

Do Not Turn On

Do Not Turn On Red
 Crimson maybe
 but definitely not on red.
 Do Not Walk
 You can twirl or trip or skip
 but absolutely do not walk.

Do Not reach for heaven
 The top shelf of the bookcase maybe,
 but heaven is too far
 so definitely do not reach for heaven.
 Do Not surrender your heart
 You can share, care and cry
 but absolutely do not surrender your heart.

Do Not Turn Your Heart Red
 Do Not Walk to Heaven
 Do Not Surrender
 Do Not Reach

Do NOT
 Do NOT
 Do.

--Karen Johnson

One Foot Out the Door

I am the product of public schools.
 I never had the joy
 Of describing the rap
 Of Sister's wooden ruler across my knuckles,
 Never wore plaid uniforms with gym shoes,
 Never got out of classes
 For saints' feast days
 Or for mass each morning.
 I didn't have twelve or thirteen siblings running around
 And no relatives who were priests
 (Although I did have some distant cousin
 Who was a nun, about 60 years old;
 My mother told me
 She used to ask the mother superior
 For beer each year on her birthday).
 I don't know what's considered a mortal sin
 And what's considered just a feel-really-guilty sin
 But I know a lot of people who are ready to tell me.
 I haven't had the benefits,
 Or the background,
 To be really any good at what I profess each Sunday
 But I have an idea about right and wrong;
 I know what hurts people
 Even without doctrine telling me so.

--Karen Sasveld