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## The Mother, Broken

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# RALPH HAMILTON

## THE MOTHER, BROKEN

A SEMI-CENTO FROM CHARLES OLSON & JOHN BERRYMAN

1.

I have had to learn the simplest things last  
First you break  
Main Street is deserted  
The heart is a clock  
Grief is fatiguing

2.

I am a vain man  
I've never been good at math  
    or gluing bits back together  
I don't know one damn butterfly from another  
It shouldn't be hard to believe damage is final  
I have strained everything except my ears

3.

When my mother broke I tried (but not too hard)  
I am two eyes   a pelican of lies  
The heart is a cloak  
Love me love me love me  
The only way I'll ever be whole, milky  
    and smooth like seaglass  
Cling to me and I promise you'll drown

4.

Is being ground into more and more parts, fine  
    and sharp as sifted sand, democratic  
as dust, really the end  
How small is this news  
I'm only a glass, says the glass: Sometimes  
    I hold the sea, sometimes the sun,  
but never more than this dark wine  
Break me