

# Two Names, Two Worlds

By Jonathan Rodríguez

Hi I'm Jon.....No—Jonathan  
Wait—Jonathan Rodríguez  
Hold on—Jonathan *Rodríguez*  
My Name, Two names, two worlds  
The duality of my identity like two sides of the same coin  
With two worlds, there should be plenty of room  
But where do I fit?  
Where can I sit?  
Is this seat taken? Or is that seat taken?  
There never is quite enough room is there?  
Two names, Two worlds  
Where do I come from?  
Born in the Washington heights of New York City  
But raised in good ol' Connecticut  
The smell of freshly mowed grass, autumn leaves  
*Sancocho*, Rice and Beans  
The sound from Billy Joel's Piano Keys  
And the rhythm from *Juan Luis Guerra*  
I'm from the struggle for broken dreams  
Of false promises  
Of houses with white picket fences  
And 2.5 kids  
The mountains and *campos de la Republica Dominicana*  
And the mango trees  
I'm not the typical kid from suburbia  
Nor am I a smooth Latin cat  
My head's in the clouds, my nose in a comic book  
I get lost in the stories and art  
I'm kinda awkward—so talkin' to the ladies is hard  
I listen to *Fernando Villalona and Aventura* every chance I get,  
But don't make me dance *Merengue, Bachata*  
Or *Salsa*—I don't know the steps  
I've learned throughout these past years  
I am a mix of cultures, a mix of races  
“*Una Raza encendida*, < ---- “a race that is black, white, and Taina  
*Negra, Blanca y Taina*”  
You can find me in the parts of a song, *en una cancion*. < ---- “a song”  
You can feel my African Roots *en la Tambora* < ---- “a percussion instrument used in Puerto Rico”  
My *Taino* screams *en la guira*  
And the melodies of the lyrics are a reminder of my beautiful Spanish heritage  
I am African, Taino and Spanish  
A Fanboy, an athlete, a nerd, a student, an introvert  
I'm proud to say: *Yo soy Dominicano* < ---- “I am Dominican”

I'm proud to say, I am me  
I am beginning to appreciate that I am  
*Una bella mezcla.* < ----- "a beautiful blend"  
I am beginning to see that this world is also a beautiful mix  
Of people, ideas and stories.  
Is this seat taken?  
Or is that seat taken?  
Join me and take a seat,  
Here we'll write our own stories.

1. What does Rodríguez mean when he uses the phrase "two names, two worlds"? What two worlds does his name represent?
2. What assumptions does Rodríguez think others might make about his identity because of his name? Which of those assumptions are true? Which are false?
3. In the space below, create an identity chart for Rodríguez. Come up with at least 10 words/phrases that can be used to describe his identity. These may be from the text or in your own words.

Jonathon