

Mary Meriam

The Mother's Buttons

The mother sews with twitching round her eyes.
The daughter's wrist is bleeding in red streams.
The mother cries, and so the daughter cries.
The mother mutes the daughter's twisting screams
between her stricken breasts. The doctor stitches.
The daughter's smothered but all stitched together.
The mother knits. The mother's eyelid twitches,
and then the mother tugs the daughter's tether
tighter and tighter. And now the two at dusk
cannot forget the farmer's fragrant fields,
nor corn for dinner, shed of every husk
and boiled down. The silky twilight yields,
and goblins split the daughter's tousled head.
The daughter slides into the mother's bed.

