

DROP-OFF

1.

Cheerios and milk
in his mother's kitchen,
a backpack I've never seen before
and alien textbooks
spilled onto a chair.

2.

We pick up his carpool friend
and the friend's sister,
both surprised to see me,
re-introduced,
and we're under way.

3.

At school, they explain the rules
of the drop-off circle,
crammed with cars and darting kids.
Suddenly all three leap out
with quick goodbyes.
Queued to exit, a few parents
give me curious looks.

By nine I'm back on the road to Connecticut.

4.

It was the only time
I ever took him to school,
a mundane ritual
I've since made momentous in my mind—
the textbooks, the carpool kid's sister
keeping her backpack on
in the backseat of my car—

until thinking about it is as much a part of my days
as the actual taking would have been,
something I occasionally get sick of
and long not to perform.