

CATHERINE LAFLEUR

MOTHER OF BEASTS

Passing through the yard
Choked with thirsty grass,
You might see the newest
Adults huddled in tight circles.

Never alone.

The beast mother is
All they know.

Wounded spirits at 18 freshly
Decanted from the children's prison
A creche not easily survived.
No citizen wants to admit
The existence of children chained,
Preferring to cross out brute words
Replacing them with juvenile detention.
Airbrushed to prettiness for the mothers
Who shelter with arms loving and kind
Their own sons and daughters

Who are not,

Will never be,

Juveniles.
Nothing to see here.

Nothing is new under the sun.
Many mothers threw their own
Into the hands of Molech,
To appease both god and the State
Which is the more powerful of the two
And never satiated.

The thirsty beast mother drains all lives to the dregs.

We are suspended here in this former
Children's prison renamed repurposed a
Bestiary for women hopscotched so
Simple to cross chalked outlines becoming
Bodies full breasted and wide hiped.
No more children can be found Except by their haunted eyes.

We mothers do see ghosts of
Former children. Faces never seen on
Milk cartons only names carved
Imprisoned in the concrete of sidewalks
Like a memorial to those missing and lost

Alejandro

Heart

Orlando

1997.

The last year children were shackled here.

Sometimes I press my palm
Over the shadow imprint of a child hand
Set by hard time and say
You are not alone,

I am your mother.