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Michaela,
As always thank
you for your support!
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Urbana: Literary and Arts Magazine of
InterAmerican Campus
Volume Seven





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INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

Welcome to Miami-Dade College InterAmerican Campus' seventh installment of Urbana: Literary and Arts Magazine. Short, sweet, and to the point: we are the voice of our campus, and we act as a conduit for the student body to express what they have in mind, conveyed through poetry, fiction, music, film, art, and photography.

Every year we release a new issue and pick a theme to inspire a diverse group of works. This year, the theme we have chosen is **Contrast**. We believe in the duality of humanity: the shadow self, especially in artistic and literary terms. Good and bad, right and wrong; all exist two-fold in the human soul.

We all have our scars and our mental and spiritual wounds. Keeping these things bottled up and not expressing them through art is detrimental to a healthy mindset. For this reason we have decided to give importance to the issue of human rights and modern-day slavery that big-time corporations don't want you to know about. The community of Immokalee, home to the Coalition of Immokalee FarmWorkers, is a whole community of workers who use their voices to be heard and to be respected, all the while being ignored by fast food conglomerates like Wendy's and supermarket titans like Publix. Who's the shadow in this case? The ones who are in complete control of market values and yet refuse to meet with or to even listen to the workers toiling away in the fields.

Tackling such a subject cannot be done by any one person, or even any one solitary staff organization: it's a concentrated effort from the students submitting their work to the staff organizing the web and magazine pages. Without the student body, this magazine would not exist, and this analysis of contrast would not exist either.

We hope you enjoy the seventh volume of Urbana Literary and Arts Magazine, and share it with all of your friends.

From the Urbana Staff

The Opulent Rock

The sun was at its zenith as the light trickled down through the richly covered forest canopy, caressing my skin. The thin whistles of the cicadas, the rustling amongst the trees, and the whisper of the crystal clear water as it ran down the mountainside stream littered the air waves to create a sweet symphony of serenity. It was one of those rare days where all the elements come together to form a perfect natural harmony. I stood in awe at the beauty as I wandered around the stream in a pensive manner, trying to think of any way cope with the fact that I was moving on and leaving my best friend behind. The new life that awaited me was full of uncertainty, and as most children do, I instantly related it to a brave expedition into an uncharted territory full of future glory and rewards. Yet, the thought of taking on this adventure seemed empty without my best friend, my grandfather.

As I plodded through the uncountable piles of rocks that lay besides the river, one particular rock caught my eye in a manner that to this day, 11 years later, is still chillingly memorable. I instantly bent down on my sore knees to pick it up and held it in my hand as I glanced at its simple and unruffled perfection. Then in act of frustration I closed my fist around it with herculean might and smashed it on the ground.

The thunderous sound of the smashing of the rock polluted the tranquil atmosphere with a mighty roar.

Then as I looked to where the rock had landed, I saw it in two pieces before me, as if Zeus himself had struck the rock across the middle with one of his legendary thunderbolts. I picked up them up once again and slowly realized that they were nature's way of manifesting what I was going through. I then safely sealed them away in my zipper pockets, and sprinted towards where I had last seen my parents.

When my family returned to the city the first thing I asked my parents to do was to drop me off at my grandfather's house, which was luckily on the way home. My grandfather was an awkwardly tall and slender man, and always dressed in formal fashion, which for some reason I found to be extremely comforting. Upon arriving he greeted me at the door, waved my parents goodbye, and handed me a freshly baked mouthwatering butter roll for me to devour, all in the usual manner. It was always clear to everyone how happy I was at my grandfather's house, mainly because of my jubilant smile which stretched from ear to ear. My grandfather used to always tell me to pace myself when I ate and I usually listened, but this time I could not help myself. I wiped the crumbs off the corners of my mouth, unzipped my pockets and pulled out the split rock.

At first my grandfather glanced at me with a bewildered expression, because much like him I normally behaved in a formal and calm manner. However when he noticed that the rock had been smoothly axed down into equal halves he looked at me with a tantalizing gaze that I had never seen before. He understood the moment.

My grandmother had once told me that she had only seen my grandfather shed a tear once during her life, the day my father, his first born, came in to the world. As I stood there with a half of the rock in each hand I saw what at the time I thought was but a mere urban legend. A single tear rolled smoothly down my grandfather face, and all I could do to console him was to embrace him with the biggest "rompecostillas" possible (an inside joke that literally meant "rib smashing hug"). The embrace seemed to be ever-lasting but was so in a perfect manner. Initially, I thought the problem of having to leave most of my family behind affected only me, but after giving my grandfather the rock I learned that I was everything but alone. With each of us carrying a half of the rock, we would never have to be far from each other because the rock itself was a culmination of every experience I had ever undergone with him.

Simplicity is often overlooked for extravagance and flamboyance, yet it carries certain characteristics that these two other qualities lack. This was the case with the rock. The rock, although, not extravagant in any way shape or form, was much more than just a simple opaque obsolete piece of matter. It was opulent with experiences shared with my grandfather. In an ironic manner, it served as a crystal clear window into my childhood and my grandfather's role in the shaping of my character. The rock radiated clear and concise emotions in cathartic manner that created a dichotomy between the nostalgia of reminiscing and the pure elation that arose from having experienced a large part of my life with my grandfather.

By Juan Balcazar

lish

Shattered Roots

The violent turbulence woke me from the deep sleep I had enjoyed during the entire flight. Small white spots of light at the edge of the hallway guided my sight to a big screen at the end of the passage, which showed how close we were to Cucuta, Colombia. The political situation in Venezuela was critical, making it more convenient to travel by Colombia since my hometown is on the border. For the past six years I had been in exile, kept away from my family in strange lands. An announcement from the captain disrupted the silence aboard reminding the passengers to keep in their seats for landing. I knew that from the moment I stepped down from the plane I would see the difference between the United States and a third world country like Colombia. Nevertheless, my mind enlightened me with the thought that once I passed the border into Venezuela, I would encounter my beloved past, filled with childhood memories and

succulent nourishments. As I looked in amazement at the intense green shades of the mountains around me, I was oblivious to what was about to happen. Time amends my memory but most importantly, it transforms places. These changes would ship me through an ocean of questions that would ultimately disembark me in a new shore of conclusions about my life.

The nightmare began in the bridge between Colombia and Venezuela. Locked inside the car, I observed all the activity going on in such a small piece of street. The road was full of dirt and black patches that covered old craters in the pavement. The fence and handles to the sides of the pedestrian sidewalk were painted in colors of yellow, blue and red, representing the flags of both Venezuela and Colombia. Some bare footed children were playing soccer in a corner right before the beginning of the crossing.

The windows of the taxi were down because the air conditioner was not working, letting inside the smell of gasoline and smoke from the cars mixed with the scent of poverty in the air. Shockingly, much commerce occurred in this little passage. There were Colombians exchanging currency of pesos for bolivares. Endless lines of tents selling all sorts of goods sat at the sides of the streets narrowing the path even more. An old mother with five children behind her crossed the street with a pack of rice in one hand and a baby in the other. The traffic was frozen because never-ending gasoline trucks were crossing the bridge. I asked the driver, "How come so many trucks are passing by this small bridge?" And he answered me with apathy, "It's the military commanders of Táchira, they bootleg cheap gas from Venezuela into Colombia." With that thought floating my head, it was time to get

down in the ocean of havoc to stamp my passport into Venezuela. While I crossed the street, two children came by me asking for money. My first thought concluded that a couple of dollars would be useless there, forcing me to ignore them and keep walking. I was burning inside, but it started to fade away when I noticed how indifferent they reacted to my disregard. My last image of the dreaded bridge was a yellow motorcycle carrying two caged hens in the back and some packs of beans driving into Colombia.

After sealing my entrance into the country, we were back on the road, leaving behind all that turmoil that tormented my eyes. The streets were so rough and eroded in Venezuela that it made the entire ride feel like a massage to my legs. Traffic stopped again, this time because of a military checkpoint.

A bulk of old black wheels blocked all the lanes but one. Four tanned chubby soldiers carrying AK-47 guns looked inside every vehicle, looking for God knows what. The driver explained to me what was going on before I could even ask, "They do these to check-points hunting for people coming from abroad carrying foreign goods to confiscate." To my fortune, the cab driver was friends with one of the guards, thus we were back on the road in the blink of an eye. I enjoyed a good part of voyage that passed through pure wilderness of the mountain. Enchanting tones of green and yellow decorated the side of the mountains. A hundred tropical animal sounds truly tricked my mind to believe that I had arrived into wonderland. I closed my eyes and allowed the smell of fresh water running down the hill to fill my lungs. This tropical paradise was disrupted by the radio that had caught signal. It was the usual in every station, either the opposition bashing on the government or the government

selling propaganda.

It was sunset when I first saw San Cristobal far between the mountains. Nevertheless, there was still enough sunlight to see the tones of orange bricks and rooftops made out of green oxidized aluminum. Luxurious constructions popped here and there between the poverty, reminding me that I was still in the twenty first century. After descending into that desert of contrasts and starvation, the driver made his way into Las Lomas where my grandmother lived. From the moment I walked inside the house my heart was filled with joy. Every corner of the house enriched me with an enchanting memory from my childhood. The beautiful porcelain designs on the walls of the kitchen were still intact. I had certainly arrived to my home. A tiny lady with white hair and the face wrinkled like a decayed grape appeared at the end of a hallway. Instantly my feet began walking me towards her and I finally hugged my grandmother.

The first days stretched slowly from morning to night, filling my mind and heart with reflection and sensations. By the second week I began to understand my reality and sorrow. The truth was that I ceased to be Venezuelan when I left at the age of eight. My mind crafted a utopia composed of the most vivid memories from my childhood. But the reality of Venezuela was that the communist move had destroyed what I once called home. It impacted me that the few wealthy people, of whom many were friends of mine, were entirely careless to the social problem which ultimately resulted in more poverty and ignorance. These are the two elements that allow communism to happen anywhere as I see it.

I concluded that time is the essence that measures change, and passing of time scourged Venezuela with corruption and famine. It seemed logical to me that after knowing better I longed for improvement. Hence, I began to enjoy my time there knowing that soon a plane would take me back to my real life. Going back to my roots to understand I was part of something else was a paradox. The United States has been my home ever since then, and I intend to keep it that way. As long as I am on my feet, my heart will fight to defend this great nation and never allow myself to lose a second home.

By Gian Lombardi

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Prologue - Colorless

The continent of Alccaa was one in which magic was a mundane part of everyday life. In the eyes of most Alccaans, magic was the most natural act a man could perform. The Alccaans had discovered long ago that there exists an association with eye color and magical ability. The darkest of eye colors coincided with limited magical potential within the person to the point of only being able to cast weak elemental spells. The lighter eye colors represented the opposite: the ability to cast extremely powerful spells.

Although brightness of eye color showed potential to cast strong and weak spells, hue showed the potential to master a different number of spells. Blue, Indigo, and Violet represented variability or the ability to perform and master a great number of spells—Violet having the most variability and Blue the least. While Red, Orange, and Yellow all represented the low variability, with Red as lowest variability.

And as such they were placed in social classes with the few people whose eyes were light violet and indigo as the ruling class, and everyone else below them accordingly.

In year 1420 of the Alccaan Calendar, a boy was born whose eyes could not be gauged on this class scale. The son of two Dark-Eye, was born with eyes so light that one could not see color. They were almost white but the boy had no difficulty seeing. His eyes were quite odd, scary even. His birth gave everyone something to talk about. And unfortunately, everyone talked about it.

In year 1422, the ruler of Alccaa, Lord Sivienn, decided that a boy whose magical powers may one day succeed his own should become a member of the royal family. Having red eyes of so little brightness they seemed almost black, the boy's parents knew they could not take care of him properly. When Lord Sivienn came for the boy, the parents agreed, and Sivienn allowed for them to visit him unconditionally.

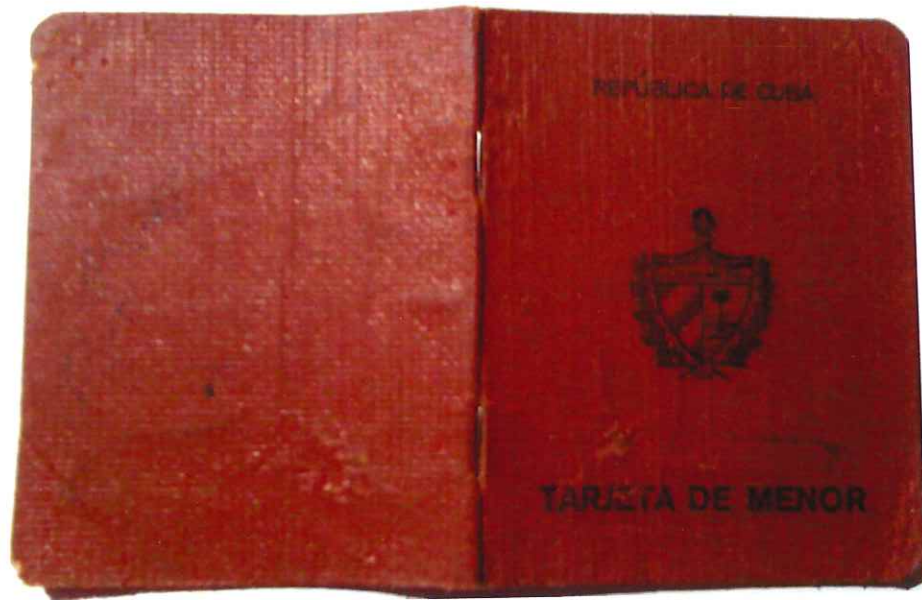
Later that very year, Sivienn passed away due to unknown cause. His son, Lord Vilienn, took over and disallowed the white-eyed boy and his parents to see each other. A week after Vilienn took control of Alccaa, the boy's eyes became black—an even darker shade than his parents' eyes. After that, no one really knew what happened to the boy, and most failed to care.

By Dynel Frometa

My Unusual Object

The process of choosing an unusual object was complicated. I had no idea of what to choose, until suddenly, inside of one of my childhood journals, I found a book-like document. This odd object is only known by people who were born in Cuba. Its cover is red, and its pages are blue-green. On its cover is written "Republic of Cuba" and it has the shield of the nation. Its inside has my personal information, and that is what makes it unique for me. First, it's unique because it has the name of my mom, my dad, and my grandparents. They are the pillars of my family, my role models, my advisers, and my guides. In its pages also appears the name of the city where I was born, and where I spent seventeen years of my life: my dear Cienfuegos, my home. When I look at this booklet, to my mind comes the memories of the days when I practiced sports, such as target shooting, because I had to show it to the arbiter before competition. At that moment, the feeling of excitement and sometimes distress took over me. I pictured that instance, everyone quiet in the shooting range, already with their guns loaded, waiting for the arbiter's instruction. Then, I heard the sound of the pistols breaking the silence at the command of FIRE!!! After that, I smelled the gunpowder coming from the smoke released by the old armaments.

This little red book has been with me my entire life because it literally was made a day after my birth. For some people this document has a political meaning. For me this ID formed part of my childhood. In its green-blue pages are written the names of the people and places that I love, and the adventures that I lived with it are unforgettable.



lish

By Ana Diego



Windows to the Soul
Yamile Cruz

Seven Seconds of Fate

A morning burst
Arranged its place within my blinds
As I lie in the bed
I can feel your heartbeat under mine
I held my stomach to confirm
that I was really awake
I was no longer dreaming
And your life within mine was fate

When do you find that feeling?
That feeling could no longer be explained
A feeling that only you
Can experience its range

Those 7 seconds
The best feeling that I have ever known
I've been in love
But not enough to a point where I was whole
You are a part of me
And you're my own.

Jashanna McQueen

Tomorrow

My eyes burn every night
Staring at this lonely old monolithic
Computer screen
My bones ache
My heart snores
How many more words must I make
to sing, to dance, to procreate
before the time is done
and I get to rest?
Before we ALL get to rest?
Even now, this monitor mocks me
These click-clacking keyboard keys haunt me
And it'll be the same story tomorrow
And Tomorrow
And Tomorrow
And until this world comes into its petty pace
Life's a game and all's a stage and I'm just gonna keep
playing my part
until the chickens come home to roost
or the crows, as some may say.

By Ismael Santos

Photograph of My Grandmother in Her Later Years

Cool radiant smile
Sits on the freezer door
She looks so happy
But time changed that

Free-frame photos
Only tell so much
Eighties Miami and beyond
What a town.

Only a few months later
And she'd be sick
And needs to be taken care of
Never get to talk to her like a human being.

Families suffer
Heart-ache from old photos
Time ruins everything in photos
Alzheimer's and Parkinson's spit her bones out.

By Ismael Santos

My Marathon Gun Fired

There is an important marathon that all human beings have to participate in. We would never know when the gun will fire and tells us that it's time to run, but we will know when we cross that finish line. This is the story of my marathon.



It was October 14 and I was in a bus full of fellow students on our way to Immokalee. We were all different students going to Immokalee for different reasons. Now, I want to be completely honest about my reason. Immokalee is a little town in Florida known for its farm activities. We were going there not to pick oranges, but to learn about the farmworkers' lives. Lives that were full of injustice, struggles, abuse and most importantly, hope. The truth was that at first I was sitting in that bus for the wrong reasons. I'm not going to deny that I did want to help them, but I volunteered to improve my curriculum. I had no clue that in that moment as I stepped onto that yellow bus, my marathon gun had fired.

As I stepped down from the bus, I was immediately transported back to Mexico, a place that I used to call home and people that I used to call my people. I was surprised of how much I felt at home, but I didn't allow myself to connect to these people in Immokalee. I was raised in Mexico and I saw the struggle and poverty those people were experiencing, but I was lucky enough to have a little book that says I am Cuban. That little book gave me the right to become a resident of the United States, the right to go to school, and the right to so much more. Even though we came from the same place, we were seen differently.

As we were interviewing one of the farmworkers, I looked through the window and observed two little girls playing and smiling. Their appearance didn't match their smiles. Their clothes were old and ripped, they were barefoot, and they didn't have an expensive toy. They didn't even have a toy. They were just playing with rocks. Just there, it hit me. I was distant from the whole project because



I saw myself in them. I realized how different my life would have been if I didn't have that little book that gave me all those rights that were denied to them. I was terrified.

On the way back home, I didn't share my feelings about the trip with anyone. In fact I distanced myself little by little from the project until I played no part in it. I tried to avoid the subject as much as I could because I knew those feelings weren't going anywhere, and I didn't know what to do with them. It wasn't until my two professors pushed me into writing this essay that I crossed the finish line of my marathon. I felt I was looking at the same thing but in a completely different perspective and with a completely different attitude. I'm not terrified anymore. In fact, I'm excited because I now know that I have that little book for one reason: to help those that don't have one and make sure that what happened in Immokalee will not happen again. I want to thank the people from Immokalee and my two professors because they changed my life. Now it is my time to change others' lives.

By Denisse Ziani

Natalie Varona

On October 12, 2013 I embarked on a trip that would alter my perspective, eating habits, and awareness for a lifetime. On this day, I listened. I listened to people who have suffered through hardships I hope to never endure in my lifetime. I listened to their struggles, their hopes, and their achievements.



When I heard all that was said, I reflected. At first, I felt defeated. I thought to myself, what can just one person contribute to this immense cause? Then I realized that my efforts could do much more than I initially thought. I decided to be a voice, a ray of light peeking through the dark clouds for farmworkers still experiencing unfair treatment. I shared my experience with others, informed many of the unjust treatment, and I made a decision to not give my money to unethical corporations. These actions don't just remind me that my efforts support a good cause, but it also brings others awareness and opportunity to join me and replicate my actions.

Ismael Santos

When I joined the project of going up to Immokalee, I honestly had no idea what to expect. Now, going with fifteen others on a school bus, that made me a bit anxious, too. As much as I talk, from time to time, about helping others, it's a lot different from just signing petitions online: to actually go out and travel a wide distance, to the area where the problems are being combated, is something else, entirely. It's an odd experience.

But, I don't regret it.

Foregoing the tales about taking pictures of the streets and the greatest burritos this side of the Rio Grande, I just want to state how honest and heartfelt the land where the Coalition is situated feels, at least to me. It feels real, not to demean any other location, like Miami: but there's no processed skylines nor hiding away the problems of the land. Modern day slavery is still an issue, and yet, walking into Coalition headquarters, it feels like there's a group that's on the up-and-up on that issue. Plus, the headquarters is cozy as can be, and the rocking chairs are too comfortable to not want to stay in for all eternity. It's an odd connection to make: dual lives always going down in Immokalee, farmer one day and activist the next or rancher one second and slave the next. I'm glad I went there, and I'm glad to be part of a collective effort to get their story across.

Regañando mi inconsciente conciencia

A temprana edad, se nos ha enseñado que debemos aprender a leer entre líneas los detalles de ciertos asuntos a los que estamos llamados a participar, ¿cierto? Me explico con mayor claridad: Si cuando un pequeñito (a) está en casa aprendiendo a colaborar con su mami en ordenar su ropa, ya para la edad de 10 años, el niño (a) debe saber que si sobre su cama hay una ropa doblada, él debe apresurarse y guardarla sin que su mami se lo ordene porque él ya está habituado a esa rutina que inculcada en él años atrás. Puede que suene chistoso, pero es cierto; desde que somos pequeños, esa clase de aprendizaje y discernimiento previo está en nosotros los seres humanos. Ahora bien, mi curiosidad y pregunta en general se deriva de esta analogía. Si hemos sido capacitados a ejercer llamados para con algo o alguien, ¿Por qué dilatamos o demoramos el tiempo de desarrollo?

He llegado a creer que esa vocecita que todos tenemos y que constantemente nos habla, la famosa conciencia, se acostumbra a vivir en un estado de rutina inconsciente en donde aun sabiendo cual es el paso a tomar, no lo damos. En muchos casos suele ser el miedo que paraliza el primer paso.

También tenemos la mala dirección que se tuvo en esos primeros años de vida de la persona; y en otros tantos casos, es simple y sencillamente la costumbre incorrecta e inconsciente de hacer las cosas. (Popularmente diríamos: "El no darle mente a las cosas que lo ameritan").

El ser humano tiene la tendencia de ir en pos de algo, siempre ha sido así. Ese algo debe tener nombre. Una vez que tiene nombre, debe tener un tiempo de desarrollo; y justamente es en ese tiempo de desarrollo que las cosas suelen desvanecerse hasta dilatar y demorar el impulso inicial. La juventud actual se mueve según las masas y se va haciendo inconsciente de las tareas que tiene para sus raíces, pero aún más, para con ella misma. ¿De qué le puede servir a alguien el saber que dar de su tiempo para otros es lo correcto, si a la final no lo hace? Cuando actuamos de una manera inconsciente, el resultado no siempre será el correcto. La conciencia humana tiene una raíz mucho más profunda de lo que podamos llegar a entender y es parte de cada ser humano el arraigarse a esas raíces para así actuar en los tiempos correctos, no antes ni después, sino en el tiempo correcto. Un reloj puede medir el tiempo físico, calculando en si cuanto nos demoraremos al ejercer cierta tarea. ¡Excelente! Pero ese no es el tiempo de desarrollo al que cada ser humano debe volverse.

Tristemente solemos justificar la incorrecta forma en nos movemos porque, aun sabiendo las prioridades y teniendo el correcto llamado a seguir, es más sencillo y de mayor agrado actuar en tiempos que no exijan tanto.

Las generaciones pasadas pudieron cometer errores, y con eso me refiero toda clase de errores pero es responsabilidad de cada ser humano hacer conciencia de aquello que fue inculcado desde el principio, arraigarse a ese o esos principios y actuar en pos de ellos. No dejando de lado la organización, es imprescindible aprender a discernir y leer entre líneas aquello que esencia para cada ser humano. Dicen por ahí que cada cabeza es un mundo y es cierto. No obstante, todo ser humano debería ser capaz de autoanalizar el nivel individual al que debe tornarse para desarrollar "x" tarea o llamado (si queremos ponerlo de esa forma). Ser consiente y moverse en "pos de" esta en todos. "Un regaño de vez en cuando no hace daño" se decía en mi familia, de modo que he aprendido a regañar las actitudes demoradas en mí y a corregirlas, tratando siempre de actuar en los tiempos debidos, sabiendo que aquello a lo que cada ser humano ha sido llamado será realizado y ha de ser perfeccionado hasta el día en que sea completado. Definitivamente quiero ser parte de una generación diligente y consiente de los tiempos correctos. ¿Habrá quienes se quieran unir a esta clase generación?

Por Mariana Frias



Mariana Frias

Héroe

• • • • •

Ese que al final del día,
En mi vida apareció,
Ese que tanta alegría,
A mi alma devolvió.
Ese que hizo justicia
Y que todo esclareció,
Ese es mi héroe, mi amigo,
El que nunca descansó.

Él no se dio por vencido,
Ni su dignidad vendió,
Ese que en cada momento,
El peligro confrontó,
Ese que con su ejemplo,
A todos nos sorprendió,
Ese es mi héroe, mi amigo,
Al que el miedo no venció.
Ese trajo la esperanza,
De ver un mundo mejor,
Ese que su propia vida,
Ante el culpable arriesgó,
Ese que incansablemente,
La justicia defendió,
Ese demostró que existe,
Un mundo mucho mejor.

Ese que lleva en la sangre,
La fuerza de triunfador,
Ese que a nada le teme,
Ese que puso su amor,
Ese que hizo posible,
La gran justicia de Dios,
Ese es mi héroe, mi amigo,
El que nunca descansó.

Margarita Rodriguez



Margarita Rodriguez - From Wonders of Our World Series

Fish Series



A

Milena Protti



rt

Natalia Mendez



Puerta

Photography

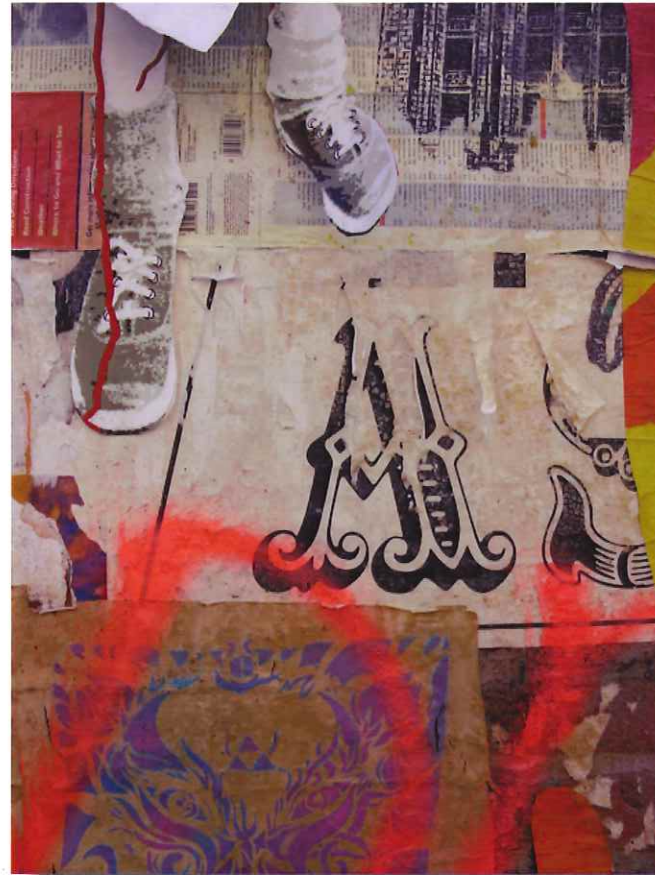


Nuevo Amigo



Caminando

NYC Decollage



Photography

Series

Raffaele Ammavuta

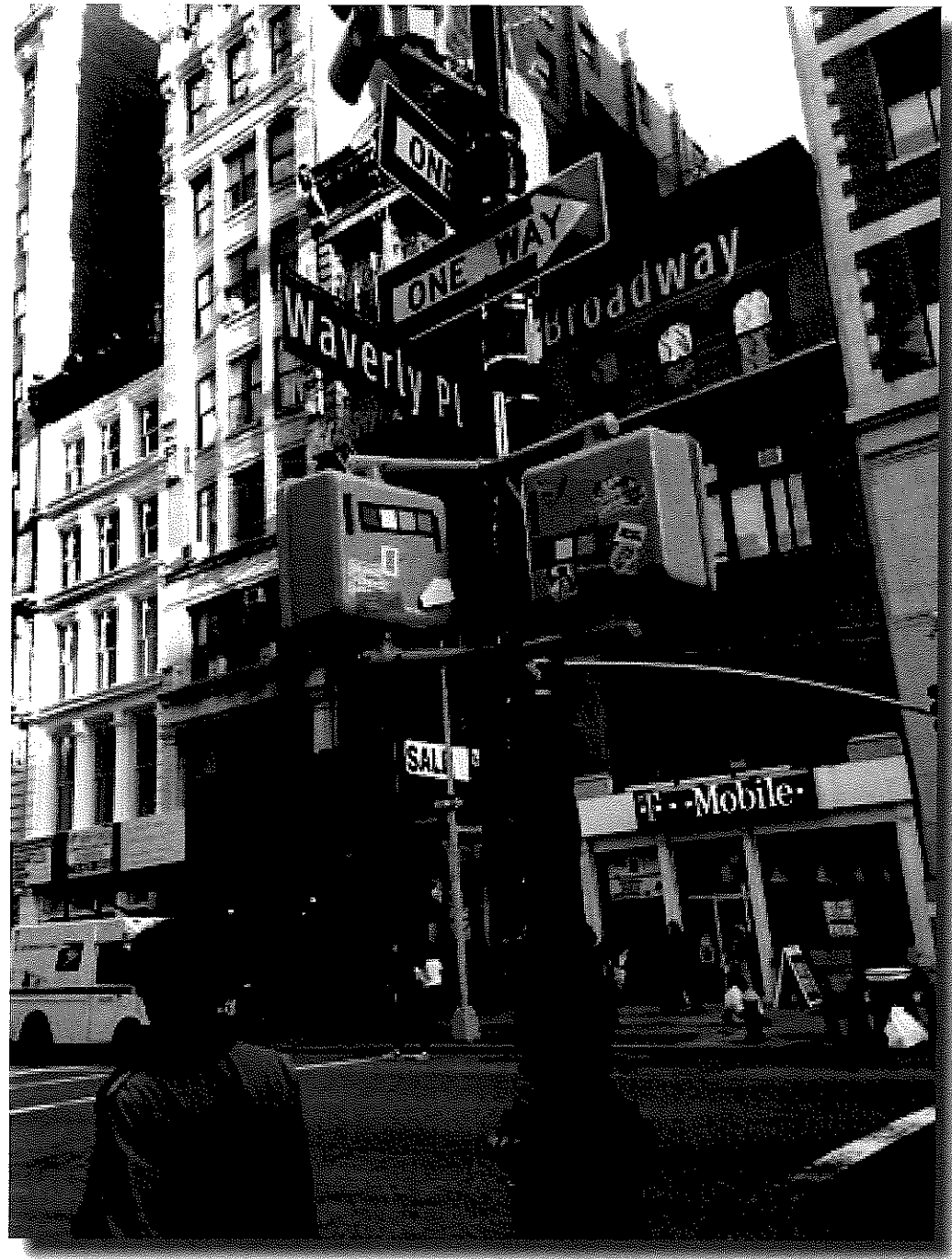


Luis Gomez

New York City

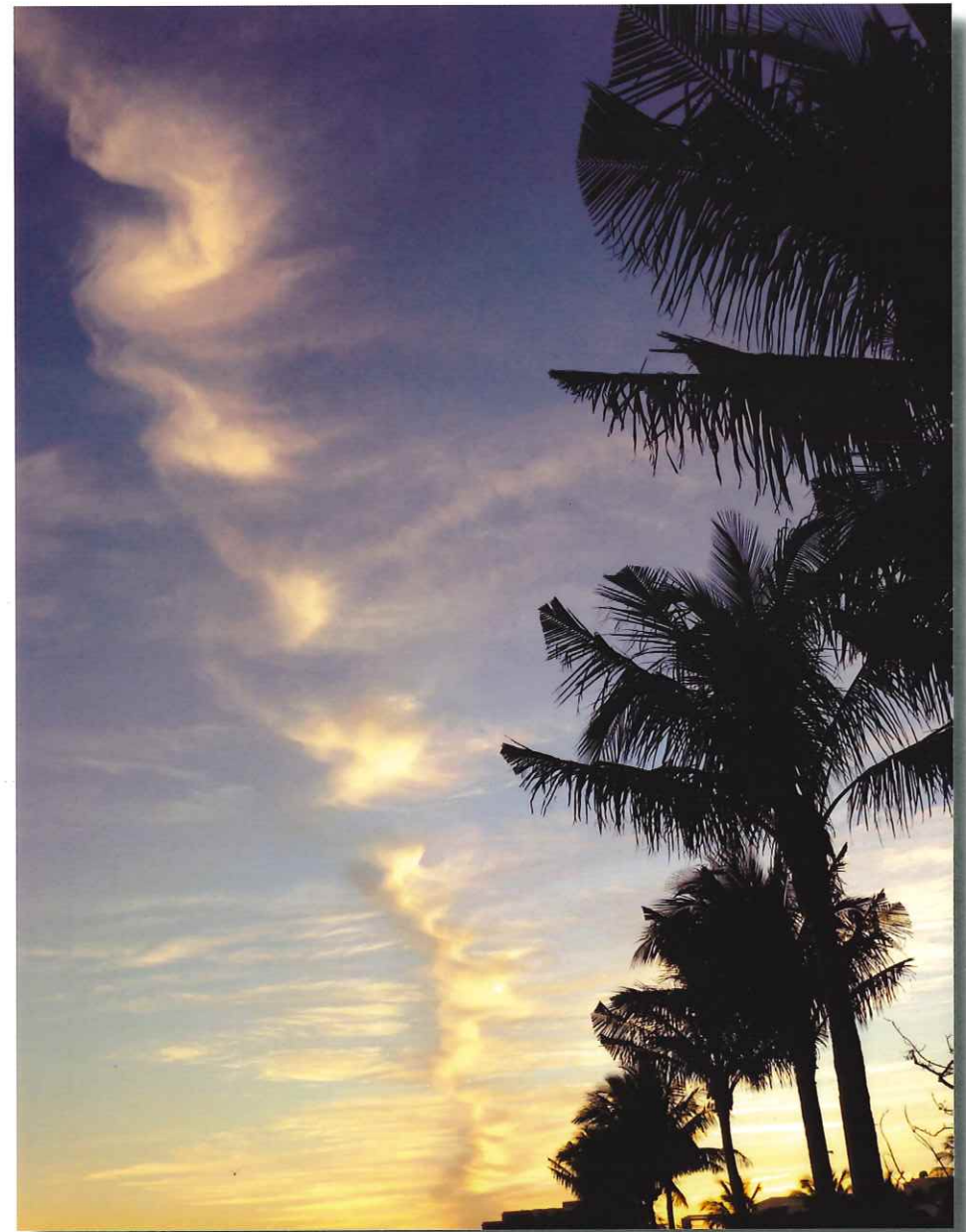


Photography



Wonders of

Margarita Rodriguez



Photography

Our World





We would like to thank our advisors, Liza Greenberg, Alejandro Salinas, and Emily Sendin for their support and dedication.

All our staff worked hard to put together the magazine and we are proud. A special thanks to all who submitted, for without you we would have no magazine.

And most importantly, thank you reader. We hope this volume was what you expected it to be and even more. We hope you enjoyed the printed version and the rest of our online magazine as much as we enjoyed it.

It has certainly been a great experience for us. We learned many things thanks to Urbana. So, we want to thank this magazine for giving us this opportunity.

Natalia Mendez & Milenys Garcia
Co-Editors-in-Chief

Thank
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