

Loudon Wainwright

"A Father And A Son"

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When I was your age I was just like you,
And just look at me now; I'm sure you do.
But your grandfather was just as bad
And you should have heard him trash his dad.
Life's no picnic, that's a given:
My mom's mom died when my mom was seven;
My mom's father was a tragic guy,
But he was so distant and nobody knows why.
Now, your mother's family, you know them:
Each and every one a gem,
Each and every one a gem.

When I was your age I was a mess;
On a bad day I still am, I guess.
I think I know what you're going through;
Everything changes but nothing is new.
And I know that I'm miserable; can't you see?
I just want you to be just like me.
Boys grow up to be grown men
And then men change back into boys again.
You're starting up and I'm winding down;
Ain't it big enough for us both in this town?
Say it's big enough for us both in this town.

When I was your age I thought I hated my dad
And that the feeling was a mutual one that we had;
We fought each other day and night:
I was always wrong; he was always right.
But he had the power and he needed to win;
His life half over, mine about to begin.
I'm not sure about that Oedipal stuff,
But when we were together it was always rough.
Hate is a strong word; I want to back-track;
The bigger the front, then the bigger the back;
The bigger the front, then the bigger the back.

Now you and me are me and you,
And it's a different ballgame though not brand-new.
I don't know what all of this fighting is for;
But we're having us a teenage/middle-age war.
I don't want to die and you want to live;

It takes a little bit of take and a whole lot of give.
It never really ends though each race is run,
This thing between a father and a son.
Maybe it's power and push and shove,
Maybe it's hate but probably it's love,
Maybe it's hate but probably it's love.

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