Gold stars are normally awarded for good behavior, but not always. This week’s poem by Rachel Flynn of Gorham explains.

Gold Stars

by Rachel Contreni Flynn

It was forbidden to touch
the Hummels in my aunt’s pretty house,
arranged just so and shut
in the glass cabinet, pigeon-toed,
rosy-faced, holding kittens or balloons,
their porcelain bellies bulging
under pinafores and overalls…

and it was wrong to kiss
the high-school janitor after track practice
against the concrete wall
in the band room vestibule
where a fake velvet blanket draped
the old upright piano,
and a long row of trombones tilted
in their shiny black cases…

but these
were the gold stars I gave myself
when I thought no one was watching
and nothing would get broken,
and I was brilliant: easing
the little brass latches
and reaching in.