

Marithelma Costa



I met the mythical Miguel Algarín through his nephew John Howard, who was my student at Lehman College. I had just arrived in New York City and although my grandmother and great-grandmother lived through the first years of the Puerto Rican diaspora, I knew very little about the City and its people. John not only introduced me to his uncle, but also to the Nuyorican Poetry Movement and the iconic Nuyorican Poets Cafe. Thanks to Algarín's nephew I went years later to the scattering through the Lower East Side, of Miguel Piñero's ashes.

I saw Algarín often. Whenever we met, he was surrounded by young poets, and always had a wide smile. It was evident he was loved by all.

The last time we met it was some years ago on Mother's Day. We were at Tompkins Square and again, he was accompanied by a group of friends. I asked him how to get to Casa Adela and his instructions were as thorough and perfect as the pernil I had for lunch that day. I am sure he could go there blindfolded.

Now he's probably eating Doña Adela's wonderful food. He is smiling and is very happy. But we miss him very much.

Marithelma Costa has three books of poetry: *Diario OiraiD* (New York: OLLANTAY Press, 1997), *De tierra y de agua* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1988) and *De Al'vión* (New York: Lautaro Editorial Ibero-Americana, 1987), and a novel, *Era el fin del mundo* (San Juan: Plaza Mayor, 1999). She has received the American Council for Learned Societies Fellowship, The Program for Cultural Cooperation Between Spain's Ministry of Culture and States Universities Grant, and a National Endowment for the Humanities Award, among others. Marithelma Costa is a professor at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center. www.facebook.com/marithelma.costa