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THAT SUMMER THAT YEAR DURING THE HEAT WAVE

What did we think sitting there
on the front porch, without fear, none at all,
no surprise or shock,
barefoot, slow breathing, the sun

unyielding even under elm and maple,
thirty-five years ago,
I wasn't yet twelve, my sister not ten, the city
months from the riots after the World Series?

Two men ran down the middle of the street,
the one in front yelling
(how far he made it—
the ice cream parlor, the diner, the liquor store, the bowling alley—

I can't say), and the other one,
chasing after him, aiming a shotgun, he looked at us,
smiled, and I saw
all his teeth.

HAYAN CHARARA

HAYAN CHARARA is a poet, children's book author, essayist, and editor. His previous poetry books are Something Sinister (2016), The Sadness of Others (2006), and The Alchemist's Diary (2001). His children's book, The Three Lucys (2016), received the New Voices Award Honor, and he edited Inclined to Speak (2008), an anthology of contemporary Arab American poetry. With Fady Joudah, he is also a series editor of the Etel Adnan Poetry Prize. His honors include a literature fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lucille Joy Prize in Poetry from the University of Houston Creative Writing Program, the John Clare Prize, and the Arab American Book Award. Born in Detroit, he lived in New York City for many years before moving to Texas, where he teaches at the University of Houston. He is married, with two children.