

Two-Voice Poem: "The Roadblock"

Today, July 8, 2017, we are stopped at a roadblock.

Today, April 22, 1994, we are stopped at a roadblock.

Construction workers blew up the road, but they will move the boulders, and we'll be on our way!

The Interahamwe have taken over the city - they want to exterminate all the Tutsi - we hope we'll be on our way soon...

So we get out of the van and are greeted by local kids.

So we sit in the van, but we are surrounded by men with machetes.

The kids smile shyly down from the hill above, giggling when we wave back.

The Interahamwe stare inquisitively into the van, hungrily seeking out new victims.

Slowly, they get braver and braver and come down to greet us.

Slowly, they get bolder and bolder and come closer to taunt us.

We shake hands, give "high-fives," and even hug.

They blow whistles, tap the windows, and smile while we shake.

For three hours, we play all kinds of games: Hokey Pokey, Duck-Duck-Goose, soccer.

For three minutes, we wait and wait: tap-tap, click-click, smile-smile.

The adults look on and smile at our antics.

The UN stands nearby, ignoring the escalating scene before them.

We make new friends, exchange email addresses, shake hands.

We grip onto our family, exchange prayers, hold hands.

As quickly as it began, the rocks are cleared. We load our bodies onto the van, waving our goodbyes.

As quickly as it began, we are pulled out of the van. Our bodies are scratched and torn. We shout our goodbyes.

We are exhausted, but our hearts are full.

We are doomed. Our hearts break.

It was a wonderful day in Rwanda.

It was our last day in Rwanda.