Bang.
By Sam Fowler

Bang.
The sound of a gunshot.
The slight kick of a recoil in my hand.
The satisfactory rip of a bullet through the dead center of a target.
Bang.
The sound rings in my ears, even though I have headphones to protect them.
Out of the corner of my eye, there's a flash of gold.
The casing drops to the floor, bouncing with a quiet
Ping, ping, ping,
Before it rolls to a stop.
Bang.
The squeeze of a trigger.
A new hole appears in the target, just right of the center circle.
My hold must be too loose.
I readjust.
It is a simple act, but to some it causes great fear.
I have no fear of the gun in my hand, because I know I'm the one controlling it.
I know the rules of this tool, and right now it is following my own.
Bang.
A small piece of middle circle vanishes.
That's better.
Bang.
To some what I'm holding is a force of evil, a weapon to be feared.
But I don't see the tool in my hand as a weapon, because it has never been used as one.
Its home is secure, its bullets never stray from the range I am in.
The worst thing this tool can do is jam, but that is an easy fix.
My gun has done no wrong.
It is not the tool in my hand I fear,
It's the people who hold it I'm wary of.
Anything can be a weapon.
A hammer, a steak knife, the pen I use to write these words
All of those tools can and have been used to inflict pain upon someone.
And yet it's the lead of my bullets they ban, not the ink of my pen.
Bang.
The gold casing flies out, bouncing off the edge of my face.
If only the words I hear bounced off just as easily.
Guns are bad, they tell me, guns kill, the people repeat this to no end.
And yet, one man left his gun out in the sun for a whole day, and it harmed no one.
It is the people that inflict the pain, not the tool in my hand.
In the hold of the wrong person, a pen is just as dangerous as a gun, but no one is talking about that. Banning the tool is not the solution. Fixing the people who have them is. 

_Bang._

Because it is a tool in my hand, not anything else. This is the first thing I learned, before I was allowed to be trusted with hearing the rest. 

_Bang._

People talk about banning this tool, but I see no one arguing that the bread knife in your house can be used the same way. Why would you ban the tool I use to secure my safety instead of the one that has cut me so many times? 

_Bang._

They think it is strange that I feel safer with this tool, but I find it comforting that something could stop a bad person. Because it is the bad person I’m afraid of, not what they’re holding. 

_Bang._

The slide on the gun stays back, letting me know I’m out of rounds. I pop out the magazine, set the gun down, and walk away. Ten shots have been fired, and yet the only pain in sight is the sting of my thumb from reloading. I have no fear of the tool in my hand, For I learned how to use it before ever even touching it, and it is not my fault if others have abused its power. My gun has committed no crime, and yet they want to send it to jail. I put in a new magazine and ready my stance. I don’t pull the trigger because that’s not how it’s done. 

_Bang._

I fire the gun, Because I don’t know how much longer I’ll be allowed to.