**If Only**

Andrea Livingston

I could have carried you longer,

you would be thirty something now.

I can’t recall how many months have passed

since you arrived too soon,

your body a question mark still curled in sleep,

the cord between us unbroken.

In dreams, you look like me,

shoulder-length hair, honeyed by sun.

I also see hints of him in you—

ocean-blue eyes I swam in,

steadfast gaze that kept me afloat.

I imagine you dressed up

in a navy wool suit, suede pumps.

You’re carrying a worn leather briefcase

filled with legal documents,

cracked yellow by age, edges torn.

I trace your silhouette as you climb

the stairs to plead your case

before the tribunal that decides

who gets a certificate

to enter this world.

Once again you ask to reverse their verdict.

Sometimes at night, I hear your voice

in the silk folds of the wind.

You cry out, wanting to be born.

I would answer, but I don’t

know your name.