

# URBANA

VOLUME IV





**URBANA**  
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**IV**





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# EDITORS'

I.

We.

You are a mamushka doll. As such, you embody the molds of every imaginable reader: inquisitive, challenging, and observant. You have influenced this publication as much as we hope it has touched you. Whether you sport a Mohawk, a straw fedora, or a fluorescent orange fro, you have taken and added color to Volume IV.

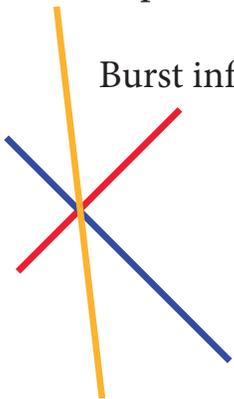
Like every mamushka, humans are comprised of layers. Opened one by one, a distinct tier represents an individual aspect of you. The written work, as well as the artwork in this issue challenges each of our layers diversely. Creativity enables the artist and critic to question his or her motives and beliefs. This magazine is a challenge, designed with you in mind.

Let the messages of this publication fester.

Mutate these artists' ideas into your own.

Explode your message to the world.

Burst infinite color.



## NOTE



Lily



Suykaniz

# 18 WOMEN

by Stephanie Aya

Dora by Stephanie Aya, Photography

The first one was called Yassira Doncel, my first “love”. She was beautiful with a long mane and deep round eyes. Her nose was full of countless freckles, which scattered throughout the rest of her face. One rainy summer evening, however, it all came crashing down when the phone rang. We were almost together for two years, but she left to the city to study political science. She died in a car accident one rainy day in the summer.

“Hello?” I answered.

“Yes. Are you acquainted with Yassira Doncel?” asked the man on the phone.

“Yes, I am,” I said

“We are calling to inform you that she had an accident,” the man on the phone said.

“Wh-wh-what?” I stuttered.

“Yes sir, a drunk truck driver crashed into her last night as she was making her way through the mountains.” He assured.

Next came Rocio Rodriguez. She also had big black eyes, but they were not as pretty as Yassira’s. Rocio and I had been classmates since grade school; however, she was not very pretty until her parents paid for her boob job, which was starting to become a fashion among all the girls in town. It all came to an end one mid-afternoon when I witnessed her sitting with a cab driver in the middle of “El Parque Andino”, holding hands with *el professor de ingles*, Mr. Gray. We never spoke again. My father would often ask about Rocio, whom he called *ojos de avispa*.

Then it was Nubia. She was from Flandes. She would walk to the ice



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cream parlor everyday to get herself a vanilla cone. This is where Nubia and I met. I left her because she had a hidden gold tooth.

Azalea Luna, one of my cousins, was the fourth. It was a great experience. She was long term. Almost four years. I was on the edge of the cliff.

Miriam...I do not quite remember her last name. I went to live in an apartment with Miriam. One evening, I entered the apartment to find it completely empty. At first, I was shocked, but then I fell into uncontrollable laughter. She took everything. But not from me, just from the house. I forgot to mention that she left all my clothes behind the front door. We lasted eight months before she left me and escaped to the coast.

Monica Encizo. Freckles covered

most of her body, *hasta en el culo*. She had fair skin, with hazel or honey colored eyes. We were together for nine years. It was becoming very serious between us, but like all good things, it came to an end because she never wanted to be on this planet.

Amanda Castañeda. She was John Dario's cousin. Seven months.

Laura Miranda. Our relationship also lasted seven months.

Laura Miranda traveled to the city every weekend because she had to go shopping for the latest fashions.

Laura was pretentious and snobby, but she was known all around town because her father owned the largest and most luxurious hotel in town.

One day, Laura ran to my house. I heard her from inside the house

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and quickly stood up from my couch to open the door. There was Laura. Hysterical. Miserable. Not Laura.

“My mother was diagnosed with cancer!” Laura explained as sadness molded her expression.

“Sh...sh...sh...*tranquila*. It’s ok...” I held her in my arms, sharing my warmth with her shaking body.

Laura left town with her family to the city, where her mother would receive better medical attention. I broke up with Laura. I did not want to deal with a long distance relationship.

Martha Lopez. Wow, she was bite size with a nice body, great green eyes and *un culo de hormiga*. We were together for a year.

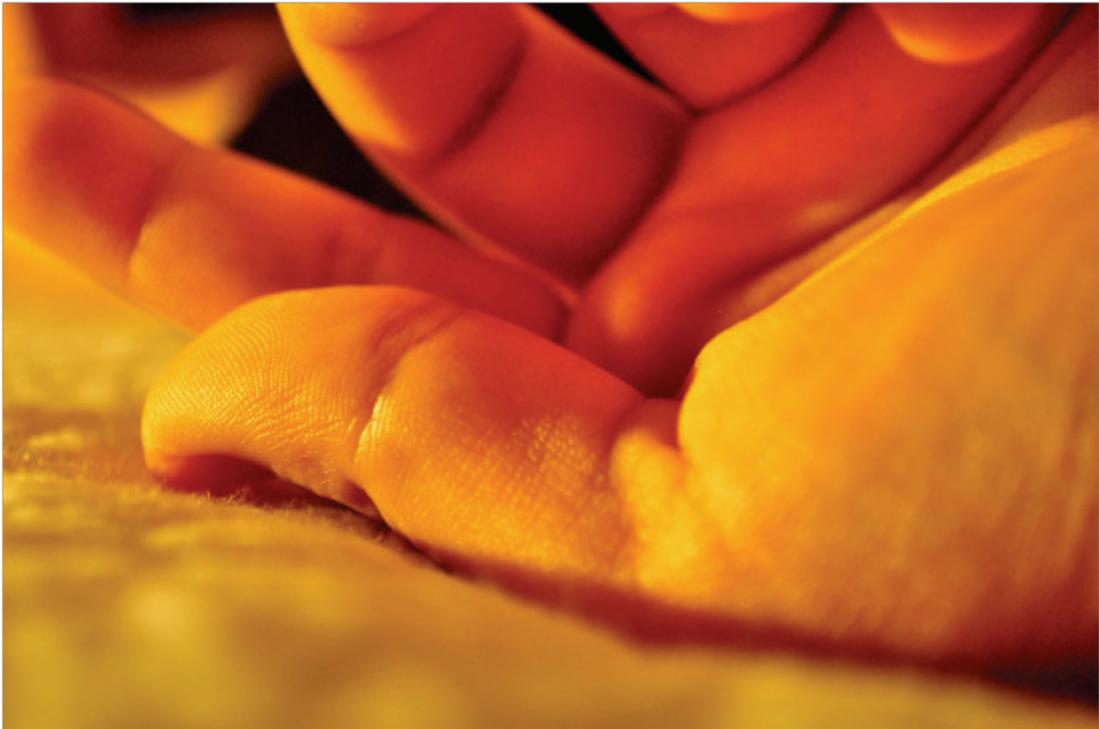
Rut, the daughter of Doña Belinda,

a lady who sold gold to my mother’s jewelry shop. She was not good-looking, but very stuck-up. She would only speak about her weekends in the country clubs and passion for tennis. She became boring after the first month; however, we lasted seven months.

Carolina Lozano Estrada. She was the daughter of the family that owned a very well-known restaurant in the area called *El Caseron de Medellin*. We only lasted seven months. She taught me how to cook. She became very fat when she began to work in the restaurant. I left her.

Nubia Amoroso. Very petite and heavy on the sides. She had the bluest eyes, almost dolllike. We lasted five months.

Alejandra, a Chilean. I lived with her about a year in a half in San Andres.



Croquetas by Stephanie Aya  
Photography

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I almost left with her to the United States.

“Alejandra, come with me back home,” I pleaded.

“I am not leaving the coast. It is where I belong,” she would argue.

“Ok, I am leaving alone then,” he stated.

“Do as you please,” she said without doubt.

Andrea. You met her. Well, you were a little girl. She loved playing with you. I was with her for about eight or nine months.

Francisca Magarin, five years.

Nilda Lozada, three years.

I forgot to mention Lesby Lozano,

from Armenia and Miryan, a tribal-looking beauty who modeled.

These were the eighteen women to whom I lent my heart. They have all probably forgotten about me.

I think about one everyday. I try to imagine what my life would have been if I had stayed with Nilda for four more years. I sometimes write stories about what could have happened after they left me or I left them.

Between these four gray walls, I close my eyes and walk alongside them, painting on them with my index finger. I try to paint the way their bodies curved, and the way their eyes opened. I have concluded that you are the only real thing I have. I will marry you.

Even if I must kill your father.

I am sure that your cheap boyfriend could never treat you like I dream of treating you when I get out of this shithole. I will be free soon and I will take you to a far away island, where we can write poetry and speak about life and its mystery.

I think about you everyday, because in every direction I stare, I see you. I never told you, but my cell is full of the pictures you have sent me since they caught me. You might think I am a little crazy.

So tell that boyfriend of yours to start finding someone else, for you are mine.

My sweet princess, we will live happily ever after. When I get out, I will run to your house, and you will have everything ready. You will jump out of your window and into my arms and we will escape from your

parents.

I am not crazy, just simply in love with you.

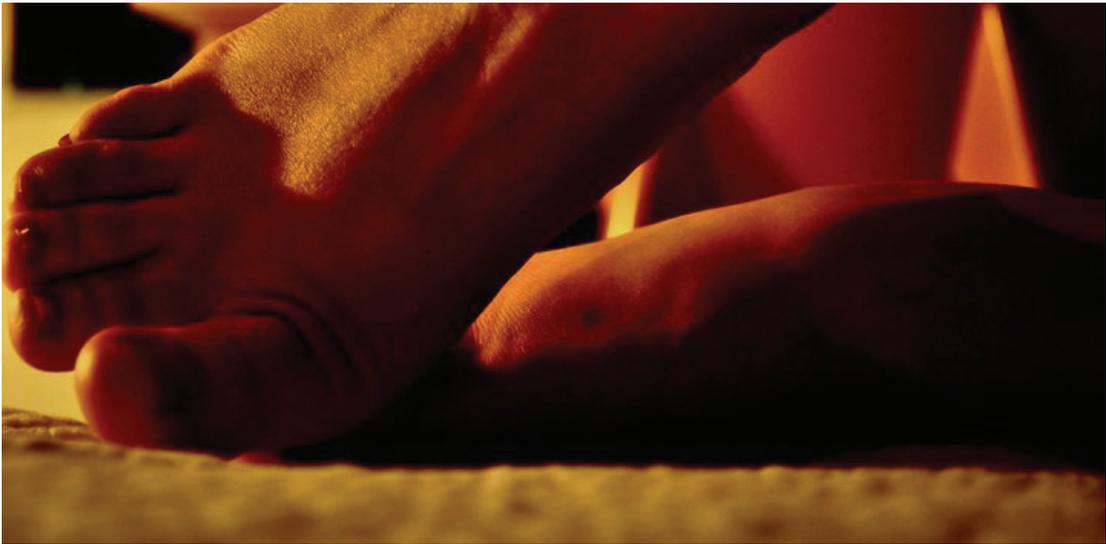
I want to smell your rich brown hair and taste your soft perfect lips. I would love to take off that soft pink dress you are wearing in that picture you sent me recently.

Please do not fear this love we feel for each other.

I love you, Princess.

Your Uncle,

Emilio.



Salchichas by Stephanie Aya  
Photography

# PART OF ME

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by Heidi Chico

Collage 4 by Leydis Mariel, Mixed Media

Haunting my feelings,  
Killing me softly,  
Poisoning my heart,  
For help, I scream loudly.

Because you are my twin,  
Becoming a part of me,  
Without you I would die,  
By your side I can fly,  
I can feel the power,  
Of the tallest tower,  
Inside your heart,  
And that is the other part,  
Of the person I see,  
Right in front of me,  
That cruel human being,  
The other part of me.



Collage 4 by Leydis Mariel  
Mixed Media

# FOUND

by Carl Cañizares  
Missed Oportunities by Michelin Janvier, Acrylic

Sheri's spring break in her freshman year started with a road trip to Panama City in a 1990 Toyota Camry with two friends and an idiot. Sarah and Robert were her friends and Charley was the idiot, a couple of years older than the rest of them.

"Charley promised he would behave on this trip." Sarah swore while giving him the eye.

"And if he doesn't I'll straighten him out." Robert the driver promised.

"Paaaarrrrty! Uga Uga!" Charley shouted out ignoring the others.

Initially Sheri had not wanted to go because of Charley, her best friend's boyfriend, pothead, and all around jerk, but the psychic guru she contacted once a month had changed her mind. She told Sheri that something lost to her would be found on

this trip. Hours into the road trip, they took exit 356 for food and gas. As they approached an old Diner, Sheri recognized it immediately. As a child, her biological parents had taken her to a colossal round white building with huge glass windows. Driving up to it had seemed grand to her, like Cinderella's carriage dropping her off at a palace. The white brightness of the diner had captured Sheri's imagination; she had been visiting a place floating in the clouds. Sheri had never forgotten this diner, even as her memories of everything, including her parents, had faded until they had left her completely. She had been told her biological parents had died in a car accident when she was only four and she had been adopted within days by Adolf and Sabrina Brown. Sheri's sunglasses hid her eyes as they began to well up.

"There's got to be a better place than



this dive,” she said, instantly regretting it.

“These diners used to be the bomb in their heyday. I remember coming to one of these as a kid,” said Charley.

He was using the map to roll a joint as they pulled into the Cracker Barrel across the street from old white diner. It didn’t take long for them to be seated and place their orders. As the other three talked, and laughed, Sheri looked out the window searching for memories but only the white Jetsons-ish building came back clearly. As she stared out the window fixed on the old structure she remembered pulling into the large parking lot and the overwhelming grandeur of the white building but she couldn’t remember the leaving. There was something else. She felt a knot forming in her stomach.

“Something else”, she said so softly it barely escaped her lips.

“Did you say something?” Sarah asked her.

Sheri’s gaze remained fixed on the structure across the street. The others had paused their chatting and were now all examining her, except for Charley who noticed Sheri’s fixation for the white colossal structure across the street.

“You know I think that was the diner that I went to as a kid,” Charley said.

“How can you tell?” Sarah asked.

“It’s the shape and the large windows; my parents took my sister and me--“ Charley’s voice trailed off and his face turned grim.

“I didn’t know you had a sister,” said Robert.

“She was abducted when she was four. It was a few days after we came to that diner.”

“God, that’s terrible. What was her name?” asked Sarah.

“Charlotte!” Sheri said, her eyes still fixed on the structure across the street.

Charley’s heart raced. He tried to speak, to move his hand; it refused. He closed his eyes and then as he opened them he forced it out, “Charlotte?”



# WAKE UP

by Melissa Larrocha

## Scene 1

*Curtains open.*

*Main light is cast front-stage right. A withered teenage girl stands. Stage left is a lilac room is dimly lit from window light at center of wall. A bed is under the window, night table at left with alarm clock, a calendar hanging above the night table, dresser on the right. A girl sleeps on bed. Alarm clock turns on, music begins.*

“Now Cinderella don’t you go to sleep, it’s such a bitter form of refuge...”  
-The Killers

*Girl awakes, looks at calendar. She begins to narrate the actions girl stage left takes.*

6 a.m. I turn off the radio. It’s January 19, 2011. Today is the anniversary of her...

*Stage left dims to black.*

As I walk the dark halls of my house, I check on Penny - she’s sound asleep with Rupert, her one-eyed teddy bear, smothered under her arm. It was a Christmas gift from Mother. In the past year Penny has gotten really attached to Rupert, so much that she treats him like a real person. I guess it makes sense. When someone you cared for is gone, you can’t help but attach

yourself to the things that remind you of them. As I enter the kitchen, I hear the front door open and see Father enter, with sagged eyes from the night shift.

*Stage left lights up. Small kitchen appears, with wooden table at center and four chairs, door at right wall. Girl goes to fridge, gets eggs out. Goes to drawer, gets frying pan. She begins to break an egg. Man slowly crosses to other side of room.*

LUCY: Good morning.

FATHER: [grunts] Hey.

He has never been the same since that day, a year ago. As I stare at the frying pan, burning the eggs to white, I recall the moment...

*Stage right dims to black.  
Curtains close.*

## **Scene 2**

*Curtains open.*

*Same room is dimly lit at stage left. Lucy sleeps on bed. Alarm clock turns on, music begins.*



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“Wanted to say I missed you, I caught it when I kissed you...” -Boys Like Girls

*Stage right lights up. Girl seems happy, healthy.*

7 a.m. I turn off the radio. It's January 19, 2010. Today is our anniversary. Jude and I have been together for three months now. I feel so happy. This is the happiest I've ever been.

*Stage left dims to black.*

I get up and walk down the hallway, the day is overly sunny, and I hear shouting coming from my parent's room. This early in the morning, really? I guess the arguing never stops. As I reach the kitchen, I get the eggs out of the frying pan just as they are about to burn.

*Stage left lights up.*

*Lucy places eggs on dish. Mom enters, clearly angry. Dad enters, takes deep breath.*

MOM: Let me get that will you.

LUCY: Good morning, Mom.

DAD: Mornin', Lucy.

---

DAD: Oh, it was nothing, right sweetheart? [kisses Mom's cheek]

MOM: [frustrated] Sure, nothing...as always.

As I serve myself breakfast, I hear tiny footsteps; it's my sister.

PENNY: Mornin', Lucy! Guess what? Today is show and tell and I'm taking Rupert and since Mom gave him to me for Christmas, no one's seen him yet so everyone will be excited. Oh, and I heard Sophie got a...

LUCY: Alright, calm down. Just eat your breakfast.

As I stuff my face with eggs, I watch as Penny tries to feed Rupert, and I see Dad reading the newspaper. I look at Mom, serving herself food, with angry eyes. Of course she looks like that after an argument. I'm sure she'll come around soon. Besides, today is my anniversary with Jude; nothing can ruin this day.

*Stage right dims to black.*

*Curtains close.*

### **Scene 3**

*Curtains open.*

---

*Stage right lights up. Stage left, a classroom, rows of desks line the room, facing blackboard on right wall. A teacher's desk with chair and books is at right corner. Some students are at left corner, chatting. One particular desk is covered with petals. A boy stands next to it.*

As I walk into homeroom, I see my desk is covered with yellow rose petals and a handsome Jude is holding a sun-yellow rose.

JUDE: Happy anniversary, Lucy.

LUCY: Happy anniversary. [kisses him]

JUDE: So are you ready for tonight? I got a surprise planned for us.

LUCY: Yes, I can't wait. I'm so glad it's Friday, otherwise I would have to get home super early.

JUDE: [pensive] Remember our first date? With the car stalling and...

LUCY: My phone battery dying. Yup. My dad almost killed us. He thought something had happened to us.

JUDE: Well, something did happen.

LUCY: What?

---

JUDE: Well, besides getting my car towed away and us never making it to the park, we had our very first date. Our very first kiss. And that's when we knew we were meant for each other.

LUCY: Stop, you're making me blush.

JUDE: Good, just like freshman year when I first meet you. Remember? I got late to class and asked if I could sit next to you, and you blushed. You were so cute, I instantly fell for you.

LUCY: Class is about to start so we'll talk tonight, okay?

JUDE: Okay. Talk to you later.

*Stage left dims to black.*

The rest of day I spend with Jude, going to class, barely paying attention, thinking of how wonderful today will be. I will finish class, pick up Penny from school, and arrive home to get ready for tonight.

I've known him ever since freshman year and I've always liked him, but nothing ever really happened until his friend told my friend that he liked me.

Then Jude found out and decided it was best to reveal his feelings to me.

---

After a couple of dates we made it official.

LUCY: I can't wait either.

JUDE: See you tonight. [kisses me tenderly]

LUCY: See you tonight.

*Stage left dims to black.*

As I enter my car, I can't help but smile. The entire drive actually, I'm smiling. I think that tonight the surprise will be that he says "I love you." I'm hoping for this because I think I love him, too. I pull up at the elementary school by our house to pick up Penny. She's standing by the front doors, hugging Rupert. I think she really likes him. She was so happy when she unwrapped him that she hugged Mom real tight. That was the first time I saw Mom smile in months. It was the last time I saw her smile too. Penny sees me and runs to the car.

*Stage left lights up. Parkway appears, Lucy and Penny are in car.*

LUCY: So how did it go with show and tell?

PENNY: Oh, you won't believe how many people loved Rupert! Everyone

---

wanted to hug him and Sophie, she got a bunny for Christmas! She named her Thumper and she was really small and I pet her and she was so fluffy!

LUCY: I see you had a good day.

PENNY: Yup, and I can't wait to get home. Mom promised to take me to the park today.

Suddenly my gut begins to ache. I take a look at the sky and see nothing but gray clouds. A storm seems to be coming our way.

LUCY: Seems like you might have to wait until tomorrow to go to the park, Penny.

*Stage left dims to black.*

When we get home, I still have that aching in my gut. I open the front door and a nasty creaking sound comes from the hinges, like if foretelling something bad has happened. The room looks gloomy. I tell Penny to sit down and turn on the TV. Something doesn't feel right.

*Stage left lights up. White room appears, full-bed at center. Night table and lamp at left. Window in center casts dim light. Door at right is closed. Door at left is ajar, streaming dim light and music through it.*

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I hear music coming from my parent's room. It's "Comptine D'Un Autre Ete", Mom's favorite song. It's from the cd of piano songs I made for her as a Christmas gift. She was a great pianist once. I walk into her room and see the door of the bathroom ajar, candlelight streaming through, creating shadows on the carpet. I call out to the only person that should be home.

LUCY: Mom?

No reply. I open the door of the bathroom and when I turn on the bright lights, I see a stream of crimson drip to the floor and Mother unconscious in the bathtub...

*Stage right dims to black.  
Curtains close.*

#### **Scene 4**

*Curtains open.*

*Stage right lights up. Withered girl from before appears.*

I wake up Penny to get ready for school. I go to my room and pull on my clothes and stuff my work clothes in my bag because ever since Mother died I've had to work. Nothing that I haven't chosen. Ever since that day a year ago, I have tried to fill up my schedule with responsibilities because I...

---

just wanted to be alone. I go check on Penny. She's grabbing her backpack in one hand, Rupert on the other.

*Stage left lights up. Room with bed at left, window at center, door at right. Penny stands. Lucy at door.*

LUCY: You ready, Penny?

PENNY: Yes, Lucy.

LUCY: Breakfast is ready. You hungry?

PENNY: No.

LUCY: How about Rupert?

PENNY: Not really. Maybe. A little.

LUCY: Alright. How about we get a slice of bread for Rupert?

PENNY: Okay.

LUCY: I'm sure Rupert wouldn't mind sharing either.

*Stage left dims to black.*

---

We get in the car. On the way to school, Penny stays quiet, except when feeding Rupert. I'm hoping that whatever attachment she has to him is healthy because...sometimes I think she's crazy, treating him like a human. We reach her school. Penny gets out of the car.

*Stage left lights up. Parkway appears, Lucy inside car, Penny stands next to car, door open.*

LUCY: Goodbye, Penny, Rupert. Take care.

PENNY: Goodbye, Lucy.

*Stage left dims to black.*

As I drive to school, I turn on the radio. That song by Arcade Fire is playing. I think of how much everything has changed this past year. After Mother's death, life just became cloudy, misty. I didn't meet up with Jude for our anniversary. I didn't go to school for a month. I didn't see anything past the walls of my house for that month. After that time, Father forced me to go back to school. When I got there, Jude was the first to welcome me. As the school year progressed, I became distant. I didn't talk to my friends. They all stopped trying to talk to me. Except Jude. He sat next to me for lunch every day, in silence. After May, he also stopped trying. He wrote me a letter; said that he needed someone that could open up to him, someone that needed him.

---

That entire summer I was mute. I did the cooking, the cleaning. I went to work. I fed Penny, Rupert, Father. I did nothing else. When the school year began, everyone had moved on. They didn't even look at me. They all seemed so happy, alive. Even Jude had moved on. Apparently he was now with this girl Clarisse that he met during the summer. He passed by me in the halls and didn't turn his head to face me. I felt so alone. I still do.

Much like Mother must have felt the months leading to her end. It turns out Mother killed herself because she was unhappy. Unhappy with her life. What made it worse for her were the illusions that Father was having an affair, that we didn't love her, that we were unappreciative of her. She had been battling depression for a couple of months and we didn't even realize it. She would do her routine: wake up, make breakfast, go to work, come home, make dinner, go to bed. I would help her somewhat with the house work, but she always did the cooking. When I first noticed she wasn't smiling anymore I just thought it had been a bad day at work. Soon that bad day turned into every day. I pretended like nothing was happening, even when she had her tantrums with Father.

I ignored them because I felt like she just had to learn how to control her anger. Father, too, had to tone it down but, when she became angry, she just had this expression of madness on her face. When she first started showing her suicidal thoughts, it was two weeks before the incident. I was home, getting ready to pick up Penny from her friend's house, Father was at work, and she was in her room. When I went into her room to ask her a question, She

was in the bathroom, talking to herself, saying: “If no one cares that I’m here, then no one will care that I’m gone.”

It was my fault. All of it. Her thoughts, her death.. I could have told someone! But I kept quiet, thinking nothing will happen, everything will be okay. She’s just saying that because she’s angry, that’s all. She’ll get over it. And she did. She completely got rid of her problem. All she had to do was end her life. Maybe that wasn’t a terrible idea. Maybe that was the only way she could end her misery.

Mother had clinical depression and no one knew because we never bothered taking her to the doctor. And now I am the one wallowing in depression. I think of how much I have spent of my life doing nothing. I had a family. A father, a mother, a sister, even Rupert. I had Jude. I had friends. Now that I have no friends, no Jude, and no Mother, I have nothing left but Penny and Father. But Father is long gone in his own wallowing, and Penny has aged a decade. So much that she doesn’t even cry anymore. Not even when she cut her knee on some broken glass at school. They don’t need me. I have done nothing but hurt this family and waste everyone’s time. No one at school talks to me. No one at home talks. If no one cares that I’m here, then no one will care that I’m gone. I decide to turn back home instead of wasting my time in class, having the teacher drone on about the Civil War. Well, it doesn’t matter really where I am, because my entire life is a waste of time. But now I just feel like going home. When I arrive, I enter the house, leaving the door unlocked. I enter my room; strip myself down to my underwear.

I take a good look at myself in the mirror. I'm thinner than ever. I see myself worn down, pale as the snow, eyes purple from lack of sleep, hair thinned out. I am nothing but a speck of sand in this world.

*Stage left lights up. Bathroom appears; bathtub at left, sink next to it, toilet at right. A small clock radio is at corner of bathtub. It's turned on.*

I enter the bathroom in my parents' room. The one that Mother used to escape this world. I fill the bathtub with water and light a rose-shaped candle. It smells like the sun. It reminds me of that one sun-yellow rose that Jude gave me for our three-month anniversary. I retrieve what's left of it from my favorite book, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. As I turn off the lights above, I sink into the water, leaving next to me the book with the sun-yellow rose, breathing in the smell of the candle, listening to that song on the radio. I grab the razor and slice my wrists, right at the point of no return. I catch a glimpse of the clock. 3:10 p.m. Today is January 19, 2011. As I sink into the warm water, I hear voices calling to me - Father? Penny? Who knows? I can't tell. All I hear is the radio blasting these words into the air...

"I can't see where I am going to be when the reaper, he reaches and touches my hand..." - Arcade Fire

*Stage right dims to black. Stage left dims, only candlelight is visible. Music slowly fades.  
Curtains close.*







# THE COMMENCEMENT OF SILENCE

by Carl Cañizares

## 10 de febrero de 2011

Berta, white-haired and wrinkle-faced, sits at her kitchen table, staring into her taza de café con leche. Raulito sits across from her sipping his third cup of coffee. As he drinks his coffee, he prepares his grocery list and updates his weekly 'to do' list. At the top of the list 'cita de médico para Mamá' has been stricken through. Below that several tasks, including 'wash the car', 'call Teresita about the job offer', and 'pick up the dry-cleaning' remain undone. At the bottom of the list Raulito pencils in 'buy groceries'.

Twenty-five minutes later Raulito is unconsciously tapping the unread *Miami Herald* on the table with his pencil and staring out the kitchen window. Berta shifts her stare from her café con leche to Raulito.

"¿Quién eres?" she asks.

## 8 de septiembre de 2001

Berta grabbed the last plate with the pink and green floral pattern from the dish drainer and carefully placed it at the top of the stack in the cupboard which she could barely reach. She walked to the kitchen table and sat down with difficulty, just as Raulito came into the kitchen to pour himself a cup of coffee. The table populated with an assortment of clear-amber medicine bottles was otherwise bare. Berta let out a heavy sigh followed by a grunt as she struggled with the child proof cap.

"Mamá, deja, I'll open it for you."

"No. Yo puedo."

"Lo sé, but it'll tire you out."

"Yo puedo."

"I know," Raulito said as he took the

bottle from his mother anyway and struggled briefly, but finally managed to pry it open.

“You know you can get the pharmacist not to use child proof caps now, solo tienes que pedirselo.”

“No hacen eso en mi farmacia.” Raulito fought back the impulse to roll his eyes, but could not prevent a weak sigh from escaping.

“Mamá, I have to fly back home to Denver tomorrow and we still haven’t made a decision.”

“No estoy decidida.”

“I’ve been here two weeks. I have to get back to work; back to my life.”

Berta clenched her teeth beneath her pursed lips and looked away just long enough to surprise him when

she spoke. “¡Tú, tú y tú! Siempre se trata de ti.”

### **17 de enero de 1991**

Raulito saw his mother at the end of the hallway when the elevator doors slid open. She had her head buried in his brother’s chest. He met his brother’s disapproving eyes when he was still half way down the hallway.

There was no mistaking their meaning; if they spoke words, they would be saying “Asshole!” His brother whispered something to his mother and she straightened up and turned her head, as Raulito approached them.

“How’s Dad?” Raulito asked.

“Ha muerto, llegaste tarde.” Berta responded.

Eighteen hours earlier Raulito had





Mi madre by Michelin Javier  
Acrylic

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rushed into Barajas Airport and made a bee-line for the Iberia counter. He tapped his foot and fidgeted with his scarf while the line slowly made its way to the counter.

“I need a ticket for your next flight to Miami,” Raulito pleaded in Spanish.

“The next flight tonight is completely booked. I can get you on a flight to New York first thing in the morning; you can take a connecting flight to Miami from there.”

“You don’t understand, it’s a family emergency, tomorrow may be too late. Please, I’ll pay anything; how about first class?”

“I’m really sorry, Sir, but it’s completely booked and confirmed,” the ticket agent said.

“What about volunteers. Can you ask another passenger if they’re willing to give up their seat, I’m sure if they knew-”

“I’m sorry, Sir, I can’t do that.”

“What about another airline, can you get me on another airline?”

“Iberia is the only one that flies direct Madrid to Miami tonight, but I could check if perhaps we have something to London or Lisbon with a connecting flight to Miami later tonight. I can try that if you want.”

“¡Sí por favor inténtalo!”, Raulito urged.

**4 de Julio y 4 de agosto de  
1981**

Berta’s grip on the steering wheel

tightened as she maneuvered into the parking lot of the Air Force Processing Center.

“¿Tienes todo?” Berta asked.

“Yeah,” Raulito replied.

“¿A qué hora te tienes que presentar?”

“7:00 A.M.”

“Es casi la hora, date prisa.”

“Mamá, I—“

“Llámame cuando llegues.”

“Yeah, sure.”

While he waited at the processing line his mind wandered to a month earlier, 4th of July Weekend.

Raulito’s heart started beating fast as he pulled up to the house Tuesday morning and saw three cars in the driveway.

“Hello,” he called out then saw his brother dressed in a suit sitting on the couch.

“Asshole, you’re going to wish you were dead. Go see Mom and Dad in their room.”

Raulito breathed, but his body continued to tense up.

“What’s up?” he asked his brother.

“Asshole, just go see them.”

Raulito tapped on his parents’ bedroom door, softly; then stepped in. His father was wearing his best suit and a long, tired face.

He looked away when their eyes met. His mother was wearing a black dress and her red eyes were moist.

“Llevo desde el viernes sin saber de ti. ¿Dónde has estado?” his mother asked.

“At the beach with friends.”

“¿Quién te dio permiso?”

“Mamá, I’m going to be 18 in less than a month.”

“¿Así que te crees muy hombre ahora, y no se te ocurrió dejarnos una nota dejándonos saber dónde estabas en caso de una emergencia?”

“What emergency?”

“Tu abuela murió el viernes y esta mañana fue el entierro.”



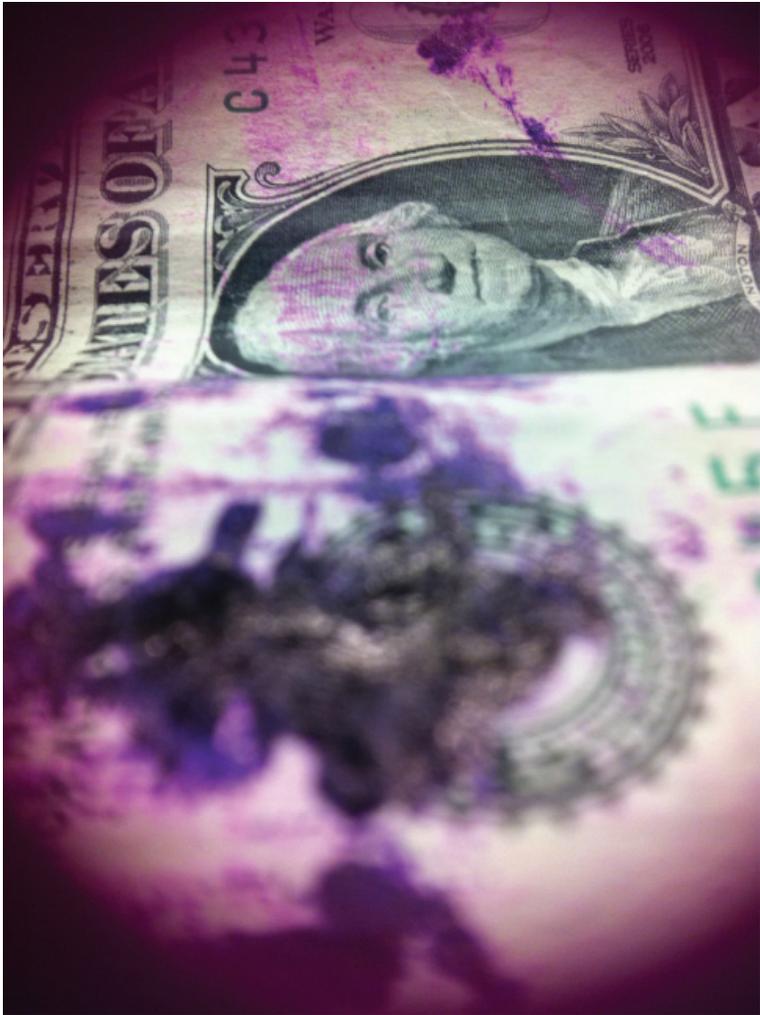
# BRIEF MEMOIRS OF A TIME TRAVELER

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by Christopher Mowry  
Fragment by Laura Loret de Mola, Photograph

Coffee Stained Napkin at an International Airport

All the taxes you pay, the products you buy,  
That money is responsible for death.  
The surgical removal of an enemy soldier.  
The starvation of a child in forced labor.  
Ecological genocide.  
There is no innocence.  
We're all Killers.  
Had become, will become War.



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## Transference

Identity is a mirror.  
But, who are you?  
Son of God. Daughter of Lilith.  
A ghost. The shadow of a wolf.  
Agent of Emergence.  
I am all that is unseen, because I am not seen.  
What dutiful shame.

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## Evolution

She is an Anima.

The core of Strength and Creation. A wash of Color.

All Vibrance.

He is the Animus.

The essence of Humility and Power. A thrust of Spirit.

All Order.

I am Animee.

The Unity of both archetypes. Life at its most Animated.

Modern Suitability.

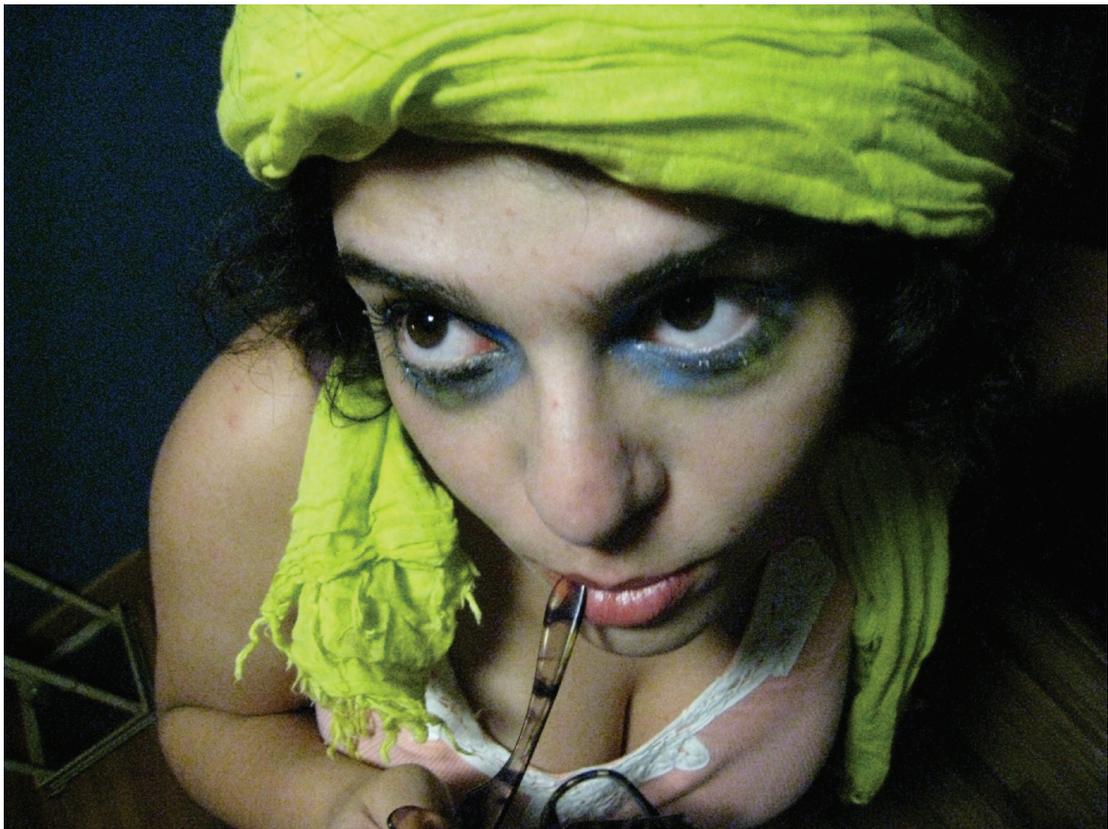
Digital.

Shapeshifter.

All Gender. All Lust.

Rejoice,

I come.



Popup by Laura Loret de Mola

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## Pop Stars

Our lips drip neon  
Under glitter stained lights.  
Where eyes cut venom  
Like glass lined scythes.  
We are copied angels  
Warped in sin.  
Flawless bullets  
Wearing thin.  
We'll explode like magic  
In bloodshed shine  
And burn as wrecks  
In fall from flight.  
Still, I see you  
Teeth like needles  
Poised on mine.  
And I can only hope  
You're of my kind.  
Just don't die.  
It's Showtime!

## Singularity

I hate when you don't answer the phone.  
The signals strike against the tone.  
Reverberant, wireless, empty soul.  
An ocean cold  
So cold its warm.  
You're not here, and yet i feel it.  
Frequent, dynamic.  
I'll skype with you to see your face  
Our motion caught in static lace.  
Basics bleeding through LCD.  
Sparks on a breeze.  
Jolts of self and place.  
Lost maybe. God, I want to be with you.  
Or, do I want to be you.  
I do, I want to be you.  
We maybe. Curse this thought so true.  
Like waves encased  
In line of light and speed  
To think, that one could move so free.  
Fractures floating in wet space.

A drive to expand, connect the race.  
It's beautiful, tragic.  
Only, you not here, and I feel like shit.  
So call the storm.  
I want that hold.  
Electric, warming, frantic soul.  
That spins a fiery molecular zone.  
Or maybe, I should find my own.  
I, just, hate when you don't answer the phone.



# MIDNIGHT

by Mickey Sofine

Midnight breathes like it is trying not to be found. Shallow gusts hint no direction. In the distance, a church bell chimes on the hour. There's a bit of fog and a chill in the wind tonight.

I step from the porch into the cool night air. My hands, jammed into the pockets of a red hoodie, molest a plump sandwich bag, which crinkles gently in protest. The promise within the flimsy plastic stirs a craving in my gut. Dirty brown eyes search the empty corner with the same intent as a starving stomach stares at an empty fridge. My answer arrives shortly in the form of a washed out black Honda, crawling to scoop me up.

Every night is a gamble in this risky business of recreation. Nothing is certain when you chase the high. Treading asphalt from porch to pas-

senger side of the car, another set of brown eyes briefly meet mine. They exhibit the same eager longing. Both of us are famished for a taste of the green monster.

Tonight Tala looks a bit more on edge than usual.

"Who knows? Maybe she toked before she got here," I dismiss with a thought.

"Where to, Penny?" Tala asks, shifting into gear before I can answer.

"Doesn't matter. We'll smoke on the fly and figure it out," comes my too-smooth sounding response.

"Ok. I've got a bit of stash to put in, too."

"Bout time you put down, ya free-loadin' hoe."

"Eff you!"

Tala pulls off down the street, cruising dead on the speed limit. Withdrawing her own sack, my lovely partner in crime tosses it nonchalantly onto my lap. Curiosity causes my eyebrow to arch as I empty the button-bag's contents, a much deeper green than my own vibrant, emerald nugget. It is already ground.

"You're givin' me shake?"

Tala challenges my snide comment with a sharp glance from the driver's side.

"I'll keep it, then."

I lift it to my nose to whiff a sample. Musky, earthy. Different from the citrus-y-raw-chicken smell of my funk. A shrug lifts and drops my shoulders. Different doesn't neces-

sarily mean worse.

"It's cool, dude. Relax or something,"

I encourage her in the most suave of tones.

My hands work instinctively. Muscle memory causes them to float to the glove box and withdraw necessary materials. A pocket-knife, a grinder, a notebook, and a grape flavored cigar to be hollowed out. The car smells faintly of socks, Febreze, and heavenly grade-A funk. With chef-like grace, I mix our in-edible salad.

After hollowing out the cigar, I insert the stuff meticulously into the brown husk. My lips and fingertips work in tandem to fashion the loveliest brown cylinder. Fat, round and looking damn near factory made.

"Where did you get this stuff?" I



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quesiton curiously.

“Uh, some guy named Carlos. My brother knows him.” There’s a stalling quality to her answer. It peaks my suspicion, but I say nothing. Soon the radio takes the place of our usual easy-going banter.

Ten minutes feels like an eternity smoking that colossal blunt. Paranoia motivated our skittish blood-shot eyes to check the mirrors for cops. As if some sort of forewarning would allow us to vanish all evidence in magician's time. As I roll the second (or third?) marijuana cigar, it seems time has stopped entirely. I feel the making of hysterical laughter bubbling in my throat. Shaking hands attempting to keep stray bits of herb from flying off the paper. Insanity must be contagious, for Tala is hunched over the wheel, laughing the hilarity of my outburst.

Doubled over in the passenger seat, laughing like a full-blown maniac, I glimpse at the half stuffed blunt in my lap and it’s attempting to wriggle, leech-like away from the bud. My laugh is so wild that I can’t tame it enough to express my horror.

Instead, I laugh harder, to the point where I’m hiccupping for breath and my face burns red.

“Oh shit!” Tala exclaims excitedly, interjecting her words between likewise hysterical laughter. “It’s working! Isn’t it?”

“What the hell, Tala? What’s working?” I manage to gasp in return, reaching out to ensnare Tala’s shirt in my tentacles. Tentacles?

“What the fuuuuuuhh Tala?” my voice cracks as I witness everything through new eyes.



Spider by Laura Loret de Mola  
Photography

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Blurred around the edges, the interior of the car is intensely vivid and feels as vast as the outdoors. The immense fog in (and outside) the car enhances the forest-like feel of it all.

Tears of comedic joy leak from Tala's eyes as she, still bellowing like a hyena, says,

"Salvia! I gave you salvia not bud, budd-ee." She acts as if her prank is brilliant and hilarious. And it is, for the time being. We watch rainbow musical notes trickle out of the car's speakers in perfect harmony to the music. Waves of color demonstrate our first run-in with synesthesia. The world has become our own living candy land.

My eyes must be trying to blink away the salvia-induced hallucinations because now my vision clicks frame by frame, like the shutter of

a camera. Of the entire rainbow colors, it seems red and blue are becoming more and more prominent. They flash inside the car like a nightclub.

"Oh God, Tala. Cool it! It's the cops behind us," spill from my lips before my brain can process the words.

The flashing lights signal these pigs are about ready to root their snouts around where they don't belong. Tala's grip on the wheel is suddenly white knuckled. A string of obscenities possess her lips, her dilated eyes scan the rear-view to confirm my high observation.

"What do we do, Pen-Pen?" Brows furrowed, still tripping out of her mind, panic sends a visible chill down my best friend's spine.

I do the only thing I know how: light

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another stick.

“Speed up and keep the windows up. We’re gonna smoke ‘em out.” In our freshly drawn cartoon world, it seems like the best idea.

Tala’s brows nearly reach her hairline, but she nods. It seems she’s too scared and too inebriated to question me. Turning off the radio, we smoke quickly to the sound of the sirens now wailing behind us. By the time we suck down that last blunt, the car is so full of smoke it’s difficult to breathe.

“On three, we roll our windows down and you cut off the lights and floor it. Got it?” I hear myself bravely command with more certainty than I’ve ever experienced.

Tala gulps and nods slowly in compliance. She has so much faith in me

that she kicks off the countdown.

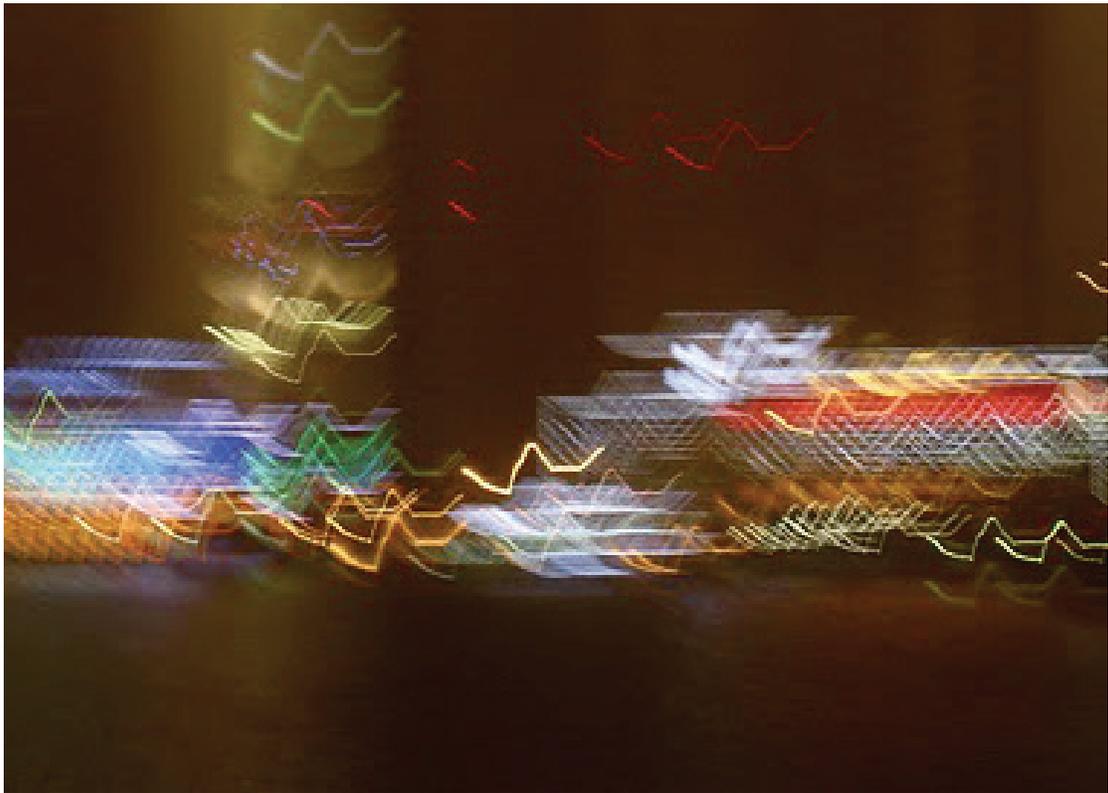
“One..”

“Two..”

“Three!” we both exclaim and jam our thumbs into the buttons of the power windows.

Tala cuts the lights just like I told her too. Smoke billows from the windows of the Honda like an atomic bomb on wheels. Mushrooms up and then immediately behind us as we plow through the fog. Our eyes snap to the rearview mirror and witness the police car engulfed in smoke thick enough to be declared milk. The cops lights bounce off the smoke and reflect like a funhouse, the police interceptor fish tailing in its lung-made carnival.

A grin creeps slowly onto my face as



Riverdance by Laura Loret de Mola  
Photography

Tala guides our vehicle expertly into the surrounding neighborhood. We laugh, but we don't laugh too hard.

In me are the victory calls of a thousand excited Native Americans, but I don't dare whoop.

Tala has an idea of her own when she parks without an ounce of shame in a stranger's driveway. We melt into our seats and spark up a little green celebration.

Every night is a gamble in this game of recreation. Tonight, though the house was clearly in favor, we lucked out.



# SERIES

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by Emil Padilla  
Waterfall by Ari Peña, Photography

## Description of Sound

The song begins and I hear the sound waves begin to rise; it's high tide and the musical surf is moving closer.

As it crashes against my eardrums, my head begins to swim.

It takes me a second to become accustomed to the lack of silence.

As the waves continue to roll, my thoughts ebb, following the highs and lows.

The current of sound is pushing me to sea, new perspectives and ideas.

I understand why the composer used a seven over four rhythm and how it successfully isolated the two voices within the piece.

Reflection upon her ideas streams in as the last note reverberates.

Silence, music's drought, the flow...



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## Nevermore

While he's whispering Nevermore,  
I am yelling severe more,

Ties, the things we're addicts to,  
For men and women love ensues,

To feel a single glimpse of glee,  
In emotional numb orgies,

As I scream my silent scream,  
I wake up from my only dream,

This dream where I know control,  
Over my love's constant toll,

On my life and on my heart,  
In real life I cut that part,

With your gnashing gnawing teeth,  
I remove my loving piece,  
So while I'm broken on the floor,  
He is whispering ...Nevermore.

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## Rapture

The tock is ticking but the clock is not winding,  
You're like the leaf that floats along the banks,  
Your journey, ever changing as you wither away.  
I am the stone bound to shore.  
I may be moved from beach to beach but always the rock,  
Unmoving and unchanging.  
Have I disowned time or has he shunned me?  
I watch as you all pass by, waving  
Au revoir  
Adios  
Ciao  
Goodbye  
You know not what you truly say.  
You tell me:  
"I will move on and forget, but you; you will be the sole testament to my  
existence."  
The tock is ticking but the clock is not winding.

Tick...

Tock...

Where is my rapture?

# TINY DANCER

by Sandra Rodriguez

Las Ataduras by Melissa Larrocha, Photography

February 10

When I was a little girl I wanted to be a ballerina. I begged my mom for weeks before she finally gave in and enrolled me in ballet class. I loved it. I would spend countless hours in front of the mirror practicing every move, every position, every step; I wanted to be perfect. When the first ballet show came up I was cast as the lead ballerina. I practiced harder than ever. When the night of the show came, I was prepared. Standing center stage I felt powerful. I had everyone's attention. Towards the middle of the show, during a sequence of shanay turns, I saw my mother get up. Turn, she was standing. Turn, she was walking out of her seat. Turn, she was walking up the aisle. Turn, she was almost at the door. Turn, she was gone. After the show, on the drive home, she said, "Your belly was bulging over your tutu." I didn't say anything. Looking straight ahead she said, "Pudgy girls are just not meant to be ballerinas."

February 11

He left me. He didn't give me a warning. He just came up to me after school today and told me we were done. "We're seventeen, you know. We're too young to be tied down," he said. We'd been together for five months. Five months. Five months is hardly enough time to be considered "tied down." That was all the reason he gave, if you could even call it a reason. Oh wait, he did add one thing. "Let's still be friends Allie." Pfft, as if it were that easy. You can't just break a girl's heart and expect her to be fine.



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February 13

I thought long and hard about this break up. It felt so sudden. At first I was mad, but now, well now I'm just empty. I've been mulling over and over in my head what went wrong, what I did wrong, and I think I figured it out. Although he never said it, I know the reason he left me is because I'm fat. I look like I've gained at least ten pounds. I ran to the scale to confirm my suspicions. It was worse than I thought. Fifteen pounds! I'd gained fifteen pounds in the past five months. No wonder my now ex-boyfriend couldn't stand to be with me. I was a whale. One hundred and thirty five pounds, how could I let myself get here? The numbers laughed at me from the scale but I will fix this. I will lose the fifteen pounds I gained and then he will want me back. Then I will be perfect.

February 14

Today I started my diet. It's pretty

simple; no sweets. I thought about it and sweets are just too fattening. I figure I'm better off without them. Valentine's Day may not have been the best day to decide I will no longer eat sweets, but it's all about will power. Once I lose the weight, he will want me again. Everything will go back to normal and I won't feel empty anymore.

February 28

I climbed on the scale this morning and was slightly disappointed. Only seven pounds less since last time. The numbers on the scale laughed again but I can do this. I will lose those last eight pounds. I've decided to cut all junk food from my diet. No sweets and no junk food. It's all a matter of will power.

March 15

Three pounds! I only lost three pounds. This diet sucks. It's awful. I'm failing. Why is it so hard to just

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lose the rest of the weight? He hasn't even looked at me since the break up. I'm a failure, no one wants me. I don't blame them. Who would?

March 16

I may have overreacted yesterday. So I had a bad week, it isn't the end of the world. All I have to do is revise my diet plan. I won't eat anything that has more than five grams of fat per serving. That seems reasonable. My mother mentioned that I should also start to exercise, to burn fat.

March 28

Success! I lost ten pounds. I'm ecstatic. Today I looked down at the scale and laughed. The numbers stared up at me silently. One hundred and fifteen pounds! Today at school my friends all said I looked great. More importantly, he looked at me today. I pretended not to notice, but I saw him. Everything is falling into place.

April 10

I stood in front of the mirror today. I couldn't stand to watch but I couldn't tear my eyes away. My stomach was hanging over. Hanging over! My thighs looked like cottage cheese. My arms looked like wings, big fat ugly wings. I ran upstairs to change into bigger clothes; clothes that would cover the nastiness that was my body. Clearly I still need to diet. Originally I thought fifteen pounds would be enough, but now I see I was wrong. I will continue my diet. I just need to lose five more pounds. Five more pounds and I will be perfect.

April 25

This week I went on an all vegetable diet. I cheated a few times and had some bread, but mostly I stuck with vegetables. I also started going to the gym for an hour every day after school. I also stopped going out with friends to eat after school.

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I read online that eating with a group of people can make you eat more without even realizing it. It's a risk I can't afford to take. I haven't lost the five pounds yet, I only lost two.

May 7

I've been eating the same thing every day for the past week. I know it may seem a bit odd, but it works for me. I don't need that much variety. Every morning I have a handful of grapes for breakfast. I take a thirty minute jog before going to school. At school I eat a can of tuna. One of my friends mentioned that I wasn't eating much so I've been making up little lies so they won't worry. I'm perfectly fine; I just need to lose the weight. For dinner, I eat a salad. I pile on the veggies, but I usually throw about half of it out. After dinner I run to the gym, it's about a mile away from the house. I've al-

ways been fit so it's a good enough distance to be challenging. At the gym I work out for two hours, mostly cardio but also a bit of strength training. After that, I run home again. I know it may seem a bit drastic, but it's working. This week I lost another five pounds.

May 20

I've been having trouble sleeping. Every night it's the same routine. I can't sleep. I keep thinking about food and all the stuff I could be eating if I were thin and perfect. Once I fall asleep, the nightmares kick up. The other night I dreamt that it was prom night and I was about to put on this beautiful burgundy dress. But when I went to put it on, it didn't fit. The zipper wouldn't even go up an inch. The nightmare ends when I wake up drenched in sweat and trembling. Sometimes I'm so scared I gained the weight back that

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I have to get up and put on my jeans, just to make sure they still fit. After I've calmed down and reassured myself that I'm still thin, I climb back into bed and try to fall asleep again, but usually I fail. I feel like I have no control. I command my body to sleep but it flat out refuses.

June 1

Today I lost it. It was weird; I can't even explain how it happened. One second I was in the kitchen preparing my tuna, the next all the tuna was gone. I looked down at the empty plate trying to remember eating it, but I couldn't. Then my body moved to the fridge. I say my body because it literally felt like my brain was acting of its own accord, I had no control. Unable to stop myself, I opened the fridge and started shoving a piece of chocolate cake into my mouth. This was not good, not good at all, but my hands wouldn't stop.

The cake was moist and delicious. I regained control of my hands long enough to slam the fridge close. I thought that was it, but I lost control of my limbs again. My hands threw chip after chip into my mouth. My eyes found bags of candy, I ate them all. The sound of a car pulling into the driveway made me stop. I tried to hide all the wrappers and bags but there were so many. I ran to my room and hid under the covers. Regret crept in immediately. How could I undo this? I peeked out from the covers and looked at the scale. Could I stand on it? Should I stand on it? I had to see the damage. I teetered on the scale while holding my breath. Five pounds. I had just gained five pounds. I could feel the fat growing around me and immediately thought of how to compensate for what had just happened. I ran to the gym before anyone could see the damage and worked out for



Ela by Suleidys Tellez  
Photography

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four hours.

I lost another ten pounds. After my momentary lapse of judgment I hit the gym hard. I could not afford to lose control like that again. I had almost ruined all my work. It could not happen again.

Next time I might not be lucky enough to lose the weight again. I'm down to one hundred and three pounds, and I will never get fatter than this again.

June 30

This week I stumbled across something online. It was a website about anorexia. Lately I've been feeling down. I was searching some of my symptoms and anorexia came up. I don't have anorexia, but I decided to look at this web page about it anyway. At first I thought it was a medical page but then I realized it

was something completely different. It was girls giving tips about how to lose weight. Most of the tips I read were about cutting calories, burning calories, and how to manage eating in front of people. I even found something called "The Thin Commandments". Some of the tips seem pretty useful. But all these people are so dumb; so stupid. They are putting all their secrets on the web, sharing them with complete strangers! I'm not that dumb though. I won't share my secrets with the world. I don't want them all to be thin. If they are all thin then I have to be thinner. No. I will keep my secrets to myself. I will take some of their "tricks" and implement them in my own diet. I will achieve perfection and no one, no one, will know my secret.

July 15

I've lost eight pounds. . I've noticed that I haven't gotten my period late-

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ly. Actually, I haven't gotten my period in over three months. It's kind of odd but I'm not worried about it. Periods make you bloat and God knows I don't need the extra weight. Even though I've lost eight pounds my stomach still has a pouch. I can't get rid of it. I look at it in the mirror and it smiles at me. It laughs. "You're still fat!" it screams. I drop down to the floor and belt out two hundred sit ups. I look in the mirror again. Who's laughing now, stomach, who's laughing now?

July 26

I haven't managed to lose more than two pounds. I feel like I'm failing. I'm down to ninety three pounds, but the fat is still there. All my friends say I'm too thin, but they're just jealous. They want to know what my secret is but I won't tell them. It's a sacrifice I make every day. For breakfast I eat three grapes, no more, no less. I prepare food, like toast and waffles, so my parents will think I'm eating more than I

am. This is a trick I learned from an anorexia web site. I toss the food on the way to school, so the evidence is out of the house. At lunch time it's too risky to eat in front of my friends, not that I have many left. I eat one fourth of a can of tuna before joining them. If they ask why I'm not eating, I tell them I had a big breakfast. Dinner is the trickiest. My parents expect me to eat with them every day so I have to sit down and pretend to eat. Most days I wiggle out of it by saying I ate at a friend's house before coming home. They seem disappointed but I can't help it. The temptation is too great. If I sit at the table with all the food staring at me I might eat it. Sometimes I eat it without even thinking about it. On days like those I work out extra to burn all the calories. On the best days of the week, I eat less than three hundred calories a day.

August 9

My mom pointed out that my hair

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looks thinner, but I haven't noticed. All I've noticed is the fat hanging around my middle. Why won't it go away? I work out every single day without fail. Sometimes I get home so tired that I can't even think about food. I eat right. I gave up all the food that makes you fat. Why doesn't it just go away? I stand in front of the mirror and demand answers. My stomach has no answers, only insults. "You'll never get rid of me. I'm all you have left. No one else wants you. Fatty!" The other day I couldn't even get out of bed. The fat was weighing me down.

August 25

There is something inside me. I can feel it moving, growing, boiling over. It hurts me. At first, I tried to ignore it but the pain was persistent. I hardly sleep anymore, the pain keeps me awake. What is this pain? What else could it be? Hunger. It's a monster growing inside me. I can't stop it. I can't ignore it. I can't quench it. It's a ravenous beast

growing inside me.

September 14

Today I weighed in at eighty eight pounds. It was an effort to even stand on the scale, but I can't not do it. Not knowing is worse. I have to be thin in order to be perfect. I tell myself every day that this is not a sacrifice. This is a life choice. Thin. That's all I want to be. Perfect.

September 26

This morning I couldn't get out of bed, I tried to lift my arms but they were heavy. The fat just weighed me down. I could barely breathe from the weight. My mom came in to my room when I didn't come down for breakfast. She saw that I couldn't get up and called 911. At the hospital, everything was a mess. People were coming in and out, asking me all sorts of questions.

"How much do you weigh?"

I don't know, I didn't get on the scale

I don't know, I didn't get on the scale today.

"Have you been recently sick?"

No.

"Did you take any pills?"

No.

"Have you been dieting?"

Yes, how else could I be so perfect?

"When was the last time you got your period?"

I don't know.

"How often do you exercise?"

Every day.

"How long do you exercise for?"

Long enough to burn the fat.

All these questions are making me dizzy. They take out blood, tube after tube. They run tests. The doctor says I have abnormally low bone mineral density. What does that even mean? The doctor says I have extremely low blood pressure, and my body temperature is too low. The doctor says my heart is failing. What does that have to do with anything? It's the fat that's weighing me down. Don't they understand? The doctor wants to know how long I've been anorexic. Anorexic? I'm not anorexic. They are all so stupid. This fat is what is killing me. The doctor wants to see me eat. Why?

"Eat, just have a hamburger."

Oh God, doesn't he know how much fat is in a hamburger? It's disgusting. I can't eat that. He brings in a tube. What could that possibly be for?

“Are you sure you won’t eat?”

Of course not! I can’t eat that junk food. That burger will ruin me. He inserts the tube in my mouth while the nurses hold me down.

“It’s for your own good. You’re too thin. This tube will deliver a constant but gradual stream of food. You need to eat. You’re too thin.”

Too thin? Too thin?! There is no such thing.

September 30

When I was a little girl, all I wanted was to be a ballerina. I wanted to be elegant and poised like the ballerinas on TV. I wanted to wear a pink tutu and leap around the stage, the lead ballerina in a famous ballet. I wanted to lace up my ballet shoes perfectly. I wanted the perfect bun, the perfect body, the perfect everything. I practiced for hours. But fat girls cannot be ballerinas. Fat girls can’t be anything. A bulging stomach has no place in a pink tutu. Cottage cheese thighs do not belong in a leo-

tard. Fat arms will never look graceful. I wanted to be a ballerina, but I’m not good enough. Fat girls cannot be ballerinas.



# NO TENGO NADA

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by Suleidys Tellez  
Self Portrait by Michelin Janvier, Acrylic

Una noche mas que no puedo dormir,  
Y esta vez no sé por qué razón.  
Tantos pensamientos debajo de mis ojos  
Frotándose dentro de mi alma.

Pensamientos oscuros de lo que fue,  
Lo que podría ser y lo que no será.  
A veces pienso, busco, encuentro personas  
Que podrían reemplazar, que podrían borrar;  
Personas que me ayudarían a lidiar.

Quiero lidiar. Mi mente es un armario sucio  
Con pensamientos amontonados.  
Tantas responsabilidades  
Tantas metas  
Tanta pereza

Quizá no debería escribir hoy  
No tengo tema, no tengo ropa  
No tengo ansias, ni estructura, ni ganas, ni nada.  
¡Tengo problemas no sé qué hacer!  
Mi futuro es incierto  
Necesito motivación  
Compromiso  
Amor.



# SOMEBODIES

by Stephanie Aya

Naromad

You silly soldier.  
Look at you, with that puerile smile of yours.  
I could run circles around you, laughing at you.  
I don't.  
Instead, I sit and observe you.  
Maybe they should send you to fight in the war.  
In a war where women fight women.  
If you were a woman, I would still love you.  
It is you, who has captivated me in every sense.  
We should walk the world together.  
We should walk the world together.

Hand in hand.

Heart in heart.

Mind in

Mind.

## Ujan Vidda

I was overwhelmed.  
Like going on the same rollercoaster ten times.  
Indulging in sixty pounds of peanut m&m's.  
You were as easy as ripping a piece of toilet paper.  
Soft, tender, useful, toilet paper.  
You had to be foreign.  
No wonder, you didn't fit correctly, like a puzzle piece would.  
Your red shirt always looked small on you, as if, you had borrowed it from the  
curious little boy next door.  
You needed someone to be complete.  
To feel you could fit.  
You were always too tight on me, even when I tried to lie on the bed and make  
you

Zip.

---

Tallio

Why didn't you say anything?

I offered you my heart, I drew a map of it.

I even included a compass I found at sea.

You were as lonely and dark blue as the center of the ocean.

A coy fish lived deep inside your blood, swimming around quietly, without causing commotion, without asking for attention.

Your fish eyes were deep. Deep but never still.

There is something about the waves.

There is something about the waves.

They cause confusion and pain; I must reach

Shore.



Fallen Terracotta by Laura Loret de Mola  
Photography

Lanluji

It all started wrong.

I was in the neon blue skirt sharing my laughter with someone else,

You stared at me from a distance.

Perplexing was your obsession with my hair.

Your teeth were unaligned, quite killer.

You were flawed in every sense. The flaws,

Held me close, casting a spell, locking up my mind.

I waited for you by the swings for hours.

Swinging,

Swinging.

The swing got tired too of swinging.

It became free of the bars.

Rauciomi

You smelled like the asphalt on 7th and 13th Avenue.

Like the grease of empanadas.

Like the sweat of the old lady waiting for the bus.

Sweet and Exasperating.

Remember when we would escape and find ourselves in the jungle.

You would speak to animals as if you were one of them.

Maybe you are.

Your touch was never an animal's, your heart was never an animal's.

You drove around town in your magic school bus with the most pirated smile.

Did you download it?

Did you download it?

I uninstalled your software from my hard drive.

It was viral,

Useless.



# TAL VEZ

by Daimara Perez  
Untitled by Bertha Campo, Photography

Esta noche, tal vez, este dentro del súbito final.

Me quemo con la sangre de mis pecados.

Las manos sucias de ti y mi cuerpo, ya casi disuelto por el viento, solo piensan en sentir tu piel de seda.

Aun no me voy, tal vez temo al enfrentamiento de las blancas hojas de mis historias pasadas, todas escritas con miedo.

Veo las noches sin soñar para dormir y pienso en esas tantas donde no deseaba pensar para existir.

Tal vez estoy dentro, saliendo o tal vez perdida buscando esa puerta roja que latía apresuradamente y luego se desvaneció.

Quizás es tarde para pedir otros deseos o gritarle a Dios que me deje nacer de nuevo.

Siento al pesimismo cargando mi cuerpo tibio y mis ganas siendo vencidas por el miedo.

Si esto es solo un sueño, tal vez yo abra mis ojos y enfrente a todo lo que lastima mi sano intento de reivindicación.

Me veo despertando, caminando, corriendo sin mirar atrás o añorar lo que pierdo, ya no cuento el tiempo y no siento jamás que me deja tu cuerpo.



# CONFUSIÓN

by Suleidys Tellez

El delirio es más fuerte cada día.  
Las obligaciones secuestran al sueño  
Lo hacen ver cada día más distante,  
Menos familiar. Una fantasía.

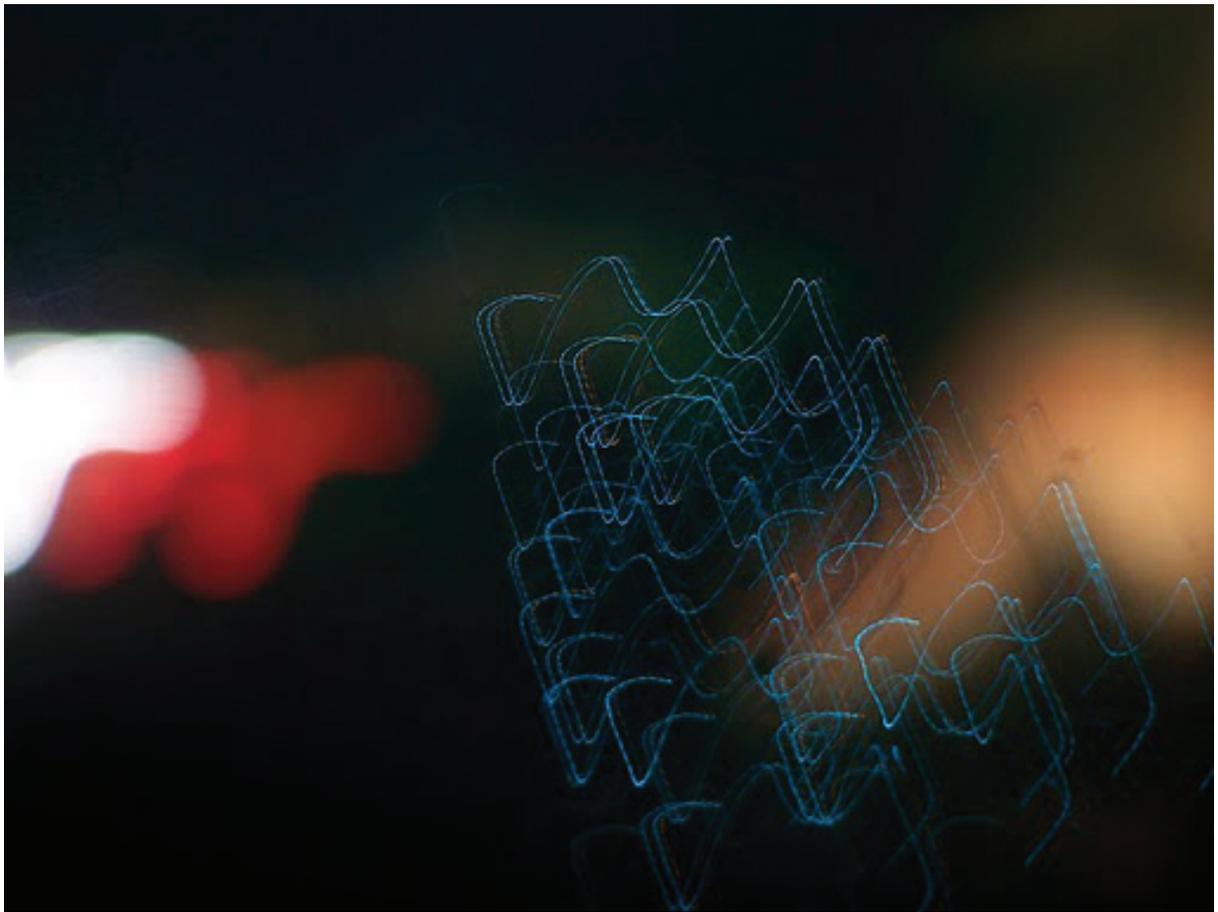
Un silencio pensante me hace parar en seco,  
La realización me hace suspirar.  
Y me paro a pensar si es lo que quiero  
Si esto es lo que me hace feliz.

La confusión se vuelve mi amiga  
Tan familiar que la siento sentarse a mi mesa a cenar.  
Ya ni me doy cuenta. Como con la propia sangre  
Ignorarla es el único remedio.

¡Oh madre confusión!  
Se que estas ahí siempre, lo sé.

Y como un niño me pongo a jugar.  
Juego con la gente, con dios y peor aún: conmigo.  
Hoy dejo mi cuerpo,  
Lo miro a mi lado y no me gusta lo que veo.

¡Oh madre confusión!  
No me dejas ser yo  
No sé quién soy y porque siempre estas tu.



Lightplay by Melissa Larrocha  
Photography

# OLORES

by Cynthia Alvarez

Ando en mi cabeza con olores repetidos y sentidos de nostalgia: mi llegada, los momentos, los indicios de un amor, las despedidas... La vida se convierte en un atolladero de recuerdos, que se materializan en una aroma, en un perfume, en un olor... La vida se resume a veces, en lo que el olfato atiende, necesita y recuerda.

Y en eso ando por estos días, siendo dichosa de respirar a cien por ciento un aire que entra a mis pulmones siendo la necesidad fisiológica lo que mi cuerpo exige; mientras el alma se aferra a una memoria que aumenta su capricho con los años porque se empeña en recordar lo que ya ha olvidado y a veces, hasta lo reinventa. La mía todavía conserva el camino de los olores al recuerdo, por suerte o por desgracia; porque a veces recordar duele o frustra; pero en el mejor de los casos: libera.

Siento “el sentido” como si no fuera mío, como si alguien lo hubiera tomado prestado para contarme algo para enseñarme unas imágenes en las que yo soy la protagonista. Todos los que conozco están de alguna forma en ella, pero por alguna razón, los que más veo, son los que se han ido o ya no están....

Mientras, sigo respirando, dejando que mi memoria haga de las suyas. ¿Qué más puedo hacer? Soy marioneta de mi misma, de mis recuerdos y mis olores...



Let Me Be by Michelin Janvier  
Acrylic

# YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

by Carl Cañizares

The glass shattered as his arm and hand, protected by a thick military parka jacket, thrust through the trophy case adjacent to the principal's office. He reached for the silver statuette of a streamlined male figure gripping two large rings.

"Jack!" Shouted Mr. Siebert, "What the hell are you doing?"

"This belongs to him!" Jack bellowed through his tears and crackling voice, "If they don't want him here then they can't keep this either."

The police were surprised to find the tall 17 year old young man, solemn and showing no sign of resistance, still crouched next to the trophy case when they arrived. The call had been placed by the principal's secretary, but the principal himself was reluctant to press charges when they got there.

"He's just a boy, he's upset about what

happened last night," said Mr. Siebert.

"But Mr. Siebert, think of the precedence it will set if you don't press charges. Other students will start vandalizing the school believing there won't be any consequences. As principal you can't allow that," said Ms. Franco.

Earlier that year, on the second day of school, Jack was at his locker between 3rd and 4th period when Billy Roosevelt and Frank Baez approached him with a proposal.

"We want you to run for class president." Billy said, pushing his glasses back up the bridge of his nose.

"You're the perfect candidate Jack." Frank added almost as a cheer.

"How's that?" Jack asked in a tone that expressed his doubt and skepticism.

“Are you kidding? For starters you’re captain of the basketball team -“  
“And captain of the Chess Club not to mention that you’re president of the Spanish, French and Italian Clubs.”  
Frank interjected.

“That’s precisely,” Jack said as he turned back to his locker, “why I’m not your man. Sorry guys, I’m stretched out thin as it is, I don’t think I could find time for that and be effective.”

“Jack if you don’t run, Newt will take this uncontested. Newt, of all people!” Billy pleaded.

“He’s not all bad, give him a chance.” Jack said.

“You can say that because he’s afraid of you. He can’t bully you. But he treats the rest of us-“

Frank cut Billy off again, “like shit,

that’s how. Jack, please don’t let Newt take this.”

“Guys I’ll think about it, but don’t hold your breath. I’ve made my peace with Newt a long time ago, and I really don’t want to stir anything back up.” Jack said just as he noticed someone he had never seen at school before walk by and stop at the next bank of lockers.

Although Billy and Frank were still talking to Jack, he was oblivious to what they were saying. He started to walk away slowly and slowed down even more as he approached the second bank of lockers. At that point he knelt down and made believe to tie his shoe laces.

“Hey Billy, what did Jack mean that he had made his peace with Newt?”

“Oh he’s referring to his first day here two years ago when he transferred



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from Newberry, that's the reason Newt doesn't mess with Jack."

"What happened?" Frank asked.

Billy's eyes turned brighter as he started to tell the story:

"Jack was at his locker when Newt and his gang approached him from behind; making fun of his pink T-shirt that read 'and proud of it!' on the back. Then Newt poked Jack in the back and told him to turn around; that's when they saw the front of his t-shirt that read, 'I'm Queer.' Newt called Jack a faggot and Jack responded by slugging Newt right between the eyes. Newt fell flat on his back and Jack asked the other guys if they wanted a piece of him. Newt's gang of three dispersed and Jack helped Newt up and took him to the nurse's office. Newt never told on Jack, no one did; no one ever messed with Jack again." Billy smiled as he finished the

story and Frank's jaw hung as low as it could before closing his mouth and shaking his head in disbelief. At the second bank of lockers the new guy, only a little shorter than Jack, but with a visibly defined upper body, was just closing his locker and turning around when Jack stood up from his farce and feigned bumping into him.

"I'm sorry." Jack said.

"No problem." The new guy replied.

"I'm Jack," he said as he stretched out his arm for a hand shake.

"I'm Cody," his hand met Jack's with a firm but friendly grip.

The rest of that week, Jack raced through the halls to make sure he could show Cody to all his classes. He even convinced Mr. Siebert to change his schedule so he would have four classes with Cody. He discovered that Cody was a 1st class gymnast

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and soccer player, that he loved heavy metal and classical music, that he liked peanut butter and jelly sandwiches but not hamburgers. About himself, Jack discovered that he was willing to do all these things whether he liked them or not as long as he was with Cody. The two became inseparable except when their competitions fell on the same night and hour.

Towards the end of September Cody won a state gymnastics championship and brought home to Albright Academy for Boys their first ever state championship trophy for anything other than basketball. Cody quickly became as popular as Jack, so when Jack definitively turned down Billy and Frank's proposal to run for class president he suggested that they consider Cody. They agreed it was a good idea, and Cody only required a little coaxing to agree. They got the campaign started the very next day. Their working campaign slogan of: Tolerance + Unity = Strength

was intended to energize and bring together a student body that had been deeply divided for two years. Albright Academy's historical arch rival for generations had been Rockville Academy. Now, two years after that school had mysteriously burned down during summer break, almost 60% of its students had transferred successfully to Albright Academy. Although Albright's recently finished multi-million dollar expansion was able to accommodate the bulk of these new students, some of Albright's original students that had been borderline 'C' students were not readmitted and had lost their slots to some new Rockville candidates. No one was more upset by this development than Newt Gardner; Newt had lost four of his closest friends to this trend. When Newt saw Cody's campaign sign on the far wall inside the cafeteria his eyes seemed to jump out of their sockets, his ears turned a pinkish red and his teeth were clenched under his pursed lips.



Hallway by Ari Peña  
Photography

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The veins in his neck were bulky and pulsating when his lips finally gave way.

“Over my fucking dead body!” Newt swore at the top of his voice.

“They’re taking over the fucking school,” said one of Newt’s boys.

“It’s not going to happen. We’re not going to let it happen.” Newt assured his little gang.

Billy and Frank had run an effective campaign for Cody, and were surprised at first how easily Cody interacted with all the students including the original Albright students. He had a real down to earth attitude and that made him likable. A month into the campaign and just one week before the November elections, Cody won 1st place in a national gymnastics competition in California and had been invited to attend the U.S.

Olympic Gymnastics Team’s training camp for a weekend workshop. Cody had placed Albright Academy for Boys on national news. No one had ever done that.

The following week Cody won the class presidential elections by a landslide. The end of his competition season coincided with the beginning of his administration as class president. On his very first week, he requested and obtained permission to miss one period of class each week in which he set up a consultation booth where students could go and discuss their ideas, concerns and needs with him in private if they so desired.

The response was beyond what he had expected. He didn’t waste any time in publishing a report that listed the items that the school body had been wanting for some time.

Meanwhile, Jack’s attention toward

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Cody did not waiver; on the contrary, it grew more intense. Jack's smile seemed to get wider and wider every time he heard Cody make a speech or saw him listening to another student's concerns. When he helped him with student government work, he would find himself staring at Cody for a long time, just taking in that moment they were spending together. During one of these work sessions in which they were making copies of a flyer announcing the upcoming Homecoming game and dance, Jack started to sing him a little love song.

"Shut up, you suck at singing." Cody said.

"Yeah I know, but will you go with me to the dance?"

"Do you dance any better than you sing?" Cody asked.

"Not really. Does that matter?"

"Not really. It's a deal," Cody said as he stretched out his arm for a handshake.

"I'm crazy about you." Jack said, as he took his hand firmly and pulled Cody tightly toward him until Cody's face had met his own and then kissed him. Without flinching Cody reciprocated as he put one arm behind Jack's head and held him tight with the other.

At the homecoming dance they walked in holding hands to a gymnasium full of teenage couples. The girls were mostly from Our Lady of the Lakes Preparatory Academy for Girls. Jack and Cody made their rounds, stopping at each table to say hello and meet the visiting girls. They hit it off at every table, Cody making pledges to the girls that they would in fact put on joint events in the future. As they walked over to the punch bowl, Jack noticed Ms. Franco's expression. It was unmistakably ugly.

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On the night of the basketball semi-finals Cody drove Jack to the school gymnasium; he kept the top down to enjoy the weather. There was still an hour to kill, so Cody remained in his convertible reading while Jack went inside to meet up with his teammates and prepare for that evening's game. The parking lot was deserted except for a few cars belonging to the remaining team members and the coach. Cody heard a rustle in the shrubs he had parked next to, but did not look up. The first blow came from behind and fractured his skull. The blood splattered all over the windshield and the car seat. Cody was unconscious as the four hooded figures continued to pound on his motionless body.

Jack's eyes scanned the stands for Cody as the game started but could not find sight of him anywhere. After a while he stopped looking, knowing that the distraction was affecting his

game. Just as the buzzer marked half time, Jack caught sight of Billy from the corner of his eye as he came in through the main doors and headed directly to him. Billy was pale and his eyes were shouting something; something beyond fear. When he reached Jack, his eyes were still wide open wanting to express his anguish, but his lips remained shut and speechless.

"Billy, what is it?" Jack asked incredulously.

"It's Cody. They ---- found him outside ---- in really bad shape."

Jack took off, pushing past him.

Billy shouted, "They took him to St. Benedict's, let me drive you there. You shouldn't try to drive," as he ran after him.

Outside Billy found Jack hunched over next to the convertible; heaving.

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Jack and Billy were the first to arrive at the hospital. The nurses directed them to the family waiting area, but disclosed no other information regarding Cody.

“Sorry,” said the nurse, “but we can only share his condition with his parents.”

Cody’s parents and the deputy from the Sheriff’s Department arrived at the cold, sterile and insipid waiting room simultaneously.

Jack ran over to them, “What happened to Cody? I want to see him!”

The deputy looked at him only briefly, while Cody’s parents ignored him altogether. A moment later a doctor came out through a set of double swinging doors and joined the three adults. Jack tried to approach them with questions but again was ignored. Just as Jack was about to lose himself

in a fit of desperate despair, someone placed a hand of comfort on his shoulder.

“I’ll find out what’s going on Son.” His father assured him.

“Dad!” Jack cried out as he buried his face in his dad’s chest.

“Billy called me as soon as you guys got here. I came as quickly as I could. But listen to me, I need you to go over and sit by Billy, I need you to collect yourself.”

Jack’s dad walked over to Cody’s parents, the doctor and the deputy.

Jack saw him shake their hands and nod his head a few times. After a little while Jack’s dad shook hands with the doctor and deputy again, but this time he gave Cody’s mom a hug and Cody’s dad a pat on the back and a squeeze of the shoulder.

---

“Jack, listen to me,” his father said as he sat next to him and placed his arm around him. “It doesn’t look good. He may not make it. I’m sorry Son.”

Jack buried his face in his dad’s chest again and began to sob quietly.

“What happened?” he asked as he lifted his head.

“Four boys with ski masks jumped into his car. They beat and kicked him and--- Jack, you don’t need to hear this now.” His dad told him.

“Yes I do, I need to know.”

“They fractured his skull with a tire iron.”

“Motherfuckers!” Jack cried out.

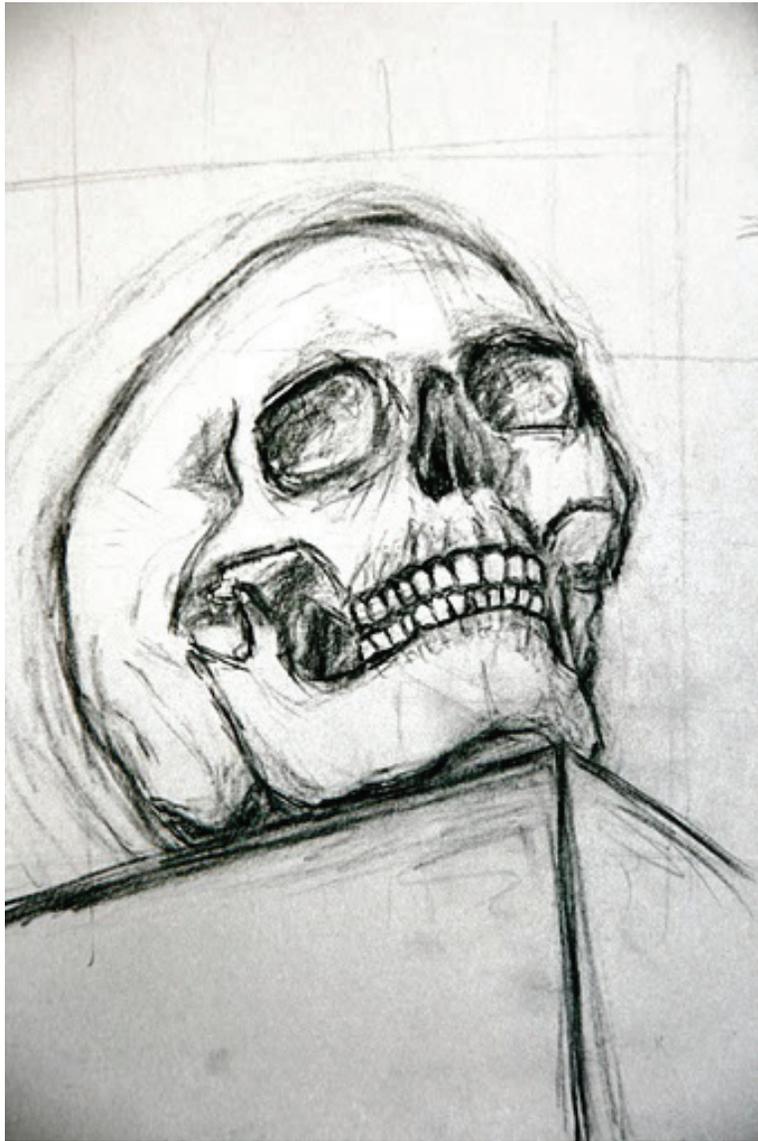
“Jack, they got the boys that did this.” His father added trying to compensate for the pain he was causing

his son. “The perpetrators were so focused on their mayhem that they didn’t notice the cars arriving for the game. By the time they did, they were already captured on cell phone videos and the police had been called. They tried to get away in a pickup, but the police caught them just five blocks away.”

“Good God!” interjected Billy, “I’m seeing it on the news now on my phone. It was Newt and his gang.” Now, at the police station, Jack was being booked for breaking and entering, destruction of public property, vandalism of government property and a misdemeanor theft. The deputy processing him was the same officer that had been at the hospital the night before.

“Kid, I feel for you, but I hope your dad can get you a good lawyer.”

Mr. Siebert and Ms. Franco had fol



Skull Study by Gian Lombardi  
Charcoal on Newsprint

lowed the arresting officers to the station and had called Jack's father on their way there. As they waited Ms. Franco expressed her concern for the damaged property.

"The trophy case can be fixed Ms. Franco." Mr. Siebert said; his annoyance with her growing.

"He had no right to do what he did." She continued. "That's what happens when you condone this type of behavior. Really, it's just not natural or right. None of this would have happened if they had been normal boys. The other boys are nice boys; they were forced to act like this because of their nasty behavior. They flaunted it at school every day. I would see them. It was disgusting."

"Ms. Franco, please!"

"I'm really not surprised at all that this has happened," she continued.

"We need to educate these boys to be God fearing normal boys, and now the other four boys will have a record and their lives will be ruined."

"Shut up Ms. Franco," said Mr. Siebert. "You don't know the slightest thing about education or what it is that young men need to learn."

"They won't ever be able to recover from that," Ms. Franco continued.

"Well the only consolation is that Jack won't recover from his record either, and---"

Jack's father came in, walked over to Ms. Franco and added, "--You don't know Jack!"



# MR. ERUTAMI

---

by Stephanie Aya

Si vous voulez la vérité, demander à un enfant by Stephanie Aya, Photography

Sincerely,

Mr. Erutami

You are responsible for the heart attack I had last night.  
You must understand that in a few years I will not be here.  
I will be in some place near the mountains,  
and it will take you a while to try to reach me.  
I will live with the bears.  
You can stay with your bunnies,  
I am sure that will do you good.  
You really won't have to face many challenges with them.  
I know Mr. Erutami, that you'll never be mine  
because your lane can never merge into mine,  
because there is an asymptote between us.  
Luisa said it was love.  
I think that it is cognizance, even though  
World War Three is presently being fought within me.

Dear Em,



# SPEED

---

by Laura Loret de Mola  
Shopping Cart by Ari Pena, Photography

On repeat  
Words swarm from below,  
Entangling us with their  
Meanings.  
I sleep  
You drive,  
On you go.  
I sleep  
You drive,  
On I go.  
Bliss.  
I sleep.  
You break,  
Leaving me shell-shocked,  
Confused.  
We stop.  
We forgot how to push  
Forward.  
We forgot.



# YOU ARE GONE

---

by Suleidys Tellez

I will forever live remembering  
The softness of your voice,  
The tender touch that burned my skin,  
The sweetness of your breath.

Pictures of past moments of joy,  
Of warm smiles and wet lips.  
That's all I have from you.  
That's all that's left.

They gallop through my mind  
Passing through so fast...  
Their dust makes me feel my heart again.

Without them what am I?  
I am a ghost passing for human  
With dulled senses and battered wit.

But the song that plays loudest in my being  
Is the one that calls for you even now.  
But truth is, my heart is numb.

You are gone.



La Main d'un Canard by Stephanie Aya  
Photography

# SERIES

---

by Rachel Delgado  
Marilyn on the Rock by Leydis Mariel, Acrylic

## Teeth

Teeth, mind the tongue  
That allow you to taste.  
Tongue, mind the words  
That the lips help shape.  
Lips, shape the words  
That the heart relays to the brain.  
Brain, convey to the heart  
That it's not sane.  
Heart, insanely claim  
That, intangible, love and air  
Life sustain.



## The Letter

Five fingered grasp  
Dipped in ink  
Reach for your head  
Tattoo ideas to your brain stem  
Drip down  
To conquer nerves  
Permanently coerce your hands  
To reach right back  
To treat me like lined paper  
Fill me with your verse  
Give me your unmeasured meter  
Reality's a shallow cup  
Ready to be overwhelmed  
By a sea of your fantasies.

## Aural Heartbreak

Rudely awakened  
to the sound of my  
chest ripping open  
the neighboring lungs  
could not stand the pounding  
of the juvenile heart  
and in a breath  
evicted it.







# WILTING LILY

by Sandra Rodriguez

Creep by Laura Loret de Mola, Photography

Lily Henderson arrived home at five thirty on a Tuesday night in June. Her husband, Daniel Henderson, was not home yet. Lily tossed her keys on the kitchen counter, threw her purse on the couch, and headed upstairs to the bedroom. She quickly undressed and hopped in the shower. While she showered she let her mind drift back to a happier time.

Lily would never forget the day she met Daniel. Sitting in a coffee shop alone and munching on a blueberry scone, she had been reading “Every Breath You Take”. She’d been so caught up in the story she hadn’t heard the man when he first spoke to her. Ah, but he was persistent, and he tapped her shoulder and repeated,

“Can I borrow your sugar?”

Lily nodded yes and their hands brushed slightly as she handed him the sugar. She could feel the blood

rushing to her cheeks as he flashed her a million dollar smile before turning around. She attempted to read again but her thoughts kept circling back to his electric yet somehow calming blue eyes and his jet black hair. That night, alone in her bed, she had dreamt of him.

Exactly a week later, Lily had been roaming around her local book store intent on finding a new book. She was crouching on the floor convinced the book she wanted was on the bottom shelf when she was abruptly knocked over. She heard a sigh followed by a series of, “I’m so sorry.”

Lily looked up just when her attacker did and their eyes locked. Fate is on my side, Lily thought as her face lit up with a smile. She was sure he wouldn’t remember her, but he did,

“Hey, you’re the girl from the coffee shop right? I met you about a week



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ago a few blocks from here-am I right?”

Afraid her voice would betray her obvious delight she resorted to nodding. His voice was full of boyish delight as he said, “I’m so sorry I tripped over you. My name is Daniel, by the way.” Lily brushed her pants off as she got up, “It’s okay. My name is Lily.” She had meant for her voice to sound strong and confident but instead it came out small and wobbly. Curse you nerves she thought. He was turning to leave but he hesitated, “Would you like to grab something to eat?” The question hung in the air with all the promise of a spring romance. Knowing her voice had betrayed her once already, Lily chose the safest way to answer, nod. Ten minutes later they were in his car on the way to a diner a few blocks down the road.

A little over a year later, on a warm June day, Daniel took Lily to the cof-

fee shop where they first met. They were having a nice lunch when Daniel roughly pushed his chair away from the table.

“I don’t think I can wait much longer.”

Lily was baffled at first, but she lost her breath when he got on his knee.

“Lily, you are the most wonderful person I have ever met. You make me a better me. You have made me a happy man for the past year and hopefully you will for the rest of our lives. Will you marry me?” One of his hands was clenching her hand while the other presented a beautiful diamond ring.

Lily felt the tears of joy roll down her cheeks as she found the courage to say, loud and full of confidence this time, “Yes.”

The phone ringing yanked Lily out of that warm summer day and back to

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reality. She rushed out of the shower but was too late, the ringing had stopped. She walked back to the bedroom and glanced through her drawers for clothes. As she dressed, she allowed her mind to wander again. It was a magical autumn day. Lily walked down the aisle in her lacy white dress. They exchanged I do's with red and orange leaves swirling around them. It was a small but beautiful wedding. Later that night, after the last guest had left, Daniel carried Lily up to the bedroom of their new house. He placed her down and swept her in his arms to dance. Lily was slightly tipsy from the champagne she had drunk and she was stumbling over her feet, but Daniel didn't seem to mind. He was twirling her around the bedroom when, suddenly, he tripped. She was giggling as she fell on top of him, but Daniel was furious.

"You tripped me."

He grabbed her by the arms, threw her to the side, and walked past her, stepping on her dress as he went. Lily was dumbfounded. She opened her mouth to speak, to call him back, to apologize, but he was already gone. She waited for him to come back, he didn't. After two hours she took off her own wedding dress and hung it up. She waited another thirty minutes before crawling into bed, alone. She had bruises on her arms where he had grabbed her. The next morning, Daniel was back. He got on his knees at the foot of her bed and apologized for overreacting. He begged her for forgiveness saying,

"Let's just put it behind us."

Lily peeled her lips back into a smile and he took that for a yes. They spent the whole day in bed together. Lily erased the bruises from her mind and put the incident behind her, just like

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Daniel told her to.

For months after the honeymoon they didn't fight. Daniel was the model of perfect husband. Lily was grateful to have found a man like Daniel, her very own Prince Charming.

On a cold winter day, Lily had a spontaneous burst of lustful confidence. She was walking down the street when she spotted a new lingerie store. Feeling presumptuous, she decided to buy a cute lacy black nightgown. I'll surprise Daniel with it tonight, she thought, smiling to herself. Lily bought the nightgown without thinking twice, certain that Daniel would love it.

That night, Lily dressed in the nightgown and waited for Daniel to come up to the bedroom. When he walked into the room, she was standing by the bed. Lily sashayed toward him and tried to grab his hand but he

pulled it away. She froze.

Daniel lifted his hand and slapped her across the face with the back of his hand. Lily flew backward against the wall from the unexpected blow. Her head hit the wall and she crumpled on the floor as her hand instinctively flew to her face. Daniel walked over to her and grabbed her by the hair. He pulled her close and hissed in her ear,

"You whore."

He spit in her face and pushed her against the wall before leaving the room. Lily was too afraid to move. The front door slammed shut as the tears came. Her mind was racing with thoughts and questions but she didn't have any answers. After an hour she crawled into the closet and lay there, crying, until morning.

The next morning she assessed the damage in the bathroom mirror.



Haunt by Laura Loret de Mola  
Photography

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There was a bump on her head from when she hit the wall but, to her surprise, there was nothing on her face as evidence that he had hit her. The only thing abnormal about her face was the red puffy eyes from crying all night. Daniel never did apologize for that night; he never asked for forgiveness, he never even brought it up.

Over the next few days, Lily kneeled on the floor and prayed that he would never hit her again, but it was in vain. Things were forever changed between them. Daniel's aggressiveness had manifested. He wanted her to be perfect, and if she wasn't, there would be consequences. It started off with small things. She forgot to pick something up at the grocery store and he would pinch her while laughing and saying, "So what else is new?" He didn't like the food she had made so he'd make a show of throwing it in the trash. "Make it again."

She didn't tell him she loved him before going to sleep. The next morning there was a note saying,

"Don't ever forget that I love you and you love me. You are nothing without me.

–Your loving husband, D."

At first, Lily didn't think it was so bad. Sure he had changed, but she stuck it out, like any good wife would. She figured things could only get better. She forgot to put dryer sheets in his laundry and he pulled her by the hair to the laundry machine to wash the clothes again. She saw him trip over the shoes he left in the living room and he threw her against a wall. He saw her eating a piece of cake,

"You're getting a little fat aren't you?"

Lily loved Daniel, she couldn't even

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think of leaving him, but bit by bit he was wearing her down. She missed a phone call, he punched her. She didn't wash the dishes correctly, he threw her across the room along with the dishes. She didn't smile at him when he got home, he whispered,

“You are nothing. My stupid, fat, ugly little nothing.”

At night she lay in bed, listening to him breathe, thinking what happened? She laid perfectly still, afraid to move. What did I do wrong? What did I do to deserve this?

She wished on the stars she could see out her window please make it end. His words cut her like a thousand knives, his fists crushed her hopes. At first she thought he doesn't mean it, It's a lie, He loves me, He's just punishing me, but then it kept getting worse. Tomorrow, she'd think, tomorrow things will be normal again. Eventually, Lily lost track of all her

dreams. She was convinced that this was how she would be forced to spend the rest of her life. One fateful day, Lily had made the mistake of disagreeing with him. The minute the words had left her mouth he was lashing out at her. A fist collided with her face and she fell down. In that moment, crouched on the floor like a punching bag, something new hit her, a thought. *Get out of here.* The thought was strong in her mind, demanding attention. She crawled to the door, found strength, got up, and ran. *Don't let him catch you, he'll kill you. Things will never be different.* She ran out of the bedroom door and started down the stairs. Daniel was coming after her. She was nearing the end of the staircase thinking *I did it, I'm free,* when she tripped. Her legs went out from under her as she rolled down the last few steps. Her new found strength was gone. *He'll kill me now, it's over,* but he didn't.

Daniel rushed to her side, yes, but not

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to hit her. Within seconds of her head hitting the floor Daniel was at her side putting her head in his lap.

“Oh Lily baby, are you okay? Did you hurt yourself, my love?”

Lily was shocked into silence. For the first time in months he was touching her out of kindness instead of rage. It was like she had woken up from a long nightmare. Somehow, somehow, Daniel had snapped out of his anger and back into the man she had met. The tears welled up in her eyes, not from pain this time, but from love. “It’s okay baby, don’t cry. I’ll protect you.” Daniel’s car pulling up in the drive way brought her attention back to the present. It had been five months since he last hit her. She heard his key in the door and the butterflies came to life in her stomach. She brushed her hair, confident that things would never go back to that dark time. She heard his footsteps as

he climbed up the stairs and walked into the room.

“Hi love,” she was beginning to say when he punched her in the face.

Blood began pouring out from her nose as he yelled, “You dirty whore. Who’s the man you’re sleeping with? Did you really think I wouldn’t find out?”

Lily was crawling away from him but he kicked her.

“You disgusting, good for nothing, whore. You are nothing. No man wants you, I don’t even want you. You disgust me. Tell me the truth. Is it the neighbor? Is it the mailman? Who is he Lily?”

Lily tried to formulate words but her voice deserted her. He was kicking at her, screaming, throwing accusations. Finally she managed through the

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blood in her mouth,

“No one, I love you. There’s no one else.”

At that he laughed.

“You think you can fool me? If you weren’t with anyone why didn’t you answer the phone?” Of course, the phone. She had been in the shower and hadn’t reached it in time.

Now that she knew this was just a simple misunderstanding, she just had to explain,

“Daniel-“

But she couldn’t finish her sentence because he kicked her in the stomach. He yanked her up by the hair and threw her on the bed.

“Don’t you ever say my name again you disgusting whore.”

She tried to crawl to the other side of the bed but Daniel pulled her back by the leg. Her head was pounding, she was bleeding, her body ached, and she could feel her eyes swelling shut.

“You’re not going anywhere, not this time. You’re going to answer me and you’re going to pay for what you’ve done.”

He was pinning her down on the bed. Stop it she yelled, but it was only in herhead. His hands were fumbling, trying to take her clothes off. She squirmed under him and he slapped before he pinned her hands down. The room was spinning around her but she could feel that he had taken her pants off. For a moment everything went black and then, “You’re my wife. You belong to me. No one else would ever want you. You are mine. Mine. My little nothing.”

She felt him inside her. She could feel

him thrusting, but she couldn't keep the black from closing in around her.

“You are nothing. You are nothing. You are nothing.”

Lily felt Daniel climb off her. This was her window of opportunity, now was the time to get away, but she felt weak. She was having trouble breathing through the blood accumulating in her throat. Daniel slid his hands under her, picking her up, and she knew, the window had closed. There would be no escape now.

Lily remembered the last time Daniel had carried her like this, on their wedding night not even a year ago.

“You'll never sleep with another man ever again.”

Then she was falling. Lily was vaguely aware of her head hitting the bottom step as she heard,

*You are nothing. You are nothing. You are nothing.*



I Am Here For You by Michelin Janvier  
Acrylic





# DEF POETRY

by Edwin Ramos  
"Halo" by Roberto Cardoso, Graphic Art

## Meaning of Poetry

Thoughts running through your head trying to speak out,  
but you can't, your voice starts trembling in fear.

Phrases, sayings, trying to convert together.

Something that you know might change you forever.

You try expressing, telling the world what's in the depths of your mind.

Quotes, lyrics, and maybe some rhymes.

Poetry is not only literature, it's an art, and if you want , it can come from the heart.

As you gaze at what challenges that lie ahead, you march forward, trying to find your place, trying to find your faith, you look up with a smirk upon your face.

Why should I be afraid? Expressing my emotions to the world.

Why should I hesitate to express my feelings to people who are uninterested to my views, or just maybe some of you are just confused, but I don't care, these are my thoughts , my words, my time, and if you don't like it , then go back in time, let Shakespeare show you what I'm trying to define.

What should I fear? Absolutely nothing, other than my own ignorance for are they not my own words? Am I terrified for saying what is in my thoughts?

No.

This is something that's coming out of my mind, and I have no reason to fear.

I'm basically speaking to you from my mind

This is who I am.

This is me.

This is my poetry.



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“M”

I want to be a superhero, really badly!!

I want an “S” on my chest that represents Savior, Super, Strong, and other words that “S” represents.

I want to be a superhero, REALLY BAD!

I want to fly through the lands, saving people when I land. Fighting justice and beating the forces of evil only using one hand.

I want to be a super hero NOW!

I want to stop world pollution by myself, give hope to all people, letting them know that they have nothing to worry. Because “ta da da DA”! Super Ramos is here, and I’m going to prevent everyone from having fear!

I woke from this dream and I realized that i’m in reality.

This reality has negative views, people choosing sides.

The reality, that equality is just a word with no meaning.

I think people are losing their feelings. The world is bad; we are struggling and trying to survive.

There are families out there that are fighting for their lives. And I “sigh.”

Frustration and anger in my mind, I want to stand up for everyone and let them know what’s on my mind.

I want to put on my cape and put the “S” on my chest and fight for people’s lives. Those families’ tears can stop, because I am here.

But I can’t, it was a dream. The image of the “S” dies away and the thought of me being a hero flies away

The image of the “S” dies away and the thought of me being a hero just flew

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away. But you know what, its ok. I put an “M” on my chest.  
Motivation is what “M” is going to represent. I will motivate myself to be the  
hero I dreamt to be. And I know there will be other heroes standing right next  
to me.

We will raise our voice because we have a choice.

We fight the bad and bring up the good. As I stand here today, I want all my  
leaders to stand.

Fight for what is right and let your voice be heard. Point at your heart and  
know one thing.

Believe in yourself and do the right thing. Fight for a change with all your  
might.

We are heroes and we are not going down without a fight!

## L.O.V.E

Love

Is a word with no meaning.

Meaning which we try to give meaning but end up putting effort to not mean it

Love

Is in I love you and you love me and maybe in the future we can have a big family,

But at the end, love changes into loved, past tense meaning I loved you when you cared.

And it's not fair.

I hate it when a word that can mean so much to one person can end up leaving them in an emotional state.

Is it fate?

L.O.V.E can mean anything,

But as entitled to our opinion,

This poet is ready to read, what the word love should mean.

**L**

As in LIVING the life until I met you, as in “would you LIKE to go out to see a movie or two?”, or as LOVING the first time we actually went on a date ,

Maybe this is fate? Or not. Maybe it's an

**O** my Gosh, I am going to meet her parents,

The fence that I have to get through to be with her,

The fear that's inside that I might mess up a chance to be with a girl I believe

is amazing. Blazing red hot with confidence, I jump over the fence for that girl that I know we can go over two months, six months, one year, and it continues

until!

VUCK! Yes I said it, VUCK, without the “f”

For Feelings after the arguments we have but I don't want to curse because I don't want to see your beautiful smile go away. I want to keep us at bay for the future to come when I say,

**E**

For Everything, everything we have gone through, through our ups and downs, we hold our ground, because our true love never broke down.

See, everyone is entitled to their own opinion,

This young poet never felt that type of love.

Well, maybe that one day this poet can say, “I love you” to that one girl he might meet, someday.



# PINTURA DE MI PUEBLO

by Leydis Martinez  
Frita by Stephanie Aya, Photography

El pueblo es hoy,  
Una pintura de antaño, tristeza sin dueño.  
Un perro lame sus esquinas  
Y la incertidumbre es un transeúnte mas.  
El parque a dicho adios a sus farolas  
Y es solo una penumbra que se mece.  
Pueblo que dejas tras la huella un canto.  
¿Qué serás mañana?  
Cuando el sol ilumine tu paisaje  
Y ya no haya quietud en tus aceras.  
Serás la melodía que envuelve la ternura  
Y niños que sonríen tus encantos.  
Serás algo más que simples poquedades.  
El tiempo torna a una semilla  
Mañana sera el árbol.

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IS A SPACE

SOLITARY LONGING,

The Desire

TO BE

ELSEWHERE



Be IN

a  
Idea  
World

WHERE

life

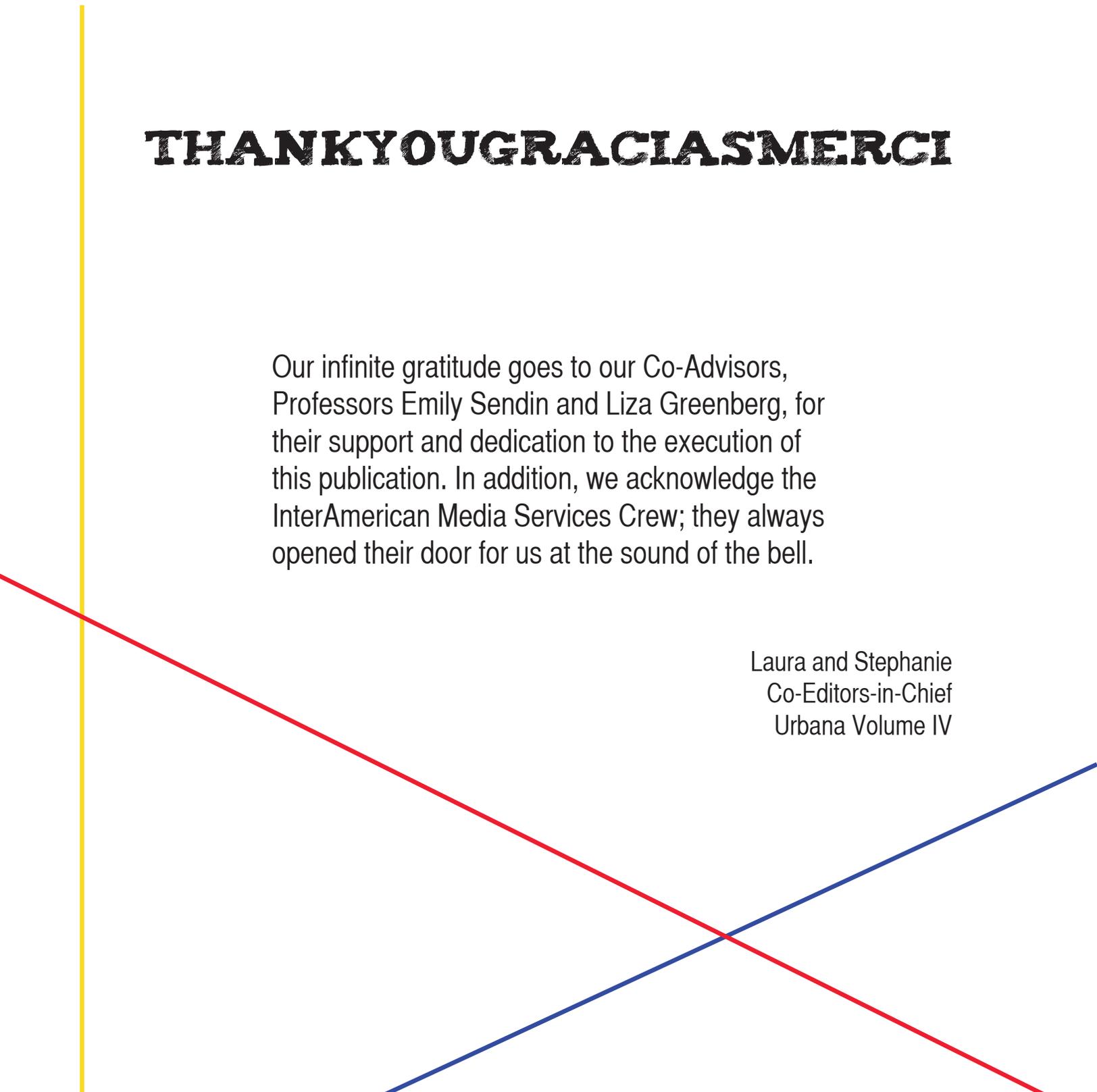
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Laura and Stephanie  
Co-Editors-in-Chief  
Urbana Volume IV





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