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## At School

Marianne Boruch

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## Four Poems · *Marianne Boruch*

### AT SCHOOL

They write and read to know everything worth knowing  
each fall past snow to spring.

The yellow buses stop  
and children wander off, this place a dream  
their first dream  
empties into. But the teachers  
so real and quick, open their trunks  
wide to the parking lot—woven bags they carry in,  
books, bottles, all business this  
early, the dim hall, dim  
until they step there.

One teacher doubts herself, and the children  
love that darkness.

She stands at the window  
looking out so much she could be weather  
or a kind of light they've seen in pictures,  
scary, depending.  
The room slips then, like ice  
on ice. They fiddle at their desks,  
walk around, know she knows at heart who  
they are—fish or giant  
ancient squids at seabottom, not kids at all.  
Certain moments her darkness floods  
the whole room at a thing  
one says by accident  
or because it sounded close. They watch her  
whisper back  
the awkward word or phrase, whatever it is,  
whatever hung in the air those twenty seconds  
like a kite wounded,  
coming down.

At recess, she's in there, quiet.  
She's in there, I know  
she is, two of them say, two  
who should be out on the playground, screaming.  
Not one of them moves  
though they want to—oh, they want to.  
It's neither happiness  
nor sadness  
how they lean their heads  
against her door that way.

## GEESE

They open their beaks and something comes out—  
a long ribbon.  
And nothing to do with fear, what  
they see up there.  
It's like breathing to them  
to swoop and glide,  
a full bellows in those bodies  
gives out a great foghorn.  
A boat too lost in the water  
might mistake it  
for rescue, and signal hopelessly  
with a flag, that flag  
once a shirt.  
To them, such a tiny flapping thing below  
on the blue expanse  
is—  
no, not a wing.  
Still their fine broad voices circle  
and come down.  
Oh heart of the world  
briefly,  
as the heart is pierced.