

Children's Work

Dessa

My father was a paper plane, my mother was a wind swept tree
My little brother is nearly twice my age, he taught me how to meditate
I taught him how to read
I grew up with a book in my bed, I got these dark circles before I
Turned ten
Heard my mother with her friends worry it was something she did, to get
Such a serious kid

But I've learned how to paint my face
How to earn my keep
How to clean my kill
Some nights I still can't sleep
The past rolls back, I can see us still
You've learned how to hold your own
How to stack your stones
But the history's thick
Children aren't as simple
As we'd like to think

Before you came along I was a lone cub
Fell in love with language, tried to tell the grown-ups
About the storm clouds, the weather in my head
Hadn't heard the word for melancholy yet
Then you came in five years behind
We thought you couldn't talk, turns out you were just shy
Mom said it was serious, dad said you'd be fine
I thought you were the prophet of 1989
You were so tender, we thought something was wrong with you
So patient, we thought that you were deaf
You were so solemn, so tiny but so ancient
Ma took you to see doctors, you scared her half to death
And I made you a library of tiny books with spines 2 inches high
You didn't say too much
But your smile taught me how to quiet down my mind

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You slept in my bed, and if I kept quiet
I could hear all the voices in your head
When the wagon tipped
I prayed over your body, I asked God to take the damage out on me
10 years later he finally gets the memo, sent it to accounting
And knocked out my front teeth
But you came to, and took my hand, and held my eyes and...
Me and you, had a long walk home, so we decided not to cry
Now we've got a grown up love
And I know that's how it's supposed to be
Same old story, mom gets Easter, let's dad have Christmas Eve

But I won't pretend I don't remember
How unusual we were
The little mystic and his handler
All some children do is work
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How to earn my keep
How to clean my kill
Some nights I still can't sleep
The past rolls back, I can see us still