

The Long Way Home
Brian Allan Skinner

For months, for most of fifth grade,
I followed Janet Kapche home,
blocks out of my way,
always a half-block behind.

I grew bolder, followed more closely:
ten, five, three houses away.
If she turned her head, ponytail swinging,
I'd tumble into bushes, duck into gangways.

I wanted her to see me, to catch me lurking;
heart pounding, I waited for the day.
When it arrived, I was struck dumb.
She turned, laughed, closed her front door.

I never walked that way again.