
WATER BIRTH

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The possibility of infant death
did not scare her. She knew her baby would be born
with swimmer's lungs like the father,
webbed digits from early fetal development
transforming into raw-fingered dexterity in the water.

Her midwife had come with the first contractions,
helping her ease into the warmth.
With the due-date on the paperwork two weeks prior,
the collapsible bathtub had arrived disinfected.
In a small bottle, the enzyme purifiers for the well

sloshed the sides gently, waiting. She'd applied them herself,
morning mist rising from water siphoned from the sides
of a mountain. It rose behind her house, austere.
Yes, her baby would be born with lungs like the father,
forged from highland billows.

The water calmed her, lapped her with support
while the midwife crooned, strung notes
into the strands of a lullaby. She listened, her head
lolling back, cushioned by matronly hands.
The air writhed with impatience.