

THE MOTHERS

Hail, Mary, Mother of God—
did you have bunions like my mother's?
angry, bulbous: a source for puns
as bitter as the herbs and diced onions of bondage.

Were your hands laced with the stigmata of poverty?
raw, knobbed: rough as the gritty sands of exodus.

Your joints: were those equally swollen, arthritic?
could you ignore their ache even as you followed
your son to Calvary?

My mother followed hers in a black limousine
hired by the hour.

And your heart: did it come apart slowly?
or all at once—like my mother's.

Leon Rosenbloom