

# For Owen

## by Stephen King

Walking to school you ask me  
what other schools have grades.  
I get as far as Fruit Street and your eyes go away.  
As we walk under these yellow trees  
you have your army lunch box under one arm and your  
short legs, dressed in combat fatigues,  
make your shadow into a scissors  
that cuts nothing on the sidewalk.  
You tell me suddenly that all the students there are fruits.  
Everyone picks on the blueberries because they are so small.  
The bananas, you say, are patrol boys.  
In your eyes I see homerooms of oranges,  
assemblies of apples.  
All, you say, have arms and legs  
and the watermelons are often tardy.  
They waddle, and they are fat.  
"Like me," you say.

\* \* \*

I could tell you things but better not.  
That watermelon children cannot tie their own shoes;  
the plums do it for them.  
Or how I steal your face --  
steal it, steal it, and wear it for my own.  
It wears out fast on my face.  
It's the stretching that does it.  
I could tell you that dying's an art  
and I am learning fast.  
In that school I think you have already  
picked up your own pencil  
and begun to write your name.  
Between now and then I suppose we could  
someday play you truant and drive over to Fruit Street  
and I could park in a rain of these October leaves  
and we could watch a banana escort the last tardy  
watermelon  
through those tall doors.