

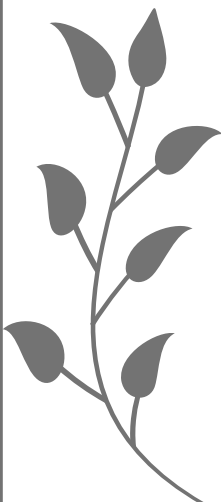
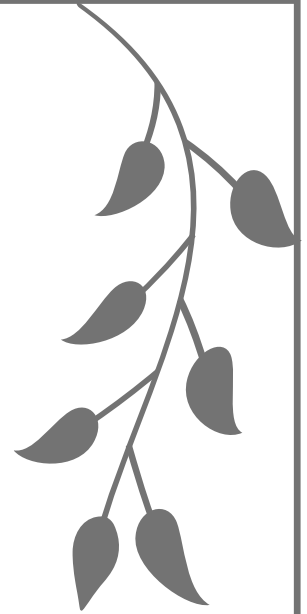
A Poem for Your Pocket

MY MOM'S SECRET

My mom bears the chronicle of Nepali women
in her rough hands hardened by time and
in the wrinkles of her jittery countenance
She is a history never to be written
because nothing big happened in her life
When she had to get a toy to play with
she got a bridal veil and the in-law's house
where rules were made only for her
There, she learned to listen and endure:
Commands, slaps, humiliation, torture
A good woman was a silent woman
A good woman begets lots of kids
My mom was successful

My mom always nods her head in agreement
because she has never disagreed in her life
She agreed to be bride when she was seven
She agreed all those nightmares of
her unwanted pregnancies
She agreed to be mother in her late teens
She agreed to be a legitimate slave to a house
where a cat also waited her service
Out of many things my illiterate mom learned
was the meaning of the word battering
which meant "love" in her new house

Blinded by that love long ago
Now in her seventies,
she told me a secret that
she wanted to beget only sons



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