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Hide and Seek

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We sit silently on the bus
Sleep gathered in the corner of my eye
I slowly scribble answers on a worksheet against the vinyl seat
The soft hum of music slips out of your earbuds
As your fingers trace the title of your latest library discovery
Your homework is safely nestled away in a bright green folder
You always come prepared for class

Sharpened pencils peek out of the top pouch of your bag
A lunchbox laden with stickers anchors your notebooks in place
Hidden in the front pocket of your blue backpack
Thoughts and prayers are folded gently
Shielded in the hollow comfort of a faded hand-me-down

Inside your bag you marked your name with sharpie, dotted the i and crossed the t
A dog tag for the modern age
Lunchtime then lockdown, the countdown begins
It's time for hide and seek

5. Take shelter under an old desk, your last line of defense
4. A bowed head embraces your knees, fingers locked clasping the nape of your neck
3. The pounding of your heartbeat
2. The inhale of a shaky breath
- 1.

Ready or not here I come

Angie
Bismann

We sit waiting
For the push of a locked door
The crack of steel piercing through the air

A blanket of our friends' bloody bodies to carpet the floor
We sit waiting
For a familiar voice to say it's over through a muffled intercom
For the crisp ringing of the bell and our teacher's reprimands, *the bell doesn't dismiss you, I do* he repeats
For the next class to begin, for this day to end, for the cycle to continue
We sit waiting

I sit silently on the bus
Today no one said I'm sorry for your loss
I pull your stained backpack closer to my chest
You tried to come prepared

ANGIE BISSONNETTE

Hide and Seek

A handwritten signature in white ink, reading "Bissonnette", written in a cursive, flowing style.