

You Built Me a House

By Haven Cochran

Papa,

You built me a house and filled it with love.

Tall ceilings and pink lace curtains that the light would dance through,
a kaleidoscope of color I'd lay under on sunny afternoons when you'd go fishing with my brother.

You built me a house with brick and mortar.

Yellow play rooms and squeaky beds, almost as melodic as your rough voice telling me goodnight.

You built me a house with whittled wood and acrylic.

You built me a dollhouse with carpet and windows that I used to look through wishing I was far away.

You built me a home and flooded it when you left.

I gasped for air but the salt water blinded me and crushed my chest

I thought I would die from the pain. I almost did.

Pawpaw,

You built me a house and filled it with music

Whistling hymns everywhere you went, singing "my only sunshine" to me as I fell to sleep,

You gave me a song in my heart that I would sing forever.

You built me a house and filled it with God.

You carried him with you like an umbrella, protecting yourself from doubt, sin, and sadness

You gave me my faith and reassurance that He was with me and would protect me when you no longer could.

You built me a house of plaster and paint

The smell of the wood stove and the fresh apple butter wafting into my memories.

The carpet coarse and hard like your calloused hands, hands I knew could fix anything.

You built me a house and burned it down when you left.

Flames ripped my insides apart, creeping up my throat until I could no longer speak. Until I could no longer breathe.

I thought I would die from the pain. I almost did.

Brother,

You built me a house and filled it with fear

Broken glasses and furniture strewn across the house

The smell of still burning drugs and alcohol drifting into the cracks of my locked door.

The sound of sirens. The fear of gunshots.

You built me a house from a deck of cards, and you blew it over.

You almost left me.

I thought I would die from the pain. I almost did.

You rebuilt that house though.

You built me a house out of redemption, out of a strong foundation and reliability and trust.

Haven,

You built me a house of tragedy.

Scars from bloody nights on the floor wishing you looked better than this

Burns from shaking every time you see fire

Tears from the times you said no.

You built a house with walls so high no one could ever scale them.

You made stars from the phosphines in your eyes

You built a house out of ethereal expectations and sonorous cries for help.

You built me a house

You built me a house

You built me a house

Of which I built a home.