Lindsay Heuser
Heartbeat: A Poem in Three Parts

**The Call**

It rings out like an old friend
Familiar place, comforting time,
So unknowing.
It beckons with the usual laughter
and smiles
Of conversations
and jokes
and dreams.
Life really.
But not this time.
No, this time it's quasi-life,
the worst of life.
A familiar voice
with words of devastation.
Not death, god no.
Thank god.
It's the in-between
the unknown
the terrifying abyss of uncertainty.
A storm envelops me.
A flash flood fills the deepest depths of my soul
and I'm drowning.

Can't breathe.
Can't think.
Can't feel.

I'm stuck in the mud.
Hands quake, heart shakes, soul breaks.

Why is this happening
and why am I in this place
with these smiles
and I'm hearing this
and I have to go out
and be strong
and not collapse
and scream out under the weight of it all
and explain to them why a river
flows down my cheeks.
Why the storm is written
upon my face.

Why I’m here
and she’s there
and I’m fine
and she’s not
and no one will understand.
The familiar voice stops
and the words end.

I have no words.
I’m here.
She’s there.
Miles apart
always miles apart.

My flesh and blood
holding hands
playing on jungle gyms
racing through grass
waiting for mom’s dinner
early morning Christmas and late night movies
laughing, always laughing.

I need to hear her voice.
Speak please speak.
I need to hear it again.
Promise you’ll speak again when I’m there besides you, when I can hear it.
Anything.
A laugh
A sob
A call.

The Heart

The green line
Dives up and down
Repeat.
Up and down
Rhythm normal
My heart
Her heart
The constant lub dub  
Beeping of the machine  
Reassures.  
It’s all okay.  

Her heart continues on.  
My heart beats with hers.  
My parents too.  
We can feel it.  
A show of solidarity.  
We beat.  
Together.  
For her.  

A touch to the cold skin.  
That’s not her skin,  
Is it?  
It’s like death,  
Quasi-life again.  
Feel my warmth,  
Sleeping one.  
And take it.  
Wake up  
And beat onward again.  
Heart strong.  
Normal, even.  
The rhythm  
That betrayed you  
Is gone now.  

We will wait  
Besides you  
With hope  
Always hope.  
As long as it takes,  
We will wait  
Till your eyes open  
And your heart beats  
No machines attached  
No tubes  
No wires  
Just you  
And that heart  
constant and strong.  
We beat for you.
The Awakening

The river flows
down my face
again.
A wash of blurred colors
and shapes.
The river transformed.
A river of light
and hope
pouring into
an ocean of serenity.
The eyes stir.
The voice quivers.

She’s here
again.
The water is here
again.
The force of life here
again.
The ocean wells up
and bathes me
in its joy.
It gives and it takes
and it ebb-s and it flows.
It’s here,
this moment.
The blinding light of
hope renewed,
the impossible made possible.
Life affirmed
and not taken.

The heart beats
and the neurons fire
and the eyes blink
and the legs wiggle
and the fingers grasp
and the soul dances.

Our hearts beat
Together.

Alive, yes alive.