

## 2 Poems by Chris Ramirez Giovacchini

### **Hanging Clothes With Maya**

Maya lived in the third story of the old Union st. flats owned by the mayor. At the back, three flights of weathered wooden stairs zigzagged up to a pane glass sunporch.

Her line stretched out to a telephone pole in the finocchio filled common space in the middle of the block where all the back fences ended, a yesteryear barn stood, and the neighborhood kids sometimes hacked their way through the fennel jungle and old foundations on imaginary quests.

Jane lived in a first floor flat on perpendicular Octavia st., with no back porch. Her line stretched from the weighted sash windows in her sons room across the little cultivated backyard, with a few herbs, fruit trees, and swiss chard, to that same telephone pole where Maya's line attached.

Jane hanging out the window with her haunch against the sill, and the statuesque Miss Angelou leaning on the railing of her wooden landing, both reeled out their clothes to that pole they had in common. Maya's dashiki patterns flowed above paisleys, Peter Max sheets, gym clothes, and baseball uniforms below. Smiling and chatting, kibitzing in loud voices across the back fences, for these two mothers, these two washer women, it was their Civil Rights Movement.

### **Valentines Day**

It was more genuine as children

Writing all those puppy dog and kitten valentines

To the list of the whole class, without inhibition,

The Chinese kids, the Black kids,

The Japanese kids, the Alcatraz kids,

Boys and girls, the teacher,

Muslims, Jews , Hindus, Buddhists, and Baptists,

Kids in other classes too,

Handing them all out personally, and receiving,

You'd get a stack of them,

No one left out, the good looking, and the not,

Then, we grew up.