

## Who Do You Think You Are? Cynthia Sappracone

“Who do you think you are” Mum shrieked, before yanking my hair.

How many times did I want to reply: “Not my mother’s daughter!”

She may have brought me into this world, but that alone doesn’t make a woman a mother.

Mothers don’t instil fear in their children. They don’t make them their personal punching bags and they don’t force them to grow up too fast.

Mothers use their arms to give hugs, not to suffocate. Mothers use their voices to sing lullabies, not to belittle.

“Who do you think you are?” Mum yelled, the first time I was brave enough to answer her back.

“I am someone who won’t take your abuse anymore” I wanted to yell in return.

I am someone who knows my worth. I demand respect and dignity.

I am someone whose wings you have clipped, but whose feathers are growing back. It will take time for my plumage to be fully intact again, but it will. Then finally, like a caged bird, I will find my voice again and sing.

“Who do you think you are?” Mum taunted, before threatening me.

“No longer your puppet” I wanted to say.

You can’t make me do things I don’t want to. You no longer have control over my life. I am independent. I am strong. I am empowered because I can make my own choices.

I am living because I finally could. I believe in my potential because you saw it and were intimidated by it.

“Who do you think you are?” you scream.

I’m someone who lifts others and treats them with kindness. I’m someone who understands pain and expresses empathy.

“Who do you think you are?” she says over my shoulder, now only existing in my subconscious.

Trauma lets the people who hurt you stick around long after they’re gone.

Finally, I can silence her for good. There’s no more room in my mind or in my heart for her. She’s overstayed her welcome.

I speak without moving my lips. Without making a sound because I don’t have to speak. The person I have become and the life that I live now speak volumes.

Now, I ask her, “Who do you think you are”?

And I shake my head. She refuses to look at her reflection in the mirror I put in front of her.