

*Mother, I'm trying
to write
a poem to you—*

which is how most
poems to mothers must
begin—or, *What I've wanted
to say, Mother...*but we
as children of mothers,
even when mothers ourselves,

cannot bear our poems
to them. Poems to
mothers make us feel

little again. How to describe
that world that mothers spin
and consume and trap

and love us in, that spreads
for years and men and miles?
Those particular hands that could

smooth anything: butter on bread,
cool sheets or weather. It's
the wonder of them, good or bad,

those mother-hands that pet
and shape and slap,
that sew you together
the pieces of a better house
or life in which you'll try
to live. Mother,



I've done no better
than the others, but for now,
here is your clever failure.

- Erin Belieu

"Another Poem for Mothers"



First Shift moms work . . . and they also build homes for their children. Homes built with hands that nurture and discipline. Hands that hold together, smooth over, and lift up.

When a mama loses her job because of discrimination or the denial of a basic accommodation during pregnancy, those hands are wrung.

Recently, First Shift assisted a new mom who is the primary breadwinner for her family. She had worked for the same company as an administrative assistant for 11 years, but was unjustly fired one week after returning from her job-protected maternity leave. Although the company refused to reinstate her, First Shift negotiated a monetary settlement that allowed her to catch up on her bills and cover her young family's basic needs for several months as she conducts a job search.

With First Shift's support, mamas are able to assert their workplace rights so that they - and their hands - can be free to go back to the creative work that is mothering.

Happy Mother's Day.

The mission of First Shift Justice Project is to empower low-income pregnant women and parents to safeguard the economic security and health of their families by asserting their workplace rights.

In 2017, First Shift provided legal services and education to over 800 pregnant women and new parents regarding pregnancy and family responsibilities discrimination; accommodations for pregnancy and breastfeeding; and family medical leave. We also trained over 400 medical providers about how to support their patients in requesting workplace accommodations.

Your tax-deductible gift will empower low-income working mothers throughout the Washington Metropolitan Area. Thank you for your support!

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