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A. KAISER

Every Thursday at 3pm

Women maintain. Daily,
clean the house, dust empty bedrooms, iron
embroidered kerchiefs.

Women bear children, this life.
Carry it with them. Feed it with their breasts.
Change diapers, wipe noses, help with homework,
cushion broken hearts,
maintain presence.

Bring up. Keep up.

Women maintain. Weekly,
behold the disappeared. The birthed and the
stolen
etched into these ironed kerchiefs.

For 10, 20, 30 days, years, more, women
silently circle their stories of elevators invading
still nights.

Of false charges, absent addresses, suspended
hopes.

Women bear children, their presence, their
disappearances.

The daily work of witness women
maintain, bear, behold.

A. Kaiser is a poet, translator of French and Spanish and a United Nations consultant most recently—and happily!—working at the 53rd United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.