

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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