Inspired by a *New York Times* article:

“Prisons Shackle Pregnant Inmates In Labor”

# Hard Labor

I wonder what you were thinking mama

when I was trying to be born and my little body

like an ice pick against your insides tried tunneling

to escape. Did you curse me mama for pain suffered

with locked legs or yourself for that moment you opened them

to a man? Did you scream aloud to heaven or did they muzzle

your mouth as well? Did tears merge with beads of sweat that

trickled to your mouth and did they taste like nectar mama

or like spoiled milk? And mama did you

bite your lips or lick them?

I did my best to free us, kept burrowing

my way to lightness, wouldn’t stop

until they unshackled your legs.

Mama, tell me you were proud

of how I aided and abetted

to deliver us from evil…

Mama don’t you know I would do anything for you.