

CORD

It's got to be cut at last, you know.
In spite of filial piety and selfish reason
you can't go on being dangled on the end
of this flabby grey string of obsolete cells
that won't supply nourishment any longer.
Of course, it's been a long battle
with you on the losing side.
Right - from that first half hour
when the midwife's scissors snicked you into separate life
and for a few minutes she was glad to be rid of you,
she's been trying to grab you back,
to stitch you into the old warm dumb dependence;
great invisible stitches like black elastic
hammered remorselessly home into every muscle,
every strengthening sinew of your mind.
The bonds stretch gaily through the carefree days
until you think that any cloud's your platform,
a springing-off station for the stars.
Then suddenly with a twang you're catapulted
back into the stifling dark.
Like diving, like drowning, you shout and struggle
out through the fresh blood of another birth,
gasping and wailing, fighting for life and air.
It's no good, the angry beating of fists,
the armour of insolence, the attack on brick walls
that turn to velvet at a touch:
and no good plunging into other wombs
to get away from the one that drags you back.
In the end, you'll have to sharpen the knife
and finish the midwife's job off.
But make sure first you're no afraid of blood.

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