

# Cholita Climbers

Penny Stone

1 We are the Cho - li - ta climb - ers, we reach for the sky, when  
2 Huay - na Po - to - si, A - con - ca - gu - a,  
3 Ay - ma - ra wo - men wear pol - le - ra,\_\_\_

3  
Voice we climb a mount - ain,\_\_\_ free - dom we find, we are the  
Voice Pa - ri - na - co - ta,\_\_\_ Ill - i - ma - ni.  
Voice ice ax - es, cram - pons and silk - en shawls,\_\_\_

Aymara indigenous women from Bolivia. Worked as high altitude cooks for years, decided to start climbing themselves in 2014. They have now climbed many Andean peaks and in Jan 2019 summited Aconcagua (22,841ft) the tallest peak on the continent and outside of Asia. 'Cholita' is a reclaiming of 'Chola' a Spanish word used derogatorily towards people of mixed and indigenous ancestry. Not until the election of the first Indigenous President of Bolivia in 2005 did the Cholitas begin to gain access and equality. They climb in their traditional dress of Pollera skirts and Aguayo carry-cloths and jewellery, swapping their bowler hats for helmets and strapping crampons and boots on.

"There's always someone who will criticise us. They still do, but we'll show them with actions, not words."

"When we go climbing we feel free from everything."

*Jimena Lidia Huayllas, group leader*