
Wilderness House Literary Review 1/4

Which Man Will Know Me Now

Which man will know me
from my birth as a bald, bawling baby
to a balding middle aged man?

Which man will I kiss now?
My lips brushing his sandpaper,
five o'clock shadow cheek?

Which man will tell me stories of the Bronx?
His gang of street urchins stealing
Mickies from carts
Impaling the spuds with sticks
and roasting them in
clandestine back alleys.

Which man will remember taking
a strap to me when I needed it?
Bluntly telling me: "You will be a drifter."
if I didn't get my act together.
Slapping my back at graduation,
bear-hugging me at my wedding

Which man?

Will I lose that primal image I have of him?
Rushing off the 6 P.M. train from Penn. Station
a regular "Dashing Dan,"
greeting me through the side of his mouth
"How are ya' kid?"

Who will make impossibly corny jokes
and impossibly dry Martinis
in front of a fire
on a long winter
Sunday afternoon?

But my father has not left me.
I see him in the laugh
lines of my face,
the way I greet a pal,
down a beer,
guffaw at a Marx Brothers movie,
crack an off-key joke.
And the way
I pick myself up
and give it
another try
time and time again.
Yes, he is dead.
and I will miss him.
and I will remember
and mark
his passage,
because there will never
be someone quite
like him
who will cross
this stage again