

## A Father and a Son

Loudon Wainwright III

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.