

On The Way to the Requiem-Ballet
by Anthony Hamilton

My daughter has to sit in the back because the airbags would kill her. Not that I think they'd do me much good either. She's just too small. She's dancing solo tonight. I saw a preview on Tuesday and I recognized Andrew Lloyd Webber's Requiem. It was in a movie I saw once about Greek or Roman but definitely not Turkish soldiers- when the hero dies. I think it's a bit dark, but I didn't say anything to Ms. Christine on Tuesday and I don't say anything to my daughter tonight.

I poke the radio on to listen to ads for blood or heart or head medication. Maybe I'll tell her tonight, after the recital. Maybe she'll find out on her own, when she's older and has the right head-medication. She'll learn about requiems at a younger age than I had. I've probably learned about them and learned about them again, but I always forget. She's much smarter than I am so I turn the radio off.

Since she's been in in the 3rd to 6th grade age bracket, she's traded in her pink tutu for a black leotard. Not that I understand all the nuances, but Ms. Christine tells me that her overall form has improved since last season but her plies have gotten lazy. I know she'll tighten up for tonight but still, I crane my neck to look at her in the rearview mirror- "Remember to keep your plies neat, Caroline."

"I know, Mom!" and I really hope she does.

So I leave her alone. She goes back to staring out the window at passing signs and not much else and I don't even bother asking if she's nervous.

She's dancing to a requiem tonight and I don't have the heart to tell her. Six-weeks of work towards a perfect requiem-ballet and nobody has the heart to tell her.