While Waiting for Bus 305-A in the Early Morning, Wearing a Rain Jacket and Pigtails Right After My Mother Reminds Me Not to Judge Books

Sally Johnson
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like the rock that's dark-bellied
after I've plucked it from the soil.
I remember that.
There were worms there that
fell away from the light,
found new ground to eat up, to make their meals.
The same worms that would stretch
their way to the surface after the rain,
smelling of those early school days waiting
for the bus.

I remember Scott Green,
third grade, eating a mealworm— our science
project. We failed because it died.
Scott Green grew up to be
not a serial killer or child pornographer
like you'd expect—
he dotted his Is when we
learned cursive, and that means
something in this worm eat worm, human
eat mealworm world.

I remember the rain getting heavy and the rocks
and worms nestling themselves
back inward. The rocks didn't mind
their heads getting a bit wet
while the rest of the worms crawled
under their stomachs so as to not
get cut to pieces while us children wondered which parts
were male, which parts were female and which,
of their thousand beating hearts,
were bleeding out into our washed away sidewalk chalk.

— Sally Johnson