

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.