

The Wife/Mom

by

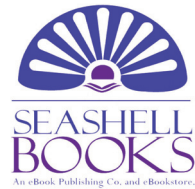
KJ Hannah Greenberg

The Wife/Mom
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The Wife/Mom

Preface

It is not so effortless for women to integrate their roles. Whereas women are pushed to “accomplish,” they are simultaneously chided for embracing traditional female functions.

Women who have advanced degrees, 401Ks, or late model sports cars receive more positive feedback from men, and from women, who have taken on “men’s jobs,” than do gals who deign to define themselves by: how actively they engage in communication with their spouses, how mindfully they proceed through their pregnancies, and how well they nurture their sons, daughters, and, later, their grandchildren. Simply, as a society, we’ve made girls into boys, while dismissing any reverence we had for girls.

The *Wife/Mom* explores possible answers to this dilemma by addressing communal stances on both visible and hidden, gender-based strata. This assemblage of poetry puts front and center our culture’s need to return to cherishing women as “women” and to esteeming “womanly” goings-on, per se. In these poems, females might be intrepid visionaries laboring in complex math, might be maestros of major orchestras, or might be Olympic athletes, but they are beloved first and foremost for being women.

This book celebrates leaky breasts, postpartum vaginas, and the complexities of striving to not have a favorite child. Likewise, this work insists that we embrace the activities of women, not in lieu of the activities of men, but in addition to them. In these pages, electing to drink pickle juice is as important as being able to order 1947 Domaine Faiveley Musigny Grand Cru. Here, homespun rhetoric gets valued alongside of sophisticated, political maneuvering. In this collection, the assorted emotions indigenous to the finer gender get played out not as hysteria, but as probable, important responses to significant, human moments.

The *Wife/Mom* posits that we ought not to incarcerate ladies in insane asylums or to minimize their convergent media sound bites. Female views must count.

Whereas there’s nothing theoretically wrong with women venturing into space, growing up to be publishers, or running the kitchens of fine restaurants, there is much, which is matter-of-factly incorrect, with upbraiding women for choosing to spend some or all of their time taking care of their families. Hence, in *The Wife/Mom*, being a committed partner and being a mother receive all manner of long overdue applause.

KJ Hannah Greenberg
Jerusalem, 2019

Acknowledgements:

This book is dedicated to my students. Without you, I would not be caused, again and again, to be mindful: about why I write in the manner in which I do, about exactitudes in my creation of texts, or about extensive rewriting. Thank-you for: your curiosity, your interest, and your ability. You empower me as a writing teacher and catalyze my manuscripts.

Introduction: The Wife/Mom

While watering the herb garden, I interface,
Ponder outrageous emails, childhood friends,
Petunias tasted nightly by bold groundhogs,
Plus dream of baths with fastened doors,
Candles, music, oleaginous soap, and spin
Fantasies of snow vacations, as school,
Dripping noses, hot cocoa rings, get flouted.

By mistake, our dear kitty's gotten locked in
That closet, where unmatched socks hang about,
Also, random towel collections skulk, await my
Punctilious lover to engage me in meaningful
Talk about ill-placed baby gates, smelly healing
Tinctures, the family's uneven back porch tiles,
Maybe the joys of dogs slurping toilet water.

Later, blanket thieves on tippy toes, discover
Our living room's screens, our furniture mountains.
They painted the grout mauve, slung lights under
Covers, created kitchen polders, campaigned to stay
Awake past eight, nine, ten, "until nearly forever."
Nose down in dollar books, they snore like ravens.
Morning brings banister slides, some head first.

Hubby's rock and roll music, toenail clippings,
Poison ivy rash, lovemaking, following his filling
Up with popcorn, willingness to drive carpool
En route to work, as well as his memory games,
Focusing on romance, thwarted grocery shopping,
Again, last night. I remain the riparian between
Domesticity and waywardness as the wife/mom.

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Personal Spheres

The Five to Eight Parent

The five to eight parent can't: jest,
Rock out at parties, visit clubs,
Sit in reservation-culling cafés;
No hour's left from multitasking.

She depends on "mommy time,"
Orthodics, avocados' benefits,
Community babysitting pools,
Bargain, family-friendly films.

Pregnancy's her constant caller,
Along with vinegary potato chips,
Elastic skirts, makeup-free days,
Microwave meals, "good" coupons.

All along, she jockeys keyboards,
Smiles pretty, finishes articles
(Worth worldly insignificance),
Does "whatever" to pay bills.

Daddy's free time, true, contrariwise,
Gets spent: eating pizza slices, fries,
Maybe reading library books in parks,
Surely, SMSing "the boys," if jogging.

Hela

Hela has birds for brains.
Penguins, really. They sit
Upon her noggin, squawk
At cats, devour raw fishes.

Except when her niece,
Estelle, makes origami
From the Sunday news,
Last week's edition.

So much folding,
Fussing, bustling,
Creasing, pleating,
Corrugating culls

Auntie's response is tears
Over: obituaries, women's
Pages listing besties' divorces,
Babies born to everyone else.

No drink of fashion fades,
Does erase pain. Exclusion
Persists like a proud avenue;
Hela parades across leftovers.