Multicultural Echoes

Department of International Languages, Literatures and Cultures
California State University, Chico

Vol. 8, 2016
The cover art this year is designed by CSU, Chico student Maly Xiong. Titled “Fire Within,” she says: “In a still motionless meadow, there stands a shy humble Jasmine hiding under the cool soft soil. As she reaches out for sunshine, dark clouds hover over and harsh rain push her down into the murky dirt. It seems impossible that she will rise again as strong breezes hold her down and hungry insects feast on her honey. She lays quietly, counting the days, waiting. Red water trickles through her stem; she grows without sunlight but she grows strong and wiser. She straightens her twisted leaves and half-dead petals. A small light appears through the shade.”
ME: Multicultural Echoes was founded in 2008 by Dr. Char Prieto and a group of faculty and students from the Department of International Languages, Literatures and Cultures at California State University, Chico. The journal’s purpose is to promote intellectual growth, creativity, and to help authors share and publish their works.

ME: MULTICULTURAL ECHOES • Spring 2016
© Department of International Languages, Literatures and Cultures | CSU, Chico
Ira H. Latour studied photography with Ansel Adams in the 1930s. In 1942 Latour traveled overseas to serve as a chief of aerial combat photography in the North African and European theaters during World War II. He also traveled to Spain where he documented Spanish life through photojournalism. Beginning in 1968 Latour taught art history at California State University, Chico where he was instrumental in the expansion of the Art History program. In 1991, the Ira Latour Visual Resources Center, was dedicated to him. His films and photographs are in collections worldwide, including the Smithsonian National Museum, the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Ira Latour was friendly, charismatic and loved cultures, languages, and ethnicities and promoted tolerance and respect through his art. He still remains a vital and charismatic presence in the Chico area through his long and almost epic life. Ira Latour’s legacy will always remind us of the spirit of commitment and kindness that defined this remarkable man.
Dear readers,

We are very happy to announce the eighth issue of CSU Chico’s literary magazine, *ME: Multicultural Echoes*. Echoes of ourselves and others, to us and the world, these contributions all seek to communicate in the myriad of voices of human experience. Just like Baudelaire, the 19th century French poet who revolutionized the poetic subject, voice, and form, whose words I echoed in my greeting, we seek to convey truth, fiction, and the gray area in between. Reading these lines and reading between the lines, we announce to everyone: here is *ME: Multicultural Echoes*. We hope that these pages will continue to echo in you, the reader, as well as echo your experience back to us.

Avec mes plus sincères sentiments,

Patricia E. Black
Chair, Department of International Languages, Literatures and Cultures
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ARABIC

**SANAA SHALAN**

- حَلَظَة عَشْق ........................................ 2
- رِسَالَة إِلَى الإِلَه ........................................ 5

## ENGLISH

**ANONYMOUS**

- Boy................................................................. 8

**EUGENIO N. FRONGIA**

- Cold Pastorals............................................... 9
- If You Must.................................................... 10
- PHOTO: Ira Latour........................................ 14
- Summer Solstice............................................ 15

**EMALEE MIMS**

- Dear Nobody: Memoirs of a Teenage Warrior...... 16

**MAX MYERS**

- Weathered...................................................... 24
- Follow.......................................................... 25
- Time.............................................................. 26

**CHAR PRIETO**

- It was 2092.................................................... 27

**SANAA SHALAN**

- The Scarecrow............................................... 28
- PHOTO: Ira Latour........................................ 30

**SEAN STEPHENS**

- Autobiography from Prison................................ 31
- A Story Best Heard........................................ 33

**JULIE ZA VON**

- My Father..................................................... 34
Multicultural Echoes

JAPANESE

ALEX COOPER ................................................................................................... 63
今朝 .................................................................................................................. 63

EVAN CUTTER ................................................................................................... 64
宇宙人 ............................................................................................................. 64

LESLIE NONVIGNON ...................................................................................... 65
日本の夏 ........................................................................................................ 65

RYO ONEJEME ................................................................................................... 66
秋 ..................................................................................................................... 66

DAVID SEMSEN ................................................................................................. 67
水と油 ............................................................................................................. 67

OLD SOUL ........................................................................................................... 68
墨 ....................................................................................................................... 68

NOAH TOWNSEND ............................................................................................ 69
一日で私が一番好きな時間 ............................................................................ 69

MICHAEL WHITROCK ..................................................................................... 70
理想の仕事 ..................................................................................................... 70

SPANISH

PABLO DEL BARCO .......................................................................................... 72
Mariano, hermano .......................................................................................... 72
PHOTO: Dale Mattson ..................................................................................... 73

GEORGINA HERRERA ........................................................................................ 74
Familia...hogar ............................................................................................... 74

CHAR PRIETO ..................................................................................................... 75
Brigadista ....................................................................................................... 75

DAVID REYES ..................................................................................................... 76
El cura cristero ............................................................................................... 76
PHOTOGRAPHY & ARTWORK

JASMINE ACOSTA
Family is Everything.................................................................78
Hume Lake...............................................................................79

KELSEY BLOTTER.................................................................80
Elephant Memories.................................................................80

CINDY EVELEIGH...............................................................81
Water and Rocks.................................................................81
Winter........................................................................82

MICHELLE MARIE...............................................................83
Lost Reflections.................................................................83
Reclaimed........................................................................84

CONTRIBUTOR’S NOTES......................................................85
ARABIC
الله هو الحبِّ، سمع جدته تردد هذه الجملة كثيراً. «الحبُّ هو الله» قال رجل الطائفة الدينية.

التي ينبغي إليها، برم شفهيته، ثمّ ابتسمت باستدراك. فهو لم يؤمن لا بالله ولا بالحبّ. كفر بها؛ لأنه لا يتمنى إلاّ ما يُلمس ويُبدي، أمّا ما وراء ذلك فهو بالتصديق به ضنين. فهو مؤمن فقط بالملموسات والحقائق والنظريات العلميّة، لذا قلبه ما بالمشاعر والأحاسيس واللحظات الجيِّاشة، وكتب في أول كتابه في الإلحاد، وهو كتاب لاقى ضحية علميّة كبيرة (أين هما الله والحب؟)

وحيّ عندما زحف المرض إلى قرنيتي عينيه، والجمّيدها دون رحمة، تابع القضية على أنّ قضية علميّة بحثة، قرأ التقارير، وراجع الأطباء، وبدأ بيّ الطريّباد الجديدة لحبّته المظلمة القادمة، وجاء العيّ، جاء باردًا ركابًا، لا مباليًا بعجرته وتفويته وغضبه، وساد الطالع. أحسن لأول مرة بأنه وحي، تعني أن تمتدّ له بد من الطالع، يف ذائفة تنديب صفيح العيّ، أرادها بدأ سماويّة جبارة. كاد يتضرع لفؤة عظيمة اسمه الله، لكنّ من جديد تبّدت هذه القوة في نفسه، ولم تستطع مداركه المغلقة دومًا أن تعنيها، وأن تدغّب في كيانه.

وغدت الحياة رئة مظلمة ليس فيها إلاّ أصوات لم تتمدّ إلى ذاته بشيء، حاول جاهداً أن يقهر نفسه لتنعّم مع العيّ على أنّ حالة خاصّة تحتاج تنديبات قاسية، لكنّه كان على خجل واستجابة، وحبّه يناسب بطببه ليسأل عن العمليّة التي يترقبها، فيجيب الطبيب الإجابة التي ألفها.

»وبات يأمل في كلّ مرّة أن لا يسمعها، يقول بصوت وجُلّ هادئ: «لم يظهر مُتبنّى بعد؟

وجابت اللحظة، جاءت حارة مثيرة بألوان زاهية، ولكنّها في طبق أسود مثلّ الموت، فقد أنتِحِرت شابة صغيرة، وتركت في رسالة انتخارة أنّها تتبّعت بقرينيتها للمستشفى الذي يقع اسمه على رأس قائمة انتظاره للتبرع.

وبعد عمليّة مألوفة وطويلة، عاد النور إلى عينيه، وهمّ تحضان قرنيتي شابة أسرّها الموت منذ أيام، عادت الأشياء بألوانها وبريقها، وحملت بعدها صورة لم تفارق ذهنه، صورةً لفتاة سمراء صغيرة الجسم، كسيفية اللوجه، هادئة الملامح. كانت صورتها تلح على مخيلته دون رحمة، ونظرت أمام عينيه في كلّ الأماكن، وفي كثير من الأوقات، دون أن تضع فلكة الدعارة ليندبر أين راحها. في البداية كان يزوج من هذه الصورة التي تغش عينته، راجع طبيبها، الذي قال له إنّ لا سبب طبيعي يفسّر ما يرى. وإنّ عليه مراجعة طبيب نفسي، لكنه ضرب صفاً على نصيحة طبيبه، وبات دون أن يقصد أفلس السمراء الذي تنازل في نور عينه.

أشعر الشمس داعبت سمراء عينيه عندما دلفت سكرتيرته إلى مكتبها الفارح، وقالت له: «لا تنسب يا أستاذ حكيم موعده اليوم.»

»كتبته إلى جملة السكرةيرة بلا مبالاة، وقال: «أيّ موعد؟»
قالت السّيدة، وهي تراجع أجندة المواعيد: «اليوم السّاعة الرابعة مساءً قد حدّدت لك موعداً حسب طلبك لزيارة وتذكير السّيدة التي نزعت لك بقرنها.»
قال دون تحسن: «نعم نذكّر، هل جَزّت الزّهور التي طلبتها لهذه الزّارة؟»
نعم سّيدي... والسّاقط في انطلاقك كذلك» -

أرادها زيارة قصيرة وسريعة، لكنّه شعر بروح غريبة تستحوذ على إرادته وحواسه وهو يجلس في غرفة السّاحة المتحرّة. كانت غرفة هادئة، يغلب اللون الوردي على محتواها. جلس على كرسي مكتبة.
كانت رسالة انتهاجها ما تزال على المكتب، جلست والدتها المكسورة بأحزاءها على طرف سريرها المرتّب إلى جانب طاقة الزّهور التي جاءت مع الضيف الملحّد. قالت الأمّ كأسفّة دامّة: «كانت رقية كيسة، كلّها حياة وحبّ وتفاؤل. كانت مصدر سعادتي واعتزاز. وأنا أنتظر منها الكثير من السعادة والعطاء.

حار فيها عليه أن يقول في هذه اللحظة، أيّشّكراً: لأنها وهبته قرنيّ انتهاجًا؟ أما يغادر دون أن يلوي على شيء؟ الصوت الأمّ قطع عليه تفكيره عندما قالت: «لقد ولدت بقلب مريض، كنت تعاف أنتّا ستموت في لحظة ما، ستوفر قبلًا في أيّ لحظة: لأنّه أضعف من أن يستمرّ. لكنّ هذا استعجلت اللحظة؟ لماذا؟

واستغرقت الأمّ في انتهاجها، انتقل حكم من مكانها إلى جانبها إلى السّرير، وأخذ يكشف دموعها، من جديد عادت صورة السّمراء في عينيه. جحظت عيناه، وتصرّب مكانها، كانت عيناه مسلّتين على صورة فوتوغرافية إلى جانب سرير المنتحرّة، تتلألئة الصورة، وينامين مرتّعين ومزعبنتين وقال: من هذه السّمراء؟

قالت الأمّ وهي تضجّب ببندلتها الوريديّ مساحة المختلطة بالدّموع: «هذه هبة... انتهاجت»
لقد كانت هي السّمراء ذاتها التي لا تفارق صورتها عينيه. صمتت بعمق، غادرت الأمّ الفرح الذي يبقى فيها بعد أن استاذذ بذلك، تعرّف على كلّ محتوائها، كان في درج مكتبة الكثير من الرسائل المعنونة بعنوانها، التي لم تبعث أبدًا، تقرأها مرة، وثلاث، وعشر.
كان فيها حبّ كبير، عرف من أوراقها ومن دفتر مذرّاتها أنتّا عملت معه كامل في نفس المؤسسة الصحفية التي يعمل فيها، دون أن تكّنّه، ولكنّ كلّ كتبه ومقالاته كانت في مكتبة. عرف أنتّا أحيائه، وعرف أنتّا صمتها قبلها المرض، الذي لا يتحلل الاكتراس، وتدفق من ملقافها أنتّا كانت تتلاعع حالتها الصحيّة، وأنّها تعرّف أنَّ أنفسها تناسب أنفسها من التحليل المراحية بثيقة حالته الصّحيّة، وأنّها... كانت تعرف أنَّ الدّور له على لائحة الانتظار لأصحابها، وفي الليلة المناسبة انتحّرت.

قبل رسالة انتهاجها، استطاعت أن يفكّ كل طلاسمها، وعرف تماماً من تعبّ بملامح كنفتها في آخر رسالتها، قالت فيها: «عندما تنعم عيناك بالثور، تأكد أنك نعمت دائماً يعني، أنا متاكّدة من أنك... ستقرأ هذه الرسالة يومًا ما، وستعرف كم أحببتك...»
على مكتبة رأي نسخة من كتابه المشهور، فنُجع الصفحة الأولى، كان مكتوبًا تحت العنوان تماماً، وبخط نسائي رقيق: "لله هنا في قلبي". تناول قلمه الفاخر، وكتب في الصفحة ذاتها أعلى الكلمات، التي قرأ "إلى حبيبي هبة... عاشفك إلى الأبد حكيم".

ألف الكتاب، وأسند ظهره إلى الكرسي الخشبي الذي يجلس عليه، دفن رأسه الأشيب ذا الشعر المتموج بين يديه، وشعر لأول مرة بأن الله والحب يسكنان قلبه. قاوم رغبة جارفة في البكاء، ثم استسلم لها دون خجل، ومضّ صورة هبة إلى قلبه الذي بدأ يدق بانفعال وقوة.

CHAR PRIETO
Kayan Girl
رسالة إلى الإله

سانا شالان

قليلٌ هم من يجرِؤون على السخط على الإله، لكنَّها سخطت عليه. نعم، هي ساخطة على زيوس.

الإله الأكبر الذي ينصرف إلى القوة والقوة، والهيبة والسعادة، وينسي أن له رعىٍ شقيقٍ. فنماها هي بالذات. لقد تضررت إليه طويلاً، وإلى إبنه إله الجمال إفرويدي والإله الحب كيوبيد. كيف غيبها حباً واحداً فقط، لكن الآلية صمتت آذانها دون استيعابها وألمها وراجاتها، مما هي مسجونة في هذا الجسد الأثري البغيض؟ تريدي أن تتحرر؟ تمرني لحظة حبٍ واحدة، هذا أكبر على إله السماوات.

أذكر أن تتميّز رجلاً يحبها دون نساء الأرض؟ هي تستحي مخاضرة تستمر حتى آخر العمر. لقد كفرت بإله السماوات الذي لا يسمع شكاها.

أمسكت بدواة وقرطاس، وجلست إلى طاولتها الخشبيّة، وكتبت إلى طاولتها، واجهت الشعراء، وجلست إلى طاولتها.

عنة عليك كيف تتركني يوس. . . أنا وحيدة. . . اللزاسالة إلى ر: يأسها، وإن لم يناسبا طبعها واستكانتها يملأ ذاتي، يهصر أشواقي وذاتي، يسكن ما بيني وبين واحداً يا يده حبُّ هذه المعاناة؟ أنا أعاني من كل شديد إلى كل شديد، وأنا وسلمت له حبُّ جسدي، وأنا وسلمت له حبُّ جسدي.

وقبّت بدواة وقرطاس، ثم صمتت وانتظرت في أعلى نقطة من جبل الأولمب. بين يديها كان شاهد، يقف بجانبها، بين يديه امتثلت إلهة الجمال إفرات إلى تلك الآدمية التي تتحرك للحب، ولم تذقه يوماً للحب القوي.

ولسعته بين يدي سيدها حيث يجلس على عرشه الماسي في أعلى نقطة من جبل الأولمب.

كان زيوس يترّجع على عرشه بجسمه الضخم وблиديته الفضية التي تمت تحت ركبتها.

شعرتي الأرجح الذي ينقرض فيه تاج لازوردي لامع كبير، وعلى يمينه وقف تاج لهب وسط إله النصر.

 وعلى يساره وقف جمجم حامل كأسه، وبين يديه امتثلت إلهة الحظ، وإلهة الشهرة فاما.

قراً الرسالة التي وصلت مرة وثلاث وعشر على مسانعي ذاته، وبحضور حاشيته، خمن الكُل أنه سيغضب من وقافة عشيته، ووقعوا أن ينصّ جام صواعقه على رؤوس سكان الأرض عقباً، وأقعوا من وقافة بعضهم، لكنه عاد من جديد، وقرأ الرسالة مرة أخرى، وشعر عظيم، شديد على تلك الآدمية التي تتحرك للحب، ولم تذقه يوماً.

فكر طويلًا في شكل الحبيب والحب الذين تطيلهم، أعمال فكره وبداعه في خلقهما، وأخيرًا خلق (هاديس) إله الموت، كان صادقًا جدًا، وقّعا اعتمادًاً جدًا. كانت قائمة تنتظر غضب زيوس، لكن هاديس خَيَّ توقعاتها، جاء مسرعا وعذابًا ورحابًا ونصبًا على أن نصبه دون بقاء نساء الأرض، امتثّت بعد السوء القوي إلى تلابيب روحها، سكن ما بينها وبين جسدها، ملأها العطش، اقتلع وجودها من جذوره، أتقطها.
حمة، كانت حشرجات الموت رائعةً لنذبتها، خلا جسدها من كل شيء آخر من حياتها العارم. شعرت بسعادة العشق، وقبل أن ترحل
مع هاديس إلى مملكة العطش، أرسلت زفارة شكر للإله زيوس، وغابت في الموت.

حملت الصواعق زفارات الغضابة العاشقة إلى زيوس الذي كان يبرق ما يجري باهتمام، غير في عرشه بازي، أمر يلصص جميع من حوله، حتى إليه النصر المفضل عندل أمر يلصصها. من جديد قرأ الرسالة الفاضلة التي كانت قد وصلته من أيما، قرآها بصمت في أول مرة، في ما بعد جهر بكلّ كلمة فيها، في لحظة نسي أنه الإله الأكبر، وتمت لو أنه يحظى بلحظة عشق حميمة كافّي طلبه.

الدمشقي ساكنة الأرض

في لحظات قدرها البشر بالآلاف السنين من صمت الإله زيوس، واحتجابه دونهم. تذكّر كل من عشق من النساء، ونافهر، كانت سلسلة طويلة من العشق والعشيقات، عشق هيرا، ووريا، ولافوس، وإليتا، وديون، ومايا، وتيمس، ويونغيم، ومنيموزين، وأوريوم، وسيميلا، والكرمة، ووداي، وليدا، والكثير الكثير من اللواتي نسي اسمهاهن، ذاق آلاف النساء، عرف كل أمات واكسمات العشق، ولكنها ما زال يتمثّل العشق، ما زال يحلم بحلفوا حب، تمّت لو كان له هو الآخر.

إله: ليرسل إليه رسالة يتصرّع فيها كي يذقه العشق الحقيقي. ولمّا مرة واحدة في الحياة.

تبت عدد طويلاً، فأحرقت تبنتاته وزفراته الكثير من بقاع الأرض، ووضع البشر بالشكوك،
عندما تذكرت أنّه، وأن ليس من حقه أن يتمّي وليحتفي في لحظة ضعف، طوي الرسالة التي يحملها، وجعلها في خزائن أوراقه، ابتها على حشيّة في مضجعه، وطلب حضور ساحق، شرب كثيراً، وفِي آخر الليلة أصدر مرسوماً إلهاياً يمنع وصول رسائل العشق إليها، لأنّ لا وقت عندده لوضع قلبه فضلاً عن قلوب البشر، وغرق في سبات طويل.

• تعديل على المرسوم: الإله زيوس لم يكن معنياً بالحب.
• تعديل على المرسوم الثاني: هذه أسطورة لم تحدث.
• تعديل آخر: زيوس لم ينتمي في الليلة التي سكر فيها، بل أمضى ليله ياكياً، وكتب رسالة إلى
  مجهول.
You didn’t understand
It was never you, it was me
Fantasy built into mystery; into misery
It’s done, it’s over
Why wouldn’t you fight for me
Why didn’t you talk
Why did you talk
Why can’t you stop talking

You didn’t understand
You wouldn’t; couldn’t possibly
How did this happen
Why
What did you do to me
Do you love me
Do you care
Do you ever

You didn’t understand
Broken and tired
Love hurts baby
You’d know
Don’t leave me
Don’t touch me
Don’t stop

Why didn’t you understand?
EUGENIO N. FRONGIA

Cold Pastorals

“When old age shall this generation waste,
- Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe...
Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”
(John Keats, “Ode to a Grecian Urn”, 1819)

Formia and Sperlonga,
Whom Cicero loved,
In the days when the pen
Prevailed over the sword,
Eyes open
Over the white swells of the Mediterranean,
Nostrils breathing
The salty breezes of Our Mother Sea,
Sheltered havens
Etched in my youthful memory,
In the early morning of a summer day!

I have trod hard trails
Over lands both old and new
And crossed steep watersheds and divides;
I have rocked and rolled
Over the blue waters of the Atlantic
And the calm expanse of the Pacific;
I have changed many lives
And many lives have changed me.

Today, at sunset,
Admiring the tranquil Bay,
I find refuge
In your unchanged memory,
Sperlonga and Formia,
And like the “cold pastorals”
Of the “Grecian Urn,”

I am forever frozen
In the tension
And the youthful love
With which I have loved you.
If You Must...

“.........that which we are, we are, -
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will,
To strive, to SEEK, to find, and not to yield.”
“Ulysses”, Alfred Lord Tennyson (1842)

If you must have god – a god –
Make sure it’s your own,
And nobody else’s, god.
A god, whose countenance
No one has ever seen, except you.
The god – or gods –
Humankind has been sold,
Or imposed upon, or handed down,
From generation to generation,
The God of tradition,
The male God,
Older with a pepper-and-salt beard,
There from the beginning, or without a beginning,
Like the old, inscrutable patriarchs
Of just about every culture,
Every religion, or myth, or cult...
He/they will not do for you,

If you are someone
Who has grown old,
Always making an effort,
To love man, woman,
Young and old, rich or poor,
Or of just about average means,
White or colored, or in between.
If you are a father, or a mother,
And reason that a god
Must be – minimally -
One you comprehend,
In your image and likeness,
So to speak,
Like a father, or a mother,
And if you have habitually delved into history
And the histories of humankind,
Especially those of which we have retained
Tragic memories,
Journeying backwards,
From the freshest
To the ones that have faded
Into ancient fogs,
Then, ask yourself:
Would you, as a father, or a mother,
Have been absent, not at all in the picture,
From Banda Aceh, or Fukúshima, or Hiroshima,
Or the ongoing slaughters in Africa and Asia;
Would you not have been on board
The thousand trains
Converging from all over Europe,
To places of gathering death,
Like Auschwitz,
Birkenau, Buchenwald, Mauthausen,
Where the “children of Abraham”
And Isaac and Jacob
Were offered as a priceless sacrifice,
To the gods of hatred, of power,
By those wrapped in swastikas
Or clad in black shirts, or in white cassocks,
By those who said and still say,
That they worship Yahweh
And Allah, and Buddha and Jesus?

Would you want your God,
The same one they say spoke in the days of old,
And is writ large in holy books,
To tell you today, or anyone you know,
That you are chosen,
But your neighbor is not,
That a woman is half as good as a man,
That a woman must be subject to you,
That if you are worth a dollar,
She is worth fifty cents, or even seventy-five?

Would you want a God
To tell you that you will own the land,
And you must slaughter
Anyone who already has,
- Or wants or needs - the land,
Because you have been chosen
and you worship the only true God?

Would you want a God
Who gives you and your wife – and future offspring –
A nice happy place
That knows no winter and fall,
With fruit trees and animals,
And who then throws you out,
Without a plausible explanation,
Because your wife, being a normal woman,
Picked an apple
And shared it with you?

Those “gods” will not do for you.

If you must have God, a god,
Make sure he/she is someone
Who does not offend your reason,
Who does not violate
The sacredness of your good feelings,
Who does not disappoint
Your honest expectations,
Who does not endorse, or empower,
All-male, all-white hierarchies,
Who looks with unblinking eyes
Upon slave owners in plantations
And sweatshops and diamond mines,
Who frowns,
Through the vicarious frowns
Of white- or crimson-robed patriarchs,
Who dwell in golden palaces
Upon poor women
Besieged by mouths to feed,
Who do not want more loveless,
Uneducated, malnourished children?
A God about whom “it is written”
That he created the cosmos
Six thousand years ago,
When we know
That the echo of a Big Bang,
Is still reaching us, after traveling
14 billion years
at the speed of light?
A God, about whom “it is written”
That he created man and woman
Six thousand years ago,
When we have, in our physical body,
Retraced the steps
Of our forebears
Who trod the hot volcanic ashes of Laetoli,
 Millions of years ago?
Remember that we are still waiting,
From among the hundred billions
Who have journeyed on Earth,
Among them, fathers, mothers,
Grandfathers and grandmothers of ours,
For someone, one, anyone,
Who has died hoping “to see his face”
To return with the news of a sighting,
To hint at green pastures
On the other side of death.

This sermon is a hard sermon,
Because you have chosen
In the fear of your soul
Or in the comfort of you mind,
To heed only soft sermons,
Voices of ancient sirens
That dull your reason
Into a life-long sleep.

Your God, or god, is someone
You must wonder about,
Seek, patiently, always,
Being true to your self,
Never betraying
The only true gift Nature has given you,
Your reason,
Never falling,
In moments of lonely despair,
Into the old packaged gods of faith,
That clerks at the temple
Sell you for a paltry sum.

As you journey through the years,
On this beautiful and fragile
Garden of evolving life,
This Planet
That reveals itself to you
If you but look for it,
That gave you a beginning
And will embrace your end,
Keep seeking for the ultimate prize.
Do not be sidetracked
By soothsayers and charlatans
Who for too long have claimed to know,
But dwell themselves in the dark of night.
The Truth – if it is there –
Will reveal itself to you.
Your God will be neither more nor less
Than the ONE your reason has set out to search.
And perhaps to find.

IRA LATOUR
EUGENIO N. FRONGIA

Summer Solstice

The sun hangs high in a realm of blue
Over the craggy buttes and hills of gold,
The river flows and tells the tales of old,
The turtle doves repeat their vows anew.

Majestic in the heavens the kestrel sways,
Piercing the placid valley with its cry,
Its beauty, power and swiftness own the sky,
The Earth, transfixed, bathes in the Sun’s rays.

No flags of hatred flutter in the breeze,*
The urban ills and sorrows here subside;
The mind, the heart, in solitude abide,
Life unfolds in the Sun with tranquil ease.

River, hill, oak, hawk make me wise.
This is all I will ever know of paradise.

*After the assassination of 9 African Americans in a church in Charleston, S.C., the confederate flag, a persistent metaphor of racial hatred in the South, still flew over the State Capitol in Columbia.
Dear Nobody,

So Dr. Keller says that I should start a journal and write down anything I want. She says it could be my hopes and dreams or my fears and sufferings as long as I am writing something. To be honest, I normally don’t listen to what she tells me to do because let’s be honest, what does she know? She just sits on a couch and collects a check from me each week after I tell her my problems. She’s probably not even taking notes in that notebook of hers. No, it’s more likely she is doodling or playing tic tac toe with herself. Anyways, I decided to try this whole journaling thing, not because she told me to, but because I love to write so I figured recording my thoughts shouldn’t be too hard.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,

I don’t really know what to talk about, but I guess the best place to start would be the beginning. About four years ago, when I was going into eighth grade, I started having problems and feeling really depressed. Now, feeling depressed is a pretty common term you hear, but for people who have actually battled depression we know that there is a huge difference between being sad and actually being depressed. I don’t know why it started. Maybe because I switched schools and left everyone I knew behind in LA. Or maybe it was because I had my first experience with death that year when my Grandpa George died of cancer. Like I said, I’m not really sure why I became depressed but the important thing is that I did. I remember I missed a lot of school that year because I couldn’t pull myself out of bed and when I did go to school I sat in the back of the class and always had my head down, avoiding any unnecessary human interaction. Needless to say, I was branded the weird girl and didn’t really have any friends, which was okay with me because I just wanted to disappear anyways. My parents acted like I was just going through a phase and that I would snap out of it soon, but when they realized that I had gotten a hold of a razor blade and was cutting myself they finally became concerned. After that they sent me to Dr. Keller and had me put on medication for depression and anxiety. That’s all I gotta say for now, I have an unfair amount of pre-calc homework to do.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,

School sucked today, I had to do a presentation and almost passed out in front of the whole class. Stupid anxiety. Then I found out I failed my Spanish II test and that wench Senora Perez announced very loudly that if I didn’t get it together
I was going to fail the class all together. Thanks for freaking announcing it to the world, Perez! Ugh, I’m going to take a bath and blast Tom Petty.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
I went to see the Doc today and she said she was proud of me for trying to keep a journal. She didn’t get it when I asked her if I could have a gold star. She’s nice, but sometimes she’s freaking clueless. For instance, she thinks I’m making progress and getting better. Little does she know the only thing I’m getting better at is hiding my symptoms and cut marks. I go to her every week and tell her I’m doing better and that I’m happy. I don’t know why I pay her just to lie to her, but I just can’t seem to stop going. The only person I’m honest with these days is you, Nobody. I lie to every other person in my life. My parents think I stopped going to Dr. Keller Freshman year and that I’m no longer on medication. My older brother, Reed, has never really talked about it and my younger brother, Kody, was too young when this all started to know what was going on. When my parents finally realized that something was actually wrong with me, and I wasn’t just being a pouty teenager, I could tell that it really affected them. I love my parents, but they like to believe in a perfect world and seeing me breakdown kinda popped their bubble. I felt responsible for darkening their lives, so I learned how to act normal again. I secretly started paying for the doc and my meds with the money my grandpa left me and told my parents I was “totally over it.” But when you are fighting the battle, you know that it’s easier said than done to be “totally over it.”

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
Today my best friend, Emry, and I went to the public library after school to do some research. There is something about a building full of books that puts me at peace. Emry always makes fun of me for smelling the books and for how excited I get when I get a new book, but she doesn’t understand. She couldn’t understand really, cause she doesn’t know what goes on underneath my happy surface. We met our freshman year of high school so I have never told her about what happened the year before and she has no idea what is happening now. So she couldn’t understand that books are my escape; that they take me to a world and a life better than this. Or that when I’m reading I can be anyone I want to be, I’m not simply Arizona anymore, I’m someone far more beautiful, stronger and better in all aspects. To her, they are just books, but to me, they are everything I’m not and everything I want to be. They are 26 letters of the alphabet rearranged into my own form of therapy. When I’m at the library I feel safe, I feel like I’m not sick and that anything is
possible. And then I leave the library and I’m back in the war that I call life. 

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,

Today was a bad day. Today is the kind of day when everything that I have been pretending isn’t happening all comes out at once. I don’t understand why I am here, living this meaningless life. I feel like I’m stuck in a constant battle against myself and I’m definitely losing. I’ve been living my life this way for four years and it’s taking its toll. I wake up every day and force myself to get out of bed and get ready for school. I tell myself that I am worthy and that I am important and that it matters if I live or die. But deep down I know I’m lying to myself as much as I’m lying to everyone else. I know the truth; I know how I really feel. I know that whenever I’m asked to name five things I like about myself my mind is immediately filled with the things I hate instead. I know that if I died my family might be sad for a while but they would move on and probably be happier. I know that I am tired, but I also know that I’ve not yet been defeated. I still have a little fight left in me. I just have to dig down deep and find it. Because there is one thing about myself that I am proud of and that is that I am a fighter.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,

I think my parents are starting to catch on that I’ve been lying to them, or they think it’s just starting up again. Sometimes I catch my mom looking at me with this sad look in her eyes like she knows, but she never says anything. I think they are hiding from it, because the minute they talk about it, it all becomes real again. I feel bad for them. I wish they had a normal daughter or that they only had my brothers. I want them to be happy and I know I’m the only reason they are ever unhappy.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,

Screw this. I freaking hate everything!!

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,

Doc keeps telling me that my depression is just a chemical imbalance in my brain and that it is genetic. No offense Doc, but what the hell do you know? If this is all just a chemical imbalance then what am I doing here! Why am I suffering? Just because some chemicals in my brain messed up their calculations I’m forced to live in my own personal hell? And if this is genetic then why is it that the rest of my family is normal??? None of it makes sense. Life is just unfair.
Dear Nobody,
I will never understand how most of the time I have such horrible days, but then sometimes, I am given a break. These breaks are the reason I’m still here and I haven’t given up yet. They are the days when it doesn’t seem so bad and I think to myself that everything could turn around and I could live a normal life. A life that doesn’t include Dr. Keller, medications, a journal or a razor blade. Just a normal, blissful life. Today was one of those days. I didn’t have to force a smile today, I just felt happy. I don’t know how long this will last because it is always different, but I cherish these days. I’m taking Dexter for a walk in the park and then I will probably go read down by the river. Some of my favorite things all combined into one. Sunlight, water, reading and my dog Dexter. The good life.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
It is funny how short blissful moments actually are. It has been a few days since I have written and so much has happened. That day by the river seems thousands of miles away now as I sit here in this cold white washed room. I had a breakdown, I completely blew my cover and now my parents are once again aware that life is not one big parade of fluffy teddy bears and unicorns. I got low. Really low. Turns out swallowing a whole bottle of pills isn’t as efficient as you’d think it would be. Truth is all they have to do is catch you in time, pump your stomach and boom you’re back in hell. So after my little brother found me on my bedroom floor and I was rushed to the hospital they “saved” me and I woke up here, attached to all these annoying machines. I feel bad that Kody was the one who found me, but it’s his fault. How was I supposed to know that the little jerk was gonna come home early from basketball practice? The house was supposed to be empty for at least two hours. Figures that this would happen to me. I can’t do anything right, not even kill myself.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
Well the jokes just keep on coming! My life is just one giant crap storm wrapped in nutella. The doctors convinced my parents that it was best to take me to a hospital where I would be with other nut jobs like me. THAT’S RIGHT; I’M IN A FREAKING LOONY BIN! Poor teenage girl pretends she’s not hurting, attempts to kill herself, fails and ends up the talk of the school when she’s thrown into a mental hospital. God, I’m such a cliché. It’s so embarrassing.

Love, Arizona
Dear Nobody,
This place sucks more than Thanksgiving at my Grandma Patty’s house! Which is saying a lot considering Thanksgiving is a stupid holiday that no one really understands and I am forced to sit at the kids table with Kody and my ten Mormon cousins who wouldn’t know what a Smartphone was if it hit them in the head. They are such clueless losers. So as sad as that is, this place is worse, which makes it absolutely tragic. Twice a day I have a nurse come into my room and watch me swallow my pills like I am a child. News flash Nurse Frowns-a-lot, I’m not dumb. In between my babysat drug sessions, I am forced to attend groups and talk about my feelings. It was bad enough when Dr. Keller expected me to talk to her, but now I’m supposed to pour my heart out to a group of strangers just as messed up as me? I don’t think so.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
Good news: I actually made a friend in this hell hole. He’s nowhere near normal, but he hasn’t quite hit the level of crazy that the rest of these dopes are on.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
My new friend Anton and I decided to blow off group today and go up onto the roof instead. We have heard from some of the loons here that the roof is the only place that you can get away from the doctors and nurses who stare you down 24/7, so it sounded like a good place to go. We stood on the edge and talked about what it would be like to jump. He makes me feel like I’m not so strange; like he understands. I mean he understands about as well as anyone can considering that we are here for the same reason. After we decided that jumping wasn’t the best way to go we went back downstairs and he convinced me to play nice and get to know a few other people. It was actually kind of fun. He introduced me to Marge, who has Multiple Personality Disorder, which explains why she’s always talking to herself. She was nice, but once Sasha, her German personality, came out Anton said it was time to go. That was probably a good call considering she started shouting in German and then bit another resident next to her. Apparently, Sasha is not one of her nicer personalities. After that we met Brody, the once thriving author, who has OCD. Poor guy has it so bad that he couldn’t even write anymore because he became so obsessed with each line having the same amount of words on it. Last we met Kim. I always see her sitting in the corner staring at the wall, but apparently that’s because she’s counting the flowers on the wallpaper. She says it keeps her calm and then told us how many flowers were on each wall of the third floor. It was interesting to
see these people as more than just the crazies that I see every day. I mean all of us here know that we are different, but I guess we’re pretty similar too.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
I’m starting to feel a little better. I mean I still hate life and am disgusted by everything about myself, but my hatred and disgust are getting a little better. It no longer consumes my entire life. I’m glad that my parents sent me here so I could see that I’m not the only one who is suffering and that there are other people like me or worse than me depending on how you look at it. But the thing is that we all understand each other. Anton showed me that. He’s been my rock the last week or so. He is just the friend I need right now. He even convinced me to go to the one on one counseling with the doctor here. At first I said hell no because I was so used to Dr. Keller. Surprisingly though this broad is pretty chill. She doesn’t sit there and just write stuff down, she actually speaks to me. It makes it easier because it feels more like a conversation with an older friend and less like an interrogation. I guess I will continue to give this place a chance. We shall see.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
So yeah, I’m done with this place. Those sessions with the new doc are no longer fun and Anton is starting to get on my nerves. They are both pressuring me and it’s pissing me off. They say that they understand my situation, which is bullshit. Shrinks and other depressed people think they understand, which they might to a point, but everyone is different. They want me to “help myself” and try little exercises every time I feel myself starting to go dark. “Take deep breaths,” “List positive things,” “Claim your worth!” “Remind yourself that you are in control.” Anton says that these things help him and they can help me too. But I know they won’t. Plus, I freaking hate being told what to do and the doc acts like these little things are gonna be like a magical cure. I highly doubt it, lady. Oh no, I feel myself taking a dark path, I better go claim my worth and take some deep breaths. NOT!

Love, Arizona

Dear EVERYBODY,
STOP TELLING ME WHAT TO DO!

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
I called my mom today and told her that I was ready to come home. I lied and told her that I was doing much better and that I had been doing
those exercises the doctor told me to do. She said she missed me and was ready for me to come home but she wasn’t so sure it was a good idea. She says she’s worried about me but I think that my family is just happy not having me around so they want to keep me here. I don’t blame them. I know that I’m the worst thing in their lives. Sometimes I wonder what it would be like to be normal like them. Other times I wonder if they’re all just a bunch of liars and that they are actually as miserable as I am. You never really know with people. We are all just a bunch of hypocrites and liars walking aimlessly through life. I don’t see the point. It’s all just empty.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
I’m still here. I don’t know why.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
And the academy award goes to….Arizona! For convincing her doctors and parents that she was well enough to go home! I told Anton that I would keep in touch, but I won’t. I don’t want anything to remind me of that place. The whole thing was deceitful and filled with false hope. It actually had me thinking for a bit that I could get better, that I could have friends who truly know me and love me anyway, but that was all just a big freaking joke. So instead, I’m right back where I started except this time all my secrets are out in the open. I’m no longer sneaking my medications and visits to Dr. Keller; I am now being forced. On the bright side, I don’t have to fork over a good chunk of money every month anymore. I don’t really think that’s a good enough silver lining though. This whole situation is covered in so many dark clouds I can’t see any light at the end of the tunnel.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
My mom is making me go back to school tomorrow. She doesn’t realize how incredibly embarrassing that is going to be for me. Hey let’s throw the suicidal girl back into the immoral carnage that is high school! Super freaking great idea, idiots! Ugh, kill me. (For real this time).

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
Well, first day back and I only had about 5,000 people stare at me and about 2,000 people ask me if I was still crazy. “You seemed so normal!” “I get depressed sometimes too, it’s okay” “Just think happy thoughts girl!” “I mean, isn’t that just a little dramatic?” “If you wanted attention
you could've gotten it in a different way, freak.” Even my “best friend” Emry completed avoided me! People are so freaking fantastic. I don’t think I can do this. The darkness that surrounds my life is starting to get darker and more suffocating. It’s making it harder for me to breathe.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
Mom walked in on me cutting. I’m back in the loony bin.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
Anton isn’t here anymore. The nurse said he improved a lot and got to go home. Doc says he learned to control his episodes with those exercises. I told her that her and those stupid exercises could go to hell.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
I’m tired of fighting.

Love, Arizona

Dear Nobody,
I’ve made my decision. This time I WILL do it right.

Love, Arizona

Dear Mom and Dad,
You won’t understand. You never have and that’s okay. I just hope you respect my decision. This is what I want. Tell the boys and Dexter that I said goodbye. Don’t keep my stuff. Get rid of all of it. Forget me and the pain I caused. I’m sorry. Goodbye.

Love, Arizona
MAX MYERS
Weathered

aging skin born of times elapse
speaks to a life of honor and sin
forged from birth under stars delight
wrestled such muses right or wrong
as might win the day
and claim a moment victorious
to soon return to stars twilight
having gleaned some essential
precious core to carry forth
as time holds to its allotted date
’tis aging skin that does not wait

CHAR PRIETO
Thai Elephant
MAX MYERS

Follow

for most of my life
my heart has led the way
were it a better leader
there may have been less sorrow
still were it so
there would not have be such joy
the unexpected depth of feeling
given to sweetness of memory
gifted with a sense Divine
whatever days are left to me
follow I will without hesitation
let the pursuit of love
be the eternal way

CHAR PRIETO

Chiang Mai Buddha
MAX MYERS

*Time*

time does claim what is deemed its own
only foolishness would try to impede its march
yet for this one difference could find sorrow
I am not of the flesh to own
nor of the stuff composed of flesh
but have a life immune to death
from the very breath of God was spawned
and given flesh to know the nature
and given mind to know the options
as given heart to know the struggle
still not of these do I exist
as eternal as nothingness
the watcher everlasting perched aboard
no more than a corpse from birth
a chariot with wheels that break
a luster that fades with times constraint
but for this would not be deemed complete
and would not know the intent of life
nor recognize the beloved when met
the fragrant wisp of Angelic encounter
the realization of time's metered point
for this is the way Divine
so graciously bestowed upon me

ALLISON SMITH

*Gold Flower*
CHAR PRIETO

It was 2092

It was 2092. During a manned mission to space, the astronauts finally reached Mars, blowing out pink clouds of heat and fire. The spatial ship from Earth had a square box portraying red and white bars and another small blue box with fifty stars. The huge metal bird glittered in the cold sun, sparkling like a coin thrown into the air, suddenly fell down softly to land. The doors in the round silver craft opened and a tall man stepped out. A few men followed, taking off their gear and stepping on the brand new ground. They were the elite from Earth. Their blue eyes were blinded by crystal pillars on the planet Mars by the edge of an empty sea.

The natives looked at the foreigners astonished and right away they took the men to security control. The astronauts did not have the appropriate chip in their wrist to be identified. They were different, and therefore suspicious since they did not know how to understand their captors’ language. They looked and dressed differently. One of the Martians made a quick sign and right away a battalion of soldiers arrived. A few minutes later, the men from Earth were on large flat landmass filled with what appeared to be trees filled with golden fruits that grew from the crystal walls surrounded by magnetic dust on the frozen wind. The fossil sea was cold and motionless, and the wine trees stood stiff in the white dessert. Metal insects and electric spiders watched them with yellow coin eyes surrounded by chemical fire. The wine trees were filled with yellow liquor. The men from Earth stood between the pillars, listening to the cold desert sands and yellow wax on the horizon, glittering pillar tops with cool streams. In the distance the space between the pillars seemed empty.

The Martians reprogrammed the astronauts and right away they started picking up the yellow phosphorous fruits hanging in the orchard. The men from Earth found themselves stranded and alone on this hostile planet. With only meager supplies, they had work hard to subsist and find a way to signal to Earth that they were alive.

Very soon something important was going to happen.
SANAA SHALAN  

The Scarecrow

His clothes were shabby, his hat was old with big holes, his legs were wooden, his eyes were made of buttons with various colours and his mouth was sewn in a hurry. He has no ears. His guts are made of hay. He has a slim waist. His body was motionless day and night, but he still loves her. He doesn’t love her just because she was the one who made him and placed him in his spot, but because she is kind and tenderhearted. He loves the tone of her nice voice when she sings.

She made him with her smooth small hands many months ago. She placed him in this spot in her strawberry farm to scare the birds and stop them from invading the farm and eating the fruit.

He performed his duty perfectly well, firstly because he is a scarecrow who was made to scare birds, and secondly, because he loves her and likes to look after her modest strawberry harvest, she clearly makes living by selling it.

He can’t remember when his straw heart started to beat, but her nice voice brought it to life. He had a broken neck, suspended head and slothful limbs since he was placed in his spot. His heart started to beat when he heard her melancholic voice. She had bare feet, the rattle of her bangles and her panting was all he could hear while she was busy looking after her strawberries till midday when the sun rays start to flirt with her turbulent hazel hair as a gypsy girl. She started to show her talent of singing by humming a song using her sweet voice. It was a sad song which described her loneliness and her hard work in the farm. At that moment he felt that his heart started to beat, his weak limbs have come to life, his big body was raised and his heart has revived. That has left him with a nice feeling that never ends. Since then he was captivated by her nice voice.

He used to watch her tirelessly day and night. One afternoon she got tired from working in the field, so she leaned against his wooden base in order to have a rest. He was happy to feel her tender body leaning against him. She smiled at him and said after she had a glance at his dress: “What an old dress! Don’t be sad my Dear! Tomorrow I’ll make you a new dress that matches your personality and reward you for your hard work.” She resumed leaning against him while eating strawberries from plants close to her with great appetite.

At that moment, he wished he had enough courage to answer her and thank her for her kindness. He wished he could ask her to sing him a song, so that he could listen to it without feeling tired or bored, but he was afraid that he might scare her. He was probably more afraid of her rejection or he thought she might get a chill from the way he looks and that would break his hay heart with no mercy.

She fulfilled her promise. The next day she dressed him with new clothes. He could tell by their smell that she made them from one of her old dresses. He felt extremely happy to be wrapped in clothes that were made
from a dress which carries the scent of the sweat of her ascetic body. He felt that he was the happiest person in the world. He can hear with his ears her sweet voice. He can smell the nice scent of her body and he's wrapped in her dress and his curious eyes can watch her wherever she goes.

He doesn't know anything about her past apart from what he has known in the last few months since he was placed in her strawberry field. Her farm was small, surrounded by a timber fence. He doesn't know what's behind that fence. He doesn't know in which part of the world that little farm lies. She lives in an old hut and it is obvious that she lives there by herself. He hasn't seen anybody visiting for several months. He can see her living room and her bedroom where she spends most of her time. He could see a lot of photos in silver or timber frames on top of the fire place in the living room, but he couldn’t see or guess whom these photos belong to.

She rarely leaves the house or the farm and when she leaves, she comes back quickly laden with fruits, vegetables, meat and farm requirements, then he realizes that she has been to the shops. He feels happy when he sees her coming from the distance wearing her old velvet scarf and singing her melancholic songs. He feels like flying to meet her and help her by carrying the bags for her, because she seems to have carried them for a long distance and that was obvious from her panting and her red cheeks.

Today was exceptional from the outset. It signals the arrival of a guest. She didn't do much work in the strawberry field. She spent the whole day in her small hut. He watched her through the bedroom and the living room windows as they were opposite to where he was placed. He watched her movements. It was obvious that she was busy preparing the house and the food. By sunset she started to beautify herself. She wore a charming crimson dress which reveals her tanned skin. She combed her hazel hair and left it like wild rivers over her shoulders. He noticed that she was happy and excited. He wondered, what and whom she's waiting for tonight.

She started to play the piano, which she rarely does. She started to sing a melancholic song; she was totally absorbed with her angelic singing. His soul would dance to her song's lyrics. Then the handsome lad who was riding a bike few minutes ago came. He was carrying a bunch of flowers. He kissed her and put his arms around her waist. He sat next to her and together they started to play the piano. Their music was a sad message to his heart and for the first time he felt happy and jealous in the same time. Still he was happy for her despite his grief. He wholeheartedly wished if he could leave his spot and knock on her door and join them, but knew quite well that there was no place for him.

He watched them for long while. They had dinner together and played the piano again then they danced to the tunes of a recorded song. Things went well with a lot of love and harmony, but what he couldn’t comprehend was what happened after that. Their screams went louder and louder. It seemed that there was a fire burning between them then he left the place angrily. He slammed the door forcefully in a manner which nearly dislocated it.
She fell on a couch near the door and started to cry. Her crying was as beautiful as her singing. He realized that she was very sad because she needed a heart to love her strongly, his heart for example. He almost called her from his spot to ask her about her grief but he remembered that he doesn’t know her name because he has never heard anybody calling her name, so couldn’t learn it. He thought for a little while then he answered the calls of his heart. He left his spot, crossed the little field. He stepped advertently on some strawberries. He didn’t knock on the door and he didn’t wait but just opened the door and entered the hut.
SEAN STEPHENS

Autobiography from Prison

There I stood
Unaware
Credulously poised
Imprisoned

The polished white walls
Of Greek, Parthenon build
Adorned with histories of enlightenment
Etched and inscribed by classical hands.
Like the paper that frames these very words,
The walls framed my reality.
And my reality was Truth.
Inescapable Truth.

Students around me,
Imbued with peculiar oddities
Were still human.
My words were foreign to them.
But the concepts,
They, surely, were still present!
Absence of word did not prove absence of concept,
So I believed.

Logic
Memory
Friendship
Concepts so fundamental they were human.
As lungs presumed breath,
And eyes presumed sight,
These concepts of the mind presumed humanity,
So I believed.

Yet here I was.
In the gaze of
100 rheumy spheres concealing curiosity and thought.
Confounded by this anomalous stranger:
I, both captor and captive,
Imprisoning yet imprisoned.
Only the white man could engineer something so absurd,
So they thought.

Verbiage left nothing behind
Because there was nothing to begin with.
Words on the chalkboard were as good as dust.  
Lessons taught of the world, nature, love,  
Echoed off Athenian walls,  
Returning to my mouth with bitter taste.

Absolutes impressed upon the unconscious mind  
Poison those who uproot for foreign lands.  
Not until the opposition cut to my bone  
Exposing corrupted assumptions in the marrow  
Did I understand this.  
Universals are not universal.  
Truth is not immutable.  
My students showed me this.  
And I will never forget it,  
Never again imprisoned.
SEAN STEPHENS
(A Story Best Heard)

Listen

You
The reader
Of this esoteric form
With eyes sweeping across these words
Are perhaps unaware of
The significance of your actions.
With ease
You decipher the arbitrary.
Perpetuating a privilege,
Another way of understanding.

Listen

As I write these words
I feel it in my hand,
The conduit of ideas to paper.
The nature of a pen –
Material indifference to you and I –
Is to write.
How quick we are
To forget the embodied power
Of such a device and its purpose.
The overlooked and underappreciated
Vehicles of knowledge

pen

word

How pathetic they are on paper
How naked they stand in ink
Yet
They are mountains
Ponderous and cumbersome
Doors that will not easily open
Gatekeepers
Necessary tools
For those without, but in search of
Development
JULIE ZAVON
My Father

Bedtime
Through bare branches of the tulip tree I watched the light on top of the water tower a mile from our house turning round and round sending its beacon flashing into the night. I was a little girl of 5 or 6 in my pajamas at bedtime. The light in my attic bedroom was on, and I lay in bed, cozy, and warm looking at the beacon light through the dark window on a winter night. The door creaked open at the bottom of the narrow staircase, and footsteps sounded on the steps. Footsteps were like voices. Each person in my family made their own sound on those steps, and these didn’t belong to my brothers who shared a bedroom across from mine. They were Daddy’s.

At bedtime Daddy read me books about adventures in the woods. Chapter by chapter, he read Two Little Savages and Rolf in the Woods by Thomas Earnest Seton. Full of woodcraft and Indian lore, the stories spoke of making camp and gathering useful plants, of wild animals, and snowshoes. The characters walked long distances in the woods and crossed rivers in canoes. They made moccasins out of leather and knew how to use birch bark. The page margins had illustrations of owls and animal tracks. Diagrams gave instructions on making a teepee, showing the pattern, folds, and stitches to use. Line drawings depicted the subtle markings Indians used to show friends the right path through the forest.

At bedtime Daddy sometimes told me stories about his own youthful adventures outdoors before the war. In Idaho he worked in a forest. The chill of early morning, even in the summer, had him bundled up in heavy wool he’d shed as the temperature rose to sweltering by noon. In Upstate New York on a farm he walked behind a plow horse, stopping occasionally to empty clods of earth from his shoes. In the Adirondacks, canoeing across a lake with a friend, a sudden storm whipped up four-foot waves, and they desperately paddled to the shore.

Sometimes Daddy invented stories. Pug-nose Johanson, a cowboy-trapper in the West, was one of his characters and a favorite of mine. Despite snowstorms, lame horses, scarce water, and bandits, Pug-nose Johanson always pulled through.

Not every bedtime was story time. Sometimes my room was dark when Daddy crept upstairs to look in on me. I was too close to sleep to say anything, but I heard him tiptoe back down, the voice of his steps speaking ever so gently.

Snowstorm
I pressed my nose against the cold glass in the entranceway of my elementary school. I was waiting for my Daddy to come and take me home. Other children waiting for their parents laughed and shouted as they raced through the corridor behind me and dashed in and out of our first grade classroom. In the snow storm outside, street lights glowed like dim halos in
the dark. Snow hid the walkway leading across the front lawn to the street and covered the steps on the hill to the school driveway.

A figure appeared at the top of the steps emerging above the rounded snow mound of the hillside. Others followed. Parents came into the school stamping their feet, sending snow flying onto the vestibule floor. They tramped into the building, their rubber overshoes making a squish-ing sound with each step. With their children in tow, they paused in the vestibule to fasten the top button of a child’s coat or pull a cap down securely over small ears.

“My husband couldn’t make it up the drive. He’s stuck out by the road.”
“I put chains on the tires, but cars are stuck all over town.”
“What a night to be out!”
“I hope we make it home.”

Children hand in hand with mothers or fathers went out into the white world and disappeared in the storm. Car engines roared as tires whirred trying to grip the snow.

Snow filled the playground, deposited round white caps on the tops of bushes, and outlined tree limbs. It transformed the everyday into a magical world. I put one open palm against the glass and then the other feeling the cold. More parents came for their children and shuffled back out into the snow. The hallway behind me grew quiet.

Out of the storm, a figure in a knee-length coat came into sight trudging toward the school across the wide front lawn. Snow mounded on the figure’s shoulders and bent hooded head. It was Daddy! He waved a gloved hand. He was dragging a sled and wore a rucksack covered in snow. The night sky was a luminous pearly grey with big snow flakes falling thick and fast. In his knapsack Daddy had a blanket to bundle me onto the sled and a jar of chocolate chips to sweeten my ride home.

Family

“80 Zavons in one room!” I exclaimed in surprise. I was a teenager, and my father was telling me about his family’s get togethers before the war.

“They’d rent a hall in the Bronx, and everybody would come. “Those were good times,” he said smiling.

I couldn’t imagine it. We lived hundreds of miles away from family. I’d only met a few of them once or twice. I couldn’t picture growing up with grandparents nearby, with dozens of aunts, uncles, and cousins visiting back and forth, celebrating weddings, welcoming new babies, eating a pot roast supper together. What was it like to go to the family farm in Connecticut in summer, to be invited by an aunt and uncle to go to the beach, or to come home to find a cousin talking with your mother in the kitchen? That was my father’s life growing up.

All his life he has stayed in touch with his family, even many of his cousins’ children, the next generation. In his graceful flowing handwriting
with its long even loops (he has “penmanship”; most of us only have “handwriting”) he recorded their addresses and telephone numbers in a small lined book, tracking their moves across the decades.

When I was a teenager, he’d tell me how they are related—Lil, Murray, Sylvie, Ben, Gisella, Paul, Jean, Irene, Juliet (whom I’m named for), Meryl, Sam, David, and dozens more. Those few words led to a few more and then a story, often followed by another, the pieces of a picture of his family and life while he was growing up. One aunt was in poor health after giving birth to a daughter and another aunt took her in for many months. My father usually went to his father’s store after school. His father had a small shop that sold sweaters, bathing suits, beads, and other sundries. In the kitchen in the back his mother cooked and my father often ate meals with his brother and parents. Through hard times during the Depression uncles and cousins looked for work or helped each other in business. When my father turned eight, he went from selling newspapers to working as a delivery boy going into Manhattan from Queens. On crowded subway cars, surrounded by the press of towering adults, he felt like he was under water and had to gasp for air.

I liked his stories and would ask him questions about his childhood and about his big family, my family that I didn’t know. I was a young teenager when I asked him how he decided to become a doctor and why he changed from agriculture to medicine.

“It was during the war,” he said. “the army sent me to medical school.”

He told me about the anxieties and uncertainty of those times—no one knew how long the war would last or what would be the outcome. But after D-day the prospect of victory grew stronger, and my father started to have a different kind of concern. The war was ending and he still had years of study ahead. How could he possibly pay for it? Before the war he worked to pay his way at university, but the agriculture school he attended was a state school with no tuition. He worked to pay for books, room, and board. Medical school was on a different scale, a whole different story, and vastly more expensive. How could he manage? What should he do? He confided in an older cousin.

His cousin listened. My father was only 21; his cousin was a middle-aged businessman out in the world. “Don’t worry,” his cousin said, and put a reassuring hand on my father’s shoulder. “The family will take care of you. Money will be there for you to finish medical school.”

My father has told me this story more than once since I was a teenager. He doesn’t talk about his emotions, but each time he tells this story, he pauses slightly before his cousin’s response, and his eyes mist over.

Friend

Heavy wooden doors, tall and arched like the doors of a cathedral, closed with a thunk behind me and my father as we stepped inside Anabel
Taylor Hall. I had walked through those doors dozens of times to go to my favorite college campus cafe buried deep in the back of the building. The thump of the doors echoed in the lofty stone entrance hall. We stood a moment to adjust to the dim light.

Built of honey-colored stone with square towers, Anabel Taylor Hall resembled a medieval abbey. Its doors opened onto an entrance hall with a high arched ceiling like a chapel off the nave of a cathedral. Students sometimes gathered there to sing, their voices and instruments soaring and resonating in the shadows.

My father’s footsteps echoed as he crossed to the far side where columns of names covered the wall. A small pool of light fell at eye-level. I had never paid attention to these inscriptions, but now my father’s raised finger traced its way in the air down the columns, down the names of all the students who died in World War II. His finger stopped. “Herb Bleich was my best friend.”

Pop and Herb roomed together before they went to war. They were both enrolled in the school of agriculture and shared interests in natural history and the outdoors. They hiked together. My father got Herb interested in plants during those long walks through forests, fields, and marshes. Herb got my father interested in ornithology. Herb would wake my father up early on Saturday mornings to go out birding. Herb started Pop’s life-long interest in birds. (From my earliest memories of hikes, picnics, or car trips Pop always brought two slim bird books and his binoculars—the enduring mark of friendship with Herb.) Herb became a pilot when they both left their studies to go off to war. In Anabel Taylor Hall my father’s eyes mist over when he tells me about Herb.

My father is 91 now, and I asked him how he met Herb Bleich. He tries to remember and drifts into other memories. Then his eyes cloud over, and he tells me where he was when he received the telegram that Herb’s airplane exploded over India.

Scouting and Tracking

“No, this isn’t the right direction,” my father shook his head. I looked for a place to pull over while he decided what to do. We were trying to find the house where he and my mother lived in 1946. “Let’s go back to the intersection at the big fork in the road and start again from there.”

My father was visiting me in the late 1980s while he was in Boston for a reunion of his medical school class. On that warm Sunday afternoon he suggested we take a drive to Roxbury to find the house he and my mother shared with two of his friends and fellow medical students after the war. He waved his hand dismissively when I asked whether it was safe to wander around Roxbury, a ghetto neighborhood I knew only for its reputation for crime.

In Roxbury, parked cars lined streets of three and four-story buildings. Most needed paint. The road forked at a major intersection. “Turn left there,” my father pointed.
Telephone poles strung with tiers of wires ran along both sides of the street. Two black ladies in church hats and pink and lavender outfits strolled along the sidewalk in the sun.

“Turn left at the next street... At the next light, turn right.”

Few cars were on the road, and I drove slowly past a beauty parlor, a dry cleaner, a drug store, and another beauty parlor.

“It looks vaguely familiar,” Pop said leaning forward against his seat belt and scouting the street ahead. We passed brick buildings with store fronts and an empty lot. A few people were coming out of a pizza place. Pop took it all in as he tried to revive memory and follow the remains of a trail 40 years old.

“No, now it doesn’t feel right. Let’s go back to the fork in the road and try again.”

My parents told stories about their early married life in the house they shared with my father’s two friends. (Pop kept up with both of them, and, at age 90 related a recent conversation with the one who survived Nazi occupation in hiding in Amsterdam, venturing out once on Christmas day disguised as Santa Claus.) There were anecdotes about laughs and good times, about mishaps learning to cook and merriment around the table. I heard about the upright Irish working class neighborhood Roxbury was in 1946 and about neighbors who looked a bit askance at the young people renting the first floor apartment in a two-family house on their street. There were stories about the times and concerns for the country—my father was among those demonstrating to oppose the end of price controls after the war. They were all so young, none of them yet 25, serious about work and studies, optimistic, determined to get on with life after the war.

In the car Pop leaned back in his seat as we headed back to an intersection where he had lost the trail. How neat to have this excuse to explore Roxbury! People were going about their business on Sunday afternoon like in other neighborhoods around Boston. What a great adventure to share with Pop as he followed tracks, trying to recognize features and find landmarks back to the past. We were on a treasure hunt!

We drove back and forth from that main fork in the road. We picked our way along business streets and side streets searching for clues. We went up and down residential blocks of tightly packed two- and three-story houses, each with a minuscule patch of grass on either side of a short cement walk leading to the front steps and the porch. Pop slowly resurrected memory and found his way.

“This is the street,” he said at last. He leaned forward intently scanning the houses on the left as I drove slowly down the street.

“That’s it! That’s it!” he cried.

We found parking further down the street and walked back. A man was sitting on his porch, and children were playing hop scotch on the sidewalk. We stood in front of the house whose rent was $15 a month in 1946. I gazed at this two-story white house similar to so many others we had passed on blocks and blocks in Roxbury, similar to houses in Boston.
neighborhoods from Revere to Somerville to Dorchester. From the sidewalk my father looked it over.

“Well, I’ll be darned,” he said at last, “they’ve taken down our venetian blinds!”

“Daaad,” I squealed critically, drawing out the “a” in Dad like a whining teenager. “What do you expect?! It’s been 40 years!”

“No, no, you don’t understand,” he protested. “Those venetian blinds were the talk of the neighborhood. Very controversial. Blinds were brand new. Everyone else had curtains.”

And so the treasure hunt that day ended with a final unexpected discovery: in his youth my father was a trend setter!
FRENCH
KELSEY BELLI
Maman

Quand je la cherche je la trouve auprès de moi.
Juste lui parler peut me rendre heureuse.
Parfois elle me raconte les périodes difficiles qu’elle a traversées
en espérant me protéger des ouragans de la vie.
Elle est une femme indépendante, de stature mais pleine de grâce aussi.
Elle a de beaux yeux, un charmant visage,
Une force lumineuse qui lui vient du profond.
Je peux me confier à elle: je le sais. Pas besoin de m’expliquer.
Elle est ma meilleure amie et le sera toujours.
Une partie de moi qui existait avant ma naissance.
Prendre soin de ses enfants c’est pour elle un métier dont elle est fière.
Elle nous donne l’espoir dont nous avons besoin pour entrer dans la vie,
des idéaux qui la rendent plus digne d’être vécue.
Si elle n’était pas là je ne serais que la moitié de la jeune femme
qui vient de se déclarer au monde.
Merci, Maman.
JOHN-MICHAEL DYER
La prison du pain

Pain#1 : « Ah! Les barreaux sont brûlants! »
Pain #2 : « T’es un nouveau, toi? »
Pain #1 : « Merde, c’est tellement brûlant! »
Pain #2 : « J’ai dit, t’es un nouveau, toi! »
Pain #1 : « Je comprends pas… qu’est-ce qui se passe ici!... Comment? Qu’est-ce que tu m’as dit? »
Pain #2 : « J’ai dit, t’es un nouveau, toi? Tu fais la même bêtise que les nouveaux.»
Pain #1 : « Moi, je comprends pas! Je me suis réveillé dans cet endroit. Où suis-je? »
Pain #2 : « T’es dans une prison éternelle, mon ami. Tu ne peux pas t’évader. Fais-moi confiance... J’ai essayé. Ici, c’est une prison sans espoir, sans joie, sans rien. »
Pain #1 : « Mais...Mais... j’étais juste avec mes amis... J’en avais un de chaque côté.
J’étais dans ma maison de plastique, quand une main tellement grande m’a tenu et...et...puis je me suis réveillé ici. »
Pain #2 : « Mais oui! C’est comme ça que tout le monde arrive ici. C’est comme ça que je suis arrivé ici. »
Pain #1 commence à pleurer :
« Donc...c’est-à-dire...nous sommes dans un genre d’enfer? »
Pain #2 : « Oui... mais en plus, il nous prépare. »
Pain #1 : « Il fait très chaud ici! ... Comment? Il nous prépare ? Qui ? Comment? »
Pain #2 : « Peut-être que ce serait mieux de ne rien savoir. »
Pain #1 : « Dis-moi! Que va-t-il arriver? »
Pain #2 : «Tu te calmes! Je vais te dire.... mais t’es sûr de vouloir savoir? »
Pain #1 : « J’en suis sûr ! Dis-moi ! »
Pain #2 : « Il nous prépare... pour nous manger! »
Pain #1 : « Pour nous manger!!? »
Pain #2 : « Oui, pour nous manger avec beaucoup de beurre et quelque fois avec de la confiture...c’est une horreur!! »
Pain #1 a la bouche ouverte, quand soudain il entend : Ding! Ding!
« Qu’est ce qui se passe? »
Pain #2 : « Méfie-toi ! Il arrive. »
Pain #1 : « C’est la main! »
Pain #2 : « Au revoir mon ami....c’est à moi maintenant. »
Pain #1 : « J’arrive !!!!!....Nooooooon !! »
Pain #1 entend une voix assez terrible venant de l’extérieur de la prison.
La voix : « Est-ce que tu veux du beurre mon chéri? »
Pain #2: « NOOOOOOON!!! »
OLIVIA FISHER

Le loup garou

Le soleil se levait sur un petit village situé au cœur de la forêt. Au fur et à mesure que la nuit disparaissait la lumière révélait une vision d’apocalypse. Un corps était allongé au centre du village, ventre à terre. Les empreintes saignantes d’un animal étaient encore visibles sur le pavé autour de moi. Assis juste à côté de ce corps, j’étais pétrifié. Comme ce corps inanimé, j’étais couvert de sang et d’aiguilles de pin.

Le moment le soleil se fit ressentir sur mes yeux, j’entendis un cri terrible, plein d’horreur. J’entrevis une femme debout sur la porte de sa maison et tuer personne secondes plus tard le reste du village était debout autour de moi. Je ne savais pas ce qu’ils allaient faire et je tremblai longtemps avant qu’un homme ne dise, “Racontez-nous ce qui s’est passé hier soir !” Je fis signe que non de la tête et je murmura : “Je ne me rappelle plus rien. Hier soir, je me promenais seul à la limite de la forêt comme je fais d’habitude quand il y a la pleine lune. Tout d’un coup j’ai entendu un hurlement affreux en même temps que j’ai senti du pelage contre mon bras. J’étais terrifié et j’ai commencé à revenir sur mes pas. C’est alors que j’ai vu cet homme-ci qui marchait devant moi sur le sentier. Je voulais me rapprocher de lui quand il a crié. C’est la dernière chose dont je me souviens.”

Tout le monde me regardait d’un air pitoyable, puis des policiers me passèrent les menottes. Soudain, je compris : “Non !” je m’exclamai, “je n’ai pas tué cet homme! Je n’aurais jamais pu tuer quelqu’un!” Le policier me regarda méfiant et dit “Peut-être que ce n’est pas vous qui l’avez tué, mais c’est le loup garou qui l’a fait.”
OLIVIA FISHER
Chef d’orchestre

Il tapote sa baguette sur le podium en inspirant l’air poussiéreux et chaud. S’éclaircissant la voix, ses yeux d’ambre fouillent le paysage pendant qu’il évalue son ensemble lentement: à partir des conifères qui caressent le ciel, jusqu’aux chênes trapus ornés d’un feuillage vert sombre. Son regard embrasse les oiseaux qui perchent sur les branches, les nuages tranquilles et les moutons qui paissent dans les prés. Le soleil brûlant réchauffe sa peau et la sueur brille sur son front. Ses yeux sont durs, son visage une grimace. Tout à coup il lève ses bras, les recule et ramassant le vent et les oiseaux, il les jette vers le sud. Puis, en les laissant retomber, il traîne avec lui le soleil et la température. Ensuite il jette ses bras d’un côté et avec fracas, les nuages blancs deviennent un orage noir. Maintenant ses mains reviennent au centre, elles bougent doucement, pleines d’attention: il dirige le monde autour de lui. Et la nature craque: les branches des arbres secouent leurs feuilles oranges, la laine des moutons grossit, la sueur sur son front devient de la glace et le silex dans ses yeux devient feu. Ses bras ralentissent, puis s’arrêtent. Il s’éclairet la voix, ses pieds descendent sur la terre couverte de neige et finalement il expire dans l’air froid.

CHAR PRIETO
Monk and Temple
Un chat nommé Mystère


Il s’écrie:

« Excusez-moi, monsieur. Que faites-vous? »

Le chat regarde Mystère et il lui répond:

« Je suis à la recherche de nourriture. »

Puis, il continue à rechercher dans une poubelle. Mystère n’est pas satisfait et il lui demande:

« Dites-moi, s’il vous plaît. Quelle est votre raison de vivre? »

Le chat regarde Mystère pendant un long moment. Puis, finalement il lui répond:

« La vie est très dure, c’est vrai, mais je suis libre. Vous pensez que je n’ai pas de maison, n’est-ce pas? Cependant, regardez autour de vous. Ces rues sont ma maison. Je vais où je veux, je mange tout ce que je desire, et la vue est magnifique. »

Loin de la ville, Mystère rencontre une femme serpent. Elle est petite et très colorée. Elle est très belle!

Il la salue:

« Bonjour madame serpent! Que faites-vous? »

La femme serpent lui répond:

« Je fais une maison pour ma famille. »

Mystère lui pose de nouveau la même question:

« Dites-moi, s’il vous plaît. Quelle est votre raison de vivre? »

La femme serpent lui répond:

« Les serpents ont le sang froid. Ils ont besoin de la chaleur dès qu’ils sont nés. La famille est le confort que nous recherchons ; nous la créons, nous lui donnons tout, et puis nous mourons. C’est notre mode de vie. »

Maintenant, Mystère marche calmement dans la forêt. Il pense au chat et à la femme serpent. Soudainement, il y a un vent fort qui souffle et les feuilles commencent à tomber. Il regarde les arbres et voit un hibou. Le hibou est très vieux, mais ses yeux sont grands et alertes. Cette fois, le hibou le salue en premier:

« Bon après-midi, mon cher. »

« Monsieur le hibou, lui dit Mystère, vous êtes très sage et vous avez
eu une longue vie. Vous êtes sûrement heureux, n'est-ce pas? »
« Bien sûr, je le suis, lui répond-il. Mais la connaissance ce n'est pas ce qui me rend heureux. J'aime surtout donner des conseils à quelqu'un qui les recherche. C'est ma raison de vivre. »
Mystère se sent soulagé :
« Peut-être que vous pouvez m'aider. C'est ma dernière vie et je ne sais pas pourquoi je devrais vivre. »
Puis, Mystère lui demande une fois de plus :
« Dites-moi, s'il vous plaît. Pourquoi est-ce que je devrais vivre? »
Le hibou lui répond :
« Parfois la vie est difficile, et parfois, elle peut être un don. Seul quelqu'un, qui est fort, est capable de mener une bonne vie. Beaucoup de gens recherchent la compagnie des autres pour être heureux en ayant une famille ou en ayant un compagnon de vie. Mais moi, je vois que vous êtes seul. »
« Oui, je suis seul. Je n'ai pas de famille. Je n'ai pas de maison. »
« Vous ne détestez pas être seul? » Le hibou le regarde fixement en attente de sa réponse.
« Je ne sais pas », Mystère lui dit finalement.
Le hibou est satisfait de sa réponse :
Mystère écoute et répond ensuite :
« Le vent? »
« Non, mon cher, c'est la vie. Elle nous parle souvent, et parfois nous pouvons comprendre sa chanson. C'est une belle chanson, Mystère. »
« Je ne l'entends pas. » Mystère est un peu triste.
« C'est parce que vous n'êtes pas prêt. Trouvez votre maison, Mystère.
Ensuite, vous l'entendrez. »
Alors, Mystère reprend son voyage. Il veut entendre la chanson de la vie, car elle est devenue pour lui sa raison de vivre.
HMONG
JER XIONG
Hluav taws kub

Hluav taws hlawv
Qhov chaw no
Kua muag poob
ntws ua dej

thov lub neej tom ntej
yug dua tshiab
ua ib lub neej
muaj kev zoo siab

CHAR PRIETO
Chiang Rai Buddha
JER XIONG

Yog leej twg nug kuv: koj nyob qhov tus tuaj, kuv yuav qhia thauum pip vim yog tib txog kev: vim li cas keeb kwmm tseem ceeb


Tiam sis kuv pua paub dab txog kuv tus kheej thiab kuv li keeb kwm? Kuv tsiis nco qab txog kuv tus kheej tia kuv tsev neeg kov keeb kwm.

Yog hais tias leej twg nug, kuv yuav teb tias: kuv yog los ntawm kuv tsev neeg. Lawv tau tso lawv pog koob yawg koob tesg mus nyob txawv teb chaws. Thaum kuv yawg thiab pog mus, lawv yuav tau hla dej hiav txwv thiab roob thia li mus cuag lawv, rov qab ua ke nrog lawv tsev neeg.


Kuv niam tau ua ib leej niam ntev tshaj nus tau ua ib leej ntxhais, tsis tau ua li ib tug hluas nkauj lub siab xav, tsis tau mus kawm ntawv li siab xav, nco phooj ywg qub, xav sij hawm tig rov qab kom nms tau ua zoo xaiv kom nms tau kev txawj ntse.

Thaum kuv yawg txo tseg, nws tsis hnav peb cev khaub ncaws Hmoob. Nws hnav As Me Li Ka ce dub. Lawv hais tias nws hnav khaub ncaws meka e kom vaj tswv pub nws muaj hmooy yug dua tshiab los ua ib tug neeg muaj kev txawj ntse.

Keev kwm twb coj kuv los txog ntawm no. Ziag no kuv paub zoo txog kuv tsev neeg kev txom nyem thiab kev cia siab . Kuv nqa kuv leej txiv lub suab ntawm kuv, kuv niam lub suab, kuv yawg, kuv cov neeg, ces kuv yuav nco ntsoov vim li cas kuv nyob no hnub no.
ITALIAN
JANESSA ANDERSON

Sta’ calma e continua per la tua strada

Sembra che fin da piccoli tutti ti chiedano: “Cosa vuoi fare quando diventi grande?” Tanti bambini dicono di volere fare il pompiere o il poliziotto perché sono personaggi coraggiosi nei loro cartoni animati, mentre tante bambine dicono di volere essere una principessa o una ballerina, perché sono personaggi di favola nei loro cartoni animati. Diventati adulti, quelle risposte cambieranno di sicuro: magari quello che sognavi di fare il pompiere diventerà un microbiologo e la mancata principessa farà l’avvocato ambientalista. In seguito, durante gli anni dell’università, molte persone hanno degli obiettivi di carriera ben definiti e hanno già fatto passi da gigante verso i lavori dei loro sogni. Ma io, mentre siedo sul mio divano alle 9:30 di mattina scrivendo questo tema, mi rendo conto di non avere la più pallida idea di quello che intendo fare dopo l’università.

Nell’insieme mi sono piaciuti molto i miei corsi e la maggioranza della mia istruzione all’università di Chico. Le mie specializzazioni minori sono state interessanti e non mi dispiace di averle fatte. Ma tutto questo non impedisce che a questo punto non so che cosa ho intenzione di fare con la mia laurea nel campo delle lettere una volta che mi sarò laureata a fine di questo semestre. Questa mia incertezza diventa una vera e propria ansia quando qualcuno mi chiede in tono leggermente sarcastico “Allora, che farai con questa laurea?” Tutto quello che riesco a replicare sono delle risposte vaghe del tipo di: “Nel mio campo molte persone diventano insegnanti” o: “Qualcosa nel campo della storia, o della storia dell’arte, qualcosa nel campo degli studi umanistici.” A dire il vero non mi piace l’idea dell’insegnamento. Non dico di escluderla per sempre, ma all’età di vent’anni non penso di avere abbastanza pazienza per affrontare degli studenti qualunque sia la loro età. Quindi mi rimane: “qualcosa nel campo della storia, o della storia dell’arte, qualcosa nel campo degli studi umanistici.”

Se cerco su Google “lavori nel settore umanistico” il primo link che appare elenca 25 diverse possibilità che includono ma non si limitano a: un insegnante (naturalmente!), un bibliotecario, un lobbista, un agente della FBI, un agente di viaggi e un organizzatore non so bene di cosa. Mentre ne leggevo le succinte descrizioni e come una laurea in lettere avrebbe dovuto preparare qualcuno per quel tipo di lavoro, nessuna di queste offerte mi ha davvero entusiasmato o mi ha fatto pensare: “Bellissimo, proprio quello che cercavo!” Forse questo mio cinismo è un po’ esagerato. Trovare lavoro richiede pazienza e trovare la propria strada è forse la ricerca di tutta una vita. Però io sono irrazionalmente delusa che tutti i pezzi del puzzle non si incastrino immediatamente.

Forse è perché ho solo vent’anni o perché ho una laurea in lettere...
che è meno mirata a dei lavori specifici di altri tipi di lauree, o forse perchè non ho mai visto mia madre lavorare e perciò non ho in famiglia un esempio concreto di una donna che lavora e di che tipi di lavori sono disponibili per noi donne. Ma a questo punto, a solo un mese dall'agognata laurea, non ho un'idea concreta per la mia carriera e questo mi preoccupa.

So che la mia generazione, quella del cosiddetto “millennio”, affronta molte più incertezze economiche delle generazioni precedenti come quella dei “baby boomers”. Ho letto un articolo che ci riassumeva con il detto inglese: “Keep calm and carry on” ovvero: “Sta’ calma e continua per la tua strada.” Be’ io non sono affatto tranquilla e continuare è difficile e costoso nella società di oggi. Mi ritrovo ad essere meno motivata di tanti miei compagni, ma non so perchè. Sembra che tanti di loro abbiano già degli scopi ben definiti mentre io vivo alla giornata, stressata perchè ho un tema da fare o perchè mi chiedo se avrò abbastanza persone per il turno di chiusura al lavoro che in questo momento mi aiuta ad “andare avanti”.

Invece forse i pezzi del puzzle alla fine andranno davvero miracolosamente al loro posto e mi cadranno in grembo come un regalo di Natale. Forse troverò su Google l’offerta di lavoro perfetta per me che mi darà quel momento di illuminazione che bramo disperatamente. Lo spero davvero, perchè mi piacerebbe avere dei risultati subito e non aspettare con impazienza il mio prossimo lavoro pagato un po’ più del minimo salariale. Senza dimenticare che ho anche il privilegio di pagare dodicimila dollari di debiti per i prossimi chissà quanti anni...

Nel frattempo suppongo che continuerà a “stare tranquilla” e a “continuare per la mia strada”. 
Per la mia educazione sono contento di poter dire che ho avuto dei grandi genitori. Tutta la mia famiglia, ma specialmente i miei, mi hanno spinto a continuare a studiare e a imparare il più possibile. Però mi ci sono voluti cinque anni prima di tornare a studiare dopo aver completato la scuola superiore.

I miei mi hanno decisamente insegnato le grandi virtù come il coraggio, l'onestà, la generosità, il piacere di lavorare molto e seriamente e per questo io li apprezzo molto. Le grandi virtù sono il fondamento migliore dell'educazione di un giovane. Esse mi hanno dato gli strumenti di base per orientarmi nella vita e mi hanno poi permesso di imparare il resto da solo. Purtroppo mi sembra di imparare meglio dai miei errori e io ne ho fatti molti. Ma se si impara dai propri errori e se si possono rimediare allora non credo che sbagliare sia una cosa necessariamente negativa.

Probabilmente la cosa più importante che ho imparato da mia madre, che mi sia piaciuto o no, è guardare ad entrambi i lati di una situazione o, come dicono gli italiani, di fare “l'avvocato del diavolo”. Questo atteggiamento mi aiuta a rimanere calmo quando devo prendere delle decisioni e mi permette di essere più empatico poiché l'empatia sorge in noi quando riusciamo a comprendere il punto di vista di un'altra persona, quando ci mettiamo nei suoi panni.

Invece la lezione più preziosa che ho imparato da mio padre è che se qualcosa è troppo bella per essere vera, probabilmente non lo è. Lui mi ha anche insegnato a cucinare, un'attività che mi rilassa e mi dà soddisfazione. Mio padre è stato decisamente la persona che più ha insistito affinché tornassi a scuola. Il modo in cui lo ha fatto è stato un po' eccessivo tanto da farmene quasi passare la voglia...

A prima vista io e mio padre potremmo sembrare simili ma a livello psicologico io mi sento molto diverso da lui. A dire il vero ho sempre cercato di NON essere come lui per tanti aspetti del suo carattere che non mi piacciono. Come molti italiani mio padre è irascibile e io non voglio affatto esserlo. Preferisco essere logico.

Qualcosa che ho imparato da entrambi i miei genitori è di essere indipendente. Se volevo qualcosa, dovevo farlo accadere. Ho imparato a lavorare sodo e ho iniziato a fare soldi quando ero molto piccolo. A dieci anni vendevo delle cose ai miei compagni di classe, ho avuto il mio primo lavoro quando ne avevo tredici e ho comprato la mia prima motocicletta quando ne avevo diciassette. Entrambi i miei genitori non avevano molti soldi quando ero giovane, dunque non sono mai stati in grado di insegnarmi come farli o come investirli. Forse per questo ho sprecato molti soldi da piccolo, ma un
corso di economia con un grande professore mi ha aiutato a capire il valore dei soldi e ad usarli meglio. Sono molto grato ai miei per tutto quello che mi hanno insegnato. La nostra famiglia ha attraversato un breve periodo burra-scoso, ma grazie alla loro guida sono giunto ad un punto di partenza dal quale posso nutrire delle grandi aspirazioni per il mio futuro.
SAMANTHA NICKEL
Riflessioni personali su alcuni temi ambientali

Tartarughe di mare
Quando ero alla scuola media sono andata a Miami in Florida per un corso estivo di scienze di una settimana. Abbiamo visitato l’Ospedale delle Tartarughe per vedere come degli specialisti volontari contribuivano a salvare le tartarughe ferite dall’inquinamento. Ero troppo giovane per poter lavorare attivamente con questa organizzazione, ma è stata un’esperienza fondamentale per me perché mi sono resa conto dell’importanza di questo lavoro di volontariato per salvaguardare l’ambiente per il bene tutti gli esseri viventi. In quell’occasione i volontari ci hanno spiegato il tipo di lesioni che le tartarughe avevano riportato e come erano state provocate dall’inquinamento del mare. Alcune tartarughe erano state trovate con della spazzatura avvolta intorno ai loro gusci. La pressione della spazzatura era così forte che il guscio della tartaruga ci era dovuto crescere intorno con conseguenze permanenti sullo sviluppo dell’animale. Altre erano state trovate con lo stomaco pieno di spazzatura che erano incapaci di digerire e avevano dovuto subire un intervento chirurgico. I volontari ci hanno mostrato come il lavoro della clinica era in grado di salvare queste tartarughe e di riabilitarle prima di rilasciarle nel mare.

Il fumo
Non mi piacciono le sigarette. Sicuramente non mi piace respirare il fumo degli altri! Ma molte persone sono dipendenti dalla nicotina ed è difficile smettere. Non sta a me guidicare gli altri, ma è anche vero che si tratta di una questione di salute pubblica e il fumo colpisce l’ambiente. Una cosa del genere non può essere ignorata. Sono quindi molto favorevole alla legge contro il fumo in tutti i locali pubblici e in tutti gli uffici perché elimina quel veleno e migliora la salute negli spazi pubblici. Credo che sarebbe utile introdurla in tutto il mondo perché porterebbe la difesa della salute pubblica e dell’ambiente all’avanguardia delle problematiche politico-sociali di tutti i paesi. Favorire l’eliminazione del fumo negli spazi pubblici promuove la comprensione generale del problema anche se la gente individualmente non può completamente smettere di fumare.

Le macchine ecologiche
Capisco la necessità di possedere una ‘Smart Car’ perché queste automobili consumano meno benzina e sono ottime per l’ambiente. Le persone che vivono da sole possono sicuramente investire in una vettura ecologica soprattutto se abitano in città. Per quanto mi riguarda mi piace esplorare luoghi che non sono facilmente raggiungibili il che comporta la guida su
strade sterrate o su ripide colline. Per questa ragione ho bisogno di avere una macchina che mi possa portare in questo tipo di luoghi. Mi rendo conto che questo non segue gli ideali della salvaguardia dell’ambiente ma la mia passione implica vivere all’aperto, immersa il più possibile nella natura. Io credo che le ‘Smart Cars’ potranno avere successo negli Stati Uniti, ma solo nelle aree urbane. Anche nelle città più all’avanguardia nell’uso dei mezzi pubblici, molti americani preferiscono ancora spostarsi con i loro mezzi, non sono abituati all’idea del mezzo pubblico. Ma le macchine sono la causa di molto inquinamento dell’aria e usano i combustibili fossili, una risorsa naturale preziosa che non bisogna sprecare. Se tutti quelli che stanno seduti per ore nel traffico di Los Angeles o New York avessero una ‘Smart Car’ o un’auto ecologica, l’inquinamento dell’aria sarebbe incredibilmente minore. Gli Stati Uniti hanno fondato le loro società urbane sul trasporto e quindi sarebbe molto vantaggioso implementare l’uso delle macchine ecologiche nelle città americane. Ma temo che ci sia ancora molto lavoro da fare per convincere i miei connazionali ad abbandonare i loro pick up o i loro SUV per una “Smart Car”.

NANCY CARAVEZ
Strong Foundation
BRENDA GUTIERREZ

Lezioni di famiglia

Nella mia famiglia ci sono mia madre, mio fratello, mia sorella ed io, la piccola di casa. Mio fratello e mia sorella hanno lo stesso padre, Arturo, ma lui se n’è andato dopo che era nata mia sorella. Quanto a mio padre, Hector, mi è un po’ difficile spiegare la sua figura. Quando avevo 6 anni lui è finito in carcere e quando ne avevo 12 è stato deportato in Messico dalla polizia federale. Poi, quando avevo 14 anni ci ha fatto sapere che ci lasciava e che si risposava con un’altra donna in Messico. Così nella mia famiglia non c’è mai stata una figura paterna e mia madre si è assunta la responsabilità di fare avere a noi figli tutte le opportunità possibili per riuscire nella vita. Mia madre è la persona che amo e rispetto più di tutti al mondo perché mi ha insegnato le grandi ed anche le piccole virtù. Grazie a lei oggi apprezzo quello che ha veramente significato e valore.

La cosa più importante che ho imparato da mia madre è la generosità che si può manifestare in molti modi: a volte basta offrire il panino che ci siamo portati per il pranzo o un pò di soldi a un vagabondo nella strada. Spesso vuole dire che dobbiamo dedicare tempo ed attenzione genuina a quelli che amiamo o a quelli che ne hanno bisogno. Possiamo quindi essere generosi con la nostra capacità di amare, di ascoltare e di provare compassione per gli altri. A volte per essere generosi basta fare un po’ di conversazione con qualcuno che è solo. Certo, il tempo è proprio quello che ci manca in questa nostra vita frenetica. So che ogni minuto è unico e irrepellibile. Ma proprio per questo dedicare un po’ del nostro tempo, dei nostri pensieri e del nostro sostegno morale agli altri mi sembrano tutti modi di essere generosi. Devo dire che questa virtù può anche diventare pericolosa quando ci si concede troppo e si superano i limiti di quello che possiamo fare senza danneggiare noi stessi, il nostro lavoro, e senza sacrificare le nostre necessità. Ci deve insomma essere un equilibrio tra un sano egoismo e una sincera generosità.

A questo riguardo l’esempio di mia madre mi è stato molto utile. Secondo me, infatti, mia madre è una donna che non conosce o non rispetta i suoi limiti e finisce per dare “troppo”. Vuole sempre aiutare gli altri e tutti vanno da lei se hanno bisogno proprio perché sanno che lei farà di tutto per aiutarli. Nella casa di mamma a Ventura, ci sono tre camere, due camper nel cortile, due capannoni ed una lavanderia molto piccoli. Mia madre ha convertito tutti questi spazi in camere per i lavoratori stagionali senza permesso di lavoro. A Ventura ci sono molte aziende agricole che offrono del lavoro a questo tipo di immigrati. Così molti vengono dal Messico per lavorare e guadagnare un po’ di soldi da inviare alle loro famiglie. In genere queste persone sono povereissime così mia madre gli affitta quegli spazi disponibili ad una cifra esigua. In cambio di qualche lavoro in casa, nel giardino, lei offre loro anche i pasti. Ma naturalmente la situazione è un po’ rischiosa e certamente faticosa per mia madre.

Fra i lavoranti che sono passati da casa di mia madre ne ricordo due in particolare. Uno, Don Jorge, era cieco, vecchio e solo. La moglie era morta,
la figlia si drogava e c’era solo la comunità della chiesa che lo aiutava. Don Jorge e mia madre si sono incontrati in chiesa e come sempre lei gli ha offerto di vivere a casa sua. Don Jorge era l’uomo più sorridente, buffo, divertente e gioioso che io abbia mai conosciuto e mia madre si è presa cura di lui fino al giorno della sua morte.

Poi c’era Don Gregorio. Quando ripenso a lui mi ritrovo sempre a piangere perché lui aveva il cuore più bello del mondo. Era sempre sorridente, gentile e voleva sempre aiutare la mamma. Anche Don Gregorio era molto vecchio, solo, senza permesso di soggiorno e zoppicava perché aveva un serio problema ad una gamba. Mia madre gli faceva pagare solo 100 dollari al mese, cucinava per lui ogni sera e lo portava in chiesa quasi tutti i giorni.

Da queste storie capisco che mia madre è un’altruista di buon cuore. Lei ha sempre avuto i suoi problemi ma questo non le ha mai impedito di aiutare gli altri. Per questo la generosità è la virtù che so apprezzare di più.

CHAR PRIETO
Flower Market in Bangkok
GIORGIO MOBILI
Affidavit

Con che brio tutti i bambini della terra
fanno cadere il calamaio
in scorno al dogma gravitazionale.

Noi non vogliamo esser da meno:
guardiani degli alberghi tristi
l’arroganza della luce piegheremo
a schermo delle vostre ombre cinesi
per ripetere fino alla dissolvenza
il discapito obbligato
di amori e resistenze. Sulle mura
del palazzo incideremo in rosso gotico
ogni proposizione indecidibile
e con punta d’argento su carta preparata
la lista degli oggetti mai smarriti.

Con una linea di boe tra riva e scoglio
separeremo i ribelli
dai semplici  urlatori, e le donzelle in alto
sereneremo senza rima
dai miseri selciati dell’estate.

Fiduciosi nel ritorno non identico
scenderemo ogni mattina di buon’ora
a sprimacciare i voti della sera:
a battere col piede sul pneumatico
prima di prendere la strada.
GIORGIO MOBILI
Contrappasso

Un’altra estate è finita, ma l’alta pressione
non intende placarsi:
del gelo ormai perduto parlano i vecchi
dal loro cerchio di seggiole...

Il freddo nelle narici sapeva di ferro – ricordi
quella sera che il terzo binario
mi trascinava via da Bordeaux
(tu saltellavi sul posto)

Sapevamo, come chi sa mentre si aggiusta
il collo del giaccone
che qualche molla nella nostra occasione
la costringeva all’addio...

Fuorilegge – su transatlantici da smantellare
condannati al ferragosto
attendiamo un rovescio di neve.

CHAR PRIETO
Orchids
GIORGIO MOBILI

Estate indiana

C’è una strana latenza nell’aria
un cedimento da dentro le cose
e ci appare letargico il clic del perché
come quando si parla
ai duri d’orecchio.

Proviamo a rievocare i bei tempi
a ritornare sui nostri percorsi
e parlando di loro nel vecchio caffè
forse si tornerà a vibrare
come allora.

GIORGIO MOBILI

Pesce rosso su manoscritto
JAPANESE
ALEX COOPER

今朝

今朝、目を開けて窓から景色を見ました。その景色は写真にあるもののように美しかったです。雲はあるけど雨はふっていなかったのです。「今日は大変そうじゃない。」と素直に思ったところが家から出たとたんに雨が降り始めました。私は「バカ正直なことを言ったのがやばかった。」と思いました。すぐにパソコンで今日の天気を調べてびっくりしました。「今日は雨がぜったい降りますよ」と書いてありました。「まぁいいか。便利な車があるし、セーターもあるし、雨は問題じゃない。」と思いました。その時、ふと携帯電話にメッセージが残ってあるのに気づいて、大事な情報を鉛筆で書きました。それからもう一度犬たちを撫でて家から出ました。

ALLISON SMITH

Temple in Tokyo
EVAN CUTTER
宇宙人

私は宇宙人はいると考えています。宇宙が無限であれば、人間以外の生き物が存在していないわけではないです。

先月、火星で水が発見されたことは、我々人間には知らないことがまだ 많いことを証明しています。

数百年前、地球が平たいということが当然のように信じられていたが、近代地球が丸いことは常識であります。

それゆえ、私は宇宙人は当然いると考えています。
日本の夏

私は日本の四季の中で夏が一番好きだ。まず春学期が終わったら色々なことができる。例えば友達と天気のいい国へ旅行できたりする。それから夏の太陽や花や海、全部は美しい。長い冬のあとに、花がさき、クマや色々な動物がおきて春がすぎ、夏がくる。

その夏の中で一番好きなことは自然が輝いているように見えることだ。

ただ時々夏は暑すぎる。実は汗をかくのがほんとうに大嫌いだからそれはこまる。

ALLISON SMITH
Osaka Castle
RYO ONEJEME
秋
日本の四季中で秋が一番大好き。
なぜなら、京都では全部の木は赤くなるし、
たくさんのたこ焼きを食べれてほんまに秋を感じるやで。
ほんて秋の金閣寺はめっちゃきれいやで。
毎秋、私はお爺さんと一緒に金閣寺に遊びに行った。
葉が舞い落ちて色々な色が混じり合うのを見たら、
それや一番間違いあらへんで。
水と油

二人の仲が良くないことを「水と油の関係」と言います。どうしてこんな風に言われるのでしょうか。

どんなに頑張って水と油をふってもまざりません。これと同じように二人の人間をふっても一人にはなりません。それはもちろん無理でしょう。仲がよくても妥協しなければ二人の人が分かり合うことは全くできません。

妥協しなければ分かり合えないことはロマンスと友情においてもそうです。利己的にだれかが自分のために変わることを期待しないで、まずあなたが相手を受け入れなくてはいけません。友達でも恋人でも同じだと思います。

相手がだれであっても、「水と油のような関係」を解決させるためには妥協をしなければなりません。妥協とは相手を受け入れる事です。

---

ALLISON SMITH
Golden Tiger
OLD SOUL
墨

後悔ばかりしてました。だから書き始めました。

高校の時、僕は英和辞典を買いました。「言葉の後ろになにかを隠したい。」僕の気持ちを墨を通して追い出したかったんです。「友達や家族や先生が僕の言葉を読まなくてもいい。」ただ逃げ延びたかったです。夜両親が眠っている間に僕は勉強しました。言葉をつづりながらブラックライトの下で静粛な僕を満みました。その「かみ」は明るい兆をはなちだしました。

短大の時、日本語のクラスに初めて入りました。僕は単語を吸収しました。このクラスの助手を僕は好きでした。クラスの後半休みが始まって僕たちは最初のデートをしましたが一年後に別れてしまいました。その三週間後に僕の大親友は自殺を図り、彼はうまくやりました。僕は改めて自分自身を満みました。

大学では、とにかく僕は一人で頑張っています。同級生や家族や先生から僕は単語に覆われて隠れています。僕は誰かと話ししたり誰かを愛したり遊びたくないんです。「墨と一緒に満みだし、僕の気持ちを空っぽにしたい。」でも言葉は僕の中で響くだけ。
NOAH TOWNSEND
一日で私が一番好きな時間

早朝に起きるのは最高だと思う。太陽が昇る前に、家族の皆が動き始める前に、清々しい空気の中でコーヒーを入れれば何でも出来るという感じが出る。夏ならこの時間はまだ暑くなくて、運動なども楽しく出来る。

こんなことを言っているのに、早朝は私のまだ寝ている時間だ。でもある人がそう言っていたし、早朝のそんなシーンを映画で見たことがあるし、想像してみるといい感じがする。実際に早起き出来たら最高だと思う。
理想の仕事

もし、一日、なりたい職業につけるとしたら、わたしはアニメーターになる。大学でいろいろな授業をとっているし、アニメを作る腕を磨きたい。ずっと続けば上手になるとも信じているし、ピクサーという会社に勤めるのが私の夢でもある。

子どもの時、アニメの映画を見てから、アニメの映画を作りたくなった。たくさんお金もらえるし、アニメはとても楽しいから、一日だけとは言わずについつはアニメーターになりたい。
SPANISH
PABLO DEL BARCO

Mariano, hermano

Mariano, hermano
Te llevas el corazón
en las manos
de uva, aguacate y mango
a este mar
que tanto contemplaste,
con los ojos del niño en otro mar,
bravío, de tu infancia,
mientras cambiabas
el reflejo de estepa zamorana
por el compás bilbaíno
y la hechura burgalesa,
organizando números, empresas,
gastronomías expertas,
galerías privadas
de un arte a tu manera
y la humana galería
de tu casta,
con tu paciente marinera;
yo seguía los pasos,
miedoso y confiante,
de tus hermosas locuras / sueños
que deseabas materia
y luego abandonabas
por otros más imposibles
de hermosos horizontes;
de tus viajes nos quedan
imágenes y objetos,
diálogos contigo
en tus escondidos secretos
que abonaban tu soledad
y algunos asuntos
que nunca compartías.
Fuiste siempre el comandante
atrevido
al mando de una nave
que creías sin fin
con vientos favorables
y peces saludándote al pasar.
Aquí te quedas
hecho para siempre mar
y corazón flotando
en el mundo total
al que ya perteneces.
Feliz travesía, capitán,
y mándanos con las sirenas
tus memorias escritas
inventadas.

DALE MATTSON
Rainbow
GEORGINA HERRERA

Familia...hogar

Madre y padre, vivos los dos,
tan viejecitos, pero
raíz al fin.
Mi esposo y yo, el tronco fuerte
del árbol del amor;
los hijos y los nietos
floreciendo, multiplicados.
En fin, la dicha verdadera,
nada costosa. Bastaba
cumplir el mandamiento:
Creced, multiplicao.
Fue el tiempo de soñar.
¿Y el de lo cierto?
Centroamérica, Europa, el otro
mundo...
Cada cual, a veces hasta sin despedirse
cogió su rumbo.
Soy
la sobreviviente,
la que esta aquí,
la fuerte.
Solitaria.

Always Rebellious/Cimarroneando (Cubanabooks Press 2014)
Reproduced with permission
CHAR PRIETO

Brigadista

Dedicado a Del Berg, el único brigadista superviviente, en su 100 cumpleaños

Eres ahora centenario

Los otros ya se han ido
Pero no se han olvidado

Todavía hoy
Entre velas encendidas
Cien velas de cumpleaños
Con burbujas de rubio cava
Y pastel de limón
Cuando miro en tus ojos
en tu mirada azul ya tan cansada

Te doy mil gracias
Por tu camaradería
Por todo ese pasado
Las bombas
La metralla que aún llevas
En tu cansado cuerpo
La muerte de tus camaradas
La tragedia
La sangre y el hambre
La historia de un país
Roto por una guerra civil
DAVID REYES
El cura cristero

Mi familia viene del estado de Guanajuato, el epicentro de la guerra y estado donde yo nací. Siendo mi familia católica, obviamente que se vio involucrada en este hecho histórico. Estas historias las conocí a través de mi abuela materna quien se refería especialmente al caso del párroco del pueblo quien llevaba siempre una cruz al pecho. Mi abuela, me contaba que en nuestro pueblo había un padre joven que fue perseguido y detenido por los federales. El cura fue sometido a un interrogatorio intenso por los federales, ellos querían saber dónde se localizaban los otros párrocos del pueblo, pero él nunca les dijo la información que buscaban ni aunque esto representara su libertad. El padre no se rindió a las promesas que sabía eran falsas. Por tal motivo, las promesas de libertad se convirtieron en amenazas de muerte pero aun así, no lograron mermar su voluntad. Después las amenazas se convirtieron en golpes y tortura, mas él no se rendía y sus labios seguían sellados, jamás delataría a sus hermanos de religión. Cansado el teniente que comandaba al grupo de federales sacó su arma para fusilar al padre, pero antes de fusilarlo le preguntó si quería decir algo antes de morir. El padre miró al teniente a los ojos intensamente al momento mismo que sus labios pronunciaban sus últimas palabras que fueron: “Dios me protegerá”. Inmediatamente después de pronunciar estas palabras, el cura cayó fulminantemente al piso, pero cuál sería la sorpresa de todos los testigos que al volver el cuerpo del fusilado comprobaron que no había muerto. La bala que iba directamente al corazón había dado exactamente en el centro de la cruz que le colgaba de su pecho. El coronel furioso al darse cuenta que el cura estaba vivo, sacó de nuevo su arma y esta vez se aseguraría que éste estaba muerto. Le dio un balazo certero entre ceja y ceja. El pueblo se enteró de este suceso y se alegraron saber que el padre de la cruz jamás delató al resto de los sacerdotes católicos que se habían escondido en la sierra. Colorín, colorado este fue uno de los tantos cuentos cristeros que me contaba mi abuela en mi niñez y que me han dejado una huella profunda en mi fe.
PHOTOGRAPHY & ARTWORK
Family is everything. They’re the first people you meet and they give you an endless amount of love. My brother and I have a relationship unlike any other even with the 12-years age gap between us. My mom was a teen mom at the age 17 when she had me and I couldn’t thank her enough for everything she sacrificed to help me get to where I am today. A family is like a circle, the connection never ends.
Hume Lake, Hume, California. The air was cool but the sun was out. Preserving nature is one thing, appreciating it is another. This setting reflects just how beautiful nature is and that everyone should get on a row boat one day and take in all of nature’s beauty. Take a look at nature’s way and breathe in the scent of nice fresh air.
In my senior year of high school, I befriended an exchange student from Bangkok, Thailand. Her name is Sineenat but she went by Bell...she only stayed with my family for a small portion of her year in America but for that time, it was like she was my own sister...I made this painting in commemoration of our time spent together and the new bonds that we made. My eyes were opened by Bell and she inspired me to continue to explore different cultures.
CINDY EVELEIGH
Water and Rocks
CINDY EVELEIGH

Winter
MICHELLE MARIE
Lost Reflections
MICHELLE MARIE
Reclaimed
CONTRIBUTORS’ NOTES

Anonymous is a freshman at Chico State, a political science/international relations double major, and an avid fan of strawberry milkshakes!

Janessa Anderson is in her last semester and she is graduating from CSUC with a major in Humanities and minors in Italian and Gender and Sexuality. She hopes to apply to grad school in the future, but also to travel to experience the things that she has studied the last 3.5 years.

Pablo del Barco is a literature professor at the University of Seville, Spain. He is also a visual poet and a scholar in Portuguese and Brazilian modernist literature. His poem included in this magazine is dedicated to his older and beloved brother Mariano who passed in 2015.

Kelsey Belli is pursuing a double major in International Relations and French. She is a second year student at Chico State. She hopes to go to grad school at Middlebury where she will pursue her Masters in Conference Interpretation. Using these degrees, she hopes to work for the United Nations to bring the world’s cultures and ideals together.

Michael Bloomfield is a Chico State student double majoring in Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering with minors in Sustainable Manufacturing and Computer Engineering. He is interested in learning Italian due to Swiss-Italian family heritage and plan to study abroad in northern Italy to reconnect with family roots.

Kelsey Blotter studies Graphic Design at California State University, Chico. Born and raised in Minden, Nevada, Kelsey has always had a knack for telling stories with her art. She dabbles in all medias, drawing from history and different cultures. Her art weaves new life into others’ tales and tells a story of its own.

Alex Cooper is a senior at CSU, Chico majoring in mechanical engineering with a minor in Japanese. He is constantly working to improve his Japanese in order to realize his goal of living in Japan and becoming a part of its society, even if only temporarily.

Evan Cutter knows more than 2000 Kanji characters. He has been to Waseda University in Japan as an exchange student. In his free time, he also studies Japanese.
John-Michael Dyer is a recent graduate from the illustrious Chico State University. He studied abroad in France his junior year and his work is a creative demonstration of his hard work and dedication to learning the French language.

Cindy Eveleigh is a Michigan native. Her photos are from a trip she recently took to the Chico area. Cindy loves photography and especially the environment and nature scenes.

Olivia Fisher is a sophomore at Chico State and majors in Kinesiology with a minor in French. This past summer she traveled to ten different countries in Europe including France! She was in France during Le Tour De France, and watched 3 stages, including l’Alpe de Huez.

Eugenio Frongia is an Emeritus Professor at CSU, Chico where he directed the Italian Program for 20 years and was Department Chair for 8 years. He is a published author of books and scores of articles. He writes poetry and prose and has contributed to ME from the beginning, issue number 1.

Brenda Gutierrez is a fourth year Sociology and Italian student at CSU, Chico. She was born and raised in Santa Barbara, CA where she attended a private school that taught her the value and power of language. Studying Italian at a high level has opened up her heart and her mind to an entirely different science of thinking.

Georgina Herrera (Cuba, 1936) has lived in Havana since before the Cuban Revolution. She focuses on the tribulations and triumphs of the AfroCuban people, especially the woman’s perspective. Herrera is the author of many books, several of which have been translated into various languages; she is well known in Cuba and internationally.

Ira H. Latour (1919-2015) studied photography with Ansel Adams in the 1930s. He traveled to Spain where he documented Spanish life through photojournalism. He taught art history at California State University, Chico where he was instrumental in the expansion of the Art History program. When Ira retired in 1991 the Ira Latour Visual Resources Center was dedicated to him. His films and photographs are in several hundred collections worldwide.

Michelle Marie (Rader) loves to explore the back roads and byways. Originally from Southern California, she has lived, worked, and studied in the Chico, Paradise, and Magalia areas for the past 22 years, while raising two
boys. She is finishing a Bachelor’s of Anthropology and a Certificate in Museum Studies.

Dale Mattson is from Chicago but now lives in Chico. He loves photography and specially scenes from nature and the environment.

Emalee Mims was born in Redding, California. She began writing when she was very young and creative writing has been a strong passion ever since. She graduated from CSU, Chico in fall 2015 with a BA in Spanish.

Max Myers was born in West Virginia and has lived in Kentucky, Hawaii, Oregon and currently lives in California. He began writing in high school and, though not formally educated in writing, has published two books and currently is in the midst of his third work.

Samantha Nickel is a 4th year student at CSU, Chico and is double majoring in Humanities and Music.

Leslie Nonvignon is an exchange student from Paris. Japanese is her third language and she is very comfortable with all three of them.

Ryo Onejeme as a young boy, lived with his Japanese grandfather in Kyoto, where he learned the Kyoto dialect.

Char Prieto Born in Spain, educated in Paris, London and Barcelona and imported to the United States--meaning she belongs to many countries, now teaches at CSU, Chico. This is a foreshadowing of what would eventually obsess her writing and psyche: the negotiation of identity. Her trips around the globe are the inspiration for her creative works.

David E. Reyes was born in Guadalajara, Mexico. In 1998 his family relocated to Reno, Nevada. His majors at California State University, Chico are Spanish and physical therapy. Since he was a little kid David has liked to write stories related to politics and religion among other themes.

Sanaa Shalan is a Jordanian writer and a professor at the University of Jordan. She is also the author of 26 published works, including literary reviews, novels, short stories, and children story books, as well as being a regular columnist in many newspapers and journals. She is a partner in many Arabic cultural projects and her work has been translated into many languages.

Noah Townsend is an officer of the J-Fusion club and he has been taking
his friends from different countries on trips in California. He will be studying abroad in Japan starting March 2016.

David Semsem learns most of his Japanese outside the classroom. He likes Japanese music and anime and that is where he picks up most of his vocabulary.

Old Soul is interested in calligraphy, East Asian religions and literature.

Sean Stephens is a master’s student in the Teaching International Languages program. He is also a recently returned Peace Corps volunteer from Sierra Leone, West Africa, where he taught junior high English literature and grammar. His travels and teaching abroad provide nourishment for his language-themed poetry and creative writing.

Michael Whitrock was born in Paradise, CA in 1993 at Feather River Hospital and adopted at the age of two. His main goal in life is to live it as much as possible and travel the world (especially Japan.) He has been studying Japanese since his sophomore year in high school.

Jer Xiong is a Hmong American born in Chico, CA. Currently attending CSU, Chico, she pursues a BA in English with minors in Asian Studies and Creative Writing. When not studying, she works as a writing tutor and civic mentor. She is also part of several organizations on campus that promote higher education, cultural awareness, and languages and literature. She was a student editor for Watershed Review. She is the ME English editor and publication designer this year.

Maly Xiong is a Hmong American, born and raised in Chico, CA. She currently pursues a BFA in Studio Art: Electronic Arts & Media with a minor in Computer Animation Game Development at CSU, Chico. The Hmong people’s history and her family’s history are inspirations for her creative works. She studied abroad during fall 2015 in Thailand, where she learned more about her history.

Julie Zavon has a sketchpad on hand whether she’s on a business trip, on camel back, or in a canoe. Over the years she has filled dozens of drawing books with images ranging from wild flowers and wildebeests to Moscow’s Kremlin in the snow. She currently lives in Ohio.