(For Emma Narvas Espiritu)

1.
She’s gone
like all mothers
of his days -
& the weighing scale
lists toward
things undone,
words unuttered
to connect the syntax
of the heart
that however stays
broken, rough,
edging into the silence
of all silences.
Yes, he could have done it
this way,
or that
but the moment had passed
a long, long time ago
when the world stood stockstill,
then spun around him
& him only:
& he could only stare
at the passing wind that,
chilly like
her hands of ice,
only stoked the firewood
of this wish,
she be here,
at his side
like an impossible child
again...
But she’s gone,
her voice
like the sound
of phantom hands clapping,
her eyes
forever gazing down
through the tunnel of light
at him
who stolidly holds on
to a fistful of slipping sand.

2.
Every woman
is mother to the child
who leaves at daybreak
& returns to her side
at the edge of night:
this unwritten duty
of sticking it out
through thick & thin –
neither mistaking the act
for faith or reason
but simply
holding each other’s hands
in the journey
toward a break of light.
Once one & indivisible,
each to each
they embrace
discovering the origins
of grace & love.
Every woman
is mother to the child.