



Poems

EMILY BLUDWORTH DE BARRIOS

from *The Pelvic Bone*

[*Passing through the pelvic bone*]

Passing through the pelvic bone as if weeping vast tears of milk

Passing through the pelvic bone into arms, crib, and quilt

Passing through the pelvic bone the girl begins and ends

The girl begins and ends and then she wends her way

The baby she was the baby she was her sweet yellow girlhood

The girl sends herself

Wends her way among the

Don't say "obstacles"

Among the bittersweet pieces of knowledge she discovers hanging in the television set, in the fashion pages that shine like sliced peaches, like pomegranate broken open

The perpetual list of delights thrums among her

To be a girl was not a bad gift

It is not really a bad gift

If you wash it and brush it and comb it and spread lotion upon it and cloak it from the sun it is not such a bad gift





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from *The Pelvic Bone*

[*I had an ambition*]

I had an ambition to make a book called The Mother's Book

It would be a short book containing inexorable truths

Like an instruction manual but also sage advice

I wanted to make something to give to women at the outset of the  
terrible journey

I mean No At the outset of a lonely voyage

But I had no advice And each woman is a lone figure traveling across her  
own continent

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Waking inside a bouquet of arms the mother disappears among them

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Each woman is a lone figure travelling across her own continent

Snow or wet leaves or light glancing off glass

Or linoleum or red clay tile or the specific aroma of a green or amber or purple  
cleaning product

Each woman is a lone figure travelling across her own continent

Here she is washing her dishes

Here she is washing another woman's dishes

Here another woman is washing her dishes

She plates food in the kitchen of the restaurant full of steam

That cavernous sink

The mother folds the towels into a neat rectangle

The woman removes her identity and folds it into a neat rectangle

Opening a book Playing a movie



Taking a walk in a sack of loose baggy garments  
The woman removes her hide and leaves it elsewhere for awhile

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Passing through the pelvic bone as if passing through the world's gate  
At what other point does one pass through a doorway of bone  
The child is carried as if it were a heavy sack of glowing satin  
*Emily*, the world said sweetly, curling its finger across my face, arms like earth  
beneath the length of my head and back  
Passing through the pelvic bone    It was freezing in November  
Heavily against her shoulder I rested the weight of my brand-new face  
I was carried    She was tired    I was warm