Born In Puerto Rico

Paul Simon

I was born in Puerto Rico
We came here when I was a child
Before I reached the age of sixteen
I was runnin' with the gang and we were wild
He keeps lookin' but he don't recognize me
Some guy from Lexington or Park
Red beans and rice from kitchen windows
It's supper time and the barrio is dark
No one knows you like I do
Nobody can know your heart the way I do
No one can testify to all that you've been through
But I will
I was born in Puerto Rico and my blood is Taino
Spanish Caribbean, my soul
We came here wearing summer clothes in winter
Hearts of sunshine in the cold
Your family rented this apartment
You'd watch the street lamps from your perch
In the sacramental hour, your stepfather in black
Preached the fire of the Pentecostal Church
No one knows you like I do
Nobody can know your heart the way I do
No one to testify to all that you've been through
But this will
I was born in Puerto Rico
Came here when I was a child
Small change and sunlight
Then I left these streets for good
My days as short as they were wild
Your features blurred in every grainy photo
And fading headline of the Daily News
Wiltwyck School for Criminal Children
Auburn, Brooklyn House of D
Dannemora, Sing Sing, Attica, Greenhaven
Twenty years inside, today you're free
You cannot even read your story
The pages piling up in shame
Before the words released you
The guard would kill the light

The night you took The Capeman for your name
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