

Poem

Plainsong for a daughter III

For Coco

In the ward again, at fifteen, then sixteen
she lies frozen.
At tilt with her world
this arrival again, bleached with trauma.
She ghosts into
the opiating realms of unexplained fevers.
Notice
among the alleys of drips, hooked
to beds or wheelchairs
the complex faces of parents with their damaged children.
At the Royal Children's Hospital Parkville,
what might divide us, distinctively
in the cumulous gift of living.
She is strange colours,
hosted by angels undoubtedly.
They patter here, yet darkly
to wrestle and reckon young mortalities.
Tested are the doctors' reasons.
She sleeps for days, in this clock-time perversion.
My own attention, edged lucid, prayer
shaped to her breathing.

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doi: 10.5694/mja14.01322