

# The Milk of Human Kindness

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Dairy calves are those which are brought into being solely in order for the milk its mother will produce. In many cases they are separated from the mother within a day of birth to maximise milk production. Females might be lucky enough to be selected for a similar fate; the males are generally slaughtered within weeks for meat. Dedicated to the milk companies who still haven't replied to my queries.



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I am first aware of existence

when the hormones enter my blood.

They stretch and push with forces

threatening to envelop all I am

and all I have known.

All I ever will know.

The groans eek through layer upon layer

of engorged flesh,

but still I hear them.

Mummy?

Blinding, deafening visions;

the stench; thud onto rough ground.

Stumble over grass, lost in frost,

our legs inadequate for use

but fit for purpose.

Sounds of horror and sounds of joy,

of pain, profit and priorities,

this is a gift;

our God's grace.

I, like millions aside me,

take a glance at mother

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her bonnie face engulfed by wire,  
tubes inject and draw liquid  
from nature's processing plant,  
the grimy hand drag us back  
out of sight, out of mind.

They have short memories.

Though the whimpers of fear  
we grunt as we grind together  
we see, through a gap in the wood,  
our brothers line onto the towel one by one.

They enjoy the use of their new muscles,  
so tender and delicious.

With a blast they can't hear  
and a flash they can't see,  
they fall, one by one, onto a red canvas.

I notice a stump beyond the metal.

No - two stumps.

Black turns to blue as my gaze lifts up  
and then to pink, dotted with red.

Oh, what beautiful colours!

The stumps rise and fall, up and down,  
before they stamp to a halt by my side.

I brave a glance at the sinuous texture,  
my heart learning to beat ever quicker,

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and notice the same flexile pattern

adorning my brothers' backs.

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