

Note

1. I am grateful to Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson, from whom I learned about this novel.

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Reflections from a High School Poetry Slam: A Teacher to Her Student

"I have hated the words and I have loved them, and I hope I have made them right."

—Markus Zusak

Just this morning, you
read your desiccated prose,
while you cursed words and their
reluctance to speak for you.

I watched as you crammed
your argument into a thesis,
like a traveler stuffing clothes into a
suitcase much too small.

We sat at this very table,
placing periods and parentheses
while I listened to your litany of
"first," "second," and "in conclusion."

But tonight, the lights are dimmed,
and poetry rolls off your tongue. Lines
break, and images fly round the room like
ghosts of childhoods past.

Others smile at what you've
resurrected. They recall
their own romps
through playgrounds, parks, and puddles.

But I smile because
I hear you—
falling back in love
with words.

—Kati Macaluso

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Kati Macaluso, a recent graduate of Michigan State University's PhD program in Curriculum, Instruction, and Teacher Education, now serves on faculty with the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Educational Initiatives. In addition to preparing future high school teachers, she conducts research on what it means for high school students to read and write poetically.