

WHEN - Susan K. Seidl - Michigan

Dissonance
of a child crying now tucked in bed
alerts the investment
parents create.

It is the ability
to know the essential
and forget oneself
in the act.

It is to pretend
the heaving does not need
in a restless year-old's
torn heart.

It is progressing on
simple tasks
with expertise
while the echo
echoes through nerves
raw unease.

It is to rise to the reproach
in the right second
comfort the whine
with love
and edge back to chores.

To own stamina
to stand
wait...
as the child
finally sleeps
again...
then wakes
with dancing eyes
and trusting hold
approaching today's adventures
which one day
will end with
a closed door
and footfalls...
silent.

In reflection, we perceive what is owed to our parents: in most cases it exceeds what we expressed.