

For Noah, In His First Year

In the story, your namesake
is told by Yahweh to build
a *tebah*, a container to preserve
the sacred—the clean and
the unclean. You have helped
me understand why.

Your mother lifts you over
waves tangled with seaweed
at York Harbor Beach. The shore
receives her feet and mine,
begging us to stay where
we are. Your presence here,

laughing at the sun and the light
of being alive, can be hard
to reconcile with pain,
or loss, or thirst.

But to be thirsty, even this,
is to pray a ceaseless prayer,

seeking that which gives life.

To feel, and on your best days,
to know, that such a prayer
can be answered. My boy,
you are never lost. Send out
the dove and she will return.

with a leaf. Close your eyes
and find holiness in the dark.

The truth of the paradox.

Build for yourself a way
of life that allows for
new creation, by which

you might find the earth

with your fingers and pull
up divinity from the dirt.

I sense this is possible,
because holding you is like
being held. May the spirit

in all things exalt you
every morning, just as we did
when you were born
to us, and may you always
receive every living creature,
here to help you rise.