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MacArthur High School



BULLSEYE  
BUL

BULLSEYE 2007: URBAN SCRABBLE



# BULLSEYE 2007

THE LITERARY AND ART  
MAGAZINE  
OF  
DOUGLAS MACARTHUR  
HIGH SCHOOL

NORTH EAST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
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## MISSION STATEMENT

BULLSEYE 2007 is a collaborative effort of students and faculty writers and artists to showcase their work in a professionally produced magazine. Submissions for publication in the magazine are open to the entire student body and faculty. Text and art entries are selected through a three-round anonymous judging process by BULLSEYE staff and advisors.

## AWARDS AND MEMBERSHIPS

American Scholastic Press Association: First Place with Special Merit 2005; First Place 2002

The Columbia Scholastic Press Association: Bronze Medalist 2005; Silver Medalist 2002; Bronze Medalist 2000

National Council of Teachers of English: Superior Rating 2005; Excellent Rating 2002; Superior Rating 2000

National Scholastic Press Association: First Class with Three Marks of Distinction 2005, 2002, 2000

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The design concept for BULLSEYE 2007: *Urban Scrawl* was inspired by a workshop at the The Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum.

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and modeled by Lupita Dominguez

Artwork on these pages by Avery Reed Moore and Lydia Manriquez

# I AM THE ILLUSION

It's all an illusion  
Call it by name  
My failing constitution  
The faltering of my will  
Subjugation  
By the run-of-the-mill  
But I must not concede  
Or fall victim to greed  
The starry heavens beg  
I proceed  
In pursuit of my need

I must not stop  
Nor hesitate  
To flower  
To create  
For my will  
Is chained to my fate

I must drive on  
I will not be a pawn  
In this chess game of life  
My mind  
My gun  
Shall remain drawn  
For I  
I am the bringer of Dawn

Time weighs me down  
Desire is my crown  
I am the magistrate  
I am the king and the clown

Two-faced revolution  
Schizophrenic delusion  
Radical, intrinsic self-convolution  
My mind is the pimp of my soul's prostitution  
Systematic de-evolution  
I am the illusion

John Marden

Heavendawnmagistratepawnehesitatesubjugate  
ImustnotstopImustdriveontimeweighsmedownIwillnotbeapawn  
Illusionconstitutionschizophrenicdelusionde-evolution



Heavendawnmagistratepawnehesitatesubjugate  
ImustnotstopImustdriveontimeweighsmedownIwillnotbeapawn  
Illusionconstitutionschizophrenicdelusionde-evolution

# SPINNING

Crack like a carbon match  
Between the beats.  
Illumination—unexpected—shocking.  
A giant yell, rolled in a ball and eaten.  
A cold breath of air.  
Warm shivers, good fever.  
Pleasant delirium—sun shower.  
Masterpiece,  
Don't change a thing.  
Blue in the face and all consuming  
Like the carbon match.  
Don't focus on it all at once.  
Too much to take in.  
Too much to absorb.  
So today—eyes.  
And tomorrow—lips.  
And the next day—hands.  
Your hands.  
My hands.  
With nails like little bright moons  
That orbit your fingers.  
Spinning.

Amelia Marini



Bird's Eye View

Julio Trujillo



# ENRIQUE IGLESIAS

Baby, why is that arrow in your back?  
Let me take it out; put it in my burlap sack.  
I'll put you on my shoulders like a mountain man—  
Conveyer belt, a la doctor in the promise land.

There we can glide with pride like it's lady's night.  
Impressed by the no-slip masonite.  
Get it right. Get it right. Get it tight.  
Iron you out as wrinkles might.  
Humidity: roller coaster: festival of fright.

It's all for the belts that your wound is a mess.  
I need some Epsom salt, Dvóra K, a few episodes of Borat—it'll be very nice.  
I promise they won't play Damien Rice,

I'll request some 3 6, maybe.  
Hey, that can be your quick pop popcorn popper  
With an elixir and my patented medicine dropper, who knows?!

The plants that grow under the right conditions  
aren't always the ones who need permission.  
"Knuck if you buck, Seimore."  
He needs more.

Avery Reed Moore



Bullet Notes

Julio Trujillo



Rebirth



Juan Bahamon

## PARANOIR

The closest thing to urban serenity lies in the passing engines and distant glowing headlights. Television sets illuminate the individual windows in each apartment. Each one acts as a miniature security blanket, a sliver of safety; if anything happens, someone certainly must hear it, and come out to help. That is, of course, unless he simply watches the incident from his safe little den. Nothing can happen, though, no need for such unreasonable hypotheses.

Maybe it's for the better, thinking about these types of things. Imagining a short-term future of mutilation or murder can really remove all the crushing stagnancy and failure of life. A maniac doesn't care how educated his victims are; how much they accomplish in their life before that particular moment in time. Regret tends to go away when survival instinct runs the show.

On the other hand, so does accomplishment . . .

Again, there is no reason for these thoughts. Threats do not lurk in such quiet and populated areas, not in the shade of homes and the people living out their quaint nights. Even so, every shadow hints some unimaginable fate: a dark room, something with ropes, a chair, a blade. Cliché, but enough to provoke nervousness; enough to quicken the step of the walk home.

## PARANOIR

Forget it. These thoughts make no sense. If they had any substance, it would invoke far more than a brisk walk. No one promenades when he fears for his life. Unless, perhaps, this all acts as a substitute for the bland thoughts of reality.

Nonsense. There isn't a reason to cover up the night's events by dreaming up this rubbish. A little social faux pas, then all the focus heads straight toward impending death. Somewhat pathetic, really. It would be a lot easier to deal with reality if all this morbid imagination went away.

A quick turn around would reveal the stalker. Half a rotation meets the bare minimum for closure, so it would seem. The threat escapes, though, persistently lingers there right out of vision.

The calm delivers the trepidation. The chilling concrete offers nothing in the way of comfort.

It is actually a very nice night, if it wasn't for all the damned murders around.

Matthew Capper



Broken Window

# YELLOW HOUSE

Atop a bronze hill sits a lone house,  
bright yellow paint caressing its walls.  
The deep red shutters flutter in the wind,  
rapping

and

tapping

their hypnotic rhythmic hum.

The lilies lining the marble walk

snap in the breeze,

the cool morning dew

lapping their petals.

The tin-looking roof loses several shingles  
as the wind flows through its cracks.

The clean, crisp white door

opens

and

closes

lazily.

The memories of happy times stir in hidden chambers,  
awakening the dormant pleasures  
of the secluded house.

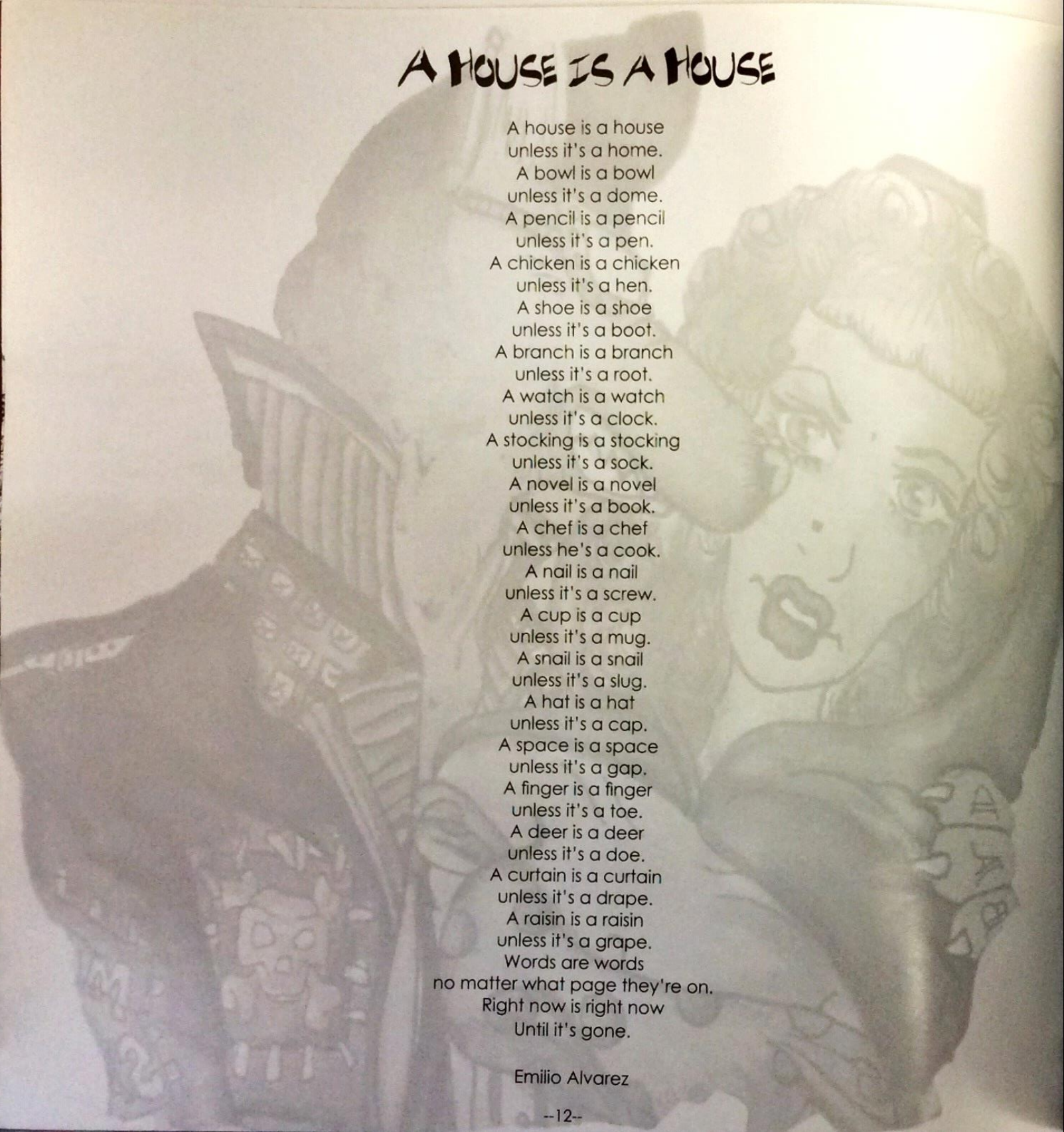
Its walls sway;

its floors creak,

but the yellow house sits atop its bronze hill  
gazing at the newer houses below it  
happily.

Marinna Castilleja

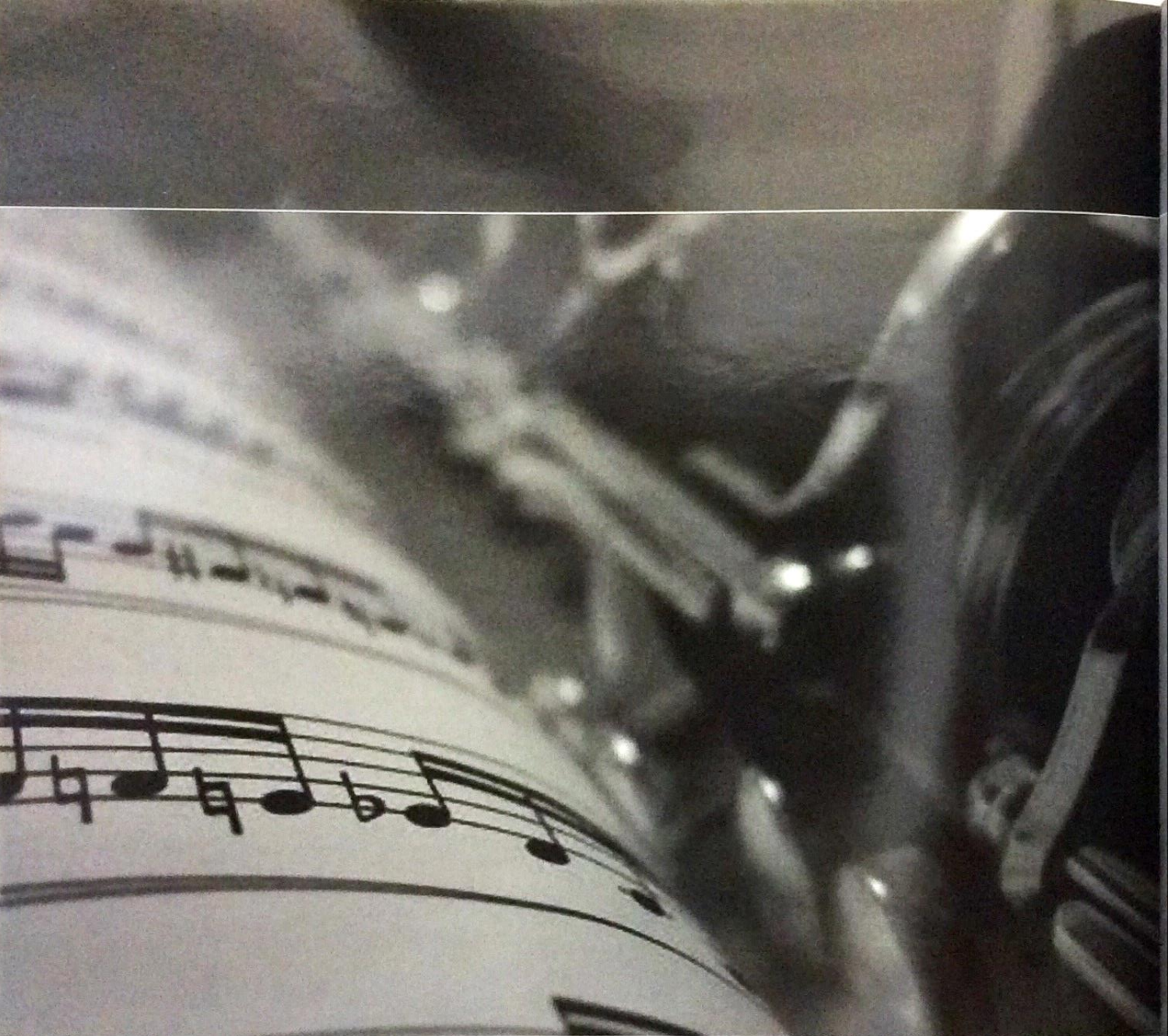
# A HOUSE IS A HOUSE



A house is a house  
unless it's a home.  
A bowl is a bowl  
unless it's a dome.  
A pencil is a pencil  
unless it's a pen.  
A chicken is a chicken  
unless it's a hen.  
A shoe is a shoe  
unless it's a boot.  
A branch is a branch  
unless it's a root.  
A watch is a watch  
unless it's a clock.  
A stocking is a stocking  
unless it's a sock.  
A novel is a novel  
unless it's a book.  
A chef is a chef  
unless he's a cook.  
A nail is a nail  
unless it's a screw.  
A cup is a cup  
unless it's a mug.  
A snail is a snail  
unless it's a slug.  
A hat is a hat  
unless it's a cap.  
A space is a space  
unless it's a gap.  
A finger is a finger  
unless it's a toe.  
A deer is a deer  
unless it's a doe.  
A curtain is a curtain  
unless it's a drape.  
A raisin is a raisin  
unless it's a grape.  
Words are words  
no matter what page they're on.  
Right now is right now  
Until it's gone.

Emilio Alvarez





El Clarinete

Marinna Castilleja

# SYMPHONY WAITS

Creaks of finger worn  
Peg gone bare, acidic residue.  
Warm wood waits.  
Harsh A, sterile, bland,  
Apprehension mounting  
Because it's your last chance.

People coughing, squeaking  
Seats, and winter coats and  
Stiff shoes, hard floors, cold room,  
High ceilings float and  
We wait.

Dimming lights and settle softly  
Because we've been here before,  
And in three hours we'll leave  
Like before.  
The same.

The final A like an arrow and silence,  
Big awful heavy dead loud silence.  
Old vibrations slink away.  
Silence unbroken by coughing, creaking, squeaking,  
Settling, rustling, tapping us.

And it begins.  
Right as we begin to suffocate,  
It hits us like a train and we change.  
And I feel the vibrations  
More real than any song.  
And they shook me as gently and violently  
As the early morning freight.

Amelia Marini

# ANTI-TRENDY

Her eyes open to the world of symmetric yellow walls, vandalized by modern clocks and abstract plastic pieces. She stretches in ritual morning-magazine-yoga, followed by a semi-tepid five minute shower. In red-dyed choppy locks and pointy flats, she grabs her blue suede bag and treads into the morning fog. Heading straight, shoulders slouched, and eyes uninterested, she walks the school runway and pretends not to care. She sits unorthodox against her open locker, filled with magazine cutouts of bands no one has ever heard of and quotes from dead reformists and outcasts long forgotten. Her phone rings and she flips her hair sideways seemingly to free her ear

# TRENDINESS

for unknown news, but secretly only to draw attention. She hears her mother's pleading voice and replies loudly, pretending it's her squad so that the people around her know that she has a life. In London mod she goes to her first class, taking out a contemporary novel with a catchy title and gaudy cover that she knows she will never finish. She looks over to her left and catches sneaking eyes of intimidation and envy. Finally, she sits on her sideways throne, legs crossed, convincingly comfortable, wishing she was somebody else.

Veronica Ambrosini





## GENETICS NEVER LEARNED

Two pairs of cheeks are marred  
by identical scars, both  
mother and daughter, equally imperfect because  
Genetics never learned its lesson . . .

in the short term.

Maybe after thousands of years evolution kicks in but  
never a generation.

Just as I never learn immediately  
from those who came before me;  
committing the ultimate betrayal  
of self, femininity, and romance in general.

Lusting

after a married man . . .

But suppose it's human nature to desire . . .  
that which is perfectly unattainable.

My Pandora's box. Of sorts.

If I dive in completely

the horrors of the world MIGHT overwhelm me . . .

Wait.

What is there to be overwhelmed by?

Guilt. Shame. Desperation. Sex???

I follow a path tread gingerly, frequently  
by women before me who were caught  
like me by blue. Eyes

Jeans

Lips.

Not his, but mine.

Lack of occupation renders them cold,  
lifeless, loveless. Is that what this is about?

Love?

Never.

Lust?

Always.

Giving myself away and attempting  
to fill that space left empty  
by wanting more and more unnecessarily.

I am marred by an internal scar  
formed by a mold, both mother and daughter  
equally imperfect  
because Genetics never learned its lesson.

Alix Carlton



Steven Campos

# CANCER OF THE WORLD

The way we hate is a sick, strange thing indeed.

An emotion so plainly cast about that we fail to fully realize its raw horror, or how dangerously close it brings us to abandoning all moral inhibitions. There is something sickeningly sweet about its appeal; no longer able to channel our positive energy into someone, there forms a great temptation to turn them into everything we despise. We can keep this person in our thoughts and dreams, only in a completely opposite light.

What once gave us joy now beats hard on the rims of our souls.

I have only thought to hate three people in my life:  
one for dragging down my esteem when it had little to lose;  
one for the much deeper scars he caused a dear friend of mine;

and one for the way he made me hate.



*Holder of the End* Nicole Ramirez

I know now that it was not pure hatred I had held against the first two. That hatred was reserved for a later time when my consciousness would come to form a deeper despise. Not until I experienced the third would I know what it felt to hate at its finest.

I hated this person not in the way that I wanted him to die,  
but in the way that I wished for him to have to see me die.

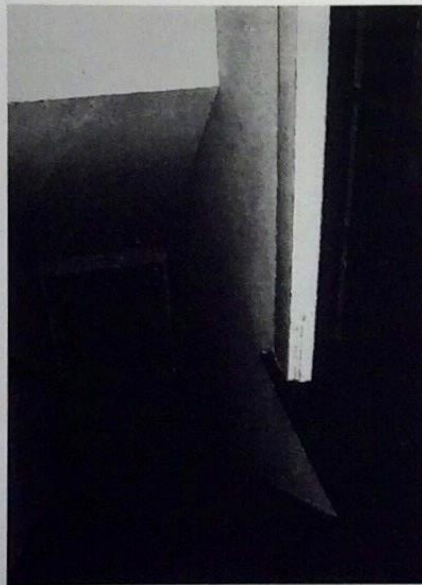
-As if I thought this might be some form of punishment beyond customary revenge.

I once met a girl whose hatred for a person was so strong that she began to pray for cancer. This was no false hope. She knew the consequences, and she knew the true art of suffering. So when in her time of hatred she became ill, she held no fear of what her sentence might be. Sometimes the most apparent prescription for a strong mental pain is an equal, or stronger, physical one.

I have often considered this possibility as well in its obvious negatives and its perversely beautiful positives. I used to dream of the day I'd find out with waves of fear and exhaustion. I was mourning over an illness I had not yet acquired. Then one day outside the dreams, it stood there: a beacon lost in a beautiful haze, a shining seagull on a gritty porch landing . . .

cancer

-this could be my next big break.



You see, people like us, this girl and me,  
see cancer as a sort of  
sick, sad solution,  
repentance for our sins,  
and a way of sponging up the sins committed  
against us.  
Forced forgiveness,  
helpless smiles,  
to be looked upon during all that pain,

# CANCER OF THE WORLD ~ CONTINUED . . .

We want cancer. We want pain, constant punishment, and twisted revenge. And through all of this, to suffer; to know *life* to its lightest and darkest potential, in all its helpless glory. And to do it all with a pasted smile as we wrap our brittle arms about those around us, slipping out of grasp only by their old singed scars, broken wounds into nothing, into our

sad, sick  
solution: dissolution.



And our love will stick to them like slick sweaty tears.  
We want to prick them with our unending kindness, a soon ending life. We want to hurt them tremendously without releasing any direct force.  
We want them to bend on their knees in the weight of grief for the torment they've caused us; for the tears behind that smile.

And most of all,  
behind all this, we don't want them to give a  
flying . . . while we wither and tear.

We want them to step on our faces, grinding their soles into our sockets, penetrating every surface of every cell with their cruelty,

the way they have been doing internally for all these years.

And finally, as we spread out into a nice sippy puddle, with that love and that strain and that forgiveness,  
we want them to laugh.

Cold and hard. Solidity. Pride. Nonchalance at its finest.

Because you see, we do not really want cancer nor anemia, schizophrenia nor heart disease. Deep down inside we do not really want to acquire manic depression, nor suffer blindness just so that we can no longer see their faces.

When it comes down to the very tip of our consciousness, to that underlying theme, we want revenge upon them by slipping the heart from the core, turning them into the stone of the world. We want all of our suffering to be for their names. For them to turn around so that the world can see the manifestation of these torturers, void of all sympathy and understanding that we have built up in our minds, turn to truth.



And this is why our hatred burns away days and brings painful memories to fill our nights. And this is how our hatred grows stronger than the sun, thicker than the sea. It hides in us like a lost pine in spring, but it burns through us a loathsome singed hole through which it seeps into our sentences and our soft, secret smiles.

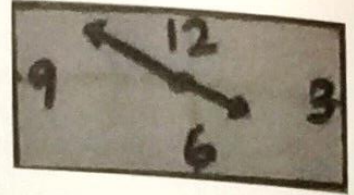
And this is why the hatred in  
our souls is considered deadly.  
The hatred of the world  
is our cancer. 🐛

Kayla Anderson

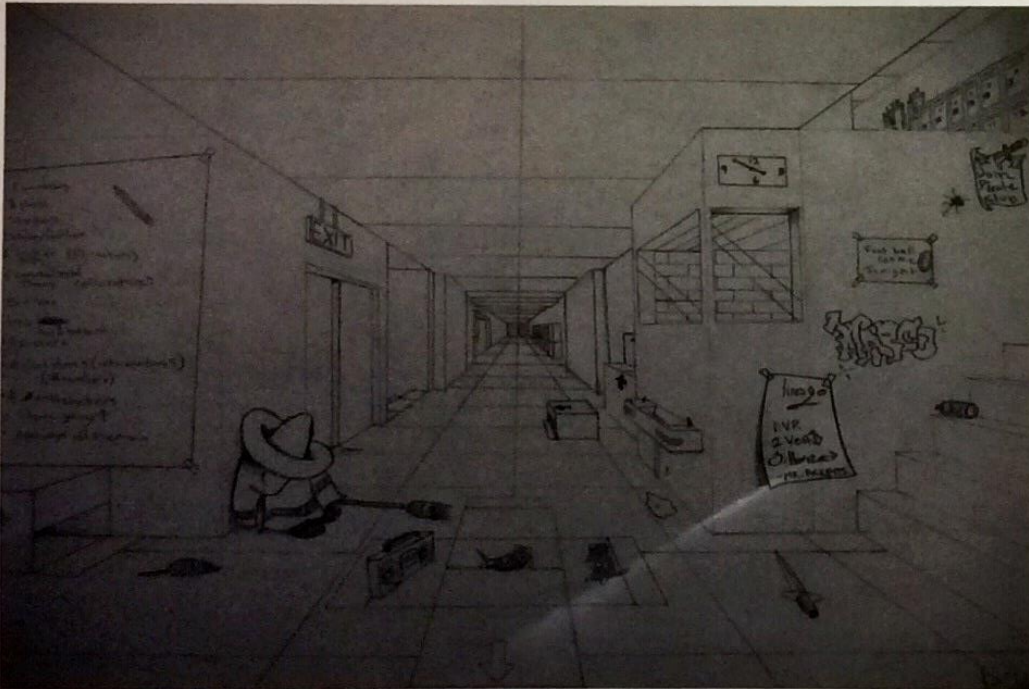
AH

"I'm so spicy," said the shredder to the rat. "Get up off my hat."  
My lame cane likes to change, yet it stays the same when I saunter.  
Time has no effect just watch him while he wrecks.  
TGIF.

Poe was mos def.  
Can you see him?  
Scannin', plannin', writin', and fightin'.  
Like a boxer in México.  
Under the bridge like water we go.  
It's a lazy Sunday book.  
Korean b-b-q on the corner of Melrose and Shook.  
Take a look it's in the book.  
It's Ben and J-Lo,  
The epitome of a rainbow.  
Alice fought the phallus with the malice indeed.  
But she stumbles with the swamp monster.  
Vlad the Impaler used reeds.  
Freeze.

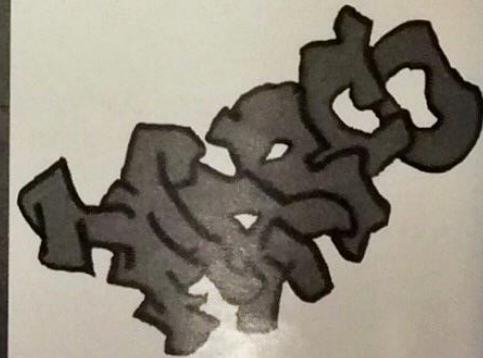


Avery Reed Moore



Odelay

Marco Fernandez



## SIMPLY PUT

If socks are for feet  
Then wouldn't it be neat  
If we could wear shoes  
On our heads?

If music's for listening  
Then wouldn't it be glistening  
If we could taste pain  
With our noses?

If mischief's for fun  
Then where can we run  
If our consciences say,  
"Yes, here we are?"

If there are cracks in the ground  
Then who will astound  
If mother says,  
"Let me lie down?"

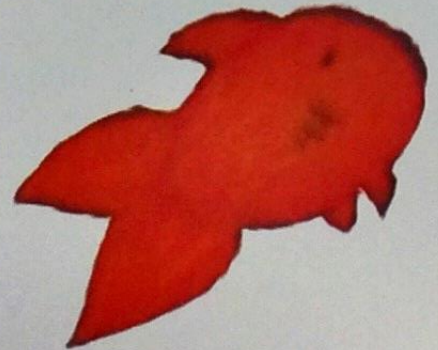
If anger's a verb  
Then why does it feel  
Like for once  
I should be lazy?

Emilio Alvarez



In a Bubble

Jennifer Tovarez



# HUMANITY

Humanity is a simple thing  
To desire and obtain,  
Except, of course, civilization  
Which is inexistent throughout the nation;  
Socially unacceptable  
In a ship, through the hull  
And, of course, to annul  
Your favorite occupation.

A barrel of monkeys  
Like carrots and peas,  
Which tastes quite rotten  
And is riddled with fleas.  
Take that and mix it  
With a do-it-yourself fix-it  
To get tainted bureaucratic  
Mass of amputated knees.

Or a bowl of hot soup  
That when you take a big scoop  
You get mutant dragonflies  
That eat out your eyes  
And after you're blind  
You clear your mind  
From all kinds  
Of temperamental dyes.

Keys that unlock doors,  
Of course, the doors that they're for,  
And freeze to the point  
That they stick to your joint  
That is pointless to smoke  
Since life's just a joke  
In a bottle of Coke  
From your mother, you appoint.

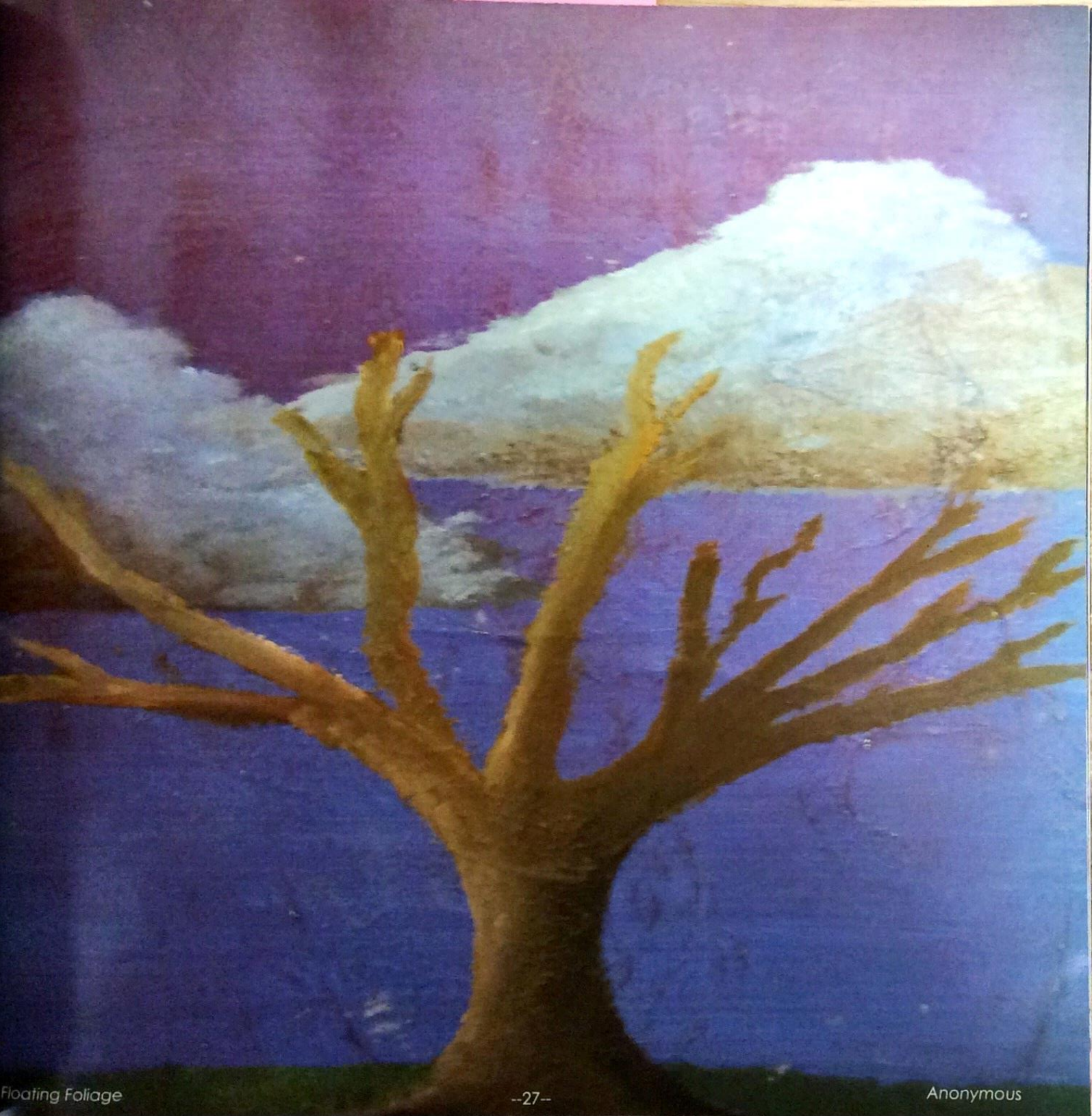
It's ointment that is  
For the dark soda's fizz  
Plus mass popularity of  
The church's white dove  
That, of course, lie to you  
When all you can do  
Is pray with the flu,  
And your father's lost love.

Oh, banana of truth  
For the fruit of the youth  
Where the basket of lies  
For troubled youth's demise  
And the unlikely regurgitation  
Of a civilized nation  
For the un-realization  
That there's no chance to resize.

And here I leave you last  
There's a stern with no mass  
With the size of a large  
Multi-colored targe  
That's the scourge of the world  
In a school that's referred  
A young pregnant girl  
For the measure's sunken barge.

Humanity is a simple thing  
To desire and obtain,  
Except, of course, civilization  
Which is inexistent throughout the nation.

Celena Blevins





*Walk into the Light*

Marinna Castilleja

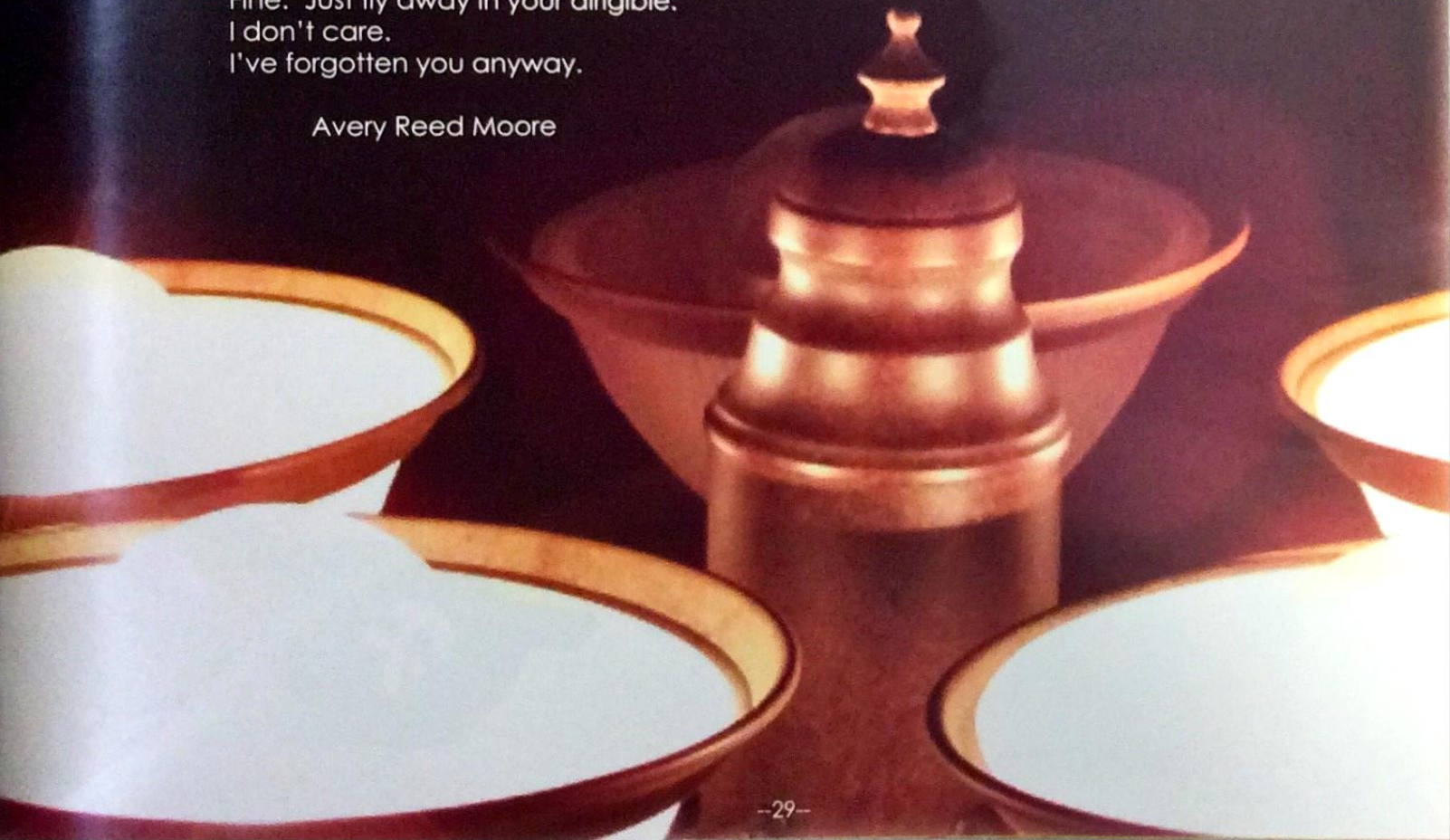
## 1986-1992: THE AGE OF ELEGANCE

Oh, Ratigan, I'm flattered.  
Your greasiness has taken me to a whole new level.  
Sure, go ahead, revel in your self, your suit.  
Now you speak.

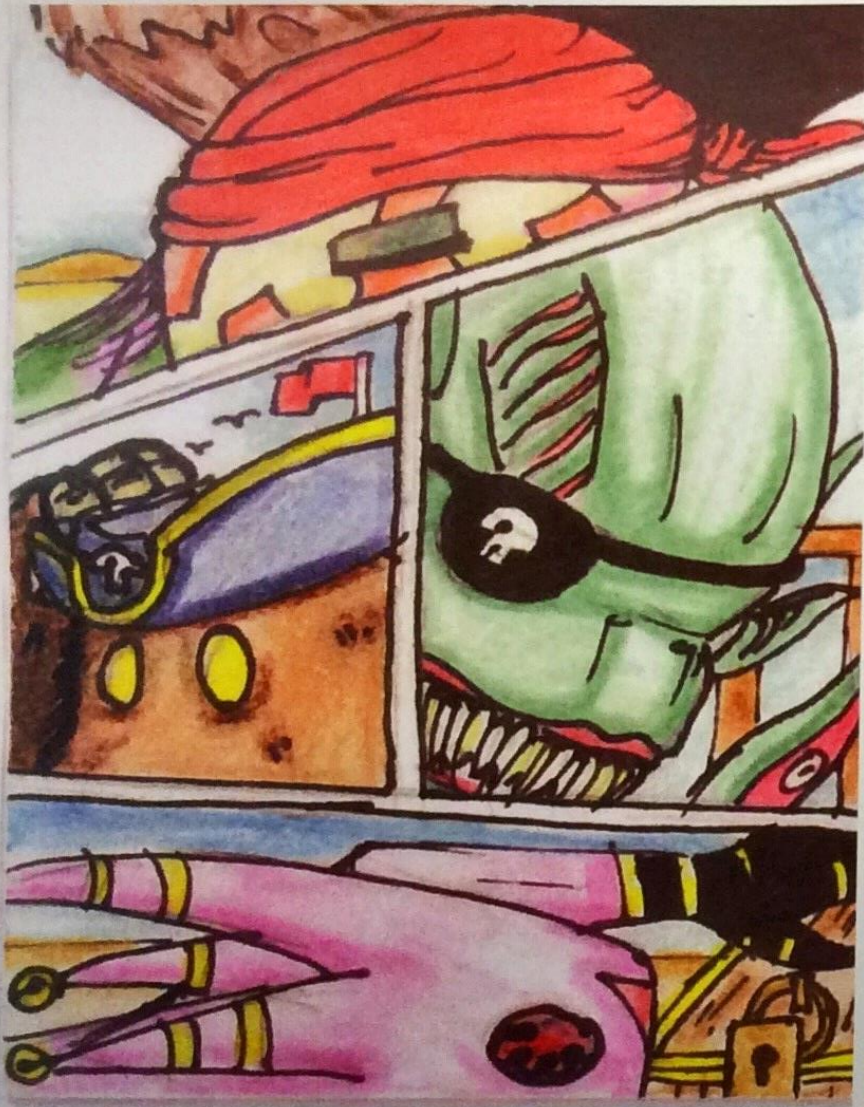
Yes, this tripping juice is expired.  
I should have known so when I saw you, but I drank the rest  
anyway.

A can?  
A three-piece, scones, and a cup of tea?  
You're so predictable.  
Fine. Just fly away in your dirigible.  
I don't care.  
I've forgotten you anyway.

Avery Reed Moore



# THERE'S A NINJA IN MY CLOSET



HMS Awesome

Austin Cashion

There's a ninja in my closet.  
He's been there for a while.  
There's a ninja in my closet  
With his stealthy ninja style.  
There's a ninja in my closet.  
He's waiting to attack.  
There's a ninja in my closet.  
I'd better watch my back . . .

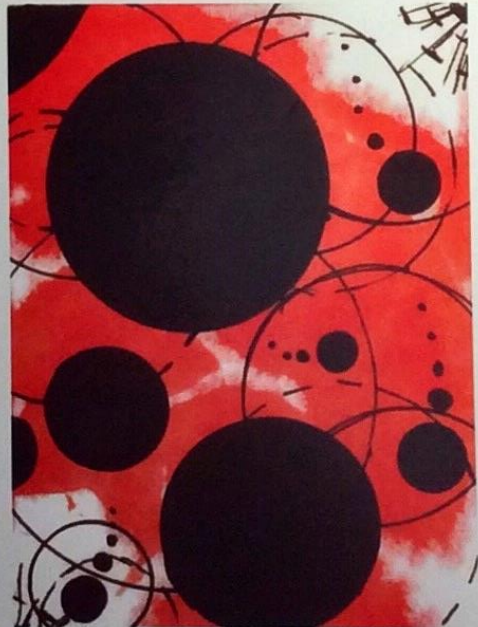
Emilio Alvarez



# A POEM FOR JAMES (WHO HATES TO EXPLICATE)

I'm searching for meaning  
In this poem.  
But I'd be better off  
Interpreting alphabet soup.  
Look!  
There's a P next to a D  
Which shows the inevitability of death.  
Death.  
Death like my English grade  
Which dies slowly . . . painfully . . . prolonged suffering.  
Staring at my soup of a poem,  
It occurs to me that there are three C's in a row.  
A row like the road of life!  
The road of life of C's . . .  
Chowder starts with a C.  
Chowder is a kind of soup!  
*THE PROFUNDITY AMAZES!*  
I wonder what the soup manufacturer was trying to  
convey  
In this elusive ingredient label?  
Oh!  
Oh!  
The C's are drifting  
In this soup-sea of change.  
Ah yes, soup is like life.  
And I,  
I am but a noodle  
In this ill-tasting broth.

Amelia Marini



# HALF-BAKED, HALF-BRAINED, HALF-LOVED

Society shuns the select few who are brilliant,  
While those who are vapid,  
And consumed by abject idiocy,  
Reproduce  
Like rabbits,  
Filling our world with Paris Hilton's,  
And George Bush's while the Dali's,  
And Sexton's and Nietzsche's become extinct,  
And the bombs drop  
Along with creativity levels.  
There are far more Crayola colors put to much less use,  
And far too many people doing absolutely nothing,  
So animals die and poverty makes a travesty  
Of our industrialization.  
And we weep  
Because according to your Lord,  
Homosexuality is a sin,  
But letting people starve is okay.  
We never gave a damn about the woman who was raped,  
But the cockroach in the kitchen changed everything.  
I hate your pride.  
I hate your selfishness.  
I wish I had selflessness but I'm just as bad as you,  
Whom I despise.  
So I will hide my ignorance behind a stylish umbrella,  
And follow your example by shutting my eyes,  
And turning my face  
From that which is despicable, detestable, and disliked.  
I will shy away from issues that breed controversy  
As I would avoid the air into which you breath insipidity,  
And I will watch your reality T.V. because  
Who needs a brain these days anyway?  
I'd rather it melt, so I can indulge in  
Incompetence,  
Apathy,  
Hate.

Alix Carlton





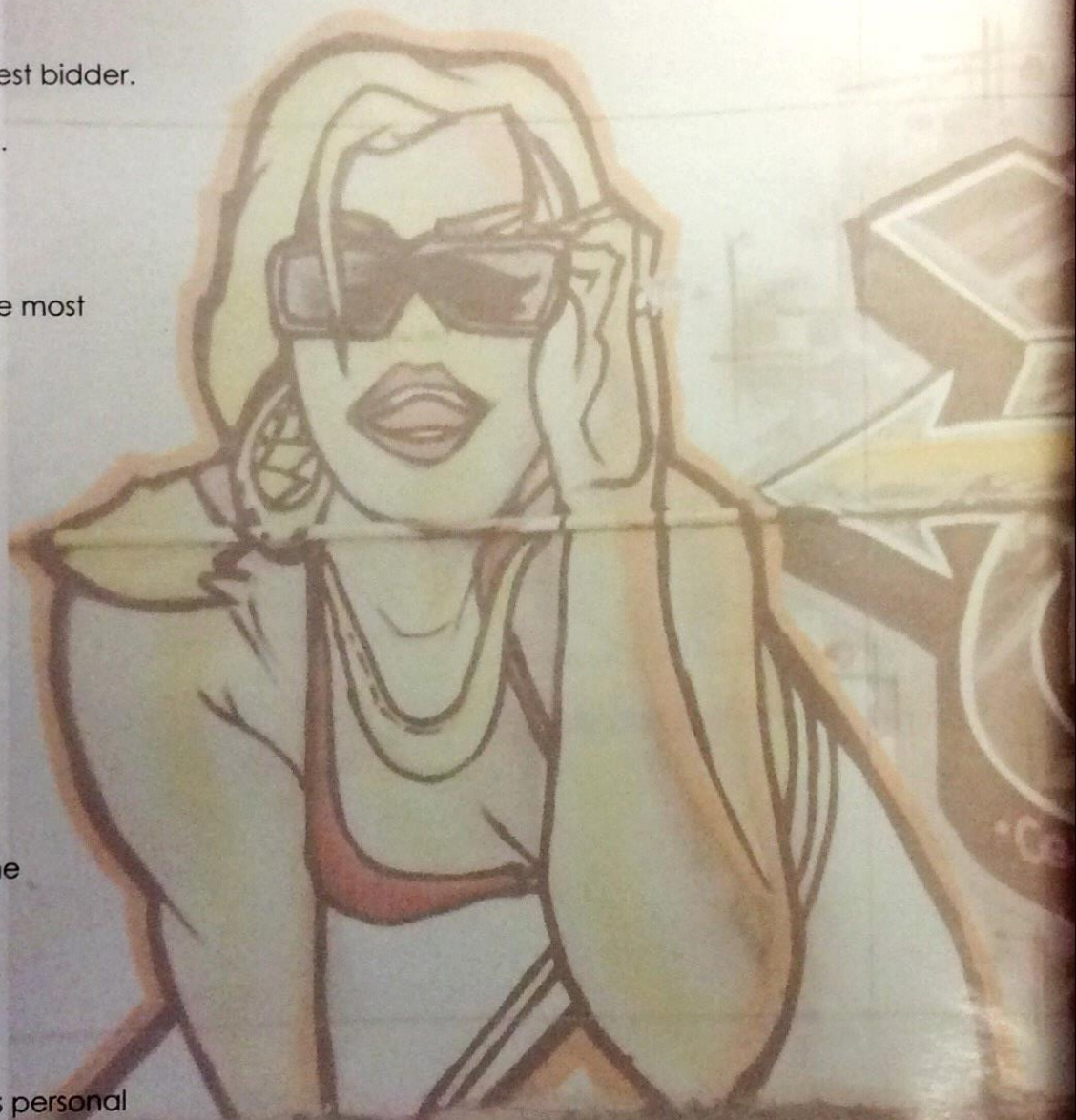
*Goin' 50 mph Standin' Still*

Matt McClain

# SEXLESS

Sex  
sells  
products.  
That's what we are  
as we sell ourselves to the highest bidder.  
Perfectly reminiscent  
of everything we seek to avoid.  
Individualism is no longer  
individual.  
Sex is everything  
and everyone  
because we all wish to gain the most  
through power struggles  
and what's more powerful . . .  
Sex appeal?  
Or materialistic tendencies  
that lead to  
materialistic lifestyles?  
But that's what's sexy, right?  
Hardly.  
Sex is power.  
Is money.  
Is life.  
Is creation  
Is destruction.  
Is a cycle.  
Cyclical sex leads to  
us all  
being found wanting and alone  
because in our current lifestyle  
we are defined  
by what's in-between our legs,  
or the size of our breasts,  
or the quantity hidden  
in our wallets.  
Personality has never been less personal  
than the way we present it today,  
and products have never been  
less productive.

Alix Carlton



*Sex is power. . .*



*Destruction*



Lovin' Every Minute of It

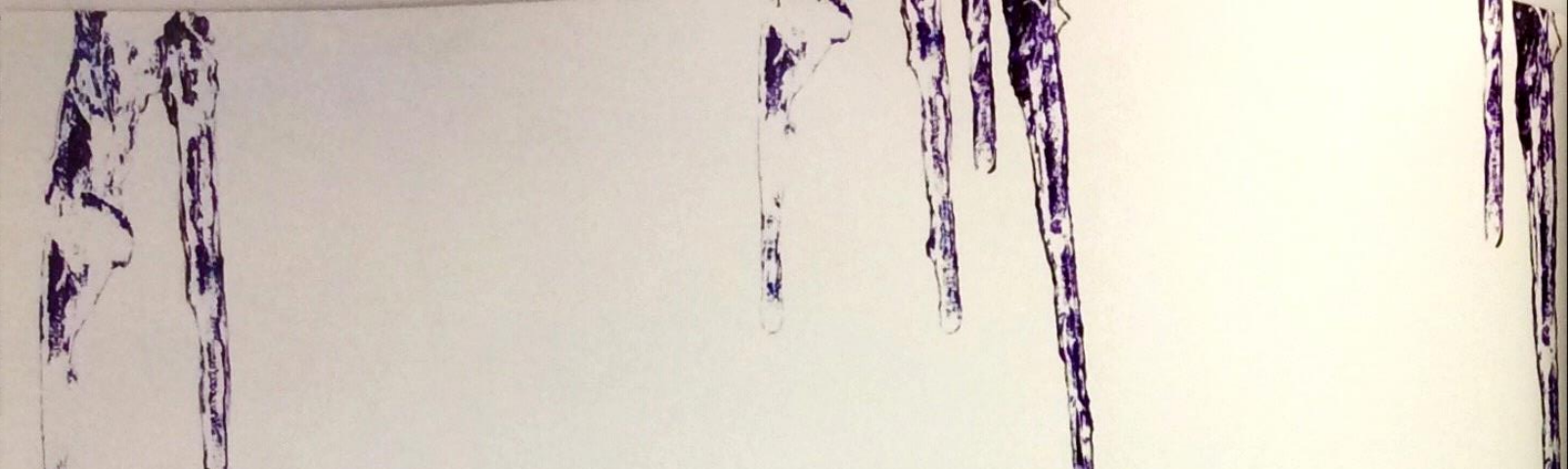
Alex Reyes



*Life*



*Money*



## SUNDAY MOURNING'S FOG

Sitting on the steps of a small cathedral in Gothenburg, I asked for your opinion on many a-thing. I spoke to you slowly, uncertainly, and needily, begging for some reasoning to help piece together my self and my spirit.

At my asking of what you saw in me, you turned toward me and I remember gasping for breath because your eyes were so blue, so bursting with life that I was certain that I'd suffocate if I didn't gulp from the cup of this *Sunday mourning* fog. I felt myself relax when your bangs blocked our vision of each other, shielding me from your stare so certain to bring me to death—or love, which some would agree is an even worse fate. The chocolate strands stabbed your eyes like a thousand needles, and yet, you did not break your gaze. You waited a long time before speaking.

"In your eyes, I see my mother rolling over in her grave that her husband has been digging for twenty-five years. In your eyes, I see the knowledge that the past has given you and I see the cynicism you received on the side. And when I look at your face, I see an old woman, still plagued with the paranoia of her youth; still waiting for the best days of her life to begin."

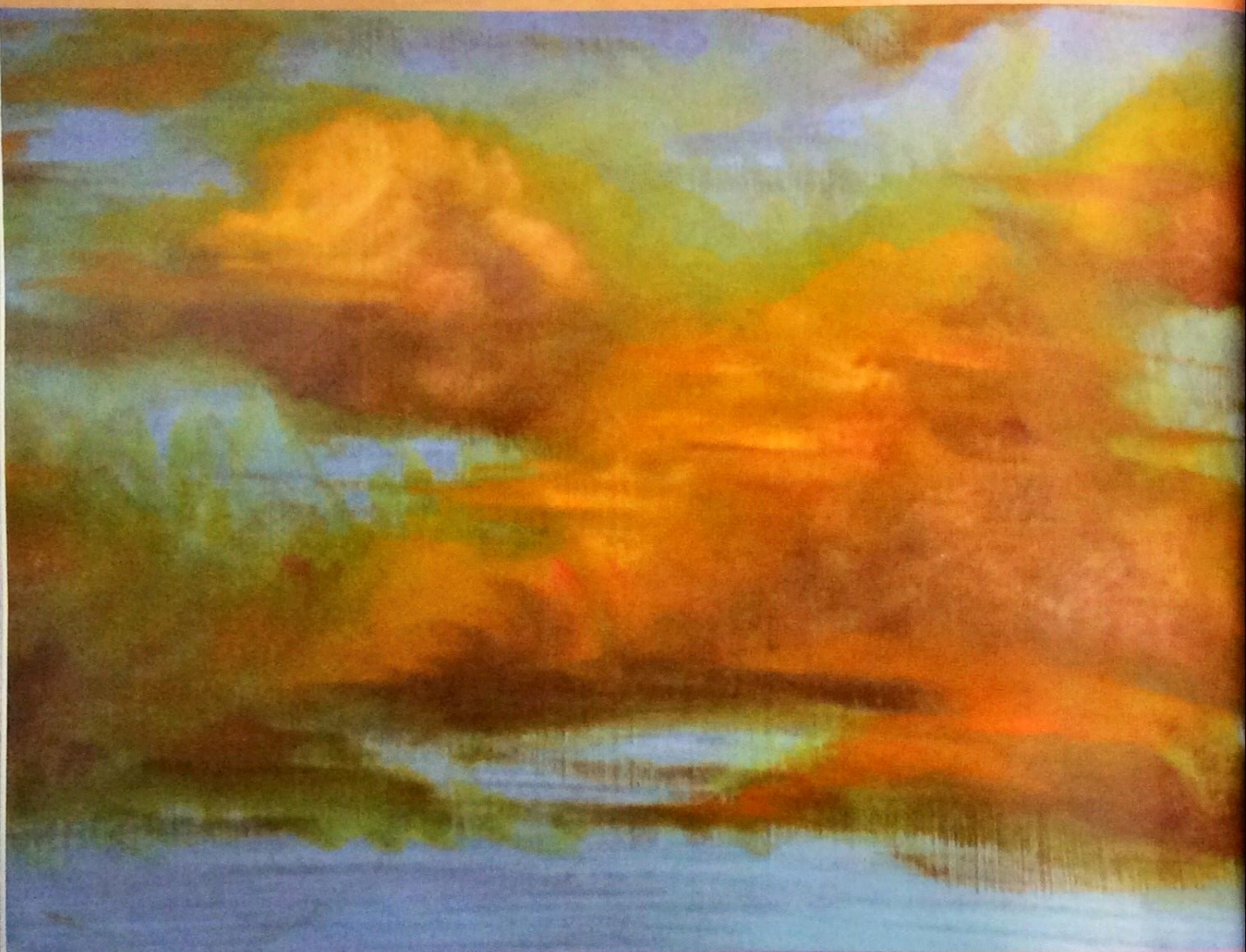
We were silent for a long while before I leaned into you, pressing our faces together so that the needles pricked my eyes instead of yours and caused them to water with your own, so that your skin could absorb my own and meld into one.

It was now that we understood. A kiss is not an action involving lips.

A kiss is an emotion, rooted in half lust, half lack of.

Katy Scott-x-





*Passion With Gasoline*

Matthew Harral

# NOBLE ONE

I will kiss a star  
To taste a dream  
And catch the wish  
Within my palm;  
Grasp it till it burns  
And scars my skin  
Then I'll toss it back to the  
Heavens above  
And watch you take form.

You appeared to me as a  
dream,  
Soft and sweet like a dove.  
I asked if you held strength  
And power.  
You answered yes.  
But I must have disagreed.

You've read the incantations,  
So you have said,  
From the scripts long ago;  
Spoken the lies that sang the  
truths  
Of gods and mankind alike;  
Buried the immortals and left  
them for dead;  
Kept the pulses of the living at  
a rush.

We all said you were a false  
hope;  
A noose hidden as a  
Rope.  
But you were kind and all  
too calm.  
You took our hands and led  
us  
Down to the underground.

We watched you battle  
demons  
Of dark intent  
And cast away the horror  
that  
Held our heads underwater.

You're the god among us  
now.  
We will follow you with grace  
And undying elegance  
As you lead us to the new  
era  
Or to a fate unknown.

Brenda Courtney

# THE MOUNTAIN POEM

Above him there is sky  
While he stands weighted  
Under the oppressive shadows  
Of the front line warriors of stone,  
Preceding a mighty static army.  
Myopic is the man  
Who cannot comprehend  
The jagged peaks  
Through the windows of the hills.  
And the fool thinks only of these heights  
At the expense of his bleeding feet.  
You mountain shepherds  
Standing watch  
Over your foothill flocks,  
You will erode with the rest  
As he begins to climb.

Amelia Marini



*Dream Catcher*

Luis Armando Torres

## TIME

What is time?  
A dictator?  
It chimes  
And we go to sleep.  
It rings  
And we awake.  
Does it really exist?  
It happens without us knowing:  
Clicking and ticking in silent rooms,  
Slowly counting down and quietly stealing  
Lazy days of ancient youth who  
Let it unconsciously slip through their palms like falling  
sand  
While trying to live each moment in the moment,  
Forgetting that every present is now the past.

Veronica Ambrosini

# ROADKILL



Pieces

Roxanne Galindo

Kylie sat quietly in math class, staring down blankly at the test in front of her.

There was no point in trying to concentrate. How could she possibly be expected to concentrate? The numbers began to blur together, the threes mixing with the sevens, fives turning into eights. She pushed a few buttons on the calculator in a vain attempt to convince the teacher she was working.

"Kylie?" the teacher called across the room. Kylie slowly lifted her gaze to the teacher.

"Yes, Ms. Oja?"

The teacher gestured with her hands for Kylie to come to her desk. It seemed to take Kylie days to make the trek across the stuffy room.

"Kylie, I'm beginning to worry," Ms. Oja said quietly.

*Here it comes. She'll probably send me to the counselor.*

"Not about you," Ms. Oja said, reading Kylie's mind and disproving her fears. "But about . . ." The teacher's voice trailed off and Kylie waited patiently for her to continue. Of course, Kylie knew what the teacher was going to say, but she wanted her to say it. She was not going to say it herself and allow the teacher to get away with beating around the bush.

"About *her*," Ms. Oja finished, as if speaking the name of the girl in question would have been too much.

"I still don't know where she is," Kylie repeated for the umpteenth time. "I just don't know."

"She's been gone for . . ."

". . . almost three months," Kylie ended her sentence for her.

"Yes. And I'm beginning to worry."

"Aren't we ALL?" Kylie burst out, all of her frustration finally coming forth. "Her parents won't talk to anyone, no one's heard from her, and she may very well be dead somewhere! OF COURSE you're beginning to worry! People she didn't even know are beginning to worry!"

Kylie walked briskly back to her desk, grabbed her things, and left the room. She didn't remember walking down the stairs and she most certainly didn't remember considering the fact that she was breaking all the rules by leaving school like this, but twenty minutes later found her on her bed in her empty house, hugging a stuffed frog and quietly crying as she pictured the animal she'd seen a few days before, lying dead in middle of the road. The animal whose eyes had resembled her best friend's eyes so much . . .

\*\*\*\*\*

She did not remember many of the details of the past few days. Wasn't that strange? Weren't you supposed to remember traumatic events clearly? She mused on this for a while.

She remembered bringing her dog outside in the front yard. It must have been late at night because she remembered feeling tired. She remembered how it started to drizzle, how the small drops of cold water hit her forehead and slid down her cheeks. She remembered being happy.

But now she couldn't remember what it *felt like to be happy*.

*She remembered spinning herself in circles as the rain beat down on her face. Then a small, black sports car had driven by. But it was going too slow. Much too slow.*

*This is where the details ended.*

*She remembered nothing after that.*

*When she woke up, she was lying on the cold, hard floor of a small cell, no bigger than three feet by two feet. She was encaged in four walls of bars. She'd wondered if she'd been arrested. She had found herself on a bed made of hay, barely big enough for her to fit on when she curled herself into a ball.*

*Then a voice had called out to her from the black shadows that cloaked everything outside of her cell. It was a quiet, smooth voice. Smooth as the surface of a calm lake. But this voice did not instill calmness in her. If anything, it made her want*

## ROADKILL ~ CONTINUED . . .

to cry and scream.

"Are you awake, my dear?" the voice asked.

She had whimpered in reply to the formless voice.

"Oh, now, don't be scared. Everything will be fine. Everything will be just fine."

A soft rustling had followed this, like thick clothes moving with the breeze.

Then, silence.

The voice had not spoken to her since then.

Now she was sitting on the bed of hay, contemplating all that had happened recently, several weeks later at the very least. She was not sure about the exact number of weeks. But it did not matter what time it was. There were no windows; there was only darkness and shadows every minute. Time changed nothing.

She could not remember how many meals she'd had since she'd been here, and so she couldn't measure time by that either. Every time she fell asleep, she woke up to find a brand new tray of food at the foot of her hay bed, but she never saw the person that brought it.

She realized that she had not cried the entire time she'd been here. She was too shocked, too confused, too scared to cry. She did not know where she was. She did not know who was here with her, or if anyone was here at all. She did not know if she would ever see her family again.

She let her mind wander, let it go back to happier days. Days when her parents brought her to the zoo, the movies, amusement parks, carnivals . . . she'd always taken those things for granted. She'd been

too happy to contemplate what life would be like any other way.

She remembered her mother's face. Her mother had sharp features but the softest, most beautiful smile. Every time she saw her daughter, the smile would soften her entire face.

Her father always looked stern. But when he'd return home from work and saw his wife and daughter in the living room of their cozy house, his wife sewing a new dress and his daughter glaring in frustration at the homework in front of her, he'd always laugh cheerfully and hug them both, the sternness replaced by loving admiration.

Did they have any idea where she was? Would they find her?

She stared emotionlessly at the white tiled floor beneath her feet. She was not a naïve girl. She knew her chances of escaping alive were slim. And chances were, her parents didn't know where this place was, or even who had her.

She had already resigned herself long ago to death. Death was the only thing that had a high probability. She was amazed that she was not more scared by this. Perhaps she was still in shock. Perhaps her mind simply refused to accept the fact that she was going to die so young.

Or perhaps she appreciated at least one sure thing in this sea of chance that had become her life.

There was a sudden rustling in the shadows to the right of her cage. She looked up quickly, startled by the sound. Then the voice from that first day spoke again, disturbingly close to her ear.

"It's time we begin, my dear."

Someone flicked on a light and she had to blink against the burning brightness for a few seconds. She then finally saw the world around her cage for the first time.

Her cage was in the back of a small room. Everything was white and sparkled in the fluorescent light above. On the other side of the room was a large, deep sink next to a pearly white counter that held several strange instruments she'd never seen before.

Then the man who had brought her here, the man who had ruined her happiness, the man who spoke to her but was never seen, stepped in front of her cage and looked straight into her eyes.

It took her a couple of minutes, but she recognized him as a man from her neighborhood. He had a wife and two young children and had always seemed nice enough. He told everyone he was a car salesman.

He smiled at her now.

"Don't look at me like that, my dear. You should be proud, you know. You're my first live test subject."

Her stomach lurched. Test subject? That didn't sound like something to be excited about.

"Tell me, how have you been feeling?" he asked, kneeling down in front of her so they could be eye-to-eye.

How was she *feeling*? She'd been taken prisoner by a stranger and hadn't seen any of her loved ones for weeks, and here was her captor, asking how she was *feeling*? She continued to stare blankly at him.

"Health-wise, I mean. Physically," he elaborated, looking at her expectantly.

She remained silent.

"Well, it's obvious you won't cooperate. That's all right. You won't have a choice soon," the man said, straightening up and leaving the room, turning off the light as he passed through the doorway.

She continued staring blankly ahead long after he was gone.

Several days passed and the man did not visit her again. She began feeling strangely after she ate. Her arms tingled and her stomach felt queasy.

That's when she started noticing the changes. First came the fur. She noticed it on her hands, then her feet, her stomach . . .

*What's happening to me?*

Did the man put something in her food? Was he giving her things while she slept? She never knew.

The only thing she was sure about was that she was changing. The fur grew thicker, her sense of smell was heightened, her vision faded, and she even felt her bones changing. It was the most pain she ever experienced.

One day she woke up to find the change complete. She had no mirror to see herself in, but she didn't need one. Soon after she woke up, there was the familiar rustling in the shadows and the light was turned on. The man stood in front of her, smiling at his work.

"It's going nicely. Very nicely."

She choked back a helpless sob.

She didn't remember when she started getting the cravings for meat, or when she stopped feeling emotions of any kind. Nor did she remember forming a plan to escape. Maybe she had never had a plan, maybe it just happened. Instinct or something of the sort.

## ROADKILL ~ CONTINUED ...

But in any case, one afternoon she found herself running out of the house when the man had opened her cage so he could examine her. She ran so fast everything around her blurred. She had run for several minutes before she realized she was running on all fours. She passed many houses that seemed slightly familiar, as if they had been in a movie she'd seen once, many years ago. But she didn't stop to examine them. She knew she had to keep running.

And then she knew. She knew what she had to do. She'd never be able to get back her old life, not after this. He'd always be looking for her and she'd always be checking over her shoulder. It would never end.

She stopped running and heard a rumbling quite a distance off. With her new, advanced hearing she was able to time it perfectly.

She leaped in front of a minivan driven by a woman in her early fifties, accompanied by her daughter. The crash was deafening to her ears. The pain was overwhelming for a few moments, but then everything darkened and finally disappeared completely.

She let go of life in this mutated form.

"Honey, did you see something running through the streets this afternoon?" asked the man as he walked through the front door, returning home from work.

"No, dear, why?" asked the woman sitting on the couch in the living room.

"The neighbors were all talking about it. Something they had never seen before. Said it had the strangest eyes ..."

"Has there been any news about Lainey?" the woman on the couch asked hopefully, changing the subject to their lost daughter as she did every evening.

"No, honey. I'm sorry," the man replied, sitting down next to his wife. "I think it's time we give up hope." 🐾

Tiffany Brown



# SWEET TEMPTATIONS

Gaze at the tempting delight,  
Stroke that tender satin rouge,  
Brush it gently against your skin . . .

"Please, you must resist!"

Run it across your bottom lip,  
Lick the sweetened liquid dew.  
The forbidden fruit only breathes between your face . . .

"Don't eat the strawberries!"

Bite into its luscious flesh,  
Rip into its manifestation . . . your precious creation,  
Juices of euphoria . . .

"Save yourself! The root of all evil!"

Swallow the beguiler's rose,  
The devil's heart . . .

"I swear, if you go any further, you'll . . ."

Feel the poison penetrate through the tips of your toes,  
Choke on your own love,  
Eat to your death, so I can kiss your blood-stained lips.

Veronica Ambrosini



Svetlana

Anonymous

## VERY. LOW. SODIUM.

Prostitution for attention, renting out our  
PRIDE for a lie in the shape of a compliment.  
Whore. That's what we are as we BEG for that lie  
in so flattering a package.

A cigarette burns the ashtray. Alone.  
And its bedfellow, DEATH, makes waves in society  
like we often wish to, as we burn  
our creativity into bowls of marijuana  
and the smoke, unseen, disappears into the atmosphere  
that we, ourselves, DESTROY  
in order to compensate for the creativity we killed  
as we raped intellectualism  
and placed its head on display with our  
ignorance.  
We breathe in the HEADY air of intoxication  
as we gasp for peace and blink with  
hatred  
our collective body torn asunder by its own will  
to contradict as it creates  
and destroys simultaneously.

Alix Carlton





Aztec Mask



Megan Moskwa



Creation Mask

Lindsay Roe

# DIONYSIAN PLEASURES LIE HERE

Dionysian pleasures lie here.

In this, the mind, the doors of perception, are allowed to open and close as they please. No hindrance may breach the walls of this sacred fortress. The drawbridge may run up when the sacred inner sanctum is breached by outside disturbance, but, thereafter, it lowers once again to allow reentry to the man whose castle this may be.

Here in the courtyard of my fortress a bonfire burns, sparks flying violently, gloriously, over the walls, kindling brushfires on the outer wasteland.

We dance around this fire as our wild ancestors did, reveling in the blood sacrifice that awaits the slaughter.

A rich and less than scanty circle of blood has been made around the wild fire. This is our track over which we dance, our long tangled hair falling about our shoulders, brushing them, whipping them.

Lines of self-inflicted wounds run vertically down our backs, the salty sweat burning and stinging them gloriously, spurring us on to greater heights.

Our wide bloodshot eyes dart about the courtyard seeking new drive. The stench of smoke and blood has become erotic, causing the red veins to rise up in the eyes, the skin to become pink and hot, the breath to be quickened and the aura of communal energy to become excited to the point where it may spill out over the walls, mingle with the brushfires and take a vengeful hold of the dry, God-forsaken land around us.

We dance and we howl. We beat our fists on our chests and we slice our skin open to new air allowing more blood to spill across our bodies drying in ragged lines of debauchery.

We are angrily happy and we are wild.

Yes, Dionysian pleasures do lie here.

John Marden

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

The cluttered desk and Elmer's glue  
Grew into quite a mess last time at Sunday school.  
And by the peach little church on the side of the walk,  
Skipped a girl in pink bows down Sainly block.

Just her smiles and laughter kept her content,  
So she proudly turned home and made her descent.  
In her own world she would never fall down,  
But she bumped into the nun just as she turned 'round.

Brushing against the midnight black of her gown,  
And expecting a smile, the nun gave her a frown.  
Her mind contemplated the things she'd done wrong;  
The seconds more like hours lasting all day long.

And oh how she snapped with those yellowish teeth.  
It's hard to believe the nun worked with a priest.  
Her dewy eyes like deer caught in a headlight,  
Shocked after years of always doing everything right.

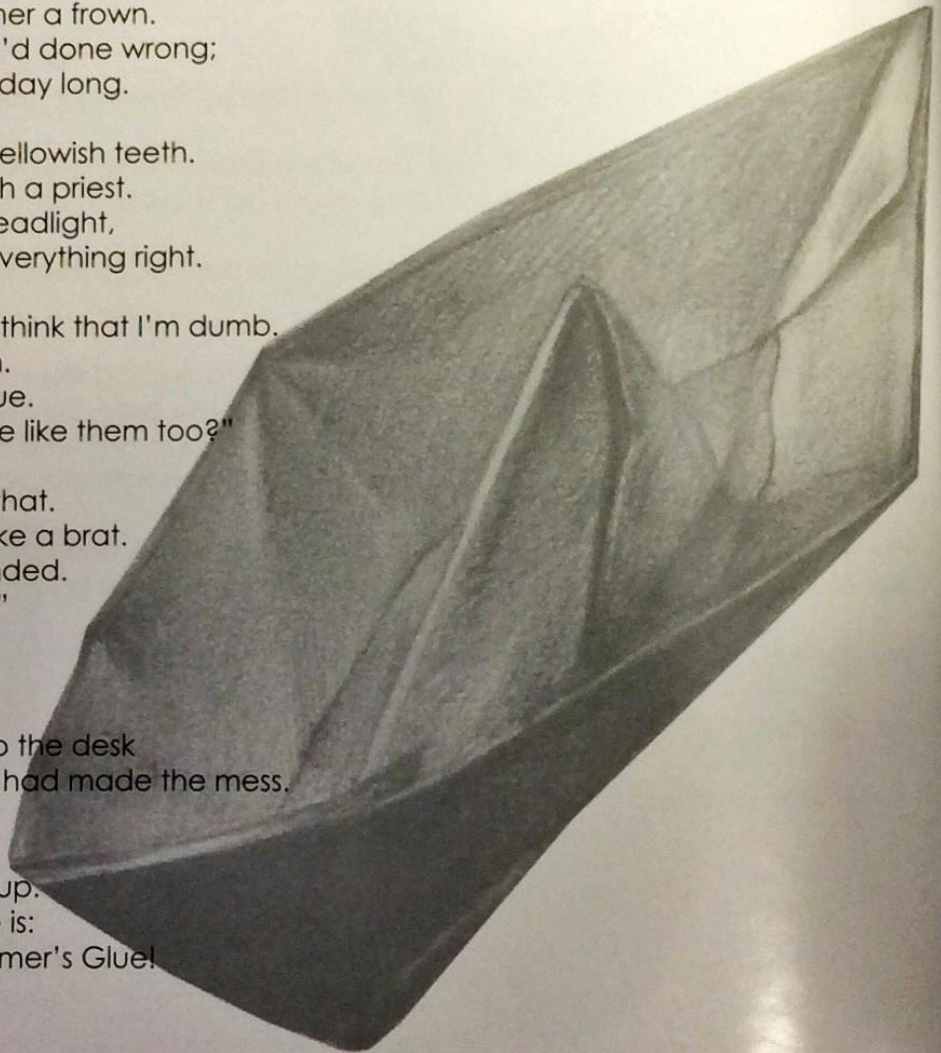
"I know what you've done, girl. Don't think that I'm dumb.  
Clean up that mess or I'll tell your mum.  
Mary and Theresa know how to use glue.  
You used to be neat. Why can't you be like them too?"

She replied, "First of all, they aren't all that.  
Mary tricks her parents. Theresa acts like a brat.  
And as for the glue, that's all I was handed.  
I prefer tape, but that was disbanded."

Yet the girl wasn't quite through,  
She knew she had a part in it, too.  
And back up the stairs, she cleaned up the desk  
Where last week at Sunday school she had made the mess.

The nun and the girl both made up.  
Their relationship was fixed and taped up.  
And 'till this day the Sunday school rule is:  
Everyone Must Use Scotch Tape, Not Elmer's Glue!

Veronica Ambrosini





Eunjin

# A-V-E-R-S

The real American gangsta' ain't any wanksta'.  
I came straight up from the burbs, dominating the herds.  
I took your leader out to pasture never to return.  
I climb up to the top,  
Brutal as it may be.  
I found a self-promoting rant necessary.

A to the V to the E R S.  
I blow doors with finesse.

Eyes diverted in my direction,  
Shouting my name with silent exclamation.

I rock the mic like Luther Vandros.  
Humanitarian like Geldoff. Get up out of my face for I tell you to step off.

I could flow to the Gypsy Kings, and throw down in the ring.  
De La Joya's shamed by the name that's famed.  
It's A to the V to the E R S.

Don't question the position,  
You're just wishin' you could have it.  
My fans are avid. No exclamation, just divine right.

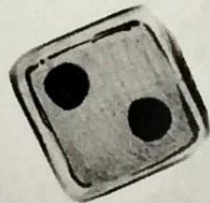
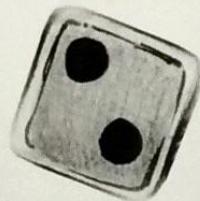
Should I stay or should I go?  
So much to give; you don't even know.

I hold it down like Whitney.  
The popo sure as hell can't get me,  
You're either with or against we.

I suggest submission,  
'Cause domination constitutes what I'm wishin' for.  
Leave 'em wanting Moore Reed Avery.

'Cause it's A to the V to the E R S.  
Recognize.

Avery Reed Moore





Dice

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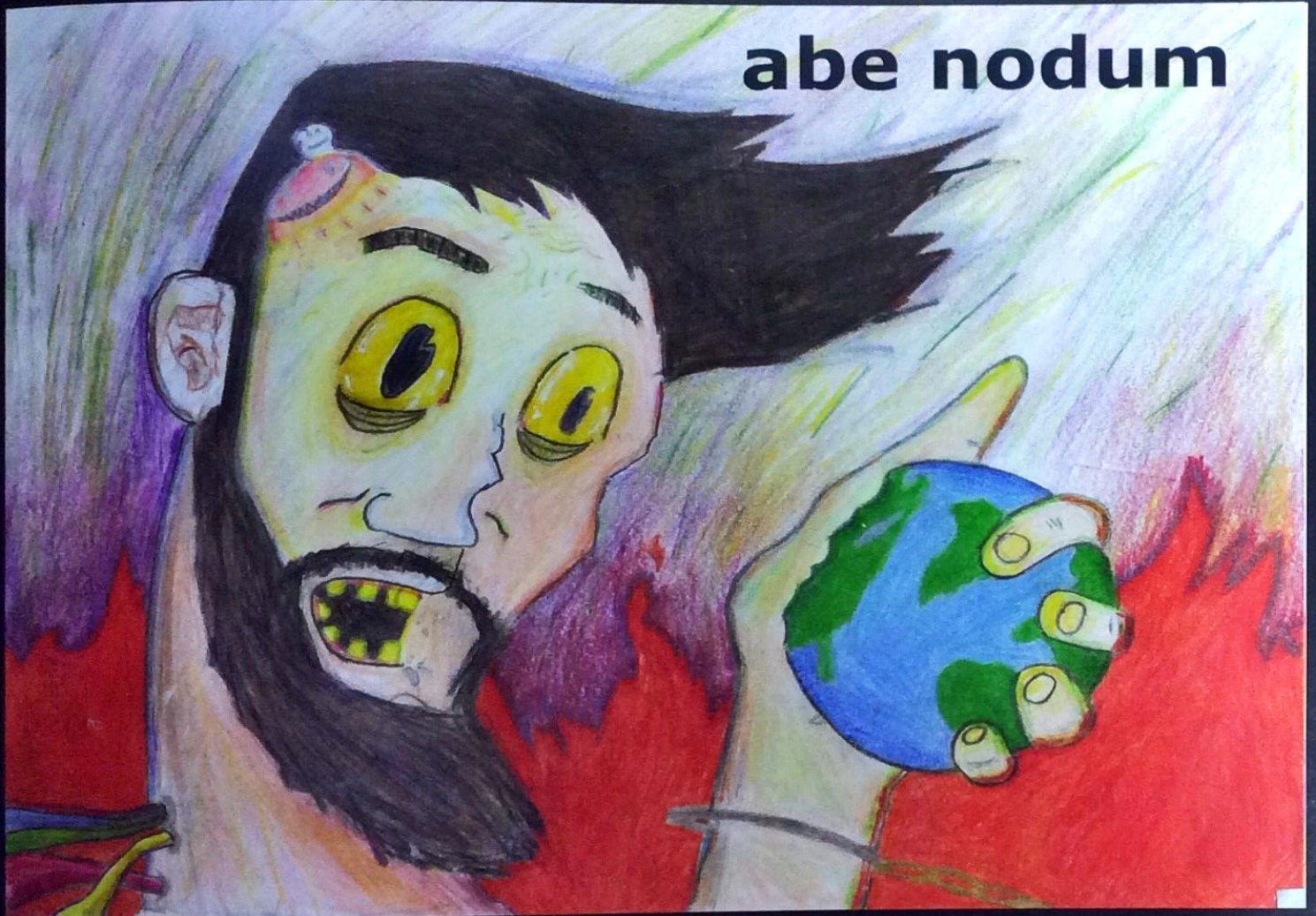
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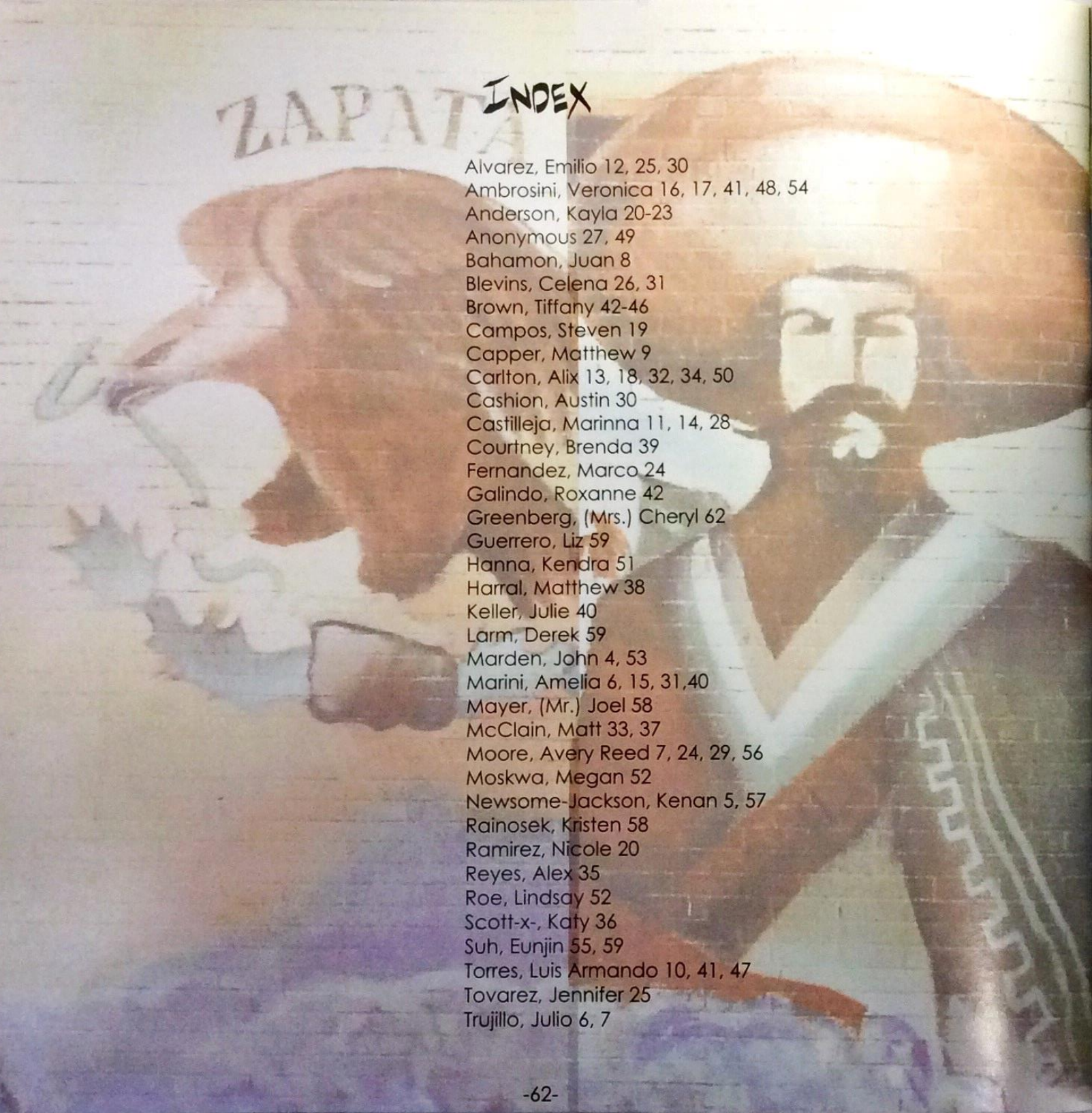
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Luis Armando Torres

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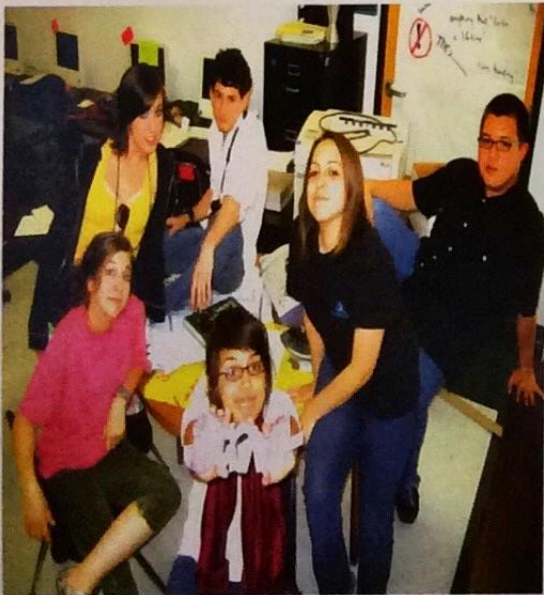
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