

Masthead Logo

**The Iowa Review**

---

Volume 26  
Issue 1 *Spring*

Article 11

---

1996

# Learning to Read

Donald Hall

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Hall, Donald. "Learning to Read." *The Iowa Review* 26.1 (1996): 49-49. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.4498>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

*Donald Hall*

LEARNING TO READ

Sitting in the back seat  
of a nineteen-thirty-five Packard  
with running boards, I held  
my great-uncle Luther's blotchy hand.  
He was nine for Appomattox  
and told about the soldier  
boys coming home from the war.  
When I pressed the skin of his hand  
between thumb and forefinger,  
the flesh turned white as Wonder Bread.  
It remained indented  
for a few seconds, and then rose up,  
turning pink, flush to the surface  
of his veined hairless mottled  
hand. Then I pressed it again.  
Luther would stay old forever.  
I would remain six, just  
beginning first grade, learning to read.