

F A R Z A N A M A R I E

Sonless

They have lived on this hill since before the wars.
They hang on like leaves closing their eyes against the fall.
One daughter is a mouth fed by another man now.
Another daughter has purchased a pair of gold stiletto heels, cradles them
in her book bag down the rutted path, tucks her feet
into them before clicking onto campus.
Two more daughters fetch water from the well below before school.
Then there was the daughter who lived only a few hours—
she had the most peaceful life of all.
Father's thigh never healed from the shrapnel it ate when Kabul's hills
were setting each other ablaze. He maneuvers over the steep dirt, crutches
swinging in rhythm, prays against muddy days though the city needs rain.
Mother's face is a clock, moving task to task, pausing on occasion
to wonder who will knead bread, turn coals, mind the home
when her hands slow—
with no son, no son's bride.

FARZANA MARIE is a poet and PhD candidate (Persian Lit/Creative Writing) at the University of Arizona, after serving in the U.S. Air Force for six years. She is author of a nonfiction book, a poetry chapbook, and a book of poetry in translation from Persian Dari, *Load Poems Like Guns: Women's Poetry from Herat, Afghanistan* (2015). She had a stroke on the 29th of August, 2015 in Kabul, Afghanistan and is gradually rebuilding her use of words.