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No Imagination

Ann M. DeVenezia

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No Imagination

That day we read third grade tales
About horses, dogs, barns, and farms
Then the teacher said

Write a poem of your own

I tried and tried summer fun
Struggled with strawberries and swings
While Miss Smith coaxed

Just use your imagination

I raised my hand and asked her
Wanting to know its location
Angrily she replied

It's in your head

Then I dared again

What is it?

To my shame she shouted

You have no imagination

From that day I wondered if she was right
I still sweat and can feel
Ache in the throat bringing tears to my eyes
Big round drops, handkerchief balled in a knot

Scratchy sweater itching vaccination spot
Slippery stairs leading from the second floor
hand on the railing, head hanging down
Dusty shoes dragging to the playground

No, no games today
No, no poem today
No more words. . .

- Ann M. DeVenezia

Ann M. DeVenezia, D.Litt., is the author of three collections: *Grave Rubbings*, *Riding My Tricycle*, and *Telling Abuse*. Her poems appear in such journals as *Edison Literary Review*, *Italian Americana*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *Rattle*, among others, as well as the anthology *The Crafty Poet: A Portable Workshop*. A retired high school English teacher, she and her husband Richard, who have six children and nine grandchildren, reside in Mountain Lakes, NJ.