

Q:Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

“Diapers”

by Bryan Quinonez

It didn't take long for these *usurpers* to get to my heart. The kids *were* cute. And they *did* have little chubby cheeks you wanted to squeeze. And I never really felt jealous of them for taking the spotlight, I just never thought the transition would hit me so hard. One second I was a spoiled 14 year old on top of the world and the next I'm watching toddlers play with toys. These children helped me realize that I had always been ready to become a mature figure, I just needed a reason, or two. And they were it, or them.

In October of 2011, the word “baby” crept out of my sister's mouth, threatening the image of an empire where I would rule above all... whether or not I was only in 8th grade. A prince of 13 years old, I was the youngest sibling with three sisters, Betsy, Deborah and Caroline. Betsy was 30 at the time, and she spoke the treason-filled words. And just when I had barely recovered from the first blow, Caroline, 20 at the time, hit me with a second, fatal blow.

Seven months later there was a due date for the *traitors*. Myself, the proud owner of May 7th, I hoped for them to be born in June. Give up on hope, it always lets you down. My family arrived at the hospital to congratulate Betsy on May 25th. In her hands was her “trophy.” The prize was named Giancarlo. Five days later all hope for June diminished. My family walked into the hospital room to meet a second heir, and she was named Adriana. Everyone was obsessed with these children when they got home. They couldn't keep their hands off them, always carrying them, and giving them bottles and giggling at every little thing the kids did. I was dethroned at last. My family always took care of the children and so there were few times they needed my help. But when I did take care of a child, I would always sit them next to me and have the most intense staring contests.

They're 3 years old now and we actually have a lot of fun. I seek them out whenever they come over and bother them in the best-uncle-way possible. I love these kids. They helped me realize that changes have their benefits, and new things are never necessarily bad things. They may have even been the reason why I became more social and started talking to a lot of people in recent years. They taught me that while there are great things to being the “spoiled one,” being the “mature one” isn't so bad. My connection with my niece and nephew led me to pursue community service by helping tutor 5th and 6th graders after school. I gained an appreciation in not only helping the younger generation, but people in general. I hope that one day they will look

up to me and see me as they're big ol' uncle who they respect and learn from. I want to inspire my niece and nephew to go to college like I have, being the first in my family to do so. I want to work hard enough that they will respect all of my hard work and still be playful enough to say they'll do better than I did. That idea in particular always makes me recognize how short life is. Three years have gone by and I did not even see them go. Life goes by at an uncanny pace, but you really just have to grab onto it and go for the ride. But for now we're still sitting next to each other, and we still have our staring contests. And they haven't beat me yet.

650 limit

Original: 936

Current: 680

Final: 632 (including title and name)