

miambiance

VOL. 28



Miambiance

Literature and Arts Magazine Volume XXVIII

Edited solely by Miami Dade College students of the Kendall
Campus in Miami, Florida



Kendall Campus

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Editor's Note

As Editor-in-Chief, I strived to raise the bar higher for Miambiance, and I believe Volume 28 is a clear representation of that. Volume 28 is meant to be a fresh take, free from censorship, and one that shows life in its rawest form. This is immensely important due to the fact that many feel like they don't have a voice, so we provide them with this platform to express themselves artistically. If one thing is apparent from our magazine, it is that nothing is eternal, and that we are all perfect in our own imperfect ways.

Twenty-eight years later this magazine continues to be a prestigious outlet for our students' voices to be heard. For many this will be part of our legacy and our footprint left on this Earth, so it is with great honor that I welcome you to indulge in Miambiance Volume 28.

Editor-in-Chief,
Marcos Tzvetanov



Special thanks to the members of the following departments:
English and Communications, Graphics, Arts and Philosophy, and Media Service



Untitled

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“
...And these children
that you spit on
as they try to change their worlds
are immune to your consultations.
They're quite aware
of what they're going through...”

– David Bowie, *The Breakfast Club* (1985)



Untitled
Anthony Diaz
Silver Gelatin Print

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Fog Dipped Pines

Monica L. Correa

Fog dipped pines
Cut the scene for Hellenistic vines,
They tint with drama
Turquoise weddings
Where I've left my senses
To stare at the transparent signs.

Fog dipped pines
Paints the night of waste;
Frizzles ink and shades my shoulders
Whilst I scream in fear
At their shy, starring chlorophyll.



Untitled
Daniela Parada
Silver Gelatin Print



Diana's Roots
Stephanie Dovale
Mixed Media Acrylic
56" x 60"

CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL

Gilda Jnofinn

Steel pans burst in blues and greens
While goat-skin drums pound with purplish fervor
And cymbals smash the golden beats.
That overpower of feet stomping green and black,
The orange glow set mode and speed,
That laughing reds keep pace with.
Clapping hands flash silver sparks
And kaleidoscopic voices range from magenta to rogue.
The music bubbles, like melted Crayola
In the fierce white sun,
In the burnished copper bowl
Of our culture.



Untitled
Sabrina Camargo
Silver Gelatin Print



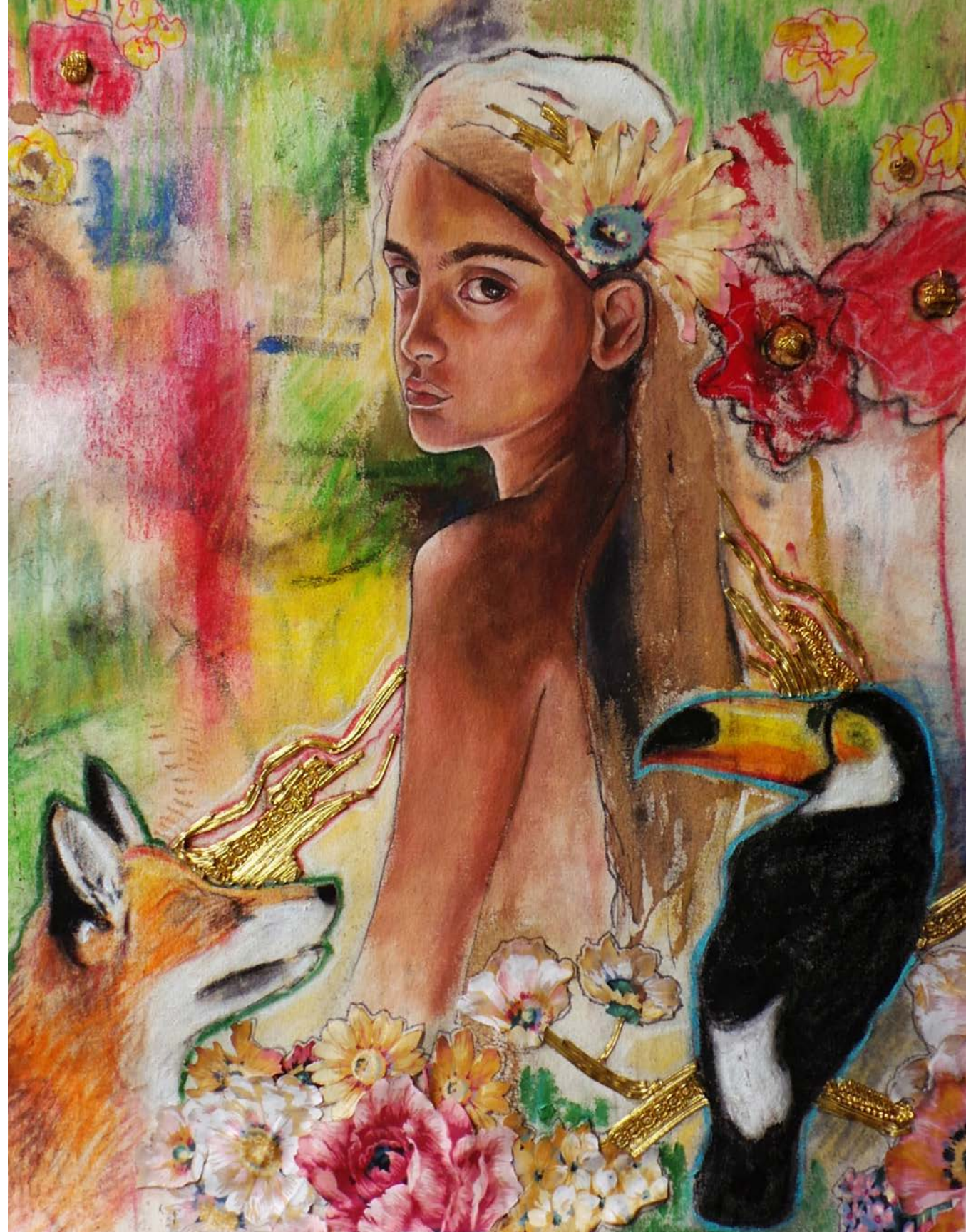
Vegans

Anthony Diaz

Vegans, the monks of our industrious indulgence era
Practicing celibacy—eating celery,
Straying from the rabid killings
Of our four legged friends.

Flogging themselves via falafel whips with tofu tips.
Fighting the heresy of animal hierarchy,
Thank you for taking the blow.

Reina de la Jungla
Stephanie Dovale
Mixed Media Acrylic
26" x 28"



Ink Well

Alexander Mertz

My fingers are raw and dripping as I pen
This down, desperately scribbling to pour
Out my heart, and this vile blood.
I extend my pen into the pools around me,
Until bile threatens to overtake my throat,
And I pause mid stroke. Words echo in
My mind, past criticism or advice, I can't remember
This is not art. My emotions, my soul are
Not fit for the world in this unrefined form.
It is too close, too real, and no one wants unsavory feelings
When reading a work. So the poet surfaces to breathe,

And looks for a well of ink. He dips his pen into the ink,
And grasps whatever he uses to keep the blood flowing.
A drink, a drag, a bite, a pinch, or maybe just a picture,
And a new life gushes and mixes with the ink.
Strokes of red and black alternate, until they are so mixed,
One can barely tell them apart. The artists' hands slow
To a careful, precise pace, as his technicality takes over
And his eyes glaze. The torturous object falls to the wayside,
Forgotten, as he cleans his paper. He begins lamination, and
Sets the ink to stone, without a speck of color to mar the perfect black.



Untitled
Richard Nina-Angeles
Silver Gelatin Print



Day Off

Anthony Diaz

Once a week I get to become myself.
After six days of sitting in a fish bowl
I find one evening to indulge
In the more grotesque things in life.
To drink to my livers displeasure,
Eat the fattiest and saltiest of foods,
To laze around naked and stare into my pool
As I warm up my lungs a la cigarette.
Tomorrow, my day off...

The Candle

Roselle Hamilton

Flickers as a door closes.

A cry is heard as scuffing feet echo through the emptiness. Begging comes from the woman, broken on the floor. Her sobs wrack her body as she clings to the man. The candle continues to quiver.

A baby's cry is heard, squawking from an unseen room. The man pauses, his hand on the door. He turns back, heading towards the infant. The woman cries, pleading. The man returns, a bundle in his arms.

The candle flutters as the door opens.

The woman wails as the door closes.

The candle sputters...

Dies.



In Transit
Nicholas Van Dine
Silver Gelatin Print

What Momma Saw

Robert Gryder



Untitled

Helene Lopez - Silver Gelatin Print

“I saw Jesus last night,” Mama said, and placed a plate of food in front of me.

“Again. While I was doing the dishes.” She hovered over me, while I pushed eggs around my plate. I was only five years old, and still half-asleep. The only thing I knew about Jesus was that he was the man in a picture frame above Mama’s bed. “He was standing in front of the refrigerator.” Her hands trembled when she reached for her pack of Winstons. “He said that things would get better. He said that we’d be okay. Adam, he told me not to cry.”

I yawned, nibbled on a biscuit. Mama saw Jesus in the rising steam of bath water and in moonlit clouds. She saw him in the falling leaves of autumn and in shadows cast upon snow.

She didn’t hallucinate per se, but she didn’t apologize for her desperate, anxious imagination that reinterpreted forms of the physical world as messages from beyond. She saw what she wanted to see, in the world and in others, covering events and objects with her spiritual dust.

Mama lit a cigarette and took two quick drags.

“Son, don’t you know who Jesus is?”

Mama’s hair was an earth-toned brown, like her eyes, and she wore it simply, pulled back into a rubbed-banded ponytail. Her cheekbones were strong and firm, like her nose, both

hinting at the Cherokee blood that seasoned her own.

Raised in the country woods of South Virginia on Grandma’s home cooking, Mama was a full-figured woman: she carried herself like a country song—simple and true; feisty at times—as a fiddle, at times like a gently strummed guitar-heavy and deep with melancholy. She listened to The Judds—Wynonna and Naomi, and would sing along to her favorites. The Judds were country, just like Mama, strong like Mama was trying to be, and they were making it without a man, and Mama was trying to do that too. “Adam, do you hear what I’m telling you?”

“Can I have something to drink?” I didn’t want to talk about Jesus.

She rested her cigarette on the ash tray, poured me a glass of milk, and handed it to me. When I finished eating, I placed my hands on the table, and leaned back in my chair. Proud of her cooking and proud of my eating, Mama smiled.

“You full?” she asked.

“Uh huh,” I answered, and smiled back.

“Then wipe your mouth boy. You got grease all over your lips.”

I wiped my mouth on my shirtsleeve and Mama took my plate to the kitchen sink and started to run her dishwater. A window over the sink looked out onto a pasture in the distance, where cows meandered and grazed and the morning sun sent a broad, crisp beam of light into the kitchen, through Mama, and onto the dull wood floor. I saw dust particles fly in the light. I saw Mama shining bright in her white nightgown, like an angel. We lived in an old two-story house that sat atop a steep hill.



Cubrete
Elizabeth Toledo
Color Film

In the front, an ancient oak tree, fat and gnarled, towered over the yard; in the back stood an abandoned barn that I was forbidden to explore.

The house had once been the active center of a farming enterprise, though by the time Mama had rented the house most activity had long ceased. A barbed-wire fence, rusted and sagging, separated the house from cow pastures that stretched over a distant, grass-covered hill. In winter, snow covered the pastures; when the ground was frozen snow and the land lord had put the cows away, I would ease between the barbs, hike up to the top of the hill, and sled down on top of a flattened cardboard box. Once, I landed in a drainage ditch, hurt my back, covered myself in cow dung and snow, and worried Mama half to death.

I went outside to play. The spring air smelled like morning, moist and wet, and I saw cobwebs atop tufts of grass,

pregnant with dew droplets that reflected the morning sun.

I looked at the oak tree older than time, and followed with my eyes its heavy roots, half-exposed, that spread over the front yard like a witch's claw. I looked at the rose bushes full of thorns that surrounded the trunk of the tree. Then I squinted my eyes, tilted back my head, looked up through the branches of the tree, and tried to see to the very top. "What would it be like to see the world from way up there?" I wondered. My heart beat faster and faster as I approached the tree. "This will be real fun," I thought.

"Don't even think about it!" I tensed up like a prairie dog sensing danger.

"Adam, come here right now!"

I looked back up at the tree. Then I looked at Mama. Then back at the tree again. She was not going away. If she came after me, she would pinch me on my shoulder like Grandma did when I did something wrong. "Do you want me to tear a knot in you?"

"Adam. Don't you make me come out there." Mama won, as she generally did.

We sat on the front steps, made of wood, painted white, chipping. The bottom step was warped, and squeaked every time someone stepped on it. Mama wrapped her arm around my shoulders and pulled me close. I felt her warmth flow through me, like a flower encouraged by

the sun to bloom. There is nothing like a mother's purr. "Son, you know you're not supposed to climb trees." Not convinced, I stared at the oak and tried to imagine how old it was.

"Do you know what happened to the last person who tried to climb that tree?"

I shook my head no, looked at the ground and kicked up dirt with my shoe.

"Well, the last person who tried to climb that tree was the man who used to live here. He had climbed all the way to the top, trying to cut back the branches so they wouldn't fall on the house in a storm. But then he lost his balance, and fell all the way to the ground."

"Did he die?"

"Yes. And that's why those rose bushes are planted there at the bottom—as a reminder. They say that the ground under the tree is full of his blood. They say that he haunts this place, watching over his tree, and taking care of his roses. They say that if you try to climb his tree, he'll get mad and try to hurt you, and that's only if you get past his rose bushes."

I stared at the top of the tree, and tried to imagine a man there, sawing off branches.

"And that," Mama said, "is why you will not climb that tree."

Mama pulled me closer, rubbed the back of my neck, and sifted her fingers through my hair. With her other hand she held mine, squeezed it, and rubbed the top of it with her thumb. Her hands were soft and pink, twice the size of mine, and smelled like dish soap. We did not speak. We looked at things in the yard—sticks, leaves, wild flowers, insects flying close to the ground. We listened to the birds. We watched cars drive by. We stared at the shadow of the oak tree.

Mama and I went back inside. On the kitchen table I saw a bundle of letters rubber-banded together like Mama's hair. Daddy's letters. She took them out every morning after the dishes had been washed and dried.

Some days she would not touch them, but would only sit and stare at them, while smoking one cigarette after another. Other days, she would read one or two, then leave them spread out on the table for the rest of the day. Then, late at night after she had put me to bed and assumed that I was sleeping, she would return to them. Lying in bed in the next room, I would hear her removing from the envelopes one letter after another. The twist and snap of the rubber band around the bundle of letters would tell me she was done. She would smoke another cigarette, put the letters away, turn off the light, and come to bed beside me. She would cradle me and kiss my forehead and whisper how much she loved me, her little man. I would feign sleep.

Daddy had written Mama weekly. At first Mama read the letters with contempt. She drank beers and cursed him in front of me and told me what a sorry no good son of a bitch he was. She said that she didn't believe what he said in his letters, about how he would change, do better by her. He said that he would not beat her again, but she had heard that before, she said. According to Mama, he was a lyin' bastard and she couldn't believe a goddamned word that came out of his sorry mouth.

But later, when we had been away from Daddy almost a full year, Mama's attitude changed. She stopped cursing Daddy in front of me and started to treat his letters like treasure. She looked forward to them. Instead of a rubber band, she began to store them in a decorated box she had picked up at the Dollar General, a box meant for pictures and keepsakes, for special things.

Maybe it was because the welfare check she drew didn't go far enough. Maybe it was because the rent was getting paid later and later after it was due. Maybe it was because the food stamps didn't stretch.

The months had not been easy for her. Married at sixteen, she had never prepared, or thought to prepare, for living on her own. She had only an eighth grade education--it was nothing unusual--and, far from being lazy, she had never worked or thought to work a day in her life. The husband was supposed to work while the wife was supposed to cook and clean and carry children. And she better have supper on the table when he walked through the door. She had known no other way.

I stared at Mama at the kitchen table. She held one of Daddy's letters in her hand and scrutinized the way it was addressed, the writing on the envelope, the postmark, the stamp. After she read and read again one letter after another and smoked just as many cigarettes, I knew that she would read them all in one sitting. Daddy told her how much he loved her, how much he was sorry for the things he did, sorry for the way he treated her. Sorry, sorry, and sorry again. Daddy had gotten good with his letter-writing, better with his words.

As soon as we heard the mail truck come and go, Mama pranced to the mailbox on the edge of the yard. I saw by the smile on her face that a new letter had come. I sat with her on the porch as she read it. Daddy had a car for us now, she said, and a better place for us to live. Daddy had a new job, she said, making good money. And he had a dog for me, she said, a dog for his little man-- a black cocker spaniel named Lucky, but I could change his name if I wanted to. Mama clenched the latest letter in her hand and brought it to her chest. Daddy was driving

his new car to Virginia. Daddy, he was coming for us, for his woman, for his little man.

Mama grabbed me with both arms and hoisted me into her lap. She kissed me with loud smacks on my neck, on my cheeks, kissed me all over. "We're going home," she said. "We're going home. It's going to be different this time. Your Daddy's changed. I know he has. I know he loves me now and us being apart, well, that's just what it took for him to change his ways, to do better by me."

Mama's voice was coming from a far off place, like she was in a dream, a place I could not find or know. Something inside me hurt but I did not know the words to name the pain or make it better. I looked at the oak tree, where a man had fallen to his death and watered the yard in blood. Just that morning, Mama had told me she saw Jesus in the night, telling her things would be okay, telling her not to cry. I wonder: Was it Jesus Mama saw, or that dead man haunting her with lies?



Untitled

Daniela Parada - Silver Gelatin Print



Reflecting - Michael Tacoronte - Digital Photography

Stranger in the Coffin

Brigitte Torrens-Soils

Time was still. I never knew this day would come, at least not so soon. I could not process what I had just heard. I sat on my bed in disbelief of the horrifying news. The hallway stretched farther away as I struggled to make my way to my sister's room. Denial pushed against me until I finally reached my destination. As I reached towards

my sister's door knob my hand suddenly became paralyzed. It felt as if fire was burning through my veins and my brain could not bare to process my intentions. When I finally had the courage to open the door, my sister beat me to it. I startle her. She looks at me, knowing there was something wrong. No emotion scattered through my body. I laid out my outfit onto my bed. I grabbed my black dress and black shoes and put them on, feeling as if I was a robot programmed to do so. My mother hurried my dad, siblings, and I out of the house and into the car. As my mother drove us to that evening event, there was silence. I can feel the melancholic atmosphere thicken by the second. Not a usual presence that wonders in our car. I looked out the window and observed the sun setting. That night's sunset was unique.

The sun slowly made its way down; leaving the sky filled with a mesmerizing hue palette. Rose, lilac, coral, and gold painted the view, but not even the beauty of the end of the day sky could give me a moment of serenity. Before I knew it, we arrived to the place I was dreading the most.

I stepped out of my car and my feet instantly gripped the ground. I did not want to go in. I did not want to witness or experience what I was just about to. When I looked to the side to find my family, I noticed I am not alone after all. I walked towards my parents and siblings and held onto them,

and together we began to walk the carpet of darkness.

The closer we walked towards the entrance, the more difficult it was to comprehend the scene. As we entered the building, I immediately saw familiar faces that were at the same time unfamiliar with the expression of sorrow that ran through them. We reached the area that corresponded to us. Wishing we had not. I walked into the room, there were countless stands wrapped with all kinds of flowers that decorated the area. Yet, the aroma of the blossoms did not appease my senses. A repetitive piano piece played in the background, which I knew would haunt me for days. As my eyes searched the room some more, I suddenly froze.

There it was. Centered at the back of the room. Everything around me blurred as I focused on what lied across in the distance. I felt my eyes begin to carry more water than its average dose. Tears began to plunge down my flushed cheeks. My sister and my cousin came to comfort me as we all took in this moment of grief together. As we marched to the back of the room the music, the people, and everything else seemed to be in slow motion. Finally, we reached the coffin.

Uncertainty began to creep through my mind. I did not recognize the body that laid before me. It was not the same woman who once dried my toes after a warm bath, in which, I could not bare but laugh at the tickling feeling. It was not the same aunt who would spoil me with new toys. It was not the same best friend who once told me we would travel to Paris and acknowledged the places she treasured the most. It was not the same person who loved to make others laugh and smile with her unbeatable sense of humor. It was not the same individual who I would accompany to Macy's, who would not leave until we had our ritual Häagen-Dazs ice cream. It was not the same selfless female who would do anything for me and anyone she loved when it wasn't even asked for. It did not look like her. It was not her. It was a stranger in the coffin.

Everyday I'm Longing
Lorraine Zhang
Silver Gelatin Print



Cemetery
Nicholas Van Dine
Silver Gelatin Print

The first drop is the deadliest.
Much like a catchy song,
Once you're hooked you can't get enough.
Lusting for more, you drag along
Looking for the next hole to hide in,
Nurturing your desires until all other holes run dry.
The first drop is the deadliest.

The First Drop

Anthony Diaz



Untitled
Anthony Diaz
Silver Gelatin Print



Untitled

Anne Karsenti - Digital Photography

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LATINA

Elizabeth Ferrer-Alfonso

Rose water spews out of my mouth when I speak.
Soy bendita.
God himself carved out these curves.

"Bendiciones Abuela Clarita."
"Que Dios te bendiga mi niña."

My hips, as thick as the Spanish accent
Stabbing the wretched English vowels
Trying to violate my Mima's lips.

Thighs as sturdy as the pride of
My people for their país.
Skin, pale like the claridad of daylight
The same claridad que dio luz to my grandmother's name.

My eyes, a moonblade at first glance.
Evaluation later revealing the balter of
Ancient African hips
Thrusting to the rumba of bongos and maracas.
Caribeño spice from Mima's salsa.
My swing. Every step I take
A new note for the African drums to play.
My sway, like the waves of el Caribe

Cleansing the path for a new Conga and
Guaguancó to begin.
This pulchritudinous of mine
Comes from the ancient dances;

Hearty hips, thick thighs
And enchanting eyes.
Gems of my latinatude.
Gems which make me a goddess.

Ser Latina es ser Diosa.



Conciencia
Stephanie Dovale
Acrylic
39" x 39"



Lady in the Shadow

Michael Tacoronte - Digital Photography



Untitled - Mark Rivero - Digital Photography



Mi Patria En Ruinas
Sabrina Mendoza Malavé
Cardboard with paper and plastic
14"x12"x12"

Stranger in Havana

Julia Gomez

The hopeful faces of desperate men and women lined up outside the US Embassy in Havana. The long row of makeshift beds and dirty, starving bodies went on for miles. Pablo Marino Gomez sat on a paint chipped bench, a blank look in his eyes. He fidgeted with the frayed edges of the hat he found in the gutter, then placed it down next to him. Slowly, he raised his scarred and blistered hands to hide his tear-streaked face. He knew weeks would pass before he even came close to obtaining what he needed. He knew by then he'd go missing.

He had nothing left here. He thought about the mother he couldn't remember and the father he didn't know still lived. He knew his brother - nicknamed Cavesa - now led a rebel army in the mountains of Cuba. He imagined his raided home sitting alone, broken, and violated by government spies. He tried to think of anyone, a family member, a friend, or even an acquaintance who could aid him, but then reminded himself of the consequences they'd face. He refused to allow his friends to sacrifice their integrity for him. His presence only put them in danger of being jailed, questioned and tortured. He refused to let anyone he loved relive his experience. He had nothing here; at least not anymore. He felt helpless.

He sat alone for a while, lost in abysmal thoughts.



Spine - Carolina Cuevas - Wooden Sculpture - 35"x3"

In his absent-minded state Pablo never noticed him approach the bench. The man combed back his short blond hair with clean finger nails as his tired, blue eyes swept across the never-ending sea of people.

“Is someone sitting here?” He inquired pointing to Pablo’s hat. His gringo accent giving away his American identity.

“Oh! No, Sir.” He wiped his eyes and straightened up. Although the sun rose higher and the day grew hotter, the crowd never changed, never diminished.

“Crazy, isn’t it?” The man stated as he withdrew a sandwich from a brown paper bag and ripped it in half.

“It is. I wanted to try to get a visa, but the line is... it’s just-” The stranger nodded chewing in silence. He looked at Pablo’s cheek bones jutting out sharply below the blue and black skin accenting his hollow eye and offered the other half of his sandwich. “No Señor, gracias. Please, enjoy your lunch.” Pablo said, to the man’s surprise, ignoring his mouth as it began to water, and his stomach began to protest his refusal. He tried to remember the last time he ate.

Pablo and the stranger spoke for a while - about the weather, sports, simple small talk. A nice distraction from the gnawing in his stomach, and the anxiety rising in his chest. He needed a way to get to the United States. He debated making a raft while the stranger spoke about the Chicago Cubs. Pablo needed some materials. He looked at his wrist and saw the scars that vined around them from the chains that forced him to stand for days at a time. When his legs and feet grew numb he felt the strain in his shoulders. When his body went limp, the guards would toss a bucket full of freezing cold water on to his face. Through the shock, he still managed to lick his lips attempting to moisten his scaly, dry tongue. They resorted to ripping off the nails from his finger tips and toes, but he still refused to speak. Every second he spent awake he begged for God to take him home, take him to see his mom.

“Where’s your brother?” was the only sentence he ever heard. The guards demanded the answer to the question and would get it by any means necessary. He didn’t speak for the three months.

They let him go, but still watched his every move. Hoping he’d lead them to Cavesa’s hiding spot, when the government no longer needed his help, they’d have him executed.

He didn’t know what to do next, but, in desperation, began to form a plot to steal the first boat he found. The stranger noticed Pablo’s silence. He pensively rolled the wrapper of the sandwich into a ball and tossed it into the brown bag. He swiped the crumbs off his suit’s pants and onto the ground.

“Well, follow me.” The stranger stood and stared nonchalantly at Pablo.

“Oh... Ehh... Excuse me?” He stammered. His words tripped over one another as his mind raced.

“Well, you want a Visa, right? Come, follow me.”

“But the line?”

“I didn’t think you wanted to wait that long.”

“No, Sir!” Pablo stood up, grabbing his hat and frayed beige coat. He followed the man to his office in the embassy with his head held high.

Within seven hours, Pablo Marino Gomez, my grandfather, sat on a plane headed to Chicago.



Bus Stop

Nicholas Van Dine - Silver Gelatin Print



Untitled
Richard Nina-Angeles
Silver Gelatin Print

Naif School, My Beloved Nightmare

Safwan Jonathan Al Ali Saunche



Naif School in As Suwayda in Syria is a charm, a despair, a disgusting smell, a kind of sweet, a meeting, a hunch, and a safeness. Naif School is love and hate. Beige tones in every pace, bordered by twelve-foot-long walls. As if it were a prison but still a home. The three-floor building is centered just in the middle of the allotment. On the left side of the building is located a narrow door with an almost faded color blue which has the power to erase the smiles of the students crossing through it. The playground, with a neglected and destroyed gray floor, while not a wonder for sight, is a paradise for a teen of fourteen years old.

Whenever inside the limits of the high, beige, and rough walls, a characteristically intense cigarette smell is present. Produced in the bathrooms, the only place a teen could smoke due to its strategic position. The kiosk is just facing the bathrooms. The halabi pistachios are the cause of its constant crowdedness. Those ones are a miracle of flavors, bitter when bitten, salty when chewed, and finally a little sweet when swallowed. Six hundred feet from the principle street of As Suwayda, next to the huge flag of Syria waving in the heights there is a big, white gate made of thick iron with a black, arc-shaped sign board on the top that reads

“Welcome to Naif School.”

It is the last Thursday of August in 2010 at 1:00PM, time to go home. A wind of happiness is present, and strong laughs fill the outskirts of Naif School. August is the heart of the summer in Syria. The sun is posed exactly ninety degrees from the horizon and addressing its rays directly to the heads of people. The dry environment joined with the hot sunshine makes them feel like they are inside a boiler where the only moisture present comes from the sweat of their bodies evaporating. Exhausted, all the people receive open heartedly the beloved Thursday, the direct ticket to the weekend.

While all the students are laughing and the teachers are happy discussing their plans for the weekend and some parents are picking up their children, I am standing with my best friend looking at the man who sells corn in front of the school. He is a short man with a grayish mustachio and hair always covered with a black cap. He always looks angry, and grouchy, always frowning. No one knows the reason for his endless anger, but I hypothesize that all day under the hot sun and the harsh environment makes him mad. The only thing this man does is yell all day while selling steamed corn.

My friend and I make our way to the principle street. We walk the six hundred feet of length that divide the school from the street, the place where we are supposed to take the bus back to home. It is 3:00PM and we are still waiting. The bus has not passed, and the street becomes lonely.

A complete quietness allows us to hear the symphony of the dry tree leaves rolling on the floor guided by the mild wind. Surprisingly, the old and angry corn seller passes next to us without noticing our presence. We are looking steadily at him, when in that moment, he crosses the street, we see how he opens the pot where he has the corn and spits into it.

“Spit corns! Spit corns! Spit corns!”

We yell three times; every yell is louder until he realizes we have seen him. He throws the pot with the corns in the middle of the street. The sound of the metallic pot impacting the pavement cuts the quietness. He takes two heavy rocks from the floor and runs in our direction at the same time that we start to run back in the direction of the school; the only place we could be safe. I am running the longest six hundred feet I have ran in my life; my legs are moving quickly and without feeling. I listen to the rocks hit the floor around my ankles while I am keeping my eyes on the huge, waving flag of Syria. From the distance, the beige tones of Naif School look like a rainbow of colors and the great walls seem a fortress's shield. We reach inside the school, and now the cigarette smell feels heartwarming, and crossing the faded blue and narrow door of the building gives me a breath of home.



Petare
Sabrina Mendoza Malavé
Mixed Media
18" x 14"

Bungle at Beau's

Violeta Moreno

Beau's Bar, while not a standard of elegance, was an enticing haven. The locals knew the spot all too well, and most tourists found it by chance. The pathway lined with colorful Adirondack chairs welcomed all. From the bulky to the fragile and everything in between. From the young and the young at heart to the cheerful and the troubled. Under the thatched roof, framed with globe string lights laid a shabby pool table and three long-haired guys wearing Hawaiian shirts were playing a Bob Marley song. Near the bar were the standing drinkers, back slapping, laughing and playing drinking games. Out on the deck, the serene view of the mangroves lined waters compelled Stella to shut her eyes and inhale the salty mist from the ocean.

The radiant blue sky transformed into a sea of darkness. The string lights were now giving an appealing hue over the lively crowd. Stella stepped out to the deck where the glow of the moon spilled onto her bare bronzed shoulders. She could feel the rhythm of the reggae fading away, as if she was dangling out of the present. A silvery voice thumped her back to Beau's Bar, "Bottoms up!" Lara chimed in. Stella grinned as she gulped her Mai Tai. The gloomy ambience, the beating bongos—maybe it was the salty mist from the ocean that brought out a rush of emotions for Stella and her best friend Lara. They met waiting for the bus on their first day of second grade and have been inseparable since.

Now, they set off to enjoy their last night out as single friends, seeing as Stella would become a married woman by next nightfall. Wearing skirts and coconut bikini tops they giggled, drank, and danced. An exorbitant amount Mai Tais turned out to be the culprit for why the knocking of the coconuts was the last sound Stella remembers. She wakes with the sun pouring its rays on her face, she squints as she surveys the snug and familiar surroundings. Panic sets in when she recognizes she is in Lara's car parked in front of Beau's Bar; coconut bikini tops settled on the floor. As seagulls are squawking above, Stella gasps for air, her heart pounding louder with each breath. With a pressing urge to flee, she scrambles to get her top when their eyes meet. Stella opens her mouth but no words come out; only managing to shake her head before taking off.

Early morning is a time of affirmation at Beau's Bar. The time when the thick rays of sun are rousing the masses and the Adirondack chairs are wrapped in a blanket of dew, nearly all truths are found. The bulky and the fragile can mingle together in perfect harmony, the young and the old find a way to concede, and the troubled have the possibility to shift to jolly. Although, other times, the cheerful leave with unexpected sorrow.



Not Your Bae

Hannah Watts - Silver Gelatin Print



Take a Pic(k)ture

Hannah Watts - Silver Gelatin Print



Safe
Lorraine Zhang
Silver Gelatin Print

Shall We?

Elizabeth Ferrer-Alfonso

He pressed his tightly rolled joint almost romantically
Up against his plump, pink, pretty lips.
His eyes an over-poured mixture of lethal benevolence.

Illustrious carnal essence embroiders his aura.
I so badly covet to caress his coruscating human film.
How easily one would surrender for a lead role in his orphic
Consciousness.

An intricate line which we fear too well to surpass,
The idea of the edge which is so enticing.
Potent turmoil, this everlasting ustulation
With its engendered conflictions.

Shall we refrain and restrict our bodies
From their need to follow the law of syzygy?
Or shall we give in to find that behind this limerence
We are one another's cathartic prescription?

How invigorating, this little game we play;
These parts as cat and mouse,
Will they lead to the abyss of celestial bliss?
Finally unveiling the tension, the sensual toying.

Our bundle of moments fleeting,
His caresses linger on me, anything but ephemeral.
Withstanding the nature of erosion, the insidious combination
Of the fabricated memory and time.

His touch as much a part of the divine as he.
The luminescent complexity of thoughts we share,
You are me, I am me, we are me
Well then, us is already one.

How about we honor the beauty of the universe?
Let us become one physically, submit to these ethereal instincts.
Fuck the joint!
Press me up against those lush, ludic lips.

Inhale and draw the stardust out of me.
Allow me to resonate within your lungs,
Embracing the point of no return.
We have the majestic right to choose.
The choice to intertwine,

To yield to the fetishes of our incarnations.
So why not cross? Why deny our mortality this manifestation?
When we're together, exquisite chemistry secretes either way.



Yo No Quiero Problemas
Elizabeth Toledo
Color Film



Untitled
Pedro P. Sena Martinez
Charcoal on Cardboard
30" x 40"

Perilous Passion

Antonio Gimenez

[Verse 1]

The moment we met was a time I'll never forget
Your beauty was a blessing but your curse was a dark silhouette
Shadows of seduction that compromised my intelligent function
I could not comprehend the complexity of your construction
You were an artist that aspired to make music your production
And what was I but a scar seared across the surface of the sun
Forsaking the promise of the future before it had even begun
To speak your name was a sin upon my innocent lips
I felt forbidden to ever share with you a passionate kiss
But your touch was as real as the wounds that it healed
My heart was yours for the taking, exposed for you to steal
You smiled with the strength to raise me from the dead
Your voice was a beautiful song stuck inside my head
With every glance of your eyes, I saw a chance for us to dance
The way you looked at me put me deep into a trance
But the spell was broken by the tragic circumstance
I could not confess my feelings out of paralyzing fear
And for the first time, I shed winter's frozen tear

[Hook]

Love is blind to the wisdom of time
I am possessed by the things that I call mine
For what it's worth I found meaning in spiritual rebirth
I longed to travel beyond the boundaries of Earth
As for you, my friend, you are the memories that cannot end
To you I write letters that my soul continues to send

[Verse 2]

The years went on as if my hope was gone
But it returned whenever I played a romantic song
My imagination was wild with magic and wonder
I would dream of you as I slept in quiet slumber
I see your face in the vaults of my secret place
The very way you walked was a testament to your grace
I'd hold you close to my heart as if you were the one that made it start
But day by day I would progressively fall more apart
You were the poison that tasted sweeter than honey
Yet I would not have traded you for infinite money
Your fortune was in feelings, an everlasting bliss
But I was still forbidden from that liberating kiss
And with every second I spent in solitude and silence
I would long to protect you from every kind of violence
A purpose set in motion by loving devotion
I would create a universe of worlds and oceans
As a gift to you, to make you feel brand new

**but you knew nothing of my obsession
I might as well have been a
victim of possession**

We were the greatest thing that was never meant to be
Like the starry night that some cannot see
Because there's too much light that blocks you from me

[Hook]

Love is blind to the wisdom of time
I am possessed by the things that I call mine
For what it's worth I found meaning in spiritual rebirth
I longed to travel beyond the boundaries of earth
As for you, my friend, you are the memories that cannot end
To you I write letters that my soul continues to send

[Verse 3]

Our streams met together in the river of time
But your life and your love was never really mine
No matter how well I would think of you and rhyme
I had to come to grips with the facts of reality
This unrequited love was the product of insanity
Like being in denial of my own mortality
I had to admit that our lives just could not fit
We were the wick of a candle that would never be lit
Our journey of joy ended before it began
I watched the waters wash away our names in the sand
And I can still hear your voice whispering in my ear
Telling me that salvation is God when He's near
You were a flower that fell in the Garden of Eden
Kept safe by angels from the hands of a demon
The scent of your aroma woke me from a coma
And suddenly the blood in my veins was the venom of a cobra
I ceased to breathe because you took my breath away
And when I died I was born again like the dawn of a new day



His View - Hannah Watts - Color Film

To Elma

Austin Ibarra

The dust fell from between his fingers like the last bits of drizzle before the death of a storm. He looked up and down the bookshelf – more mold now than knowledge – searching for a particular bound text – he found it. A cracked and wrinkling hand reached up to grab the book, lowering to the face so a blow from the lips would scatter the dust and reveal the title: Guide to the Roads and Highways of North America (Volume III, updated 2012). Upon seeing the year, the old man chuckled at the uselessness of the book. He opened the pages with a careful motion aware that the crack of pages threatened the loss of memory. Turning from page to page and chapter to chapter, he found what he was looking for: a map, not too detailed and undoubtedly outdated, of western Washington. With a careful eye

combed over the map till he found
Olympia,

and the small harbor town to the west, Elma. According to the map, Elma was about one hundred and eighty miles north – about three days walking, but pushing seventy his aging legs meant he couldn't do any less than five. The old man stored the book in his bag. He looked around the empty room, the toppled shelves and the scattered books, the beams of white light piercing through the shattered windows, the cobwebs, the dust, the smell of age and desolation long since past. This room once a library, a place of learning and discovery, was a ruin – wood and decay the most striking sign that there had ever been human handiwork here. The old man crossed the room, stepping over paperbacks and hardcovers and toppled shelves to a broken rack of books on which a red leather-bound book lay. He crouched down and picked up the red-leather book, hoping beyond reason that this was the book. And indeed it was, a copy of *The Hobbit*.

It had been Angela's favorite. She was his wife, some time ago, before chaos fell, before the world crumbled. The *Hobbit* had inspired her as a child, he remembered how often Angela would tell him that Bilbo's riddle game with Gollum always excited her or that the gang of dwarves had taught her what true adventure could be.



Untitled

Sabrina Camargo - Silver Gelatin Print

She was always going on and on about adventures like the dwarves', about seeing different places far off, remote and exotic. He missed her dreams. He missed hearing the ecstasy in her voice when she would see a mountain, any mountain, and exclaim: "Look, Phil, it's the Lonely Mountain! We've made it!"

Phil grinned, remembering those escapades, but the smile faded when he remembered her absence. When the wars came and the famine followed, many didn't survive the initial economic strain. People struggled to feed their families, children died of hunger in a place where a McDonald's used to be on every other street corner. Among the dead was Emma, Phil, and Angela's only daughter, not even two years old at the time. He remembered her frail little hands, the life oozing out of her day by day. It only got worse after that. Uprisings and riots and sickness and chaos until eventually enough people died that it was decided that extraordinary measures were needed to fully control the population and quell the conflict. By then it was too late for Angela. Just like Emma, she starved to death. Phil hadn't noticed that secretly Angela had been forfeiting her rations to him.

Then when the rations stopped being shipped, she couldn't go on. And for the second time, Phil watched her beauty decay into her suffering – a bone-thin frame of the woman he loved – and finally into the absoluteness of death. She had asked him to promise her one thing and one thing only – that she be buried in her hometown of Elma, Washington alongside her first and favorite book in Vance Creek park under the tree with the gash. They had been living in Ohio then, outside Cleveland and impossibly far from Elma.

“You don't have to, honey, I know Elma's far,” she strained to say, “I don't want you dying just to put some ash and a book under a tree. Okay, my love? I understand. I do.”

Phil held her skeletal hand, “I'll do it, my angel. I'll bury you there, I promise. No dragons or lonely mountains will get in my way.”

He remembered her tearful smile when he said that.

Seven years had slid by like melting snow on a hill, a slow process of dissolution. Phil had managed to survive using the skills he learned during his years in the war. Those were not long years, but they weren't easy years either. He'd seen more than his fair share of death by the end of that. Now here he was, long after the passing of his wife and near the end of his mission. Mulling over these thoughts, Phil felt the vigor on his bones, that youthful drive he had believed to be lost. He rose, stored the red leather fantasy book and clasped the metal can containing ashes at his side, with the name Angela etched into the side, saying, “Not much longer, my angel, I'll get you home. I promised you that.”

Phil stepped outside the library into the cool March afternoon. He raised his head to the sky – the sun shined but there was no warmth. The day was cool, held by the grip of winter in its final throes. To the north was what used to be Portland. Beyond that was forest, forest, and more forest leading to his final destination and Angela's home. One foot in front of the other, Phil made his way. Through brutal nights of cold, biting winds that chilled Phil to his bones. He would have struggled to sleep had the weight of weariness not forced his eyes shut every night. Each morning he struggled up off the ground fighting his protesting joints and muscles, gathering his strength to put away all his supplies. He walked through towering green pine trees, giant impartial masses which either blocked the heat of the sun or retained the cold wet rain – they knew no benevolence. Phil trudged on under their looming shadows, through long days, growing pain, and a slowing pace. Yet he trudged on – one foot in front of the other – pausing for food, water, waste, and sleep.

It was on the morning of the fifth day that he came to a sign reading Oakville. He'd be in Elma by morning the next day. He followed the river north, its calm surface betraying not the slightest bit of motion. He smiled for the beauty of the water and the quiet emptiness of the world he walked through and the closeness of his end. Sure enough, he was in Elma by morning on the sixth day. The streets were empty, the asphalt carried nothing but silence.

Phil looked around from building to building, all small and all more or less equally dilapidated. By midday he had found the specified location: the tree by Vance Creek pond, with the unmistakable large gash on the side of the bark. Towering like the pine trees of the forests, the gashed tree loomed larger than any vegetation around. Phil set to work immediately, digging the hole directly under the root. Arching his back was excruciating, but tolerable, at least for Angela and Emma. He dug deep and round enough and placed the red leather-bound copy of *The Hobbit* inside the hole. Then Phil went for the can of ash, wiping the sweat from his wrinkling forehead. He brought the can over to the hole, opened it and leaned over to pour out the ash into the hole – but then Phil paused. Standing upright, he brought the can close to his face for examination, looking inside to stare at the ashes that had once been his beloved wife.

“This dust isn't you,” Phil spoke to the quiet world. “How can she just be dust?” Phil had seen hundreds of soldiers blown to smithereens – reduced to smoldering piles of debris – more times than he ever could count, but only now did the thought of a human being reduced to a pile of ash sink into his mind as something so impossible. “She” had been in the can for the better part of a decade, always the same pile of ash, and always had Phil accepted this state. Sorrowfully, yes, but never perplexingly. Only now at the moment of disposal did Phil reconsider his whole endeavor. Up above in the branches of the gashed tree a bird began its song. A red winged blackbird, its shrill chirping hardly constituted music. Phil was distracted, pulled out of his trance by this alarm-sound. He glared up at the bird which didn't seem to notice him. The bird sat there sounding off for long enough till it stretched out its black wings and took flight, taking with it that sharp disturbance. Released from the spell, Phil looked back down to the can of ash in his hand.

“Just some dust in the end,” he tried to tell himself before dumping the ash into the hole.

Phil covered up the hole, the book and Angela now eternally a part of the land, just as she had asked. Over head the sun inched its way across the sky, and below the old man Phil gathered his belongings and walked south. After walking another half an hour, Phil came to a river. The surface was, again, still and undisturbed. All around the distant sounds of birds and the gentle whisper of wind and the soft, almost inaudible sound of the flowing river filled the void of an otherwise empty landscape. The sun glared but the air was cool, the sky was clear but the day was not yet done. Phil stepped to the water, pausing at the bank. Then and there the old man, Phil, dropped his belongings and sat down next to the river. Watching each and every drop as they drifted through the lonely expanse out to an ocean far beyond what Phil could ever see. He thought of Angela and Emma and infinite joy, his mind was lost in that isolated world—in the small dead town that was once called Elma.

The Repentant
Pedro P. Sena Martinez
Oil on Canvas
47 " x 35"



Inescapable

Alexander Mertz

There are always two choices, two people, two everything.
I am nothing more than an avatar, an amalgamation of two diametric halves.
Take me.
I shall refer to this dichotomy as red and blue.
Blue strives for calm, understanding, rational dialogue...control above all else.
Red bubbles with indignation
Demanding I stand where Blue advises me to sit,
Cursing both our names for our complacency.
They pull at my spirit—confusing the boy they think I am.

Blue reassures me of my existence, my worth.
Red pounds my worth beating out its flaws.
Blue compromises and accepts, not judging others.
It refuses to throw the first stone.
Red laughs, slinging that same stone
Reprimanding and looking to be held accountable for its actions.
Blue understands I have a duty to myself while Red
Howls at my pain and desire for others to understand.

They terrify me when they look out,
But paralyze me when they look in.
Red, knowingly instigating me and
Blue keeping its comforting distance.
The worst is looking into those eyes,
Their eyes—my eyes;
Insisting on representation, they demand choice
Neither of them wrong...I'll never be right.

Mignonette

Jennifer A. Centurion

Sweeping left and right, the flowers danced a waltz with the wind. Gliding delicately from one place to the next, the flowers all had an amusing time. But, Mignonette did not join in the fun, or rather could not join in the fun. She sighed, unlike all the other plants she had no vivid flowers to boast of. Her flowers were small, stark, and possessing only two boring colors. She sighed again with discontent.

The wind was enjoying himself splendidly, for her loved to dance. He rejoiced in his partners' beautiful gowns, and in their delicate steps. He looked around the garden, to contemplate the joviality of his company. Then, he heard a sign, and a sweet voice depressingly murmuring:



“Alas, if I just had beautiful flowers, a beautiful gown, I could join in the fun. But my flowers are awfully meager, lacking in color and delicacy.” said the mysterious plant.

Wind redirected himself to the place where the voice had come from. There, he came upon Mignonette, looking sad and forlorn. Wind, being the kind, gentlemanly soul that he was, offered to dance with her.

“Hello Mignonette! Would you like to share a waltz with me? Don’t be afraid, I assure you, I’ll be gentle.” said the wind with a tremendously positive tone.

“Oh no!” Mignonette said, as dejected as before. “I cannot dance. I’m far too ugly. If I were to dance wearing these rags I’d be the laughingstock.”

“Oh, don’t worry about that” said the wind “dancing is not about looks, dancing is about movements and grace. Your flowers, though small, are extremely graceful and seem just perfect for dancing. Come on, let’s dance, you won’t regret it.”

Mignonette was not convinced, but she could not refuse an offer so kindly made.

“Okay, let’s dance.”

“That’s the spirit!” said the wind, happy to be able to bring joy to this mistress of distress.

The wind and Mignonette danced. Mignonette may have lacked the beautiful flowers the other plants donned but her small flowers and ample stalks were perfect for dancing. Gracefully did the wind and Mignonette dance.

They were so graceful, that they soon became the stars of the ball. All the other plants beheld Mignonette in admiration, for she danced like no other. After the couple

stopped to rest for a while they received a

shower of applause from all the other plants. Mignonette, quite embarrassed was left speechless.

“See, you are a splendid dancer. Looks and dancing do not go together.” said the wind.

“Yes” said Mignonette with utmost happiness “you were right, dancing is not about looks, and I can dance just as well as the others. Thank you for exposing me to this wonderful truth.”

“You’re welcome.”

The wind looked at Mignonette, and asked her to dance once more with him. Mignonette accepted his offer, for she found that she loved dancing with him. Thus, Mignonette and the wind danced together every single day until the sun set, quite enamored.

Façade

Gabriela Espinoza

Diamond was the most beautiful of rocks,
Emerging from black, grey stone.
She was pleased to be the first selected
By those who tunneled deep to find her.
However, for all she was satisfied with herself
No one else was.
She could not have any impurities,
Not a scratch, not a speck, not one feature
Less than perfect.

So she was cut;
Shaped into unrealistic expectations—
Forced to squeeze into the socket of a metal ring,
Made into a symbol of ultimate expense and sacrifice.
Dreams and fulfillments—an embodiment
Of burdens and failures so heavy that she
Was dropped into water and flushed down a drain
Only then did she realize...
Beauty is a curse, and was among those chosen to fall.



Untitled
Anne Karsenti - Digital Photography

The Sun Will Rise Again

Roselle Hamilton

Though death and lies be oft what we perceive,
Not all has been lost, just take it from me.
When news is spread and leaves us all to grieve,
We oft tremble and do nothing but plea.
Our trees have toppled; our streets have flooded,
And irreplaceable lives have been lost.
Yet cry and fret not. Our streets are mudded,
But our spirits rise despite the cold frost.
We are strong and should not waver for long.
There is almost nothing we cannot do.
The light will shine as clear as a bird's song,
So do not cry; there is nothing to rue.
Just take it from me, and don't be so blue.
The sun will rise, so just enjoy the view.



Sus Hojas De Hueso
Stephanie Dovale
Acrylic
36" x 40"



Carolina
Lorraine Zhang
Silver Gelatin Print



Drive Thru Worship
Rosa Vallone
Digital Photography



Untitled
Anne Karsenti
Digital Photography

Myster Craig

Sleepy Boi



Pavlov's Bell

COTV

Lofty Sea

Pale Blue Dot

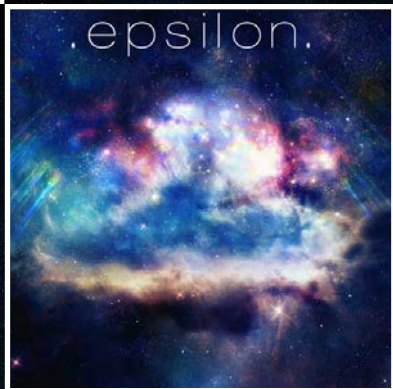
Solipis

Tessalations



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MUSIC

Awards Volume 27



Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA)

Gold Medalist Certificate
Annual Critique

Gold Circle Awards

Third Place: Humor: Izabella Felpeto “Yeya’s Girl”

Certificate of Merit: Photography: Edian Ibarrola

Community College Humanities Association (CCHA)

Second Place: Magazines from Large Colleges: Southern Division

Second Place: Artwork/Southern Division: Dyron Gabriel Lafuente “Sitting in Despair”

Honorable Mention: Creative Nonfiction/Southern Division:
Jennifer L. Weiner “The Feminine Aspect”

Florida College System Publications Association (FCSPA)

Second Place Cover: Octavio Fernandez
Second Place Staff Page: Marcos Tzvetanov



Dyron Gabriel Lafuente :
Sitting in Despair



Edian Ibarrola :
Praise

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Miambiance is available free of charge in the English Department, room 2217

Colophon

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Note to Future Self

“..But we think you're crazy to make us write an essay telling you who we think we are. You see us as you want to see us - in the simplest terms, in the most convenient definitions.”

— *The Breakfast Club* (1985)

Sincerely yours,

Miambiance



In memory of the last Male Northern White Rhinoceros, Sudan.

