

Katharine B. Ferguson

To Mother from a Daughter Leaving Home

I hated you
for taking the training wheels
from my pink and white bike.
I was already too old
(eight can be ancient)
to not be versed in the exact balance
of wheels on pavement
or the way my body should know
just how far to lean in
during the smooth swoop of a curve
like some graceful hawk
circling down to perch
and other children always laughing
sun-speckled
and pumping through tree-lined streets
pungent with summer
while I fell in the crusty slip of loose gravel
until, disgusted, you left me to it
which was better anyhow.
Later, bumping through the springy
downhill pastures of my backyard,
I would teach myself
the secret ways of bicycles
and limbs sprawling and sprawling
in wet grass.
You weren't even there
when, finally, I pushed myself
free.