

ANITA ON MY BIRTHDAY

Irwin Goldman

It's my birthday, I told Anita,
Wish me a happy birthday.

It's not your birthday, she replied,
You were never born, you will never die
And you do not have a birthday.

Eighty-three years ago wasn't I
Pushed out
Ejected from my mother's struggling body—
Are you denying this?

I am, she said,
That baby
Is a floating dream
In a mind not even yours.
As real as
Last winter's snowflake
In tomorrow's backyard.

Wish me a happy birthday anyway
I pressed my friend.

I wish you a happy eternity, was her answer.
And if you choose to be a prisoner of time,
A happy birthday as well.