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ELIZABETH JOHNSON

We Come Home

There was the hollowness of the apartment
as I stood alone, watching the silent newborn

and the fear as she stretched in the seat,
beginning to wake, to want.

I held my breath as her eyes opened,
lids peeling apart from each other,

fragile milky skin suffused
with her own incandescence.

There was my hand daringly placed on her chest,
the independent pumping of her heart,

the delicate throb of her body, a small sigh,
not sorrow, not pain, but knowledge of earth.

There was the stab in my groin
as a gaze held between us,

pull of my arms toward her squirm,
lift of my palms under her head and spine.

There was her flesh fragrant on my face,
her breath against my neck.

Elizabeth Johnson teaches writing and literature at the University of Minnesota. Her poetry appears in various journals.



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