

MICHELLE CAHILL

---

*An Exercise in Magic  
Realism*

Being a parent is like an exercise in magic realism. The little person who starts out as a clump of fertilised cells inside you, glued together by glycoproteins, whose embryological term ‘morula’ derives from the Latin word for mulberry, is, before you know, an assembled aspect. She is your blood and bones transformed into rich gestures. She is a voice that echoes but isn’t quite yours; a partial copy; a karyotype resemblance, one which resists and manipulates the prototype, being carried by its own synchronicity; a figure from the past and the ever-evolving, unpredictable, karmic future. The embodied genes, all twenty five thousand, from the twenty three pairs of chromosomes in the hundred-or-more trillion cells are randomly assorted, hybridised, watered down and contaminated by what is yours and not yours. So that what flowers strikes you at once suddenly and with tenderness in a manner that the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier might have described as ‘lo real maravilloso.’ Or to put it another way, like the most terrifyingly beautiful living thing you have ever seen.