

Words of a Single Parent.

To think, even suggest, that I
am a role model, would be
like saying the earth is flat,
and expecting others to believe that.

My stepmother said, "Enjoy them, for they'll be grown in no time."
I replied, laughing, "It's more like watching rust form."
I fell off a cliff into loneliness
while singularly raising my children.

Provide and protect, I understood,
But who said I was to entertain
and provide their social life, too?
Child custody battles would suck my life dry.

Discrete intimate encounters sheltered my children.
Working kept the ever-encroaching boredom at bay, and
updating my education consumed swaths of time;
while the struggle to afford life devoured the rest.

Who cleaned the house while you slept,
and who washed and folded your clothes?
Your beds were always clean, and,
I taught you to use a spoon the right way up.

I never revoked privileges; instead, I enabled you.
The rest I assumed you'd figure out
just as I had so many years before.
I left the easy part for you.

Living is the easy part.
Who you are, and why you're here
are for you to figure out and
will allow you to become self-sufficient.

To love as deeply as a parent
means never stopping, no matter what.
I did that, and I haven't stopped,
but now, I get to do my stuff.

I sit in the quiet of myself, responsibility-free,
and at peace, as I was before you.
I never found peace with anyone,
while trying to be necessary to them.

I know my life is not
as creative as my creator.
It is creative, however, and in that
is my bounty of satisfaction and pride.

To know that I am your reason
for being here, for your survival even,
yet you don't care to acknowledge me,
is what? A stop sign? A green light? Perhaps a yield sign?

Who gets to be disappointed?
Me, who staged and threw the party
from your birth to adulthood,
or you, complaining the party sucked?

I loved you, I fed you, and I kept you safe.
I taught you right from wrong, and
I gave you your freedom because,
I had faith in the intellect you espoused.

I now have but one responsibility: me.
All life is reality, and my life as seen
through a panorama of who I am,
is itself a story, a wordy creation.

When I don't know what to do,
I have learned to do nothing.
Our lives once relied on each other, and
I will never unsay my words nor undo my care and love.

I cannot redo our time together,
and since life is a learning process
I'll end with this thought:
Transactional love is no longer an option.

Written by Peter Skeels © 2-17-2024