

## The Journey

Laura Smith

We all piled in  
the rickety white station wagon  
a tangle of arms and legs  
vying for a window seat.  
"Where are we going?"  
"Are we there yet?"  
Sharp looks dart across  
"He's looking at me."  
"Tell her to stop breathing."  
"She's on my side."  
Suddenly an arm reaches back  
flailing to silence the rabble  
Over potholes, speedbumps  
Away from cramped, pinched houses  
Out of the stagnant smell of steel  
garbage and airplane buzz  
Into tree lines and morning glories  
climbing angels returning to heaven.  
White door, brown from dusty handprints  
Enter with hoots and howls.  
There she sits, in the easy chair  
Books, magazines, clutter everywhere  
White wires poke out  
sound asleep, mouth wide open, drooling.  
She startles awake  
dirty spectacles reflect our dirty faces

Flabby arms grabbing  
scrambles to be first  
pulling into flesh, one at a time.  
Music from her mouth  
treats from endless pockets  
peppermints, cloves and old lady  
permeates

Sunshine spills over windchimes  
Long strolls, wrinkled skin against new  
Conversation lulls, hushed tones, the  
sentence drops off, dangling  
"When your mother was little"  
"She had curls like yours"  
"She loved to draw pictures"  
"Her head in the clouds"  
Mother little, so hard to imagine  
Never, she's so distant, cold  
She couldn't have been a child  
Ever, born full grown with  
scolding eyes and no smiles  
Drawing pictures, chasing dreams  
How can that be?  
Older we grow, Grandmother dies.  
And I see Mother in my mirror  
a bitter heirloom handed down.