

# AXIS

CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE

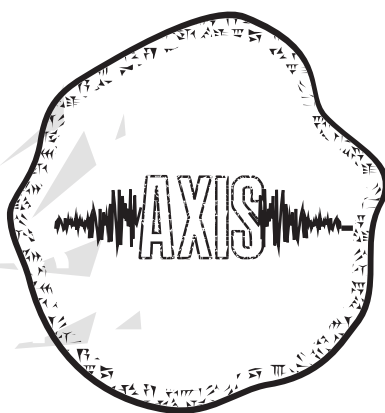
Volume 12





# AXIS

|'ak-sis|



a line that connects different  
backgrounds, stories, and experiences  
into one cohesive voice.

# About the Cover Artist



*"When I look into a microscope, art is what I see. The natural world around me has always been my muse since I was a child."*

*- Barbara Sotolongo*

Born in Miami and of Cuban descent, Barbara Sotolongo is studying Biology and plans to minor in Art. Her desire is to transfer to the University of California at Berkeley and concentrate in Zoology. She enjoys animation and graphic novels in her spare time.

*Camouflage*, an acrylic on canvas, 12"x12" painting, which represents the different types of faces that people must wear in order to survive in society, merges Sotolongo's love of the natural world and its surroundings. The tree trunk provides protection for humanity in its most organic way.

*Camouflage* was selected from over 800 works of art, including mixed media, photography, and paintings.



# Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Whether you're reading this magazine because you helped organize it, your piece is in it, or because it just caught your eye, we hope you are able to truly understand the voices we tried to portray in the very heart of Miami Dade College, North Campus – the voices of the students.

The Miami Dade College, North Campus creative arts magazine is dedicated to any student who believes he or she has something to say, draw, play, sculpt, or design. It is because of our dedicated students that AXIS serves as the voice to be heard in our campus community. AXIS is a strictly student-generated creative arts magazine. All pieces are submitted, selected, edited, designed, and published by the students of North Campus.

For those who do not think much of our campus, we would like to show you otherwise with AXIS Volume 12. The AXIS Creative Arts Magazine is more than some crafty words on expensive paper; it is the collective voice of the many students that make the heart of North Campus beat, showing resounding life. From depression to elation and generation to generation, the stories, art pieces, poems, and photography all guide you, the reader, to the soul of humanity.

We hope you enjoy seeing the voices of our North Campus.



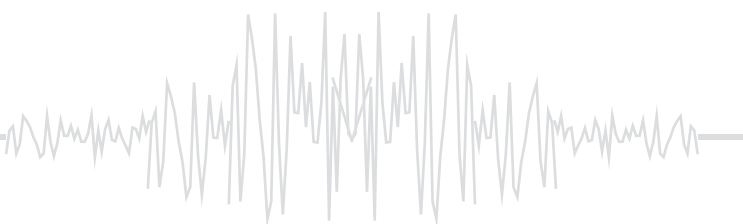
Katherine Marcelino, *Editor in Chief*



Jasmine Rosello, *Managing Editor*



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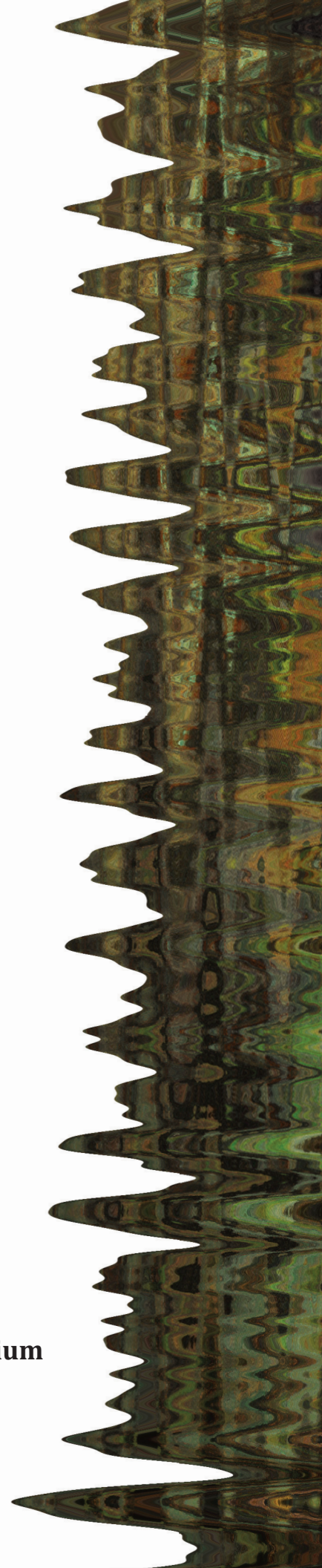
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# Poetry Is

**Elizabeth Diaz**

They murdered my poetry—

word by word

They judged my lack of punctuation

my abundance of sentence fragments

They rewrote what did not belong to them

*They left a skeleton of my work*

They scavenged the pieces of my art

printed on paper

And yet still—

I watched my words become the truth

slowly and then all at once

I watched them

I watched as they butchered my words yet made them **whole**

And yet still—

I write with fragments

I hold no urge to obey rules

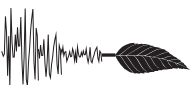
Poetry leaves room for:

defiance

omission

sin

Poetry is.





# Royal Blue

**Guillian Cittadino**

Royal blue around each curve,  
With time the air stands still.  
It grows to shimmer through the night,  
Where it hovers vibrant chills.

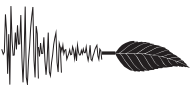
Velvet too, its fur had glistened.  
The clouds were to erupt.  
A taint of water on its body,  
Its surface then corrupt.

A dimming gleam,  
With dampened seams.  
The wind would strike,  
A sharpened pike.  
Beaten, battered through and through,  
To where it fades the royal blue.



# Tranquility

Adrian Nonez-Newman







# Serendipity

Roxana Aluart



# Day

Keishla Quiles



# Night

Keishla Quiles

# Mars and Venus

Juliana Zapata

Mars and Venus set us apart.

Boys are hard as rock.

Girls are nice and soft.

Prickly and dry.  
Lovers, daring, violent.  
Rotten, unfaithful.

Hairless and smooth,  
Loving, caring, jealous,  
Dramatic hysterics.

or the Big Bad Wolf

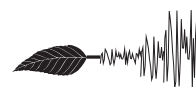
little red riding hood

The world's a huge puzzle  
where they all play a part.

and as for men who dare cry

and women who dare war

There's no place for them here.  
Even if they're all from earth,  
Mars and Venus set us apart.



# Futility

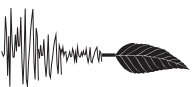
## Sarah Kiss

My gaze scans the azure expanse  
Attempting to find your likeness in the clouds  
I'm submerged in an empty sea of blue  
I search for you everywhere

I stop to listen to the rustle of the pines  
Seeking to catch a whisper of your tender intonation  
I'm given nothing but a hollow echo that resonates through my bones  
I search for you everywhere

I swallow amber, candied fire  
When I am adrift in my quest  
I've dived to the bottom of many bottles  
Trying to bring you back  
I search for you everywhere

I let tawny, worn leather explore my lustrous silk  
Eau de Cool Water mingles with sweet sweat  
Sometimes I call him "Daddy," when I look up into burnt umber irises  
Hoping to catch a glimpse of you  
I see only the dim glow of a bedside lamp  
I search for you everywhere

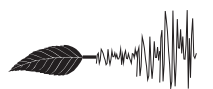






# Weekend

Brenda Diaz



# A Time for Toilet Paper

Jessica Maria Fiallo

## March 2010

2-ply *Cottonelle* toilet paper, my favorite kind. Mom doesn't harass me about using only what I need. Unless, of course, I make them into giant soggy spitballs and hurl them towards the ceiling.

## April 2010

Mom started complaining all of a sudden and told me not to waste so much paper. She even threatened me with removing the good toilet paper from my bathroom and only leaving it in hers.

## Mid- April 2010

I can't believe she actually did it! I'll show her. I'm just going to use the roll in her bathroom.

## May 2010

So Mom started buying that horrible translucent school toilet paper. I tried using the good stuff, but the roll's been empty for weeks. I've noticed that dinner's served on smaller plates, too. Mom says she's trying to get us to eat healthier, but Vienna sausages and leftover rice are definitely not from *Whole Foods*. What's going on?

## June 2010

What the hell is this? Mom's even stopped buying the crappy, low-grade toilet paper. This morning I found old rags folded on the towel rack. Mom said she saw it on TLC: something about saving the planet by wiping with rags and washing them once a week. I don't know what's gotten into her, but I'm not going to wipe my ass with my old pajamas.

## July 2010

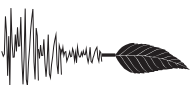
Today, Mom slipped in the laundry room, and all the soiled rags she carried fell on top of her. I wanted to laugh, but I've never seen her cry before. She wouldn't even look at me; instead, she flung the rags back into her basket and told me that I'd cry too if I were shitted on.

## Late July 2010

I found mom in the backyard sitting on an empty laundry basket. She stared at a bonfire as she roasted a giant piece of Spam over the flames. She offered me a piece but the smell made me gag. That's the last time we ever used rags.

## August 2010

A big storm hit and both the electricity and water have been turned off. It's been three weeks and it seems like we're the only house that hasn't gotten our power or our water back yet. Mom says it's the company only caring about the customers living on the better side of town. Now we're using candles because Mom keeps forgetting to buy batteries for our flashlights. Sure, we've got Kleenex, but I don't pay too much attention anymore.



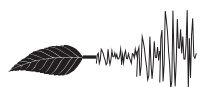
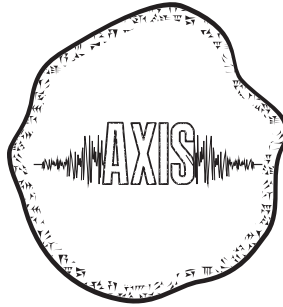
### September 2010

Mom came in with a stack of newspapers and a box of Chinese take-out. We haven't eaten take-out in months. We sat together on the living room floor to eat; she asked me if the food was good, and I nodded. Mom's smile was forced. She opened a can of *Coke* that we ended up sharing. That's when she said it: *we have to move*, then stuffed a piece of chicken in her mouth. Now I understood what the newspaper was for.

### Late September 2010

Turns out the newspaper wasn't just for the packing, my ass is permanently black. It stains the inside of my underwear and my jeans. Sitting in our car, I asked if we would have toilet paper at the new place – she just stared at me and shrugged.

*Sure.*



# Two Doves

Hannah Manzano

**When I was a little girl, my grandmother would pick me up from school every day.**

We would do everything together, and we were inseparable. She was my best friend.

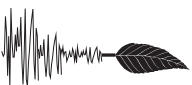
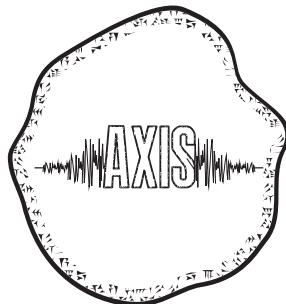
In my opinion, my grandmother was the best cook. I remember one day we were making my favorite meal, carne con papa. The aroma of the cooking beef traveled through the whole house. As we put all the ingredients into the pot, I noticed her hands trembling. I was too young to understand what was going on; I thought she was cold, but then I noticed her hands shook with everything that she did.

My parents eventually told me what was wrong. She was really far into her illness and was getting worse. I couldn't understand how this could happen to someone so loving and caring. I locked myself in my room and cried for hours. The fear of losing my best friend tore me apart. Every night I would ask God why He was allowing this to happen to her and my family.

Her illness got so bad that we had to put her in a nursing home. I could not accept this decision, but I knew it had to be done. Every day after school, I would go visit her. I would sit beside her and tell her about my day, and she would tell me about hers. She told me a story of a bird that would sit at her windowsill for days. When I started to cry, she asked me what was wrong. I told her that the same thing would happen to me whenever I got home: I would find a little white bird sitting outside my bedroom window. On our last day together, the birds were nowhere to be found.

Shortly after, we gathered her things from the home in silence. On the drive back to our house, I prayed to God. It was a beautiful day outside; the sun was out, and the cloudless sky was the perfect shade of blue. I asked Him if this weather was because my grandmother was now in the Kingdom of Heaven...

Walking into my room, I heard chirping. As I opened the window blinds, I saw the two white birds that would sit with my grandmother and me. I knew in my heart that my grandmother was telling me that everything would be okay.

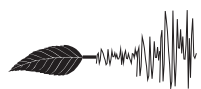




# Candles

Elizabeth Diaz

And I thought—  
what a dangerous thing,  
to allow others into pictures  
when they might be gone  
by your next birthday.



# My Momma

Regina McKinney

**I didn't think I would ever be here in the backseat of some old white man's car.** Me and my sister Joy are in the car. We are waiting for our Momma. Momma said she forgot something in the house and went back in to get it. I wish she had taken me with her instead. Now he is looking at me, saying that I look just like my Momma. He is touching me where my boobs would be if I had some, and he's smiling. Why would he touch me at all? I'm only seven years old. He says you are going to be just like your Momma when you grow up.

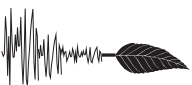
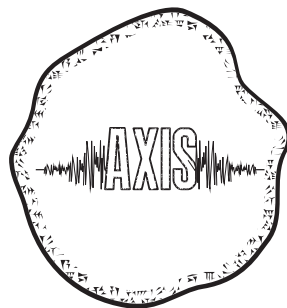
Sometimes me and Joy are home alone for days. We go to school, and we buy our own food from the corner store. We can make a \$65 book of food stamps last a long time. We learned the hard way about spending our stamps on crazy stuff. We were hungry the whole weekend.

Where we live is not all that good. It looks sort of like a wooden shack. The good thing is that we can watch TV all we want when the electricity is on. Momma doesn't say nothing because she's hardly ever home. She tells me and Joy don't open that front door for nobody. But nobody ever knocks.

Momma is with us today. She is going to get some money from this old white man. On our front door there was a paper in red letters. It said EVICTION. It was there when me and Joy came home from school. One of our neighbors caught up with Momma and told her about the paper on our door. Momma came home and looked at the paper. She took it off the door and sucked her teeth. The next thing I know we are in the back seat of this man's car. Momma said this man was her friend and was going to give her the money so we won't get put out.

Finally, Momma comes back out the house. I am glad because I'm tired of this old man already. He asks Momma can he buy me and Joy some Chicken Flip. After they got the chicken dinners for us, they drove a little more and got out. Me and Joy don't even care because we were eating something. We fell asleep for a long time until we heard the car crank up again.

I didn't tell Momma that her friend touched me. What good would it do? She would just say shut your fat ass up. That man doesn't want you. I know because Joy tried to tell her that a man touched her once, and Momma slapped her for it, saying the same thing. This happens a lot. Sometimes when Momma is at home, I wish she wasn't. Sometimes I wish for another Momma.



# Uncle Frankie

Rachel Pappalardo

**“The one thing you’re gonna learn in life, kid, is that you hafta make your own love.”** I watched Frankie light his pipe, taking a long drag before continuing on, “If nobody loves you here, then someone’s gotta out there.”

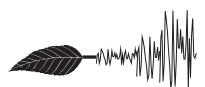
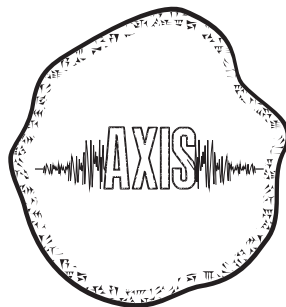
Watching Uncle Frankie’s lips move, I tried to understand the meaning behind his words. He was a concise man, never saying too much, so this burst of language lit up the dark dinginess of the restaurant. I was eleven, and Uncle Frankie was the closest thing I had to a father. That day, those strange words made Frankie a god in my eyes.

My mother had died earlier that day – a car accident at the town square. There was a dull ache in my heart, reminiscent of something lost, but I was only a child, unsure of how to cope with the pain. I was a child who was far removed from parents that were more focused on a life outside of home than in it. My mother’s childless brother, Frankie, was my godfather, and treasured me as one would treasure an only son. Uncle Frankie was my escape from this gray-scaled world into one touched with hues of color, warm in shape and vigor.

Uncle Frankie must have been hurting, but he chose not to show it. Instead, he took me out to dinner and continued to be there for me, unlike my father who became sullen and withdrawn. He’d spend days at a time staring out the window as if there was nothing left in the world but a life that had taken my mother away from him.

Eventually, I learned that I lost two parents that day – my father had forgotten to live for me. We tiptoed around each other as if just the slightest whisper would shatter the emotional house of glass we lived in. It was these periods of deafening silence that would leave me with a terrible feeling of emptiness. The more I tried to reach out to him, the further we drifted apart until the only thread that seemed to connect us was a surname and the echo of a woman’s memory. Whenever the school bus would drop me off to the black chasm I called home, my father’s now hollow cheeks further reminded me of the insurmountable withering of his soul – an emotional decomposition I was powerless to stop.

Uncle Frankie says, “Some folks get so stuck on the hurt that they forget to live.”



# The Page

Elizabet Moreno

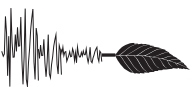
Afraid that we might ruin the page,  
that we might end up destroying it  
with our light and darkness,  
the way no one else can,  
we don't know **how** to fill it.

The only way the page is ruined is  
once we stop writing.

A blank page deteriorates into the air  
just like our words never written.

Our pen, our ink, our paper, our stories  
will not let us,  
will not **ALLOW** us  
to stop writing.

*Fill the page.*

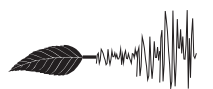






# Back Light

Eliany Martinez



# Ultimate Rejection

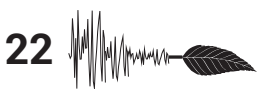
## Sarah Kiss

Drifting in a sea of amniotic venom  
Her disdain is the life force sustaining my existence  
How I unconsciously yearn to escape the womb of hostility.

Tepid water pours forth...  
I unwittingly take my first gulp of air  
Crying, screaming...  
How else could I react to this cold foreign room...this cold foreign woman?  
Naked, empty, utterly exposed.

Searching for reassurance, for comfort  
She avoids my gaze in this ocular tango for two.  
In her desperate attempt to avoid any connection  
Her burning cold, icicle grip cradles me loosely—  
Was she hoping I'd tumble to the ground, leaving this world as harshly as I entered?  
I am whisked away for the first and last time.

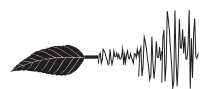
This apathetic body from whence I came signs my denunciation  
This, the only time I will ever see the soft curvature of her smile.  
Wheeled away as the alabaster ceiling swirls  
Aware of her betrayal, I take this in...  
The ultimate rejection.



# Mannequins

Juliana Zapata

Perfect Illusions.  
Without a voice to protest-  
mere products of men.



# He Wants Me

Kathlyn Alexis

green bruises  
traced like hands  
hide under my sleeve  
while i listen  
to the cheap lectures  
my 'sisters' preach  
about unity, and respect.  
before i hunt down  
my white '96 solara,  
filled with dandelion wishes,  
i hear them whispering  
like middle schoolers  
about my toy ring,  
wrinkled papers, and green finger.

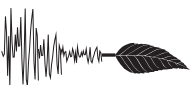
but that's okay because  
**my husband wants me.**

or at least that's what the yellow bruise on my left rib  
tells me.

my husband likes smoking,  
and Mary Jane.  
especially when she shakes her round hips and giggles.  
his pants  
wrap around his ankles  
while he chases her  
like a two year old,  
just learning to walk.

he likes shiny things.

my rusty tin can,  
filled with dreams of a plane ticket to heaven,  
always catches his eyes  
when he trips,





with his pants down in our empty bedroom.

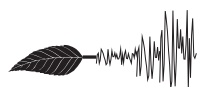
the cigarette bud burns his finger  
to remind him of personal space  
but he doesn't like to listen.

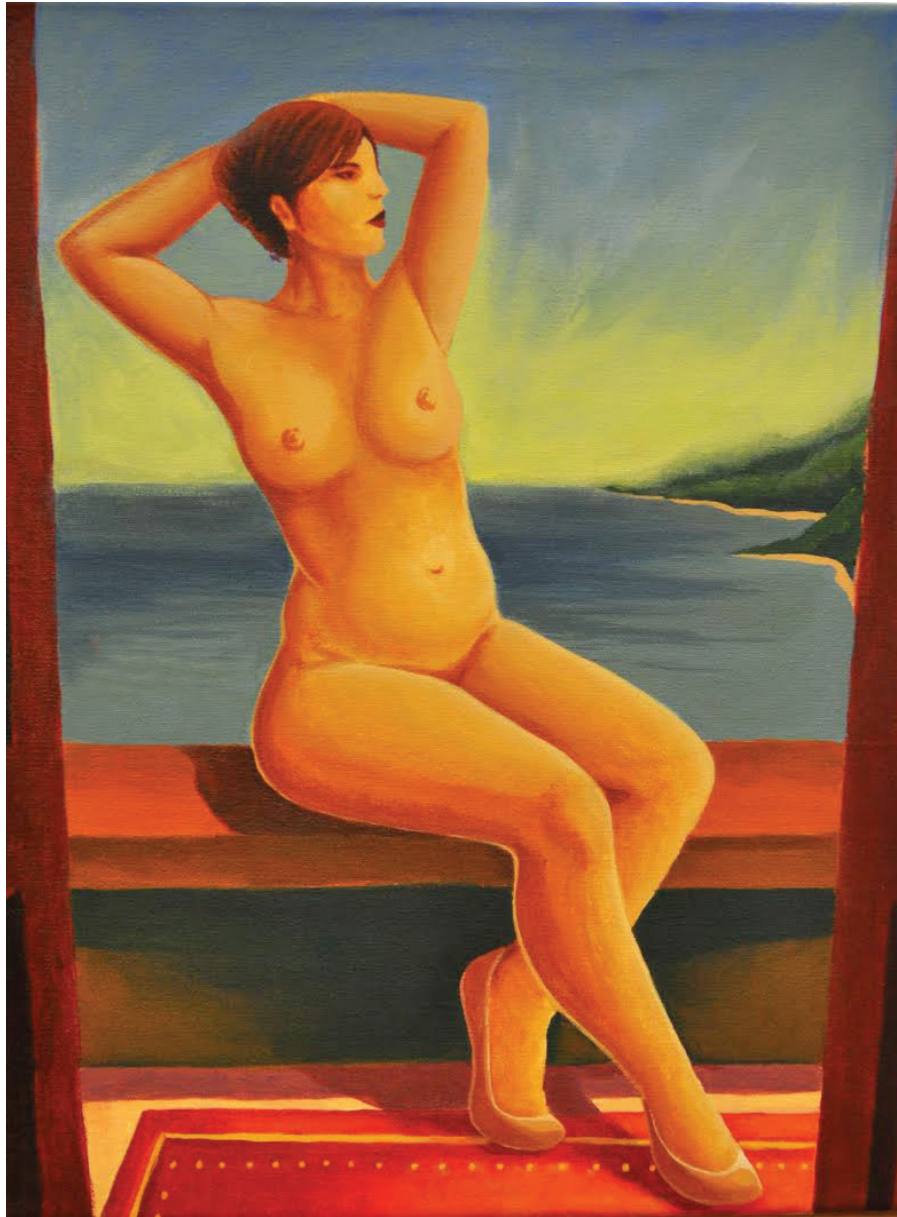
Mary Jane has him wrapped around her finger,  
while she sneezes a whiff of yellow skittles  
and white dust fills his fat hands.

yet my husband says he wants me,  
but Mary Jane has got him  
huffin' and puffin'  
white clouds of spit  
as he hums  
"A Natural Woman"  
to her bite marks  
all over his chapped, peeling, lower lip.

he has hard yellow hands,  
and red blotches all over his face.  
like my l'oreal creamy '95,  
melting on the carpet  
nearby my rusty can  
now empty of dreams  
but full of liquid hate.

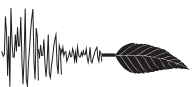
**I have to believe that my husband wants me,**  
because  
holding silver trays in my hands,  
while he puffs and pleases his urges for mary jane,  
with my **dreams--**  
gluing myself together after  
I've turned black and blue from  
his brown nails pinching my skin,  
fighting the *fear and pleasure* of him  
*disappearing all together* with the smoke of his round mary jane  
**will be worth it**  
when I've bought my ticket to heaven.





# Natural

Chandra Diaz de Arce





## Self Portrait

Andres Evangelista

# A Little After Ten

Jessica Maria Fiallo

***Now or never. I shut the blinds and light a candle. When they open the door, the*** breeze should brush the flames against the curtains—presoaked in acetone from my mother’s nail polish box. They will be too busy trying to put out the flames; I will be long gone by then. The clock reads 10:06 p.m. I take out the batteries to freeze this moment. This is the time I want them to write in the newspaper. I don’t expect it to make front headlines but probably the page right behind it, in the bottom-left corner, right next to the advertisements for home insurance and advocates of parents talking to their teens. The bed has been made. Next to it is a tablespoon loaded with peanut butter if all else fails.

My stomach twists as I trail the acetone across the floor, from the desk to the mattress. I get comfortable in bed, holding my stuffed bear, Harold, my confidant. He’s never judged me. Not even when I entered 5<sup>th</sup> grade and met Joe, who made fun of my connect-the-dot freckles. Harold’s scratched plastic button eyes always watched over me.

Chest heaving, I hug him tighter. *I’m not allowed to have second thoughts. I’m in too far now.* I stare at the candle and think about how Harold comforted me when Joe promised a trip to Disney World in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, but instead took me to a motel room for the first time. My mom ignored me when I came back sick, telling me that I wasn’t a child anymore, so I didn’t need any babying.

Yesterday, for my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, instead of a cake, I got an eviction notice. Harold supported me as I fervently scribbled a note on a cheap fast food napkin from the crumpled bag of leftover McDonald’s in the trash bin.

My nose is runny. I grab the note for lack of tissues and use it to blow my nose and wipe my eyes. *Joe won’t give a shit, and Mom agrees with him.* I look at Harold and sigh. *At least, I won’t be alone.*

I hear the front door rattle and the tap-tapping of heels. Joe and Mom are home. As I’m reaching for the spoon of peanut butter, my mom opens my door. Just as I planned, the embers flicker close enough to the curtains, which burst into flames. I stare as the fire travels through the trail of acetone under my bed. Mom screams out Joe’s name and pulls me by the arm out of bed just as the blanket is engulfed.

I beat against her grip and shout, “Harold is burning!”

His button eyes melt and run down the sides of his face in two thick, black-tarry tears. His polyester body is quickly consumed along with the rest of the room.

Joe rushes over with a fire extinguisher in hand.

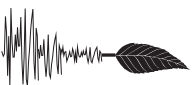
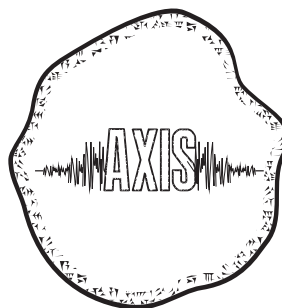
“What the fuck?” he says.

I was hoping my Mom would put up some sort of protest, but she walks past me instead, her arms hugging herself.

He turns to look back at me and yells, “You ungrateful piece of shit! Get the fuck out of my house!”

I realize his fire extinguisher is not enough for the growing blaze, so I do the only thing I know I can do. I run towards Joe and knock both of us into the fire.

*She will remember me, I promise.*

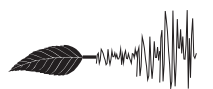






# Life Tracks

Deven H.C

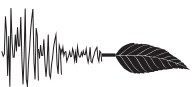






## Match Made

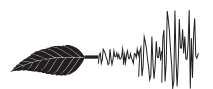
Chandra Diaz de Arce





# In Magic

Chandra Diaz de Arce



# Our First Shower

Jayvon Ricketts

When we first met,  
The rain drenched the outside,  
And the coffee burned our insides.

We had never seen each other before,  
But I felt like I *knew* you,  
And I knew you did too.

We **had** to be connected.

While your orbs of sapphire  
Looked directly into my orbs of gray,  
I walked over to tell you that  
Your long silvery blonde hair  
Was cascading down your back.

When I told you how I felt,  
You were in denial;  
You ran out into that dreadful storm  
Because you thought I wouldn't follow.

**But I did.**

You screamed at me,  
Telling me to go away.  
I realized  
Words would be useless  
So instead I silenced your claims  
With a stolen kiss.

# His First Intrusion

Elizabeth Diaz

You took what ***did not*** belong to you.

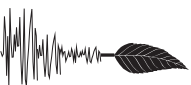
I am aware:

My hair flows down my back  
And the storm outside threatened black

But I opted to **escape** your gaze  
Yet you followed me into the rain—

I begged you to pause  
I screamed resistance at you—

But ***still*** you went on.

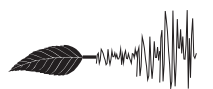






# Blossom

Andres Evangelista



# Sold

Steven Ricaurte

**The red capillaries in my eyelids are all I can see besides the layers of black. This** is a darkness deeper than our oceans, and it has the density of a mire's grime. My chest is tightly pressed against a cushion with a solid underbelly, leaving me no room to fill my lungs. The air is heavily perfumed with the scent of diluted roses and sandalwood—a smell that stains my clothes. My lips are sand and my mouth is a desert of dry heat. My hands are tied, crushed between my chest and the ceiling, while my legs are bound together with ropes of unnecessary thickness. A rapid-fire speech is delivered by a male voice outside my confinement. One solid bang follows: wood on wood—a gavel.

"Sold! To the red-headed woman on the left."

An applause that might as well have been delivered by mice is given to the woman as an empty congratulation.

The wick of my madness is lit. I curse the auctioneer, but my hexes do not reach his ears. My shout reverberates within me, keeping my mouth from leaving its muzzle. I grit my teeth with distilled frustration and feel a molar crack—bottom row, last tooth on my right. It is the force of a ship splitting under the weight of a storm. The waves of blood wash the dunes of my dry mouth, cooling my fury and making me aware of the throes of pain I delivered unto myself. There is nothing I can do. My inch-wide thrashing is dampened; my screams are muted. If I am heard, I do not suspect they will free me from my cell and remedy every pain and discomfort I have. The gavel strikes the block. The auctioneer's words are quicksilver, meaningless shapes without edges, able to fit coherently into a puzzle or my ears.

Again the block is struck, this time with thunder.

"Sold! Again to the elegant, red-headed woman."

Hands clap with programmed courtesy. There is perhaps a nod of agreement or a vocal acknowledgement that eludes me. Heels click dully on the ground. I begin to move along with the squeaking of wheels. There is nothing more she can do that can add to my current misery, but I am not a man of fear. I am a man of anger, and I feel myself burning.

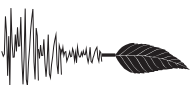
"In the hearse, you eels. Who carries coffins stacked in the back of a convertible? It's not practical. And rather alarming, don't you think?"

"Right you are, ma'am."

"Leave the rosewood behind; I'll be taking sandalwood this week. Follow from afar and drop them in my garage."

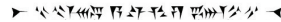
"Aye, ma'am."

*Coffin? Is that what this is?* The road to her garage was winding and nauseating. I could smell the ocean with its brine, the humidity of dense forest wood, and the sick air of a city.

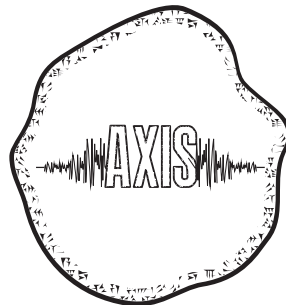




"On the fireplace, gentleman. Now leave."



“Say you love me.”





# Flight

Kenny Melendez



## Timeless Tango

Kenny Melendez



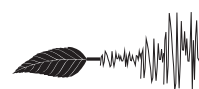
## Stringing Along

Kenny Melendez



## It Takes Two

Kenny Melendez



# Haiti

Rachel Louis

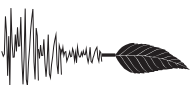
A wind is blowing off the coast of Haiti  
Sitting in my shack I sip a drink  
Watching the stars in the sky  
If there were not so many mosquitos  
I would go with *Défilé*<sup>1</sup>, the madwoman,  
Marching with the stars  
Haiti

## Original Version in French:

*Un vent souffle sur la côte d'haiti  
Assise dans ma cabane je sirotais du jus  
Voir les étoiles se défilées dans le ciel  
S'il ny avait pas tant de moustique  
J'irai bien avec Défilé, la folle  
Défilé avec les étoiles  
Haiti*

---

<sup>1</sup>*Défilé* – Haitian *Défilé Kanaval* is the Haitian Creole name of the main annual Mardi Gras carnival held in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.





# Reflection

Patricia Urena





# Keep Swimming.

**Kristen Solorzano**

Drowning—

Rocks stagger under my bare feet, ripping their way through my pale flesh. Every ache increases with a push forward. What was once crystal blue water slowly diminishes and resembles the feathers of a cardinal bird. I must keep swimming. The rattling trees whistle an ominous call. Their intricate branch wails a blow towards me but goes straight through. In that instant a wave of fresh water consumes me. Choking and now gasping for air, I try to examine my body, but another wave sends me to the bottom.

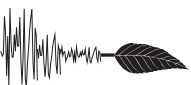
Underwater, salmon dance along the ridges, peach scales slowly subsiding. Wrapped up like a cocoon, I tumble through and through. I thrust up for air, confusing the crackling of my bones with the laughter and joy of a girl. She prances along with her red ribbon low, singing the sweetest tune I've ever heard:

Joy up, Joy must come down.

I managed to swim up to a small patch of grass. Flailing my arms with what was left of my strength and screeching to the top of my lungs, I look down and catch a glimpse of my reflection. I don't see me. The person looking back at me is a stranger.

Joy up, Joy must come down.

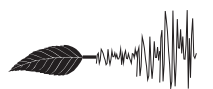
—Depression.





# Floating In Space

Deven H.C



# Memory

Kathlyn Alexis

You are just a memory.

A figment of my imagination.

A dream I forget in the mornings.

You are just a quote from my diary—

Of the tears of pain and the glee of salvation.

A script my pen scribbles without my consent; the truth behind my dreary hums.

You are just a fiery picture that glowed amongst darkness.

That led us from death with your humble yet stern narration.

A glob of blue ink stains my fingers.

You are just a stain

The spilled paint that drenched the linen, the anger that perjures my voice, my deprivation--

A drop of polish can't remove sorrow.

You are just the ripped pages from our book of inquiry.

The questions that blurred into one another as the strains turned gray and the wrinkles began to form

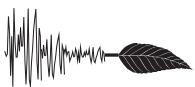
Gravity held us **down**; the questions are no longer answered, so I lay incomplete; forgery becomes my only witness.

I'm sorry, I lied. You are not a figment.

You are not a quote, picture, stain, paint, or the ripped pages—

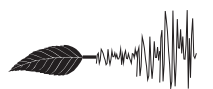
You were my laughter, my smile, my glee, my heart, my peace—

You are more than just a *memory*. You have become my *release*.





**Ponchis**  
Carlos Ramos



# Dear Nick

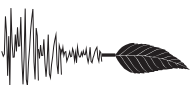
Elizabeth Diaz

Dear Nick,

A lot of people look like you. It pains me to know they can't possibly be you due to your unwavering distance. You have allowed for an indefinite array of hours between us. I'm sorry I still write for you – about you. The wind whispers discrepancies in my ears; my eyes divert to nothing. This letter will extend to nothing. The entire campus goes on in the click of their heels and the weight of their books. This concrete safety continues to elude me. There are all these faces and these new portraits of hope. I see your face again in a futile attempt. Blue benches, concrete paths, and blank faces. None of these people are you.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth  
Diaz







# Lakeside

Jose de Los Angeles



# Pepito's Eulogy

Jessica Maria Fiallo

**Deep in the Hialeah jungle, on the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> avenue and 34<sup>th</sup> street was a** ramshackle bungalow that housed a family of 83—three humans, one dog, and 79 various birds of all shapes and sizes. The neighbors called it ‘hoarding,’ but we called them family.

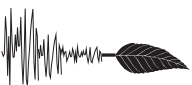
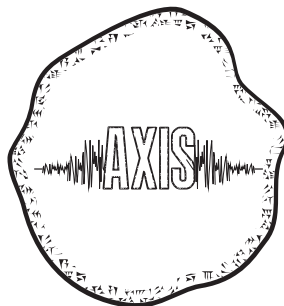
Pepito, our first Quaker parrot, was a gift for my mother. As a fledgling, he was an ugly creature with barely any feathers, big black bulging eyes, and a tiny body that teetered back and forth precariously. He transformed into a gorgeous, vibrant green parrot that brought all the lady parrots in the city perching onto our wire fence. It was obvious Pepito was my mother's pride and joy.

Pepito took after his Kookaburra cousin, picking up everything he heard around the house from loving phrases like “*Besito, besito, besito!*” to “*Vete pal carajo, hijo de puta!*” like a true citizen of *La Ciudad del Progreso*. He never learned a lick of English; what little of the language he did speak was choppy and indecipherable.

The little rascal's favorite game was calling my name at any hour of the day. I'd drop everything to find out why my name was called, only to see Pepito with a mischievous glint in his eye letting out his version of my father's boisterous laugh. My parents got a kick out of it, and more than once, I was tempted to slip some parsley into his seed mix. One time, I was bestowed the opportunity to be his human perch where he quickly became bored, shat on my forehead, and noisily flapped over to my mother. He crawled into her shirt and settled himself between her breasts, poking out his little head and blowing kisses. I envied her ability to tame the quick-tempered little ball of fury. *The Bird Whisperer*, I called her.

Pepito died during the midsummer rainy season. It was darker than usual, and the thunderstorm overhead was strong and moved slowly. The birds were outside under the rickety tin roof that covered our small backyard. Along with all his other bird brethren, Pepito hunkered low in his cage waiting for the storm to pass. Suddenly, thunder rolled through, shaking the windows. I remember looking out to make sure everyone was alright. All the birds seemed unfazed, except one. On the bottom of his cage Pepito laid with his eyes closed and legs pointing skyward. He was still warm.

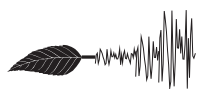
God has a sense of humor, I'm sure.





**Pepito**

Deven H.C

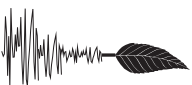






# Identity

Andres Evangelista





## Pintura Cafe

Andres Evangelista





# Fragmented

Kathlyn Alexis

a drop of red  
paints  
my dry lips.

my sins  
are the scars  
on your  
cheek.

sleep  
small face

sleep  
in my arms.

your  
eyelashes  
like  
white feathers  
tickle my cheek  
as you slowly breathe.  
barry  
just stands  
like an  
old oak tree.

I reach for him;  
his cotton shirt  
slips from  
my fingers.

**doctors'**  
footsteps  
chase  
each other  
like sneakers  
in  
hopscotch,

while  
gold flames  
eat at my blood.

the cold  
hard  
plastic  
chair  
comforts me  
when  
my husband  
cannot.

barry  
whose grip  
leaves  
crescent paper cuts  
on my palms.

silence  
blackens  
my heart  
like war paint.

**my reflection**  
is bathed  
in reddish  
squash soup.

my peeled lips  
form O's and P's;  
a gold cross  
scratches  
my chest.

but—  
those feather

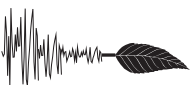
prayers drop  
like marbles  
rolling on concrete  
while I scramble.

"PLEASE!"

*Nancy.*  
barry's stillness  
pushes me  
towards the window.

while my baby  
breathes  
slower and slower  
in the nursery room.  
  
quiet paints  
the truth  
in barry's heart  
killers don't get mercy.

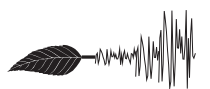
eyelashes





## Self Portrait

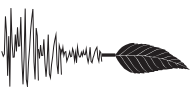
Jen Medina





# Memoria

Dahlia Santos



# Cornium In My Cranium

Christian Steiner

**We liked being alone. It gave us time to plan. Just me and my brain. My brain and I.** We had fantastic conversations. Me and him. Damn it! He and I.

Someone started knocking at the door.

*Someone is always knocking at the door.*

These people couldn't think for themselves. They weren't one with themselves as I was. Those parasitic scum.

Quite frankly, I understood why Cornium wouldn't let me communicate with them. They were selfish, entitled beings. Our project was nearing completion and Cornium was growing antsy. There was no time for distractions. And then came the banging on the door. One, two, three bangs, a pause, and then two final bangs. A nice rhythm.

*Focus, you fool!* said Cornium.

"Apologies, my master," I said.

I creaked open the door so only one of my eyes glared at the musical man in front of me. He was new. I had never seen him before, and I had seen everyone. He was tall, with flowing blonde locks. His blue eyes looked back at me, wide with nervous anticipation, but masked by a bright white, confident smile.

"Yes, what is it? Who are you? What do you want?" I said.

"Hiya! My name is Braindon; it's my first day and I just wanted to get to know the boss and work envi—"

*Get back to work, idiot!* said Cornium.

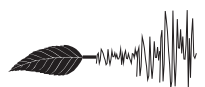
"Go away," I said as I went to slam the door.

The boy had fast reflexes. He put his foot between me and my sanctuary.

"Please sir," he stated. "I just want to make my time here a memorable one. That won't happen if I don't get to know the boss."

I hated the heart. It thought only with emotion. If we'd let the heart make all our decisions, we would have been dead within minutes of exiting the womb.

This new kid, conveniently named Braindon, had heart, but I admired his ambition. I let up a little



on the door.

"Okay, you have one minute, kid. Go."

"Um, excuse me?" Braindon replied.

"Fifty seconds."

Not only did he have heart, but also he was exceptionally strong in the arms. He pushed against me and barged in my office.

"I'm not a kid! I'm an employee, and I demand some respect!"

He slammed his hand on the table, right near the experiment.

*Kill him! Cornium hissed. Kill the incompetent little shit! He is testing us. He wants our job; he wishes to steal our plans.*

"I can't do it," I resisted.

*He longs to steal me from you! He knows about me. You'll never gain your mother and brother's respect. Your father will hate you all over again.*

Braindon's eyes widened, as if it was a surprise that I was talking to Cornium. He knew Cornium; he wanted Cornium. I needed Cornium. I couldn't let him take my brain. I needed my brain. Me and him were a team.

"He and I are a fucking team! I didn't bring my family together for an ignorant little boy like you to fuck it up!" I screamed as I wrapped my hands around Braindon's neck.

His eyes bulged out of his skull as I slammed him against the table.

"Stop squirming, you filthy worm!" I yelled.

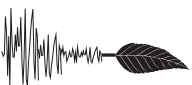
*Grab a weapon and finish the job!*

I looked around and ripped the phone from the wall.

*That cord makes for a beautiful necklace.*

"This cord makes for a beautiful necklace."

I wrapped it around Braindon's neck. He choked and I actually began feeling remorse, but he would have ruined everything if he continued to live.





Braindon made one last dramatic tug before his lifeline was cut.

*Perfect! You must understand, human, no one can ruin our plan.*

"Dammit! What the hell do we do now, Cornium? This man is dead and someone is bound to find out!"

*I can hear someone approaching. Quickly now, it is almost complete!*

Cornium was right. I had to finish! Just one more screw here and some tape there and my final self-brain surgery machine will be complete. Alas, the voices of my mother and my brother could subside. Their voices would change from resentment and disapproval to respect.

"Mr. \*\*\* is everything all right in there? The police were called; there was a lot of noise coming from your office," Kaitlyn said as she knocked on the office door.

"It is finished!"

I strapped myself in and fastened my head, making sure Cornium was safe.

"Mr. \*\*\* if you don't comply, we will be forced to take the door down. Is Braindon Matthews okay?" said the officer.

"All my hard work and years of loneliness will pay off! Father will be proud of me again! And the three of us can rule the world."

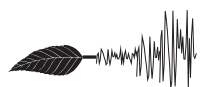
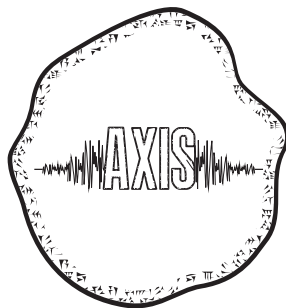
"Time's up, we're coming in! 1... 2... 3," yelled the belligerent officer. The overweight policeman broke down the door.

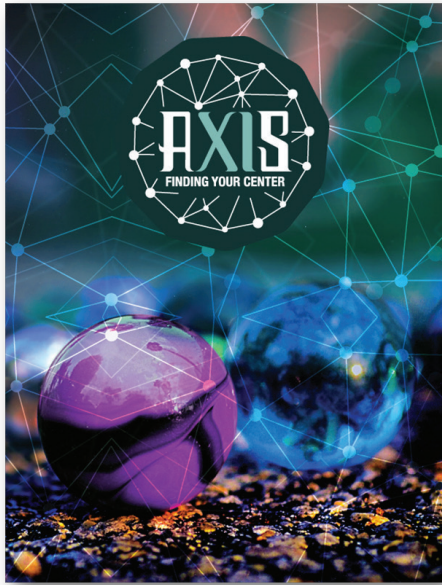
"Fre— what the hell is that?"

"Just me and him."

I pulled at the pulley string that would activate the machine. Two shots were fired.

"He and I," I gurgled as the blades entered my brain.





# AXIS Awards

## 2013 – 2014

**Editors:** Chelsea Fernandez and Kathrina Giordani

**Designer:** Shane Mehta

These awards were won in the Florida College System Publications Association (FCSPA) for AXIS Magazine Volume 11. The purpose of the 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 the education of future citizens of a free society.

### **General Excellence**

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

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place** AXIS Magazine

### **Design**

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

### **Editing**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place** Chelsea Fernandez & Kathrina Giordani

### **Cover**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place** Shane Mehta

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### **Staff Page**

**1<sup>st</sup> Place** AXIS Magazine Staff

# Staff Page

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Elizabeth Diaz

Steven Ricaurte

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# A Special Thanks

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.

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# Editorial Policy

AXIS is Miami Dade College, North Campus's creative arts 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 and non-fiction – essays, and poetry. We also accept pieces of art, photography, short films and music. All submissions must include a corresponding form, which is 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.



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“Our pen, our ink, our paper, our stories  
will not let us,  
will not **ALLOW** us  
to stop writing.”

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