

Bullied in the Bible Belt

by Linda Simoni-Wastila

Every Monday
you brought your Sunday
finest to the bus stop:
harsh words, hard fists
inflicted on the infidel
who kept Jesus
in her hope
chest—along
with a copy
of Anne Frank
and the sugar-
sweet stopper
from a Drambuie
bottle—and who
prayed at night
between bed sheets
to whoever listened.

A good Christian boy,
you went to church
but spent your Mama's
tithing coins on gum
and candy, later
cigarettes and beer,
spent your envy
on those not forced
to make the commute
to a cross-covered
space, spent your
fear on those
who believed
in a different fashion.

