

## **A Tale About My Mother**

By Zora

My mother finds an ice cream shop in every town we visit

Chocolate. In a cone.

It brings a smile to her face, unabashed joy but only for a fleeting moment.

She regrets eating it, she says to me after the first couple bites.

Once I told her regretting it is not worth it, as soon as it's bought just enjoy it.

She didn't seem to take my advice, yet she was always angry with me

if I echoed her regrets in my own indulgences.

She's like that about most things- not just ice cream.

It's almost as if she can't quite allow herself to feel fully happy,

She holds an obligation to the part of her that owns the feeling of desolation.

But I was never allowed to worry, she told me to leave that to her.

When I was younger I could never fathom why

And I would get frustrated.

Just eat the ice cream mom.

Now that I'm grown I find myself severing the misunderstanding,

Breaking up the miscommunication between my mother and I.

But I would never tell her that I see right through her.

We don't exactly work like that.

Her womanness breaks my heart,

Ice cream was her childhood, it cannot satisfy her now as a mother.

Ice cream is for me to enjoy, and for her to let go of.

She sees it as my time to become a woman, she's had hers.

(I am no longer speaking of ice cream)

So when I tell her I won't be home for Christmas she'll be quietly resigned,  
because she wants to watch me run after she walked for so many years.

When I tell her I miss her and she doesn't say it back,

It's not because she doesn't but because she doesn't want to hinder me.

She wants to save me from the burdens of her truth.

My mother loves me so much to give up herself for me

to have everything **she** ever wanted.

She loves me in a way only she ever could

And I am beginning to realize,

We are not so different,

my mother and I.

We share what only a mother and daughter will ever be able to share,

And so for her,

I buy chocolate ice cream in a cone in every town I visit,

And mom? I don't regret it.

The mystery of a mother's love. Growing up I could never understand my mother. I often wondered how someone so worried and anxious could have produced such a brazen

careless child such as myself. I felt from an early age that she didn't understand me, and I kept away from her. We didn't have the same relationship that many of my friends had with their moms. I never told her about my crushes, every time I had a fight with a friend she would say "well what did you do to make her act like that?" "Why can't you ever just take my side mom," were words that often fought their way from my lips. Looking back, she was just raising me. At that point in my life, I needed a mother not a friend. And I'm grateful for the way she did that. From her, I learned my morals and learned which rules in life were meant to be followed and which ones were meant to be bent. My mom followed every rule, she prided herself on that. In most of my memories of my adolescence, my mother was frazzled. That was usually the first word that would come to mind when I thought about her. She has chronic sleeping problems, and it just causes things to go wrong for her. I used to think Diet Coke ran through her veins instead of blood because of the amount of cans she would consume per day. But I understand now, the stress she was under raising two children and working. My brother and I demanded endlessly from her, as did her job. No matter what was happening, she gave everything her all. It was almost as if she was divvied up into thirds, one third to my brother and I, one third to her job, and one third to my father.

As I grew older, and left my adolescence behind in the dust of my teenage years, my relationship with her grew even more strained. I was sad, and she didn't know why or what to do. And to me, everything she did was wrong. I could tell she was trying, but I couldn't understand how she could say each thing so incorrectly every time I asked for help. I kept being secretive, and expected her to read my mind. Obviously she could not. But one night, on a particularly hard evening for me, I was holding myself in my bed late at night crying. All I wanted was my mother, but I didn't know how to ask that. It was too vulnerable, too many emotions and we were notoriously not very good at sharing those. But I texted her, "Will you come lay with me?" She read it instantly, despite it being two in the morning. She slipped

quietly into my room and climbed into my bed next to me without saying a word. She knew I was crying. “Do you want to make shapes in the stars?” She whispered, pointing at the glow in the dark stars that my grandpa had pasted on my bedroom ceiling when I was five. I nodded in response, hiccuping and gasping through my sobs. She rubbed my back, “I see an elephant, just there.” “I see a heart in those ones,” I responded, pointing. That went on until I fell asleep, and when I awoke the next morning she was no longer next to me, but the imprint of her in my bed and the memory of love remained.

I kept growing, and I realised so did she. I moved out, and haven't really been home since I was in high school. She misses me, I know she does, but she never tells me just in case it will make me sad. I call her when I can, and I think about her all the time. I now consider my mother my best friend. I see everything so clearly now, all the things I once didn't understand were changed by the distance. When I was little, she was just doing her best to raise two small children into good people. When I was a teenager, she just wanted me to be happy. She used to make vacuum sounds, placing her hands on my back, telling me that she was sucking everything that made me sad out of me and into her so she could hold it instead. Now, she supports me from a distance, and will answer the phone no matter the time difference.

The misunderstanding here, what I don't yet understand, is the way my mother loves me. I think it's something that's so big I will never be able to comprehend it until I have a child of my own. She would give up anything for me, she loves me so much that she cries about it. I don't think she knows what to do with all that love. What a beautiful thing that I get to experience, to be so wanted by her. Despite our differences, and the parts of me that she doesn't understand or refuses to look at, I am her child and she loves me in a way only a mother could. One day I will understand. But today, it remains a mystery.