

SCHOOL-SONG

Eve Hughes

falling in & out of step are
bodies of neophytes, all lit up in gold
wholly indifferent to it all really but
so violent with wanting
the growing gets to us

streams of the all, the everything
is important & not to be missed
but we miss it all & watch it speed away
& run with it
not to reach it just to
feel the wind in our hair

all our cresting essences form a river
stretches through the grey
leaves the floors slick &
the walls bear our names

the flatness of it all, our voices
pulled lazily across the air
& at times rising with the heat
a reminder: we can hear everything you say



so many of us- such dreams of
letters or codes in some world where
we could just exist & credits
an ancient thing, for history & classics

but buildings scaled for the few now
trap the many inside, among themselves:
every iteration of longing humming inside
concrete & asbestos
the desperate loveliness of the walls-
we cling to them as we climb

there is nothing now except the steel-&-brick
boxes containing us & the blazing
boredom of our days spent
writing & staring out windows
into cloudless sky & the branches
framing it

& we all buzz outside, we toss you
around, you're in the whirl now &
we're on each other's team
how rowdy we can get when the bell tolls
it signals the death of an idea

& ideas are getting a bit boring for us now



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we pour into the tunnels of shadow
underneath the trees, dodging bicycles
& those falling back for their friends, each in a world
full with change, spilling over, bubbling through
our fingers after the bell, we never
really tell anyone though

our steps synchronise as if planned by some
man in a suit, & maybe there he is under the
pavement or drawing on the rubbish bin with a pink
paint marker: it's art!

some artwork this is- the gore & dropped mascara spatter,
spat-out gum painted over in ochre, rapidly draining
batteries & the "f... you" on the wall

it could just as easily have been "i love you" but
we hear that one enough
o wall of truth, tell us something we don't know

it's getting longer even though today is short: the screech
of chairs on vinyl & we crash together again,
elbows colliding, laughing on the staircase
reaching for someone, walking on the edge
of the grass



it all turns warm, glancing at them, &
they're in every classroom in our mind
& those arms, pushing the pull doors,
lips goodbying at the kerb, thighs
under skirt, we are doing maths right now stop that

but there's the world out there, & the hospital
we can see it from the ground & the
higher plane, we wonder what
they're doing out there, all of them
can't see from here

so many of them, & of us, screaming
about things we don't know, tapping
on shoulders & whispering things we're
sure about

maybe one day we can all go home, back to the room
with that scent that makes us curl inwards
like a dying flower, petals all
trying not to remember the soil

how we spread it on our tongues, left dry



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incredible thing, brisk down the pavement,
we could never be so swift but we all are
everything, & as we stare down after them there is
something that needs meeting

can't place it, can't say it around them but
who are they when they're not in utero?
palace in their dreams, staring into cloud

it hisses under the sun & we troop
into the shade, mouth on neck, is this
what's real? is this what they say we do?

& what of the pull from right behind us
steps to balance
steady from the space around
space all inside us & between

what if it's all some parody of forms that exist
outside the cave, what if on the contrary
we are something, or on the other hand
this is a test, as it were



we can't check anymore, can't grab for something,
there's only darkness & the inherent blind
scrabbling, what if we have it all?

see us between classes bouncing off boundaries
searching for a gap

salty crunch ringing in the still
keyclack & leanwhisper

new faces here, clay-sculpted,
never knowing what they hit

tremble all over again, hear the waves,
we hug the same plank

no rehearsal this time

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maybe all this clinging is just a phase as of
the moon, & we all live in the craters
pass these grey hours in company

maybe rambling's our only pressure-release,
expecting something to listen
doubting it still, turning,



turning fifteen in the day's first class
trying not to fall into someone else completely
but they look so nice today
running for the bus, wind flying, our hair in their
face, there is nothing as sweet as this

they are the entire landmass they stand on, the sky
they squint into, their fingers budding up through
the ground

but the blood keeps dripping, filling our bodies
& as all things must do it
finds a way out
colours the floor with shame
it's all natural

they keep telling us we'll find it, come on now— just
how tender are you? how
long will you wait for something just like this?

we'll all see it, the closed eye against the open—
feel the grind inside our chests,
waiting for the beautiful, tapping & tapping,
we keep on hitting something hard

please let the next blow be soft
you, let the next class be ready for a dream

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