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Richard Jones: Letter of Recommendation from My Father to My Future Wife

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Richard Jones is the director of the Creative Writing Program at DePaul University, as well as the author of five books of poetry. The most recent is *The Blessing*, published by Copper Canyon Press.

Letter of Recommendation from My Father to My Future Wife

During the war, I was in China.
Every night we blew the world to hell.
The sky was purple and yellow
like his favorite shirt.
I was in India once
on the Ganges in a tourist boat.
There were soldiers,
some women with parasols.
A dead body floated by
going in the opposite direction.
My son likes this story
and requests it each year at Thanksgiving.
When he was twelve,
there was an accident.
He almost went blind.
For three weeks he lay in the hospital,
his eyes bandaged.
He did not like visitors,
but if they came
he'd silently hold their hand as they talked.
Small attentions
are all he requires.
Tell him you never saw anyone
so adept
at parallel parking.
Still, your life will not be easy.
Just look in the drawer where he keeps his socks.

Nothing matches. And what's the turtle shell
doing there, or the map of the moon,
or the surgeon's plastic model of a take-apart heart?
You must understand —
he doesn't see the world clearly.
Once he screamed, "The woods are on fire!"
when it was only a blue cloud of insects
lifting from the trees.
But he's a good boy.
He likes to kiss
and be kissed.
I remember mornings
he would wake me, stroking my whiskers
and kissing my hand.
He'll tell you — and it's true —
he prefers the green of your eyes
to all the green life
of heaven and earth.

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