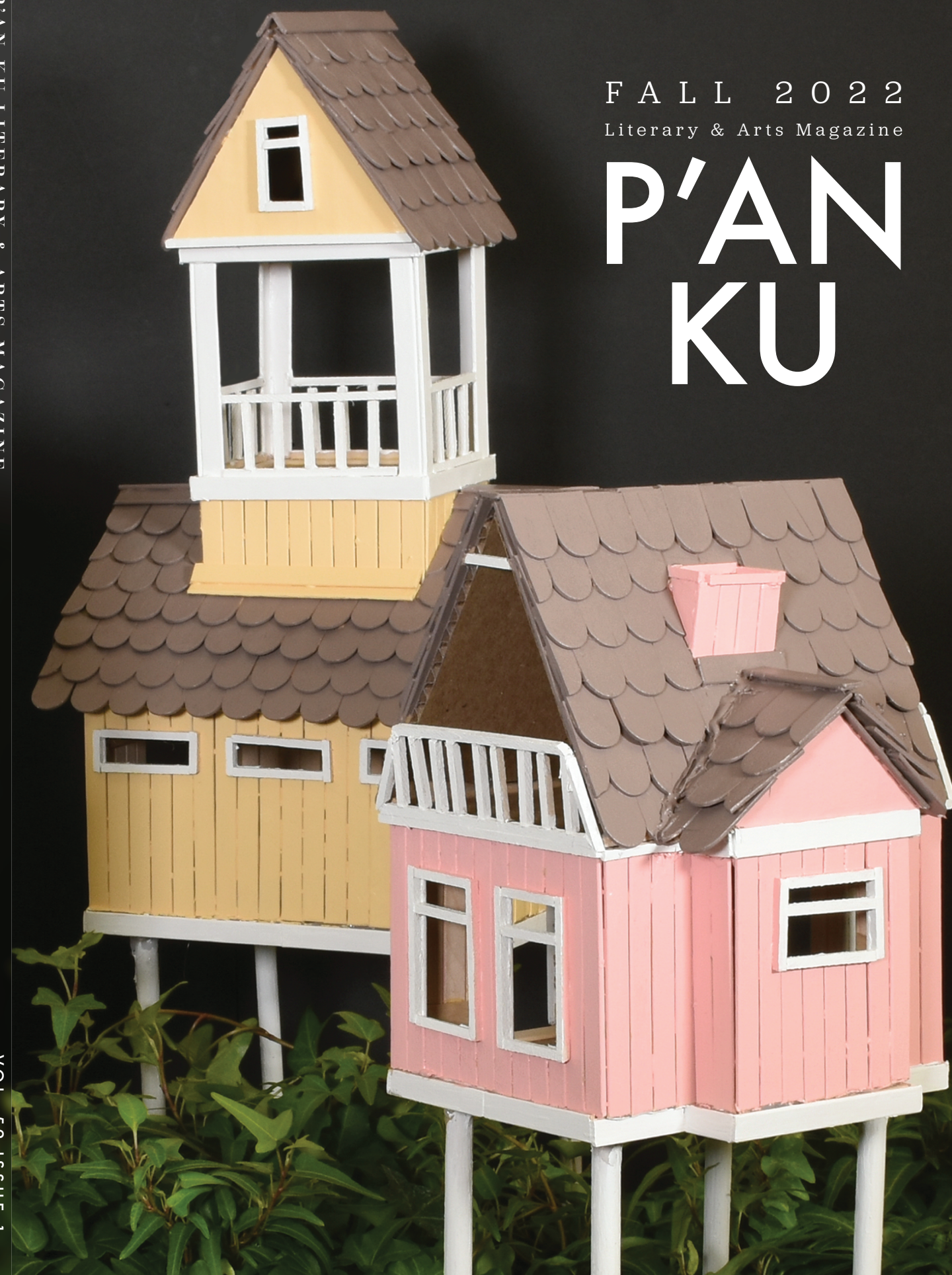


FALL 2022
Literary & Arts Magazine

P'AN KU



P'AN KU LITERARY & ARTS MAGAZINE

VOL. 59 ISSUE 1

FALL 2022
VOLUME 59, ISSUE 1

P'AN KU

Literary & Arts Magazine

Cover Art "Renovations"
Miniver Kandrata

Printing
Print Dynamics

Studio Reshoots
Natasha Gonzalez

SPECIAL THANKS

Daniela Alonzo, Dr. Kimberly Barron, Patricia Beltran, Marisol Cortes Diaz, Andrew Dutka, Marjetta Geerling, Jean Griffin, Priyasha Jadoo, Trish Joyce, Kohl King, Tsz Law, Tamara Petasne, Wanda Sims, Jennifer Solley, Our Dear Readers.

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Dearest Friends,

For this edition, poems about family roots swept into our submission box like a whirl of leaves. Born from the water of Haiti or the mountains of Guatemala, we all meet in one shared place. And just like that, this issue proliferated with themes of home and nature.

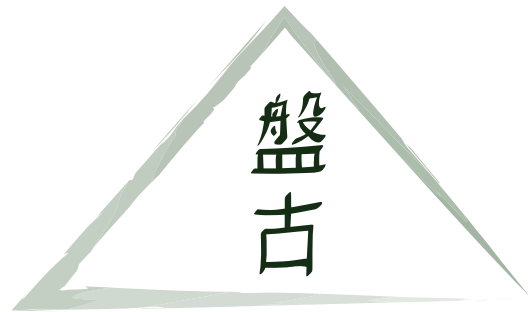
I set to work on P'an Ku's reconstruction with elaborate plans. Blood, sweat, and hot glue went into the cover design, its foundation nailed together with the talent of our contributors. Like the stilts of each house, our team wobbled precariously on dedication and drive, and we would not have finished construction without the support of the editors, staff, and a few lovely individuals. I deliver to you my gratitude in the shape of a housewarming gift.

To bookworms and art enthusiasts alike, take a peek into any window. There, you will find artwork hanging on the walls and literature pressed between the pages of freshly-bound books. In each room, a thousand interpretations await you.

Turn on the lamps and free-fall into reverie.

Miniver Kandrata
Editor-in-chief
P'an Ku Magazine

THE HISTORY OF P'AN KU



Founded in 1964, P'an Ku Magazine is a student-run, bi-annual literary and art publication funded by Broward College. Our namesake is the Chinese god of creation. Chinese mythology holds that P'an Ku created the sun, the moon, the heavens, and the Earth. P'an Ku's breath became the wind, his voice the thunder, his blood the rivers, and the fleas of his fur, humanity. Anyone endowed with creativity is said to be possessed by the spirit of P'an Ku.

MASTHEAD



Miniver Kandrata
Editor-in-Chief



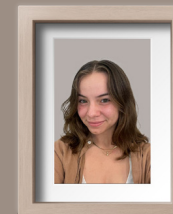
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The Willow's Warning

Suzy Potash

Child, lie your head upon my roots,
Find a pocket you can sit comfortably.
Though the fumes may cloud your vision,
You are safe in my hold.

I know these missionaries of ego-based desire
take what temptation demands.
Infidelity and Warcraft parade,
Lead ripping through animal skin,
leaving them discarded as game.

Their selfishness stains the green,
Marking the human territory.
Red anguish floods the rivers;
The sacred land is tainted.

Genocide of the forest
leaves its Weeping Willow's call:
We are the protectors of tomorrow,
The hope of restoring nature's fall:
Man's ecological overshoot.

You can find solace
In this space we lay together.
We will find a new tomorrow;
You are our hope.

Please.
Demand restitution for our connection:
You and I are one;
We are enough;
We have always been;
We will always cycle back to each other:
Nature and Human.



Heart of Gaia

Melanie Hosein-Finol
Cardboard, Acrylic Paint

No Man's Land

Ashley Matos

My home you call your home is not for sale
You are welcome, but please do not touch
Please do not displace what I have worked so hard to create and put in its place
My home you call your home is not up for grabs
You cannot stick each blade of grass with a price tag
You shouldn't overflow my floor with spilled water from your machines
My home you call your home should not be overtaken by greed
I will allow you to get comfortable with my neighbors, the trees
Once you begin to climb them and break their foundation, you must leave
My home you call your home should be taken care of just as such
Leave the stream untouched
Leave the seeds where you found 'em
Leave the birds where they sounded
Do not encroach on my property
As others of your kind would not do to you
Do not let your structures pass the threshold
I found a home, where you find gold
I found trees, where you see thin leafy greens
I found a place for my petals to face the sun
My roots to down stretch, and land to protect—
Where you found a field to pluck any flower you can get



Bite the Hand that Feeds You

Melanie Hosein-Finol
Acrylic Paint

The Stars/The Antler

Ricky Morales

Ivy walked through the forest alone.

The wind shrieked in her ear, her teeth chattering. The night was piercingly cold, but she did not mind. She allowed her hands to embrace in the pockets of her fleece hooded sweater, searching for any bit of warmth. As she trudged through the unwelcoming snow, she noticed that her shoes were beginning to grow damp, annoyingly wet. She pretended that she did not mind, but there was a sense of doubt that crept in toward the back of her mind. She had placed her socks in the microwave minutes before and was feeling concerned that they would not shield her from the uncomfortably numbing sensation that came with a damp shoe in the cold.

It was 5:00 PM. She knew that the sun was about to set. Ivy would hike every Wednesday to the bench on the hill that was about a fifteen-minute walk away from her house. She would sit atop the bench and gaze at the sunset, marveling in its wonder. It was her private spot. A place where she could breathe. She couldn't be late. She picked up her pace and allowed the fear of missing her tradition fuel her. She looked up and caught sight of the sky changing colors before her very eyes, delighting in the sight of the beautiful oranges and pinks that illuminated her path, lost in thought to the clouds that looked like balls of cotton against a painting. She was devoted to them. The only thing that she adored even more than the sunset was observing the harsh black night sky chasing it away, bringing with it the stars. They weren't anyone else's. They were hers.

Her stars.



Times Up

Melanie Hosein-Finol
Cardboard, Magazine Paper, Acrylic Paint

She could spend hours looking up at them, allowing her neck to become increasingly exhausted by the minute. She fantasized of flying to them, or perhaps even living on one, hoping that one of the dazzling spheres of plasma would absorb her, and she would become one with it. She would live her days and nights as that star and shine her light through the pitch black of space.

She stopped in her tracks.

Ivy found herself looking at a deer, a beautiful buck to be precise. He was light brown with a gentle stroke of white on his forehead, carrying beautiful brown orbs for eyes that were staring right back at her. His legs, beautifully extended and graceful. Ivy gazed at the buck, in awe. She noticed that one of his antlers was broken. An almost maternal instinct took over her, and she took a small step toward the deer, hoping to help him.

This startled the deer. In front of him was a tree, obstructing his path. He did not notice this, and as he retreated, he crashed into it, unintentionally lodging his other antler into it. The deer bucked and grunted, trying to free his remaining antler.

Ivy approached him as gently as she could, not to startle him again. She was not aware that it was starting to get dark. He did not perceive that her proximity to him grew closer. Ivy deliberated with herself, contemplating pulling him out. Instinctively, she wrapped her arms around his neck, slowly. The deer did not take to this kindly, and his bucking grew aggressive, twisting, and turning his neck, viciously. She still had her arms wrapped around his neck, fearful that if she didn't hold on, she would get hurt. The deer made a sharp movement and broke off his other antler from the tree. Now free, he thrashed his head, trying to shake Ivy off him. His movements were energetic and hostile. She let go. One more violent motion from him.

Stillness. He stopped bucking.

Ivy's heart dropped. She wrapped her hands around him again and became aware of a dampness from her gloves. They were wet. She looked at them. They were covered in blood. Her eyes shot back up at the buck. He was bleeding, gasping for air. He had struck his head against his own broken antler in that final movement, lodging it inside of his skull. Ivy panicked. Her heart-rate galloping, eyes filling with tears. She pulled the doe away from the tree, removing the antler from his skull. This caused blood to begin pouring out of his head like a waterfall. The buck gasped for air. Ivy rushed to take off her jacket, laying it on the snow with one arm. Simultaneously, she used the other to hold up his head. His breathing began to weaken. She lowered him onto her jacket, hoping it would provide him some warmth and a place to rest. Ivy placed her hand on his head, caressing him gently. Ivy did not allow herself to cry. She stayed strong for the buck, hoping her calmness would give him a sense of quiet in his final moments.

His chest was no longer moving.

Ivy released an exhale, collapsing against the tree. She placed her head against its trunk and looked up at the sky. She noticed that it was pitch black. Her view was slightly obstructed by the antler, but she could note that there were no stars. She lowered her gaze into the eyes of the deer, hoping to catch a glimpse of his brown eyes one more time. This time they were pitch black, lifeless. She placed her hand over his eyes and closed them. She shut her eyes. Ivy gave herself permission to release the tears that she had bottled earlier, hoping to surrender to the darkness within her eyelids. She sat there for a moment, processing the events that had just occurred. She sat there for a moment, before it hit her.

No more stars.

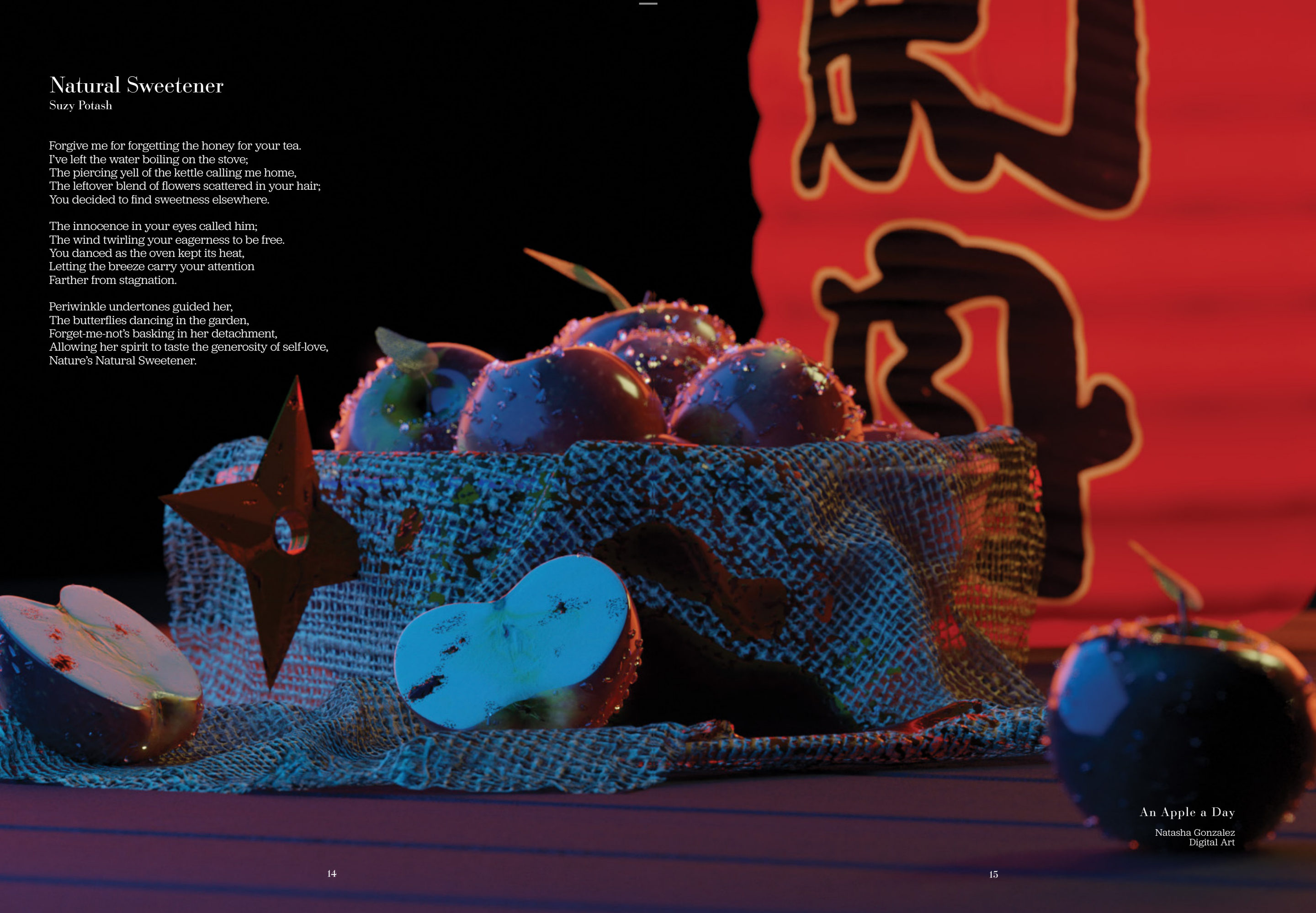
Natural Sweetener

Suzy Potash

Forgive me for forgetting the honey for your tea.
I've left the water boiling on the stove;
The piercing yell of the kettle calling me home,
The leftover blend of flowers scattered in your hair;
You decided to find sweetness elsewhere.

The innocence in your eyes called him;
The wind twirling your eagerness to be free.
You danced as the oven kept its heat,
Letting the breeze carry your attention
Farther from stagnation.

Periwinkle undertones guided her,
The butterflies dancing in the garden,
Forget-me-not's basking in her detachment,
Allowing her spirit to taste the generosity of self-love,
Nature's Natural Sweetener.



An Apple a Day

Natasha Gonzalez
Digital Art

Blooming Peace

Angelina Pozo Marinho
Watercolor and Gold Leaf



initiation

Sage Hernandez

at the age of eighteen, i arose from a decade-deep slumber,
born into the throes of a storm ever insatiable
needle-tipped gales caressing my spine,
hungry and undoing
holy ghosts and myths brawling in her ever-widening belly
clouded hands staining cheeks ichor, calling out names not prayed to in centuries

she desires the contract fulfilled:
the reverence of a dying bloodline and the curse of a life ever reincarnated
and i tumble, a child once more,
hot-blooded yet ever so insignificant,
trembling over the path that lay before me.

Pride and Resilience

Laissa Senatus

I am from concrete houses and cherry trees,
from blazing suns illuminating
the sugar cane street vendors on every road.
I am from chocolate-scented coffee and bread
under the morning star,
with a slice of fruit cake
stolen from the table I was told not to touch.

I am from vibrant colors dancing along the roads in January—
blues as deep as the Caribbean Sea,
yellows and oranges as bright as the horizon at sunset,
greens as vibrant as the nourishing vegetation,
and reds as rich as the soil we dance on—
indicating a parade of culture and history.
Oh, carnival, how I miss you so.

I am from waves and vibrations:
the music of drums, maracas,
and earthquakes.
I am from the sight of falling walls
and broken legs.

Ayiti Cherie. (Haiti, my love).
I am from the consumption of your bittersweet fruits.

I am from the plastic bag holding the vomit of my nerves and anxiety
as I flew to the promise of a better future.

I am from a young, confused mind
trying to grasp a foreign land.
I am from the insults they thought I would not understand
because I did not know how to form the words.
I am from the strength I witnessed
from my mother, and my father.

I am from the memories I still have of my country.
Dreams and nightmares intricately juxtaposed in my consciousness.
Bittersweet and all, I am from both Haiti and America,
from both cultural experiences and life-changing journeys.



Bigs

Sydney Scott
Photography



Colors of Love
Zhia Smith
Acrylic on Canvas

Sonata in B-flat Minor

Yewande Shitta-Bey

Gnarled fingers flit across ivory keys.

The strings beneath tug an impassioned song from the bones of the piano, the melody so deeply stirring that the air stills to listen to its bittersweet tone.

The man who sits on the piano stool can only observe in dismay. He does not understand this piano, much less how his fingers dance effortlessly across these keys. The tune they play, he does not know. He is a mere receptacle, insignificant if not for his given name even that sometimes slips away from him.

His mind harbors few remnants of the past and even fewer hopes for the future. The rush of this melody and the fire that settles within him are far more familiar than the sunlight glaring through the nearby window. At this moment, while his fingers glide across the keys, it feels as though his entire being only lies within his fingertips.

Still, he cannot recall knowing how to play the piano, and this riddles him with such bewilderment that it forces his fingers to freeze.

“Why did you stop?”

The man jolts, then turns his head towards the source of the voice.

A woman is standing in the doorway of the piano room. She has silvery hair that falls about her pale, freckled face. Her baby blue knit dress sweeps the floor as she saunters over to the piano, and, once she is close, the man notes that she smells of lavender and chamomile. Her scent fosters something warm in his chest, and the way her cheeks crease with delicate wrinkles

as she smiles makes his heart swoop with perplexing normality.

It is as though her features are an echo of an entity the man could not remember, and this notion causes his eyebrows to furrow.

“One of Aurandt’s sonatas,” the woman speaks wistfully. She drops a hand onto the man’s shoulder. “He’s always been one of my favorites.”

The man’s eyes dart to where her hand lies. His gaze latches onto the simple gold band on one of her fingers. He glances back to his fingers that rest on the piano. He hadn’t noticed he was wearing a matching ring.

His breath hitches, and he dares to look back up at the woman. There is melancholy brewing deep within her eyes, and her lips twitch as her smile threatens to collapse.

“What is it?” she whispers, saccharine and loving. “Do you want to say something?”

The man stares until unexplainable tears spring to his eyes.

Voice quavering, the woman says, “I’m sorry,” without any foreseeable reason.

The man turns his head away to face the piano keys, letting the tears that mist his vision fall to his lap. He tries to ignore the faint cries of that stranger of a woman who stands behind him.

Clenches his fists. Unclenches. Cracks his knuckles.

Lets his fingers flit across ivory keys, though he does not know how.



The Tree

Ana Sofia Ordaz
Acrylic on Canvas

Evelyn

Jessica Cattanach

My previously listless heart,
hidden away amongst the shadows
Glowing anew with a feverish desire
I try to quench the growing flames,
all-consuming
She's so alluring, with her beaming smile
Golden atmosphere
Suffocating presence
It feels dangerous, as if I'm a tightrope walker
Balancing between love and aversion

When my eyes close, it's her I see
Prancing in my dreams
Waking or slumbering, her attacks never cease
My resolve is going weak, letting her light into my heart's chambers

How does one learn to love
When being told my love is false
What determines this feeling untrue?
Is it her slight smirk in my direction?
The sunlight glinting off her shoulders,
casting a golden glow?
Or is it my own skirt
That doesn't belong with hers
But with a pair of trousers instead.

Dahlia

Mia Orris

My mother is heaven

In fact, she is a lot of things
A compiled list of complicated concepts
That force the world to know
She is an identity of her own

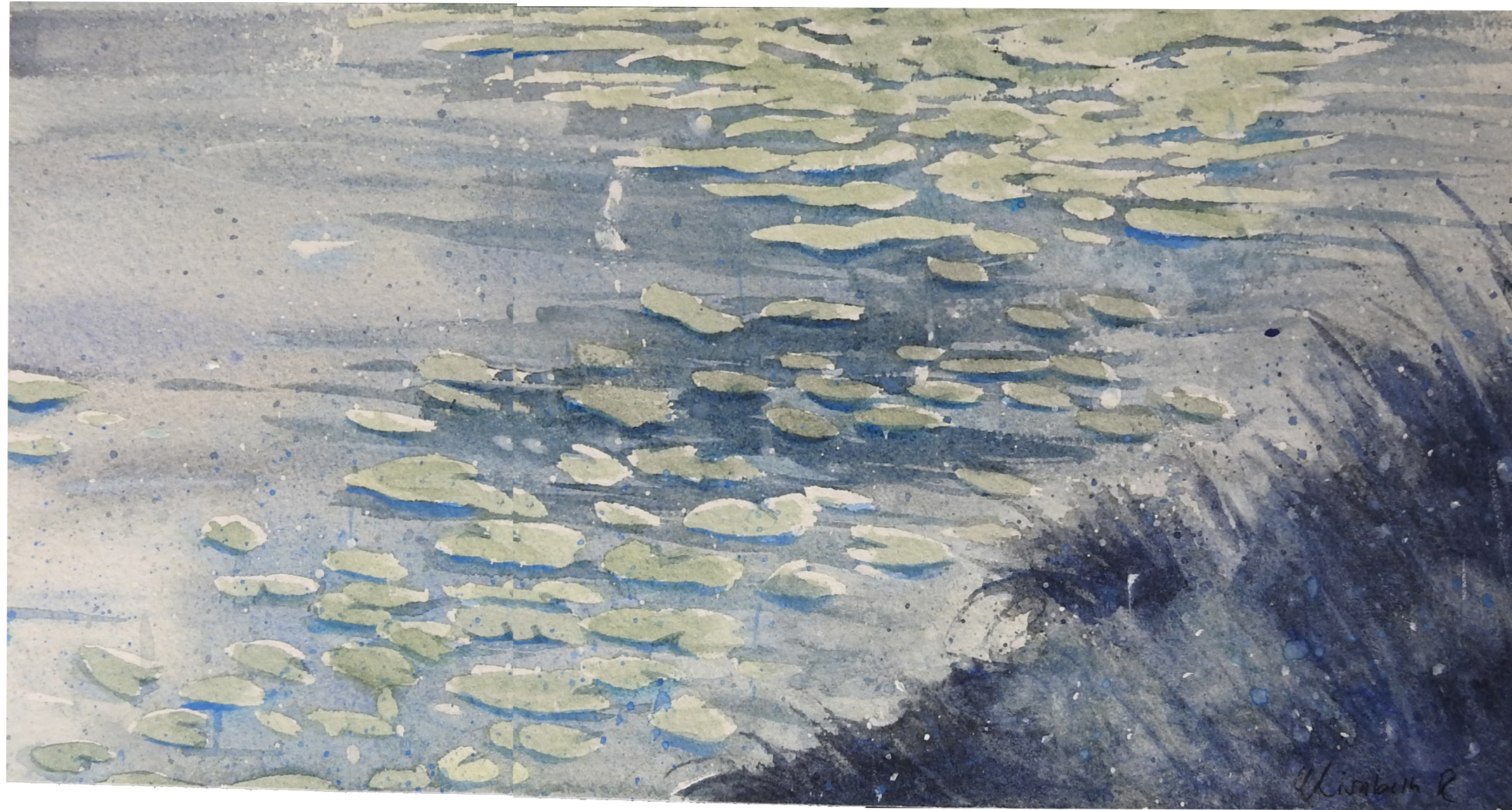
My mother is a flower

In more ways than just her name
A favorite regardless of nature
Plucked for her beauty
Pressed for preservation
She blossoms and she bends
And she gives herself away

My mother is an angel

In my sadness, we lie together
In my happiness, we laugh together
And when she touches my cheek
I'll write about how she must be God
But more strikingly

How she is heaven



French Harmonies

Elisabeth Rodriguez
Watercolor

Soft, Selfish Creatures

Orionis A. R. Elder

i am hungry
hungry for hands on my ribs
and legs tangled with mine
like a climbing fern on a tree
let me suffocate under you

please
hold me close

crawl into me
as i would crawl into you
mix-and-match our parts
until we are never alone
with ourselves, near or far

let me
hold you

i have written so many poems
of my hungers
my desires
to be buried and held
to have my organs replaced
and made into a home

at what point
would my greed
no longer be condoned?

when will i be seen
as wretched, and depraved
instead of hurting, and wanting?



Melting
Emily Fernandez
Marker on Paper



Limitless Void
Phoebe Potter
Plaster Sculpture

Stuffing

Yewande Shitta-Bey

When Mom became pregnant for the third time, Auntie gifted her unicorn and dinosaur stuffed animals for the new baby. My baby brother was stillborn though, so he never got to play with the stuffed animals. Mom still put them in his crib.

Mom yelled when I asked for Unicorn and Molly asked for Dinosaur. She would holler whenever we tried to play with them, and Dad didn't care when we whined to him about it so we stopped.

On Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter Sunday, Mom would gift Molly and I pies, chocolates, and hand-me-down dresses from Halloween. She always gave Dad a new tie. She would fill Unicorn and Dinosaur with new stuffing, gifting them festive hats and mittens that she knit.

When Molly asked for a cat, Mom shook her head and said *You should be thinking about Unicorn and Dinosaur. That damn cat would tear them to pieces and no amount of yarn and stuffing would fix them.* Dad reasoned she could just keep the door to the nursery closed, so with a frown and a mutter about safety locks she let us get a fat tabby cat. Mom always tiptoed around that cat and looked behind her before going into the nursery when she wanted to check on Unicorn and Dinosaur.

She always locked the door when she left, but one day it must have slipped her mind because the next morning, Molly, Dad, and I found her wailing on the floor of the nursery while holding one of Unicorn's torn-off arms. She begged my dad to get rid of the

cat as she sewed the arm back on, but he refused and they argued about it all day until Mom gave him the silent treatment. When dad succumbed to cancer of the mouth, Mom gave the cat away and plucked Unicorn and Dinosaur up from the crib to perch them on the side of her bed where Dad would sleep.

Once I and Molly grew older and went off to college, we called Mom weekly to be polite. We never had anything to say, so we just asked *How are Unicorn and Dinosaur?* and we could hear her smiling when she replied *They're doing just fine.* That was enough of a conversation to satisfy her.

The first time we visited home on holiday, Unicorn was lying on my bed and Dinosaur on Molly's, both stuffed with cotton until they were round. Meanwhile, Mom's room was dusty and emptier than it had been before we left.

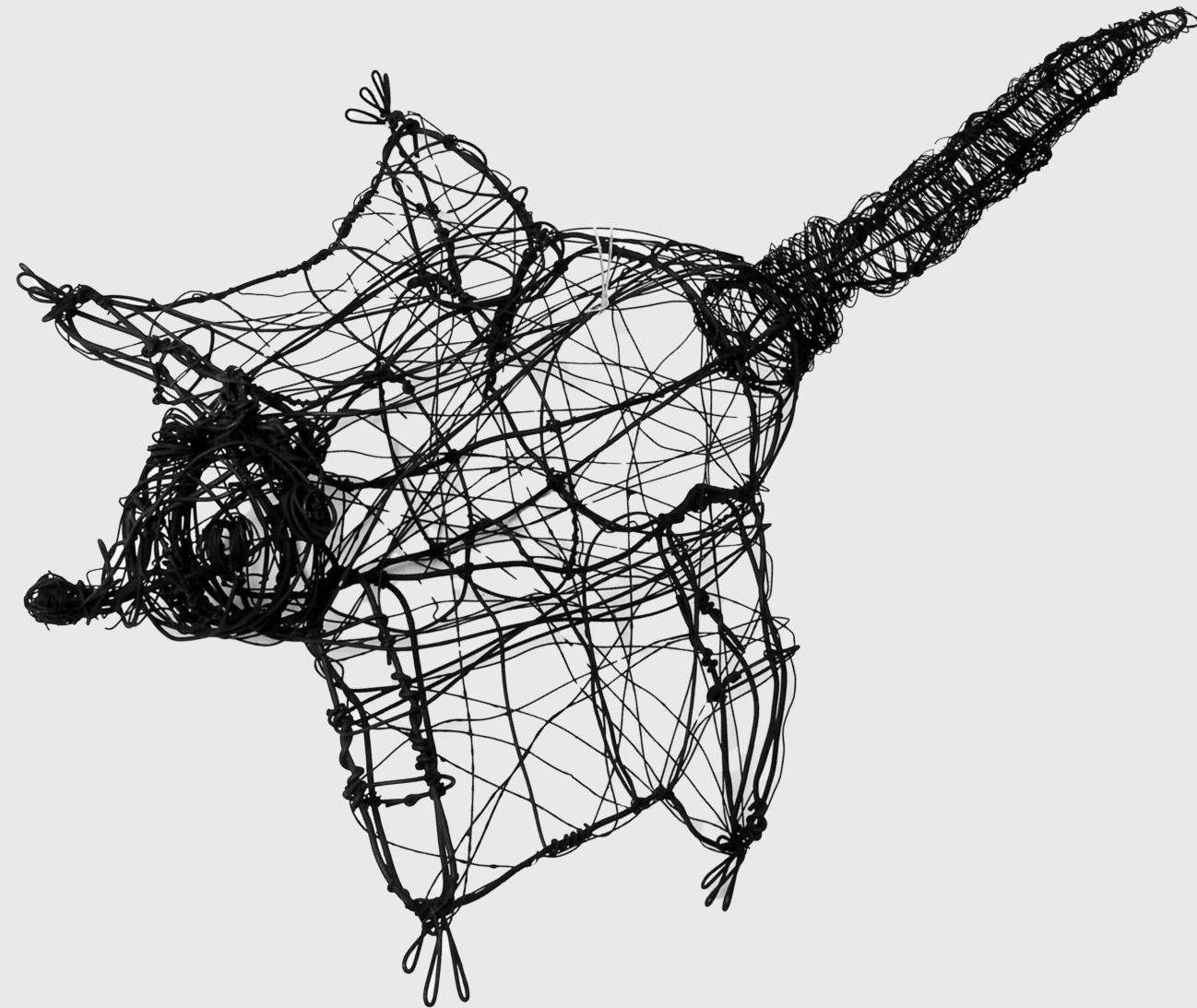
When Mom started balding and her face got wrinkly, she began knitting accessories onto Unicorn and Dinosaur like glasses, earrings and wings. She started shrieking when I told her she was making them ugly.

She died of a stroke two years later in her sleep while holding Unicorn and Dinosaur. She was gripping them by their necks as if to choke them and was squeezing so hard that stuffing burst from their seams.

We buried Mom with her crochet needle, and the stuffed animals were far too worn out to donate so I and Molly decided to throw them out.

Sugar Glider

Phoebe Potter
Wire Sculpture



Children of Ham

Jaleyna Lawes

As an orphan in the Nile,
I cry out for the promised motherland,
Thrashing like the waters which carry
My wooden cradle, restless and wild.

My first milk comes from foreign breasts,
Head embraced by foreign hands.
Belonging to no land, only the oceans in between,
I have no mother, I am no woman's child.

Another stolen child tells me it is our fate
To wander and bow beneath the beating sun.
I learn to call the strange land home,
As one does when the walls of prisons persist.

In their language, they tell me stories
Of great floods and dishonorable sons,
Of an unruly people cursed by God to bondage,
While never giving me the words to resist.

Our arms must not fight but
Embrace the cages that confine them.
And the motherland we were promised
Be inevitably forgotten.

Who are we but children of Ham,
Our bodies and the skin which binds them
Stained with sin and perversion
From which we are begotten.

Once children of the Nile, of the restless river,
Of the mourning shores which cry for our return.
We travel in coffles overseas of sand,
Until the milk and honey of the motherland again begin to flow.



Misty Wave

Elisabeth Rodriguez
Watercolor and Gouache



Alter Ego
Yaku Madalengoitia
Acrylic on Paper

Train of Time

Ami Amor Bergeron

A surreal fact, profuse plot.
Once again surrounded by the same walls,
under the red heart-shaped windows
under the white roof.

I have observed you in detail,
despite having virgin eyes of the world, itself.
I was present,
in every delirium and scream by which you expressed yourself.
I was present,
in each act of desolation where my mother was hurt.

You could be the reincarnation of Abraxas himself,
being part of Evil and God.
Although I know which of these two worlds,
was the one that predominated the most.

Vaguely remembering you,
I perceive,
how my veins swell
I perceive,
how my blood accelerates.
The loud noise above me indicates the sky is collapsing.
You used to say through my blue eyes,
you could see the sky.

Blurry my vision becomes,
I can't see clearly anymore.
I slightly see your silhouette closer than ever to me,
I can recognize you despite the years.

"To die for love is possible,
or rather, for the scarcity of it.
Of the train of time
we were not the chosen ones"—
I thought.

I'm on my way home.

Ode to One Hell of a Mother

Angie Mejia Sierra

Wrinkled hands.
Manos arrugadas.

The hands of my mother
Spotted with beautiful blemishes—
Calluses smelling of tortillas
De harina o de maiz
Dark moles that each speak a story
Within itself.

These manos are the life of our family
Strong, delicate, passionate
But most of all,
Determined.
You instilled those same values
Into your daughters.

Ponte las pilas, hija
Words that meant don't fall behind
Don't slack off
Sit up—
stand straight—
speak softly—
Say please and thank you,
Make something of yourself.

Ponte las pilas, hija
Work 12 hours per day
Faint scent of perfume on your uniform
That you could never stop
To breathe in—
Doesn't matter if your body is battered,
Bruised or weak
Your daughters will make you proud.

Ponte las pilas, hija
Food on the table
Tortillas, frijoles, mantequilla
Enough to feed—
The whole neighborhood
You always made more food than we could
Gobble up.

Ponte las pilas, hija
Doesn't matter how much money
You got—
You got more dignity than the rest of 'em,
Mami.

Ponte las pilas, hija
Your smile brightens up a room,
Your anger rains down hell
Upon us.
Who knew a cackle could be so sweet?

Pay rent, love us, keep us
Safe
Too safe—
Too tight, too constricted, too *determined!*
"Ponte las pilas, hija!"

Let us
Go!
It's time to let go.

It's time to descansar, hija

Descansa,
Mami.



through the grime, there are grins

Izzy Alchemy Evening Lechuga
Photography



clearer than it all

Izzy Alchemy Evening Lechuga
Photography



Free Iran

Saina Amir-Zadeh-Shams
Graphite

Studio Discomfort

Ignacio Beroiz
Oil on Canvas



Student

Laissa Senatus

I'm burnt out.
I am in bed, able to move,
yet stagnant.
It is as though I'm going through
another state of sleep paralysis.
I'm awake, aware,
but absent.

Except now, the only monster watching me is myself;
In the dark corner of my mind that
rejects me, judges me,
exerting more pressure, more.
It watches the smoke dance
from my last remaining spark
of motivation.

I was once "gifted,
a talented kid with potential."
Why didn't anyone tell me
that it would only get harder?
That I'm not the smartest,
not special,
not "gifted."

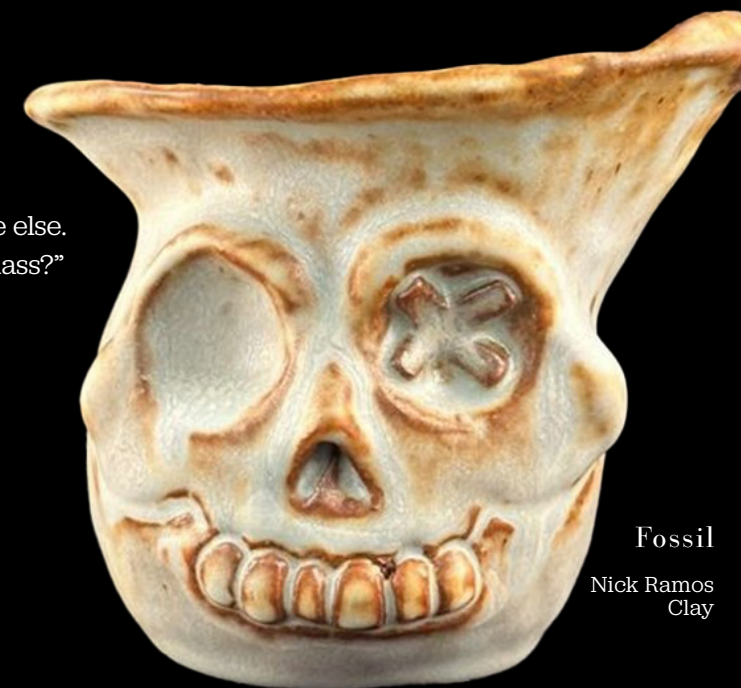
Now I look in the mirror and see
the student who can't seem to catch up.
The student who asks the "dumb" questions,
the questions that seem so obvious to everyone else.
"Maybe you should switch to a slower-paced class?"
Maybe I *should* give up.

In the chaos around me—
the mess that I ignore;
In the darkness around me—
The light I deprive myself of,
my professor's words dictate my thoughts.
A second monster, whispering chants:
"The assignments need to get done."

Two turns into four
and four turns into seven
missing assignments.
I worry about it but I can't lift a finger.
I don't try to lift a finger,
It's so exhausting.

My throat is hot-dry;
my eyes are red-tired.
I'm trying, I tried so hard.
I can't anymore.
I'm burning, I'm burnt.
I'm burnt out.

I am the blown fuse of a once-lit match,
not knowing if it will ever light again.



Fossil
Nick Ramos
Clay

Tumulus

Sophia Manzor

Empty soda cans and snack bags crowd my desk,
messy sketches are strewn across my floor,
and my clothes sit in a mound atop my bed;
it's dimly lit and dreary,
it's an eyesore,
but it's familiar.

After a long day of studying,
toiling over my textbooks,
I walk to my room,
resigned to an eternity of mundanity.

As I open the door,
I take in the view,
the gloomy, miserable sight,
and I sigh.

"I'll clean tomorrow," I mutter,
ignoring the week-old food wrappers,
stepping over the papers on my floor,
hobbling over to my cluttered bed,
and laying down to sleep,
resting under my self-made tumulus.



Listen

Sydney Scott
Collage on Paper



Bees

Ignacio Beroiz
Oil on Canvas

The Library

Orionis A. R. Elder

Here it is quiet.
The air conditioner rattles
—the lights, old and yellow,
buzz softly above,
but here,
it is quiet.

And I do mean quiet;
not the silence of still air,
stifling and stale.

No, I speak of
the low hum of
conversation, like
cicadas on a Saturday
night. Present,
as all living things are,
but welcome.

The turning of pages
like rustling leaves,
adding to the living song.

And here,

though it may not seem like it,

it is quiet.



In Collaboration with Nature

Emily Fernandez
 Preserved Butterfly,
 Plant and Tree Material,
 Lichen and Mushroom Collage



the hunter

Sage Hernandez

its eyes blind—you persist nonetheless.
 on a quest of honor and piety
 loom over the water; your answer lies within.

three pairs of hands beg for penance—pride is deafening.
 of bladed teeth, impenetrable armor, lively fury
 its eyes blind—you persist nonetheless.

snakes, birds, fish, turtles—they all whisper:
 what you seek will surely ruin you—
 loom over the water; your answer lies within.

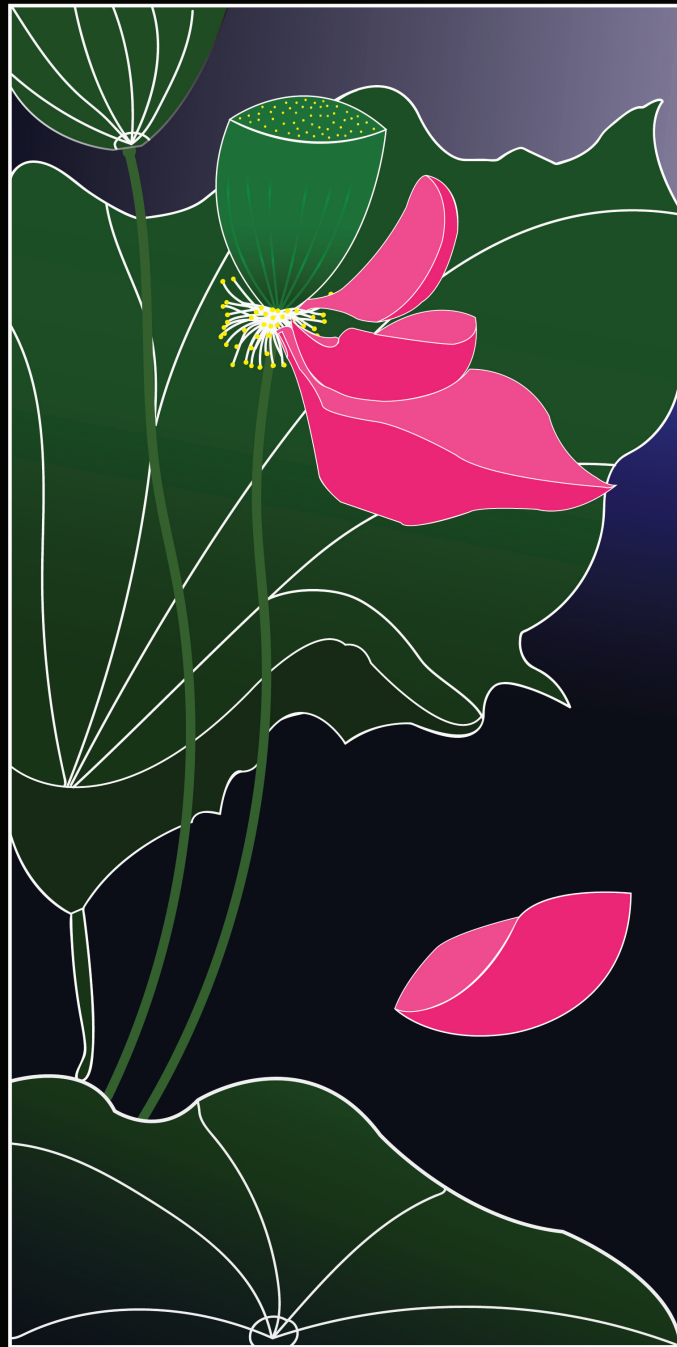
hidden among the reeds and papyrus,
 don't come any closer, you know better.
 its eyes blind—you persist nonetheless.

incinerating light manifests on the final blow
 what would you do for a second chance?
 loom over the water; your answer lies within.

primordial burden, shackled for lifetimes incalculable
 do it again, again, and again. until you get it right.
 its eyes blind—you persist nonetheless.
 loom over the water; your answer lies within.

The Mess We Made

Melanie Hosein-Finol
 Acrylic Paint, Mixed Media Paper, Plastic



Lotus Pond Under the Moonlight

Kate Nguyen
Digital Art

Eclipse

Sophia Manzor

She was the sun,
a shining star;
bright, bold, and beautiful,
bringing light to life.

I was the moon,
a mysterious mirage;
dim, distant, and daunting,
nearly escaping notice.

But she noticed me still,
bringing me in close,
holding me tight,
casting her light upon my shadow.

We became one, the sun and I;
An eclipse, our love illuminating the dreary sky.

Ode to Father of the Year

Angie Mejia Sierra

Miguel Angel Mejia—
This is my ode to you
My sweet vindication after
Years of wondering where you were

This is an ode to the empty chair
At the table
That we could never fill,

This is an ode to the compliments I get
For my hair
Hair like yours my family says,
But I've never even seen your face
Or maybe I forced myself to forget it—

To the Father of the Year:
This is my ode to you.

The way I walk across the block,
The way I talk,
My nose and the shape of my eyes

Miguel Angel Mejia—
This is my ode to you.

This is an ode to uprighted roots
Behind my family name
This is an ode to being a Mejia even though
I don't even know what that means—

This is an ode to me making a poem
About a man I claim to not give a shit
About but here I am making a poem about
My father—

Miguel Angel Mejia—
This is my ode to you!

This is an ode to you forgetting
Your daughter's name—

This is an ode to you having dozens of children
And not caring which is which as long as
You don't have to pay for them—

This is an ode to your drunkenness
And what could've been—

This is an ode to me!
Changing my last name as soon as I turn 18
Because I will not have my successes
Be claimed by a man
Who was never there!

This is an ode to the way I walk across the block,
And the way I talk,
What could've been—

Miguel Angel Mejia—
To the Father of the Year!
This is my ode to you.



expendable
Melvin Mason
Ceramics

The One Who Got Lucky

Laury Pierre

May 5, 2016, I still remember everything like it was yesterday. My skin burning from the hot weather, my sister's tears, the street merchants' voices, the sounds of old tap taps overloaded with passengers, and the gross but comforting scent of home.

One I did not realize one day I would forget.

In my small village of L'asile Tournade, Haiti, I woke up early in the morning to give a speech in French, since I was the only child who was fluent enough to deliver it. Not even 3 hours after my speech, everyone was saying goodbye to me. They did not say it directly—maybe it was because they thought I was too young to understand—but their eyes were enviously shouting "You are so lucky."

What was so lucky about a child being left at an airport at 9-years-old all alone? What was so lucky about a child who was supposed to be dropped off in a foreign country to her father who she had never seen outside of pictures? What was so lucky about a child who screamed and begged her mother not to leave her at that airport but all she got in response was "I have no choice"?

To me, nothing.

By the time I arrived in the U.S., it was near the end of the school year, but it was decided that I would be attending the last few weeks of 5th grade anyway. I experienced loneliness for the first time in my life. No one understood what I was saying and I did not understand what they were saying. No one wanted to be my friend because who would be friends with someone they couldn't talk to? No one. Before I knew it, it was time to move to my new school and start middle school.

When I got to middle school, things were much different. I was placed in a class where there were people who actually understood what I was saying. And by the time I started 6th grade, I had some knowledge of English. But now, I was aware of where I was.

This was America.

The place where the only punishment I got for not knowing my times table was a simple letter, and when I got out of the class my knees weren't bleeding. The place where when I got home and wanted to shower, I wasn't worried about whether the water was contaminated or not. The place where the new scratches on my legs were from falling down playing and not from gathering spices in bushy gardens for my next meal. The place where I would be hearing about all the frequent kidnappings and killings near my village. The place where I would learn about how *Lesly's*—the market where my mother would go to get an American apple every year for my birthday—was forcefully shut down due to violent riots. The place where I watched my mother sleep outside on the cold dirt because her house was destroyed by the August 14, 2021 earthquake.

What was so lucky about a child who was worrying about how to get her SAT score higher, and not whether she would make it back home alive? What was so lucky about a child who was worrying about whether her food had lactose in it but not when her last drink of water would be? What was so lucky about a child driven by passion rather than fear?

To me, everything.



Stages

Lennidies Montanez
Candle

A Child's Perspective of a Parent's Love

Suzy Potash

I am from the flame of a love,
Its heat radiates through each corner.
White paint melts off the four walls,
Speaking its truth into creeks of baseboards,
Letting the paint act as pride,
And their hearts suffocate on desire.

Memories of a sugary release,
The pitter-patter on the tile,
its cold bare touch suppresses the child's frustration:
The cooling of excitement;
The abyss of a quiet night;
The energy fading into a dream.

I am from expression and submission,
fighting to understand our own;
Their feelings and their home
wishing to drift off to a peaceful sleep.
Hearing the echoes of defeat;
The slamming of doors and its carried isolation;
The silence of hidden emotions
beneath the owners' broken stronghold.

I am from health and heart,
The home created with its nurturing touch.
The remainder of a beating promise;
The thumping of what was left to feel;
Its production festering on attachment:
The warmth of a rekindled flame.

Labyrinthine Mind

Ami Amor Bergeron

Because of the sacred silence
a labyrinthine mind begins to expand,
causing a collision and link between its thoughts,
which, if sprinkled with imagination,
intensely surreal might become.

What would come to be the origin of my desire
to create and unify verses to lead to an allegory?
A question that has manifested itself in my intrinsic being
for more than once.

Fantasies have always been part of my night-to-day life.
I am enthralled
to think if the words and actions had been altered,
it would have been different or opposite
the outcome of the ending supposed.

It leads me to be an observer,
who, hand in hand with its mental pencil,
levitates through this carnal world vague.
My existence anymore is in vain.

Once I had dreams of becoming a beautiful poet,
where the end of my verses
becomes the beginning of innovative perspectives.

I write.
When sleep turns extinguish
When I spread distorted memories in cages hidden
When my inspiration is finally released.

I write, so that my sorrows make sense
I write, for the failed romances
I write, for my soul to undress.
I write.



Stardust

Yewande Shitta-Bey

Did you know that humans are made of stardust?

I didn't believe it to be true until the first time I saw the galaxy that sparkled in your eyes:

Your iris was a midnight backdrop for the cascade of twinkling stars, your pupil the swirling azure and magenta of a nebula.

haphazardly over the grass, often distracted by the glimmer in the heavens' own nighttime blanket. Our fingers would trace constellations along the expanse of luminescence dusted across the deep blue ether. When our hands sometimes met in a few, fleeting moments of desire, the skin would flush pink against the light of the stars.



Brown Sugar

Yaku Madalengoitia
Photography

You snorted when I told you this. “What are you buttering me up for?” you had laughed.

Disappointedly, you were never able to see the celestial beauty within your eyes. Rather, you found it in the stars above. I never understood how you loved the stars so deeply—still, I stargazed with you nightly.

We would lie against my Yosegire-style quilt that you frequently tossed

“It’s only subsurface scattering,” you would sometimes whisper. “Don’t flatter yourself.”

I never replied as I knew you were right. However, the stammering of my heart said otherwise.

We exchanged few words whenever we lay under the moon—partly because you were too mesmerized by the stars and I too mesmerized by you, mostly because you

feared that anything louder than the trill of insects would awaken the yokai.

Yet one night, you suddenly spoke up so loudly that even the cicadas were compelled to quiet their tune.

“The stars are fading,” you had proclaimed.

Your tone had been strong, but your voice wavered.

I tilted my head toward you then. Your arm was stretched out to the sky, hand splayed out as you observed your rosy fingertips. Though your face showed indifference, when I brought my hand to cup your cheek, my fingers met dampness.

I had never seen you cry before, and the whole ordeal was so confusing that the only thing I could think to say was your name: “Kokoro . . .”

I hadn’t known what you meant by your words, and I suppose it didn’t matter much to me then, as you were kissing me quite stupidly within the next moment. It was not our first kiss, but it was the only one that had occurred under the piercing gaze of a full moon, with your fingernails digging crescents into my skin while your tears stung my face.

I was reminded of a paper play I watched as a child, one I’m sure you would know well—the story of Tanabata, a tale of star-crossed lovers reuniting each year in the Milky Way. As you kissed me, I entertained the romantic thought that we were like these lovers. With you as Princess Orihime and I as Hikoboshi, I dreamt of holding each other close as we danced among the stars; your gossamer dress, woven from novas, would sweep across the galaxy. Alas, a fate of eternity for us was not written in the stars.

The stars inside you were fading—is that what you meant back then?

The luster slowly burnt out, and the wind whisked your spirit away so you could meet your kindred in the night sky.

The stars have dullened and wept

with great anguish; I can no longer bring myself to draw constellations into the canvas of night. Rather, I trace out the kanji I associate with you.

The first, your name, 心, meaning “heart.” Your name accurately suggests plenty of who you are—still, much of your allure is ineffable.

The second, 恋, meaning “to yearn for with love.” You longed for the stars and, as I later realized, for me as well. And, as much as I did then, I ache for you now. Though, unlike before, I can no longer touch you when I wish to.

The third, 忘, meaning “to disappear.” You were a mere mortal vessel for the stars, and like all vessels, you eventually evanesced. Even so, I would have never imagined it would be so soon.

心, 恋, 忘.

Three different kanji, yet they all share the same radical that is your name.

Three different kanji, all connected to you.

I find this fact startlingly sad.

I miss you dearly.

But, despite the pain that your memory brings, I still stargaze. I now understand how you could love the stars as you did, although I surely love them for a different reason. Even though I am all alone in this neverending dusk, your presence in the cosmos leaves me unafraid.

We are eternally intertwined—as I am made of stardust, and you reside in the stars, a part of you will always be with me.

the last sunset of eternity

Yewande Shitta-Bey

a hazy ball of gold
hung high in the sky
peeking over a horizon
that stretched on to infinity;

cider clouds danced
to a graceful minuet
and the world seemed to slow
to one, two, three beats . . .

time then froze
as the clouds grew feeble
against the harsh sky
streaked with scarlet red—

now that i consider it

with careless legs
dangling over a cliff
while overlooking a world
turned into a bloodied abyss,

it feels as though this
is the last sunset of eternity.



E-Waste

Melanie Hosein-Finol
Canvas, Acrylic Paint, Chips, Wires, Plastic

Memories in Twilight

Yewande Shitta-Bey

I raise my hand to grasp the night.
Though it is hard to perceive without fireflies,
There are threads of memory within the twilight.

I dream of you with all my might:
A dreamscape, opaque, slowly fades, quickly dies.
I raise my hand to grasp the night.

I will shut my eyes and wait for tonight.
While the darkness is intangible behind my eyes,
There are threads of memory within the twilight.

Your smile, your laugh, I've forgotten the sight.
(If not Moneta, may the stars hear my cries?)
I raise my hand to grasp the night.

There are ephemeral echoes in the sunlight;
Only under the moon does the world crystalize.
There are threads of memory within the twilight.

I sometimes hear whistling in the candlelight.
(Is that you? I no longer recall the tune of your usual reprise.)
I raise my hand to grasp the night.
There are threads of memory within the twilight.



Dark Harbor

Elisabeth Rodriguez
Watercolor

ARTIST BIOS



The End.png

Melanie Hosein-Finol
Cardboard, Canvas, Acrylic Paint

Saina Amir-Zadeh-Shams is a 16-year-old student at College Academy who hopes that her art will show people the depth of the situation in Iran, where her family is from.

Alejandro Arias was born in Colombia and raised around music all his life.

Ami Amor Bergeron is a girl who lives in black and white, but the poetry she reads and tries to write brings her back to life.

Ignacio Beroiz is an 18-year-old Argentinian immigrant. Last year, art became something very close to his heart, and he has not stopped creating ever since.

Jessica Cattanach has been writing stories from a young age and dreams of becoming an author when she grows up.

Emily Fernandez learned at an early age that creating art was a safe and powerful outlet for her emotions. Her work represents emotions she struggles with and subjects she is passionate about.

Sage Hernandez is on the life-long pursuit of exploring the arts and the world through the lens of eradicating fear.

Melanie Hosein-Finol is a freshman in college who loves to create artwork focused on environmental issues while incorporating mixed media in her works. She plans on continuing her art career and putting her versatility to good use in the industry.

Yaku Madalengoitia takes inspiration from curious spaces and little things that go unnoticed. To really stop and have eyes to appreciate those spaces makes him feel closer to his purpose.

Jaleyna Lawes graduated from Broward College as a dual-enrolled student in the spring of 2022 and is now in her first year at Yale University studying for a Bachelors in the History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health. As the daughter of two Afro-Jamaican immigrants, Jaleyna reflects through her writing on the Black diasporic experience through formations of home and belonging.

Izzy Alchemy Evening Lechuga is an LGBTQ+ amateur photographer documenting the simplicities they find in kits journey to learn and explore! Ete wants to capture those moments, big and small, throughout her life!

Sophia Manzor shares her personal experiences through writing, in the hopes that others find empowerment through them.

Orionis A. R. Elder loves their two dogs, Angel and Pudding.

Angelina Pozo Marin likes to think about life . . . a lot. She wonders how she can create art that opens doors to different worlds while making sense of her thoughts, which typically come in the form of poetic chaos.

Melvin Mason is a freshman in college with a passion for art. His goal is to use his art to start a conversation about the helplessness and nihilistic thoughts many people are currently feeling.

Ashley Matos is from New York and marvels at the cityscape from her memories. She wants to emphasize the message of the importance of literature in our society and how a single line can help overcome obstacles and begin a journey.

Natasha Gonzalez believes that with every creation, comes a higher vibration.

ARTIST BIOS

Ricky Morales is on the path to graduating in Spring of 2023. They enjoy capturing different stories through writing and are pursuing a degree in Journalism.

Samuel Mujica and **Natalia Leal**, referring to themselves as “The Embers,” are seniors at College Academy expressing their emotions and pursuing their passion for music through song composition and music production.

Kate Nguyen is a Graphic Designer who sees art as an essential part of her life. She didn’t expect to become a designer, but the art world gave her a chance to experience this multidimensional life in an improvised way. She found herself again through art.

Nick Ramos likes art.

Mia Orris is just living.

Laury Pierre is a Haitian student filled with stories that she loves sharing with those around her. She would not be who she is today without her background. Her experiences have shaped her to be the person she is today and she will never forget her roots.

Suzy Potash uses poetry to establish a bond between others and their emotions. Poetry is her service to those who are willing to open their hearts.

Phoebe Potter is a Studio Art major at Broward College. Her artwork reflects her and her surroundings, particularly those she holds dear to her.

Elisabeth Rodriguez strives to appreciate everything around her. She is a music and art lover who is excited to discover more.

Sydney Scott loves bringing her imaginative ideas, fueled by her family, friends, culture, and interests, to life through whatever medium she can.

Laissa Senatus is a senior in high school taking dual enrollment classes to explore her interests. Writing gives her an outlet for all the chaos of thoughts running wild in her mind.

Yewande Shitta-Bey likes to write words that express and evoke nebulous feelings.

Angie Mejia Sierra is a junior at the College Academy who is an Afro-Latinx activist and youth voice in their community. She is the proud tia of six kids.

Ana Sofia Ordaz loves reading and connecting with nature, these and the experiences in life being her main source of amusement.

Dillon Bryant Stawicki is an all around artist interested in pursuing a career in both music and graphic arts. He will continue to further his education and explore the many fruits art has to offer.

Tak Yu Wong is a digital artist who loves creating illustrations that convey the complexity of human emotions.

Zhia Smith loves to express her feelings and creativity through art. She believes that it not only serves as an outlet to communicate her feelings, but also results in the creation of something beautiful.

Lennidies Montanez believes that life is all about stages and evolving in our circumstances without allowing them to take over her. “Stages” is a reflection of the stages in her life and how she has evolved.