

Opening Day at LCA

My thoughts peddle me faster

Than my feet on this bike...

Too small for my long legs.

It's my little brother's

But I need it to get to work.

I relax my body

And make myself small

So I can fit.

I'm early.

I glide down Woodward

Letting the wind push me

Push me towards a crowd

Of brown hands holding signs.

On the shore of the sepia sea

A white girl with fiery red hair

Holds a sign, END VOTER SUPPRESSION.

My dad's cracked watch on my wrist

Says I got 20 minutes.

"What's going on?" I ask a skinny dark-skinned sister.

*Mis-a-proppy—something something tax dollars,*

*Got me hollering at an arena.*

I was prepared for this.

"That's all?"

*Kid Rock carries the flag of oppression,*

*With him falls Detroit.*

Red closes her mouth,

Staring straight at me.

Oh...

“That’s where I work...I got to be there in 20.”

Red looks like she’s weeping inside. I am too.

She looks at Skinny for something to say or do.

*At least they’re hiring Detroiters?* Red said.

*Hm.*

*Some Detroiters...?*

*Hm.*

I lift my head high for the first time in a long time

And read the signs.

KID ROCK SERVES JIM CROW!

BLACK LIVES MATTER

KID ROCK DOESN’T CARE ABOUT YOU ONLY YOUR MONEY

A pastor stands on the platform

Of a former white mayor

And addresses the crowd.

I’m too mesmerized to hear him—

it reminds me of the family legends

of MLK in Detroit.

“WHOSE CITY??” Pastor shouts in a loudspeaker.

OUR CITY

rocked me, knocked me back on my bike.

I can ride for hours and never get tired

But right now, I can’t breathe.

White people walk by, laughing at protesters,

One is wearing a Kid Rock shirt

With a Confederate flag flying in the background.

I pass another and another wearing the same shirt, looking like grinning clown clones.

I remember the hard week of training,

Body aching from standing and bending and cooking and cleaning and learning how to say

“May I help you?”

Fuck that *may*.

Learning how to smile when I’m dying.

Fuck that clown grin.

But never learning how to serve

Hundreds of men wearing a shirt

With the Confederate flag on it.

My hands become shaky.

OUR CITY I hear.

Pause.

OUR CITY

My hand slips off the handbar

And I fall as hard as Jesus,

Somewhere between my job and my people.

I lay on the curb,

Staring up at the white sky with patches of blue.

I don’t want to get up.

I’m so tired.

I see the pastor from earlier,

Surrounded by a shield of black and power.

“Father, give us the patience,

give us the courage to continue to stand.”

I hear the his words in my head,

Somehow I missed them the first time.

I stand up and mount my bike.

For the next two hours,

I ride around the marchers.

-MLS, 2017