

The Babysitter

This girl with steel
piercing her eyebrow
is dangling a chubby
boy. The father's
in jail for drugs. "What kind?"
I ask, wearily. What I want to ask:
How can I leave
my daughter with you? "I don't want to
know," she replies, warily.
Nineteen, she can already spout
a litany of social
services: WIC, Medicaid,
no insurance for
the baby. A new mother
myself, I am old enough
to be her mother. I remember
puking in the dorm bathroom.
Not the beer.
I exercised my right
to choose. Now,
forty-six years old, finally
able to mother
this child I traveled far
to find. And I see this
girl: bright, grinning,
as lost as I ever was.
And I want to give her
anything. *Just not this job.*