

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