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Que Ondee Sola - January-Feb 2010

Xavier Luis Burgo

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Renacimiento

Selected Poems from the
Paseo Boricua Renaissance
and
other
pieces
from the
Puerto Rican & Latina/o experience
in Chicago



Que Ondee Sola • Vol. 38 No. 1

"*Todo boricua tiene un poco de poeta y de loco*" - "All Puerto Ricans have a little bit of poet and insanity," said the 20th century revolutionary, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos. It is through the art of poetry that human beings are able to define, understand, and possibly seek to transform the insane world in which we, as individuals, are defined by. For Puerto Rican culture, poetry has played a central role in defining and even resisting that colonial and conflicting experience. If one studies the lyrical rhythms of Luis Palés Matos, one will see the struggle to insert into history the african and mulatto elements under the national pantheon of Puerto Rican culture. If one studies the lyrical rhythms of Julia de Burgos, one will see the struggle to insert into history the important role that Puerto Rican women play in building our nation – that is why she changed her name to de Burgos, so that she became the owner of herself and not of a man. If one studies the lyrical rhythms of the poets of the Nuyorican movement during the 1960s and

1970s, one will find poets angry at the lie of the "American Dream" that deceived thousands of Puerto Rican migrants. One will also find a group of artists struggling to define the Puerto Rican nation as one that goes beyond the shores of the island and extending to our communities in the diaspora. Now, you have this small collection of poetry from the poets of the Puerto Rican community and the Latina/o experience in Chicago. Look closely at these artists' words and one will find multiple efforts to explain and understand our marginal social positions, love for our far-away homelands, struggles to maintain our communities, and attempts to validate our history of resistance as a people. In the end, poetry, especially those that transcend time, goes beyond individual experiences, even though the individual might be its central theme. Poetry connects with our *collective* memory and experiences. It is then that poetry becomes art of a people, of a community, and it is through community that our history can last *ad infinitum*.

¿Porqué Poetry? Ruthy Venegas

Poetry, it is just a few words on a page; sometimes it rhymes and many times it does not, a few times it makes sense and most of the time it does not. *¿Porqué Poetry?* To those who generated ideas, opinions with sentiments and transcribed them on paper; utilized it as a way to either escape reality or affirm their voice. Reading as well as writing is used to pause all veracity, by just allowing the brain to connect with the words on the page without the fear of understanding. Reciting a poem, either if it is original or not is empowering, one has a chance to act the words,

shout out headlines and add in a phrase such as; *that's fucked up?* There are 51 ways to write out how one feels through a poem, write one up and recite it at the next open mic, you will understand what I mean by empowering. See, this little thing called poetry can be whatever you would like it to be, a news broadcast, a concert, a speech, it is only possible if you allow yourself to preach. Be open minded, never muzzled, "think you" and let it flow. Don't question, just do let it, rip and be you! Let out those taboos, morphemes and dreams. That mic is yours, take it, and just leave.

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Poemas for a Renaissance

- 4 They Wear Zapatos de Arco-Iris
(Rainbow Shoes) To The Epiphany
- 6 Blue-light Sale
- 7 Mi Bandera
- 8 Cuestión de Posibilidades
- 11 Why I Don't Cry Blood
- 12 Our Faces
- 15 Just Press Rewind
- 16 The Day Oscar Came Home
- 20 Resisting Oblivion
- 23 Donde Yo Vivo
- 24 Pa' Mi Isla: Mi Cuerpo y Mi Palabra
- 25 Alice in Wonderland
- 26 Recession

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

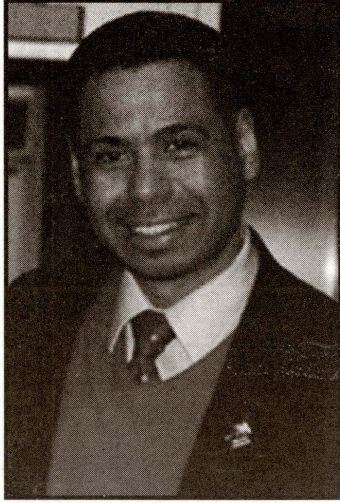
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We appreciate and encourage suggestions and contributions.

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Eduardo Arocho was born and raised in Humboldt Park, Chicago, where he currently lives. He is a graduate of Roberto Clemente H.S., Northeastern Illinois University (1997) with a BA in History and Spanish Literature and Spertus College (2004) with a Masters of Science in Nonprofit Management. He has been writing and performing poetry since 1992. His poetry has been published in several anthologies and journals including: OPEN FIST: Anthology of Young Illinois Poets, by Tia Chucha Press (1993), POWERLINES: A Decade of Poetry from Chicago's Guild Complex, by Tia Chucha Press (2000) and EL CENTRO JOURNAL, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College New York, NY, (2001). As a freelance reporter his articles have appeared in several local Chicago newspapers, as well as, the National Public Radio news program Latino USA. He is currently completing work on his forthcoming poetry manuscript, Nació Maestro (New and Selected Poems).

They Wear Zapatos de Arco-Iris (Rainbow Shoes) To The Epiphany (inspired by Oscar López-Rivera)

Marching down
an impasse street
seen parading on TV
the children of a colony
are dancing proudly
exiled with the flag
they inherited from history.

Navideña is the night
over a barrio where
a niño is born
under the northern fifty stars
He learns to walk
with other niños y niñas
from a nation unknown
lost is Diaspora
on an imperial paved road.

Three saw the star
three from Belén
two thousand years

they journeyed to Borikén
where the Jibaro-Santero
has carved them
and calls them in prayer
asking please, bring gifts
to the poor niños y niñas
of this estrella.

They came on the eve
Tress Reyes Magos
riding on three Paso-finos
in search of the star
inside every Borincano child.
Under the children's bed
they find fresh grass
for the royal horses to eat
and leave an Aguinaldo treat.

With esperanza still bright
and Parrandas loud
they gallop through the isle

bringing gifts to every child
stopping at the coast
where black are both
the sea and sky
and empty of treasures rest
Tres Reyes Magos.

A new star shines in the sky
Seen by the middle saint divine
Melchor is his name
Africa's negro Rey.
He says to the wise,
"look there on the street,
deep in a city canyon
a beckoning light
and hidden among the shadows
are niños y niñas heirs to this estrella".

"We must ride", he said,
" through the sky
and bring Aguinaldos
to them this night".

But the other wise men
said to Melchor
"we have no more treasures,
we gave them away,
to all the children en la isla
to them all gifts we gave".

So the wise Melchor
on his white horse
contemplated and prayed
and then he said to the wise,
"bring them history
bring them song
bring them zapatos de arco-iris
so they may walk
to the future with dignity".

And so Los Tres Reyes Magos
mounted tres Paso-finos
and rode towards the north
through the heavens
through the night
guided by the stars light.

In the morning they arrived
Singing, "ven, ven little Boricuas!
Look at what we brought you
History, song and zapatos de arco-iris
for the Reyes y Reynas de La Bandera".
All over the barrio, niños y niñas
woke from their dreams
when they heard the three sing.

They run to see the epiphany
they run to see the three
who ride Paso-finos down the street
with gifts for shoeless rainbow feet.

A trail of shackles remain on the street
a phenomenon never seen on t.v.
as they wear zapatos de arco-iris

to the epiphany.

Niños y niñas are reborn
on this street the star adorns
as they wear zapatos de arco-iris

to the epiphany.

History they live and make
on Division street renamed
and, they wear zapatos de arco-iris

to the epiphany.

By Eduardo Arocho
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José E. Rivera is a poet and filmmaker born and raised in Chicago's Humboldt Park community. As a member of the Batey Urbano collective, a Puerto Rican & Latina/o youth space on Paseo Boricua, he has helped organize many artistic events in the community. He is a graduate of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School and is currently pursuing his bachelor's degree in Film & Video at Columbia College.

Blue-light Sale

The LIGHT comes up, and so does the rich man. Taking apart completely My history My lifespan. WAY before the Rivera clan WAY before they Gave A Damn. Way before White Uncle Sam told US to fight for his own land that really wasn't his. See we were raped and we were stabbed, we were tripped over and Grabbed my people and for what.

Open your history books or change the channel to the history scholar. It all looks and sounds the same. Regurgitated lies. Cause now they coming back at us stronger. TRUTH is they never left. THEY so called home of the brave they prized possession theft.

And they left... this blue light behind. and as this LIGHT awakens me from my dreams of freedom and independence. i'm reminded... that i'm that bird in that cage chirping my heart. Because I'm stuck here, and THAT

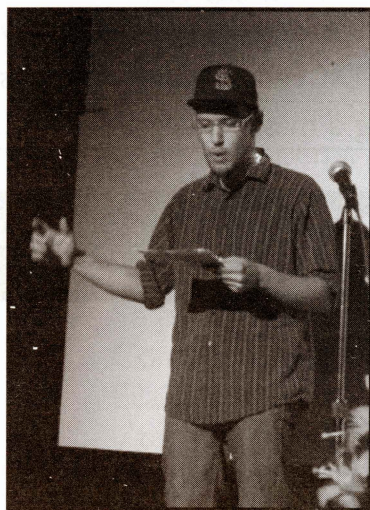
FUCKING BEAMING LIGHT won't let me dream again. Because under it.. UNDER IT MY BROTHER'S AND SISTER'S ARE BEING ABUSED, and they're disappearing slowly, And I can't help to notice that they're also being replaced Its like the yuppie exchange program except my people are being put behind bars or deep under the earth.

And these yuppies are coming in faster and faster , Starbucks Venti on they're breath ipod headphones jammed in their heads. In their minds, for them the worlds revolving but for us our world is falling BUT WE'RE GOING TO STOP IT. Cause the C.P.D. naw the B.A.C.O.N. can't hold us down forever. They're only the puppets being controlled by the rich. Putting us in a ditch so they can stay rich.

And even though they puppets man that shit still hurts. But they brought us to a land that THEY never owned in the first

place and we have to break free. We must break free from this land of oppression, that holds us all down with colonial aggression. It's time for you and yours to take another history lesson, about my culture I consider it a blessing. And if you aint hearing me I'm considering you deaf then, cause even

if you're black or chinese you are still left in the belly of the beast, on your soul it will feat, so you're people can't exist or even live in peace. Virtually deceased white supremacy's that beast and it wouldn't exist if we weren't on a leash.



Pedro Julián Sarsama is a sophomore at DePaul University where he studies Sociology. In addition to school, Pedro is a member of ¡Humboldt Park NO SE VENDE!, a project aimed at resisting gentrification in Humboldt Park. He also stays involved with a number of political organizations and is a visual artist and spoken/written word poet. His inspiration to start writing began when his seventh grade English teacher made his class write a number of vignettes after reading "The House on Mango Street."

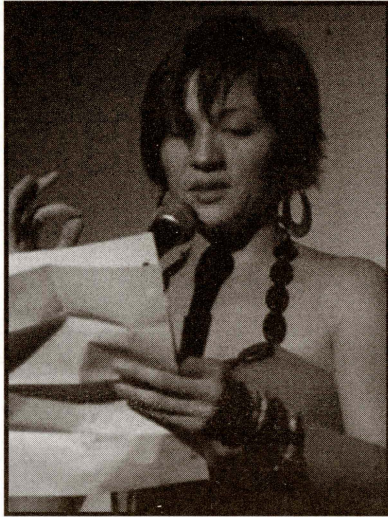
Mi Bandera

The moon creeps through a bandera that hangs like a corpse in my window, whose last act was no suicide, but a defiant leap with the tentacles of empire wrapped around her throat.

A hopeful bandera hangs in my window where the moon creeps through her soft frame; she cries for independence, her hand is heavy at her side, the weight of a machete dragging it down while the weight of the world balances precariously on her shoulders.

In my window the moon creeps through a hanging bandera, her face is one star in a sea of blue the shade of the sky, the shade of my soul, her body is painted white and red, the dolor and paz of my past and my people: the sangre and the alma are her pigment.

My bandera wears moonlight proudly, a scar for eternity;



Judith Díaz López is a poet, organizer, and educator born and raised in Chicago's Humboldt Park community. She is a former member of the Batey Urbano collective, a Puerto Rican & Latina/o youth space on Paseo Boricua. Judith is also a former member of the Union for Puerto Rican Students at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she received her bachelor's degree in Sociology. She is currently the Dean of Students at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School and is pursuing a master's degree at UIC.

Cuestión de Posibiliades

El poema estancado en mi mente
Es el pensamiento de posibilidades presente
Es el mundo entero sentado en su potencial con desmero
Es mi alma frente a oportunidades
Y el miedo que tengo a darme sin miedo
Es la Musa que siempre visita, sin cita,
Se sienta en la sala de espera
Me invita a escribirla
Y no olvidarla
Se despide diario, prometiendo volver
Por si acaso mañana tinta toca papel.

El poema estancado en mi mente
Las posibilidades siempre presente
Pasan por frente
Cuando Consuelo de repente
En acto de tacto ante diplomacia
Nos decía que el dejar vivir
Es dejar morir
Mejor es ayudar a vivir
Juntos en busca de Ella Musa
Llamada posibilidad y ella brindar
Honor por el reto que nos esfuerza
Un reto a la locura, sin espacio suficiente
Que viajando no tiene fronteras

Ni barreras de hierro
Que intentan robarle aliento de inspiración
A Oscar López Rivera y Carlos Alberto Torres
Su arte es su expresión de libertad
Y con mayor ocupación han estado libre
El día que esten con nosotros
La dicha posibilidad ya es realidad
Naciendo en otro mundo de posibilidades.
Y por esa oportunidad historica peleamos
Y por ese mundo luchamos

Aquí, no hay nadie que me diga que no se puede
Que este poema ya cojió viaje y no hay quien lo pare
Ya lo oíste
Y no hay quien te separe de esta memoria
Asi funciona la posibilidad
Se planta en tu mente
Con el posiblemente, tal vez, y quizas podemos de esta manera
Ella te susurra al oído,
y te grita en el otro
te enamora de ideas
y te acaricia el pensamiento crítico
Te manda a bregar
Que con manos trabajadoras
La posibilidad vive

El poema es posible
O posible es el poema de mi vida, nuestra vida
Que si se puede sobre toda oposición
Puede ser que tal Elvira Arrellano
Mujer, madre, entre miles indocumentados
Logro lo imposible
Poniendole cara, nombre, vida, ser humana y lucha
La contradicción de esta nacion
Que al mundo se cree rescatar
Mientras que el coro de si se puede
No se puede ignorar
Que hay conciencia en la calle
Cuando fluye de marchantes
Latinos Unidos
La posibilidad de crear nuestra propia frontera

Que la nacionalidad sea de aquí
Y de aya, una sola

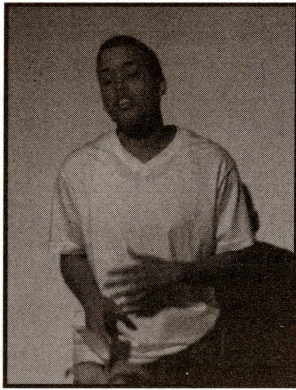
Ese es el posibilitar Bolivariano
Ese es el poema de Latinidad

Y cuando nos cansemos
Cuando las posibilidades se pongan difícil
Cuando la peresa de pesadillas
Te encuentre de noche
Y te diga que no puedes
Que el mundo imposible
Tan chiquito, facil y potente te llame
Y te diga que sigas la corriente

Recuerda tu familia
Su historia y lucha
Recuerda que el problema tuyo es de nosotros
Que el todo se trabaja
Y el nada se da de gratis
Recuerda La Escuelita
Donde la esperenza esta en el paso
De un monton de graduantes rodeando nuestra comunidad
Fructificando los desechables

Recuerda proyectos, programas, actividades, planes
Que ya son realidades
Recuerda bandera dibujada en servilleta y mirala ahora en hierro.
Irrevocable y quieta
Recuerda tu primer poema
Corazon en la mano por tema
Todo lo que has aprendido
Olvidado y amado
Todo sueno y pesadilla
Toda lucha secreta y publica
Las veces que subiste, el cantaso cuando chocaste
Las lagrimas sinceras
Y la honestidad que nos hace tanta falta
El barrio mas grande en presencia mundial
La lucha por preservar "un paseo"

Recuerda este poema de posibilidad...



Jessie Fuentes is a graduate of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School and a freshman at Northeastern Illinois University. She is a staff writer for *Que Ondee Sola* and a member of Union for Puerto Rican Students. Jessie is a community activist on Paseo Boricua, working as a peer mentor at VIDA/SIDA and is a member of the Batey Urbano collective.

Why I Don't Cry Blood

Someone once told me to be lucky you don't cry blood,
But I never understood that analogy cause back then I was like a teacup next to a mug, to young.

But as I got older I understood the pain,
And how to live in struggle and how to live in vein.
And I ask myself why don't I cry blood.

For all the times I seen my mom inject needles in her arms,
And when my sister will grab a blade and cut her wrist and tell me she would mean no harm.

I ask myself why don't I cry blood.

For the mornings I use to go to school with belt welches on my legs and back,
Cause my mom would beat me; take my money just to control her drug attacks.
And I ask myself why don't I cry blood.

For the day me and my brother went to go do a dancing gig and I seen two nine millimeters come out of a car,

I heard bullets come out of the chambers, white tee turn red, goddamn it that day my brother died in my arms.

And I ask myself why don't I cry blood.

For all the times I had to hustle drugs just to get my sister a plate of food,
For hating myself for hating you,
For watching you unwrap crack cocaine and taking lighter to a spoon.

I ask myself why don't I cry blood.

For waking up in the morning to deal with this white privilege, colonialism, color people oppressed bullshit.

When I was born into a family that has no knowledge of it.

And I ask myself why don't I cry blood.

Because no one see's the things that I see,
And no one has a fucking clue on what it is to be me.

And now I know exactly why my tears don't bleed.

Cause all my struggles and heartache is in the color of my ink.



Matthew Rodríguez is a poet, organizer, and educator with roots in Chicago's Humboldt Park community dating back to the 1950's. He is a former member of the Batey Urbano collective, a Puerto Rican & Latina/o youth space on Paseo Boricua. Matthew is also a former member of the Union for Puerto Rican Students at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he received his bachelor's degree in Sociology and master's in Secondary Education. He is currently the Director of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School and is pursuing a second master's degree at NEIU.

Our Faces

I can see the face of Oscar López-Rivera,
Ríos are made,
As the tears of our spirits relate,
Claiming, name after name, like Filiberto Ojeda...
So just let the, floods begin to form.
The water is our work, so let's make it, flow outside of the norm...
So we can see the face of Oscar López-Rivera,
Ríos are made,
As the tears of our spirits relate,
Claiming, name after name, like Filiberto Ojeda...
So just let the, floods begin to form.
The water is our work, so let's make it, flow outside of the norm...
So we can see the face of Oscar...
So you can see the face of Oscar...
So I can see the face of Oscar...
The face of Oscar...

In a cell SIX-by-NINE feet, square footage of FIFTY-FOUR,
Like the historic year when Lolita, went knockin' on Congress' door.
Bringing all of Puerto Rico, unfurled with her flag,
Tears of love down her face, knowing they'd be her last...as her claim rang...

SHOTS fired!
A powdered GRITO!
Aimed not to proclaim hate,
Only to call attention, to the lethal effects as an extension,
Of the non self-governing fate, the colonial state, of Puerto Rico...
SHOTS fired again! With no attempt to cause casualties...
Handling the situation with POISE,
In an act of DISSENSION,
Deemed as terroristic and ODD.
Going against the grain of repression,
Bringing in front of the firing squad, with increased noise...
The reality of oppression...
As seen and spoken with words,
Through our people, the UN-informed, UN-taught and UN-learned.
We, the upset yet silenced and discreet,
Our people learn from the streets,
From our extended family trees,
Or are, educated through North Americanized lessons.
Unknowing of our potential,
Our people COPE with DOPE, dealing with a mental state of depression.
Historically labeled as SCHIZO and BROKE,
Designated as SPICS and TOLD to GET GONE and run...
Back to the tropical sun...
It is us, Nuestra Gente,
That have been able to flip the script on our conditions,
And symbolically hit home runs...
Like the heroic figure of Roberto Clemente.
It is because of him and people simila',
That within the struggle against conditions that limit-cha',
That our, Presencia Boricua, will never be deemed Ausente.
Because, our SHOTS will fire again,
AGAIN and AGAIN, 'till we're heard, and people listen...
And we can see in ourselves the solution,
That empowerment comes from being able to do shit,
To meet our own needs, and service our own peeps...creating our own Institutions...
As an attempt toward a holistic fixin', enlistin', Mind, Body and Spirit,
Awakinin' the unaware yet gifted,
Whose insecurity with Self, leaves infinite gifts stitched in,

It's time to give those stitches a good clippin'!

And heal our own wounds of history

REMOVE THE STITCHES!

'Cause we are NOT in a state of misery...

REMOVE THE STITCHES!

We can begin to determine our own fate!

REMOVE THE STITCHES!

We can come face to face and attack each and every one of our contradictions...

REMOVE THE STITCHES!

Even though it might hurt...

The only way we begin to heal our own selves is by putting an effort toward more, effective work.

The harvest of which, is where our people's faces are reflected...

Where those who have been taken from us, are brought back to the fore, and even, RESURRECTED!

'Cause I can see the face of Oscar López-Rivera,

Ríos are made,

As the tears of our spirits relate,

Claiming, name after name, like Filiberto Ojeda...

So just let the, floods begin to form...

The water is our work, so let's make it, flow outside of the norm...

So we can see the face of Oscar López-Rivera,

Ríos are made,

As the tears of our spirits relate,

Claiming, name after name, like Filiberto Ojeda...

So just let the, floods begin to form.

The water is our work, so let's make it, flow outside of the norm...

So we can see the face of Oscar...

So you can see the face of Oscar...

So I can see the face of Oscar...

The face of Oscar...

OUTSIDE OF A CELL SIX-BY-NINE!!

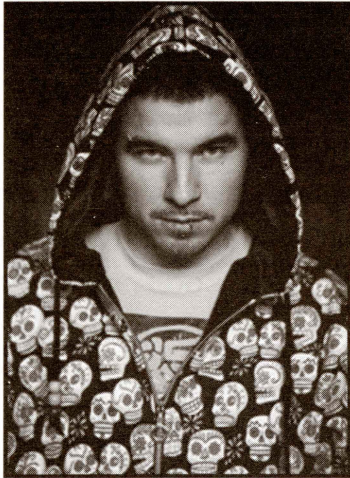


Tania Castillo, 17, is a second year student in the Barrio, Arts, Culture, & Communications Academy after school program in Humboldt Park and a student at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School. She is also a part of the school's "Louder Than a Bomb" poetry slam team. Tania took advantage of being in this poetry team so that she could write about her brother's situation and the issue of street violence.

Just Press Rewind

with so much pain...
his eyes are closed...
he can't see 'cause he just blacked out...
almost feels like he got punched and knocked the fuck out...
slowly and slowly he's losing his strength...
feels like he's really
close to death, no breath
his eyes are bloody
tear drops dripping all
over his body...
he's moving and moving
his heart beats fast with a rhythm unsteady
lil' did he know Wolfy
had a bullet already, ain't
this shit petty...
so now he's sufferin'
to live another minute by
so he could hug my mother and kiss her goodbye...
but God knows if he's
lucky and makes it alive
so I hug my mother
and says it's alright
but I thought to myself this shit ain't right...
I swear I watched my mother cry, no lie,

She's screaming out his name saying,
"Oh Lord no why!"...
So I just sit there and think
"Damn I hope he doesn't die
but try to live another
day by"
'Cause life ain't always about that
Cheese and Wine
'Specially when you in the 'hood
tryna make that Grind
So, I just wish this never
happened and Just press
rewind!!!!



Michael Anthony Reyes Benavides' work has been dedicated to the Batey Urbano, a Puerto Rican & Latina/o youth space on Paseo Boricua. He has been involved in a variety of youth lead projects, including the founding of Zócalo Urbano, a Chicano-Mexicano/Latino youth space located in Pilsen. He is also a former editor of *Que Ondee Sola*. Currently, he is touring the country with his new play "Crime Against Humanity," co-written by former Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Luis Rosa. Michael has played the role of actor, writer, and director for the play.

The Day Oscar Came Home

The day Oscar came home
We held the biggest parade every seen

There flags covering the entire horizon

Light

Blue

Shinning

Bright

Blending

Sky

People yelled from the roof tops

“Viva Puerto Rico Libre”

Police even joined in

And all the politicos came out

I think I even say Mark Anthony

But it might have been lusito from up the block

He looks like Marc Anthony

Cars could't even move down la division

The UPS driver was pissed

We shut that mother fucker down

We had planned a bombazo at La Casita de Don Pedro

But we had to move it to the park

The yuppies walking their dogs

Started to freak out

We carried Osacr on our shoulders

The was an ocean of beautiful Puerto Rican People

More like the Orinoco river perhaps

I made sure I had my Mexican flag

The street cheered as Oscar moved toward

Humboldt Park

Abuelas yelling from windows

Youngins yelling from cars

Kids yelling from bikes

There were even two gangbangers yelling

As they rode a shwin tandem bike

You know the kind that has

two sets of everything

even the drunks who don't seem to care about anything where yelling

the news sent helicopters
and they reported it was a riot at first

“ this just in live from Humbolt Park the third riot
in 40 years

why the Puerto Ricans riot join us for a full
report at 6”

but when they read Michael Rodríguez article
in La Voz our community newspaper
they changed their story

I heard a littler child ask her father
“who is that man on their shoulders?”

the father said “that a Puerto Rican hero?”

as we reached the first 59 feet tall flag on
California and Division

There was a calm over the crowd
Silence
as if Roberto Clemente was at bat
in the bottom of the ninth
down by one run
basses loaded
with a full count

Oscar stepped down off our shoulders

He looked at the flag closely
Felt the cold steel
Observed the detail of the work
And gave a smile
More so with his eyes

The crowd cheered

We approached the park
A sound system was set up on the back of a truck
Lourdes Lougo gave the introduction

You are home now Oscar you are home
The crowd wept
Then Jose Lopez spoke
You are home now Oscar you are home
The wept some more
Then there was poetry by the youth of the Batey Urbano

Judy, DVS, Pinky, Melissa, Matt, Janeda, Jay Jay and Xavi all read

I read as well and Eduardo Arocho too

Oscar went to the mike
And the crowd erupted
For 20 whole minutes he could not
Say a word over the cheers

During his greeting

We cried
 Laughed
 Smiled
 Cheered
 Yelled
 And cried some more

After we finished
We went to eat at the cultural cents Juan Antonio Cortejer

Dona Cladie cook special

We had every type of Puerto Rican food made
There was alcapurrias, flan, tembleque, chuletas, morcilla, asopao, pastelon, pastels,
albondigas, mofongo, mondongo, chicharron de polla and every type of sweets from café
coloa.

We ate talked and laughed
We smiled cheered but most
Of all we celebrated and prepared for the next days work

All of this on the day Oscar came home



Xavier "Xavi" Luis Burgos is editor of *Que Ondee Sola* and a member of Union for Puerto Rican Students at Northeastern Illinois University. He is currently pursuing his bachelor's in Sociology with a minor in Latino & Latin American Studies at NEIU. Xavi is also a co-coordinator of the Barrio, Arts, Culture, & Communications Academy after school program in Humboldt Park, a staff writer for *La Voz del Paseo Boricua* newspaper, and a member of the ¡Humboldt Park NO SE VENDE! campaign.

Resisting Oblivion

There is a Puerto Rican word
that embodies the consciousness
of a contradictory people,
a complex word that represents
the historical narrative
of my beloved people.
A word that removes the façade
of a dying nation.

There is a nation born of maroon societies.
Identities spawned through forgotten barrios.
A people viewed as a fall from grace,
a fall from the mother country
like a half-bitten apple
encircled by a whispering serpent.

Juruntungo is that word,
somewhere that is nowhere,
the boonies of a place people are warned not to tread.

Although I write my pride
and my dismay
in English
it is still a reflection of my deviance
of an innovative people
re-creating language to conform to our realities

projecting an aura of collective defiance
to the processes that seek our oblivion

We were displaced, not liberated!
Over and over again, like a scratched CD
the Puerto Rican people must relocate and dislocate
pushed aside
and criticized
because most of us have not lived out the "American Dream,"
as if that smoke-screen ideal was made for us.

We are taught that Puerto Ricans are not important,
that we populate savage lands
beggars' palaces
content with docility
We are told that we are not a nation of 4 million,
let alone 8 million,
reflecting the Boricua trans-nationality.

We are examined as a Latina/o problem,
of butterfly-knife wielding youth
and salsa dancing welfare queens.
But as I watch the brick buildings of La Division
swishing past my eyes
through a rear-view window
like the reels flowing through a projector
my mind catches snapshots
of bright, rhythmic Tufiño-esque murals of the people,
of Boricua flags
and political prisoners.

I give a smile
as I see a pig-tailed borinqueñita negrita
receiving her coconut-flavored priaguá.
A feeling of nationalistic adrenaline takes ahold of me.
I get out the car
and stand before,
in awe,
a 59 foot high monument to resilience -
the sun shining through its solitary star,
This world becomes no longer a flash of images,
but a still reality

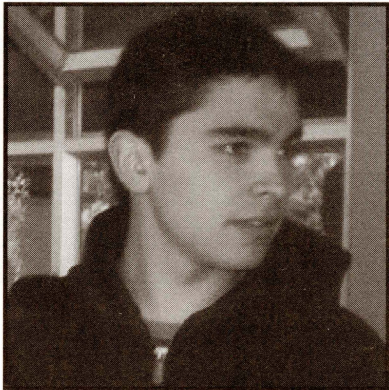
proving that the Puerto Rican people are real,
concrete,
that we exist,
that we are not a myth.

We no longer can be the invisible people!
Our history re-written.
Our resistance hushed.
Our people re-defined, re-named
like a youth Josesito turned into a little Italian Johnny
or a youth negrito Jesús told that he's too black,
too Latino,
to be named after the white savior
of a dominant white civilization.

We cannot be a people
compliant
assistant
selling our homes
with only half-ripped currency to enjoy.
¡Ya plantamos bandera!
Showcasing to all the world our glorious ghetto!

But what will become of us?
Will I continue to hear the laughter
of jovencitos play fighting on cracked sidewalks
and the nasal accented Puerto Rican Spanglish
of viejitas pushing grocery carts.
The future is a blank book,
even if it's flashing before our eyes.
But our struggles are ours!
The Division Street rebellion is ours!
They can't take that from us!
It is for our nation,
for our humanization,
opening-up the gates of a collective curiosity
so that generation,
after generation,
after generation!
an awake with the knowledge
that in each and every one
of a beautifully tragic people
lies a spirit of self-recognition.

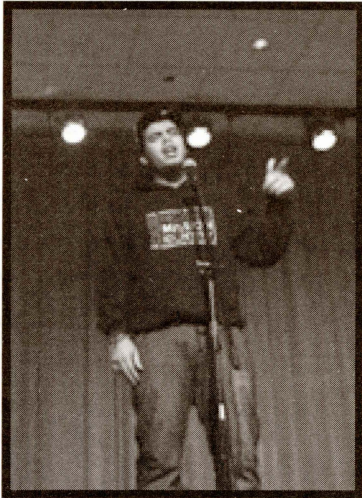
So that no matter if we lose our enclave,
No matter if God decides to rid our little chaotic island
from its uncertain misery
and sends a wave of destruction
from the very waters that brought us our oppressive history
and sinks Borinquen to the water's floor,
our history will be narrated by the jíbaros on the moon.
And Paseo Boricua will remain,
declaring myself
Puerto Rican
borincano,
borinqueño,
puertorro,
Boricua!
Forever resisting oblivion,
telling and showing the world
¡Que somos puertorriqueños
y Humboldt Park es de nosotros!



Nicolás Alvarez is a senior “aspirante” at Lincoln Park High School, whom from time to time writes poetry because he feels poetry is a great form of self expression. When asked what inspired him to write “Donde Yo Vivo,” he replied “*este poema me gusta porque me recuerda la playa donde vivo [en Chile]*” - “I like this poem because it reminds me of the beach where I live [in Chile].” He plans to go back to his native Chile to study Electrical Engineering.

Donde Yo Vivo

The endless sea is glimmering
She knows about solitude
She is the one that gives life
She is the one that quenches our thirst
But she is lonely,
Because her only companion
Touch only a thin strip
A strip that is far, far away.



Rubén Borrero is a senior at Loyola University in Chicago, where he is studying Psychology. He is President of the Latin American Student Organization (LASO) founded in 1969. He is also a co-founder of the Empowerment Pipeline Program, a curriculum designed for inner-city students of color. He found the need to write when experiencing his day to day happenings in "La Isla del Encanto" - Puerto Rico. His first album, "The Color Brown," is a combination of Caribbean rhythms and Hip-Hop. He has performed all over the city of Chicago and will be performing this summer at the Chicago Theater. He is currently working on another musical album coming up in the Spring.

Pa' Mi Isla: Mi Cuerpo y Mi Palabra

Pa mi isla: Mi cuerpo y mi palabra

Para poder escribir en el viento
voy a construir lapices invisibles
y te voy a dibujar caricias en la cara
sin que te des cuenta

voy a doblar barquitos de papel
pa' que mis labios tengan donde navegar
en este mar llamado distancia
donde las olas son de risas, y la arena es de cristal

y voy a desifrar el misterio de las alas
pa' ir volando hasta tus costas
y plantar en cada uno de tus pueblos
un pedazo de mi cuerpo, pa que no me olvides

voy a quemar velas con olor a t 
voy a infectar esta ciudad de coqu es
pa' poder dormir sin escuchar el ruido del lago
donde el agua se parece al cemento

voy a hablarte de nuestra historia
de tu infinita estrella blanca
de tus rojas franjas, pintadas con sangre de taino
y después, voy a darte un beso para siempre...

Pa' que entiendas que mi amor por tí
va mucho mas alla de 2000 millas.

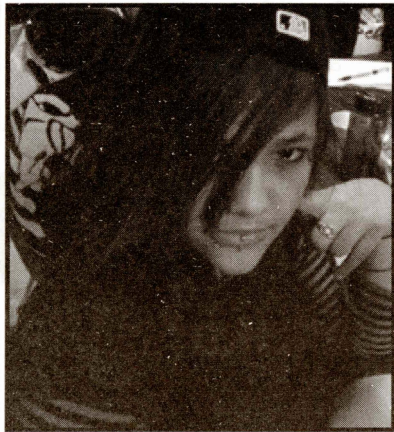


Jacklyn Nowotnik is a sophomore at Northeastern Illinois University. She is a soon to be Vocal Performance major with a minor in Theatrical Performance. Outside of academics, Jacklyn is an active member in *Que Ondee Sola*, Union for Puerto Rican Students and Aspira of Lincoln Park. It was in high school where she found her knack for writing, experimenting with vivid poems alive with imagination, natural rhythms, and clever rhyme schemes. Eventually, these poems lead to beautiful song writing and catchy lyrics. She is currently considering becoming a children's book writer.

Alice in Wonderland

Ever feel like your mind doesn't have a working stoplight?
So you're constantly stopping for something to make the right
Thus you are on your way
But then without looking something pulls out too far and stays
Then before you know it BOOM! CRASH! There's a collision
A busy bustling crowded, thought to thought (bumper to bumper)
intersection
That's what I feel as I try to pour my soul out
Onto this blank cyber sheet, letter by letter on this Microsoft cursor...just
typing about
All at once I feel this busy intersection of feeling and emotion
In a dead silent house with no noise or commotion
Yet everything feels so loud

In a room all alone, yet feeling so crowded
I'm a bit **A**nnoyed, **B**ored, **C**alm, **D**ark, **E**ntirely **F**rustrated and **F**lustered, **G**rim, **H**opeful,
and I **J**ust can't help but feel like a **K**not tied over a thousand times, and begin to tell you
how many degrees of **L**onely I feel
I could describe myself in the rest of the Alphabet, but my mind is so full that adjectives
don't come to mind
Boy, how I need to just unwind
A simple hug or kiss would make me feel so much better
But all I got is myself to keep warm through cold fall weather
Lose me to a Puerto Rican hurricane or a Frank Sinatra song
'Cause I don't wanna go on pretending you're mine
When we both know pretending in this case is such a waste of time
Pretending happens in fairy tales and I didn't begin on once upon a time
I didn't have a fairy godmother, lose a glass slipper, follow a rabbit, nor meet the queen of
hearts
So button button...who's got the button?



Janina Silva, *a.k.a Nina, a.k.a Ky*, is a 17-years-old and is a student at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School and a radio student at the Barrio, Arts, Culture, Communications Academy after school program in Humboldt Park. She is currently on the poetry slam team at her school, which will be competing at "Louder Than a Bomb" competition. She wants to study all types of art, especially animation, creative writing, and world languages at Columbia College.

Recession

In times of desperate measures
all I can do is write my words, all I
can do is roll them off my tongue as I'm
stepping through this darkness with my eyes
closed, even the music yet to have
been reaching in my time of need,
they say we're in recession but I think

it's my life in need of recess, money bums so
green that gets sick as the green in my hair is screaming
it isn't fair that my number has yet to be picked out this hat of life, and I'll be damned if
I pick up the knife to cut me off a good
slice of life from this world's
pie, pie is 3.14x trouble + eyes closed
It burns my ears to hear people making
a profession off this life recession, and
how I can't even afford to breath
clean and easy because this life
here teases me with that shining
green piece of paper that makes us
murder and gives us ambition that
fills our guns with ammunition because
I'm ready to go off on this recycled
life because it isn't fair that you
sparkle so bright as hard as I wish
to grab and obtain I'm wracking my
brain and it's driving me insane but
my tears turn gray and I'm losing
doses sending me through a psychosis is
because it isn't fair and it's driving
me into despair I'm thinking my eyes
are blinking but underneath me the
whole world is sinking you took
away my liberty my freedom just to rule
your kingdom of recession but
at who's discretion
I'm being watched
every second and you're sitting
they're watching my every move watching
me wither away at the results of
your beautiful recession while others are suffering of depression because at
the end of the day no matter how many
bodies waste away for you another
day another dollar, for me another
lucky hour is at my discretion
I'm surviving your recession

Que Ondee Sola

Informing, Educating and Advocating for the Puerto Rican & Latina/o students at NEIU and our communities since 1972

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