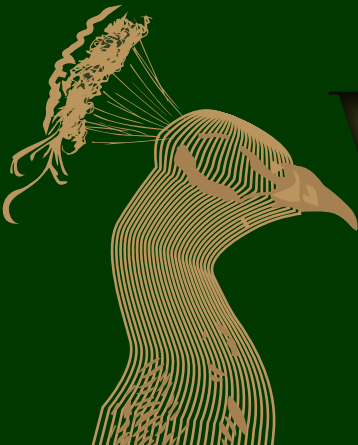


# OUR VOICES

JOURNAL OF CULTURE AND DIVERSITY  
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY  
VOLUME X. 2023





*“Yes, I will be a writer and make all  
of you live again in my words.”*

[Carlos Bulosan]

American Is in the Heart:  
A Personal History



# OUR VOICES

in collaboration with

13<sup>th</sup> annual **DIVERSITY**  
**MONOLOGUES**

Dear Reader,

Every person faces a challenge each day. Whether it be the struggles of being a person of color to the everyday brawl of fighting your own fears to so much more. We all fight different battles and it is a matter of how we choose to encounter these barriers that mean the most.

Every person's struggles are a part of their story and journey. Our Voices offers an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to share their pieces and give us the chance to view things in their perspective.

As a member of the underrepresented community at Gonzaga University, I wanted to ensure that we were providing a platform for people to be heard and be seen by our community. Throughout time, many of us have been seen as invisible and the minority, but I hope you see that through this journal, we are proving that we are as much a part of this community as the "majority".

We want to emphasize the importance of embracing the differences between every piece and recommend that you view all of these stories with an open-mind that we are being vulnerable to you, so we can show our strength and be heard within the community.

We ask that you do not judge us for how we are, but find ways to relate to us or see things in a different perspective.

Culture and diversity are the two things that will always unite all people together, thus we hope that this edition of Our Voices can make a positive impact on you.

Sincerely,

Dominic Pe Benito

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# POETRY.

[Marianne Nacanaynay]

all the great writers swear  
on killing your darlings,

so I looked at what I held dear,  
my eyes dragging the room,  
and in my clean sweep I  
watched

as you went around the party  
telling everyone how pretty you  
are!  
sunlight melting your teeth,  
bones figuring your outline  
while I tried to figure you out.

I pulled my arrow back  
and shot it forward with a hung  
breath,  
to hear you gasp and point and  
scream  
at the soft brown girl in the  
corner,  
blood seeping out from under  
her skirt.

I stared her down into fractured  
glass  
and sighed in content at my  
broken reflection.

is this what you meant?  
when you schemed her  
execution?  
she was my breath of fresh air,  
stolen in blinks,  
my sense of self—

I loved her,  
so I killed her;  
marooned in the final banality of  
homogenous peace.

[Amari Troutt]

## Broken Heart Syndrome

They say a closed mouth doesn't  
get fed.  
So I starved myself.  
And sometimes I regret it.  
As I was truly hungry for your  
love.

It didn't take me long to realize  
That my love was deeply rooted  
And my mind heavily polluted

Because if the silence wasn't  
enough to kill me  
My illusions definitely would  
I wasn't ready to feed myself a  
reality without you

My heart sang in a tune you  
never knew

[朱水晶]

## Colored

I walk around like a traitor in  
the midst  
knowing they won't understand  
how I exist.  
Unintentionally segregated  
house,  
thinking I'd be a quiet timid  
mouse.

I'm sick of running through the  
dark,  
praying you'll miss your mark.  
Curled up in a ball on the floor,  
praying one day I'll be more.

The anger bubbles up inside,  
a constant anger I have to hide.  
Spitting, boiling, burning,  
while inside I'm just hurting.

I bite back the rage, keeping a  
level gaze,  
yet everyday, there's more red  
haze.  
I know I'm going to burst.  
Let's see if it's you or me first.

I'm tired of being tired,  
I'm tired of being wired.  
wired for fight or flight.  
tired of the constant night.

I'm sitting in my little red haze,  
letting the anger fill up my gaze.  
Yet sleepiness fills my bones,  
wishing I could be alone.

I don't have the energy to fight  
this war.  
Because it happens from shore  
to shore,  
I'm ready to lay down my arms  
Because my words will just  
bring harm.

I'll keep my head down in the  
light,  
walking with timid fright.  
I can't spark this match today,  
Cause the match will burn the  
world away.

What a beautiful fire it will be!



Sadly I won't get to see,  
because the whiteness will  
overwhelm  
my vision at the helm.

Now it's getting hard to breathe,  
as all of us begin to seethe.  
I wish I could go back to living  
in a box,  
unaware of being a white faux.

But my skin has always been  
yellow,  
and I can't allow myself to be  
mellow.  
So I'll just sit here in this segre-  
gated house,  
acting the part of a timid mouse.

[Piper Fine]

## Dismember Me Gently, Please

Someone help;  
I can't—  
My body is incoherent;  
a mind of its own,  
yet again out of my control;  
a jittery carcass  
possessed by Something  
frenzied, rabid—  
but innocent,  
only seeking to escape  
my corporeal form;  
Dismember me gently, please;  
Take off my skin and  
peel away this desperation;  
Cut off my fingers,  
Unscrew my wrists,  
Unstitch my ankles  
Unfasten my joints  
Crack open my skull and  
pluck the delicate fruit from  
its chamber;  
Exhausted;  
My body a beautiful wreckage;  
Finally, relief, from the violent  
disagreement  
between my body and brain;

Finally, Something exorcized,  
Something rid;  
Finally—stillness.

[Gwen Mitchell]

## Fomorian

I rebel in flesh,  
In sight,  
In mind.  
My bones and skin  
Contort around and against you.  
Blushed, highlighted, founda-  
tional.  
Black eyes made to be seen.  
My chin disgusts,  
My stomach revolts.  
My hair, my feet, my hands,  
All lumped together  
In strange  
Unassuming patterns.  
But those with black eyes  
enchant.  
A power dances on my  
Lipstick-lined mustache.  
Reviled, my image commands  
Your mind,  
Your sight,  
Your flesh.  
My name lies forever on your  
lips.  
You boil our similarities away  
And return to gawk

At the mystical  
Otherworldly  
Freakish  
Miracle.

[朱水晶]

## His Name

I coo Death's name like a love  
poem,  
A sweet tender voice for no one.  
His listens with attentive ears,  
hearing all my fears.

I wish another's name fit better,  
but the way it rolls off my  
tongue,  
his name is second to none,  
and our love could never turn  
bitter.

I whisper his name into the dark.  
He always leaves such a brilliant  
mark,  
a star that shines too bright,  
a star that always brings me  
light. .

Somedays I scream his name,  
such a beautiful name, it's  
almost a shame  
that only he hears my cries,  
while you all hear lies.

I don't know if another can  
replace him.  
Maybe in a different eon,  
but for now I coo Deaths name,  
for it's never in vain

He runs to my bed,  
a constant thought in my head,  
Yet he remains just out of reach  
for me, but he's all I can see.  
I can barely breathe.

Yet sweet air fills my lungs,  
and I clutch to the bottoms  
rungs.  
Death won't take my hand  
today,  
but with me he will lay.

[Sydney Abrahamson-Fernandez]

## Let Us Be

"I am brown and I'm a woman

I am outspoken and "over the top"

I'm too opinionated and I need to calm down

but I am so much more than what you see and perceive

I am outspoken because I'm underrepresented

I am over the top because you won't notice me if I'm not

I'm opinionated because my voice is drown out and invalidated

I need to calm down because the frustrations of my reality make you feel "uncomfortable"

I am a minority woman within our white male dominated society

and I am here to take up space, and here to be heard, acknowledged, and respected  
I am someone with worth and I deserve to be valued the same as any other

So yes, I'll be loud, I'll be frustrated, and outspoken.

But most importantly I'll be ME and represent us because they won't let us be"

[Andrea Galvin]

## Mabuhay

I'm from an archipelago of islands  
Of scorching sand, sparkling like shiny diamonds  
Vast, vivacious verdure and vegetation  
The ultimate vacation destination.

Milky coconuts the size of bowling balls  
Streets lit with color and music that enthalls  
Tasteful art clings to the jipneys and buildings  
As fast tricycles, with their bells, release "dings."

Growing a strong sense of the Commandments Ten  
Remembering with patriotic pride when  
Manny Pacquiao swung with another kapow  
And Miss Universe's win ushered a wow.

Plucking saccharine strawberries in a field,  
Riding sturdy, valiant steeds, stopping to yield  
To Mindanao's purple, majestic mountains  
And sightseeing gardens of fruits and fountains

Of sunset sailing through spraying salty mist  
To the sizzling Sun, that leaves surfers sun-kissed.  
Softly, silks and satins sway, swish, swash, and swoosh  
To the beat of the shore's thrusting waves' whoosh.

[Syvana Arwood]

## Rain Dance

We stood on the soil that our  
ancestors stood on  
We sang in the tongues that our  
ancestors sang in  
We chanted words with more  
power than we were ever taught  
to understand  
We danced, unafraid and free...

The union of these Native girls  
shook the Earth  
So moving, the sky cried  
Eternally bonded together  
Sisters, like our ancestors

- Syvana Arwood

[Kaitlin Le]

## Untitled

You love me so different  
You don't love me the same  
The way you love me is like  
You love me for what I am  
Not what I am  
Or rather who

I love when you see the little  
parts of me  
My little nooks and crannies  
But you boiled me down so little  
That is is generalized  
And something that is not me

What is representative as me as  
a whole  
As "Asian"  
You think noodles, anime, kpop  
Chopsticks, vacation,  
fetishization

Your love is not kind  
You love the idea of me  
And cannot comprehend that I

am more than what I am  
I am a what, not a who

And it is not me  
Who states they are so cultured  
and diverse  
Who loves all things "non-  
American"  
That is so fun with new sayings  
to rehearse

It is not me who grew up on the  
receiving end of your hatred  
Of your teasing and your  
pushing  
With now love that seems all  
too belated

You are a supporter, an  
advocate, an ally  
You say so proudly  
But you do not love me  
Like the way I wish to be loved.



[Antonio Campos]

## Western Progress

Some think the frontier days  
have passed away,  
That the wild West is dead and  
gone.

But, if this is true, it must be  
asked,  
Was it lost or was it won?

The lovely mountain majesties,  
So fair, pristine, and old,  
Became to foreign prospectors,  
The sources of mere pocketfuls  
of gold.

The vast frontiers and endless  
prairies,  
Once an Eden yet untamed,  
Are crisscrossed now with rail-  
roads and map-lines,  
For which we all should feel  
ashamed!

A land as rich as Canaan,  
Generously filled with spoils,

Has succumbed at last to human  
hands,  
To our modern, bloody, and  
sweaty toils.

Sometimes fortune is our mis-  
fortune.

Sometimes our ends are not our  
goals.

Why should we demand the  
world,  
When it costs our very souls?

[Meagan Graves]

## What I Can't Say Aloud

I've never been one to go "out"  
on  
The weekend. No pub crawls or  
Clubs or other words that  
connote  
Violence, by substance or  
otherwise,  
But my uncle got married last  
summer.  
The joint late night bachelor  
party was  
In Toronto, during Pride Month,  
in a  
Gay bar, surrounded by all the  
people  
Who cared for them most – a  
celebration  
Of love and identity for all,  
despite  
Every overhanging despite. The  
night  
Was as joyous as you can get  
in days  
As bleak as these ones. But it's  
after

Moments like this one that I  
start going  
Back there: The gay bar. My  
family. The  
Fun that got so big it made me  
feel small.  
It's after moments like this one  
I start  
Wishing we could have  
celebrated the  
Wedding in a place made secure  
and  
Secret and utterly unreachable  
like Fort  
Knox or a bird's empty nest or  
the face  
Of the moon so that when I  
remember  
The crowded dance floors and  
open doors  
My skin won't crawl and I'll  
stop waiting  
For new catastrophe to come  
shooting

Down the doors a year after the  
wedding  
happened. It's after moments  
like this  
(guns and guns and guns and  
blood  
Spilling lavender and lime across  
strobe  
Lit floors in places once safe  
now called  
Crime scenes) that I realize my  
body is  
Home to an obituary waiting to  
happen –  
And now it's night again, much  
like that  
One, but I'm not in Toronto at  
Pride Month  
With people who love me  
because I'm  
Outside and exposed like a  
livewire and  
I'm not in a club but I can hear  
people

Partying merrily as I'm walking  
back to  
My car alone and clutching keys  
between  
Each finger like a shaking  
Wolverine as I  
Weigh the odds if I'd die faster  
out here  
Or in the belly of a bar. On most  
nights  
Like this I wonder if this street  
is the right  
One to walk down, or if I'm  
going to end up  
Like one of the others like me  
who was  
Carved up like carrion and got  
left to rot.  
And I have to wonder if I'll ever  
be brave  
Enough to step foot in a bar  
without recalling  
Kindergarten lockdown drills  
and knowing,

cont. What I Can't Say Aloud

Even then, in the case of a  
shooting there'd  
Be nothing I could do. I have to  
wonder if  
The carnation pinned to my  
lapels was left  
Like a kiss from Dorothy or like  
a cross to  
Bear. I have to wonder if I'm  
target  
Practice – If They can smell it  
on me, if  
They can see who I am. I have to  
Wonder what the worth of pride  
is  
When all I keep seeing is people  
like me  
Landing six feet below. Please,  
all I  
want right now is a witness: I'm  
living  
In silence so no one can hear  
me; like  
Schrodinger's cat, so no one can  
see if

I'm in or I'm out so I stay a  
moving target.  
So I won't have someone follow  
me home  
(On nights like this) and end up  
on the  
Mourning news as the latest  
struck  
Down in her prime because I  
love so much  
Someone tore a hole through  
my heart and  
Left me to bleed. If I am a secret,  
then  
I'm still at least living, if only a  
half-slip of  
A shadow of what they all say  
youth should  
Be, but then most of Them don't  
keep  
Running tallies of who is safe  
and who  
Knows what and how much and  
who has

Been hinted to and who might  
kill them  
If ships escape bottles and lips  
drink down  
what's left. I can't go to bars and  
I can't go to  
churches and I can't go to school  
but I'm  
Doing it right, is what I keep  
telling myself,  
If only so that my parents won't  
find out  
I'm gone from another stock  
email that  
gets sent to junk. I know there is  
joy in the  
truth, and love and acceptance;  
Pride if I  
Only just say it, and I have when  
it's quiet but  
I want to say it and not be  
afraid. I want to.  
So badly it hurts. But then I  
remember the

Bodies left bleeding on the  
dancefloor.  
After moments like these and  
nights like  
This I have to wonder if the only  
choice  
We've been given is to live free  
and die or  
Linger with survivor's guilt and  
tell the only  
Stories left to tell to an audience  
of no one.

[Marianne Nacanaynay]

## What I Did This Summer

I withered away in bed,  
steaming in a 10x10 room,  
letting my anger boil me alive  
as I thought about

scraping the skin away from  
their foreheads  
so I could scream into their  
skulls,  
my fingers crossed behind their  
ears,  
hoping my hot breath browns  
their skin into empathy.

but they turn to me and smile,  
cheshire, glossy in tooth and  
eye—  
oh but I, but I am not like that!  
she  
will say, and he  
will hold her hand and nod, and  
they  
will point to all the “activism”  
they’ve done

in a handy-dandy bulleted list:

- that they used
- to contour
- their resumes.

as I read over it,  
I see they did none of it for me  
—with me—  
and I wonder if they ever will.

[Emma Larson]

## Where'd You Go

i thought I've been keeping it  
sane  
thought I could see my own  
reflection  
in the rain  
my lights been dim  
in this life of sins  
speeding with a blindfold on  
while she explores my limbs

my skin has been stripped  
while my mind runs on a script

what we built was bigger  
than the sum of two  
I had to go and count on  
my own  
I must find my purpose alone

[Gwen Mitchell]

## Worship

Luna  
Tu cara preciosa sees me  
Peeking oculta from behind  
shades  
Hovering on your sea of silk  
Perfectamente free from guilt  
Your unwinking gaze me llena  
Con la ansiedad that I will  
Never feel close to your  
Essence

Must I drown my mind,  
Drag Psyche deep into el mar  
And let Cupid's wings fill  
My lungs con un viento  
De euforia pura?  
Must I blind myself  
And allow mis sensaciones  
propias  
A guiarme a la verdad  
Que me prometiste  
Con tus palabras dulces  
Y tus besos suaves?

Pero perhaps you lie.  
Maybe tus palabras dulces  
Y tus besos suaves  
Y tus miradas sensibles

Are your snares.  
You drive them through my  
heart  
And pull my yearnings closer.  
While I await el paraiso  
You said would come,  
You pull me closer and closer  
To the frozen lake  
That you call your home.

O tal vez este es solo  
La racionalización  
De mi comunidad  
De mi familia  
De mi escuela  
De mi universidad  
Tal vez what I need  
Es bucear a tu raíz  
Y buscar por tus secretos.

Las dudas have pulled the  
Nerveless passion from me.  
Clouds cover your face  
As the sky darkens  
And el mundo spins away  
From your promises once more.









pg. 34 - 69

# PROSE.

[Antonio Campos]

## Ashes to Ashes

"Bless me, father, for I have sinned. It has been... about eleven years... since my last confession." I could not see the face of the time-worn priest through the dark wicker of the screen, but I distinctly heard an inhalation of air in response to the lengthy duration of time. It was the only sound in the vast, empty vaults of St. Louis Cathedral that shadowy night in July. Neither man nor beast seemed to stir beneath the oppressive humidity of the old French Quarter of New Orleans.

"After so long, what has brought you back to the fold, my son?" The priest seemed to whisper, his voice friendly, but distant in the murky moonlight. "What urgent confession has brought you here at such an hour?"

"I... I do not know if I really require a confession," I panicked, my mind feeling jumbled and irrational. "But I had hoped that we might just talk. I... I am very scared, father, and very confused. I am sorry for waking you up like this..."

"It is all right, my son," the priest assured with a yawn. "I was quite the night owl... in my youth at least. Now, what is it you would like to talk about?"

I hesitated, "Father... do you believe that spirits—that people, I mean—can truly rise from the dead?" The air in the room suddenly felt more still and more torturously hot. "I mean, I know about Jesus and Lazarus coming back from the dead, but they were both holy men. What about the bad ones, father? What about those unfortunate,

tortured souls? What about..."

"Did you pull me out of bed to tell me that you have been conversing with some kind of evil spirit? A zombie, perhaps, or a vampire?" The priest seemed dismayed and slightly irritated. It was true that I had hammered upon the rectory door in the middle of the night. "Perhaps, my son," he yawned again, "you have been having a bit too much libation on Bourbon Street. Maybe things would seem clearer in the morning..."

"No, father," I hesitated, "I mean, I don't know. I don't drink, father, or use hard drugs. Perhaps you would understand things better if I started at the beginning..."

I could hear the priest adjusting his seat in the darkness, "Yes, perhaps that would be best, my son." His voice was calm, but I could sense growing impatience. "Father," I sighed, at last coming to the point, "it all started about one year ago, when I returned home from the army. I had just completed a second tour in Afghanistan, and I finally came back to New Orleans to live permanently. I had inherited my great aunt's home out by Lake Pontchartrain—an old, white, clapboard "shotgun" house with antebellum columns at the front. I loved my great aunt, father, and I used to stay with her as a boy, but she had been ailing for several years before she passed, and I was very grateful to receive her home. I thought that it would be the perfect place to start a family..."

*cont. Ashes to Ashes*

"You are married?" The priest questioned, thinking it pertinent.

"No father," I began, "at least, not yet. Actually, father, I wonder if that was part of the problem. The house was so immense, you see, for a solitary person. It had that one long line of rooms, stretching from the front of the house to the back door, and you could peer all the way down the length of the home when the doors were open. It was eerie to have such a large space to oneself, and yet the place never seemed quite empty..."

If the priest noticed that I kept to the past tense when discussing the old shotgun property, he did not comment on the fact.

"As I have said, father, the house was quite aged—it was built at the end of the nineteenth century, when all of the land around it was cotton fields and swamplands. The place was in bad need of repairs, and an old, black oak tree, dripping with Spanish moss, threatened to crash through the front room at any time. The tree was half-dead, father, and a disease of some kind was rotting away at its core. Naturally, it needed to be removed..."

"Naturally," whispered the priest in agreement, proving his attentiveness.

"I called out a contractor, who marked the tree for cutting," I hesitated, "but, that evening I received a little note on my doorstep—it was neither signed nor addressed; it was not even in

an envelope. The note warned me not to remove the tree; in fact, it said that the tree was cursed. I thought that it was just some conservationist busybody with a green thumb, or maybe someone from the historical society. I didn't care. It was my tree on my property now, and it had to go. The contractor came the next morning to chop down the old oak tree, and I saved some money by digging out the stump myself."

The priest had a touch of asthma, and I could hear him breathing in the still, heavy air. I could not decide if his raspy breaths were comforting or discomforting in the wavering glow of the moonlight.

"Beneath the stump, father, jumbled in the roots of the old, dead tree, I found it," I shivered,

"a small, black box with a cast-iron lid, rusted and cracked by the elements. I was surprised by the discovery, obviously, and I hoped that it might contain something valuable, so I took the box into my house and used a knife to pry it open. The box had been sealed tight, and when I finally broke the seal, the contents of the box spewed all over my front room and dissipated throughout the house—ashes, father, were what the box contained—and charred, black fragments of bone. I did my best to clean everything up, father, and I threw out the remains; I didn't want to have anything to do with them, and I didn't want to hassle with the historical society about the old chest. Only later did I realize I had disturbed some kind of cast-iron coffin—I had thought that all of the bodies

cont. Ashes to Ashes

around here were buried above ground...”

The priest’s breathing grew raspier, but he did not utter a word.

“That was when the dreams started, father, or at least I thought that they were dreams. Night after night, I began to hear noises—to see things. I told you that I could see everything in my house all at once, and I started to believe that I could witness a dark figure in the nighttime, moving in my direction. I cannot say ‘walking,’ father, because it did not seem to walk—it trudged, it slunk, it crawled. It would begin at the front door, nearest to the spot where the oak tree had stood, and then it would move toward me, room after room and doorway after doorway, toward

my bed in the rear of the house. And then, the figure would suddenly combust! It would burst into flames and be gone!”

The priest was startled, and he coughed loudly at my exclamation. He seemed to be having trouble breathing; the air, indeed, was very heavy in the old cathedral, and thick with some faint odor.

“This happened to me several times, father,” I explained, “and I was growing more and more scared. I even thought about going to a friend’s house, but what reason could I give? I am a veteran, father, and I have seen strange and terrible things before! And this, this thing, it was nonsense. It was disgusting and absurd. And then, one night, it was no longer a dream. I woke up around midnight, and I



smelled real smoke. My kitchen, my bedroom, my entire house was on fire, and I could feel the flames all around me, burning everything. Everything! And, I could hear the fire engine arriving outside, and the calls of the paramedics and firefighters! But nearer at hand, among the flames, I could see him—a old, black man, clothed in rags, unbothered by the smoke and fire. There was a noose about his neck, father, and cuts on his hands and face. I had never seen him before in my life, but he stared at me with some mixture of disinterest and menace. I know it is hard to believe, father, and the paramedics thought that I had been hallucinating when they rescued me, and I related the story. But there were rope marks on my wrists and neck—in addition to my burns—and I could not otherwise account for

them. My aunt's old house was totally ruined, father, and the firemen said that it had been the hottest inferno they had ever witnessed in a domestic blaze. Actually, the police had to question me if I had any illegal accelerants stored inside. Of course, I did not."

Yet again, the priest did not answer me, and I really began to question if he was still alert. I was too focused on my story to notice that the air had grown yet heavier in the church, and the odor was growing stronger—somebody must have been barbecuing meat in a nearby restaurant on Jackson Square.

"An insurance adjuster came by my house to review the damages, father, and he asked me if I knew about the history of the property," I fanned myself with

cont. Ashes to Ashes

a copy of the missal that lay inside the confessional; I barely noticed how it was becoming more and more stuffy. "He told me that something horrible had happened at the house almost a hundred years ago, around the time my great aunt was born. A poor vagabond—a black man—had been caught trying to break into the home. Rather than calling the police, the neighbors decided to 'try,' the man themselves, and, finding him guilty, they lynched him. They hanged him father, my ancestors and their neighbors; they lacerated his hands and face when he tried to fight back, and then they burned the body so that nobody could know." I began to cough now, but I was too agitated to know why, "They hanged the poor man on that live oak tree, and then the buried his burned remains

among its roots. His name," I coughed, "was Balthasar Jones."

No sooner had I said the name than a bright light suddenly illuminated the darkness of the church, causing me to flinch. The fire that had spontaneously ignited allowed me to see the billows of smoke that had strangely filled the church, boiling and swirling like water in a cauldron. I swept aside the partition to see that the elderly priest was slumped against the wall of the confessional, gasping for air and clutching at his heart. A dark figure could be seen now, emerging from the flames at the center of the revered cathedral. The tortured man had great gashes on his hands and on his face; the swinging noose strangled about his neck. His skin was not a natural shade but blackened

like charcoal and smoldering embers.

Invigorated by the strange and terrible apparition, the priest convulsed in his confessional and widened his eyes, "Cursed..." he sputtered, suggesting some line of scripture, "...unto the third and fourth generations... we are all doomed to become but ashes and dust, yet there is still time yet... for forgiveness..."

The fire was spreading throughout the cathedral now, as a cloud of smoke blotted out the moonlight, yet, like the burning bush of old, nothing seemed to be consumed by the flames. I could feel their oppressive heat upon my skin; taste the burning flesh in my mouth. No, the fires could not harm the holy church, but the

inferno could certainly consume me!

"Balthasar Jones!" I exclaimed as I fell to me knees, and the burned husk of a man contorted his hollow eyes to view me. "Balthasar, I know that it was my family—my ancestors who did this to you. Please! Please forgive them," I begged, collapsing toward the flames.

"Balthasar, forgive me!"

[Red Kwenda]

## The Demon

Let me tell you about The Demon.  
The Demon appeared to me on a clear, sunny day.

"Howdy!" she said with a smile.  
"How would you rate your body?"

"About average," I said reflexively.

"No, no," she retorted. "Don't worry, I'm not going to kill you for answering incorrectly. All I want to know is if there's a body part of yours you wouldn't mind giving me. Not something you want, of course. I would feel bad taking something from you that brings you even an ounce of joy." Her words dripped sarcasm, but I could tell by her tone that she was serious.

I thought it over. "Well," I said, "It seems you're out of luck. I like every part of me just the way it is."

"Is that so? Every part brings you joy?"

I nodded.

"Well then. If I can find but a single part of you that brings you no joy at all, you consent for me to take it? I would of course replace said part with another of your choosing."

I nodded my assent. Besides, I was confident that she wouldn't find what she was looking for. After all, the only body part that had ever actively tried to kill me had been urgently suppressed and removed after failing to detonate in time, and even if I still had it, I would have handed it over to her without question. That left me with the question of what The Demon would do with a swollen appendix.

All that to say, I was pretty confident in my satisfaction with the body parts I had left.

The Demon began pacing around me, prodding and poking me. Her hands first landed in my hair, cut their way through my curls, and placed their fingertips on my scalp.

“Your brain,” she inquired.

“You don’t need that, do you? I mean, don’t you want to enjoy a fireworks show with your family at a Fourth of July party, or to sink your teeth into a juicy, fresh tomato, as if it were an apple or a mango? Wouldn’t you like a brain that didn’t tell your face to make expressions that scared other people?”

Easy. “What about Versace, Holst, Masuda, or Fox?” I challenged. “How could I watch

Shingeki no Kyojin without singing along to a Linked Horizon opening, or chant along to a Sabaton track while playing Europa Universalis IV?” I shook her fingers loose from my hair. “If you took my brain, I couldn’t throw myself into a composition with the same vigor, enjoying an all-consuming concentration realer than driving a car. No, I wouldn’t love music the same way, and music alone has been the single greatest source of joy in my life.”

The Demon began pacing again. This time, her hands rested on my chest.

“Now these!” She said. “If these were different, life would be easier for you, wouldn’t it? For starters, you could use the bathroom of your choice without question. People wouldn’t look at you as if you

## cont. The Demon

were trying to rob them. You wouldn't have to ask someone if they were attracted to your gender, because you could comfortably assume that they were!"

This one was a little trickier. "I've spent years trying to accept my body," I told her. I was actually getting angry. "What is the saying about the eye of the beholder? And you're really gonna dictate to me that I dislike my shape so much that I'd ask you to change it?"

"Are you forgetting how this works?" she cut in. "I can read your thoughts. What, you thought I just walked up to some random asshole and started asking questions? What kind of demon would I be if I operated like that? Besides, you haven't told me how your chest brings

you joy."

"As I said, I've spent a long time learning to accept my body. I've reached that point. If I removed even one part, the whole thing would be out of balance. Besides, my chest is the one part of my body that's the perfect size. The rest of me is completely out of proportion."

"... In everyone else's eyes, you mean. Not out of proportion in yours, surely?" It took me a moment to realize my mistake.

"I was worried you had me," she said, before I could recover, "but you've given me hope. Thank you!"

For a third time, The Demon paced around me. Again, her hands found my chest, but this time, they seemed to reach deeper.

"Now this," she said, jabbing my heart with a finger. "You've spent many days crying over this. I mean, your appendix almost killed you, but this made you want to kill yourself!" She placed her palm across my chest, my heartbeat bouncing between her hand and my soul. Her voice dropped to a whisper. "I could pluck it from you as easily as plucking fruit from a bush, and with it, I could take all those years of self-doubt and loathing; prayers in vain to spiteful God who refused to make you like everyone else; all the names of those you loved but who you knew would never – could never – love you back, who in learning of your love would chase you away with sticks, stones, and words. Shall I recite some of them? Perhaps after a reminder you might be more willing to part with your heart. Who shall

we start with? Oh, I know! How about C—"

"ENOUGH!" I screamed pushing her back. In tales like this, I knew she could have eaten me then, but I didn't care. "There were moments, brief moments where my heart brought me joy. The Charter Bus, the Concert Hall, I wouldn't give those moments back for anything. You're right, I almost plucked out my own heart myself, but because of those moments, I knew my heart was capable of bringing me joy. And unlike my appendix, my heart never poisoned my body, never threatened to explode in my chest, though it's caused me no end of pain over the years."

The Demon was in shock. "I . . . underestimated you," she said. "For that I am sorry. You passed.

*cont.* The Demon

I can see you truly love every part of you.” She began to leave. I had slid in my headphones and was about to hit “play” when The Demon turned back to me. She spoke in a small, doubtful voice.

“This is a longshot, I know. But you wouldn’t, perhaps. . . would you be willing to part with your skin?”

I sighed. “Do you want it hand-washed, machine-tumbled, or dry-cleaned?”



[Antonio Campos]

## The Gypsy's Requiem

### La Ciudad—The City

*¡Sevilla!* Ah, noble Sevilla, that wonderful Spanish city in the heart of Andalucía, resplendent with its chronicles of long-forgotten lore, its mysterious oriental charms, and its lovely occidental mysteries. Behold the *Real Alcázar*, the royal palace, with its Moorish archways, its merlon-studded walls, and its roaring lion atop the ancient portcullis. Behold the magnificence of *La Giralda*, one of the tallest belltowers in all Christendom, the twin of the great minaret of distant Marrakech, yet now adorned with signs and symbols of the Catholic Kings and the weathervane of the great navigatrix. At last, behold the *Torre del Oro*, the Golden Tower of the ancient Almohad caliphate, with its sturdy

octagonal walls watching every corridor of the city, observing every entrance and exit along the River Guadalquivir with panopticon-like charm.

Ah, Seville, that city of stories! That city of Carmen, and Don Juan, and the famous Barber—that legendary factotum who bears the metropolis's very toponym. That city of Moors and Christians, of Saharan gold and Toledo steel, of wealthy champions and cynical philosophers. Ah, beauteous, generous, quixotic Seville! *Ah, mysterious, shadowy, strange Seville! ¡Sevilla, la Perla de Andalucía!*

### *El Gitano*—The Gypsy

Manfri, the gypsy, knew the stories of his city well. He knew the stories that he

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

was supposed to know—the histories that had been shared in the time of his grandfather, and even in the time of his grandfather's grandfather. He knew the stories that he was not supposed to know—the trysts and assignations between young lovers in the night; the heated fights of noblemen that occurred behind closed doors; the innermost thoughts of struggling artists as they threatened to defenestrate themselves into the cobbled streets below. But Manfri also knew other stories. He knew the tales that nobody understood save himself—the tales sung upon the strings of violins by candlelight; the stories told by the birds as they chirped atop the belltower; the legends squeaked by the weathervanes as they twisted in the wind, or whistled by the flames of torches spluttering.

Manfri was an old gypsy, born of an ancient Bohemian line. His age could not be counted in years—for he, himself, did not know how many revolutions he had made about the sun. However, the lines of his creased forehead and the wispy white hairs hanging upon his shoulders spoke volumes of his long and turbulent life. The gentle gleam of his yellowed teeth told others that they had nothing to fear, and yet his eyes nevertheless contained the slightest shade, not of menace, but of singular slyness and otherworldly guile.

Some of Seville's younger residents believed that Manfri was a clairvoyant capable of reading the thoughts of the dead. Some of the city's older inhabitants claimed that he was immortal, for the passage

of decades appeared to have no effect upon him. Indeed, even the city's most autumnal denizens could recall Manfri, the gypsy, just as he was today, in the distant annals of their youths.

Manfri would wait upon the street corner where *Calle de Segovia* crossed the Alley of Don Remondo, positioned halfway between the Roman ruins of *Calle Mármol*es and the tomb of Christopher Columbus at the heart of the Seville Cathedral. Then, as the sun descended into the distant hills and the shadows crept across the faces of the Roman marbles, he would establish himself upon a three-legged stool at the corner, his face as stony and as shadowy as the visages of the ancient gods. From the fringed and torn tendrils of an antique shroud, he

would unwrap his prized violin, and from the back of his sturdy leather boot, he would retrieve his musical bow. Then, with a heavy sigh, Manfri would put the instrument to his shoulder and begin to play long, slow, sonorous, nocturnal melodies, that augmented the tropical warmth and enriched the black shadows of the night.

He would sit thus, in intense melodic contemplation, for countless hours as the spirits of the notes swirled about him, and the harps of the ancients whispered down the alleyways. Manfri's eyes would wink in sleepiness and water with emotion as the archaic chords of his Bohemian ancestry faded into the night, as soft and as tender as the bosom of a newlywed.

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

The street about Manfri was never quiet. Rather, the sacrosanct atmosphere of the old gypsy's music would be interrupted and overwhelmed by the profane words of passersby and the discordant rows of drunks in the night. On evening strolls, ladies and gentlemen would pass by the old gypsy without a word, a sigh, or a glance, and yet their shuffling steps were sufficient to spoil the old man's sanctuary. Boisterous knaves and genteel aristocrats alike were attracted to the numerous tapas bars that lined the *Calle de Segovia*, and their raucous shouts would disturb the very melodies that their parsimonious coins prolonged.

Indeed, for all his wealth of wisdom, Manfri was a poor and solitary man, supported only through the generosity of others.

He could be destroyed, too, by others' neglect.

For all of the varnish of his pristine violin, Manfri's toes shown through the tips of his boots, and his aged head was bared to the elements. His lips had not known the taste of fine wine or bread in many days, save for a few parsimonious drops of the Sacrament, and his stomach growled with hunger for less ecclesiastical sustenance. Yet, for all this, Manfri, the poor gypsy, knew the sound of beauty, and he knew how to create it. Manfri, the old gypsy, knew the value of charity, and he survived—or rather subsisted—upon it.

For the world, this night was not so very different. The gypsy played his violin on his happy street corner in Seville. The

nighttime pedestrians walked along the road, racing from bar to bar, from scene to scene, and from friend to friend. The walls and parapets of *La Giralda* stood guard over the magnificent city, obscured by the night and yet prominent in the mind.

Yet, for Manfri, this night was like no other.

It had a sublimity and a profundity uniquely its own.

Indeed, this was the night that Manfri was to die, not from malice nor from violence of any kind, but merely from extreme old age. The apathy and callousness of others in this matter may astound you, Estimable Reader, and yet there is no reason that they should. After all, we are each dead men or women, only awaiting

the precise moments of our personal demises. We treat ourselves and others as if we are eternal, and yet nothing could be further from the truth. We do not respect that which should be respected, and we fail to praise that which should be praised. We act as though the ancient amongst us are distant, and therefore we consider them forgotten, yet it must not be so. Are we, too, to be forgotten? A few years from now, are we going to be so very distant from the minds of those we leave behind?

But hush. This is no time for such obvious philosophy.

Manfri, the soon-to-be-deceased, has just uplifted his bow.

Today, he shall play his own requiem mass as he remembers

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

himself and his long, long  
life. Let us hope that others  
remember him, and all those like  
him, in their solitary moments of  
memorial.

We salute you, ancient gypsy,  
and we listen to you with  
patience and contemplation.

### *El Artista*—The Artist

Ambrosio Rocos, the artist,  
was a young man when first  
he arrived in Seville at the  
beginning of the Francoist  
Dictatorship and the National  
Regime.

He was as penniless as a beggar,  
and yet he had a tremendous  
wealth of that golden substance  
called ambition.

He promised to become the  
greatest painter Spain had ever  
seen.

He had studied the works of the  
old master Diego Velázquez...  
and the realist marvel Francisco  
de Goya...

and the exiled Pablo Picasso...

and the pious Dominikos  
Theotokopoulos, who they called  
*El Greco*, The Greek.

The artist did not have a  
criminalistic disposition.

That is to say, he did not look  
like a criminal from the outside.

But, he always dreamed of being  
arrested.

The whistles of the social  
brigade as they chased him  
through the laneways...

The intensity of the courtroom  
scene...

The drama of being hauled  
away to prison just like a  
revolutionary or a martyr...

These things, he thought,  
appealed to him.

"An artist must stir up some  
trouble!" he would say, although  
he did not know what he meant  
by it.

"An artist must break the rules!"  
he would claim, although he  
could not guess which ones  
were worth breaking, and which  
ones ought to remain intact.

"Above all, an artist must  
envision the future, and paint it  
upon the canvas!"

Ambrosio failed to uphold this  
maxim as well.

For as much as the young

revolutionary adored the  
philosophy of progress, he could  
not help but love old things as  
well.

He loved the old buildings of the  
gothic quarter as the shadows  
crept across their pointed  
features.

He loved the old paintings in the  
galleries, with their smooth and  
realistic lines carefully trained  
with equal parts art and science.

He loved the old people—the  
ancient residents and the cryptic  
denizens—of Seville.

The aged gentlemen in their  
shabby, patched suits...

The older ladies in their Sunday  
frocks...

Now just a little tattered or a

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

trifle stained with the memories  
of forgotten dances, and the thin  
veneer of respectability...

These were the characters  
whom most he admired.

They were the ones who  
remembered, the ones who  
reflected, the ones who cared.

But, as an artist, Ambrosio  
had to stir up trouble  
somehow; he could not sink  
into the complacency of older  
generations or admit that he  
loved the simple, the steadfast,  
and the sacred.

So, he painted with bold strokes  
in garish colors.

He reveled in quick, staccato  
slaps of the brush against the  
canvas.

There were no kings or  
emperors to be found in his  
pieces; there were no smooth  
countenances to be seen on his  
Cupids or his Venuses or his  
Adonises.

Here was the delivery boy  
running in the street, painted  
with the same terrific colors of  
any Goya.

Here was the heavyset  
grandmother in the window, no  
longer portrayed with smooth  
features, but with Picasso's  
errant angles.

Here, at last, was the old gypsy  
on the street corner, his violin  
reduced to a maddened dash  
of umber, flashing against a  
background of enclosing greys  
and blacks.

The gypsy's face was downcast



in pensive concentration; the melody of his music wallowed in smears of paint and escaped through a tear in the cheap canvas.

The Roman marbles of the background disappeared into a menagerie of pencil-marks, as the street remained unfinished.

The artist yearned to complete the work; he wanted to fill in the missing details.

But no!

Certainly not!

An artist must break the rules after all; he must abandon the masterpiece before its expected *telos*.

And so, Ambrosio threw the sketch to the ground, half-

colored, and cursed himself for his lapse into mundanity.

*An artist must envision the future, he reprimanded himself, and this old gypsy is merely stuck in the past.*

#### *Las Amantes—The Lovers*

*La familia Gutiérrez*, the Gutierrez family, represented a wealthy and respectable echelon of Spanish aristocracy. Once upon a time, their ancestral patriarch, Don Francisco Gutiérrez de Cuerna de Vaca y Bexar, had owned more land in Perú than King Carlos IV of Spain; he had commanded more forces at sea than Doge Ludovico Manin of Venice; and he had fielded a greater army than General Francesco Sforza of Milan. However, time had not been kind to *la familia Gutiérrez*,

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

and the fate of the once-powerful dynasty now rested in the hands of an overbearing, yet incapable, buffoon and his two youthful daughters.

These girls—Victoria and Gloria—had been born to wealth and raised in its loving embrace. However, for all the leatherbound books in their family library and all the tireless hours of their tutors, they knew but little of the world beyond their villa, and they could never guess the true dangers of beautiful Seville. These young ladies, in the greenness of their youths, were also hopelessly quixotic and romantic individuals. Much like Queen Isabella II of Spain—*La Reina de los Tristes Destinos*—this forgivable innocence was destined to lead them to times of sad misfortune.

One evening in the happy month of May, Victoria Gutierrez stumbled across a crisp, wax-sealed envelope, tucked between the leaves of her favorite book of poetry. At first, she was alarmed to think that some person—some stranger—had infiltrated her secluded bedroom and disturbed her most prized book of verse. However, any such infraction into her privacy was quickly forgiven when she opened the envelope and discovered its contents—the careful drawings and tender writings of some secret and wonderful lover. For Victoria, a young maiden barely upon the threshold of adulthood and carefully raised in a cloistered and old-fashioned household, this gran amor, this great love, was incredible and fantastical! The thought of such

a surreptitious and mysterious admirer brought rosy blushes to her cheeks and throbs to her heart; the consideration of so secretive a lover was almost too much to endure!

And yet, the pungency of this *amor insólito*, this unusual and unexpected love, was yet enhanced for Victoria when she decided—against her nature—to keep this feeling a secret to the world. Thus, Victoria did not tell her overbearing father, her trustworthy maid, or even her twin sister about her wonderful letter, and she never inquired as to how the package came to be within her guarded boudoir.

The drawings and poems of the mysterious stranger were gorgeous and romantic. The words of each poem seemed sincere and intense, like the

praises and yearnings of some deeply pining gentleman. The images perfectly portrayed the lush foliage and lovely fountains of the Jardines Alcázares and the glorious architectures of the *Plaza de España*. One image even showed Victoria herself, as seen through her bedroom window in the quiet of the evening while she sat at her desk working at her studies.

Who could be the young woman's furtive admirer? Some dashing nobleman she had met at court? Some aspiring servant from the hall? Some adoring peasant from the farms surrounding Seville? Victoria could not guess the identity of this distant lover, and yet this made her emotions seem so much more visceral and extreme. What fine sort of a man might adore her so intensely, and yet

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

remain at such great distance?  
Who was this charming stranger  
who loved her from afar?

Little did Victoria know, in  
all of this, that her sister,  
Gloria, had received an almost  
identical parcel of letters, tucked  
beneath the pillow of her bed  
at the Gutierrez villa. With  
equal sighing and pining and  
romantic imagination, Gloria  
likewise received her parcel  
of floral paintings and loving  
letters. Gloria, too, found a  
lovely watercolor of the Alcazar  
Gardens, an unstretched canvas  
of the Spanish Plaza and a quick  
charcoal of herself, as seen  
through the window. Gloria, too,  
kept these quixotic drawings  
a secret from the world, and  
Gloria, too, bided her time to  
discover her secret lover. As the  
weeks passed and the beauty of  
the springtime melted into the

hotness of the summer, both  
gullible heiresses continued to  
receive their loving notes, and  
they both continued to secret  
them away from the world,  
each ignorant to the actions  
of the other. Here was a note  
especially for Victoria hidden on  
a shelf in the library; here was  
one for Gloria stashed beneath  
her vanity. Here was one rolled  
into Victoria's equestrian boot,  
and here was one concealed in  
Gloria's dainty jewelry box.

Any other individual might  
have questioned the letters and  
worried about the intent of their  
sender. Any other heiress might  
have been concerned regarding  
how some stranger accessed  
her room or trifled with her  
belongings. Yet, there could  
not be any harm in this secret  
romantic's actions, could there?  
He had not stolen anything

after all—even when accessing the treasures in the jewelry box. He had not made any improper demands of the girls, or written any scandalous content, or portrayed any undignified art. He could not mean to harm them, could he? He could not mean to hurt them, correct?

Finally, a separate note came for each yearning heiress, asking to meet, secretly, behind the Roman marbles that stood near the corner of the *Calle Mármoles* and the *Calle de Segovia*.

So, each young woman made her excuses to the other, claiming that an important social visit or a trinket forgotten in the city compelled her return to Seville. Victoria asked the chauffeur to drive her into town, and she implored the loyal servant not to tell her father or her sister of

her actions. At the same time, Gloria concealed herself in a neighbor's haycart as the estate farmers brought their produce to market. Thus, one young lady carefully made her way to Seville, and thence to the *Calle de Segovia*, in the back of an expensive coach, as her twin made the same journey upon a peasant's cart. One heiress wore the black satin gloves, gossamer gown, and shadow lace veil of an older generation, while her sister wore the bright circle skirt and bonnet of a country belle. Both girls were sweetly beautiful, and both were imbued with that characteristic naïveté of their class, which at best is seen as elegance and at worst as foolhardiness. Both yearned for unexpected romance, and both courageously abandoned their comfortable villa with a sensation of determination and

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

independence.

But neither knew whom she would meet, or what trick fate might have in store.

When Victoria and Gloria separately arrived at the *Calle de Segovia*, an old gypsy played his tender violin upon the corner, his eyes closed in concentration and his head slumped towards the instrument in mortal exhaustion. Victoria arrived some seconds before her sister, and she rushed behind the Roman marbles with enthusiastic skips. Then, when Gloria arrived, she too disappeared behind the statues, quite ready for some secret rendezvous.

How sad each young aristocrat was when she discovered no secret lover! How perplexed

each was when she came across the other!

And, all the while, Manfri played his quiet requiem upon the corner, celebrating life's follies and remembering youth's disappointments.

And, all the while, Ambrosio Rocos, that deceitful young artist, worked on his sketches of the gypsy as he commended himself for the trick he had played upon the overly romantic and overly covetous aristocrats, each miserly enough to conceal her secrets from the other until it was too late. The artist smirked at the success of his deception, and he chuckled at the trouble he had caused for two young, innocent lovers. They had been compensated for their troubles with small pieces of artwork and poetry,

and he had thoroughly enjoyed his little farse from afar, easily bribing the girls' servants to deposit their packages, and easily watching their changing moods through the villa's open windows.

Ambrosio thought that his work had been a harmless jest. He considered that he had done his artistic duty by causing trouble, and he figured that the girls would soon enough forget their disappointments.

However, Manfri, the ancient and omnipotent violinist, patiently waited for the girls to return to the street, and he studied their ashamed countenances carefully. He knew that the artist's jest was unforgivable, and he knew that it was wrong to play so casually with weighty matters like love,

longing, innocence, and passion. As sweat beaded upon the old gypsy's brow, he lugubriously played sonorous, largo chords upon his violin in memory of the girls' fabricated romance, and, when Victoria and Gloria had departed, he played a dissonant minuet to reprimand the vile artist who had so casually joked with their hearts.

Indeed, the mercurial artist did not deserve Victory and Glory, but only derision for the callous trick he had played.

#### *El Matador—The Killer*

The afternoon wore into evening, and the evening descended into night. The artist, throwing his unfinished drawing into the street, disappeared into the nearest bar for a drink. The lovers, only now comparing

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

their secret letters, and only now bonding over their mutual heartache, returned to their estate on foot, each a bit wiser of the world and thus a bit more disappointed by its realities.

Meanwhile, with slow, sonorous notes and grand chords, the gypsy's requiem neared its completion, and the wizened, old Manfri prepared to die. Out of order, and yet nevertheless recognizable, the venerable man had seen the thrills and excesses of youth, displayed in two quixotic girls; he had viewed the end of youth in the guise of a callous trickster, who claimed to create as an artist, and yet only ever aimed to destroy as a deceiver. Now, Manfri only needed to view a killer in order to end this daily reenactment of life. He needed to see a personification of old age—a

literal manifestation of Death himself.

Don Humberto Penáguilas was such a man.

The leading *matador* of the *Plaza de Toros de la Real Maestranza de Caballería de Sevilla*, Don Humberto was no stranger to murder. The gallant, grey-haired gentleman, now in the declining years of his life, spent each day in the bullring with those famous tools of his trade—the scarlet cape and the estoque sword—in his hands. Every day, when the whirling toreros cast open the gate to the ring, he watched six bulls charge through *la Puerta Grande* to the tune of *España Cañi*.

Each and every bull rushed into the ring, eyes filled with frantic frenzy, as it was led in running



circles by the dancing *toreros*. Every bull flinched and groaned as it received the sharp point of the *picador*'s lance in its back. Every one roared in agony and jumped in anger at the stick of the *banderilleros*' barbs, and every one leaked vibrant blood onto the sand as it bolted around the ring, lowing and growling with fury. Every bull dripped mucus from its nose and saliva from its mouth as it ran in circles, its eyes crazed like those of a rabid dog. Every bull stomped and tramped on the ground, shifting its gaze from the merry brass band to the grotesquely enthralled crowd to the yellow and pink capes of the *toreros*.

Yes, every bull in the ring was similar, but no two were ever exactly the same.

When Don Humberto leapt into the sand and stared the quaking creature in the eyes, he never knew if this would be simply another bull to fight, his last beast to attack, or the very mechanism of his demise. He never knew which one of them was truly *el matador*—the killer; would this be the bull's final hour upon the Earth, or would this be Don Humberto's?

When the experienced don at last called for his sword and his blood red cape, the moment was just as philosophical—as transcendental—as it was gruesome. This moment was man's timeless struggle with and against nature, reduced to a single moment, a single heartbeat. Here was civilization—here was humanity—garbed in his rich

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

suit of gold, his necktie, his collar, his cap, his cloak, and there—right there—were fifteen hundred pounds of barbarous hate, pawing at the ground and preparing to charge.

Here was the dance of death, the swirl of the *matador* with the beast in his sights as the crowd chanted “¡Olé!”. The flash of the sword through the bull’s heart; the stab of the dagger through the brain.

The bull was dead, but Don Humberto lived to fight another day.

The crowd called for one ear... two ears... the tail.

Don Humberto received them all.

It was a triumphant moment in the ring at the bull was pulled away by horses, but the weary

don was simply content to have survived it all once again.

Raised as an upstanding aristocrat on a *toro bravo* ranch on the high plains of Andalucía, Don Humberto Penáguilas was a man who had seen it all. He had seen gentility and stateliness on full display in the Royal Court of Madrid prior to the beginning of Franco’s dictatorship, but he had also seen the brutal fighting in the streets during the Spanish Civil War. Yes, the hesitant *matador* could be accused of some cruelty and destruction in the ring, but he always recalled a far greater evil than bullfighting—man’s more sincere and personal inhumanity to man.

Following his daily triumph at the *Plaza de Toros*, Don Humberto was paraded through

the streets in the company of his adoring fans. Hats came off for the *matador*, and flower petals bestrew his path as he toured the *Calle de Segovia*, enroute to his favorite tapas bar and an aged bottle of *tinto de toro* wine he had been saving just for the occasion.

Yet, even in his moment of triumph, Don Humberto cared enough to cast his eyes down upon Manfri, the old and reliable gypsy, who quietly lay beside the Roman marbles at the end of the street. Cheers rose from the don's eager fans as they celebrated their hero of the day, but the curious don requested that the cheers be silent as he listened for the final strains of the gypsy's requiem. However, the notes had already passed away, and without the fans' interrupting cheers, the

laneway grew mysteriously silent.

There was a proper time for applauding and for booming salutes, Don Humberto understood, and there was also an appointed hour for victory and conquest. There was an age for romantic wiles and the silliness of youth; there was a meaningful moment for revolt against the order of things, and a careful critique of authority; there were even minutes set aside in life for artwork, for beauty, for jealousy, and, indeed, for madness.

But, the *matador*, who knew death as well as he knew life, glimpsed the profound emotion in Manfri's expiring eyes, and he realized that this was not the moment for any of these things. This was only the

## cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

time for quietude and peaceful tranquility.

Great loves, and brutal sports, and vile treacheries had all occurred this day in Seville, showcasing the culmination of long-standing patterns, and unforeseen connections, and outré cross purposes. Affections had been promised, and loves had been lost; minute revolts had been concocted against the organization of the world, and change had been effected on a variety of tiny scales; cheers had been made for daring achievements, and lives had been lost both needfully and needlessly. But all through this, at the margin of the story, the stalwart gypsy had occupied his place and played his violin. This was his day to celebrate and be celebrated. This was his day to remember and be remembered.

Nevertheless, the gypsy was forgotten, just as so many are forgotten, and his gentle requiem had largely gone unheard. Manfri's work had always provided the background to the affairs and lives of others; for so many years it had added to the ambience and the collective memory of old Seville. Don Humberto remembered the gypsy's violin from his youth, but, like so many, he never thought about the music until it had faded away, leaving an empty vacuum in his memory more poignant and more noticeable than the thing that had originally occupied its place.

The gypsy had died.

He had been dead for some time, and yet nobody had cared to notice the fact.

They all had their own lives, and their own deaths to prepare for as well. Who cared about the man on the street? The one who was not an artist or a revolutionary, the one who was neither an aristocrat nor a celebrity. Manfri was simply a street person; a busker; a gypsy. Who needed him?

And yet, without him, we would have no story, no emotion, no meaning, for any of these things without background is worthless. Yes, Seville was our setting, Estimable Reader, but without Manfri, the city became silent; its passion disappeared.

Don Humberto had the profundity to recognize this, even if we did not. He had the humanity to care about the violinist, even if the gypsy's

shoes were worn through and his hat was empty of coin.

There was a man who had lived in the margins; a man who had lived in them and now died in them. There was a man who had reminded Don Humberto—a man who reminded us—to remember to remember.

Those in the margins, and in the background, allow us to enjoy the pride of the foreground and even the spotlight. Those who are simple and unassuming still matter; it is better to remember others here and now, before they are gone and forgotten.

"I know this man," Don Humberto cautiously claimed, even though he could not recall the gypsy by name. "He has played his violin on this street corner since the days of

cont. The Gypsy's Requiem

my youth—since the days of  
the Romans who built these  
marbles, most likely! Now,  
what shall we do for him? A  
proper burial, at least, seems  
appropriate. *But what else  
should we have done when we  
had the chance?*"









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# ESSAY.

[朱水晶]

## A Letter To My Ancestors

Dear Ancestors,  
I know you fought hard to bring us here. You fought against poverty, against your culture, against exclusion to give us a better life. You fought valiantly to place our family here in the land of opportunities and promise. You bled and toiled. You worked so so hard to give me a life of privilege.

Pò po, Gōng gong, Grandma, Grandpa: I hope you're proud. I've attended college. I've been educated without war in my home. I've never gone without a meal or a roof over my head. You achieved what you dreamed. Thank you for everything.

Yet now, I look at the world you brought me to. I see the hatred in my neighbors' eyes when they notice the color of my skin and shape of my eyes.

The soft yellow you graced me with, the Phoenix eyes you said would bring me luck. They're a reminder of what I am. I know you ran from your wolves, beating them back and escaping into the night. Yet, you threw me to the wolves in sheep's clothing. The gentle growl that's lost in the crowd that I hide in.

I'm so sorry that my goal is to leave. I want to flee back to the land you escaped from. To find a place. To find a purpose. Will it be perfect? No. It won't. But maybe I won't have to live every day fearing the racist remarks. I won't have to worry that people will see me as other.

You worked so hard to come here and I'm working so hard to leave. The country you were promised was great, but not good. I have opportunities here.

But at what cost? I'm strangled a little more every day from the rope around my neck. The whips still hit my back although I'm not working the railroads. They still tug at my hair as they try to scalp away my pride. I can't breathe here anymore. I love you all. I appreciate you all. You did the best you possible could and now I'm doing the same. Thank you for your hard work. Thank you for your courage. Thank you for coming to a land where you didn't know the language.

Thank you. Thank you.  
Thank you. I am eternally grateful.

I'm sorry if my leaving doesn't make you proud. I tried to make it work. I toiled. I bled. I worked to create a life here. But that doesn't mean my life is good.

You gave me so much. I hope I make you proud. I love you. I'm sorry. My life wouldn't exist if you hadn't made that leap of faith. Now it's my turn. My turn to ensure a better life for my children. My turn to toil and work hard in another country.

I will be brave because I have your bravery. I will be kind because I have your kindness. I will be strong because I have your strength. Thank you for everything. I love you.

Sincerely,  
Your Descendant

[朱水晶]

## A Letter To My White Friends

To whom it may concern,

To those who have skin as white as snow or whose tan is idealized rather than demonized. To whom feels safe walking into a room at our school. To whom will see the color of my skin and react with disgust or pretend they are color blind. To those who will never learn my history without their white savior complex or my language without fetishization. To whom I sit next to in class. To those who never know the struggles I face.

I've kept quiet all my life. Learning that rocking the boat means I will drown and you will survive. But I'm going to drown either way, might as well go out with a splash. I don't mean to offend you, but maybe I do. Directly. Rudely. Fearlessly. A punishment for the cowardly

indirect remarks and actions I've faced my whole life. The subtle snubs about the darkness of my skin, the shape of my eyes, the parts of my body that identify me as other.

I went to this school knowing my peers would be white. I would remain the colored face, the diversity statistic. The exotic. The one teachers will pointedly look at when they mention POC because I am obviously one. The one assigned to speak on diversity. The one who has to speak up to be heard. The one who had to explain the difference in my American culture vs your American culture.

Have you ever been asked "Where are you from? No, no, where are you really from?" As you reiterate the same answer

again and again. Have you ever been asked what you are? Not who, but what. Have you ever faced a microaggression in class that focuses on your heritage being the point of your life? No? I thought not.

Have you ever walked down the street and heard the slur shouted from a passing window? Have you ever froze seeing a cop car drive by, because what if it's your turn? Have you ever felt the fear of walking into a restaurant of your people and thought what if a shooter comes? No? I thought not.

After the Atlanta, Georgia shooting where my people were shamelessly shot because the shooter "had a bad day," I was terrified to walk a short distance to Kim's Korean. I was terrified to sit down and eat because what

if I'm next? What if someone else has a bad day? What if my name is forgotten? Or worse, what if the only reason it's remembered is because it's American? I remember crying that day. Crying because talking wouldn't help. Crying because I was surrounded by people who didn't give a damn. I was asked by one white person if I was alright. I froze when they did because it was a relief but a terror to try to explain how I felt. To explain how it felt to hear your people die because of racist motivations rather than pure animalistic rage.

I remember the night of the vigil so vividly. Sitting in an audience of white people trying to show their support to the minority group they infantilize, eroticize, try to save. I remember a white man speaking. My

*cont.* A Letter To My White Friends

sadness turned to rage because he wanted to pretend this wasn't about race. Like it was a bad word and that this tragedy could've happened to anyone. No, it couldn't. It happened to us. No, it wasn't random. It was racist. NO, IT'S NOT OKAY. WE'RE NOT OKAY. We are drowning, fighting, struggling but all you preach is color blindness. We don't want color blindness, we want EQUALITY. Stop acting like they're the same.

That evening I cried in my car. I cried while driving to get Chinese food because I needed comfort. I cried into my chow mein on the floor of my room. The only person who cared was an Asian like me. Another Asian who cried into her fried rice. Another Asian who bawled in my car. Another Asian who

could feel what I feel. It was a relief and a burden. A relief to talk and cry with someone who could understand. A burden because once we left the room that understanding would shatter in the presence of our white roommates. Our apartment was as much a sanctuary for our race as a prison.

I'm scared to even bring it up. To point out what seems so obvious to me. To point out that in our friend group of 10 the darker our skin is the more we serve, darker skin inherently placing us lower. It's so obvious to us. Something we're conditioned to see and not speak about. That only with the other POC do we evenly divide the work. It's impossible to explain what we see and how we feel because they don't

understand the struggle. They can't understand the difference. It's just how their life works. We can't talk about feminism with them because our feminism sits on our ethnicity. We can't discuss beauty standards because our heritage affects us as much as the US culture. We can't discuss beauty because by their standards we are never beautiful. Only exotic.

I didn't know where to begin this letter, and now I don't know where to end. There are too many words, too many instances, too many memories to write in one letter. I hope this scratches the surface, but it doesn't. I hope it makes you change. But it won't. Well maybe a little. Maybe it'll spark a change. Maybe you'll throw a

buoy into the water to keep us from drowning. Maybe you'll finally listen when you hear us scream. I hope you do. I hope this changes you.

With Love,  
Your Colored Friend

[Angeline Elguero-Mateo]

## Cha'tine a ba - Te Quedes

“Anji, tráiga me un plato!”  
Spittle flies from above,  
the paddle lands on her soft  
skin.  
Just as hard Abulita’s  
(chuchishnam) accusations  
of disrespect hit mama  
(isinchuch)  
As ma makes tortillas, I see each  
clap cup the soft dough  
each beaten between her dried-  
out palms.  
Those hands soak in saltwater  
gloves,  
gripping the handle of a worn,  
muddied clam rake.  
Raindrops surround her, rustling  
gently against her hair,  
the wind carries the spices off of  
the roasting carne asada.  
Ma places each tortilla on the  
propane stove,  
a practice she does regardless of  
the shifting pacific-northwest  
weather,  
Cooking every meal outside— is

from her childhood,  
a means of survival from the  
rural lands of Huehuetenango,  
Guatemala.  
Not the only practice that has  
grown into a habit.

Mama sacrificed her youth to  
feed her large family of ten.  
Every morning, she takes her  
basket of maize to the local  
grinder,  
scattering feed amongst the  
cattle and chickens.  
A girl conditioned to bathe and  
drink  
out of the same river the  
livestock do  
rather than strive for an  
education  
past the third grade.  
Numbly the siblings fade away,  
emptying bottles to fill empty  
stomachs.  
The harsh conditions allow for  
the illogical and criminal.



My twelve years old cousin ran  
away,  
skipped into the arms of her  
thirty-eight year old predator  
to start a family.

Ma has nightmares.  
Loved ones who tended to the  
homeland are watching over,  
these memories are passed down  
to her.  
Rezando por la familia, her  
visions instead protect.  
I see the cruelty of growing up  
without healthy parenting  
when she collapses to her knees,  
Slowly shrinking in front of la  
Virgen de Guadalupe,  
curling into herself— Ma chants:  
[Amén. Amén. Amén. Amén.]  
Dios te salve María, llena eres  
de gracia  
bendita tú eres entre todas las  
mujeres,  
y bendito es el fruto de tu  
vientre, Jesus.

Santa María, Madre de Dios,  
ruega por nosotros, pecadores,  
ahora y en la hora de nuestra  
muerte.  
Amén. Amén. Amén. Amén.]  
Sobs rack through her tiny  
figure.

His story is different from ma's,  
pero no conocemos la tristeza  
de Michoacán, his Mexican  
childhood,  
unless he's had a ton of beers.

Desde el amanecer hasta el  
anocheecer, como un esclavo de  
la industria de Pacific Northwest  
Non-Timber resources, Papi  
muele sus porros.  
Construyendo una colección  
de worn-out headlamps, holey  
calcetines y guantes, shredded  
trajes  
y zapatos, and a busted tan  
Toyota Tundra. Repeatedly  
repaired for the past nineteen

cont. Cha'tine a ba - Te Quedes

years.

The seasonal work in Eastern Washington, Idaho, Montana, etc. is his only way of making money because a long long time ago, not having a green card ment he could keep his job shellfish harvesting.

Now the price of your labor is retailed at \$50 per pound but you are being paid \$5 per pound.

The number of bunches, the pounds of mushrooms or huckleberries you make by sunset is your income. To walk-through thick forestry picking salal or other floral greens under the bi-polar Pacific Northwest weather fills my childhood.

But I was carefree with my siblings, playing with our dog Chewy.

This shadow industry is an easy target for the U.S. immigration

and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Often, if one camp is raided or the migrants are alerted that ICE is in the area, everyone scatters and moves to a new location.

243 days a year we hold our breath. I know. My uncle was caught and deported.

With the relief of Papi's arrival home comes his warnings to do better at school.

It's even harder to have him communicate, to differentiate his emotions.

"En esta casa, yo soy el papa. I don't have to explain myself" Machismo culture is impossible to reason with.

I have three older siblings that are a decade older than me and my two younger siblings. That's six children.

My oldest sister is seventeen years older than me but twenty years older than Dani, my youngest brother. In the rural lands of Huehuetenango, Guatemala, at seventeen, mom gave birth to our oldest sister. Mom had two more sons after settling in California with her first husband. Us three younger siblings sympathize with each other. We recognize how the older ones are coping. My older sister plagued the house with her mood swings. One of my brothers, after his divorce was physically around but not really “there,” and the other brother is an alcoholic. Not aware of the fear and tension caused by his drunken state. Always ranting about the “ungrateful little shits” wasting his money ---Mom would pay him to babysit us—, accusing

Dani of spitting in his food, ruminating over politics and conspiracies, and how someone is messing with him, watching him. He doesn’t like that we have a “good childhood” compared to his. Within my small bubble, it was easy to avoid questioning life outside and just survive. To not worry if I was “fucking up the vibe” or seen as a “Handout” because of Cris and Dani. We are content with just each other’s presence. My closest friends stopped inviting me because I’m no fun. They did not understand why I was not going to their birthday parties and sleepovers; why I was not buying red-bull spritzers with them and decked out in school spirit gear; or why I acted

cont. Cha'tine a ba - Te Quedes

differently: quiet.

Though I admire my parents  
and their sacrifices; I feared  
disapproval.

It was apparent that I was born  
different from my white friends,  
and I resent that.

Self-conscious of my ethnicity,  
how I spoke and represented  
myself.

I panic over the idea of  
communicating with other  
people.

Ashamed to see myself  
imagining I was the one making  
interactions meaningful,  
when I see others having fun.  
Even if I really wanted to, I am  
not used to banter and keeping  
conversations.

My parents are very talkative  
and they did not trust we were  
safe with other people.

"Que no sabemos la maldad que  
tiene la gente."

My younger sister and I knew  
we had to talk to a professional,  
To find a release from this cycle  
of destruction, destroying us  
from inside.

But instead, mom threw it into  
Titi's face as

un berrinche,  
"que te calles! Go cry  
again."

papi kept silent.

[Max Reyes]

## Galing Galing Ang Pamilya Ko!

When I was in the second grade  
I dreamed of a nose job.  
I dreamed of a bridge  
So prominent that I could  
Turn my nose up at my Filipino  
self;  
So prominent that I could

Turn my nose up at my own  
differences.  
I desired blue eyes and blonde  
hair  
And skin so pale that I would  
become  
Transparent.  
Invisible even.  
Invisible to my culture, my  
language,  
And my family.  
In my second grade eyes,  
This was the definition of  
beauty.

But beauty,  
As I've come to learn,  
Is my brown skin.

It's my Asistido eyes  
And my Reyes smile.  
It's the 4'11" shortie  
With a voice so loud  
You have no choice but to turn  
And listen.

My beauty originates from the  
sacrifices  
Of my immigrant parents.  
Sacrifices that, for too long,  
I took for granted.

Sacrifices like the "kaya mo  
yan" that  
My daddy would repeat as I  
rehearsed  
A reading for church mass or a  
speech tournament.  
Sacrifices like the Vicks Vapor  
Rub  
My mama would massage into  
my feet  
As I lied in bed with a fever oh  
so turbulent.

cont. Galing Galing Ang Pamilya Ko!

Sacrifices like their time away  
from home,  
Working long hours,  
Just so they could provide  
For me, Matty, and Mikey—  
Allowing us three M&Ms  
To grow up sweet, strong, and  
spicy.

It's the ube cookies my mom  
bakes,  
The durian bread my dad  
creates,  
The mischief my 18-year-old  
homie Matty provides,  
And "The Lazy Song" by Bruno  
Mars that Mikey cries,  
That teach me what it is to truly  
be beautiful.

From my mama I have inherited  
a devout faith,  
Salamat at salamat sa Diyos for  
her unending strength.

From my daddy I have learned

how to fail forwards,  
Through his support kahit naka-  
limutan ko ang mga words.

From Matty I have been inspired  
by his profound leadership,  
Both on the field, as a Kuya, and  
through our twin friendship,

And from Mikey I have been  
energized by his youthful  
demeanor,  
Galing galing si Mikey as he  
dances in front of the mirror!

Ang aking pamilya has taught  
me  
That I don't need a nose bridge  
to be beautiful.

It's our love (and the lechon at  
lumpia!) that makes us beautiful.

Salamat.

[Stefanie Hinkaew Marlow]

## Grief is a strange emotion

Grief is a strange emotion. It's expected that everyone will experience it, but no one can tell you how it will go for you, or why, or when, or how to handle it. It is the one thing that is entirely governed by you, by your very most organic self. Even under layers of lies, of physical performances to appear strong and stable, it will seep through like blood beneath a shirt, until you're soaked and reeking of copper. And the only person who will be most aware of it is yourself.

People often expect grief to be these oceanic waves of deep sadness and hollowness and anger, like the five stages that they first teach us about in health class: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Sure, enough people

have to experience those specific emotions, in that specific order, for it to be a recorded fact.

See, to me, that's misleading, and oftentimes incomplete. Hate. Relief. Hate that is borne out of the feeling of relief. Guilt. Shame. Paranoia. Irritation. These should be included in the list. And what people didn't tell me about grief, is that it can begin long before the loss even occurs.

The long nights of pacing, cursing, wondering when, wondering how. Wondering where I'll be when it happens. The deep sweltering anger at the things that cannot be controlled, or changed, or improved. The hatred for the years of hurt that lurks deep inside my chest. The heated desire for death, even if not for me. Nauseating

## cont. Grief is a Strange Emotion

guilt, from knowing I could be handling the situation better, thinking better, being better. Anguish, because the days last longer and longer when waiting for something to just happen so I can move on, so I can finally do something instead of waiting. Pain in my jaw, from clenching, biting back rage and flesh-eating words that would sear. The gentle words that come out instead, words that will deescalate, words that show that I care, because I know nothing will make much sense to him anymore. I go to sleep with teeth gritted. I wake up tasting salt in my mouth.

I think to myself, *Just let it happen already. Just let him go. Just GO ALREADY. GO.* And then I'm ashamed, because he'll ask me if I've eaten or if I need anything from the store.

Relief. Isn't it weird, knowing that the feeling I'm anticipating the most is relief? How selfish of me. How self-centered of me. I feel sick, guilty bile rising up my throat. I'm shaking, convulsing, because I'm pretty sure the chambers of my heart are actually rupturing, bursting from this tortuous waiting. I hear myself, in my head, and hate myself all the more. *Someone who loves me is dying, and all I can feel is how much lighter I'll be after it all. How heartless of me. Evil.*

Am I really, though?

Our society is obsessed with putting parents on pedestals. "They did everything for you, they did so much for you, you should be grateful!" Should I only picture the loving palm



that was shown to me, and ignore that I also saw the backhand of that same hand? Should I only picture lips that kissed my skin and not the lips that curled back to threaten me? To spit at me? Gratitude should not come with a shadow, because that shadow grows into this, into resentment and sorrow that complicates grieving, a task that was already too complicated to begin with.

That doesn't mean I'm not grateful, or that I don't love them, or that I'm not in agony at the prospect of losing a loved one. I simply cannot—and will not—ignore that I suffered just as much as I loved. And I like to think that it is not evil to wish for relief, to be at peace.

It's just messy.

I've learned that what's important isn't what emotion I'm feeling, no matter how alarming they are. What's important is how I govern them. What's important is that I let them flow, but don't attach myself to them. I am human, and there is beauty and ugliness and impermanence to everything I experience.

Grief is a strange emotion, because it's not an emotion. It's a cumulation of hundreds of emotions shoved inside a bottle. Don't do it the way that's comfortable and appealing for everyone else. Grieve the way you grieve. Everything is on the table, and only you are in control of how you will employ it. Do it wisely. I can only hope that I will.

*Author's Note: This piece was inspired by Jennette McCurdy's memoir, I'm Glad My Mom Died, where she discusses her complicated feelings of grief towards her mother's passing after years of explicit abuse and trauma.*

[Reagan Bowyer]

## I am all that and Dim Sum

### **My personal experience eating dim sum in the U.S. and in China**

I go to dim sum restaurants when I visit my family and friends in California. Many of my Chinese relatives and close family friends live in the San Francisco Bay Area. Usually when we go to restaurants it is for family banquets, so they are a rare occasion. There are few restaurants in Spokane that serve Dim Sum. For instance, Salma, my BRIDGE mentor, treated me to dinner from Hong Kong Express to celebrate the Lunar New Year several years ago. It had a small selection, but I was glad that I could order some comfort food. It reminded me of the food that my mom makes which made me less homesick. I associate eating dim sum with happy memories

of getting together with friends and family.

As I got older, I became more interested in learning about my Chinese heritage. In 2016, I traveled to China with my mother to meet some of my relatives from her side of the family. My mother is from Shanghai, so we were mostly in Shanghai or Xi'an during the two weeks we were there. My mother served as the interpreter during the trip because I only knew a few Chinese phrases. Even though it was difficult for me to communicate with my relatives they discovered that I love to eat Chinese food. As a result, one of my cousins made my mother and me homemade char siu bao and lo mai gai. He would also treat us to meals from restaurants and give us recommendations for places to

try. For instance, in Shanghai, I went to a restaurant with my mother that specialized in soup dumplings! They had a variety of dumplings with different flavors and sizes. I got one that was the size of my palm. It is served with a straw so you can poke it then suck up the soup. There are many different types of Chinese food to try.

### **Etiquette and examples of dishes**

Dim sum is normally served in the early afternoon; however, the time may vary depending on the restaurant. Usually, people order many dishes and then share them with friends and family. Customers normally pick out a tea first before they order dishes. According to traditional etiquette, the person closest to the teapot should pour tea for guests before pouring

their own cup (“What is Dim Sum”). Waiters from traditional restaurants push carts that contain dishes around tables and then deliver them to customers. However, more modern restaurants will give customers menu cards to make ordering easier and less chaotic. Menus vary widely across restaurants, and they normally make a limited number of dishes. I would advise people to arrive early if possible and to make a reservation at the restaurant. Some of the most popular dishes are shumai, soup dumplings, char siu bao, and rice noodle rolls. Shumai are pork or shrimp dumplings. Soup dumplings are filled with “hot broth and pork” (“What is Dim Sum”). Char siu bao are barbecue pork buns. They are one of my favorite dishes! I also like to order lo mai gai which is sticky rice with

*cont.* I am all that and Dim Sum

chicken wrapped in lotus leaves and wu gok which are deep fried taro root puffs.

### **History of Dim Sum**

Dim sum is a popular type of Chinese food that people usually eat around brunch time that consists of small dishes served with tea. It originated in the Guangdong region of China because of teahouse culture. Merchants traveling along the Silk Road would stop at local teahouses for “rest and conversation accompanied by a cup of tea” (Radez). There, they could negotiate business deals. As a result, dim sum became associated with the Cantonese phrase “yum cha” which means to drink tea (Radez). People can order dim sum from all over the world. It became increasingly popular due to globalization

and increased trade between countries. Chinese immigrants introduced dim sum to the U.S. as a way to feed themselves and their families. Then, it changed overtime due to access to different resources and efforts to conform to American tastes.

Chinese food was introduced to the United States because of Chinese immigrants pursuing job opportunities. During the early 1800s, Chinese workers “played a monumental role in the development of the railroad system” (Adhiyaman). Despite the important contributions they made towards improving the infrastructure of the country they faced heavy discrimination from other laborers. Many non-Chinese workers saw them as competitors in the job market which increased “animosity” towards them (Adhiyaman).

The Chinese community was targeted by extreme white racists. They were victims of horrific violence such as the massacre of twenty-eight Chinese residents who lived in Rock Springs, Wyoming in 1885 (Uyematsu, 10). To escape violence and persecution, many Chinese workers and their families “fled” to the West and East coasts (Gourse). They worked for long hours with meager wages just to support themselves and their families. Chinese workers continued to face discrimination against them such as rising racial tensions which eventually led to the Chinese Exclusion Act. It prevented “any further immigration of laborers” from China and it increased anti-Asian sentiment in the U.S. (Gourse). Many of the immigrants were poor, so

they made inexpensive meals. Chinese workers turned to dim sum to remember their home. They modified recipes when they did not have access to traditional ingredients. For example, in Chinese American dishes vegetables such as bamboo shoots and cabbage are typically replaced by broccoli and carrots since they are easier to find in grocery stores. Additionally, as Chinese food became more popular, restaurants adjusted dishes or created new ones to appeal to the American palette. Americans preferred “milder, sweeter items,” so recipes for dishes such as General Tso’s Chicken were adjusted from the original salty, savory flavor to a sweeter, tangier version (Adhiyaman). Many Chinese and Chinese American restaurants catered

*cont.* I am all that and Dim Sum

towards American preferences because they were afraid of not attracting customers if they served authentic dishes.

Chinese American food varies from traditional Chinese food in ingredients and taste because it reflects American preferences. Many traditional recipes incorporate every part of the animal into the food which was considered “revolting to Americans” (Adhiyaman). The demand to satisfy American consumers led to the popularization of Chop Suey. It is made of “bite-sized pieces of meat and vegetables in a brown gravy and is served over rice or noodles” (Ku et al., 60). Chop Suey became extremely popular in New York City, so to support the growing demand for the dish, “each of the three hundred Chinese

restaurants ... maintained a Chinese staff of five waiters and four and a half cooks” even though xenophobic legislation prevented legal immigration (Ku et al., 54). Restaurant staff worked in grueling conditions which perpetuated the demand for more Chinese workers. Many came to the United States illegally to support their families. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act prevented Chinese laborers from immigrating to the U.S., and it was the first U.S. immigration law “to restrict a group of immigrants based on their race, nationality, or class” (Lee, E.). People were forced to pay a fine if they did not have documentation which prevented immigration from China to the U.S. Furthermore, the Chinese Exclusion Act set a precedent for other legislation to prohibit the immigration of other ethnic

groups to the United States. These racist laws restricted workers' access to jobs they could apply for. As a result, they were stuck in dangerous, low paying jobs.

Despite terrible working conditions, Chinese workers could not unionize because of racist policies. The Hotel and Employee and Restaurant Employee Union (HERE) which was part of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) explicitly excluded Chinese and black workers from joining the union (Ku et al., 63). As a result, these marginalized groups did not benefit from efforts to improve work hours or increase wages in the industry. The AFL protected the interests of white workers, so it saw people of color as competitors that should be removed from the job market.

It continued to suppress Chinese workers' rights by pressuring Chinese restaurant owners to hire unionized white workers. As a result, HERE "mounted a series of strikes ... that raised the minimum wage to twenty-nine dollars a week" (Ku et al., 64). While these strikes benefited white workers, they hurt Chinese laborers who were forced out of jobs. In response, the Chinese community created its own organizations to regulate the food industry. The Chinese Restaurant Association negotiated with government agencies over regulation changes and policies that often targeted immigrant communities. Additionally, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) mediated conflicts between restaurants (Ku et al., 65). Both organizations were intended

cont. I am all that and Dim Sum

to protect workers' rights and the interests of restaurants. Many restaurants were small, family-owned businesses, so business owners preferred to hire family members over other potential employees. This led to resentment from workers to their superiors since they "suffered through years of low pay, long hours, and hard work" (Ku et al., 65). Workers usually did not get promotions within the restaurant because family members were prioritized over them. Furthermore, restaurant workers could not assist family members with the immigration process since it was too expensive. They aspired to eventually own and operate their own restaurant. However, existing owners did not want additional competition in the market, so they used the CCBA to reduce competition between

restaurants. It mandated that all major business transactions were authorized by the CCBA (Ku et al., 66). The CCBA's strict policies allowed the Chinese elite to maintain power over the restaurant industry. Discriminatory practices both outside and within the Chinese community restricted opportunities for Chinese laborers.

**Anti-Asian hate because of the Covid-19 pandemic negatively impacted Asian owned businesses and restaurants**

Asians and Asian Americans have been falsely blamed for spreading Covid-19, and as a result many Asian American businesses have experienced hate crimes. Racist memes insinuated that the pandemic started because Chinese people



eat bats which is not true. Conservative media outlets and Donald Trump perpetuated racist rhetoric about Covid-19 which fueled anti-Asian sentiment in the United States. Michelle Fox, a reporter from CNBC, interviewed several Asian American small business owners in the Los Angeles area about the anti-Asian hate they experienced. For instance, Leo and Lydia Lee, owners of RiceBox, told her that “People would ask, ‘Do you serve bats? Do you serve Covid?’” (Fox). Asian American business owners were concerned for their safety as well as their business surviving during the pandemic because of the increase in hate crimes. Some restaurants were vandalized, or people left them nasty voice mails because of the stereotype that Asian food is “dirty” (Fernando and

Mumphrey). Additionally, employees of Asian American businesses were “pushed or spat upon” because of anti-Asian hate (Fox). In response to these hate crimes, some employers adjusted work schedules, so their employees would be safer and less likely to be harassed. All these horrific acts are rooted in xenophobia and racism. They are a form of white supremacy, and these acts are designed to promote fear and division between people. Hate crimes and discrimination should not be tolerated. People should support initiatives for social justice to combat white supremacy.

There is a history of cross-cultural solidarity between Asian Americans and Black Americans because Asian American activists such as

*cont.* I am all that and Dim Sum

Yuri Kochiyama and Grace Lee Boggs advocated for creating meaningful, long-term relationships between different communities. They challenged the stereotype of Asian Americans being “silent citizens” by actively engaging in activism (Uyematsu). Yuri Kochiyama, a Japanese American activist, joined the Civil Rights Movement while living in Harlem. She learned about the injustices her neighbors experienced by talking with them. At first, she supported initiatives to improve the quality of schools in the Harlem area. Then she joined the labor movement to try and prevent discrimination in hiring construction workers to build a medical building (Abdelfatah et al.). Yuri met Malcolm X because of her community activism. Overtime, they developed a close

friendship. Initially, Malcolm X opposed integration since he saw it as a “trap” (Abdelfatah et al., 2021), however Yuri Kochiyama believed that cross cultural solidarity was possible. She thought for integration to occur “non-Black Americans first had to recognize that they were the problem” (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). Yuri believed that people had to overcome their own prejudices before joining a social justice movement. Throughout the rest of her life, she continued to support the Civil Rights Movement and other social justice movements.

Grace Lee Boggs was a Chinese American woman who became a Black power activist because of the connections she made with the Black community in Detroit. She was a Marxist philosopher, and she was particularly

influenced by Hegel. Hegel promoted the idea of dialectical thinking which is the belief that “every idea contains its opposite and by only struggling through those contradictions can you get closer to the truth” (Lee et al.). As a result, Grace valued conversations with other people. Through them she could challenge people to reassess and evolve their ideas. Grace became an activist when she moved to Chicago. There, she met a group of people protesting against “rat infested housing” and that was her introduction to the Black community (Lee et al.). Grace wanted to join the Civil Rights Movement, so she collaborated with other philosophers on promoting workers’ rights, especially Black workers’ rights. Grace became active in the Civil Rights Movement by helping organize marches and supporting

other initiatives. However, Grace and other people with left-wing views were excluded from attending a Civil Rights Conference because of political pressure. In response, they created the Grassroots Leadership Conference, and they continued planning future activism (Lee et al.). Grace wanted to encourage young members of the community to become activists, so she created the Detroit Summer program. They designed projects such as urban gardens and murals while developing communication and teamwork skills (Lee et al.). These initiatives allowed the younger people to engage with and connect with neighborhoods.

Both the Black Lives Matter movement and the Asian American community want

*cont.* I am all that and Dim Sum

to end racialized violence; however, white supremacy has impacted these communities in different ways. The Black Lives Matter movement seeks to end police brutality and racist violence against the Black community, and the Asian American community wants to end violence against Asian Americans (Chang and Tran). People should foster cross cultural solidarity because these movements are combatting similar issues. For instance, after the horrific Atlanta shooting, the Movement for Black Lives Matter supported “public safety solutions” proposed by Asian Americans Advancing Justice Atlanta (“M4BL Statement on Anti-Asian Violence”). Some of these solutions included increased mental health support services and greater language support for immigrants. Asian

Americans Advancing Justice Atlanta rejected “increased police presence or carceral solutions as the answers” because they wanted to create a community centered response (Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta & Georgia NAACP). They wanted to focus on providing resources for people to deal with their grief and trauma.

People can help foster solidarity on campus by attending meetings of different cultural clubs and by purchasing tickets for their signature events. Additionally, students can connect with social justice organizations in their local area to develop community based activism.

[Hatsune Kubota]

## Japanese Mountain Climbers

Forests and mountains are where I belong, they give me space to reflect on myself and the energy to live in the town. I am from Hokkaido, Japan. I was raised in the middle of nowhere near the Northern Territories in east Hokkaido. Hokkaido is the largest and northernmost island, known for its natural hot springs, agriculture, and volcanic mountains. It is also famous for its unique Ainu culture because it was the last place to be explored and developed by the Japanese government in the Meiji period. People are known to speak slowly compared to people in Tokyo or the Kansai area, easygoing, and not punctilious. Even though Hokkaido is too big to call a community, people from Hokkaido often have a sense of unity. They seem shy and introverted because they

are prudent, but they are usually open once you become friends with them. They have a special feeling for their hometown, and they usually get along fast with other people from Hokkaido. There is a word *どさんこ* (dosanko), which means a person or people born and raised in Hokkaido.

I am also a mountain climber. In the U.S., people seem to have a positive image of nature lovers and hikers, but it is not the case for people in Japan. Japanese people judge mountain climbers as terrible at social situations, and they assume going to the mountains is the only option for pleasure we have since we hate human interactions. Not every mountain climber in Japan is anti-social, an ultimate introvert. We love social interactions and small talk, too.

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## cont. Japanese Mountain Climbers

When I was 15, I joined a Wandervogel club in my high school because my best friend was in it. The year after I joined the team, I became the team leader. I had to lead the team, and make sure everyone feels okay when we climb. Weather forecasting was one of my important jobs. In my senior year in high school, I was extremely stressed out and depressed because I lived away from my dad for three years in a vast city called Sapporo, and living in a big city was simply not my thing. Last summer, we had the All Hokkaido Mountain Climbing Competition. It's a five-day event where we climb 4 to 5 mountains and put up a tent, the leader predicts the weather by drawing a weather map. I also learned what leadership is and how I can contribute to a small community

as a leader. Leadership is not just about leading people, but also supporting team members and making sure nobody is falling behind in the team. Having an important role in a small community forces you to develop as a person.

I love immersing myself in nature and enjoying the beautiful view and clean air. Although Japanese people judge me as if I am a freak, I spread my arms and take a deep breath, set aside all problems I have when I am in the mountains. Now I feel less overwhelmed in everyday life because I know there is a place to escape for a little while.

[Tia Moua]

## Letter to the United States

You drink your pain away  
Sober wide awake  
Yet deny the inequalities  
That you created

You numb yourself  
To the realities  
Under the  
disguise of democracy

Burnt tongue  
On the feelings  
Of white saviorism  
And doing the "Lord's work"

You are the hero  
In your egotistical story  
Where all these  
Black and brown  
helpless people  
Need saving from you

When really you  
Should be  
Saving you  
from yourself

You are a monster  
Wrapped up with lies,  
False promises,  
Fake justice  
That emanate from  
Your revolting, crusted lips

You abandon those  
You promised to work alongside  
War torn countries

Were torn by your presence  
Under the  
disguise of democracy

Bombed 40 years ago  
But the presence  
still felt today  
By millions of  
Hmong and Laotian children  
Seeing them as  
toys to chuck  
Or balls to kick

You made our people  
Think we should

cont. Letter to the United States

bow down to you  
Keep our head down as  
The "Model Minority"  
And kiss your ass  
We're oh, so grateful  
Like we owe you

You're nothing but  
A pathetic liar  
A sneaky snake  
That corrupts nations  
And destroyed generations  
Of dreams

The bully who targets  
The most vulnerable  
Under the  
disguise of democracy  
But we are still here  
Fighting against you

Your time is up



[Kaitlin Le]

## ông ngoại

every year i would begrudgingly  
say happy new year to you,  
sometimes in february,  
sometimes in january  
i had to hear your voice over the  
phone and hear questions about  
how i was doing in broken  
english  
i hated talking to you  
i could never understand what  
you were saying to me or  
wanted to say  
i hated hearing your accent  
my mom had to translate for  
both you and i  
i hated having to talk to you  
because i couldn't talk to you  
i felt like you could never speak  
to me  
and then you couldn't speak  
at all

i'm not sure if after your  
accident did i feel guilty  
or if it was always inside me  
and after it took you away from

me did it finally come out

i heard about your crash in april,  
maybe march  
i remember being told as i was  
in the pantry getting an after  
school snack  
"ông ngoại is in the hospital, he  
got into a motorcycle accident"  
if i were to look back on myself  
in that moment, i would see  
a momentary pause before i  
continue my task like nothing  
mattered

i hated when you visited all the  
way from oklahoma  
i hated when you made me pick  
the numbers on your lottery  
cards  
i hated when you asked to hear  
my voice and see me when you  
were bedridden  
i didn't want to see you  
i wonder if it ever really did feel

cont. ông ngoại

guilty at all  
or was it because i was expected  
to?

when i got called into my  
parents' room to hear the news  
"my dad died. my father has  
passed."

i think was the time I felt truly  
disconnected from you  
this was the first time you  
weren't referred to as ông ngoại  
- grandpa - to me

i wondered if i had just wished  
you happy new year before your  
accident  
if you would still be here

one night i was looking for  
something on the bathroom  
counter with no lights on  
it was a simple task and i knew  
where it was  
for some reason it was taking  
me too long to find it in the dark

i was about to give up and turn  
the lights on until an electric  
toothbrush finished charging  
and slightly lit the counter with  
its green light  
i found what i was looking for  
and left

i don't normally believe in the  
supernatural or divinity or  
magic  
but my first thought was that  
you were looking out for me  
like you've always done

i know that you have loved me  
since the very moment i was  
born

you left this world not knowing  
if i loved you or not  
i wish i could have told you i did  
i wish i told you happy new year  
i wish i had more time  
i wish i could have been a better  
granddaughter

[Giana Martinez]

## Sana Sana Colita de Giana

“Sana sana colita de rana” is a common Mexican song meaning, “Heal, heal the tale of the frog.” In calling this piece, “Sana sana colita de Giana” I am putting it out there that I am trying to heal myself and my past through sharing my story. I was brought into this world two months early by the strength of my mother’s body. I am told that she cried the first time she saw me. It seems as if that cry was a culmination of confusion, exhaustion, and pain. As I was strawberry blonde, fair skin, and soon to have blue eyes that faded to green at the age of three. “She doesn’t look like me!” my mother wails. In a way, she was right.

This story became a joke told at family gatherings throughout the years. As many do in a state of confusion, I would

chuckle along with my family’s remarks not really thinking about the layers of it all. I have a vivid memory of releasing my breath slowly in my laughter while simultaneously turning to my disheartened mom weathering in her own discomfort. It was no joke that my mom wanted a daughter who could relate to her experience as a brown woman, but at the same time, she would give anything to have her child not go through the racism that she had. Due to our differences, we couldn’t escape the public stares, the questions from strangers, “Are you, her nanny? Y’all look nothing alike!” As if the difference in skin tone hid the button nose we shared, the smile that goes from ear to ear, the apple cheeks that form the same lines alongside our noses, or the sunspots we develop

cont. Sana Sana Colita de Giana

under our eyes in Texas heat.

Unfortunately, the division between brown and white within my family didn't stop at comparisons between my mom and I. My grandparents, on both sides, made the decision to not teach their children Spanish, meaning my parents were taught to speak in English in order to protect them and set them up for success in a white world. So, I am left wondering, 'Why was it more important to fit into white society rather than Mexican culture?' The answer I have come to understand is survival. Currently existing at a predominately white institution I find myself asking this question more and more and I do not yet have an answer. Not knowing Spanish created a divide within the families. Those who spoke Spanish separated

from those who did not, leaving my Primas and Primos and I to feel ignorant for not learning and frustrated for not being taught— despite understanding the social implications.

In tandem with keeping future generations from learning their native tongue in the home, trying to fit into a white world took on another form, otherization and favoritism of the white. My grandma gave nicknames to her grandchildren that reflected this favoritism. To name a few, the oldest was called Sunshine (she is white), the youngest was called Mandona (she is brown), and I was called Precious— I am white.

Growing up I often felt as though I didn't have to do anything to make my family

proud as my whiteness did it for me. My skin seemed to be who I was. It surrounds my physical body—swallows my fingers, toes, and creases as I move. It creates my perception of myself and how I should interact with characters in my life. Socially constructed, yet one of the most real things I could know. Skin holds implications, stereotypes, and melanin. But also narratives, minds, passion, and culture. For my primo, skin holds discomfort. At the age of 3, he tried to scrub away his brownness with a sponge and Dawn dish soap. He hurt his own skin. His beautiful brown skin that holds his narrative, mind, passion, and culture, tarnished by a family that values whiteness over the same blood each member shares.

The Martinez and Villarreal families are complicated ones. In addition to what I have shared there is so much love and faith within one another and yet the racial dynamics are never discussed. So, I try my best, to question the spaces I exist in, as I would never want people to feel like I do within my family, that I am not Mexican enough.

I personally have not felt like I fit into my culture, but I am learning to understand that none of the identities that make up 'ME' are homogenous and I don't need to prove to anyone that I am Mexican or anything for that matter. I want to revisit a question that I asked myself earlier in this mixture of stories: 'Why was it more important to my family to fit into white society rather than Mexican culture?' A lot has to do with

*cont.* Sana Sana Colita de Giana

the system we exist in that  
perpetuates and uplifts  
whiteness. I don't know if it  
was a choice to pick white  
society over Mexican culture  
or if it was simply inevitable.  
Whether or not this was a  
conscious or unconscious  
choice, its contribution to the  
flourishing of white supremacy  
is real. However, through  
reflection and conversation  
pain can be acknowledged and  
hearts can begin to heal. Again,  
it's complicated, but through  
sharing my stories I can feel my  
agency in relation to my culture  
begin to resurface.

[Shay'den Howell]

## We are Evolved

I am the byproduct of mass incarceration, I am the byproduct of Slavery, I am the byproduct of the War on Drugs, I am the byproduct of red lining, I am the byproduct of Jim Crow laws. They call us (me) The minority but the majority of us are in prison, we are the minority but the majority targets of violence, I am the minority but makeup the majority of deaths across the nation, I am the minority, but the majority follow our trends

They call us (me) the minority, but we built a majority of the country

I am a minority, but your minimal ideas and stereotypes do not define me

I am (we are) the living result of destroying preconceived notions of what it is to be a minority.

We define who we are, we define what it means to be us, we get choice, the option, the opportunity to be who we want unapologetically.

We are the people that WILL break generational curses, we are the people that WILL be educated enough to stand up for ourselves, we are the people who WILL teach the future generations on what it means to be ourselves.

The oppressive mannerisms of the majority WILL not stop the cultural richness of us, you put us in chains, we dip them in gold and wear them around our necks, they used to call our

*cont.* We Are Evolved

hair dreadful, so we named our hairstyle dreadlocks. No matter what oppressive system they try to put us in, we will always overcome and evolve. And that's part of what it means to be us. Thank you for your time



[Audriana Alfaro]

## What is Your Race/Ethnicity

What is your race/ethnicity? The question stares me back in the face. It's a question I have had to fill out several times, and each time, I check the box that reads "Hispanic".

While I do identify as a Latina, I feel more distant from my Nicaraguan roots than ever. Growing up in a predominantly white area, it has been difficult to connect with my culture.

I can try to blame it on outside factors, but I know that it is primarily my own fault. It has been my own negligence and disinterest that has steered me away. But I have had time to think about change.

There are some traditions that made the jump to the US with my dad, one of those being the Nicaraguan style chicken

that we make every year for Christmas dinner. This year I decided it was time to learn the tradition: I want to reclaim my roots.

During this time spent in the kitchen with my dad, it brought me back to the Christmas my family spent in Nicaragua so many years ago. I was just a child, but the memories flooded back.

Something about the Latin music we were listening to, and the familiar smell of plantain leaves made me feel at home. For once in a while, I felt closer to my roots than ever.

As I continue to find who I am, I have plans to study Spanish and study abroad to experience Spanish speaking cultures, experiences that I feel like I have missed out on. This is the start of a wonderful journey of self-discovery.

[Ellie Williams]

## What to Work On

*“You need to work on not being so aggressive”*

9 words and I, a black woman expressing hurt and frustration, was reduced to a monolith by someone I considered a friend in a fraction of a second. In that instant, I recoiled. It was as if I was suddenly 12 years old, the only black child in the classroom, completely isolated. Playing into the stereotype that has overshadowed women like me for decades. Taking back-handed compliments and passive-aggressive remarks on the chin, as I was taught to do. “You’re so loud!” “Could you be any more extra?” “You’re honestly really pretty for a black girl.” “You’re so eloquent in the way you speak!” Shrink yourself. Blend in. You’re noticeable enough as it is.

To be honest, I should’ve seen it coming. The whispering of the word “Black” in conversations, as if someone might overhear. The disgusting lack of empathy and understanding when the murders of Black men were concerned. Why would I expect to be treated any differently? Am I naive enough to think I’m the one you finally accept? Your only black friend in 21 years of life should have been a caution in itself, but I was never known to heed warnings. You came with your preconceived notions before you even said hello. You spoke of the blatant racism you witnessed towards your teachers, towards your peers, yet you held your tongue. Inside your little bubble, nothing else mattered. No one else mattered. And so, in your first adult confrontation, you condescendingly throw talking

points and insults at me, like the superior being you clearly see yourself as. But truthfully, how could I have expected anything else?

There was venom in your words. Cowering behind your victimization in the face of conflict. Hundreds of years of prejudice and discrimination, stereotypes and preconceptions. You laughed off your damaging ways of thought as a product of your upbringing, yet look down on those in the south that justify their hateful rhetoric the exact same way. At least they're honest. They don't hide behind hashtags and empty black squares and pretend to care. You are so much worse. You brush off your indifference to Black struggles as a result of your sheltered nature. You weaponized your inexperience

with difficult conversations as fear of my rage. My rage, unjustified if it means you are uncomfortable. Irrational if it means you have to take any sort of accountability. Terrifying. Threatening. You'll take your crocodile tears and speak of how attacked you felt by my calling you out on your mistake and will never accept responsibility for the role you played.

I've always understood that I was different. The negative connotation my darker complexion held has followed me around, shaping the way I enter rooms and relationships. Growing up in the South, my younger brother and I were taught to be hypervigilant of our surroundings, as well as those we chose to surround ourselves with. But make no mistake, regardless of where

## cont. What to Work On

in the state, the country, or the world we were, the lesson still applied. Beyond the flying of confederate flags or proud sporting of MAGA hats, racism has embedded itself into the framework of this country—of this planet, despite one's political affiliation. In the three years I spent in Louisiana, I thought I had seen the worst of it until I arrived here. Here, it's covert. Here, it's hidden within the shadows, waiting to strike with graffiti over a mural or turning away black students from a social gathering. Here, it's real and it's sinister but since it does not take on the traditional form, it's ignored. Brushed aside as a figment of our imagination. But it's working in the hiring processes, in the admissions building, and in the social groups of this institution.

The lack of diversity in the demographics at this school is astounding and has been something I have struggled to navigate in my semester here so far. I urge my peers to work on opening their eyes to this issue. To work on challenging themselves to reach beyond their little bubbles. To work on educating themselves on how destructive micro-aggressions and ignorance can be. And to work on speaking out on the blatant racism permeating throughout this university. I want to believe most people do not set out to be intentionally hateful, but apathy in the face of discrimination is just as detrimental.







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# DIVERSITY MONOLOGUES.

[Odalys Sanchez Cedillo]

## Bendito es el Fruto de su Vientre

Del monte surge la mano de  
una niña  
Que desde lo oscuro tiembla y  
luce pálida  
Pero al salir de la tierra su piel  
es tierna y de un color marrón  
que deslumbra los grumos a su  
alrededor  
Ella creció de la tierra, en la  
tierra, y para la tierra

Sus tiernas manos se convierten  
en unas polvorosas palas que  
siembran los próximos frutos  
para su pueblo  
Día tras día procura hablarles y  
cantarles  
Hasta que crezcan fuertes y  
jugosos para alimentar a su  
familia

Bendito es el fruto de su vientre  
Mientras algo crece de la tierra,  
en ella crece una hermosa alma  
Que vendrá al mundo para  
ayudar al pueblo

Bendito es el fruto de su vientre  
Es recibido con gracia en un  
hogar acogedor  
Esta alma tan bella que se  
convierte en una grande mujer  
Sus tiernas manos se llenan de  
callos al cosechar los frutos de  
su madre

Sus esfuerzos dan alegría a todo  
el pueblo  
De la tierra se nutren  
Gracias a las bendiciones de  
Dios se llenan de nutrientes y  
los frutos dan a luz  
Dejando un legado para las  
generaciones por venir

Ellas curan las heridas de sus  
tierras y construyen un imperio  
que será utilizado cuando ellas  
se marchen

El monte se convierte en  
pavimento  
No hay tierra a la vista



Se ven obligadas a reconstruir  
un hogar en un lugar nuevo  
El trabajo es nuevo e indignante  
Su labor ahora hiere su piel y  
sus manos de nuevo duelen

Las voces de los demás las  
hunde  
Pero esto no las detiene

A lo lejos escuchan llamar sus  
nombres  
Ellas siguen a las mariposas  
hacia el lugar de sus sueños  
Marchan por días y días hasta  
llegar al mundo que se merecen

Pero no es lo esperado  
Sus manos de nuevo se utilizan  
para dar frutos a la tierra  
Aquí se queda su ternura

El lugar mágico que se  
esperaban ahora es uno de horas  
largas y largas  
Uno de más y más trabajo

Pero esto no las detiene

Juntas siguen marchando  
Pronto, de su vientre nacerá otra  
criatura  
Por fin sus manos se ganan un  
descanso y ella tiene al amor  
que tanto esperaba  
Las dos continúan marchando  
juntas  
Ahora con más integrantes a la  
familia

Su pueblo pequeño sigue  
creciendo y las mariposas van y  
vuelven con los mensajes de sus  
seres queridos  
Sus manos se nutren de amor  
y continúan dando frutos al  
pueblo

Después de años,  
Ellas se separan  
Pero mientras el piso bajo sus  
piernas es diferente,  
Las continúa uniendo:  
El fruto de su vientre

[Jackie Lee Gaither]

## Dear Diary

Dear diary,

I heard that journaling can be  
therapeutic  
So i guess i'm writing to you

I am a mad. Black. Woman  
It has been too many days of  
waking up with sadness but fury  
So mad that I could name too  
many that ought to stand before  
a jury  
Im so tired of the lame ass  
excuses  
While i am left battered with  
bruises  
And your empty apologies,  
useless

I really tried  
But my patience has shriveled  
up and died  
I had convinced myself that I  
could show someone to care  
That no matter the color of skin,  
the struggle of oppression we

share

Ive come to realize that people  
like me always have to have  
grace  
Or we would be labeled as  
radical and a disgrace  
My expectations were so low for  
equal human dignity  
That I realized I sacrificed the  
proper accountability  
Ooo I am tired of tiptoeing  
around white fragility  
Just to preserve their everlasting  
tranquility

Dear diary

I am so angry

Because for some reason i have  
to justify who i am  
But my aunties and uncles  
always told me that i am black  
and beautiful and anyone who  
thinks otherwise can scam  
You want re-assurance yet

degrade my humanity  
And I ask you, who is to comfort  
me?  
Existing in these white spaces  
it becomes so effortless to be  
washed away  
And continue to keep culture  
erasure

I've been so tempted to let this  
anger consume me  
Let them control all of me free  
But this rage is the equivalent of  
the sun to the tree  
And feeds my soul like fuel to  
a fire

Let me tell you what blackness  
is  
Blackness is excellence in every  
way imaginable  
A concept for some that can't  
seem to be fathomable  
Blackness is resiliency in the  
face of adversity  
Despite the extreme and horrific

monstrosity  
Blackness is the beautiful shades  
of melanin skin  
That holds trauma and beauty  
from our kin  
Blackness is harmonizing  
together in our deepest pains  
While still making sure we  
achieve our gains  
Blackness is hoping with humor.  
And blackness is power

I came from the strength of my  
ancestors who built this country  
And then marched for  
justice from Birmingham to  
Montgomery  
I came from the black gospel and  
old school rap that has touched  
nations  
That fills our ears in the face of  
marginalization  
I came from the fighter of my  
father who refuses to let cancer  
win

*cont.* Dear Diary

Who forever reminds me to not  
forget who I grew to be within

A force to be reckoned with

Dear diary

I am a mad. Black.

- Jacquelyn Renee Lee

[Juliette Aguilar-Gomez]

## Hasta la Raiz (To the Root)

Reclaiming your roots. That's the theme of this monologue. But what does that really mean? The act of reclaiming your roots? First off, **reclaiming** as stated by the Oxford dictionary is the act to, "retrieve or recover (something previously lost, given, or paid)." **Roots** as stated by the Oxford dictionary when referring to a plant is, "the part of a plant which attaches it to the ground or to a support, typically underground, conveying water and nourishment to the rest of the plant via numerous branches and fibers." Although, in reference to a less literal definition it means, "the basic cause, source, or origin of something." I think both the literal sense and the non-literal definition apply to this theme. In the sense that an individual's roots are from their point of

origin or source of someone, from looking at the aspect of lineage, ancestry and culture that take part of one's identity. This is then also intertwined with the definitions of a plant's definition of roots and is similar to the less literal form where these roots act as a type of support and a nourishment that can guide you to the type of person you are and who you will be. It is the essence of these definitions that an examination of where my roots are is the question. What is my point of origin exactly? And have I reclaimed these roots?

My ancestral lineage most known begins way back in a pueblito in Mexico called San José De Gracia, Nayarit where my parents and generations before them resided and later on in a large city called

cont. Hasta la Raiz (To the Root)

Guadalajara, Jalisco where my older brother was born. It was not until a couple years later that an opportunity to go to the United States was offered that those original roots spread towards new land. It wouldn't be permanent to move to Washington or as my little cousin refers to it el polo norte (the north pole) due to how cold and far it is. But that did not become the case when those roots were then permanently established in 2003 the year I was born in Spokane Valley, Washington. And it was then that through the years those roots planted in Mexico from Jalisco to Nayarit slowly diminished more and more as the years went by and were not as strong or plentiful as they once were. There was still some connection to those roots but it was only explored at home

where a continuation of my parents cultural traditions were still practiced. From tamales and pozole that was always made during Christmas, avocado, beans, tortillas, rice made always aplenty in the household, Maná, Vicente Fernández, and Los Tigres Del Norte always continued to play especially during días de limpieza (cleaning days), to shows such as Hasta que el dinero nos separe and El chavo being the classics always seen and referenced, and the common phrase always heard "dimelo en español" to remind us to speak spanish at home. Although being raised in Spokane, a connection to these roots was only found at home and there was a lack of acceptance or commonality from others. And that difference in origin simply brought questioning

and stereotyping to occur. The constant remark and question surrounded how part of my roots that resided in Mexico were not plausible, for how could I speak english so well and how come my skin was so light. Growing up surrounded by this it developed a huge disconnection to those roots for years as a little kid. It was not exactly shame but certainly not a sense of curiosity for them or major pride from where I came from.

It wasn't until years later that a shift in that area happened through an occurrence of various events but most importantly by going back to where it all started in el pueblito de San José de Gracia, Nayarit. Visits to Mexico had always occurred but going at an older age didn't just bring

a large number in age and a large number in height but also a larger perspective. I got the chance to have my eyes opened to the true struggles and dreams that were put to plant these roots in San Jose and spread them out to where I am now in Spokane. From the hours of work my bisabuela implanted towards her dream of establishing a restaurant in el pueblito, to the struggles that my grandpa faced working as a railroad worker for years to provide for his family, to my grandma who as single mother worked full time and raised a son and supported him through his higher education. And ultimately to my parents who left their home to come build new roots somewhere else with better opportunities for their children. Understanding this gave me light to my history of

cont. Hasta la Raiz (To the Root)

what came before me. Although, what truly struck me was when I saw my great aunt who once had liveliness in her eyes was now gone, years had grown on her with her hair fading in color and ridges collecting around her eyes. And that year as she greeted me with her eyes welling in tears saying in Spanish her common phrase “look how you have grown” and then what was abrupt and out of script was a small cry and true pure sadness exclaiming, “I thought you had forgotten all about us and all about me.” Hearing this brought a sharp stab to my heart shame of her thinking that we had all forgotten about my family and my origins.

Going back to that start of it all, of that journey and the struggles and dreams and the loss of

connection to my roots and my family directed me towards the process of reclaiming my roots. I know I haven’t reclaimed them but I am going back to what I missed and have not learned. A connection to those roots is still being built but I now know that it won’t be forgotten and that it’s a constant journey of self discovery of one’s genealogy, heritage, culture, and history of where they truly come from and what happened to get there and how it can direct me towards who I am and who I can be. Like singer songwriter Natalia Lafourcade explained it best in her song *Hasta la raiz* “Mire el pasado sabrás que no te he olvidado, Yo te llevo dentro, hasta la raíz.” And I like to know I keep the words true to my heart as my journey of self discovery and constantly reclaiming my roots that I will remember what and who came before me and have my origins close to me “hasta la raiz”.



[Analesa Amira Mason]

## My Mother's Garden

Under the summer sun she  
worked life into the soil of her  
garden.

Her brown hands covered in  
brown dirt as she planted the  
seeds of her soon to be fruits.

With sweat beams and aching  
knees, she created a sanctuary  
in our backyard.

She saw weeds more than she  
saw progress and yet she did  
not sway.

Treating them like her children,  
she called her flowers by name  
but knew they would leave her  
by October.

Manually manifesting growth  
and keeping faith the size of  
a mustard seed – her garden  
would eventually bare remnants  
of all her work.

A mother with a green thumb.  
My mother and her green  
thumb.

Like her garden, her womb gave  
life to children that would make  
her proud.

Two daughters and a son—a  
physical reminder of her manual  
manifestation of a family.

She passed down her brown  
skin and asked the sun to shine  
on it.

Watering us with boundless  
love, compassion, and dedica-  
tion— her green thumb made  
her easy to find in a crowd.

Nurturing has always come  
naturally; her mother planted  
that seed.

She told stories of our roots,  
hoping we would carry them  
with us in the fabric of our  
being and one day give them to  
our own fruits.

Three grandsons and a  
granddaughter – they too are  
remnants of her all work.

cont. My Mother's Garden

She was always watching over  
her garden.  
She put fences around her plants  
to protect them, tying their  
stems to sticks for support.  
And wilting leaves... they  
never stayed long. Adamant that  
nothing gets in the way of her  
blossoming flowers.  
Her garden was a beacon for  
prosperity and so badly she  
wanted it to stay that way.  
She exchanged life for life.  
She gave so they could receive,  
and they would soon return the  
favor.

Then, our sprinkler arched rain  
on the soil, reflecting rainbows  
with the day's light.  
With bare feet and soft smiles,  
we ran through the water.  
Now, we work that same soil  
with her guidance.  
Roots so strong, some plants

return each year.  
Her values have engrained  
themselves on our spirits.

Like her garden,  
my mother worked us,  
fed us,  
demanded success,  
and nurtured our souls.

Living fruits, rough hands, and  
happy children.  
It was all worth it.

I am from my mother's garden.

[Akon Edwang and Anonymous]

## Oil and Water

**\*\*both speaking = bolded\*\***

**\*\*Akon speaking = normal\*\***

**\*\*Kellyn speaking = italicized\*\***

### **Oil and water.**

Oil

*and water.*

**The two have different densities and different polarities. The two have different identities and different backgrounds.**

*When I was ten years old and deeply invested in my local library's reading competition, I read a book entitled Oil and Water and learned about how the two substances physically cannot mix. My first thought was "who says they can't?" Naturally, I set off to prove this notion incorrect. I tried all kinds of experiments to see if I could get oil and water to mix, but none worked.*

Growing up, I didn't know I was being conditioned to be the other

I lived in a world where everybody is silently judging me  
My role was already made for me

Loud, rude, angry, expressive are words you said describe me  
I realized I never had a chance to be "a girl"

Instead, my blackness over encompasses who I could ever be

I am trapped in what is supposed to be the beauty of me  
a part of who I am.

**Growing up, I was told that nothing was wrong.**

*Before I could even spell the word "flag",  
I pledged my allegiance to one.  
I vowed that I would stand for a country*

cont. Oil and Water

*United and indivisible  
One nation under God  
But that was never really true,  
was it?*

*How can our country be united  
and indivisible*

**When my America is different  
than your America?**

**In My America** police would  
patrol the neighborhood,  
Kids in the corner standing on  
the street because we couldn't  
wait for the police to hand out  
blue coupons to the local corner  
store for free slushies  
They can't be a threat because  
they protect our neighborhoods  
**Back the blue** they said  
**Back the blue** when my body is  
forced face down on the street  
**Back the blue** when my heart is  
on its final beat  
**Back the blue**...when I lay on  
my coffin

And repeat  
**Because my America is different  
than your America.**

*In my America  
My whiteness protects me  
While I fear being kidnapped for  
my womanhood,  
I do not fear being kidnapped  
quietly  
My face would headline NBC  
News  
Many faces do not.*

*In my America,  
The black experience is  
homogenous  
I lack in individuality, but I also  
lack unity  
I hear black power, but I don't  
see it  
Every time I take a step forward  
there always a foundation  
pushing me back  
I see pathways opening to help  
me grow but are shut down the*

minute someone is “threatened”

In my America  
Much of the pain which I  
experience comes from those I  
share blood with  
Rather than the very  
foundations of this country  
As it does for many.  
When I was eleven, my father  
took my brother and I to a local  
lumberyard  
Where we were told to pick out  
a few planks of wood.  
I carefully selected several  
planks of cedar wood,  
Assuming we were building an  
Adirondack chair like my mom  
wanted  
Soon to be covered in  
popsicle drippings and sticky  
fingerprints.  
I was so wrong.  
My father told us that if we  
ever made the “decision” to love  
someone of the same gender, we

would use our planks of wood to  
build our own house on the pile  
of dirt next to the dog run in the  
backyard.

That way, we were not “sinning”  
under his roof, but he could still  
“keep an eye on us”.

I cowered from this homophobia  
for years.

It consumed me.

It consumed me when one of my  
best friends texted me from Club  
Q on November 20th,  
Saying that if anything  
happened, he loved me.

It consumed me when my high  
school took down the rainbow  
colored flags promptly on July  
1st.

It consumed me.

It consumed me.

It consumed me.

Until now.

This past December, sitting on  
the Adirondack chair that I built

## cont. Oil and Water

seven years later,  
Twenty feet from the now  
warped planks of cedar wood,  
I came out to my mom as bi.  
It should have been popsicle  
drippings covering that chair.  
In my America, it was tears.

In October, the two of us  
traveled to Washington, D.C.  
to attend the Ignatian Family  
Teach-In for Justice.  
Here, we converged our stories,  
our experiences, and our  
perspectives.  
Here, we heard stories about  
other people's Americas. This is  
what we took away.  
*To be radical is to be rooted.*  
In order to heal, we have to  
believe that we are worthy of  
healing.  
*I want to be a better human and  
a worse settler.*  
Community is where humility  
and glory touch.

We are storytellers for urgent  
change.  
Fuck the flag.  
**True freedom is what I  
represent.**

No human being will ever be  
illegal.  
Everything is possible and  
nothing is an obstacle.  
**Optimism is optimal.**

The notion of being a "voice for  
the voiceless" **does not exist.**  
**This is a lie. A misconception.**  
We ALL have voices. Some of us  
just aren't listening.  
They want to make our  
movements divided and  
separate.  
**Anybody fighting for justice are  
your people.**

If something is more accessible  
for one person, it's more  
accessible for everyone.

Flip the table feminism. They  
say us women want a seat at  
the table.

*Fuck the table.*

**We're going for a walk.**

*Most importantly, we hear you.*

*We feel you.*

**We love you.**

*The one thing that I took  
away from those childhood  
experiments of mine is that  
when oil catches fire, water is  
the worst possible thing to add  
to the mix, unless you want the  
flames to grow.*

*Maybe this was never about  
getting the two substances to  
mix.*

*Maybe this was all about  
burning a stronger fire than  
either could create on their own.*

**Maybe all we need is a match,  
because when oil and water**

**come together, they can burn  
these foundations to the ground.**

[Aaliyah Mae Lewis]

## Sampaguita

A Sampaguita

Alright, Ready? On the count of  
3 smile!

1..2...3...

“Click”

As the ID prints, I feel this rush  
of nerves through my body.  
Anxious to see a reflection of  
a girl that has sprouted on the  
growing vines of this earth but  
as I receive this ID and hold it  
in the palm of my hands, I can’t  
help but feel like an imposter.

An ID of blurred facts as  
nothing feels certain in my own  
identity.

A girl unable to believe that  
she comes from a field of  
sampaguita’s because her soil  
was from a

different garden

A girl with the roots of her soul  
so fragile with every lift that is  
taken, as the planters of her  
environment move her from  
one garden to another, unable  
to pinpoint exact characteristics  
of the flower she is supposed  
to be.

Leaving her to replant and  
grip the soil beneath her each  
time, trying to finally build a  
foundation that can nourish her  
growth and sprout beyond the  
pedals that are questioned by  
the outside gaze.

Feeling the leaves along her  
stem to falter, as the world she  
grows in, increases the weight  
of pressure to sprout into a  
flower that is desired to be  
cherished for the characteristics  
of beauty that is the standard.



Feeling out of place in a garden  
that doesn't feel like home yet  
to move her in a vase cherished  
in a home, will still never feel  
like a home.

“Ang hindi lumingon sa  
pinanggalingan, hindi  
makakarating sa paroroonan”

A person who does not  
remember where they came  
from will never reach their  
destination.

It wasn't until recently that  
the soil I'm planted in began  
nourishing the growth of my  
existence.

Connecting my beauty to  
the stem of my foundation,  
watering my features with  
what I know rather than drying  
myself of pursuing to look like  
the sampaguita's that I am

surrounded by.

To acknowledge that my  
growth is paced at the timing  
of my own understanding  
of this Filipino Experience,  
I have learned to care for  
the environment that deeply  
connects to the peace of my  
own soul.

To be a sampaguita is to  
symbolize purity, fidelity, and  
hope. To be faithful to who I am  
regardless of the ground I grow  
from, just as the flower isn't  
native to the Philippines, my  
identity is still cherished by  
the beauty of features I offer to  
share with the earth around me.

Sampaguita deriving from the  
phrase “sampai kita” translated  
to “I promise you”

I can promise to myself that like

*cont. Sampaguita*

this plant with flowers smaller  
than others that holds a rich  
fragrance that is loved by its  
world, I will be loved in my own  
world, accepting that this  
reflection I see of myself  
now, will only continue to be  
nourished by the nutrients I  
let in.

Allowing myself to accept that  
the blooms of my pedals is just  
as beautiful regardless of the  
garden I am growing in because  
I symbolize the strength of  
sampaguita's before me.

And so, I must promise myself,  
to bloom through the seasons of  
change and nourish the ground  
of my foundation so I can  
become a Sampaguita that is  
planted in a home that feels like  
home.

{Jocelin Garcia}

## Strawberries

Growing up, I learned to love  
mornings back home

Mornings where the sun would  
glow on my skin,

Never heavy with heat,

Always light paired with the  
smell of grass and birds singing

There were fields, all filled with  
people

All who looked like me with  
brown skin and different levels  
of Spanish all throughout

Fields full of strawberries.

Where the strawberries grow

The ones you get in a little clear  
container at the grocery store

The kind of strawberries my

grandma and I would go pick.

Fruit that lives in my mind back  
when I was so young

Picking them with my favorite  
person in the whole wide world

While I was there with my  
favorite person,

Mama Viki was watching out for  
the kind of favorite person that  
you want to live the rest of your  
life with.

See Mama Viki all her life had  
handsome men waiting for her  
hand.

At first when she would tell me  
the stories

I had imagined a gentler version  
of myself,

cont. Strawberries

Always wanting so eagerly to be  
exactly like her

I engraved all the stories that  
she would tell me

The stories that would give me  
insights to all that she lived in  
Mexico

All the stories of her and Papa  
Gerardo before coming to the  
states

Papa Gerardo came to the  
United States because his  
daughter was having me

He crossed the border to be able  
to pick me up from school when  
Mama Viki was stuck at home  
making dinner

For when my mom was stuck in  
LA and missed a train to come  
back home

He left his home full of people  
that knew him and the type of  
people we've always been to be a  
part of my home

Gerardo Garcia Lopez

And for the first time

It comes out of my mouth  
because I get to say his name in  
the beautiful ways he's lived

And not because I didn't even  
know he had Lopez in his name

I found out after having to repeat  
it so much after his nine digit  
inmate number

One morning I got up to go to  
school

Before I left I remember my  
grandma asking me if I had  
money for lunch and telling them

that I was late and that I loved  
them

My little sister Pala tried leaving  
an hour after I did and was met  
with officers

When I got home that afternoon  
the apartment was quiet

Pala was in the living room with  
my godmother's daughters

My godmother was in my  
grandparents room repeating  
over and over

El va a estar bien, va a estar  
bien

Such a wonderful man

Kind and soothing

The kind of father that provided  
for his daughter and his new  
granddaughter

Moved to this country that was  
so foreign to him

The kind of person that spent  
his entire life trying to learn the  
language that now his children's  
children were coming home  
speaking

The golden sun became dull

The fields turned grey, and the  
strawberries in my mind weren't  
bright but bitter

Ultimately becoming the  
realization that my comfort

The feeling of being safe was  
being shattered

Grief

Became like glitter grasping on  
to every thought when I think  
of him

cont. Strawberries

Not being able to fully wash it  
away because you'd eventually  
find traces of it somewhere

Grief

After every time I say his name

The name that I inherited

Was being put in newspapers  
and flashed on the news with  
words that I had never used  
before

Words no one ever thinks of  
when thinking of the man that  
raised you

And loved you

My roots were being dug up  
from the soil that had taken  
generations to heal, and it was  
being thrown back into the  
water that continuously kept  
drowning us

I had always loved home

But home turned into the place  
that kept him behind a cell

It kept him behind bars because  
even though I would tell  
everyone my family was from  
Mexico so proudly,

It was being used against us

Like the words were so dirty  
that they shouldn't ever be  
associated with anything worthy

Anything loved

Him dying made me realize just  
how much home was in him and  
how he made me feel in every  
new space

Not on land that constantly kept  
burning us

How was it that the thousands  
of years my ancestors had  
continuously pushed through so  
that I could potentially exist felt  
like they were being scorched

To ashes everything that we  
were

There's a veil that gets released  
when you get to the point where  
the world isn't always so bright

How was I living in a country  
that was constantly teaching me  
I could do it all

When it would turn around and  
tell the rest of my family they  
didn't belong and to go back

Maybe it's the trauma that is  
constantly sticking

or maybe its because we're  
constantly growing up at the

age of 6, 7, 8 when those around  
us are learning about them at an  
"appropriate" age

How is it that I had to learn  
about deportation and the  
starvation

The forced sterilization of  
women crossing borders

The children behind cages that  
are dying behind the bars

And my peers having the  
comfort of learning about it if  
they want to

If they want to take the extra  
class that somehow fits all my  
traumas of being chicana in this  
country

cont. Strawberries

In

One

Fucking

Class

So while you get uncomfortable  
in these white walls that  
continuously lift you up in your  
discomfort while I'm told I'm  
"feeling" too much

I'm back here growing through  
it

I'm crying through it

I'm rising from the ashes that  
were supposed to burn me alive  
when in reality it made my  
ancestors and those who come  
after me indestructible.

So continue sitting in your  
discomfort

I'll continue rising and eating  
the fruit my people continuously  
have to grow

But my roots are getting deeper

Good luck trying to uproot my  
people again

Because if we go

We're taking all that we've  
brought with us



[Anisia Khammala]

## To the Little Girl with Big Dreams

*You are my sunshine. My only  
sunshine.  
You make me happy when skies  
are gray.  
You'll never know dear how  
much I love you.  
Please don't take my sunshine  
away.*

To the little girl with big  
dreams,  
I am sorry to say that I did not  
become the person that you  
wanted me to be.

You used to dream about one  
day being just like everyone  
else: funny, smart, tall, beautiful.  
And looking like the people in  
the magazines with pretty long,  
straight hair, fair skin, long legs,  
and to make a room go hush as  
you'd enter.  
You dreamed of being a  
showstopper and a light in other  
people's lives.

But that was until, other people  
began to take the light out of  
your life.

Instead, you became something  
you had trouble imagining:  
You learned quickly that you do  
not fit the status quo.  
Your hair so big it blocked  
the views of others, your  
curls too tight to lay flat and  
unfortunately  
by the age of 13 you didn't get  
much taller.  
But it didn't stop there.

You grew up surrounded by the  
beauty of other people and other  
cultures,  
but for some reason that meant  
in others eyes you were ghetto.  
You grew up in a place that  
lacked resources because the  
world is unfair,  
So, you had to work twice as  
hard to get into places where

cont. To the Little Girl with Big Dreams

some people just walked in.

You grew up in a family whose skillset and knowledge you exceeded in college because it is beyond their grasp.

So, you had to learn to do it not only alone but for them too.

You grew up realizing that you were fighting for not only yourself, but your family, for your community and for every other little girl just like you.

To the little girl with big dreams, I am sorry that I did not become the person that you wanted me to be.

But I'm so excited to tell you that I became someone even better.

Stop dreaming about being like everyone else because you are not everyone else.

That big curly hair that you

wanted so bad to get rid of, well it got longer and bigger because who cares that it blocks the view,

Baby I am the view.

You will learn to love the parts of yourself that some people can't appreciate.

Your ancestors laid seeds on your head to grow a beautiful crown that know how to defy gravity.

Your ancestors crossed oceans in the midst of war to plant you in a place of opportunity.

Baby girl,

You are a showstopper. You are a trailblazer, You are a warrior continuing to pave a path for you, your family & your community.

You have a confidence that makes a room for hush, Because you are

unapologetically bad ass

To the little girl with big dreams,  
you are exactly who you need  
to be, don't sell yourself short or  
make yourself small.

Don't fit try into a box, you  
never belonged in one.

Keep dreaming and dream  
bigger because this world is  
what you make it.

So, to the little girl with big  
dreams,

I am sorry to say that I did not  
become the person that you  
wanted me to be.

But I am excited to tell you that  
I am someone you would be  
proud of.

*You'll never know dear, how  
much I love you.  
Please don't take my sunshine  
away.*

[RJ McGee]

## Tree

Son of cop, jokes to me, about  
me, about cotton crops and  
trees, 2 trees, labeled poplar and  
family.

About slaves and strange fruit,  
about don't shoot pleas.

Pleased, he jokes to me about  
murder, coast ivory, the sea

About black bodies lost black  
bodies shipped.

About black bodies ripped from  
homes and history.

How hilarious the ham, son of  
pig the real joke, apple always  
falls close that's the thing about  
trees.

Concerning parent child  
ideological proximity.

Offspring raised with fear in  
mind, in soul

Dehumanize king and queen,  
hate perpetuate the goal,

Offer outward oppression via  
disguised hegemony.

Because leaders lack spleen,  
spine, and deep-thinking mind.

Equipped with cold heart, rotten  
soul, there's corruption at core  
of apple.

Apple taught; apple grown.

Apple bought; apple owned.

Does not take tongue slip for  
true colors shown.

Investigation unrequired for  
noble cover blown.

Remove covers, truth revealed  
to Innate disdain requited  
A bastardized profession,  
professional bigotry is required.

No repercussion for  
confessional, never fired or  
retired.

Simply moved on to the next  
job, with hardly a shift in attire.

Traded in white hood for badge  
and gun. A whip for a taser.

Black bodies bruised by cops  
donning blue. The Pinkertons  
were slavers.

Unchecked police behavior.

Bodies protected; bodies served.

That's a phrase misconstrued,  
it's really  
black bodies used.  
Expectation black and blue,  
misused power abused.  
Abuse protections, take  
advantage of immunity granted.

Permitted hypocrite standards,  
underserve people on purpose.  
Purposely protect mind from  
undeserved brain sore.  
Mandate means of revolution.  
attrition, war.

Educational places protect  
confederate spaces.  
Slave owner statues are saved  
by idealess statutes.  
And ideals of black dudes with  
placated attitude.  
Become common in country full  
of racist habitude.  
White supremacy in the states is  
merely a platitude.

Prideful government institutions  
averse to restitution by means  
of constitution preach American  
lore.

It's a red herring history, hateful  
heritage galore.

Greatest American revolution  
written as profound mystery  
Not fought for tax and tea  
or against a red coat. Instead  
fought for spread of facts and  
the peoples right  
to vote.

I hear a knock on the door, and  
a slam on the ceiling doubles as  
somebody's floor.

Hear ring of phone with calls of  
pain, pained shouts fuel fight for  
freedom's flame.

In name of retribution, for mine  
most prevalent, keep in mind  
the relevant, melanin, oxygen,  
required for survival.

Strife, vital resistance, my  
existence is no recital.

cont. Tree

Name plates are arbitrary,  
there's too much value in a title.  
Too much value placed in color,  
placed in shades, placed in hue.  
Value placed in lives of people,  
that is value placed too few.

And what's the value of  
freedom, when it's cost isn't  
free.  
Country feigns liberty, idea less  
sturdy than tree.  
Idea understood by trees apple.  
Hate's passed down with ease.

Tree from corrupt apple grows  
into glorified bully.  
And apple from rotten tree  
completes the circle fully.  
But trees don't hate only, trees  
can show peace soley.  
A tree free of aversion,  
inevitably spreads love wholly.

Perpetuating infinite is each and  
every tree.

Keep everything pristine cause  
everything is everything,  
Everything is tree roots,  
everything is apple juice,  
everything is persistent purpose  
presented with  
undisputed proof.

Maintain trees word as oak, per  
what's needed to succeed.  
Swift spread of strong roots  
allows wisdom proceed.  
Upkeep every tree, and sustain  
each apple, and discover every  
forest and win each battle for  
the apples that find themselves  
intertwined at the roots.  
Dig deeply to see where  
existence collides, and the war  
has gracefully concluded.  
Cause it takes every apple, and  
it takes each tree to combine  
into the forests that allow us to  
breathe.

Tree has roots, and tree has  
apple, and apple is tree, and  
tree was apple, and we are tree,  
and we are apple, and roots  
are we entangled eternally,  
for everything is everything is  
everything is everything.





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# AUTHORS.

## Aaliyah Mae Lewis

[Sampaguita]

My name is Aaliyah Mae Maniego Lewis, I'm from Tacoma, Washington. I'm currently a third, majoring in Computer Science & Computational Thinking with a Concentration in Communications. Here at Gonzaga, I work with 3 different departments, those being CCE, UMEC, and being a member of the GUCDEI Council. All while participating in clubs such as FASU, AAU, and HPIC and being a current ActSix Scholar in Cadre 12.

## Akon Edwang

[Oil and Water]

Akon Edwang is a sophomore at Gonzaga University. She is currently studying Political Science with a minor in international studies. She works with UMEC as a BRIDGE mentor. She loves activism, hanging out with friends and playing volleyball.

## Analesa Amira Mason

[My Mother's Garden]

Analesa Mason is a Junior at Gonzaga, majoring in Criminology and Sociology. She was born and raised in Tacoma, WA. She values intentionality, authenticity, and family. Her grandma, Tina Mason, a professional poet, inspired Analesa to write and through that inspiration came some of her best work. Her passion for writing has become more apparent and platforms like Diversity Monologues and Our Voices have instilled confidence and created community for her.

## Andrea Galvin

[Mabuhay]

Andrea Galvin is a first-year student and Act Six Scholar at Gonzaga University majoring in English Literature with a minor in Political Science. She is from Tacoma, Washington and was on the Editorial Board of Write253's Disclaimer magazine, a local non-profit literary arts organization that provides meaningful opportunities to young creatives in Pierce County. Last year, she served as a Daffodil Princess, the first to represent Silas High School, and Official Ambassador of Pierce County, accruing approximately 500 hours of community service. In her free time, she enjoys frequenting the local coffee and book shops in Spokane. After graduation, she plans to attend law school.

## Anisia Khammala

To the Little Girl with Big Dreams

Anisia Khammala is a senior at Gonzaga University studying Sociology & Critical Race and Ethnic Studies. She is a low-income, first generation, student of color and hopes to obtain her degree to work in college-access and/or student affairs to help students like herself gain access to higher education. Khammala has participated in multiple leadership roles on campus to first-hand be the representation she wishes she had for the younger students at Gonzaga and through representation and community she believes it can create greater sense of belonging for students of marginalized identities.

## Angeline Elguero-Mateo

[Cha'tine a ba - Te Quedes]

As a low-income, first-generation student of color from an immigrant household, Anji Elguero-Mateo is navigating new spaces, to cultivate bonds with different communities. During and after her time at Gonzaga, she hopes to gain an academic and holistic understanding of the world while personally striving to learn from the stories she hears. Anji's former leadership positions consisted of seeing roles as placeholders, but nothing is one-sided. Therefore she wants to integrate inclusive and engaging dialogue into headlines, worldviews, and experiences through multiple lenses. Anji is personally committed to aligning her actions and behaviors with the values ingrained from her family of diverse representation, optimism, vulnerability, and perseverance.

## Antonio Campos

[Ashes to Ashes, The Gypsy's Requiem, Western Progress]

Antonio Roman Campos is a Gonzaga University Honors College senior currently pursuing a major in civil engineering along with minors in English, writing, Catholic studies, and philosophy. In addition to being a student researcher investigating transportation engineering technologies, he is also president of Gonzaga University's chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers; he is a member of Alpha Sigma Nu, the Jesuit International Honor Society; and he is the vice president of Tau Beta Pi, the Engineering International Honor Society. Though pursuing a career in STEM, in his free time Mr. Campos enjoys reading and writing, with an emphasis on the styles and topics of late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature. A highly decorated Eagle Scout from Colorado, Mr. Campos also considers himself to be an outdoorsman, and he enjoys hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding. He has won awards for speechwriting, visual, and

performing arts. He enjoys volunteering at local charities, and he believes that all people have the capacity to become great men and women. He is a committed environmentalist, an active member of the Catholic community, and he hopes to become a rancher one day. Mr. Campos has previously published his creative writing in Gonzaga's Charter and Our Voices journals, with technical work appearing in Transportation Research Board and Elsevier among others.

### Amari Troutt

[Broken Heart Syndrome]

Major: Sports Management with a minor in General business  
Hometown: Spokane, WA  
Fun fact: I've always been drawn to the arts and the creative processes

### Audriana Alfaro

[NO TITLE]

My name is Audriana Alfaro, I'm from Spokane, and I am a human physiology major in my first year here at Gonzaga

### Ellie Williams

[What to Work On]

Ellie Williams is a GU student athlete who transferred here in the fall of 2022. She plays on the collegiate soccer team and is in Black Student Union and Concert Choir on campus as well. She is majoring in International Studies with a minor in Spanish and has plans to attend law school post graduation. As the child of immigrants raised Dallas, Texas, she had an eclectic upbringing that has shaped her view of the world around her differently than most of her peers. She hopes that in pursuit of higher education post-undergrad, she can diversify a traditionally homogeneous career field and work to positively impact the lives of disenfranchised women in the process.

## Emma Larson

[Where'd You Go]

My name is Emma Larson. I am a freshman at Gonzaga University, but originally from Everett, WA. I am planning on pursuing a career that involves photojournalism, I have seven years of experience though photography and I just like to casually write here and there! Ultimately, I love to spend my time running track for the team here at GU while also enjoying some of my hobbies such as photography, hiking, running, writing, and listening to tunes with the friends (my favorite song right now is “candy grapes” by Foushee and Steve Lacy).

## Giana Martinez

[Sana Sana Colita de Giana]

My name is Giana Villarreal Martinez. I am from Austin, TX. I am a sophomore Philosophy major with minors in Leadership Studies and Women and Gender Studies. Outside of school, I work for The Arc of Spokane as a Direct Support Professional with young adults with disabilities and I am the play performance coordinator for GUSR here at GU. In my story I am discussing my whiteness coupled with my Latina identity and how that intersectionality has manifested itself in complex familial relationships. Further, I am using this as a way to heal myself and my family moving forward in hopes of making strides in discussing racial dynamics and differences.

## Gwen Mitchell

[Fomorion, Worship]

Gwen Mitchell is a poet and writer from Juneau, Alaska. She is a junior at Gonzaga University studying Communication Studies and English with a concentration on Writing. She writes to understand the world and her place in it. When she's not brooding over a notebook full of poetry, she loves to play Dungeons and Dragons.

## Hatsune Kubota

[Japanese Mountain Climbers]

Hatsune Kubota is a freshman at Gonzaga majoring in Environmental Studies and English with a Leadership Studies minor as an international student from Japan. When she is not studying, you can find her volunteering for Campus Kids or enjoying the scenery in the mountains. This essay was her very first writing in the English 101 course since she came to the US 6 months ago.

## Jackie Lee Gaither

[Dear Diary]

Senior studying criminology and communication studies on the pre law track. Passionate for social justice and much love for black student union!

## Jocelin Garcia

[Strawberries]

My name is Jocelin (yo-se-leen) Garcia and I am a Criminology and Sociology double major at Gonzaga. While I'm from Southern California, Spokane has been home for a couple years now. I tend to write about the hardships and traumas of living in predominantly white institutions as a Hispanic First Generation college student.

## Juliette Aguilar-Gomez

[Hasta la Raiz (To the Root)]

Juliette Aguilar-Gomez was born and raised in Spokane and is currently a Freshman at Gonzaga University. She is majoring in Biology with a minor in Health Equity. In her spare time she enjoys thrifting, eating rice cakes, hanging with friends and playing and watching soccer.

Kaitlin Le

[ông ngoại, Untitled]

My name is Kaitlin Le. I am a senior studying Spanish and minoring in Business Entrepreneurship at Gonzaga. The things I write are a true reflection of my thoughts and feelings. When I share, I never expect or intend to make people relate or feel so strongly by some of my experiences and things that I say. I just want to let people know what I think about something in a way that is true to me but also clear to others what exactly I mean. After a lifetime of listening to other's thoughts, I am glad to be able to share my own.

Marianne Macanaynay

[All the Great Writers Swear on Killing Your Darlings,  
What I Did This Summer]

Marianne Macanaynay graduated from Gonzaga in December 2022 with a major in Communication Studies and an English minor in Writing. She is currently abroad, spending time in the Philippines with family. Her poetry largely focuses on her Filipinx American identity and unpacking how white supremacy has damaged her sense of self and her relationship with her cultural community. Outside of school and work, she spends her time baking (she's currently trying to perfect a focaccia recipe, so if anyone has any ideas, please let her know).



## Max Reyes

[Galing Galing Ang Pamilya Ko!]

Max Reyes, originally from the Seattle area, is a current third-year student at Gonzaga University studying English Literature, Secondary Education, and Leadership Studies. She keeps herself busy by working as a lifeguard and swim instructor for the Rudolf Fitness Center, serving as a Resident Assistant in Coughlin Hall, and providing tours to prospective students and their families as a Gonzaga Ambassador. In her free time, Max enjoys going to swims, reading and writing poetry, catching the sunset, or watching documentaries on anything that she takes interest in. Above all, she is grateful for her GU community and is proud to celebrate her Filipino-American identity, especially alongside the Filipino American Student Union (FASU).

## Meagan Graves

[What I Can't Say Aloud]

Meagan Graves is a writer from Portland, Oregon, and is a senior completing a degree in English Writing and Communication Studies. She is the Editor in Chief of Gonzaga's Reflection Journal, and she explores the themes of home and connection through poetry, prose, and playwriting. In her free time, Meagan performs in Discantus Treble Choir, the GUTS improv troupe, and Boone Street sketch comedy troupe.

## Odalys Sanchez Cedillo

[Bendito es el Fruto de su Vientre]

Odalys is a sophomore at Gonzaga majoring in Accounting with a minor in Communication Studies. In her time at Gonzaga, she has become involved with the GU community as the current Director of DEI for the Gonzaga Student Body Association and the current president of the Association of Latin American Students. Odalys hopes to continue her work in DEI in her future career to amplify the voices in our communities and fight against social and racial inequity.

## Piper Fine

[Dismember Me Gently, Please]

My name is Piper Fine. I'm a sophomore majoring in Psychology and minoring in English. I was born in a tiny town in Vermont, raised in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, but my mother and I recently moved to Merrimack, New Hampshire. I have always hated writing, especially poetry, but I recently discovered a love for it after taking an English course. It's so refreshing to have a new artistic outlet, and I hope to continue exploring poetry.

## Reagan Bowyer

[I am all that and Dim Sum]

Raegan Bowyer is a senior Biology major with a Research Concentration. She is from Twin Falls, Idaho. Raegan is also one of the secretaries for Asian American Union. She is an avid reader and is happy to give people book recommendations.

## Red Kwenda

[The Demon]

Red Kwenda is a junior at Gonzaga University. A Music Composition major, they tell stories through both words and music.

## RJ McGee

[Tree]

RJ McGee (he/him/his), Sports Management Major, Aspirations to coach basketball.

## Shay'den Howell

[We are Evolved]

My name is Shay'den Howell. I am a freshman at Gonzaga University studying business finance with a minor in leadership. I am from Tacoma, Washington and come from the Science and Math Institute (SAMI). In my free time, I am highly interested in martial arts/wrestling, this prompted me to start the first ever Grappling Club at Gonzaga University. This club is focused on community and growth of the whole person, where we learn and teach, wrestling/jiu justu principles. After graduating I want to teach financial literacy principles to communities that are marginalized and suffer from the lack of knowledge.

## Stefanie Hinkaew Marlow

[Grief is a strange emotion]

Stefanie Hinkaew Marlow is a twenty year old, first-generation Thai-American student pursuing a degree in biology at Gonzaga University. She was born to a single immigrant mother and was adopted when she was twelve by the person she has called her Dad since she was seven years old. When she turned eighteen, her father was diagnosed with dementia, a disease that only worsens over time, while also being the only source of help for her mother, who needed help navigating certain aspects of the world due to a language barrier. Since then, she became responsible for her parents wellbeing. She finds solace in sharing her story so that others who may feel the same way know that their emotions are not unique, and that they are not alone. Her piece, Grief is a strange emotion, is her first personal piece published in any kind of media.

## Sydney Abrahamson-Fernandez

[Let Us Be]

My name is Sydney Abrahamson-Fernandez. I am a first year Sociology major looking into minoring in Native American Studies. I am an Act Six Scholar and member of Cadre 14. I'm also an enrolled Spokane Tribal citizen and affiliated with the Chumash, Choctaw, and Seneca nations, and I represent the Spokane Tribe as Miss Spokane '22-'23. In my future, I'd like to pursue law school to become a lawyer in American Indian Law so I may go back and contribute to my community on the Spokane Reservation and to help others create change and to find their pursuit of happiness. In my free time, you can always find me with my friends, beading, or with family.

## Syvana Arwood

[Rain Dance]

Syvana Arwood is a Junior at Gonzaga. She is majoring in Psychology with a research concentration. She is from Spokane Valley, WA and has found roots at Gonzaga in Act Six and in UMEC. In her free time, Syvana is a Social Justice Peer Educator, operates a small thrifting business, and she loves to spend time with her friends and attending Gonzaga basketball games.

Tia Moua

[Letter to the United States]

Tia is a senior, double-majoring in Communication Studies and Sociology, and minoring in Solidarity and Social Justice. Tia is a College Equity Ambassador for APIC Spokane, a local Asian advocacy organization. She is currently leading the Asian American Activist group on campus to fight for a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable Gonzaga campus environment. In 2017, Tia was Miss Spokane's Outstanding Teen and went on to become Miss Washington's Outstanding Teen. She was the first Hmong-American state titleholder in the Miss America Organization. Tia enjoys dancing, listening to music, cooking, creating art, attending concerts and art galleries, and riding her bike on the Centennial Trail. She has a passion for advocacy and activism work, especially advocating for the civil rights of Asian Americans, women's rights, and racial justice.

朱水晶

[A Letter to My Ancestors, A Letter to My White Friends,  
Colored, His Name]

A girl with too many thoughts in her head and no place to  
put them except on paper.

To the contributors to this journal: The courage to share your story shows your strength and I want to remind you that you are never alone. Thank you so much for being a part of our journal and I hope you are greatly proud of your work.

To Jessica Hernandez and Carmen MacRae: Thank you for your participation in working on this journal. The amount of work that you did this year was immensely appreciated and the positive impact that you have made is what makes this journal special.

To Hailey Shoda: Thank you for designing our journal once again and sharing your creativity with our audience. The cover is beautiful once again and I hope you continue to share your art with the world.

To Michele Pajer, Tere Graham, and the Diversity Monologue Team: Thank you for continuing to support Our Voices, along with personally supporting me over the past year. Your support and advice has allowed me to create this journal full of beautiful pieces. An additional thank you to the Diversity Monologue Team for giving us the opportunity to see your vulnerability and live in your reality.

To Joanne Shiosaki and Morgan Scheerer: Thank you for your patience and guidance with me this year. As you both know, the past year has not been the easiest for myself, but the continuous amount of support helped allow me to grow and see the good in everything I do. This journal and my own self-growth would not have been possible without the both of you leading me through this hard time in my life.

Thank you for reading this journal. Our Voices Volume 10 was published March 21, 2022 at Lawton Printing in Spokane, Washington, with the assistance of Trevor Werttemberger. This journal was edited by Dominic Pe Benito, Jessica Hernandez, and Carmen MacRae. It was designed by Hailey Shoda. It was printed using Accent paper, 100# uncoated paper for the cover and 80# for the inside pages. It is 8.5 inches by 5.5 inches. Additional journals can be attained by emailing [ourvoices@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ourvoices@gonzaga.edu).

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