

I Watch the Pregnant Woman at the Next Table

She declines the wine

held in the crook of the server's arm
the way I carried my child so long ago
his crying endless among endless stupor nights.

She declines the wine and I remember

my lips crusted black, mascara-stained cheeks
and his long swim in my tainted, slippery sea
this child of grape and thorn who danced the wineskin's
song.

I beckon the server

decline more wine and pay the tab
crook of my arm heavy with emptiness.

-Jackie Langetieg