

NOTES

Written as a personal, narrative poem, the free-verse style allows a performer to also consider using this selection as a Dramatic Interpretation. This piece of literature may be performed by a female or male performer. The drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer where to turn his/her pages in the manuscript. The key to this selection is portraying the narrator with 100% honesty. There is no need to ever become melodramatic during the performance. This poem touches on several emotions: fear, uncertainty, but most importantly, love. Humor is found throughout this selection; however, the humor should never be forced. Audiences should identify with the contemporary references throughout the selection. The key to this selection is likability. The audience should not only root for the mother to overcome her illness, but they should equally root for the narrator to ultimately win the National Spelling Bee.

Malleable

Capable of being extended or shaped; adaptable or tractable

When Mother is first diagnosed with cancer, she is understandably afraid. She instantly takes on the role of victim. It is important to understand that Mother has never embraced change, so she is adamant our routines stay the same. Dad still goes to work. I study my spelling words, and Mother constantly quizzes me *over* my spelling words. She is determined to coach a National Spelling Bee Champion. Except for Mother's chemotherapy and doctor check ups, our lives remain a constant vigil to *all* that is routine. It's funny. While helping me with my spelling words for the National Spelling Bee, I see Mother's entire demeanor change like the malleable mind of a child. Mother is no longer a victim. She is a fighter. A champion. My hero.



Maelstrom

A large, powerful, or violent whirlpool; a restless, disordered, or tumultuous state of affairs

When Dad is unavailable to take Mother to her doctor's appointments, I become the side-kick of choice. Riding shotgun, Mother and I scurry down the side streets like *Lucy* and *Ethel*, two ladies with a plan. We enter the maelstrom of early morning traffic and greet each doctor with a smile, hopeful, that this will be the *one person*, to bring normalcy back into our lives.



Marmalade

A jellylike preserve in which small pieces of fruit and fruit rind are suspended

When I was younger, Mother would make jar upon jar of homemade orange marmalade. After she finished canning, Mother would bake flaky, hot biscuits from scratch. The kitchen was filled with an aura of *Mmm's*, as Mother slathered the warm bread with the citric gooey-ness of her homemade marmalade. Some memories are just too sweet to be forgotten.



Magnanimous

Generous in forgiving an insult or injury; free from petty resentment or vindictiveness

Mother has lost all of her hair, and she *refuses* to wear a wig. Vanity is not my Mother's style. She says, "*Bald is beautiful, and it may be the only time in my life I have the chance to look like an exotic runway model from Paris!*" A few weeks ago, Mother and I were walking downtown. Mother was wearing a sharp, brown pantsuit Dad had given her for Christmas. There was a group of young men walking five yards behind us. They kept yelling, "*Deal or No Deal!*" At first, Mom and I just thought they were chanting nonsense. We had no idea the comments were directed at us. Then I realized the comments were not directed at *us*. The comments were directed at *Mother*. From the back, with her sleek baldhead, wearing a tailored suit, Mother, I can only assume, looked somewhat like Howie Mandel from the popular game show, *Deal or No Deal*. Without any warning, Mother stopped in