

**This poem grieves its shortcomings of being an authentic Ghazal**

After Hayward Gallery Touring's major group exhibition;

*Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood*

*Every failed pregnancy test is a death / then / the act of creation  
is deceptive / like / waiting for angels to confirm us virgins / of creation*

*is / the body of work is the body **in** work / We must / unfold infertile instructions  
use what we have at hand / like prayers / embody failures of creation /*

*and inject The / institution of (m)otherhood is a business / our lack of production /  
incompetent / involuntary / internalised / incapable / immaterial of creation /*

*We / sand these words back to dirt / make lunar palettes / with / lost potential /  
from / baby dust / Our death is a life We must learn / the rituals / of creation /*

*As sedimentary as we are / in likeness to the moon our / temporal bodies /  
are / non-compliant / sand timers with a limit to our cycle / The phases of creation /*

*our shapes once / captured / what's to come and what to find / what's going on  
inside me / left the soil / soft edged mountains / earthed up our bodies of creation*

*still / transmute sound through amniotic / bodies of water / bodies of relation /  
bodies of blood / berries unpicked / look like / polycystic remnants of creation /*

*in shards of church windows / homes not broken by tiny bodies but pathologised  
broken / is / ecological breakdown / The / misappropriation / of creation*

*as limitless / is nothing wrong with the patriarchy merchandising the despair  
of desperate people / the fact that / our bodies become resourceful / of creation /*

*is more proof / we are interconnected nature / The ultimate thread is the umbilical cord  
wanting to be attached to the maternal line / a pilgrimage to instinct / Acts of creation /*

*brings an audience to / discarded women / Who is my audience if not (m)other / the whole  
left is so big I can see the edge / the urge / the way to cope is through creation.*

Hayley Frances

A note from the author. All italics book ended with / are actual statements, words, phrases made by the women who read, presented, performed, shared at the Picturing the Unseen: Grief & Labour in and out of Motherhood Symposium. I wrote this poem threading my notetaking of the event, puzzling together the voices of (m)other artists.