

Summer in the Heights

By Angel Eduardo

Thick heat and humming traffic;
water gushing from a broken hydrant;
Mr. Softee's song somewhere in the distance—
 a vanilla cone with rainbow sprinkles
 claiming a dollar in your pocket
 before you even touch it;

a soccer ball darting between
mullets in tank tops
and faded jeans,
not knowing that their sense of fashion
is outdated
or ahead of its time,
depending on how you set your watch;

Goya cans and Adobo spices
cutting through iron-barred windows,
riding the pulse of *bachatas*
from passing black cabs;

bomb bags from the *bodega*
for mischief in a vestibule,
and the guilt of being scolded
for scaring an old man half to death;

false rain from air-conditioners
as you braced overhead
for the random jugs of rotten milk
that deranged old lady would send careening to the street
until the cops take her away again;

the stillness of sun setting
behind the church tower on 175th;
getting a good seat on the stoop
to watch cars slow as they pass;
feeling the nights grow bolder
as you circled the block on your bike,
knowing it would all be over
before you're satisfied.