

SPECIAL
Ed

Voices from a Hidden Classroom

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ROLL CALL

tina's news	15
no tongue in cheek	16
silent partner	17
paulie's bouncing bible	18
tamisha's alphabet	19
one-boy band	20
kitchen magic	21
school of music and art	22
pea-brain	23
heroes and saints	24
paulie and sadie play catch	25
charity work	26
the way it is	27
innocent with guilty hands	28
day-dreaming behind the projects	29
reruns	30
chocolate's not enough	31
felony bouncing	32
gravity lesson	33
accomplice	34
outside the hock shop	35
pious uncle philly	36
recipes for reading	37
one pea at a time	38
no spilled milk	39
midnight shopping	40
no summer camp	41
tall tale	42
breakfast fixings	43
paint-chips for the queen	44
tracy goes fishing	45
slamming the door on christmas	46
slippery slope	47

winter fires 48
strange tears 49
winter fires 2: last parachute at coney island 50
marksman of sorts 51
the dreamers 52
gloria's dream box 53
winter fires 3: where there's flies there's fire 54
phonics 55
flying machines 56
masking for touch 57
when tina's full moon howls 58
diamonds of anger 59
when touch breaks a branch 60
present tense 61
shopping for ghosts 62
outside agitator is missing 63
killer soup 64
official business 65
freddy-boy 66
bruce lee gets lost 67
small miracle 68
when marilyn stays home 69
closet man 70
three birds with one stone 71
tyrone's eyes 72
checkers with rats 73
scorpio rising 74
what bobo knows 75
where the music begins 76
carlos 77
stage presence 78
the great escape 79

PAULIE'S BOUNCING BIBLE

He carried his basketball wherever he went.
Sometimes he bounced it fiercely
and took aim at hoops
that only he could see.
Sometimes he twirled it
on one finger
like a bulbous ballerina.
But mostly Paulie
held the ball
between his palms,
against his chest,
the way a preacher holds a bible
to make god's point.
Just like his mother's little Christ,
it strengthened his grip on things,
extended his palms around a world
he was barely able to hold onto.

GLORIA'S DREAM BOX

I keep my dreams
in a dream box under the bed.

My sister Carmen says
it's just an empty box.

Carmen never sees what I see.

Her eyes are dark
like a night without stars.

WHEN TOUCH BREAKS A BRANCH

Touch is high voltage for Tanya.
Today she shook and sweat
right where she stood
when Pablo put his arm around her.
She twitched and tilted her head
until her ear was touching her shoulder blade.
Her neck was so bent out of shape
it looked like a broken branch.