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Moro or Congrí

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Moro or Congrí
(Or Why I Consider Myself to be From Marianao, 
Where My Mother is from, Instead of Matanzas, 
Where My Father was Born)

Though I have not been, and
at this rate will never be,
in Cuba, I have certain
allegiances already forged
in my head. I am a fan of
Marianao, for instance. That’s
where my mother’s family
is from. In Cuban baseball,
I back the Tigers of Marianao,
even though my mother’s family,
who actually lived there, cheer
for Almendares, the Scorpions,
who play God knows where.
The other, more important reason
I think of myself as being
from Marianao has to do with food
(Of course! Doesn’t everything,
you’re probably thinking, This guy
must weigh about a thousand pounds.
I do.) Growing up mostly around
my mother’s family, we called
black beans and rice moros
y cristianos, or moro, for short,
and red beans and rice we called
arroz congri, though my father
always pointed out that it didn’t
make much sense. Congri sounds
like con gris—with gray—
the color of the rice cooked
with black, not red beans; los moros,
the Moors, weren’t black but dark,
reddish-skinned people. Wouldn't it make sense if moro was red beans and rice, and congrí rice with black beans and I say Yes, echoing my aunt: but so what, who cares, I call it what we call it in Marianao.