

My little girl, Leila,

Had painted her hands black
With some kind of marking pen.

It took a while for her to tell me
When and *where*, I guess

Because she was afraid
Of being punished.

I never understood *why* she did it,

But I told her, "Don't do that again.
It's hard to wash off."

And she said, "Okay."

Passage

s e v e n t y - s i x

Consequences

I was raised as a Mormon.

One time when I was twelve,
I accompanied an Elder to a member's home.

This was called *a home teaching visit*.

We visited the home
Of a woman who was not an active member,

And this woman confided to us
She was struggling with not smoking.

She was trying not to smoke
Because Mormons are not supposed to smoke,

But she was not being entirely successful.

I was usually the silent partner on these visits.
I was young and usually did not have much to say,

But I was moved by this woman's confession
And by the fact she was genuinely struggling.

I said to her that I believed
Our Heavenly Father knew if she was really trying

And that He would help, and not condemn her,
If she called on Him for help.

When we fail in our attempts to be better,

We suffer as a consequence of not being better,
But there is no condemnation
From any who are better.

We are only condemned by those who are worse.

Smoking tobacco is bad for us.
There is little debate about that any more.

If we smoke, we suffer the consequences.
We are not condemned and punished.

Judging and condemning are bad for us.
I do not believe there is any doubt about that.

If we judge and condemn,
We suffer the consequences.

We are not condemned and punished.

When we are kind and loving,
When we are generous and forgiving,

We are not rewarded for being so.
We enjoy the rewards of being so.