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## Three Poems

By Krista Surprenant

### Seminole County, Florida

A girl tiptoes through a crowded room still, dark.

The blue, yellow and red neon of the \$65 per week motel sign  
filter through cracks  
of faded flowered curtains.  
Her jeans and Mickey Mouse t-shirt hang next to the bathtub  
in hopes that steam from the shower will freshen them.

She writes her name in the foggy mirror revealing fragments  
of her freckled face.

Her mother uses the dresser to make breakfast  
with day old bread and tossed aside tangerines  
from the Chinese restaurant across the street.  
The peels perfume the stuffy air.

Her father sits on the edge  
of the only bed,  
making a sign:  
*Family of Five to Feed.*  
His new job.

Her older brother lies wrapped  
in a quilt on the floor.  
He will look for work today  
instead of going to school.

The girl wonders if her family could be better  
without her.

She combs water through her mousy brown hair  
smoothing it.  
A yellow ribbon frames her face.  
She pauses at the mirror seeing pieces  
of her family in the reflection  
like glass figurines,  
small and fragile.

She slips on scuffed sneakers,  
walks through the damp parking lot at dawn  
joining the others  
in line  
waiting for the bus to school.

### Planting Paper Flowers

Riding home on the bus--

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she gazed at the wide verandas overflowing with blooms.

She sank into the leathery green seat  
waiting for her stop:  
a faded house, with a tattered screen door.

A quarter, two dimes and one penny,  
clinked from a faded, chipped piggy bank.  
Not enough for seeds, even from the Dollar Discount.

Spying brown grocery bags in the open pantry,  
she set to work.  
An old Crayola box held six broken crayons.  
The yellow crayon ground down,  
created the centers that held  
petals.  
Toothpicks, Popsicle sticks and pencils:  
the stems.

Cultivating her garden,  
purple iris, pink pansies, blue violets.  
The dull dirt was now vibrant.

A red clay pot cracked  
in a variety of sizes and shapes of shards:  
a fancy border to contain the beds.

She imagined-- sipping honey tea and eating fresh berries in her  
regal garden.  
Passersby honked their horns in appreciation.

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## **Sitting in the Classroom**

Defiance written on her face.  
This hard look was well rehearsed  
for a crowd. She sat  
in a chair that supported  
her with its embrace.  
Clips neatly held tight  
to raven flowing hair.  
She did not waver  
her voice.  
Years of  
parents arguing, a  
sick brother, and  
always wanting had left her  
tough to this world.  
An icy appearance was  
her guard.

In her lilac room  
her eyes wandered up  
beyond the posters, and through the curtains  
to the moving clouds where she  
loosened the clips,  
was still,  
while tears streaked  
her face.

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**Krista Surprenant** is a debut author. She received her BA in Psychology from Gettysburg College and is currently completing her MFA in Writing from Albertus Magnus College. She is a member of SCBWI. She has previously had articles published as a parenting/education columnist for her local online newspaper, *The Patch*. She is an eighth grade teacher of reading and writing in Norwalk, Connecticut. She currently resides in North Branford, Connecticut where she spends her spare time with her amazingly supportive husband and her two beautifully inspiring and energetic sons.

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