

'To the Boys Who May One Day Date My Daughter' by Jesse Parent

To the boys who may one day date my daughter!
I have been waiting for you.
Since before her birth,
Since before my spark took hold and ignited the fire in her mother's belly,
I have been training to kill you.
When you took your first steps I was preparing to make it so you never walked again,
When you played at war I was perfecting headshots,
You can't catch up at this point.

And when you first meet my daughter and fall in love with the look she sends over her shoulder,
Her crescent-moon eyes framing her laughing smile, you
Are gonna wanna talk to her.
And when those hours pass by like sprinters during that first timeless conversation-
You will also know with a deep and impending sense of dread,
That you are going to have to talk to me.

When you first come to my home, and see the bone carving over my threshold-
Try not to imagine your own femurs so expertly carved.
Pay no attention to my "ample crawl space", my
"Room with a rubber mat and a drain", be careful
To only approach me with love for my daughter,
See, I have been seeding her childhood with tap-root hugs
To weed out indifference and apathy,
There will be no Daddy Issues for your teenage talons to latch upon. If you
Break her heart; I will hear it snap with the ear I pressed against her mother's belly-
The elbow I cradled her head in will send a message to my fist. My cheeks
Are attuned to her lips.
I will know if they tremble.

I have taught her that a man should never hit a woman-
Now her mother would like to add that you really shouldn't ever hit anybody-
But I have taught her that a man should never hit a woman.
Consider my genes a mark of Cain;
You will suffer seven times whatever you do to her,
And she will not keep your secret:
You can't make fire feel afraid.

I have been teaching her love all of her life,
And all that I ask is that you continue the lesson.
Love her.
Befriend her.
Protect her- be there when I can't, and when my body gives up to the grave,
Let the grin that eternity carves into my face be
a reflection of the peace that your love brings to her,
And we should get along just fine...

ADDENDUM: To the girls who may one day date my daughter!...
My wife is a better shot than I am.