

If I become like you, I will write about a roughed grouse

by [Brian Doyle](#) in the [July 24, 2013](#) issue

If I become like you I will write about a roughed grouse,  
Says the boy, five years old, with a face like a chipmunk  
Storing up winter browse. We are at his school, where he  
And the other small mammals have written things for me  
On bright scraps of paper. He hands me his paper and I'll  
Carry it in my wallet the rest of my life. Mister Brian, the  
Sun is raining all around, another child says to me. It is up  
And down sun, she says. I want to be a cookie when I'm  
Your age, says another child. Once we were all monkeys  
In skirts made from the skins of trees, says a boy with an  
Icicle tattoo. It's temporary, he says, explaining it to me.  
I laugh and he laughs and every kid there starts laughing.  
I think I am going to fly up gently into the air over a tree  
From joy, as saints used to float when gripped by ecstasy.  
That happened to Saint Joseph Cupertino, you remember,  
Seventy times, it is said, and now I know why: no gravity.