**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)