Evolution of My Block

By Jacob Saenz

As a boy I bicycled the block
w/a brown mop top falling
into a tail bleached blond,
gold-like under golden light,
like colors of Noble Knights
‘banging on corners, unconcerned
w/the colors I bore—a shorty
too small to war with, too brown
to be down for the block.

White Knights became brown
Kings still showing black & gold
on corners now crowned,
the block a branch branded
w/la corona graffitied on
garage doors by the pawns.

As a teen, I could’ve beamed
the crown, walked in w/out
the beat down custom,
warred w/my cousin
who claimed Two-Six,
the set on the next block
ducked in black & beige.
But I preferred games to gangs,
books to crooks wearing hats
crooked to the left or right
fighting for a plot, a block
to spot & mark w/blood

of boys who knew no better
way to grow up than throw up
the crown & be down for whatever.

Source: Poetry (September 2010)