

**Scarlet Red**

Jessica Chen

*I'm scarlet red*, he declares proudly  
Jabbing a thumb at his chest of *barely any muscle (skin and bones, really)*  
And I nod, absentminded  
*Yes dear, good for you,*  
Too caught up in so-called "adult affairs"  
Which is only ever a fancy word used to describe  
Things we'd rather not burden children with because we're ashamed  
Their sense of purity can see a path otherwise Undetectable  
By maturity—

*Scarlet red*, he urges  
And I sigh, pretending to look at the world with "wise eyes"  
*Yes dear, I get it*  
*A very pretty color*  
*Now go outside and play,*  
Hiding from him  
That secretly, I desire that  
We too, be *scarlet red*,  
Praying that children take us with  
To those long-forgotten memories, only barely remembered in faded photographs  
When simplicity was the answer.