

# *Lighter*

by La'Tasha Strother

If you give your son a joint,  
he is going to ask you for a lighter.  
When he asks you for a lighter,  
you will have no clue as to what fires he will set ablaze.  
When he sets ablaze the fires,  
it will be too late for you to say,  
“Son, weed is more acceptable than crack cocaine.”  
When he sets ablaze the taste for crack cocaine,  
he will ask for a dollar.  
When he asks for a dollar,  
they will eventually turn him away.  
When they turn him away,  
he will begin to steal.  
When he begins to steal,  
you will not have a clue.  
You will age thinking you offered your son the rite of passage.  
When he begins to steal,  
he will also learn how to pray.  
He will pray for the urge to go away.  
He will pray for the itch to leave his hands.  
He will pray for the dry cotton mouth to dissipate.  
After he prays,  
he will see that his temptations have not been cast away.  
When he sees that his temptations have not been casted away,  
he will fix his face to display the stature of a reformed man.  
When he sees that his facade is unable to hold up,  
he will show anger.  
He will become angry at his bone-of-my-bone and flesh-of-my-flesh,  
in hopes that it will keep her questions at bay.  
You will take rest in thinking that your son has cultivated a stable home.  
You will praise his foundation without knowing that crack flows through his veins.  
If you give your son a joint,  
he is going to ask you for a lighter.  
When he asks you for a lighter,  
you will not see him use the heel of the lighter to crush the head of the pill.  
When he crushes the head of the pill,  
he will want to inhale.  
When he inhales,  
he will think that he has found a higher place,

a holy place that brings freedom and shame.  
When he has seen the higher place,  
he will be unable to look his loved ones in the face,  
for he has locked eyes with his dealer.  
When he locks eyes with his dealer,  
anything sacred such as fathering has taken a back seat to his addiction.  
When all things sacred have taken a back seat to his addiction,  
his temple will begin to display the signs of starvation,  
for his appetite for street drugs has replaced his appetite for nutrition.  
He will not bare his chest,  
so you will inaccurately call him slender and graceful.  
You will not see the way his ribs display his addictions.  
Your son will come and go like a ghost,  
and you will think it is due to his mother being bipolar.  
If you give your son a joint,  
you have passed on a generational course.  
A course that will strive to strip your lineage of everything Godly.  
It will kill,  
steal, and destroy from the inside out,  
and without a doubt you will be left with a shell of a son.  
But thanks be to Abba who formed your son before you offered him the rite of passage  
and before he met his mother's womb.  
Abba who breathed the breath of life;  
to make all sons join heirs with his son formally known as Christ.  
When you give your son a joint,  
Abba will lead him to the light that is lost in the dark.  
Abba will lead him to the light to remind him that before he was born to man,  
he was formed by God the Father known in Aramaic as Abba.  
Abba who was,  
who is, and who is to come.  
Who has joined him together with hope, truth, and life,  
so he can be more than a fig tree with leaves but no fruit.  
When you give your son a joint,  
Abba will remind him that he has been joined to the resurrection power of Christ,  
and it is in the dying of his own flesh that he will come to live again.