

Micki Blenkush

Changing Schools

I stood before blank faces
as the teacher spoke my name.
I squeaked the lid of an empty desk,
rattled pencils into place.

When it came my turn to read,
words tangled on the map of my tongue.
In gym I learned that planning to catch kickballs
from a field of fresh new friends
was like expecting to drill for water
before finding a land too parched,
runners too fast to tag.

I might have been a dowser,
though the word was buried deep
in dictionaries squeezed
along the bottom shelves,
leaving space above
for girls to move their Barbies
through imagined houses
after we drank our morning milk.

One girl dangled a spare Barbie before my eyes
and said I could borrow it for the day.
Then she turned to tell the others
where theirs should live among the shelves.

I held that doll before me
as I inched across the linoleum,
divining my position.

Micki Blenkush lives in St. Cloud, MN and works as a social worker. She was selected as a 2017-2018 fellow in poetry for the Loft Literary Center's Mentor Series program and was a 2015 recipient of an Emerging Artist Grant awarded by the Central MN Arts Board. Her writing has appeared in a number of journals, including: *Gyroscope Review*, *South 85 Review*, *Star 82 Review*, *Pittsburgh Review*, *Sequestrum*, and is forthcoming in *Midway Journal*, *Postcard Poems and Prose* and *Crab Creek Review*.