

DAVID BARRICK

DOING VOICES

Ask for them at story time.

Demand they match the pictures.

Baritone dip of a moose jaw, pipping
patter of rodents, nasal drawl
of British bears by the seaside.

Hear the other people inside parents.

Practice your own, step stooled
to a mirror and screwing up
your face, experimenting
with air passages and mouth shapes.
Try them out on the schoolyard
even as some kid jerseys you
and parrots a bad version
of the voice you'd just been doing.

Save them. Their currency
accrues value with age. Perfect
your Bogie, Bush Jr., Stewart, Eastwood;
Schwarzenegger your way to the head
table. Throw them around the room
until folks choke laughing.

Reach beyond amusement. Micro-tune
them for all occasions, a snorkel
in social commotion, a perfect pairing
with after-work beer bashes
churchyard socials
dinners with in-laws

or cross-country road trips with the kids.
Feel yourself refining them
to the point that no one asks
are you doing a voice right now?