

## Daddy

Did you miss something? When you signed up for the job did you misunderstand that parenting is much more than the gift of your loins, the blood in my veins, your name on my birth certificate, or that I call you Daddy.

You had fatherhood laid out on a silver platter that I created in your honor. The innocence of an infant gave you the gift of my ignorance. You could have been great Daddy. You could have been my hero, my idea of perfection. The white picket fence opened to my unlimited amount of affection. The man the court allowed every other weekend to give me a bear hug and call me your little girl.

Couldn't you just have played pretend? I would have played along. Played house in your far away palace, with dogs like lions scratching at the door to greet me and let out a roar as I ran up the hill with my legs that did not yet carry your burden in their joints.

That Sunday we sang about a Stairway to a place I felt I was already at. Heaven was your grizzly beard, the smell of a car freshener, my double bunk beds, and that pier where I asked to see the ocean as you lifted me up on your shoulders.

I forgot about mom, ran past the strangers, ignored the other women, denied your shaking and completely, without doubt bestowed you with the gift of my love. Something that could not be rescinded or ignored. As strong as the blood in my veins. As permanent as ink on paper. As long lasting as the name daddy itself.

It was yours. I was the easiest thing that you ever achieved. Screwed over mommy in more ways than one. Didn't look back and in the end you still won. I should have locked it away until the day when I could have properly bestowed it on a rightful heir that would have known exactly what to do with it. That would have taken it with caution. Wrapped it up and protected it, knowing that this is a limited time only, special edition, collectible item not found in stores.

Daddy. Tell me a story. Like you use to. With your thick voice and gentle tongue. Tell me what it is like to have a father. To come home to a man to pat you on the head and ask you about your day? Tell me about families who sit at dinner tables. Does it really happen every single night? I hear that fathers can get strict? Do you guys get mad when I come home too late? Must every boy shake hands and look you in the eye as I roll mine and sigh. Do they defend you? Sit you down and talk about life? Be there to hand me over and pronounce me a wife?

Life has gotten me twisted up in its limbs. I am not strong enough to go through this on my own. There is no man to shield me from the destruction. I am dying and in need of resurrection.

You were supposed to support, to be the wall that could never break. Some sort of stability to my heartache. What do I have to do to make this go away?

I can't sleep because all I see is you.

I can talk because everything I say is hiding you.

I can't relax because I'm always trying to get rid of you.

I am half of a circle, searching for completion. I thought I found you. But the two halves were from an entirely different whole. What do I have to do? I know the answer doesn't lie in you.

You can keep the gift, but, Daddy, Daddy, you bastard. I'm through.