

# Lilac Time Minneapolis, May 2020

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*after Roy McBride*

It's Lilac Time  
and the Family Dollar is on fire  
helium balloons and sippy cups  
greeting cards two for a buck  
Batman birthday napkins  
and miracle floor polish  
dance in the flames

It's Lilac Time  
purple pink blue mauve fingers  
curled into a fist  
flowers laid end to end  
on bloodied concrete

lilac bruise  
lilac skin  
the lilac spin  
of blue red sirens  
hurting into the night

It's Lilac Time  
and a boy and a girl  
sleep under their beds  
to avoid the shots  
mothers fathers patrol  
the blocks stained with curfew

Lilacs  
my favorite flower  
the one I brought  
each year as a gift  
to sweet Mother Mary  
the church filled  
with girls in pastel dresses  
and boys in pastel shirts  
little Jesus  
so proud of his mom

It's Lilac Time  
tear gas shrouding streetlights  
non-lethal projectiles  
carving holes in protestors' eyes  
knee to the neck  
knee to the neck  
Lilacs  
Lilacs  
Lilacs  
Neck  
Neck  
Neck

it's Lilac Time  
the burnt aroma  
of breath scattered  
like blackened snow  
it's Lilac Time

step out onto your stoop  
smell the flowers  
wash your eyes with milk  
breathe—I can't breathe—breathe

it's Lilac Time  
and the blossoms  
barely hold the world

