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Compound Life

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Compound Life

HELEN PETTER WESTRA

The day's long handled broom is still
With shutters closed, she rests
under mosquito net, a bird caught,
beauty draped, a veiled woman.

Nursing her daughter in the night
she feels the infant breath
like moth wings on her skin
and breathes air quiet,
free of the dust she mounds each day
in noisy streets,
sweeping up footprints, waste paper,
twigs, dead cicadas.

Against the shimmering moon tonight,
plum blossoms float soundlessly.
Tomorrow they will limp before the broom.