

Deborah Keenan

THE BABY

She had a brief and beautiful greed for milk, for the color blue, for more milk, and many late night television shows. She was constantly luminous, showily glowish. When we carried her from the prairie to the west coast, her glittering skin and eyes sustained and inspired us, though we were not pioneers.

The baby, born in winter, loves summer. The baby loves being warm, hot even. The baby lies face down on a blue towel and dreams of reindeer who do not glow with radioactivity, dreams of lions.

And now the baby, in October, admits summer has ended. And now the baby hates us all for our powerlessness. Sick of our love, sick of being carried. Preferring her crib, her mobile of six Shetland ponies, spinning and neighing.

She was just a little wild, the baby. Her parents were a little too tame, so she got to be a little too wild. Not like a reindeer at all, much more like a tawny, ragged lion. But small. A very small, secretive kind of lion, with teeth that could hurt you. She was a small, dark gold lion right here on earth.