

"One face in a million, one soul in millions...but my cries will echo...the lives of those we allowed to be extinguished"

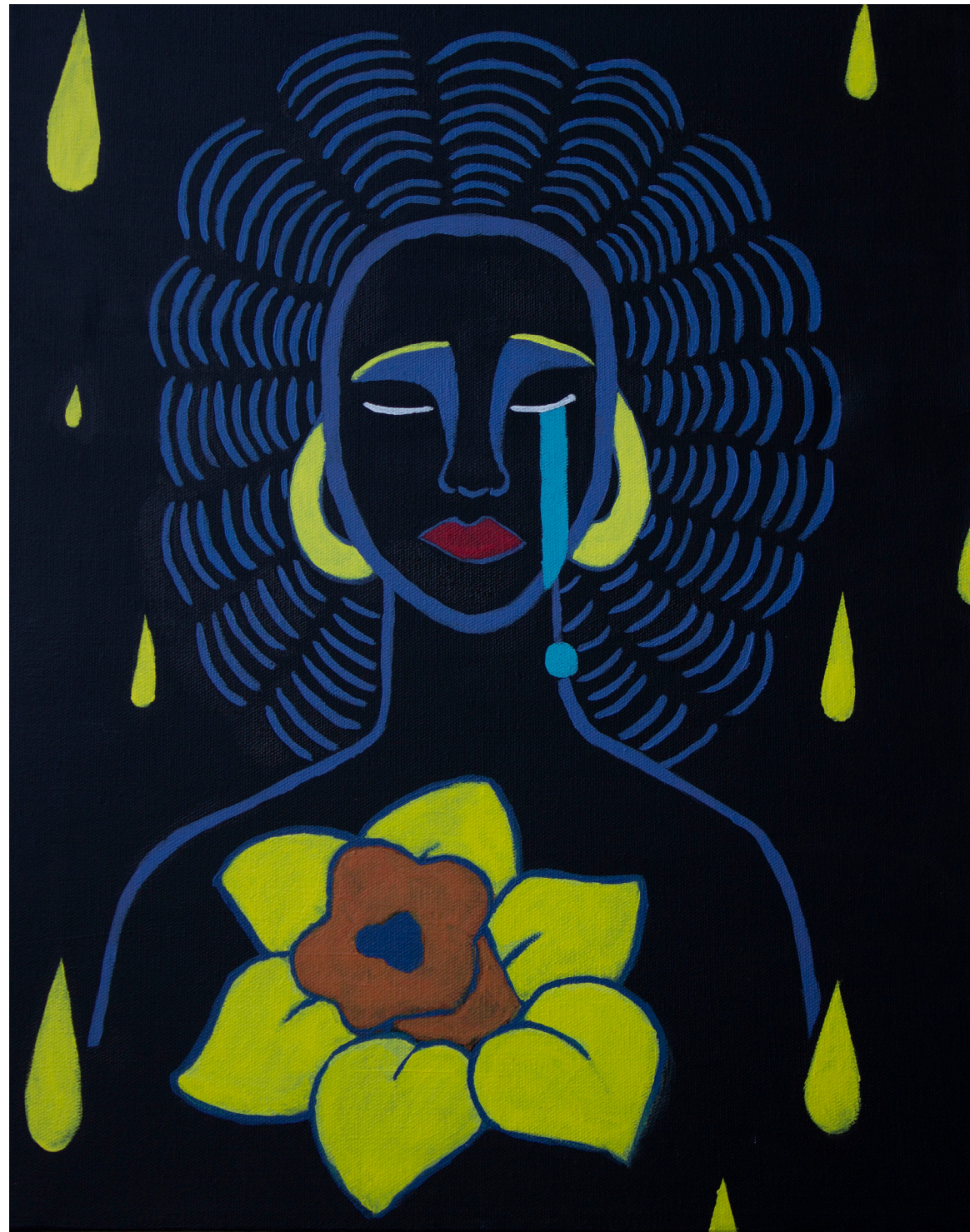
- Dalilah Montesino

AXIS [AK-SIS]

The central line between the darkest moments of vulnerability and the resilience to thrive once more.



ABOUT THE COVER



Yanaira Rosa | “Out of the Concrete” is an acrylic on canvas work inspired by Faith Ringgold’s series on African masks.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

The essence of every person’s journey has always been a cultivation of individual experience in the whirlpool of life; each formation of events, whether it be for the betterment or the stumbling of ourselves, creates this sense of individuality. Take snippets of the lives of those beside you and you will never read the same story. Glance at the wrinkle of a forehead or the crackle of a pair of lips and you will never guess what they’ve been through. However, despite the seemingly separating connotation of individualism, we’re all interconnected with that similar goal. We all fall into an abyss, the darkest, scariest points of our lives where we tumble and lose grip of ourselves; however, through this, we morph and come to terms with those moments, metamorphosing little by little into a changed individual. From there, we’re reborn with a new set of eyes, a new palette of words, and a newfound ability to power through once more.

As you read AXIS Volume 16, let the journeys of all the artists, poets, and story tellers bring some form of strength to your own life. Allow their shows of vulnerability, self-revelation, and resilience resonate with you as they did us. Take their depictions of their own every day and formulate your own views. Whatever the case, we hope they touch you in some form and place a needed reminder that we all have our journeys of self-growth.

Yours truly,

Ines Alvarez
Lead Designer

Adriana Ramos
Editor-in-Chief

CONTENTS

ABYSS

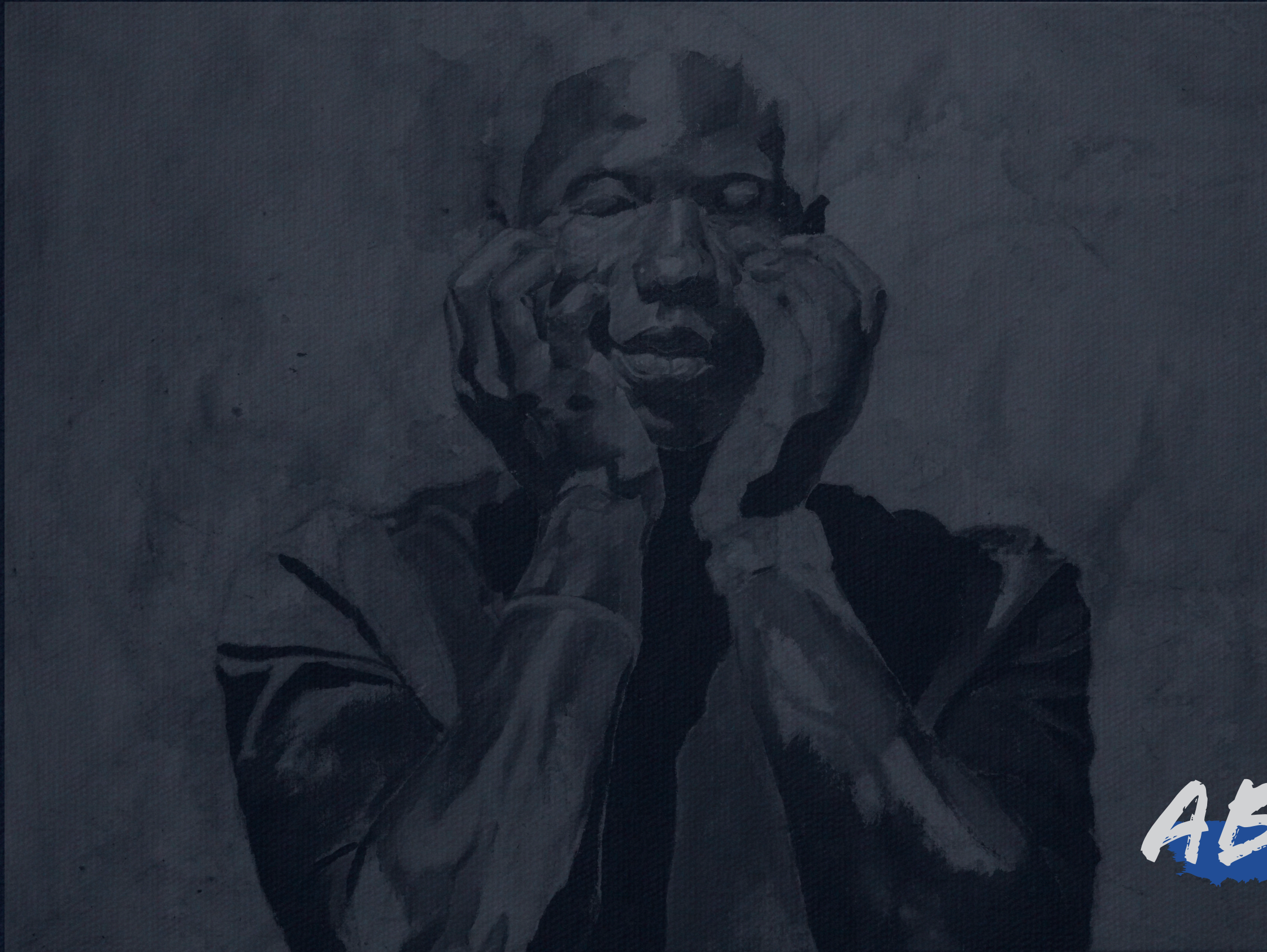
7AM At North Campus	1	I Am	8
Alejo Storni		Quentin Gibson Mays	
Beneath the Mask	2	The Roasting Hour	9 - 13
Seneka Findlay		Arianna Cruz	
His Mom Kept Crying	3	Universe	14
Rooslin Francois		Daniela Gonell	
Victor	4	Ride	15
Claudia Garcia		Ria Carr	
Sleep	5	Consumed By Fire	16
Anonymous		Dalilah Montesino	
She Has No Bounds	6	Kids On the Slope	17 - 18
Crystal Palomo		Andrea Velez	
Black Center Stage	7	Stay Away	19
Ethan Toth		Cris Diaz	
		Descending	20
		Leslie Villegas	

METAMORPHOSIS

Cassette	21	Bottles in Time	29
Benjamin Germain		Self-portrait	30
A Galaxy Within a Town	22	Home	31
Arianna Cruz		Benjamin Germain	
On the Road	23	Excuses for the Uninvolved	32
Liza Marie Guillen		Keaira Carter	
My Flowers Grow, Too.	24	Sophie Cruz	33
Kathy Fernandez		Yunsook Coco Valladares	
2019 Portolio	25 - 30	My Family Tree	34
Lorena Fernandez		Brandi Barrien	
Dim	25	Journey	35
Veritas	26	Leslie Villegas	
Chrysalis	27	Hybrid Anklet	36
Being cut out of the picture	28	Jordan Richardson	

REBIRTH

Response to Sonnet XVII	37	Bliss	43 - 44
Ashley Gonzalez		Nathalia Pineda	
Lighter Days	38	The Night Me & Your Mama Met	45 - 50
Andy Garcia		Francis Peli Jr.	
Wine	39	Natural	51
Elena Torrens		Belle Sanon	
Article 3 in Regards to Trans Individuals	40	Wise	52
Jazmin Quiroz		Andy Garcia	
Women Are Made of Colors	41	Nefarious	53
Claudia Yusmila Garcia		Andrea Velasquez	
The Sweetness of Deceit: A Sonnet	42	Up On Stage	54
Adriana Ramos		Dannah Ray	



ABYSS

LACK OF SELF



7AM At North Campus, Alejo Storni | Photography

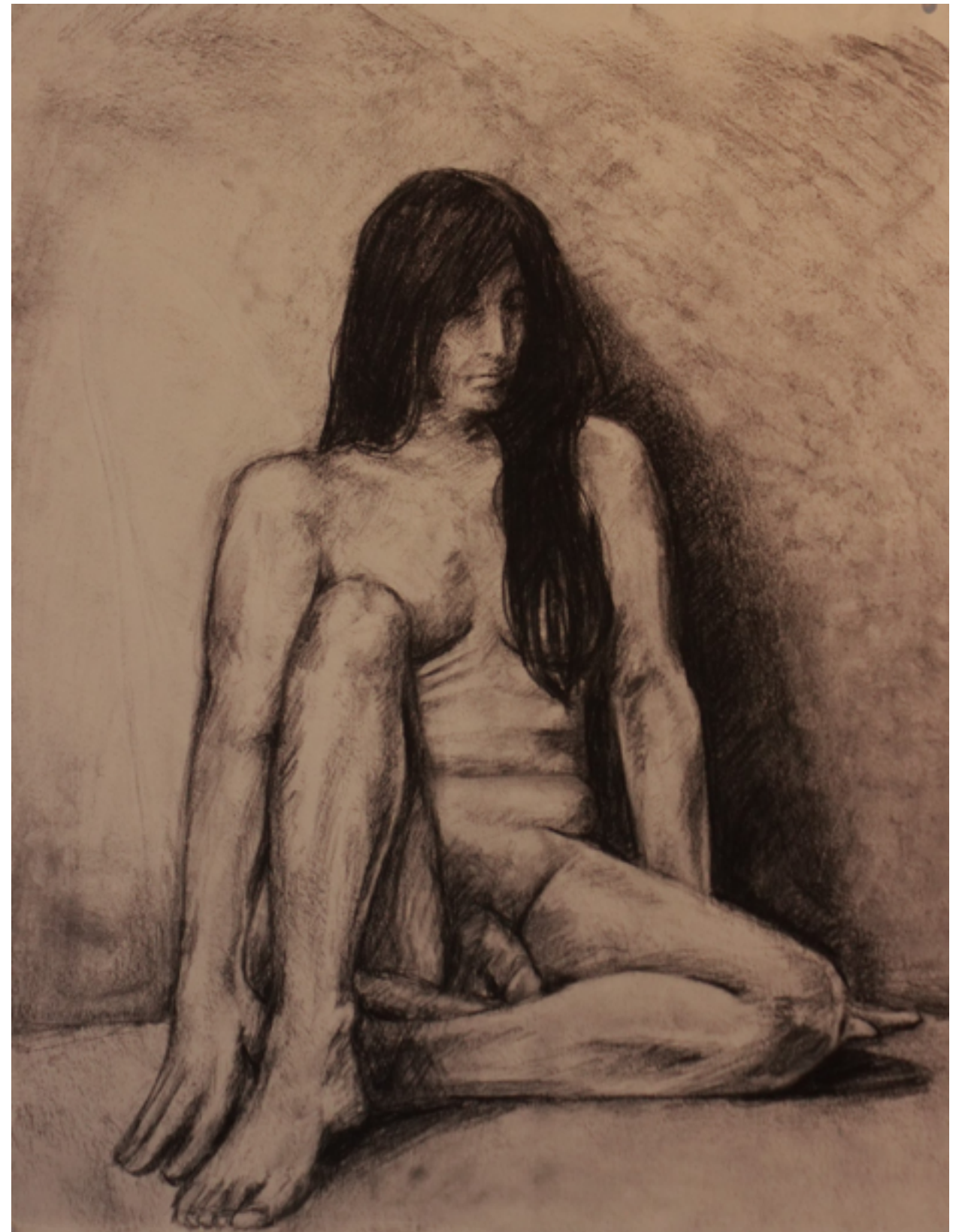


Beneath the Mark, Seneka Findlay | Acrylic on Canvas

HIS MOM KEPT CRYING

His mom kept crying when she found out what her son was doing.
It was no longer her hot cooked meals that he was chewing.
Under his mattress was cocaine and two guns,
She never thought once that her son would do drugs.
Police ran into her house one night for something stupid.
They had a warrant for the living room, but he hid it in the Buick.
He moved it there the night before because him and his bro was moving.
He told her that was his last time and he would change, but
His mom kept crying.
Dropped out of school because selling crack was his amusement,
Got locked up a couple times so jobs think he's useless.
He happened to make her happy whenever the bills were done,
But it gets her fucking frustrated when he gets locked up.
The jail loves it when he visits, but
His mom kept crying.

- Rooslin Francois



Victor, Claudia Garcia | Graphite on Paper



Sleep, Anonymous | Charcoal

SHE HAS NO BOUNDS

Worry and I know each other quite substantially; we wake up next to one another in our very own catastrophe.

Worry is hunch-backed and always wears a devious smile, with inching, barbed fingernails, and hair burnt to a perpetual crisp that looks vile.

She is my abusive friend.

She nags and flagellates my every thought for her attention, until I've done all I need and have no loose ends.

But she has no bounds; I can be sleeping and she'll wake me up for any meager sound.

Weary I became of all of Worry's madness, so I went to a therapist to see if he could diagnose my sadness.

Her sharpened thoughts left my mouth impulsively; such words poured out

so cunningly.

It was not Worry all along that I have known; had I only recognized the symptoms that had shown.

All these years I've been beating up Worry and I'm the one who should be saying sorry.

After all these years of screaming silently...

I realized my intricate friend's name is

Anxiety.

- Crystal Palomo

Black ~~Cinema~~ Taking Center Stage In ~~2018~~

September 14, 2018

~~Every~~ ~~text~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~film~~ ~~industry~~ ~~is~~ ~~an~~ ~~African-American~~ ~~issue~~. ~~In~~ ~~the~~ ~~1970s~~ ~~and~~ ~~80s~~ ~~and~~ ~~90s~~ ~~era~~ ~~of~~ ~~political~~ ~~and~~ ~~social~~ ~~change~~.

~~With~~ ~~Black~~ ~~culture~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~center~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~film~~ ~~industry~~ ~~has~~ ~~become~~ ~~more~~ ~~than~~ ~~just~~ ~~a~~ ~~word~~ ~~and~~ ~~has~~ ~~now~~ ~~transformed~~ ~~into~~ ~~a~~ ~~major~~ ~~critical~~ ~~and~~ ~~financial~~ ~~success~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~movie~~ ~~industry~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~past~~ ~~few~~ ~~years~~. ~~From~~ ~~Klansman~~, ~~Blade~~, ~~Fences~~, ~~and~~ ~~Boyz~~ ~~n~~ ~~the~~ ~~Barbershop~~ ~~to~~ ~~Moonlight~~, ~~you~~ ~~are~~ ~~all~~ ~~capable~~ ~~of~~ ~~being~~ ~~a~~ ~~Black~~ ~~movie~~ ~~without~~ ~~being~~ ~~a~~ ~~surprise~~.

~~It~~ ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~that~~ ~~these~~ ~~films~~ ~~have~~ ~~all~~ ~~done~~ ~~well~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~box~~ ~~office~~. ~~From~~ ~~Black~~ ~~Panther~~ ~~to~~ ~~Moonlight~~, ~~the~~ ~~gross~~ ~~of~~ ~~\$1.216.011.000~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~gross~~ ~~of~~ ~~3.120.000~~. ~~The~~ ~~importance~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~portrayal~~ ~~of~~ ~~sexuality~~ ~~and~~ ~~identity~~ ~~in~~ ~~Black~~ ~~men's~~ ~~lives~~. ~~These~~ ~~films~~ ~~are~~ ~~showing~~ ~~the~~ ~~creative~~ ~~capacities~~ ~~of~~ ~~Black~~ ~~artists~~ ~~in~~ ~~response~~ ~~to~~ ~~real~~ ~~world~~ ~~events~~ ~~that~~ ~~connect~~ ~~us~~ ~~to~~ ~~stories~~ ~~portrayed~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~big~~ ~~screen~~.

~~A~~ ~~better~~ ~~example~~ ~~than~~ ~~this~~ ~~year's~~ ~~Blade~~ ~~III~~ ~~Klansman~~, ~~Spike~~ ~~Lee's~~ ~~story~~ ~~of~~ ~~Sam~~ ~~Beckett~~, ~~the~~ ~~first~~ ~~Black~~ ~~officer~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~Colorado~~ ~~State~~ ~~Police~~ ~~force~~ ~~and~~ ~~his~~ ~~infiltration~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~White~~ ~~Clan~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~South~~. ~~So~~ ~~go~~ ~~to~~ ~~Boyz~~ ~~n~~ ~~the~~ ~~Barbershop~~, ~~directed~~ ~~by~~ ~~Boots~~ ~~Arny~~, ~~also~~ ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~very~~ ~~successful~~ ~~under~~ ~~the~~ ~~surface~~ ~~of~~ ~~its~~ ~~witty~~ ~~and~~ ~~quirky~~ ~~story~~.

~~It~~ ~~was~~ ~~this~~ ~~movie~~ ~~that~~ ~~did~~ ~~it~~ ~~happened~~ ~~overnight~~. ~~That~~ ~~started~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~1970s~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~arrival~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~"blaxploitation"~~ ~~films~~ ~~that~~ ~~had~~ ~~primarily~~ ~~Black~~ ~~leads~~ ~~and~~ ~~featured~~ ~~them~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~foundational~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~movie~~ ~~industry~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~time~~. ~~The~~ ~~most~~ ~~of~~ ~~these~~ ~~being~~ ~~Sweet~~ ~~Sweet~~ ~~Black~~ ~~Girls~~ ~~and~~ ~~Cheer~~ ~~leaders~~ ~~and~~ ~~other~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~time~~. ~~In~~ ~~1971~~ ~~the~~ ~~film~~ ~~did~~ ~~for~~ ~~Black~~ ~~men~~ ~~what~~ ~~Crazy~~ ~~Rich~~ ~~Indians~~ ~~and~~ ~~Ben~~ ~~Hur~~ ~~are~~ ~~doing~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~Black~~ ~~American~~ ~~community~~ ~~both~~ ~~released~~ ~~this~~ ~~year~~. ~~Now~~ ~~is~~ ~~who~~ ~~studios~~ ~~can~~ ~~see~~ ~~the~~ ~~value~~ ~~of~~ ~~Black~~ ~~cinema~~ ~~and~~ ~~hopefully~~ ~~continue~~ ~~to~~ ~~support~~ ~~them~~.

~~Representation~~ ~~is~~ ~~one~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~best~~ ~~ways~~ ~~to~~ ~~encourage~~ ~~more~~ ~~people~~ ~~of~~ ~~color~~ ~~to~~ ~~get~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~film~~ ~~and~~ ~~entertainment~~ ~~industry~~. ~~In~~ ~~a~~ ~~survey~~ ~~from~~ ~~March~~ ~~by~~ ~~YouGov~~, ~~59%~~ ~~of~~ ~~Black~~ ~~Americans~~ ~~said~~ ~~that~~ ~~growing~~ ~~up~~ ~~they~~ ~~did~~ ~~not~~ ~~have~~ ~~television~~ ~~and~~ ~~film~~ ~~role~~ ~~models~~ ~~that~~ ~~looked~~ ~~like~~ ~~them~~. ~~Maybe~~ ~~if~~ ~~that~~ ~~had~~ ~~been~~ ~~the~~ ~~case~~ ~~the~~ ~~entertainment~~ ~~industry~~ ~~could~~ ~~have~~ ~~had~~ ~~more~~ ~~writers~~, ~~producers~~, ~~and~~ ~~directors~~ ~~of~~ ~~color~~ ~~to~~ ~~represent~~ ~~the~~ ~~current~~ ~~generation~~ ~~and~~ ~~change~~.

~~As~~ ~~the~~ ~~end~~ ~~of~~ ~~2018~~ ~~draws~~ ~~close~~, ~~what~~ ~~do~~ ~~we~~ ~~have~~ ~~to~~ ~~look~~ ~~forward~~ ~~to~~ ~~and~~ ~~what~~ ~~is~~ ~~next~~?

~~Jenkins~~ ~~is~~ ~~returning~~ ~~with~~ ~~his~~ ~~widely~~ ~~acclaimed~~ ~~2016~~ ~~film~~ ~~Moonlight~~. ~~Another~~ ~~film~~ ~~to~~ ~~look~~ ~~out~~ ~~for~~ ~~includes~~ ~~Spider-Man~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~Spidey~~ ~~verse~~ ~~the~~ ~~first~~ ~~film~~ ~~adaptation~~ ~~of~~ ~~Miles~~ ~~Morales~~ ~~the~~ ~~first~~ ~~Black~~ ~~Spider-Man~~. ~~Also~~ ~~keep~~ ~~an~~ ~~eye~~ ~~on~~ ~~The~~ ~~Black~~ ~~List~~ ~~and~~ ~~Blind~~ ~~Men~~ ~~both~~ ~~tackling~~ ~~the~~ ~~subject~~ ~~of~~ ~~police~~ ~~brutality~~ ~~and~~ ~~unjust~~ ~~killings~~ ~~of~~ ~~African-American~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~country~~.

- Ethan Toth | Black Cinema Taking Center Stage in 2018, is a black out poem, redacted from and inspired by Barry Jenkins' movie Moonlight



I Am, Quentin Gibson Mays | Acrylic on Canvas

THE ROASTING HOUR

- Arianna Cruz

It might be one of the hottest days of summer. The sun is shining like a diamond and burning people's skin like wildfire. One can even smell the scent of human flesh being barbecued in the air. The weather is so dry; one cannot even sweat to cool down. Thus, it is not weird to see people fainting on every corner of this isolated town. Only crazy people go out during these hours. Crazy people and Jerry, because Jerry has to work at 12:00 p.m. The Roasting Hour.

So, Jerry gets out of his house by 11:20 a.m. all dressed up in his best royal blue suit. Jerry is crazy enough to leave the jacket on, and with his professional look, he starts his journey to the bus station. It is about a ten-minute walk until he gets to the green bench under a transparent, plastic cubicle that does not help to cover up the sun. American engineering is truly brilliant! There he sits, drinking no water, breathing warm air, contemplating the vaporizing horizon, while waiting for the 11:45 a.m. bus.

He starts looking around, the sweat dripping down his temples, and sees nothing. There are only two other people in the isolated street: an old lady that lives at the laundry's door behind the bus station, and another businessman who is too concentrated on his phone to even care. So Jerry sits there, bored to death. His mouth starts feeling a little dry, and he coughs a couple of times to keep his throat moist. The longest fifteen minutes of his life. He looks at the businessman, dressed up to the neck, but with his jacket resting on his forearm. Then, he looks at his royal blue suit. He considers removing the coat, but then again, he likes the professional look. To be successful, one has to look like a successful person all the time.

He checks his watch. Only three minutes have passed, and he feels like it has been a half-hour already. The heat is unbelievable! In a new attempt to kill boredom for another twelve minutes, he looks at the left side of the street and ...Oh Lord, he is blessed!

There she is... Beautiful like a refreshing breeze. Shining so perfectly like a pond of cold, crystalline, fresh water. Her brown hair is dancing with the few blows of air, circulating while making love to the sweet heat that makes her cheeks blush. Her eyes are undistinguishable under those brown, leopard sunglasses, making her more mysterious. Her jawline is perfectly drawn, and her nose is the most delicate nose Jerry has ever seen. She is wearing nothing but a mustard colored bikini, and still, Jerry thinks she has too many clothes on.

He takes a dry gulp of saliva as he assimilates the beautiful vision. Her long neck turns in his direction, and her rose lips curve into a long smile, leaving Jerry speechless.

A little embarrassed, yet excited, Jerry stands up and unbuttons his royal blue jacket, checks his black, greasy hair in the reflection of the plastic wall next to him, and walks toward the tall, suntanned model standing in front of the green advertising pole.

"Madam!" He says, as he takes his jacket off and offers it to her with a polite gesture. "I know it is sweltering today, but do you think it's appropriate to walk around in such provocative raiment?"

He notices his nervous tone, and in an attempt to cover his insecurity he adds, "It is not that I am complaining, you are certainly beautiful." He smiles with an insecure gesture.

The beautiful, long legged lady doesn't move, but her laugh calms Jerry's heart, "Well, thank you for the compliment. But this is my job, this is what they pay me for, and I really don't care if people admire my body."

Jerry looks at the gorgeous face with a disorientated look in his eyes and thinks twice before speaking.

"Your job? Walking around half naked?"

"No, standing on this street half naked," she corrects him.

Jerry's eyes open in disbelief and surprise. "Excuse me? Such a beauty working in these types of atmospheres? I don't mean to offend, but I am surprised."

"It's quite common. I am surprised that you are surprised. You are certainly unfamiliar with the world."

Jerry shrugs. He probably is. He usually spends the day eating chips and watching movie marathons. He doesn't care about anything commercial, and he barely knows who the current president is or if there have been any wars lately. Thus, he doesn't know too much about clandestine jobs. However, he doesn't care if she is a prostitute or not. All the prejudice he once held against the oldest profession of all time means nothing to him. He takes a deep breath to come back to life; maybe because of the heat, or perhaps because he thinks he is dreaming, but he feels confident.

"I am sorry, I didn't catch your name... What is it?" He asks.

"Call me Rosa..." she answers, "...Rosa Cha."

"Of course... It suits you perfectly" he says with a smile "... And Rosa, are you always here? Because I think that now I like this empty, boring street a little bit more."

Rosa laughs looking at Jerry and then shakes her head, "I got installed here yesterday, but I am here all day, all night. Every day."

Before Jerry could say anything else, the bus arrives. What felt like one minute was actually ten, and he has to leave now. Jerry rushes to the bus, but before getting inside, he turns to Rosa and screams to her.

"I'll be back tonight ... I hope I see you."

He doesn't hear a response from her, but he doesn't care. He is too happy and too confident to think about anything else. He jumps to the bus where the bus driver gives him a confused grimace. He has probably never been seen a happy guy during The Roasting Hour. Jerry finds himself a seat. The guy next to him gives him a strange look, pulls out a magazine, and turns around, showing Jerry his back. Jerry couldn't care less, he takes the seat and sighs with a big smile, daydreaming about his bikini girl.

It is 9:00 p.m. and the bus drops Jerry at the same bus station. The weather is cooler now. There is a refreshing breeze dressing all the streets of the city. He gets off of the bus, expecting to see her, but the streets are too dark to see anything. The only light comes from the plastic bus station. Jerry walks there and sits on the bench, waiting. He told her he would be here. Has she lied to me? Has she left because I told her I was going to come? Had I freaked her out? Jerry wonders nervously. He sits in the cubicle watching the dark street, but nothing happens. He shrugs and leaves, thinking that maybe tomorrow he would see her again.

It is midday already, and Jerry runs to the bus station like never before. Today, the bus station is full of people for some reason. There is probably an event taking place at the central plaza, but Jerry never knows anything. He walks through the crowd, looking for her, but something tells him she is not there. The bus station is packed, people are leaning against the plastic walls. There are so many people that even the green advertisement pole is covered up. There are people everywhere, but he can easily recognize her because there is no one more beautiful than her. But he doesn't have to because he doesn't see her, and his bus is already here.

When he comes back at night, the empty dark streets tell him no one is there. In a rage of desperation and frustration, he punches the plastic walls of the cubicle hard enough to make a crack. He is no longer sad. He is no longer disappointed. He is angry.

"She made a fool out of me, or probably I made a fool out of myself, and that is why she left," he whispers to himself and then lets a loud scream escape from his lips.

"I freaking lost my chance," he complains, kicking the bench. With a deep breath, he recovers his posture and shakes his head. "Fuck her," he says in his melancholic style.

"Shut up, you loser!" The old lady from the laundry screams through the darkness, "Some of us are trying to sleep, crazy man."

Today is the hottest day of the summer for sure. It is so hot that Jerry carries his jacket on his forearm; he can't resist it. The sun is right in the middle of the sky, covering everything and everyone with its unwelcoming heat. With little strength and almost no hydration, Jerry makes it to the bus station. As he sits down on the plastic bench, he sighs, reaching for air. Keeping his eyes shut, he leans his head back and moves it side to side, unbuttoning his shirt to feel some relief. As he licks his lips, he opens his eyes and looks to the left.

There she was again. Gorgeous. Wearing the same mustard-colored bikini that she had two days ago, with the same brown leopard sunglasses. He smiles in disbelief. Could it be possible? Yes, she was right there, in front of him. That means he didn't scare her. That means that she wanted to see him again, or maybe she was just doing her job. Whatever it means doesn't matter. She is there right now, and that is all he cares for. Out of nowhere, Jerry pulls the strength to stand up. The heat is unimportant in this moment. He feels like he is the coolest, freshest guy on the block. He doesn't care that his hair is flat, his shirt unbuttoned, his lips dry, and his skin wrinkled due to the dehydration. He doesn't. Right now the only thing he cares about is inviting Rosa out on a date. With his confident walk, he approaches her, and she smiles at him when she sees him.

“My secret admirer,” she says playfully as she bites her lower lip.

“Not so secret I would say,” Jerry answers letting a little laugh escape from the corner of his lip. “So, what happened to you? I missed you yesterday.”

“Oh Jerry, you missed me already? Aren’t you going too fast,” she answers with a flirty smile.

“With a girl like you, I think I am not going fast enough.” He is amazed by the kind of confidence he is exhibiting. Never in his boring and solitary life had he ever felt so in control, so powerful. It was beyond his imagination.

“You weren’t here last night,” he said.

“I was here every day, you just didn’t see me,” she responded.

“No, you weren’t. I wouldn’t have missed such a beautiful smile.” He looks down on her, noticing that she was wearing the same bikini as the other day. With hesitation, he offers her his jacket. “Please, wear this, I would feel more comfortable if you do.”

As he tries to cover her up, he can’t help but notice that the people surrounding them were getting closer to the scene. They probably couldn’t believe that such a beautiful woman is even looking at a man so simple and unattractive like Jerry. Immediately, collective laughs are heard at the back of Jerry’s head. He is bothered, but he doesn’t want to look back.

“Hey, you! Crazy man! What are you doing?” The old laundry lady screams with a laugh and she throws Jerry a plastic cup.

“Hello?” She screams again.

The other two people at the bus station start laughing even harder and harder, but Jerry doesn’t understand. He turns around, embarrassingly red, and sees that everyone is laughing at him.

“What’s the matter with you all?” He screams, angrily.

Poor fool, if he could only see that the love of his life is a simple big advertising post of a model wearing a mustard bikini from the brand Rosa Cha.



Universe, Daniela Gonell | Assemblage

CONSUMED BY FIRE

I gaze at the tenebrous fumes
wisps of decaying dreams
carried by the wind
and scattered silently into the past.
The fumes asphyxiate me
I cannot breathe in
I hold my breath
as my heart ceases to pump.
Withering, shriveling like
a plant in a drought,
crumpling up like paper
fold it into a paper airplane
and aim it past the barbed wire fence.
The candle of faith that glowed within me
has been snuffed out
by the cruel winds of fate.
Extinguished by these shackles wrought by society
A number
Engraved into my soul
I'm merely a number
One face in millions
One soul in millions
I have lost my light, and I cannot see in this abyss of humanity
My dull eyes flickering, a setting sun
But my cries will echo
Reverberating across the pages of history
The crimson that spilled
The lives we allowed to be extinguished,
brimming with hope and possibility,
as we turned to look at the other direction,
will eternally spill crimson into the chasms of our conscience...

- Dalilah Montesino



Ride, Ria Carr | Assemblage

KIDS ON THE SLOPE

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] tired of solitude [REDACTED] a new rush of feeling took
hold [REDACTED] a flood of light chased away the gloom, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] determined to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] suddenly [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] engage in a strange occupation [REDACTED] taken up at
odd moments for [REDACTED] few hours —aaaaa looking [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] uneasy
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] conscious of this [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] hallucination. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] very curious condition today, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] similar to [REDACTED] bygone years. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] a moment [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to wake up to vigor and light; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] filled with joy and hope, and all [REDACTED] anxieties [REDACTED] to be swept away forever; these
moments were [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] short [REDACTED] and consequently
[REDACTED] life [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] seemed to end in paradox, leading to the further [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] abnormal tension of the brain, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] overflowing with unbounded [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] beauty and
[REDACTED] in those abnormal moments, [REDACTED] they [REDACTED] contained the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] possibility of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] unreal dreams due to intoxication [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] characterized [REDACTED] by an intense [REDACTED] sense of
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] little worth; [REDACTED] clearly [REDACTED] the result of [REDACTED] moments
defined by [REDACTED] mental darkness [REDACTED]

- Andrea Velez | Kids on the Slope is a black out poem, redacted from *The Idiot* by Fyodor Dostoevsky.

STAY AWAY

I wonder what happened to the writer in me
He's gone far away, I must've set him free.
I know he's alive but he would much rather be
Somewhere I'm not to avoid the company.

I wonder what happened to the lover in me
She's flown on by, though she's heard my plea.
I know she's alive but she would much rather be
Somewhere alone, living in glee.

In love I trusted, but now I'm lost.
In all these years, the names I've crossed
Have long since gone, my heart turned frost
My lungs burned out, my thoughts been tossed.

I've been warned half a million times
Do not test the waters, do not fall for rhymes.
Through it all, I climb and I climb
Only to find that darkness is a pantomime of my mind.

I wonder what happened to the child in me
They ran down the street, nearly skinned their knee.
I know they're hiding in there, but they'd much rather be
Dancing alone, dreaming of sugar fairies.

- Cris Diaz



Descending, Leslie Villegas | Photography

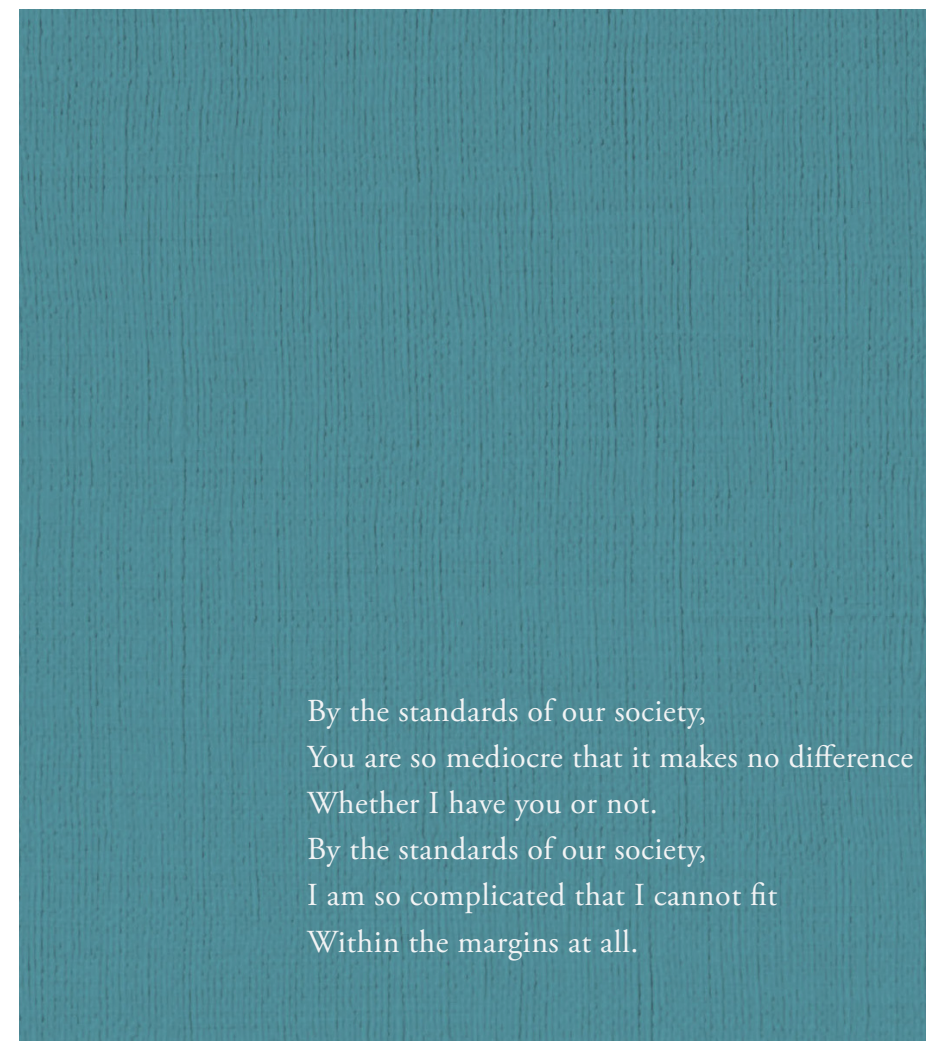


METAMORPHOSIS

SEEKING OF SELF



Cassette, Benjamin Germain | Photography



A GALAXY WITHIN A TOWN

By the standards of our society,
You are so mediocre that it makes no difference
Whether I have you or not.
By the standards of our society,
I am so complicated that I cannot fit
Within the margins at all.

You, who finds pleasure in the same women as everyone else.
Me, who gives pleasure to anyone who touches her.
You, who watches the same TV shows every night.
Me, who has no TV at all.
You, who listens to the same music as the rest.
Me, whose tastes no one understands.
You, with such a wasted and empty smile.
Me, with eyes full of life.

You are a lake. I am an ocean.
You are charcoal. I am a diamond.
You, a simple town. Me, a galaxy.
Then, would you explain to me;
How is it that I am the one lost in your simplicity?

- Arianna Cruz



On the Road, Liza Marie Guillen | Pastel on Pastel Paper

MY FLOWERS GROW, TOO.

I oftentimes find myself wide-eyed and blotchy
With a weary chest and a cluttered psyche,
I plunge into a great deal of self doubt

I oftentimes find myself moving like gears on a clock
I'm afraid the garden of life inside my mind will be left to rot,
watering a formulaic lifestyle barely allows me to recognize that

I AM
SPROUTING.

BLOSSOMING.

THRIVING.

I oftentimes find myself picking out my vices,
Stacking them like books in a neat pile with the spine on display;
they serve as a fertilizing reminder that my mind is in a constant state of disarray.
I oftentimes find myself looking at life through monochromatic glasses.

So the thought rarely passes
forgetting that I, too
can make flowers bloom
during the the rigid winds of my wisdom's off season.

- Kathy Fernandez

PORTFOLIO 2019

LORENA FERNANDEZ



Dim | Acrylic on Canvas



Veritas | Color Pencil

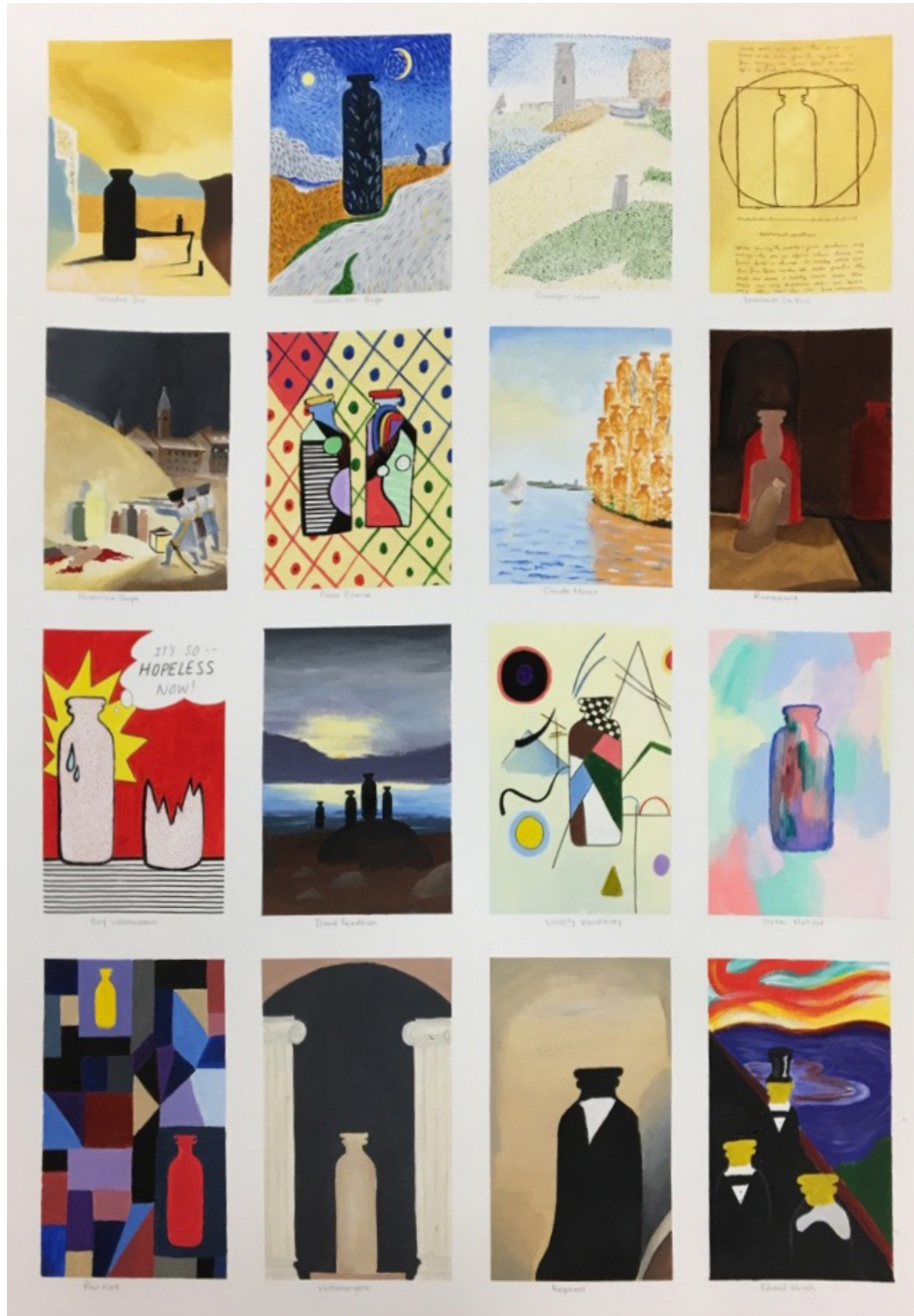


Chrysalis | Acrylic on Canvas



Being cut out of the picture | Acrylic on Canvas

ABOUT LORENA



Bottles in time | Acrylic on Canvas



Self-Portrait | Charcoal on Paper

I am a South Florida based artist born on October 26, 1989. As a child, I always had a creative mind. I won first place prizes for fair projects throughout elementary and middle school. Although I didn't make art the way I do now, I found myself writing a lot through my early years. Because I've never been too into romance, I would write a lot of horror/suspense stories. At the time, even my teachers noticed my writing because of how well I wrote. As an adult, I now enjoy watching horror films and documentaries. I have also been a vegan for about a year now. Although I do it to have a better diet, I also do it because I love animals and I'm very empathetic towards them and the health of the planet.

My first inspiration is my father who was a creative and gifted artist. He learned on his own, but did not keep his artistic vision growing. Growing up, he would do free hand sketches to entertain me and to this day, my most cherished art piece of his is a portrait he did of his grandmother (which is the only piece I ever did see). Unfortunately, throughout the years and growing up, I fell out of the art path up until three years ago when I started sketching famous cartoon characters and I really enjoyed it. That was the moment that reignited my ever growing passion for art.

My future aspiration is to continue producing art and to be able to sustain myself through my art business; I also hope for continued art growth. I like to think that I am meant to live through my work.



Home, Benjamin Germain | Photography

EXCUSES FOR THE UNINVOLVED

So let's just cut the bullshit
It's all my fault
I'm the reason you're uninvolved
I shouldn't have texted
I shouldn't have called
Bugging, annoying you up the wall

Maybe I'm the reason you went away
I should've begged for you to stay
I did too much, and left you no space
Lord have mercy, I even prayed

Your problems are much bigger than mine
I know now that you require more time
When I told you to do better, I crossed the line
I should've been arrested for my crime

I shouldn't have asked for you to try
It probably pushed you away to hear me cry
You failed to show, and I asked you why
My bad for expecting a reply

See, I've realized that some people need a break before they start labor
I ask for too much, I'm the worst kind of neighbor
I should've just shut the fuck up while you chased the paper
But I was always impatient, never a waiter

When you took from us, I shouldn't have questioned you
Now I've blocked my blessings by rushing you
All of the days I spent cursing you,
If I were to relapse now, it'd be nothing new (I did)

I'm the bad parent, I'm the one to blame
I projected my flaws onto you to ruin your name
It's ridiculous, I know, it's insane,
Now I get why you questioned the state of my brain

I'm in the hospital, day 3, writing this
The princess is asleep, complete silence
I asked you to come, I should just stop trying it
I hope you can forgive me, these habits don't die quick

This is a poem for my baby's father
Another attempt to get you to try harder
That's all I know, huh? I'm such a bother
Like I have to want the best for our daughter

- Keaira Carter

SOPHIE CRUZ

When I was five I asked the Pope,
“Please will you help us?”
My mom and dad have no status or hope.
I fear they will separate us
Cause, deep in my heart, I know
that families should be together,
And, deep in my heart, I know
that people should be given a chance.

My father is picking the melons now
He starts at the break of day
After he finishes picking them all, will they send him away?
I hope there are many melons to pick today
So, I march for the people who seek a better life
I speak for the unlucky ones
who weren't able to come to America
when the Natives let anyone come.

When I was six, Obama asked me,
“Come to the white house for tea.”
My mom and dad had to wait outside
because they're not legal, you see.
But, deep in his heart, he knows
that families should be kept together
And, deep in his heart, he knows
that people just want a chance.

My father is picking the berries now
He stops when there's no more light
When he finishes picking them all, will this be his last night?
Without him, my future isn't bright
So, I march for the people who seek a better life
I speak for the unlucky ones
who weren't able to come to America
when the Natives let anybody come.

Now I am seven, I ask of you,
Do you wonder what you should do?
Protect our families with a “chain of love.”
We want to be here too.

- Yunsook Coco Valladares



My Family Tree, Brandi Barrien | Ceramic



Journey, Leslie Villegas | Photography

HYBRID ANKLET

My ancestors were the first free
We've spent a century without chains on our feet
Because of them, I know how freedom feels
It's the reckless abandonment they name savagery

I descend from those who spit on nonviolent protest
Our motto is to cut off their heads to release the hand
We watch the land become alive from the Merlot spit

I'm Hispanic not by choice
The island became Espanola because of those who conquered
We were content with Quizqueia
They mixed their blood with ours and fostered children

Asphalt colored skin created division
Alienation makes you wonder if pigment really makes a difference
Our cousins who share the land say they are not us
The ones who share $\frac{1}{4}$ blood slaughter us
Reject us to gain favors from Anglo Saxons

They enhance the discrimination
Our culture, they say, is not Caribbean
Our culture, they say, is not Hispanic
Our culture, they say, is not even Latin

I laugh at them for their mind games
It's envy if the game had a name
In pride I will indulge
Burned skin from the 2 or 7 sins
I will always praise the ones who paved the way
Because of them, my ankles have no chains

- Jordan Richardson



REBIRTH

DISCOVERY OF SELF

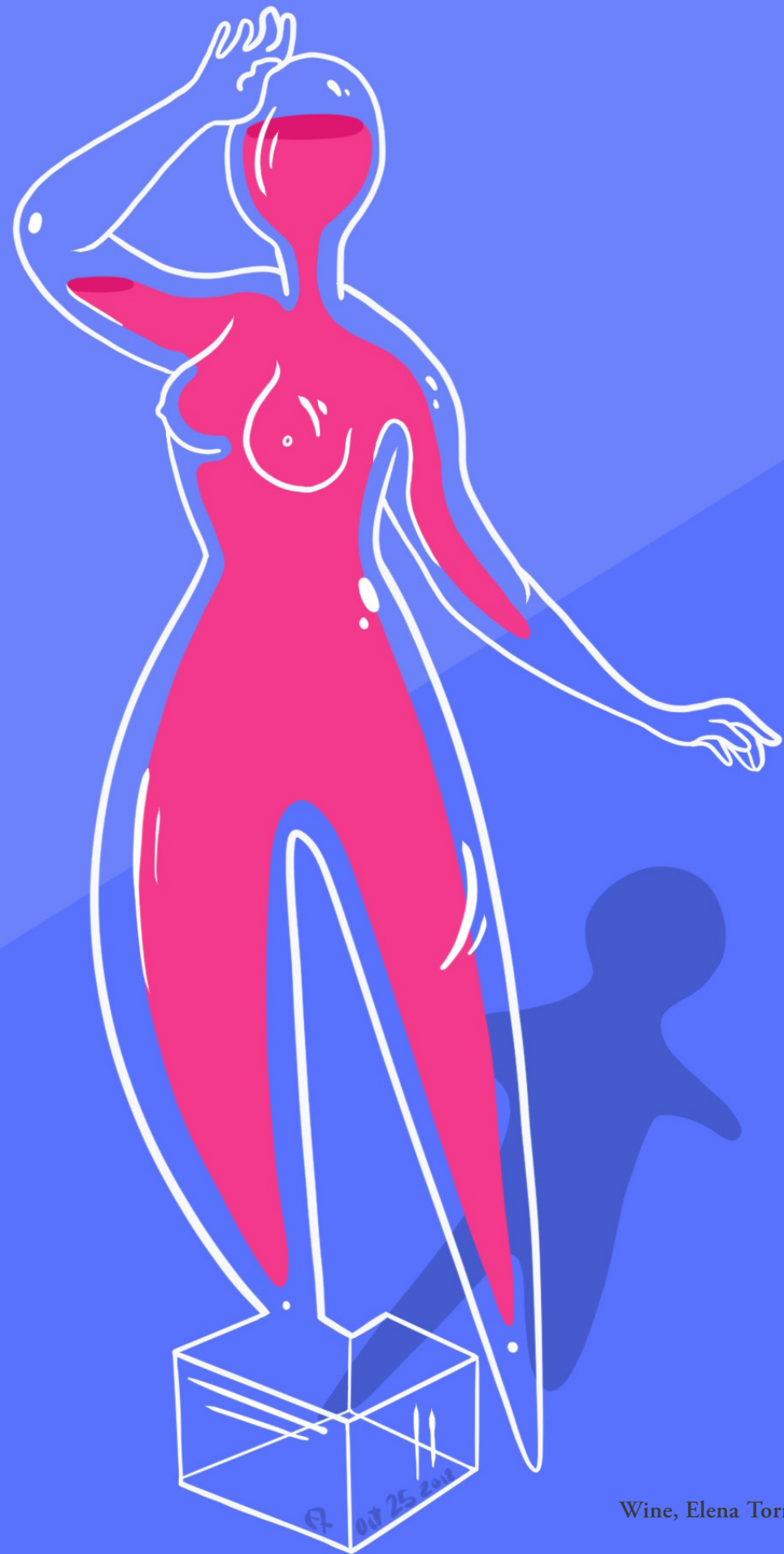
RESPONSE TO SONNET XVII

If I surrendered, as your conquest
will I be seen like a second rate rhyme?
Or will critics bless me as Shakespeare's best?
Give me a gospel that will feel sublime.
If I could form a formula to count
the flames that have tried to melt my slick wick,
it would reach the vast, infinite amount.
The calculation does not equal dick.
Good, Will Shakespeare, the cat lusts for the mouse.
If you want to play with only me and
toy no more, I might go to your dollhouse.
Just then, will you cement to my command.
You must see, love, I also play a game,
Although different, it's also the same.

- Ashley Gonzalez



Lighter Days, Andy Garcia | Photography



Wine, Elena Torrens | Digital Art



Article 3 In Regards To Trans Individuals, Jazmin Quiroz | Photography



Women Are Made Of Colors, Claudia Yusmila Garcia | Acrylic on Canvas

THE SWEETNESS OF DECEIT

A SONNET

An artificial taste of sweetness to whom
clasp their fingers to a ludicrous and false
enjoyment. Soda bubbles fused with tales,
the chemicals as tumorous as smoke.
The popping candy sparking fire, gelato
screaming “more!” and cake galore, their
senses lost within desire.

The purpose to their madness stems from
sore and tired eyes with sugar coated lashes,
the cherry tinted lips too plumped for
speech, and puff eclairs for bodies; Romances
a sin and looked upon as out of reach.

As glazing turns into a norm, will burning
brains be cooked to be inedible?

- Adriana Ramos



THE NIGHT ME & YOUR MAMA MET

- Francis Peli Jr.

It all began on a cool autumn afternoon in South Florida, a few miles west of the beach. Far enough from the coast that you'd probably want a cab to get there, but close enough to catch a whiff of the occasional sea breeze.

I had just finished up a 6-hour shift. The chore of packing and stacking boxes all afternoon helped me build up a hefty appetite. Walking back to my car, I wondered where I would get something to eat. My work T-shirt was sprinkled with cardboard particles and spots of sweat, and it carried a bit of body odor with it, that special odor working men get. I refused to sit down in any restaurant and eat like this, so whatever I decided on had to be take-out. My favorite burger spot was a few miles south of my job and the thought of a Portobello & Swiss burger made my mouth salivate like water from a garden hose.

I started my car swiftly, and quickly rushed onto the avenue, nodding my head in rhythm to the melody of A Tribe Called Quest's "We Can Get Down" as I cruised, windows down, enjoying the refreshing aroma of the afternoon's air. Cars piled up at the intersection and the sight of the white exhaust fumes rising from the car in front of me drew my imagination to the sight of my burger patty being grilled to perfection. After all, today was Friday, my last work day of the week and I felt entitled to a stomach-stretching meal; a reward for having survived the aches and pains of a vigorous work week.

I arrived at the burger spot around seven. The sun hadn't quite gone down yet, leaving its orange glow across the horizon. I parked my car and scurried out, leaving the windows down and doors unlocked, power walking my way to the entrance, trying to beat the people in the parking lot to the take-out line.

Three people stood in line before me. I began reciting my order in my head. Portobello & Swiss burger, add lettuce and tomato with a large Parmesan Garlic fry, Strawberry milkshake and a homemade triple chocolate brownie to go. The brownie had always been my finishing touch: the icing to my gluttonous cake.

The woman in front of me took almost ten minutes to order her food, a majority of it being a bunch of questions and comments. "How big are the patties, darling? What shake would go best with my sandwich? Is it beef or steak? Gosh, I hope it doesn't go straight to my hips, most of my meals do." The cashier had a bland look on his face through each of his responses, an obvious reaction to her obnoxious curiosity.

"Next in line," the cashier said dreadfully while handing the woman her change and receipt.

"Hey bro," I uttered joyfully, "I'll have a Portobello, medium rare, add lettuce and tomato, large Parmesan Garlic fry, strawberry shake, no whip cream and the freshest brownie you have to go."

"Ice cream machine is broke; Soda okay?" he mumbled, looking down at the register.

"Cherry Coke then."

"That'll be \$12.88."

I reached down in my right pocket, feeling only my cell phone. My left pocket contained nothing but lint and stretched lines of jean fabric. I pressed the rear pockets of my jeans with both hands, feeling nothing but the designs woven in them.

"Just a second, bro," I replied uncertainly, trying to retrace what I'd done the last few hours in my mind as I reached deeper into my barren pockets.

"Goddammit!" I shouted, "I must've left my wallet in my locker back at work."

I was at least 20 minutes away from my job, give or take, depending on how traffic was flowing and with my stomach growling like an angry dog, I wondered why I chose today of all days to be an idiot.

"Sir, I'm going to ask you to step aside. I'll hold your order slip here while you figure things out."

"Look I know this sounds crazy, but I work just a few miles down and I'd have to go get my wallet from there but if you gave me the food, I'd be happy to bring the money back. I won't have you waiting long bro, I promise."

"You're joking, right?" he chuckled.

"C'mon man," I said persistently, "I come here all the time, you can trust me; you know I'm good for it."

"Again," he laughed once more, "I'm gonna ask you to step aside while you figure out how to pay this bill. I don't know what kind of shop you think this is but you're not about to get me written up."

"Bruh!" I raised my voice, "You can't do me this measly \$13 favor. Just this ONE solid, man. I'm starving. You see me here ALL THE TIME."

"What part of my NO didn't you hear?" he spoke up, leaning over the counter, "I WON'T DO IT. I WON'T! Give it up!"

“Chris, man, you ain’t gotta heart, bruh? I haven’t eaten all day,” I replied.

“It’s Charles, you moron, the nametag clearly says Charles.”

“Whatever, man, that ain’t the point.”

“Okay I’m gonna get a manager because clearly you can’t hear.”

“It ain’t even necessary, forget it, I’ll just—”

“Hey, listen, I’ll take care of it,” spoke a soft, tranquil voice from behind me.

“Take care of what? His bill?” The cashier responded, dumbfounded by the offer.

“Yeah, I got it.”

I turned around swiftly, to see who I was about to thank for this act of mercy on my famished soul. I mean it’s not everyday someone saves your life.

And there she was... A short, caramel-skinned girl bombshell standing before me. She wore a white boyfriend tee that read “Fun-Sized Sunshine” in gold print, cut-up denim and milky white Nike Air Forces. Her curly, jet black hair seemed to shine from the lamps above and her fingernails were recently manicured and painted turquoise. Her eyes were a dreamy light brown complimenting her picturesque smile.

“What’s a goddess like her eating at a dump like this for?” I thought to myself.

“You sure about that, ma’am? You shouldn’t if you ask me, he’s very rude,” said the cashier.

“But I didn’t ask you,” she giggled, “It’s ok.”

“Are you ordering as well or..?,” he asked.

“Yeah, I’ll have a double with cheese meal, no mustard and a sweet tea.”

“\$21.90.”

She handed him the money and turned towards me.

“Thank you,” I smiled, **“I guess all heroes don’t wear capes.”** She smiled.

Then that awkward silence broke. You know that moment of quietness when you wonder how on Earth you got smacked into such a crappy situation. Or better yet, you’re stuck trying to figure out how to make light of it. You know the silence that gives you just enough time to check out all the little details? Like the design of her gold earrings. The exact spots her dimples hid. How many inches her hair reached from her shoulder down her back or if she was wearing a ring on the one finger you prayed she wasn’t.

One thing was for sure, she was unlike any girl I had ever met. I mean before today, no woman I had ever met, well besides my mom, had ever bought me so much as a bag of chips or a pack of gum. This had to be some sort of sign.

She was facing the register for a few minutes when I tapped her shoulder.

“So um... what’s your name? What are you into?” I asked.

“Keisha,” she said, looking at me curiously, “What do you mean into?”

“Yeah, man, into, like what’s your deal?”

“You’re kind of rude, you know that? Anyone ever tell you.”

“Why would they? Nothing wrong with the way I speak. I figured I should ask, I mean you did just pay for my food.”

“Well it isn’t what you say, sweetie,” she replied, “It’s how you say it. And I’m into nursing. That’s what I’m studying. What about you? Are you in school?”

“Hell no,” I snickered, “I know everything I need to know already, I ain’t got time for that.”

“Oh yeah, do tell me some of what you know?” she giggled, stepping closer to me, examining my face.

“I know how to properly package and ship hazardous materials. That’s what I do at work.”

“They trust YOU with hazardous materials?” she said, her eyes opening wide, “Tell me where this place is. So I know to never go ‘round there.”

“You’re trying to be funny, but I’m coming up on two years next week. Laugh about that.”

“Really. That’s great. So, is that your grand plan? To make a career out of it?”

“I don’t know. It pays my car note. It pays my rent. Keeps money in my pocket and that’s all that matters.”

“Oh, you mean the money you forgot to bring here? The money you need for that Swiss Burger?” she joked, laughing harder than before.

“Whatever.”

“Relax boy. What’s the matter with you? Where’s your sense of humor?”

“You’re trying to clown me.”

“I’m just messing with you. You know you said all this and still haven’t told me your name?”

“Oh, my bad,” I said nervously, “It’s Jermaine.”

“Okay Jermaine, where are you from?” she said, looking me in the eye.

“Florida. Born and raised. The sweet Sunshine State: where God himself comes to take vacation.”

“Is that right?” she said, rolling her eyes, “Well, I’m from Georgia, country Georgia. You know the rural side. I moved down a few years ago with my mom and stepdad.”

“Georgia, huh?” I said fascinated, “Never been, I’ve only seen Atlanta on TV when I’m watching football games.”

“Yeah football is big there, my older brother played,” she said.

“Not bigger than here though, I’m sure. This is football’s home. When you’re born here, doctor puts a football in your mom’s hand,” I explained.

“Uh ok,” she said looking confused, “I’m guessing you played?”

“Eh...A couple years back in high school. I couldn’t have been very good though because I never got any offers,” I spoke softly, looking down at my work boots.

“Or maybe, it wasn’t meant for you. Maybe you’re meant for something greater,” she explained.

“Hmm... Hell, I’d never thought of it that way.”

Another silence broke, and I didn’t know what to do. Maybe I should ask for her number, but she’ll probably say no. I mean she already paid for my food. Man, how could this day be any worse? But her smile, man, her smile...

“Hey Keisha, Can I-”

“Order for Keisha,” yells the cashier, carrying two bags and a drink holder, “Here you go ma’am, have a great day.”

“Thank you, you too. Here you go Jermaine,” she handed me my bag and drink.

“Well it was nice meeting you. Take care,” she shouted, walking out the exit.

Dammit. Dammit. What do I do now?!

“Hey Keisha, wait a minute,” I shouted on my way out the door, my drink and bag crashing against the glass.

“Umm hmm,” she hummed, again gazing into my eye, this time with a serious demeanor, “Did they forget something? What’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” I mumbled, “It’s just that...It’s just that I was wondering...well I was hoping I could have your number?”

“And why would you want that?” she stepped closer.

“To call you, you know?”

“To call me, why would I want you calling me, Jermaine?” she grumbled, her face without emotion.

“To get to know you, I guess. To talk to you. Maybe I could take you on a date sometime...I could make this up to you, you know?” I spoke softly, almost under my breath, afraid of the response coming.

“Well I didn’t want you to starve, but...a date, I can’t accept. I’m not looking for a boyfriend or anything right now.”

“Look...I just thought that we could hang out, maybe figure some things out about each other, maybe you don’t like me now but who knows, I could grow on you, I hope,” I said, giving her a foolish smirk.

She shook her head, “No thanks, Jermaine. I don’t think it’s a good idea,” she muttered as she began to walk away.

“Wait, wait, wait... hear me out. You just told me about how that football thing wasn’t meant for me. How I could’ve been meant for something greater. Well what if today, us meeting here at this spot, means the same thing?”

She smiled, giggled some, “I’m still not gonna give you my number, nice try though.”

I took a deep breath and sighed, “Alright Keisha, it was worth a-”

“How about this Jermaine? You give me some days to think about it, a few days to consider. If it feels right, I’ll be back here, in one week at the same time.” I looked at my watch. It was 7:25 pm precisely. “If I’m here, you can tell me all about your newfound fate while we eat. Deal?” she said firmly.

“And what if you don’t show up? Then what?” I said, feeling lost.

“Then it wasn’t MEANT to happen, and you’ll have to be ok with that. It’s your choice to show up or not,” she said unyielding.

“I’ll be here, most definitely.”

“Cool,” she said, turning away, “Just remember to bring your wallet.”

“I won’t...I mean, I will,” I stuttered, “I will.”

“Goodnight, Jermaine,” she shouted from the parking lot.

“Goodnight, Keisha,” I shouted back, approaching my car door, “Get home safe.”

I opened my car door and sat down inside, placing my drink in the holder and food on the passenger seat.

“I do hope I see her again,” I thought to myself. I turned the key in the ignition, cranked the next A Tribe Called Quest’s song a bit louder, reversed out of my parking space and turned the car onto the avenue.



Natural, Belle Sanon | Photography



Wise, Andy Garcia | Photography



Nefarious, Andrea Velasquez | Graphite on Arches Paper

UP ON STAGE

I wonder if grace is worth bloody toes,
often hidden with tulle and satin bows.

Taut muscles dressed in lycra and polyester,
illuminated on stage with an iridescent shimmer.

An audience unaware of a pain she wears
of movements that exhaust her tendu body:

*CRESCENDO, ESCHAPPE,
ADAGIO, ALLEGRO, FASTER!*

She is ripped tights with unsightly holes,
drifting through air with alabaster skin.

May she enthrall you with her rapture,
telling stories of long lost prose.

- Dannah Ray

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AXIS Awards

2018-2019

We are very pleased to announce AXIS Magazine Volume 15 from North Campus won several awards at this year's Florida college and university student publications conference, FCSPA 2018, in Tampa, FL on January 25, 2019. Congratulations to all the students who contributed, edited, and designed work for this issue. Volume 15 has also won a Pacemaker from Associated Collegiate Press, a First Place Pinnacle Award from College Media Association, and Gold Circle and Silver Crown Awards from Columbia Scholastic Press, making it the most award-winning issue in AXIS Creative Arts Magazine's history.



Associated Collegiate Press,
Pacemaker, Literary/Art Magazine



College Media Association,
First Place Pinnacle Award
Two-Year Literary Magazine of the Year



Columbia Scholastic Press Association,
Gold Circle: Cover Design for Literary or Literary-Art Magazine
Silver Crown: Print Literary-Art Magazine

AXIS Awards

FCSPA

First Place, Poetry:

Maria Jose Grogg
Joshua Buron
Momo Manalang

First Place, Art Works:

The Homeless Soldier, Pedro Lazaro
My Pile of Paint, Quentin Gibson-Mays
I Need You Like a Virus Needs Warmth, Rafael Lucas

First Place, Contents Page:

Jerel Ramsey

Second Place, Two-Page Spread Design:

Jerel Ramsey

Third Place, Photo:

Elegance, Rodrique Julien

Second Place, Design:

Jerel Ramsey
Amaris Quintero
Miguel Cardenas
Savanah Sanchez

Second Place, Cover:

Jerel Ramsey
Rodrique Julien

Inner Circle:

(for winning awards in three or more magazine categories)

Jerel Ramsey

General Excellence First Place:

AXIS

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AXIS is Miami Dade College, North Campus' 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 work, both audio and print, returns 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.

Design Notes

Axis Creative Arts Magazine was made possible through countless hours consisting of discussing edits, design elements, and the general direction in which to organize the pieces in order to tell the story of finding oneself. The cover was a major inspiration for the contents of the magazine, using various elements of it through the pages. At the corners of the pages are freehand brush strokes, the text follows with similar paint-brush strokes, and the texture of the canvas falls behind various pieces. The minimalist design was meant to place the works to the forefront and allow them to shine individually.

Colophon

Created on ASUS Q325UA, 13.3" 60Hz Glare Touchscreen, Windows 10 Home. Created using Adobe InDesign CC 2018 for drafting, Adobe Illustrator CC 2018 for graphic elements and final motif illustration. Adobe Photoshop CC 2018 was utilized for all image adjustments, cropping and final unification. The following fonts were used: Flood Std, and Adobe Garamond for magazine content. Printed by Color Express Inc., Hialeah, FL on 100lb. Hannoart Silk Dull.

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



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