

Mi General - Daniel Hernandez

(In Loving Memory)

Juan García-Castañón, Ph.D.

I always wanted to see you again
And thank you for being my older
Brother.

When I needed it the most
When I was a young man,
Just left from the nest.

I can't even remember how we met
Through Armando or Romano or
through our mutual quest for what was just.

You were the leader and led
Us into battle against the
Institutions and their reps.
It was fun to battle cry and
Provoke the so called leaders of
Academe, and fairness for all.

You were the visionary. I knew you had talked to
Armando and
With that I would follow you or say
The things you didn't so that you
Could negotiate; what a brother.

So many things that we did in such a short amount of time,
as I look back the span of 35 years or so.
We were just kids and best friends
Even though you were the older by 2 or 3 or 5 years, I forget.
We went to Fresno to rally the other Chicano students; to
LA and Berkeley, and Oakland, El
Paso and San Antone, too.
To talk about and initiate Chicano Student power,
politics in the halls of
Learning 1000 miles an hour.

The daily little "empujos"
The reassurance we were right
The confidence I felt in you
To push a little harder and work and plan deep into the night.
The circle of fellow "soldados", Benja, Armando, Tomas, Eduardo,
Sonny the lowrider, and the batos from Oakland,

Victor, Manuel and who could ever forget Frank Rivas.
Itz* all coming back to me now. (* It's)

The house on 10th street where it all took place; where we planned
it all; who would go to which meeting,
Who would say what; who would
Write it up and Who would stand
up first to interrupt?

You were our leader our mentor our brother. Who would have ever
Thought that you would go first.
Daniel UR* our brother; we will follow you, (*you are)
one step after another; one breath after another,
after the last, to one another.
God took you and you rest my big brother.

RIP

This poem was written in memory of Daniel Villanueva Hernandez who died quite unexpectedly in San Jose in June 2003. He was a community activist in San Jose and the Bay Area for nearly 40 years, having been involved in Chicano community activities from student initiatives to farm worker and labor issues, housing, health, and police monitoring. As a lawyer he took up many causes over the years in civil, criminal, and family law. He was a great friend, family man, father, brother, husband, and most of all a mentor to young people.



**Catedral de Ocotlan, Tlaxcala, Mexico.
Photo by: Veronica Sanchez**