1996

Lens

Jane Brady

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A poem by Jane Brady

Lens

You weren't there when I was born
so the nurses thought Alan,
leaning against the glass taking pictures,
was you, Dad.

We played a game one night.
One was blindfolded
and the other would lead.
I guided with care but

you saw it as a joke.
And as I tripped and hit into trees
you laughed.
I was five.

When I was seven Grandpa died.
But you said I couldn't go with Mom
because I'd miss school.
Which of course was more important.

Then I ran away.
And when you caught me and drove me back
you said I pulled
at your heartstrings.

One Christmas Alex gave me a dozen donuts.
He said they were all for me
since being the littlest, I always got
the leftovers.
You took two later in the day.
And instead of listening to my explanation
you punished me
for being selfish.

When Mom died I told you
I loved you.
Because I knew it was what
you needed to hear.

You saw me as a child:
irresponsible, immature.
And now you ask me to be
more adult than you.

I became what you
expected me to be.
There is no changing the rules
now.

As I lean my face against the window
to watch the rain I wonder,
does the breathing have to stop
before the picture can be clear?

Jane Brady will graduate with a Master's in English Literature in August 1996.
She lives in a old stone house with her gourmet-cooking husband Ken, creative son
Sam, her bear-hugging daughter McKenna, and her fiesty cat Huckleberry.