

Dot Com Boom

By Cathy Arellano

internet cafes
where people work
without working
grocery stores close
reopen as food boutiques

hipsters invade the bars
come for the ethnic ambience
stay for the “low” rent
sunny weather

take photos of murals
of people
never asking permission
sell photos back to us
as Art
never see the Artist in us

mom and pop shops closed by owners
who can make more by renting to them

moms and pops and kids given notice
so landlords can live in space
until they turn around
and double, triple the rent

speculators flip homes like pancakes
buildings burn down
from unknown causes
but you know condos
or lofts going up

from Oakland, Vallejo, Sacramento
kids come in every morning
to stay in their schools
parents cross a bridge or two
to keep their paychecks

We mobilize:
Hogares sí
Desarrollos no!

We organize:
Homes Yes!
Evictions No!

We march:
Hogares sí
Desarrollos no!

We protest:
Homes Yes!
Evictions No!

At planning commission meetings
Irish developers bring Irish construction workers
who hire African American and Latino subcontractors
to stare us down
to tear down
remodel
put up
the condos
that are pushing their own people
out of the city they grew up in

the work is here now
the money is here now
they'll worry about their own commute later

We
elders artists immigrants queers youth
parents students community activists
pack city hall chambers

sign up at public meetings
to request within our allotted two minutes:

- 1) affordable units set aside
- 2) evicted receive notice and funds to vacate
- 3) zoning codes enforced

one day, one of us talks past the polite ping!
planning commission president warns

