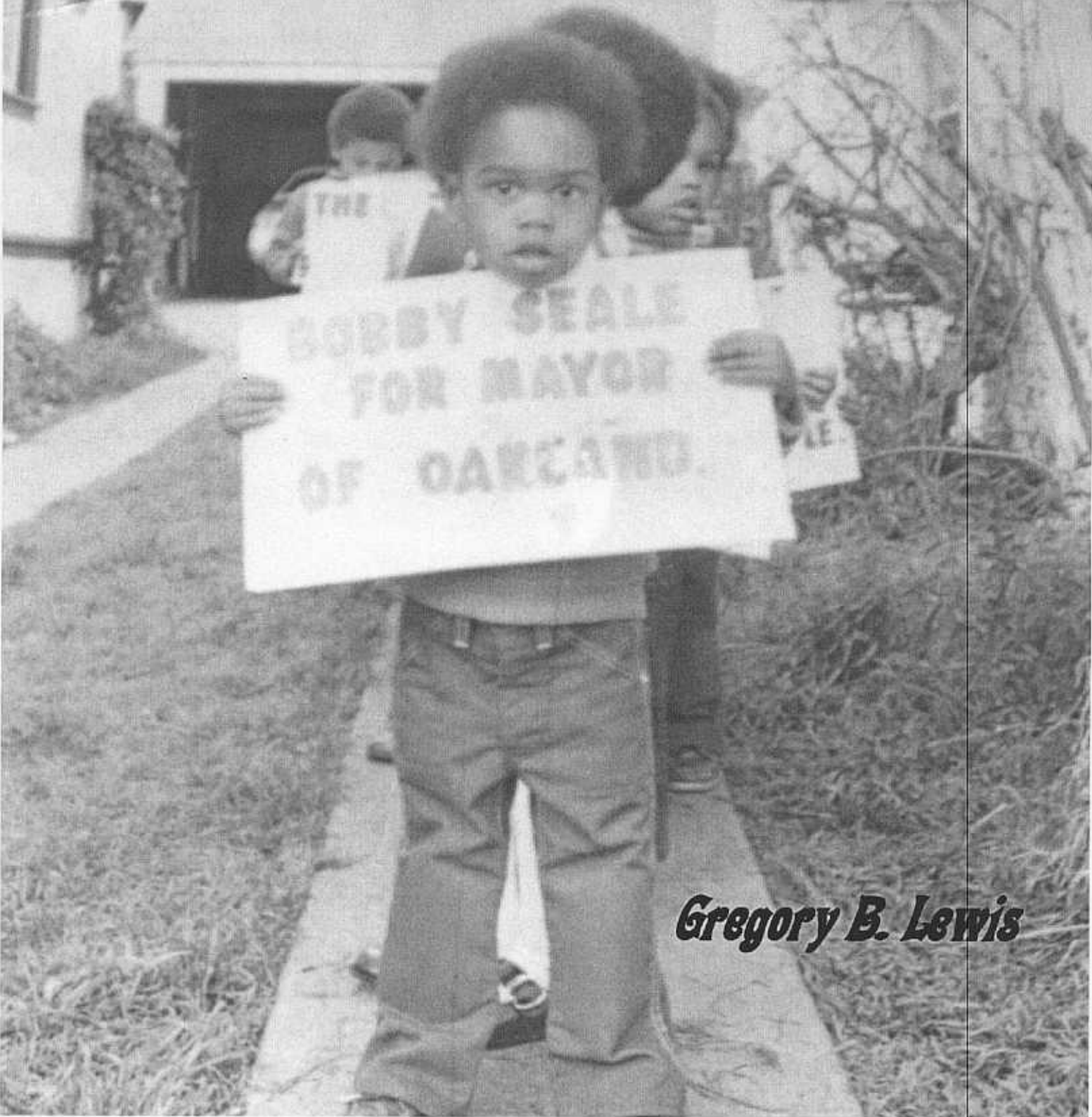


***Power To The Children:
Writing from the Life of a Panther Cub***



Gregory B. Lewis

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By: Gregory B. Lewis

"Man does not evolve concepts out of himself but receives them from the outside world". Nikolai Dobrolybov, Russian scientist (1836-1861)

"We want to have just an off-the-cuff chat between you and me, us. We want to talk right down to earth in a language that everybody here can easily understand. We all agree tonight, that America has a very serious problem". Malcolm X "Message to the Grassroots" (November, 1963).

INTRODUCTION

On February 3, 1995 I sat in a chair next to a hospital bed and wrote in my journal.

“What is the meaning of life. Is there a God?...there must be...”

For most of my life I did not believe but on this day my life changed. I had just witnessed the birth of my son.

The situation was not perfect. Despite the bad vibes from the anesthesiologist who insisted on giving my son’s mother an epidural, my son was healthy, happy and beautiful when I welcomed him to the world.

But I also knew that I would not marry my son’s mother. I was in love with someone else. I needed to be alone.

I thought about my father, whose name I inherited and cursed due to his absence in

my life. I was under the same pressure he experienced at 20, when my mother, then 17, birthed me. I knew all too well that it is an easy decision for many. Far too many parents, like my father, decide not to raise their children. My father chose the easy route. I knew I could not take the same route.

Several months prior to graduation from San Francisco State University I was confused about everything. Except that I would be a father to my child.

Chance saves a few. Reality destroys the majority. I was one of the lucky few.

As I looked at my son's perfect feet and hands I knew I had to continue my mission to change the world. Our world. A world I had seen torn by war, racism, classism, fascism and generations of injustice. On the day my son was born I wrote in my journal and renewed my pledge to cure the world of its ills. In today's climate of war and misinformation this mission has never been more important.

Unconscionable as it may seem, my desire to change the world was born 23 years earlier, when my mother enrolled me in the Oakland Community Learning Center.

The Oakland Community Learning Center was a Black Panther Party chartered school and I was amongst its first students. My first eight years of education were spent within the comfortable confines of this school and the organization that birthed it, an organization that shines as one of the most controversial and necessary political movements in the history of America.