RENZO just stares. BLACKSHIRT # 1 throws him into a playground headlock.

BLACKSHIRT # 1
Fool-- so stupid Renzo. You could have missed the march-- I wish you had-- I’ve been sharpening my fist all morning.

#2. THE BOY I’D LIKE TO BE

RENZO
C’MON BOYS, GET IN LINE
BE OF ONE STATE OF MIND
HERE I AM ON THE SIDE
WRITTEN OFF WHEN I TRY

BURST, CONCEAL, TRY, THEN HIDE
ALL I AM, DEEP INSIDE
IS THIS WRONG? IS THIS FAIR?
RAISE MY VOICE, DO I DARE?

FASCIST OFFICER places RENZO roughly in front of BLACKSHIRT # 1.

FASCIST OFFICER
Infraction, Renzo. Punishment for the crime. You’ll fight it out-- fists up.

RENZO
Fight him?!

FASCIST OFFICER
Are you crying?!?! C’mon Renzo, fight him. May the strongest one triumph!

BLACKSHIRT # 1 aggressively circles around RENZO, fists ready to strike.

RENZO
AM I SICK? IS IT FATE?
WAS I BORN SECOND-RATE?
TELL ME GOD, WHY AM I
WHO THEY…?
BLACKSHIRT punches RENZO in the jaw.

FASCIST OFFICER
Are ou just gonna take that, Renzo. You’re weak. Infraction. Are you crying?!?!Misdemeanor, speaking out of turn, defiance, and crying in the face of opposition. What your father would do to you if he heard of this...

RENZO
Don’t tell him.

FASCIST OFFICER
Your father has more important things to deal with, that doesn’t include you. How the best Captain in the army had a son turn out like you.

The boys begin to march.

RENZO
THE BOY I’D LIKE TO BE
THE BOY YOU WANT FROM ME
CONTROLLED, ROUGH, CLEAN, MATURE
FIT, STRONG, BRUTAL, PURE

THE MAN I SHOULD BECOME
MACHINE, A RULE, A RANK, A GUN
COLD, CLENCHED, TOUGH, STRICT
DECISIVE, DEMANDING, COMMANDING, AND PERFECT

I WOULD GO ANYWHERE
I WOULD DO ANYTHING
I WOULD BE ANYONE BESIDES...

THE BOY THAT THEY ALL SEE
THE WAY THAT THEY ALL LOOK AT ME
HOPELESS, CRAZY, LOST CAUSE, LOST FIGHT
ALMOST, NOT QUITE, NOT FIT, NOT RIGHT

I CAN’T GO ANYWHERE
THEY SAY I’M NOT ANYONE
DOES THAT MEAN EVERYTHING?

BLACKSHIRT # 1 motions to BLACKSHIRT # 2--
he nods for them to sneak away from the march.
He motions to RENZO to do the same. RENZO pretends not to see.

BLACKSHIRT # 1
Are you coming or not Renzo?

RENZO considers-- at once-- the boys stealthily trail off from the group. They run down an alley way.

RENZO struggles to keep up with the boys-- they yell back “Come on Renzo, faster Renzo, keep up!”

BLACKSHIRT # 1 (CONT’D)
Come on Renzo, so slow!

BLACKSHIRT # 2
Faster Renzo, keep up!

They stop abruptly-- FRANCO, seventeen, Italian, and brave-- hurries along BIANCA-- a young Italian Jewish girl with a brace around her leg-- she wears many layers of clothes, FRANCO holds her bag stuffed to the brim.

Realizing they have been seen, they hurriedly continue along their way doing their best to seem inconspicuous.

BLACKSHIRT # 1
Hey you! Stop there!

FRANCO turns to them-- salutes. FRANCO releases BIANCA’s hand and keeps walking without looking back. The young soldiers surround BIANCA.

BLACKSHIRT #2
Halt, you cripple!

BLACKSHIRT # 1
Why do you look so guilty?

BLACKSHIRT # 1 (CONT’D)
Where are you headed? Huh?

RENZO recognizes her.
RENZO
Bianca?

BIANCA
I don’t want any trouble.

BLACKSHIRT # 1
You’ve seen this girl before? Why have I never seen before? Do you go to school cripple?

RENZO realizing what he’s done.

BLACKSHIRT # 1 (CONT’D)
A Jew

RENZO
No.

The boys chase her and wall around her-- slowly closing in-- BLACKSHIRT # 1 laughs at her-- pointing to the worn brace on her leg. BLACKSHIRT # 2 spits at her.

She tries to continue on her way. BLACKSHIRT # 1 notices RENZO is not participating, he motions for him to join. RENZO is still. He does not move.

BLACKSHIRT # 1 grabs RENZO throws her towards BIANCA. He turns away-- BLACKSHIRT # 1 grabs him by the collar-- puts up his fist threateningly-- then points to BIANCA. BLACKSHIRT # 1 throws RENZO towards her again--

BLACKSHIRT # 2
Do it already, Renzo! Do it!

BLACKSHIRT # 1
He’s too weak-- he’ll never do it.

BLACKSHIRT # 2
You’re useless Renzo.
RENZO

IN A FLASH IT GOES POP
SOMETHING STARTS I CAN’T STOP
IN MYSELF, IN A CROWD
STARTING SOFT, GETTING LOUD

FACE GETS TENSE, STOMACH TURNS
FISTS, SKIN, HOT, PRESSURE BURNS
NO CONTROL, HAVE TO CHOOSE
IF I DON’T THEN I LOSE

BURST, EXPLODE, GASP FOR AIR
KICK, BREAK, STUCK, SPIT, FIGHT, TEAR
IS IT THEM? IS IT HER?
IS IT GOD? IS THIS ME?

RENZO winds up his fist at BIANCA. As he goes to strike, he lets the fist go, and pushes her to the ground.

The BLACKSHIRTS laugh. They run off. RENZO lingers. BIANCA struggles getting up. She doesn’t look to RENZO, she holds back her tears as she continues on her way-- determined-- fighting tears.

RENZO is still.

RENZO (CONT’D)

THE BOY I’D LIKE TO BE
IS THAT BOY EVEN PART OF ME?
FUNNY, SMART, BRAVE, TOUGH
DAD, I JUST WANT TO BE ENOUGH

I CAN’T GO ANYWHERE
I’M STILL NOT ANYONE
DOES THAT MEAN EVERYTHING?