THIRTEEN

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WHAT HAPPENS? A boy stopped by police recalls an encouraging school visit from one of the officers.

BIG IDEA **Racialised suspicion can make a child's public promise of a future feel conditional and unsafe.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"cornered"

Verb

The encounter is presented as entrapment rather than a neutral conversation.

"Thirteen"

Repetition

Insistence on age challenges the treatment of a child as an adult threat.

"supernovas"

Extended metaphor

The school's apparent celebration of potential is vulnerable to reinterpretation.

"dying stars"

Metaphorical reversal

The ending recasts brilliance as a sign of impending destruction.

FORM

Free verse in second-person future tense; the street encounter is interrupted by a remembered school assembly.

CONTEXT

Femi examines a Black boy's encounter with police, contrasting institutional encouragement with institutional suspicion.

COMPARE IT WITH…

England in 1819: the failure of powerful institutions. A Century Later: vulnerable young people and resistance.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Stop near home

STARTLED AND VULNERABLE

The boy's age clashes with the adult criminal description imposed upon him.

School memory

HOPEFUL, THEN PLEADING

An officer who once praised children's potential does not now provide recognition or reassurance.

Remembered explanation

BLEAKLY IRONIC

A scientific detail transforms the earlier language of promise into a forecast of collapse.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.

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