

# Dear Daughters & More

by [Marc Darnell](#) (August 2025)



The Artist's Wife Sitting by a Window (Carl Holsøe, 1900)

## Dear Daughters

I'd say you'll thank me later, but you won't—  
you miss the love your dad reserved for you—  
always nice to those naive; he couldn't

fool me more, I knew what wasn't true

about him, things some day I might explain  
if you ask, and yet you'll figure out  
for yourself—promises that drain  
you as they're daily broken. Please don't let

such future disappointments scar, you'll find  
a prince in time, but I can't promise that  
he'll stay the way as when you met him—kind,  
a listener, and if he changes, sit

alone awhile reflecting, then decide  
if *standing by* is worth the tears you cried.

## **Blind Love**

Your love will help me love myself, you said—  
your faceless internet encouragement,  
but I still wish that I could see your head.

For all I know you could be chuckling dead  
drunk, saying it for your entertainment,  
that your love helps me love myself. You said

I should remain strong and not turn sad,  
for casual jabs at me aren't permanent,  
still I wish that I could see your head

with each reply, or your smile, instead  
of just these aching pixels. I lament,  
yet know that you adore me—you have said

it often. If I could see your eyes mad  
with love for me from where that love is sent—

but you fall short, I can't see your head.

We'll meet and lie, our heads covered, in bed,  
laughing at that fearful firmament,  
your love to help me love myself—you said,  
but still I wish that I could see your head.

### **Jack The Dripper\***

The chaos in my booze let vision thrive  
(and made the poles unite a bit, at first).  
More than altered eyes would be my thirst—  
such things inebriation can't relieve .

All ache I leaked I plugged, and dribbled life  
across the floor and back—a gestural course,  
but really so my fingers could rehearse  
the twist, whip and bleed of afterlife.

When I had twined the vectors of my grief  
like comet tails to where, I don't remember,  
I saw my style was just parenthesis

to narrow men with bright and bold motifs.  
The years I trod across the spackled lumber,  
I felt no God, no hurt's antithesis.

*\*Refers to Jackson Pollock in 1956 Time article*

### **Sister Esther**

Urges invade her chaste conscience—  
she shelters her heart as would the saints,

for there's no qualifying deliverance  
for a lovesick soul with earthly complaints,

or she'll never get into the sky oh why  
must liberal lust be hidden, though sure  
to pull her from the cross *I'd pray*  
*stigmata aches away*. With rapture

stifled, she'll stay a stone—she must,  
since life as a chosen is barren, full of  
hush and empty apses, where dust  
congregates on her habit, and love

is reserved for a God and untouchable son,  
desires deemed deviant undone.

## **Seamstress**

I only miss my mother in my dreams  
where she is younger, hiding me behind her,  
and everything's not ripping at the seams

like when I wake, and all the body teems  
with thoughts of self-harm and future disaster.  
I only miss my mother in my dreams

where I remember siblings' middle names—  
the only friends we had were one another  
and everything wasn't ripping at the seams

which now requires dulling fluoxetine.  
I haven't seen the gravestone of my mother,  
but I still see her nightly in my dreams,

holding strong to monsters that she tames,

where children in her kitchen laugh together  
and everything's not ripping at the seams.

Motherhood was first to her it seems—  
I laud her for a job she clearly mastered,  
and I wish I missed her more than in my dreams  
where everything's not ripping at the seams.

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**Marc Darnell** is an online tutor and lead custodian in Omaha NE. He received his MFA from the University of Iowa, and has published poems in *The Lyric*, *Rue Scribe*, *Verse*, *Skidrow Penthouse*, *Shot Glass Journal*, *The HyperTexts*, *Candelabrum*, *The Road Not Taken*, *Aries*, *Ship of Fools*, *Open Minds Quarterly*, *The Fib Review*, *Verse-Virtual*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Ragazine*, *The Literary Nest*, *The Pangolin Review*, and elsewhere. His latest book is *Forecast: Increasing Visibility*. He has 3 times been awarded the Academy of American Poets prize.

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