

# Coastlines

A Registered Student Organization at FAU



Still

by Sydney Amon

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY  
Boca Raton, Florida

# MASTHEAD

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# California

by Maria Manzano

I'll admit it—there are some times, some nights, and some instances that for a small second or close to a minute, I will have some vivid flashbacks of us, your boyish face, of Rasta lying out in the desert sun, and I sunbathing while you would trim all the small little trees. Sometimes our eyes would meet—and I would smile and, of course, you were always sun dazed, delirious from the sweet scent of tangerine dream. While you meticulously trimmed, I would pray that somehow the Holy Spirit would touch your soul and enlighten you to take on a different trade—some other career that did not involve a Greenhouse or going to the Hydroponic store all the time—all those trips back and forth to Home Depot. But this trade made you so much green, so much green that you did not know what to do with but stash it in the AC unit. The smell of currency mixed with all your little trees became too much for my conservative nose, but sometimes, on a really hot day like today

I think about it and laugh,

and smile when I look at my rear-view mirror,

what hangs from it, 'Little Tree' scented tangerine dream.

# Neither Here Nor There

by Jessica Gill

Growing up was always a little different for you. It's different because you came to the United States as a child. You've never even really heard someone speak English before. It's a long journey for a five-year-old at first. It really shouldn't be—the plane ride from Havana to Miami is only about an hour. But it's more complicated than just a plane ride. You're escorted off the plane and you can see your mom nervously reaching into her bag for an endless stream of paperwork, passports, and ID's. You shuffle just as uncomfortably as your mom does, even though you're not sure why. When your family approaches you with “*Welcome!*” banners, you feel the complete opposite of welcome. You think about the blank faces of the men asking your mom for identification—they definitely weren't carrying welcome banners. It's an underwhelming introduction to say the least, and the fluorescent lighting shining through the damp, moldy air only seems to highlight the feeling of dread.

Life in Miami is garish and loud. The air outside is less moldy, but still damp and humid. The tall buildings are more scary than interesting to you. You feel like crouching down or making yourself smaller—anything to hide. You look up at the buildings and feel uncomfortable, like everybody is watching. It's the first time you've felt shame in any real capacity. You're only five, but you *know* you're out of place here. There are tons of other Cubans here, but they're different. They've been here, they've assimilated. They have actual houses, and cars that they know how to drive. You think of your dad's visibly older car, the one that's missing the seatbelts. He drives unsteadily and usually in the middle of two lanes because he's thirty-two years old and has never driven a car before. You and your family don't fall under any of those qualifications—you just have a tiny apartment, and of course, the seatbelt-less car. You say qualifications because that's how you feel—underqualified. You don't realize it at the time because at five years old, the concept of belonging and acceptance are full of winding complexities that won't clarify themselves for years to come.

After a few months, you grow a little more comfortable. You usually spend all day in your parents' cramped little apartment, which is okay with you, because it feels safe in that tiny space. It's just you, your parents, and your sister. It's still not home, but you figure it never really will be. You *really* only agreed to come because your dad said you'd go to Disney and meet Mickey. He seemed to forget to mention that this "trip" would last the rest of your life. To you, home is still eastern Havana, where you used to ride the horse drawn carriages down the weather worn streets with your Abuelo. You're only five, but you remember holding his hand and passing by all your neighbors, your eyes carefully following the moves of the old men playing dominoes on the street corners. You remember your Abuela gathering your dad's old shirts and magically turning them into dresses and bows of all different colors for you to proudly wear down en el Parque Central. That's all you really know. *That's* home.

Your mom corrects you when you say that. "We don't live there anymore," she says, voice shaking with thinly-veiled anxiety. She's scared you don't understand the permanence of such a big move. She's scared because soon enough, school will be starting, even though you don't know that quite yet. She wants you to assimilate, to learn English with no trace of an accent, to forget the fact that one day, you were just put on a plane and torn from the little apartment on *Calle 23*, where you were born. As a child, you don't understand why she is so quick to steer the conversation away from Cuba. After all, that's where you're from. When you're older, you suddenly remember that ambiguous emotion that would twist around her words, and now you can identify it: guilt. It had never occurred to you that she had felt some overwhelming guilt for bringing you on such an uncertain journey. Everyone said that there was more opportunity in the United States, but you imagine that ripping your young children away from their roots—from everything they knew—could be quite the risk. When you're older, you'll learn to thank her profusely, of course, but there's still years to come before that.

School eventually starts. You *hate* it. The kids all speak English, a language that seems impossibly foreign to you. Everyone sits and talks amongst themselves, except for you. Your first day

gets off to a rocky start when it's time to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Everyone stands up, and you, remembering school back in Cuba, finally feel at ease for a second—you recognize the stance and the hand over the heart. A small sigh of relief; finally some normalcy. You proudly do the same and proceed to recite Cuba's Pledge of Allegiance. Your teacher is a bit shocked—she's probably never seen a five-year-old declare her devotion to Che Guevara and communism. Overall, it's quite an embarrassing situation for you, and you spend the rest of the day looking down at your new Mickey Mouse shoes and frilly socks that your *Mami y Papi* bought you at Walmart. You frequently find yourself in these uncomfortable predicaments. There will be times when you try to expand your vocabulary and feel intense regret when you're made fun of for saying words a little funny. That same regret will occur when you open your lunch box and see that your mom so lovingly packed you rice, beans, and *platanitos fritos*. You brace yourself for the impact of this misstep and rightfully so—you don't live down the “weird lunch” incident for weeks. Later on, when you're older, you'll realize that a lot of your early memories carry that distinct feeling of discomfort and shame. Later on, your family will marvel at how different you are now that you're all grown up. You'll hear all about how outgoing and boisterous you were as a kid in Cuba, willing to talk to anyone and everyone. You'll hear the shock in your parents' voices when they talk about how quiet and introverted you've grown up to be. You don't have the heart to tell them that your sudden personality change is really just the product of shame.

When you're growing up, you're pretty much just considered the ugly duckling. You have way too much unruly, curly hair and your brows are bold and thick, even for a five-year-old. The dark features against your fair skin gets you teased a lot. You mostly try to ignore it, but it's hard when you're home after school, watching the Disney Channel in your older sister's room. Everyone on television is blonde, straight haired, and blue eyed. No one looks like you. You matter-of-factly think to yourself that shows should have “ugly” girls like you—it's only fair, you figure. Strangely enough, when you fast forward a couple years and you're a teenager, those very features deemed too ugly for television will now be celebrated. Suddenly, people love “mysterious” dark eyes, thick brows, and

copious amounts of hair. “It’s beautiful,” people say. You feel a little vindicated, but you still find yourself looking for girls like yourself on TV.

Your parents, who were once university professors in their country, want you—scratch that—*need* you to be the best. “You have more to prove,” your dad says, pride filling every inch of his body. *He’s right*, you think to yourself. You do have more to prove. You have to prove that your parents’ hard work, sacrifice, and suffering have been worth it. You have to prove that maybe you didn’t learn to speak English until you were six or seven, but you’ve only ever known one place as a real home, and despite your feelings as a child, that place has really been in Florida—not Cuba. You absolutely have to prove that maybe your parents don’t make tons of money, and maybe your mom did clean for a living, but that doesn’t make you any less “American.” Years later when you’re dating a white guy, you’ll have to smile uncomfortably and politely ignore his sister when the term “spic” accidentally comes out of her mouth. You will master the art of feigning polite deafness. There is more to prove. School is your personal rat race. You either produce the success that is expected of you, or you are a failure. Your parents never say this to you, of course. They don’t need to. You know that you can’t afford to miss any opportunities—it’s just a luxury you don’t have. Guilt eats you alive when you feel like you haven’t done the absolute best you could. Being an immigrant is a special kind of pressure. Years later, you’ll learn it’s not enough that you have to prove yourself to your more “American” counterparts; you have to prove yourself to the community you originally belonged to.

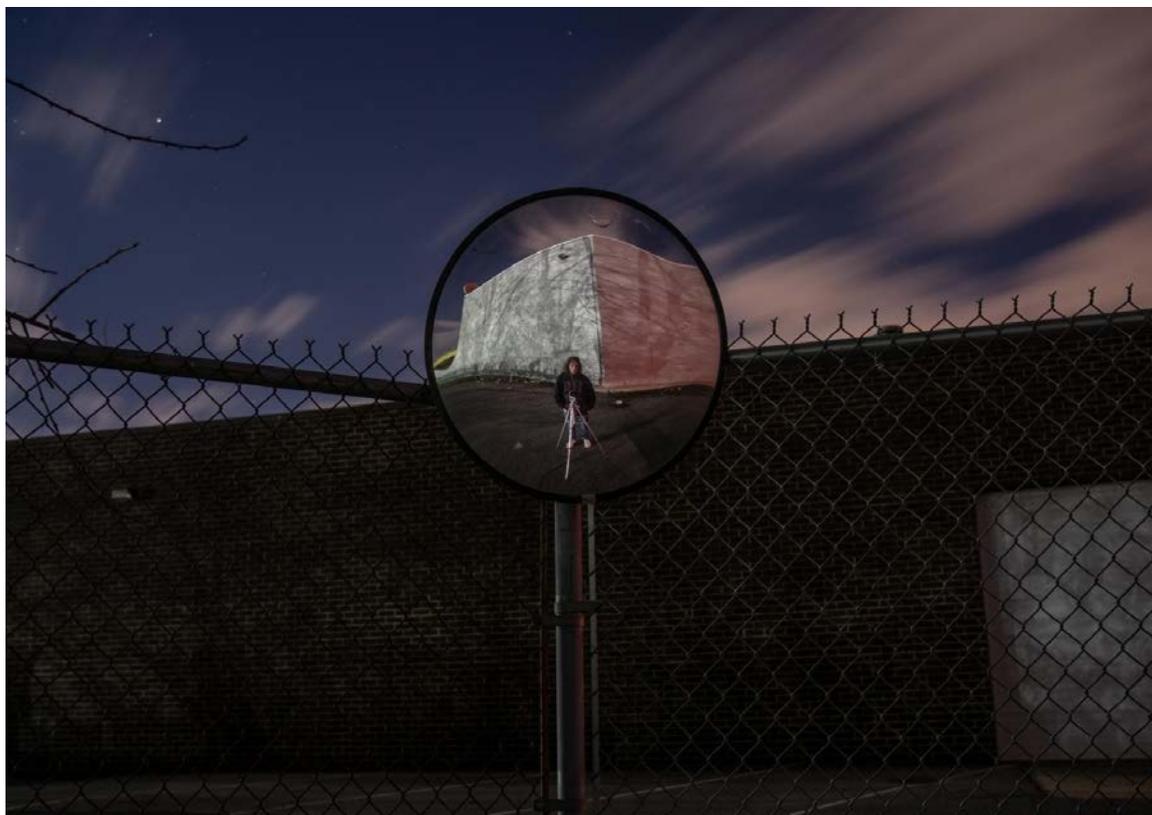
You’re twenty-one and you’ve lived in Florida nearly your entire life. “Estas perdiendo tu *accento*,” your dad mentions, disappointment creeping into his voice ever so slightly. *You’re losing your accent*. You frown. That offends you a little bit, just like it would offend you when your schoolmates would point out the Spanish lilt your voice had when you spoke English as a child. It’s a little ironic—first you were not American enough, now you’re not Hispanic enough. When you tell people you’re Hispanic, they’re nearly always shocked, commenting on how “white” you look. You scrunch your nose in slight disgust at the ignorance—what does Hispanic look like to them? Should you be short? Darker skinned? You will find yourself explaining away your “whiteness” regularly, as if you

owe people some kind of explanation for your perceived lack of Hispanic roots. “My mom is half Spanish, so I guess I look like the European side of my family,” you’ll explain in one breath, trying to put a stop to the curiosity on people’s faces. You’re not sure what “looking white” even means. “You’re Spanish, but like, white girl Spanish,” is the phrase you hear the most from peers whenever ethnicity comes up. You wish you could correct them, tell them that *actually*, you *are* Spanish because of your descendants in Spain, but Spanish is not a blanket term for all Hispanics. Furthermore, Hispanics could be darker, lighter, shorter, or taller. You think this all in your head, and while you figure maybe you should just say it out loud one day, you can only imagine yourself repeating it day in and day out for the rest of your life. You think you’d rather just save yourself the trouble. You’re not really safe from it at home either; you’re regularly referred to as the *gringa* of the family. You’re too Hispanic to be totally accepted as a “white girl” but too Americanized to even be recognized by your own family as one of them. It baffles you.

You realize the glaring irony. You spent the first half of your life desperately wishing you had more Americanized parents, straighter hair, less of that pesky Cuban Miami accent. Now, in an effort to reclaim the old you, the five-year-old-immigrant-you, you wish you still had your curly hair and find yourself using that Miami accent to your advantage (“No I’m, like, *super* Cuban bro, like born there *y todo*”).

You feel a sense of dread when you’re having a conversation in Spanish and have to fill spaces with “uh” and “uhm” because you’re slowly losing your vocabulary. You realize that your whole identity—your whole life, really—has been based on not being enough of this, or not enough of that. You never quite feel like an insider, but never really an outsider. Your mom used to tell you that you would understand when you were older, and you used to not even know what she meant by that. Now you know—you know that she meant you would understand her guilt, the difficulty to assimilate, then try to assimilate again to your original culture. For the first time, you realize she was wrong. You still don’t understand. You’re still within and without. You’re still assimilating depending on the environment you’re in, the people you’re around. It’s okay with you. As you get older, the

confusion never really settles. You manage to grow comfortable with the buzzing, tangled chaos of being neither here nor there.



## Self Portrait

By Gregory Guerin

# One Night with You

by John Gao

*A late valentine*

For every wayworn sailor lost at sea  
Abhors the earless breeze, the endless blue,  
I fathom not how, amid this Galilee,  
Through howling tempest broke the light of you:  
How soft you soothed my wave-tormented ship,  
Eclipsing Luna with two starry eyes,  
Composing music with each worded lip,  
Reposing all the world beneath the skies  
All while I tried, fought, but failed to resist—  
Bon Dieu! was this not one blind act of faith?—  
To ask for your pretty hand for one tryst,  
Rekindling from your e'er-angelic wraith  
Eternity—how I felt on our first sight;  
Eternity—the magic of one night.



# Balloons

by Gregory Guerin

# What Makes me a Woman to You

by Elizabeth Sides

I scribble my short brown hair onto the paper in front of me. I hear the *scratch, scratch, scratch* of the colored pencil and I carefully swap out the muddy brown in my hand for the sapphire blue to the left of me. I shade in my eyes and stare at the mess before me; little pencil shavings litter the floor and my sharpener lies neglected beneath my desk. Colors roll across my desk's surface and slip to the floor beneath, where their descent is silenced by the thick gray carpet suffocating the mahogany. I go quiet as I pick each object off the floor. The only thing that disturbs the silence is my brother, playing in the other room.

I drag my hand across the artwork a few times and blow on it once, to clear the remaining debris from my masterpiece. The picture is simple, but my 11-year-old self can't help but admire its simplicity. Right beside my art piece rests the picture I used as a reference. The portrait features my younger brother, with a grin on his face and monster trucks patterning his jacket. Then there's my mother, and, seated beneath her on a little stool was me, clothed in my favorite tee and a hand-me-down pair of jeans with little jewels dotting its hem.

My mom always struggled to get me into those jeans. I hated those little gems, and I never hesitated to tell her so. It had taken a long time to leave the house that day; my mother had insisted on plaiting my hair, which I absolutely, irrevocably would not allow her to do. This was back when my hair still swirled around my shoulders. Now, it's cropped around my ears, much to the dismay of my family.

They had initially refused to cut it. I was always told I looked like a little angel with my pretty blue eyes and sleek hazel hair, but somehow that made me want to cut it even more. Eventually, I took some scissors and cropped the whole thing, until they had no choice but to take me to a professional. I must've been 8. From the other room, I hear the sound of toy trucks gliding across the non-carpeted floor of my brother's bedroom. If I strain my ears, I can hear the murmurs of my

mom on the phone. I stash my drawing away inside my desk and lie back on the couch, my hands rummaging around for the bag of chips I had left open earlier. As I lie there, munching, I feel my stomach rumbling and start to ache. I rush to the bathroom and sit on the toilet, and as I stare down, my heart skips a beat.

Dark, sticky blood spots my underwear. I remember my mother telling me a long, long time ago about a period, and I don't know what to feel. I fumble around, wad up some toilet paper and cram it into a ball. I pull my underwear off and my pants back on and waddle uncomfortably into my mother's room. I have my underwear clenched inside my fist, and at my panicked gaze she works to end the conversation.

When at last she hangs up the phone and puts it down onto the desk beside her, I am near tears. I am feeling emotional and I don't know why. I'm scared, and my whole body itches, as if ants are crawling under my skin. I want to shed a layer like a snake and slither to the darkest corner of the room.

I explain the predicament shamefully. My mom is pleased, and she proudly exclaims "you're a woman now!" with glee in her voice. My cheeks burn redder.

I don't understand what changed in the last half hour. I don't understand why a little bit of blood on my pants makes me any more woman than the me from yesterday, or the day before. I don't understand it, and I don't want it. I wish I could take the blood back inside me, to reabsorb any bit of femininity that escaped my body. I wish I could be like my brother in the other room.

# Angelica America

by George Naranjo

Angelica America,  
Madre touches  
Papi's face,  
She migrates  
to his hands  
while they're still soft.

Together  
at the Promise land,  
they settle new from lost.

Angelica America  
Allures an aspired aura  
From off the ark,  
So intoxicate to begin  
to embark.

This is angelica,  
Papi's chest crossed  
With a chained cross  
and he wears a white shirt.

This is America,

Papi roots his boots  
to blue jeans  
and stomps at the dirt.

He lays down that body for work,  
until his body's out of work.  
So we can maintain  
on his body of work.

Me, who Madre feeds.  
Me, who Madre cleans  
when I bleed.  
Me, who Madre made  
take heed to her  
double-knee clapped pleads.

This is angelica,  
Praying  
that her son  
keeps his chest cross,  
makes it off the streets,  
home to her,  
and not in a casket  
with his chest crossed.

This is America,  
growing up,  
I stay alive by walking a shadow

and not losing the tone.  
Cast in this light, but kept in the dark,  
I ghost through the borough,  
find home,  
and intoxicate  
to begin to embark.

Still, flies the white dove,  
still grounded,  
a wingless black raven.  
Clips yours and gain theirs,  
they say,  
if you wish to make it to their haven.

I sit static,  
a fruitful son,  
eyes to what it seems.  
I've seen the Americana  
that's sold on the selling screen.

The branded shirts,  
and those blue jeans.  
Tapped phones,  
and people still feed machines.  
Uproot the seeds of democracy  
as luxury becomes the need.

Papi ties a tie around my neck,

but tugs the cross harder.  
He sees me now,  
and tells me that the chain is now my armor.  
As Papi's eyes begin to fade away,  
Madre mia  
looks away,  
her grey hair,  
burnt within an ashtray.

This is angelica  
And aesthetics' the word,  
bible of beauty,  
but the black lines are blurred.  
Keep your faith in your back pocket,  
but keep their cross at the front.  
Like keeping your gun in a safe,  
lock it, and only then begin to hunt.

Assimilate to crucify,  
light up those still in the dark.  
Differentiate and be crucified  
You must intoxicate  
to begin to embark.

Angelica America,  
yet the illusion can breakdown.  
Madre and Papi,  
bearing their true skin brown,

secretly grew their garden  
On the sacred ground  
until they both migrated to the roots.

Deceased  
with their hand crossed together now,  
I put on Papi's old boots.  
I'm left at their promised land,  
suitless and alone,  
devotedly tending to the fruits.

# Entre el Camino y la Esapada

by Ronald Deleon

Alejandro met the girl by the swings during recess—ella, de pelo negro, ojos oscuros, y piel de caramelo. Una gringa de papas Mexicanos. She smiled at him at first, and then asked for his name. He retreated back into the corners of his mind to find the word escaping his tongue, and when he said it at last, it came out in a murmur.

“Alejandro.” When she asked if he would come to his house, the answer was immediately yes for him, but for his madre all ideas needed a tone of cynicism. Como, que paso con tu tarea, y que tal esta amigita? Ojos tristes viendo hacia la puerta y finalmente, vete entonces. Alejandro was told to be home before dark, and just now the sun was holding steady at its peak. His mother gave him five dollars, and told him to tuck it into his pocket.

Alejandro came around the corner to find a taco stand on the sidewalk. Carne Asada, Lengua, Suadero—lo mas sencillo. The Taquero was an older fellow sweating over the grill, drops of his sweat sizzled on the black top. He pulled the rag from his shoulder to wipe his face.

“Cuanto valen,” Alejandro asked.

“Donde estan tus papas?”

Alejandro looked around. “Oye, me escuchas? Te pregunte algo.” Alejandro pointed his finger over the grill, almost touching the Taquero’s grease-filled apron.

“Quitate gringo,” the Taquero said slapping Alejandro’s hand away. “Mejor regrasate cuando llegan tus papas. Vamos.” The Taquero came around the grill and out from under his hut to usher him away. “Largate, no quiero ninos aqui.”

Alejandro dug his hands under his arms, and marched away from the taco stand. He kicked a rock in the road, and looked back at the Taquero waving his fist in the air, “Chinga tu madre!” He shouted and ran down the block.

The end of the block was covered by an impasse, a wall of red weathered bricks. The clay mortar stuck to his fingers as he climbed over. A nail at the top pulled on his skin, and cut his hand as he jumped off. The blood dripped off his palm, and he looked up.

Del otro lado habian casas con banderas de USA en las ventanas, y hombres en camisas de vestir cortando el cesped. Le vieron de repente con caras nerviosos y uno de ellos mejor entro a su casa. Alredor de los pies de Alejandro habian botellas vacias, y fue cuando el sed empezo. "Water," Alejandro said.

One of the men turned off the lawn mower, and pointed to McDonalds. "They got your water over there." He yanked on the pull cord three times before the engine squealed into a start. The yellow upside down U came into view, and Alejandro saw the shimmer of red from the McDonalds sign. "Hamburgers!" was scrawled in with a fluorescent tip, the exclamation was beginning to fade. The flat gray pavement, and mossy green bushes surrounding McDonalds entombed it in a strip of suburbia. Behind the glass panels was a mix of cultural personalities all wobbling toward the registers. His hand slipped off the handle, leaving behind a bloody print. He went inside, going directly toward the counter, which came up to the bridge of his nose. Uniform for employees seemed to be the dark half moons under their eyes, and smiles plastered over frowns. One of them was pouring water from the soda fountain.

"Can I have one?" Alejandro asked.

Behind him the people in line shuffled about saying, "he's cutting" and "get in line." Alejandro's lips twisted to the corner of his mouth, and he trudged to the back with his head below his shoulder. The line was maintained between metal poles with chains to adjust them, and by the time Alejandro made it to the back of the line, the room was past capacity. The manager came out from his office, and was thrusting his hands in the air, and from the back it was hard for Alejandro to distinguish anything but aggressive movement. "There's too many of you," he said coming out from behind the counter. "Someone will have to leave."

"What about that Mexican kid?" Someone shouted in the front. Alejandro jumped out of line to spot the Mexican kid who had to leave. "Donde esta este nino?" Alejandro asked, and the woman in front of him took a step away. She pointed down at him, and her eyes searched for the

manager.

“Oye,” Alejandro said pushing her finger toward the man in front of him. “Perdon senior,” he said and pointed his finger too.

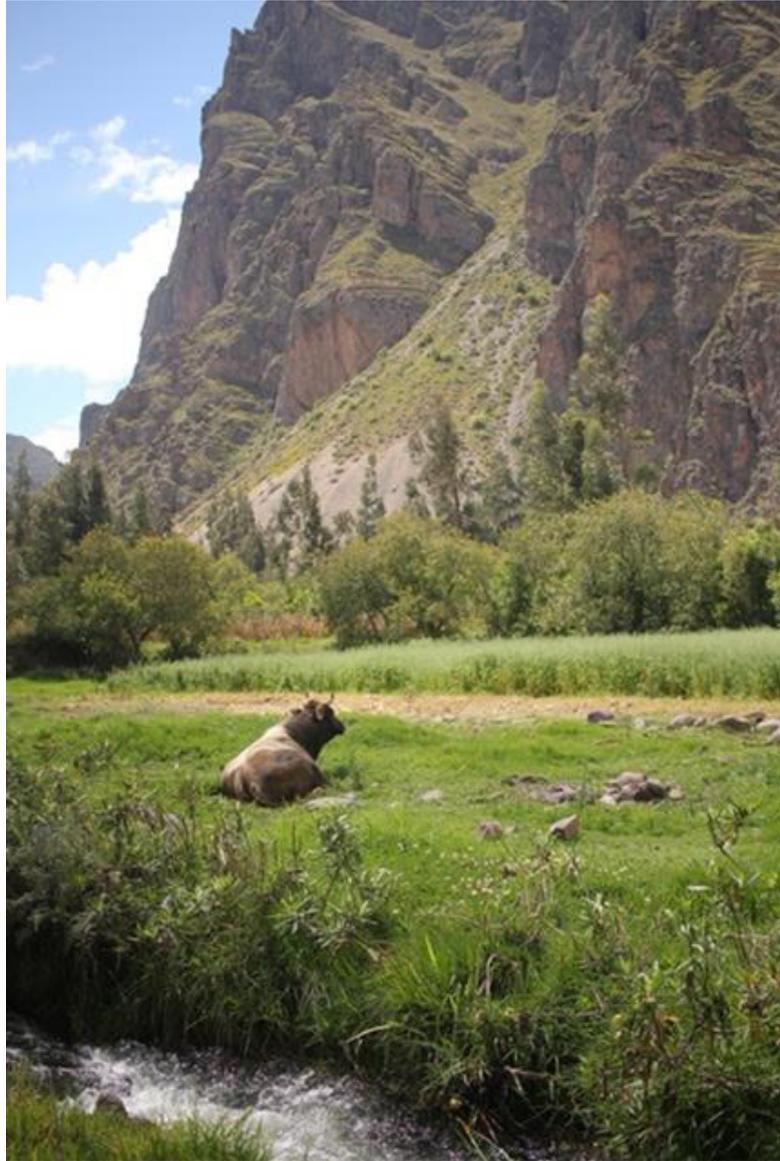
“Can someone tell him to leave?” The manager asked.

“He doesn’t speak American,” the woman said.

“Then push him toward the door.”

The woman held the door for Alejandro as he left. It slammed behind him leaving only the glass door between them, and a bloody print. “Solo quiero un agua,” he said knocking on the glass. Outside, leaning on the red striped patterned wall was a homeless man holding a blank canvas. Alejandro approached the older man. His gaze was fixed somewhere beyond the parking lot, where Alejandro could not see. “Te vez bien flaco senior, pasame la dieta,” Alejandro said chuckling. “Perdon mi mama dice eso cuando vea a alguien flaco... aver que dice aqui?” Alejandro grabbed the bottom of the sign, and looked under. He took it from the old man, and flipped the board so that the letters were exposed. *Hungry*. Then he placed the sign back into the old man’s curled fingers. He dug his fingers into his pocket, and pulled out the five dollars. He dropped it in the can by his feet. “Si tambien tienes sed es mejor si no entres,” he said and left him.

The sun had begun its descent from the sky, and the tallest buildings were eclipsed in shadow. Her house was at the end of a long road, and when he got there his skin glimmered from sweat. The combed over groove of his hair was now dangling beyond his brows, and his shirt had darkened an extra shade. She sat on the steps of her home next to a boy he didn’t know. Her eyes turned to him, and she waved in the manner of farewells. Alejandro put his hands in his pockets, and stepped back, the road back was impossibly far and the road forward dark.



## The Lone Bull

by Sydney Amon

# Franconia

by Milena Braga

There were giants once in this land,  
Wiped out by the great waters in the last lifetime.  
Tossed into the roaring foam, they vanished from existence,  
Blinking out like a flame, silenced by the wind.

We do not know much of them  
Not their names, nor their customs.  
We know not a thing,  
But their agony can be felt even today.  
Their cries can be heard as the wind howls through trees, who warn of oncoming rain.  
Nature trembles in the wake of the thunder as it remembers,  
And the mountains shiver in the cold,  
Longing for the absence of warmth that they have not known for centuries.  
The mountains, you see, used to shelter beating hearts  
And now they are the viewing place of the bones,  
One massive tomb for a people so swiftly eradicated.

This is a beautiful land,  
tragic and haunting.

Traces of life still ring through its hills,  
The land the giants once inhabited, I too now inhabit  
Smaller, more reserved, trying to add my song to the wind.

# Everyone Goes Home

by Griffin Sharp

Have you ever witnessed a miracle?

In your own hands

pulled from a hovel

a child's agonizing howl piercing

through the glowing content's

slow demise crackling —

faced against time,

her last breaths approaching.

Coming out of the smoke-

filled room, celebrate with me.

# Mi Madre

by Maria Manzano

Shoulders are wide and strong,  
Hair is black and curly; she blames her mother's genes.  
Now what about 'those jeans' she walks around in,  
her taste in fashion is particular.  
Particularly strange since we live now in the States,  
"It's no longer a small town," I remind her again.  
But memory is something she lacks,  
I have become her mentor and her guide.  
Since all those consultations—have cost me so much *dinero*,  
when I say in my American accent, she confuses for De Niro-  
as in Robert De Niro *mija?*  
I look at her and smile,  
I pray she never stops asking.







"WHEN WE RECONSTRUCT  
CAN WE MAKE THEM  
LOOK LIKE HERSE?"

"I  
JUST  
WANNA  
LAUGH"

"I FEEL SICK, KELLEY"

"JUST TELL ME  
WHEN TO GO."



SEPTEMBER 2010

"CAN YOU PLAY  
"HIGHWAY TO HELL"  
AT MY SERVICE?"

"WHOSE HAIRSPRAY  
IS THIS?"

JULY 2007

"WELL, IT'S  
NOT MOMS"

APRIL 2010

LAUGH  
IT'S  
OKAY!

JULY 2009

NOVEMBER 2009

"PLAY THAT  
SONG AGAIN."

JULY 2008



# TIMELINE

JULY 2007

GRADUATION GIFT FROM MOM OF AN "OKTOMAT" LOMOGRAPHY CAMERA.

THE FIRST IMAGES SHOT ON IT ARE OF MY MOTHER AND SISTER AT THE BEACH.

18<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY I RECEIVE A NIKON D40 DIGITAL CAMERA.

APRIL 2010

FIRST TIME I MAKE A JOKE ABOUT MOM'S CANCER TO MY SISTER.  
• SPRING BREAK MEMOIRS

JULY 2010

SCHEDULING MASTECTOMY & DISCUSSING FUTURE RECONSTRUCTION.  
20<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY GIFT "THE FROG EYE" LOMOGRAPHY CAMERA.

SEPT '10

TOO SICK FOR SURGERY, PUSHED BACK & WE DISCUSS FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS. SHE DOESN'T THINK SHE'LL LAST UNTIL 2011.

JULY 2008  
AVETT BROTHERS ALBUM "THE SECOND GLEAM". ON IT IS THE SONG 'MURDER IN THE CITY', RELEASED IN JULY.

JULY '09 DANA JUMPING IN TO POOL. ONE MONTH BEFORE DIAGNOSES.

NOV '09 DIANE'S FUNERAL

JANUARY 2011

MOM'S MASTECTOMY. BROTHER JOKES WITH HER WHEN SHE'S SICK FROM ANESTHESIA AND PAIN MEDS TO HER DELIGHT.

# Mirage

by Morgan Hunn

An old Jeep Wrangler kicked up a long cloud of dust as it approached the canyons in the dark of the pre-dawn hours. No one cared to watch except maybe a scorpion or a dog, long-since beaten down by the ruthless desert air.

Ian St. Lheare came upon a town. Thank God, a blessed town. He'd been wandering through the labyrinthine collection of plateaus and caverns for which the area was famous for nearly the entire day. He came for pictures, but no exposure time or shutter speed would ever capture the burning of his skin and stinging of his feet, the true marvels of this trip it seemed. When he began his excursion, his DSLR was his eye—inseparable from his face. Now, after hours of being lost, it was just another weight for him to carry, thumping against his chest with each step like some mock heartbeat.

At this distance, he could see the closest of the buildings sit across from each other on either side of the dirt road on which he walked. The locals all stopped what they were doing to stare at him as he entered town; their expressions melted into nothing and words died, only partially spoken, in their mouths. He felt as though sand filled his mouth and any words he might speak would give way to nothing but choked confusion. He attributed this to dehydration and walked to what appeared to be an old, two-pump gas station. Ian pushed on the door and it slid open with a steady hiss as the immaculate door sweep brushed across the linoleum.

Three large men stared at him just as the people outside did. His throat guided him to the clear refrigerator cases lining the back wall and he soon returned to the men standing on either side of the check-out counter. He let six twenty ounce bottles of water tumble from his arms before the register. To his credit, the slender, leather-skinned man behind the counter began to type at the register rather than continue to stare at Ian as he tried to corral the bottles. A number popped up from the register. Ian reached for his wallet, and held out the money for the cashier. There was silence as the cashier continued to stare at him without lifting a hand. His grey eyes never blinked. Ian

lowered the money onto the counter and slid it forward. The cashier picked it up and slid each bill into place before producing change. Before the coins could hit the counter, Ian opened a bottle and chugged. He felt thirstier than the desert itself and swallowed a fair bit more water than the desert had in quite a while. After finishing the first bottle, Ian retrieved his change and looked at the two men on his side of the counter. The one nearest him was only a few inches taller than him, but he had the sort of perfectly distributed heft that made it impossible to tell where his muscles ended and his fat began. The light blue windbreaker, probably navy once, that he wore over his green flannel shirt further obscured his bulk and left a weight of uncertainty on Ian's core. Unreadable. The man a step behind and to the side of the ambiguously fat one was over a foot taller than his company. His hair, which had the uncertainty in its color marking it as formerly-blonde, would have brushed the white ceiling tiles if it were any more unkempt.

"Sorry, about that. I got lost out there and ran out of water a few hours back," Ian said, gasping for air that no longer stung like knives in his throat.

"I was taking pictures in the caverns and canyons and damned if those twists and turns didn't spit me out as far from my car as the sun from the moon." Ian added a chuckle at the end, hoping to lighten the mood. The two men beside him chuckled back, then the man behind the counter grumbled something about, "Those damned canyons."

The man's lower lip raised into a resigned half-smile as he turned his head to the side and raised his shoulders in a fatalistic shrug, straining the seams of his weathered windbreaker.

"Got back from taking a spit and those canyons there and that damned sun... As if the water's damned."

Ian laughed uncomfortably at the man's nebulous comment and soon the original silence fell over the gas station. Ian opened his mouth and took a breath.

"So, any phones I could use?"

More silence.

"I just need to contact someone who can pick me up."

More silence.

"And just leave a message that I'm not dead."

More silence before, “there’s a phone out back there,” the cashier said, pointing a liver-spotted hand to a building across the sandy street.

“Awesome! Thanks guys,” Ian said.

He turned to the door, then paused, catching himself.

“I’m Ian, by the way. Well, my full name’s Immanuel St. Lheare. Sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. I’ve been so caught up in the crisis of all this.”

Again, silence threatened sovereignty.

So, Ian quickly followed up with, “What are your names?”

“Allen Turnsun,” said the cashier, eyeing the large paper bag of water bottles Ian nearly forgot along with his introduction.

“Ben Lostsome,” said the man in the blue and plaid.

“Guy Sofsun,” said the tall man. So, he could speak.

“Interesting names,” Ian said, turning to the cashier, “You said ah-len. Same spelling as Allen?”

“Allen,” was all the cashier said in response, this time using the common pronunciation.

A bit more silence followed.

“Well, it was nice meeting you three. Thanks for all the help.”

Ian grabbed the bag Allen pushed toward him, and left.

He walked briskly across the street, in spite of his painful feet, and stopped in front of the white cinder-block building Allen had pointed out. The street was no longer some eerily quiet wasteland; the soft hum of distant conversations filled his ears and he barely suppressed a sigh. It seemed in the time it took him to embarrass himself in front of Allen, Ben, and Guy, the rest of the town had realized he was just some idiot who got lost in the desert. He climbed the gray, wooden steps of the building’s porch, put his hand on the searing metal front-door knob, and opened the door.

It took a few seconds for his eyes to adjust enough for him to navigate what he supposed could be called a lobby, if your expectations were low or your sight was failing. The walls were just a more dimly lit iteration of the white, cinder block exterior walls of the inn. Maybe six feet from the

door stood the front desk, a wooden monolith. The room continued, however briefly, to his right. Wooden chairs with thin, green seat-cushions lined the walls as though they were waiting to sit in judgement over the next customer to pass through their midst. This building was not nearly so advanced as the antiquated gas station. The walls were unbroken by windows, but at least it was cool in the darkness. He made his way to a kind of help-desk where a woman, presumably in her early thirties, flipped through a rolodex, phone in hand.

“Uh, hi. I heard you have a phone,” he asked rather than stated.

“Guy named Allen sent me. Big guy, flannel shirt, cashier.” He waited for a response.

She looked at him blankly before saying, “out back.”

Ian looked wistfully at the phone she held, but held his tongue and walked back to the front door.

Sharp rays of sunlight skewered his eyeballs when he stepped back out to the wooden porch. Even as it set, the sun was cruel here. As he carried his thoroughly blistered feet around the side of the building he began thinking of the place he once called home.

No leap of imagination could let him believe he was back there, not with the heat, the light, and the relative silence. In Seattle, he'd pray for silence, a break from the car horns, the neighbors, the wife, and their son. It sounded awful and it was. Still, there was no denying his feeling; he didn't leave them because he liked them. There were times when he did: waking up late on a Saturday to two wide brown eyes gleaming an inch from his own while his wife made bacon, the feeling of comforting a child still ignorant of life's callousness, holding whole conversations through shared looks with a beautiful woman, walking three-in-a-row and swinging their child up and over puddles and cracked pavement. He loved the snapshots of their life together, but the kid was hopeless. It wasn't his fault that he was inept in every area that could conceivably yield a career. His grades were bad, his art disturbing, and he could sing about as well as Ian—which is to say, not at all. The wife started blaming him, to herself at first, but he could tell. He started being harder on the kid, the kid started avoiding him and getting in trouble. He started losing his temper more often, and soon a battlefield seemed to separate him from them. He left. He paid child support, but the kid never forgave him. He thought Ian let his mother die. He didn't let her, she went and did that on her own. But now the kid

was a man and Ian would never again wake up to those brown eyes gleaming at him.

He realized he'd been standing in front of the phone now for what felt like ten minutes, but due to time's callous disregard for people's feelings, it was probably only three. It was ancient enough to still have a rotary dial, but when he picked up the receiver, a dial tone hummed on the line, so the poor sand-scrubbed beast lived on.

He secured the receiver between his shoulder and ear, then reached into his back pocket, pulled out his wallet, and assessed his change. Long-distance would cost more; best call Mark. Four quarters fell into the machine with an echoing clunk. He wound Mark's cell phone number in and waited. Ringing then, "Leave a message." The sound of Mark's voice was reassuring. Their voices were quite similar, or so he'd been told, but no amount of talking to himself would ever bring him the comfort of a friend. Right about now even an enemy would be welcome. The beep sounded and Ian said, "Hey, Mark. You know I'm out in the El Espejismo Canyons taking pictures, right? Well, idiot I am, I went and got lost. I'm at a payphone in a nearby town. It's pretty small and more than a little weird—I mean this phone has a rotary dial! So, I imagine it'll be easy to spot on Google maps. Anyway, I really need your help here. I don't have much change and long-distance is gonna—" *Beep.*

Ian sighed and hung up the phone. Maybe Mark wasn't the one to call. Either way, he was out of coins and he didn't want to go running through all his cash on the payphone. If his experiences with this town so far were any indication, they probably didn't have a wealth of card-readers.

He walked, or rather limped at this point, back to the porch and the cool, dark interior of the white, cinder-block building. The woman at the front counter had moved on to paperwork, but she set down her pen as he approached.

"Do you know of any motels in this town?" Ian asked wearily. "The sun has begun to set and I'm afraid I'm gonna have to stay overnight."

"You stay here."

Ian wrinkled his eyebrows and turned his head. Did everyone in this town speak so strangely? She didn't say that in an especially caring way and she didn't get up to get someone or something for him; she just seemed to state it. She did, however, point to a large binder sitting open on the high counter between them. The blank spaces finally explained it: this was the motel.

He paid in cash of course.

His room was lit by a single forty watt lamp. He was genuinely surprised it wasn't an oil lamp. With his energy exhausted and his logic futile, he decided to accept his incongruous surroundings. He stood in front of the air conditioner vent, letting its mechanical wind whisper through his hair. His seating options in the room were limited to a wooden chair, identical to its green-cushioned brothers in the lobby, or the bed. He chose the bed. It was about as soft as the cinder-block walls, but it felt like a pile of down to his tired body. He knew he should eat and shower, but the promise of not moving for a while so appealed to him that he reached for a protein bar from his backpack and a water from the paper bag, reasoning that that would do. He swallowed the protein bar without bothering to chew and downed the water in less than a minute. Stomach full and eyes watering from the renewed moisture, he laid back and closed his eyes.

The search party, coordinated by the county police, searched the canyons for three days with the help of the inhabitants of a nearby town after several people reported hearing the voice of a man echoing from the canyons. The party wound their way through the canyon and caverns using rope, flags, and tape as markers of their paths. A local woman, Michelle Wells, finally came across the body of Ian St. Lheare, curled up on a slab of stone in a shallow cave. Officer Gabriel confirmed St. Lheare's identity and death. The transportation of the body proved surprisingly difficult due to its unexpected heft. Upon autopsy, the local coroner found St. Lheare's stomach filled with three liters of sand. Mark Justin claimed his remains following cremation as St. Lheare had no other living relations. In accordance with his will, Mark spread the ashes of Ian St. Lheare at the site of his last photo shoot, El Espejismo Canyons. Afterwards, Mark claimed St. Lheare's camera. The police advised against viewing the last photographs, but Mark insisted he would. No one saw Mark's reaction to the photos; most were just glad to have him and all evidence of so disturbing a death leave their town.

Four months later, news reached the town that Ian St. Lheare was the posthumous recipient of the Human Photographer of the Year Award. Due to the death of the photographer, the award, thirty-three thousand dollars in award money, and global exposure was given to St. Lheare's son, Mark Justin, who presented the photos on his father's behalf.

Tourists flocked to El Espejismo Canyons, feeding its undying echoes.



## Where Borders Don't Exist

by Ellie Vilakazi

# Upper Africa

by Ellie Vilakazi

Bursting into the living room, my younger brother, Lwandle, says, “Ellie brah, check out my new hair style!” He had the top part of his head dreaded into medium-length locks with the back and sides of his head tightly shaved.

“I look like one of those people from Upper Africa.”

A second or two coated in confusion and silence go by and I finally ask, “You mean north Africa?”

“Nooo! Upper Africa!”

“You mean all the countries above us? Like Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana?”

He responds as though I should know what he is talking about. “No dude, those countries are quarter to us! I mean like Angola, Sudan, Niger, Burundi, those type of places.”

He rushes out of the room to inform the rest of the family of his new found “Upper African” aesthetic, and I am left to contend with “Upper Africa.” *We are black South Africans. If anyone knows what it’s like to be lumped in one big arbitrary category—it’s us! Why would Lwandle so readily do that to fellow Africans? Does he not understand that in order to change the problematic discourse that surrounds Africa as a continent, he needs to know that each country has its own people, its own languages, its own unique political condition! This is why —*

It then dawned on me; Lwandle knows that there are different countries. Knowing that there are different countries inherently preserves knowledge of difference between those countries. Why am I expecting him to know of all the details and intricacies of the diversity of Africa? Have I imposed on him what so many people impose on me and people of color in general? This idea that we speak for and represent the race, country or region that we come from? That we must know every detail and

have all answers to any questions anyone may have of our politics, literacy rates, population numbers and employment rates? And as I thought more about “Upper Africa,” I realized that Lwandle created a geographical term that functions around *him*—a young, black, Swati male whose existence has been defined throughout history as a problem, whose country still does not know how to affirm him in his blackness, in his Africanness, in his Swatiness. Perhaps the term “Upper Africa” is a small act of resistance. In his own way, Lwandle is reclaiming the space that he has been historically denied. The space to define himself, to place himself at the center of history, of culture, of geography. In that moment, I burdened my brother with the responsibility of being a black South African, rather than search for the celebration of self that was embedded in his phrase. Or am I just a doting older sister who can see no wrong in her kid brother!

# Not a Procreation Sonnet

by John Gao

Mankind, by way of your demographic route,  
Your evolution will breathe nevermore  
If heirloom genius wither without fruit  
While alloys leave the litter of the boar.  
The slave revolt will not be televised.  
Saltwater in the sea and now in our boat,  
Undrinkable, will not be vaporized.  
They man the streets. They outnumber us. They vote.  
They hive the ghetto and rot in trailer doors.  
They're dreamless. They've no keys—drunk dorm to dorm.  
They start the coal-burner of stupid wars,  
Then leap into the flame to keep it warm.  
And even as our little island sinks,  
They exploit us with their greed and ankle links.



## On Earth as it is in Heaven

by Gregory Guerin

# “Whered’ It All Go?”

by Gabrielle Graham

Have you been taking care of yourself?

The hours you work ain’t paying you no mind.

The money you make don’t get you nowhere past rent.

The car just broke down in the middle of I-95, again.

The toilet’s overflowing and got the floor looking like the Yellow River.

The phone bill went up cos Leo won’t stop going on the 4G.

The TV’s shot and won’t let you binge properly.

And then there’s your head.

You still getting them headaches?

Did you go to the doctor?

They take your insurance?

No?

They sent you to someone else?

How much was the specialist?

Why couldn’t you afford the specialist?

Well, have you been going to church?

You been paying your tithes?

No?

How do you expect to receive when you don’t give?

You do your taxes?

Loans paid off?

No?

Ain't you working?

That's a shame.

And just look at your hair.

You ain't get a relaxer in months, huh?

Look at those nails!

When'd you last get a manicure?

How'd your lips manage to get so cracked?

How'd you get them dark circles?

Ever heard of chapstick?

Ever heard of concealer?

You know what, girl?

You really do need to take better care of yourself.

It's getting out of hand.

Oh?

You don't have the time?

What do you mean you don't have the time?

Where'd it all go?

# Come From Slaves

by Billie Cruz

I fell in love painfully quick, hurting  
Sinister blue eyes, flaxen hair  
Her skin wavelengths of slippery visible light  
Like Olivia Newton-John on a doorstep  
In her nightgown writing a love letter across a Hollywood sky

She felt love eventually no pain to be released  
Starry vehemence through colorless lens. My eyes enamored  
With a light deep within her  
Some misguided knight stumbling around her  
Through her. Looking for softness, foolishly

We could not be together  
Something biological, something about my skin  
Perceived ugliness, that she cannot control  
She can only abide, under someone else's roof  
Our world obliterated, unbeknownst reality until now

They allowed me to enter, a dark domicile  
With no air or tolerance. "Your family comes from slaves"  
Not of our world, not American. Back on the streets  
With all its dirtiness and cruelty swallowing me  
All alone, slippery new perspective within a synchronicity of hate

# Depression in '18

by Anthony Brandy

Indistinguishable from the bed on which I lay  
or is it lie?  
I

am opening my eyes to see the light of day  
but only after night  
-time

and the mucus seals my eyelids shut  
and I have to ask  
crass

Did I ever wake up in the first place?  
As a drone droning (, I)  
sing

in a cubic room with plenty of nothing  
In an unknown town (, I)  
drown

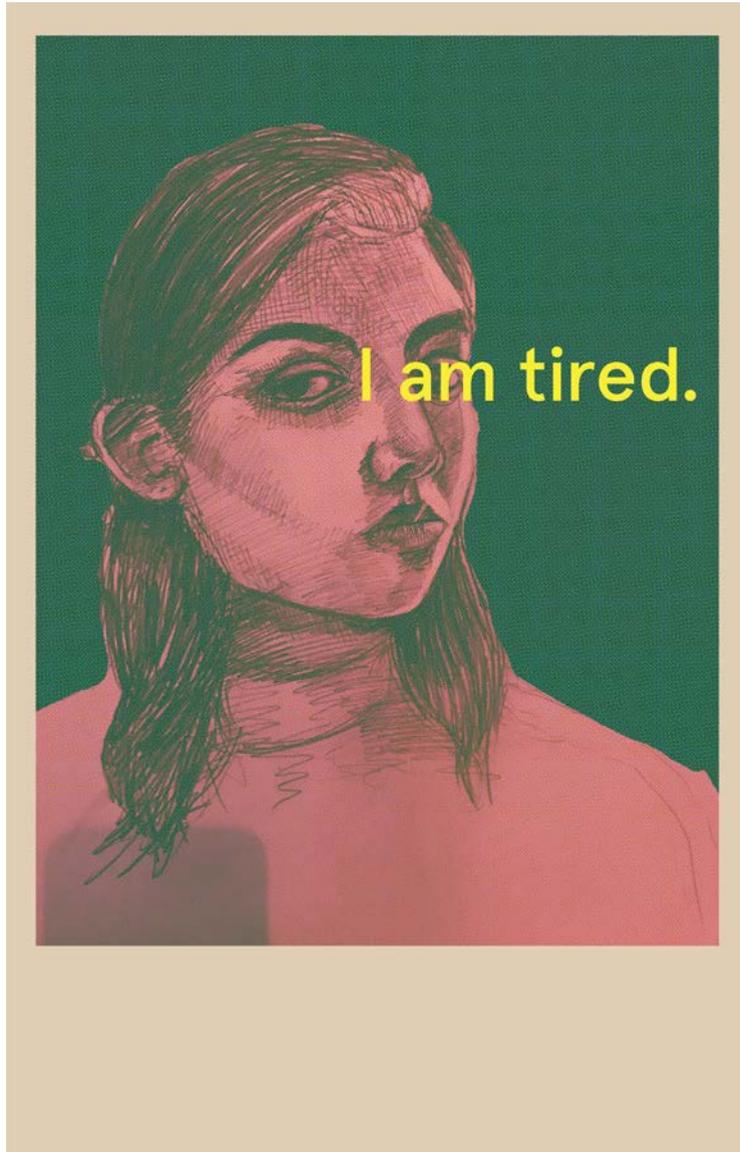
and forget the glorious hustle  
for which I groan  
Alone

Eyes shut and bleeding from a screen  
The Netflix streaming (, I'm)  
dreaming

of being elsewhere, like a home, or the like  
having passion so closely  
to me

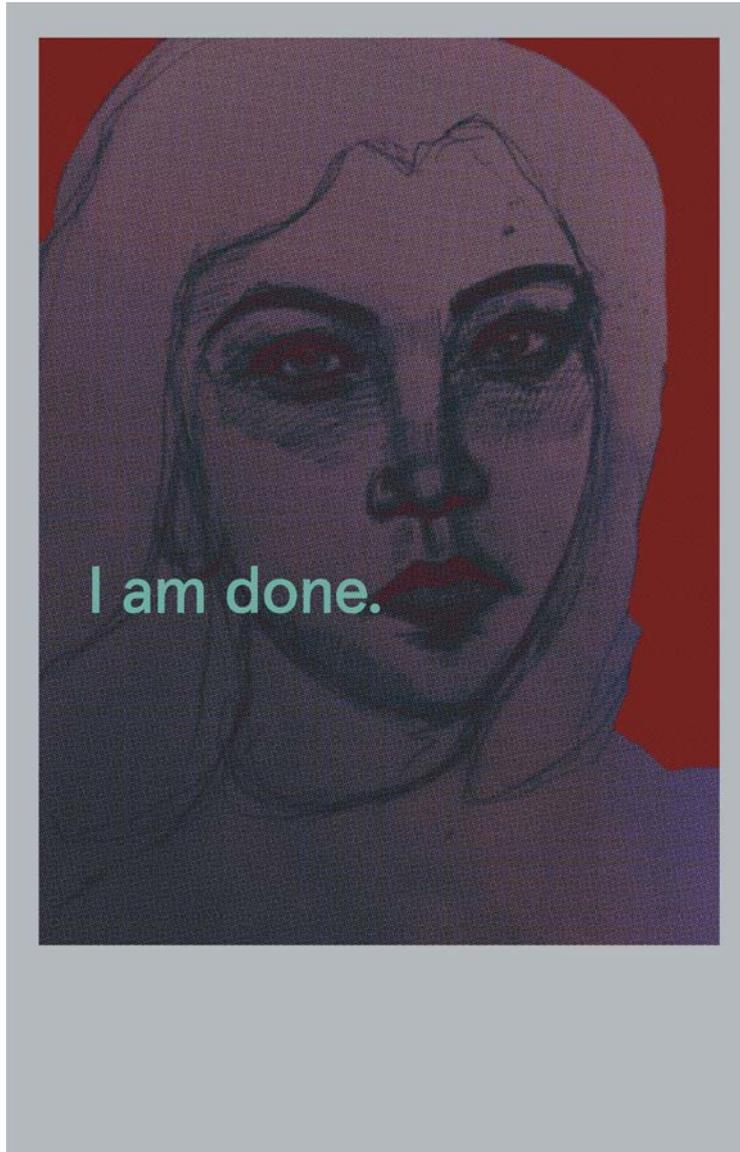
But I'm acquainted with neither the past  
nor the present night,  
I

exist somewhere in between



## Naomi is Tired

by Naomi Taher



## Naomi is Done

by Naomi Taher

# Little Drummer Girl

by Bittencourt

Eyes desire a pair to match;

Mind on the cusp of a crack.

A Voice to follow, the hollow, drum that beats,

in the middle of her chest.

*Rum, pum pum, pum —*

*Rum, pum pum, pum*

Her Hands want to be held,

Her Head yearns for a shoulder to rest.

A Voice to follow, the hollow, drum that beats,

in the middle of her chest.

*Rum, pum pum, pum —*

*Rum, pum pum*

Angry hands

become fists.

Ignorance

is a form of bliss.

After some time

her drum changes its tune,

A rhythm full of gloom;

And, as she inhales her very last breath,

*Rum, pum —*

She became death.

# Take a Breath

by Elizabeth Sides

I'm so hungry  
for food  
and for attention.

*Pathetic!*

I can't satisfy this feeling.  
How could I?

You are alone.

I am alone.

*This is a competition.*

I have no way to win.

It will never be enough.

*You're not trying hard enough.*

*You can be enough.*

I'm at war with myself.

*Eating that was a mistake.*

I can't take it back.

*Use three fingers, or four.*

*You won't need to feel your guilt anymore.*

I shove food in my mouth until I can't breathe.

*You fat fuck.*

I just want to breathe.

# Analgesic

by John Gao

I reach for rubbing alcohol instead  
whene'er my cellarette's bare, just because  
you can't kill what's already as more-than-dead  
as corpses dangling limp without a buzz,  
fatigued with all the intemperate demands  
for sitting through the surgery of la vie  
(without an analgesic laying its hands  
on places where the saw and I disagree)  
that always starts with lockjaw-bitten teeth  
and ends with eunuch shrills and girlish cries  
for God to tan my liver into a sheath  
so that the sword of killing never dies:  
to scintillate and bury in my skull  
a wine-imbrued deep blade that doth not dull.



Scientist grow up in  
producers of the  
obscure place,  
the official soldier  
Mikano—near the edge  
of a fungus acid  
a green algae. It's  
a partner, but  
the algae die, but  
heavy life, but  
poisoning only  
percentage of fish  
lichen's in the  
also make  
harmful to  
the fungus.

## Lizzy

by Naomi Taher

# Remember

by Billie Cruz

I entered the rehabilitation center with awkward steps, the scent of urine and despair encasing my senses. The scent has always been there and I fully expect it every time I enter the nursing home, but on some occasions like today, it is completely overpowering. I continue through the cramped hallway and I exit into the first garden area. The garden is congested with the living dead propped up into grotesque positions within faulty wheelchairs that are missing some part or another. The opening of the sliding door announces my presence and the vacant eyes stare at me, past me, through me. I pick up my pace, but my arthritic knees bring my body back to reality allowing me to catch every blank stare. I try to smile to each and every zombie but after the second condescending smile, I can no longer keep up the charade and just keep going.

I enter the second hallway and to my surprise the scent of death is not present, but the scent of vomit and feces reigns within the four way section of the hallway. I hold my breath and make it to the second garden, which houses the dead that smoke cigarettes. This group of people seem more awake and closer to the living. My stomach hurts with the collage of scents my body has encountered within the last minute or so and I drop my sunglasses over my eyes to disguise my sickness. I am greeted with a few good mornings, puffs of secondhand smoke, and immovable bloated bodies that block the walkway. I traverse myself through the haze of carbon monoxide, lead, formaldehyde, and sunshine. I cut through the grass and the air is breathable again.

Back to the shadows I arrive and prepare myself to enter the last hallway leading to my father's room. I enter and there is an old man maneuvering himself with just the use of the left side of his arm and leg, his right side twisted into a violent circle of uselessness. I stand there, holding the door open, forced to witness the spectacle of his painful journey and all the while his gaze upon mine. The minutes pass and finally I can let go of the door. I promise myself I will not look back. But I do and notice that his pants are not completely on, his butt is in full view...to me.

I walk and try to forget the man's butt but it is no easy task. The common scent of decay in this assisted living facility has become stronger in this wing. I am startled by a little old lady greeting me with a high pitched greeting, I nod and carefully walk around her. I continue down the hall and hear her greet other people behind me with no one responding to her. I see my father just outside his room with a man slouched in his wheelchair, my father with his thick Spanish accent telling him how to grab the rails along the walls to propel him forward. I greet him and he looks up at me with a wild look upon his face. He completely ignores me and continues with his laborious instructions to his pupil. Finally, he looks up and something turns on in his mind and greets me from his chair. The look he gives me takes me back to a time of childhood, one of my birthdays, maybe? I have seen that look before, outside these walls of madness. He tells his student to go practice and waves to me to follow him into his room.

The room is tight and he can barely maneuver himself to his side of the room by the window. The shutters were drawn tight and the darkness of the room combined with the scent of urine that arbitrarily permeates through the facility, gave a sickening claustrophobic feel to it all. I reach for the blinds and sweet sunlight pours in. I close my eyes letting the warmth of the rays envelope my face. I pause. I turned back to my father and place the plastic bag on his food table. Is that soup, he asks me, I nod and begin to set the soup for him. The police were here again, he says.

I pause the familiar pause of uncertainty.

Is this information real or is it all in his head? How can I trust what he says with his selected dementia? I continue with setting his soup for him, the mere scent of food sickening me, but this place has this effect on my withering sensibility. He continues his madness...He had an accident and gave the police my name, he is something else. My father shook his head all the while looking at the soup I laid out for him. I backed away from the table and he wheeled himself up to his food. I approached the window and looked out into the garden that entertained the lifeless entities that resided in the facility.

Have you spoken to him?

I turn around to face my father and I ask him who. Your brother, what are we talking about here? I approach his drawer that also serves as his hamper. I don't answer him and collect his dirty

clothes to take with me. Yes please take those with you, I got so much dirty clothes that it's beginning to stink in here. I place the dirty clothes into a garbage bag and place it by the door. Are you leaving, he asks. I say no and begin to straighten out his corner of the room. I keep busy with his dirty clothes smelling of ammonia resisting the notion of looking at my father and seeing what he has become no fault of mine...but is it not? You cook this, it's excellent! Yes, it's my chicken noodle recipe, remember? I finish with the small housekeeping and sit on his bed watching him eat. His shirt is covered with soup and avocado, and I get a wet cloth from the bathroom. The toilet hasn't been flushed and my stomach turns as I flush it. I look into the mirror over the sink and see someone who looks like me, but it isn't. It can't be, my face looks ragged and pale. I can't bear to look at it anymore.

I ask my father to lean back and I clean him up as much as I can. Who cooked this, it's excellent. I throw the cloth into the garbage bag and return to sit next to him. I'm full, I can't eat another bite...here you have some. I decline and tell him I ate. Which was a lie, I haven't been exactly eating that well, lately. No need to worry him though. My father continues eating and suddenly stops, he asks me to take him to the bank. He wants to withdraw all his money in case this trouble with my brother turns into a lawsuit. I pacify him and tell him yes, tomorrow. He thanks me and keeps eating. I watch and again he offers me some, I decline...again. He asks about my mother, his ex-wife, and I tell him she is fine. A nurse comes in and she greets us. My father proceeds to tell her that he hasn't had a bowel movement in five days. She agrees to give him some medication for that. He takes the medication the nurse gives him and swallows it down, complaining all the while. The nurse motions to me towards the door. My father yells out don't believe a word she says, then softly he says she lies. The nurse wanted to explain about the bowel movement comment he made and how it's not true. I was going to tell her about the toilet but I didn't... too tired to keep a conversation with the lady. I say thank you and return to my father, still eating. He asks if I could connect his cell phone to charge and I do. I find it in a drawer by his bed. The phone hadn't had service for a few months and I wondered who he would call if it did have service. He finally finishes and I have to wipe him down again with a wet cloth. I dropped some on the floor can you also get that? He orders. I do and he starts about how my brother is such a bad person and a thief and so on. I sit next to him dreading what was about to happen, what always happens when I tell him that my brother, his son, is

dead. Remember? The funeral was almost three years ago. I look at his glossy eyes as his tears well up and he grieves all over again. I hold him as best as I can with the cumbersome wheelchair between us. He remembers...again. I gather up the utensils from his soup and place them back into the plastic bag as he continues to sob quieter now. I place the bag near the dirty clothes bag, returning to him, solemnly. He snaps up sensing my soon departure. He asks me to close the blinds and tells me of how someone keeps sneaking in to his room doing two things on a regular basis: opening his blinds and defecating in his toilet. He also tells me that he won't be responsible for what he will do to that person if he catches them. I laugh, it just came out. He looks at me with a weird look on his face. Is that funny? I get up and hug him. Be well I say heading towards the door. Sweetie, I hear him say, which stops me in my tracks every time. When will you be back? I don't look back at him. I tell him tomorrow and I exit into the hallway with a bag full of dirty clothes and a bag full of plastic food containers to face the stench of the facility.

I exit through the hallways busy with patients, nurses, and visitors. I look at other family members and they give me a bittersweet smile, sympathizing with a glance. I exit through the garden filled with smoke and sadness intertwined through metal wheelchairs. I exit through the four way hallway that has that round mirror so you can see down every leading hallway, so that not one decaying soul goes unnoticed. I exit through the first garden that remains filled with residents and picnic tables that are hardly ever used... a reminder of younger times...better times. I exit through the last hallway leading to the exit door. I stand there with my bags and the residents looking on... probably wondering why they cannot go with me to the real world. The buzzer sounds and the door opens. I thank the receptionist who could care less if she has a good day or not. I finally am outside into my own world. I reach my car and place everything inside. I reach for my water bottle and notice I am still shaking. It usually subsides once I am in the lobby. I take a drink and look out into the endless but definitive sky. I take a deep breath and get the car in motion. I look over to another bag in my front seat, another container of soup in a plastic bag. I slowly proceed to the exit of the facility and begin my drive to next facility where my mother resides. I hope she remembers that my brother is dead. I hope she remembers my chicken soup. But most of all, I hope she remembers...me. A light rain starts as I pull into my mother's nursing facility, which is located a few miles away. Slowly I

approached the door and wearily it opens, inviting me in. Reminding me of who I am...where I am...and what I am there to do. I am nothing but a reminder to the dead...of who they used to be.

I shake it off and proceed down the hallway...their eyes upon me...always upon me...  
hoping to remember.

# Spring

by Andrea Avelo

*After Lisa Olstein*

It had been so cold leaves froze in place;  
nothing wanted to move.

I didn't expect you. Mornings I thought I was alone  
at the edge of the garden, by the split in the road,

in the haze of rainfall, but then like  
blooming buds you revealed yourself,

blades of grass between the cracks, rainbows.  
No one expected you yet, not really, not at all.

In February, I left wilted bouquets to frost over  
by the headstones wreathed with snow.

March is livelier.  
I've made dyes from the newly grown berries

so that if April continues to surprise me,  
I can at least say I was ready for it.

I have fresh paints and a worn brush.  
I mix new shades. Mine is the red

of the strawberry patch. Theirs is the pink  
of the carnation petals lining the sidewalk.

Yours is the green of the new leaves  
at the edge of the blooming garden.



## EDITORS & CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

**Yeva Amirjanyan** will be graduating in August 2019 with an English Bachelors of Arts along with a Professional Writing Certificate and a Teaching English as a Second Language Studies Certificate. When she was little she wrote stories for her own magazines, which she would make herself with craft paper—today, she is the copy editor of Coastlines. Yeva is an introverted soul who takes delight in books, writing, yoga and personality psychology. She is especially passionate about discovering and reading works of women writers.

**Marina Renee DeCicco** is a Senior at FAU and will be receiving her BA in English with a concentration in Writing and Rhetoric, a minor in Theatre, and a Business Certificate in May 2019. She is a performer and technical theatre student at FAU, having worked within the Theatre Department and in FAU's Professional Theatre Company, Theatre Lab. She is a proud member of the Alpha Psi Omega and Sigma Tau Delta Honor Societies, and is pursuing a career in Editorial. Marina enjoys photography and art in her spare time. She is incredibly proud of this magazine.

**Jessica Kavanagh** is Criminology major with a passion for reading and writing. She has plans to graduate this year and pursue a literary career. When not studying vigorously, Jessica can be found entertaining her three dogs or brewing up a cup of hot chocolate to write some fiction of her own.

**Rebecca Montana** is a senior at FAU and will be receiving her BA in English with a concentration in Writing and Rhetoric this May. She is a student of

both the English and Creative Writing honors programs. Rebecca writes nonfiction and fiction prose that is mostly inspired by her family, social issues, and selfhood. In her free time, she enjoys lounging around with her very lazy miniature dachshund, Bay, and baking homemade bread. She intends to pursue a career in publishing after graduation and would be thrilled to one day work on editing cookbooks, children's books, or graphic novels.

**Danielle Ott** is a senior in her final semester at FAU and will be receiving a BA in English and a certificate in Technical and Professional Writing. Danielle tends to spend her time writing fiction prose and working on fiction novels. When she is not writing she spends time tending to her four rescue cats named Bella, Bennie, Gideon, and Remy. She also enjoys focusing on film in analytical reviews, and working with indie filmmakers locally in her area on screenwriting and editing. She would like to pursue a career in copywriting and editing and hopes to one day work for Lucasfilm.

**Aleya Siegel** is an undergraduate student at FAU and will be graduating in 2020 with a BA in English. She loves writing, poetry, drawing, and music. Aleya hopes to one day be a well known author and inspire others to follow their dreams.

**Serena Torres** graduates May 2019 receiving a BA in English with a concentration in Writing and Rhetoric, along with a Professional Writing Certificate. Post graduation, Serena hopes to pursue her career in Social Media Marketing. Writing poetry is her passion but enjoys writing non-fiction as well. Since she's been published for her poetry once before, she hopes to get out of her comfort zone and one day publish some of her non-fiction works, too.

**Sydney Amon** is one that sees the beauty in the little things in life. She sees and appreciates things that not many people would notice at first glance. Sydney cares a lot about photography and sees it as a way of de-stressing, getting away from the fast-paced world we live in today.

**Andrea Aveledo** is a junior here at FAU. She is an English major, focusing on creative writing. Her strengths in writing lie in poetry, which is her favorite mode of expression.

**Bittencourt.** This literary artist goes by the pseudonym Bittencourt. She currently attends Florida Atlantic University wherein she seeks a B.A. in English with a concentration in British literature. Aside from finding her work on this edition of *Coastlines*; her other work, “Hotel Room Service” could be found online at <http://www.thevoicesproject.org/>. After graduation, Bittencourt aspires to survive by using the one tool that has gotten her thus far: her creativity.

**Milena Braga** is a senior at the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College. Although she is majoring in psychology, she has always had a profound love for writing. She always marvels at how it allows her to take any feeling—joy, anger, bitterness, sorrow—and turn it into an art form. It is truly freeing for her.

**Anthony Brandy** is a linguistics-Spanish double major in his senior year. He just got accepted into Florida State University’s graduate program for foreign and second language education. Anthony’s been writing poetry since he was 11, posting amateur poems in his Myspace notes.

**Billie Cruz** will complete his Bachelors in English with a minor in Film in May 2019. Bill looks forward to the daunting and harrowing task of pouring his heart and soul out at “ 90,000 words or so “ increments. He is currently working on a novel, a screenplay, and believing in miracles.

**Ronald Alejandro DeLeon** is a proud student of FAU studying English. He was born in Southside Chicago to immigrant parents. He budgets his time between writing and dancing Ballet Folklorico de Mexico.

**John Gao** is a 19-year-old native of Miami, Florida, ex-Texan, and twice expat in China, currently completing his BA in English with a concentration in British Literature as part of a seven-year BA/MD program. He has been recently published by the Society of Classical Poets. Aside from literature, John enjoys philology, piano, Esperanto, and dabbles in chess, banjo, and ballroom dance.

**Jessica Gill** is a Cuban-American FAU senior and writer. She enjoys eating Cuban croquetas and napping. Her aspirations in life include attending law school and seeing snow for the first time.

**Gregory Guerin** is a photographer based in Delray Beach. Originally from New York, Greg relocated to South Florida in hopes of finding a better life. He has been taking photos for 2 years and since then, the hobby has evolved into an obsession. Find more of Greg’s work on Instagram @gregslistdotcom.

**Morgan Hunn** was born in Austin, Texas in 1996. She began writing makeshift books from printer paper at the age of two. Hunn is now a senior

at Florida Atlantic University, majoring in English with a focus on British literature. Currently, she is working on a thesis as part of the English Honors Program and is looking forward to her induction into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi on April 14th.

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**Maria Manzano** was born and raised in Colombia and is inspired by the beauty of her new found language, English. She is creating her world around it by studying it for years, using it to escape, reflect, and create different worlds where she can run free through the magic of words.

**George Naranjo** is a Communications Major at FAU. Born in New York, he arrived to Florida at the age of 7, and even by then, already had an idea that he wanted to write and perform. As a child, he was drawn to performers, artists, and icons of the likes of Michael Jackson, Freddie Mercury, David Bowie, Prince, and Jimi Hendrix. As he got older, he started participating and acting in various theatrical productions and continues to explore and expand upon himself, hoping to find a unique way to combine both poetry and theatre in his performances.

**Elizabeth Sides** is a sophomore at Florida Atlantic University. She is working towards her Bachelor's degree, and intends to pursue creative writing in the future. Elizabeth is also a Broadway fanatic and a cat-mom, and finds her favorite place to write is with music on and a feline nearby.

**Griffin Sharp** was born and raised in Whippany, New Jersey and works as both a Firefighter and EMT. He is in his third year at FAU seeking a degree in psychology and nursing.

**Naomi Taher.** In Taher's work, she aims to merge graphic design and traditional art together. In order do this, she collects sketches and writings from her journal, photos from her everyday life, and she combines them with elements of graphic design such as typography and layout design. Her inspiration comes from everywhere, this includes books, plants, history, family, friends, culture, traditions, teachers, and dead gifts from her cat.

**Ellie Vilakazi** was born and raised in South Africa and has been in the United States for three years. In her spare time, she is usually out photographing all that Florida has to offer. She is currently completing her last year at FAU.

**Gabrielle Graham Williams** was born and raised in South Florida. This Spring, she will be graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies. Aside from poems, Gabrielle also loves writing short stories, songs, and screenplays. "Where'd It All Go?" is her first published piece, and she hopes it is the start of many more to come.

**Kelley V. Yarkin** was born and raised in South Florida. Having received her AA from Broward College and currently attending FAU, she is pursuing her Bachelor's in English and a minor in Art. Drawing inspiration from family and friends she incorporates interpersonal relationships through visual storytelling. Her mediums include but are not limited to writing, photography, ceramics, painting and crocheting. In her leisure Kelley enjoys reading novels and volunteering at her local library, with aspirations at a future in librarianship.