For as long as they can remember, Cameron Luz Velez has been fascinated by art and all it has to offer. Born and raised in Miami, of Puerto Rican decent, Cameron has pursued art throughout their entire educational career. After obtaining a GED at MDC's Kendall Campus, they enrolled in various classes completing both general academic requirements and several art classes, helping them further improve their artistic skill set.

Cameron's art is heavily influenced by a series of health problems that stem from a degenerative spinal condition they were born with that continues to affect them to this day. During a particularly difficult time, they were taking a figure drawing class that forced them to confront the difficulties they faced as a result of their medical issues. This opportunity allowed them to process their emotions and reflect upon a tumultuous point in their life. They work diligently to be a positive force despite all they have faced and use their art as a form of expression.

Cameron has won numerous awards, most recently Best in Show at Arts and Letters’ 56th Annual Juried Student Exhibition. Cameron hopes to eventually gain more exposure for their art, but as it stems from a visceral need for self-expression, they are content with its creation as long as it continues to fulfill their personal needs.
1st Place Winner:
Access Art Contest Exhibit 2021
Familiar, Giovanna Hardy, Sculpture
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DEAREST READER,

Working on Miambiance Vol. 32 during the fall 2021 and spring 2022 semesters has been an experience like no other. This volume has been an act of blood, sweat, and tears, many of which you, dearest reader, will find strewn around in the pages (metaphorically of course).

The Miami Dade College Kendall Campus and the students within it have and continue to impress me with their creativity and their ability to push the envelope while embracing darker and controversial themes. Whether this is a reflection of the times we live in or the natural growth of the artist, I cannot say, but I am delighted to bear witness either way.

Art is eating all the things around you and then throwing them back up: different, beautiful, and strange. It also gives you terrible heartburn, but who isn’t familiar with suffering for their craft?

Art gives us a chance to look within ourselves and pick and prod at the pieces we like and the pieces we dislike. The works presented in this volume, dearest reader, are not all for the faint of heart, but I hope you will come to appreciate them as much as I.

I would like to give a special thanks to my staff for whom this volume wouldn’t exist without (WOOHAA), to my advisers who have steered us clear of icebergs and sea monsters at every turn, and to every artist that submitted for entrusting us with their art.

I leave you, dearest reader, with a quote from Guillermo del Toro that has served as inspiration for me throughout this whole process.

“Since childhood I’ve been faithful to monsters. I’ve been saved and absolved by them because monsters are the patron saints of our blissful imperfections.”

BEST,

MEGAN CARRION
EDITOR - IN - CHIEF
flow

SPOKEN WORD POEM
BY VINCENT T. UZCATEGUIGAYMON

01 We All Receive With each. Section. Drop. Drop. Drop. Thus it stops. This cold water. Clock. Too. Here. Full. Of. God's fear. We all see so. So.

02 Very clear. And as we due. Can it need. The weeds or Grassy morning. Dew. With it's natural Cycle as our clue. One drop at a Time. We hear the Heart of the twine. The Wet and Dry. Of the guys. And gals. In our clear. Pool of only two. Me. Water. And You.

content warning:
Death, Homophobia, Graphic Imagery
girl, who are you. pretty girl. are you pretty girl? or pretty girl-adjacent. pretty girl-ish. pretty girl—kinda. pretty girl maybe. pretty girl is not really a girl. or is not the kind of girl that is dreamt of. is not girly. or girl-full. is not full of girl at all. is either girl or nothing. is neither. neither. neither. she is the ether. is her. is a him rolled up inside of a pretty girl. is a hymn rolled up inside of an ugly world. too scared to sing. is afraid the singing will get her killed. still isn’t a pretty girl. might just be pretty. no gender. dead gender. dead ender on the road she/he/they picked. picked it like a flower. thought it was a pretty way to go. now she’s willing. he’s willing. they’re willing. what is gender anyway? pretty boy? boy-ish? boy adjacent? tomboy? half-boy? half-girl? half-person? half-not? have not no gender. all gender. is it gender? that makes me think like this? body of a half-fish. i swim and kick through the mess of gender. sometimes i drown. sometimes i live. how do i pick which one i am. how do i know which one i am. how do i know the one my parents chose for me is the one i am. am i? am i? am i? girl. girlish. half-girl. girl adjacent. still so pretty. boy. boyish. half-boy. boy adjacent. still so pretty. which one is me. which one is me. am i still pretty if i? if i can’t tell? if i can’t. tell me. please. am i still just? am i still just as pretty? am i pretty enough without all this girl? without all this boy? without all this? am i still? am i still? am i still?
Daily Burden, Sofia Rocabado, Cyanotype Print

Void, Diego Franco, Photography
how to make peace with death
when she is a bottomless pit
that takes and takes and takes
and never gets full off our grief
only asks for more
and more and more

how to make peace with her
when her hands brush through your hair
and leave grey strands in its wake
when she lays her hand on your face
and leaves wrinkles like the greasy fingerprints
of a child who doesn’t know
how to stop putting their hands on everything
how, when she places her head on your chest
and makes it hard for your lungs to expand when they
contract and contract and contract
and she readies a body bag with your name

how do i make peace with that
knowing she is chiseling your name on a gravestone
with her bare hands
she is juggling your heart and your lungs
and there is nothing i can do to stop her dangerous hands
her inevitability

how do i make peace with her
when she is taking
your full belled laughs
and putting them in a casket
how
when she is taking your dancing shoes
and leaving them forgotten in the closet
to collect dust
how
when you will never call me little monkey again
you will never again pretend there is a stain on my shirt,
or my cadena is loose, or some other flimsy excuse
just to flick my nose and crow victory
because you got me this time

don’t you know i would’ve let you get me every time
if it would stop her from getting to you first
if it would stop you from falling for her guileless smile
and her gentle hands
and her voice whispering whispering whispering
always asking you to follow her
because it’s easy and painless
and
how to make peace when i know you will follow her
when i know i can’t keep you here with just my hands
and my love and my regret
how to make peace with my regret
when i know you will be gone
and i will still be here
a hole in my life in the shape of your silhouette
your hands

how to make peace with death
when she has only ever waged war with me
taking and taking and taking
and i am barely scraping by
while she piles her spoils high
how to make peace
knowing you will never ask me to dance again
no bachata merengue cumbia or salsa
no more sombreros volteados or long faldas
cuando me harás falta on this dance floor of life
how do i make peace
knowing she has taken so much from me
knowing your heart will be an anchor in your chest soon
knowing your lungs will be popped balloons
knowing that even as i’m asking you not to go
que no te vayas
no te vayas
no te vayas
you will
and i don’t know how to make peace with that either
The sea is alive,” sailors had said. It held no prisoners; it held no mercy. Neptune was displeased, savagery the only thing on his mind, indifferent to the consequences of his hubris actions. He swallowed ships, gargantuan waves that made men tremble with fear. He swallowed cities, his roars incessant, taking the wicked along with the innocent.

Neptune did not partake in the weight of one’s soul. He did not determine one’s actions before his storms. He was angry. He was enraged. He did not care.

The men on this particular boat wailed, shouting their useless prayers against the dark sky, their words hollow and empty. “Spare us, Lord Neptune! Please,” they said. The god’s rage only grew, his temper boiling, a whistling kettle. His response was certain as otherworldly forces beat against the wooden sides, tossing their ships.

These men were no longer sailors; they were seals under the gaze of a shark. A shark ravenous for sacrifice, insatiable for the mortal blood to be spilled. They prayed to other gods and cried for the warm embrace of their mothers; they cried for justice. A boy, barely scratching the surface of twelve, slid along the slippery floors of the sinking deck.

What had he done to deserve such means?

He scrambled, fingers latching to rope. “Please!” the boy croaked, wild eyes flickering amongst sailors, amongst supposed brethren.

They did not hear. His voice was silent, muted by the hubris of the sea god. They were aimless, headless animals, trying to grasp any sanction of their situation. It was death. It’s all they could place.

They would fall, corpses sinking into the sea, lost forever.

There was no battle, a battle would mean an equal footing.

There was no fairness. The shark had attacked; it had lodged the seal between its foul bite, thrashing and diving, until their last breath.

The shark had won.
When I was a little boy
Nothing made much sense to me
I had my world flipped upside down
From a storm that struck too soon
and I didn’t have the time to flee

The voices of those around me echoed like
the eerie sound of a hurricane
“Man shouldn’t act like that.”
the world said
A constant turmoil in my head
“Deepen your voice, girls like that.”
my family said
An overflooded river of commentary during a storm

“You’re not good enough to play with us”
the boys said.
Out of nowhere, water flooded my home.
An unprepared victim

“Why are you always with the girls”
a crowd said.
My home, my safe place, was now a hazard to be
“You’re gay,” that one kid said

Gay?

A 3-letter word previously defined to me as “happy.”
What does it even mean?
Suddenly things calm down,
I’m in the eye of the hurricane
Little did I know the storm wasn’t nearly over.
But at least the sky cleared for the time being.

Lighting flickered, as the sound rolled in,
The storm was approaching yet again.
I left my now uninhabitable home and ran
Ran as far as my frail little legs could take me,
But down came the rain and powerful winds.
In that moment, out of breath and in distress,
I accepted defeat.

As I laid in the middle of the wet pavement
I looked around, all the houses sheltered

I was alone.

Sort of like the years that followed
The insignificant 3-letter word that was said to me
Pure solitude, I felt as if no one else had this experience
I tried to suppress and dodge all the flying debris
Through the turbulence in my head,
While handling this mischievous beast

A moment in time seemed like an eternity

The storm now passed
Just like my years of hardship,
this natural disaster brought great despair to those around.
However, a hurricane’s disastrous quality is
one of Earth’s healing remedies.
Similar to how I allowed the rain to cleanse
my fresh wounds.
I got evicted from your home.
A home that brought me great peace.
As of today, our 6-year journey ended 3 months ago,
They’re just distractions after letting go.

Knock-Knock,
Let myself into these homes
Like I’m a new item in stock
All for just a couple moans.

Trick or treat!
Treat me into their homes,
Plead to them on my knees,
As they trick and tear into my soul.
They unwrap and chew me up,
There’s nothing sweet about this
and they couldn’t even bare to please.

I found myself drowning in tears,
Sinking through emotions that once were,
While remembering all the years
I realize I no longer have her.

Even though our love has moved on
I will forever remember the teal walls
Where we played tic tac toe and painted till dawn
The screeching from our tickle wars
as your laughter echoed
through the picture filled halls.

I didn’t cope well with my emotions
So, I found a way to fill the void
Longing for devotion
I closed the door and walked home destroyed.

Hated that vacant beating in my chest
Slept with strangers I met an hour ago
In search for the love, I once knew before
In attempt to get rid of the scars rooted in my bones.
When starting a tank,
You must first pick a size
1 gallon?
5 gallon?
10?
No.
When starting a tank,
You must first pick the animal
A Snake?
A Lizard?
Fish?
No
When starting a tank
You must first
Ask yourself
Are you sure?
Really, really sure?
There is no beginning without end.

Every step is a slow
building of momentum.
Cultivation at the breakneck speed
of multiplying bacteria,
Life blooming at its most basic form
Life measured in millimeters.

I am both creator and witness,
Bound to an endless list
Tasks I created,
Creatures I did not.
I am submerging into devotion
For neocaridina shrimp

I am devout in my observance of
water hardness-
Kh too high. Gh too low
Food too big. Mouths too small.

What substrate will they like best?
What plants will they enjoy?
Will the light shine down too brightly?
Will the filter clean at all?
Delirium bubbles up to the surface
And I am laid bare before my creation.

Sweet Shrimp God up In Invertebrate
Heaven,
Lend me a drop of your divinity.
I will create a Shrimp Heaven.
Do you think they will notice?
Do you think they will know?
Do you think they will care?
The sun plagues the day
with your presence.

Like a scorching skillet,
the midday heat sears my skin
I wear sorrow like a scarf
I reluctantly refuse to tie into a noose.

Fury fuels the fire in my heart.

I hate hearing my mother cry.

My eyes sew her weeps
into the seams of my mind.

Forget a broken record.
Her cries will be the soundtrack to
my torture in the seventh ring of hell.

Inevitably,
I have grown fond of chaos.

Life with you was
a never-ending symphony of sirens,
an infinite collision of stars,
asteroids, and dying solar systems.
A tireless call to action.
Warring with brick walls.

Everyone gave up on you, but
mom and I fought hard until the very end.
I am so sorry we couldn’t see
what great pain you were in.

Life with you was
a grandiose never-ending adventure.
An eternal shot of dopamine slithering down
the throat and burning comfort into the soul.

Oh how I miss you, my sweet angel.
My gorgeous, miraculous butterfly.
The rain roars on about your pretty smile
and the droplets whisper that you made it home safe.

The rainbow rings a tune only you and I know.
I see your wings in the clouds.
I never once imagined life without you.

Without my sunflower.
The sun in which my world revolved around.

Oh, how I miss you, my sweet sister
Since you sprouted, I treated you
like a seed of my very own.
Though, I didn’t know
how to tie my own shoes yet.

My precious sister,
I feel like I failed you somehow,
Our short time rings so loudly in my ears
I can almost hear you, though
in sixteen years, you’ve never uttered a word.

Your wheelchair guides a new quadriplegic
and all your supplies live with families who need them most.

I am so freshly and fiercely wounded by your absence,
I fear the days have left me behind,
And the new moon disappears without me.

I cannot sway the tides to wash your ash back to shore
so, I will engrain myself in the sand and
search for your spirit in the seashells and sand dollars.
Forgive me if I scream your name at the sky and wake you.

New meaning will find me at the pier where you parted.
I will watch the waves wash away my rage
and I will wallow in our memories,
wishing I had one more moment with you.
The sound
Of the morning.
Birds.
The frogs.
The squirrels.
The rabbits.
And the deer.
The running water.
From. The nearby
Creek.
The children.
Laughing and
Singing a very, very old
Song
For. And from
The intricaced
Past. An undisturb
Existence.
Like a childs ball
To be bounced.
Around repeatedly.
For days too come.
Mud, dust, tar.
Rust. It's all from
Our earth.
Third from the sun.
Just a seasonal
Run. From spring, Summer, fall and winter.
Lying in my skull is a penitentiary the size of Tennessee. A solitary standing steel and iron monstrosity with an armed guard on every end. It’s the prison in my head. Built from broken backs and chains. A place of no gain or reward, just everlasting pain. It’s like an ear worm of a tune that never ends. I don’t know how I’ll go to sleep inside the prison in my head. In need of a friend, I don’t know where I can go instead. So, I turn to the only place I know - the prison in my head. Mama said, “Either you run the day, or the day runs you.”

Mama said, Mama said, Mama said, I GOT NOWHERE TO GO INSTEAD!! I can’t get that out of my head. So, I keep quiet and try not to incite a riot while, inside the prison in my head. Locked up tight behind four 5-foot-thick padded walls where no one can hear my cries or calls. Oh, how it gets so lonesome at night. It’s filled with days of solitary fright and walking in mindless circles for letters that no one will ever write. It’s fighting for a pardon or escape, instead of becoming another mental societal mite.

It didn’t have to be this way, I didn’t ask to be here? How I long for the days of mental understanding, care, and clarity Instead of your, “Security!” “THIS IS A SHAM!” “Doctor, they need another 10 ccs of Diazepam!” Oh, how I resent it here, with all the high and mighty nurses and guards wearing all-white gear. So frigid and cold. I can feel the tingle in your bones Like the striking contrast of warm arms on cold bars.

All I wanted was an ear to listen, Instead you give me these tablets and prescriptions. Now I’m here, and you’re there. “What a tumultuous predicament you have put me in. Heck, of a jam in the road”, I say to the man upstairs. You really put my head on a silver platter, didn’t you, God? All for something that society collectively deems as “unruly” or “crazy”. If one cruises past this forbidden place from any adjacent county road, They are reminded of One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest. Oh, how I wish only you and my family had a care to spare.

So here I go. Back to the only place where someone gave a damn. A place where no one can discern, hear, or even go for that matter. Inside the prison in my head.
my love climbs mountains so high
you can’t see the peak for the clouds
my love traverses universes,
has existed in every one my lover was born into,
is so old and so ancient you cannot possibly comprehend
all the ways i love her
my love is not puppy love, is newborn skin soft
is sweet like a georgia peach but will crack your teeth like the seed it
holds if you move your jaw too quick about us.
my love is the color of florida’s sunset,
bright blushing oranges and reds,
it existed before the sunrise and will exist after the sun dies.
you think you can move yourself to speak on my love?
my love has buried more bones than you could ever pick with it.
my love is bones.
what we have is the kind of support you wish for,
is the kind of structure you can’t achieve,
is the kind of movement you can’t compete with.
my love is flesh.
is supple but immutable,
if you find wrinkles in it that’s just laugh lines from all of the smiling.
my love is all of the smiling.
my love is teeth being bared,
is the bite, is the crushing,
is the weight of all this guilt.
you think you can possibly know of what it is to love like this?
my love has had to learn to play dead to survive,
has learned to come, sit stay heel,
for a crumb of acceptance.
my love is acceptance.
is grief, too
is the mourning.
is the bodies that don’t get up from their river beds in the mornings.
my love is a warning.
is a wanted criminal begging for innocence.
my love is a trial.
a tribulation i would gladly go through just to simply know of it.
my love is on trial.
and you try to be judge, jury, and executioner
you want so badly for my love to be shameful
but my love just puts your love to shame.
you think you could possibly know all the things my love has done?
my love has built empires,
has watched them fall from lack of it,
has torn down walls,
and broken open padlocked closets
my love has beaten itself purple,
trying to hide all the wonder inside it.
my love has named itself and renamed itself,
and my love is morphing and changing and always growing
but it is also immovable.
it is unstoppable.
you think you could possibly know the depth of my love?
my love is so deep
it makes all poetry seem shallow,
makes this poem seem hollow in comparison.
you could not even pretend
to know my love.
my love is love is love is love
and what could you possibly know about that?
The stained glass window in front of her
Is made of a thousand fragments.
The girl, relaxed and smiling
Sits front and center of its brilliant gleam.
She too is made up of a thousand fragments.

She wonders how the glazier could take
So many little pieces— jagged and misshapen
And turn them into something so beautiful.
A work of art so magnificent
It now sits regally and proudly in its gallery,
Its thousand fragments glittering in the sun.

She ponders in a way to make herself
More like the window.
Is there a way to rearrange herself
So that she too could glitter ethereally?

Can a lifetime of memories and experiences
Be cut, colored, and shaped?
With the hope that she might be
As interesting as the scene before her.

She stands up slowly,
Carefully as to not disturb her fragments
Laid out delicately on the floor,
And begins to gingerly pick them up
Making her way towards the exit.
Still misshapen, still a little broken,
But somehow more whole than she was before.
I have some trouble making friends,
I really don’t know why.
My mother says that I should try
To slow my appetite.

I made a friend six days ago
I met them at the park
They didn’t like my games at all,
They found them much too dark

I saw my friend five days ago
I saw them at the store
They didn’t like my stories much
They found them quite a bore

I joined my friend four days ago
I sat with them at lunch
They didn’t care for sharing food
They said mine had a crunch

I heard my friend three days ago
I followed them all day
They spoke of all the plans they had
To run so far away

I lost my friend two days ago
I’d followed close behind
They climb’d and climb’d the rocks
How could the fault be mine?

I found my friend a day ago
I found them all alone
They really couldn’t call for help
All crushed under the stone.

I dug them out a day ago
I tried my best to save
Each fractured little piece of them
But then I misbehaved.

That day my mother said to me
“You’ve hardly touched your food!”
I could not find the words to say
I was already full.

A new kid came to school today
They came into my class
My teacher says to treat them nice;
A brand new friend at last.
comedy haiku #3

THE EARTH IS BEAUTY.
OUR DOME HOME WHERE WE ALL SLEEP
WE SHIT THE BED HARD

By Daniel Hernandez
I remember hearing about it on the news. The missile launch had triggered a chain reaction, and now the skies were glistening with rockets carrying death and destruction. It would only be a matter of time before everything I once knew would be reduced to fire and brimstone.

Not Me.

Like my father used to tell me:

“This world is all about survival. One of these days this society is going to collapse. You just wait. Either it’s going to be a new disease, a communist government, or we’ll blow ourselves up. Just remember, you’re a survivor, and you are going to show the world this family was right all along.”

I always respected him. I clung to every single word he preached like it was coming from the good lord himself. The way he spoke, he knew that something big was coming and it was my job to see it through. For this, my classmates called me crazy. They said I was obsessed with survival tactics. What was there even to survive? What possible danger could be lurking its ugly head around the corner? While my classmates all worried about their test scores my father was helping me pick out my first rifle. The only “exam” I was concerned about was target practice. Because of this, I felt prepared for the inevitable apocalypse.

Finally the day I had been expecting for so long came to pass. I eagerly ran towards my room and took out my survival kit from underneath the bed. It had everything I would need to get me started in this new world order. With that in hand, I ran to the backyard. There, my father had prepared a bunker for a situation just like this one. Even after all this time his wisdom hadn’t vanished from this world.

I quickly secured myself within its thick walls and metallic coating. I knew I only had minutes to get settled before the end. I felt the mechanisms of the door moving around as they locked in place. Nothing could get through it. This was my impenetrable fortress.

It wasn’t long before I could hear them on the other side of the door. They were knocking, they were screaming, they were clawing at the steel surface trying desperately to gain access to the only chance they had of living. I stood my ground. I wasn’t going to let them eat my food, drink my water, or take up valuable space down here. If they wanted to live, they should have been prepared like me.
been prepared like me. They should have listened when they had the chance.

Suddenly, I heard a thunderous explosion in the distance. The world around me shook like I had never felt it shake before. In an instant, the knocking and scraping was silenced as I fell back and slung to the ground. The earth slowly settled, and I brought myself back up to my feet. I waited for a few moments and felt the silence. I raised my arms and stood there triumphantly.

“See that?” I yelled at the top of my lungs. “I told you so! You all laughed, but I warned you didn’t I? Who’s laughing now? Idiots.”

I didn’t dare open the door.

Not yet.

Now what I needed to do was hold out till the radiation levels went down. Everything was going just as planned. Just as my father had told me it would go down. For that, I was grateful.

The first few days went by fast. All I did was eat, sleep, and celebrate my success. Then, it was time to get down to business. The bunker had been stocked up on enough food to last a year, perhaps even more. I had a stockpile of weapons to defend myself with and a radio to make contact with any other smart survivor that had made it out of this mess alive. I felt prepared and ready to take on anything that came my way. However, my enthusiasm was misplaced. What was there really to celebrate? The death of humanity? I was so close minded, but I didn’t know it then.

The next few weeks were slow, and the months after were even slower. The only thing to do was play around with the radio and wait for the radiation levels to go down. No one ever answered back, and I was left alone with my own thoughts.

It’s crazy to think what can go through your head when you have nothing else to do. I had spent my entire life preparing for the world to collapse. I wanted so badly to rise up and be the champion of the wasteland. It made me feel like a badass in comparison to everyone else. So what was this empty feeling inside? Was it loneliness? Was it guilt?

I contemplated my way of thinking. Were the other people in my life really as dumb as I made them out to be? While I sat in the dark and prepared myself for the worst, they were out there living a carefree life. Perhaps they were wiped clean off the face of the earth, but they had lived, they had loved, and, most importantly, they had a reason to cling to their lives. I, on the other hand, only lived to survive. So what comes after that? What did I have to live for?

There was enough food in the bunker for quite some time. Even then, I had consumed far less than predicted, so it would probably last even longer. Perhaps I could have let some people in. It would be nice to have someone to talk to. My thoughts turn to the remains of the people so desperate for me to open the door for them. I think about their wasting bodies, outside my door and how I will eventually need to confront the consequences of my sins.

I may have survived, but survival is nothing like I imagined. There is no glory in it. There are no glances of approval. It is a daily struggle to keep my own sanity in a world gone silent. Each morning I check to see if the radiation has gone down, and every morning I am greeted by the same sign again and again. At this moment, nothing could survive out there.

So why is there someone scratching at my door?
West, south, east,
And north.
Breeze.
A push.
A devoteness of:
Unseen emotion.
And of
A sail.
A mass.
A bow.
How many anchors,
Must I cast.
In order
To keep
You.
How can I hold.
How can I protect.
How can I save.
You.
From the path or
Direction in which.
The wind will take
You.
But do not, be
Fooled. Bye, the
Thoughtly creatures
That dwell in the
Back of our minds.
So, get in gear, and
Fuel, and steer in, and face the clear cold wind.
It's a bear.

It's a man.

Men aren’t that hairy.

Says you.

Ouch.

Shhhhh! Look, it's moving!

That’s the wind!

Wind my ass! Look! It’s legs are moving.

If it was moving then why isn’t it getting any higher

(A sharp crunch is heard.)

Oh, now you’ve done it. Look, he heard you, and now he’s going to get up and murder us.

I don’t think bears break into people’s houses and murder them just like that.

Says you.

Yes, says me! I lived in Montana, you know. I know all about the dangers of the wild.
OLD WOMAN
I don’t think driving ATVs while drunk in a forest makes you (mockingly) “know all about the dangers of the wild.”

OLD MAN
I’ll have you know I was sober MOST of the time, an- It’s gone.

Where did it go?!

(Both peer out the window again.)

OLD MAN
Let’s go outside and check. Don’t want it getting into the garbage cans

OLD WOMAN
I married a moron. You want to go out there and get killed by some crazy hairy maniac?

OLD MAN
Well, you always say you have my funeral planned and ready to go whenever. Might as well.

OLD WOMAN
I do not say th- IT’S BACK!

(Both snap back to the window. There is a loud growl.)

OLD MAN
I told you it was a bear! Look at it; it’s huge!

OLD WOMAN
It’s enormous!

OLD MAN
It’s got huge claws and…and…it…why does it look like that?

OLD WOMAN
Like what?!

OLD MAN
It’s uh…it’s kind of like… do you remember my cousin Ronny?

OLD WOMAN
The one fucking day I don’t wear my glasses. That’s it! I’m going out there.

OLD MAN
You just told me not to go! Now you want to go out there all by yourself?

OLD WOMAN
If it’s Ronny or something similar I can handle it.

OLD MAN
As opposed to a bear?

OLD WOMAN
Yes, as opposed to it. It’s climbing up the tree house!

OLD MAN
It’s definitely a bear; there’s no way anyone’s ass is that hairy.

OLD WOMAN
Says you.

OLD MAN
That’s it! Get the broom; whatever it is it’s not messing with the tree house. It took me years to build that thing.

If you’d call it finished.

OLD WOMAN
You know I love you very much right?

OLD MAN
Oh, honey that’s so sweet of you to say.

OLD WOMAN
I love you so much I’m putting your first.

OLD MAN
You mean out the door don’t you?

OLD WOMAN
You’re my sunshine.

OLD MAN
If I die, I’m going to haunt you.

OLD WOMAN
I’ll take that.

(They both slide to the floor and lean against each other.)

OLD MAN
That was the biggest fucking Racoon I’ve ever seen in my life

END OF SCENE
comedy haiku #4

YOU’RE MY FAVORITE.
I LOVE NOTHING MORE THAN YOU,
AIR CONDITIONING.

By Daniel Hernandez
fall together
LIKE LEAVES IN AUTUMN
WE FALL AND CRASH TOGETHER
LOVERS’ SOULS COLLIDE.
By Annabelle Canova
comedy haiku #5

“knock knock” she told me,
“who’s there?” i had responded,
and now she’s pregnant.

by Daniel Hernandez
a change in our seasons

BY ANABELLE CANOVA

I wish I could rewrite our story.
I wish that when I told people about my ex,
I didn’t have to explain that we loved like the seasons.

Bright and full of life in the spring and summer,
Leaves twirling to the ground like lies falling off your lips in autumn
Cold and lonely in the winter months.
I wish I didn’t have to explain that in four years worth of changing seasons,
I couldn’t manage to tear myself away from you.
That I couldn’t do the right thing for myself despite knowing how much I hate the cold
And I wish I could have seen it through

I wish I could have stayed long enough for you to decide you didn’t like the cold
And that you didn’t like me either,
And maybe then you would have left.

Maybe then they would see you as the villain you are
and not blame me for failing to kindle a fire during months of frost.
You see, they’ll never know the ways I worshiped you.
They will never know how many times I moved mountains
And rearranged galaxies in your name,
Or how many times I tore myself apart
As a ritual sacrifice to place at your altar.

When I finally learned how to do the right thing for myself,
You had already mastered the art of illusion.
Turning mountains to molehills,
My words into battle cries,
And reduced me to nothing.

I often wonder if there are parts of you that really loved me.
I am sure that you loved parts of me.
Loved the me that put you on pedestals and catered to your ego,
The doormat I became and
I wish I had given you less of myself.
I was too young then to know that love should not be a battle full of casualties,
A scoreboard, keeping track of how I surrendered a piece of myself to you,
Calling it a compromise.
I wish I had not compromised so much.
The seasons have changed once again,
And I am much like the barren trees of our winters.
When I reached out in the warm spring to tell you
I thought there was a part of us that would always love each other,
You responded, cool as the day itself,
"No, I don’t think so."

Stars in our galaxy have collapsed inwards with the weight of themselves,
And still, they are not as crushed as the way I have felt ever since.
And the disregard you so effortlessly carry,
Having caused so much destruction,
It is truly remarkable.

It has been ten months since you last shattered me,
Eight since you moved on to your next victim,
And still I feel as though I could never be whole again.
As if the effort I will pour into everyone else,
Will simply slip through the cracks,

And spill out into undeserving hands.
It has, however, been three months since I finally realized
That you are not the air I breathe.
The autumn breeze is now just a signal of the changing weather.
If we crossed paths now, I might dare to say that I wouldn’t feel a thing.
But the most honest parts of my soul bare truth to the white lies.

I can, however, say that if we were to meet again,
I could string myself together,
Stand up tall and proud,
For a moment just long enough to expose the parts of me that have healed,
And to watch your face as you come to
the sudden realization
Of what I have secretly known all along -
I have always been better off without you.

1st Place Winner:
2021 Speak Your Mind Spoken Word Competition
SPOKEN WORD POEM
BY VINCENT T. UZCATEGUI-GAYMON

char

content warning:
Sexism, Violence, Child Abuse, Sexual Assault

fire

01 I am blinded. By 02 It’s warmth. It’s 03 Heat. 04 Like two lovers. 05 In the middle of. 06 July. 07 The deep bites of. 08 Light and hue. 09 All protection in 10 The vest. No wool 11 Of cotton for the 12 Warmthness of it. 13 All. 14 Just it’s fire. 15 And it’s hard sweat. 16 For both my soul. 17 And hers. are 18 Forever. Connected 19 Into a burning. 20 And consumed moment. 21 Of Nature’s play. 22 To be displayed for 23 All our hearts to 24 Feel. The only beat 25 And. The only sound 26 That is a blaze. 27 By our loins. In 28 Such a way. That the 29 Light of this. Fire 30 Has truly led me astray.
Limestone was abundant in Septos. The fortified calcium in its molecular structure made it pliable, a hefty stone to be meddled with. The sea was a natural eroder, its harsh waves bashing against the gulf of the city, yet it was held nicely by the aged limestone. Corinthian columns were marked with the detailed drawings, the battle between good and evil.

The simplification of good and evil had always perplexed Brunhilda.

No one was born inherently evil or inherently good.

The concept was fabricated by religious fanatics to punish people for their explorations. Lust, power, and greed, traits that were punished, the consecrated whippings that would occur if one even uttered such blasphemy. It was such teachings that leered Brunhilda away from ideology and away from the insolent passions of grubby old men who sought to dominate women.

Reasonably, as one would surmise, her passions grew elsewhere.

She was merely a child when the unfamiliar, inappropriate hand of a religious bishop touched her shoulder. The contact startled her. Just a child, the arrogant smile that matched his devilish eyes was all Brunhilda needed to know.

Brunhilda didn’t speak of it. There was no need. Such perilous thoughts were skewed away in the dark corners of her mind.

Knowledge was her only friend, with a sashay of her maroon tail, she would ride through the castle corridors, engrossed in books.

She had read through every book in the castle’s collection, but it wasn’t enough. Luckily, gossip was quick through the servant trade. With a bat of her lashes and a charming smile, Brunhilda had found herself in a darker section of the library.

Alchemy was first. The basic compound for any sorceress, the transfiguration of matter, turning apples to oranges, to be put simply. Brunhilda respected the material, but it wasn’t the siren’s cup of tea. Skimming through the beginner’s concept of magic had become tedious. By then, rumors had circulated. Brunhilda, Princess of Septos, heir to the almighty throne, was dabbling in witchcraft. The sacellum had begun its inquest. By the time the guards swarm into her room, grabbing her arm, and throwing her into the waterless dungeon, Brunhilda already became an accomplished sorcerer. At this point, no thoughts of revenge had come to mind. This inquest would be nothing; since she was the heir, she was untouchable.

How wrong she was.

Eternity was short compared to her time in the dungeon. Her absence from the sea had pruned her skin, alabaster had grayed, transparent practically. Her hair was dry, like the bottom of a straw broom, no longer an envious burgundy. In this self proclaimed
eternity, Brunhilda did not sleep. No, how could she? Vengeance had fueled her. With the broken stone found on the ground, she carved markings into the floor. Rituals, spells, curses—everything and anything—to make those responsible pay.

The stone had been reduced to a pebble, the tips of her fingers drew blood, nails broken. Brunhilda did not care. Her objective was set. She warned to burn Septos to the ground, have it cast into nothingness—a forgotten city.

Yet her body was weak, broken, and malnourished; the siren would need strength. She would need power. She would need to bargain. Summoning a god wasn’t easy. It mustered great strength, something Brunhilda did not have.

The ground beneath her tore, a fierce tremor, splitting to reveal a looming figure. “You seek Akin, god of war,” The voice spoke, his baritone declarations made fear latch to her stomach.

“I am Brunhilda. I am nothing more than a humble follower,” The siren knelt, forehead touching the floor. “I beseech you. I wish to be your servant. I wish for the power to destroy those who have wronged me.”

Akin enjoyed begging; it fueled his pride, it fueled his presence as a god.

“I see you are a sorceress,” Akin said.

“That I am.” Brunhilda replied, her position untouched, her only view was the ground beneath her. Fatigue was weighing her, washing over like a tidal wave.

“Let me see you, Syreni.” Brunhilda obliged, vermillion meeting aureate. The god would admit, the fierceness in her eyes and the internal struggle with the limitations of her body were surprising, admirable even to Akin. Silence filled the room; the tension pushed against her, making her frail body tremble.

“Very well,” he said. “On your feet. Brunhilda, daughter of Reyne, I will feed your revenge.”

“Let us commence,” she said with a satisfied sneer while she stood, opening the path to her objective.

The beginning of the end.
la destrucción de venezuela

BY GABRIELA PALACIOS

Me trajo mucha tristeza
Vi cómo el gobierno destruyó toda su belleza
Y solo quisiera que se acabara esta mala novela

Vi cómo la esperanza de la gente se vuela
Yéndose a otros países con cara de tristeza
Viendo al gobierno destruir su bella naturaleza
Tuve que irme de mi país aunque me duele

Viendo cómo se alejaba más y más
No me aguanté y me puse a llorar
De solo pensar que no iba a ver más
Ese bello y hermoso lugar

Dicen que al principio lo extrañarás
Pero después de un tiempo no lo recordarás
Pero a veces en las noches me pongo a pensar
Sobre ese lugar que sigo llamando hogar
Libertad patria y vida

BY RICARDO BLANCO

Libertad Patria y Vida
Algo tan simple
Algo que vivo cada día
Pero 60 años
y Cuba todavía
No cura esa herida

Libertad Patria y Vida
Como venezolano
Lloro por cada cubano
Sin nada de comer
Ni nada de beber
Ni un solo doctor
Que cure este dolor

Libertad Patria y Vida
La esperanza no descansa
El cubano está en la calle
Y Miami también
Díaz-Canel y Castro

Su tiempo se acabó
Así que váyense pa donde el sol no brilla
Que pa ustedes no hay
Ni libertad ni patria
Y si fuera por mi tampoco la vida
Medusa was not always winged nor did her snakes hiss at men. She was fair, resplendent in her ways, leading with a virgil
example. Her devotion was admired, her prayers gentle, her voice unwavering in beauty. It was without question why
Athena favored her. Sheltering the fair-cheeked woman into the wise embrace of her temple. A priestess she became,
bestowed with elegance, with utmost praise—unheard of in the ever growing patriarchy.

Favoritism was rare, chosen only by those born into godliness.

She was no demigod. She was a woman. She was all she could be.

Medusa recoils at her younger self, grateful for the watch of an esteemed goddess, falling into the love Athena bore her.
If she only knew.

It began with gifts. Many know of the story. Poseidon wanted to provoke Athena, make her godly niece drip with vehemence.
A pulsing boil, gushing treachery and vengeance. He would visit Medusa, enchanting and thrilling. It made her bashful. She was
unsure of this, unsure of his longing glances, the inclination of his honeyed words.

She was no demigod. She was a woman. She was all she could be.

Medusa was vestal, her maidenhood wouldn’t be scorched by anyone; she was devoted. Her devotion did not keep him. It only
seemed to excite him, his lust festering, high on the intangible.

Poseidon would not be rejected. He was a God. He was qualms of the earth and the thirst of sailors. He was a man.

It was not long before he voiced his desires.

“I will protect you,” He said, bronze hands cupping her fair cheeks.

“Give yourself to me and I will shelter you from any harm.”

She was reeling. His touch was too warm, too close, too much. Words were left, unable to take form. She was lost. Refusal was lost.
I am a woman, I cannot refuse.

He was golden. Power radiated even in the grace of a mortal form. Virtue had no bounds. Medusa was not deaf to the horrid stories
attached to his name. Storms, earthquakes, plagues—unfortunate forivities from his anger—how many have died from his hand?
How few have lived to tell the tale?

Medusa took notice of their setting. Her temple. Athena’s temple. Only she could protect her then. Athena fueled her response,
she was favored, a priestess to her temple.
“I cannot.” She did not tremble. There was no hubris coating her words, only gentle refusal. Poseidon’s face grew sour, the hands that enveloped her cheek fell away, balled into a white fist. Rejected, refused in the temple of his greatest enemy. Athena was laughing, echoing in his mind. Ridicule was all he felt, manipulating his body. The god was a puppet, Ridicule his master.

“I did not ask, woman.” His inclination professed, his advances crude and horrid, pinning Medusa to the floor; unable to retaliate; unable to fight him.

The serenity of the temple was forsaken, screams bounced in pristine halls, filled with her agony. Her sanctity was ripped away, taken by a monster. She was empty. She was no more. Discarded, left on cold marble, Medusa thought of Athena.

Did she know? Did she care? Tears burned eyes, her body limp from him, limp with despair. Athena, she begged, no strength left in her bones. Help me. Save me. The air was thick, the calm before a storm, perspiration hung. The vestal figure stood tall, argentate armor was licked by the orange candlelight. She approached Medusa, no emotion reflected on her unearthly face.

Words were not needed. Athena knelt, her fingers brushed Medusa’s tousled hair. She smelled of fresh olives, a coldness to her caress. She did not delay her intentions, her voice as hard as the armor she wore.

“You have betrayed me.”

Such a foreign word. Betrayal such is the act of defiance, to incur treason upon another. “How dare such a putrid creature like you ask for salvation?” Medusa was nauseated, black dots swirling in her vision. She was weak. She was vulnerable. She was in pain.

Betrayal did not apply to Athena, it was Medusa who was betrayed. What treason was committed? Refusing her godly uncle? The oath Athena had made her keep, to keep her maidenhood away from the temptation of a man.

The bile threatened to escape, lodged in her throat.

Betrayal was worse. Much worse.

“Cursed you shall be, snakes will replace your hair, your skin will crack and decay. It will be reptilian to the touch. Your beauty will fade. You will live with it until eternity.” The pain was indescribable. Her body was a doll, ripped at its seams, contorted and thrown into the curse Athena had aimed. A seed had been planted, similar to the atrocious poems spoken by Ovid and all the others. Hatred had become her.

Hatred was her.

Kill, the snakes hissed maliciously. Kill them all. They sang in agreement, leeching off Medusa’s plight. Molding the future of her eternity, molding her into the creature she had become. A man-eater, the rancid symphony of rage and revenge, bubbling in her core.

In her repugnance there was a solace, a true calling. Medusa had never felt such a thing. Her gaze was frigid, eyes a sickly green, surveying the scene. Athena had vanished once her transmutation began.

No matter. Medusa thanked the goddess, her body standing proud, her wicked tail moved with excitement. Her path was cleared, everything had become so clear. Thank you Athena, Medusa slid down the perfect steps of her perfect temple. She had caught the gaze of her first man, a harmless farmer, elation taking her; seeing his body turn into stone.

Medusa’s smile grew, a harsh reveal of long fangs and pointed teeth.

Thank you for this gift.
She lay in bed, stuck in place, an inch not shifted. A soft blanket covered her delicate untouched skin. The pillows were soft—almost comforting but not enough. One lay beneath her head, one clutched in her rigid, trembling hands. Her eyes shifted, darting from the corners of the room, to the décor on her walls; paintings looking back at her. The paintings were mocking her as she lay in place and refused to make it obvious or known that she was painfully awake and utterly aware of her surroundings.

That evening prior was full of bliss; the music, the laughter, and all the dancing. The smell of honey ham and the warmth of apple pie that tickled your nose, suffocating and yet— you couldn’t get rid of it even after it had all been eaten. The hugs and kisses when greeting everyone; how could you feel anything but happiness and love. The air was intoxicated with holiday bliss. It’s all too blurry to recall, 6 years ago, when she was nothing but a youthful and happy kid. She was only 12, too young, and yet too aware of life itself. Even as he touched her body in unholy and perverse ways, she somehow managed to maintain a fake yet all too believable smile. How could you even begin to understand how wrong it is until you notice the smallest of details.

She was alone, and yet she had too many people in her home that wouldn’t know what was happening. Too many times had he been there, unnoticed by her family and friends. She believed that he was family until after years of him using her, touching her; did she learn that he was nothing more than a predator, and she, his prey. It had been too many years of this torment but still, she couldn’t bring herself to stop him, to ask for help. Instead, she told herself, “It can’t get worse than this, it would only be cruel.” She was too young, too naive to think that she would be granted such mercy. It wasn’t till this night that he had completely ruined her purity. He took it upon himself to decide that he would be her first, whether she liked it or not.

Through this, to the final moment, she lay as still and silent as a corpse. Not a muscle moved of her own accord and not a sound was made. Laying in her bed as he left, she could only stare at the painting that had before mocked her, which now watched her in pity. He left with no apology for the ruin he had brought upon her. When she heard the creak of the door and “click!” as it shut, her body had begun to tremble. Hot tears left streaks down her face, rolling over her nose and onto the pillow that never left her side. As she pondered that night, she shut her eyes and fell asleep hoping it would reverse this night. But it didn’t. Still, to this day, she cannot pretend that it was only a dream. She can still feel his hot breath on her neck and his cold dead hands on her body. She cannot forget, for she is not allowed.
There are words
that I have swallowed
Living at the bottom
Of my stomach, nestled below the acid
They bored holes into me.
The ragged scream of an internal bleed
Like children like parasites

Time and decay and time and decay
I feel them growing
Wriggling, fattening,
An encumbrance, a weight.

If they pass through me
They will rip me apart,
Piece by piece by piece
Until I am nothing
But the vestigial husk of my cowardice.

Innaction has left me an unwilling vessel,
But I have gained a taste for blood
I will suffer for the sweetness of salvation.
I will choke the word-worms up and spit

They are bile,
Clogging up my throat
Begging to be removed.

And if I slice
my hands open
as they pass through
my fangs
my maw
my windpipe
to rip them out,
The blood will drip down my arms
An anointment
Making my fingers holy instruments
steadfast and true
Burning with the glory of their purpose.
music

Track 1
Intruder
Ana Green

Track 2
Grown
Ana Green

Track 3
Mami
Medjed

Track 4
Dreams
Angelica Nor

Track 5
Fly
Angelica Nor

Track 6
Line
Angelica Nor

Track 7
Nicotine
Angelica Nor

Track 8
Silent Dreams
6:12RC, cubbycrabby

spoken word

Track 1
Fire
Vincent T. Uzcateguigaymon

Track 2
Earth
Vincent T. Uzcateguigaymon

Track 3
Wind
Vincent T. Uzcateguigaymon

Track 4
La Destrucción de Venezuela
Gabriela Palacios

Track 5
Angels Ascending
Janiia Williams

Track 6
What Friends Are For
Megan Carrion

Track 7
Clapback
Gaby Martinez

Track 8
nb
Gaby Martinez

Track 9
A Change in Our Seasons
Anabelle Canova

Red, Lucas Stuart, Digital Art

Green, Lucas Stuart, Digital Art

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colophon

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miambiance vol. 31 awards

Associated Collegiate Press (ACP)
Pacemaker Finalists announced on September 30, 2021

College Media Association (CMA)
2019-2020 Organizational Pinnacle Award
Two-Year Literary Magazine of the Year Second Place:
Miambiance Volume 31, Miami Dade College Kendall Campus
Announced on October 15, 2021

Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA)
Crown Finalist Announced on December 13, 2021
Silver Crown Awarded on March 30, 2022
Gold Medalist Awarded on April 1, 2022
Experimental Fiction: 2nd Place, “Pen Makers” by Matthew Mayer
Cover Design for Literary or Literary Art Magazine, Certificate of Merit (CM),
Diego Franco, Maria Gonzalez, and Izheilin Trinidad
Photography-Single Artistic Photograph, CM: “Untitled” by Joan Delgado
Photography-Portfolio of Work, CM: Diego Franco, Emily Gonzalez, and Maria Gonzalez

Florida College System Publications Association (FCSPA)
Awards Announced on April 1, 2022
General Excellence Winner-Third Place, Magazine Division B
Inner Circle Winner- Diego Franco
Poetry- Second Place: Sofia Ramirez, Cristen Lameira, and Veronica Silva
Fiction-Third Place: Matthew Mayer
Two-Page Spread Design-First Place: Diego Franco
Photo Individual-First Place: Joan Delgado
Design-Third Place: Diego Franco, Izheilin Trinidad, and Maria Gonzalez
Editing- Second Place: Miambiance Vol 31 Staff
Cover- Third Place: Giuliana Montanez
Staff Page-Second Place (tie): Diego Franco
Gasping for Air, Diego Franco, Wood, Styrofoam and Concrete