In October of 2026, a retired teacher, Mrs. C. Marin, wrote to the Desert Museum. She had tried to find the author of a poem that she taught her students for many years. She had a copy with only “author unknown” as an attribution. She typed in the first lines of this poem in an internet search, and the poem by Emily Decker, “Fall in the Sonoran Desert,” popped up. This teacher retired before Emily was born, so we knew it was impossible for her to have written this poem. It turns out Emily copied the poem, “Fall,” by Karla Kuskin (below) and only changed a few words. This is not what we ask for when we request that students submit original works. Please be inspired by other poets, but please do not copy someone’s work and call it your own.

Fall

by Karla Kuskin

When I go walking in the Fall

I stop to watch the deer

They open up their lovely eyes

They blink

And disappear

The rabbits hop from here

To There

And in

And out

And under

While deep within the forest’s heart

The black bears roar like thunder

The chipmunks gather butternuts

And hide them in a tree

Where clever squirrels discover them

And laugh with squirrelfish glee

My hat is green, my jacket, blue

With patches on the sleeve

And as I walk, I crunch

Through piles of red and yellow leaves