

Arms that can dispatch a chicken for our dinner
Arms that protect and guide an eight-year-old boy.
In the evening moonlight,
beside my Grandmother's house.

In East Texas, in Burlington, population eight.

I WANT A COUNTRY

NATALIE FRANCE

I do not want a country
where residing in prison
is more permanent than a home,

nor a country
where minorities are easier to hose down
than wildfires

I do not want a country
where bodies are as disposable
as plastic bottles, piling up
in urban streets

I do not want a country
where getting richer
is the only means
of getting ahead

I do not want a country
where shortcuts are taken
for big corporations,
leaving destitute lives forsaken.

I want a new country
where we won't have to be reminded
that *anyone's* lives matter.

I want a new country
where headlines of black names
are for the Nobel Peace Prize,
not about the irreversible death toll rise.