

After the Man Who Found Me Doing Burpees at the Park Said: “I Can Tell You Learned Those on the Inside.”

MICHAEL TORRES

I came here to write you a story where
four brown boys set out to solve a
murder in their 'hood. But my
characters keep getting stopped by
cops and told to stay still. All the
officers ask is if my boys have
anything sharp
that might pierce while they search. My
boys learn to lace fingers instead of gather
evidence.

You can spend your whole life
unraveling. Even tempered glass is
meant to shatter—just quietly. At some
point, all my homies were down for
whatever
and I don't know why. How do
we decide which bodies
are worth defending? All we need is one
clue, a break in the case.

I can't finish this story, this story I
wanted you to have. I've spent all
day running my fingers like a
searchlight over my body. Now, I
stop to read the wrinkles that rest

over my knuckles. My hands lie
flat. I want it to be okay to see my
skin as a landing pad for little
birds' feet.

My wrinkles as mapped wind.

I think they could be a boy's grid for
charting stars. Yes, this is his chance to
give each one a name.

