

FATHER'S DAY
POEMS

Nicholas Gordon

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A FATHER AND A DAD ARE NOT THE SAME

A father and a dad are not the same:
One can be a dad and not a father,
Or one can be a father and not bother
To earn through love the more endearing name.
Some find fatherhood a bit too tame,
Leaving all the details to the mother,
Or dumping the sweet burden on another
Man with just a passing twinge of shame.
You have been our dad so many years
That you've become the landscape that is home,
The mountain that we look to from afar.
No matter where we go we're not alone,
For you remain within to still our fears
And be the word that tells us who we are.

A LITTLE GIRL NEEDS DADDY

A little girl needs Daddy
For many, many things:
Like holding her high off the ground
Where the sunlight sings!

Like being the deep music
That tells her all is right
When she awakens frantic with
The terrors of the night.

Like being the great mountain
That rises in her heart
And shows her how she might get home
When all else falls apart.

Like giving her the love
That is her sea and air,
So diving deep or soaring high
She'll always find him there.

AFTER MY FATHER GAVE ME HIS BLESSING

After my father gave me his blessing
For the first time, saying, "God bless you"
As I left him to the darkness,
He held me there and kissed my hand.

For the first time saying, "God bless you"
In all the years that I had loved him,
He held me there and kissed my hand,
And the child shivered with delight.

In all the years that I had loved him,
We understood no need to speak.
The child shivered with delight;
The man in silence turned away.

We understood no need to speak
As I left him to the darkness.
The man in silence turned away
After my father gave me his blessing.

BEFORE I WAS MYSELF,
YOU MADE ME, ME

Before I was myself you made me, me
With love and patience, discipline and tears,
Then bit by bit stepped back to set me free,

Allowing me to sail upon my sea,
Though well within the headlands of your fears.
Before I was myself you made me, me

With dreams enough of what I was to be
And hopes that would be sculpted by the years,
Then bit by bit stepped back to set me free,

Relinquishing your powers gradually
To let me shape myself among my peers.
Before I was myself you made me, me,

And being good and wise, you gracefully
As dancers when the last sweet cadence nears
Bit by bit stepped back to set me free.

For love inspires learning naturally:
The mind assents to what the heart reveres.
And so it was through love you made me, me
By slowly stepping back to set me free.

DADDY, I LOVE YOU

Daddy, I love you
For all that you do.
I'll kiss you and hug you
'Cause you love me, too.

You feed me and need me
To teach you to play,
So smile 'cause I love you
On this Father's Day.

EVEN THOUGH WE'VE LIVED APART

Even though we've lived apart,
I do not love you less.
There's provision in the heart
For storing tenderness.

There's a love that like a star
Must reconfigure space
To turn the far-flung wanderers
Towards some predestined grace.

Time matters not, nor pain, nor death,
Nor fate as hard as stone.
This truth needs but a single breath,
And that we now have known.

Ah, Father! What a joy to live
With love at last expressed!
Life has no greater gift to give
Than that with which we're blessed.

FANTASIES, LIKE WORDS, AWAIT WHAT'S REAL

Fantasies, like words, await what's real,
Anchored only when attached to things.
The dream of fatherhood, that long-sought dawn,
Has now become the light of early morn,
Exact and merciless in what it brings:
Riches to which one can only kneel.
'Mid all the truths the package will reveal,
Sensing well the wonder as it sings,
Drawing well the world to which it's drawn,
A love beyond all words will give you wings,
Yielding joys beyond what you can feel.

FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS HAVE A ROMANCE

Fathers and daughters have a romance
That goes on for the rest of their lives,
Destined to ripen and age as they dance
Through the days of their husbands and wives.

Up near the surface their love is distinct,
Like a garden surveyed in the sun,
In which seedtime and full bloom are credibly linked
By a consciousness shared and hard won.

Deep down below, where the world is a dream,
And the dream is a world of its own,
All manner of memories the moments redeem
In a place where one's never alone.

FATHERS CAN BE SOLITARY MOUNTAINS

Fathers can be solitary mountains,
All their love rock-like, steep, and strong.
Though warm and caring, somehow they belong
Halfway home to mothers' bubbling fountains.
Each of us needs love that knows no quarter,
Reminding us of bonds that cross a border,
Strengthening our sense of right and wrong.

FATHER'S DAY WITHOUT YOU IS LIKE MUSIC

Father's Day without you is like music
Muted by a distance undisturbed.
It is so faint I cannot tell the feeling,
Though I myself am gripped with pensive sorrow.

I listen all the more for what I cannot
Hear, and you are somewhere close beside me.
"It's joy!" you say, and then I nod, unbending,
Listening still while weeping like fine rain.

Yes, it's joy, and you again are with me.
I turn to you, and I am in your arms.
The music is a rhapsody around me,
And I am safe again and free to cry.

It is so beautiful, I cannot stand it,
I am a torrent, shaking in my gladness,
And you recede, as distant as the music,
Smiling dimly far across the plain.

"Please, please!" I say, yet know that what I'm asking
No longer is. Your day will come and go,
And I will crave and fear its restless turning
Because my happiness must be my pain.

FOR YOU I FEEL AN OVERWHELMING LOVE

For you I feel an overwhelming love,
All the more because you're far away.
Though all the continents of Earth may move,
Here is my love, and here my love will stay.
Each time I feel my fortune go adrift,
Realities like rocks poised in my way,
'Ere I feel that fearful, shuddering rift,
Some memory of you holds them at bay.

Dad, your love can still my heart uplift;
After all these years, my spirits sway;
Your strength and courage still my fears remove.

FREEDOM IS A CASUALTY OF LOVING

Freedom is a casualty of loving,
As one must freely choose to be unfree,
Taking is, instead of what might be,
Holding onto essence for dear meaning.
Each father ought to be the nearest mountain,
Rock-solid, unmoving in his passion,
'Twixt wind and world the will no will can fashion,
Sustaining innocence through sheer intention.
Depths are in more places than below,
As those who dive for melody well know,
Yielding memories sunlit and certain.

HANDS ARE A BOND BETWEEN FATHER AND SON

Hands are a bond between father and son,
A tool that one teaches the other to use,
Needing to pass on the passion, or lose
Doing what long generations have done:
Sowing the seeds of what they have begun.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY, TO ONE WHOSE LOVE

Happy Father's Day to one whose love
Asks nothing more than that it more might give!
Praised be those whose self-love selfless proves;
Praised be those who by such pleasure live.
Years of longing find no better plight,
For everything that is, is ever here.
A love that gives, gives unalloyed delight,
Taking in more breath than it can bear.
How lovely, then, to give this day to you,
Embracing who would rather us embrace,
Rejoicing in the ballet old anew,
'Twixt give and give a shy and awkward grace!
So may you ever be on Father's Day,
Despite yourself, the hero of the play,
Accepting from your loved ones what you would
Yet give yourself to them, if you but could.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY TO THOSE WHO LOVE

Happy Father's Day to those who love
As amply as the angels love the light,
Pleased to be for us the scourge of night
Pacifying rage we know not of.
Yours the passions in the pit that prove
Fierce enough to fend off nameless blight,
And yours alone the rectitude to right
The jigsaws jumbled when the monsters move.
How came you to such competence and valor
Even as we wait to take your places,
Rife with fear, uncertain of our courage,
'Twixt the world and chaos bent on pain?
Since we first knew, we knew no hint of failure,
Desperate as we were for your good graces,
As you must sometimes look back at your knowledge,
Yearning to be innocent again.

HOW CAN I TOUCH YOU WHEN YOU'RE FAR AWAY

How can I touch you when you're far away?
A poem is not as salient as a kiss.
Poems but poorly presences convey,
Perhaps because of all that words must miss.
Yet write I must because you are not here,
Father farther from my eyes than heart,
A face more frequent than it might appear,
Tempered by the tyrannies of art.
How might I be with you in ways that are
Equal to the passion of my yearning,
Reaching for a grace beyond the bar
'Ere there's any word of your returning.
So may the time between us quickly pass,
Days of longing that long cannot last,
A time when but through words we may embrace,
Yet know that soon we will be face to face.

HOW LUCKY TO HAVE HAD SO GOOD A FATHER

How lucky to have had so good a father!
On us his warm, unstinting sun long shone.
We were, of his hardworking life, the center,
Loved for the pure joy of love alone.
Uncanny are the requisites of pleasure,
Coming as they do within the will.
Knowing well where lay his greatest treasure,
Years on years of love he labored still.

HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU I CAN'T SAY

How much I love you I can't say:
It's more than words can hold.
You're all at once my rich, red clay,
My potter and my mold.

Yours the words that shaped my voice,
The spirit within mine.
Yours the will that shaped my choice,
My fortune, and my sign.

How lucky I was to have had you
At the core of me!
Wise and good, you always knew
Just what I could be.

And so I came to be someone
Whom I could be proud of.
For this I give my swollen sum
Of gratitude and love.

I DO NOT SEE YOU OFTEN

I do not see you often, but
I see you every day.
I've taken you along with me
As I have grown away.

We talk about the things that fill
A life with love and pain,
But our timeless golden time,
Unspoken, still remains.

You will always be my dad,
And I, your darling daughter.
The days may turn like waterwheels,
But that will never change.

The thought of you will make me glad
No matter where I wander.
You are the place that cannot feel
Uncanny, dark, or strange.

I WAIT UPON THE LOVE THAT WAITS FOR ME

I wait upon the love that waits for me
Unknowing as I grow within the womb,
The creature of an unheard harmony
Between the voices of my dawn and doom.
Half of me is you: how strange! Yet more
Uncanny is the fact that we are two.
I live within a room whose only door
For good or ill must open onto you.
Be there for me, father, in your heart,
As I for you will be the child you will.
Play with all your love the father's part,
And I will with my love your dreams fulfill.
I will rebel, of course, but pay no mind:
Years of love will stand against the wind.

MY LOVE FOR YOU IS HUNGRY AS THE SEA

My love for you is hungry as the sea:
As turbulent, as tidal, as forlorn;
As deep with unrequited mystery;
As elemental, vast, and tempest-torn.
No mountain is more awesome and enduring;
No moon so full of passion for the light;
No garden more forbidden or alluring;
No watchman more acquainted with the night.
I've learned such love leaves me with little pleasure,
Nor does it die from lack of recompense.
It is from birth a precious, haunted treasure,
Long buried just beyond my innocence.
It is a treasure I now offer you:
That you are loved regardless what you do.

PERHAPS WE'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER

Perhaps we'll never understand each other.
Loving doesn't mean that we agree.
If that were so, then I would say, why bother?
But there are things I know I'll never see.
I'm sure your heart knows what I don't yet know:
The pain of loving a reluctant son;
The anger, coming fast and building slow,
Of being helpless to control someone.
You want only that I grow up right,
But you know what right is, and I still don't.
I have to learn to wield my inner light,
And if I follow yours, well, then I won't.
I'm sorry for the anger in the air;
Though we fight, my love is always there.

THE THINGS YOU TAUGHT ME I WILL ALWAYS KNOW

The things you taught me I will always know.
How could I not? The roots have sunk so deep:
All lessons of the heart that I will keep
No matter who I am or where I go.
Kids learn from what their parents are, and so
You are my book of life, the thoughts I reap;
Only in your arms I quiet sleep;
Under my words your voice sings soft and slow.
From you I learned the rules of right and wrong
Against which I at times had to rebel,
Though with regret I carry with me still.
How lucky I am to have been loved so well,
Even as I pushed against your will,
Relying on a father fair and strong.

THOUGH NEW AT FATHERHOOD

Though new at fatherhood, you're surely not
A novice at the art of giving love.
With quiet tact you find the perfect spot
Among the needs of those whose hearts you move.
I never feel you slight me, even though
At times your time for me of need is slight.
Though working long and hard, you seem to know
Just how to make our son feel loved each night.
These gifts you give I know cannot come easy,
Although they seem to flow so easily.
You have a lovely air that's light and breezy,
That says: I get from you more than you see.
And so I am in awe of what you do;
You love so well that I love you well, too.

TO MY DADS ON FATHER'S DAY

To my dads on Father's Day,
On both of whom we both depend:
My daughter reinvents my themes.
Years pass, and well-wrought love remains.
Dads are saviors, straight or gay,
Always where our oceans end,
Deliverers of desperate dreams,
Solid land where sunshine reigns.

TO THE FATHER OF MY CHILDREN

To the father of my children:
Open up your willing heart!
Take what music I can give you,
Hearing, too, my silent song.
Even as, arrayed in passion,
Finding love, I play my part,
A wonder like a wind whips through me,
Truth unknown for which I long.
How beautiful, this unspent yearning,
Ever for the darkness burning,
Rising like a summer storm!

YOU ARE OUR KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR

You are our knight in shining armor,
Pilgrim of our plea,
The Atlas for our wounded world,
Our rescuer at sea.

You are the pillar of our hopes,
The deep bass of our song,
The strength that underlies our strength,
The calm for which we long.

You came into our house of dreams
And turned it into truth,
Entering at just the point
Where yearning shatters youth.

What could motivate someone
To bear another's load
But that most beautiful of lights,
The inner lamp of love.

YOU TAUGHT ME HOW TO LOVE YOU

You taught me how to love you by
The way that you loved me;
And by your unseen sustenance,
To see what you could see.

You gave to me through who you were
The gift of what I am.
Your pride in me is now my pride;
Your faith, my caravan.

Your life does not conclude with death,
Nor will it end with mine,
For all the lives I touch, you touch,
And so on through all time.

YOU'VE BEEN EVERYTHING TO ME

You've been everything to me: a father,
Teacher, playmate, model, conscience, friend.
Sometimes I'm not certain why you bother,
If your feelings on my words depend.
I know I haven't been the child I should:
Far from it, and I really can't say why.
I know exactly what I'd label good,
But in the real world something goes awry.
Underneath my actions there is love,
Gratitude, respect, and admiration.
Sometimes I don't know what I'm thinking of,
But I thank God you're in for the duration.
I'm sorry, sorry for the things I do,
But please believe I cherish Mom and you.

