

*Anger Management Kit*

*Stop saying you're a boy, said the mother. I would if I could, said the child. You must've wished for a boy while you were pregnant, said the mother's mother. That girl just wants to be noticed, the mother's mother said. I can fix her, said the mother's sister, she needs to come live with me.*

*Why must you be a boy?* asked the mother. *For the same reason you must be a girl,* said the child. *You can act like a boy, but you'll be a woman when you grow up,* said the mother. *I'll stop when I grow up,* said the child. Candles blown, cake cut, it was the mother's forty-fifth birthday.

*Here's your birthday present,* said the child, handing the mother a Ziploc with paper dolls. The mother pulled out the paper family. It was a mother, a father, three older sisters, and a young child. The paper mother's face was scarlet, the child's cyan. *I drew you with a red face,*

*said the child. And this little one, with a blue-green face. When you're angry, beat up, kick, and yell at this little one,* said the child. *I would never do that,* said the mother. *That's why I made it,* said the child, *so you don't. Beat up, kick, and yell at your real child.* The real mother said,

*Thank you.* The mother whose real face, like that of the paper mother's, now flushed scarlet.