**The Debt Due** *by Sheila Aldous*

I noted in that room
The absence of your life —
And yet its term of expectancy
The welcoming of the bloody cord
Your little body caked in vernix cervosa.
I note as I walk the paths of Cwmdonkin
The pleasure of earth
The sweetness of soil
The flowers having lived
Replaced with seeds like you.
I note the defiance
To beat the flesh
To berate the weakness
To take a fist to the body
To uphold the spirit of you.
I note the presence
In the absence, in the rage
In the knowledge in you
To know the wage of life is death.
And then too, I note your absence in the air
The breath of you subtracted in the gentle night.
I note the long cry of you
The honesty of you, the ghost of you
In the terrible of the day, in the drink of you,
Of what they said about you: a boy of summer in his ruin.
And your father, I note his absence —
For you his betrayal by death
The devastation of his absent steps
The allusion to his truth
The empty delusion of pain
The burning end of light.
And I noted you living in the absence
In the shadows
Unbaggaged on the journey
Knowing about the payment of the debt
Knowing about being born to die.

*Dylan Thomas was born at 5, Cwmdonkin Drive, Swansea.*