

**Wilderness House Literary Review 19/1**

*Elizabeth Wyman*

**To hold a human in your lap**

Small enough to lie crosswise across your thighs,  
Tufts of hair and gently curving skull tickling the tendons in the crook of  
your elbow,  
Rib to rib, lip to nipple, hip to hip,  
His chest gently pressed to yours with each breath,  
Closer with each exhale,  
Oxygen and carbon,  
Your nose to his lungs.  
A thousand tiny bits of organ, bone,  
Nerves and nails,  
Separated only by skin, not space, and I guess:  
You will never be this size again.  
Your weight will never nestle this perfectly in someone else's folds.  
What more could we dream but to relive that moment when our souls and  
we are lifted  
As children into the air and settled heart to beating heart,  
Whole to whole.

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### Stay Home

I have a dog,  
Protective, nuts.  
She needs her space – don't we all.  
I have a yard, where shadows move from west to east as the sun reverses  
course.  
I *am* grateful dammit.  
I have two kids.  
One grouches that it's getting close to bedtime. Tiny fists flail.  
His face is to the wind and he startles, eyelids wide, then tightly shut.  
The wind is new.  
It's all so new. Each change in nature, day by day.  
It's all he's known, this house, this yard.  
The older one ambles through Saint Augustine, runners snaking her toes,  
A patch or two of weeds in her wake  
(Okay fine, plenty of weeds, it's that time of year and we're busy),  
Chasing balls and shadows.  
Every step a blessing and a fear—for me, that is, not her.  
Have I killed all the fire ants? Did their dad pick up the dog poop?  
The sun is orange, darker than you'd think --  
7 o'clock, late enough in the year for warmth and lingering. Late in the  
day for my baby.  
The house shrinks behind me.  
Do they need to go to bed? The back of my shirt and my face are damp,  
And the littlest one is more certain than me.