THE TARGET SHOOTS BACK

Cobalt Poets Series # 439 ~ August 4, 2020 ~ PoetrySuperHighway.com/cobalt

walking down st. mary's
at 2:30 in the morning
a group of bud light machos
in Make America Great Again hats
let my rainbow flag covered ass know
that i was a *faggot*

their spit
pulled the strings of my spine straight
eyes down
mouth shut
kept walking

but they–being ever so ignorant in the art of subtlety
didn't see the other cheek
saw an easy target
said it again
faggot

and i could've stayed a shadow
said nothing
and hoped to just heel-click my way to
there's no place like home
like we tell women to avoid catcalls
lest they become roadkill

but how much longer
will we let a group of Jäger bombs in popped collar polos
wave their flaccid, unwelcome advances
like a get out jail free card

the status quo
strokes their misogyny
on college campuses and court rooms
because silence is permission
passive is complacent

where i come from
faggot
is a fighting word

i may be a faggot, but i ain't your faggot

i was silent in middle school before i found my voice
said nothing in high school before i knew my history
now I brass knuckle Stonewall and swing,
wonder where would I be without bloody knuckles

well behaved women seldom make history
and one lone loud-mouthed faggot will probably die young
I made myself a target
as vulnerable as paper
to burn like kindle
this is how the target shoots back

a MAGA hat killed Harvey Milk
a MAGA hat killed MLK
and the target shot back
one bullet
sparked outrage
created a riot fire

trust me, I understand the need to stay safe
but what is life if lived in darkness?
crowded closets
watching from the gallery

you are not safe
you're just next
and at what cost?
oppression?
erasure?
a bloody lip?
they were gonna do that anyway

CHIBBI

Chibbi is a Mexican-born, Texas-raised queer poet and actor. He is the founder of Laredo BorderSlam, a founding member of Write About Now, 2 time San Antonio Slam Champion, winning 3rd place at the 2017 National Poetry Slam Group Piece Competition. He has self-published 2 books, toured across the country performing his spoken word sets, and his work has appeared in OutSmart Magazine, The Latino Book Review Magazine 2020, and has been featured online on We Are Mitu, George Takei, SlamFind, Poetry Slam Inc, Button Poetry, and Write About Now.