

**MOTHER**  
**by Chantal Bilodeau**

*An ageless woman*

WOMAN

Look at me  
Why won't you look at me?

You were such a surprise  
No one was waiting for you  
No one was expecting you  
The idea of you  
hadn't even crossed my mind  
You just showed up one day out of nowhere  
A fully formed creature  
A little beast with its own will  
ready to take the world by storm

I should have seen it coming of course  
I should have realized when you crawled out of the ocean  
that something was happening  
that something had been set in motion  
But the truth is  
it was all random  
A little mutation here  
a little mutation there  
and boom  
there you were  
with your big head and your big brain  
so proud of yourself for standing on your own two feet

And that's the beauty of it  
That's the real miracle  
Somehow  
in the space of a geological flicker  
chaos organized itself into you

Why won't you look at me?

Then one day it happened  
One day you spread your wings  
and set out to make the world your own  
And what a day that was!  
Drunk with your own power

you heard and saw and tasted  
You experienced and learned  
Invented and discovered  
Organized and catalogued  
It was so exhilarating!  
I watched you grow  
innocent and carefree  
incapable of even imagining that  
Well  
maybe it wouldn't have made a difference

We used to gaze into each other's eyes  
remember?  
From dusk to dawn and dawn to dusk  
I held you close and we lost ourselves into each other's mystery  
That was before you started calling me Mother  
Before there was anything to call Mother  
I was you and you were me  
There was no distance to travel  
no otherness to name  
It was our version of Eden  
Our own little paradise  
You know  
Maybe the proverbial apple wasn't plucked from a tree  
Maybe it was extracted from the ground

Look at me  
I wish you would look at me  
simply  
without guilt or shame  
I may be sick  
I may be oozing thick black blood  
but I'm not angry  
I know you  
For billions of years  
I have carried you in my womb  
You are made of me  
You  
my little piece of eternity  
my little miracle

I know you're not ill-intentioned  
I know you're not oblivious  
I know you're not mean  
You care  
You want the best

You love  
Yes you do  
Maybe imperfectly  
But you love

The past is behind us  
Let it go  
And the future  
The future is forever hidden in the double helix of a cell  
But now  
Now is here  
Now is us  
Now is our time for forgiving what has been done  
For rediscovering what has been lost  
For healing what has been hurt  
Now is our chance to bridge that distance again  
and reclaim the Eden that was  
before there was Mother

Look at me  
Please  
If I see myself in your eyes  
I'll know that everything will be okay