

Momma Said, Pointing to Papa

Be a man.
Your father's
the bravest man I know.
Remember that tornado?
---no, course you don't you were
only two...

But Momma, I do.

Anyway, spread his
very own coat
to cover the both of us.
He could've died.

*I know Mamma, I know.
There's a full moon
tonight, Mamma,
so maybe I could go out
to the cliff
and sit
to watch it rise?*

Now, do you think
that man, your papa,
got where he is
by quitting? Do you? You think
your papa
ever let himself
be slowed down?

*No Mamma,
I don't Mamma. Will the sun
ever
burn itself up?
Would it burn us up
too? Or would
everything just go
black and cold?*

We got security
because of him---

You think he likes
his job?
You think he likes
taking orders
from a man who's
half the man
he is?

*No Mamma,
Does a man have to hate
his job?
What does Papa like
to do?*

What kinda question
is that?
Liking and not liking's got nothing to
do with it.
A man's gotta do--- for the
family.

That night by the cliff
the moon rose, golden,
round.
The valley glowed.
*She's an ember
in the sky
setting fire to the
whole earth,
I thought,*

then thought again
 of the sun
burning far away
 on the other side,
 the whole world between
 them.

I wondered
if I could ever be a man.