

**To a Daughter Leaving Home**  
***Linda Pastan***

When I taught you  
at eight to ride  
a bicycle, loping along  
beside you  
as you wobbled away  
on two round wheels,  
my own mouth rounding  
in surprise when you pulled  
ahead down the curved  
path of the park,  
I kept waiting  
for the thud  
of your crash as I  
sprinted to catch up,  
while you grew  
smaller, more breakable  
with distance,  
pumping, pumping  
for your life, screaming  
with laughter,  
the hair flapping  
behind you like a  
handkerchief waving  
goodbye.