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**Chapter 6 Poem**

**Link - https://youtu.be/mZjsSn52Qws**

**Arrival**

I was one week early

which never happens

my mum never had The Chat with me

but handed me a book and said

*read this, and if you have any questions*

*come and talk to me*

I smuggled it into school

and showed it to everyone

we fell quiet when we read what would happen to our bodies

I only asked

*what if I get pregnant by accident?*

I should have asked her more questions

because there must have been a chapter missing from that book

it never told us to look for the day that boys become quiet

and speak in code

it never told me

that if your body grows beyond a certain size

it becomes public property

a monument to development

it never told us growing up was going to be so damn hard

that your mind would grow with your body and experience

pains of their own

it should have mention

mental health

managing stress

peer pressure

and damnit

would it have been so hard

in the section about periods

to mention that when trying tampons for the first time

DON’T USE THE SAME ONES YOUR MOTHER DOES

THE WOMAN’S HAD TWO CHILDREN FOR CHRIST SAKE

HAVE A LITTLE COMMON FUCKING SENSE

I should have asked her more questions

I was one week early

she was two weeks late

right boy, wrong time

too young to play mother

too young to ask her mother to hold her hand

it should have been him

he, who pitched a tent inside her self-worth

and built them both a home but

instead, it was me

and I was 30 seconds late

breaking down the bathroom door

as what could have been

spilled down her legs

they never came at the right time

but they were not wrong

she was not wrong

and impossible decision between that and

the life she envisioned for herself

I asked my mother

*if that ever happens to me, should I tell you?*

she said

*I’m the first person you tell.*

and stroked my hair as I cried

for all the right choices

that come at the wrong time

and all the arms that never got to

carry

they never told me growing up would be

so

damn

hard

I was one week early

at a party my cousin brought her new-born baby

her name is Isla

she floated through a sea of

arms and aunties

no rocking disturbed her slumber

she drifted into the port of my chest

all the seas quieted

eyes turned to me

someone said

*that suits you*

they were many years late

in noticing I am not harbour

not port, not resting place or

lapping shore

I am tempest and ocean

I road and compass point courage

adventurer mind

I captain

I live my life with my arms open

like sails ready to catch everything that comes my way

these arms are not meant to shelter

their wistful looks

turning my arms from sail to cradle

wrestle my love into

straight-jacket

tie me to this love

this is how to love when you are

woman

*isn’t this what you wanted?*

*isn’t this what we wanted for you?*

*doesn’t mother just suit you?*

so

damn

well

I was one week early

which never happens

the usual sign telling me I am not pregnant, telling me

I was

past tense

I was born one day late

into a world of music

and never stopped dancing

my mother taught me how to look after myself

my father taught me I would never be alone

my sister taught me how to be sister

to be friend, to be

storyteller

I see her

she has all the music of her father

and my way with words

she

is him

she is me

if she is called by the wind and sea

and leaves me once again

empty harbour

I’ll keep my love burning in the lighthouse

point her North

wish her fair weather

tell her to never look back

she will be free as I am now

to plot my courses and weather my seas

we are connected by the oceans that boil

under our skin

I’ve been making waves all my

I’m not sure that’s ever going to change

I was one week early

one day late

one life inside that’s

mine to give

maybe she will only remain

beautiful possibility

my best story

maybe the best is yet to come

but if she does

she will be

right on time