

Seasonal Poem

by Nonnie Augustine

I will write your mother's name
and your name on a list,
make a folder for your family,
put it with the other thirty-four.
We can go to fifty.
One morning in December,
your mother and maybe your father
will go to K-Mart and shop for your Christmas.
I'm glad I could do this for you, child.
This writing down names. This easy work.

I used to teach children much like you
to count pennies, sing funny songs, move like an elephant,
line up when you hear the bell, speak one at a time.
Together we had Mother Goose, Beatrix Potter,
the old tales from the old countries,
Maurice Sendak, Ezra Jack Keats, Eric Carle.
Piglet had a high voice and Eeyore had a low one.
I'm no longer the adult on the playground--
on guard against trouble, giver of time-outs,
hugs, thumbs-ups, stickers. (Could I even give hugs, today?)
I was always in awe. I was always exhausted.

Now, because I can, and want to, and should have done
something before but didn't because and because and because,
I've become a volunteer in a small office on Thomas Drive.
Everyone who helps out (we hook people up with donated money)
speaks in an inside voice, tries to follow the rules,
washes their hands and coffee mugs.
Seemed simple to me, at first, but it isn't.
So many people need this little bit that we have to give.
I don't make decisions. I keep records, fill in forms,

Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/nonnie-augustine/seasonal-poem>»*

Copyright © 2012 Nonnie Augustine. All rights reserved.

and I work on the Christmas list.

