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Dramatic Publishing

TWO DONUTS

A Play

by

JOSE CRUZ GONZALEZ

Originally commissioned by
Childsplay, Inc., Tempe, Arizona.



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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For Barry, Kassie, Graham and David.

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What Inspired Me to Write *Two Donuts*

My wife Cory and I love to take walks together in our neighborhood. It's a time for us to catch up with each other about our day. Mostly, our discussions center around our two sons and what happened at work. But every now and then, she'll share something that resonates with me. Cory is an elementary school teacher in a tough neighborhood. She's been working there for 17 years. And though there's lots of poverty and heartache, there is also lots of kindness and laughter too. "One day, a student at my school failed to show up," she said. "When we called his home to verify his absence, his mother had assumed he had gone to school. The police were called and a search began. After about an hour, the little boy was found walking down a busy street two miles away. When asked what he was doing, the boy replied that he wasn't happy living in the U.S. He wanted to go back to Mexico and live with his grandmother. The boy went to a donut shop and bought two donuts before setting off on his journey home." After our walk, I went to my study and wrote down what she had told me. I asked, "Is home a place where we hang our hat or is it a place we carry in our hearts?"

Several years later, I sat with David Saar, the artistic director of Childsplay and asked him what he needed from me as a playwright. David said he wished for a small-cast production that could tour and reach younger audiences. The story that my wife had told me years earlier came to mind. *Two Donuts* finally came together in a conversation I had with director Graham Whitehead. Graham explained a

project with actors and puppets he had done years earlier in Canada. I had always been interested in writing for actors and puppets but I wasn't sure how to go about it until then. Listening to him sparked for me that image of a little boy walking home. I started writing *Two Donuts* a year and half ago. I find it so fascinating how plays are born. *Two Donuts* has been inspired by three of my favorite people. I hope you'll enjoy it as much as we've enjoyed creating it!

José Cruz González

Where Do the Tears of Children Go?

*Where do the tears of children go?
Are they wiped away by a mother's loving hand?
Do they become absorbed in a father's shirt sleeve?
Or do they evaporate in the warm sunlight of day?*

*Maybe the tears of children fall on earth
Turning into little water streams capturing light
Or maybe they become great rivers flowing towards the
open sea*

Into an ocean of tears, maybe?

— José Cruz González

TWO DONUTS premiered at Childsplays' Tempe Performing Arts Center on October 19-November 17, 2002. Directed by Graham Whitehead, scenic design by Edie Whitsett, puppet design by Douglas N. Paasch, costume design by Rebecca Akins, lighting design by Derek Madonia, composer Zarco Guerrero, sound design Benjamin Monrad, stage manager Catherine Shappell, production manager Mary Kay Stone and actors Carlton Franklin, Jeff Goodman, Christina Romano.

“Commissioned and world premiere at Childsplay, Inc., Tempe, Arizona. David Saar, artistic director. Steven Martin, managing director.”

TWO DONUTS received its second production at First Stage Children's Theater, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on February 2-March 5, 2004. Directed by Steve McCormick; scenic, puppets and properties design by Mark Hare; costume design by Kristina Esch; sound design by Ernie Brusubardis; scenic artist Dotti Youells; stage manager Kathleen Kern; assistant stage manager Charlotte Ford; production stage manager Brad E. Bingheim; and actors Sophia Dhaliwal, Dan Katula, Gustavo Mellado, Trent Mendez. Artistic director Jeff Frank, managing director Rob Goodman.

TWO DONUTS was developed at the Bonderman IUPUI Playwriting Development Workshop 2001 and in Childsplays' Whiteman New Plays Program in July/August 2002 in Tempe, Arizona. The Whiteman New Plays Program was made possible in part by a generous grant from the Whiteman Family Foundation and the Flinn Foundation. Additional support came from an Extended Collaboration grant from Theatre Communications Group/MetLife Foundation.

The 2002 Whiteman New Plays Program *Two Donuts* workshop artists were Jere Luisi, Jeff Goodman, Zarco Guerrero, Andrea Morales, Douglas N. Paasch, Graham Whitehead, Edie Whitsett.

TWO DONUTS

A Full-length Play

For 7m., 5w. with some doubling, or as few as 2m., 1w.

CHARACTERS

PEPITO a small boy. He has dark curly hair and loves eating donuts.

ABUELA Pepito's grandmother. She loves to sing and tell stories.

PANADERO our storyteller and local barrio baker. He wears a mustache, a baker's hat and apron.

MADRE Pepito's mom. She looks a lot like Abuela, only younger.

MODESTO & RIDICULO . . two Guatemalan Worry Dolls dressed in Armani suits and ties.

LITTLE GIRL FOOTSTEPS a girl with the gift to transform into a coconut and rock or just about anything by holding her breath. She is a superagent spy and protector of the last flower in Cuate-Malo.

COMMANDANTE BOOTS the evil dictator of Cuate-Malo. He wears sunglasses, military uniform, boots and lots of medals.

SERGEANT BOTAS an army sergeant.
He is Commandante Boots' sidekick.

TIRADO a single tire. That is all that is left of him.
He is a very nervous type.

THE GREAT SEA TORTUGA . . . a wise, giant sea turtle.
She leads the resistance against Commandante Boots.

and...

Arm, Eye, Nose, Bi-Plane Pair of Shoes, Baby Manatee,
Luna, Bumble Zapper. . . . other characters seen throughout
the play.

PRODUCTION NOTE

The play can be presented a couple of ways: with 3 actor-puppeteers (2 male and 1 female) or with a larger cast up to 12 actors with some double casting (7 males and 5 females).

TWO DONUTS

SCENE: *A bakery in the heart of the barrio.*

AT RISE: *Mambo music plays as PANADERO, the local barrio baker appears. He wears a big mustache, a baker's hat and apron. He balances a stack of pink donut boxes.*

PANADERO. *Quihubo!* I'm *Panadero*, the local baker. Each morning before the sun rises, I'm busy baking *pan dulce*. That's sweetbread. My customers have got to have their *pan dulce* with their *leche* or *cafecito* at breakfast. When I bake I listen to the radio in *Español*. I love to sing loudly, and sometimes even the neighborhood dogs join in. Every now and then I even dance the *mambo!* I can't help it. It starts at my feet and everything else follows. *Mambo!*

(PANADERO presents an old wooden house with porch and steps. The house sits in the old part of town. A tire hangs from a tree, and an old bucket rests in the garden, while a used pair of shoes, newly shined, rest nearby.)

PANADERO. I have a story to tell you. It's about a little boy named *Pepito*. *Pepito* loved eating donuts. My deli-

cious donuts baked fresh, the scent would reach him next door where he lived and he would instantly arrive at my bakery.

(PEPITO appears. He is a boy.)

PEPITO. *Hola, Señor Panadero!*

PANADERO. *Buenos días, Pepito!* He was a small boy with black curly hair and eyes as dark as a moon's eclipse. He would always order—

PEPITO. *Dos donas, por favor!*

PANADERO. Two donuts.

PEPITO. *Gracias!*

PANADERO. *De nada!* One for him and the other for his *abuela*.

(ABUELA, Pepito's grandmother, appears.)

ABUELA. *Pepito, qué me trajiste hoy?* [What did you bring to me today?]

PEPITO. What else, *Abuela?*

ABUELA. Oh, yummy, *una dona!*

PANADERO. *Pepito* and *Abuela* would sit on their porch steps and delight in my sweet creations. *(Admiring the garden.)* Oh, what a lovely garden *Abuela* has.

PEPITO. Mmm, good!

ABUELA. *Mmm, muy buena!*

PANADERO. His *abuela* would tell him stories of the old country where jaguars roamed, eagles soared and rivers flowed endless like a poet's imagination. They shared a language all their own.

ABUELA. *Pepito*, there's a tale about how *la luna* came to be. Have you heard it?

PEPITO. No, *Abuela*.

ABUELA. Then I'll tell it to you. Long ago there was a God of Lightning who became very hungry.

(The GOD OF LIGHTNING appears. He may be played by PANADERO.)

ABUELA. His stomach rumbled like the earth when it shakes. He searched the heavens for something to eat, but found only—

GOD OF LIGHTNING. *Masa!*

PEPITO. That's dough!

ABUELA. *Muy bien!* The God of Lightning wasn't sure what to do with the *masa*. So he rolled it into a ball, but it accidentally fell.

GOD OF LIGHTNING. Oh-oh.

ABUELA. So he spread it flat like a pancake using a giant redwood tree—

PEPITO. —*Abuela*, a redwood tree so big?

ABUELA. And threw it onto *el sol* to cook! Soon the *masa* began to bake.

GOD OF LIGHTNING. *Masa, masa, masa!*

ABUELA. The smell was so delicious. The hungry god couldn't wait so he reached for it, but he burned his hand instead yelling a great *grito*.

GOD OF LIGHTNING. *Aaaghhh!*

ABUELA. He threw the *tortilla* high into the sky where it stuck.

PEPITO. No way!

ABUELA. And that's how *la luna* came to be. But every now and then, that God of Lightning still gets hungry, and takes a giant bite out of that big *tortilla* moon. That's why you sometimes see it half eaten!

PEPITO. *Abuela*, is your story true?

ABUELA. *Tú qué crees?* [What do you think?]

PEPITO. I think eating *donas* is always fun with you!

PEPITO & ABUELA. Breakfast of *Campeónes!* [Champions!] (*PEPITO burps.*)

ABUELA. *Ese es mí nietecito!* [That's my grandson!]

PANADERO. *Pepito* loved his *abuela* very much.

(*ABUELA crosses into an empty lot. She picks up garbage and an old boot, throwing it into the trash can.*)

ABUELA. Oh, look at this neighborhood. *Necesita mucho amor.* [It needs a lot of love.]

PEPITO. *Abuela*, don't start. We've got enough work to do already.

ABUELA. Once we've fixed up our *casita*, I bet we could make the whole neighborhood *bonito* with a little paint and *flores*.

PEPITO. *Abuela*, our street has got too many potholes. Most of the houses are boarded up, and the people living here are all strangers. What's the use of fixing things up if they're only going to get wrecked anyway?

ABUELA. This is our new home. *Debemos estar muy orgullosos.* [We should take pride in it.]

PEPITO. Don't say the "T" word, *Abuela*.

ABUELA. *Bueno*, moving into an old *casa* does take a lot of *trabajo*.

PEPITO. You said the "T" word! *Trabajo*, work, yuck!

ABUELA. A little *trabajo* doesn't hurt anyone.

PEPITO. But a lot of *trabajo* does. It's not good for little kids to work so much.

ABUELA. *Es verano y no hay escuela.* [It's summer and there's no school.]

PEPITO. But by the time I start third grade, I'll be all used up! No good for *nada!* An empty shell.

ABUELA. *Trabajo* makes you an *hombre!*

PEPITO. *Trabajo* makes you an old *hombre!*

ABUELA. *Quizás, tienes razón.* [Maybe you're right.]
Maybe I have been working you a little—

PEPITO. —too much? *Abuela*, I think it's time we went to the beach.

ABUELA. *La playa?*

PEPITO. Please just say “yes”! *Por favor!*

ABUELA. *Bueno pues*, okay! [Oh, all right!]

PEPITO. You really mean it?

ABUELA. *Es una promesa!* [It's a promise!]

PEPITO. Hurray, *Abuela!* Maybe I'll even get to see my little *tortuga* turtle swimming in the sea!

ABUELA. I'm glad you and your *papá* let her go free.

PEPITO. I bet she's all grown up. Well, I'm ready!

ABUELA. *Pepito, tenemos mucho trabajo que hacer. Las flores necesitan agua.* [*Pepito*, we've got a little work to do first. The flowers in the garden need watering.]

PEPITO. Okay. *Flores*. Water. (*PEPITO waters the garden with an old bucket, while ABUELA gathers flowers.*)

ABUELA. I brought two things with me when I left my beloved homeland.

PEPITO. Memories of your country...

ABUELA & PEPITO. "...And a pocketful of seeds."

PEPITO. *Abuela*, did you feel sad leaving *Guatemala*?

ABUELA. Oh, *sí*. When I was a little girl I could run bare-foot everywhere and pick flowers whenever I wanted but then *soldados con armas y botas* came and took everything away.

PEPITO. Soldiers with guns and boots?

ABUELA. I never looked at their faces just their shiny new *botas*. I was always hiding from them. They stole my country and they broke my heart.

PEPITO. I would have fought them.

ABUELA. Many of our people tried, but the soldiers made them disappear.

PEPITO. Did they use magic?

ABUELA. No. They used the cover of *la noche* [the night] to come into people's homes and take them away.

PEPITO. I would've run out of there as fast as I could.

ABUELA. *Eso lo que yo hice*. [That's what I did.] I listened to my heart and I came here so our *familia* would have a better future. That's why it's important you water these sweet *flores*. They remind me of the good things we brought with us. Always remember, *Pepito*, to trust what's inside your heart.

PEPITO. I'm all done watering!

ABUELA. *Andale*. [Go on.] Go get your shorties and towel and I'll pack us a *lunche*.

PEPITO. I'm going to build the biggest sandcastle ever! (*PEPITO rushes into the house. ABUELA sweeps the porch steps and sings a lively song in Spanish. ABUELA stops sweeping.*)

ABUELA. Oh, my... (*She sits on the porch to catch her breath.*)

PANADERO. *Pepito* and *Abuela* never did get to the beach that day. You see, *Abuela* became very ill. (*PANADERO*

covers over ABUELA with a piece of fabric.) And soon she didn't even get out of bed. Days passed and nights came and Abuela died. She left behind a very sad, triste Pepito.

(ABUELA and PANADERO exit. PEPITO enters in a white shirt and clip-on tie. He holds one of ABUELA's flowers. He sits on the porch steps and covers his face. A silhouette of Pepito's MADRE appears in the doorway.)

MADRE. *Pepito?*

PEPITO. ...

MADRE. *Pepito, where are you?*

PEPITO. I'm out here, 'Amá.

MADRE. Come inside the house.

PANADERO. *Pepito's* mother and father were away at work most of the time. *Abuela* had always looked after him since he was a baby. Now, he would have to take care of himself.

MADRE. *Pepito*, it isn't safe out there.

PANADERO. *Abuela* would always give him a dollar on Friday mornings and send him to my bakery to buy two donuts but now that would change too. *(To PEPITO.)*
Buenos días, Pepito.

PEPITO. Hi, *Panadero*.

PANADERO. I'm sorry about *Abuela*.

PEPITO. ...

PANADERO. Her garden still looks beautiful.

PEPITO. ...

PANADERO. I brought you two donuts. I thought you might want to share one with your *mamá*. I bet she'd love to hear one of your *abuela's* stories.

PEPITO (*to himself*). My *'amá* and *papá* are too busy for stories. (*PANADERO places the donut bag near PEPITO.*)

PANADERO. Well, I—

PEPITO. *Panadero*, when you die, where do you go?

PANADERO. That's difficult to answer. Some people believe you go to heaven.

PEPITO. Is that where my *abuela* went?

PANADERO. Isn't that where you want her to be?

PEPITO. No. No, I want her here with me.

PANADERO. Well, maybe she is.

PEPITO (*sarcastically*). I don't see her anywhere.

PANADERO. That's because she's inside you in your *corazon*. You've got so many good memories of her. And you have her *cuentos* too.

PEPITO. Her stories?

PANADERO. Her stories are like seeds. They'll grow in your heart and bloom. And when you share them with others it will be like *Abuela* is sitting on the porch steps right beside you listening.

PEPITO. She shouldn't have left me.

PANADERO. She didn't have a choice.

PEPITO. She was going to take me to the beach.

PANADERO. I bet she would have if she could.

PEPITO. But she never did. She lied. She broke her promise!

PANADERO. Well, I better go. I've got tomorrow's bread to bake. Goodbye, *Pepito*. Over the next few days,

Pepito kept to himself. You could see a dark cloud forming over his head. Thunder and lightning too.

MADRE. *Pepito*, if you're staying outside then water *Abuela's* garden.

PEPITO. ...

MADRE. Answer me, young man!

PEPITO. Okay! (*PEPITO* kicks a bucket. He then picks it up and begins to water the garden. A bumblebee buzzes by circling and annoying *PEPITO*.) Get out of here, you dumb bumblebee! Get! (*PEPITO* gets stung.) Ouch! You stung me, you dumb bug! What's the use of watering this stupid old garden! She's not even here to see it! Everything in this garden is *estupido!* This neighborhood is *estupido!* These flowers are *estupido!* *Estupido!* (*PEPITO* stomps on the garden flowers crushing them. He runs into the house.)

PANADERO. That night, *Pepito* sat on the couch all by himself reading a book and watching TV before bedtime.

(The glow of a television appears illuminating PEPITO's face. He looks at a book with the picture of a manatee on the cover. The sound of sirens and gunfire is heard.)

MADRE (*offstage*). *Pepito*, turn off the TV!

PEPITO. Okay, 'Amá! (*PEPITO* turns the television off but the sound of gunfire and sirens continues.)

MADRE. Didn't I tell you to turn that thing off?

PEPITO. But I did!

MADRE. Ay, *Dios mio!* *Pepito*, get down! Get down now! (*PEPITO* sits on the floor.)

PANADERO. *Pepito* sat in the darkness as the sound of gunfire and sirens grew louder. Most nights in the neighborhood are peaceful and calm, but on occasion violence can strike deadly like a rattlesnake's bite. *Pepito* and his family turn out the lights and TV and sit in the darkness waiting until it is safe. That night *Pepito* went to sleep with a troubled heart.

PEPITO. *Estupido* neighborhood!

(PEPITO falls asleep on the couch. The television fades up as ABUELA appears on its screen.)

ABUELA. *Pepito...* *(PEPITO turns over in his sleep.)*

PEPITO. *Masa...*

ABUELA. *Pepito...* *(PEPITO turns over again and snores.) Pepito.* *(PEPITO releases a little gas.) Ese es mi nietecito!* [Ah, that's my little grandson!]

PEPITO. *Abuela!* What are you doing in the TV?

ABUELA. I've come to give you something. *(A small Guatemalan pouch magically appears in PEPITO's hand.)*

PEPITO. Wow! What is it?

ABUELA. *Un regalo.* A gift. Now, come give me a kiss.

PEPITO. I don't want to. *(PEPITO opens the pouch removing two small figurines.)* What are they?

ABUELA. They're Guatemalan Worry Dolls. They're supposed to help you when you're worried about something.

PEPITO. I'm not worried about anything.

ABUELA. You place them under your pillow before you go to sleep and in the morning all your worries will be gone.

PEPITO. Can they bring you back to life?

ABUELA. No.

Words in Spanish (Palabras en Español)

Abuela – grandmother

Amigo – friend

Arco iris – rainbow

Ayudame – “Help me”

Barrio – neighborhood

Bonito – pretty

Buenos días – “Good morning”

Cafecito – a little cup of coffee

Commandante – commander

Corazón – heart

Cuentos – stories

Dos donas – two donuts

El sol – the sun

Escuela – school

Español – Spanish

Estupido – stupid

Excelente – excellent

Familia – family

Flores – flowers

Gracias – “Thank you”

Grito – A shout, scream

Guatemala – A Latin American country in Central America.

Hola – “Hello”

Idiota – idiot

La luna – the moon

La noche – the night

La playa – the beach

Leche – milk

Mambo – a dance from Latin America
Masa – dough
Monstruo botas – monster boots
Muchacho – boy
Muy bien – “Well done” or “Very good”
Panaderia – bakery
Pan dulce – sweet bread
Por favor – “Please”
Quihubo – An informal greeting, something like “Hello!”
Regalo – gift
Tirado – dirt cheap or something thrown away
Tortilla – a thin flat round Mexican bread made from corn
meal or wheat flour
Tortuga – turtle
Trabajo – work
Triste – sad
Vámonos – “Let’s go”