

# Teenagers

*Elizabeth Terhorst*

I'm tired of having a teenager for a mother.

When I was young and squishy,  
I giggled when you'd  
squeeze with your hands.

Chipped paint and nails,  
strands falling out of your  
too loose hair tie.

The bags under your eyes  
grew into your favorite shade of purple.

Your squeeze molded my hands  
thin and long, "perfect for piano"  
but, you'd cry when I tried to sing—  
that was your talent anyway.

Compression moved  
up my arms  
and around my chest—  
you gripped my throat.

I still remember  
standing a whole  
ten years tall and  
your crowned canines  
looked sharp enough  
to tear out my jugular.

I didn't ask you to help me  
with my math homework again.  
You weren't that good at it  
when you were in school anyway.

I filed my teeth to points  
with your clippers  
I stole from your bathroom  
when you were still at work.

I stole more than that,  
but it still doesn't feel like enough.

By seventeen, I was ready to  
give you bite marks  
to match the ones  
you left on me.

But, you still hadn't  
unhinged your jaw.  
It's hard to bite  
when you're still  
being bitten.

Eighteen, my bruises  
had started to fade,  
and the scratches  
I left on your face  
hid behind new freckles.

I think we forgot  
that teen girls don't get along  
especially when you force  
a wolf into Bo Peep's clothing.

Nineteen, almost twenty.  
I'm left with bleeding nubs,  
broken gums and eyebags  
your favorite color.

You even got me  
to dye my hair  
the same violent red.

You're ready to go another round,  
but I'm tired. I don't have  
the same energy  
a teenager does.

I'm tired of having a  
teenager for a mother.  
I just can't keep up  
with your youthful angst.