

A Few Questions— Involving Pears— for My Newborn Son

So how do you like the air? The way it hums on your skin, moves through your nose in quick shots, or cools the lungs with the scent of fresh pears. The power it gives to release yourself in a scream. The breath of life that comes in sharply once, and is forever after going out. How do you like it? And the light? The way it burns your eyes and cuts into your mind. The way it confuses our world with colors: the yellow-green reflected off a pear, the reds and blues absorbed, the brown shadow cast on the counter. Let it in through your thin eyelids; shut it out with the mild jut of your brow. How do you like it, Son? Your ears dry and open to the noise. Shouts rumbling through the vent. The refrigerator's hum. The press and release of *pear*. The slip of our tongue shaping a voice that comes from a place we can't get at with words. Take another breath, Son, open your eyes, and listen. Then tell me, how do you like it?

—James Richards