

**CRUEDA – August 2016**  
**Claudia Castro Luna**

**Quotidian**

I feed my baby daughter her noon meal  
-- mashed peas and brown rice --  
she swallows easily  
mouth fast open after each spoonful  
plump face, fervent hands  
the last time I saw my grandmother  
I fed her like I now feed my daughter  
she sat in a room full of shadows,  
a crucifix above her bed  
she was ghastly looking  
emaciated limbs  
blank eyes staring into space  
she opened her mouth anticipating  
water I held in a cup  
but the liquid came back,  
spoonful by spoonful  
rolling down her chin  
and all the while  
death waited  
the way ocean  
waits for river  
the great mouth  
of river's end

## **Mattole Morning**

In late summer  
blackberries brambles ripen  
canes bubble up  
like water from a fountain  
hug fences, scamper up trees,  
line country roads

This sunny morning  
we go on a harvest expedition  
jars in hands and resolve folded  
into each step  
we stroll down a lane  
where thorny limbs wail  
to and fro in foggy wind

The low branches are for Lucas  
the youngest of my three children  
Sofia beckons me to pick for her  
and Amalia, the oldest, licks  
blood and juice red from finger pricked

We pick and pick  
the sun higher and higher  
chasing fog away, flattening shapes  
hills golden and giant like elephants  
offering velvety backs to wind's caress

Berries fill jars, turn into jam  
to taste the rain  
the sun, the wind,  
the earth of the valley  
now stretched before us  
back home on cold winter days