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# The Competition

Raymond Federman

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## THE COMPETITION

Seven years old. You are in school. During *récréation*. An all boy school—*une école de garçons*. Yes, a French school. You were born in France. It's not your fault. You had no voice in this decision.

During *récréation* the older boys—eleven and twelve years old—go to the far end of the yard near the big wall to play. You go with them even though they always make fun of you because you are rickety and clumsy. That too is not your fault. The older boys let you play with them because they like to laugh at you.

In the far corner of the yard near the big wall where the *Pion* [*l'instituteur* in charge of watching the boys during *récréation*] cannot see the boys, the tallest boy draws a line on the wall above his head with a piece of white chalk, then he draws another line on the ground about *six mètres* from the wall. Then the boys, half a dozen of them, beside you, start the competition to see who can pee the highest above the line on the wall. You never win. Only once did you succeed in peeing above the white line, but that's because you stood close to the wall, about one meter away, and also because you held back all the *pipi* you had in you since the night before in anticipation of the competition. You were excited to have managed for the first time to pee above the line, to pee into the sky, even if you did not win the competition that day. The other boys said you cheated because you crossed the line on the ground. Only those who pee on the wall from the line on the ground are qualified. Those who cross the line are disqualified. That day you were disqualified as a high altitude *pisseur*. This you will never forget.