

Love and Hip-Hop

ELIANA BUENROSTRO

I was on my way to the hospital for work when a tribe song came on in my LYFT. After work I felt lightheaded so I treated myself to ramen. The restaurant that I went to only plays hip hop. I walked in, they were bumping Kendrick's HUMBLE. And Slick Rick. On my walk home, I began to think about my relationship to hip hop and my life in Chicago. I've been living in Chicago for a year now and my understanding of this city is informed by my love of hip hop. I've loved hip hop through lifetimes but now it's different. I've undergone a lot of changes on a deep bodily level.

I arrived to the city in the early spring when the weather was still cold but gradually getting warmer. It was anxiety inducing and exciting all at once. Now the arrival of the sun brings out fears in me that I didn't have before. Listening to raps about the precarity of Black life... There is pain in the written bars and on the streets. I am constantly reminded of all the blood Illinois's governor has on his hands. Of all the Black lives that will be lost in the following months and have already been lost. I am becoming aware of the sense of urgency that Chicagoans feel constantly. I am growing aware of the traumas that come with giving birth to boys and knowing you need to

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leave the city or giving birth to boys and knowing you can't afford to leave. When I read about Anzaldúa's analysis of the US-Mexico border as *la herida abierta*, it reminds me of all the pain simmering in Chicago and all of the children's lives that have been sold out for greed.

"I walk through the valley of the Chi where death is."

Young people's experiences are formed through run in with violence and learning to avoid and deflect violence. Young people that don't get to live because winters are freezing and summers are bloody. Each new realization for me has come attached with a musical note. It was right before Valentine's Day when 2 Black girls were killed. I played *Shadow Man* on repeat and fell into depression. I couldn't understand why I felt how I felt.

Ninguna otra vivienda me ha dolido tanto como esta.

And yet there is so much pride in this amazing city and I feel it. So much so much pride in every Yeezy shoutout to the Southside.

Yet, I am grateful to be consistently around young people. I am grateful to witness to artists and creators that are the heartbeat, the pulse of this city. The beats are painful and still healing. This love is transformative. The people remain. I'm not saying anything someone has said before and said it better. The romantic in me sees the beauty in this city, graves and all. Hip hop is the past, present and future of music. If you don't recognize this, no pos wow...