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## Learning a New Game

Janet Jennings

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# Learning a New Game

Janet Jennings

We sit on the family  
room floor to play Fish

for the first time. I show  
my daughters how to shuffle,

cut, deal, match. We play  
open hand. They don't know

yet about winning—proud  
of the five big, blue-backed

cards they hold. We place  
them face up on the brown,

stain-blended rug. Stella  
Starfish, Leroy Lobster,

and their friends. Charlie  
hands me her seahorse

to make a pair, lit up  
with being the first

to spot a match. She gives  
her cards away with such



*Illustration by SWOSU Design Studio*

pleasure, and I catch  
myself already tensed

with the habit of going  
it alone, defending what's

mine. They are laughing,  
my daughters, leaning in

to each other, making  
sets of two on the floor.

Living close to the ground can  
change things. Out

beyond the idea of winning  
or losing, there is a world.

*From Sow's Ear Review*