

Harry Moore

Some Love Poems or *GP Ponders His Blended Family*

I. License My Roving Hands

Watching *Law and Order* reruns
from the worn loveseat our daughter gave us,
you lean forward, my cue to rub your neck
and back, kneading tight muscles, pressing
thumbs beside the spine, releasing a day
of early church, Sunday dinner, two children,
four grandchildren, your mother, and
deep planning for the beach. That hurts,
you say, when I squeeze your tender
shoulders, remembering how firm
and smooth and tan they were that night
three decades past when first I watched
your shirt drop away. Finally tissue
and tendon go soft, and you lean into
my pressing fingers, saying it feels good
and offering me a bite of chocolate
Weight Watchers' bar.

When I pat you saying that's all,
you lean against me, resting
snug beneath my arm. On TV,
the news at ten parades a troubled world.
Tomorrow I do *Beowulf* at 8:00 and
you teach Olivia words and drop
my shirts for cleaning. But now we sit,
your hair against my cheek, my hand
lightly on your hip, our little sunroom den
an everywhere.

2. A Summer's Day

High in the La Platas, by spruce and fir,
my son shows me relics of the Lucky Moon Mine:
tan-colored tailings, like sawdust, rusted
iron bucket, corroded tin roof
from a collapsed cabin, and a growing
cover of currant bushes. In August sun,
he waves toward distant mountain rims,
ribbons of switchback road, sheer slopes
down which he boarded last winter.
Fingering rocks, he speaks of glaciers,
granite, limestone, fault lines
up which the molten metal surged.
Behind us, thunder jolts the earth.

When he was four, he piled flint and sandstone
by my mother's door, salvage
from a gravel road we walked.
She left them there for weeks, she said.

I've fled my Eastern classroom where language
is my trade, he his kitchen-concrete shop.
We're out for alpine air, chasing lost years.
I climb the slope, snapping cheap pictures,
naming phlox and cinquefoil, while far below
he probes the earth, kneeling, peering,
tossing, piling rocks. With loaded arms,
he yells we'd better get to the jeep
or he will break it down.

At the treeline a hailstorm hits,
marble ice pinging the hood,
drumming the canvas top, filling
wood and ruts till we bounce and slide
laughing down slopes, through sharp turns
of the ancient road. All around us,
beneath the ghostly aspens, the ground
is white, like some winter world
where time has stopped.

3. Time's Fool

"Daddy?" she said, her cell phone voice rising toward some question, "We're getting married. David's taking off Thanksgiving and we're going to St. Simon's. You can have a reception for us later, and Mom can too."

She didn't say she missed me when I left, the golden books we read when she was two, songs we sang, or waffles we two made while others slept or that weekend roads were long and houses far. She didn't say she needed me with nouns and numbers and thunderstorms that shook her sleep. She didn't ask how we who bore her could not speak, why in our years apart we built no bridge a child might walk, no place a girl might marry.

In the tape she sends of palm trees and marbled seaside houses, they stand outside before a man in black robe, who calls them by their names, wind scuffing the hidden mike and blowing her dark hair. When she pledges lifelong love, through riches, hunger, health, and the quiet chill of time, her voice trembles, her eyes glisten, and I weep.

4. A Gift

Nathan, Heb., gift
My macho grandson swings
an orange bat, driving the plastic ball
beyond the neighbor's car, sliding home

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safe in a shower of sand. On scooter, board,
and bike, he wheels like a circus acrobat
past all rivals. He speaks beyond his years
of football, hurricanes, and what color
God is, wearing like a small mantle
the prophet's name who counseled kings.

But crossing the wide street at dusk
behind our laughing family,
he rides my arm in silence.
Under oaks that burst the soil
a hundred years ago and now rise
dark as old houses, he leans forward,
kisses my cheek, and settles
snugly on my arm.

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