

Newborns

Newborns are almost beings
 almost larvae, almost able
 to see, meeting the world
 with their mouths, open.
 Newborns are wild grass
 pliable, delicious, plucked
 out of the womb in a sting of separation
 and rubbed between our hands.
 Newborns are rain
 passing over our bodies
 dousing us, baptizing us
 always moving, always away
 before we can see the shape
 of them. Wings sprout, seeds
 disperse, water lifts back into
 the cloud layer, as we reach
 as we try to find a name for these
 shape-shifters. Now our hands
 hold air, a wing-beat
 a breeze. A sweet, damp smell.

After the Vasectomy

I think of the artist
 who puts down her brushes
 or God on the seventh day when the last
 bird is released into the singing air.
 Then our work is to simply
 watch the falling apart.
 How can this be the best
 way of things?
 I want it to be my turn
 for a little longer.
 To be the one whose belly
 strangers want to touch
 with reverence.

Mary and Gabriel

She must have received the news
 of her pregnancy with fear
 and sadness. What mother wants
 her child to be lofted to such greatness
 he becomes a sacrifice? Instead
 she must have longed for him
 to simply be excellent
 with his hands. To be known around town
 as someone to go to with your broken
 furniture. Not someone to go to
 with your broken body,
 with your broken life.
 Would it have been wrong for her
 to wish him back down
 to an ordinary life in which perhaps
 he could have been happy?

Sleeping, Nursing

I touch the pearl
 of your face. Your eyelids shiver
 while your mouth works
 my nipple, in long strokes.
 The muscles in your jaw are stronger
 than any muscle in my body.
 In this early morning light
 I dive into the ocean of you
 eyes closed, breath held
 my fingers traveling along
 searching for the opening
 in this closed shell of hope:
 you will always be here.
 I will always be able to open you.

Teething

Her father keeps checking
 for teeth, running his finger along
 her gums, a gold miner
 hand in the stream, looking
 for treasure. When I hook
 my fingers in her hard
 pink mouth I'm looking for it
 to stay empty, to assure myself
 no buds of sharp rock are rising
 to change this soft mouth, this
 fish that rises every morning
 to the lure of my breasts
 and latches me firmly to this
 wild land called love.

Lemon

Your body: plump, juicy,
 sweetandsour, sits on the counter
 between my hands
 and I can see all the sharp teeth
 of the world poised to take a bite.
 I know someday you'll want this.
 We are here, after all,
 to be tasted, to seed the world
 to unpeel our thick skins for someone we love
 or think we do. I don't want to stop this, really,
 except that I do.



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With Reverence
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