

Alexis Green

The Chicken Shack on Chancellor

over 100 options, neon lettered
against a red menu. generic images
of cheeseburgers and bagels

surround us, but we always order fries.
salt, pepper, ketchup, hot sauce
—they taste better in the bag.

the sight of beige khakis
and familiar faced classmates
—our back burner salvation,

until the tall boys walked in.
don't make eye contact.
don't look like you're alone.

after school hours melt
and our innocence becomes
a watery myth. The tall boys,

noises wide open, smell our
fear through our pigtails.
their stares strip us

out of our bubble jackets
and pastry sneakers, and we
pretend to not notice—

a ritual mama forgot
to mention we she told us
to walk home in groups.