

LAURIE KRUK

## Mockable Mom, or The Mother Who Laughs Out Loud at McDonalds

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*“In traditional carnival, Mother Folly is seen as a misrule of sorts...”*  
—Magdalene Redekop, *Mothers and Other Clowns:*  
*The Stories of Alice Munro* (1992)

Oh, we were nice kids: got good grades, didn't  
sneak beer or risk *It*  
too often, with our boyfriends, but  
as teen daughters we were mockers,  
sharp eyes trained on  
all lapses in maternal knowledge  
or authority, especially  
rash risks of sharing with strangers  
like grocery cashiers (“I *thought* I had  
enough in the bank”) or store clerks when shopping for Prom dresses  
(“she hasn't really *developed* yet—when I was her age, now!”)....

Such mother moments would bring down our wrath, doubled by two  
relentless magnifying glasses. Ballooning cartoonly huge, Mom became a target  
as irresistible as her bending, child-bearing hips  
direct bullseye of our family picnic photo, snapped by me  
as she cleared the wooden table, uncomplainingly.

Now it is my turn,  
caught as I awkwardly am in this doorway between  
daughter and mother

by my own expanded center,  
where I must intrude on, or define, the limits of acceptability:  
like at the McDonald's stop, mid-family vacation, all four craving fuel of  
Coke and over-salted fries, London's Summer Olympics  
playing on all four screens. There, I was sternly advised  
not to "ogle the athletes." Meanwhile, my ethnic-proud cheer  
for the grim-faced gymnast from Belarus,  
was deemed "Over-the top, Ma!"—  
as if I had rudely interrupted  
the mute munching of faces glued  
to the gyrations of those who  
were trained by tired, overweight mothers  
who sacrificed health, happiness, sleep  
so children could compete (sponsored by  
Coke and the golden arches of international  
junk food)—

Or, on a ski outing, when I fell behind their  
new long-legged strides,  
silver tracks that drew me suddenly over  
new icy decline,  
so that I spilled, skis escaping, to land somewhere else,  
like rubbish, dumped, illicit, in the bush. A pratfall registered, caught  
in their over-the-shoulder laughter—cold  
as the mouthful of snow I clumsily bit down on:

Mother's revenge, a dish  
best served cold,  
thirty-some years later  
(or so I'm told).