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## Que Ondee Sola - September 2009

Xavier Luis Burgos

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# QOS

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**Grito de Lares**  
**141st Anniversary**  
**of a Revolución** pg 7

**200+ STUDENTS!**  
**Attend Our 3rd Annual**  
**LATINA/O**  
**OPEN HOUSE** pg 4

\*  
**An Olympics in**  
**The 'City of**  
**Neighborhoods'?** pg 16

\*  
**A Chicago Play**  
**Mesmerizes**  
**Puerto Rico** pg 9

## The Social Responsibility Behind a College Education

I want to take this opportunity in welcoming all new students (freshmen and transfer) to Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), especially to the 40% who are Latina/o (the largest in the Midwest!). Your presence here makes not only NEIU a federally designated "Hispanic Serving Institution" but gives us a unique look into the future of Chicago and the country. At no other university in this city have I seen so many brown faces, especially Latina/o faces, walking through the halls and campus. Latinas/os, as the country's fastest growing population, are an integral part of this society (as reminded by the appointment of Sonia Sotomayor - a Boricua judge from the Bronx - to the highest court of the land).

Sadly, for those Latina/o youth who actually attend college (about 11% of our population), and graduate, most will integrate themselves into the mainstream, shed or downplay their Latina/o identities, and distance themselves from the communities of their compatriots. In my observations, for those Latinas/o from the inner city, the trend is stronger. One cannot necessarily blame them - in this "dog eat dog" society we are taught that rugged individualism and

assimilation is the key to success and prosperity. Who would dare go the opposite direction?

Well, this magazine and the students who put it together seek to define and redefine that "opposite direction." As you can see from the articles we write and the events we host, individualism is not on our minds but a keen sense of social responsibility and cultural relevancy. If we did not, *Que Onde Sola* would no longer exist. Nor would NEIU possibly obtain a Latina/o Cultural & Resource Center (this magazine's staff, among others, will be honored at the Hispanic Heritage Committee's *Noche de La Familia* event on September 25 for that struggle).

So, as you begin your journey into college, remember, that it is not just about getting a job (especially, since with this economy there aren't any!). It is about applying your newfound knowledge of the complex social world into your everyday life and its practices. It is also about seeking to improve the lives of others in any way you can. Only by rising to such a challenge can Latinas/os truly reshape this society into something more equitable and admirable.

### Regarding the Front Cover:

By returning to the "mainstream" design of our May 2009 edition, we are seeking to challenge our readers to question why don't other Latina/o magazines and periodicals - which attract their readers with sleek designs and eye-popping headlines - touch upon the topics and issues we present in *Que Onde Sola*. With this design, we might look like most other magazines but we strive to open a dialogue that most do not - from colonialism to racism, sexism and homophobia.

The young man on the cover (designed by Samuel Vega and Xavier "Xavi" Luis Burgos) is Luis Xavier

Muñoz Zayas, a resident of Paseo Boricua-Humboldt Park. The picture was taken by Marisol Rodríguez, one of the editors of *La Voz del Paseo Boricua* newspaper. He stands in front of a new mural by artist John Vergara on Campbell and Division Streets depicting the official flag of that community. The T-shirt he is wearing is by Marcos Ríos from Reos Designs, depicting a *jíbaro* - the iconic *campesino* figure of Puerto Rico. With this shirt, he is paying homage to our ancestors who worked and lived by the land - a place that most of her/his descendents have been displaced from but still lives in their collective memory.

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Xavier "Xavi" Luis Burgos

## Campus

- 4 Third Annual Latina/o Open House at NEIU
- 6 Latinos in Higher Education Summit

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## Puerto Rico & Latin America

- 7 El Grito de Lares: 141st Anniversary of a Revolución
- 9 A Chicago Play Mesmerizes Puerto Rico
- 11 Censuran libros en escuelas puertorriqueñas
- 12 Hazardous Chemicals at Vieques
- 14 A Puerto Rican Political Prisoner's Parole in Danger

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## Arte & Comunidad

- 15 National Boricua Human Rights Network
- 16 An Olympics in the 'City of Neighborhoods'?
- 17 Artist Spotlight: NorthRock360
- 21 Poetry: *My Life*
- 22 Poetry: *We'll Call It Salsa*
- 23 Poetry: *So Called Line*

## Misión

Que Ondee Sola was established in 1972 and remains the oldest Puerto Rican & Latina/o university student publication in the U.S. Our mission is to provide the NEIU community with a relevant and engaging publication that deals with student issues with a focus on Puerto Ricans and Latinas/os, our communities, and our patrias.

Que Ondee Sola continues to affirm the right of Puerto Rican self-determination, freedom for all Puerto Rican political prisoners, and support for a truly participatory democracy.

## Que Ondee Sola

is published at Northeastern Illinois University. The opinions expressed in Que Ondee Sola do not necessarily reflect those of the Administration. Responsibility for its contents lies solely with the staff.

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## 200 Participate at Que Oondee Sola's Third Annual Latina/o Open House

On Thursday, September 3 during Activity Hour (1:40-2:40 PM) 200 Latina/o freshman crammed into Alumni Hall to participate in the 3rd annual Latina/o Open House, organized by this magazine, *Que Oondee Sola*. The mostly Freshman Latina/o students enjoyed free food and beverages and music from some of Puerto Rico's greatest talent. There were also tables of information from the various Latina/o-focused student organizations and programs at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU).

As any Freshman or Transfer student will tell you, coordinating the difficult bureaucratic waters of college is a daunting task for anyone to undertake. Making these waters even more difficult to sail through is being a first generation student, a student of color, and/or a student from a humble background. When I was told to go to college by my grandmother, it was not with advice on how to apply to financial aid or what kind of programs can help guide me through these crucial years of my life - no! All that was told to me was "go to college and become a professional." And here I am at NEIU, like thousands of others.

Of course, there is the official orientation process (which I did not get as a transfer student back in 2005) and other ways to find information. However, too many people fall through the cracks, especially those without the social capital that more privilege college students have. That is why there is a dismal 17% retention rate at this school.

Moreover, since NEIU is an official "Hispanic Serving Institution," with Latinas/os comprising 31% of the general student body and 40% of incoming students - many of which are first generation, low to moderate income, and even undocumented - it has a responsibility to make this crucial and unique population feel welcome.

However, as Latina/o students at NEIU, we also have a responsibility to our fellow peers. That is why *Que Oondee Sola* magazine for the past three years has organized the Latina/o Open House - to make sure that the Latina/o students of NEIU feel comfortable, welcome, and informed on what this school can offer them.

There is no doubt that student groups are an asset to incoming freshman. These organizations offer

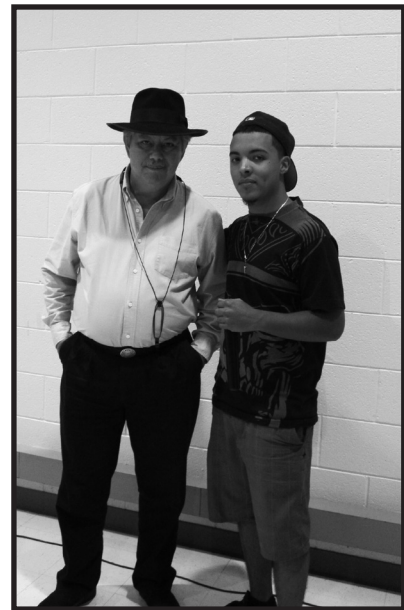
community involvement, discipline in study, time management, and leadership skills. Therefore, the event provided tables for the four main Latina-focused organizations on campus: Union for Puerto Rican Students, Alpha Psi Lambda, Sigma Lambda Beta, and the Movimiento Cultural Latino Americano. Each of these groups had colorful and well-organized tables of information, with representatives ready to recruit anyone interested. The event also had tables from the Latino & Latin American Studies program, Proyecto Pa'Lante and the Foreign Language Department, which are all programs that can help students integrate academically and socially at NEIU. The event closed with Hip Hop performances from Puerto Rico's Velcro and Ikol Santiago and música jíbara (traditional Puerto Rican music) by world-renowned musician Tony Mapeyé.



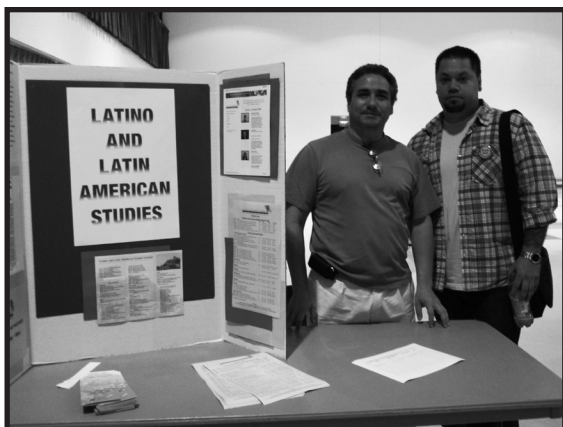
Photos taken by Esmeralda, a member of Alpha Psi Lambda



Representatives from Proyecto Pa'Lante



Tony Mapeyé & Samuel Vega from QOS



Representatives from LLAS



Alpha Psi Lambda, which sponsored the food

# Creating an Education Leader's Institute: Latinos in Higher Education Summit

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) enjoys the bragging rights of being the most ethnically diverse university in the Midwest, according to U.S. News & World Report. Even though Latinas/os make up 41.4% of the incoming freshmen population and 27.1% of the entire population, there still is a missing link between our university and the Latina/o student body. There are many reasons as to why and the long absence of a Latina/o Cultural and Resource Center (LCRC) is one of them. On Saturday, June 6 over 100 people, including several students visiting from México, attended the Latinos in Higher Education Summit, presented by NEIU's Latino and Latin American Studies Program (LLAS), to address this issue.

The summit's moderator was former Telemundo anchor Vicente Serrano, who along with Senator Iris Martínez, Chicago City Clerk Miguel Del Valle, Professor Robert Smith from the Mexican Educational Foundation in New York (MexEd) and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco from New York University shared their insight on what can be done to improve education and increase the academic achievements of Latinas/os. The summit also presented a recognition to NEIU Professor José López for his work, and some of his students were featured in a short video coordinated by LLAS Director Victor Ortíz. The video's purpose was for the students to share their goals and obstacles as Latina/o students.

Senator Martínez promoted the idea of it is never too late to complete an education, as she herself is currently finishing her studies at NEIU. Martínez also shared with the audience her experience as a college student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, which proved difficult even though she had

excelled in high school. The difficulty of transitioning from high school to college resonates with many students, not just Latinas/os, because there can be a lack of preparation and ultimately quitting school can appear as the most attractive option. NEIU has had a problem with retention of students overall and MexEd is being viewed as a model by LLAS.

MexEd is a non-profit organization that campaigns for education and community leadership among Mexican immigrants and their children in the Big Apple. The way this has been achieved has been by creating an after school program that pairs high school participants with mentors. The mentors provide academic support and positive examples while preparing students for college. The program meets once a week and finds time for recreational and social activities for the youth. MexEd also provides college information to students and their families to help them rethink their notions about education and forget old ideas of college being impossible for Mexican students. MexEd was created because Mexicans are now the fastest growing ethnic group in NYC but unfortunately have the largest percentage of youth not graduating and not in high school, which stands at an alarming 47%.

Ortíz mentioned that even though the Latino and Latin American Studies program will focus first on Mexican students, the plan is to include all Latinas/os in the near future. LLAS will face an uphill battle in its fight to increase student retention, a fight further burdened by the lack of a LCRC. However, one recurring theme taught by LLAS classes has been the fighting spirit of Latinas/os, which will be very useful in confronting the educational problems of our community.

# September 23, 1868... **El Grito de Lares**

*El Grito de Lares* was the first major act made by the Puerto Rican people to become independent from the colonial ruling of Spain. This armed rebellion was carefully planned and lead by Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances, with the help of revolutionaries like Segundo Ruíz Belvis, Mathias Bruckman, and Manuel Rojas. Other memorable people who participated or contributed to the cry for the independence of Puerto Rico were Mariana Bracetti and Lola Rodríguez de Tió.

Bracetti was a strong, brave and dedicated woman who fought unconditionally for the freedom of the island. Rodríguez de Tió was a brilliant poet who wrote the words for the revolutionary anthem, "*La Borinqueña*".

The original planned date for the uprising was September 29, 1868, when the revolutionaries and their supporters would meet on the property of Manuel Rojas, on the outskirts of Lares, and from there take over the town (there was a similar revolt planned in Cuba, another Spanish colony, in October of that year, which became *El Grito de Yara* and lasted ten years). Unfortunately, the plan was carried out 6 days earlier because they discovered that there was a paid informer.

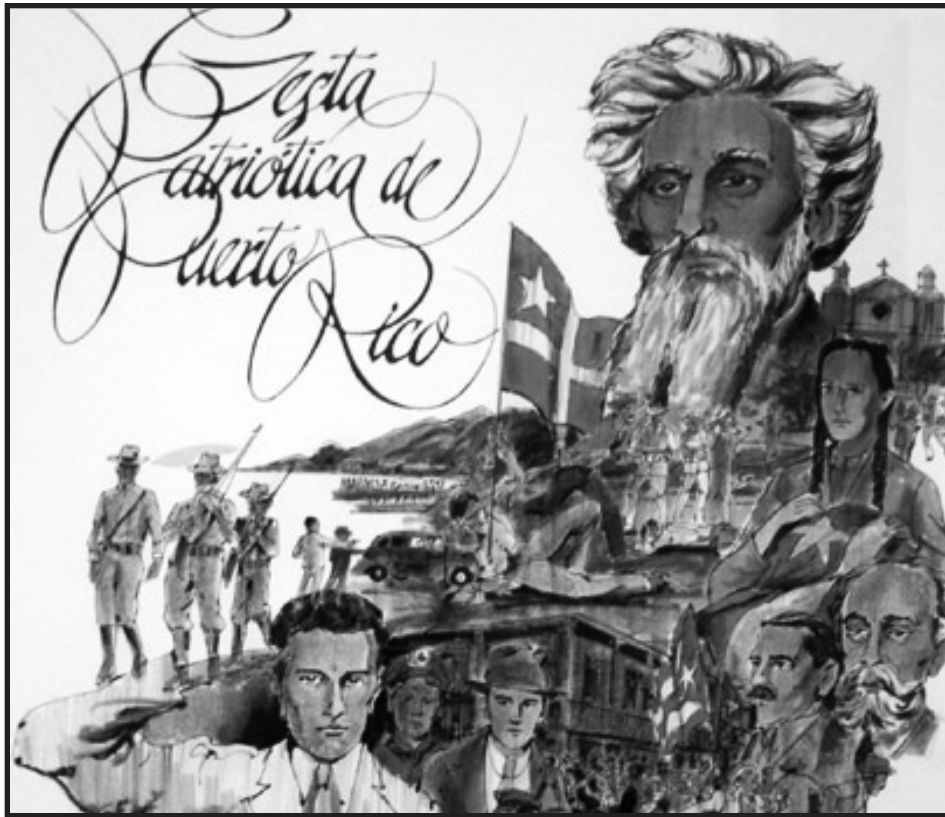


Immediately after this, Emeterio Betances was incarcerated, and the armed forces of Spain confiscated the ship "El Telégrafo" that had an arsenal of 500 rifles and 6 cannons. When Bracetti, Bruckman and Rojas were informed about this, they knew that it was now or never.

On September 23, 1868, around midnight, a group of 400-600 revolutionaries entered the town of Lares, only armed with a couple of guns, knives and machetes. When the rebels entered Lares, they

looted some stores and offices owned by Spanish men. They released all the prisoners from jail, and captured people that they considered enemies of the island; mostly merchants from Spain and local government officials. Immediately after taking their prisoners, they went to the church and, above the plaza in the main square of the town, hanged two flags. One was the new flag of the Republic of Puerto Rico knitted by Mariana Bracetti, and the other one was a white flag with the words "*Libertad o Muerte, Que Viva Puerto Rico Libre*" ("Liberty or Death, Long Live a Free Puerto Rico"). The laborers that participated burned their *librettas* or notebooks, which they had to carry with them at all times in order to inform their Spanish bosses of their activities whenever





they left the plantations. Unfortunately, Puerto Rico as a Republic did not last long. When the revolutionaries went to take over the town of San Sebastián the following day, adjacent to Lares, they were surprised by the Spanish militia. Soon after, all the rebels were captured and imprisoned in the town of Arecibo, and later moved to the cells of El Morro fort in San Juan. Almost a month after the incarcerations, the military court in Puerto Rico sentenced all the rebels to death.

In 1869, the incoming governor of the island José Laureano Sanz, wanted to smooth the tension between the islanders and the Spanish government. Therefore, he declared general amnesty and all the revolutionaries were released from jail. However, many of them were sent into exile, including Betances, Rojas, Lacroix, and Aurelio Méndez. After her release, Bracetti went to live in Añasco until her death in 1903. Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances died in exile in France in 1898.

Nonetheless, many of the demands of the revolutionaries were incorporated into reforms after the rebellion. Slavery was abolished in 1873, the *libretta* system was outlawed, and the island became an autonomous entity of Spain in 1897 until the U.S. invasion a year later.

In 2005 on the anniversary of this revolution, the FBI stormed into the countryside of Hormigueros, Puerto Rico and shot up the home of clandestine revolutionary Filiberto Ojeda Ríos. He was left to bleed to death for 24 hours, sparking controversy around the world. He is now considered one of the martyrs of the Puerto Rican independence movement (*look to the back cover*).

### **Ten Commandments of Free Men**

- Abolition of slavery
- The right to reject all taxes
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of the press
- Freedom of commerce
- The right to assemble
- The right to bear arms
- The inviolability of the citizen
- The right to elect our authorities

*Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances  
from the island of St. Thomas, November 1867*



## A Chicago Play Mesmerizes Puerto Rico: **Wonders of My Homeland**

During the weekend of September 12, 2009 I began my days early in the morning to visit the natural wonders of my homeland: Puerto Rico. Among these wonders were El Yunque rainforest in Río Grande, Luquillo Beach, Charco Azul and of course the quenepa and coco frío spots on the side of the expressways. Every experience left me in awe. In the afternoons I rehearsed for the the Spanish language version of the play “Crime Against Humanity” (*Crimen contra la humanidad*) for performances in the evenings.

I have been touring with the play Crime Against Humanity for almost two years now, and in September 2009 Puerto Ricans on the island and the Diaspora commemorated the release of two generations of Puerto Rican political prisoners (in 1979 and 1999) by witnessing the reenactments on stage of their experiences behind bars. On September 10, 1979, after years

of organizing and campaigning, the Puerto Rican Nationalist Five were released. Twenty years to that date, and as a result of similar demands for release, eleven Puerto Rican political prisoners were freed after many years of incarceration.

After touring through the states, I finally made it to the show I had been anticipating in my ancestral city of Caguas that would culminate the *Jornada de la Libertad*, a series of showings of the play throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. It was my first time performing in Spanish and I never get nervous before a show until I am on stage. However, that night two generations of former Puerto Rican Political prisoners were in attendance and the energy in the seats seeped under the curtains, and shook us in the middle of our whispered recitations. That night was the night that Michael Reyes, Melissa Cintrón, and I (from the original Chicago cast) would share the stage

with the actors from Puerto Rico to rekindle a flame and fortify the relationship between Chicago and Puerto Rico to free the remaining Puerto Rican political prisoners.

On Sunday September 13, close to 200 people filled the seat of Caguas' oldest theater. After each scene, one could hear the laughs, sniffles, the shifting in the seats that made one uneasy, and finally applause. At the end of the show, we curled around the curtains to the sounds of the famed song of "*Boricua en la luna*" and received a standing ovation, meanwhile the tech crew in the sound and lights room unfurled a Puerto Rican flag from their window to show their appreciation. My grandmother who was the first one to show up that night approached the stage from one of the front row seats and gave me a hug and kiss. My five cousins from Cataño, who I had not seen in two years followed. When the former political prisoners were called to the stage for recognition



Crowd in Teatro Arceley, Caguas

of their struggle and the room bursted into tears of joy and sadness, as thoughts of Oscar López and Carlos Alberto Torres (the last remaining prisoners) sitting in a cell while we celebrated may have ran through some people's minds.

As a member of Union for Puerto Rican Students and the Batey Urbano (a Puerto Rican and Latina/o youth space in Humboldt Park), I was reminded in my trip to Puerto Rico of the importance of preserving culture, history, and the promotion of self sufficiency and independence for my people. Living in a concrete jungle for most of my life, the greenery, the water, the food, the families, lifestyles and language of this place welcomed me to the place that would have been my home had my parents not been displaced from such a beautiful island. The hotels and U.S. corporations may interrupt the scenery, but the support of local Boricua businesses to the support of the freedom of the remaining Puerto Rican political prisoners is backed with a earnest understanding of preserving the Puerto Rican identity.



Ex-political prisoners Rafael Cancel Miranda and Alicia Rodríguez

# Mi escolita... yo la quiero sin censor

Era de esperarse, aunque quizás no tan rápidamente, que los conservadores republicanos que han tomado el poder en Puerto Rico comenzaran a censurar la literatura que se estudia en el sistema de educación pública de nuestro país.

Por muchos años el ofrecimiento de textos de literatura en el Departamento de Educación fue muy limitado. Esto, unido al hecho de que a las nuevas generaciones hay que motivarlas a leer; no era ningún secreto para las maestras y los maestros de español. Por eso ellos, los únicos que de verdad conocen qué lecturas deben usarse para los cursos en escuela superior; insistieron por años, y lograron, que se integraran nuevas lecturas que parecieron motivar a los estudiantes a leer.

Pero ahora, censores ajenos al salón de clase han decidido prohibir textos excelentes como la extraordinaria novela *Aura*, del mexicano Carlos Fuentes, quizás una de las obras literarias latinoamericanas más hermosas y de mayor sensibilidad de la segunda mitad del siglo XX y *El entierro de cortijo*, un texto ejemplar de crónica urbana contemporánea de nuestro Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá.

La infantilización de la juventud que imponen los conservadores anti-intelectuales aquí, al igual que en Estados Unidos, parte de una agenda ideológica que califica “no apta” cualquier obra que tenga referencias al cuerpo humano o a la sexualidad.

Cuán distinta la educación de verdad que recibimos algunos hace cuatro décadas cuando a los estudiantes de escuela superior las monjas asignaban. Por quién doblan las campanas, de Ernest Hemingway y *Anna Karenina* de León Tolstoy. Eran dos grandes novelas y en ambas, al igual que en la vida, algunos personajes tenían relaciones fuera de matrimonio; y en ambas nos enfrentábamos a grandes interrogantes sobre la existencia humana, a grandes tragedias y a grandes pasiones.

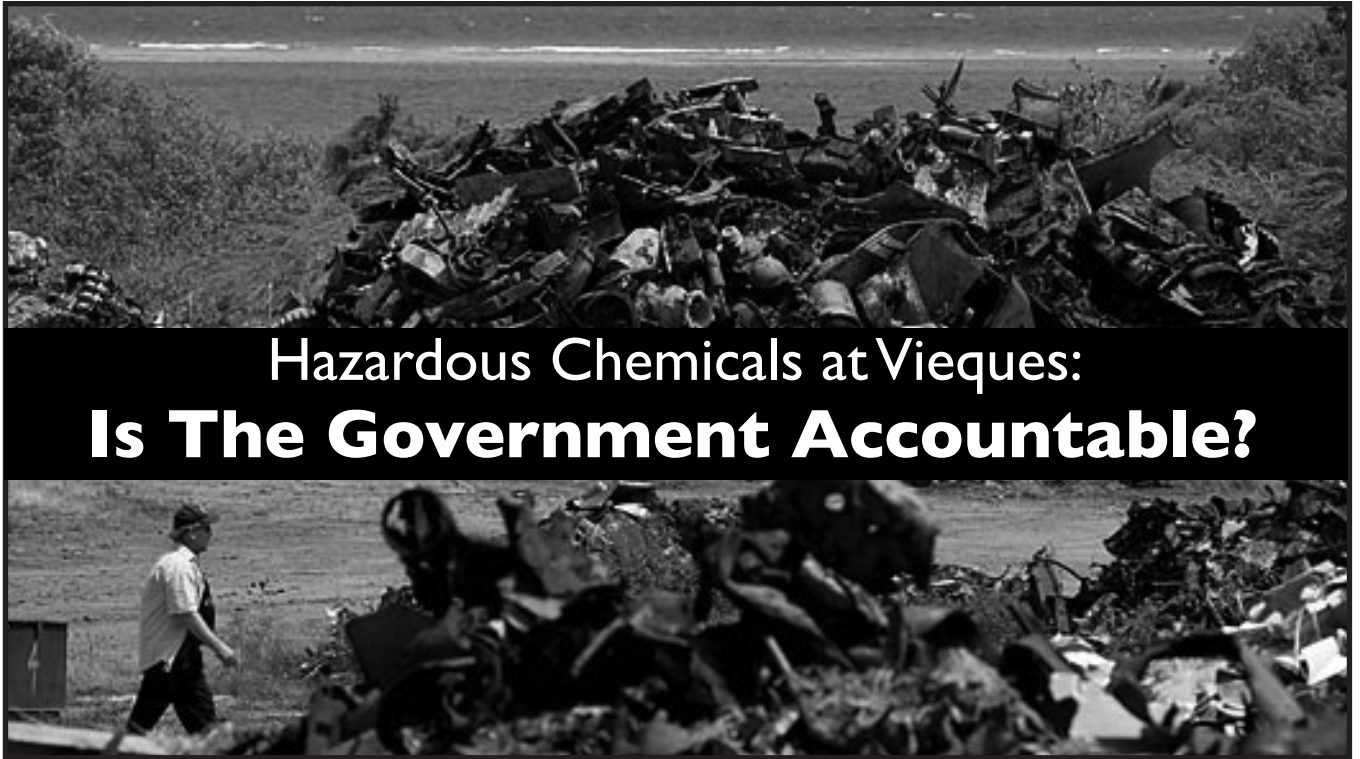
¿Por qué esas maestras escogían buena literatura para educar a los adolescentes, aunque tratara, entre otros, temas de sexualidad? Porque ellas eran, además de religiosas, educadoras de verdad y no facsímiles de activistas de cultos simplones. Sabían que si no nos exponían a lo mejor de la literatura, de las artes, de la ensayística, no creceríamos como seres humanos y nos conformaríamos con los productos baratos y faltos de creatividad de la industria cultural, como ahora se conforman muchos adolescentes con los melodramas de las telenovelas malas o las gotitas del saber de los superficiales libros de auto-ayuda.

Los jóvenes de 16 años de las escuelas públicas que van de pasadía escolar escuchando en la guagua reguettón del vulgar, no del de conciencia social, que rebaja a las mujeres llamándolas ‘perras’ y hace referencia a todo orificio posible del cuerpo humano, tienen que ser “salvados” de cuentos de Rosario Ferré, Juan Antonio Ramos, Ana Lydia Vega o José Luis González.

Hace cuatro siglos prohibían libros de aventuras de caballería en las Américas para que no le diera a la gente con soñar imposibles; hace poco tiempo, en Estados Unidos los conservadores lograron prohibir en muchas escuelas la novela de redención social *Matar a un ruiseñor* porque cuenta la historia de un negro falsamente acusado de violar a una blanca, y los libros de Harry Potter porque afirman que los cuentos de magia y duendes son cosa del demonio. Ahora prohíben en Puerto Rico textos de nuestra propia literatura que permiten a los jóvenes ver representado el mundo en que viven y cuestionarlo, apropiárselo, y quizás, o peligro! querer cambiarlo.

¿Qué les darán a leer ahora? ¿Las profundas divagaciones del mercader de textos Deepak Chopra? ¿Las rimas anodinas de las tarjetas del día de las Madres? ¿O ese nuevo estribillo escolar: “Por la mañana temprano, lo primero que yo hago, botar la literatura y ver la televisión. Mi escolita, mi escolita, yo la quiero con censor...”.





## Hazardous Chemicals at Vieques: Is The Government Accountable?

When Hermogenes Marrero was in Marine boot camp, he recalls being the only recruit who didn't panic during simulated-chemical-warfare drills. "I'd sit there calmly with my gas mask on," Marrero says, "while a lot of other guys got scared and ran away." It was 1969, and Marrero, a New Yorker born in Puerto Rico, was fresh out of high school at the age of 17. But his composure caught the eyes of Marine instructors — and the next year, he says, he was at Camp Garcia on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, helping guard for 18 months chemical agents being tested by the U.S. Navy.

Today Marrero, at 57, believes he was too poised around those hazardous materials for his own good. In an affidavit filed last month in the U.S. District Court in Puerto Rico, where Marrero now lives, he says he is legally blind, uses a wheelchair, has battled colon cancer and chronic pulmonary illnesses, and was recently diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, among other ailments. "I've been sick in some form or

another since I was 25," says Marrero. He was stationed on Vieques, he adds, "for too long."

Most Vieques residents — who, as Puerto Ricans, are all U.S. citizens — would agree with Marrero. In 2007, more than 7,000 of them filed a federal suit, *Sanchez v. United States*, claiming that in the nearly 60 years after World War II that the Navy used a portion of the island as a firing range and weapons-testing ground it negligently exposed Vieques' population of 10,000 to dangerous levels of toxins. The community, according to several independent medical studies, has a cancer rate 30 times higher than that of Puerto Rico's main island to the west. The U.S. Justice Department has filed a motion to dismiss the suit, which collectively seeks health and property damages in the billions of dollars, claiming the Federal Government's sovereign immunity. A federal judge in San Juan, Puerto Rico's capital, is expected to make a ruling this fall.

One thing the judge is waiting for is a deposition from Marrero, which the former Marine sergeant is scheduled to give next week (though Marrero is not actually party to the suit). Lawyers for the Vieques plaintiffs say his testimony lends credence to their assertions about the long-term effects of living on the 55-sq.-mi. (88 sq km) island during the last half of the 20th century — and about the federal health and environmental laws they allege the Navy violated. “His coming forward offers proof,” says John Eaves Jr., a Mississippi lawyer representing the Vieques residents. “These are things the Navy has to answer for.” The Pentagon refers questions about the suit to lawyers at the U.S. Justice Department, who are handling the case for the Defense Department. They say they can’t comment on pending litigation. But in their dismissal motion, they cite similar Vieques cases earlier this decade in which judges upheld the claims of sovereign immunity.

Marrero says his job at Camp Garcia from 1970 to 1972 often entailed helping Navy officers test hazardous airborne chemicals on animals like goats. Many of the canisters he handled, he says, were labeled “112” for Project 112, a top-secret Cold War U.S. military program conducted between 1962 and 1973 that involved experiments with chemical and biological weapons. Project 112’s records were finally declassified at the start of this decade, but the Pentagon as yet does not acknowledge a link between the chemical tests and the spate of illnesses suffered since then by servicemen like Marrero, who is still fighting to get his veteran’s medical benefits. “I’d always ask how safe that stuff was and those Navy chemical guys always told me, ‘It’s safe, you’ll be O.K., kid,’” Marrero says. “But I wasn’t, and I’m not.”

The Navy’s half-century on Vieques was a controversial chapter in U.S. military history.

Protests erupted after a stray bomb fired during a Navy training exercise killed a local security guard in 1999; a few years later, the Navy closed Camp Garcia and left for good in 2003. By then it was already conceding things it had long denied — such as its use of toxic materials like Agent Orange and depleted uranium. It also admitted that on at least one occasion, during a chemical-warfare drill in 1969 for a project called SHAD — for Shipboard Hazard & Defense, which was part of Project 112 — it had sprayed trioctyl phosphate, a chemical compound known to cause cancer in animals, as a simulant for nerve agents. When the Navy left, the island was declared a federal Superfund site for environmental cleanup. The Navy has cleared thousands of undetonated bombs and turned its area of the island into a fish and wildlife refuge.

Still, the federal Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ATSDR) said in 2003 it found no negative effect on health from the Navy’s decades on Vieques. Much of the scientific community howled at that verdict, given that independent studies of hair, vegetation and other local specimens indicate island residents have been exposed to excessive levels of lead, mercury, cadmium and aluminum. “The [ATSDR] conclusion seemed borderline criminal,” says former Vieques mayor Radames Tirado, a plaintiff in the Sanchez suit who says at least 13 of his relatives there today have cancer. Says Arturo Massol, a biologist at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez, “We’ve also found that since the Navy left, those contaminants have decreased eightfold. That’s no coincidence.”

As a result, Congress this summer sent the ATSDR back to Vieques to begin a review of its earlier findings. “If there is anything more we can do, it will be done,” ATSDR director Howard Frumkin

pledged on a visit to the island last month. The Navy itself had already realized it had more to do, setting aside an additional \$200 million last year for seven more years of Vieques cleanup. Still, Viequenses complain the Navy is exacerbating the problem by detonating left-over bombs; the Navy insists it is the only safe way to dispose of them.

Marrero, meanwhile, says he spends much of his time today volunteering to help Iraq war veterans apply for their own benefits. "One of my jobs at Camp Garcia was to gauge the wind direction during those tests," he says. "If the wind ever shifted toward the population, I'd shout, 'Cease fire!'"

## Federal Bureau of Prisons continues to sabotage Carlos Alberto Torres' Parole Efforts



On the heels of the U.S. Parole Commission hearing examiner's recommendation that Puerto Rican political prisoner Carlos Alberto Torres be released on parole on April 3, 2010, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP)

The sentence imposed: 60 days loss of telephone; 60 days loss of visits; 60 days loss of commissary privileges; 41 days loss of good time credits; and 30 days in segregation (though he will not be placed in segregation if he goes 180 days with no disciplinary violations). Writing letters would thus be the only form of communication for the duration of the sentence.

reinstated false accusations— already expunged— in a transparent attempt to derail his release after 29 years in prison.

Just as the sentence began, the prison official who had been routinely translating his mail told him that they had received orders from "higher up," to gather all of his mail and send it out to a translator and censor, and that this would likely result in lengthy delays in his sending and receiving mail— in other words, leaving him completely incomunicado.

The disciplinary hearing officer found Carlos Alberto guilty of possessing knives which a cellmate had hidden in the light fixture of the 10 man cell, in spite of the sworn statement and testimony of the cellmate, accepting full responsibility. The routine in the BOP in such a situation is that when the person responsible admits guilt, the prison dismisses the case against the others who occupied the same cell.

At the same time, another prison official told him bluntly "they're looking at everything you do," inferring that "they" meant the regional or central offices of the BOP.

We must denounce these blatant attempts to sabotage Carlos Alberto's parole efforts, and to isolate and further punish him.

Of the 10 occupants of the cell, Carlos Alberto is the only one whose case has been heard— another deviation from the norm.

Jan Susler, September 17, 2009  
People's Law Office, 1180 N. Milwaukee

# An Effort For Liberation: National Boricua Human Rights Network

The National Boricua Human Rights Network (NBHRN) is an organization composed of Puerto Ricans and Latinas/os in the U.S. and their supporters that strive to educate and mobilize the Puerto Rican community. The main objectives of the organization are the release of the remaining Puerto Rican political prisoners: Carlos Alberto Torres and Oscar López Rivera and to end the continuing political repression and criminalization of progressive sectors of the Puerto Rican community. In a recent interview, Michelle Morales, a member of the organization, sees the network as a community effort rather than a political one.

She stated that "In 2000, after the release of some of the political prisoners, the organization shifted in a way that encourages individuals to get involved with the Puerto Rican community." It can be described as a network driven by community supporters to engage in the fight against repression and to liberate those who are being oppressed by the socio-political system.

In the past two weeks, NBHRN had an event at Humboldt Park's Fiesta Boricua: 'Bandera a Bandera' festival, in which they built a prison cell to create awareness among the Puerto Rican community and others about the injustices that are being infringed upon Oscar López



Rivera, who has served 28 years, and Carlos Alberto Torres, who has served 29 years.

If you have any questions about the National Boricua Human Rights Network, please contact [info@boricuahumanrights.org](mailto:info@boricuahumanrights.org), check out the website at [www.boricuahumanrights.org](http://www.boricuahumanrights.org) or write to 2739 W Division Street, Chicago, IL 60622. Join the JORNADA!



# Will a 2016 Chicago Olympics Displace The ‘City of Neighborhoods’?

I grew up in a neighborhood where the displacement of people is common. I was born and raised in a community where I have seen family and friends get gentrified on a regular basis, where buildings of familiar culture and memories were torn down and unaffordable condos were built in their place. In Humboldt Park, I see this process affecting many families, but especially families of color. Division Street, the center of my community, used to be about a mile stretch long and because of gentrification it is now cut down to a five-block radius. Half of what used to be our community is now called Bucktown/Wicker Park, where you will find condos, hookah bars, Paneras, and Starbucks on every corner, things that obviously do not cater to an ordinary Puerto Rican.

On October 2 the International Olympic Committee will decide if Chicago will host the 2016 Olympics. Many people believe that with the Olympics coming here we will make a lot of money, especially businesses, and that in itself is a great thing. Those same people also say that people will come from all over the world to come visit this “global city.” That Chicago will be recognized all over the world and become economically attractive. But you tell me: is this worth hurting our families that have been living here for decades?

I deeply believe that people in this city are blinded by dollar signs, and forget all the hard work that was and still is being put into our communities to make them better places. I also believe this economic and political system has forgotten who has been doing the work. On Paseo Boricua- Humboldt Park, our community



lives by a motto “Live and to Help To Live.” Money is not an objective to our work. We build institutions and help families to make our community a better place for the people who live in it and for the people who visit. Paseo Boricua is not the only community in the city of Chicago that lives by this motto; there are other communities that live by a motto similar to ours.

With the Olympics coming here there will be thousands of homes and community businesses knocked down to build its venues and to change the look of our city. Families will be torn apart as well as memories and history for something that will only be temporary. The displacement of people is more serious than what most people understand.

“Shock” is a medical term to explain the internal

system of the body when it tries to protect it's vital organs. This term, transformed to "root shock" by Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove, explains what happens to people and communities when they are uprooted and displaced. Social networks and the fabric of communities are destroyed and violence becomes an everyday part of life.

Displacement is something no one in this city wants to experience, but yet we put thousands

of people through it on a regular basis. The Olympics coming here will bring us millions of dollars, but is that worth hurting the families that have been living here for decades? No it is not!. These families have been pouring blood and sweat to keep their communities together. Displacing them from their homes will be no way to repay them. I am not okay with sitting here and seeing families being torn apart to put money in some people's pocket, I refuse it and here I make a stand!

Jacklyn Nowotnik

## Artist Spotlight: **Northrock 360**

*Call them Northrock360, call them a tease, call them fresh, but regardless of what you call them... they are the reason you can't stop pulling out your camera phone. Northrock360 is one of Chicago's upcoming and hottest Latin group blending the realness of Hip Hop and el calor de Salsa y Reggaetón. Their catchy lyrics, high energy dance songs and phenomenal stage presence leave fans chanting for an encore and lining up for autographs. As Humboldt Park natives and the winners of Burger King's "Tu Ciudad Tu Música" two years in a row, I present to you Northrock360:*

**So let's start with the basics. Who is NorthRock 360?**

**U-N-I:** NorthRock was originally comprised of U-N-I, OutBreak and our super manager Immortal Ceze.

**OutBreak (OB):** Pretty much the dynamic duo and a manager that doesn't know the definition of the word quit...

**U-N-I:** In all honestly, there are a lot of mem-



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*Que Ondee Sola*

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bers of NorthRock... from our Dance Core to our extended fam like Lil Reap.

**OB:** The point is NorthRock is more than a duo. It's a way of life. Driven people. Dedicated to one goal... success and being positive, every step of the way.

**U-N-I:** For real, if you got a dream and you are man or woman enough to hold down your dream and fight for it, you are NorthRock yourself...

### ***Why the name NorthRock 360?***

**U-N-I:** NorthRock 360 has a real meaning. First and foremost, it comes from growing up in Humboldt Park. Specifically, on North Avenue and Rockwell, which when we grew up was one of the most gang ridden and violent areas at the time. We wanted to show that we could make something from what many people referred to as nothing.

**OB:** From Logan Square to Wicker Park and everything in between... nothin' was nice, so we wanted to flip what most people thought of as negative. To put it short, North, meaning always on the rise and Rock, unbreakable.

**U-N-I:** The 360 was something that someone told me a long time ago... They were like, "Man... your music is so worldly... It's like anyone can listen to it, and still feel it. It's like you wrote the record like you meant it for me." It doesn't matter how old or young, NorthRock has a record even your moms will like! Haha

### ***How did you guys form NorthRock 360?***

**OB:** Both of us were solo artists for quite a long

time. After being around each other for so long and constantly doing shows with one another, we finally had the common sense to put it together. It just made sense. The timing was right and the chemistry was always there... I mean... both of us can honestly say we put on a great show individually, but together we take it to another level.

### ***How long has NorthRock 360 been together?***

**U-N-I:** That's a great question... matter of fact we just put two years as a duo in the books. The official birth date of the group was when we won our first title as Burger King's winners of "Tu Ciudad Tu Música" in 2008. But unofficially, good luck trying to figure out when it all started! We've known each other since we were 14... have done music since high school and have ran in the same clicks for years... from OutBreak's days in MiddleGround with Prime and my days with Frontline and Conglomerate with J.U.I.C.E. We've been rockin' shows for quite some time.

### ***What do you feel separates NorthRock 360 from other Chicago artists?***

**OB:** We definitely appreciate and admire everyone making an impact on the Chicago music scene today. But the one thing that separates us from the rest of Chicago is the fact that we aren't afraid to think outside the box and "do us." Just cause we did hip-hop before we did this project, doesn't mean we can't experiment and flat out make good records. At the end of the day, we make quality music that doesn't just sound like Chicago or NY or LA... It sounds like NorthRock. I really think the fusion of both of our styles really gives us that musical edge.

***Do you guys consider yourself to be just Hip Hop?  
Or are you guys a mix of genres?***

**U-N-I:** I am Hip Hop 'til the day I die... I was born and raised within it. I feel like I was raised in the essence of it, but that doesn't mean we can't each interpret it our own way. Just cause I grew up listening to Public Enemy, Eddie Santiago and KRS-1 doesn't mean someone who grew up listening to Pac and Biggie has any less to bring to the table.

**OB:** Honestly I grew up listening to B.O.N.E. Thugs and Harmony and gangsta rap... Hell, even salsa like Jerry Rivera. I didn't know what the other side was 'til I got my hands on Capital Punishment by Big Pun... we can both agree on that being a huge part of us musically. But I would say we are a mix of genres in the sense that we aren't afraid to bend the norm of music and what we love.

***Who are your influences?***

**U-N-I:** When I was a kid, all I remember is waking up on Saturday morning mad at the fact that my dad was playing timbales while listening to El Gran Combo and Oscar De León... then my brother was in his room listening to Public Enemy and Run DMC... then my sister singing away to Mariah Carey and New Kids on the Block... I'm sitting in the middle like what the...???? Talk about influence! I listened to it all but gravitated towards the underground scene ... A Tribe Called Quest... The Black Eyed Peas (Pre Fergie) Wyclef, Pun and so many others.

**OB:** For me it was similar just a little different. My biggest influences have always been Big Pun and B.O.N.E. hands down. They really kept me interested in music...

I noticed that in all your songs, you guys are able to make the songs fun, high energy, danceable and catchy all without the use of explicit lyrics. Why is that?

**OB:** It's because we do what we feel. We're high energy people. We're always trying to have a good time and no doubt we love to dance.

**U-N-I:** Bottom line is we put ourselves into the music and cursing really isn't something we think about too much, so we don't put it into our music. There's nothing wrong with it. Its expression but we just haven't seen the need to use it in our records.

***As far as performances go, how many has Northrock360 done?***

**U-N-I:** We've done numerous performances.

**OB:** We've done everything from small bars to stadiums. We can honestly say we've done all the major concert venues in Chicago and now we gotta conquer the rest of the U.S.

You guys won the Burger King Tu Ciudad Tu Música two years in a row. How did it feel when you won it the second time?

**U-N-I:** It was definitely a sweet feeling. It kinda proved the fact that we weren't just a one shot deal. I feel like we constantly gotta prove ourselves to get respect and recognition and that's one way we definitely pulled it off. We stay consistent.

**OB:** We really try to keep it fresh and we know there's someone trying to take our spot at any moment...so we gotta be ready.



*Do you guys have any memorable performances?*

**OB:** That's a tough question.... every show is memorable. The last Pitbull/NorthRock concert at the Congress was pretty fresh... packed house. But as far as most memorable, performing at Soldier Field was pretty much the best... a stadium full of people... a great cause and a jumbo-tron with our faces on it... Pretty Dope!

*What do you guys hope to accomplish as NorthRock 360?*

**U-N-I:** Success and the ability to make music and be able to do that for the rest of our lives. We want to give back to the people and things that made NorthRock. And we want to be role models in the sense that people from bad situations can rise up and be successful. Our city raised us,

now we gotta do our part to raise the city. Any upcoming events you would like to plug?

**OB:** Keep a look out for us coming to a college near you! Look for the Debut E.P. titled "Just Landed" and the follow up album. You can pick up our single "Tease" on iTunes right now, but the project is set for release in just a few short weeks.

**U-N-I:** You can keep tabs on us at [myspace.com/northrock360](http://myspace.com/northrock360)... same for Facebook. But if you wanna preview the project hit up our website where it's posted! [www.northrock360.com](http://www.northrock360.com)

First and foremost we would like to thank God for giving us the opportunity to live our dreams. To all our friends, family, and fans that have supported and continue to support us. We love and thank all of you!!

## **Have an Opinion???**

We at *Que Ondee Sola* magazine want to hear from our audience - YOU! Yeah, we hear the whispering gossip about us in the hallways (the good and the bad!), but we know there's brave people out there with opinions, ideas, suggestions, and even (gasp) submissions!

Come on, tell us, we dare you.

You can find us at room E-041 on Tuesdays & Thursdays during Activity Hour (1:40-2:40PM)  
[queondeesola@gmail.com](mailto:queondeesola@gmail.com)

# My Life

My life you see I was 13 in the game.  
 My life drove my mom insane.  
 My life is filled with racial and judgemental comments.  
 My life makes me want to vomit.  
 Violence, hatred, corruption, I been through it all.  
 But yet i still find a way to stand tall.  
 Beat down push to the limit.  
 The sins I've committed lord have i been forgivin.  
 My life has been quoted in many verses.  
 On how i control my many urges.  
 My life no one would ever really know.  
 On how i feel and the experiences i behold.  
 You see my life is filled with ups and downs.  
 But yet I would never be played for a clown.  
 My life is filled with fights and battles.  
 But nothing that i can't handle.  
 Feeling like an unbalanced scale.  
 You see my life is no fairytale.  
 Happy 24/7. ha....  
 My life is a shut down seven eleven.  
 Never get what I want.  
 I'll be lucky if I get the end of that crossant.  
 You see my life is no where near perfect.  
 But I'm willing to live every part of it.  
 Pain, struggle, whatever comes my way.  
 I'll close my ears if you don't have anything good to say.  
 My life is as ugly as a murder scene.  
 But it ain't no god damn conspiracy.  
 My life is like the gravel you drive on the road.  
 Or that sunflower that never wants to grow.  
 I'm that person people look at an in akward expres-  
 sion.  
 Or that cat that never learns her lesson.  
 My life is worst than war war 2.  
 But what worst i see this life through you.  
 Mami mami no puedo porque me dehas.  
 Es por las drogas que me suetas.

I'm sorry mom but you a unfit mother.  
That's exactly why I went to go live with my brother.  
I thank god my life is better than yours,  
Cause my friends are my medicine and my future is my cure.  
You see my life is headed in the right direction,  
It won't take me to lose my daughter to learn my lesson.

Jacklyn Nowotnik

## **We'll Call It Salsa**

**Dedicated to my Madrina**

Wrap me up in your beautiful rhythmic arms  
Whirlwind me from any harm or fears I may have  
Send my mind running to a place where tengo calor and pride sweats out your pores  
To a place where las banderas son bonitas  
Ay Bendita! You're in for it now with the piano bouncing playfully  
While the congas set a new pulse...rhythmically  
Setting off the maracas  
Let the trumpet scream to your heart and feet's content  
And then beat in the claves  
Colorful and tropical music notes bumping into each other into a staff sheet maze  
The cuatro starts to play its way to my soul  
Simultaneously making peace with the güiro  
Every part of my body screaming "WEPAAAAAA!"  
Johnny Pacheco said it best when he said "We'll call it Salsa, like a gumbo or a stew"  
When I hear Hector Lavoe I just don't know what to do  
Ceila canta canta hasta que Cuba is free  
I could sit and listen for hours while Willie Colón plays for me  
La Lupe and Marc Anthony please don't stop  
My feet, hips and arms catch your rhythm and I begin to daydream  
I daydream to a place where Victor Manuelle's voice echoes over head  
And where Fania Allstars twinkle above my bed  
Entonce Salsa, no me dejes aquí si tu sabes que música no es la misma sin tí

# So Called Line

I take the thoughts from my beautiful mind.  
 And I lay them down on this so called line.  
 For I live a life of struggle.  
 With ambitions, goals, and a pot full of trouble.  
 For I live for today, cause I don't know whats coming tomorrow.  
 So I live like a rocket scientist, doctor, lawyer, not a cop, and I sing in the shower.  
 For I try to live by the happier days.  
 Cause when I get thinkin I think about the darker days.  
 How pops wasn't around, moms got put into rehab.  
 And in a inch of a mile, split of a second I lost everything I had.  
 Man i feel so worthless.  
 Like this so called beautiful dream isn't worth it.  
 How am i suppose to live by soomethin I don't completely believe in.  
 People tell me keep trying I promise you'll make it just believe in it.  
 Than why the hell I'm in the same spot and haven't moved an inch.  
 The streets are over rated.  
 My mom lives with saden.  
 And the government is crooked.  
 For Iraq didn't bomb our two buildings the government took.  
 Feeding us lies threw radio and televisions.  
 Brain wash lil shorties don't let them have there own visions.  
 I remember when I was younger I use to play hide and go seek.  
 Now we have kids at the age of ten just wanting to hit the streets.  
 Getting exposed to gangs, guns, drugs, and violence.  
 For it killed my brother two years ago and made the whole crowd silent.  
 You see this is the shit i go through everyday.  
 But I try not to make excuses I just try to find a better way.  
 But things are so god damn hard when you feel like your alone.  
 And the only thing that keeps you company is the lyrics to your song.  
 To think I try to lay all these thoughts on this so called line.  
 But the truth is this line is to small for the shit on my mind.





Filiberto Ojeda Ríos  
1933-2005