**Upon Meeting My Great-Grandson**

Lynn Aprill

Dear B\_\_,

I got to meet you today.

You’re six months old, chubby

and smiling, babbling away.

People do not bring babies to asylums.

Well, most people, anyway.

Your grandmother did, bringing

your mom and her siblings

to show me, I suppose,

that everything turned out,

that you were all fine,

that it mattered that I’d once carried

her and her sisters and her brothers,

even if I couldn’t raise them.

And, of course, we’re no longer

an “asylum.” We became a Health Center

and then Brewster Village

as if we’re all sitting in cafe chairs

under striped umbrellas

enjoying Long Island iced teas.

Here’s what I’ll remember:

See that table on the left?

The chair just slightly pulled out?

That’s where your mother stood

to change you, wriggling

on the table, so full of life.

And then that back door swung open

and a whole busload of patients

returned from a field trip. And saw you.

It was like metal filings to a magnet.

They burst across the room,

babbling excitedly, *a baby!*

*Someone brought a baby!*

And your mom held you

and let them touch you and

pat you and coo over you.

It was all the visits they’d ever wished for.

When I graduated from high school,

someone wrote a class will. In it,

I willed my artistic talent and shyness

to the next class. I don’t talk

much anymore–that shyness

stuck with me like a persistent burr–

but if I could, here’s what I would leave

to you: I will you the ability to see

the beauty in this world.

I wish for you someone

who will see the beauty

in you.