

## Poem for a Daughter

'I think I'm going to have it,'  
I said, joking between pains.  
The midwife rolled competent  
sleeves over corpulent milky arms.  
'Dear, you never have it,  
we deliver it.'  
A judgement years proved true.  
Certainly I've never had you

as you still have me, Caroline.  
Why does a mother need a daughter?  
Heart's needle, hostage to fortune,  
freedom's end. Yet nothing's more perfect  
than that bleating, razor-shaped cry  
that delivers a mother to her baby.  
The bloodcord snaps that held  
their sphere together. The child,  
tiny and alone, creates the mother.

A woman's life is her own  
until it is taken away  
by a first particular cry.  
Then she is not alone  
but part of the premises  
of everything there is:  
a time, a tribe, a war.  
When we belong to the world  
we become what we are.

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