

# Trouble with math in a one-room country school essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ Trouble with Math in a One-Room Country School” is broken into 25 lines and divided into three stanzas; it can be considered not just a free verse poem but also an anecdote. In the context of the title, which obviously states trouble with math, the meaning of the first line is clear: the poem’s speaker is a student left behind while all the rest have begun working on a test or quiz of some sort for division. The student resorts to asking for help from her neighbor. In the 3rd to 7th lines we know by implication that this “ neighbor” is farm girl whose family is likely quite religious.

She rings not only “ raw milk” to school but also the “ raw’ image of Christ baring his heart and wounds. This creates visual image for the reader. In stanza 2 Miss Morgan plays not just an ordinary teacher, but a superior being with not just a desk, but a monumental desk, which is considerably an exaggeration. Miss Morgan, believing the student could be cheating on this test/quiz springs from her desk and takes the child back into the furnace closet. The writer states that only boys, specifically the older ones, are put into the furnace closet which gives us an impression that the student is most likely a girl.

The irony when the girl is put into the gloom furnace room, is that she does not fully fear being in there, but is soothed. She adjusts to her surroundings and makes herself as comfortable as she can, “ found a bucket, turned it upside down, and sat, hugging my knees” (embedded quotation) is also another example of a visual image. She sits and hums a song she learned from her piano lesson as time goes by. This poem in general recalls a humiliating moment in school when academic trouble leads to punishment,

not help. In her case, it also leads to an inner change, a heart newly “  
hardened against authority. “(Embedded quotation).