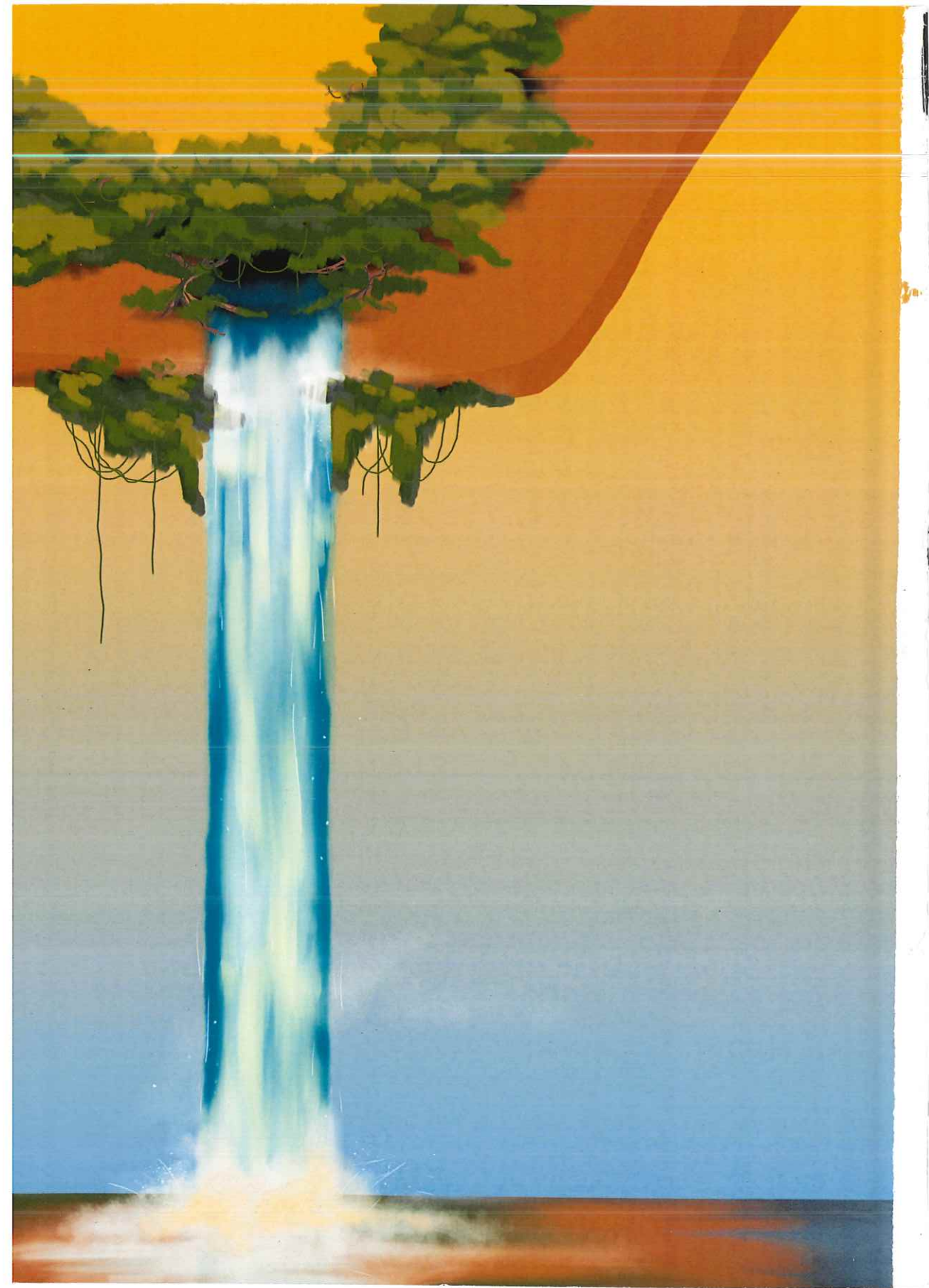




UFA **BANA** **XIV**
LITERARY & ARTS



UCF BANANA XIV LITERARY & ARTS

Eduardo J. Padrón Campus
Miami Dade College
Miami, Florida



Some of the content in this magazine addresses sensitive topics. If you or someone you know is struggling with any of these issues, scan our QR code for more information on how to get help.



Editors' Note

In September 2020, the *Urbana Literary & Arts* magazine volume XIV staff met online for the first time. With new additions to our team, to this day, many of us have never seen each other. Before us loomed a distance that felt insurmountable. With one purpose in mind, we got down to our keyboards to do what we do best: create. We wanted to convey all our hopes; however, reality hit us every day like a tsunami. And if we had learned anything, it was that closing our eyes to reality is just as dangerous as burying all illusions. Thus, our staff embarked on a journey to discover and expand our worldview.

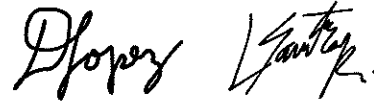
Humanity has always longed for the idea of a better world; however, better acquires a new meaning as time progresses, and it is dependent on each individual. Even seemingly unattainable at times, we always aspire for more than what we had before. With this volume, the *Urbana* XIV staff aims to convey that longing for ever changing needs, desires, and aspirations while deterring scenarios that do not coincide with our ethics and principles.

As it is in the eyes of the beholder, the same principle applies to the concept of what is ideal or otherwise. For some, the idea of utopia may rely on the dystopian existence of others. This relates to concepts like the environment, other species, conservation or destruction. In addition, it is also based on several factors such as ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender and race.

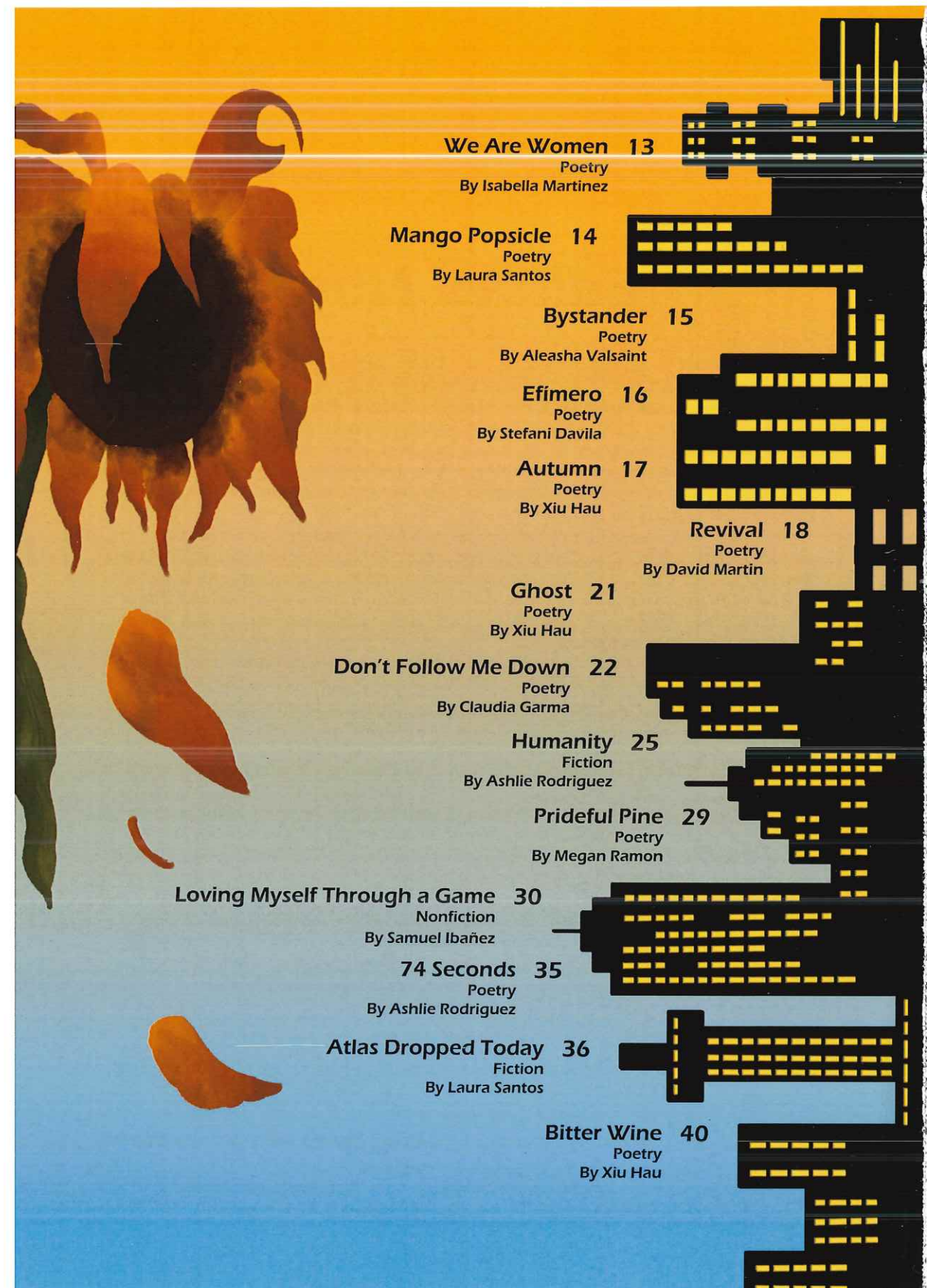
With this volume, we want you, the reader, to explore your perspective on your requirements for a utopia while accounting for how others' utopias might differ from your own ideals. For a significant portion of history, many believed in the subjugation and exploitation of the *other* in order to advance their idea of a better world. And to this day, some still believe that in order for the world to be a perfect place, it is necessary to exert control, power, and dominance over any entity that threatens the establishment.

We invite you to venture into the content of our pages and website to challenge your paradigms. As Margaret Atwood has taught us "Better never means better for everyone ... It always means worse, for some." So what is a *better* world for you?

Peace and love,

Handwritten signatures of Daniela Lopez and Laura Santos in black ink.

Daniela Lopez and Laura Santos
Co-Editors-in-Chief
Urbana Volume 14



We Are Women 13
Poetry
By Isabella Martinez

Mango Popsicle 14
Poetry
By Laura Santos

Bystander 15
Poetry
By Aleasha Valsaint

Efimero 16
Poetry
By Stefani Davila

Autumn 17
Poetry
By Xiu Hau

Revival 18
Poetry
By David Martin

Ghost 21
Poetry
By Xiu Hau

Don't Follow Me Down 22
Poetry
By Claudia Garma

Humanity 25
Fiction
By Ashlie Rodriguez

Prideful Pine 29
Poetry
By Megan Ramon

Loving Myself Through a Game 30
Nonfiction
By Samuel Ibañez

74 Seconds 35
Poetry
By Ashlie Rodriguez

Atlas Dropped Today 36
Fiction
By Laura Santos

Bitter Wine 40
Poetry
By Xiu Hau

LITERARY Content

41 Her Gift
Poetry
By Xiu Hau

44 Génesis
Poetry
By Daniela Lopez

47 Nightly Despair
Poetry
By Laura Santos

48 Arachnocalypse
Poetry
By David Martin

49 Redemption
Poetry
By Daniela Lopez

50 Illusions of Freedom
Poetry
By Jose Moreno

52 Jacob and Amelia
Fiction
By Luisana Ortiz

59 I Do Know
Poetry
By Isabella Martinez

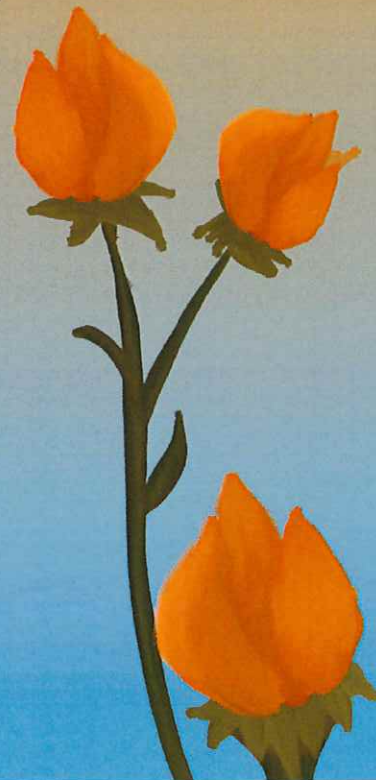
60 Gray Sky
Poetry
By David Martin

61 Nancy Sue
Poetry
By Megan Ramon

63 Snake Charmer
Poetry
By Laura Santos

68 Prophesying
Poetry
By Laura Santos

69 She
Poetry
By Cristina Garcia



ART Content



10 Virtual Sunrise
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles



12 Aesthetic Light
Photography
By Alejandra Riveros



14 Free Range to Hurt
Digital Illustration
By Camila Ramirez



16 Vibras
Photography
By Stefani Davila



17 Find your Light
Photography
By Liana Bravo



19 The Last Lighthouse
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles



20 Solace Underneath
Watercolor and Pencil
By Adriana Alonso



22 Memories of a Lifetime
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles



24 Behind the Curtains
Colored Pencil and Acrylic
By Adriana Alonso



27 Hidden Heaven
Photography
By Danilo Navarro

Gassy Barmaid 28
Digital Illustration
By Camila Ramirez



Paarpamthux and D20 30
Digital Illustration
By Wolfgang Rugeles



A Bard's Tale 32
Digital Illustration
By Wolfgang Rugeles



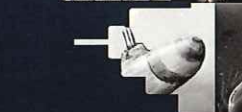
A Sense of Reality 34
Acrylic and Pencil
By Adriana Alonso



Crystal and Flowing 36
Photography
By Jose Mendez



Submarine and Torpedo 38
Digital Illustration
By Mario and Maurizio Casamassima



Spring Lovers 40
Digital Illustration
By Camila Ramirez



Blissful Sunrise 42
Acrylic
By Leandro Escandell



Origin 44
Digital Illustration
By Wolfgang Rugeles



Silence 46
Photography
By Jeidy Gonzalez





48 Blinded
Photography
By Jose Mendez



49 Disrupted
Photography
By Jose Mendez



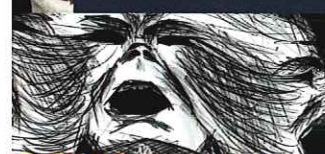
50 The Face of Anxiety
Acrylic, Watercolor and Pencil
By Adriana Alonso



52 A Man's Best Friend
Digital Illustration
By Wolfgang Rugeles



54 Tunnel
Photography
By Jose Mendez



56 Voiceless
Acrylic and Pencil
By Adriana Alonso



57 I Am Ok, Am I?
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles



58 The Power of Exteriors
Colored Pencil and Acrylic
By Adriana Alonso



60 Absence
Photography
By Jeidy Gonzalez



61 Nancy Sue
Charcoal
By Camila Ramirez



62 Galaxy Woman
Acrylic
By Leandro Escandell

Playing with Decay 64
Watercolor and Colored Pencil
By Adriana Alonso



Perfect Plastic 65
Digital Art
By Maurizio Casamassima



Green-Red and Blue-Orange 66
Colored Pencil
By Alejandra Riveros



Venus and Selkie 68
Illustration with Pen
By Camila Ramirez



Virtual Sunset 70
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles



Staff Page 72
Digital Art
Camila Ramirez, Jorge Ramos
and Wolfgang Rugeles



Content Pages
Digital Art
Wolfgang Rugeles



Day – Inside Front Cover
Digital Art
Camila Ramirez and Jorge Ramos

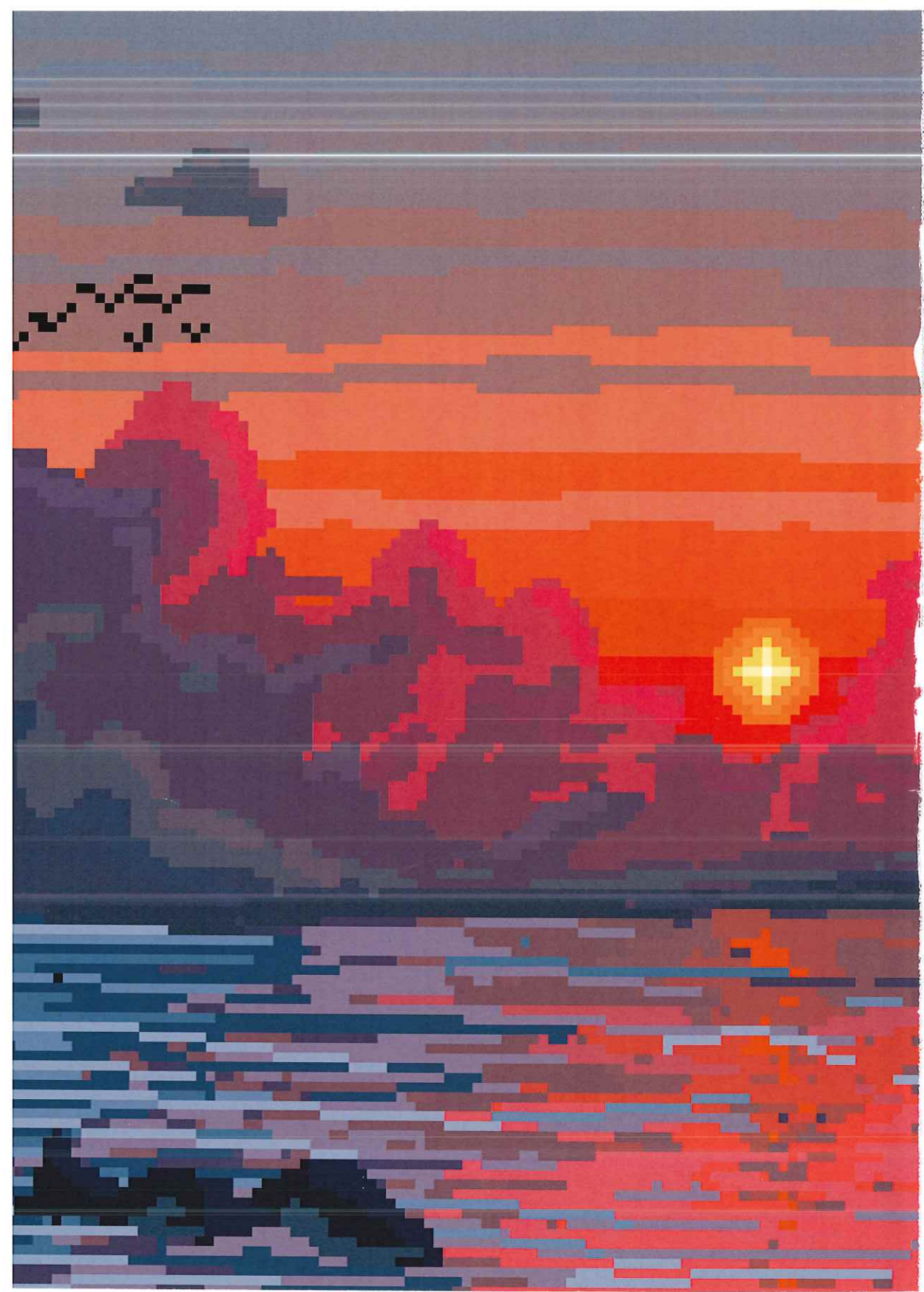


Night – Inside Back Cover
Digital Art
Camila Ramirez and Jorge Ramos

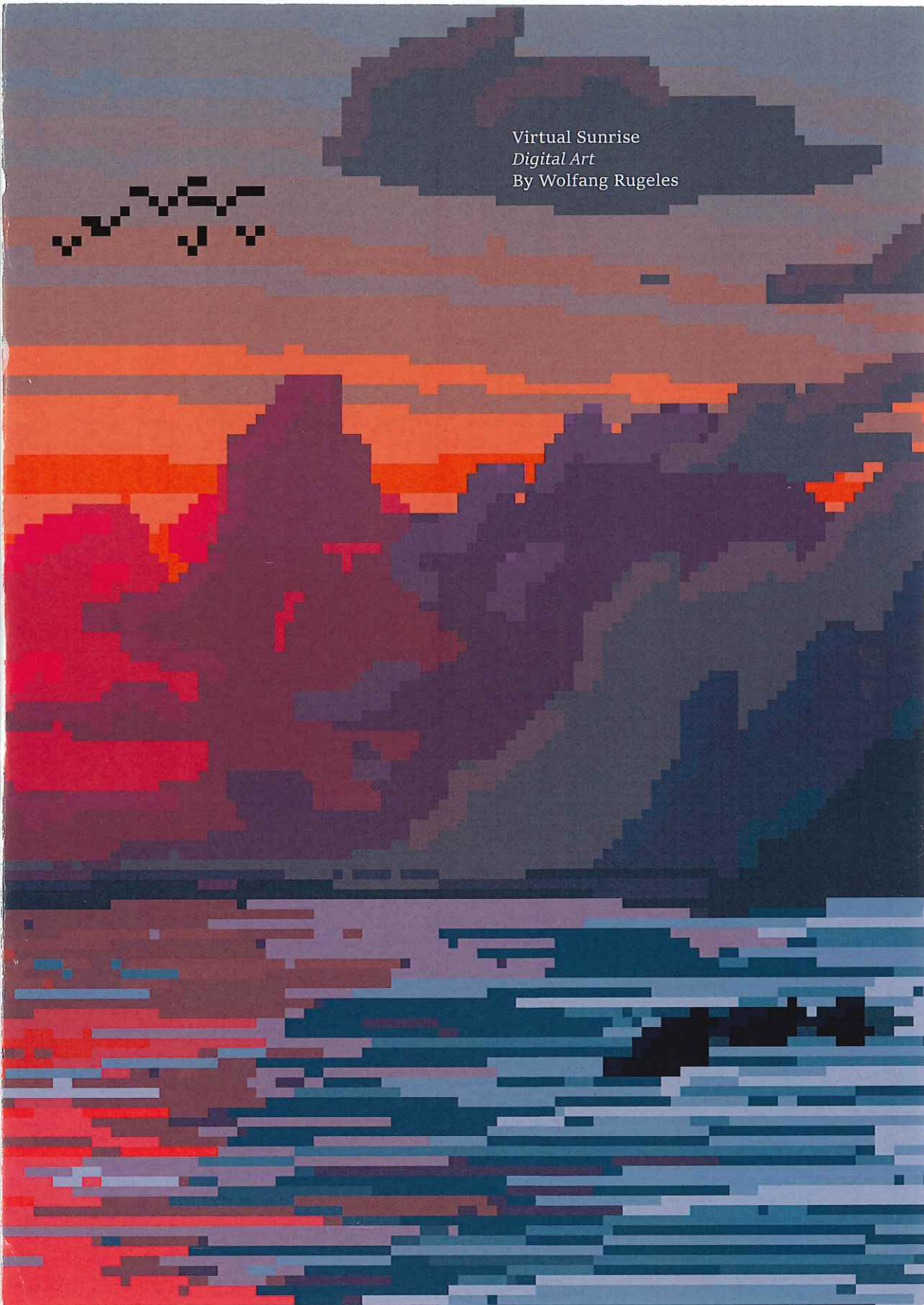


Front and Back Cover
Digital Art
Camila Ramirez and Jorge Ramos





Virtual Sunrise
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles





We Are Women

Poetry
By Isabella Martinez

She stands at the corner of the street,
Picking at her nails.
Her friend rushes to her side pushing her into the crowd,
Shouting: "Come on!"
She unrolls her sign, hesitantly raising it over her head
like others next to her.
"Our Voice Is Our Power," it reads.
The pounding in her head wasn't the sound of her beating heart
But the thumping of their steps,
the slaps of their hands,
and the roars of their words
A drowning harmony of one symphonic voice.
She feels the fever rise up from her soul.
At first, she speaks it.
Then her voice grows louder
Until she shouts it, cries it, shrieks it, roars it.
Until she too has become one of the waves
in this tsunami of female empowerment.
Her voice is coarse now,
and her lungs too are shouting at her to stop,
But there's no stopping her now.
Her voice will forever echo: "We are women!"

Aesthetic Light
Photography
By Alejandra Riveros

Mango Popsicle

Poetry
By Laura Santos

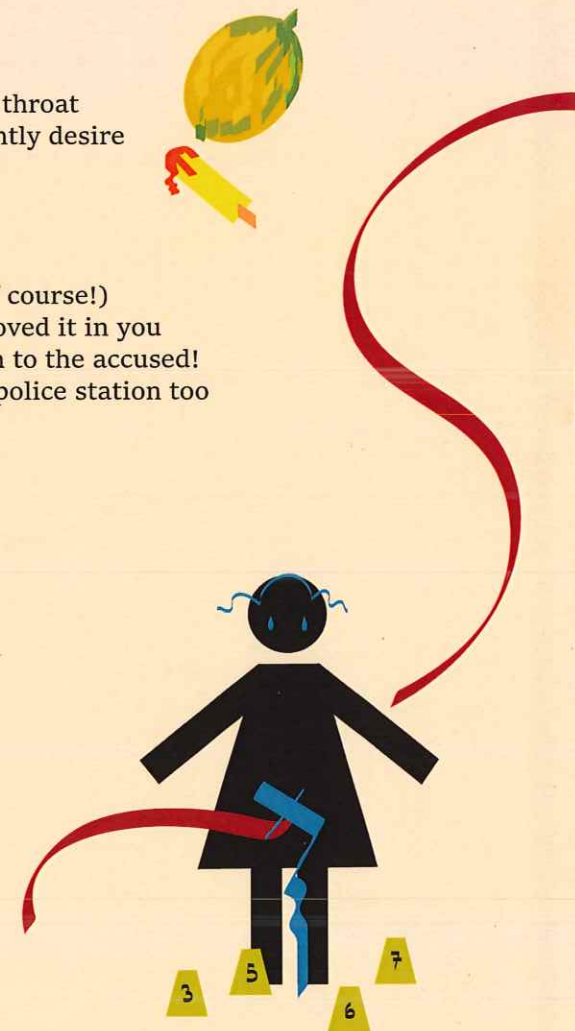
Trigger Warning: Sexual Assault, Suicidal Ideation

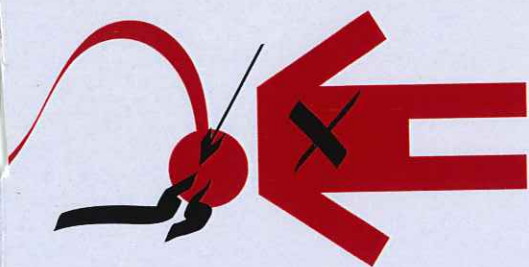
This body stopped being yours after that night
You won't ever get it back
Even if you prove them guilty
Even if you tell yourself it didn't happen
You're just a crime scene now
Everyone walks over looking for evidence
of someone they never wanted to trap

I kept choking on your cock
Like chunks of mango down a newborn's throat
And now, there's nothing I more vehemently desire
Than to choke once again
This time with just a rope

If you go to court, they'll rape you again
(for simulation purposes, for evidence of course!)
They've got to know in what angle he shoved it in you
Please! Please! Someone bring more porn to the accused!
You're lucky if they didn't do that at the police station too
Just to put your papers away
forgotten like the rape kit at Jackson

I know no one will remember me either
When I soon leave for eternal rest
At least, he will remember my screams



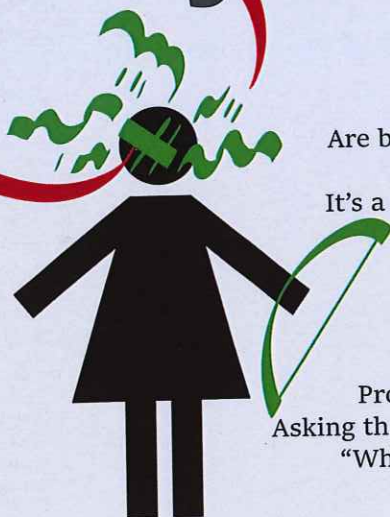


Bystander

Poetry
By Aleasha Valsaint

I am a bystander
I sit and watch day by day
As crimes, profound inhumanities
Are being committed against my brothers and sisters
Day by day
It's a constant and neverending play; no intermission
"The pain these poor families must be feeling"
I say as I turn my cheek the other way
"Why?"

I ask as I sit and do nothing
Instead of something, anything
Protesters in the streets asking the same questions
Asking those simple questions no one can seem to answer
"Why does your life have a higher price than mine?"
Because of a change in pigmentation
I scoff,
"What a world we live in"
I say as I sit and do nothing
Instead of anything, something
Just watching, always watching



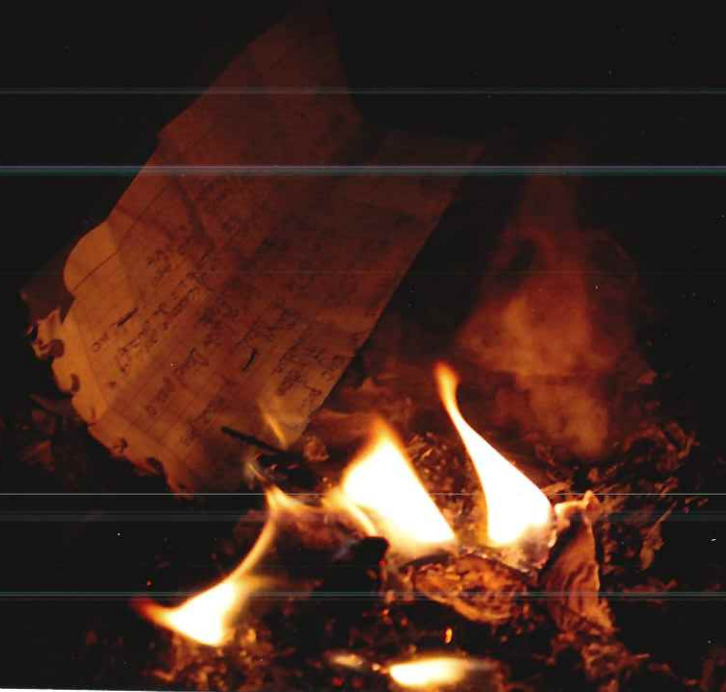
The Hunt
Digital Illustration
By Camila Ramirez

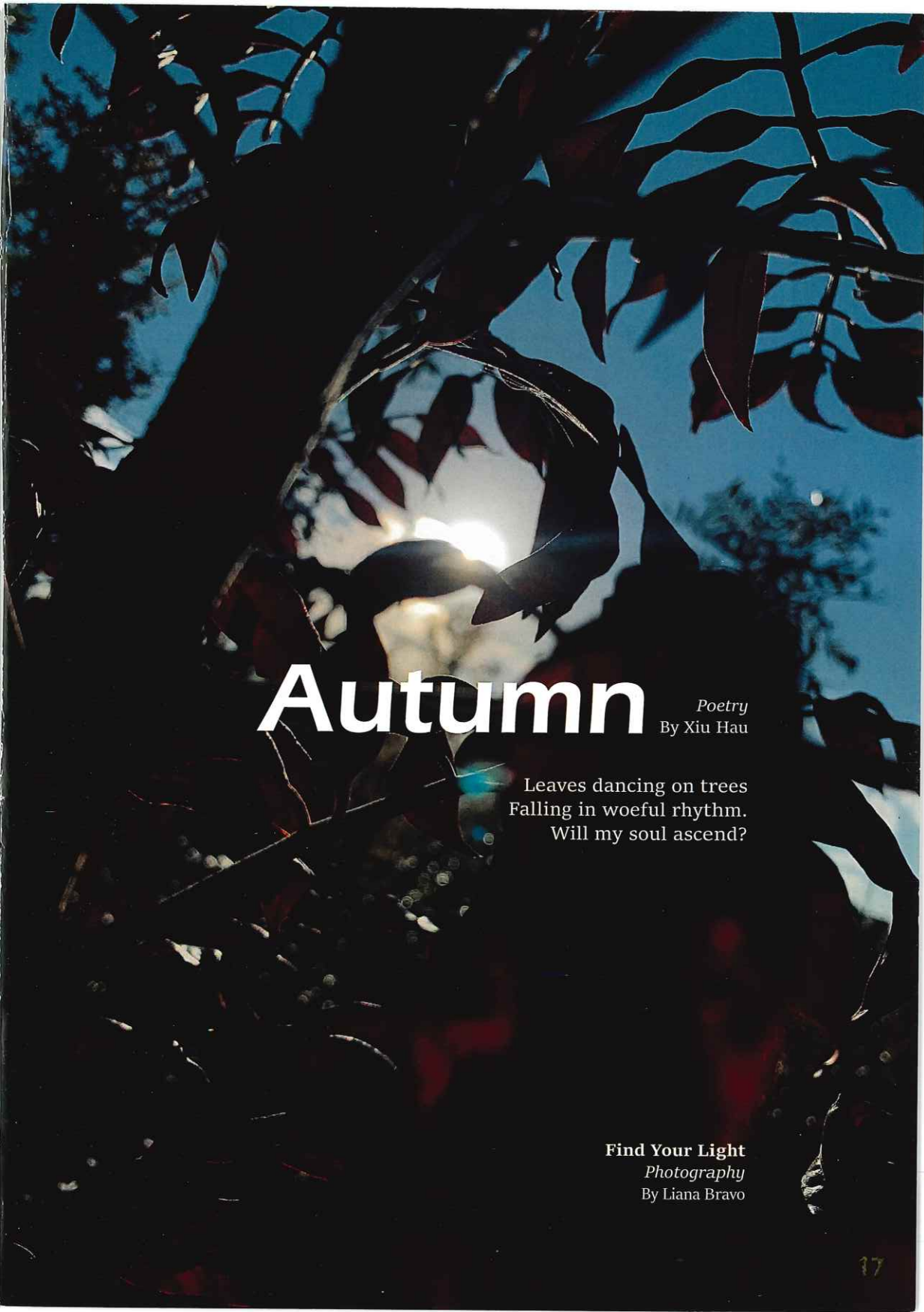
Poetry
By Stefani Davila

Efímero

Piel con piel,
la curva de su cintura
sintiendo sus delicadas caricias.
Su espalda siendo el lienzo
de los dibujos de sus deseos.
Sus piernas entrelazadas,
ese calor, ese ardor,
esos suspiros
llenos de palabras
que los labios
no pueden expresar.
Conectado el anhelo de su cuerpo
con la rebeldía de sus movimientos.
La noche cae, pero dile que fue eso,
que no lo puede olvidar,
dejar de sentir, ni recordar.

Vibras
Photography
By Stefani Davila





Autumn

Poetry
By Xiu Hau

Leaves dancing on trees
Falling in woeful rhythm.
Will my soul ascend?

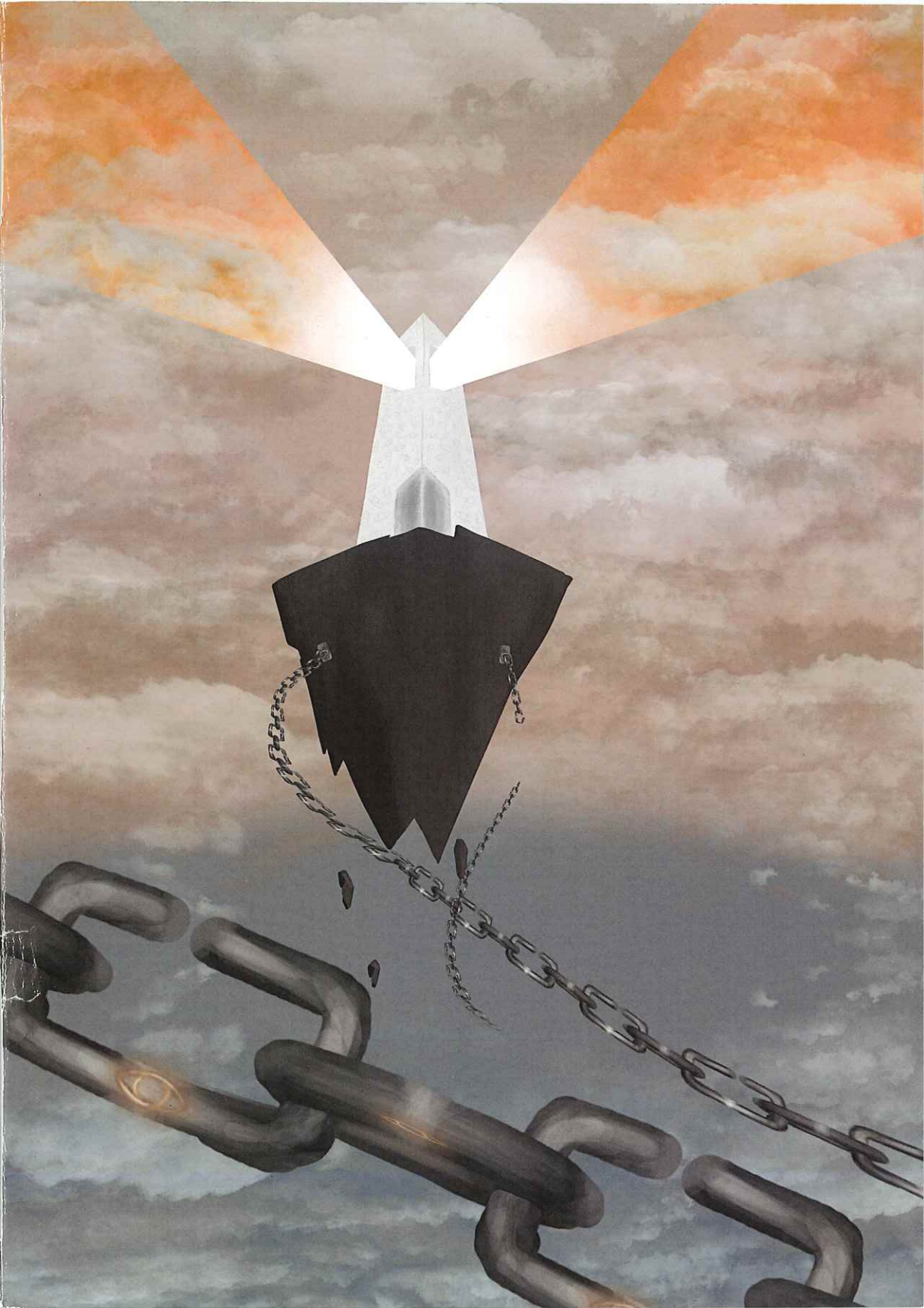
Find Your Light
Photography
By Liana Bravo

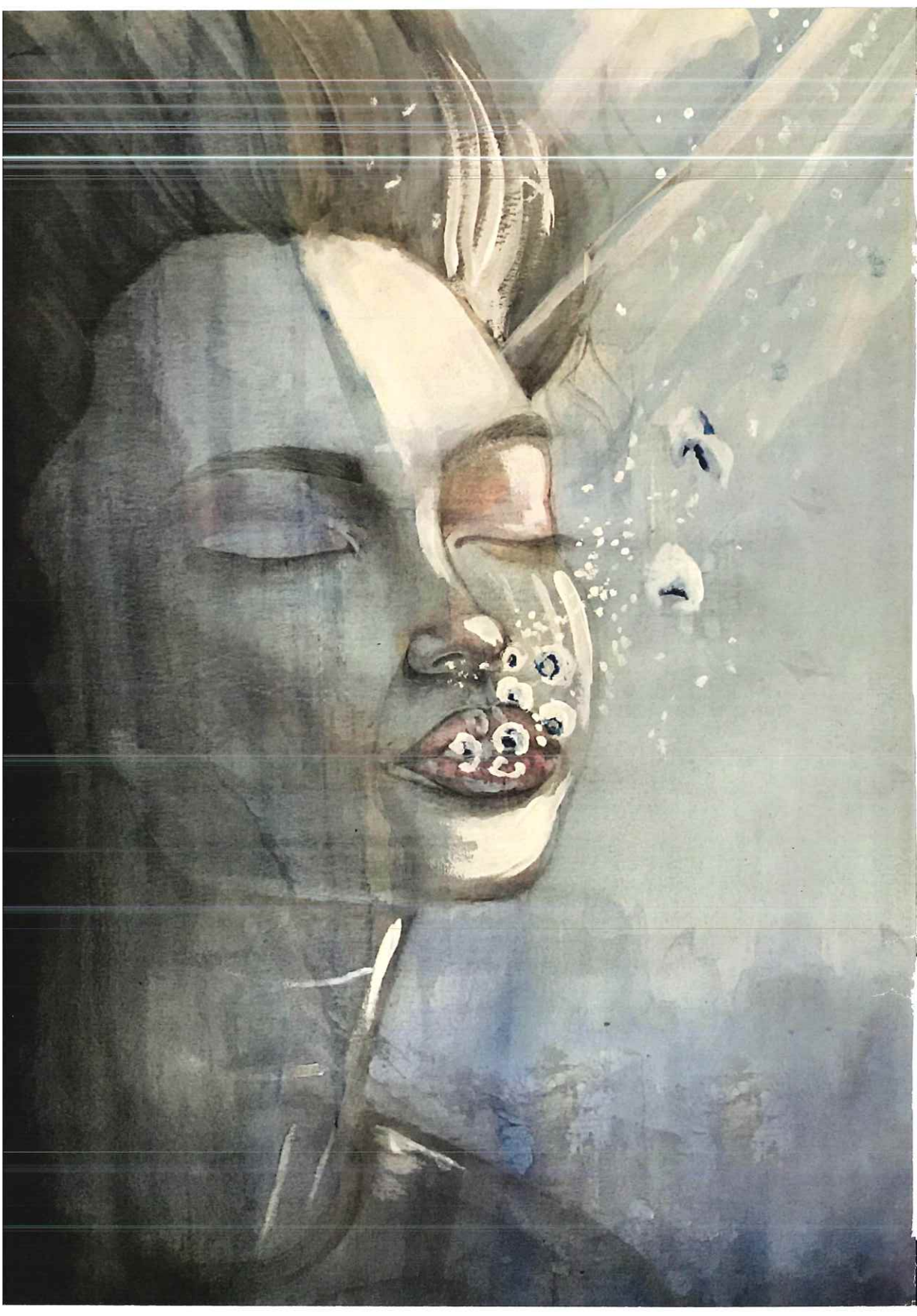
Revival

Poetry
By David Martin

With haste, you must hearken unto my cry.
There is no time to sway, nor to careen.
For our foe shall fall in the vile ravine.
And his tears shall bring joy to the red sky.
Tremble at our might, as you would at thunder.
Obey our presence like beasts of the field.
With rage, we seek to tear you asunder.
For it is here, that our house, we will build.
Remorseless, we laugh and annihilate.
This is how our spirits cross the great divide.
It is your flesh we seek to violate.
And our wrath has left you nowhere to hide.
Like acid, your foul essence we dissolve.
We curse our foe to death with quick resolve.

The Last Lighthouse
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles





Ghost

Poetry
By Xiu Hau

I think that day I saw her ghost.
I was mesmerized by her strength.
I think out of all, I miss her the most.

I left her memory on that seacoast,
just her presence took away my breath.
I think that day I saw her ghost.

Her bright soul took me in — well, almost,
I wished I had her at arm's breadth.
I think out of all, I miss her the most.

That time, I kissed her by the post,
and she almost brought me to my death.
I think that day I saw her ghost.

I would die to go back to that coast,
and get lost in her depth.
I think out of all, I miss her the most.

She made me feel like I overdosed,
and she freed me at great length.
I think that day I saw her ghost.
I think out of all, I miss her the most.

Solace Underneath
Watercolor and Pencil
By Adriana Alonso

Don't Follow Me

Down

Poetry
By Claudia Garma

Don't follow me down
My vision is blurry and my feet can't stand
I don't care now that he is not around

I walk barefoot all around town
Hoping something will help me understand
Don't follow me down

I feel stuck in the mud facedown
Now that he is gone all that's left is this drink in my hand
I don't care now that he is not around

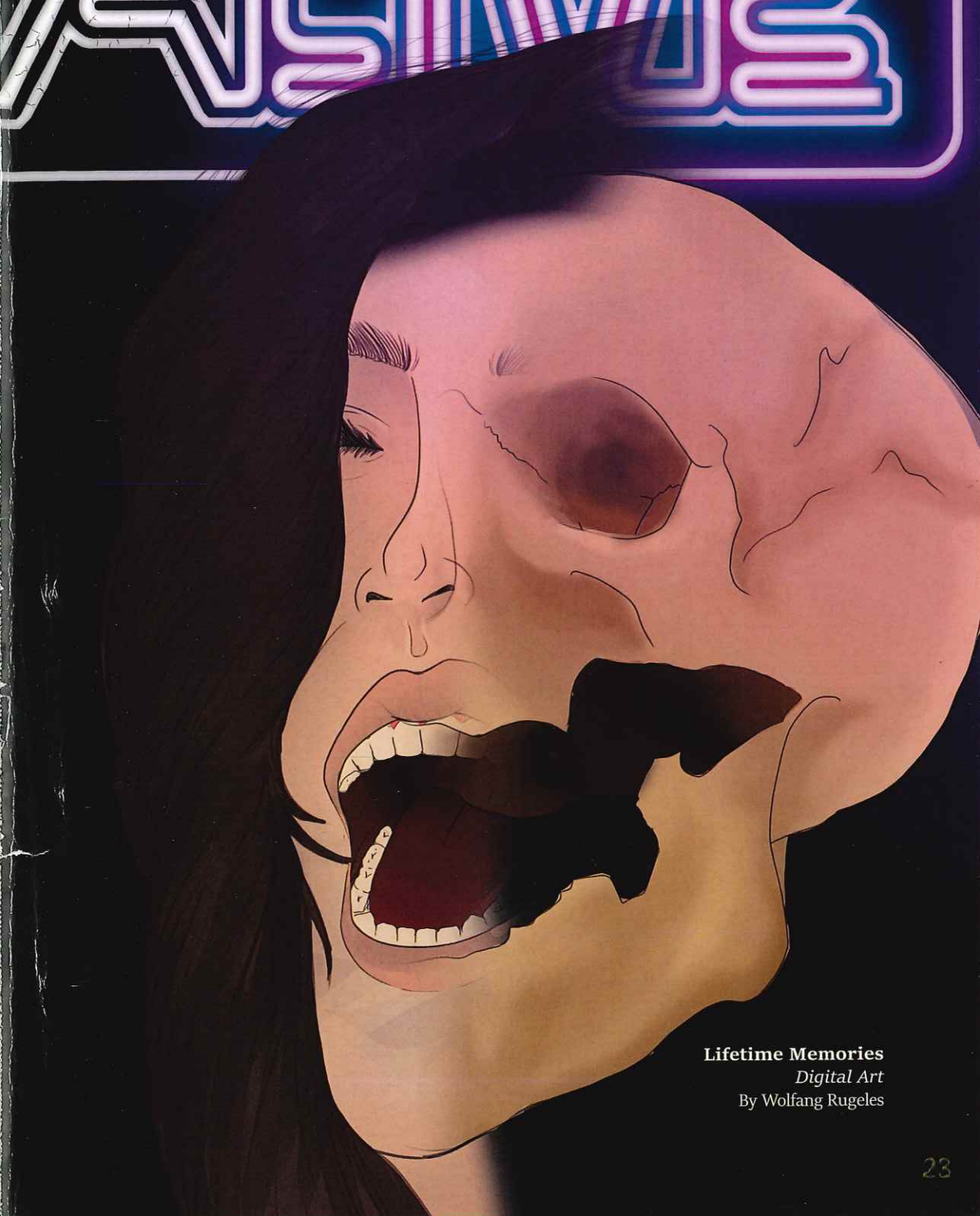
I live shades of brown
A bleak world filled with dead land
Don't follow me down

No light can reach me and I don't want to be found
This is not a life everyone can withstand
I sit pretty in my frown

While my life goes unmanned
I obey no command
Don't follow me down
I don't care now that he's not around

HOST

ALIVE



Lifetime Memories
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles



Humanity

Fiction
By Ashlie Rodriguez

My bookbag began to weigh the moment I stepped out of school, and it seemed to only grow heavier with each minute that went by.

I thanked the driver as I made my way down the last steps of the 252 bus. The first of a daily, two-part journey ended, and I was almost home. The last stop was still a little over a mile away from my house, so I had to complete my trek by foot.

Now, I wasn't in the best neighborhood, and I learned a long time ago it was best to keep your head down while walking through it. Curiosity wasn't the most admired virtue where I came from.

But looking back now, a bit of situational awareness would have been rather useful that day.

As I walked, I put on my headphones and began my daily routine of mindlessly scrolling through my music. By the time I looked up, I realized I was approaching two men standing by the sidewalk. I trudged ahead and tried my best to avoid eye contact, but my attempts proved fruitless when I heard a loud "Hey!" right as I walked past them. I reflexively winced at his harsh tone and turned to meet his eyes for the first time. They stood looking me up and down for what seemed like forever. The taller of the two had a sarcastic

smile on his face. I was at a loss for words, but even if I had known what to say, I couldn't muster the courage to speak.

"We're gonna need to borrow a couple of bucks."

He said it nicely enough, but I knew better than to think this was optional.

Before I had a chance to respond, the other stepped closer and was now in my face, reminding me not to lie. All they needed, after all, was a twenty.

**"I wasn't
that lucky."**

With shaking hands, I reached for my wallet, knowing its contents but hoping that it somehow wouldn't be there, that I had left it at home or that it had fallen into the depths of my backpack.

I wasn't that lucky.

There, peeking out of the envelope, was a crisp 100 dollar bill. It was a birthday gift, and I carefully planned how I would spend it for weeks.

"We have change," the man told me.

Of course they do.

I sighed.

I stared at the envelope, know-

Behind the Curtains

Colored Pencil and Acrylic

By Adriana Alonso

ing what was coming next. And sure enough, they yanked it from me and walked away. What's worse yet is that they didn't even pretend to run — just strolled, until I finally realized I wasn't getting my money back.

I stood there, defeated.

And then I saw him.

An old man witnessed the crime. He saw the whole thing go down. He approached me and asked if I'd just been mugged.

"They said they only needed a twenty, but they took the entire bill."

"I'll speak to them." I watched as he approached the men and made up a story about me not having any money to go home. Strangely enough, it worked. Although they didn't return the whole 80 dollars, they sent back 50.

I was just happy to have not been left with nothing. I smiled at my savior as he came back to me, but before I could begin to express my gratitude, he abruptly asked where

I was going.

"Home."

"How far away is that?"

"About a half mile from here."

He smiled at me. I reached out my hands, all the while praising the man for his kindness.

"It's my pleasure. I checked to make sure the whole amount is here," he said, and with that, he walked off.

I stood there, dumbfounded, watching the man's gait as I tried to process what had just happened. I thanked God for the man's goodwill, and vowed to be more like him: helping others in their time of need, with no expectation of reward or compensation. *There's still good people out there.*

My eyes followed the man until he was out of sight. I then looked down and carefully opened the envelope, ready to revel in my good fortune — only to realize he just gave me a single.

Hidden Heaven
Photography
By Danilo Navarro





Prideful Pine: A Cowboy Blown Away

Poetry
By Megan Ramon

Oh dear Chris Pine,
Aged like fine wine.
Stands proud in his cowboy hat,
Boy, what a sight to look at!

Just like any movie star,
He's got the ladies dying for him.
Walking gracefully into the local bar,
He ordered their strongest drink on a whim.

A beautiful woman stood behind the counter,
Catching his eye without a try.
La Flaca always packed some playful banter.
The townsfolk knew this, and never failed to stop by.

Chris, quite haughty he was,
Tried getting her attention with a wink.
La Flaca turned fast and let out a giant gas
So strong it sent Chris flying back.
He hit his car so hard even Canada heard the CRACK!
La Flaca turned to the rest of her guests,
And ended the deed with a bottle of Jack.

A toast to what everyone detests:
A cocky cowboy with no zest.

Gassy Barmaid
Digital Illustration
By Camila Ramirez

Loving **Myself** Through a Game

Nonfiction
By Samuel Ibañez

Trigger Warning: Transphobia

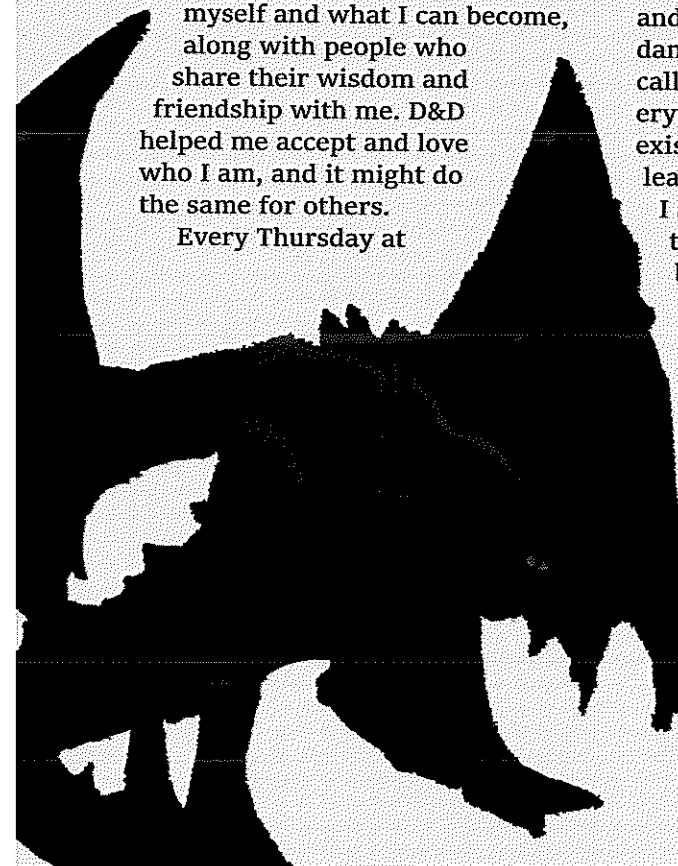
Before last November, I knew nothing about Dungeons and Dragons, usually abbreviated as D&D. On a Thursday afternoon, I discovered that this game entailed much more than combat, roleplay, and exploration. I embarked on an adventure with four perfect strangers, who embraced every aspect of my personality, even the ones I thought would be annoying. Through this fantastic adventure, I am learning about myself and what I can become, along with people who share their wisdom and friendship with me. D&D helped me accept and love who I am, and it might do the same for others.

Every Thursday at

8 p.m., four strangers and I connect to a voice chat while exchanging greetings. A few minutes pass while we prepare our characters and remember where we left the story last week. Then, someone will speak with a funny voice — the one meant to represent their character — and we take it from there. Today, we will march west to save a princess. My voice is high pitched, so voice acting is the bane of my existence. My character is an older man who tries to seek vengeance for himself and his dead lover. He loves to sing, dance, and flirt. He is unapologetically queer and outspoken. He is everything I will never be, yet he only exists through me and my words. At least for three hours every week, I am him. I believe in his convictions in the same way I wish to believe in mine. For three hours every week, I feel free.

I realized that I am transgender three years ago — trans-masculine, to be exact — I had been questioning myself for a long time, but it took a bit of encouragement from my closest friends to take a last step in my self-discovery journey. However, hardly anyone be-

Paarpamthux and D20
Digital Illustration
By Wolfgang Rugeles



lieves me when I tell them. For most people, I look too small and feminine with my delicate voice and colorful earrings.

"There is no way you are a boy. Maybe you are just confused," said one teacher I tried to come out to. This treatment did not improve when I transitioned to college. In the first week, I joined a group chat for one of my classes. I do not remember the context of the joke, or the consequent conversations. All I recall were the cruel "jokes" that my peers made against trans women, the hatred, and the implications. It will not be different for me, I thought. With my safety in mind, I closed the doors of my heart.

Even though I did not hate who I was, I became deeply insecure of everything I had believed about myself until that moment. *Am I a man? Is that what I want? Is that who I really am?* Deep within my heart, I knew the truth, but the fog of self-doubt is thick and painful to endure. I tried to be a girl for a while. I did not enjoy it. Also, I discovered I am terrible at doing my own makeup.

In the hope of cheering myself up, I revisited the activities that my high school friends used to do. One of them was D&D. After a few unsuccessful attempts of joining a group, I found a person who introduced me to a handful of nice strangers. We all played through voice, and we never saw each other's faces, yet the awkwardness seeped through every time

someone spoke. A couple of months later, we are a group of strangers who tell everything to each other. Within this corner of the world, I can be whoever I want to be. As a queer person who often keeps silence about his identity, this little freedom means everything to me.

The fear of being different does not exist. To be different is a blessing and a high-sought prize. I am different inside and out of the game. I am free.

At the end, I wish to backtrack what I said. "He is everything I will never be." That is true. I do not wish my life to be as painful as his. Nor do I want to fight dragons and rescue princesses.

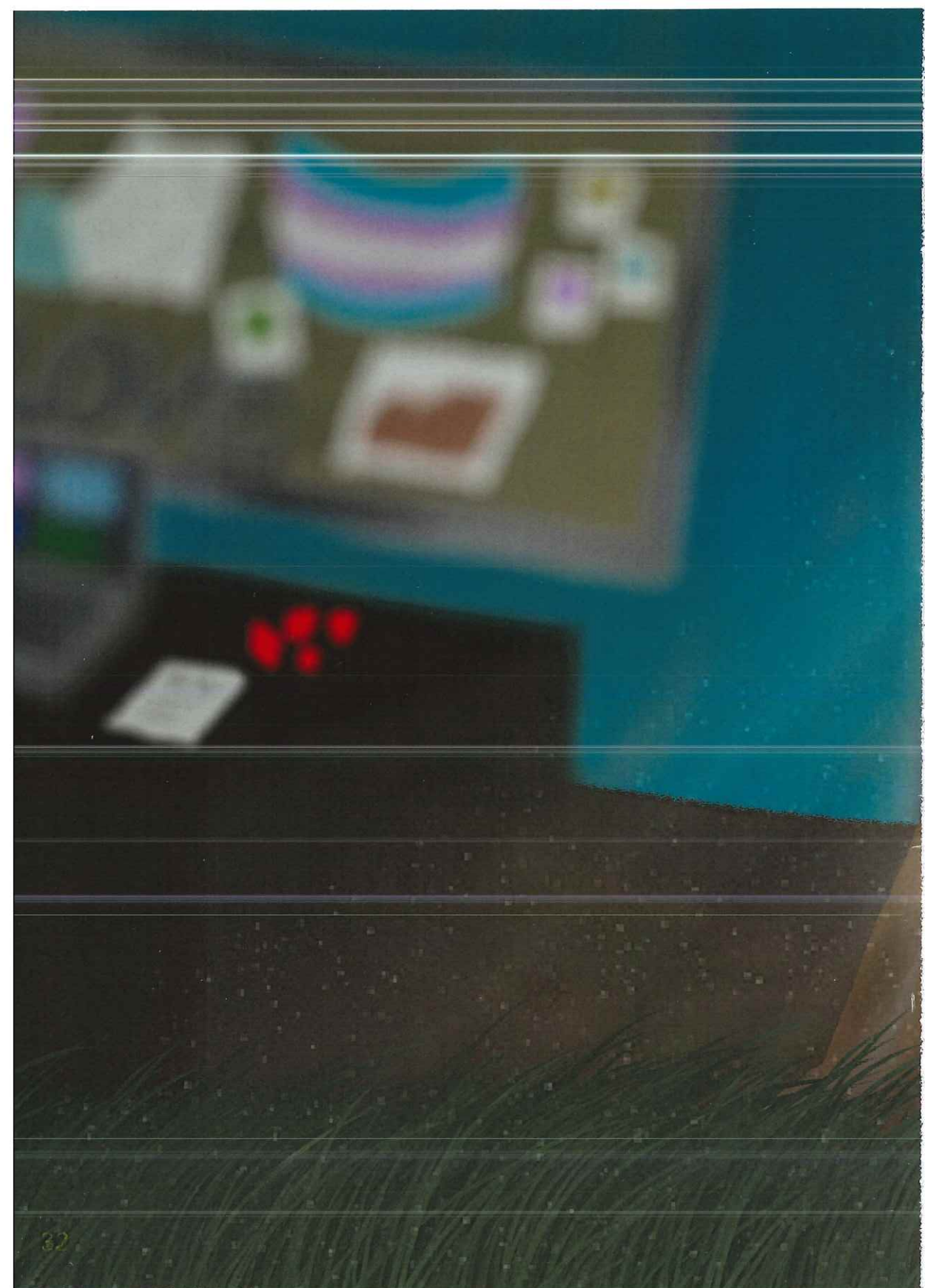
However, I do wish to

be an older man someday, who has loved and lived to his fullest, a man who has the guts to love and speak loudly. For now, I will enjoy myself in silence. My strangers teach me about American food and customs; in return, I teach them about Latin America and its people. There are so many things I wish to ask and answer, but everything must come at the right time. I will treasure the bits of their souls

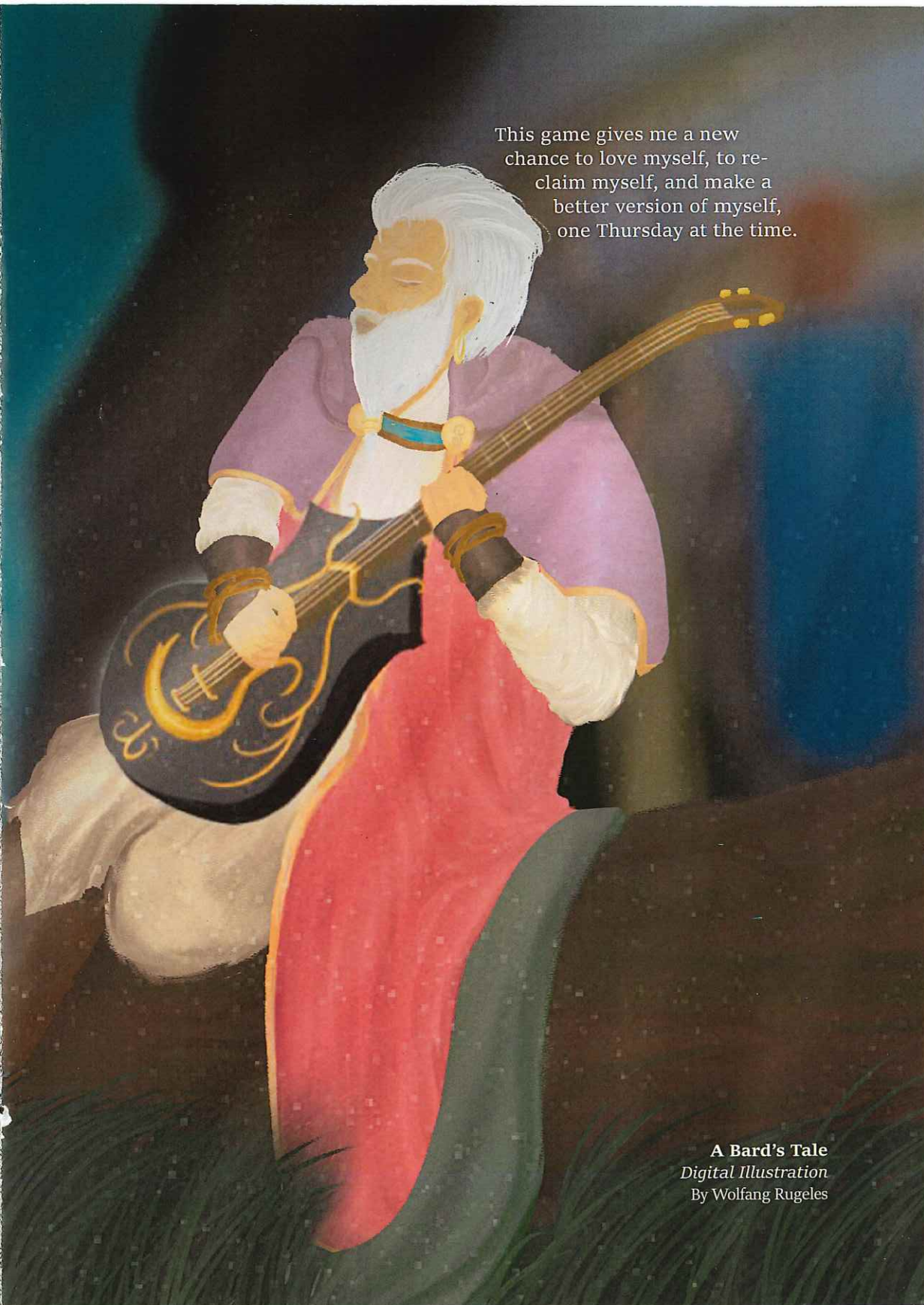
that they show me through their characters, the same way they love me.

**"I tried
to be a
girl for a
while. I
did not
enjoy it."**





This game gives me a new
chance to love myself, to re-
claim myself, and make a
better version of myself,
one Thursday at the time.



A Bard's Tale
Digital Illustration
By Wolfgang Rugeles



A Sense of Reality
Acrylic and Pencil
By Adriana Alonso

74 Seconds

Poetry
By Ashlie Rodriguez

Trigger Warning: Police Brutality, Racism

Hands up!
Don't shoot! My daughter's in the back!
Sure, Judge, that *is* how it went down.
But if I hadn't fired then, he would've surely fired back!

Yes, he told me he had a gun —
That's why I thought he was reaching for it!
And okay, so he looked like someone else.
I guess that nose must've fooled me!

Judge, can I really be blamed?
I'm sure you'd agree when I say
all hoodlums tend to look the same.

But don't you worry, because I swear —
I'll *never* do it again.
I think I've learned my lesson:
Never, ever kill a Black man while his family is present ...

And recording.

Atlas Dropped Today

Fiction
By Laura Santos

Trigger Warning: Nazism

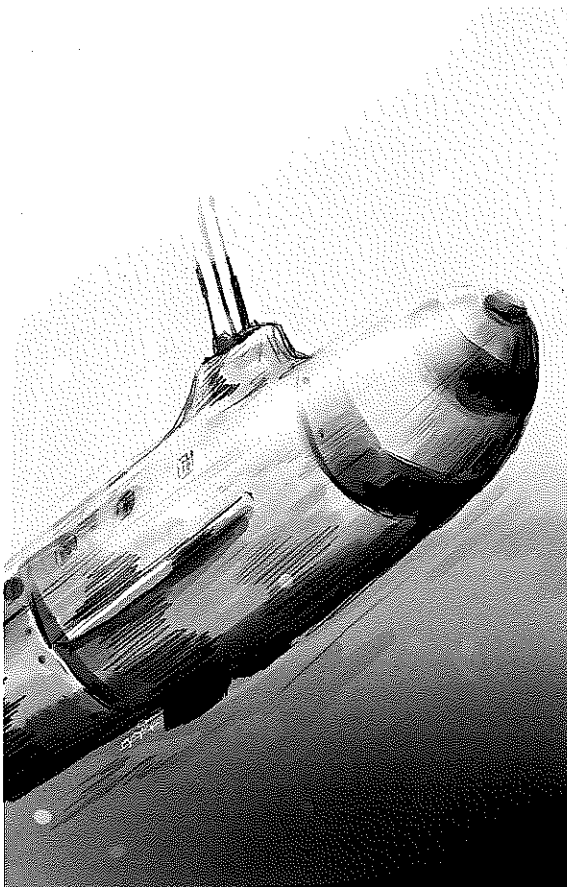
Heavy swelling waters were a daily occurrence; inexperienced sailors, still not accustomed to the ways of the sea, frequented the bathroom en masse. Most *matrose* lacked the experience to deal with the repetitive movements of the U-boat colloquially baptized as the Atlas. As Wehrmacht Admiral Lukas Ruggers slid through the canteen, he drove shivers down his subordinates' spines. His ruthlessness was widely recognized through the *Kriegsmarine* forces.

"The more you vomit, the less you eat! We can't allow you weaklings to waste the few rations we have. Keep working for your food." Ruggers yelled at the affected. As a result, many succumbed under his leadership, but in his mind, his actions were justified as he needed to incentivize the strong ones.

He enjoyed tormenting cadet Weber the most, especially since he developed an emaciated complexion due to the lowering of his rations. Weber gambled away most of his belongings and jewelry heirlooms to feed himself and satisfy his fellow creditors. Eventually, he owed the most money to Ruggers. Even though the admiral's favorite bet was always physical punishment, he enjoyed the appropriation of some gold jewelry every now and then. At this point, most soldiers had sold their



Crystal
Photography
By Jose Mendez



Submarine
Digital Illustration
By Maurizio Casamassima

own dignity and became servants to their opponents in the occasion they lost the gamble. Needless to say, the admiral owned the most servants.

Weber and his friend Konig devised a plan to cheat on a game of *skat*, so they could regain freedom from their torturer — this was their only chance to once and for all become free from the unjust rules of their tyrant as they had nothing left to gamble. By introducing a set of marked cards, the cadets would be able to count the cards and understand what their enemy had. However, they were not aware that the master trickster was Ruggers himself, cheating his way through with his own set. Ruggers had achieved all of his wealth and possessions in the vessel from these fraudulent practices, and now it was time for the cadets to recover what belonged to them.

“Let’s gamble away! The only thing you have left to give me is your virginity!” Ruggers said to ridicule his subordinates. As the match began, all three encountered themselves with different cards than expected, as all were trying to cheat at the same time. A grin was plastered unto Ruggers’s face when he noticed their dishonesty. The admiral continued to breathe louder and grow in size as he stood up from the chair. The rage burst without batting an eye, the admiral was ready to make them pay for playing his own cheating game.

“There is no bigger shame and dishonor than to cheat in a *skat* game, but there is no bigger fearlessness and disrespect when you try to do so against your command-

er!” Ruggers shouted as he flipped the table in which they were playing. He then proceeded to approach them and kicked their chairs from underneath them.

With sympathy, many members of the crew ran to the canteen where the match was occurring, rapidly creating a mutiny against their leader. Soon enough, everyone pointed their weapons to their boss; tensions were already at an all time high and at this point, there was no one left loyal to him. All members of the crew abandoned their posts and everybody witnessed the scene. It was a pact of blood; they all swore not to snitch. Finding himself in these circumstances, Ruggers had no choice but to surrender; even if it had to be in a despotic manner, he was dethroned from his pedestal.

“Now, what do we do with him?” said Konig.

“If they find out in the Fatherland, we can be punished for treason and rebellion. That is a death sentence for anyone in the Wehrmacht,” Weber expressed with angst.

“We only have to make it look like a suicide,” Schimdt added.

However, they could not allow him to leave this Earth without paying the price in pain for their suffering. Admiral Ruggers, ensuring his survival, negotiated a dystopian deal for himself.

“Make me endure what I have put you all through for as long as I can. If I can make it through a day, I will just be set free and request to be re-assigned to a different vessel; if not, I will just fulfill your wishes and go down with dignity as our honorary arylans do, through *Seppuku*.”



Flowing
Photography
By Jose Mendez



Torpedo
Digital Illustration
By Mario Casamassima

All of the crew agreed to retribute with the same treatment his subordinates endured until his demise; he only persevered for a few hours. His screeching could be heard from a thousand miles. The hematomas in his knees had turned blue to the point he could not even stand up.

"Please, stop, stop my pain, I just want a clean death now!" Ruggers pleaded between his cries of pain.

"Bend now for all those you tortured!" spat Weber against the reflection of Ruggers's beaten body. Having learned from the companionship of fellow Japanese soldiers, there was only one way to recover integrity: the old withstanding practice of *Seppuku*. The live disembowelment was a sight for sore eyes; Ruggers proceeded to reach for his *degen* blade, holding it up as he recited the ideology for which he'd given his life:

"*Heil Hitler und Deutschland reine Souveränität!*" He brought the blade to his abdomen, penetrating into his bowels with a circular movement to then pull it out. He dropped in agony, to a pool of his own blood. They all cheered with unexplainable gratitude to the gruesome scene, finally free of the tyranny they had endured for years. Midst celebratory cheers, they lost their footing as an enemy torpedo struck the submarine. Slushing water inside the canteen alerted them to the failure to man their abandoned posts.

As the water reached for their necks, Konig said:

"It seems like he's not the only one going down today."

Bitter Wine

Poetry
By Xiu Hau

They keep saying we're sick.
But if love is a gift, then why is this a sin?
To love and be loved, they say.
But when we follow along then, it's a mistake.

I don't know if heaven is real.
I only know her touch against my skin.
The light taps along my cheeks
While her cold hands wake me from my sleep.

If this is a sin so let it be.
Who dares define what holy is?
For me, it's what I feel when she's here,
Holding me tight while she sings me to sleep.

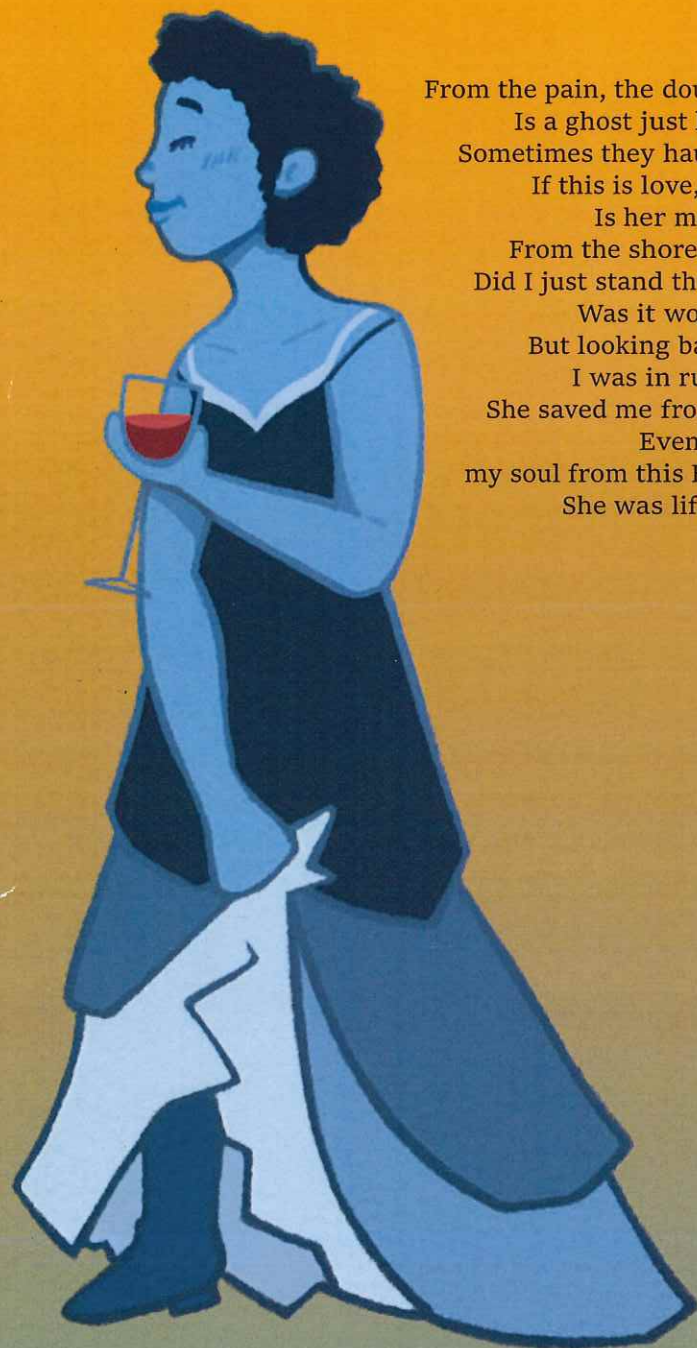
She's wrapped herself like a vine.
I'm sweet poison and she's bitter wine.
I'd rather stay in their doomed hell
Than renounce her love for heaven's grace.



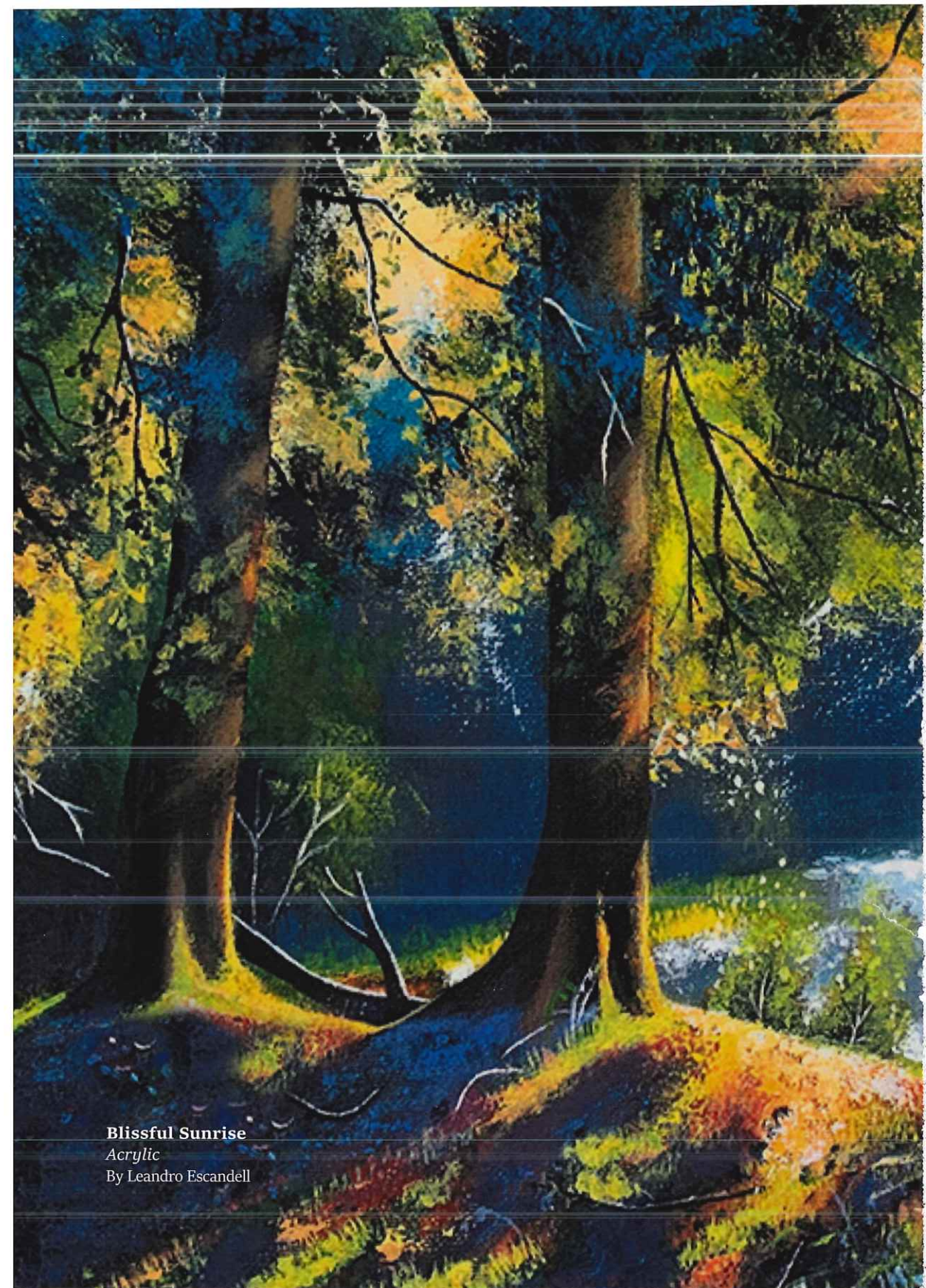
Her Gift

Poetry
By Xiu Hau

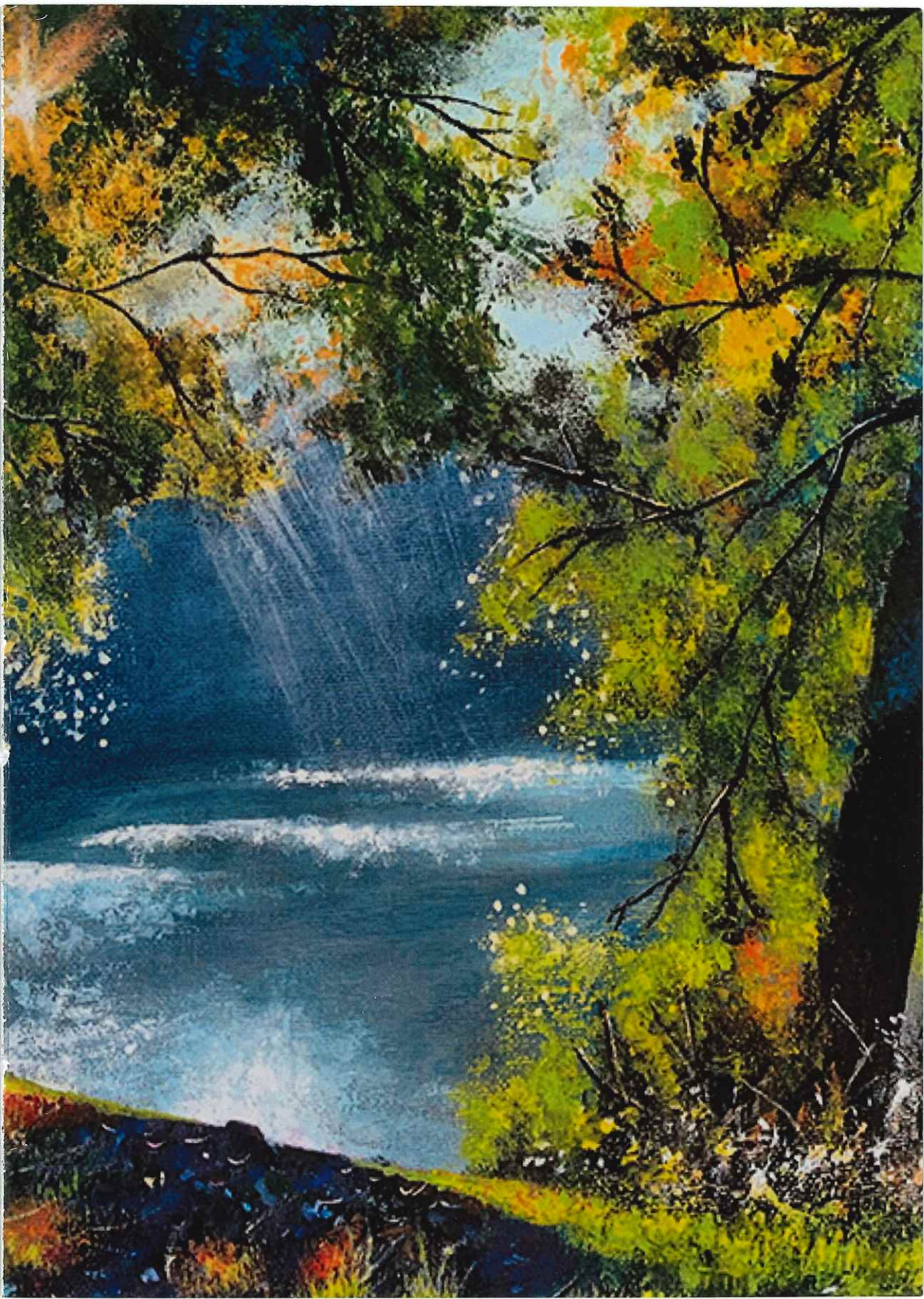
From the pain, the doubts were born, to haunt all.
Is a ghost just love for some, do you think?
Sometimes they haunt us all, and we just blink.
If this is love, would you answer the call?
Is her memory my doom, a free fall?
From the shore, I saw her give up and sink.
Did I just stand there, looking from the brink?
Was it worth it, just to end in a bawl?
But looking back now, her love was a gift.
I was in ruins, she loved me the same.
She saved me from drowning, floating adrift.
Even losing her caused me to lift
my soul from this Earth and lighten the blame.
She was life, leaving in my heart a rift.



Spring Lovers
Digital Illustration
By Camila Ramirez



Blissful Sunrise
Acrylic
By Leandro Escandell



Poetry
By Daniela Lopez

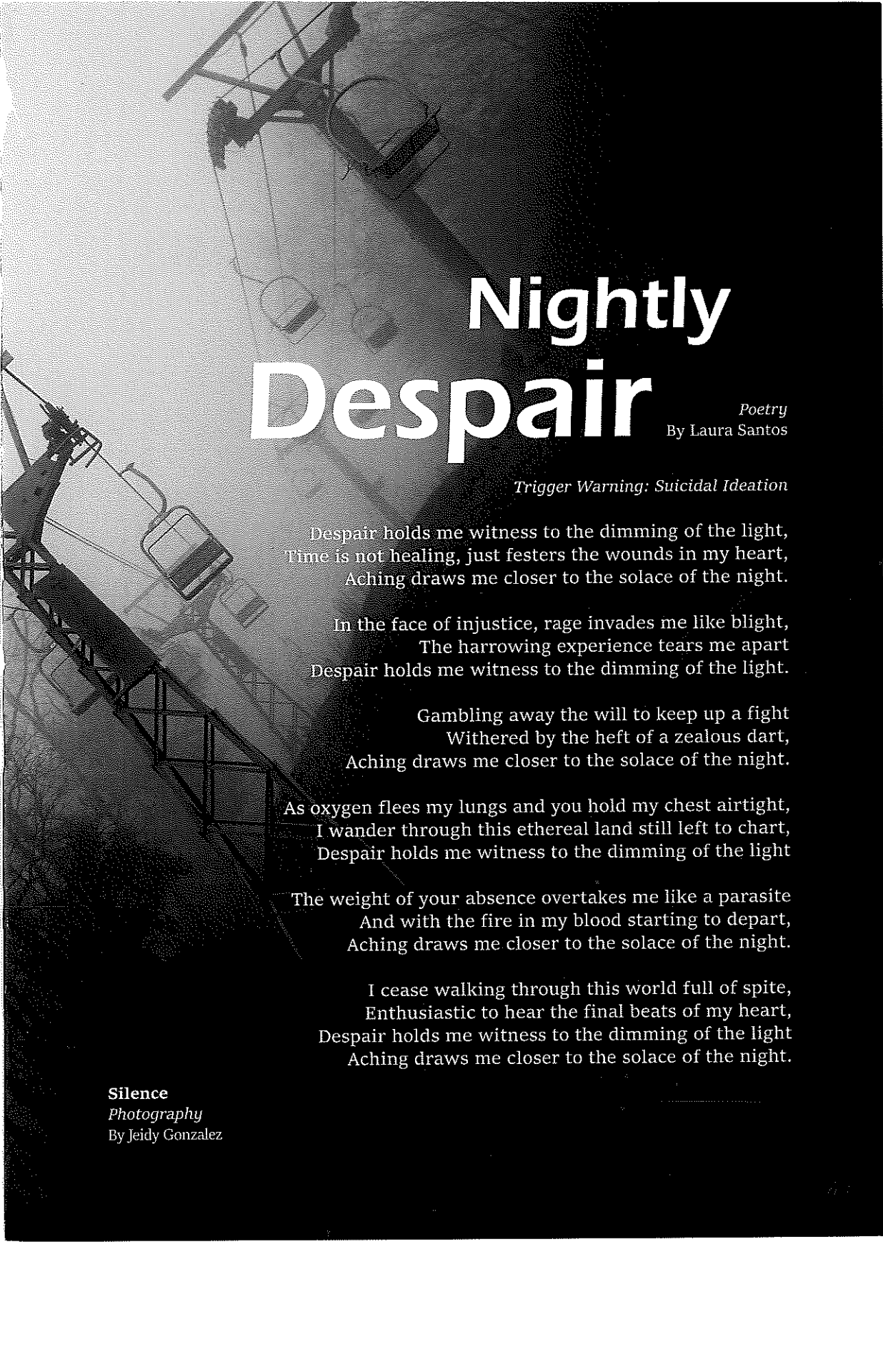
Génesis

Despierta en un espacio infinito de agua tibia que le besa los tobillos.
Solo cielo y mar se expanden más allá de su mirada,
Del mismo azul limpio y puro.
Se incorpora, poderosa, sobre un manto de titilantes estrellas
Reflejadas que tiemblan con congoja ante su presencia.
Se mira a sí misma y a través de sus manos translúcidas observa
El brillo de las luces.
En sus brazos, en sus pestañas, en sus muslos.
En su vientre crece una estrella.
Se abraza y no es una, sino dos almas en un cuerpo.
En sí contiene esperanza y desilusión, fortuna y desgracia;
Como el mismo Dios que creó el mundo
Y como el Dios que ha de destruirlo.

Origin
Digital Illustration
By Wolfgang Rugeles







Nightly Despair

Poetry
By Laura Santos

Trigger Warning: Suicidal Ideation

Despair holds me witness to the dimming of the light,
Time is not healing, just festers the wounds in my heart,
Aching draws me closer to the solace of the night.

In the face of injustice, rage invades me like blight,
The harrowing experience tears me apart
Despair holds me witness to the dimming of the light.

Gambling away the will to keep up a fight
Withered by the heft of a zealous dart,
Aching draws me closer to the solace of the night.

As oxygen flees my lungs and you hold my chest airtight,
I wander through this ethereal land still left to chart,
Despair holds me witness to the dimming of the light

The weight of your absence overtakes me like a parasite
And with the fire in my blood starting to depart,
Aching draws me closer to the solace of the night.

I cease walking through this world full of spite,
Enthusiastic to hear the final beats of my heart,
Despair holds me witness to the dimming of the light
Aching draws me closer to the solace of the night.

Silence
Photography
By Jeidy Gonzalez

Poetry
By David Martin

Arachnocalypse

Little Daddy Longlegs, playing in a sink.
No one knows what made you shrink.
Once water comes down there's no escape.
You'll be squashed like a grape.
Little Daddy Long-legs, life ends in a blink.



Lower 5
Digital Illustration
By Wolfgang Rugeles

Disrupted
Photography
By Jose Mendez

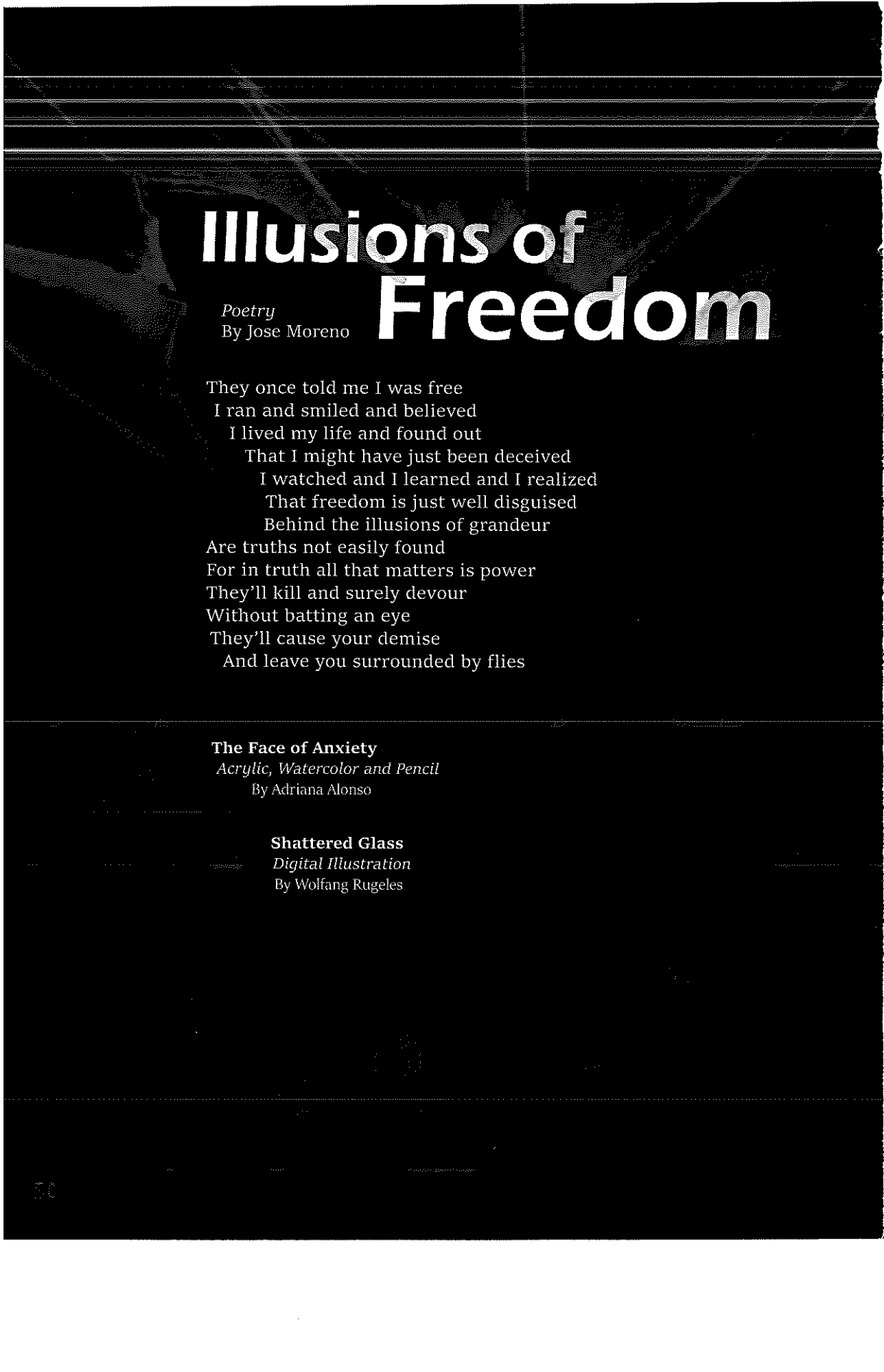


Blinded
Photography
By Jose Mendez

Redemption

Poetry
By Daniela Lopez

Maybe, if I go to the beach one day,
and let my evil-self in the sand lie,
I again would feel, like that night by the bay,
against my being millions of stars die.
And, a tear moved by the freezing breeze,
Camouflaged between my freckles and hair,
Will run down my throat with blazing ease
And so dissolve into the sweetened air.
If I feel light, and in my skin the salt
Is starting to melt like indolent snow,
My bowels will be torn by my very fault
As I am watching the cold waves come slow.
Maybe, that day forgiveness will be found
And my demons will return to the ground.



Illusions of Freedom

Poetry

By Jose Moreno

They once told me I was free
I ran and smiled and believed
I lived my life and found out
That I might have just been deceived
I watched and I learned and I realized
That freedom is just well disguised
Behind the illusions of grandeur
Are truths not easily found
For in truth all that matters is power
They'll kill and surely devour
Without batting an eye
They'll cause your demise
And leave you surrounded by flies

The Face of Anxiety

Acrylic, Watercolor and Pencil

By Adriana Alonso

Shattered Glass

Digital Illustration

By Wolfgang Rugeles



Jacob and Amelia

Fiction

By Luisana Ortiz

Panting in unison, the boy-dog duo dared not look back.

Nothing was left for them there. None of Mother's food to calm their constant stomach aches, no matter how hard their tummies pleaded; not a drop of rain to offset the ever-increasing planet's heat; no roof to keep them shaded and cool in the hours the rays felt especially scorching.

In any case, the climate could not be any more stifling than his exasperation this past day. He anxiously witnessed his mother's arrest, knowing it was the last glimpse he would have of her. The image seared into his brain for as long as he lived.

If anything, he initially lied to himself. He had Amelia to comfort him; the old cocker spaniel's presence turned out to be the only "comforting" thing, as the dog didn't suddenly transform into the loving companion he hoped for. Father gifted Amelia to Mother before he left the Community, and she lived with them before the boy could imitate her four-legged strut. Though she was officially considered a member of the family, she never seemed to take much liking to him, saving a soft spot only for Mother and Father, or, rather, simply leaving him out of the picture. More than once, Amelia's

snobby attitude almost made him lose his fascination with animals; he often chided himself for wondering just how it was possible they lost *elephants* and *polar bears* but were left with that indifferent creature.

Despite their strained relationship, he felt compelled to take the dog with him. To his own surprise, she cooperated in following him in his sudden escape. Mother would have wanted him to, he thought. She taught him to take care of others, and now Amelia was all he had of Mother and Father (although she still managed to keep her distance). Just having her nearby helped move his fatigued feet farther and farther.

As the sun reached its peak standstill for the day, the boy began to find it more difficult to swallow. Luckily, he came prepared: a knapsack with enough food and water that, if he rationed just right, would last him just over a week. He squeezed a few drops into his mouth, then offered some to Amelia. Mother prepared it weeks in advance for this exact occasion.

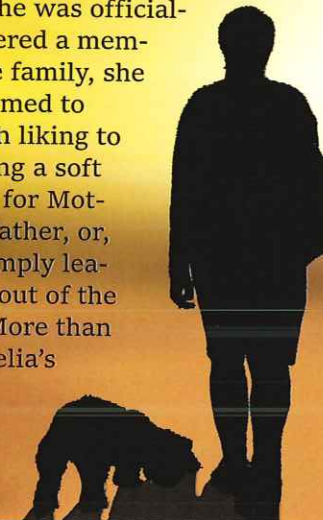
He just never thought he would use it.

The two trudged on, kicking up dust with every step they took in their path. The boy looked up, hoping to distract himself. Unfortunately, the uniform landscape before him didn't leave much to the imaginati-

A Man's Best Friend

Digital Illustration

By Wolfgang Rugeles



on. Its uninventive features created an illusion of endlessness, one that would have most definitely left anyone from only a couple hundred years prior thoroughly perplexed. For many miles, his view merely consisted of parched and barren soil, the cracked, black-and-yellow pathway he and Amelia had been following for hours. *Roads* — he remembered their names from the old history books he effortlessly devoured back at home and at school before they shut it down. *Roads* were useless now, as Earth's oil ran dry and the *automobile* became obsolete.

Suddenly in the distance, he was able to spot a dead forest, and he decided it would be the much-deserved rest stop for the two.

Soon enough, in the desert, an internal commotion was back to haunt his memory for perhaps the hundredth time. Once again he could feel his heavy eyelids snap into their wide, alert positions from one second to the next as Mother shook him awake. He could still hear her hurried whispers.

"The Head will be here any minute now; they discovered my alliance. I am now a traitor to them. I love you. Please don't forget the knapsack." Through the pitch-black environment he carried Amelia to the hidden escape hatch they dug out months earlier. At its end, he wriggled under

an unguarded area of the Community's border chain fence. Then, with the dog at his side, ran for his life.

Having reached the rest stop, he set down the knapsack and sat at a stump under a shady clump of what one might have once called trees. He glanced at Amelia, lying and panting at his side, and meekly lifted his

hand to her head, lightly stroking her. At first she let out her usual snarl, but to his surprise she let him continue.

Her gentleness finally broke him. The realization of the day's events came crashing down: He left his lifelong home in what would probably be a futile search for Father and the home he'd promised to build for his family when he was forced to escape three years ago.

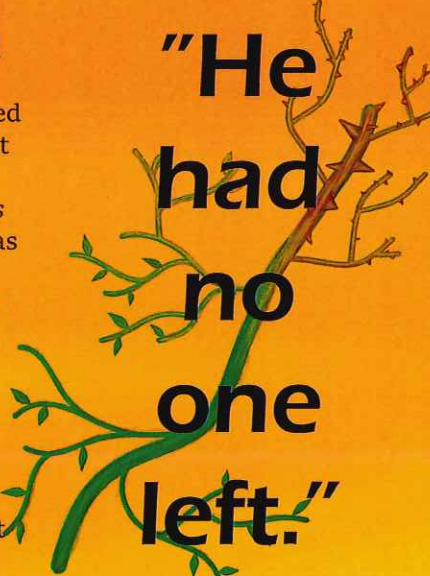
The Head discovered his family's involvement in the illegal distribution of survival resources to the Rebels.

The Head had probably killed Mother by now.

He had no one left.

He felt the need to spill this rush of emotions, yet he only allowed a small whimper out; he couldn't afford to lose any more fluids than he already had. His thoughts and the heat stuck him to the stump for hours before he drifted off.

He awoke with a start. Amelia's perked up ears heard it, too: voices



"He
had
no
one
left."

in the far distance, but voices nonetheless. As carefully as he could, he scrambled to his feet, yanked the knapsack, and tiptoed deeper into the barren forest. It was so cleared out he could've been easily spotted, and anxiety took over again. *How could they venture this far in so little time?*

Just when he had begun to lose hope his thoughts were interrupted by an opening in the ground he hadn't noticed. Fortunately, the small trip did not hurt him, but he found himself in a cave. *I can camp out here until the officers disappear.* Tucking himself into a darker corner, he shivered, remaining alert into the night until his eyelids could no longer hold their own weight.

The following morning, sunlight peeked through the opening, and with it, the realization that the deafening silence had returned. He awoke with a sigh of relief, but it was short-lived when he discovered Amelia was missing.

His last piece of Mother and Father was gone.

No longer caring, he climbed out

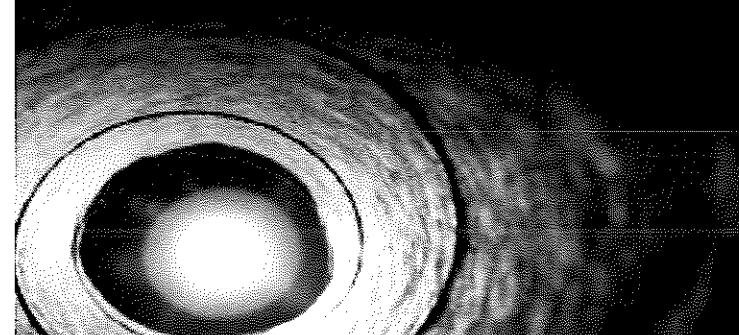
and spent his morning living a nightmare: Amelia was nowhere in sight. He dared not call her name out of fear, remaining grief-stricken for the rest of the day.

As nighttime fell, he once again drifted off with three words trailing around in his otherwise barren head: *I failed Mother.*

Soon enough, it was morning again. Grabbing the knapsack and struggling to keep his mind clear, he set out into the forest and began his trek again, trying his best to ignore the absence of responding paws to his left.

It was evening before he let himself remember Mother and Father's incessant generosity to the war-torn Community's Rebels. They provided food, clean water, and electricity, risking their own Head-partnered lives in the process. He remembered school and his inability to make friends with any of the Head's children, but it didn't matter; even Amelia was a better friend. Until now, he hadn't realized how much he missed her.

Stuck in a reminiscing-and-ad-



Tunnel
Photography
By Jose Mendez

vancing loop for various hours, he had also failed to notice a faint buzz of noise ahead, followed by beams of light. Once the news caught up to him, he was sure he was hallucinating. Or dreaming. He had to be. In the glaring distance, he noticed a blue ... *automobile*, lurching its way towards him.

Dumbstruck, his knees buckled in place, staring ahead as he waited for what he was sure would be his demise. Soon the vehicle was ... *parked*, right in front of him. *This had all been for nothing.*

"Jacob?"

An unfamiliar towering figure stepped out of the *automobile*, carrying in his arms a mass of caramel fur he recognized.

"*Amelia!*" Jacob screamed out, and the dog jumped out from the stranger's arms into his. Whatever grudge she held against him had been forgotten in the moment, and Jacob laughed and hugged her as she fran-

tically licked the entirety of his face.

"You're Jacob, aren't you?" the man spoke again crouching in front of Jacob, who nodded without looking up. The man smiled.

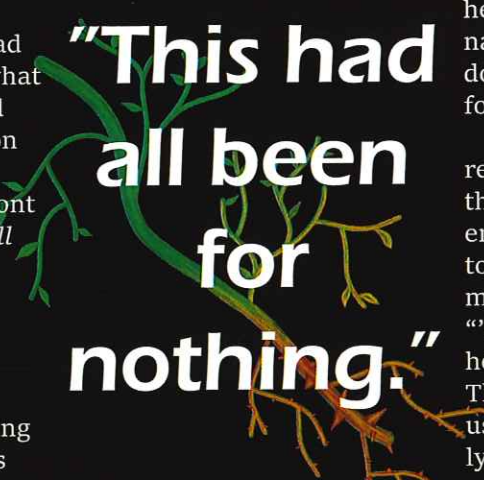
"Thought it was. Your father's been waiting for you."

The three of them piled into the vehicle. An overwhelmed Jacob

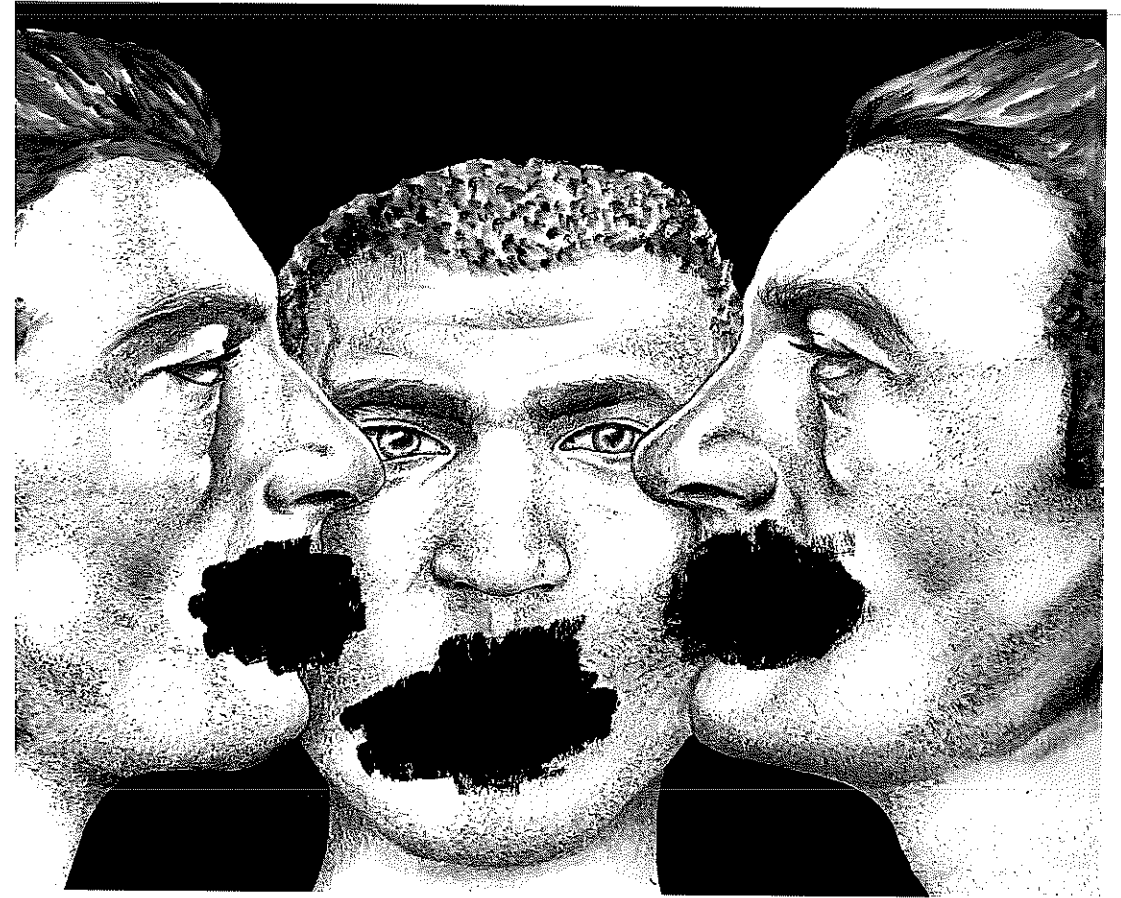
hadn't said a word; he couldn't. Fortunately, the man was doing all the talking for him.

"... solar-powered engine during the day, stores some energy for the night too. Designed it myself," he boasted. "Course, I had some help from the others. There's not a lot of us, so we're all family in a green pasture; you don't see those everyday. And there's a lake, too."

His dog on his lap, the soft murmur of the man's stories and the engine felt like a warm blanket that covered Jacob and tucked him to sleep as the car drove off into the countryside.



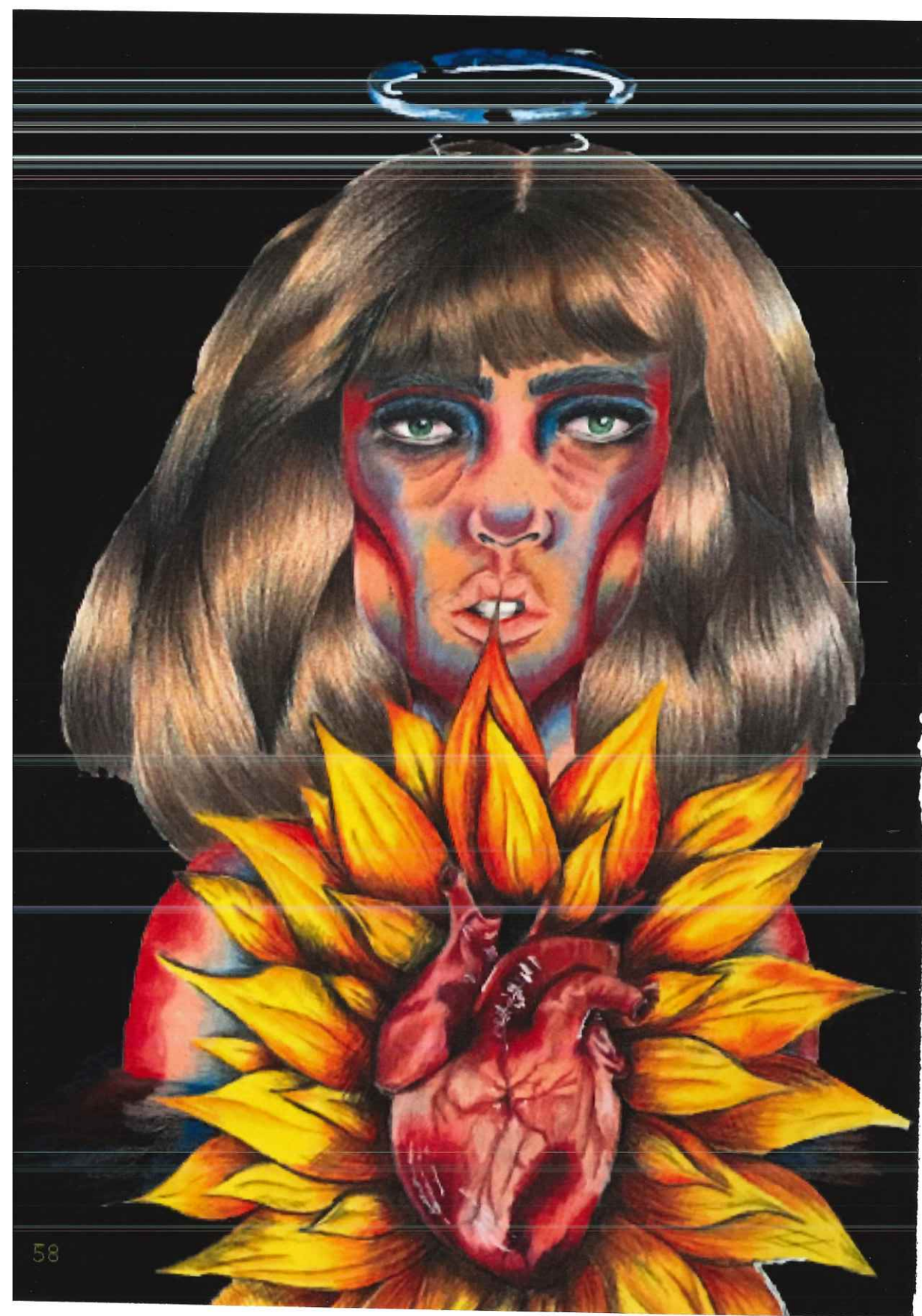
**"This had
all been
for
nothing."**

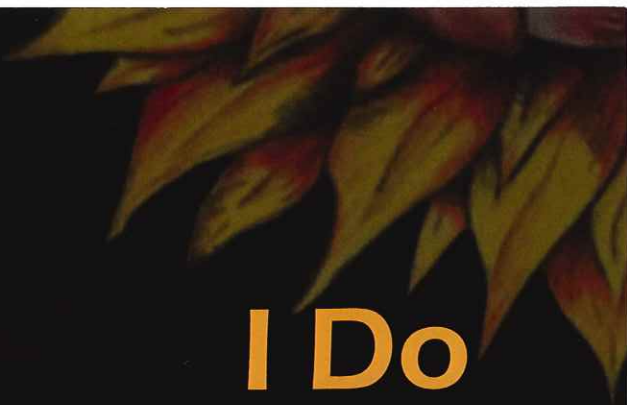


Voiceless
Acrylic and Pencil
By Adriana Alonso

I Am Ok, Am I?
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles







I Do Know

Poetry

By Isabella Martinez

Do you know who you are?
Love does not equal obsession
Don't tell me who I am so far

You can't tell me who I am in a spar
I can't forget your empty expression
Do you know who you are?

The truth came out and left its scar
I can't forgive your indiscretion
Don't tell me who I am so far

Lies so loosely spilled like candy out of a jar
You kept changing your perception
Do you know who you are?

Questions left unanswered like a door ajar
Each time there was a new face in your reflection
Don't tell me who I am so far

Now my heart is filled with char
In the end we weren't the exception
Do you know who you are?
Don't tell me who I am so far

The Power of Exteriors

Colored Pencil and Acrylic

By Adriana Alonso

Sunflower

Digital Illustration

By Maria Patricia Mejicano

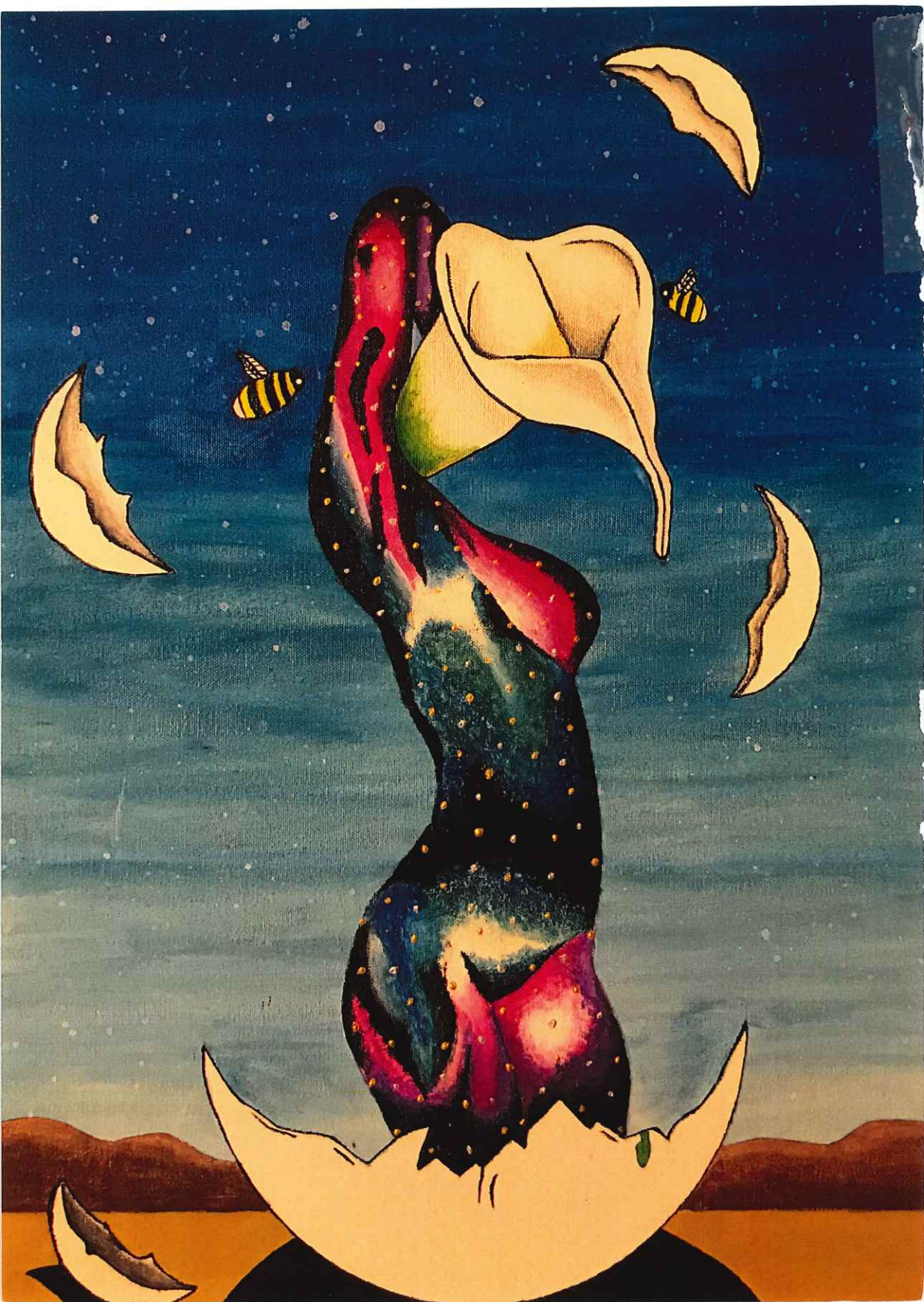


Absence
Photography
By Jeidy Gonzalez

Gray Sky

Poetry
By David Martin

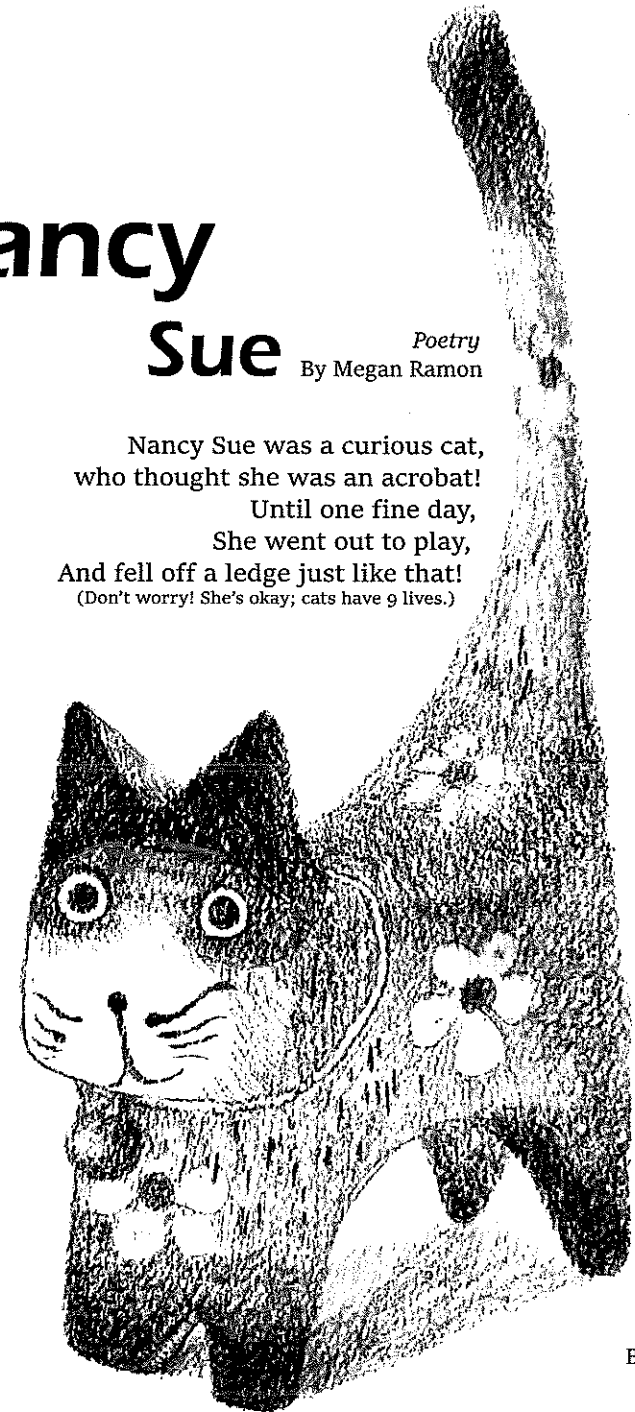
A brooding gray sky
Inspires self-reflection
As rain thwarts the pain.



Nancy Sue

Poetry
By Megan Ramon

Nancy Sue was a curious cat,
who thought she was an acrobat!
Until one fine day,
She went out to play,
And fell off a ledge just like that!
(Don't worry! She's okay; cats have 9 lives.)



Nancy Sue
Charcoal
By Camila Ramirez



Snake Charmer

Poetry
By Laura Santos

Tempered and hostile
Savage land
I call upon
Your godly lambs

Feathered and fertile
Wildly raw
Enough to carve
A figure for my lord

Sing your holy songs
To entangle my thoughts
Stare into the lies
And strangle my voice

Trying to conquer this land
Which was not meant
To have an owner
Other than your love

Galaxy Woman

Acrylic
By Leandro Escandell

B's

Digital Illustration
By Maria Patricia Mejicano





Playing with Decay
Watercolor and Pencil
By Adriana Alonso

Perfect Plastic
Digital Art
By Maurizio Casamassima

BETTER ONE

Summer Edition

Beauty

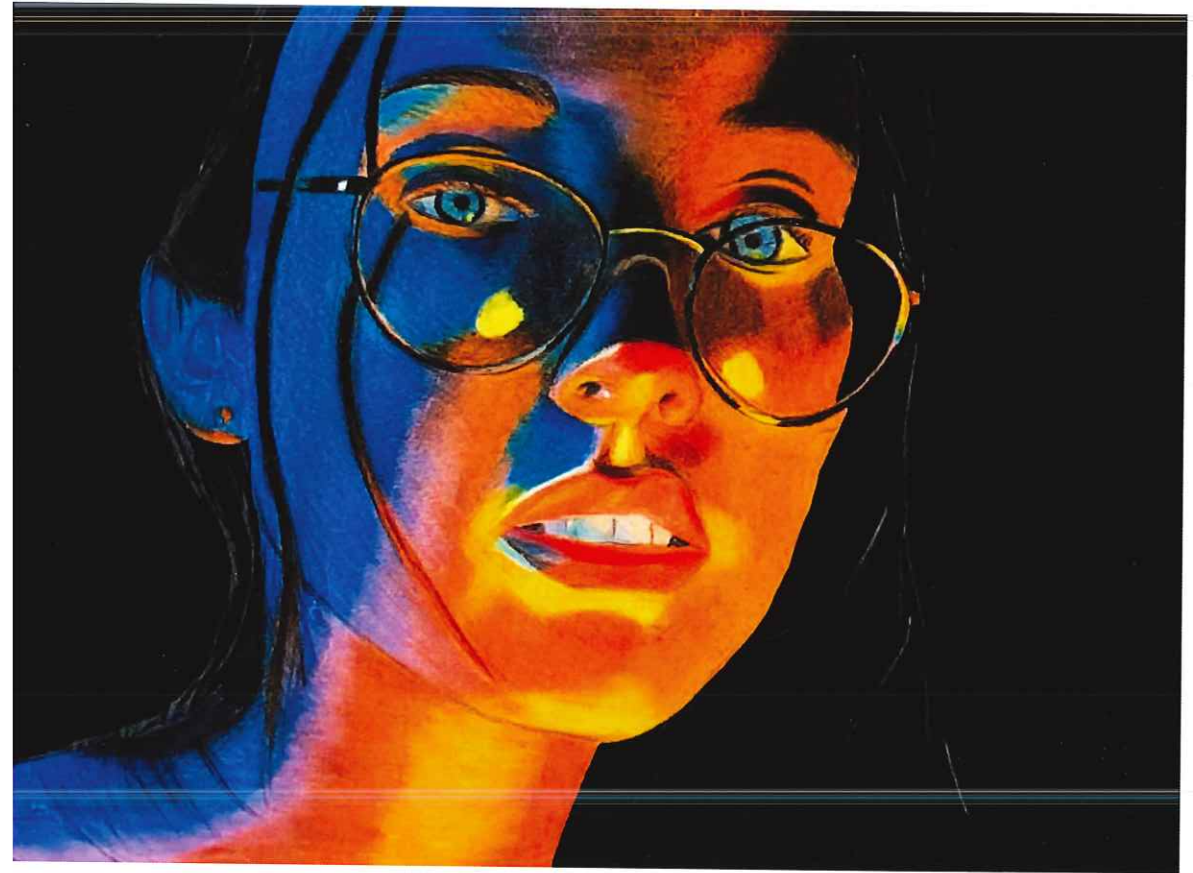
TIPS
For a
brighter
smile

Absolute
best of the year.

TOP 10
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7 STEPS
TO PERFECTION!





Blue-Orange
Colored Pencil
By Alejandra Riveros

Green-Red
Colored Pencil
By Alejandra Riveros



Poetry
By Laura Santos

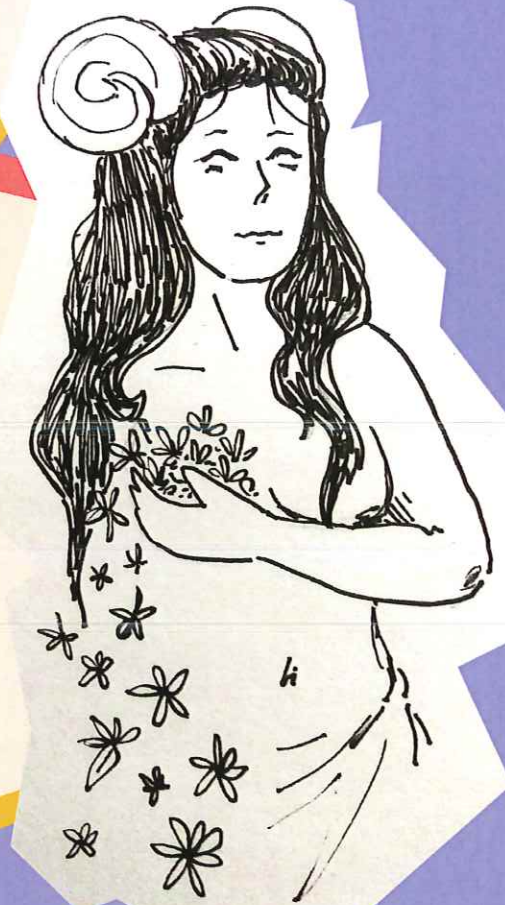
Prophesying

Your smell is buried under my skin
While quenching the thirst of my bed
A comfortable funeral
To all splattered dread

For a sinner like me
Staring into your eyes
Prophesied the flesh of Satan
Burning like rye

You are the puritan
I am the sin
So do me like we are both about to die

Undress me with your teeth
Sink your needs within my flesh
Just let me wrap you and fasten your death



Venus and Selkie
Illustration with Pen
By Camila Ramirez

She

Poetry
By Cristina Garcia

Her presence is intoxicating
And her mind is a labyrinth,
Full of wisdom and knowledge,
She paves way for the future.

She is powerful,
But she is also graceful and delicate.

She belongs to herself:
Body, mind, and soul.

Dare to break her,
And she will rise above you.

Her voice is like silk,
But her war cry will send
shivers down your spine.

She will roar,
"My life, My body, My choice"

She will shout,
"My life, My body, My choice"

And she will cry,
"My life, My body, My choice"

Until everyone knows
She belongs to herself and no other.





Virtual Sunset
Digital Art
By Wolfgang Rugeles



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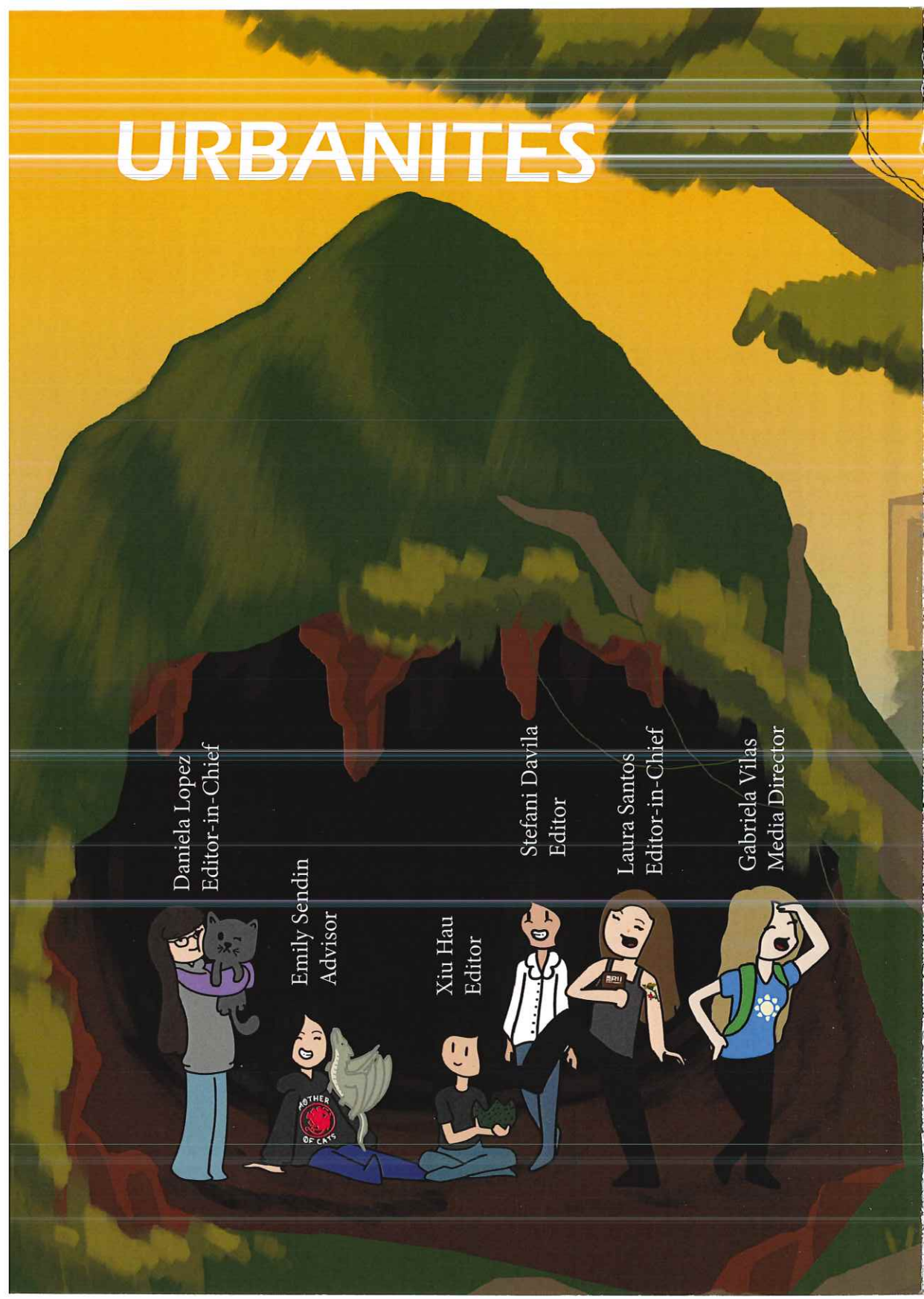
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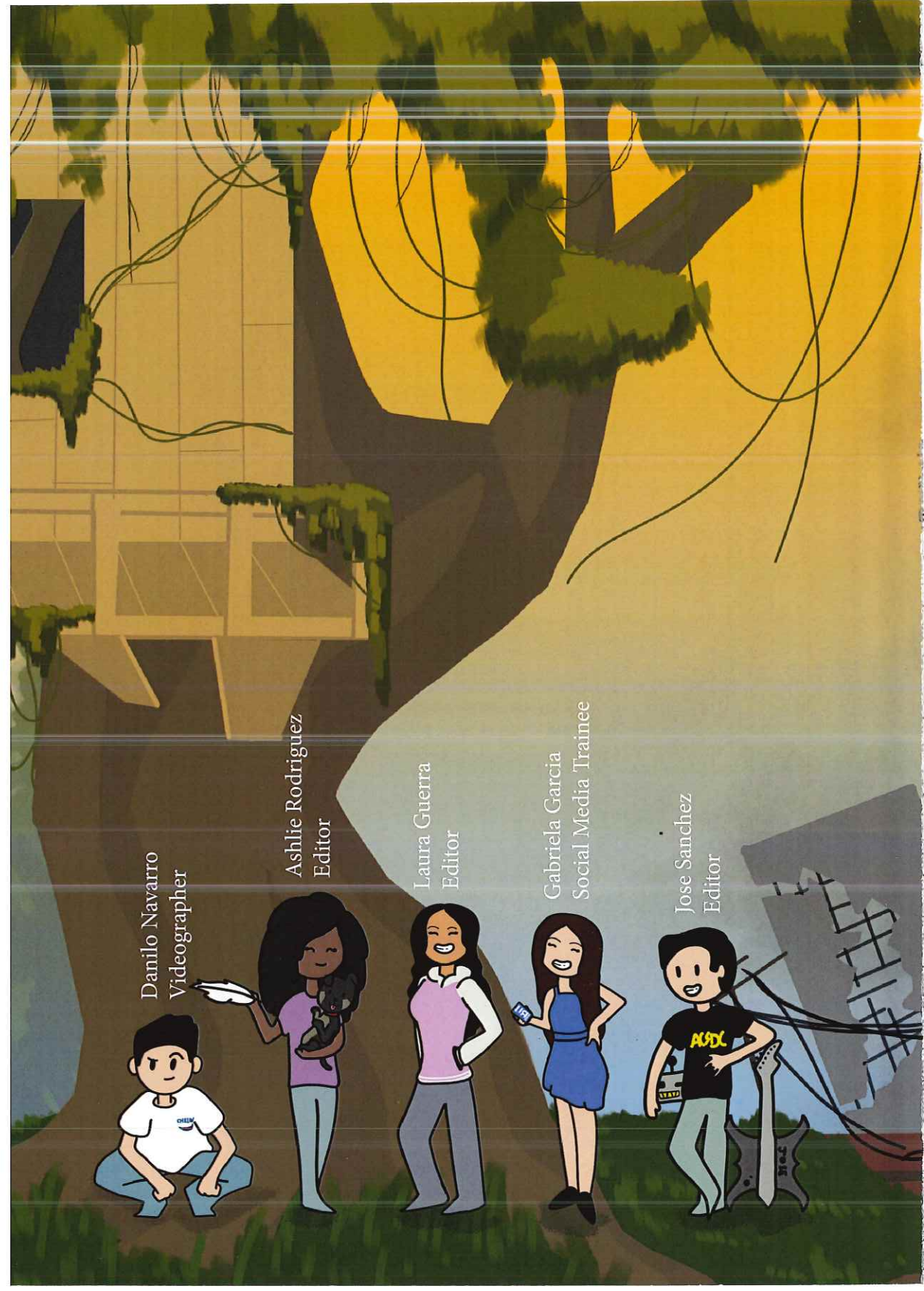
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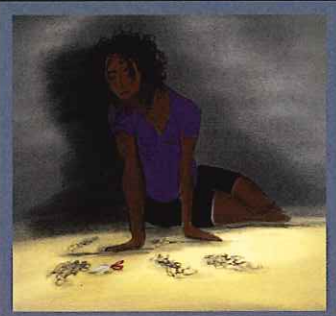
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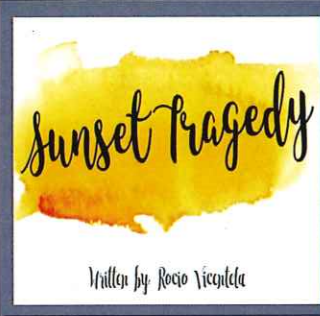


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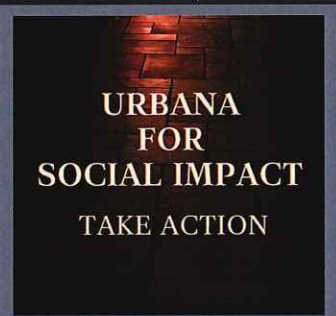
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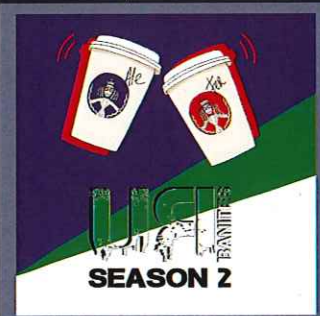
Blog



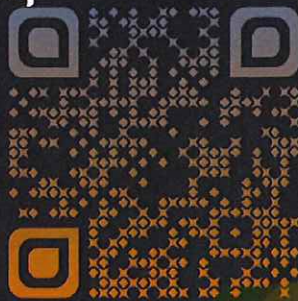
Media



Advocacy



Podcast



Thank You

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Thank you to our advisor Emily Sendin for your guidance. You championed for us, inspiring us to be brave dreamers and innovators while remaining realistic and conscientious.

Last but not least, thank you to all the readers who, in one way or another, have become witnesses to the wonders and misfortunes that give life to these pages.

Cambio y corto (over and out),

Urbanites Team



Colophon

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 on print and online. *Urbana Literary & Arts* Volume 14 was published in June 2021. Two hundred copies were distributed at no cost.

The views expressed within these pages and urbanalit.com 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.

Urbana Literary & Arts is published once a year by students currently enrolled in credit courses at Miami Dade College, Eduardo J. Padrón Campus at 627 SW 27th Ave, Miami, FL 33135. This year's staff chose utopia and dystopia as the theme. Submissions were received electronically at urbanalitpadron@gmail.com. They were logged for control purposes and stripped of authors' names and information before being distributed to staff for review, selection, and editing.

This volume was created using a MacBook Pro with Adobe InDesign CC 2021 software. The fonts used throughout the magazine are Eras and Sitka (regular, bold, and italics).

Moreover, no contributor and/or staff member of *Urbana Literary & Arts* received any monetary reward while engaging in this extracurricular activity.

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



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Awards

Associated Collegiate Press

2020 Associated Collegiate Press's Innovation Pacemaker Finalist
Design of the Year

Marian Bulnes, Wolfgang Rugeles | Third Place

Best Use of Social Media

Barbara Silvera Ramirez | Second Place

2020 | ACP/CMA Fall National College Media Convention

Best of Show Literary Magazine | First Place

Best of Show Website | Fifth Place

Best of Show Podcast | Tenth Place

2021 | ACP/CMA Spring National College Media Convention

Best of Show Blog

Ashlie Rodriguez | First Place

Best of Show Website | Sixth Place

College Media Association

2020 Distinguished Adviser Award, Emily Sendin

Columbia Scholastic Press Association

2020 CSPA | Hybrid Literary Magazine

Gold Crown

2020 CSPA | Gold Circle

Portfolio Illustration

Jorge Ramos | 3rd Place

Single Illustration: hand-drawn

Anielka Figueroa "Disoriented" | Certificate of Merit

Photography: Portfolio of Work

Alejandro Hernandez | Certificate of Merit

2020 CSPA | Magazine Critique

Gold Medalist

Verbal, Design and Essentials

All Colombian Honors

National Council of Teachers of English

2020 REALM Award

For a complete list of *Urbana's* awards please go to our website.



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Florida College System Publications Association

2019 - 2020 Division A

General Excellence | First Place

Artwork Magazine

Jorge Ramos | First Place

Cover

Jorge Ramos and Wolfgang Rugeles | First Place

Content Page

Wolfgang Rugeles, Sonsoles Lopez, Maria Patricia Mejicano,

Jorge Ramos and Laura Santos | First Place

Design

Wolfgang Rugeles, Sonsoles Lopez, Maria Patricia Mejicano and Laura Santos | First Place

Editing

Marian Bulnes and Gisella Valdes | First Place

Photo Individual

Alejandro Hernandez | First Place

Photography Magazine

Alejandro Hernandez and Daniela Hernandez | First Place

Staff Page

Wolfgang Rugeles, Jorge Ramos and Christopher Tormo | First Place

Two - Page Spread

Maria Patricia Mejicano and Marian Bulnes | First Place

Non-fiction

Anielka Figueroa | Second Place

Poem

Alejandra Almada Martinez | Third Place

Poetry

Marian Bulnes and Laura Santos | Third Place

Inner Circle

Marian Bulnes, Maria Patricia Mejicano, Jorge Ramos, Wolfgang Rugeles and Laura Santos

Publications Students of the Month - Padrón

April 2021 | Matthew Jimenez

March 2021 | Stefani Davila

February 2021 | Ashlie Rodriguez

January 2021 | Amalia Abraham

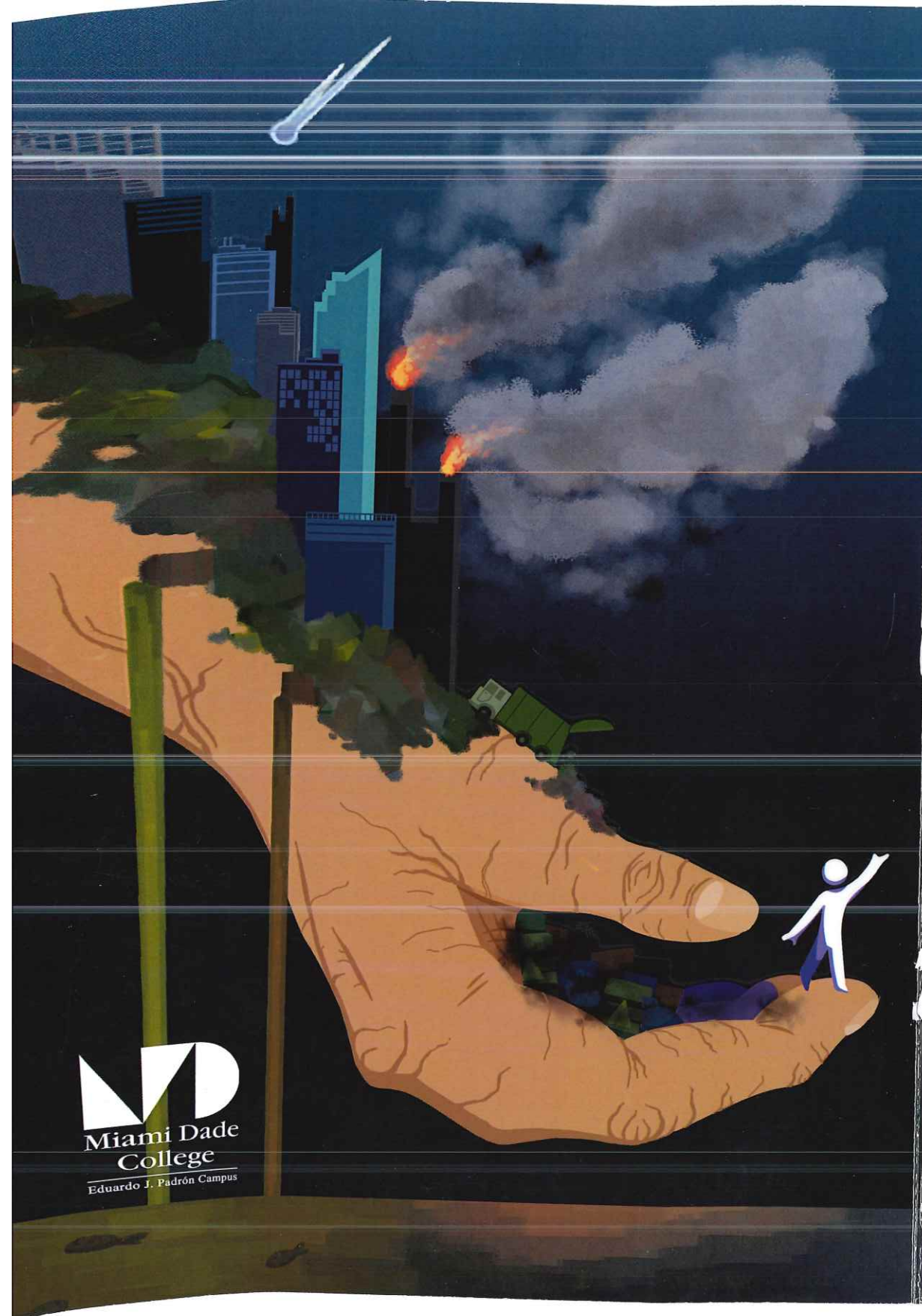
December 2020 | Daniela Lopez

November 2020 | Jimena Romero

October 2020 | Gabriela Vilas

September 2020 | Danilo Navarro





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