

Judy Kaber

This is What Happens When You're Not Watching

In the wedding picture my son wears a boutonniere
with a lego man holding a briefcase and a cup of coffee
fixed among the flowers. His wife-to-be wears a white dress
with a small jacket, heels with straps, which later she will
take off and replace with bright blue sneakers. There's no tie
around his neck, nor will there ever be. On the cake,
a lego couple, and bubbles to blow at each table.

So

my son still holds his childhood with one hand, clutches
his toys, fills his rooms with games, drinks beers
with whimsical names: *Imperial Chocolate Bunny Milk Stout*,
Ephemere, and *Maudite*. For amusement in his spare time
he builds robots with his 3-D printer, uses a laser to etch
designs on wooden boxes, paints small figurines: dragons,
ogres, the occasional hero.

But

my son is a man now. Halfway to the end of things. He believes
in science, hopes for the good in man, but doesn't hold his breath.
Each day news rains in his heart. Each day agony lies
writhing on the ground and he can do nothing but
watch. Now we have all lost our childhood. Soot and blood
cover toys, carrion birds skim streets, eat our fallen dreams.

Still

he uses his phone to click into the world around him, shares
pictures almost everyday on Facebook and best of all
my son has a child who hugs trees and makes him laugh.

Look, Daddy! The grass is growin'—take a picture of it.

Judy Kaber is currently the Poet Laureate of Belfast, Maine, as well as the author of three chapbooks: *Renaming the Seasons*, *In Sleep We Are All the Same* and *A Pandemic Alphabet*. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in publications such as *Atlanta Review*, *december*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Hunger Mountain* and *Spillway*.