

April 2015

Paternity

Matthew M. Campbell
Western Michigan University

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Recommended Citation

Campbell, Matthew M. (2015) "Paternity," *The Laureate*: Vol. 14 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/laureate/vol14/iss1/14>

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PATERNITY

Matthew M. Campbell

My daughter
Who brought panic with the news of her existence
Whose existence was irrelevantly buried
Within concentric mucous membranes
Whose imminence approached as lengthening stretchmarks
And whose lively beating heart ticked
Away the remained seconds of my life

My daughter
Whom I knew I must love
But who would surely confine me
As all shackles do. My shackle,
Whose existence I would resent because it would
Impose a duty so annoyingly omnipresent
I would never be able to escape it

My daughter
Whose incredibly fragile beauty
Left me fumbling for words
Whose helpless eyes never found mine
Until they did
Whose tiny screeches never ceased in my presence
Until they did

My daughter
Who can't do anything by herself
Who *must* do everything by herself
Whose eyes that mirror mine
No longer look so helpless
Whose eyes, I fear, will someday again
Look helpless

My daughter
Whose blossoming petals threaten to wither
Whose death approaches with more fearful an imminence
Than the lengthening stretchmarks
Whose death reminds me of my own
And how helpless our eyes will be
When they can no longer find the other's.