

## **Lines on Reading James Joyce's story "The Mother"**

Patricia Lundberg<sup>1</sup>

Joyce's lines struck me.

"She respected her husband in the same way as she respected the General Post Office, as something large, secure and fixed; and though she knew the small number of his talents she appreciated his abstract value as a male."

Men have abstract value  
as fathers, husbands, bosses.  
Men range tall, large, secure  
and fixed.  
Their gazes fix  
on their mothers, daughters, sisters.

Some men loom over their women  
their small talents looming large  
while their women work the loom  
musing.

Women, thank Gaia, muse.

Muses are mothers  
with large concrete talents.  
They inspire men  
who can not muse.

Inspire my muse, Mother Gaia.  
Mother me, bemusingly.  
Concretize that maleabstraction  
into small fluid pools of wisdom.

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