Those Kids

When he fell off the stone staircase

we stopped for a moment. Heat waves rolling us out like dough.

We would sweat standing still. The reminiscence of warm milk seeping between teeth.

Me, the ones I knew, and those Silverhawk kids.

Because of decisions I could not yet comprehend, my school and their school

shared a tiny patch of asphalt, milk crates for cubbies, and trailer classrooms

in the heart of the city.

They were a separate school, and through congested classrooms, drying knuckles,

and the disappearance of the only good bouncing ball,

we decided to hate each other.

Side eyes were chocolates being passed around. They had made fun of my new shoes.

Those kids.

*Those weirdos,* said a friend, after the Silverhawks were no longer surrounding us.

And then he fell.

Glazed and sparkling, a Silverhawk no one paid attention to, dropped from

the stone staircase, landing so gracefully with a silent ‘thud’.

Splayed like a snow angel on concrete.

Sometimes I try to imagine what he was thinking when we were all staring down

upon him. And I wonder if he still remembers the way we sucked in breath, scrunching our

faces as we bent over and cocked our heads, trying to get a better view of the gash in his scalp.

Mumbles rose when he began to writhe, delirious. A few chuckles, even.

And *oohs* and *ohhs* as the blood broke off into strings and strands,

stretching towards us.

We all watched with intensity.

Yet lost interest when a kid announced that he finally found the bouncing ball.

The good one.