

## *A Map for Students*

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They want to make their poems right themselves,  
and they know they should, but to win the A  
they need me to like their work (so goes the rumor).

So they ask the question that has floated lonely as a  
shroud among poets at least since Sophocles competed:  
Where should this poem go? Maybe this year

I'll say it: "Here's the map you need. Start in a place  
you don't really know, that scares you, but turn  
hard west after line one. Follow that stanza straight

south, passing several scenes you've never seen.  
If possible, try to avoid the moon. Watch out  
for stray cats. You'll soon cross the B Street Bridge,

a fine and rickety structure that makes even the river  
seem small, and will lead you, quivering, headlong  
into the turn. Leave the right lane. Always go left.

Meander country roads until you run out of stone  
and you have to hike through a meadow so green  
it makes your chest swell. Let it fade to grays.

From there, give me your final shot. If your heart  
breaks, you're close. If mine breaks, you found it."