

SHELLEY A. LEEDAHL

Logan

*Not wanting to betray your impatience,  
you have nevertheless been trying to speed him along.*  
Ann Beattie, *Picturing Will*

I was the dog nipping at your heels.  
I needed to prove the old women wrong,  
warning with their clacking tongues and teeth,  
to enjoy you now  
because you'd grow up before I knew it.  
For eight years I willed you to grow,  
learn, be someone else:  
*For God's sake, act your age!*  
Those Hellish early years,  
you crying in the nursery,  
me crying in bed.  
Sore breasts, filthy diapers.  
The alphabet like a mantra.  
Not knowing who to call when you swallowed  
shampoo.

I was in the habit of saying *he's almost three*  
when you were just a few months past two,  
would pay more for the circus  
when five was a winter away.  
Every failed birthday cake, bruised knees.  
The days crawled like caterpillars.

Did I expect to push you along,  
then stop time  
when you reached the golden age,  
the ability to reason,  
or whatever it was  
that was always a bit out of reach?  
I was sure a conversion day would arrive  
clear as glass  
so I could put my hands around it,  
bottle and savour it  
like a good wine.  
And here's the last laugh,  
it did come  
and I missed it.

I know  
because you've given up pyjamas,  
refuse goodnight kisses,  
hate when I cry during movies  
and said "The Sound of Music" sucks.  
You woke up one day and asked for healthy  
cereal.

Not yet a man but never again a boy,  
my heart pinwheeled that summer day  
when you looked at me sideways,  
said *Are you in love?* and I was.

You used to speak so much  
of death and God, too.  
What's happened to all your talk  
of miracles? Remember blind Bartimaeus  
with spit in his eyes?  
Will these moments fade  
or stay ingrained, forever?

You will never again say you want to marry me.  
We're too big to share a bathtub.  
Now I will myself to remember  
the first Christmas concert,  
the day you splashed across the pool by yourself.  
The summer you urged me onto a bike saying  
*Ride with me Mom,*  
*we have a whole world to explore!*

No more lace tying.  
You don't need me to butter your bread.  
Soon it will be too late  
to get the dog you always wanted.  
It's already too far behind us to ask  
what you thought when your father left,  
my lover moved in,  
when I dismissed them both.  
Did you hate me?  
Did you suspect I was crazy  
playing "Sarabande in D Minor"  
33 times in a row?

Often you were the parent,  
me the child  
Just one more time, take my hand  
as we cross the street. This time,  
you throw me the ball  
and I'll catch it.

*Shelley Leedah's poetry appears earlier in this issue.*