

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Lori Jakiela: "My Son" & "My Daughter"

Lori Jakiela · Tuesday, June 12th, 2012

Lori Jakiela is the author of the memoir *Miss New York Has Everything* (Hachette 2006), the poetry collection *Spot the Terrorist* (Turning Point 2012), and three limited-edition collections of poems. Her second memoir, *The Bridge to Take When Things Get Serious* (C&R Press), is forthcoming in Spring 2013. She teaches in the writing programs at The University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg and Chatham University. She lives outside of Pittsburgh, with her husband the writer Dave Newman and their two children.

My Son, Who's Embarrassed by His Little Sister's Buoyant Joy, Says

"Life is not all daisies and roses, you know,"
and my daughter throws her arms up,
spins like a swizzle stick
and says, "Who's Daisy?"

My Daughter, Whose Favorite Word is Actually

stands on tiptoe and points
at the refrigerator, her self portrait
stuck under a magnet shaped like a soup can.
The portrait is titled "Phelan at 100."
It's a celebration — her 100th day of kindergarten,
a milestone of survival, ABCs, 123s,
mean girls, already those,
with their squint-eyed bug-faced snickering.
My daughter, nearly always happy,
is so untouched by the world
she draws herself joyous at 100,
a dollop of grey curls, a red swoop
on her heart face, her body one bright streak
of green, that color of Go!
and algae and aloe and every
unabashed and healing thing.

My 100 year-old girl.
My six-year-old delight.
When I look at her I believe
in everything good,
everything I would have
missed without her.
Each night, she tells me
“I love you, actually,”
and when she points to her gum drop feet
in this picture she’s made, she says
“Actually, I’m dancing.”
Little green shoes, all watermelon and lime,
so much hope and promise
I almost can’t bear it, actually.

This entry was posted on Tuesday, June 12th, 2012 at 5:20 pm and is filed under [Poetry](#)
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