

## AFCCC-CALFD

### The California daddy

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The CALIFORNIA DADDY poem by George Graham

Mother Love [md] it has been an inspiration for mankind since poetic and artistic impulse was first recognized; writers and artists, however, have not paid as much attention to father love, though there have been fathers who have shown an exalted devotion to their offspring just as self-sacrificing as mother love.

In San Jose at the present time is a father who has reared his ten-year-old motherless daughter from infancy. From the day she was two years old he took her to work with him and their companionship has been so wonderful that he has been inspired to set forth his experience in a poem. [md] Editor's Note, Mercury-Herald.)

A story here I wish to tell, And draw on memory's flowing well; Some thoughts I would express to you; These verses I would pen are true; And so I would convey the thought And hope that you will find I know the path of duty well And leave small cares behind. And in a modest way I'll try [md] Between the lines you may supply The scenes to you I would convey [md] These past events of yesterday. And please excuse if I relate Ten years I jogged without a mate; For ten long years, just plain and rough, I kept a home and did my stuff. Just for a girl, so dear and small, Whose angel mother God did call; For she had passed, and ever more Had left us for the golden shore. One babe went with her up to God [md] Left one with me; it may seem odd; I for my wife and babe did mourn, For at this time twin babes were born. But God had spared me one, and so I made a vow [md] I did, by Joe [md] And for that kid, through thick and thin, A babe so dear, I'll work and win. Now with the angels she must be, With tender thoughts for Babe and me; And God had given this babe to cheer, For me to love, and teach, and rear. And so my little girl she grew [md] And I've been dad and mother, too; And with my wee one in my car, I've worked for people near and far. Her food and things I'd bring along, And in my heart a thankful song; I'd work and [toil?], and Babe would play; Sometimes the boss would yell, "Hey! Hey!" "You rest the team (his name was Mack); Go get the kid and hurry back." Sometimes I'd hurry to my car, And reach inside and get the jar. This jar contained my baby's food [md] Prepared with care [md] I understood. Her bottle filled with wants so small; A gentle pat [md] asleep she'd fall. And at one place I lost my job For having her along; Just seemed I couldn't do my work Without that baby's s/ong. I stopped to dress a baby hand [md] A bandage for to find [md] And other men so hard at work [md] I must have fallen behind. For baby hands, you know so well, At times get hurt, you all can

tell. I found kind people, many so, Who helped us on our way you know. Ten years went by; I saved some dough, And bank accounts, you know, grow slow. I planned to buy some land, and bring My babe where I could work and sing. So in a river deep and mean [md] An island small with trees so green; The place looked good; the price was fair [md] I'll tell you how we landed there. This land to reach, I know that now I must construct a boat or scow With lumber that I rafted here [md] The boat and all the inside gear, And other things to make the boat Were fashioned from a care remote. My boat, I built it near the bank [md] With faith, and hope, and cedar plank. And I would like to tell you here, I planned and made this boat so queer. To think it out, the fun was great, And do the stunt that seemed my fate. And thoughts came marching in the while My baby with me did beguile. At work, at play, my only thought Was for my baby as I wrought. The silence [md] it seemed so profound [md] The rushing river, ocean-bound; The power plant, and engine quick; The drive wheels on each side did kick. To go ahead, reverse, and turn, And how the water they did churn! If Maple Isle you visit, though, You'll see just how this craft can go. Say, fetch along some help with you [md] A friend, I mean [md] a friend or two. You'll lose your head [md] you will, by heck, When on this craft you tread the deck. So days and weeks with saw and song, This boat I built so good and strong. With babe asleep [md] sometimes at play [md] I'd work and sing the livelong day. And often, as asleep she lay, Of course I knew wild beasts might str/ ay; For at that time a jungle wild Was very near my camp and child. And as I worked, I watched that kid [md] At sleep, at play [md] I surely did. I'd fastened every plank and beam; With care I caulked up every seam; And when I had the engine in, Switched on the juice, and made it spin [md] (It never had four-wheel brakes), But wheels and things like other makes [md] This engine with my foot would start [md] Three speeds, reverse, all did their part. To launch that boat, the world I'll tell, And on this theme I love to dwell. You see, I'd never made a boat, And people said it would not float, But just the same I launched the scow [md] In simple words I'll tell you how. And so from trees that grew near by I cut some logs and poles to pry [md] To pry it up so many ways It took me all of two long days; With tackle block, and roe, and fall; And then at times my pal would call, "Come, Daddy dear, come quick to me, I see a great big bumble bee!" And then I'd sit me down so blest, And in my arms that girl would rest; And to her I told all my plans, With loving pats of baby hands, And baby prattle in my heart, Soon to my task once more I'd start. A bower I made so neat within, Where Babe could sleep [md] no traffic [din?]. And so, dear friends, this story true At times I fear may tire you. And now the boat, once more my theme, Had quit the bank, and on the stream She looked so staunch and rode so high, To run my craft I'd do or die. And then I piled my camp things on [md] The stove, the bed I brought along; And household things so many more; My baby left I safe on shore. The blessed child, she did not cry When I pushed off the boat to try. The throttle then I opened wide, And out into the stream did glide; Tried gear and engine through and through, For me and Babe would be the crew. Faith in my crew was good as gold; No pilot's license did I hold, And for/ our cruise this craft would do. Back to the bank once more I drew. Then crib and baby I put on, Stepped on the gas and we were gone. Then out across the water wild, With hope and prayer, my thoughts

beguiled. Our boat, so good, so staunch, and true; Our distant island full in view; She churned along; my heart did cheer; Our future home was drawing near. But at one time my engine stopped, Then two girl eyes wide open popped. I for a time my bean did rack; I guess she thought us going back. And for a time I lost control, The waves so high our boat did roll; And then my darling said to me. "Let's go on home; I see a tree." The engine trouble soon I found, And had my drive wheels going round. With engine going good and fast, The roughest water soon was passed. We came to shore so near a grove; Near some large oaks our boat we hove, And right into a sheltered bay, I made her fast and there she lay. Our camping things I soon got out; It was so nice, I had to shout; And yell I did, and made it ring [md] So many [birds?], and on the wing. At first, so-so, I cleared enough, And made our camp [md] I knew my stuff. A shady spot for Babe to play [md] The day was warm, the month was May [md] And made a place beneath a tree [md] My baby girl was nearly three. I brought her crib and everything, And then I fixed a tiny swing. She'd play awhile, then fall asleep. It surely made the willows weep To see a head so small and brown; And, tired out, she nestled down. You may well guess my pal so dear Had peaceful sleep with daddy near; And when the shades of night came on, The night birds would begin their song. I guess at times the bears did growl; We often hear the coyotes howl. We had a dog [md] a faithful boy [md] That baby was his pride and joy, The voice of friends through space, you know, Came to us on/ my radio. Of course I stretched an aerial wire; With logs I made a big camp fire. With gratitude my way I trod, And made a home and thanked my God. My girl is now past ten years old; So far, so good, the story told; And of this tale the last is best, And soon my pen must come to rest. We welcome to our island queer The many friends who greet us here. Neath oak and maple's leafy bower Their camps are made at twilight hour. To cheer our home from day to day [md] To work and plan, and live and pray. In hope this thought may come to you, I've tried to pen these verses true. (Finis)

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