

Kindergarten

LISA ZIMMERMAN

It's hard to know
how much they love their children,
these mothers and fathers
reaching across a five-year-old lap
to unlatch the car door
or holding that mittened hand
block after block to the brick school
with its slide and gravel, the teacher with her
inscrutable smile.

Because at the same moment somewhere
a child is being beaten by a parent who was beaten
by a parent who was locked in a basement,
or worse.

It's hard to tell when you watch a woman
bend down to kiss her small child
what hurts most, in which family, on whose body.