

Four-letter Words

When we were kids,
There were certain
Four-letter words
We could not say.
One in particular
Was even banned
From most cable TV,
But as adults, we say it
All the time,
Though rarely meaning it
As an action,
Like you do now.
You don't say it,
That four-letter word,
But your fingers talk.
They get a little too curious
And I try to discourage them,
Like our moms did
When we asked what certain
Four-letter words meant;
But we kept pushing,
And your fingers kept wandering
Lower. You still can't say it
Or even ask if I'm okay
With this so you put your mouth
To other uses.
I tell myself it's okay,
But then you go to places
That make me think of
Another four-letter word.
This isn't taboo
Like the one on your mind—
Network TV uses it,
And we even joked about it
When we were teens—
And yet no one wants to talk
About it or even think
About the consequences.
You surely don't,
As your mind becomes occupied
With more four-letter words:
Want, need, give, take—
No, not the last one; it's too close
To that word you've banished
To the deep caverns
Of your mind,

Like the bad words your mom
Told you to never think about
Much less say.
You don't go there
Because you're not that type
And as long as you don't
Cross the final threshold,
You're okay— I'm okay.
I tell myself the same,
Pushing that four-letter word
Away, except now I remember
Those jokes and the girls
I used to call names
With four or five letters,
And I think that none
Of this is okay.
I should cry, scream, kick, push,
Do something to tell you
How I feel on the inside,
But my body says
Something else,
And you only understand
Moans and shudders,
Wants and needs.
In the end,
There is nothing
But the silence
Of unsaid four-letter words
To convey our emotions:
Lust, love, hate, hurt, fear
For, from, of
You and me.