



Teachers Write

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Poetry Connection

Can I bring you
the gauzy sky
draped over brillo pad trees
and tassel-topped corn
so you can sleep
while wide awake
as I did today?

Can I make you taste
the buttered potatoes
piled like batting
and breathing heavily
from the pottery bowl
in the middle of a table
silent with prayers?

Can I turn up the volume
so you can hear
the spaces between
grandma's final gasps
for life
as she grows smaller
and smaller
under the crisp sheets
until she finally,
gratefully,
disappears?

Can you learn from my shame
of making a mistake
that I rub and rub
but cannot erase
making a hole
in the page
of my life?

Can I get my words from my heart
to my head
to the page
to your head
to your heart
 . . . to your life?

—*Sandra Lingo*

Through and Through

I can't get enough of it.

First-day pencils with still-clean erasers
and chalk dusting the seat of my pants

Jumprobes clicking on wet blacktop
and then shoes squeaking on linoleum

Forgotten bologna sandwiches curling on window sills
and Rice Krispie treats stuck on birthday napkins

Fingerprints on door frames where boys jump to reach
and gym clothes petrifying on coat racks.

Football numbers shaved into Monday morning haircuts
and Saturday-won trophies posed on desktops.

Poetry launched with "Roses are red"
and stories from once upon a time

Hampster kisses, gerbil funerals
and goldfish with middle names

Chalk in the erasers on April Fool's Day
and the blackboard countdown beginning Memorial Day

And, today,
as the sun reflects brilliantly off
orthodontics
and I inhale deeply
to smell Dorito breath and pubescent perfume
I know that teaching is not what I do,
but who I am.

—Sandra Lingo

