

Dickens Bicentenary 2012

Roger James

Louisa Gradgrind

You never believed it, father,
the way we are conjugated
by the tenses of our hearts,
the way, one eye on syntax,
we step up and pirouette.

I was always a syllable
under your knees, a curled
finger in your fist and all
I wished was to set you free
from your stamped out nouns.

My notation discarded
under your stumbling words,
I was locked into longer
and longer clauses. Now,
face to face, we start a story
we should have finished long ago.