

UNDERSTORY

It's not that sometimes I forget.

I'm told that everybody does.

What troubles me is how

whatever I've forgotten troubles

in importance the more I keep

forgetting it.

Some word...

Some place...

Today a student from the Class

of Way Back When

seemed certain I'd remember him

by name.

I tried and tried

before I had to ask...

Though students

and ex-students are my life,

I must admit that I remember

most of the best, all

of the worst, many who have left

this world and not that many

of the rest.

It leaves me wondering...

Is memory a beast that sheds

its baggage as it goes?

Are facts by definition destined

for oblivion?

Or is it absolute

that what I can't forget no matter

how I try is all that's worth

remembering?

I know a mother
of four sons who mixes up
their names.

Ollie is Bennett.
Bennett is Drew.

Drew
is Christopher.

Facing one,
she'll travel down the list before
she'll ask, "Tell me your name,
dear boy."

Outsiders realize
they're all one boy to her,
regardless of their names.

She knows
them by their souls.

That reassures me.

For JoAnn Bevilacqua-Weiss