

UNTANGLED

(A Poem For Parents)

You arrive in a torrent of overpowering love
Great waves crashing down on me
Waves of pride, of animalistic protectiveness
Waves of fear, and anxiety
Echoed with my own experiences of childhood
But I am deaf to them

I hold your tiny hand
The most natural and yet most foreign thing in the world
How will I cope?
I will. I must
The responsibility
The pressure
The honour

As you grow I battle with myself
With the conflicting parenting advice
Pick the cherries, they say, but I do not know which ones
Too much love will spoil, too little will damage
The mountain of books towers over me, mocking me
Which way is the RIGHT way?

I am your world
Your need for me eclipses everything
I am needed, wanted, loved
I bask in the warmth of your need for me
It liberates and suffocates me
I snort you in; it is addictive
This love

When you need me
I comfort you
The only way I know how
Your needs and mine intermix, inextricably tangled together
You stifle under my efforts to parent you
I try to pull away, to let you grow, to give you space
It frightens me

And then it is time
For you to grow away from me a little
To sleep without me, outside of my arms
It's for the best they say
The first small step on the path of separation

So I allow you to cry a little
The fear of your needs neglected claws away at me
You will need me
And I will not come
And then I will not be needed
Having broken my newborn promises to you
I crumble under their weight

Then a ray of clarity sears through the mist of a sleepless life
You begin to sleep, yourself, and I realise
You still need me!
I am still your world
I have only given you the tools to do it yourself
I have empowered you

(I have kept my promises)

And so I make you a new promise;
I will strive to separate your needs from mine
To untangle the roots of our needs, however deep
To equip you with the tools you need to fathom life
To send you out into the world
A soldier armed with love and compassion

I will let you go to keep you close
I will set you free to fly near me
I will swim above the waves of my love for you
Not drowning but swimming, gliding, breathing, seeing
And you will swim alongside me, too
Because I have taught you to
Because I love you

By Eve Squires

(Dedicated to Rachel & Ethan, my first clients)

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