

to be on his side as he fought a losing battle with the vicious stream that laughed its way down his pant legs.

After lunch and regulated nap, Mrs. Pufry would suddenly lurch up out of her chair and stumble toward the supply cabinets, like some hideous, reanimated corpse, and hurl herself around the room throwing out instructions, crayons, construction paper, and panic, forcing an art deadline on all of us. The class experienced its first creative block, staring at the paper, a pile of broken crayons, the clock that rushed around in a circle none of us could decipher, and Mrs. Pufry, now looming over us, pacing the aisles, staring down at the feeble slashes and stick men with disgust, cuffing a few heads yelling, “hurry up, fill that page, nobody asked for Picasso.”

When the final bell finally rang at three o'clock and our parents lined up outside for their wards, each shaky child clutched a lopsided monkey, tortured landscapes, family portraits with a member or two missing, heads without bodies, bodies without heads, in what could have been a fair rendition of the birth, or at the very least, the first mass movement toward minimalism. School turned out to be a daily workshop in human dynamics.