

## Vote Wolf

No escaping the campaign ads on campus, bubble letters in chalk that conjure the image of contortionists spelling out some final breathless message. It is autumn in Indiana and politics is the desiccant packet haunting our bomber jackets. Promises are promises, the sidewalk vows *Vote Wolf, end racism*. I'm all ears. Every other day, my classroom resembles a wrecked game of Tetris. Black and white blocks of gossip greet me as I unpack the invisible privilege of teaching rap. This morning, the blonde yogi in her tantric pants can't make peace with hip hop's dental obsession. She doesn't know what she knows, that even the self-proclaimed colorblind still see missing teeth. When my tongue dislodged my filling in the midst of a lesson on miscegenation, I commenced mumbling soft as a saltine in chicken soup. I could only whistle while my friend worked his way through the neighborhood, pausing to gawk at the "riffraff" bouncing a basketball along the shoulder of the road. Sometimes I regret passing on platinum caps, regret my ethics resisting any affect that would arouse suspicion about my tolerance for white noise. At the mixer last weekend, my colleagues took turns asking me the same rapper's real name. Horst Simco must be in on the joke, the metaphor for American conversations on race shriveling inside the Trojan-horse absurdism of "Tip Toe Wing in My Jawwdinz." In this ballet, I twirl awkwardly in awe of every black swan's grace. When my best student follows me to Starbucks to express how powerless she felt deconstructing

the women in Biggie's "One More Time" video, I can't help  
but apologize on behalf of every well-meaning man  
oblivious to the sheep's clothes keeping him comfortable.