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Elizabeth Wade

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My First Love Asks Me to Stop Writing About Him

Abstract

Your daughter sounds out Seuss, knows all the words
of *Hop on Pop*. I learned in Montessori
that words had ancestors. They flocked like birds
on paper wings, their nests the baggies we

secured in pockets, used for daily drills.

Keywords

poem, words, it, child



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My First Love Asks Me to Stop Writing About Him

by Elizabeth Wade

Your daughter sounds out Seuss, knows all the words
of *Hop on Pop*. I learned in Montessori
that words had ancestors. They flocked like birds
on paper wings, their nests the baggies we

secured in pockets, used for daily drills.
My favorite patriarch was “it,” begetter
of targets hit with schoolboy’s spit. I filled
my tongue with offspring—glitter, kittens—letters

that opened worlds. In time I met the clan’s
black sheep, from zit to misfit. (I met you,
and mother called me smitten.) Love, I understand
wanting to shield your child, but who

succeeds? She’ll find the others soon enough—
from clitoris to bitch and bullshit—outcasts,
eccentric aunts and uncles, banished, loved,
just out of sight, but lurking close, held fast.

Elizabeth Wade lives in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where she teaches literature and writing at the University of Mary Washington. Her recent work is published in or forthcoming from Arts and Letters, Pank, Packingtown Review, Diagram, and others. Her current projects include a prose poem sequence in the form of a medical history. She has not seen her first love since the night he told her he hated poetry.

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