

“Television” by Roald Dahl

The most important thing we've learned,  
So far as children are concerned,  
Is never, NEVER, NEVER let  
Them near your television set—  
Or better still, just don't install  
The idiotic thing at all.  
In almost every house we've been,  
We've watched them gaping at the screen.  
They loll and slop and lounge about,  
And stare until their eyes pop out.  
(Last week in someone's place we saw  
A dozen eyeballs on the floor.)  
They sit and stare and stare and sit  
Until they're hypnotized by it,  
Until they're absolutely drunk  
With all that shocking ghastly junk.  
Oh yes, we know it keeps them still,  
They don't climb out the window sill,  
They never fight or kick or punch,  
They leave you free to cook the lunch  
And wash the dishes in the sink—  
But did you ever stop to think,  
To wonder just exactly what  
This does to your beloved tot?  
**IT ROTTS THE SENSE IN THE HEAD!**  
**IT KILLS IMAGINATION DEAD!**  
**IT CLOGS AND CLUTTERS UP THE MIND!**  
**IT MAKES A CHILD SO DULL AND BLIND**  
**HE CAN NO LONGER UNDERSTAND**  
**A FANTASY, A FAIRYLAND!**  
**HIS BRAIN BECOMES AS SOFT AS CHEESE!**  
**HIS POWERS OF THINKING RUST AND FREEZE!**  
**HE CANNOT THINK--HE ONLY SEES!**  
"All right!" you'll cry. "All right!" you'll say,  
"But if we take the set away,  
What shall we do to entertain  
Our darling children? Please explain!"  
We'll answer you this by asking you,  
"What used the darling ones to do?  
How used they keep themselves contented  
Before this monster was invented?"  
Have you forgotten? Don't you know?  
We'll say it very loud and slow:  
**THEY...USED...TO...READ!** They'd **READ** and **READ**,  
**AND READ** and **READ**, and then proceed  
To **READ** some more. Great Scott! Gadzooks!  
One half their lives was reading books!