Two Poems  
by Pamela Waterbury

A Warning

This morning we sit on your bed  
exchanging dreams.  
You tell me of the princess,  
the perfect princess who as you watched vomited.  
I recall my dream of the princess of the Tarot cards  
whose long flowing hair becomes snakes winding about her body, tightly binding her.

I watch you paint your lips with mauve wanting braces to straighten crooked teeth,  
so patterned cheers flow smoothly from a practiced cheerleader smile.  
I want to warn you that the hair shielding your eyes  
and veiling your face will grow more opaque with time,  
gauze tightening to bandages wrapping about your head like an ancient Egyptian queen's.

Then even a surgeon's knife can not cut through invisible wires locking your jaw--  
generations of strictures silencing your voice to hisses through barriers of shoulds and smiles.

Preservation

Quickly I rifle  
Through the photographs in hopes this hiking trip to Yosemite with my daughter,  
has been preserved.  
My daughter who for years hid behind her closed bedroom door, eyes shuttered against me and disappeared into secrets.  
Seeing none are ruined,  
I slowly spread them across the kitchen table like a display of precious stones.  
Here, she stands in Warrior pose on a flat rock.  
In the background the river rushes, ferns along its bank leached of sound and color.  
In the next, Sequoias and Ponderosa pines shrink into graininess;  
and in the final one she disappears into the other tourists as the spray and power of the falls fade into mountain surfaces.

No pictures of us lying on the banks of Merced River across from Bridal Veil Falls, its back splash growing, changing directions in afternoon light.  
No image of us hiking around Mirror Lake, water bottles empty as we, depleted approach the ninth mile.  
No photo captures her arms wrapped tightly around me beneath the wild rush of the lower falls.