

DON'T LEAVE YOUR AMBITIONS

ON THE MOUNTAIN-TOP.

SLING A CHAIN OVER THEM AND DRAG THEM BACK DOWN,
AND WRAP THEM UP NEATLY IN SHEETS OF CLING WRAP
AND STRIPS AND BOWS OF MASKING TAPE.

GRACE PENZA



AXIS

AXIS

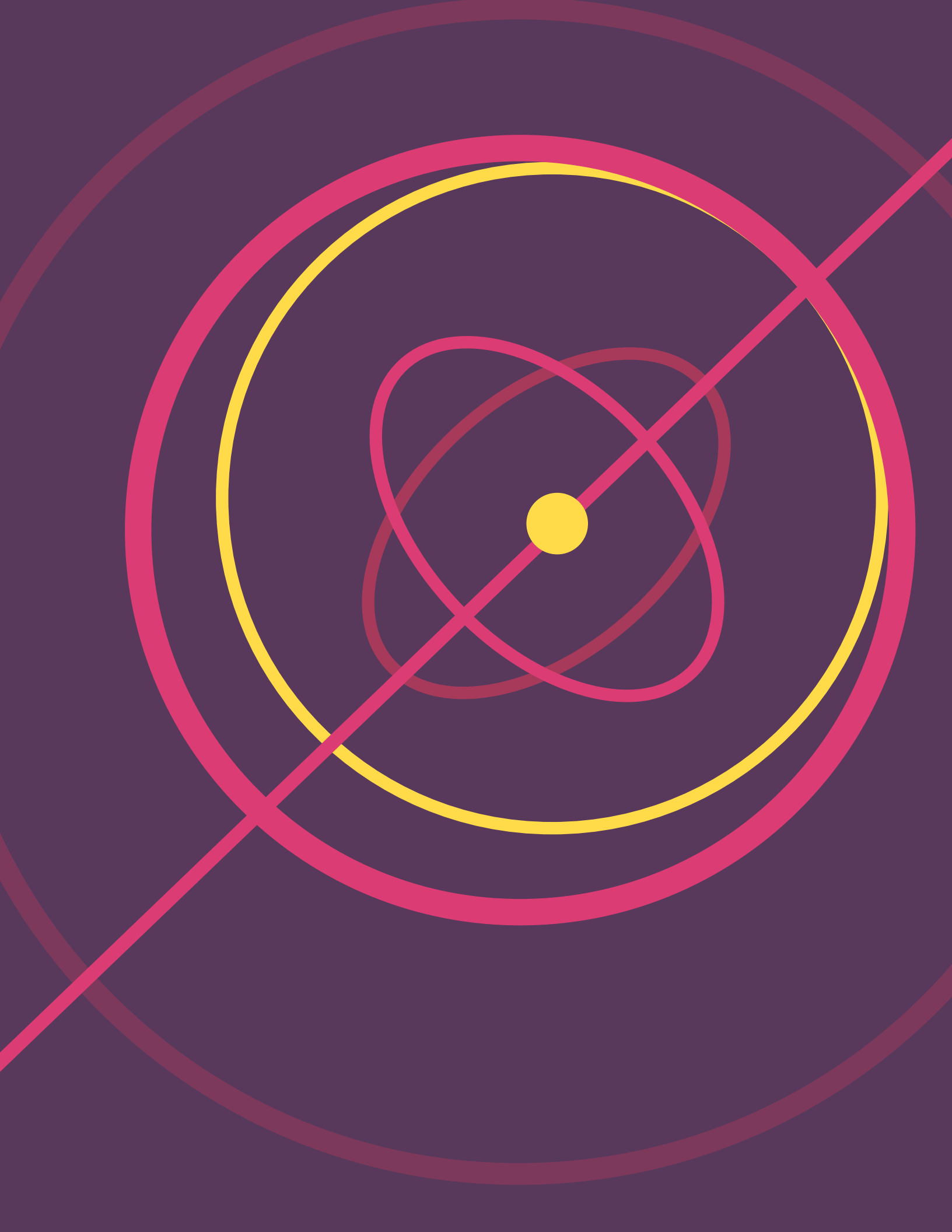
CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE MIAMI DADE COLLEGE NORTH CAMPUS

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VOLUME 20





AXIS

| 'AK-SIS | *The margin binding memory and mending.*

4C HAIR

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | MILOPHE JEAN



INTUITION

WATERCOLOR | ASHLEY FERRERA

ABOUT THE COVER

When our editorial team first saw this beautiful cover art, we were wonderstruck. It captures the theme of the magazine at its core; from the blooming flower in the woman's hair, to the expression on her face, to the vibrant colors of the paint, it embodies growth and renewal. It is painted like a memory, in smudges and blots, only revealing the better parts of the past to carry into the future.

Our Lead Graphic Designer, Jeanna Chery, sampled from its vibrancy and curated a complimentary theme that both contrasts and attracts with the special art pieces of this volume.

"I liken simplicity to be a key, a skeleton key to all of life's most difficult-to-open doors and visual art is the most grandest of all complicated doors of them all."

Jeanna Chery is a Graphic Design major with a focus in Brand Design at Miami Dade North Campus.

"The majority of my artwork, like '4C Hair' mainly centers on my skin color and my current energy while painting. In my paintings, I include multiple colors and at times, I use my bare hands instead of a paintbrush. Using this technique gives me a sense of freedom and a reminder that life is meant to be messy. When painting with your bare hands you are bound to make mistakes. And when that happens you have to look for a solution. You can't abandon it nor give up. It's like setting a goal and no matter what happens you try to make it work in your favor. The first thing people notice about my paintings is the multi-color use. Over time my art has gone from small, simple, and naked. To now big, colorful, full, and connected. I would love for my viewers to think deep, to look beyond the surface, and to continue looking for all the possibilities."

Milophe Jean is a Biology major in the EMT program at Miami Dade College North Campus.

ABOUT THE BACK COVER

"Intuition" is an artwork created using color pencil and watercolor that essentially captures what trusting your gut feels like. This piece was made for a series of art works I named "Emotions," and was inspired by the idea that we should all trust our inner guidance. To me, self acceptance and trust feel very warm and whimsical, and inspired the colors and composition of this piece. To further capture this harmonious feeling, the figure in this drawing is relaxed with her eyes closed as the intuitive energies flow around her, starting from within. This piece is essentially a direct, dreamy portrayal of the phrase "trust your gut."

Ashley Ferrera is a Computer Arts major at the Miami Dade College North Campus.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

THE IDEA BEHIND THIS VOLUME STARTED TWO YEARS AGO, when Miami Dade College was still a ghost town left behind from the years of the pandemic. For many students, though, it was still a fresh start: a chance at making beautiful memories where many had been stolen from them by the ravages of isolation and illness. For us, AXIS was a beacon. We had walked into our first class seeking a creative community, and it quite literally fell right into our laps when we were handed the 18th volume of the magazine. It did not take us long to reach out, and we quickly fell in love with all that AXIS stood for: a commitment to student voices and a love for the arts. The production of AXIS's 19th volume was a struggle; with a small staff and still-recovering student body, it took every ounce of willpower the team had to keep our spirits up and ensure the magazine maintained its high standards.

We clung on to the memories we had made during the production of the previous issue—the peaks and the valleys—and used them to propel AXIS forward. Our former team of four grew to be fifteen strong. We shared our devotion to creative writing with every editor that walked in and formed a bond based on our collective desire to restore an artistic community. Everything that makes AXIS beautiful, in turn, helped us to grow; each person that walked into our meeting room was invited to make it a second home, and to consider the people there as part of it.

The future we visualized for AXIS was one of renewal; we built a striking community bound together by experience—each of us stitching our memories together to raise something stunning from ruins plagued by desolation. This year's theme of reminiscence and renewal speaks to the re-establishment of AXIS to what it once was: a bustling community of young artists. The pages of this volume represent a journey of healing—one from the memories of the past into a mended future. From the time since we first stepped into the editorial room to now, this anniversary edition of AXIS has been shaped into a monument to all we have endured and our unified approach to imaginative rejuvenation.

The 20th volume is not just a representation of change, but also a celebration. If you work your way to the midpoint of this issue, you will find the 19 previous editions commemorated by the work of past AXIS teams. This magazine goes beyond its pages; it marks twenty years of community and commitment from creatives everywhere, and it would not be possible without you, our readers.

As you read, we hope that you see the passion in every work, and that you notice the process of healing from the first half to the second. We invite you to imagine yourself within the poetry, the short stories, the art, and the films, so that you can reminisce with us and experience the renewal, as we have.

For the last two years, AXIS has been our silver lining. Now, we wish it to be yours.

Enduringly,



Lea Rabaron, Editor-in-Chief



Grace Penza, Managing Editor



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EMERGING ARTISTS

In this edition, it has been our pleasure to receive amazing works from talented North campus students. However, four of these students stuck out to us the most, not only due to the amount of work they submitted, but to the quality of their pieces. Each of these artists has three or more wonderful works showcased in this year's magazine. We hand the pen over to them; please take the time to discover the artistic processes of these blooming creators.



GRACE PENZA

Everything an artist makes is a love letter to enduring. With each finished product comes proof that your mind, body, and spirit hold fast against the trials of the world. The process from rough to final draft also engenders a beauty you can't find anywhere else—something cultivated from the delicacy of an attentive touch and the unbridled potential of a creative mind. When I write, I try to take those glimpses of beauty and endurance and transform them into a piece that makes my brain and heart into a spectacle for others so that they, too, might feel something where once there was nothing.



DANIEL BENITEZ

Why create? It's been asked a million times over to a million different people. When every thought is already out there, when every emotion has already been felt, when every word has already been uttered, why do I create? Because I can. Everyone's neurons fire differently for the same situation. So I create to deal with the consequences, and in turn, it gives me art to share with the world. So why do I share? Simply to see how you respond. The joy in discussing how you view me through my works is always enthralling. So, maybe I show my work to scratch that itch left by the unreleased songs; the unwritten poem; the forgotten. Hi, my name is Daniel, and I invite you all into a little slice of my brain. Enjoy or not—I hope you leave with something more than a loss of some time!



ELIAS OCHOA-MONSALVE

I've always felt that stories are told in the small moments. My favorite parts in movies and books are certain facial expressions, words, sentences. My poetry is an attempt to recreate the kind of moment that makes you pause a film and stare out your window. I want to express how I feel in the most raw manner possible, just like how I do in bed with your mother. I'm sorry—wrong page. I'm a writer of all disciplines, which means I never know what I'm going to write. That's what inspired all of the pieces that are being published in this magazine: bursts of inspiration brought on by hours of sitting alone at my laptop. I hope you like them. It's how I feel.



BEVERLEY KERSAINT

There is a specific feeling that entangles me as I create the art I do. For hours and hours, I am stuck in the same place contemplating colors and shadows while the music in my headphones blasts. It is a method I hold dear to me—a method where my expression holds no bounds, and I am free to create whatever I please. I center these pieces around identities that exist within each other. Representation is something that I wanted to see more of as a kid so now I offer myself this: a gift to those who do not feel seen, people of color who want to see more of those who look like them in the atmospheres that they create. I show my work not only because I love creating pieces that feature beautiful women of color, but also to present my love for the women of color around me. When looking at these pieces, connect with your identity and let yourself know that you deserve a place to feel seen in this world.

PART ONE:

REMINISCENCE

MARINE LIFE JELLYFISH

PHOTOGRAPHY | DANIEL BENITEZ



MARINE LIFE LIONFISH

PHOTOGRAPHY | DANIEL BENITEZ

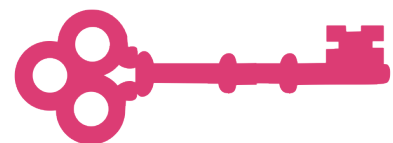
THE FOLLY OF THE MASTER OF DEATH

GRACE PENZA

For all the talk of life and death,
no master holds the proper key
to happiness or other ends,
to storied endings with good rest.
His circle wishes all good tides
so whereupon his master hides

his pride, goeth far and hiding
fear of weakness, pain of death,
and eyes averted from the tides
of holy gate and shining key
which lock away the final rest,
where all souls will meet their end—

and should his ego come to spend
its coats of fur and shining hides,
disguise which puts disguise to rest,
flamboyance in its fiery death
will polish metal of the key
before it's taken by the tides



of better men and their well-tides
of lovely girls and their split ends
indicative of the true key
to where some happiness hides,
letting ego die its death,
and letting tortured souls lie, rest

on beds of satin resting on
a river crying out the tides
where weaker creatures meet their
death
while moving end to end, my friend;
the weaker creatures do not hide
when presented with the key

to choirs singing higher keys,
to the place where ever-rest
past the highest mountain hides,
the winds thick like river tides,
this place being the final end -
ineffable, good friend, it's death.

The key to riding fated tides
is resting when what's done doth end.
Brutal death's for those who hide.

ENDLESS TRACKS
DIGITAL ART | GABRIEL CEDENO



PARTY OF ONE

DANIEL BENITEZ

Inhale, exhale.

Is the room becoming foggy, or is this just me in my own mind, slipping through my consciousness again? How does one get here? Wanting to forget everything again, unable to shoulder the burden and blame?

Inhale, exhale.

The smoke rises, causing a cough every now and then—but I like that. Everything grows hazy. A smile starts to form: manufactured happiness.

Inhale, exhale.

It's after work, and I've been invited to a party. It's rather full. All the shadows and silhouettes are moving about. But I don't mind. All of my friends come to me. And the bottles talk to me. The friendly bottles don't mock me. They don't tell me what an asshole I am.

Inhale, exhale.

I can't see anymore. Is the smoke too thick, or have I just disconnected? I don't care. I can't remember why I was sad, and that makes me happy. A party of one ensues. The feeling is fleeting, though.

Inhale, exhale.

The persistent vibrations of my phone shocks the dull nerves of my leg. My hands are like cinder blocks attempting to hoist up a brick from my pocket. Such a wasted effort; my eyes are singed by its cold, harsh light. I see a name, but I am too worn to see.

Inhale, exhale.

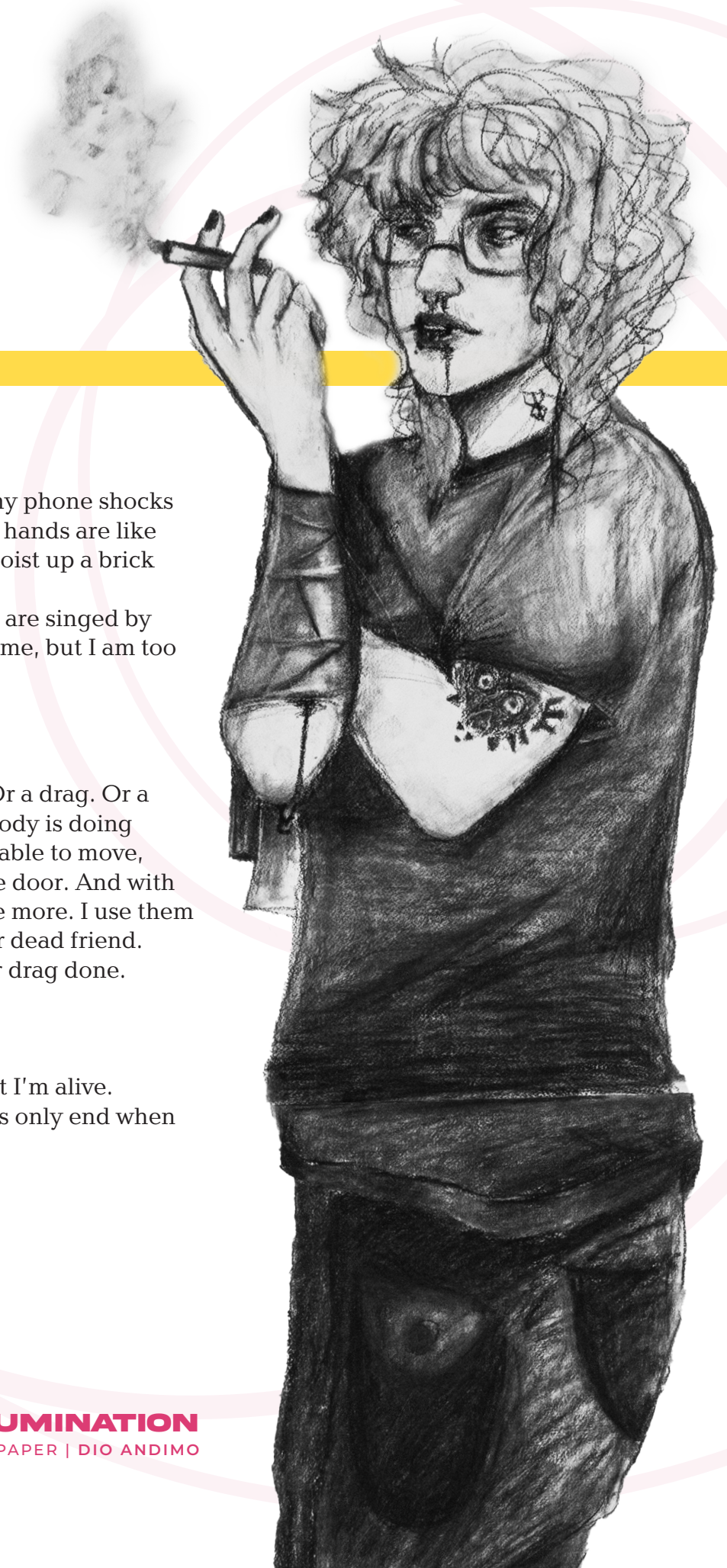
A silent click. Another puff. Or a drag. Or a drink. Who knows what my body is doing now? I stand up and walk, unable to move, unable to think. But I'm at the door. And with that, my memories come once more. I use them to validate my anger. Another dead friend. Another bottle gone. Another drag done.

Inhale, exhale.

I can only hope it kills me, but I'm alive. Unfortunately. Cycles like this only end when you're dead.

RUMINATION

GRAPHITE ON PAPER | DIO ANDIMO



GLIMPSES

FRANCISCO LACAU

All I ever get are glimpses;
their lives flash before my eyes.
Moments I should have been a part of
all stab me like knives.
And then the dark takes me again,
away from my precious friends,
and before it can begin
another happy memory ends:

a smile,
a wave,
and a goodbye.

RED HOODIE
GRAPHITE ON PAPER | MAX RUBIO



HOW TO FACE A COBRA

EMDYA PERMUY-LLOVIO

Complex minds, resounding so great—
a voice to shatter the shackles of a prisoner.
Enslave this prey with your bait and deception.
Once and for all, always a prisoner
stuck within her own exhibit of fear so great.

Peculiar? Absolutely! Fear of mere shadow;
a regalness to comfort the Kings of chastity and lust alike.
Feed this pet with the kindness of your arrogance and false perception.
She and the rest dwindled down into obedience,
knowing no better than to fear their own shadow.

Like the covens in Salem, shunned into a state of "nothing,"
a persistence to weaken an ignorant brotherhood.
Dismiss the rattles of her tail and their tales.
You and the "owners" were never frightened by those snakes,
for a cobra with no bite is a primary catalyst of "nothing."

Caution is of the utmost importance, yet
visitors always seem to skip the lines of reason, yet
you'll provoke her until her stance seduces you, yet
you'll never admit to your provocation, and

she'll use the violence subtly to warn you once more, and
if that signal isn't enough, she'll forgive you for any wrongdoings, and
you'll mistake her control through empathy as her downfall, and
you'll stick your hand into the enclosure with the enthusiasm of an impatient child.

Combating her impulse with rational thinking is what I'd presume the opposition
would argue,
but ultimately, your only sense of authority is only unconquerable through the abuse
of the curvatures of her serpentine frame, or her ability to amuse.

If you're willing to disrespect a species within its own habitat
or rather, its confined habitat fabricated by pet "owners,"
then you win, even if it was through gross exposure.

Just be sure that you're poking her right side—or left, whichever is easier to demoralize.
How to? You'll know, through the silent screams at the instant of your touch.
Or you'll learn to know when injustice invites a slightly sincere sense of remorse.

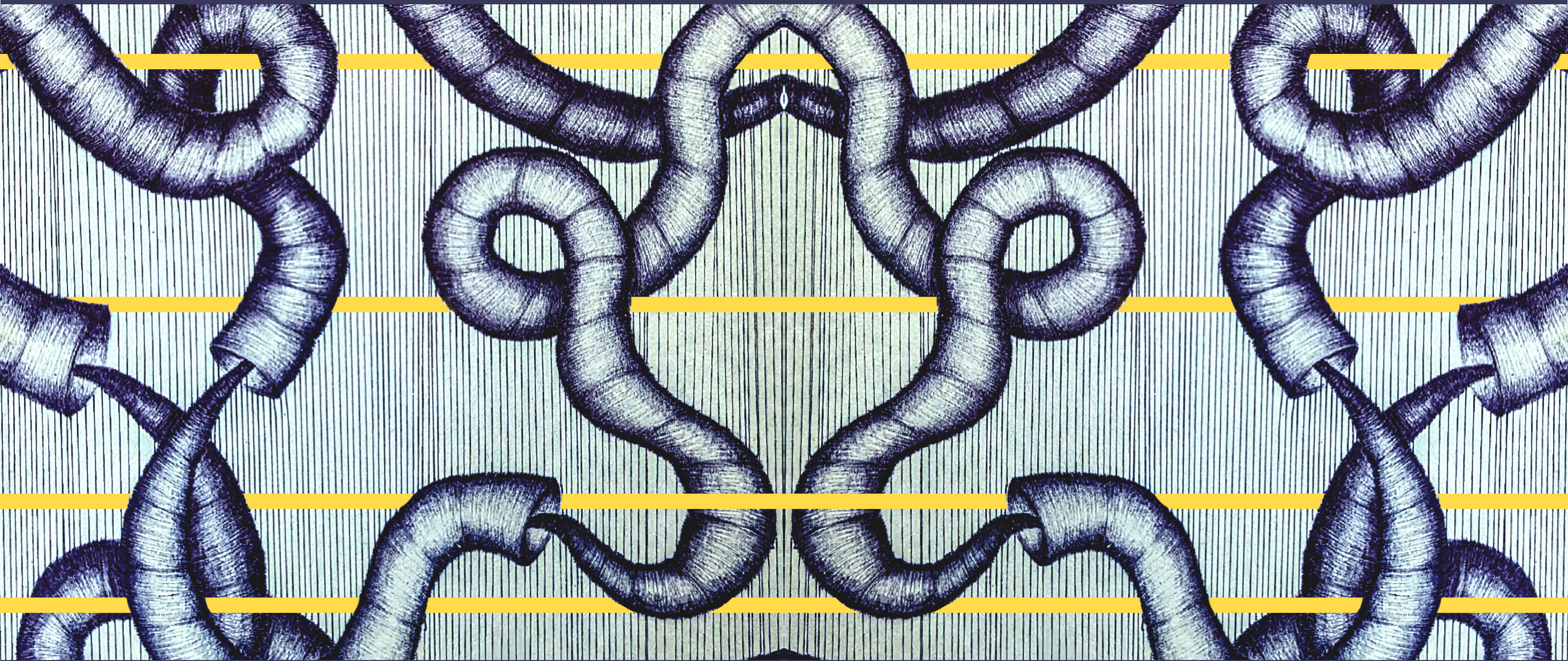
Nevertheless, it's your job as the owner, right?
Is it all justified through the strength of your own jealousy?
Is it justice?

Preparation and tactic may become your stronghold,
but I'll leave you with this:
a venomous serpent fights to kill.
Completely refrain, or proceed if you insist.

The approaches vary, but it's all the same.
Hear her sympathy in all your glory.
Attempt to control the doings of the creature,
slowly slipping and coming to familiarize yourself
with the tastes of hypocrisy and empowerment, and all else in between.
The venom of a cobra, the hand of all-encompassing femininity,

it's all the same.

LINE AND FORM
INK ON PAPER | ASHLEY FERRERA





CONFESSION

DANIEL BENITEZ

Dear Dead Friends,

And to those who follow my empty musings and hollow head—

I'm left to warm myself with the internal monologues of self loathing and heated debates about my ever-devaluing worth. Endless snowfall obscuring my vision, appearing as flecks of my own ego burning in the last embers of sunlight. Soon left with nothing but the deep black tar infesting my mind and my lungs. Quietly, I observe the horizon on an unfamiliar, yet all too familiar, impermanent balcony. I wait for daybreak.

"How did I get here?"

I ponder this statement continuously, all day, staggering in a sleep-deprived wake. And every night, lying down in a restless, anxiety-filled, shaking husk of a body. A sleepless existence, filled with continuous moments of hate filled isolation. And for what? To write generic words on a page any asshole with a laptop and mildly inconvenienced childhood could? Or because I naively thought I could achieve my old dreams of being remembered? I hate this.

"I miss you. I want you back."

You tend to think these thoughts a lot when you're in some godforsaken city you can't remember. "You" constantly changes. It can be an old friend who told you to go fuck yourself when they saw how obsessed you were with your career, or just one you neglected to respond to. Maybe it's a family member. I had a family, a mother, father, and two sisters. A wife—every day, I find myself missing her cute little chuckle—and a beautiful baby boy. I'm pushed to tears when I remember our son's first words, or his first steps. I want to go back, accept the promotion. I want my friends back. To have a family again. Yet, I am always appalled to find the remains of dismembered relationships in my wake. I've left behind the lives and love of those closest to write for the damned kids. Fuck this all.

"Yet here I sit, out in the cold. Not doing a fucking thing."

For fame I've yet to acquire? I'm not the second coming of Tom Clancy or Stephen King, like I always saw myself. I'm just this little small-time jackass who maybe meets one dude in a Kurt Cobain shirt, saying some variation of, "Wow dude, your stuff is pretty good." Pretty good? Seriously, not even memorable, special, or even great!? That's not it. Then why? To meet those empty faces and generic thank yous? See above. And fuck everyone who said that to me. I hate you all. It was obviously to create more rifts and push all prospects of love and happiness further away from me. To sacrifice my own mental state. To feel the downpour on every fiber of my being when the rain comes in. Fuck fame. Fuck Writing.

"I'm sorry."

To my wife, who I'm nothing more than a stranger to anymore.
To my baby boy, who I will never get the honor of seeing. Never teach him to fish. Or about girls (or guys, as long as he's honest). Who will never remember his father, who sang him to sleep every night. Who told him "I love you."
To my old friends: you guys were all right. I was just an upset piece of shit who never took criticism the right way.

I'm sorry.
I'm sorry.
I'm Sorry.



If you are reading this, I never made it through the night. The thoughts grew too cruel. The shadows were too dark. The echoes were too loud. I really do love you all, and want you to know I wanted nothing more than to have you back. The gun is so tantalizingly close, fully loaded. All it takes is one through the roof of my mouth to end it all. Don't miss me; I am in a better place now. Its call is too loud to ignore. Goodbye, maybe we can be better together in the next life, if there is one...

Until Man controls the breadth of space entire and you can pull me from the heavens and depths,

yours into infinity,

8



HOMINIDAE

GRAPHITE ON PAPER | DIANAMARINA RODRIGUEZ

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT HER NECK
FELT LIKE!



THE SUSPECT

FILM BY LUCAS FERNANDEZ

ANCIENT LEGEND

DANIEL AMAYA

A
Lone
Deserter
Who seeks
Burning power
From the goddess
Of fire and corruption.
Thus awakens the heart of
A cold-blooded Demon King.

As
That
The wise
Souls united
Intertwined with
Who brought oceans
Filled with vast creatures
Here marches a royal empress
For together, Hyrule's treasure grants the Triforce of golden sun.

of
come
and brave:
to save others.
both the goddess
and nurtured forests,
along with wild children.
to seek a gallant in bark tree,



JOYFUL CREATURES

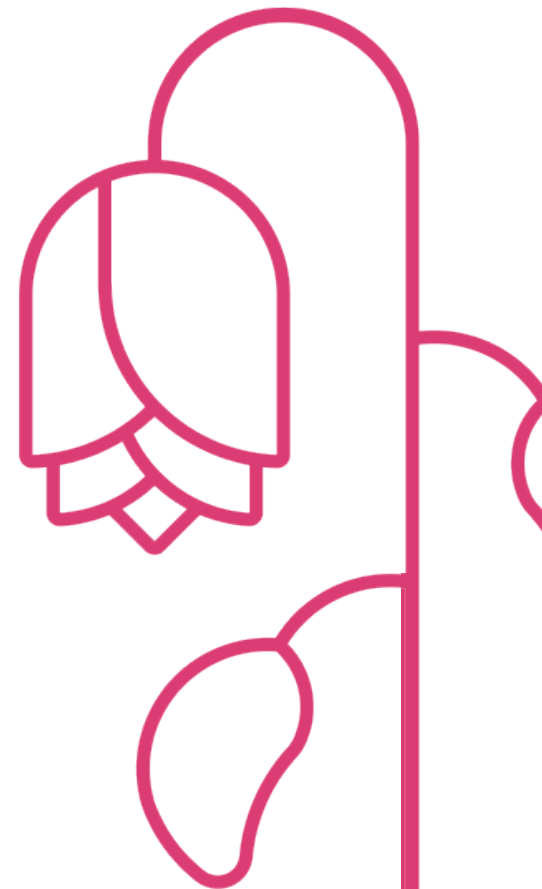
DIGITAL ART | BRIANA GOMEZ



ANNIVERSARIES

JOANNA GERGES

Anniversaries, such strange things:
a celebration of life or death.
A start or end.
This anniversary in particular is one I can't quite decipher.
Is she beginning or ending?
Losing or gaining?
What's the title for something in-between?
Something both lost and gained through strife and strength.
She is all wisdom and power, yet her heart sinks at the sight of a date,
a time.
Once in the past, they say, it can no longer bear its weight,
though the depths of my grief seem to flow endlessly,
as if it was fate.
I often reminisce on her, in who I once was,
the girl before the twenty-second of November.
I reckon she'd be quite proud of who she came to be:
a small comfort,
a token.
For who shall save the girl who wandered lost in pain?
Today marks the first year
of all I lost dear to me
and all I fought to create,
which brings me here to this very moment
wondering—
what purpose do anniversaries hold
but to remind us of what we mold?





AESTHETICALLY UGLY
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | ANGELINA GONZALEZ

A NEW LEASE

GRACE PENZA

THE FLATS IN THE CHEAPER PARTS OF ASLOW are just barely appropriate places for a living person to reside. Most, if not all, of the flats in the giant apartment building that Baxter just moved into have floors covered wall-to-wall in carpeting that's never been replaced. Many of its residents swear that small animals live in the walls, often telling the landlord that their "other tenants" are liable to pay their share of the rent any day now when the time comes to pay it. Although she is not too optimistic about how she will fare in a place that smells equally of mildew and mold, Baxter is confident that she can make the dingy flat she's renting for fourteen hundred dollars a month into a proper home in no time. Baxter wipes the sweat off of her brow, droplets rolling down her forehead and temples, after moving the last of the boxes; her cropped hair is matted to the top of her forehead, sticky and near transparent with moisture. The slight chill of the drafty space was unwelcoming on first arrival, but became an appreciated reprieve from the incessant heat of Aslow's early autumn. As Baxter unpacks her boxes, stacking book after book on the poorly-constructed Ikea bookshelf she put together late the night before, she finds herself wishing—not for the first time—that somebody was there with her; if not a committed partner or close friend, then at least a roommate to help her unpack and commiserate with about the state of housing in their fair city. If she closes her eyes, she can almost sense it: a hand rubbing against her back, a cool huff of breath against her cheek, and a light chuckle beside her ear. She turns around to open more boxes with a beleaguered sigh and is greeted with a wholly unusual sight. Where there was previously nothing but dead air and dust particles, there now stands an entirely intact specter. It wears a broad smile on its face. "Wow, another tenant's breezing through. Landlords just can't keep 'em anymore, huh?" it says. Without so much as a single undignified yelp, Baxter passes out, her head thumping onto the damp carpet. When she comes to, the specter is hovering over her with a concerned expression.

"Man, that was weird. Are you alright? Hellooo? I know you can't hear me, like, at all, but—"

"What? Who are you? Why are you here? I'm too young to have dementia!"

The specter blinks in surprise, cocking its head to the side with a puzzled look. Its long hair brushes precariously close to Baxter's face, eliciting a faint tickling sensation.

"I think you mean schizophrenia or—wait, you can hear me? That's great! It's been ages. At least a year. I've been so alone with just stray cats and that boring landlord for company," it says. Baxter blinks owlishly, still lying face-up on the floor. It occurs to her that she should probably get up, so she does, rising to her feet and staring the specter dead in the eyes. Its waist-hair floats into the air around it, billowing out like



the sundress it's wearing.

"Yeah, I can see and hear you. Just to clarify: you are a ghost, right? And I'm not hallucinating you or anything?"

"That's me! Your resident ghost," it says gleefully. "It's great to have a real talk again. Especially since the last person I talked to was the most boring coworker near my cubicle."

"Cool, cool," Baxter says. "Uh, nice to meet you." She extends a hand to shake before cringing at the gesture and grabbing her elbow instead. "What's your name?"

"Oh. Uh, I'm Marisol." She rubs the back of her head, sheepish, and wraps a segment of her long hair around a couple of her fingers. "What about you?"

"Baxter." The room fills with an awkward silence.

"So, Bax—I'm totally calling you that—I guess we're roomies now. What are you up to?"

"You...saw me putting books on this shelf. I'm just unpacking all of my heavier boxes and getting set up, starting with stuff that has, like, shelves associated with it. I don't really have a system. This is probably gonna take ages."

Marisol pouts, jutting out her lower lip exaggeratedly. "Man! And here I was hoping we could play twenty-one questions or something. Whatever. You got any feather-light objects I can toss around? I've been getting really good at semi-corporeal actions lately."

"Uh..." Baxter doesn't know how to respond to this. "I don't know quite what that means, but I have an entire box full of really small plushies I sleep with, if that sounds like your jam?" Baxter blushes, embarrassed, and tugs at the sleeve of her flannel.

"Oh, sick! So cute! What are they? Little dogs? Hamsters? Fish?"

"Variable. Some are little creatures, I guess, and some are of my favorite characters. Go wild. Just try not to drop them on this gross floor."

"I can do that! Don't worry—your plushies are safe with me!"

Baxter chuckles. "Cool. You'll have to look for them yourself, though; I don't know what box they're in, and I still need to organize this bookshelf."

"It's like a find-the-item mystery game, then. I've got you. It'll be fun!" Marisol turns around and floats through the single plaster wall dividing the rooms of the flat, humming cheerily under her breath. Baxter goes about shelving her books again, looking forward to when Marisol returns and eases her loneliness.

It's occurred to Baxter that the situation she's in is strange, and perhaps even a little dangerous. People talk about stuff like this on TV shows all the time, she thinks; it could be stress hallucinations, or symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, or an elaborate setup by a serial killer, which seems much less likely, but not impossible. As she mindlessly sets book after book on the shelf, she considers calling her landlord, but there's nothing he could say that the dual carbon monoxide and smoke detectors couldn't. She'd call her therapist and ask about the stress stuff, but she really doesn't have enough money for that—that leaves a serial killer, and Baxter doesn't particularly fancy herself a Scooby-Doo character.

A ghost it is, then. Weirder things have happened, like anglerfish evolving and Jimmy Fallon being allowed to host The Tonight Show.

When she's about halfway through shelving the books, Marisol comes back with a plushie in hand. It's a little lion with a crown-like mane and a cheeky, toothy grin.

"Bax, this is so cute. It looks just like you!" Marisol bounces the plushie around between both of her hands. "Especially the hair. It's the same short of fluffy blond 'do you've got. I always wanted to cut my hair like this, and it looks so good on you I might just try—even though I can't really pick up metal yet," she chuckles.

Baxter looks up, amused.

"I'd offer to do your hair for you, but I have the skilled hands of a toddler with a bottle of glitter glue. Even if it worked, and I have my doubts, I think my work would make you cry. And not in a good way."

"Aw, phooey," Marisol replies. "Just kidding! I don't think I can actually change what I look like anymore. If I could, I'd do something way cooler with it than just cut my hair. I'd make my eyes purple instead of brown, or deck myself out in designer clothes, or something like that. My hair's not too bad the way it is."

"It looks full of vitality," Baxter notes.

"Right? I was always proud of my hair!" Marisol beams. "And I love how it never looked greasy as long as I took care of it right. My mom compared it to raven feathers." Her face falls, somewhat abruptly.

"You have a lot of work to do. I'll leave you to your unpacking. Nice plushie collection." She floats around the wall, gingerly holding the lion plushie, as Baxter watches with a curious face.



Over the next several weeks, Baxter and Marisol grow unusually close for souls inhabiting separate planes. It ends up that every other day, Baxter, Marisol, and all the plushies in the apartment gather on an empty patch of floor and talk about their lives. Marisol talks a lot about bug fun facts and gossips about the neighbors; Baxter complains about her coworkers, but every so often lets it slip that she's excited about a manuscript that crossed her desk. Occasionally, they inspire her to work on her own writing, and a good number of poems end up slapped on the fridge, written in sloppy

cursive on neon yellow Post-It notes. Whenever Marisol gets lonely during the day, she floats into the kitchen and reads a few of them.

"Bax, this poetry is really good. Are you published?"

"No, no," Baxter says with an emphatic shake of her head. "I'd like to be, but it's pretty hard. I mean, yeah, some of my stuff is in small magazines scattered across the area, but it's not like having a novel written or anything."

"You should make a collection out of your poems," says Marisol. "I'd buy anything you write!"

That afternoon, Baxter writes a short poem about love and gratitude and sticks it to the outside of the fridge in one of the few open spaces she has left. It mysteriously disappears before she wakes up the following day and resurfaces in her pile of plushies when she re-makes her bed.

When Baxter finally finishes figuring out the apartment—unpacking all the boxes, putting together each piece of furniture, replacing the terrible incandescent light bulbs in all the light fixtures with more efficient fluorescent ones—she sits down on the couch with a bottle of rosé and a tall glass of white grape juice and invites Marisol to join her.

"I know you can't actually drink anything, but you've been such a big help in keeping me sane while I got situated here, it would be unfair not to toast to your generosity and pleasantness," Baxter says with a gentle smile.

"Aw, shucks, you really know how to flatter a girl," Marisol responds. She's fairly certain that if ghosts could blush, she would. "It's been all too sad here by my lonesome—trust me when I say I'm more than happy to be hanging around."

"And, of course, you can't get enough of my fantastic company."

"That too!" The two of them laugh together, smiling broadly. Baxter pours some of her wine out and raises her glass.

"Thanks, Mari. You're a certified great roomie." She tips a third of the cup down in a single go.

"Man, I sure wish I could be drinking with you. It sucks that this whole transient body thing means I can't actually drink anything."

"Man, how does that even work? Have you tried to drink anything before? Picking up bottles of wine or cans of beer seems a bit out of your ability range. No offense."

"None taken," Marisol replies. "Actually, it's a weird story. I wanted to visit this place I used to go to a lot when I was still alive—I don't know, the kind of place frats would throw their parties if they were made for college dropouts. It was a sick joint. A bunch of my friends would drink directly out of the kegs there, but, uh, to make a very long story short, someone left one of the taps open, and when I tried to drink some, it went right through me."

"That honestly sounds like a letdown."

"It totally was," Marisol pouts. "I mean, don't get me wrong, whatever beer they had was awful. I could, like, feel the taste, and it was bad. But I kinda wanted to get drunk that night."

"You liked partying, then?" Baxter asks.

"Meh, not the partying so much, but the feeling. Being around people is the best. I miss it. But that's besides the point! The point is, we'd be great drinking buddies if I could have a glass with you."

Baxter wipes a sheen of her makeshift sangria from her top lip.

"Oh, I don't doubt it. Remember that one time when I got just completely wasted after a long day at work and you just...kept laughing with me, even when you had no idea what I was laughing at? You'd be fantastic! We would have so much fun."

Baxter stares down into her glass, feeling both emboldened and melancholy from the wine. Looking Marisol directly in the eye, she asks, "What did you do when you were drinking with your friends? Before you died, of course. You've never told me about your life before."

"I don't like thinking about it too much."

"Do you mind me asking why not?"

Marisol sits down on the floor, her legs crossing as she settles down above the carpet.

"I mean...I don't mind you asking. At all. I like that you care, actually," she says with a faint smile. "It just hurts to think about—that I'm dead. How I died. Where I'm going after this."

"No, I get that. I totally get it. You don't have to tell me anything if you don't want to. I just..."

"You want to understand me more? Yeah, I can tell."

"Oh! You, uh, you can?" Baxter flushes and averts her gaze, cheeks burning.

"Yeah, I can. You're surprisingly easy to read—which isn't a bad thing. People weren't always honest with me, so it's refreshing to be around someone who is."

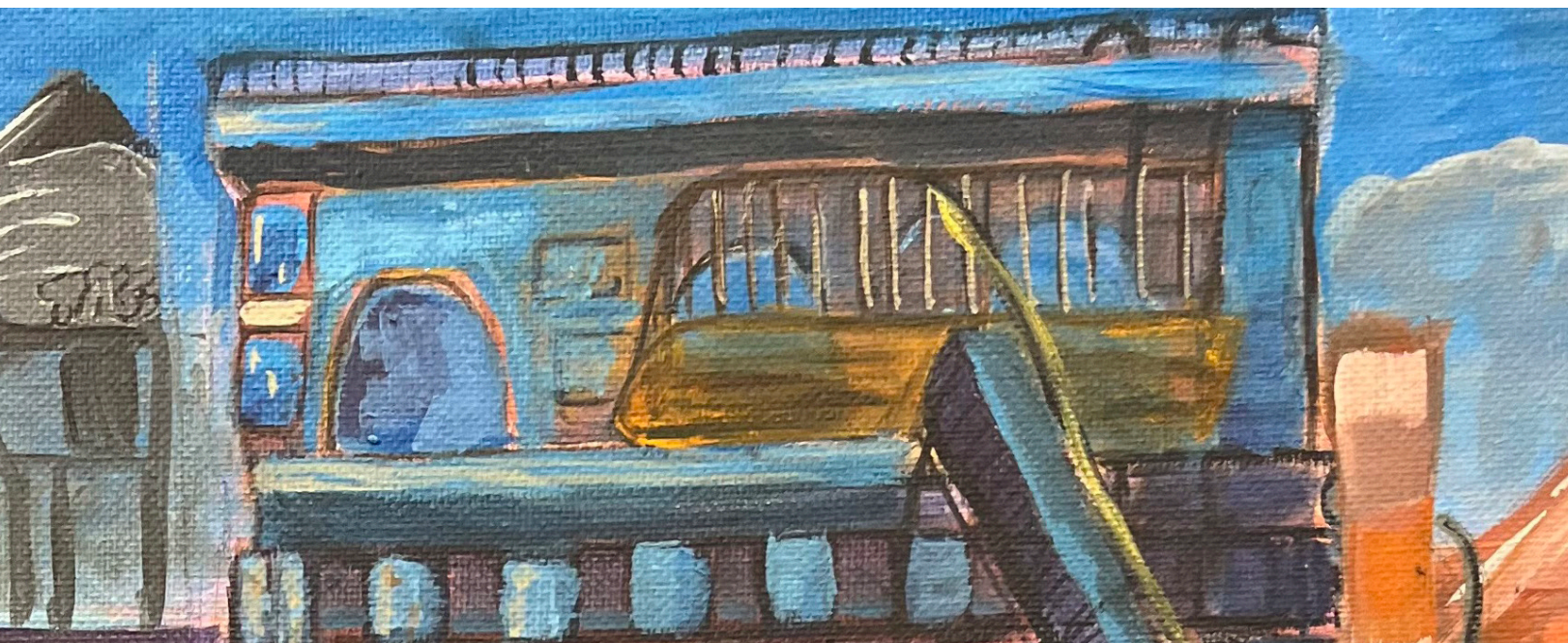
"It's not like I'm this transparent on purpose, though."

"Yeah, but you never try to hide that you are, you know? I'm not sure if this makes sense, but some people are really open but pretend not to be. They try to hide. You don't."

"And that's...good?" Baxter asks.

"Yeah. I like it!" Marisol sits on the couch and leans towards Baxter. "You're upfront. It's good. And I wanna understand you better, too."

Baxter sets her glass down on the coffee table next to the bottle of wine and clenches her hands on her thighs, gazing into Marisol's eyes, which shine under the flickering

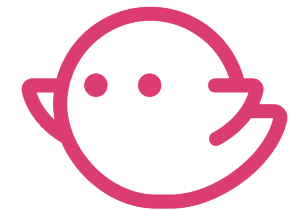


lights.
"Marisol?"
"Yeah?"
"I'm really glad I met you."
"I'm glad I met you, too."
"Yeah. Yeah, that's good. Mari, I feel like you should know—"
"M-maybe you shouldn't say it, okay? We both know that this isn't permanent."
"I know. I know. I'm sorry."
"Don't be sorry! And, for the record—me too." Marisol reaches out as though to caress Baxter's arm but stops just short of touching her with a regretful grimace on her face.
"Aw, Bax. I wish I could touch you, just once. It would make me so happy."
"Me, too. I really, really want to feel you. This sucks."
"It totally does, doesn't it?" Marisol laughs nervously. "But it's okay. We can see each other, hear each other, and that's pretty good on its own, isn't it?"
"Yeah."
"Hey, what do you say you finish that bottle of wine, and I start tossing some stuff around in the air? I can even try to pick up a book and start flapping the pages like a bird!"
"I think that sounds great, Mari. Lord knows I need to be drunk to handle, uh, whatever this conversation was—no offense. Naturally. You're still a great conversation partner."
"Damn straight I am!" Marisol and Baxter sport matching smiles, almost like nothing ever happened. "You get to guzzling that wine. I am going to confer with the plushies." Marisol floats away through the wall to the bedroom.
Baxter stares up at the water stains on the room's ceiling. Suddenly, the couch she is sitting on feels almost unbearably uncomfortable; she has a great itch to get up and start pacing, maybe walk down to the pier and jump off the end into the deep, murky waters below. Tears are building near her lower lash line and threatening to spill out onto her face, and she just barely represses the urge to start wailing.
She's sober enough to know it's not the wine.
When Baxter wakes up the next morning, she has the beginnings of a small headache, what is very clearly a developing hangover, and a right arm that's gone numb after being trapped underneath her body the entire night. As she gets up, she can feel the red markings on her face from where it was pressed against the couch all night. Marisol is sat cross-legged across from her, eyes set serenely closed as she cuddles a giant bat-shaped plushie—the largest object she's managed to touch thus far. Baxter yawns, and Marisol's eyes drift open.

"Morning, Bax. Sleep well?"
"Ugh. Totally not. The entire right side of my body feels like somebody injected it with lidocaine, and this headache is gonna be killer in an hour." Baxter pauses for a moment, stretching with her arms high in the air as she yawns. "Hey, you good? Your eyes look even more glazed-over and ghostly than usual."
Marisol averts her gaze. "Yeah, all good!" she shouts enthusiastically. "Kitchen, kitchen! Go!" she says, making shooing motions with her hands. "I'd be right behind

you, but maybe I should put these plushies back on your bed. You know, for when you go back to sleep in an hour."
"Hey! I take offense at that. I can totally stay awake for more than an hour."
"Not in this state, you goof. Now, you're gonna drink a tall glass of water, take an Advil, have some soup, and go back to sleep."
"I will do that."
"Great. Go. Seriously. I will be here when you come back."
"You will be here when I come back," Baxter repeats.

Marisol blows a kiss to Baxter with a wink and a hair toss. "You know it."
The day goes by fairly quickly after that; despite sleeping a full night, Baxter is still exhausted—from the wine, the conversation, the poor position she slept in—and warm soup and painkillers knock her straight out again. She settles into her bed, surrounded by the soft warmth of her plushie collection, as Marisol hums a tune to help her sleep—a jovial lullaby that reminds Baxter of festivals and cool autumn air. She drifts off peacefully, aided into her dreams by a gentle hand carding through her scalp and the dulcet tones of Marisol's lullaby.

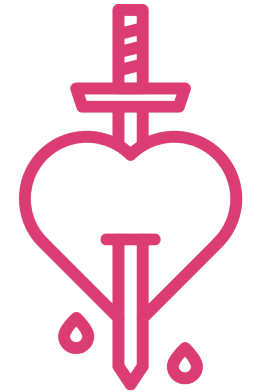


WINTER HEART

BIANCA JULES

The words never left his lips,
for if they did, arrows would shoot them down.
His calloused hand never reached out.
They would hold too firmly and break her down.

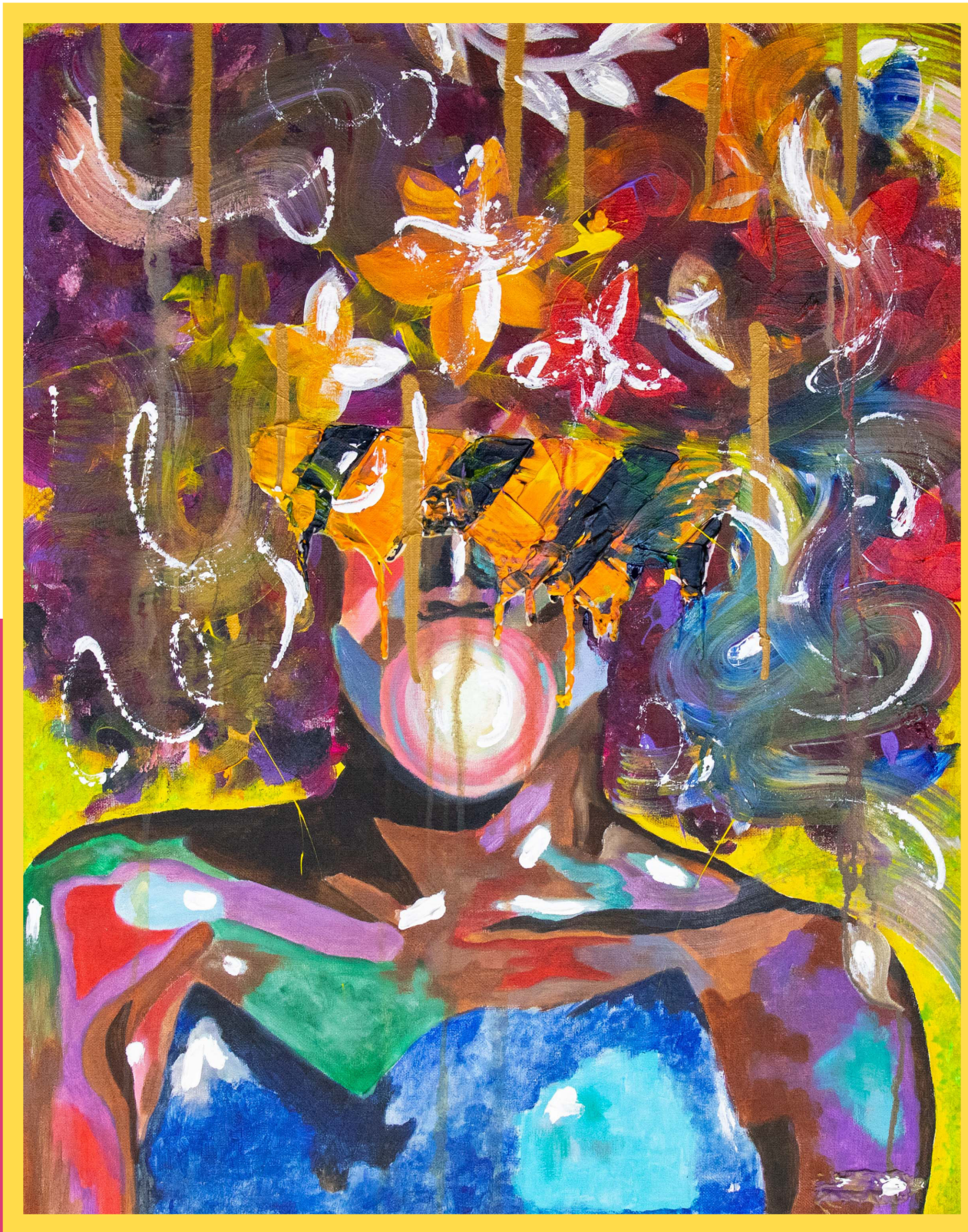
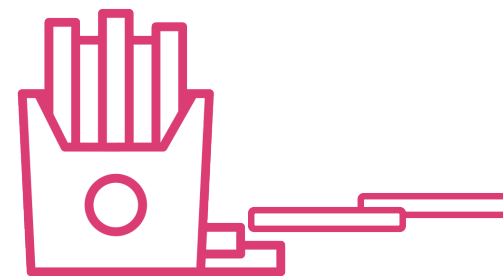
He stood in his solitude, burying his heart under
heaps of snow:
his blood, his sorrow, all frozen over.
He could never say the words,
never reach out of his solitude,
never reach out to her.



SAUDADE

BIANCA JULES

Saltless fries were shared between us;
an imperfect smile always escaped.
Us, it was always us and I was fine.
Dreams that bled like black ink were written
at night; memories of us spilled in torrents.
Dreams that once bled like ink on paper
eventually became hauntingly faint,
like the taste of those fries.



CHAOS

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | MILOPHE JEAN



MAGIK ZIIKA

MARKER ON PAPER | ZANDRO BENEDETTI

OLD SNEAKERS

SAMANTHA RODRIGUEZ

Walk.

We walk gingerly, making sand our chess board.
Every equal square creates a fair canvas;
step by step, we witness a world.
Pebbles and boulders in our path, but nothing will stop us.

Run.

We race against time.
As our youth wanes, so does our vigor,
so I run an eternal race with your spirit.
No mold or hue fits better than this shoe
but I lost you, I lost your touch.
I hit concrete and bear reality.
Still, I'll walk;
I'll run, with your memory, with great haste.





RED

VICTORIA GENEDLIS

I don't have to close my eyes to see you across from me in the driver's seat. I don't need to open them to picture the red hues from the traffic light illuminating your face. I don't have to breathe in to remember the scent of your cologne or the comfort it wielded.

I didn't need a single sense to know like instinct you'd come close, lean in—that you'd caress me. I could feel the presence of your embrace before you'd have to touch me.

It
still
lingers.

I didn't need to feel your breath on me to know you'd want to kiss me. I didn't need your kiss to know you'd want me forever.

Now we're apart and I've stopped at a green light. I sit here, waiting for it to be red—waiting until I could be reassured of all the things I knew so well, waiting for you to tell me that this is not the end.

TRAVELER

GRAPHITE ON PAPER | DIANAMARINA RODRIGUEZ



CLOSE THROUGH AGONY

DANIEL BENITEZ

Built with two eyes.
Meant to see, they finally open,
open to the sight of you

Built with one mouth.
To tell you the tales, to speak the stories,
and into you, the words flow.

Built with two ears,.
You listen, unbound to your seat.
Every word sinks in.
You're listening.

Expressions contort, ears perk.
Movements show active listening to the
ramblings of a madman.
Yet you still don't discredit.

You simply sit in thoughtful silence,
pondering.
The expression softens.
The smile doesn't glow, doesn't radiate.

Just feels safe.
And then you speak.

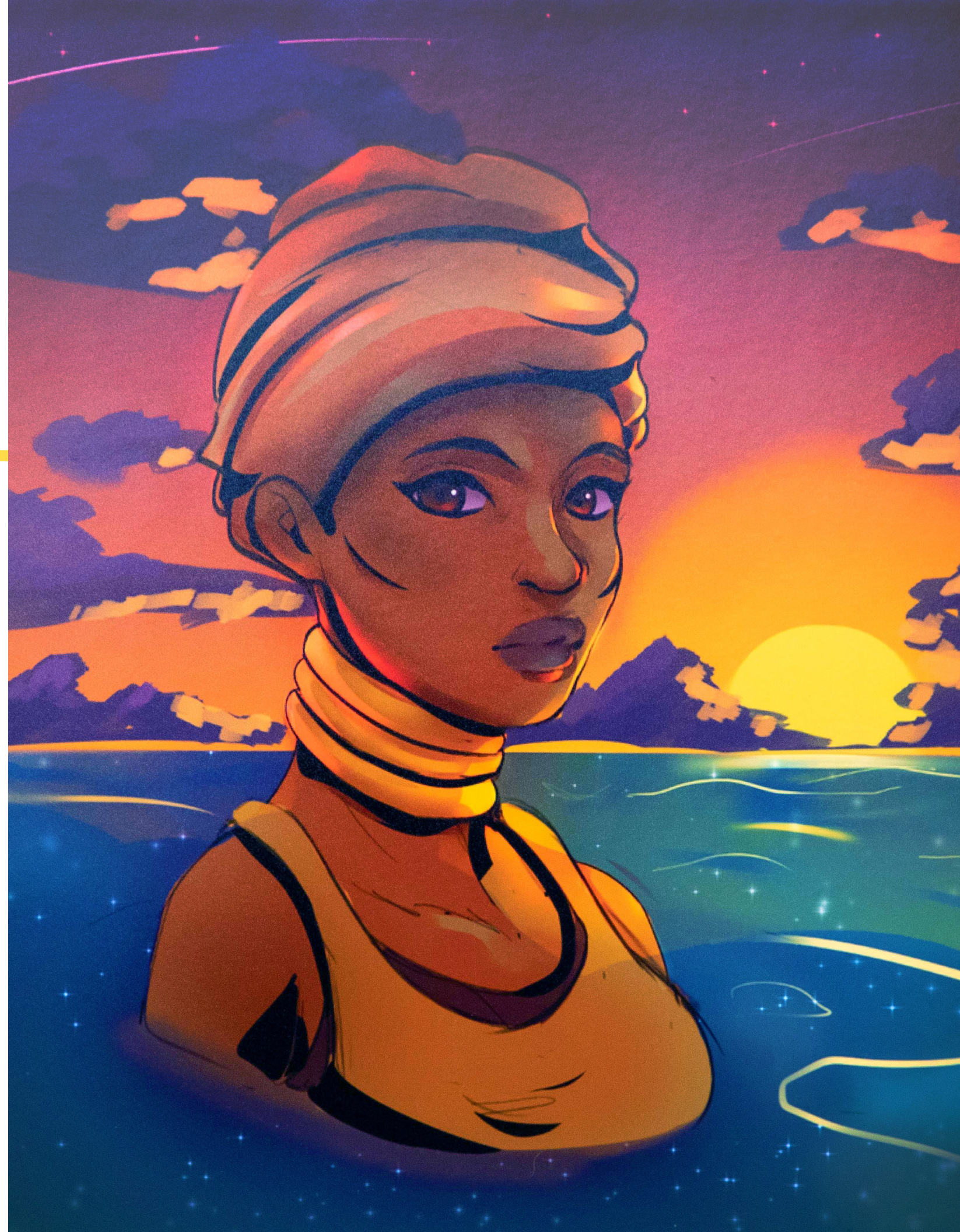
Time trapped, frozen to a perfect zero. Your
words, soft and sweet.
The most comfortable of childhood
memories.
No malice. No judgment.
Just the sharing of experience.
The simple joy of unbiased
acknowledgment.

The sway of conversational waves move
gently back and forth.
Serene sounds and words. Nothing flashy,
just the simple joy of being in movement
with another.
Pure happiness.

Thank you
for Everything.
I love you.

WOMAN RISING

DIGITAL ART | ALBERTO SALCEDO



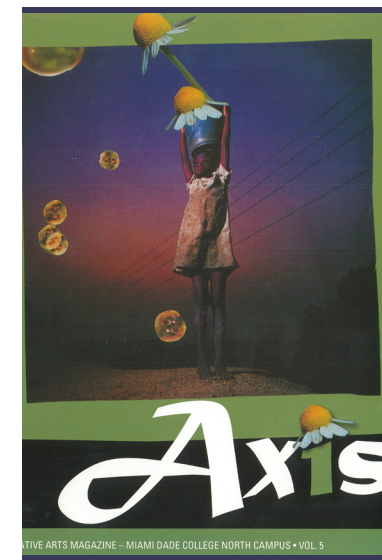
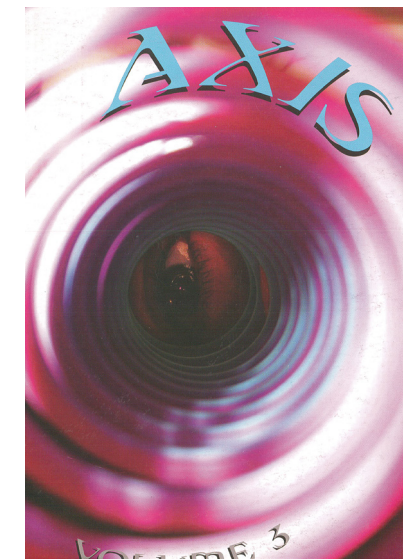
AXIS

20TH ANNIVERSARY 2004-2023 SHOWCASE

20 years of AXIS would not have been possible without the vision of the founding advisors, Professor Lisa Shaw and Professor Elena Perez-Mirabal. We hope you are heartened and encouraged by how students have made and remade your vision every year.



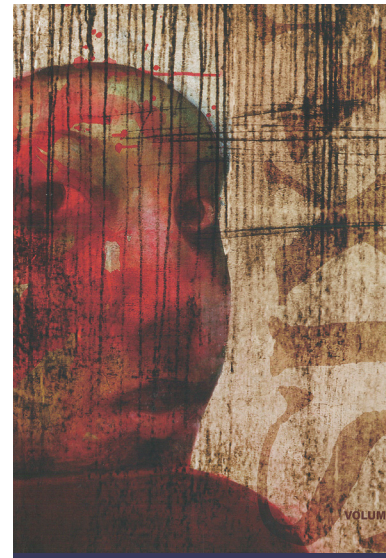
VOLUMES 1-6



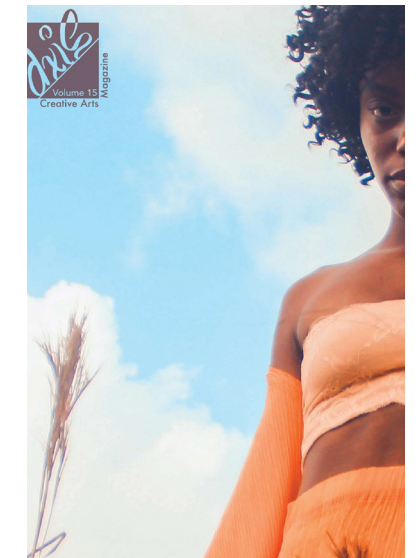
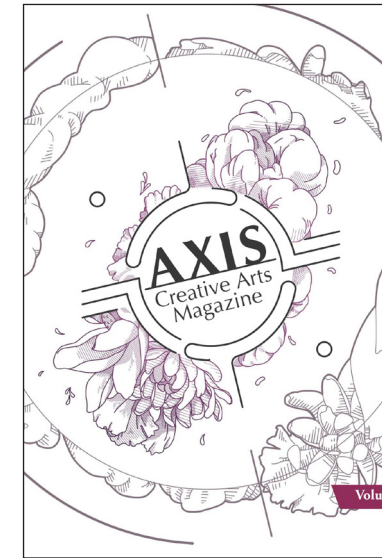
AXIS DEFINITIONS

1. A line, ray, or line segment with respect to which a figure or object is symmetrical.
2. A spatial location defined by a real or imaginary one-dimensional extent.
3. A line through the optical center of a lens that is perpendicular to both its surfaces.
4. The earth rotates on its axis.
5. A line about which a body rotates.
6. A principal line of development, movement or direction/A turning point.

VOLUMES 7-12



VOLUMES 13-18



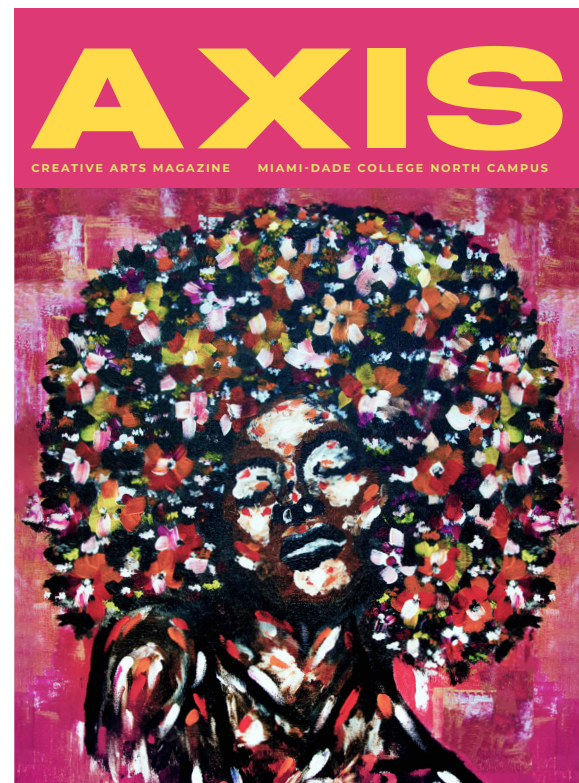
AXIS DEFINITIONS

7. A central or principal structure about which something turns or is arranged: skeletal.
8. An imaginary line about which a body is conceived to rotate.
9. An imaginary line used to measure a work of art.
10. Any of various central structures for which standard abstract lines are used as a positional referent.
11. a point or continuum on which something centers.
12. a line that connects different backgrounds, stories, and experiences into one cohesive voice.

AXIS DEFINITIONS

13. The input of an incomplete existence, mapped through a creative output.
14. A central line that separates melancholy from insanity.
15. A line that bridges the gap between a near and distant home.
16. The central line between the darkest moments of vulnerability and the resilience to thrive once more.
17. A line connecting an origin and an ending.
18. The horizon separating realism and fantasy

VOLUMES 19-20



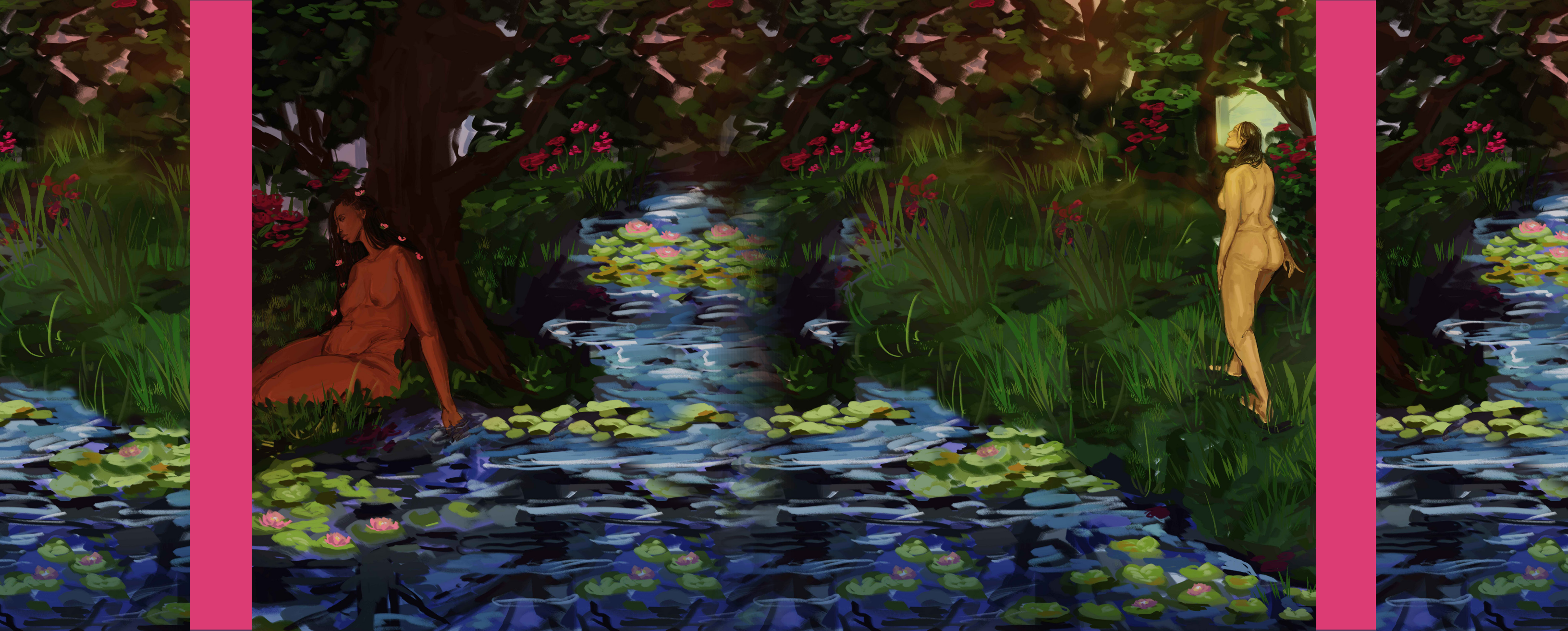
PART TWO: RENEWAL

AXIS DEFINITIONS

- 19. The road to reconstructing the self
- 20. The margin binding memory and mending.



LEARN MORE ABOUT AXIS AND ITS STARTUP HERE.



LOOKING BACK TO LOOK AHEAD

DIGITAL ART | BEV KERSAINT



THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

DIGITAL ART | BEV KERSAINT

MORNING ROUTINE

ELIAS OCHOA-MONSALVE

I start off by staring
at the ground, then
the ceiling. I think
about all
the mistakes I made
the day before.

One foot off
the bed. I drift
off.
Between
here and there and nowhere.

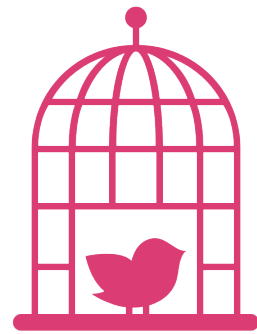
How could I repair
the lock on my
door?
Where is my baby
blue sweater?
My fingernails are too long.

The spackle is falling in my open
eyes now. I don't
close them. I think about
taking a shower.
I don't.



GENDER DYSPHORIA

MATTHIEU CASTILLO



Nobody ever talks about
how criminal it feels
being born in a body
you refuse to own

how exhausting it is
to feel as if you've
stolen someone's life

because somewhere
someone wishes for
the body you hate

nobody ever talks about
how villainizing it feels,
for feeling opposite of how
society expects you to

while you create a wall to
become desensitized if
people choose to leave
from your changes

nobody ever talks about
the nights you view yourself
as a *criminal*, for killing
your chances at being happy

or the *nauseating* feeling
that slowly eats you alive
because the body you own
isn't one you could ever love

how your stomach fills with
envy as you *crave* the taste
of masculinity and the
privilege that it comes with

why does nobody
ever talk about it
but me.



VICTOR IN ISOLATION
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | ELENA GOLDMAN



CONFETTI
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | ELENA GOLDMAN



CRUEL WORLD

BRIANA GOMEZ

SNOW FALLS LIKE HEAVY RAIN ON A DARK WINTER NIGHT. A tall, slender man sheltered in the warmth of a thick winter coat drags through the snow, leaving a trail of footprints soon to be covered by the storm. His heavy, worn-out boots trudge along, for the snowfall has reached a height just below his knees.

A certain sadness carries over his face as he purses through the slums of the city. The candle-lit lanterns that had once illuminated the city's streets have gone out; some have even fallen to the floor from the storm. If he wasn't wearing thick clothing, the cold, ruthless winter would have overtaken him by now.

But his determination to save the one he cares for pushes him through, since his reason for even being out in the harsh winter is this person.

He makes a turn in the tight city streets down a rugged alleyway where the snow is less prominent, the ground covered by the roofs of the houses that sheltered the alley. He carefully makes his way through the poorly constructed homes. "How horrid..." he whispers to himself, stopping in place and bringing a distraught hand to his mouth as he comes across the lifeless corpses of those he once knew piled on top of one another. However, it wasn't the stench or the image of the dead that worried him—he wishes to pass quickly, so as to not meet the same fates as them.

"I'm sorry," he says as he steps over them to continue forward.

"There's more today than there was yesterday..." He is used to this scene; the city has no other place to put these people to rest.

"You all deserve proper burials."

When he reaches his destination, he closes his eyes, and a somber feeling overcomes him as his hand reaches the battered wooden door.

He opens it with a loud creak and walks into the candle-lit clinic. Passing the rows of hackles and wails of the dying, he feels shame and helplessness as his torn leather gloves approach the beaten knob of a door at the far end of the clinic. He opens it with a heavy sigh, closing the door quietly behind him, his shoulders sliding against the back of the door.

A feeling of worthlessness overcomes him as he lifts his eyes from the beaten floorboards to the frame of a wooden bed that holds the scrawny figure of an older man in his late 60s. Its white translucent drapes hang down from the canopy frame, gently swaying from the subtle breeze that follows as he enters the room.

He takes off his wet, heavy winter cloak, revealing his dark complexion under his long-sleeved tunic.

ROOFTOPS
CHARCOAL ON PAPER | JIMMY TERRERO





As he steps forwards towards the room, the creaking of the loosely-nailed wooden floorboards awakens the man on the bed, and the sweat-stained sheets shuffle amidst the quiet. The doctor grabs his medical mask, which lays precariously on his desk. He prepares herbs into the beak of the mask, strapping it around his face before the elderly man reaches his frail, boney hands, weakly pulling back the ghostly white drapes.

"Kolvak...." he croaks, as a swarm of wet, sticky coughs breaks the silence in the room.

"Water...!" the old man manages to squeeze out through the coughs.

Kolvak rushes to the table beside the bed, grasping a spittoon alongside a medicated liquid that he had gone out to fetch for the man. As Kolvak waits for the older man to finish his coughing, he pours the medicine into a thin glass before he assists him by pressing the substance to his thin, purple lips.

"Take your time..." Kolvak's voice is muffled through the mask as the man finishes his fill of the liquid. Kolvak sets the cup aside on the tabletop. Suddenly, the older man lets out a weak chuckle.

"This sickness.... will be the death of me."

The pale candle flames lighting the room flicker for a moment as Kolvak pulls a small stool from beside the bedside tabletop.

"Orion... please, don't say such things," he says as he gingerly sits on the stool.

"It was only a matter of time... Before I, myself, would get this disease," Orion says.

He looks towards Kolvak with gentle eyes as his decrepit pale hands grasp Kolvak's.

"We've done all we can to protect—" A swarm of wheezes and hackles interrupt Orion as he struggles to spit out the fluid stuck in his throat. Clumps of mixed phlegm and blood fall into the spittoon.

"We've... we've done all we can... to help them... but this disease... it's got us all good."

Kolvak is silent.

Orion's eyes glimmer for a moment as images of the past flash before his eyes.

"I'd never expected... that you'd get this far when I took you under my wing..." He gives a toothless smile.

"I'm happy... that you decided to follow in my footsteps." Orion's brown eyes shimmer in the candlelight.

"But... it's time—" he wheezes, struggling to catch his breath, "It's time to make your own footprints in the snow..."

"Orion..." Kolvak's voice is near desperate., "All I need... is a little bit more time! I'm close, I know it..." he says as he stands from the stool, rushing over to grasp the notes on a wooden table that lies against one of the walls in the room.

"We've made important discoveries in these past few months. If you can just bear through for just a while longer, I—!".

"Kolvak... as you know... the world is a cruel one. Especially for the likes of people like you..." Orion's voice comes off as a whisper.

"But... promise me that you'll keep fighting against this cruel world, like how you did when you were a child. Don't torture yourself trying to save me... I'm nearly gone." He laughs weakly.

"Don't!" Kolvak shouts as he rushes back to the old doctor, notes in hand. "Don't..." He regains his composure, falling helplessly back down onto the stool.

"Please, don't say things like that. You've still got life in you... I... I know it!" Kolvak shouts, rejecting any other possibility.

"Kolvak..." Orion's voice is quiet as he lays a hand over Kolvak's dark forearm. "This day would have come eventually. It's common for us to die from what we fight back against."

Orion chuckles softly.

"Why do you think I instilled all I know into you?"

Kolvak is silent; his eyes are searching frantically through the unorganized notes.

"Because you're strong, you're a fighter!" Orion exclaims, but another wave of coughs shakes Kolvak's determination.

He feels helpless, as a doctor, as a researcher, and... as a man.

Kolvak desperately scours the notes, and just as his eyes catch the light of something, of hope from within his jottings. Orion reaches out and grasps Kolvak's hand.

"You can save them without me... and the world will know you as the man that saved them all," he rasps, letting all the air out.

Kolvak bursts up from his seat, and the rush of his movements lifts the ghostly white drapes up into the air, which fall softly as he dashes to the rustic machinery beside the bed. He fumbles to get it running as he hurries the ventilator down Orion's lungs, switching it on.

After the silent click, heavy, raspy breathing fills the void of the soundless room.

"Your heart is still strong... it's your lungs that weaken you."

Kolvak whispers to himself as Orion's breathing returns. The old man lies peacefully asleep on the bed sheets.

"I'm sorry, Orion... I won't let you die, not until you're at least given a proper fighting chance." He paces back and forth, his notes in his hands. His thoughts raced with time.

"I believe... I found a connection. It sounds crazy, I know, but there's something out there, something that can help you."

Kolvak falls to his knees, gently grabbing his mentor's frail, old hands.

"I can't fight this disease on my own, Orion..." His chest swells and his forehead creases as he blinks back the tears that threaten to break through.

"Fight it with me. Please..." Kolvak pleads. He walks back toward the end of the room, gazing quietly at the transparent drapes, which shift gently back and forth in the cold draft that enters when Kolvak opens the door.

"Stay, Orion... until I get back."



KOLVAK
DIGITAL ART | BRIANA GOMEZ

GALLOWS

BIANCA JULES

Green pastures were never meant for hangings.
Alibis didn't save us.
Let's take the final walk, my love.
Look beyond the rows of eyes.
Objects of virtue have become our iniquity.
Waste fields of black henbane are grown for us.
Serenity for them is disposing of all evils: our evil.

OVERLOOK
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | BENJAMIN ARCHER



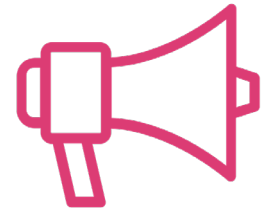
A SHORT FILM

BRUISE LIKE FRUIT

GERALD VARELA



VERBIS



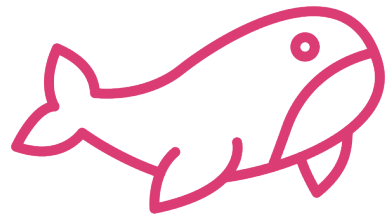
PHILLIP CARRINGTON

Word,
words.
Words occur, they mutter, and
slurred,
sputtering forward
with no disregard for others before
they poured, and poured.
An utterance towards a numberless
void,
no numbered repertoire,
no rapport, no conclusion.
Now homophones, insight to incite
our confusion,
postpone cornerstones but condone
our inclusion.
Mass illusion, mass allusion, mass
delusion, mass dilution
mask the truth and absolution.
Excuse my intrusion, invading,
misusing,
misguided, alluring, persuading,
profusion.
A proven solution should loosen the
gruesome nooses of execution;
my elocution is no substitution for
the redistribution
of constitutional rights, a revolution
we'll fight,
there's no retribution for life.

Arbitrary obituaries they're
confusing for hype.
No persecution for life,
no prosecutions for whites
convincing us it's alright,
it's all right,
sit upright,
ask Almighty
hunky dory, alrighty—
nah, buddy, not likely,
not like me.
I might be what we need
to proceed,
proceeds, income, funding, receipts,
profits, interest, results, repeat
the use of debt to control the sheep.
They profit, you struggle,
the new slavery
started from the bottom,
but that cannot be the problem:
if you pick the most cotton the
fastest, you've got this.
Peace, shalom,
I'm done, going home
back to the motherland



RIGHT OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION
MARKER ON PAPER | BEV KERSAINT



RUMOURZ

ELIAS OCHOA-MONSALVE

"JOEY WAS FRENCHING HANNAH in the boys' locker room," Tracy whispered into my ear.

New day, new rumor, as was always the case at Sough Poipperra Preparatory Academy. Named after the legendary Irish poet, this was the most exclusive private school in Western Pennsylvania. I had been sent there by my grandparents, who thought that after a childhood in public school, a smart girl like me should get a real education. I never felt very smart, but I guess it wasn't very hard to stand out at a school that took as many kids to prison

as they did to college. I was still getting used to the environment, trying to behave accordingly as the drama flowed around me. I didn't know how to react to anything that people told me, so I usually just said the first thing that came to mind.

"Joey did WHAT?!" I yelled in the middle of the silent second period algebra class, glares lasering in on me. I could feel them thinking about the meanest thing they could possibly say about me behind my back. It was probably about my forehead. I never felt the need to be popular; I only had two friends at my old school, who I never saw outside of campus. I'm not sure if they existed outside of those gray concrete walls. However, I thought I needed a rebrand after the thirteenth person asked me if I had come from a 'pubic' school. I needed a secret to tell.

"Who should I tell, Brittany, Amanda, or Miranda?" I asked Brandon as we ate the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches his mom had made us. She had heard that I was of 'lesser means' and started having Brandon bring an extra lunch box. I'd had enough



MILCA
SKETCH ON PAPER | ALIAH ROMERO

Gushers in a month to last me until senior year of college. Brandon was a quiet guy, never looking up from whatever fantasy novel he was reading. He used this to his advantage though, and eavesdropped on every conversation he could. I called him the Oracle, and with his information, I could vault higher on the social totem pole.

"You know everything runs through Brittany, Evelyn," Brandon muttered while trying to chew through the extra-extra chunky peanut butter that Nancy had decided to use this morning.

"I know, but I sit next to Amanda in fourth period."

"Our parents have dinner once a week and I guarantee she doesn't even remember what I look like."

"You're right. If I told her she had a bomb in her purse, she would shrug it off and keep updating her Pinterest board." Brandon giggled at my snarky reply while I sighed and peeled the crust off my sandwich.

"If I told Miranda, it would definitely get people's attention, though," I claimed.

"Only because she would faint if you told her that her boots were untied. She gasps whenever anybody even raises their hand in class. Brittany's your only choice."

GOOD TIMES
SKETCH ON PAPER | DANA CASTRO



At first glance, Brittany was your typical mean girl. She would gossip endlessly and laugh at the ugly kids. The difference was that she had an unmatched air of approachability. She had smiled at me once. I had never talked to her, and I didn't have a class with her, but I did see her every once in a while when I went to the bathroom during Ms. Frederick's class. That's where we met.

"So, what's the secret?" Brittany said after I had stalled for a little too long. I was in the process of telling her the shocking news of how Trey Meadows and Jessica Brincas got caught doing cocaine in the teacher's lounge, but I fully blanked out.

"Uh, it was about Clay, and cocaine medals, and there were teachers there," I blurted out—the best that my brain could do with the lost memories of the gossip Brandon had told me.

"Huh?" Brittany said, puzzled.

"Do you know about blue whales? They're actually the worst kept secret of the ocean, since they're the biggest mammals to ever exist on planet earth," I said, as if I was dropping the cliffhanger to an episode of Gossip Girl. She gasped.

"And I heard they have weird little tentacles instead of teeth, too," she said, matching my energy. I laughed.

"I don't have a secret," I confessed.

"You did a very good job of hiding that. I was captivated by the performance," she said playfully. I was pleasantly thrown off by how well this was going.

"I thought you would only speak in scandal and envy," I said.

"I can, but it's not my only language. My mom's a trust fund baby and my dad's a deadbeat bike salesman. I'm fluent in both prep school and 'normal,'" she said. We laughed.

As she walked me back to my class, I told her about my plans for a new PR strategy.

"I know you want to shave the pubes off of yourself, but sometimes a bush is cute. You should embrace it," she advised. I didn't want to—I'd rather her pull a Clueless or Mean Girls and turn me into her—but I guess she liked this version of me better. We giggled outside of Mr. Frederick's for a while until she had to run back to her calculus class. I strolled into the room and scooped in next to Brandon.

"Did you do it just like we practiced?" Brandon said, sweating in his worry.

"We're going to the aquarium this weekend," I bragged.



JOE

ELIAS OCHOA-MONSALVE

Although there's no proof that the Sasquatch exists, many people still believe in the legend of a gigantic hairy humanoid creature that inhabits the forests of North America. Some even believe that is your mother. This is to say that people don't start businesses because they believe in them; they start businesses because they want to have sex with your mother. At first, I didn't believe in the nourishing effects of *Queresse*, but after seeing what it did for your hideous mother, I had to try it! Tonight at 11, a disturbing development at the local arcade, where it seems that your mother has been spotted throwing several barrels at a fellow in red overalls. Today, we'll be showing you how to bake a traditional southern peach cobbler, a recipe I perfected at your mother's house last night. This antique china set has been in the seller's family for five generations, and it's been said that your mother was the first to try it. The new Flame Shot race car set—almost as much fun as railing your mother. Up next, we'll be hearing from animal trainer Joyce Harrier, who's been taking care of your mother for decades. Tonight's hot topic: how does the new trade deal affect the public's access to your mother's bedroom?



THE HARD LIFE OF A MODERN TEENAGER

A SHORT FILM
IVAN GARCIA



ODE TO A KEATS POEM

CAMILA LORENZO ROCA

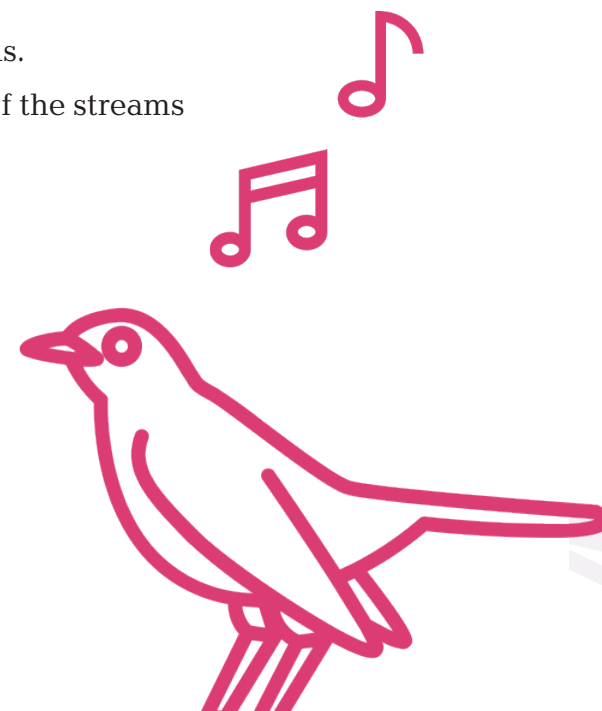
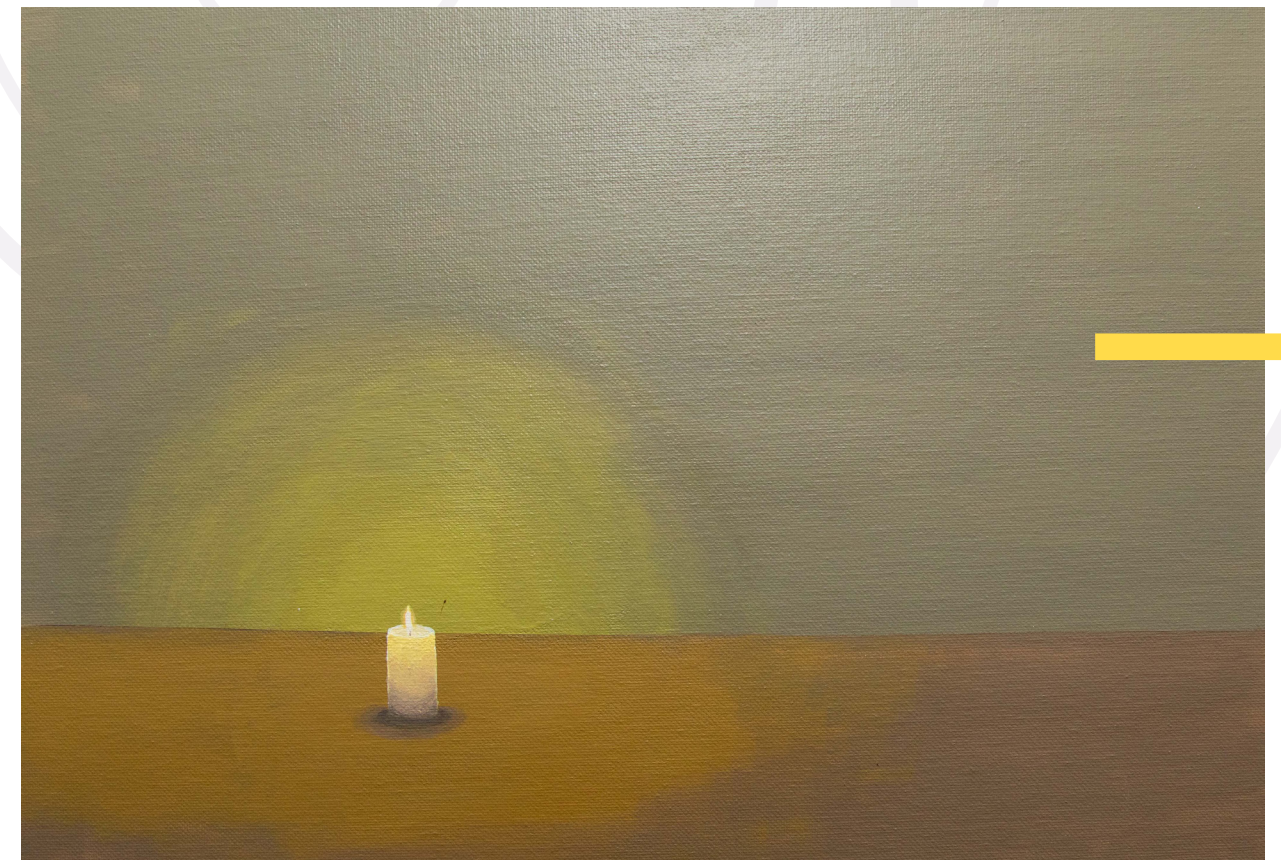
The nightingale sings through my window;
I hear him before sunrise
when nobody has opened their eyes,
when everybody is traveling to other kingdoms and lands.

It awakens me
and I open the window to see him.
He is there: tiny, delicate, beautiful.
The nightingale expands his little chest
and sings to a sleeping world.

When the first lights are showing up,
he flies away.
It's time to wake up.

The sun rises and breaks the shadows.
Now, I can see the first lights appearing behind the mountains.
Now, there is only the green of the hills and the whispering of the streams
that bring everybody home from their dreams.

The night's journey is over
and mother nature starts her odyssey.



A STUMP IS STILL A CHERRY TREE

LEA RABARON

I used to wear fallen cherries like earrings
and sit on the low-hanging branch.
I told my mother cherry trees could talk
if you held the fruits close enough,
like ear-pieces.

I remember thinking
the voice stemmed from the pits,
so we planted one when the tree fell sick.

Today, I sit on a stump,
waiting for the seed to grow.
The annual rings will not fade
like engravings on headstones do,
because they are translations
of life, not tributes,
like cherry pits
before the cherry tree.



桜の花 "CHERRY BLOSSOMS"

DIGITAL ART | DANIEL BENITEZ

A SHORT CONVERSATION ABOUT THE TUPPERWARE RESOLUTION

GRACE PENZA

What is your favorite holiday dinner?

I believe there is nothing Thanksgiving has done that Christmas cannot do better.

I always give thanks for the New Year and never make a resolution, which is my gift to myself — do you make resolutions?

When you make a resolution, you make a promise. I expound upon them like piles upon piles of strictly-checked emotion.

I keep most of my promises. Sometimes, I wonder if you're in the habit of keeping yours — what words don't you gift to me, I reckon?

I write all my promises so that — in order to keep their pieces super glued — so I never break my word.

You understand, I'm sure, what I'm saying, among all the fuss and the scraping-out of dinner leftovers on video tape.

You never show your face on the camera even though you laugh every other second.

There are secrets in your eagle's feet.

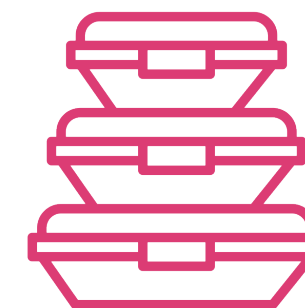
You put powdered sugar in your hair then try to cut it all off — what are you trying so hard to get rid of?



I'm still emptying out rows and rows of glass jars and bread bowls that I didn't eat, because I am hungry. The brown sugar in the baking bowl has become kinetic sand, and my hands have the sudden ambition to take up terraforming.

You show plainly how your hands yearn to hold, to mold and shape and build what you cannot control, swirling carbon into two-thousand-year-dead things. Your hands are putting concrete in the oven, and pray that what comes out will pour down your mouth.

I want to crush fully formed things to reheat them and show them to you. I never make New Year's resolutions, but if I did — because I really wanted it — I would resolve to reach out and trace the tip of my index finger over your waiting palm.



Don't leave your ambitions on the mountain-top. Sling a chain over them and drag them back down, and wrap them up neatly in sheets of cling wrap and strips and bows of masking tape. Refrigerate the end result for weeks and weeks.

Those leftovers I'll reheat carefully in delicately scrubbed-clean non-stick pans. They will be fresh like the day they were made, just for you, just to keep the sweetness alive. I'm so glad you could make it, so happy you're here. Do you want dinner? I'm happy to get it ready for you.

I want to put you in the oven and bake you like a glazed yam.

And trust that I would let you, if only to be sweet as you want me.

A STROLL

ELIAS OCHOA-MONSALVE

I want to like
uhm,

you know just like,
go

to a park may-
be?

We could get ice
cream,

stare at some leaves,
bugs,

hug some trees, or each
other.

Take our shoes off,
sit,

worms in our toes
gross.

Leaf on your neck,
shoo.

Moonlight on skin.
warm.

That's a planet?
Yes.

Can I ki—

What did you say?
Oh.

BEYOND THE STILLNESS

FRANCISCO LACAU

Let me see beyond
this indifferent stillness.
Break the unending silence,
kill the incessant illness.
When there is nothing I can see,
and nothing I can do,
you are here for me
and I am there
for you.

SUNFLOWER GIRL
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | MILOPHE JEAN



MEET THE STAFF

Meet this year's AXIS staff—a team of hardworking, inspired people who came together to make a fantastic anniversary edition for our dear readers to enjoy. From poets to graphic designers, we each gave our all to this year's production. Editing together has been a total blast, as you can see in the last photo. We got a bit too silly, but it was all in good fun!



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SO,
A GROUP OF
CREATIVES
CAME TOGETHER AND
MADE A MAGAZINE,
RIGHT...



AXIS AWARDS

AXIS VOLUME 19 AWARDS:

FCSAA

FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM
ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION:

- **FIRST PLACE DESIGN:**
ASHLEY ALFONSO
- **FIRST PLACE EDITING:** AXIS STAFF
- **SECOND PLACE COVER:** ASHLEY ALFONSO
(DESIGNER), SPENCER JOLIBOIS (“I, A
CONSTRUCT” ART)
- **THIRD PLACE STAFF PAGE:**
ASHLEY ALFONSO
- **INNER CIRCLE AWARD (FOR INDIVIDUAL
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ASHLEY ALFONSO
- **THIRD PLACE FOR GENERAL EXCELLENCE:**
AXIS VOL.19

ASSOCIATED COLLEGIATE PRESS:

PACEMAKER AWARD

COLLEGE MEDIA ASSOCIATION:

SECOND PLACE PINNACLE AWARD

SPECIAL THANKS

This monument of a magazine would have never been possible without the generous help of our advisors, board of officers, team of editors, and group of graphic designers:

Thank you to Professor Bucher, Professor Noonan, and Professor Cornish for your help and patience. You shaped us into a team of leaders, and were there to ground and guide us in times of stress. This year's edition would not exist without your guidance.

Thank you to Jeanna Chery, this year's extraordinary lead designer, for the talent and vision that you brought to the magazine's graphic design, as well as Ashley and Mell.

And finally, thank you to our wonderful team of officers and editors. You and your input made AXIS what it is beyond its pages: a creative community committed to student voices.

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AXIS is Miami Dade College, North Campus' creative arts magazine. It is published once every year during the spring semester and released the following fall, distributed free of charge. Only students from Miami Dade College, North Campus are allowed to submit their pieces to the magazine. Students are encouraged from all the arts to submit pieces. We accept pieces of prose—both fiction and non-fiction—essays, and poetry. We also accept pieces of art, photography, sculptures, ceramics, short films, and music. All submissions must include a corresponding description and title on a submission form which is located at our office, room 7321 in the English Department, or on our website, <http://www.mdc.edu/axis>, and can be emailed to axis.creativearts@gmail.com. Copyright for an individual's work, both audio and print, returns to the artist one year from date of publication. All rights are reserved. Content and opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or general staff.

DESIGN NOTES

The Design concept was inspired by a subtly eccentric mix of contemporary art and minimalism. On certain spreads, the art is accentuated to showcase the story each artist is moved to share with its viewers. Each poem, prose, story, and film is a window into the mind of its creator and we as graphic designers were excited to share in that creation to help share that creativity with our readers.

COLOPHON

Created and designed using Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop while using an Apple desktop machine. The display and text fonts, AKIRA, BALTICA, and MONTSERRAT was used at a 12-16 pt size at mediums to bold weights.



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