

In the black room just before sunrise, when my kids are already burrowing into my limbs to wake me, because they want the light on, I think, if I'm right, and there is a creator of the universe, did they have to give us bodies designed to stop for several hours a day? And also, these smaller creations knit from these same frail bodies perfectly designed to thwart that? And was there a physical pain in creating the universe, or a heartache when it didn't go as expected? And is creation just a prelude to destruction? And is there a reason no one talks about the humiliations of birth, the pain and stitches and fountain of blood? And is it just like this for me? And what about the women who speak of their birth stories without wincing, as if they're not war stories? I see the neighbors through crooked vinyl blinds, lounging outside in folding wooden chairs on their porches with their coffees. When the neighbor kids knock on my door, they see through the crack inside a floor of primordial chaos, ants and crumbs and balled up paper towels, and orange juice stains, a bike helmet, counting blocks, and I think the creator must love repetition of the mundane, day and night, groceries and spills and diapers. And I can't seem to catch up, and sometimes my lullaby for them is little more than a whisper under my breath, stop, sleep, stop, stop, stop. It's times like this I can't stop thinking about a walk I took with my dad as a child, when I told him I couldn't catch up with the others in gym class. And he said I wasn't required to push past my physical limits. And if I ever find love in this life, it's going to look like a man who isn't put out when I need it all just to stop. And so before it all stops, which of course, someday it will, I decide the least I can do is let my son wake me by flipping the light, sampling the power of creation, calling out good morning, good night. To let my daughter build a Lego city, and when it doesn't work out, let her send the walls tumbling and cry out. And sometimes the stomping of their little feet sends shudders through the apartment floors, and sometimes they give a primal yell, and despite what the adults will tell them, they're not wrong to scream. It's the sound of being born, and giving birth, and dying, and everything that hurts in between.