



I am Not a Fetus By Richard K. Olsen

Medical waste, of no account
to be discarded
life's flotsam and jetsam
a ganglion of cells.

Had I taken a breath,
made a whimper
had a beating heart or moved a limb,
I would have been counted.

And yet, I have a name.
I've heard my parents sing to me.
I am the sum total of their genes,
I am their child.

I didn't suffer.
I went to sleep,
an eternal sleep from which
I shall nevermore awaken.

I still hear them call out to me
in the quiet of the night
when they do not sleep:
why, why, why, they plead.

I am not a fetus
I am a baby
fully-formed
perfect
but still.

Richard K. Olsen is the founder and Executive Director of The National Stillbirth Society (www.stillnomore.org). He formed it after he and his wife Sharon lost their only child Camille to stillbirth at full term on August 17, 2000. Its purpose is to "educate and agitate" for stillbirth research and reform, and to empower all women through knowledge. Olsen can be contacted at stillnomore@cox.net. ©2002

The beautiful baby shown above is OLIVER KENYON STOVER HILL, SB February 12, 2006.