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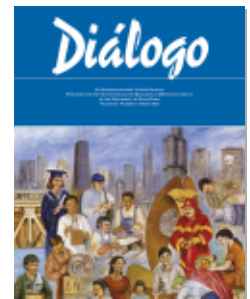
Paseo Boricua Pugilist

Eduardo Arocho

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Dossier: Chicago en la poesía de poetas latines **Eduardo Arocho**

Paseo Boricua Pugilist

On another plane
On another dimension
In a different direction opposite traffic
An artist with face fiercely focused
 Ten steps ahead—
 Jogs and jabs
 Six blocks
 Between Banderas

And then returns
To do it again and again
He speaks to no one and everyone fears him
Because he always seems to be battling rage
He yells at the street. Some call him “El Loquito”

If he could just make it one more time
One more time before he’s punched in the gut by
 hunger
Before he’s reminded by an uppercut that he’s
 homeless
If he could just make it across the street
To the park and raise his fist under Bandera

Hoping they’ll become as hard as Bandera Steel
Hoping they’ll be raised victoriously in the ring

A dream—he keeps jogging and jabbing
 With soul in anguish
Despite a festival, the traffic, police harassment
Nothing blocks him—he dodges all obstructions
Sweat soaks his Bandera shorts

Everyone watches him—he sees no one
Some envy his athletic body—he trains like a
 champion
Weather resistant and resilient in the face of pain
Despair has knocked him down many times
 Yet he still—
 Jogs and jabs
 Six blocks
 Between Banderas

Eduardo Arocho is a poet, author, and professional tour guide. He is the author of six poetry chapbooks. His poems have appeared in *Another Chicago Magazine* (2022), *Wherever I’m At, an Anthology of Chicago Poetry* (2022), *Irma Romero “Soy mujer mejicana de la clase trabajadora”* (2022), *We Are by The Chicago Community Trust* (2016), *Catalogía I: El amor* (2013), *El movimiento de los Reyes hacia la estrella sola* (2008), *Diálogo* (2004), *Centro Journal* (2001), *Power Lines* (2000), and *Open Fist: Anthology of Young Illinois Poets* (1993). He is currently completing work on his forthcoming poetry manuscript, *Nació Maestro*.