

Oh Mama No

Vienna Teng

All day,
One long tethered motion:
Sweep, stir, sow.
This is her kingdom,
An inheritance that you can't deny.
Oh mama no, oh mama no.
Oh mama no I will.

Come down, child,
From your gates and connections.
Sleep, slur, slow.
This is where you come from,
The anchor that you can't leave behind.
Oh mama no, oh mama no.
Oh mama no I will.

So mama learns your tribal lingo,
Tolerates the time between calls,
Catalogues the years and makes a note of all
Your endless goings-on.
When her sentences start to repeat,
And her voice in the night is reaching -
Oh mama please don't leave me.

And then one day,
In the boxes upon boxes:
Grieve, give, go.
Maybe you can learn how -
If you never feel the dark, never see the light.
Oh mama no, oh mama no.
Oh mama no I will.
Oh mama no, oh mama no.
Oh mama no I will.
Oh mama know, oh mama know -
Mama you know I will.