**Awe**

Sitting in a recliner  
in the NICU, lights dim,  
holding a baby so small  
I wonder at his breath while  
looking at the perfection of  
his tiny ear  
  
which reminds me  
of a flower, an iris, with its  
veined petals folding back  
and forward, layer upon layer,  
opening an closing  
  
which reminds me  
that flowers are   
strewn over coffins, placed in  
the hands of the dead,  
  
which reminds me   
that flowers call us with their  
quiet odors, pull us closer,  
force us to see the exquisite  
correctness and fragility  
of life.

Janet Hull Ruffin

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