FATHERHOOD
AN ANTHOLOGY

Edited and introduced by
John Lewis-Stempel
Contents

Introduction 1

Part 1

A Father is Born 5

Letter to Daniel: Fergal Keane, 1996 7
To Ianthe: Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1792–1822 10
'I think I was reasonably shaken': From Laurie Lee,
The Firstborn, 1964 10
The biological programming of fatherhood: News article in The Times, 6 January 2000 11
The smell of you: From Peter Carey's 'Letter to Our Son', 1995 11
Being there: From figures presented to the Fatherhood Research Group by Anne Wollett, 1985, and the records of the Royal College of Midwives, 2000 14
Soul man: From The Rainbow by D. H. Lawrence, 1915 14
High anxiety: James Boswell, 1740–95 15
Serenade: Thomas Hood, 1799–1845 16
From IVF to paternity: From 'Trying Times' by Charles Spencer, 1997 16
Echo, homo: From a letter by Lafcadio Hearn, 1850–1904 19
To father is to be human: From Margaret Mead,
Male and Female, 1949 20
Frost at Midnight: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1798 20
The Birthnight: To F.: Walter de la Mare, 1873–1956,
written for his daughter Florence 22
Lie still with thy daddy: Anonymous lullaby, from Songs from the Nursery, 1805 23
An affair of the heart: From Honoré de Balzac, Old Goriot, 1834 23
Clenched in it was my heart: Hugo Williams, from 'What Shall We Do Now That We Have Done Everything?', 1992 23
To My Son: George Gordon, Lord Byron, written in 1807 25
Small men, big fathers: From Barry Hewlett's study Intimate Fathers, 1991
Exponential fatigue: Ogden Nash, 1902–71
Birth wrong: From Sophocles, Oedipus Rex, c. 430 BC, translated by Sir George Young, 1887
Artistic representations of Joseph the Father: From Adrienne Burgess, Fatherhood Reclaimed, 1997
On the Birth of His Son: Su Tung-P'o, 1036–1101
Early Morning Feed: From Peter Redgrove, Poems 1954–1987
My Baby: Song sung by Charlie Bakus at the San Francisco Minstrels Opera House, c. 1880
Forever Young: Bob Dylan, song written for his infant son, Jacob, 1972
Long time coming; the history of Father's Day: From The Modernisation of Fatherhood, Ralph LaRossa, 1997
The contrariness of early fatherhood: From Charles Jennings, Father's Race, 1999
A great nuisance: From Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh, written 1873–4
Hector and son: From Homer, The Iliad, c. eighth century BC, translated by Alexander Pope
Rising late and playing with A-ts'ui, aged two:
Po Chu-i, written in 851
Fatherhood, from the German: Les Murray, Collected Poems, 1998

Part 2

Fathers and Sons

Little Boy Lost: William Blake, 1757–1827
A Parental Ode to My Son, Aged Three Years and Five Months: Thomas Hood, 1837
Teaching a son to walk: The Baal Shem Tov, 1698–1760
Roughhousing rules ok: National Fatherhood Initiative, USA
Play fellow: A letter from Richard Steele to his wife, 16 March 1717
The main event: From Charles Jennings, Father's Race, 1999
Nothing spared: From Ivan Turgenev, Fathers and Sons, 1862
That's my pateras!: From Barry Strauss, Fathers and Sons in Athens, 1997
A mystical estate: From Ulysses by James Joyce, 1922
A Boy Named Sue: Song popularised by Johnny Cash, 1958
What makes a father's love distinct?: From David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*, 1995

'This is a poem to my son Peter': Peter Meinke, 1932–

Boy tyrannus: From Plutarch c. 46–c. 120, *Themistocles*

The Judgement: By Franz Kafka, written during the night of 22–23 September 1912

What will daddy say?: From Sophocles, *Ajax*, written c. 440 BC

*Sons, what things you are*: William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 2* (Act IV, Scene 5), c. 1597

Repentance: Molière (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin), 1622–73

Father's pride: From the memoir of a schoolboy, *Mesopotamia*, c. 2000 BC

The Toys: Coventry Patmore, 1823–96

All children should be equal in the eyes of the father:

Advice from Jean-Jacques Rosseau's *Emile*, 1762

A liberal allowance: From *Brief Lives* by John Aubrey, 1626–97

Older and wiser: Mark Twain, 1835–1910

My Son, My Executioner: Donald Hall, 1954

On an Old Photograph of My Son: From Raymond Carver, *A New Path to the Waterfall*, 1989

The son of my father: From Sherwood Anderson's *Memoirs*, 1942

So there!: A boy writes to his father, Greece, c. 300

The old chestnut: From Oliver Goldsmith, *The Good Natur'd Man*, 1768

The Father and the Son, David Citino, 1947–

The prestige of the father: From Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 1949

'As long as my dad was there': News report in *The Daily Telegraph*, August 2000

'Dads ought to have their whack sometimes': From a letter by Edward Burne-Jones, 1861, shortly after his marriage


Anecdotes for Fathers: William Wordsworth, 1798


Rebel son without a pause: From the diary of Reverend Ralph Josselin

Crime and punishment: *Deuteronomy* 21: 18–22

Off with his hand: Code of Hammurabi, Babylon, eighteenth century BC


Father knows best (even when you're forty): From Blake Morrison's *And When Did You Last See Your Father?*, 1985

The good father, he ain't heavy: From Maureen Green, *Goodbye Father*, 1976
Thoughtlessness: Harry Graham, the inventor of ‘ruthless rhymes’, 1874–1936

The ungrateful son: From Grimm’s Fairy Tales, 1812–22


The toughest thing in the world: William Carlos Williams writes to his son Bill, in July 1942 and July 1944

My Papa’s Waltz: Theodore Roethke, Selected Poems, 1969

Fatherwards: From Iron John, Robert Bly, 1993

The ghost of Achilles seeks news of his son and father: From Homer’s The Odyssey, Book II, in which Odysseus enters ‘the infernal regions’

Part 3

Daddy’s Girl

Beattie is Three: Adrian Mitchell, Heart on the Left: Poems 1953–84

Devotion: From Honoré de Balzac, Old Goriot, 1834

To My Daughter: Stephen Spender, 1909–95

Foster father: From Silas Marner, 1861, by George Eliot

Cocooned in her father’s shirt: From a letter by Thomas Meauty, 1632

My girl: From Laurie Lee, Two Women, 1983

A nineteenth-century father writes from a business trip: Thomas Hood to his daughter, 23 October 1837

Listen up: From the diary of Cotton Mather, America, 1698, when his daughter was four

Like father, like daughter: The author William Godwin writes to his author daughter, Mary Shelley

A runaway daughter: From The Vicar of Wakefield, Olivier Goldsmith, 1776


Freudian electricity: From ‘Sugar Daddy’ by Angela Carter, 1983

‘That you are my daughter shouldn’t do you any harm, either’: Sigmund Freud to his daughter, Mathilde, 19 March 1908

More reveals his daughters’ goods: From John Aubrey’s Brief Lives, written c. 1690

Independent fortune: From The Journal of Eliza Weeton, 1824

A father suckled by his daughter: E. Cobham Brewer, Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, 1870

The fall: From a ‘Short Digest of a Long Novel’ by Budd Schulberg, 1953
Alice in the White House: Theodore Roosevelt, 1858–1919, 26th President of the USA

Golden Bells: Po Chu-i, 772–846

Fathers and daughters in Ancient Greece: From The Supplicants by Euripides, c. 422 BC

Mary be good: Lyric by Irving Berlin, 1888–1989

The earth father: From D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow, 1915

By Duty Divided: William Shakespeare, Othello

(Act I, Scene 3), c. 1604

The Grief of Lear: From History of the Kings of Britain by Geoffrey of Monmouth, c. 1120

To Her Father: Mehetabel Wright, 1697–1750

Daddy: Sylvia Plath, 1932–63

Charmed: From the diary of James Boswell

The pillar tumbles: From The Sibling Society by John Bly, 1996

The value of a daughter: From William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, 1936

The four ways in which fatherhood makes children richer: From David Blankenhorn, Fatherless America, 1995

‘Fathers imprint girls for sexual adequacy’: From Alex Comfort, The Listener, 1973

A Prayer for My Daughter: W. B. Yeats, June 1919

And never lose it: Amos Bronson Alcott to his daughter Anna, 1839

Thank heaven for a little girl: From Angela’s Ashes, Frank McCourt, 1996

Papa Love Baby, Stevie Smith, 1902–71

Lap girl: From Naomi Mitchison, Small Talk: Memories of an Edwardian Childhood, 1973

Poem for Jane: Vernon Scannell, Selected Poems, 1971

First Lesson: Philip Booth, 1922–

Part 4

The Sins of the Father

Study of a figure in a landscape: From Paul Durcan, Daddy, Daddy, 1990

A bad temper on a Sunday evening: From Samuel Butler, The Way of all Flesh, 1903

The philosophy of punishment: Aristophanes, The Clouds, c. 450 BC

The no-praise man: From The Journals of Anaïs Nin, 1966–83, Nin writes about her childhood relationship with her father

‘Most fathers prefer DIY to their kids’: The Daily Telegraph, 1998
You shall not go to the ball: From H. G. Wells, Ann Veronica, 1909

The Stern Parent: From Harry Graham, Ruthless Rhymes, 1899

Lost fathers: From Jonathan Bradshaw et al., Absent Fathers, 1999


Cuckolding thy own sonne: From ‘The Father Hath Beguil’d the Sonne’, English ballad registered in 1629

‘Father jailed for chaining up son’: A report in The Daily Telegraph, 1996

We have no bananas: From Will This Do?, Auberon Waugh, 1991

Take that, you little whelp!: From James Joyce, ‘Counterparts’, Dubliners, 1914

‘I’ll Take You Down a Peg . . . ’ From Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, 1884

Pour encourager les autres: King George V, 1865–1935

What inconveniences do happen by the negligence of fathers?: From Plutarch, The Morals, c. AD 90, translated by Sir Thomas Eliot, 1535

Innsensitivity: From Anny Thakeray, Chapters from Some Memoirs, 1894

‘Now I don’t like being touched in any way’: From Behind Closed Doors by Janine Turner, 1988

A stricture against deadbeat dads, eighteenth-century version: From Emile by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1762

Too late to play the role: From Kirk Douglas, The Ragman’s Son, 1988

Too far: From Mikal Gilmore’s Shot in the Heart: One Family’s History of Murder, 1994

Provoke not: From the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians, 3: 21

Ten tips for fathers: Fatherhood USA, 1999

Part 5

Experience

Things a Man Should Know about Fatherhood: Esquire magazine, 1999

The nighttime father-jitters: From Laurie Lee, The Firstborn, 1964

The pram-pusher’s knack: From Vladimir Nabokov on bringing up baby in Nazi Germany, from Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited, 1964

Henry Miller changes diapers: From My Life and Times by Henry Miller, 1971

‘Restrain your mirth till you have children of your own’:
Two scenes from Ancient Greece, as related in *The Percy Anecdotes*, 1821

A wider arc: From *A Man Called Daddy* by Hugh O’Neill, 1996

Kitchen sink drama: From Fraser Harrison’s *A Father’s Diary*, 1985

Growing Pain: Vernon Scannell, 1922–

Real men do childcare: Extracts from William Cobbett’s *Advice to a Father*, 1830

A Nottingham father’s place is . . . ?: From John and Elizabeth Newson, *Patterns of Infant Care in an Urban Community*, 1965

Even educated fish do it: From Konrad Lorenz’s zoological study, *King Solomon’s Ring*, 1952

Dad’s department: Sam Harper, *National Fatherhood Initiative* website, 1999

A classically good father: A portrait of Cato as pater, from *Vitae Parallae*, Plutarch (c. 46–c. 120), translated by Bernadotte Perrin, 1914

The father’s job: From *Sorrell and Son*, Warwick Deeping, 1925

My Thoughts: Victor Hugo, written 1837

The tie that binds: Sir Thomas More writes to his children, Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecilia and John, probably 1517


No striker: From the diary of Reverend Henry Newcombe

Eppie was reared without punishment: From George Eliot, *Silas Marner*, 1861

Batter up: From Bill Cosby, *Fatherhood*, 1986

Distress of sperm donor children: Article in *The Times*, 31 August 2000


The cat’s in the cradle: Hit song by Harry and Sandra Chapin, 1974


And the son’s-eye view: Aram Saroyan on his father, William Saroyan, quoted in John Winokur’s *Fathers*, 1994

Keeping Mum about Dad: Television review by Joe Joseph, *The Times*, June 2000

Don’t Call Me Mr Mom! Or, what not to say to a Stay-at-home Dad: Buzz McClain, slowlane.com web page, 1999

Mothers ruin: From James Joyce, ‘Ivy Day in the Committee Room’, *Dubliners*, 1914

The devil is in the definition: Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil’s Dictionary*, 1911

Tugging at the purse strings: Letter from Robert Louis Stevenson, aged sixteen, 1866
Artful fellow: Dalton Trumbo writes to his son, November 1958
To the poorhouse with a smile: From Bill Cosby,
Fatherhood, 1986
The fathering class of the 1950s re-examined: From David
Blankenhorn, Fatherless America, 1995
They don't make them like that any more: From Tony Parsons,
Man and Boy, 1999
Teacher man: Seventeenth-century English proverb
Paternity and posterity: From Sir Francis Bacon, Essayes or
Counsels, 1601
Power and paternity: From The Father, August Strindberg, 1887
Paternal ballast: From Jean-Paul Sartre, The Words, 1964,
translated by Bernard Frechtman
My father thought it bloody queer, Simon Armitage, 1963–
Disgusted of Albemarle Street: The Marquess of Queensberry
writes to his son, Alfred Douglas, concerning the latter's
homosexual relationship with Oscar Wilde
The children are revolting: Phil Hogan, The Observer magazine,
18 June 2000
Did I really break my daughter's tooth?: From Hugo Williams,
“What Shall We Do Now That We Have Done Everything?”, 1992
Detained by the boss: From ‘Forty-five a Month’ by
R. K. Narayan, 1906–
Tips for working fathers: From James A. Levine and Todd L.
Pittinsky, Working Fathers: New Strategies for Balancing
Work and Family, 1997
Daddy matters: From Raising Cain, Dan Kindlon and Michael
Thompson, 1999
Dad: Berlie Doherty, Another First Poetry Book, 1987
At least the big brown squiggle lives at home: Tom Kemp,
Daily Telegraph, 26 June 1999
True wealth: From Craig Raine, Rich, 1984
Human bondage: Fathers and slavery in the ante-bellum South,
recounted by Robert Griswold, Fatherhood in America, 1993
Life is half made up of partings: Charles Dickens to his eldest
son, on the latter's emigration to Australia in 1868
‘Even if I cannot see you’: Isaac Austin Brooks, a Union soldier
in the US Civil War, writes home
‘Each night I sing out my love’: Letter from Corporal Samuel
Furash, a US soldier, to his infant daughter at home in America
Walking away (For Sean): Cecil Day Lewis, The Complete
Poems, 1992
Growing up and away: James Agee to Father Flye, 1950
When Willie Wet the Bed: Eugene Fields, 1850–95
The road not taken: From Carl Sandburg, Always the Young
Strangers, 1952
'I may have been mistaken': From Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Confessions, 1782–9 229
In Chalkwell Park: John Fowles, 1992 230
Do not go gentle into that good night: Dylan Thomas, The Poems, 1974 231
Dad: Elaine Feinstein, Some Unease and Angels, 1977 232
To My Dead Father: Frank O'Hara, 1926–66 233
Lonely: From Clinging to the Wreckage, the autobiography of John Mortimer, 1982 234
His father's grave: Albert Camus, The First Man, 1994 234
Farewell words: Letter from Captain John Coull, of the Royal Fusiliers, to his son 237
Broken heart: From Roald Dahl's autobiography, Boy, 1982 238
Nothing compared to her: Plutarch (c. 46–c. 120) writes to his wife about the death of their two-year-old daughter, Timoxena 239
My Boy Jack: Rudyard Kipling 240
Such a child I never saw: From the diary of John Evelyn, 1620–1706 241
Would you like to see the baby?: From Vernon Scannell, The Tiger and the Rose, 1971 243
Yielded up his soul to God: A letter from William Wordsworth, 2 December 1812 249
Remembrance of my deare Mary: From the diary of the Reverend Ralph Josselin 250
The Distress'd Father or, the Author's Tears over his Dear Darling Rachel: Henry Carey, c. 1687–1743 251
On My First Son: Ben Johnson, 1572–1637 252
Three Years She Grew: William Wordsworth, 1770–1850 252
The Death of Jean: Mark Twain, 1911 254

Part 6

Patrimony 257

Echoing down the ages: Jean-Paul Richter, 1763–1825 259
Heracles' last words to his son: From Sophocles: Women of Trachis, translated by Ezra Pound, 1956 259
His father's voice: From Tony Parsons, Man and Boy, 1999 260
To thine own self be true: Polonius to his son, Laertes, from Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act I, Scene 3, written c. 1599 260
Blessing: The exiled Walter de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, writes to his son, April 1450 261
The ABC of goodness: Samuel Taylor Coleridge to his son Derwent, aged seven 263
One in ten: Report in The Daily Telegraph, November 1996 265
It makes you blind: Letter from John Evelyn to his son, November 1679, on the eve of the latter's marriage 265
A declaration for dependence: Letter from Thomas Jefferson to his daughter Martha, 28 November 1783 266
Advice to a son about to depart America: Benjamin and Julia Rush to Jonathan Rush 267
Make yourself a delight to all eyes that behold you: Jack London to his daughter, 16 September 1915 268
The good news: Extracted from Thomas Fuller, Scripture Observations, 1645 269
Advice to a son: Ernest Hemingway, Berlin, 1931 270
Paternity and ambition: From Bertrand Russell, Marriage and Morals, 1929 270
Shit: From Philip Roth, Patrimony, 1991 271
The four commandments: G. I. Gurdjieff, Meetings with Remarkable Men, 1963 274
Aristocratic advice: Lord Chesterfield to his son, 15 July 1751 275
Don't bet on it: Charles Kingsley to one of his sons away at boarding school, c. 1860 277
The Marxist theory of seduction: Letter from Groucho Marx to his son, Summer, 1940 278
Three little sentences that will get you through life: Advice from the supposedly dying Homer Simpson to son Bart in The Simpsons, episode 'One Fish, Two Fish, Blowfish, Blue Fish', 1991 279
In your dreams: From Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, 1913 279
Starlight memory: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, aged eight in 1780 280
Awakening: From James Dodson, Final Rounds, 1997 280
A model father: As remembered by George Bernard Shaw, 1856–1950 281
Smile: From Angela Carter, 'Sugar Daddy', 1983 282
Daddytrack: From Robert L. Griswold, Fatherhood in America, 1993 283
Nothing good gets away: Letter from John Steinbeck to his son, aged fourteen 284
In heaven, as it is on earth: From the diary of Reverend Ralph Josselin 285
A son departs: Extracted from The Vicar of Wakefield, Olivier Goldsmith, 1776 286
The crown and the glory: Proverbs, 17: 6 286
Love Anyhow: F. Scott Fitzgerald's epistolic advice to his daughter 287

Acknowledgements 289