Masthead Logo

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Ponle Título

Alfredo Matías

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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."
The poems on these pages are taken from Alfredo Matías's work-in-progress. In the words of Rafael Angel Boria, "Matías is the black Puertorrican, the revolutionary ahead of his time. Since the time of the Young Lords he's been making a living but never forgot his roots and his people. The poet always writing the revolution, the injustice, the peculiarity of life, the ideas that make the people think. The artist that offered his talent for free, so the people enjoy, learn, and be challenged on ideas that he expresses in his art manifestation."

Alfredo Matías: Desde niño fui controversial. Me enamoré de la luna, de mi barrio Sabana Seca, Toa Baja, Puerto Rico, y de Lolita Lebrón, Primera Dama de Borinquen. Y como buen hijo, no puedo amar a nadie ni a nada antes que a mi anciana madre Carmen García. Tengo como guía a Don Pedro Albizu Campos. Expulsado de la escuela a la edad de 13, del país a los 15, del ejército a los 17 y de este mundo no sé cuándo. Pero que como dice el gago, "¡Moriré nacio-nacio-nacio-nacionalista to the bone, y que-que-que-que Viva Puerto Rico Libre, Mi Jardín Florido!"

Characters of My Poetry
The characters of my poetry originate in my Anti-this and that
Poets have the tendency to explore the mind And that makes us psychologists.
We speak of rivers to explain a teardrop Out of the ruins of a thought we create a poem, Just for the hell of it, that's frequently perceived by others as the idiom of poets
Artistic creation out of colloquialism Configuration, a-la-jo-jo-ha-ha-ha,
Noteworthy to the national book award Pulitzer Prize. But you must wait your time, third-world thinkers In other words, inner city dwellers take it easy Don't be so pushy
After all, have you ever seen a black angel? So stop the plebeian masquerade And stay in your place among the you know what. Hollywood doesn't want you You cannot merge with the
You know what.
Ponle Título
La maestra me decía cuando era muchacho allá en Puerto Rico "OK, repeat after me... pollito chicken, gallina hen, lápiz pencil y pluma pen" Y ahora que estoy preso me dicen "ventana window, puerta door, the rich es rico y el pobre poor..."

Just a Poem
A poem for the unknown contributors
Of life
To life
You who sink your plow in the earth And plant the seed.
You who have ground your skin in those machines.
You who die of unknown causes At unknown times
But in a well-known country.
You to whom history refuses to give the torch of fame.
You who are the true heroes.
You who die in the battlefield.
The battlefield will never die in you.
Rise up and be counted.
Well-known men die
Claiming to be Jesus Christ.
But the real Jesus walks the alley,
Punches a time clock
And keeps coming to the House of the Lord,
Looking for his soul from an unknown debtor,
The ruling class.

El Coquí, el Grillo y la Luna
Sentadito en una hoja de malanga se encontraba un coquí De pronto miró p’al cielo y al ver aquella luna lunera Que lo observaba se dijo para entre sí "Dios mío, ¿será boricua esa luna lunera que cautiva mis ojos o será la que el 'Yankee' conquistó?" Y escuche esto, mi pana, pues fue lo que sucedió Desde entre unos pies de yuca brincó un grillo americano y le contestó "I just don’t know, my friend, I just don’t know!"

Sin Título
El soneto le dice a la copla "con mi persona te arropas"
Pobre de la sílaba si lava las palabras como ropa de pobre con agua y sin jabón Fíjate, el poeta de "campo adentro" escribe sobre el gallo y la gallina y la carreta de bueyes Y el pobre poeta que se fue de la isla escribe sobre las estructuras dañíferas, la basura y el arrabal Newyorquino [NY]
Así que canta gallo canta Que monte adentro nada te va a faltar El soneto se calla cuando se acerca la copla.
Preface

The errors in my poetry are like the errors in life
When you find them
Say like I said,
"Oh, what a pity!"
And go forward
Godfather or Godmother
Life is not perfect
So interpret my poetry like I interpret life itself:
Errors do happen naturally
So assimilate whatever you understand
And what you don’t understand just set it aside
I hope everything goes all right
After all this book is dedicated to you,
And those of us that can’t comprehend, as well as you do.

Sin Título

Ese africano que habita en tu alma
Y que lo llevas por dentro
No es motivo de remordimiento
Aunque tus verdes ojos nunca se te maduren
Por favor deja que tu mente madure
Pues más vale tarde que nunca
No señor, no fue el español quien te dio ese júbilo de inquietud soberana
Bajo esa piel habita un africano
Esa alma africana
A lo Palés Matos
Es de tu abuela
No te olvides de tu abuela
Pues tú sabes de dónde vino
Yes, tú sabes dónde está.

Untitled

People tell me Alfredo, Alfredo, you sweet nigger you.
You are not a poet
You are no William Shakespeare.
And I say, you know, you are right
I am only Alfredo Matias
And to me that’s enough
Because to me the sun is the only poet
And I never, never, never want to be or not to be a Shakespeare
You, Shakespeare, could never be an African or Puerto Rican
And I am both of these things
Being able to be those two things
Who wants to be or not to be a Shakespeare?