

Delilah

—for Jen and Gabriela

You turned two women into mothers, transformed them entirely,  
reshaped them with the hard tools of love and grief  
into women stronger than they had any right to be.  
You changed the world! Brief spark burning,  
you flared and illuminated for many  
what it means to be human and vulnerable,  
what it means to be open to birth and death.

Their arms will ache with your absence,  
they will be heartsick without you.  
They spent every moment they were given loving you.  
They will remember your weight, your perfect shape  
in their arms, how they learned to love each other  
through the worst nights, how they held on to one another,  
did not let go,

Even when you let go.

The night your spirit left your body,  
they carried you outside  
into the garden, into the dark and beautiful  
garden. Their arms trembled  
knowing you were gone. The night trembled  
with birdsong.

But look: all over the world, we still see you!  
Just today in my garden, a golden butterfly rose  
to brush the lilacs. At dusk in California, a hummingbird,  
ruby throat pulsing, opened a sunflower  
and drank like a small prayer of courage, courage!

You opened us to love  
as the sun opens roses to its great shining.