

HUSH LITTLE BABY

By Chastity Kennedy

NOTES

There is perhaps nothing more tragic for two new parents than to hear that their newborn baby was stillborn. In her heart-wrenching narrative poem, Chastity Kennedy introduces us to a young mother coming to terms with the reality that the baby she and her husband fought so hard for—is sadly gone. This selection should be performed by a female and may be entered in either Poetry Interpretation or Dramatic Interpretation. If used in Poetry Interpretation, the drama mask icons are visible to show the performer when to turn the pages of the manuscript.

I hate goodbyes.
I always have.
There's something so—*final*—about them.
Goodbye.

Today's goodbye will be the hardest one I've ever said.
Today's goodbye is one I never thought I'd *have* to say.
Today's goodbye
Is to my precious baby
Who was
Stillborn.

*Hush little baby, don't say a word,
Mama's gonna buy you a mockingbird...*

As a young girl, I'd line my dolls up against my bed.
I'd pretend to be their mother.
I'd teach them how to drink tea,
Or make the perfect cupcake.
I'd rock them to sleep at night.
I'd sing them lullabies.
I'd tuck them in beside me.
I'd make sure they were always within an arm's length,
In case they needed me.
I'd kiss their boo-boos.
I'd take them to the Baby Doll Hospital.

My entire life
I've been preparing to be a mother.

*If that mockingbird don't sing,
Mama's gonna buy you a diamond ring...*



When Jake and I got married,
We knew we wanted kids.
I always knew Jake would be a good father.
Once, while dating, we went to a family dinner.
He held the newborn daughter of a distant cousin.
He carried on a tiny conversation with her.
He held that little angel in his arms.
At that moment,
There was no talking of cars or football.
There were only sweet whispers
Promising that someday
All her dreams would come
True.

Jake was destined to be
An incredible loving and devoted father.
Someday, he would cry at his daughter's wedding.
It would break his heart to say goodbye—
To let his little princess go.
He would *definitely* cry at her wedding.
You could just
Tell.



When I became pregnant,
Imagine our delight
When we found out we were having a little girl.

Sonogram Days were the best!
Jake would always drive me to my appointments.
He'd put his ear against my stomach.
He'd listen to her little heartbeat.

It was all so sweet that *I'd* cry.

When our baby began to kick and move,
It all became somehow—real.

This was *real*.
This was not—*pretend*.
I was going to be—a *mother*.

Baby Jessie—that's the name we chose.