

"Forgiving our Fathers" by Dick Lourie

How do we forgive our fathers?

Maybe in a dream?

Do we forgive our fathers for leaving us too often,
Or forever,
when we were little?

Maybe for scaring us with unexpected rage,
or making us nervous
because there never seemed to be any rage there at all?

Do we forgive our fathers for marrying or not marrying our mothers?
or for divorcing or not divorcing our mothers?

And shall we forgive them for their excesses of warmth or coldness?
Shall we forgive them for pushing or leaning,
for shutting doors?
For speaking through walls,
or never speaking,
or never being silent?

Do we forgive our fathers in our age,
or in theirs?

Or in their deaths,
saying it to them, or not saying it?

If we forgive our fathers, what is left?

* This poem was read during the closing credits of the incredible film "Smoke Signals".

Nice Try

"Hi, Dad, it's me."

"Oh, uh huh! Hi, son! I'll go and get your mother..."

"No, don't get Mum. It's **you** I want to talk to..."

There's a pause...then...

"Why? Do you need money?"

"No, I don't need money."

The younger man starts on his [somewhat rehearsed but still vulnerable] speech...

"I've just been remembering a lot about you, Dad, and the things you did for me. Working all those years to put me through college, supporting us. My life is going well now and it's because of what you did to get me started. I just thought about it and realised I'd never really said 'Thanks...'"

Silence on the other end of the phone. The son continues, "I want to tell you... Thanks. And that I love you."

"You been drinking??"

from *Manhood: An Action Plan for Changing Men's Lives* by Steve Biddulph

My Papa's Waltz by Theodore Roethke (1908 - 1963)

The whiskey on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy;
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans
Slid from the kitchen shelf;
My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist
Was battered on one knuckle;
At every step you missed
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head
With a palm caked hard by dirt,
Then waltzed me off to bed
Still clinging to your shirt.