

Andrea Sherwood

**from the poem: FATHER 4:
A VISIT 10 YEARS LATER 1991**

The meeting was harmless.
A huddle of strangers
held together
by a part to play
in something they couldn't quite
imagine.

My daughter didn't call him grandpa.
She didn't call him anything, seeing
what I saw: some strangers (with strange accents),
a small battle of words and movement,
and a yearning so polite
it had ceased to exist.

from: FATHER TO DAUGHTER 2001

Happiness isn't everything
as you get older. The garden exists.
There's more than two to every story,
like father and daughter, he only wishes,
and a wish is beyond
his control.

If he pays maintenance for a hundred years
you'll grant access to the next generation.
Not your problem, you'll say, smiling higher,
a little lighter than the last decade
when you wrote a poem saying he
didn't exist.

Now, you'd rather not record the angst of one generation
to the next, as though if it's inherited
it all makes sense.

He remembers you in 1968 and
that's enough.