

When Death Came Knocking On My Door

The first time I noticed Death,  
Was not long after my first breath.  
He watched as I waited;  
Eye wide and fascinated.  
Growing up, he stayed by my side,  
Hiding in the shadows, preoccupied.  
Come light come dark, Death was always there,  
A moment without Him would be so rare.

Time passed and I started to wonder,  
When will Death take me yonder\*

Doctors and nurses talk on and on,  
With words I didn't understand, but neither did mum.  
Then as if it were a dream  
Death disappeared, no longer to be seen.

Tests and vials and tubes galore,  
Oh, how I wished Death would come knocking at my door.  
With a brave smile that never reached her eyes,  
Mum leaned in and gave up the lies.  
It's okay my love, just have some faith  
Pray for happiness, strength an- *wait*

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Ten, fifteen, twenty years on,  
All trace of illness, abnormalities... seemingly gone.  
The miracle of modern medicine, genetic technologies  
Endless pills and check-ups, unprecedented therapies!  
Death slowly became a collection of distant vague memories.

So, the next time I sat in a Doctors' office,  
I was reminded of a childhood I did not miss;  
The anxiety, fear, the uncertainty was almost suffocating.  
Though not for the same reasons, I should be stating.  
A quick test result, a pop to the loo,  
Oh thank God, I was going to be a mum too.

To think Once Upon A Time, I was surrounded by Death,  
With a new life is inside me; I felt so blessed!  
But the concern in their eyes made me uneasy.  
A couple *more* tests, a *mandatory* screening.  
Every part of me, silently screaming.

Unforeseen mutation  
*Breathe in, breath out*  
Nothing that can be done  
*Inhale my dear*  
Prognosis is Death, painless if we're lucky  
*Don't cry – how is that going to help?*  
Help the child by ending her suffering  
*I made it throu-*

*Wait- did you say girl?*

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Comforting  
Words  
Confusing  
Odds  
Cautious  
Support  
*No, I screamed.*

*I refused to abort.*

*You fixed me  
You saw the worth of a human life;  
Mine!  
A little girl whose life was chained  
To a cruel fate o-  
Am I to blame?*

*T'was my genes,  
My fault.*

*No, I refused to abort.*

*Would my mother have chosen the same?  
She couldn't have known, free of all blame.  
Have faith, she would say  
No matter what come may.*

*They guilt me.  
Scare me.  
Using the law as a final resort.  
She won't live long  
Barely a day  
Stats and facts  
No, I refu-*

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*I yelled at the Doctors, demanding to know:  
When were they planning to share the memo?  
No cure, no medicine, no funding you see,  
For my unborn baby, helpless as can be.*

Angry and frustrated,  
I asked Death to do what's best  
For what was the alternative?  
I couldn't let her be born in a world where she is instantly discriminated.  
Not due to her race, nor her class or gender  
but the very essence of her being  
Means they cannot mend her.

I remember their options:  
'Adopt, use a donor'  
*A lot can be done*

Yet in a world which spins on  
Privilege  
Profit  
Power  
I keep feeling like I'm trapped in an endless tower.  
This time, though, the spotlight is no longer on me,  
But Alas, not even my poor baby.

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Death lingered, Death waited.  
But His presence never *truly* faded.  
For He too was bound by fate.  
Perhaps that is why He plagued my childhood.  
A silent companion; neither bad nor good.  
Looking back to all those times,  
It's only now do I realise  
Death was simply being kind.