

Mother

By Angela Celynn

Lulling between conscious and not... the popcorn ceiling whirring above...

From the foot of the bed—over valleys of blankets and pillows—I catch the crown of your head. You speak to me like you've just come home from work and are undressing.

I feel your hands embrace and cover mine from behind as you sing me an unintelligible lullaby; the words don't matter at all; they never did, but they're *you*... and **you're home**, and by association, I am a child again.

Yet, I wake up—and the hands folded over my chest are none other than my own.

And it hurts me incredibly to realize that one day I'll come to indefinitely miss you.

The feeling is one that has burned in my heart slow enough to be understated and forgotten.

Now I remember that many a time, you had said that if you'd ever pass, I'd come to recognize the phantasms of your touch... that you would tug me by the ankles in reprimand, were I to misbehave.

Yet, I am taken aback by the contrary of your conjuration—this seeping of comfort, warmth, and love.

Now I know so well; and I cannot conceive or reconcile the fact that I would have to falsify your absence in my life...

It is both my pride and burden to believe you will always walk among me.