



11-15-1998

Class Picture First Grade 1958

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Recommended Citation

Namm, Devorah (1998) "Class Picture First Grade 1958," *Westview*: Vol. 18 : Iss. 1 , Article 15.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol18/iss1/15>

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Class Picture First Grade 1958

by Devorah Namm

No one looks happy except for Jimmie
 Whose coonskin cap hangs low over wooly eyebrows.
 Otherwise, four rows of children
 Stand like notes on sheet music
 Cacophony of striped shirts, bow ties,
 Poodle skirts turned partly round
 Unruly mass of arms mid air.
 In the back row, a halo of cowlicks
 Imprisoned with Brylcreme and water
 Scalps glistening on top.

The shortest of us, including me
 Sit on wooden chairs
 Ten pairs of knees press together
 Socks creeping down over untied shoes
 Ankles cross in salute
 To Miss Crain who stands
 Erect as a soldier
 All starch and patent leather.

Sometimes I stare at the faces of children
 As they pass by my window
 Transfixed by the wings of a butterfly
 Or the armies of ants under foot
 And I wonder what happened to Jimmie
 And the girl, front row center
 Eyes open wide
 Toward the light and the moment.