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Forgot His Pencil

His hair was uncombed.
He didn't have much to say.
Forgot his pencil,
But he came to school today.

His shirt remained untucked.
His face was unclean.
But it was a wonder he made it at all
After last night's scene.

And his books,
He had forgotten again,
Third time this month,
Only remembering them when

His teacher scolded
For not turning in page 55,
But the telling only reminded him
Of how his mama cried,

Last night before Papa
Passed out on the floor,
And of how Mama collected things,
Rushed them all out the door,

Grabbing the half-emptied bottle,
But leaving Papa behind,
While his bewildered little sister
sobbed,
The thoughts filled his mind.

And all the time his teacher screamed,
"You're not in the first grade anymore!"
And he hoped Papa wasn't cold
Lying passed out on the floor.

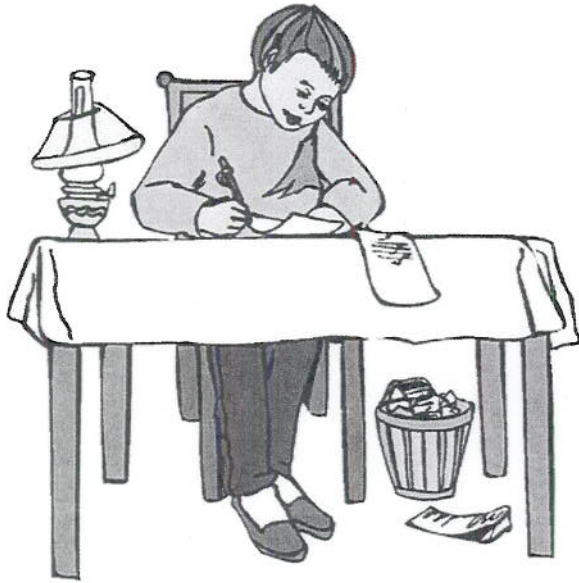
What they would do tonight
Mama didn't have to say.
He forgot his pencil,
But he came to school today.

Sigmund A. Boloz



An Average Child

Many classrooms were my home,
And dozens of teachers called my name.
While thousands of dittos passed my way,
Each year was much the same.



For I was an average child,
With nothing important to say.
Practicing, practicing, practicing,
Preparing for some mythical day.

A day when I would be ready,
After I learned some other skill.
A day which never came,
After many years of drill.

For I was an average child,
Reminded by each and every one,
Promised that I would write
When the endless lists were done.

But while the chairs got bigger,
And my shirt size too,
I was never quite ready to write,
The stories which I knew.

So during all those boring years,
A story was embedded in my head,
That I was just an average child,
No matter what I wrote or said.

Yes, many classrooms were my home,
And dozens of teachers called my name,
While I was practicing, practicing,
practicing,
For a day that never came.

Sigmund A. Boloz

Just Turned Five

So it's Tommy O'Grady who's coming to school,
How proud and how neat, how sweet and how cool.
Tommy O'Grady who just turned five,
Facing school smartly, his senses alive.
Well, Tommy O'Grady, just what do you know?
Forget it, poor Tommy, a school's not just so.
Behavior's important, content's not high,
Just listen, sit still, and you'll get by.
Speak when you're told, but smile a lot,
Don't be a fighter, at least don't get caught.
Raise your hand always and memorize what's right.
The teacher will love you; she'll think you're so bright.
A success you will be, no problem you know,
And someday, dear Tommy, to first grade you'll go.
So Tommy O'Grady, who just turned five,
Facing school smartly, I hope you survive.

Sigmund A. Boloz



Loved to Death

An irreverent burial
In a pile on the floor,
Almost hidden within a stack
Next to a can by a door,

And I would have missed it
If not for its spine,
That reached out to me
In a memory of mine.

So I pulled it out,
All tattered and torn
With dog-eared pages,
And a cover worn.

And I smiled in recognition,
At this old friend of mine,
A book I had been introduced to
When I was not yet nine.

"Mind if I take this?" I grinned.
"I promise to bury it right.
After I read it to my daughter
One more time tonight."

"Yeah, I guess so," she answered.
"Go right ahead.
These kids are murder on books,
And that one's dead."

"Murder? I don't think so."
I whispered under my breath.
"This book was not murdered;
It was loved to death."

Sigmund A. Boloz

