

10-year-old shot three times, but she's fine

Bewildered in hospital whites,
you are folded with disbelieving.
Braided hair escapes and corkscrews,
holes in your shoulder pulse soft voltage.

Who shot you, baby?
I don't know. I was playing.
You didn't see anyone?
I was playing with my friend Sharon.
I was on the swing,
and she was--
Are you sure you didn't---
No, I ain't seen nobody but Sharon. I heard
people yelling though, and--

Each bullet repainted you against the air,
kicked your head sideways, made you leak
something. *I ain't seen nobody, I told you.*
And at A. Lincoln Elementary
on Washington or Jefferson or Madison St.,
Homerom 218, an empty seat, the sometimes
counselor underpaid and elsewhere,
anyway your grades weren't all that good.
No need to coo, encircle, stroke your naps,
introduce the wild notion of a constant love.

Mama's been located, the heart monitor
hums, you're nibbling on saltines.
No major damage, the invasions will seal.

But a small shadow behind your left eye
has taken root.

Somebody better go find Sharon.