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Searching for Identity around the Globe

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Rick Santos

Searching for Identity around the Globe

poem

Yes, I was born in this country
BUT WHAT ARE YOU?
My parents are Brazilian;
I am Brazilian

BUT YOU WERE NOT BORN HERE
WHAT ARE YOU?

I was born in New York
Soy americano

There is no such a thing as a half-Jew
Your mother is Jewish, you ARE Jewish
don't let anybody tell you otherwise

The male God of Catholicism orders you to
follow you Father's religion
So, technically (and whether you like it or not)
You ARE catholic

Caught in between the middle of a war of ideologies
& identities
i AM continuously forced to choose one
inextricable dimension of my?SELF over (an)other.

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New York.*

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Rick Santos

In the middle
of
this

c
FIRE
o
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What can one do?
Who do i s_de with?
Is there a way out?

When I returned to this country
i had g_ven up trying to define myself
And to my surprise
For the first time in my(?) l_fe i found a group to belong
(or better yet, They foun_g a group to stick me _n)

□ H_spanic

At first, not yet used to belonging,
i tried to excuse myself:
"Well, I'm actually Brazilian and not really hispanic."

But They refused to hear me
"Yeah, yeah... brazilian, porto-rican, all the same"

"Get out of Our neighborhoods, motherfucking spics"

"In welfare line all you spics look alike"

"Why don't you go back to where you belong?"

I did NOT get out, though...
And, for the first time in my lfe, I actually got In
I learned to belong, to appropriate, and to resist.

Resist being pushed out

Searching for Identity Around the Globe

I learned to fight those who wanted to erase
and s_lence me
I opened my mouth and shouted loud,
And with my pen, I filled many pages
I refused to be invisible
I struck back
That is how I learned to be
✠LATINO.