



# You Begin

BY MARGARET ATWOOD

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You begin this way:

this is your hand,

this is your eye,

that is a fish, blue and flat

on the paper, almost

the shape of an eye.

This is your mouth, this is an O

or a moon, whichever

you like. This is yellow.

Outside the window

is the rain, green

because it is summer, and beyond that

the trees and then the world,

which is round and has only

the colors of these nine crayons.

This is the world, which is fuller

and more difficult to learn than I have said.

You are right to smudge it that way

with the red and then

the orange: the world burns.

Once you have learned these words

you will learn that there are more

words than you can ever learn.

The word hand floats above your hand

like a small cloud over a lake.

The word hand anchors

your hand to this table,

your hand is a warm stone

I hold between two words.

This is your hand, these are my hands, this is the world,

which is round but not flat and has more colors

than we can see.

It begins, it has an end,

this is what you will

come back to, this is your hand.

