

# What I Used to Love

Kim Kile

Were you there, Theo, when I got the call from your mama?  
The one telling me so quietly the technician couldn't find your heartbeat  
and they were on the way to the hospital "to confirm your viability?"  
The one I answered driving on 465 to my dentist's office?  
Did you see me in my navy blue and orange paisley blouse?  
The one I bought to wear to your Uncle Ethan's swim meets?

I used to love that blouse.

Were you there, Theo, when I told the dentist I had to leave?  
That I couldn't be in his chair reclining like I had no worries while  
I waited for your mama to call me again—to confirm what I had already  
denied—we had "lost" you like you were an insignificant piece of paper?  
I heard Earth, Wind, and Fire singing "September" on my way out the door.  
It was August 9 and you were due September 20.

I used to love that song.

Were you there, Theo, when we flew to D.C.?  
Did you watch me find the pennies you left for me under my seat  
and on the floor of the terminal? The ones I still have in the  
ceramic turtle on my bookshelf? Were you impressed by the  
Washington Monument and the Capitol building we saw from  
the airplane window as we landed on an airstrip in the Potomac?

I used to love that city.

Were you there, Theo, when I helped your mama push you into  
our living world? The most perfect baby in every way but one.  
Did you hear me plead with you to "just breathe" - to be the miracle  
I had prayed for, to be a joyous mistake of science and medicine,  
to turn from oxygen-deprived blue to the healthy pink of newborn life?  
Did you hear me whisper, "I love you," as I held you in my arms?

I will always love you, Theo.

*For Baby Theo, forever our first*