

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Krista Lukas: Four Poems

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Krista Lukas is the author of a poetry collection, *Fans of My Unconscious* (Black Rock Press, 2013). Poems from the collection have been featured on the *Writer's Almanac*, in the *Best American Poetry 2006*, and *Creative Writer's Handbook*. A former schoolteacher in Douglas County, Nevada, Lukas is now a Chancellor's Distinguished Fellow and a Gluck Fellow at the University of California, Riverside, where she is pursuing her MFA in Creative Writing.

Letter V
 The v slices
 divorce
 di- spins down
 to the left, alone
 comes to sound
 like die,
 what you are
 sure you want.
 And -orce, cut off,
 a spewed-out
 syllable, a spiny
 thing that rakes
 your gut. What's left
 is -v-, a blade
 to carve all new
 v's of your
 body: armpit, elbow,
 the cunt, the corners
 of your mouth. The wells
 between your toes, your fingers,
 where the webbing
 has evolved out, where now,
 in place of your diamond—
 a pale soft band of skin.

Would It Be So Wrong

to suggest that he move
 next door? I don't want him
 gone altogether, neither can I stand
 him underfoot. It might be ideal
 to holler over the fence,
 invite him to dinner.
 We'd sit together on the patio, eat
 asparagus from his garden,
 grilled shrimp under the setting sun,
 then kiss the grease from our lips,
 maybe more. After,
 he'd go home
 and watch basketball at full volume,
 while I soak in the tub listening to Coltrane.
 Then, wearing pajamas, hair uncombed,
 I'd curl up in my own living
 room with Robert Frost or People
 and the cat, the quiet,
 the light of a single lamp.

Vade Mecum
 You can run your hand along my binding, trace
 the raised letters of my title, take off my dust jacket,
 feel the texture, the roughness of my fore-edge.
 Lay me down on my spine, lay me down
 on your table, or cradle me
 between your knees, take me
 to your bed. Breathe in the scent
 of my paper, feel how smooth my pages,
 open me and dip in—notice my dedication,
 advance praise—skim the body
 do what you can to resist
 skipping to the end. Read me all the way
 through. Read me from the beginning, let go
 your disbelief, let anticipation build. Trust me
 to surprise you. Get entangled,
 lose yourself in the rising action,
 keep going, keep going through my climax,
 through the fall, the denouement.
 And after, hold me. Stay with me, hold me,

and drift to sleep dreaming my words, cover to cover.

Composing a Sample Poem for Third Graders, Who Are Generally Encouraged to Write Cheerful Things, I Choose My Estranged Brother and the Color Gray
—after Barbara M. Joose, author of *I Love You the Purplest*

Ben, I love you the grayest.

I love you the color of forgotten things, cobwebs and dust in corners.

I love you the color of storm clouds and thunder,
stripes on the june bug's wing.

I love you the color of driftwood, of ancient boulders
ground to bits by time and water.

Smoke, sky scrapers, and over-washed whites.

The color of a moth, pale cousin to the butterfly.

I love you the color of in-between, the color of a question
with no right answer.

I love you, Ben, the grayest.

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