

**To the boy in my Kindergarten class who forced me to play Tic Tac Toe with him everyday during snack time; here's what I'd say to you now.**

by Jocelyn Weiss

Tic ,Tac, No.

Keep your X's and O's locked up in your lunchbox  
And grant our teacher the key.  
The lonely PB&J you never have time to eat would love the company.

Tic, Tac, No.

The only lines I will draw out in a grid for you  
Are the ones you continuously forget  
Are not to be crossed.

Tic, Tac, No.

I don't need a refresher on the rules-  
Three in a row is fairly simple. And if I did,  
I wouldn't ask for your mansplanation.

Tic, Tac, No.

"You want to play a game?"  
and  
"You want  
To play a game."  
Mean two very different things.

The uptalk in your voice a mere courtesy  
In an effort to disguise your command  
As a question.

I commend you for your ability to make me think I had a choice.

Tic, Tac, Oh!

My bad- I forgot that your youth is an excuse

For the behavior you have yet to realize  
Is far from appropriate.

Tic, Tac, So...

What's the point of even playing the game? You win 100% of the time!  
Even when I'm the first to get three in a row,  
It's only because I cheated! I'm a cheater! Tell the teacher! I must be put in a time out!

Why don't we just skip to the part where you swallow your daily dose of ego boost  
Along with the two yellow Flintstones vitamins your mom forces you to take.  
You say that you take them to grow big and strong  
Like a big boy.

Well, now I'm a big girl.  
And to be honest, I don't give shit about Tic, Tac, Toe.

But there are shits that I do in fact "give".

Like how you internalized distorted views of masculinity  
Before you internalized the alphabet.

Like how you took away my chance to say "yes" or "no"  
Before your dad took off the training wheels on your bike.

Like how you already believed girls need to be educated by boys  
Before our formal education even began.

Like how you failed to keep your hands off me  
Before we even knew what intimacy was.

I know we were young.  
There was so much we didn't know and so much to learn.  
You and me, both.

But when the phrase, "boys will be boys" seeps into our brains as children  
It later morphs into "men will be men."  
Then, it is not your lack of experience or time on this Earth  
That excuses your actions anymore,  
It's simply the fact that "boys will be boys."

So, to you, the Tic, Tac, Toe Boy, wherever you are now, I say:  
If a girl agrees to play this silly game with you,  
Don't be fooled by the Xs and Os;  
They are far from hugs and kisses.

And if a girl says "Tic, Tac, No,"  
Simply  
Move along.