

# *THE* **Guild**

MAGAZINE



# Mission Statement

*The Guild,*

*The premiere student literary arts magazine of Borough of Manhattan Community College, aims to establish a visually engaging magazine that will be both interesting and enriching to the general student body and to provide a medium for student's creative work (i.e creative writings and art). By producing a high quality arts publication, we hope to support student artists throughout BMCC and to stimulate the creation of further student-directed ventures.*

## **- How to submit your work for publication in the Guild -**

BMCC's very own 'Writer's Guild' club has made an effort to create and release a new issue of 'the Guild' every spring semester. We want to present and showcase some of BMCC's most talented and creative student's. Not only is it a great way to show off you're talent, it also gives students the oppertunity to be published which looks great on a resume, especially for those students that are in English or Art related majors.

So here's everything you need to know about submitting your work:

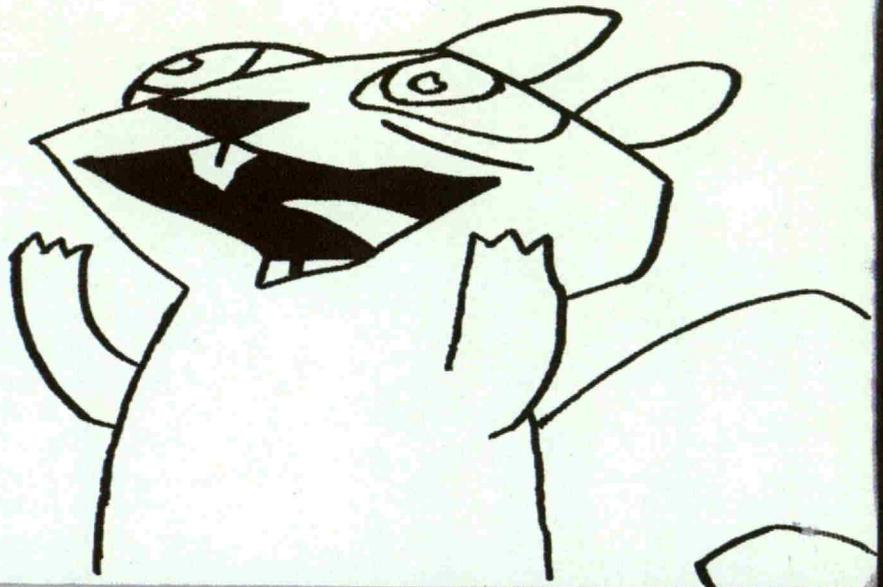
- We accept short fiction, journalism, feature writing, autobiographies, essays and poetry with a maximum of 3,000 words. We only accept Microsoft Word files and up to 10 pieces may be submitted.

- Visual art - such as photography, illustrations, paintings, graphic designs, etc. - are only accepted as high quality .jpeg images, and up to 10 pieces may be submitted.

Be sure to include a small biography (which can include a bit of information on yourself, your major, web links to your other works, etc.) along with your work. The editorial staff will review all submittted pieces and email congratulations to those selected to be in the magazine. The editors may ask for a revision or make small edits to a piece in the event of grammatical and/or spelling errors. The copyright of a published contribution will ALWAYS remain with the owner, and all contributors must comply with BMCC's policy on plagiarism.

To submit your work, inquire about more info or to find out how you can become a member of the Writer's Guild, please contact us at [theguild.sumit@gmail.com](mailto:theguild.sumit@gmail.com)

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# CONTENTS

pg. 03 - Meet the Editors

pg. 05 - Notes from the Editors

pg. 07 - Comic Introduction by Rey Harris

pg. 09 - America by Josua Caseres

pg. 10 - Build Each Other by Vanity LaPree

pg. 11 - Checkbook Journalism by Berverly Terry

pg. 13- Autobiography by Malatya Hekimhan

pg. 15- Alice by Cynthia Toro [Art]

pg. 16- The Brightest Flower by Eddie Acousa

pg. 17- Fish, Ant, Bird, and Man by Enzo Scavone

pg. 18- [Untitled Art] by Cynthia Toro

pg. 19- Birds by Alex Walker

pg. 20- The Lion by Eddie Acosta

pg. 21- The Blue Girl [Art] by Rey Harris

pg. 22 - Insecurities by Josue Caceres

pg. 23- Forgiveness by Beverly Terry

pg. 25- Good Times [Art] by Elvis Ayala

pg. 26- Surprise Love by Sumaiya Sarwar

pg. 27- Leaving by Sumaiya Sarwar

pg. 30- Beach Photo [Art] by Elvis Ayala

pg. 31- [Untitled Art & Photography] by Rey Harris

pg. 34- Zephyr by Victor Vauban Junior

pg. 35- Intuition by Sumiya Sarwar

pg. 36- A Season of Mercy by Alexis Rodriguez

pg. 38- Couleur by Angela Hong

pg. 39- You by Angela Hong

pg. 40- The Plunge by Solomon Henderson

pg. 43- Champion Memoirs by Jed-Rene Tulian

pg. 44- The Burning of a Rebelious Generation

pg. 47- Famous Last Words by Rey Harris

# MEET THE EDITORS



## **AFROJA ISLAM - ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Afroja is a BMCC freshman. She's currently a Liberal Arts major, so she can experience different fields and hopefully find something that she truly loves. She is planning to be either a Psychiatrist or an editor for a publishing company. She loves reading and wants to invest her time discovering new stories so others will be able to experience the joy that reading has brought her. She hopes that this magazine is a great form of enjoyment for the hundreds of people that will come across it. For her personally working on this magazine was an amazing honor. Not only did she gain experience in editing great art, but she also met incredibly talented people that were just as excited to work on THE GUILD as much as her.

## **ANGELA HONG - EDITOR**

Angela Hong is an aspiring wordsmith and expert daydreamer from The Other Coast. Born Brooklynite, and raised west coast rider (writer), she discovered a passion for the written word in junior high, where she first began tinkering with poetry and short stories with all the zealousness of a love-struck preteen. Hong is a reptile lover, hippie festival goer, self-proclaimed food critic, and since moving to New York City a year ago, an obnoxiously frequent pizza eater.



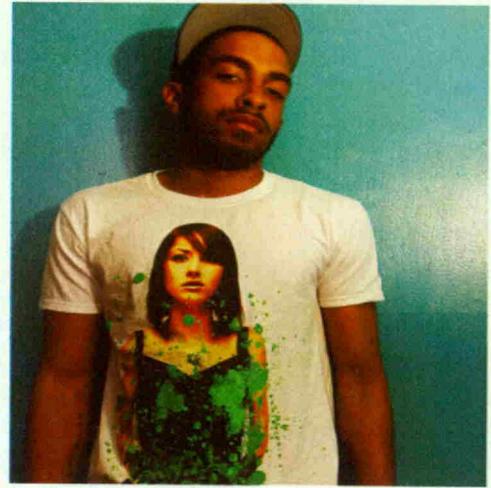
## **CRYSTAL WILLIAMS - MAGAZINE DIRECTOR**

Crystal was born and raised in Queens, New York. She has always had a passion for acting and being on stage. As a current BMCC Theater Major, she has worked on projects such as *The Negro Speaks* Directed by Marcus Dargan. She has directed an original piece, *The Coffee Shop* by Kayla Rodriguez and recently has performed as Candi in Katherine Kavanagh's devised piece, *Sonho (Dream)*. Williams plans on transferring to Binghamton University this fall and will miss the Writers Guild oh-so-dearly, she has learned many valuable lessons throughout her experiences as President. For the future, Williams plans on working for her Bachelor's, and hopefully work overseas as a lighting designer or director.



## **REY HARRIS - GRAPHIC DESIGNER/ ILLUSTRATIONS**

Reyrey is an aspiring writer, artist, musician and activist. Alongside being young and reckless, he enjoys spending his time doodling comics for his friends, wandering the U.S. Kerouac-style and reading endlessly. He's studying Writing & Lit at BMCC with the hopes of being able to write fiction for a living while wandering the earth like Kung-Fu with his future wife Eva Mendes. He is currently working on a comic series called 'Autumn Come Down' that follows a young girls psychedelic existential journey to understand love, life and religion. He plans to release issue #1, *Girl Scout Fight Club*, in the near future. He also has a Boston Terrier pup named Gatsby, who also happens to be his best friend.... Oh, and he is single - enjoys long walks on the beach, candle lit chipotle burrito dinners and.... the Wu-Tang Clan.

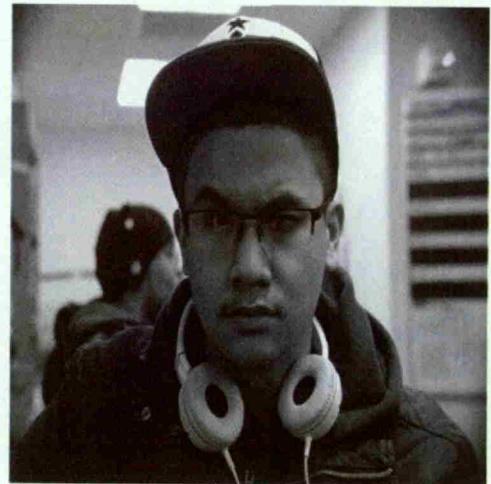


## **SOLOMON HENDERSON - GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Solomon Henderson is a writing and literature major, reoccurring writers guild resident and know-er of all things relating to geek culture. When he's not taking nostalgia trips back to the "good old days", he's using that nostalgia as a tool for writing character driven works of fiction. His plans for the future are to become an internet journalist while maintaining a steady work flow as a fiction writer. He knows that someday he will finish his novel in the hopes that his readers will feel as inspired and connected to the characters he has created as he was growing up with the ones he discovered in his misadventures with film, literature and video games.

## **JED-RENE TULIAO - ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Jed is an aspiring writer, primarily in poetry, monologue and short story. He is the Treasurer of the BMCC Writer's Guild. He is Filipino born and raised here in the Boogie down Bronx, and has traveled all over the world to see what it had to offer. He's been to the Philippines, Paris, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Ireland, London and Germany. Throughout his travels he has learned that the world is a classroom and there's no better place to learn about the world than the nitty gritty in your face attitude of good old New York City. A guy whose love for food and culture has lead him to some of the most bizarre places and people, from art bars in Paris to classical Madmen-esque speakeasy's in New York. His nerdy and musical wanderlust immerses him into a world of Yugioh/Vangaurd card shops in Chinatown and the infinite world of music from Biggie/2Pac to The Red Hot Chili Peppers/Bob Dylan. When he's not writing or learning guitar, he's investing into his passion for boxing and MMA, where most of his written works come from. He's been training in Boxing, Muay Thai, Gracie/Brazilian jiu-jitsu and wrestling for about 5 years and his favorite band the Foo Fighters engulfs most of his workout playlists.



# NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

I remember the first day I walked into the Writers' Guild I wasn't expecting much, just a bunch of literary nerds sitting around talking about their favorite classics. That didn't happen. Instead there was a guest speaker, a poet, talking to us about his time in jail, and getting high, and messing with the KKK. That whole session was great, and by the end I joined the editorial staff for "the Guild" magazine. It was intimidating at first because I have never been an editor, and I really didn't know what to do. So I really want to thank our President, Crystal Williams. She approached me and made me feel really welcomed and comfortable. Thank you for helping me and answering all my questions. I also want to thank all the people who submitted to the magazine. Going through all your submissions really left me flabbergasted; I didn't realize we had so many talented people around, and without you there wouldn't be any magazine.

Finally I want to thank the staff for the Guild magazine. Angela, Alex, Rey, Solomon, Crystal and Jed; working with you guys was too enjoyable to be considered work.

- Afroja

We all have a story inside us. Whether we tell it through our words, songs, artwork, or actions, every moment we breathe sees that story unfolding. Here at the Guild, we find the greatest passion in sharing these stories. Written word has come a long way from its role in record keeping, and now participates in our continuing quest for self expression and creativity. It's a channel for us to touch and connect with our most human selves, the part lives for communication. I believe we have all encountered moments so raw, we want to look away. We fear the things we see may hurt us or turn us into stone. In these pages reside a few demons, a couple ugly truths, a handful of unbridled emotions. I implore you to not look away. There is so much to learn in another person's story, and I for one, am extremely blessed to have glimpsed the human soul bared in these words.

- Angela

Producing the third edition of "the Guild" magazine has been such an exciting and nerve wracking experience! I made a promise to myself last semester, I was going to make the third edition of "the Guild" magazine happen. In the beginning, I had no idea what I was doing but luckily there were plenty of people around that I could ask for help. When I learned all the proper steps needed to make the publication, I was slightly overwhelmed, but the editors did a great job at helping the magazine stay grounded and move fluently.

This issue steers in a different direction from the previous publications. We decided to take a different approach when designing the layout of this issue of "the Guild". We made sure that every BMCC student who submitted work had a place in the magazine. We also played around with the concept of artwork and poetry, using images as page backgrounds for

writings.

Next semester I will be transferring out of BMCC. I have enjoyed every moment of my time here. My experience as VP and President of the Writers Guild is a memory I will never forget. I learned so many valuable things about what it takes to be a leader and it has taught me many life lessons. I hope that someone just as eager will help this magazine stay afloat. It just takes one brave soul.

A big thank you to all the students who submitted work. Without you, there would not be a magazine. Thank you editors for all your time and dedication. Thank you Aaron Thorpe, "the Guild" magazine guru. If it wasn't for him, this magazine would not be what it is now. Thank you to Professor Lara Stapleton, for always keeping me on my toes. Doctor Adele Kudish, for leading a detailed publication lesson. Anthony Lothian, Harry Mars, SGA and most importantly the Media Board for granting us the funds to make this happen.

The editors and I hope you enjoy our publication of "the Guild".

- Crystal

I was well into my second year at BMCC when I changed my major from multimedia programming to writing and literature. It was a transition that I knew would consequentially set me back a bit academically, but its one I'm glad I made back then and won't soon forget.

BMCC is known for it's offices being scattered across the planet, which while tedious isn't in itself a terrible thing, it leaves each student with a chance to explore the school and interact with a lot of other student and faculty members (whether they want to or not). An experience you might find tasteful, or dreadful depending on your patience that day. I went up and down visiting quite a few of these offices to have a waver signed for my change of major. When I finally met with the English Departments chairman I had never been greeted with such wide-eyed optimism before.

The chairwoman, whose name I begrudgingly have forgotten (and I do apologize if she ever reads this), was ecstatic to have another writer on board, whether it's from the current lack of students with said major I can not say, but it was a welcome change. Her encouragement lead me to the guild, a group that truly made me feel more like a member of the student body, like a contributing member and it's been an honor working on this magazine with everyone. And that's what it means to be a guild member, we are a family. We've had some amazing, well known writers and teachers come share their experience as writers with us here at the guild, and it's been a blast! And each time these hardened veterans come and speak with us, share their experiences, and do work shops with us, I'm reminded why I love literature so much.

Reading and dissecting written works isn't just about how to be a good writer, it delves into philosophy, art, and what it means to be human.

That being said I hope you enjoyed this years publication of "the Guild" as we in our most vulnerable point in life share our stories of what it means to be human, and a guild member of the world with you.

- Solomon

Working on this magazine has been one the most frustrating and empowering things I have ever been blessed to work on. This is mostly due to the complications I faced when walking into my position as the treasurer of The Writer's Guild. When it came to balancing school, work, the club, the magazine, and the main thing we all know is THE STRUGGLE, just getting the paperwork out was a hassle. For future officers of any club, my advice is to make sure your internet is working and your phone bill is always paid! Ha-ha. But seriously, this magazine is a legacy of the writers of this club, this school, those who came before us and to those now, who are trying to get their work out there. It is a symbol of what we are as guild within our written works. This magazine could be some of our first steps towards our careers and goals or it could be another stepping stone for others already walking ahead on the path.

I've learned through my fellow officers and club mates that even with deadlines kicking our butts into gear, we still made it work, no matter how complicated things got. We as writers have an obligation to ourselves and to our fellow artists to strive, starve and grit our teeth as hard we can to open more doors for opportunities in a financially competitive world. Writing has taught me to roll with the punches as each word flows with the strike of a pen. To make a fighting reference, just throw in a jab at the heart strings and catch the reader with a hook to the mind; I promise you it will send them flying through the pages of your work. This club taught me that you can write complete crap and still maintain momentum to write even better crap and eventually it just keeps getting better as you put up with more crap. People will always look for catharsis, a relative feeling of connection to your work. Also, when you write, learn to be fearless and attack the page with reckless abandon.

After reading all of these submissions to the magazine I have read so much potential within our writers here in BMCC. And I do hope to work with all of you in the future if our paths were to cross. A lot of people from different backgrounds and walks of life have come, shared and submitted work regardless of where they came from or any language barrier, and I found that amazing... just amazing.

To my fellow readers, writers, artists, I have a firm belief that the strongest weapon in the world is the power of the word, the words we speak, the actions we take to say what we need to say, without having to make a sound. The great Abiodun Oyeowle once told me personally during a brief meeting with him that picking up a pen was like picking up a gun. A scary though isn't it? But a powerful one. And I hope this magazine inspires you all to take up your arms and aim it right into the soul. I'm trying my best not to sound too generic or too cookie cutter with my words, but sometimes they make it a lot simpler to put than complicated words. Also, one more note, keep it

simple and concise my writers. You can be as fancy as you can be while still have your work pertain to everyone that reads it

I am very proud of our work here and everyone else's contribution. I want to thank Ms. Lara Stapleton for nurturing this club and kicking my ass into gear every time I needed it. Thank you Crystal for being a driving force for this club to succeed; I firmly believe we couldn't have made it without your indomitable spirit and energy. Thank you Rey Harris for the passion and hard work you've put into this magazine (Most of the art work is his everyone! Check out more of his stuff!). Thank you Solomon Henderson for being a bro since last semester and your page work here in the magazine. Thank you my fellow officers, Julia, Angela and Penelope for helping run this club, even when some days we couldn't just get a damn break haha. And a thank you all to the readers, previous guild members, writers, the Media board and SGA who have helped make this happen.

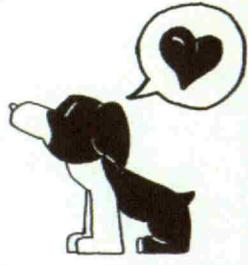
There is one more thing I want to bestow upon our readers, something I've written and learned over the years of my travels and experiences. To my readers, writers, artists, Club mates and Bohemian family:

*Explore to your hearts content. But, always remember to stay in control or else you risk losing grip of the mind, body, and soul. The roads are broken and bent but experience it without regret. I leave you out into the world with these words now go and become an eagle amongst the birds.*

Become eagles my friends!

- Je

HELLO FRIENDS AND LOVERS! MY NAME IS AUTUMN, AND THIS IS GATSBY. AND WE ARE HERE TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING THAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MAGICAL BOOK YOU HAVE IN YOUR HAND...

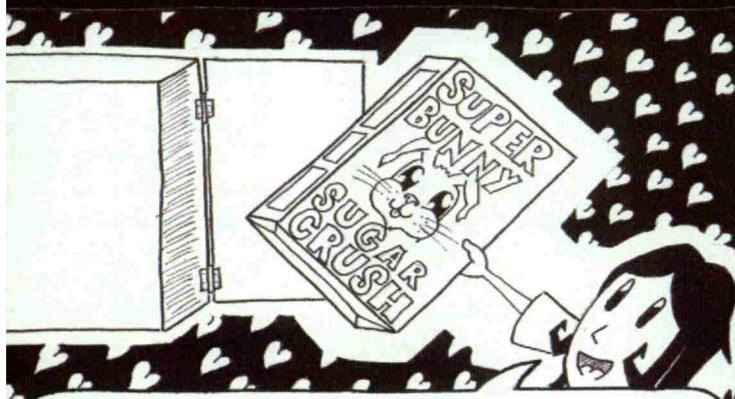


THIS IS THE CREATION OF B.M.C.C.'S FINEST!



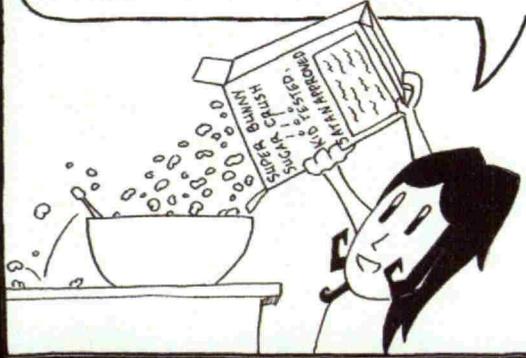
THOSE THAT LIVE, LOVE AND CREATE. THOSE THAT TEND TO QUESTION EVERYTHING. THOSE THAT DREAM AND ROMANTICIZE LIFE. THOSE THAT HAVE HEART!!!

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THE BEST PART IS HOW DIFFERENT AND DIVERSE THE ARTISTS AND WRITERS ARE. THEY COME FROM MANY PLACES, RACES, GENDERS, SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS, RELIGIONS ... ISN'T IT JUST SO BEAUTIFUL ?!

RAY BRADBURY ONCE SAID, " WHILE OUR ART CANNOT, AS WE WISH IT COULD, SAVE US FROM WARS, PRIVATION, ENVY, GREED, OLD AGE OR DEATH, IT CAN REVITALIZE US AMIDST IT ALL." I WISH I COULD SPEAK THAT POETICALLY!



IF YOU ASK ME, THERE'S NO BETTER TIME THAT NEEDS REVITALIZATION THAN NOW!



WITH SO MANY WARS AND RUMORS OF MORE WARS, OUR NATION BECOMING A PLUTOCRACY, RISING POVERTY, MONEY RUINING POLITICS, MARRIAGE INEQUALITY AND MARIJUANA STILL BEING ILLEGAL, THE WORLD CAN SEEM SO HORRIBLE!



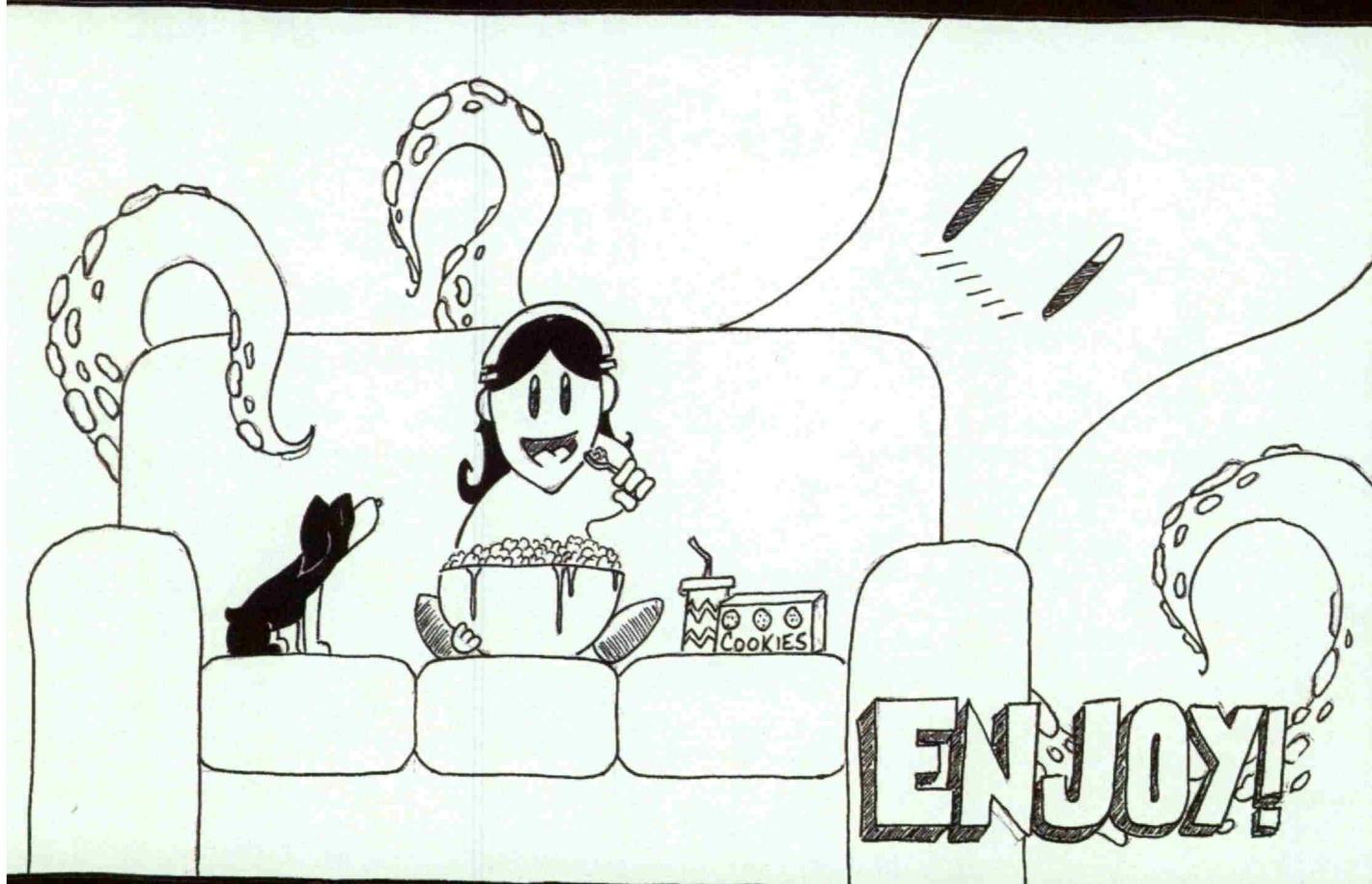
T THANKS TO THE  
ITERS GUILD, WE  
VE MAGICAL MAGAZINES  
IT CAN HELP US  
CAPE AND DREAM!



BE SURE TO SHOW SOME  
LOVE TO THE ARTISTS AND  
WRITERS YOU LIKE MOST!  
BUT MOST OF ALL ...



SO KICK BACK, GRAB SOME  
SNACKS, TURN ON SOME  
GOOD TUNES. BUILD A  
BLANKET FORT IF YOU'RE  
REALLY FEELING ADVENTEROUS!!



*And extra special thank you's to -*

*Doctor Adele Kudish, for coming into our club meeting and teaching us  
the ins and outs of creating a literary magazine.*

*Our dearest friend Aaron Thorpe for all his help. After all he is the GURU  
of this magazine.*

*Most importantly Prof. Lara Stapleton, for always believing in the Guild.*



# America

By Josue Caseres

Land of the free and home of the brave  
Place that foreigners praise, where they come and wanna stay  
Where modern day slaves exist in this day and age  
Where you only get love if you're on TV or in the grave

Apple, True Religion, is that the cost of life?  
To some it determines your wealth but won't determine your health  
Determines your cool but not if you been to school  
Will show off your style, but when you go for a job will it swag in your file?

16, Jordan's that cost 16 to make in a sweatshop down in China, May I remind ya  
Those same kicks are sold for 300 a pair, 300 for something that you wear,  
Then a kid dies for his outerwear  
The kid that shot was just a minor, that's death over designer

We strive for the finest, who's looking the flyest, but have an intellectual conversation and all you gonna end up hearing is silence

This the life that we live in  
We always want but never giving  
We could have all the materials but somehow there's always something missing

There's kids sleeping in the cold, no family living all alone  
While we out here giving in and purchasing our fourth iPhone

The richer getting richer, while the poor getting poor  
Won't wear 20 dollar jeans, 'cuz of the name that's on the store

Now here's a lesson, the price keeps going up, the more we ask from the brand  
They make you feel like you need it, that's called supply and demand

We throw thousands at the rich, and throw pennies on the homeless hands  
Hunger to consume, some people will never understand

Rather shop and go clubbing than to commit a good deed  
The line is extremely blurry between what you want and what you need

You buy a person a gadget, instead of extending a hug,  
I guess we rather spend money instead of expressing our love

Look we tend to see and then we spend, that's why the problem persists  
On Christmas, instead of thinking bout Jesus, we think bout Santa and gifts

Respect? You buy things to earn some respect  
On mother's and father's day we burn checks, that's the consumer effect

They say fake it till you make it, instead of being ambitious  
Everyday a broke person is trying to make a rich decision

No disrespect to the real slaves but we slaves to the brand  
But that new phone is so cool, that's all part of the plan

Rich lifestyle on minimum wage  
America, land of the free and home of the brave

# Build Each Other

*By Vanity LaPree' Jenkins*

"If you live for the validation of others, you will die by their rejection". Young sisters and brothers, when you look in the mirror at your reflection, are you happy from within?

To some young women, just because daddy was hardly there you don't have to transition from men to men...to fulfill an empty void.

Slowly but surely you are the only person it will destroy ...Mrs. Carter said it best in the song '*Pretty Hurts*'... that the soul needs surgery.

Not solving the root of an issue is like perjury....to your own character. When character is lost...all is lost.

Ladies, let's make a difference and be an inspiration and become a BOSS!!! A BOLD OPTIMISTIC SUCCESS STORY ...where we overcome our struggles and reach GLORY.... women, stop trying to tear other women apart because you find them as competition... How about changing your whole disposition and benefiting from each other rather than being spiritually bankrupt?!

Some men, stop degrading and manipulating the ladies and disappearing after helping them create babies.

Some young men shout out M.O.B. Money Over ---!!!You know the rest...thinking chasing quick paper and rolling in Bugatti's and Mercedes with different ladies is what defines success. I can't stress... enough.

Young brothers got to do better. Rather than glorifying drugs, money and sex....and free my guy or girl who did the crime that deserves the time.

How about celebrating the young man with the degree, that works hard and takes care of his responsibility?! Incarcerated brother I have nothing against ya...just prayers for ya. That this test will be a testimony for other young brothers!!!

For the boys whose fathers were not there to set an example and have anger! Holding that anger in... it is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to die. That anger is corrupting you inside. Learn to forgive... so you can truly live...and one day you will be an example for your kids... When you know better, you do better.

R.I.P to Trayvon Martin that was killed because of racial profiling... Martin Luther King stated in '*I Have a Dream*': "We should be judge not by the color of our skin, but the content of our character".

Young Brothers you are meant to be unstoppable KINGS! Let's set an example and live the best American Dream.

# Checkbook Journalism

The Breeding Ground for Synthetic Reporting

By Beverly Terry

Although checkbook journalism has been taking place in news organizations for over a century, the term started making its mark during the 1970's. Major news conglomerates openly began compensating hard to get interviewees to give exclusive interviews. For instance, after CBS turned down fallen president Richard Nixon's expensive offer to 'play for pay' during the Watergate scandal in 1976, he then went to the ever popular British journalist, David Frost, who paid Nixon six figures for the interview. Jeremy W. Peters, the media reporter for The New York Times, admitted in his article "Paying for News? It's Nothing New" how even the reputable New York Times publication paid the surviving operator of the Titanic's wireless communications system an attractive sum during that era, for his account of barely escaping death aboard the plummeting ship in 1912.

From the Hearst Newspapers securing a high priced lawyer in exchange for exclusive access during the Lindbergh kidnapping trial in 1935 to ABC news' constant scrutiny for a flurry of payments in pursuit of sought-after news subjects like Casey Anthony, the mother tried and acquitted in the death of her young daughter; Jaycee Lee Dugard, a kidnapping victim held in captivity for almost a decade; and Meagan Broussard, the 26-year-old who received lewd photos from The disgraced former congressman Anthony D. Weiner, checkbook journalism has fully served its main purpose for all interested parties involved. That purpose being, building unmerited ratings and temporarily filling opportunistic pockets.

That is why the phrase "checkbook journalism" is often used disapprovingly, because the term suggests that stories obtained by paying sources are not as commendable as those achieved by traditional investigations. Moreover, many believe it has become one of the main culprits in the slow destruction of journalistic integrity and factual news reporting. As this article pointed out earlier, most of the major news organizations have participated in the business of payola journalism. Former New York Daily News columnist/writer Clem Richardson stated during a Journalism class Q/A workshop at BMCC last fall, "Checkbook Journalism is a win/lose situation. And, it only works for the people it serves." His statement alludes to the fact that even though this under the table practice is one of the most unethical things you can do in journalism, as long as it serves the purpose of getting the exclusive and exchanging personal sorrow for cash and fame it will be a primary practice for both interviewer and interviewee.

Journalistic traditionalists feel it has also become the phenomenal trend that has taken center stage to journalism veracity. Each time a network decides to pay for a story it strips away more and more of the press's intended integrity. Plus it has become one of the hottest news topics coming over the media wire. In addition to ABC being on the proverbial hot seat, there have been several other major news organizations, such as CNN, Fox News and NBC News that has been exposed

for paying for the exclusives to breaking major news stories. However, the news executives have been crafting the most creative ways of categorizing payment lately. Currently payments are concealed under the term creative licensing, and if the interviewee wants to throw in an exclusive interview along with their personal footage then so be it. Most recently major news organization, NBC was publicly criticized by the Society of Professional Journalism (SPJ) and the Washington Post's senior writer Paul Farhi for checkbook journalism. It seems that NBC and ABC were in a bidding war over the exclusive rights to interviews and amateur footage of an aerial accident that involved nine sky divers and two pilots who survived the horrid accident.

According to the Washington Post article, 'NBC News, agreeing to pay for sky-diving footage, criticized for 'checkbook journalism' ABC claims it has banned the practice of paying for interviews, and pulled out of the bidding war as soon as it became clear that the interviews were tied directly to cash payments. Spokesman Jeffrey Schneider said, "Paying for interviews is a clear violation of our standards and ethics. We wanted to bid solely for the rights to the footage." The peacock news conglomerate (NBC) agreed to compensate the eleven lucky men \$100,000 for an appearance on the "Today" show, a story on "NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams" and a one-hour "Dateline NBC." Mike Robinson, a sky-diving instructor who was involved in the incident near Lake Superior in northwest Wisconsin stated in the Washington Post, "We can do print and radio interviews, but no TV interviews [other than for NBC] for two weeks. That's the agreement." Robinson's statement further confirms that this type of yellow journalism only benefits the major players of under-the-table ethics for cash exchanges. However, it leaves the concerned public and smaller news venues scrambling for truthful tidbits of what's left of the story. If the major news organizations have been paying for their news reports for more than a century, then most of the in-depth news stories being reported could be nothing more than embellished or fabricated news blasts that mirror the practices of the veteran tabloid newspapers like the National Enquirer or Thirty-Mile Zone (TMZ).

According to the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) 'Code of Ethics', news organizations and journalists flipping news for cash are in direct violation of the "Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news" code. Yet the age of communication we are currently living in has created a breeding ground for this type of payola journalism. Once money enters the reporting equation, it has the potential to corrupt the essence of the journalist/source relationship. In other words, why would you tell your story to a seasoned reporter for the sake of journalistic integrity and getting the story out to the public, if you can score some quick cash from another reporter with deep negotiating pockets? Since checkbook journalism only serves the paying reporters, desperately corrupted news networks and the opportunistic

interviewees, then what happens to the concerned public that's expecting the facts? They are left with recycled details and remnants of the truth only worthy of wrapping fish.

Furthermore, checkbook journalism is encouraging laxity in reporters. News organizations that pay for news stories are afraid to continue researching a lead for fear of finding conflicting information, thereby clearing the field for synthetic journalism to fester. In other words, the majority of the news being reported could be nothing more than stories created from half-truths and speculation, but no facts. SPJ member and associate professor of journalism at the University of Kentucky, Mike Farrell says, "The practice of checkbook journalism threatens to corrupt the news gathering and reporting functions of the media. Because journalism - accurate and credible news - is so essential to the maintenance of a democracy, checkbook journalism is not only unethical, it threatens to undermine journalism and damage democracy."

Based on the barrage of news stories surfacing and resurfacing about major news organizations giving into this travesty of journalism, this infectious literary disease will continue to

standardize ethical news reporting here and abroad.

Fortunately there are many remaining ethical purists in mainstream news organizations that remain reluctant to pay for information for the following reasons. One is practicality: Paying for stories can get expensive and consciously unbearable. The other, more important consideration is the perception that paying sources poisons the credibility of both the source and the news organization. Hagit Limor, the president of SPJ stated, "When you pay for a story, you're making a contract with the person who supplies it and that means you're no longer acting independently," Limor also stated, "People will say anything in pursuit of money." "Because news reporting has become such a lucrative business, and the validity of that news seems to be based on how many zeros follow, we will continue to live in an age of constantly breaking news that's being sold to the highest unethical bidder. Therefore, the practice of pay for pay will continue and the only difference will be in the many ingenious ways to process the payments without detection. \*



- Photos taken by Rey Harris on September 17 and 18 of 2011 in and around TriBeCa during the Occupy Wall Street Movement's take over of Zuccotti (Liberty) Park. To read more about it, check out page 47.

# Autobiography

By *Malatya Hekimhan*

I was born in a village in 1986 in East Turkey. My village is a mountain village, deep within the mountains and far away from any city. During winter, the roads were closed due to snow for several months and most of time we had no electricity. I used to wear the same shoes, pants, t-shirts, and coat for years because of poverty. I have not seen that kind of poverty yet since I have been here in the US. I just want to say that this is how we lived; it seemed normal.

My mother can barely read and write. My father went to school for a few years as a boy. I had never gone to a city – any city- until I was just short of ten years old. I didn't see cars, games, movies or technology for the first ten years of my life.

What might seem funny to you is that even though I had all these difficulties, I was one of the happiest kids in the world while living in that village. Because, I had good friends who were honest, and cordial, and we were always in nature (spring waters, mountains, animals, forests, lakes), we had fun and we did not really know our circumstances in the world.

In 1996, the only school in our village with only one teacher had to close by order of the governor. Our school had only one room. Students from age 7-14 were in class together, with about 30 students in one room. We were allowed one book and one pencil – and you can believe we never lost them. In '96, all the village people were moved to city. In the summer, we were permitted to return to the village to tend to the land – the vegetables and cereal that we grew.

So I moved to city to with my family. I have a sister and brother. The first couple years in the city were hard for me because of the big cultural difference. Urban students were so rude towards to peasant students. And they could tell who we were because of our accent and our dress. My father is an alcoholic and he used to give us a hard time in the city. That's why I am still mad at him! He was unemployed most of the year and only worked when he went back to the village in the summer to take care of the lands.

My mother was washing dishes at a restaurant to bring home bread and send us to school. (I respect my mother). Sometimes we even didn't have bread to eat at home. My sister and I finished middle school due to my mother's sacrifice, and we started high school together. My sister is one year older than I am. Due to economic problems, my sister and I were forced to drop out of high school and we had to go to work. I was constantly thinking about my younger brother because I didn't want him to have the same problems as I had.

When I was 16, I left home and went to a different city for work so I could make more money. I went to the new city with two friends. We didn't know anybody in that city or even how to get around. During the first couple of weeks we slept on the beach until we found a job. At the end of second week, we found jobs in a hotel and started making money. I took care of my brother all the time; I sent him money and paid his all school expense and basic needs. During this period, I got my high school degree from open education because my dream was to go to a college. First I wanted to send my brother to college. He graduated from high school at 2010 and he passed the exam to start to college in Turkey. I registered him in college in 2011. He is studying law now.

In my own thinking life, I experienced a change reading philosophy books (Socrates and Karl Marx are my favorite philosophers). My brother was checking out my books, and he told me that I am lucky that I read philosophy since I will have better analytic skills as a result.

I dreamed of coming to the United States but I didn't have money to afford it. Everyone told me it was a silly dream and that it was impossible to get a visa to the US. Because of my status- no money, no college degree, no good job – and the fact that my parents did not want to come with me – I was a poor candidate. But, I didn't listen to them. I borrowed money from 10 people to have some money in my bank account to show at the visa application, and I got a paper from my work place which said I was going to study in the US and when I graduated from school, I would return and work for them.

I was scared but I went to the visa consultant to get some advice about visa application before I went to the US Consulate. He said I should forget about it and that the government was not going to ever give me a visa because my family was poor, I don't have a good position at my job, and most importantly, I do not have a college degree. I didn't listen him either. I went to US consulate in Istanbul for my visa application. I told them that I want to go to school in the US and I told them everything, the whole truth of my life and my dreams. My interview was longer than anyone else in the consulate; they asked to me too many questions in Turkish. I gave them so much information about my family and my life. They kept asking me: "WHY do you want to study in US? Why not the other countries? I said I believe that America has good colleges and I want to learn American English, so I can stand upright and proud. They give me the visa for 5 years and they said good luck! I am thankful them that they gave me this opportunity. They took a chance on me.

Before I came here, I gave my all belongings to my brother and I arrived here with one pair of shoes, two pair of pants, two t-shirts, some underwear and \$400. I paid for my school for 3 months with my credit cards from back home. I was living in Long Island when I got here. My first school was in Long Island. I found a job there at a gas station. It was my 3rd day in NY. I have a friend from Turkey and I stayed at his apartment first a few weeks. In one month, I decided to move to the city from Long Island because I believed that opportunities could

be found in the city. I found a new job and a new room in Manhattan and I quit the gas station. I took my small suitcase and took the train to the city. When I arrived in the my new work place I saw that owner of the place hired someone else instead of me. He had promised the job to me. The owner was not there either. I had no say and no power. I went to my new apartment room to leave my suitcase, but there was one more surprise for me: they rented the room to someone else! I was homeless and unemployed with little money. I stayed outside for two days but I didn't give up and I was able to find a new job and new room. I was trying to fix my life but surprises kept continuing. I broke my wrist while playing soccer with some people and I couldn't work for a couple of months. I don't want to remember those days. They were hard times. But I didn't give up about my college goal. I worked hard; I paid the money I owed to my friends and using credit cards from back home, I registered for BMCC. I am glad that I am in a college now.

I work 40-45 hours in a week as a driver and I am going to school. My dream is not to be a millionaire or to be a popular person. My dream is to make useful research for the environment, to have good projects for people, to fight injustice, and I want to feel that when I become old that I did good things for world and for others. This is why I came here – to get an education.

When I think back to my village when I take the subway to BMCC every day, it's hard to believe. I guess I thought it was so hard to believe that I wanted to write it and tell it to someone. It is not always easy to be alone. \*



Artwork By Cynthia Toro



# *The Brightest Flower*

*By Eddie Acousa*

The brightest flowers freeze first when  
winters cold air descends  
upon the land.  
And the people too,  
sometimes,  
too lovely,  
freeze and wither  
and are no longer  
beautiful.

# Fish, Ant, Bird and Man

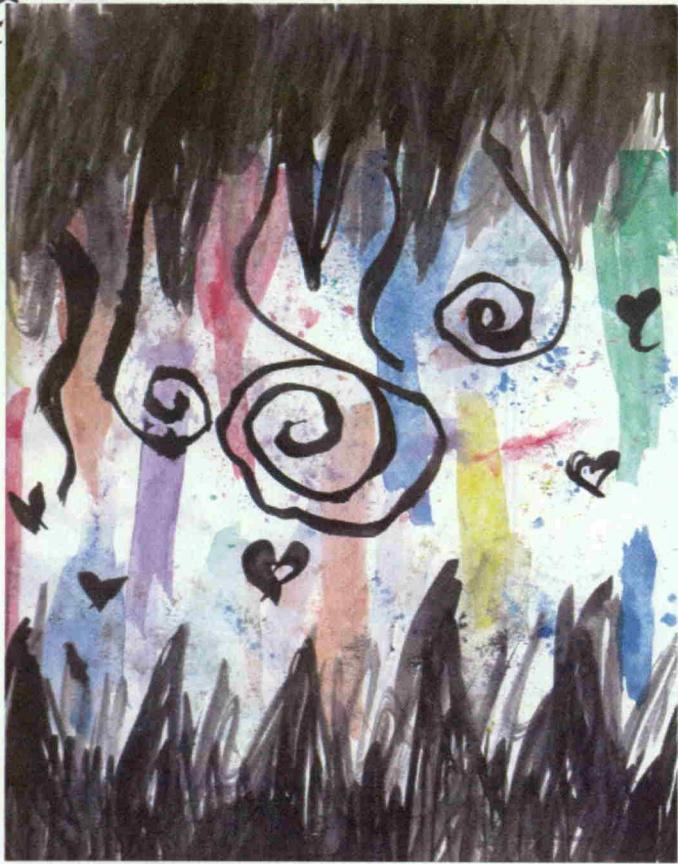
By Enzo Scavone

One day man walked to a brook and met fish. He watched and saw that all fish did throughout the day was swim. Man was puzzled about what he saw and finally asked, "Fish, why do you swim all day?" "Why, that's what fish do," fish answered. Man was pensive and returned home.

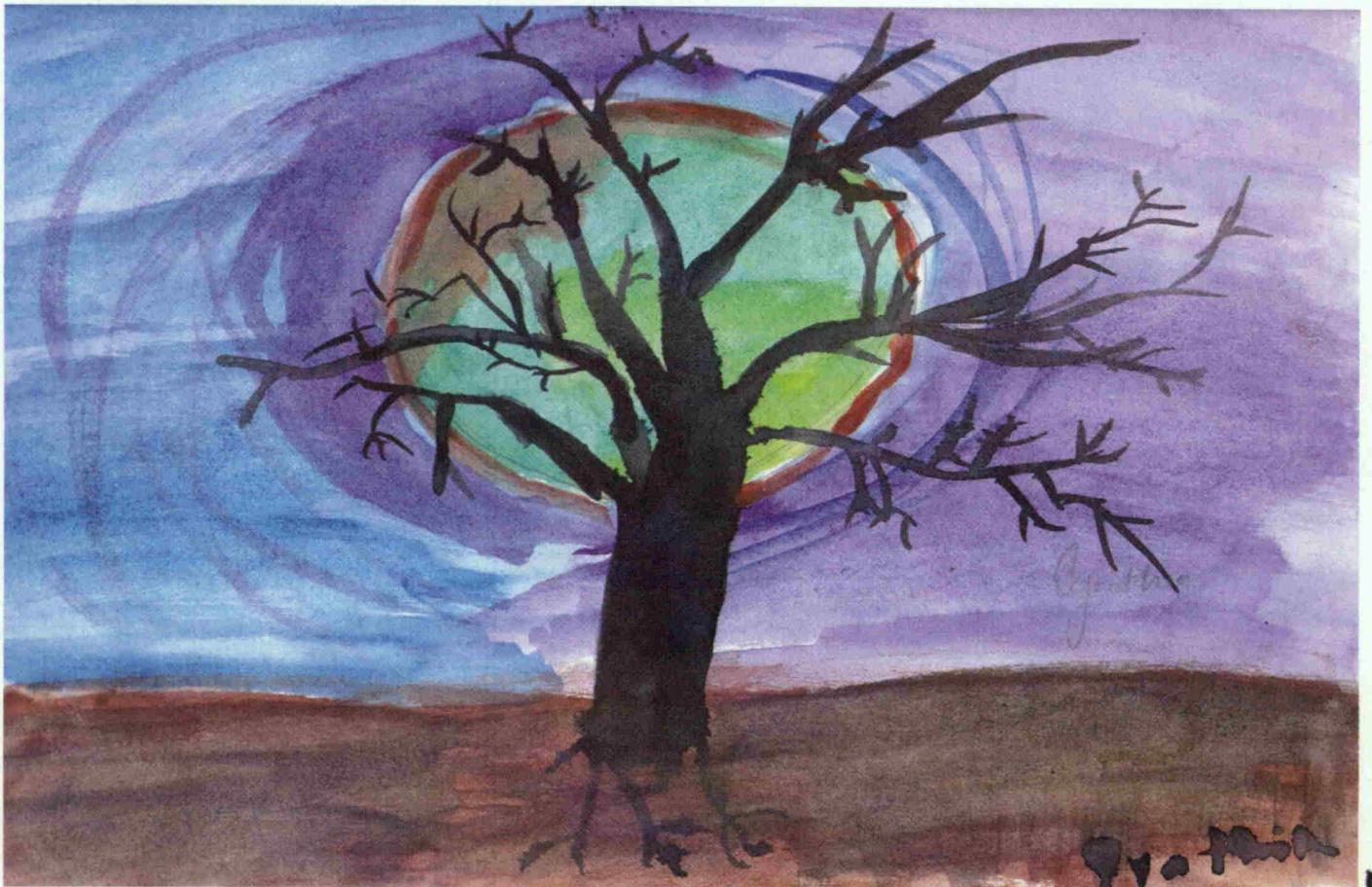
The next day, man walked into the steppe and met ant. He watched and saw that all ant did throughout the day was work. Man remembered fish and was curious what ant would answer. So he asked, "Ant, why do you work all day?" "Why, that's what ants do," ant answered. Man was pensive again and returned home.

The day after that, man walked into the forest and met bird. He watched and saw that all bird did throughout the day was fly. Anticipating what it might say he asked, "Bird, why do you fly all day?" "Why, that's what birds do," bird answered. Man nodded and was pensive once more. He set off for his way home.

On the way home, as he pondered his thoughts, man paused for a moment and wondered, What is it that I do all day?



Artwork by Cynthia Toro



# Birds

*By Alex Walker*

Sounds changed when a bird of my mind flew away, away, away. It went far from buildings and human voices to a special place where something completely different happens. She flew under the bridge. She always does that; it reminds her of the dark cloudy state inside the egg of herself – mumbling dreams. She especially liked loud heavy trains passing by it's beauty of going forward, making things sound like metal math. Logical and tum-tum, tum-tum. She liked to close her eyes for a moment, exactly under the bridge with her wings wide open and to enjoy the cosmic second of the whole universe's union between tum-tum of the train's heart and the tum-tum of her own. She went further, further, further, joined a flow and disappeared into it. In a bird's world there's no difference between sound, taste, and image. Every piece of existence is a wave, and she was a wave as well. Relaxed and going forward to the harmless "next".

Here it is! The cage between treefingers. The little blue bird was waiting for her. They were happy to see each other. Especially the blue bird. There was nothing to do inside of the cage and the world seemed to be too small for her. They shared twitty waves. A bird's language is less cryptic than ours. It has no sequences, so it is impossible to misunderstand it. The brain of a bird doesn't solve equations, trying to figure out what the other bird meant to say, like people do. They just show a tone of a wave, a tuning map that is universal. You cannot express a lot if you are a bird, but the truth is there's no need to express. Feeling the tone is enough to understand. Blue bird tweeted sadness with excitement and hesitation:

*Locked but not sure if I want to, Should I?*

The Mindbird answers in surprise. It was like,

"Why are you still in the cage if you want to explore the world?"

"Because it's my cage, and it's locked forever," she said

"You're right about 'yours', and wrong about 'locked'," tweeted the Mindbird as a mix of hope and inspiration occurs.

"How is it possible?" she asked.

Something touched my shoulder and I opened my eyes. The train was overcrowded, people everywhere. It was too much.

I want to die.

"Excuse me?" A young lady was surprised.

"I want to leave, sorry can I?"

"Are you okay?" she asked as she moved to the right.

"I don't know," I replied and left the train.



# The Lion

*By Eddie Acosta*

They say  
before a lion begins its hunt  
it has already chosen its prey.

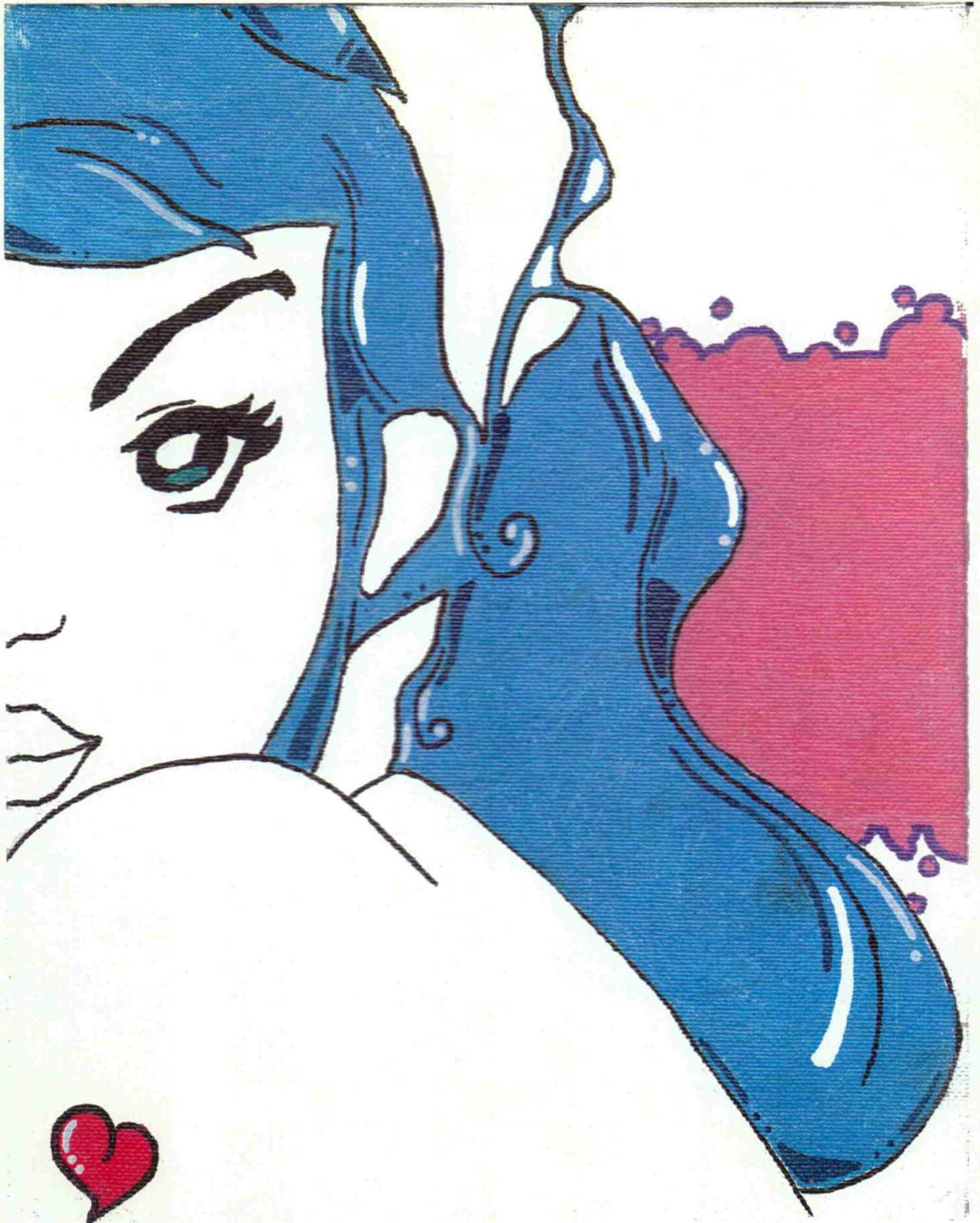
Out of a whole herd  
it singles out  
one.

Then in all the chaos  
hard hoofs beating the ground,  
dust kicked up,  
nothing else exists but that  
one.

The lion doesn't stop,  
until that prey has been caught or lost.

I am a lion and you were my prey,  
I chased you until you got away.

Maybe we'll meet again  
on this sun baked clay  
and I  
will pick something else  
to chase.



Artwork By *Rey Harris*

# *Insecurities*

By  
Josue Caceres

**Nobody's perfect.**

**Is it worth it, to judge others just to make yourself feel better on how you look?  
Look, you over look their feelings and you make them feel rejected and neglected,  
but all they really want is to be respected.**

**What, you think it didn't hurt? Put yourself in their shoes.  
Except you choose to judge on what they wear and tell them to lay off on the food.**

**And then they all laugh and talk about friends behind their backs,  
And in your face, be like, "who, me? I would never do something like that."**

**They make people not even want to look at their reflection,  
But what's funny is that those that judge have the most imperfections.**

**And a lot of them judge just to crave the attention,  
But even the most attractive person in the world is extremely far from perfection.**

**I truly believe everyone is beautiful in their own way,  
But nowadays you need to be skinny or popular to be treated okay.**

**I might not be the most attractive, wear tight shirts and tight jeans,  
May be a little chubby and sometimes may come off as mean.**

**But did it ever occur to you that we're all just human beings?  
And what's ugly to you, may not be what another person is seeing?**

**Talking about others, saying all this stuff,  
What if somebody judged the one that you loved?**

**Or what if somebody spoke on all your insecurities,  
People growing up but not yet reaching their maturity?**

**This is the society we live in, I'll be alright,  
Don't wanna raise my kids in a world where to be accepted you gotta put up a  
fight.**

**Where beauty is defined by what is first seen by your sight,  
Or to be accepted in certain places is all up to your weight or your height.**

**I've seen very rude people with the most beautiful skin,  
So forget your insecurities, or if your fat, thick, or slim.**

**So If you listening, you're beautiful, just smile at those that judge you,  
And if you feel that everyone's against you just remember that God will always  
love you.**

# Forgiveness

## The Reversal of Fortune

By Beverly Terry

After reading both "Forgiveness" by Rebecca Brown and "Happy Endings" by Margaret Atwood, I have concluded, that forgiveness creates a constant battle of emotional control. Sure I have been on the receiving line for forgiving someone and being forgiven for some human transgression, but I must admit once either occurred, the relationship shifted gears. It was no longer about... 'darling I love you and we can make it work.' It was now about who held all the cards, or at least the winning ace. Think about it, once you forgive your lover's mistreatment of you, without a trial, the relationship becomes an emotional tug of war, where each opponent takes their corner in preparation for strategizing and manipulation. In one corner you have the forgiver, coming in at 5 years of unconditional love, covert feelings of entitlement and distrust. In the other corner you have the forgiven; coming in at still no commitment in five years and honey I will never do it again, unless I can get away with it. Generally most people would say forgiveness is a positive decision towards moving forward and hopefully regaining the trust that was once lost. I say it is the key to a broken space, left unattended by your beloved.

If you forgive a person without answering your hearts questions of betrayal, or your mind's weary thoughts of revenge, your decision to do so can only lead to resentment and bitterness towards your beloved, but most of all, yourself. You can go to therapy; talk to your family and friends, but in your gut, will be that gnawing feeling of wanting to recant your decision. In Rebecca Brown's 'Forgiveness' she describes a woman who has sacrificed the innermost part of herself, in order to prove she is willing to do anything to earn her lover's approval. However, her lover's response was to accept her love and then figure out a way to manipulate it into an emotional power to use against her. In my opinion, forgiving is the same as giving your power to someone. Selflessly relinquishing you of your self esteem, in bits and pieces of "to err is human and to forgive is divine." Alas, the more you give of yourself in order to forgive that scoundrel, eventually the harder it becomes for you to recognize who you've become; a mere resemblance of your former existence, trapped and powerless beneath the surface of regret and shame. Furthermore, once you lose yourself in an unrequited love jones for some undeserving someone, sometimes there's no turning back! You will start to drown in bitterness and resentful revenge, waiting for your opportunity to strike back! Usually your attack is misdirected at the wrong person, yourself or some innocent bystander waiting in the wings. According to the Mayo Clinic's article 'Forgiveness: Letting Go of Grudges and Bitterness,' "Forgiveness can [...] lead to feelings of understanding, empathy and compassion for the one who hurt you." However, in Margaret Atwood's "Happy Endings," each time 'Mary' extended her forgiving hand to her unrequited love 'John,' he reciprocated in disdain of her emotional effort and the disempowerment of her soul. By manipulating her every move and every thought, his treatment of her eventually led to her unintentional suicide.

Pamela Kulbarsh, RN, BSW/Writer for Officer.com, who has been a psychiatric nurse for over 25 years and has worked for law enforcement in crisis intervention for the past ten years, states in her article, "Murder-Suicide: When Killing Yourself Isn't Enough," "At the core of a murder-suicide lies a frustrated, turbulent, intimate, long-term personal relationship. The perpetrator has had a strong ambivalence about the relationship, vacillating between anger and love." This explains why Atwood's character, John in story C, drowning in desperation, decides to kill his young mistress and her lover, and then turns the gun on himself; ending the same torment his emotional impasse caused Mary to end her life in story B. Therefore, the question remains, why do we forgive, if the ramifications are so life threatening? Kulbarsh's article also states, "The perpetrator feels helpless and powerless in the relationship; the homicidal act is the culmination of this sense of intolerable powerlessness." So, I say poppycock! The only thing that forgiveness leads to is the loss of your inner power, which slowly diminishes your will to live devoid of respect and self esteem. Because the forgiven has emotionally usurped every bit of your power of self, which includes, determination, self-respect and self-worth, you have now been reduced to very little reason and rendered of all hope. You begin to wonder if you will ever return to your true self. Therefore, when the narrator in Brown's Forgiveness describes her heart's betrayal as the bloody stump left after severing her left arm off for her undeserving lover, she is recounting the magnitude of what forgiving your culprit without a trial would yield. Brené Brown, Ph.D., LMSW, author/research professor at the University Of Houston Graduate College Of Social Work, states in her book, 'Daring Greatly,' "When the people we love or with whom we have a deep connection stop caring, stop paying attention, stop investing, and stop fighting for the relationship, trust begins to slip away and hurt starts seeping in." Her statement alludes to the same type of hurt and despair that John experiences when he discovers Mary and James intertwined in a haze of lust and mirrors, in Atwood's, story C, of "Happy Endings." Brown also goes on to say, "Disengagement triggers shame and our greatest fears — the fear of being abandoned, unworthy and unlovable" (51). Moreover, the desertion you feel from your partner is comparable to the desertion you feel from your soul, when you forgive.

Rabbi Irwin Kula, author/host of Jewish Television Network's (JTN), 'Simple Wisdom,' states in episode eight "Forgive and Forget, If you've hurt someone — you've diminished them. If they've hurt you — you have been diminished and all the inner work in the world won't create a new equilibrium — a new state — a new kind of relationship. So, forgiveness has to be a process between people." Consequently, this means that part of that process includes the repairing of your damaged heart and absentee sense of self preservation. The episode also disparages the age old adage, "you can't forgive others until you forgive yourself." the Rabbi suggests

that this is a destructive way of thinking and it's not true. Most importantly, it's one of the worst pieces of contemporary wisdom. Yet, psychologists, self help groups, religious personnel and your friends and family dime store psych 101, continue to use this misguided terminology, as the basis for their suggested road back to a path of wellness for the forgiver. Instead of studying the ramifications of forgiveness after a grave betrayal, you are told to basically trap yourself behind a wall of self blame and then instructed to chip away at it slowly. Until shame and guilt has completely enveloped you. Therefore, why should any person allow themselves to be subjected to that thought pattern and practice, in the name of forgiveness? So, after the narrator's despondent lover returns to her and proclaims through crocodile tears, that she has changed and is ready to start the unwarranted clemency process in Brown's *Forgiveness*, "she recalls how she looked at her lover's beautiful tear lined face, and tries to pretend that she has never seen her before in her life" (2). She resorts to this measure, after realizing that the love of her life has returned to collect on the reversal of power that her demands and betrayal created.

However, Atwood's *Happy Endings* story line exemplifies the rollercoaster ride of emotional tug of war for power that stems from the forgiveness process. As I mentioned earlier, the ramifications of emotional amnesty involves two opponents, the other is the forgiven. Sometimes the shame and guilt experienced during these dreadful situations of the heart, can birth a person who is willing to do anything to restore their partner's sense of trust and their sense of self-worth. He/she has become ready for the emotional battle of their life; in order to recapture the former loving spirit of their victim's damaged source of power. Not for further personal gain, but for the betterment of his/her partners emotional outcome, as well as theirs. Now this puts the forgiver in the perfect position to prepare for their deep seeded need for revenge. The chance to return the unfortunate favor of betrayal has arrived with a big red bow on it! At this point, the forgiven has become vulnerable and desperate for emotional absolution, and the forgiver is filled with so much resentment and retaliatory need

for revenge, that the relationship has become sensitively powerless. As a result, both party's stimulus is now generating from a place of shame and blind despair. Rather than following through with the act of desertion, once the perpetrator is caught, pretentious guilt and shame sets in, thereby initiating the follow-through of forced penance. Where does this leave your power you ask? It is left in the bottomless pit within the bowels of forgiveness.

In conclusion, even though, there are hundreds of arguments out here to substantiate forgiveness as a path to personal growth and the removal of resentment and a damaged self-esteem, I believe that my hypothesis and both authors plot structures, along with the high percentages of suicides/deaths in the name of unrequited love, nervous breakdowns and the trail of misguided forgiving bleeding hearts, all constitute a legitimate basis for the dismissal of forgiveness, in the emotional transaction of betrayal. Furthermore, if most of society wants to believe that forgiveness brings more than just a reversal of fortune, then so be it. But, I highly advise to examine the most in-depth aspects of forgiveness, before attempting it and without losing yourself in the process. \*

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Artwork by *Elvis Ayala*

# Surprise of Love

By Sumaiya Sarwar

A Rose.

What's so sweet about that?

The smell?

The color?

Or just the thought of it?

Thoughts-

Memories-

Colors-

Smiles-

So vibrant!

Like the rays of the morning sun,

So gentle...yet so warm on the skin;

Like a touch of love.

We have all felt it

Once or more.

The sweet kisses-

The long stares full of care-

The unexpected hugs,

When we don't even have to ask for it!

Because the heart just knows...

That's the silliness.

That's the butterflies in the stomach.

When it's true-

The heart just knows,

# Leaving

*By Sumaiya Sarwar*

I woke up by the banging noise coming from the front door. It startled me so much that it took a couple of seconds for me to compose myself. I realized where I was, what I was doing and slowly I looked at the clock on the wall. The time was two thirty in the morning. I turned to look at the other side of the bed and he wasn't lying there. That was just a usual night like many others. I was surprised that I actually was able to fall asleep because I was getting used to all those sleepless nights. I used to sit by the door and wait for him to get home. If I didn't take care of him then nobody else would. So, I got out of the bed to open the door and let him in.

As soon as he walked into the room, I smelled the alcohol. It smelled like he was soaked into it. It nauseated me, but I should be used to this already. I knew the drill. I knew what was coming up next. He would try to explain and I would get mad at him. We would have a fight, and I would keep trying to convince him that he needed to change. That was the whole routine. Every day, every week, every month of the last ten years of my life was a repetition of the same game. We played the blame game. We cursed at each other, we hit each

we fought, we argued like dogs and at the end we always made up and hoped that tomorrow would be better.

"Babe, come gimme a kiss..." That's what he said to me. *A kiss from me for this drunken man? No way!* That is what I thought but I have learned to keep my cool lately. I tried to take off his shoes and get him into his sleeping clothes. "You don't love me anymore..." his voice trailed off as he said that to me. I still didn't respond. All I had to do was make him take a cold shower, then put him to sleep. All of that would have been much easier if he cooperated with me.

I could hear the sound of water falling on his frail body from the bed. I kept picturing him in my mind while my eyes were closed. All the struggle and drinking too much had put us through hell. He lost so much weight; I could barely recognize the man I fell in love with way back when I was in high school. "Yo ma, I am hungry bring me some food" he calls out after the shower.

"We ain't got no food in the house" I replied.

"Whatchu mean there ain't no food?" he yelled out.

I didn't know what to tell him but how was I supposed to maintain this household and put food on the table when none of us were working...I wished that I could tell him that. Only if I had the courage to...I had been beat and hurt way too many times that even hearing the rain drop fall on our roof top scared me. I wasn't afraid of the physical pain. I was afraid of how emotionally broken I would feel when he would pull me by my hair and slam me into the brick wall. Millions of times I had prayed that God would change my heart into a stone, so that I won't feel anything. My prayers weren't answered yet.

I laid on the bed and tried to ignore all the voices in my head, but I couldn't ignore his angry voice in the kitchen. At that point he started banging the dishes and making a big fuss about everything. I couldn't help but wonder where I went wrong to end up with a life like this. Maybe it was because I did something wrong. Maybe it was because someone wished the worst for me, but what did I know? I never meant anything bad for anyone. I wished that I could go back in time and have a chance to do things differently, but I knew that it wasn't possible. If only I knew that he would change to be so different than what he showed me. He was such a caring and genuine person when we met. We used to take long walks by the river, we used to lie in each other's arms and look at the stars, and we spent endless nights talking about the bright future we would have together. Now, those nights were replaced by sleepless nightmares. I wished that somehow I could bring back the magic we once felt in our lives. My parents always told me that he was no good, but I never listened. I knew that his family had a bad reputation with drugs, theft, local gangs and that they were constantly in trouble, but he was nothing like them He was mine, only I knew him like no one else. I could see the sparks in his deep brown eyes and those sparks would bring hopes to my little it'sy bitsy heart. I knew my man, or at least I thought so. We were supposed to go off to college together, open our own business and travel the world, but when we got married all the financial debts came out into the picture. That is when the struggle began, but I didn't care. I fought for this man, I left my dream of being a doctor for this man, I changed my religion to marry him, I even left my family so that we could be together...and I thought that he would

do the same for me. I was wrong. My perception was completely off about him. He wasn't the loving and caring soul mate I pictured him to be. He wasn't going to protect me...he was the one who would hurt me and break me down with everything thing possible. and I didn't tell anyone for so long. I was too shamed, too broken, and too exhausted to realize that I had lost. All my dreams were just illusions. I really hated to admit it. It felt like someone stabbed me right into my beating heart with a sharp knife, not the dull ones...but the ones with shiny edges.

All of a sudden I felt something hard hit me in my head. I didn't feel any pain. I tried to get up and run out of the room but it was too late. I could see his face so close to mine. It felt like any sense of human feelings was gone from his being. He seemed like a furious predator to me and he had that smirk on his face, the one he would always have when he was ready to beat me up till I would pass out. "Please...please...don't, I'm sorry, Ima go and find something for you to eat," I said with fear in my voice. He didn't seem to care.

"You wanna play games, huh? Ima show you a game, it's called 'Ima teach you a lesson.'" When I'm done withchu, you gonna be lucky to even remember your name," he said as he hissed like a snake. By then I knew that it was going to be a long night. I could try to stop him, but I knew that it would just get him angrier and he would keep hitting me harder. I have learned by now that if I just stayed quiet and just took the beating then he would stop sooner or later.

He picked up anything he could find on his way. It was like a tornado in that room. Everything was thrown towards me...glasses, plates, pots, pans, water bottles, the small bottle of perfume my friend Jena gave me for my birthday two years ago, I could tell just by the smell...even though it was mixed with my tears..my blood... and his sweat. He took off his belt and started hitting me so hard. I knew that I would be filled with bruises the next day, and how was I supposed to go and look for a job like that? I couldn't tell him anything like that because that would probably seem like a complaint. For a second he stopped. I thought that he was done with this for the night but he started screaming at me, "You think you are too good for me? You think I'm a loser just coz I don't have a job? You stupid bitch! I'm my own

man, I do whatever I want and you are MINE. You ain't going nowhere! Talking about leaving me, shit...nobody leave ME. You heard? NOBODY leaves ME!"

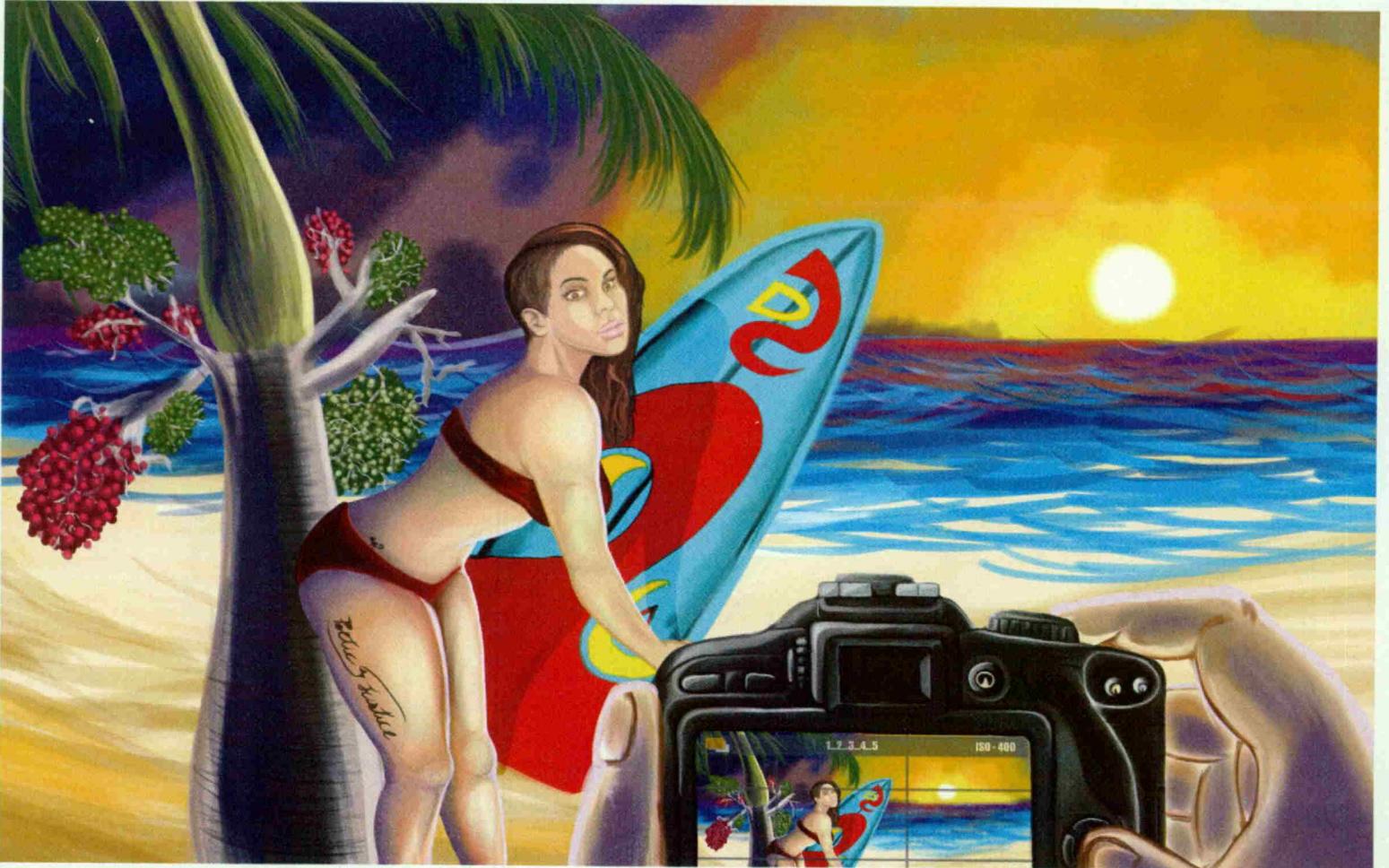
I remembered that yesterday when we argued I told him that I was tired of this and I wanted to leave. I wanted to go far away. I wanted to be free and fly like those birds that sit on the branches of the mango tree in the yard. They seemed so happy. They fly, they sing, they dance into the ray of sun. I wouldn't want anything more than to be free but the thought was short lived.

"Everyone loves you, huh? You know why? Coz you are a whore, that's why! You think you are too pretty for me? Watch what happens when your pretty little face is gone. Then you won't have nobody but me bitch!" He called out. I felt like a loaf of meat, like property; like I was nothing more than a prisoner trapped to obey him for life. Otherwise, why would I have opened my legs every night to this man? But, deep inside my heart I knew that I had reached my breaking point. I was done; I wished that he would hit me harder and end it all. It was better to be dead than to live like this. I guess he knew what I really wanted.

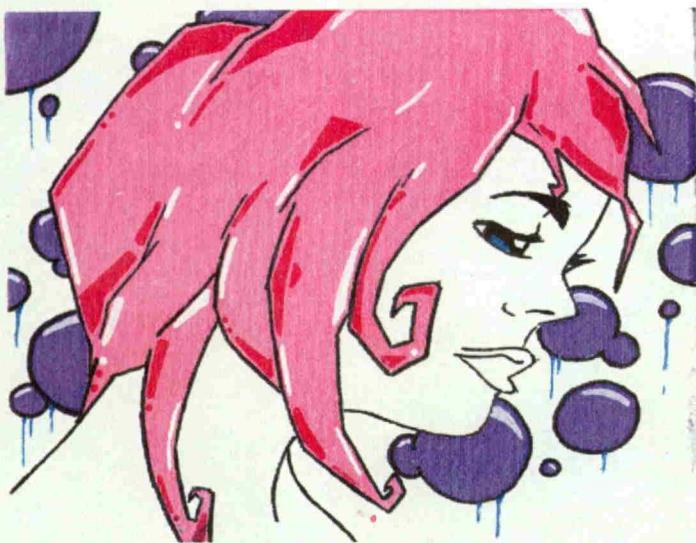
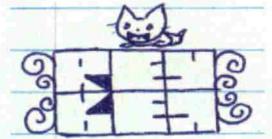
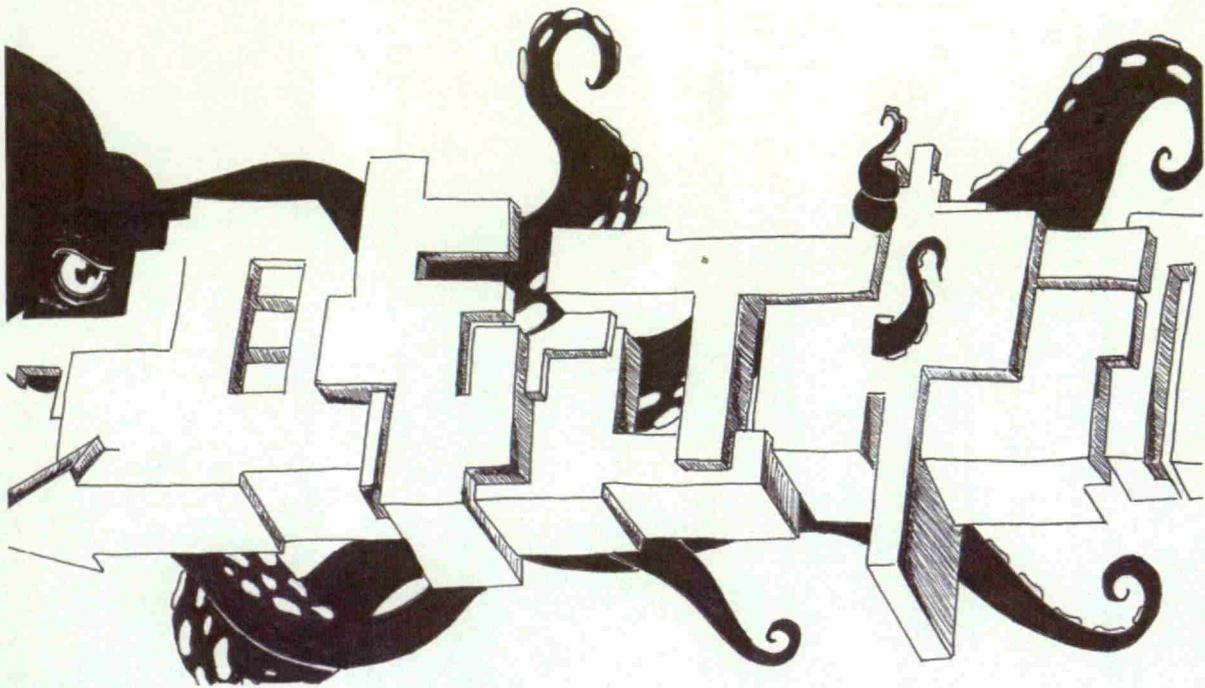
He flung open the broken down fan we had in the room, the little standing one's. All of

a sudden, all the fear I had in my mind started to go away because I felt like I knew what was coming next. I saw the blades of the fan coming closer and closer to my face, my eyes, my mouth...I closed my eyes gently and hoped to be gone in peace. Blood was gushing through every parts of my body but I still didn't feel any pain. I knew that I was ready to be free. I opened my eyes one last time to look out the window and saw the rays of the rising sun. It was the last day I lived. It was the day I took my last breath and I was finally able to leave. No, I couldn't leave him in this life but I left him. You see mama, I finally listened to you because I have been your little precious doll all these years. Even though I wasn't there every Christmas to put the angel above our Christmas tree, I wasn't part of our traditional thanks giving dinner, I wasn't there to be your best friend, I wasn't there to be your crying shoulder when daddy passed away, and I didn't become the successful doctor you wanted me to be, but your words had always been within me. It burned the fire of passion in me even so dimply at times, and brought me hope that someday I would make you proud. I hope that you are proud of me now because I am happy...laying under these carnations and the shadows of the trees...I am finally free. \*

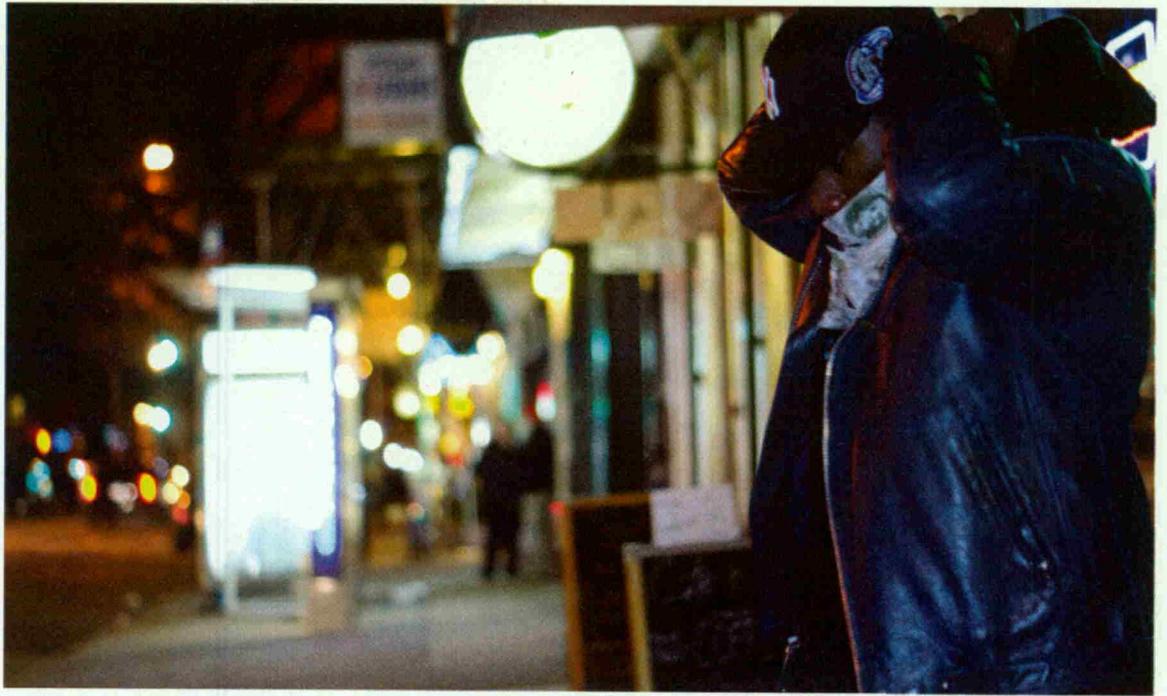




Artwork by *Elvis Ayala*



Artwork by *Rey Harris*



Photography by *Rey Harris*



OH MY DEAR, I'M SO LOST! I THINK ALL OF THAT SUGAR CRUSH IS MAKING ME HALLUCINATE!

**City Hall**  
Subway **R W**

**Bklyn Bridge–City Hall**  
Subway **J M Z 4 5 6**

**NYC Transit Bus**  
4,5,6 only

**M1** Fifth/Madison Aves  
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**M15** First/Second Aves  
**M22** Madison St  
**M103** Third/Lexington Aves  
**B51** Downtown Brooklyn

**Broadway–Nassau**  
**Fulton Street**  
Subway **A C**

**NYC Transit B**  
M1 Fifth/Madis.  
M6 Broadway/Si  
M15 First/Second.

**St. George**

**Staten Island Railway**  
**NYC Transit Bus**  
S40/90 Howard Hook via Rich.  
S42  
S44  
S46  
S49



# Zephyr

By Victor Vauban Junior

Yet again, I find myself standing at the window of the now ghost castle, lonely and gazing at the horizon expecting your return. Thoughts have become a constellation of uncertainties. I hardly dare to think about the new you; I know that in doing so, I am jeopardizing all the good memories and the safety of our eternal flame of love --- The flame we promised to keep alive. The waves are still hitting the shore incessantly; dry leaves are falling and are still being moved by the quiet dancing wind which hits my face like the sweetness of your kisses. The lilacs around the house are growing closer, it gives me heart palpitations. The castle still stands. ***I will always be yours, my first and eternal love. You will always be mine, unconditionally. In sickness and in health, till death do us part.*** I embrace myself with the shawl, feeling your presence. Your smile, the simple touch of your hands or your sweet embrace always made me feel loved and like luckiest amongst women. I have you. I will forever be your Hera my Zeus, your Alcmene my Amphitryon, your Cleopatra my Anthony. Vivid sentiments winning me over, regaining and resuscitating my weary heart, measuring my life in moments – There will be no more need to wind the watch up, measuring the life in moments.

# My Intuition

By Sumaiya Sarwar

Intuition;  
A woman's intuition:  
The heart,  
The mind,  
Push it all away-  
And just follow the gut feeling -  
That's what they tell me.  
Yes, I am a woman.  
I can feel.  
I can tell.  
I have intuition-  
The voice whispering in my head,  
The one that keeps on singing...  
It keeps on crying such a mourning  
melody,  
It's so fragile- just like me  
But I feel dead trapped within this  
meaningless shadow of life;  
I wish my heart was a hallow space...  
Because I don't ever listen.  
I don't care.  
I jump right in.  
Every time -  
Every moment -  
Every single day of my life -  
I wear my dreadful heart on my sleeve.  
They know.  
That's why they steal it away.  
I don't know why, but I let them -  
I let them into my heart.  
I share my stories,  
My shame...my glories,  
All-  
I let it all out:  
Just to walk down the same lane of  
mistakes all over again;  
Same pain.  
Same hurt.  
I keep on bleeding.  
I keep on drowning deep within the

the ocean...  
I wish to be saved, but no -  
As I kneel down,  
Broken - beaten -  
Shattered like million pieces of a beautiful  
mirror -  
I can't see myself anymore.  
I am lost.  
I am reflection-less  
I become invisible within the pressure  
tightly pressed onto me.  
It's swallowing me...  
It's taking me away...  
I don't even recognize myself,  
And it's all because I didn't listen.  
I didn't care.

My intuition -  
She guides me  
She is the mother in my life  
She wants to keep me sane  
But she fails.  
Because I have failed her.  
Am I really a woman?  
Am I anything at all?  
I wonder;  
I would ask my intuition -  
But she is nowhere to be found...  
She is lost and gone just like me.  
So, I am here searching -  
For me and for my intuition.

# A Season of Mercy

## (Intro)

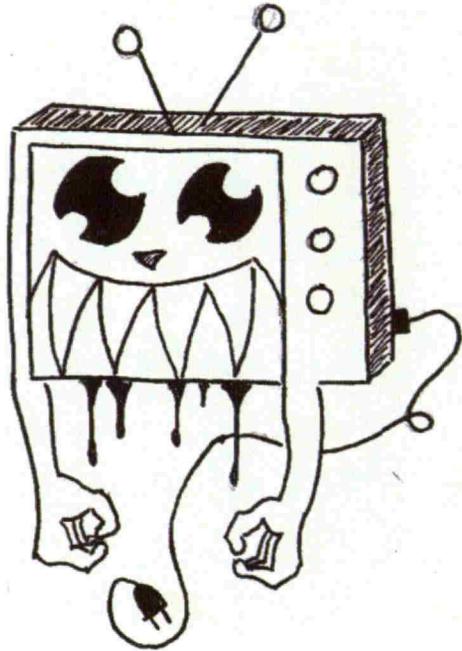
*By Alexis Rodriguez*

“TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY.  
A SHEER LINE ALWAYS TOLD IN REMEMBRANCE  
OF THE HOLIDAYS.  
WHY DO MOST SEE THE HOLIDAYS AS A JOYOUS  
OCCASION?  
IT’S NOTHING MORE THAN A DAY TO CELEBRATE  
UTMOST GREED.  
A DAY WHEN THOSE WHOM ARE WEALTHY  
BECOME SPOILED BEYOND THEIR WILDEST  
DREAMS.  
I NEVER HAD MUCH CARE FOR CHRISTMAS, OR  
ANY OTHER HOLIDAY.  
THERE WAS NOTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TOO,  
NOR TO CELEBRATE WITHIN THIS SORROWFUL  
THING I HAD ONCE CALLED A LIFE.  
THEN AGAIN THOSE WITH LIVES, ALWAYS HAD  
SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE. I FOR ONE DID NOT.  
WHEN I WAS A CHILD I NEVER THOUGHT MUCH  
OF IT, UNTIL SOMETHING OR SOMEONE MADE  
MY FEELINGS CHANGE. AFTER THAT DAY, I NEVER  
THOUGHT THE SAME WAY AGAIN.”

--MARY WRITHE, 1887

# Editor's Corner

DO YOURSELF A FAVOR  
AND  
KILL YOUR TELEVISION!



# Couleur

By Angela Hong

Oh darling, didn't you know?  
You had me at "who cares."  
Rough skin of fingertips  
Trace dark ink and blossoms.  
Speed racer, but swerving was so fun;  
Wasn't it?

Wasn't it so fun, that you  
Never looked back, or even checked out  
Blind spots; slow down, speed racer!  
Your blue eyes, and those  
Golden balls. You probably have  
Forgotten already; The time that we  
Didn't watch that movie. Ice cream?

(Yes, please.)

You stole the breath right out of me  
My knight, my champion Of beer pong and running away.  
Your aqua eyes, and your  
Old, old car; We'd hear it before we  
Owned the nights; You and I  
Loved the smell of pho; diet Coke and apple butter.  
Played them all; hide-and-seek and  
Mario Kart.

Cigarettes and Ballatore (pink) and hiding away from  
Everyone; our secret, "Shh!"

Oh honey, didn't you know?

It was when you jumped right through  
The door, glow-sticks swinging; Positively magical.  
Les piercings; your hair all green and gold.  
Beautiful angel, please don't go; You're chasing that snow.  
And when she walked by In that bikini, no, not even that,  
Those eyes would always follow.

Later, it was so much later  
when you would find me; the driveway. Sit with me in the  
dark and say "Hi, let's talk about forever."

# You

By Angela Hong

*You broke with the morning  
quiet as you wished we were,  
With your face always so  
Still, looking away from me and  
It was fantastic, because you were  
Always so cool, like in that  
Book and movie, and poem  
I wrote about you on  
That one day after you left,  
MIA, with your phone switched to  
Off, and your shoes no longer  
By the doorway, so  
I listened to nothing, but I  
Feared everything, mostly the worst,  
And my car spent hours  
Trying to find you, and when I,  
I mean, it, found you  
Huddled in the glow  
Of the streetlamp, as if it was  
A valuable source of heat,  
Your lifeline,  
I couldn't speak, and still remember  
when I had no words  
And you had no words, so you just  
Got into my car, and we  
Drove off in silence, but  
It was the happiest, the best  
Time was inconsequential, and  
I realize now, I didn't save you  
You were already  
Broke.*



# The Plunge

*I made the plunge five feet ago...*

*I made the plunge, with neither a run nor leap, but with a single step. So why did I close my eyes? I admired the view for one final moment before taking the last step I'd ever take. It wasn't long before that admiration turned to indifference as I looked over at them; the tiny blips we call people and houses and trees. From up here they all looked the same; so small, just as I am to them looking up. Who was I kidding; I was small to them even at eye level. Depth had nothing to do with my stature or place in this harsh world. Maybe now in this moment, I'll stand out, and things will be different. They won't care or miss me, and now with this step they can't miss me.*

*I placed my right foot out of the door and felt the pressure of the air rise from below me pushing upward. I tilted my body towards the door and I let the gravity of it all take me away. I did not spread my arms but instead pointed myself at the ground like a bullet, I didn't want any contradictions, any arguments, or anything holding me back.*

*I was ready to say goodbye to everything, and I would do so gracefully without a second thought. I left regret in the plane, and though I could feel it at my leg, chasing after me still even after I had taken the step that sealed my fate.*

*"He" always said I was as graceful as a swan, so for him I would leave this world beautifully, that's how I wanted to go...*

**By Solomon Henderson**

*My mind was clear, and my resolve was strong and unchanged. Don't try and stop me now.*

*Despite the circumstances the air feels... good. It flows along my body and I give into it, spreading my arms as far as I possibly can. I'm flying again!*

*I made it to my sixth jump! No one to share this victory with. If I had to choose someone I'd have wished to share this feeling with "him"...*

*I remember the first time I asked him to come with me.*

*It was during one of our wonderful but short conversations at our favorite cafe; Mrs. Blythe When we first met it was not easy to connect with him, I approached him in his usual comfort zone, sitting alone in that corner he nested. I was the terribly loud one, with untamed sass, who loved surrounding myself with any and everyone. His exterior was my interior, and because of that I wished he would be as drawn to me as I was to him. He was as stubborn as I, and I would no longer be satisfied with a few glances here and there, so I yelled across the room, "hey you with the awkward stare!" An odd tactic but one I would not soon regret.*

*Months in, seasons passed and I often enjoyed teasing him about his adventurous inner self being smothered behind those thick glasses he fixed every five minutes, I threw out the idea of flying together, said it feels good to fall. The rush is how you truly feel alive, it's exhilarating. He used that*

form of mystic dance. A hypnotic dance that he had honed to perfection, and then he did what he did best, He made me smile. "I'll give it a try" he said, "what's the worst that could happen, a broken shoot, a scrambled brain?" Not funny I replied. He promised to give it a try someday with a bright smile, and I couldn't help but smile back. Though his reluctance was evident the selfish side of me held him to his word. Like some romantic fantasy, I wanted it to be.

Fifteen hundred feet...

I did not want to remember that smile. I wished only to forget it along with everyone else as I looked down at them; all those insignificant pixelated smears we call people.

Fuck'em all! Fuck their condescending tones and their assumptions.

Fuck their tainted hearts, and closed minds

Fuck their Sophist ideals of love, and twisted ideas of parenting.

Fuck their trying to make me something I wasn't.

Fuck their "you can be cured's."

Fuck their "queer" their "faggot" And their "dick carpenter."

No... actually I thank them for the last one... because while patching myself up in my apartment, and smoking a joint to ease the pain I needed a good laugh helped ease the mind and body.

For nothing was more interesting than imagining such an asinine occupation while being high enough to float on clouds. Had I built such a structure I could probably win the grant of some young up-and-comer by slapping a sticker on it and passing it as "contemporary art."

Yet...when the fingers were pointed and the names were called, I found myself alone. The aggressors left my body broken and beaten, and the rest looked away.

They couldn't see me! They were all guilty, even the ones too weak to watch! Worst of all...even "him", he was no angel as I had pictured him, he was just as guilty.

Was our love unjust, unreal, sacrilegious? When the chance came for us to stand against the world together I was alone, and I paid the price for daring to change it.

When I was down on the ground looking up into his eyes he looked away. It was as blow dealt harder than any fist. The mere gesture had broken me, and in the moment I shouldered his burden and mine.

He betrayed me, and even so... I still wished he could have experienced this with me once. I would have told him again how much it meant to me; that he be here by my side. This is my time;, my life. Here and now I choose to end it as I always have been, loud and obnoxious. I can't help but laugh. So then why in the pit of my gut do I feel like I want to scream...

Three thousand feet...

He was right I was always the dramatic one, but maybe the problem was him, he never did emote very much, it annoyed me at times.

I tried to make the most of what was left of my life before the pain was gone forever. Oddly it my best memories were of you. I try to forget everything and just feel the wind; the only one there for me now, the only one that supports me now. Though cold it listens, and complies with a soft embrace. Thats why I just want to fall.

The houses begin to take shapes, and the people bellow looked like people again.

They were now more distinguishable.

It then hits me faster than the ground how very real this was... Despite my resolve and the speed at which I had fallen, regret had finally caught up, and clenched my throat with such an overwhelming grip. I couldn't breathe. I feel the tears forcing their way through, but the wind holds them back.

I begin to fill my mind with foolish thoughts of hope.

I think that maybe what's broken could've been mended... someday.

Maybe my family will love me again...someday.

Maybe "he" would look beyond those glasses and stand with me...someday.

I think about them all at once as the tears flow heavier than before;

The words I never said...

The people who never heard them...

How I'll never make the plunge again...

In an effort to escape these thoughts I aim myself towards the ground; like an arrow.

The speed separates me from my despair. It's all still kind of exhilarating.

They looked up at me with shock and fear in their faces as they pointed their fingers upward. They weren't blips anymore, they were people pointing a very different kinds of finger than the ones I was accustomed to. This is what I hoped for isn't it?

They could finally see me, as I thought they couldn't turn their heads anymore...but don't look at me with those fearful eyes...

Then the unthinkable happens. From the crowd I see "him" looking up at me.

Don't look at me with those sad eyes! They make me feel embarrassed and afraid.

He came to me when I was falling. "He" who turned away when those fingers became traumatic closed fists, snuffing my face out like I was some sort of unclean smear.

Yet the fact that he was there now... I had forgiven him.

I just wanted to keep crying my tears that the heavy wind was blowing away so coldly.

The swirl of emotions I had gotten from this experience brought clarity, and peace,but... the thought of never doing it again...

I'll never laugh, never dance, never smile...

That's when I realized too late; how much want to keep flying.



How much I want to live!

Thirty five hundred feet...

I want to do this again with him, I want to take the plunge  
I wanted to live to find out whether or not he really loved me.  
I wanted to live to scream at my good for nothing parents.  
It was too late to pull the chutes, too late to turn back. This time  
I did not jump I plunged, and it could not be stopped. There  
were no do-overs.

I pull the damed shoot anyway... because I want to live.  
Now for the first time my troubles seemed small, because he  
came to me when I needed him.

Suddenly the winds embrace wasn't good enough. I needed  
warmth and weight.

I needed him... I need you...Rufus.

When I first made the plunge I had nothing to lose, I got closer  
to the world, and it's people grew larger, in that instant we had  
all become the same size. My problems were left behind, but at  
what cost?

I made the plunge into my soul and I found the bottom wasn't  
as hollow as I thought.

Four thousand feet... I kissed the Earth that gave birth to the  
love, and hate I had known all my life. I was wrong, though it  
hurt me before, its touch was neither cold nor hard... It was  
soft and warm. \*

*- For my friend, and anyone else who wakes up every morning  
and courageously makes the choice to be themselves.*

# CHAMPION MEMOIRS

*By Jed-Rene Tuliao*

All I remember is that it started with a one, two and it ended with a bang.

Drop dead silence echoes across the room. Sounds...ringing sounds. The smell of burnt leather and blood fills my nose with a taste of iron victory. My muscles tense up as beads of sweat roll off my shoulders. My right arm, stiff, knees are wobbly. Fists tighter than the Gordian knot, clenched onto what little oxygen I had left. Wrists are shot, hanging on by the skin and cloth wraps. Grounded, I melt towards the canvas, fists in the air victoriously clawing for a breath. Someone cut me loose from these ropes. It was all a blur, hazy, glossy-eyed. I feel like millions of metal balls are bouncing all over, rattling inside my head. I don't remember a thing. All I remember is a ding, staring up at the heavenly lights as a flooded roar fills my ears, drowning out the white noise. I don't remember a thing, but my body does. My bruised ribs memorized each hook. My melon sized eye felt out every jab. My chest fully committed to that piercing kick. My hinged jaw kissing every single one of his up-percuts. My body remembers...It remembers pulling back the trigger, it remembers letting it go. It remembers each crackle in the bone, each tear in the muscle. Shotgun pellet bruised spots riddle up and down my arms and chest, tattooed memories on my face reminding me that I should've kept those hands up. I should've rolled with each swing, kept my shoulders tight every time I shot the pistol, and pivoted my foot and hips with each swing of my cannon. It remembers the face, the expression of a deer caught in headlights, its head cocking back lifelessly onto the floor. The blood painting on the mat, a canvas in a steel cage full of animals. I carry a visceral paint brush colored red. I strike a crooked Mona Lisa smile as I grit my bloody teeth staring down the body of a 6 foot 4 giant. I felt like I just painted the sixteenth chapel all over this ring. It was telling a story of David and Goliath through our bruised knuckles and battered faces. This is what happens when you put animals in a cage, they get violent, their true colors turn red, black and blue come out. Fading in and out of consciousness I grasp tightly onto the ropes, my corner man comes and helps me up, carrying me on his shoulder back home, to my corner. Someone pours cold water over my head, a sudden euphoric high hits me like a joint of Mary Jane, it feels like a damn baptism. My corner man pulls the gloves off of my shaking hands. They feel like I got struck by lightning and grabbed the bolt by its tail mastering it and honing it into precise sharp strikes and movements. The shock of it all I look up and see my opponent sitting up on the mat just as dazed as I am, but he doesn't look like raggedy Ann doll or a used up punching bag like myself, lucky bastard who knew he couldn't take a counter to a glass jaw. I force myself up, I penguin my way over to him ever so slowly. I stare down at him; he stares back daringly ready for another round. I extend my hand and smile, He smiles back and grabs mine, pulling him up, almost falling over myself. He says to me, "Great match" as he raises my fist in the air, I let out a roar loud enough to hear outside the stadium.

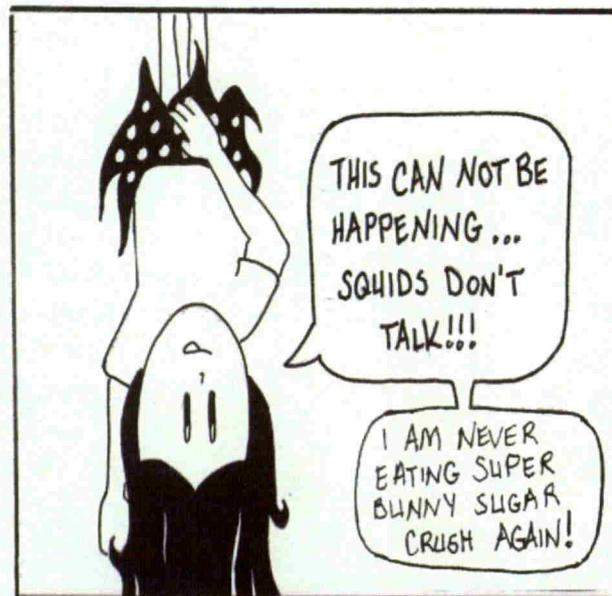
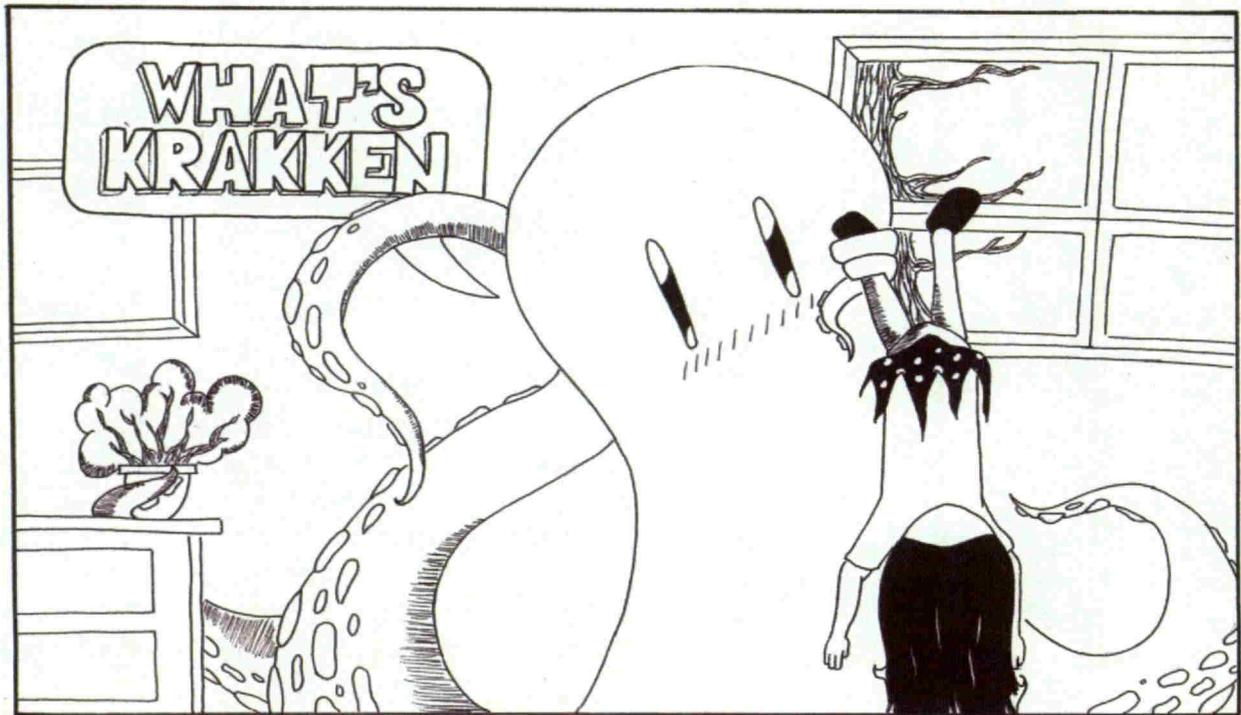
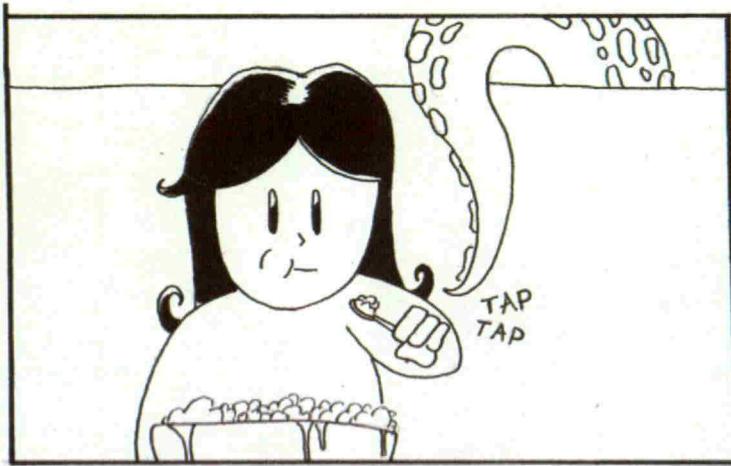
I am a warrior; I am a gladiator of the ring.

# The Burning of a Rebelious Generation

By *Jed-Rene Tuliao*

Murder yourself,  
Murder your health,  
Murder your liver,  
Because it ain't going to distill,  
The liquor that kills,  
Kills your lungs,  
As it puts guns, down your throat,  
As you swallow the smoke,  
Down your lungs, cigarette caskets,  
Going under in a basket,  
Ashtray to ashes,  
Dust to dust,  
Hold her,  
Closer with protection,  
Mention, you boday count history,  
Misery, Lies in a lover's mystery,  
Feels to me,  
A generation of nobodies,  
Bodies in bags,  
To riches,  
Living in ditches,  
Dying for the itches,  
Snitches with that crooked shaped mug,  
Sells drugs, cocaine, meth,  
All different forms of death,  
What's left?  
Need a life vest, for this test,  
Testament of our cause,  
Round of applause,  
But, pause for a moment of silence,  
To the end of the violence,  
End of an era,  
Mirror, mirror,  
On the walls,  
Where innocence falls,

Before your eyes,  
Days gone by, more goodbyes,  
Mirror, mirror your face,  
Wrinkled and old,  
Cracks in the bone, slower pace,  
Your face, trace the lines,  
Towards cultural suicide,  
Sides take, Lines drawn, red dawn,  
We just dropped another bomb,  
Another con, Artist out for our money,  
Funny, how it all seems,  
From murals to miracles,  
I have a dream, follow the king,  
Towards peace, like a new lease on life, Like Biggie  
It was all a dream,  
Word up magazine, clips empty out in the streets,  
Beats life out in the sand,  
A war over the holy land,  
War on terror,  
War on drugs,  
Lost a leg, lost an arm and all I got was this stupid  
mug,  
Shot in the system,  
As victims, plead the fifth,  
Another myth of about another child missing,  
Just listen and watch,  
Marley and Pac,  
2 deaths, one love, one change,  
The whole damn block is a shooting range,  
Of needles up your own arms or from your trigger  
hands,  
Man, where the good kids at?  
Oh a fatherless child, a mother on crack,  
Attack on government,  
Attack on news,  
Attack on education,  
The rise of the empire of inflation,  
Patient, we are when the cost of living became so  
high on mary jane,  
Anything to take away the pain,  
Indulge yourself with distractions,  
Just take action,  
But listen, I got hope for this generation,  
Different place, same name, new nation.



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# Famous Last Words

By Rey Harris

This magazine is like something of an urban legend around BMCC. A lot like Sasquatch, aliens, God and the Loch Ness monster the existence of 'the Guild' is something that is always speculated upon but rarely ever proven. Throughout my four semesters here I have always heard rumors of an annual literary magazine released by a Writer's Guild, but finding a copy was about as futile as hunting for unicorns or saying 'Candyman' five times in front of a mirror in a dark bathroom. Hopefully, with the issue you hold in your hand, all that will change.

This particular edition of the Guild is the first to come out in over two years and only the third issue ever released. So this magazine is sort of like a toddler - yes, it has taken its first steps and can even walk on its own a bit, but it's far from ready to run a 50 meter dash or step into the ring with Mike Tyson. But I think I can speak for the other editors when I say we strived to bring something new, original and very creatively and visually stimulating to the table. This issue is far from perfect, and anyone with an interest in graphic design or a keen attention to detail could point out its flaws. But I believe it is those flaws that give this magazine its character. In doing so, we have definitely achieved what we set out to do.

Laying out these pages was.... hell to say the least, but as we near the end I can also say it has been quite the learning experience. I am forever indebted to **Solomon Henderson**, whose assistance was paramount to completing the magazine, and **Professor Julie Cassidy**, whose guidance and wisdom has kept this magazine from looking like a third grader's art class project.

But most of all I want to thank everyone who submitted and anyone who takes the time to read the magazine. BMCC has been more than willing to support student projects and activities such as this, but in order for these to continue we need support from students like YOU.

So for these last few pages I'm going to rant and rave about things like my experiences as a member of the Writer's Guild, the process of making this magazine and the artwork and photos I personally put in. If I happen to venture of topic, which I always have a tendency to do, I apologize.



The **Writer's Guild** is a club for anyone creative or seeking inspiration to be creative. You don't have to be an English or Art related major to join. You just have to have a passion for the written word in any of its infinite forms. We have amazing guest speakers who have given us first-hand accounts of what it is like to have a career in a creative field.

This spring semester was my first time ever joining a club and I had no idea what to expect. My biggest intention was to be a big part in making this magazine happen. As a Writing & Literature major and an aspiring fiction writer, the opportunity to be published in any capacity is always a valued one. The first thing jobs within my field of interest ask is for samples of your work or notable publications you've been in. So I became obsessed with making this project my bitch. But producing a 50 page magazine alongside a small staff with very limited submissions turned into a grueling task. Any BMCC student can probably relate to how quickly semesters come and go like seasons. Before I knew it, Spring semester was coming to its last two weeks and deadlines were made in order to release it before Spring ended. So here we are at the end and as I finish these last few pages, I can't help but look forward in anticipation of having this finished and released. And even though I didn't have all the time I needed to apply all the epic ideas I had to make this magazine really amazing, I'm still pretty satisfied with the end result. Above all, I hope it sets a new precedent for future editions of 'the Guild'. This should demonstrate the amazing things a collective of creative students can accomplish if their time and energy is put into it. It should also stand as a platform for ANY student's voice to be heard.



When I was young(er) I used to ask a lot of questions - Where did we all come from? Why are we here? Is God real? Can I be a power ranger? As I grew older, I never quite grew out of that, and I began to grow concious of the fact that most people do. Eventually we all sort of settle with 'the way things are' and seeking knowledge and explanations to life's mysteries take a back seat to handling life's immediate responsibilities. Our parents and the education system do the same by feeding us an interpretation of 'the way it is' and promoting the ideas that if you follow everyone else, single file, you too can be successful. But I still have that inquisitive mentality of a young reyrey and I am still always asking questions - If God said 'love thy neighbor' how come we are so mean to gay people? Sir, can you please pull up your pants? (Sagging went out with the '90s) DOES MARCELLUS WALLUS LOOK LIKE A BITCH?!

My point is that we, as students, are in our prime. Keeping in mind that the average age of BMCC's students is 23, the human brain isn't fully developed until around age 25. So now is the best time for us all to try like hell to make sense of the world around us. Let's constantly question the world around us, the status quo, what we are being taught and why the establishment feels we should know it. Questions bring answers,

answers bring knowledge, and knowledge is power. If you study some of the information about our school as provided to us upon completion of your FASFA form, BMCC's graduation rate is only 15%.... okay, sit and let that marinate for a moment... According to bigfuture.collegeboard.org the average number of students seeking undergraduate degrees at BMCC per year is 24,186. Take that number, multiply it by 0.15 and you get the average amount of students that graduate each year - 3,627.

BMCC has so much to offer its students. Their slogan, "Start here, go anywhere" is not at all a joke. It is actually the epitome of everything this school represents. We need to take full advantage of everything this school has to offer in the pursuit of our future and career related goals. Sometimes you have to search high and low to find exactly what you need, but I can almost guarantee that it is there somewhere. We also need to take control of school events, activities and projects. It's up to us to make sure that people are aware and take part. Every bit of college life should be a learning experience.

**The best part about being in the club** was our field trip to Beacon, New York. I had never heard of this town before but the experience was amazing. It's a small community located upstate. Immediately upon arriving at the train station, on a gorgeous spring day, you get a sense of what sort of town this is - it seems to be a tight knit community that promotes artistic and creative endeavours. Many walls are adorned in artwork and the shops that make up the central part of town are all locally owned. It was the first time I had ever been to a place that didn't have a church or a McDonalds on every other corner. There weren't many streetlights and cars stopped to allow pedestrians to pass without yelling obscenities out the window as we would experience here in the city. Although our group felt a bit like outsiders, many people still stopped to greet us with a warm smile. As someone who enjoys traveling through the states a lot, this area was very reminiscent of places like Yellow Springs, Ohio and certain parts of Portland and Seattle (but without all the rain).

Many of you are probably wondering how this was all put together. Led by our club president **Crystal Williams** along with the assistance of the lovely **Professor Laura Stapleton**, our club simply provided the school with information about the trip along with a proposed budget, and BMCC was more than happy to help fund it. Within all my four semesters as a student at BMCC I had no idea things like this were going on.

The trip has been made into a highlight of my life. We treated it as a writers retreat specifically for club members that went above the call of duty when it came to club related functions. We spent hours in a creative space called the Beahive, talking about writing as a craft, sharing ideas and current projects and participating in writing prompts. Some of us even brought guitars and we all attempted to make music together. We also took time to explore everything Beacon had to offer, only really scratching the surface, but nonetheless we found it all quite intriguing.

It's rare in life that you connect with people the way all of us club members and even our chaperones did. **Angela Hong** put it best in her notes from the editor - We all have a story to tell. I believe that in doing so, artists have to take a piece of

themselves to share with the world. It's never an easy task and, even worse, it can leave you quite vulnerable. We all shared a bit of ourselves through our work on that trip and in doing so we made connections and new friendships that can never be reproduced under any other circumstance.

I highly recommend all students to take up a club or activity of any kind at BMCC that can give you an experience like this. I promise you won't regret it.



**Many of the photos** I personally put in the magazine were taken during Occupy Wall Street's occupation of Liberty Park in 2011. It can be reasonably argued that general interest in the Occupy Movement has declined a bit within the public sphere, but to simply disregard it as unimportant is a fallacy.

Around that time, I considered myself an activist - I was constantly attending meetings and marches, reading news and current event related material religiously and trying to find a place in a movement that promoted the idea of drastic changes to the current way our social and economic system functioned. The media tends to write off the movement's followers as homeless degenerates but if you spent any time in and around Tribeca during this time, you will find that these statements were far from the truth. Regardless of whether you agree with the ideas and sentiment behind the movement, you will never fail to meet some of the most socially aware, caring and intellectual people you will ever come across in life. Again, you may disagree with what the movement does and how it does it, but it's promising to meet people passionate enough about social issues to take to the streets and demand their voices to be heard. With crooked politicians and corporations having such a choke hold on our political system, it is so easy to simply become cynical or even submissive to the system, to the point where you just let things take their course. Most of us aren't involved, nor do we possess that much passion about the things we all know are essential to maintaining a fair and equal social and political structure. If it weren't for many social movements of the past, such as the French revolution or the counter-culture of the '60s, the world as we know it today would be a very different place.

Recently, my definition of personally identifying myself as an 'activist' has been redefined. While I still think it's essential to take to the streets and demand change, I have found my artistic and creative endeavors to be just as effective. I have a tendency to write of things most people are too afraid to openly speak about. In the process I may offend, but at the end of the day at least people are discussing them. Anyone can write poems and songs about breakups or bad relationships, but to instill a sense of angst and revolution is poetry in and of itself.



**There is a line in a song** called "Light Up" by Tegan and Sara (I believe you can find it on the b-sides of their record 'Sainthood') that says, "Let them say what they will, 'cause they will anyhow". Unintentionally, she wrote the best stoner song a boy like me could ever ask for, but I wanted to end this piece with that line because it is something I have come to live by.

It is natural for us as social beings to wonder and care about what others think of us. It's the prime reason we wear the things we wear and concern ourselves with certain things. There is nothing wrong with wanting to be liked or to have your hard work appreciated. But to counter that, there are many times where that fear can take control of us. Taking into consideration 'what others might think' causes our imagination to simply run wild, and our imagination can sometimes be the worst weapon against us. Even when we have 49 people telling us how much they love and respect something we do, somehow we manage to lose focus on that and only think about that one person that goes out of their way to let us know just how much they think we suck. This is a problem.

No matter what you do or how hard you try to avoid it, haters will always exist. It is impossible to please everyone, so why bother? Start with doing things your way and take into account 'what works' later.

So I challenge you to throw away all of your concerns about what others may think. Have the courage to be you. Be true to yourself. There are so many fake people in this world that when real people rise up and demand to be heard, others will listen and follow. Do things different. Shake up the system and the status quo. Never submit to what others expect of you, especially when it's not true to what you are about. Never think that you have no more room for growth or self-improvement; these processes are never ending. Always have a lust for knowledge and never be afraid to ask questions. QUESTION EVERYTHING.

*"The first step - especially for young people with energy and drive and talent, but not money - the first step to controlling your world is to control your culture. To model and demonstrate the kind of world you demand to live in. To write the books. Make the music. Shoot the films. Paint the art."*

- Chuck Palahniuk, author of *Fight Club*

I'm Rey Harris,  
and I'm trying to control our culture. \*

# Extra Credits

Many of our submitters forgot to add short Bios along with their submissions, so unfortunately we don't have information on all of the writers and peices included in this magazine. But a few did take the time to either share a bit about themselves or their peices.

If you are considering submitting a peice for publication in the Guild, don't forget to include your bio! This is a great way for readers who become fans of your work to further connect with you, and it also opens up the possibility of networking with other creative students.

Remember to email submissions to [theguild.submissions@gmail.com](mailto:theguild.submissions@gmail.com)

- **Josue Caceres** is in his fourth semester in BMCC. He was born and raised in the Bronx and his family is from the Dominican Republic. He began writing at a young age, about 6 years old. It started in school, with assignments and projects, and it continued at home. He began taking it serious when he was in his junior year of High School, when a friend of his had a home studio. Caceres decided to begin making music, laying down words on paper and recording alongside instrumentals. He continued to make music and performed at some events and showcases. When he started college, he went through an experience where he was judged based on my appearance, which eventually made him write his first real poem titled "Insecurities" which he received high praise for. Caceres continued to write poems and was eventually chosen as a finalist in the BMCC poetry day contest (Something he never would have expected). He looks at poetry as an art and as a place where he is free from the rules and scrutiny that surrounds him. Writing, poetry, and music is something that is essential in his life and he feels like it is something that would never make him reach his highest potential because he will always be improving in it.

- **Vanity L. Jenkins** had this to say about herself - "I'm an aspiring poet, writer and MC. Originally from Maryland, I moved to New York City when I was 10 years old. NYC introduced me to the journey and discovery of myself. It took tribulations, trials and triumphs to rely on writing for therapy. I always had a passion for entertainment, music and poetry. They make me feel like I'm living and breathing to the beat and life is poetry we sometimes off beat. However if you have faith and do soul searching the flow of life like words; your passion will lead you to you to your destiny." If you would like to reach out to her and let her know how great her peice is, email her some love at: [vanityj1.vj@gmail.com](mailto:vanityj1.vj@gmail.com)

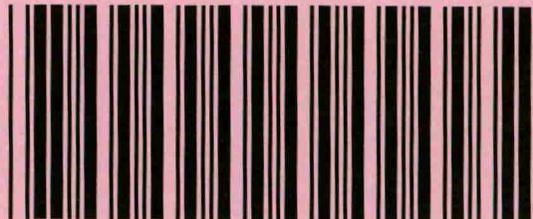
- **Enzo Scavone** is a fiction writer. He is Italian, grew up in Germany, lived in Switzerland, and came to New York in 2011. Currently, he lives in Brooklyn with his wife and in the fall of 2014 he will begin attending Hunter College to pursue a Bachelor in creative writing. You can check out his work at:  
[www.enzoscavone.com](http://www.enzoscavone.com)

- **Victor Vauban Junior** took some time to explain his peice "Zephyr": "This is about a lonely woman waiting for her long lost love (her husband - who vanished years ago after an aircraft accident). She doesn't know for sure but is terrified of the thought of him being alive and living with someone else. She contemplates suicide when the reference to the watch is made at the end."

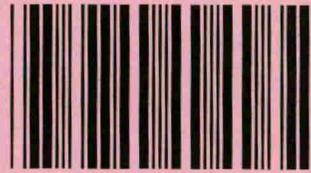
- If you loved **Jed Rene-Tulio's** peices, ou can catch some more of his work at [jed-renetuliao.blogspot.com](http://jed-renetuliao.blogspot.com)

- **Rey Harris** has a musical solo project called the Fox & the Wolf ([facebook.com/tfatwny](https://www.facebook.com/tfatwny)). To keep up on his comic project "Autumn Come Down" and his other literary works, add him on facebook ([facebook.com/reyreyallday](https://www.facebook.com/reyreyallday)) and Tumblr ([reyreyallday.tumblr.com](http://reyreyallday.tumblr.com)).





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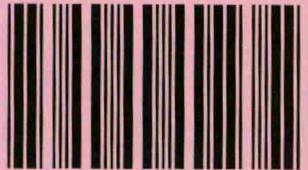
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