

1989

**early saturday afternoon**

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**Recommended Citation**

Bagga, Manpreet K. (1989) "early saturday afternoon," *Calliope (1954-2001)*: Vol. 1989 , Article 9.  
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope/vol1989/iss1/9>

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## early saturday afternoon

gusty breezes  
through the kitchen screen door  
blow back my hair.  
it's dim outside,  
but, brooding, i don't rise  
to turn on the hanging lamp.

on the couch, mom groans  
like an old woman climbing stairs;  
i call to her quietly,  
she blinks and looks away.  
my little brother whimpers  
coming in from fall rain;  
i turn to say hello,  
he flings his muddy shoes,  
clumps of dirt fly into my face.  
Dad wanders into the shadowed kitchen  
to sneak a potato chip;  
dazed, he returns without the soda  
i asked for.

i gape at the umpteenth  
math problem in this looming hour,  
wondering if my zombie family  
would notice me  
dead  
at the formica table.

*Manpreet K. Bagga*