

Book Chauffeur Visit

The branch library book mobile kicked up
yard driveway dust and gravel under
its gray wheels. Mid-morning, June
sun matched our lifted spirit. Tumbling
out of the clapboard house like school-dismissed
children, we slammed the blackened screen

door, raced across gray-painted porch, cement
walkway, through mowed grass. The book chauffeur
smiled us into the rusty-red and cream bus. I stood
tall—a walking doll—inside this dollhouse shelved
with library stacks, volumes, their closed-paper smell

strong. We finger-tip-touched books, held
our heads sideways reading spines by sun-rayed light.
My sister found *Green Poodles*—the green book
she would read five times. I found my blue books,
Jefferson and Adams biographies, learned
how their minds stood at enmity almost a lifetime

until age slowed their hot blood with parchment and quill.
When Adams knew he was dying—he whispered,
“Thomas Jefferson still survives.”

They died hours apart resting in the knowledge
that the other lived. Some book lessons are never teacher
taught. What stories, what truths summer readers take
with them—moving memories—from moving libraries.

—Susan Hodgins

This poem was written for Mayor Bill Lambert’s ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Moscow Public Library honoring the glass tile pollinators’ mural of Spokane artist Melissa Cole and Moscow locals on Friday, June 15, 2018. This event was part of Artwalk, 2018.