

## Closed to the Public

### ***Why Now?***

After all these years  
After so many abandoned years  
Now?  
Would you like me to call you daddy?  
When you have forsaken  
Your flesh & blood  
To adopt others as your own,  
Would you like to reclaim us?  
Something to own?  
(You seem to realize that  
It's my choice...  
Those are your words.)  
The funny thing  
Is that it's quite possible,  
As soon as the blaze is chilled,  
For me to crawl into  
Your lap  
Like I did  
As a child  
In my forgotten memories,  
But not until  
You tell me why  
After all these years.

### ***Father***

Forgot the meaning of the word the moment we spoke our own minds.  
Apathetic to our cries for love and protection and presence.  
Thinking only of his own needs and wants and timeline.  
Hearing nothing but his own truth and version of events.  
Erased us from his life and kept only the trophies.  
Reunification was a farce.

### ***Systems Failure***

When the systems are broken  
I live in a constant state of fear  
Hyper-vigilant  
Instead of being able to heal  
And relax and move forward  
I constantly have to look back  
Depression  
And fear every second of the future  
Anxiety  
Instead of my babies  
Enjoying their childhood  
The one I work so hard to give them  
Or plan for the beautiful bright futures  
They should have.  
They want to die.  
They count down the years to 18  
For the youngest child  
So they can always  
Have each other's backs.  
Because there is no

“Trustworthy adult”  
To turn to  
To hear and believe them  
Who has eyes to see  
The abuse  
The neglect  
The abandonment  
The threats  
And manipulations  
Who has the power to  
Stop this madness  
And keep them safe.  
But instead  
“(Asking for protection) is going to be a  
Marathon”  
Meets  
“They need to get over it”  
Because  
“Being sexually abused by a parent  
Is better than not having that parent”  
And  
“Allowing therapy for a  
Suicidal child  
Would interfere  
With my process of  
Reunifying them  
With their (abuser)”  
So  
“There’s nothing we can do”  
Because  
“It’s at the judge’s discretion “

And

“Family court judges aren’t required to  
Have training in domestic violence and  
Child abuse”

But

“You can file a petition”.

“That will cost  
Five thousand dollars...”

And the hearing  
Will be scheduled  
Next year.

And

“I don’t want to  
Hear about  
Any of that. “

### ***Silenced***

You keep your mouth shut  
Because confronting him with the truth might make him less comfortable  
Might make you less appealing  
Might make you seem like a bitch

You keep your mouth shut  
Because you’re afraid  
Of his biting words  
Of his icy stare and hard pounding gate  
Of his threats that someday might not be

You keep your mouth shut

To protect the investigation  
To cooperate with the feds  
Because you can barely believe the truth yourself  
Because you wonder if even the new locks could keep him from killing you

You keep your mouth shut  
Because it's the right thing to do  
So the kids can have a normal life  
So they can love every cell of their being  
So they don't have to wonder how you scrub a brain clean like you do.

Eyes open.  
You see.  
Online dating matches.  
Single dad. With some help with the kids.  
Eyes close...  
Pried open.  
Incest erotica! Bestiality? Urophilia! Coprophilia?  
Steel anal hook!  
Who the bleep did I marry?  
Still trying to close my eyes.

...

Oh God. No.  
It's not ok for anyone to touch you like -  
"Not even daddy?"

You tell and tell and shake and cry and scream for help.

...

Unfounded.

You keep your mouth shut.  
Let the legal process work.  
You have the truth on your side.  
Words flow and out spills every hidden secret I kept for you.  
And every one you kept from me.

You keep your mouth shut.  
Because now the heads turn to him with soft listening faces.  
Spreading the icing over every inch of poisoned cake.  
And each bite they eat. Swallow.  
Vacuous affect.  
Empty.

You keep your mouth shut.  
What is there left to say?

### ***Mandates***

Don't sell me your false hopes,  
Show me the change.  
Don't broker in "could be worse",  
"Only"s and "just"s  
Your systems, undoubtedly your ears  
Don't ever want to hear  
What's really going on  
Only that old familiar song.  
Wouldn't want to aggravate you  
For the hour or day or week  
You've got to crack open my file  
Needing to be educated  
On my children's struggles and choices,

Why they keep on begging you  
For safety, respect, and a voice is  
Because the record plays broken  
My life, his life, her life, and on,  
Show you time and again that you're wrong,  
You rubber stamp "be quiet",  
"Get over it", move along.

So, no, there is no justice  
In your systems,  
No peace in your officers,  
Judges, and staff.  
No protection in your  
Services, what a laugh!  
You make a mockery  
Of my love, my strength, and my cry.  
And then you look surprised  
That I don't trust your words,  
'Cause I can hear your disgust  
Every time I brush the dust,  
Each time I rise and adjust.

See you may have broken my beliefs  
As you're breaking your own pedestal  
And you may catch me step in line  
'Cause you know that I'm not stupid,  
But I'll never be just like you,  
It's not in me, stand my ground  
And there are bones that I sit upon  
That keep rattlin', hear that sound?  
They'll ring the bells of freedom

Regardless if you're looking.  
See Spirit only lies in wait  
Regroups and synthesizes.  
You can never box it in,  
It just rematerializes.

So, I've got time if I need it,  
But I'm done with all my pleading.  
You can board the train, now we're leaving,  
And I hope you bought your ticket.  
Recognize that where we're headed,  
There's no free accommodation  
We don't want negotiation  
And we will lead this generation.