

LEARNING TO DRINK TEA
for David Chadwick

My father is the sky.
My mother is the earth.
My father beats me down with hailstones,
My mother spews me up with lava.
Ice and fire,
down and up,
they raise me.
Restless child, they say,
Sit still!

My mother is the sky.
My father is the earth.
My mother guides with vast star formations.
My father lulls with wind in tall grasses.
Out and in,
to and fro,
they teach me.
Idle child, they say,
Stop dreaming!

My mother is the moon.
My father is the sun.
My mother pulls light from the darkness.
My father pushes light into the darkness.
Pull and push,
light and dark,
they stretch me.
Thinking child, they say,
It doesn't matter.

My father is my body.
My mother is my heart.
My father ages and hobbles up the mountain.
My mother sorrows and weeps into the river.
Age and sorrow,
mountain and river,
they embrace me.
Dear child, they say,
You are alone.

My mother is before time.
My father is beyond.
My mother is invisible.
My father is invisible.
Before and beyond,
invisible,
They mock me.
Lonely child, they say,
Stop looking in mirrors.

My father is buried in my spirit.
My mother is buried in my mind.
My father's ashes are my seeds.
My mother's bones are my hoe.
Buried,
ashes and bone,
spring comes.
Good morning, Sister, they say,
Time to drink tea.

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