

A School Photograph

Mark Ward

Thankfully, not alphabetically, those
strictures difficult to break,
those enforced relationships either
side of me; Maddern and Moss —
the original greeting got lost,
stuck in our throats and now
we don't speak, not even a nod,
this may seem unfriendly but it's not
the intention.

Anyway, that didn't happen.
Re-arranged by the put-upon
photographer losing the run of
thirty boys into height-based
aesthetics — there's nothing more involved
to it — we were closer than
a Stewart, M. and Martin, T.
should be but still separated
by boys without the capacity
for such a connection or sense
of time together and its commemoration. Clipped
from The Free Press, I have a picture of you
half in-frame from the parade
looking out of shot to me
hidden in my wallet. Today's setup is the
only covert way for boys to pose
together without raising suspicion.
A muttered mission, a game devised
to switch places whilst the photographer's
eyes are elsewhere elates those bored of
full uniform in sticky sun.
By the time he's ready to shoot, we're

centre-stage. I pocket-money pay for an
extra print that I persuade my mother to frame;
my civic pride thrilling her purse open.
It hangs across the room, in line with the bed so
it's the first thing I see each morning, a cover
for the other copy where I cut around us
and remove the window-dressing.

Mark Ward is a writer and musician from Dublin, Ireland. His poetry featured in *Assaracus*, *Glitterwolf*, and *Emerge*, and is forthcoming in *Out of Sequence: The Sonnets Remixed*. "A School Photograph" comes from *Circumference*, the first book of his *American G.I.* series. Visit astintinyourspotlight.wordpress.com.