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# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## CLS Ferguson & Rich Ferguson: Tribute to Evelyn

CLS & Rich Ferguson · Wednesday, February 13th, 2019

### Then Came You (A Love Poem For Evelyn)

by CLS Ferguson

I grew in the womb of a woman who did not raise me. She loved me enough to pick my mother for me. That was the beginning of my desire for you. My friends and I grew older, picked spouses and partners. Most of them longed to be pregnant – I never did. I wanted you. Your dad was the first man I met who didn't insist he make a child. You were a possibility.

We went through the paperwork. Background checks. Physicals. Interviews. Letters of recommendation. We hoped that we would be good enough.

Before you, my life was a blank canvas, white, or beige, a rare hint of color. Then you came, a rainbow of bold tints, your edges sharp between colors. The only mixes a beautiful result.

I know love when you say, "Bless you Mommy," after I cough, when you show me new uses for the spatula—like drumming on the table, when you hug the dog closely, like the precious being she is, when you ask me why, then tell me because, when you use a word I didn't know you knew, like "appointment," when you insist on doing everything yourself, then realize it's just a little too tough, look at me and say, "Mommy help you?"



## Love Poem For My Young Daughter On Valentine's Day

*for Evelyn Lane Ferguson*

by Rich Ferguson

You were still  
a vague notion  
in my mind—  
like  
trying to grapple

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with the concept of infinite pi—  
until your mother  
sent me that first picture  
of you,  
just moments after your birth.  
How you glowed.  
Eyes closed and serene;  
divinity's tiny seed.

I  
recalled  
all the fathers  
I'd witnessed growing up,  
the ones that would  
flip open their wallets  
to share the latest photos  
of their kids.

Back then,  
I mistook their actions  
for boorishness.  
Upon your birth,  
I realized it as pride.

Now  
I felt like  
I was glowing, too.

For  
I was now a father.  
And you,  
Evelyn,  
were my beautiful baby girl.

Still,  
that first year  
was rough—

Old family loops  
reemerged—  
my father's rage,  
mixed with mother's sorrows.

At times,  
that music  
left me shackled  
to my past.

When you cried out at night,  
Evelyn,

I did not know  
what to do to soothe you.  
I did not know  
what to do to soothe myself.

More attuned  
to the rhythms  
of healing,  
your mother  
would come to your aid.

With time,  
I learned  
to embody her music:  
perform neat and clean  
diaper changes;  
rock you back to sleep  
after a night terror;  
bottles of formula  
at the ready  
for 2, 4, and 6 a.m. feedings.

The song  
of your mother's  
patience and play  
combined  
with your babbled baby jazz  
eventually  
overrode my old tape loops.

Instead  
of my father's harsh words,  
I heard you  
burble your first words.  
Instead  
of my mother's muffled sobs,  
I heard your mother  
lullaby you to sleep.

Certain evenings,  
I'd creep into your room,  
place a hand  
on your sleeping chest  
to make sure  
you were still breathing.

In those moments,  
my existence  
became

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a still center point  
around which  
spun prayers and whispered words  
devoted to your wellbeing.

In your presence,  
Evelyn,  
I've experienced all the ways  
my heart  
can break wide open  
with joy and sadness;  
and how  
it can mend itself,  
one newfound wisdom at a time.

*(Photos by Alexis Rhone Fancher)*

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