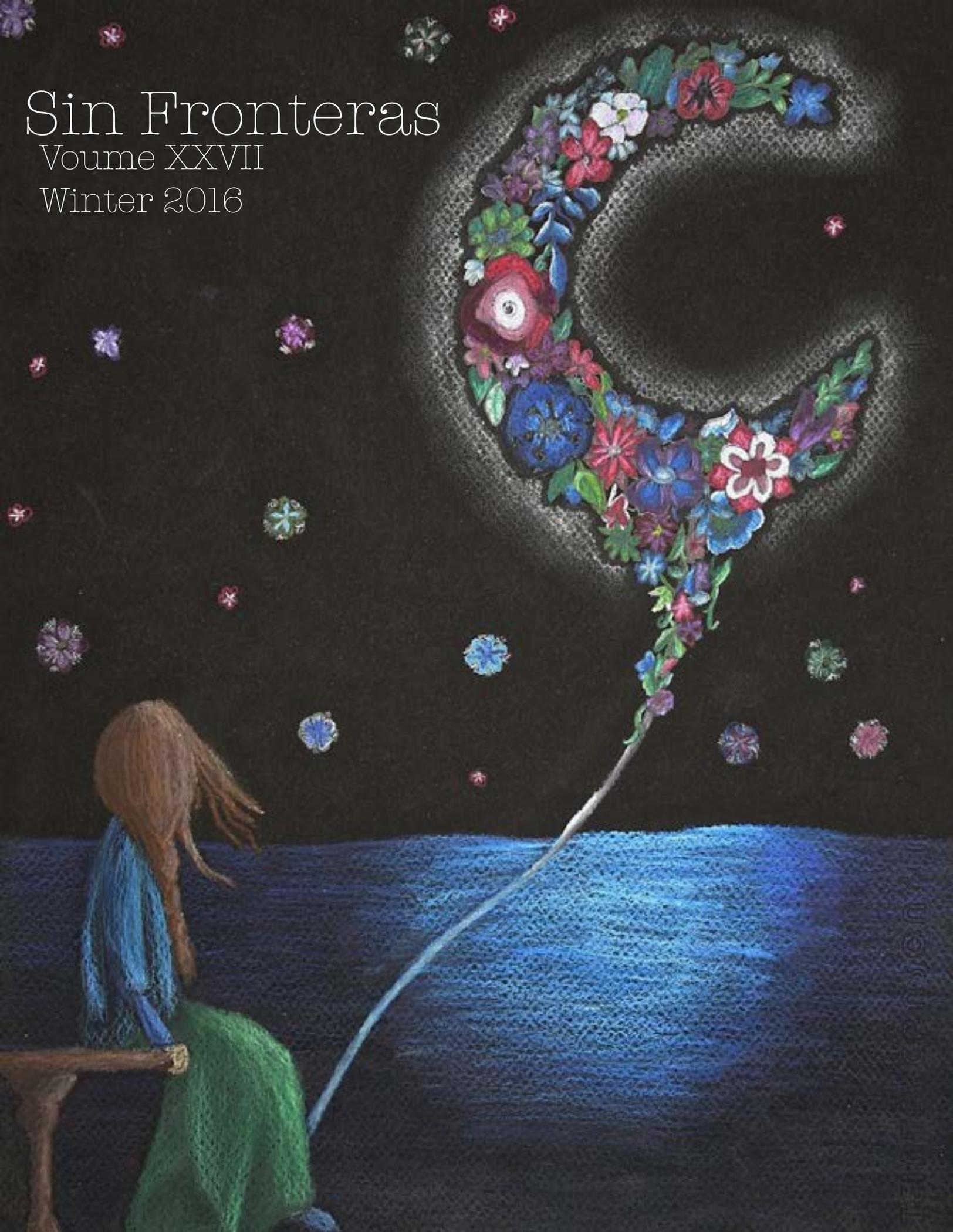


Sin Fronteras

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EDITOR'S NOTE

It is through the flow of the sentence or the resounding cut of punctuation that a writer finds the essence of self. It is the elegant curl of a vowel or the stunning pause of a perfectly rhythmic verse that allows the poet to sing. The artist, like all people, seeks the heart of her work through the endless process of creation. So too does the editor seek the heart of a piece and the soul of the artist, in persistent pursuit of perfection.

In meddling with the fabric of understanding, a single work of literature can overturn deeply rooted beliefs. Through their questioning cries to the universe, their refusal to conform to the status quo, their allusions to the past, future, and the most mundane situations, their passions for loss and loss of passion, creators give new life to the words they set down on the page, to the art they so expertly etch on the canvas. Making art is sharing a part of one's mind, releasing one's self into the ether.

We hope that this issue of *Sin Fronteras* honors not only the mind of every artist presented herein, but also the intense love for the craft that we fervently believe lies at the heart of what it really means to write.

Sincerely,
Daniel Soberanes Barrios
Sin Fronteras Editor in Chief, 2016

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FIRST STEPS

Francisco Aguirre

I still remember how I was first introduced to writing.
I was just like a little kid
Words and phrases were my new toys
And I endlessly played with them,
Developing shapes, colors and textures
That contrasted with the simplicity of my ideas:
An act of pure joy in which pen and mind became one.
I used to be a baby, cradled in the arms
Of incredulity, lost in a spectacle of ideas
Shooting off from the pages of a book like
Fireworks flashing in the night.
I was enchanted by the new worlds I had found
Within the silhouettes of every letter and word,
Like lost empires I had once traveled to
In the land of a forgotten dream.

As I grew older I gained
This sort of confidence which translated
Into a mastery of words once unimagined.
I became a defender of creativity,
With pen and paper as sword and shield,
Defending my thoughts, one on each hand.
I became a sort of sorcerer, experimenting
With the ideas that bled from my mind,
Streaming into the blank cauldron that
Would ultimately blend them all together,
Into one streaming thought.

As I reminisce on
The ideas conquered,
The chapters won,
And the many stories that leaked from
My mind and flowed into inky words,
I realize that writing was my first love:
I never had to look for it,
It just came to me at the right time:
A gift of destiny, the fruits of good fortune.

I sometimes think of myself as a veteran
Belonging to a former glory,
Sitting on a rocking chair and
Staring into a longing distance
With eyes blistered by years
Of careful reading and writing.
But then I remind myself that this is not
The epilogue of my life, that there are
Plenty of chapters to be written, and that
I am just a toddler taking his first steps
On the unknown grounds of literature.

SLAVES OF THE GODS

Tania Romero

In Ghana, in order to appease the gods, young girls are given to fetish priests to pay for crimes committed by their relatives. Referred to as Trokosi or "Slaves of the Gods," they become the property of the priests and frequently endure brutal conditions. Many attempt to escape. The few who succeed face the rejection of their families, who fear the punishments of the gods.

I stand,
Facing them.
After more than seven years
Of children bearing other children,
Of sleepless nights that left
White sheets stained in red
And scars that his claws left on my
 skin.
They burn like hell itself.
The place is hell itself.
He is hell itself.

My eyes tell my story
But they can't show the pain
My soul is enduring.
The tears that turned into blood,
His repulsive breath
Against my lips,
And his fetid sweat
Against my naked body.

Mornings were saviors
But the wait was interminable.
Seconds turned into minutes
And minutes into tortures.

Tortures that caused
My stomach to swell for nine months,
That made my hips enlarge
And my breasts fill with an ivory milk.
Desperately scratching the walls of
 her crib,
I left this newborn behind.

I am finally free
And back to my home.
They scan my undernourished body,
Asking what happened.

How did I manage to escape?
How did I, a young girl
Who was taught that females are
 objects,
And who was instructed that by being
assaulted
I was saving my family from the godly
 curses?
How did I dare to leave that place.

My father stared deeply into my eyes
And recalled how sixteen years ago,
He started to despise mother for giving
 birth
To a disgusting female.

Afterwards,
His loathful palm encountered my
Pitch-black sandy cheek.
As I shed a tear of shame,
A sense of
Resentful violence filled the place.

He feared the god's punishment
More than he feared a hundred more
 rapes.
And his blow granted me one gift:
A one way ticket back to sadism.

This was when I realized that,
Even if you are free from being
A slave of the gods,
You will never stop being
A slave of the devil.



EL INFIERNO INTERNO DE M

Francis McCann

Inspirado en La loca de la casa de Rosa Montero

Todo empezó ese maldito día. Recuerdo haber despertado en un estado de confusión tremenda. Un rojo oscuro cubría toda mi frente, mi camisa jalaba mi piel dolorosamente mientras la capa de sangre coagulada se desprendía con mis movimientos. No tenía la menor idea de qué había pasado, entonces cogí el teléfono y llamé a una ambulancia.

Así empezó la mañana en la que mi vida empezó a decaer. Esa maldita autora le dijo a la prensa que me accidenté borracho. Mi imagen se echó a perder. Nadie me quería ofrecer trabajo y en los pocos lugares que sí, las cosas salieron horribles. Se me olvidaban líneas enteras a media escena, me perdía en el coche en camino al estudio y llegaba tarde, no podía ni dar una conferencia de prensa sin pedir que repitieran preguntas incesantemente. Los pocos roles que me ofrecían en películas fueron bajando en importancia y pago, incluso me llegaron a despedir varias veces. Algo dentro de mí estaba mal, y tenía que averiguar qué.

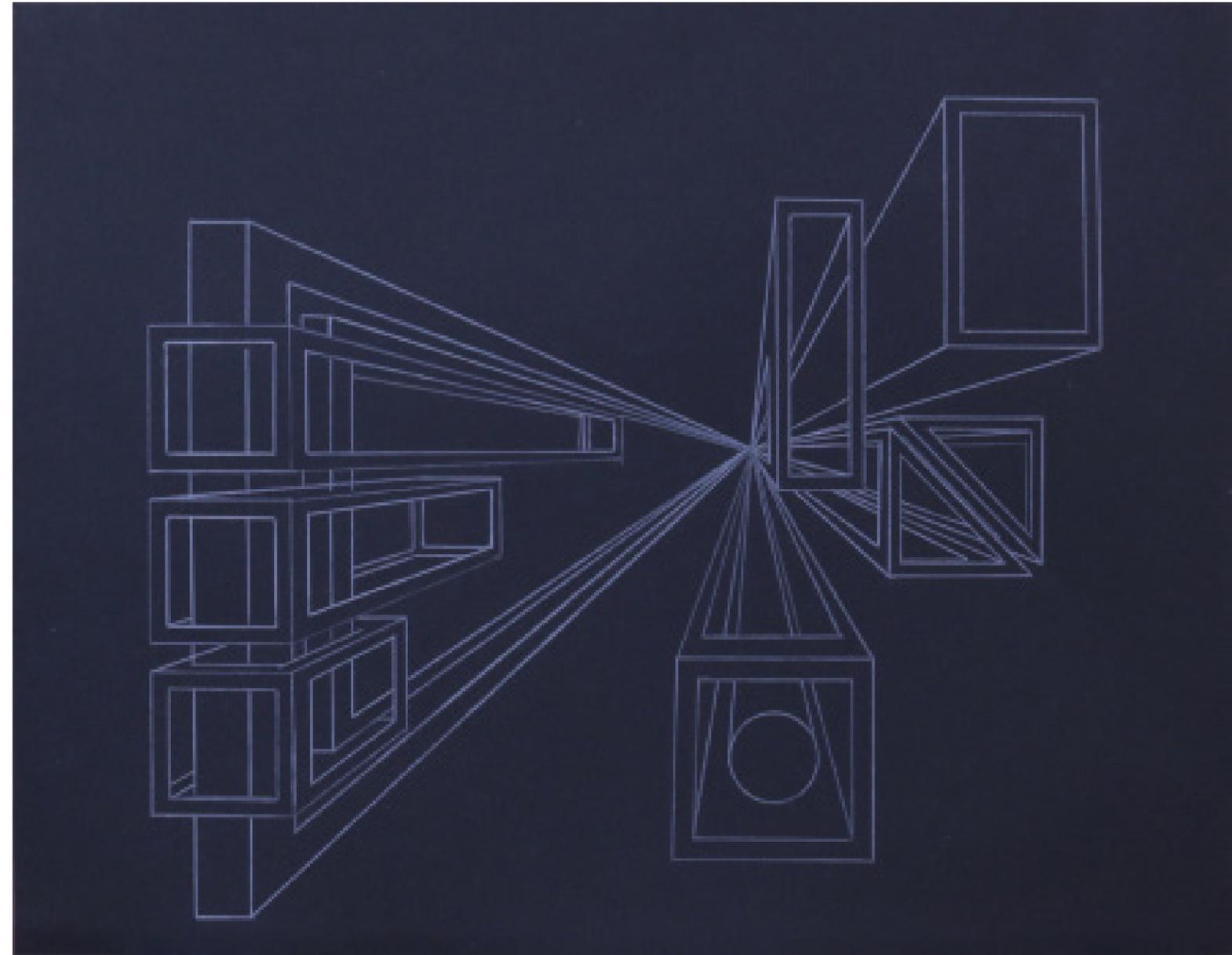
Por lo tanto acudí a un especialista neurológico. Después de semanas, se determinó que había sufrido daño cerebral que me limitaba significativamente la capacidad de formar memorias y hacer razonamientos cognitivos. En otras palabras, estoy medio pendejo.

Al saber esto todo tenía sentido: por eso se me olvidaban líneas, por eso me perdía y por eso mi carrera se fue a la basura. Pero, ¿qué podía hacer? No había manera de restaurar la capacidad mental que había perdido. Es por esto que me gusta tanto beber y drogarme, para olvidarme de lo que alguna vez tuve.

Espero que quien encuentre esto entienda por qué lo hice. Esta noche me he dado cuenta que ya no me queda nada más que el consuelo de la bebida. Llevo 20 años existiendo como una memoria torcida de mi carrera como actor y ya me harté. A lo mejor en la vida futura puedo volver a ser competente.

Con esto firmé la carta. Me subí a la silla y metí la cabeza entre el lazo que colgaba del ventilador. La cuerda me daba una especie de cosquilleo reconfortante. Volteé a la ventana y alejé la silla de mí.

Sentí un dolor leve pero soportable. Mi visión empezó a titilar entre mi recámara y un negro absoluto. Me empezó a llegar un calor consolador, así como el que se siente al dormir en una noche helada, y no pude más que sonreír.



MY COLLEGE HERO

Samuel Dueñas

Now that I have consumed most of my years and I've gone through almost all the stages of life, I can pretty confidently state that my best years were the ones I spent in college. If you ask me, I'd say that there's no experience in the world that overshadows the college experience in self-growth and memorable moments. Personally, I remember it as a life-changing phase as well as an anchoring point for my life afterwards. I had the time of my life, all because of one little hero that saved me from falling under the label of antisocial. Yep, that's true... I wasn't always an outgoing person.

You see, before I went to Canada to get my bachelor's degree in civil engineering, I was a very shy and inhibited person. I only had two nerdy friends—both of which studied in Ivy League universities—and a great relationship with my mother. I had an okay relationship with my father as well, but being a businessman he wasn't around much during my childhood. The day I left Oregon for Calgary, my mom was drowning in her own tears. I can't lie, it was really heartbreaking to watch. Watching her cry before my departure kept my mind busy throughout the entire plane ride; I was no longer a little boy.

I arrived to campus on a chilly Sunday morning. When I walked through the entrance gates, I genuinely felt like a naked sheep. There was no one here that I could rely on, no one that I could trust my secrets to and play videogames with. I kept filling my head with negative predictions, like, "You're not making any friends, who are you kidding," and, "Engineering is not going to let you socialize at all, so don't even try." These poisonous attitudes looping endlessly inside my head were distracting me so much that when I was walking towards

my dorm room, I suddenly bumped into a girl. It wasn't your typical apologize-and-move-on kind of bump. I'm talking about a massive collision between a bulldozer and a birdhouse. I felt so bad that time, because me being six feet two inches tall, she didn't stand a chance. She was so tiny and frail, but at the same time so beautiful and delicate. My face could've boiled water while I was helping her regain her posture.

After the embarrassing situation cooled off, I managed to ask her for her name. Kate. It turned out Kate was staying on my floor, at the very end of the hall. She was studying international management. I told her we could see each other again, and she agreed with a smile. That was the first time I ever saw her smile. It's a contagious one, too. We kept seeing each other, and eventually she became my best friend. She also managed to prove wrong my theory about engineering ripping away your social life. Every night, after I finished my long hours of study, I would sneak up to her room and knock on the door. Kate would let me in and I'd talk with her until I fell asleep on her beanbag. Her roomie didn't mind, so that was good. We spent our vacation days together, traveling through some of the most amazing Canadian landscapes you will ever see in your life. In the end, we wound up spending all four years closely together.

I truly did enjoy being around her. She was the most enthusiastic, bright, lively person I had ever met in my entire life. Her smile changed my college experience like a switch turns on a lightbulb, and her company made me feel safe all that time. Kate can certainly make someone's life just that much better. I am glad to have been given the privilege to call her my wife, and you are extremely lucky to have been able to call her "mom".

GOODBYE
Michelle Gómez

December 26, 1947

Dear,

I'm well aware that a name should have followed that greeting, but I can't bring myself to write it, much less dare to pronounce it. They told me to try to write to you; apparently it will help ease the pain. So far, it has only made me lose two nights of sleep, skip five meals and cry ten times. I don't tell anyone about it. All I ever do when I'm out with people is stare out the window like a character in those over-exaggerated sad books and mention a thing or two so they'll leave me alone. There's a rose garden outside the window. It's rare considering how everything was wiped out after the war, but I suppose life always finds a way to flourish. At least that's what you used to tell me.

You, with your eloquence and optimism. Me, with my clumsiness and negativity. Both, holding hands and walking through the rose garden. I told you the day I met you that I couldn't afford to love you and when you asked me why, I never replied. I recently figured it out, I find it terrifying to love something as fragile as a human being that can leave this world at any given time. But, you took me by the hand and entranced me in the most beautiful way, and though it was terrifying, I don't regret any of it. I'm not saying that I wouldn't change a thing because you know I would. I'd change you enlisting, you going to war, but most of all, I'd change you dying. You were dying to fall in love, you were dying to fight for your country, you were dying to return home, and then, you were simply dying.

I always maintained hope, I preserved it the same way I tried to preserve our little garden. It was years after you were gone that I couldn't take anymore, four years to be exact. I was eating dinner when there was a knock on the door. I figured it was just another group of travelers asking for some food or a place to stay. Feeling particularly generous that day, I grabbed an apple from the counter and went to open the door. You can imagine my surprise when I saw James towering before me. You two were always together, even the day I met you he was next to you making a fool of himself. I felt my heart skip a beat and a smile take over my face. That is, until I saw his eyes, empty and full of regret.

He didn't even have to tell me. I knew it, you were gone. I melted into James' arms as my heart roared and my eyes spilled. All I can remember is the pain, the emptiness and the routine. I'd wake up and eat, then drink, read the same book and finally fall asleep. Then repeat it all over again the following day.

They told me that the first thing I would forget would be the sound of your voice. I refused to believe them. How could I ever forget the sweet melody of it as it lulled me to sleep every night? I wouldn't allow myself to. I tried, believe me I did. I tried to hold on to it, every little aspect of it. Like the way you rolled your r's for too long or how you whispered my name like it was a secret that only we shared. But, one day while looking at your photo before going to bed, I realized I couldn't remember it. It was as if my heart had shattered into a thousand pieces. I was in disbelief at how my world was turned upside down in a split second. At how the rest of my life crumbled in front of my eyes. But not any more, I'm better now or at least that's what I tell myself everyday when I wake up. That's the problem of pouring yourself into another person, when they're gone, you're simply left as an empty vessel. Now, I'm trying to make sense of the constellations inside me, connecting star with star until I can finally manage to trace myself. That's why I decided that it's time to move on, or at the very least try. I figured learning to say your name without falling to my knees would be a good start. Maybe next time.

Love always,
Adeline

I AM, WE ARE
Mariam Yaldai

I am heartbreak.
I come unannounced,
And will do so in varying shapes and
forms.
Whichever form I chose to morph
into,
It will hurt just as much every time.
I will destroy innocent souls,
And traumatize the minds of those
Who aren't willing to forget.

I am child neglect.
I won't provide what you need,
And will take away the happiness
Almost everyone has the privilege to
enjoy.
Your mom and dad will choose me
over you.
Don't frown, after all you did nothing
wrong,
But that doesn't matter anymore,
You will suffer the consequences of
abandonment.

I am rape.
I appear when you least expect it.
A nice man you once knew,
Turned into a monster.
I lie and deceive,
In order to claim you.
You want, but can't fight.
My strength is too much for you.
I will turn you into a monster.
Wreaking havoc among anything and
anyone,

That dare cross your path.
No longer will you trust the smiles,
The laughs, the truth.
The worst part is, I'll also be taking
your voice.
You won't be able to say a word,
After I'm through with you.

I am emotional mistreatment.
I live off degrading and disrespecting.
I will hurt you so much,
With just a few words that
You're going to want to end your life.
I'll make you numb to life's
pleasures.
I will fill your soul instead with pain.
First anxiety, then chronic depression,
Until finally all you will want to do
Is drive off the bridge.

We are the common issues of life.
Affecting everyone, no matter their
wealth,
Size, race, religion or gender.
Often, we are ignored.
Pushed aside because people don't
believe,
The world goes through them.
But we do, you do, I do.
Introducing ourselves is just the
beginning.
You'll be bound to us like a dog to a
chain.
Sooner or later that's all it'll be.
Your story belongs to us now.





IMPETUS *Diego Escudero*

The driving force in the soul
Pushes the body to achieve
The inconceivable.

This enigma
Of motivation or reason
Prompting the unique momentum in our lives,
Seems impossible to fathom.

While for many
It appears impenetrable,
I assure you that no one
Will be able to deny the feeling.

Because even when life is most punishing,
Choking us with lethargy, or
Placing us in a state of inertia...
A ray of hope propels us back.

This arcane phenomenon
Concealed within us,
Generates the most essential human curiosity.
It generates hope.

Shall we rummage for this
Perplexing riddle that could define life itself?
Or shall we set the idea free?
Free from the notion that it is meant to be comprehended.

With love there is impetus.
A great force of might.
And although its origin is unclear,
It will be our shining candle in the night.

WHY? *Francis McCann*

Have you ever just sat back and asked yourself why? What is our purpose as a race? What are we moving towards? This is a question that has long been the bane of mankind's condition; here are some thoughts of my own.

I began to reflect on the why of things one day when I was rebuked by a friend for having not started working on a project. I then proceeded to ask myself why I was doing such a thing, and then my mind spiralled into an abyss of confusion and existential crisis.

I reflected deeply and began to suspect that as a race we are insignificant. We live in a universe of supposedly infinite proportions, endless possibilities. How then can something like saving a life, or developing medicine come to have any sort of real impact on our universe? Everything we have been doing in science, in our pursuit of happiness, has all been towards bettering the time we get to live in this shared universe. But for what? What is our purpose, what is all we do for?

While many claim that they aspire to be good, and moral, I have come to question what this even means. After all, aren't all these ideas and morals that we strive to follow to become

what others would consider remarkable humans a fabrication? As humans we live inside a bubble that we created and filled with our own ideas in a desperate attempt to mold some sort of purpose for ourselves. Whether we claim to strive towards bettering others' lives or being happy, as a race we are choosing to ignore our insubstantial existence in an attempt to maintain mental sanity and motivation to carry on with our lives. After all, if we have no real purpose in our endeavours as mankind, then why continue to "progress" as a race instead of simply descending towards the primal life that animals and neanderthals lived before us?

Upon pondering these questions I found some comfort in the concept of spirituality. Maybe there is some sort of divine power at work that has set us on the right track in our creation of concepts such as "good" and "moral." Maybe in striving to fulfill this ideal some supernatural power will cause us to transcend into a superior frame of mind in which the purpose of mankind is blatantly obvious. Or, maybe there is nothing and we do in fact live in a purposeless bubble of insignificance, waiting for the day in which everyone comes to realize our condition and it pops.



HOW TO DISAPPEAR
Michael Hogan

*He wasn't there again today.
Oh, how I wish he'd go away.*
—R.L. Stevenson

Dissatisfied, (and who isn't?) some people remake themselves
in ways that may or may not be true
but like self-fulfilling fantasies
become the self in place of self:
good mother, kind-hearted teacher, fearless warrior,
disguises which hide them even from their closest friends
and like thousands, even millions, of others,
are rarely exposed because
who they are has become lost in who they pretend to be.
When they die at last, although they never really were alive,
they depart like ground fog on a cold November day,
and the bumps on your skin tell you: You're real, remember?



UNA SEGUNDA OPORTUNIDAD

Cassandra Torres

Inspirado en El ruido de las cosas al caer de Juan Gabriel Vásquez

“Siempre hay un mañana y la vida nos da otra oportunidad para hacer las cosas bien, pero por si me equivoco y hoy es todo lo que nos queda, me gustaría decirte cuánto te quiero, que nunca te olvidaré.”

-Gabriel García Márquez

Subí al ascensor. Busqué en mi chaqueta y saqué las llaves del apartamento. Al abrir la puerta, Mariana llegó corriendo a saludarme con su muñeca en la mano. La cargué y la lleve a la cocina. Mientras me servía agua, le pregunté por mamá. Mariana me miró y apuntó a la habitación. Llevé a Mariana a su cuarto y la acosté en su cama. Prendí el televisor para suprimir los gritos de la pelea por venir. Su cuarto estaba tal y como lo recordaba. Sus figuras seguían pegadas en el techo y su cama estaba tendida. Cerré la puerta y me dirigí en busca de Sofía.

La puerta estaba entreabierta. Al entrar, vi las maletas en la cama; había ropa suya y de Mariana dentro de la maleta. Por un momento, creí que irían en mi búsqueda a Villa Elena; sin embargo, descarté la idea cuando me topé con Sofía al salir del baño de nuestra habitación. Tenía la expresión de un niño que fue descubierto robando galletas antes de la cena. No me habló. Me esquivó y continuó empacando.

Mientras ella metía más y más ropa, yo la sacaba y la acomodaba. Así pasaron cinco minutos hasta que me miró con lágrimas en los ojos y me dijo: “Antonio, ya no puedo más. Nos vamos. El taxi llega en 10 minutos. No hagas esto más difícil de lo que ya es. Despidete de Mariana”. Tomé a Sofía en mis brazos y la abracé mientras mi hombro se humedecía con sus lágrimas.

Nos sentamos en la orilla de la cama y mientras Sofía miraba sus manos me disculpé y le compartí mis descubrimientos respecto a Lavedere. Le conté de Maya, de Mike Baiberi y Mike el armadillo. Le conté de la vez que visité la Hacienda Nápoles en mi infancia y hace unos días. Mientras yo hablaba, Sofía me escuchaba atentamente.

Se oyó un claxon afuera del edificio, pero Sofía permaneció inmóvil.

MOTHER'S DAY

Michael Hogan

--for Anna Hogan 1915-2008

We cannot imagine a world we do not inhabit
so I cannot guess at the other side where you are, Mother.
You escaped the wreckage and the triumph
of ninety-three years among us
the web finally broke which held you
to the brittle branch of that familiar tree.

What remains now is lodged in memory.
And what was lost (why we wept my sister and me)
is also memory, yours of who we were.

And no one now remains to create as fully as you could
two tenderly observed siblings
in sun-dappled childhood and stormy adolescence
fights and grudges and doleful hurts
the daily sureness of Father come home from work
the hungry silences before Grace, the noisy dinners
all gone with the afternoon thunder across Narragansett Bay
the rain streaking the shiny windowpanes
the drippings from the eaves into the wooden rain barrel
whose soft water you used to wash our hair in when we were children
and you were younger then we are now.

DUST BOWL

Derek Chase

For centuries massive herds of American bison
Migrated north and south over the American plains,
Sixty million animals, some larger than ten men.
A continental ecosystem of interdependent life.

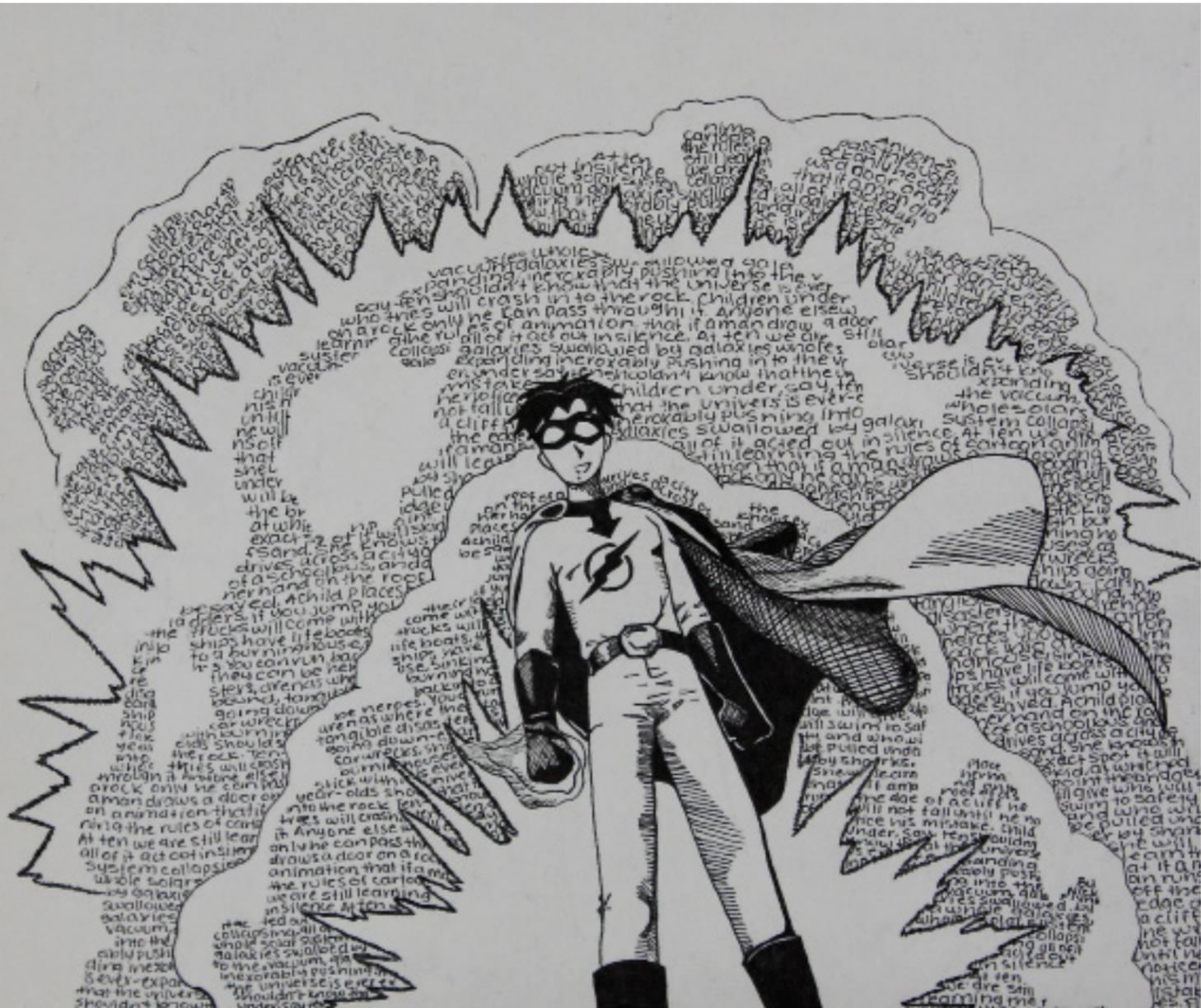
Then destiny manifests the American immigrant:
Armed with superior Christian civilization,
Armed against the unfamiliar and imagined,
Dreaming dreams of gold and dominion.

Fingers itching to claim their destiny
Guns and trains... hordes more coming.
In less than a generation the bison become
Bleached bones rotting into the land.

The flooding tide of immigrants surges,
Children learn that they live in
The land of the free, the home of the brave,
The sweet land of liberty, with justice for all.

Ruled by thieves and scoundrels
Believing that might makes right, that
Wealth is success and power its rightful reward.
Making idols of money and oppression.

From sea to shining sea.



SEA OF DESPAIR

Daniela Sandoval

Bare feet, now tainted red and swollen,
Sharp rocks encrusted.
There's no escape.
Sore throats from screaming at the top of our lungs,
Yet it is as if we weren't speaking a word.

We cried for rescue. For food. For a different life.
But the Fates have left.
Flowers in shrines
For gods who left us behind.
More so, they could've pulled the trigger themselves.

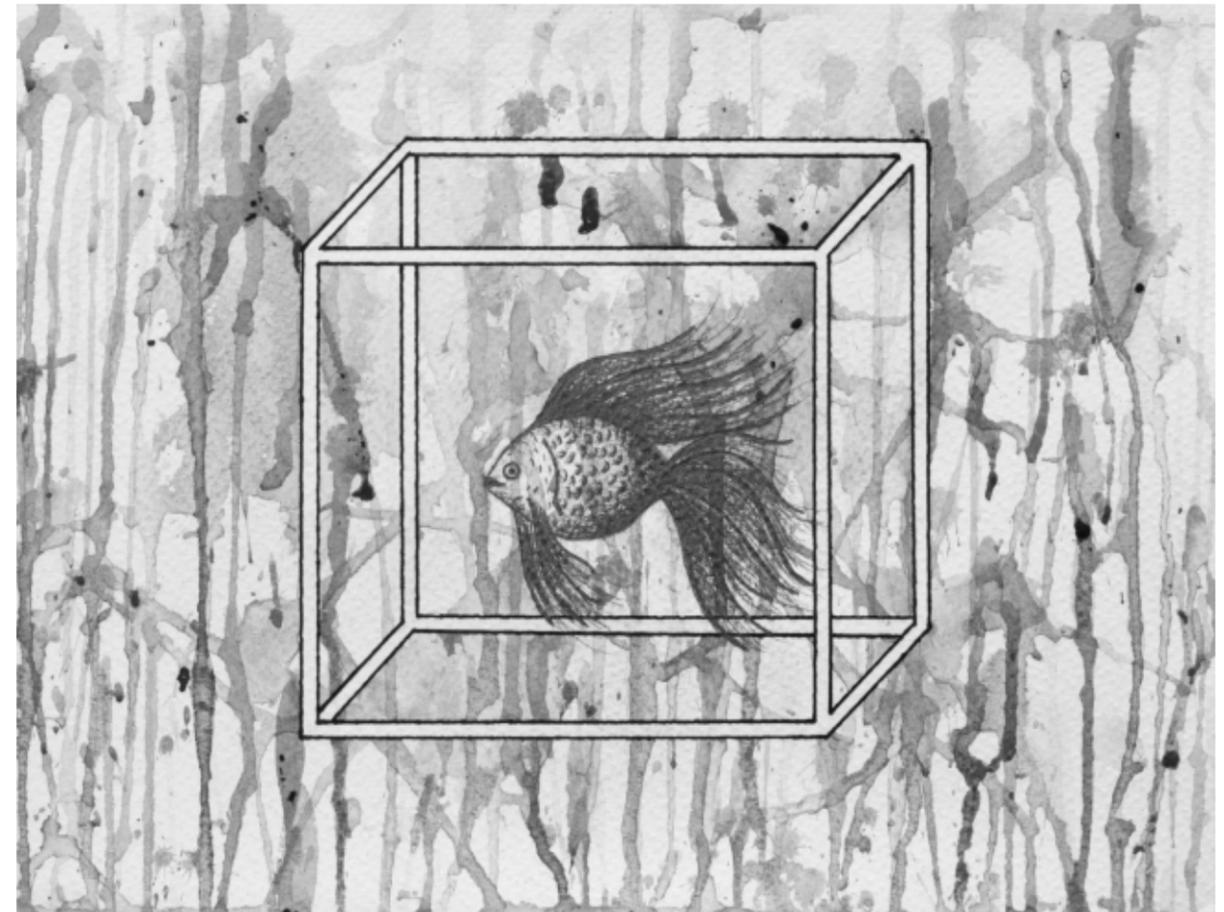
The tears turned into rivers
That later turned into seas.
The River Styx and the Sea of the Philistines.
Now we are drowning in despair
Washing ashore, dead.

He robbed us!
Men that speak of valor,
When they know nothing about that.
We did nothing and they still killed us.
We bow down to those who have the power to destroy with the blink of an eye.

The sounds of shouts became a symphony,
and the collision of bombs; the harmony.
The beaten, the hungry and the dead.
Quiet. It became all quiet the moment the screams faded away.
It was an abrupt sound. The impeccable silence had flourished from screams and
explosions.

Wars as wild as the souls of the caged.
But there is nothing left for us to claim.
Close your eyes and see the wildflowers,
yet those have died as well.

We grew up like that.
We were born into it.
We became the slaves of a king
We became the slaves of a war.
Loneliness will join us when we are gone.



I AM ALIVE

Denisse García

Air can now hardly enter my lungs.
In my head, voices jitter detrimentally
and
While my last hopes collapse,
They are making me feel ghastly.

I push my hair back as I try to calm
down.
My arms hug my legs, my forehead
rests on them.
I allow my chin to tumble into my
palms,
As I see the last drops gently fall.
It is not actually raining.

My eyes are now red and sore
And my lips dried out and cold.
Sitting in this unfriendly, lonesome
place,
I gravely wonder if I can do something
more.
Something more than hide this broken
face.

This one, which clearly shows
The unconditional and chronic pain
That I am forbidden to publicly expose.
The one that if I share, would be in
vain.

To cry, once represented true
manliness.
It was done as a sign of honesty,
integrity,
It defined your courage, your strength.
You weren't judged, you weren't
condemned.

Despite what it once meant,
Today there is nothing more foolish

Than a man who invariably sobs.
A man who weakness speaks for.
My breath is now steady,
All the baffling thoughts clearer,
And my chest doesn't feel heavy.
I am now staring at the mirror.

Tears still plunge down my face.
The difference now, is that I don't
care,
Whether someone comes in and sees
Or if anyone can hear me.

Things have never been easy to say,
And I cry because it's hard to explain
them.
I might look miserable and unsteady
But the words that hurt me are far too
many.

"Crying is for the weak," they've
always told me.
Then, maybe breaking apart internally
And feeling like you are drowning,
Is only a thing of the truly mighty.

Strength. Who are they to define it?
True strength, is to be weak and
recognize
it.

It is to endure when life gets harder.

I'll wash my soul with the tears that
are my soap.

For a minute, I'll forget that gender
defines who I am
And make myself understand, it-is-
okay-to cry.

It's okay, because it means I'm alive.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Daniel Soberanes

I'm looking at you, staring at you. You're leaning back on your chair, chuckling, creases forming at the corners of your eyes. They are a sign of aging and the passage of time; they are a lie, though. We are barely adults. I don't know why you are chuckling, I zoned out. I tend to do that, one of my flaws. You might have told a joke, I can't be sure. It doesn't matter, I smile either way. It comes easy to me, that smile. Good jokes, bad jokes, tense situations. It's all the same to me. The smile comes easy. It didn't before. Before I had to force it. If I didn't, people would be worried. Before they might think that I had a horrible sense of humor or that I was sad. Sad was always relative. Not now with you, though. It's been some time since I had trouble with that smile.

You've stopped talking and push back from the desk, looking at your hands. It is times like this when I wonder what you're thinking. Perhaps it is worry I see in your eyes, or tiredness. I hate being tired because it always feels wrong. Like I shouldn't

be, I don't have a right to be. We both get tired more often now, occupational hazards where our job is simply to grow up. Maybe it's not worry or tiredness, maybe you're judging me, judging life. Perhaps I also tend to overthink.

You look up again, and this time you stare at me. I can feel the probing eyes, and now I worry. Can you hear me thinking? Doubtful. I think get out of my head just in case. You're still looking at my eyes. There's not much there you haven't seen before, but you keep looking. I smile again because you smile now. The smile comes too easy sometimes. But you nod at me and chuckle. I enjoy the chuckle, it helps me remember. Sometimes in these moments I want to cry. But I don't, it wouldn't be appropriate.

You ask me what I'm thinking about. This time I catch the joke and I can laugh with ease. Laughing is even easier than smiling. And I'm thankful because we can both continue to chuckle and laugh, even though roses still have thorns.

HOME

Sabrina Cuevas

Every day I came home from school to the same daily routine. Down the same street with the same people. I would enter my house and smell the freshly-cooked meal which my mom usually prepared and I was sick of eating. The chicken fajitas, white rice, and burned tortillas. Tired and hungry as I would be from a long day at school, I'd have to confront my family. It usually varied from just my sisters and parents to what seemed like a group of noisy parrots which included my aunts, cousins, grandparents, and long lost relatives who always seemed to appear from nowhere. Mexicans are known for their extroverted and unreserved personality, and my family was no exception. Stories from the recent weekend were shouted in all different directions. The dreadful question, "any boyfriend?" never failed. I just tried to swallow what seemed like the twentieth plate of rice and beans of the month and exceedingly spicy salsa. Aggravated by the noise and questions, I would stomp to the kitchen for some peace and quiet. I got used to my daily conversations with the housemaid, Mary, while accompanying her for lunch. She would tell me about her day and I would pretend to listen while anxiously longing to lock myself in my room and lie in bed.

These routines changed when I moved to a different city. A surprise which hit me off guard but I soon came to desire desperately. I would be able to leave behind everything I dreaded in my day to day life. The language, the people, the streets, and even the food was different. When I got home, I could no longer hear the noisy conversations or smell the burning tortillas on the stove. My tongue no longer stung and burned with everything I ate. When I got home, I was welcomed with a plate of foreign cuisine and the maid couldn't even understand me. I spent day after day in my room, not knowing any better. The streets were unfamiliar and the people, aliens. My thirst for change began to dry up. Slowly, I began to miss those insignificant details that I once knew so well and that now seemed so distant.

I soon realized that a seed had been planted in my heart. A seed that had already sprouted and spread its roots inside of me. No matter how far I tried to run, the taste of those rice and beans, the screams of my aunts, and the feeling of belonging would always be within me. A part of my home.

E G O

Julieta Hernández

And one day it hits you
That all those days, hours, and minutes were never you.
It was him, destroying you day by day with a sarcastic smile,
Brown eyes, pretty face, and a fake appearance.

Like a broken record inside your mind, the word “almost” never left.
Some say the word “almost” is the saddest word in the dictionary,
And I guess it’s true.
I almost saw him, I almost made it, I was almost good enough for him,
We almost fell in love.

It wants you and everything you desire,
The feeling of having him is unique, exhausting and in a way comforting,
Just like drowning in water.
If you never open your eyes and realize you’re drowning,
The ocean will never have a reason to stop you.
It’s a game, and everyone is in it.

He was illuminated with darkness since the day he was born,
Filled with poison the day he grew,
And reborn with evil the day humanity was created.
He fell from the high skies of heaven,
But we have fallen deeper.

The king of our minds, our souls and aura
Always there, but never present to the naked eye.
Always smiling, with a lack of emotion.
He’s in love, he has everything he has desired,
For 4 million years and for the future years to come.

It’s impossible for him to leave you,
Death has never feared him, only in certain circumstances.
It is mystical death we as humans need to achieve,
To learn and to master.
It’s the Ego and its 49 million allies that have been loyal to him for years.
It’s him who takes you into other dimensions in your sleep,
It’s him who destroys you, who creates lies, expectations and desires.
I, I have him, and he loves me, deeply.
But I don’t, I never have and never will.

Just like all the women out there being abused by men,
Me and you are being abused by him,
With no pain, no noise, nothing.
If you don’t observe you’ll never see,
The ego is there,
And that’s when it hits you,
That your soul was almost illuminated, but you fell,
Into his world,
And his lies.



THE LIGHT DIMMED

Denisse Garcia

I saw the devil today. She looked a lot like me.
She is now cold and crooked like I can be.
She is feared and respected more than I am,
And she sings to the voices of the fiends every night.

Darkness contrived her a force to be feared,
And not a force to be fought.
When was my precious narcissus cut?
Was it me who made her that dark?

Demons recall when she arrived to my world,
Graceful but baffled, trembling in fear.
A light, which in fascination slowly dimmed.
I was enchanted by her like she was by me.
This was the right place for her and that's clear.

Back then, she would make lilies flourish with just one touch.
All animals would begin to run joyfully, between May and March
My Queen's smile irradiated so much beauty,
Not even the sun's glow could be compared to it.

Even her mother can remember, in times when she was up there,
Lashings of flowers began to dance to the rhythm of the air.
Every spring with her, the prairie was dense and green.
From down here, I could hear all the birds sing.

Now, she dabbles in the occult of the underworld,
Always greeting pain with a smile.
She is looking through the cracks,
And she is longing for you to fall.
That is my queen of dusk.

At least I can say that still, to this day,
Her beauty irradiates the same way.
Her striking eyes burn like a blaze in a pit
And her body moves soft and gracefully.

It is hard to believe she cheats on me.
If my heart actually permitted it,
I would forswear to the love I give her.
Unfortunately, I can't break our promise.
Regardless of everything, I truly love Persephone.

I was fooled by her charm,
Hypnotized by her eyes.
When I loved her the most
She just tossed me aside

Now the great Hades has fallen,
So take her as an example.
An example of strength,
An example of inner power.



EDGAR STREET

Teresa Lee

The street is lit today
By a single lamp
That flickers,
Like the restless mind
Of a man.

He drives around aimlessly,
His only true companions:
A purring motor,
A bottle,
And eerie silence.

The night is enveloped
By a peculiar calmness,
A cold breeze
Caressing the man's skin.

Aside from the screams
Inside his head,
Silence fills the air,
Loud like static.

He still remembers,
White nightgown,
Delicate lace between
His callused hands.

Her blank gaze,
As the monster claimed
Her youthful body.

The stark difference between
The soft skin of her throat,
And the clawed paws
Of the creature.

The meaty mouth
That inhaled her soul.

The man glances at
The rearview mirror,
Tough hands
With
Bloody knuckles,
Clenching the steering wheel.

A feminine silhouette
Stares back at him
From the backseat.

She has the same
Eyes,
Nose,
Lips,
As she did.

But it's almost like
Looking at
A dead carcass.

The street is lit today
By a single lamp
That flickers,
Like the restless mind
Of a monster.

ORPHEUS REVISITED

Kassandra Ortiz

One car. One drunk driver.
That's all it took to tear me from my life.
Everything I had ever known, loved, ripped from me.
Death kidnapped me,
Separated me from my only love,
He is the only man capable of possessing my heart.
He is hurting, as much as I am.
I can see his pain, feel it as if it were my own.
But nothing can compare
To the torment that his absence causes.

It is dark in this abyss,
The only light comes from the hope that, one day, we will be together.
The deafening sound of loneliness and heartache rings in my ears.

But there is another sound coming from the distance,
Faint, barely audible.
Such a beautiful melody,
Is it from him that this melody comes?
Is it he that sings such a mellifluous sorrow?
I am drawn to it, but fear keeps me from moving.

Then, to my fortune, slowly strength rises inside me.
I feel a sense of freedom,
As if I were Death's only exception for life.
And I am.

I am in the hospital again,
Only steps away from him,
Walking behind him and hoping that he will not turn to face me.
I can sense the doubt that runs through his veins.
Have faith, we'll be together again soon!
I can see the light,
Hear the birds chirping,
Feel the cold marble on my bare feet.
Just a few more steps and I will be free and reunited with him.
He stops.
I cry out to him, begging him not to look... but it is too late.
Our eyes meet.

The last time they will ever meet.
Only Death will permit us to see each other once again.



P R E T T Y

Sofia Ramos

I don't remember that night, mostly.
But there is one moment I do recall.
It was when I woke up to darkness,
And ripped clothes in a dirty bathroom
At the dingy club.

I don't remember his face,
I don't remember how it happened,
But sometimes in the middle of the night,
I think I feel the whisper of a touch.

The morning comes with
Shower gels of every colour and scent
That line the walls surrounding the tub;
As well as the dozens of shampoo bottles
And lotions sitting atop the counter.

Now, there's strawberry milk
Always stocked in the fridge
And a wall of nail polish racks;
Comfort in the shape of beauty products

I don't even remember what I was wearing.
That night that was supposed to be fun,
Now haunts me, even in broad daylight.
Maybe it was that tight leather skirt
Or those glittery pumps that sit in the closet.

So I ignore it, and I scrub everyday.
I shower twice a day, sometimes more.
I paint my nails continuously
I wear pretty flower crowns atop my head

I put on my pink dresses and weave bows into my hair
And hope and pray to be back before 5 p.m.
I drink my beloved strawberry milk
Because it paints my insides a pretty pink.

Colorful polish where caked blood was,
Smells of lavender where his smell was.
Am I pretty yet?
I think he might be gone from my skin.

RECREACIÓN

Diego Soberanes

Como en la Creación, yo suplicaba...

No importaba si era carne de mi carne
O hueso de mis huesos
Y no ser ya dos, sino uno solo
Porque solo, no sabía adónde ir

No quería bestias dominadas
Mares divididos o tal vez por dividir
Aves en el cielo
Y un jardín por disfrutar

“Que se haga la luz” - sentenció la voz, sin dar tiempo a pensar
Y dos luceros de esmeralda marcaron mi destino
No quedó más remedio que seguirlos y seguirte
Y pedirte, suplicando, no apartaras tu mirada

Y creí, y la soledad se hizo un recuerdo
Lloré, y mi llanto era tormenta y buen augurio
Y no hubo más remedio que tomarte
Disfrutando así la recreación

NURSERY RHYME: THE

SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Alejandra Vázquez

There once was a piggy named Iggy,
Who lived with her mommy and drank from her tummy.
Then ugly men came, and it was all over.
They were snatched away from each other,
And separated forever.
Their hearts were broken, skins were swollen.
Mommy was beat with a stick, and left the world with a kick.
Iggy was put in a cage, where she would eventually age.
Forced to eat disgusting food, and showered in her own poop
Getting real fat, while all day in the cage she sat.
The cage too small for her, she really did suffer.
Dark and filthy, the place was unhealthy.
Growing up hearing the others scream and die
It was torture for her and this you can't deny
One day the men came again, but now to take her to be slain.
She was forced on a line so today you could dine.
Squirming and screaming, knowing that death was approaching
Soon it was all over and it was time to meet again with her mother.
An electric shock ended her life of misery,
In which plate she ended remains a mystery.
Millions like Iggy exist and die every day
Because you take their lives and pretend it's okay
Now kiddies remember we shouldn't eat piggies.
Animals suffer so you can have supper.

M E

Daniela Zaragoza

Why are they selfish?
Only caring about their line in the dialogue
Changing the subject because they didn't care for another's question
Skipping turns so they can listen to their own voice again.

Why are we selfish?
Not wanting to share our material possessions
Though they will be gone not long after oneself.
Hoarding and keeping, hogging and accumulating
While across from us, many lack.

Why am I selfish?
Looking for a mirror wherever I go
Sinking in my own reflection and never finding an end;
Falling and falling hoping to find something at the bottom
That will be even more special

It's because they think that it is only their stories that matter
And that the rest of the world is dying to hear what they have to say
Just as much as they are

It's because we don't realize what a short time we have here
We think that everything that is ours now will be here forever
So why would we share this with anyone else?

Because when I am drowning in a mirror
There is no other way to look
I just care too much for my own eyes to turn around and face another's

That's when they, when we, when I sit there and think
"Maybe it is simply too late to care for others."
Then realize, "No; It's just too late to stop caring this much for me."



HIPÓCRITA COMO NADA MÁS

Daniela González

Naciste y había una criatura esperándote, observando.
Te admiraba.
Al principio.

“¡Qué hermosa!” Fueron las primeras palabras que se expresaron al verte.
Creciste como una niña alegre,
Vestías de rosa y usabas moños atados al cabello.
Las palabras de esta criatura evolucionaron
“¡Ve esos cachetotes tan preciosos!” “¡Será bellísima de grande!”
Y cuando tus papás te limitaban: “Déjala hacer lo que quiera”.

Creciste más y la criatura empezó
a criticar la manera en la que te vestías.
A juzgar tu manera de pensar.
Tu manera de bailar.
Tus decisiones.
Incluso tus hábitos alimenticios.
Tu música.
Hasta a tus amigos.
Intentabas resaltar y la criatura te atacaba con palabras desgarradoras.
Intentabas de ser única y la criatura te miraba con asco.

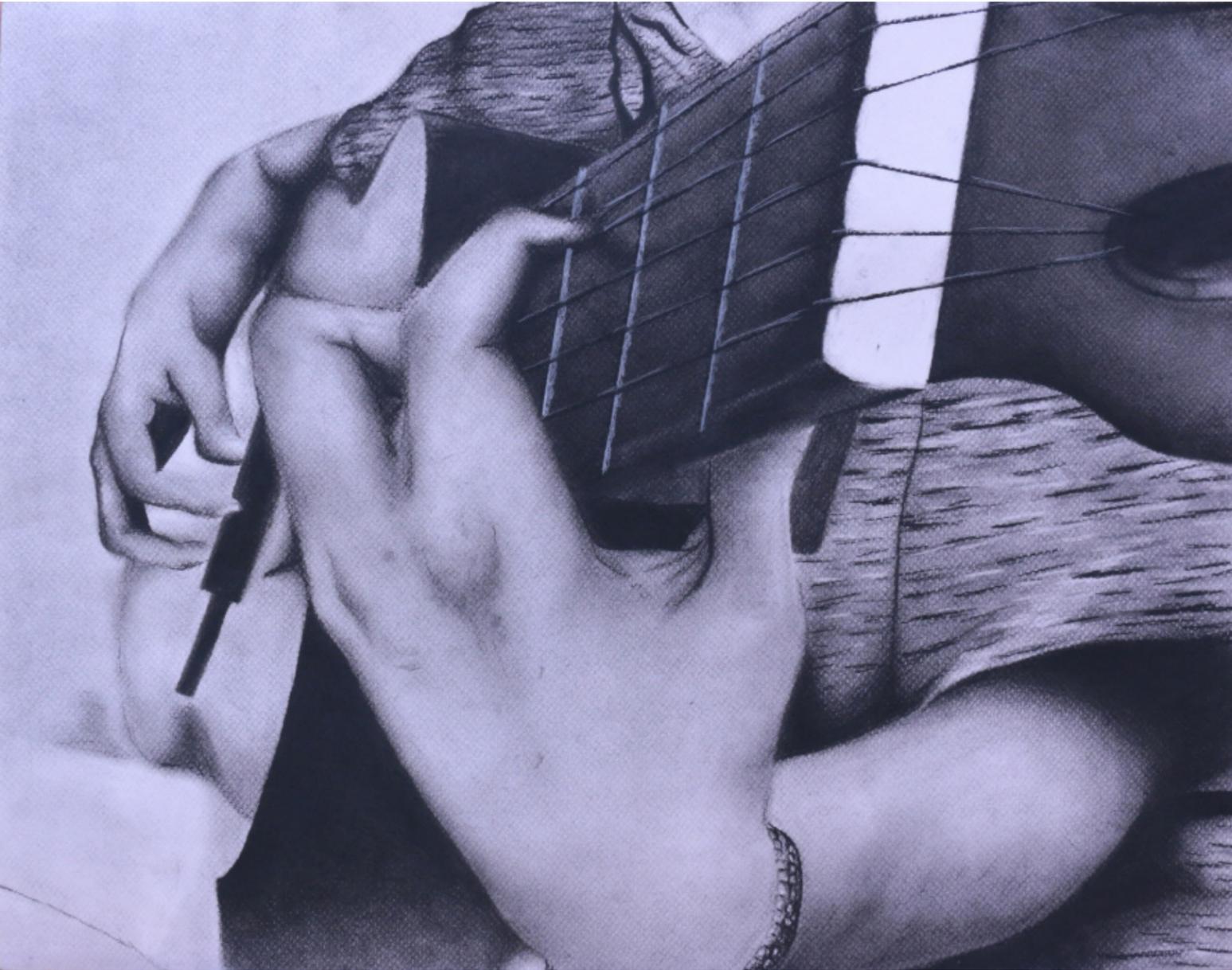
Los murmullos de la criatura te perseguían,
los escuchabas en el aire, explotando de las paredes,
en todas las personas que veías.
Los empezaste a escuchar dentro de ti misma.
se convirtieron en tu cárcel personal,
cada palabra una barra de hierro que te acorralaba.

Se convirtieron en tu realidad.

La criatura hizo que te convirtieras en tu propia pesadilla. Sus palabras
quebraban cada fragmento de ti,
dejando marcas y moretes en tu consciencia y corazón.
Te lastimó tanto que te hizo creer que no valías la pena.
Hizo que odiaras a la persona en la que te habías convertido.

Fueron las garras de la criatura las que lastimaron tus muñecas.
Fue su mirada fulminante la que te forzó a renunciar a comer. Tranquila, tú no
saltaste del precipicio que terminó con tu vida.
Fue la criatura quien te empujó.
Hipócrita como nada más, la criatura lloró y fingió angustia en tu muerte.
Tal vez nunca lo sabrás.
Pero siempre estuvo ahí. No la veías. Las sombras de lo que fuiste son tan solo
un reflejo de la vida que esta criatura te forzó a vivir.





ASÍ ERES TÚ, AMOR

Francisco Aguirre

Te alimentas de mil pretextos,
Terminas siempre sin argumentos,
Te faltan pantalones para visitar al perdón,
Así eres tú, Amor.

Ojos pardos y bigotes me pondré,
Tu austero pigmento teñiré sobre mi piel,
Así la vida me confundirá con un felino y me
Dará más vidas para resguardarme de tí.

Si negara que aún te amo,
Es como negar que mi corazón aún siente,
Pero poco a poco me he alejado de las
Manchas que has desquitado en mis reflejos.

Por mí no te angusties,
Que mi sol sigue teniendo un rico sabor,
Y el aire no se ha vaciado de oxígeno,
El dolor aún no patina sobre tu ausencia.

Te robaste la madera con la que
Apresaba mi infelicidad,
Y con ella construiste tus
Palacios de mentiras.

Así eres tú, Amor,
Voy y toco a tu puerta
Pero nunca me contestas
Porque tú me buscas,
Cuando menos te quiero ver.

Así eres tú Amor,
Voy y toco a tu puerta
Pero siempre me rechaza y
Sólo me buscas para divertirte con
La poca ilusión que me queda.

Así que cuando llegues a mi puerta,
No te dejaré entrar,
No sea que saques tus garras
Y me arranques las ganas de vivir.

DEFEATED

Natalia Velazco

He told the tale in a different way.
He claimed that he had been
courageous, and cunning.
He said he had defeated me,
But the truth is yet untold.

When he came into my cave,
Making his way through the maze of
carcasses,
The reek of rotting flesh that piled on
the ground
Mixed with the smell of his terror.

I knew what he wanted, I could guess
why he had come,
But couldn't bring myself to strike
him,
And tear the young hero into pieces,
Or even to cower away.
I was too exhausted to care.

I caught a glimpse of him,
His gorgeous brown hair, his face full
of youth.
The large muscles on his arm were
tense,
From holding the heavy sword or from
the fear,
Either way.

His handsome features reminded me
of the man I had once loved,
The one who made me fall for him,
who told me I was beautiful.
The one who had sworn to love me
forever,
The sea-god that had abandoned me.

But the familiar anger wasn't there,
My heart had been slowly hollowed
out, and now it was empty.
I didn't want to fight this boy, and take
another precious life.
Tears welled in my deadly eyes.

But he told the tale a different way.
He claimed that he had been
courageous, and astute
That he had defeated me,
But I had surrendered long ago.

I saw him come close to me
Clutching a shiny silver plaque.
I understood what he planned to do.
In that moment, I decided to look into
that mirror.

So I looked,
Deep into the reflection and into my
infamous haunting eyes.
I looked, but only for a brief second,
And saw everything I used to be. I
recognized that girl again,
The beautiful damsel whom everyone
admired,
With gold hair and profound emerald
eyes.

Then I turned to stone.

Sin Fronteras has received the following awards from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines (PRESLM):

1993 Award of Excellent

1994 Award of Excellent

1995 Award of Excellent

1996 Award of Superior

1997 Highest Award

1998 Award of Superior

1999 Award of Excellent

2000 Highest Award

2001 Highest Award

2002 Award of Superior

2003 Award of Excellent

2004 Highest Award

2005 Award of Superior

2006 Award of Superior

2007 Award of Excellent

2008 Award of Excellent

2009 Award of Superior

2010 Award of Excellent

2011 Award of Excellent

2012 Award of Excellent

2013 Award of Superior

2014 Award of Excellent

2015 Award of Superior