

Hold

Category: Longing

written by Anne Whetzel | March 7, 2026

I lean back in the reclined hospital chair, and the nurse places my baby heart to heart on my bare chest, for the first time. She covers us in blankets. Me with my mask, long hair up, a giant blanket covering my body, and a little pink and blue knit hat under my chin. I stare at the clock, the second hand, because I don't know what else to do. A few beeps brings me back and I stare at the monitors beside the isolette. He forgets to breathe, his heart rate dips too low, his tubes on his legs, arms, nose and mouth get tangled. It is a relief when the nurse comes in to say time to put him back. I untangle his hand from mine, a fairy hand around my pointer finger barely covering my finger pad. The nurse helps me settle him into his incubator. Standing beside his machines, watching his vitals normalize under his clear plastic cocoon, I still feel his tiny warm body, heart beating, on my chest.

Sitting here years later, my son eating dinner beside me, I still feel his tiny warm body, heart beating, on my chest.

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