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Poetry for Children
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My Dear Daddy

In the morning, Daddy wakes me
and gives my nose a tweak,
then gently plucks away a lash
that had fallen onto my cheek.

He cooks us barley porridge,
the milk heated just the right way.

Then we read a book together—

I want to read like this all day!

But after the happy ending
we jump and dance across the floor.

The sun's now sliding behind the shed—
it's time we went off to the store.

Dad orders some ground beef
while I pet a lettuce head.

He piles bell peppers into a bag:
orange, green, and red.

I cried and begged for ice cream.

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Now our shopping bags are laden.

Walking home we pass old ladies

tending the plants in their gardens.

Dad puts on a snow-white apron,

and we listen to the radio.

The kitchen smells of grilling peppers.

Dad turns the flames down low.

The meat is also simmering

when suddenly the doorbell rings.

Dad runs to open the door for Mom

and helps her with her things.

Mom gets tangled in her coat,

she can't get out of the sleeves.

She's busy complaining about her staff,

"They're all con-men and thieves!

They always need to be told what to do,

they're going to drive her mad."

Back in the kitchen, chopping onions,

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"Really!", "How awful!" says Dad.

Hunger overcomes her anger
and we sit down at the table to eat.
The perfume from Mom's red suit
smells so strong and so sweet.

She asks if I behaved myself,
and didn't cause any trouble.
Then pulls from her bag a cheesecake—
my portion is the double.

We eat dessert in front of the TV.
Mom ruffles my Dad's hair.
Then a show that's rated R comes on—
I should not be there.

Mom says it's time for bed now.
I sigh and get ready for sleep.
Next door my parents laugh and chat
but barely make a peep.

I open up my book again

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and look at the Happy Ending.

Mom's hand ruffles my own hair, too,
even though I'm just pretending.

A well-behaved kid is well-loved
so I shut my eyes, at last.
Tomorrow I'll wake up early
when Dad calls me to breakfast.

Earbuds

Here, you take one
and leave the other for me,
we can now both hear
the same song in unity.

Fast, broken beats–
the bass low and slow–
caress both our ears
at the exact same tempo.

The melody pours and melts

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just like ice-cream.

Every word in the song

seems about us, it's like a dream.

We don't hear the crowd

buzzing all around us.

First love's chart-topping hit

makes all else superfluous.

Politician Dad

My dad has a single mission,

you see: he is a politician

He talks a lot and rolls his eyes,

he promises me such lovely lies:

we'll go on picnics at the seaside,

we'll go hurtling down a waterslide,

a mountain bike for me to ride,

my own horse in the countryside.

"I'll give you everything," Dad smiles,

"you just have to wait a little while."

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Days and weeks go by,
but nothing happens – why?
I walk around the house, all mad,
refusing to talk at all to Dad.
He waves his arms, rolls his eyes,
and promises Mom such lovely lies:

He'll give her a little daughter,
a fancy house down by the water,
a fur coat, a gold-edged porcelain cup,
an enormous bubbling hot tub.
“I'll give you everything,” Dad smiles,
“you just have to wait a little while.”

Days and weeks go by,
but nothing happens – why?
Dad works in politics,
appears on TV doing his tricks –
he waves his arms, he rolls his eyes,
promises everyone such lovely lies:

Nobody will ever wear a frown,

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he'll make sure taxes go down,
summer will last for half the year,
free sodas for all who support his career.
"Just you wait, soon you'll see
how great life is if you vote for me!"

People agree, "He makes a good argument."
Dad gets elected to Parliament.
Days and weeks and months go by,
but nothing happens – why?
“Keep calm,” Dad smiles,
“you just need to wait a little while.”

July bakes us with no update,
all the people sit and wait.
January freezes us, and meanwhile
all the people sit and wait.
They wait a year, they wait two,
all the while my dad just smiles.

By the time his promises show up,
I myself will be a grown-up.