

## CHILD

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I didn't realize how completely and helplessly  
I was at your mercy,  
How profoundly I loved you,  
Until one moment while we visited  
    your grandmother, my mother,  
When you were barely two years old.

It was the second time your sisters, Mom and I  
Had visited her since your birth.  
We went for dinner at a restaurant in Baltimore.  
I remember this so well.

You were sitting on Mom's lap,  
Content, snuggling and being hugged.  
You looked up at me across the table.  
A fire flashed brightly, suddenly, in your eyes.  
You leapt off of Mom's chair  
With a grin and a cry that surprised us all.  
    Out of the blue, you cried  
    "daddy daddy daddy!"  
You came running, tumbling, careening around the table  
And leapt into my arms.

You should know that loving you fiercely  
Has always come without *any* effort  
Any act of will, any choice.

But in that moment  
I realized how thoroughly blessed *I* was  
And have been and am.  
I have never ever been more glad to be alive  
Than at that moment,  
    A moment that abides and remains  
    And even, impossibly,  
        grows in strength to this day.

I am so proud to be your father  
And so determined to be worthy  
    Of your lovely soul.