

## Gillian Harding-Russell / FULL MOON THIS NIGHT IN JANUARY

With your fingers  
against night glass, you fingerprint  
the moon      a man's skull  
an old woman spinning  
the fishy spine of a fetus  
all visible  
to this susceptible eye.

You blow warm frost against the pane  
and mark the light smudge of stars  
with dots

a ladder to that dark element  
framing our brain, thin-layered  
in bone and halo-white.

(You can step into that sky  
just closing your eyes  
and dreaming.)



I tell you the story  
about the smudge of life  
within my belly, that dark figment  
sketched on film, I am told  
to believe may be  
your brother. Can believe  
only when I feel  
the trail of new formed limbs  
flutter within me.

Why was I surprised to see  
the small perfect head, limbs  
angled like a doll's

to embrace  
(the testes unlike) nature  
unfolding oblivious  
to clinical eyes  
watching, measuring  
interpreting (that lump  
is bladder, that dissected snail  
the house of heart, the kidneys  
like love birds twinning).

You will step out  
of that brief negative  
into the light  
at large  
to live.



Your great grandfather still  
living stepped out  
of the shell of his body, leaving  
it in the nursing home. While his eye  
levels with the anesthetic table top  
his mind roams the dust motes  
of his boyhood  
on the prairies.

So strange to step out  
of a negative  
into the light  
back to the negative  
when the image is worn.

*I can draw you  
on a piece of paper, cut out  
the shape that is you*

*and you'll be gone, won't you?  
Or where will you be?*

We dream (consciousness  
taking cons, the thought  
in sea-creatures,  
the lumbering lobster and crab,  
like the shadow  
at the brainstem).



You crawl into bed  
and I turn out the light.

*It's funny, I'm there  
but not really there, when  
I'm asleep — things  
can happen and I  
don't notice them, you know  
what I mean? I missed*

the ferry trip across Georgia Strait,  
did not see the dolphins and whales  
(or did I?) when  
I fell asleep.

Because you have been sick  
I creep back at midnight  
to watch your face, eyelids  
sculptured white in shadow  
young lips puffed and pouting  
mouthing small words.

*January 12, 1990*

(for Celia, Lindsay and Katie, aged 2, 7 and 11 years)