

7:17 AM

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*Immaculate Heart Academy*

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## 7:17 am:

*for an IHA student*

By Sue Kenney

I swipe my bar code to enter the building  
push past the double doors  
to see you slumped  
against your locker,  
Good morning, pajama girl.  
Sportsac backpack propped  
like a pillow against the hard sea  
of skinny metal boxes and blue tile wall.  
Your uniform kilt  
permanently pleated  
floats around you like a  
life preserver  
your flannel pajamaed legs,  
still warm and comfortable,  
crossed pretzel-like  
in front of you.  
Our eyes meet,  
we nod discreetly  
each unwilling to break the silence  
of this sacred hour.  
This is your time.  
The wide hallway,  
the smooth, cool floor  
smelling faintly of polish  
belongs to you  
until the double doors  
bang open again,  
spilling crashing waves  
of kilts and sweaters,  
iphones and computers,  
books and water bottles all over  
you breathe deep  
collect your calm  
and brace yourself  
for the onslaught of the day.

**Sue Kenney** teaches language arts at Immaculate Heart Academy in Bergen County, NJ. She earned her Doctorate of Letters degree from Drew University in 2015, and has adjuncted at William Paterson University. She volunteers as an immigrant's rights advocate for First Friends and visits undocumented people being held in detention by ICE. Her most recent publication is "Social Constructions of Otherness in the United States," which is in the anthology, *Critical Approaches to Literature*.

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