

1-1-2004

The Bubble Gum

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Recommended Citation

King, D.J. (2004) "The Bubble Gum," *Digressions Literary Magazine*: Vol. 1 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/digressions/vol1/iss1/14>

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D.J. KING

The Bubble Gum

I was in training to be a girl scout
Wearing a brown dress hoping to wear green
Responsible girl, my dad had no doubt
That I'd keep my uniform neat and clean

Proudly, Dad drove to the uniform store
I was surprised what he paid for my dress
Doing the laundry, Dad taught me that chore
Sorting the loads, reading tags, do my best

A brownie. Good student. His Right-Hand-Girl.
My dad always spoke so highly of me
And Dad, the most important man in my world
Let me proudly think that he needed me

But then, there was the gum, the bubble gum
Joke on the wrapper, delicious delight
At first dry and so stiff, the bubble gum
Then yielding and chewy, juicy-- just right

Pink pleasure to savor, I kept the rest
Wax wrapped rectangles in pocket of dress
No hint this moment that I'd failed a test
Committed a crime I couldn't confess

Because, there was the gum, the bubble gum
Free of its wrapper, mean mis'erable mess
It was scorched hot and hard, the bubble gum
Not pink, but gray, the gum gripping my dress

Oh yummy gum! Stupid careless desire!
What could my dad think? What would my dad say?
Mess of a dress, spilling from the dryer
What cost- pops of pink? What price will I pay?

"Dad, being a scout isn't really that fun
and I have a lot of homework to do."
Lies, lies to Dad, just for that bubble gum
Good girl. Smart girl. Because Dad never knew.

That girl, good girl, I left far behind me.
 You don't know me, Dad! You're not perfect, Dad!
 I hurt from lies that I keep inside me
 Teen-aged daughter mad! Teen-aged daughter sad!

Between Dad and me, only division
 But other men had their eyes upon me
 Just seventeen but its my decision
 Bikini contests with a fake I.D.

Man with a camera, an offer of fame
 What did I think of Penthouse Magazine?
 My beauty, my youth, my power to claim
 But I did think: what it means to be seen

Pink pleasure to savor, the men impressed
 Unwrapped teenager, juicy sweet undressed
 A glint this moment that this was a test
 Should a right-hand-girl fall into this mess?

Because such is the gum the bubble gum
 That could stain and stick to your daughter dear
 Flashing cameras go pop, it's bubble gum
 Dad's hope left for me could just disappear

I saved my body from glossy pages
 but age nineteen, I'm pregnant with no plan
 My Dad talked to me, forgave my rages
 He let go of what he could not understand

He never was perfect, may not be wise
 But Dad believes in me like no other
 His trust and the faith revealed in his eyes
 Gave me courage to become a mother

Now, we are both parents, so now I know
 We all tell our kids to watch out for gum
 And, we teach them lessons then let them go
 Hopeful in spite of the gray days that come

I'm careful when I sort dirty laundry
 A good woman, a smart woman, in this world
 I'm certain that my dad always loves me
 no bubble gum sticks to his right-hand-girl