

The Lost Baby Poem [1972]

the time i dropped your almost body down
down to meet the waters under the city
and run one with the sewage to the sea
what did i know about waters rushing back
what did i know about drowning
or being drowned

you would have been born into winter
in the year of the disconnected gas
and no car
we would have made the thin
walk over genesee hill into the canada wind
to watch you slip like ice into strangers' hands
you would have fallen naked as snow into winter
if you were here i could tell you these
and some other things

if i am ever less than a mountain
for your definite brothers and sisters
let the rivers pour over my head
let the sea take me for a spiller of seas
let black men call me stranger always
for your never named sake

Lucille Clifton, *Good Woman: Poems and a Memoir, 1969-1980* (Brockport: BOA Editions, 1987)