

Notes in the Margin

(After finding handwritten marginal notes beside William Stafford's poem, "People Who Went by in Winter.")

Only eight weeks
since my last parent
returned to the earth.

In this book,
barely held together
by a peeling spine

penciled words
jostle each other,
claim the margin:

*Ancestors—
when can our blunders,
yours and ours—kiss?*

Who can claim these words?

The girl half my age,
the teacher, or the poet?

No matter.

These are the words
that arrive today.

THEARSA McCOURT