



Dr. Romi Jain

Ode to You, Dad

When I set out to write a poem for you, Dad,
my eyes (not brain) send forth verses

weaved by gratitude.

For it's the flow of remorse,
for no word ever existed
nor will it ever
in a lexicon, dialect, imagery, or composition
to capture the tide of my penitence

Since you're the best dad in the world. I wish I were the best
daughter...

Since it took me decades to notice
the bruised, unrelenting arms to guard,
while the little girl
under their shadow played,

while the young girl in her fantasies dwelled,
and the still growing woman
pursues her dreams, falls back, recovers,
moves on...

Since it dawned quite late on me
that under your bright forehead, the eyes are mellow and wet,
for the slightest of my pain and frown could unsettle them
like a needle pricked into baby skin

that you have a reservoir of patience
to hear the tales of my bad days,
a fathomless eagerness to know I'm safe and happy,
a child-like laughter to hear me speak gleefully,
a weird anguish to miss my call and a restlessness to hear
me back,
an unending striving to sew a carpet of comfort
as far as I tread.

Since I neglected to see

your graying hair, the freckles, the scars
for you've presented your life as an evergreen tree,
to lie under carefree

O Dad! How hard it's to end this ode
for I crave numerous ways
in this life and many to come

to be your artisan to build a palace of bliss for you,
to be your server to let no discomfort visit you,
to be your savior to slay calamity,

to be a dad— just like you—to you!

Dr. Romi Jain

Dr. Romi Jain (PhD) is associated with the Canadian Society for Peace and Global Studies. She has worked as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan. Her poems have appeared in literary journals such as Transition (Canada), Off the Coast (Maine, USA), Penwood Review (California, USA), Journal of Poetry Society (India), Touch: The Journal of Healing, The Bombay Review, The Tower Journal and Munyori Literary Journal, and in international anthologies such as Veils, Halos and Shackles (co-edited by Charles Fishman, Pulitzer Prize nominee), San Diego Poetry Annual, Family Matters, and Poems from Conflicted Hearts.

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