

**Setting:** *Municipal Building of Power, Life Outcomes and Strategies, 3rd Floor Office.*

**-We, the beautiful, bold, bright children of Detroit demand reconsideration.**

A placid woman, thin and veiny, glances up from a stack of miscellaneous papers.

**-We would like to speak to the person in charge.**

He is gone for the day, leave your number and—

**-We will wait.**

Until tomorrow? She asks, doubting their will.

**-Yes.**

Stand over there, she says, while stirring a Styrofoam cupped coffee. Others in the marble slick lobby, sequestered in their own corners of despair, snicker.

184 minutes pass, then a man appears.

What is the meaning of this? He asked the woman who is still hovering over her miscellaneous stack.

They want to talk to you.

Well, do they have an appointment?

**-We do not, but we do have a purpose.**

Your purpose means nothing to me.

**-We know.**

A silence.

What do you all want? You all have occupied every square inch of this building with your antics.

**-These are not antics. We would just like a reconsideration, sir.**

Should I call security? The woman says suddenly interested in something other than her miscellaneous stack.

The man shakes his head.

The children step forward.

**-You said literacy is not our right. But why is that? We have the ability given to us by our creator. The ability to learn, the ability to understand, the ability to read. Your judgment should be reconsidered.**

Your creator? Do I know him? What board does he sit on?

The children whisper among themselves.

I'm taking a lunch break, the woman says opening a nondescript door.

No one acknowledges her departure.

The man starts toward another nondescript door. Look I have a meeting in ten minutes, how about you all email your complaint, someone will get back within 5-7 business days.

**-We don't want your automatic response, we want a reconsideration.**

Well I'm booked for the next few months, leave your number with my secretary when she comes back and she'll put you on the calendar. Now if all of you could vanish, you're scaring the other patrons.

**-We will not be diminished.**

I did not mean literally.

A Freudian slip. The children sigh.

**- But you did mean it. What do you think will happen to us if our potential is not honored? Our schools are rundown, ruined, shells of what was. Toilets we can not use. Windows that will not shut. Ceilings that leak water on our heads. We need updated books, not the ones our parents used, the pages we read are tattered ghosts, they disintegrate in our hands. There are rodents, roaches and mice in the classrooms, in the halls, they scurry around like we are invading their home.**

Mice are such fascinating creatures aren't they?

**-Did you hear what we said? Our situation is dire. Our classmate taught our math class for weeks because we didn't have a teacher.**

Oh, he must be smart, he's going places for sure, the man says.

The children did not blink.

**-We do not wish to be illiterate, we are future taxpayers, voters, jurors. We could be doctors, teachers, lawyers, philanthropists, speakers, writers, thought leaders, world leaders.**

This is America, the land where anyone can be anything. You can be all those things and more. Just work hard children, your dreams will come true.

**-How will we bloom? We need rich soil to germinate, we need a quality education. Why is a quality education not our right? Is it because we are not white?**

Woah, woah, don't you all start twisting my words. You all aren't one of those left wing cancel culture groups are you?

**-No, we already told you sir, we are the children of Detroit.**

Right, right, he says, readjusting his tie. Listen if you want an official statement here it is : I care deeply about minorities.

**-We do not want an official statement. We want a reconsideration.**

Reconsideration. Reconsideration. Is that all you all know to say? What do you want me to reconsider?

**-Our value.**

I don't know what you mean, he says.

**-We know.**

I'm back, the woman slung a greasy paper bag on her desk. Hamburger and fry notes piped in the space like an invading backdrop. Oh, they are still here, she says, unimpressed.

He says, this is maddening. Alice, please call security, get these hoodl— kids out of here.

Alice springs up to the phone like an apostrophe and mumbles indiscernible things into the receiver.

I would suggest you leave now before every single one of you are arrested, he says.

**-They do not have 50,000 handcuffs, the children reply, then laugh.**

The man turns red because he knows it is true, though his pride will not acknowledge it.

Twenty-five minutes later, security, two men with flashlights and batons, muddle through the glob of children.

Took you long enough, the man says.

Do you see how many kids we had to push through to get up here? The men ask in unison.

Alice sits on the edge of her secretarial seat, beady eyed, hungry for a confrontation.

Well do your job, get these kids out of here. They are trespassing, the man says, his nose flares.

Come on, let's make this a peaceful exit, go home, go home. The security men wave their hands as fans gesturing toward the narrow doorway.

**-We will not be moved until we get a reconsideration.**

My God! This bunch is the definition of a broken record, he says.

You can say that again, Alice says. Her eyes back glued on the miscellaneous stack.

The guards wave their hands.

The children do not move.

What do they want? The security guards asked in unison.

**-Reconsideration, the children said quickly before their intent could be misconstrued.**

Can you give it to them so they can leave? They tossed their words toward the man.

Are you really trying to negotiate with children? Do your job and get them out of here, the man said, his face red as a crayon.

You know what, the man says, forget it. I'll get them out myself. It seems like I'm only one competent enough to do a decent job, he glances at Alice.

It's not my fault they came here, she says without looking up.

The man balks and says, it's not my fault either.

The security guards are parrots: it's not our fault either.

The phrase was like a magic spray. The four adults said it over and over until...

The children disappeared.