

POETRY

One of us

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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