

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

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

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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