

JACKSON OSCAR

A Dear Telephone

My dear boy:

A construction of copper wires,
streaming tinfoil, and glass plates;
a duplicate from worked sheets
of mica, metal, and wood.

My dear son:

A series of muscular puffs
stored away in winding threads;
specks of electricity
too tiny ever to see.

Dear young man:

A speaker's tuned voice singing
and tiny windpipe cycling,
transmitting sound waves to me
to listen to loud and clear.

My dear man:

A design I can no longer
feel nor touch, fix or adjust;
dearest boy, son, young man, man,
don't you ever leave from me.

My dear boy,

are you there? Can you hear my voice—?

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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

When I first skimmed *Letters of a Radio-Engineer to His Son*, the slightly varying, almost incongruously personal salutations struck me, eventually leading me to create a poem featuring them and expanding upon the feelings I found expressed in them. To construct the poem, I read through the book, scribbling words and phrases that I found either linguistically unique or generally useful. I then culled and scrambled them, marrying sterile and passionate words until I had a poem that contrasts the dramatic, unexpected changes of our current lives and communication situation with the inevitable, gradual changes in life that every person goes through.

Jackson Oscar lives in suburban Virginia.

