

The rest of us know what “a mother’s love” means because we have seen it. Not only in our own mothers but in the many others that we know well and love. What is the greatness of a mother’s love? It must be that it can be counted on in all circumstances and isn’t diminished by the distance of years or miles and doesn’t fade with memory. Wendell Berry expresses facets of this love in his ode

“To My Mother” – Wendell Berry

I was your rebellious son,
do you remember? Sometimes
I wonder if you do remember,
so complete has your forgiveness been.

So complete has your forgiveness been
I wonder sometimes if it did not
precede my wrong, and I erred,
safe found, within your love,

prepared ahead of me, the way home,
or my bed at night, so that almost
I should forgive you, who perhaps
foresaw the worst that I might do,
and forgave before I could act,
causing me to smile now, looking back,
to see how paltry was my worst
compared to your forgiveness of it

already given. And this, then,
is the vision of that Heaven of which
we have heard, where those who love
each other have forgiven each other,
where, for that, the leaves are green,
the light a music in the air,
and all is unentangled,
and all is undismayed.