



USFV **BANA** **VIII**
LITERARY & ARTS



UPPER LITERARY & ARTS

Eduardo J. Padrón Campus
Miami Dade College

Editors' Note

The door opened, shoes tapped against the tiles of the floor, chairs creaked, and twenty two pairs of eyes waited expectantly to begin creating *Urbana Literary & Arts* magazine V13. Palpable innovation in photography, poetry, prose, and every kind of art was framed differently in each of the artists' pupils. They never predicted a global pandemic would hinder their unity. In the midst of creation, the light that cracked through their bubble dimmed.

Shielded by hope, artists grasped onto their stories and remained in-between the boundaries of confinement and freedom, good and evil, love and hate, failures and accomplishments, peace and war. Each artist knitted the distance that tore them apart by colliding juxtaposed worlds to create magic.

Like the wizard of a spell, you are the only beholder of the perceptions of boundaries entrusted in these pages. You may clasp wrongs and rights without knowing they are braided within an indestructible chain. Your desire may expect a sweet rejoice, but feel satisfied with a bitter ending. Your thoughts may be intertwined in abstract webs that defy structure and connect the inconceivable. You may encounter unexpected twists that reflect the author's mischievous intentions. They will either elevate your true self or your most duplicitous impulses. Just like the inertia of a caterpillar before metamorphosing into a butterfly, you may repress or overcome your fears. You hold the key to a locked door that only your own consciousness could decipher.

Let your eyes lead your soul in-between-boundaries!



With love,

Marian Bulnes and Giselle Valdes
Co-Editors-in-Chief
Urbana Volume 13



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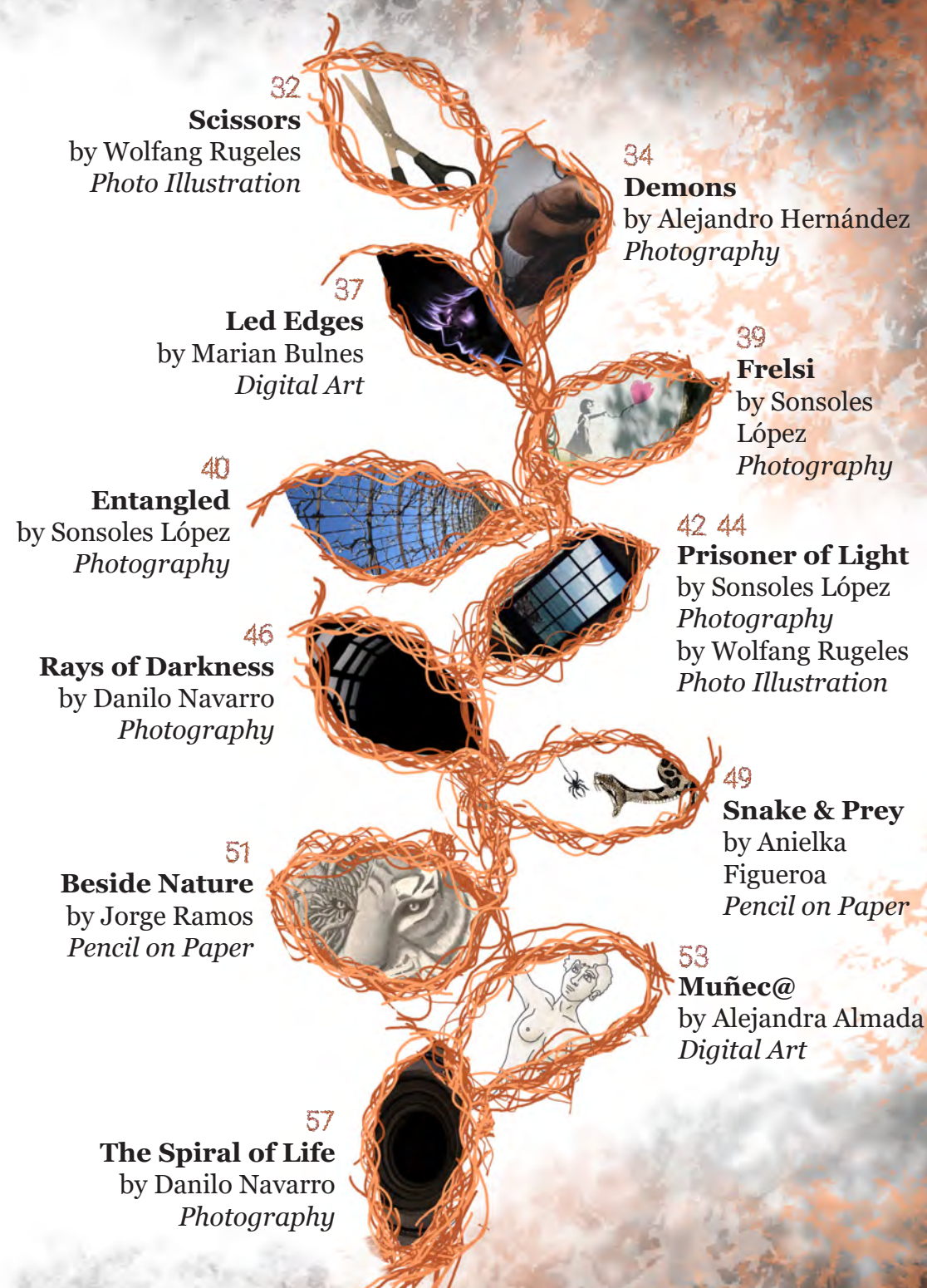
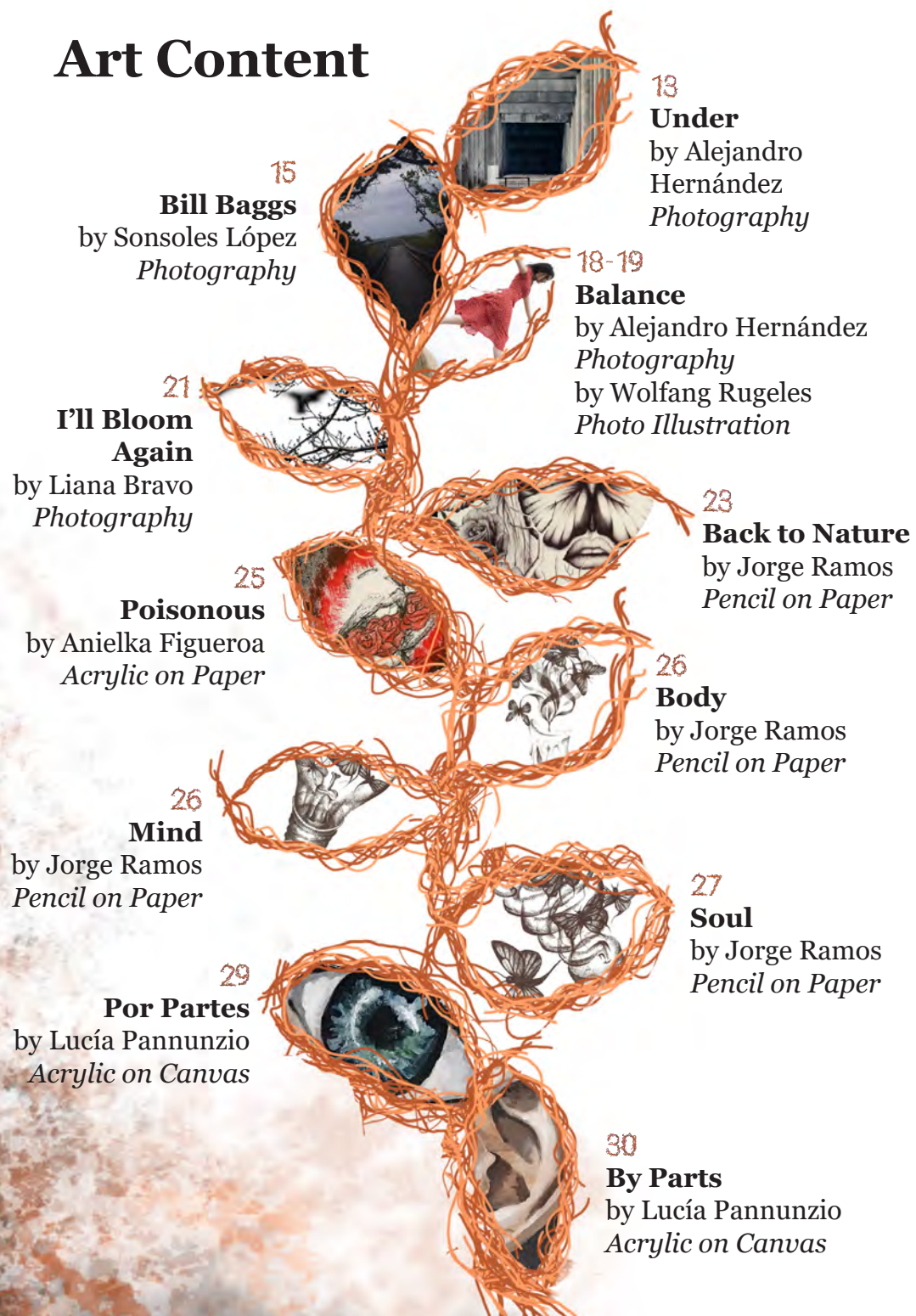
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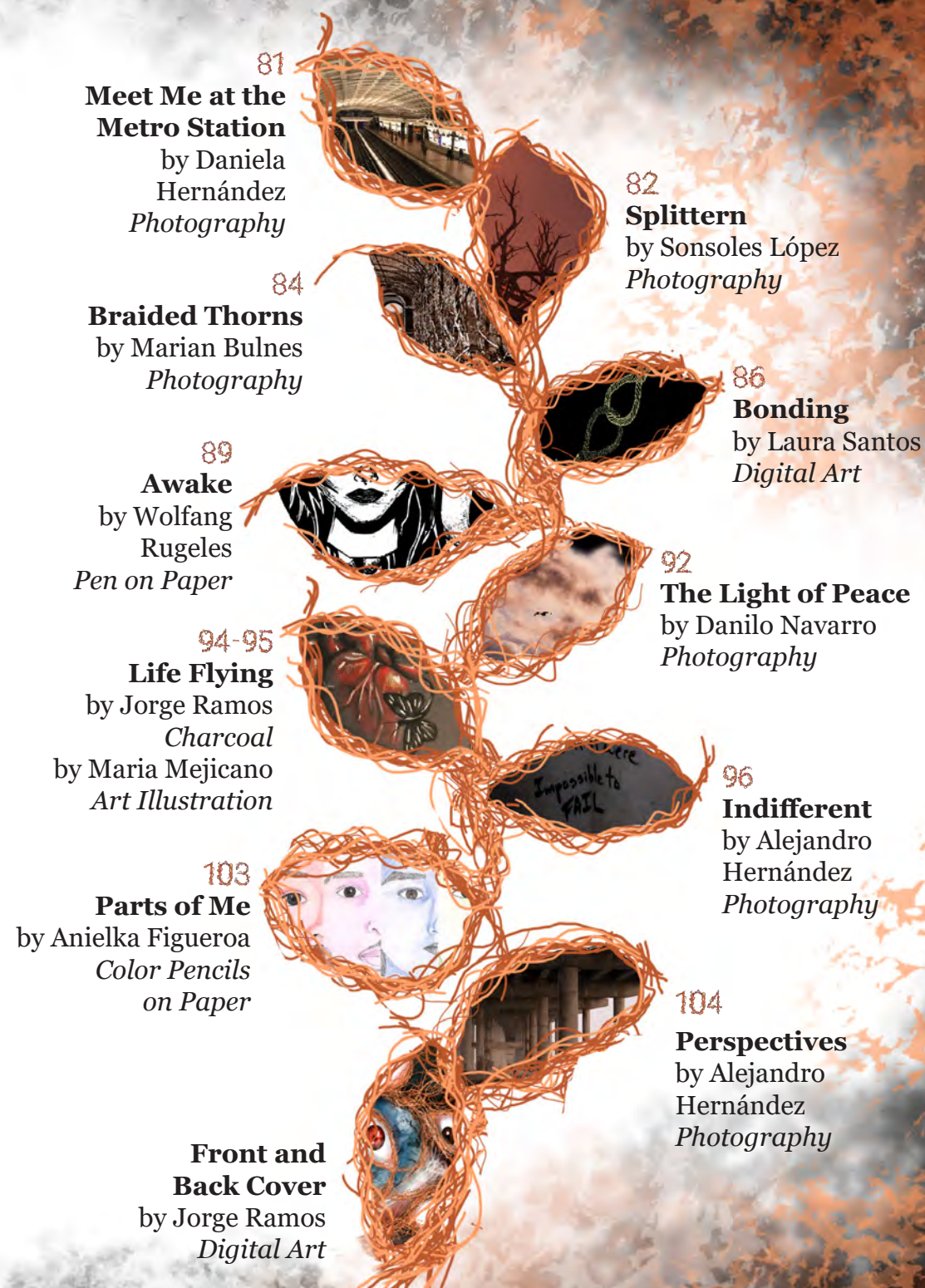
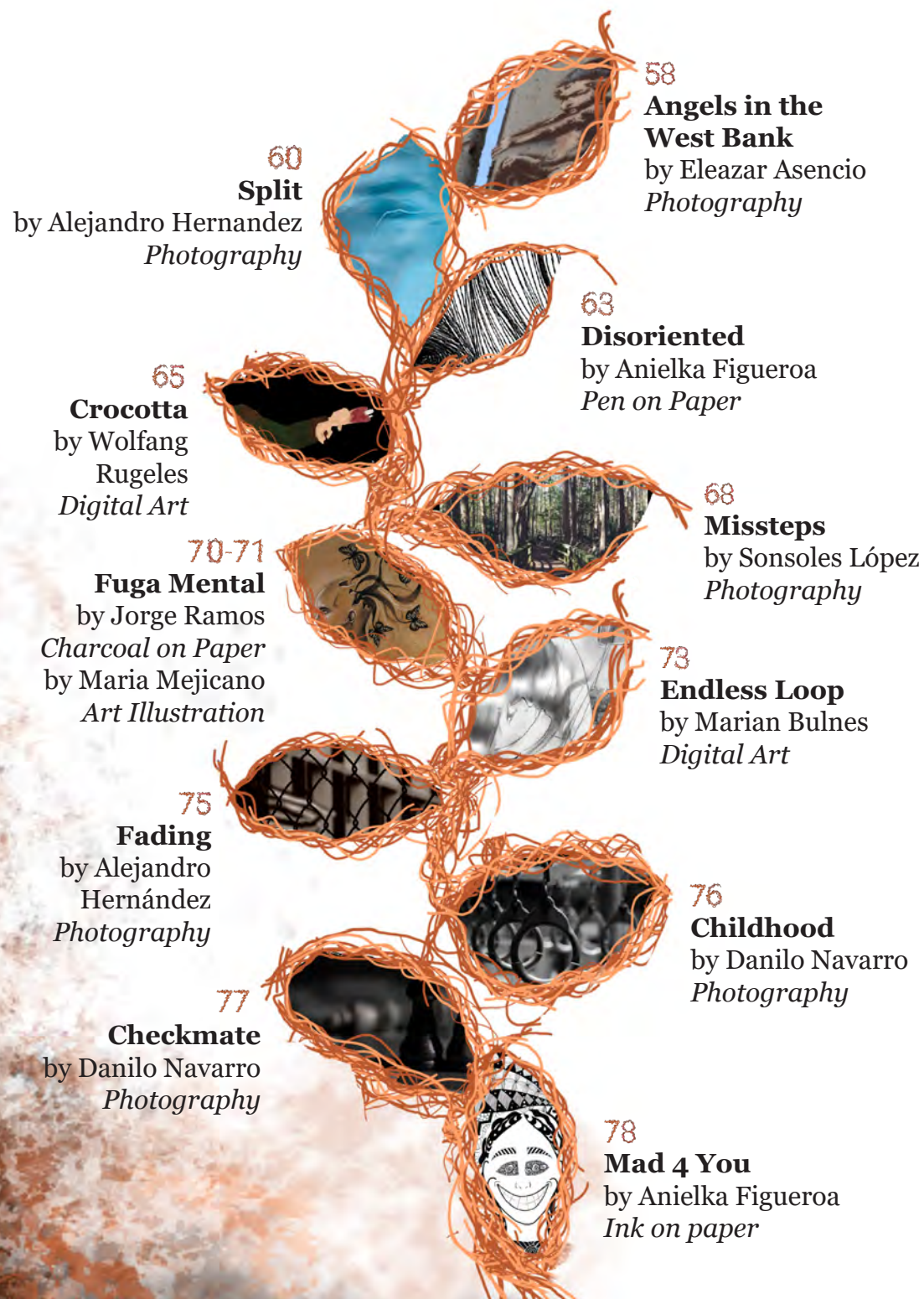


Hella Family
by Sophia de la Rosa



Art Content





Home

by Ana Laura Escandell

Dust on my feet
Sun kissing my skin
Walking the streets
Dazzled, bewitched

Everything looks smaller
Falling apart
My heart is filled
With memories of the past

Days upon days
Longing to be back
Turning heads
A stranger in town

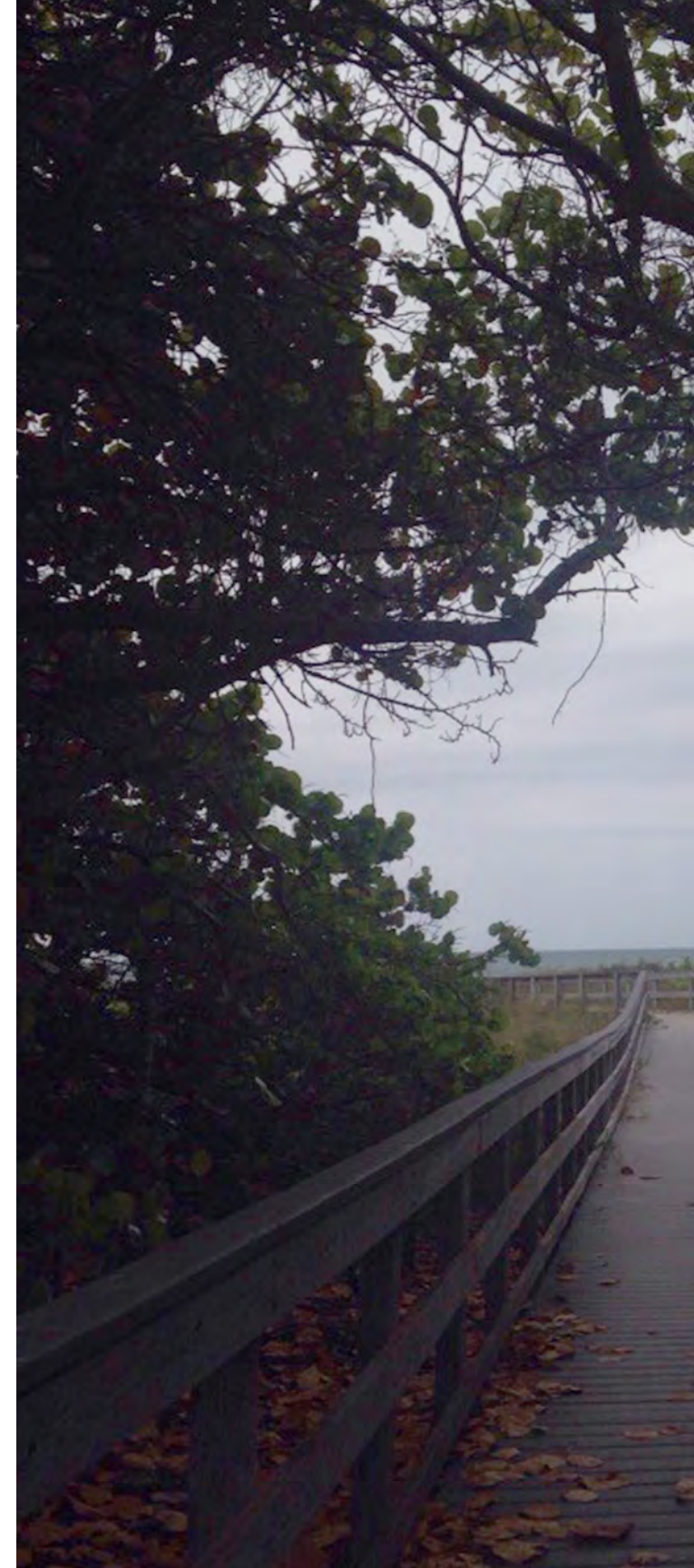
Naive, foolish heart
Becomes a ghost
A dog wags his tail
He knows I belong

I loosen my hair
Let it dance to its will
Take off my shoes
As I did as a kid

Unannounced rain
Washes my face
All makeup removed
Back to my roots

No need to look back
My life lies here
“I’m finally Home”
and it won’t disappear

Bill Baggs
by Sonsoles López
Photography





Indelible

by Daniela Hernández

He approached me
I pretended to play hide and seek
Hoping he wouldn't find me

He asked
How "los novios" are
Leaving me forever scarred

He continuously tried
I ignored him most times
But I never said a word; I just cried

I was twelve years old
And asked God
Should I break from his chains and be bold?

He came to my home
And spanked my butt
I did not tell my mom

My uncle hosted a family lunch
Created an excuse
To lunge at me with lust

I am nineteen years old
*It was my fault,
I decided to wear shorts*



Not Just a Dreamer

by Anielka Figueroa

When I was six years old, I spent two weeks in a detention center separated from my mother. Nearly fourteen days went by without a shower, a private bathroom, or a bed. Border patrols stopped our car and aggressively interrogated mami. They dismissed her answers and did not believe she was even my mother.

The next day, we were put in a bus. When we arrived at another building, the rails swung open. I do not remember my mother's exact words, but she hung on to me and began to cry as they yanked me from her arms. I ended up in a room with at least twelve fifteen-to-twenty-year-olds. There were no beds,

only dirty blankets on the floor. The toilet was in the corner of the room. I was embarrassed to use the bathroom in front of strangers, and the lights were never turned off. They could see us at all times. As the only English speaker, the other girls used me as a translator to ask officers questions on their behalf. I had a hard time sleeping. Even though I was six years old, I still slept with my mother. I hugged a young girl who lay next to me. She hugged me back. Sadly, I cannot remember her name.

The second week many women came and went. I stood against the glass to watch like the other girls. The girl who hugged me at night, tapped my

Balance

by Alejandro Hernández
Photography

Balance

by Wolfgang Rugeles
Photo Illustration

shoulder.

“¿Conoces a esa mujer que te está apuntando?” the girl asked. I could barely see. *I don't know anyone here.* Suddenly, my name was called. I was moved to another similar room where I found my mother. She was smiling, but tears rolled down her face.

“Perdóname,” my mother repeated multiple times. Many years later, mami still apologizes for that traumatic separation even though it was not her fault. We were transferred to a family detention center in Pennsylvania where we were able to shower, sleep in real beds, and spend

time together during dining hours. We regained our humanity. My uncle, who was a Florida resident at the time, was able to vouch for my mother and I, and because of him, we moved to Miami.

“We
regained
our
humanity.”

For many years, I was scared of telling others about my situation, and to this day, it is hard to talk about this experience. As a DACA student with a temporary legal status and undocumented parents, I know I have to work harder than some of my counterparts. However, I will not let my immigration status control who I am, who I want to be, or where I want to go.

Seasons

by Cristian Arteaga

Brand new leaves that spring brings:
blooms of hope, happiness, and love.
Although it cuts behind painful stings,
broken souls are stitched in one glove.

Hearts lift like a floating feather
welcoming the summer breeze.
Bewildered souls are glued together,
bearing in the chest buzzing bees.

As always, fresh winds change it all.
Love is challenged by another's touch.
Predicting leaves' befall,
trees fall guilty of their own grudge.

Winter rushes and crushes love, happiness, and hope.
It tears hearts apart through its kaleidoscope.

I'll Bloom Again
by Liana Bravo
Photography



Forever His

by Giselle Valdes

I removed layers from my body as cooks do when peeling onions. Mesmerized by the purity of the sheets, I locked eyes into what caused my inevitable immersion between the fabrics. The redness of my stockings juxtaposed the concept I had of innocence. Consumed by empowering flames of emotion, I walked seductively towards him.

The lights darkened, the screams intensified, and our bodies emerged into a melodious symphony. His hands stroke my hips as our souls touched. His breath gently whispered the secrets only our minds could decipher in those ephemeral seconds. I turned around urging to look beyond the flesh, and his world immediately collided into mine. I entered an abyss of lust and passion. His fingers traveled down my spine as a river's stream narrows into the ocean, but his



Back to Nature
by Jorge Ramos
Pencil on Paper

hands parted ways and disappeared from the landscape. His lips moistened my neck while elliptically stumbling with the edges of my body, just like the tarnished legs of a compass with a broken point. He felt my skin threads, leaving behind

“The more he drew closer, the more I wanted him to surpass the boundaries between us.”

extremities, reaching a point of ecstasy that only soaked sheets could validify. The more he drew closer, the more I wanted him to surpass the boundaries between us. He furnished arousals that incited a dor-

mant caterpillar to transform into a butterfly in a matter of seconds. Just like pressing the keys of a piano, he palpated the surface of all my imperfections while reconstructing them into masterpieces of their own artistic buoyancy.

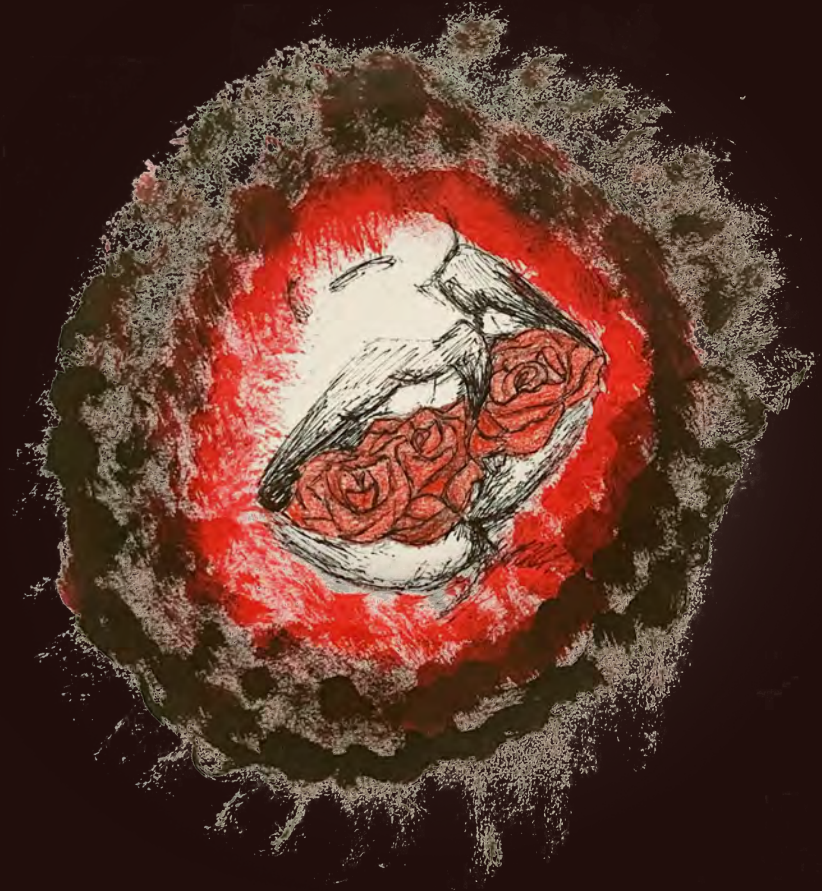
Interrupting knocks attacked my door. Wearing nothing but the lingerie molding my silhouette, I opened the door. An officer dressed in an impeccable uniform extended his hand to give me an envelope. *I am guessing he couldn't get his eyes off my breasts. I could puncture his chest with mine.* The letter was stamped with a circular rope surrounding the central insignia with the words United States Navy printed in blue.

I wonder if I should have dressed more appropriately for the occasion.

“I am sorry for your loss ma'am,” the Navy SEAL said. “Your husband died yesterday at 3:13 pm when responding to a foreign attack on one of our bases.”

I automatically closed the door and shouted:

“Hey babe, I guess we don't have to worry about Bob anymore.”



Poisonous
by Anielka Figueroa
Acrylic on Paper



Body, Mind, and Soul
by Jorge Ramos
Pencil on Paper

Haircut

by Damari Marichal and Alejandra Almada

Hey, how are you? Are we still doing the play today?

Hey, Kelly ... I'm alright. And yeah of course. I'll see you later.

Listen, I want to apologize about last night. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that. It wasn't cool. You're my best friend and I care about you more than anything. I don't want things to be weird between us. Please forgive me?

Let's just pretend nothing happened, OK? I don't want to talk about it ...

Delivered

"Hurry up and get in the car," Marcos said as he yanked my arm in frustration.

The hostility in Marco's voice was not unusual. He always had these random bursts when something upset him, and I didn't need to be told twice that he still wasn't over not being invited to yesterday's party. Only those who were part of the showcase could go, so there was nothing I could do to get Marcos an invite. He wouldn't have liked it anyway since all we did was rehearse our lines and party a little afterwards. As I sat down in his 2008 Chevrolet Silverado pick-up truck and buckled-up, I braced myself. The uncomfortable ten-minute ride home became an eternity with all the tension in the air, so I decided to spark a conversation in hopes his mood might lighten up.

"Don't forget about the Hispanic heritage month showcase after school today, by the way. Although you're not participating in it directly, you can still wear your zarape

either way! Help me represent our people, hermano ..." I patted his arm to check if he was listening to me. His muscles were tight and unforgiving, stressed. I continued, "I mean, I do have to head back earlier to get my hair done... at least an hour ahead because of how long it is, but the show for sure starts at four. Just so you can drag mamá out of the house on time."

We were almost to the house when Marcos abruptly stopped the car and pulled over to the side of the road, taking me by surprise.

"What's the matter? ¿Pasó algo en la escuela hoy?" I asked him, reaching for his arms to embrace him fully now that the car stopped.

"Que si me pasó algo en la escuela ... Maria, ide veras! You can't be serious. Te tengo una pregunta: ¿Me ves cara de payaso? I didn't say anything yesterday because I couldn't believe it. Vamos her-

manita, confess!" he said and slammed his right fist on the steering wheel. I noticed how red his face turned. He was livid. I was having heart palpitations, and after a deep breath to calm my nerves, I turned to face him.

"¿De qué estás hablando? Is this about last night? You aren't part of the showcase so you couldn't go. We went over this yesterday!"

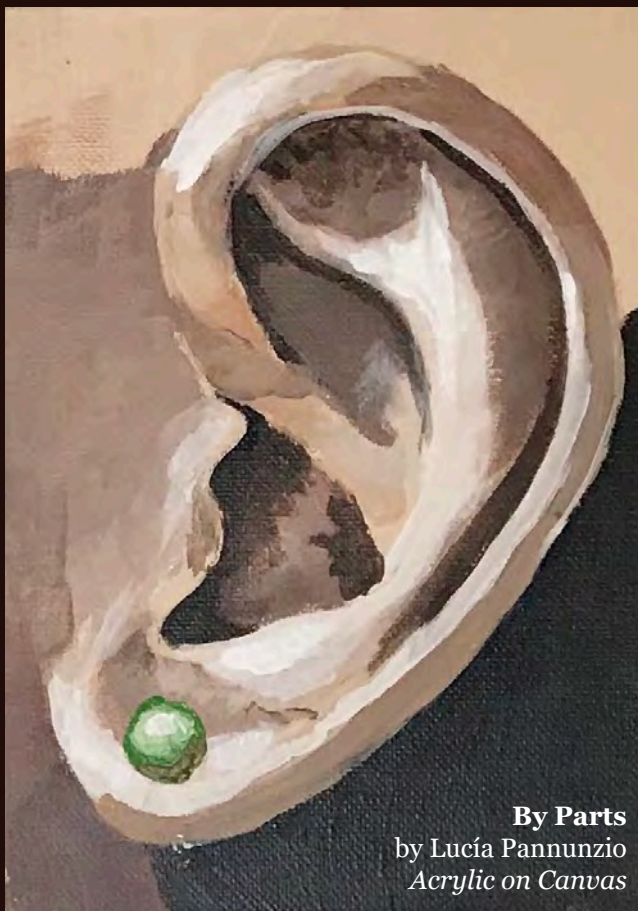
He remained undeterred. His eyes proclaimed the thought that I was still playing stupid.

"Maria José!" He began, and nothing good could possibly follow the invocation of my

Por Partes

by Lucía Pannunzio
Acrylic on Canvas





By Parts
by Lucía Pannunzio
Acrylic on Canvas

middle name. “I caught you and Kelly kissing at the party last night,” and as the words left his mouth, mine opened in disbelief. He continued, “I passed by last night to see if you needed a ride home, instead, I saw you drinking and with Kelly all over you. Now I understand why Kelly wanted to play a male role in your little skit. Eres una vergüenza.”

from me, checked his mirrors, and pulled back into the road.

“You know something, Maria? They say that when people get drunk, their true nature is revealed,” he said as an afterthought, but I didn’t speak another word. It was best to not add fuel to a fire.

By the time we arrived at the house, I was no longer cry-

“Marcos, hermano, por favor ... We were drunk. I don’t even want to talk about it, okay? I just want to pretend it never happened. I wasn’t thinking straight, and-” as I spoke, I could feel myself losing control of the situation. Tears rolled down my cheeks and I shivered. I feared above all other things that he would tell our mother.

Content with his intervention, Marcos turned away

ing and Marcos was too collected for my taste. I went along with it, acting as if nothing was wrong. My mother was sitting outside on the porch waiting for us, dressed to watch me perform today. When we got closer, she stood up and we kissed before entering the house. Marcos was the last one to enter, and in a smooth motion, he shut and locked the front door. I turned to look at him and his grin scared me. Then, I saw my mother with a pair of scissors in her hand, certain and menacing.

“¿Cómo quieres hacer esto, mamá?” my brother asked calmly.

“Agárrala mijo, con cuidado,” she said sternly.

Before I had a chance to even react to what was happening, Marcos grabbed me and held my hands behind my back. He was always the favorite, and mom usually took his side in any argument.

“¡Marcos, suéltame! You both need to stop!” I shrieked.

I tried to free myself from his grip, but it was too strong. My efforts were futile. He tightened his grip until it hurt me.

“Mija, tu sabes que te

quiero muchísimo. I will always love you, regardless of what decisions you make for the rest of your life. But this decision, esta estúpida idea que tienes sobre Kelly en tu cabeza, this I cannot support. It is not real. Kelly doesn’t

understand the values that you were raised with, and a life with a woman could never fulfill you. Tú sabes que tengo razón.”

“Mami, dile que me suelte ... I was drunk! It was a mistake,” I begged.

“Escúchame bien,” she said then, pulling hard

at my scalp and raising my eyes to her own. “Kelly no te puede amar. She never will. Not only as a gringa, but as a woman as well. Ella solo te puede querer, y vas a ver, hay veces en que eso no es suficiente.” Her grip

**“Then,
I saw my
mother
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scissors
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and
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softened.

“Marcos lower her head,” she demanded. As he did what he was told, my mother tugged my hair while my body bent at the guillotine. I could still see the sharp scissors in her hands.

“¡Mamá, por favor no! Marcos please let go! Not my hair. At least let me do the show with my hair.” I pleaded in vain.

The blades sliced my hair in two cuts: One to

take the bulk and another for some form of style. Through my tear-filled eyes, I could see my hair fall in tresses onto the floor. My brother released me as soon as it was over, but I didn’t move from the floor. I couldn’t believe the damage it left in my soul.

Scissors

by Wolfgang Rugeles
Photo Illustration



It took me a while, but I made it to school around the time I had originally planned. My head felt simultaneously lighter and heavier than before. Everyone was shocked that I decided to get a haircut at the very last minute. Around fifteen minutes to curtain, I changed into my Aztec attire. La Malinche would be harder to play without my hair swinging behind me, but at least my big brown eyes and flawless accent would help me do her justice. Kelly appeared in the dressing room soon after I finished tying my huaraches. The wig she was wearing was a little big on her head, almost covering her ears, and the hat that completed the ensemble was not much better. She was playing the most infamous of the Spanish conquistadors that invaded Mexico in 1519: Hernan Cortés. The irony of our characters didn’t escape me then, as her blue eyes met mine and centuries of history repeated itself. Here we were again, the conquistador and the conquered.

“Hey Maria, what happened to your hair?” she sounded both amazed and horrified.

“Oh, it’s a long story. Don’t worry about it.” I still felt awkward about the whole kiss situation, but I was trying for the most part to act like nothing had happened. She probably was too. As always, I neglected how well Kelly knew me and how she understood my emotions when most of the time they puzzled me. She reached for my arm, and just like that, I got emotional again. My eyes watered, proving I still had tears left to cry.

“Did something happen at home earlier?”

“I just argued with Marcos and my mom, you know, the usual,” Kelly’s eyes opened wide although she’d heard the same story a thousand times and her hand began making soothing motions on my arm. Before she could ask anything else, I gathered a deep breath and continued, “He saw us at the party and told her. They did this to my hair.”

“Oh my god, Maria. I’m so sorry,” her makeshift metal

armor pushed against the simple cloth of my huipil. “Listen, we can leave if you want,” she whispered in my ear, “We can go get something to eat and talk about it.”

I shook my head and pushed her away kindly. God knows I would have stayed in that hug for a year if we didn’t have somewhere to be in less than five minutes.

“No, Kelly, really, it’s fine. I want to do the skit. You want to do the skit. We rehearsed a lot. Besides, you look nice,” I said, and she blushed. “Let’s just get this over with.”

I walked towards the hairstylist that was waiting for me

while feeling Kelly’s eyes on me until I disappeared backstage. I didn’t have much hair to work with. All I got was a quick brush and trim with decorative flowers arranged all around the crown of my head. Happy for the first time in hours, I waited behind the curtains along with everyone else. Everyone except Kelly.

“Okay guys, everyone get

**“I
didn’t
have
much
hair to
work
with.”**

into your positions. We start in two minutes,” our drama teacher shouted.

I moved to the sidelines of the main stage while the kids doing the opening number got into their spots. It was then that Kelly reappeared with something dramatically different.

“Kelly! What happened to your hair?” I sounded amazed and horrified, but all Kelly did was smile.

“Since you looked so nice with short hair, I decided to cut my hair too.” I noticed the pair of scissors hanging from her hand as she placed them inside a forgotten box.

“Besides, the wig was a No-Go,” she said, extending an unspoken invitation by removing her hat for me to run my fingers through her hair.

Seeing I was frozen, she took my hand and moved it through her locks. The golden

tufts of hair were no less amazing than the tresses I could vaguely recall pulling on the night before at the party, or the playful curls she used to have when we first met as kids.

The start of the first act snapped me out of my haze.

“Kelly, though I admire what you did, we are supposed to go onstage in a minute and portray a love story between a Mexican woman and a Spanish man. With these haircuts we’ll look like two lesbians playing at romance,” I said, letting my mom’s ideas echo out of my own mouth, “They’ll heckle us, or worse, laugh.”

Kelly’s hands were cold as they reached for my chin, lifting it gently to look into her eyes. I knew then, with far more clarity than ever before, the extent of what I could feel for her and perhaps what she might feel for me. Her expression broke me with its tender-

ness, short hair highlighting the perfect slope of her nose.

“It won’t matter if we’re there together. Aren’t we allowed to love too?” she said, looking at me with complete seriousness.

“Okay, Kelly and Maria, get into your positions!” Our drama instructor bellowed, and with that, hand in hand, we took the stage and waited for the curtain to open.

Demons

by Alejandro Hernández
Photography



Cotton Candy

by Marian Bulnes

She strangled [redacted]
[redacted] your neck [redacted] breathless,
My heart ruptured [redacted]
When you praised and [redacted]
[redacted] licked her [redacted] snake shaped lips
[redacted] I carried your weight
And you [redacted] stood [redacted] with [redacted] bruised knees
Begging strangers to wrap your knifed heart
And [redacted]
[redacted] as you touched her [redacted]
She tainted [redacted] your skin
You kneeled [redacted]
[redacted] and again
How could I [redacted] replace her?
I hope [redacted] your lies [redacted] poison her lips
[redacted] inject her ears with noxious lullabies
[redacted]
[redacted] when [redacted]
Did you diffuse into [redacted] a stranger?
I fought to [redacted]
[redacted] grasp your hand despite [redacted] carving my [redacted] veins
You [redacted] destroyed me
[redacted] stabbed [redacted] thorns in my flesh
[redacted] canned me [redacted] like a rav-
enous dog
I drowned you in [redacted] naked robes
"I will [redacted] hurt you"
[redacted]
[redacted] you already had
When you chose her [redacted]
[redacted]
When your hands caressed [redacted] my skin
[redacted] slipped inside me

provided me [redacted] ecstasies
[redacted] fettered your hand on my mouth to
silence
[redacted] your name [redacted]
You [redacted]
[redacted] crawled [redacted]
and rested in my abused [redacted] and objectified
tongue



Led Edges
by Marian Bulnes
Digital Art

Zapatitos de tacón

by Daniela López

Fue un anuncio en la tele. No recordaba ni siquiera de qué, solo que salía una niña de unos siete u ocho años. Era una chiquilla adorable, con un vestido de tul celeste, cara alegre y bucles castaños, pero lo que llamó su atención fueron sus zapatos.

Eran unos zapatos infantiles, de un tacón pequeño y flamenco. La purpurina azul contrastaba graciosamente con los calcetines blancos y en cuanto los vislumbró ya no hubo bucles, ni vestido, ni la elocuente voz que intentaba venderle el mejor producto del universo. Solo esos brillantes zapatitos de tacón.

Tomó un trago de su cerveza sin despegar los ojos de la televisión. De pronto, la niña del anuncio empezaba a transformarse. Los zapatos ahora eran calzados por otros pies cálidos, con otros calcetines blancos, con otras piernas infantiles que desaparecían bajo otro vestido. La niña ya no tenía bucles castaños, en su lugar retozaba una fina cabellera rubia que decoraba, como un

marco de oro, un rostro sonriente.

La niña salió del anuncio para pasearse y saltar, animada por el ruido de sus zapatitos de tacón. Su boca se movía pero no emitía sonido y todo lo que pisaba se convertía en césped claro de verano. El hombre sonreía, pero pronto, la angustia lo asfixiaba con sus afiladas uñas, presionándole ambos lados del cuello.

Su hija vivaz.

Los ojos se le inundaban.

Su hija jugando con pompas de jabón en el jardín.

Una lágrima le mojaba el puño apretado sobre su rodilla.

Su hija que vuelve cansada del colegio.

Otra lágrima.

Su hija mareada.

Se cubría la boca.

Su hija tosiendo.

El llanto lo desbordaba.

Su hija que no responde.

Le costaba respirar.

Su hija en una camilla.

Se levantó desbocado del sillón. Confuso, borracho

y cegado, el hombre se dirigía atropelladamente hasta el baño de la casa. Cada ruido, cada murmullo lejano se transformaba en los pitidos agudos de las máquinas que monitorean a su cálida, sonriente y vivaz hija. Su niña que jugaba con pompas de jabón y taco-neaba encantada con sus zapatitos.

Un grito crecía arremolinándose en su pecho y subía por sí mismo, desgarrándole la garganta. Temblaba

descontrolado, apoyando ambas manos en la pared. Levantó la mirada para contemplar en el espejo a un rostro demacrado y cenizo, sin afeitar, con bolsas y ojeras bajo unos ojos rojos, cansados y devastados. No soportaba esa visión y de un puñetazo rompió el reflejo.

El hombre lloraba hecho un ovillo.

Al fondo de un armario yacían unos zapatitos de tacón llenos de polvo.



Frelsi
by Sonsoles López
Photography

Entangled
by Sonsoles López
Photography





Prisoner of Light
by Sonsoles López
Photography

Ruminating

by Giselle Valdes

The air is fresher here. The sofa's fabric crawls within my skin pores, but the cloth is so tightly held together that it encages my mind to my body. My imprisoned voice is inaudible when talking about my past. However, there is something about the clarity that peeks through the window that gives me hope. I am thinking about sharing my darkest fears in one of these sessions.

I wonder if I'll be able to speak soon.

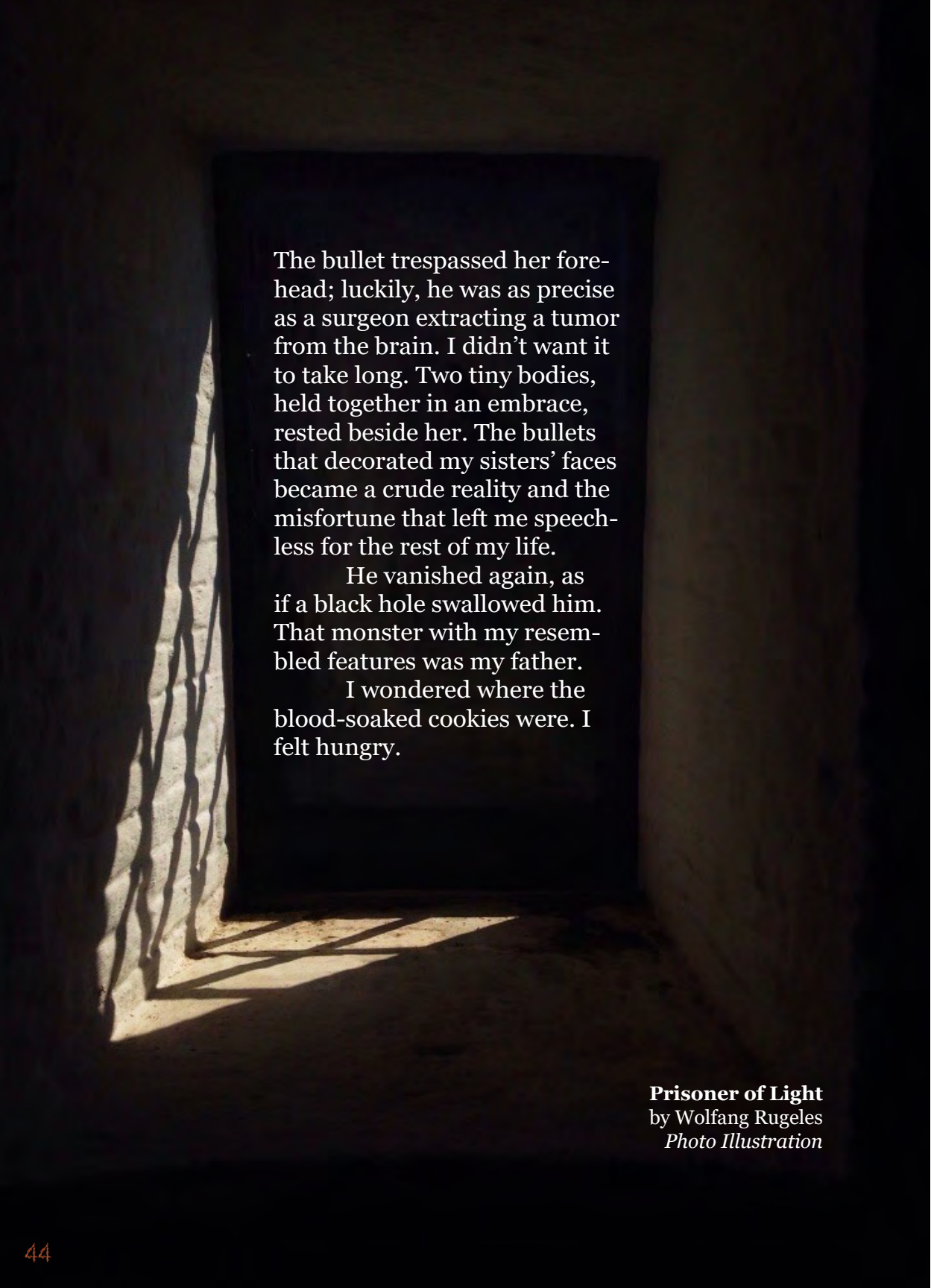
The house was painted in a creamy bone-like color, just at the stern of Hillsborough Avenue. I remember it was Christmas and it was cold. Lily and Suzie, my sisters, were getting ready for the cookies mom was baking.

Deafening knocks on the door shook the walls of the house. Behind that door hid a beast incarcerated in an unrecognizable human body. Nothing was comparable to his eyes, reddened as blood drops. The fear paralyzed me. I could feel my arms becoming numb, my face turning pale, and a

tear rolling down my cheek. That man's face was so intimidating that no wild animal would ever dare approach him. His sole presence was deadly. Everything crumpled at the palm of his hands, destined to face an inevitable decay. I recall my mom being in the kitchen as he reached to grasp her petaled body, withering by the touch of his fingerprints. Her elegance shattered when her eyes widened like a cheetah's prey before thinking of death.

I could only hear the striking sound of the gunshots, his claws repetitively pressing the trigger. While I hid in the closet, I heard him say: Don't run, more time means more pain. I still wonder if hiding was the best choice. Was it better to live in the agony of survival or receive a taste of death?

He transformed good into evil, life into death, and memories into my own premeditated insanity. My mother's corpse lay on the floor, but the tiles remained undisturbed.



The bullet trespassed her forehead; luckily, he was as precise as a surgeon extracting a tumor from the brain. I didn't want it to take long. Two tiny bodies, held together in an embrace, rested beside her. The bullets that decorated my sisters' faces became a crude reality and the misfortune that left me speechless for the rest of my life.

He vanished again, as if a black hole swallowed him. That monster with my resembled features was my father.

I wondered where the blood-soaked cookies were. I felt hungry.

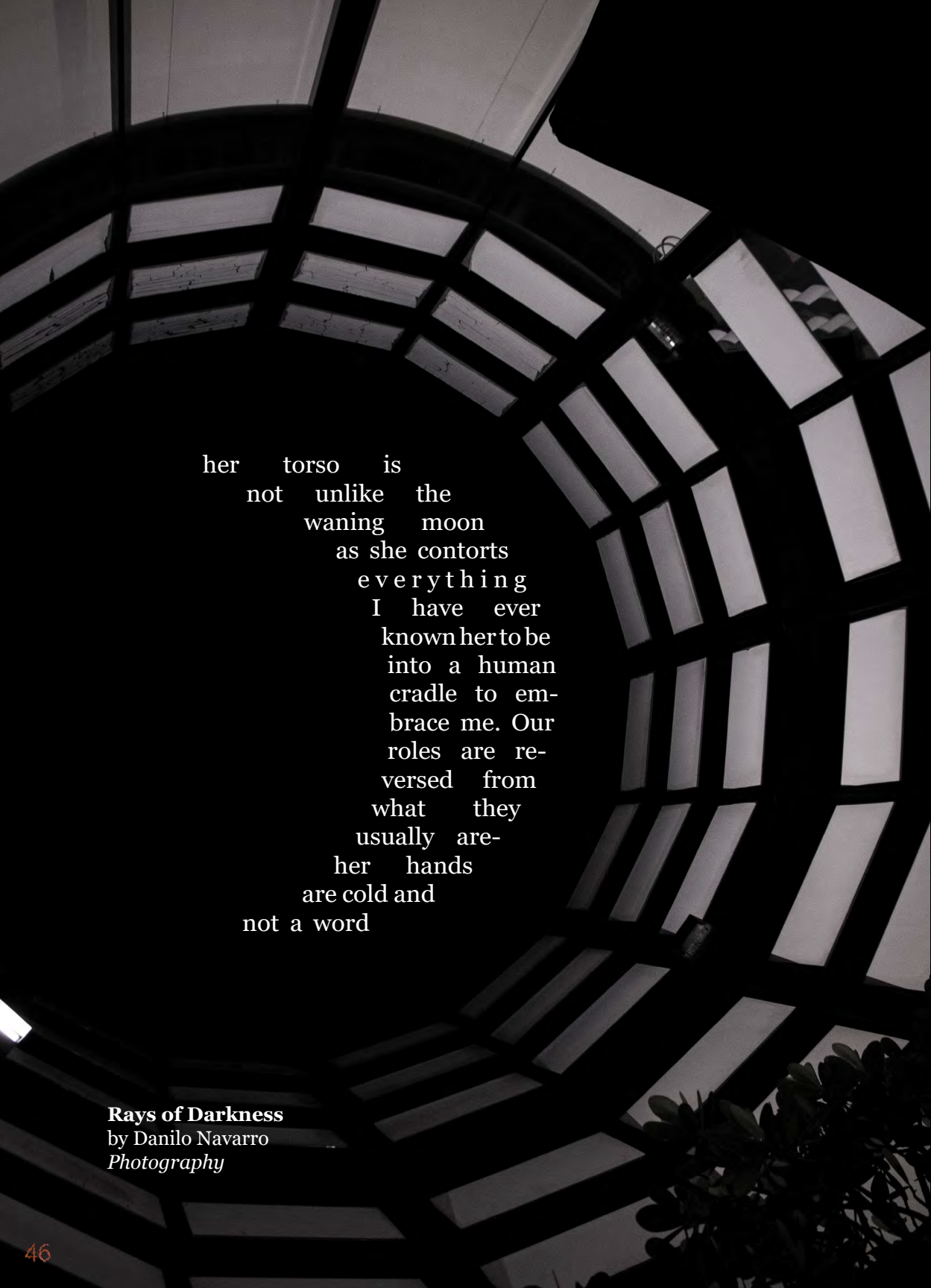
Prisoner of Light
by Wolfgang Rugeles
Photo Illustration

Crescent

by Alejandra Almada

Even
now he torments
me, though I stand suspended miles above infatuation, reaching desperately for unknown depths of forgiveness. Oxygen grows scarce in my lungs at this altitude above my comfort zone - the sound of his breath remaining a staccato rhythm in the void of my ears. Insistent, inescapable, like high-heeled stilettos striding across a polished marble floor. His silhouette lingers in the corner of my eye, broad shoulders shrugging and dripping with a smile. An aching pain, a bleeding wound, irresistible in a dry-cleaned suit.

The weight of my
sister's hand
upon mine,
familiar after
years of tender
touches, pulls
my heart from
its hiding place
up my sleeve
and my broken
soul from its
refuge in the
lofty clouds.
The abyss in
her eyes is a
starry sky and



her torso is
not unlike the
waning moon
as she contorts
everything
I have ever
known her to be
into a human
cradle to em-
brace me. Our
roles are re-
versed from
what they
usually are -
her hands
are cold and
not a word

Rays of Darkness
by Danilo Navarro
Photography

escapes her
lips. Every
second she
holds me,
her promise
reverberates
around us
with echoes
of great suc-
cess and dis-
heartening
failure. I loved
her from the
second we met.
Now, I am eve-
rything to her.

I can
still drift away
into the stratosphere, re-
turn to treasured thoughts of him,
even when her hand is the one I firm-
ly hold in mine. She knows her presence
alone can't erase the abrupt plunge of his
jawline or the light tilt of his head. Similarly,
he knows the taste of disbelief on his lips or the
bitter hatred in his tongue, can't soothe the con-
stant longing in my soul the way her voice can.
But on days like these, as she heals an aching
pain, a bleeding wound, within her free-
ly-given silence, the warm yet ephemeral
becomes tangible for a moment -
betraying the pretense that
they're the same.

My Tongue Is Still in Its Place

by Giselle Valdes

Now you want to silence me,
but after saying "Patria o Muerte"
you praised me.

You, who soak in warm water
while my parents come home
after swirling in mud.

Their hands dirty from your fetid affairs
to provide food for our starved conscience.

I, that must seem undisturbed when
history is changed to support your
glorious, yet unscrupulous conquistas.

La historia me absolverá,
Leery pages that champion for liberty but
muffle my voice.

Throw me to the sharks.
Dismember every limb from my body.

I won't give up what you seek.

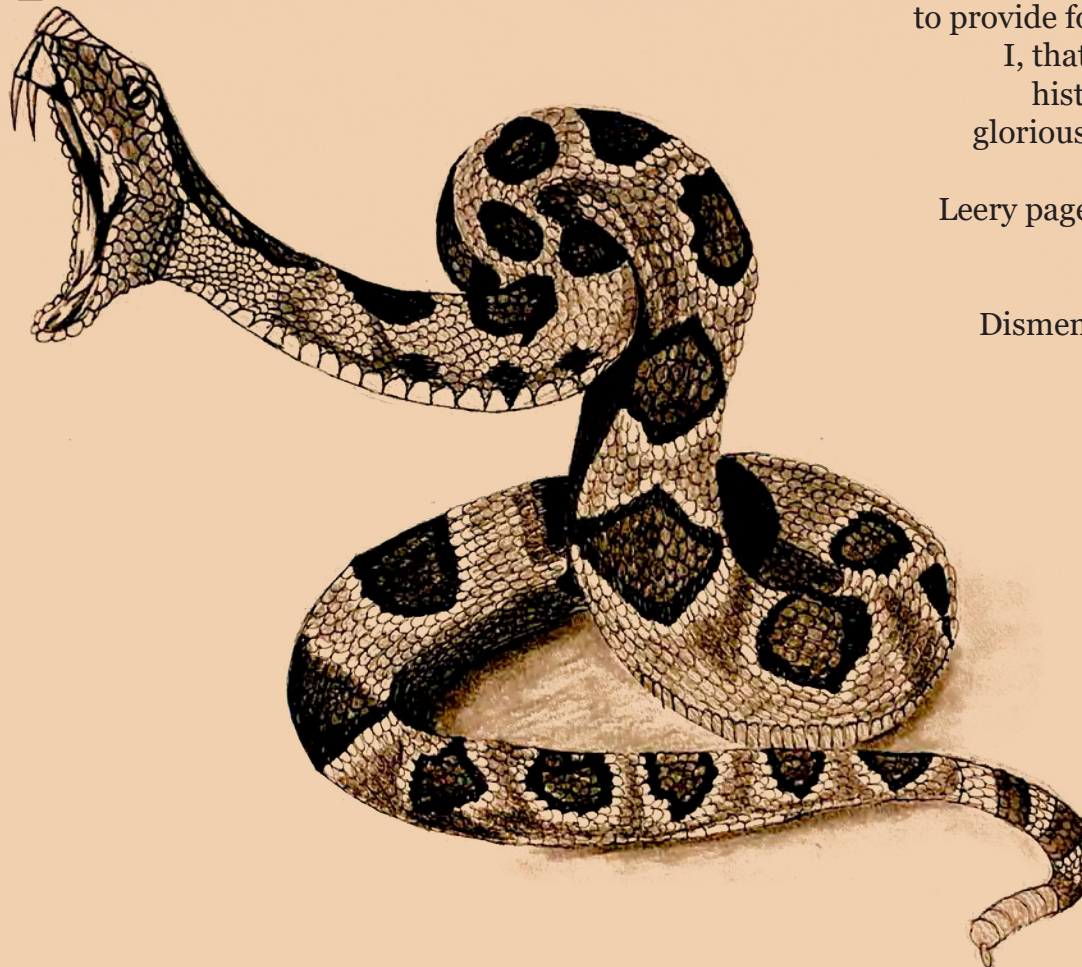
I will scream: tyranny.

My tongue is still in its place.

A falta de araña, serpiente

by Sophia de la Rosa

A falta de araña,
Serpiente.
Salá' de entraña,
cuan mar hirviente.
Tal vez te extraña,
aunque no siente.
La niña engaña,
pero no miente.



Snake & Prey
by Anielka Figueroa
Pencil on Paper

The “M” Word

by Alejandra Almada

As the sun struggled to remain above the water outside the windows of the gallery, Dorian prepared for what would arguably be the most important day of his life. At least his agent, Veronica, kept telling him so. As she spoke, Dorian ignored her, much too concerned with the position of the cloth he was attempting to place over his statue in order to conceal it from the public until its great reveal.

“The sculpture is the most important part of the collection. I won’t take it out,” he said, and cleared his throat. As if struck by a sudden cold breeze, he crossed his arms tightly in front of his chest.

“Dorian, *please*, reconsider. The piece is radically different to what your public is used to. You have a market to appeal to—”

“I *know* that, Veronica, but the collection would not be what I want it to be without it. I simply won’t capitulate on this one,” Dorian said, turning to face her with that blinding quality to his gaze. There was a certainty that bordered on arrogance when



Beside Nature
by Jorge Ramos
Pencil on Paper

one took into account the time the man actually spent as a high-profile artist. "I'm sure the auction will be a success and you're just worrying about sensibilities that are not there," Dorian continued.

"If that is your final position, then I believe I must offer my resignation."

Now *that* took Dorian by surprise. Her eyes betrayed not an ounce of doubt. The clipboard that spent so long being a part of her role was now pressed to his chest.

"Very well," he said, and trailed by the persistent sound of heels clicking on wood, she was gone.

What followed was simultaneously a blur and the most vivid half-hour Dorian could have ever imagined. He alone had to hand out flyers and welcome all the guests of the evening. Once everyone took a seat and a glass of chardonnay, he summoned their attention to the front stage. His speech, per Veronica's instructions, consisted of a quick welcome, an acknowledgement, and an introduction to his collection. He was glad for her guidance although he'd

never admit it. In that moment, nervousness crept up his spine.

"With no further ado," he stated with a flourish and charismatic smile, "allow me to introduce you to 'Mirage'!"

As he removed the cloth revealing his masterpiece to the group, he was met with a deep and ambivalent silence.

"*Mirage?*"

a man in the front row said, in a rather confused tone of voice. "*Monster*'

makes more sense. Don't you think?"

Dorian closed his eyes briefly, as if struck, much in the way a computer reverts to the blue screen when it fails to process something for its user. Opening his eyes a second later, he gazed straight at the man who'd boldly spoken, looking nothing but calm through tremendous effort. "Please, sir, refrain from using the 'm' word, if you can. I don't think it's appropriate."

"Oh, like '*mediocre*,' right?" Another voice added, helpfully.

"*Miserable!*" A further voice concurred.

**"*Monster*'
makes
more
sense."**

"*Get out!*" Dorian yelled, overcome for a minute by the light of the camera flashes and the judgement in the faces before him.

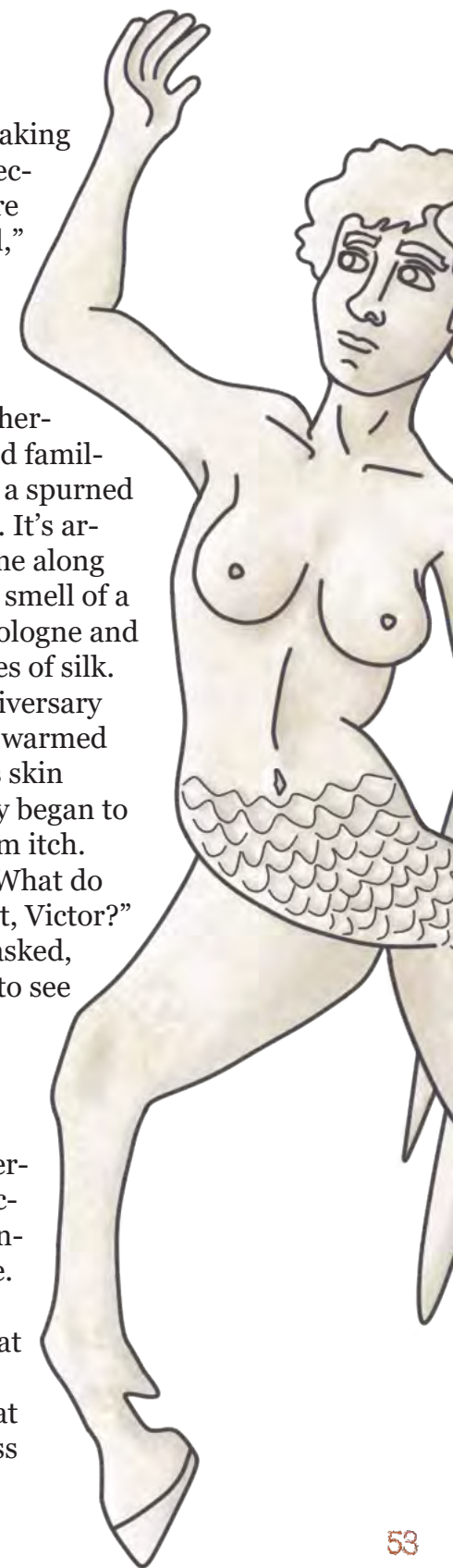
For a simple instant, he felt incomparable grief- for his fame, his art, even for Veronica to a certain extent. As people exited the gallery, he remained gazing up at his statue with his back to the one or two remaining journalists, deaf to their pleas for an incendiary comment or a candid picture. He told them to leave with what presence of mind he had left.

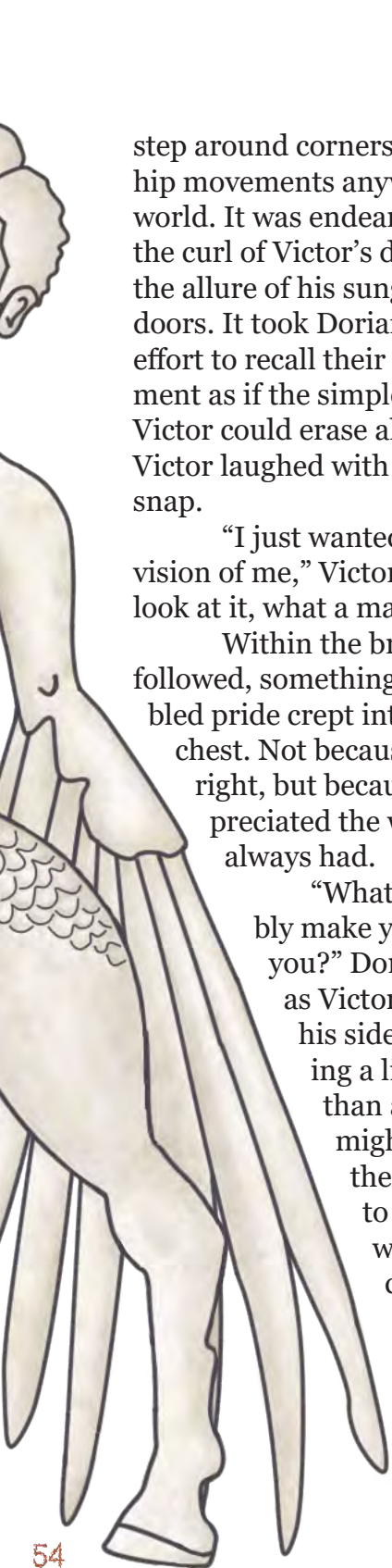
In the quiet that remained, Dorian moved his sculpture about in the last dancing lights of the sunset, attempting to make sense of his mistake. *It must have been the lighting*, he was convinced. The statue itself was beautifully carved. Composed of the mixture of a man's face, a siren's torso, a woman's arms, a vulture's wings, and a horse's legs. The sculpture was a feat of creativity, all chiselled by hand on the finest marble towering over six feet tall. There was no angle or lens through which the artwork wasn't worthy of appreciation. It was a 'masterpiece.' What could have gone wrong?

"I see you were serious

about making this collection more personal," a new voice said, once deeply cherished and familiar, now a spurned surprise. It's arrival came along with the smell of a strong cologne and memories of silk. The anniversary gift that warmed Dorian's skin suddenly began to make him itch.

"What do you want, Victor?" Dorian asked, turning to see the man walking into the gallery with a certain practiced nonchalance. He'd know that walking pace, that crisscross





step around corners, and loose hip movements anywhere in the world. It was endearing once, the curl of Victor's dark hair and the allure of his sunglasses indoors. It took Dorian deliberate effort to recall their last argument as if the simple sight of Victor could erase all bitterness. Victor laughed with a quick snap.

"I just wanted to see your vision of me," Victor said, "and look at it, what a marvel."

Within the breath that followed, something that resembled pride crept into Dorian's chest. Not because Victor was right, but because he appreciated the work. Victor always had.

"What could possibly make you think it's you?" Dorian asked, as Victor reached his side, standing a little closer than a stranger might. From the shoulders to the vulture wings, Dorian could see what pieces

Muñec@
by Alejandra Almada
Digital Art

of Victor wormed their way into the sculpture as unconscious, reverberating echoes of idiosyncrasies loved and left behind.

Dorian did his best not to tremble as Victor's hand reached for his back, certain it belonged there, and in a way, held him.

"Well, it is a man, mostly, right? Isn't that what I am in the end?" Victor said. His eyes bore into Dorian's as he spoke, attempting to change his mind. "This is simply you calling me out for leaving you when times got hard by portraying me as this horrid masterpiece, strong yet broken. You shouldn't have, really."

It was then that with both hands on Dorian's shoulders, Victor pulled him in for a kiss. A longed-for dream and a dreaded nightmare, the connection was electric and magnified by the events of the day. The early darkness of a coastal night bended around the corners of Victor's severe features, building up the cold that Dorian feared, blue as a scorching flame.

A second too late, Dorian broke away, breathless and deeply disappointed in his self-control.

"'Masterpiece,' you said?" Dorian asked, unwilling to look into the

sunglasses resting on his nose.

"A bit *marred*, almost," Victor nodded with his head, noncommittal.

"What is it with all the 'm' words?" Dorian's voice was a whisper that quickly grew frustrated, taking a step out of Victor's loose grip. "You couldn't be more wrong."

"Really? *I'm* wrong?" Surprised, Victor's laugh thundered again for an instant. He continued as Dorian walked closer to his sculpture's side. "The only person who's ever understood your art is wrong, now? What does that say about it if I can't interpret it?"

Through a full-body shake, Dorian responded, turning to face Victor again.

"It has nothing to do with interpretation. You're just not the '*monster*' here. If anything, *I* am. You know what this piece is, truly? Well, it's *mine*, it's *me*!"

In that moment, Dorian climbed the steps to see his statue closer, caressing the marble and regaining his footing. All the feelings he repressed during the event returned to him.

"I can accept that now, you know, that this is who I am: my inspiration, my creativity, my talent, and my clarity. This is more myself than anything, and

I hoped the world was ready for it."

For once in many years, Victor was silent. It was a side of him that would have been welcomed in the summer when the argument took place or during the fall when the pain was excruciating, but by some trick of fate it appeared only now, in the winter, when it didn't make any difference at all.

"You know what the problem is, Dorian," his voice was wiser.

"Perhaps. Now get out, Victor."

"You'll call me, you'll see."

Alone once again, this time ensconced in the dark, Dorian caressed the sculpture a final time. Noticing the slightest piece of lint on the face, he made a point of taking his sleeve and wiping off the mouth. It was important to make sure no mark remained of this day, of its filth and its 'm' words.

With a firm kiss on the cheek, Dorian took his leave, stepping back and away for good.

"You're
just
not the
'*monster*'
here."

Angel of the Abyss

by Ana Gutierrez

The beatings and screams echoed in the darkness of his hateful self.

"You are nothing. A useless bag of trash that makes me want to kill myself. Go put your putrid existence to use and bring me a shot," his mother said as she pulled his hair so hard that a tear escaped his subdued blue eyes.

Santi dragged his heavy feet onto the rundown kitchen, colliding with memories of frustration and impotence. With rage, he placed the glass shot on the counter and filled it with a dark amber liquid, reminiscing on how much he hated to breathe.

The need to escape hell dragged him to another type of hell, the one he never wanted to leave. Like best friends, ecstasy and cocaine accompanied him at every moment.

"La niece is my favorite, the cool and minty chill shoots down my spine and possesses me with euphoria. The unimaginable rush of pleasure is better than heaven, and the numbness feels safe," Santi en-

thusiastically talked about cocaine to his friend Juliana. She shattered every time he snorted it, seeing how easy it was to fall deeper and deeper into the abyss. Lost in the symphony of destruction, Santi neglected the significance of money. His world and debts consumed him like a burning forest.

"Y Santi?" Camila asked Juliana as they walked across the street to the cafeteria in front of the old, rickety school. Medellin's subtropical highland climate gifted them a golden day. Juliana's eyes frantically searched for Santi's calming smile in the sea of bodies flushing out of school.

"I think they're really mad this time. What should I do?" Juliana remembered what Santi said during their walk to school. He brushed off his problem, but his words resounded in her head.

After fifteen eternal minutes, Santi appeared around the corner, sprinting. The sound of a motorcycle exhaust filled the busy street, covering the blast of the three loud gun-

shots
as he hit the
pavement. The devil
laughed as he claimed
another fragile soul. Juliana's
thirteen-year-old heart left her
as all of the children screamed.
An overwhelming burning sensation
consumed her soul as if the bullets
pierced through her too. Camila
grabbed Juliana by the jacket, pulling
her toward a group of bystanders
surrounding his body. As they
approached him, oozing blood
from his head and chest, the
sidewalk turned red. Just
another lifeless angel
on the road, facing
down.

The Spiral of Life
by Danilo Navarro
Photography



Angels in the West Bank
by Eleazar Asencio
Photography

The Collection

by Sofi Heuchert

If it's a good day, he'd come in twice. If it's a bad day, only once.

On this summer afternoon, Barnes sat inside The Bounty, flipping through a catalogue in front of the register when Grimsbane strode through the door.

The bell jingled from the top of the doorway alerting

Barnes of the hunter's arrival. Seeing that it was *that* particular hunter, he immediately rose to greet him.

No one in the town of Deadwood knew Grimsbane's real name. He'd just appeared one day, and no one ever dared question where he came from. Since his arrival, the creatures stopped coming close to town. Small favors.

Everything about his appearance looked ragged. His tall frame, always wrapped in a tattered olive-green trench coat revealed dark underclothes—stained with mud and blood. That wasn't even the worst part about him though. His face remained concealed by a mustard handkerchief, only his bloodshot eyes unveiled. They seemed to always stare at the townspeople accusingly. Any visible skin was burnt and scarred. He appeared to never rest, always looking for monsters.

Grimsbane's discolored bag thumped against the count-

Split

by Alejandro Hernandez
Photography

er as he took a seat. Barnes swallowed noticeably. The smell coming from the bag was unbearable, like sewage and rot.

"Grimsbane! How you doing, big fella?" Barnes said. "What'd you bring in that bag of yours?"

The man in question unknotted the top of the sack. It didn't take Barnes long to see two green-tinged severed arms. Then he noticed the other appendages. Half hidden by the body parts was a pair of translucent wings.

"Faerie," grunted Grimsbane.

Barnes looked at the contents of the bag in revolting awe. His fingers hovered over the body parts before snapping back into attention.

"Yes, yes, I can see that," nodded Barnes. "Roger! C'mere boy, look what Grimsbane brought us!"

Roger pulled the curtain that separated the backroom from the entrance and walked inside. He wiped his hands on his apron, blood staining his skin.

"Lookie here, boy!" Barnes said. "A faerie! Why has no one been able to catch one of these bastards for years? What

can you do with this, eh, Rog?"

Roger examined the contents, not caring that green faerie's blood smudged his hands.

"Where's the head?" he asked Grimsbane.

"No head," Grimsbane answered. "Body."

Roger and Barnes learned early on that asking Grimsbane for more details led nowhere. Roger nodded and picked up one of the arms. The hand flopped lifelessly out of the bag. Barnes noticed the small size of the arm and the unusual green-tinge.

The arm could have belonged to a human if Barnes hadn't known it belonged to a faerie.

"Well, have we got something to work with?" Roger laid

the arm to rest.

"I can remove the insides and stuff it up to display it at the shop. I'm sure we'll have a lot of clients wanting to pay for the ingredients— especially pieces of those wings." Barnes grinned at

"*Pay* first, Grimsbane demanded."

Roger and clapped him on the back. The boy started working for him five years ago, and

he'd been the best asset to the shop Barnes could ever hope for.

Grimsbane put a hand on the bag before Barnes or Roger could do anything else.

"Pay first," Grimsbane demanded.

"Of course! Now, a faerie is a rare find. How about we say 80?" Barnes bartered.

"200." The hunter gave him his awful stare with no room for argument.

Barnes winced at the large sum.

"There's no head, Grimsbane. The head's the most important."

"200," interrupted Roger, "Is a fair price. You'll get your money right away."

He walked over to the

register and handed the money to Grimsbane. His nails were sharp and caked in dried green blood. Grimsbane grunted in farewell and exited, returning to the woods where his next prey resided.

"Boy! Are you trying to make me go bankrupt? Nobody is worth that much!" Roger hefted the sealed bag and carried it with no struggle. Barnes enviously remembered a time when his body didn't fail him.

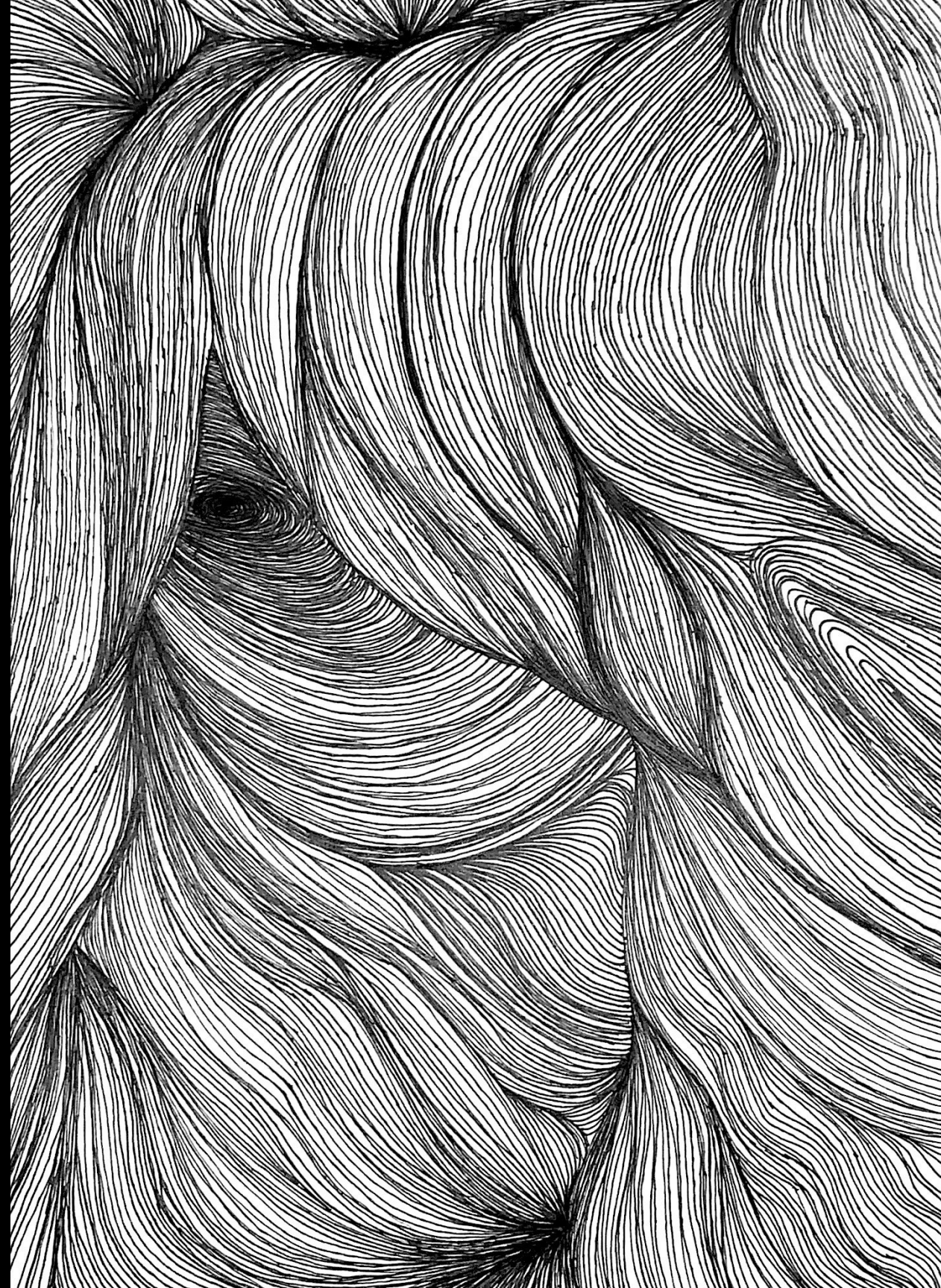
"Trust me, old man," the boy replied. "This thing will make up for the money wasted once people find out what we have."

Barnes settled back in his seat and narrowed his eyes at Roger. "It better. Or there will be hell to pay. Ya hear me, boy?"

The boy simply grinned, waved him off, and vanished into the back room. The shop was quiet as the afternoon bled into the evening. Barnes sat back on his stool and looked at his entire collection hanging from the walls.

At night, Barnes regaled the bar with the story of how he acquired a faerie when a ques-

Disoriented
by Anielka Figueroa
Pen on Paper



tion from the barmaid made him pause.

“What?” Barnes frowned. She was very pretty and always reminded him of his wife.

“If there’s no head,” the barmaid repeated, “How do you know it’s a faerie?”

The rest of the bar attendants murmured in agreement. A faerie’s features were distinct: pointy ears and rows and rows of sharp, large teeth. Without that, they could easily pass off as human if they hid their wings.

Barnes sputtered trying to respond. “Come now! This is Grimsbane, the best hunter out there!”

Mentioning Grimsbane caused many of the hunters to scoff bitterly. No one knew where Grimsbane hunted to get these rare creatures. While everyone caught the same elves, golems, and satyrs, Grimsbane brought in werewolves, gorgons, and demons. Sometimes, Barnes worried. What if they hunted all the monsters to the point of extinction? Back when he still hunted, some

monster types became extinct.

Barnes knew he shouldn’t complain. Every hunter went to him with their bounty. But he wanted to expand his collection. The thought made him gulp his beer down. Another hunter chimed in before Barnes could diverge the conversation.

“Never mind that. Didn’t you men hear about the disappearances in Shadow Hills just days ago?”

“A man a couple of towns over was found ripped in half. It was said that his lower body was missing,” another one said.

“There’s been killings and disappearances for months now. Nothing was found,” a third reported.

“Could it be the same monster?” someone else asked.

Barnes’

mind was racing. This sounded like a big monster, a possible new asset to his collection.

“Well,” Barnes announced. “I don’t know anyone more capable of finding that creature than all of you men right here. I’ll give good money

to whoever finds it.”

The hunters began strategizing; their mouths already hungry for blood. Barnes finished his beer and let out a satisfied burp. He’d have a new addition to his collection by the end of the week.

“Grimsbane!” Barnes called as he saw him stomp across town, hands gripping large amounts of chains. Two weeks passed, and no one had been able to catch the monster responsible for the disappearances. Barnes was getting antsy, and not even Grimsbane had brought back anything.

Grimsbane kept walking and it wasn’t until the third call that he stopped. Barnes caught his breath as he reached Grimsbane. The hunter looked a lot more horrifying in the sunlight; his burn marks more pronounced, his eyes colder, and his body towering. Barnes tried to bravely stare up at him.

“Any news on that new monster?” he asked Grimsbane. “Some folks are getting pretty restless, you know, and I think if it’s up on my wall people are gonna rest easy.”

Grimsbane dropped the heavy chains on the floor in front of Barnes. “Rest easy.”

Barnes looked around the deserted town square as Grimsbane echoed his words. The afternoon heat had everyone locked away in their chilly homes.

“Yeah, rest easy. You know monsters, all they do is kill. We can’t let any more innocent people get hurt.”

Grimsbane loomed over at Barnes. He felt something shifting in the conversation. Goosebumps formed on his arms regardless of the unbearable heat. The hunter gave Barnes one final look before picking up the chains from the ground.

“Tonight,” Grimsbane said.

“What about tonight?”

“I will give you your monster.” Grimsbane was already walking towards the woods. Elation filled his

“How do
you
know
it’s a
faerie?”



whole chest. Tonight, he'd have another prize for his collection.

"Don't kill any other unnecessary monsters," Barnes called out to the hunter's retreating form. "Let them breed a bit so you have more game to hunt in the future!"

Barnes laughed at his own cleverness and went back into The Bounty. The body of the faerie hung in the middle of the back wall, right in sight's view. It hung with its arms outstretched and wings furled out, the stitching so immaculate that Barnes could barely see it.

"Roger, get your knives ready," Barnes said. "We'll have a new addition tonight." Roger and him spent the rest of the afternoon reorganizing the collection. He liked to switch it around and give all his prizes the attention they deserved. The ghoul replaced the changeling, allowing space for the new monster. Barnes thought that it would surely have the same aesthetic. He had a great feeling about this.

Crocotta
by Wolfgang Rugeles
Digital Art

By the time eight o'clock rolled around, Roger and Barnes were starving.

"Go to the diner and get us some food," Barnes told the apprentice.

"Are you sure? Grimsbane could come any minute now."

Barnes waved him off. The food wouldn't take too long, and the two were starving.

"Don't forget to observe their reactions. I want to know what they all say," he demanded.

"Yes, sir." Roger gave a lazy salute and left.

Barnes stared at the time and started pacing. Every couple of minutes he looked out the window; Grimsbane had yet to appear. Every time the clock ticked it seemed to get louder and louder, so Barnes decided to go outside for fresh air and wait for the hunter.

Outside, the crickets chirped in harmony, and the heat from the day had transformed into a nice cool evening breeze. The houses were all lit up as people ate dinner and conversed. The diner wasn't visible from his shop, so Barnes didn't know if Roger was almost done. What he did see, however, was a distinct mustard color in the

distance. Grimsbane was standing by the tailor shop, staring directly at Barnes. The moment Barnes was about to call out his name, the hunter moved and headed back towards the woods.

Without thinking, Barnes followed. He figured the monster was big, and Grimsbane needed help moving it.

"What did you catch, Grimsbane?" Barnes asked as they reached the woods. "A wendigo? A natchzehrer? A *Dragon*?"

His heart pounded in excitement from the thought. He hadn't seen a dragon since his wife was killed 30 years ago. Her voice came to him now, urging him further into the forest.

Grimsbane ignored him and led him to a large fallen tree. It looked completely intact and Barnes could see all the roots that had been pulled. It created a giant hole where the old tree

once stood. It smelled rotten. Wrinkling his nose, Barnes looked down and squinted in the dark. It was difficult to see with only moonlight, but Barnes noticed certain shapes that looked like a child's head, an entire lower body, and piles and piles of other body parts. Barnes's blood ran cold.

"Grimsbane," he whispered. "What is this?"

"Hunting spoils," the hunter replied.

"This doesn't look like monsters! These

are humans. What have you done?" Barnes asked horrified as he walked slowly away from Grimsbane.

"I hunt monsters." Grimsbane stared at Barnes expressionless. "I cut and make humans look like my people, and you hang them up on a wall."

This was the most Grimsbane had ever talked. Barnes' mind raced as he realized what

**"His
heart
pounded
in
excitement
from
the
thought."**

the creature in front of him said. That meant that the faerie on his wall ... was an actual human child ... and he had it on his wall. This couldn't be possible. Grimsbane just looked calmly on.

"What are you?" demanded Barnes.

Grimsbane reached back and untied the handkerchief that always hid his nose and mouth. Barnes noticed his long jagged fangs and the distinct features of a crocotta, the creature that killed his wife.

"You," Barnes trembled. He fell to his knees and froze on the ground. His body failed him as his mind screamed to run. "Your kind killed my wife."

"You killed all my family," the creature responded. "Now I kill you."



Barnes tried to fight, but Grimsbane was stronger than him. He grabbed him by the neck and watched him choke as he held him off the ground. Barnes made one final feeble attempt to remove Grimsbane's hand, but his iron grip never let go. Barnes dropped his hands and looked at Grimsbane's satisfied eyes as black spots filled his vision. Barnes' cries were lost in the woods.

"Another monster for my collection." Grimsbane extended his jaw, rows of pointed teeth biting Barnes' head off. Silence reigned in the woods once more.

The next morning, Grimsbane showed up to The Bounty and presented a worried Roger with the head of a vampire, the creature that caused all the disappearances.

Missteps

by Sonsoles López
Photography

Brushstrokes

by Marian Bulnes

Doors slammed and wooden floors creaked. With each nearing boot step, my breath accelerated. He returned from work five hours early.

He stood on the threshold of the bedroom and stared at me with darkened eyes, making my skin shiver. Sweaty black strands glued to his forehead. Before I could notice, his breath sat on my face when the first blow struck. My right cheek numbed.

He had a bad day.

Slaps turned into kicks, and my already purple skin crawled within my bones. Blonde locks fell on the floor as he pulled on my scalp. I whimpered and salty tears rested in my mouth. *Maybe it's blood.* Ten minutes went by.

"I'm sorry babe. I love you," he said clasping his cherry lips with mine.

My trembling hands led me to the closet. I had to change the damp clothes suffocating my skin. *I just wanted everything to go away.* I grabbed the nearest object, a blue tennis racket he played with on our first date at Pinebrook Park. We walked

there together when we bought our house months later.

First swing hit the back of his head. New prints covered the light-yellowed walls with the second blow. *This was my canvas.* Hot dripping liquid splattered on my face as the tiny squares of the sport's object imprinted his Indian features. The clock struck 11:11 am.

"I love you, too."

Our bodies lay in complete unison, and I submerged in the holiness of his frame. We locked eyes and fell into silence.

The distant ringing of the doorbell diffused into a Mozart melody. The front door burst open.

There were mumblings and turmoil in the back of my head.

"I heard screams," crooned a woman.

I looked away from my husband and saw my neighbor and police officers dressed in black.

Someone must have died today.

Fuga Mental
by Maria Mejicano
Art Illustration



Fuga Mental
by Jorge Ramos
Charcoal on Paper

For a Cold Night

by Bella Rodriguez

"Go away."

"Come back to bed."

"I'm busy. Just go."

The evening candlelight does nothing to help my weary eyes read the distilled notes. Words bleed into the melodies of an untuned piano. *I can't focus like this.* I shuffle across the floor, feet sliding against the surface out of rhythm.

"A drink wouldn't be too awful right now," I mutter to myself.

"Once you start, you won't stop."

"I thought I told you to leave me alone," I sigh, pouring myself a glass of whiskey.

"You know I won't do that."

"I wish you would," I turn around to see her silhouette leaning against the curtains.

"If you really wanted that, I wouldn't be here."

I say nothing and take a long sip of my drink, the liquid burning my throat. I examine her figure. Her large blue shirt covers just enough to leave room for my imagination.

"Go," I pray that she

won't listen.

My feet are dragging along the tiles again, leading me in circles until I sit at the edge of my bed. Toes dangling dangerously close to the ground.

"Are you ready now?" Her touch is cold.

"Will I ever be?"

"That's for you to decide," her breath sends a chill down my spine.

"So this time I get to decide?"

"You can't control everything," she whispers.

"I could never control you," I lie down and take a shuddering breath.

Memories dance across my vision, lighting up the dark room. Moments I took for granted. Songs I should have sung louder. Fights I could have avoided. Things that apart seemed unimportant, but together painted a picture that says, "Congratulations. You're an idiot." Maybe it's time I move on. I can't numb my thoughts with liquor. Why do I have to pick up the pieces? Why am I always the one left in the

shadows? Why does the sun laugh and mock me in my shallow home?

"Are you ready?" She's fading.

Perhaps I was never meant to feel the grace of warmth on my skin.

"Yes."

Just as quickly as she's there, she's gone. No traces left behind save for the blue shirt ly-

ing on the floor by the curtains. If loss were a taste, I'd spit it out as soon as it touched my lips. But it isn't. It's a sound and a cry that goes on forever. It leaves remnants in its agonizing wake. Histories forgotten when my feet slid across the pieces, shuffling the never-ending puzzle. No map to guide me. No notes to chase. Just a ghost and footsteps I can't bring myself to follow.



Endless Loop
by Marian Bulnes
Digital Art

Land of Equity

by Marian Bulnes

Make me [redacted]
[redacted] drown my identity.
Chain [redacted]
[redacted] ghostly [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] heroes
Shackled [redacted]
By greed.
[redacted]
Carve [redacted]
My immigrant hands to
Sell [redacted] your trash in [redacted]
My [redacted] home.
Sink [redacted]
[redacted]
My wages.
[redacted] destroy me with [redacted]
[redacted] feathery talk and political
[redacted] tricks.
Segregate me [redacted]
As I resist and [redacted] exist
In the land of equity.

Fading

by Alejandro Hernández
Photography

Dream

by Melody Roth

Let America be that dream that dreamers dreamed.
The birds are gone, the world is white,
The winds are wild, they chill and bite.
The colour has painted itself in my heart;
God bless America, land of star.
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

*Sources: Langston Hughes, Jack Prelutsky,
Harold Monro, Tato Laviera, Maya Angelou.*



Childhood
by Danilo Navarro
Photography



Checkmate
by Danilo Navarro
Photography

Missed Connections

by Nico Morales

I never felt obligated to reply to them. At least, not all the time.

At the very least, it was fun pretending I was the busty 25-year old girl being sought out by a man who claimed we held eye contact for five minutes.

Other times, I was a young man responding to someone's closeted attempt to seek out other men.

It was fun, until it wasn't.

Craigslist wasn't the most elaborate place in the world.

It was brief and straight to the point; there was no way to

miss what someone was trying to find.

There was an ad. A bizarre choice of words that would've made anyone else browsing the Missed Connections section instantly tab out.

I kept reading.

i'm losing my hamster in a custody battle. this must sound really stupid and it is, but i'll be at the bar at this location tonight if anyone wants an excuse to drink.

To the right, the map showed the area of the bar. It wasn't too far from me, and for the first time, I felt like doing more than humoring the typical crowd of people looking for nothing but sex.

i'll be there at 9 pm or so. look for the person by the bar having too many margaritas, i don't do shots alone.

Deciding to humor myself while also giving the person who made the post the opportunity

to get properly intoxicated, I went to the location that was on the map. The entrance was full of girls and couples laughing and blowing smoke in each other's faces.

The bouncer nodded at me as I flashed my ID, slipping inside a moment later. The music wasn't loud enough to make my skull shake, but it was getting there. Belatedly, I realized I've been here before and remembered the bar was located near the private rooms.

Walking there, I avoided looking at the people that seemed to meld into the same person on the dance floor. I knew they wouldn't be the types to haunt Craigslist like the misguided ghost I felt I was.

I saw the bartender giving pitying looks to someone pressing their face against the bar, two empty margarita glasses in front of them. Sitting next to them, I coughed lightly.

"It's barely 10 p.m., are you ready to do some real drinking?" Their head shot up, and we stared at each other for a few seconds.

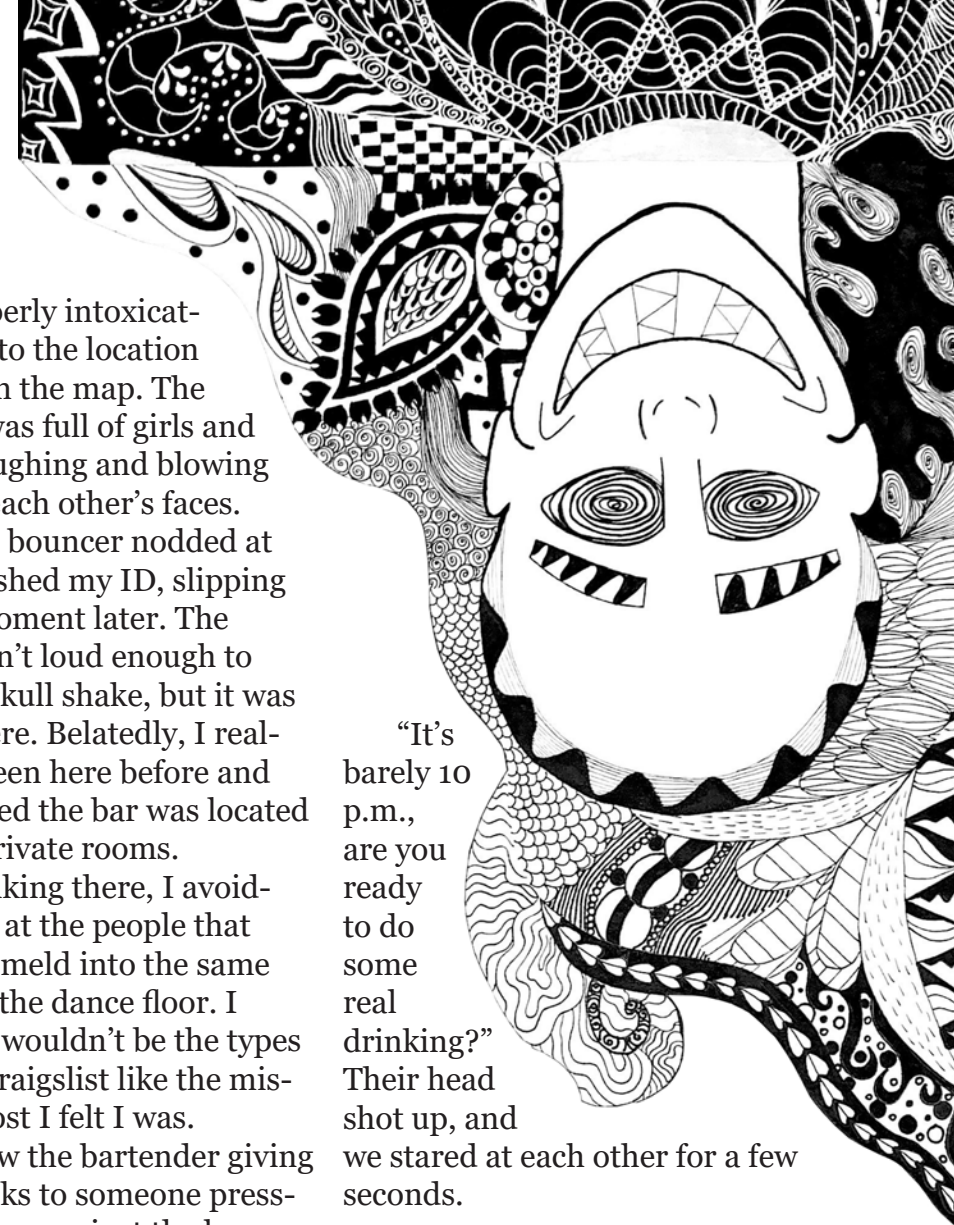
"Uh," they said. "Do I know you?"

"You don't," I confirmed.

"I saw your post on

Mad 4 You

by Anielka Figueroa
Ink on Paper



Craigslist.”

“Oh dude, seriously?”

Their voice went up so quickly that I jumped back, but they still crowded into my space. “I’m Ender.”

“You’re what?”

I asked, signaling the bartender as I moved further back.

“My name is Ender,” they explained, holding onto the base of one of their pushed aside glasses. “My roommate wants to take our hamster because she’s moving out, and I don’t want that, so I’m drinking. Nice to meet you.”

“I’m Owen,” I lied. “Do you want a real drink?”

I ended up shooting back glass after glass of foul-tasting liquid to forget a problem that wasn’t my own.

“Do you do this often?”

Ender asked, their hands roamed my face as I glued my

head to the head to the bar.

They looked at me more intently than the booze should have let them.

“I don’t,” I admitted. “I’m glad you aren’t a seedy person or anything.”

Ender only smiled, pressing a cool shot glass to my head.

I passed out there, the echo of bass ringing in my ear. When my eyes peeled open several hours later, the person I shared drinks with wasn’t anywhere to be seen.

I stumbled out of my seat, making my way to the front of the club. Patting my pockets, I couldn’t feel my wallet or my phone.

“Shit.”

[The following afternoon, a new post popped up in Missed Connections:
we met at a bar and i lost my things.]

“Do
you do
this
often?”

Meet Me at the Metro Station

by Daniela Hernández

Photography



Kitsune

by Manuel Tuñez

“Shioka, un pueblo abandonado, donde desgracias espantaron a los que alguna vez fueron sus habitantes.”

La niebla cubría todo pueblo, monte y bosque de Shioka, la tierra olvidada. A la entrada de la villa, justo debajo del Tori, yacían los restos de una joven, Kagetsu. Después de su muerte los pueblerinos se marcharon, huyendo de la maldición que supuestamente había en el lugar. Nadie se preocupó en darle el adiós al menudo cadáver de la chica que allí murió.

La hermana de Kagetsu, Inori, regresó a su pueblo natal después de 21 años.

La mujer entró al pueblo y se dirigió directamente al lugar donde se encon-

traba el cadáver de su hermana. Cuando arribó al lecho de muerte de Kagetsu, se arrodilló y llorando, empezó a orar con el objetivo de que algún Shinigami se llevara el alma de su hermana. Para que el alma de una persona fallecida encuentre el rumbo correcto y no se quede vagando en la tierra se debe hacer un ritual que la guíe al más allá.

Tras varias horas orando, Inori no recibió ninguna señal. Se retiró con un aura de tristeza y fue a descansar a la que había sido su casa dos décadas atrás.

A media noche, el plenilunio cantaba junto al viento del otoño, que hacía bailar a las hojas marchitas con sus melodías conjuntas.

Una sombra, saliendo de la exuberante flora del bosque, se dirigía a donde dormía Inori. Al introducirse en la casa, se acercó al lecho de la joven, donde comenzó a olfatear su cuerpo

curvo y se colocó sobre él.

Inori se despertó al sentir como algo húmedo y puntiagudo la rozaba. Quedó petrificada al ver que un ser inhumano estaba sobre ella; el ser era una incógnita. Tras la silueta percibida a contraluz de las persianas, se veían grandes curvas en su cuerpo, resaltando la feminidad de una mujer. Lo más extraño era que poseía unas orejas puntiagudas, un hocico como de zorro y que de su parte trasera relucían nueve largas colas.

La inhumana criatura agarró el delgado cuerpo de la mujer paralizada por el miedo.

Comenzó a lamerlo, como una hiena que disfrutaba el sabor de un jugoso trozo de carne. Su lengua se desplazó por todo el cuerpo. Comenzando en la frente, descendió hasta los labios, los cuales acarició delicadamente. Continuó dejando una línea de saliva por sus pechos y abdomen, finalizando en lo más íntimo de la mujer. Allí hizo estancia. Mientras lamía, se escuchaba

a la mujer gemir, sumida en confusión. Placer y miedo la ahogaban.

Cuando alcanzó el clímax, liberó un gemido que rebotó en todas las paredes de la habitación. Inori estaba desconcertada, sin la capacidad de ver o hablar. Finalizado el agridulce gozo, la criatura bebió los fluidos que secretó la mujer y comenzó a morderla como si fuera un juguete de goma. Le arrebató un brazo,

parte del abdomen y le comió la lengua. Su propia sangre le llenó la boca, asfixiándola. El dolor era inmesurable. Podía sentir cada uno de sus tendones tensarse, rasgarse y romperse ante los colmillos de la

despiadada criatura. Un dolor agudo en cada ojo encendió millones de estrellas blancas que se despejaban para dejarla sumergida en una oscuridad mucho más pesada y total que antes. Sus ganas de huir esa pesadilla no tenían límites pero ni siquiera podía gritar. Su mano desnuda, empapada en la sangre que perdía, trataba

“Placer
y miedo la
ahogaban”

Splittern

by Sonsoles López
Photography

de encontrar su lengua. Lo único que logró palpar fueron sus propios ojos, que retozaron por un momento entre sus dedos.

De pronto todo regresó a su forma y color; la oscuridad desapareció. Sorprendentemente, a pesar de las penumbras de la madrugada, la mujer podía ver todo más claro que nunca. Las heridas críticas comenzaban a cerrarse.

La criatura seguía en la misma habitación, observando a la mujer que empezaba a regenerarse. Inori se giró con la intención de verla, pero justo en ese instante, el kitsune se dirigió hacia el bosque.

Minutos después, Inori abandonó la casa. A cada paso, el rastro de su propia sangre disminuía. Sentía un hambre inmenso y comenzó a seguir un olor peculiar que despertó su apetito aún más.

Llegó nuevamente a donde dormían los menudos huesitos de una adolescente que apenas había cumplido los 19 otoños, su pequeña hermana. Se acercó a los deteriorados restos, los agarró sin titubeos y los introdujo en su boca. Los masticó hasta triturarlos y los ingirió. No dejó ni rastros del crimen que una vez fue cometido. Solo quedó la



tierra mojada por la saliva que derramó al saborear los huesos de su hermana.

Se levantó suavemente y comenzó a caminar, alejándose del pueblo, del monte, del bosque.

Mientras se alejaba, su silueta, a contraluz, comenzaba a cambiar. Sus orejas cayeron al suelo, como si hubieran marchitado y en su lugar brotaron dos triángulos puntiagudos. Su cuerpo se encorvaba por el dolor de la mutación que parecía estar sufriendo. De ella emergía un sonido agudo que parecía lastimar su garganta, un quejido doloroso que espantaba todo tipo de vida a su alrededor. De su piel crecían capas finas de pelo que se erizaban al entrar en contacto con el frío de la noche. De sus caderas se empezó a notar como dos colas nacían, ondeando en direcciones opuestas. Eran colas de zorro. Todo su cuerpo resplandecía con un tono rojizo. La sangre bañaba como una fina llovizna todo a su vera, resaltando el color de su nuevo pelaje carmesí.

La niebla cubrió el cuerpo de Inori. Ella se giró y sus ojos brillaron con un color ámbar intenso.

Braided Thorns

by Marian Bulnes
Photography

Eviction and Foreclosure

by Laura Santos

Can you be evicted from your body?
Did I ever own this home?
How can it be so futile to live within my soul?

All the disarray,
dissociated me from my mind,
corroded the edges of this vine,
where I brew my potion for the divine.
Who will have the will to take my life?
But was it ever really mine?

I found myself held by ruptured skin,
built with broken bones,
working with a pierced heart,
and living with a fractured soul.

Forcibly foreclosed by reality,
I fell victim to my own insanity,
became a truant to my mortgage
and found myself locked in storage.

Fetish

by Laura Santos

I wear my skin
As some kind of coffin
My soul perishing inside
My hands stained red
from holding broken hearts

In a sea of madness
The bottom of the ocean
Holds enough oxygen for me
While bricks are tied to my feet
The only thing I try to do to stay afloat
Is fall asleep

And with exacerbation
Every day I wish we could trade places
Me? six feet under
You? six feet above where I lie

I've been fetishizing my lifeless body
I've been fantasizing about my death
Is it gonna be tomorrow?
Is it gonna be today?
Will I be in pain or find eternal rest?

The end of my existence is my hope
bleeding into these words
which conceive the wish
To gore out my soul
Bonding tightly, my neck with the rope

Bonding
by Laura Santos
Digital Art

Wooden Basement

by Laura Santos

I hoped that day silenced my mind.

Reality woke the thoughts that slipped through the cracks of the blinds. The bed harnessed the energy my flesh left. In confusion, I found my extremities asphyxiated from the safety restraints that bounded me to the hospital bed.

Suicide watch read the orange vinyl bracelet on my wrist.

The door split open as if the devil stared right through; was it the reaper that finally came for me?

Paralysis overcame me betwixt breathless attempts to take control.

"You finally awoke. They found you in the basement," said the doctor submerged into the clipboard's paperwork. "What happened? You are so young. What forced you to do it?" He stared after noticing I was only seventeen years old.

I meditated possible answers. The real question is: Why did it take me so long to dare do it again?

I just lay in silence, amid

voices crippling my thoughts.

"You lost a lot of blood," the nurse mentioned while undoing the restraints.

"Not enough, though," I mumbled.

Incessant quiet described the beeping sound from the machine that monitored my life. I lay back with a smile, reminiscing on the memory from the basement, embracing this feeling as home. The wood absorbed the substance of my life. They say that you may infer the age of a tree by looking at its rings; funnily enough, in order to do so, you first have to kill it.

As I lay nauseous from the room's antibacterial odor, I dwelled on my body melting into unconsciousness; the joy of giving up. I was abruptly disturbed by the strident sound of emergency sirens and a couple of flatlines.

The taste of blood infected my mouth. The beating of my heart reverberated in my ears, yet the voices were louder.

With brisk gloom, a chilly

Awake
by Wolfgang Rugeles
Pen on Paper



feeling broke through the cracks of the basement's wooden floorboards; the atmosphere scorched with fire and humidity.

Flashes rushed through me like second-hand memories; my mind became the thief of hope. Lodoform and alcohol dozed me to sleep. It was not painful, just liberating.

I spiraled into a loop of despair. My angst suspected everything was just happening again, a *déjà vu*.

"I only did this for you." I spat against the reflection of my insecurity.

Fright and dismay composed the scene. Like glass, everything shattered around me, revealing an unbearable mad-

ness
and void.

"Knock, Knock.

It's not the reaper; it's better!"
whispered the shadow following me.

Incubus and his friends continued to climb on me. I lapsed down the road to hell; it was always within me.

Lucifer took shape from the underworld shadows in the room. His withered hands peeked out from his cloak. He traveled with an aura of loathing to indulge in the image of what I feared the most: immortality.

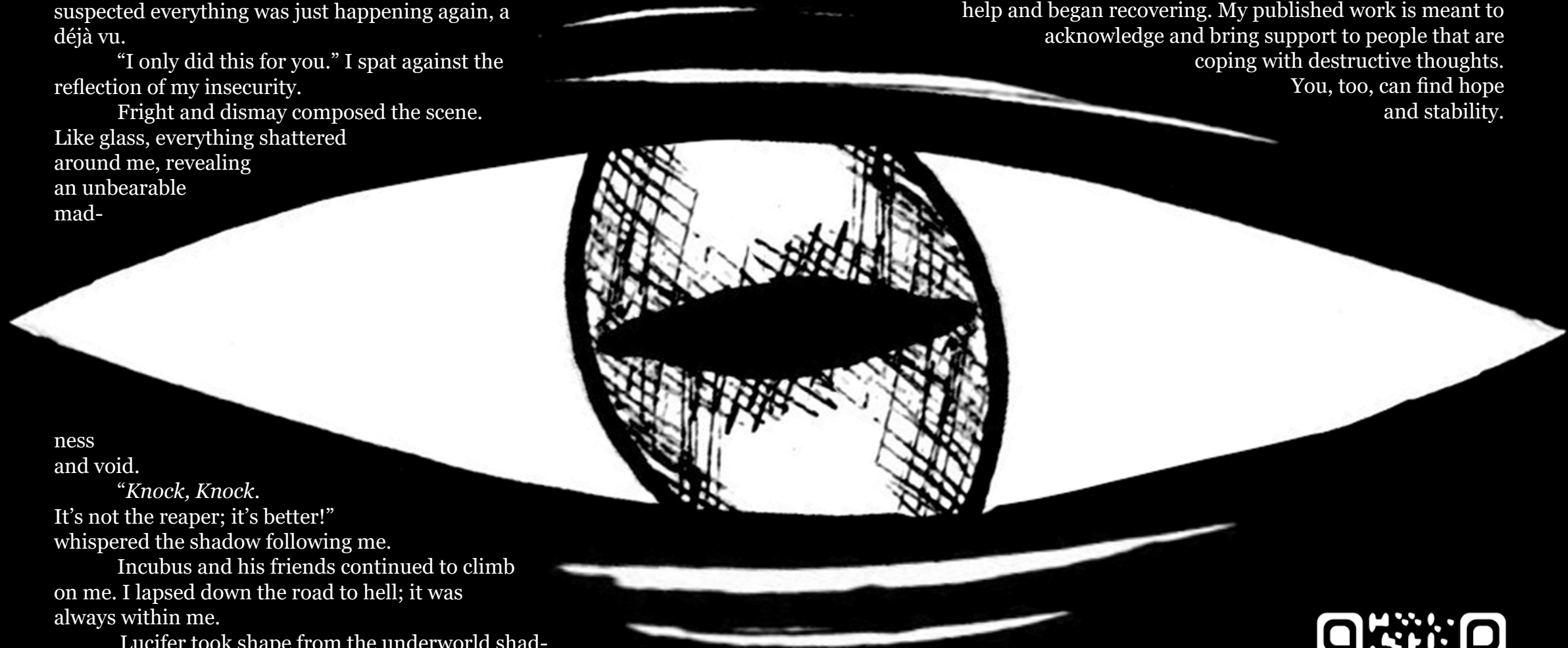
"Congrats! You've got what you longed for!" he grinned.

"As a supreme judge, I now condemn you to relive the moment where you felt the most joy: your death."

Author's Note

Having struggled with mental health issues for many years, it became a normal occurrence for me to live with repressed feelings. I joked around with suicide, raising concern among my friends and peers. With the support of the *Urbana* staff, I sought professional help and began recovering. My published work is meant to acknowledge and bring support to people that are coping with destructive thoughts.

You, too, can find hope
and stability.



If you are in distress or crisis, please contact 800-273-TALK (8255), or scan this QR code for more information.

Awakening

by Ana Laura Escandell

A pond of despair

The night's embrace of a man

A sunset, a verse

The Light of Peace
by Danilo Navarro Espinosa
Photography

Arde y late

by Laura Santos

¡Ay por favor!
Alguien ocupe este cuerpo
que carece en la sangre de fervor
o de un corazón que late con ardor.

Desde que caí en el olvido
Se presume que nunca ha habido
El disgusto y el castigo
que a alguien así haya corroído.

Por ende,
me entrego y baraústo,
con espíritu bélico, combusto
y tomando el arma al frente

Al apuntarla a mi oponente
me encuentro a alguien conocido.
Resulta que siempre he sido mi enemigo.

Life Flying

by Maria Mejicano
Art Illustration



Life Flying

by Jorge Ramos
Charcoal



I Can Talk

by Nico Morales

not my grandmother's hands, worn from years of caring,
nurturing and maintaining and creating
and how much she loved without saying so—
i am her antithesis.

not my mother's strong words and proud stance,
placating and forgiving and repairing
and how much she loved without saying so—
i am her antithesis.

not the restraints of our culture's tradition and standards,
suffocating and overwhelming and *traitorous*
and how i always feel their eyes on my back—
i am its antithesis.

antithetical, i prove to be:
child of women stronger than i will ever be, our coastal city in
my veins
and how the Atlantic lives within me, ocean currents where
blood should be—
my being is a patchwork of proofs.

Indifferent

by Alejandro Hernández
Photography

Hella Family

by Sophia de la Rosa

I'm Rigo, and I have no biological family, well, except for one little shit I love. This is me at the elevator as I get off work, and that short blonde standing next to me is Susie. I know, she's staring at me like she wishes I would give *her* a family. I flash a smile at her, all I can do considering she's married, and has a lover. But hey, I don't judge; I date a married chick myself.

"Bye, Rigo."

"See you tomorrow, Rigo."

"Bye," I reply as I walk out the door. Who are they? Not a clue, didn't even look.

I work for *GeNova Tech. Corp.*, an Italian company that's quickly developing in the world's technology market. We make almost anything. Well, they do, I just have great ideas. Even though I was born in California, I am Italian by heritage, so this company suits me.

As I drive through San Francisco, I feel a bit nostalgic. I don't know why, but lately, I think too much about my her-

itage. Not that I miss my parents, or anything, the bastards left me in a hospital the minute I was born, not even bothered to leave me at the orphanage themselves. I don't complain; I'm thankful they did. I'm just feeling nostalgic about the place itself. I don't know what part of Italy they came from; I've been to all of it, just in case, but I often wonder what gelato shop would've been my favorite, what cobbled road we would've taken home, what color our Romanesque house would have had and, you know, all that shit.

Luckily for me, I have Betty to keep me distracted from all that nonsense. Betty's that chick I was talking about earlier, the one I *said* I'm dating, but I'm actually *not*. We're just hooking up because she's got half a brain, something quite hard to find nowadays, and because she's into the Italian lover thing. Also, her husband's as good as a dead fish in the bedroom.

This is about a regular day for me; go to work, get

out, fuck Betty, and go home. Sometimes, I have plans afterwards, like today, but I ain't going to keep Betty waiting. I park three blocks away from Betty's building, outside St. Philomena's Church. The couple goes there every Sunday; I just get out of my car, nod at it in gratitude, and pray to *Papa Dios* I don't get fucked over for my so-called sins.

Once I get to Betty's, I greet George, the concierge. He thinks I'm a preacher, you know, black suit and all, so he lets me in. I go upstairs and walk through the brick red halls until I find apartment 8, Betty's home and, as usual I knock. Door opens.

"Hey, you're not Betty—"

I get punched in the face so hard I'm slammed against the door in front, and a big, pale man grabs me by the collar and brings me inside Betty's apartment. The jock closes the door behind me. I'm sat by force in one of Betty's dining chairs, and I recognize the

huge dude in front of me.

"You think I wouldn't get you, bastard?" he says looking down at me.

"Hi, Ronny, it is so nice to finally meet you!"

"So you do know me," he growls.

"Now, of course I know you! Betty talks a lot about you! How's work? Catch many fires lately? I've heard there's been a few down—"

And I am punched again.

"Shut up! Betty's down at the hospital, took an extra shift. Do you know why you're here?" he asks, frowning like a damn grizzly.

"I do. It's because you're not giving poor Betty what she needs. Not good, man, not good. Ever consider therapy?"

"You sick piece of shit!" he yells as he punches me again and again against the dinner table. I feel the blood running down my nose and eyebrow, "I knew you were sick from the moment I saw you at the hospital! All those nights Betty got home late to take care of *you*, she said you were defenseless but I *knew*! I knew from the moment I saw you, you fucking, manipulative

"You
sick
piece of
shit!"

psycho! You like getting it with other men's wives, huh? Here's what you're getting!"

He punches me nonstop, and I feel the swelling start. Without letting go of my shirt, he grabs a pan from the sink to hit me, and *man*, I think that is it for me, but then, all of a sudden, the door blows open. Ronny looks stunned at the four strangers in the living room.

"What the—"

"—fuck are you guys doing here?" I interrupt Ronny; I am more shocked than he is.

"You weren't supposed to come to Betty's today, asshole," says Zaffiro, the girl with a ponytail, holding a tennis ball on her hand.

"Exactly. And, you're welcome, by the way," says Shigo, the other girl in a pixie, the hot one.

"You're welcome for what?"

"You're getting killed, dumbass!" That's Enzo.

"Dude, for real, let's just

kill him ourselves," and that's Johnny.

"Nah, he'll live, no way he's bailing on us today," Shigo tells Johnny.

"How the hell did you find me, you creeps?"

"Find My Friends, remember?" says Zaffiro.

"You weren't supposed to come here today, dickhead, we told you, straight home after work, remember?" says

Shigo.

"What, you jelly baby?" she raises an eyebrow.

"You wish."

Hell yeah, I wish. That's Shigo, the impossible thing I told you about. Rigo and Shigo.

Get it? Well, that's because the day I was born, and the orphanage people came, they saw Shigo's hospital crib next to mine and thought she was my twin. So they gave *her* the name that was meant to be for my actual twin sister, Zaffiro. What's with the other two?

They were born the same day, in the same hospital as Zaffiro, Shigo, and I were, and they

**"You're
getting
killed,
dumbass!"**

were taken to the same orphanage. We all were. They're not related or anything; in fact, they're a couple. But they are *my siblings*; they *all* are, even Shigo, the one I want to get it with so badly. What? You think I'm sick, like Ronny said? Well, you haven't met *them*.

"What the hell are you doing in my house?! You're gonna have to pay for that door, buddy!"

"Sure thing, dude," says Enzo. "I was gonna give this here to my brother, since he likes them so much and says they're so expensive." As he points to Johnny's hand, I notice what he's holding, and my eyes open wide. "But I guess it'll pay."

"No please, not a viol—" I yell, but it is too late. Johnny smashes a brand new Mezzo-Forte black violin into Ronny's head. He falls next to my feet, "Why, man, why?! That was a *gorgeous* violin?!" I am devastated, what would they know! But, I have to admit, it was a very sensible gift, coming from two NASCAR drivers. Ronny gets up quickly while I think. Then again, I always am thinking.

"You're gonna pay for

that, motherfucker!" Ronny charges towards Johnny but gets hit in the nose by a tennis ball. He screams in pain. It looks like my twin broke his nose.

"Really, Zaff, a *tennis ball*? I'm your twin, for fuck's sake!"

"I know, that's why I was the only one to buy you something you really deserve. I know you too well, asshole." I don't know how they let *her* become a kid's shrink. I guess she played the orphan card.

"I'm calling the police, you guys are cra—" Shigo throws a whole bottle of whiskey at him.

"AGH, my eyes!"

"Shut it, Huggies."

"NO, not the thousand-dollar Scotch! You bieeea-csh," I deform the word as I talk because I don't want her to break one of my bones as well.

"Quiet, idiot. Enzo, let's get out of here."

My brothers carry me outside and my sisters close the door, leaving behind a crying, nose-broken, manhood-less Ronny. One thing is for sure: I won't call Betty again.

The five of us run down-

stairs, quick-pass George, and walk to my car.

"Think he'll go to the police?" I ask.

"Nah," says Johnny, "he got you first."

"Dude, he left you looking ugly," says Enzo, and the rest laugh.

"We're gonna be getting him a face reconstruction instead," Shigo says, and the bastards laugh again.

"Liked my old face that much?" I tease her, "Don't worry, I've always known."

She hits me in the back of my head, and I groan in pain but laugh with them. Quite the hand, she has. The she-devil won't work and spends her life learning Krav Maga.

See, I do have a family. Not a regular one, but the best one I could possibly have. I mean it when I say I was grateful for my parents leaving me at the hospital. They left me right where fate wanted me to be. Oh, did I mention? Today's my birthday. Well, *our* birthday.

Parts of Me
by Anielka Figueroa
Color Pencils on Paper





Perspectives
by Alejandro Hernández
Photography

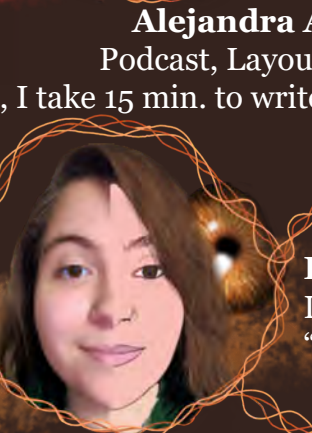
Urbanites



Giselle Valdes
Co-Editor-in-Chief
“I don’t want the fire.”



Marian Bulnes
Co-Editor-in-Chief
“I will use the raqueta.”



Alejandra Almada
Podcast, Layout, Editor
“Yes, I take 15 min. to write a text.”



Laura Santos Somohano
Layout, Editor, Illustrator
“I’m in confusion.”



Daniela Hernández
Webmaster, Editor
“It’s ANONYMOUS.”



Bárbara Silvera Ramírez
Social Media Director, Editor
“Is that even a word?”



Nathalie Guillén
Editor
“Ok, can I talk now?”



Daniela López
Editor
“It can work with editing.”

Meet Our Staff!



Manuel Túñez
Editor
“No, it’s Japanese.”



Emily A. Sendin
Advisor
“I want to be Khaleesi!”



Wolfgang Rugeles
Layout Director, Illustrator, Logo
Designer
“Later, se me calma.”



Helen Menendez
Music Editor
“I’ll try.”

Maria Patricia Mejicano
Lead Layout
“Sure, I’ll fix it.”



Sonsoles López
Layout Manager
“A little more to the left.”



Danilo Navarro
Videographer
“OOOEEEEEE.”



Jorge Ramos
Art Director, Illustrator
“Oh, I see!”



Christopher Tormo
Illustrator
“I will draw your eyelashes.”



Karla Cardoso
Editor
“Hmmmm ...”



Anielka Figueroa
Illustrator
“It’s pretty... for a calendar.”



Yordan Borges
Web Designer
“This version is free.”



Alejandro Hernández
Photography Director
“Garbage.”



Juancho Martínez
Performer
“I love everything.”

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@urbanalit



Urbana Literary & Arts Magazine



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urbanalit.com

Besides showcasing the skills of the students at MDC Eduardo J. Padrón Campus, we also display the talent and hard work of *Urbana* members:



Videos



Music



Urbanarts



Awards

Florida College Systems Publications Association November 2019 Conference On-the-Spot Flash Fiction Noir Contest

1st Place

“Brushstrokes,” Marian Bulnes

2nd Place

“Ruminating,” Giselle Valdes

Urbana 2019-2020 Fiction Contest

1st Place

“The Collection,” Sofi Heuchert

2nd Place

“The ‘M’ Word,” Alejandra Almada

3rd Place

“Haircut,” Damari Marichal & Alejandra Almada

Urbana 2019-2020 Photography Contest

1st Place

Meet Me at the Metro Station, Daniela Hernández

2nd Place

Under, Alejandro Hernández

3rd Place

Angels in the West Bank, Eleazar Asencio

Awards

Florida College Systems Activities Association 2019-2020 Publications Students of the Month - Padrón

September: Marian Bulnes

October: Giselle Valdes

November: Daniela Hernández

January: Laura Santos

February: Bárbara Silvera

March: Alejandra Almada

April: Wolfgang Rugeles

May: Sonsoles López

June: Maria Patricia Mejicano & Jorge Ramos

For a complete list of *Urbana* awards,
please go to our website: urbanalit.com.

Thank You

The *Urbana* team is lucky to receive unparalleled support from our Miami Dade College Eduardo J. Padrón community.

We are grateful to Media Services for printing our posters and advertising our events and campaigns. We would like to thank Network Services and Learning Commons for providing our staff laptops and necessary softwares. A special thank you to Omi Ramirez for his insightful feedback!

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We are thankful to our advisor and Khaleesi, Emily Sendin. We could not have asked for a better person to represent and care for us. We are a family because you ignite such unity among us.

Most importantly, thank you, the reader, for allowing your soul to navigate through every artistic medium entrusted in these pages.

With love,
Urbana V13 Staff

Urbana Literary & Arts was founded in 2007, and its purpose throughout the years has been to promote artistic and creative work within our student body of over 3,000. Since its inception, our magazine takes pride in its sole mission of serving as a medium of expression for students. *Urbana Literary & Arts* Vol. 13 was published in June 2020. Three hundred copies were distributed at no cost.

The views expressed within these pages are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of our institution. Copyright of the work showcased in this volume remains with the individual authors and artists.

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We can be reached at (305) 237-6070, urbanalitpadron@gmail.com, or visit our website at urbanalit.com.



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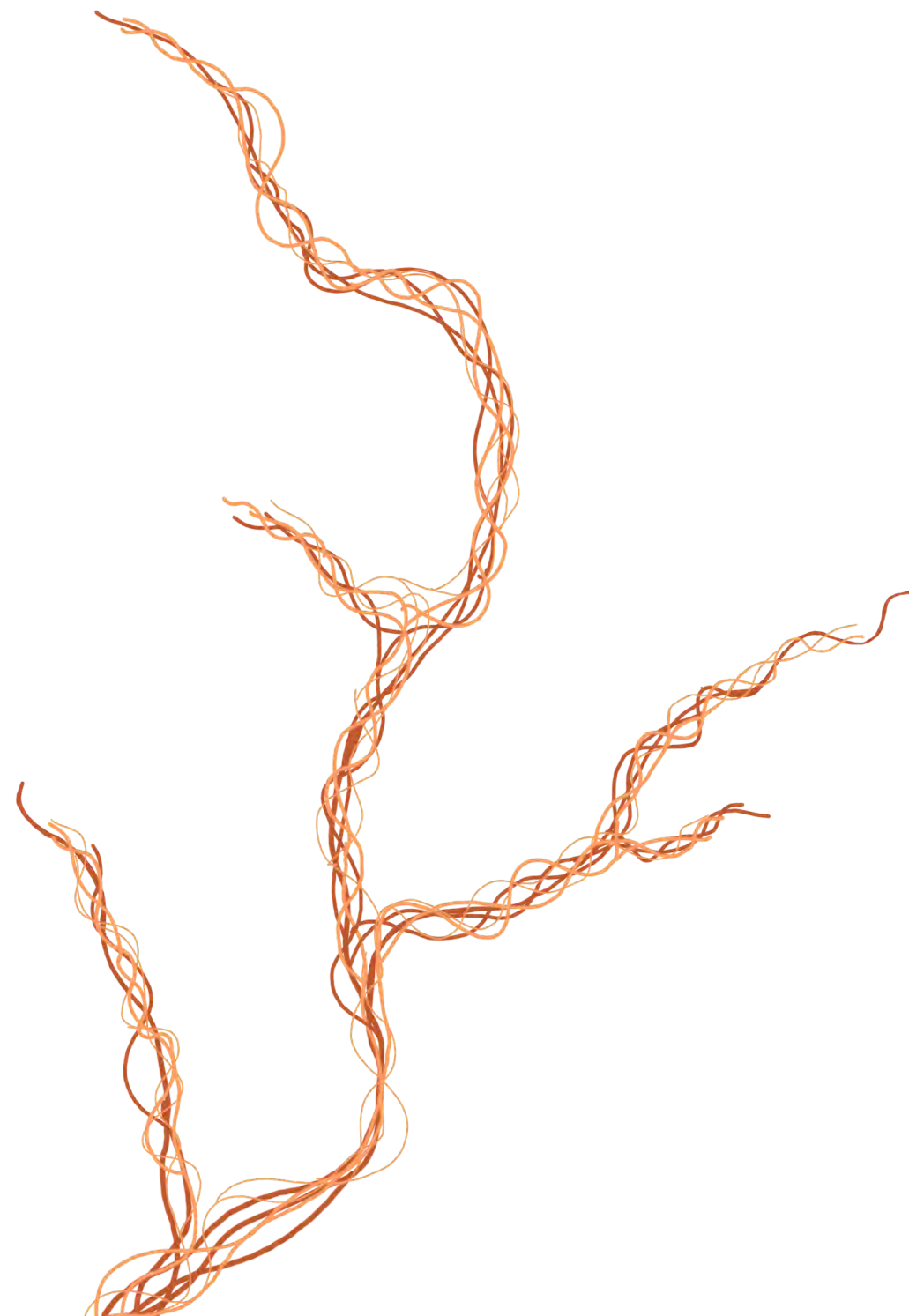
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