

Breakfast tears

by Deborah Oster Pannell

Morning claims me from sleep before I can say no
You wake up instantly from your alarm clock's ring
You are bright, enthusiastic, ready to cooperate
It will be a good day
You shower, dress and I prepare your breakfast
Eggs, soft, toast two ways, one with salmon cream cheese,
One with butter and jam
I am a good mother
You verge on distraction, diverted by your latest origami
I redirect you to pack your bag, put your sneakers on
I slip on jeans instead of the soft, polka dot pants
That everyone would recognize as pajamas
And we are out the door without so much as a harsh word
You are a good boy
I am mentally calculating things we will need for our
After school activities
You are here, now, and will not remember most things for later
Without reciting your list to me, several times
We are creating your brain, together
In the schoolyard, your friend Billy shows you a new origami
A scorpion made from forty pieces of paper
Impressive
And before I know it, you and your classmates have been
Swallowed by the school for another day of
Knowledge being pushed into you
Whether you like it or not
Back home I'm ready to start my own day now
A tiny bit bereft
For you are leaving me, one small step at a time
I feel the distance between us growing
The coating of egg on your bowl, and the crusts of your toast
Ringed with cream cheese, salmon, butter and jam

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Evidence, artifacts, signs of love, the wasted bits
Emptied into the trash
How much longer will you let me feed you like this?

