**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.*