

Instead of a Greeting Card

Krista Lukas

“Great Dads Get Promoted to Grandpa”

*-engraved on a picture frame in a font meant
to look like a child's scrawled handwriting*

I say a great dad lets his kid be
who she is, a mother, not a mother.
In place of grandchildren, a great dad—
who would love nothing more
than to ski with his daughter—will drive
over mountain passes and through snowstorms
to attend her poetry readings. A great dad,
whose television is tuned to the tennis channel,
whose coffee table is covered with sports
magazines, will make a permanent home
for her publications. Best of all,
a great dad will bring her the overheard
"Goddammit, I want me bottle!"
from a toddler in a chairlift line.
And brochures from his pursuit of mountains.
The Tibet Kailash Hotel:

*sunlight city
beautiful scenery gives way
to person if facing a wonderland*

He will bring his daughter “Strawberry Fields,” a cake
whose information he does not think to read
until he tosses and turns nearly all night.
A great dad digs the box from the trash:

Sugar, cream (cream carrageenan). Water, wheat flour bleached (enriched with niacin, reduced iron, thiamin mononitrate riboflavin and folic acid), whole eggs, canola oil, strawberries, vegetable shortening (palm oil, canola oil and/or soybean oil, mono diglycerides, TBHQ (Preservative) 1, glucose, enriched bleached wheat flour (wheat flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, hydrogenated palm kernel oil, sanding sugar (sugar artificial color), dextrose, corn syrup, margarine (palm oil, water, soy oil, salt, whey solids (milk), vegetable mono/diglycerides, soy lecithin, artificial flavor, Beta Carotene (color), vitamin A, palmitate, corn starch, modified food starch, non-fat milk, modified cornstarch, soybean oil, whey, artificial color, natural and artificial flavor, high fructose corn syrup, butter, salt, mono and diglycerides, sodium caseinate, artificial flavor, potassium sorbate, phosphoric acid, polysorbate 60, locust bean gum, guar gum, citric acid, leavening (sodium aluminum phosphate, baking soda,

*aluminum sulfate, fumaric acid, mono calcium phosphate, sodium acid pyrophosphate),
propylene glycol,*

and on and on and on in such fine print he needs a magnifying
glass. A great dad brings the label, wiped clean and folded,
to his daughter, saying, “Look, no wonder I couldn’t sleep,
there was propylene glycol in that cake. That’s anti-freeze!”
Which makes Great Dad laugh and suggest—practically insist—
that she write a poem about it. And because she’s touched,
because she loves that he dug an idea out of the trash—
an idea spurred by a painful, sleepless night—she writes a poem
which ends, *Thanks, Dad. Thanks for letting me be who I am.*



Photography by Krista Lukas