

Three poems for Sixfold.org

POEM 1

Sleeping to Pooh

I am a body pillow on my daughter's bed.
As she rehearses in a British accent
the story of the storm cloud hanging
from a balloon that should not be spoiled,
I cannot tell her that my reason for dozing
through every other paragraph
is that I have failed at a thing I think
I wanted most in my life, a thing that has nothing
to do with her. I must pretend this tiredness
is a fatherly one, a tiredness from which
I may be revived in the morning.

POEM 2

Elizabeth, 5 months

You will not remember
my arms on your crib,
your flannel feet cycling
away sleepiness.

You will not remember
blue tree silhouettes,
my promise to stand
here till morning.

POEM 3

Luke, 2

When you were angry,
you used to cry like a triple
jumper: two staccato yips,
a pause, and then a real launch pad
of a shriek, intended, I assume,
to sear into my memory, as well
as the memories of our neighbors
and other friends and loved ones
in the city limits—anyone with ears
to hear your prophecies
(like Isaiah, confusing at times
but vivid in tone) of destruction—
that you have been wronged,
that your bottle is too cold,
that your Spider-Man pajamas
were preferred.

Who am I kidding? You're still two
years old, and this is you.

But I know someday you will
become me, and you will
have your own triple jumper,
and Time, Herod-like, will dissolve
my memories of you
thrashing on the changing table.