

STUDENT WORK!

# P'ANI'KU!!

**BC**  
COMICS

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JAN 2012



# P'AN KU

VOL. 48

ISSUE # 1

Choosing a motif for a magazine can be easy and difficult at times. When we chose to make the motif about comic books, I thought of how fun it could be and I knew we would have a challenge as well.

The fun was provided by the dedicated P'an Ku crew and challenge part was given to us by the students of BC, Broward College. The challenge came not from collecting the work as much as choosing among so much work. A relief that the pages wouldn't be blank, but now how to make it all work together.

We struggled and strived to provide you, the readers, with our P'an Ku Comic Book. Through countless hours of preparation, design, and editing pages, on weekends and holiday breaks, we finally bring to you a completed piece of labor and love. We hope you enjoy.

Editor In Chief

*Salomon O. Carrasco*

We would like to thank the South Campus Early Childhood Development Center and the students of Broward College's South Campus for helping create the cover for last Spring's Issue. This semester we would like to thank Pat Meyer for her continued support given to P'an Ku. We would also like to give special thanks to Lourdes Rodriguez-Florida for assisting us in our process of selecting the Spanish poetry. We're also grateful for the continued support from Broward College's faculty and students.

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**FEATURED ARTIST : DANNY DIAZ**

SCORPIOPOD.....	32	LIZARD FROG.....	34
TOURTOISAUR.....	33	SUPER SERPENTS.....	35

**FICTION**

<b>ERICA PARENTE</b>		<b>LAUREN MILICI</b>	
YOU CAN LET GO.....	23	MEAGAN'S CLIFF.....	43
<b>OWEN T.B.</b>			
NIGHT TXTS.....	36		

**ART**

<b>JOANA SANDOVAL</b>		<b>KIMBERLY SUALIY</b>	
AZTI.....	4	BROKEN.....	28
<b>IVAN BENARIDES</b>		<b>STACEY LOUIDOR</b>	
ARKU.....	5	EN LAS NUBES.....	29
<b>JEFF ROMAIS</b>		<b>JENAE RUBIN</b>	
DRAGON DRAGONFLY BOY.....	11	JAPANESE LANDSCAPE.....	30
<b>M. DANIELA PYTLESKI</b>		<b>ELVIRA CIUCULIN</b>	
THE BURNING GIRAFFE.....	14	JAPAN TSUNAMI 2011.....	31
<b>JOEY HAMILTON</b>		<b>COLOMÉ</b>	
5 SECOND KNOCKOUT.....	15	A CHILD IS BORN.....	38
<b>ANDRÉ TYBL</b>		<b>KRISTYN LAMOIA</b>	
RUBI.....	16	EXHALE.....	39
<b>PHILLIP E. HARDY</b>		<b>JONATHAN GUM</b>	
FRANKEN PORTRAIT.....	17	DON'T BOGART ME.....	40
<b>ROLY SHAUL GUTIERREZ</b>		<b>JULIANNA GONZALEZ</b>	
SPACE QUEEN.....	19	WISTERIA FALLS.....	52
<b>ALEENA HAYATT</b>		<b>MARQUEZ M. JONATHAN</b>	
READ.....	24	MUJER DE SONRISA.....	53
<b>TEU</b>		<b>KATHRYN MCALPIN</b>	
MERMAID.....	25	HAUNTED BEACH PARTY.....	56
<b>LONI NEGRON</b>		<b>ERIKA HAGARTY</b>	
PEPPER.....	27	NESTING.....	59
<b>JENNIFER SMITH</b>		NEWTs.....	59
SUMMER BLISS.....	27	MOONS OVER MY HAMMY...59	
<b>REBECCA DAVIS</b>		<b>ANDREW HOO</b>	
OH! MY BONES.....	28	MICROSCOPIC SOCIETY.....	62
		<b>BRIGHTON JU JACKOBEE</b>	
		NICOLETTE.....	63

**FRONT COVER CONTEST WINNER: JONATHAN GUM**

**BACK COVER DESIGNED BY: MARK A. HERRERA**

## **POETRY**

<b>RACHIEDA WHARTON</b> HOMELESS HAPPINESS.....6 CHILDHOOD.....6	<b>OWEN T.B.</b> TURMOIL.....31
<b>BURDLEY COLAS</b> DEATH.....10	<b>PHILONA INNOCENT</b> CHOCOLATE.....39
<b>BRIAN MARKS</b> VOICES.....12	<b>BURDLEY COLAS</b> HIS TRUMPET.....41
<b>KIMBERLY SWABY</b> WHO AM I?.....13	<b>ENRIQUE LUIS HARTMAN</b> HUH #2.....50
<b>ANNAKIE</b> A DULL ESSENCE.....14	<b>HENRIQUE GUIMARAES</b> TO BED A SNAKE.....51
<b>BURDLEY COLAS</b> POETRY.....15	<b>MORGAN BILBREY</b> MORE THAN A BOX.....56
<b>ROLY SHAUL GUTIERREZ</b> SPACE QUEEN.....18	<b>OWEN T.B.</b> MEMORIAL.....56
<b>BURDLEY COLAS</b> SUBJECTIVE.....26	<b>VALENTINA GONZALEZ NUCCI</b> SI ME CASTIGAN VERDAD LAS LAGRIMAS ESCUPEN SABIDURÍA....57
<b>PHILONA INNOCENT</b> YELLOW ROCK.....26	<b>BRENDA ROJAS</b> PARA EL DESCONOCIDO DE HOY...57
<b>PAUL W. HARVEL IV</b> THE COMFORT OF FATE.....30	<b>FRANCESCA PONTILLO</b> HER AND YOU.....60

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

<b>JORGE CASTILLO</b> HOMELESS.....6	<b>CONSTANZA GALLARDO</b> MUSIC IS MY BOYFRIEND.....47
<b>ALYSSA GARCIA</b> PAINTING HIPPIE.....7	<b>KENIA RICHARDSON</b> UNTITLED.....48
<b>CYNTHIA MALANEY</b> GLASS MOUNTAIN.....8 BEJEWELD.....9 SUNRISE AT THE PIER.....9	<b>LEVI LUNON</b> FENCE.....49
<b>SALOMON O. CARRASCO</b> VOICES.....12 LEAP OF FAITH.....20	<b>SONA HUSEYNOVA</b> THE REFLECTION.....54
<b>CONSTANZA GALLARDO</b> CUP.....21	<b>MINERVA MORENO</b> TEARS OF A LEAF.....54
<b>KENIA RICHARDSON</b> HANDS.....22	<b>MICHAEL SCIOLINO</b> CURIOUS FOX.....55
<b>MISOOK KANG</b> GRAND CANYON.....42	<b>MARK A. HERRERA</b> PALM EXPLOSION.....58
	<b>THAIS MARRA DE ALMEIDA</b> MOTHER AND CHILD.....61



Azti  
Digital Illustration  
Joana Sandoval



ARKU  
Digital Illustration  
Ivan Benarides



Homeless  
Photography  
Jorge Castillo

## Homeless Happiness

by Rachieda Wharton

Laying under my overpass hideaway  
Warm concrete supports my back  
As I listen to the cars ride away  
They seem to be rushing  
I never understood why  
Time is not of the essence  
As I'm gazing at the sky  
Lessons in the form of clouds  
Fill my mind  
And I am grateful  
Until one slows  
Sympathetic faces  
Appear through tinted windows  
I see them  
Feeling sorry for me  
When it is I who feel sorry for them

## Childhood

by Rachieda Wharton

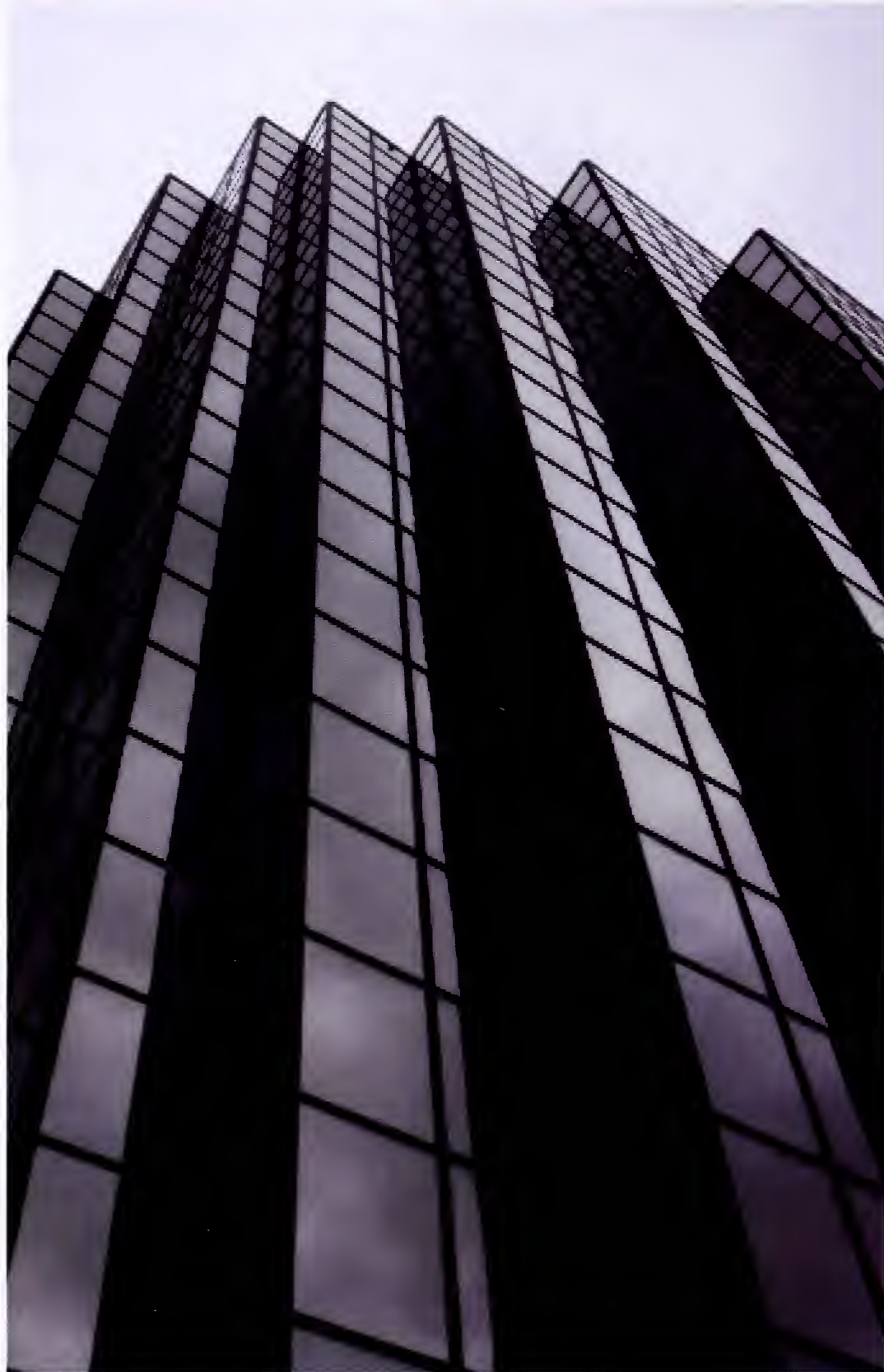
Time waits for no one  
But I waited  
With that cold receiver pressed up against my ear  
Gazing longingly into the eyes of  
The man who shared his last name with me  
Even though, last names weren't all we shared  
He was still a stranger.  
He spoke, his voice warm yet still unfamiliar  
He requested and I stood and spun  
He wanted to see how big I'd become  
He smiled but in his eyes laid the pain of  
Lost memories never to be reclaimed.  
It was my birthday one of many that he'd missed  
He promised to be at the next  
And I waited  
Time didn't.



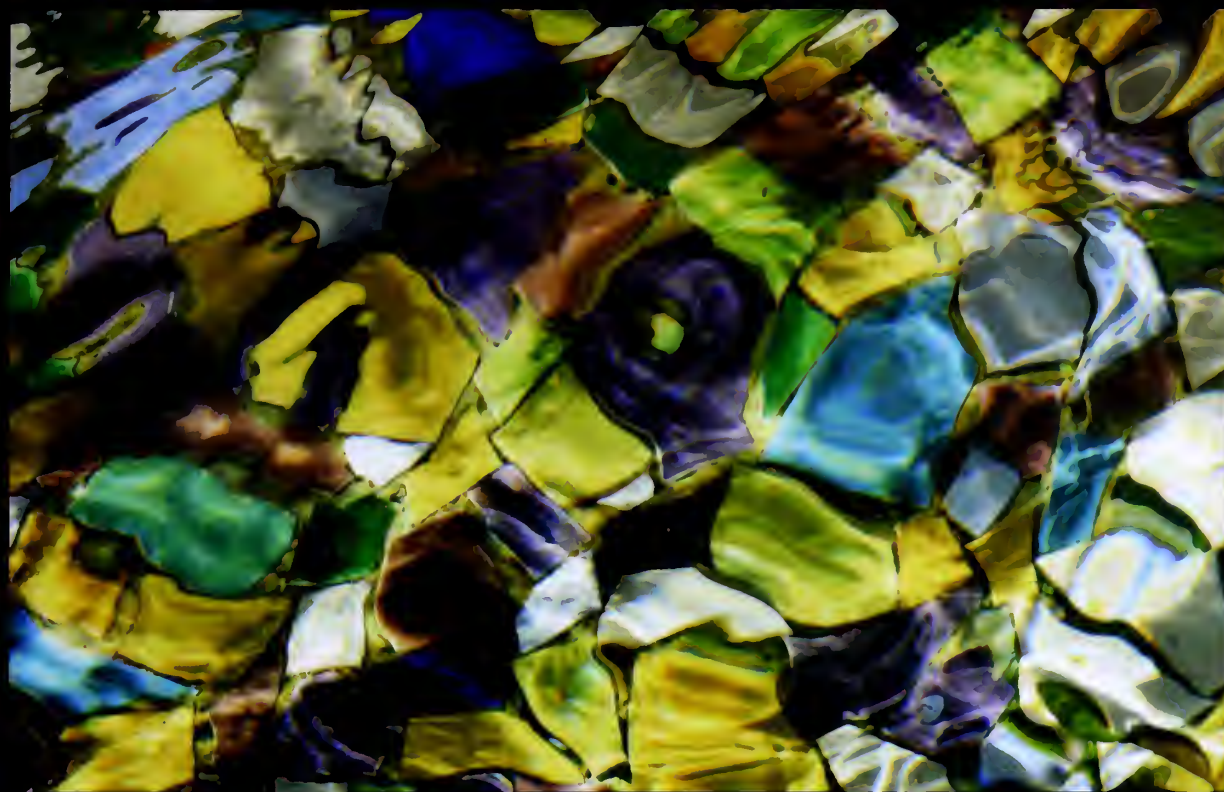


**Painting Hippie**  
Photography  
Alyssa Garcia

# CYNTHIA MALANEY



Bejeweled  
Photography



Sunrise at the Pier  
Photography

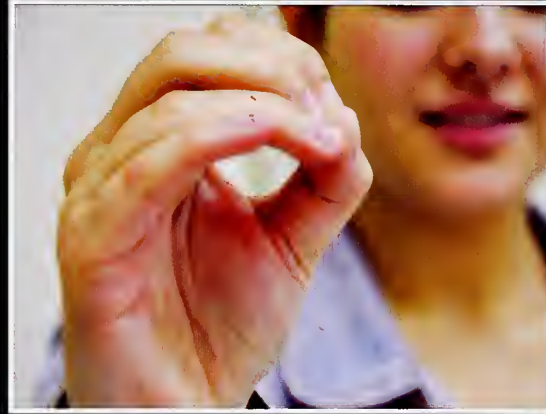
# DEATH

*by Burdley Colas*

Why hate you?  
Me? I love you  
Life is beautiful  
But sorrowful  
You? Nice friend  
But to them and life  
You are the enemy  
I wish they could see  
All the things  
You help them do  
No exceptions  
You're a great fellow  
That's what I know  
Valiant and elite one  
They wish you were gone  
For all that you have done  
The ones crying and doing  
Are still unsatisfied  
While you and I are here watching  
I know they wish they could kill you  
Me? Only you can.



Dragon Dragonfly Boy  
Digital Illustration  
Jeff Romais



## who am i?

I'm a daughter, a sister, a friend.

A homie, a dude, a face across the street-

Wandering almost aimlessly over this vast planet, we call earth.

I'm a student, a lover, a voice.

Begging to be heard but still cowering in the darkness called... Fear.

Afraid that the right person might come along and figure out exactly who I am

So I shun myself. Exiled from the body I've called my home for the past 19 years.

I'm a Christian, a believer, a... follower?

Following those who have before walked a path similar to the one I now embrace

The sound of my shoes as it hits the pavement, my head bobbing to the beat of my heart.

-Boom, Boom, Boom... -Silence-

But I'm still breathing. Walking like a ghost ignoring those that brush me as they go by.

I'm a leader, a child, a lesbian

Loving those I have been forbidden to love, knowing my path can only bring pain and sadness from those I hold dearest to me.

But still I persist, not caring but carrying the burden in my... Heart.

The words of my lovers cut deep as they spread their wings. To something better, wiser.

A shadow in the crowd, just another statistic screams in my ear... Silently.

I refuse to believe my own thoughts, pushing them aside to envelope my mind with new... Peace.



*by Brian Marks*

# voices

Some days I feel the earth spinning,  
A thousand miles an hour beneath me,  
I try to go as fast the in the other direction,  
But it always seems to defeat me.

Some days I hear these voices,  
Voices echoing in my head,  
Not the crazy kind of voices,  
Although I'd prefer those instead.

The voices of my past,  
Mere memories of what's gone,  
I do my best to tune them out,  
The world keeps spinning on.

The noise inside my head,  
Keeps me up into the night,  
On paper my thoughts sound so serene,  
I think, therefore I write.



## *A Dull Essence*

by Annakie

What do I know of deeper things?  
Of death and life and love?  
Where dreams are lost and prayers fail,  
Where homes mean greater of  
Mommies crying in shadows,  
Children with swollen eyes,  
Broken walls and matching hearts,  
Empty tables and daddy's lies

What do I know of deeper things?  
Of poverty, sadness and fear?  
Where wealth is measured in dollars and cents,  
And I love you means I care –  
But only for the moment,  
I'll leave you when it gets hard.  
When merry Christmas is just as routine  
As special Hallmark cards.

What do I know of deeper things?  
I am only in my youth.  
What do I know of deeper things?  
Not much, I guess.  
Clearly, I have no clue.

**The Burning Giraffe**  
Narrative Paper Cut  
M. Daniela Pytleski



by Burdley Colas

# Poetry

(The) giggles of words  
Tears from the ink of my pen  
On my thin cheeks' paper

(The) the battle of swords  
Hurting the edges  
Of my sharp fine thoughts

(The) Nightmares of my  
Lost dreams in this vast  
Dry- dark land

(The) sweet tender kisses  
Of my purple lips on lips  
Of thick sorrows of love's joy

(The) giggles of words  
Battle of swords  
Nightmares of my  
Sweet tender kisses.

5 second knockout  
Narrative Paper Cut  
Joey Hamilton





**Rubi**  
Digital Illustration  
André Tybl



**FRANKEN PORTRAIT**

Digital Illustration  
Phillip E. Hardy

# SPACE QUEEN

Poetry and Art  
*by Roly Sha'ul Gutierrez*

She's wearing garments dipped within fresh celestial dyes,  
A dabble of supernova and a sprinkle of red giant,

Stars glimmer through the delicate fibers of Her mantle,  
Her eyes glow with soul, reminiscent of the Sirius star candles,

Crescent moons outline the shape of Her bosoms,  
Her hips created by the very foundations of cosmos, this woman,

This inspirational vessel of light,  
Satiated with particles of Venusian meteorites,  
Exquisite visions, pouring like avalanches of stardust in flight,

This Queen of the Cosmos,  
Whom I seek to eternally model,  
To those dwelling on Earth to see my awe of Her,  
Where Her accounts will be etched in space, surpassing the age of undying fossils,

Her soul burns infinitely through Infinity like an expanse of fiery suns,  
Where I invoke to be laid upon,  
The surface of whichever planet allows me to grasp Her for a moment of love,

Positioned beneath Her gaze to be allowed to inhale the scent of nectarous reality,  
With garments made of a glow so paramount, shards of starscapes blessing our intimacy,  
Her complex stellar composition is enough to have me penning tales of Her intensity....





**Leap of Faith**  
Photography  
Salomon O. Carrasco



**Cup**  
Photography  
Constanza Gallardo



Hands  
Photography  
Kenia Richardson



# You Can Let Go

She sat there flipping through the pages of an old photo album, many of these pictures were worn, and around the edges dust had created a film. Each flip of a page brought back a memory that she never wanted to be erased. While looking at each picture she could replay it in her mind, and know what events happened right before the picture was snapped.

"This one would be nice," she said

She was talking to her family as they sat around the room one looking more confused than the next. "Yes, that one would be great," said her grandma. Her voice had grown tired, almost as if it took everything in her to say just those few words.

Once another picture was agreed upon, it was added to the pile of frozen memories scattered across the coffee table. They were creating a collage of a man they loved and always wanted to remember. It was a day they all knew was coming, each one handing it, bracing themselves for what was to come, but only she could not brace herself for what was to come.

"I'm done with this"; she threw the album across the room and exited the house without even a glance at the people she had just left.

She sat by the bedside of a man who had taught her some of the greatest things about life: things are not always going to be easy, people are not always who they say they are, and the most important how to work over grandma.

The room was cold, the walls were this murky shade of grey, there were dingy noises

that could not escape the brain even if you tried to drown them out. She talked to him as if he was going to answer, that there was going to be a miracle and everything would be just as it was before.

"Granddad, I love you" she said with a sound of hope just thinking she would hear an "I love you too."

"How are you holding yup" a man voice came from the background. It was her father, his face resembled hers, not just because they shared the same DNA, but because he was feeling the same emotions she was.

"Let's take a walk" he said to her directing her to the door.

"Okay, I'll be right back granddad" she said making sure he knew she was not going far.

"I want you to understand something babe he loves you," her father said holding her hand as if she was a little child again.

"I know dad, I just want him back."

"He gave you some of the most amazing years of your life he watched you grow from a little child to a beautiful adult and there is no one who can take that away from neither you nor him." He could see the pain in his daughter's eyes not knowing if these words could ease her pain any less. Her eyes filled up with tears knowing what she would have to do.

She reentered the room looking at a man who would be the greatest person she had ever been blessed to know. She knelt down, grabbed his frail hand and said, "You can let go now."



**Read**  
Tempera Paint  
Aleena Hayatt

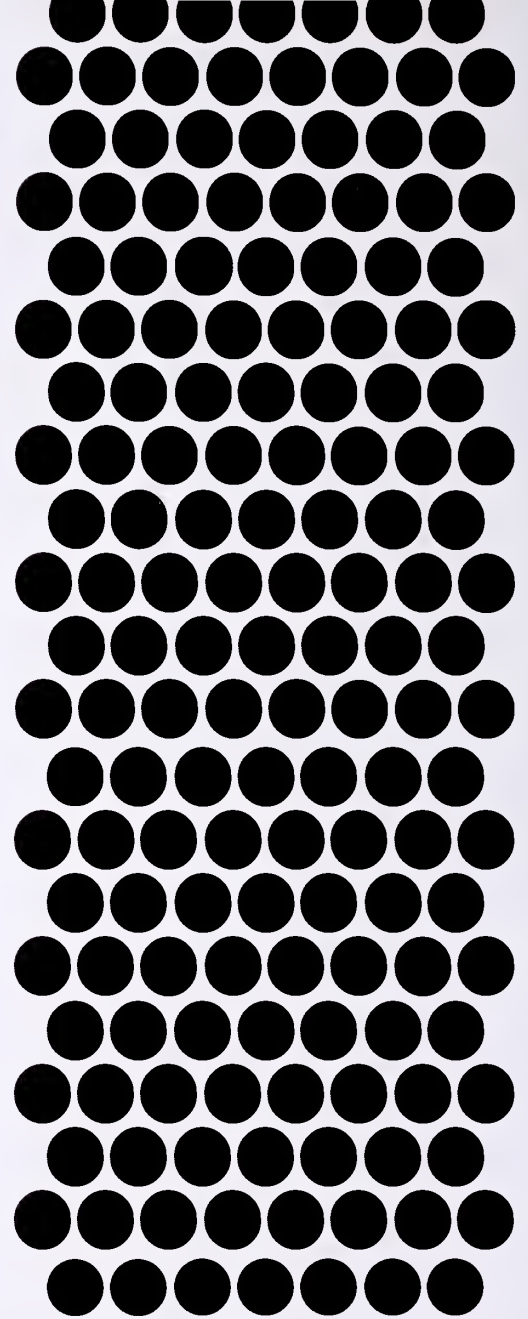


Mermaid  
Color Pencil  
TEU

# Subjective

by Burdley Colas

I understand that you are misunderstood  
And my misunderstandings never be good  
To open your mind just to understand me  
Who may in fact, would never be like thee.  
Educated well I am, but still not guarantee  
That I may be fit in a well organized society  
My reasons never meet life's standard part  
For my mind and your minds are too far apart  
For me you're deaf as for you I am blind  
But within my conscience I remain calmly kind  
I always fail to comply with moral judgments  
Cause "go with the flow" is never my moments  
I understand now that I stand alone fighting  
Against collective thinkers of right  
Who are trying to make me understand by beating  
What are morally wrong and right.  
But fail to know I intake only what's right for me  
To perceive and to do in such blinded society



## Yellow Rock

by Philona Innocent

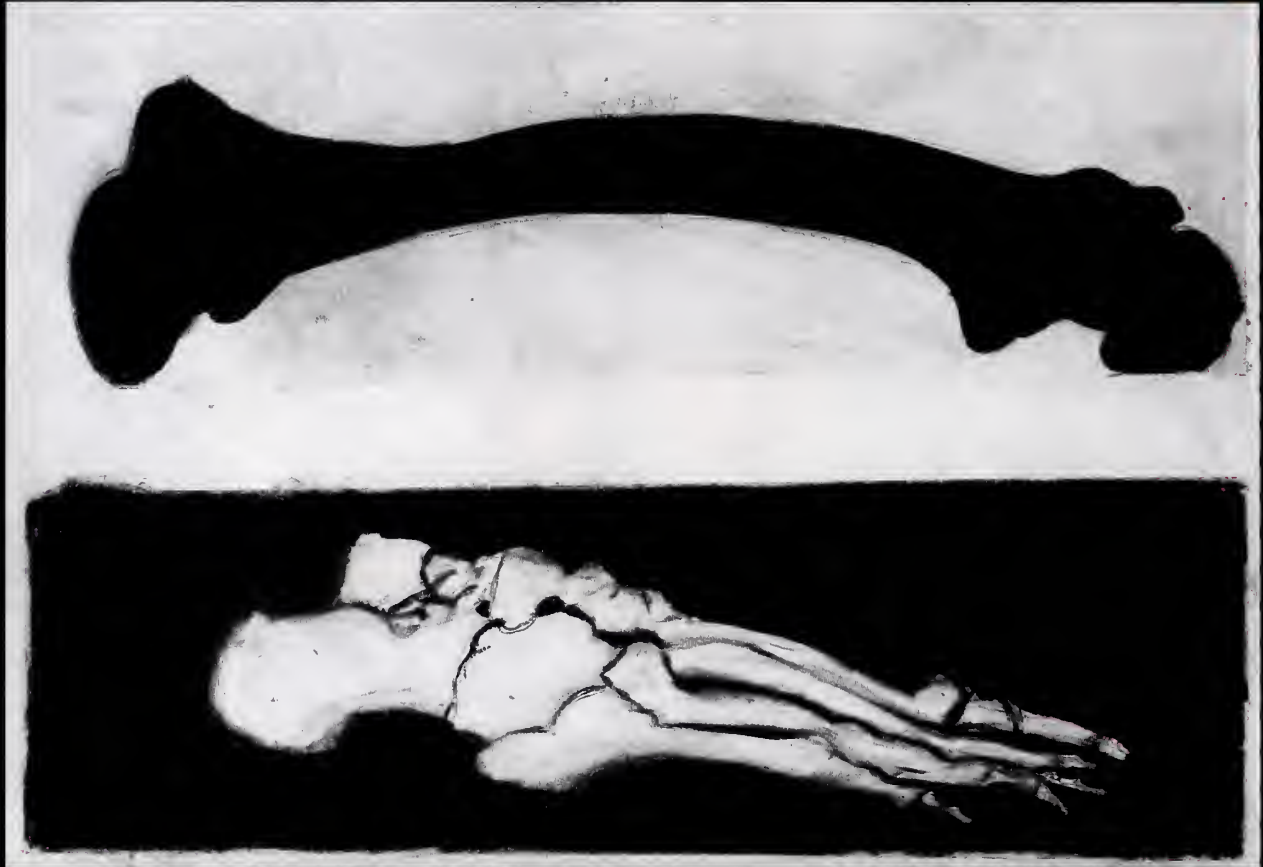
Yellow rock on sand,  
Finds itself in my left hand,  
Cradled in new life.

Pepper  
Digital Art  
Loni Negron

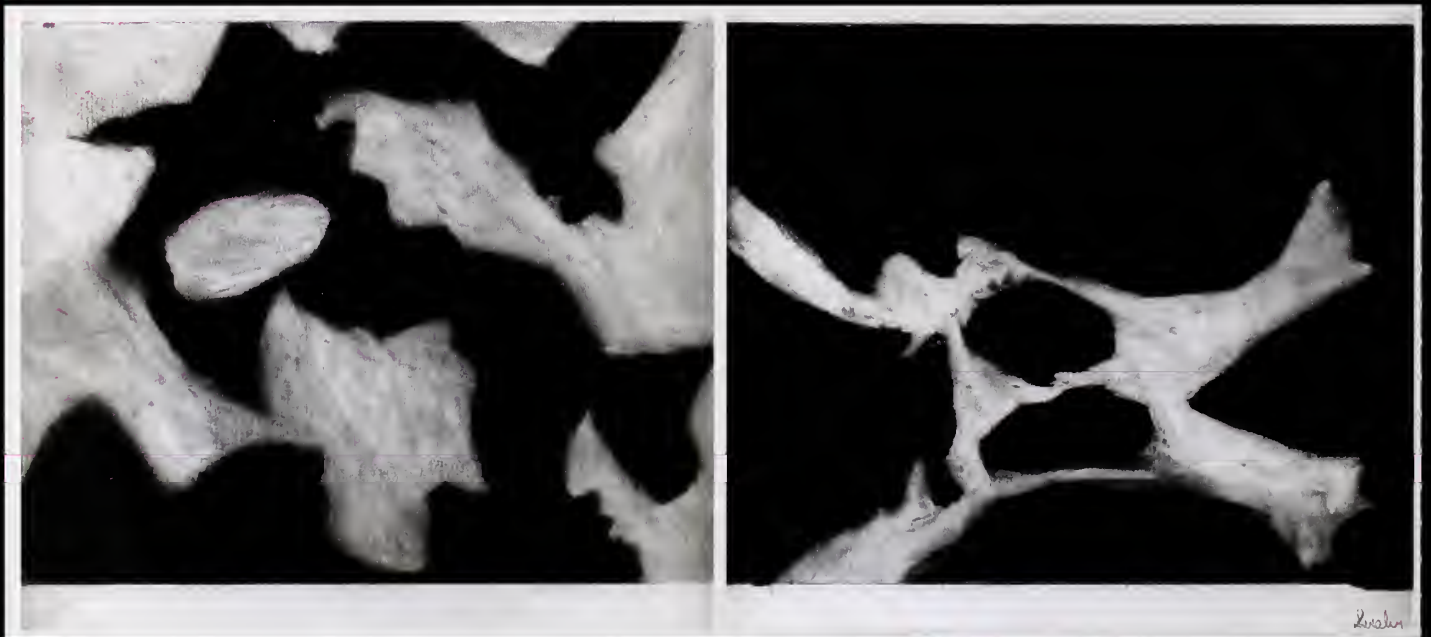


Summer Bliss  
Collage  
Jennifer Smith





Oh! My bones  
Rebecca Davis  
Charcoal



Broken  
Kimberly Sualiy  
Charcoal



En Las Nubes  
Graphite, Charcoal  
Stacey Louidor



Japanese Landscape  
Acrylic Painting  
Jenae Rubin

## THE COMFORT OF FATE

With one last goodbye  
No words left to say  
He would always remember that crisp autumn day  
Weeks turn to months, then months into years  
And as time moved on,  
So did the tears.  
But through the stars and the cold winter nights  
A beacon of hope  
Was kept, by a warm candle light  
A way back home for you to follow  
To fill a heart that had begun to hollow  
A space cleared for you  
When the time is right  
A bed made for you  
To sleep through the night  
A hand left open for you to hold  
Memories to make and by the fire be told  
A life to plan and a home to make  
In each other's arms  
Secure in the comfort of fate

by Paul W. Harvel IV





Japan Tsunami 2011  
Pencil  
Elvira Ciuculin

by Owen T.B.

## TURMOIL

Gentle potted plant  
Blissfully unaware of  
The tempest outside

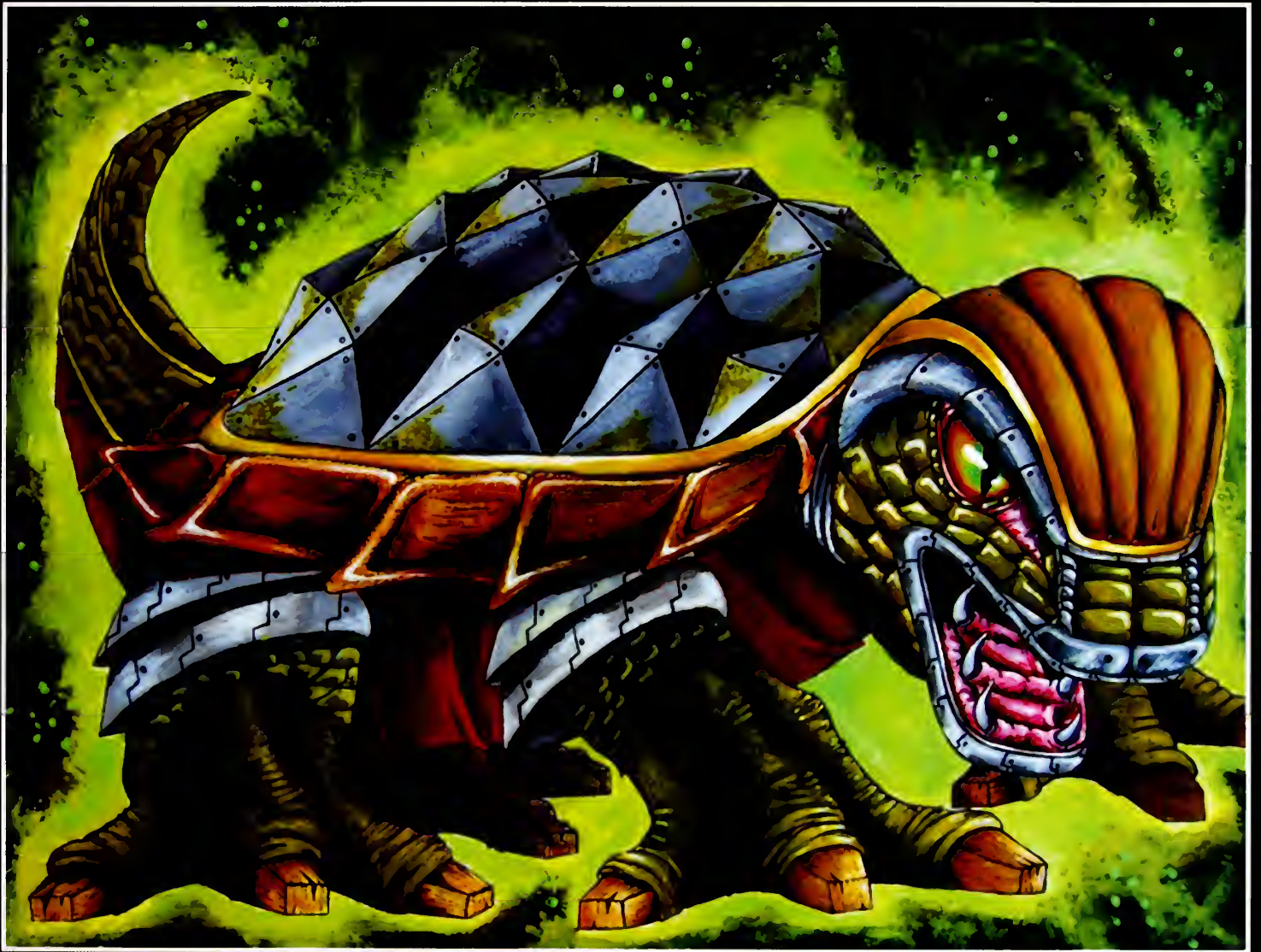
A moment's reprieve  
The fools pretend all is well  
Though maelstrom surrounds

His land in ruin  
Reality settles in  
He was not ready

# FEATURED ARTIST: DANNY DIAZ



**SCORPIOPOD**  
Acrylic Paint



**TOURTOISAUR**  
Acrylic Paint

**FEATURED ARTIST: DANNY DIAZ**



**LIZARD FROG**  
Acrylic Paint



## **SUPER SERPENTS**

Acrylic Paint

# Night TXTs

by Owen T.B.

All was silent within my sanctum, broken only by the sound of my breath. My form, motionless, save for the steady rising of my chest. Casual observers might guess me asleep were it not for my unwavering stare at the stucco ceiling. Night after night I would stare at that ceiling, each time, a different pattern unfolding before my eyes.

It often seemed this was the only time I could afford myself. The hustle and bustle of the everyday keeping me too occupied to give myself any more than a fleeting thought. Caught in the motions of the everyday, a broken twig in the rapids of life.

I sigh deeply and roll over on my side, taking a moment to notice the quiet glow of my cell phone on the counter. Who could it be? I reach for it and pick it up, bringing it closer to my face, disconnecting it from the charger as I do. A text message from Tiffany comes in.

“Hey you. Feeling any better?”

It reads, she’s referring to a Facebook status I left earlier today. It said I was depressed. I still am, but not for any reason I feel that I can talk to her about, however much I want to. I type my response to her “eh, kinda sorta” I fib, though the statement was hopefully leading enough to illicit a response. I set the phone back on the end stand and look back to the top of the room, letting my eyes lose focus on what the ceiling is and instead begin to see what is there but isn’t. I can make out the outline of a flower. I imagine it would be blue. Tiffany is between relationships right now a fact I really wish I could change.

The light of the phone casts a shadow along my face. It doesn’t break my quiet contemplation however. I keep it on silent for that very reason at night. It’s Tiff again.

“Everything ok?”

No, it isn’t, but I can’t really tell you that.

Setting the phone back down I lay back and sigh deeply. A noise breaks the silence, my stomach growling. Guess I’m hungry. “Ah... Fuck...” I utter to myself as I use some momentum to sit up, and then stand up. Stumbling around for a moment I grab my phone and stuff it in my pocket and

start to make my way toward the kitchen.

Tiff and I met two years ago. She had a boy friend then, so I never really went after her. Just liked her. Should I try now? She broke up with Gabe a week back, and I’ve been torn ever since. Her and I are friends, but does she feel the same way? Am I wasting time? I mean I haven’t really dropped any hints or anything so I can’t just come out of nowhere and ask... but at the same time if I wait too long, she could find someone else. Should I even be thinking that? A good friend would tell her to ease up and not jump into another relationship right away.

I shield my eyes from the light of the fridge and after letting them adjust eventually decide on some grapes, breaking off a branch. I look out my window and am greeted by the sound of sirens as an ambulance passes by. I guess I could be worse off. I pop a grape into my mouth and make my way to the sofa in the living room. My dad is snoring away on the couch and has his arms crossed around the remote like some sort of stuffed animal. The paused TV is casting a blue glow on the room. I plop down on the love seat and re-read the text I got from Tiffany.

“Everything ok?”

The time stamp tells me it’s only been 10 minutes. Should probably respond before she falls asleep. The image of her sleeping in her Pajamas lingers for maybe a little longer than it should. Peaceful. “Yeah, everything is cool. Just having one of those days.” I send her.

I pop another few of the purple fruits into my mouth, and set the branch on the coffee table as I get up. I walk over to my sleeping father and gently tug the remote from under his arm. I pick up the device and point it at the screen. It’s paused on an image of the ocean. I shrug and turn it off, before picking up the grapes off the table, finishing off the last few and throwing out the empty branch. I have a thought, and then decide to send another text.

“Anyway. So how’ve you been?”

It’s easier to change the subject so I don’t have to keep lying to her. I trudge back to my room and quietly close the door, my calico cat running in just behind me, put my phone on the charger and lay back down. Maybe we’re better off as friends. If I were to pursue her it would make our current relationship kind of awkward. Is it worth the chance? I suppose I could see myself with her, but I have to be a realist, it

probably wouldn't work out anyway.

It'd been a little bit since her last text. She probably fell asleep or something. I decide to get comfortable, working around to find a nice position.

Predictably, my phone illuminates the room just as I settle in.

"Ok. Just really tired from school and everything." Tired...I can understand that. Though I'm sure that isn't the whole story. It's been a week since I heard she split with Gabe, so I decided I would prod.

"How's everything been with Gabe?" I type into my phone. My thumb hovers for a moment over the send button.

Is it really my place to ask? I mean yeah we're friends. Not extremely close but I would call it good friends. Would she have brought it up already? What do I have to lose honestly? It's just one question; if she doesn't want to answer she'll get over it.

I press send, and hope for the best, before rolling over onto my back and resume the nightly ritual of staring at my speckled roof. I see a moon hovering of a river tonight, no, a stream. It is a dying stream. It looks tranquil, wonder if places like that really exist. I'd like to go sometime if they do. Another siren echoes throughout the house, Guess that ambulance earlier is heading back to the hospital. Well whatever my problems at least I have my health.

I'm laying down for what seems like a long time watching the silent motion pictures on my ceiling, going through different scenarios in my mind before I eventually am interrupted by the familiar glow of my Smartphone. Guess I didn't scare her off.

"Sorry about that, I was helping my mom. Everything is all right. We actually talked yesterday. If it's all right though, can we talk about this in person later? I'm starting to fall asleep."

Well that's...unfortunate. I feel my face

frowning and pangs of disappointment in my chest. I was kind of hoping to see how she was doing now but it'll have to wait I suppose. I grab my phone and text out the response.

"Okay, good night. Love you."

I type as a cruel joke to myself. I don't plan on sending it.

I wonder what she would do if I were to send it. How would she react? Would she think it a joke? In magical Christmas land where all dreams come true she'd shoot an "I love you too" back.

Of course dreams don't come true.

That's why they're called dreams after all. If it happens then they can't really be a dream. It's more a goal at that point.

I am motionless again, save for the steady rise and fall of my chest. I suppose I can't tell her, and probably never will.

It's more of a dream, a fantasy.

Here I have the means and opportunity to break the ice and tell her, and yet, I'm too terrified to pull the trigger. To press that button for fear of what will happen next.

"Oh fuck!" I say. The cat pounced onto my stomach and startled me and knocked the phone from my hand.

I reach for my phone and a look of pure horror takes over my face.

"WHAT! NO! Shit shit shit shit!" I say in a quiet yell as a wave of dread washes over me. In my panic my thumb must of accidentally pressed send. "No no nooo.."

As though it would some how undo what had just been done. I feel like my life is coming to an end. I pick up the cat and toss her off the bed. She lands and scampers away, as though everything were okay. Okay, damage control mode. Think, think, think! But I'm coming up empty. My hand feels a little weak and I drop my phone.

I stare at the telephone for what feels like a long time, the screen now black and facedown in the sheets. The familiar light from its screen shines off of the bed cover. She responded.

*To  
press that  
button for fear of what  
will happen  
next.*



A child is born  
Mixed Media  
Colomé



*Haiku Sequence*  
*Chocolate*

*by Philona Innocent*

Dark and succulent  
Hidden and wrap in a box  
Sweet is every bite.

Layered like onions  
It induces tears of joy  
As one savors it.

Young, old cherish it  
It symbolizes true love  
Pure as this of Doors.



Exhale  
Color Pencil  
Kristyn Lamoia



Don't Bogart Me  
Markers  
Jonathan Gum

## His Trumpet

*by* Burdley Colas

his old trumpet  
on his dark lips  
tight in his grips  
eyes closed, a set  
of blackish tones  
sucking his bones  
he knows, but yet  
his solo is bleeding  
the notes he seeks  
as they're admiring  
his puffy cheeks  
"Oooooooh Yeah!  
Riiiiiiight there!"  
they chant so rich  
as he cries, he lies  
his highest pitch  
in the old smoky bar  
and as his solo note dies  
he says, "get me a cigar"



**Grand Canyon**  
Photography  
Misook Kang

# Meagan's Cliff

by Lauren Milici

Her beauty was passive, subtle like a crimson-orange leaf detaching from its mother tree and blowing in the fall wind; quiet and unnoticed but a lovely sight to those who dared pay attention.

I thought it would last forever, the delicate porcelain skin and the smile that melted my heart, the one that let me know that everything would be all right.

But, like all things on this earth, her beauty faded with the years that came.

I watched as cigarettes turned the almost pearl likeness of her teeth a dull yellow. I watched wrinkles form around the corners of her once velvet lips. I watched her eyes grow tired and weary. Her once sweet, perfumed smell faded with the scent of tobacco taking its place.

Remember when we were twelve, Meagan, I want to say. We used to sit on the wooden swing in your mother's backyard. You used to tell me stories. Remember?

Somewhere deep inside her, I know she remembers. Past the pale pink lipstick and the charcoal painted eyes, I know Meagan Moorland is still twelve and still likes to cheat at hide and seek and still wonders why she could never solve a Rubix cube.

I watch as she sits down on the bench in front of the dining hall. She pulls her lighter from her left pocket and a cigarette from her right. She puts the white stick in her mouth and sighs deeply, letting the gray smoke flow out into the chilly air. Her stringy, russet hair hangs down over her face and her jeans are ripped at the knees. She doesn't care. The tobacco makes her feel at peace.

"Meagan," I say lowly, and it comes out almost as a whisper. She looks up, but she doesn't smile. "Are you going to class?"

"I don't know." She exhales a ring of smoke. "Maybe."

We share a physics class this semester, but I only see her once out of the four days we're supposed to attend.

She rolls up her long white sleeves and looks up at me again. "Do you want me to go?"

What an odd question. I think. The answer is yes, of course. Her presence brings an odd, familiar sort of comfort. The answer is also no, for I find myself gazing at her rather than taking notes from what's written on the board.

"Do you want to go?" I reply, repeating her question after being unable to share my thought.

Meagan draws long from her cigarette and exhales again, almost quietly grinning to herself as she sits back against the wall. "Physics isn't part of my major." Her voice is soft, but raspy, and I remember when it was young and full of life. She turned thirty on the inside when the rest of her body turned ten years younger.

Her major is English, and she'd shown me poems when we were fourteen. They were sunny and honest and written in a pink and white journal. Now I watched her scribble verses and lines on homework and various scraps and sheets of loose-leaf paper. One fell from her bag before she left class a week ago. I promptly picked it up and I read the messy script.

The lights are dimmer in December

The trees are hollow

The walls are washed away

Paint covered secrets

Secrets covered pain

The rest was scratched out in black.

Meagan, are you in pain? I want to ask. But I don't think she'd tell me. She rarely tells me anything personal, anything about her life. Whenever I drive her back to her house after class, she stays silent the whole way home. I keep my eyes on the road while I silently try to figure out what exactly is on her mind, but she gives me no hints or clues.

"Noah," She says somberly, flicking her cigarette to the ground and squashing it with the toe of her boot. "Do you want to skip class with me?"

Her eyes are round and green and they stare up at me with intrigue and curiosity. How could I say no? I could miss a class, just this once. I sit all the way in the back. Ms. Siebel might not even notice my absence.

"Well sure, Meagan." I tuck my textbook back into my shoulder bag. "What did you have in mind?"

She stands up and grabs me by the arm, her grip firm and her fingers closed tightly around the crook of my elbow. The touch startles me and memories flood through my mind, ones of her dragging through the woods in the back of my house. I was always too afraid to go in; scared I might meet my demise at the hands of a bear or some sort of ferocious creature, but Meagan made me. She'd told me she'd fight all of the monsters we'd come across. She was my hero.

Her valor is the only trait that seemed to remain the same, and she pulls me across the campus grass with a look of determination spread across her face.

"We're taking your car," She says, leading me into the parking lot. "But I'm driving."

"You're what?" I want to ask her if she remembers Driver's Ed in eleventh grade, when she turned the wheel much too far to the left and crashed into Ms. Tanner's butterfly garden, thus plummeting her grade to a D minus. Instead, I hand over my keys without protest. Even

if it results in my impending death, I can't turn down Meagan wanting to spend time with me. Every so often I drove her home, we walked to class, or we sat together in the dining hall. This instance is different; she's making the first move.

The Station Wagon is old and grey and the only thing I could afford after two years of saving up paychecks from my minimum-wage job, and not a very popular item. The football team had shuffled into the parking lot one rainy afternoon last spring, and Brad Dunning walked forward. He said loudly, while obnoxiously smoothing out of the front of his varsity jacket, that he wouldn't be caught dead pushing around an out-of-date heap of garbage such as the one I own. But Meagan never told me my car was junky or lame. She always got in and looked straight ahead.

She hits the button to unlock and climbs in the driver's side. "You coming?"

I hold my breath before hopping in and putting on my seatbelt. "Where are we going?"

She turns to me and grins, a rarity, and I can see the little wrinkles forming around her mouth at the mere age of twenty.

"Wouldn't you like to know?" She cackles like a sinister witch.

A voice in the back of my mind tells me there's a small chance I might die today, if not by Meagan's driving, then surely by the location Meagan is taking me to.

The car pulls out of the parking lot and onto the road, making a sharp right onto Silver Creek Road. I watch the speedometer rise above forty-five and brace myself. Her eyes are in full focus, paying attention to nothing else, least of all me.

"So, you're not going to tell me where we're going?" I grab the dashboard with both hands as she makes another rapid turn. "I don't want to die before twenty-one. I'd like to finish college, have my first Manhattan, get a high paying job, maybe settle down and start a family..."

"Shut up, Noah," Meagan says sternly, and she pulls into a neighborhood I'm utterly unfamiliar with. "Just trust me."

I sigh deeply. "Haven't I always?" Meagan smiles again and I can feel my body ache in anticipation.

"Meagan is crazy, man..." My friend John had said a few weeks ago. "She has this look in her eyes like she's gonna bring a gun to school and blow us all to hell."

Meagan definitely isn't all the rage at Rodale University, to say the least. She goes to bed with guys who aren't me and hardly says a word to anyone.

I shouldn't be upset though, about the random guys. It's not like we're dating, although I tend to treat her like we're in a civil union. She doesn't treat me like much of

anything, which hurts more than she could possibly ever know or understand.

But I could never tell her that.

I had narrowed my eyes at John. "She isn't crazy-" To my knowledge. "-She just keeps to herself." I like to think I keep to myself too, but I am in a fraternity, and I do attend the occasional party and routine football game. I have friends, I socialize...Meagan doesn't do any of that. In fact, I don't know what she does in her spare time besides write. I wonder how much of her time is spent alone.

I want to ask her, but the car stops.

"Where are we?"

We're parked in front of a forest, thick with wet grass and abundant in red and yellow leaved trees. Black birds fly in and out of the branches. One perches on a limb and stares down at me with black, beady eyes. I shiver. The road must be miles back.

"Just come on." She grabs me again, this time by the hand, and I feel twelve again. I can feel my buckteeth and terribly mousy hair coming alive and Meagan's hair is in two ponytails and her shirt is bright pink.

Do you remember? I know she remembers. I know she has to feel what I feel, because she's smiling. The fallen leaves crunch under the soles of our shoes and she pulls me along, skipping almost frantically through the woods. She knows exactly where we're going.

"Now close your eyes," Meagan commands. She stops me in the middle of nowhere and the path is getting darker. We must be miles into the woods, no sign of human life or civilization. My heart is pounding, as I'm completely convinced there is a hungry bear lurking around the corner, or maybe Meagan is going to stab me bloodlessly and tie my body to a block of cement. No one would be able to hear me scream, and no one would find a body for at least a few months. They'd find my corpse half-eaten and the wake would have a closed casket. I can picture my mother reading the eulogy now; 'Oh, if only Noah hadn't skipped class, he'd still be here with us today.'

"Are you going to kill me?" A part of me is joking, but I don't feel my lips curl into a grin. I'm looking straight at her, pebbles staring into emeralds.

"Close your eyes, Noah," She says again, this time more firm. Obediently I shut them and I try to become used to the darkness behind my lids as she continues to lug me along.

I open my ears. Crunch! Crunch! Crunch! Fall is all around us, and leaf after leaf collapses under my feet. I hear the chirping of robins and maybe the buzzing of a fly, but I'm really listening for a growl, a grr. I hear nothing else. Meagan makes no noise.

*"I know she remembers.  
I know she has to feel  
what I feel, because she's  
smiling."*

..

I feel her break to a halt and I slam in front of her, my body hitting the ground below. I feel my face grow hot and red with embarrassment and Meagan laughs. She pulls me up; turning my torso to face what I assume is the front.

“Just a bit more...” I feel her bony hands slowly push me forward. “There. You can look now, Noah.”

Hesitantly, I open my eyes to nothing but pure blue sky. The toes of my feet are inches away from a stony edge, Lake Emery glistening at the bottom. Meagan chucks a stone off the cliff and we watch as it falls for what feels like forever, until it finally hits the water with a tiny plunk!

“I...Meagan...” I step back a little, the distance from here to the ground below slightly intimidating me. I don't want to imagine falling from such height. The stone will sink to the bottom, but I'll slam against the surface of the water, my life ending on impact.

“Saben's Cliff,” She proudly states.

Saben's Cliff...A place that I thought only existed in the make-believe part of my childhood. The older kids used to say it was the most magical place in all Piper Falls, and the adults said it didn't exist. It wasn't on any roadmaps or mentioned in the town history. It was all just apart of our game. That's what I had thought for the past ten years, anyway.

“It's real. Can you believe it? I always wanted to show you.” She spreads her arms and shuts her eyes, her mouth opening wide and stretching into a beam from ear to ear. I wait for her to say, Remember? Just like when we were little and...But she doesn't. She inhales the cool air and stands still.

I walk in front of her and face her, carefully examining the face of the girl I had known since my first year of life. Tar stains the bottom row of her teeth. Worry lines fill her forehead. Her long, wavy locks blow towards me and I catch the scent of tobacco in my nose. Meagan's natural glow and delightful aura had dimmed and faded once we turned seventeen, but I can see it once more her face, in her rare and genuine, now closed grin.

Then it fades. Her face twists up, a memory floating in through her mind, a ghost encircling her body, and the flawed grin declines into a frown. Her arms drop, but her eyes are still closed.

Come back, I beg silently. The Meagan I once knew had finally returned, but only for a moment. No, please come back.

I won't let you go.

Impulsively, I grab the sides of her face and I press my lips into hers, a kiss long, long overdue. Her body grows rigid for a moment, a reaction of shock, and I feel as if she's going to pull away. Instead she wraps her hands around my neck and she kisses back deeply, our tongues flickering and nose squashed against nose.

I should have kissed her at our eighth grade dance, at the community barbecue three summers ago, in the woods on that faithful day.

Better late than never, I think. She lets go slowly, fingers still closed over my neck.

“Meagan,” I breathe. “Where have you been?”

“Here,” She says, gesturing to the forest around us.

“But why did you...you stopped...” I don't know how to ask it. Here. It seems so stupid now.

“But you've been different,” I choke out. “For a really long time and-“

“So?” She raises her eyebrows and shrugs. ‘So?’ That's it? That's all? And here I've spent years wondering what happened...and she thinks nothing's happened at all.

“So this is just...who you are now.”

Meagan steps back and folds her arms. What am I not getting? Is there something blatantly obvious in front of my face that only I am unable to see?

Or am I just afraid to open my eyes?

“Look around you, Noah.”

I glance around, and look back at the lake below the cliff. “Old oaks, damp grass, a tall cliff, a body of water...”

“Nature, Noah.” I can feel her becoming slightly frustrated. No, no, Meagan I don't get it. Why can't she just tell me?

“What about it?”

“People change. It's in their nature.” Meagan shrugs again.

People change.

Sure, people change. They grow older; they develop new habits and drop old ones. They hang out with different crowds. They change their hair color, or get a new car.

They don't just build a bridge between them and their only friend and act as though an almost nineteen year best friendship was nonexistent. They don't sleep with Nina Sellers' boyfriend and call you to pick them up after.

Does she really think she's done nothing wrong?

“But you did more than just...change.” I can feel a vein start to pulse in my neck. I don't want to upset her but I can't get the right words out. “It's not that simple, it's-“ “It's life.” She turns on her heels and starts to walk away. No.

My fists clench and I stomp after her, my face turning red and my eyes narrowing enough to burn a hole in the back of her head.

“No! No it's not 'life', Meagan!” I bellow, raising my voice high enough to knock birds out of their nests. She keeps walking and I yell louder, hoping she'll stop and just turn around and listen for once. “We turn fourteen and you stop talking, you stop coming over my house. You lock yourself in your room and you chain smoke. You disappear for hours on end and you reappear like

nothing happened and—

“Yet you’re still here,” She says calmly. Slowly, she spins around and sticks her hands in her jean pockets. “It’s been six years. You’re still here.”

“Well of course,” I had every reason to leave, the mistreatment and neglect and the lugging me around like useless baggage...but I couldn’t. I can’t. “I love you.” The words are out before I can stop them and I hoped the wind would catch them and blow them away. But Meagan’s eyes widen.

“You love that I ignore you? That I make you drive me around and that I make you lose cool points with Phi Beta Kappa and that I blow smoke in your face during every attempt at conversation—

“I just want to know why.” Is that so bad? Is it really that hard? Meagan stares up at me.

“Jenny...” She starts. “Jenny died...That’s why.”

The name comes out in a murmur, hushed like a secret, and it doesn’t ring a bell.

“Who?”

“Really, Noah?” She shakes her head at me and turns on her heels again.

“No, stop walking away from me, Meagan!”

She quickens her pace and I rush after her.

“Damn it, just tell me. Please. I’m tired of guessing.”

She turns her head to the side but she doesn’t stop. “End of eighth grade...the girl in our school who threw herself off a cliff, remember?”

Newspaper clippings start to rush through my mind, headlines that read LOCAL TEEN DIES BODY FOUND IN LAKE and TEEN SUICIDE IN PIPER FALLS.

Jenny Feller. She was blonde and her mom was friends with Meagan’s mom...it was so long ago, her and her death. I never thought anything of it at all.

But something else clicks.

She threw herself off a cliff. “You mean...” But I don’t want her to say it.

“This cliff. Saben’s Cliff.” She’s still walking and I’m following her back through the woods. “They said we’d never find it, but I did. I found it and she threw herself off of it.”

“Meagan...” I grab her by the shoulders and hold her in place.

She blames herself.

She couldn’t tell me she blames herself...and I didn’t even think to consider it was something deep, something internally breaking her apart.

“No, it’s...” I search my brain for the right words, trying to make up for the yelling, for the shouting and the stomping. “It wasn’t...”

“My fault?” She doesn’t look at me. “I knew she was sad. I thought this place would make her happy. I was going to bring you here after. Remember? I called you and told you to come over, and when you came, I wouldn’t come

out of my room.”

I remember. The phone rang and I knew it was Meagan. Her voice cheered on the other end, telling me she had the surprise of the century for me to. I put on my favorite shirt and knocked on her door, but Mrs. Moorland said she didn’t want to come out. I walked back home with my shoulders slumped, wondering if I did something, wondering why she changed her mind. Her mom must have told her the news.

“That doesn’t make it your fault. You didn’t know what she was going to do.”

She jerks from my grip. “No, Noah, no. Do you get it now? I deserve to walk alone. I don’t deserve to be around people or to form friendships. I don’t deserve you.”

The words bite at my heart and I know she loves me. She loves me back and I can finally stop wondering. “Meagan...” I reach for her again.

“You shouldn’t love me, Noah. Lung cancer will eat me alive soon enough. You’ll have your degree and your big house just like you want.”

But that’s not all I want.

There would be one thing missing and she knows it.

“And what,” I’m supposed to just move on and be happy...is that what she thinks? “You’ll just continue to wander the universe alone?”

“Precisely,” She says lowly.

I spin her around. “It doesn’t have to be like that,” I take a deep breath and vomit the words I’ve been dying to say.

“Please, just let me in. Be with me.”

Meagan looks into my eyes. “I can’t.”

“Meagan.”

Her eyes begin to water and for a moment I think she’s going to assure me once more that she can’t be anything more than a loner, let alone my girlfriend.

She looks up at me, lips parting slightly, and I’m ready to fight whatever comes out.

“Can we just...” Go our separate ways? Get married?

Kiss and make up? “...go to the woods behind your house?” Her face cracks into a smile. “Unless you’re, you know, too chicken...”

“Race you back to the car?” The childhood words come out, rather than the planned repetition of ‘I love you’, but I know she knows it, I know she can feel it.

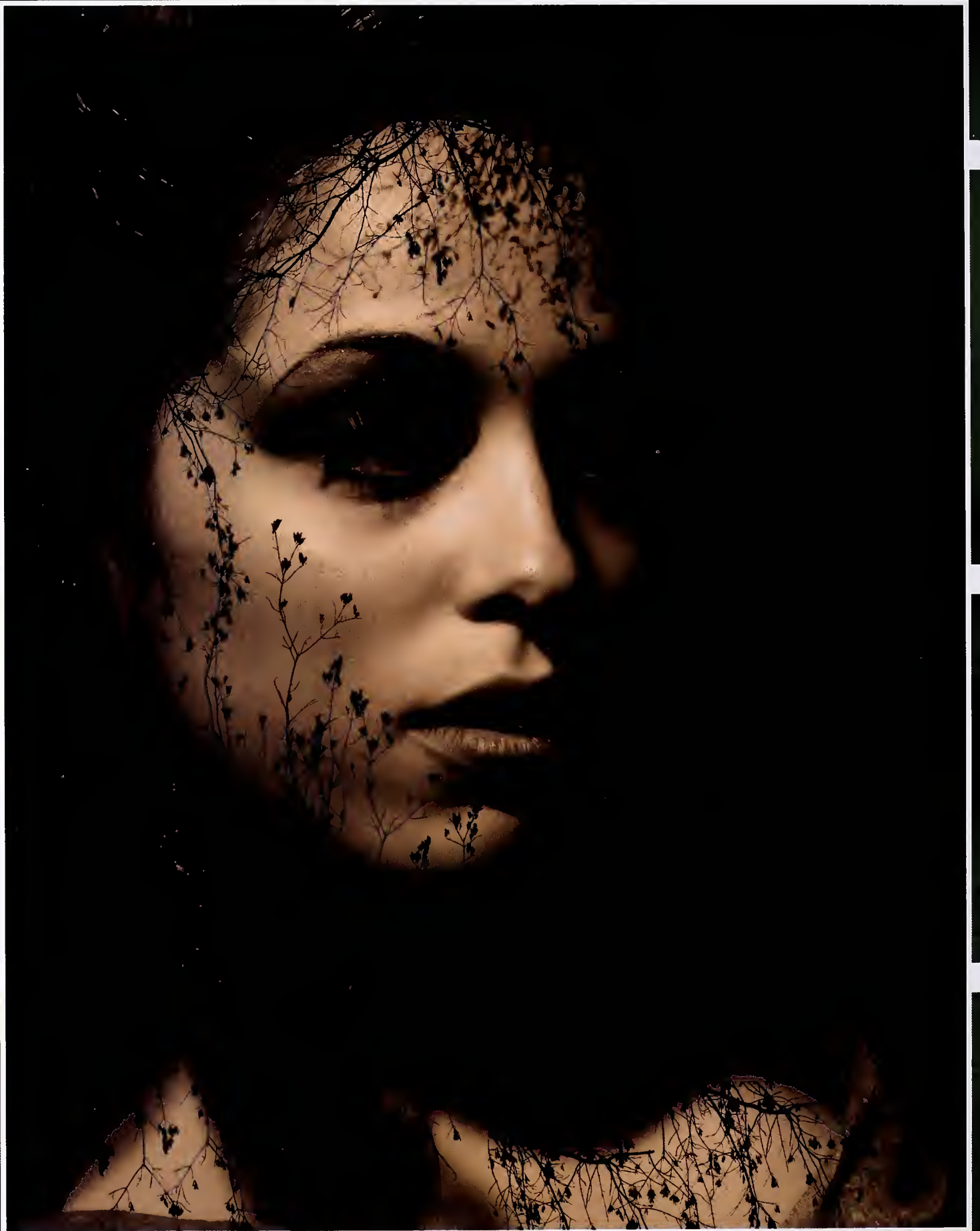
We stare at each other’s lips and she leans forward, turning her head and standing on her toes. My hands reach up to hold her face but she pulls back.

“Last one there made out with Suzy Ketch behind the oak tree!” Meagan sprints away through the woods, leaving me to laugh and chase after her, like nothing had ever changed.



Music is my boyfriend  
Photography  
Constanza Gallardo





Untitled  
Photography  
Kenia Richardson



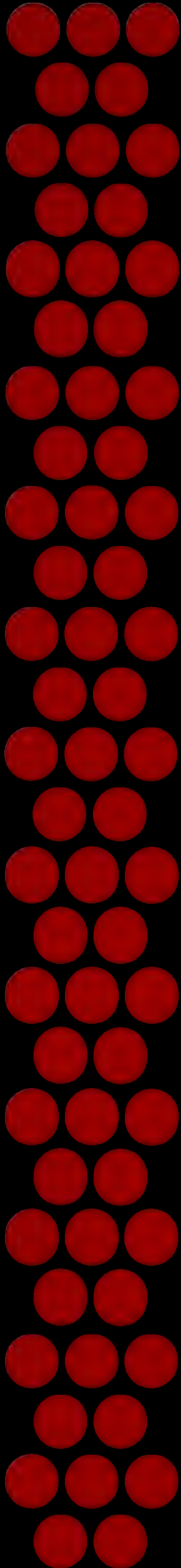
Fence  
Photography 120 film digital print  
Levi Lunon



# HUH #2

BY ENRIQUE HARTMANN

Depression pain go away to never come back another day baby your fool proof love foils the plans the devil has for me me me who be the only man I've seen to court both joy and misery loves company so the voices in my head join jovially and invite all the hell they can because these dark clouds mean admission is free to choose but sometimes pain makes you forget you have a choice and it's not nice to have to deal with this bullshit and sometimes I feel like I am licked my wounds so many times that everything tastes like blood flowing in my veins faster now that I think I am insane window pane stained and smashed pieces are all around I have the lights of my friends however depression casts a grey veil made of white that I lift when the kiss makes my baby doll my wife and man that I claim to be never has an umbrella when it gets rainy with a chance of sun fall and get back up I realize that I'm not alone in the light is when the pain feels like knives to cut off this noose wrapped around my neck because sometimes I'm afraid of what might happen next and call me a cowardly lion king of the stumble over my own feet baby your love zoo keeps all these dangerous animals away baby stay and depression pain never come back again.



## To Bed a Snake

*by Henrique Guimaraes*

Wrap your arms around me  
Let us unify  
Let us breathe this musk and air  
Let us sanctify

Curling fingers in my back  
Deep and sharp they tear  
Spiraling around my mind  
Under falls of hair

Twist your arms around me  
Open up your hearts  
Show those wicked eyes  
Red lips, how they part

Distorted all around  
I hear the passion song  
Carried on the flow  
Of your red forked tongue

Venom does run deep  
From your kiss departs  
Course throughout my body  
And murders at my heart.



Wisteria Falls  
Digital Illustration  
Julianna Gonzalez



**Mujer de Sonrisa**  
Color Pencil  
Marquez M. Jonathan



The reflection  
Photography  
Sona Huseynova

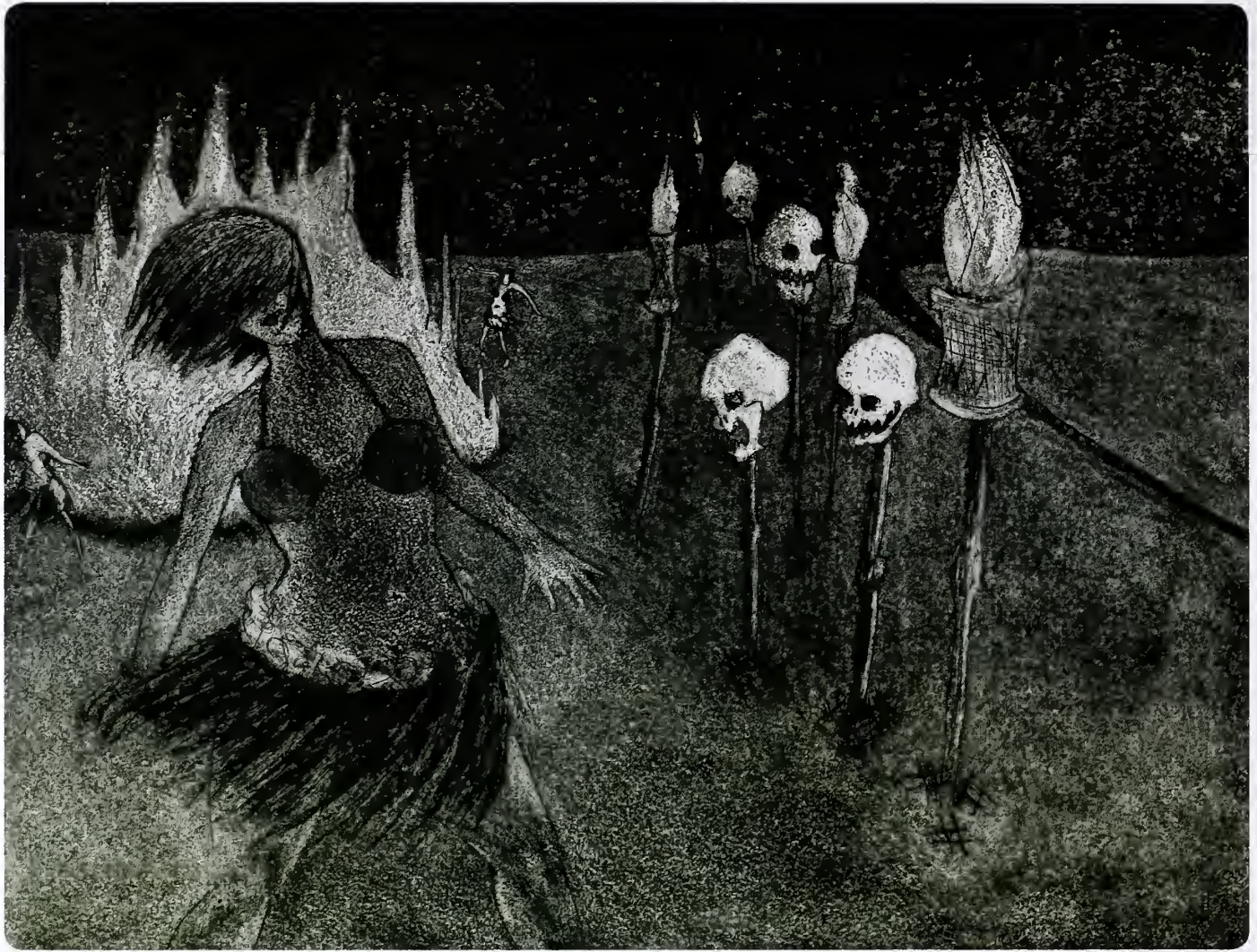


Tears of a leaf  
Photography  
Minerva Moreno





Curious Fox  
Photography  
Michael Sciolino



**Haunted Beach Party**  
Etching  
Kathryn McAlpin

## MORE THAN A BOX

We sit in a room with a box.  
A box that it is too small,  
A box that is not empty.  
One covered by barely blossomed daisies.  
We sit in a room with a box.  
A box that is not heavy,  
A box that has just been built.  
But will be covered in dirt  
And a snowdrop to surface the soil.

by Morgan R. Bilbrey

## MEMORIAL

A touch of Autumn is in the air as I approach the memorial. Gently caressing it, I feel the cold stone biting at my finger tips. As I trace my fingers along the engraved names, I'm brought back. I can remember the smell of violence in the air, the sound of gunfire, and the taste of blood and grit in my mouth. A cold tear is running down my cheek. Why did I survive? Why did my brothers die?

by Owen T.B.

## Si me Castigan Verdad, las lágrimas escupen sabiduría

Estaré loca por ver manipulacion en cada sombra,  
Por desconfiar de la felicidad y  
Del alivio de juguete que proclaman 'los defensores de la muerte?

Me condenaron,  
Me diagnosticaron,  
Me encerraron,  
Me araron,  
Me sacrificaron con una vision pura.

Cuando exhalo,  
Levanto sarta de mentiras,  
Pero aunque me desespere  
No alcanzo a mostrarlas,  
Ni siquiera antes  
De que veulvan a caer.

Me atranganto con lo que otros llaman  
Un antifaz retrogado y  
Alejado de la realidad palpable,  
Pero lo que no entienden es que  
Es la realidad misma la que me estrangula,  
Con su verdad de un gris  
Tan oscuro que es malvado.

No se puede ver en tonos de gris cuando se trata de la vida.

Mi condena se convierte en carga,  
Se transforma en una hebra irrompible  
Que corre a traves de mi alma y pensamientos.

Moralidad, derechos, creencia, vida, muerte.  
Enumeracuiones sin sentido y  
Desviaciones en la valorizacion de lo correcto.

Mi don, mi castigo,

Déjà de brillar cuando sucumbo ante el meido,  
Y las sobras se agrandan,  
Y las risas ensordecen,  
Y las mentes debiles se creen ver reir,  
Pero en realidad lo que lloran es sangre,  
Sangre derramada en manos propias  
Que esperaban ser redimidas,  
Y todo dejo de esperanza brillante  
Parciera apagarse en aquellos  
Companeros de celda espiritual.

Pero la verdad no puede ser negada,  
Mi verdad tampoco.

Me paro con huesos quebrados  
Sobre pilas de lagrimas de sangre  
A defender eso que espera qe yo lo haga.  
La vida.

Porque hasta sin pensarlo,  
Mi luz se estira para enceguecer  
Al pobre infeliz que se consideraba automata  
Pero solo era un hilo en la marioneta de interes

Hermano que brilla,  
Estoy con vos en el mar de la inconsciencia.  
Nadamos juntos contra olas de  
Agresividad y violencia,  
Defendamos la paz,  
Defendamos la vida.

Esta enfermedad da la verdad  
Nos ata unos a otros,  
Como faros en medio de la miseria emocional,  
Para plantarnos cual semilla en tajo de tierra seca,  
Fe en el poder y en la magia de la vida.

## Para El Desconocido de Hoy

by Brenda Rojas

Si alguna vez te pidiera que me escribas,  
es para saber que tambien puedo ser insiracion.  
Si alguna vez te pidiera que me pintes,  
no es para que me retrates,  
si no para plasmes con tus manos aquello que tus ojos sienten al respirar.  
Si alguna vez to pidiera que me hables,  
no es par aver que tenes para decir,  
es par aver que tenes para decir,  
es para sentirme envuelta en tu perfume una vez mas,  
y elevarme con el pensar de que es a mi a quien tu voz se dirige.

Si alguna vez te pidiera que me miraras,  
no es para que me veas,  
Es para buscar en tus ojos los motivos que mis labios lloran.



**Palm Explosion**  
Photography  
Mark A. Herrera

# ERIKA HAGARTY



Nesting  
Print



Newts  
Print

Moons over my hammy  
Print





**Mother and Child**  
Photography  
Thais Marra de Almeida

## HER AND YOU

*by Francesca Pontillo*

You can tell her anything about yourself,  
You can tell her your whole life story,  
But hers and yours will never be the same.

You may have the same problems and issues,  
But hers will be greater.  
As much as you may want, you'll never be her.  
You may have the same looks and DNA but she will always be her and you, you.

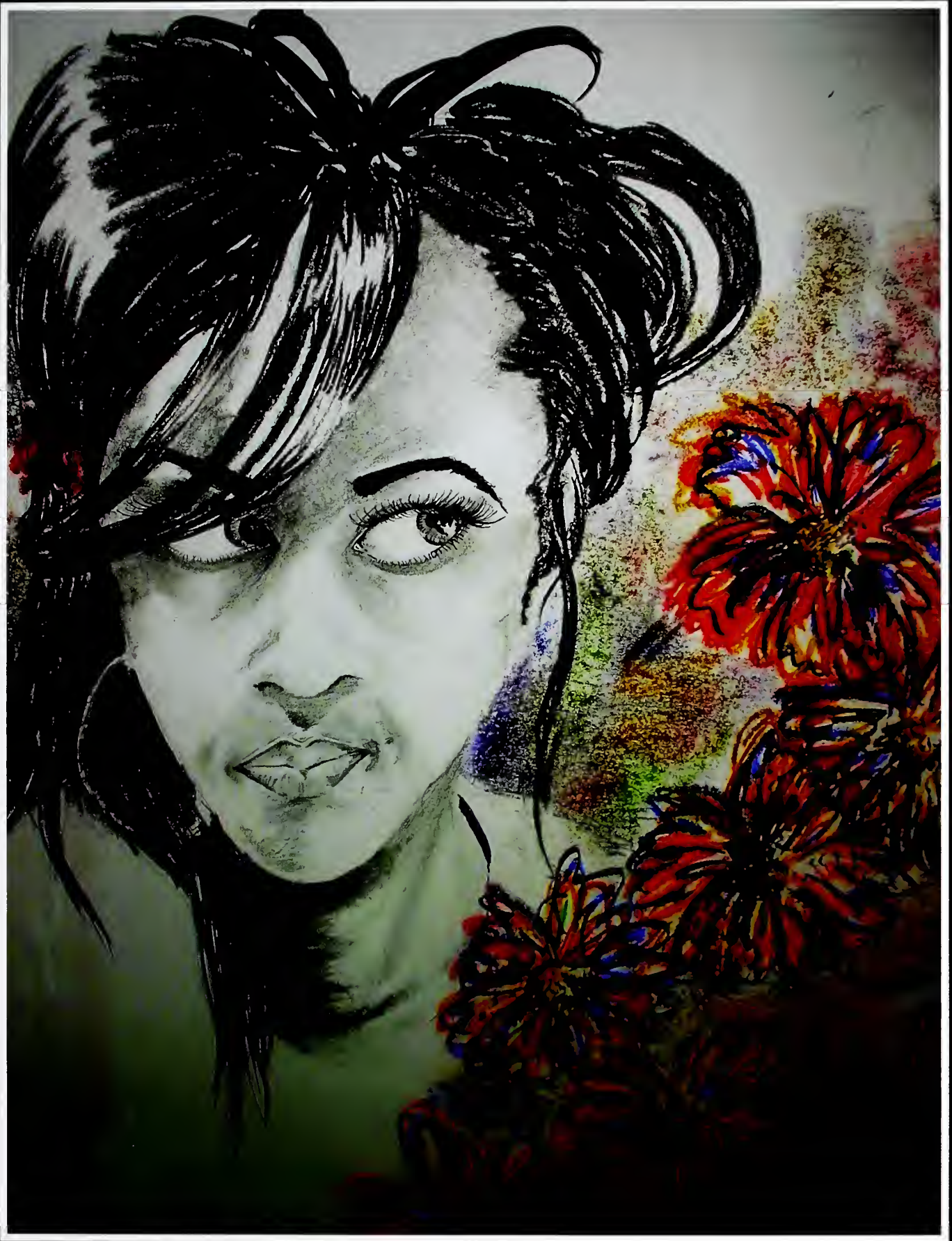
How will you know that you are you, when you wake up in the morning and look into the mirror?  
Is that you or is that her staring back into your world?  
But at the same you want to be her.

You know her from back to front, up and down,  
You've met her friends and read her mind,  
But does she know you?

Your friends are the same,  
Your minds and ideas identical,  
But have you ever thought maybe it's you,  
Wanting to escape reality to be trapped in a world,  
Of back and forth.







Nicolette  
Mixed Media  
Brighton Ju Jackobee

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