

Violence didn't come into my life like a stranger.

It came like family news,

whispers in the kitchen,

phone calls too late at night,

It sat at our table.

It rode in our cars.

It followed us home.

It was with us wherever we went

Too many "be carefuls." and " be safe. "

Too many lit candles.

Too many pictures on T-shirts instead of on walls.

I grew up checking my surroundings before I learned peace and quiet.

They say childhood is supposed to feel light,

but a lot of kids feel heavy

heavy like looking over your shoulder,

heavy like memorizing which streets not to walk,

heavy like knowing someone you love might not make it back tomorrow.

Some kids grow up with bedtime stories.

Some of us grow up with survival stories.

But lucky me i had what some dont have

Nice homes,

Loving parents,

Because when love is missing at home,

kids go searching

not for trouble,
but for belonging.
A gang can look like family
when you've never been hugged enough.
A block can feel like protection
when no one else protects you.
They don't join violence
because they're evil.
They join because they're empty ,
looking for something to fill that void
But if there's a helping hand...
Showing them what will happen once they get in
And what can happen if they are out
Maybe I can help.
One " hey you okay ? " can make a gigantic difference,
Letting them know someone cares
But everyone is always so self centered
always worried about themselves
Theres more to life than just you !
If we all just look to the right and check on one person...
Show we care .
That one thing could improve our communities
And then there's the map of this country
drawn in tiny invisible lines.
One side is quiet.
green grass.

Happy families.

Safe homes

Dogs named Sam .

The other side sirens.

Liquor stores.

Boarded windows.

Candles on the sidewalk.

Shoes on the powerlines.

How come we have more liquor stores than most suburban neighborhoods ?

Some made it out

Others didn't

Same city.

Different worlds.

Like the past never really left,

Still segregated

Still separated

Still scraping to get by

Still neglected

But segregation is " over "

It was never over...

We're still doubted

Looked down on

And it makes you wonder

why we inherit fear

like it's a last name.

But they get safety and security.

But i will not accept this

I WILL beat the odds

I WILL be way more than what " they " expect

And there's no doubt about that .