

# Breakfast tears

*by* Deborah Oster Pannell

Morning claims me from sleep before I can say no  
You wake up instantly from your alarm clock's ring  
You are bright, enthusiastic, ready to cooperate  
It will be a good day  
You shower, dress and I prepare your breakfast  
Eggs, soft, toast two ways, one with salmon cream cheese,  
One with butter and jam  
I am a good mother  
You verge on distraction, diverted by your latest origami  
I redirect you to pack your bag, put your sneakers on  
I slip on jeans instead of the soft, polka dot pants  
That everyone would recognize as pajamas  
And we are out the door without so much as a harsh word  
You are a good boy  
I am mentally calculating things we will need for our  
After school activities  
You are here, now, and will not remember most things for later  
Without reciting your list to me, several times  
We are creating your brain, together  
In the schoolyard, your friend Billy shows you a new origami  
A scorpion made from forty pieces of paper  
Impressive  
And before I know it, you and your classmates have been  
Swallowed by the school for another day of  
Knowledge being pushed into you  
Whether you like it or not  
Back home I'm ready to start my own day now  
A tiny bit bereft  
For you are leaving me, one small step at a time  
I feel the distance between us growing  
The coating of egg on your bowl, and the crusts of your toast  
Ringed with cream cheese, salmon, butter and jam

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Evidence, artifacts, signs of love, the wasted bits  
Emptied into the trash  
How much longer will you let me feed you like this?

