

*(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.