

Renee Norman

Hannah's Child

would have been precocious
female of course
chattering away in German & English
before she let go of Hannah's desktop
to try walking

would have learned to scribble
quietly
while Mamala worked
filling papers with the dizzying marks
that fenced out a distance

loved
of course she would have been
a child of the republic
a light ahead of the dark times behind
more at ease with adults
whispering to her teddy
about Aunt Mary's blueberry pancakes.

until she begged again
to hear the story of the Holocaust
a family album of never forget
this page Buba Martha

sounding strict

turn over to someone named Walter Benjamin
the sad pallor of suicide
in the tone of voice
a puzzle
when she pointed to a framed picture
of Uncle Martin on the desk
& in the way that children can
imaged a second picture there
in her mother's measured reply
black & shadowy like a silhouette

*Aunt Mary is Mary McCarthy
Uncle Martin is Martin Heidegger
Buba Martha is Martha Arendt, Hannah Arendt's mother