

Commentary/Biographical Sketch

I am seventy-five years old, and I've been writing poems for about 65 of those years. I've written about women's experience as female bodies, in their relationships as lovers, wives, mothers, sisters, in their private worlds. My earliest poems came out of my own childhood, and experiences in it of loss, drawing on my emotional life; as my life and work has unfolded I've tried to include a wider world and a wider self in my work, an intellectual self, a public world.

I became mother of an only child relatively late in life, at 38, at a time when my work as a poet was becoming a real practice. I wrote about my son and his childhood for years, even as I was beginning to write more "public" poems. Mother of a still young child at an age when my friends were becoming grandmothers, I couldn't understand the rapt enthusiasm they expressed for that state. But when, seven years ago, I became a grandmother, I was astonished to find myself as doting as any I've seen. My two grandchildren have become muses for me, as my son was as a child. And it is fascinating to relive parts of my experience as mother, of my son's childhood, in the light of what I see in my grandchildren's childhood. This poem is in part an exploration of that subject, and of the difference between being a parent and a grandparent.

I have also written about my ambivalence at learning that I was to become a grandparent; my long poem "Ab Ovo" is an exploration of that subject.

Here is the link to it:

<http://ilanot.wordpress.com/ab-ovo/>