The Last Journal Entry
—April 10th, 2012
by Tina Siton

Today, my daughter became a poet.
—As we drove to the airport of all places.

Her daddy has a job interview. Strangely, I drive.
Her daddy shuffles itineraries, tickets, and possibilities.
but really the car is silent buzz—
the sound air molecules make trying to escape...

My daughter’s six year old body is slumped
against the rear passenger door.
Her black ballet flats are worn, and won’t stay on her feet.
The revealing raw leather creates unintended patterns.

My daughter’s head is against the window.
Her glacial blue eyes scan the Great Salt Lake
in the thin tilted light the Rockies create—a golden hour.
The light is the same color as her hair—both are growing darker.

My daughter lifts her head, opens her rapid mouth.
Milk teeth floss and singing, she says,
“The birds look like flying cushions.”

Her daddy pulls down his papers, looks west,
saying, “I never thought of birds that way before.”

Sketch
Salted Figure, Aria Brown 2008
by Caitlin Brinkman

She sits
maniacally twisting paper
in her hands,
black hair falling
over her face
obscuring her eyelashes,
wearying nothing but
a ding

legs crossed casually
at the knee, her foot—
I imagine
fidgeting importante, as though saying
Are we done yet?

I wonder how the muscles sit smoothly
under her skin.
and how her smile still curves
into a smile,
as though even while raised
she has secrets

and if ever at
like that without roots
rippling like carved wood in trees,
without arms folded
to underage maturity

and it’s how he sees me
early in the morning, before the sleep
has slithered out of his body—

that glimpse
between the soft blue sightglass
and emailed

and I worry—
though she is a rough sketch
made with stick and ink—
she feels more real
than I’ll ever be.

My Book Report
from For Capric’ Out Loud
by Diane Anne Hardy

Mama still selected books for me and I was excited when she handed me The Grapes of Wrath, clearly the hardest book, but also the best I’d ever read. When we talked literature and writing I had her undivided attention and approval. I took back at these times fondly, not only because of what I learned from good literature, but because books were about all Mama and I could talk about.

Mrs. Stanley, my English teacher, required a book report. We students could present it orally or in a written review, but she had to okay the books we reviewed. When I told her I was reporting on The Grapes of Wrath, she looked at me sternly.

“Do your parents know you’re reading that?”

I told her my mother knew you’re reading that. Mrs. Stanley made no effort to hide her disgust and said, “I won’t allow you to present it orally because of the ending, but I guess you can do the written report, if you want to.”

We were given time in class to prepare. As I wrote about the character development of the family members, the plight of farmers being forced off their land by dust-storms, Steinbeck’s Socialist bent, and the various human manifestations, including the poignant ending I watched Mrs. Stanley keep books like, Harry’s Big Day in Town, and My Very Bad Christmas.

Helicon West invites you to open mike nights, 7:00 p.m. at the Logan City Library (255 N Main in Logan) every second and fourth Thursday during USU semesters. For more information contact star.coulbrook@usu.edu or log onto writing.usu.edu
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