

I Remember Like it was yesterday

I remember like it was yesterday
Down this very city
The City of San Jose. . . was our universe
I saw Kuanza, Cinco de Mayo, Christmas, and Lunar New Year
We celebrated everything together
Enjera, paper flowers, Santa Claus, and lanterns
We sang in Feliz Navidad and Kong Hay Fat Choy
We learned new culture and tradition all throughout the year
Those were the days when everyone could share with each other

I remember like it was yesterday
Down this very avenue
Virginia Avenue . . . was our world
I could hear from thin lips to thick lips
All sorts of languages
Chinese, Cambodian, Spanish, and English
We taught each other Chinese Jump rope and Double Dutch
We smiled, laughed, and even cried in the same languages
Those were the days when everyone understood each other

I remember like it was yesterday
Down these very doors
Apartment number 1, 2, 3, and 4 . . . was our home
I saw black, brown, white, and yellow
My brothers and sisters
Jamal, Mario, Elizabeth and Mei
We went in and out of everyone's house like it was our own
We ate and drank at the same table . . . we were the same
Those were the days when everybody was family

I can see today
Down this very ghetto
Ghetto East Side San Jose . . . is my home
I see Crips, Bloods, Nortenos, and Surenos
My brothers and sisters
Shot, stabbed, poisoned, and beat to death
Unsafe tenants move in and out of the apartments
There is no longer a safe place
No longer peace

I can see today
Down this very ghetto
Ghetto East Side San Jose . . . is my home
I see Crips, Bloods, Nortenos, and Surenos
My brothers and sisters
Shot, stabbed, poisoned, and beat to death
Unsafe tenants move in and out of the apartments
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The sidewalks that were once covered with bike marks
Are now covered with blood and glass
From nights of drive by shootings
Cinco de Mayo was once a day of fiestas and carnivals
Now it's a day of beer bottles and broken windows

This is the day when families became enemies
This is the day when sharing became stealing
This is the day when understanding each other became
disrespect

I wish for tomorrow
Up this road
King Road . . . will be our sanctuary
Where I will see people of all colors
People of all tongues
Come back together
As a loving family
To share with each other
To understand one another
To live together
Now is the time when
"All the peoples of the world will have to discover a way to live
together in peace."
So that my children can run and sing
Laugh and smile with their brothers and sisters.

**Silicon Valley Conference for Community & Justice
2006 Martin Luther King Student Contest
Grand Prize Writing
Sandy Ngo - Andrew Hill High School**