

What Some Boys Do

by Robert Vaughan

I sat on the bus
same seat as yesterday
heat of a mid- June afternoon.
Earlier my teacher,
Mrs Starr, asked:
Why is the sky?
How is the ocean?
“What's in the bag?”
Joe Ferris presses.
His breath smells of
tuna fish. I squeeze the
soft bag tighter
between my legs.
Craig Neff peers
over their seat.
“Answer him, faggot.”

This is what some boys do.

I'm tight-lipped, breath held,
face flung.
I am flying through the sky now,
skimming over the ocean.
The brakes squeak as
the bus pulls over.
Mrs. Nolan, bus driver,
bellows “Turn around, Neff!”
My mother never warned
about the scarf I was
knitting for Grandma Meyer.
It was pink, her favorite color.
My mother never explained

this is something you do
at home. She never said
this is what only some boys do.
What she did say is
when your grandma sees
this scarf, you will make
her very proud.

