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Poem

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JIM PERSOON

Poem

She showed me an essay once
she'd had to write on Cooper.
It was like her letters, enough
plot summary to put you in a stupor

but in a perfect hand, her elementary
schoolteacher's hand, strong and sure
and empty, and to her Ph.D. son
a mystery of how he'd come from her

who spent his days trying to reach
such people — what could he do
but feel again his puzzlement
and hers — she hadn't a clue

why he listened to the nuns
or cried over Walt Disney creatures.
He said nothing, she talked about
the neighbors, about other teachers.

He hadn't seen her writing for years
until that last Christmas card — in a dull
childlike scrawl, and in pencil,
uneven, shaky, weak, and full, so full.