

# Singing in the Kitchen

*Carrie Newcomer*

My mother sang with full abandon  
With the kitchen radio  
When she was washing dishes.  
She liked the old songs,  
And she'd swing her hips,  
Sashaying as much as a woman can  
When elbow-deep in soapy water.  
I would sit on the hardwood steps  
Filled with pride and wonderment,  
Whispering into my dog's ear,  
With sage five year-old assurance,  
"My mother has the voice of an angel."  
As I recall, my dog agreed.

Years later,  
Standing side by side on Sunday morning,  
I was horrified,  
In the way only a teenager can be horrified  
When her mother is singing  
Loudly and confidently,  
Completely and consistently  
Off key,  
In church,  
In public,  
In front of her friends.

But now I understand  
That my mother was a cautious soul,  
Private and intentional,  
And so I am grateful  
That she taught me how to hold my little sister's hand  
And look both ways before I crossed the street.  
But I am also thankful  
That either she did not know,  
Or she did not care,  
That her voice was not smooth or perfectly pitched.  
She sang anyway,  
Because some things just have to be  
Exactly what they are,  
And a song must be sung  
One way or another.