

## Connect 4

1.

When I think of what it means to connect  
I think of my youth playing Connect 4,  
that oddly competitive vertical stacking  
game  
lining up four checker pieces in a row.

If I were losing I might “accidentally”  
bump the plastic bar at the bottom and  
\*Whoops\* game over, no winners declared;  
red and black checkers scattered on the  
floor

I rarely lost. When I did,  
some would call me a “sore loser”.  
I preferred the term “cunning victor”

2.

Enter K’Nex into my life.  
So many random, geometric plastic bits  
when snapped and clicked just so  
build a giant rocket ship

that would take me to Mercury,  
that planet closest to the sun,  
out of the silent tension of my home,  
flying into the potent cosmos among the  
becoming, shimmering stars.

I used to – no still do – stare at those  
shimmering beacons and read  
the wondrous stories that come from  
connecting the dots.  
Red and black checkers scattered on the  
floor.

3.

To connect: to bind together.  
Connect 4 and K’Nex vestiges of a more  
blissful, naïve, escaping, deceitful youth.  
To whom are we bound and what do we  
owe

to these youthful vestiges?  
They connect us to what we once were,  
Give us that dark sky with which  
To place our own shimmering stars.

Red and black checkers scattered on the  
floor  
A pile of random, geometric plastic bits,  
Meaningless until some vision takes ahold

4.

The challenge, then, to connect is  
to see the pattern between the dots,  
to gather the scattered checkers,  
and shamelessly snap the stochastic plastic

together.  
To take our internal rubble and  
let it crumble between our fingers.

Or better yet, to build  
from that rubble our rocket ships,  
and fly them to the moons of strangers,  
to read the stars and let them read to us.