

## **Burping the Baby**

I burped the baby on the other shoulder last night.

We rarely call upon this side;  
the load of the baby does not often greet  
this left shoulder.

It started as a physical need.  
Arm, elbow, neck, wrist begging for a break;  
a different role.

The baby's weight had worn out the right side and rendered me weary.

The physical burden lifted from one set of joints and landed on the others.

The weight of the baby on the other side was  
novel,  
a gift,  
a reason for awe,  
a moment of pause.  
Drool pooled up,  
sticky,  
like honey or syrup.  
I could nearly taste the sweetness of the moment.

I sucked the relief as sustenance into my tired being,  
showing me I had capacity to receive love and  
be ready to pour another round of milk and love from my chest to my babe's mouth.

As he quickly moved his head up and slowly,  
ever so slowly  
settled back down,  
my heart did the same;  
rising in admiration and settling back down in humble gratitude.

I, thankfully, burped the baby on the other shoulder last night.

By Mary Beth Keenan