

Summer 2018

## Que Ondee Sola - Summer 2018

Jacklyn Nowotnik

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# QOOS

**Que Ondee Sola**

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*Quarterly*

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About Luz Rodriguez: Growing up as a Mexican-American woman in the United States, shaped Luz into the person and writer that she is today. She was always intrigued by the idea of sharing her experiences but didn't know if anybody else would resonate with them or would want to hear them. It wasn't until college that she learned that her experiences were valid and worthy of being shared. As one of the few latinx people at Lake Forest College, Luz realized that she had to speak up about her personal experiences and political views. She felt it was important to share her ideas and opinions because this was her way to speak up for her people.

"I realize that I have a privilege that not many people in my community do, I am part of a white space, a space not meant for me, but I made it my own by sharing the obstacles that my people face." With the current political climate, Luz believes that the best thing we can do as active members of our society is speak up whether that is through poetry or other forms of art, voting, protesting

or speaking to the people in power. Luz will graduate from Lake Forest College with a bachelor's degree in sociology/anthropology and French. She hopes to attend graduate school next year for a master's degree in educational leadership in higher education.

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About Gabriel Alejandro Cortez: Gabriel Alejandro Cortez is an Associate Professor in the Department of Literacy, Educational Leadership & Development at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). He earned his doctoral degree in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2008. The focus of his research is on grassroots activism in public school policy and intercultural relations in Chicago. Born and raised in the West Town neighborhood of Chicago, Gabriel is an active supporter of educational initiatives that help to empower disenfranchised communities with equal distribution of resources, innovative leadership, and social justice-based democratic principles. With seven years of experience in preparing future school leaders, he has become an expert in urban/suburban education and its relation to local communities.

This includes understanding the phenomena of race, class, cultural identity, human rights, and globalization and their influence on accessibility to educational resources.

His research and work embrace critical approaches that support empowerment in disenfranchised communities. This includes educational research design and community assessment design for K-12 educators to improve their understanding of the communities they serve; introducing self-care and restorative justice practices for the K-12 classroom and higher education leaders; designing strategies on building community across racial/cultural lines; and coordinating literature, workshops, and conferences on the rising topic of Hispanic Serving Institutions for higher education leaders in the state of Illinois. He is currently a co-chair of the annual People's Education Forum sponsored by the Goodwin College of Education at NEIU which provides professional development on grassroots liberatory pedagogy for disenfranchised communities.

Photo provided by Luz Rodriguez

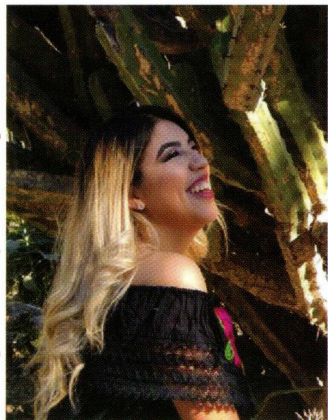
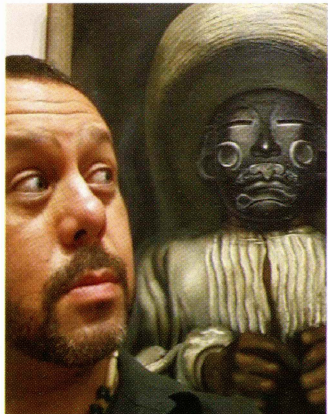


Photo provided by Gabriel Cortez



## Letter from the Editor

Que Ondee Sola (QOS), what does that mean? How do you say that? Is that slang, like que onda? I have heard all those questions and mispronunciations since I joined QOS as an undergraduate nearly 10 years ago and even now as a graduate student.

To be quite honest, I asked similar questions when I first joined. It wasn't until I joined QOS that I learned what it meant, both literally and metaphorically. I remember asking Jessie Fuentes, a former Editor-in-Chief of QOS, one time about the name. I don't remember what brought up the question in conversation, but I remember her answer. She said it meant "to wave alone," but it also symbolized Puerto Rican solidarity with Dominican and Cuban independence. Three Caribbean islands colonized by the Spanish but fighting to break free from colonization.

I remember feeling in awe of it because I had just read Juan Gonzalez' *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*. I could see the connections since the book traced the various effects that the U.S. had in Latin American countries in regards to historic events and migration.

I still explain QOS in that way, but I think the meaning has expanded recently. I think QOS just doesn't to wave alone but it waves as an advocate for the undocumented/DACAmented, LGBT, and Latinx communities. It waves in understanding of *la latinidad* (the Latino identity) as it grows.

It waves for educational access, creativity and culture. It waves for the commonalities in struggles similar to our own.

Waving that much can be exhausting but this magazine comes from 46 years of waving, I think we can handle this. Our hope is that you see QOS for what it really is and what it's always been, a voice for all the things we wave for.

We encourage you to ask questions about QOS, Latin America, the issues happening right here in our very own Latinx communities, our *culturas* (cultures). We encourage you to come visit us, reach out to us, send an idea for a story, contribute and to become involved.

I hope that you enjoy our issue and read our future issues.

Salud,

*Jackie Nowotnik*

Editor-in-Chief

# Conversation

## Rising Up: Lin-Manuel Miranda Talks About Hurricane Maria Relief Efforts in Puerto Rico



Photo by Mary Kroeck

### Mary Kroeck

In early November, Lin-Manuel Miranda (creator and star of “Hamilton: An American Musical” and “In the Heights”) held a press conference at the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture in Chicago. His goal? To continue to raise awareness of the devastation to Puerto Rico brought about by Hurricane Maria.

“Any time I go to Chicago, the first thing I do is come to Division Street,” said Miranda. “Our Puerto Rican population here is so incredible and so vibrant and involved.”

Miranda has been an outspoken advocate for Puerto Rico long before the devastation that wreaked havoc on the American territory. In 2016, the Tony winner appeared on “Last Week Tonight with John Oliver” to address debt relief for the island.

“The hard part is convincing Congress Puerto Rico matters so their heart is in the fight for relief, not a bailout, just relief,” Miranda rapped on the late night satirical news show.

Before Hurricane Maria, the island was already \$73 billion in debt and has been in a recession for the last decade. This past year’s storms brought the situation from bleak to dire.

Yet, Miranda, who is enthusiastically proud of his Puerto Rican heritage, keeps trying to do everything within his power to help the island that sits just about 1,000 miles from the continental United States.

“It’s been all hands on deck since the hurricane hit,” said Miranda, who’s been dedicated to supporting the relief effort in any way he can.

The Pulitzer Prize winner has gone to Washington, D.C. and met with members of Congress. His online merchandise shop, Tee Rico, has a special collection with proceeds going to relief efforts.

He even shared an awkward video via Twitter of himself at 13 singing about his love for Puerto Rico for Stephen Colbert and actor Nick Kroll’s #PuberMe challenge. Kroll started the challenge as a way to help kids feel less alone as they go through puberty. Colbert jumped in on the challenge and together they promised to make a donation to Puerto Rican hurricane relief efforts for every celebrity who tweeted a photo of themselves at age 13. Miranda’s tweet helped the campaign hit the \$1 million mark.

In January of 2019, Miranda is set to reprise his role in “Hamilton” for three weeks in Puerto Rico to help boost the island’s economy. If all that weren’t enough, Miranda wrote a song and got dozens of Latinx superstars to perform on it.

The song, “Almost Like Praying,” features Gloria Estefan, Marc Anthony, and Jennifer Lopez, among others. All proceeds from the song are going to the Hispanic Federation for Puerto Rico hurricane relief efforts.

“My first response to almost anything is to begin to write lyrics,” Miranda said. “That’s just how my brain works – for better or for worse. So I began writing ‘Almost Like Praying’ one: knowing that the song ‘Maria’ from ‘West Side Story’ had a very different connotation in the wake of this hurricane and is there any portion of that I can flip to do good? And two: well, my Facebook feed was just full of ‘Has anyone heard from Isabela?’ ‘Has anyone heard from Marico?’ ‘My grandfather lives in Toa Alta’... . So I began writing the towns into the lyric. Then I made it my challenge. Can I put all 78 towns into a song lyric and still make you want to dance to it and buy it? So that became my challenge.”

The challenge is one that seems to be paying off.

"Almost Like Praying," which sells for \$1.29, debuted at number one on iTunes in October and gave Miranda his first Billboard Hot 100, Top 40 hit.

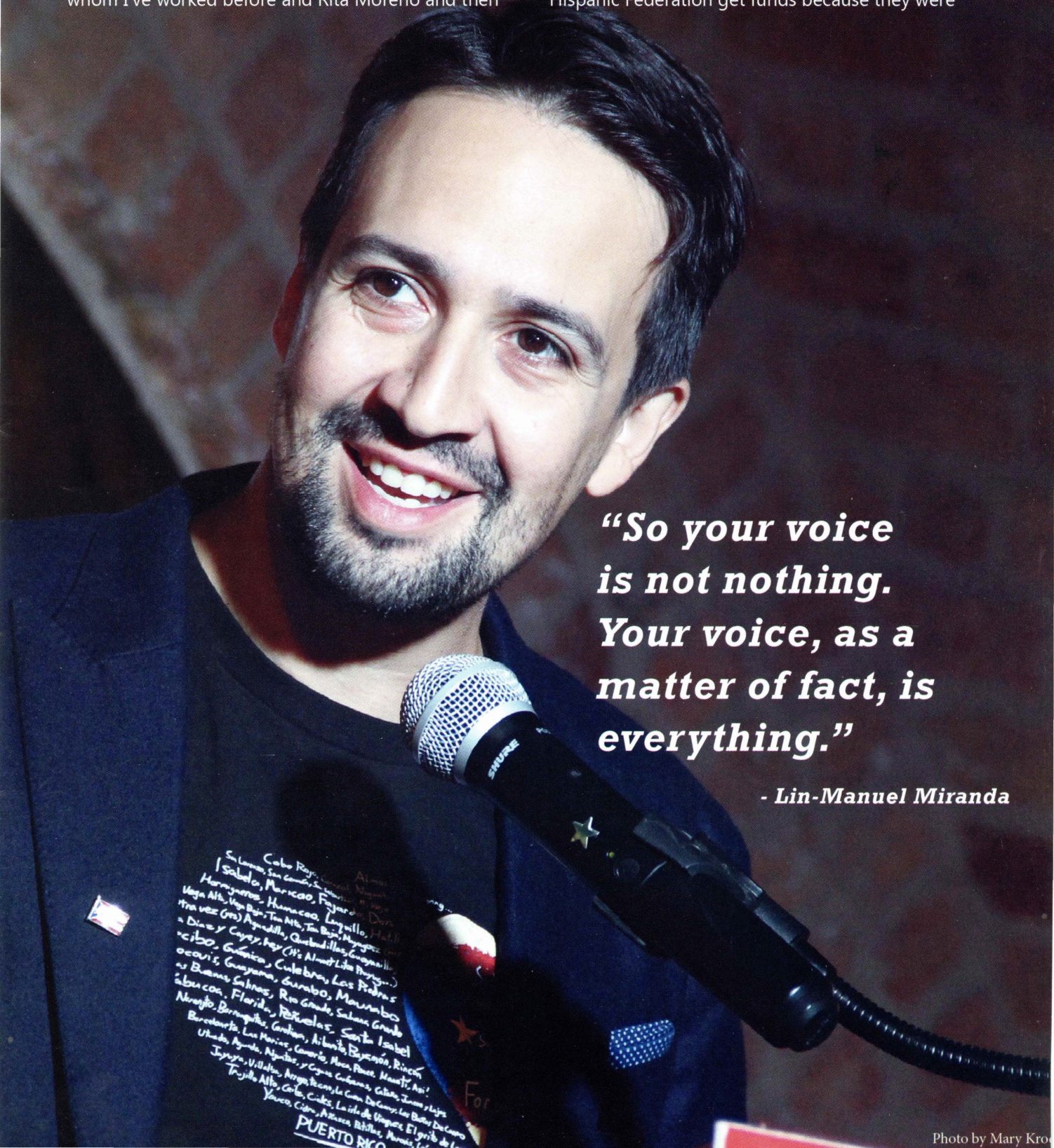
"Then, as soon as I finished writing the song, began burning up my rolodex to any and all Latino music superstars the few that I knew, like Jennifer [Lopez] with whom I've worked before and Rita Moreno and then

straight up Tweeting the ones I didn't; tweeting Luis Fonsi, tweeting Camila Cabello, Fat Joe," said Miranda, the two-time Grammy award winner.

"Everyone said yes without having heard the song. From writing the song to releasing the song was about two weeks, which was important. It's important that Hispanic Federation get funds because they were

***"So your voice is not nothing. Your voice, as a matter of fact, is everything."***

***- Lin-Manuel Miranda***



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sending planes and they were sending first responders. They were one of the first organizations to send first responders that week. That became the mission. That's what I do and continue to support because 100 percent of the proceeds of buying that song [go to relief efforts]. Please feel free to stream it and bump it in your car, but if you buy it all the money goes to the Hispanic Federation."

**"My first response to almost anything is to begin to write lyrics. That's just how my brain works – for better or for worse."**

**-Lin-Manuel Miranda**

Miranda seems well aware that there is a long way to go in terms of getting Puerto Rico up and running again. At the time of the press conference 75 percent of the island was still without power. According to NPR's All Things Considered, 11 percent of the island's was still powerless in March. "I'd much rather be telling you about some new musical I'm working on, but this is sort of the new full-time gig for now," said Miranda. "Until there's a sense of normalcy on the island, this is family, this is our friends. This is who we are. This is where we're from. So this is the gig for the foreseeable future." Miranda also encouraged everyone to do whatever they can to help with the relief efforts.

"What we can do is continue to contribute money and supplies in ways big and small as everyday citizens," said Miranda. "What's been amazing is also people using their voice. When the Whitefish contract happened and people went 'How are you hiring two employees to rebuild the power grid?' everyone jumped up and down and that had an effect. So your voice is not nothing. Your voice, as a matter of fact, is everything."

To find your elected officials and encourage them to support relief efforts in Puerto Rico, visit [usa.gov/elected-officials](http://usa.gov/elected-officials). "Almost Like Praying" is available for download on Amazon, iTunes, Google Play and other music download services. For more information on the Hispanic Federation and their Puerto Rico relief efforts, visit [hispanicfederation.org/unidos](http://hispanicfederation.org/unidos).

• Z •  
Welcome  
TO THE  
OLDEST  
Colony



# Conversation

## A Student Narrative: The Student Eye in Hurricane Irma

Liz Varmecky

"Irma, Irlma, Irlma!" That's all I could discern bubbling from street corner conversations, erupting from boomboxes in plazas, and simmering over restaurant tables. She was coming to pay Puerto Rico a visit: Hurricane Irma. Though Puerto Ricans are no strangers to hurricanes, the strength and trajectory of Irma put the islanders on edge.

Irma was a Cape Verde hurricane, which form off the coast of Africa. They travel, gaining strength, across the warm late-summer waters of the Atlantic and then crash into the U.S. or the Caribbean islands with massive force. By Tuesday morning, Irma was a Category 5 hurricane and was projected to directly hit Puerto Rico.

Life-long residents related tales of "Ugo" (Hugo), which hit the island as a Category 3 hurricane in 1989. Hugo destroyed coffee and banana crops, nearly decimated El Yunque rain forest, and caused massive flooding and bridge loss in San Juan, the capital of the island. The same San Juan where I was staying in September 2017.

Like Irma, Hugo was a Cape Verde hurricane. Carmen, a tour guide at Flavors of San Juan, told me that El Yunque saved the island because the trees absorbed most of Hugo before it hit San Juan and other populous areas.

Puerto Ricans will proudly tell you that the word "hurricane" originates with the Taino people, aboriginal to Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands. Huracán is the Spanish interpretation of a Caribe (the language spoken by the Taino) god of evil or storms, Juracán.

My husband and I arrived to Puerto Rico on Saturday, Sept. 2, 2017, to celebrate his birthday. Starting Sunday, the surprisingly slow but steady ramp up to the storm began.

Where you were going to ride out the storm was a hotter topic than where you would spend New Year's Eve in Chicago. "Did you get a flight?" "Where are you flying through?" "What hotel are you staying at?" "Are you heading inland?" "How Far?" "What elevation is your room?" "Are you high enough?" "Are you low enough?" "Do you have enough water?"

Old San Juan is a walled fort city on a hilly rock island. My husband and I were staying at an Airbnb near the top of the hill in what felt like a solid stone and plaster building. After many frustrating interactions with Spirit airline which included the query "Do you

want me to die in a Category 5 hurricane?" we decided to ride out the storm in this two-story building.

We started forming a plan to make it through Irma and its aftermath. Drinking water was our first concern, so we stopped by the Super Max and the Pharmacia every time we were out touring to pick up as much water as we could carry. Like other people on the island, we moved in what felt like slow motion. In our case, at least, because of the oppressive tropical humidity.

We needed supplies, but we had days, and there was little sense of urgency. We picked up a radio and batteries, though finding an English language station proved impossible. We bought a flashlight, candles, a can opener, trash cans for water storage, tuna, granola bars, a case of Medalla, cards, and dominoes with the Puerto Rican flag.

I didn't see any of the price gouging or shortages in Puerto Rico that people were already sharing from Florida's hurricane preparations. But I also didn't see assistance coming from the states, and locals didn't mention it or seem to expect it.

The day before the storm the city started to clear.



All photos for this story taken by Liz Varmecky

Sanitation workers picked up all the dumpsters and anything else movable that might be thrown by the wind.

Few tourists would ride out the storm in Old San Juan, but without options to avoid a storm with an eye that was larger than the diameter of the entire island, many locals stayed. Though no census was taken, I would estimate that there were fewer than 500 people left within the city walls.

After getting everything as ready as possible, one of the most agonizing waiting games of my life began Tuesday night. The storm was predicted to hit Puerto Rico sometimes around 3 p.m. Wednesday.

That night we set out into the eerily empty blue cobblestone streets searching for bebidas (drinks) and companionship. Douglas' Pub was one of the few bars that hadn't been boarded up, and we spent the rest of the evening there with our brand-new hurricane friends.

The locals we met at the bar were concerned for their property, but knew there was nothing else they could do. Either their battened preparations would be enough to save their livelihoods, or they wouldn't, but either way most people were confident in their personal safety. The tourists I met were questioning their judgment, timing, and sanity.

My primary concern was maintaining the health of my husband and I. The unhealthy and infirm are usually those who suffer and die during natural disasters, so I knew that we needed to stay hydrated and healthy.

Later that night while my husband slept restlessly, I was glued to the television waiting for the near-hourly weather updates from the only "local" station providing updates in English for the Caribbean, One Caribbean Television. One of their three meteorologists used a parrot puppet during his telecasts, which was at times frustrating, humorous, and comforting. I needed to have the constant updates as long as I could, because loss of power was inevitable. I knew that loss of information and data would be stressful.

Around 2 a.m. on Wednesday morning, the storm projections showed Irma's eye just missing Puerto Rico, and I was finally able to feel semi-calm. We would have a storm, but it wouldn't be the storm of the century, at least not for Puerto Ricans.

As the sun rose, the air felt different. I forced my husband into the streets for one last check with our "local authorities," the policia (the police). As we checked with the officer about evacuation plans and locations providing shelter, I saw a motorcade escorting the governor off of the island, even though residents had been repeatedly told that he would be riding out the storm within the city walls.

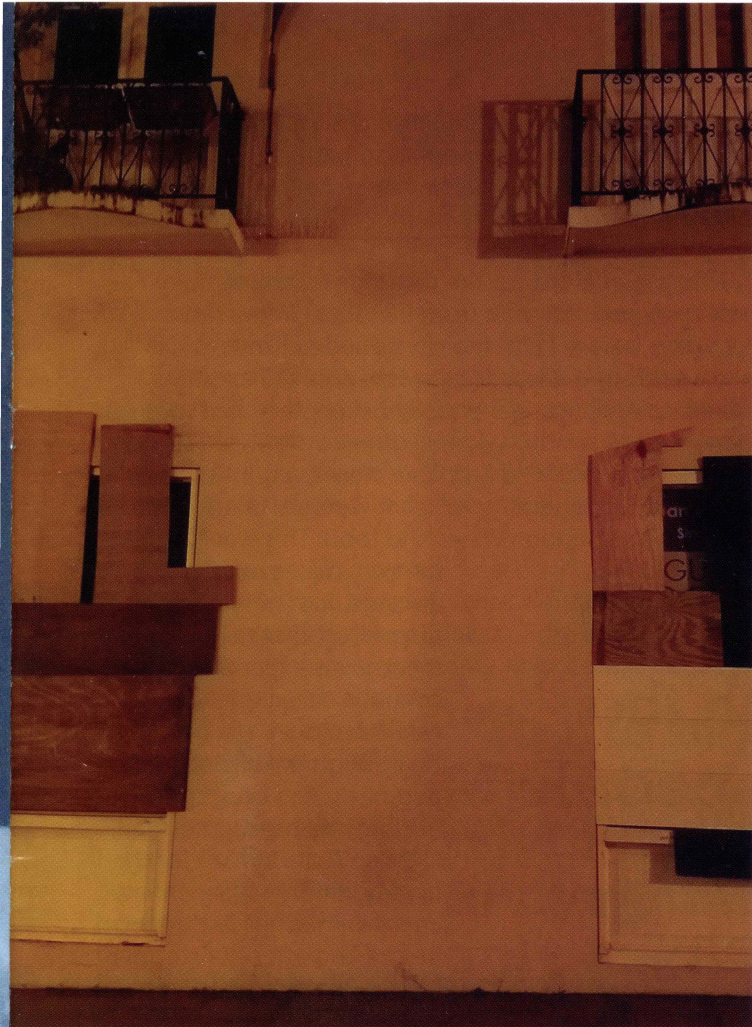
There was no evacuation plan for Old San Juan, but the officer pointed to a school about four blocks downhill from our room that was providing shelter to people. Our casa on the hill, architecturally and



geographically, seemed like a better place to ride out the storm, even though we knew communication would be cut off from everything outside the room in just a few hours.

Back at the room, shut in around 300 square feet, I started my pace-a-thon. I wandered from our balcony, where I watched the pedestrian traffic, to the only other opening in the room, the courtyard door, where I watched the wind building. I circled between those two





points glancing at the satellite feed, waiting for the next weather update, and constantly updating the radar on my phone even though the feed only updates every 30 minutes.

I paced so much my feet got tired.

After power went out and data and cell service became spotty, we knew the bands of Irma were thickening, and we needed more updates. I wanted to know everything that people knew outside of our cave, but it was difficult for information to permeate the storm.

I asked friends and relatives to text me updates so they would show up as the service came in and out, but according to them, they also felt cut off from Puerto Rican updates. Reports in the states were already focusing on Floridians' Irma preparation, even as the storm was lashing Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

But once the wall was near, I didn't need the news reports or frantic texts to update me. Wind and leaves whipped through the courtyard, and the low pressure of the hurricane created a throbbing behind my eyes and in my sinuses. I felt tears pricking my eyes, and sat like a pained Rodin statue on the edge of the bed for what felt like hours, but was probably closer to twenty

minutes.

The hurricane brought with it salt water in the rain, which I tasted on my lips, and the strong smell of fish, which I imagined was pulled from the depths of the ocean. The yawning wind was the only sound, other than my husband scanning the radio. There was no thunder, and the only lightning were transformers exploding in the distance.

After the worst of Irma had passed, the island was blanketed in complete darkness. We lit the candles, and my husband and I spent the rest of his fortieth birthday drinking Medalla, playing dominoes, and listening to the wind.

In the morning we set out upon a dead city, armed with water and wearing tennis shoes. A tree growing out of a building across the street had come down, blocking most of the road in front of our casa. Roof pieces, awnings, and bits of antique street lanterns littered the street.

Power was out, except for buildings that owned or had rented generators in preparation for the storm. We surveyed the city for open establishments and checked in on hurricane friends.

The storm left most of San Juan untouched, and the city collectively celebrated in the Puerto Rican way: with rum.

I wouldn't see the grid's electricity restored during the rest of my five days in the city. As slow as the build



up to the storm felt, recovery felt even slower, but was accompanied by music, laughter, and comradery.

San Juan's water system uses electrical pumps to pump water from cisterns at the bottom of the hill to maintain pressure at the top of the hill. We found out that we were losing water about a day after the storm when we saw people coming down the hill carrying water vessels.

Our saved trash can water was used to towel sweat off and fill the toilet tank. Generators started powering the pumps and by Saturday morning smelly water was running from the taps.

Few hours were spent in our room because the cans of water standing in the post-hurricane heat and humidity had made it into a mosquito colony.

Because of the post-hurricane heat offensive and the colony of mosquitoes, sleep was impossible, despite our extreme exhaustion. I operated on adrenaline until landing home in Chicago, where I crashed hard.

The days after the storm were a time of excess and conservation. We drank heavily and tipped heavily. Conservation of certain resources like cash and water

became important, but equally important were building the bonds that connect people to people. This human connection would be our saving grace if we ran out of resources, and it is the memory that I carry with me from this adventure.

The relief effort for the rest of the Caribbean was being coordinated from San Juan. In the last two days before I left, the city sounded like what I always thought a war zone would sound like: sirens, generators, radios, generators, helicopters, and more generators.

The people of Old San Juan were thoughtful and giving, always checking to see if we were taken care of, if we had enough water and food. This was despite the very real property damage, loss of income, and discomfort that they were themselves experiencing and continue to experience two weeks later.

Though my blisters, bug bites, and bruises are healing, my heart is still in Old San Juan. I yearn for the beauty, kindness, generosity, and community I felt there before and after the storm. My thoughts remain with the neglected people of the world's oldest colony.

**“My thoughts remain with the neglected people of the world's oldest colony.”**

- Liz Varnecky



All photos for this story taken by Liz Varnecky

## All-American Mutt: Brown in White Spaces

Hailey G. Boyle

When I was growing up, my favorite series was Star Trek and I didn't realize that my favorite was character just like me.

Kirk may have been the swashbuckler and Picard was the methodical badass that only Patrick Stewart could bring to life. Data was the lovably, curious android and Janeway was the feminist icon I cheered for, but my favorite character was and always will be Commander Spock.

Across seven TV series (yes, I'm including the Animated Series) and eleven movies, Spock was the half-human, half-Vulcan Science Officer of the USS Enterprise and the reason he was always my favorite was because my whole life was about balancing my half-human, half-Vulcan nature. Well, sort of.

I'm not an alien, but I certainly felt that way growing up. My ethnic heritage is mixed more than a stray mutt in an animal shelter, but the two dominant cultures that always seemed to clash with each other were my Caucasian and Hispanic sides.

My dad is Irish and my mom is Mexican. There are more countries in there, but these are two cultures that I was raised with most. I grew up singing Irish music, taking Irish dance lessons, learning Irish history. I grew up eating Mexican food, looking at pictures my family took in Acapulco and hearing stories about my bisabuelos, great-grandparents.

I always felt these two heritages pulling me like magnets, often trying to pull me away from the other one. It was isolating.

The grammar school I went to was predominantly white. Now, my skin is a soft olive at most, but this school was liquid paper white. Everyone in my class had blue or green or hazel eyes. Except for the Japanese girl. You could count the non-white students on your fingers and toes. And this was kindergarten to eighth grade. For nine years, I had to pretend to be all white.

I was the 'dark' kid. The Mexican. Anytime the Mexican magnet pulled up pan dulces or conchas, the white kids would shun me. I pushed down every part of my Mexicanness. I did it without realizing what I was

doing. To me being Mexican felt like trivia that was fun to have, but was only ever useful when playing Trivial Pursuit.

Spock would be bullied by full Vulcans for having a human mother and I was bullied for having a Mexican mother.

It was the same in dance classes. All the other girls had red hair and green eyes and freckles. Nobody looked like me.

I would point to the two freckles I have on my arm and comb through my hair to show my teachers my one strand of red hair. I'm a brunette, but there are natural red strands hiding underneath the brown. I would pray to God every night to put freckles on my cheeks and change all my hair red. It never happened.

My struggle wasn't only going to a white school with white kids in a white neighborhood. It was the fact that I didn't really have much Mexicanness to push down.

You see, I have never been to Mexico. I don't know much about Mexican history. Hell, I can barely speak Spanish. I can listen to what you're saying and mostly understand it and respond in English, but unless I'm having a

conversation with a four-year-old, I'm not going to be able to say much. And that's mostly because my abuelos, grandparents, didn't teach it to me.

They, along with other members of my family didn't teach me, my mom, my cousins, my siblings Spanish. They said they wanted to have a secret language without the kids knowing. But I always suspected it was to make us seem more American. Being Mexican in my family meant loving my abuelita's albondigas, meatballs, and listening to my abuelito tell me stories about Cuernavaca and look at pictures of Acapulco for hours.

Then I graduated and went to high school and everything flipped upside down.

Suddenly, I was the 'white' kid. My high school was predominantly Black and Hispanic. I was going to school with kids so much darker than me and I felt myself reaching into the back of my brain for my Mexican trivia. I never won that game of Trivial Pursuit. I was the girl who took Irish dancing lessons, knew all of Enya's albums by heart and could tell you twenty ways to cook a potato.

**“To me being Mexican felt like trivia that was fun to have, but was only ever useful when playing Trivial Pursuit.”**

-Hailey G. Boyle

All of a sudden I was pushing down everything Irish about me and anything that was considered "white." It didn't matter that I liked Selena or had a real serape, shawl that I love and wear to this day. I could try to act like the girls in class, but the Ireland magnet would pull me back to U2 and Colin Farrell.

Those girls, my classmates, they were Hispanic. They either were born in Mexico or Puerto Rico or their parents were. They watched telenovelas. They could hold conversations in Spanish. As much as I tried, I never really felt "Mexican enough," whatever that nebulous feeling is.

There's this whole part of me that don't I understand because was I never encouraged to explore it. I was proud of what I thought Mexican heritage was until I saw what real Mexicans were.

As a kid, Spock was always being pulled by his Vulcan logic with humans or his human emotions with Vulcans. He eventually chose to fully embrace Vulcan and shunned his human half. That choice often landed him into trouble though. Because of that, he never truly fit in with the Enterprise crew, but he still belonged.

It took a campy, low-budget science-fiction show from 1965 to make me realize that choosing one over the other, would only tear me apart and why would I want to do that? My identity isn't about picking one over the other. It's about embracing everything they have to offer. It's about enjoying my tacos with a pint.

**"My identity  
isn't about  
picking one  
over the other.  
It's about  
embracing  
everything they  
have to offer."**

**-Hailey G. Boyle**

## The Worst

Dear Mr. Donald Trump,

Tell me how Mexico is sending its worst  
If my father's hands are covered in dirt  
From doing a day's work coming home until sundown  
Sweat dried on his face, mud on his boots  
Exhaustion dragging his permanent smile into a tiresome frown

Tell me how Mexico is sending its worst  
If my mother comes home after ten hour days  
She carries a notebook filled with English words she just learned  
She never complains about not understanding  
Exhaustion dragging her permanent smile into a tiresome frown

Tell me how Mexico is sending its worst  
If thousands of immigrants work picking strawberries to feed their families  
They restlessly fight for their rights after working long hours  
From sunrise to sundown but they never complain  
Exhaustion dragging their permanent smiles into tiresome frowns

Tell me how Mexico is sending its worst  
Tell me how you wish to make America great again  
Tell me how Mexico is sending its worst

**Luz Rodriguez**

# El Movimiento

Like the golden rays that stream from the bright blue skies  
 We dance along varied rhythms contributed by many lives  
 We represent a movimiento of cultures, politics, and desires  
 Breaking through imposed borders and outlasting malicious fires  
 Latina, Latino, a community of identities who clash and morph into something new  
 Creating new realities of dreams that you never thought would ever come true  
 Speaking with tongues that capture the essence of many civilizations  
 Cambiando meanings of survival throughout our vivid situations  
 We emerge from isolated pasts punished by deep conquest intentions  
 Re-aligning our souls with open paths that cherish wonderful sensations  
 El movimiento, the ability to move toward your lifelong aspirations  
 Riding above the weight of man-made rules who dwell on limitations  
 Recognizing that a full fledged liberation is not a loner's truth  
 We look to the past and see el movimiento is deep inside our roots  
 Our struggle for a better tomorrow continues as we venture onto new horizons  
 We dance along vivid hopes and dreams, dreamt by so many generations

Gabriel Alejandro Cortez

## Marisol: Every Time a Cockroach Crunches, an Angel Gets Its Wings

Nicole F. Anderson

Catastrophic news footage flashed across the screens, and sounds of crawling bugs and screams of neighbors surrounded the audience in Stage Center's newest production, "Marisol" by José Rivera.

"Marisol" was directed by NEIU faculty member Adam Goldstein.

He works all over Chicago: as a faculty member, director, assistant director and accent and dialect coach.

In the director's note, Goldstein said that while reading the "Marisol" script, he remembered playwright Liz Duffy Adams was asked why she wrote about the end of the world.

She said, "Because I believe we crave revolution. We want to see what happens on the other side of destruction. We need to experience total loss to truly experience total discovery."

The play beings with Marisol (played by Cecilia Hernandez) on a train in New York City. She is approached by a homeless man (played by Ian William) swinging a golf club at her; however, the assault attempt was a swing and a miss, as Marisol was rescued by her guardian Angel (played by Tameera Harris).

Marisol Perez works as a copy editor at a publishing company in Manhattan and lives in the Bronx.

Upon returning to her apartment, the audience begins to

see some of the problems she deals with.

The audience hears the sound of bugs crawling and sees Marisol stomping on the ground. Besides dealing with the presumed New York City cockroaches, the audience is introduced to Marisol's neighbors.

They are loud and obnoxious; there's even a jealous, murderous girlfriend.

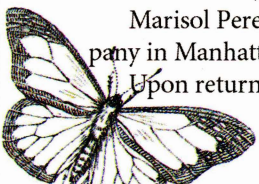
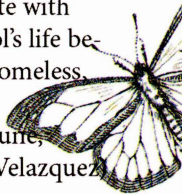
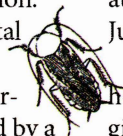
Before Marisol could be killed, her hauntingly beautiful guardian Angel spread her wings yelled, "Wake up!" She wakes to an unrecognizable world, one where the moon is gone, land is contaminated, all food tastes like salt, rain eats away at human flesh, neo-Nazis set homeless people on fire and angels are at war with God.

After this encounter, Marisol returns to work, and the audience meets her coworker, a quirky young woman named June (played by Emily Hosman).

June convinces Marisol to move in after a dispute with her brother Lenny (played by Ian Williams). Marisol's life begins to spiral downward from there. She becomes homeless, lost and alone.

Marisol and the Angel brought intensity while June, Lenny and Woman with Fur (played by Angelique Velazquez) brought comedic relief.

Most importantly, "Marisol" addresses homelessness, social class, mental illness and societal chaos.





Graphic by: Brandi Nevarez

## Misión / Mission Statement

Established in 1972, Que Ondee Sola remains the oldest Puerto Rican and Latina/o Student Magazine in the U.S. Established at Northeastern Illinois University the magazine is student run with participation from faculty, staff, alumni and community members. 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 (homelands).

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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