

CHRISTINE VEASEY

Dear Youth

Dear Youth:

experiment for yourself
to send messages and to receive them

our world is made up of two kinds of building blocks
you mustn't think of these blocks as like bricks
we don't yet know so very much

protons and electrons playing together
atoms group together to play the larger game
like a troop of boy scouts in a grand picnic
I shall write of more complicated games

balloons buoyant in air
revolve about the sun as a center
the atmosphere in which we live
unimportant in amounts

funny thing about it all

to run away and play in some other group
molecules of the blue vitriol go wandering
needn't be lonely any more
everything will be satisfactory
despite the fact that these ions broke away from each other
they don't stay together long before they split apart and start wandering again

over and over again
dissolve
wander into the moist paste
connected
nothing in possibility

we use years as the units in which to count up time
but how would you know those scales gave correct weight?
I trust you have a fairly good idea

the pull of the positive terminal and the shove of the negative
has a high resistance

separate
we'll find
the grid
deep red

easy ways of finding out for one's self but we shall not stop to describe them
I want to show you how to make a picture
you are to imagine me as using two pencils
would he do it?

after one learns how
quite ingenious
the electronic games
this whole business of variable capacities

this extra trouble would be because of the relations between gangs
at right angles to each other
they have no effect on each other
if they are parallel and wound the same way
they will act like a single coil of greater inductance
parallel but wound in opposite directions
they will have less inductance because of their mutual inductance

like learning to dance
in conformity with the human voice

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

“Dear Youth” was created from *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son* by John Mills (1922). About the poem and the process of composing it, Christine Veasey writes:

In my process for found poems, I grab words and phrases that fit the theme I begin with in mind. As this specific poem was evolving, I was thinking of the uptick in shootings in my area related to gang violence and how difficult it is for youth to separate from that in real life even with simulations like Grand Theft Auto of which I heard talk of an immersive VR headset version being released. I feel that this sort of time-travel is possible when reading through any book, but that it was specifically intended in *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son*. We are all the children of the authors we read, and John Mills was brilliant in knowing that someone from the future would read through his work some day and apply it to their own space and time. I was just lucky enough to have caught a glimpse of that intention.

Christine Veasey is the author of *Walking Into Spiderwebs* (2021). Her work has also appeared in *The Prompt Magazine*, *Disasters of War: An Anthology for Veterans Day*, and elsewhere. She lives in Philadelphia, PA, and can be found online at twitter.com/honeylovepoems.

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