

The weekend life of my mother

On Saturdays

Mother's lipsticked mouth is a boxing glove

One false move and she'll knock you down

A dragon tattoo curls down the side of her bicep. Her jeans are ripped knee to toe

She wheels her bike out in the sun. Sits astride whilst

chewing fried chicken bun

Mother is 'Firecracker' to her friends. She bets on horses with a few men

Sometimes she brings them home

On Sundays

She strolls through the mall shoplifts a bauble or two

Wrapped and ribboned she gifts me these. Hairbands and books

We slurp noodles in the food court and ride the bus to the sea

Her eyes are rimmed in blue kohl. Her kisses taste of Sriracha sauce and smoke

'I want to be like you, Ma,' I say, arms wrapped tight around her waist

'Don't you dare,' she hisses but she's pleased I can tell

On Mondays

Mother gets up early. Changes two buses and goes to work

in big grey overalls that dwarf her limbs

Her hair pulled back- a sparrow's tail. Cheeks soap clean like a nun's

She nibbles her cheese sandwich on a park bench in her lunch break

And spends her day filing nails of women

who call her 'Cindy' and pat her shoulder when she pours them ginger tea