

JOHN MCAULEY

The Old School

We took recess in the schoolyard
where generations had,
scraping asphalt in oxfords and buckle shoes.
Only staff entered the King Road front door.
The sky faux grey-blue as if improperly fired,
all around, the trees female,
dropping seeds in season.

Students laboring over spelling tests
when teachers' words rolled down the aisles,
conforming shoulders, elbows
as knees squeezed shut.

The new school a block further west.
Girls there with names like Barbara
had short curly bangs
and boys with names like Barry
occasionally met the strap.

Its gym had high windows
and ropes hanging like anacondas.

We also knew to let an unleashed dog
come over on its own
as well as give a wide berth
to any stranger who'd try to sidle up to us
or we might not get home.

No wonder moms now wait
for their kids in cars spewing exhaust.