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CUTTING TEETH

Inconceivable, squirming
under the newness of pain,
you are crying again,
and I am unable to help.

I don't know who
is more uncomfortable,
which of us most afraid
of not easing this madness.

All I can do is hold you,
and soothe you with this voice
I have never before known
or needed to use.

There will be other times
when you feel this terror,
when all that is possible
is for me to touch and to talk —
times when the confusion and pain
come from within,
when the ache swells
and slowly grabs hold —
when you can only cry
and I can only hold you,
say words with meaning but no use,
and hope for this very smile...

8-17-90

REV. 8-10-90