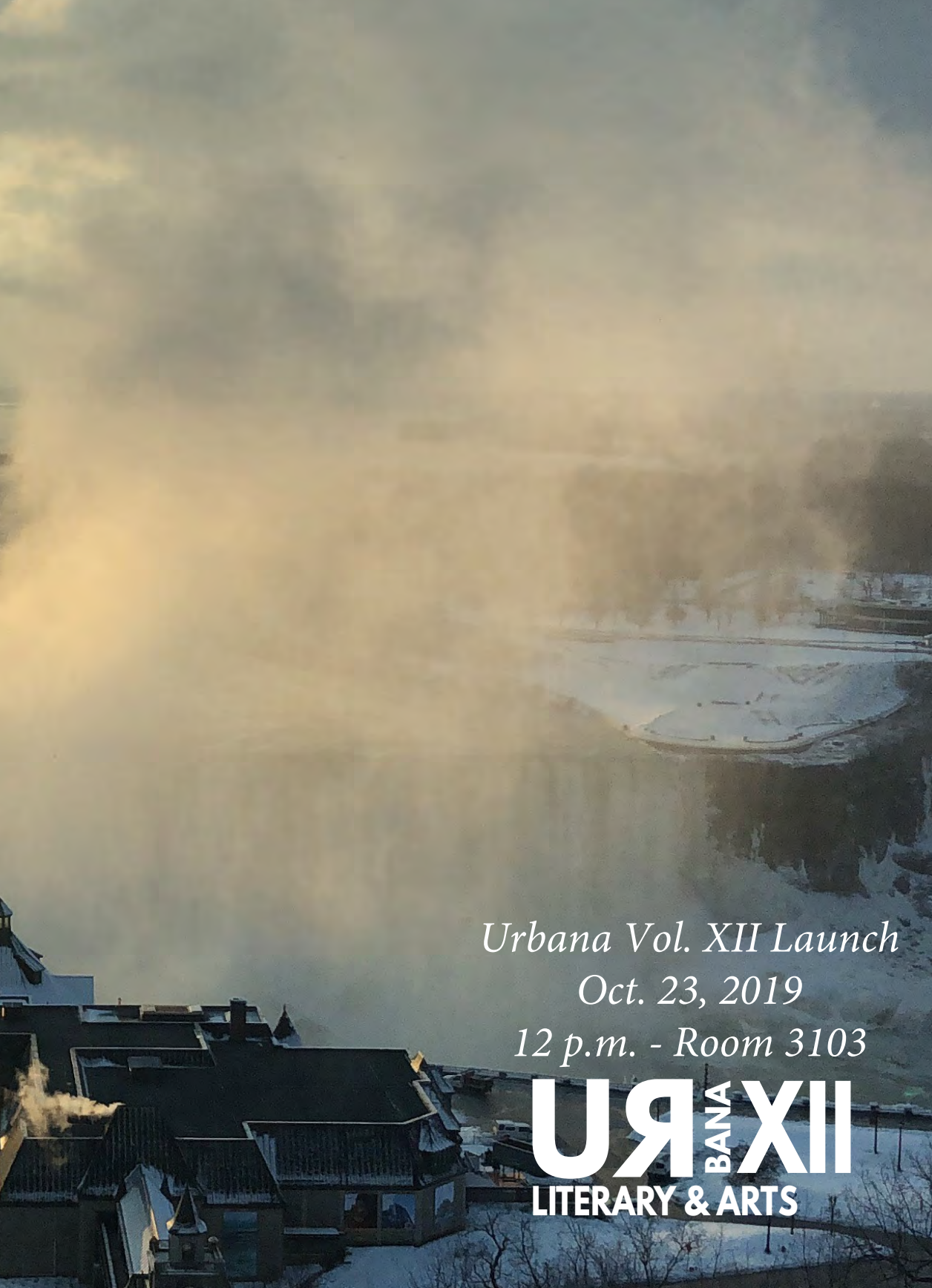

Urbana Vol. XII Launch
Oct. 23, 2019
12 p.m. - Room 3103

URBANA XII
LITERARY & ARTS

URBANA XII

LITERARY & ARTS 2019

InterAmerican Campus
Miami Dade College

Editors' Note

Hello Urbanites—

When we began our twelfth volume we did so with an open mind. Unlike previous editions, we left the theme ambiguous so we would adapt the story and development of the magazine dependent on our submissions.

InterAmerican is a campus that is constantly changing. The faces that one sees in the fall, will not be the same returning in the spring. The expectations and growth of our campus is the changing season that Miami never experiences.

Throughout the magazine we highlight the global aspect and growth prevalent in the passage of time. We hoped to encompass the emotional turmoil prevalent in each season. We created this magazine with the hope that it could offer the comfort of normality towards your own fears, aspirations, and desires.

As you read, analyze, and enjoy our magazine, we can only hope that it offers a sense of enjoyment and peace.

Sincerely,
Ana Chao and Sammie Zenoz
Co-Editors-in-Chief
Urbana Volume XII

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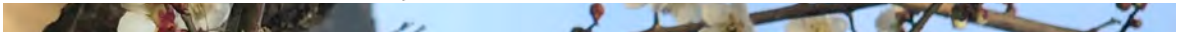

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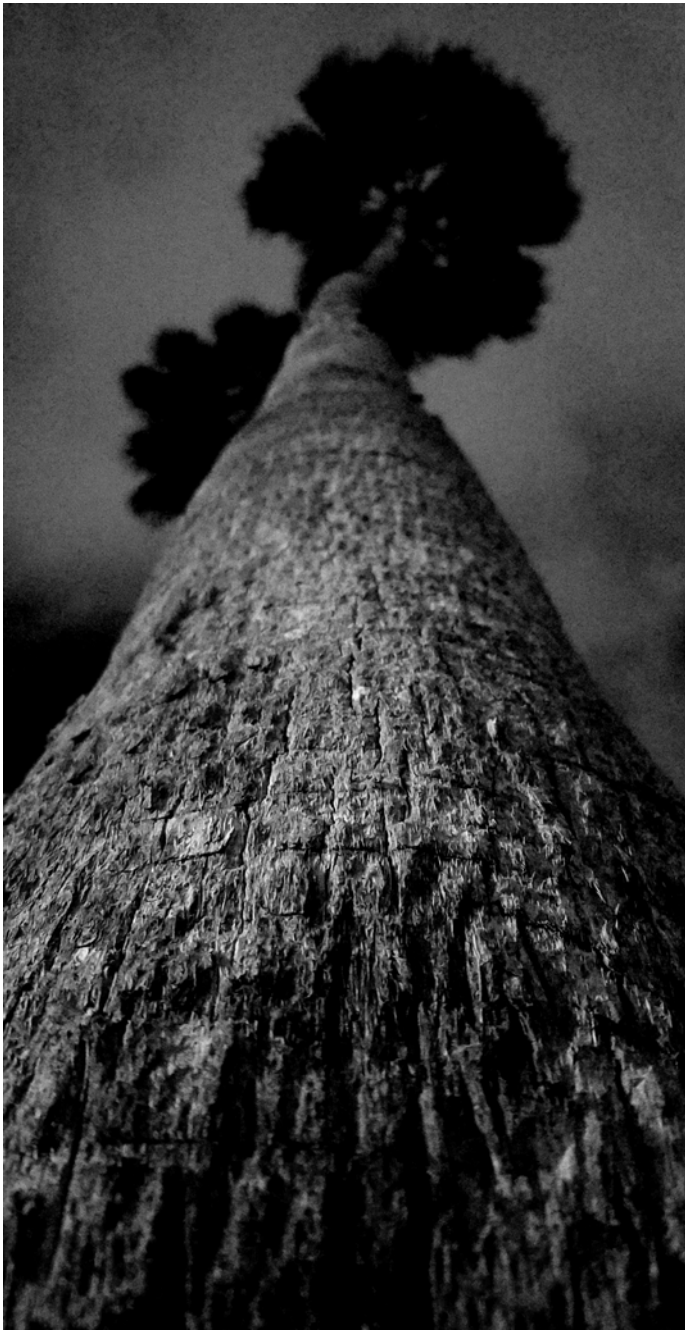


FEAR OF HEIGHTS *by Sammie Zenoz*

Apology

Gabriela Martinez

Speak only when spoken to
I'm speaking to you
Questions and questions and more questions
But your only answer is
Silence
Did you feel bad?
When you hurt me?
Voice soft
Like raindrops
When it
Drizzles
Words hard like
Marble
I could not carve myself out of
But I carved and carved and carved
And used the blood to paint a blush
of victory on your cheeks
It was never enough to make you happy
Are you happy now?
Happy that even though
It's been years and years
I still have tears for you?
That I still have fears of you?
Sliding close enough to feel your harsh words
Take their place,
Heavy, on my back

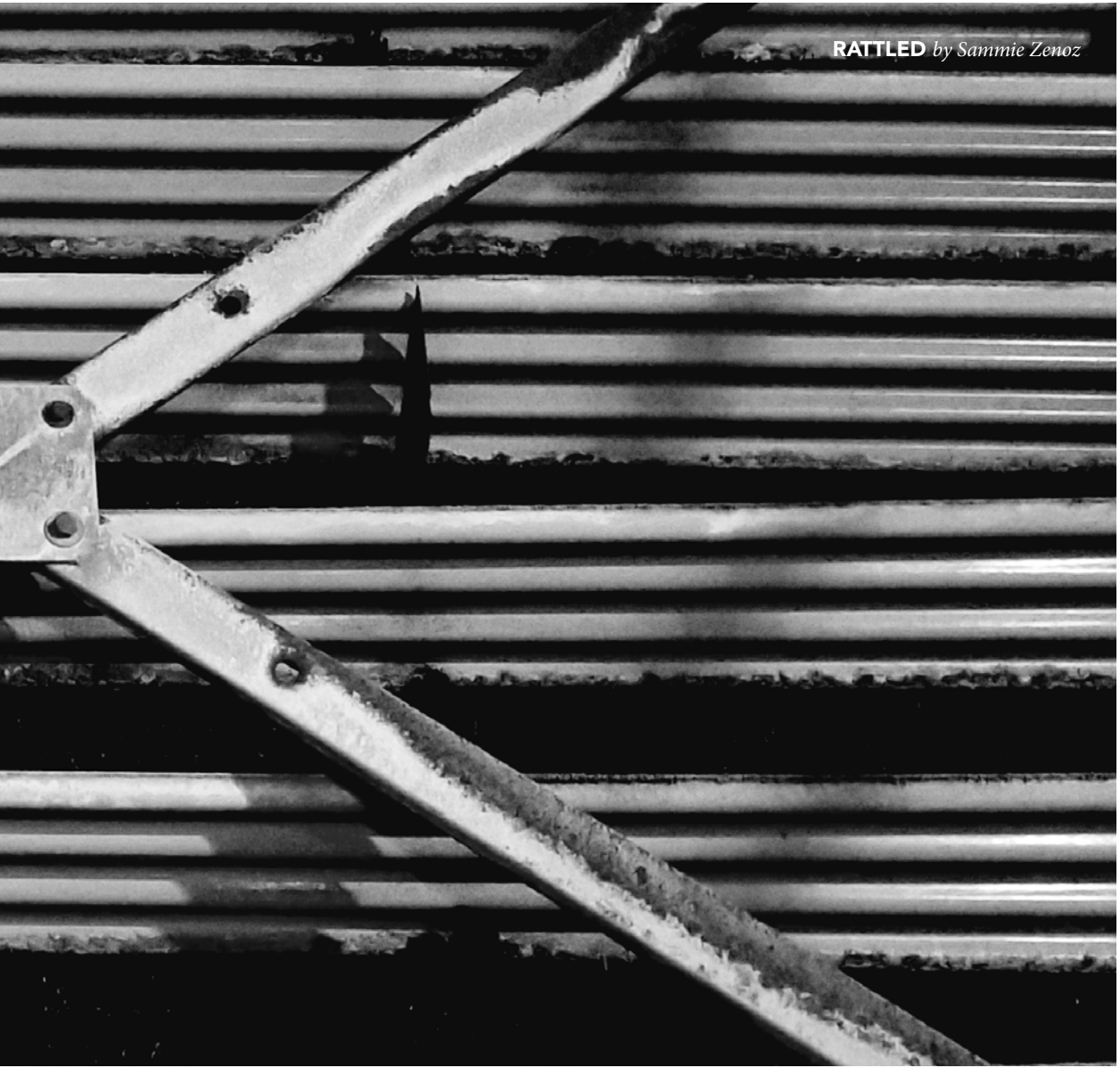
Your expectations, another weight
To break
My shoulders
Be the straight A student
The straight daughter
You better make me a proud father
Speak when spoken to
But not like that
You'd be pretty
If you just
Weren't so goddamn fat
You nitpicked and nitpicked
Until I was nothing but bones
My heart, so soft, turned into nothing but stone
It still bears the scorch marks of your hands
Where you clutched
Inside my chest
Until the me I loved so much
Was dead
And not even when I chose to resurrect
Did you ever
Say sorry
Sorry.
But sorry is as sorry does
And you are the most sorry bitch
that ever was
Never knew how the fuck to love
Without saying something to fuck it up

See, you owe me
An apology
For shrinking me down into nothing
Compared to the promised land stretching
Beyond those children you had
You were supposed to be a father
Instead you considered your own daughter
To be contraband in your house
You owe me an apology
That I know I will never get
You, with your rigid rules
And me, with no respect
For your authority
You, with your mediocrity
And me, wanting to be better
You, with no love for yourself
And none to spare for me
Yeah,
You owe me
An apology

The Shoah Collection: 140603

Rohama Bruk

Life. Death. Right or Left.
Reaks the smoke of dying flesh.
Numbers on their arms



I Am

Kately Rivero

You know what that means?
Truth revealed, judgement ringing
Back inside I go.

DOCUMENTING *by Daniella Garcia*

Triptych: Old Age

Ana Chao

Rotten brown blue flesh
Acrid scent of loss
Clinging to my skin

A durian
That's what I've transfigured to

My flesh
Chopped
Scarred

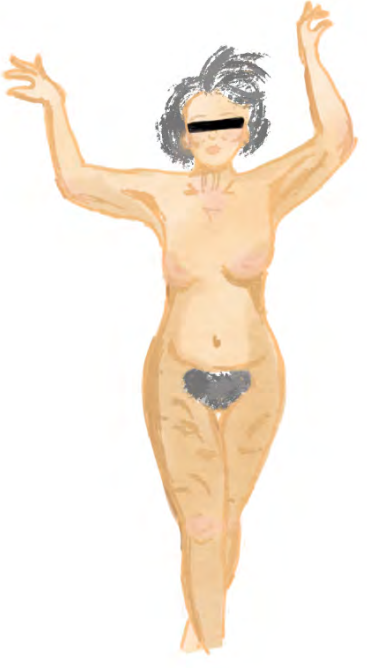
My age is revealed
Like a tree

The rings of skin
Curving
Falling into itself
Hanging from
me

Framing my face

My hair
A pine tree in winter
Wilted
Dyed
Blond
Red
Purple

Any other shade
is better than the taste of winter
that clings
to my strands



DOLORES *by Ana Chao*

Disparu

Christian Perez

Prends mon coeur, poumons
Je ne peux pas respirer
Vous avez quitté

FROTHY BUBBLE BATH *by Daniella Garcia*

INTO THE WOODS! *by Daniella Garcia*

Gone

Christian Perez

Take my heart, lungs
I cannot breathe
You have left

Я СУМУЮ ЗА ТОБОЮ (I've Missed You)

Nicholai Cardona

Я відчував, що більше не можу це взяти,
Отже, я повертаюсь до мій коханий, і я запитую,
ти сумував за мною?

О, приходь і поцілуй мене!
О, ангеле, о, солодкий серафиме,
О, будь ласка, люби мене!
О, будь ласка, ебать мене!
О, будь ласка, високо цінуй мене!
О, ведмежатко, якщо я лежати мої кістки в ваш рот,
Ти будете моя гробниця?

I felt like I couldn't take it anymore,
So, I return to my lover, and I ask,
Did you miss me?

Oh, come and kiss me!
Oh, angel, oh, sweet seraph,
Oh, please love me!
Oh, please fuck me!
Oh, please make much of me!
Oh, little bear, if I lay my bones in your mouth,
Will you be my tomb?

Unidentified

Daniella Garcia

Thirty-two,
Murdered.
Sixteen,
Mutilated.
Twenty-eight,
Beaten to death.
Forty-three,
Dismembered.
Assaulted.
Raped.
Humiliated.

Dehumanized.

The names
were drowning.
Each a larger gulp of water I couldn't swallow,
Breathless
Awakened, by the weight dropped
in my chest,
By the lives I read,
the truth I couldn't bear.

Hundreds,
Names and places and ages,
Everywhere.
And the air around me sealed tightly,
Forcing me in this temporary air pocket
Of realization, of my ignorance.
I read the names.
And each was worse.
And the world became unforgiving and cruel,
And gruesome and horrifying and violent
It was so violent.
Only recorded since the 80's
First ruled as a hate crime as of 2008.
Angie Zapta.

28 years of hate went by,
Towards people who were Different
Themselves,
Alive, transgender.
Before ruled as such,
Hate.

Gisberta
Sweet Maria
Evon
Kelley
Islan
Dwayne
Keeta
Zoraida
Tasha
Vanessa
Edgar
Christian
These were people,
Whose identities were drowned,
But names never resurfaced,
Unidentified.

EDGE OF THE WORLD *by Daniella Garcia*

Sphinx's Riddle

Ana Chao

Jesus, [redacted]

[redacted] memories
[redacted] feeling [redacted] revenge

My name,
A prayer [redacted]

[redacted], I [redacted]

I want more [redacted]
His heart [redacted]
Leaving bruises
In [redacted] my name

[redacted] want [redacted]

'cause imma [redacted]
Steal [redacted]
Taste [redacted] everything

[redacted] my [redacted]

Metallic and sweet
Your [redacted] mine
[redacted] scars, life [redacted] left behind

[redacted] sins [redacted].

Your breath
[redacted]
[redacted] humid puffs
[redacted] my name [redacted] unspoken [redacted]
[redacted] back

I will not stutter [redacted] your name
I refuse to [redacted]
I will [redacted] remove the rose
From its perch [redacted]
Resting upon my canines

Jesus, I want my sins back.

TRUTH BOMB *by Ana Chao*

The Shoah Collection: Yellow Stars

Rohama Bruk

The stars the darkest hour obscured.
a wicked tempest swept through, and yet
The twilight the yellow spectres endured.

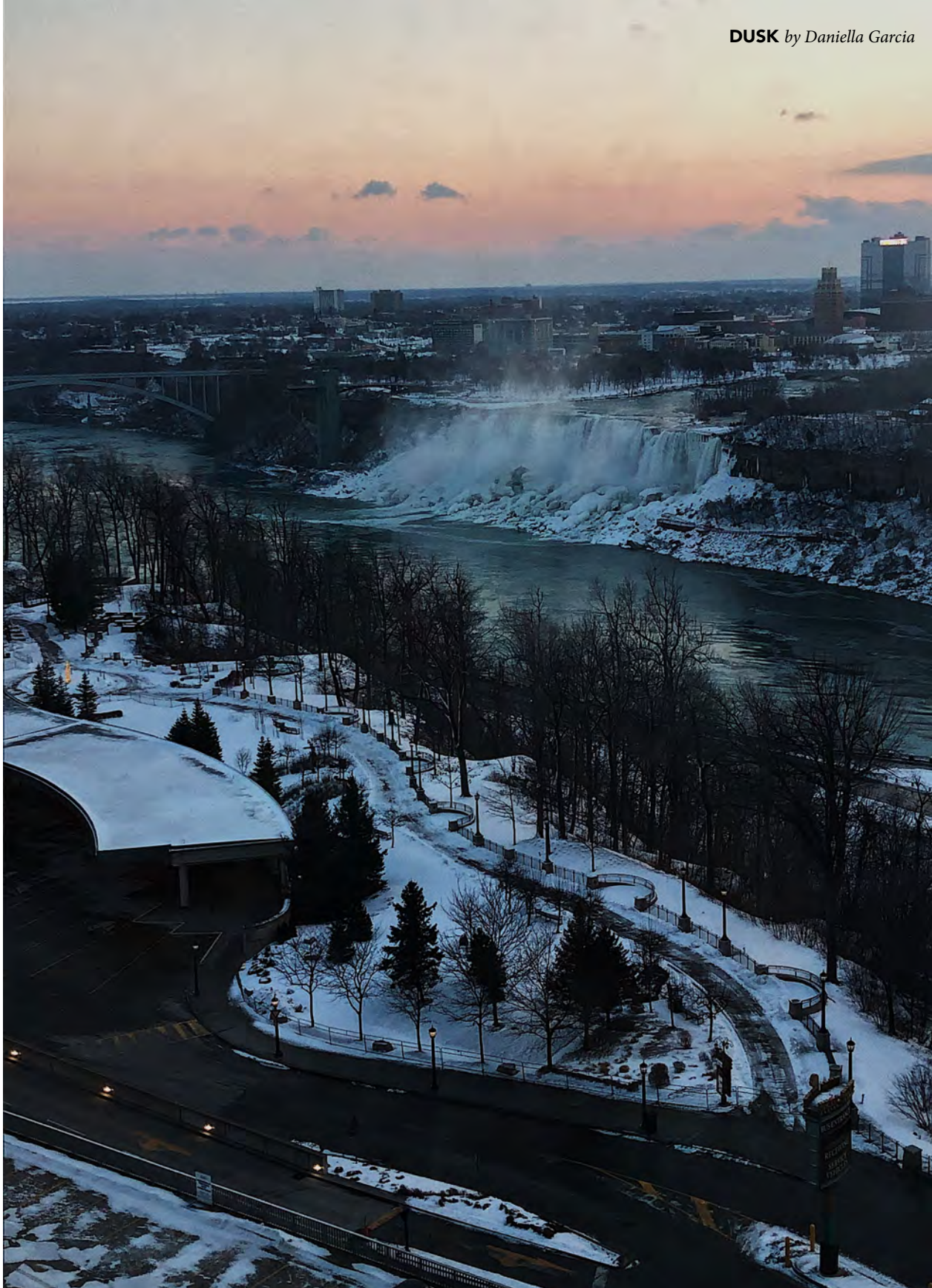
The virtue of existence denied
by the Fuhrer's onset of hate.
The stars the darkest hour obscured.

The furnace flames their faces discolored,
shrieks of Shema resound like a quartet.
The twilight the yellow spectres endured.

Deformed alliance assured
by the Wehrmacht marionette.
The stars the darkest hour obscured.

A blasphemous calamity ocurred,
Tolerance is still in debt.
The twilight the yellow spectres endured.

Remember, until all are remembered,
Never allow yourself to forget—
The stars the darkest hour obscured.
The twilight the yellow spectres endured.



DUSK *by Daniella Garcia*

Car Crash

Gabriella Martinez

My parents are oxymorons
Always lovingly out of love
Together, but on opposing sides
They kiss with their fists
And call it kindness,
romance

My parents are oxymorons
More moron than oxy
Never cottoning on to different factors
Too busy trying to set their fractures
enveloped in a bind of lies
hoping against hope that they got it right
this time

Temporary flings became a remedy for broken homes
broken bones that never healed right
Still ache during the nights when the cold sleeps in their beds
And keeps them awake past 2am

They're trying to keep their botched up quiltwork intact
by stringing together excuses
sewing their mouths shut so they'll look happy
pretending they're unaffected
but I know how they bend over backwards
Always trying to find a way back towards each other

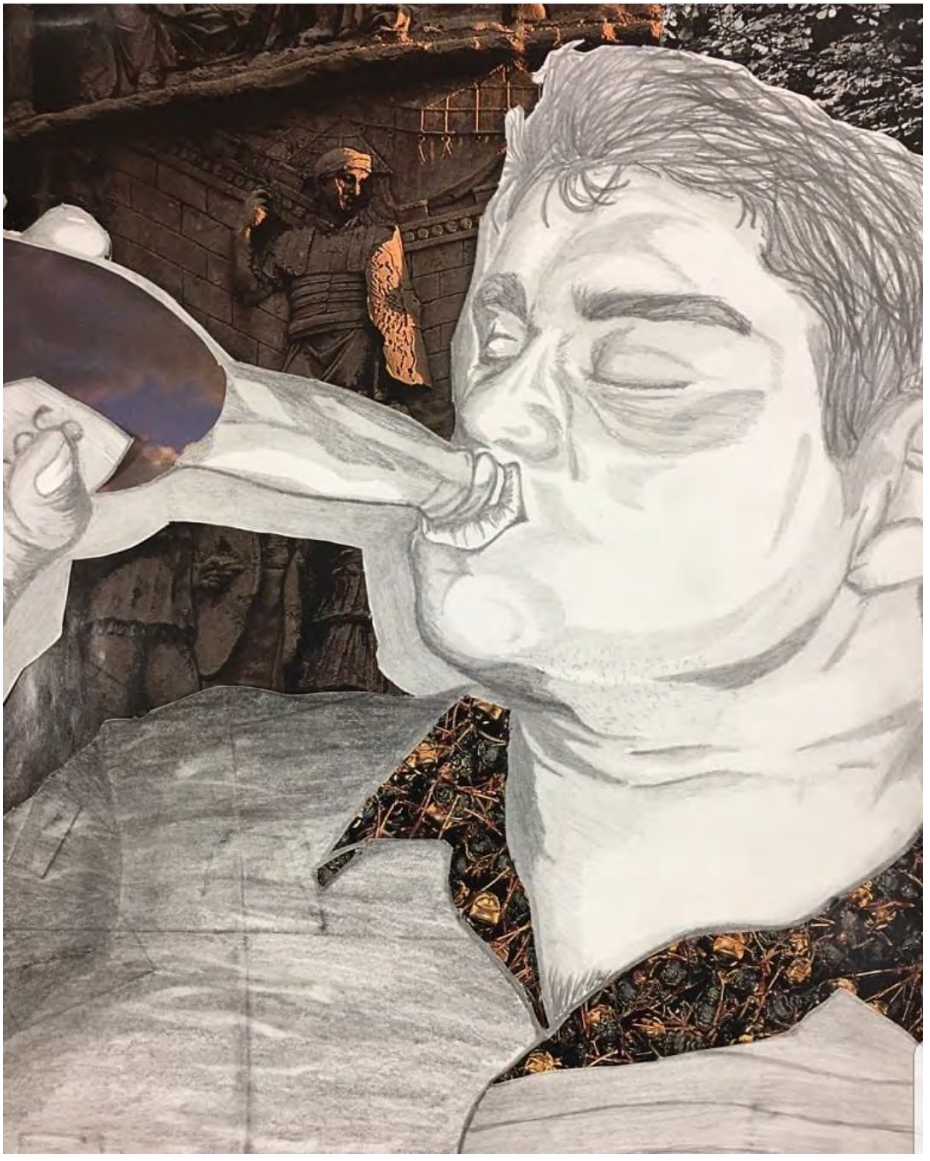
They've got both eyes on the rearview mirror
Getting blinded by the high beams of nostalgia
Cruising down the same dark road
They've gone down so many times before
There are permanent valleys in the shape of their tires
Where they tried to brake, and take it slow
Because they always forget the curves and forks
But. then again.
They have always been reckless drivers.

My dad speeds 50 over the limit through life
Forgets to hit the brakes
But always remembers to hit and run from his feelings
There's no insurance that can cover up
The trauma my father's father ran into him by accident
So my dad locks himself inside
With the windows up and the music high

All he does is drive and drive
All he does is hide and hide
Behind his black tinted windows
I wonder if he ever gets tired
Of his fists balling tighter
Trying to get a grip on steering his emotions away from the light
While he hydroplanes on his mistakes
But I know he's as empty as his passenger seat most days

My mom
constantly switches from lane to lane
Never knows when to just stay heading one way
She doesn't use signals so it's a guessing game
Where you goin? Who you with? Why?
Trying to find love with the same type of guys
That have screwed her over a thousand times
All she does is try and try
But all men do is lie and lie
So she cries and cries
And when the tears have dried
She applies liquid lipstick kisses to the rim of a cup
Heavy with liquor, full to the top
She hops in her car, swerves to the club
Wearing her tightest dress
Her gas tank is always empty
And she is never full
Her money gets spent until there's none of her left
alone again with her regrets

My parents
Are drunk drivers
Already crashed
Hell-bent on hurtling towards each other, foot on the gas
Almost in love, together at last
I just hope
The ambulance gets here fast
god,
I hope the ambulance gets here fast



VICE *by Adolfo Sirias*

MANDELA *by Emely Martinez*

AUDREY *by Emely Martinez*

SCOTTISH SUNDAYS *by Daniella Garcia*

Triptych: Puberty

Ana Chao

Curves
that's all I am
a mix of soft edges
and delicate skin
At times I can be rounder
less like a pear
more like an apple
Why am I fruit?
Is it because I have become
ripe
with the promise of puberty?
Is it because I have grown
apples
melons
upon a barren land?
Is it because my hips
extended like
tree trunks?
Is it because my lips
remind them
of a peach's pit?
Is it because I hold
a cherry between my legs?
Is it because my skin
is a soft petals breath?
Is it because my eyes
hold
the earth?
Is it because my identity
is dependent on how much
I am wanted
touched
coveted
bitten?

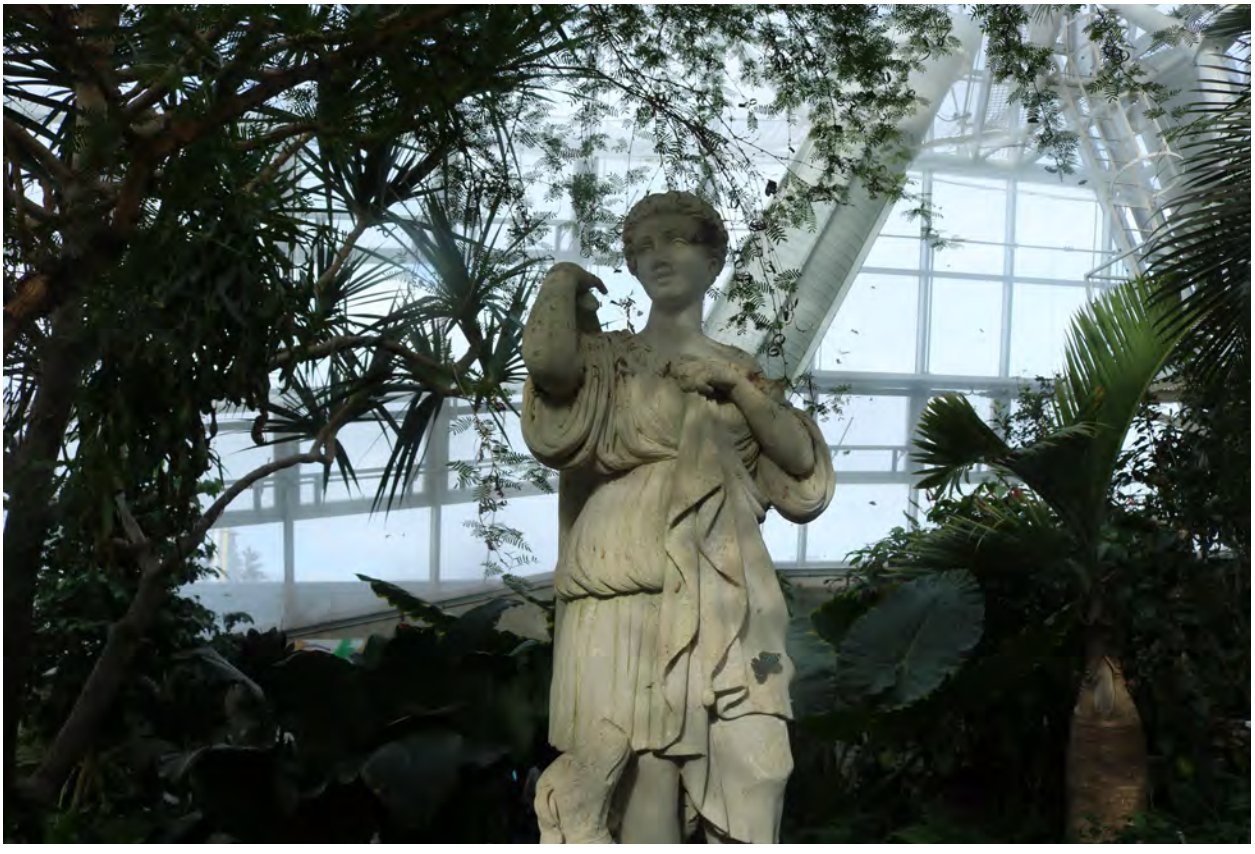
ANGUSTIAS *by Ana Chao*

BRICKS *by Alexandra Hernandez*

The Shoah Collection: Mila

Rohama Bruk

I am the crimson river tainting the white snow
Bluma, I am six months old.
I am the last voice before the gas filled our lungs
Motl, I am a young boy.
I am the ring, divorced from my beloved's hand, that paid the bribe
Rachila, I am a bride.
I am the hiddened Siddur where my God lives
Zalman, I am a Rebbe.
I am the corpse shadow roaring from behind the walls
Marek, I am a ghetto fighter.
Bluma.
Motl.
Rachila.
Zalman.
Marek.
These ashes are my people
Mila, 18, I am an uprising.



WHO IS SHE? *by Daniella Garcia*

I Am a Woman

Maritza De Armas

I am a woman

I'm supposed to be a plastic flower

I'm supposed to be a puppet

I'm supposed to know my place

I am a woman

I am the carrier of life and death

I don't wait to be rescued from dragons

I slay them

I am the breaker of glass ceilings

I am a woman

CLARITY *by Daniella Garcia*

It Rained

Marisa Estele

It rained today
And another trans body was found,
drained of its blood like slaughtered sheep being made
kosher
Is this the reward for calling the Lord our shepherd,
Or praying to a Mary that would allow the Silence of her Lambs ?
These horror scenes have become as natural as the weather
It rained today,
And I don't know if it was a warning
The collective tears of the dead telling me
to seek shelter because this false weather of
acceptance came with a high chance of bigotry
Or maybe it was America washing off her blood-stained hands
I don't know, but it rained today
And I thought of how many more bodies would be found
With razor thin cuts on their wrists like roads to redemption
Others hanging, rainbow flags wrapped around their necks
Makeshift nooses for society's nuisance
The air reeked of a xenophobia for those of us on the wrong side of the rainbow
It rained today
Rained fire and brimstone
And the flames screamed,
urged me to repent because there's sunshine after the storm
But there'd be no rainbows
Acceptance, like Judas' silver, wasn't worth the betrayal to myself
So I stood in the downpour, smiling
Knowing that even Sodom's fire wouldn't refine me

Forgive Me

Ana Chao

Please, forgive me.
I was never meant to reach this point.

I am sure that at my birth,
My own mother meant to drown me.

Too many girls.

I would have forgiven her.
Because, well,
She met me first.
Weighed my heart on a silver scale
Against a feather.
Then,

I did not give you the same opportunity.

Please, forgive me.

I did not feel your warmth,
Nor did I see my womb
Shifting
Distending my flesh
As you sought me out.

All I had of yours was
A plastic stick
Two jagged lines
Too red

And even that proved too much for me.

Please, forgive me.

I should have drowned you.

Wrapped the umbilical cord
Seen your eyes bulging

It would have been more honest
Than letting another reach for you
Rip you out of me.
Nothing more than
Clumps
Tissues
Sinews
All on the doctor's metal tray

Was that you?

It looked more like hearts
Found in an anatomy textbook.

Yet, it wasn't

You weren't my heart
And for that

I ask you-

A being that never lived
Past the moment a plastic stick turned red-

For forgiveness.

To Catch a Seagull

Rodrigo Urdaneta P.

They met again one windy night when
the moon had drawn him to the shore:
his feet burrowed in sand
his arms wrapped around thin legs
his chin settled on cold knees
his eyes fixed on the roiling ocean,
as alluring as his mother's
meringue – but of tin and seaweed.

Two waves clashed and wrestled, then
parted – and the other boy was there,
outlined in moonlight; his dark hair,
wet whirlpools swirling freely, a small

conch shell in his hands as he
approached the sitting boy
and sat next to him.
They watched the ocean together.

When the sitting boy said nothing,
the boy from the sea raised the shell
in his wet and pearly hands – a singing
melody of waves and foam emerged softly
from its crevices and soothed
the sitting boy's pained chest. Drowning
the sound of shouts and broken plates.
Washing away the splatter of key lime pie.

The sitting boy took the shell in his hands
and his skin felt warm and foreign,
a pulsating starfish glowing in dark depths.
He pressed the shell against his ear, closing his eyes.
He saw mollusks bright and green, and pink
shoals fluttering around him.
He sank deeper
along gleaming sharks and lazy turtles
to pick flowers in the oceanbed, and swam
back up to break the surface, where he saw
dolphins surfing, silver arcs shining.
He envied them, their luminescence, their silent
presence; he became them, and forgot
about being that scared sitting boy, and thought
of returning to shore, where he could finally
catch a seagull.

Before the break of dawn, the boy from the sea
stood up and watched the sitting boy, now
lying asleep on the soft sand.
He placed the conch shell next to the dreaming boy's
head, the ringing ocean seeping from it softly.
The boy from the sea walked back into the calm water,
the last rays of moonlight tangled in his hair,
and disappeared between the waves.

CLEAN MY BOAT *by Juan Tognini*

CITY APERTURE *by Nicholai Cardona*

Cigarrettes

Marisa Estele

I was his five minute cigarette break
Buds littered like rose petals, always landing on, “he loves me”
Until nicotine patches relieved the ache

The reason he stayed up until daybreak
Igniting my tobacco skin with his lighter fluid fingers
I was his five minute cigarette break

The deep inhales he’d take
Reveling in the rush of me
Until nicotine patches relieved the ache

A habitual mistake
The burned residue in his ashtray of a bed
I was his five minute cigarette break

He lived for my sake
Fit me into every little break in his schedule
Until nicotine patches relieved the ache

Buds, littered like dried petals, landed on, “he loves me not”

THE SILK WEAVER *by Sammie Zenoz*

El íncubo

Manuel Tuñez

Un verano como otro cualquiera, era allí una villa en lo intrincado del monte al pie de la montaña y el bosque, todos nombrados Shioka. Los habitantes de la villa no conocían que era un "Smartphone", ni un ordenador, lo más que tenían era un televisor para diez personas que conformaban la población. Solían trabajar en un arrozal, el cual les brindaba el alimento de cada día. Tan solo una joven vivía en Shioka, con 18 años ella estaba obstinada de su vida, del campo, del pueblo, de los ancianos, de todo. Marcando las seis de la mañana comenzaba su jornada laboral hasta las cinco de la tarde. A las siete, hora del crepúsculo, todos los pueblerinos se reunían a ver televisión hasta las diez en punto de la noche que se iban a dormir. De esta manera daban por finalizada su rutina de monotonía diaria.

Antes de irse a dormir la más anciana del pueblo comenzó a contar una antigua leyenda que vivía plasmada en sus más remotas memorias.

"La penumbra nocturna retorna en pleno período Sengoku, época donde los cerezos adquirieron el rosado de sus pétalos con los mares de sangre derramada por las esposas viudas de los samuráis yacidos en combate. Las recién enviudadas solían arrebatarse la vida por medio del Harakiri al pie de los árboles de cerezo. En el pueblo de Shioka, nombrado así por el monte, hubo extraños casos donde las viudas no acudieron al suicidio, deshonrando así la memoria de sus maridos fallecidos. Dadas sus acciones el pueblo decidió excomulgar a toda viuda que no valorara su honor y el de su difunto esposo. Tras varios días seguidos aparecieron en cadáver dichas viudas, pero los cuerpos estaban momificados, completamente secos. Los villanos sin conocer la causa decidieron afrontar que fue por cuenta de la culpa que sentían, mientras otros se marcharon diciendo que el pueblo estaba maldito. Hasta el día de hoy los habitantes se marchan jóvenes y luego regresan ya ancianos."

Los días pasaban y las noches a su par. Un día común la chica que se nombraba Kagetsu escuchó rumores sobre la leyenda contada la noche anterior, diciéndose que en el bosque una criatura mágica fue la que concedió el deseo de poder morir sin sufrir, para aliviar sus penas. Esas palabras llenaron

el vacío ser de la frustrada joven que sólo ostentaba su inminente salida del rural pueblo de Shioka.

Ya de noche el reloj marcaba las diez pasado meridiano Kagetsu se aseguro de que los adultos se fueran a dormir y así escapar hacia el penumbroso bosque en busca de la esperanzadora criatura que la sacaría del pueblo con un deseo.

Sin ningún preámbulo Kagetsu se acercaba, caminando lentamente hacia el brillo intenso. Nada más logró identificar lo que tanta curiosidad le provocaba con su brillantez, impactada pegó un grito e intentó correr, sus sentidos, ni nervios respondieron por él miedo y cayó desmayada. Cuando recobró la conciencia se encontraba en la orilla de una pequeña cascada y a su lado había una extraña criatura que no parecía humana.

Tenía el cuerpo curvado en el que sus costillas y vertebras eran facilmente notorias por sobre su mohosa piel, del lomo le salían dos alas como de escamas, su cráneo poseía dos cuernos que casi no se veían por su mugrosa y desgreñada cabellera negra, y de su zona lumbar una larga cola con un cono rojo por punta, se movía de un lado a otro. Kagetsu anonadada e incrédula viendo tal repugnante esperpento se sintió aterrorizada. Pero esto no impidió que su voluntad, que se fue forjando por cada hora que busco a la criatura se desvaneciera. Presuntuosa se dirigió tras reaccionar hacia el ser inhumano, haciéndole una serie de preguntas: ¿Quién eres o qué eres? Dudó antes de continuar con las interrogantes. ¿Eres quien concedió los deseos a las viudas hace medio siglo? Preguntó trémula. ¿Me concederías un deseo?

En el rostro depravado del demonio se dibujó una soberbia e intrépida sonrisa mientras respondía a la adolescente.

“¿Mi nombre? Pues, me llamo Kurocchi soy un íncubo que habita en este bosque desde hace mucho tiempo.” Tras responder las primeras preguntas, quedose pensativo como si tramara algo, pero ante los inocentes ojos de la humana, solo parecía estar recordando.

Nuevamente liberó la desesperada sonrisa y continuó respondiendo las preguntas de Kagetsu. “Sí, yo concedí el deseo a unas jóvenes mujeres hace mucho tiempo. Como también puedo concederte un deseo a ti si a cambio me ayudas a

recuperar mi apariencia humana." La chica deseosa y emocionada de poder cumplir su sueño aceptó instantáneamente el trato sin tan siquiera preguntar que, ¿Qué podría hacer ella para ayudarlo? Nada más dado el si de Kagetsu, Kurocchi la hizo firmar con su sangre virgen en una roca, en la cual tuvo que escribir su deseo, que decía así: "Yo querer ir a Tokio ciudad y vivir como niña normal"

La falta de educación no ayudaba su pésima caligrafía y dicción. Nada más Kurocchi leyó el deseo escrito con la sangre que brotaba del dedo pulgar de Kagetsu, perforado levemente con la espina de una rosa negra, se empezó a reír de pena por la mala escritura y le prometió liberarla mientras evitaba el sangrado chupando la yema del pulgar.

Acordaron encontrarse las dos próximas noches de luna llena en la pequeña cascada cuando el reloj marcara las once de la noche. Más feliz que nunca se vio en Shioka a la más pequeña, corría de una punta a otra, tampoco cesaba de gritar que por fin sería libre y se iría a la gran ciudad en menos de lo que canta un gallo. La noche que se reunieron por primera vez era el último día que la luna estaba en fase de cuarto creciente. Marcaban las once horas nocturnas, el plenilunio resplandecía tenuemente, y allí se encontraba Kagetsu puntual esperando a Kurocchi. De la oscuridad apareció más ansioso que nunca sin saludarla, le dijo que esperaba que estuviera preparada, ni tiempo tuvo la joven a decir que sí, porque ya lo tenía justo encima.

Con la cola amarró sus frágiles muñecas elevándola, e introdujo su lengua fría en la dulce boca de la chica mientras la besaba. Muy asustada sin tener la menor idea de lo que sucedía mantuvo la calma mientras era besada, hasta que de pronto adormentada cayó rendida.

Despertó confusa y medio cansada, era ya de día y se encontraba en su casa. Así comenzando la monotonía diaria del pueblo, y rápidamente sin darse cuenta ya era de noche.

La luna un poco más luminosa señalaba la hora de encontrarse en la cascada, puntual ahí estaba Kagetsu. Mientras aparecía en la oscuridad el íncubo, la niña notó que el rostro estaba más rellenito y color carne, hasta era bien parecido, y que la postura ya estaba erecta. Esta imagen la alivio al ver que cumplía con su parte del trato.

Kurocchi la miró y con un pequeño soplido arrebató cada prenda de la chica dejándole su bello cuerpo desnudo al descubierto. Aguantando las manos de la chica el demonio comenzó a lamer sus jugosos senos desarrollados, pero una vez más luego de alcanzar el tope de su excitación Kagetsu cayó rendida con un cansancio inexplicable.

Al despertar nuevamente en su casa, ella notó que le costaba mucho respirar o el mantenerse de pie. Ese día se mantuvo en cama hasta el anochecer que se sintió repentinamente en perfecto estado y tomó rumbo al bosque. Caminaba con pesar, parecía hipnotizada.

La luna estaba más brillante que nunca antes amparando al demonio que esperaba pacientemente en la cascada. Su cuerpo era como el de un humano, de pies a cabeza, sin embargo, solo le quedaba esa repugnante cola. Aparentaba 25 años y una estatura de 1.93cm.

Sorprendentemente esta vez la chica se acercó a él, y comenzó a desnudarse por su propia cuenta. No parecía encontrarse en sí, parecía poseída. En efecto estaba hipnotizada por Kurocchi quien planeaba su acto final. El cuerpo de Kagetsu estaba bajo los efectos severos de la maldición, lo cual aumentaba por cien la sensibilidad en cada roce. Finalmente tras medio siglo lleno de jóvenes que partían y regresaban con el último aliento de vida, llegaría la hora del gran festín, la Última Cena de Kagetsu. Con esa cantidad de energía vital le bastaría para sobrevivir otro medio siglo entero sin comer.

Tomó a la adolescente en sus brazos y comenzó a penetrar con un movimiento elocuente y demente su cola dentro y fuera de la vagina de la joven que a gritos daba gemidos de placer ligados a dolor tras su violenta desfloración. En sus últimos movimientos Kurocchi dejó su cola en el interior de la chica y de pronto el cuerpo se tornó bajo una blanca palidez, que luego sería marrón ya que quedaba completamente seco y sin una gota de líquido en el cadáver. Así terminó absorbida toda la energía vital de Kagetsu por Kurocchi.

Satisfecho con su cena, el íncubo colocó el momificado cadáver a la entrada del pueblo Shioka. A la mañana siguiente, el amanecer

de los habitantes fue lagrimales de llanto tras encontrar el pobre y desaliñado cuerpo tirado en la entrada de la villa que tanto odió.

Muerta la joven en manos del vil demonio que la engañó, todos los habitantes de Shioka se mudaron con miedo a un pueblo vecino pasando el monte. La niebla cubrió el bosque dándole el adiós a Kurocchi que encantado con el paladar de la joven virgen decidió emprender un nuevo rumbo en busca del espléndido gusto de la primera vez en otras chicas y así saciar su inmensurable sed de afán sexual.

THE JOURNEY ACROSS *by Sammie Zenoz*

Ingrata yo que marché

Amanda Alvarez

Testigo fuiste de cada
lágrima que derramé,
de las efímeras noches
que con mis manos palpé.

Testigo de las sonrisas,
de todo lo que amé.
Te extraño más que nunca.
¡Ingrata yo que marché!

De tu cielo las nubes
con mis dedos desgarré
y el color de tus días
capturarlo yo traté.

En las noches sin estrellas
con la culpa cargaré.
Tú me querías mi tierra.
¡Ingrata yo que marché!

Pero no queda de otra,
ya mi frente realcé,
como hice al dejarte,
las lágrimas secaré.

Donde quiera que yo vaya,
sin importar guardaré,
en mi corazón mi tierra.
¡Ingrata yo que marché!

PROMISE *by Ana Chao*

Ode to Myself

Nicholai Cardona

Oh, the joy of being an eyesore!
Oh, the joy of disrupting!
A class, an outing, a family reunion, a life!

Oh! The joy of not being known!
By you!
By me!
By God!
By the government!
All these spiteful joys
Going, going, never gone.

Let me scream! Let me wonder!
Let me clatter about!
Let me be!

I am a menagerie of vagaries!
I am cosmic!
I am apocalyptic!
I am the weight of critical entropy!

MALCOLM X *by Emely Martinez*

CAPRI IN BLUE *by Juan Tognini*

Abuelo

Sammie Zenoz

The day I'm born
Abuelo sends my mother a list of names
Acceptable for his granddaughter
Samantha

I'm almost seven
He buys only strawberry ice cream because
He knows I like
Chocolate

I'm ten years old
Abuelo asks me to bring him a dictionary
To look up a word
Glutton

On my thirteenth birthday
He gifts me a set of golf clubs
I play
Soccer

I'm only fifteen
Abuelo gives me my present two months late
A bottle of rum
Unwrapped

I'm barely eighteen
Abuelo tells me I won't find a husband
If I don't stop
Eating

Twenty one comes fast
He sends me fifty dollars in the mail
My brother gets five
Hundred

I'm twenty three
He takes me to buy a new car
So I can drive
Him

I'm twenty five
Abuelo is diagnosed with alzheimer's
Sometimes he remembers my
Name

I'm twenty eight
He tells me get out of his house
He doesn't recognize me
Samantha

ROSE *by Emely Martinez*

Change

Kately Rivero

Change is upon us,
Sworn over and over again,
Yet new ways are here to oppress;
Wrapped tighter and tighter in these chains.

A human being just like you, kept from feeling free,
Hiding behind interpretations of words written long ago;
Oh, please, just leave me to be just me;
They can all see my hiding spot, it seems like I glow.

HIGHLAND SUMMER *by Sammie Zenoz*

How loud you are, speaking down to us all,
Since when did love become such a crime?
Yours is loud and bright, yet mine is reduced to a corner of the dim hall;
Witnessing love, yours and mine, now isn't that sublime?

Change is here,
Starting with knowing I'm more than just queer.

Triptych: Childhood

Ana Chao

Red roses
Thin thorns curving
Snapping off
Before blood is drawn
I cry when
I hunger
I thirst
I ache
Warm rivers
Etched
On the soft mounds of my face

A small seedling
Grappling off of a twig

A child

Even at this size
I am considered
Sweet
Tart
Mind numbing

I am
Reached,
Sought out,
low hanging fruit.

PALOMA *by Ana Chao*

FLOWER CHILD *by Adolfo Sirias*

PETALED SKIES *by Sammie Zenoz*

No solo las plantas se inclinan a la luz

Pedro Alfonso

Veo sangre; otra noticia local.
Inmediatamente cambio de canal.

Retumban las paredes del estómago del vecino.
Yo doblo mi ración; más pan, más vino.

Otro pómulo de rojo por un machista pincel.
Y yo termino pensando: allá ella, allá él.

El niño de mi primo no tiene su medicina.
¡Que bajen los impuestos! ¡Leyes asesinas!

Dos extremos del espectro las posibles dianas.
Un asesino con sed. Calle oscura de La Habana.

Un negro amigo sobrevive; yo cargo con la cruz.
No solo las plantas se inclinan a la luz.

No Longer Defeated

Kately Rivero

You will no longer defeat me.
No more will you plague my mind;
I will be free.

Days spent cowering to you will desist;
Life back in my hands and realigned,
You will no longer defeat me.

Mounting lies readily dismissed
No longer moldable, now standing unconfined
I will be free.

You are now faced with a war, you have even whined,
You hit and scratch and tear, you must coexist,
You will no longer defeat me.

You will submerge me until I drown, but you don't expect me to resist;
Hands reach out and help steady me, smiles all around so very kind.
I will be free.

Up and down we go, just you and me, a dance in which you insist;

An extended hand for our continued waltz, I blissfully declined.
You will no longer defeat me;
I will be free.

MALALA *by Emely Martinez*

UME *by Ana Chao*

A Gaze upon Them

Rodrigo Urdaneta P.

The tropical night brimmed with stars. The suffocating humidity of the afternoon had finally receded and now a soft, crisp breeze carried the taste of salt into the balcony.

"Here, sweetie," said the man as his silhouette emerged through the wooden frame, holding a dark shape in his hand. "Put this on."

The lights of the bungalow were out. He could barely make out her hunched frame, outlined in blueish gray by the starlight. He did not need to see her, though, because he knew the picture by heart: she would be sitting on the teak planks, her legs curled to the side, her ponytail keeping the dark wavy hair out of the way. The slim frame of her glasses would rest on the top of her head, allowing her to see into the telescope's eyepiece without interference. She would pull herself back, lower the glasses, scribble down some notes and ponder her inextricable thoughts, before returning the glasses to their crowning spot and her eyes to the endless sky.

Is she thinking about the stars? She took the sweater from his hands and covered her tanned shoulders."Thanks, dad." Leaning back into the telescope, she turned a knob slightly and shifted her body into a more comfortable position. *Does she find peace in the vastness of it all?*

"Find it yet?" he asked, even though he knew the answer. The low, constant roar of the ocean filled the air, joined by the rustling of the wind rocking the palm leaves and the cries of nocturnal animals wakening to their hidden lives in the nearby jungle. Still, all he could hear was the silence between him and his little girl, who was no longer little, and who had been quiet for most of the trip. This mute chasm between them had been growing steadily. He felt as if he was standing in the edge of a cliff, staring longingly at the other side with a rope in his hand, but unable to tie his end to anything on his barren world.

"Yeah. I've been following it for a while, now," she answered, looking through the eyepiece. "It's now very close to the Milky Way's plane, isn't it? I figured it would be hard to pin down. But I knew you'd find it," he continued.

She didn't say anything. He sat across her with his back leaning against the wooden balusters. His eyes, growing used to the darkness, searched in her direction, hoping to see the smile that lit her face when he complimented her. But she did

not smile and the night grew thick around her. He turned his eyes upward, admiring the beauty of the equatorial vault. Even among the myriad of bright, colored dots that flooded the sky, he quickly recognized the constellations, located the planets, followed the satellites darting away. He looked at the cloudy streak he knew to be the galaxy, usually lost from view in the bright city lights, back home. Out here, on this remote island, it stood sharp against the starry canvas: a foggy white stream that spilled stars and nebulae and cut the sky in two.

An open wound.

"You've been awfully quiet, Connie," he said softly. She stood still for a few moments. Then, slowly, her figure straightened, as if guided by the same ancient mechanisms that ruled the motions of the stars.

"I know it's been hard, sweetie," he pressed on, "and I know we haven't really talked about it—"

"Dad…" whispered the girl, almost to herself.

"—but we need to, sweetie. It's been almost a year. I haven't been very open, I know – and you've been so strong. Strong for both of us. Stronger than me." His voice quivered a little, as he stared into the abyss. He took a deep breath and closed his eyes.

"I… that's…" she hesitated, and he knew he had to take the leap, now.

"But sweetie, we've grown so distant. It's like you're up there all the time and I don't even know how to reach you, anymore. And it's tearing us apart. It's tearing me apart. And it's just a few days away, and—" he said in a rushed voice.

"Dad, that's not—" she tried to cut in, still facing the shadows beneath the telescope.

"—and I miss her, and I know you miss her, too! I just thought, you know, we could come here and spend a few days together, with the comet and all, just like we always did, and it would almost be as if she were here, with us, and nothing had— as if she hadn't…"

But he could not finish now. He felt empty, depleted: a star that has run out of fuel and, lacking the sufficient mass, fails to go supernova and flutters away instead, a dead, cold rock falling through the emptiness of space. He hadn't been able to cry since his wife had passed away; and even now, as he sat there, his body shaking with anguish, his face buried in his hands, the tears would not come.

He felt the warm touch of his daughter as she lay her hands over his.

"Dad," she spoke tenderly. "Dad, it's OK. That's not what this is about."

He looked up, meeting her gaze. She had her mother's eyes, and now he saw in them the same flickering flame that he had come to know so well in his late wife's eyes.

He knew what that fire meant, and he braced himself.

"What is it, Connie? Tell me."

She bit her lip, just as she did as a small child, when she was nervous; but the flame in her eyes held steady.

"I…I'm getting baptized, Dad."

The silence seemed to stretch eons.

"You're—what?"

"I've been thinking about it for a while. And I want to do it." Her tone was soft, but resolute.

"Why didn't you tell me before?" he asked, and his voice came out more defensive than he would have wanted. *All this time, all those nights gazing into the skies, and I had no idea.* He felt cold, a prickling sensation that crawled from his lower back up to his neck.

"Well… it's just that you never cared about all this stuff, and lately you've been so… so vocal about it, and…look, I just didn't know how to tell you, alright? But I've made up my mind. I spoke to Father Mulholland and he figures I can –"

"Really? You went to that old crook? After all he did to your mom?" he blurted. "He didn't do anything to her, dad," she replied coolly.

"We could have done so much more, Consuelo! Tried so many things! But he just came in, wedged himself there, and convinced her that this was all somehow part of His plan? That it was fucking fate?

"He had nothing to do with that, dad. She believed in it, she had faith! All her life she did, why won't you respect that?"

"You know, it's really funny. They never seem to care about you, but suddenly you're dying and they just so happen to be there every single day. It's like they're almost waiting for that moment so they can have their little power trip," he said with a short, scornful laugh.

"She wanted him to be there, and so he was. And he gave her comfort, and peace, and that's all that matters," she replied curtly.

"How? By feeding her those stupid lines about oh, how things are meant to be this way and all that bullshit?"

"It gave her peace, dad!" she lashed out. Her hands no longer held his and, in the dim starlight, he managed to see how they now clutched something around her neck. "Why is that so hard for you to understand? Christ! This

is exactly why I didn't want to tell you! You've been hating on religion ever since mom died, and I—cannot—fucking—stand it. It might seem idiotic and illogical to you, but it meant so much to her, in the end. And this must be really hard for you to comprehend, but guess what: it means something to me, too."

He heard the tears in his daughter's voice, even though he could not make them out in the dark. He sensed her simmering ire, but he had to ask. He could not wrap his head around the idea that, after all this time, she would succumb to this cultish nonsense.

"Did she ask you to do it?" She got up and cast a look into the dark silver ocean, one hand still at her neck. He saw her cheeks shining softly with the reflection of the stars in the streams coming down from her eyes. She had never looked sadder and he felt a deep sting in his heart.

"Of course she didn't, dad," she replied. The rage had faded. She sounded tired, and nothing more. "She never would have."

She opened the wooden doors and left the balcony. He sat in the darkness, his daughter's words still ringing in his ears. His wife had been the brightest, most beautiful person he had ever known. She had always been religious, albeit in a casual, personal way, and she never made a fuss about it. He had always been agnostic, and often he went out of his way to make his arguments loud and clear for everyone. They met the first day of class, young kids playing at being adults, eager to start their PhDs in Mathematics, fumbling with love and fears and dreams. They would talk for hours under the open skies of the California desert, discussing life, death, God and numbers; and even on the nights when they could not agree on something, all arguments were cast aside, along with their clothes, and their naked bodies brokered an unspoken truce. During those never-ending summers, she was the one who taught him the way the stars, indifferent and eternal, were an open window into their souls – their patterns hidden in plain sight until he finally stopped to look and, guided by the loving hand that helped him draw the lines, found a glimpse of meaning that had always been there.

Of course she never would have. He turned his eyes up again, staring at the long river of the Milky Way trickling along the ment. The distant stars gazed back, striking their light on a different stream, warmer and saltier, that rushed

down his face. He walked to the beach, guided by the sound of the crashing waves, and saw his daughter standing with her feet in the warm water and her back to the shore, her hand still clenched over her chest. He stopped at her side, facing the silver dance of the stars over the dark ocean.

"You know, I gave that crucifix to your mom the day you were born," he said in a soft tone.

She stood there, silent."We had a big argument a few days before. She wanted to baptize you and I…well, I had my objections."

"Yes. She told me," she said. "It was really important for me to let you decide for yourself later. Your mom understood that, in the end, and she agreed to not baptizing you. She was always the gracious one, you know."
"Yeah, she was," she said, turning to face him.

"But I wanted her to know I supported her, and her beliefs. Even if I didn't always share them." He turned to face her. "She smiled at me so sweetly when I gave her the crucifix, and she always wore it, so I guess she knew that. I hope she did. She was better at knowing me, anyways."
"Of course she knew, dad," she said, and there was a hint of warmth in her voice, now.

"I didn't know you had it," he continued, turning again to the ocean, this time with a smile in his face. "But I'm really glad you do. And it still means the same, sweetie. You must know that. I'm here for you, no matter what."

She smiled, and leaned closer to him, resting her head on his shoulder. He put his arm around her and stared at the hints of plum and lilac appearing faintly on the horizon. They looked at the ocean for a few minutes more, the sound of the crashing waves and early birds and sleepy insects all around them. The stars bathed the beach with their dimming light, the comet rushed across the sky, and the Milky Way was now a barely visible, disappearing scar.

"I bet we can still catch a glimpse of that comet before dawn breaks."
"Yeah. I bet we can."

SEABIRD *by Juan Tognini*

Invincible

Ana Chao

I felt invincible in my predetermined compartmentalization of the world. In high school most of my friends had been victims of rape or sexual assault. I considered myself infallible since I only knew "good guys."

As Cubans we adopt others into our familia, most unrelated past the familial tendencies grown over a lifetime. The day it occurred I was with my female "cousins" and him.

Despite his growth spurts, he looked more like an awkward gazelle than a fox. It felt normal to share a room.

Denial was my silent companion. I hoped it was a nightmare, rather than my nebulous reality. He is unaware that I know. I played possum. A better alternative than destroying the green strings connecting our families. I blamed myself. After all, I could have avoided it, I could have—

For fourteen months I kept silent. During family events I didn't show my trepidation of him. I felt alien in the texture of my own skin. He began dating. I grew fearful for her, then hateful of him. While I, still lost in the tsunami he created, he gorged himself on normality.

At brunch with friends, I admitted to being sexually assaulted. Silence. I giggled, a nervous twitch, setting them off. All of which culminated in us crying, turning sweet coffee salty.

More months passed. I meditated, clearing my mind past the fear and hatred. I wrote and painted, my art a reflection of my subconscious. The more I poured on the page or canvas, the less pain I could hold.

GROWING *by Daniela Hernandez*

THE END *by Daniella Garcia*

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Thank you!

We at *Urbana* would like to thank everyone who contributed to and supported our work in this, our twelfth edition. This magazine was the labor and love of many, and couldn't have happened without their support.

We would like to thank our advisors, Emily Sendin and Omar Figueras, for their guidance, encouragement, and feedback.

We'd also like to thank Dr. Malou C. Harrison, Loretta Ovueraye, Robert Troy, Marcella Holness, Glenda Phipps, Omi Ramirez, and everyone in our Media Services and Network Services department. Thank you for allowing us to create.

Lastly, we would like to thank you, the reader.

Without you, we would just be throwing art into the void.

With love,
URBANA XII

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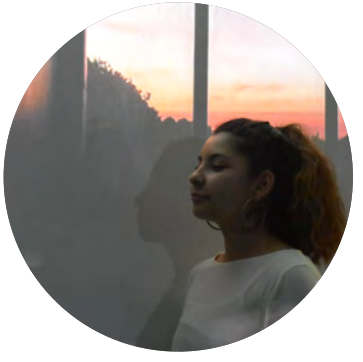

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Urbana Literary & Arts Magazine was founded in 2008 and its purpose throughout the years has been to promote artistic and creative work within our student body of over 3,000. Since its inception, our magazine has taken pride in its sole mission of serving as a medium of expression for all students. *Urbana Literary & Arts Magaine Vol. 12* was published in 2019, and is free to anyone at Miami-Dade College. Three hundred copies were printed.

The views expressed within these pages are those of the authors and contributors, 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 Magazine is published once a year by students currently enrolled in credit courses at Miami Dade College, InterAmerican Campus at 627 SW 27th Ave, Miami, FL 33135. For this year's volume, the staff decided to not have an official theme until it emerged from the submissions. Submissions were received electronically at urbana.iac@gmail.com. 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 MacBook Pro with Adobe InDesign CC 2018 software. The fonts used throughout the magazine are Legion Spartan, Minion Pro, and Avenir (regular, bold, and italics). The cover of this volume was printed on 100LB silk coated paper and the pages are printed on 100LB dull-coated paper. Moreover, no contributor and/or staff member of *Urbana Literary & Arts Magazine* received any monetary reward while engaging in this extracurricular activity. We can be reached at (305) 237-

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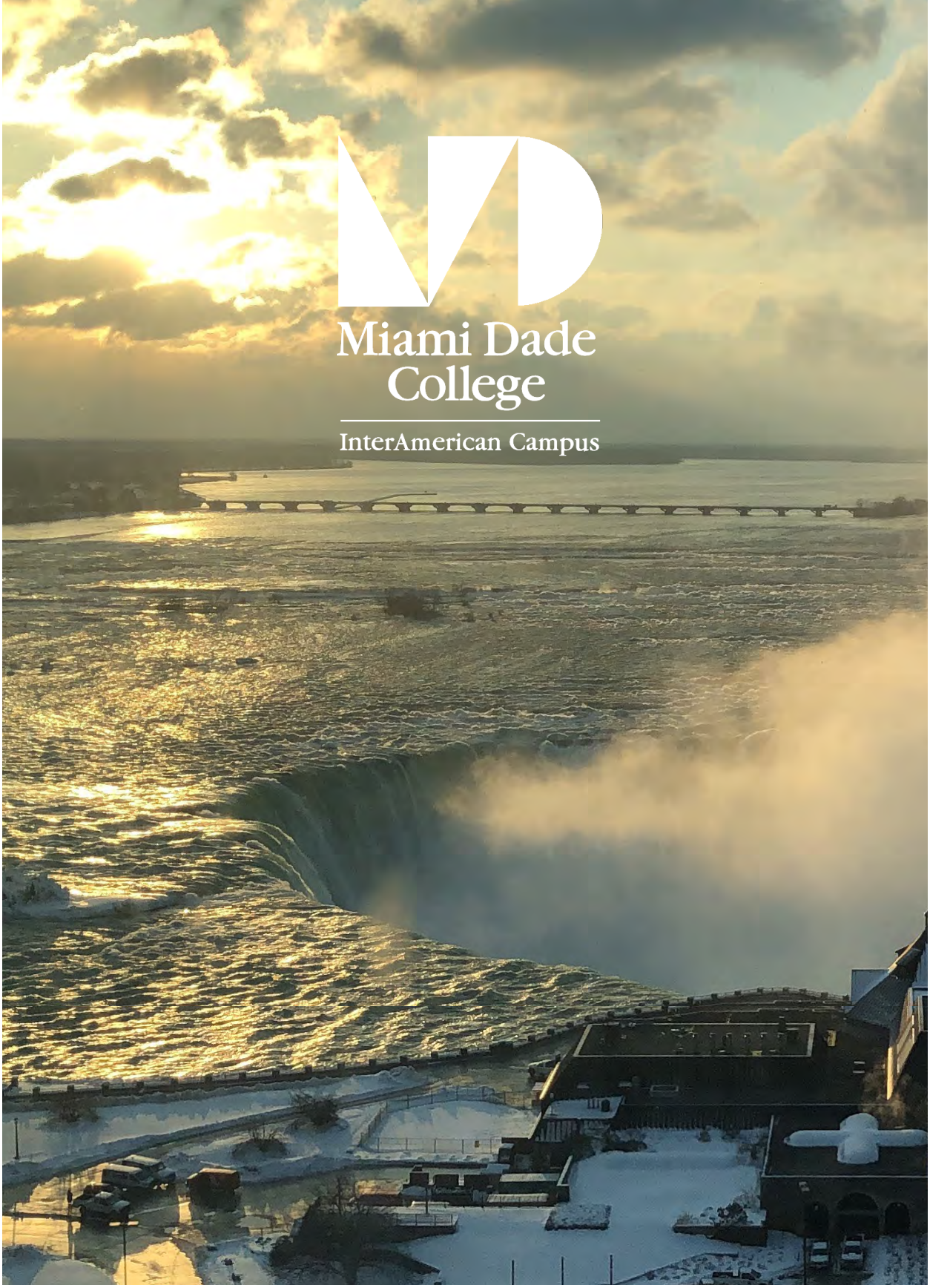
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