

Night Call

2 a.m.

Tired to the bone.

Flick on the light, a hard spill of brightness.

Don't wake your man, sleeping heavy as a sack of grain.

You lay your hand

to the small of your back.

("Keying up," you laugh to yourself.)

Check the kids, rolled up like black moles, like socks.

Slip a carcoat on, drown a cup of last night's black.

Stand before the last of last night's fire.

Headlights on

ignition

drive over the black hump, thinking, "That box of seedlings

out back, I'll plant them tonight."

The first fight with lights of town

turns you blinking

but the hospital gleams, familiar as a garden tool

(You think you see your own death spin

before you on a white

plate in moonlight.)



Been reading of a pregnant squire in Great Britain:

huge, her fifth coming.

You stand stocky, small, going out to deliver charms

—rows of harried mothers haunt your dreams.

Is nothing virgin?

3 a.m.

The heap of slaggish mountain

collapses

behind you

swallowing home. Air's murky as barley-broth.

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Washing your hands after the birth, thick lather,
your hair looks like a wet bird.

Breech birth, but
no forceps marks, a pearl borne out of bone.
Like a starfish, hands of the newborn.

Day comes up white as a chalk pit.

Your hip aches as if someone had kicked it—
the child lights a bonfire in the flowerpot.

Yesterday bought today so cheap. So dearly.
Lullay, child & lady.

I see my death
on a white plate
spinning before me.

Today: high beyond cost of rubies.

—But the garden, the green thumb, breath, oxygen.

Junketing
between nurseries:
white clinic
green garden.

The price is right: sterling.