

Are You Okay?

By: Mansa Kuang

She whispered subtly to me if I was okay
and placed her hands on my thin shoulders

I stared back at her calculating whether I
had enough time to run and escape through
the double doors

Because for the first time someone actually
noticed my tremors and my nervousness
I thought
I was a lost cause already

Instead of fleeing
I quickly stuttered a broken no because if
he heard me not obeying his orders

He would kill and torture me more. He
always knew where and what I was
planning.

The pain, the agony, the unwanted
memories ran through my brain

I wanted freedom and escape from this
horrendous life
But this was the only life
I remembered living

The shadowy basement
The sinister bed
The lack of freedom
dripping with venom

I was scared of looking in the mirror
Because I knew I wouldn't recognize myself
anymore
To see the repulsive person I have become

A coward

I told her that
I once trusted too much
And I
lost everything
So I let the man take me
Because there was a time when I was too
beautiful

I was just a kid
I was only a kid

Wounds gaping open
Invisible shackles on my wrist
Screaming for help with no words

Can you see me?
Can you free me?

I told her
I covered because he commanded it
The scars littered on my damaged body,
the bruises on my skinny wrists

I wore longer shirts, bigger shirts to hide the
jutting bones
No one asked any questions

However, her watchful observant eyes
caught the signs
She asked too many questions and was
concerned
So before I could flee like always
I answered them with the truth

So then
I was no longer afraid
The person opened my eyes
That there was more to living than living for
others

That we are never below someone
That people are not to be bought and
sold like a pack of meat

That I was not broken goods
That the life I was living was not truly living
She held the key to my chains

Then, for the first time, I saw that he was
the one with chains around his wrist. The
flashing blue, white, and red light car

I began another journey
because she opened a new world
Where I could dream again
The others were free to dream again

In the distance I saw them
My parents, my lover
They never gave up on me
They continued waiting

I ran as fast as I could with the luminescent
sun shining rays down my back

The peaceful wind brought the delightful
fragrance of freedom

I smiled
and the world boomed

A crackling and musty scent slithered in
A heavy clang echoed on the cold floor
where I moved my trembling hands

I cried in anguish
Because I woke up.

When you saw the signs, why didn't you
decide to save me?