**“The Fence”**

Author: Jason Qu from the Bronx High School of Science, NY

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| There was a fence between us…it was tall, and adorned with barbed wire and Arabic graffiti reading words like horaiya and peace signs and curses and blessings and love letters. It was built when I was younger but my parents tell me it has always been there. Arab only. Israeli only. The fence never looked very large when I was younger, not even when my cousin, was killed trying to cross it to Jerusalem, not even when my grandfather was denied a permit to Amman to visit my sick grandmother, not even when my mother was in labor and crying because they wouldn’t let her drive to Bethlehem. But now that I am alone, and must work, and must eat, and must breathe the air of my land, the fence seems like a mountain. It keeps coming close and closer until I suffocate, until I feel like I can no longer live but somehow I do. On the other side of the fence are guns, but behind those guns, are happy children and men and women with jobs and families. Why don’t they see us behind this fence? Why do they hate us? I hate this dreaded fence. | There was a fence between us…it was tall, and adorned with barbed wire and it was covered in Hebrew graffiti reading words like shalom and peace signs and curses and blessings and love letters. It was built when I was younger but my parents tell me it has always been there. Israeli only. Arab only. The fence never looked very large when I was younger, not even when someone threw a stone over it and it gave my uncle a concussion, not even when I had to stop seeing my friends because my parents said they didn’t belong on this side of the fence, not even when someone threw rocks at my classmates on our way to school. But now that I am grown up, and must work, and must speak, and must think for myself, the fence seems like a restless ocean, we can never pass it and it can never be broken no matter how hard we try to navigate it. On the other side of the fence are guns, and behind those guns, are restless children, and angry men and women. Why don’t they see us behind this fence? Why do they hate us? I hate this dreaded fence. |