

Natural Childbirth is a Must

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Think of Zeus.

First it starts as a headache,
as if his brain is a fetus trapped in his skull.
Wombs, for the most part, survive birth-trauma.
Eggs do not. The real story (no one told)
climaxes with Athena cooing
among the shards of her father's skull,
something gray and bloody
leaking through her hands.

You can paste a skull back together again
(if you are gods).
You can stuff anything
(that happens to be lying around)
into the skull cavity
and the result will walk.
But despite the semantics of the word,
there are limits to omnipotence.

The official story is that she didn't have
a childhood. But in point of fact
the intellect is omnivorous;
and the cynical and uncaring gods laughed
while they watched her cling to his chest
like a leech (cute as a button
with teeth),
the gore dripping onto the thick rug
as he shuffled back and forth.
(He giggled vacantly whenever he touched
something metallic.)

Years later, stories circulate
of a demented rabbit vainly hopping up
under a woman's dress or a divine idiot
raping a scarecrow. "He moves

in mysterious ways,” peasants chortle.
Meanwhile, gods die
(under peculiar circumstances):
A flayed Pan found hours before
Athena wears her new fur; Poseidon
drowned; Hades buried alive; Aphrodite ...
details are sketchy.

Centuries pass and we don't hear much
except for occasional hints: a god
who sires himself on his virgin mother
(under suspicious circumstances),
a cosmos haunted by a holy ghost
(whose? we wonder).
Meanwhile, desperately secular,
we use lightning to run egg-beaters
and hope for the best.