

Promotion Day

First day of first grade:
 Smaller than everyone else,
 Quieter.
 She knew no one;
 They had already established themselves
 And she was an intruder.
 She sat at her desk, a silent mouse,
 And did what she was told.

I wonder how their teacher told them;
 How she explained the extra desk,
 Moved in just the day before,
 Waiting for the girl to come
 From Mrs. Prato's room,
 The kindergarten room,
 Across the hallway.
 How did she spare
 All the delicate egos
 And six-year-old pride,
 Take in the extra one
 And smooth it all out
 To make it equal again?

Somewhere in that school building,
 Children were still drinking chocolate milk,
 And taking afternoon naps,
 And learning their ABCs.
 The girl walked across the hall alone
 And opened the books
 That she had learned to read.

--Karen Sasveld

The Dove

The dove finally free from the ark
 finds no place to rest.
 Through the day and night she flies
 high and strong against fatigue
 and the elements. She strains
 delicate wings
 beats a furious path
 and breath burns in her chest
 a pure white streak across
 a blue sky as smooth
 and immense
 as the water-world below.
 She is like a child's chalk dot
 centered on a blue construction sheet.
 If only the child
 would fold the sheet in half
 bending the dot's wings
 leaving chalk
 against the brown desk top
 and letting the dove rest.

--Jim Zeigler