

# Courage

by Nancy Smith Worthen

People tell me I am strong.  
When my daughter had a stroke at 22, I did not fall apart.  
I asked for help.

I found support in many ways  
so that I could rise above  
the fear, the denial and the grief.  
There were decisions to be made,  
and I had to be able to balance  
the fierce love for my daughter  
with the medical facts.

What I discovered was that facts  
were not what guided me,  
but an unswerving clarity that  
I could understand my daughter's wishes, unspoken,  
through my love for her and  
some other mystical understanding.

When the doctors said to let her go,  
that she would never progress  
beyond a persistent vegetative state,  
I fought on, with a mixture of  
hope, grief and despair.

Not a happy ending, because  
my daughter is still unmoving  
and silent, but today  
she can speak 'yes'  
by moving her eye.