

From Rocky Top for Juneteenth

I learned his language--a way with words  
and ideas not my own, shared grief's  
losses, devastation's broken trust  
over tears, not relapse prevention plans,  
or white wokeness tropes, but lost baby  
and 8 years in prison since 16,  
childhood stolen over and over  
only a go cart put together  
from abandoned bike parts the story  
that told his joy, ambition, sorrow  
all at once when the police came,  
took it with accusations of theft  
as if he weren't just a boy building,  
as if his family could not be,  
as if their home in this small mountain  
town was a phalanx of crime to come.

Kris Hunziker  
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