Two Worlds

(1) Bi-lingual, Bi-cultural
able to slip from “How’s life”
to “M’estan volviendo loca,”
able to sit in a paneled office

(5) drafting memos in smooth English,
able to order in fluent Spanish
at a Mexican restaurant,
American but hyphenated,
viewed by anglos as perhaps exotic,

(10) perhaps inferior, definitely different,
viewed by Mexican as alien
(their eyes say, “You may speak
Spanish but you’re not like me”)
an American to Mexicans

(15) a Mexican to Americans
a handy token
sliding back and forth
between the fringes of both worlds
by smiling
by masking the discomfort
of being pre-judged

(22) Bi-laterally.

Line 3: They are driving me crazy

Two Worlds
by Stephanie D. Colquitt

(1) Bi-lingual, Bi-cultural
able to be open, charismatic, and loud
while having to use my inside voice
as I respect others’ personal space

(5) able to kiss, hug, intimately greet
as well as nod when
they saw “How’s it goin”
as they walk away,
able to sing my heart out in Spanish

(10) surrounded by friends and strangers alike,
Dominican-Haitian-American
one of three intricate parts,
some days one of the thirds overpower
the two others

(15) quickly reminded that one can’t stand on its own
perceived by estadounidenses as one that
slowly but surely is climbing the ladder of success,
assimilation,
viewed by Latinos as a morena

(20) that’s losing her flavor
between the chasm that
joins and splits my two domains
by resisting to conform

(25) as I debunk preconceived notions,
discover, grow, and explore
embracing all parts with
dignidad, certeza y orgullo
Afro-Latina that spreads and evolves
in one world, two worlds, all depending on the context.

Line 16: An American
Line 19: Black/Brown girl
Line 28: Dignity, certainty, pride