When I'm not good enough
as a mother,
I think of my own Mama
pulling the tangles out
of my straight brown hair
with the pink plastic
stiff-bristled brush,
parting with a rat-tail comb,
coaxing my front cowlick into bangs,
sweeping my shoulder-length hair
up in a pony tail,
spraying the wisps, then
smoothing them down
with the palms of her hands,
moving aside the pony tail
to kiss my nape.

How many hours did she spend
bent over me in the bathroom?
Now I pray to her:
*Send me your spirit.*
*I need your patience*
for my little man,
his blue denim hat just
pulled down sharp
over his straight brown hair.