

2012

Bakersfield Teen

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Recommended Citation

Miller, Mark (2012) "Bakersfield Teen," *Studio One*: Vol. 37, 14.

Available at: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/studio_one/vol37/iss1/11

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Bakersfield Teen

for Seth Walsh

You scribbled on your dresser
that “words are methods too.”
Your death was not by noose
but one of a thousand cuts
from the razor blades of English:
f-words, h-words, q-words,
words they have for those
whose love is misunderstood.
The other children conspired,
coming together for the counterfeit joy
of observing you fall apart.
You ran their bloodless gauntlet each day—
in the hall, the bathroom, and even class
until you chose the wrong way out.
Having slurred you to death,
they finally acquired remorse,
but their words sticked and stoned
and you cannot return from beyond.

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