

Poem for an inked daughter

JEAN WYRICK | FALL 2006

I did it too you know, just differently.
Way back then
when I was angry young
I pierced my ears with a rusty ice pick,
and willfully wore dangly earrings
(and a smirk) to Christmas dinner.
My scandalized mother
referred to me for days as
"my daughter, the dirty gypsy."
I let my ears jingle silver music, ultimately
dancing right over her Victorian disapproval
out of that house forever.

And now here you are,
fresh from a different kind of parlor,
with that defiant dragon
curling dark over your shoulder.
No, of course you know I don't like it.
Another gauntlet thrown down
in the ongoing Mother-Daughter Wars.

But hear this, my own gypsy girl:
I know something you don't.
That under that fierce fire-breathing dragon,
claws bared, ready for the next battle,
under the skin where the purple ink turns to blood,
your blood is my blood,
rushing red to red, flowing in a long bond
linking my heart to you no matter what,
like the swirling, twisting lines
of an intricate intimate tattoo,
invisible, indelible, forever permanent.