

# Placenta<sup>1</sup>

William DeFord

“Snow glistens in its instant in the air”

—Wallace Stevens

I picture it, a milky glass teardrop  
Just large enough to fill my cupped hand.  
It floats in an almost-dark cave;  
It lights the cave but slightly, casting  
Wan shadows, a vessel of music and logic  
Unknown among us.

I saw it as a dark circle on the ultrasound,  
Saw it conspicuously empty.  
It’s common, the doctor said, for it to end this way.  
But it hasn’t ended, even after the procedure,  
After bringing you grape juice in a paper cup,  
And watching you lift it to your mouth, trailing  
An IV tube from your wrist.

The dark teardrop is still there  
Not a thing but a place, as the name suggests,  
A place that cannot be given or taken,  
That does not live or die.

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