

Words

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A young girl stood with hands
shoved
deep in her jean pockets
gathering lint seeds
between small fingers.

She stood
waiting to write letters on a clean blackboard
in unforgiving chalk.

She listened
hard
trying to understand
the words.
Words that ran together,
fell apart
and broke like the mismatched plates
in her mother's cupboard.

She learned words,
ugly words,
words like
illegal alien, wetback
and other words that made her
cower
on the playground.

A woman stands
where the young girl stood
waiting
to speak words.
Words that run together,
fall apart

and break like the mismatched plates
in her own cupboard.

She's learned new words,
ugly words,
hurting words
words like
pocha, traitor
and other words that make her
angry and
sad
because nothing has changed.