

Time is a sick joke
Moving the floor beneath my feet
Making me stumble
Shoving me forward
Telling me to never look back
Never stopping for a second
To let me breathe

Recently, I've held my breath
Letting time wash over me
Like waves on beach
I close my eyes and focus on my past

--

When I was little every morning started the same.
My mothers warm hands on my back lulling me back to sleep
The absence of them, slowly waking me up
Her singing echoing from the kitchen

I would call my mom from the bathroom
I stood on my toes to see the top of my head in the mirror
While she would battle my mane
Until it was smooth
Then she tied it up seamlessly

This was our routine.
Until I could do it by myself to get ready for school.

Then, it was her turn.

When I would finish putting my hair up
She would sit on the small table in the living room
And I would crawl onto it, making it possible for me to reach her wavy brown hair
And I would brush until it was smooth
Then I would tie it up

And take it out again because it wasn't right
Repeating this process until my sister and I were happy with it
And finally we were ready to go to school

--

When I would come home from middle school
I was always happy when I saw my baby cousin
Watching him crawl toward me excitedly,
I helped him stand up
Holding his hands while he wobbled
Then I guided him through the house

And suddenly he could walk on his own
Waddling from room to room

I would politely tell him to move,
Because my mom was nervous when I stood her up from her seat,
Holding her hands while she wobbled
Then I guided her through the house

My mother was the type of person to do spontaneous things
She was a free spirit
So free, she couldn't even follow a recipe word for word

But as her illness became more serious,
Everyday became the same set of instructions
Meds, eat, PT, rest, meds, eat, PT, rest, meds, eat, PT, rest,
Her family becoming her nurses
No time to catch up on our day
No time to make her kids food
No time to go out with family
No time to be herself.
For nine years.
Her illness became her identity

Nights would be spent
Screaming at each other
Out of fear of the unknown future
Fighting about what is more important
Living with a regimen
hoping there is a light at the end of the tunnel.
Or living your best life in a short amount of time
Hours of arguing, yelling, screaming, shouting, crying, shrieking
Never did any good.

Because she's gone now

I'll never get to see her beautiful green eyes light up when she laughs
I'll never get to kiss her goodnight even after we got into fights
I'll never be able to hear her cheer me on from the audience after I perform
And I'll never forgive myself
Because I took all that time for granted
Now I hide in the past
Because moving on is so much harder
When I know my mommy won't be there to hold my hand