

Painting By Numbers

James McMurtry

The gates of the schoolyard
are padlocked and chained
to keep all the children in out of the rain
the art teacher's preaching
the virtues of pastel shades
you pay no attention but it won't hurt your grades

'cause you're painting by numbers
connecting the dots
they don't have to tell you
you don't call the shots

you jump when they say jump
and you don't ask how high
'cause painting by numbers they know you'll get by
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you take a position
in the old man's firm
he signs all the papers
you agree to the terms
they ley you run errands
and you don't get days off
you take off the garbage and hope it pays off

'cause you're painting by numbers
connecting the dots
you work from neck down

you might be in grad school
up ut M.I.T.
you might be down in the canal zone
being all that you can be
you might get to thinking you're ahead of the game
but when you break it all down
it all comes out the same

'cause you're painting by numbers
connecting the dots
you work from neck down