

# The Kid

by Daphna R. Kohn

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One kid on the street doesn't act like they should  
One kid on the street has the wrong brain – head – face – clothes – mother – pool  
One kid has the screaming in them, the echoing, the stench, the stinging stench of chlorine,  
    poison gas  
    is over the limit  
    is out of the world  
    is crying alone  
    is alone  
    is alone now, tonight, forever.

There is one kid  
    one kid on the street  
    with an alarm bell going off in his head  
    time to run, kid, time to swim for safety  
One kid got left out on the step.  
    locked out for the night  
    with the garbage.

One kid is singing in the windows. She is singing to the songbirds; people never listen.  
    One kid is tired from the struggle but plods on anyway, imagining himself a hero, picturing  
    himself without chains.  
    One kid is dying, or wondering why not.  
One kid lost her father in a dark wood, lost her mother to a storm, freak storm on the ocean.

One kid is keening like that word means, a sharp knife in the air of feelings, someone's feelings  
    of dying in their soul, wanting to lose the world.  
One kid is on the step, bouncing a ball, like normal.  
(Hey, check out the normal kid. Who let him in the picture?)

One kid is drowning. One is swimming, one flailing, one paddling meekly along.  
    Nowhere to go.  
Who could forget  
    a kid  
    in the water  
    at the supermarket  
    with the screaming bright lights  
    quintessential Americans?  
Allen Ginsberg said it—  
    he must've been a kid once

because he had a mother  
and he lost her.

One kid is writing poetry,  
one is laughing, closing down.

One is screaming, squealing,  
reaching for something  
because pain says  
*pay attention to me*  
and pay attention to me  
says  
*here is life.*

One kid looks at another  
What do they see?

One kid talks to another  
What does she hear?

One kid looks to another  
Looks up? Looks down?

One kid looks with another  
they are the same  
and still know it  
squirming into costumes too tight  
called lead me, follow me.

One kid cries because she's hurting  
another joins in  
do they know it?

One kid is lonely  
on the street.

One kid is only one kid;  
inside though  
they're all the kids  
at once  
inside though  
a cavernous waiting and awakening  
inside though  
a slumbering purple dragon, violet pony  
with wings  
not fanciful  
a real one  
not messing around here.

One kid has a multitude  
so wild it can't be seen or comprehended  
and for what?

To be there with it—  
over the limit  
in the deep end of the water  
in the fullness of love  
in the thickness of blood and danger.

It only takes one kid  
to move the world

One kid  
to stir the dragons

One kid  
to be enough at once, at once.

It's only gonna be that way  
forever;  
so hurry up  
and catch on.

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