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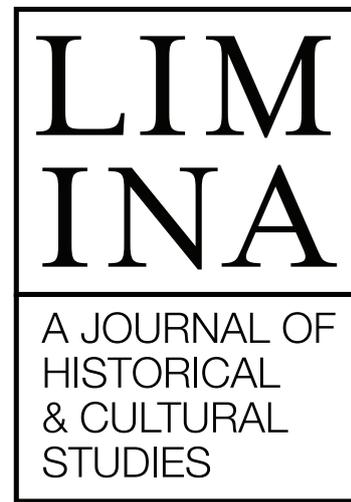
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Information regarding the journal and how to submit can be found at <https://www.limina.arts.uwa.edu.au/future>.

Cover Image

UWA Japanese Garden, Perth, Western Australia. Photograph by Rebecca Repper.



You're My Best Friend

Kerry Greer

Deakin University, Vermont College of Fine Arts

I turn on 'You're My Best Friend' by Queen as I eat dinner, and he sits beside me on the floor constructing a wonderland for miniature cars, each with their own distinct character, which he voices in low tones. I say to him, 'This is for you.'

Do you sit beside him on the floor as he waits for me? All the hours he would be left waiting, alone, but for his spectacular imagination, did anybody think to tally those up before they pulled your card? There must be enough of those hours now to get him free entry into Heaven (whatever shape that takes). A sort of grace for all the fatherless children, a back-handed clemency.

Once he said to me, 'I don't have a dad.' It was a child's statement of fact as observed, not intended to bring me to my knees. Kids in his preschool class were making Father's Day cards to present to their fathers who would stand in the classroom at morning tea. What he meant with those words was: 'I don't have a dad to stand in the classroom and share morning tea with me.'

Now I tell him all the time, as one might recite a prayer, 'You have a father, he's just not here in his body.' It sounds like you've been injured and must be kept at a distance to coalesce. He teasingly calls me 'Mommy-Daddy,' and we make-believe that I have a split personality, veering from the booming tones of a father to the mock-pandering tones of a mother. Except that's not make-believe. I must be both. I can't be both. I am both.

I want him to know you loved him, you wanted him. This distinction must be knit within his soul so deeply he can't doubt the worth of his own being, the heavy weight of fabric without price. There are worse things that haunt those with absent fathers than waiting on a mother doing everything at once all the time every day ever including voicing characters for miniature cars while making school lunches in between cooking pasta pushed aside to fold laundry on the countertop and heaven forbid she should stop to eat her own food or even for a goddamn second breathe.

I turn on 'You're My Best Friend' by Queen as I eat dinner, and he sits beside me on the floor constructing a wonderland for miniature cars, each with their own distinct character, which he voices in low tones. I say to him, 'This is for you.' He is quiet, briefly.

Did you know you were my best friend too? Some nights (all the nights, always) I'd really like to talk to you. We used to tell each other everything. Except for that one last thing you (haphazardly) planned to do. You never mentioned that.

When he's peaceful, in some place of childlike wonder that is at once miraculous and fundamentally quotidian (like right now), I can see you sitting next to him on the floor. I don't think he knows you're there, but you are both my best friends. You would have been best friends, you and him, if you'd had a few extra years.

I turn on 'You're My Best Friend' by Queen as I eat dinner, and he sits beside me on the floor constructing a wonderland for miniature cars, each with their own

distinct character, which he voices in low tones. I say to him, 'This is for you.' He is quiet, briefly, looking away. He doesn't see that I cry for my other best friend. You're with him there, in his imagination, in all the miraculous things he does as if they're commonplace, natural, just the way he was made, the best parts of you, of me, of words we never got to speak into being.

In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. I think of that line a lot in relation to him. Through him, we're both redeemed, and yes he's holy to me, and he's also a normal kid who can push every short-fused button tucked away inside my wiring. And I wanted to be full of grace, to be calm under pressure like wax refusing to melt before a flame. But he taught me grace has nothing to do with how you move, with how you look as you come undone. He can be words that bring life like light into sunless spaces. He can be the last candle in a world of dark, after I said the light hurt my eyes and must be blacked out. He causes me to crumble, brings me to my knees, and he is the only one who can pull me up, though (apparently) he is smaller than me, for now. *I know I'll never be lonely, he's my only one.* Just like you were. Just like you are still.

In the end too, the Word is there, both with god and the embodiment of god. He can be a man, a small boy, a best friend, because all he is – and he is all to me – is love. The sun and the wax. The heat and the melting. The feathers aflame with light, and (most of all) the flight, the soaring in the darkness.