

# Again and Again. (and Again.)

## Shruthi Dandamudi

*Shruthi Dandamudi is a rising junior who enjoys writing and playing the piano. She has been dancing classically for 9 years and started writing as a freshman in high school. Her passion for poetry led her to start @thedandiary on Instagram to challenge herself and allow her to venture to new places.*

Gunshots hit the lives of the innocent,  
full force and merciless.  
Terror threats and circulatory comments fight them  
to lose their battle.  
Police cars on Friday nights and every day after,  
defenseless victims and  
assumed culprits,  
to their trial without consent.

If lucky.

With testimonies that are meaningless,  
justice that is secondary,  
the unlucky use their palms as their only shield,  
skin as their only strength,  
fear as their only option.

And video recordings as their only evidence.

Our country has gone numb, insane,  
tolerant to pain,

oblivious to understanding,  
and untruthful to ourselves.

They can't walk  
the same grounds we do.

They can't breathe  
the same way we do.

They can't plead.

Bang.

He's been shot.

Bang twice.

He's dead.

Bang thrice.

He's forgotten.

Stop waking up to mass shootings and  
punctured lives and  
being okay with it because it  
wasn't your people.

Repost, read, recommend, and  
repeat again.

Repost, read, recommend, and  
repeat until it all happens again because—

Breaking news.

He's been shot.  
Bang twice and thrice.  
Bullet in his body,  
tears in his blood,  
but this one is not on camera.

Repost?  
Read?  
Recommend?  
It happens again;  
again and  
again and  
again.

We need to do more.  
Stop letting social media act as an arcade plaza  
where you can find the next game to win and  
voice to dominate.

Because the dent in the earth already exists.  
We've built a bridge over centuries  
to break off the hearts of people  
identical to us, people innocent.  
People who have children to come home to  
and bills to pay;  
who work tirelessly to help us but  
get thrown under a bus,  
used like a dirty rag.

For what?

For acting  
as though everything is a fresh breeze?

For pretending  
our country is the best?

No, please think again.

This is not right.

We need to change.

We are the change.

But we need more.

Fight with your all.

Take responsibility.

NO exceptions.