

1994

Afternoon Tea with Mum

Coral Hull

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Two Poems · *Coral Hull*

afternoon tea with mum

we almost died didnt we/

4.30 pm afternoon tea/

melbourne is grey/ i look out/ from a terrace house/
have not been out/ for twenty six hours/ got no
money til pension day/

afternoon tea/ with my mother/

goes like this/ we almost died didnt we/ yes/ but
you dwell in the past/ too much/

i never wanted to

birth/ mother/ i spend all my day/ trying to get
back/ to how it was/ & will not leave the house/
until pension day/

mother says: you are wasting your
life/ shut up in here/ go for a walk/ to the park/
& get some sun/

but my skin/ it hurts/ i never
wanted to birth/ & the outside light makes me dizzy/

happy birthday/ to poverty/

would you like a cup of

tea: mum/ i do not like the sun: light/ i like it
inside the terrace house/ i like melbourne/

& do not

want to leave your womb/ but you are dying with me
inside/

i wait for the cheque/ fourteen days
overdue/

a late ripe fruit/ reluctant to drop/ to
its death & the winter/ chilling the seed/ & killing
it/ until it splits & grows/ let me stay inside/

we
are clutching the sheets/ together: we are pleading/
for a natural birth/ but would naturally: die first/

i do not want to birth/ mother/ im afraid we have
lost: consciousness/

we have been given the gas/ an
epidural in the back/ a spine chilling mess/

do not
push me out/ my arm is breaking/

here i come/ bum
first & bleeding/ into an injured world/ from an
injured womb/

upside down/ falling from branches/ i
hit the muddy ground/ it splashes up/ air punctures
my lungs/ frozen like razors/ a new seed cracks/ i
scream for you/ before my breath/

from inside/ the
humid crib/ i do not like being: outside/

this is
my birth/ you recover from the gas/ we almost died
didnt we/

yes/ but you dwell in the past/ too much/

i am tired/ & will stay in the house/ until pension
day/ besides i am broke/

mum takes an early flight/
back to sydney/

& the only thing/ that makes me go
out/ for a walk in the park/ into autumn darkness/
is when my nan rings up long distance & says:

ive
loved you from the day you were born/ with your
little twisted arm