

She Dances

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Dedicated to girls throughout the world who are vulnerable to so much trauma. This poem was inspired by an event at J.T. Breckenridge Elementary School when Tom was a counselor there.*

She dances
at the PTA carnival
near the deejay's amplifiers,
on elementary school blacktop.

Eyes closed,
her hands
slide in sync
with legs and torso;
lips make silent words;
hair does counter point with hips.
All partners in a poem.

She draws a crowd.
We know we watch a private thing.
Like a prayer, a kiss.

The music ends,
she stops.
We applaud. She opens her eyes.
Surprised.

Again, the music begins.
Again, she is gone into sacred space:
body/music/self/one.

What demons wait to corrupt this innocence?
What angels plot celebration?

—Tom Keene, 1999

Sin Is

Sin is reservation-concentration
camps for any who came here
first,
slavery's arrogance in holding
others as property,
Auschwitz separating a
"superior race" from the rest of
us.

Rwanda,
seeing others as us-verses-them,
separations that blaspheme our
holy human family.

Sin is our indifference to this.

—Tom Keene & Muse, 2021

Sin is Hutus killing Tutsis in

BIO

Tom Keene served as a community organizer during the War on Poverty, as a university professor of liberation theology and as a counselor for at risk students and families at J.T. Breckenridge Elementary School in the Westside of San Antonio. He has published poetry in *The Texas Observer*, *Voices de la Luna & Latinamerica Press* in Lima, Peru. His poems can be found at www.tomkeenesmuse.com

Christopher

(For Jack Elder)

Legend has it that St.
Christopher,
patron of travelers, carried
the Christ-child and weight
of the world
across a rushing river.
Thus, his name, One Who
Ferries Christ.

Centuries later, another
legend.
There was a man who
helped refugees
from war in El Salvador to
cross

the Rio Grande to shelter
on their way.
He recalled helping one
family wade across.
All but grandfather whom
he carried on his back.
Midstream, it came to him
what he was doing.
He wept for joy and
wonder.

—Tom Keene and Muse,
2020



Developed World

While others starve, we eat chocolate.
As others walk miles for water to drink,
we turn on a tap, and let it run.
Yet, as others breathe poisoned air, we do too.
As oceans rise for them, they rise for us.

When will they, when will we
come together to plug the leaks
in this sinking ship?

—Tom Keene and Muse, 2020