

Woman-Child

For the last twenty-four months,
more woman than child,

Her ninth summer
stretches the shadow of dolls

Beyond plank-bottom swing,
she sets two-year-old brother on her hip.

Like a steel-trap, she grasps
little sister's thumb-suck hand.

Six days a week, seven when needed,
she be her mama's stand-in-mama.

Woman-child hauls water buckets.
Woman-child bends over washtub.

Woman-child wrings mop strings.
Woman-child stirs cook-stove pots.

Woman-child gazes past clothes on wire line,
longs to be more child than woman