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Elegy: Written for Unknown Babies

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Elegy: Written for Unknown Babies

Newspapers spurn the thought of uterine life.
The judges wonder if a fetus small
Deserves the law's protection from the knife,
And those who plead for life are charged with gall.

Abortion's foes are named with tyrants cruel
Who murder freedom for their own delights.
But those who with a knife eject a jewel
Are merely exercising sacred rights.

Is this the world where saplings thin are braced
And flowers watered, every bud to save?
Are human eyes, a mind already faced
Designed for nothing but an early grave?

We harbor horror at a gunman's shot;
We thirst for vengeance 'gainst the bully's blow.
But mother claims her fetus but a knot
Of cells and tissue, and we let her go.

What king unborn was judged before his birth
And executed by his mother dear
As blood and bones and tissue of no worth
Though child enough to flinch with human fear?

Some million babes have wilted on the stem
As doctors severed each umbilical cord.
What gardener will repeal the mother's whim
That on some sunny day says, "I am Lord"?

In May when tulips bloom we mourn the death
Of young men cut when barely in the bud.
We give for those who never drew a breath
No day, no speech, no tears for shedding blood.

For them no more a mother's veins will feed;
No more the shelter of the law or wombs.
When mothers' freedoms seem a pressing need
Then babes are dumped in bloody, unmarked tombs.

For blood like this, Macbeth would see a ghost,
His wife would pace the midnight floor and weep.
I see on my TV a woman boast
Of taking life, and lying down to sleep.

Some legislators fight to pass a bill
To correct the feeble-minded judges' view
That fueled the engine for abortion's mill
And proved, alas, an eager Satan's cue.

Will legislative conscience stop the voice
Of blood that cries to sovereign God above?
Or will the ranting lobby of "pro-choice"
Forever kill the chance for human love?

Mike Vanden Bosch

Legal Tender

Randall VanderMey

Now take old Mrs. Franco and old Mr. Schilling, the butcher. Ain't no love lost between them two. Ain't no wasted smiles. Ain't no need! Mr. Schilling, he got the duck. Mrs. Franco, she got the dollar. He ain't gonna git no bum dollar. She ain't gonna git no skinny duck. He give the dollar bill a snap to make sure it ain't made on no two-bit backyard print press out a no moldy green exclassified section and she do her part, snip for snap—she give that cross-eyed duck a smack on the bill with the palm of her hand to make sure that orange thing ain't held on by no horseglue. He don't smile and she don't say no two words. But so? I seen him wink to her one time across a leg a lamb, and I hear her say to him, "You got a tic in you eye, Mr. Schilling?"—and I be off to the next stall buying me a squid or something thinking, I know this, I see the game, the dollar, the duck, all the whole thing, no talking and no smiling, it's a way a saying something can't be said, I believe I hear it. And if he die, she going to be there crying into them marigolds she bring and saying, "That man skin a good goat." And if she go first, he going to be there, second row, shaking that spotty head a his and saying, "Mrs. Franco, she a good fat woman."