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## They Wear Zapatos de Arco-Iris (Rainbow Shoes) To the Epiphany (inspired by Oscar Lopez-Rivera)

Eduardo  
Arocho

Marching down  
an impasse street  
seen parading on TV  
the children of a colony  
are dancing proudly  
exiled with the flag  
they inherited from history.

Navideña is the night  
over a barrio where  
a niño is born  
under the northern fifty stars.

He learns to walk  
with other niños y niñas  
from a nation unknown  
lost is Diaspora  
on an imperial paved road.

Three saw the star  
three from Belén  
two thousand years  
they journeyed to Borikén  
where the Jibaro-Santero  
has carved them  
and calls them in prayer  
asking please bring gift  
to the poor niños y niñas  
of this estrella.

They came on the eve  
Tres Reyes Magos  
riding on three Paso-finos  
in search of the star  
inside every Borincano child  
under the children's bed  
they find fresh grass  
for the royal horses to eat  
and leave an Aguinaldo treat.

With esperanza still bright  
and Parrandas loud  
they gallop through the isle  
bringing gifts to every child  
stopping at the coast  
where black are both  
the sea and sky  
and empty of treasures rest  
Tres Reyes Magos.

A new star shines in the sky  
Seen by the middle saint divine  
Melchor is his name  
Africa's negro Rey.  
He says to the wise,  
"look there on the street,  
deep in a city canyon  
a beckoning light  
and hidden among the shadows  
are niños y niñas heirs to this estrellas."

"We must ride", he said  
through the sky  
"and bring Aguinaldos  
to them this night."

But other wise man  
said to Melchor  
"we have no more treasures,  
we gave them away  
to all the children en la isla  
to them all gifts we gave."

So the wise Melchor  
on his white horse  
contemplated and prayed  
and then he said to the wise,  
"bring them history  
bring them song  
bring them zapatos de arco-iris  
so they may walk  
to the future with dignity."

And so Los Tres Reyes Magos  
mounted tres Paso-Finos  
and rode towards the north  
through the heavens  
through the night  
guided by the stars light.

In the morning they arrived  
Singing, "ven, ven little Boricuas!  
Look at what we brought you  
History, song and zapatos de arco-iris  
for the Reyes y Reynas de La Bandera."  
All over the barrio, niños y niñas  
woke from their dreams  
when they heard the three sing.

They run to see the epiphany  
they run to see the three  
who ride Paso-Finos down the street  
with gifts for shoeless rainbow feet.

A trail of shackles remain on the street  
a phenomenon never seen on t.v.  
as they wear zapatos de arco-iris  
to the epiphany.

Niños y niñas are reborn  
on this street the star adorns  
as they wear zapatos the arco-iris  
to the epiphany.

History they live and make  
on Division street renamed  
and, they wear zapatos de arco-iris  
to the epiphany.

## Rumba Time Bomb

Rumba starts ticking away  
after a downtown parade  
when Boricuas cruise the flag  
around towers and hoods  
all over Chicago to Albizu Street  
where everyone's on stage  
all day and night  
dancing salsa and looking fine  
almost naked  
wearing only flags in the heat.  
Loud is this noise they make together  
That breaks the sound barrier  
Forcing the world to listen  
To a people kept silent all year  
Till rhythms of rumba  
Burst from the conga.

Just in time to feel the crowd  
That's growing restless  
Cuz pigs are sniffing around  
Blasting sirens and lights  
Trying to stop the celebration.  
With a small army invading  
This spot targeted for gentrification.  
But if cops can't make a fine soon  
They better move  
Before a rioting mob  
Turns the lights off.  
Rumba gets louder with angry beats  
As the bomb ticks.

This conga is almost ready to blow  
With a revolutionary rumba  
Like it did in Cuba  
When independence day came  
With a 21 conga salute to the flag  
Yet my star is not free  
So I continue to rumba  
With the conga  
Like negritos did in Cuba  
Till my colonial chains explode  
In Yankees face  
I'm going to rumba, I'm going to rumba. Rumba Time Bomb!

Eduardo Arocho is poet born and raised in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. He has performed poetry throughout Chicago for the past nine years. He completed in 2001 a M.S. in Human Services Administration at Spertus Institute in Chicago. He currently works with local community agencies in Humboldt Park.