

A Mother's Prayer Before Dawn

(from *Passage of a Doe*)

Hava Pinchas-Cohen

At the hour when I am about to cook porridge  
May all my strange thoughts recede  
And when I touch my baby's back to check his temperature  
Let all my troubles leave me  
and not confuse my thoughts.  
Give me the strength to wash my face  
So that each one of my children  
Will see his face in mine  
Like a mirror cleaned for a holiday.

And may the darkness that is sunk within  
My face---be covered with light.  
So that my patience not break nor my throat grow parched  
From a troubled thickening scream  
May I not become powerless  
Against the unknown  
And may I never cease for even a moment  
To feel the touch of my children's flesh against my own.

Give me your love so that I will have enough of it in me to stand at my doorway  
Sharing it simply as slicing bread and spreading butter each morning anew  
The aroma of boiling milk overflowing and the lingering smell of coffee  
Is an offering of thanks and an eternal offering  
That I do not know how to give.

Translated by Sharon Green