

I've Been Dreaming Of My Dead Grandmother

Visage of her doughy skin thickly
Kneaded into demands, and my mama
Bent like a willow, wind-beaten by
That woman's wilful voice and needs.

.
When i was just a little boy

(in a house of women)

i heard her say,

.
'Daughter, you must train a child
Same way that you train a dog.'

.
(She had very large hands.)

.
Now She Comes
back at night, sneaks into my wet
dreams and scolds me
for smoking in the basement; I run
through my mother's wisp of self, out
the green door, down
a block of taunts, take
refuge behind
each year
added to my file.

.
Children are cruel, though less adept than adults:
I attempted revenge; I attempted
To cut her through with the sharp fragments
Of my early vocabulary, but
Soon became convinced that her skin was some
Convoluting armour and that her mind –
Though strong - was too dull to feel any
Pain other than the physical. At best,
My words, spit out, might earn a hasty slap.

.
(She had very strong hands.)
.

Now She Comes
back at night, invades my sleep to make
me a dinner
of pig's knuckles and blood
soup. I always
have to clean
my plate.

.
I had just got puberty beat
When she said, 'You'll miss
Me when I'm gone!' And went.

.
For fifteen years I didn't

.
Then I started to have these damn dreams, no not
regrets, just dreams, and

.
I'm already a father.

Ken Stange (from *Nocturnal Rhythms*)