

## Morning Offering

Dear Lord, I do not know what will  
happen to me today as I put on my  
clothes: hooded sweatshirt, baggy  
grey sweatpants, armor meant for  
the sharpened tongues too white to see  
the dirt beneath their shoes and fingernails.  
They tell me "all play and no work makes Jack  
a *dull* boy," yet no matter how hard I scrub  
or speak with their foreign tongues,  
my body is no cleaner than the  
streets of Ferguson. My clothes are  
the mark of a shadow held together  
by the threads of "Nigger," and the  
smoke that curls around bloodshot eyes  
and flaming engines.

I only know that nothing will happen  
that was not foreseen by You  
So how can You not see the color in  
my sister's eyes when she sees her brothers  
leaving, with hidden knives and Vengeance in  
their hands?  
they drag the weight of

heavy sin across their tired backs,  
directed to an uphill battle they are not meant to win.

my only question then is how we came to this,  
grasping after Greater Good by spilling  
blood of Bartimus,  
blind from all our melanin that  
screams after an eternity of white  
noise: White Noise adorned with  
the same pain that still whispers,  
colorless, in Your holy ears.

meanwhile, on Earth we scurry along  
streets—blossoming with homemade  
molotovs—more accepting of the different  
tastes of Skittles than we are of other men.  
The only colors we see are the ones whirring  
out of barrels and  
the ones that peak over horizons  
to greet impeccable streets baptized  
in shields and shrieks.  
We've been pushed beyond the brink  
of Unfathomable and beyond the  
predictability of "plans"  
and have been forced to

submit to “them bad policemen”—  
with all of us falling to  
those Ghosts of the Wild  
that skim lightly over our hearts.  
It is not for my love of You  
that I take the Proper hand,  
and lay it down to rest. It’s  
for the Impeccable Mosaic of  
heartache and loss that yields  
a scene of Mary without her  
child.

Amen.

## Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace

Full of the blessings

That Pastor Lamb\* preaches on

Early Sunday mornings—when

mama's pen runs dry in check

books. As Mama's tongue runs

ragged to the angry beggar at the

door who wants more money, I hear Lamb

whisper to her from the TV :

Our Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women,

And blessed is the fruit of your womb,

but his words bounce off the grimy walls

As hollow as the beer cans

that Papa leaves on the tele.

Papa thinks he's Jesus.

Each evening, he lies, bottle

in hand, body anointed

with Devil's Spit that Mama

smothers with her favorite

white linen—hoping she'll hide

His stains that run deeper than in his clothes.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,

pray for us sinners,

When Pastor Lamb and Papa

Begin to bleed together,

and the Devil doesn't see the difference

between white linen and the 7.5 million

that Lamb hid Sweet Sin in when

kicked out of Eden. Now and at

the hour of our eventual death please tell me

how Mama, lesser than Lamb, pays more

than he ever did.

Amen.

Lauryn Eldridge

Princeton Senior High School

Will read on April 20<sup>th</sup>

Accompanying Photographs:





Title: Rouge and Rosaries

Princeton Senior High School

Photography

304-922-9224