

# UC Merced

## The Vernal Pool

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These Children

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## **These Children**

By Maya Cecilia Mendez

The audience sits in their seats

Thinking

“Why bother with this production?”

“We already know how it ends.”

But they don't.

When the curtain rises,

their thin veil of expectations will be torn

and the performers will prove

that they're so much better.

Curtain raised,

the audience murmurs

“this will be a waste”.

What do they see upon the stage?

Outcast

Misfit

Unwanted

Forgotten

Having watched from behind the curtain,

I see what these performers are

and my world is all the better for it.

These children, yes, children, are fighters

that will conquer the world.

Stand in awe and wonder  
at their might.  
Disguised as adults  
Unwilfully playing their parts  
Actors in their play  
Dancing across the stage  
Innocence behind masks  
To be overlooked  
Or buried away.

I see behind the masks  
the purity of the children.  
Their best selves  
the audience can never see.  
A sparkle in their eyes.  
I see their smiles  
And tears.  
Hear  
And embrace the child.

Beyond the stage,  
Their lives may not be beautiful  
with Love and Affection  
that actors of their caliber  
deserve.  
They may be filled  
with wilted flowers,

broken gifts,  
and grimy mirrors.

But this world is beautiful  
and wonderful  
Because they are here.

So, see these children, please.  
Rise from your seats,  
Applaud,  
and embrace them.