

## English Teacher Unbound

Dickinson. Frost. Eliot.  
Wonderful vetted poets--  
but sameness of names  
in every school.  
My students are alive--  
they need MEANING,  
not biography-worship.

Bless Keats and  
jolly Shakespeare  
for all they wrote--  
but now let's dare  
to anonymize these  
bards around whom  
schools have  
mummified their  
curricula by means  
of committee after  
workgroup  
kowtowing to  
conformist after  
department head  
after principal as  
the decades ditto on.

I'd rather pluck  
new writings out of  
most abundant  
everywhere,  
throw them all  
nameless into  
a vibrant pile,  
then pull them up  
one by three--  
READ them--  
BE them--  
poems and stories  
written by unknowns  
who may inspire  
and kindle fire.

I fully CARE,  
but I'm captive  
in this well-lit,  
firmly-administered,  
climate-controlled  
classtomb.

SOULS come here,  
parched souls.  
We're to feed them  
stacks of  
cardboard facts  
and poetic forms  
to memorize--  
vital to know,  
we con, because  
they'll be on  
the final exam.

Teachers, let us  
wake very much up!  
Dare we transcend  
the tried and dead?

Let's each write a sonnet  
on why we don't read  
sonnets--or an elegy  
for the deceased  
meanings of passion.

What would Shakespeare  
write about our schools?  
"Much Ado about Atrophy"?  
And Robert Frost?  
"The Railroad Not Taken"?

I am nobody  
to be writing like this,  
nor am I in your syllabus,  
but I can still breathe.