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12

Abortions will not let you forget.

You remember the children you got that you did not get,

The damp small pulps with a little or with no hair,

The singers and workers that never handled the air.

You will never neglect or beat

Them, or silence or buy with a sweet.

You will never wind up the sucking-thumb

Or scuttle off ghosts that come.

You will never leave them, controlling your luscious sigh,

Return for a snack of them, with gobbling mother-eye.

I have heard in the voices of the wind the voices of my
dim killed
children.

I have contracted. I have eased

My dim dears at the breasts they could never suck.

I have said, Sweets, if I sinned, if I seized

Your luck

And your lives from your unfinished reach,

If I stole your births and your names,

Your straight baby tears and your games,

Your stilted or lovely loves, your tumults, your marriages,
aches,

and your deaths,

If I poisoned the beginnings of your breaths,

Believe that even in my deliberateness I was not
deliberate.

Though why should I whine,

Whine that the crime was other than mine?--

Sir

Or

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dim
children.

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Your luck
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If I stole your births and your names,
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Your stilted or lovely loves, your tumults, your marriages,
aches,
and your deaths,
If I poisoned the beginnings of your breaths,
Believe that even in my deliberateness I was not
deliberate.
Though why should I whine,
Whine that the crime was other than mine?--
Since anyhow you are dead.
Or rather, or instead,
You were never made.
But that too, I am afraid,
Is faulty: oh, what shall I say, how is the truth to be said?
You were born, you had body, you died.
It is just that you never giggled or planned or cried.

Believe me, I loved you all.
Believe me, I knew you, though faintly, and I loved, I
loved you
All.

by Gwendolyn Brooks

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