

You remember the first war you were ever in. Your ninth grade class declared war on the tenth grade class. The principal didn't even ask your class to do it. Your class vice-president, the boy who started oozing, decided that the tenth graders were mooching off the school resources and needed to be made examples of, to use their bodies as resources, and your president, the girl with half a face agreed. Your tumors started waking from their chemically induced slumber, stoked the bloodlust in your fists, in your heart, but you volunteered to work in the nurse's office, help treat wounds on both sides. The boy who started oozing wanted you executed for your treason, your betrayal against your fellow classmates but the president, the girl with half a face refused. We need boys and girls like him to patch people up, the girl with half a face said. You can't fight a war without willing bodies. The boy who started oozing appealed her ruling to the Student Body Supreme Court and upheld the president's ruling; it was the first time the law was on your side. It might be the only time the law saved your life.

The school forbade students having guns and it didn't make sense in this country where god is in every gun in every hand that holds one until the principal reminded the warring factions that guns are for adults, and they will get to use one when they turn 18 and have graduated. Violate this rule and the guards will execute you without a thought. You learned to not cringe as much as the casualties were wheeled inside the nurse's office: heads caved with baseball bats, torsos turned into sieves, a smiling stomach or two. This could happen to us, you reminded your tumors and all they could say back is "so"?

You first noticed the boy who coughs up oil during the war between your ninth grade class and the tenth grade class. All the girls in your grade had to take turns helping the wounded piling up in the nurse's office and the boy who coughs up oil was the only boy you saw helping the wounded. You asked him why he wasn't out there fighting with the rest of the boys, why he wasn't helping the ninth graders secure their future until they graduate, and he said he was helping them by patching up the wounded enough so they could go back out there and fight, or at least act as human shields. You notice he also helped with the tenth grade wounded and you asked him why and he said they deserve a chance, too. They didn't ask for this war,