

## *My Child*

The jaws of silver monsters found you,  
disemboweled you, ferocious forceps leaving your tiny  
chest eviscerated; mutilated your precious  
head, and maybe brain asunder, you wonder  
why you were squandered. Cured craters of flesh reveal  
unknown thoughts blackening, festering in quiescent  
blood, lost postmen with nowhere to deliver. I quiver  
as I purse my lips and blow a gentle wind to fill  
your nose. And though your breaths are still,  
I still want you to feel how tender air can be  
as she caresses the recesses of your empty throat  
with a gentle tickle. But life, like the wind,  
is fickle. Yet somehow still, we will take  
a million more breaths. And this, this is what  
breathing feels like, my child.

In my hands, I envelop your disembodied arms, skeletal and torn.  
I try my best to caress what's left of your flesh so you  
know how warmth lingers after fingers have touched you,  
and not how silver, slivered serpents have rent you.  
I don't know why I try to put you back together,  
you're not a Barbie to be fixed. This isn't playtime,  
there are no fixes for the existence I've nixed.  
Into your hips, I dumbly bump the stumps of  
your legs as I shift them, animate them,  
giving them motion, locomotion with my imagination,  
granting them a shade of life. But I'm not a god  
and God knows the days and days have pained me. Yet  
somehow still, we will ourselves forward to take  
a million more steps. And this, this is what  
walking feels like, my child.

As I hold your head close to mine, my tears fall to places  
in the spaces above your face, where they trace out  
rivulets of silent cries and sighs onto eternally  
lidded eyes. I imagine you cooing, sincere with cheer with  
a voice that the world will never hear -- an unfinished  
melody, a song that I penned, but ended before the impending  
chorus. Crimson drops fall into my lap, from living rivers no  
longer coursing. My coarse hands rutilant, ruefully stained by  
your darkened Spring. I bring you closer, our foreheads nearly  
touching. And I touch my lips to your lips so you'll know how I wish  
I could kiss you 'good night' every night. But Life is full of  
heights and bottomless dips for it knows no scripts, and now you know  
that living hurts. Yet somehow still, we will keep trying  
a million more times. And this, this is what  
love feels like, my child.

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**Author's Note:** Dilation & Evacuation (D&E) refers to a specific second trimester abortive procedure. The fetus is first terminated with a lethal injection. Instruments such as forceps, vacuums, and curettes are then used to remove the fetus from the uterus. Since the baby may be too large to remove through the cervix, forcible dismemberment of the body is sometimes necessary. This poem is inspired by a true mother's story, but remains a piece of poetic fiction.

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