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# The Bubble Gum

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D.J. KING

## The Bubble Gum

I was in training to be a girl scout  
Wearing a brown dress hoping to wear green  
Responsible girl, my dad had no doubt  
That I'd keep my uniform neat and clean

Proudly, Dad drove to the uniform store  
I was surprised what he paid for my dress  
Doing the laundry, Dad taught me that chore  
Sorting the loads, reading tags, do my best

A brownie. Good student. His Right-Hand-Girl.  
My dad always spoke so highly of me  
And Dad, the most important man in my world  
Let me proudly think that he needed me

But then, there was the gum, the bubble gum  
Joke on the wrapper, delicious delight  
At first dry and so stiff, the bubble gum  
Then yielding and chewy, juicy-- just right

Pink pleasure to savor, I kept the rest  
Wax wrapped rectangles in pocket of dress  
No hint this moment that I'd failed a test  
Committed a crime I couldn't confess

Because, there was the gum, the bubble gum  
Free of its wrapper, mean mis'erable mess  
It was scorched hot and hard, the bubble gum  
Not pink, but gray, the gum gripping my dress

Oh yummy gum! Stupid careless desire!  
What could my dad think? What would my dad say?  
Mess of a dress, spilling from the dryer  
What cost- pops of pink? What price will I pay?

"Dad, being a scout isn't really that fun  
and I have a lot of homework to do."  
Lies, lies to Dad, just for that bubble gum  
Good girl. Smart girl. Because Dad never knew.

That girl, good girl, I left far behind me.  
 You don't know me, Dad! You're not perfect, Dad!  
 I hurt from lies that I keep inside me  
 Teen-aged daughter mad! Teen-aged daughter sad!

Between Dad and me, only division  
 But other men had their eyes upon me  
 Just seventeen but its my decision  
 Bikini contests with a fake I.D.

Man with a camera, an offer of fame  
 What did I think of Penthouse Magazine?  
 My beauty, my youth, my power to claim  
 But I did think: what it means to be seen

Pink pleasure to savor, the men impressed  
 Unwrapped teenager, juicy sweet undressed  
 A glint this moment that this was a test  
 Should a right-hand-girl fall into this mess?

Because such is the gum the bubble gum  
 That could stain and stick to your daughter dear  
 Flashing cameras go pop, it's bubble gum  
 Dad's hope left for me could just disappear

I saved my body from glossy pages  
 but age nineteen, I'm pregnant with no plan  
 My Dad talked to me, forgave my rages  
 He let go of what he could not understand

He never was perfect, may not be wise  
 But Dad believes in me like no other  
 His trust and the faith revealed in his eyes  
 Gave me courage to become a mother

Now, we are both parents, so now I know  
 We all tell our kids to watch out for gum  
 And, we teach them lessons then let them go  
 Hopeful in spite of the gray days that come

I'm careful when I sort dirty laundry  
 A good woman, a smart woman, in this world  
 I'm certain that my dad always loves me  
 no bubble gum sticks to his right-hand-girl