

Weiss, N. "The Mother-child Dyad Revisited: Perceptions of Mothers and Children in Twentieth Century Child-rearing Manuals," *Journal of Social Issues* 34.2 (1978): 29-45.

The Cook's Wife

The cook's wife
cleared tables,
straightened ash
trays, swashed
out glasses
with a wet rag
then dried
the dishes
with a cotton towel
she had ironed
the night before.

The cook's wife
met the fishermen
at the dock, bargained
for the best fish,
filled her apron
with fish smell
and the blood of fish
as she cleaned
and scaled them,
cut them into stew.

The cook's wife
handed plates
from the cook
to the waiters,
her arms strong
and wide, extensions
of the cook's
arms, of the cook
who wanted to take the food
to the tables himself.

The cook's wife
swept the floor
at night, cleaned
the tabletops.
The cook's wife
cleaned up
after everyone
was asleep.

The cook's wife
joined the cook
in bed. The cook's wife
was the cook's,
his heart beating
into the night
this steady
strong beating
to which she woke.

Donna J. Gelagotis Lee