

POETRY | FALL 2023

Beautiful, Peaceful, Holy

By Hannah May

Beautiful, peaceful, holy—
A friend's description of the birth of her son.

Not terror or shame or premature.
Not cold or bloody or sterile.

I can still feel the tugging of my skin,
the hands in my belly,
and did my scar hurt—just now,
at those words?

Beautiful, peaceful, holy.

The rush of fluid,
the baby upside down,
the heart lost,
the tide of people—
I don't know who—
the shaking, the shaking,
the shaking.

Beautiful, peaceful, holy.

She emerged whole and crying,
a tiny creature.

Eve in the garden—
Wasn't I supposed to labor?
The sound I heard was God laughing.

Beautiful, peaceful, holy.

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