

# How We Met

BY ROB COOK

*for Ben*

Your mother's still at it,  
giving birth again,  
this time to the placenta,  
a lagniappe at the maternity checkout counter.

Meanwhile I have a job too.  
My job is to hold you.

I take you to the window and point out the sites  
*that's the Golden Gate Bridge*  
*the hills behind it are Marin County*  
*that white stuff is called fog*

I can tell you're not following any of this,  
but I'm trying to make you feel welcome.  
*You'll like it here* I assure you.

I wonder if I should be doing something  
but you seem to be doing fine.  
I give you my little finger and you grab it.  
Tiny little hand,  
microscopic fingernails,  
and the spell is cast

looking into your eyes  
just...taking you in  
you looking into mine  
just...taking me in  
the moment taking us both in  
generic baby becoming a particular you  
*this* you  
your overwhelming you-ness  
smiles...tears...smitten...

The world intrudes — it's time to nurse.  
They ask me to pull your hands from your mouth.  
I try, but you give an indignant grunt and glare at me,  
an unmistakable look that says *no way, buster*,  
a look I would come to know well

*It's OK buddy,*  
*you can put your arms*  
*wherever you want.*

They are,  
after all,  
your arms,  
not mine,  
not theirs.