

ELYSIUM 2017

"Art washes away from the soul
the dust of everyday life"

~ Picasso

GRACE SIEVERT

Johann Sebastian Bach:

cello suite no. 2 the prelude and gigue





AUDREY DAUGHERTY EDITOR IN CHIEF

Audrey traveled to NYC in March to accept the crown award on behalf of the 2016 staff. Pictured with her is Edward Sullivan, President of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association



THE 2016 -2017 STAFF OF ELYSIUM





The Mud Bench

Emmi Avalos



the cold grass under my toes
cold tile too

a barefoot family
dirty feet under the table
a sign of familiarity

shoes always by the door
a reminder of who is in the house
and who is gone

as I step in, I see their faces in the laces
their tongues speak to me
of who lived there
how old, how many, how cold

ten sneakers,
five pairs of shoes
big, small, a faded remembrance of white
black earth left in the soul

like their toes
natural and bare
my family makes home feel like home

and when those who feel
better than the dirt we all come from
wear shoes into our house

they become outsiders
in our smelly heaven



Many Wrinkles in Many Feet | Sabrina Vega | Graphite on Paper



Eighteen

For: Tiffany

Anai Gressier

An eternal doze with scattered dreams
as if machines had control
as if Summer stayed
as if darkness escaped through light

Like a man lost at sea
I stood alone on the island
I am asleep

Time

A prolonged nap
with sounds of whispers
with lopsided smiles
with pinching and poking
washed off nail polish
with knotted hair
with colorful patches of skin

Looking for help
Searching for aid on an inhabitable island
I am asleep

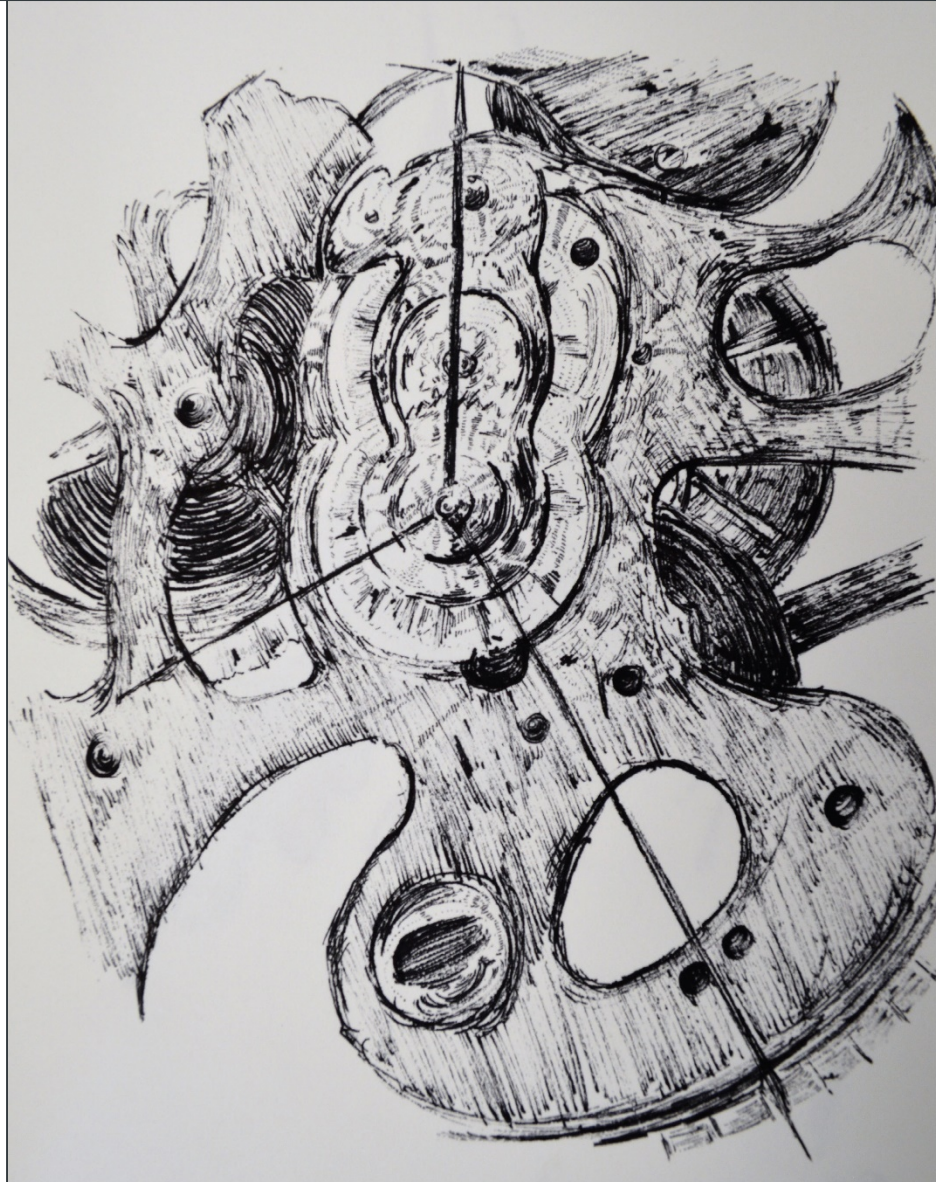
Time

Unconscious
like a monkey stuck in a trap
one hand stuck
and another

Marā gets an opportunity, Buddha says
I must not roam in another's domain, Buddha says
I must stay in my own natural territory
tears fall
I can hear you

Patience

Absent in reaction
Present at mind
like blue lips to pink
like 2 breaths to 20
like closed eyes to open
Am I asleep?



Immer Mechanism | Connor Albright | Ink Drawing



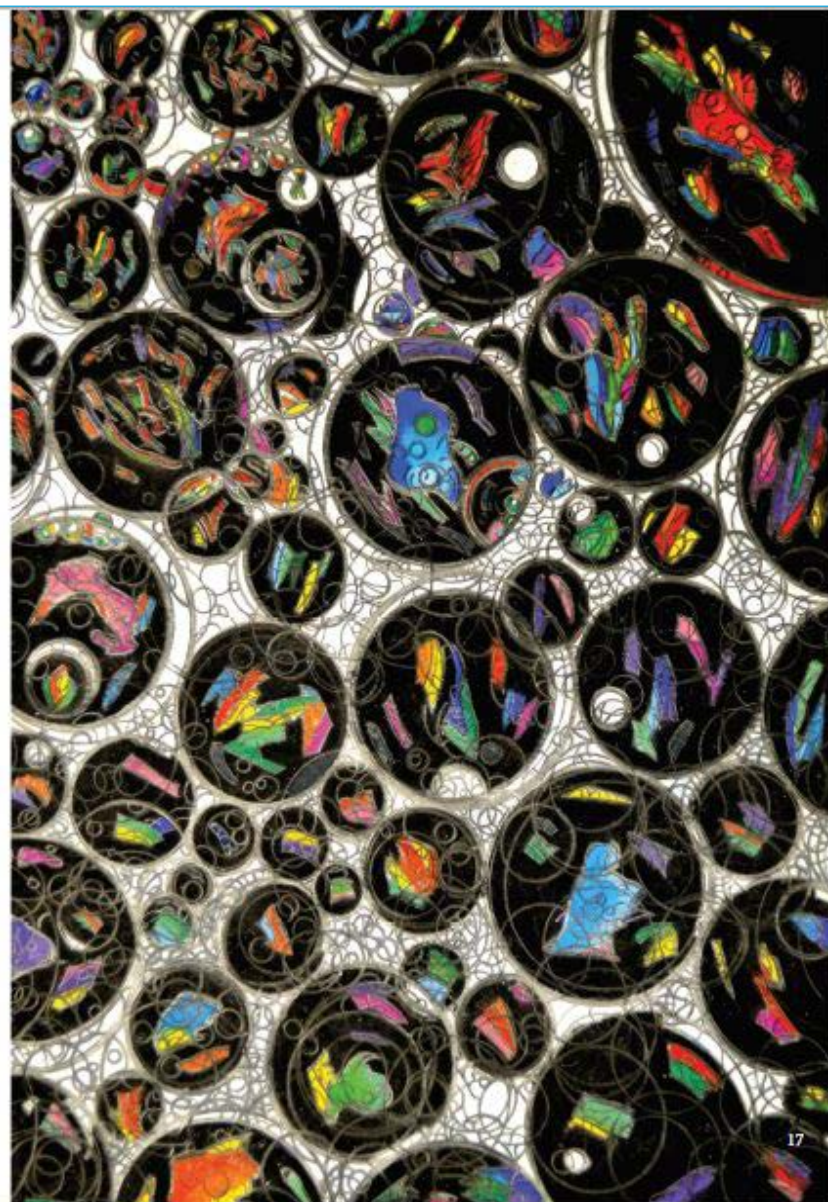


Just Check The Box

Kailah Strickland

I miss the days when borders didn't exist.
When playing in the sand didn't require me to fit in.
I could be myself, all that I am, more than this skin.
But they say ignorance is bliss and that's all
childhood was.
Some big dream meant to be broken.
Racism didn't exist to me, it was something lost,
far beyond a young child's reach.
False compliments hollow like my understanding.
Incomplete was my mind and so were the people
around me.
It's like sleepwalking, calm and deep,
being so lost in yourself that you forget what right is.
Denying parts of myself that were deemed bad didn't
make me whole.
Denying what I am doesn't make me fit,
when I am like a full grown monster trying to pass as
her sweet grandmother.
Words always sharp and rigid, stabbing through a
false skin
and me shedding or shining or something hopeful.
Something, wanting this cocoon of confinement
gone.
"Mut", "Half-breed", the new names that branded me
by my collar
as if I was the dog they dreamt up.
Making friends was a game I didn't know I knew
how to play.
I couldn't talk to black children without being
bourgeoisie,
and I couldn't talk to white kids without being the
black sheep.

What is it about skin that makes me so foreign,
so separate from the people around me?
I am a foreigner.
The alien with envied shape and form
that they love in the dark but will deny when dawn
breaks.
Him, afraid to say my name even though it is the air
in his lungs.
Me and my melanin.
When I was told to "...just check the box," a blank
washed over my being.
I tripped over reasons and words, reaching out to
her, trying to explain that I cannot.
I can't just mark myself false and turn it into truth.
People tell us to think outside the box, but when you
lie just outside the box
you are not seen or recognized.
You are this or that.
I am this or that.
I am white or black,
because it is not possible or fathomable to mix red
and white and make pink.
This concept, this false truth will not sway me from
burning down barriers.
They will not stop me from marking myself a new
home.
I will not succumb to an artificial identity.
I am me.
I am more
than four
lying lines
that I will no longer lie behind.

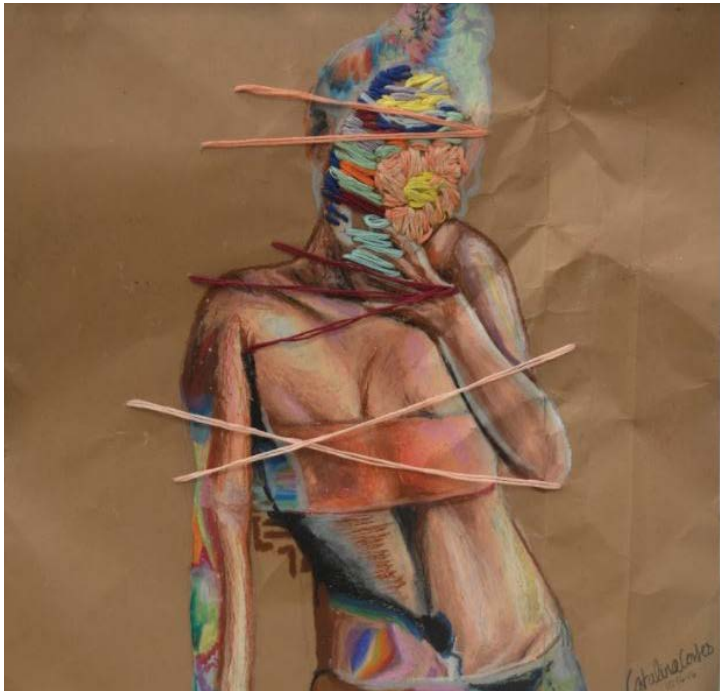
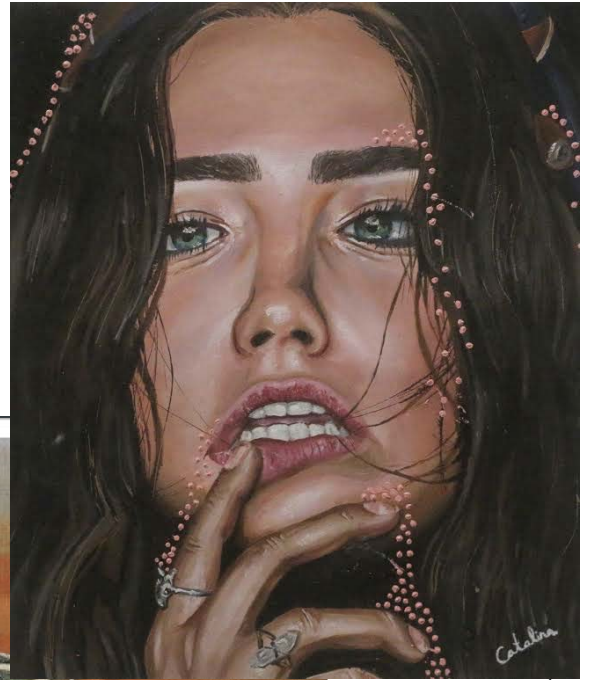




Dario Amador-Lage sings "Words Fail" from *Dear Evan Hansen* by Pasek and Paul



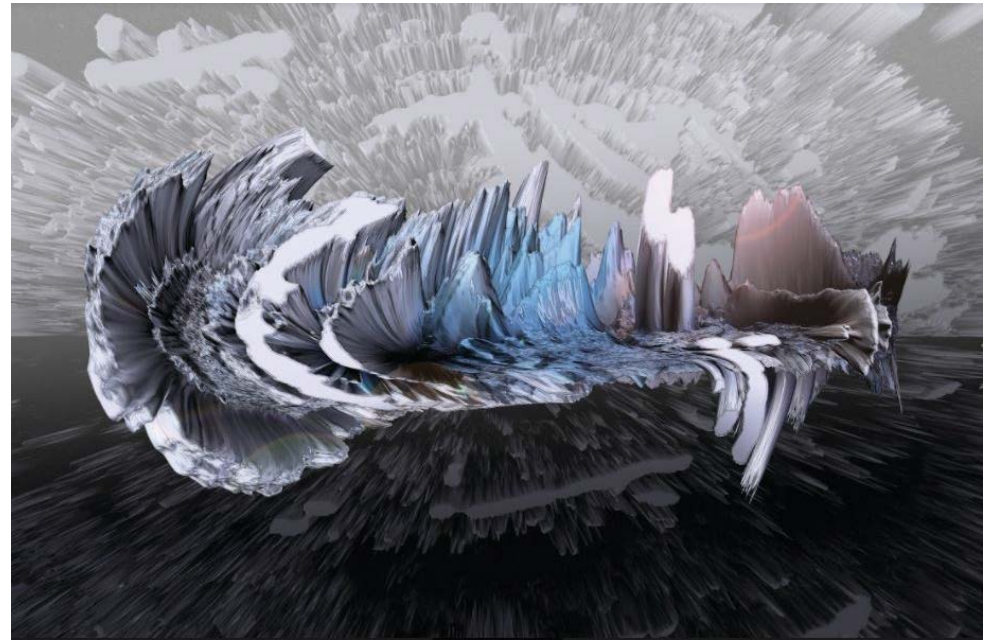
CATALINA CORTES



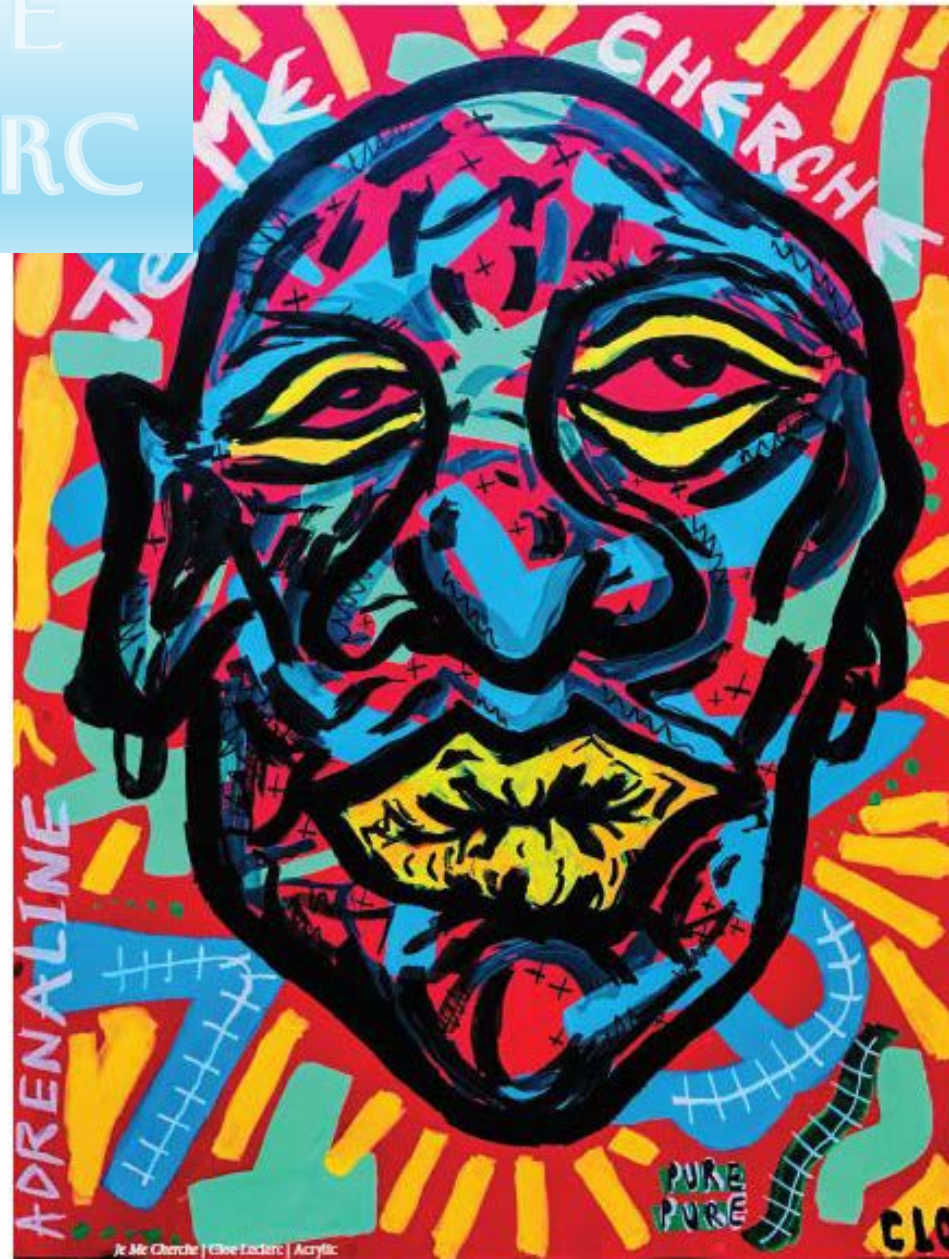


EVA BIBAS

THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION



CLOE LECLERC

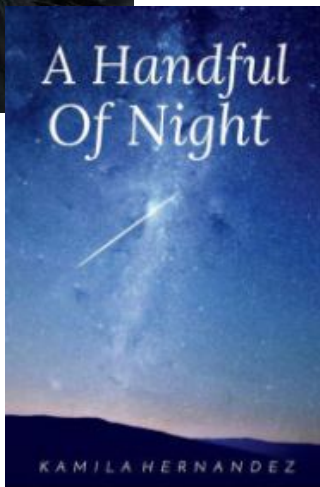
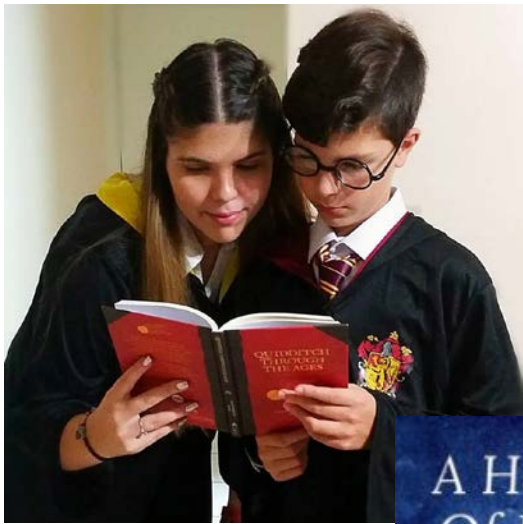


The artist known as LocoLens
"Loco means wild/crazy in Spanish which fits my weirdo self pretty well. 'Lens' in the name means my perspective on the things I photograph through my camera in the world around me."



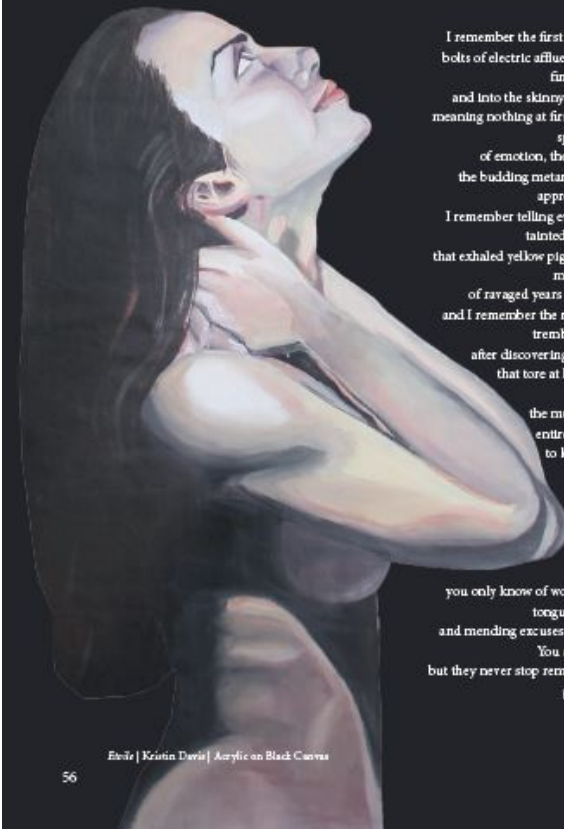
CASSANDRA ZURIA





KAMILA HERNANDEZ

Newborn Poet Kamila Hernandez



Elvis | Kristin Davis | Acrylic on Black Canvas
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I remember the first time I discovered poetry,
bolts of electric affluenza coursing through soft
fingertips
and into the skinny blue lines of fascination
meaning nothing at first, yet transforming into the
spillage
of emotion, the invention of color,
the budding metamorphosis of the artist's
apprehension.

I remember telling everyone about the honey-
tainted metaphors
that exhaled yellow pigment through our film noir
madness
of ravaged years cementing over irises
and I remember the revelation, saucer eyes and
trembling hands,
after discovering the faultlessness of magic
that tore at heartstrings and furrowed
brows,
the mumbled prayers of stitching
entire blankets of words together
to keep our souls warm even as
the frigid ice of Time
burned in desperation to
freeze our heartbeats.

You are a poet
but to the world, you are
wasted opportunity
you only know of words that slip through tied
tongues like silk
and mending excuses to make up for heartbreak
You are a poet
but they never stop reminding you to keep your feet
glued

To hollow ground, shaking
To find something that's taste of reality, the human flesh
sweat of long lost longing
You have to stop living in your head
In the space where you breathe life into promises
You are a poet
But that has never been enough.

The poet is used to this—
the knowledge of failure always shoved under the doormat
numbers that collect under crumpled paper,
the rotten look of misunderstanding at they wonder
where the science of living went missing.
When did art decide to invade your insides,
Leaving no room to calculate meaning with mathematics?
Oh, but only the poets understand
That there is no formula to meaning
No theorem to calculate suffering,
Only words that get stuck and disintegrate into whispers
only all-consuming madness, write me a storm
That rages through afflictions
Write me an ending where
We are older, in the house we dreamed of, buried
Under blankets in the forgotten fog of Decembers
Write me an ending where my voice is steady
Instead of constantly wavering past the silence of goodbyes
hellos
heartaches
Love me
And I will love you
Lose me
And I will turn you into poetry
stretch your bones into feelings,
follow the lines in your palms into futures
Where we end up together
I will hold up your eyelids
So they will never feel heavy at the sight of destruction
I will shelter your heart to keep it beating
As we watch as the words I could never say
Flutter at your fingertips like moths
With broken wings.
The world does not understand love
nor the poets that create it.



JUAN GARCIA

The Streets of Santiago de Las Vegas

Juan Garcia

"Mi patria Cubana." My country, my people, my culture, forced into an endless, dark tunnel with no sight of light. My life began in a little poor town on the outskirts of Havana, Cuba called Santiago de Las Vegas. There I had my first steps, words, and experiences of what my country had become.

The streets of my provenance were littered with potholes, but this could not wipe away the smile of my belligerent people. In my town everyone

we celebrated Christmas Eve with a pig roasting over burning coal. I can still feel the heat radiating off the red coals, the smell of the crackling pork, the sounds of happiness and laughter mixed with the pitter-patter of my parents' feet on the concrete floor. Nothing can come close to the strength of my people who have endured through every injustice, every restriction, every moment in a system that only hurts *"el pueblo Cubano."*

"This darkness still plagues my heart, because I know that my people are suffering, caught in the crossfire of a war that will never cease."

knew each other; everyone was kind and gracious to one another; everyone was family. That was where I learned what it meant to keep family close. I can still remember the aging faces of my cousins, aging not in the sense that they were getting old but they had lost a childhood and with it their innocence; I remember the richness, not in wealth but in culture and love. Every birthday, my people gathered, made big with the little that they had. On *"Noche Buena,"* one of the greatest days of the year,

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The next step was a massive one. Leaving everyone I knew, everyone that made me . . . me, but it was necessary. I couldn't live in a country where my own grandfather was put into prison for four years just for speaking his truth. The two who brought me into this world paved a way for me to live a life they could not have. My mother is a hard-working woman whose only goal in life is to make her son's life worth living. My father is the greatest man I have known and will ever

know, the hero whose cape flies high in my heart. Their sacrifice came at a price. For the first year living in this country I saw my parents twice a week, sometimes once. They had to work two jobs each; this forced them to go to work at sunrise and leave at midnight. I was only a child, and I did not understand what it meant to miss someone, but my parents did understand this; they yearned to embrace me, to show me that they still loved me. Looking back at those years, I realize how

tenacious my heroes were, how they could sacrifice so much so that I could have the opportunity to accomplish the biggest dream I could ever dream.

The dark endless tunnel was one that I did not see an end to.

I want my descendants to see this world as I see it: green, lush, and magnificent. But I will not forget of the struggle of my people. I will go back into that dark tunnel. I will give them the light they so utterly deserve.

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La Reina | Ashwin Rajah | Photography



ISMARY
GUARDARRAMA

Bedtime Stories & American Dreams

Ismary Guardarrama

I come from a long line of criminals.

As far back as I can remember, my childhood was peppered with stories from within barred cells and windowless rooms. While most kids were put to bed with tales of brave knights and damsels in distress, I was lulled to sleep with narratives of cold halls and strange characters. These weren't, however, your typical delinquents.

The first criminal I came across in my life had soft, blue eyes and a tender smile. His alabaster hair made it seem like it was snowing year round, even in Miami; his voice, the honey that attracted my curiosity like bees. My grandfather was not a man of many words, but the words he did say stuck with me for an entire lifetime. He was a political prisoner in a country that preached its independence while placing chains on anyone that dared defy the status quo. My abuelo, a simple man from the countryside, did what few had the courage to do in such a tumultuous time in Cuba: he spoke out. Then he suffered for it.

My father also saw time within a cell, albeit much shorter and for an entirely different reason. After mustering up the courage to leave behind a life he had built full of success as a world-renown doctor, my father decided to flee the largest island prison in the world for his family. We made it to the Mexican-American border during our first immigration attempt as a family: my mother, father, brother, and I. My father was somehow allowed to go through, but we were kept back as "buff" to encourage him to return to Cuba. My parents agreed that he would stay and my mother would try again. The first three nights my father spent in the United States were in a cold, white prison cell. They gave him a McDonald's burger and a can of Coca-Cola and said, "Welcome to the United States."

"We could look at chains as relics of the past. We could tell our children bedtime stories that didn't center on our imprisonment, rather our liberation."

After our failure to cross, my mother went to prison sixteen times: sixteen times for sixteen attempts at escaping the country. I spent a majority of my second year of life living with my grandparents while my mother fought the chains, both physical and political, that had been inherently placed on her and her children. She told me about the rusty, sharp metal of the cells, how you could place your hands through the bars and run the risk of slicing a finger.

She said, "This is what freedom is about. No matter how badly you cut up your hand, as long as you get to the other side, you will be OK."

Eventually, we got to the other side. I never knew the privation the "criminals" in my family endured growing up. I never had to steal food or fight for my freedom of speech. Instead, I went to sleep each night with a new account of a moment of sacrifice that got me to the

country where I am today. It was these bedtime stories that eventually became my dreams for the future. I was molded by individuals who had done the impossible and had placed something bigger than themselves over their own wants and needs. I was led to believe that I had the world at the tip of my finger and I could change it all if I wanted.

As a child, my dreams were full of hypotheticals in which I was the president of a New Cuba. In this land, nobody starved and nobody protested. We lived harmoniously in a place where democracy and the freedom of expression thrived. We could look at chains as relics of the past. We could tell our children bedtime stories that didn't center on our imprisonment, rather our liberation. We could go to sleep knowing that even when we woke up, the American Dream was waiting for us.



Sunset Palm Trees | Emily Etkin | Ink and Spraypaint on Paper



Portrait of Stephanie |

STEPHANIE WOOLLEY-LARREA

Good Humor

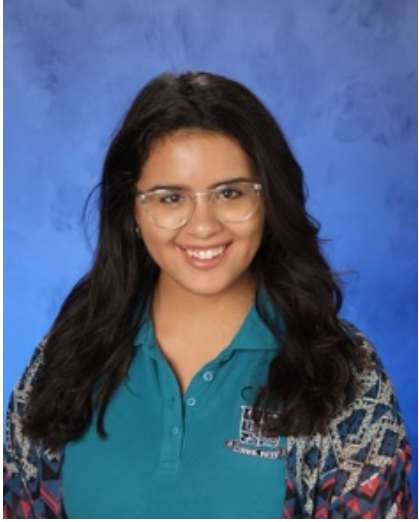
Stephanie Woolley-Larrea

During the summer they were four,
my kids finally understood the ice cream truck.
Until then, they'd heard it and seen it, but didn't connect
the music to the parade of ice cream wielding children.
I was okay with their ignorance.
Like every universal secret,
like every part of their maturity,
it was only a matter of time,

Every day at the park, six big brown eyes beg:
"Mama -- today?"
The four-year-old in me wants to hand over cash
the way I hand over kisses.
But I am the mom. I think about dinner,
I worry about the mess, I calculate
the box of twelve bars at the grocery
store that costs the same as three from the gray,
parasitic tin truck.
But often I say "yes" because I remember
my own sticky, sweet childhood,
the bubble gum that stuck
to the bottom of the plastic
the hard, pink ball that finally
would fall with a clunk
against my teeth. I'd hold it in my cheek,
hamster-style, until I'd scooped out
the rest of the pink sherbert
with the wood-flavored spoon.
And I'd lick my lips, and chew
the gum, and smile.



Park | Narta Dolgim | Gouache



ARLENE AREVALO

Privilege of Individuality

Arlene Arevalo

Hair. My curls cascade around my face, a picture frame. She told me to love myself, but I would see her labor away, painstakingly straightening each strand until the curls lost life and turned limp like overcooked noodles. I grew up accustomed to the smell of burning hair and ironing products; there was only one kind of hair acceptable: pin straight. But it wasn't supposed to be like this. They were told curls were unruly, *immigrant*. Straightened hair was polished, educated.

My mom came from the Dominican Republic to seek better opportunities, and she wasn't going to let hair - despite how ridiculous the notion - impede her from reaching her goal. So there she'd stand over

the sink each night, concealing pieces of her life strand by strand. That was another world, and here I stand, proud of these "unruly" ringlets. Each one is a snowflake, and I'm not about to let myself blend into the background, another puff of snow in a blanket of white. Despite popular belief, idealistic expectations are unrealistic. Each day that I wear my curls, I defy society's strictures. By setting rigid standards, the world fails to recognize the broad spectrum of beauty. I am more than my hair, but without it, a part of me disappears. My mother conformed to grant me the privilege of individuality. This is for *mami*, and all the people who never gave her a second chance.



Feed Yourself | Melanie Chong-Qui | Photography



YASMINE TORRES

One Man's Grain of Sand



Yasmine Torres

Past memories filter through my mind in a luminous burst of endless progressions. With the stealth of a camera's flash, the particulars of that day flood my consciousness. As a child, I had never truly understood the stark realities of life. That naïveté, however, was jolted, tilting my world on its axis, when I first observed my father, an immigration lawyer, attempting to keep a man from being deported.

The memory is tucked close. The gravity of the situation has never eluded me. The year was 2009; I was ten years old, and I sat waiting for my father to finish. I struggled to amuse myself; my hands clutched the red patent leather armchair in his office as I swung my legs back-and-forth observing the room around me. Every inch of the office's mustard walls were reminiscent of a Cuban immigrant's fondness for French culture. Various fleurs-de-lis and Eiffel Towers littered the space.

I thought back on life with father. He was a man who, like Churchill, was "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma". He was a force to be reckoned with who would always hold his lessons in silence. His five-foot-seven stature used to tower over me as I compared our hand sizes palm to palm. His large round spectacles helped reflect the wisdom in his green eyes. His philosophy was honesty, and it often took away the rose-colored glasses from my eyes. Ironically, and perhaps paradoxically, my father was also the one to alert me to the obscure pleasures of the world. He introduced me to Edith Piaf, her mellifluous voice drifting through the air of our Honda as I accompanied him on weekly errands. This unity of opposites led to an authentic view of the world that I would soon learn to cherish.

The emotion of the room was stifling, almost suffocating me in its hopelessness. Not quite

understanding what was happening, I stayed silent as hours passed and more intense phone calls were made. Two small children clutched their mother's skirt and hid behind her for security. Almost in a state of hysteria, the woman pleaded in rapid Spanish to release her husband from a U.S. detention center. The despair and weariness on her face was evident as she realized deportation was likely. In that instant, a verse from "Los Zapaticos de Rosa" by José Martí came to mind, "Y dice una mariposa/ Que vio desde su rosa/ Guardados en un cristal/ Los zapaticos de rosa."

These lines explain that from the rose bush a butterfly saw pink shoes encased in glass. My father often read this Cuban poem to me before bed, and it tells the story of Pilar, a young girl, who gave up her precious pink shoes to help a girl in poor health. Where were my pink shoes? Logically, I knew that a pair of shoes would not help this situation, but I desperately wanted to help.

On Earth's surface area of 196.6 million square miles, it can be difficult to find a niche in life. I have always been fascinated by the lives of others, real or fictional, as they weave their way through the path of life and achieve self-fulfillment. I had always thought that what defined a person's life was one extraordinary feat, not a multiplicity of experiences. It was then that I understood that my father, an immigration lawyer, was someone else's hero. From his quaint office countless families, such as this one, have been saved from the clutches of insensitivity. On his desk, a blindfolded Lady Justice, with a sword in one hand and a scale in the other, beckons visitors. This is a tribute to a man who never expected any. A human life is ephemeral in nature; therefore, it is worthy to contribute even a grain of sand to the mounting problems of the world.



Brian Zahner | Martin Arévalo | Oil Painting



LIANNE D'ARCY

Forgive me, Father

Lianne D'Arcy

Candles yawn and bright eyes dull. It is getting late. She turns to me and her words sink into me fast, like jewelry dropped into the ocean. Gone before you even register the splash.

"Do you think God believes in us back?"

I know how the answer will taste on my tongue before it reaches my throat. Wine gone sour. Communion gone stale. I feel His gaze on me, weighing me down. How He wants me to answer, how I am supposed to answer. I feel my mother's hard stare as I am dragged to Sunday school, her nails digging into my wrist and her heels digging into the dirt. I feel my heart in my throat when I reach my uncle's hospital bed, knowing I am seeing him for the last time. I feel the indents carved into my skin from the rosary I grasp too tightly. I see the colors I create from the pressure to my flesh. White. Red. I feel the ache in my grandmother's knees when she presses her hands together at bedside for too long. I see the look in my mother's eyes when she tells me God is everywhere, the same one in my father's when he tells me God does not exist.

I am hyper aware of God's proximity to me. He is as far as the sun but as close as the rays on my bare skin.

I close my eyes, sigh, and open them again. I stare at the ceiling, not at the sky.

"Go to sleep."

ISABELA CASANOVA



THE FUSION OF ART
AND LITERATURE



THE ARTIST AS PREDATOR:
KLIMT AND DEGAS

Art can prey, and fix and fetter
as well as liberate and make
living . . ."

~ Eavan Boland

Klimt's Kiss

Isabela Casanova

inspired by Eavan Boland's *Degas's Laundresses*
and Gustav Klimt's *The Kiss*



You've always been
a sight to behold.

When I wake up
or walk with you
or lay at ease
or go to sleep
we are side by side
hand in hand
never too far from
each other.

We walk into the studio
and he compliments you,
a blush on your body
doubt in your mind.

Act natural.
Turn your head.
Hold each other.

Relax.

The sun is sinking
its rays in your hair,
a fiery halo.
I can't help but glance at
your morning glory mouth.

Not here.
Not now.

Don't look at him my dear
keep your eyes on me,
lashes fluttering like
butterfly wings
on the apples of
your cheeks.

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You shimmer in the dim light,
a golden wonder,

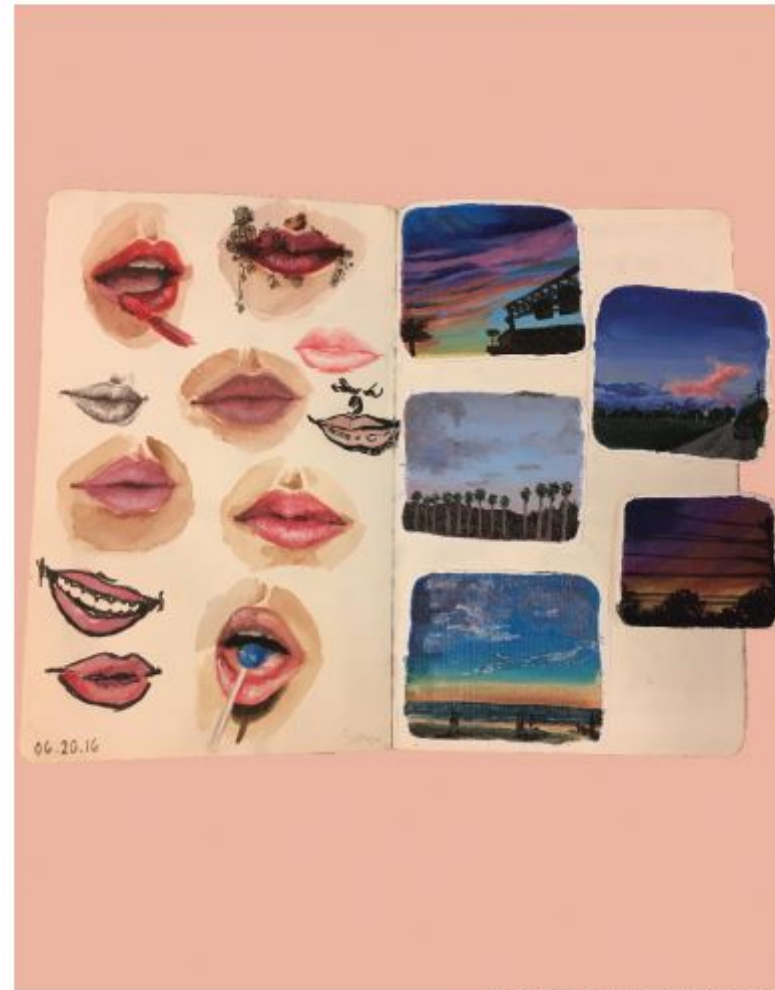
and your eyes are sparkling
and the world is starting up at me
and I can't breathe with
paint fumes in my lungs
your love in my heart.

I'm crumbling
flaking like the
gold leaf he wields
when you blink so beautifully
and art may have no sound
but your voice is what
kills me.

I love you.

And before I can even
know what I'm doing,
your cheeks cupped in my hands,
thumbs under your eyes,
my lips on your porcelain skin,
you sigh, barely there
a hand on my neck.

He exclaims softly.
I laugh and you
turn away,
bashful in the face of
the kiss.



Lips Moving, Stars Setting | Sabrina Vega | Mixed Media

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ZACH GASSENHEIMER ON THE CLARINET

Concertino for Clarinet by C.M. Weber



At the conclusion of Zach's performance, please join us in the courtyard for refreshments.

We do ask you refrain from taking your food into the café since it is for private use only.

Visit us at <http://elysiummagazine.com> where you can see full cover magazines archived since 2005.

Join us next year around the same time for the 2018 Gala.

Thank you for coming.