

Unit

5

Poem

A Father to his Son

Carl August Sandburg



Warm Up

Every parent is anxious about the welfare of his / her children. Parents express their anxiety by advising them almost all the time. What kind of advice do you frequently receive from your parents? Fill in the bubbles. Tick the ones you like to follow implicitly and give reasons for the ones you don't like to follow.



- ❖ Wash your fingers before eating.
- ❖ Don't stay awake till late night.
- ❖ Who are you talking to over the phone for a long time?

A father sees his son nearing manhood.
What shall he tell that son?

"Life is hard; be steel; be a rock."

And this might stand him for the storms
and serve him for **humdrum monotony**

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and guide him among sudden betrayals
and tighten him for slack moments.

"Life is a **soft loam**; be gentle; go easy."

And this too might serve him.

Brutes have been gentled where **lashes** failed.

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The growth of a frail flower in a path up
has sometimes shattered and split a rock.

A tough will counts. So does desire.

So does a rich soft wanting.

Without rich wanting nothing arrives.

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Tell him too much money has killed men
and left them dead years before burial:

the **quest of lucre** beyond a few easy needs
has twisted good enough men

sometimes into dry **thwarted** worms.

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