

My Hero

By, Arianna Shaprow

The military uniform he wears  
The memories of death he shares  
Yet, after the war  
It seems as if no one cares

He tried to be a hero  
But when he returned home  
minds were too narrow  
Their lies devoured his heart  
and tore his family apart

All he felt was pain  
That his life was in vain

The military stole his youth  
That's the unbearable truth  
Words of patriotism spoken  
While promises were broken

Life took its toll on his youth  
Stripped away his confidence and truth  
Now he suffers from unbearable pain  
and wonders...  
was his life, in fact  
in vain?

The South

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When my grandma  
Was seven years old  
She picked watermelons  
Right from the ground  
The heavier ones  
Were the sweetest

The sweet juice  
Spilled out  
She slurped it up  
As she devoured  
The red flesh  
Of the fruit

Barefoot  
My grandma walked across  
The rich, fertile soil  
She observed the clouds  
Like enormous waves  
magnificent  
Just hanging there  
Suspended in the air  
Hugging the horizon

Birthplace of the blues

Music telling a tragic story  
Of oppression  
Melancholy  
And love  
B.B. King  
“King of the Blues”  
Born to sharecroppers

Home of soul food  
Crisp crusted cornbread  
cooked on a cast iron skillet  
The earthy flavor of collard greens  
Cooked with salted ham hocks  
Hot sauce  
Garlic and onions  
Golden brown fried catfish and okra

Heartland of the American Apartheid  
Segregation in education  
My grandma remembers  
Segregated water fountains

Violence and intimidation  
Abandoned plantations  
Covered in graffiti  
still stand

A horrifying legacy

of racism and slavery

Home of my ancestors  
Who were slaves  
Small towns, frozen in time  
Poverty  
Economic disparities  
Long after slavery ended

Dusty, empty streets  
No help coming through  
no buses coming through  
Outside the city limits

Towering trees  
Red maple  
Cypress And oak  
Covered by a thick, hazy mist

These resilient trees  
Remind me  
of the possibility  
for renewal and transformation  
even within the poorest of communities

Floating clouds  
flowing rivers and streams  
Endless farmland

Brick streets

Beautiful billowing clouds

Like enormous waves

Just hanging there

Suspended in the air

Hugging the horizon.