Mama's Hands

Mama whooped me because I didn't listen/
cause I broke the heads off the ceramic angel magnets/
cause I peed the bed the night she bought me my first sports bras

Mama whooped me & her hands
were bricks. & my body was a glass window.
I shattered all over her carpet
& she whooped me for making a mess

At night, I laid on my belly/ prayed tonight
I could hold it/ & hated Mama's hands

I have never seen her hands so dry.

So crumpled & tossed like yesterday's paper
blending with the white sheets in the white room.
Useless, nobody can fold a swan out of crumpled paper.

The cancer is in her stomach/
in the pus crusted over her eyes/
in the robe that exposes her

I wish I had a brick & it hurts me to think that

I lay by her bedside
& it doesn't matter if I hold it
cause Mama can't fold her hands.

She asks me to help her to the bathroom.
I pretend I can't hear.
& she asks God to help her *Please God, I'm not ready*
I'm not ready yet, & I pretend I can't hear