

What I Keep

Category: Poems

written by Melissa Fournier | October 13, 2017

Melissa Fournier ~

Inked footprints on paper
a one-ounce trial size
 of Johnson's Head-to-Toe Baby Wash
 one-quarter gone
a striped receiving blanket and knit hat
 folded inside a clear plastic bag
 zipped to preserve her scent
a vial of holy water
 one-third gone
a dried white rose entwined with baby's breath
two hospital bracelets
one sonogram picture at seven weeks
three sonogram pictures at twenty weeks
a urine-imbued double-pink-lined stick
 which I hold like proof
 the way Thomas held out his blood-
 and-water-soaked finger
 after removing it from Christ's
 pierced side

About the poet:

Melissa Fournier is a perinatal and pediatric hospice social worker, and program director of a nonprofit bereavement center in Traverse City, MI. Her poetry has appeared in [Dunes Review](#) and *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, and she received the 2013 William J. Shaw Prize for Poetry awarded by Michigan Writers, a nonprofit group dedicated to helping local writers hone their craft and publish their work. She also facilitates Writing Through Loss, a therapeutic writing program for individuals grieving the death of a loved one.

About the poem:

"This poem was inspired by my disbelief over the death of my daughter, Camille Grace, born on the very edge of viability and held for the entirety of her ninety-minute life. Yes, she was here, and she is risen."

Poetry editors:

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer