

Routine

A fetus curls. Its body blooms like a flower. It takes the first weak steps and looks up at the sky with fear and wonder. It becomes a he. He rises up to march. His first steps are timid and slow. Slow. His body rises. His back straightens. His chest inflates. The force of air fills his lungs. His steps are graceful and robust. But this lasts only minutes. Strength is not the bulk. It is not even half. He slows down. The body tenses. The steps stir. He stagnates. The mouth becomes twisted. His eyes turn blank. The walk becomes a crawl, and he curls up again. The body shrinks and his face grows dark. At the moment before the stage light goes dim, death perfectly resembles birth.