

MIDLIFE FETE

*Virginia Z. Tolosa**

*In childhood, you fondled and raped me
and told me to keep quiet.*

*As my brother bathed me, I vaguely remembered,
Told him about what you did
Not knowing what it meant.*

*He told my family
Then we promptly forgot all about it.*

*You went on to succeed in the world.
While I went on to sabotage myself
in a haze of hedonistic frenzy
as some scarred survivors are wont to do.*

*In adolescence, young adulthood, even in marriage
I carried your weight in me
without knowing it.*

*Now, in midlife, grown stronger and wiser
Because of other women,
The scars are healing.*

**Pen name of an occasional poet.*

*Belatedly, I decide I am whole and okay, after all.
'Twas you, who were not okay, after all.*

I have survived you and the society that molded you.

*In midlife, I will fight for myself and others
In this warped society.*

*I celebrate midlife for I am now free
To be me.*

*Free to be me and help
Others to be free themselves.*

