**Fifth Grade PE**

Katy Luxem

Today she tells me the rules

of tug-o-war, and how it takes

so many hands on the rope to win.

I listen and feel the hard pull

of years I don’t know yet.

First, it was girls versus boys

then small versus big. Almost every time

it was a draw and her hands now

are red and pleated like a school skirt.

In the end, she says,

you have to use your whole body,

dig in with thighs like a dandelion

in the very field you stand on.

And then it is merely who can

hold on the longest.