December 2008

A Scholar Divided, A Life Replete

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay’s first paragraph.

"You are three. The echoes of splashing water and the melody of child-father play reach me from down the hall. The bedtime routine begins. I am writing, absorbed (mostly) in my work, finding inspiration in the insights that come from reflections on the day, a day spent engaged in the mundane but rich experience of taking care of you, playing with you, meeting your every need. Your laughs and giggles and statements of child wisdom offer background music to my writing."
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I hear the pitter-patter of your feet. You sneak away, evading your Dad’s efforts to clothe you in moon and star pajamas. You come to me, all warm and new, eager for my embrace, managing to wiggle your way onto my lap, between me and my work. Your eyes seek me; your body hugs me, projecting what you take to be a right to be with me, to have my presence with you as you negotiate the evening and process the events of the day. I am divided, gratified yet overwhelmed by your need for me and only me, but also pulled toward the creative outlet that my work provides.

I reach around you, kissing your head, shifting to see the screen and seeking out the keyboard in order to finish one more sentence, one that I hope will capture my thoughts, the insights reached only by pulling away and reflecting on the experience of parenting and engaging in transactions with friends and loved ones. The words I write include care, engagement, connection, priority of relationships, a need for presence, and,
moreover, *a need to avoid being absent in one’s presence*… The irony does not escape me. I am amused and pause to be with you, truly with you. Your efforts are rewarded and so am I.