

## **Ice Cube Made My Aunt A Lesbian**

**By Gerald Cedillo**

Grandma had never seen a lesbian before.  
Sure as hell she didn't know this Ice Cube man  
because she would have snatched him up quick  
and demanded he release whatever hold he had  
on her youngest daughter, my aunt.

Stressing tenth-grade, the school faculty called  
the house for a third time to say she skipped  
gym class for the fifth time in as many days.  
I remember her jumping into the barber chair  
after me telling the man, give me what he had.  
The first little mexican girl with a southside fade  
finished with a blue bandanna rolled  
into a smooth circular ring like a badass halo  
slipping down the crown of her bald head.

Then came oversized flannels unbuttoned except  
beneath the chin like coat tails waving beside her  
pulled back confidently, hands in pockets the way  
zoot suit pachucos used to do, grandma said.  
Mija, you look like a child still wearing a bib.

But who gives a fuck when Yo! MTV Raps is on.  
We had cable every other month so she memorizes  
each episode. After that Arsenio Hall has the hottest  
group acts they're all talking about tomorrow.  
Sorry momma, she's not listening. All night long  
she's playing Bone Thugz n' Harmony on her  
all black jumbo Panasonic boombox and grandma  
is in the kitchen with another cup of coffee  
talking about going outside to cut the electricity.

You forget the battles not fought in South Central LA.  
In the early nineties, Texans had to choose which  
coast we pledged allegiance to. Maybe grandma  
had just never heard a girl speak in her own voice,  
phrasing opinions as vehement as these. I learned

to make the school bus my own G ride the way  
my aunt taught me. Permanent scowl out the window  
as if I could pull a switch to make the ass drop

before it stopped on the long road I walked  
to grandma's. My aunt sat leaning on one of her  
girlfriend's headphone pieces of a clunky discman  
between their legs when they began to kiss.  
Not noticing me creeping up and with no time to react,  
she punched me, barrel fist, square in the chest.

It all comes down to what it always comes down to,  
rebellion. The music of that era taught us this.  
There's a standoff now between all three of us:  
Grandma keeps my sobbing body against her side  
threatening my aunt with a wooden spoon in hand.

She's screaming "He's lying, he's lying," and I got  
all eyes on me, because I'm ready to out this bitch.  
And isn't it just like gangsta rap: 90 percent ego  
and only 10 percent real life. Bragging and boasting  
about what you want until you realize it don't matter.  
My words glob out like a knot loosed in the long  
water hose of my mouth. My aunt's eyes widen  
and close and die. All the doors in my head  
kicked open by what I've done. She's standing,

a solitary body I see for the first time, all her femininity  
blunted. Breasts tucked under a sport's bra, tank top,  
and extra-long white tee. No makeup, never that, but  
streaks of tears clear enough, her red blustering face  
lowered beneath a White Sox ball cap.

We just never assumed any other way. We had to play tough  
and say fuck authority, not get caught in the trap  
of being seen as vulnerable, but to a cage everything's an open  
and shut case. Nothing left to conceal, my aunt  
hollows like the back of sagging pants. Grandma  
leaves me to pick her up. Both pairs of arms tighten  
around each other. Oh, you didn't love me yesterday,  
she said, now you wanna love me today?  
My aunt's smothered mouth sobs, mind yo business.