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ADOLESCENCE IN AMERICA

I was walking home from school
My heavy book-bag weighing me down
Defeated by a weary war of rules, of questions, of answers,
Memorizing useless facts in my mind.
None of which I cared for,
None of which had meaning,
Yet I walked on.

Further and further from school I walked,
Further and further my feet carried me,
As the sun got hotter and beat against my back, in a rhythm I
could recognize.

The grass grew parched; grew dry like my mouth
The flowers all but withered from their roots
Yet I walked on,
I beat on like the sun.
Waiting for a cool breeze,
Waiting for my house to appear,
Waiting for the sun to go down,
But that rarely happens at two in the afternoon.

A ladybug landed on the strap of my bag that dug into my sweaty,
worn, shoulder.
I was about to speak to it about its children, about its home,
I was about to tell it about the fire,
I was about to lie for my own pleasure,
But I didn't.

What would it prove if I were to lie to an arthropod with no voice,
Why should I cause a beetle such pain?
So I walked home in the sun
With a bug, not weighing much, on my shoulder.