

1970

## First Born

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## DIAGRAM

Suppose you write a poem—  
And it's about two people's guts:  
You show them buttocks to buttocks—  
Let's say you call it 'Diagram';

Or, with dotted lines between them,  
Facing, to show the passage of semen,  
You make a full examination  
Of their reproductive system;

For this, you take little trips  
Through them, long journeys in between—  
And you think, "All poems are a dream,  
Only, some dreams happen to be steps  
Towards discovering a world . . ."  
You take their bodies' evidence:  
Their dreams illustrate defenselessness—  
And in their brains your lines are forming, curled.

## FIRST BORN

I was pregnant, standing outside the hospital.  
A man I didn't know put his hand on my shoulder.  
He said, Well, how did you get that inside of you,  
And what are you going to do about getting it out?  
He asked if I had a birth permit. I said I didn't know.  
Then he told me to follow him into the hospital,  
He would give me a private consultation . . .

We went upstairs to a room, and a man in a white coat  
Who looked like his brother came in. When he was done  
He stood up and smiled in my face. Well, well, he said,  
It's about time. And he pushed me someplace in the belly,  
And my baby's head popped out! Then back in again—  
Out and in, out and in . . . I was astonished  
How easy it was to bear children.