

Flash Nonfiction
Kathy Fitch
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Allerton Articulation Conference
324 Words

Reclaiming Red

(Inspired by a friend for whom "red" is an ache of a word, because healing is an act of cleansing and reclaiming images and definitions.)

Red is construction paper valentines drizzled with school glue and affixed to white lace doilies.

It is the battery operated glowing eyes of a Halloween skeleton in an October display on a front porch in the early darkness.

It is the long smeared reflection of a stoplight on wet pavement, the swirling stripe of a candy cane, strawberry jelly spread on thick bread toasted just so.

Red is a velvet Christmas dress for a little girl who loves her hair ribbon but hates her tights and squeaky, stiff patent leather shoes.

It is delicate wild columbine stirring in spring breezes. It is the sudden bloom of blood on the tip of your thumb when you get a paper cut, and its coppery taste. It is a Santa hat, a glass of wine glinting in firelight, a 50's political moment recalled as a scare.

Red is daring lipstick, a devilish costume, a disk of cinnamon hard candy slowly dissolving in your mouth at grandma's house when you were eight.

It is a vintage tin Coca Cola sign edged with rust, a Salvation Army kettle clinking with coins, a bushel basket of tart autumn apples, a steaming mug of tomato soup slowly sipped on a brisk day.

Red is vintage mercury glass ornaments on a blue spruce, a plastic fireman's hat sported by a delighted child, the half-time swish of a cheerleader's paper pom-poms on the gleaming wooden floor of a basketball court.

It is the hair and freckles of a classic Irish girl, but it may or may not be her temper.

It is a bandana on a big black dog, a fleeting moment at sunrise and sunset, the tinge of a giant full moon that steals your breath.

Red is your word, your mosaic, and nobody else's.

Details	
Words	324
Unique Words	197
Characters	1,771
Sentences	13
Longest Sentence (words)	37
Paragraphs	13
Reading Level ?	11-12th Grade
Reading Time ?	1 min 11 sec
Speaking Time ?	1 min 48 sec

