

When they were small

by *Fotoula Reynolds*

I know better my hands
than my face
they wake my mornings
they bathe and dry my skin
they throw themselves into
the waves of my hair
they thread a needle
and sew and mend
they fold the clothes
and the days
they know when to prune
the trees in the garden
and when to pull the weeds
they know when I am tired
and hold my head so I may see
the smiles of birds

They don't belong to me
I belong to them

My hands had the task of
collecting my children's childhoods
proof that they were once children
now grown and independent
I go to the storage box
and visit them again in the years
when they were small
they lead me to undertake
the privilege of preserving those
young years before they were tall
Give me a heart as high as

the treetops so that in the distance
I can always follow the flight of my
children, who are not afraid of the wind
sometimes, I look at the world as if inside
a picture frame, a life without knowing
the weight and gravity of the land

Nothing is as it was
as when they were home

I will open the doors and let the seasons
take over the house
I will learn to look at the sea again
I will take pause when the eagle soars
and shows me the beauty of a fly by visit
I will honour my mother, who has seen
many mothers before me

When all the cafes have turned off their music
and when the streets are filled with loneliness
let me die standing, like the trees