“Something’s wrong with this baby,” the attending said, gesturing. “Can you see it?”
“Yes,” says my fellow student, without pausing to breathe.

I stare at the two of them.
At the nude human, whimpering. Small fists flailing.

Wrong.

I wonder. The baby lets out a small breath.
Two-day-old eyes bore into me. Alert. Processing the world she’s just joined.

Wrong.

Red reflexes staring back at me. Homogenous, we say. Bright. The same.

Wrong.

I stare at her upslanting eyes,
The buzz of words we’re supposed to know flood my mind.

Wrong.

A sensation in my throat — or is it vomit?

Somewhere, distant, I hear my colleague rattling off words.

We ALL fall DOWN.
A compilation of First Aid, PowerPoints, and mnemonics fly through her mind.
The signs of wrong.
“Yes, the simian crease” they say as I reach out to touch her hand. I’m here.
“Low set ears,” as I wonder if she can hear us. It’s okay.

Wrong. I wonder if they’ve forgotten the baby.

The atonic neck barely turns and I wonder if she senses me.
Senses how we ripped her apart, two days into this world.

Denying her of her beauty and perfection.
Of the life she will lead full of a different wonder,
one we will never understand.

Wrong.

As our fingers meet, my internal pride widens.
Well, her grasp reflex is strong.

Strong.

And in the background, I hear my attending,
Commenting on my need to improve my fund of knowledge.