

# THE GUILD



SPRING 2019

# The Guild

Writers' Guild is proud to present its annual literary magazine. In this issue, we celebrate all facets of resilience in our community. We all experience hardship in different ways but how we persevere and come through resilient is what matters the most. After combing through all of the submissions and connecting with each author and artist in a unique way, I felt the need to provide a platform for peers, like myself, to display their work. As a person of color, it is especially important to have socially conscious spaces for individuals like myself to create unapologetically. I never thought I would be able to do something of this scale and volume. Being able to see everything from the production standpoint evolve into reality was exhilarating. I had no prior knowledge about how to make a magazine, which can be overwhelming. This magazine truly allowed me to exercise my creative bone. To my beloved Mahir, thank you for always pushing me to go above and beyond- motivating me to pursue everything under the sun. Also, to my mentor Robert, for being a huge influence in my life. None of this would have been possible without the tremendous help of everyone involved in the editing process. A special thanks to Woodelin Florveus, our graphic designer for being an integral part of the magazine and perfecting the Guild's vision. I would like to thank Dr. Goodison and Professor Stapleton for providing clarity whenever the team needed it the most. And lastly, I would like to thank OSA, SGA, and BMCC for supporting our endeavors.

Best,

Shaeta Hossain, Editor-In-Chief

Hey there, Jordon here! It's been a great opportunity and experience for me to work with the Writers' Guild on the magazine. All of us in the Writers' Guild worked really hard on this magazine for you. It has been really fun to work on it, strengthening friendships within the guild. We've received a lot of great submissions and I want to thank everyone for submitting your work of art to the magazine. I want to shout out to everyone who helped work on the magazine, everyone who submitted to the magazine and everyone who will be reading the magazine. Resilience was this year's theme. Resilience is something we have when dealing with our everyday lives. During everyone's journey, there will be many challenges to overcome. Challenges that can create conflict, pain and contemplation of self-doubt, making the journey more difficult. There will be times when you'll be disappointed. There will be times of anger and sadness. A time where you feel lost and alone. These experiences may cause you grief, but they are chances for you to learn, grow and develop. Expand your horizons and your comfort zone. Never give up! Don't give in to those who tell you something is impossible or you can't. They don't know all the possibilities. Use that to fuel your resolve and improve your on strengths and weaknesses. You are much more capable than you believe yourself to be and if you believe you're capable of great things, that's great, take it further. There are no limits to determination and willpower. Remember who you are, it is your greatest strength. Enjoy your life with family, friends, enemies, anyone who has been a part of your journey. It feels good to share and be with others. Stay positive, be happy and love life. I hope you enjoy the magazine.

Sincerely,

Jordon Spence, Co-Editor in Chief

# Supervising Professors

Prof. Stapleton: Club Advisor

Prof. Goodison: Magazine Advisor

## Editors

Shaeta Hossain: Editor-In-Chief

Jordon Spence: Co-Editor-In-Chief

Woodelin Florveus: Graphic Designer

Rabia Hussain: Consultant

Brandon Rodriguez: Submissions Editor

Keegan Hakim: Submissions Editor

## Club Officers

President: Brandon Rodriguez

Vice President: Jordon Spence

Treasurer: William Marte

Secretary: Shaeta Hossain

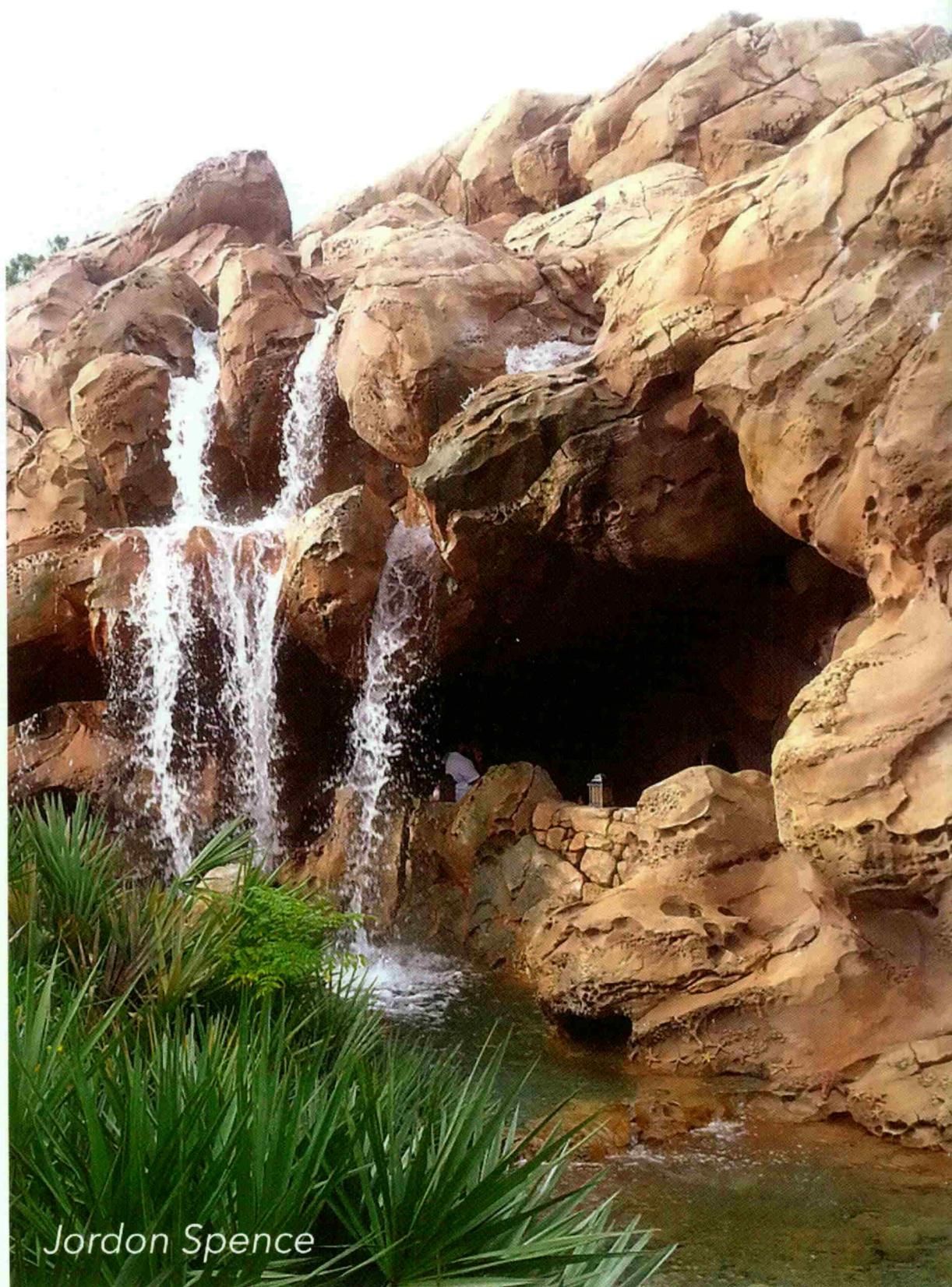
Front Cover

Airiana Rendon by Shaeta Hossain

# Table of Contents

A Daughter's Conquest .....	6-8
Troubled Train Thoughts .....	9-11
I Remember You Atabey .....	12
Photography by Arni Zaman.....	13
Demon .....	14-16
Photography by Rob Coin .....	17
The Darkening .....	18-20
Artwork by Arni Zaman .....	21
Monologue .....	22-23
What Life Is Said To Be .....	24-26
Resilience .....	27
Artwork by Afterthesmoke.....	28
Light As A Feather.....	29
Grey Matter .....	30-31
A Talking Aposiopesis.....	32
Home .....	33
Infatuation/Who? .....	34
Heart Vs. Mind.....	35
Lucky/Dummy.....	36-37
Storm .....	38

Photography by Shaeta Hossain.....	39
The Painful Truth.....	40-41
Sculpture by Erica Roldan.....	42
Zip Code 32-606 .....	43
Archives.....	44
Beary .....	45
Nightmare .....	46
Dear Mother .....	47
Solution/ Meters per Second .....	48
Artwork by Afterthesmoke.....	49
The Bright Eyed Girl- Sestina .....	50
The Love Flu/ My Brown Skin .....	51
To My Imago Dei .....	52
Oh Little Human.....	53
Photography by Rilo-Studio.....	54
A Love Letter To Unrequited Love .....	55
Army Of Trees .....	56-57
A Phone of My Own.....	58
Artwork by Afterthesmoke.....	59-61
Ambition .....	62
Hennessy .....	63
The Bootstrap Bunch.....	64-65
Photograph by Shaeta Hossain .....	66-67
The Rest is Up To You .....	68-69



*Jordon Spence*

# A Daughter's Conquest

*Jordon Spence*

The moonlight gleams down on a mountain peak in the Snoqualmie Valley. Raiyn looks around her. She sees her friends and comrades beaten to near-death all over the cave. Raiyn stares intensely at The Masked Man and clenches her fists. Jgvx staggers to her feet and faces The Masked Man. "I can still fight." Jgvx said staring down The Masked Man. "I won't let you get away, not again." Raiyn walks over to Jgvx and places her hand on her shoulder. "I understand your frustration, but you're in no condition to fight." Raiyn said. "Put your trust in me, and I will fight for all of us. I will make sure he doesn't hurt anyone ever again." Jgvx looks at Raiyn's wounds. "You're injured. Here, let me heal you," Jgvx said. Jgvx places her hand on Raiyn's chest. "Ticiyøtl!" Jgvx commanded. A lightly colored blue light emits from Jgvx's hands and heals Raiyn's wounds. "Don't show him any mercy and...be careful," Jgvx said. "Thank you, Jgvx." Raiyn said. "I'll finish this and then we can continue our search for my mother."

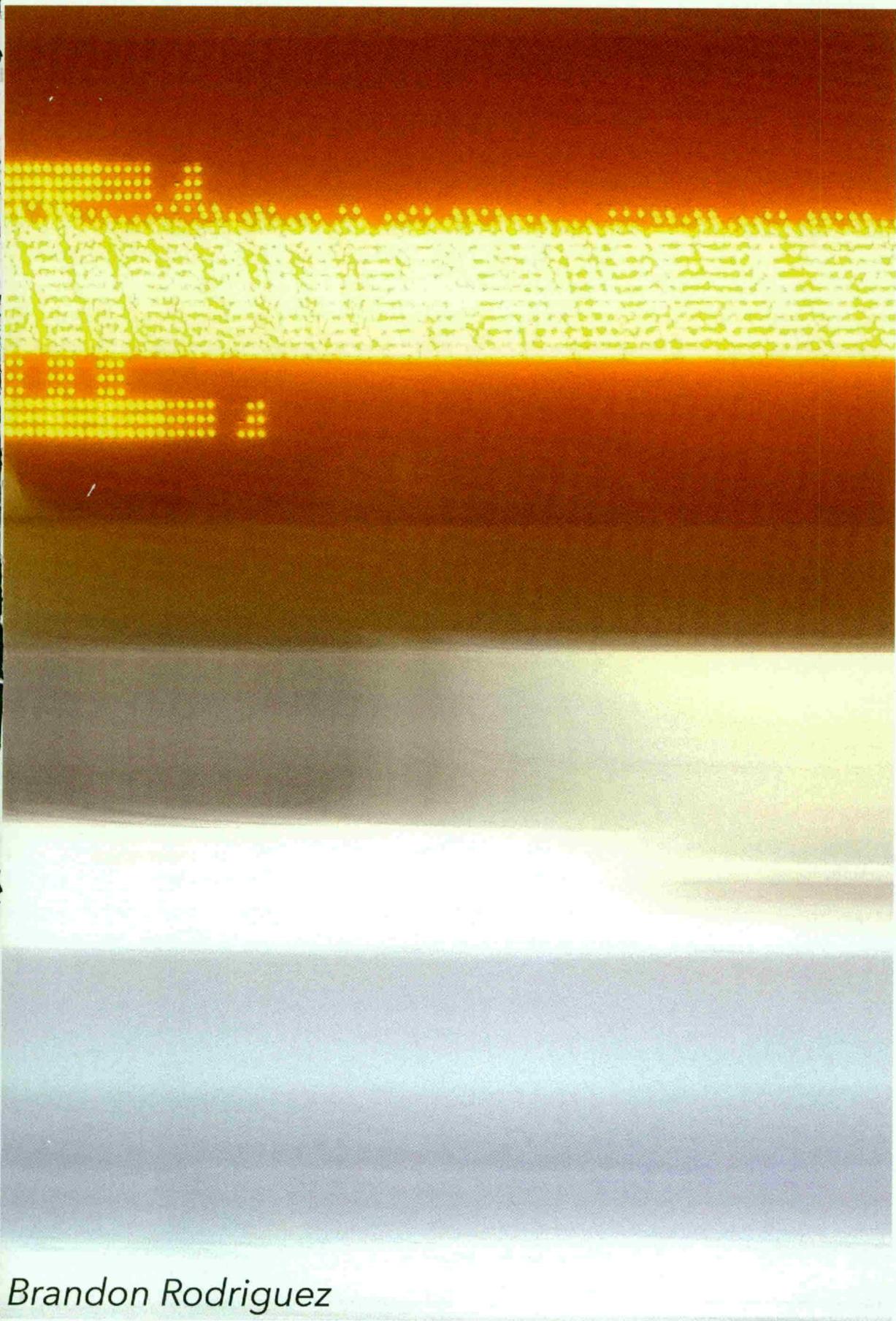
Raiyn stares at The Masked Man again, her eyes are much more fierce than before. "It's you and me now, just like you wanted." Raiyn said. "And this time, I'll have you cowering in fear." The Masked Man scrapes his sword against the cave floor, taunting Raiyn. She draws the Ame Blade from her hilt, takes a deep breath and takes a step forward. She exhales, then increases her speed drastically. She swings her blade with great speed and power. The Masked Man blocks the attack with his own sword. Their weapons clash, creating a shockwave. Their duel begins. Raiyn and The Masked Man swing at each other, each swing is cancelled out by the other's. The sounds of swords clashing echoes throughout the cave. Raiyn steps it up a notch by swinging rapid slashes. She slashes The Masked Man several times, but the slashes weren't strong enough to pierce his armor. The Masked Man withstands the rapid slashes and kicks Raiyn in her stomach. Raiyn summons a part of her Knight Armor around her stomach to take most of the damage. She summons the Knight Armor around her arms and bashes The Masked Man's head into the cave wall, marking a dent in his mask. She kicks him in his side and attacks him repeatedly. Punching and kicking, not letting up for even a second. The Masked Man endures the attacks and grabs Raiyn's head. He headbutts her, blood runs down Raiyn's forehead. The Masked Man summons his shield and bashes her into the cave wall. The Masked Man amps up his strength and forces her further into the wall. A light blue color glimmers from the hole. Raiyn ejects herself from the hole. "Will Fist!" Raiyn shouted. She punches The Masked Man in his chest, launching him out the cave and down the mountain.

Raiyn summons her full Knight Armor. The Amarillo Armor encases her body and envelopes in an Amarillo aura. Raiyn exits the cave and pursues The Masked Man down the mountain. The Masked Man skids down the snowy mountain, grabbing a small cleft to catch himself. His red cape and cowl are ripped. His chest armor is cracked and blood is leaking through. He grunts in pain when he touches the cracked spot. The Masked Man concentrates his energy into his hand and launches himself into the air. Raiyn concentrates her willpower into her fist as she dives towards The Masked Man. Their attacks collide. The concentrated energy flares and explodes, blowing them away. Raiyn is sent soaring through the sky. She's stopped mid air. Raiyn struggles to move, but she can't. The

Masked Man is on the side of the mountain with his hand directed at Raiyn. He thrusts his arm back and Raiyn is pulled toward him against her will. He punches Raiyn in her stomach with a lot of power that launches her back into the air. Again, she's stopped in mid air. The Masked Man pulls her back and punches her again. The Masked Man does this several times, hitting Raiyn with various attacks. He pulls her in once more, much faster than before and clasped his hands together above his head. "No, I'm...in...control," Raiyn said as she struggles to break free. Raiyn is pulled right up to the Masked Man. He swings his arms downward unto her. Raiyn regains control over her body and blocks the attack. Then, she counters the attack with an uppercut.

The Masked Man is launched up to the cave with Raiyn pursuing him again. She kicks him into the cave. Raiyn slashes at The Masked Man. He catches the Ame Blade in his hands and forces it out of Raiyn's hands. He attacks Raiyn with an upswing from the blade. Raiyn falters a bit, but she bounces back with a Will Fist. The Masked Man grabs her hand and crushes it. Raiyn yells in pain. He slashes Raiyn and places his hand on her lower torso. His palm glows. Suddenly, Raiyn is launched into the cave wall. She falls to the ground. The Masked Man tosses the Ame Blade to the side. He walks to the center of the cave and raises his hand. His energy begins flaring in his hand. Raiyn looks at the ground. "I won't die here. I will see mother again. I will fight for my friends. I will protect them. I will defeat him!" Raiyn thought to herself. Raiyn staggers to her feet. "I'm not done yet!" Raiyn yelled. "Turn around and face me!" The Masked Man turns to face Raiyn. He draws his sword, Raiyn picks up her blade.

They slash at one another, both pushed back by the clash. They clash again. The Masked Man is forced to the ground. He sees a silhouette behind Raiyn, swinging in unison with her. He shakes his head and clashes with Raiyn once more. Again, he's forced to the ground. Raiyn is amazed with her own strength, she feels a presence behind her. She turns around to see her mother standing behind her. "M-mother," Raiyn said. Whitney hugs Raiyn. "Yes, it's me my little Niji. I'm here now." Whitney said holding Raiyn in her arms. "Yes! Yes! You're alive! I knew it! I knew it! You're alive!" Raiyn said in jubilation. The Masked Man charges at them. Whitney draws her katana and cuts him down with a single swing. "Wow!" Raiyn said in amazement. "How did you do that?" "That was the Quicksilver technique." Whitney explained. "It may have looked like a single slash, but I actually hit him multiple times." The Masked Man stands to his feet, badly injured. "The real reason you lured these children here was to find me, wasn't it? That drive, that determination is so desperate, yet admirable." The Masked Man uses an Escape Rune and flees. Whitney tends to the others, healing their wounds. Everyone is okay. Raiyn and Kyiler hug their mother. The family is reunited and their quest is complete.



*Brandon Rodriguez*

# Troubled Train Thoughts

*Brandon Rodriguez*

Imagine something you hate. Not a deep hatred, nor a light disliking, but still something you hate. Do you have it in your mind? What is it? A person? People? Specific or in general? Is it yourself? Whatever it is, hold it in your mind. Now, imagine that hatred for that thing in your mind and multiply that hatred by the first prime number that you can think of. You have a prime number in mind? Great. Now, the thing you hate times the prime number you thought of. You know what that equals?

My hatred for the bus service in this goddamned city.

The train's a very awkward place, especially if you're by yourself. Of course, you can listen to music to drown out the other strangers talking amongst themselves, the showtime crew dancing on the poles, with their feet flying centimeters from your face, and the homeless people who walk down asking for change to either pay off rent or get a bag of chips from the stand. Either way, I never look them in the eye. If I make that sort of contact with them, it means I acknowledge their existence and their story, meaning I have to give them something. I just don't have the money right now, man.

It took me a long time to realize that my fear of people looking at what I was doing on my phone didn't stem from an incident that happened a long time ago. Instead, it's because I do that to other people's phones already. I mean, they just have it out. The public service announcements on the subway always warns of keeping your personal belongings close by, but not everyone follows that rule. Even if they do, the advertisements act as a blurry viewing guide. It doesn't take much to make out where they are on their phone. If the picture's too blurry, no problem. The fingers say enough, especially when their index finger is swiping right and left repeatedly. Looking for love based on a couple of words and some carefully chosen pictures. Maybe not even love, just someone to relieve their insecurities and anxieties for at least a night. Hope they're cute enough.

Then again, I shouldn't be the one judging others on who they pick to be their whatever. Lest I forget my last whatever, Gina. I swear, she looked so beautiful and innocent, sitting on the bench near the basement entrance to Macy's. I should've listened to my older cousin when she said, "Looks can be deceiving. She just don't look right to me. I wouldn't even get with that, and you know how low I've sunk." To this day, I can't seem to figure out what vibe monitor Emily was apparently equipped with that day, but I'd like a double, please. Point is, five months with her felt like paradise, until I got home to her wearing a strap-on, about to peg some blindfolded dude. I guess she was right to say that I never listened when she wanted to get "adventurous". Truth is, I just don't want that type of stuff and I'm down for most things.

After that whole fiasco, I began to think back on the warning signs, besides the "adventurous" talk. Yes, I could've peeked at her phone like I do with strangers, but it didn't feel right when I first tried to do it a month into our time together. I guess I had that much respect for her. Of course, that went flying out of her apartment window that late Wednesday afternoon, along with what I'm pretty sure was a dog mask and a cat-o'-nine-tails whip. She should be grateful I didn't throw out the briefcase full of... never mind. I mean, I've heard worse stories from other people, especially Emily. When I told her about the incident, after she spent a good five minutes

laughing her ass off, she said that she felt sorry for me, and that I should've been more open and talked boundaries. She likes playing devil's advocate sometimes.

One of our favorite pastimes is watching *All Dogs Go to Heaven* whenever life just gets a bit too hard. It started when Emily broke up with her last boyfriend. I have it on DVD. One scene that has always stuck out in my head was the scene where Charlie and the female dog version of St. Peter are dancing in Heaven and singing a nice duet. It isn't really the scene itself, just a lyric sang by the female St. Peter dog about the world being full of used cars, singles bars, broken dreams, and out-of-reach stars. At first, I didn't think about this too much, like I still do with some songs. It wasn't until our, like, twentieth time watching it, the day I told her about the breakup, that I chose to pay attention to that lyric. There's something similar about the people I've seen swiping left and right repeatedly and people at singles bars. Most have broken dreams and see other people they like as those stars that are seemingly unreachable. I remember those times in high school, everyone looking like they've paired off and I'm just in the corner feeling miserable. Actually, that still applies to whenever I'm on the same car as a cute couple, loving it up in front of everyone. They're the few that keep their personal belongings close. Or at least that's the picture I paint in my head. Loving couples that are seemingly inseparable. I never see them again, so only God knows the full story. Filling in the blanks is too much work when I can instead look at some guy playing some game on his phone.

Oh shit, this is my stop.

# I remember you Atabey

*Ananiel Reignos*

Native American genocide is one of the least talked about genocides yet the land we step on every day was their home.

My Taino people were made the first slaves on the islands yet the story of what happened to our Native peoples is the least taken serious. We stand up immediately at the news that one of our friends or family members were raped, imagine them taken hostage and forced into slavery. We feel the pain, we are ready to fight, call the police, defend our own, kill if it is our family in danger. Where is that spirit for our ancestors? The dates and names have been forgotten. Most have become too accustomed to the "light skin", never wondering how we got that light skin, and living an average life speaking only English or sometimes English and Spanish. We do not stop to think about the spirituality our ancestors and what is their perspective of right and wrong instead of narrowing our minds to the moral and logic other religions have done for us

In english movies we are the exotic ones that the wife cheats on, the gay latino men are always promiscuous, Puerto Ricans are always thugs and there is little to no por trayal of Dominicans. All my life I have watched my people be labeled pigs, lazy, drug addicts, even by other Latin groups. As I watch all of us be so separated, pin against one another, individualistic minds within the family, focused on not bettering one another, avoiding politics as a whole community, no one standing up against the abusers in the family or el bloque. I remember a time when I picked up a book in college and learned of my ancestors, because all my life no one taught me my peoples history. Gay men and women had an important role in society as being mediators between men and women, were seen as having two souls in one body winning the title of "Two Spirit peoples". Women were Shamans, wise women & Chiefs, Men were Chiefs, and warriors. We were a community, with the same language, we focused on healing and worshipping the earth. Fast forward centuries later and our people are lost, doing opiates and drugs, some of us successful while the rest fall into worst ruts. The disabled living off the government, a government that was founded on stealing our identity in the first place. A government that was founded on the invasion of our land. We had the skin tone of the earth, the butterflies confused us for home. We were dark, we were always dark, tan, red, beautiful copper skin and sometimes darker. Too much of our light skin-ness can easily remind us that we did not agree to suddenly inter-breed with the white man. To lose who we were and forget our language and wearing clothing so closely related to nothing of who we were in our glory days. I long for my family. The Family of my original peoples where social norms were not enforced by religion. I miss a time I have not experienced but have felt, when we prayed to the earth for thanks, never for forgiveness for being human. But I have lived in a time where our spirit will always live within us. Atabey, this that I write is my prayer to you holy mother. Unlock the Taino spirit within all of us again. Bring us back to the nobility that we were, a people of love for one another. Have you not lost enough of us? Atabey! You are destroying all the hateful cities and the world in anger because of our ignorances PLEASE wake us up before it's too late. We need this earth and you will always repair yourself with or without us humans. ATABEY! Wake the spirit of this island up and bring us back to worshipping love and helping one another. May it be so that before I die, I witness my people together again.



# Demon

*Jerome Brown*

The day before I left for New York was my 20th birthday, in the summer of 1986, and Mama took one last jab at persuading me to change my plans to go stay with cousin Sylvia in Brooklyn. Sylvia had told me the previous month, on her 21st birthday, that I was always welcome to stay with her. She said I needed to see the world through my own eyes, if I really wanted to grow up, and I could only do that if I left home.

With the exception of Sundays, when Mama would invite the pastor and his family over for dinner, her house felt like a mortuary desperate for repair. The sofa and chairs were covered in old torn plastic to protect them from stains. Wherever there was a rip in the plastic there was prominent smearing reminiscent of a defined streak in soiled underwear. I was on the sofa. Mama was perched in her comfortable chair as always, watching the news. There was a fold up dinner tray table, stationed to her right. The only items I ever saw displayed on it were the remote for the TV, her Bible, a rotary phone which never rang, and a mason jar, always filled with Jack Daniels. Mama swore it was iced tea. Aunt Irene would occasionally swing by, God only knows why, and she and Mama would sit in the living room like two propped up corpses positioned in front of the TV and say nothing for hours. The pastor's family was at least entertaining to watch. Observing those ravenous vultures feeding off Mama's cooking, as if on a carcass in total silence brought me amusing relief to Mama's mundane daily monotony.

Mama and I were sitting in the living room. "Nina," She began. "Spare us both a headache. Not only will you be begging me to return home in a few days, but you'll be miserable from the unsavory stench of rotting flesh in that summer heat dripping off them nasty fairy boys with AIDS, disrespecting the Lord's word, acting like a bunch of circus clowns. Not to mention all the drug addicts smoking crack, panhandling on every corner. It's just not safe, Nina." Mama often referred to gays and drug addicts as the devil's imps. I think she enjoyed the TV news because it seemed to be fixated on drugs, crime, and AIDS in urban neighborhoods, and that made her feel superior as a delivered child of God. I don't know where else her disdain for gays came from because I didn't notice many open homosexuals or persons dying from AIDS in Youngstown, Ohio, where we lived. She would frequently chime in, spewing random scriptures from the Bible at the TV, which seemed to validate her point, at least to her. "Nina, New York City is nothing but Satan's playground, where no God-fearing Christian should be without an army of saints to protect them from temptation. Your cousin, Sylvia is no child of God, that Jezebel is loose and Lord only knows what kind of sin she's wrapped up in living in Brooklyn. You've just turned 20 and all of a sudden you think you know everything. Well, heed to my word little lady, you're walking straight into the belly of the beast!" That was the first time I ever heard Mama acknowledge my birthday. Perhaps it was because she was drinking the Jack Daniels as if it were actually iced tea and the effect of the spirits had mama a little woozy. Nonetheless, I couldn't help but take notice.

I did believe in God. When I was twelve, I found 20 dollars under the dining room table. It was on a Sunday evening and the pastor and his family had left after eating Mama's food and had the nerve to take whatever they didn't eat with them. As I was cleaning up the mess after the feeding frenzy, there it was. I held on to that money and prayed to God everyday for a week that no one would ask about it, and God answered my prayer, nobody ever did. But I never bought into the God-fearing Christian thing. What I did fear was turning into a God-fearing Christian like Mama. Except for occasional deliveries from the liquor store she seemed to bask in denying herself any worldly pleasure, in preparation for a life after death. I knew what mama was referring to about Sylvia being loose. Apparently, she had shamed the family name by getting caught kissing a girl in public, open mouth no less. The thought of her kissing with her mouth open is just plain nasty, even if she did it in private. But I have to

admit, I've always admired Sylvia. She was so free and unafraid to do anything she wanted to. Sylvia's mother, Aunt Irene, threatened to send her to the Christian Academy of All Saints for juvenile delinquents. Mama and Aunt Irene called it boot camp for Jesus. Though Sylvia may have had a wandering tongue, she was no juvenile delinquent, unlike her brother Ronald, who was caught up in all kinds of messes before he was even 14. He would break into people's houses across town with a group of boys he used to hang out with, steal the TVs and other electronics, and pawn them. He was even caught stealing money from the collection plate in church. Aunt Irene sent him to that Christian Academy and his mind hasn't been right since he left that place. He won't talk to anyone except himself and nothing he says makes any sense. Mama says he's talking to The Lord in a foreign tongue. Sylvia was a straight A student who, like me, had dreams of becoming an architect. So rather than being lobotomized at the age of 19, Sylvia had the sense to leave for New York, where she got work as a cater waiter and began attending class at the Pratt Institute School of Architecture in Brooklyn.

Mama glanced in my direction as my silence, I'm sure, was deafening to her. "You're awfully quiet over there, what are you thinking about, Nina? You know the Lord don't like any secrets, young lady. I'll bet the holy spirit is working on your mind right now. Speak to her, Lord Father God." Truth be told, I felt compelled to ask Mama why she never allowed me to ask about my daddy and nobody ever mentioned anything about him. She had some nerve to lecture me about keeping secrets. I was ready to excuse myself when Mama asked me to fill her jar with more of the iced tea, which I always did discreetly in the kitchen. "Mama, perhaps you've had enough for now." Her venom came swift, "Girl, if you sass me again...Just because you've turned 20 don't mean nothing in this house! You better show me some respect, young lady! I raised you all by myself, you ungrateful sow. Is this how you repay me, by talking back!? I knew you were going to be nothing but trouble the first time I laid eyes on you."

At that moment Mama gave me all the courage I needed. It was going to be my last day in her house, and I had nothing to lose by speaking honestly. Instinctively, I led myself into the kitchen and returned with the bottle of Jack Daniels and a glass for myself. I poured a generous shot and almost choked when I gulped it down defiantly in front of her. I poured another shot for myself and sat the bottle on Mama's dinner table, wedged between her empty Mason jar and the Bible, before I returned to the sofa. "You're right, mama. Just because it's my 20th birthday today, why should it mean anything to you? You've never acknowledged my birthday before, so why bring it up now? And why did you raise me all by yourself? Why don't you ever talk about my daddy?...Who is he?" The silence was such that I would have heard a mouse piss on a cotton ball clear across the room, and it felt like an eternity before she uttered a sound. Mama's stare burned through my flesh and her body was positioned as if to pounce at any moment. Her eyeballing was known to send a violent dog running with its tail between its legs if it dared to challenge her. The effects of the iced tea quickly began to relax my anxiety as Mama began to fill her mason jar. "Well, I suppose you're ready for a little heart to heart now that you're acting grown in my house woman!"

I'd been waiting my entire life to have a conversation with Mama about anything other than Heaven or Hell, but I didn't anticipate her dialogue straying far from the Lord's word. Mama sipped her iced tea, turned off the TV, reclined in her chair with her legs planted firmly on the floor and said, "Alvin." She then looked upward, her head resting in the imprinted folds of the worn plastic. I felt she was searching for just the right words to say. Whatever Mama was pondering, I began impatiently predicting. Alvin was probably the love of her life and may have died tragically in the army overseas, perhaps before I was born. Mama obviously could not bring herself to love another man after him. That's why she lived in solitude and entertained life after death, so she could be with Alvin. She shook her head and shrugged her shoulders as she came out of her meditative state. "I never wanted children and I sure wasn't going to get married. My mission has always been to dedicate my life to the Lord, like Mother Teresa. That good-for-nothing man just messed up everything. Irene warned me he was charming, the devil is a charmer too, that's how he gets your soul, Nina. I can't have nothing to do with anybody that don't love the lord

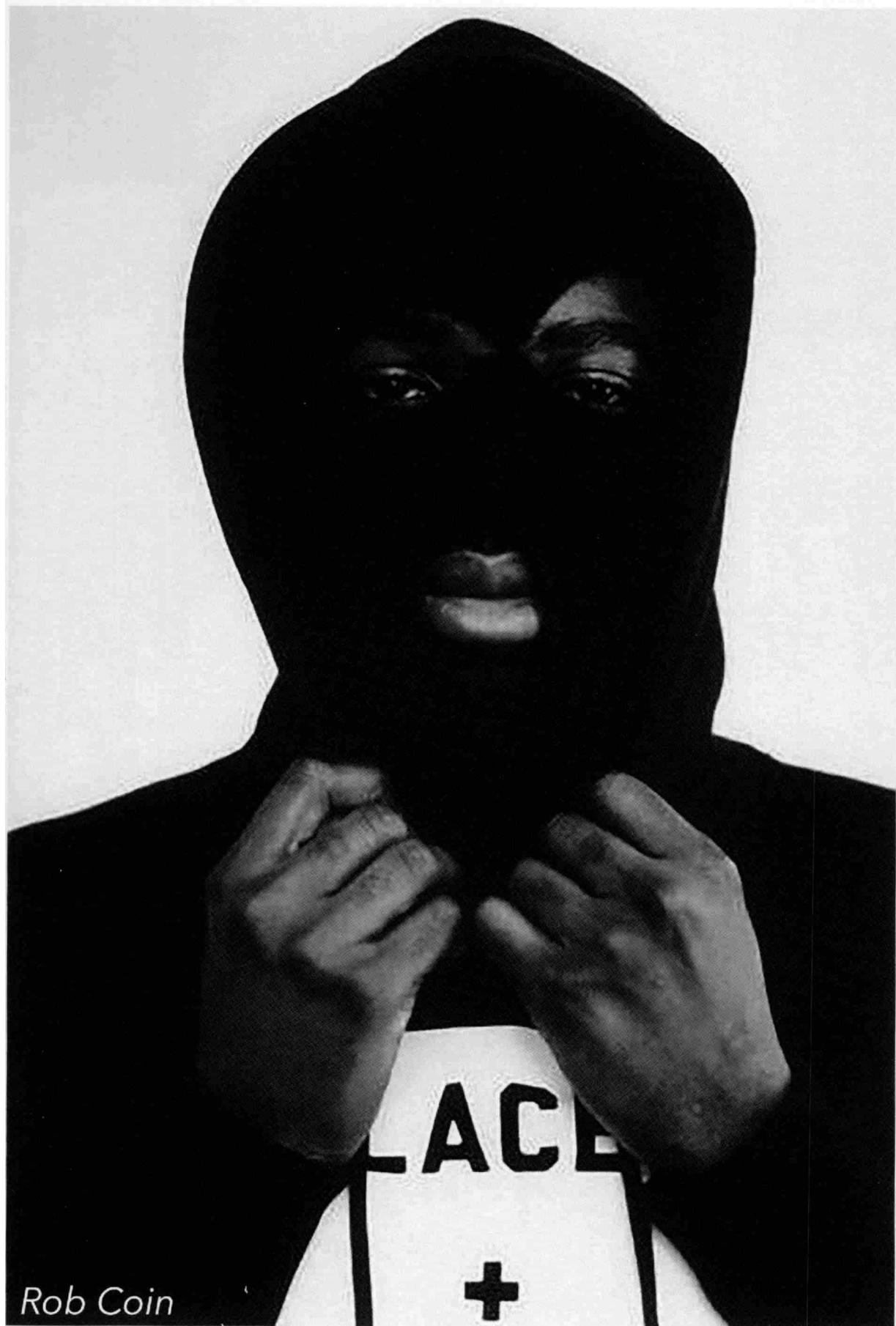
and he don't know nothing about the goodness of the Lord." How could anybody be so miserable and talk about goodness or the Lord to validate it? Her story was not quite adding up to what I envisioned it to be. Alvin more than likely charmed her, they had a brief, passionate affair. She got pregnant and then he probably got tired of her constant nagging and preaching so he left her. I don't blame him; any sane person would have done the same thing. As disappointed as I knew I'd be, I had to know more. She continued, "He said he played baseball, or maybe it was basketball I can't remember. I just know he was never around much. He invited me to watch him play whatever the heck it was several times, but I never went. All that fool ever talked about was himself, playing his sports and talking foolishness about love. I met him through Irene, I don't know why she pushed him my way. He was drooling all over her. I was so glad when the Lord finally got a hold of her and straightened her out. She was a cheerleader, shaking her tail like some barroom floozy in them cheap outfits that barely covered her behind." When Mama mentioned cheerleader, I excitedly interrupted her. "He played basketball mama! He must have played basketball because there are no cheerleaders for baseball."

Again, my thoughts wandered as I conjured fantasies in relation to Mama's story. He was probably a professional basketball player and I bet he was tall and good looking. Aunt Irene must have nudged Alvin in Mama's direction because she was too busy doing all kinds of things with the other guys on the basketball team. And she had the nerve to look down at Sylvia, her own flesh and blood, for doing half of what she did. She's no better than a charlatan. I gulped down what was left of the Jack Daniels in my glass and instinctively went for a refill. Mama's liquor--I mean to say, her "iced tea"--had me feeling pretty good. Eagerly, I waited for her to continue with the story, but she was clearly annoyed with my interruptions. "You want to tell the story since you know so much about it, Nina! And what the devil are you doing drinking from my stuff without permission, you didn't pay for nothing in this house. Have you lost what little bit of good judgment God gave you?" I almost pissed on myself from laughing when Mama accused me of drinking from her "stuff," because I thought she referred to it as her stash, but regardless it was unquestionably a slip of the tongue.

I had never known Mama to have a sense of humor and her unresponsiveness to laughter seemed to repel even the staunchest of her Christian associates from visiting or even calling her. The smirk on my face and overall giddiness emanating from my core must have struck Mama's last nerve because the pitiless, irate expression in her eyes sobered me up instantly.

She grabbed her Bible. "Stand behind me, daughter of Satan! Yes, that beast is your daddy, Nina! I hated every second of the day I carried you inside me. I felt tainted and wicked watching my belly grow with sin in it. He knew I was weak in the Lord and he hunted me like a serpent from Hell, tempting me with all kinds of lies, sending flowers and cards almost every week. I can't tell you how many times he made me miss prayer on Wednesday night; all because he wanted to talk! He never had nothing important to say. How could he talk about love and not know the Lord? I let my guard down and felt sorry for that fool. I never should have listened to his nonsense." She lifted the Mason jar and pointed it towards me. "I drank this stuff the entire time I carried you hoping to flush you out. Instead, the Lord has sentenced me to live with my sin for the rest of my life here on earth. I did my best to raise you right in the Lord's eyes. But I knew this day would come, you sitting over there laughing at me in my face."

My lower lip trembled uncontrollably, I could taste the salty stream from my nose as it ran in my mouth. I felt the tears run down my cheeks, numb and cold while dangling beneath my chin, preparing to jump. Similar to that of bodies falling from a high-rise thumping concrete, I heard the tears splatter between my legs onto the plastic covering of the sofa. I just wanted to fly away from the evil that I felt in that house, but Mama's words had erased the sky and replaced it with a ball and chain that kept me on the sofa, because I loved her. I buried my face in my hands to hide the anxiety of my nakedness while I sobbed in fear like a child at the mercy of a demon. I became aware of the uncomfortable reality that I had to let go of Mama completely in order to be free. Or I would only be dragging a chain with me, linked to the pain that had stripped Mama of her freedom.



*Rob Coin*



*Keegan Hakim*

# The Darkening

*Keegan Hakim*

The Sun's light spectrum dimmed at a level that, theoretically, has not occurred since 400 thousand years after its formation. The confirmation took place no later than a day from the solid evidence of the Sun's decrease in energy ray, or as it became known in a popularized term, The Darkening.

Science had predicted something like this would happen at around three billion years from today, or even longer considering The Darkening was drastic. The Earth's axis would tilt reaching 33 degrees with not enough influence from the other planets to sustain its wobble. The ice caps were presumed to increase their size in shape and weight by nearly 700%. But that was, of course, after the Sun would have already engulfed both Mercury and Venus. Dr. Andy Wax had observed a change in the gamma rays precisely nine minutes after the Sun's energy reduction, thus making her late in discovering the problem by one minute, considering Sun's light takes eight minutes to reach the surface of the Earth. She noticed the rays moving now slower in the heliocentric orbit.

At 0.002 after the Sun's decrease in energy ray, or in the actual term, two days after The Darkening, Dr. Wax sensed a silence in the world. She noticed the geese making an odd circular pattern in the sky, rather than the usual wrinkled V-shaped picture of migration. They were heading west. This, Andy found to be strange since their typical annual south route during this time of the year.

Observing the sky, the weather patterns seemed artificial now not real, and some of Andy's colleagues proposed the possibility of a climate control system which she knew would malfunction due to the moon's orbiting sequence and cause toward the existing climate. She submitted a report earlier yesterday challenging the dictation of the weather configurations to follow, rather the opposite of what was posted. Instead of an Ice Age, we were still very much heading toward a hot planet. The source was quite different though.

In her apartment, the red dot on her answering machine flashed. Ignoring it, she observed the study she'd been involved with, The Great Attractor, which she understood to be a gravitational anomaly in the intergalactic space. She was fascinated by the pull. The red dot bothered her peripheral vision. She played the message.

"Hello, this message is for Dr. Wax. My name is Sargent Stevenson. This is regarding the work you submitted to the NSF two days ago and also another particular report four years ago. We're interested in your hypothesis toward the recent changes in weather patterns."

The next day, she drove the 300 miles to the military base and spoke with Sargent Stevenson about her gatherings the past two days. A camera recorded everything. The young man typing what she said made her nervous. She paused a lot.

At 0.004, she was back home focusing on the project concerning The Great Attractor. The information received frustrated her. Each time, the calculations came back wrong. The wavelength emitted radiation from the Sun detected were much shorter than previously reported. The Cosmological Redshift would suggest higher frequency declares movement. She paused and ran to the phone.

Sargent Stevenson had submitted the interview to The United States Air Force facility. The Central Intelligence Agency contacted him less than 24 hours. Dr. Wax was now on her way to explain her knowledge of The Dark-

ening. She sat alone in an office for a few hours and was encouraged to prepare a review of her discovery. Two men wearing black walked in followed by a woman who introduced herself as, simply, Vickie. An older gray-haired man holding a stack of papers walked in shortly after and introduced himself as Dr. Epperson. A few minutes later, Sargent Stevenson and an older woman walked in. She sat quickly at the end of the table without an introduction. She scanned her folder (Andy thought this a trick to show her knowledge of the case) and asked, "Well Dr. Wax, tell us what you know."

"Alright, well according to my calculation of the available data, the heliocentric orbit and the mass of the Earth." Andy noticed the woman rolling her eyes. "We are going to travel at an incredible speed toward the Sun."

"What?" The woman said.

"Within the next few days, six days actually, we will probably be back to our usual climate. However, where we once held a range of 91 to 94 million miles from the Sun, I imagine we will maintain a distance of somewhat between 50 to 55 million miles," Andy said.

"Shouldn't the speed cause alarm?" Dr. Epperson asked.

"We're moving as we speak," Andy confirmed.

Everyone adopted a confused expression. "Then we should announce this to the public, it'll help with the chaotic-ness the news stations are causing," the woman said.

Andy found it somewhat humorous that the president of the facility used a nonexistent word. "There is one other problem, the other planets," Andy hesitated.

"Venus and Mercury are going to sink into the Sun," Vicki guessed.

"Right. If we observe Venus, it is already four million miles closer to the Sun. But that's not my worry, it's the other planets. Pluto's velocity is smaller than most and is going to travel faster, colliding with Saturn. Saturn is going to lose most of its Ring.

"Pluto's revenge," Vicki exclaimed.

Andy chuckled, "With that speed, there are two possibilities."

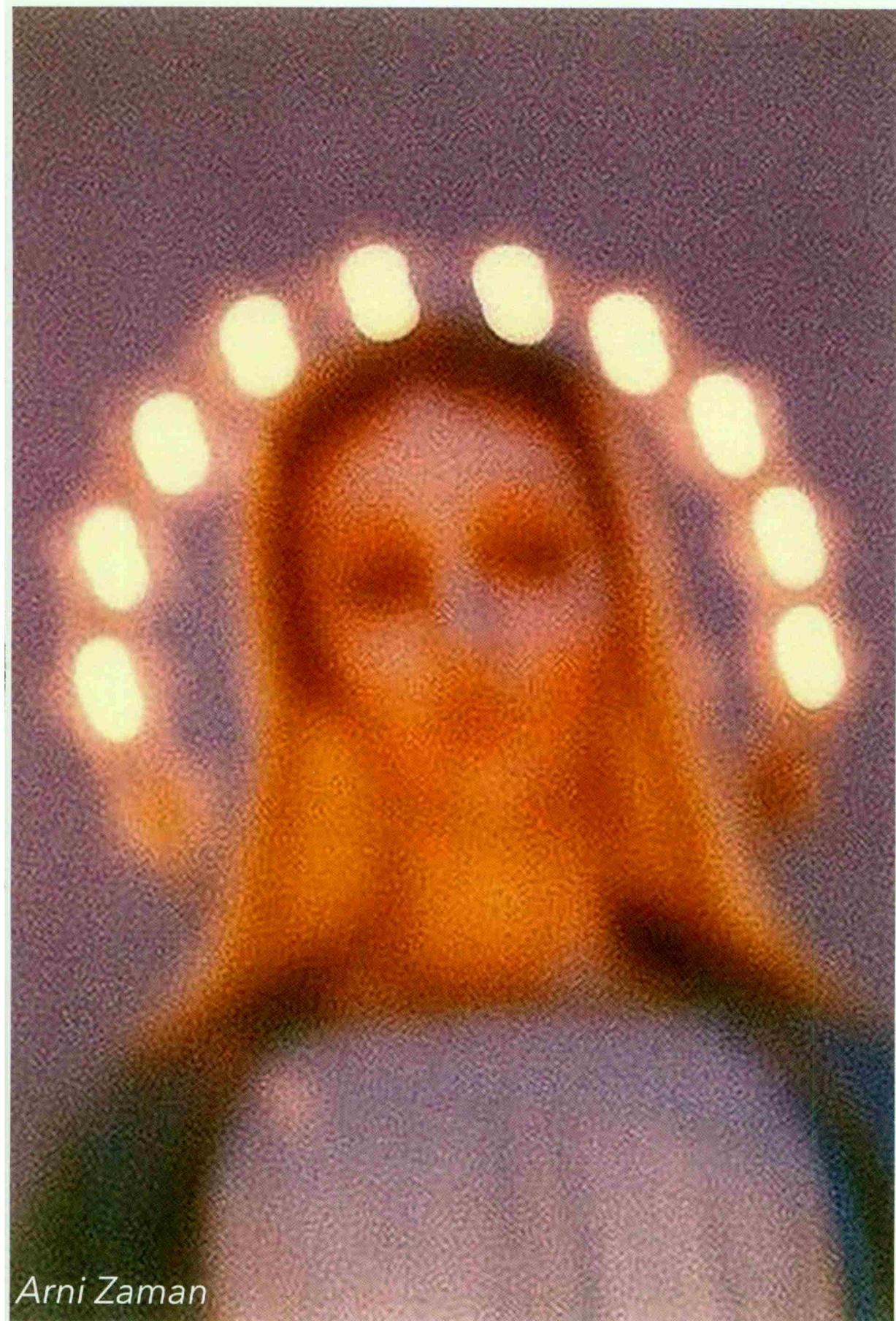
"What?" Sargent Stevenson asked.

"Most of Saturn's Ring particles are going to detach and crash into one another probably creating thermal heat temperature that will reach 10 million degrees Fahrenheit. If that happens, we will lose some planets but gain a small new moon in the span of 800 centuries."

"What's the other possibility?" The woman asked.

Andy sighed, "The heat will not reach 10 million degrees Fahrenheit and Saturn's Ring particles are going to crash into Jupiter, Mars, and you guessed it Earth."

The room went silent.



Arni Zaman

# Monologue

*Christabelle Vasquez*

On August 28 of 2013, you are going to experience a drastic life change. Getting away from someone that you have lived with your whole life is a bittersweet moment, because you know that they are doing it for your own good, but you just don't want to be apart from them. It's going to hurt a lot. You are going to miss the smell of Machica in the morning, your brother bothering you 24/7. You are probably wondering who you are getting away from or where are you going? Well...you are going to New York City and you are getting away from "Mami". You have to remember all the good moments that you had with her and even her physical traits, like her green cat eyes, the green eyeliner she always wears, her Paris Hilton Perfume, the touch of her small hands with a French manicure.

It was around the year 2009 when she came home from work with a "sonrisa de oreja a oreja" (ear to ear smile). "Que paso Mami?" You asked her. "I found a perfect place to start our restaurant," Mami said. You were over the moon filled with joy. When the day of finally opening up the restaurant came, we did a big celebration. In the place only fitted three round tables, the grill, and barely enough space to walk to deliver the dishes to the customers. Yes, it was small, but filled with love. All the hours and days that she had spent working in the restaurant was to feed our little family. Now, she has more wrinkles and bags under her eyes. She doesn't have soft hands anymore. Her hands are now rough and she doesn't get her manicure done that often. When you started working with her, at first it was fun, you get to meet a lot of people, some that are going to help you and love you and some that are asses, but as time passes you will feel the pain and sacrifice that Mami does just for the benefit of us. I understand that we had to grow up fast.

However, that has made us stronger hasn't it? Taking care of your brothers at the age of 12, cooking for them, being the mother that they couldn't have because Mami was working non-stop. Just remember that you are going to NYC to have a better future ok...you know that Mami didn't get the chance to become the model and fashion designer that she wanted to become. However you have the chance of a lifetime to follow your dreams. You get the chance to join the FBI or become a doctor that you always wanted to be and don't worry you are not going to be alone in NYC. You are going to meet a person that will be with you, whenever you need him.

One day, in English class this guy caught my attention. I felt that I knew him from somewhere, his long black hair and deep black eyes were so captivating. One day after English class, Sebastian waited for you outside. You were surprised since you only talked once to him and that was just to ask for his name. "Can I walk you home?" He asked. "Um claro, yeah, sure." You answered nervously of course. We talked about everything. About homework, our hobbies, our families. Near my house we were encountered with his mom coming from the hair salon. She was blonde and was so mean, I said "good afternoon" and she just looked at me like if I was an insect that needed to be squashed quickly. I felt kind of mad and sad at the same time, she didn't even take the time to get to know me before making any judgement. She threw the keys at Sebastian and left. I was just like OKAY?? He left me in the corner and he went home.

The next day, he tells me that his mom recognized me, so after a detailed investigation, we discovered that our parents had been friends, and Sebastian and I had been friends since we were little. From that day on we became closer, we did everything together and talked like if we were never apart for 7 years. He took care of me when I needed it the most, like that time when the class was watching the movie "My Left Foot", based on the book written by Christie Brown. Christie had cerebral palsy, which means that he couldn't speak or move his body, but in his case he could only move his left foot. Which allowed him to write MOTHER on the floor with a piece of chalk, I started crying immediately. I felt so shattered that the only thing I needed was somebody to hold me. Sebastian came rushing towards me. He took me outside of the classroom and stayed with me until I calmed down. He was quiet all the time, but that made me feel even more secure. When he finally asked what had happened to me, I started crying again while I was explaining to him that specific scene made me miss my Mami even more. I was feeling alone and I was angry. I had it all kept inside of me, but when that word came on the screen it was "la gota que derramó el vaso" (the drop that spilled the glass) I am so grateful for him. He is one of the good things that has happened to me. Even if we don't talk every single day anymore, when we get together, it just feels that he is always going to be there when I need him. He is the part that completes me when Mami is not here. Of course she will always be there in spirit but sometimes you just need somebody to hold you when you are feeling down. When this happens to you, please, cherish it, love it and most of all respect it.



*Grisel Mauras-Williams*



*Brandon Rodriguez*

# What Life Is Said to Be

*Brandon Rodriguez*

(Instrumental of Notorious B.I.G.'s "Suicidal Thoughts" starts playing in the background)

Broke out of the pound,  
Friend is clumsy, but helpful.  
We go back to the spot,  
Everyone's surprised to see me.  
Even my old business partner,  
He tells me to go do other things.  
Even gives me half of what we made together,  
Sounds nice.  
We party, maybe too hard.  
I find myself in a strange place,  
Ain't that my grandma?  
Fuck, this can't be it,  
This can't be it,  
This can't be it.  
Run the opposite way,  
Wait, what?  
I can't come back?  
Whatever.  
I'm back,

Need to go to my friend.  
He saw me go down,  
Thinks I'm a ghost.  
Ghosts can't shake hands,  
Let's get my son-of-a-bitch business partner back good.  
He has a girl hidden away,  
She's beat up real bad.  
We have to start a new business someway,  
She agrees, we leave.  
First stop, the racetrack,  
One day in, we're doing great.  
Slowly starting up a new business,  
We help out the poor kids a bit.  
Sees us for what we are,  
She leaves when the bad dreams start.  
The demons bite my skin off.  
I rot,  
Bite after,  
Bite after,  
Bite.  
She's at a friend's place, eating waffles,  
Convince her I'm not scum.  
We leave,  
We get shot up.  
I'm alive, by some miracle,  
We run to an empty place.  
Not so empty,  
Five guys surround us.  
One guy's a rapper,  
We spit a few.  
Ameer's his name,  
He's cool.  
We leave,  
She comes down with something.  
Even better, the business was burned down,  
He accuses me of catching feels.  
I didn't catch shit, okay?  
We make everything back, and dump her somewhere afterwards,  
She heard everything.  
Runs off again,  
What kind of movie shit is this?  
Partner caught her, and I'm next,

Fight off goons.  
Fight off partner,  
Drown him in the toilet.  
She's real sick,  
Send her off to her friend's.  
I think I got bit earlier,  
I see someone at the end.  
Can't tell who,  
It's Grandma,  
I'll be there in a bit.



*Allen Kruzikov*

# Resilience

*Yvette Kumi*

Are you tough to withstand your storm? Do you have what it takes to be courageous? Well, this letter is for you. The you who is struggling academically. The you who is struggling with low self-esteem. The you who don't know how much longer they can hold on. The you who is always judged and doesn't know where they're going. You are beautiful, wonderful, and amazing. You have so much potential and better things are coming your way. Be yourself and accept yourself the way you are. No matter what people have said or done to you, forgive them, and do not be bitter. Heal yourself and get to know who you are. Remember who you are is not what you do, but it's who you are on the inside. I know I went through half of these things I mentioned. When I'm uncomfortable, my instinct is not to avoid the discomfort, but to become at peace with it. Yes, I cry, I have my breakdowns, I feel like giving up, but the last time I checked, we are all a little broken, but broken things can be restored. Never let your struggles make you think anything else. You are full of greatness. Whoever is telling you otherwise is trying to control you. Do not allow others to manipulate you. Stop allowing others to affect your joy. Choose to be happy despite what you are going through. Let go of your past because holding on will only have you living a life of defeat. You can heal from those afflictions and overcome those addictions. Your sentence hasn't ended. You are strong and never stay silent about your battles because your pain deserves a voice. It's okay to not be okay. The fact that you are reading this means you still have strength. The fact that you still laugh and make time for friends is what counts the most. Your battle is just temporary. In your darkest storms, you go ahead and shine brightly. There's a purpose greater than your pain. Now that's resilience.



Afterthesmoke

# Light As A Feather

*Kassandra Green*

Her name is Veronica Parker, but her stage name is "Sapphire," for her eyes were a sparkling blue. The circus lights glistened on her copper brown skin and glittery blue body suit. Her hair was jet black and in a long ponytail with a diamond encrusted butterfly hair bow. The balancing stick was firm in her hands. She smiled with anticipation as she was getting ready to perform her final act on the wire. She was going to do a twirl and hold one leg up in the air, her finishing move.

Suddenly, the poles that were holding the wire were moving. Sapphire was trying to hold herself steady. The crowd gasped with ooohs and ahhhhhs and a few "oh my GODs!!!" Then the glass ladders came loose off the pole. The ladders stood at least 25 feet. Everyone was shoving each other out the way to stay clear of them as they made their way down. It seemed like everything was happening in slow motion. The ladders finally made their way down to the floor, shattering in pieces. Sapphire was trapped on the high wire.

Now the sensible thing to do due to her experience would be to simply walk across the wire and climb down. There lies problem number two. Both poles were decorated with tiny black spikes from top to bottom. Sapphire started to sweat very heavily. Her sweat felt like blood was dripping out of her pores. She started to tear up. Her heart was beating so fast, it felt like it was about to rip her chest open.

Then, a thought came into Sapphire's mind. It wasn't clear yet because panic and fear was clustering her mind. She finally calmed down and closed her eyes. She began to say, "Light as a feather, stiff as a board." She kept repeating it. The more she said it, the thought became clearer. She saw herself levitating over a pool of crystal blue water with yellow feathers floating on top.

The rescue trucks with automatic elevators made their way inside of the circus tent. They were setting up the elevators to get Sapphire down, when suddenly there was silence throughout the audience. They were looking up in awe as they watched Sapphire levitating slowly down to the ground. "Light as a feather, stiff as a board," she kept saying. Finally, her feet landed firmly on the floor. As she opened her eyes, she felt the intense stare of the audience. The silence was so thick you could cut it like bread. At first, Sapphire thought that they were going to attack her and call her all sorts of names. To her surprise however, the crowd cheered and whistled!!!! People were blowing their horns. The clapping seemed to never end. A few people from the crowd shouted "ENCORE!!! ENCORE!!!"

With a satisfying smile across her lips, She gracefully took a bow.

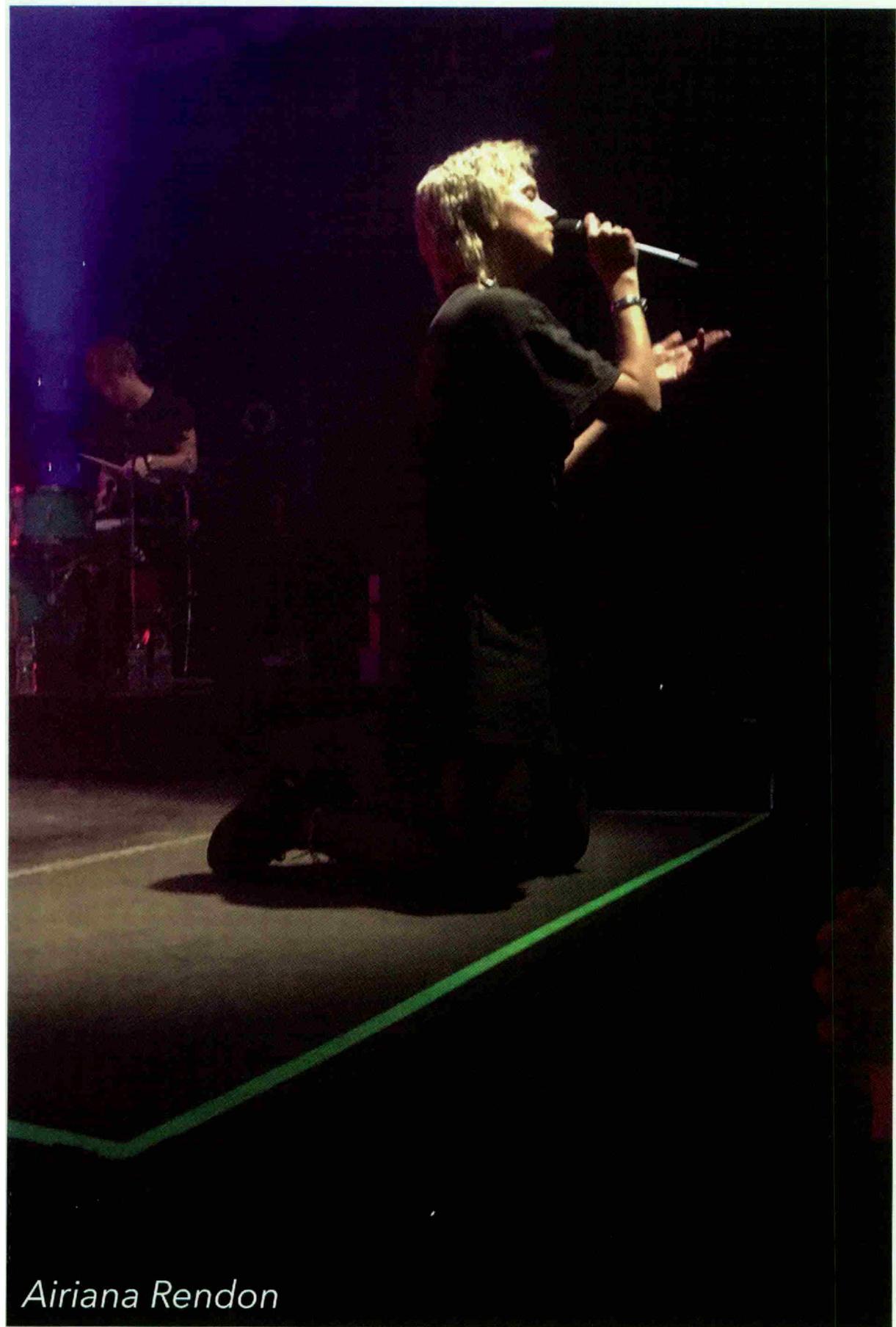
Freedom is a choice. It starts by taking your thoughts captive and transforming and renewing your mind.

Romans 12:2

# Grey Matter

*Airiana Rendon*

You've changed everything about me  
Even though you've always been there  
Hiding  
Lurking  
Showing little signs here and there  
But once I found out  
Once you scratched the surface  
Things changed  
I changed  
Everyone around me changed  
You're destroying me from the inside out  
But now that I think about it  
You've always been apart of me  
Comforting me with voices when I'm sad  
Making my heart race for no reason  
Contemplating death since a young age  
Always there by my side  
You being the only constant in my life



*Airiana Rendon*

# A Talking Aposiopesis

*Kiarah Dunn*

Ambivalent apprehension

I always feel at a loss for words

But I have so much to say

I have so much to say

Subsisting within myself

I am a paradigm

Of a living breathing aposiopesis

I can never finish what I-



*Shaeta Hossain*

# Home

*Caroline Mateo*

Come with me. We're not drinking beer from big red cups and kissing guys that'll talk about us tomorrow. Not tonight. Tonight, you're not staining your lipstick on their necks. Even though I know you crave the affection. We're going home. Away from that perpetual yearning that makes you dig your nails into your plumped lips. We're starting a revolution; a boycott in some ways and we're going home.

I'm peeling away your hardships and scraping at your misjudgments. Give me the innocence of your insanity. Give me the girl that stood five-feet tall on top of all her failures in the seventh grade. I'm not going to change you tonight or when the sky turns pink. I don't want to change you next week or in ten years. Just come home. Come with me. Dig your nails into my arm instead, stain your lipstick on my forehead and I'll give you your home.

# Infatuation

*Ashley Mills*

It's just something about you but I don't know what. You see the grab your attention and they don't even know it or maybe they do and they're just ignoring you. But it doesn't matter because weather they know it or no they make you feel good, it's a secret your secret. Its almost like a movie moment, its sudden and you get all giddy inside and you wanna tell the whole world, but you know it wont last long, until it becomes unconscious and before you know it you're obsesse

# Who ?

*Nacirema Brown*

Who is this girl that we call Nacirema

I don't know who I am

Who am I ?

Am I black , am I white , am I jamaican , am I hispanic who am I ?

when a person ask me about myself I say I am just a girl that's trying to make it

I say i'm a teenage girl with a mind of a writer

But as I say again ...

Who am I ?

# Heart vs. Mind

*Arianna Santos*

h: "I know what you want princess, I live in your core. He's just so different, something real, something more."

m: "Don't listen to him, he knows nothing! I should be in charge here. That takes time, he's rushing."

h: "Oh precious mind, where did our friendship go? We used to be best friends, but why so long ago?"

m: "Don't you remember? You made her cry. My programming was a mess, you made it hard to say good-bye."

h: "Oh precious mind. I know it's been a hard year. She just cried herself to sleep at night, and now she has no more tears."

m: "She's better now because of me. I burned the memories into dust. All because you got lazy, ever since you met lust."

h: "I want to work together, like we used to. Side by side. We can make her strong again. There is no need to hide."

m: "Oh dear heart. Oh how I do miss those days. When we fought wars together. When we had a little girl to raise."

h: "Here's a thought, oh precious mind. It's time for me to take over. I think now is the time."

m: "Well I know my place. You need to duck for cover. Stop letting them in so quickly. She doesn't deserve to suffer."

h: "You watch and see, stupid mind! They don't mean no harm. The last guy was no good. They always get me with their charm."

m: "I won't let them hurt her again. You jump into everything not sure. Your selfishness broke us apart. So now dear heart, this means war."

# Lucky

## *Jahir Lazaro*

He thought the world was out to get him,  
And realized it's just difficult to win.  
He thought this life had no meaning,  
Since everything he loved kept leaving.  
When the lights turned off,  
It was just him and his thoughts.  
So he bruised his head,  
To make it easier to go to bed.  
But he always looked at the positive side,  
Because he needed an excuse to feel fine.

He saw the cracks in his life,  
Because he was beginning to lose sight.  
He wanted to see a happy family,  
And he was tired of mom and dad's fighting.  
His faith had begun to diminish,  
He knew their love for each other had finished.  
A truth that had been out for far too long,  
So all he could do now is put headphones on.  
But he always looked at the positive side,  
Because he needed an excuse to feel fine.

He knew his goals wouldn't be accepted,  
Because he didn't accept himself.  
He wanted to be someone else,  
Causing him to avoid any mirror.  
And when he tried to walk by,  
His answers wouldn't become any clearer.  
So he sacrificed his knuckles,  
To find a less painful route.  
But he always looked at the positive side,  
Because he needed an excuse to feel fine.

He had the biggest dreams,

And tiny hope.  
Wherever he went,  
He carried a rope.  
His ideas were shunned,  
And he couldn't cope.  
So he locked himself inside,  
Thinking it's time to reach for the light.  
But he always looked at the positive side,

# Dummy

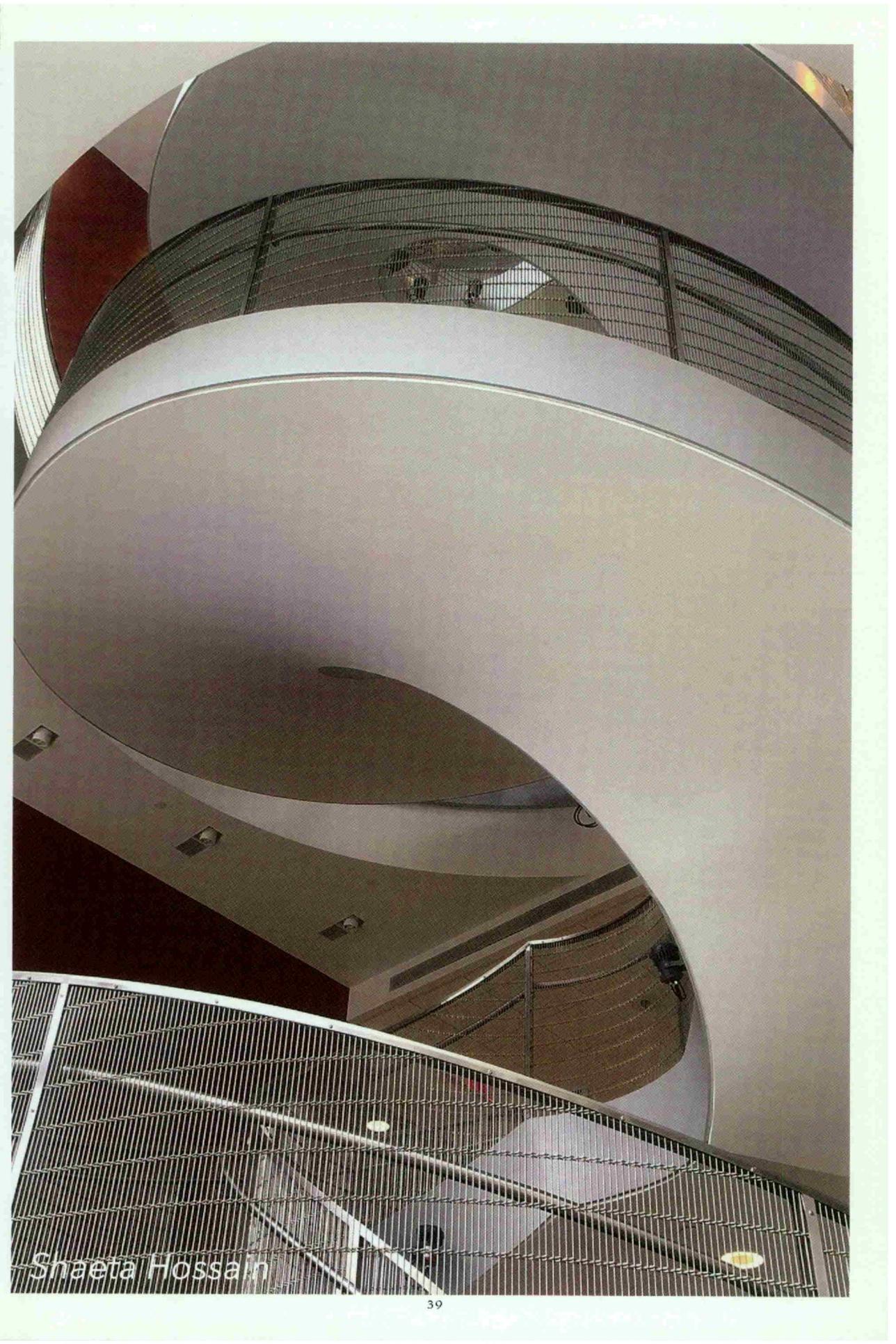
*Jahir Lazaro*

It's just something about you but I don't know what. You see the grab your attention and they don't even know it or maybe they do and they're just ignoring you. But it doesn't matter because weather they know it or no they make you feel good, it's a secret your secret. Its almost like a movie moment, its sudden and you get all giddy inside and you wanna tell the whole world, but you know it wont last long, until it becomes unconscious and before you know it you're obsesse It's just something about you but I don't know what. You see the grab your attention and they don't even know it or maybe they do and they're just ignoring you. But it doesn't matter because weather they know it or no they make you feel good, it's a secret your secret. Its almost like a movie moment, its sudden and you get all giddy inside and you wanna tell the whole world, but you know it wont last long, until it becomes unconscious and before you know it you're obsesse It's just something about you but I don't know what. You see the grab your attention and they don't even know it or maybe they do and they're just ignoring you. But it doesn't matter because weather they know it or no they make you feel good, it's a secret your secret. Its almost like a movie moment, its sudden and you get all giddy inside and you wanna tell the whole world, but you know it wont last long, until it becomes unconscious and before you know it you're obsesse

# Storm

*Thandiwe McMillan*

The rain hasn't stopped yet,  
The trees are soaking wet.  
And water rolls off their leaves  
Like the tears that slide down my cheeks.  
And the droplets fall into the lake,  
Like my face that fell when I realized my mistake.  
And the wind warns that a storm is near,  
Like all of the signs of which I should have been aware.  
And no sound is heard as the damp branches break,  
Like my heart did...how it hurt; how it ached.  
And the rain pours down, harder and faster,  
Like in the near future there would be disaster.  
And the thunder roars with lightning flashing,  
Like my heavy sobs as my world went crashing.  
Then gradually it stops until all is still,  
I peer outside from the window sill.  
The wind is silent; the rain has ceased,  
The clouds are white; the sun is unleashed.  
The birds chirp happily as if to say,  
It's alright now, it's a brand new day.  
The storm has left and the weather is better,  
Catastrophes like that don't last forever.



Shaeta Hossain

# The Painful Truth and The One-Sided Love

*Sober:*

*Morgan C. Richardson*

Sober...

There are many meanings to the word 'Sober.'

Sober means you have started to drink in order to fill the hole in your cracked heart.

Sober means you started to become high only to hurt the people that you have loved for so long.

Sober means that you have started taking drugs in order to find a better world because your world is to bitter.

Sober means you take pills so your mind drifts forever in the wonderland of your twisted mind.

Sober...

It is a way to escape the horrible world that is around you, every day you are awake every day when you're asleep every day to you is a 'Sober' day...

*Evolution:*

Throughout time we have learned, humans have changed over and over into something better then we we're before.

But it would seem that time is slowly going backwards instead of forward.

Time has been going back

Time has been moving backwards

Human have been falling back into the stone era

Humans...

Those who are intelligent can only win

Well those who are Ignorant are most likely to lose.

Those who cannot win shall fail and fall far below the chain.

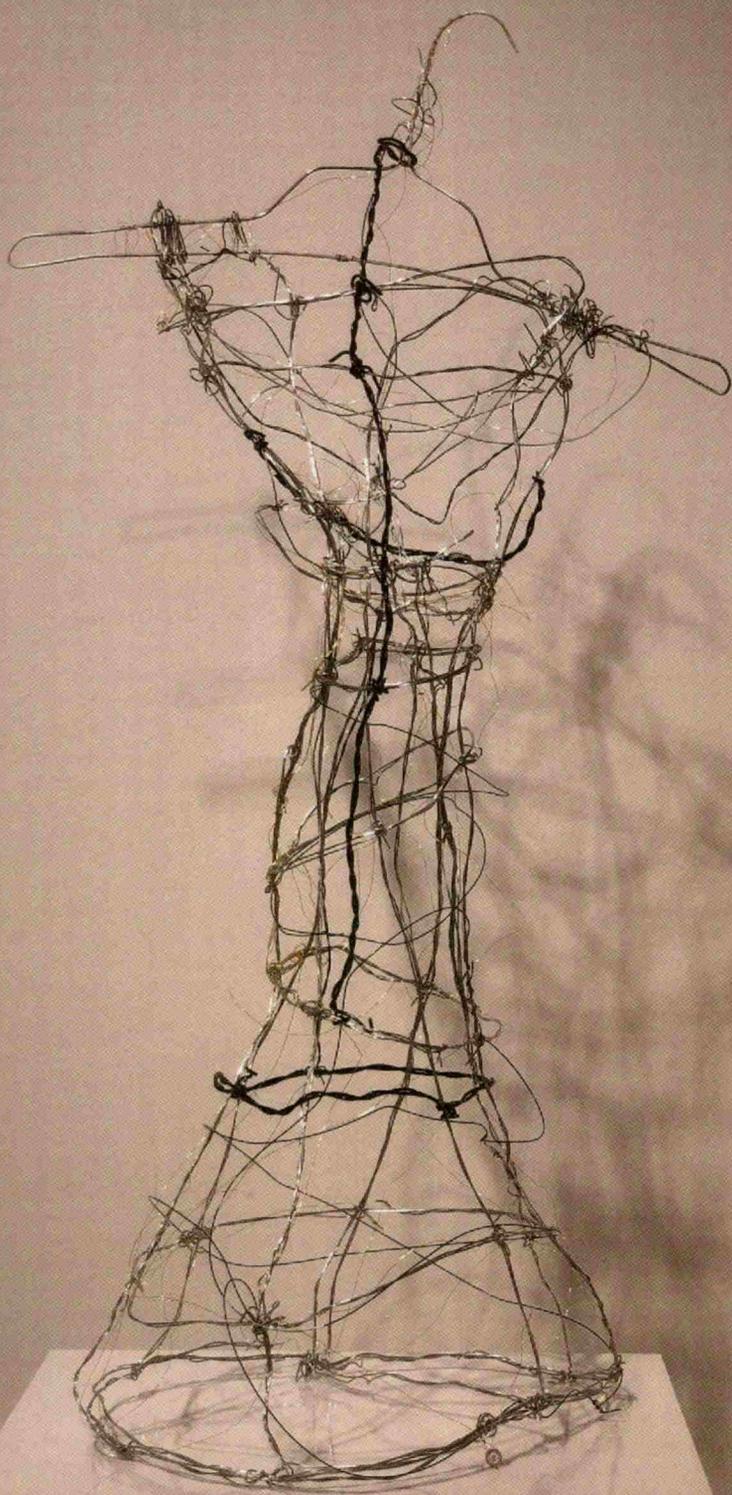
Well those who don't shall be better than all the rest

But in the end...

We all have fell down in evolution or we race to the beginning and start anew.

# EDEN:

The flower in your window.  
The ground from which it sprouted.  
The air you breathe  
The sky above and the earth below  
Eden...Called earth by the feeble minded...  
Called Pangaea once  
When the great mirror fell...Noah was not to survive...  
No one but the beasts were to live threw the fall  
He was the beginning of a disease...  
The plague of humanity  
Worse than fire  
Worse than frogs  
Worse than pestilence  
Worse than the apocalypse sent to purge Eden of us  
The book of Revelation  
It has happened  
Seven times  
I have seen their lives  
Lived as them  
Died as they did  
One line...  
I ache for  
The Third line  
The line where man and nature walked hand in hand  
I weep at the memory  
Both of longing and hatred  
So much intellect  
So much...language...  
So much culture  
Lost to the ages  
And gifted to me...  
Why?  
No one listens yet they want me to spread their wealth  
My words fall on deaf ears...  
Even yours...



*Erica Roldan*

# Zip Code 32-606

## *Dorotea Levy de Szekely*

Mama, can you see the glowing torch?  
"Where, dear, where?"  
There, under the scarlet banner;  
Oh, how pretty, "Good Fortune" it says.

Mary had a |

Mama, can you see the blurry stars?  
"Where, dear, where?"  
There, above the smoldering tower;  
Oh, how they dance away in the sky.

Twinkle, twinkle |

Mama, can you see the tall trees in the woods?  
"Where, dear, where?"  
There, behind the fenced wall;  
Look! Now it sparkles in the dark.

Humpty Dumpty |

Mama, can you see the cat's green eyes?  
"Where, dear, where?"  
There, inside the steel-toed shoes;  
Oh, how they march me into sleep.

Ring around the rosy |

# Archives

*Kate Ghesquiere*

My relic was abiding

in the black box

Under your sofa

Numb is all I feel now but

I'm lucky, all the same, because

I didn't need paper to remember anyways



*Arni Zaman*

# Beary

*Nacirema Brown*

His name is Beary.  
He lives on 22-29 dix avenue.  
He is suffering.

My older brother throws it around .  
Blue the dog bites Beary.  
My older brother is as mean as a lion.

I approach Beary worried.  
I wonder if he's ok.  
I look closely and a patch of hair is missing and it smells like dog saliva.

Through Beary eyes it's a good world.  
When my brother throws him he see that the world is full of hatred and he hates the world.

Beary recovers by taking a little nap.  
He smiles at me to show me that he is ok.  
I smile back .

I love Beary so much.  
I love Beary as if he's my brother.  
So Beary was getting lonely because he was the only stuffed animal I had.  
So I went to the carnival and won I won Beary a friend.  
Beary's friend is a duck.  
The duck's name is Ducky.  
When I first got Ducky she was suffering.



*Coinelius Laing*

# Nightmare

*Nacirema*

It was the worst nightmare then a nightmare I ever had  
Closing my eyes and dreaming about something I hope to never see  
Dreaming that the one person I want to have a future with is in the next room with another girl  
Dreaming that he was kissing the other girl  
Dreaming that once I saw he lied to my face and said nothing was going on  
Dreaming that he said that was just his friend

So yes it was a nightmare  
Once I dreamed this dream I jumped up out of my sleep screaming  
I screamed as if it was true  
I screamed as if he would ever hurt me like that  
I couldn't believe what i've dreamt  
I felt as if this relationship was over  
I felt like my heart was broken into pieces  
I couldn't believe what I've dreamt

I couldn't believe what I dreamt  
I jumped up out of my sleep angry  
I was so mad as if it was true  
I was so mad that I felt like he really have done this to me when he really didn't

I was so mad I jumped out of my sleep and I was so angry I screamed off the top of my lungs as if I saw a ghost

Some may believe that a nightmare may be true  
Some believe that a nightmare can't be true  
Some people believes that a nightmare can mean something  
Im one of those people that believe that a nightmare may mean something  
Im one of those people that believe that a nightmare can't be true  
Im one of those people that believes a nightmare may be true

# Dear Mother

*Rukaya Hamza*

Dear mother,  
I'm eleven today. It's been a year since you left us  
Yet it feels like a lifetime.  
You told me to be me  
I'm scared.  
What if no one likes 'me'?  
I wonder when I'll see you again.  
Dear mother,  
I'm twelve now.  
I sit alone because I have no friends  
It feels awful.  
Dear mother,  
I'm thirteen.  
The sleeve of my dress has covered my pain.  
Dear mother,  
I'm fourteen now.  
Tears stain my pillow at night  
As I wonder why no one will sit near me  
Dear mother,  
I'm fifteen.  
High school has started It seems weird.  
It's been five years. I wonder when I'll see you again.  
Dear mother,  
I'm sixteen now  
Tears still stain my pillow as I sleep

# Solutions

*Shaeta Hossain*

The thoughts are not  
always linear nor conventional.

My life is in an incongruent motion,  
that is not intentional.

I often gravitate to the visceral nature  
of things that are not tridimensional.

**299,792,458 meters per second**

*Shaeta Hossain*

When the light hits the pavement, it was always strangely satisfying for me.  
My pupils were dilating with curiosity, I could never articulate what this feeling was.

Maybe because there was a certain darkness in my life.

I have always lived amongst the shadows.

I was hiding in the deep recesses of my mind.

I no longer want to conceal myself.

I must break free from this cocoon.

I want to be the source of light.

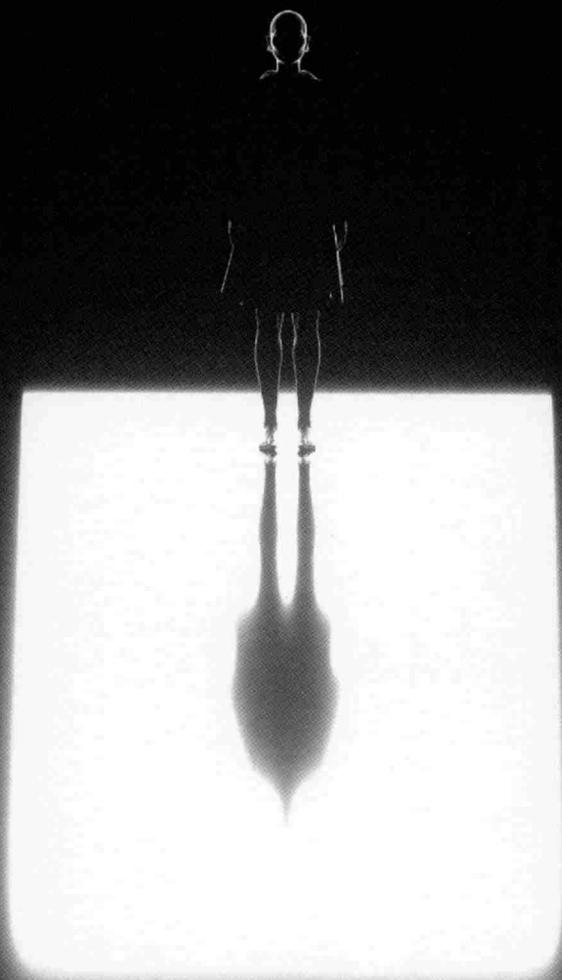
This is just the beginning.

I hope you are prepared

for what's coming.

I am not afraid...this

is my homecom



*Afterthesmoke*

# The Bright Eyed Girl- Sestina

*Rukaya Hamza*

One summer night  
In the July heat  
A group of children play  
But a bright eyed girl slips away  
Into the labyrinth  
Near the sea

And the waves of the sea  
Is what she hears in the quiet night  
As she walks through the labyrinth  
Feeling on her skin the summer heat  
Slowly she drifts away  
From the group of children who play

The children who play  
Draw closer to the sea  
Not knowing that the girl who got away  
In the warm summer night  
Is relishing the July heat  
As she joyfully runs through the labyrinth

One may wonder what is in this labyrinth  
One child notice in the group of children who play  
That in the July Heat

# The Love Flu

*Shaeta Hossain*

When I first met you, you scared me

Then I got to know the real you

You impressed me

Then I really, really got to know the real you

You blessed me

Maybe I'm obsessed with you

I confessed, yes its true

You caressed my soul

It's time I addressed you

Without you I'm blue

We need to stick with each other like glue

You are the only person I need on my crew

Baby boi you gave me the love flu

# My Brown Skin

*Ananiel Muriel*

Everytime im made fun of for my brown skin, curly hair, or my Boricua ethnicity.

I am reminded that there is no better blessing than being the color of the earth itself.

Having curly hair reflects the rapid waves of the water.

I am a flower because I grow, wither as I age, and die without water.

I am the earth.

# To My Imago Dei

*Kiarah Dunn*

Whenever I begin to think of you  
I find myself back in a place of uncertainty  
You are an enigma to so many  
I only wish for a little bit of clarity  
As a cherub I yearned to know  
What exactly you looked like  
Whenever I would ask  
My mother would say to me  
That you simply are

Anyway that we imagine you to be  
In deep contemplation I'd imagine  
Different configurations of your anatomy  
I'd wonder about the alignment of your form  
And if it was made out of cold hard bones  
Or an arrangement of glaring constellations  
Indecisively I'd create infinite variations of you  
All versions of you still encompassed in my mind today  
I've made endless adaptations of you over the years but

The Idea of you is still ambiguous to me

# Oh Little Human

*Barakaat Coppinson*

The sun's dancing rays hide behind the clouds like shy performers.

The Clouds drifting ever so slowly above my head with a cool embrace: the solace of a dark dreary place.

The rain feeding me ever so often to keep me alive, but never plentiful.

Humans

Humans talking on the phone and shopping in nearby shops. Humans whizzing by in cars and running down the block.

They stomp on my feet and spit on my skin.

I only wish to help them.

Why don't they notice me?

Am I not beautiful enough? Look at me! LOOK AT ME!

Oh Little human,

little humans eating popsicles and hanging from my arm, I love your attention, I love your charm.

You make me feel like the only tree on the block.

Oh little human how you give me life.



Rilo-Studio

# A Love Letter To Unrequited Love

*Luis Paulino*

It pricks the skin, warms the blood, and then it's just uncanny happiness.

Then the sickness, and you're climbing up the walls.

You see the person; hear their name.

Your heart is squeezed, a sense of hopeless glee with no rapture.

A playful pain like picking on a hang nail; sorry if, that's weird.

But, it's lovely. Because, every emotion has the right to live and the right to be loved.

To the actual person,

I would like to express the fact that I am grateful for meeting you; un-ironically. Because of your rejections, I have achieved undying self, and confidence with the opposite sex. Even if you softly despise me, I am entirely thankful. I realize now that it was nothing personal. I just didn't know how to kick it.

You have to admit it was kinda funny.

# Army Of Trees

*Rebecca Rodriguez*

Aww tree, Aww tree

I feel uncomfortable feeling your temperature

I feel uncomfortable feeling your texture

I feel as if you will give me splinters on my hands

And I would have to struggle to get it out

You feel so lifeless

I can feel your sadness

You and your army go through so much to help us human beings live

You and your army are scattered all over the world

To show existence of life

And we just walk by you as if you are not even there

Not even a sight in the corner of our eyes

How selfish of us

Poor thing you

Mother nature beats you and your army

Snow that sticks on you and freezes till it melts

Rain that keeps you moist and wet

Wind strong enough to blow your leaves off

Storms that makes you want to be indoors to keep safe

Tornadoes that lifts you up from the roots of the ground

Spins you round and round to a non existent place

Fires that burn you and leaves you a permanent color of no healing

I don't know how you do it, tree

Even I can't stand against mother nature when the challenge is too overwhelming

Although mother nature makes some your soldiers fall

The leaves fall and leave blood stains on the ground

The twigs and branches snap being permanently amputated

Just know you are in war 365 days of the year  
The existence and your presence you have has been ignored by us  
I feel as if only the creatures and the animals truly appreciate you, Tree  
I really don't understand why  
Why 99.9% of humans just don't take trees to consideration

I can even smell your dullness  
Smells of mold  
My nose twitches just for a few seconds  
The smell is not welcome to enter my nostrils

Aww, poor tree  
Mr. or Ms. gigantic enormous tree  
You and your army of trees fight against mother nature  
Some still stand tall, some break and fall  
All in all, you come from the ground  
Always remember where your roots come from  
You roots is your weapon  
It's what keeps you standing tall

# A Phone of My Own

*Melanie Aucello*

I see her sitting there

On a ragged forlorn chair

We are all working

Oh.so.hard.

At pretending not to stare

Acting unaware

Wondering

How...

    did...

        she...

            get...

                there?

Homeless and alone

No place to call home

Sitting there on her throne

Waiting for someone...

Anyone...

To throw her a bone

As she looks at her

Obama phone

How can this be...

That this city has no place for me

No money to house me

But I got this

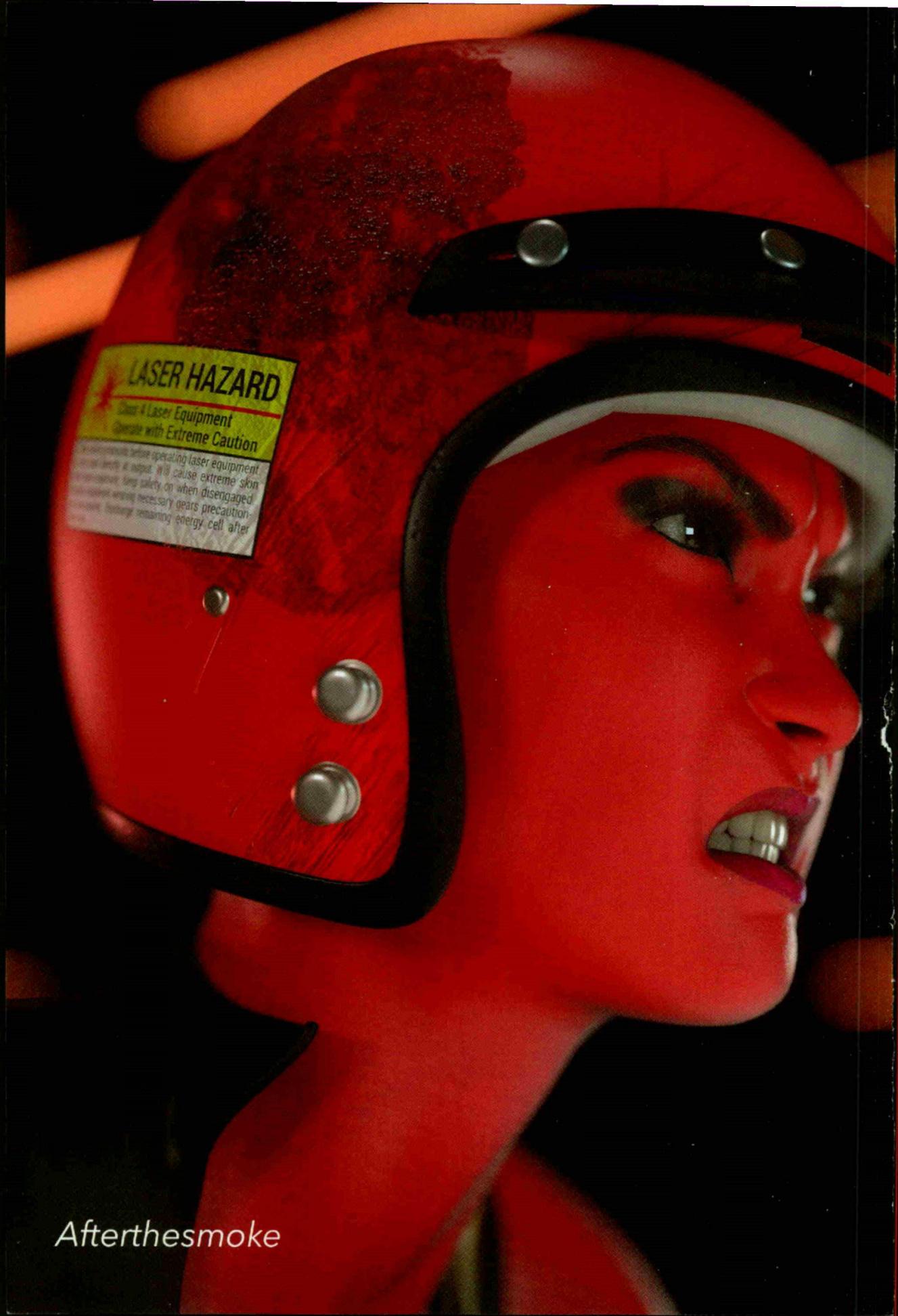
Free

Obama phone

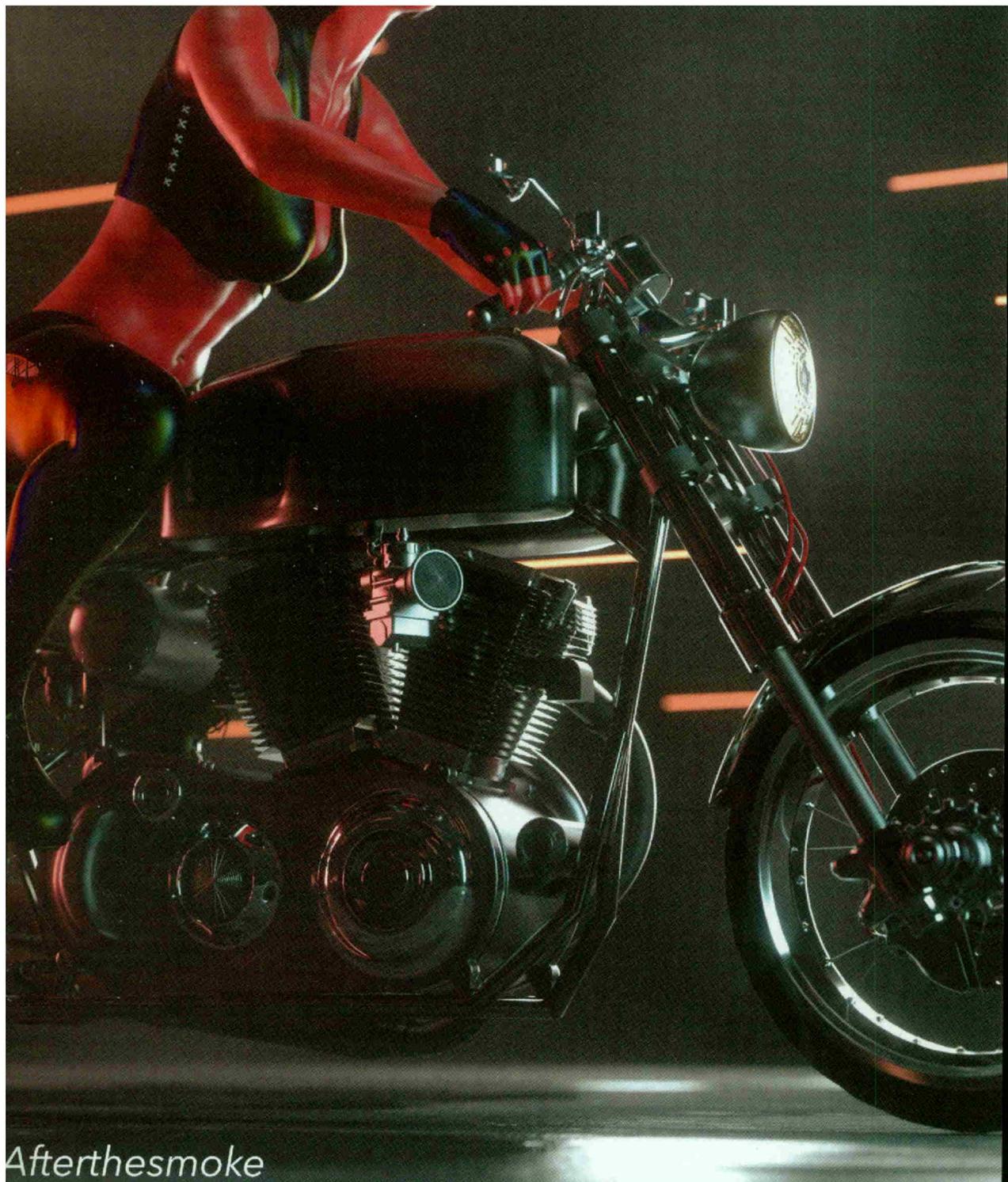
To call my own.



*Afterthesmoke*



*Afterthesmoke*



Afterthesmoke

# Ambition

*Courtney Walcott*

I am strong as a tree with its green lively leaves,  
Twenty-four with a head full of dreams.  
An optimist always looking on the bright side of things,  
Always believing in myself.  
Born and raised in New York,  
Born Female with Melanin skin.  
Strong as lioness on the hunt for her pray,  
Fearless as a strong-winged eagle soaring through the night sky,  
Hungry as a grizzly bear awakened from its hibernation.  
I will continue striving to meet my goals,  
Never seeing my dreams dashed or divided,  
Words are my art most form of expression,  
And I intend to make them my career.  
Pouring my heart out to the universe,  
On long white sheets of paper.

# Hennessy

## *Bassirou Guinde*

The sun is down my night is up,  
The mood is set with filing cups.  
A drop of lemon makes it bittersweet,  
many miles away in this hotel suite.  
Looks like apple juice tastes so rude,  
a burning feeling coming down so loose.  
My blood is rushing can't get enough,  
this Hennessy got me feeling tough.  
A couple of shots in me feeling so nice,  
wild thoughts running  
guess who paying the price.  
It feels so right but it's too strong,  
A man like me can handle this but not too long.  
My mind is spinning out of control,  
time to close my eyes and recollect what just happened in my world.  
The feelings are real and the mood is right.  
Hennessy has a way of making me feel good throughout the night.

# The Bootstrap Bunch

*Jordon Spence*

It's 4:47 pm, 5/12/17. There's a rapid knocking on the door. Jeremy's mother, Susan, opens the door for Tito and Ingrid. They say hello to Susan and Jeremy's younger sister, Grace and rush up the stairs. Jeremy, Enlai, Andy and Meredith are in the middle of an intense game of Jenga. Tito and Ingrid burst into the room, Jeremy drops the stack of wooden pieces and loses the game. Enlai, Andy and Meredith let out a sigh of relief knowing they've survived the game. Jeremy sighs. "What is it THIS time?" Jeremy asks slightly frustrated, but with the elegant touch in his accent. They each take a moment to catch their breath. "Thomas asked out Victoria!" Tito blurts out, sporadically waving his arms around. "And she said YES!" Jeremy rolls his eyes and sighs. "Some idiota (idiot) bikes past me with a stupid little corneta de aire (airhorn) and I dropped mi telefono (phone) in the sewers!" Ingrid yells. "We have to reset the day!" Tito and Ingrid shout. Jeremy takes off his glasses and rubs his eyes in annoyance. "Have you forgotten the rules we set out for our ability?" Jeremy asks. "No," Tito and Ingrid say. "So why do you want us to reset the day?" Jeremy asks. "We all agreed we should reset the day when there's an emergency and we have two emergencies," Tito says. Enlai, Andy and Meredith roll on Jeremy's bed laughing. "Why should we reset the day if Thomas asked out Victoria?" Jeremy chuckles. "Yeah, aren't you and Thomas friends, Tito?" Andy asks. "Sure, but Thomas knew I liked Victoria since freshman year of high school. He knew I've been planning to ask her out since she broke up with Richard. I have to ask her out before he does," Tito says. Enlai, Andy, Meredith and Jeremy continue laughing. "Right." Jeremy says shaking his head. "And you have enough for another phone, Ingrid, so why should we reset the day for that?" "I'm saving that money for the next iphone," Ingrid says. "The answer is no and that's final." Ingrid and Tito groan. Andy and Meredith set up another Jenga game, Ingrid and Tito join the game.

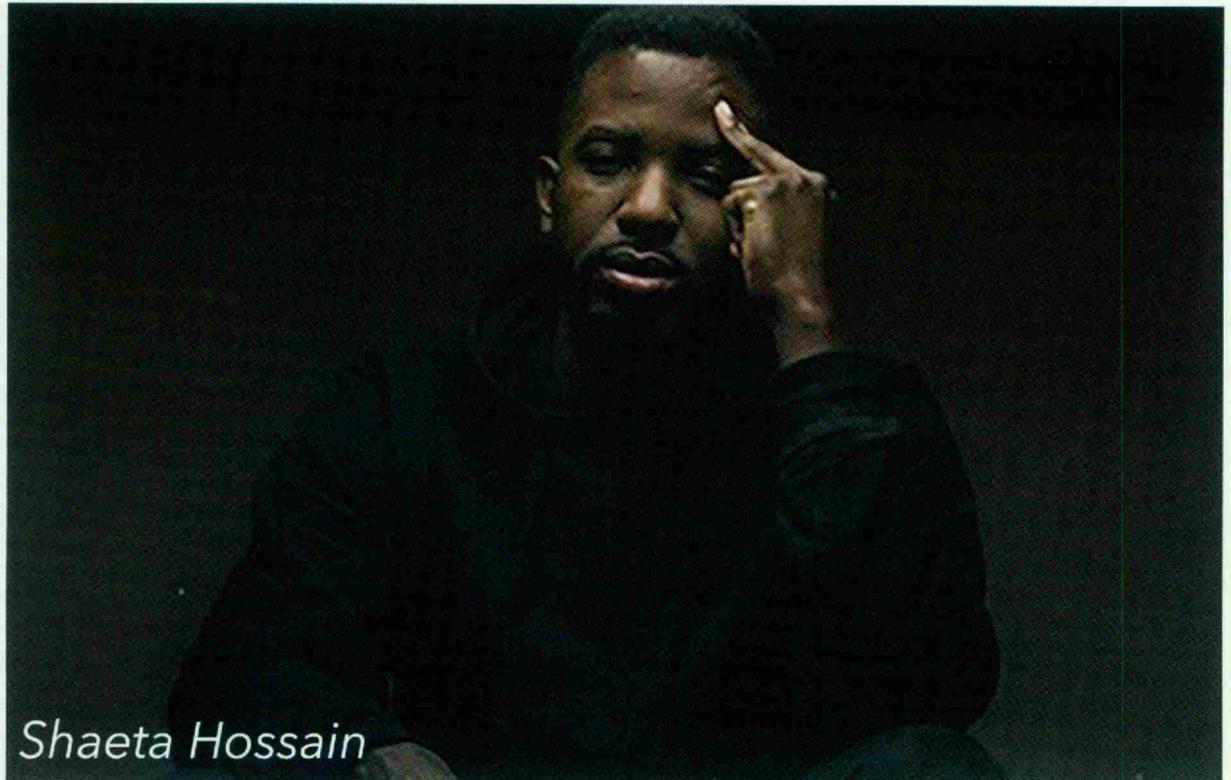
Julia frantically knocks on the door. Susan opens the door, Julia says hello as she's rushing past her. Julia runs up the stairs and she trips. She chuckles to herself and bursts into Jeremy's room. Jeremy drops the Jenga pile again. "Damn it all," Jeremy says. Everyone except Julia laughs. "That's two dares now," Meredith says. "Blasted game." Jeremy says. "What's the matter, Julia? Is something wrong?" "R-Reggie is hurt," Julia utters in distress. "Oh my goodness, what happened to him?" Andy asks. "Me and Reggie were walking down the street and this truck was coming at us full speed. I think the brakes weren't working. There wasn't much time so Reggie pushed me out the way and he broke his arm and his leg. I called an ambulance and ran here as fast as I could, we have to reset the day." Julia says. Ingrid and Tito give Jeremy a certain look. "Alright fine, we'll reset the day." Jeremy says. "Yes!" Ingrid and Tito shout pumping their fists in the air. Everyone put their hands together, forming a stack of hands in the center, and they all begin glowing. They each close their eyes. Jeremy opens his eyes and he's in his bed. He looks over to his alarm clock, it says 7:00 am, 5/12/17. He stops his alarm before it goes off. Jeremy yawns and gets out of bed.

It's 5:00 pm. Jeremy, Enlai, Andy and Meredith are playing Jenga. "Since we reset the day-" Jeremy says. "Still counts," Meredith says. Jeremy groans and the others chuckle. They hear Tito and Ingrid greet Susan and Grace downstairs, and run up the stairs, they walk into Jeremy's room. "Guess who's dating Victoria?" Tito asks. "This guy." Tito celebrates with a little dance. "Y yo tengo my phone," Ingrid says kissing her phone. Ingrid and Tito dance together. "Congrats," Enlai says. "I hope you're both happy," Jeremy says. "Hey, let's not be so vain about

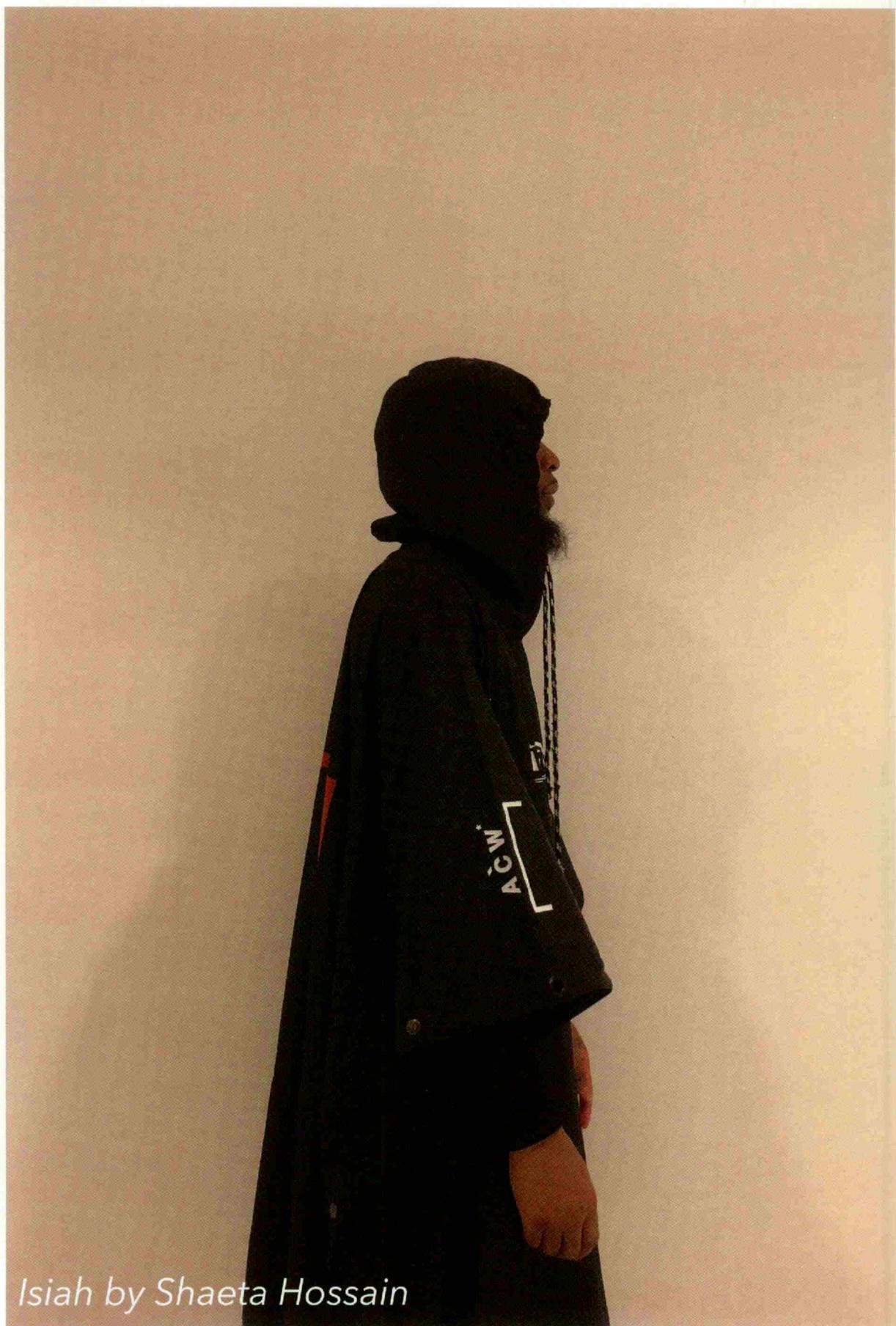
this." Ingrid says. "Why don't we vamos a un restaurante elegante?" "That depends, are you paying for us?" Andy asks. "No pago for you en un restaurante elegante, that's muy caro," Ingrid says. "Let's just go out. Ingrid and Tito don't have to pay for us to have a good time." Meredith says. "It's been awhile since we've all gone out to a restaurant because of college and work." "Meredith's right." Enlai says. "I love hanging out with you all, but we hardly ever get to. Let's go to that restaurant." "I suppose we can go out," Jeremy says. They all cheer. "Where should we go?" Jeremy asks. "I'm up for some thai," Meredith says. "I had that yesterday." Tito says. "Let's get some Italian." "Oooh. Italian sounds nice," Andy says. "I wouldn't mind Greek..." Jeremy says. "I second that," Enlai says. "Or we could get Mexican," Ingrid says. "Or we could just order the food we want and eat at our own spot," Jeremy suggests. "Alright, French it is," Ingrid says. "Agreed," everyone says. "Great! I'll call the others," Andy says.

Around 7, everyone arrives to De La Ville Du Goût. "Reservation for 8," Ingrid says. "Yes, right this way," The waiter says. The waiter seats Jeremy, Ingrid, Andy, Meredith, Reggie, Enlai, Tito and Julia at a huge table by the center of the restaurant, and hands them menus. "Thanks for resetting the day, guys. I owe you one," Reggie says. "No prob. That's what friends are for," Andy says putting her arm around Reggie. "We're all just glad you're okay," Jeremy says. They gather around Reggie and they have a group hug. "You know, helping Reggie gave me an idea," Meredith says. "Let's help people, like superheroes!" "That sounds crazy and I like it," Tito says. "I don't see why not," Jeremy says. Everyone raises their glass. "A toast to a new avocation," Reggie says. The glasses clink together in the center of

the table. "Since we're all here, we can discuss what Jeremy should do for his dares," Meredith says. "Or we could forget about that," Jeremy says. "He lost in Jenga?" Julia asks. "Yep," Andy says. "How about we get him to ask Cynthia to hangout?" Ingrid suggests. "Yeah!" Everyone says in agreement. "W-what, Cynthia?" Jeremy asks, blushing. They all laugh and enjoy a drink.



*Shaeta Hossain*



*Isiah by Shaeta Hossain*



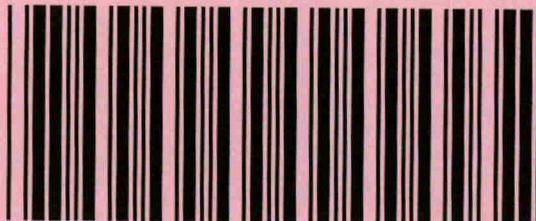
*Isiah wears all A-Cold-Wall\**

# The Rest Is Up To You...

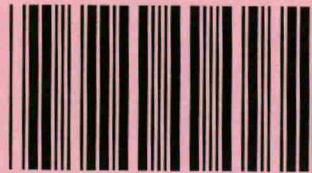
*(This is where you write your own story)*

*Ressssillliennnceee*

*Ressssssillliennnceee*



\* 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 \*



\* 7 6 6 9 \*

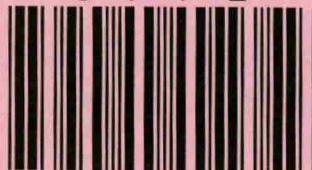
## Separator Sheet

### CASO Scanning and Image Processing

---

*Do not place folder tab above this line!*

\* 6 9 9 2 \*



\* 6 6 6 6 6 6 \*

