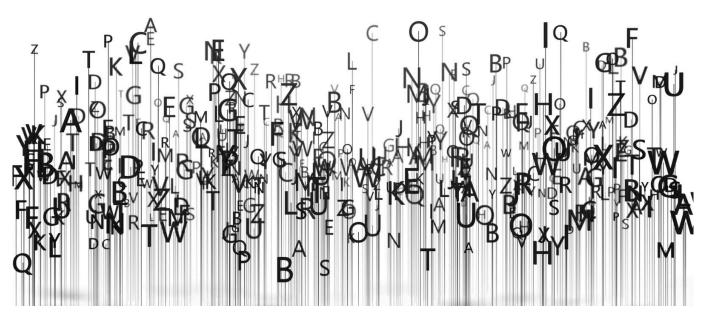
## **Poetry Corner**



## School

A school on recess is silent.

It is not empty.

The men who handle the fixing nod their sweet heads at the sight of you, ask with such earnestness if you need something, you could kiss them.

The women in the office have grown weary of the AC, or they are sweltering,

battling humidity that curls the papers, bringing order to what has been pure chaos.

Your presence feels like an intrusion, pure annoyance.

You can't help but agree.

Still, they will smile and sigh,

help.

The halls are buffed or not.

The gym is waxy with a sheen you can smell from the cafeteria,

ready for the adolescent sound and fury.

Somewhere,

there is a mess of boxes.

A wilting trophy case.

A stink still rising from

last year's lost and found.

A tangle of pests feasting

on forgotten Easter candy.

Somewhere,

a classroom is lit by daylight only.

Maybe an ancient desktop chugs along,

resuscitated.

There, a teacher surveys industrial dust,

stares into the middle distance—

a near-empty lot,

an overgrown courtyard,

an extravagantly astro-turfed field—

considers the enormity of it all.

Sighs.

Gets back to work.

Katie Cubano is an author and educator focused on supporting teacher leadership toward curriculum and instruction that effectively and equitably meet students' needs. After teaching English for over a decade, she became an instructional coach in 2019. In 2023, her first book, *Choose Your Own Master Class: Urgent Ideas to Invigorate Your Professional Learning*, was published. Reach Katie at <a href="mailto:katecubano@gmail.com">katecubano@gmail.com</a>.

## Truth and Love

There are a million things I should be doing right now That aren't writing a poem So I will write a poem I'm using an old note On my phone so I promise The title is not premeditated It's just something One of my students said During the usual Wednesday Afternoon meeting of the Malden High School Philosophy Club it was The start to her rejoinder "So back to the Truth And Love thing" we had Been discussing the Ouestion "What is love" And we could not agree If love was closer To Truth or Untruth Like when Proust's Jealous Lover thinks Albertine is cheating or When one student talks

About how her sister

Says she loves her

Abusive boyfriend

Even went back to him

She said how can we

Know what it's like

From the outside

(I hear this and think

About how no one would

Understand Lol Stein

If she explained herself)

And then someone else

Says sometimes even on

The inside you don't know

Like you could think

Everything's fine but

You're really hurting

The person you love or

You're calling something love

That isn't and now

We are talking about labels

Who can call what

What and two students

Gesture at my bi pride

Flag during their stories

About how they relate

To that label, what coming

Out was like for them

The munchkins are almost

Gone and we agree

We'll continue next week

Talking about labels
We haven't gotten
To the bottom of it yet
Like the laundry pile I
Should be putting away
Instead of writing this
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