

Patriarchal Blessing

The boy, sixteen, is taller than his mother, taller than
the creaky man with shining eyes and trembling hands.

Mother comes fasting, something she's good at,
years of honing her physical yearnings
into empty bowls to catch spiritual manna.
And now she is empty of all but her hope
of hearing the voice of God through this old man.
Her son, the first fruit of her labors,
a rough-cut stone but the best she could do—
and would God touch this stone with his finger?

Her son folds into the chair with a quick glance
at her, an echo of the glance he gave her long ago
the day he stood to join his father in the font.
And maybe now the father will join them
in spirit? She, longing, glances to the corners of the room.

The trembling hands are stilled on the boy's head,
as if the words of power give them weight,
words that dart like lightning in the air
And dance upon her eyelids. She opens them
to watch the old man, ageless, shine like sun,
his voice a whisper still but piercing bright.

The mother sits and holds the hand of God—
for once she feels she's truly not alone
in her sweet knowledge of her son's good heart.
She weeps to hear God tell her of the man
he will become, this boy she's nursed with blood
and milk, and tears,
this boy, a shining sword, a man of God.