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Sleep's Got Nothin' To Do With It

by Patricia Stewart

5:30 am starts, cold water alarms.
Late nights beneath a desk lamp
grading papers where the text begins to blur

Budget cuts, shared rooms
Triple the students, third of the books

Standardized tests cutting the creativity
right out of the front of the brain.
Students forget how to imagine --
forget how to be children

We grow tired
Calluses on our fingers
From writing, writing
Comments about how to improve
Writing grades reflecting ourselves

We grow tired
and we sing a lullaby to our students
as they sit crouched over tests
that are none of our own
evaluation that does not reflect knowledge

We sit at our desks
tired and resisting the urge to yawn
pencils tapping a rhythm on our desks
a tune that is unknown.

Imaging days where we could write.
Write a story, a poem, perform a play.
Read, read anything we could get our hands on
But now we sit

We circulate but
We see one student
Drawing an abstract flower on the
Back of his test

And so we
sing another lullaby
sliding novels across desks
discussing the different ways
to describe the cloud drifting past our bare window.

Patricia Stewart is in her last semester of my graduate degree at Rutgers University. She is seeking a high school English teacher position to share her love for reading and writing with the younger generations.



Artwork by Izzy Boyce-Blanchard