

Mother's Days (from "Inside Out and Back Again")

By Thanhha Lai

On weekdays, Mother's a secretary
In a Navy office.

Trusted to count out salaries In cash
At the end of each month.

At night, she stays up late
Designing and cutting baby clothes
To give to seamstresses.

A few years ago,
She made enough money
To consider buying a car.

On weekends, she takes me to the market stalls,
Dropping off the clothes and trying to collect
On last week's goods.

Hardly anyone buys anymore, she says,
People can barely afford food.
Still, she continues to try.