

## **Don't cry (even though you want to)**

At eleven forty of an August morning  
she joined us here on Earth,  
just one of nine billion  
but one in nine billion,  
one like no other.

She taught me what it means to love  
(but that is by the by,  
not I but she is here to cheer your spirit).

One week was an eternity,  
then two, then a month,  
then one August morning  
she had aged a year,  
she smiled, she laughed,  
she played, she cried,  
and soon she walked.

That year became two, then four,  
then eight, then twelve  
and one night,  
as I sat beside her at the supper table,  
I saw that this once slip of thing,  
once nothing but unwieldy legs and arms  
was growing breasts,  
small yet, small,  
yet significant.

Big school came, and sleepovers  
and where-were-you rows  
and assurances that no one loved her more  
than Mum and I.

At seventeen she left, ostensibly for college  
but I knew, though she did not,  
that she was leaving for ever.

I did not cry, although I wanted to,  
but I did not cry.

She met a boy, a young man,  
and went to live with him.  
And one day she visited  
and told me  
'By the way,  
you're going to be a granddad'.

And now she has her own one in a billion  
And came to learn  
and understand  
the things  
what I had learned  
by her simply coming alive  
those many years ago.