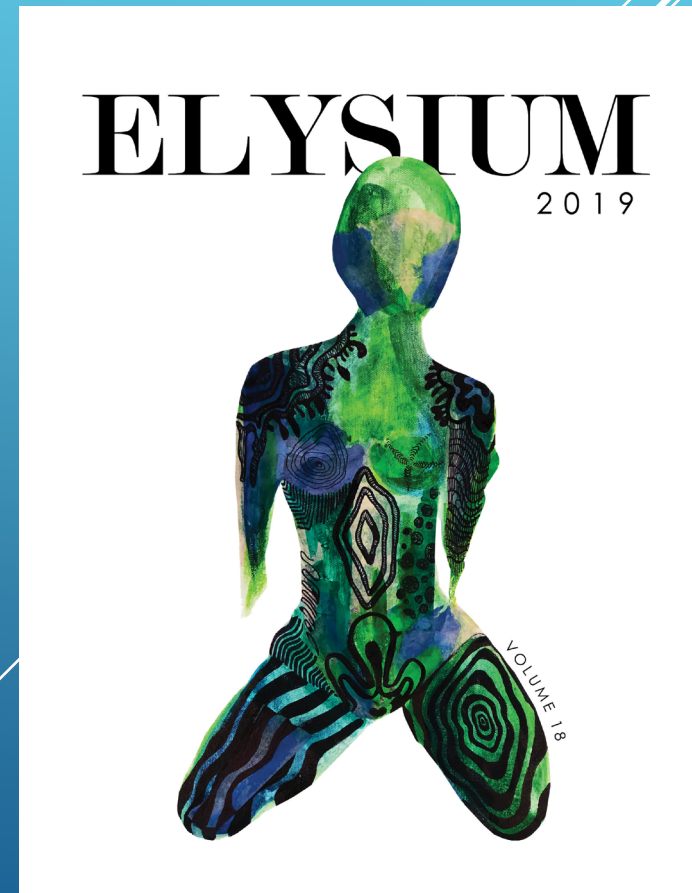


WELCOME TO THE 2019

ELYSIUM GALA

Hosted by Books and Books



SOPHIA LORD

EDITOR IN CHIEF 2018 AND 2019



Elysium Staff 2018 -2019



Eight Elysium staff members traveled to NYC this year to receive the Crown Award at Columbia University



Our former 2007 editor in chief Cecile McLorin Salvant just won her third Grammy Award for best jazz vocal Album



Many of our staff have gone on to become journalists, artists, and writers.



McLorin Salvant our 2007 Editor in Chief wins her Third Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Album

Angela Ramirez and Lisa Takeyama



Der Spiegel by Mozart

Bach's 3rd movement of
Concerto for 2 violins

Bach's 1st movement of the
Concerto for 2 violins



LECTION OF
WOMEN
WOMEN
WOMEN
WOMEN
WOMEN

The basement was covered in dust,
cobwebs, and boxes full of
half-forgotten memories.
It smelled faintly of wet cardboard
and the air was thick.
I could have taken the humidity,
placed it on my tongue,
and swallowed it whole.

In the center of this room stood
one long, black tube.
One piece of neglected treasure.

Inside it, a rolled up piece of paper
where a woman lays on its flat surface.
Crafted from watercolors.
Molded by time and patience.

This was familiar.
It bore the mark of a gentle hand.
If I closed my eyes I could see
how my mother must have looked
when she painted it

ABRIL MACHO



Mania | Veronica Webber | Acrylic, Graphite, and Ink

Abril Macho reads “A Collection of Women”

Feet planted firmly on the floor,
holding their position for hours.
Pain forming in between her shoulder blades
from the arch of her back as she
hunches over the easel.
A slight crease in her brows.

How happy she must have been to have
sat for hours in silence
with the smell of paint
and a canvas.

My mother does not paint anymore.
She is too busy:
with children
with work
with a house.

And yet I yearn
to see her once again
in the spot she was years ago
with a brush in her hand.

(This, after all, was the thing she
loved first.)

I know there are more women
hidden in this basement,
tucked discreetly away behind
Christmas ornaments.
And if I showed her this collection
she would give a small, sad smile
shake her head
and say:
That was years ago.



Daniela Hernandez-Gil, a member of Elysium for 3 years and this year's literary co-editor, reads "Statues"



STATUES

DANIELA HERNANDEZ-GIL



I was raised on myths of possessed statues.

My mother, a devout Catholic, always scolded my younger cousins for scaring me with their horrid fantasies, but when I was alone I swore that Gaitana's eyes followed me. Bloody head in one extended arm, axe in the other, her hands were transfixed on glory, and her mouth was drunk on freedom. Her iron body lay rigid, but as I grew older her limbs loosened and relaxed until she welcomed me with comfort.

La Gaitana.

A scorned mother who murdered and drove out hordes of Spanish conquistadors, she welcomes me home under the shade of this very mango tree.

She is alive.

Her cries flow through my veins and her tears swell through my hands; she welcomes me home. I have spoken to her in dreams with lost color, but to have her in the flesh would be the ultimate accolade. I would ask her about her fears, her worries, her legacy to the Colombian people, an old friend basking in veneration. Did she know that she would lead revolutions? Did she know that she would lead me? I want to know what lies beyond her fixed braids; I want her to teach me. La Gaitana has led insurrections beyond the grave; she has watched centuries of pain, but her triumph is set.

Now she is more than iron and fire.

My grandfather, Eladio Gil - Zambrana, the sculptor of the statue pictured here, was an artist and poet. Born in Andalucía, Spain, he moved to Colombia where he was a professor of fine arts. He made it his life's mission to tell the story of the native peoples through sculpture and prose.

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Michelle Huang, a three-year staff member and current literary co-editor, reads "In the Morning"

IN THE MORNING

MICHELLE HUANG

the smell of dew
drips off an april breath
to soak deep into the bone
of the budding earth

the crystal droplets
trickle to the core
pools of sunbeam swallowed
in this kiss of life

and
spring is still a perhaps hand
nudging its veins through topsoil
the stems of morning glory

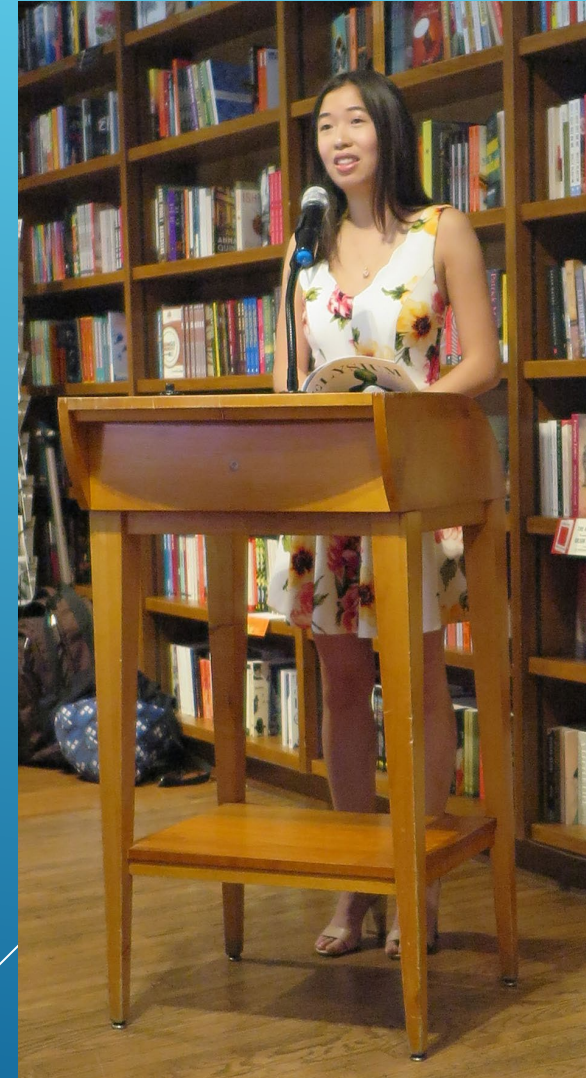
an illumination of dawn

our irises bloom towards
the gilt of this horizon
a hopeful inhale

for all this gold to stay



Face to Face | Nia Paz | Digital Photography



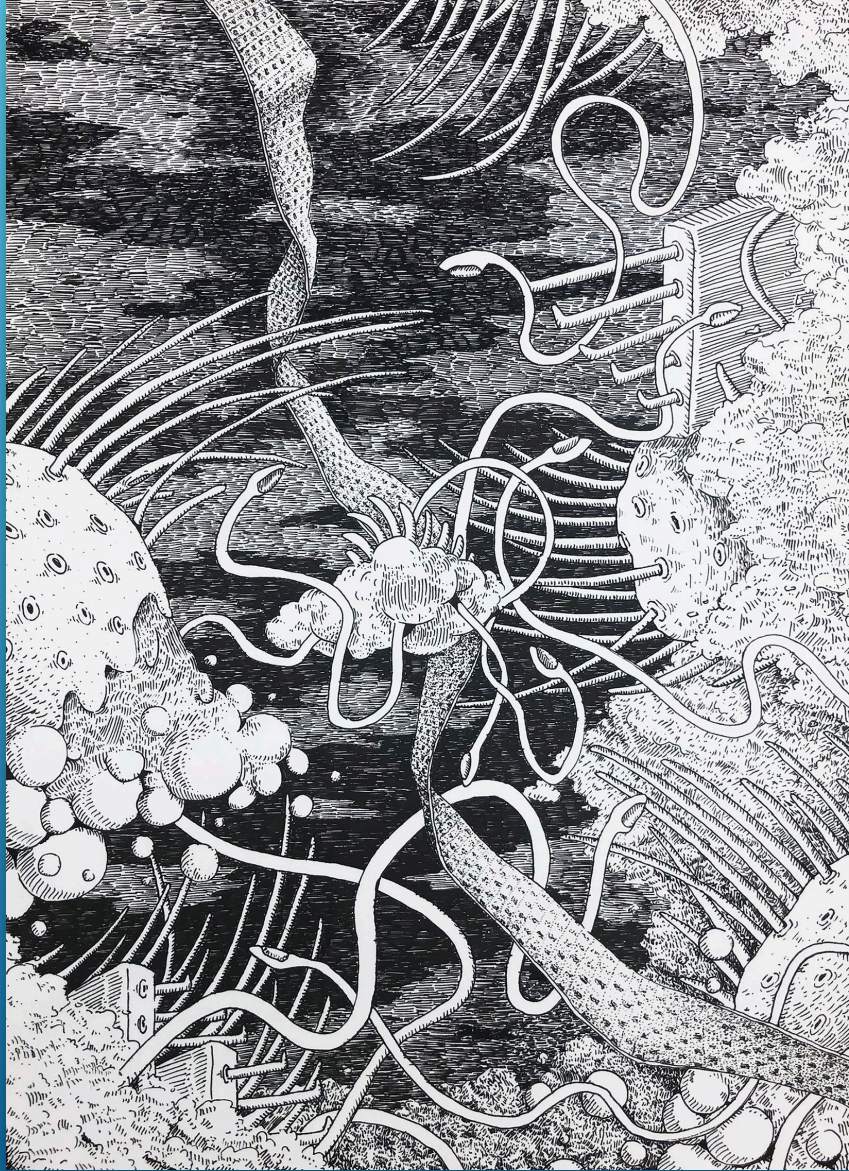
Sabrina Arrate sings her original composition “Inside my Head”





Tiffany Ma
discusses
her art work





The art of Daylayni Etienne

Inspired by her family





Song | Dalayni Etienne | Gouache



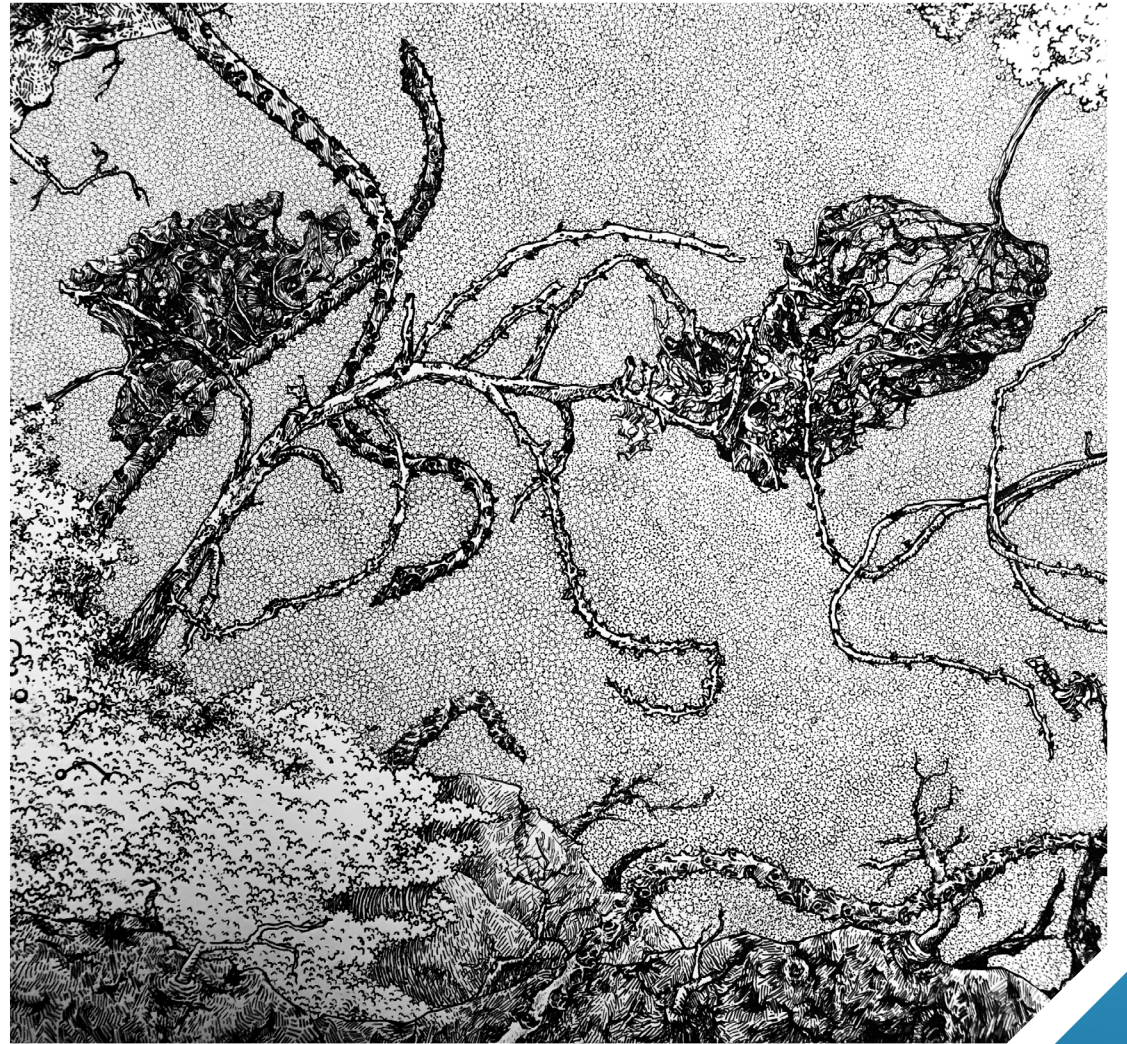
Creator | Dalayni Etienne | Gouache



Cindy Wang
discusses her art



jache



Butterflies Chasing Flowers | Cindy Wang | Chinese Ink and Pigment Powder

LAO LAO

CATERINA DONG

花香引蝶
二〇一七年
王心韵





Caterina Dong reads “Lao Lao”



Of all things
it was the smell
distinct, nostalgic, heavy
with past lives mixed into
skeletons of crushed cigarettes
puffs of motorcycle fumes, and
a slight southern sea wind
with lingering traces of sweet and sour
a delicate balance of blooming peonies & human sweat

in this foreign land i call home
i am a stranger tracing back my roots
through venerable palaces and endless family trees
as we climb out of the taxi,
the hot air and its mistress of scent
greet us eagerly; they guide us to our destination
under the blazing path of the round yolk sun
dripping into the silky white sky
a burning egg omelette - *ji dan bing*
i taste it in my mouth and in my bones

the lotus green building shows sign of wear
but its ancient tile walls remain
untouched by human flesh and hearts alike

they swell towards the heat
and as we walk in, they
bow to us in deference

i stumble as we walk up the stairs
and almost give in to the fall but
in this ghost town, no one notices
kuai yi dian she says, and i keep going
when we finally reach the door
i can smell her hesitancy as her hand
softly grips the bitter door handle
as if asking for permission
that's how they used to do it
90 years later, have things really changed?

my mom greets my grandmother
and i stand there in between
years of history love sacrifice joy hardship
my naivety crumbles completely
it spills over and out
like the tea leaves brewed into *junshan cha*
that fall apart when burned, disintegrating onto the
rusted linoleum floor, etching itself
between the tiles worn in by the slow,
steady footsteps of my grandmother

the silent killer they say, the one that
eats away at your brain but not your soul
still, when my mother caresses her mother's
face and asks her who she is
yong na, yong gang, yong jie
she finds her daughter from the pile of scorched names
blessed to live and die, born in a generation of
poverty, determined to rise to anything
but; when my mother sees her forget,
i know she too is crumbling inside
my mother grips her hand tightly
as if holding on to her will keep her there forever
roles reversed, she takes her mother into the bathroom
and gently sits her down like a fragile child
when she begins to wash her flossy hair
i know my mother is letting the water run down her face
so the tears can flow freely and soak themselves
into her mother's wrinkled, timeless skin

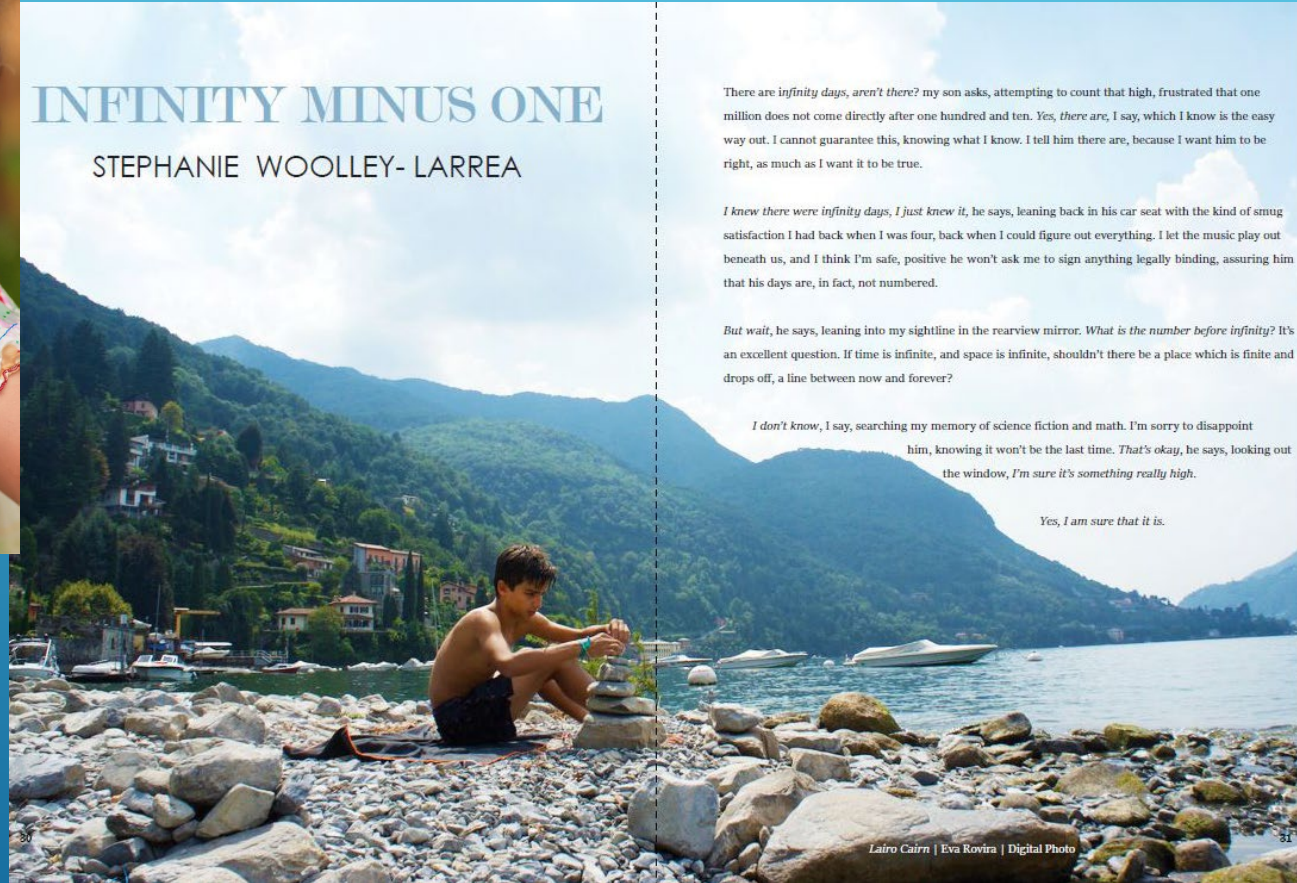
i turn away out of respect
there is nothing more i can do
in this land of strangers who look like me,
of food which tastes so unfamiliarly nostalgic,
of language that stifles my native tongue,
a grandmother who doesn't know my name

but at least i know hers

Lao Lao



Stephanie Woolley- Larrera Reads “Infinity Minus One”



There are *infinity days*, aren't there? my son asks, attempting to count that high, frustrated that one million does not come directly after one hundred and ten. Yes, *there are*, I say, which I know is the easy way out. I cannot guarantee this, knowing what I know. I tell him *there are*, because I want him to be right, as much as I want it to be true.

I knew there were infinity days, I just knew it, he says, leaning back in his car seat with the kind of smug satisfaction I had back when I was four, back when I could figure out everything. I let the music play out beneath us, and I think I'm safe, positive he won't ask me to sign anything legally binding, assuring him that his days are, in fact, not numbered.

But wait, he says, leaning into my sightline in the rearview mirror. *What is the number before infinity?* It's an excellent question. If time is infinite, and space is infinite, shouldn't there be a place which is finite and drops off, a line between now and forever?

I don't know, I say, searching my memory of science fiction and math. I'm sorry to disappoint him, knowing it won't be the last time. *That's okay*, he says, looking out the window, *I'm sure it's something really high*.

Yes, I am sure that it is.



“Rock, Paper, Scissors” Playwright: Brennan Woolley-Larrea
and troupe: Aitana Lugo, Joy Cadman, Lazaro Rodriguez, and Bryan Diaz



Abigail Thielen reads "That These Family Photos are Limited"



LIMITED THAT THESE FAMILY PHOTOS ARE ABIGAIL THIELEN



After Lights | Alex Hernandez | PVC Expanded Sheet

-and not because my family
is no longer whole
or my parents no longer intertwine their
fingers out of habit
or my sister's eyes no longer
glimmer with that same curiosity
of a rosy-cheeked, fuzzy-headed infant

When Mom and Dad were first in love
nothing visible nor invisible could
tear them apart
those fingers,
pale and tan, interlocked
seamlessly.

Looking at their hands now,
I only see frayed edges.
loose thread fell to the ground
some time in the sweetness of youth.

I interrogated this photograph,
age and tears had faded its glossy coating
the corners folded like the crease
between my mother's brows
its pigment faded like the dark
brown of my father's hair
and I wondered when-

and how
(was it visible or invisible?)
-the seam ripper had gently plucked away
their love,
the lost string left holes in the weak fabric
that held my family together

When I take this photo down now
and examine the faded pink-printed
date on its back, it is never so I can say
Here are my parents happily in love with
their first child,
nor my mom and dad
faithful and emotionally aligned,
nor the seamless fabrics connected as one,
But to tell myself that

Their meager, mismatched scraps were
Connected by straight pins,
And my mother was always
One to pose for the camera,
And the thread will not be found,
And here I am

A novice seamstress.





**LIKE MOTHER,
LIKE DAUGHTER**

NICOLE MARINO



Explore 1/1/14
DIFFER.
Change
What.
NOW.
quest.

Explore | Maria Gonzalez | Mother and Pen

shoes she hoarded, never to be worn, perpetually shifting identities.

"No, Mami wants to sleep," she retorted.

In my youthful eagerness to mend, I rushed to the pear green kitchen, hastily plastered with images and souvenirs of my mother's past life. In search of a remedy, I gathered mismatched cutlery, two wandering Serquel pills, and an assortment of tamarind candies. Tiptoeing into her room, I paused at the door's threshold, careful not to startle her. I crawled into the sunken bed and cradled her, waiting for her to return the embrace.

As I reached for the tart candies, I pulled away and asked, "Can you sing me a song?"

I allowed silence to pervade the compact room as she scraped her thoughts for remnants of the song that pruned across her mind. I shut my eyes as she pieced together the Venezolana lullaby.

"Nina linda ante ti me rindo..." she began, her voice thick like cane syrup. I relished its honeyed richness, memorizing the curves of the melodies that would cease to exist in moments.

myself and fall into her gaze. Before she could utter a sound, I parachuted off her bed and onto the stilled tiles.

Years would drift by and the babble of the privations that ached her branched into discourses of the girls she wished she could save, the poor women in her village who had succumbed to "el machismo prodador," the Chinese women with bound feet and the stories of sexual harassment buried by history. She spoke of the immigrant women, who like her, traded their pride for opportunity, and I would continue accepting her utterances as wisps of lunacy.

It would take the eleventh grade to tumble onto my open fits to internalize the breadth of her lessons. It was then my mother began studying the Kabbalah, finding comfort through its scriptures. She insisted on teaching me the 13th name of God, Unconditional Love. With each syllable, I felt my mother's lingering presence seeping through my blood and into my thoughts and actions. Through her I learned that compassion and empathy overcome the streaks of fear and bitterness that sometimes cloud our vision. My mother remains sequestered in a world of her making, but she gifted me the vision to see the world for what it is and what it could be.

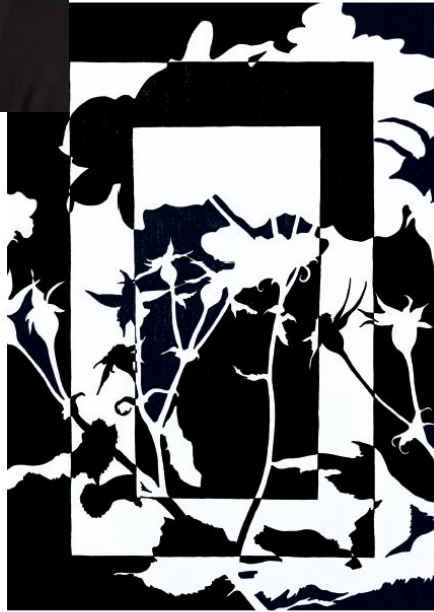


Nicole Marino reads
"Like Mother, Like Daughter"

LIKE DAUGHTER



Daniela Casillas Reads "Synthesis"



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The Floral Illusion | Cindy Wang | Chinese ink and pigment powder

SYNTHESIS

DANIELA CASILLAS

They married in September of 1997.
Diana was dead. Monica was in the White House.
Grandfather refused to go.
Good Jewish daughters do not marry men of his kind

and disappoint their family, he said.
He was too poor to say he loved her. She lived in
an apartment where the dining room and kitchen were separated
by walls. A mahogany door. His father was in prison. He paid the
water bill or the electric bill, not both. God no, never both.

I imagine my father in a black suit he borrowed.
It's too big for his small stature and skinny frame from twenty years of skipped breakfasts.

He has gelled hair. On his right wrist is an inherited watch that looks stolen.

There's a single plait in mom's hair. Her dress was new but didn't look like it.

Her makeup was done by her frantic mother, who was scared to see

her only daughter go. She pretended not to notice.

The space between the pews seemed larger to her. Breathe.
She will have three daughters by the time the decade is done.

His Catholic parents felt odd in the synagogue. Breathe.
Their things will be shipped in boxes to America in one year.
Zeide is glad she is marrying him; he was better than the boy her mother married. Breathe.

I love you.
I love you, too.

Tiny murmurs under the chuppah.
Circle him seven times. *I love you.*
Drink the wine of her ancestors. Last week they drank the tequila of his.
Give her platinum eternity. *I love you.*
Drink the wine again, whisper *I love you* again. You started to love her
after the third day. *God, she looks beautiful.*

Her father is not there.

Break the covered glass. You love her.
Mazel tov.

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Emilia Vial sings
“The Life of the Party”
from the musical
The Wild Party



Elysium wishes to thank Mitchell Kaplan, owner of Books and Books, and the entire Coral Gables Books and Books staff who have graciously hosted us for the past eleven years.

Mr. Kaplan is known throughout Miami as a champion of the arts. Co-founder of the Miami Book Fair and host to over 60 events a month, he has welcomed Presidents and authors. We are honored that he has given our little literary magazine a stage. Thank you, Mitchell.





JOIN US IN THE PATIO FOR COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS

Please do not take your food inside the café. They are a Separate entity from Books and Books, but you are welcome to order from their menu.





Join us next year in late May or early June of 2020 for the next great Gala.



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