

We sat not talking

We sat not talking me and you and listened
with two ears to the radio
and two to hear that bell.
And when it rang

I'd grab my bag and elbow shove the door
and nod goodbye and slam the door and sling
my bag and pigeon toed slouch down the lane
through double doors and up that corridor

Now writhing, rising full of legs and books
and lunch boxes, and down again to locker
room and sweat and dirt and dark and hockey
sticks and boots. I'd stay there if I could,

In the belly of the school, the wordless

Hubbub round me knocks. But something grew
from silence, we grew something in the car,
that in the listening became a nurtured
thing, emboldened by your quiet, your care,

That carried form and metre. Measure off
my steps on fingertips, turn it over,
watch and follow it, work with the grain,
and chisel it again, again, again.