

(The Larger Structure) is the Poem

by John Riley

for Sophia

Tonight I helped my daughter write a paper
on a poem by Thomas Moore (1779-1852)
that the professor said is *overly familiar*
but would be fine for their purposes because

*it well illustrates the same
kind of richness of meaning
that we find in individual words.*

The topic: words as *microcosms* of the *macrocosm*.
By which he means

(the larger structure) is the poem.

The instructions continued:
“with reference to the Compass of Discourse
can we say that the work
—makes a statement
—generates meaningful images
—performs an action with grace and charm
—employs forms that enrich its meaning.”

My daughter insists she does not like poetry and thinks
I talked her into taking the class
because the professor is an old friend of mine

from the twelve-step group that saved our lives
(which means we've both had charms that,
when they lost their blush,
were *like fairy-gifts fading away.*)
Maybe someday I'll tell her
I'm happy I suggested English 330
because of the way her face wrinkled into a smile
when I read aloud to her
the heart that has truly loved never forgets.

