

Patricia Dobler Poetry Award, 2008 Winner

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Mud Season (2nd grade)

By: Jane McKinley

Mid April. Bloodroot's promise in the air.
We ride along with Dad to see the piglets
born the night before. The pick-up swerves, jiggles
to a halt. Dad's face goes gray, his dark hair's
damp with sweat. He stumbles out, collapsing
near the ditch. Run for help...leave Philip here.
I fly, my winged Keds barely grazing, smeared
with mud, reach a distant farmhouse, rapping
sharp as knuckles can, scared no one will come.
The tar-patched door creaks open, and a child
peeks out. It's Debbie Tuckey. She's the one
we laughed at last week, taunting her with combs.
Her mother holds my shoulder, while her wild-
haired, gentle father rushes to the phone.

About the author

Jane McKinley, a native of Iowa, is a professional oboist and artistic director of the Dryden Ensemble, a Baroque chamber music group. She received degrees in music from Northwestern University and Princeton University and studied Baroque oboe in Vienna with the late Jürg Schaeflein. Her life as a poet began in 2003, when, haunted by an image, she began writing again after a lapse of thirty years. She has participated in poetry workshops in Princeton and at the 92nd Street Y in New York. Her manuscript *Vanitas* recently won the Walt McDonald First-Book Prize and was published in 2011 by Texas Tech University Press. Her work has appeared in *The Georgia Review*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *2River View*, *U.S. 1 Worksheets*, *The Raintree Review*, *Grey Sparrow* and the Irish journal *Southword*.

Judge: Ann Townsend