

First Day

ALAN SOLDOSKY

Hand in hand, we go across the grounds
until under 8:30's hard brilliance
we stand-father, mother, younger
son-in a knot, talking with others
who've come like us out of the sheen
of summer. The children, spying
playmates on the playground, look past
the perishable faces of their parents.
The ball field has turned brown,
the spiky grass in clumps, the dirt
cracked. Nothing too old or new
here. We compose our kids
for the cameras as though what
they were they should remember.
As if they would change the moment
the door opened, beneath
a jet's rumbling roar, and
the teacher greeted them,
their fingers loosening in our hands,
and asked them to line up,
boys here, girls there, to enter
through that sun-filled room
lives they couldn't have imagined
we had not given them.

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