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REMEMBRANZAS
Pastel on Paper 36 x 24 - 1999



EL CAMPESINO
Acrylic on Canvas 48 x 34 - 1998



HOME SWEET HOME
Pastel on Paper 24 x 36 - 1999

I Am Puerto Rican

by claribel santiago

It's 5 o'clock in the morning... the familiar smell of home-grown coffee, slowly simmering atop the gas stove, rouses me from sleep. I hear a muffled clinking of metal coming from the kitchen, as my mother struggles in vain to quietly wash the pots and pans. I know by the familiar smells and sounds that it's time to get up and get ready to catch the school bus. The routine is comforting.

I climb out of bed and slowly drag myself down the hall, towards the kitchen. I rub my eyes, still half shut from sleepiness. The dim light of

morning seeps through the partially opened kitchen window and reflects against the wall. Except for the small rays of light, the room is dark. I peek around the kitchen and see my mother's silhouette. She sits in her usual spot crouched against the wall, while quietly sipping her coffee. I watch for a moment taking in these fleeting seconds...

All is quiet. Except for the occasional crow of a rooster out in the distance, everything is still. Puerto Rico seems to have stopped in time. The image embedded clearly in mind. Images that are part of my culture and who I am...

I am Puerto Rican.

CLARIBEL SANTIAGO



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About the Artist

Born in New Jersey, raised in Puerto Rico, Claribel currently lives in South Florida. She started practicing art and writing at an early age. When she was nine years old, she wrote and directed her first school play. In High School, she won first place in a drawing competition.

Her love for the written word and fine arts led her to study creative writing, and obtain a Bachelors of Fine Arts Degree with a major in Graphic Design. She graduated with honors, Cum Laude, from Florida Atlantic University.

Claribel is an entrepreneur, and founder of Phil One Six Designs. She uses her skills and education to promote her work on the web.

About her work

Claribel's artwork, and writing, are inspired by the Puerto Rican culture in which she was raised. She works mostly with pastels and acrylics, and illustrates both by computer and by hand. While her writing focuses on feelings, smells, and sounds, her artwork is filled with colors evocative of an era, the culture's positive and

humble lifestyle, which was common to the island's past. Her paintings are up-close and personal, transporting the viewer to a specific place and time, awakening a sense of yearning for the uncomplicated ideals of the past.

In Her Own Words...

My art is a reflection of my years growing-up on the mountainous countryside in Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico. Through my art, I want others to experience the treasures of Puerto Rico's history. My paintings incorporate movement and bright colors,

which I employ hoping to remind viewers of places they have visited, or perhaps stories they had heard from their childhood; and give them a desire to discover more about Puerto Rico's past.

