

# Lester

Little Lester's tell-tale beanie  
has red and white stripes.  
Up and down  
back and forth  
it bobbles  
as he races his faded push-car  
along the sidewalk.

He whizzes past half-finished chalk creatures  
abandoned in favor of soccer games  
and you-can't-catch-me's.

He laughs like Christmas.

Little Lester  
smiles  
with teeth carved from decay like crescent-moons  
and lights up the world.

His hand hovers over the lunch tray  
with a surgeon's precision,  
dodging *pan* and *lentejas* and anything green.

He plunges into the tuna mountain,  
pinches like a claw-machine,  
and plops it on his tongue with a grin.

Little Lester  
roars fiercely,  
not a fan of mornings.  
Sister tugs his bare legs into the chilly air,  
gets him all the way out to his firetruck *chonies*  
before he wriggles back under the covers.

He fights valiantly to continue his reign  
in the fortress of blankets and sleep.

Neither stern tones nor sweet cajoling  
hasten his surrender.  
He is declared the victor  
in the Five-More-Minutes war.

Little Lester  
learns  
letters and time and “can I go to the bathroom please?”

He high-fives his keepers  
walks proudly in line  
and never asks when he’s leaving.

Little Lester  
receives  
the gift of childhood  
unabashedly,  
the gamble of his journey  
a win.

Risky roulette  
played by hopeless parents  
paid with loans and memories that could-have-been  
all for the chance at a dream.

Little Lester’s  
a lucky one.  
May he live life joyfully  
never seeing  
the hand he traded-in.