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## Poetry

### The Longest 2 Minutes

Tomy Bewick

The longest 2 minutes  
 Of my entire 28-year existence  
 Came after 40 weeks and 2 days of waiting.  
 Heart beat racing  
 90% anticipation  
 No way to prepare for what I was facing,  
 Nothing in life to put it in context:  
 Such adrenaline, dopamine and pure  
 intensity  
 Safe to say,  
 We had not been sleeping  
 And if so: lightly.  
 Nightly I would tense and flex  
 Planned responses  
 Emotions and methodology,  
 But any ideology gets tossed quickly  
 In a pinch...  
 It was a pinch;  
 Around her neck.

Umbilical noose  
 Not pulling loose,  
 Every inch drawing it tighter:  
 My daughter was born a fighter.  
 Doctor tied her with a clamp and cut quickly:  
 My eyes saw blur, squeeze, scissors,  
 Ears heard "sorry's"  
 And "SOMEONE: something-something  
 QUICK!"  
 And then in came the specialist;  
 They lifted her tiny body  
 Purple, limp, silent...  
 The worst damn sound  
 In a delivery room  
 Is quiet,  
 Inside I was ready to riot,  
 "What's wrong with her?"  
 "Why isn't she crying?!"  
 Inside my heart breaking  
 As I wondered if before me  
 My newborn daughter was dying,  
 We clamped our damp hands:  
 Palm-to- palm as a hymn to god.

"She's fine"  
 I hear myself say...  
 But I see my hopes caving in  
 As I look at my love, who has carried this most precious gift  
 For 40 painful weeks and 2 days  
 Only to see the mission failing,  
 Eyes search delivery room wildly for limbs to be flailing  
 - 1 minute 30 seconds -  
 No new baby is wailing,  
 Suction noises slurping where there is supposed to be inhaling  
 - Waiting to exhale -  
 While the air/lung investigation is underway,

I have no choice but to look at my lover,  
The mother I love,  
The mother of this newborn babe and say;  
"Babe, everything is going to be okay,  
It's just been a really long day"  
As I feel all the fears I have been hiding,  
Riding up through the IV submerged in her sleeve  
I must seek to deceive her,  
Of the wit  
That I have temporarily misplaced;  
I pray that none of the terror tremors under my surface  
Are showing on my face,  
I place left hand over her horrified death-grip  
And let 3 whispered words slip  
"I'm right here".  
Now, thanks to the epidural;  
She's not really hearing me clear,  
But she resiliently acknowledges my plea  
Of affection and commitment.  
My heart rate is explosive for those 2 minutes  
Until an angel's choir shatters the thick air in the delivery room  
And the suspense for everyone in it:  
The absolute decadence of an infant's first cries...  
I sense swelling beginning just under my eyes,  
I realize I managed to keep my freaking out at bay,  
But there is nothing in my closet full of skeletons  
That comes remotely close to that day:  
They lifted her tiny body,  
Purple, limp and silent;

My world felt grey,  
Shifted and almost collapsed  
My skyscraper heart was about to fall flat  
Until breath: sweet baby's breath  
Resurrected my faith in life  
And I knew everything was all good.  
I winked at my sweetheart  
Like we shared the most intimate universal secret  
And I knew she understood.  
I went with the nurse and the incubator,  
To the special care unit in the hall to the west,  
Kissed my love's forehead before leaving  
Stated the obvious like,  
"Honey, we have just been blessed,  
And there goes the ever-loving god-given living proof"  
The longest 2 minutes  
Of my entire 28 year existence  
Came as my daughter was born  
I give you my word it's the truth.

3 minutes later  
My purpose became apparent;  
My soul will never again have to question its use.  
It is for love;  
The sheer commitment of it  
And standing still long enough  
To be brave  
In the face of fear,  
It is for her,  
My love,  
My lady,  
For my darling, my baby,  
For my daughter, for the future:  
I am right here.

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My Mouth Hurts Too Much  
To Fight You:  
Poems by Tomy Bewick, Lulu and  
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