

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Krista Lukas: Four Poems

Krista Lukas · Wednesday, July 9th, 2014

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.

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### 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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## **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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