

Mother at Home

Off the bus from school, / the picture window's curtain is drawn. / So, you're there
on the couch. / I can hear the sound of soft moaning / before I go in. Say: *I'm home.*
Hello. Goodbye. Ask: *Can I tell you that I'm sick, / because sick / is what you are?* / Say:
When you speak: Be free of my burden. / You mean free figuratively, / not literally. / But you
were right. Ask: *Is it already time to say goodbye?* Say: *I believe in letting go, / like*
disconnecting, / like see ya later. / Ask: *What are your medical issues—what are their names*
now? and should we still use this innocuous term issues? / Say: *I'll give a short history / of*
the universe of them, / the orbits of each / not quite making perfect ellipses. Ask: *Is guilt the*
gravitational force that keeps them tethered? / Say: *Goodbye. See ya later.* / Ask: *Is duty the*
same as guilt? Say: *The farce of it all. / I can't keep up with it.* / Ask: *Is it ever too late?* Say:
I still hold your old medical chart / tucked in a pocket somewhere. / Ask: *Do you feel any*
pain? Say: *I'm leaving now. / I'm gone. I'm so far away now.* / Ask: *If there is no pain— / if*
I have none / and you have none, / are we an equation / where the product / equals numb?
Say: numbness— / the physical and mental state / of disconnection. Ask: *Why do I still need*
you? / Say: *After all, I could only say goodbye / in this poem / to myself.* / Ask: *Will you*
show me how / to go numb, to disconnect / in a dark room / moaning softly to anyone / who
might hear, / then ignore / and then disconnect / and then be free, too?