

June 2009

In Response to the Question, Asked at a Party, "Do You Wish That You Had Waited Longer to Have Children?"

Kevin Haworth

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

Recommended Citation

Haworth, Kevin (2009) "In Response to the Question, Asked at a Party, "Do You Wish That You Had Waited Longer to Have Children?";" *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 9: Iss. 1, Article 20.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol9/iss1/20>

This Fiction is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION, ASKED AT A PARTY,
"DO YOU WISH THAT YOU HAD WAITED LONGER TO
HAVE CHILDREN?"

Kevin Haworth

At first you say, Well, yes, because we're all friends here, and let's admit it: they do eat up the day, and when they're done with that they swallow up your night until you're so tired, so tired, it's all you can do to remember that there was this novel, the one you were going to write and all this sex you planned to have, preferably on the living room floor surrounded by boxes of Chinese and the pages of that terrific manuscript you wrote, but then this boy arrived loud and needy and, yes, kind of beautiful and asking to share your name and not asking but demanding the rest, including the novel you never wrote, the sex you never had, the bad Hollywood movie you never saw, the hip, independent film you never saw, the endless afternoons of child care and *Law and Order* reruns, the same wisecracks and perps, and once again the novel you didn't write because of the sleep you didn't get, the hours untaped, the sex you didn't have.

But then. You think of the stories you cannot write or even read anymore, the ones where a child is kidnapped or found floating in the pool or pulled away at Auschwitz, hands reaching for parents who are still there, mother and father whose task it was to keep that child safe and who failed; and that your one and only job is to keep this boy safe, to keep him from every harm and sickness, and to foresee and to prevent every random accident; and that to answer Yes is to imagine a world without this boy in it, and here, finally, is the thing you cannot do, not for time, sex, art, not to save your own life, not even for the moment required to lift the cocktail to your mouth and to answer this question.