

**Letter to my Uncle**  
**By Justin Chin**  
**Age 16 – Durham School of the Arts**

My uncle is a short, stocky man,  
his blood sugar is sweeter than coconut milk  
but his words are as acrid as the bitter-melon in my grandma's soup.  
He tells me we should hack away at welfare like sugarcane  
topple his son's Lego blocks over the border-crossers  
smother immigration benefits with his daughter's blanket.  
I want to ask him, do you remember?  
Do you remember the taste of  
food stamps sticking to your tongue,  
do you remember...  
Do you remember  
welfare checks paper-cutting your heart,  
doesn't it still sting?  
Do you remember  
the black eye you gave the kid who made fun of your almond eyes,  
crowding in the black-gated house with your six brothers and sisters?  
Do you remember  
shooting down the California highway in my mom's car  
100 miles an hour  
Hands in the air  
Free.  
Do you remember  
Scraping pennies together  
Hoping for a spark, do you remember...  
So next time you are driving with my cousins  
Hate spewing out from that AM radio  
in your Acura minivan, sixty miles an hour,  
I know it's been a long time, but  
Please,  
Remember.