

The following three poems are golden shovels. The original poem is referenced at the top. Words from a line from the original poem have been used as the last words in each of the lines in the new poem. If the reader reads down the right-hand side of the new poem, she would read the line from the original poem.

## **The Circle**

*After "amazons" by Lucille Clifton*

When night falls, when  
The cast comes. And they always do. The  
Jagged edged feathers and sharp beaks root out the rookery.  
Stealth ambush seeks to scatter us to the edges of  
Antiquity. These predators do not know that women,  
Endowed with the armor of warriors  
Under all of our skin, bonded with the blood of all  
Daughters that came before, each  
Offer their alms of endurance cupping  
The womb, the wounded, even the one  
Who does not feel worthy, have not one hand  
But a nest of tendons and muscles around  
Us. To show the one that feels alone her  
Strength will never succumb, our life force always remaining  
Beats in her breast.

## The Dream

*After "An Atlas of the Difficult World XIII (Dedications)" by Adrienne Rich*

You stir thick gravy, warming.  
Farmhands washing the fields off their fingers. Glasses of fresh milk  
Already set on the table. Everyday a  
Dinner party for twenty. You hold a crying  
Toddler in your arms, another at your skirt, and another child  
In a crib wide awake. Neediness and chicken pox linger on  
All of you. You do not immediately recognize when your  
Days are not your own. You scrub the grout of the tile floor until your shoulder  
Grows numb in hopes that your mother will not see a  
Failure to keep your house in order. Where is the book,  
You wonder, to explain how you arrived in  
This surreal place that is your  
Home, your loved ones, your hand.

## The Longing

*After "When You Have Forgotten Sunday: the love story" by Gwendolyn Brooks*

Soft breath of my name at dawn and  
A tug at my arm, showing me how  
To keep the rising sun from turning time, we  
Lost limbo lazy lush, lay finally  
Embracing an otherwise elusive state of undressed-  
Ness. Over rumpled pillows and  
Under towering sheets like whipped  
Butter. Barricaded bodies force day out  
Lost limbo lazy lush, longingly the  
Shards of half light  
Lurk, moving the hours and  
Long fingers flowed  
Between open mouths, over heated skin, into  
clenched hands. We push the world away in bed.