

Child's Pose

By Kelsey Zazanis

Written from the perspective of my eight-year-old self, this poem illustrates the state-sanctioned power differentials between children and their legal guardians that give birth to incestuous violence. I hope for the reader to recall their own eight-year-old mind, life, and emotional world to further understand this severe power disparity.

This is a happy world,
As long as we keep Mommy and Daddy happy.
As long as we keep our teachers happy
We can be anything we want when we grow up.
We can be happy,
As long as we keep Mommy and Daddy happy.

Smile for Daddy's photos.
Don't make him sad.
Daddy loves you, so much.

"I'm giving you my love," Daddy said
before entering me for the first time.
"This is our secret. If you tell anybody, Daddy will go to jail
forever
and Mommy will never be happy again," Daddy said
after entering me for the first time.
I told my brother.

I wondered why Daddy never went to jail.
I wondered why Mommy could still smile.
This is a happy world,
because we kept Mommy and Daddy happy.