

daddy didn't do it damnit

Nobody blinks twice when little girls recite love poems dedicated to daddy and when mommies never wonder about side-long glances. So long and side-wounding to the object of affection.

Daddy didn't do it damnit!

Mommy makes me mad.

Blaming broken bike

For boy's bruised back

A bat. A bat.

Was a bat did that.

Nicholas George was barely breathing by the time the aluminum slugger stopped swinging. He didn't whimper a word and I just stood there in awe. Amazed at my father's single-minded sweep. Such dedication! Hands choking the grip with a winner's determination. He was hopin' for a homer. And I was just hoping. And wondering....Who in the hell ever invented the safety in suburbia? The white picket fences that keep dangerous dogs out, the bolts, locks, and chains on doors that make kidnapping difficult and a five-year-old's escape impossible. The soft edges and hand-made quilts. The razorless apples on Halloween. It's all so safe.

While no one was watching, all kinds of things happened in suburbia. My brother was thrown around like a Frisbee, and I was rewarded for my silent perfection.

You see, my father had no love left over for Nick, because he'd spent it all on me. I tried to make sense of it all, but I was in too deep. Besides, my brother had my mother- wasn't that enough?

There was an idea of forever in my father's smile and his black brown ocean deep eyes. he loved me more than I could've guessed back then, but somehow it was off-kilter and unlawful, almost prison worthy. he had a touch of Lolita lust in his veins. where'd he catch it? from his father? a dirty old uncle? or maybe on the filthy freighter shipping him across the sea?

he had it bad. holding me too close for too long. somehow I managed to calm him, to soothe his worries with the touch of my baby hands.

he was my first true love. I forgave him everything. the flying highchairs and lost teeth, the broken arms and homicidal threats. I closed my eyes and prayed he would wake up from his nightmare and realize that I was his. his.

he did wake up. each and every time, a little later, a little less sorry, a little more entitled. armed with a bag of ice or a face full of tears, he would trick me into believing I had driven him to the edge. a trick I would later use throughout most of my adult life.

then he abandoned me. when my body finally succumbed to puberty. the widening hips, minefields of exploding pimples, bad hair and braces.

while wrapped in the cocoon of my metamorphosis, he quit me. he loathed my teenage American ways. I clung so desperately to our secret history and replayed the dimly lit scenes behind the safety of my bedroom door. I had hope. but it was too late. he hurt me so deeply that I felt it at the core of my organs, in the swift stream of my blood, and in the heartbeat of my brain. the denial and abandonment of most loved one. I became only daughter, and hardly so. I hated this thing I had become,

this ugly mass of flesh I did not want, of a face I could not recognize and a voice that did not speak.. what was left to say? sorry? he was not sorry. he dumped me . no more games. tv time. whispers in ears about who we love the best. no more saturday morning breakfasts. just my father and me. his cowboy boots ringing through the restaurant, smoking his kent 100s. homefries with fried onions. eggs over easy. his coffee with two creamers and three sugars. I had lost. big time .I was desperate to fill the hole. to find something close to the biggest baddest love of all. the men began to file in. one after another. sometimes two at a time. most of them were weak-kneed mama's boys, closeted queens, quarterbacks with big clumsy hands and sweaty shorts, or just plain wrong for me. I wanted something but I couldn't quite put my finger on the pulse of that desire. I wanted my greek cowboy. the one who promised me at five that he would love me forever. I had no idea the price I'd pay for throwing my arms around his neck and vowing my eternal love. but I was only five. he was old enough to know better.