

## **Beth Ann Bryant-Richards**

### **Pulling the Tangles Out**

When I'm not good enough  
as a mother,  
I think of my own Mama  
pulling the tangles out  
of my straight brown hair  
with the pink plastic  
stiff-bristled brush,  
parting with a rat-tail comb,  
coaxing my front cowlick into bangs,  
sweeping my shoulder-length hair  
up in a pony tail,  
spraying the wisps, then  
smoothing them down  
with the palms of her hands,  
moving aside the pony tail  
to kiss my nape.

How many hours did she spend  
bent over me in the bathroom?  
Now I pray to her:  
*Send me your spirit.*  
*I need your patience*  
for my little man,  
his blue denim hat just  
pulled down sharp  
over his straight brown hair.