

Latina/o Retention Transforming the Culture of the University Proyecto Pa Lante Latina/o Recruitment UIC Paseo Boricua 40 Years of Que Ondee Sola NEIU D.A.L.E Depaul Oye P.R Colombia College Chicana/o Community to University Pipeline Oscar López Rivera Latina/o Cultural & Resource Center Pilsen Union for Puerto Rican Students Latino & Latin America Studies Little Village ENLACE NEIU Gentrification Latino Alliance Latina/o Faculty Ethnic Affirmation



Latina/o Coalition

A coalition of university student organizations in Chicago

Que Ondee Sola
Nov. 2011 Vol. 39 No. 9

by Juan “Nito” Morales

“Transformation of the world implies a dialectic between the two actions: denouncing the process of dehumanization and announcing the dream of a new society”.

- Paulo Friere

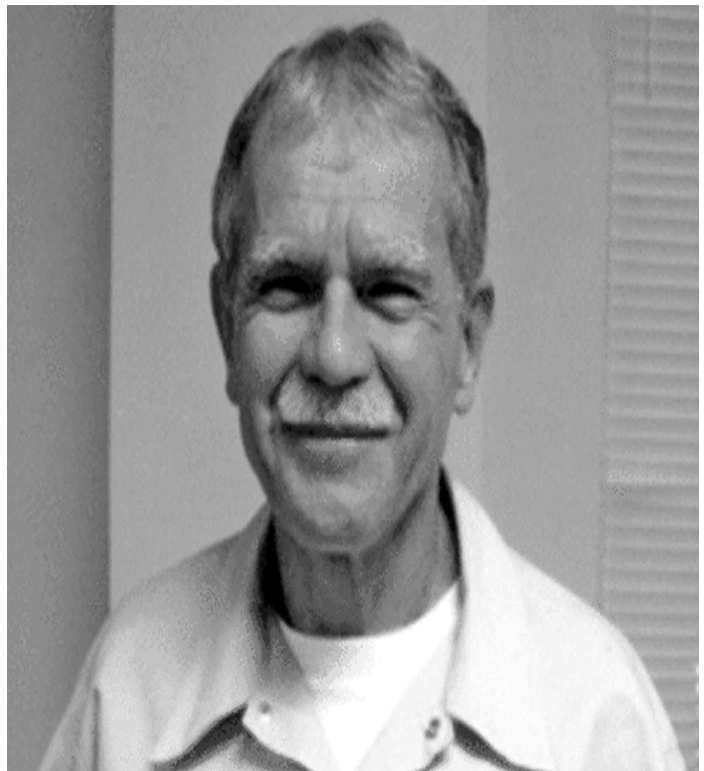
When exploring through this edition of *Que Ondee Sola*, you will find the 2nd issue within a series. These issues speak to the 40 year legacy of *Que Ondee Sola* and the Union for Puerto Rican Students. It is our privilege to have and announce Dr. Dragan Milovanovic to share his thoughts and reflect on his experience with being advisor for the dynamic Union for Puerto Rican Students. Milovanovic, who has been instrumental in providing an incredible amount of support towards the actions and vision of *UPRS & QOS*, is a distinguished research professor in the Justice Studies Department.

In addition, you will also find material relating to the legacy of the great nuyoricano poet Piri Thomas in a *Death of a Boricua Pioneer*. Piri, rest in Puerto Rican paradise. Moreover, you might be wondering what is the meaning behind the front cover of this edition. Well let me explain. Decades ago, a group of Latina/o students from different universities in Chicago formulated a collective Latina/o student coalition in attempts to address issues that were directly impacting Latina/os in el barrio, Latin America, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. Issues such as Latina/o retention, Latina/o Recruitment, gentrification, immigration,

Puerto Rican political prisoners, and Latina/o college programs are all topics that have been the focus of attention within the framework of the Latina/o student coalition. Today, these struggles continue as a new generation of Latina/o students equally feels the importance in addressing this issues responsibly, critically, and in a transformative matter. In addition, the above quote speaks directly to the idea of human beings being able to understand the world around them, but more importantly, transform the world into a more better and just world to live in.

Also! be sure to sign up for Dr. Jose E. López class *Puerto Ricans and the Caribbean*.

Freedom for Oscar López Rivera!



Editor-in-Chief
Juan "Nito" Morales

Copy Editor
Marla Mojica

Staff Writers
Alyssa Villegas
Jessie Fuentes
Katherin Padilla
Jennifer Luna
Josue Contreras
Franklin Ortega

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GUEST WRITERS & ARTIST

Dragan Milovanovic
Xavier "Xavi" Luis Burgos
Casandra Figuerora
Jacklyn Nowotnik
Regina M. Torres

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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.

Contact Que Ondee Sola
5500 N. St. Louis Chicago, IL 60625
Room E-041
(773) 442-4583
queondeesola@gmail.com

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.

40 Years of Student Struggle;

The Union for Puerto Rican Students & Que Ondee Sola

Some 25 years ago I interviewed at NEIU as one of the finalists in the then named Criminal Justice Department. Professor Kingsley Clarke from the department, while orienting me to the campus, introduced me to the Que Ondee Sola magazine and its orientation. It was a pleasant shock to witness their activist on-going agenda. I was inspired then as I continue to be today with the dedication, perseverance, tenacity, insights, and many accomplishment



of the staff of QOS and UPRS. In fact, one of the several reasons I chose to accept the CRJ's job offer was precisely because of this incredibly uplifting awakening to see such constructively critical engagement by students with compelling issues of the day. It is with great admiration that I briefly

commemorate their 40th year as the oldest Puerto Rican student publication in the U.S.

Born in the struggles of the 1970s, QOS and UPRS have a continuous and accomplished record of confronting issues of colonization, resurrecting

denied voices, overcoming lack of representation, and supporting more genuine democratic practices. On campus their leadership role in struggles has contributed to the creation

of a new minor in Latina/o studies and a new cultural center. They have spoken out against the assaults on free speech. They have exerted strong pressure to hire more Latina/o faculty. They have galvanized a greater sense of solidarity within the Puerto Rican student body. In the community, their

outreach to Chicago's Humboldt Park Neighborhood and elsewhere in Chicago has provided crucial connections between the academic world and real life community struggles. They have been instrumental in helping students from Puerto Rican communities to come to NEIU for their studies, and have provided continued support in their struggles to complete. Nationally, we witness their unwavering support for Puerto Rican political prisoners, highlighting the great disparities of sentencing and draconic conditions of imprisonment and providing greater public awareness about the continued U.S. colonization of Puerto Rico. QOS was to also bring to public attention the contamination of Vieques used as a bombing range by the U.S. military, against the wishes of the Puerto Rican people.

After many years as the faculty advisor for UPRS, Professor Clarke, in retiring, asked me if I would be willing to be nominated faculty advisor. I was greatly honored and quite humbled. Reading their magazine over the years, keeping in touch with their struggles on campus and off, I had been extremely impressed, and continue to be, at how active and dedicated the students were and are, many of whom continued after graduation to be quite

active in their communities. Many, indeed, went on to become leaders in their community. The big names associated with UPRS – Congressman Luis Gutierrez, NEIU board of trustee Marvin Garcia, City Clerk Miguel de Valle – are quite obvious. But many others have continued their leadership role in the community, most recently, Xavier Luis Burgos former editor of QOS and member of UPRS. He works in Humboldt Park as coordinator of the after-school program at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, as an activist writer for the community newspaper *La Voz del Paseo Boricua*, and as an activist in the anti-gentrification movement. And there are many more, who after attending NEIU, after being actively involved in QOS/UPRS, continue the struggle. For many, too, formal involvement in QOS/UPRS was perhaps their first experience in collective struggle against injustice, a line that is often crossed with much tribulation, self questioning, perhaps even some anxiety; the subsequent experience certainly has been transformative.

QOS and the UPRS have also brought attention to the continuous struggle against U.S. domination/colonization. Their writings have highlighted the struggles on the main campus of the

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University of Puerto Rico, even as the U.S. press continues to pay little to no attention to the campus-wide struggles unfolding. Their support for the Puerto Rican political prisoners has been ongoing. Twelve were provided clemency by President Clinton in 1999. One reads with amazement their sentences for “seditious conspiracy” ranging from 35 to 90 years, hugely disproportional to the offenses claimed, especially since the government was not able to convict on the basis of deaths or injuries sustained by the alleged bombings. A number of organizations, both national and international had called for their release (i.e., American Association of Jurists, Subcommittee of U.N. General Assembly). More recently, Carlos Alberto Torres, allegedly in a leadership role in the FALN was released on July 26, 2010, returning to Puerto Rico with a hero’s welcome. He has returned to the U.S. and speaks openly about the struggle and the conditions of his former confinement. Oscar Lopez Rivera, however, initially given an opportunity for clemency, refused, insisting that he would still be prisoner under the terms of the clemency, continues being incarcerated, now

30 years on. He, however, remains inspirational to those in struggle. In his uplifting words (QOS, July 2011):

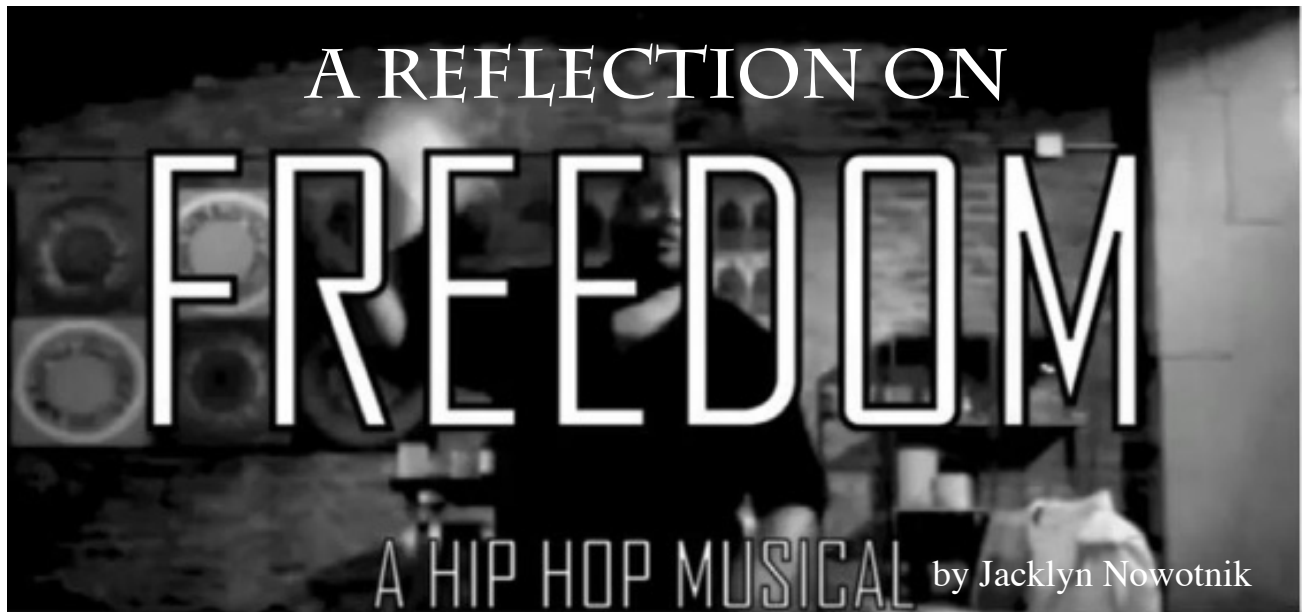
“Stay in school, think critically, and become a problem solver and not a problem maker. Fill your hearts with love and compassion and never turn your backs on an injustice. A better and more just world is possible as long as we dare to struggle for it. Life is all a struggle, but don’t let that stop you from enjoying the good things it offers you. Have fun and learn.”

The members of UPRS/QOS have a dream for the people yet to come, born in struggle, destined to reach the mountain top from which a new vision of what could be shall materialize.

En lucha,
Dragan Milovanovic

by Dragan Milovanovic

Distinguished Research Professor
Justice Studies Department



Imagine trying to live in a room made of cold concrete and the only source of natural light is from a small slit in the wall in which they call a window... and that's if you're lucky. In a room where you're sharing everything with at least four other people and privacy isn't a priority. You never know what time it is, and the only thing to count is the markings on the wall of someone else before you who attempted to keep track of their lost time. When you finally decided to rest your head, the only thing that lulled you to sleep was your personal lament which goes something like "I'm trapped here, learned to adapt here. Death is a fact here; I learned how to scrap here. Watch how you act hear? Wall to your back here, no more looking back the past is the past...no more holding back the tears."

A few months ago, I was asked to help bring to life on stage the lives of so many people in COMMUNITIES just like YOURS...just like OURS. Where

YOUR LIFE isn't judged by a divine entity, where the way of LIFE and LAW are up for ANYONE and EVERYONE'S intrupretation as they see fit, and where being at the WRONG PLACE at the WRONG TIME can happen to anyone of US. I present to you FREEDOM: A HIP HOP MUSICAL written by Patrick Blake and CHI-ILL and music produced by Manny "3-60 Tha Mack" Escalante and Omar Zamora.

I have been a good friend of CHI-ILL's for years now, and about 3 years ago is when I first heard of this musical. At the time, FREEDOM was an ambitious idea that was still in the making of being thought through, written and produced. It was until a few months ago did I get a call from CHI-ILL asking if I would be interested in participating in FREEDOM. Not only was I thrilled to work with CHI-ILL, I was excited to marry my love for music and theatre with the burning inspiration of realism this musical brings

to the stage.

I was brought into the later rehearsal phase of the production, which initially worried me because I hadn't seen any of the other performers' performances, nor had I heard any of their raps. However, all worries and nerves went out the window as soon as I opened the doors to the Wit Theatre, which is where we had our Chicago Reading. As I sat there waiting for my cue, I was amazed as I watched the whole cast and crew come out of their comfort zones and really put themselves in the acting, directing, sound and lighting shoes. It was almost unbelievable to experience the talent and creativity levels that were involved in FREEDOM. We had just enough time for one rehearsal prior to the show, and here it was...our chance to make the audience feel the frustration, the sadness, the love, the hatred, the sense of hopelessness, the sense of family, and the sense of realism this musical embodies. While we as a cast were performing; I could tell our relationship to the audience was strong because I heard them laugh, I heard them sigh a sad sigh that kept down their tears, I could feel the heat of their frustration and their full on attention on us. When it was all said and done; the applause in the small theatre seemed to echo so loud that it bounced back and forth off the walls...and when we finally said our goodbyes as a cast and crew, it was overwhelmed with smiles, hugs and laughs.

I personally could not shake the

excitement that I felt, I was so proud of the work put into FREEDOM for it brought to life the lives of many, and it acknowledged a genre of music that I believe doesn't get its due respect. As a member of the cast, a lover of the arts, and as someone who is experiencing a similar situation; I am excited to see the growth of FREEDOM as production, as well as working with the cast and crew involved with FREEDOM in future projects. Thank you to everyone who made FREEDOM possible and to the people that believed in it and continues to believe in FREEDOM. As Tea and DZ would say "I'm ready for the world. I know that I can take anything that's thrown at me and I will never break. I will never fold, I'm never letting go. I'm chasing down my dreams however far I have to go, AND YOU CAN'T TELL ME NO."

If you would like to see the trailer for FREEDOM: A HIP HOP MUSICAL or read more about it, you can visit the following:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7GcwyUovVY&feature=youtu.be>

(Type in FREEDOM: A HIP HOP MUSICAL TRAILER on Youtube)

<http://www.thisis50.com/profiles/blogs/freedom-a-hip-hop-musical-trailer-video-inside#comments>

(Check out the comments on thisis50.com)

**“Some
Say”**
by *Cassandra Figueroa*

Some say I take on more than I can
but if I let that slow me down I wouldn't be where I am
I had to wake up to see what was going wrong
I found I was staring at still images all along
stuck in a song, looping forever long
but I stay ready to fight with a flag in one hand and the other with a mic
ready to strike.

You see you can't slow me down I'm on to better days
flyin away

cause I've been to that place, you know
the land of shattered bottles and stray bullets
where if they say pull it

You Pull it

I'm from a land of fighters, where prisoners are unknown
where women were experimented on and my caciques were dethroned
so I gotta push hard and long to make it right
get ready for a fight

I refuse to be stuck like this

I got goals on my wish list

but I see how you treat me its like I'm not around
its like aliens just flew in and up ducted me off the ground
to you I'm a still image, a mural painted on a wall

I'm that painting that you pass and admire but don't wanna posses at all

I be too hot to handle that rebel that can't stand you

cause you think your too cool

how about you reevaluate the shit you do

I refuse to be societies slave or someone that just gives up and digs there own grave
id rather be pulled through the sand with my hair in there hands

I am ghetto, wild, uneducated and undeserving I am all these things in your eyes

but I don't need your eyes to see these lies

I have the whispers of so many in ear telling me to be positive

to stick to my path and days of happiness shall follow it

cause I speak my acinct knowledge and I will never be stereo typed

I am going to college

you see Ive been trough the rain with many different things

I had to pick myself up fast before I drowned in a sea of feelings

so im ready for the dealings

cause no other beat can compare to mine

all the rest is an EKG on flat line

thats why gods up in heaven look down at this girl below

and can identify my soul because of it raw glow.

NEIU's Noche de la Familia Celebration

On Friday, October 7, 2011 over 150 people attended the annual Noche de la Familia celebration at Northeastern Illinois University, organized by the school's Latino Heritage Committee. The event is put together with the intent of creating a sense of community and belonging for Latina/o students, faculty, staff and their families at the university. The largest and most dynamic event in an abundant series, Noche de la Familia coincides with this country's official Hispanic Heritage Month, validating the ever-growing Latina/o presence on campus and providing a space of pride and respect for *Latinidad*.

The event included a welcoming by the President of the university, short speeches by members of the Hispanic Heritage Committee, and an awards ceremony for students, faculty, and staff in recognition of their contributions to the Latina/o community on campus and in the city. One of the awarded included the Program Director of Vida/SIDA, a

project of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, which offers free STD/STI testing, counseling, and an LGBTQ support group. The program is also set to build housing in Humboldt Park for homeless youth. The evening, which included free food and beverages,

culminated with a performance by the youth of Ensemble Espanol, a Spanish Flamenco dance company, and an eclectic Son del Viento.

Nearly everyone who attended felt the celebratory pulse of Noche de Familia, but some also commented that future programs could also serve to counter the growing imagined homogeneity of Latinas/os and, more firmly recognize, address, and honor the diverse identities of Latinas/os that are present in Chicago. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial for future events if some of the pertinent issues and concerns affecting Latinas/os at NEIU, at minimum, are touched upon with some space provided to incorporate attendees conceptualizing solutions.

Que Ondee Sola

From El Barrio

A look at Latina/o Street Gangs

by Juan "Nito" Morales

Since the 1930s, Latino streets gangs have been, in many cases, the forefront within the social aspect of Latinos in the United States. When examining factors of Latino gang

activity, and the emergence of Latino street gangs, ecological and socioeconomic factors is crucial to understanding the construction of Latino gangs as a transnational phenomenon. In addition, poor urban planning that resulted in the

discrimination and segregation of migrant families. I focus on these concepts, as being prominent figures of Latino gang formation.

In considering the ecological aspects of Latino gangs, Diego Vigil (2001) affirms that where Mexican immigrants settled contributed to a number of problems. In addition, Vigil examines how the effects of urbanization, along with poor city planning made barrios an ecological inferior place to raise families. Until this day, Latino families confront a poor economical status. According to Vigil, economic restraints on families and children

are the most important in understanding the emergence of street gangs. The 2001 U.S. Census Bureau illustrates that 24 percent of Mexican families, and 26 percent of Puerto

Rican families were below the poverty line in 1998. This demonstrates the conditions of Latino youth being forced to create disparate motives of supporting their family.



It is important

to note how the community dynamics that created gangs and shaped gang members stemmed from the nexus of immigration, industrial influences and developments that benefit those in the capitalist arena, along with poor urban planning. However, it is equally important to note how poverty/discrimination, and social/cultural cohesiveness helped create Latino barrios.

"The Son Jarocho Style Comes to Seltzer Library"

by Regina M. Torres

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, spanning the time period of September thru October, there were many diverse events offered up for the public to enjoy. The Chicago Public Library featured planned events such as authors, speakers, films and the rich cultural entertainment stemming from Latin American influences. One such event took place on Saturday, October 8th at the Sulzer library located on Lincoln Ave, in the Lincoln Square neighborhood of Chicago's North side.

A sizeable crowd gathered to witness the scheduled performance of a local Chicago band showcasing the traditional and historic songs of the people of Veracruz, Mexico. The band's name was Jaro Chicanos, and they consisted of a small group

of capable young musicians playing the style of music known as Son Jarocho, which still holds a rich tradition of practice in the Veracruz region of Mexico. These young musicians were headed by maestro Raul Fernandez, who is well respected in the Latin music Jarocho scene.

Jarocho is a style of lively and comical music which got its start in the Mexican state of Veracruz, which is aligned with the Gulf of Mexico. It is the oldest traditional form of native music, as it is a two-and-a-half centuries old form of percussive

and stringed instruments which announce a fusion of Spanish, African and indigenous styles. The Jarocho style of music is mostly played at parties which usually end at dawn. This means that the instruments are easily transportable, especially since tradition dictates that the instruments are played acoustically, without electric amplification. The



song lyrics are meant to be humorous and concern love, nature and especially the abundant animal life native to Veracruz.

Jaro Chicanos opened their set with a briefing on the Spanish Baroque origins and practices of the Son Jarocho style. Maestro Raul Fernandez showed the audience the unique instruments that would be played for this show. There were the various stringed instruments such as the jarana jarocho, which is a tiny harmony producing guitar, and the requinto jarocho, another small guitar-like stringed instrument, tuned to a higher pitch and plucked with a cow horn.

There was also an occasionally used tambourine which was creatively utilized in order to maximize the percussive sound produced, as well as an unusual hollow rectangular-shaped drum which was made of wood and struck

on the sides to produce African beat rhythms. Complimenting the bass beats of the wood percussion drum, were the deep pulsing sounds coming from the largest wooden guitar. Interestingly, the tuning knobs for the guitars were located on the backs of the guitar necks and not on the sides as in American guitars. Perhaps the



most interesting instrument used was something called a quijada. The quijada is essentially a lower jaw bone of a donkey which is struck and scraped with

hand or wooden sticks in order to produce percussive sounds.

Aside from the unique musical and lyrical stylings of this beautiful and exotic music, there was another interesting element to Jaro Chicano's performance that afternoon. The audience was introduced to the practice of Son Jarocho musicians prompting the dancing of anyone willing to step onto a large rect-

angular and hollow wooden box which lay on the floor and amplified any bass sounds created by the dancer's specific dancing techniques. So, while there was the element of tradition in the form of lyrics and musical rifts, there was much room for improvisation as well. The musicians would set the tone and rhythms for the changing songs, and the dancers would articulate their steps/bass sounds in return, while expressively turning, shuffling, stomping, and swirling on the platform.

The lyrical style of Jarocho can be best compared to spoken lyrical poetry in the sense that the lyrics are sung more like declarative statements, or musings about a comical subject. For example, one traditional song called "El Iguana" allowed for the singer/singers to belt out lyrical phrases about an iguana, while male dancers took turns creatively portraying their animated version of the iguana sung about. The lyrics were strong and clear, and not waveringly expressive as is seen in American songs. They were more like fantastical and funny musical storytellings of subjects such as birds and reptiles. The music itself

both compliments and changes the directions of the songs, allowing for rises and falls, dips and swerves, and this is reflected in the symbiotic nature of the lyrics, music and dance.

Throughout Jaro Chicano's set, the performers would engage the audience in participation and explain to them the beginnings and ongoing popularity of Veracruz's oldest form of traditional live music. This seemed helpful to those in the audience that weren't familiar with this form of music. Questions were asked, and toes were tapping. The Jaro Chicano's did a fine performance complete with storytelling, and the audience seemed pleased—at the end of the set, they were even allowed to come up and get familiar with some of the instruments used.

Bravo to the Chicago Public Library for recognizing the talents of Hispanic culture and giving a platform for these talents to be shown and shared.

RECOGNIZE

by Josue Contreras

America wants to melt me into its pot

Mix me with others who are curvy & brown

Speak Spanish, eat rice, and come from places that are hot

So they can call me Latino as I walk into town

But America, I need you to recognize

My curvy brown complexion is not like theirs

My Spanish, my rice is customized

Our homelands resemblance do not bare

Latin America is our part of the world

But I am Puerto Rican, as they are something else

Call me what I am and let me be unfurled

Our differences, as our similarities, will bring us both much wealth

So stop trying to assimilate me into what you want me to be

I'd rather acculturate and still be me

Piri Thomas,
The Death of a Boricua Literary Pioneer
by Xavier “Xavi” Luis Burgos

“Softly, Puerto Rican, you ain’t alone,
Muchos están contigo and you’ve got a home....”

...Flex your breath of life,
talk about your breeze
and forget you nots.
Write your say
about sidewalks dirty.
Scribble your mean
message
on dingy hallway-walls.
Express your aptitude
and limit not its call.”

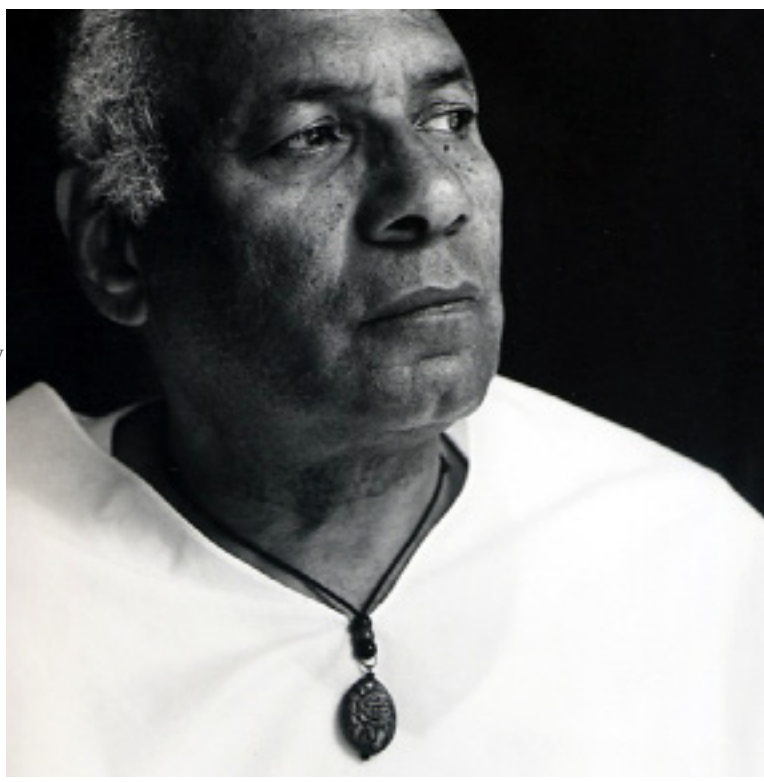
From *Softly, Puerto Rican, You Ain’t Alone* by Piri Thomas

On October 17, 2011, Piri Thomas, a pioneering cultural champion of the Puerto Rican Diaspora, died at the age of 83. Poet, novelist, and vocal witness to the plight of the underclass, Thomas is considered the father of a Spanglish linguistic tradition and modern Boricua letters. But more importantly, he constructed an incredible legacy on which a modern Latina/o literature was built upon.

As demonstrated in his work, racism was an important fixture in the social development of Thomas’ life. Born in 1928 in El Barrio, New York City to Puerto Rican and Cuban migrants, they gave him an anglicized name, John Peter Thomas, in an effort to assimilate the family. His mother called him “Piri”(the Spanish

pronunciation of “Petey”) as a nickname. Growing-up, he battled white ethnic gangs and struggled with his skin color and West African features due to the favored treatment given to his light-skinned siblings from his father. Subsequently, he endured drug addiction, homelessness, and prison.

Much of these experiences were chronicled in his most famous work, *Down These Mean Streets*,



published in 1967, that places front and center discussions of the systematic origins and abuses facing our communities. As a result, his autobiography not only empowered the Boricua diaspora to produce its own unique literature, but validated the new cultural and linguistic expressions that

the children of Boricua migrants were developing, like *Spanglish*. Without a doubt, Thomas was brave to write in a form and style that did not accommodate to the expectations of the white U.S. literary establishment. In other words, he ensured that our stories had to be told from us *and* in the way that we tell them. Therefore, the Nuyorican Movement and contemporary Latina/o literature are products of Thomas’ tenacity and eloquent ferocity.

I remember still the awe-struck feeling of reading *Down These Mean Streets* in high school, deeply

relating to his testimony of how dark-skinned Boricuas are devalued and the inhumanity of prison. And more importantly, my culture and my context was honored and respected in a world where we are rendered invisible or hopelessly

delinquent. For many Boricua and Latina/o youth Piri Thomas contributed to the understanding of our social context and ourselves, stimulating a sense of hope and pride for which we shall be forever indebted.

Mi Patria

a letter from a Puerto Rican prisoner

Hola Brokie. Pedona me if I'm intruding in anyway, but I cant express my thoughts if I stay silent. My words come straight from the heart. The way I feel right now is the way every Boricua should experience, day in and day out as a proud flag carrier. I have a friend who

introduced me to your magazine (*Que Onde Sola*) and let me tell you, I am proud of my Puerto Rican gente and how you guys hold it down. I just want to thank you for rekindling that flame I have for not only my people, but my Patria as well. I appreciate the poems. Oh, how the poems touched my soul and Corazon, son! From "Our Faces" to "Puerto Rican on the Moon", and "Nigger Rican Blues", thank you Mathew Rodriguez, thank you

Jessie Fuentes for expressing "why you don't cry blood", and thank you Judith Diaz López, por el recuerdo de inspiracion que son los hombres, Oscar López Rivera y Carlos Alberto

Torres. Gracias a todos for the poems, literature, history, and awareness of the troubles to our land here in Humboldt Park and Puerto Rico.

I am a Chi-Rican born at Norweigen Hospital and raised in Humboldt Park up until the age of 18. From then I've been in and out of prison

for a cause as meaningless as the word rehabilitation in this place. I have spent half of my life in and out, well more in than out, of my 32 years behind bars. And let me tell you brother, its nothing to brag about. It isn't a place you young brothers should ever experience. It isn't a life to have, it's more of a death sentence once you get used to the revolving door. I accept my punishment, because I am at fault, I deserve it, and because it saved my life. I danced with the devil longer than the average and still live to tell about while many

of my boys are dead or will be locked up for most of their ending days. I don't want you guys to follow my road and end up in this revolving machine. These days I speak out against,



Que Ondee Sola

S.T.D's, drugs, and gangs. I am absolutely not perfect, but I am a work in progress. I know that I can't give up because I would love to be part of your movement and help out in anyway possible. Just let me know what I can contribute. This isn't about me though, I am writing to let you know you have proud Puerto Rican brothers who though incarcerated, stand at attention to your moves and cries of struggle. Your struggle is my struggle, your movement is my movement, and your tears will always come down my face as long as we share the same freedom. No matter how far apart we are, how different our blood type may be, we still and always will represent as one. I believe in your guys and what you stand for because this generation is more knowledge full and well informed, compared to mine. Internet, political, and social awareness, along with medical and technology in science has made a difference in the minds and hearts of our youth, this generation is built by leaders who will be competent enough to run our own community

and Puerto Rico with the best interest of our own people in mind.

My family came from Puerto Rico and lived by Wrigley Field before getting pushed out and relocated by white collars who wanted to build high rises downtown. In the 60's they ended up moving to a part of the city which is now famously know as "Paseo Boricua". My abuelita and family were forced out her community by the yuppies and their ways 50 something years ago, lets not let it happen again, and for history to repeat itself. This means we cannot fold, nor break to the strong grip of higher society, that we will hold our own and always keep our values and ethics above materialistic things..."No Se Vende" means more than just a saying.

My brother, I leave you with good luck, God speed, and keep the movement alive, 4eva!
(Long Lives Our Struggle...)

Behold, the Boricua Diaspora

by Xavier "Xavi" Luis Burgos

Envision, for a moment, a soundless and barren urban landscape, encroached on by a harrowing, opaque sky and bright, white snow mystically descending from the heavens, with only dim street lights to guide a path. Your awe-struck eyes gaze upon the overwhelming swarm of small,



cold particles engulfing the air, swirling with the wind in a synchronized, rhythmic movement, rapidly melting on sun-burnt skin. Finally, your mind collides with the cognizance that this shall be the eternal home of lineages unrealized and that Puerto Rico is a land of no

return. What a sorrowful and beautiful genesis to a narrative laid before us; the setting of the stage of an epic and incomparable tale of tragedy and greatness unforeseen.

Such was the experience of thousands of pioneras/os, like my grandmother, who endured a particular migration decades ago; there were many before and many after them. In whatever time we locate the conception of a diaspora that owes its existence to a U.S. government-sponsored colonial enterprise, we must descry the fact that subsequent generations, physically distant from the island, continue to identify as Boricua. Some merely say that one can still be Puerto Rican even if residing outside Puerto Rico, as if the island is lending us magical keys to a locket of authenticity. In many ways, to be Puerto Rican is to be a part of our diaspora. In other words, there is a distinctive Puerto Ricanness in the U.S. and the island is just one (important) piece in a complex and colorful mosaic of cultural ruptures and innovations.

*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 story will be narrated by the jibaros on the moont*

Unfortunately, our communities are burdened with institutions, artisans, and educators who make it a point to extract the political from the cultural. Puerto Rican cultural consciousness is inextricable from the political. When the dwellers of the island and the diaspora began to understand themselves and their cultural productions as distinctively, unmistakably, and uniquely Boricua, they simultaneously understood, due to a subordinate sociopolitical status, the danger

in making such claims. In essence, Puerto Rican culture and identity is a product of resistance. Thus, to be proudly Boricua, is to be solemnly defiant. To affirm a *puertorriqueñidad* is to thwart the processes that seek our destruction. But, many of our institutions, artisans, and educators present the world with sanitized, nostalgic, and island-centered artistic representations detached from our lived experiences in the U.S. Most, but not all, contemporary art by the Puerto Rican Diaspora is thus without purpose or direction.

Yes, there are many possible routes and trajectories, but one thing must be clear: there needs to be an aesthetic attached to an ongoing process to cultivate a non-assimilationist, diaspora-specific, solution-proposing, and culturally affirming agenda. In order for it to be meaningful, this aesthetic, utilizing photography, painting, literature, poetry, film, theater, sculpture, music, dance, and song, must be by and for our people and rooted in our communities (both historic and new).

If we construct a New Boricua Diaspora aesthetic we can, with greater clarity, understand who we are and map out possible directions. Quite simply and unequivocally, we can begin to recognize and honor our beauty, particularities, and greatness and heal wounds of self-hate and cynicism. This, for what it is worth, is an invitation to dialogue and to create. Who shall heed the call? Whose art will proclaim, “Behold, the Boricua Diaspora, in all its lamentations, in all its glory”?

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