

Dumbo

I read aloud *Baby Dumbo was born in the Spring and his mother was proud, but oh, what big ears he had!* And Emma throws up her arms, saluting the magnificent ears of Dumbo, ears that make him a clown in the circus, which he hates, ears that get him back (somehow) to his elephant self via the mimicking of birds. There's a lot in there about talent and the freak, and I'm concerned, like all parents become concerned on contact with *what am I saying?* Would Dumbo be any less an elephant if he *couldn't* fly? Lennon sang *They didn't want me so they made me a star*, but Dumbo's mother *does* want him though she is taken from the narrative after the third page. (In the movie she fights the designs of men, is labelled mad and chained; Lennon's mother was killed by an off-duty cop driving drunk and both mothers become songs that haunt the evenings of their sons.) But this is how his story always starts when the hero is a man, a man begins alone. . . . Emma throws up her arms at the sight of him, decoding his picture the way D=U=M=B=O is decoded, this Disno-glyph, lost child, Emma's hands saying what her mouth cannot, already lifting him from the page, *Dumbo, so big, I know you.*

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