

**Seed**

I'm planting a seed  
right now.  
I'm going to grow something  
Something bigger than me, I swear.

I'm planting a seed  
I'll place it in the dark hole I've fallen into  
I'll care for it  
water it  
it will grow

I'm planting a seed  
and when it grows,  
It will pull me loose of this soil

I'm planting a seed  
it's my changed behavior  
it's my effort  
it's me every night in the basement, punching a bag  
punching until my hands ache  
instead of giving up

A seed is a commitment  
I'm committed to staying alive.  
I'll trade tears for sweat  
I'll trade sleep for blood pounding in my veins  
If this is invigorating now  
imagine how it will feel  
when I cultivate my garden

You have to fight to get out  
You have to start someday  
you have to plant a seed  
if you want a flower

**A Sprout!**

I'm a big girl now!  
I know because  
Today I helped my hero  
by helping her students

They fidgeted,  
adjusting their leotards  
while they leaned shyly  
to peek at me

their canvas wings  
flapped behind them  
as they chasséd  
in a joyful circle

They grinned at me  
and told me jokes  
the jokes were not funny  
But I laughed anyway.

I found them to be wonderful,  
curious creatures.

I relayed this to my mother  
I said,  
"mother,  
why do all children  
share the same humor and mannerisms,  
but by the time we know it  
we've lost it?"

She laughed lightly  
"You've just lost the magic."  
So  
I guess  
I'm a big girl now.

But hopefully  
someday  
I'll find that little spark again  
I'll catch it  
like a firefly  
and hold that giggling, ticklish magic  
in my hands  
just once more.

**A Stalk**

When I was young  
All I wanted was to grow up

My friends were older  
And I was positive that by my next birthday,  
(this time for sure!)  
I'd finally catch up to them

But the funny thing was  
they didn't stop growing  
they didn't wait at the threshold  
for me to cross with them  
They marched through stoically  
to time's strict tempo

My legs were too small to reach the first branch,  
but they were in the tree already  
grinning down at me  
"Are you coming yet?"

My legs grew  
painstakingly slowly  
but my mind churned ahead  
hurtling down the track  
like a frenzied, out of control train  
I read grade levels ahead  
so we could discuss novels  
and novel ideas  
I understood them,  
but we weren't the same: I was young

I understood what these friends pronounced  
and school crushed my spirits too  
My body *even* decided to contort itself into a different shape  
so we looked the same  
even so, we were not on common ground  
I still couldn't reach the top shelf,  
or take the SAT

It wasn't much longer

I finally got there.  
I can reach the top shelf  
(if I stand on my tip-toes)  
I took the SAT-  
Scores come out tomorrow, wish me luck-  
But it didn't matter.

they moved away.

Out of the country,  
across the country,  
and the furthest one  
is three hours away  
close enough  
to be just  
too far away.

So yeah, I caught up.  
I have mental illnesses  
and stress  
and a constant pressure in my skull  
Which means I'm a grown up  
sorta

But if I could go back  
I would  
I would stand at the base of that tree  
a thousand times over  
so I could see them all smiling down at me  
"Are you coming yet?"