

The window through which to whisper

by [Brian Doyle](#) in the [March 5, 2014](#) issue

Talked to six high school students this morning,
Two young men and four young women, for 20
Minutes each. Ostensibly the discussion was all
About college admission essays, but one thing I
Have learned in life is to be quiet and listen and
Out will pour real honest naked hard holy grace,
And there it was, child after lanky child. So very
Many masks worn as armor. So many polite bits
Of college admissions essays that skated over the
Stories they were so desperate to tell they would
Even tell *me*—given the chance, the shy window
Through which to whisper. When we were done
I stood up rattled and blessed. Such terrible gifts
And such generosity in the giving. I remembered
Confession, in the old days, when the old shutter
Made of oak or pine would shiver open suddenly
And a voice, often so calm and gentle, would say
Say what you most want to say, and have not said.