

*Mothersong*  
*Bonnie Shiffler-Olsen*

Let us amass

our wandering kicks, wondering in awe at these  
costumes her womb hath made. O Mother  
of the sacred hearts, sing your peasant lullabies

before our every sleep. Ring like waves against  
sand-swept ears. Hark, the angels weep  
Her ocean's cradle & She drinks their briny tears

to feed our hearts, the lungs, the liver, the teeth  
of us. Our tongues stretch forth for honey  
dropped like gems from powdered buds beneath

bees' feet. We are atoned for this matter, for  
our Mother & her earthy star. We each appear  
& hover above our swaddling, alive and silver—

O blessed human Mothers—in tender kindness  
& hope for joy. Chime, you quiet bells. Open  
lapping mouths and let us laugh your milk of life.

O thou

good and faithful servant of Earth-flesh, to whom  
is born this morning,  
its birds pealing birth of dawn. Hear

the compensate call of renewal & answer  
calling us by name. O thou blessed mother,  
who lie in wait & will be delivered

when her days are accomplished on the  
hour we last scream in this world. The third  
day cometh. We are dressed in the deaths

of forbears, silken and glowing,  
a placid transgression of light. See the trees  
in our fingers, blades of grass beneath

moons of every toe. Count their numbers  
in quiet amaze: ten for good works, another  
creeping in good paths.

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