

CAROLYNE VAN DER MEER

The baby in her belly

couldn't get comfortable

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

*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

*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.*

What small comfort  
there was in  
here

is gone  
My mother's  
wracked and  
damaged body  
no longer a haven  
splits, cracks, erupts  
upon impact  
Hunk of metal  
crashing  
Blood  
I ride its wave  
There is no point in staying

*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

*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, Bibliosophia, Carte Blanche and Helios, and the WOW! Anthology.*