CAROLYNE VAN DER MEER

The baby in her belly

couldn’t get comfortable

What small comfort
there was in
here
is gone

In good professional conscience, I can’t counsel you
to have this child, she said. The risks to you and
the fetus are too great.

there is no longer a haven
splits, cracks, erupts
upon impact

There is nothing for me
to grab on to
no purchase
It does not feel
like home

Hunk of metal
crashing
Blood
I ride its wave
There is no point in staying

If you decide to have this child, I’ll see you through
it, of course. But you could die in the process—you
need to understand this. And if you do, your seven-
year-old son will be the one who suffers the most.

I’m already tired
(dot of life)
miniscule against the
crimson sky
I feel the shudder
am losing hold, begin
spiralling into
oblivion

It’s the best of a bad situation. You really didn’t
want to face terminating the pregnancy—and now
you don’t have to. Nature took care of it for you.

Did I lose the baby because of the car accident?
she asked.

There is no way of knowing, no scientific proof, but
it’s possible.

Possible, probable
With certainty
the mother grieves
her stolen child. Stolen
from her loins
Grieves that the home
in her womb
was not good
enough

You can’t put yourself at risk because you feel
bound by a moral code. The consequences would be
too great. Your age. Your heart condition. And the
medication. There’s no telling what effect this has
already had on the fetus.

Carolyne Van Der Meer is a Montreal journalist and PR practitioner who teaches at McGill University. Her poetry and
short fiction have been published Ars Medica, Bibliosofia, Carte Blanche and Helios, and the WOW! Anthology.