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Prelude and Chorus to Rainbow Shoes: A Poet-Opera

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Cover Page Footnote

This article is from an earlier iteration of *Diálogo* which had the subtitle "A Bilingual Journal." The publication is now titled "Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Studies Journal."



Photos by Marixsa Alicea

Born in Chicago in 1970, Eduardo Arocho has been writing and teaching poetry since 1992. During this time he has performed at many venues throughout the Chicago area, especially with The Guild Complex. He has been a poet in residence for The Poetry Center of Chicago (Hands on Stanzas Program) and Gallery 37. His publishing credits include: *OPEN FIST: Anthology of Young Illinois Poets*, by Tia Chucha Press, 1993; *POWER LINES Anthology*, by Tia Chucha Press, 2000; *EL CENTRO JOURNAL* Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College New York, NY, 2001. His first self published chapbook *Poems Behind The Máscara*, was released in October of 2002. Eduardo recently appeared in a cameo role in the feature film *URBAN POET*, by New Film Productions, 2003. He is currently working on a new collection of poems to be completed in the summer of 2004. Contact him at chivejigante@hotmail.com



Prelude and Chorus to Rainbow Shoes: A Poet-Opera

I don't want to be seen dead
on Division Street.

I want to be seen alive
Walking with pride
On *Paseo Boricua*.

I want to be rainbow
From shoes to *máscara*
Full of horns - rainbow
Under *bandera*

I'm waiting for *la parada*
I'm waiting for *la marcha*
I'm waiting for *la protesta y fiesta*
Under *bandera*

The skyline has changed
La Division is not the same
I'm louder than ever
Under *bandera*

I want to look up at *bandera*
and count the many times
my soles have walked back and fourth
many times higher than The Sears Tower

On this street, were I was born
On this street, where I went to high school
On this, my old and new neighborhood
Where I dine and dance - celebrate the past

Chicago! I know what lies
East of the Western Avenue border
The gentrified lots
My memories - erasing

You didn't let me live
in Cabrini O'Green.
You didn't let me live
in Lincoln Park.
You treat me like a stranger
in Wicker Park.
But I was born in Humboldt Park.

Here we clean the street, and cook a feast
For Chicago will visit this piece of *Paseo*
as we sing to tourists and commuters:

Paseo Boricua is Renaissance
It took fifty years to become
New San Juan

And now that *bandera* is metal
And pointing to the stars
United in rebirth - no more - divisions

Paseo Boricua is Renaissance
the cameras, the buildings
are filling up with art
And now the poets
Have joined the *bomba* drums
Reviving spirits in Humboldt Park

Potawatomi, I know you were here
German, Jewish, Polish, Russians
Norwegians Ice-skated here. Today
when I march in pride - Mexico is at my side
Paseo Boricua is Renaissance.

We have five hundred years
Before the flags come down
Until then, I'll sing with the crowd:

Nunca para la parada
When they sing a poet-opera

I want to be rainbow
From shoes to *máscara*
Full of horns - rainbow
Under *bandera*

Nunca para la parada
When they sing a poet-opera

I'm waiting for *la parada*
I'm waiting for *la marcha*
I'm waiting for *la protesta y fiesta*
Under *bandera*

Nunca para la parada
When they sing a poet-opera

The skyline has changed
La Division is not the same
We're louder than ever
Under *bandera*

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