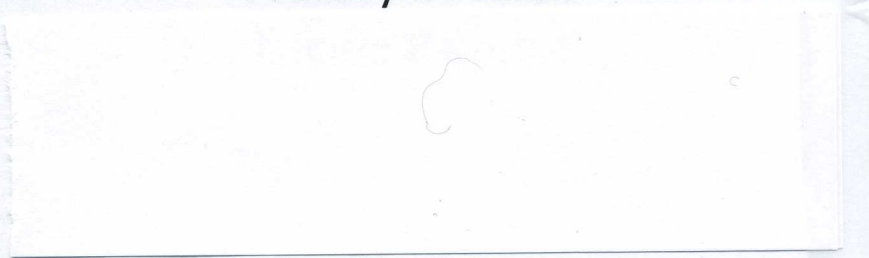


# Bits and Pieces

A story in verse



It's almost like  
I am standing in bits and pieces  
Of a picture.  
The picture could be beautiful  
If someone even tried to put it back together.

By the way, the picture is of me.  
I am Alonna.  
I am in bits and pieces.

People say they're trying to figure it out.  
People like the guidance counselor at school.  
But somehow, I know they're not.

Here on Hawaii,  
December sixth, 1941,  
My family is preparing.  
Because tomorrow is a day of rest  
For military soldiers.  
A day of rest for my brother.

My mom was making my brothers old favorite meal.  
My older sister Laya was counting little American flags.  
My twin little brothers were licking sugar off the table.

I was sketching a picture  
Of me as a hero  
Saving helpless people  
From death itself.

Basically,  
I was sketching my dream.  
Of being the hero of it all.  
The person who saved you.  
But being a hero probably requires the ability to speak,  
Something I don't have right now.



There are still warnings  
Of war and destruction.  
But I am able to tune it out  
Without making any noise,  
Without moving my mouth and making sound.  
I use  
Drawing  
As my escape from reality.

I draw what I want to be.  
But of course, my family has a different way.  
They scream and shout,  
And wonder why I won't do the same.  
But they don't wonder about me much.

Because I am the outcast, the one in the middle.  
I really like it better this way than before.  
Before, as in when Leo was alive.  
Leo as in my brother.  
When he died, it silenced me.  
As if his soul followed me, spreading glue on my lips,  
Stopping me from making my sketches into a reality.  
But even if I could speak, I think I'd still be scared of being a hero.

I am too excited to sleep.  
My brothers are as well.  
Laya is out with her boyfriend, Ron, like always.

I pull my window shade up.  
I open my window a crack, and try to feel the ocean.  
But all I see out the window were stars, and all I feel is a breeze of warm Hawaiian air.  
The stars are so intricate, beautiful.  
Everything feels fresh, as the wind whistles its sawal song to me.

But the stars,  
Tonight, they sparkle  
And I barely miss the smell of ocean salt  
With the stars right outside my window.



I miss Leo.  
He used to tell me that he was a horoscope sign  
I didn't believe him  
Until after he was gone.  
Sometimes, I think Leo is connected to the stars.

Suddenly, I hear the front door creak open.  
It is Laya.  
She is yelling at mom

"You don't make any sense!"  
Laya yells.  
"It's too much, Laya. No" Mom yells back.  
My mom doesn't want Laya to do what?  
"Well he proposed!" Laya hisses.  
There is only silence.  
Then a door slam.  
Laya never comes into our room that night.

I wake to an unfamiliar sound.  
Bombs.

It is seven in the morning, December 7th, and the Japanese are bombing us.  
I wake mother.  
She grabs my younger brothers, Jamie and Charlie.  
"Find Laya"  
She whispers.

Find Laya. Those words echo in my mind.  
Where is she?  
I can't speak, but mom can read my mind.  
"With Ron"  
My mom whispered, and I know what I have to do.

Ron had been going on about his bomb shelter for weeks, how safe it was.  
And Laya was with him.  
And that's where the twins need to be.

I take the twins, and rush out of the house.  
I am worried for mother.  
But I keep running.

There are already homes destroyed,  
But I am too scared to look.  
I keep running, my new sneakers going  
Pit pat pit pat  
And I speed up.  
Two blocks to go.

Planes soar above, dropping the bombs.  
I am so scared  
To be called upon for courage,  
But it's too late to say no.  
One more block.  
I am still running.  
Bombs are still falling.  
And then we're there.

Laya is surprised  
When I give her the twins  
And speak for the first time.  
"Mother..."

We both know there is little chance our home hasn't been hit.  
When the screams are over, we peak out of the musty shelter.

Laya and I break into a sprint.  
Our house is gone.  
Our mother too.

We stand there, scared.  
But then Laya takes a little flag from her pocket.  
"They're not gone, Alonna."



A tear rolls down my cheek.

Together, we put the flag down.

Laya smiles

"They're not gone because we love them."

I might never be the hero in a red cape I draw,

But that doesn't mean I'm not a hero.