

Yasmeena

I am no one's mother,
yet to find my eyes in someone else's skull my hands don't fit perfectly with another's.
I *do* babysit.

Between the toothbrush game,
where I narrate the bristles hugging their baby teeth, and my just-so-lenient iron hand --
I'm a favorite.

I am no one's mother,
but when Yasmeena's large brown hollows, rounded like steaming mugs of coffee,
widen in realization, I find myself afraid. She is scared that
there will be no more polar bears or penguins,
her skin perpetually sunburnt. But
I want Yasmeena to see glaciers, for her to
travel and
love mangos and
she is one of those really really annoying smart kids, who wants to explain things to you
even when she knows that you know already
- hip jutted out and head to the side like at eight it is already too heavy to stand
upright -
who calls my name as I am drifting to sleep on her quicksand green couch to ask me to
define a word I cannot identify.

There is nothing more poignant than seeing her blanket, pink cotton hovering over her
globe as she plays global warming at the kitchen table, she is folding it in half.

10 years

She glances at me for approval; folds the blanket again with an emphasis on the
years;
gently placing the material over the only version of the world she may ever know.

20 years

40 years

60

80

100

110 until only one tiny point of the fabric is kissing the earth's surface; cotton dipping into the Atlantic Ocean.

Until one day...

her lecture continues,

there will be no more of this ozone thingy left! Riiiiight Simone?

Her understanding of the ozone layer, the earth's sunglasses as I told her, is more real than many others.

It really is quite sad you know, Simooone. People reallytruly should recycle more...

No Al Gore movie or overenthusiastic environmental club meeting or breaking story about new cancers in our skin and our brains and our breasts has ever made me as scared as seeing Yasmeena telling me about how the polar bears and the penguins

will have to move to New York City soon if we aren't careful.

I don't have the heart to tell her that NYC might not cut it either.

I am no one's mother,

but Yasmeena's eyes are caffeinated: lively and addictive.

It does not take a mother,

her hands don't fit perfectly into mine but we cry syncopated teardrops

our jawbones won't match up but she could change the world if there is still one for her to fix.