



Extract from The Poet X

by Elizabeth Acevedo

Ms. Galiano

Is not what I expected.

Everyone talks about her
like she's super strict
and always assigning
the toughest homework.

So I expected someone older,
a buttoned-up, floppy-haired,
suit-wearing teacher,
with glasses sliding down her nose.

Ms. Galiano is young, has on bright colors,
and wears her hair naturally curly.
She's also little—like, for real petite—
but carries herself big, know what I mean?
Like she's used to shouldering her way
through any assumptions made about her.

Today, I have her first-period English,
and after an hour and fifteen minutes of icebreakers,
where we learn one another's names
(Ms. Galiano pronounces mine right on the first try),
she gives us our first assignment:
“Write about the most impactful day of your life.”

And although it's the first week of school,
and teachers always fake the funk the first week,
I have a feeling Ms. Galiano
actually wants to know my answer