



1996

## Lens

Jane Brady

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### Recommended Citation

Brady, Jane (1996) "Lens," *Inscape*: Vol. 16 : No. 2 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/inscape/vol16/iss2/12>

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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.*