

MISCARRIAGE

We all carry with us
Cherished images of motherhood
Perfect babies and smiling mothers
Universal Madonna's
Mothers mild.

Our anesthetized world
Of modern technology
And controlled emotion
Has promised
Safe, painless
And happy childbirth.

And somehow
We have come to believe.

But in those same antiseptic hospitals
Where healthy babies sleep row on row
In sweet smelling flannelette
There is another side of motherhood
About which no one speaks.

Stillbirth

The baby born with half a heart
Or lungs not made for breathing.

The baby who comes too soon
Too small to live outside the womb.

And the baby delivered in silence
With no explanation for its stillbirth;
We have no portrait of these mothers
In our mind's eye.

Sorrow and heartbreak are not part
Of our mythology of motherhood.

The young woman sitting with empty arms
Eyes brimmed with tears
Is not our picture of a mother.

Yet in her grief
Is the Pieta's anguish
She is a mother, too
This also, is motherhood.

~ Leslie Cole, Ottawa