

The Children

Cori Howard

carry the Burmese sweetness
like chai served at street stands
in tiny glasses
their skin the colour of the Mekong
their tiny hands grasping mine
never letting go

at the monastery my son
asks questions the monk can't answer
both of us unsure how to hold the mystery
my daughter deflates when she sees
the broken puppies limping over
begging for love

my son gets stomachaches when
he hears us fight
the pain lasts for weeks
my daughter tries to make us laugh
dancing around making farting sounds
desperate for laughter

my heart whisperers
for years
I stayed so I wouldn't break them
but they kept smiling
they were always
unbreakable