**The Foundling Mother’s List of Pain** *by Jane Burn*  
1. Walk, slow as you can towards that door  
2. Cradle your child, feed on the scent of frail hair   
3. Stitch the sight of newborn skin to the back of your eyes  
4. Offer your miracle to somebody else’s arms  
5. Cut a hole in your clothes   
6. Wear its wound, crave the missing piece  
7. Breathe all your love into this poor scrap   
8. Pray that time will not fret the kiss you press upon it   
9. See your piece pinned into a sorrowful book   
10. You will be bound by this inheritance of rags  
11. Your womb will mourn  
12. There is nothing you can do  
13. Try not to feel the blade of years as they pass   
14. Each blow of a candle, wear out the wish  
15. Stop picturing your baby folded to your breast  
16. Stop waking at night to imagined cries  
17. Stop opening your palm to the ghost of tiny hands  
18. Stop searching  
19. Howl. Your throat is wolves  
20. Every time a face peeps round the swoop of a skirt, look  
21. Hold your breath and scry for echoes   
22. You will probably never see your child again  
23. Say *mother* and your mind will break  
24. Grow old and never know

*Notes*Thomas Coram established the Foundling Hospital in London in 1739. It was the first children’s charity in the UK. It still exists as a charity today. Tokens or pieces of fabric were left by the mother for her child in case at some point she could return to reclaim her child.