

that summer, I made myself flyers with the help of a neighbour's super laser printer, and then handed them out to everyone who came to our sale.

That exercise generated one or two proof-reading jobs, small jobs, but they enabled me to tell other people that *Magic Ink* had a contract, and that in turn helped people take interest. When I was offered a contract job in communications, it was easy to say yes and I had the company in place to accommodate it.

*Magic Ink* is by no means a big company now. I envisage *Magic Ink's* success taking years and, no doubt, many transformations, but that is also the character of a second job, one doesn't give up the day job. However, I do have ongoing work, and the more I do, the better I will be known and word of mouth will work. Work and more work comes, and the hats keep changing to accommodate this.

Women, someone remarked to me the other day, change hats as often as they are required to do so. Frequently my hat changes from door to door to door.... It really can all be summed up by doors....

The front door I close on the breakfast dishes; the classroom door I open on eager faces (yes, eager, really waiting for me to produce their marked papers...); the school door I open to collect my anxious son whose face asks me how long we've got before I go out and can we have a story; the class room door I open to give new Canadians some hope that there is life after learning English; the door I open on my office to fulfill my contracts in my few quiet hours; and the door I open again to say goodnight to my family, already asleep and not listening to the unsaid.

Doors. And hats. So many hats, so little time.

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## BARBARA PARKIN

### The Stillness of His Mother

He hangs from branches  
breaks falls with ravaged sand  
slides down stairs  
& throws himself into everything.  
His mother moves delayed,  
climbs the plank  
to catch the child  
& a glimpse of the stillness  
of her life.

The two-year-old child races a circuit  
around his mother's mind.  
Days suspend as he rushes  
into the physics of his new world,  
establishes territory  
& proclaims: Mine. His mother,  
taut between two zones of time:  
hers, his.  
She has not always seen it this way.

When she puts him to rest, she wakes  
briefly into her first name  
& watches him slide  
into his ocean sheets, grey whales  
mobile above him. The only activity:  
the sound of breathing  
hers, his.

On the sofa she sits alone  
where he remains with her  
primordial, the salt content  
of the sea that made him.

She swigs cold tea, dusts  
around a novel half-started  
& milk spilt across  
an otherwise flavourless letter  
to a friend across the country.  
The phone hints at contact  
with layers gone under. Identity shifts  
like tectonic plates.

From under the ocean sheets she hears  
him call, Mama. Mine.

*Barbara Parkin's fiction and poetry have appeared in Grain, Descant, Scrivener, Room of One's Own, Prairie Fire, and many other publications. She is the mother of two young children.*