

NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans.

The music from the brass horns filled the streets.

The smell of gumbo filled me high.

It drifted me through the streets.

My feet hovered over the ground.

My head tilted back,

and I drifted.

I drifted by the dancing crowds

of green, gold, and silver beads.

I drifted past the Mardi Gras lines

filled with smiling faces,

dancing feet,

shaking and shimmering bodies.

I drifted past a line

of stores

all decorated with fallen bead necklaces

and galleries filled with people from all around.

All of them came to see what

New Orleans is made of.

I still kept drifting.

I drifted past the spot where

my brother was killed.

He was shot.

Killed by gang violence.

Suddenly my joyride stopped.

My feet hit the ground.

I remembered the neighborhood curfew.

I remembered how my mother would not let us play outside.

I remembered how my mom tried to save my brother,

save him from the gangs,

save him from bad choices,

save him from our city.

New Orleans.
I hated New Orleans after my brother died.
I hated the thieves.
I hated the gangs.
Sometimes I feel lucky to be alive
after living in such a rough place.
Now, when I think of New Orleans,
I can't feel the music the same,
or
eat pralines the same.
But
New Orleans
is where
I am
from.
Where are you from?

