

Emily Turner

Horatio Will Be a Scholar

I heard the singing when I was in the kitchen. I was making a peanut butter and jelly and egg sandwich. The trick to this sandwich is to toast the bread while the egg is cooking. Scrambling the egg won't do either. It has to be over-easy for me, so that when I bite into the sandwich a dribble of yellow gushes out and coats the rest of the sandwich in a creamy thick flavor of eggs.

When I finished making the sandwich, I didn't even get a chance to bite into the egg before I heard the singing.

It came from the bedroom. With the sandwich in hand, I followed the singing. There, lying on my desk, was a baby. He or she rested upon the open page of my *Complete Works of Shakespeare, Volume One: Tragedies*. Hamlet just told Horatio that he would pretend to be crazy for his uncle and his mother before I went to make my sandwich. This seemed like a bad sign. But the baby was content. Its fat limbs swirled around in the air, stirring up dust. His or her open mouth stuck out the tongue. The tongue wasn't a fat pink slug but narrow and thin. Right at the tip was a tiny slit, like a snake. At first, it seemed like just a tear, but I knew that as the years passed, the tear would grow and grow until the tongue split itself into two. It split out like a red streamer. He/she made an "ahh" sound like he/she was singing.

On closer inspection, right between the legs was just scribbles. Someone had taken a black sharpie and doodled between the legs where something should be. I could make out cheesy daises and smiley faces with funky hair in between the black lines. I guess he/she didn't even care to know about their gender. He/she didn't seem to mind.