



Gilbert or Frank

by Terrence Mosley

Frank: When we moved here, my parents wanted me to go to the best public school available so we got this tiny ass apartment right next to these million dollar homes and I went to school with white kids. Mind you, I'd seen white people. I just never really was friends with one. First day of school. Dressed like I always dressed which was fly. Specially, the first day of school. We're running late and I didn't have time to brush my hair. So took my brush with me to class. I'm in homeroom, the teacher leaves, and this kid immediately starts in on me. Talking 'bout "Why are you brushing your hair?" To which I replied "I know how to take care of myself, so shut the fuck up." He then takes my brush and the kids start throwing it around the room. One of the kids puts my brush in his book bag. I went to get it and the teacher walks in right as I grab it. I try to tell her "That's my brush, that's my brush!" and she said "You have no hair to brush." So I spat in her face. I got expelled. My dad kicked my ass when I got home. I was fourteen crying like five. I have this theory: No matter how old you are, your parents beating you will always make you cry.

We moved to a neighborhood with a lot more black people, with a lot more space, for a lot less money. I promised my parents, I wouldn't do that to them again. That I wouldn't take them through that embarrassment. They understood why I did it, but what's pride worth when coupled with embarrassment? And I— I sort of agree with them. So I say OK. At least I can keep my pride.