

Photo Essay — Martin Cohen, Los Angeles
Torch of Life

In one sweeping flow
Out she came
Wet with the bodily fluids
that had surrounded
and protected her
for nine months

She slipped out of you
little Cassidy Oceane Mull
And in that instant
you passed the torch.

No greater miracle
than our human existence
no sight more awe inspiring
than a baby being born

Fluids flowing everywhere
out of your womb
dripping from the baby
tears in our eyes
water and salt
life

How different the female body
seems to me now!

Water and salt
Ocean
Little Oceane Mull
came flowing out
And in that instant
You passed the torch.

Generation upon generation
Centuries
Millennia
Mother
Daughter
Giving birth
Giving birth
Endless cycle of Life

Title: Torch of Life
Subject: World Tribune 08/21/98 n.3205 p.16 WT980821p16 Los Angeles, California
Author: Martin Cohen
Keywords: Angeles California Essays Experiences Family Life Parenting Photo Relationships Torch
Worldview

O Woman
What eternal
and awesome task
lies upon your shoulders

That simple moment
of giving life
a little wet baby
flowing out of your womb

Please accept these tears
as a token of humility
at the sight of this miracle
that you have performed
with such precision
and flawless memory
a task that goes far beyond
your own consciousness
deeply embedded in the essence
of your being

Woman
beautiful
life giving
woman

— Martin Cohen
July 15
for Murielle

If the water of one's faith is clear, the moon of blessings will cast its reflection on it and, without a doubt, protect one. You are assured of an easy delivery. A passage from the Lotus Sutra states, "A wondrous Law such as this..." and another says, "With easy labor they shall bear a fortune child." (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 4, p. 88)

During the last three months of her pregnancy, Murielle Mull and I chanted together almost every day. Her husband, Greg, asked me if I would take pictures of the birth. Of course, I gladly obliged.

July 15, at 5 a.m., Greg called me from the UCLAMedical Center. The contractions had started earlier that night, and Murielle was going to give birth soon. I did gongyo, chanted for a while, and got my gear together. It was not until past noon that Cassidy was born. Witnessing her birth was one of the most incredible and deeply joyful experiences of my life.

WT