

Birth Giver

Best of Poetry

Piper Rowley

She is an emotional, infrequent phone call
late in the evening.

Small and fragile.
Tiny, breakable, fleeting.
The abruptness of her fragility
has winded me.
She has been shrinking in my hands for years,
eventually,
she will disappear.

I remember her blank white skin
and long, small-town ponytail
only from pictures.
Her skin is leather brown now,
cluttered with ink
as incomprehensible
as her thoughts.
She has a wispy, dyed-black bob now,
graying severely at her temples.
Long hours,
hard drinking,
a-pack-a-day,
childhood trauma,
adult mistakes
gray.

Her body is a collection of unpredictable slopes
and swells.
Celluloid divots and aged stretchmarks.
Despised round nipples, a relic from her child-bearing,
and a jutting scar above her navel,
evidence of poor health.
Short legs and long torso,

Piper Rowley

carried by pink soles,
cracked and calloused.

Her face has become gaunt and exhausted,
lined with deep regrets and troubles.
She looks older than her years.
Blue eyes
soul-aching vacancy or
a pale and unforgiving landscape,
wintry and vicious when provoked.

She is unapologetic wine stains on carpet,
diet Mountain Dew mixed with vodka breath.
Absent apologies,
scatterbrained advice,
and subjective, inconsistent realities.

She is a familiar ghost,
a source of shame,
a place of guilt,
the origin of homesickness.

She has always been a memory.
The possibility of unhappiness
heirloom of imbalanced chemicals
dormant in my veins
I was born trying to escape.

Her angry missed calls collect
unheard in my inbox.