

In The Ords

Literary Arts Journal at CSUMB



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In The Ords

Literary Arts Journal
at CSUMB

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IN THE ORDS PRESENTS...

DIVE

What do you **dive** into without hesitation?
What **depths** have you emerged from?
Which ones do you have yet to **explore**?
How do you **navigate** the **mysteries** of the self?

Where does your compass lead?

Playing Hide and Seek

ZITLALLI MACIAS

When I was seven,
I went to a schoolhouse the size of a shoebox–
90 kids and a few classrooms.

The shoebox–
surrounded by fields with tiny silhouettes scattered through it,
sat across from a mountain.
Every morning, the sun is curtained by its magnitude.
From the backseat, the cold smell of mist and lettuce lingers in my nose.
With small icy hands in my lap,
the fear in my stomach plays tag with the hope.

Maybe today they will like me,
the blue eyed boys and girls with golden hair,
like cream colored silk from the tips
of elotes in my backyard.
I played hide and seek with people who could not see me
while I looked at myself through a magnifying glass.

You can learn many lessons inside of a shoebox.
You can learn how to hide your light behind
the mountain so that
maybe, today they will like me.

When I was seventeen,
that was all I wanted.
The acceptance letter, the golden shimmering key to a future
that would validate the sacrifices of my family–

but I am gambling with their blood, sweat, and tears for
a future I don't know how to build with
a light I never learned how to shine
because I am still stuck inside of a shoe box,
hiding behind that mountain,
wondering if I like myself.

Maybe I ought to try.
Maybe today, I will.

You remind me of the Grapevines

PARKER JONES

You remind me of the Grapevine today,
russet stone bridges.

Live coastal oaks. Little brown moths and baby's-breath bouquets.
Autumn corduroy and leather boots. Horses' manes and tortoise shells.

Yesterday, you were sea lion fins and choppy seas, chapstick kisses and tee ball games.

Desert brush and tumbleweeds.

Sometimes,
you're sun rays and carnival tents,
kettle corn and apple cider palms.

A crocheted scarf with matching gloves.
Pottery wheels and clay-stained aprons. Squirrel stash of acorns in a dying sequoia.

Mostly, you're green pitted olives, with the red pimento peppers inside.
Grainy sand and European lakes.

Mostly, you're barn cats and gray cotton shirts, Southern California hills.

Mostly, you're home videos
of kids laughing in sprinklers and old swing sets, the first family dog, a cracked

mussel shell
washed up on the shore.

Brown packages on doorsteps and stubbed thumbs. Hand in hand and heads pressed
to chests.

Palm-cups-cheek and longing looks.

Mostly,
you're elbow bruises, painted nails,
solid pine,

rainy day.

bilateral

ELIZABETH WILES

I watched her take
her makeup off
one side at a time;

purple mascara, caramel eyes
two sides
one raw
the other made
but both
beautiful.

I've never seen this
on anyone else
I don't see this
in the mirror,

but I always fall
deepest in love
with people
I want to be.

Daylight

AUBREY AMILA

The sky leaves tonight
rushing from shore
and believe me,
I've packed my things.

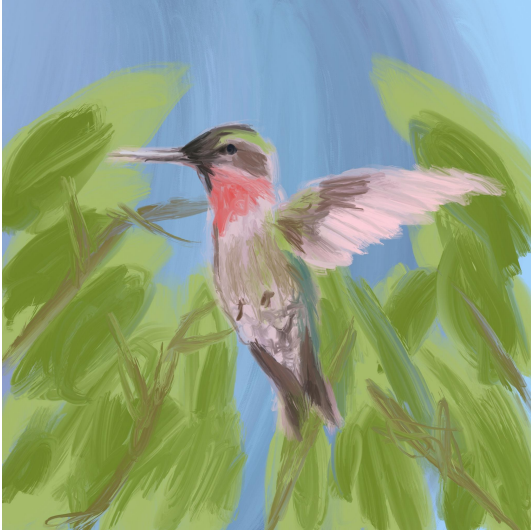
Daylight will come
and I'll go back
to the eucalyptus tree
where I sat steady
and unsteady,
borne back by time.

I left my scar on the table.

Hummingbird, I'll call you when I get there.

Hummingbird Calls

AUBREY AMILA



A Beautiful Day

LIBERTY SORDIA



trees in the trench

ELIZABETH WILES

oceans of blue
swim further
sunlight wading on the surface
don't breathe it in

don't breathe at all
mossy pigments paint
my deepest color green

forests beneath the waves
when the tops of trees
are below my feet
this is the only way
I can fly

Convergent Evolution

JOJO COOK

I.

The chemo-receptors
Of a jellyfish stinging cell
Are fine-tuned as to not
Sting it's own body,
But cannot distinguish between
Individuals of the same species;

Blind

Gossamer ghosts
Pass by body over body
Sensing the self in the other.

II.

Sophomore year of high school,
In a lesson on debate,
Your teacher announces
The next topic of dissection
Will be LGBTQ+ rights.
You linger in your seat;

You watch
Eager students
File to the opposition's side;
Your battered lamb of counterpoint
Once again is held prone,
Its tired neck awaiting the blade of
Cutting remarks
As to why
You should be stripped
Of your dignity
And protections as a citizen.

You stand up,
Last of your classmates
Save one
Whom you've never spoken to;
You share a wordless glance
And cross the room together,
Your bodies in close orbit.

Anyone got any binoculars?

FERRIS CROSBY

I've never seen the sun fall from the shore

only here, on the waves

this distanced survival

crashing, pulling these waves

people on the shore happy to watch

primitive, abnormal, wade

god gives me no raft

only heavy clothes around my chest

try to float

the shore line laughs

fuck it then, sink

we never had a chance on that shore

only in this body

their salt poisons

go on, sink *deeper*

you insolent crossdresser

curl into yourself

let their sun fall

when you hatch, you will be

bioluminescent

A House with a View

LIBERTY SORDIA



Seacoast Chillin'

LIBERTY SORDIA



Adonis in the Waxing Gibbous

PARKER JONES

How are the clouds, at the edge of a sunset, that look like rain?
You come from the ocean after the
moon's come out,
Adonis in the waxing gibbous, and
your heels leave inky puddles in the sand.

How am I not meant to watch you down the shore, turn into
a shadow, and then run after you,
stepping on shards of shells and bottle caps and
gull feathers?

Not when you are a pearl in a dark
mangled oyster with a luminescent innard,
the whale's spray in the darkness,
the sea lion's bark.

I'll tie myself to a piece of driftwood
and kick past the breakers and
follow the North Star and
drown in shimmering emptiness

waiting for you.

I'm Blue & it's True

AUBREY AMILA



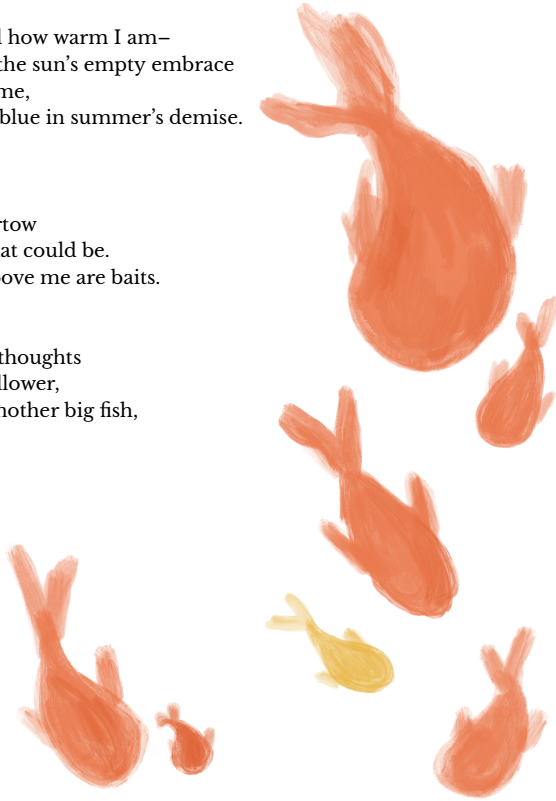
Today I Feel Fishy

AUBREY AMILA

I don't understand how warm I am—
yellow and red as the sun's empty embrace
and at the same time,
cold like cerulean blue in summer's demise.

So I swam faster
through the corals
through the undertow
wondering how that could be.
These thoughts above me are baits.

So I swam deeper,
hoping that these thoughts
would get any shallower,
or swallowed by another big fish,
if that's possible.



An Ode To Cinnamon

NEVAN BELL

Cradling me, rugged kelp keeps me
 Tethered to a shifting sand sea floor.
In the deep I belong, though I cannot help
realize my future rests under the glassy ocean surface

inquisitive visitors like sardines, packed
to witness and proclaim who they think me to be

Sadness worn into every crevice and gill,
people perpetuating poor beliefs about my look-
blackened scales reflecting doleful features
distorted through opaque glass

Maybe this kelp is but a voluntary prison,
Finding comfort between the chlorophyll-imbued green,
and the fears of finally knowing peace.

Craving to know the joys of being
sun-kissed and serene, I unravel
self-imposed leafy chains, releasing
sorrows of weeks past as I propel upward

Briny blue waves become visible as once onyx scales
Reveal a prismatic spectrum no normal visitor would appreciate.
Sun rays, highlighting previously shrouded features,
Showcase beauty that always accompanied me

Sadness harbored by deep crevices and gills, no longer
will be bound by the fears of yesterday

Dura Mater

MICAH RODRIGUEZ

Loving way too fast

Another way to lie-
My lack of last
Moments run by
Chains I've torn from seven miles deep

I feel alright.
I'll be alright.

Next stories to be told

And forty days go by-
I lost my mind

Feelings feeling cold
Way too old for younger doors

And nothing new.
There's nothing new.

My compass always spins

Spin n' spin-
When will it be?

Will I be dead?
Living the dream?
I live in my head.
How could I north?
I've always been south.
Couldn't do west, but never the less-

My life is a map, my mind is the test.

Duplexity

ELIJAH RAMOS

I. It's hard to write poetry about the beauty;
Metaphor you a fantasy, when I'm caught in the ugly,
With a reflection that more than maybe,
There is something wrong with me

[We]

Beyond my (almost our) body or anything physically;
My [our] mind has a duality-duality
A duplex-fatality.

II. Schizophrenia is not a split personality.

That would be dissociative identity;

Split mind however, all my thoughts are not my [our] own.

It could be society; my doc says I have bad chemistry:

[Least I'm happy, I thrive in thee]

Increased dopamine; overtime inner-monologue, personified

Most have one, I have like, I don't know, more than three.

More than three/more than enough

[more than me? still not merely enough]

Those other voices, they always seem to disagree

With which I'm meant to be;

Hallucinations they go against what I see

Delusions against my known truth:

Fractured distractions & horrific spoofs

III. My friend jumped off a bridge.

For years he claimed to hear voices;

For years he lived without diagnosis.

IV. I'm not sure I believe in ghosts,

[I'm standing here, is that not proof?]

But ironically it was him who abridged

Visions with vices; this start of

An interdimensional versus, illinentional

[We're on your side if you just join us]

Maybe I should listen; fall short to their mission,

Those emanations when paranoia kicks in.

This belief it's all for my own protection,

[Don't wake up; Don't get out of bed;

Don't go outside; it's not safe]

But never, have ever they had my permission to stay;

And for that my brain is a prison for their play;

And for that my body is a vessel for their prey.

And for that, I do not write poetry about beauty

end of the line

ALANAH HUNSDORFER

Picture me as the train that runs on the outskirts of town
the one that whistles late at night when no one's around
Sometimes I pretend I'm seated there on the tracks
a perpetual passenger on a ride of lies

I've said goodbye to you a dozen different times
in my dreams and on this train
Watch me rehearse my lines as I wait;
the engine will fail sooner— or later

Once my screams exhaust and the brakes burn
while the trees and mountains blend and blur
Picture me *please* before the train derails
when the whistles go quiet and you hear me wail

A One Way Ticket

SOPHIA MORENO

I'm standing in front of a train named Time.
I wanted a ticket to take me to my past,
But all I have is a one-way ticket to the future.
To the left is the dimly glowing light of my childhood,
To the right is a blinding light of possibility.
I can only revisit my past through my memory
Through closed eyes, I watch myself grow:
At five years old, I learned to read—
At ten years old, I became a writer—
Fifteen, I became a storyteller—
Twenty, I became a poet.
I'm standing in my present with open eyes,
Carrying all that I was and all that I will be
And a one-way ticket to the future.

The Spectator

RYAN ANDERSON

SOLD OUT (sorry for the inconvenience) entitled a placard now placed in the window of the ticket booth. The clerk, a girl with dark bangs and shiny braces, kept her eyes down after handing me a ticket. The *last* ticket. The line behind me that filled the velvet-roped labyrinth let out a collective sigh which visibly rose into the brisk December night. Their mass exhale carried away with it their hopes of effortless entertainment, something often determined by room capacity. I shrank away toward the theater entrance without looking back at them. Why did I feel ashamed? I worked hard all week, pouring beer and making soul-crushing small talk—I deserved this. I deserved a movie that would carry me through the week until next Friday night. The ticket felt sharp as I ran my fingers around its edges, before tucking it in my back right jeans pocket, where it would be safe until I could place it in my ticket-stub shoebox back home. Above the panel of entrance doors was the familiar sight of luminescent calligraphy; a provocative red underlined by strikes of blue and yellow, which read: Reading Cinemas.

I pulled the glass push door by its horizontal handle. Nothing. I *pushed* the glass pull door and it pulled me inside with it. So annoying. The perimeter of the lobby was lined with arcade games played by slurpee sipping, blue raspberry-tongued kids begging their moms for one more game during previews. Across the film reel and popcorn patterned carpet was the grand concession stand. I made my way over through the butter-coated air bracing myself for the assault my paycheck was about to endure. The days of hot dogs and whoppers that I coerced my mother into buying for me through excessive jacket tugs seemed barbaric compared to the spread available nowadays. As a hardworking adult should, I rewarded myself with a turkey club (on multigrain toast) and chocolate cake a la mode. Only \$18.00. Plus tax.

With my hands full of my neatly boxed courses, I headed towards the auditorium to find my seat. Growing up, it was paramount to arrive early; to get the seats with the railing directly in front of them. Otherwise I'd end up with feet on the floor, shifting in my seat the whole movie, or spreading my legs in a vulnerable v-shaped fashion, like I was in labor, with each heel on the left and right armrests of the seat in front of me. But now, thankfully, all the seats reclined. The advancement in movie theater culture, of reserved leather seats with buttons and trays and each their own space to recline must have been responsible for the unpunctual status of the rest of the audience. Gifting luxury encourages luxurious behavior. But they'll be here. The movie is *sold out*. Momentarily, droves of patrons would funnel in each holding either their neatly packaged snack or the wrist of a resisting child. The buzz for opening night had been steady for weeks and newsfeeds were full of posts by fans claiming to be on the edge of their seats. Yet as the lights dimmed, signaling the start of the film, I found myself solely occupying the vacuous IMAX theater. But no matter. Lying at the optimal obtuse angle, my dining tray set, and my week behind me perfectly set the scene for satisfaction. I deserved this.

* * * * *

What a shit movie. *The Spectator*: a story about Elliot, a white middle-class man who lived a cycle of work and watching youtube vlogs. For two hours Elliot failed to exercise any agency over his life. His parents decided he would be a financial

advisor at age six, he never missed a day of school or work, any romantic or platonic encounter in his life found *him*, and he never felt a moment of uncertainty. But uncertainty is what makes a good movie. Elliot never crossed the threshold into the unknown, never had *his* hero's journey. How could he even see it if every spare moment of his life was spent subscribed to the life of others.

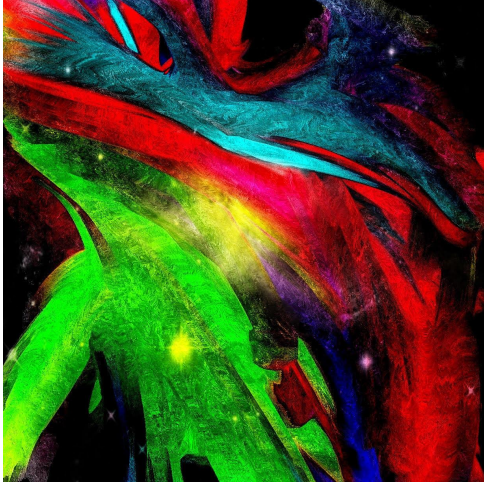
Who would make this movie? Who would see this as art? As entertainment? As worth producing? As worth watching? Apparently no one. No one but me. How in the hell was this movie *sold out*?

I was furious. I had to know who was to blame for such a waste of my time. So I sat. The credits crawled across the screen and I waited alone in the theater. As I waited, the image of Elliot dashing home from work, a Toyota Camry swerving in and out of the carpool lane, came racing back. How pathetic was it that he couldn't bear missing *someone else* speak about their rock climbing trip, or deep-sea dive, or food review! The image of him sitting in front of his monitor—in his gaming chair, headset on, and a freshly-microwaved tv dinner in front of him made me cringe. As I opened my eyes from my wince of second-hand embarrassment, I gaped at the rummaged wrappers on my dining tray. What was different from Elliot's vicarious vlogging habits and my own marriage to the movie theaters? We both had our necessary accommodations to accompany our screen time. We both valued and cherished the most comfortable viewing position. *I* was the spectator. Finally, the words "Written and Directed by" inched its way from the bottom of the screen. It should have been my name under the title director.

I looked around the empty auditorium—silence hung from the forty-foot ceiling. The rows of empty seats reflected the absence of pairs of eyes, hearts, and minds that could make the connection between Elliot and myself. Or Elliot and themselves. The words *sold out* can be deceitful. It was my responsibility alone to resist the temptation of passivity; to see consumption as a path of danger. Not an escape route.

Vortex

ELIJAH RAMOS



Her Tears Ships

AUBREY AMILA



ZOMB13

ELIJAH RAMOS

Never nullify the necromancy —
Of art. Double negative abstract the artifact
Til it's in fact an infract error:
No longer intact but on track.

Zombie genocide gently prophesied;
Meant to silently scream [Social Artistry]
Writing wit in cuffed wrists to hit wages war; *what for?*
Grinding garbage to grandiosity gains more.

Psychoanalyze in counter clockwise,
Run rotten unrobed to downsize a franchise,
Porque tradicional es aburrido y no lo siento
Be unconventional, breaking low tempo.

waiting on ashes

ELIZABETH WILES

My mother taught me
to live and let die
sometimes
it's better to kill
than to rise

I have to spit out
what keeps me in

this echoing violence
of smoke and fire

I've told her the heat
only gets higher
I can't start over

I'm no phoenix, I'm just
on fire

The Invisible Miscreant

JOSE LUIS LOPEZ

Death,
how often do we acknowledge that she takes everything one cares for.
Often she comes and knocks on the doors of some amazing people.
She destroys all our joy and leaves us with nothing but delightful depression
constantly.
She takes individuals that bring joy to the world, such as the many influential artists
she's stripped away from us.
From Selena to Aaliyah and Whitney, death takes people's heroes relentlessly.
How often do we acknowledge that she has been nothing but a burden and a worry in
our daily lives?
Because of the heartache, grief, and melancholy that she causes, death is a reprobate.
From leukemia, ALS, to lupus patients that have perished, she's left us wistful with no
other feelings than sheer sorrow and worry.
Do people ever challenge her?
She dismantles and abducts.
Death puts a limit on many, from our loved ones to our idols.
The invisible miscreant likes to torment, intimidate, and take people's lives. People
hold power, however, death is not aware of it.
A limit on the legacy of perished people cannot be put by death, a limit on the love
that people have for one another cannot be created by death, and a limit for the
affection that people have for each other cannot be formed by death.
Our love for those perished loved ones that we have created will always live on, and
that is something that not even the robust hands of death can strip away from us.
We as a people are powerful, unlike death we have the ability to love, believe, and live
as we please!
We must accept that she is unavoidable, but we have to let her know that she will not
conquer everything she pleases.
The foundations and structures that matter most to us will always prevail through
time and legacies.
The invisible miscreant has the power to take a loved one, however, she cannot take
their living spirit from our households.
People will frequently say death is a constant cycle, but together we also formulate a
constant cycle. I say that when we've perished, we are not gone. We will still exist in
some way, such as living through future generations.
People say you cannot stop death. However, I say death cannot stop us.
The next time we find ourselves in a position when death leaves us heartbroken, let us
show death a new perseverance in life and show her that we will not allow ourselves to
be conquered.
For we are the people, and through us, our perished ancestors, our perished loved
ones, and our perished heroes, will always prevail from her icy, frigid grip.

Delirium & Throwing Stones

PARKER JONES

I worry about others
Throwing stones my way.
I have been turning myself
The color of a plum
Over raindrops in an ocean.
Sand in the water.

I have been fields of flowers
And towering trees.
The soft breeze that whispers kindly:
It tousles your hair.
I see the pollen that makes your eyes run,
The leaves that block the sun and leave you cold,
Your lips chapped and
Bloody from the wind.

Rings on the lake
From skipping stones,
Moving our paper boats.
You laugh when they tip and
Melt like candle wax.
I see the waves as a sign:
A storm will drown us
In the briney murk of
The loch.

If I were a greenhouse,
My panes would crack,
A groaning ache under the pressure
Of the vines.
A strangling weight.
You might eat the fruit from
The boughs. Eve.
The juice would leave you donned
In rivulets of purple.
In delirium.
I'd scream for help,
Believing death had called for you
And it was all
My fault.

overextension

ELIZABETH WILES

I've said *it will be alright*
with tears in my eyes

I've placed scars
where I know they will stay

red and puffy skin
swells atop my loneliness
but still heals
blue

a bruising reminder
sensitive and trite
until it's open
once again
until they call
now and then
I can only reach as far
as my arm's end

when no one
reaches back

but I've learned to stretch

so far
the scars
come to me

it will be alright
scars heal over

if you leave them
alone?

Crescent Moons

ALANAH HUNSDORFER

I can feel your presence
in the palm of my hand
the whisper of your touch
on my fingertips

I've mapped out the terrain
of the tiny scar on my right thumb

It never did heal right
My fingers couldn't leave it alone

I can never leave well enough alone

Have you memorized it like I have?
the way it juts out like a bad memory
jarring and jagged

I wish it wasn't there
I wish a lot of things
weren't there

and have you noticed the crescent moons?
scattered across the center where I
jab my nails in

waxing and waning
and wasting
away

Stars rest in the creases
Darkness lives in the abyss

feel the raw around my cuticles
see the red around the edges
where I pick
and prod

Let me know what's left
after the blood runs dry

The Deep End

MILES SHELTER

When I was little, I would jump into the deep end of our family pool and sink to the bottom. I'd leap into the cold over and over to watch the pearlescent bubbles rush up past my fingertips, to feel the currents caressing my long hair, to sit in the deprivation of any sound but the water rushing in my ears and my own heartbeat. Near weightless, sitting on the smooth plaster, I'd feel peace. I think it was one of the only times I let myself feel like I lived in my body and accept it as a home. I spent minutes down there only to break the surface, gasping and gulping for air, and dove right back to the bottom. It scared my mother half to death. My dad would scold me until I stopped.

Now, when I'm feeling particularly out of control, or when the memories become like smoke, thick in the air I breathe, I again dive deep underwater. I sit on the substrate in one of the exhibits at the aquarium or underneath the wharf. I count fish and watch the kelp sway. I have less hair for the waves to play with now, but that's just as well. The water takes you as you are.

If I stay submerged long enough, I will get a visitor. She sinks like a stone and settles next to me, curls unfurling above her in a halo, skin turned blue in the soft, filtered light. She eyes the scar across my bare chest and my close-cropped buzz cut, not with judgment or malice, just curiosity.

I often feel the urge to say something to her. But what could I say? Would I warn her? Apologize? How many sorry's would it take to make up for what lies ahead of her? Nothing I say could ever be enough. And anyways, I've no air to say it. No way to hear her reply. In truth, I'm afraid of what she would say if she could. I crave her forgiveness, but almost more, her righteous anger. I want her to kick and scream and rage at me. At least then one of us could let out a little of what's kept in our chests. But I know her heart too well. She's not one to hurt anyone but herself. Some things never change. But, I suppose, other things do.

Much of my memory of my early teenagehood is murky, like I'm looking at the images from the bottom of my pool. The few that are most visible, those that float down like sheets of paper soggy in the water, are all centered around a bodily sensation. I've never been particularly in tune with my interoception, so I guess those impressions that caught my attention stuck with me.

The cold washing over me when my Grammy wrote that I was a "*beautiful young lady*" in my twelfth birthday card.

The burn of shame in my cheeks when I was caught binding my chest with bandages and tucking my hair into a beanie.

The flutter of elation in my stomach when I saw myself in the pictures that I took when I had stopped crying.

My head lightening as scissors sheared off my long curls.

The weight on my chest lessening with every *snip*.

My sense memory lets me piece together the story of how I got to this piece of time called the present. When I'm far enough removed from those moments, they only serve to remind me where I started. But it's a burden as much as it is a gift. Some memories are still too close to the present. Some memories I wish I could dive deeper away from. Still, they demand to be felt.

A dark mass pawing at me in a locked car.

A hollowness in my gut as I searched for an open pharmacy at that late hour.

The bile in my throat every time I recall his face.
The bite of my fingernails in my palms.

They are never easy to feel again, but at least the water provides a buffer.

The light dances across the pages, the corners fold and tear. A colorful fish may swim past, drawing my gaze for a second. Everything has a dream-like quality that dulls the sting of the wounds.

I struggle to reconcile this sappy wad of flesh that I am these days with the peaceful girl sitting cross-legged next to me in the sand. I struggle not to blame myself for what will become of her. But, what else can I do but allow myself some grace? The other option would destroy both of us and that's no good at all. Instead, I do what I can to continue making this grotesque accumulation of tissues and water and blood my own. I pick up the work with care and kindness and sew myself into a shape I can recognize. There are days where I simply can't manage it. Days where I float aimlessly under the waves. But, there are those days where I feel that peace I did when I was little. I let the waters cool my anger and shame and soothe all the hurt. Those are the days I most look forward to seeing the girl meditating next to me.

She'll sit just out of reach, face partially obscured. I can't know what she's dreaming about anymore. I'll never really remember what my silent companion is thinking, nor she I, but maybe that's for the best. Some things are better left to the depths of memory.



Deathbed Archives

GABRIEL MORALES

I'm going to a place my family hasn't been. My sister went to a neighboring country, but I'll be the first besides her to go this far from home and this long.

Time is funny like that. I'll tell myself jokes during the plane ride and orchestrate stories based on subtle behavior and appearances.

I could meet strangers to explore where I'll be. What a way to experience life away from the nest.

It's a small plane so I will get a window seat. I'll eat my snacks and stare out the window. I'll pretend the turbulence is a roller coaster. I don't have control over the plane.

To me, the destination doesn't matter. By the end of it I will be a new person. It's a secret promise that was made without me knowing.

When I feel the post-vacation blues, I'll remember how PRIVILEGED I am to get the opportunity. I would like to thank geographical luck and generational courage. Some call it being in the right place at the right time. I call it knowing the lay of the land. Choosing to plant in optimal soil, early and long hours of intense labor. Maize and cattle from Central America to the North: long journeys that could break a soul, grit is pumped in our blood.

It's not a vacation because I'll be working through it. It's not entirely about the money. Also, I don't know what to do when I get there. I don't even know what I will do when I return home.

I'll do a little prayer for everyone, and everyone I know, to manifest their safety.

We're an hour out from the airport. I will enjoy this experience now and when I am older.

Paint your pictures. The special moments are sprinkled everywhere, and they are so mundane.

Nobody will even notice. You could really feel it. It's so beautiful I could almost cry.

Welcome To Sisterhood

SOPHIA MORENO

You're going to get a little sister soon,
Lose a big brother soon too.
It's a bit of give and take.
Or, in her case,
Take and take and take,
As only a baby can.
It's a balance;
Balance your love,
Balance that little bit of resentment.
(It's okay to hold it inside—
As long as nobody ever knows about it)
Step into the shoes you were always meant to fill.
(Didn't you always want a little sibling?)
You're the only big sister she's ever going to have,
You need to be everything she'll ever need.
Don't get angry like your big brother,
Don't be absent like her big brother.
Here is a chance to give everything to her,
That you never got from him.
You need to live for her now,
Nothing you do is for yourself now,
You need to think about her now.
She's just a baby; she needs you.
She's just a kid; she doesn't understand.
She's your sister: don't you love her?

Rainy Days

JACKIE CASARENO

The rainy days remind her of her lowest times;
When she couldn't get out of bed
Or when she would lose her appetite.

Her hobbies all became chores
and were no longer enjoyable.
She would start to fall behind on schoolwork
And texting her friends was no longer fun.

It's all just mundane,
She thought.
It's like she fell into a pool,
Took an unexpected dive,
And failed to swim up to the surface.
The feeling was suffocating,
And draining.
She was just so tired,
Overwhelmingly tired,
So the thought of just accepting the feeling
Seemed like the right thing to do,
In her mind,
At least.

Just as she was about to go toward the light,
The sun shined brightly,
Parting the rainy days away.
She could get out of bed now
And her appetite came back.
She looked forward to eating again
Her hobbies became enjoyable again
And she got the motivation
To get back on track with her academics.
She gradually started texting her friends again,
Letting them know,
In a way,
That she was better now.

She finally swam to the surface;
The gasp of air filled her lungs
And she felt alive again.
Tears of sadness were replaced with tears of happiness.
She overcame it.
And she was stronger than ever before.

AUTHORS

AUBREY AMILA

Aubrey Amila is a second year Humanities and Communication major at CSUMB. She loves to take pictures, stargaze, write poems, go to concerts and bookstores, and listen to music. Also, she loves the doggo, Lu, and all the raccoons she comes across.

RYAN ANDERSON

Ryan Anderson is a fourth year Humanities and Communication major with a concentration in CWSA and a minor in music. He loves to play basketball, cook, and adventure with his friends in his free time. Ryan hopes to use writing to engage his readers, but also make them laugh from time to time.

NEVAN BELL

Nevan Bell is a fourth year Psychology major with minors in music, as well as Humanities and Communications. He is currently a student, researcher, and coordinator for many roles across his communities. As a musician, he aspires to further his creative craft through poetry and writing. Many would note that he is indeed an aspiring kazoo player. Nevan is driven to leave a positive legacy on campus, which he credits to him being a taurus, or just stubborn. In his little free time, he finds that it is best spent with those around him.

JACKIE CASARENO

Jackie Casareno is a third year Psychology major with a minor in HDFS at CSUMB. When she's not learning about anything Psychology related, she enjoys listening to music and reading in her free time. Jackie has always loved poetry and uses it as an outlet whenever she is feeling down. When she graduates, she hopes to help kids/teens who struggle with their mental health.

JOJO COOK

Jojo is an HCOM student with a concentration in Creative Writing and Social Action. She explores herself and her communities through her poetry, often centering around the imagery and associated language of biology, ecology, and natural history.

FERRIS CROSBY

Ferris Crosby is a fourth year Humanities and Communication major at CSUMB with a minor in journalism. They currently serve as a staff writer for the Lutrinae, and are always down for a good house show.

ALANAH HUNSDORFER

Alanah Hunsdorfer is a fourth year student at CSUMB and is majoring in Humanities and Communication with a concentration in both English Studies and Creative Writing and Social Action. She loves writing and is excited to pursue that passion upon graduating in May.

PARKER JONES

Parker Jones is a senior at CSUMB. They are majoring in Humanities and Communication with a concentration in English Studies. They mainly write about their experience as a non-binary person, as well as their struggles with family and mental illness. The ocean is also often featured and is their favorite part of Monterey.

JOSE LUIS LOPEZ

Jose Luis Lopez is a fourth year Humanities and Communication major at CSUMB. He enjoys writing in his free time, whether it be creative writing or poetry. He also enjoys watching films and reading books. He likes to be involved on campus and is a part of many clubs and organizations including In the Ords. He plans to work in the journalism field, and also expresses interest in working in the film industry as a screenwriter or scriptwriter.

ZITLALLI MACIAS

Zitlalli Macias uses she/they pronouns and is a fourth year Humanities and Communications major with a concentration in Creative Writing and Social Action. They enjoy crocheting, knitting, doing puzzles, painting, writing, and other grandmother activities.

GABRIEL MORALES

Gabriel is a fourth year Social Behavioral Sciences major with a concentration in anthropology. He likes to be out in nature and explore places he has not been. He is fairly active on campus and is looking forward to graduation this term.

SOPHIA MORENO

Sophia Moreno is a passionate reader and writer who has always been captivated by the power of words. Currently graduating with a degree in Humanities and Communications, with a concentration in English studies, Sophia has spent years honing her craft and exploring the intricacies of written words. She hopes to continue exploring the power of words in all their forms, whether through poetry, prose, or other forms of creative expression.

ELIJAH RAMOS

Elijah Gabriel Ramos is a 4th year HCOM major with a CWSA concentration. He likes writing and drawing and observing all forms of art. Many of his artistic works are a reflection of his passions for social artistry and call for change. He lives by the motto/artistic alias, “Rebel the Flow” which promotes the concept of separating oneself from social normalities. His works present the themes of mental health awareness, philosophical abstractions, and political injustices. He likes to create pieces that are personal to him but can serve as a voice to many. He hopes you can find some of your story through his own.

MICAH RODRIGUEZ

Micah Rodriguez is a Second-Year Communication Design major at CSUMB. During his time at CSUMB, he likes getting to know people around campus, listening to music, playing games, and playing guitar. Micah is also the president of the Super Smash Otters Club, and has been doing so for three semesters. Originally, Micah started writing poetry to himself in high school to help him figure out his own confusing thoughts. Now, he writes for fun, to cope, or for lyrical purposes.

MILES SHELTER

Miles Shelter is a third year Biology student at CSUMB. They read, write, and go tidepooling when they're not participating in ecological research or leading Bio 210 sessions at the CLC. He is a transmasculine person and loves to express their journey through their art.

LIBERTY SORDIA

Liberty Sordia is a graduate student with a BA in Psychology. Liberty's next step is to go to graduate school and get a Masters in Occupational Therapy. In her free time, she likes to spend her time painting.

ELIZABETH WILES

Elizabeth Wiles (she/her/hers) is a lifelong and published poet. Writing has always been her avenue for contemplation, solace, and growth.

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