

Johnny Doe

Category: Poems

written by Yvonne M. Estrada | August 14, 2009

Policemen pose like plastic toy soldiers,

point rifle barrels in every direction,
ghetto bird's spotlight glints off helmets.

Ambulance allowed across yellow tape,
diesel engine grinds up the sharp grade.

In no moon you glow fish white belly up,
streetlamp casts mottled shadows,
your blood a preschool finger painting
smeared on sidewalk.

I am ordered to shear off your slick, soaked
jeans, to smash your chest, beat your heart
for you. Your arms extend savior-like,
needles are pounded into veins,
translucent bags held skyward
like offerings to a life-giving deity,
clear liquid bleeds in, your blood pours out,
three bullet holes versus six-minute
trip to emergency room. How old are you?

I think about my son asleep at home.

I wonder if *your* mother's at work.

I breathe deep, drive fast,
make the siren a prayer
too loud for your God to ignore.

About the poet:

An emergency medical technician for twelve years, Yvonne Estrada currently works as an ambulance driver for the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Authority. "I have always written poems, and my job naturally presents adventures and situations that need to be written about, stories that need to be told. My family and friends enjoy these stories, but it's also nice to have them read by people 'in the industry'." Estrada reads this poem and others at www.guerrillareads.com (she's No. 8).

About the poem:

"*Johnny Doe* was inspired by the patient's being so young—only eighteen. At the time, my son was fourteen, and he was at home while I was at work."

Poetry editors:

Judy Schaefer and Johanna Shapiro