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An English Play

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Alice Turski

AN ENGLISH PLAY

For five minutes I
make my mother read
The Tempest aloud.
A lullaby, I say,
if you do it right. I pin
her finger down and the ship
rocks to its side, prostrate,
chewed and spit out
in the Captain's voice, you,
the army of fleas and this, life,
this is life crawling
overboard and I dragging I blazon I
birth forth the first word.
My gift to her, lucky,
saucy tongue
and straight, pearly teeth
and elegant, slender throat, we can
lop mountains in two, spring
rivers from the ground and make water thirst
for the path I flick, flicked
into shape like the hoary dragons
we are. Louder I say and
louder she sings because I
am so very powerful.