

Wilderness House Literary Review 11/3

Natalie Crick
Young Love

When you were five
And I was six,
We would hold hands
Just like this.

When you were nine
And I was ten,
We made a pact
To never tell, and then:

You began to tell me every word
That escaped from your lips, with cold secret stares.
A look or a glance through long
Fingertips. Your beautiful face.

I see you sitting by the stair, your body
Tight in hot sun, a sad lamb
On stage. And when I have passed you
Flushed red raw, I want to remember

How young we were.
Splayed out across the pitch
Like baby starfish, pink and pinched
As tongue's blood.

Our father and mother are in silent reverie,
With knotted wrists and electric hair,
Nodding and clapping, as dumb waiters do
To our games. When we are together we are together.

Today we are family as the ill
Walk in lines, with shaken smiles that marry us.
Mother, to me you are a figure of fun.
Father, you are a child when you wake up each morning.