

# Ways of Healing

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# the poetry business

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## *Moondaddy*

Today the doctor asked if I was planning on  
keeping it Right now it is a grainy little moon  
distorted by dark waves that I know

with the slightest change of tide  
might pull us closer together Being in love is like

drowning in space oh baby you gaslight me so hard

The days when you pretend we do not know each other  
fill me with all this understanding  
for foxes screaming in the night for want of sex Imagine

your reaction to something concrete  
proof of a world in which we have both existed  
momentarily even if it is just this

this malformed pearl ready to be crushed

## *Mother of Pearl*

My female relatives are thrilled I have been  
impregnated by the sea. My belly a swollen pearl

they take turns stroking. At night, the pearl glows ochre.  
I don't get much sleep. My aunties assure me this

is a good sign. My boss is not so impressed by my pearl  
& I. We keep bumping into co-workers, making hollow

sounds. My pearl glows in annoyance. My co-workers  
tell HR. I am asked to take parental leave at once.

I keep a dream journal to monitor my progress.  
I write, whale song, saltwater, grain of sand, oyster knife.

My aunties pass it around in a circle, reading it like scripture.  
My pearl grows stronger, glows holy, from their worship.

My maternity package is not very generous. It glows  
like my cheeks, keeping me up at night. I am getting

even less sleep than before. Citizens Advice assure me  
this is a good sign. *I am getting even less sleep than before,*

I tell the sea. The tide swells against my ankles  
in a gesture of comfort. My pearl glows the colour

of an old coin. *Can you help us?* I ask. The water pulls away.  
I lie with the windows open at night, listening out for the sea,

hoping child support will wash up on the shore, in waves  
that clink with loose change. My pearl is less convinced

by this logic. Her light suddenly goes out.

## *Clinic / The Winter Self*

*i*

Running into the sea fully-clothed is a symptom.  
So are the crowds forming, the perpetual sunsets  
& sharp applause. I am sick with wanting.

I just want to hold a child in the snow.  
I want to dab their face with antibacterial wipes.

*ii*

After my January swim, which was more  
a thrashing in the waves, lost in television static,  
I buy a coffee made the wrong way, milk first.

Wet silk, beige gossamer, twirling around a cup.  
I think back to the clinic, paper cups atop  
a water cooler bubbling with mild anger.

I just want an answer: Is depression a glitter?  
Does my empty womb mean something?

*iii*

I was born in January. My mother was afraid  
to take me outside, for fear I would inhale cold air  
& freeze from the inside out.

I picture my childhood self as a small instrument  
made of glass into which air & spit is blown.

It produces an awful whistling which can only  
be heard by dogs.

I am afraid of the sounds I make, the ways in which  
my body alienates others.

I am afraid of the ceaseless winter of myself.

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