Harold & the Purple Crayon

By D. Gilson

Berkeley psychologists told Harold his anger was justified. What parents let their child go for a midnight walk under no moon? I couldn’t have been more than four, Harold told the doctor in her crisp beige office. Doctor, could it ever be OK for a four-year-old to eat nine different types of pie? Harold asked her. Call me Lisa, the doctor replied. Everyone knew Harold could draw. By sophomore year, he was critiquing grad students. By twenty, Harold knew exactly when to quote Sontag. Standing in front of a professor’s latest pastel of Mojave succulents: This just makes me think how in place of a hermeneutics, we need an erotics of art. Harold’s professors would hum & nod their dragon heads (though none of them understood, exactly, what Harold said). By senior year, Harold became distant, his work increasingly angry: apple trees, their fruit rotting in monochrome purple, under the notable lack of a moon.

Source: Poetry (May 2017)