

Fist

When I sat on the green bench beside the little black girl
 whose name was *Vendetta*, I asked her what her name
 meant to her. She was the daughter of a momma from
 Alabama, she said, but was being raised by her *gramma*,
 who was over there at the carnival stand in Hart Plaza,
 buying French fries and hot pretzels. The festival blazed on.
 Speed boats cut waves in half. Sail boats mended them.
 The buildings of downtown glowed like marble statues.
 I was in charge of the world, which someone had told me
 was just a set of wheels on a broken axle. My real job
 was to look out for the girl whose name was Vendetta.
 Her white shoes dangled. She munched cotton candy.
 She stroked her arm and brushed all the world off of it.
 Some of the world landed on my shoe. Some on her ankle.
 Some of the world which will be forever ruined landed
 down alongside the green bench for the ants to eat it.
 Gramma looked over at us and smiled. Worried but polite.
 Some of the world that survives landed on the girl's lap.
 She heaved it up and took big bites out of it, said *yum...*
 I looked over at it. Wanted some for me. And she gave me
 a tug full of the cotton candy. Told me to be careful of it.
 That cotton candy fools you 'cause it's soft and it's sticky.
 You end up getting hungry for it, and you eat it too fast.
 Said her mother named her Vendetta 'cause of her father,
 who was a factory rat on the West Side. Didn't know her.
 Her brother, whose name was foreboding shadow, pushed
 his way into the line and tugged on gramma. Forced his way
 against the chain of people and he ran headstrong into it.
 We saw him go tumbling down, like pieces of litter bug.
 A bag of French fries spilling all over the dirty pavement.
 The world that is forever ruined inched a bit closer to us...
 The girl shook her head and said some people never learn.
 My name which means white fool trying to learn about it,
 blended with her name which was Vendetta Against Dad,
 and she whispered to me that her name meant *fist holding*.
 And she hoisted up the cotton candy. Into the light.