

Fugue No. 4

by Simon Kearns

SUBJECT

My granny is learning to read. I am learning to write.

DEVELOPMENT

She watches my homework, over my shoulder, her bony hand, knuckles white, leaning on the table, and she's breathing in my ear, my granny, learning to read, her wispy mouth full of stepped out words, where once ran prayers, learned by heart. I am learning to write.

RECAPITULATION

I am learning to write. Pencil leaning on table, page between them, my knuckles white with effort, breathing word sounds, whispering what the pencil scores upon the page, the new trick, learned by heart. I am learning to write: my granny is learning to read, which he wrote out for me. The boy is kind, he doesn't mock.

