

**Le Livre de ma mère**  
*(The Book of My Mother)*

She left before I understood  
why mothers sometimes go  
to love from far away.

She said:  
I'll be back soon.  
I'll call you tonight.  
Be good.  
Be brave.

And she hung up with a voice full of sunlight  
though her hands were tired  
and her pillow was not hers.  
She works  
so I can dream.

She lifts  
so I can rise.  
She sends pictures of markets,  
quiet kitchens,  
skies I've never seen.

I send drawings.  
She hangs them on invisible walls.  
Sometimes we don't speak.  
But she knows when I've grown.  
And I know when she cries.

We meet in the middle of silence,  
like two hearts bowing.  
I do not ask her  
if she is lonely.  
She does not ask me  
if I miss her.  
We know the answers.

When I eat warm rice,  
when I walk home from school,

when I dream about tomorrow —  
she is there.  
And she is not.

She gave me her days  
so I could have mine.  
She gave me her youth  
without asking for thanks.

She lives in the space between  
my voice and her name.  
I say:  
I love you, Maman.  
She says:  
I know.  
And she means:  
Me too.