

The Ideal Dream

Annie Chovanes

my community is Carlisle.
Hanover, Louthier, and Pomfret street.
overpriced guitar strings at JW Music, and underpriced sushi at Mt. Fuji.
we walk to Georgie Lou's to buy the bubble gum cigarettes
we blow on the way to the library.
we spend the afternoon between shelves reading comic books and taking
polaroids.

my community is culture.
cocoa butter and edge control.
silky soft durags and basketball shoes.
Korean church hymns, and the smell of pho.
mothers shouting, "¡Ya! Mientras tú vivas en esta casa..."
children screaming at each other in foreign tongues.
the hijabs draping over my friends' hair.
people coming together despite their differences,
the beauty of diversity.

and yet...

my community is confused.
a town filled with character, love, and happiness,
a town filled with discrimination, impurity, and injustice.
smoke burns the back of teenager's throats,
gang signs decorate instagram photos,
slurs graffiti our ears in the hallways.
my community gets called a ghetto, hood, a place you want to leave.
so I imagine a better one.
a place where minorities can let out the breath they are holding.
where women and men are exactly the same,
where you and I are brothers and sisters.
where human is human.

and yet...

venom pours out of others' mouths,
encases me in amber,
tells me to shut up.
to take a seat.
little girl, dreams are just dreams!
oh, rejection tastes so sweet.

because they don't know I have already gathered an army.
ignorance breeds from lack of education,
so I will start my attack at the school system.
teach children to love each other,
that we are all connected,
good energy flows within us,
no one is inferior.
so that maybe,
one day,
dreams will come true.