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These Eyes and This Heart Remembers

Bronwyn Fredericks

Watchful eyes and increased breath,
I heard the car drive in, door shut, each foot take a step.
I waited, I watched.
Through the house he would slowly wonder,
it seemed as if every step was like thunder.
Waiting, praying.
Watchful eyes and increased breath.

These eyes and this heart remembers
the dog being thrown over the veranda,
the tomato sauce bottle thrown against the wall,
the way our family plans would fall,
the way I felt so very small,
the side table smashed all over the floor,
the smell of urine piddled on the floor,
the running away of the kids next door.

These eyes and this heart remembers
the being let down yet again,
the grubby drinking men,
the facade the family used to play,
the many things we didn't say,
the living in fear,
the kerosene that nearly brought death near,
the night a suicide was attempted by someone dear.

These eyes and this heart remembers
the stench oozing through pores,
the effects of drinking driving,
the smashed car, the cuts and open sores,
the economic deprivation,
the wishing for him in incarceration,
the neighbours would to help sometimes come,
the deeds that were already done.

These eyes and this heart remembers
the terror and the trauma.

These eyes and this heart remembers
the pain and the hurt.

These eyes and this heart remembers
the sights and feelings of childhood.

What do you want your child to remember?