

Row Three, Seat Seven



Miss Fox called me Linda.
My name, though, is Claire.
My underwear's itching.
My skirt has a tear.

Miss Fox moved me here
to keep Bobby from Boomer.
My kitten's got ringworm.
My mom's got a tumor.

I'm absent on Fridays,
but no one asks why.
My brother got busted.
I tried not to cry.

LeAnn said I'm weird.
She talked soft, but I heard it.
My daddy, he beats me.
I guess I deserve it.

Today Mr. Simpson said,
"How's that girl Claire?"
Miss Fox said, "Oh, fine.
I've got no problems *there!*"

Faculty Meeting



Once upon a Wednesday dreary, while I grimaced, weak and weary,
at the papers on my desk and all the trash upon the floor,
while I scowled and sat there snacking, suddenly there came a tapping
as of someone gently rapping, rapping at my classroom door.

“There’s a meeting,” someone grumbled as she passed my classroom door.

“There’s a meeting. What a bore!”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December
and the smudge of muddy boots had left their mark upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; vainly I had sought to borrow
from my chips surcease of sorrow – sorrow for the ninety-four
reports on Poe I had to read and tests I had to score.

I’d be here forevermore.

So the dismal, daunting, dreary thought of going to a meeting
chilled me – filled me with fantastic terrors often felt before,
so that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
“Maybe this will be a short one; we’ll be out of here by four –
we will zip right through our business and be out of here by four.

I think it happened *once* before.”

(continued)