

## Testimony

I feel the swelling  
Of fear that fills  
Me up, up, up  
To my knees  
The water swells.

But ah --  
A kick, my belly  
Swollen with fear,  
A fear that kicks  
Moves with the water,  
Coming up, up, up  
Around my neck  
Are thin arms that cling  
With fear.

The moon is rising,  
And the water pulls  
Back, back, back  
and leaves  
Salt clinging to  
My feet.  
Swollen and sore.

I fear for them.

Two children.  
No three.  
Or four?  
One still expected,  
The fear in my swollen belly.

I, a mother, -- expectant  
yet unable.  
The leaves wilted,  
The crops dying,  
The land is dead.  
A mother unable to  
Provide  
A mother unable to  
Mother.

We ran,  
To find shelter,  
To find safety,  
To find refuge.

But refused.

Sent back, back, back  
To watch the water pull  
Back  
And fear swells  
With the water  
Coming  
Rising

I am thirsty,  
She says,  
Her voice small  
And afraid  
Of the blood  
That became boils  
And a wound.  
Like us  
Wounded by the  
Water  
The salt,  
The king of tides  
We cannot drink.

It is coming, coming, coming.  
Faster every time.  
Higher every time.  
Up to my knees,  
Up to my chest,  
Up to my neck.

And I see  
Children  
Sinking,  
My children  
Disappearing  
Their hands slipping  
Out of my wounded  
Fingers

And I struggle  
Kicking  
As the fear inside me  
Kicks

Ahead  
There is help  
A vessel  
Of shelter  
Of safety  
Of refuge

But no.

I am drowning  
And the ship is sinking.

And you

With your shelter  
With your safety  
With your refuge

Refused

And here

We will drown.