

On the Bus

The stranger touched me
as though I were
a piece of sculpture
the bus a museum
the driver the guard.
The stranger was nine.

He chewed a strand
of black licorice
like a sailor,
touched my hip
as though he wanted
to dance.

He was alone
in the city
raining monkeys and stars.
He carried a bag of books.
Placed a book on my lap.
Piled them up.

Nabakov, Shakespeare,
Mad Magazine, Sylvia Plath.
Do you have children? he asked
tapping his finger against the glass –
a boy-man on a bus
at 8 a.m. heading to third grade.

The driver winked
at us,
opened the huge door
and he spilled out.
I felt my frame sweat,
longed for a cigarette.