

SCHOOL DAYS, 1977

Louis Adame

The afternoons they'd chase me from the school yard,  
I'd sneak out of Mrs. Busbee's class five minutes early.  
But once the combination lock on my bike got stuck.  
The steel ridges wouldn't budge  
No matter how hard I thought 636.  
And just as the lock unclicked,  
The school bell rang . . .

When I tell my mother this story,  
I always change it just a bit,  
Lessen the severity by explaining that they really didn't mean  
To hurt me, they were just bored kids  
At the end of another school year.

But to myself I swore that if I ever saw that boy Wayne again,  
The one who held me down as the others  
Ran their dirty bikes across my chest

Yelling *Sissy*,  
I'd lift my shirt up to the chin,  
Point to the mark they left,  
And say — not meanly, but plainly —  
*Look someone will remember you for the rest of his life.*