

The philosopher and the poet talk on the last warm day in fall

by [Julie L. Moore](#) in the [October 14, 2015](#) issue

My neighbor scrapes old paint  
from the fence around his pasture,  
an annual chore he attends to,  
for he knows the white he applies  
revives each slat.

I think of his recent essay,  
*peeling back the layers*, as he said,  
of online education, revealing a barren base  
devoid of the body's subtle  
gestures—

how a screen cannot replicate  
confusion written on a brow,  
engagement flashing in the eyes,  
or a hand touching a shoulder.  
How a cursor cannot translate  
the voice's inflections, nuanced  
as the nod of his head, greeting me,  
while he lays

down his tool to rub my dog's ears,  
while he motions toward the remaining wood,  
tells how he'll finish the job before winter.