

**BEATRICE K. BALKCUM RENAISSANCE LITERARY AWARD WINNER**

*Dear Anna*

*Grace Evans*

I had a dream last night  
We were on the swings again  
Eating ice cream in the dark  
Vanilla dripping from your lips  
Chocolate from mine  
It reminded me of you  
The conversations we would have  
On the balcony at 2 a.m.  
Looking out at the circus lights  
Flashing in the distance  
Wishing curfew didn't keep us home

I want to get lost in a bazaar again  
Haggle for cheap clothes at each vendor  
And climb the abandoned Ferris wheel  
Just to risk a glimpse  
Of the mountains outside the city  
Everyone knew we were foreigners  
Especially you with your poofy skirts  
And French accent that only appeared  
When you spoke Russian

Anyways, I hope all is well in Newport  
I'd love to see the white colonial mansion  
You always talked about  
There's so many things I still don't know about you  
I only knew you for seven weeks  
We never even got to say goodbye  
I want to see you again

Meet me on the bridge  
Where we left our lock?  
I'll bring the key.

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# People Watching

*Grace Evans*

As I step out onto the city street  
I can't help but look  
wanting to catch a glimpse  
of each person's life

An old woman walks a dachshund  
slightly pulling on the leash  
as a boy with eager hands  
walks up to pet it

A man locks eyes with a homeless woman  
her intense stare pleading for help  
but his gaze slips  
as he walks past

Curiosity is an unrelenting force  
always hungry for more knowledge

A woman stops to watch a TV  
outside a laundromat  
five grocery bags between two hands  
the news flashing clips of war

A child peers into a sewer  
dropping his lollipop stick  
through the rusty grate  
to hear how long it takes to hit the bottom

Even when things come to an end  
books  
movies  
friendships  
our lives  
we can't help but wonder  
what happens next