

CAN I ONLY GUESS?

I'm male, so can I really know
or even learn what it's like
to be a woman?

We wrestle in our youth,
struggling to come of age—
amid confusing voices,
brittle traditions,
abusive histories,
political agendas—
into gender identity.

While growing up, always
as much of my insides felt
part “Momma” as part “Daddy.”
The language between my legs
tipped the balance.

My wife's body language
confirmed our separate gifts.
Twelve children later,
lessons crystalized forever
in my work of helping moms
deliver and nurse their young.
I observed them losing
exploitation's social lies
about never finding fulfillment
in gender-distinctive anatomy.

After myriads of such meetings,
witnessing intimate episodes
that nurtured without defining
feminine self-affirmation,
no . . . I stand forever stunned,
still too mesmerized to fathom
the mystery of womanhood.

— *David L. Hatton, 2/24/2016*