## Life on Earth by Dorianne Laux

The odds are we never should have been born. Not one of us. Not one in 400 trillion to be exact. Only one among the 250 million released in a flood of semen that glides like a glassine limousine filled with tadpoles of possible people, one of whom may or may not be you, a being made of water and blood, a creature with eyeballs and limbs that end in fists, a you with all your particular perfumes, the chords of your sinewy legs singing as they form, your organs humming and buzzing with new life, moonbeams lighting up your brain's gray coils, the exquisite hills of your face, the human toy your mother longs for, your father yearns to hold, the unmistakable you who will take your first breath, your first step, bang a copper pot with a wooden spoon, trace the lichen growing on a boulder you climb to see the wild expanse of a field, the one whose heart will yield to the yellow forsythia named after William Forsyth—not the American actor with piercing blue eyes, but the Scottish botanist who discovered the yellow bells on a highland hillside blooming to beat the band, zigzagging down an unknown Scottish slope. And those are only a few of the things you will one day know, slowly chipping away at your ignorance and doubt, you who were born from ashes and will return to ash. When you think you might be through with this body and soul, look down at an anthill or up at the stars, remember your gambler chances, the bounty of good luck you were born for.