

Pulse pulse unpulse
queer kinfolk in a nightclub
out for a gay old time not knowing
it'd be their last

and a lot of them looked like me
and had last names like mine,
Abuelas and Tias like mine,
and probably heard the same songs
blaring in the house growing up
Me tengo que ir

"but let's not bring race into it"

I feel

small and weak
like a child, like the first time
someone called me a faggot
or made fun of how I talk
or the way I walk

face-scorchingly angry
like in fourth grade,
when I slammed a kid in a headlock
on the playground, when he
called me soft, and a sissy
temporary victories don't mean shit

confused and fearful
like at 13
when I prayed to God
to not be gay,
envisioning total rejection,
and cried staring at my ceiling
till my faith had drained
like rainwater into a sewer

we deal with so much violence
for our entire lives, for what?
to die on the bathroom floor
of a gay club?
one of our only sanctuaries?

where there's a pulse, there is healing
but that takes time,
and I'm scared I might not
have enough time to heal
before someone decides
to hurt me beyond healing

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