

# Jeannie C. Riley, Back To School

Wintertime comes early to the north part of this state  
I walk along the river where we used to come and skate  
The trees're now all gone and by the river there's a sign  
Trespassin' is a twenty dollar fine  
Lookin' up the road toward the schoolhouse on the hill  
That thing about an empty building causes me to chill  
My memory goes back to when the teacher rang the bell  
The day she sent you home for saying hell  
Walkin' past the building so important in my past  
The road is full of ol' discarded bottles and some trash  
I step behind the building as I shelter from the cold  
I see our names in letters big and bold

My fingers trace the letters of a work of art alone  
And I recall the day that you carved it in a stone  
Somehow I can see you now with books and coat in hand  
You always waved as down the hill you ran  
Cokes were just a nickel then and many were the times  
The two of us would sip them as if they were village wine  
And then on Graduation Day we bought the little ring  
And said that carats didn't mean a thing  
Now I retrace my footsteps to the cab that waits for me  
Looking back to see our names you carved upon a tree  
The driver says I look familiar asks me what's my name  
I say hurry I have to catch a plane