

# The failing student

by [Jeanne Murray Walker](#) in the [May 10, 2017](#) issue

Her tattoos, her way of pulling back her lips  
the way a stallion does when he won't take  
the bit.

In the corner, last row she sleeps,  
her nose ring, low cut shirt—

as I talk  
on about Wordsworth, trying to unlock  
the longing that is reading.

Oh, I can see!  
I'm not blind; I've lost one of the flock.  
Poetry she scorns and probably hates me.

Next week my baby's crying, locked in my car,  
where I've left the key. Seeing what's amiss,  
she stops and picks the lock with a coat hanger.  
I thank her and we stand together, wordless  
at some brink where kind meets better kindness,  
where I see I need a better blindness.