

First Words Poems

Emily Vogel

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First Edition

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Breaking

The sensation of pain is incomprehensible to an infant, until
it is no longer incomprehensible.

Eventually it fails to elude her,

becomes as regular as variations of light and dark.

The world infiltrates as repetitions, enumerations, conversations
sustained by gradually familiar voices.

In a dark kitchen at 3 am, her mother breaks

in the sense that pain might break

amid the silent rooms of absolute solitude.

Also, a song plays somewhere about something breaking,
like a heart, or the first dawn.

Poem for my Week-Old Daughter

In a lapse of lucidity, you focus on a shape
made by a certain light, your eyes held captive
by the waking world. Your tiny jaw drops, your mouth
filling with new and unfamiliar air.
You are attuned to peripheries, a certain threshold
of looming sadness, which by now
is merely inarticulate—a perplexing
and irretrievable aspect.

Channel 3

The deepest part of the night is blue noise,
the sound of an infant breathing.
My husband snores beside her on the floor.
Me, I'm an unfathomable crater on the moon,
a vessel that contains conceivable things.
I want to lie in a field of waving wheat
and discuss the mysteries of the universe.
I travel through starlight which appears
on channel 3, my mind a conduit
for traversals, each evasion of the bleeding heart
a fleeting redemption.

Calamity

Because I didn't go looking for the moon last night,
I can't be sure. I made pork chops. They were offensive.
They rendered me a less apt woman. The guests were merciful,
entertaining, scholarly. I hid in the living room, weeping.
My daughter's mouth was open, shaped like a world,
and searched and searched
to be filled.