

FRANCISCO X. ALARCÓN
USA (1954–2016)

LANGUAGE: SPANISH

ODA A MIS ZAPATOS

mis zapatos
descansan
toda la noche
bajo mi cama

cansados
se estiran
se aflojan
las cintas

muy anchos
se duermen
y sueñan
con andar

recorren
los lugares
adonde fueron
en el día

y amanecen
contentos
relajados
suavecitos



A prolific writer for adults and children, Francisco X. Alarcón was born in Los Angeles, California. When he was six years old, he moved with his family to Guadalajara, Mexico but returned to California when he was eighteen to attend college. He wrote in English and Spanish, and his work celebrates life, bilingualism, and Mexican/Chicano culture. Songs his grandmother sang to him as a young boy inspired much of his poetry. Tradition, culture, and heritage were very important to Alarcón. He explained, “I carry my roots with me all the time—rolled up—I use them as my pillow.”

TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
a (prep.)	indicates direction or position	to
adonde (adv.)	in or to a place	where, somewhere, someplace
amanecen (v.)	from the verb <i>amanecer</i> —it means to emerge from sleep	they awake, they stir, they wake up, they get up
anchos (adj.)	with sides and edges far apart	wide, loose fitting, ample
andar (v.)	move on foot	walking, strolling, marching, sauntering
bajo (prep.)	location of something	under, below, underneath
cama (n.)	furniture on which to sleep	bed, cot
cansados (v.)	from verb <i>cansar</i> —needing to rest	tired, exhausted, worn-out, drained
cintas (n.)	cord for fastening shoes	shoelaces, ribbons, ties, cords
con (conj.)	indicating something is combined with something	and, with
contentos (adj.)	feeling pleasure	happy, content, glad, in high spirits
descansan (v.)	from verb <i>descansar</i> —stopping of work or activity	they rest, they take it easy, they take a break, they kick back
día (n.)	sunrise to sunset	day, daytime
el (art.)	masculine, singular—refers to something already mentioned	the
en (prep.)	indicates state or location	in
fueron (v.)	past tense of <i>ir</i> —to leave a place	they went, they left, they departed, they went away
la (art.)	feminine singular—refers to something already mentioned	the
las (art.)	feminine plural—refers to something already mentioned	the

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
los (art.)	masculine plural—refers to something that has already been mentioned	the
lugares (n.)	areas or portions of space	places, locations, spots
mi (adj.)	belonging to me	my
mis (adj.)	plural—indicates that they belong to me	my
muy (adv.)	gives emphasis	very, extremely, incredibly
noche (n.)	daily period of darkness	night, hours of darkness
oda (n.)	a poem that expresses love or respect for someone or something	ode
recorren (v.)	from the verb <i>recorrer</i> —it means to get to the other side of something	traveling through, traveling across
relajados (v.)	from the verb <i>relajar</i> —it means to spend time at ease	relaxed, unwound, rested
se aflojan (reflex. v.)	from verb <i>aflojar</i> —make something less tight	they loosen themselves, they slacken themselves, they untie themselves
se duermen (reflex. v.)	from verb <i>dormir</i> —not being awake	they sleep, they doze, they nap, they take a siesta
se estiran (reflex. v.)	from verb <i>estirar</i> —expand by force	they stretch, they extend themselves
suavecitos (adj.)	smooth-textured	soft, delicate, spongy, squashy
sueñan (v.)	from verb <i>soñar</i> —a sequence of mental images during sleep	they dream, they are in a reverie
toda (adv.)	whole of	all, every part of
y (conj.)	plus, along with	and, in addition to, as well as
zapatos (n.)	stiff outer covering for the feet	shoes

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

PHRASE BY PHRASE

ODA A MIS ZAPATOS _____

mis zapatos _____

descansan _____

toda la noche _____

bajo mi cama _____

cansados _____

se estiran _____

se aflojan _____

las cintas _____

muy anchos _____

se duermen _____

y sueñan _____

con andar _____

recorren _____

los lugares _____

adonde fueron _____

en el día _____

y amanecen _____

contentos _____

relajados _____

suavecitos _____

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?
