

One Week before Kindergarten

I see you from the window
As I do dishes
Again—
Sunshine soaking your hair
Mud soaking your dress
As you pet the cat and eat garden peas.
Crack
Peel
Chew
Pet
Again and again
For an hour or more.

You know your letters
And how to write your name.
You know what to do if someone tries
To take your lunch
Or pull you from a swing.
We've practiced all this,
But bells will soon ring
And lines will form.
You will try to find your place
And kids will laugh and cut
In front
Before the teacher sees.

So stay outside, love.
Soak up another hour
Of light
And garden
And mud.
Cross-contaminate your little hands
With peas and cat hair.
The sanitizer dispenser
Will be posted
By your classroom door
Next week.
So soon.
Too soon.

—Ali Benson Moulton

This poem was a finalist in the 2022 BYU Studies Poetry Contest.