

Isabel Inman

Mr. Green

English 9

September 5, 2017

Parking Lot Angels

In the Tabernacle church parking lot, a plastic basketball goal towered over a small girl's wrinkled sun hat. She had tried many times to hurl a ball through that net, but no matter how she sweated and strained her spindly arms, the rim remained resolutely out of reach. She would watch with admiration as time and again, the older boys sent the ball through the grimy net with a satisfying swish of nylon. Their tall, glossy figures dashed and dived along the pavement, ragged leather balls dribbling out a song on the ground as they passed from hand to hand.

Wiping the sunscreen smears from her face, she'd run toward the regal lot of players. Never one of the official chosen, she drifted outside the game, jumping in now and then to get a skinned knee or a mouth full of gravel. Witnessing these daily slips and scrapes, the angels Keyasia and Ebony would scoop the pale, bleeding scarecrow up from the court, and carry her in to be clad in sleeves of Band-Aids. After watching Keyasia's beaded braids jingle back and forth over the bottle of hydrogen peroxide, the bandaged child would spring back outside to the game. Each time the ball came briefly into her possession, there would be a fumbling pass to Jaden, or a colossal smack-down from Tyreece, and the orange sphere would bounce away again.

Though constantly clasped in the brown hands of the elders, now and again a tattered ball would find its way to her hands. And although her dribbling never matched Korey's skill, nor was her hair ever as intricate as Ebony's cornrows, the sound of a ball snapping through a net on a sultry day is what keeps this girl present in that parking lot, if only in her mind.