

Dear Mom—

Reflecting on your 66th birthday I've been asking myself what is it that makes you so special? Not just special to me and in my life, but generally special—special to all who know you. I don't know that I have an answer, but certainly some thoughts have occured.

Your talent as an artist is an obvious thing, but there are many talented painters. But it's not just your ability to capture likenesses in paint and pencil, but literally the way you look at the world... with an extra vision that constantly evaluates shapes and shadows, the interplay of colors and textures and patterns, what reveals character in a face and personality and humanity in an environment. You are part of the world, but also beyond it and above it.

Knowing you well is a schizophrenic experience. You are wise and full of depth and knowledge, but you are also a little girl—naive, playful, innocent and naughty. I know no one who loves laughter, jokes and humor more than

you do, and few who tell a joke as poorly. You can wax eloquent and rhapsodic on an intellectual point and be reduced to giggles within seconds at the mere mouthing of the word "fart".

You and Dad are antithetical in so many ways; after forty-plus years you still can't comprehend how (or why) he does some of the things he does — and they often drive you crazy — but I don't know a wife who respects and loves her husband more than you do. (And I don't mean biologically.) My view of the world, my personality, my humor, my tastes, and even my fears and anxieties, all are colored by knowing you and growing-up with you. Because you were so young when I was born, I think in many ways we've grown-up together and, sometimes, see the world through, if not the same eyes, eyes (and ears and thoughts) that (think and hear) simultaneously see the world as it is, as it should be, and as we would like it to be (not always the same those last two).

Some children resent their parents influence on their personalities and lives. I am, for the most part, grateful because you — and Dad — have given me a far richer and deeper life than I could ever have hoped to have with other

parents.

So on this, your 66th — and the birthday where I become 2/3 of your age — know that I feel lucky, grateful and that I love you very much.

The Happiest of Birthdays! and may we celebrate together dozens of happy and healthy ones in the future.

Love,
Mark

ROSE
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