

# Pregnancy Journal

Category: Poems

written by Laurice Gilbert | February 16, 2018

**Laurice Gilbert ~**

4th January 1986 / opened the journal and wrote the first entry:  
swapped completely from mercury to digital thermometer

basal body temperature: a colorful set of graphs that each invests  
3 months with footnotes, asterisks and inexplicable numbers

Reading: *Birth Without Violence / The Paper Midwife*  
*A Guide to Responsible Home Birth*

21st January / passed my Distance Learning exam in Horticulture  
Human Biology next perhaps / forgot to take my temperature

February: used Bennett's pendulum to find out if I'm pregnant yet—  
keep trying / happy 32nd birthday Me / second pendulum test is positive

the fertilized ovum will swoop down the fallopian tube multiplying  
as it travels / each divided cell a mite smaller than the original

Himself says he'll believe it when there's proof / 12 days post-conception  
is Waitangi Day / I wonder when I should ring the yoga class

*Your Body Your Baby Your Life / Birth of a Family;*  
*Psychological Aspects of Pregnancy / Eating Well For a Healthy Pregnancy;*

the cell cluster bubble has around 32 cells / it measures the same as the  
unfertilized egg  
this morula is ready to slip from the fallopian tube / .5 mm gap / into the  
uterus

increased blood supply will nourish the new life / I wonder  
if I will be able to sense implantation / a miniature meteorite

have arranged for a pregnancy test on Wednesday  
and becoming anxious about being wrong / again

lab technicians' strike / my doctor teaching at Wellington Hospital  
a very helpful staff nurse / Valerie / rings me back / inconclusive

another bottle of pee on Monday / the uterus is soft and engorged with blood  
morula now a blastocyst extending antennae in search of nourishment

the embryo has primordial legs & arms at the gill slits  
eye development is under way / it probably looks like a baby seahorse

temperature plummeted this morning / period started

sorry

**About the poet:**

Laurice Gilbert worked as an audiologist in New Zealand's public-health service for twenty-six years before retiring to immerse herself in poetry. She was president of the New Zealand Poetry Society from 2007 to 2017; her poems have appeared in many journals and anthologies in that country as well as in Australia, USA, Canada, the UK and Israel. She has received three Pushcart Prize nominations and has published two poetry collections.

**About the poem:**

"This is the first chapter of a planned long narrative poem about the pregnancy, birth and subsequent postnatal depression I experienced with my third child. These are common experiences, each felt in a unique way, and this is my chosen method of sharing how they affected me. This poem is based on the actual journals I kept throughout that time. Waitangi Day, mentioned in the poem, is a national holiday commemorating the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's founding document, on February 6, 1840. As it is a public holiday, all public services are closed. In 1986, most pregnancy testing was carried out in public hospital labs, so the holiday added to the wait for testing, and to my impatience to have it."

**Poetry editors:**

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer