

TOO YOUNG TO FACE THE DAWN

By Andrew DiPrinzio

Dear Eva,

You are crying now in your crib, which your father moved from our bedroom to the guest room. He sleeps there with you because on your first morning home post-hospital, when you cried, I went to the kitchen to fix your bottle and punched my hand through the foil lid. I cried too and told your father to get you away from me.

It's been two weeks since your birth. I can't speak your name. I say, "It" is hungry. "It" is tired. "It" is wet. I don't want you near my breasts. At least I can write your name, *Eva*. I'll keep writing it. *Eva*. If this is a breakthrough, I'll need to thank my psychologist who prescribed writing you letters.

At your birth, my regular physician was in Barbados. An invader, some pompous resident, checked my dilation with his index and middle fingers. His nails stretched against his glove. "We're still at four centimeters," he said. *We* weren't though. I didn't want him to take the moment from me. That's when I remembered a sardonic memory from my adolescence I had buried—the night I met the surfer Pharaoh Kal-Bassari. It spoiled any motherly jubilation, any intimacy I could've felt for you.

In retrospect, since that night, I've sunk like a damaged ship; in a miserable ballet, a vessel falling through the ocean of my consciousness. When that resident touched me, the memory, which had for years rested on the seafloor of my subconscious bubbled to the surface. I birthed a reminder of the most horrifying moment of my life.

Pharaoh Kal-Bassari molested me. I'm sure of it.