

# For a Daughter Who Leaves

by Janice Mirikitani

*"More than gems in my comb box shaped by the God of the Sea, I prize you, my daughter. . ."*

—Lady Otomo, 8th century, Japan

A woman weaves  
her daughter's wedding  
slippers that will carry  
her steps into a new life.  
The mother weeps alone  
into her jeweled sewing box  
slips red thread  
around its spool,  
the same she used to stitch  
her daughter's first silk jacket  
embroidered with turtles  
that would bring luck, long life.  
She remembers all the steps  
taken by her daughter's  
unbound quick feet:  
dancing on the stones  
of the yard among yellow  
butterflies and white breasted sparrows.  
And she grew, legs strong  
body long, mind  
independent.  
Now she captures all eyes  
with her hair combed smooth  
and her hips gently  
swaying like bamboo.  
The woman  
spins her thread  
from the spool of her heart,  
knotted to her daughter's  
departing  
wedding slippers.



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