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For Patricia Nora, 1994

by Mary Cooper Martinez

I was glad when
 I felt your bird-like heart
 beating under my cold palm
That early morning six years ago

I was glad when
 you bellowed your first
 cry of yourself,
 when I heard you mark the world
 with your voice print

I was glad when
 the obstetrician, head bent between my open legs,
 said,
 I can see a shock of thick, black hair
 and
 when every day I see you burst through
 the open school doors
 that hair gleaming in the sunlight
 red velvet bow aslew,
 bangs in your eyes

I was glad when
 you said lastnight
 (as I leaned over to kiss you),

 "I want this shirt you're wearing,
 when you're finished with it, Mommy."

(and I thought,
 Yes, because it's old and worn and the fabric
 feels sweet on the skin)

and you said,
 "Because it smells like you,

and you crushed it to your
 face
and breathed me in,
 cooing like a tiny dove.