

# CELEBRACIÓN 2010

ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S INTERNATIONAL MULTICULTURAL  
INSTITUTE PRESENTS

A CELEBRATION OF HISPANIC HERITAGE AT RCC

FEATURING

INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED POET

## MARTÍN ESPADA

READING HIS AWARD-WINNING WORK

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2010**

**11 AM – 12 PM**

**MAINSTAGE THEATER**

AT ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**BOOK-SIGNING AND LIGHT LUNCH TO FOLLOW IN REGGIE**

**LEWIS GYM**

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

*INTERESTED IN PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS FOR THE EVENT?  
PLEASE FIND A **SAMPLE LESSON PLAN BELOW!***

**In this spirit of Celebración, read this poem by Martín Espada with your students and complete the following exercises!**

Tony Went to the Bodega But He Didn't  
Buy Anything  
*Para angel Guadalupe*

Tony's father left the family  
and the Long Island city projects,  
leaving a mongrel-skinny puertorriqueño boy  
nine years old  
who had to find work.

Makengo the Cuban  
let him work at the bodega.  
In grocery aisles  
he learned the steps of the dry-mop mambo,  
banging the cash register  
like piano percussion  
in the spotlight of Machito's orchestra,

polite with the abuelas who bought on credit,  
practicing the grin on customers  
he'd seen Makengo grin  
with his bad yellow teeth.

Tony left the projects too,  
with a scholarship for law school.  
But he cursed the cold primavera  
in Boston;

the cooking of his neighbors  
left no smell in the hallway,

and no one spoke Spanish  
(not even on the radio).

So Tony walked without a map  
through the city,  
a landscape of hostile condominiums  
and the darkness of white faces,  
sidewalk-searcher lost  
till he discovered the projects.

Tony went to the bodega  
but he didn't buy anything:

he sat by the doorway satisfied  
to watch la gente (people  
island-brown as him)  
crowd in and out,  
hablando español,  
thought: this is beautiful,  
and grinned  
his bodega grin.  
This is a rice and beans  
success story:  
today Tony lives on Tremont Street,  
above the bodega.

From: *Trumpets from the Islands of their Eviction*. Bilingual Review Press, 1987.

Poetry is about finding your voice and being heard! Try these exercises to encourage your students to take part in the conversation:

- 1) Start by reading this poem aloud to your students. Ask them to close their eyes and visualize the landscape described in the poem. After you are finished reading the poem aloud, ask your students to open their eyes and call out what they remember (images, words, turns of phrase, etc.). Start a dialogue on why the poem is memorable and ask them to describe the power of the imagery and words in the poem.
- 2) To spice up the classroom atmosphere, ask your students to memorize and then perform the poem before their class.
- 3) If you are in the foreign language classroom, ask students to translate this poem into the language that they are studying. Ask them to get together with a partner and compare their translations. How are they alike? How are they different? Discuss the importance of word choice in conveying meaning.
- 4) If you are working in a history or social-science classroom, offer this place-based writing exercise. Ask your students to imagine the people and places in their own neighborhoods, and using Espada's poem as a model, write a short history of where they live.
- 5) This poem is a great jumping off point for talking about points of view (first person, second person, third person). Discuss the effect of the third person point of view in this poem and try an experiment: ask your students to choose one character from the poem (Tony, Tony's father, Makengo, the abuelas, etc) and rewrite the poem from that character's first-person point of view (this is called a dramatic monologue). How does the point of view shift cause the story to change? How does it cause the story to stay the same?

Developed by KL Pereira for Roxbury Community College

SEE YOU AT  
CELEBRACIÓN 2010!

