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Kodak Moments

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Abstract

Poem reminiscing about a childhood interaction with her father. Despite being past her bedtime, she waits until her father gets home to hear about his day. The speaker likens the memory to a photograph captured in time.

Keywords

Poetry, Family, Fathers, Childhood, Bedtime

Disciplines

Creative Writing | Poetry

Comments

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KODAK MOMENTS

By Lauren Browning

It's late.
And I'm already asleep—
Or at least I should be.
For a child, eleven pm seems like a different realm.
The air in my room is navy blue.
Because of the yellow light peeking in under the door,
It cannot bring itself to be completely dark.

Tonight.
I cannot get myself to sleep.
I only have one kiss on my forehead
In a space where there must be two.
I only have "sweet dreams, I'll see you
In the morning. I love you." ringing in one ear
And not the other.

I hear it.
The whining of the engine from the cold.
The garage door rumbles open two floors below me.
I can hear the car's heavy breathing
As he sits with it running
So he can listen to the end of the NPR story.
The car turns off.

The door.
I hear nails on the floor as the dog get excited.
My mother sees him first,
But the dog get the first attention.
I hear tones but not voices.
They never chatter loudly, they know I'm sleeping,
But boy can they talk.

The stairs.
His step is different than mom's.
Despite wearing sneakers he walks like he's wearing dress shoes.
I can hear the thin soles and the heels clicking.
His feet are dad sized, so he goes up the stairs on his toes.
I know how fast he's going, how long it takes to get here.
Two hallways. Thirteen steps. Twenty seven seconds.

I pretend to be asleep.
I know that won't matter to him.
He'll say it anyways.

“Goodnight sweetie, see you in the morning. I love you.”
I move a little. “Oh you’re still awake.”
He sits on the bed. I smell his clothes. I know where he’s been.
Outside. At the lake. Splitting wood. Building fires. Doing work.

He kisses my forehead.
He tells me about his day. Where he’s been.
If he found any animals by the lake.
I hold his hands to my cheeks as he talks.
They’re cold and refreshing like the air he’s been out in.
The coolness drags me out of my cozy bed
And I’m standing there at the lake with him.

Ending one:

I take a picture.
With my eyes.
With my nose.
With my ears.
When you’re from Rochester,
You live through a series of Kodak Moments.
“That’s not what I call settling down.”

I pretend to be asleep.
We hear mom from downstairs.
Dad squeaks and makes funny gestures,
Feigning fear, making me laugh.
We hear mom coming and he flies out of the room.
His feet are dad sized, so he goes down the stairs sideways.
But I don’t hear it because I’m already asleep.

Ending two:

I take a picture.
With my eyes.
With my nose.
With my ears.
When you’re from Rochester,
You live through a series of Kodak Moments...
Even when you don’t have a camera.

I will have albums of these moments.
These snapshots in the realm of eleven pm.
We hear mom from downstairs and I pretend to be asleep.
Dad squeaks and makes funny gestures, feigning fear, making me laugh.
We hear mom coming and he flies out of the room.

His feet are dad sized, so he goes down the stairs sideways.
But I don't hear it because I'm already asleep.