

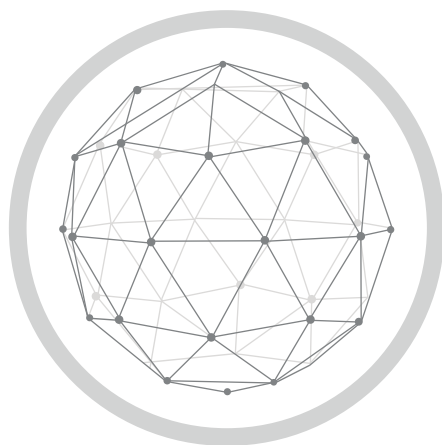






# a x . i s

/ ' a k s i s /



- a point or continuum on  
which something centers.

## ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST



Johnny Zuleta was born in Cali, Colombia. He came to the United States in 2000. Since his childhood, he would show a true interest in drawing and art. He decided to study Graphic Design at the artistic center of Miami Dade College - North Campus. During his years of study, he discovered that photography was an expression of art, which has, ultimately, now become his passion. In photography, he found a true center to express feelings, moments, memories and stories.

For the first time, Johnny Zuleta was selected as the cover artist for the Axis Creative Arts Magazine. He describes his photograph Marbles as a tribute and memory of childhood, transmitting colors, freedom, innocence, and making his photograph talk and tell a story on its own.

"It is not only taking a photograph, it is to make that photo talk and tell a story by itself."

**-Johnny Zuleta**





# EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello Reader,

Every year is always the same when preparing to create our magazine. In a zombie-like state, we collect submissions, edit them, and find a central theme. But we never truly thought about who we are. Who are we? Are we AXIS Creative Arts Magazine, a member of a group, an individual, or another floating soul? The AXIS editors wanted to define who we are as a club and individuals of Miami Dade North Campus. But, how do we do that?

Of course, we thought of the usual things to find our happy place, like reading, writing, or simply taking a nap. However, we were only scraping the surface with our inner senses. That's when we found ourselves in silence. Our answer! We read each other's mind. Once we silenced the sounds around us we found our inner voice with the help of our cover piece: "Marbles."

The cover is the culmination of the feelings we have had throughout our magazine journey. We are as we have always been, a gritty, concrete campus, but filled with youth in the innards of these solid walls. Throughout this issue are those youthful writers and artist who were inspired by who they truly are, right to their core or their *happy place*.

In this 11<sup>th</sup> edition, the editors have chosen to rely on how each piece developed internally, moving toward their inner purpose. With that in mind, we envisioned a modern version of how the chakra system would be symbolized. From the root of survival to crowning our connection to our spirit, you'll flow through the seven levels of the chakras.

Enjoy flowing through our journey to how we found our center.



Chelsea Fernandez  
*Editor in Chief*



Kathrina Giordani  
*Managing Editor*



# CONTENTS

## ROOT

<i>Irina Slizskaya</i>	8	Untilted
<i>Kaina Bellegarde</i>	9	My Skin, My Blood, My People
<i>Nicole Wallace</i>	10	Behind the Mask
<i>Cynthia Dehosson</i>	11	Play the Fool
<i>Nicole Wallace</i>	12	Zui
<i>Marisol Aquino</i>	13	Avian
<i>Casey Baron</i>	14	Aconitum
<i>Oscar Falero</i>	15	Pollution
<i>Christian De Leon</i>	16	La Persistencia de la Memoria
<i>Jonathan Turner</i>	19	Old Poles
<i>Casey Baron</i>	20	Lambda
<i>Florencia Bradolini</i>	22	Sunny Miami
<i>Johnny Zulsta</i>	22	My City
<i>Irina Slizskaya</i>	23	Day & Night
<i>Julia Heredia</i>	23	Reflections

## SACRAL

<i>Chelsea Fernandez</i>	26	Already Gone
<i>Alejandro Renteria</i>	27	Broadway
<i>Diana Nunez</i>	28	Solitude
<i>Vanessa Hernandez</i>	29	Morning Routine
<i>Edwin Colon</i>	30	Up in Arms
<i>Jorge Carrena</i>	31	Walk Through the Past Part 2
<i>Rhode Jacques</i>	32	A Broken Fairytale
<i>Diana Llanes</i>	33	Young American
<i>Elizabeth Diaz</i>	34	Sight, Smell, Taste, Hear, & Feel
<i>Phil Pruitt</i>	36	Mojave

## SOLAR PLEXUS

<i>Sakina Golding</i>	39	Me
<i>Julia Rose</i>	40	On Pointe
<i>Diana Nunez</i>	41	Red
<i>Marian Jorge</i>	42	The Doll of Livia Rose
<i>Alexander Ruiz</i>	43	The Fountain of Youth
<i>Aaron Rolle</i>	44	Lonely Addict
<i>Aaron Rolle</i>	45	Last Drop
<i>Stephanie Magels</i>	46	Juxtaposition
<i>Adrian Moya</i>	47	A Traumatic Event



# HEART

Sunrise	50	Diana Nunez
Kismet	51	Casey Baron
Without Blood	52	Casey Baron
Dance With My Father	54	Jessica Ruiz
Drummin'	55	Nicole Wallace
Time From You	56	Anthony Vella
What You've Taught I Never Learned	57	Marietta Hurtado
Bloop 1	58	Nicole Wallace
Bloop 2	59	Nicole Wallace

# THROAT

Who Understands (And I Hate It)	62	Danny Guiraud
We Are All Mad, Too	63	Marisol Aquino
Madre & Mommy?	64	Katherine Marcelino
Typerider	66	Elizabeth Diaz
Frozen Water	67	Nicole Wallace
Pressure	68	Casey Baron
What If You Were Served A Side Of Truth	70	Nicole Wallace
The Victim	71	Andrea Mathis

# THIRD EYE

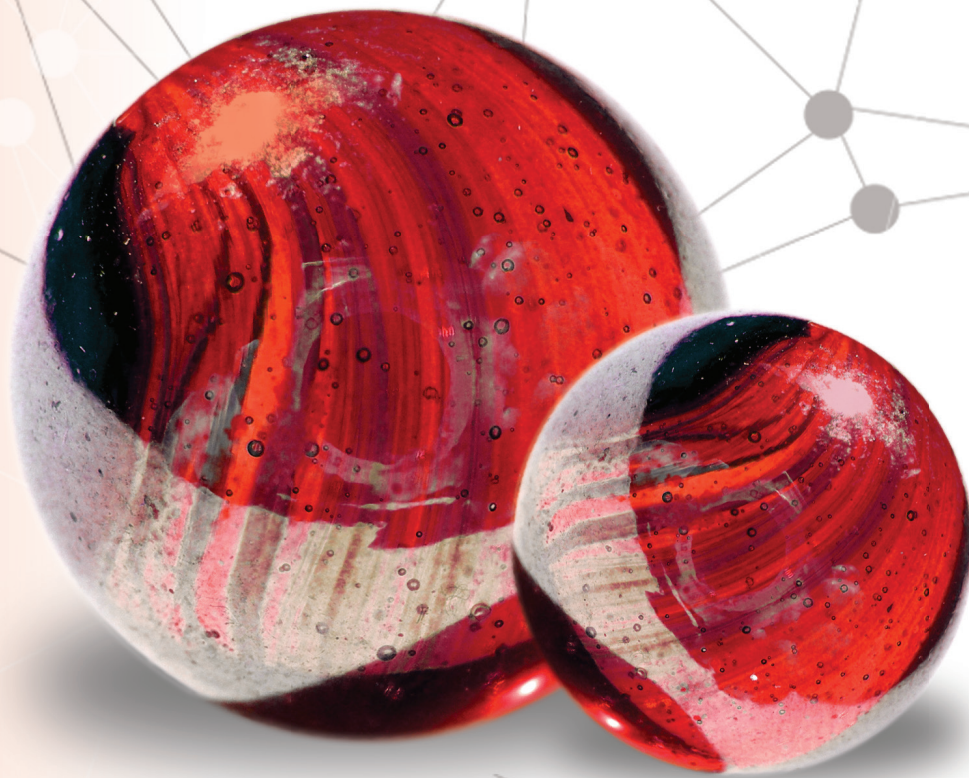
Faith	72	Carlos Valencia
Mental Slope	73	Charley Cesaire
We Were Not One of Those	74	Elizabeth Diaz
Impermanence	75	Ellier Jimenez
Perhaps	76	Elizabeth Diaz
Hidden	77	Karitza Ledesma

# CROWN

Tagged	80	Carlos Valencia
Framing Me	81	Kenny Lewis
Our World Realized	82	Daniel Cardom
Clean Your Mind	83	Nicole Wallace
Imagine Peace	84	Danny Giraud
Sky & Surf	85	Anonymous
Cancer Girl	86	Daylena Barrios
My Daddy's Daughter	87	Mercedes Maduro
Now You See From Below	88	Nicole Wallace
Maelstrom	89	Danny Sequeira







# ROOT CHAKRA

**What is our foundation of who we are? In the deep, dark core of our spine what will we find? When there are no consequences to our actions, whether the situation deals with survival, wealth or food - we discover the truth of who we are.**



# UNTILTED

IRINA SLIZKAYA





# MY SKIN, MY BLOOD, MY PEOPLE

KAINA BELLEGARDE

"Leve, kanpe dwat!" screamed my mother.  
"Gade m 'nan je!" my father demanded.  
Pure perfection from a child they desired.  
Through me,  
They saw the skins that were murdered,  
The eyes that were shut,  
The countless breaths that were stolen,  
And, most importantly, the Haitian Revolution.

See this skin of mine,  
The Skin that is dark brown and full of scars,  
Is not just ordinary skin.  
It is the skin that underwent slavery  
And brutal beatings from slave owners,  
Every whip and bruise  
Which pierced through my ancestors' skin  
Healed through a battle,  
A battle that was won  
On our independence day.

See the roots of my hair,  
The roots that amplify the beginning of a sturdy and healthy hair,  
Resemble the rebellious path of my people.  
The path that consisted of a rising army,  
And a path of broken chains  
That was taken from wounded feet of bondservants.

See the naps of my hair,  
The naps no combs can detangle  
And no hot combs can restrain,  
They resemble the workmanship of my people,  
A workmanship that can withstand any battle.

See my dark tinted pupils,  
The pupils that widen in the dark,  
From the days of slavery to Revolution.



# BEHIND THE MASK

NICOLE WALLACE

# PLAY THE FOOL

CYNTHIA DEHOSSON

Sit in the dark,  
Target locked,  
Hit your mark.

Eyes blind,  
Take your shot,  
Bulls eye!

Tie the strings,  
Make her dance,  
Oh, sweet romance.

Break the wall,  
Break the dam,  
Break the soul,  
Break her hand.

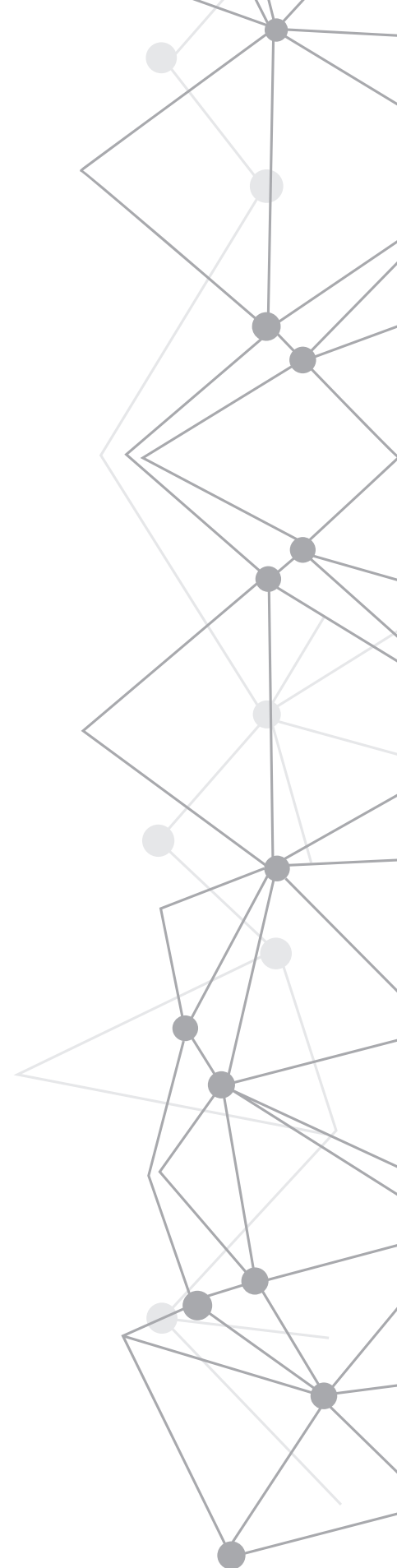
Turn an eye  
To her cries,  
Pleas on ears  
That never hear.

Still she tries,  
Still she gives.  
Still he takes,  
Still he lives.

But she's blind  
In the dark,  
Lead in circles,  
Left stark.

Follow the motions,  
Move as he does,  
No clue or notion.

He takes the shot,  
Hits his mark.  
The puppeteer  
Will strike again.







ZUI  
NICOLE WALLACE

12

ROOT

AXIS Vo. 11





AVIAN  
MARISOL AQUINO

# ACONITUM (WOLF'S BANE)

CASEY BARON

*"The more expensive a school is, the more crooks it has – I'm not kidding." \**

The ghouls and goblins that roam these hallways would surprise you,  
Muddled with the sheer misunderstandings that they serve like fresh pudding.

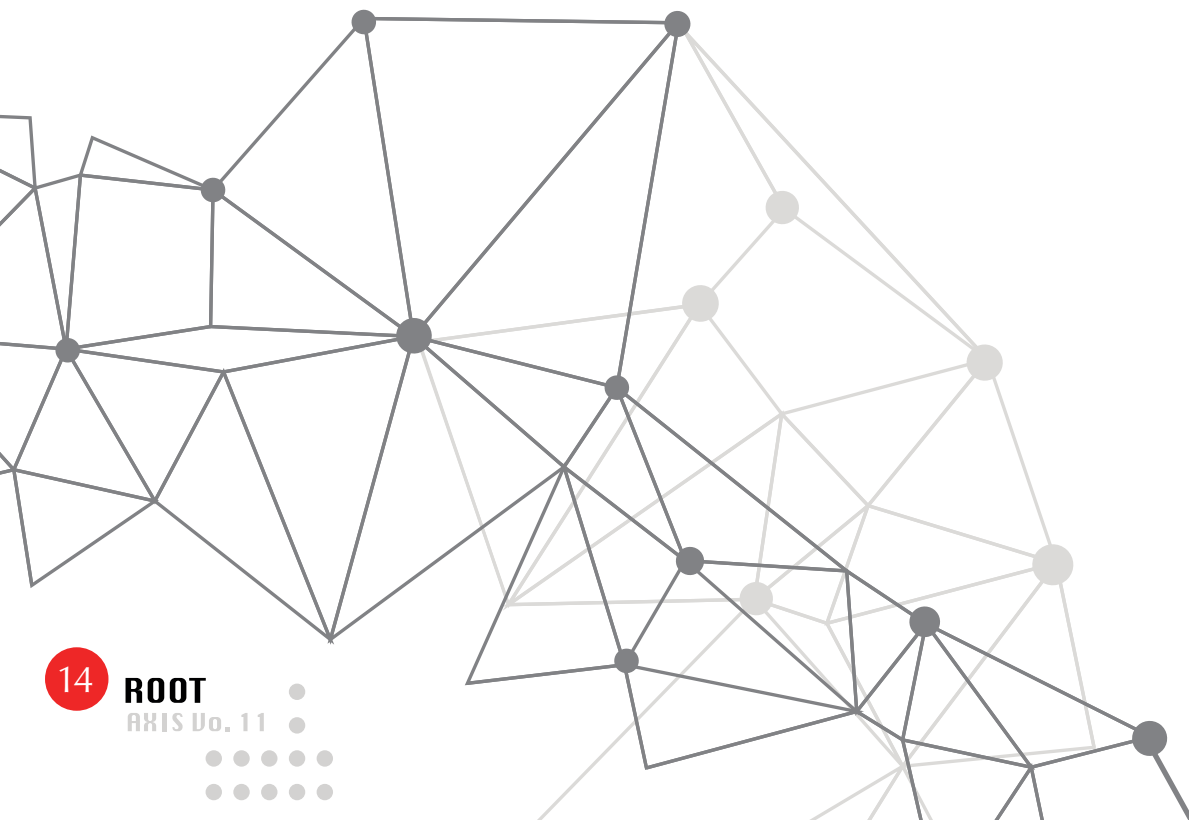
'This is an institution steeped in tradition,' they say,

Then proceed with the utterly demeaning recantation of a school motto only gods respect.

This is an edifice furnished with foolish remarks.

This is your school, infested with money-loving sharks.

*\* from The Catcher in the Rye*







# POLLUTION

OSCAR FALERO

# LA PERSISTENCIA DE LA MEMORIA

## (THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY)

CHRISTIAN DE LEON

El viento desértico sobrevolando consistía en un vapor arenoso que se proponía insistentemente golpearme la cara de forma delicada, casi con gracia, pero aquello no me molestaba. De hecho, aquel día se me rendía un día perfecto: en la distancia veíamos los grandes árboles que coronaban majestuosamente el parque más cercano a nuestro paradero, que para mí no era muy cierto, ya que aquella mañana era mi amigo quien, como de costumbre, servía como guía. Caminábamos por un sendero desierto, casi misterioso, pero ciertamente no había nada más que pudiera aludir algún rasgo diferente en aquel día. Un Sol Apólico se reía de mi espalda ya cansada de ver correr las intranquilas gotas de sudor por su cauce, algo que provocaba que yo continuamente pasara mi mano por debajo de la nuca y cada vez la viera más mojada.

“¿Falta mucho?”

“No, ya casi estamos ahí.”

Pasamos por la esquina sur del parque dirigiéndonos hacia su localización más al este, y el olor de la hierba fresca y del aire húmedo me despertó los sentidos de su letargo momentáneo inducido por el cansancio. Noté como en varios troncos de aquellos enormes flamboyantes de los cuales colgaban curujeyes en sus ramas más altas, habían escritos disímiles nombres de personas adjuntados con diferentes frases de moda entre la jerga amorosa de los jóvenes de aquellos días, que disfrazaban la retórica de muchos de los grandes de la literatura más conocida con errores comunes o tergiversaciones pasadas por alto. Aquello era algo que me incaba el perfeccionismo, pero no dejé de admirarlo como un intento más de fecundar un sentimiento, así que desde ese momento dejé aquella imagen de árboles heridos por el amor como un pensamiento más bien metafórico, pero que definitivamente escondía un significado para mi vieja y rechazada teoría de que el amor sí que cambia y transforma a quien toca.

“En cuanto doblemos aquella esquina ya verás la cúspide de esta endemoniada loma, que estará a solo unos doscientos metros de ese punto. Solo

The desert wind was no more than a sandy vapor charging insistently against my face. It was delicate, almost graceful, and did not disturb my humor. Actually, that day was presenting itself to be a perfect day: in the distance we could see the tall trees that crowned majestically in the nearest park. I couldn't recognize the place we were – a feeling I'm accustomed to – because that day it was my friend who served as our guide.

“How much longer?”

“Not much; we are almost there.”

We passed by the south corner of the park walking towards its eastern part, when the smell of fresh grass and moisture in the air awakened my senses from their momentary lethargy. I couldn't help noticing how in several trunks of huge Flamboyant trees were carved people's names, attached to diverse phrases from the love jargon of teenagers of those days. They were disguising the rhetoric of many great writers with common mistakes or ignored misinterpretations. This was something that would puncture my perfectionism, but I couldn't stop to look at it as attempts to create a sentiment. From that point on, I left that image of trees maimed by love as nothing more than a metaphoric thought, which hides a meaning for my old and rejected theory that love does change and transform what it touches.

“At the next turn you will see the top of this elevation, and prepare yourself because you are going to see the most amazing, spectacular, and



estamos ya a una distancia relativamente corta del punto al que quiero llegar, y prepárate porque vas a ver la cosa más impresionante, espectacular y deslumbrante que alguna vez hayas visto,” dijo Jorge.

Jorge era mi mejor amigo, algo así como el hermano mayor que nunca tuve, relación que se vio destinada a mantenerse inexpugnable desde el día en que mi madre se vio atrapada en una amistad entrañable con su madre, y mi afecto y respeto por su carácter y su entereza ante la vida era una constante de vasto conocer por parte de los dos, solo que yo siempre fui aquel que lo demostraba por mi naturaleza afectiva y ñoña y él era el que se regocijaba sintiendo lo mismo pero sin expresarlo, porque si había algo que él no soportaba era tener puntos vulnerables a las opiniones, él trabajaba como un todo y no tenía tiempo para esos miramientos de estar apreciando y agradeciendo. Él era un guerrero de la vida, el enemigo letal del destino, eso y nada más.

A veces, las más sobrepasando a las menos, a mí me fastidiaba su total inexperiencia para demostrar el afecto que muchas veces sentía, ya que era un enamorado nato del tirón de la carne; y cada vez que buscábamos refugio a prueba de adultos para hablar sobre los últimos descubrimientos sexuales que habíamos tenido, algo que ya hacía unos pocos años había parado, terminábamos enfrascados en una discusión que no había ni Quijote ni Rodrigo capaz de enderezar, de lo tan ensayada que estaba, debido a que siempre terminábamos discutiendo sobre lo mismo.

Sobre aquel punto del viaje, como ya se había prometido, doblamos en la esquina y nos adentramos en una pequeña callecita discreta, sin nombre aparente, que nos saludaba con una señalización de tránsito pintada a mano y doblada en sus bordes de una manera que recordaba vagamente a una chapa de botella, solo que varias veces su tamaño original. Las casas eran altas en sendos lados del camino, y debido a la creciente pendiente de la loma parecían estar jorobadas sobre la perpendicular de la calle, dándole un gracioso aspecto de inexactitud al bloque entero. Estaban todas construidas bajo el

dazzling sight you have ever seen,” said Jorge.

Jorge was my best friend, something like the older brother that I never actually had. Our friendship was bound to be unbreakable since the day that my mother found herself in an enviable friendship with his mother. My affection and respect for his well-rounded view towards life was a constant of vast recognition for both of us. However, I was the one who always showed it because of my emotional nature, while he took amusement in feeling the same and not expressing it. If there was something he could not stand, it was being vulnerable to opinions; he was not the kind to appreciate and thank. He was a warrior of light, destiny's lethal enemy, that and nothing more.

Sometimes, I was incredibly frustrated with his complete inexperience at showing the emotion he often felt. Now he was nothing more than a love numbed in the remnants of the flesh. Every time we would seek refuge in adult discussion of our latest sexual discoveries, something that had stopped a few years ago, we would end up in overly rehearsed conversations, which neither Quijote nor Rodrigo would be capable of righting, in which we always ended up talking about the same thing.

At that point in our trip, as promised, we turned in on the corner, and we entered a small discreet street, with no apparent name, that greeted us with a traffic signal resembling a big bottle cap. Houses were high at both sides of the road, and due to the increasing slope of the street, they looked as if they were slanted perpendicularly, which gave a funny look to the whole block. Every construction there had the same style; they were all battered because of how long they had been there or because of all the inconveniences they had suffered: the frequent hurricanes that whipped tropical islands, the



mismo estilo, maltrechas por los muchos años que habían estado allí o por las muchas inconveniencias que habían sufrido: los frecuentes ciclones que azotan las islas tropicales, la inextinguible humedad que se hacía trecho por cada rendija o brecha que el cemento ceda, el mal cuidado que sus dueños le han dado, o que han podido darle... A veces hasta las piedras lloran en este barrio.

En esta admiración silenciosa se me pasó el tiempo hasta el punto en que ya solo faltaban algunos metros para llegar a la punta de aquella elevación urbana, y de repente la excitación atrapó mi ánimo y di unos grandes pasos movido por el reciente entusiasmo hasta alcanzar la cima.

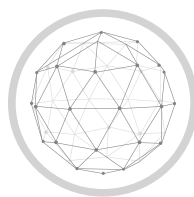
En un mar de espumas, en un horizonte recto, ajedrez millonésimo de estructuras irreconocibles y diminutas, La Habana se erguía. No desafiaba los cielos con sus construcciones gachas, no separaba razas, clases, alcurnias ni sueños; desde allí solo era eso, La Habana, mi hogar, mi pedacito de pertenencia en este mundo que no se atrevía a relucir brillantes piedras, sino que mostraba el fulgor del amor que se nace de la miseria. Un mar de antenas que reciben poco pero envían nada, porque no hay más na'. Terminal nacional de autobuses que se quieren ir, pero que siempre hay alguien esperando por ellos, y que no se van porque en el fondo le temen a la memoria. Estatuas de bronce con la fuerza de mil huracanes que pudieron caminar a ultramar pero que prefirieron cuidar su parque, hasta que una tempestad, meteorológica o humana las arrancase del cuajo; y, finalmente, los tantos gorriones, que solo sobrevuelan porque saben que sus alas no les servirán de ayuda contra los fuertes vientos que soplan en el suelo, pero que no les importa cagar a los que pasan apurados, amontonándose bajo su estela. ¡Ay, ciudad!, mira que haces humo, pero ¿realmente cuántos habrán visto tu fuego?

inextinguishable humidity that took up residence in every breach in the cement, and the poor amount of care that their owners had given them, or had been able to give... Sometimes even stones cry in this place.

I spent time in this silent admiration, until we were only a few meters from the edge of this urban elevation. Suddenly, a great excitement overcame me, and I took a few big steps, moved by this recent enthusiasm, until I reached the chasm.

In a sea of foam, forming a straight horizon, a million unrecognizable and tiny structures made up Havana. It didn't defy skies with its stooped constructions; it didn't separate classes, races, lineages or dreams; from there it was just that -- Havana, my home, my bit of belonging in this world that did not show off brilliant crystals, but instead, showed the glint of love born in misery. It was a sea of antennas that receive little and sent nothing because there is nothing to send; a National Station for busses that want to leave but stay because there is always someone waiting for them, and because they fear memories; statues of bronze with the power of a thousand hurricanes that could have walked across the sea, but preferred to stay until a tempest, meteorological or human, uprooted them; and, finally, the many sparrows that only fly above because they know their wings will not help them against the strong winds that blow on the ground, birds that do not mind defecating on those who walk hurriedly underneath.

Oh, city, how much smoke you make, but how many have really seen your fire?





# LAMBDA

## CASEY BARON

He stared down at me. Quivering, my knees fastened to the floor. *Drip, drip.* Blood exuded from my left shoulder, splashing against the gloss of the laminated vinyl floor.

"What would you have me do, Zach? Construct logical reasons why she shouldn't have died?" Nolan said.

We were about an hour away from completing the job. It was simple: get the codes, halt acts of violence, and gain fame throughout our community. Our goal was to change the world by hacking into a military base. That's what Nolan told me when he wanted me on his team.

Well, it sounded like a good idea at the time. Earlier that day...

"So, where are you from?" I asked.

She fiddled around with her hair a bit, never taking her eyes off the flashing screen. The question seemed polite in my mind, but she did not respond, so I tried again.

"You're not going to tell me where you're from?"

She fastened her lips down like the closed hatch of a ship; nothing was going out, and not a thing was going in for that matter.

"Well with an exotic name like Jira, you certainly can't be a native of the United States. Come on, you can tell me. We're on the same side after all. Nice place, night sky, penthouse condo and some chatter could only help the situation," I said.

See, she and I have been cooked up in here like gumbo in a hot pot, but while I can't take my eyes off of her, she can't take her eyes off of that blasted computer screen. I placed my hand on Jira's shoulder.

"Jira Backus. Born December 12<sup>th</sup> 1989 off the coast of South Africa. I moved here when I was ten; I eventually went to Georgia Tech, got a degree, and I have been working my ass off ever since. In my spare time I like to play with sharp things. So, would you rather sit here and chat about your interest in my life story, or would you rather we get on with the bit?" she said.

My eyes fixed on her as she delivered a monologue befitting Shakespeare, or at least I thought so. I would have come up with a rebuttal, but I let it lie. She turned back to the screen, ticking and tacking away at the keys, attempting to complete every line of code with the fluidity of Venus. Symbols of all sorts poked at her face with multiple colors; it was as though each little speck of data wanted to swallow her whole and drag her into this space she was creating, controlling and manipulating. I couldn't stop staring.

So I stepped away, let her get back to the dealings she was up to as she mumbled something under her breath. It sounded a bit rude to me, but I just smiled and went off to admire the view.

The door to the condo opened, and as a seemingly mysterious figure walked in, both Jira and I jumped to attention, a gun in each of our hands, but hers shaking by the end of the action as a cold sweat dripped off the side of her face.

"You two almost done?" Nolan asked.

"Sixty seconds," she said.

Jira maintained her focus where it needed to be: on the computer screen. Nolan motioned towards me and put his hand on my shoulder.

"We're playing with house money; get it done," he said.

She took a trap door, which tripped the alert system of the Fort Benning firewall. We gathered up all our gear, and made our way to the elevator. I opened up my phone.

"What's the ETA?" Nolan asked.

"Six minutes," I said.

We ran down the flights of stairs, and then jolted through the halls. As we continued down the



twisting staircase, I continued to update Nolan on our time; it certainly wasn't getting any better. Upon reaching the ground floor a sudden chill hit me. Shivers crawled up my spine, and I took a moment more to gasp for air. Nolan tried to move forward in an attempt to keep us going, but he could only tap his hands against his thighs. Jira maneuvered closer to me, pressing her arms around my chest.

"We have to keep moving. Let's not test our luck," Nolan said.

He stepped forward into the lobby, leaving me and Jira behind. I looked at her, and she gazed back, clutching my hand as to never let go. We walked out to the lobby together, but what greeted our eyes was worse than a grim chill.

"What happened here?" I said.

Everything lay shattered on the floor, from the papers and office supplies littered across the level, to the artwork and walls standing battered and bruised. Nolan stood as if caught in quicksand. Jira covered her face with her hands. As I stroked the arch of Jira's back, I walked towards Nolan.

"Nolan, what's going on?"

He doesn't mutter a word but begins to motion to the front desk. Nolan walks slowly, each step seemingly more staggered than the last. I walked up to him trying to stop him in his tracks.

"Nolan, hey it's okay. We can get out of here, Nolan. We don't have a lot of time before the m—"

"Zachary. Stop it," he said.

Nolan continued to walk to the front desk and made his way to look over the counter. I needed no confirmation of what he had found; the red splashes over the extravagant horse-painting behind the desk was all I had to see.

"They're dead," he said.

I stood unsure for a moment, calculating the proper responses. *What should I say? What shouldn't I say?* As I turned to Jira, a tear drizzled down her caramel-toned face. I began to drift towards her, hoping to wrap my arms around her, but the closer I approached, the more she moved back.

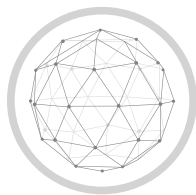
"Jira, everything will be okay," I said.

Jira glared at me with tears rolling down her cheeks, and as I extended my hand towards her, she ran through the side door out of the tower. As I chased after her, she ran into the three-lane street in front of the building and stood there.

"Damn it Jira, you know we have to go—"

And before I could finish another word, a white van showed up. I ran towards her, hoping to get there in time while hearing her screaming and yelling at the top of her lungs, but I couldn't. Before I could reach her, they had taken Jira. Only one thing was left in their wake; a business card with a red smiley face over a suit without a head.

*We are Legion. We do not forgive. We do not forget. We are anonymous.*







## SUNNY MIAMI

FLORENCIA BRADOLINI



## MY CITY

JOHNNY ZULSTA





## DAY AND NIGHT

IRINA SLIZSKAYA



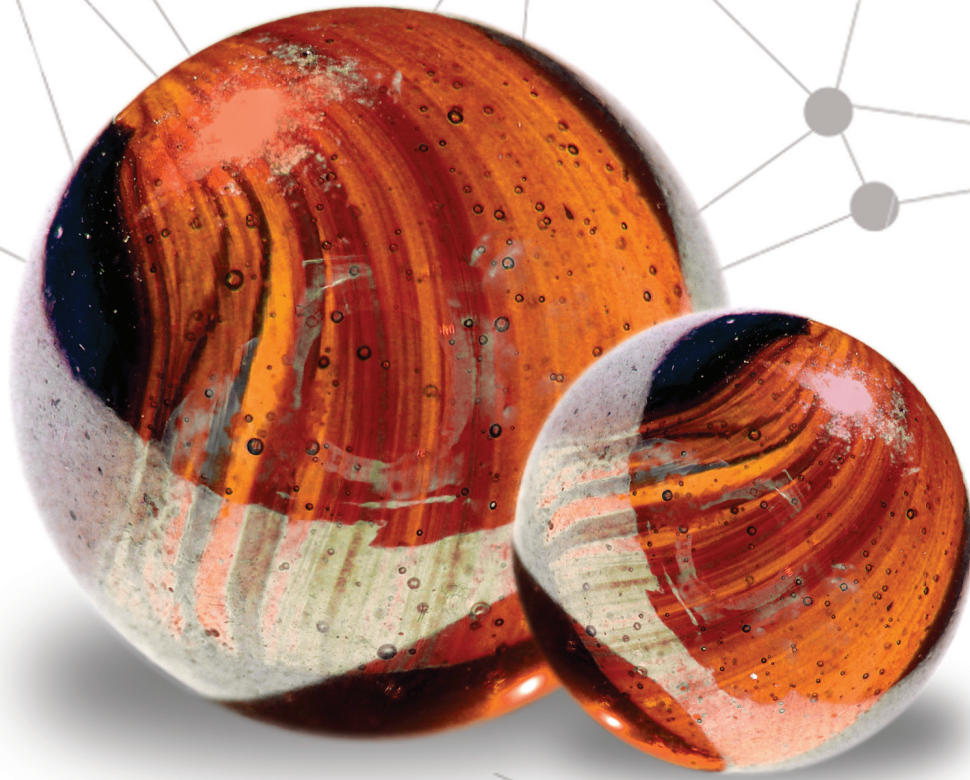
## REFLECTIONS

JULIA HEREDIA









# SACRAL CHAKRA

**In the naval lie our connections, security and ability to accept new experiences. In other words, what is our gut trying to tell us? Should I believe in my first instinct? Will I be safe here? For some worrywarts, having a sense of well-being can be a challenge.**



# ALREADY GONE

CHELSEA FERNANDEZ

You always sit there watching the screen,

Never looking at the real thing.

But go ahead, keep watching.

Once the commercials ring,

I'll be gone like all your other flings.







# SOLITUDE

DIANA NUNEZ



# MORNING ROUTINE

VANESSA HERNANDEZ

"C'mon, it's time to go already."  
I force myself up,  
But I keep closing my eyes.  
I put on all the hidden fantasies I'm forced to keep under my pillow,  
And I keep kicking things out of bed.  
I put on all the insecurities,  
Pulling the covers over my head.  
I put on all the lies that my parents told 5-year-old me;  
I wake up bruised and weak.  
I put on my boiling anger;  
I put on my mistakes.  
As I wait for you by the door,  
I put on my criticism;  
I put on a smile.  
I say goodbye,  
Afraid of not seeing you again.  
I put on me.



# UP IN ARMS

EDWIN COLON

It equips me with life and cloaks me in a robe.  
It clothes me in armor yet blinds my vision.  
It softens my heart and sharpens my tongue.  
It can quench flames and flood valleys.  
My weapon can forge others and destroy my enemies.  
My weapon can speak life and death,  
A weapon that can tear down pillars and mold the sky with fire,  
My weapon – that forever has me up in arms.





# A BROKEN FAIRYTALE

RHODE JACQUES

First, they killed the dog. The little ten-year-old girl stood there in silence looking over at him, lifeless. His golden fur that she once loved to caress was now scattered all across the ceramic floor. His cold wet nose that once made her face grimace whenever he would lick her, now resembled the Hawaiian red punch she spilled all over her bright yellow Sunday dress. Then it hit her: she no longer had a best friend. An avalanche of tears ran down her frozen cheeks.

"Lévé!" she desperately screamed out, not wanting to believe he was gone. The innocent girl could only ask why, why did this happen to him? He was an innocent creature who did nothing wrong but simply fulfill his duty. Somehow she was supposed to feel better because he died protecting her, but that wasn't the case. In the months that passed, the image of those masked men and the poor animal was engraved in her mind. She went to bed every night terrified that those men would come back again; instead, it would be her lifeless body lying on the floor.

In the coming weeks there had been whispers of a plot to kidnap her for ransom. From then on, nothing was the same. Everyone in the household was now on watch.

"Veye! Paske se met ko ki veye ko," her mother firmly told everyone after a quick gathering. Word quickly spread around the small neighborhood. The rat-like gossiping of the neighbors could be heard as they huddled around in small crowds, shocked that this happened to the family that lived under the small hill.

The way the little girl viewed her community completely changed. She trusted no one, not even the milkman who always brought them fresh milk at the break of dawn. The housemaid, whom she loved to play hide and seek with and who would always make her laugh with ancient Haitian riddles, was now a stranger in her eyes. The landscape man, who, like a magical pony, would gallop all across the small farm carrying her up the steep green hills, was now a tall black horse. Everything she was once familiar with now turned into a vast and gloomy forest of unknown. No longer would anyone hear her sweet laugh that made everyone else smile. The beautiful and tall pink castle that stood at the top of the hill now resembled a jailhouse.

As the months continued to pass by, the sun continued to set every night; that was the moment she feared the most. The pallid moon and dancing stars that she once loved to twirl under became her enemies. She held the covers tightly on top of her head, her blurry brown eyes peeking out and her body uncontrollably shaking under the covers. She felt and heard the drumming of her heart, syncing with the rhythm of the loud clock in the unlit room, ready to burst out of her small chest. She waited for the moment the sunrise would liberate her from this paralysis. The little girl's appetite shrunk; she lived in fear, questioning every new face. Her mother's worries grew more, and even though her soft and yet sure voice was supposed to bring some sort of comfort, the deep and dark circles under her eyes spoke louder. Her mother held on tightly to the pale blue rosary as she recited over and over again those same words

*"Je vous salue, Marie pleine de grâce,"*

But the little girl felt like the Blessed Virgin was completely powerless. Certainly, no soft couch or man wearing bug-like glasses, a silly suit, and shiny shoes, with a crisp white paper pad, could possibly help.

Then one day it all suddenly ended. The pain, the silence, the warm tears, heavy heartbeats, and the fear. It was all gone. The green and beige boarding pass was her golden ticket. The day she boarded that plane and left her home in Haiti, her innocence stayed behind trapped in the cold walls of the castle. All she knew was that she was being taken to safety in Miami, away from those long sleepless nights.







# SIGHT, SMELL, TASTE, HEAR & FEEL

ELIZABETH DIAZ

Sight-

Creases, outlining the thin, fragile, rippling skin along his eyes.

Beauty,

In the waves of his rippling skin.

Invading horizontal lines as he smiled.

Lines that ran from the corner of his murky eyes to the very mountain of his cheekbones.

My hair,

falling

in torrents

Along the RED leather couch.

Detailed inscriptions,

Trailing the skin absent of the touch,

The ink that wrapped his arm in barbed wire,

And the silver ring on his hand.

INTRUSION-

Of the silver ring.

Was no illusion.

My chaos erupted from every pore.

Chaos, until it could grow no more.

The hard, thick smell of smoke,

Attached itself

to the air.

Smell-

Simultaneously drowning me

Victim.

Simultaneously appealing and repulsing.

Synchronously, leaving no breath,

Reaching new lengths.

But this did not matter anymore.

For the smell of Marlboro

Paled in comparison to the shame every crevice in my mind held.

For my body knew better,

But did not wish for such.

My conscience drowned under smoke

In a tidal wave that proved difficult to step out of.

Amidst the smoke of chaos, sin, and desire.

Sweet, Taste-

Monster energy drink.

Marlboro. Colgate.

The overbearing aftertaste

Of his mouth sufficed to leave me mundane, leave me insane.

Singlehandedly, sent my mind on an unending journey



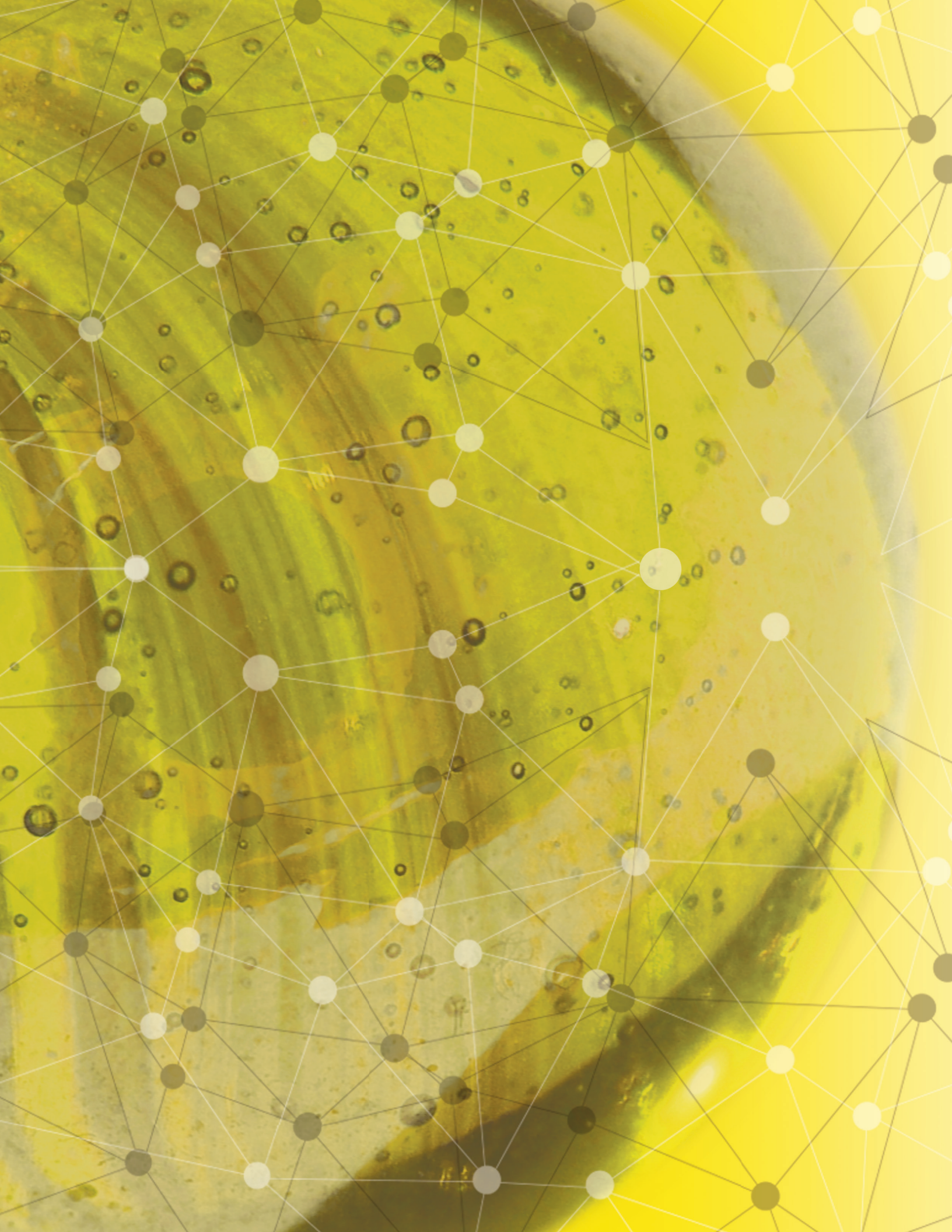
Of irresistible disgust,  
There was only the steady yet ephemeral waves,  
Of smoke that escaped his mouth.

Hear-  
Breaths- massacring the air,  
Leaving it in suffocating terms.  
"How old are you?" I bite my lip awaiting.  
"Old enough to know better," he whispers, pronouncing each and every letter.  
"Have you learned your lesson?"  
"Yes."  
I cope through a breath.  
And my yells are disguised into the Red leather couch.  
Ringing beat-  
Into senseless, sporadic breaths.  
The air now filled with silence and entrancing movement.  
"Are you okay?"  
"Not yet."  
He laughs, and I drive my lips to his again.

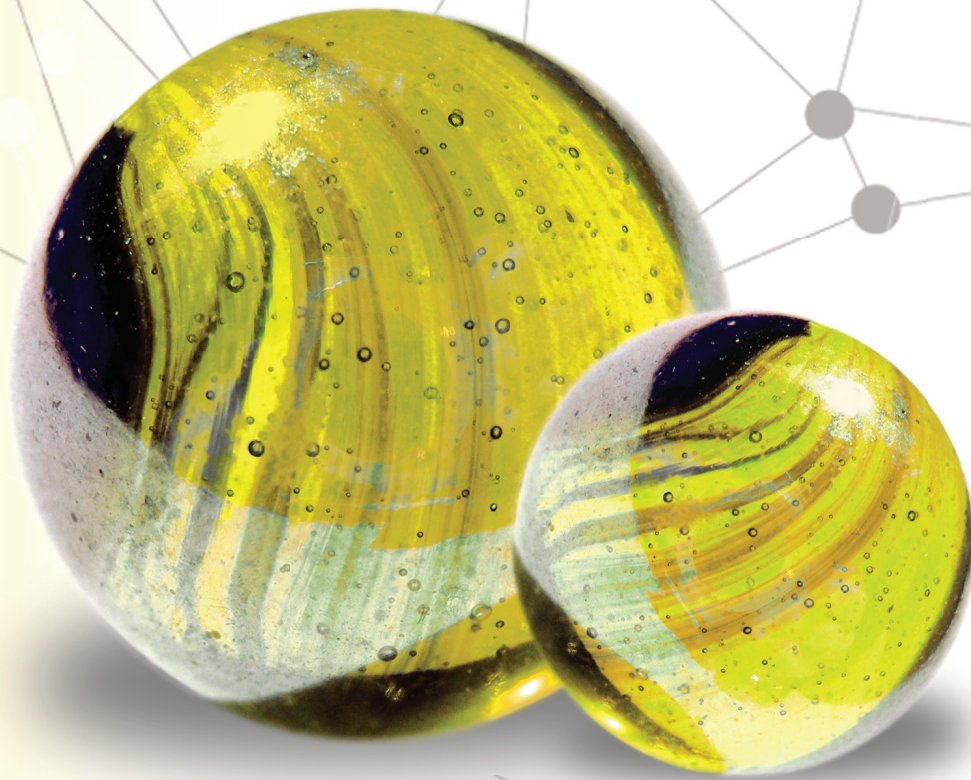
For the firm, profuse prominence  
Was enough to send the entire couch  
Spinning in wild elation.

Feel-  
The firm, copious prominence sufficed to reconcile every crevice in my body.  
Collaborating in gorgeous injunction, unison,  
Allowing my toes to curl south.  
Leaving my body in fragmentation.  
My crevices, a burning sensation.  
Too great to control.  
The chaos erupted in surges  
That trailed through my veins,  
Pressed up against mine.

Pain, gripping the RED leather couch.  
Friction, between the RED leather couch, and my cheekbone.  
Warmth, radiating every pore that his palm insisted on.  
The steady blow of the air escaping his lips.  
Dry mouth.  
Thighs, implore.  
No right,  
No wrong.  
No sixth sense.







# SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA

How are you? How are you feeling? Sometimes we answer so quickly and it ends up being a lie. It's ok. With any age and at any time, we struggle with overcoming lack of confidence or self-worth. Don't be a yellow belly! Just take a chance.





# MOJAVE

PHIL PRUITT



# ME

## SAKINA GOLDING

I can't seem to swallow all this shit;  
I just can't digest it.  
Feeling jaded and jeered by my surroundings,  
I can't seem to find any openings.  
Running. Reaching. Trying to grasp my destiny.  
I even looked death in his eyes.

I was intimidated by the retrospect of my being,  
I cultivated new lies to cover my eyes from my disease.  
Because all my life, my stormy past haunted me,  
I was too afraid to see.

My illusions became more profound;  
I saw courage, but couldn't seem to harken to its sound.  
I was in a haze, heckled by my own pain,  
Ignited by my pride and my shame.

I'm even a hypocrite to my own ideals,  
To me it felt like I was reaching for something unreal.  
I had to sculpt a woman's figure,  
Because of all that I have seen.  
But in truth,  
I'm just afraid to be me.



# ON POINTE

JULIA ROSE

40

SOLAR PLEXUS ●  
AXIS No. 11 ●





RED  
DIANA NUNEZ



# THE DOLL OF LIVIA ROSE

MARIAN JORGE

Once again autumn has shown its face,  
Urging nostalgia to fill every space  
With the mischievous wind that sings a song  
In the chilly morning as the sunlight is young.  
The words of the autumn bring feelings of pain  
As they talk of a Rose, her heart, and her name.  
Close to where the leaves lie dead after becoming gold,  
A delicate woman cries as she sits alone.  
She searches through memories of the distant past.

Livia grew up inside the boundaries of a silvered world  
Where it was a sin to touch those of corrupt blood.  
Being the only treasure of the Lady and Lord,  
She soon grew accustomed to being called "The Rose."  
The generous father fed the Rose's deep pride  
By buying her presents every time she cried.  
The reserved mother spoke of kindness and love,  
Yet the truth in her name could not be ignored.  
Destined she was to become graceful and fair,  
But her heart, instead, would remain bare.

She was given a garden with every existing rose.  
But in fear that the garden might not be enough,  
Father ordered a swing to be built and adorned.  
The golden lace pattern made her dull life bright,  
And during the autumn, she'd swing with delight.  
But the masterpiece suffered under rain and cold,  
And its elegant metal became rusty and old.  
The noise of the chains hurt the Rose's ears,  
And the pitiful sight called forth her tears.

So, Father looked for a joy that would forever last.  
He thus searched the streets of Victorian France  
For a man whose art was born through his hands.  
And it was given shape, two eyes, and a smile.  
Porcelain Livia, a magnificent doll,  
Was made with the hope of filling her young soul.  
While still in her childhood, she was given the treasure,  
And with a greediness impossible to measure,  
She stared at the doll, at her face and her clothes;  
Porcelain had paralleled the beauty of Rose.

The doll has seen much living by her owner's side,  
She is almost a human; she is almost alive,  
And although many autumns have languidly come,  
A heart exists where bitterness has not gone.  
Livia still wanders through her empty life,  
For her garden she mourns, and for her swing she cries.  
Now as a woman she can understand  
What her mind truly says when she holds her doll's hand.  
And who could have ever guessed?  
As the red leaves lie, forgotten and dead,  
The Rose stared into her glass eyes and unmoving face,  
Replacing the love with burning hate.

It occurred to her that her beauty was prey to time,  
But the doll's stagnant beauty would never change or die.



# THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

ALEXANDER RUIZ

Ascending,  
As everlasting as a mortal crown;  
Can't fathom going down.

Resisting the force of gravity,  
Undesired stored capacity.  
Someday we all will touch the ground.

With the complexion of a cloud,  
Age is rebellious,  
Reaching its apex, loses its essence.

Life is a gift,  
And youth is just an abstract concept.





# LONELY ADDICT

AARON ROLLE





# LAST DROP

AARON ROLLE

# JUXTAPOSITION

## (YUXTAPOSICION)

STEPHANIE MAGELS

I close my eyes and you can see my veins.  
I am translucent.

*Oh, Pero tu madre es India.*

My mom has a much darker complexion.  
Hourglass shape, olive complexion.

I open my eyes and you see clouds before a storm,  
What a unique color.

*You must take after your grandfather's baby blues.*

No, I take after my mother's Guatemalan Jades.  
But, I am hardly detected when I speak.

*¡Latinas son exóticas!*

They speak like their tongues are on fire,  
Like moving their hands will extinguish it.

Americans are reserved,  
They speak as if they are trying to keep secrets.

*A gap between the thighs is revered.*

I am big-boned, I plead.  
The baby-powdered faces roll their eyes.

I am dinner for two,  
And a *bachata* lesson under the moonlight.  
I am like a Sunday sunrise.

I am my mother just as much as I am my father,  
I am a Guatemalan American.

# A TRAUMATIC EVENT

ADRIAN MOYA

Slow down. You're talking too fast. Slower. Slower. Not that slow, they're not idiots. Project your voice. Don't shout. Pause. Breathe, swallow. Keep going. My mother's words mimicked my own internal voice as I stood in front of my 12-year-old peers and recited the monologue I had been practicing for the last month. As my head whipped around from one side of the room to the other, my arms flailing actively to mask the tremble in my voice, I caught a glimpse of my drama teacher. His face was stoic, unimpressed, and his stare turned me to stone. I froze, lost my place. The words were never very sharp in my memory; they danced after one another in a natural flow developed through endless repetition. And now they were missing.

As the echo of my last words faded away, I felt my cheeks flush with heat. The pounding of my heart was the only sound filling the emptiness within the room. What was it, that last word? The last sentence... what was it? Oh god, they're staring. Breathe. Think. What was it? Wait ... Death! Death, death, the valley of death!

"Cannon to the right of them, cannon to the left of them, cannon in front of them volley'd and thunder'd!"

Sorry mom; I did a little more than project my voice with that line. I yelled it at the top of my lungs as if I could convince the class my hesitation was for dramatic effect if I said it loud enough.

From that point on, my fears evaporated. All that remained were the words that possessed my mind. I felt a hundred pounds lighter. With all the confidence in the world, I lived and died from line to line, breathing into each word its own life. I took my classmates through the highs and the lows of the monologue. I made it my own. Through the whole semester, most of the others in the room had never heard my voice. Now they heard me. They had no choice but to hear me. As the last words of the piece dripped off my tongue, they had no choice but to follow me through booming echoes and soft whispers.

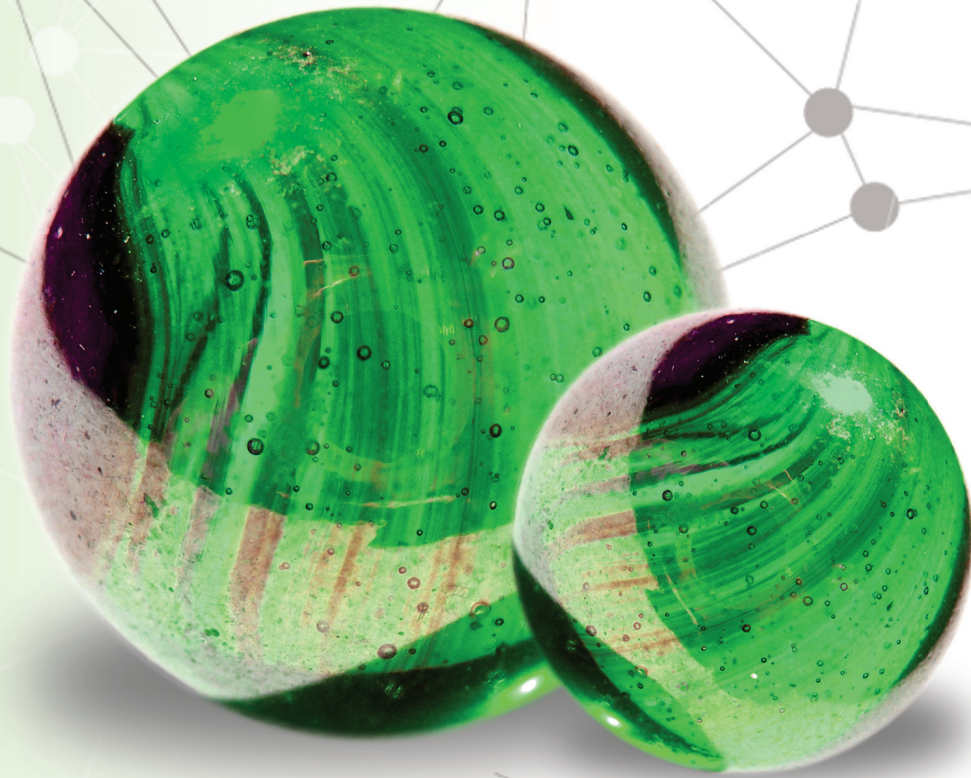
And then I was met with silence, my familiar foe. Deafening silence. I felt my premonitions knocking at the door, trying to creep back into my mind. That's it. It was too much. They will never let me live it down. Oh man, what did I just do? I should not have—

"Well, I think that was the best one out of the entire class." Mr. Signori's voice cut through the silence like a standard bearer leading an army of applause through the fog. There was hooting and hollering and so much clapping! I was engulfed in appreciation, and I felt a new kind of warmth, this one welcoming and reassuring. I knew that that would be the last day I would sit in the back of the class. I had left my shell behind, and I now felt surrounded by future friends. Maybe this new school would not be the worst thing to ever happen to me after all.









# HEART CHAKRA

Who fits in that puzzle piece in your heart? Our ability to love can be endless and overwhelming. But never forget to tell them how you feel or you'll regret it. People like that sort of thing.



# SUNRISE

DIANA NUÑEZ



# KISMET

CASEY BARON

It's a distinct pain,  
Looking into the eyes of a loved one,  
Knowing that you're helpless, without a paddle  
In a vast ocean of trinkets and shriveled hearts.

Or for that matter,  
Without a boat to simply float in,  
Drowning in an endless barrage of wails,  
But at that point it seems familiar.

It seems comfortable.  
It feels unlike walking into high school  
For the first time.  
At one moment, I dread the frown upon her face.

In the next, I accept it,  
Embrace it like a warm baby  
Because in the end,  
It is truly all I have ever known.

# WITHOUT BOUND

CASEY BARON

Sometimes I wonder what life would have been like if we were different, but then again: doesn't everyone? No one aspires to be different to the point of blatant discrimination and ridicule, but just to be different would be nice. *Maybe I'm using the wrong word though.* If I am anything, it is different. It is all that encompasses me, and it is the easiest way to define me. Well, instead of me, I guess I should say us. I sure can't get my words straight tonight, but then again, this isn't any other night.

Tonight I am out with the people whom I love – the people who make me the person I am. We were out at Lucky's on Congress Street, just a lounge adjacent to a river where all the cool kids hang out. *Okay, maybe not all the cool kids.* There were barely any kids here at all, but it was a really nice place; the perfect spot to relax with a few friends and take down a few drinks. I am even known by name around here.

"Emi! What's going on, brother? I got some new things on the menu tonight. Let me know what you think."

We went to *our* table, a spot next to a window and parallel to the bustling of Boston Street. I was with my best friends who sat directly in front of me, our ensemble making us out to be nothing short of a barbershop quartet as we adorned the leather couch. Yet the most important person in my life – someone who had been with me through everything – was sitting next to me: my little brother Charles. To most, I'm just Emerson Odinson, but to Charles I am more, even now that he is twenty-two and I am twenty-seven. This connection to the bundle of joy sitting to my right is the closest thing I have ever had to a timeless bond.

"If there are two things that don't mix, it's alcohol and aspirin," Charles said. He does dumb things for stupid reasons. I don't ask.

"Damn Bro, why do you have to be such an idiot? I thought we got past this," I said.

"I honestly didn't know this shit would hit me so hard. Why couldn't this be like one of those myths about chewing gum being stuck in your system for five years or whatever?"

Our friends burst into a frenzy of laughter at his ignorance. These moments were few and far between for two kids who grew up in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

I never knew I could forge this kind of friendship with people outside of my brother. I always put him first since the day of his birth. I remember the first morning my parents left me and Charles home alone; it was a Saturday morning, and he was in his nursery sleeping. I was on the couch in my briefs watching cartoons. One moment, I am watching animated characters comically abuse each other nonsensically and the next minute, I hear the bawling and shrieking of my baby brother. It was deafening and nauseating; it was like someone let loose a boom box right in the middle of my temple.

I quickly rushed to my brother's aid, cutting corners like a racecar driver, while holding my ears in an effort to alleviate the pain. I thrust the door open, and there he was. My little brother lay in his crib like a peaceful lion with a pacifier in his mouth and seemingly without a care in the world, yet I could still hear his cries. I quickly approached Charles, brushing up against the side of his crib as he stared at me with his big audacious eyes. I was trapped. As soon as I got within reach, he latched onto my finger, and all the noise was gone in an instant. The only thing that filled my body at that point was the warm feeling of my brother's touch, and the warm glow of his spirit filling my chest. The only thing that broke my trance now was my brother with his intruding words "Thanks for the love, Emi."

"Emi! Snap out of your bullshit daydream," Charles's thoughts invaded mine again. Like a needle penetrating skin, he was trying to bring my attention to the fact we were about to leave. Making my way to depart, I realized my friends had left, and I was stuck with a more levelheaded younger sibling than when I was last fully immersed in our conversation.

"Just me and you again, Emi. And a whole lot of empty bottles," he said, settling more into his seat.

I smirked as he continued with his excellent observations, "Damn, there really is no one here; it's like a damn ghost town in here."

"Yes Charles, I heard you the first time. Let's get out of here."

"Wait, there's something I want to do."





Charles proceeded to take a beer bottle in his hand. *What the hell is he gonna do now?*

"You remember all the cool things we used to try to do with it?"

He placed the bottle square in the palm of his hand. "Do you still believe in magic, bro?"

"Hurry the hell up, Charles," my attempt at gently speaking to him failing.

The bottle began to float in his hand like opposing magnets. At one point the bottle was about six inches up from Charles's palm, and he started to move it. The bottle started flipping and twirling through Charles's fingers like a drummer's drumstick; then he sped up the process. Now the only thing around his hand seemed like a blur as the bottle began shifting and twirling around his hand like the revolutions of a natural satellite around a planet. It was reminiscent of our golden days.

When Charles and I used to play on supple grass fields just as the sun was beginning to set, we would try and see what the hell this link between us actually meant. We never quite figured it out; he took to calling it *The Gift*, while I had a different name for it altogether: *The Curse*. Still, all that mattered was that it was something *different*. The term "different," in the very nature of its core and in its very primal state, was terrifying to me.

That notion never stopped my brother though, and it wasn't about to stop him now – not when there was such a glaring opportunity to show off to me; not when all the instruments of his great parlor trick were simply laid out on the table, scintillatingly teasing his every brain spark with the prospect of something riveting. Charles began to add another bottle to his trick. Then another. And another.

"Cool it, Charles; it was cool while it lasted. Let's go."

"Nah, one more Emi, hold on."

"Stop this shit now! Hurry up before someone sees you."

"Who? There's no one here Emerson, so calm the hell down."

Since he would not listen, I forced past his ability and stopped all the bottles mid-air. I looked through him to that place where I knew he would understand, "Not here."

He jolted out of his seat like it was set on fire, thrusting his bottles aside like toys when we were kids and gladly going on the offensive: "What the fuck is your problem? You think we're little kids again?"

"Well I wouldn't think so if you would stop acting like one," my eyes darting towards the owner looking at us warily, "You should know better."

"Your best friends are gone now Emi. It's just me, your loving little brother. And I know exactly what you are. They may not know, but I do."

"We're not going to talk about this now."

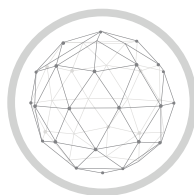
"Then when? When are we going to talk about—"

"Charles!"

Blue and red lights began to flood the lounge in flashes. And we realized the owner had called the authorities about our argument.

"Go home Charles. Get the fuck out of here and go home!" We both tried to rush out of the lounge. Charles began running down the street like someone had stolen something from him, and I stopped in the doorway and looked back at my once simple paradise – the place where I shared memories and fantasies, where nothing of the outside world was permitted. Now all that was left was shattered glass and fractured bonds.

*What I wouldn't give to be normal right now.*



# DANCE WITH MY FATHER

JESSICA RUIZ

It never really resonated with me.  
Having a bald father was the norm.  
The hairless eyebrows, eyelashes, and deep-set eyes,  
He was my rock – the blue and white polka-dotted  
Gown was his cape of bravery and courage.  
I found no flaw in him,  
Perfectly sculpted and clean.

Ten years old, I lost that very image.  
As the casket went six feet under,  
My knees trembled to the ground  
Where I yearned for the peace he rested in.  
There was no reason to get  
On my feet again.

But dance became my escape.  
Each sharp movement of my body  
Erased the pain.  
All I saw in the audience was him.  
I was dancing for him and with him.  
When the music stopped,

He was no longer there.





# DRUMMIN'

NICOLE WALLACE

# TIME FROM YOU

ANTHONY VELLA

1. (20 Minutes Since)

This thing between you and me,  
It simply cannot last, you see.  
Even if you disagree,  
This isn't meant to be.  
You're poison to me --  
Absolutely toxic, definitely.  
So please just take your things and just let me be.  
You've become my icon of misery.  
There's the door, please leave your key.  
I mean you no ill will,  
But I simply can't go on with this fantasy.

2. (2 Days Since)

Hell hath no fury like a woman's scorn.  
This must be true, as she has left me torn.  
Where her halo was, now lies only a set of horns.  
She will accept no means of my surrender,  
Not even when I offer up my first-born.  
My eternal suffering is all she has sworn,  
At least that's what her lawyer has forewarned.  
She's even trying to take the house I was raised in  
Only because she knows it's something I adore.  
I've grown weary of this torment.  
Simply rusted and worn.

3. (1 Month Since)

Give the bitch an inch, and she will take a mile.  
If this doesn't stop soon, I'm going to be on trial  
For the murder of this woman whom I now deem so vile.  
I finally heard the news about her and my friend Kyle,  
With whom now I've become incredibly hostile.  
When confronted, all she did was stand there and smile.  
There was no sadness, there was no denial.  
Just the urge to stomp their heads into the tile.  
Revenge is not the answer,  
But it sure seems to be worthwhile.

4. (1 Year Since)

It's been almost a year since I've seen your face.  
I still don't understand why you left without a trace.  
I thought my love would be enough, but it was not the case.  
All I can do is wait – waiting for you to return to your home base.  
What's more terrifying is you're out there wandering through space.  
I just hope you find whatever it is that you chase.  
Until then I will be here, just trying to keep my pace,  
Hoping one day soon, I may again see your face.

5. (Eternity)

I missed you today.  
I wonder where you could be.  
You haven't come home ...





# WHAT YOU'VE TAUGHT I NEVER LEARNED

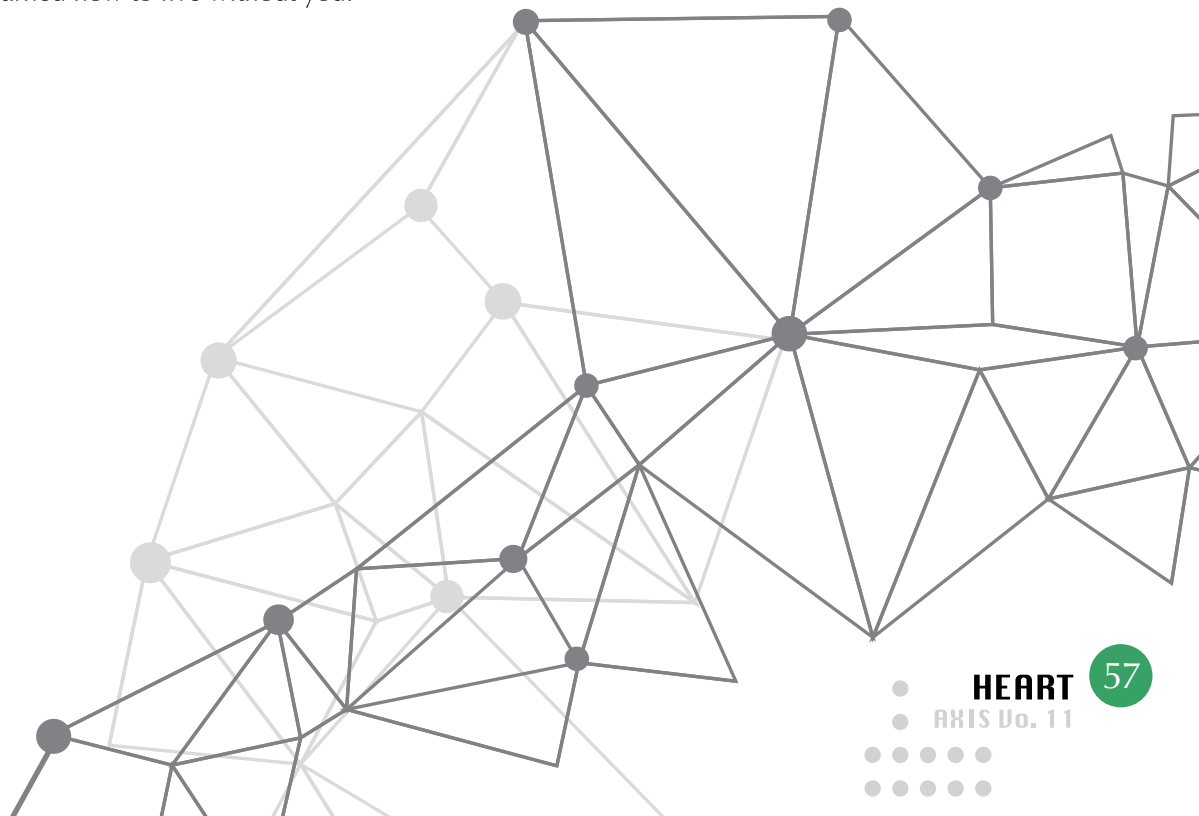
MARIETTA HURTADO

You held me.  
You sheltered me.  
You've taught me how to love.  
You've taught me how to trust.  
We've devoted ourselves to one another.  
We've learned to love unconditionally.  
I can't help but stare at the thick blonde beard that surrounds your masculine jawline.

With you, I'm a better me.  
You've taught me to strive for success.  
You've taught me to stop fearing.  
Your smile warms my heart,  
Although you're obnoxious.  
Oh, how I love that moustache that drapes over your lips.

I've learned not to instill fear.  
I've learned to never break.  
I've learned to look forward.  
Our tight grip makes my hand fall asleep.  
It's the grip I didn't want to let go of.

But I never learned how to live without you.





# BLOOP 1

NICOLE WALLACE





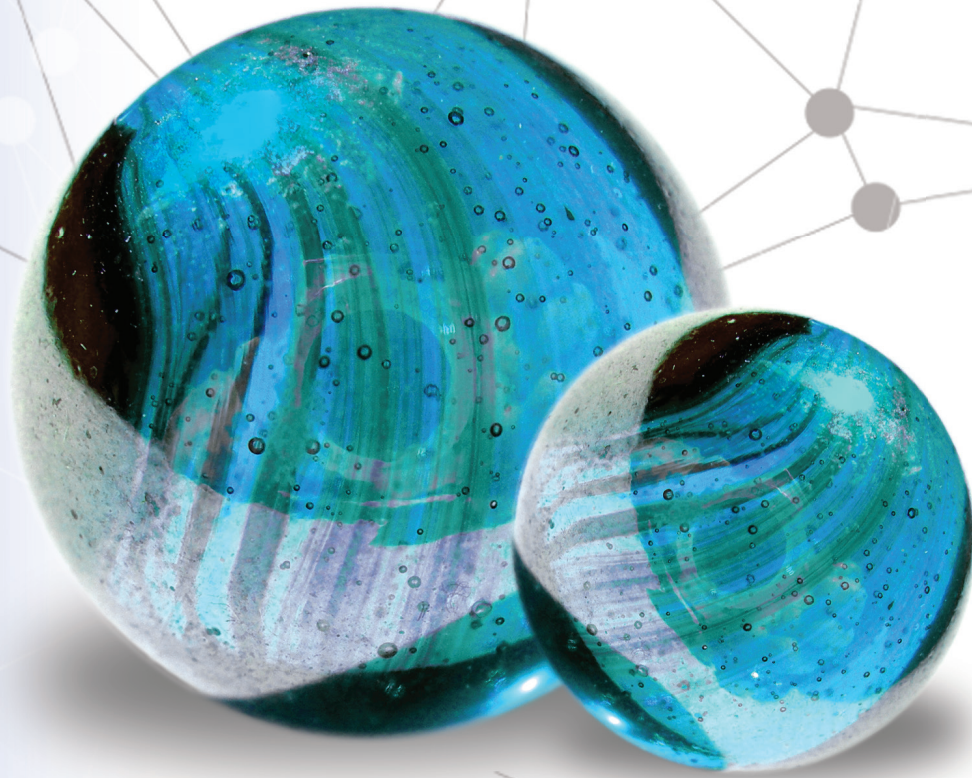
## BLOOP 2

NICOLE WALLACE









# THROAT CHAKRA

**It is essential to vocalize your thoughts! Whether you hate something, or tell the truth or even babble about the randomness of ideas. Just say what you need to say to communicate what you want. Paint the big picture for us!**

# WHO UNDERSTANDS (AND I HATE IT)

DANNY GIRAUD

How humorous it is for a song or for a character, in a movie or in a book, to comprehend me in ways no one in my life can. It forces me to acknowledge and feel everything I'm suppressing, reminding me of people I want to forget. It makes me confront my hardships in a matter of minutes, hours, or even with each turn of the page. It can be rather soothing and, yet, so painful.

I hear and sing that song that reminds me of him. And I hate it. When I hear that lullaby that holds me in ways that no one does, it's so infuriating – the way each word speaks to me as though it were my only friend. When it's not!

I press play and watch my life play out on screen. I look at the characters and realize there are people out there hurting like me. I'm left to reflect while I pity myself again. Once the credits roll, my friends are gone. He and they remain in a state of darkness. This is their happy ending. They are gone. And I'm left to bawl in my bed, reminiscing about all the things that lead to where I am because no one will ever be there for me.

I turn the pages and read my biography. Why do I hurt so? I weep for you, but I secretly weep for myself. You speak your mind, but you mock my feelings, spewing out your emotions as though it were the last time you could do so. I don't want the pages to run out. What becomes of me when I read the final words? Who do I turn to when all's been said and written?

When I'm waist-deep in the mud in the middle of a storm, no one will extend a hand. No one is going to understand what I feel inside like that perfect harmony, or like that person on the other side of the screen or hidden within the pages. I learn from them because they are the only ones I have. Yet, they remind me of my pain and leave me to suffer. And I hate it.





# WE ARE ALL MAD, TOO

MARISOL AQUINO



# MADRE AND MOMMY?

KATHERINE MARCELINO

Wicked witches and poisonous apples and ruthless stepmothers ... are stepmothers really like the way they are portrayed in storybooks? Being eight years old, my Madre was all I was ever familiar with and she was always the one that took care of me. Why would I need another Madre? The concept of having another female character involved was a bit foreign and disturbing. Not only did I not know what a stepmother was truly like, but how does one approach such a person? I only hoped this person didn't intend to replace my Madre because although she had her vices, she had always been mine.

I faintly remembered my father; I only carried a rather faded but cherished image of him in my mind. I loved my father terribly, and I missed him though I had no true perception of just how much time had elapsed since I was last in his presence.

"I have some news for you mi reyna! Papi wants to have you visit him for the summer. What do you think?" my Madre said.

These words somewhat excited me -- why wouldn't I want to see my dad? Regardless, I instantly became skeptical, but I gave it a chance because after all, he was my dad, and how bad could she possibly be? Right?

Now I had to make the three-hour trip from New Jersey to Florida. I had spent the entirety of the last week packing all I could fit into my luggage. By the time I had finished, I was presented with one major problem: how to close the suitcase. I thought for sure that I'd need the equivalent of the weight of an elephant to sit on it in order for it to close properly. I wanted to take everything with me, and I was so eager to spend a whole summer in the Sunshine State. Come to think of it, I might have been more anxious about this trip than I'd have liked to admit. I had never even set foot on a plane, and now I was planning on flying to this place all alone at eight years old!

Strangely enough, parting with Madre was not as hard as I had expected, and the flight was not as nerve-racking as I thought it would be. Being an accompanied minor, I was assigned a specific flight attendant who showed me around and assisted me in any way possible. Aboard the aircraft, she introduced me to some of the wackiest people ever: the cabin crew. At some point, I couldn't stop laughing at them because they were so entertaining.

I recall a moment where one of the flight attendants sat beside me and flashed two napkins with two different doodles of what seemed like the same giraffe. He asked me which looked better, so I closely analyzed them. I chose the one in his left hand. The giraffe had a wiry but charming smile while holding a flower in his mouth. When I gave him my response, he surprisingly jumped up with excitement. Turns out, the two drawings were by two different cabin members, one of them him, and I had chosen his doodle.

"Here," he handed me the napkin with an enthusiastic grin that touched his eyes, "as a memento of your first flight by yourself."

Upon arrival, I contacted my father using the phone at the main desk. Once he answered, I let him know that I had landed and would wait for him in the main office. Sitting and waiting there patiently, feelings of happiness flushed through me as I thought about the flight, but the unease I felt toward meeting my stepmother still clouded my mind. Looking around, I noticed that the airport was rather dim with a noticeable overcast; I ignored it, seeing as paying any mind to it may have had some negative effect on my mood. Waiting wasn't helping. I created an image of what she would look like: a wicked smile, evil personality, handing me a poisoned apple.

After dosing off into my thoughts, I heard my father's distinct voice resonate through the walls the moment he asked for me at the desk. I jumped from my seat, ignoring the stewardess advising me to remain seated. Then I saw him, wearing a custard yellow polo suited to his complexion and khaki pleated pants that matched his brown penny loafers. He had been growing somewhat of a chin curtain beard that flattered him. Sparing a glance past him, I saw her. This shapeless form that had been inundating the notions in my mind finally became a person.

From head to toe, I studied her posture, her actions and her overall manifestation. She





didn't appear to resemble the storybook images I had been imagining, but the ominous ambiance of the gloomy airport overshadowed the positive aura she had. Remembering to breathe, I noticed her impressively high shoes, her smooth lipstick and her fitted V-neck blouse. It all seemed to balance out with her complementary curves in dark, slim jeans and her long blond hair. I was not at all expecting the figure before my eyes. She was beautiful!

As luck would have it, her obvious insecurity alleviated some of the anxiety I had towards meeting her. I snapped back into reality as my father was hugging me with all his might. A surge of warmth poured into my soul now, embracing my dear father. I took in all of him.

"Mi hija, this is Monica. She is the woman your Madre told you about," he said holding my hands.

Monica... her name was Monica... it was nice.

She gave me a timid smile, I returned one just the same. She kept her distance and did not pry, which both pleased and intrigued me. I found myself wanting her to speak; I found myself wanting to talk to her and being able to like her. So, with a stomach full of butterflies, I introduced myself.

"Hey, I'm Katherine."

"Hope we didn't keep you waiting too long," she replied with a smile.

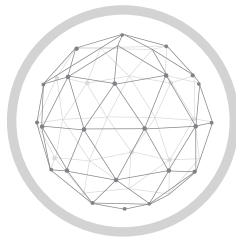
A humid chill entered the night as we headed on home. My father was driving with Monica in the passenger seat, and I was seated in the back. I remember looking up at the ebony sky and spotting stars that shone vividly and sparkled. That instant, I experienced complete and utter peace. The day had been wonderful and my stepmother was not at all related to the negative persona I had imagined her to be. I came across a very simple but extreme question that I felt a strong urge to ask her. Catching her attention, I hesitated and remembered to breathe once again. It was just five simple words. I closed my eyes and blurred them.

"Can I call you Mommy?"

"You can call me anything you'd like," she said with that smile I came to like.

"So can I call you 'evil stepmother'?" I asked, just testing her out ...

She laughed, "Even that, so long as you don't call me that in public," and from that day forward, Monica was not just some woman who occupied space in my father's heart. She held a special place in mine as well.



# TYPERIDER

ELIZABETH DIAZ

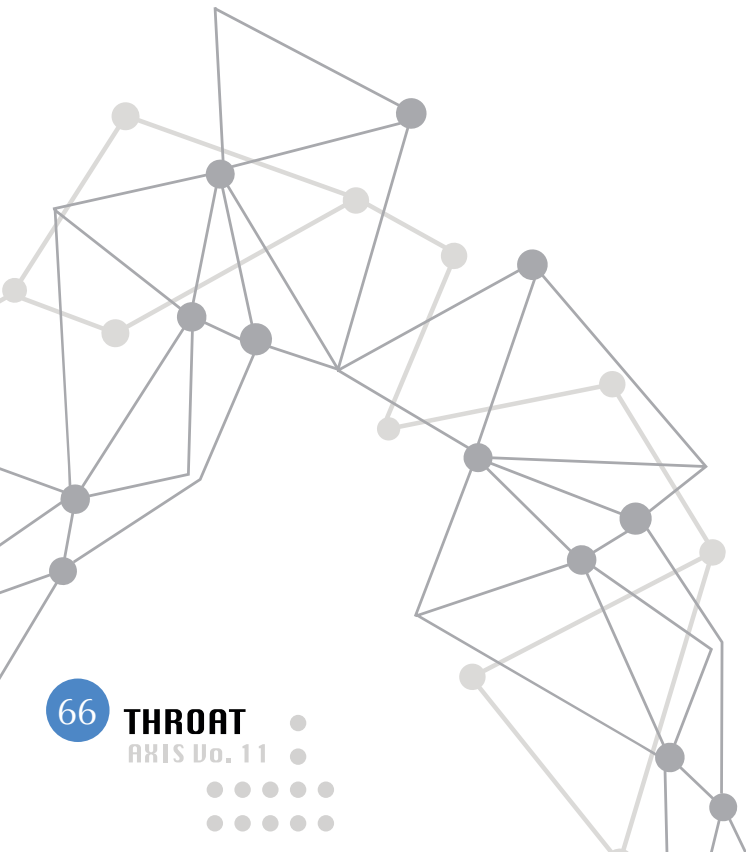
The Sight-  
Painting itself through the windowpane  
Of a slowly moving train.

The Train-  
Swallowed by the tracks  
In a desperate cry for help.

These Words-  
Spoken, written,  
Beating through my veins, staining journals black.

The Train-  
Painting the entire edge of the universe,  
An overspill of ink, unswerving to the brink.

My Self-  
Empty of the words it used to converse.





# FROZEN WATER

NICOLE WALLACE



# PRESSURE

CASEY BARON

It was just one of those nights. People were flooding the pizza shop like the rest of the food on the planet was scarce at best. All the ladies wore heels too tall to be comfortable and a dress too short for tomorrow morning's mass. Meanwhile, all the men were wearing watches which were surely more than a few bucks.

Everything meshed together perfectly, all too well, except the guy sitting in the back corner booth. Solomon. He sat at the booth with his eyes directed straight forward at all times. He sat in silence, but everyone had something in mind.

Solomon reached into his right pant pocket, digging for something, which apparently didn't want to be found. The only thing he recovered was an old gum wrapper and a dime. Frustrated, he grew frantic in his search. He continued to pat himself down as if the TSA was three seconds away from finding drugs on him.

"Here it is," he said to himself, removing the red prescription bottle from his pocket.

*Still popping those pills like a five-dollar female on the side of the street. Didn't I tell you to pray, Sully?* His mother's condescending tone battered the inside of his mind. Solomon moved quickly to get the bottle open, but there was nothing inside.

"To what end, mom?" Solomon placed his head in the palm of his hands upon the table, rubbing his eyes feverishly. "My entire life is the result of your prayers to a dead man! Color me uninterested in the good blessings of your savior."

Exasperated, Solomon rushed up from his seat and headed for the restroom, his head pounding with no sign of release. He pushed open the heavy door and entered. Graffiti lathered the walls like black spots down the skin of a leopard, but the toilets themselves look freshly scrubbed, pristine. Solomon dove for the faucets in an attempt to cool his hot rush.

*I guess the well has run dry for you Sully,* she droned once again.

A soft whistling shifted Solomon's attention to the man standing next to him. The man had features similar to his lost friend: identical stature, face structure, and even facial hair. The man whistled and whistled. The familiar tune sent Sully back.

He recalled December 3, 2005. He remembered the marines who guarded him and his fellow survivors at night. He remembered his best friend whistling the same tune as this stranger, and the flash as his best friend was snatched from the world like a torn photograph. Everything rushed back to Solomon's head, and he tried to splash water at his face rapidly to cool it down, but to no avail. The stranger began to resemble his friend more and more given the heat flashes, and Solomon began to panic while the stranger made his way out of the restroom. Solomon watched his friend, or rather, the man, leave, and slapped the metal mirror in madness.

After several minutes, Solomon pulled himself away from the faucet. He straightened his hair and made his way out of the restroom to confront the stranger. Chasing after Kev, Solomon tugged his shoulder and swung him around in an attempt to get a look. But it wasn't his friend. It wasn't Kev. The confused stranger told Solomon to get his hands off him. Solomon released the man and apologized.

*Solomon, you can't go around arguing with every single man that you think has a problem. That is not the way the good Lord made you, Sully,* his mother called softly.

He gazed around for a moment before storming off for the car. Solomon drove his car to the top of a bluff overlooking the Pacific. After pulling up as close as possible, he sat in the car a moment. He breathed in deeply then released with ease; deciding to exit the car, he made his way towards the edge of the cliff, breathing into his hands and clapping them up a bit, only to place the recently warmed things on his chest for a rub.

"I wondered if I would ever come back here," he said. "And if I did come back, what would I say? What would I say? What would I say or do to make it seem like this very moment didn't send waves of shivers down my spine. The truth is, I don't know. I'm just talking to the wind, hoping



someone will respond. Anyone. If you were here right now, you would probably tell me that this is pointless. You would tell me that I'm wasting words on false hope. But – fuck it if there wasn't a time I needed that hope more than now!"

Solomon continued on, talking atop the Pacific bluff, but even after all of that: nothing.

"I watched you die. Five minutes after I took a photo of you, and three years after we set foot on that desert spit of land together. You died right in front of me. Two to the chest, one to the head – that's all I remember them saying. I am beginning to realize that no matter how hard I fought for you, I still lost you."

With an eye towards the clouds, Solomon saw that the overcast sky was becoming more ominous. Bolts began to take shape in the skies, and thunder bellowed like the coughs of so many sickly soldiers Solomon encountered. His face turned sour as lightning began to strike over the waters of the Pacific.

"Is this supposed to be a sign? What should I make of this? That you want me to jump from this cliff and meet you down below?"

Lightning spewed from above the Pacific, its lashings seemingly never-ending and only lessened by some other force. Among the sight of madness, Solomon staggered back to the car, opened the door, and sat in the driver's seat once again. He sat there for minutes on end, peering at the cliff before him, eyes not blinking.

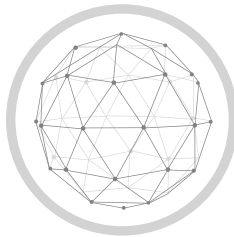
Solomon then opened up the glove compartment, reached inside, and pulled out a small orange bottle with a white cap and a label that read: "Hydromorphone." Painkiller.

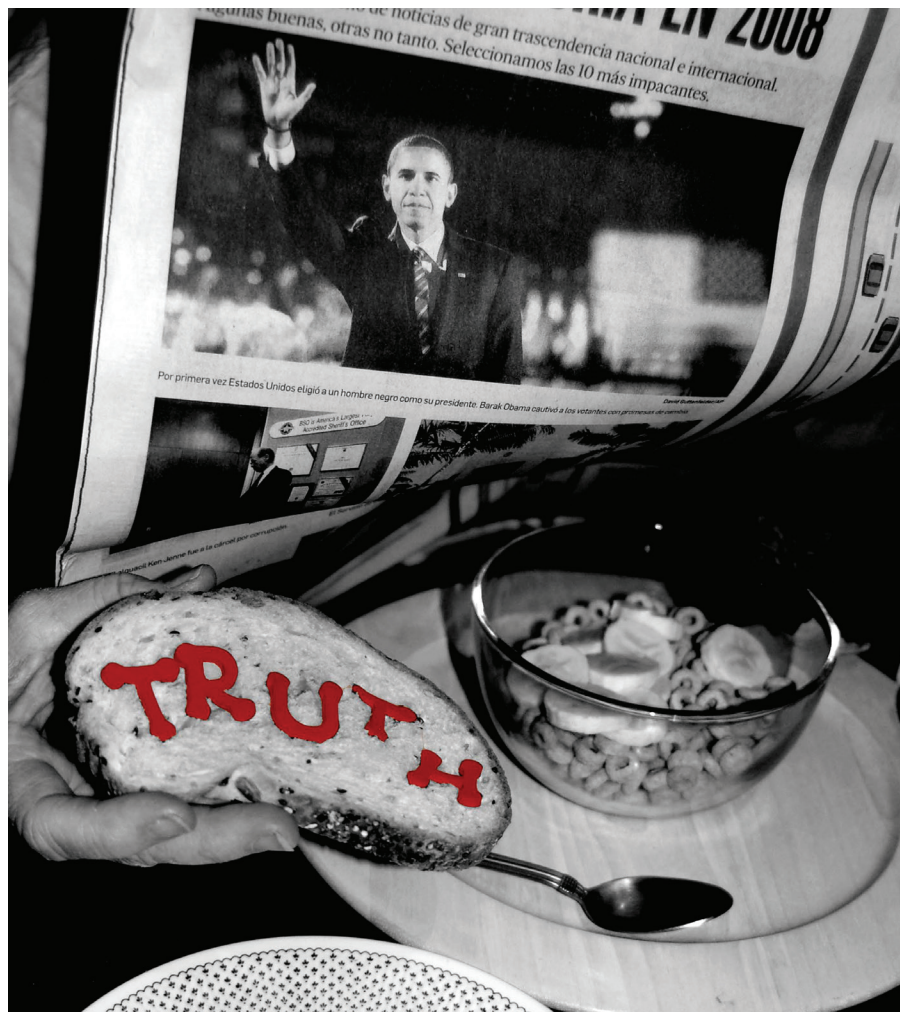
Solomon popped up the bottle cap.

"I'm not ready yet. I'm sorry Kev, but I'm just not ready," he said. Solomon took some pills from the bottle, placed them in his mouth, and began to recline the seat to a point of ease and began to chew.

*Don't worry Sully, I'll pray for you.* The whisper echoed through the confines of the car.

Lightning continued to flash and dazzle across the visible vast of the Pacific as Solomon shut his eyes under the tapping of cool rain, crunching on the only good he had left.





## WHAT IF YOU WERE SERVED A SIDE OF TRUTH

NICOLE WALLACE



# THE VICTIM

ANDREA MATHIS

## **NOT GUILTY!**

She says defiantly.  
Evidence laying sprawled on the table;  
It is the perfect show for afternoon cable.  
Questions both sides try to test,  
Each one gives one answer at best.  
The looks, stares, and subtle sighs,  
Hearing faint whispers and cries.

## **COME TO THE STAND!**

Taking the oath with his right hand,  
Evidence was the killer;  
She indeed was a stealer.  
His heart, she held with no remorse;  
Deception was the game of course.  
The book she had written,  
Love didn't have her smitten.

## **HE'S GONE TOPSY-TURVY!**

Her glares, unnerving,  
The verdict is in.  
Wishing to start all over again,  
Beads of sweat roll down the brow.  
Questions answered:  
Who, What, When, and How?

## **I'M A VICTIM OF LOVE!**

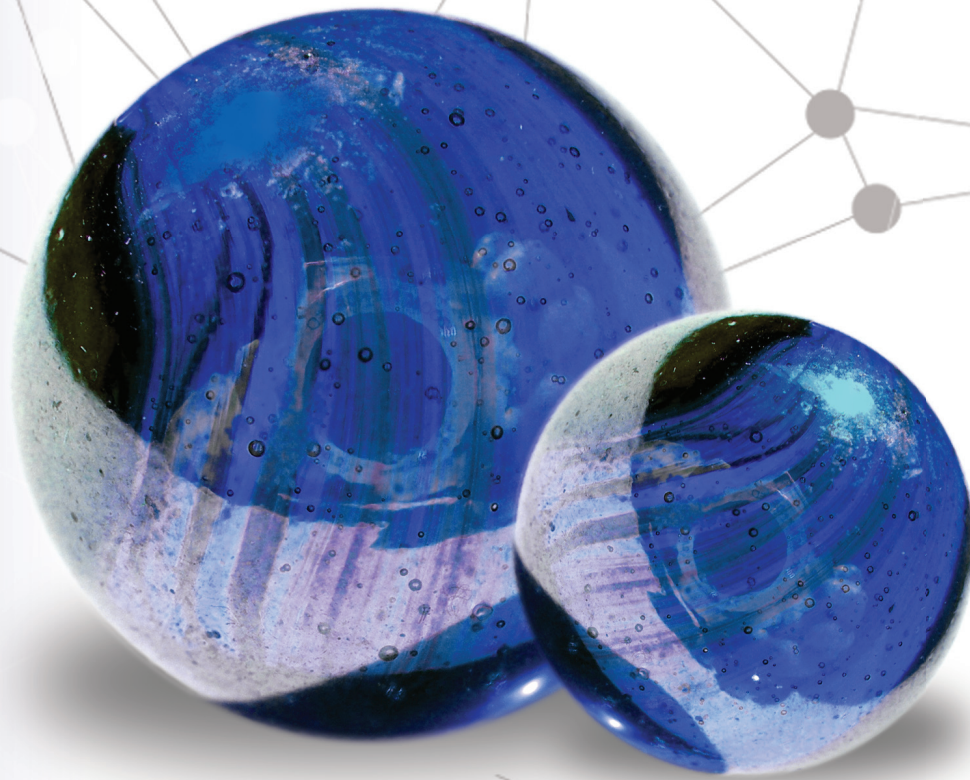
He pleads;  
Pity, she's not worthy of.  
Lock her up and bury the key,  
Charge her with the highest degree.

## **JURORS PASS THE VERDICT TO ME!**

Says the Judge, "You are utterly mean!  
You broke his heart, and that's a crime.  
You took away his inner shine."  
Everyone stared as she was led away,  
Being charged with a crime and a debt to pay.







# THIRD EYE CHAKRA

What can you see? Can you see into the future, or the past? In truth, everyone literally sees everything differently. Think about it! There are varieties of individuals that have 20/20 vision and others that are partially color-blind. Is it just my imagination or are we thinking the same thing?





# FAITH

CARLOS VALENCIA

# MENTAL SLOPE

CHARLEY CESAIRE

Within an instant, darkness engulfs.

I look to the sky for a light of hope,

But it is inactive.

I think of other possibilities,

But I see my soul sinking into this unmerciful abyss.

A chance to fight back is

Hope. A chance, a risk.

My state of mind is neither horizontal nor vertical,

Neither up nor down, filled with torment.

With a mental clock, the sound of a tick

Is what I hear; I toss and I turn, and it ticks.

Hoping for it to be a dream

But instead I sink into my mental slope...



# WE WERE NOT ONE OF THOSE

ELIZABETH DIAZ

Our actions –  
Their ramifications  
can only be highlighted  
by the foundation  
to the end.

Take one,  
two melatonin.  
Only to find what was in lack  
was serotonin.

So I found it in this man's sheets,  
in his speech.  
Eyes –  
in search of anything but my retina,  
sending triggers through my body.

This man I try to dispel:  
Always in a failed riot.  
For my heart knows not what it wants.  
"I thought you knew,"  
he said.  
"Knew what?"  
"What you wanted."  
*I did. I do.*

- A) I want him.
- B) And me: In a parallel universe where spiritual matters are trivial.
- C) I want him to want no other woman.
- D) Or all of the above.

I fear we'll skip A through D and dispel sadness at any given cost. I fear I have made my way into farther of a place than I would have habitually chosen. Yet I am here, as is he.

*Silence. Calm. Drought. Nothing.* Because one second I am overcome with fear, and the next, his hand might graze my cheek to send me on a spiral of silken sin, tying a bow, holding all the spirits in. How do I go back?

In order to dispel the highlighted revelation  
to dispel this man and his smile  
from entering this beating, jagged  
tumor in my bones.

"I don't know what I want."

I lied. I did know. But he didn't want to hear it. I believe he felt it, too. His mind also fought in a riot to dispel its feelings. So we fought against the currents of our blood. Yet we held no argument. There was never a divergent tone in our voices, because that would constitute a relationship thing to do.

And we were not one of those. Certainly not.

We lay in the wake of our chaos, searching for some means of certainty or reason behind our twisted logic. *We were not one of those.* Full of spirits, and anger, and fear, and sadness. We were fine. We wanted nothing more. We are fine. We don't need a relationship. Never with each other. No. Because we were not one of those.







# IMPERMANENCE

ELLIER JIMENEZ

# PERHAPS

ELIZABETH DIAZ

Perhaps we maintain an untainted appearance.

To ignore the guilt  
From the fear of the past,  
To find some sort of new hope.

Perhaps we hold prayers and love.

Yet we can't hold ourselves,  
And we don't all gather once we fall,  
But we hope.

Perhaps we are inundated with these waves.

Pain and anxiety  
Wavering inside,  
Wedge between indecision,  
Incisions and decisions.

Perhaps we want lust and hate.

We walk on thorns and dream of silk.  
We are tempted to be obedient,  
And yet we are rebellious.  
We only satisfy our needs.

Perhaps it does not matter.

We believe we count for many  
Because we want something.  
We strive for greatness,  
Even if it costs us everything.



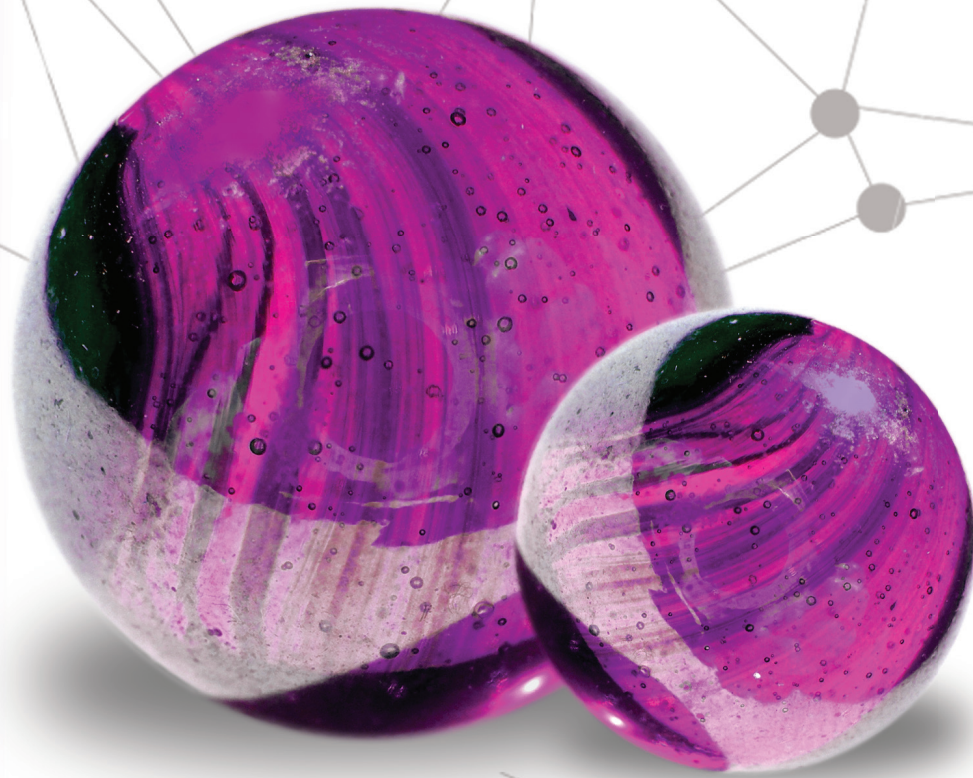


# HIDDEN

KARITZA LEDESMA







# CROWN CHAKRA

People define our spirit in a variety of ways, however, the similarities in the end are all the same: pure bliss. When all is said and done, what fills our inner and outer beauty to the point of pure happiness?



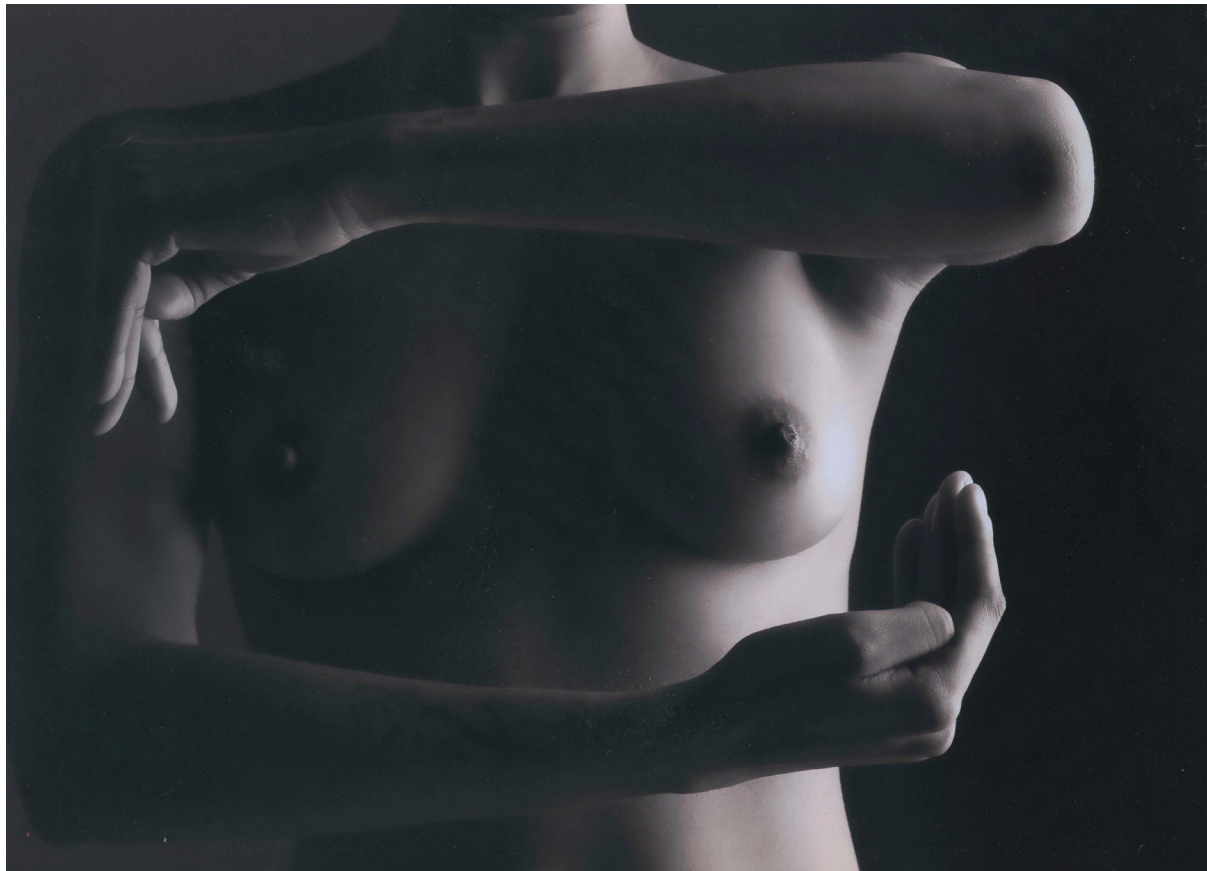


TAGGED

CARLOS VALENCIA







# FRAMING ME

KENNY LEWIS



# OUR WORLD REALIZED

DANIEL CARDORN

Stop and listen  
To your inner workings.  
Look up and soak  
In this world around you.  
You might think  
There's something greater than yourself.  
Blink.  
It's as if the world reset itself.  
See the world for what it is,  
For what we made it.  
Breathe  
As if you might pass out.  
Life goes on.





## CLEAN YOUR MIND

NICOLE WALLACE



# IMAGINE PEACE

DANNY GIRAUD

Right now is one of those moments when I want to forget reality and take myself to another world. I always imagined myself falling into this alternate universe, landing softly on endless fields of grass and magnificently tall, giving trees, providing bountiful fruit, sheltering shade from the rays of the sun, and a playground for me. I climbed up to sit on a branch to grab a perfectly crimson apple, while enjoying the view of the animals going about their business. No man disturbing the peace. No hunters in sight.

I found myself walking for miles until the birds and the trees all faded away in the distance. What I came across, however, was no less pleasing to my eyes. It was a simple yet beautiful town. It was full of life, much like the rest of this world. The townspeople wandered about the town running errands and speaking to their neighbors. Children were out and about, tossing balls around and running through tall meadows.

Parents never worried for their children, and the children never feared being kidnapped. The wooden doors of these clay homes had no locks, and it wasn't uncommon for the doors to remain open. Neighbors would come by without a knock, with a plate of delicious home-cooked meals in their hands. I could smell a fresh apple pie in the distance. It reminded me of that perfect apple I had eaten on top of the tree.

After spending the evening roaming through town, the children were going home, and the lights were turning off. Even on a Friday night, there was no wrongness in this world. I continued to walk until the village was only barely visible. I found a patch of sunflowers and lied down. The flowers hugged my body warmly as I admired the night sky. I counted the visible stars until my eyes closed on their own.

With great anticipation for the next day, the Earth suddenly began to shake beneath me. I no longer felt the warmth of the sunflowers; instead, I felt cold metal banging against my fragile little body. It is as if I can't open my eyes because I am in complete darkness. There are no sounds of wind rustling through the trees, only the silent sobs of young girls nearby.

As I look through the vast darkness, a crack of light burns my eyes, dried out from crying through the night. I blink hard to readjust to the light and try to take in a breath of fresh air, not knowing how long I'll be in here. I'm reminded of that moment over and over. Walking home from school, a man had called me over to show me his puppy. And then I was taken. Unable to scream, unable to call for help, I have remained in utter darkness since.

I want my mommy and my daddy. I want to rest in my pink, flower-patterned bed. I want my mommy to kiss my forehead when I come home from school; I want my daddy to place me on his lap and sing to me in our favorite chair. I am never going to see them again.

My heart begins to race. I'm dreading the moment the trailer door will open, not knowing where I am, or where I will end up. A foreign sun burns my eyes, and I brace myself for the moment a stranger will pay his dues to grope my innocent body. Right now is one of those moments when I want to forget reality and take myself to another world.





# SKY AND SURF

ANONYMOUS

# CANCER GIRL

DAYLENA BARRIOS

It was my sixth surgery, and they still treated me like a first-timer. At first, they asked me to undress and put on the dead-looking robe. It was light green with blue figures and an exposing backside. Then she came in with her light blue scrubs, her matching hair cap taming her shiny black hair. Setting up the IV, my nurse explained the anesthesia process. She listed the after-effects, almost as if to scare me. Everything was fine. Then the man of the hour entered, dressed in navy blue scrubs with a mismatched red and pink hair cap. Dr. Grobman sat next to my bed and drew on my right ear, as if it was a blank canvas on which he would be creating a masterpiece.

"And this is where I'll make the incision ... and this is where I'll cut some more. More ... then more" Dr. Grobman said almost to himself.

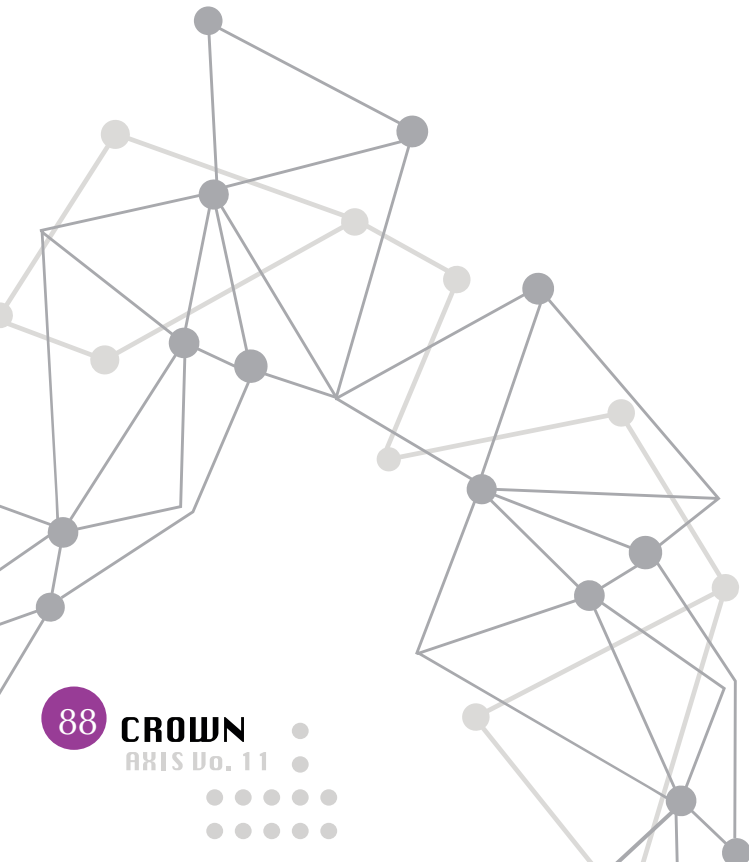
*Did he just say that to me? Please stop! Stop explaining how you might cut more and more!*

I guess he thought that I was strong enough to take all the scary talk, since I had survived five petrifying surgeries to remove a cancerous mass before.

*But I was only a baby for God's sake!*

I barely remembered those surgeries. But this one, this was the real deal. Panic overwhelmed me. Everything was scary now. In a matter of an hour after the graphic and bloody explanation, an army of light blue-suited soldiers pushed my bed away from the surgical waiting area. I was ready, according to them. My heart was pumping faster and faster; you would think the monitor would explode. *Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!* Sweat was running down my forehead ... cold sweat. I was wheeled into a cold room with big white bright lights and surgical tables filled with scalpels and scissors and more sharp objects. This is the last I remember before the assistant nurse approached me with a mask, put it on my face, and asked me to count:

"Ten ... nine ... eight ... s—"





# MY DADDY'S DAUGHTER

MERCEDES MADUIRO

My father is a particular man. It can be seen in the set of his full lips and the rigid tone of his broad brown shoulders. The challenge presented within his hard brown eyes says it's either "put up" or "shut up all together." He cannot be taught anything because education and degrees are worth nothing on the street. With tools and muscles about him, he strives to get the job done as efficiently as possible. The calluses that decorate his palms accentuate the scars and marks that adorn his arms, completing the portrait of the handy man that he is. To him, there is nothing more reliable than the good old ways.

Cooking, cleaning and shopping-- although stern when needed, my father took on roles he considers to be the work of women. All these times molding into memories like mending fences or fixing pipes. Explaining my period, building a tree house, buying my first bra or fixing my first car, he stood as my pillar of strength. Buying my first heels, rebuilding our home and meeting the first boyfriend, all while keeping a brave face as the years revealed my femininity.

I watch even now as he bears his stony façade, washing the one dish he used for dinner. Absentmindedly scrubbing repeatedly in circles, he rinses the plate and dries his hands. I follow him, walking into the hall as he picks up the picture of both of us.

"That was a beautiful day. Wasn't it Dad?"

He does not respond. Instead, he sighs, touching a finger to my photographed face. Placing the picture back on the mantle, he continues to his room to get ready for bed, swiping his hand across the back of our homemade chair.

It was in this chair that I would wait for Dad to come home from work. I would wait for him to wake up each morning to start our day together. I would watch TV, surf the web, and do homework. I basically lived in this chair, but now dust collects on the curved wood. Before my last breath, my loyal dad promised to never leave me, and I promised him I would never leave him.

My strong, silent and fair, but hard, Daddy. He wept at my side, begging me to stay alive long enough for the ambulance to help me. But I could not.

I am my daddy's daughter. And we take utmost pride in our truth and honesty. True to my word, I sit in my favorite chair now, waiting once again for Daddy to wake and start our day.



# NOW YOU SEE FROM BELOW

NICOLE WALLACE



# MAELSTROM

DANNY SEQUEIRA

He entered the world in a maelstrom of light and sound and pain. His entrance ignited the sequence of events that was the birth of a star. The clouds of hydrogen coalesced and began to swirl, pulling at them, and at the heart where He stood, the fusion reaction began. In the space of moments where there was nothing but empty space, stood a red giant. His mere presence accelerated a process that should have taken hundreds of millions of years. Around this sun, planets began to form and on them: life. He was creation itself, and life sprang up around Him.

Within these moments, His consciousness grew. He *knew* what every blade of grass in every world and every universe was doing. He could *feel* the heat of all suns and the *touch* of every whip of wind. He knew what it was to be a drop of rain falling from the sky. Suddenly, a blaze of agony spread through His mind. It was a physical pain, but, more importantly, it was a spiritual pain. He could feel all of the negative energy: rape, murder, theft, and assault. And He grew *angry*.

His rage shook the worlds to their core. How could anything wrought by His own will subjugate and debase itself – that it could become so rank and foul, so putrid and horrible? It was beyond fathoming of Him. He gave them life, happiness, love and paradise. They had warped into an abomination worse than Hell.

And they lived and died in this mire. But below the filth, He could feel a positive energy. It was just strangled by the hatred, but it was there: the light of love, of hope, of devotion and tenderness. He swelled Himself with it, bathed in goodness. His next course of action was to destroy everything that He had made. Like every time before, He stretched his mind to find the source. Unremarkable by any estimation, it was a small blue and green orb in a nearby system. He searched further in this world and found specific souls to inspect.

He materialized into hundreds of millions of light years away to a small blonde girl sitting huddled in on herself in her bedroom. She could not see Him, but she felt a change in the room.

Ever since she had been old enough to walk, her father had used her as a Toy. She had never been outside and never learned to talk. Now as she approached womanhood, her father had grown worse in his perversion, no longer content merely to fondle. Nearly hollow, she had grown dull with misuse and her emotions stunted. Feeling His presence, she raised her head and looked at the empty space where He stood.

He revealed Himself to her in a manner in which He'd been borne into this world: an androgynous male-shaped shadow with only the semblance of a body; his hands had no fingers, his face no features. A being of utter darkness stood in her room. A normal girl would have been afraid. But not Toy, as she was called. She didn't know how to be afraid. To make her comfortable, He changed into something else: a stunningly beautiful woman, clothed in a long elegant dress of all white, with blond hair, blue eyes, and a softly curved, graceful body. She was the envy of every woman, the desire of every man. He made himself into what she would grow up to be.

Toy watched Her come and did nothing but follow Her with her eyes. Taking a seat beside her, She looked down at this poor and abused child and smiled. Toy had never seen a smile. With a smile on Her face, She reached to touch Toy's face with Her soft hand. She infused Toy with warmth and light, and tears began to swell in Toy's eyes. She warmly grabbed Toy's hand and led her out of the darkness. She guided Toy into her father's room and watched as She reached into him, and tore out what had made him human and alive. She cast his soul down into nothing. She had now created a place where Toy would be nurtured and no longer be a toy.

So Her first visit was complete, and She had seen the resilience of the human spirit. The majesty of a child surviving horror and, with help from Her, the girl would grow to become a magnificent woman.



She then moved to the second.

In a small padded room sat a lone man, sitting on the floor in the standard lotus position. Like the décor around him, he too, was garbed in white. His hair and beard were a white so pure it would put shame to the snow in the highest, cleanest places of this world.

His eyes were closed when She arrived, and while he had sensed Her arrival, those eyes remained closed. He treated Her as he did everyone else. He had been kept in his own mind rather than the realities of the world. He acknowledged nothing and no one that was not a product of his own imagination. He was not mad; conversely, he was one of the sanest men to be found. He knew what was real and what was not; he simply chose to ignore what he felt was underserving of his attention.

Marking his fortieth year in imprisonment to his captors had only been a convenience to him. He had no worries, and his meals were always provided. He could weave his world however he wanted, and that was exactly what he did. He had seen the horrors of that world and chose not to participate in it any longer. His world was beauty. His was a mind so potent, that within a short amount of time he would be able to affect the outer world with his mind. That was why She had come to him.

She saw that this man had no need to be protected from Her true self, so She changed back into Himself. He became, again, the slender being of darkness. He stood with His robes of shadow – that seemed to be a space where nothing stood. He did not take up space as most did and where He stood seemed to be bending space and time. Anything approaching him would be instantly unmade.

He walked to the center of the room and sat in mirror image of what the other prisoners called him: Dreamer. For the first time, Dreamer opened his eyes. Dreamer even opened his mouth to give greetings to this strange visitor. Before he could bring the air through his unfamiliar throat, He touched his mind, and, while He used no real words that could be discerned, His point came across perfectly. Dreamer smiled and touched His mind, communicating in the same fashion.

They talked for hours this way. He learned everything there was to know about Dreamer: he had never really been a part of the world but more of an observer, experiencing things only vicariously. While not living in the world, he did know what went on: the wars, the tragedies, the overall wickedness that was plaguing society. He believed that every day they would destroy more of everything; they would put each other to death, and continue to enslave one another. Dreamer left the outer world when he decided that only thing that humanity deserved was extinction.

They discussed the world that Dreamer had made for himself, inside himself. In this world, it was all exotic flowers, animals, and landscapes. Even colors were unique here, not bound by waves of light or by the limitations of the human eye. This world was special in that it was beyond every boundary. Nothing was impossible for the things that dwelt within it.

They said their goodbyes, and then, curiously, Dreamer began to fade. His eyes smiled as they closed once again, and he dwindled. He had finally decided to give Dreamer's realm physical substance. If His face could be said to smile, it would have been as Dreamer's smiling eyes closed for the last time in His world. In Dreamer, He had seen the power of the human mind – the power of creation through imagination; their power to grow. He was impressed.

Travelling once more, He moved on to the third occurrence of humanity.

He found Himself in a valley somewhere in the hills of China. At the mouth of this valley there was a huge divided waterfall, and on the top outcropping of rock where the full weight of the water fell, sat a small old man. He sat and withstood the dull impact of the torrent, succumbing neither to the press of thousands of gallons of water on his body, nor to the cold threatening to seep into his body. That body was small, but in it was compressed more strength than tissue and bone could account for. Any man that



took him for a frail bent-back old man would soon learn that he was anything but. His strength had moved beyond the limitations of mere flesh. His limbs moved with the power and speed that could only be possible through the use of qi.

He found himself in a valley of rock walls that were pockmarked, as if hit by fists in stone itself. Giant trees that occupied one end of the valley had been stripped of their bark, as if they were struck. Some across and, amazingly, some down the center. Walking across the stone floor, He noticed it had been worn smooth in the center, as if feet passed over again and again. Living in exile all these long years, this man became apt in his trade; no man alive could challenge him. So he trained in solitude in hopes of a one day being presented by a great challenger. All those that fell called him Fighter.

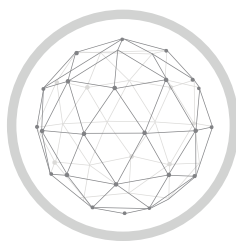
As He moved towards Fighter, the spry old man moved out from the trees and gracefully leapt down to where He stood. Being quite arrogant, Fighter grinned a wide toothy grin at Him and proceeded to make his move, but He caught Fighter's fist easily in his hand and held it. Fighter just pulled his head back and cackled at the sky.

He drew back and struck again, but once again, He was countered. He moved faster, struck harder. With every failure, Fighter stepped up his assault, and they moved in tandem across the valley, off the rock walls and into the forest, moving between and against the trees using them to propel themselves at each other.

For hours they fought. When they reached the center of the valley again, Fighter began to reach out to lift and catapult objects towards Him. Fighter used large boulders and uprooting trees to fling at Him. He seemingly could not keep up with this nimble creature, this human. Into the fourth or fifth hour of their struggle, Fighter finally laid a hand across the face of Him, and with that victory, they stopped abruptly and laughed.

He collected himself and disappeared, materializing back at the heart of the red giant where He had been birthed. He reviewed all of the day's occurrences to decide what should be the fate of His creation. He had seen an emotionless doll grow and become a beautiful, vibrant young woman. He had seen the heights of what the human mind could accomplish: the brightest beacon of human imagination. He had seen a man surpass the bonds of his body and become a god solely through his own determination.

He made His decision, His Judgment. He would let it be. And if they destroyed themselves, this blemish on His mind would be forever destroyed. Still, He thought, they might change. He left the world, and with his passing, His red giant exploded, becoming a supernova of unimaginable beauty, destroying all the planets clustered around it. It created the basis for new life in the clouds of hydrogen that rolled forward...



# AXIS AWARDS 2012 - 2013

**Editors:** Jessica Fiallo and Chelsea Fernandez

**Designer:** Stephanie Garcia

These awards were won in the Florida College System Publications Association (FCSPA) for AXIS Magazine's 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. The purpose of FCSPA is to bring students and advisers into an organization whose aims are to provide responsible guidance to student publications and to ensure their growth as a medium for their education and critics.



## **General Excellence**

The General Excellence Award is determined based on the results of the publications in all the categories.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place AXIS Magazine

## **Nonfiction**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Daniel Rodriguez, "The Words we Live By"

## **Art – Individual**

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Alejandro Valencia, "Homos Homini Lupus Est."

## **Two-Page Spread**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Chelsea Fernandez & Claudia Gonzalez (pages 22-23)

## **Photo**

1<sup>st</sup> Place Marisol Aquino, "Madness"

## **Photography (Group of Photos)**

1<sup>st</sup> Place Natalie Martinez ("Untitled"), Roberto Medina ("Untitled"), Aaron Rolle ("Dish Dive")

## **Design**

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Jessica Fiallo & Chelsea Fernandez

## **Staff Page**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place AXIS Magazine Staff





# STAFF PAGE

## **Chelsea Fernandez**

Editor & Chief

## **Kathrina Giordani**

Managing Editor

## **Poetry Editors**

Miguel Anuez

Denise Hernandez

## **Prose Editors**

Katherine Marcelino

Stephanie Garibaldi

## **Editorial Board**

Rachel Bubbel

Casey Baron

## **AXIS Advisors**

Carmen Bucher

Kate Noonan

## **Eric Cornish**

Graphic Consultant

## **Stephanie Garcia**

Graphic Director

## **Graphic Designers**

Shane Mehta

Johana Martinez

Santiago Acosta

Abigail Solorzano

Adriana Berincua

Kendra St. Luc

**More details about AXIS Creative Arts Magazine & Club!**

Contact Us At:

[Axis.CreativeArts@gmail.com](mailto:Axis.CreativeArts@gmail.com)

Or Like Us on Facebook:

AXIS Club



# THANK YOU'S

To all of those who have helped this rebellious AXIS Creative Arts Crew, or as the English Department would prefer to call us "The AXIS Peeps," we humbly thank you.

**Malou C. Harrison**

North Campus President

**Dr. Jacqueline Peña**

Dean of Academic Affairs

**Fermin Vazquez**

Senior Director of Campus Administration

**Georgette Perez**

Dean of Students

**Josett Peat**

English Department Chair

**Ellen Milmed**

Assistant to the Chair, English Department

**Feliza Gomez**

Secretary, English Department

**Carmen Bucher**

Professor, English & Communications Department & AXIS Advisor

**Kathleen Noonan**

Assistant Professor, English & Communications Department & AXIS Advisor

**Eric Cornish**

Computer Animation Faculty

**Victor Gomez**

Professor, Art & Philosophy Department

**Barry Gordon**

Director of School of Entertainment & Design Technology

**Eveyln Rodriguez**

Student Life Director

**Stephanie Garcia**

Graphic Arts Designer

**Media Services**

**AXIS Creative Arts Club**

Thank you for your unwavering support for the AXIS Creative Arts Magazine!

# EDITORIAL POLICY

AXIS is Miami Dade College, North Campus's creative art magazine. It is published once every year during the spring semester and released in the following fall, distributed free of charge. Only students from Miami Dade College, North Campus are allowed to submit their pieces to the magazine. We accept pieces of prose, both fiction, non-fiction, essays, and poetry. We also accept pieces of art, photography, short films and music. All submissions must include a corresponding form, which are available in the AXIS office located in the English Department in room 7321. Copyright for individual's works both audio and print return to the artist one year from the date of publication. All rights are reserved. Content and opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or general staff.

## **Miami Dade College Board of Trustees**

Helen Aguirre Ferré, Chair  
Armando J. Bucelo Jr., Vice Chair  
Marili Cancio  
Jose K. Fuentes  
Benjamin León III  
Bernie Navarro  
Armando J. Olivera

Dr. Eduardo J. Padrón, President,  
Miami Dade College

Malou C. Harrison,  
North Campus President



Miami Dade College, North Campus  
1138 NW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Miami, FL 33167-3418

Miami Dade College is an equal access / equal opportunity institution and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, marital status, age, religion, national origin, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation or genetic information. Contact the office of Director, Equal Opportunity / ADA Coordinator at 305-237-2577 for assistance.





WE WALK ON THORNS  
AND DREAM OF SILK.

WE ARE TEMPTED TO  
BE OBEDIENT, AND YET  
WE ARE REBELLIOUS.

-Elizabeth Diaz