

Burdens

She came in with her 2-week-old,
a healthy boy, for a first visit.
“He has these extra nipples,” she said.
And yes, there they were,
two tiny supernumerary nipples.

And then she started to cry.
“Look,” I offered. “He has 2 eyes,
a nose, 2 lungs, 10 fingers, 10 toes.
These 2 little spots won’t ever hurt him.
I wish they were the worst thing that
ever happens to him.”
And I held her hand and she cried.

And I thought to myself:
How relative it all is.
What about the stillborns,
the seriously deformed babies, and
those whose brains were replaced by CSF?
Rejoice, sweet lady, in your very good luck.
Could a mother ever cry enough over such children?

Howard Fischer, MD
Detroit, Michigan