

It's all very thief in the night stuff, because you go into an ER or whatever, and you walk in thinking that you're an ecosystem, and you walk out completely barren and empty.

—Tori Amos

MMC (missed miscarriage)

1.
You died
so
quietly
I did not feel you pass
inside me

The first time I saw you
you were already missing

sunk to the bottom, the floor
of an indoor
ocean in miniature
like a tiny
goldfish

Later I thought
it would help
if only

I just never thought

I could call out to you
say words for you
speak your name

I wouldn't know
who you were
at all,

but confusion stopped me:

or where
and niw

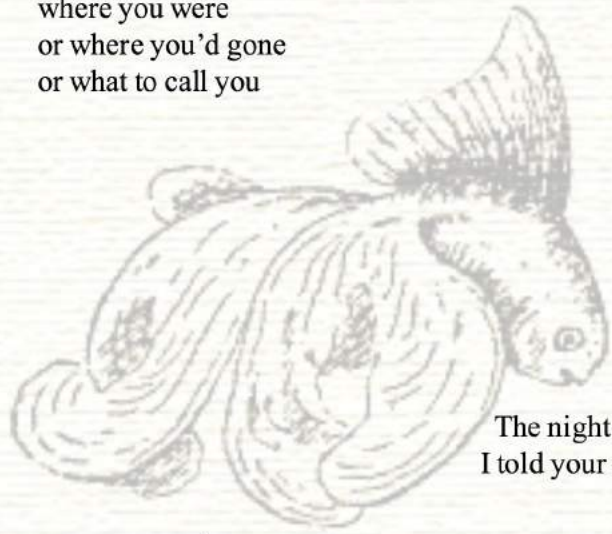
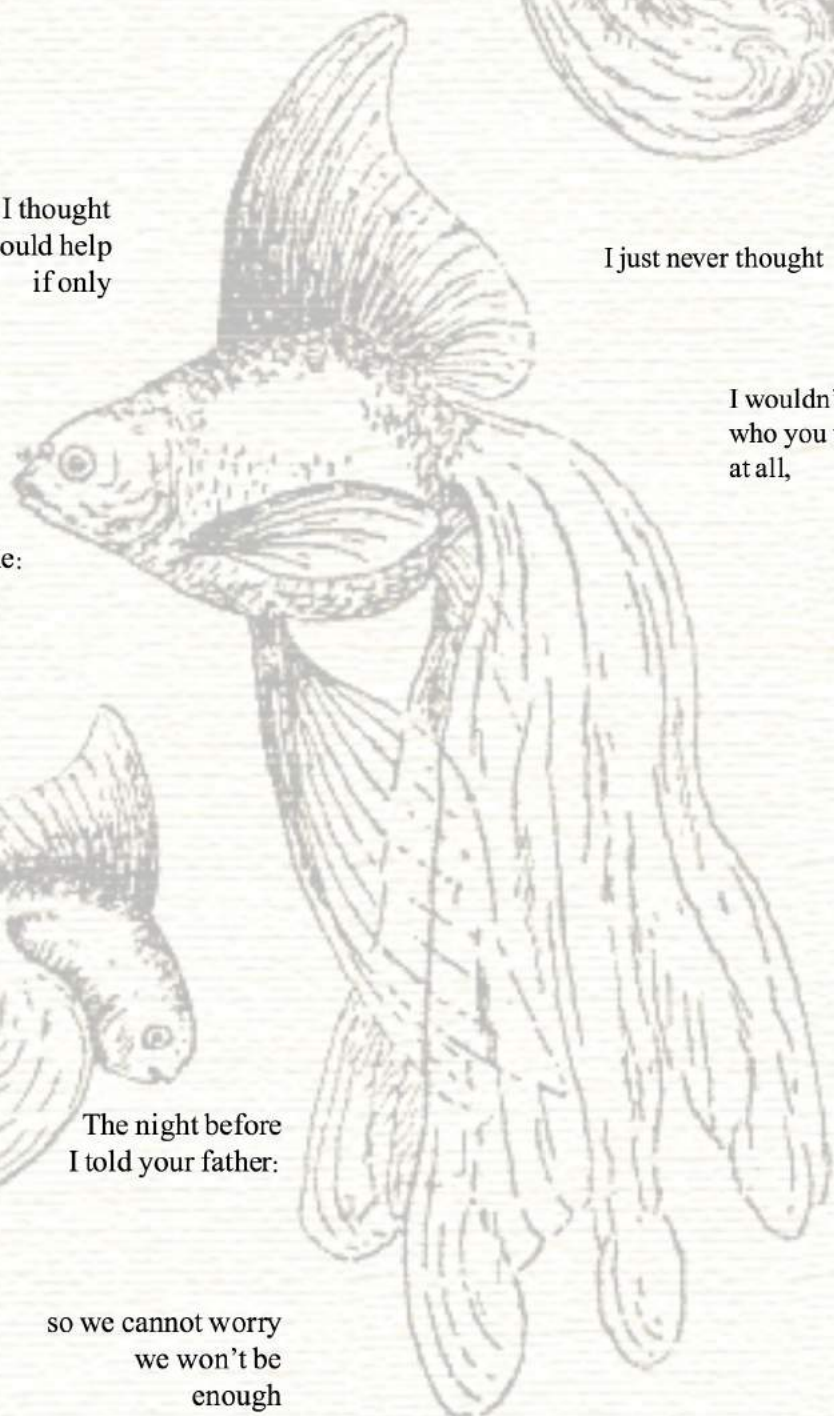
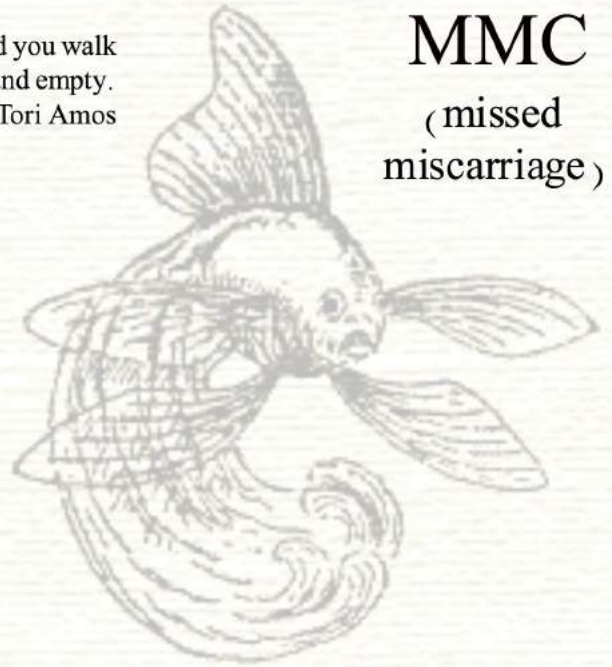
I didn't know
where you were
or where you'd gone
or what to call you

you are in
the ether again

The night before
I told your father:

we can never know
who our children will be

so we cannot worry
we won't be
enough





2.

About a week before I realize
what has happened
I have a dream
of running
unencumbered
as though I'd suddenly been
lightened or freed

I woke up relieved
to be encumbered still,
lunar full
the prising apart
at the pelvic joint
the growth at the os
whose sensation is so
hard to describe
still there
pulling me earthward
to make running
an impossible discomfort

but of course my dream
was prescient

and as it is Eastertide
my father brings lilies
and a card:

the flowers of the dead
but also the flowers
of resurrection, the promise
of victory over death
in the ceaseless churning forth
of growth from decay,
pain into art, possibility
of hope amidst
the suffering of bodies:
that's all a Christ
is really—
secularly,
anyway.



BLACK COHOSH—*Cisampike racemosa*
71



3.

In the morning
he apologizes
for keeping me up
but I don't remember
anything—all night spent
lucid dreaming
of dosing myself
with dark tinctures
of emmenogogyery—



Black and Blue
Cohosh, Blue Vervain,
Sepia for emotional
release, False Unicorn



Lobelia
Cotton Root
Angelica or
Dong Quai



(that's the Chinese
variant, Angelica
the European)
Shepherd's Purse
or Witch Hazel

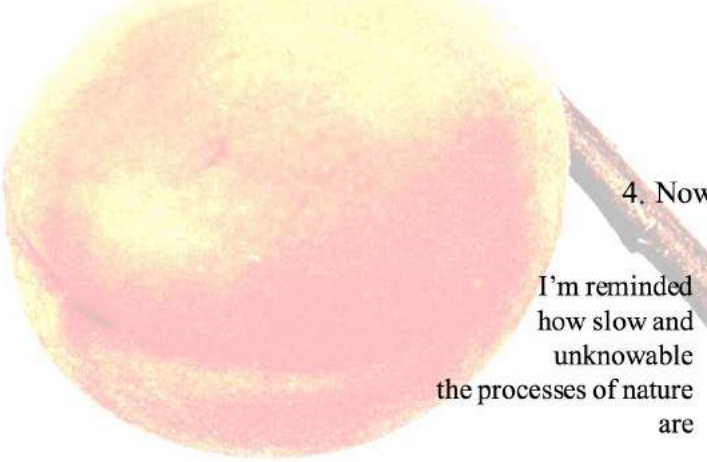
歸 當

for bleeding,
under the tongue
as needed, parsley
in pessary form,
celery, basil



in a tea
(1 tsp
per cup, boiled
in ceramic only
and stirred
with only wood,
no metal: the ions
can disturb herbal
properties.)





4. Now that you are a tree

I'm reminded
how slow and
unknowable
the processes of nature
are

I'm reminded that the body too is wild,

a tight spring unwinding
on its own time

and who knows
but the maker
the mystery
why or
when
it will begin
or end,
grow
or not

but I am grateful for
your father's green thumb
his patient belief
in the seed and the soil
in the experiment of seeing
what would happen to seeds
from last year's peaches
if planted

He took six, wrapped them up
in wet paper, tucked paper inside
plastic sandwich bags
slid into the cheese drawer
in the fridge
next to the burr oak
and the orange
and the three-chile
cheddar

Four of them became
the tiniest trees
Two did not sprout—
who knows why?

When you finally appear

white bean in a sea
of richest heme
like liver or beets,
whose legs and arms
have already devolved
back into your body,
the only thing left are
your eyes, undeniable,
two tiny spots
up top: yes,
it really is you

On your birthday
we place you in dirt
in a pot
We cover you
with blanket of dirt
chewed by time
from bone and
rock

We loosen the finger of dirt
from the mold of its sixpack
plastic nursery
to stand it on top
of the bloody paper
and placental scrap
then pour dirt all around
as a moat to secure it—

and now you are the tiniest tree

with leaves long fronds
like palm or tobacco.
We take you outside
for watering, then add
more dirt
just to be sure you are steady.
This we will do
until you are ready for the ground:
now that you are a tree, my
daughter,
my son.





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Plate 1

“Old Style Veiltail Goldfish.” By N. F. Zolotnitsky. Illustration from Aquarium Lover (1885). Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AOld_style_veiltail_goldfish.jpg

Plate 2

“The True Bermuda Easter Lily.” The McGregor Brothers Company. Floral Gems for Winter Flowering: Henry G. Gilbert Nursery and Seed Trade Catalog Collection (1901). Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3Afloral_gems_for_winter_flowering_\(1901\)_-\(20561802205\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3Afloral_gems_for_winter_flowering_(1901)_-(20561802205).jpg)

Plate 3 (clockwise from top left)

“Black Cohosh—Cimicifuga Racemosa.” Parsons, Frances Theodora. How to Know the Wild Flowers: a Guide to the Names, Haunts and Habits of our Common Wild Flowers, by Mrs William Starr Dana (1904). Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AHow_to_know_the_wild_flowers_\(Page_71\)_-\(7248320038\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AHow_to_know_the_wild_flowers_(Page_71)_-(7248320038).jpg)

Martin Cilenšek. “Capsella bursa pastóris [Shepherd’s Purse].” Naše škodljive rastline (1892). Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ANsr-slika-182.png>

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Plate 4

Raver, Duane. “Carassius Auratus (Goldfish).” U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AGoldfish_carassius_auratus.jpg

Unknown Artist. “Figure 41: Anatropl Seed of Citrus Aurantium.” Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 11 (1911), p. 259. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AEB1911_Fruit_-_anatropl_seed_of_Citrus_aurantium_\(entire\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AEB1911_Fruit_-_anatropl_seed_of_Citrus_aurantium_(entire).jpg)

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