

The Elysium Staff

proudly presents

The 2009 Edition of Elysium Literary/Art Magazine



Coral Reef Senior High // 10101 SW 152nd St. // Miami, Florida 33157 // (305) 232-2044





Michael Cisneros , next year's layout editor, welcomes you to
Books and Books
May 31, 2009



Mitra Hosseini,
editor-in-chief,
serves as master
of ceremonies

TRANSIENT DELIGHT

FOR STRING QUARTET

Jiwen Lei
by Jiwen Lei

Adagio

violin I *mp*

violin II *mp*

viola *mp*

cello *mp*

6 *Allegro moderato*

11 *p*

16 *p*

'CREATING MUSIC IS THE SERVICE I RENDER THIS WORLD;
IT IS THE LEAST I CAN DO TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE.'

To hear and see Jiwen Lei's composition performed, visit us online.
<http://crhs.dadeschools.net/elysium>. Click on the music category.

21 *cresc.*

25 *dim.*

26 *dim.*

30 *p*

31 *simile*

35 *p*

36 *ritando*

40 *p*



Treymon Ellis, Jiwen Lei, Amanda Hudson, Karina Grubin, Kyle Kravitch
(not in picture, see inset)

YOU MADE ME WRITE BAD POETRY



You made me string together the foulest combination of words to ever distaste my word processor. It's truly upsetting. However, most bad poetry is derived from genuine feeling. It's quite interesting to see how a writer feels his words carry the weight of the world with them, and watch those carefully crafted words fall flat two days later when it is read by a man, woman, or group of individuals with less giving character. These individuals are callous in their evaluations, not giving the content behind the flourish of each rhetorical device created strategically to appeal to the audience a second thought. In fact, the audience finds these appeals below them, and then savagely annihilates any hope of the paper being worth anything, at all, ever, as long as that ink should drip.

I write to understand as much to be understood.

Thus far, I have been proven unintelligible. So what can I say I have learned? I've understood that I might as well be typing "asghf" to communicate that life is too important a thing to seriously write about.

So please, let us continue to write bad poetry, because it's the only proof that we, as humans, have left to demonstrate the insatiable beatings of our chests, and the tenderized rationalizations of our emotions.

Asghf. Damn.

Daniella Carucci

Daniella Carucci



Cecilia Cabrera, *Bored and Sick*, Graphite.

C.C.



Daniella Carucci

TO READ BEFORE YOU DIE

Her rigid inability to discuss a matter so lighthearted had frightened her, and her face was now buried in his chest. It was hard and warm, a living anchor. What books do you know you have to read before you die? She kept it there longer than was comfortable for either of them. There was something unnatural and violating in what she was being asked to do, though the question had been no more than a casual invitation to conversation. She wriggled under the sheets and offered clipped phrases into the hollow of his chest as she tried to explain what she herself did not quite understand. She did not want to answer. Indignant with her sudden state of vulnerability and angry with him for being its cause, she lay exposed, feeling childish.

There were books she wanted to read with a great deal of eagerness, but no books she had placed on a pedestal as he now suggested. She saw reading as the embodiment of intellect; the source of all knowledge and culture, the heights of human achievement. It was a reverence she had cultivated as a child and had not been able to shake off since. She knew her love of literature gave her nothing that was not given to anyone with a singular passion, but she felt as though it should. This was her habit, her joy, the string whose rosy bow tied her to reality; as a gambler has his dice and a painter has his brush, so she, a reader, had her books. She knew that to name books that she absolutely must read before she died would ruin her passion, turning it from a thing of passion to a thing of obligation; but she suspected that it could do worse even than that.

Her reason for life was rooted in her own sense of worth, which was informed, in turn, by her pride. This is the case for many humans, fallible and in need of flattery, but she was willing to admit it: she needed her pride, and it so happened that its greatest sources were in being loved and feeling intelligent. Without one, she figured, she would always have the other to catch her. But what if she lived and died without ever being ultimately and honestly loved? Even if she thought she was in this fortunate position, how could she truly know?

There was a dense vagueness to love that she could not stand. No matter how in love she felt she was, there was never a moment when she could not imagine a love more enrapturing, more fantastic, more simple and enduring. Does the capacity to imagine a thing make it possible? Though she moved through the world a figure strong and proud, her heart was as soft a piece of meat as any, and it tore at its roots in throbbing curiosity to think of the problem of love. Perhaps a gypsy should find the answers for her in the lines of her hands, or maybe she could make it out in the tapping code of his muffled heart as it beat now in her ear. She pressed her head closer, and did not answer.

But there was no gypsy, and no cordial rhythm to inform her. Should she live and die without the certainty of love, she would need intellect more than ever to sustain her confidence in life and soften its travails and, knowing with rather too much certainty that she possessed no real genius

of her own, this could only be had by associating her own mild intelligence with the genius of others. She would wear pages like robes of redemption and play the part of the biting cynic: respected yet resented, admirable but troubling. If she would not be loved, she would have to be above love.

She did not want to answer, because if she should set out for herself any number of books which she must read before she died, it would mark the end of what sustained her. Having accomplished the meager goal and having fulfilled the potential she herself determined she had, her limits would have been reached, so that reading anything after those books would be empty, void of meaning and nourishment. The creation of a new list would be out of the question. To read all but one of the books would not save her either: she knew loose ends could not stave off mortality, and that it would only leave her feeling unfulfilled and anxious for far too long a time. So inevitably, if she named the books she must read before she died, she would have no choice but to follow through, and by following through, reading would be ruined for her. The conciliatory lifestyle of a cynic would no longer be possible either, as someone with such limited aspirations could not fill the role's spacious bitter shoes. Keeping her face pressed on his chest she shook her head, untangling their legs to move away. She did not want to answer. There would be nothing to look forward to except the love she did not think would come.



Raquel Kidd, *Pyre of Knowledge*, Oil

Amanda Hudson

Amanda Hudson

Amanda Hudson



MARROW

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Raquel Korda, *Pyre of Knowledge*, Oil

Amanda Hudson

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Amanda Hudson: violinist and writer

ZORBA AND APOLLO

The creator
and
The thinker

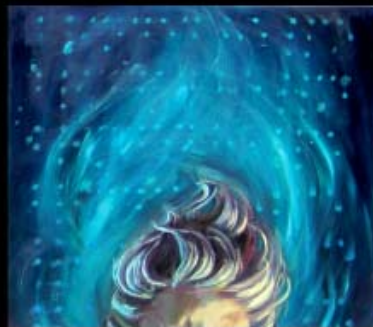
The creator:
Whose hands have intimated
crafted
structured
and molded
Art in the likeness of Man

The thinker:
Whose hands have scanned
searched
perused
and crafted words
As he postulated the conditions of Man

And yet they are joined by fate:
In having taken such care
such time
and such prudence
Towards such a passion
They have forged manacles of the mind
That bind them to icy chisel and frigid quill

For neither painting nor book
statue nor manuscript
sketch nor essay
Can wrap the cold hands of their creators
And warm them like the ardor of fellow
man

John DiGiacomo
John DiGiacomo



Audrey Gonzalez, *Blinded*, Oil on Canvas, *John DiGiacomo*



John DiGiacomo

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST

The sound of brush on stone,
And the feel of the hot sun
On the back of his neck and
On the blades of his shoulders
Had left him angry.
And the sweat falling from his brow,
Onto his legs,
Onto the stone,
Onto the ground
Left him dazed and searching.

But in the heat of the day he saw fantastical things.
On the horizon: The Sphinx, Stonehenge, Montezuma,
The Burning Monk, The Great Wall, The Capitol,
A car, a train, his wife.

And common sense compels him,
To look down at his work and try again,
He frowns then breathes,
Presses brush against rock,
Feeling the urge to look again at that skyline.

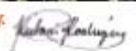
And when he does succumb,
He instantly throws his head behind,
And resumes that breath and frown,
And says, "What a fool am I?"



Danielle Wierenga



Keilani Rodriguez, *Of Suburbia*, Photography.



Danielle Wierenga



DENIAL: THIS POEM IS NOT ABOUT SEX

Why can't I fix you?
I try and I try but you're wrong again.
The sound is off.
The string low.
The other flat.

My fingers dance across your body,
Holding you down to find the right notes,
But you don't respond as I hoped,
And so I say you're wrong again.
Of course, it cannot be me.
I'm going by the book.
I'm doing this right.
I chant the spell,
The incantation
Flawlessly,
My wand moves
Gracefully,
With fluidity,
But no rabbit comes from the hat.

It cannot be me.
I who studied the arts,
The sciences,
The ways of the unknown.
I who have learned all there is to know.
It cannot be me!

And yet,
No matter how I strum the chords,
And though I say the words just right,
You do not respond
Scoundrelously,
And my hat
Remains
Empty.



Victoria Melendez



Raquel Kidd, *Violinist*, Graphite.

Raquel Kidd

VICTORIA
MELENDEZ



PERCEPTION

I had seen this one before.
 Him over me,
 Our bodies
 Entwined
 Like trees with brittle branches.
 Only the earth could hold us then.
 Her face looked sullen, apologetic
 Almost,
 But she still had the horns and
 Never again
 Could I stand
 To smile at them.

They waited there,
 Looking down
 Like angels doing God's work,
 Waiting for reaction.

They waited and I stood.
 How similar we both looked.
 And yet how different
 When in the end I was alone
 And she
 With child to bear,
 And me
 With none but men to coax me
 Into their traps.

Barbara Uchdorf

Barbara Uchdorf



Audrey Gonzalez, *On the Back of My Mind*, graphite

Audrey Gonzalez



PERCEPTION


I had more than one before.
How many more?
One broken
Unrequited
Like trees with knots for knots,
Only the earth could hold us there.
We had looked and seen, we'd gotten
Almost,
But she still had the horns and
Never again
Could I stand
In spite of them.

They walked there,
Talking down
I do people doing good, work,
Working for reasons.

They walk and I stand,
How many we both looked,
And yet how different
When in the end I was done.
And she
With all she had,
And I
With none but more she made me
Love that night.

Thomas Uchdorf

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Barbara Uchdorf

PATIENT(S)

I. Confession

Wake up early today,
Pour the syrup and begin.
Ever heard of love triangles?
I smack my lips and stick, stick, stick.
Well, I'm an infatuation polygon, I say.

It's you, me, and another million
Sleeping in a bed for two.

II. Recession

Your tongue curls out morphemes
Of an irreverent pattern,
With a writhing finger you try and coax me
Into the passenger's seat,
We pass the local strip joint,
Yet your eye does not wander
It remains eternally fixed,
As if locks were clipped,
And engraved with my Name.

Static hisses and pops as you change stations.
From Class to Jazz to News to Blues
A string of sounds piece sentences together
Along the persistent zzz of turning knobs,
They'll speak for us instead.

My favorite part of speech is the adjective.
It describes; we hyperbolize and hit the asphalt.
Talk forward, act backward.

A fly's eyes could match yours
A face upturned and hazed in red
There's a sour taste lurking in my mind
And that trepid sucking sound
So - do you even know it?

III. Delusion

Salt on black paper quakes in a frame,
And this is what they call Entertainment?
Funny, I think. What a swell night -
The streetlights shine bright.

They flower up against buildings
Under the dark luscious sky,
A virus growing
Like a baby inside me.


IV. Conclusion

Emma Bates hates
Waking in the morning
Injections and drips
Her gums itch
At odd hours of the day

She'd rather stay half-asleep,
Horizontal in the backseat
Swerving and shaking, indecisive

She's in here every day,
Drowning in sea foam green
It's progressed, they say.
Blame the tiles and long aisles,
Or just a plain healthy self that ails
From the counterfeit color on the wall

She hears her dad argue with the men in white,
Just have patience? Oh, I have plenty.
It's pulling feathers off an ostrich
To see her smile from a tangle of tubes,
So she writes her name inside her head forever
And keeps these images at bay

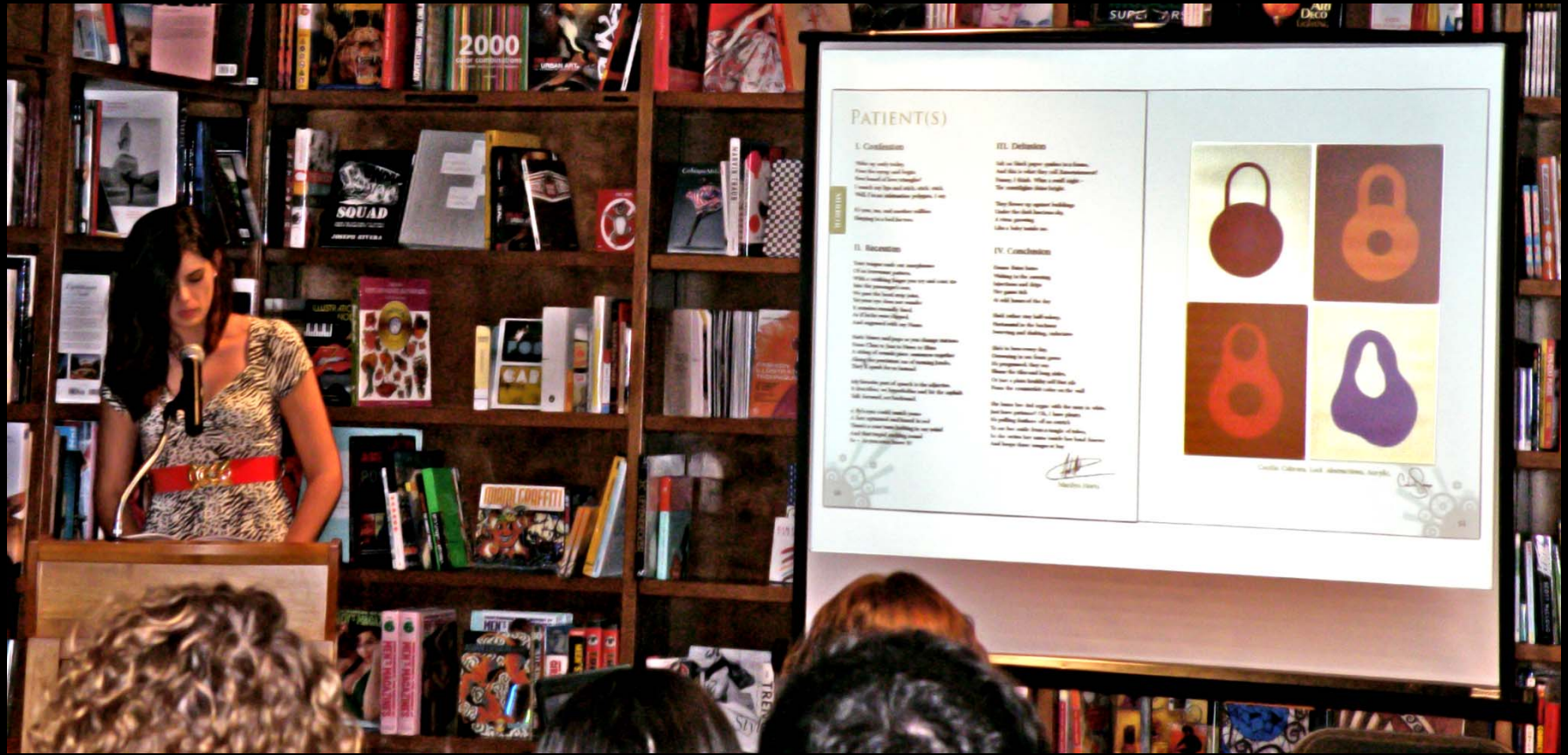


Marilyn Horta



Cecilia Cabrera, *Lock Abstractions*, Acrylic.





Marilyn Horta

UNFINISHED MASTERPIECE

Anorexia is an art
of self-control, obedience
of distorted reflections, bottomless numbers
of shaping her body just the way she desires

Perfection is never achieved
After all, art can always be improved
Stories can always be rewritten
Forgetting what joy is and
Living solely in the present

What the scale dictates here and now — all that matters

Pain can be endured
Techniques made to survive the day

All to think about are
The last seconds of consciousness to suffer
Just go to sleep to escape the sculpting knife
Only to start the cycle again
The day right after

Catherine Zaw

Catherine Zaw



Tatianna Jackson, *Anorexia Nervosa*, Acrylic, *Tatianna Jackson*



Catherine Zaw

P.D. LEE AT JASPER

I don't know nothin' - he lays that out first-
but people be askin' so I tell.
I been here awhile is all, it's crazy.
He lays that out, sure as hell.



Scott McKinley, Enamel *McKinley*

BURNING AT DIEGO FLATS

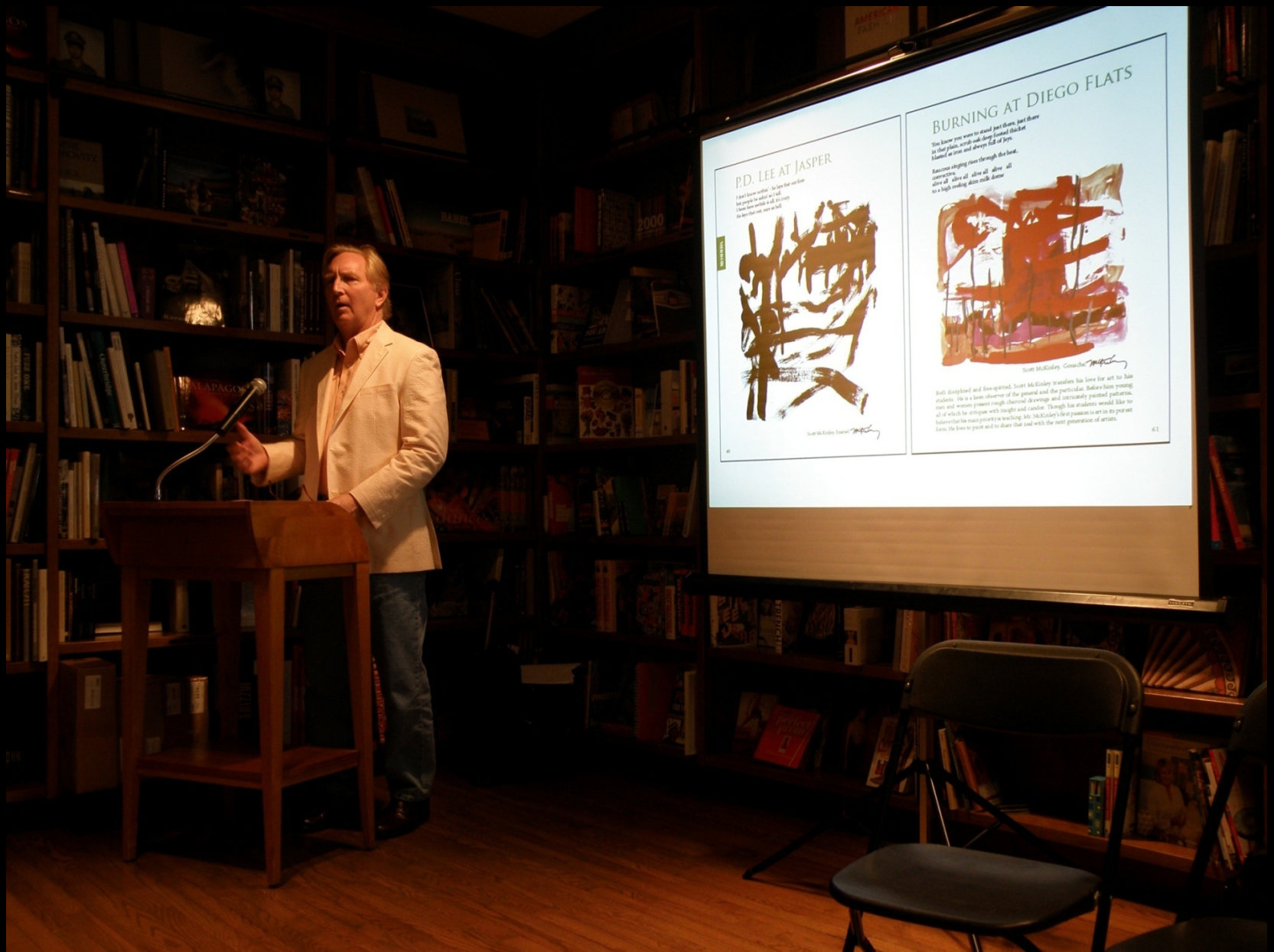
You know you were to stand just there, just there
in that plain, scrub oak deep footed thicket
blasted as iron and always full of Jays.

Raucous singing rises through the heat,
convective,
alive all alive all alive all
to a high reeling skim milk dome



Scott McKinley, Gouache *McKinley*

Both disciplined and free-spirited, Scott McKinley transfers his love for art to his students. He is a keen observer of the general and the particular. Before him young men and women present rough charcoal drawings and intricately painted patterns, all of which he critiques with insight and candor. Though his students would like to believe that his main priority is teaching, Mr. McKinley's first passion is art in its purest form. He lives to paint and to share that zeal with the next generation of artists.



Scott McKinley

Audrey Gonzalez





Audrey Gonzalez



Cecilia Cabrera



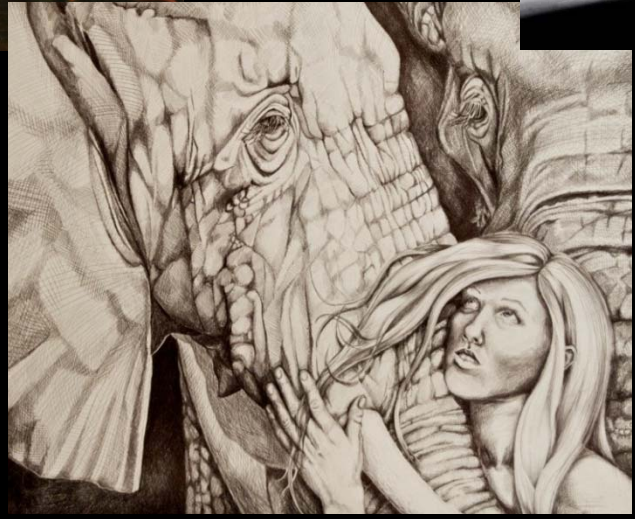
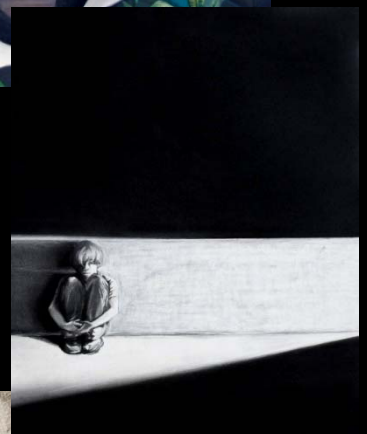


Raquel Kidd



Raquel Kidd





Noel Kassewitz



Noel Kassewitz



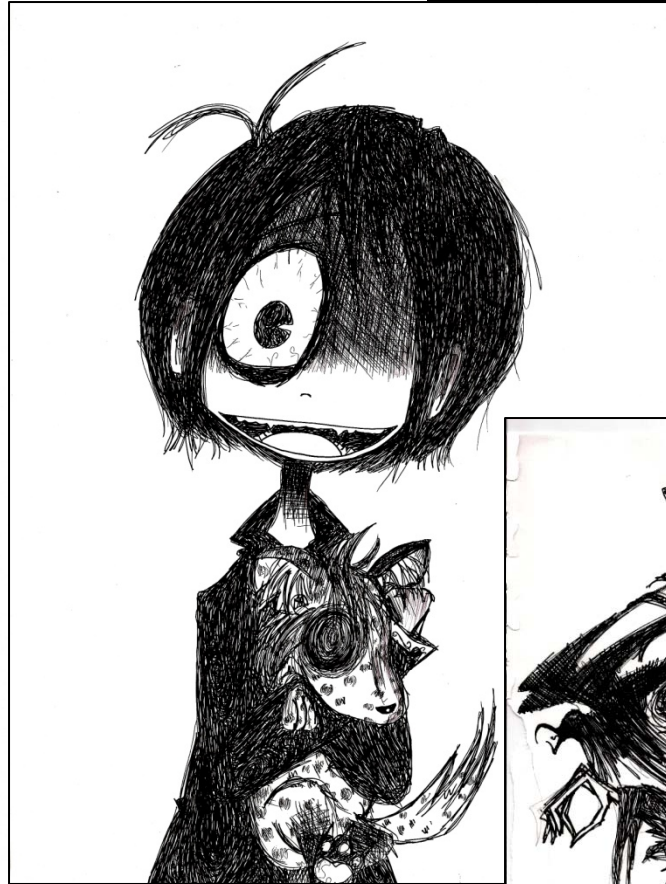
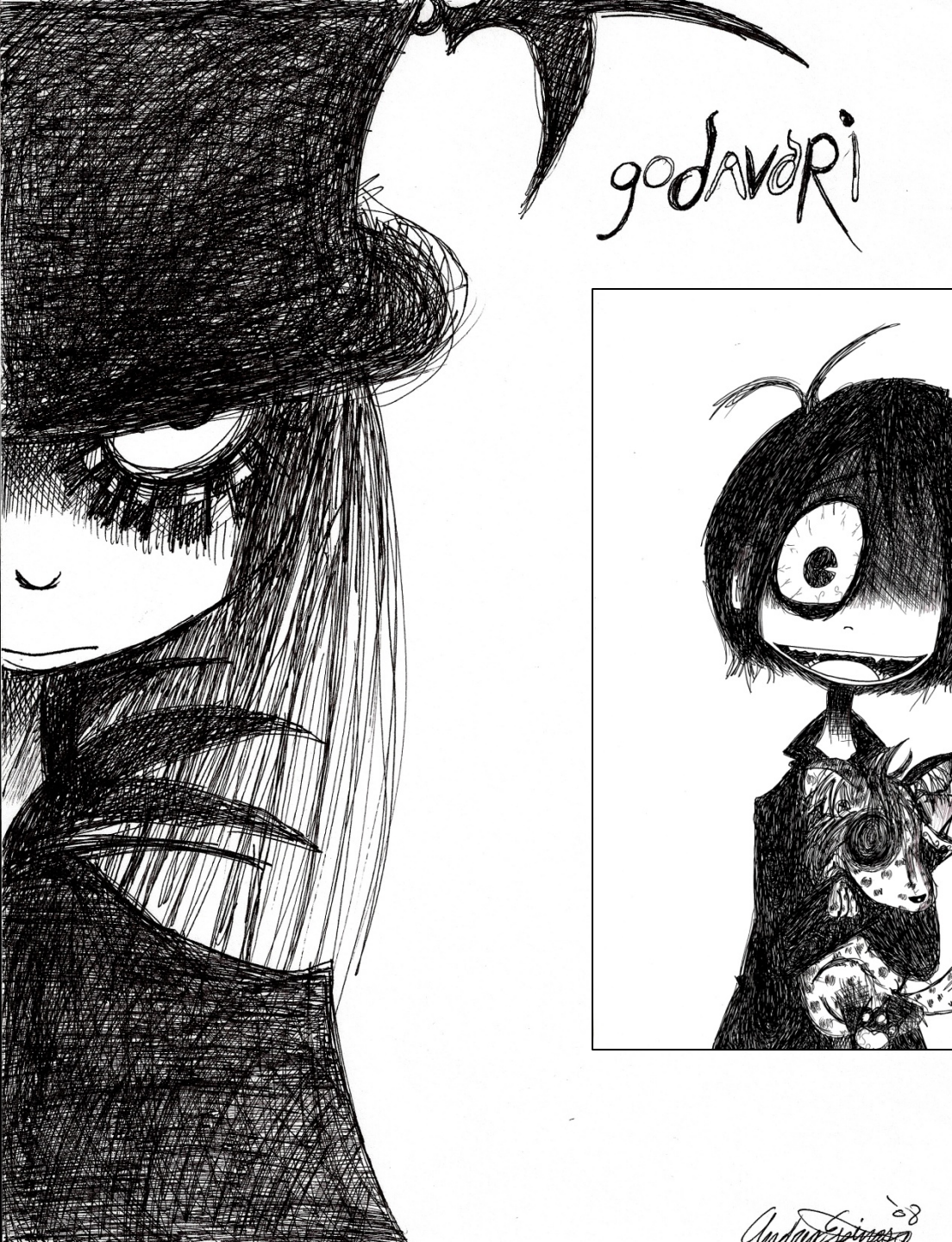
Tatiana Jackson



Tatiana Jackson

Ronel Constantine





Andrea Espinosa 08



Andrea Espinosa

STRANGE WAYS



Eduardo Moreno, *Break*, Mixed Media.

Eduardo Moreno

They stay strange ways

Confusing people making things hazy
 Made to think people like me are crazy
 Even though large corporate interest get paid
 People don't stop to think about the minimums made
 Big business going try to bottle this
 So can the taxpayers hire some lobbyists?
 Man it's the signs of time
 People distracted from radio and billboard signs
 The drinks the drugs they abuse it
 The TV, the radio, the music
 The tears the cries they abuse it
 Manipulate your feelings and then they use it
 Nobody cries when the truth becomes lies
 And then these lies get harbored inside
 Stuck in the system of misery
 And nobody checks when these lies become history

They stay strange ways

You can't reform 'em

A society based on consumerism vanity
 What the fuck man am I losing my humanity?
 From the moment of your birth
 You were born to a slave
 Made to lie down and behave
 We were once swans
 Got turned into ducklings
 Started off as men
 Got turned into sucklings
 People don't see the situation
 They're already used to the lie saturation
 I storm through the tracks live on location
 To give ya'll fools education
 Along with mental stimulation
 Trying to save a nation
 ... From mental annihilation.

They stay strange ways

You can't reform 'em

Zero

Michael "Zero" Akinlabi





Michael Akinlabi aka Zero

“No Freedom”: Original Scene written and dramatized by Kayla Burgess on the oppression in Rwanda. Winner of the Theodore Gibson Oratorical Competition



Noel Kassewitz reads an excerpt from her essay which won 1st place in the ACLU
Zelda Glazer Civil Liberties Writing Competition



JANUARY 20, 2009

MORROW

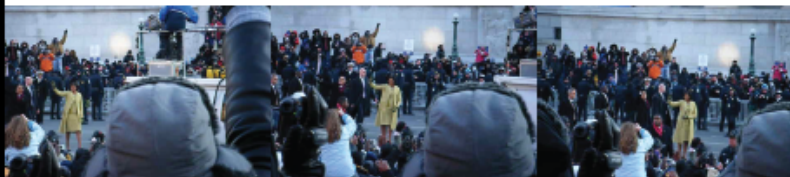
I fought to warm the blood in my numb hands, while my limbs ached and my legs shook. My will-power to stay awake wrestled with my body's desire for sleep. I was envious of my friends who were home in the tropics. I daydreamed of the hot beaches, trying to transform the stubborn, chilly wind into salty ocean's breath.

I noticed people dancing to keep warm. A simple bend and twist with the body created the kinetic energy necessary for heat. I contemplated the idea and then threw it away under the pretense that I was not in the mood. Music flowed through the speaker system set up along Pennsylvania Avenue, beginning with the anthem of Obama's campaign: Bono's soft words of "It's a Beautiful Day." A pair started to do the

hustle, and this enlightened spirit spread until it overwhelmed the entire mass of people, moving in perfect unison. They were united in celebrating this great cause, which all of us made happen.

The focus of my attention then changed to the man speaking with my brother and sister. I entered the conversation just as he mentioned he was a candidate for mayor of a New York city. He handed over his business card and flashed an ambitious smile. His story was practically identical to that of Barack Obama. He was here with his wife. A long time New Yorker, the cold was nothing for him. A woman joined in the conversation and relayed her story. She flew from Italy just to share in this moment and to brag about it to her friends.

I wondered what was stalling the parade until I heard the ambulance sirens blare. The car flew through the vacant street,



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followed by the police. That was when we found out Senator Kennedy's seizure had caused the delay. The crowd calmed down and silence sunk in. I decided to avoid keeping track of time after that and instead embraced the scene and my frigid fingers.

The host woke us up with the announcement of the approaching march. The film was rolling. I held my breath so I could listen better. I wanted to hear the first footsteps. The trucks carrying the news cameras obstructed my view for a few panicking moments, but then my eyes spotted the target. Designed as a protective tank, the black Cadillac limousine harbored one of the most important and influential people in existence.

The Secret Service agent opened the door revealing a pair of highly polished black shoes. He stepped out of the car with a bright smile and wrapped his arm around his wife who followed soon after. There they were: President Barack Hussein Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. They looked beautiful. I didn't think the moment could excite me more until he walked forward. I screamed. I forgot how to breathe. I gasped for air, but I didn't inhale. I almost fell trying to get the best, clear view I could get with my useless, frozen feet.

He waved to the crowd, in all different directions, making sure not to miss anyone. We waved back, screamed, laughed, and cried in joy. Everybody held hands with their neighbor, whether or not they knew the person seemed irrelevant. These few seconds were eternal. Yes, this was what we would brag to our friends about. This was the defining point that made the trip worth it. The crowd, a mixture of all classes and races, came from different states and countries, united for change, and were moved by this fragment of time and space. I waited for months; he labored for years; people struggled for lifetimes. We did it.

Mitra Hosseini

Mitra Hosseini



Mitra Hosseini, Inaugural Parade Film, Photography.

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Mitra Hosseini reads from her account of President Obama's inauguration

TANGERINE TWILIGHT

She had been waiting here for much of the day. Here. The spot between point A (her house) and point B (somewhere else). The uncertainty factor of it all only made this spot more enticing. It was an intersection, bright lights illuminating the already electric blue sky as though it were Christmas. She allowed the heat emanating from the pavement to seep through her clothes, refusing to stand for relief. This place was perfect. Four paths met and departed immediately.

“She was partially blinded from the image ingrained in her retinas.”

People were so busy scrambling from point A (their homes) to point B (somewhere else entirely) that they never noticed the ride between.

They never noticed how the man who sat across the street and sold mangoes has the habit of twitching his nose excitedly, almost like a rabbit. They never noticed the young, but tired and rapidly aging, woman who waited for the bus each day, her hands clasped in her lap, her purse held close to her like a bandolera, her eyes darting around nervously until relief came in the form of an elongated six-wheeled vehicle. They never noticed the man who ran each day, growing thinner and thinner until he began to look like death itself, stripped to the bone.

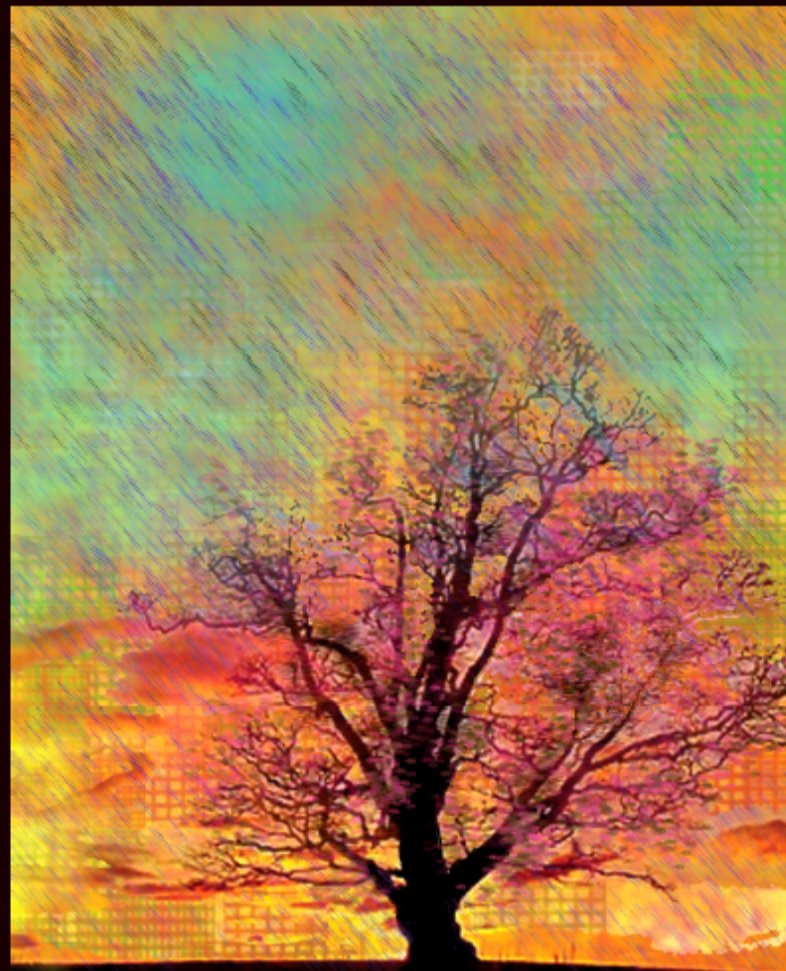
They never noticed her, and how she sat each day, waiting for the perfect moment, when God in the heavens would inject the sky with a burst of citric colors that would resonate through the clouds. Today was different. She put film in her camera, and aimed it at the sky, ready to remove the cap from the lens and allow heaven to drain itself into her camera.

The rest of the walk home she was partially blinded from the image

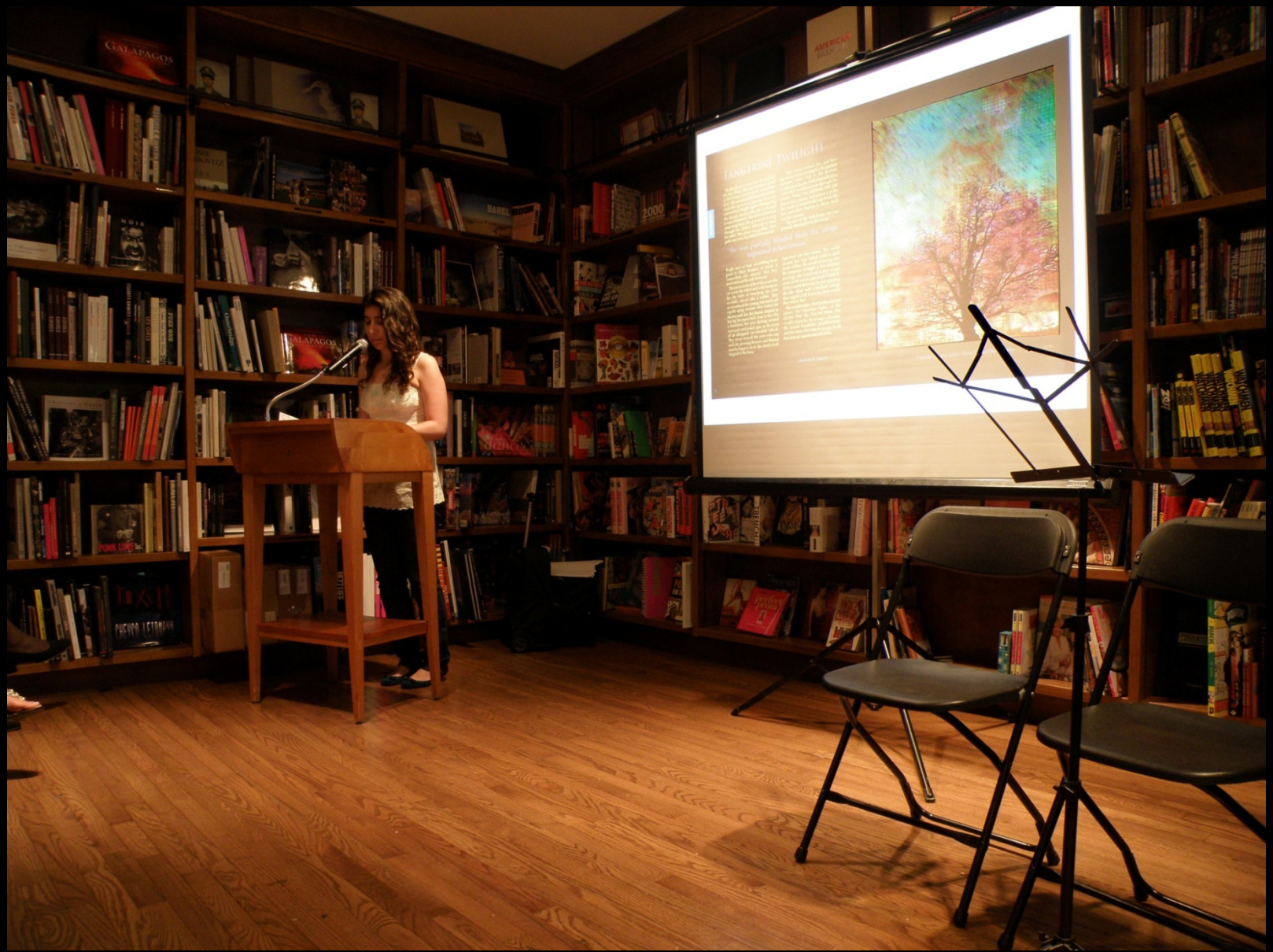
ingrained into her retinas. The world around her was tinted with a dark shade of blue, the result of staring into the tangerine twilight a few minutes too long. She wondered if they would notice if she never came back. Unlikely. If they could drive day by day ignoring the sky, filled with a brilliant orange that engulfed all horizons, how would they notice her?

She would return. Not for the celestial sunset, the Christmas lights, or the electric blue sky. Not for them. She would return for the mango salesman, the fearful bandolera guardswoman, and the man who runs to escape death but instead transforms into him.

Amanda M. Nichols
Amanda M. Nichols



Danielle Garone, *Father Time*, Digital Photography. *Danielle Garone*



Amanda Nichols



Raquel Kidd, *Some Lucky Kid*, Mixed Media.

Raquel Kidd



BLUE NAILS

In school, she painted her nails blue
and doodled Salvador Dali
in her math notebook, wishing that
drifting eyeballs and melting clocks
would replace derivatives.
After school she wished

to dress up her obsessions in
neat verse and snappy meter—
her influences were set:
Eliot, Yeats, never Austen,
never pink-skirted waltzes.

Instead, she decided
to twist her syntax into jazz
to make furniture come alive,
to make her sonics spit and cackle
like a witches cauldron;

but most earnestly, she swore
to never taint her nails a proper peach.

Anna Mebel

Anna Mebel



Anna Mebel

ARTIST DWELLING



Corner Perspective.

I like to think that buildings are alive with stories to tell of where it has been and where it is going. My main focus with this design was creating a space that was suitable for the freedom and creativity necessary for an aspiring artist. After all, the environment in which you live is crucial for artistic, spiritual, and intellectual growth.



3D Model.

Mitra Hosseini

Mitra Hosseini

THE SKY IN FRONT



Inside Living Room.

The world of architecture is everywhere. I feel that my architecture is an outlet for my vivid imagination. It is a way to express my mood, to pass up time, and to achieve something while having fun. Personally, I incorporate nature as an integral part of the home's design. Why have beautiful landscaping if an ugly wall covers the view? Thus, "The sky in front" building is designed with a vast glass curtain wall from floor to ceiling to take advantage of its surroundings.



Jorge L. Buitrago



Isometric View.



Jorge Buitrago

Drive

Sometimes, I feel the fear of uncertainty stinging clear
And I can't help but ask myself how much I'll let the fear
Take the wheel and steer
It's driven me before
And it seems to have a vague, haunting mass appeal
But lately I am beginning to find that I
Should be the one behind the wheel
Whatever tomorrow brings, I'll be there
With open arms and open eyes
So if I decide to waiver my chance to be one of the hive
Will I choose water over wine and hold my own and drive?
It's driven me before
And it seems to be the way that everyone else gets around
But lately I'm beginning to find that
When I drive myself my light is found
So whatever tomorrow brings, I'll be there
With open arms and open eyes
Would you choose water over wine
Hold the wheel and drive?



Kevin Kassner sings "Drive" by Incubus

A Quintet from the Coral Reef Orchestra presents:

Entr'acte from the Opera *Carmen*





The 2008 and 2009 staff gather in the Books and Books courtyard for a luncheon





We look forward to seeing you at Books and Books next May
for the 2010 edition of Elysium

Mitra Hosseini

Editor 2009



Katherine Holmes

Editor 2008

Jolie Shapiro

Editor 2010