

Dealing with Sudden Melancholy

by Nonnie Augustine

Someone who I know only via Facebook and a writer site we both belong to posted a picture of a 12 week old fetus in the palm of a human hand. The message was anti-abortion. You know--how can you consider killing this baby? And the picture was of a tiny, tiny baby, looking like a newborn infant only so much smaller. Is that true? I didn't think they were so perfect-looking so early. Is that what 12 week old fetuses look like? I'd do a search or something but I'm too fragile at the moment to check on this. It might be true. No. It was a trick photo, wasn't it? My baby died in utero at 16 weeks. Annie Clare was her name. Is her name. This happened 21 years ago and had she lived her birthday would have been two days ago. It was a punch in the stomach to see that tiny baby on Facebook. Don't they, the pro-life crusaders remember us? The expectant parents who lost babies they wanted very much and never got to see? Do they really want to hurt us this much while making their political/churchy point?

Nevermind. I have worked things out for myself. About 10 years ago, when I was still married, I got to thinking about Annie Clare again during a road trip. I had my usual muddled, near tears thinking for awhile, then a new thought popped up. What if there is a heaven? What if Annie Clare was born in heaven? Of course! She was scooped up by a heavenly being, possibly an angel, finished her time in a celestial surrogate mother's womb, and was born in heaven. A heaven-born, as are all the babies who don't get to have live births for *whatever* reason. Wonderful, creative, calming thoughts skipped through me. It was all I thought about for the rest of the trip during those long road trip silences. There were silences that lasted hundreds of miles.

When we got home I started a novel about Annie Clare and her life in heaven. I wrote about who was raising her, how she played with other heaven-borns, “dead” people and celestials she got to know and what her room looked like. My novel wasn't only about heaven--there was a plot of sorts and a character that was her living mother. Madeleine. Not me, *exactly*. Writing my novel was also my first serious go with writing. Huh. I finished it and sent it out, but no one decided to publish it, although there were nibbles. I'm thinking about getting back to it. The earth parts seem all wrong to me now. I've learned a lot in the last ten years. Soon, I'll have a book of poetry out there in the world. Annie Clare is alive in the novel, though. I think that's why I want to get back to it.

One of the many things I don't understand about militant pro-life Christians is: whatever do they think happens to fetuses that don't get to have live births? They believe in heaven don't they? HEAVEN. If life begins at conception, then the soul begins at conception, (I think souls probably begin before, long before a particular conception) so why don't they think that the souls of these babies who don't have a live birth would go straight to heaven and be splendidly happy, cared for, loved...all that. Huh? Why do they get so upset about abortion? If you asked the baby, he or she would most certainly prefer heaven to being unwanted and on earth. I used to teach emotionally disturbed Kindergartners, and believe me, they were not having a good time. The first goal we teachers had for them was to “experience their environment with pleasure,” because they didn't know how to do that. And it's a damn hard thing to teach.

Losing my baby is the worst thing that has happened in my life. I can't think of anything that might happen even now that would be worse. I was having a middling to good morning until I saw that fucking Facebook photo. Then, whoosh. Down and down. I'm all right now, because I'm writing about it; getting my anger out. Thinking about Annie Clare is okay, now. Maybe I'm not *completely*

sane, but I'm me, and I can think about her any way I want. Sorry if that sounds corny. Shit. I am corny. Not cruel, though. I've never been cruel.

