

*Deborah Jack*

## **MOTHERLINES OR BREAST FEEDING THE DIASPORA**

the presence of love is greater than the  
absence of the body  
i believe  
the mothers i have known  
in fragile memories  
have known love  
have known loss  
have known me and now you  
this bond is a cycle  
a circle not understood  
by passersby

first there is Mom  
mother of my mother's mother  
who outlived one daughter's life  
and another's sanity  
she too comes from  
mothers who have had to  
cut their children loose  
give them up to the care  
of un-natural mothers  
and though there was outer distance  
there is always the inner line

so i named you blue  
the deepest blue  
my deepest blues

and like you  
i knew my mother's mother first

Oma  
i called her  
my grand mother  
tall imposing  
wise eyes  
taht reached deep  
and expected much  
i learned lessons  
i did not know i was being taught  
that manners was not meekness  
that there was strength in a smile  
that there was healing in the tears of women  
and in the laughter of our men

she died when i was four  
at her funeral they passed me  
over her open grave  
according to the old ways  
it meant that i was the favored one

my first memories of my mother  
were born  
on that day  
in my deepest blues  
i wonder  
will you know of the mothers  
in our line that  
gave theri children  
to other mothers?  
women who know about the presence of love  
over the absence of the body

or will you be  
the sullen girl  
i was  
hardly smiling  
not unhappy  
just blue  
deep blue  
like indygo

blue water  
blue movement  
blue tears

blue screams  
dreams of tidal blue  
washing over me  
leaving me only the echo of  
your name  
economy of letters  
ripe  
bursting with meaning  
indigo child  
a deeper shade of blue  
a deeper shade of blues

now there is Mama  
my mother, your mother's mother  
who has had to give me  
up twice  
her only woman/child  
the moody girl with old eyes  
who prefers the memories of love  
who knows about the presence of love  
and the presence of spirit  
the sullen one whose love  
is unconditional,  
unyielding  
a relentless thing  
whose cycle is a circle not understood  
by passersby

and when we two remain  
within the cycle that is  
our circle that is  
our line of mothers  
i will let you go again  
as it has always been  
and you must let me go  
as it must be  
and i will teach you that  
the presence of the love is stronger than  
the absence of my body  
it is our bond  
that is a cycle  
a circle not understood  
by passersby