
Goodnight, Dad

Lorena Paxcci Jonard-Snyder

Abstract

The following piece captures the experiences of an Indigenous youth in care who has been historically parentified. He writes of his parental allegiances, his love and devotion to his dad, and his relationship to a foster home. At the heart of the piece, is an exploration of the inherent powerlessness that children endure when their lives are predetermined for them and how, despite this, they continue to hope, to love, and to idealize. The piece is positioned from the imaginative yet honest eye of the child, and models much of the fantastical thinking held by so many of our Indigenous youth who sleep away from home.

Keywords

foster care, Indigenous, youth, intergenerational trauma, parentification

Goodnight, Dad

I tuck you in our video chat, I see you have passed out on the couch now almost drooling, unresponsive when mom shakes you, I guess you are a hard sleeper like me. A minute ago, you were talking with me but then you dropped into the couch, the exhaustion of it all hit you at once. I know you are trying dad; know you are working in the mornings now, so you get up early. I am safe dad, and the people here are nice folks, a bit fancy but nice. I'll be ok dad, while you rest. I hope you're not still taking all that stuff that made you sick dad you know, those bad things. I knew you were lying then, but I wanted to believe you so bad. Like when the ambulance came, and you turned blue. You keep trying and I'm trying to. I miss you; I love you, dad. I've kept your secrets dad, at least I've tried. I want to be like you. So now I sing you gently to sleep as you used to when I was small sometimes. Good night moon, goodnight room, goodnight dad.

Author Biography

Lorena Paxcci Jonard-Snyder is a Diaguíta Indigenous mother and graduate student in the Ph.D. program of Socio-political thoughts at York University. Her interests are in the decolonization of motherhood and the decolonization of mental health. She is focused on the legitimization of traditional knowledge and the epistemic violence of settler ideological hegemony within the domestic sphere. Lorena works as a therapist in the field of children's mental health and has informed her research interests and focus from her front-line work.