

I doubt you would want me to do), they would say, 'Well, are our public schools designed for the brainy elite, or for the average student? They are for the child with a 100 I.Q., not a child with a 130 I.Q.!' So you see, I really cannot do anything like that to help Thomas. It is a shame that they closed down the gifted classes at Central. 'A lack of interest,' they called it at the downtown office; what they really meant was that they got 1,550 letters of complaint from parents of average children, who did not want their tax money to be used to 'help the brains.' So I am afraid that I cannot help you much in that respect. I might suggest that you apply to the principal's office for a permit to put him in the sixth grade next year. I am sure Thomas can handle it."

Tom slid into his seat and was amazed at how big the desk was. Would he never start out a school year with a desk that fit him? "I'll probably never grow into it," he thought. He looked around at all the new faces in the class; he had expected to see many old friends (the principal had rejected the Millers' request for permission to put Tom in the sixth grade—"his grades don't warrant it," she said). Although he had had two disappointing school years in a row, he was still somewhat confident of his success in this grade. "Maybe this year will be different," he said to himself.

"Good morning, children. My name is Mrs. Knurd, spelled with a 'K.," and I will be your homeroom teacher for this next year."

*February*

Martha Moldt

Cornfields stretched out to horizon's limit;  
 Stubbled, brown, melted-snow soft,  
 Furrowed, pooled, tree-framed,  
 Successive mirror-image farmhouses  
 Patiently sit out winter's bleak progression,  
 Waiting for summer's green.  
 How soft some of the trees look!  
 Their tentative leaf-fuzz  
 Against the hard bare lace of oak,  
 The virgin coldnesses of birch,  
 Is more alive than anything else around.  
 More, even, than the black and white pigs  
 Rooting in the mud.