

Bed
by Sandy Mercer

Irene is pacing.

She wants her mama.

She wants to go home.

I follow her into her room.

We sit on her bed.

A bed with a wicker headboard.

A Golden Girl's bed.

A bed that traveled with her when she moved from Rhode Island to Connecticut to California and finally, Arizona.

She says she's scared.

90 years old.

I've never heard my mom say she's scared.

She says she doesn't know what's happening to her.

She's crying.

She never cries.

I hold her hands.

I tell her I'll take care of her.

We hug.

A long tight hug.

She lets go first.

She gently nudges me off the bed.

She clearly says, "I'm not gonna let it bother me!"

Irene is back!

And I watch as she tidies up her wicker Golden Girl's bed.