

ON A WALKING/TALKING AFTERNOON

Some people called you prickly, even cold.
My friends all thought you kept my reins
too short and exercised too tight a hold.
For years I thought the same--and said as much--
but never once made plans to leave the fold.

My best friend ran away, broke all the rules.
In summer envy, I defied my mold,
sought wider options, less restricted space.
I yelled for freedom, wanted to be bold.
I'm sure I ventured further than you wished,
but you'd taught me to tell the brass from gold.

You knew my friend would reap a bitter crop;
it turned out even worse than you foretold.
It's hard admitting your way was the best;
those corny adages you always doled
like carrot sticks and bus fare-- even now
they make me groan. Yet friends I've polled
now say they'd rather have a firmer hand
than one too slack. The mothers who cajoled,
they said, got flattering deceit returned
while you got sass. If you were quick to scold
you also were the first to offer praise.

So Mother, here's my tribute--nothing scrolled
or lacey, just belated words of thanks
I've tried to put together as we strolled.
I've felt your steady flow of warmth; I've trolled
your sunlit pool and found your stock of fun.
Implanted values can't be bought or sold
And though we're different, I'll wear your cachet--
still evident when both of us are old.