

diagnosis

my therapist told me
life could be traced
back to a mother
one half
of a gene pool

I asked if all disorders
were hereditary
she said most are

in Abnormal Psych 101
our professor warned
of self-diagnosis
but we all tallied our scores
in the back of the book

our mother later wondered
why we scattered
to the periphery of the country
while the most vivid
memories I have of her hang
around gas stations on
36th street after school

she threatened to get
the Quiktrip cashiers
fired for talking too much
the french vanilla machine
was *out of order* and
we waited outside in fear

we watched
as she boiled over in
the Oklahoma heat
slamming car doors while
we learned which version
of her we would meet
this afternoon

we were forced to walk home
her car quietly following at a distance
to teach us a lesson for being
her children