

## This Day

Two of my older brothers  
atop the wooden pallets in the backyard  
stacked four feet off the ground  
beneath the waning sun

They each wear a glove  
black leather on a fist  
held up in the air  
high above their bowed heads

like Tommie Smith and John Carlos  
at the Olympic Games in Mexico City  
on KABC Channel 7 Wide World of Sports  
the day before

We live in an old Mexican neighborhood  
surrounded on three sides  
by the larger black community  
and this day it feels really good

## Here and There

The cholos next door  
all speak English not Spanish  
aside from a few words  
picked up here and there.

“Orale, ese,” they  
say to one another.  
They fight among themselves,  
flip off the CHP

and pick each other up  
when they get jumped  
but say “yes, sir” and “no, sir”  
to my father when he tells them

not to curse in front of his family.  
And when I meet the cholos  
on the streets a few years later  
I can show no fear.