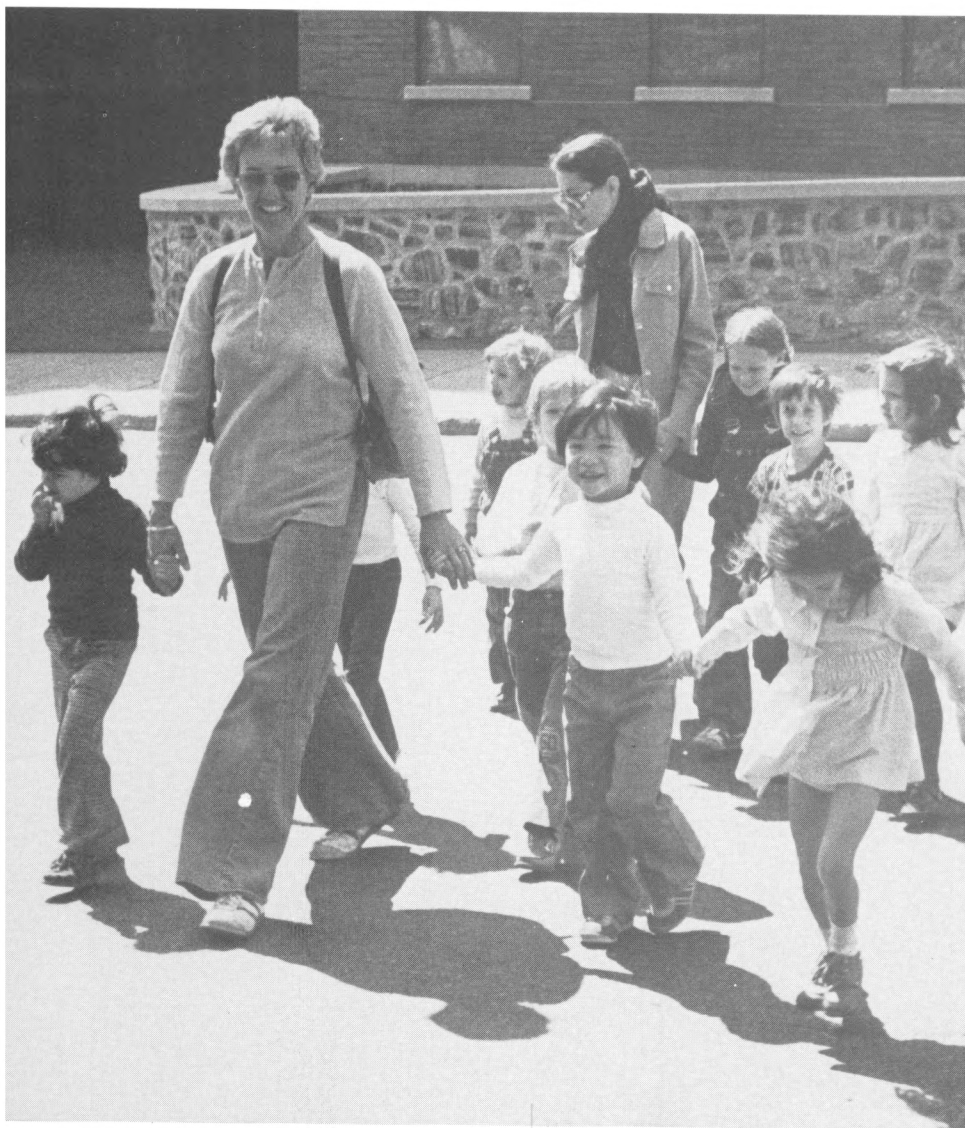


The Future is Children



photographs by Mary Landry | poems by Paddy Webb

growth

*This dream's the same.
I have had this dream before.
It is starting again.
A dark mulch of loam
crumbles and spatters the wood
with the hollow knock of rain:
I grow and I grow.*

*Down here all things are colorless
etiolate worms of another heaven
turn in their soft tunnelling.
Has it come to this, then?
after the fire and the ashes —
pimpernel sparks like flung
handfuls of gravel —
out of breath in a folding of limbs?*

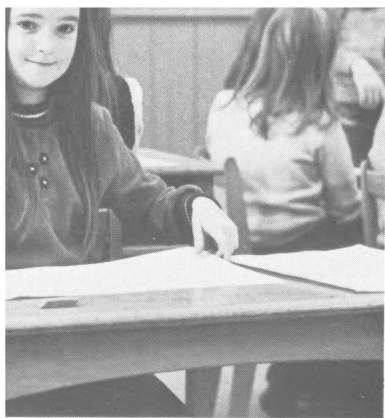
*Do the leaves speak, green
face and silver? Does water spill
from the sac in splashes of moon-glow?
and the moth shake off its dust?*

*Down here one cannot see.
I grow eyes. I grow eyes
that tadpole on stalks
sensitive to the world's twisting,
making chinks and cracks in the chalk
and stones. The black
earth cradles my bones.
Roots twine and embrace
in a tangle of sinews.*

*Down here one cannot sleep.
Little creatures scurry about
like goose-pimples, fresh
beads of acne erupt and the flesh dissolves.*

*What is this queer force in me
pushing and shoving upward?
Too weak to tear cobwebs
shall I hurl concrete?
In this dream of no waking
I grow and I grow — a swelling
cancer. Just my tips are enough
to sunder the earth.*







future in search of a shock or shock in search of a future?

*I know what I could hope for
(unfortunately once invented
some man-forged institutions
endure all changing storms —
we come to need our poisons:
police states whining shells
dug-outs stockades and prisons)*

*but imagine a child freed from school
with bare feet leaving prints on wet sands
of the receding tide's beneficence —
wading through small waves
in search of secrets and of history*

discovering discovering:

*wrack wrecks the tiny microscopic things
of life and bars of sleeping clay
enfolding multitudes of fossils: angels' wings
sharks' teeth and vertebrae
of long extinct sea-creatures*

*then — as the moon comes
up behind the rocks — the children
join in a return to dance
each singing pure and clear
a glad song of oneself*

*no more rude shocks of war
but statesmen learning as they watch
these children play*

*and if you say
this is a backward glance then
I reply at least it's out of doors
but if you like transfer it to the stars
and let our young in wild free spaces roam
encourage easiness to improvise
and move with change
preserve books questions
senses — cultivate a sixth —
mistrust all answers
worship no machines*

*thinking of this today I passed a school —
behind iron rails the pupils took recess
and they look well / all stood in line
at clang of bell and trouped within*





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