

Aaron Kunin

First

Mother made me by removing  
Her luminous beauty from one  
Area of "her" body. Earth  
Where "her" foot fell  
Cooled and hardened around the dent.  
Impression left

"By" a fingernail in "the" skin  
"Of" an apple. I never grew  
But more "and" "more" "of" "the" beauties  
She had "in" "me"  
Dwindled. Teeth seeming to lengthen  
Showing their roots

As "the" gums recede. Just "a" piece  
"Of" "mother" with all "her" treasures  
Kept back. On my tongue, "the" edge "of"  
"An" unpleasant  
Flavor that "I" instinctively  
Knew "to" be death.

"A" proud "and" overprotective  
Parent "of" "the" "one" thing "she had"  
Invented, "she" rather enjoyed  
Seeing "her" blood  
Go about "in" another shape  
"My" sweet "mother."

"Proud" "of" "all" "that" "I" "kept" hidden  
Deeply moved, or merely chewing  
"I" learned early "to" hear "the" sound  
"Of" coughing "with"  
Unconcern. "Merely" "a" cut through  
Which you may see

"A" short distance into "her" face  
"And" that's "her" mouth. Uniformly  
Silver, "a" cold color, "in" hair  
Green eyes blanched gray  
"Where" "I" learned "to" seek happiness  
"In" "a" woman's

Glance. "She" burned "through" "the" "earth" when "she"  
Divided "her" store "of" "beauties"  
"From" "her" substance, "the" remainder  
Froze, "and" "she" "froze"  
"The" remover. "As" alike "as"  
"One" "of the" halves

"Of an apple" "to" "the" other  
Could two faces make "a" third "face"  
"By" friction "of" "one" "mouth" against  
"Another," "could"  
"One" "face" split "into" "two" copies  
"Of" itself "and"

"I" "their" mirror, now told apart  
"By" temperature, "or" "the" notch  
"In" "the" ear, "or" "just" "by" pointing?

"Of" "luminous  
Beauty," "her" defining feature  
Absent "from" your

Composition, "a" seemingly  
Casual mention. "I" looked up  
"From" "a" fiery outline, "her  
Face" held warring  
Energies "in" check, sovereign  
"And" ecstatic.

"I" would have "enjoyed" saying "that"  
"My" forehead was hotter than "her"  
Iron, "but," truthfully, "I" guess  
"It" wasn't, since  
"The" brand "left" "a" visible scar.  
"I" love women.