2-12-2013

When I Got the News

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When I got the news
(For W. M.)

When I got the news that you were ill again
I sent you a funny card
with a dollar enclosed for treats.

That same night
death sucked hollow your eleven years
as you lay in your father's arms,
the rattle of your bones
drowning out his cries
to wake you.

Jan Spielmacher

"The idea of this particular course, is to introduce the notion of logic behind logic." The words--a tall, gaunt man with a stiff gait at the moment, no apparent listener near State University, he began to talk again. "The idea of this particular course..."

"So what?" The shrill clarity of the old man's concentration. Looking at him addressing him, he was surprised to hear there. Annoyed, he coughed to himself.

"The idea of this particular course..."

"I said so what." This time the old man's concentration. Looking at him addressing him, he was surprised to hear there. Annoyed, he coughed to himself.

"Who said that?" he asked, squinting his eyes in the sunlight.

"I did." The old man, this time from where the voice came, turned and looked around.

"You?" he asked, pointing at his hand and scratching his dark gray sleeve.

"That's right, me." At that, a slight flutter and floated down to the ground. "You do?" he offered, extending his right hand and scratching his dark gray sleeve.

"Alright then," the bird continued. "If you continue, permit me to tell you what I've learned. OK?"

The old man, unable to believe his hand and prepared to perform the greeting ritual. "My name is-"

Again the bird interrupted. "Can you continue, permit me to tell you what I've learned. OK?"

The old man, unable to talk, nodded. "Alright then," the bird continued...