

The Rapper

An Imitation of "[The Writer](#)" by Richard Wilbur

In our den, in the corner of the house
where books are stacked and markers litter the floor,
my son is writing a rap song.

I stop in the doorway, smiling
as his long fingers grip graphite and rubber
like a machine tapping out Morse code.

Lithe as he his, the years
of his life total merely eleven, and most of them flew.
I wish him decades of imagining.

And now it is he who smiles.
He who has forgotten the heaviness of writing.
His pencil quickens, and then:

The whole room seems to brighten,
and I envision him, years older, onstage,
gripping a microphone, an audience illuminated.

I remember the magnetic slate,
which he got for his third birthday, so long ago,
how he scrawled out, writing first words,

then swiping, erasing the screen;
and how, for hours on end, with that magnet pen,
I saw forming the swift, confident letters

of my young son
Stretching on that gray canvas, etching in hope,
joining the sounds echoing through our home.

And later on, he hovered with hope
over the pages of a picture book, smiled,
Inhaled when, suddenly aware,

the words emerged from the pictured pages,
lifted their certain letters up to his eyes,
and settled lovingly into his heart.

It is always a matter, my beautiful boy,
of words on a page, as I often forget now. I wish
All I wished you before, but fiercely.