

Ari

It hasn't met the world yet.

I say quietly, as I hold this newborn child. His name is Ari.

It's a unique name.

My sister gave it to him because she said she wanted him to feel special. Different.

I whisper his name to him

Ari.

He doesn't react to it at all

Though they have labeled him with it, he hasn't learned to respond

He hasn't met the world yet.

That name will hurt you.

It will hurt when it's called last for games, first to be out, or not called at all

It will hurt when you hear it with insults, slanders, and jokes

Part of me wishes he would never learn it.

But I know there will always be some way to refer to this baby, this boy, this man.

It does not matter what you are called, I guess.

But Ari, that name will hurt you.

Because you haven't met the world yet.

So different from the rough, course

scarred, callous hands that I touch him with

He has this soft, hairless

Smooth, silky skin.

He hasn't met the world yet.

You will bleed, burn, and scrape.

That skin will carry marks of its time on Earth.

Right now its unblemished.

I can hope those scars are on accident and not on your wrists

That they come from falls and not from fists

But I cannot, could not, keep you from it.

Growth and progress require pain.

I look at you heartbroken and know that your purity won't last long.

Because you haven't met the world yet.

Ari's eyes are a deep brown

Rich Illinois soil waiting to grow something golden and beautiful.

But he hasn't met the world yet.

You will see things you wish could be erased from your memory.

I can't stop that from happening.

But I hope that you don't let the weeds take root and grow, stealing away your sunlight.
Right now your eyes have seen little, and you remember nothing.
Because you haven't met the world yet.

Ari,
You beautifully, innocent babe.
I can't control any of it
What they say, what you hear
How you get hurt, how it heals
What you see, what you remember.
But I'll love you through all of it.
No, you haven't met the world yet.
But you've met, and will always have,
Me.