

Elegy for Adam Toledo

“Authorities released body-worn camera footage that shows an officer making a split-second decision to fire a single shot that killed 13-year-old Adam Toledo after the boy is seen holding a handgun at the end of a foot chase, according to police.”

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/15/us/adam-toledo-police-shooting-body-camera/index.html>

Twitch of a finger
One 38th of a second
Last beat of a heart
A boy poised to greet manhood
Possibilities not yet born

Gasp the air explodes
Body jerks sinks to the ground
A universe lost
Collision course for two lives
A child's hope begun and lost

Artist Statement

“Elegy for Adam Toledo” is written in the style of two consecutive tankas - a form of Japanese poetry typically composed of five lines with a 5/7/5/7/7 syllable count. Tankas, like haikus, are known for their succinct, vivid imagery. This poem recounts one tragic moment of contact between persons caught within multiple systems of oppressive, dangerous connections.

Mary Barbara Walsh