

Writing: 9-12th Grade. 2nd Place.

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Unhearing

The first time I did not see it;

The second time my eyes saw, but my ears pretended not to hear

The third time happened much too soon, caught me off guard;

It was too easy to turn away, not so easy to stop the words or to prevent the sounds

After that I kept my eyes open, kept my ears open;

Every day: I witnessed but did not hear, heard but did not see

The cries of my kin were mixed among the fighting and the defending. Which one to help?

One day the cry for help demanded to be heard so I asked: why?

I got no answer but I persisted.

Why?

When I got no results, when my voice was drowned by those who spoke louder, with
more power, I thought I must give up

Then came the time that it happened to me

This time was different. Not only did I hear and see but they knew that I saw and heard

Eyes and ears were now on me

Don't speak, said my body.

But the eyes, spoke my soul, show of hurt and humanity

So speak I did

And I was next

My role was defender, the others: attackers.

They asked: why?

I would not have had an answer had it not been that another in my role had said thank you

Although I could not stop the hurt from coming, I made it so they were not alone--

I spoke with my actions, telling them that I heard and saw. And that it was not alright with
me.