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

dcked 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)