

Dyslexic

WILL NIXON

The year I learned the hangman's noose
I tied it everywhere: tire swings, clothes lines,
the drawstrings on the rec room curtains
that hung my pinkie purple during commercials.
*The doctor says you only want attention
because of your little brother, Mom said,*
cupping her dishpan hands like horse blinders
so she wouldn't see my purple finger, my eyelids folded
inside out like plum skins. My doctor didn't wear
a white coat, didn't depress my tongue
with an extra-wide popsicle stick. In a bow tie
always tilted to the side like a stopped propeller,
he played checkers and asked me easy questions,
like why I felt it necessary to pour dirt
down my brother's underwear. *Because I like to,*
I said, *besides he doesn't care.* My doctor never
smiled or frowned when I jumped his pieces,
sometimes three in a row. *Do you enjoy pulling
his pants down in public?* he asked.
He doesn't care. He's dyslexic. Ask my mom.
And what does dyslexic mean?
It means, I said, he throws a baseball like a girl.
He gets to stay home from school in his bathrobe

*because he didn't do his homework. He's fat,
and he'll eat ants if I tell him to.*

*My doctor suddenly jumped four pieces and chose red
for the next game. I think it means you should be nice
to him, my doctor said. Yeah, I said,
but you're not his brother.*