

**Graced***(for my mother)*

“Graced, graced the eyes grow black with dancing”

— *Louis Zukofsky*

My hand against  
my mother's back, pushing  
while she listens to flutes.  
The sounds are  
of other countries  
with warm winds  
where she can never go.  
I imagine I push  
pain through her  
heart up to notes, where  
she can go, her spirit  
too in the singing  
lips of strangers. The man  
on the stage says peace  
with a long flute,  
then one with the shape  
of a bird. It whistles  
like playing, and I feel  
her back ease lightly away  
from my hand—she  
is taller and when  
she looks at me  
after the bird has nested,  
the sun in her eyes  
has gone black with dancing

*Kathleen Nicastro*