**Targets by Obasi Davis**

My middle school

On 14th and Adeline

Wading in a concrete sea of decay

A central pivot between to liquor stores

That witness more dead bodies than a funeral home

And create more walking cadavers than a zombie apocalypse

Two stationary assassins

Gunning for the preteens caught in the crosshares

My classmates and I were all unintentionally killing ourselves

At thirteen

Targets

Guzzling down a soda while walking past wheelchaired amputees and crack addicts

Because we weren’t aware of our own bodies collapsing

After the sweet, euphoric sting leapt from our tongue

When I went to the liquor store

I always gravitated toward the orange soda

Kel’s words rattling in my subconscious

“Who loves orange soda? Kel loves orange soda.

Is is true? I do I do I do”

Not knowing what I was swallowing

A toxic solution of high fructose corn syrup

Caffeine, and artificial orange flavor

Slowly decomposing my body from the inside out

Not so appealing when you break it down

In my city

44% of children drink one or more sodas a day

Adding one or more pounds a month

Sending us hurdling towards hospital beds and cemeteries

Who really likes orange soda?

Insurance companies, the American Beverage Association

Hospitals and mortuaries

Swelling their pockets on the rapidly rising diabetes rate

Tasty poisons are misleading

Because we all want to trust gullible tastebuds

But look behind the façade

Sugary drinks are the leading cause of diabetes

Sodas kill more colored people than Jim Crow

Drowning us in corrosive pools of sugar water

Soda companies reaping the profits of our addiction

Pushing bottles like weight on corners

I’ve seen fiends

From East Oakland to the Mission

Ingesting carbonated poison

It’s no coincidence

That over 40% of black and Latino youth will get Type 2 Diabetes in their lifetime

It’s strategy

A minority hunt

With liquor stores for hit men

And sugar for bullets

Aim for the sweet spot