

(Birth Series)

Brynnleigh's Knot

The breathless sleep
of baby Brynnleigh,
the cord coils around her neck
with a slithering serpent's
grip, knotted and taut.
Her first breath, her first cry

Muffled on the other side
of life, hushed and stilled.
heaven is not a place for babies;
mother's tears should be wasted
on stubbed toes and paper-cuts.
Prayers are pulled from the depths
hauling up a mother's anchor
Hand over hand, gripping at faith.

So gloved hands, masked faces
slip and unravel the birth cord
frantically, untying knot after knot.
So, laces can be tripped over on play grounds.
So, a brush can gently untangle all of a night's dreams
and be kissed in the wide eyed glow of morning.

(Birth Series)

Breaking Water

The ice once held us safe,
we tested the strength of water,
as it held our baby and
nurtured life from two hopeful cells.
We walk upon the ice,
water flowing beneath our soles.
We play and test faith,
we glide on the strength of water,
halted and held despite
the fluctuation of temperature.

Like the ice my body
thinned and hardened,
the effort to slow down,
to stand still for months and months.
Gradually stretching until paper thin,
If you paused to look, you could see
Right through, a foot or a hand
Pressing at this thawing world.
It held us both effortlessly, now
light trickles through the ice and me.
Letting go of the stagnant chill and breaks free
with the fluid movement of life, from
the determined strength of stillness.

(Birth Series)

Sisterhood

She wasn't doing a thing that I could see, except standing there. Leaning on the balcony railing holding the universe together.- J.D. Salinger

Leaning and swaying from side to side.

Hair draping across her slender shoulders.

My hand slid down the arch of her spine,

rested on the small of her back.

I swayed with her, I breathed with her.

Cooed and hushed in the dim light.

She turned to face me, I swept golden

tendrils away from her teary eyes.

We leaned into each other and

I lifted her universe off her hollow shoulders.

The day was long and the night slowed.

This was our quiet moment where we fell

and slipped in and out of sisterhood,

Our breath guided us with trust, our sway

danced into a unusual friendship.

Our eyes locked and tears kissed our cheeks.

In the cool of a summer night, the air felt heavy

gravity buckled our knees and the earth pulled

A baby from her mama's womb down to her.

(Birth Series)

Holding Hands

Chubby fingers wriggle and twist.

Gripping and bracing my toddler in midair,
after he slumps to the ground.

Defiant, determined to cross the road alone
Independence rages in parking lots,
Crosswalks, grocery stores and in the silence of church.

I offer my soft gentle palm as if to fill his dance card,
my loving embrace to safely glide him through
this exhausting world, with the terrors of sidewalks,
with cars driving at nerve wracking legal speeds.

My son would dart from left to right
with the instincts of a lemming.

He did this to me over and over again.

My efforts included: reasoning, punishing,
Bribing, that stern look all mothers master,
explaining the rules and clipping a leash to his belt loop.

The thought of a shock collar did come to mind.

Then one day he held my hand for no other reason,
other than he was too big to be carried in my arms.

(Birth Series)

If . . .

*The hesitation of if
I listen, I hold, I comfort
I confront and I fall silent
I surrender and I convince.*

*Slow down. Breathe with me.
Look at me, it's almost over
Let this pass, allow your muscles
To just let go with each long slow breath*

*You're doing it, you have plenty of space
This is a little baby, your body
Was made to do this
Just look at me, trust me*

*I know it hurts, you need to be patient
You need to slow your breath
While we wait for the doctor*

*I stopped I gave up
I sunk into a chair
Infected by her hesitation*

*Spiraled into her pain
Was lost in the hesitation of if. . .
if only she trusted me*

**What if it goes wrong?
I'm not ready, I can't do this
I need drugs, this is too much
This baby is too big!
Please make it stop!**

**I can't! It hurts too much
Cut this baby out of me
I need drugs, please
don't make me feel this**

**Make her go away!
I hate her. Tell her to leave
I need drugs now,
Why won't you give me drugs?**

**Make this stop, please
I'm begging you, someone please
Make this stop.**

I wasn't meant to be a mother.

*If only she trusted herself
Her body, her baby.*

I surrender.

What if I am just like my mother?

What if I realize. . .

I regret ever meeting you