

# TWO WORDS AFTER THE LAST SCHOOL SHOOTING

TED BROUSSARD

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Two words were all he said  
To confirm his name.  
“Yes ma’am.”

Head hung so low  
I couldn’t see the truth of his eyes.

Words were polite  
but gave away nothing.

Teenagers walk single file, arms on the shoulders of the one in  
front just like they were trained, but this time, shell-shocked.

Students and teachers, cowering in closets, cringe and wince with  
each nearby shot, unable to muffle their tears.

Parents wear powerlessness on their faces, wracked  
with the horror that they could not protect their child.

More cliché, thoughts and prayers.

More indignation and disgust.

More dancing around timing, politics, and excuses.

I have two words.  
They are not  
“Yes ma’am.”