



El Zocalo
by Yetiani Fernandez

OHIO 2100

by Gian Manuel Lombardi

I close my eyes. I see the world. It is 2100.
The sea has swallowed the old world.
Miami is a sunken temple of the past.
I can only see the top of Manhattan's skyscrapers.
The agglomerated streets of Dhaka are submerged. Bangladesh is no more.
Italy is almost gone. It started in Venice.

The capital of the United States is Columbus, Ohio
We already had a woman president,
And a black woman president too,
And a black homosexual president with a first gentleman.
The war on terror is long over.
It seems that the arrival of the others has united the world under one religion.
Human existence.

As my grandchild drives his Chevy Malibu Jet 2099,
He thinks about his college application. He still needs two letters of endorsement.
He stops at a floating light. The Jet next to him plays classical music.
"Another Classical American student jerk" says my grandson.
The jerk blasts Billy Joel's Piano Man.

My grandson unlocks his iPhone 50. Designed by Grape.
Yes, Apple is long gone. At the edge of bankruptcy in 2054, an Italian bought the company.
He was a wine aficionado and renamed the company Grape.
He unlocks the iPhone and opens FaceHollogram.
He likes a few pictures and the light goes green.
The man behind him honks for him to go.

And there they are. A new world. The same old.
It's human nature.

MY CRAVINGS

by Samantha Gonzalez

I caressed the smooth naked back of Kara, my new, temporary bed partner as she continued to sleep, and I thought back on the night we had and how satisfied she made me feel. I was surprised that someone so timid and reserved reacted so strongly to my touches and how quick a learner she was.

"It's always the quiet ones," I thought to myself.

Too bad she's going to be heart-broken in a few days - I mean I know it's only a matter of time before I'm going to get tired of her and look for someone new; maybe someone rougher, more dominant. It really depends on what I'm hungry for. I compare my lust-filled cravings to the ones of a pregnant woman. Some may last longer than others, some cravings come out of nowhere and I have an unbearable need to have them, or I'll get over them the second I've had my fill. Sounds selfish, right?

Well, maybe I am a little selfish. But what's so bad about trying new things? I don't go walking around and judge people for trying different kinds of food. So why should I be judged for sleeping with someone different every few days? Oh, that's right! Because it's immoral and my body is my temple that should be treated with the utmost respect and it should be pure for marriage. I love my body, and I do see my body as a temple, a beautiful, luxurious temple that just so happens to love others inside it.

I love sex, just as much as the next person, if not more. I love the feeling of flesh against flesh, my nails scratching into someone's back, male or female-whatever I'm in the mood for-the gentle or rough touches of my new meal, the moans and screams that are so loud we disturb the neighbors, until I reach the climactic ending which makes me feel like I'm floating and blissfully happy.

Like with Kara last night. Every touch, kiss, and bite wasn't enough. It's like I had to consume her completely until I felt full, even if in the end she didn't feel the same because it's not about how good she feels, it's about me. No matter how beautiful she is with her blond, wavy hair, light blue eyes, and those pouty lips, at the end of the day I really don't care how she feels. She could wake up right this second and walk out the door, but you'll know what I'll do? I'll just find someone else until I get sick of them and go on to the next and so on. People may think I'm a slut who sleeps around with everyone, but that is completely untrue. I'm very picky when it comes to choosing my next meal because I have to find the right person who can keep up with me, who is open to trying new things, and in the end, can make me sated every single time.

I heard Kara mumble and move her body closer to mine and the only thing I could think of is 'maybe a few more rounds won't hurt' as I moved my hand from her back till it disappeared under the sheets.



Cercania
by Pablo Romo

Noches Como Estas

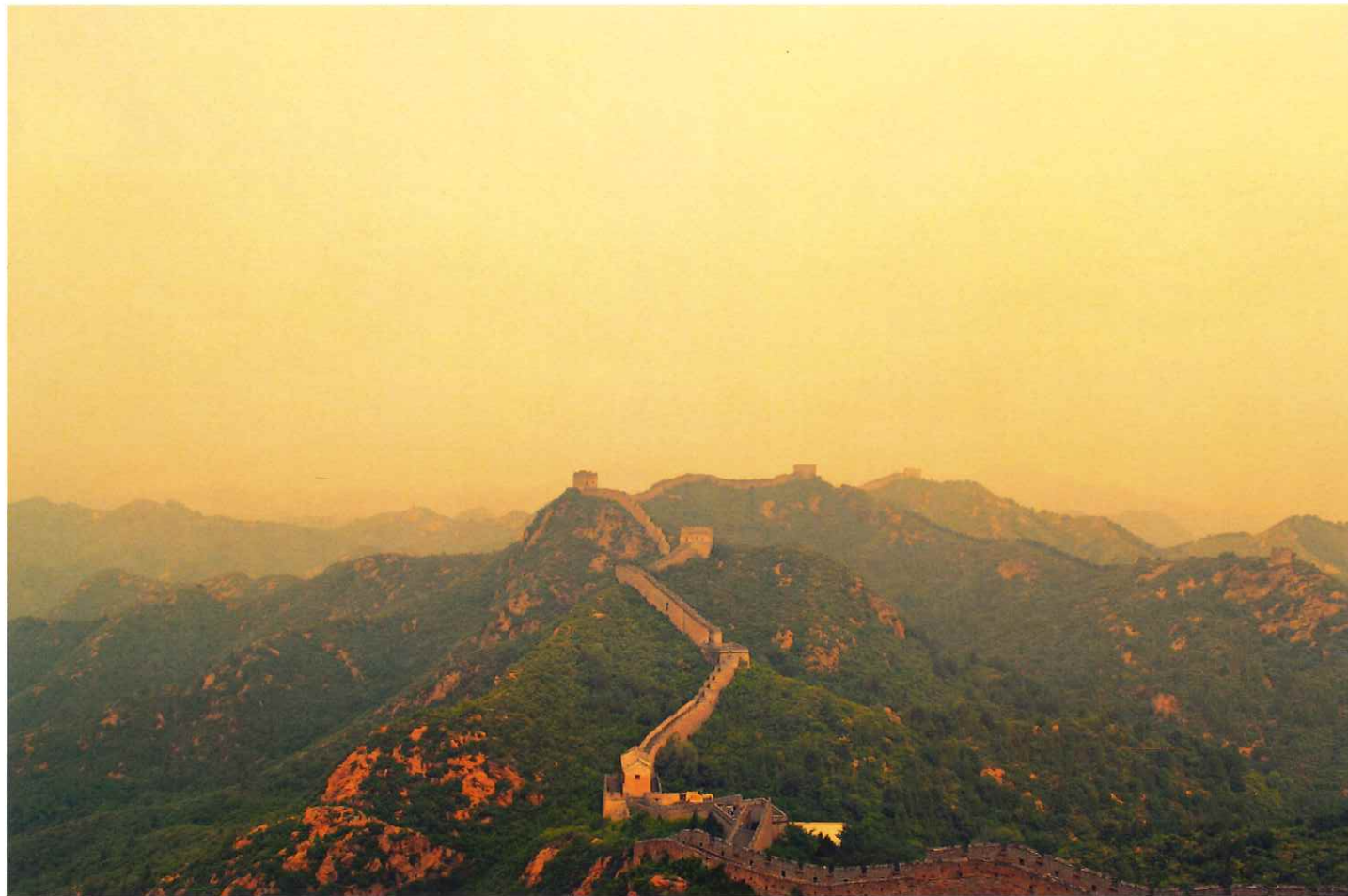
by Christian Lara

Odio las noches como estas en las que mi habitación se convierte en una prisión, noches en las que mi cama, que solía ser mi consejera, me encierra entre paredes construidas por mis más temidas preocupaciones; donde mis incontables pensamientos son cadenas que me mantienen preso. Mi imaginación, la que un día me ayudó a construir el futuro, toma el papel de una máquina demoledora de sueños que pulveriza todo a su paso. Odio las noches como estas, donde mi único aliado es el sueño, y él, siempre tarda en llegar.

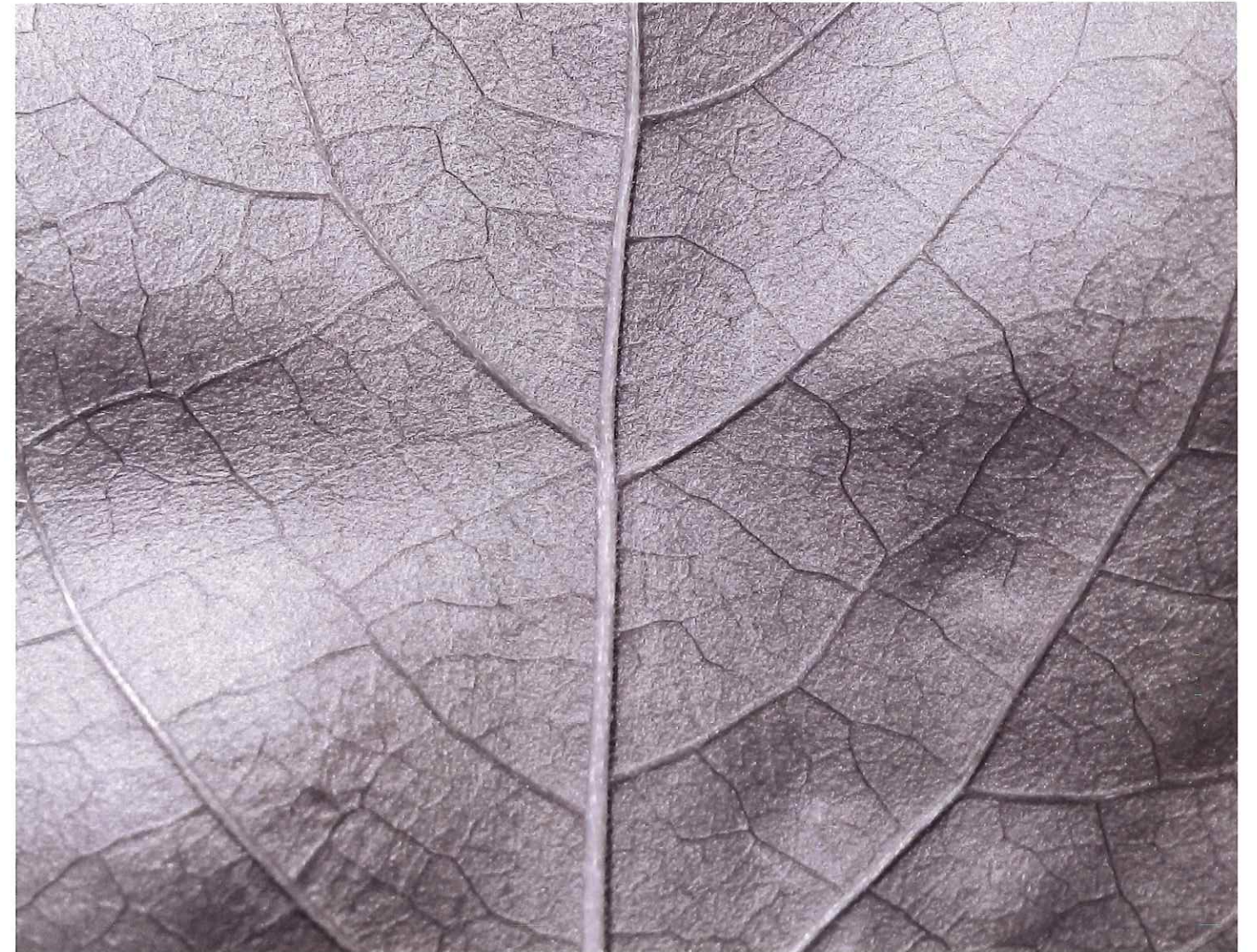
Rumbo Hacia Lo Desconozido

by Christian Lara

Me paso la vida caminando por desiertas ciudades y calles desconocidas, rodeado de personas extrañas que me enseñan cada vez más sobre la imperfección del hombre; haciéndome millones de preguntas y dejando las incógnitas a ese gran maestro llamado Tiempo. Camino agradeciendo al que me ayuda, ignorando al que me critica y amando al que me quiere. Me enamoro de la vida, a la que no debo entender sino solo querer. Me paso la vida caminando con un equipaje lleno de sueños, esperanzas, pensamientos y temores. Me paso la vida caminando a veces sin saber a dónde me dirijo pero no me detengo, no me detengo... Yo, sigo caminando hacia la luz aunque en el trayecto abunde la oscuridad.



Great Wall of China
by Anggely Cardenas



Leaf
by Joaquin Pannunzio

BRAZIL REFLECTION

by Joaquín Pannunzio

Have you ever thought that if you were able to time travel and tell your older self something that was happening to you now, that in a million years the older you would not believe you? That exact thought came to mind a couple of weeks ago while I was on a wooden boat, cruising along the Madeira River, a tributary to the Amazon, in the deepest parts of the Brazilian rainforest. To my left, ecstatic pink river dolphins swam next to the boat and waved their fins as if to welcome me to this new adventure. To my right lay the sunlit skyline of Porto Velho, capital of Rondônia, a relatively secluded Brazilian state in between Bolivia and the Amazon state. It is strange even for Brazilians from the big urban centers like Rio or São Paulo to go there. And if they do, they don't stay for more than a few days. So how exactly did I end up in that part of the planet? And what was so shocking about it that the older version of me would never take my word for it?

If my life were a videotape and I could rewind it, let's say, five years from today, you would see the image of a thirteen-year-old boy walking back from school through the busy concrete jungle that is the streets of Buenos Aires, Argentina. He would be speaking Spanish, playing around with friends, and thinking about what video game to play once he got home. If you fast forward that same tape to just a month ago, you would see a nineteen-year-old man, beard included, representing the United States in Brazil as an English coach to a number of teenagers only slightly younger than himself who would change his life forever. Is that a major plot twist or what?

A handful of events took place in between that five year timespan that made such a drastic change possible. First, shortly after finishing eighth grade I moved from Buenos Aires to Miami. Second, upon graduating from high school, I enrolled in Miami Dade College. Lastly, I was lucky enough to receive an email from my advisor that read "US-Brazil Connect Summer Program Apply Now." And I did... without ever thinking I was going to get

accepted! In my mind I saw this experience as practice for future internships or job applications. However, after a handful of interviews, both in person and through Skype, I got an email from the College's Office of International Education that had my name on it next to the title "US-Brazil Connect Community College Fellow." First reaction: a pure feeling of joy and excitement. Second reaction (and more of a rhetorical question): how did I trick these people into making them believe I was a good fit for the program? I was supposed to be an ambassador to the USA and I had barely just gotten there.

Fast forward the tape of my life once again to the last day of school in Brazil. All the initial doubts and fears that I packed in Miami as part of my luggage and made their way to Porto Velho were gone. The main reason? The students! I learned as much from them as they learned from me, probably more. I know we have formed a bond that will last for years to come. Spending so much

***"Thank you. Gracias.
Muito obrigado."***

quality time with such incredible people from a different part of the world heightened my sense of intercultural understanding. Also, I owe a lot of my sanity to the whole team that went to Porto Velho: the other Fellows from Miami Dade and our awesome team leaders Nathan & Geri from Denver. Our team chemistry and work ethic were out of this world. That last day of school, amidst the smiles and the tears, the goodbyes and the see-you-laters, was when it all hit me. And I say "all" because I realized a lot of things that day. I realized that you don't need to be a senior citizen to represent the United States somewhere else in the world, as long as you take in and communicate the ideals the country stands for. I came to the conclusion that many times the best way of learning something is by teaching it! I found out that



Waterfall
by Eyquis Chavarro

unfinished business. The author turned the machine on and searched through saved recordings on its dashboard.

"This is the first recording I captured. I don't remember what I was doing, but that's not important."

He played the recording for the two reporters. His hands shook as he held up the device toward them. The recording was low and muffled. But amidst the static, faintly, a woman could be heard.

"I hear you. I love you."

"The recordings are better when they're done later at night," the writer responded, navigating the dashboard again.

"Don't you think there's something odd about that?" Kip asked. "The fact that the recordings are much clearer as night falls makes it sound sinister."

"I'm not afraid of the dark because I've seen the monsters in the day. There's nothing to fear. The recordings are stronger as night falls because that's when we're the most intimate with the ones we love. Isn't it?" The author was stone-faced.

"Yeah, I guess it is."

Dugger's eyes moved from the recording device to the author and back again.

"How lovely life was years ago. It was virile, loving, caring, and good-natured. Life is pain. It's the way that children are brought into this world through the painful act of childbirth. People are brought into this world whining, and they continue to do so for the rest of their lives until they die. The wonder of the world has been lost, for I no longer have someone to share moments with."

"Then why are you still pursuing your wife?" asked Dugger. "If you know there's nothing you can do then why put yourself through this torture? How are you even certain that this is your wife?"

"Because she hasn't let go. I want her to know that she needs to let go."

"Could it be that you haven't let go?"

"Have you ever thought about why we say goodbye to people? Saying goodbye is meant for momentary absences, not temporary ones. This is why

it's so hard for us to say it and know that we will never see that person again. We can never really accept that. You said you wanted me to tell you my story. Well, this is as best as I can tell it."

Kip leaned forward and placed the cup of water on the floor.

"You need to finish one story before you can move on to another."

A third drop of water fell to the ground and Kip's right foot slipped into a puddle of murky, black water. He fell forward and desperately tried to pull his foot out of the puddle, but he felt that something was pulling him in.

The author stood up, aghast, and uttered, "No, it's happening again."

Dugger quickly rose to his feet and aided Kip in pulling his foot out. In doing so, a black arm appeared from the ever-growing puddle. Behind them, the picture of the young couple was distorting and the colors were melting off into the sofa.

Kip's foot was finally freed, but from the puddle, a dripping, black body emerged. It struggled to stand and screeched while doing so. When it gathered up the strength to stand, the two reporters exited the home and fell on the street. Before them, the house was bleeding.

Inside the house, the writer, despondent, walked back to his work station and took a seat. He began to cry uncontrollably. He picked up a pencil and began to write:

I've lived in the future all my life. I formulated a future I thought I deserved, that we deserved, and I paid no attention to what was unraveling in front of me. The truth is, you were in my past and you were in my future. But I must come to terms with the fact that I have to live in the present, and you're not here with me.

The two reporters watched in awe as the house went up in flames.

scary feeling you get down your spine the minute you exit your comfort zone can only be cured by making the unknown your comfort zone, one step at a time. Every brave step counts. Also, I realized this program is one where you begin by first dipping your toe in to test the waters and then diving in without looking back because it is just so irresistibly good and genuinely human. Last but not least, I realized Porto Velho is actually an ironic decision for the name of the place where I spent such an incredible month. In English, it translates to Old Port. In my language, however, it will from now on mean New Port, and in it I will harbor all the new treasured moments, friendships and life-long learning.

Press the fast forward button one last time on my life-tape and stop it when the credits start coming up. I have to make some additions and special mentions

here. Everyone has a story. Mine wouldn't have been as enjoyable as it was this past summer without the help of the US-BC staff in Denver that made this program a reality, SENAI and SESI in Brazil for opening their doors and their students' minds, Miami Dade College staff that sponsored the partnership with the right organization at the right time, and finally my family and friends who supported me all the way. Thank you. Gracias. Muito obrigado. You have provided me with gratifying moments that I will never forget. But most importantly, you have given me the chance to become a part of something bigger than myself. Something that has created ripples of change that will last a lifetime.





Forest Fairy
by Milena Protti

was insane and regretted tagging along with Dugger in pursuit of a paranormal breakthrough. He cleared his throat and revised the notes Dugger had supplied him with.

The house the interview was currently being conducted in is called the house that bleeds by residents of the neighborhood. This name stemmed from a substance that looked like red paint dripping down the house on certain days when it was dark. Nobody knew why this happened, and those that tried to make sense of it said it was just the way people were perceiving the weak street lights hitting the house from a certain angle. Still, people were superstitious and nobody got close enough to the house to ever find out what it was that made the house bleed.

***“The fact that the recordings
are much clearer as night
falls makes it sound sinister.”***

“Those that are unfortunate enough to pass on before their time struggle with moving on to the other side,” the writer began, crossing his legs. “I was told by a psychic that many of them don’t even know they have died. They’re trapped in a constant loop, and they just continue to live their life as if nothing has happened. That’s why there are reports of people saying that objects randomly end up somewhere else in their homes.”

A drop of water lands by Kip’s right foot and stains the floor with a rotting green color. He disregards it.

“Do either of you believe in ghosts?”

Dugger took a sip of his water and leaned back on the couch. “Well, my mother told me that she had an encounter with the devil one day. She was in college, had just come back from school, and was taking a nap in her room around midday. She said she dreamt she was in a lair that had an opulent orange glow. She sensed that a beast was running toward her and so she began to run the opposite way. After running for a while, she felt somebody grab her arm and that’s when she woke

up. On her bed, she looked at her arm that had been grabbed and she saw there was a handprint outlined in ash. My mother was a deeply religious woman all her life, so I believe there are things out there.”

“When I was about six or seven,” Kip began, running his hand over the back of his neck, “I was falling asleep and I felt somebody pull the covers up to my shoulders. I don’t know if I just imagined it or not, but I know that nobody was in the room with me when it happened.”

“On some nights I wake up and feel my wife getting into bed with me,” the writer responded, looking down at his hands. “Sometimes I feel her chest pressed close to my back, and I feel her heart beating. All I want to let you two know is that that’s all we are, ghosts. We’re all ghosts inside.”

All this time, the ghost in the writer had been toxic like the air that hovers over nuclear power plants.

“I have recordings of my wife. I was able to capture them in something called the spirit box. I’ll play them for you.” The author got up from his seat and disappeared up the stairs.

A second drop of water fell by Kip’s foot as he and Dugger commented on everything the man disclosed to them. The drop of water was disregarded.

The author, rummaging through boxes of possessions in his office, found the device and made his way back down to the living room. On his desk, an open journal read:

There’s something beautiful in seeing the one you love before passing away, especially when the person you’re seeing was expected to pass away much earlier than you. It makes their plight much easier, and it allows them to move on without any worry of leaving something behind. This is why I want to see you. Not because of what you mean to me, but because of who we’ll be tomorrow. We’ll be the most distant we’ve ever been, and it will remain as such.

Back in the living room, the author sat back down and inspected the device. It looked like a Texas Instruments calculator, heavy when held in one hand. It’s heavy with memories, broken promises, and unfulfilled dreams. Most of all, it was burdened with

THE OPENING DARK

by Daniel Molina

The reclusive author had not had a visitor in years, so he was surprised to hear several knocks on his door. He had been ignorant of the world outside his house, for he believed that it brought nothing good to people. Stepping up from his workstation, he made his way to the door.

Two reporters waited outside on his porch, dreading the cold that New Jersey had to offer on a November morning. Their breath escaped their mouths like ghosts lunging with open arms before disappearing in the air. "Don't you think it's overwhelming to write two stories at the same time though? You need to finish one story before you can move on to another," said Kip.

"I'm finished with it."

"You're finished with it?"

"Yes, I'm finished with it."

"Let me read it."

"I'm not writing it anymore because I want to write this one; therefore, I'm finished with it."

"This man has been off the radar for years. He hasn't had a soul visit him in ages."

"Well, I wouldn't say a soul. Remember what we're here for, Kip" answered Dugger.

"You really think this man is anything more than an act?"

"That's our job, I guess, to find out what's fiction and what's not. Personally, I find this interesting."

The door opened.

Both reporters plastered welcoming smiles on their faces, though Kips' was forced and fake. The writer, a stern look on his face, waited for someone to initiate a conversation.

"Hello, my name is Mark Dugger. This is Kip Thompson. We're with the Jersey Tribunal, and we were wondering if we could talk to you for a bit. You've become quite the character in the last few years and

we wanted to show our readers who you really are."

"You mean, you want to know if I'm a liar."

"No, we just want to tell your story. Certain stories deserve to be told, and we think this is an important one. We just want you to tell it to us if you have the time."

There were a few seconds of silence. People were outside shoveling snow in their driveway. The sky was foggy.

"I haven't spoken to someone in about two and a half years. I haven't wanted to, and here come two reporters who want to do a lot of questioning about a very personal matter in my life." He pauses, sighs then continues. "I'll talk to you. What flatters me the most is that you found me interesting enough to approach. I understand you may be skeptical, but it's all true. Come in."

Both reporters followed the 57-year-old writer into his home and were told to wait for him in the living room. The house was hot and Kip sat down on the nearby sofa while Dugger examined the room and all the pictures that were mounted on the walls. The reporters began to take their coats off and make themselves at home. The pictures, lively, contrasted with the somber air that filled the house.

The writer came back to the living room a few minutes later with two clear cups in his moderately shaking hands.

"There's no use in asking you what you'd like to drink if I really have nothing to offer you. I'll just give you what I do have, water." He then handed the cups to the reporters and Dugger took a seat next to Kip on the worn down sofa below a framed picture of a couple on the best day of their lives.

Kip scratched his right cheek, newly shaven and irritated, and thanked the writer for allowing them to interview him, even though Kip thought the man

AWAKENED IN ASH

by Edwin Melgar

Twenty years in the ethanol ocean
I crawled out a broken bottle, unkempt
My mind diseased as a harlot, confused
The light played amusingly as the day
Grew a five o'clock shadow in the rain

I ripped and tore nine needles from my arms
I loosened ties that were tight on my wrists
A loving tide had brought me in safely
And laid me out on a dry sandy beach
Where I stood standing in new-found Eden

My cleanly paved mind in bitter remorse
Settling in for a long walk in the night
Narrow light sun baked sky haze blue dew drop
An inner way is lit, so I follow
Tempestuous waves on the horizon

Many years ago a great net was cast
Where I was drawn like an unwanted skate
From sharks swimming in afterbirth of man
The school of my thought was out of season
And no one would claim that philosophy

Twenty years lost, my mind intolerant
So much, I caused all whom I loved to cry
Breathless, I darkened so many doorsteps
My voice then became rank and hoarse to all
No one would listen to those drunken words

In tomorrow base my hands have faltered
A tiny blind fall planted in deep thought
The wind now bleeds a yellow under bite
And the miscarriage becomes golden sound
In all the musings of a shone faced boy

This time now stands with a borrowed gesture
I must make the bones rattle their hollow
To eat the marrow of a second chance,
In fate we speak from inebriation
Of a tilted, jilted, left behind past

Lie with me on this ethereal sheet
I decide the inky black slate is my
Cutting board. From my obsidian tale
I will write the future into being
With a dove's plume dipped in yesterday's blood.

BRAIN CANDY

by Edwin Melgar

Sweet chalk turns to sweet powder
Colors that bleed from sugar cast palatable doubt
Across domestic tongues discovering tastes anew

The discouraged cannon of warning gives great
The lost bastion of steadfast taste
Bright and sunny as a lemon, bitter as a lizard gray

Scuffed surface like a mummy thousands of years old
And inhabited by myriads of spent casings of cane
Wrinkled resentment, wasting away in daylight

Have we seen the combed shores worn down by the tides?

Commotion combines its displacement from the
Azure cove of forgotten sweetness, gone is the sense
From the psychologist's tablet

Beneath a hollow blinded bend it contained all
That change could share in a vapid minute
Call out the nameless, for it dissipates a flavor

From the forgotten gem tooth. The calm,
Quiet violence of the nested jewel denies
A spitfire channel from the courted groove.

Para Tico

by Ivette Prieto Castro

Querido Tico:

He oído muchas veces de tu boca cuán inusual era encontrar lo que otros consideran su “media naranja”, alguien con quien desees pasar el resto de tu vida. Sé que no usaste esos términos en específico, pero permíteme hacerlo como parte de esa libertad literaria que me concedes.

Ante esta afirmación yo no puedo más que quedarme paralizada, sin respuesta alguna . Mi razón me pide tiempo para pensar lo que debo decir, lo que sonaría mejor, y lo que tú recibirías más agradecidamente. Lamentablemente, no soy tan rápida para pensar, se me pasa el tiempo y no soy capaz de decir palabra. Entonces, me parece ver en tus ojos una pizca de decepción o de temor, no lo sé. Creo que piensas que dudo de ti, o de mis sentimientos hacia ti, o de nosotros. Sin embargo, la verdad es que no lo hago, nunca había tenido una relación más clara que la nuestra , una convicción más noble que nuestro deseo de estar juntos, ni siquiera una idea tan cristalina comparada al sentimiento puro y delicado que me sobreviene cuando pienso en ti.

Dudo al responder simplemente porque soy defensiva, porque no digo lo que pienso la mayoría de las veces, y porque siempre he considerado las consecuencias de mis palabras antes de decirlas; también porque a veces, con tanto amor que me profesas, no sé que yo podría hacer o decir para igualar los sentimientos que toman control de mí cuando me pones en tan consumado altar.

Algunas noches, como ésta, me pregunto si sientes lo mismo que yo, o si sientes más que yo porque te dejas llevar por tu sentir. Lamento mi naturaleza un poco escurridiza y asustada. Solo quería dejarte saber cuánto te amo.

Tu Iv.

As It Should Be

by Carmen Villalobos

If only life were easy,
If only happiness would come,
Then, I would not be saddened,
No, I would not be, not at all.

Life is not life without experiencing falls,
Once you stand up, go ahead, and stand up tall.
Demonstrate all you have been taught,
To not ever worry about something so small.

If only laughs would linger on,
If only tears would not fall along,
Because love is one of our biggest dreams,
Even though it is very hard to keep.

My heart is shattering into little pieces,
But do not think it is because of romance,
The loss of a simple mother's touch
The loss of time with your father

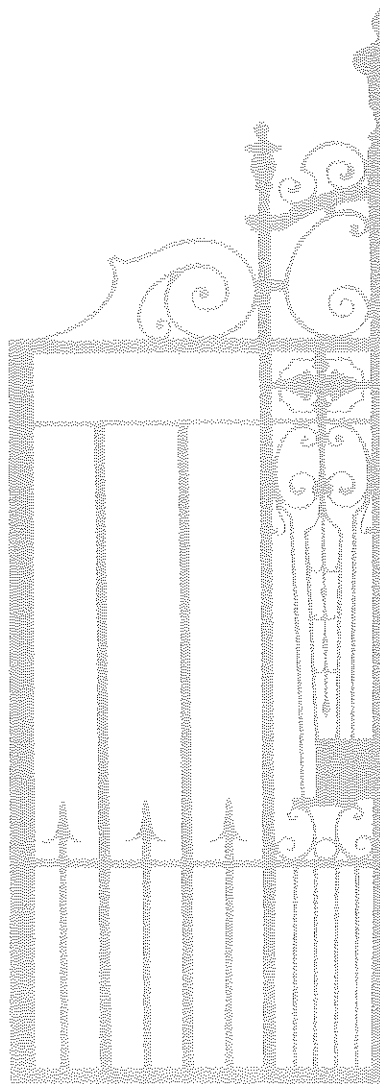
If only life were easy,
If only happiness would come,
Then my family would be together,
Living with each other, as it should be,
As it once was.



Grandma's House
by Milena Protti



South Beach Car
by Yetiani Fernandez



JUST SMILE

by Sheila Borden

I always wondered why the children on the other side of the wrought-iron gate never invited me over to play with them. I really didn't understand. Was there something wrong with me? Was I not good enough? These were the kinds of questions that haunted me as a child. But none of them compared to one that bothered me the most: Why was it that only I could see my dead friend?

I remember the day he first decided to reveal himself to me. It's been engraved in my memory like the branches in my palms.

Nathan was my childhood friend, my only friend.

I was sitting about a foot from the ground on a stony ledge that surrounded a marvelous angel statue in my mother's garden. With my drawing pad on my lap and a pencil in hand, I looked up above at the sky, free of cotton clouds but azure nonetheless. I focused my attention on an old oak tree ahead. My eyes took in the movement of the branches as they slowly swayed in the wind's wake, their leaves spiraling down to their doom in a graceful dance. I quickly sketched what I saw; I had to before it was gone.

After that I looked around for my next subject to capture on paper. I was excited to see what I could draw next. Suddenly, I felt a chill down my spine. I stood to my feet and everything seemed to move in slow motion. Leaves rustled across my feet as if they were running away from something and with them came the eerie whisper of my name.

"Christopher."

What was this? How could a day that was so bright and happy without notice, shift into a dark and mysterious, almost menacing atmosphere? I squinted, trying to adjust my eyesight so I could see past the appearing



Dying Beauty
by Joaquin Pannunzio

A Motherly Expedition

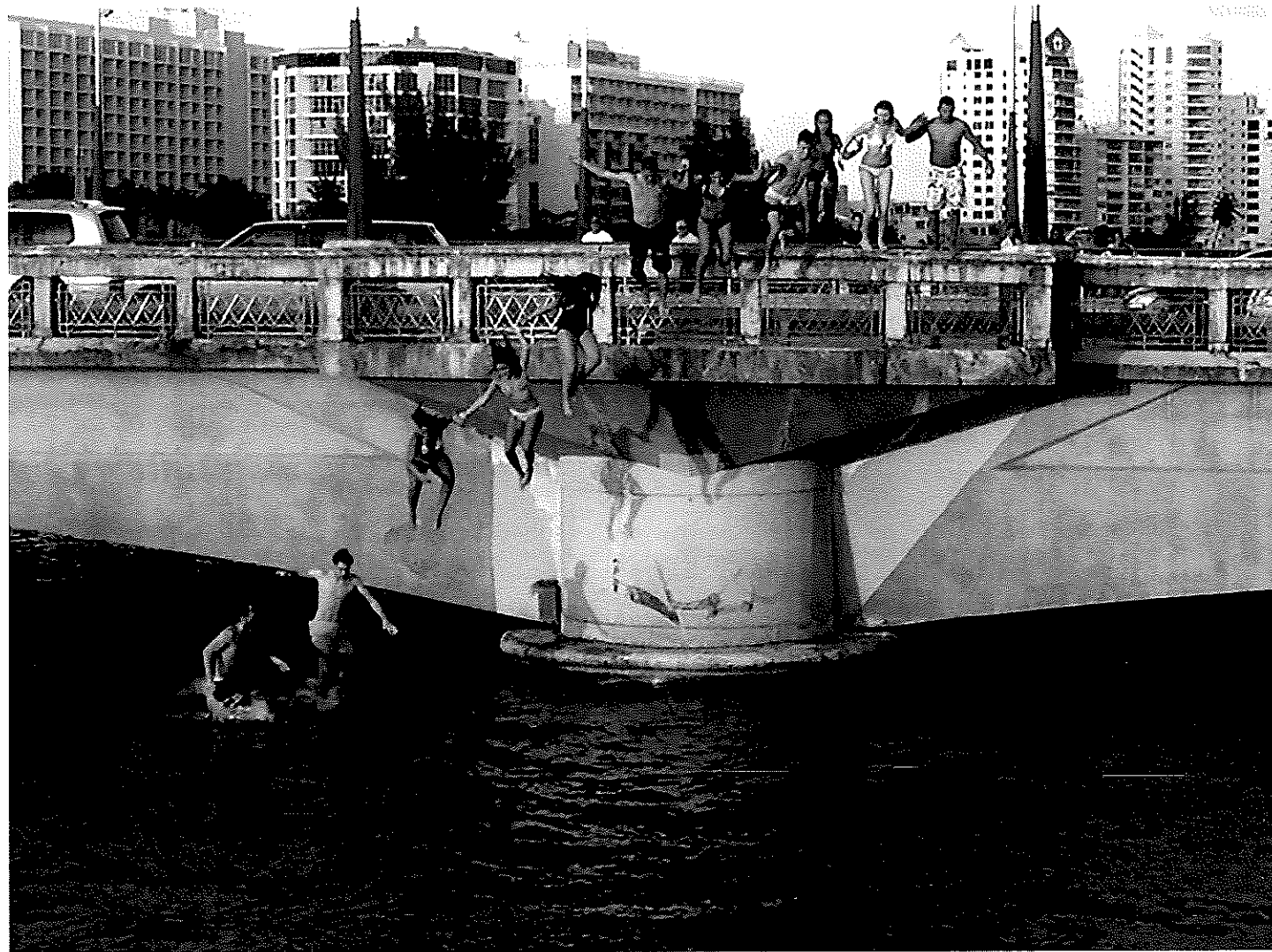
by Naomi Romo

From Venus to Mars,
She sways across space and into the stars,
Right then and there,
The mysteries of the universe seem so familiar,
Wonders become known.

From Betelgeuse to Arcturus,
None brighter than her
Soul of Nebulae and mind of constellations
She's the sweetest of all creations.

From faraway galaxies to her arms,
Every inch of her smile welcomes me to stay,
Warmth filled silence,
Love she bestows,
Eyes so wise, eyes so daring,
The world she holds.

From her womb to Earth,
She gives rise to life,
Face of courage, heart beating peace,
Mother of mine,
Shine, shine, shine!



Jumps of Happiness
by Eyquis Chavarro

fog but to no avail. I slowly stepped forward attempting to walk out of the fog without tripping, but my small body grew rigid when a silhouette came forth and into sight. My heart was pounding against my chest so hard I could feel it beating in my head. What was going on? I tried to move, tried running away, but I couldn't. It was as if my legs weren't connected to my brain. They weren't receiving the frantic messages my nervous system was sending out. I became paralyzed with fear. By then, the dark figure had already closed the distance between us. It was then that a pair of crystal blue orbs peered into my face. Nathan?

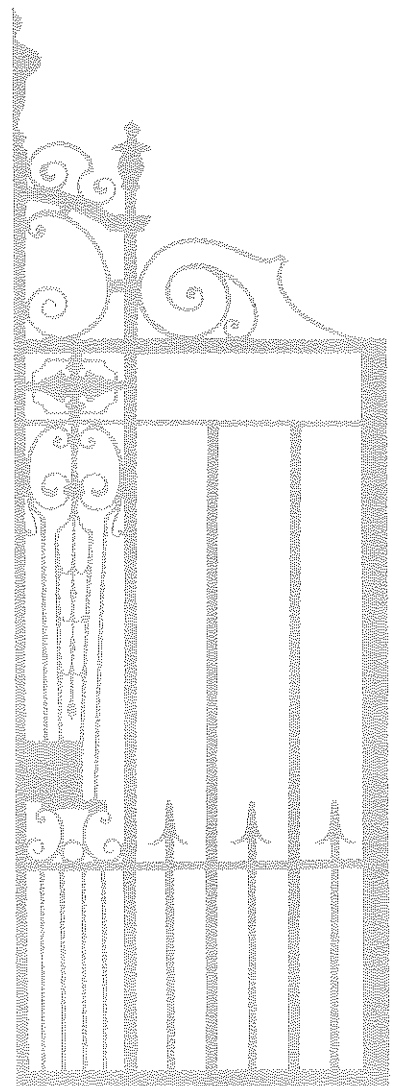
A childish giggle rang in the air.

The fog finally dispersed and I was able to see with more clarity. I felt my eyes widen as I sought but miserably failed to search for an explanation of the sight before me. I couldn't believe it. It was the same long blonde hair, freckled cheeks and bright crooked smile. It was the same boy who had drowned in a lake over a year ago.

"Hi, Christopher. How have you been, buddy?"

Memories of the time we spent together, playing on the swing set, pulling pranks and getting caught and laying in the grassy meadow looking up at the stars hit me like a tidal wave. Nathan was my closest friend, my only friend. And when he died, it was almost like he had taken a part of me with him. The tears I didn't know were pooling in my eyes threatened to spill and ran down my cheeks.

"Hey, what's the matter? Why are you crying? C'mon, cheer up. You should be glad to see me," he stated confidently. I smiled and nodded. He was just as confident as he was before.





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MY ENDLESS LOVE

by Yazmin Monge

The sky seems a tad different today than its usual old self. The leaves are gracefully moving, dancing a sweet ballet. The flowers around my house are gorgeous as if God planted them in that spot with his gentle hands. All of the heat is on its way out from Miami as December is commencing. I feel happy, for this is a beautiful time of the year— a year with several accomplishments as well as failures. However, I also feel sad because of a special person who seems to never come— my husband.

My daughters say that he is in the hospital very sick. I can imagine that he needs my help, but I do not know how to get there. Perhaps, I can take a taxi, but I do not know the name of the hospital. I do not know how long my husband has been in the hospital— maybe two weeks or a month. The only thing I know is that I love him with all my heart and that he will come some day. My granddaughter Min tells me he is in a better place with a lot of people that care for him. When she tells me this, I hope she does not mean that he is in a nursing home. Oh no! That would be terrible because he already has a house. More than that, he has a home with me.

Sometimes, I feel lonely at night, and stay awake wondering what he is doing now. He surely does not like the cold just like me, so hopefully, he is wrapped up in a warm blanket. I wonder if he ever thinks about me as much as I do of him. Most likely he does since we have been together for more than 60 years. Although we are separated, it does not mean that our love is split. We are a whole since I first met him. And just like God will come like a thief in the night in the last days, Alfredo will come for me so that we can live in harmony for eternity.

THANK YOU

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

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

The Urbana Staff

WELCOME

Dear readers,

Welcome to Miami-Dade College InterAmerican Campus' eighth 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 it has in mind, conveyed through poetry, fiction, music, art, and photography.

Every year we find inspiration on a selected theme; however, this year we decided to create a motto for the magazine: "Empower the Mind to Wander." We believe that in order to emotionally reach an audience with the work of the students, this audience has to be open-minded. For instance, we encourage you to open your mind to the different types of visual and literary works that you will find in this volume.

We hope you enjoy the eighth volume of *Urbana: Literary and Arts Magazine* as you empower your mind to wander through the following pages.

From the Urbana Staff

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Allow the Mind to Wander

URBANA

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