

ALMA FLOR ADA

CUBA/USA (1938–)

LANGUAGE: SPANISH

CÉSAR CHÁVEZ

Ya tus pasos no cruzan los campos
polvorientos
ni los alumbras con tu buena voz
pero tu ejemplo
y tu palabra
retoñan en los surcos
en brotes de callada esperanza.



Born in Cuba, Alma Flor Ada is the author of folktales, heroic stories, and poetry. A citizen of the world, she has lived and studied in many countries, including the United States, Spain, and Peru. As a professor at the University of San Francisco, she was a powerful advocate for bilingual education. When asked about her inspiration for writing she explained: "Stories were a very important part of my childhood. My grandmother loved to tell stories and she did so masterfully, weaving elements of the present moment into the story in such a way that traditional folktales and myths came to life. She also taught me to recite poetry from the time I was very young. This greatly influenced my own desire to write poetry."*

*"Alma Flor Ada: In-Depth Written Interview,"
January 16, 2009,
<http://www.teachingbooks.net/interview.cgi?id=56&a=1>.

TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY		
WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
brotos (n.)	compact, knoblike growths on plants that develop into leaves, flowers, or shoots	buds, shoots, blossoms
buena (adj.)	of high quality	fine, good, excellent, exceptional, splendid, exquisite, superb
callada (adj.)	expressed in a restrained or understated way	quiet, hushed, stilled, muted, whispered
campos (n.)	areas of open land, especially those planted with crops, typically bounded by hedges or fences	fields, pastures, pasturelands, meadows
con (prep.)	accompanied by another person or thing	with, accompanied by
cruzan (v.)	from the verb <i>cruzar</i> meaning to go or extend across to the other side	they cross, they traverse, they negotiate, they navigate
de (prep.)	expressing the relationship between a part and a whole	of
ejemplo (n.)	a thing characteristic of its kind or illustrating a general rule	example, precedent, lead, model, role model, lesson
en (prep.)	expressing the situation of something that is or appears to be enclosed or surrounded by something	in, within, enclosed by
esperanza (n.)	a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen	hope, dream, expectation, faith, belief, conviction, promise
los (art.)	object of a verb or preposition that refers to two or more people or things previously mentioned	the
los alumbras (v. + direct object pron.)	from the verb <i>alumbrar</i> meaning to light up	you illuminate them, you enlighten them, you ignite them, you brighten them
ni (conj.)	used to introduce a negative statement	nor

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
no (adv.)	not performing an action, the precise nature of which is often unspecified	do not, don't
palabra (n.)	a distinct, meaningful element of speech or writing used to form a sentence	words
pasos (n.)	steps taken by a person in walking, especially as heard by another person	footsteps, steps
pero (conj.)	used to introduce something contrasting with what has already been mentioned	but, yet, nevertheless, even so, nonetheless, however, still
polvorientos (adj.)	covered with or resembling dust	dusty, soiled, sooty
retoñan (v.)	from the verb <i>retoñar</i> meaning to sprout	they sprout, they shoot, they reappear, they come alive
surcos (n.)	long, narrow trenches made in the ground by a plow, especially for planting seeds or for irrigation	furrows, trenches, grooves, ruts, channels, hollows
tu (poss. pron.)	belonging to or associated with the person or people that the speaker is addressing	your
tus (poss. pron.)	belonging to or associated with the person or people the speaker is addressing	your
voz (n.)	produced in a person's larynx and uttered through the mouth as speech or song	voice
y (conj.)	used to connect words	and, together with, in addition to
ya (adv.)	at the present time	now, at the present, in this time

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

PHRASE BY PHRASE

CÉSAR CHÁVEZ _____

Ya tus pasos no cruzan los campos _____

polvorientos _____

ni los alumbras con tu buena voz _____

pero tu ejemplo _____

y tu palabra _____

retoñan en los surcos _____

en brotes de callada esperanza. _____

REFLECTING AND FINDING MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: _____

Pick a scribe for the group, and work together to answer the questions.

What are the best parts of this translation, and why do you think they are good?

What elements of the original poem did you lose in the translation? What did you manage to keep?

Did you achieve something new with your translation, and if so, does it make sense in the poem or not?
