

The Therapist and His Client

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I asked the little girl to draw
a picture for my picture wall.
And did she like any she saw?

Family faces, crayoned hearts,
X-ray-visioned body parts,
incipient ideas with several false starts

fought for the limited gallery space.
I saw concern crisscross her face,
until she started to start to trace

the center of a flower part
that was, she said, the flower's heart
—and then she tore the thing apart.

But then she asked for another page,
this minueted, tiny sage,
and tried again to engage

the task, to maybe get
the idea down that wouldn't quite yet
let her cast her little net.

This time she placed a tentative mark
that subtly curved into an ark
and spiraled down like a spark

wildly running from itself.
And then my concentrated elf
raked her hand across the shelf

and knocked the paints to the floor.
She headed, alas, out the door.
She wasn't playing any more.