Icicles

Just one icicle  
Laid across her tiny hand  
Taught her about life  
Her daddy placing it there  
Let her understand his love  
  
He had been watching. Her little face was serious, eyes squinting, looking  
out the window and trying to see the icicle things. Taking her small hand  
in his, he brought her outdoors, broke an icicle hanging from the eaves,  
and placed it across her palm. He remained silent but she knew he watched  
her  
still. It was cold, this icicle, and wet, as it melted within her hand's  
warmth. 'Do you see it now, mon petite?' he asked after a moment. She  
nodded, awestruck, realizing for the first time that Daddy did understand  
her  
need to see. "It's dying, Daddy," she said as she sadly held out her nearly  
empty hand. "No, mon petite, icicles do not die," Daddy said as he held her  
  
icy hand.  "They just need to change clothes sometimes and this one is  
saying 'thank you' for undressing it."  She smiled at him and for both it  
was enough.

C  mdbadgerow  2008

Comments from Lynda:

The poem begins with an epilogue. The epilogue gives the reader a synopsis of the events that will follow in the remainder of the poem. The epilogue is a window, through which we, the readers, get to view the events that follow it. This window forms a framework through which we enter the story. It provides a boundary. We will only see what is framed within that window, the present moments of a child with her father on an frigid winter’s day. This moment in time will be a life lesson for both the father and the child.

The word “watching” becomes important here in the poem. We are given a God’s eye view of this moment. We have a large distance here between the reader and the characters of the poem. Like God, we remain distant, and we “watch.” The child had been “watching” out the window trying to see the icicles. The father is a Watcher as well. He watches the child who is watching the icicles ouside the window. I think it is very significant that the child is separated from what she is watching initially. Again, there is a separation between the Watcher and the Watched. What initially separates the child from her object of viewing is the invisible pane of the window. This pane of the window is also a barrier and emphasizes the feelings we have of boundaries, separation, and distance.

The poem begins to have movement when the Father takes the child outside, and we have the sense of :cold: and “wet” and “melting.” The reader begins to FEEL the icicle as it was placed into her palm. Up until now, there was solely a focus on viewing and separation, but now.

The reader has been ushered into a closer view now, when we can hear the little conversation that begins between the Father and Child.

The Father brings the icicle to life in the child’s mind when he gives it human characteristics. It changes clothes! This is a surprise element. Like the child, we are imagining the death or disappearance of this lovely thing from Nature. Suddenly, we are given a new perspective of the idea of CHANGE.

Finally, we have a new understanding of the word “see.” The Father asked, “Do you see it now” and we begin to SEE it now, too. Seeing is something that happens slowly, over a period of time. It is slow. It is not a quick “look” or a momentary “glance.” Seeing takes time, and it reveals a truth through touch and movement. I think the real life lesson here is not at all what an icicle does when put into a warm hand. The lesson I see here is what it means to SEE. Seeing is an activity that brings together all the senses of the body, and it takes place in the fourth dimension as well as here and now.

It is not static. It moves as time passes, and deconstructs, and in the deconstruction of the image, a new construct has been born.

Lynda River Woman