

LAUREL SNYDER

*Forcing the thing to be: For Mose*

I had a son, made him myself.  
And it was life, not language.  
But here I am now, a *mother*,

forcing the words to be a poem.

He tore through me, ripped we wide.  
Widened me bigger. Widened me.  
You get it? From *if* to *than*.

Front to back. *Now* do you

get it? So how could I not write  
about him, widening me so—  
when there was no killing the pain.

The sun of it, blazing in me.

A great round pain, alight  
in the darkest recess. A great  
and terrible fire in the narrow pass

of my own. Fire tunneling in flesh.

There were no words  
to dull the anything. The all.  
The violent. The streaming.

Things burst and flooded.

Walls of water and the walls of me,  
my very within— and then in the end,  
towards the end, a crying from *inside*

that became the crying *from* inside.

I was falling from the dark room,  
from the very world while he was still  
inside and screaming.

Screaming from inside.

A sharp voice between my tired legs,  
stuck—a rage, baby, real live person.  
I made him with my body. Made him

with the parts I can't see,

can only *believe* in. Bloody,  
stretched and still I did it, let him come.  
What else was there to do? Cry.

I heard him cry, in that instant, loud

between my legs, before he was mine  
but after he was me, before I saw him  
and we were severed. Horribly,

wonderfully. From you, all there is.