

## "For the Love of the Game"

I have love for the game.  
Sweat and dirt running down my face  
Trying to get mine every day  
So mom and dad don't have to worry about a thing.  
I stay up late every night praying my dreams come true.  
What do I have to do?  
To be honest, I have no clue,  
But I have an Idea though.  
I have to wake up every day and do what other people won't.  
I have to sleep when everyone else is partying.  
I have to train when everyone else is sleeping.  
Everyone thinks i'm not good enough,  
But they can keep sleeping.  
It motivates me; that's why I go extra hard in everything I do.  
My mom tells me I need a break,  
But I say "nah, I feel great!"  
She asks me why I do this every day  
And I say I do it for the love of the game.

## Shoot Your Shot

Whether for three or for two  
Shooting a shot is the best option for you  
In life we must take risks to succeed  
Shooting shots is a trademark of those who lead

It may swish like water and win  
Or rattle out like a rock in a can of tin  
In moments large and small  
Shooting shots is a method for all

In final seconds games have been won  
But only when the risks exceed a ton

The man gets up before the stars come down  
With forty strangers, forty brothers-in-arms  
They fight for this piece of hallowed ground  
Protecting us all from any kind of harm

The crimson sun ignites the dawn  
As shots ring out and men fall to the ground  
The world will remember, when the smoke is gone  
The men who got up before the stars came down

When I think of poetry I think of the things that have unsettled me  
I think of the tears, dark, and the hurt  
I neglect the pride, healing, and the work  
I forget the things that have strengthened me  
It comes to mind my parent's separation  
Not a clean break more of survival obligation  
I know now to leave even though I'm in love  
Because love blinds you from the truth that you were afraid of  
It's not about the days when only my anxiety can get me out of bed  
But the days when I wake up that I realize it was all inside of my head  
I won't write about that pill in the morning that keeps me afloat  
But the steps it took to realize I was drowning and to admit I needed help  
I won't let my pen leave marks like the scars on my body  
I'll write words of rejoice like the day I beat that blade  
This won't be a poem about the boy who used me for something I wasn't ready to give  
But a spoken word for now being stronger than him and the mistake I admit I made  
It won't be about the girl who spent years masking herself as my best friend  
But the year it took reviving myself from the words she buried me under  
This isn't about the grown man who grabbed me by the waist to whisper in my ear  
Or tears and the panic I feel for his words that after all this time I can still hear  
I won't whisper the thoughts of how I wish I weren't what I am  
Or who I wish I could be or was or will be, or could have been or never was  
But I will shout the words of what it took to become as strong as I am  
I'm done writing to pick up my broken pieces, to heal the parts that hurt  
I'm speaking loud enough so that I can hear every ounce of pride in every single word

"Why?"

When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

Do you see the hero you can be?

Why do you only notice the bad things?

Do you see the beautiful person you are?

Why do you only notice the flaws?

When you walk down the street, what do you see?

Do you see the smiling people all around?

Why do you only see the frowns?

Do you see the little kids running around?

Why do you only see the kid crying?

When you sit in bed, what do you think?

Do you think about your day?

Why do you only think of the people who did you wrong?

Do you think about your closest friends?

Why do you only think of the kids who bullied you?

Your brain turns to sorrow before joy.

Your eyes see the flaws before the perfections.

Your body turns to shaming before exalting.

Why do we do this?

Why don't we notice the happiness?

Why don't we see our perfections?

Why don't we remember the good times?

Why?

"Her Blue"

There is chaos.

Lots and lots of chaos.

It's a storm where dry lightning crackles across the sky; it's a spinning, uncontrollable twister.

There's a girl in the middle of it all, such a hazed mind. Well, you jerked her around, Mister,

And you were the beating thunder of this storm, Miss.

The anxiety in her heart nags and pulls her apart,

Pieces of her begin to shed.

They saw blue.

They saw the blue in her eyes, the cloudy haze of cobalt in her mind,

The echo of blue tears against her cheeks.

They saw her feelings as blue, and her body as just another body.

They saw blue, like me. I saw her sadness.

There are unsteady heartbeats.

Can you hear them?

Her heart beats a little louder when we're around:

*Beatbeat, beatbeat.*

These beats pump out volcanic vows

And landslide lies

About who she is,

Who she promises to be.

Pieces of her still shed.

I saw her.

I promise. I can't lie anymore.

The truth, utter and real,

Is not a lie. It's a regret.

I saw her, just like you.

We knew she was a china-glass doll dragged through dirt,

Her elegant round cheeks were red like petals,

Her hair a synthetic canvas of dyes and bleaches,

But because they dragged her through the dirt,

There are scattered glass pieces on her skin

And broken moons in her eyes.

I saw her, just like you.

I should've been braver.

Seven billion people on earth,

one thousand, three hundred forty-nine classmates,

thirty-five family members,

one cousin,

I should've said something.

The

Last

Piece

Of

Her

Sheds.

I could've caught that last piece.

You could've, too,

because we all saw her blue.

## Don't Allow Hate

There is hate all around  
So thick we can feel it  
Harmful activities  
Hateful attitudes  
The streets are calling for help.

BOOM, POP, SPLAT is all you hear  
Sirens are blaring  
Loud and close  
Families are crying  
Hearts are hurting.

The yellow tape is bright like the sun  
Blue and red lights blink and wink  
Runaways run rapidly.

Handcuffs clipped  
Tight and heavy  
Blood all around  
At every single step  
People are asking...  
Why?



From Up North

I am from scalding candle wax,

From Apple and Boar's Head.

I am from houses walled by snowdrifts, frigid, tranquil, and stained by smoke.

I am from willows and oolong, Melancholy but serene.

I'm from bonfires and gazing blue eyes,

From Roger and Rennae.

I from callused hands and bare feet.

From "Don't play with fire" and "The tides are constantly changing."

I'm from the enigma of life, lacking belief or skepticism.

I'm from snow dammed Kenosha, and frozen grasslands and lakes alike.

From fish fry and French toast,

From the climbing journeys at Devil's lake, the descendant of the US Airborne.

Closets wrapping countless trinkets in dusted old clothes, tucking them away from time to preserve memories.