



**Maria Bennett**

**song of the common woman**

we are not roses  
our legs grow heavy  
with veins taking root  
more deeply each day

we celebrate the ritual of blood  
the waxing and waning  
abandon and recovery  
so much like  
what the moon guards  
and then offers back

we know the gift of the aloe  
and the care of lilies in winter  
spitting out heartbreak  
like a bitter lemon  
we become the firewalkers of a  
    broken world

where there is so little  
really  
to properly adorn us  
let us not fear our own eyes  
and learn how to approach  
this mirror  
with the faith of women  
looking for signs  
proving

the cartographers of our grief  
are mistaken

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Maria Bennett is a poet and a translator of such poets as Ernesto Cardenal, Cintio Vitier, Nancy Morejon, and, most recently, Carlos Edmundo de Ory. She teaches creative writing at the City University of New York.