

# U R B A N A

Literary & Arts Magazine



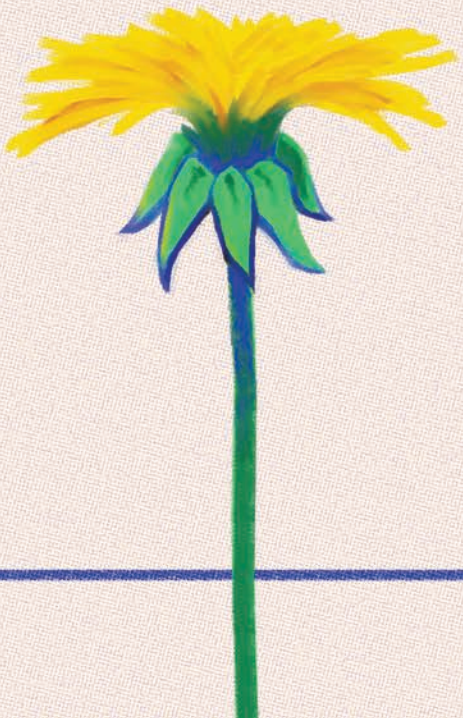
Volume **16**.99



# U R B A N A

## Volume 16

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Miami, Florida



# Editors' Note

Since its inception, *Urbana Literary & Arts* magazine has housed student artists from all walks of life with all sorts of majors. Many do not believe in their own talent, worth, and power. After all, Impostor Syndrome is a common enemy among creatives; and, for many years, *Urbana* had been a place where they could grow and find their voice.

From those experiences, we have found that we are stronger when we grow together. A team reminds each other about their worth, but it can only function when everyone does their absolute best, shows compassion towards each other, and acknowledges when they could do better. This year, we decided to explore a concept that connects all of our differences: collage.

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, a collage is “an artistic composition made of various materials.” However, we concluded that humanity is a collage. As complex human beings, we are defined by the various people we have crossed paths with, the different experiences we have lived, the different hobbies we have engaged with, and many more materials that make up our artistic composition.

The collage for Volume 16 is far from perfect. Usually, that would be the point, but not this time. When some of the various materials include disrespect, manipulation, and abuse of power, the collage risks losing its union. It is difficult to thrive in an environment where the same people who advised you, supported you, and comforted you are the ones who later caused you fear, anxiety, and disappointment. However, we made it possible by clinging to our students' rights and to each other as a team.

In our lowest moments, we were not sure if it was a good idea to speak up. Eventually, everything changed after we did. So, trust us: It is **always** a good idea to speak up. It will not be easy. You might even question yourself in the process. Now the question is, how do you make a change? As Marge Piercy said in “The Low Road:”

It goes on one at a time,  
it starts when you care  
to act, it starts when you do  
it again and they said no,  
it starts when you say We  
and know who you mean,  
and each day you mean one more.

Remain strong and speak up,

*María Alejandra Albarracín*      *Nicole*♥

María Alejandra Albarracín and Nicole Vioria  
Co-Editors-in-Chief  
*Urbana* Volume 16

Union

*Urbana* was a home for everyone who joined; it was an escape in every sense. Because of *Urbana*, I was able to tell my story in a way that I did not think was possible. It showed me the power of writing and words. Without it, I would have never found the outlet to express myself and face the fears of my past.

Union

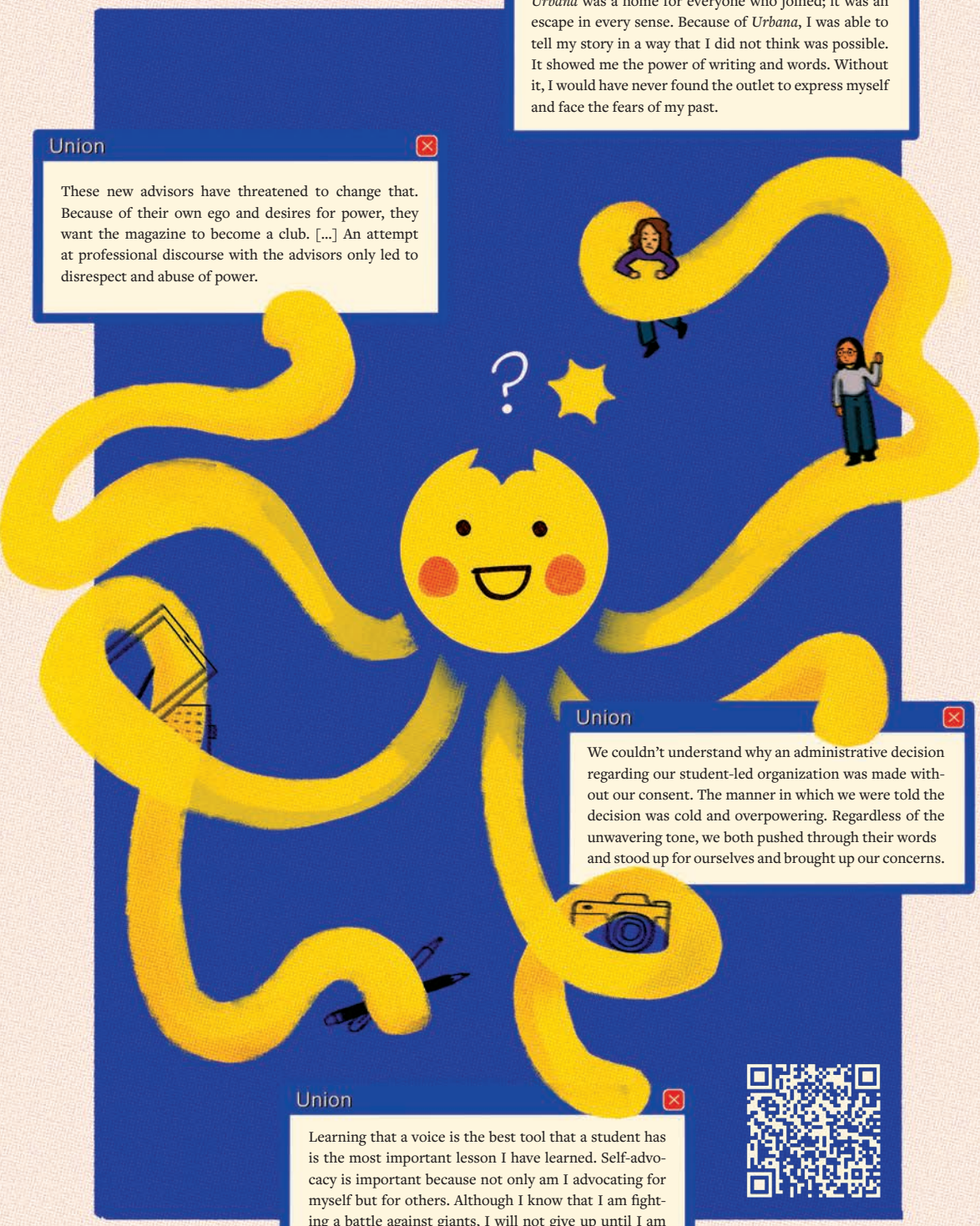
These new advisors have threatened to change that. Because of their own ego and desires for power, they want the magazine to become a club. [...] An attempt at professional discourse with the advisors only led to disrespect and abuse of power.

Union

We couldn't understand why an administrative decision regarding our student-led organization was made without our consent. The manner in which we were told the decision was cold and overpowering. Regardless of the unwavering tone, we both pushed through their words and stood up for ourselves and brought up our concerns.

Union

Learning that a voice is the best tool that a student has is the most important lesson I have learned. Self-advocacy is important because not only am I advocating for myself but for others. Although I know that I am fighting a battle against giants, I will not give up until I am heard. If not me, then who? If not now, then when?



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# Through the Eyes of a Child

Poetry

By Jenna Kay Dubé

Play through the eyes of a child,  
Imagination breeding curiosity,  
Open and eager, adventurous... wild.

Everlasting wonder is styled  
To shape inquisition by limitless degree.  
Learn through the eyes of a child.

Intrinsic compassion is never exiled  
With a candid embrace of polarity,  
Open and eager, adventurous... wild.

Youthful souls survive undefiled,  
Magic bewildering minds with pure glee.  
Dream through the eyes of a child.

Sincere journeys of friendship smiled  
Upon those who choose to be free,  
Open and eager, adventurous... wild.

Innocent hearts not yet beguiled  
By our evil, austere reality.  
Love through the eyes of a child,  
Open and eager, adventurous... wild.

**Laughter Overflow**  
Photography  
By Nicole Vilorio

# No quiero que sepas

Poetry  
By Nicole Viloria

No quiero que sepas cuántos poemas he escrito para poder entender, para rehacer, para amortiguar el dolor de que no estés aquí hoy.

No quiero que sepas que oculto lo que siento detrás de una lengua, detrás de un idioma.

No quiero que sepas cuántas veces he llorado para que cambies, para que me extrañes, para que me llames.

No quiero que sepas que deseo estás muerta para que mis poemas cobren vida, para que mi dolor se justifique y nadie se de cuenta.

No quiero que sepas cuántos sueños hemos compartido, lo que hemos reído, lo que hicimos.

No quiero que sepas que en carne viva, llena de heridas, eres tú quien me reanima, quien este poema inspira.

**Midst of It All**  
Photography  
By Nathalie Saladrigas

# A 1,488 millas aparte

Poetry  
By Andrea Terrero

ya nos olvidaremos de nosotras a 1,488 millas aparte  
¿quién nos culpará?  
ya encontrarás a otras de quien te enamorarás.

pero espero que a la próxima persona que beses le sientas mi sabor y escupas el suyo.  
que te des cuentas que nadie dirá tu nombre como yo y que muchas te abrirán las puertas pero no todas te empujarán para que entres, que muchas te acompañarán a tomar un café pero con ninguna sabrá igual, que muchas te mirarán con deseo pero ninguna se tirará al piso a rodillas, rogándote que la dejes probarte. ni bécquer quiso a la suya tanto de manera inhumana, obsesiva, adicta a tu olor y tu sabor y tu manera y tu voz.

tratarás de olvidarme, pero fallarás igual que yo.  
ni a 1,488 millas aparte, ya verás.



**Facade**  
Photography  
By Nathalie Saladrigas

**Suspicious**  
Digital Illustration  
By Camila Ramirez

# Mi peor enemigo

Poetry

By Jose Peaguda

El asecho constante  
es sinónimo de desastre  
Siempre busco escaparme  
Corro y corro y corro  
Siempre vuelve a alcanzarme

Estoy cansado de ser el títere  
pero me enredo en sus cuerdas  
Anacondas que me ahorcan  
Hilos que me controlan  
Cadenas que me encierran

Pesadillas constantes  
Terror en cada mensaje  
Penumbra en cada acción  
Conjuro torturando mi corazón  
Pensamientos grises

Corro, me atrapa  
Me escondo, me encuentra  
Duermo, me despierta  
Grito, me silencia  
Me levanto, me golpea

Un ciclo vicioso de agonías  
Imaginación de escenas sombrías  
Duchas de agua fría  
Pensando qué pasaría  
Todo por culpa mía

**Peer**  
Photography  
By Nathalie Saladrigas



## Ego

Poetry  
By Nicole Viloría

I wonder if you miss me  
as much as I miss you.  
I see you everywhere  
every single day.  
I hear you in my head,  
especially today.  
First November without you,  
all surrounded by friends,  
wishing it were you,  
not them.  
I regret what I did.

I regret what I didn't do.  
I regret what you did.  
I regret what you didn't do.  
I, every time.  
Is there an "I" on your  
side?  
Do you think about me?  
Do you regret it too?  
Would you let your ego slide?  
Just this time?  
So you and I can collide?

## Etude No. 2

Poetry

By Mateo Medina

Tengo miedo de líneas convexas  
Que el día se oculte y la luna,  
Mientras nace y sale  
Sale y yace  
Del vientre oculto de mierda  
Nazca el pétalo de una Dalia,  
Y nada resuelva, se quede en tensión  
O en un acorde disminuido  
Yace y nace

Tengo miedo que el vértigo sea suelo  
Que los escenarios escatimen en distancias  
Resoplen mi cuello, laceren mi yugo de ti  
La tortura de una razón sin poesía

¿Qué es amar?  
¿Qué es la poesía?  
Solo sé que uno viene tras otra  
Tal vez como consecuencia dialéctica  
Tal vez como consecuencia filológica  
Ambas falsas y ciertas

**Enlaces**  
Photography  
By Joseph Muñoz



*En la mente, uno siempre se está solo*

Tengo miedo que el amor se muestre puro  
Que solo quede amar sin condiciones  
Ulises y su Itaca  
Narciso y el río hecho de tiempo y agua

Fuego eterno recorre  
Del lagrimal al carpal  
Oxímoron entre lo de afuera  
Eclesiastés sangres de adentro  
Las aves lacustres  
Versos fenomenológicos sobre mi zahir  
Verde, eternamente verde.

Tengo miedo que me falte poesía  
Para amar  
Para llorar  
Para cantar  
Y todos los tar del mismo  
Y no pueda volver a escribir  
No puedo volver a sentir  
Algo que no sea tu mirada

Sobre la piel de un tigre onírico  
Diluyéndose en un café con leche

Sobre Marte o Venus

**Lunar Mission**  
Collage  
By Lucia Gil and Camila Ramírez

# The Timeless Cave

Non-Fiction  
By Manuel Martínez

Ten years ago, I was shown what it meant to care about others – and when I say others, I mean every living being on Earth. This unforgettable lesson took place in my home country, Venezuela, when one of the most bizarre characters of my childhood inaugurated my birthday celebration with a memorable remark that has remained with me throughout my life.

“Do you guys smell that? It is called ‘guano,’ the more appropriate word for bat poop. It means we have arrived at the cave.”

All of us laughed. Petia was an interesting character. Even as a guide, he was exceptionally good at making explicit remarks about the natural ecosystem. *La Cueva del Indio* was a new step for me. It was my third birthday in a row traveling to the cave system of the *Cafetal*. But now, in the fourth grade, my friends and I were given the green flag to explore the most extensive cave of the mountain, located close to its peak. Of course, we were accompanied by our parents and Mr. Petia.

We stood before a relatively narrow fissure on the mountain’s stone. It almost looked like the entrance of a house. Still, indeed the guano’s acidic, almost sulfuric smell was not welcoming. Nervously,

I looked up at my older brother, who held my hand. He seemed eager to enter and was inclining his head, with a lantern attached, into the cave entrance when Petia interrupted him.

“Just a heads up. Remember that this cave is not home to humans. Bats, lizards, and some cave spiders call this place their home. So, as such, we must treat it with respect. I must ask you to abstain from hurting or killing any natural life in this reserve.”

After that heads up, my brother and Petia were the first to creep into the crack slowly—everyone else followed behind. My best friend, Sebastian, was also by my side. The irregular and smooth surfaces of the stone below us made it difficult to maintain balance. We entered a reception-like room with another fissure at the end. But the fact was that nature had built it. The gallery was adorned by pillars of stone sprouting from the ceilings and others rising from the ground.

“These are stalactites and stalagmites,” said Petia with a tone of excitement.

“These rock formations took millions of years in the making.”

Sebastian looked at me with a smile and said, “So we didn’t invent houses?” He

Jupiter  
Digital Illustration  
By Laura González

laughed. Suddenly, as if by a natural mechanism, the group fell silent. I recall feeling a heavy atmosphere. A thick and humid smell permeated the walls of my nostrils, and my senses became meticulously attentive to the whole experience. Slight squeaking and clicking noises reverberated across the cave—it was alive; it spoke to us.

As we traversed the entrance of the next gallery, I slid my hands across the surface of the walls, feeling the thin wax-like substance that covered the rocks. While in between my thoughts, I miscalculated and tripped over a small stalagmite, almost falling into the darkness of the parallel path. Thankfully, my brother was cautious of me and caught me by the hand.

With a smile from ear to ear, he said: “Watch out. You do not want to break a leg on your birthday.”

Our guide, Petia, announced that we had just entered the main room of the cave. The group was in complete awe at the immense size of the cavern. I likened it to the living room of a mansion—with 20 feet ceilings and a variety of hallways

to pick from. From what was discernible from the play of lights and shadows cast by the dozen flashlights we carried; this section had a continuous path. It was subdivided by a massive wall of stalagmites. Behind it, I saw the site, eons in the making, tainted by all types of graffiti. Decades past political propaganda, love promises, and even scribbles. Was it art? Or was it blatant disrespect to mother nature?

Certainly, Petia was not going to reserve his thoughts on the matter.

“This is what I meant by respecting the place. How about I walk into your house and scratch your entire living room with Crayola? Would you like that?” he asked.

I thought he was funny, but he spoke wise words. Still, I did not understand why they had not just cleaned the cave walls. Those graffiti will likely outlive their creators. Looking back, I find it amusing how, during our short lives, we are oblivious to the timelessness of eternity.

Sebastian and I were tottering through the narrow path on the side of the room when a rock was kicked into the

**“Was it art? Or was it blatant disrespect to mother nature?”**

gradient towards the wall of stalagmites. Those vibrations must have caused something because the cave was suddenly submerged by thousands of clicking noises. For at least a minute, a spectacle of bats swarmed from one side of the cave to the other until everything was silent. Evidently, they were disturbed by our presence. However, we continued exploring their alien home.

Petia stopped abruptly in front of the group. He looked like a ghost with all the flashlights pointed at him. I could tell he had something in mind. That is when he pointed with his own light at a hole in the wall. It was small, roughly the diameter of a medicine ball, and was at ground level.

With a broad smile that showed his yellow teeth, he said, "Here is the Ant's Tunnel. We can head to the main attraction of the cave through this path. But be aware that it is very narrow, so if you suffer from claustrophobia, you better take another path."

I was obviously not backing up from that challenge. Crawling through a tunnel could not be that hard, or so I thought. My brother decided to go first, then me, with Petia following behind us. Now inside, my sight was limited to my brother's feet. As we advanced, the walls

were gradually enclosing us, and not touching the cold, waxy surfaces of the cave was almost impossible. My breathing became agitated. Something inside me thought the cave was swallowing us and there was no way back.

When I thought it could not get any worse, my brother stopped momentarily, following a sudden change in direction to the right.

He said, "Watch ahead, spider," and calmly—but slowly—advanced past it.

As soon as his shoes left my eyesight, I let out a loud scream that echoed across the entire cave. A humongous cave spider was stuck to the wall right in front of me. The monster-like creature had a long pair of claws and six legs. It could have easily been the size of my face. Claustrophobia consumed me, and my agitated lungs communicated danger. Then, I thought I had no choice but to kill it. In the limited space, I raised my hand violently when Petia contained me.

"Do not worry. You are not its prey. Did you not see how the spider was unresponsive to your brother's passing?" Petia said to me in a calm, reassuring tone.

"But I am afraid!" I said while shivering.

"We are all afraid of the unknown. It is normal. But there is no reason to end

a life out of momentary alarm. Remember, this cave is that spider's home. Let me, as your guide, reassure you that cave spiders impose no harm on humans. So go ahead, ignore it." Petia declared in sincerity.

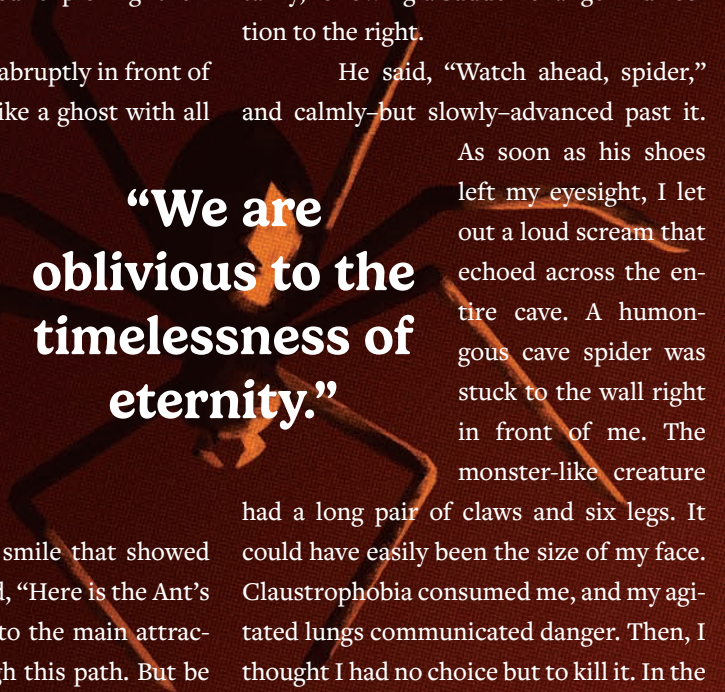
At that moment, I decided to face my fear and continue crawling. Petia was right; nothing happened. To a certain degree, I imagine that every person in the tunnel had a similar experience with that spider. It was almost like a rite of passage—almost premeditated. Who knows? Petia had been making trips to this cave for decades. Maybe he had something in mind.

But whatever it was, it worked. I now look back at the experience as that one time I battled social indoctrination. Living in the city, so disconnected from nature, I developed a repulsion towards animals I did not understand. Containing my urge to kill the spider in the context that I was inside its home was enlightening. The complete picture fits together like

a puzzle: the bats, the spider, the smell of guano, the graffiti, the ancient stalagmites, and the tunnel.

Every organism on this earth plays a role in the vast and complex system that nature corresponds to. Cleaning up timeless graffiti would not be enough to change our behavior, but a culture change was necessary. And it began the moment we stepped into *La Cueva Del Indio*. The tunnel led us to a cavernous room that looked like it was made for children—a playroom for the children of nature. It had a series of naturally formed slides going from different directions.

Cave spiders were all over the walls, but this time the feeling was not of fear but amusement. My friends and I played happily on those slides for the time available until we had to head back to the surface. When leaving, we decided to take the Ant's Tunnel, but we made sure to say "hi" to the spider this time.



**"We are oblivious to the timelessness of eternity."**



**Itsy Bitsy**  
Digital Illustration  
By Camila Ramirez

**Peace**  
Digital Illustration  
By Laura González

# Beach

Poetry

By Noah Zarran-Paz

Bottlecap shells in your plastic ocean,  
brown-blinded eyes grew rings of blue,  
pupils that shriek: "Take me home,"  
but home is an eroded carcass.

Bits of bendy straws outnumber the stars  
and flowers bloomed over a graveyard,  
their petals burned like cigarette buds  
as your debris dived into the sea.

Waves of remains desperately grip  
and crash into sepulchral shores,  
a dead dog rests when he knows,  
but I swam to savor one last sip.

"Remember when?" and "Remember then?"  
all collide in pools of synthetics,  
micro-plastics depart from my heart  
as we meet the same eternal fate.

**Jupiter's Dune**  
Photography  
By Laura González

# Sea

Poetry

By Violeta González

Crashing delicately,  
Where foam meets the shore,  
End of one wave,  
Beginning of another.

Beneath it all,  
Creatures with a neon glow,  
Abundant with things to discover,  
Glittering as sunshine spears through.

Peaceful chaos,  
Schools of fish migrating as one,  
Mother whales humming melodies,  
Warrior baby turtles making it to the deep sea.

Undiscovered,  
Untamable beauty,  
Unimaginable  
large and peculiar.



**Padrón Sunsets**  
Photography  
By Adriana Garcia



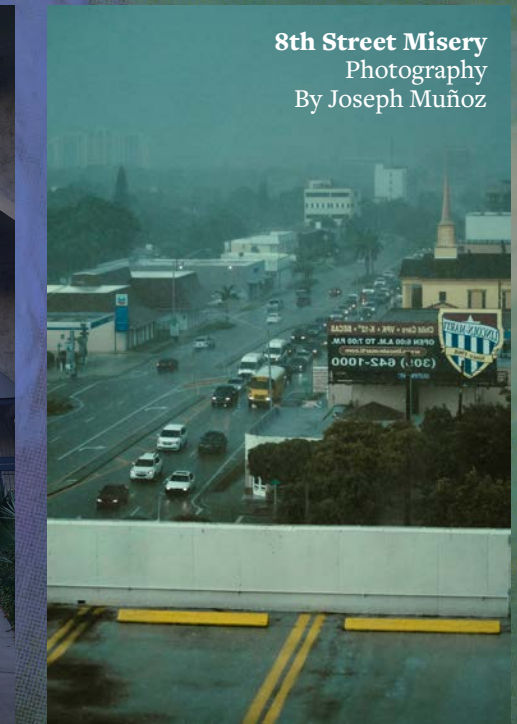
**The Two Pigeons**  
Photography  
By Joseph Muñoz



**Perspective**  
Photography  
By Elaia Sainz



**8th Street Misery**  
Photography  
By Joseph Muñoz



# Quiero inventar

Poetry

By Diego Faría

Quiero inventar una palabra nueva.  
Una que exista opuesta al pecado  
de no amar siendo amado  
y encerrarse en paredes de cueva.

Quiero inventar una palabra diferente.  
Una que relate la historia del lado  
de quien por miedo a ser amado  
actuó elocuente, frío e indiferente.

Quiero inventar una palabra dolorosa.  
Una que exprese la ruptura del corazón  
al escuchar atentamente a la razón  
y colocar una muralla rocosa.

Quiero inventar una palabra compuesta.  
Una cuya primera sección describa  
el caminar firme de quien escriba  
la belleza de tu alma expuesta.

Quiero inventar una palabra mítica.  
Una cuya segunda partición pinte  
el levantarse bañado en el tinte  
de tu hermosa mirada ansiolítica.

Quiero inventar una palabra  
que me confiese ante el espejo,  
me desgarre el pellejo  
y exponga mi alma macabra.  
En esta búsqueda por una palabra,  
un abracadabra,  
cargaré con los restos  
de mis amores que debieron ser honestos.

Quisiera encontrar en los huesos  
del esqueleto de nuestros sueños  
la manera de hacernos dueños  
de nuestro destino y salir ilesos.

Pero,  
por más palabras que invente,  
párrafos que cuente  
o lágrimas reviente,  
nada será suficiente  
para compensar tu amor ferviente.

Eres la luz que ilumina mi sombra,  
la colina que guía mis brisas,  
el origen de mis risas  
y de mi sonrisa si alguien te nombra.

Te amo, al menos tanto como puedo  
en este juego donde siempre quedo  
entre el amar o no amar,  
por miedo a no hallar,  
las palabras correctas para expresar  
que...

Quiero inventar una palabra singular,  
una que dibuje tu amar  
contrastado con mi querer  
y por fin se admire... el pecado de mi ser.

**Spark of Creation**  
Digital Illustration  
By Camila Ramirez

# Murano Glass Mind

Poetry

By María José Vega

Our minds are like Murano glass.  
A complex mixture of colors; our experiences, our feelings,  
our personalities, our goals.  
Just like a Murano piece is unique,  
each mind is, too.  
A composition that can never be replicated with exactitude.

How can you expect the world to understand you?  
The countless feelings you struggle to express,  
warping into different shapes.  
The experiences that are embedded into the intense colors.  
Your passionate ideas, like the light penetrating through the glass.

It's impossible to make two Murano pieces exact replicas of each other,  
it's impossible for another Murano glass mind to understand  
the elements that make up yours.

So, cease to imprint your infinitely colorful and intricate design  
onto others'.  
They'll look at it  
and try their best to make sense of it.

But they'll never understand its complexity like you do.  
Because it is, and will always be  
a visual representation of your own unique  
and irreplaceable essence.



**I Found You!**  
Digital Illustration  
By Camila Ramirez

# Gossamer Me

Poetry

By Chris Zapatier

A lantern shedding light like a spark  
daily surrendering sooner to dark.

When did I stop wondering why?  
When did I stop growing?  
When did fear of the unknown  
foil the fear of never knowing?  
Quests set off on sans preparation.  
Crests too lofty for a man of my station.

Once upon a time long gone  
a celestial canopy absent boundary  
forecasted unbounded possibility.

Times change slowly,  
so do we  
standing on ceremony  
gambling responsibly  
abandoning hunger  
for the lap of luxury.

Eyes aloft now  
I see only storm clouds.  
That once prismatic tapestry  
blanched to a spectrum binary.

Time is a reservoir,  
a pitch-perfect harmony of surface, and shore  
each solar vault siphons some more.  
The basin draws nothing,  
no runoff, no hot spring.  
Prayers for rain are prayers in vain;  
its substance immutably circles the drain.



**Nationalism**  
Photography  
By Nathalie Saladrigas

# Unholy

Poetry  
By Giuliana Mesa

He tells me about growing up in church, and all I can think about is how far away from it I'll take him. My palms are tainted. One small graze and his purely white soul will flourish in burgundy. I can't help it. The overwhelming need to have his hands caress each part of my body drives me.

I want him to say I taste like church. I want my thighs kissed the way he was taught to press his lips to a rosary. I want his reason for getting on his knees to have my name written across it. My body holy and worthy of his worship.

There is no sweeter innocence than our gentle sin. Spill red wine on me. I'll soak up your love like bread. Feel human as you feast on my flesh. Let lust be the reason we end up downstairs. Tell me all about how I taught you that immorality is nothing short of a miracle.

**Fire Triangle**  
Photography  
By Carlen Arevalo

# Piso No. 6

Poetry  
By Manuel Martínez

Nuestro rojo, saturado ocaso  
Madriguera de desahogos y abrazos  
Sombríos como manta de estrellas  
Acurrucándonos a nosotros, a ti.  
Espejo perplejo con sabor a flor  
Dulce, agria, sustanciosa  
Nos haces llorar colores. Compartir  
Tiempo perdido, ganado - el pasado  
Nuestro 'porqué.'  
Los turquesas del cielo escurren miedo  
O nosotros mismos tal vez.  
Eres tú quien nos delata.  
El calor de tu frío cemento  
Arrulla nuestros pesares  
Y aligera el momento,  
En tu deslumbrante atardecer.



**Invisible Half**  
Digital Illustration  
By Lidice Tabares

# UNION

# The Color Pink

Poetry

By Karla Fina

I really like the color pink.  
It's just so nice and it reminds me of pretty things.  
Though, sometimes admitting that makes me want to die.

I'm too girly,  
but isn't that what the boys like?  
I really like the color pink.

Yes, I also like skirts and dresses,  
But I didn't know that meant you had the right  
to stick your hands up them.  
Sometimes, admitting that makes me want to die.

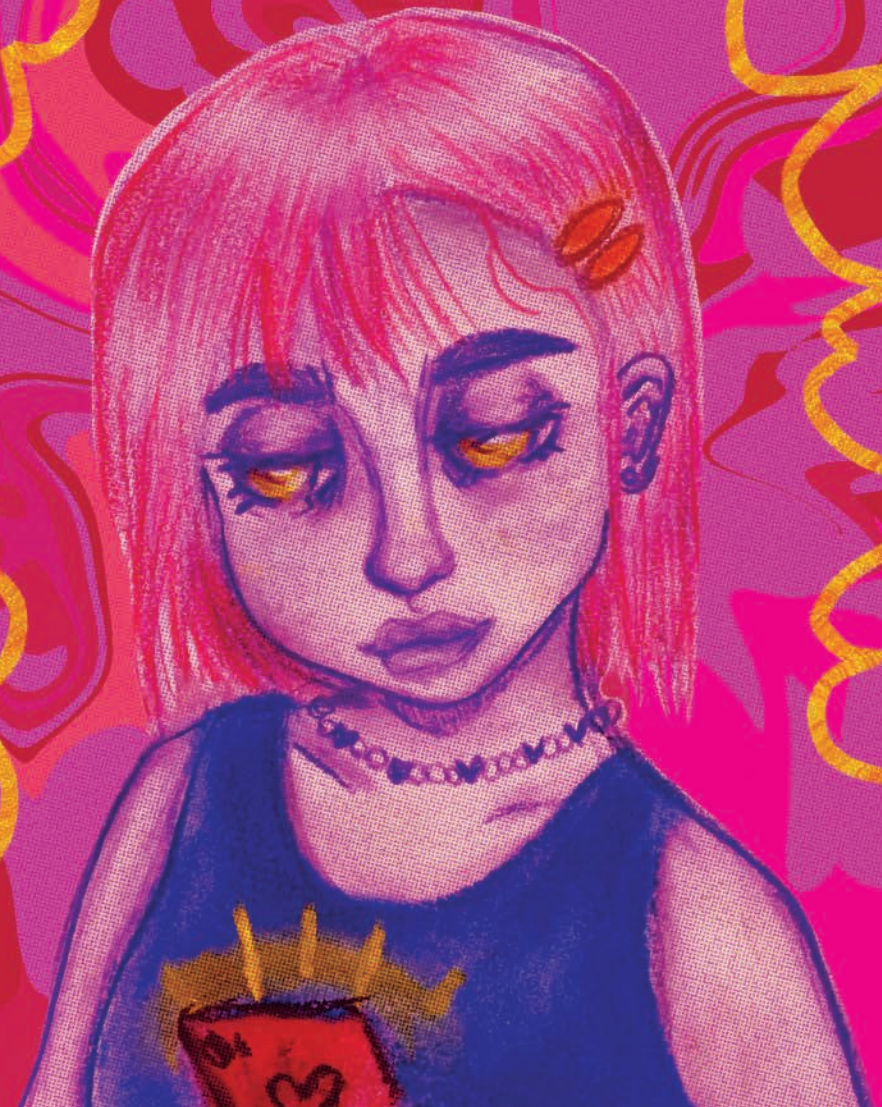
If a man with more power were to ask me for a little favor,  
I bet the bruises on my knees might be purple or green.  
I really like the color pink.

How does a color define who you are?  
I'm too feminine to be taken seriously.  
Admitting that makes me want to die.

I just need to be still and not make too much noise.  
They will ignore me if I seem like I'm no fun.  
I really like the color pink.  
And sometimes admitting that makes me want to die.

**Swirl**  
Digital Illustration  
By Camila Ramirez

**(Secretly) Manic**  
Color Pencil  
By Noah Zarran-Paz



# The Dinner



Fiction  
By Tiago Tofani

We have just arrived at the restaurant. Of course, she is pissed. Nowadays it's impossible to please her. I go to the florist and buy her a shit-ton of flowers: pissed. I buy her a dog to cheer her up: still pissed. I don't know what else to do. If she has a thing for opulence, maybe this ridiculously expensive restaurant will make me succeed and will save this relationship. I have no idea what I am doing here. I don't even know what to eat in a French restaurant. I should have given up on her months ago. Let's see what I can eat here that won't make me go bankrupt.

"Fuck!" I screamed after seeing the prices on the menu.

The whole restaurant looks at me, flabbergasted. That's fair. I guess that this is a pretty rare thing to happen in a place like this. My girlfriend looks at me, pissed. That's not rare.

"I forgot my wallet," I said to her, trying to get away from the tantrum.

That's a lie.

"Good thing that you have Apple Pay," she answered.

Thanks Steve Jobs. Now would be a good time to use a time machine. That way I could travel to the future and buy a sports almanac, just like in *Back to the Future II*. That's the only way I won't go bankrupt today. If this date works out, it will be a pyrrhic victory. There's no doubt about that. The waiter arrives.

"Bon soir!" The waiter said. "What can I get you?"

A winning lottery ticket wouldn't be so bad.

"I'll have the Coq au Vin," she answered.

Oh yeah, of course. She had to choose the most expensive dish. If her plan is to destroy me in every way possible, she is succeeding. Tonight, she makes her final blow, her checkmate. After this dinner I'll become her memorabilia.

"I'll have the Ratatouille," I answered.

Yes. I ordered it because of the movie. I hope that those succulent vegetables lift me up and make me forget that

I won't be able to eat for the next three months.

I'm having a juxtaposition of ideas in my head. I have saudade from the time that she was a dainty, spontaneous, spectacular woman. I want that woman to come back. But I'm also desperate to stop waking up every morning to the grumpy, boring, exhausting woman she has become. As I'm having these thoughts, we

are sitting here, not speaking a single word to each other. After about 20 minutes, she breaks the silence.

"I want to break up," she said. Finally.



# Untitled #3

Poetry  
By Andrea Terrero

There's a little chicken breast you can have whilst we discuss what will likely be the worst decision of our lives. But do what you want darling, I'm not your mother I wish I was so I could beat some sense into you. You know I wouldn't and I know you enjoy my melodramatic tendencies so let's just forget this and go to Wendy's PLEASE Do not make me beg, for I am starving and prideless enough to stuff that chicken breast into my mouth in its entirety with a futile hope that I choke so that you can touch me again. Desperate times call for desperate measures And we're in a bloody emergency.



Eventful Dinner  
Digital Illustration  
By Camila Ramirez



# Questions That Popped Into My Brain During Calculus II Class While My Mind Was Busy Somewhere Else

Poetry  
By Giuliana Mesa

Are you really less than just because you can't prove to him your value? Is my love a **constant**, if not why is he **deriving** it to equal zero? Does love still count if only one side of the equation felt it? Does it actually matter if the **limit converges**? If not, why do I have to **rationalize my limits** in order for them to be respected? If you have a history of abandonment issues and he's a flight risk, will the **summation of cumulative** wounds be transformed into a **definite integral**, or will the pain remain **boundless**? If a problem can't be simplified, should I still bother to solve it? Can I just rewrite it in simple terms without being marked down for oversimplifying things? If I can't **decompose it into fractions** of pain and deal with each issue individually, what then? If he hurts you once, should you approach it as an **infinite series**, look for the pattern and predict the third and fourth times till you reach the **n**th time? Can an **alternating series** remain positive or is it always doomed to repeat its negative values? In conclusion, I should've spent more time on the problems that wanted to be solved.

Properties of Gradients —  
 • Direction of maximum increase  $\nabla f(x,y)$   
 • Rate of increase  $\|\nabla f(x,y)\|$   
**Homework and Notes**  
 Formula of Linear Approximation  
 By Camila Ramirez  
 $f(x_0, y_0) + f_x(x_0, y_0)(x - x_0) + f_y(x_0, y_0)(y - y_0)$   
 Linear approximation:  
 $L(x,y) = f(a,b) + f_x(a,b)(x-a) + f_y(a,b)(y-b)$   
 Extreme values:  
 $d_x f(x(a,b)) - f_{yy}(a,b) - [f_{xy}(a,b)]^2$

To Study  
 1. derivatives  
 2. integrations  
 3. limits  
 4. series (bring cheat sheet)

Partial Derivatives  
 $x \ln(y) = 2z^2$   
 $\frac{dz}{dx} = \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{y} = \frac{1}{2y}$   
 $\frac{dz}{dy} = \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{y} = \frac{1}{2y}$   
 $\frac{dz}{dz} = 4z = 4(2) = 8$

Find directional derivative at  $(0,1,1)$  in the direction  $3i + 2j + 2k$   
 $\nabla f = \frac{1}{\sqrt{14}} \langle 3, 2, 2 \rangle$   
 $\frac{1}{\sqrt{14}} \langle 3, 2, 2 \rangle \cdot \langle 3, 2, 2 \rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{14}} (9 + 4 + 4) = \frac{17}{\sqrt{14}}$

Double Integrals  
 Fubini's Theorem  
 $\int_a^b \int_c^d f(x,y) dx dy = \int_c^d \int_a^b f(x,y) dy dx$   
 Region R:  $a \leq x \leq b, c \leq y \leq d$

Quotient rule  
 Integration by parts  
 I like him to study group

Trigonometric Substitution  
 $\int \sqrt{a^2 - x^2} dx = \frac{1}{2} (x \sqrt{a^2 - x^2} + a^2 \arcsin \frac{x}{a}) + C$   
 $\int \sqrt{x^2 + a^2} dx = \frac{1}{2} (x \sqrt{x^2 + a^2} + a^2 \ln|x + \sqrt{x^2 + a^2}|) + C$   
 $\int \sqrt{x^2 - a^2} dx = \frac{1}{2} (x \sqrt{x^2 - a^2} - a^2 \ln|x + \sqrt{x^2 - a^2}|) + C$

one coin  
 I want to see the other side of the coin  
 both up or both down  
 not both up or both down

(12)  $f(x,y) = -x^2 + 5xy + y^2 + 5x + y + 6$ , find a unit long vector to the level curve at  $(2,5)$  that has a positive x component  
 $\nabla f(x,y) = \langle -2x + 5y + 5, 5x + 2y + 1 \rangle \rightarrow \nabla f(2,5) = \langle -2(2) + 5(5) + 5, 5(2) + 2(5) + 1 \rangle = \langle 26, 21 \rangle$   
 $\|\nabla f\| = \sqrt{(26)^2 + (21)^2} = \sqrt{1145} \rightarrow \langle \frac{26}{\sqrt{1145}}, \frac{21}{\sqrt{1145}} \rangle$   
 (13)  $f(x,y) = 3e^{-4x} \sin(4y)$ , find  $\nabla f$  at  $(3,3)$   
 $f_x = -12e^{-4x} \sin(4y) \rightarrow f_x(3,3) = -12e^{-12} \sin(3)$  |  $f_y = 3e^{-4x} \cos(4y) \rightarrow f_y(3,3) = 3e^{-12} \cos(3)$   
 $\nabla f(x,y) = \langle -12e^{-4x} \sin(4y), 3e^{-4x} \cos(4y) \rangle \rightarrow \|\nabla f\| = 3e^{-12} \sqrt{16 \sin^2(3) + \cos^2(3)} = 3e^{-12} \sqrt{16 \sin^2(3) + \cos^2(3)}$   
 $\approx 0.495, -0.009$



## Untitled #5

Poetry  
By Andrea Terrero

cansada de tanto pensar sin decirte,  
de hablar sin pensarte,  
de decir sin hacerte.

quiero más de tu piel pero no tienes más que darme  
y me pregunto por qué no te propones crear más piel para mí  
porque yo sí por ti.

tranquila, sé que nunca tendré tu todo  
por mucho que yo te de el mío.  
pero miento, me rehúso a dártelo,  
por mi propia protección y por tu seguridad,  
para que yo logre vivir cuando te vayas y para que tú no te asustes  
tan pronto,  
para que todavía quede un poco de mí  
y para que tú no tengas que cargar con mi cerebro podrido y mi  
corazón partido,  
para que yo logre decirte, hablarte y hacerte  
mejor solo me das un poco  
y yo solo un poco más.

quiero más de tu piel pero no tienes más que darme  
ahora ¿qué hago?

**Warm Embrace**  
Digital Illustration  
By Andres Domínguez Solano



**Capitalistic Horndog**  
Photography  
By Nathalie Saladrigas

# The Best Escape

Poetry

By Erika Hernández

Trigger Warning: Implied Substance Abuse

The savory smell of  
Freshly baked chocolate chip cookies  
Laughter roars over the sound of peaceful music  
Meows and purrs of cats can be heard around me.  
As I pet their heads and breathe in,  
I remember what I left behind,

*Loud clashing barks of dogs at night.*  
Sinister laughing can be heard from the next room  
The sounds of people screaming and arguing on TV  
Disgusting tar-filled cigarette smoke  
Empty vodka bottles clanking together and being broken  
That arguing on TV becomes a reality  
As my heart starts to race, I tremble and shake

At last, I breathe out.  
Remembering that I am safe now,  
I take a bite,  
The comforting gooey chocolate fills my taste buds.

**Cookie Cutter**  
Digital Illustration  
By Andres Domínguez Solano  
and Camila Ramirez



# Upcycled

Fiction

By Jenna Kay Dubé

I was floating in a sea of ink, gasping for a breath that could not be found. No moon. No stars. Deafening darkness accompanied by pummeling swells knocked me over and under with each straggling stroke to stay afloat. I became disoriented, not knowing which way was down or up, left or right. Searing pain filled my chest with shards of ice, my insides dismantled with every inhalation of the reality that engulfed my being. My body, mind, and soul were filleted into bits that floated amongst the incessant crested waves, desperately seeking the splicing of their tattered remains.

It would have been so easy to surrender, to stop flailing and be consumed by the relentless weight and power of nothingness. In what was left of my mind's eye, sinking into those eternal depths, passing through trenches on the way to nowhere, I asked, "why?" Why bother? Why fight against the torment? Is this what he felt? Is this why he let go?

Was he so blind and burdened that I wasn't enough? No. His reality was not about me or any-

one else. The spirits that stormed his ship had befuddled his psyche beyond repair. He had been drowned by the bottled leviathan - it consumed him, not the other way around.

With that realization, that tiniest of breath, there was warmth. There was more than just this realm of suffering after all, but where? The frigid sea began to calm, and a balmy horizon appeared before my drifting debris. Flashes of hope seemed to grip the now sorbet sky, willing the sun to rise. The exhaustion of treading water, feeling weak and defeated, had begun to dissipate, and, in its place, my fibrous tissues barely hanging on by their threads, had begun to strengthen. My swollen eyes softened, allowing me to be welcomed back into the world. As the water receded, I found my frame sutured on the sand, a Picasso of my former self. With one blast of lightning, my reality had changed. What was once buried deep was now shown on the surface for all to see. I am a window made of stained glass, light and dark fragments all pieced together to tell a story: His story. My story.



**Liquor Dream**  
Digital Illustration  
By Camila Ramirez



# Rosie's Lovely Day Out

Fiction

By Erika Hernández

I don't know what is beyond that white gate, but it is calling out to me. Every chance I get, I lounge my way through that gate, whether it be to greet the dog on the sidewalk or bite them. Today in particular I felt bored. Every morning my owner Beatrice takes me outside to do my business or, as my other roommates do, chase lizards. The largest dog, Bella, continually badgered Lucy and Daisy. She didn't mean to; she was just unaware of her size. She was also unaware of the annoyance of her digging huge holes into Beatrice's finely cut grass. Lucy, despite her size, was the most dominant: no one messes with her except for Bella. Lucy would willfully attack any size dog that threatens her personal space. Daisy, on the other hand, kept to Beatrice's side. Occasionally fought with Lucy, but overall Beatrice is practically Daisy's birth mother at this point, making her my grandmother.

Very typical boring day with Daisy laying at Beatrice's feet as she prepares lunch. Bella outside running frantically, and me just laying there in the grass waiting and waiting...

Without thinking, I squished my rawboned body through the gate and felt the texture of warm concrete fill my

paws. I could've sworn the air was cleaner on this side. I figured I might as well take advantage and continue my way down the block. I stopped in awe at the black gate to my side. Their grass was always my favorite, so long and uncaged. I felt like a tiger crawling through that tall grass. Did I mention this is my second time here? Simply beautiful, I sniffed my way through.

"Hey! What do we have here? Aren't you cute? A Yorkie!" The neighbor said enthusiastically. He picked me up without hesitation before I could run. Who could blame him?

"Hehe, looks to me like I have a new dog. Ooh, she might be a Rat Terrier mix?" He questioned as he pulled me closer to his face. He smelled like his lawn.

This cannot be good, I squirmed as aggressively as I could, barking loud and insensately as he took me through the second wooden fence and into his backyard. He underestimated the nature of my bark, not only loud, but excessively high in pitch.

Yet he kept petting my fur ever so gently. "It's okay, shh shh, you're safe now." As he sniffed me, he exclaimed "Oh you sure need a bath!"

I was placed down and my sudden

**Green**  
Photography  
By Joseph Muñoz

instinct was to run to the nearest corner of the wooden fence. I could almost see the backyard of my home. I scratched the fence as if there were a box of Greenies treats on the other side. I screamed and cried and begged for my life. *Please help me!*

I heard walking on the other side of the yard. It sounded familiar.

“Rosie! Is that you? Rosie, wait right there! I am coming to get you.”

As the footsteps approached, my barks got louder.

I must keep... Going! My vocal cords shattered as I continued to alert my grandmother where I was.

I fell against the wall under immense pressure. Water hitting my back legs. There he stood over me with a hose.

“Be quiet, you! You’re so dirty; you desperately need a bath.” I felt his hands on my body with a grip so tight I could barely move.

I felt weak. I tried to “ruff” once more but the force of one hand was holding my mouth closed.

Everything went black.

“I’ve been running around this block for 30 minutes already! Where is she?” Yelled Beatrice as she returned to her backyard to think.

“I can’t hear her anymore. Would you be quiet please?!” Bella was barking and growling aggressively as she was digging a hole right in front of the neighbor’s wooden fence.

“I know she’s there! I don’t need this right now!” Beatrice exclaimed in tears. Bella growled her loudest one last time when her whole body squirmed through the hole. She crawled underneath the fence

whimpering in pain, but fueled with aggression. She had the huge body of a Pit bull trying to squeeze it through that large but limited dirt hole.

“Don’t hurt yourself!” Beatrice gasped as all she could do was hear what was on the other side. She heard the sound of a man scream and fall to the floor in pain. As she listened closer, she heard the sound of Bella whimpering and crying.

## “Everything went black.”



**On the Run**  
Digital Illustration  
By Camila Ramirez



Little Havana Panoramic  
Photography  
By Joseph Muñoz



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→ Where will we go next? A: ...



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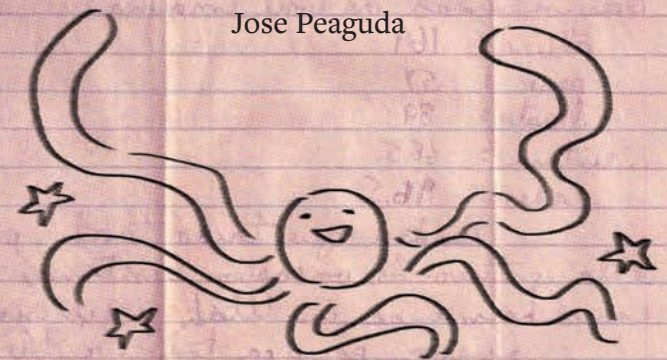
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# Thank You

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Last but not least, thank you reader. We hope that this volume does justice to the poetry, fiction, non-fiction, photography, and artwork that makes up the collage of our souls.



Keep on fighting and creating,  
Urbanites

# Colophon

*Urbana Literary & Arts* was founded in 2007, and its purpose throughout the years has been to promote artistic and creative work within our student body of under 2,700. Since its inception, our magazine takes pride in its sole mission of serving as a medium of expression for students on print and online. *Urbana Literary & Arts* Volume 16 was published in June 2023. Two hundred copies were distributed at no cost.

The views expressed within these pages and [urbanalit.com](http://urbanalit.com) are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of our institution. Copyright of the work showcased in this volume remains with the individual authors and artists.

*Urbana Literary & Arts* is published once a year by students currently enrolled in credit courses at Miami Dade College, Eduardo J. Padrón Campus at 627 SW 27th Ave, Miami, FL 33135. This year’s staff chose collage as the theme. Submissions were received electronically through Airtable. They were logged for control purposes and stripped of authors’ names and information before being distributed to staff for review, selection and editing.

This volume was created using a desktop computer with Adobe InDesign CC 2023 software. The fonts used throughout the magazine are Freight-Text Pro (medium, bold and italics), Gelica (medium and semibold) and Minion Pro (regular).

Moreover, no contributor and/or staff member of *Urbana Literary & Arts* received any monetary reward while engaging in this extracurricular activity.

We can be reached at [urbanalit@outlook.com](mailto:urbanalit@outlook.com) or visit our website at [urbanalit.com](http://urbanalit.com)



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# Awards

## Associated Collegiate Press

### 2022 Associated Collegiate Press Magazine Pacemaker Winner

#### Individual Awards

- Best Use of Social Media - Social Media Promotion  
Ana Muñoz, Gabriela Garcia, Kamila Izquierdo | Honorable Mention
- Multimedia Story of the Year - Podcast  
Jimena Romero, Erika Hernández, Nicole Viloría,  
Diego Faria, Sebastian Parra | Honorable Mention
- Multimedia Story of the Year - Blog  
Alejandra Garcia | Honorable Mention

### 2022 | ACP/CMA Fall National College Media Convention

- ACP Best of Show
- Literary Magazine | Second Place
- Website | Second Place
- Blog | Second Place
- Podcast | Sixth Place

### 2022 | College Media Association

- Literary Magazine Two-Year College | First Place
- Best Social Media Strategy | Second Place
- Best Social Media Presence | Second Place

### Columbia Scholastic Press Association

- 2021 CSPA | Hybrid Literary Magazine  
Gold Crown

### Apple Award

- Best Magazine (2-year) | First Place

### Gold Circle Digital Media

- Portfolio Illustration | Kamila Izquierdo | First Place
- Non-Fiction Column | Alejandra Garcia | First Place
- Traditional Fiction | Karen Pasos | First Place
- Art/Illustration: Hand-drawn | Kamila Izquierdo | First Place
- Essays | Kamila Izquierdo | Second Place
- First Person Experience | Xiu Hau | Second Place
- Open (Free) Form Poetry | Karen Pasos | Third Place
- Cover Design Literary Magazine | Camila Ramirez | Third Place
- Design Portfolio | Certificate of Merit  
María A. Albarracín, Maurizio Casamassima and Camila Ramirez

## National Council of Teachers of English 2022 REALM Award | Superior

### Community Colleges Humanities Association | Southern Division

- Best Photography | Stefani Davila | First Place
- Best Photography | Nicole Viloría | Second Place

### Florida College System Publications Association

- 2021 - 2022 Division A  
General Excellence | First Place

#### Design | First Place

- Camila Ramirez, Mario Casamassima, Maurizio Casamassima,  
María A. Albarracín and Andres Dominguez Solano

#### Staff Pages | First Place

- Camila Ramirez, Mario Casamassima, and Maurizio Casamassima

#### Artwork | First Place

- Kamila Izquierdo

#### Artworks | First Place

- Kamila Izquierdo and Camila Ramirez

#### Photography | First Place

- Stefani Davila and Nicole Viloría

#### Photo | Second Place

- Stefani Davila

#### Contents Pages | Second Place

- Camila Ramirez

#### Cover | Second Place

- Camila Ramirez

#### Non-Fiction | First Place

- Kamila Izquierdo

#### Poetry | Second Place

- Giuliana Mesa

#### Inner Circle

- Camila Ramirez

- Kamila Izquierdo

### Publications Students of the Month – Eduardo J. Padrón Campus

- December 2022 | Elaia Sainz
- March 2023 | Erika Hernández

For a complete list of Urbana's awards please go to our website.



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