



KINDER GARDEN

KATHLEEN FLOWERS

A breeze always blows through this grassy meadow
of five year olds, arms waving, fingers poking, flower
heads bending on slight stems. I sway above them,
tell stories, try to name the butterflies that flutter from

their small mouths, upper and lower case letters
winging across a white paper sky. It's my job
to drop breadcrumbs, a path they can follow through
the once dark forest of reading and writing. But, how swiftly

they shift and change—the least wind ruffles their leaves,
turns them into riots of flight, rackets of laughter, a surfeit
of squawking. To call this flock back, I scatter

the sounds of a poem's first syllables across the classroom air.
By the second line, their voices lift with mine, a lilting rhythm
flies out the door. Rising, we look down on school buildings
like rows of blocks we've stacked on the alphabet rug.

We soar from stanza to stanza, a warm draft stealing us up
and up. From this height, even the soccer field, with its lone ball,
shrinks—a green and white puzzle piece adrift on an asphalt sea.

Listen to the hum of our sing-song rhymes and riddles.
Watch nimble fingers mimic the climb and fall of itsy-bitsy spiders,
how chubby hands hug big, fat pumpkins, and oh, how we make
the raucous rain pour down in pails and buckets!

For the breath of a poem, we're all the world's flowers