

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## Vera

By Mary Ann Larkin

It's today, a Friday.  
I am going to my college internship.  
I have chosen the intake room  
at the Juvenile Court in Pittsburgh,  
I don't know why.  
It's the room where the children arrive  
whom nobody wants.

The workers welcome me  
over the screams of the new children  
being deloused.  
The cleansed children sit quietly.  
I join them. We talk.

The women put out food,  
but Vera will not eat.  
I don't know why.  
Can you make Vera eat,  
the workers ask me?

I take a spoon and try to feed Vera,  
but she turns her nine-year-old head  
away from me  
although I want her to eat.  
I really want her to eat.  
I don't know why.

I pick Vera up  
and take her to a window seat,  
put her on my lap  
and offer her a spoonful of food.  
Then a door opens in me  
takes me someplace  
I have never been.

I dip my finger into Vera's food.  
She sucks the food from my finger  
again and again.  
I dip my finger into her food  
until, leaning against my shoulder now,  
she sleeps.