

Amelia on Her Birth Day

Your mother cried through the laughing gas—cried
biblically, "Get it out of me!" and you
flooded out, long-headed and alien blue,
jaundiced in mucous and blood, new eyes wide
open to a chilly ward with strangers
beaming at you, like cannibals, in joy.
"Overcooked," one nurse chimed. And not a boy,
we knew, when Sam shrieked, "A niece!" What dangers,
we are, with our love, you'll know all too soon--
molding you to a sad, misshapen need--
but, for now, we'll let you be: urgent, freed
and piping your fair, obstreperous tune,
swaddled and placed into your mother's nest,
sucking wildly at her still-milkless breast.