

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Jenise Miller: Two Poems

Jenise Miller · Wednesday, September 18th, 2019

### Dolphins

Yolanda “Yo-Yo”  
Whitaker whipped crimped,  
blonde braids and bragged  
*the earrings I wear are called dolphins*  
and I became bigger  
bigger than my block  
bigger than my neon green and black  
biker short set copped  
from the swapmeet  
where airbrushed tees, corduroys, and rows and rows and rows of gold  
were sold like the dolphin earrings  
my father bought, four gold  
dolphins, connected two by two at the nose, and I was rapt  
by these shining creatures  
swimming toward each other  
bouncing daily from the ears lobes  
that foretold my skin tone from birth  
and Yo-Yo  
grew like me  
from streets  
of gray and grace  
and rapped  
me golden like  
dolphins break the light  
above ocean waves,  
make surviving the deep  
look easy.

\*

### Jacarandas

I stem from a place defined by color: red and blue  
of poinsettias and jacarandas, gold of acacias. We danced beneath pastel, jacaranda petals

that painted Indigo Street an occasional blues, rode bikes next to piru queen palm trees on Greenleaf Avenue, hopped-scotch on bougainvillea-lined sidewalks on Myrrh Avenue, picked lemons, oranges, avocados, and a crown of star-jasmine from backyards on Poplar Street. Tropical trees waved in the breeze at Park Village like parts of Samoa, Mexico, Louisiana. Tamarind Avenue was palette and paleta. Alameda Street was pastoral and al pastor. The names of streets patterned like lines in the sienna-brown leaves that grace the ground in fall:

Acacia Street  
Spruce Street  
Arbutus Street  
Rose Street  
Elm Street  
Palm Street  
Poinsettia Avenue  
Willowbrook Avenue  
We never learned  
about the native  
trees or that jacarandas,  
like so many of us  
were transplanted  
here and bloomed.

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