

Chambers of A Gun - Poem by Zanne Langlois

A gun has 26 working parts-
The length of the barrel, the speed of the bullet,
And caliber of the ammunition determines lethality.
There are 6 chambers in the cylinder.
When cocked, the hammer clicks, as it locks into place.
The trigger requires a precise amount of pressure to fire.
The target erupts, as the bullet forces entry,
Opening a door that cannot be closed.
An act that cannot be undone.

A school shooting has countless working parts.
The lengths at which the shooter will go to force entry.
The speed of the response and the caliber of the security system
Determine its lethality.
The first shot triggers a lock-down.
The fire alarm sounds as chaos erupts
And classrooms become as deadly and inescapable
As gas chambers.
The shooter burns through clips of bullets,
Until police, moving with precision, secure the building.
Reopening closed doors, separating the student body
Into living and dead.

The Senate has 100 working parts.
The size of the majority, the length of their terms,
And the caliber of the lobbyists determine its productivity.
The massacre of school children triggers debate in the chamber.
But while the men and women are dead-locked,
Arguing endlessly behind closed doors,
Two pressure cookers erupt in Boston.
And new images of carnage force entry into our minds.
We barely notice when the Senate body rejects gun control.

The American electorate has 200 million working parts.
The size of the tragedy, the length of the media coverage,
And the caliber of the press photographers determines the level of outrage.
Pressure builds and erupts in shocked headlines,
But the firing squad has no trigger to pull.
The shooter's last bullet forced entry to his skull,
Closing the door to why and leaving only what,
And how, and this is not a question we want to answer.
The four chambers of a human heart
Are each filled with separate desires.
For safety, for freedom, for power, for protection.
We are dead-locked. And minds that are closed cannot be re-opened.

But a murdered child has no working parts.
It's body does not function.
The size of the child at the time of its death determines
The length of a coffin.
A coffin is a chamber lined with silk and sorrow.
When the lid clicks shut, it cannot be re-opened.
When will this trigger more than tears?
When will we feel the pressure of small hands
Hammering on the locked doors or our hearts?
As soon as our eyes are dry, we shut them again.