

## ICE FALLS

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Ice falls-

Heavy sheets chip off my house  
I cringe inside my yolk like blankets,  
ready for the blow.

Inside this cocoon,  
this brown-skinned egg of home  
I wonder if I'm the only one,  
am I America?  
Am I, America?

A lurch-  
outside this shell of a home,  
a militant sound off, "1 – 2;  
Sound-off;  
3 – 4  
sound off; 1 – 2 – 3 – 4; 1 – 2 –  
3 – 4,"  
a cadence calls for my ethnicity.

I've read that the man who created the cadence call  
before it was used for this  
was a black man from a segregated troop long ago.  
I think it is tragic  
to be nearly forgotten

yet kept up stepping  
and morale of millions  
at least his legacy is written.

—to be Chicano without knowing your heritage:  
Which Chicano invented...anything?  
Which Chicano began something?  
Who was Chávez? What is left of his?  
No one will teach you now.  
look,  
but where is it written?  
They erased Zapata and Chávez and Huerta out of our kids' books.  
They gave us trinkets instead—  
Cell phones and big screen TVs occupy our time,  
though much more time is spent working menial jobs to afford the trinkets  
that adorn us like ice crystals forming on a roof.

They said fight among yourselves  
when you are not fighting for us—  
toy soldier/Aztec warrior.  
—give us your children  
we will not leave them behind for any reason,  
or move them ahead—  
They've banned all ethnic studies in arizona.

They said, Aztec Warrior, we adore your women  
—here are the smallest bindings we have to offer,

let us adore the women.  
They said  
they love our music and bejewel us  
They say there is no us.  
Only citizens captured by bling,  
We all look the same  
like so much mud frozen under the ICE, on the ground.  
I cringe,  
rejecting ice—ICE, am I America?