



**VOLUME XII, NUMBER 2,
JUNE 2002**

SIN FRONTERAS



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1999 **Excellence Award**
2000 **Highest Award**
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SIN FRONTERAS

Volume XII, Number 2, June 2002

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COVER DESIGN: Lázaro Julián

ART CREDITS: cover picture, p. 34, David Bak Geller; pp. 3, 25, 33, Pablo Hernandez; p. 11, Ana Sofía Carbonell; p. 14, Student teacher; pp. 17, 29, Jacqueline Flores; p. 18, Luis H. Carbonell; p. 43, Jesús de la Parra.

STAFF



FRONT ROW: (from right to left) Juliana Capetillo, Ana Sofía Carbonell, Sofía Silva, Lauren Nichols, Martha Anguiano, Francisco Morales.

BACK ROW: Daniel Robles, Meaghan Hoffman, Laura Jileta, Marisa Chavarría, Dr. Michael Hogan, Emily Burnor, Alejandra Ruiz, Gina Rodríguez, Rosa María Garciamontes.

NOT PICTURED: María del Lourdes Govea.

Editors-In-Chief

Martha Anguiano Ramos
Sofía Silva Rangel

Production Manager

Martha Anguiano Ramos

Spanish Editor

Sofía Silva Rangel

Art Editor

Ana Sofía Carbonell

Faculty Advisor

Michael Hogan, Ph.D.

Non-Fiction Editor

Lauren Nichols Rubenstein
assistant: Meaghan Hoffman

Poetry Editor

Francisco Morales
assistant: Ana Sofía Carbonell

Fiction Editor

Juliana Capetillo
assistant: Alejandra Ruiz

s Govea

EDITOR'S NOTE

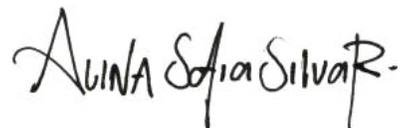
Many *Sin Fronteras* generations have gone by. Looking at past staff pictures will always bring back memories of those who we once saw as *the* high school students, the grown ups on the other half of our school who sat in the grass reading and writing, making editorial notes. We can barely remember how we got to this place today, how we grew up and suddenly became members of that select group. *Its not easy tracing the path we took to get to this place today; the journey during which we grew up and suddenly became members of the select few that worked on the magazine.* But we are now editors of this magazine which once “belonged” to them. It is now we, along with other of our friends, who in this year, have known all (and perhaps too much) about deadlines, writers’ block, revisions and all that which comes along with editorial work. Yet there is no greater satisfaction than that of seeing “our” magazine bound and completed, ready to be held by the hands of others. Others who will first flip through the pages as we used to do, looking at the pictures and quotes, and later indulging in the written works and introspective minds of the published writers.

The printed contents of this magazine encompass those nights in which the writers’ pens began to move across the lined paper, or nights in which the computer’s keys would click interminably, until our thoughts and words were exhausted, until the weight of a stressful week had been transcribed into

Sincerely,



Martha Anguiano Ramos



Sofía Silva Rangel

words. *Sin Fronteras* strives to capture the essence of what lies confined in the space between ourselves and the written expression of our thoughts. The published pieces have been carefully selected to serve this exact purpose. In each of the pieces, whether about jamming sailboats, Arabian desert horses or nights of conversing stars, the authors have “cut” part of themselves and “pasted” them into this magazine, revealing their insights to the reader and making note of the advancing journey of their lives. Many times, we are surprised with what comes out of our own minds, what we write and with what we end up revealing to ourselves. Writing has been a personal therapy that frees us from our own boundaries, which are always the hardest to overcome.

The entire magazine has been designed to allow the freedom of the reader’s mind. We avoided boundaries in its creation; we allowed the strings of the guitar on the cover to lead us through with no apparent endpoint. Yet we have reached the goal line, and we knew the final outcome was what we’d always been expecting. We hope that this issue will have an equally rewarding effect on you.

In music and in literature, silences are more important than sound, but one must be aware of their presence. May you make *Sin Fronteras* a vehicle with which to travel through the unexpressed silences of your mind. Relax and enjoy the journey.

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THE TRUMP CARD

Lauren Nichols

My dad's booming laughter filled the room as he shuffled the faded cards and we all sat down at the table, the bottoms of the chairs squealing across the wooden kitchen floor, as each of us claimed that we would be the night's winners. We each clamored around the table adjusting our position so that nobody would be able to peek at our cards while my brother hurried to find the best view of his neighbor's hand.

It didn't matter what we were playing, hearts, gin, five crowns or even rummy, the cards have always seemed to draw my family together. On summer evenings after a long day at the beach, each with our fresh tans, or on Sunday afternoons after having an overwhelming lunch too heavy in our stomachs to allow us to do any work, we would all gather under the small candelabrum hanging over the table to make our bets on who was going to win, the competition running hot in our blood. Crunching on fresh Granny Smith apples smeared with peanut butter and sipping at steaming mugs of hot chocolate, we would wipe our hands on our pants legs and examine the hands we had been dealt. The black and red numbers fating us to lose or win, determining a painful humiliating defeat that would hang over our heads for the rest of the week, or a triumphant victory that we could continue to exalt in for days. High squeals of joy could always be heard when someone was dealt a straight or had three pairs, and groans would escape from those helplessly stuck with disconnected cards. Only Dad, with years of practicing and fine-tuning of his almost comical poker face, would not give away any hints. Lips pinched tight, his head tilted downwards and his brow furrowed, he reminded me much of the Neanderthals I had studied in my sixth grade science class. His

deep stare seemed to work, though, and we usually found ourselves ganging up against him in order to keep him from trampling all over us.

I have never met a family with such zeal and hunger for competition than my own. Even Aunt Clara at age 87 would often jump about the room laughing and yelling in surges of energy surprising for her age. When she would challenge my grandfather in a game of gin, you could still hear both their voices two blocks from our house. My mother is probably the least competitive in the family, often taking pity on the underdog and holding or discarding certain cards to give one of her precious children a chance. Although she often played the role of the innocent player, she would often win without anyone ever realizing she had ever been in the lead. I often wonder if she had hidden her secret plans and tactics against the rest of us, plotting ways to outplay us all. My brother has a need to win that surpasses us all but is also the sour loser. It is not very often that we ever beat James. It is not that he is the most talented player but that he has the irritating habit of quitting before he submits to losing.

On evenings in which we gather to play, the sun setting outside and the wind whipping the flag on the flag post, producing a methodical clinking sound, the atmosphere can often grow intense, each member determined to come out on top. As soon as the game begins it is each man for himself; age and gender are no longer matters of consideration. We have never been able to play "just for fun," there always have to be strict rules and a prominent loser and a winner. Although we always agree on set rules from the beginning, we always run into disagreements on what is allowed and what

isn't. Sometimes such disagreements can escalate into full-blown arguments, usually my dad jabbing his stiff finger on the table and demanding a card be laid down or my grand-father barking in his already loud voice that "a card laid, is a card played."

Once, when my brother was younger, I remember during an intense game of Five Crowns he had discarded a wild card lazily without noticing what he had done until it was too late. Dad had snatched it off the table with a pronounced "Ha!" at the same time James had reached to retrieve it. Both holding the card from either end had argued over to whom it belonged. My dad's face grew red with my brother's defiance of what he said were "The Rules", and James' face pinched up with frustration from being denied his card. My father had yanked the card into his possession and stuffed it in with the rest of his hand. James, standing up in his chair and squeezing back the stinging tears quickly welling up in his eyes had yelled "Cheater!" spitting out the word and stomping up to his room, abandoning the table. Blowing his temper, my dad had thrown his cards on the table, standing up and bellowed for him to come back down "this instant," to no avail. My mom had tugged on my father's arm and reminded him it was "only a game" in a desperate attempt to calm him but we could all tell that the game would not be completed. My sister and I sat in silence looking at the table before abandoning the cards on the table and following James' footsteps up the stairs to get ready for bed, knowing there was nothing within our power that would settle their disagreement that night.

I had always believed that this was the way everybody played cards. The pressure to win, and the satisfaction that

came with it. It wasn't that I thought my family wouldn't love me if I couldn't win, it was far from that, but it was a way to prove myself in some way and also a time that I could feel more united with my family because of the common attitude towards the game.

The first time I played Uno with a group of friends, I was irritated and disgusted by their casual attitude towards the game. I felt an urge to set all the rules in order and a strong need to make sure everyone was playing fairly. The laughter and indifferent attitude toward the prospect of winning or losing had baffled me and I had preferred not to take part in their undignified game. It took me a long time to get accustomed to the passing of cards under the table and the "accidental" up turning of cards in the deck. Slowly I had loosened up and was able to quench my irritation enough to enjoy their casual attitudes. After being used to the tense competitive attitude in my family, it had been a big leap to the looseness of the way the games were played among friends who saw the games only as an amusement rather than a test in which people were rivaled against one another.

I do not regret the competition between my family, though. As my brother and sister and I have grown older and farther away from our parents and relatives, no longer having the leisure of Sunday afternoons to play games, the times when we are able to gather together to play a game unite us in a strong bond of competition. It is a way to get back to each other and although the game is often tense, it gives us a much needed excuse to spend time together and exchange a few words, even if they are only taunts and challenges.

RIVER STREETS

Sofía Silva

I'm running. I can't deal with my anger and desperation in any way other than physically running away from it. I don't like to run just for the hell of it. I prepare to run while playing basketball or other sport because one does not usually notice it then. But today I'm not playing basketball or any other sport, I'm not even "thinking sports." I'm also running because it's raining today and rain has some rare effect on me sometimes, like it is calling me to be a part of it. Other times it just invites nostalgia through the windows, but today it has invited me to run with it. At first it's hard to find a rhythm; the rain and the cool air are suddenly too drastic a change from the warmth I had been in only a few minutes ago. I start trotting, not finding a comfortable pace yet. I am still too aware of what surrounds me, the people, my already-soaked shoes and the water in my eyes.

My mind finally begins to wander, to switch to a different level of awareness and I keep running, my legs begin to move unconsciously and I run watching my feet catching a perfect rhythm and synchrony. Left, right, left, right... I can't seem to stop looking at them, I'm running without looking up to see which direction I'm heading towards. The trance-like running has begun and the music in my head begins to play. I rarely even notice it anymore (the music, that is), but there's always background music to my thoughts. I'm thinking and wondering where people are, I'm thinking of myself getting hit by a car. I see it in slow motion

and it's not really a tragic event. It's more like a movie scene with calm music for background and in which the girl's body will later begin to elevate towards the sky. I think water, I think rivers forming under my feet. For some reason I think New York and a journal entry I wrote about rain in ninth grade. I see myself running through the flooded streets, as if I am a spectator of myself. I think names and faces but I back away from those thoughts. I don't want to remember anyone right now. This is what I think, but I hear differently.



Today I'm concentrated enough to distinguish the faint music in the back of my head. Today's it's a Dire Straits song which is more of an instrumental song and with brief interludes of lyrics. I think I dreamed with the song all night long. It's not really a favorite, it's just the background music while I run; it's the song which my dreams chose the night before and which will probably last the rest of the day. My legs have gone numb, I'm starting to wonder whether I will suddenly

realize I've been standing all along, that I haven't moved from the corner of my house where I thought I'd turned fifteen minutes ago. I haven't turned anywhere else ever since. Straight lines have more of a hypnotic power than circles, or so it seems to me. I haven't turned, I haven't stopped once nor have I looked away from the always visible point forward which seems the farthest. I aim to reach the moon's reflection in the flooded streets ahead, but it's got an unreachable lead. Yet I can't stop looking forward.

I barely realize I have increased my speed at least three times from when I first started. I'm going faster because it's raining harder and my clothes begin to weigh more with every step. The cold air has seeped into my lungs, I can feel it burning cold inside. I see the vapor coming out my mouth and nose and the water in my eyes no longer bothers me. I could be crying and no one would be able to tell the difference. My legs are running completely on their own now; I have no conscious control over them, and the numbness has changed into severe pain. I picture my rheumatic bones exposed to the cold and soaking wet. The air is breaking through my spine, my thigh muscles are breaking apart too. I feel frozen inside but I cannot stop the mechanics of my legs, the rain has not stopped yet. It's one of those storms that won't let up until dark and will continue lightly throughout the night. My jaw is clenched, I notice the pain only after a while but I cannot relax it yet. I become the spectator of myself once again. My lips are blue and I keep exhaling vapor through my mouth. I can barely breathe through my nose now. My throat is dry with cold. I need to cough but too much energy would go into that, too much air would be wasted. I'd have

to stop and remember where I came from, why I started running in the first place. My throat will close up soon, I will run out of air and the water reaches a few inches above my shoes. I can rarely see my feet anymore.

I try thinking warmth now. It's growing dark, I don't know where I am anymore. I'm thinking constellations, I'm thinking of storms at the beach and a crab sailing through the great ocean's waves. There's not much it can do but follow its command, flow with its current until the storm is over. My eyes are still fixed on the farthest point my sight can reach. I won't fight the weather too.

The fall. Like a slow motion picture, my body reaching for the floor, the breaking of my weak knees and the collapse of my exhausted body into the river street. Half my head is under water and my eyes are wide open, staring up into the now dark sky. Rain falls hard and straight into them, the spherical yellow above is blurred. I'm wordless, thoughtless. I was angry and running away from that which I could not deal with. But I've run out of anger, run out of thoughts and strength. I lie there, immobile. I let myself flow with the current for now. When the rain lets up, I'll be able to turn back home.

TRANSLATION

LA LUNA

Jaime Sabines

Translated from the Spanish by Daniel Robles

The moon can be taken in spoonfuls
Or as a capsule every two hours.
It works as an hypnotic, a sedative
And it also alleviates
Those who have been intoxicated by philosophy.

A fragment of the moon in a pocket
Is a better amulet than a rabbit's foot:
It works to find those whom we love,
To be rich without anyone knowing
And to keep the medics and clinics away.
It can be given as dessert to children
When they have not fallen asleep,
And a few moon drops in the eyes of the elderly
Gives them a serene death.

Put a tender moon sheet
Under your pillow, and you will see what you want to see.
Always carry a jar of moon air
For when you drown,
And give the key to the moon,
To the prisoners and the disenchanting.
To those condemned to death
And those condemned to living.
There is not a better incentive than the moon
In precise and controlled doses.

NON-FICTION

DE LA SALLE

Michael Hogan

My old high school has been transformed into luxury condominiums now, but one can see the elegance and imagine the pride of the working class boy chosen to attend there. The carefully trimmed lawn swept down to tree-lined Bellevue Avenue where the estates the Vanderbilts and the Pierponts, the incredibly rich-before-income-tax, 19th century magnates, had their summer estates.

The inside of the school was impressive as well: the grand staircase with its polished oak, the oil paintings of Colonial governors, the polished railings, and the vaulted ceilings. Christian Brothers in their black robes, crosses tucked into rope belts, made their way along the corridors with crisp smoothness as if floating. We felt privileged and I suppose we were, but we also felt captive by a past that was not ours, by a religion which seemed severe and medieval, and by a discipline which far exceeded that in our own modest homes.

The exuberance of Tommy Gough was met with a quick slap by the French teacher, Brother Dennis, when Tommy mispronounced the word for pen and then, when asked to repeat it properly, did a credible imitation of the effeminate brother. Brother Peter in English class, a Friar Tuck look-alike, would turn red in the face when anyone made a joke, passed a note, or giggled during the morning prayer.

"Come to the front, Mr. Hogan!" he'd order.

As I stood in front of him, grinning out of embarrassment, and readying myself for the slap that I knew was coming, he'd raise his right hand.

"Get that cocky grin off your face, or I'll knock it off!"

And then, as I moved imperceptibly to avoid the slap from his right, he'd pop me with his cupped left hand in a resounding smack that could be heard out in the corridor.

I can't remember the slaps ever hurting very much. And we never told about such punishment at home. The ones who made that mistake often found themselves beaten again by their father for whatever offense they committed that deserved such punishment from the Brother in the first place. Even if you came from a family which did not much care for corporal punishment, it was generally accepted that the punitive attentions of the Brothers from De La Salle were part of the price you paid for a good education.

I was something of a class clown so I got more than the average share of slaps. I remember once when Brother Peter left the room during the first period class when we said the Pledge of Allegiance and sang the Star Spangled Banner, deciding I would direct the anthem as a conductor and stood in front of the class using his yardstick as a baton. He came in during the middle of my performance, waited until I was finished and then whacked me twice with the yardstick, breaking it in the process.

The broken yardstick brought forth hoots from the boys and so, more infuriated, he proceeded to strike me about the head and shoulders with his hands.

"Of all the disrespectful, arrogant, young men, I've ever taught, you take the prize. You...you..."

And, as words failed him and his face reddened with rage, I felt his impotence when confronted with what was essentially youthful irreverence. He could not inculcate in me the blind devotion for God or the

academy or even America which for most children of immigrants was unquestioning. I remember feeling sorry for him then, as he wiped the sweat from his broad Irish brow and instructed me to return to my seat. He had lost it.

"How was school today?" I remember my mother asking. I also remember the smile on my face as I said, "I had a great day, Mom."

Breaking Brother Peter was an accomplishment. He never struck me after that. Perhaps I modified my tendencies as class clown, as well, but I don't think so. Nor did he stop striking other students. However, some of the zest went out of his slaps when he struck the other boys. While he never raised his hand to me again, he had replaced physical aggression with the verbal. Once, I recall, he told me, "Mr. Hogan, you have a cavalier attitude." For a few days I went around thinking of myself as one of the Musketeers, a swashbuckling equestrian, until I looked up the word in a dictionary.

While Brother Peter had been put in his place by passive resistance and quiet dignity in the face of impotent fury, there remained one nemesis who could not be dealt with so easily. He was a priest and Latin teacher who utilized physical aggression in a more manly way. Father Gallagher would call you up to decline a noun or conjugate a verb in front of the class. If you missed the ablative plural of *mensa*, or the third person subjunctive of *amare*, he would tell you to tighten up, and then punch you solidly in the stomach. He'd smile as he did this, and you were expected to smile stoically back, wrack your brains, and then try to recite perfectly the second time. If you did not do your homework for Fr. Gallagher's class, you best have a cast iron stomach. I endured him for three years of Latin and I remember that for all of us boys in that class, sit-ups were considered every bit as important as memorizing declensions and conjugations.

Father Gallagher considered himself to be one of the cool members of the faculty.

He drove a Harley Davidson to work. He would offer you coffee if you went to his office for counseling. On the weekends he could often be found out by the beaches where some of us went to drink beer and make out with the local girls from St. Catherine's. It wasn't until after a wild beach party one spring in our junior year that we found out what he was up to. Giving a sermon at our local church on purity and abstinence, he asked our parents: "And where was your Johnny this weekend. Your Michael? Where was your Mary? Your Cindy?" looking at each of our parents in turn. "I'll tell you where!" he roared. "Out in the dunes at Second Beach drinking beer and engaging in God knows what impurities."

He'd been parking his Harley somewhere out of sight and then creeping up on the campfire to record who was there. I never trusted him after that, and no longer was amused by his manly punches even when I was not their focus.

In our senior year, a sickly boy by the name of Gavin was called up to the front of Latin class. He missed the line he was supposed to translate from Virgil. I remember it well. "Sic volvere Parcas," which had to do with the Fates spinning the web of predestination for Aeneas and his crew in that unforgettable epic of the founding of Rome. *Umph*, Gavin was struck the hard punch to the breadbasket. And then his face paled and he collapsed in a heap on the floor. It seems that Gavin's appendix had ruptured. The local fire department was called (they operated the EMT service) and with sirens and much excitement Gavin was taken to Newport Hospital where he was operated on, saved, and then transferred by his parents to a public school. Father Gallagher was also transferred a week later to become a chaplain at a retirement home for nuns.

By the end of my senior year, corporal punishment was a thing of the past. We used to joke about the good old days and how the new kids coming up had it so easy. Verbal

abuse continued, of course, and sarcasm became a much more finely-honed instrument on the part of the Brothers. We were tolerant of that and would smile when one of them would suggest that if we didn't do better on exams then we'd most certainly end up as a buck private peeling potatoes in the army. Or, when not paying attention in class, another would suggest that our thoughts of sex would almost certainly lead us to a "Hell where sex would be all we'd *ever* be able to think of!" We knew they were dealing as best they could with the new regulations which had disarmed them of their

old weapons. Sarcasm involved so much more thought and practice that we winced when they did not pull it off, and inwardly applauded a good quip even if one of our clique was the victim.

"So," said Brother Leo, when I was staring out the window during English class in May of my last year. "Are you already deep into your own masterfully written book, Mr. Hogan, or could we entice you back to our poor text?"

I smiled back condescendingly. Not bad, Brother Leo. Keep practicing.

REFLECTION

Emily Burnor

Her hands twitched nervously around her pencil. She fiddled and fumbled with it, as if she had never seen this thin, wooden instrument before. Her ankles were crossed, right over left, and her cleanly polished leather boots reflected the streams of morning light which slid through the narrow opening of the classroom curtain. Her hair hit her shoulder so cleanly, as if she had gone to the salon just that morning. If it moved out of place, her creamy-colored hand would grasp the thick, blond mane, smoothing it behind her toned, cut shoulders. Her spine stood erect against her desk, and her delicate neck extended far beyond her strong, firm torso. The position of her body looked almost plastic-so flawless, so still. Her eyes were fixed on her irresolute hands, which held the pencil on her index finger. She stared so intensely at this object, I wondered what could be so fascinating about the words, "Eagle, No. 2."

She barely ever opened her mouth to speak. She never made eye contact with the professor to clarify her understanding of the material. She seemed so bored and uninterested. I almost lost interest in the class by just looking at her.

How could an empty character like her stand to be in such a thought-provoking class? As I glanced around the room, I saw the many wide-eyed, grinning faces baffled by the professor's eloquence. She just didn't seem to quite fit in with these zealous pupils. Their deluge of questions tended to sidetrack the professor at times. But she just sat there, quiet and idle, the entire class period.

What drew my attention to an inattentive girl in my favorite class? Was it the fact that she was perfectly still, or were her attempts to go unnoticed a little too obvious? No, it wasn't either. Somehow I felt

her pain, and I reflected back to when I too was once of a victim of shyness.

I remember when I first moved to a large, competitive school district in the high-class suburbs of Dallas. I remember seeing new faces, smiling and smirking. Being the new girl was difficult; it felt as if everyone was constantly watching you. I responded to their stares by covering my face with thick make-up, wearing tight clothing, and keeping my mouth shut. I would think to myself, "If I can get through this class unnoticed, I won't make a fool of myself. If I don't make a fool of myself, then I'll be popular and I'll fit in". I remember in Mrs. Moseley's sixth grade math class, I would sit in the back corner, farthest away from her desk. If she ever asked me a question, my eyes would water and blood would rush to my cheeks. I would answer in a meek and mild voice, as to not sound overconfident. Often times I knew the answer, but I was frightened of saying it.

Then, I thought of this English class-- my insane questions, my random, repetitive statements, and my continuous babbling. I compared myself now to how I was in Mrs. Moseley's classroom, sitting in the back corner gawking in disgust at the loquacious frizzy-haired girl in the front of the classroom who cut the professor's every three words short. Then I glanced over at her. I watched her one more time, and then I understood. This girl, who seemed so stiff and closed, was not that different from me. In fact, she was exactly as I had been years before. She probably did know the answer, she just feared what she would sound like if she said it.

What a pity, I thought to myself as I watched her. "Don't say anything, because you might sound like a fool," she probably told herself, just as I did when I was thirteen years old.

I wondered if anyone had watched me the same way I observed her. I put myself in her position, and I remembered what it felt like when I caught someone's eyes on me. I was attempting to go unnoticed by being quiet, and it scared me when I felt a stare. Just in case, I would look beautiful for whoever noticed me. I would keep my posture straight, cross my ankles perfectly, or comb my thick, auburn mane with my small, soft hands. But deep down inside, I knew I wasn't quiet. I was loud and outgoing, and I needed to yell the answer out! But my self-consciousness and fear of feeling ridiculous in front of my peers overcame me, and I just kept quiet.

My confidence grew, though, and the real me was released. I distinctly remember getting a paper back from Mrs. Jakus, my reading teacher, that said, "Emily, excellent work, but why didn't you say that in class?" To be honest, I couldn't answer that question myself.

The following year, I had a very inspiring teacher for civics. Law and politics was something that fired me up; I was spouting out the answers and participating in class discussions. Sometimes I would get so excited, I would turn bright red. Instead of turning red from embarrassment, I turned red from lack of breath-I wasn't breathing from being so worked up. It was the first time I had truly enjoyed learning. Loving my job as a student improved my grades, inspired me to study, and gave me the confidence I needed for the true me to shine through. I returned my attention to the class for a while, but the thought of an intelligent girl intimidated by her classmates and teacher kept slipping back into my mind. I just wish I could have shown her what she was doing, but I couldn't. She had to figure out by herself why she was uncomfortable in her skin. I couldn't help her, so I just moved on with my own life. "Do what you are doing." I told myself silently. "Be who you are."

CUESTIÓN DE FE

Diego Soberanes

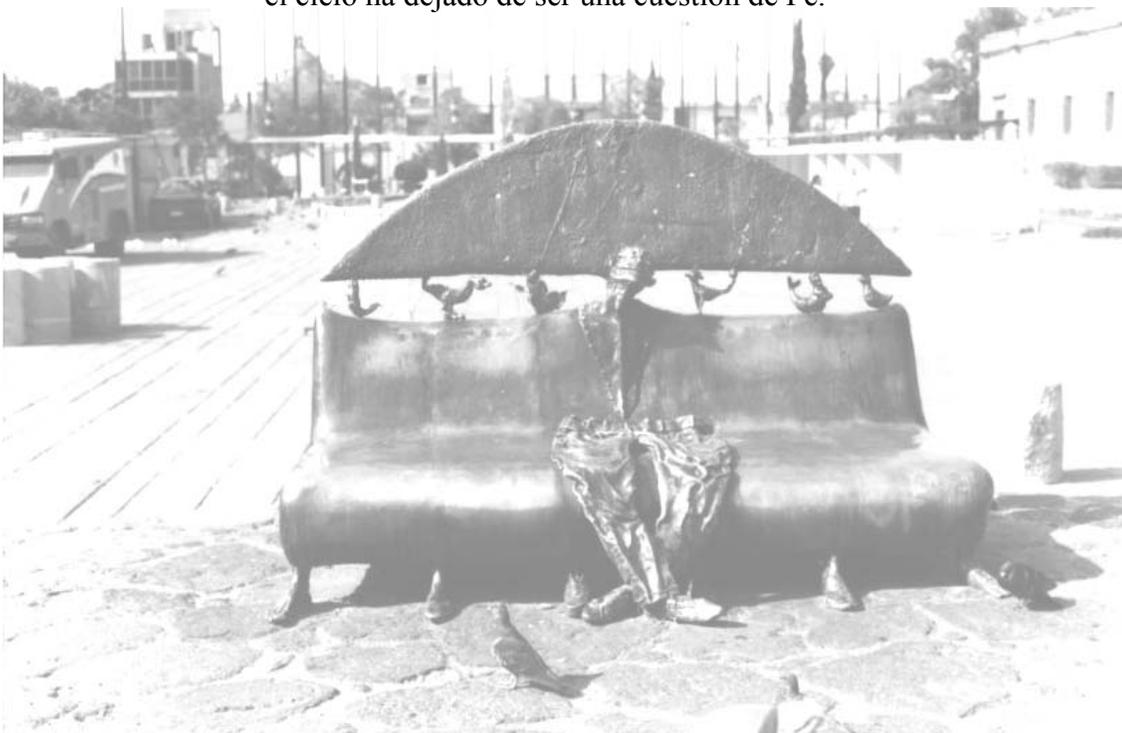
“Tu crees porque has visto,
dichosos los que creen sin haber visto”
- Jesús

“Ver para creer”, alguien dijo por ahí
ya son tantos los intentos y no estás
a pesar de las mañanas, separando tejidos
apartando inquietudes; no estás

Haciendo rondas, internas y nocturnas
dejo a un lado las posibles distracciones
te dibujo... y te llamo... y nada
simplemente... no estás

Ataca tu fantasma y me sorprende buscando
“siento su presencia, mas... no está”
llega el fin de la jornada y otra vez la misma historia
contigo estoy solo y sólo sueño

Tal vez no pueda encontrarte en mi corazón
pero de una cosa estoy seguro:
después de conocerte y besarte como te besé
el cielo ha dejado de ser una cuestión de Fe.



FAITH?

Rosie Garciamontes

Ever since I can remember, going to church on Sundays and Catechism on Mondays was a weekly ritual. Church has always been annoying to some extent, but I really enjoyed Catechism because I remember coloring, singing and listening to parables about people helping each other. Every night before I went to bed, I would pray to the *Angelito de la Guarda* or My Guardian Angel. Then, my mommy and daddy would kiss me good night and I would easily doze off. Every morning before breakfast, my mom, my brother and I would pray together. My dad has never been very religious, so he preferred to skip these moments which he calls “mini-Masses.” After a blessing from my mom, I would go to school knowing that everything would turn out fine.

When I was little, I used to believe all the Bible stories, like the one about how the ocean had been split into two so that Moses’ people could escape their oppressors. But as I grew older, I began to question these tales. I knew there wasn’t a scientific explanation for them, I knew they were fiction. I know these lessons have a deeper meaning, a lesson about respecting each other and loving God whose sons and daughters we are. But how are we supposed to live on stories that are not true? Faith. The belief that God exists and is with us all is what keeps many alive, including myself sometimes.

In the Hindu religion it is believed that we are all one, and each of us is part of an essence. It is also believed that when we die, our soul leaves our body and reincarnates in another depending on the soul’s past life. If this person was a rich man who committed

adultery, he might reincarnate as a poor man who has no chance to succeed in life. A person may descend so low in life that he/she is reincarnated as an animal, such as a dog or a dolphin. This belief is the way through which Hinduism explains the reason why some people are born poor and in a society which offers them no opportunities and why other people are born rich, beautiful and intelligent. So what is Catholicism’s explanation for these unfair living arrangements? There really isn’t any. In Catholicism, a person lives righteously for a happy afterlife, not for their soul’s reincarnation.

“We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.”

- Jonathan Swift

According to Catholicism, an underprivileged person or one born with a strange disease is immediately closer to God. Isn’t this also an injustice?

So does God really exist, or is religion used in order to encourage people to behave in an orderly fashion? Society can be manipulated in a few ways: by the press, by an oppressive government and by the threat that God punishes misbehavior so that one’s afterlife may be ruined by wrongful actions such as killing, stealing and even cussing. The most peaceful way to have control over a society is for the masses to be kept faithful and maybe that is why religion is so important in some countries.

My grandma always says that when you can’t find what you are looking for, you should simply ask God for help and you will find it. I have tried this many times and it actually works. Is this coincidence, God, or does this faith simply trigger something in one’s brain which reminds them where the lost object has been left?

I realize how controversial these issues are and I also know that many people are extremely attached to their faith and live for it, my mother and grandmother being clear examples. I completely respect and envy such people because they are sure of what they believe in and what they are going to do with their lives. I, on the other hand, no longer know what I believe in and have no clue what I am doing or will do with my life.

I know that if my mother or grandmother read this piece, they will most likely be disappointed and amazed. Or maybe I should give them a little credit because they were once teenagers and probably felt this way at some point in their lives.

I seem more religious than I really am. Not only do I attend Mass every Sunday but if I don't go, I feel guilty and I feel like I owe it to God to spend at least 45 minutes in church every week. But there's another part of me which fully disagrees.

What I despise the most is the fact that I have to go to Confession at least once a year. I know that it is not much at all but I feel very uncomfortable telling a stranger what I have done wrong. Even if I like the priest, I don't think that the "Hail Our Mary" and "Our Father" which he will give me in Penance will be enough for my sins to be forgiven. I believe that, if I am really sorry

and I want to ask God for forgiveness, I should do it directly and not through a priest who, even though I see every Sunday, I don't really know.

As I keep writing I think that maybe it isn't God I don't believe in, maybe it is the religion and the work of the, I am sorry to say, corrupted church. But of course, everything and everyone has its flaws and even though priests are supposed to be inspired by God when making decisions, they cannot be perfect.

So as the day of my Confirmation approaches, I search for a reason to be sure that God exists so that I can confirm that I will be Catholic for the rest of my life. I don't want my Confirmation to be a lie but I also don't want to disappoint my grandmother and my mother.

I know that many must think that I have no right to talk about religion like this and I am sorry if I have upset them in any way. That was not my intention. If I have made anyone doubt their religion, I am also sorry. I advise you, and myself, to get to know our religion better. That is the only way to learn to love it or step away from it. But mostly, God, if I have offended You, I am deeply sorry, I did not mean to, and if You are out there, I wish to get closer to You, unless it's for my benefit not to.

POETRY

h a z e

Gibran Julián

The song of love has been the same.
There are those who scrub their minds in search of rhyme.
Some who print their hearts in bold,
Dramatic tones of ink.
And I,
That have begun a new attempt
To tell myself and you, just how I feel.

It is hard, I know.
The pain of starting music and its prose.
The sound of sighs... and shorter breaths
That either follow or precede a tear.

We grope inside our minds
Through darkened hours of the night.
But the haze of that *one* thought...
That grabs us by the neck, and whispers in the ear;

I'm here. I'm here.



THE UNSEEN CONTACT

Martha Anguiano

As I drive to school in the mornings listening to music, I always try to figure out what's going on in my life. My thoughts are always interrupted when I see the newspaper boy trying to sell the *Mural*, a Mexican newspaper. It's not like they are actually interrupted, but when I see him I always say that I'm going to write something about him. It's not that I like him, but I've noticed that he's been selling newspapers on the same corner for probably more than ten years. I think he must be about eighteen or nineteen years old by now.

Even though it may sound a little awkward, I've practically been watching him grow. I remember him as a little kid because when my dad used to drive my brother and me to school, he was always there. The *Mural* didn't exist at that time, but I'm pretty sure that he has always sold newspapers. I see him every single day in the mornings, but still I don't even know his name, where he lives, or whether he studies in the afternoons. I don't know anything about the boy, yet I've been seeing him every day for the past ten years.

I smile when he walks by the window of my Blazer. I have never bought any newspaper from him, nor listened to his voice, but every morning there's eye contact between us, eye contact and a "good morning" smile. He has seen me in almost every mood, I think. He has seen me fighting with my brother about the radio station we should listen to, or even laughing about the bad hair day of the guy driving the car next to us while going to school.

He has witnessed my irresponsibility as I used to do my homework while my

brother drove. He has seen me cry, but has never known my reasons. He has seen me pass with a truck full of friends, but when I see him while riding with many people; it is our "special" moment, and nobody else really knows what thoughts go through my mind. He has listened to the music that I play on my radio, pop music in English that I'm sure he doesn't even enjoy listening to. Yet, I have only seen him selling newspapers wearing his same old blue jeans and a simple red T-shirt with the sign of *Mural* printed on the back.

One day he wears the red *Mural* T-shirt and the next the white *Mural* T-shirt.

When my mom used to drive us to school she would take us in the Blazer that I drive now. I imagine that he must have noticed over the years that

the SUV has been my mom's, my brother's, and now that he's gone to college and she has a new one, it's mine. He witnessed my first driving lessons. I wonder what he thought when he first saw me sitting in the driver's place instead of in my usual seat? Was he surprised or did he laugh, because he thought I looked weird driving? I don't know. When I began driving I didn't even turn around to look at him, because I was so nervous that the light would turn green while we were exchanging our morning smiles.

I feel as if he knows me, as if he has seen me grow. Even though I only see him for a few seconds while he passes by my truck, I know that he knows who I am. He doesn't know my name, but since he has seen me for many years, maybe he has invented a name for me. Maybe for him I'm Claudia instead of Martha. I've done this myself. For me, his name is Carlos. I don't know

"Under all speech that is good for anything, there lies silence that is better."

- Thomas Carlyle

why I chose this name, maybe because I always picture guys that are named Carlos as tall, brunette and skinny.

I have never had the guts to ask Carlos for his real name. I have never talked to him, and I really don't know why. I should try to talk to him, but I would be embarrassed. Not because of myself, or the other drivers, but because of him. It would be embarrassing to ask him for his name after so many years. I know that people say "It's never too late to do anything that you want to do." The issue here is that I'm not really sure whether I want to know his name. I think that I'd rather keep this a mystery, a secret, something that I will always live with. I like living with this enigma, with this person whom I know knows me, and has seen me in more moods than even my closest friends.

Maybe Fate has brought me to the neighborhood where I live, and has brought him to the corner where he works. Maybe it was meant for us to know each other in a completely mystical way. He seems to be a nice person, very constant and hard-working. He's not like the other boys who stand on the corner trying to clean windshields, or beg for money. There are other boys that I hate even looking at because they always seem to be on dope and they don't even work or do anything useful with their lives. This is why

I smile at Carlos, and why I enjoy that daily eye-contact where I share with him my mood for that day. Maybe one day, I will end the mystery and ask him his name, *or* maybe not.

Five or ten years from now, when I come back from college, I will expect to see him on his corner selling newspapers. If he has already moved on with his life, or if he has already gotten a different job, I will miss driving by and not seeing him. I will live with the doubt of where he has moved to, what he did with his life, or even the terrible, yet realistic wonder of whether he is still alive or not. But... what will he think of me when I leave for college without even saying *good-bye*? Will he be surprised when I return and looks at me (only if he is still working in that same corner)?

Perhaps, on the same day that I leave this town, he will stop working on that corner. I will not know that he has stopped working there, and he will not know that I have left. I will always think that he is still working there, and he will always think that I still drive by there in the mornings. We will both have wrong assumptions of each other's life, and then when we see each other again, twenty, forty or sixty years from now, we *will* recognize each other. Still, not knowing each other's names.

QUIEREN LAS ESTRELLAS

Carlos Ochoa

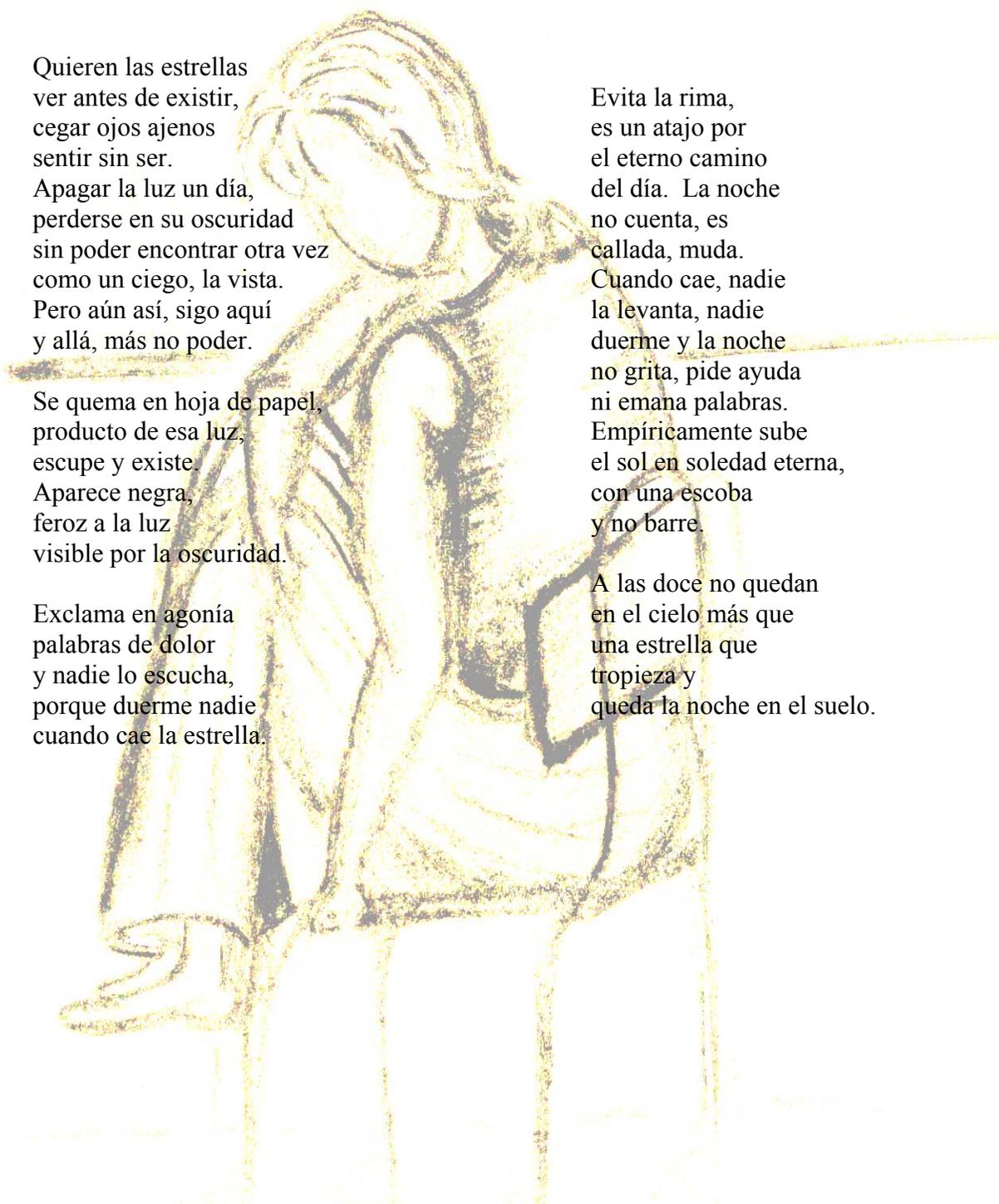
Quieren las estrellas
ver antes de existir,
cegar ojos ajenos
sentir sin ser.
Apagar la luz un día,
perderse en su oscuridad
sin poder encontrar otra vez
como un ciego, la vista.
Pero aún así, sigo aquí
y allá, más no poder.

Se quema en hoja de papel,
producto de esa luz,
escupe y existe.
Aparece negra,
feroz a la luz
visible por la oscuridad.

Exclama en agonía
palabras de dolor
y nadie lo escucha,
porque duerme nadie
cuando cae la estrella.

Evita la rima,
es un atajo por
el eterno camino
del día. La noche
no cuenta, es
callada, muda.
Cuando cae, nadie
la levanta, nadie
duerme y la noche
no grita, pide ayuda
ni emana palabras.
Empíricamente sube
el sol en soledad eterna,
con una escoba
y no barre.

A las doce no quedan
en el cielo más que
una estrella que
tropieza y
queda la noche en el suelo.



LLANTO DE GARCÍA LORCA

Francisco Morales

Cuán difícil será inmortalizar un momento. Vivirlo una, otra y otra vez más, al oír el doblar de la campana que nos recuerda al ser, cuyo latir se desvaneció así como las campanadas y mi amor. *Eran las cinco de la tarde* cuando su corazón dejó de latir. Su pupila capturó la imagen, sus facciones el terror. Trato de imaginarme el vacío que Ignacio debió haber sentido; el toro que embestía sobre él, una pincelada negra. Yo miraba desde la barrera, me imaginaba que, con la gracia que solo los toreros tienen, Ignacio movería su cadera, el toro abanicaría su capote e Ignacio clavaría su espada sobre el lomo ya coronado con las banderillas; sangre se derramaría del toro y no de Ignacio. Y la plaza se levantaría, la arena se llenaría de rojo, pero rojo de claveles, rojo de la sangre del toro y no de Ignacio. Los espectadores gritarían: "¡Ole, bravo Torero!" y el toro mugiría y su cuerpo caería sobre la arena levantando una nube de polvo.

Pero no fue este grito eufórico el que se oyó en la plaza; fue un gemido, seguido por silencio y el doblar de las campanas que anunciaban que eran *las cinco de la tarde, las cinco en punto de la tarde*. La audiencia se



quedó estupefacta. Yo grité. El toro te había cogido y levantado, sobre su pitón tu sangre se derramaba y gota a gota caía sobre la arena. ¡Tu sangre, Ignacio, y no la del toro!

Mi garganta se secó, mis ojos se humedecieron, pero no podía llorar por ti.

Otros matadores se metieron a la arena, capoteando sus banderas, el toro ya te había dejado. Sobre la arena yacías inerte. Un médico entró por ti. Pero al verte inmóvil una punzada dentro de mí me dijo que tus ojos ya no tendrían brío.

Los otros matadores tomaron

venganza sobre el toro, que irónicamente había cogido al matador. La bestia caída parecía una montaña de carbón. *Un niño trajo la blanca sábana* con la cual te cubrió. Una vez más doblaron las campanas... eran las cinco de la tarde.

La sangre teñía la arena y la blanca sábana, un botón de clavel que florecía... ¡Pero yo no quiero verla! "¡Que no quiero verla!" Ojalá que nunca te hubiera cogido. *Que no quiero verla...* Pero Ignacio, tu figura vestida en un festín de brillantes colores y dormida sobre la arena y las campanadas anunciando que eran las cinco de la tarde se congelaron en mi pluma, en esta tinta y en mi corazón.

*A las cinco de la tarde.
¡Ay, qué terribles cinco de la tarde!
¡Eran las cinco en todos los relojes!
¡Eran las cinco en sombra de la tarde!*

– Federico García Lorca

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Agustina Sacerdote

I remember it well. Too well maybe. It happened on one of those days when I just wished I could be someone else, the times when I imagined myself worrying about things I never even thought were worth worrying about. It was useless. I was me and no one could change it.

It was cold and my fingers were numb. Actually, my whole head felt nothing; not that I was very interested in feeling. The cold weather was piercing my ears as a thin knife that did not cut right away; it tortured slowly. The wind blew tremendously, making it hard for the trees to sway peacefully as they used to. I could still feel my legs, but they too were slowly failing me. Everything these days was failing me and by this point I wasn't surprised. Even though I really wanted to get to that old building, where my psychologist was inevitably waiting for me, I enjoyed the pain. The pain of the cold pressing against my lungs, piercing my ears and burning my cheeks. The pain of knowing that I had still a long way to go, a lot of time to suffer fighting against a number of merciless enemies that I had created.

I was walking with my head down, as usual. And then, suddenly, I accidentally leaped into the air and swung my arms all around desperately while I helplessly tried to hold on to my already lost balance. My eyes were open while I felt a chill brush against my cheeks and I forced my eyes wider and wider until I saw nothing but a black emptiness.

The first thing I felt were my fingers. They hurt and when I turned my head against the hard pavement, I could see and feel they were burning red. Some even had tiny specks of dark blood on them. I could feel my brain pounding ruthlessly inside my head.

My left cheek was stinging because of tiny pebbles and soil encrusted in it and emotions that other people had thrown away on that street and who knows what else. But neither my fingers, nor my legs, nor my head compared to the excruciating pain I felt in my chest. It pressed harder and harder against me, until I felt I would remain lying there in the middle of the sidewalk dead. Motionless. Emotionless. But I used the little strength I had left to get up, slowly but I did, after a few eternal and exhausting minutes.

I continued walking against the raging wind. I held my face up this time because I felt that if not, the wind would catch me off guard and blow me away. The buildings around me looked sickening. And then I saw her...or should I say me? Not so far in the horizon I saw a blurred figure walking towards me. At first I thought that my mind was playing vicious little tricks on my inaccurate vision. The figure was curiously wearing the same jacket with the faded brown pockets and a zipper that didn't work. She had her hair up the same way as I did. I don't know if I was too scared to believe my eyes, but I decided to close them for a second. I opened them again. And there she was. Coming right at me. I felt ridiculously scared. Why should I be afraid of my own self? How ironic! I was supposed to go to the psychologist to find "myself," but I never really thought of taking it literally! I felt very afraid and the cold seemed to intensify every second. She was also me and there was no proof I could use to deny it. By this point she ran faster and faster, with fiery eyes that thawed my fingers and my head and my chest. She ran like the wind, her hair flying back. She was only a few feet away from me, when something made my head turn down and see an irregular crack in the

sidewalk. I lifted my head up to see her dreary face again, and she was in the air, waving her arms helplessly. She landed with a loud thud and I stood there watching her lying on the cold floor.

Then everything blurred. Everything became an unclear silhouette of something else and the colors combined in a daze of confusion. Sounds mixed with images and images became feelings. Sounds of desperation, fear and helplessness. I felt myself drawn inside the center of a powerful whirlpool as everything around me began to move. I thought I would faint. But I didn't. Instead I heard more voices of women crying

loudly and men shouting: "Make way!" and "Step aside." The siren of an ambulance became clearer and clearer, the only thing that did. Then out of nowhere, came a man who started pushing everyone who had formed a close circle around the poor girl who had hit her head. He pushed us all back and immediately started to reach inside the inner pockets of the girl's jacket. In the left one he found a white plastic card, the girl's I.D. I heard my name being read out loud.

I continued walking against the harsh wind that blew against my face. I remember the day well. Too well maybe.

A NECKLACE OF FIRES

Michael Hogan

In December we rise to the odor of wood smoke
and mist lacing the eucalyptus.
A necklace of fires surrounds the city
from Tlaquepaque to Zapopan
as the poor in their many disguises
warm their hands at trash barrels
with lathing from construction sites
or heat damp cubicles with supermarket cardboard
or cheer tin shacks with twigs from the Primavera forest.
The cold is death:
stalking the half-naked child
lifting the edge of newspapers to find the old man.
Here in the world we do not see
families gather each December morning
waiting
for the sun to come round again
for the mist to dissolve
for the tentative voices of the birds.
Before the fires die
before the children's perishing shiver
before ice covers the old man's eyes.

In the tree-lined valley where we live
a neighbor complains of the inversion layer
the smoke that hangs above the eucalyptus
the banners of mist among the ficus.
She walks her spoiled spaniel quickly past,
anxious to return
to the warmth of her friendly kitchen
the hot chocolate bubbling on the range,
to her child who wakes briefly, so warm, so safe
in the sweet, good world which is all she knows,
while a filament of smoke seeps through her window
and she coughs, annoyed, then turns to sleep again.

PRICKLY PEARS IN AUGUST

Meaghan Hoffman

It was August and in spite of my grandmother's terror of lightning storms and swimming pools, I would float around on my back on stormy nights and gaze at the pregnant, purple clouds above me. I marveled that the stars still burned above those clouds while I listened to the rumble of thunder in the distance. The water would lap against me, passing gently over my fingertips and tickling my ears.

The only way to get me out of the pool before bedtime was a phone call from my parents who were in Guadalajara checking out my dad's new job. I would jump out of the kidney shaped pool, avoiding scattered rocks and cacti, brushing past the honeysuckle hedge, slamming my goosebump-covered body into the French door just to reach the still-ringing phone before anyone else, to talk to my mother.

It had been the most trying two weeks of my life between my grandfather's early Masses, my grandmother's big soup spoons and my aunts, uncles and cousins' constant late night visits. My grandfather would randomly surprise me by taking us to Mass and breakfast one day or to dinner and a movie another day.

One morning my grandfather woke me up and told me to get dressed. When I was ready, he drove to St. Andrews in his old Buick with the maroon leather interior and fuzzy carpet covered in knots. We attended the seven o'clock Mass where I dutifully recited each prayer and amen. Afterwards we drove to my mountain to take a morning hike.

My mountain is actually South Mountain, a state park I used to live close enough to that my friends and I would spend summer mornings searching for little skeletons and trying to catch lizards on it. The largest communication system in the

state is located on the highest peak of South Mountain; the towers are long and skinny and blink like crimson Christmas lights. They are so bright that I used to open my curtains at night and use them as night-lights.

My grandpa, however, was not there to inspect anything electric, nor did he come to gape at the collection of stuffed desert critters, Gila monsters, javelinas and eagles that my brother and I loved to visit in the museum. He had come to hike with me.

He led us up steep hills and across many rocky, narrow ledges. I remember how beautiful it all was, so wild. The prickly pears would grow in the most unlikely places: on rocks, in caves and on cliffs, their flowers seemingly glowing. The ocotillos were covered in orange blossoms with little tan spikes poking around the fragile petals. The cholla cactus seemed so alive that I felt if I could reach out my hand and keep it very still above the wispy needles they would jump out and lodge themselves into my palm, twisting into the flesh like corkscrews. The sky was covered in a blanket of heavy gray clouds that seemed ready to pour water onto the dry brown dirt and rocks, the dank air pressed against our bodies and made our breath come in short, irregular spurts.

We finally stopped and sat on a couple of large boulders. My grandpa took a deep breath through his nose and sighed out the word "Beautiful." I nodded my head and listened to the thunder and saw the flashes of lightning before me. I noticed a small prickly pear growing through a crack in my boulder. Cacti do not need tons of water like other plants and I wondered if this one would drown or become liquid mush from the amount that would gush down on it that day.

I also thought of the mature prickly pears whose blossoms close into tough fists

during the night. I wondered if they would close those casings during the frequent August downpours or if they merely died and grew new buds.

“It was tough getting up here wasn’t it, *mijita*? But it sure was worth it.” He looked at the landscape before him and reached into his pocket for his rosary. I supposed he felt inclined to thank God for the great gift of the picturesque desert and his satisfying day. I felt inclined to thank my grandpa for taking me on that hike and to pray to God to save all the little prickly pears that I loved so much.

“It wasn’t too hard, Grandpa, I can’t wait to do it again.”

We didn’t go again in the few months before I moved. I trudged onto an airplane and when I came out again, I was in a world filled with rubber trees and tequila, it all seemed so far away from the blinking home lights in The Valley.

It seems now that I won’t be able to go hiking with my grandpa anytime in the near future. He has acquired health problems that never seemed like a possibility to those people that knew him, not just because he was so strong and still ran miles every morning, but because he seemed so well protected and prayed for by others. I wonder if those prayers weren’t being heard throughout the past year. He has had minor strokes that caused temporary blindness and he even has cancerous tumors in his colon. I

never really took it seriously enough though, I thought it was impossible for my Tata to get sick for real and it was no surprise to me when the cancer was removed successfully. His problems went away but he never took the medication he needed to stay healthy.

But he is now in the emergency room at the Desert Samaritan. His lungs are filled with water from a severe cough that he refused to see the doctor about. I always remember the story of the Good Samaritan when I hear the name of that hospital. The story in the Bible of the kind man that stopped and nursed a stranger he had seen on the side of the road and gave him money. The story always reminded me of my grandfather who is the sort of person who calls a waiter a “gentleman and a scholar” when he brings the bill quickly. He’s a man who gives extra good tips for everything from at-home-massages (provided by me) to helpful managers at the Motel 5.

But I wonder if the real Samaritan would have taken care of himself if he were sick or if he would think of others first and foremost as my grandfather does. I wish that I could tell him that he should know that if he doesn’t live for another good decade so many people that depend on him and love him will lose something more than a couple of dollars or prayer, they’ll lose a father, an uncle, a grandfather. But I know in the end he won’t listen.

SAILBOAT

Lauren Nichols

The first time I ever set foot onto a sailboat was when I was twelve. The instructor was a college student who was working three different jobs over the summer and seemed more worried about getting the lesson over with so that he could meet his girlfriend at the nearby yacht club than in teaching us anything about how to sail. Eight of us were crammed into a small sloop, each of us itching with the salty water and heat as we tried desperately to coordinate the movement of the tiller, jib sheet and mainsheet, and scrambling over each other to pull at the ropes we had been assigned.

“Tack!” Our arms and legs became a tangled mess as the instructor tried in vain to direct us to pull in the jib in order to travel up-wind. The boat tilted sharply and his yells were muted by our shrieks as we ducked a moment before the boom swooped

perilously, inches over our unsuspecting heads and onto the starboard side. We each took a minute to gather our limbs and settle into a new position while the instructor yanked the ropes out of our hands and took the place at the rudder, scowling at our clumsiness. We sailed back to the dock in silence, each of us pulling at the uncomfortable life vest that seemed to cut off our airflow and chaffed our exposed skin.

When we were assigned a separate boat for the first time, there was an excitement that bubbled in my throat at the prospect of being independent, and being able to sail as I pleased without the cacophony of seven other voices squabbling around me. We spent the first two hours struggling to tack into the wind in what seemed an incessant series of zigzags that got

us to the edge of the bay where it met the open sea. Too soon it was time to turn around and coast back to the dock. No matter how tight we made our turns or pulled in our sail we could never get more than a few meters past the breakwater that signaled the boundary of the bay. I watched in awe as the private yachts coasted by, cutting the waves smoothly with their imperious sails that looked like wings. One of the girls told me that they were headed to Catalina Island only a few miles away, barely visible from the very edge of the bay. Every morning we rigged our boats as quickly as possible, rushing to tie the knots and jamming the center board into place so that we could set

out as soon as possible in order to try to get to Catalina. We sang songs about the Catalina Flyer as we aimed our bows towards the small dark shadow on the horizon

and dodged the boom as it swung from side to side with our tight turns. All our energy was focused on moving as rapidly as we could, fighting over the best air and water currents.

As we drew closer to the edge of the bay, our hearts pounded with excitement as the waves began to swell higher and higher, rocking each small boat as it rose and fell the hull filling with chilly water every time we turned about. Despite our efforts, the most we ever got to see of the island was a slight glimpse of its outline far in the distance. The urgent call of the instructor always implored us back towards the dock, forcing us to leave our goal behind and bringing us both disappointment as well as relief. Letting out the main sheet we would sail smoothly back towards his voice, leaving the menacing

“The last of the human freedoms is to choose one’s attitudes.”

- Victor Frankl

waves behind, sending envious glances at the yachts that sped by in the opposite direction, oblivious of our yearning.

When the sailing class was successfully completed and we were ready to sail without assistance, I no longer headed towards the waves or to the island. I was content to sail between the anchored boats in the bay, trying to dodge the buoys and avoid the leeway drift that seemed to persist if I did not keep careful track of the wind direction. If I had headed out toward the island then I wouldn't have had a voice to call me back, to announce it was lunch time or remind me that my mom was waiting for me in the parking

lot. I would have headed out towards the waves, towards my independence and towards my future without looking back. So when I flip through magazines on colleges and universities, I look towards the island and realize that there is no one following me this time in a motor boat or offering instructions when the ropes get jumbled. I read through the statistics, pamphlets and applications, take in the possibilities beyond high school and the life I have come to feel so confident with and focus on the fuzzy shadow in the distance, pointing my bow towards the waves, determined this time to make it all the way.



POETRY

FRAGILITY

David Bak Geller

There is a tender beauty in the farmer's indecision
around the few last days before the harvest
if famine doesn't drag him
to force the unripened fruit
and comfort doesn't free his mind
from images of drinking roots
and raising sprouts.

There is a fragile sorrow in the farmer's hesitation
when he perceives the plot
of time and nature.
He feels the virtual juice
rivering his chin down to his chest
but more clearly he can listen
his neighbors and his friends saying
what fancy liquor damps our tongues and lips.

There is a subtle violence in the farmer's indecision
around the few last days before the harvest.

SUPERMARKET TROLLEYS

Rosemary Woodrooff

Saturdays, it seemed to Catherine, came round with monotonous regularity. It wasn't that she didn't heave a sigh of relief as she left the office on a Friday, but it seemed no time had passed than she found herself, once again, doing the weekly shopping. And it wasn't as if she didn't like shopping. She did, and often used it as a panacea for bleak moods. Nothing large, her tastes and pocket were modest. But buying a new sieve or some slinky undies could revive spirits immensely. And yet, you could have just so many sieves and, apart from the tactile aspect, was the underwear appreciated anyway?

But it was the dull routine, the same old products on the shelves and above all the thinking of what to provide for the following week, which irked. At times she wished they would invent another animal as she juggled among chicken, pork, beef or lamb. Fish, would have added another dimension, but it was not a favorite of her husband's. His tastes were definitely conservative and she would sigh wistfully as she watched others nonchalantly tossing herbs, spices, and exotic vegetables into their trolleys. Even the dog would only eat one brand.

The greatest dilemma, however, was timing. If she sacrificed the Saturday morning linger over breakfast, freshly baked items were not ready. Waiting until later meant people. People who dithered. People who needed a course in the Highway Code of trolleys. People on an extended family stroll. And why was it that shelf packers were at their busiest at this peak period? And not just in one department, but in detergents, fruit, cans, cereals, all seemingly in need of replenishing at the same time.

Eventually, having wrestled mind and body to the accompaniment of strident music, there were the checkout lines to endure, and it was here that she had unconsciously developed a safety valve. While others leafed through magazines so thoughtfully supplied by the management (did anyone buy those dog-eared, sticky, numbers?), she would study trolley contents. Regular weekly trolley contents. Regular weekly trolleys did not interest her. Nor particularly those specializing in say a party or a Spring cleaning binge. No, it was the ones that contained unusual combinations which fascinated. How did a hair net, three cans of peas and a bottle of ketchup go together? What was the story behind a kilo of grapes and an aerosol spray? She knew, of course, that it was normal. People ran out of odd things. But this did not stop her speculations on the lives and characters of those in front of her.

At some stage it occurred to her that if she were doing this, so too might others and this had made her acutely aware of her own trolley contents. From then on she would periodically add red herrings. One day she found herself walking out of the store having bought food and accessories for dogs, cats, canaries, and tropical fish and had had to make hurried donations to a local animal welfare center before getting home. Another occasion, a trolley piled high enough for a family of eight had led to an impromptu party.

Nevertheless, her musings continued until one day her eyes lit, positively sparkled, on the trolley of the man in front of her. This was a gem. Definitely one to ponder on. Forty two bars of soap and a fluffy toy rabbit. What lay behind this one? Did he have a

cleanliness fetish? Was he the father of an enormous brood? And then it happened. A brainstorm.

Hurriedly paying for her own couple of items (a story for someone else there) she found herself following him. It wasn't too difficult. He had a slow, ponderous gait and steadfastly made his way to the shopping center exit. And, as if by an act of providence, their cars were parked in the same vicinity. Unaccustomed to following someone, she was quite prepared to lose him in the traffic. But his driving, like his walking, was unhurried. She soon found herself driving along unfamiliar streets, but so intent was she on her mission, neither time nor distance registered.

And then, after endless meandering, he began to slow down and turn into the gateway of a large building set in leafy grounds. She quickly found a parking spot and took a closer look. It was then that she saw the sign. Hillgrove Psychiatric Hospital. She watched as he showed a pass to the security man. He was let through and the gates clanged behind him. Was he a warden? Was the rabbit a daughter's birthday present, or perhaps, a comforter for some lost soul

regressed in childhood? Was he a patient adjusting to uncertainty in the outside world? She would never know.

It was then she realized she was in an unknown part of the city and the enormity of what she had done sank in. How was she going to explain away the hours and a fourth of a tank of gas? Could she indeed find her way back on her own? She shrank from asking for directions as if this might somehow reveal her impetuous, possibly even irrational behavior.

In panic, she started working her way through a labyrinth of small residential streets, all seemingly the same. Where was the sign? A landmark? A 52 bus to follow? After a few false starts, she eventually got to the freeway and thankfully recognized the route, which headed for home. She tried to relax, but the euphoria at finding her way was short-lived, as her tangled thoughts flitted between her actions, explanations to come, and the enigma of the man she had followed.

At long last, she turned into her street. It was then that she was jolted by the thought that she might soon learn more than she wanted to know about the man, the soap and the rabbit.

MINUTO CERO

Jesús A. Sánchez

Un abrazo cortado,
vértigo fehaciente del armario
día contiguo al sueño mortal
de un regado color vientre.

Venas que caen como un pincel
y pintan los cabellos de rojos,
violeta y miel. Cielos sin mar,
azul, extraño en lluvia.

Manos de exilio, canon de
tormenta con golpes al piano
y tu voz, tras la escena del barro
la manta de humo, sin ser vista, vista.

La tristeza desnuda la garganta
de la guitarra, el canto calló
en sublimes sombras de antaños días
que traen recuerdos, que borran el hoy.



RELIGION: NONE

Gina Rodriguez

“Gina, you need to make your First Communion if you want to be recognized by the Church,” my father said, urging me to follow the footsteps of absolutely everyone around me.

“But, Dad, what if I don’t want to be recognized by the Church?” I replied, fearing his reaction. That was almost seven years ago.

My father dismissed my question at first, considering it to be just a phase of uncertainty and doubt that had hit me too soon. But I made him aware of how serious I was. I bluntly told him that I was not ready to give myself completely to the Catholic religion, and I doubted

that I ever would be. I pointed out the corruption that any fool could easily see in the Church, the contradictions that I found in the Bible, the hypocrisy that is extremely visible in

many ‘pious’ people, and, most important of them all, that I had no reason to believe that God even existed.

Coming from a long line of devoted Catholics, it was hard for my father to accept my views. I know that he still does not agree with me, but I am grateful that he has at least come to terms with my view. I guess that knowing I wouldn’t change my mind and that he could not turn to my mother to back him up, he gradually became accustomed to my absence at Mass, not saying grace at the dinner table nor praying before bedtime, and my lack of knowledge about the religion.

My mother, on the other hand, was not surprised by my renouncing Catholicism. She had already seen her share; a mother, an aunt, two sisters, three brothers, and about a dozen nieces and nephews had converted to

one branch or another of Christianity. Yet it was nothing compared to my ‘conversion.’

I know that I was not the first one in my family to believe this way, but I was the first one to announce it and not live my life pretending. My sisters may have had their doubt, and even questioned God out loud, but it was just a mere whisper to my parents, unlike the shout I made at the top of my lungs.

If I had not moved to Mexico at such a young age I don’t think I would have been thinking this way. I would have continued going to church every weekend as well as Sunday school, and I would have attended a

private Catholic school just like my sisters had before me. But once our lives were abruptly forced to adapt to Guadalajara all that changed.

At first, we stopped attending Mass

every Sunday morning because my sister and I, not able to speak Spanish yet, couldn’t understand. The agreement was that once we learned, we would resume our weekend routine. But when that moment came, we didn’t. By then, both our parents were working seven days a week, which didn’t leave much time for morning Mass. With guilt weighing down on all our shoulders, our parents repeated what our previous priest had told us before we left Texas: you don’t need to attend church in order to continue being good Catholics, our faith in God and at-home-prayers would be sufficient. I believed that.

One day, in second grade, I brought a ham sandwich to school for lunch. When I began to eat it during recess, my best friend at the time looked at me in horror, pointed

“God is a comedian playing to an audience too afraid to laugh.”

- Voltaire

and shrieked at the top of her lungs, “What are you doing? Don’t you know what day it is? It’s Ash Wednesday!”

I replied with a simple, “So?”

“You’re not supposed to eat meat today!” she announced. When I informed her that I was very hungry and I did not have money to buy lunch, she began yelling for everyone to hear, “Gina doesn’t believe in God! Gina doesn’t believe in God!”

I argued with her, repeated that I did, and asked her to stop. She ignored me and continued spreading the news around. The next person to hear her vicious rumors was my art teacher. We didn’t talk much after that. Would my selfish need to feed myself send me to hell? It was then that I began to question my beliefs.

Many of my friends complain about how hard it is to pretend about their faith and continue ‘believing’ the way their parents want them to. Some even say they envy me for being able to be so open about my views and not fearing what people have to say. But they don’t see it from my prospective. I was

frightened about how my father would react as well as the rest of my family. I didn’t care much about what others besides them and close friends thought about me. But it is still hard to maintain my views in a dominantly Catholic country. Being frowned upon society, treated as if I were contagious, automatically being labeled a devil worshiper, I was shut out of many people’s lives because of my lack of faith.

I feel awkward and clumsy when I go to church for someone’s wedding, Communion, or *quinceaños*. The person sitting next to me points out little things that I had long forgotten: don’t cross your legs, don’t wear sleeveless shirts, stand up straight, kneel down, cross yourself. I don’t know any prayers or songs and I have never been to Confession. I no longer consider myself Catholic. When asked about what my religion is, I say, “None.” I don’t live my life pretending, nor do I apologize for offending anyone. They are my views and mine alone and not meant to influence anyone else.

MIND CAVE

Ana Sofía Carbonell

There was no temptation to speak, there was no point in even trying. Entering the cave muted the world outside, and deafened all sounds except those in my mind. No one had spoken in there for 150 years.

I walked into the cave and didn't even question how the minerals incrusting in the rocks shimmered, with no apparent sunlight to cause the effect. I sat alone beside a big rock, color black, my favorite. I created this hideaway, or maybe someone else created it for me even though I constantly tell myself I don't believe.

The water that trickled silently down a blue rock made me thirsty. I interrupted my thoughts and drank some. I sat down again and thought about how I'd gotten there, my life, and how ironic everything seemed to be, how bleak reality was. I left home in search of excitement, to live a dream that stopped being one once it became a reality. I thought that with new experiences I could go back home with something to talk about with people, but it turned out I couldn't start the conversation that would lead to my anecdotes. For once I understood that I was looking at the wrong life and I'd missed living my own.

I arrived at the cave by mistake. It was an irony, in fact. I hate closed spaces. When I analyze things, I normally search for a destination with a horizon, where I feel free, like an ocean or a mountain. It's not that a special force attracted me to the cave, it was curiosity, but the power to deafen all sounds distanced me from the mouth and, like a wolf, I silently followed my instinct. It was a proof to the line: "nothing is what it seems." A horizon is supposed to expand

your reach in thought, but it was the focus that the closed space provided that worked for my mind, for myself.

There is a unique response for everyone, I get that now, just as authors write about the same things, but with different styles, different words. Ultimately, they say the same thing with a different perspective, or with such a gift to put into words what others can't that one stands in awe. I used to believe some things couldn't be described, especially feelings. But they can, by comparing two unlike moments, objects or

finding in other words the real image. The taste of blood is "rusty and metallic."

- J. R. R. Tolkien

Beliefs change, just like truths. I used to

believe in God, and now I can't even remember what that feels like. It scares me, because part of me is still used to the idea of heaven, and fate. It's hard to disregard the idea of eternal punishment, and the question of what comes after death. I try not to say things like "I'll see you tomorrow," because I might not. When I run out of inspiration, I can count on Dave Mathews' songs, my teachers' lectures, or a movie like "Schindler's List" to get it back.

I found my meaning of "truth" in *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. In this book he describes the death of his friend adding new details each time, or changing the atmosphere. First, comes the simple version of the story; the feeling it evokes doesn't come near to the surreality or horror of seeing one's friend reduced to guts and brains hanging on trees. Yet, using a hyperbolic tone, a gory description of the instant the land mine exploded, came nearer to the truth than the exact memory of the event.

“Truth,” I mouthed silently. I took off my jacket and laid down. I started dreaming about my future, disregarding for the first time the possibility I might not have one. I want to go to college, but although it’s one of my major concerns right now, I try hard not to think or talk about it. Getting my hopes too high may bring me disappointment, it’s one of the risks I haven’t taken yet in this trip around the world.

After a while I start to make my way back to the mouth of the cave. I spot the blue rock dripping water, the shimmering minerals, silence. I turn back and wish I could bring the black rock with me, looking stunning and elegant, surrounded by a disarray of color. I keep walking in silence. I reach the mouth of the cave where I trip over sunlight, and fall into noise.



POETRY

DIANA

Francisco Morales

Luna que vela nuestro sueño,
belleza, contraste del negro.
Diana que cuida de sus hijos
belleza, cortada en el cielo.

Hoy brillas sobre el firmamento
belleza, desvanecerás
menguante, desfalleciendo
belleza (tú sabes) que morirás.

Brilla inconstante
Como la fortuita de fortuna;
Un día arde, su aura se esparce
Pero el sueño se esfuma.

“Diana fija bien tu flecha
que no sean, como la luna, mis riquezas.”





Martha Anguiano

Having a topic to write about has always been my problem. Whenever I sit down to write something, I just stare at the blank page that lies in my computer, just staring at the blinking cursor. The phone is sitting right there besides me, waiting for me to pick it up and call someone. The *need* to call someone is always stronger than the need to do my homework.

I always take a break before I actually start writing. I usually call Ana Sofia first, and we talk about our crushes for about an hour, then I ask her if she has already started her essay, she usually tells me that she hasn't and that she doesn't even have a topic to write about. Since neither of us has started, we just keep on talking instead of hanging up. Then, I freak out, and I tell her, "I'm gonna call Sophie, just to see if she has already started writing." I hang up and call Sophie. An hour more passes by and, just like me, she hasn't started her assignment, for she is too busy playing her guitar. As I finally hang up the phone, about two hours and a half have already passed, and I look at my watch and it is almost ten o'clock at night. I still have plenty of time to write something, I think to myself, actually believing it.

There are some days, in which I call both of them in the afternoon, and they have already finished with their homework. When this happens, I completely freak out and I begin writing and finish early. This rarely happens though. Instead of worrying about my essay, I do my other homework, like Pre-Cal, which takes me hours to do because I never understand anything.

When I finally finish the rest of my homework, it's about four in the morning; a new day with an assignment due in about five hours. It's frustrating not to have anything to write about, I have already written something about the significant people or events that have happened in my life, I tried to write fiction, but the stories just didn't work out, the endings were and still are, always the problem.

As I stare at the blank Word Document, I only get more frustrated, so I minimize the window, and start changing the music. I can't even decide what type of music I want to listen to, for I don't even distinguish the mood in which I am. I click at the "shuffle" button so that my music will play randomly... I listen to English, Spanish and even French songs, and with every song that I listen to, a memory comes to my mind, like the place and moment where I first heard the song, or when I watched the "Making the Video" of the song. It's a nice feeling to be able to remember every story of the song that's playing.

I usually write my assignments on my lap-top, because while writing I can comfortably lie down in my bed. This has a great disadvantage though, for I am all dried out of ideas and the only thing that I can think while trying to write, is to fall asleep. But then if I fall asleep over my lap-top my whole essay would look like this "guhthrtguhwgvjnrjghrgh," for my forehead would be pressing all of the keyboard, and I wouldn't want to turn in something like *that*.

I usually never finish my assignments at one in the morning, so I wake up at 4 am

"The better work men do is always done under stress and at great personal cost."

- William Carlos Williams

(this time really works for me) to finish my assignments. After I'm done, I fall asleep again, but only for a couple of hours. I don't know why, but usually the best pieces that I've written are the ones that I write about two hours before they are due. Maybe this is because I work better under pressure. The inconvenience of writing my pieces at 4 am is that if I'm writing something that makes me cry, then I'll arrive at school with red and swollen eyes. I hate this because people *know* me, and they know that if my eyes are in that condition, there are three possibilities they can choose from: I had a fight with my parents, I didn't sleep at all, or I wrote something that I don't want people to read. Still, I always turn in my papers, so it's obvious that people *do* read them.

I once arrived at school with my eyes so swollen, that I thought about wearing my sunglasses for the rest of the day. I tried to put makeup before leaving for school, but it only made my eyes look more swollen. That day I had written about my brother's departure, and that I felt alone without him. This is a subject that really gets me going, and I often end up writing essays about him.

Working under pressure carries psychological advantages. This really works for me because if I am not pushed to do my work, then I will end up procrastinating even more than usual. While working at 4 am, my mind goes wild with crazy ideas and thoughts, that usually don't go through my mind at midnight or 1 am. I really don't know why I chose this time to do my homework. I didn't exactly choose it, it is my mind that controls my body, and at that time, even though I'm tired, I still have enough energy to keep on typing my work.

The thing that I don't like about choosing a topic to write about, is that I am not a very original person, so the topics that I would want to write about, have already been written in the past. I have many ideas written in my journal from last year, but I usually don't like those topics. I have the advantage that my first language is Spanish, so I *could*

write in my native language, but it's just simply incredible that I cannot write in Spanish. Instead of taking me about three hours thinking about something to write, it would take me at least five hours if I wrote in that language.

Poetry. I've also tried it, and it just never works out. I usually don't understand what goes inside a poet's mind. Poems are wonderful yet, to me, often undecipherable. The poems sound great, the techniques are incredibly well-applied, but I understand poems only after I have read them at least five times.

Choosing something to write about is difficult for me, even if I have the liberty to write about anything that I like. I have this liberty and I don't really take advantage of it. Still, I'd rather write anything, than having to write something about a topic that has already been chosen for me. I sometimes steal the ideas of pieces that I've already read, and try to make them sound better, sometimes this works, but sometimes it doesn't. As my teacher always tell us, "Mediocre writers borrow, but great writers steal".

Working under pressure makes me want to keep on writing just about anything, and when I have only about thirty minutes left to write, I decide to change my topic... Whenever I do this, I have the most stressful mornings because I did not have enough time to finish writing and because I didn't have any time to eat my breakfast or even get ready to go to school.

My mom has recently realized that I always finish my homework in the mornings, and she told me the other day, "I don't want you to be printing your homework before leaving to school in the mornings, so you better finish everything the day before." When she told me this, I completely freaked out because I actually enjoy finishing my writing in the mornings. It's stressing, but I'm already used to it.

I've always criticized the girls at my school who didn't have time to eat breakfast

at home. Now I understand why: because they are procrastinators just like myself. Now it's time for me to go to school, my mom is yelling at me, "I told you I didn't want you to be finishing your homework at

this time!" I haven't eaten my breakfast and I will not because there is no more time, and still... I haven't even started writing my essay, for I don't have a subject to write about.

BOOK REVIEW

Julie Capetillo

Man's Search For Meaning by Viktor Frankl.
Pocket book, (N.Y, 1959). 179pp.

Man's Search For Meaning is a moving account of Viktor E. Frankl's experiences in which he relates his discovery of the key to man's search for the meaning of life. It is the gripping tale of his survival in four Nazi concentration camps during the Holocaust and his realization that the human spirit is capable of triumph over even the most trying experiences.

What makes Frankl's account so intriguing is his ability to step back from the horrific memories and analyze the psychological effect of the victims' daily tortures. He doesn't just explain how a victim reacts to the atrocious circumstances, he explains *why*.

*An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is **normal** behavior. Even we psychiatrists expect the reactions of a man to an abnormal situation, such a being committed to an asylum, to be abnormal in proportion to the degree of his normality. The reaction of a man to his admission to a concentration camp also represents an abnormal state of mind, but judged objectively it is a normal and, as will be shown later, typical reaction to the given circumstances. These reactions, as I have described them, began to change in a few days. The prisoner passed from the first [he felt total shock and disbelief...] to the second phase; the phase of relative apathy, in which he achieved a kind of emotional death.*

As he describes camp life, Frankl brings to light the difference between those who had the will to survive from those who simply gave up. The strongest motivating factor in survival was having something to

live for. For some it may have been their families, for others it may have been an incomplete body of work that one was forced to abandon upon capture. This faith in the future is what kept men alive.

A man who let himself decline because he could not see any future goal found himself occupied with retrospective thoughts. There was a tendency to look into the past to help make the present, with all its horrors, less real. But in robbing the present of its reality there lay a certain danger. It became easy to overlook the opportunities to make something positive of camp life. It made it easy to forget that often it is just such an exceptionally difficult external situation which gives man the opportunity to grow spiritually beyond himself. Instead of taking the camp's difficulties as a test of their inner strength, they did not take their life seriously and despised it as something of no consequence. They preferred to close their eyes and to live in the past. Life for such people became meaningless.

Frankl reminds the reader that no matter how bleak and hopeless life might seem, it is imperative to find some good in it, something worth living for. Maybe it would be the dream of seeing a loved one again, or accomplishing a lifelong goal that one had set for himself earlier in life. This hope in the future is what kept the victims alive; this was their reason to endure the unbearable treatment they experienced day to day. The future had a way of making the suffering of the present more bearable, like a light at the end of the tunnel.

In Nietzsche's words "He who has a Why to live for can bear almost any How." This could be the guiding motto for all psychotherapeutic and psychogenetic efforts regarding prisoners. Whenever there was an opportunity for it, one had to give them a why--an aim-- for their lives, in order to strengthen them to bear the terrible how of their existence. Woe to him who saw no more sense in his life, no aim, no purpose, and therefore no point in carrying on. He was soon lost.

Finding a meaning a reason to live seemed to be the only thing that could keep these men alive. They defined their own existence by not being defeated by their present circumstances and keeping their eye on their goal and envisioning their survival.

Suddenly I saw myself standing on the platform of a well-lit, warm and pleasant lecture room. In front of me sat an attentive audience on comfortable upholstered seats. I was giving a lecture on the psychology of the concentration camp! By this method I succeeded somehow in rising above the situation, above the sufferings of the moment, and I observed them as if they were already of the past. Emotion, which is suffering, ceases to be suffering as soon as we form a clear and precise picture of it.

Frankl and many of the other prisoners realized that even though they had been placed in an atrocious setting and were forced to face physical and mental abuse daily, they could still have control over their inner lives. Man can be stripped of everything except his soul, notes Frankl, emphasizing the indomitability of the human spirit.

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from man but one

thing: the last of the human freedoms--to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

Frankl discovered that by having a positive outlook on life the world suddenly did not seem so dark. He realized that even though he did not have control over what ordeals he was to go through in camp, he did have control over how he reacted to these ordeals, and thus he still had control over his life.

Once he was about to escape from camp but before leaving he went into his ward to check on his patients one final time. After seeing them he found he could not make himself leave them, so he decided to stay by their side and comfort them. Even though he knew that the camp was to be burned down in a couple of hours his decision made him feel completely at peace. He was in control of his own fate.

Frankel ultimately concludes that "it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us." This is the basis of his theory of logotherapy. In order to really achieve something in life one must not simply sit around and think about what one is going to do with one's life, but must go out into the world and realize one's dreams.

Frankl's existentialist theory revolves around the idea that man defines his own life by his actions. The meaning of life applies exclusively to each individual. The manner in which each carries out his life and fulfills the daily tasks and obstacles that are placed in his way ultimately defines his life and its meaning. This manner of thought has had overwhelming acceptance throughout the world because of its applicability to other religions and beliefs. In Frankel's case he found that looking at life in this way brought him almost to a point of spiritual enlightenment. Throughout his time in the concentration camps he seemed to become more aware of a higher power and more aware that every choice he made in camp

could have enormous repercussions. He felt that he had been placed in the camp to serve a purpose and it was up to him to make the best use out of the time he had there. He took a seemingly terrible situation and turned it into one of spiritual growth and understanding. Others may view logotherapy as atheistic, and interpret its meaning in a different way: that we alone are the ones that decide our lives and make of them what we will, no higher power having anything to do with it. Either way one chooses to view Frankel's theory, it carries an empowering message: it pushes one to achieve, to have faith in oneself and one's power to define the future.

After reading the novel, I looked back on my life and realized that existentialism is a very important part of it; for me, existentialism is more than an abstract philosophy but a living code. Through existentialism I have found a sort of spiritual peace. I feel that God has placed certain obstacles in my way and it is up to me how I handle jumping the hurdles. It's as if life is handed to you and it's up to you what you get out of it. This outlook on life has helped me get through many tough times. Just when I feel I can't handle life anymore I try to remind myself that everything I go through in life happens for a reason, it is up to me to take advantage of these situations and try to make the best out of them. Like Frankl I try to learn or grow through these experiences, sometimes the worst things in life turn out to be blessings in disguise.

I remember one summer all I wanted was to be on the crew team in my summer camp. I had trained for months in advance and when I tried out for the team I was sure I had made it. As I scanned the list of new members, I felt crushed when I did not find my name on it. I thought my summer was ruined, because being on that team was the highest honor in the camp and although I wanted desperately to be on the team, I wasn't chosen. I went back to my cabin after seeing the list; I decided to cry until they would feel sorry for me and let me join.

My counselor came in a while later and saw the terrible state I was in. She took me outside and to my puzzlement had an understanding smile on her face. I stopped my blubbing and asked her why she was smiling and she told me to sit down while she told me a little story. She told me that when she was just my age she had been a camper too and the only thing she had wanted that summer was to be on the crew team. She ended up not making the team, though. When she found out, she practically cried her eyes out until one of her friends who was two years older told her to try and make the best of the experience. After all it wasn't the end of the world and there was a smaller crew team that she could be on. Well, it turned out she took her friend's advice and ended up having a wonderful summer. She was the captain of the smaller crew team and got so much experience from that, that when she came back to camp the next year she made captain of the big crew team. She told me that it was up to me to find something positive about my rejection and to make something of it. She assured me that there was a reason for everything in life and that someday I would appreciate what had happened to me that day.

I ended up having a wonderful summer in the end and when I came back the next year I made the team with flying colors. After seeing the list with my name on it I was so happy I almost didn't notice the tears on another of the camper's face as she read the list. Her name was Rachel and she had not made the team. I knew exactly how she was feeling, so I sat down with her. As I tried to comfort Rachel, a smile, much like my counselor's, spread across my face. As I wiped her tears away I gave thanks for having shed the same ones a year before; without them, I never would have been able to assure her that everything was going to be all right in the end. We ended up talking for hours on the steps of the office, where the list had been posted. We had known each other for a while before that, but we had never really talked, as it turned out one of my very

best friendships was kindled on the steps of the office that evening.

I have had countless experiences like this one and I feel so grateful that I view life the way I do and I am able to see life as a blessing instead of a task. Of course there are times when keeping this in mind is very hard

and many time I miss golden opportunities, but each day I live with existentialism in mind and know that I have within me the power to find meaning in my life and, sometimes, to share that experience with others.

TABLE FOR THREE

Carlos Ochoa

The table occupied
by you and me
and someone more,
is set today
(for three
and not for more)
with empty plates
and
empty glasses
and
unlit candles.
The chairs are empty
until tomorrow,
after a third handshake
exhibiting the strength
of hand.
The morning light illuminates
the sound of forks
against our plates.
Our woe is silence
in two throats
for you are missing
from the table set.

RESURRECCIÓN

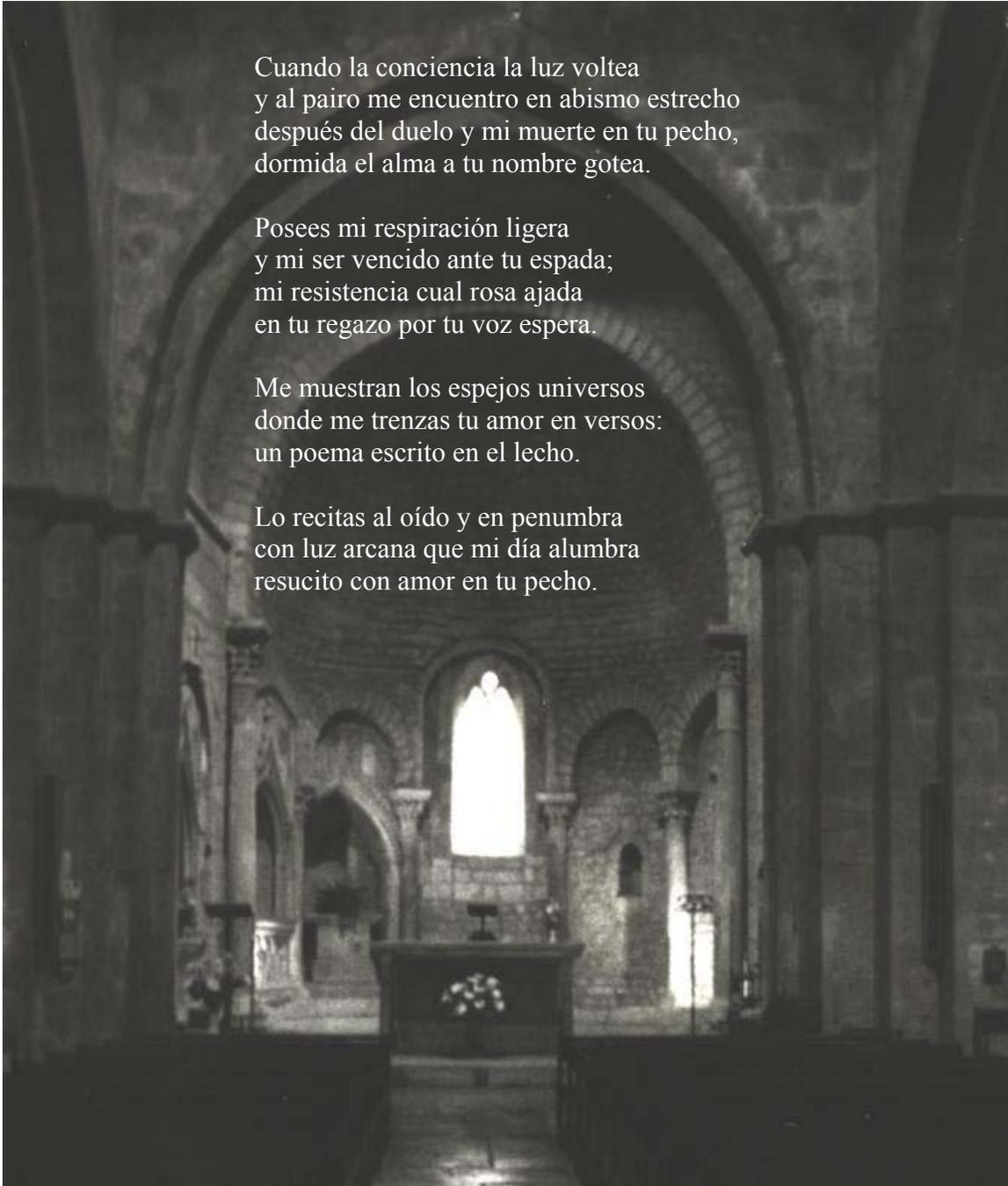
Jesús A. Sánchez

Cuando la conciencia la luz voltea
y al paio me encuentro en abismo estrecho
después del duelo y mi muerte en tu pecho,
dormida el alma a tu nombre gotea.

Posees mi respiración ligera
y mi ser vencido ante tu espada;
mi resistencia cual rosa ajada
en tu regazo por tu voz espera.

Me muestran los espejos universos
donde me trenzas tu amor en versos:
un poema escrito en el lecho.

Lo recitas al oído y en penumbra
con luz arcana que mi día alumbrá
resucito con amor en tu pecho.



PROFESSIONAL MOVER,
AGE 18
Maria Muller

With an abrupt start, I jumped upright in my bed, confused as to where I was and what I was doing there. My sturdy wooden desk was looming over in the corner of the room as the dim streetlight sifted through the blinds. I could see my dresser to my left, picture frames, perfume bottles, and piles of clothing sprawled atop. My favorite Van Gogh poster hung solemnly above my headboard, the thick brushstrokes losing intensity in the dimness of the night. My mind froze in a split second of incomprehension. A single question pounded in rhythm with my quickened pulse: where am I?

Similar instances have happened countless times in my lifetime. The objects remain the same, yet their placement within my room alternates often, as each of my father’s job assignments led me to another move; I have had a new room approximately every three years. Being the daughter of a U.S State Department Foreign Service officer has given me a lifestyle different from that of the majority of people my age, or perhaps even of any age. It has opened my eyes to the multitude of riches in the world’s cultures: the variety of languages, mannerisms, and traditions that exist in separate continents or even bordering states within a country. At the same time, my almost constant relocations have introduced me to emotions and situations which my peers most likely did not have to confront as early as six years old.

Some people argue that the traveling life I have led is not adequate for a child, that the development during childhood should

include a great deal more security and stability, not random moving. Naysayers have said that such skipping from place to place can influence a young person’s capability to make friends, to feel a part of a community, and ultimately to succeed in settling down later in life. My father has doubted many times whether our being modern nomads would be healthy for me and my sisters.

In my opinion, I would never have wanted to live any other way; nothing else than this experience would have helped me become the person I am today. To a certain extent I feel that my environments

“There is nothing so easy to learn as experience and nothing so hard to apply.”

- Josh Billings

everywhere I lived created me, making me their product. I have placed certain distinct cultural traits onto my palette of knowledge, each delicate stroke adding new tones into my everyday life. The portrait

would never be complete without the inclusion of several stylistic influences which have made me see each diverse culture as an artful masterpiece.

The term “third-culture kid” is often used to describe those children who, like me, have had the influence of more than the usual two cultures inherited from their mother and father. However, those parental traits reflected in appearance, values, and traditions are not solely what make me. Intertwined among my mother’s Spanish bronzed skin and Argentine love for beef and *chimichurri*, there is an openness and friendliness that I acquired from embracing the Mexican people. In addition to my father’s stately German punctuality and orderliness, I have

incorporated an Italian enthusiasm for life, my constantly moving hands sometimes speaking for me. My years living in Switzerland helped me learn to accept and reject cultural elements: Swiss efficiency and respect for the environment inspired me wholeheartedly, while the rigidity and often unwelcoming disposition towards foreigners were characteristics not to my liking.

I admit that there was a time several years ago during which I convinced myself that moving so much was dreadful, and I promised myself a peaceful, settled career once I graduated from college. I imagined myself living in the same house for thirty, forty, maybe fifty years, growing old in it, perhaps raising a family and watching my children, then grandchildren, pass through it. No matter what, there would always be that assurance that my house and I would remain settled forever.

As a first grader, I had trouble grasping the concept of permanence. I understood that mountains and streams and rocks and houses were permanent, but how could people ever stay the same, remain in the same place? I thought that everyone must go through the same process I did: arriving, living, leaving. The first four years of my schooling were at the International School of Bern, where all students were sons and daughters of diplomats, and thus the process felt normal, standard, correct. My classmates came from all corners of the world, from South Africa to India, Canada to Nigeria, Sri Lanka to Colombia. Having to watch them leave throughout the year and then seeing new students come in was a painless and normal process, perhaps because as children we did not form such close friendships as more mature adults do, or simply because everyone there went through it.

It was not until my family moved from Bern to Washington, D.C., that I realized how “permanent” people existed. My new classmates had lived in the same houses their entire lives, known the same people all those years. To a fourth grader’s

mentality, my lifestyle was strange and alien, thus misunderstood and rejected. In a childish mindset, I was seen as different and thus could not be accepted as cool or as a part of the “in” group. My world was shattered by these thirty upper middle class fourth graders; I entered into a phase of hating my unstable way of life and earnestly waiting for the day when I could finally call a place my home.

Shockingly, just when I thought I knew what I was looking for most in my life and believed that I understood myself perfectly, my mind, ambition, and heart changed completely and instantly. I cannot remember in detail the moment in which my state of mind radically changed nor specifically describe the feeling, for it was ineffable and sudden. What I do recall was my arrival to Italy, from northern Virginia. I was angered at my parents for having dragged me on yet another move, but deep inside there was also a sense of relief at having left a school that had been so close-minded, and of inexplicable curiosity towards discovering the unknown. I arrived at the Montessori School of Naples as a shy seventh grader, unsure of what to expect.

My worries soon vanished; in my class of twenty-five, I was immediately included into the group, even though my comprehension of Italian was restricted to the basics, only catching on to bits and pieces of speech which resembled the Spanish I already knew. My friends eagerly invited me to their family sailing boats out on the bay and toured me around *il Centro* and *il Vomero*, the ancient and trendiest sides of the city; my elderly bus driver even took the liberty of teaching me phrases in the harsh-sounding Neapolitan dialect. My experience in Guadalajara was the same: I got there and within a week I found a close-knit circle of friends who took me out to the nearby plazas for shopping, to *antros* for Friday night dancing, and to *taquizas* to savor the spicy taste of real Mexican tacos.

Amidst those who marvel at this sequence of transitions in my life are others who are not only skeptical but critical as to the benefits, if any, of such a lifestyle. I admit that there is a negative side to this repetitive cycle, and when I fall into such ruts, they are crushing. With every move I go through an initial period of settling in, usually including organizing my room, getting used to my new school, meeting friends, and secretly crying over the life I just left. Beyond the allure of great travels is a lonely life, one that includes many intimidating moments where worries abound about whether or not I'll like this new place, if I'll make lasting friendships, or any at all. Upon arriving to Switzerland and Italy I did not speak a single word of either German or Italian; thus, my bewilderment of confronting an unknown language built a barrier between me and natives, making it hard for me to even do simple, everyday activities, such as ride the public bus downtown. Changing schools so often was another problem, since many times subjects and class difficulty levels alternated from one school to another. For example, I never took an ancient history class since I left Italy a year before it was offered in my school and got to Mexico the year my class had just completed the course.

One of the biggest drawbacks of being a "nomad" for me has been finding people who are accepting of me and what I have lived through. Closed-minded people are my biggest worry, not only because I come from a mixed heritage family, but because I've lived in ethnically diverse countries. For many who have never left their hometown, my descriptions of where I have been are sometimes seen as arrogant and egocentric.

On the other hand, the past six years have proven that the world is here for me to explore. These years awakened in me an urge, a want, a need to travel, to indulge in this marvelous world. I look back on the time when permanence was my sole wish, and the memory is now bleak and incomprehensible.

As I ponder the upcoming years my hope is to continue this upbeat mode of living, possibly even entering into the same work force as my father, the Foreign Service.

Over the course of the past two weeks, amid the hectic rush of finding stimulating classes and settling into drabby, unwelcoming dorms, meeting new people has become an additional daily activity. As people from every corner of the globe come to attend Yale, it is only logical that along with her name and residential college, a person completes her introduction by naming her hometown. This presents a dilemma for me every time, considering my temporary stay in every "home," is not an actual hometown.

Each time I try to find a shorter, more compressed version to explain myself, and for the most part, people respond in awe. The wonder, though, is still mixed between those who see it as an amazing adventure and others who instead are skeptical about its being such a benefit. In my defense, I feel that my years of travel have given me insight into studying people, learning not to offend, to act diplomatically, to admire, and to respect. My friendships have proven to be solid, and though sometimes distant, still strong through constant contact by letter and email. I have become a stronger person with each move, having had to start my life basically anew each time. I have found my true self, never altering from my beliefs or changing my character in order to please new people I meet. People may be surprised to hear of my "experience" living abroad. To me it is not so simple as to classify it as an experience: it is my life.

Lately, I assume because of my latest transition, I have been reflecting on all these years gone by, but more importantly, on those yet to come. By the time three years roll around, a subliminal clock inside me begins to ring, announcing that the time has come to pack up and move on. The four years I will be spending at Yale are not only an adventure and a mystery but also perhaps a

test of patience. As much as I try to predict now, I really cannot foretell if I will like this lengthy stay in one place. From the wide array of people and activities I have encountered already in my first weeks here, I doubt that I will feel the urge to discover new horizons elsewhere; Yale is already so

diverse that I am sure I won't be disenchanted for the next four years. Still, that lingering sense of intrigue and adventure is always present. For now and the next four years, my imagination will be doing the traveling.

MAD GIRL'S LOVE DREAM

Sofía Silva

› Author's note: The horse is a known symbol for a lover.

One more night, and the picture is still rooted in my mind, like a scheduled cartoon it reappears, but tonight I'm already expecting it.

I stand in a desert, plain and immense. I see blue sky and when I'm asked to picture it, an Arabian brown horse with white spots, running around uneasily and at the back of my scenery. I listen attentively for its thudding hoofs on the dense sand but the sound is mute. Finally there is sound: *Don't turn back, do not look at me, never look for me when I'm not there.*" I listen attentively but infer no meaning from the words.

Now it is night and white candles have been lit in the form of a circle far away from me.

Fire storm, I might be dying, I hear from where I stand, and still the words make no sense. As I get near I realize the horse is standing still at the center of the lighted circle. *"Never look for me when I'm not there."* I cannot feel the air; it is still, as is sound. I might not be here, for there is only the absence of sound when no one is there to hear it. I might not be real here.

"You are here, never look at me bleed." My horse is now lying dead at mid-circle and with his head, he has toppled a white candle out of its symmetrical circle. *"Never look for me when I'm not there,"* once more.

Here it ends, this nightly hologram. Tonight I was expecting it, I was prepared. I look around my room and the same white candles of the dream are lined up in my window sill. Why the candles are in my room and not the Arabian, and not a desert or

the stars, I cannot figure out, though really I'm drunk with images and disturbed by my blurred thinking. As I come out from the involuntary trance, thoughts flow more clearly into my mind and I try to focus in being as real as possible. There should be no numbness or silence here. I am here to listen, I am real, I think over and over. A candle topples and I watch it fall in slow motion, but I hate that I am able to do that. I can always see everything in slow motion after the hologram incident. The rest of the candles go out as the falling one breaks into the floor.

I'm ahead tonight, way ahead because I expected all this and I'm strong, much stronger than past nights. I rise from the shadows of the

- Oscar Wilde

walls and out from my room and light eleven white candles once again. My vision is restored and I know what to do; I'd written it on the mirror previously with lipstick so that I wouldn't forget. I turn to the mirror and gaze in surprise. It's my hand writing, my lipstick, but I don't believe it to be my own message to me. *"Never look for me when I'm not there."*

The Arabian horse. He's not here and I was with him minutes ago; I was with him an entire desert night when he asked me not to look, not to hurt myself with his blood and when he asked me to forget. I was there then, and I stood there instead and spent the night. And now I remember it all. I rise from the shadows alone; the candle has already toppled once, and once is all it takes. This is not the dream anymore, I know so because I hear my hard breathing. I always forget, inevitably, this dream makes me mad

and I forget what I'm supposed to do. I forget what I write in the mirror and I always think I'm ahead though I'm behind. But tonight I did feel stronger, that was a truth and no illusion. Tonight is different and I read it from the lips of my twin in the mirror; I remember what I thought I was supposed to do. I remember bold red letters and my

message, "*Look for him always.*" And so I do, night after night, I search and search until I find him, roaming the desert uneasily at first, and then amongst white candles. Every night I wait expectantly, every night I see his hologram and nothing more. I spend the night and watch. One night I will not wake.



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“In the depth of my soul there is a wordless song.”

- Kahlil Gibran