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## Story Problem

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

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## Story Problem

From the deep well of his striped bib overalls  
Father would pull his pocket knife

and score the candy bars—  
always two, always something

with nuts and stretchy caramel  
and covered in thin skins of chocolate.

He'd divide each sweet sentence  
into six carefully equal phrases.

Much later, with five loves of my own,  
I recall his diligent portioning,

his steadying the knife-holding hand  
with the palm of his other,

and leveling his eyes  
before making the final divisions.

He'd disregard what he knew  
of the hour's bone-picked child,

disallowing any inclinations to oversize  
the portion meant for her

or to undercut the portion  
for the chronically grumbling one.

For the fortunate one, he was always  
more than fair.

—Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

*This poem won honorable mention  
in the 2007 BYU Studies poetry contest.*