



Hand-Me-Downs

Emma Garcia

The box is swaddled in birthday wrapping.

The tape is crooked

and the box dent

ed.

Inside are your words. They look worn out,

wrinkled,

after years and years

of constant use.

They don't even have a heartbeat when I check the pulse.

When I get home I put them on, slipping my arms through the sleeves,

tugging my head through the scratchy cotton.

I can't get the words past my thighs. They are too tight

the arms too long

the color doesn't match my

complexion.

I go to the store and buy

some other words

with a coupon. I carefully take the words home.

In the backyard I hose them down,
scrub them with my fancy hand towel, they moan under the hot
water.

The grime leaks into a nearby ant hill.

I borrow the clips from my mother,
hang the words on the clothesline,
and watch them drift in the wind.

The sun splitting between the letters.

I cut them sideways, sew on some new words that I've pulled out from
the garden.

I match the colors to complement each other

I dye the words,

I repaint the words,

I stretch them out

and iron on new ones.

I flatten them on paper. Let them rest overnight
so in the morning the words look

brand new.

I try them on. My arms ease into the sleeves,
my cheeks warm pink at the soft cotton.

They actually accentuate my hips.

The legs are not tight,
the arms are the perfect length,
the color even matches my eyes.

I twirl in the mirror,

I *love* these words. They fit

me

perfectly and I want more.



Noodle Soup

Are you sick? Here let me.

Sit you down on an old wicker chair, I'll give you a quilt
that I made with my hands. The fabric from the tendons in my left
forearm.

It's warm, trust me. I sewed it myself, balancing the needle in between
my teeth, with each loop of inked thread, a letter is formed in the
shape of a dozen stanzas.

I patched them together like a nocturne of owls.
Don't shiver, I'll bring you my special soup,

I arranged it this morning.
The kill still fresh and beating wrapped in long lines floating in
exceptional errors.

I twist the fork in the clunky sentences, cupping my hand underneath,
careful as to not spill any details and gently place them in your mouth.