



Poetry and Meditations for Mamas Day

What Did I Do Today?

What did I do today?
Today I left some dishes dirty,
The bed got made around 3:30.
The diapers soaked a little longer,
The odor grew a little stronger.
The crumbs I spilled the day before,
Are staring at me from the floor.
The fingerprints there on the wall,
Will likely be there still next fall.
The dirty streaks on those window panes,
Will still be there next time it rains.
Shame on you, you sit and say,
Just what did you do today?
I nursed a baby till he slept,
I held a toddler while she wept.
I played a game of hide and seek,
I squeezed a toy so it would squeak.
I pulled a wagon, sang a song,
Taught a child right from wrong.
What did I do this whole day through?
Not much that shows, I guess that's true.
Unless you think that what I've done,
Might be important to someone,
With bright brown eyes and soft brown hair,
If that is true...I've done my share.

- Author unknown





In the Beginning

Kate is teaching the kids about dinosaur air.

“That air you breathe – that air you have inside you every time you take a breath – that’s dinosaur air,” she says. “Dinosaurs breathed it.”

The kids’ eyes are very wide. They take deep gulps of air, just to have more dinosaur air inside them.

“The air we have is all the air we will ever have,” Kate says, “so we have to take good care of it.”

The kids gulp less. Consider the air already inside.

Kate tells more. “Actually,” she says, “we’re all cousins.”

The kids look at each other, disbelieving, believing: “You?”

“We – *all* of us –“ Kate says, “way, way back, began as cousins. Way back in the beginning.”

The kids whoop, clap each other on the back. For the rest of the day, they savor air and call each other “Cousin.”

- Nancy Shaffer, *Instructions in Joy*, Skinner House Books (2002)

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Some Day

Once upon a time I was
Now I am
Some day I will become

Once there was
And now there is
Soon there will be
And some day there surely shall be

Once upon a time we were
Now we are
And some day (Hallelujah!) we shall surely become

Amen
Amen

- Margaret Williams Braxton, *Been the Storm So Long: A Meditation Manual*, Mark Morrison-Reed and Jacqui James, co-Editors, Skinner House Books

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Songs for the People

Let me make the songs for the people,
Songs for the old and young;
Songs to stir like a battle-cry
Wherever they are sung.

Not for the clashing of sabers,
Nor for carnage nor for strife;
But songs to thrill the hearts of [all]
With more abundant life.

Let me make songs for the weary,
Amid life's fever and fret,
Til hearts shall relax their tension,
And careworn brows forget.

Let me sing for the little children,
Before their footsteps stray,
Sweet anthems of love and duty,
To float o'er life's highway.

I would sing for the poor and aged,
When shadows dim their sight;
Of the bright and restful mansions,
Where there shall be no night.

Our world, so worn and weary,
Needs music, pure and strong,
To hush the jangle and discords
Of sorrow, pain, and wrong.

Music to sooth all its sorrow,
Til war and crime shall cease;
And the hearts of [all] grown tender
Girdle the world with peace.

- Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, *Been the Storm So Long: A Meditation Manual*,
Mark Morrison-Reed and Jacqui James, co-Editors, Skinner House Books





#193 Poem to the Child Who Doesn't Arrive

I don't know where or when
but I know you will arrive.

Child of mine, bathed by sublime tenderness
I have dreamt of you a thousand times,
but, where can you be?
Why don't you rebel and burst into the world
in subtle reality?

I know don't where or when
but my soul says you will come.

And my dream which has the illusions of the dew
that rises to the sky
pursuing peace,
and my dream, that has the clean nakedness of the waters
the freshness of the dawn
and the mystery of the sea,
shall become flesh in your body
and a smile in your mouth
and candor in your eyes
and in your soul piety.

I don't know where or when
but I know you will arrive.

You will arrive at my arms on a solemn ay
when everything at my side will dress in light.
There will be light in the shadows,
in the wind, harmony
in the flowers, murmurs,
and in the front, quietude.

- Julia de Burgos, *Song of the Simple Truth*, Curbstone Press

#194 Poema al hijo que no llega

No se cuándo ni dónde
pero se que vendrás.

Higo nío, bañada de ternura sublime
te he soñado mil veces,
pero, dónde estarás?





¿Por qué no te rebelas y te rompes al mundo
en sutil realidad?

No se cuándo ni dónde
pero me alma me dice que vendrás.
Y mi sueño, que tiene a ilusión de rocío
que se eleva hasta el cielo
persiguiendo la paz,
y que tiene la limpia desnudes de las aguas
la frescura del alba
y el misterio del mar,
se hará carne en tu cuerpo
y sonrisa en tu boca
y candor en tus ojos
y en tu alma piedad.

No se cuándo ni dónde
pero se que vendrás.

Llegarás a mis brazos en un día solemne
en que todo a mi lado se vestirá de luz.
Habrá luz en las sombras,
en el viento armonía,
en las flores murmullos,
y en la fronda quietud.

- Julia de Burgos, *Song of the Simple Truth*, Curbstone Press





#94 Poem of the Unborn Child

As you were born for daylight
you departed unborn.

You lost yourself serenely
before me,
and covered with centuries
the agony of not seeing you.

You didn't want the edge of anguish
nor the why of some hours that pass slowly
in life,
without leaving a sign,
nor a memory,
nor anything.

You didn't want the aurora.
Nor death.
You rejected oblivion,
and blew perpetual in the flute of the air.

You didn't want love in a coffin of waves
nor silence left by the brief tunnel
where man has slept.

Yours, immensely yours,
as you were born for daylight,
you departed unborn,
spikenard between two pupils that never knew
how to separate the echo from the shadow.
Wellspring without painful dewdrops,
fertile foot forever walking the earth.

- Julia de Burgos, *Song of the Simple Truth*, Curbstone Press

#94 Poema del hijo no nacido

Como naciste para la claridad
te fuiste no nacido.

Te perdiste sereno,
antes de mí,
y cubriste de siglos
la agonía de no verte.

No quisiste la orilla de la angustia
ni el por qué de unas horas que pasan lentamente





en la vida,
sin dejar un sollozo,
ni un recuerdo,
ni nada.

No quisiste la aurora.
No quisiste la muerte.
Rechazaste el olvido,
y en la flauta del aire avanzaste perpetuo.

No quisiste el amor en féretro de las olas
ni quisiste el silencio que deja el túnel breve
donde ha dormido el hombre.

Tuyo, inmensamente tuyo,
como naciste para la claridad
te fuiste no nacido,
nardo entre dos pupilas que no supieron nunca
separar el eco de la sombra.
Manantial sin rocíos lastimeros,
pie fértil caminando para siempre en la tierra.

- Julia de Burgos, *Song of the Simple Truth*, Curbstone Press





Song for Bringing a Child into the World*

(Seminole)

*This song is sung by the medicine man or woman.

let
the
child
be
born
circling around You day-sun
you wrinkled skin circling around
circling around you daylight
you flecked with gray circling around
circling around you night sun
you wrinkled age circling around
circling around you poor body

- *Native American Songs and Poems: An Anthology*, Brian Swann, Editor,
Dover Thrift Publications

