

MORNING ●

Shawna Ervin

He greets me by the edge
of my bed, the same as yesterday, the day
before. This our moment in the dark,
his head barely past the mattress. “What are we doing

today? What’s for breakfast?” His round
face, the same perfectly round face I first
met when he was one, toothless, bald. He has
thick, black hair now, the same piercing

eyes that want answers: *I am
your mom. I am here.
You are safe. Safe. I will keep
you safe.* He reaches for my hand,

swings it around, up, holds
my focus. He’s stronger now. *School today.
It’s Tuesday. Do you remember
what special you have? You have speech. You’ll see*

*Ms. Abby, Ms. Michelle. You can
check the lunch menu on the fridge
when you’re ready. Today
is the 18th.* Do you know

what that looks like? 18?
Do you know what you will be
like at 18, if you’ll live
here, with me

or somewhere else? Will you need
me to go over the day?
Will I hope you'll make it
through another day, worry

you'll have a meltdown, hurt
yourself? Will you still
come to me, hold
my hand, ask, assume I know?

“Mom, when will you pick me
up? What will we do after school? What's
for dinner? What will you do
today? Where will you be if I need you?”