

Who Decides “Good”

By: Emma Chan

Carved by the courage of the unbehaved
I walk in a path that I did not pave
I sit in a classroom where the law once drew a line, separating, denying
If no one had stepped out, that line would still be a wall
If no one had dared to rattle the cage, I would've thought the ceiling was the sky

They tell us to be “good” and to follow the rules
But obedience can be a heavy, tight, suffocating mask
Holding you just where they want you to be
What does it mean to be “good” in a world that is anything but right
Is it found in the voice of the many or the weight of the one who stays

It costs the comfort of doing what you are told
The fear in your heart, the targeted stares
The feeling of being the only one there
I am the legacy of the struggle that redirected my community
The sound of progress that will never be complete

Without the “troublemakers” who broke the unjust bar
We never would have known how beautiful we are
John Lewis knew the law could be a shadow, cold, vast
Justice is the lightning strike
Yet you don't feel it's wrong

I am the benefit of yesterday's trouble, the reason for tomorrow's justice
Being “Special” isn't being better
It's about being the one who can swallow the fears
To get in the way of hate, in the way of all the “No's.”
I will get in the way, for there is no real community without some good trouble