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## True Crime

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### Abstract

This poem is a creative response to contemporary true crime narratives about baby farming in Victorian times, namely Alison Rattle and Allison Vale's *The Woman Who Murdered Babies for Money: The Story of Amelia Dyer* (London: André Deutsch, 2011); and the TV documentary, "Amelia Dyer: Martina Cole's Lady Killers."

**Keywords:** True crime, baby farming, infanticide, motherhood, documentary

Making a living from death  
the baby farmer was at last  
arrested, her crimes revealed,  
the commentator explained,  
the odd smell from a cupboard  
concealing dead babies' bodies.  
Opium had stilled their cries.  
Money given in exchange  
For the fragile lives discarded.

Sunken eyes, shrivelled skin  
Hunger never stilled, thirst  
Unquenched and ignored.  
Emaciated limbs don't scream,  
they speak a silent language.  
To hear it, you have to listen,  
imagining the bones inside  
your own thriving children,  
choices you have they didn't.

Those mothers who left their  
babies, mark of their shame.  
Those women who took the  
babies, leaving them to die.  
The everyday Victorian horrors  
haunting our sleepless nights  
have become today's true crime,  
baby farming murder mystery,  
a documentary shown on TV.