

Puberty²



Two short
poems from
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April 2015

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Photo by Anne Fassotte. This non-pubertal photo of the father and son will also appear on the cover of Surviving the Twenty-First Century, a book of essays by William Eaton, soon to be published by [Serving House Books](#).

Given: Such Disorder

Boys and girls with pictures and science may seem
Well-schooled (and besieged)—yet still not prepared.
The mad builder-destroyer, inside and free,
Organs growing, over exposed, clumps of hair.

To the watching parents, all this occurred,
And perhaps we recall some startling events.
But not only by time are feelings blurred,
The mind closes down when fears won't relent.

Why dwell on change, mortal anxieties?
Forgotten, you know, homework becomes play,
And hunting, killing men who flash on a screen,
My son hopes to survive at least for today.

His father holds for him the larger fear:
Given such disorder, what next might appear?

Papa & the might yet to come

For his part, my son, now full thirteen,
The years of steady growth having come undone,
Changes ordained and advertised, but so extreme,
Best leave to Papa the might yet to come.

Nursing words warm from a warm breast,
Story upon story he reads and re-reads.
Hours filling with good's irresistible conquest —
Not only the young are so happily deceived.

Many adults would leave fear's pages unturned—
For others fighting, cancers, economic distress.
Yet if, unbidden, God or science ordered this berm,
Time might bring another, more or less.

And the faith and laws that governed our own lives,
With shame and astonishment would have to be revised.