For Their Second Childhood

David Wagoner

There’s hardly anybody
left alive to remind them
to stop that
slouching to stand up
straight to quit playing
with their food to chew it
certain numbers of times
and swallow
without gulping
and to know when to go
to the bathroom and where
it is and what to wash
and wipe and what to take off
and put on to be afraid
their faces will stay like that
or how they ought to start
thinking seriously
of the future just in case
they ever get there or what
for a change to please
remember for heaven’s sake.