**Ode to the Diasporican**

by María Teresa “Mariposa” Fernández

(pa’ mi gente)[[1]](#footnote-1)

Mira a mi cara Puertorriqueña
Mi pelo vivo
Mis manos morenas
Mira a mi corazón que se llena de orgullo
Y dime que no soy Boricua.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Some people say that I’m not the real thing
Boricua, that is
cause I wasn’t born on the enchanted island
cause I was born on the mainland
north of Spanish Harlem
cause I was born in the Bronx…
some people think that I’m not bonafide[[3]](#footnote-3)
cause my playground was a concrete jungle
cause my Río Grande de Loiza[[4]](#footnote-4) was the Bronx River
cause my Fajardo was City Island[[5]](#footnote-5)
my Luquillo Orchard Beach[[6]](#footnote-6)
and summer nights were filled with city noises
instead of coquis[[7]](#footnote-7)
and Puerto Rico
was just some paradise
that we only saw in pictures.

What does it mean to live in between
What does it take to realize
that being Boricua
is a state of mind
a state of heart
a state of soul…

Mira a mi cara Puertorriqueña
Mi pelo vivo
Mis manos morenas
Mira a mi corazón que se llena de orgullo
Y dime que no soy Boricua.

No nací en Puerto Rico.
Puerto Rico nacío en mi.[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. For my people. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Look at my Puerto Rican face / My nappy hair / My brown-skinned hands / Look into my heart filled with pride / And tell me that I am not Boricua. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. authentic [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. River in northeastern Puerto Rico. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Small island in New York City. Fajardo: small city in Puerto Rico. Both associated with waterfront property. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Public beach in the Bronx. Luquillo: Luquillo Beach, public beach in northeastern Puerto Rico. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Species of small frogs that make a rhythmic sound at night. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. I was not born in Puerto Rico. / Puerto Rico was born in me. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)