

Towards Earthside
Forty Songs & One

by Doula Bramble Angela O'Brien

with all heart's love
for
Mary and Mio
Ives and Perrin
Jenny
Ithy
and her Little One

~ The First Week ~

I am
But hardly formed, not even a speck of dust
Yet what was mere potential
Has now been fertilized
Your body has dreamed of me

Only a cell—then two, then four—
Your family
Cells forging the chain of ancestry

And you are eternally changed
From this moment,
Mother

~ The Second Week ~

I float in my cosmos, your uterus
Smaller than the dot of the “i”
Yet your body knows me
Your breasts tender, anticipating me
Two souls within you now

~ The Third Week ~

I, microscope seed, am planted
My cells are forming
Into brain, and spine, and sex
The colour of my eyes
And there are two hearts
Beating within you

~ The Fourth Week ~

The eye can see me
I am the size of a poppy-seed
I have bones, muscles, and teeth
You may not know I am here
But your body knows,
Moods changing like seas and seasons,
Mother-weariness and dizziness,
Rest! We have much to do!

~ The Fifth Week ~

I am like a tadpole
The size of an apple-seed, or peppercorn
With a tail
And you can start to see my fingers, toes,
And features of my face
And growing with me
Is my companion, protector and nurturer:
Placenta

~ The Sixth Week ~

You cannot feel me yet,
But I can move!
My limbs have appeared
And I am the size of a ladybird
With lungs and liver
And your hunger is growing with me!

~ The Seventh Week ~

I am your blueberry
Tiny but ripe
Appendix and intestines formed
And speaking of,
Your tummy may be troubled,
Cravings things you never craved before?

~ The Eighth Week ~

I am an inch long, losing my tail,
My bones are beginning to harden
Our bodies are changing together,
Your areola darkening, your uterus
The size of a grapefruit.
And in the west, paperwork begins
To tell the kings and bureaucrats that
I exist

~ The Ninth Week ~

I am the size of a green olive
Eyes closed,
Waiting

~ The Tenth Week ~

I am growing so quickly from one day to the next
That now I could lie
Comfortably in the palm of your hand.
Perhaps you have heard my heartbeat.

~ The Eleventh Week ~

I am the size of a hummingbird
And have twenty clearly defined fingers and toes
You feel the motion in your body,
So much more moving blood,
Your hair growing quickly, rich and thick

~ The Twelfth Week ~

Any uncertainty I may have had
Of whether I would make this journey
All the way with you, is gone.
And I am deeply rooted now
And I am coming, surely, now
And our ways will go together now
And mine will continue,
Long after yours.

~ The Thirteenth Week ~

I am a little larger than a ripe apricot.
Your breasts are sore,
The fires rising from your belly,
And silver calligraphy
Writing my story on your thighs

~ The Fourteenth Week ~

I am the size of a house mouse, and like him
Unseen,
But sharing the intimacy of your food and warmth
And home.

~ The Fifteenth Week ~

Perhaps you have heard my heartbeat.
I have heard yours.

~ The Sixteenth Week ~

I can suck my thumb!
And when you cleaned to Irish tunes
I heard and danced.

~ The Seventeenth Week ~

I am like a pomegranate
You, too, are round and full and pink and
People are beginning to ask
If I am there!

~ The Eighteenth Week ~

My tail is gone; I am less a tadpole
And more a baby
Enjoying my lengthening limbs
And hardening bones
And performing Cirque du Soliel
Within your uterus.

~ The Nineteenth Week ~

I am the size of a hedgehog
Loud sounds can startle me,
My hearing is almost ripe.
My body is making meconium.
My little cave is not so little now
And presses other organs
For a little space.

~ The Twentieth Week ~

We are half way through
My journey towards Earthside.
No two beings can ever come so close
As you and I are now.

~ The Twenty-first Week ~

You are craving strange things
Asparagus, and beer,
And charcoal dust.
I am the size of a guinea-pig, and furry too,
Swaddled with lanugo and vernix.

~ The Twenty-second Week ~

My eyes are fully formed,
Although their colour is yet to come.
And you are hungry, and evident to all:
'Mother' written on your silhouette.

~ The Twenty-third Week ~

I weigh a little more than a pound
Trying embryonic pugilism
Punching and kicking
And... perhaps not unconnected...
You need to wee a lot.

~ The Twenty-fourth Week

I am the size of an aubergine, or ear of corn
Lungs inhaling amniotic fluid,
Readying for days of breathing air
Your eyes are dry, and skin is stretched,
And for the first time, you feel
Murmurs of our Earthside day
The cadence called the braxton hicks

~ The Twenty-fifth Week ~

Both, we are growing
You are flashed with
Heat and itching, stretching skin.
I, tiny, have full fingerprints.

~ The Twenty-sixth Week ~

I am the size of a butternut squash
Eyes have begun to open and to blink
For now, the colour of the Sea
Perhaps they will change, reflecting Sky
Or Leaves, or Earth

~ The Twenty-seventh Week ~

Your chest hurts and your breath is short.
Speak to me,
I am listening to the music of your tones,
I'll know them Wombside, Earthside, Heavenside.

Sing to me,
Make a nest for us,
And when I leave this orb,
Most intimate of nests,
I'll go where I in You
Becomes a new I and You
So, like my present home, let it be close, and warm, and dark,
Dark like here,
But full of song and stars.

~ The Twenty-eighth Week ~

So much discomfort!
Heartburn, braxton hicks, and running to the loo
Although with dubious success at times,
For other things are 'running slow'...
And I'm continuing to grow
Three pounds, a coconut,
And starting to be short of space.
I'm getting plump.

~ The Twenty-ninth Week ~

Still a small prize-fighter
With punches and kicks,
Hitting Mother's ribs,
Taking breath away.

~ The Thirtieth Week ~

My brain is developing quickly
And you are feeling many things:
Growing plump and
Pregnancy pain
And, as I practise breathing,
Hiccups,
Like a butterfly inside your ribs

~ The Thirty-first Week ~

I am the size of an otter
Breathing in the amniotic air,
And weeing it out
Fingernails fully formed
And hearing accurate.
Sing to me,
I am learning your voice;
It will always be home.

~ The Thirty-second Week ~

There is less space and yet
I am slowly turning, beginning
To find the position
That leads Earthside

~ The Thirty-third Week ~

My skeleton is developed, now hardening
All save the skull; it stays soft and loose
Necessary for this thespian feat
Of force and flexibility

~ The Thirty-fourth Week ~

I gravitate lower in your body
Moving towards the Temple Bar
Into the world.

~ The Thirty-fifth Week ~

I am a full-formed little body
And not so little: over 6 pounds,
Liver functioning, lanugo disappearing
And getting plumper.

~ The Thirty-sixth Week ~

It could be any hour now,
But only you and I know
When exactly it will be—
Or let's be fair, it's only me.
I, waiting for the perfect time,
When You and I, Placenta, Passageway
Are all prepared, consummately.
You are in discomfort, as am I,
Your body pressured by the
Swelling cage inside, the growing pen
An intimate one-creature zoo,
In which I, little bear,
Dolphin,
Marsupial,
Am eager to burst out
And see the world.

~ The Thirty-seventh Week ~

You are making ready
Packing the hospital bag
Finishing the nest, breasts
Swelling with colostrum.

~ The Thirty-eighth Week ~

I am the size of a melon
And Dr. Who would say, if he could see you now,
(With his accustomed flustered wit)
That you had recently,
And inadvertantly,
Swallowed a planet.
(Ah yes, I know the Tardis's strange whir -
My ears, you know, are sharp,
And you and I are moving less
And I am hearing telly quite a lot.)

~ The Thirty-ninth Week ~

Wait,
Just a little longer.

~ The Fortieth Week ~

Everyone says that it is Time.
But we both know that Time will be
Just a breath, a heartbeat longer
Waiting together for the perfect fulcrum
Of readiness, you and I

~ The Final Week ~

In your World, you are watchful
Waiting almost unbearable
You mark the time 'til you can touch my skin
And I am stirring, sifting through
The dreams of you, and waiting also
For the moment...

Now
We are ready,
We Trinity: Placenta, Mother, I
All pulsing in
The triune dance that moves me down,
Willing me Earthside.
For you it is sensation, and a kind of pain
Like planets breaking wide.
For me it is a kind of death:
Leaving my universe
Entering the great Unknown,
Hoping for a vast and
Unconditional Love.