

My mother's gifts

My mother still stands in the corridor
writing letters on the institution walls
sealing pieces of plaster in envelopes
that are slow in the overseas mail reaching me
I tear them open
plaster covers the floor.
My regrets pock the dust
the way meteors attack the moon
no atmosphere to stop them.

My mother brought me to the door of the locked ward
She wanted to touch me
You are my only daughter
I didn't let her I didn't wave goodbye I was thirteen
eleven years ago last october at midnight I forced my
mother
away
There are certain events one always remembers.
Later on there may be other confessions
glossy and useless as the sunday comics.
All these years
the only presents she sends
are sweaters:
when she travels, she remembers
her daughter lives in the north alone
She doesn't want me
to be cold.