

easter

in this dream
I'm looking at an old family photo
 25-year-old black + white
mother father brother + me
 the classic easter pose in the yard
 outside grandpa + grandma's house
my focus is on my dad
he's so young
 younger than I am now
and he looks so scared!

I feel compassion + tenderness for this
 frightened young man who took on too much
 a family he was ill-prepared to handle.

I know some of his fear
I feel it myself in my own life every day
 the fear of being a bad father
 the fear of being a father too soon
 the fear of losing my life + my dreams to
 the demands of a wife + a child
he has good reason to be afraid
he looks lonely
no one's taught him how to do this
nobody's backing him up.

I feel his loneliness + his fear for the first time
 not in my head but in my heart + my gut
I'm surprised to feel such thorough compassion for him
 as he was at that time
I'm so used to hating the man I knew as my father
 angry insensitive frightening hateful cruel
I don't feel comfortable identifying with
 this man I've cast as my personal demon.

this dream frightens me because I'm afraid I'm like him
 but it also encourages me
it tells me that
 maybe I'm beginning to see him as a person
 instead of a demon
 maybe I'm beginning to let go of him at last.