

The Birth of Cinema

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Robert Edgar

A babe's first breath is coughed below
As lenses frame a brief exchange
She rests upon an ice prop drifting
Darkly outside camera range.

This child's friend is not the sea.
This child's friend is not the night.
This child's friend is not the ice.
This child's friend is not,
the halogen light.

From barren filmic storyboards
A pair receives the child
And lifts her beyond cinema
Raising her full spectrum into real sun.

Well the hexagon's grin and the dice's
spin
Even the fortune teller's loaded
While none of these predict the past

Our bodies are surely coded for the
future, babe,

Though our life lines run out fast.

Thread the film through the projector
Loop the audio just right
The stuttering sounds that reach us
Are shivers of such a nervous light.

As silver grains are swirling screens
We pass each other therein
Where babies age through turns of plot
And parents cry again.

Each frame in sequence flickers
Emulsion's burnt away
And before the bulb is cold, child
Let's together realize
The meaning 'till now cauterized
In the shadow puppets
illuminating
this passion play.