**Dear Mama**

By Wanda Coleman

when did we become friends?
it happened so gradual i didn't notice
maybe i had to get my run out first
take a big bite of the honky world and choke on it
maybe that's what has to happen with some uppity youngsters
if it happens at all

and now
the thought stark and irrevocable
of being here without you
shakes me

beyond love, fear, regret or anger
into that realm children go
who want to care for/protect their parents
as if they could
and sometimes the lucky ones do

into the realm of making every moment
important
laughing as though laughter wards off death
each word given
received like spanish eight

treasure to bury within
against that shadow day
when it will be the only coin i possess
with which to buy peace of mind