

Stomp

By Nikki Grimes

I come home,
feet about to bleed
from angry stomping.
“Boy!” says Mom.
“Quit making all that racket.”
But what does she expect
when, day after day,
haters sling words at me
like jagged stones
designed to split my skin?
I retreat to my room,
collapse on the bed,
count, “One. Two. Three...”
When I get to ten,
I snatch up journal and pen,
flip to a clean page,
and unload my hurt, my rage
’til I can breathe, again.
Letter by letter,
I rediscover
my power to decide
which words matter,
which words don’t,
and whose.
Calm, now, I remember:
I get to choose.

Source: *Poetry* (March 2021)