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1 The Donners, Michael and Lisa, first heard about BearHeart when they were at the obstetrician's office, about four months into the pregnancy. They were waiting at the counter, behind an almost-due Brazilian woman, and while the receptionist tried to locate some staff member named Marlie, who apparently could speak broken Portuguese, Michael started looking at the brochures and flyers
5 spread to one side of the reception window. There was an invitation to be part of a study on weight gain and pregnancy, and a flyer for an exercise class. There were glossy trifold pamphlets for IUDs and other contraceptives, as well as special high-resolution color ultrasound packages that produced the image of your baby in the womb matted with a pink or blue border, or, if you wanted to keep relatives guessing as to the gender, yellow.

10 And then there was BearHeart. There was a single flyer for it, battered and a little wrinkled, with phone numbers at the bottom that you could tear off. BearHeart offered an ultrasound that would, they claimed, be covered by most insurance. They would not only provide the client the usual ultrasound image, but in addition, for a small fee of fifty dollars, they would make a high-resolution recording of the heart of the baby in question. This would be placed into a device that
15 would be sewn into a silken fabric heart. This in turn would be placed inside a teddy bear, in its chest. Squeezing the chest just right would start the recording of the heart beating, which would run for thirty minutes.

A perfect gift for your newborn! it exclaimed near the bottom of the flyer. *Babies find great comfort sleeping next to a bear that beats with the rhythm of their own heart! Give your child the
20 gift of postwomb womblike comfort! Only fifty American dollars!*

Grinning, Michael showed the flyer to the other half of the Donners, to Lisa, and watched as she read it.

"Weird, right?" he said.

25 "That can't be good for the baby," said Lisa. "Having its heart both inside and out at the same time. It'd be confusing."

"Sweetheart," said Michael. "The heart's not actually outside of the baby. It's just a recording."

"Still," said Lisa. "Would you want to curl up with a recording of your own heart?"

"I don't know," said Michael. "How do I know? I've never tried it."

Brian Evenson. « BearHeart ». *A Collapse of Horses*. Minneapolis : Coffee House Press, 2016, pp.122-123.