

Hospital Visits and Border Crossings

In my own way I can make each of them laugh
By counting to three
But not really counting
Just promising to count
I start - 1- 2- ...
And their most earnest attempts at being straightfaced and somber
Crumple gleefully into snorty gales
They believe me when I say I'm going to do something

Both of them—the fourteen-year-old man boy
And the seven-year-old wise girl believe me when I say they are brother and
sister

The two of them rehearsed and ready
Psyched as we cross the U.S. border
They believe me when I tell them the border guard might not completely
understand about us
and the ways that we make family, that we may have to leave some of the big
parts out
We will say I've known them all of their lives
I'm a very good friend of the family and our eyes twinkle at the truth

They believe me when I tell them that one of them is named after my
grandmother
And the other after my father, a Jewish tradition of naming your children after
the dead
The honour of namesake that they each carry

They believe me when I tell them that their uncles, my brothers were once both
smaller than me and had all their hair even though that's really hard to believe

It's tempting sometimes to think of adoption
The piece of paper, the judge's decree
THESE ARE YOUR CHILDREN - THEY BELONG TO YOU
I would wave the signed, notarized and most legal of possessions at hospital
staff, border guards, teachers
Sweep them all away in thousands of copies of iron-clad paper proof - these are
my children!
The whole world would know

And then I think
Would I be any less able to make them laugh
I just have to start counting
1 - 2 - ... and they are wild with anticipation
Because I promised I could do it
And they have decided
They believe me