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A New Mother's Blood Type

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I learned fetal DNA
can be found

in the mother's blood
for a short time postpartum.

The detail came
late in the library

and hung there for a minute
like cold air.

Once rouge labor pains
have turned to pink

this genetic essence
pulses gently

through her tired body
with every heartbeat

perfuses deep into
each narrow space

thin capillary
and quiet inlet.

For a moment, the mother
is both without child and

completely overflowing
with its design. Instructions

left over from
a grand origination

brush inside edges of the body

that gave it form. Lungs

once delivering outside air
like a scuba apparatus

so the baby could live
underwater. Pulse

a constant production of
give and take, give and take,

give and take, the muscle
shares an ancient rhythm

offering the first lesson
a mother's heart can lend:

it is by constant, unrelenting force
that anyone is alive.

I learned a hole
in the fetal heart

closes over at birth,
as if to say living

must always begin with
a change of heart.

I saw the mark left behind
in anatomy lab today

felt the impression
with my fingertip.

And it stayed with me,
like a reverent breath.
