National Junior High Sunday 2019
“Strong and Courageous” based on Joshua 1:9 (NRSV)

Drama: Not There
by Frank Ramirez

(Lights up and down, revealing in turn a youth, perhaps dressed shabbily, looking down, at their feet. Each youth stands silent, unmoving. There is a voiceover, perhaps recorded, of the voice of a youth. In each case there is a pause, a blackout, the lights come up, the youth is not there, and a final line is delivered. Then a blackout, and when the lights come back up there is another youth standing there, and so on. After the penultimate blackout all the youth are standing in a line, unmoving, looking at their feet. A blackout, lights return, no one is standing there. At that point the speaker will step forward and begin to speak.)

SLAVE

You don’t see me. If you do see me, you don’t see me. It’s like I’m not there. I never get out anyway. I work indoors, in bad light, in bad air, sixteen hours a day. I don’t know if it is day or night. I don’t know if it is spring or fall. I just work. I can’t get out. If I get out, no one sees me because they don’t want to see me. If they saw me, they might have to do something. Don’t tell me there is no slavery, because that’s what I am. A slave.

(Blackout. Lights return. The person is gone. The voice continues.)
If you saw me, would you see me? If you saw me, would you wish you hadn’t? If you saw me, what would you do?
(Blackout. Lights up. A youth is standing there, looking down at their feet.)

PHYSICALLY ABUSED

You don’t see me. If you do see me, you don’t see me. It’s like I’m not there. Maybe you pass me in the hallway at school. Maybe we live on the same street, or in the same apartment complex. Maybe we go to the same church. You can’t see the bruises. If you did see the bruises I would have to lie about them. If you saw the bruises maybe it wouldn’t matter, because people don’t want to have to do anything to the person that hurts me. They don’t want to believe that person hurts me. They know that person, at school, at work, at church. The person that hurts me is the person that matters. I’m not there. I don’t know. Maybe I deserve it anyway. Maybe I’m an awful person and that’s why it happens to me. I’m nobody. You can’t see nobody.

(Blackout. Lights return. The person is gone. The voice continues.)
If you saw me, would you see me? If you saw me, would you wish you hadn’t? If you saw me, what would you do?
(Blackout. Lights up. A youth is standing there, looking down at their feet.)

BULLIED
You don’t see me. If you do see me, you don’t see me. It’s like I’m not there. I don’t want to be seen anyway, because everyone makes fun of me. Everyone laughs at the clothes I wear, the way I talk, the place I came from, the family I belong to. Everyone knows it’s safe to bully me because nobody does anything about it. Besides, they’re afraid. They don’t want to be the one that’s bullied. And the people that don’t bully me don’t see me, because they don’t want to be the next target. Maybe it’ll stop. Maybe it’ll stop because I really won’t be there. I wish I was not there. I really won’t be seen. You can’t hurt somebody if they’re --

(Blackout. Lights return. The person is gone. The voice continues.)

If you saw me, would you see me? If you saw me, would you wish you hadn’t? If you saw me, what would you do?

(Blackout. Lights up. A youth is standing there, looking down at their feet.)

CYBER-BULLIED

You don’t see me. You don’t know what’s happening to me. You don’t know that I can’t look at my phone anymore because there’s always hate there. I can’t look, but I can’t look away, and it just keeps on coming. Somebody knows everything about me. Somebody knows where I live, and where I’m standing right now. Somebody knows what I like, or what I used to like anyway. Somebody knows who my friends are, or who they were before they got scared away. Everything I do, everything I think, everything I want to be, is torn down. It never stops. I can’t breathe anymore. And I can’t complain. Nobody cares. Nobody -- wait, I’m the nobody. I’m not there.

(Blackout. Lights return. The person is gone. The voice continues.)

If you saw me, would you see me? If you saw me, would you wish you hadn’t? If you saw me, what would you do?

(Blackout. Lights up. A youth is standing there, looking down at their feet.)

SEXUALLY ABUSED

Nobody knows about it. I can’t talk about it. No one believes me anyway.

(Long pause. Blackout. Lights return. The person is gone. The voice continues.)

If you saw me, would you see me? If you saw me, would you wish you hadn’t? If you saw me, what would you do?

(Blackout. Lights up. All the youth are standing there, looking down at their feet. Blackout. Lights up. Stage is empty. After a pause, enter the speaker.)