

I Must Be

McKenna

10th Grade, North East School of the Arts

I don't act on my hate,
But you act on yours.
And because I'm white,
I can't be poor?
I must be privileged,
Spoiled
Coiled
Protected.

My biggest issue just has to be,
Not being allowed to drive Daddy's new truck.
I must drink and smoke because I get bored,
Yet not for the secrets I hoard.
And when I fight with my parents,
It must be because
I didn't get that new phone I adore.
It can't be because we barely have enough
To do our daily chores,
But because I'm white,
I can't be poor.

My Twin

Jenna

4th Grade, Rhodes Elementary School

His hair is brown
His eyes are brown
His smile is just like mine
My brother, Ace Allen
My brother, my Twin
Until we meet again
I am a Twin

A twinless Twin
A surviving Twin

My heart aches
For what might have been



Arbat Transit Camp for Syrian Refugees, Iraqi Kurdistan

Select Poems

Holding Clinic in Sabana Real

Chris Yan

The road to Sabana Real is cut from rock
and soil by secondhand motorcycles and many feet
of women carrying clay-colored vegetables.
We take in the mountain and its people like manna from God,
raw sustenance formed in secret before sun or water.
The caravan stops twenty miles in,
a crowd of men and women, children and chickens gather around
a cinder block hut.
A man with swollen hands comes
from a far off sugarcane field for vitamins.
A woman finds she is pregnant with her fourth child.
We have bags of lollipops for the children, but no shade for the
elderly.
A frail man coughs weakly as we put on masks, fearing the worst.
Someone's toe is infected. Someone's knee is crooked.
Someone's baby is starving. Someone is waiting,
someone is watching, someone is saying "The American doctors
are here with free pills."
And the boys' feet are caked in mud and their guts are filled with
worms. But they laugh too,
and play, and terrorize the windows
with little furious hands and fingers—boys
who have appetites for lollipops but not soap.
And the girls squeal in delight under the squeeze of a blood pres-
sure cuff,
run out with butterfly stickers on their eyelids.
Perhaps the world is not such a mystery.
Or is it? In the airport, I look for postcards for my mother and
father.
The plastic rack has pictures of palm trees and phrases like "Car-
ibbean Paradise." No pictures
of the Haitian woman to whom I gave
a sack of granola bars, the girl in her arms,
or the one clutching her hemline.
Nor the tree canopy from the side of the mountain road to Sabana
Real,
the children chasing down our swaying truck of students and sup-
plies.
I seal up these images in a place
that's not home. And then, on the back, what would I write?
Maybe something bittersweet, like "Having a great time, wish
you were here."

Dancing Polcas in the Afternoon

Susana Nevarez-Marquez

An accordion riff blasts off like an electronic cicada.
With a *grito*, her partner pulls her to the dance floor.
A soft hand warms her back. Eyes smile close by,
breath shared like a soda for two, hands clasped like I do.
He pushes her to unfurl on an axis of hands.
His arms bring her back as though she never left.
And there's nowhere she'd rather be than
dancing *polcas* in the afternoon.