When he was under the dome, spinning core of the earth, they awaited him, drapes around where he would surface.

And he squirmed a knot, effortless, into the helix that flooded him with blood, retied the tether of his foaling. The mottled purple mantles — chorion, amnion, and triad of vessels — pulsed like magma inside his crocus mother.

After a day she labored choppy, the restless green flock of doctors rush into gowns over gowns, gloves over gloves, and masks to become invisible. Each face has disappeared. The sterile room is intimate.

Her eddied waters quake when the cocoon is slit open. Quicksilver fish glides into flesh for fist-grabbed Josiah, who wakes up.

Jennifer Stella

“Many of us are never born— We live in a private ocean for hours”
—Sharon Olds, “Everything” from One Secret Thing

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