

Children's Work

Dessa

My father was a paper plane,
My mother was a windswept tree.
My little brother's nearly twice my age,
 He taught me how to meditate,
 I taught him how to read.

I grew up with a book in my bed,
I got these dark circles before I turned ten.
 Heard my mother with her friends
 Worry it was something she did,
 To get such a serious kid.

And I've learned how to paint my face,
 How to earn my keep,
 How to clean my kill.
Some nights I still can't sleep,
 The past rolls back,
 I can see us still.
You've learned how to hold your own,
 How to stack your stones,
 But the history's thick.
Children aren't as simple as we'd like to think.

Before you came along I was a lone cub,
 Fell in love with language,
 Tried to tell the grown-ups
 About the storm clouds,
 The weather in my head,
Hadn't heard the word for melancholy yet.

Then you came in, five years behind.
 We thought you couldn't talk,
 Turns out you were just shy.
 Mom said it was serious,
 Dad said you'd be fine,
I thought you were the prophet of 1989.

You were so tender we thought something was wrong with you,
 So patient we thought that you were deaf, you were
 So solemn, so tiny but so ancient.

Mom took you to see doctors,
You scared her half to death.

And I made you a library
Of tiny books with spines two inches high.
You didn't say too much, but smiled
And taught me how to quiet down my mind.

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You slept in my bed,
And if I kept quiet
I could hear all the voices in your head.

When the wagon tipped I prayed over your body,
I asked God to take the damage out on me.
Ten years later he finally gets the memo,
Sent it to accounting and knocked out my front teeth.
But you came to and took my hand
And held my eyes, and
Me and you had a long walk home,
So we decided not to cry.

Now we've got a grown-up love,
And I know that's how it's s'posed to be.
Same old story, Mom gets Easters,
Lets Dad have Christmas Eve.
But I won't pretend that I don't remember
How unusual they were,
The little mystic and his handler.
All some children do is work.

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How to earn my keep,
How to clean my kill.
Some nights I still can't sleep,
The past rolls back, I can see us still.

Lyrics submitted by Sunny Akane.

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