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My Big Blue House

Julie Birkey

People always wanting to know
where I'm from.
My likes, my dislikes
my accent and flow
my personality, my type
my music and swag.

If I said I was from 12 Morningside Avenue
unincorporated West Chicago,
where time goes by faster than a second,
would you know where I'm from?

Where I'm from,
Friday nights are drugged with youth
doused with familiar faces
and laced with busted rebellion.

Where I'm from,
work isn't an option
between school and chores.
Where I'm from,
money doesn't grow on trees,
doesn't come cheap.
Where I'm from,
it's the sound of raucous dirt bikes
revving their engines
waking you up at three a.m.
pulsating adrenaline and rage
through sleepy veins.

Where I'm from,
patience wears thin with every drive
intolerantly waiting for
train, after train,
...after train.
Infinite graffitied cars,
blinded eyes with a blurred streak of color.

Where I'm from,
Street lights don't exist.
The darkness claims the Earth's surface
as it swallows the streets.

Where I'm from,
Spanish corre through the town
more common than the sunrise.
Walking through the crowded, academic hallways,
the air suffocated with
"saca las chellaz!"
side conversations.

Where I'm from,
it's more than just loud music
and fist pumping.
More than just ghetto style
and hangovers.
Where I'm from,
we embrace our small-town flavor
and our obnoxious attitude.
Where I'm from,
it starts at a big blue house
with a red door.
The number twelve claiming the property.
This is my house