

To the Boy in Ms. Maguinness's Class

I didn't notice you when you arrived.
I didn't notice your braces or freckled face and green eyes.
I didn't notice you crying before school with your dad
because your parents were getting divorced.
I mean, yes, when you happened to come by,
I was aware of your presence—you weren't invisible.
But I never cared to see you.

Ms. Maguinness made everyone get into two circles—
a makeshift solar system orbiting an invisible sun—
one circle would rotate clockwise like Venus
and tell the person they landed on a compliment.
For seventh graders this was hard.
You were three stars away, but I didn't notice.
I told Leo he had a sweet smile; he said I was nice.
Vincent said I was smart; I said I admired his confidence.
Then your spaceship landed in front of me,
and I honestly wasn't expecting much—
we had only talked a few times—
but you looked at the ground
and said it was cute when I blushed.

People shouldn't be able to land on the moon
and declare it property of the USA— shouldn't
have the power to declare what isn't theirs as worthy or not.
But that night when I closed my eyes,
those words etched into an eternal
part of my galaxy.
How could someone I didn't notice
see my biggest insecurity then compliment me for it?
How awful my cheeks splatter like Jupiter's red spot when I blush,
then show me it wasn't space junk
floating into the oblivion, but a shooting star—
I guess it's all about perspective.

I'll never forget that moment.
But you know what?
I forgot what I said back to you!
Because nothing I could've said
could've possibly impacted you like you had me.
I'm sorry.
I wish I could've told you something wonderful and important
like you did to me.

So the next time you stare into the sky
and can tell the differences
in the each star's brightness, color, and size
shout into the night: "You're beautiful!"
Because maybe they'll look back at you and blush.