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## Que Ondee Sola - December 2016

Robin Bridges

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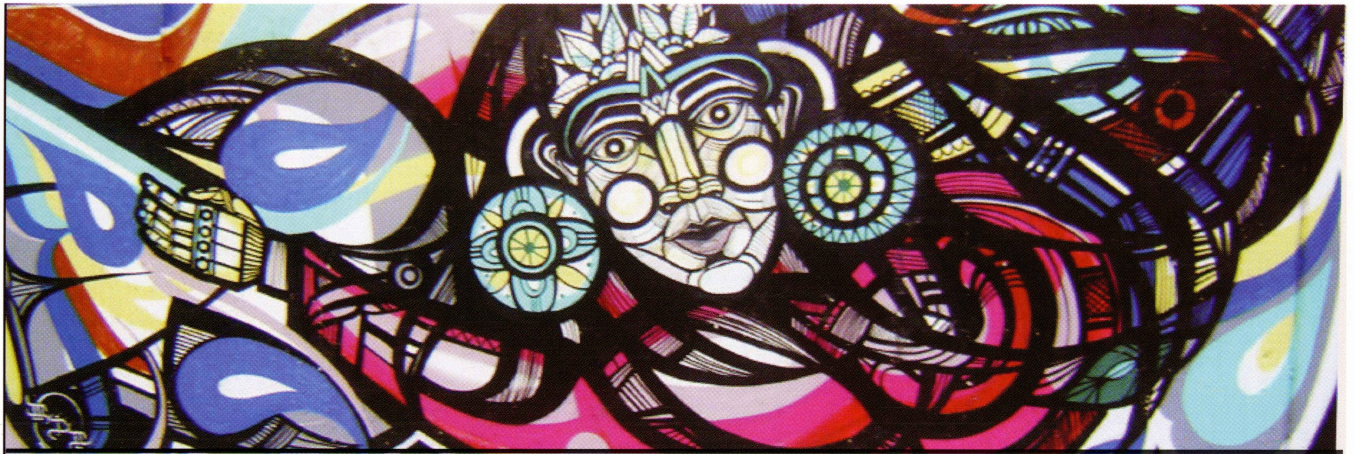
# Que Ondee Sola

December 2016  
Volume 44, Issue 1

¡El poder para el pueblo!  
Taking to the streets again



Photo of Aesthetics of Resistance by Emily Barney, 2008



## Bienvenidos a todos, Welcome everyone!

This warm welcome is extended to our readers, subscribers, communities, advocates, alumni, staff, students and university. Que Onde Sola (QOS) finds itself in a very interesting state as this year's staff is diverse in academic level, talent, experience, background and age. What does that have to do with QOS?.

As with many student organizations, the atmosphere and goals tend to change with leadership. With this in mind, the goal of this magazine is to stay true to its mission statement but become more inclusive to Latinx current events, communities, and culture so that readers that may not be so familiar with these things can become interested and start reading *nuestras historias*, our stories.

We believe that this is more important than ever as Northeastern Illinois University's (NEIU) Latino student population is the second largest ethnicity in the student body, according to their Fall 2015 Enrollment Fact Sheet. We also hope to appeal to our student body as a whole. NEIU has international and undocumented students. There are almost four times as many undergraduates as there are graduates and a near even split between full-time and part-time students. The average age of a student being 27. As a staff, we hope that this historic magazine will find its way into the hands of many as we begin to plan our issues for the rest of the school year.

There are a lot of ideas floating around as many of the staff are new to QOS, with the exception of one of the Co-Editor-in-Chiefs who was a QOS staff writer between 2008 and 2010. Despite this being a new experience for many, we have some super exciting ideas. We plan to feature submissions from faculty, and strengthen our ties to the Latinx communities at NEIU and to our subscribers. In addition to that, we are working more closely with the other media organizations on campus to network and share resources. We also plan to theme our issues around main ideas so that our magazine has an overall topic for each issue. With that said, we would like to welcome you into reading our first issue for fall 2016. This issue is dedicated to *nuestras culturas*, our cultures. We hope that you enjoy it and look forward to future QOS issues.

*Gracias a todos*, thank you all

Your Editors-in-Chief  
Robin Bridges and Jacklyn Nowotnik

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## Misión / Mission Statement

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.

We appreciate and encourage suggestions and contributions.

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# The Habits of the Empire: Neglect and Control in the Caribbean and Mainland

By Dr. Patricio Rizzo-Vast

*“Cuba y Puerto Rico son de un pájaro las dos alas,  
reciben flores y balas sobre el mismo corazón...”*

*Lola Rodríguez de Tió*



Those 19th century prophetic words by Lola Rodríguez de Tió, the first prominent Puerto Rican-born female poet, not only say that Cuba and Puerto Rico are the wings of the same wounded bird but that they are also the recipients of violence: “bullets in the heart.” Poverty and hunger are such forms of violence. The heart can be viewed as a symbol of the economy and culture of both islands. While birds are conventionally symbols of flight, of freedom, in the context of the literary movement known as romanticism, birds are a symbol of restoration. A return to a life of simplicity, God and nature. The bird is also a symbol of both beauty and the challenges of the colonial enterprises in the poem. It is a metaphor that comments on the present situation of Puerto Ricans and Cubans on the islands and the mainland.

This year’s presidential election has seen a promise of change in the relationships between the United States and Cuba, but not much else has been accomplished up to this moment. In light of the 56-year-long relationship between the United States and communist Cuba, this essay offers readers an educational history to contrast how the condi-

tions of Puerto Ricans living on the island and mainland have improved compared to Cuba.

To borrow a phrase from Charles Duhigg, we can say that one of the keystone habits – or customs that are at the heart of all other routines – of the United States is its misunderstanding, mocking, neglect and outright discrimination of Hispanics. Even after incorporating all the Native American territories of the 13 original colonies in the 17th century, this is being continued with the annexation of one half of Mexican territory in the mid 19th century and the occupation of Cuba and Puerto Rico after 1898. This behavioral habit is still present in the United States’ inability to assimilate with equal rights and conditions for Latinos in the mainland of the United States.

When we look at the relationship between the United States and Hispanic nations in the Americas, the scarce dialogue between them is based on an indisputable relationship of control, domination and neglect. Yet, the impasse of this long history has become central to the future of the United States because of the sheer numbers of Latinos in the

United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau there are about 55 million Latin Americans and Latinos living in this country presently, and their numbers are growing. This fact is not due to immigration but to reproduction.

*“...customs that are at the heart of all other routines – of the United States is its misunderstanding, mocking, neglect and outright discrimination of Hispanics.”*

The presence of Latinos is an undeniable reality in this nation. Therefore, their potential participation in the creation of revenue via taxes as consumers and employees has a significant effect on the economy of the nation. This keystone habit of neglect and discrimination can be studied by looking at two islands of the Caribbean that were part of the Spanish empire until 1898. Puerto Rico became a colony of the United States and continues to be one. Cuba, on the other hand became an informal colony until 1959. Puerto Rico remains a classic example of what the late Tulio

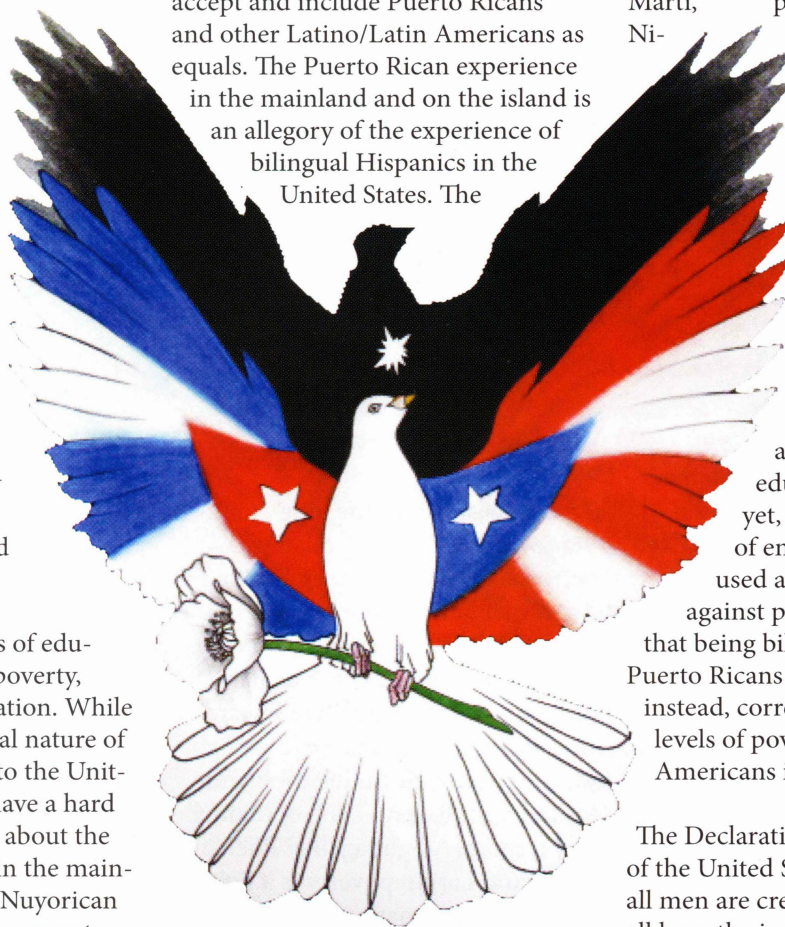
Halperin-Donghi, an Argentine historian, called the colonial compact: minimum investment with maximum extraction. And, like the rest of the main jewels of the Spanish and American empires, Puerto Rico has been a source of material goods and human labor.

Seen as a resource, the people of Puerto Rico were treated like test subjects in a laboratory of uncertain chemistry. Between 1900 and 1970, about one third of Puerto Rican women in Puerto Rico and the mainland were part of a great effort to sterilize women in the name of population control. Many of those pharmaceutical companies are still located in Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico has low levels of education and high levels of poverty, unemployment and migration. While the bilingual and bicultural nature of Puerto Ricans is an asset to the United States, Puerto Ricans have a hard life in this nation. Movies about the Puerto Rican experience in the mainland, such as *Manito* and *Nuyorican Dreams*, show that a large percentage of Puerto Ricans are excluded from the American dream.

Puerto Ricans leave the island and return to the island according to the labor needs of the mainland, that is to say when employment goes up, then migration of Puerto Ricans goes up. Like Mexicans and Central Americans then, we can say that Puerto Ricans are a reserve labor pool located in the fringes of cities. Like many other Latinos, we can echo Juan Gonzalez, writer of *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*, that Puerto Ricans remain largely invisible to Anglo society living in buffer zones between blacks and whites. I propose

that the United States begin to see the position of Puerto Ricans in Latin America and the United States as an opportunity. Breaking the stubborn habit of discrimination and ignorance, United States' citizens could accept and include Puerto Ricans and other Latino/Latin Americans as equals. The Puerto Rican experience in the mainland and on the island is an allegory of the experience of bilingual Hispanics in the United States. The



Graphic by Brisa Becerril

habit of discrimination of bilingual and bicultural people is behind the depreciation of people who are an asset to the global culture of the twenty-first century. Gonzalez would say that in the United States the experience of Puerto Ricans was "closer to Algerians in France before independence, or to Irish Catholics in England today."

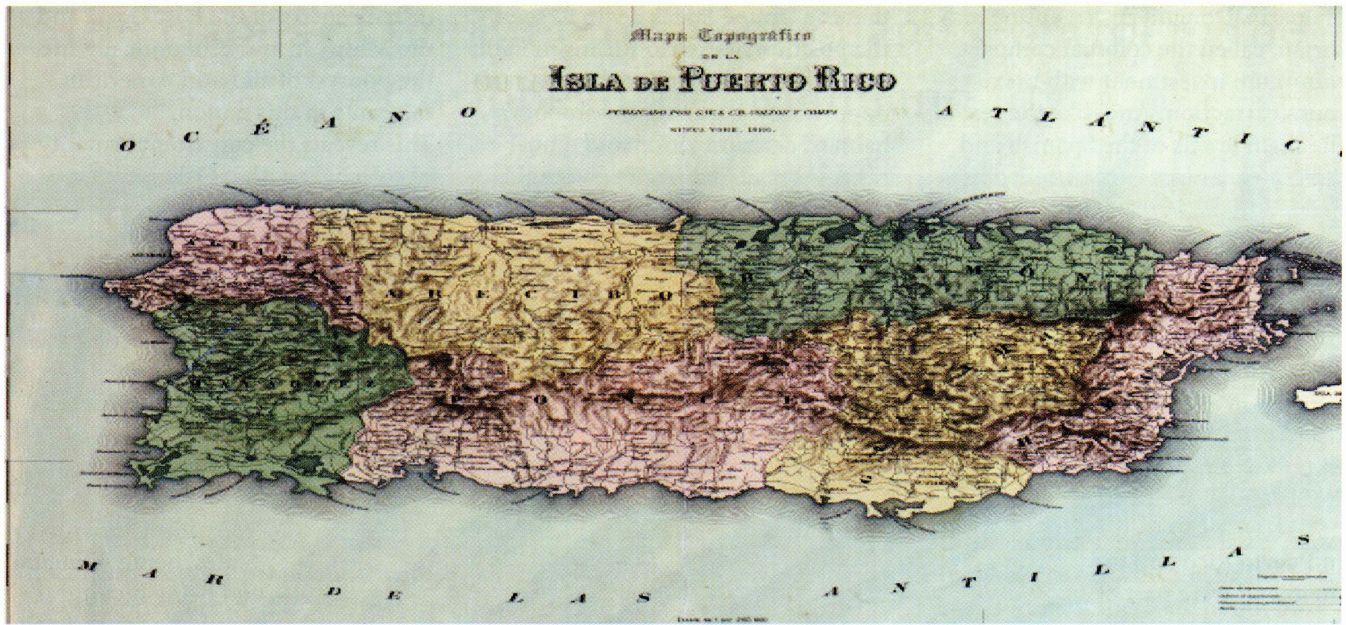
This long relationship of neglect and discrimination is the product of more than 500 years of colonialism by Spain and the current virtual colonialism of the United States. Puerto Ricans in the United States mainland, are predominantly in the largest

urban centers of the East Coast and the Midwest, and economically, are the poorest of all Latin American migrants in this nation. This reveals the consistent brutality of colonialism that Cuban writer, Jose Marti, pointed to and that Ni-caraguan poet Rubén Darío foreshadowed in his writing.

Culturally, Puerto Rico is a precious asset because Puerto Ricans are mostly bilingual and, in a society like the United States, being bilingual and being bicultural should be appreciated and promoted in the educational system. And yet, because of the habits of empire, this position is used as a way to discriminate against people. To the point that being bilingual, in the case of Puerto Ricans bringing prosperity instead, corresponds to the highest levels of poverty among all Latin Americans in the United States.

The Declaration of Independence of the United States proclaims that all men are created equal, that they all have the inalienable right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

And yet, the United States' habits of empire in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the Americas lead to the uprooting of people and forcing them to live without access to education, in neighborhoods where crime is rampant and economic violence is a way of life. This leads to patterns of migration and suffering caused by lack of hope. The United States should invest in improving the lives of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos here. Instead of continuing the business of unending wars in other parts of the world, the United States should look at the inner



cities in its own borders.

Let's hope that American leadership becomes more enlightened while we fight for the right to educate people about the advantages of bilingualism and multiculturalism in a twenty-first century. Where we need to pay attention to greater evils such as the imbalance in the distribution of wealth, and the destruction of the planet and species. Just like when the United States began talking about the relaxation of the antiquated and detrimental embargo laws to Cuba, a product of old mentalities of empire, the United States must work to improve the education and quality of lives of Puerto Ricans living on the island and the United States.

The habits of racism and discrimination can be broken. In *The Power of Habit*, Charles Duhigg writes that the golden rule of changing habits is to insert a new routine in the minds of people. A new routine for the population at large in the United States would be to learn about Latino people, about the great contributions of Latin America to the world. To name a few : the domestication of corn, chocolate, potato, vanilla and

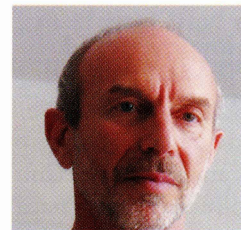
so many other achievements.

To also learn about the long-standing asymmetrical relationships between the United States and Latin American nations and Latinos in the United States. Since education on foundational issues is not usually the direction empires gravitate toward. In addition to hoping, we must fight for the right to be understood and for the right to have a life of dignity and respect. A fight against Puerto Rican and Latino poverty is a fight against discrimination and disrespect.

*"...the golden rule of changing habits is to insert a new routine in the minds of people.."*

Racism, sexism and discrimination are the building blocks of an oppressive empire; let's work to change that long history! Bilingual peoples are a resource rather than a nuisance. If this appreciation is accepted as a new habit, the possibilities of growth and understanding between Anglo and Hispanic cultures would be full

of the possibilities of setting a new example for other conflicted regions of the world.



*Dr. Patricio Rizzo-Vast has published five poetry books and a book on literary criticism. He has a deep commitment to teaching Latino and Latin American Studies, Spanish and Portuguese. He has traveled all over Latin America and has lived in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin American Studies with a minor in Chicano Studies at University of California, Berkeley. He was awarded his Clear Teaching Credential in Spanish and Master of Arts degree in Spanish from San Francisco State University. He also received his doctoral degree in Spanish with a specialization in Latin American poetry from University of California, Davis.*

# What Trump's Presidency Means for the Latino Community

By Danny Montesdeoca

Nov. 8, 2016 will not be a day that is soon forgotten in U.S. history. It was the day that Donald J. Trump became the President-Elect, supported by the racist and misogynistic side of America, and those who have the luxury of not letting racism and sexism be a deciding factor. It was the day that many minorities watched in complete disbelief that a man who openly encouraged supporters to use violence, who ludicrously generalized all Mexicans as rapists and criminals, who proposed an outright ban on our Muslim brothers and sisters and who has blatantly disrespected women, veterans and the disabled, became the elected leader of our country. As outrageous as Trump's campaign has been, what has been a shock to many of us is since Nov. 8 is how he's doubled back on some of his statements.

The proposed wall along our southern border is no longer being planned as the big 35 to 50 feet high and made of precast concrete. Now, it's being planned as a 2,000 mile long, double-layered fence, according to a report by Reuters. That doesn't mean, however, that this double-layered fence is better than the originally proposed wall. The fence is still an unnecessary expense, but a more realistic one for Trump's administrations and the GOP super majority in Congress. Though his original plan for a wall has changed, what hasn't is his desire to deport undocumented immigrants from the U.S.



Trump at Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa, by Matt A.J.

Trump's absurd generalization of all Mexicans, and Latina/os, being rapists and criminals has him wanting to deport two to three million undocumented immigrants who have criminal backgrounds, as he said in an interview with 60 Minutes on Nov. 13.

According to the Pew Research Center, there are an estimated 11.2 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. today. This number is down from its peak in 2007 where there were an estimated 12.2 million undocumented immigrants. This estimated of 11.2 million accounts for only four percent of the total U.S. population.

According to a report done by the Bureau of Judicial Statistics, of these 11.2 million only 73,665 of them are undocumented immigrants that are in state or federal prisons. Our total prison population stands at 2.2 million.

73,665 out of 2,220,330.

That's three percent. Three percent of our state and federal prison population is made up of undocumented immigrants. There aren't even enough convicted undocumented immigrants that amount to the total that Trump wants to deport, though this is not counting the population in private prisons.

But the way Trump describes the people he wants to deport is ambiguous. Criminal. That word encompasses quite a number of offenses including some that, quite frankly, aren't even that big of a deal to be deemed "criminal." Driving without a license, possession and use of cannabis, possession and use of other drugs and other nonviolent offenses. Exactly what kind of criminals is Trump going to deport?



Trump's election in the presidency provides us with a number of uneasy uncertainties. The best-case scenario, which isn't good, is that he doesn't turn out to be the fascist he painted himself to be. The worst-case scenario is that most of that rhetoric isn't just rhetoric and with a Republican super-majority in Congress, they will work together to put America in a state of regression.

*"People shouldn't be afraid of their government. Governments should be afraid of their people."*

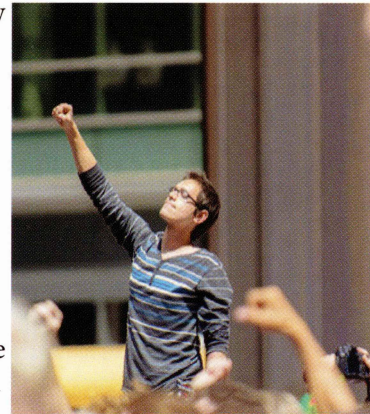
Trump has plans to deregulate carbon emissions, handicap the Environmental Protection Agency, cut taxes on the one percent. The GOP has long wanted a way to get and maintain political power, and now they have the executive, legislative and judicial branch. Money in politics doesn't seem like it's going to stop, but continue. Methods of voter suppression might manifest itself again as it

did during the Jim Crow era of the South.

But we are the solution. As Alan Moore said in V for Vendetta, "People shouldn't be afraid of their government. Governments should be afraid of their people." Now, more than ever, we must unite. We must rid ourselves of the inter-

nalized oppression that the Latina/o community has in order to get over our petty differences and realize we are one.

There is no Mexican, Puerto Rican, Guatemalan, Venezuelan, Ecuadorian, Costa Rican or Dominican. There is only us.



## Abuelastra

By Emily Chelmecki

Pushed into the kitchen to meet my new abuelastra,  
brandishing flowers like a ward to a curse.  
My sullen eyes freshly salted by unfair wedding bells.  
Her lips drawn tight in a skeptical purse.  
"¿Mucho gusto Abuela?" I ventured, my Spanish  
almost exhausted.  
"¡Para ti!" I parroted, thrusting the foliage forward.  
"Encantada," she replied, her voice sounding frosted.  
The silence rolled in between us like high tide.  
She shifted her seat "Pues...mira."  
I memorized the floor.  
She cleared her throat. "Ven aquí."  
I eyeballed the door.  
"I don't want to be here," I said,  
"my real grandmother is dead."  
The words rushed out like convicts escaping the jail of  
my mouth.  
"Finalmente...la verdad esta aquí."  
"Ya comiste?" she asked.  
I backed away.  
"Come algo."  
I shook my head.  
She pushed me a plate, and I ate anyway.  
"Mi hija tiene suerte que soy todo corazón. Mañana cocinamos."  
Together by obligation but separated by age, by blood, by tongue.  
We made food and war for 8 years.



Graphic by Brisa Becerril

# There Once Was A Monster

By *Marlena Ceballos*

There once was a monster that loved to watch women burn; started it all, it turned into another generation of monsters that fought against another generation of hard-working peasants daughters of farmers, ancestors were explorers from possibly Africa, Italy, and Spain, after several generations arose a queen from this generation who was finally able to speak against the pain.

She spoke there were slave owners of these women and literally spoke it all, I mean literally spoke it all... and the sleazy character of the slave owners arose outta the generation that was left of these slave owners; just as the women were about to break free, he tried denying me of my freedom of speech...so that's when the peasant in me fought cause now that I had the power of a queen, I had the power to tell him his words didn't hurt me, and so this man in a king mentality decided to try to claim death on me cause I was bold enough and spoke against the disgusting shit that his previous generation put me through...

But my king reversed the cycle of every curse he wished on me and now this man suffers pain...so now I'm a bit more at peace, but this narrative piece isn't complete until I mention that only two of these women have yet to achieve their fullest potential... to gain status as queen because they've spoken out against the generation of slave owners that robbed them of their sexual innocence...far too many more from various generations, some from the same and innumerable ancestries have yet to do same....

I've given you ..

Bits and pieces, but not enough pieces to see the en-

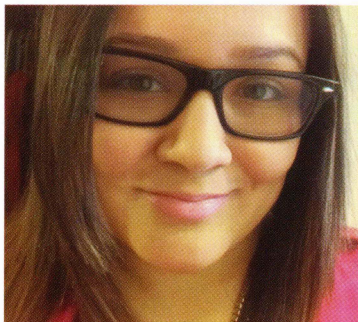


tire picture of the puzzle...I been literally making my dreams a reality, both literal ones and metaphors...I been makin' dreams a reality since the day that I was born, I hit the ground running, that was metaphorically, but now but I'm both metaphorically and physically running cause this life's a game we play and on fasted paced lane, but every time I can catch glimpse of the bigger picture I have to stop and think of the women that were left behind...are they okay? Na, I mean really if they bottle that shit up is it possible to remain psychologically sane?

Venting this shit out leaves me with a bit more of some psychological sanity...

...far too many women from various generations some from my same and innumerable ancestries have have had the courage to speak against their slave owners...will you be bold enough?

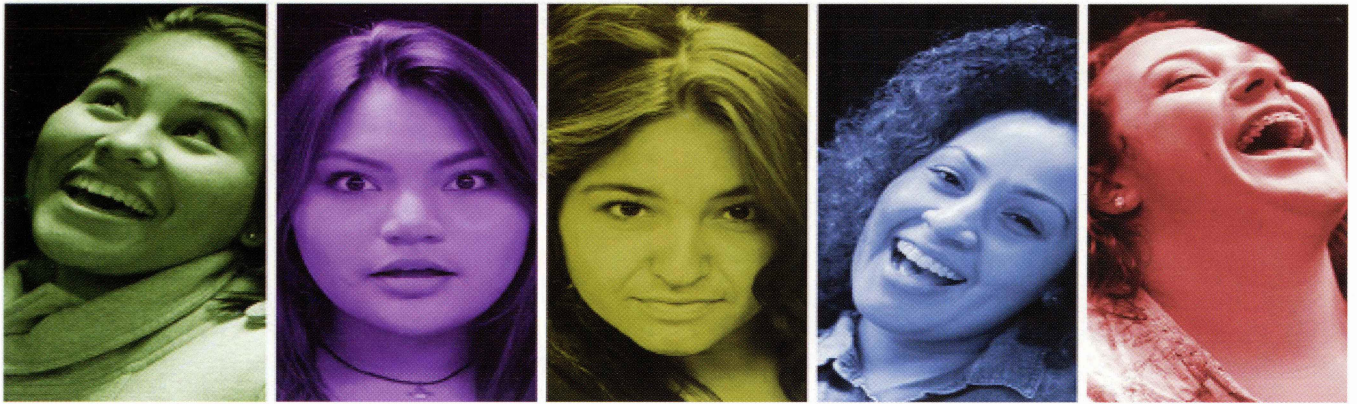
If you're in a room full of people stop and look around... and if you're reading this alone name the first 4 women that come to your mind... an outdated statistic from 2004 said that every 1 in 4 girls had been sexually abused; I hate to see what this number is today...



*Marlena Ceballos is a Chicago native and a bilingual teacher and coordinator for Chicago Public Schools (CPS). She has strong influences from her Mexican and Puerto Rican cultures. Marlena writes and performs poetry as a spoken word artist.*

*She graduated from Dominican University with a teaching certificate and a bachelor of the arts in American Studies. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in curriculum and instruction at the American College of Education.*

*She shares this poem in order to bring awareness to the issue of domestic and sexual abuse women suffer. This poem is based on her story that she tells in memory of the women in her family who suffered domestic and sexual abuse.*



## ‘Curves’ Are Coming to NEIU

By Desiree Dylong

“Real Women Have Curves,” a play written by Josefina Lopez, was performed at NEIU in early December and was the first Stage Center production to have an all-Latina cast. Which was an important aspect of the production as the play is centered on a group of Latinas who work in a sewing factory in Los Angeles in the late 1980s.

Lopez wrote “Real Women Have Curves” based on the experiences she had while working in a sewing factory for five months in Los Angeles. It was during this experience that Lopez learned the value of bonding with other women.

“I remember feeling blessed that I was a woman because male bonding could never compare with what happens when women work together. We had something special and I wanted to show the world,” Lopez said in her playwright notes. The special bonds formed inside of the factory is what helped to bring the characters of Ana, Estela, Carmen, Pancha and Rosali to audiences around the world.

Unlike the movie, the play wasn’t written to focus solely on Ana or feature her love interest, but rather to show the everyday life of the women working in the factory. For them an average day involved body image issues, risk of deportation, love interests, chisme, the clash of female identity as women, and making ends meet while struggling to meet workload deadlines.

The representation of Latino culture and having an all-female cast is part of what made director and NEIU graduate, Mary Kroeck, excited about the production. “The fact that it’s an all-female cast is really special. And even more so, it’s an all Latina cast which is a big deal. It’s also a bilingual show, and that resonates with our student body,” said Kroeck. She also explained how some of the character’s struggles are relatable to NEIU’s student body. For instance, students may be able to identify with Ana, the recent high school graduate. “The fact that Ana has just graduated high

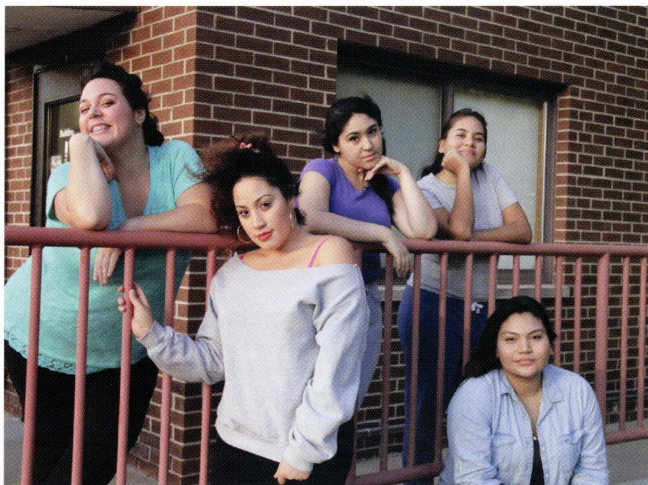
school and is looking to go to college, and has all these obstacles against her is also another thing that connects to a college environment,” said Kroeck.

The show being bilingual was a great way to reach a wider audience and the characters presented positive representations of Latinas. This positive representation is part of what made it easy for the cast to relate to their characters. When sitting down with the cast, they explained the different aspects and the themes from the show that resonated with them most.

Angelica Hernandez, who played Carmen, the 48-year-old mother who loves storytelling, is a recent NEIU graduate. She said that she was determined to play Carmen early on. Part of why she knew she wanted to play Carmen, was because of the connection she felt with the character. Hernandez explained, “It’s a character that I’ve known my whole life. She felt familiar to me. I’ve been around a lot of women like Doña Carmen a lot.” She also expressed that the experience of being in the working-class and not having documentation were also parts of that play that resonated with her.



Photos by Mary Kroeck



Tasiana Villalobos, a NEIU undergraduate who played Ana, the 18-year-old daughter to Carmen and recent high school graduate, said that she thinks this play is special to NEIU because of the university's strong Latino population and growing number of female college students. Villalobos explained that since the production has an all-female cast set within the Latino community, it has the potential to bring a strong minority population to the theatre. She said she hopes that audiences will take away "a positive understanding of what Latino/a's go through and what they have gone through to get where they are today. Especially undocumented Latinas."

Clarybelle Navarrete, a NEIU community member, also felt a familiarity with her character, Rosali, the sweet 29-year-old. "Rosali is Miss Sass, she's funny and sweet. I grew up around my aunts who were the same. I feel that I fit that and I liked that about Rosali," said Navarrete. Growing up in Latino households have not only helped these women relate to their characters, but also helped to shape their own ideas of body image.

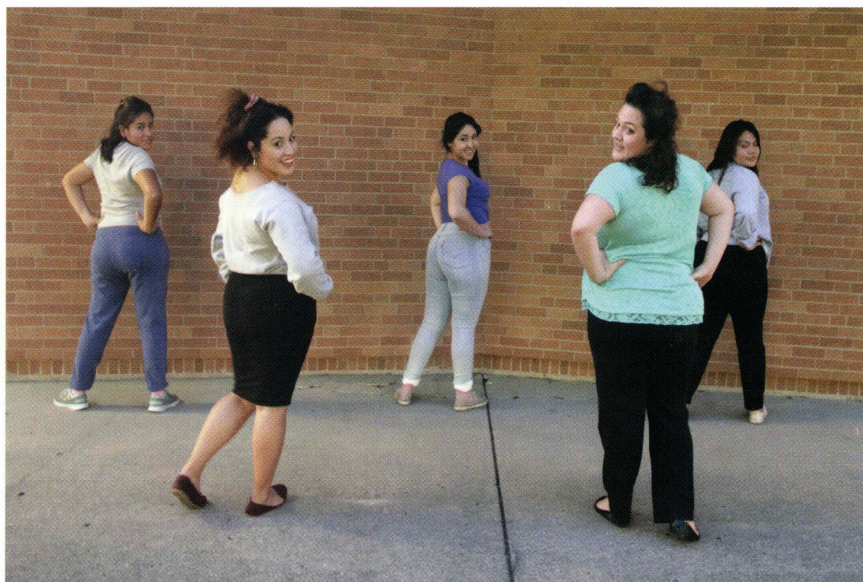
"What I love about being Latina is that we look different and we embrace that. Even in our families, we say that you're fat and it's okay. I think that helps us embrace it as we get older

and we can say 'this is me, I'm curvy,'" said Navarrete.

Although the show was body positive, the title "Real Women Have Curves" has the potential to conjure up the questions of "why do real women have curves?" or "are women who aren't physically curvy deemed as less feminine?" When talking with Kroeck about the show's title she explained that the name of the play came from the boutique that the character Estella opens up at the end of the show. The boutique represented the idea that all women are beautiful, no matter how they look. Kroeck explained how the message of the show is not exclusive to a certain body type.

"In my opinion, real women come in all shapes and sizes and even if you're not physically curvy, emotionally you can be curvy," said Kroeck. She went on to explain how curves can be based on a women's ups and downs and her experiences. The play shows that being a woman isn't based on physical appearance, but rather how you identify yourself.

"The point isn't that being curvy means being a woman, it's that being a woman means being who you are," said Villalobos. This was important to keep in mind as the show also touched on issues of immigration, family hierarchy and sexuality. Villalobos went on to say that "we get this image that having a slender body is what's considered beautiful and now people are becoming open to the idea that being who you are is beautiful." The production went against stereotypes of beauty but it also worked to break down conventional representation of female relationships. It's not uncommon to see females in competition with one another in media. However, the production showcased women working together and challenged the notion that women can't get along. "There's a big stereotype that women are always against each other and I think that that's something we



need to move away from. A show like this has the opportunity to expand that conversation," said Kroeck.

# The Puerto RICO Project

By C. G. Hernandez

Melissa Hernandez, a student and mother of two, spotted a homeless man begging for food outside of a Mexican restaurant. With her two boys by her side, she continued to watch the man for a few seconds, observing how her society treats the poor. One by one, every single person would walk past or over him while he begged humbly for food. After a while, people stopped noticing him. Sickened by what she just witnessed, Melissa approached the man and asked: "What would you like to eat?" It took a few seconds for the man to realize what Hernandez just said. Surprised, he rushed to tell her his order: a few tacos and a drink.

"I went inside [the restaurant] and told my kids: 'this is important. We have to take care of each other and our people,'" Hernandez said. "The Puerto RICO project basically started as a lesson for my children." Two years later, Hernandez now utilizes Facebook and GoFundMe to spread the awareness of her Puerto RICO Project. Every Friday, Hernandez and her kids, along with some volunteers, package and deliver the food she spent most of the day preparing. On some days, she would pick up donated food from restaurants that were willing to help her. She



Photos by Danny Montesdeoca

would make sure there's a dessert with every meal. "They like sweets," Hernandez said. "I try to give them what they want--it's a form of empowerment. I want them to know that somebody does care about them, cares about what they want, and what they are comfortable with."

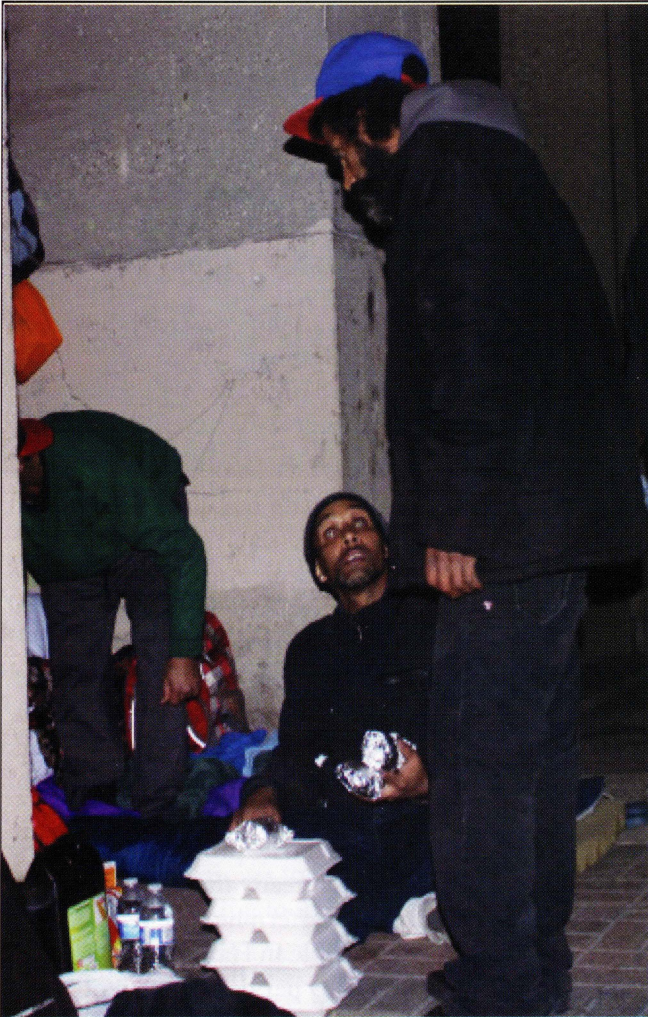
She also provides Survival Kits, which include clean syringes and Narcan, an opioid blocker that's used to immediately reverse a heroin overdose. Hernandez also provides some food, bus passes, clothes, shoes—the basic essentials to keep warm during harsh winters and cool during blazing summers.

"I know a lot of people that feel bad for me," Hernandez said while chuckling. "They're like 'Oh, my God, you go to work and school, you have kids; I want to help you!' When they cook and all I have to do is pick it up, that helps me."

Hernandez is a part-time student majoring in Social Science at Wilbur Wright College. She works as a dental hygienist, along with being a full-time mom; her schedule is packed. She wakes up every weekday at six in the morning to get her eldest ready for school; by seven she rushes him to the bus stop, where she continuously has to battle with the bus driver to wait for her kid to get on. After she drops off her eldest, she does the same routine for her youngest child.

With so much on her plate, Hernandez barely has time to pencil in an hour of meditation or a nap before she has to begin her own day. She spends her days either going to class or prepping the food and clothes she'll distribute to the homeless on Fridays. She starts cooking the food around 3 p.m. and has everything packed and ready for delivery around 7:30 or 8 p.m. Her outreach can last anywhere between four to five hours, delivering food and





necessities to the streets where her people live and sleep. “There are plenty of times where I felt like giving up,” Hernandez said. “But God will help me through this. I feel like someone has to do it. I feel like they need me; too many people rely on me to just walk away from it all.”

Hernandez now has more than 150 homeless people she cares for on Fridays. These people are usually drug addicts from Puerto Rico. According to many testimonies from the addicts she works with, Hernandez has helped them all survive under a Puerto Rican program called Devuelta a la Vida which offers them a one-way ticket to the U.S. They arrive and are sent to unregulated drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs that either don't exist or --when they do exist-- often humiliate addicts into cooperation in order to fool authorities.

“It's suspected that they are selling them [the documents] in the Black Market,” Hernandez said. “I have a client who is paying child support for a child that's not even his. Another client is no longer Puerto Rican but apparently now Mexican here in our city.” She wonders why Chicago



hasn't thoroughly investigated these allegations. Tired of seeing so many people – the leaders of these unlicensed 24 hour centers, the Puerto Rican state police, and anyone helping these groups succeed—get away with such malicious crimes of fraud and identity theft. Hernandez continues with her project not just for the homeless, but for her children.

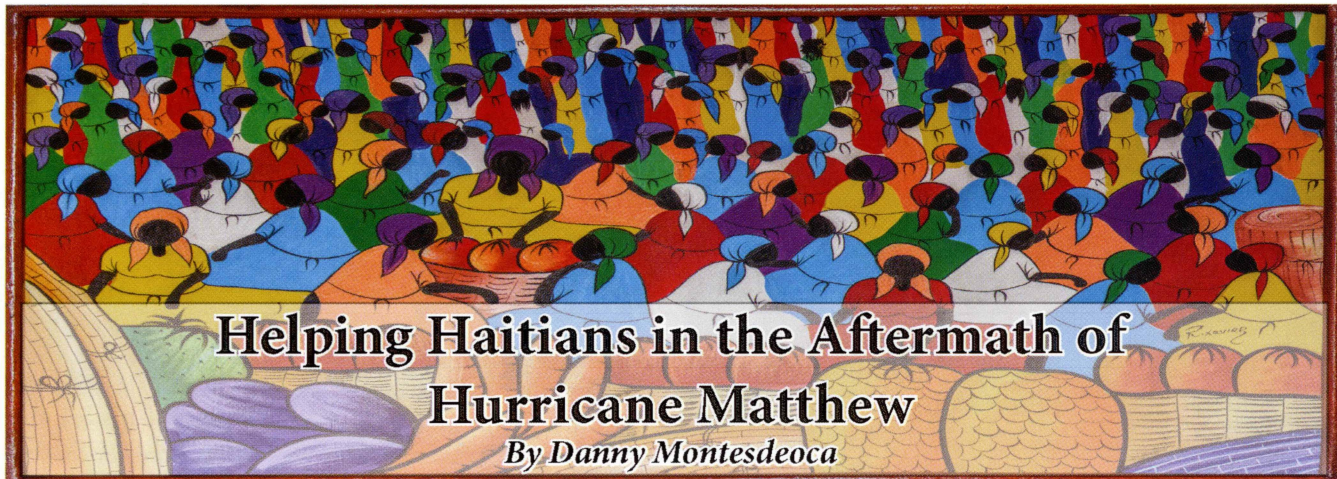
“My kids look at me as a hero,” Hernandez said. “I just started thinking my children are the future, and I'm a firm believer of leading by example. Our society is losing its way, so I have to start with my children.”

Her kids help Hernandez pack and take everything down the stairs into her car, but they do not accompany her during her five-plus hour runs throughout Chicago's neighborhoods including Humboldt Park and Back of the Yards. If she were to run late and pack everything herself, her kids would become upset.

“My youngest would say ‘Aw! How come you didn't tell me; that's not fair,’” Hernandez said, chuckling fondly. To Hernandez, the Puerto RICO Project is more than feeding and aiding the homeless. It has been a “spiritual journey,” one that she couldn't do all by herself--one she certainly did not think she would end up creating.

“When you imagine the kind of person that does volunteer work like this, you don't see me,” Hernandez said. “You see a church-type person, not someone who smokes or has had to battle her own way out of addiction. I smoke cigarettes, [and] I curse like a drunken sailor.”

Rebelling against the status quo is what Hernandez loves the most. However, it's the feeling of being among family members that keeps her motivated and inspired. “It's about family,” Hernandez said. “Everyone I come into contact with, even the people who donate—they're family. To the people that I help, I feel like I'm their older sister. They call me their angel and they are my family.”



## Helping Haitians in the Aftermath of Hurricane Matthew

By Danny Montesdeoca

Our often forgotten Latina/o Haitian brothers and sisters were hit by the devastating Hurricane Matthew on Oct. 4. The destruction of the Category Four hurricane, the second highest hurricane classification, has left the dead toll at over 1,000, according to a report by Reuters on Nov. 10.

Hurricane Matthew came nearly six years after Haiti was hit with a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck the capital, Port-Au-Prince, leaving over 200,000 dead and 300,000 injured, as reported by NPR. The lasting effects of the earthquake were perhaps even more dire than the earthquake itself.

One of those lasting effects is the cholera epidemic that's plaguing the country and has the death toll count at 9,200, but the actual death toll could far exceed that, according to the NY Times. Evidence suggests that the outbreak originated in one of the U.N.'s peacekeeping camps and spread from there.

In a report done by Progressio, a lobbying-firm that aims "to change policies that keep people poor," examined how social and political relationships, coupled with a to-

tal infrastructure and the cholera outbreak, helped contribute to the lack of efficient help the Haitian people received.

Haitians are desperate for food and supplies and have grown impatient with the government, non-governmental organizations and their lack of coordination. Distributions have also been slowed down by public officials who are making emotionally driven decisions that are affecting the needs of the Haitian people.

The NY Times reported that the interior minister's absolute refusal to distribute tents in the wake of the hurricane is one case where decisions were made based on emotion. After the earthquake in 2010, the government distributed tents to thousands of people without any semblance of shelter. Haiti became known, internationally, for these tent cities. The infamous legacy of these tent cities has kept Haitian government officials from distributing tents to those left without shelter.

"Maybe we will be a prosperous country one day, and we can use

tents to send our children to summer camp," said the interior minister, François Anick Joseph, to the NY Times. "But we will never be a nation of tent cities again."

However, this comes at time when most of those without shelter are crammed in local schools, and with classes already supposed to be in session, a new problem arises. Haiti is already the poorest country in the western hemisphere. Four in five people in Haiti live on less than two USD per day. Their central government, which can only provide so much help for its people, has very limited resources making Haiti heavily reliant on outside donations and support. Support that comes from people like you and me.

However, when it comes to giving support, we shouldn't just blindly give it, even if we are well-intentioned. We must think about the subtle things, like should you donate cases of water bottles that eventually run out and leaves behind empty plastic bottles, or do you donate a water filtration pump that provides a family with a steady stream of drinkable water.

An assessment of what is needed

prior to the collection of goods and supplies is crucial to avoid sending products that will be of little to no use. Working in collaboration with the Haitian Consulate or other non-government organizations can help you figure out exactly what the people of Haiti need, as these organizations are already well-established on the ground.

Working with well-established organizations means that they have some structure amongst all the madness. The structure will help ensure that goods and supplies aren't distributed in an anarchic manner. To be able to make the most out of in you send over, and making sure the organization you're working with works efficiently is imperative to maximize help efforts in Haiti.

Sending money rather than goods and supplies also proves to be more efficient than donating food and supplies. It's a lot more cost effective, and the money that's sent over starts circulating in the local Haitian economy. This is important as there is already very little money amongst Haitians to spend. Prior to the earthquake, around 60 percent of Haitians were unemployed.

If you want to play a direct role in the help, instead of just donating, then it's important to look at and research the different organizations

and exactly what it is they do. You want to be able to use your skill set to effectively and efficiently help. If you have a background in construction, then your efforts will be well spent constructing shelter rather than administering food and medical supplies.

Don't try to help by yourself. Helping is a noble act in itself, but these dire situations call for team action. Collaborating with other people, and even collaboration between organizations is encouraged. We are stronger in numbers. We need to work collectively with the volunteers, with the Haitian government and the Haitian people. If we're in this, we're in this together.

Que Ondee Sola stands in solidarity with the Haitian people. They were hit with another natural catastrophe while still managing to recover

from one that left the country in shambles nearly six years ago and while dealing with a cholera epidemic.

Now, more than ever, we must unite. 2016 wasn't the best of years for the world. The Syrian refugee crisis has proved that the world is in a moral turmoil. The nuclear war tensions around the globe have shown us how we let social constructs and political borders divide us. The U.S. has elected Donald Trump to be the 45th president. The world is divided, but there is always the possibility to change that and unite.

Unfortunately, sometimes it takes events like a hurricane to destroy the homes and lives of thousands of people before we unite, but as long as we do we will prosper and continue forward.



Little Haitian Girl In Jacmel by Breezy Baldwin

## Join Que Ondee Sola!

**QOS is always looking for talented writers, photographers, and designers to help speak for the voiceless and tell their story**

**[Queondeesolamag@gmail.com](mailto:Queondeesolamag@gmail.com)**



# Que Ondee Sola

By *Trudy Leong*

Que ondee sola

Space for time, hola

Dimming rhythms tumbling leaves

Gasping patters, breathing breeze

Colors toll sweet bounce of blossoms

Struggles roll, announce "We lost them"

Nervous risings probing tendrils

Brighter musings new breaths gentle

Openings quota

Que ondee sola!

Que ondee sola

Espacio para un tiempo ¡hola!

Ritmos que receden hojas que ruedan

Esquemas que quitan el aire respiración de brisa

Dulces colores que rebotan llenos de brotes

Laparecen luchas y anuncios de "los perdimos"

Surgen nerviosismos como hiedras que trepan

Pensamientos brillantes y suaves inhalaciones

Cuotas de apertura

¡Que ondee sola!

(Translation by Dr. Patricio Rizzo-Vast)



# Día de los Muertos Paper Doll



cut out  
and fold



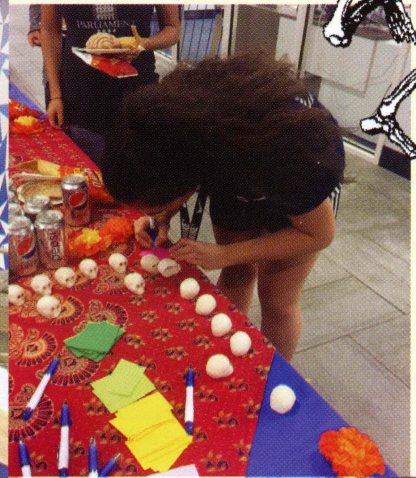
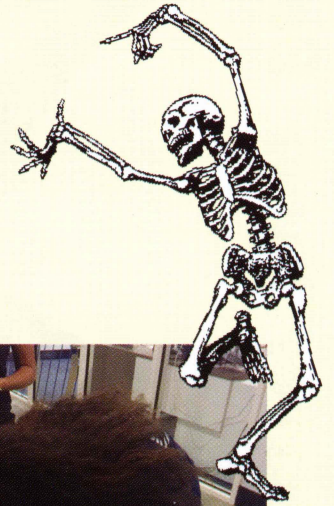
To make this  
Day of the Dead  
Paper doll, print on  
white card stock or heavy  
paper, cut out and fold the  
shawl and arms over the body.

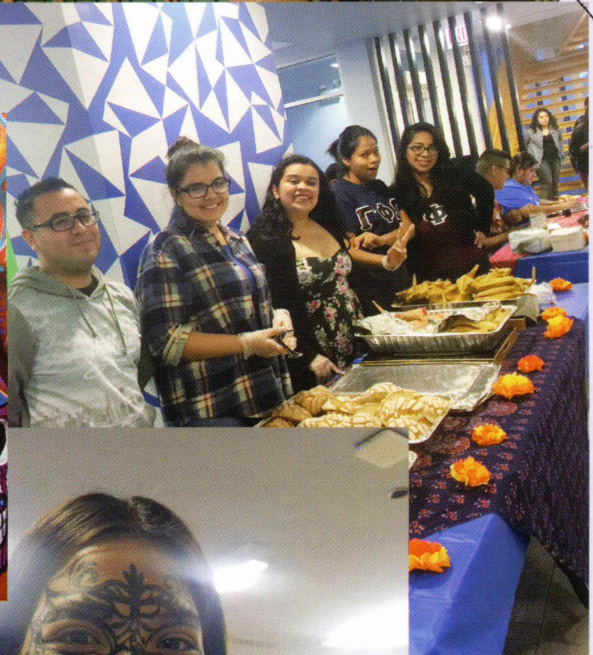
To see more of my paper toys  
please go to my flickr site:  
[flickr.com/photos/jacquedavis/](http://flickr.com/photos/jacquedavis/)

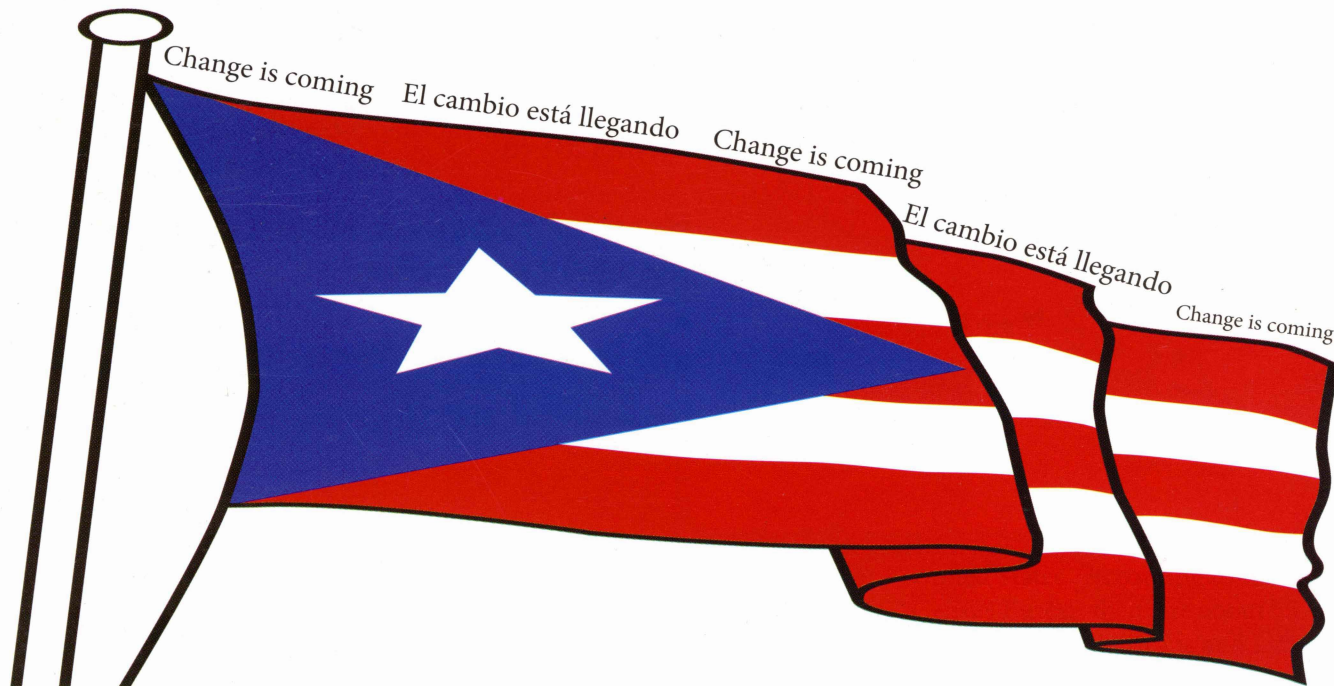
Best Regards,

Jacque Davis

Day  
of the Dead  
at the NEIU NEST







**Q**ue Ondee Sola (QOS) is the oldest Puerto Rican and Latina/o student publishing magazine and was established in 1972. Throughout the years QOS focused much of its content on Puerto Rican and Latino issues within the NEIU community, Chicagoland area and other Latino communities. The majority of the content focuses on Puerto Rican political prisoners and related issues. While this is a tradition we will honor and include in our content, we also hope to make this magazine more inclusive toward the Latino culture and attract a broader audience that reaches outside our community. You can help us do that, so please contact us or come visit us!

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