

Like Bookends by Eve Merriam

Like bookends
my father at one side
my mother at the other

propping me up
but unable to read
what I feel.

Were they born with clothes on?
Born with rules on?

When we sit at the dinner table
We smooth our napkins into polite
folds.

How was your day dear

Fine

And how was yours dear

Fine

And how was school

The same

Only once in a while
when we're not trying so hard
when we're not trying at all
our napkins suddenly whirl away
and we float up to the ceiling
Where we sing and dance until it
hurts from laughing

and then we float down
with our napkin parachutes
and once again spoon our soup
and pass the bread please.

Analysis:

In stanzas 1-2, underline the figurative language and label it. What does it mean?

Who is the speaker?
What is the speaker's conflict?

Infer: What does stanza 3 tell the reader about the parents?

In stanza 4, what do you *see*?

What do you *hear*?

Infer: What is the author's purpose?

Underline the *hyperbole* in stanza 5. Is this really happening? What is the point?

Underline the *metaphor* in stanza 6. What is the author saying?

