

The Water Child

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My mother is stoic and only weeps at fiction. She affords herself the luxury of release when it is artificial, but swallows and buries it deep when it was real. The thing is, one cannot bury water – it continues to trickle down until it rests on something that can absorb it.

Her suppressed tears filtered down to me, like residual raindrops in a cave after a storm, pumping gallons overtime when I was forming inside of her. A water baby. I needed to be cut out of her because I was too heavy. Over the course of nine months, I had drunk all the tears and my foetal body had been bolstered with liquid veins, swollen limbs, a puffy face, a watery heart.

The caesarean gash on my mother's abdomen has healed and faded over the years, but is still raised and visible. I catch her tracing over her yellow sundress, over where it is on her stomach, then caressing it as if she's fallen again. The puddles of water in her womb, leftover from when I was removed, have fertilised a healthy breeding ground for a phantom child.

Now I am grown and I cry and cry and cry. Sometimes I do not know why. I look at my mother's face and she looks back in perplexity and confusion. I took most of the tears out of her when I was born. Her face instantly makes me bawl. Her water is my water. My tears are her tears. How can she not know that she is the reason I cry?