

POETRY

One of us

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One of us asks,
 "Is there family?"
 He has two children,
 A son in Omaha
 And a daughter in Idaho.

One of us has her knees on his bed,
 Both arms locked at the elbows,
 Caving in his breastbone an inch,
 Holding,
 Releasing,
 Eighty times a minute.

One of us squeezes a blue balloon
 That pushes oxygen
 Through the tube one of us
 Shoved down his throat
 Twenty minutes ago
 When he first gasped for breath.

One of us feeds him,
 Not meat and potatoes
 As he must have been used to,
 But calcium and epinephrine.

We talk as if we were at a family reunion,
 Not about Uncle Jack and Aunt Martha's
 Two sets of triplets,
 But about blood gasses and pH
 And ventricular fibrillation.

One of us pushes the green button on the little machine
 And waits
 Then pushes the red button.
 His hands rise four inches off the bed
 And then fall back.



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One of us says it is time and we
 Stop.

One of us asks what time it is
 And writes it down
 It is official.

One of us washes him off
 Like a newborn baby

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