



ILLUSTRATION: LAUREN VOLK



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JOHN 3:16 by Sam Taylor

The perfection of God that rose
Jesus out of its body also put forth
two Mexican girls, four and five, running alone
down a city street, a wind of white dresses
and red ribbons, hair as fine as black water –
shouts leaping halfway down the block –
then the mother rounding the corner
behind them, shaking her head, “They wore me out.”

A streak of laughter now. But it could be
one day mother will be roasting corn
and an uncle will lead one of the girls
behind a shed – a birthday present he says –

and before she knows how to braid her hair
or ever hears of Shakespeare, she will tear
her face to shrapnel in the mirror, follow
any boy who curses down an ally.

That’s why he’s on the cross. Not for one sin
or another, but to show the nature
of birth, to tell himself – his children – the price
of existence. Because God so loved the world,

he wanted to be a girl with red ribbons,
a blue Minnie Mouse watch, even if then
he had to forget, to live amongst all the forgetting –
the tv talk show, the uncle, to watch him each day
through the smell of corn. Because He so loved the world,
he was willing even to be that fat man
lying on the couch eating *chicharones*,
scratching his balls, chafed from the quarry,
because the white light just goes on forever.