

from *Skin Deep and Other Teenage Reflections*
Angela Shelf Medearis

Nonconformist

I don't want to be anybody
but myself.
So, I shaved little lines
in my head and
dyed my hair purple
and green
(with just a hint of orange)
and pierced my nose and
hung a gold earring in it,
AS AN EXPRESSION OF WHO I AM
(who am I?).
I waited until someone else did it first.
I didn't want anyone to think I'm
weird.
You know what I mean?

Sunglasses

I wear these dark glasses
because they're really cool
(and because I don't want you to see
the fear
in my eyes).
I walk like I do
because
I'm trying to keep
from running.
I try to stay alive with a rap
style that drives 'em wild
with what I say each and every day
because
no one seems to
understand me
when I'm talking anyway.

Mom Says

Mom says
“Be careful!”
“Where are you going?”
“What time are you coming home?”
I say
“I know what I’m doing.”
“Quit treating me like I’m a baby.”

I guess we keep telling each other
the same old things
in the same old way
because
we’re too scared to say
I love you.