

i've seen gray

Mary Ellen Concannon

the moment before morning  
 and after night  
 the second before death  
 and after life  
 the fusion of black and white  
 the balance of wrong and wrong  
 living with knowledge of death  
 knowing ideals are never reached

### TOM

John Gregory

Sliding into his seat, Tom Miller felt he would have to reach as high as he could just in order to touch the desk-top. "Well," he thought, "no matter—I'll grow into it by Christmas; I did last year, and the year before." He was somewhat short for a fourth grader, because he was a year younger than any of his classmates; Tom's parents had had him skip the second grade. He did not do as well in the third grade as he had in the first, although both he and his parents knew that he had the ability to compete favorably with children a year older than he (his kindly first grade teacher had let it slip out that his I.Q. was 127). He had gotten only "C's" on his report card last year, and while no one could figure out what happened (his parents suspected that there was a personality clash between their son and the third grade teacher), Tom had decided that "this year was going to be different."

"Good morning, children. My name is Mrs. Gnurd, spelled with a 'G,' and I will be your homeroom teacher for this next year. We have only two hours today, so we will get right down to work in the business at hand: filling out the first-day forms that you see on your desk. Please remember to print your last name first, and do put down your student number in the blank at the bottom. After you finish this, you will raise your right hand, and I will give you this medical form. . . ."