

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg State University Digital Commons

Poems

Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg Collection, ca.
1975-2022

March 2023

Braided Poem

Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/cm_g_poems

Recommended Citation

Mirriam-Goldberg, Caryn, "Braided Poem" (2023). *Poems*. 11.
https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/cm_g_poems/11

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg Collection, ca. 1975-2022 at Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Poems by an authorized administrator of Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact lfthompson@pittstate.edu.

Caryn Mirriam
3530 Virginia Ave.
Kansas City, Mo. 64109
816/931-4791
816/756-0041 (work)

Braided Poem

Grandmother
Remember how to braid my hair
Over and under
Twisting the strands
Pulling them tighter
Over and under
The hands moving down
The thick line of hair
Like time moves down your face
Tightening the cells
Over and under.

Outside the rain slapped the window, I watched.
"Be still," you said, "just another storm,
Nothing to be afraid of."
Outside the rain flattened the wind against the earth
And the trees bent in circles
Arching before breaking straight.

Your hands weaving apart,
Reconnecting the loose ends
To a single line of hair.
Nothing to be afraid of,
Just loose strands of air, of water, of earth
Unbraiding each other.

Grandmother
The strands have unravelled.
The curl into themselves.
~~Where have your hands gone?~~
To the years, to the miles.
The order is lost, the circle is undone.
The strands of light, of darkness, of shadows
Are thrown against our windows
Light wild into itself, escaping to air.
Darkness blown black and unforgetting into the earth.
Shadows of storm breaking like waves
Over and under
Twisting the strands apart, lost.

(continued)

Grandmother
Remember how it is done:
The hands touch,
Meet the eyes,
The voices,
The braided connection.
The hands tremble.
"Be still," they grow harder.
They learn to weave with soft strokes.

Speech and song and silence
Over and under
The hands over the earth
Under the words
Over each other
Slowly learning
To break apart the knotted soil
To move through fragmented storms
To watch the flight of dying birds.

I am speaking of the peacelessness,
The **pi**èces we braid and rebraid
The lives we move down
Our bodies only a strand
Interweaving
Over and under.

Sept. '82