

Labor Pains

By Sandra Brown

My time is up.
My due date
Is fast approaching
From the belly
Of Accountability.
Moments of contraction
Once slow, dull, and ignorable
now quick, sharp,
and undeniable.
Like new life
coming into a
new world,
this strong woman
snatched as a
scared girl is
back.
Back with a past
but no longer from it.
Healed from old pain—not
living to numb it.
Back for my name
with no ID number.
Back from the cage
meant to tear me asunder
I'm *back*.
Back with life to live
and mouths to feed;
a home to make
and people who need
what I did back then
but couldn't get.
Someone to believe me
and believe in me
enough to help me
not just stand,
but to walk confidently
in my own shoes.
I found that
somewhere in this cage.
But my time is up.
It's time to take my steps,
to toddle,
tread, and traverse
my hew path.
Blockers old and new remain,
but I navigate
and circumvent them
like my life depends on it.
Because it does.
The thing meant to abort me
I used in order to birth me.
That's just how the strength
of a woman works.