

CHAD ABUSHANAB

Boys

The fall of '93. Red leaves  
pile on the ground  
and tremble beneath the schoolyard eaves.  
Once struck, you just stay down,

swallow the blood and hide the tears.  
The boy who picked the fight  
will carry on this way for years.  
He packs a solid right

left bloodied by your broken lips,  
and lifts his arms to play  
the victor, satisfy the script.  
But before he walks away,

back home to where his dad swills gin,  
curses game-show hosts,  
the government, and Mexicans,  
you see in him the ghost

of fear. Today he is a man.  
His dad will sure be proud.  
The rest, stunned silent when this all began,  
are cheering, wild and loud.