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# THE FIRST DAY

When I was five I was put on a bus
and sent to Catholic school
not unlike my mother who was five
when she was put on a train
and sent to residential school,
both feeling that gut feeling
that this was not going to be
a place we would like.
My parents told
my older sister
to watch over me
but she had long ago
grown to not like me,
let alone protect me.
As we waited to go in
that first morning
a group of boys decided
they did not like my brown skin
The biggest of them came at me
but I was prepared
as I had already been beaten up
when I was four, again
because of the colour of my skin.
So the big kid and I scrapped
and soon the sisters were on us.
We were sent down the hall
as all the other kids
and their glorious uniforms
went down into the classrooms
to begin their first day.
The big kid and I were told
to stand against a brick wall
and the main Sister Superior
of all the sisters told us
if we wished to punch,
then punch the wall.
So we did.
As my five-year-old fists

smashed against the wall
and soon blood formed on
my knuckles and the Superior
smiled and praised the Lord.
She told us that was enough
and I kept swinging
as the big boy cried
and said he was sorry. But I wasn’t.
The sister again told me to stop
and I threw one more punch
at the wall for her and one more
for Christ who the whole time
stared down from his cross.
And that was the first day
of my time with the Lord.