

LOUIS BOURGEOIS

## Slides of a Life in Blue Air

1

Here, the boy Lucius plays  
with armadillo bones  
beside a dry ditch.

2

Here he is along Highway 36,  
up toward Abita Springs,  
flying a kite on a field  
charred by snipe hunters.  
All day, he flew the kite alone,  
at the edge of the field,  
wishing he were someone else  
in another time.

3

Was he fishing  
in this scum-filled pond,  
or was he  
merely imagining?

4

What about here? The night he heard  
John Lennon had been shot dead?  
For a month he couldn't speak,  
and a priest performed an exorcism.  
The parents, as always, were oblivious  
to his spirit.

5

Here's that time he rode his bike  
From LaCombe to Talisheek,  
to fight a bully,  
a distance of some twenty miles,  
then collapsed when the first punch was thrown.

6

Here it's 1982, and all the fields  
are dead from summer.  
He's walking and thinking  
about the Great White North,  
about Canada  
and all the ducks  
he shoots in winter.

That same summer,  
in a different landscape,  
he's jumping from skiff to skiff  
at his grandmother's place  
on Bayou Sauvage.  
He's looking for crabs  
under the floorboards of the skiffs,  
and for dark fish in the wells.

7

Here he is at fifteen in Slidell, Louisiana  
dying of pneumonia  
in his father's house,  
as a fever kills day by day,  
leaving only the charred fields  
and empty lagoons.