

The Call of Wildflowers

Julie Bloss Kelsey

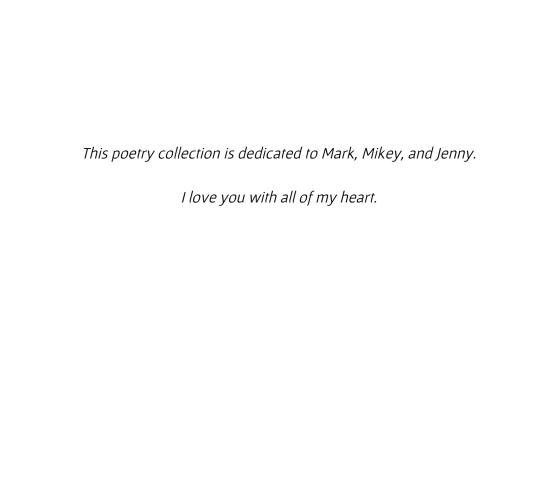
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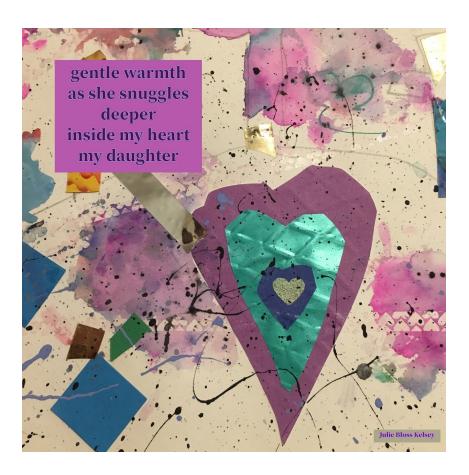


pregnant at forty— I never knew I missed you until you were born

swollen half moon...
thirty-eight weeks
and counting

forty weeks along but still no baby name

in these arms like nothing I've ever held before... a daughter



hiding from our baby playing peek-a-boo
—the moon

second birthday everywhere I look candy sprinkles first day of school her unscuffed shoes scrape the sidewalk

my baby doll in my daughter's arms... my baby dolls

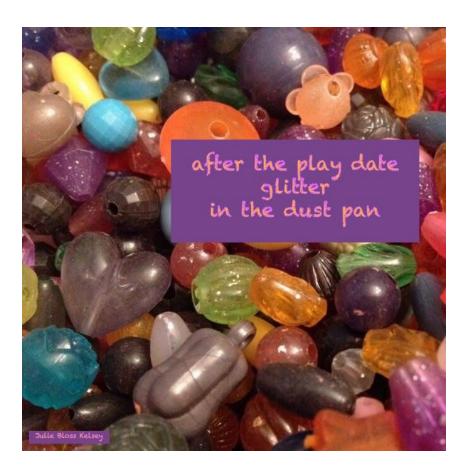
such a wide smile

in wax crayon

I want to become

the radiant mother

in my daughter's drawings



sudden spring heat last year's ballet slippers tight on her toes

> my daughter's hug butterfly wings around my heart

first winter storm—
a thin coat of snow
on the toddler

preschool field trip—
he hoists a tiny pumpkin
onto his shoulder

nativity play... the star of Bethlehem loses his way

evolution my son draws a dinosaur for a girl thunderstorm warning—
the insistent pleas
of small children

spin cycle the endless agitation of siblings at play



on the balcony our children dance to the rhythm of bubbles

Easter Sunday the hunt for matching socks

above the pure white Communion dress my daughter's scowl a row of saplings
where the tall pines
once stood
I take my oldest
for driving lessons

snow squall my teen gives me a dubious look familiar songs
drifting up the stairs—
over college break
our eldest rediscovers
the ukulele

midnight cough—
the scent of menthol
sneaks into our bedroom



family dog the warm spot on the ottoman

as news of war leaves me helpless... she hands me construction paper and stickers

a light dusting of snow around the edges of the windowpanes... our hearts remember the little things

family photo four smiles and a smirk

In Remembrance of Adam and Erin

first sonogram
so excited to see you
we didn't notice
your missing heartbeat

the silence

remembering my miscarriages Mother's Day



The author gratefully wishes to acknowledge the following publications, where many of these poems first appeared:

A Hundred Gourds Atlas Poetica brass bell: a haiku journal Bright Stars, An Organic Tanka Anthology cattails Englyn: Journal of Four Line Poetry Failed Haiku Frogpond hedgerow: a journal of small poems Seven by Twenty Shambhala Times Midwinter Haiku Contest The Ramboo Hut The Haiku Calendar Competition, Snapshot Press The Heron's Nest A Thousand Voices, Tanka Society of America Members' Anthology



Julie Bloss Kelsey began writing haiku after the birth of her third child in 2009. She used to sit in a comfy chair, nursing her daughter, while staring out the window and composing poetry. This gradually evolved into frantically typing haiku, tanka, and other short forms into an iPhone while shuttling her children to various activities. Much of her work can be found on Twitter, where she posts as

<u>a,MamaJoules</u>. Julie is married and lives in Maryland with her husband, her two younger kids, one dog, and three fish.

"From pregnancy to college, Julie shares moments with her kids that so many of us experience and forget. Even if you haven't been a mother, these poems will make you feel like you are one. It's that easy to get caught up in reading her work. Anyone who reads this book will see these poems as the gems they are, and a testament of a mother's love."

 Susan Burch, author of Keeping Score: Angry Tanka, Vice President of the Tanka Society of America, & 2018 Touchstone Award Winner for Individual Poem

"Julie Bloss Kelsey offers up the gentle joys and fragile moments of parenthood with insight, humor, and bravery. From daily aggravations to the push-and-pull of watching her children grow, she lays bare her heart, writing as someone who has been in the trenches, and has come up not hardened, but open and receptive to life's sweeter things."

 Tia Haynes, author of Leftover Ribbon (shortlist, 2019 Touchstone Distinguished Book Award)