

**Wilderness House Literary Review 14/3**

*Bree A. Rolfe*  
**The Stone of You**

We don't begin motherless—  
we were told how to hunt fire,  
what we held allegiance to,  
and what butterflies were poison.

Our eyes the color of coal  
glowed in the womb.  
We came out slick, warm  
dark-haired, wiggly in their arms  
imagining gold thunder.

We are in a hospital room,  
where days repeat days,  
punctuated only by McDonald's  
sundaes brought to us at midnight.  
Only a tiny yellow prayer blanket  
made by the ladies at Katie's  
church to keep us warm.

Who's Jonathan? the nurse asks  
because she keeps asking for him.

But she's asking for Janet,  
my godmother, who let me drink  
strawberry milk because I hated  
regular milk. My mother refused—  
just couldn't stand for making  
it even just a little sweeter.  
Janet arrives and we count breaths.

The whispers we kept close  
to our mouths were accidents  
rising in the dark.

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Finally, a reprieve, a few  
hours of sleep on an air  
mattress in the basement room  
I lived in as a teenager.  
The walls covered in writing  
that she forced my dad  
to paint over even though some  
of it was really fucking good.  
Some of it still showing faintly  
through three coats of paint.  
And then, mom is gone.

The stone of your eyes so dark  
and so much like our own.  
We want to climb inside  
It is solid in there. We won't fit.