

Pregnancy Fête

Huntington's Pantoum

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Abstract

A mother's excitement about welcoming a new child into the world is tempered by the fear that her Huntington disease genes will be passed on to the baby.

Pregnancy fête: anticipation,
Excitement, planning
Counting the numbers
Ten fingers, ten toes

Excitement, planning
Pink sheets, blue ties?
Ten fingers, ten toes
First movements: rolling, kicking

Pink cheeks, blue eyes?
Watching you grow
First movements: rolling, kicking
Flickering ultrasound pictures

Watching you grow
I cannot wait to hold you
Flickering ultrasound pictures of
your shape

I cannot wait to hold you
As parents, we wonder how we'll be
You're shaped,
your chromosomes from ours

As parents, we wonder how will be
each pair of your genes
your chromosomes from ours
I have Huntington's disease.

Each pair of your genes,
fate sealed: heads or tails?
I have Huntington's disease.
Autosomal dominant, the doctor said.

Fate sealed. I can't make heads or tails of it.
Do you have it or not?
Autosomal dominant, the doctor said.
Will I watch you grow?

Do you have it or not?
I ache to hold you in my arms
Will I watch you grow?
Take your first steps?

I ache to hold you in my arms,
but I fear I'll drop you. As you
take your first steps,
will I be losing mine?

But I fear I'll drop you. As you
gum pureed solids,
will I be losing my
ability to swallow?

Gum pureed solids,
blow spit bubbles and drool
My ability to swallow
this tough pill is lost

Blow spit bubbles and drool
Quite the pair we make
This tough pill is not lost
on me

Quite the pair we make
The reason for your disease is
on me
Alone

The reason for your disease is
The number of repeats
Alone
New moms can feel trapped

The number of repeats
More than 36
New moms can feel trapped
The caged bird sings

More than 36
Will I live to see?
The caged bird sings
and you with me

Will I live to see?
Counting the numbers
and you with me
Pregnancy fate: anticipation.

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