

HIS PIANO

My son sits at his grand piano,  
back erect, fingers in place  
on glistening white keys,  
unstirred by sounds of lawn mowers,  
dogs barking, and airplanes flying above.

I plop down on our green velour sofa to listen,  
yet embarrassed don't recognize his tunes,  
or names of all those songs he's created.  
I'm yanked into my seventeen-year-olds world;  
as he fills our high-ceilinged room with his magic.

Five songs later, he motions me to his stool,  
smiles into my eyes and places my fingers on his keys.  
I am paralyzed, tone deaf, and can't recall a note.  
I don't want his spot. I tell him I'd rather listen.

I return to our sofa, where I sit like a sponge  
and a faucet at the same time.  
My tears hold me hostage  
as my son's music soothes me.

How will I ever thank him  
for the joy he brings to my life  
with this ritual and his perfect posture  
I pestered him with as a child?

*By Diana Raab*

## TO MY FATHER

You had this radiant smile  
and handshake to fracture a bone  
and a giving heart  
void of bad intention,  
even risking tossing that shirt  
off your back to street beggars.

As a child I sat on those borders  
of Rockefeller Center as you taught  
Paul Newman to skate every Sunday  
in that place where they called  
you Mr. Mark because they couldn't  
pronounce your long European last name.

We'd return home for steak  
and whipped potatoes, topped off by  
vanilla pudding, your favorite meal  
before your bedtime snack of  
pumpkin bread with a smear  
of cream cheese.

In morning hours, I eyed you sitting  
in your corner diner  
as you flattered waitresses  
making them giggle with your charm,  
while they poured you steamy coffee  
in that same seat each day, that same  
place I saw grandma for the very last time.

Now, nearly three decades since your passing,  
I miss you more than ever and relish  
each moment in which your  
spirit encircles me. I still talk to you  
each day—you the only person who  
loved me unconditionally.

I shall be forever warmed by you.

*By Diana Raab*