The Next Apology
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Until I had
Her
Question-asker
Art-maker
Song-singer
Honey-blonde bed head
Diving back under the covers
For just five minutes more
To pretend

We didn’t need
To beat the bill
To move forward
By looking back

I want to atone
For number-crunching
Up
The children
Proficient
Not proficient

And reducing them
To a
Square
on
a table
a spreadsheet
a 1 or a 0
red, yellow, green
under the name of
their teacher
lined up next to the
other numbers

Because
The State
Told me that
Reducing them down
Would
Build them up
Help them grow

I wish I could
Break
All of the numbers
From their boxes

Let them dive
Back under
Their cocoon of blankets

Give them their stories
Give them their pictures
Give them our hearts

Give them five more minutes.