

SMALL TOWN WAITING ROOMS

Garland Strother

Waiting for news of your own kin
you hear about the teenage mother
whose newborn child died last week,
the heart too small, veins too thin,

to be a child, how she asked to hold
him again and wouldn't let go,
fastened like pitch to rhythm,
the small life in her hands already cold.

Several waiting rooms later she's still
in shock. The baby dies each time
she tries to sleep. The pills to keep
from waking never work nor ever will.

Randomly overhearing private news
we learn to heal from it like the blues.

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