

# There is no heartbeat, Mrs Stirling.

*by* Tabatha Stirling

I lost a baby two years ago. At 8.5 weeks after seeing her heart beat. I haven't been able to talk about it, but I can write about it. My throat cracks and splinters when I begin to form a thought or word or phrase. I took such great care when pregnant that I think I overheated.

My husband grieves with friends and booze and long, arduous bike rides.

I grieve like a stone. Relentless, petrifying and depersonalized.

But it is so personal, you know, this loss. Must have been something I did or didn't do. I wasn't able to hold my child in my womb for long enough. She gave up half way to heaven and didn't look back.

Her name is written in the night. Her face is imagined by her mother.

Her fingers not to be held. Skin as soft as honey oil never to be reckoned with or kissed by an inappropriate lad.

Grief is heavy. Not tweed-heavy but shackle heavy. The stench of summer makes me retch.

I am lost amongst the dusty rebels.

Lacklustre and heartsick.

