

I Love You

Do you love me? she asks while she washes dishes.
There is soap in her bangs, the sponge is fraying, the water splashes my fingers
as I dry the glasses.
You are ridiculous, I say
as I twist the towel
in out around done.

Do you love me? she asks while we look
at hats in the little boutique in town.
Red or black
feather or flower?
I poke a brim, twirl it, and I say
I love ice cream. Let's find some.

Do you love me? she asks on the bus.
She has shouted and I know people have heard.
There is a child against my hip
a woman against my shoulder.
I only roll my eyes.

Do you love me? she asks while we study
in the park. The sun is hot
only on the left side of my body
and I tell her I am concentrating
on verbs, the subjunctive, the indirect pronouns.

Do you love me? she asks
and when I don't answer she laughs and says,
That's all right, I love you.
And this time I want to say it back
but the words catch in my teeth
which close to
bite them.