

Notes on Motherhood: Three Poems by Lauren Clark

written by Guest Contributor | May 25, 2016



MOTHER'S DAY

In her backyard my mother is hurling rocks at other people's houses,
surrounded by shovels and flowers, flinging dirt, screaming and searching
for her husband. Everyone
is her husband. Windows,
fence, telephone pole, sun,
gray dog, man walking gray
dog, bag of mulch, blades
of grass, seeds of grasses
yet unborn.

He has to be around here somewhere.

He has to tell us why.

Hey. Hey. Things

don't just get better after awhile.

You have to pick up every shovel

and keep turning the ground. You
have to move soil until your hands
curdle. The new spring sun itself
even is a weapon, an enemy, its
precision. They will tell you it's
wrong to keep shoveling, but
shovel forever. We all do. This
is not your husband speaking.
I am here.

SOMEONE ELSE'S WEDDING

held in a barn, at which there are gladness and cheese platters
and the special type of crying that changes your face.
Every flower in a bunch. All the lights in a line. A little thing.
A metaphor. *Anyone can get married*, my mother says.
But it's not anyone. It's someone else, their wedding,
after which the whole wedding party goes to the movies, like
it was just a normal day, except at the end someones go home together,
forever, and they both know it. Each night they have slept in the same place
has been wonderful in how like a childhood sleepover it was.
When they want to sing they just stand together at the piano
and harmonize, and they both enjoy the song exactly the same amount.
When it is Thanksgiving they hold hands on the couch and look out
at their family gathered around them. Any one can get married. But
what can that mean? Someone else's mother in a golden dress,
holding a glass of champagne. Here is a woman who can reasonably expect

new children to be born in her name. To raise and love and keep. Someone else's wedding held in a barn on an auspiciously golden day, before or after whenever whenever, it doesn't matter, and someone else dances with someone else, and they look into one another's eyes.

And they look into one another's eyes and sway, and talk.

The sun setting over the small pond with the gas station behind it.

The air, then the small patches of summer bugs suspended in it.

No one else knows it yet but the DJ has left the song on repeat.

They will dance, foreheads together, sun setting through the windows

and on their bodies, for eight full repeats

until someone else realizes. It doesn't matter who.

INTERLUDE

In the middle of the night someone—rain, stranger—is tapping

on the window. Before that, before sleep, my mother says,

The person you think you love is just a figurehead—a metaphor, for safety, a gravestone. She did not tell me what you stood in for. She knows something

I don't know. The wind moves around my body and the body

of the secret cat in the grass. She knows something I don't know.

Lauren Clark holds an MFA in poetry from the University of Michigan, where she was the recipient of multiple Hopwood awards. Her writing has appeared in [The Offing](#), [The Journal](#), [DIAGRAM](#), and *Ninth Letter*, among other journals. She works at Poets House in New York City.