

“[Somewhere In Los Angeles] This Poem Is Needed” by [Christopher Soto](#)

She charges her ankle bracelet // from the kitchen chair
& Sunflowers in the white wallpaper [begin to wilt].

I wilt with them // before my sister // & her probation
Officer [who comes over to the house unannounced].

Just as we are // preparing dinner // & what are we supposed to
Do now. Cook for him?! Invite him to eat with us??

I am hacking the heads [from broccoli stems] & pretending
His body is spread across the cutting board. [Ugh].

This officer keeps talking nonsense & nudging his eyes around
The apartment. Looking for—drugs, alcohol

Alchemy. My sister waits for him to leave & then begins to rant.
Ramble about // her childhood // & how she used to be

[Before house arrest]. The confines of these plastered walls
& Her monitored route to work // where

Every corner has a cop [coddling a liquor store]. Protecting their
Notion of freedom. // My neighborhood eats fear.

Mothers are getting // handcuffed & harassed. Homes are being
Crushed [like cigarette butts]. Everyone I know

Hates the racist police & wants a revolution. // But we seldom
Aim the gun... Have you heard // how the bullets

Sing their anthem // throughout the body?? // It sounds like
God shutting the door— Bang. Bang.

When it's dinnertime in heaven [& your officer's knocking]
Ignore him sister— let the door bruise.

[Let the bears devour our enemies]. We have no obligation
To open // ourselves // for those who do us harm.