

dime



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COLLEGE**

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the arts & literary journal of  
Donnelly College

Volume 4, Spring 2016



# Thank You

dime would like to thank every student who submitted work to this year's issue. This publication exists because of your dedication and creativity.

We also thank the faculty and staff members of Donnelly College, as well as our outside readers, for volunteering their time to vote for the winners of the Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award. We could not create this journal without your kindness.

Finally, thank you to all our supporters, whose generosity supplies the publication costs as well as the awards for the Sister Mary Faith Schuster winners.



Untitled Photo  
By Ta Ephaw Gaw

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dime: the Arts & Literary Journal of Donnelly College

Volume 4, Spring 2016

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Special Thanks To:

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Cover Image: "Determination" by Rosa Favela-Moore

 **Winner**   
**Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award**  
**Nonfiction**

**“Katrina”**

**By Sr. Cecilia Lopez-Mendez, S. de M.**

One evening the sisters and I were eating dinner in the dining room in our Convent house in Kansas City, when one of them mentioned: “It will be ten years since Katrina hit New Orleans, and we have three survivors here from the hurricane.” Yes, two sisters and I were there on August 29, 2005.

Let me give you a brief history of my community of Servants of Mary, Ministers to the Sick. We are a religious congregation of Catholic Sisters founded in Madrid, Spain in 1851 by Saint Maria Soledad Torres Acosta. We are religious nurses who strive to bring the healing presence and loving compassion of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the bedside of the sick and dying, preferably in their own homes and free of charge. In 1914 the Sisters, Servants of Mary arrived in the U.S.A., so the convent in New Orleans became the 1<sup>st</sup> convent built in U.S.A.

In 2005, I was one among the younger sisters at the time in New Orleans. Those who live in Louisiana had experienced once in their life a hurricane during the past centuries, New Orleans had flooded six times, so I had heard many histories from the people and the sisters. I remember that everybody followed the news when a hurricane began to start in the Atlantic Ocean.

It was Saturday morning, August 27, 2005 when Mother Superior (Sister Silvia) told me a new hurricane was coming toward New Orleans according to the news. I thought that it would be not too bad since I remember the last two hurricanes: Lily on October 3, 2002 and Ivan in 2004, which did not damage the city.

The night before, both the sisters and I were helping sick people in their own houses. After Sister Silvia made the announcement, we began bringing bottles of water, cookies, toilet paper, food cans, batteries, flashlight, emergency kit, etc., to the second floor in case we had a flood.



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**for the next issue of dime**

&

 **The Sister Mary Faith Schuster Awards** 

mom told me, “You are lucky, because at least you can access to an education, which I never got an opportunity to get.” Society is changing, but things always end up so that women are not considered equal to men.

### Bilingualism

“And our tongues have become dry the wilderness has dried out our tongues and we have forgotten speech.”

- Irena Klepfisz

English is a language I learned at the age of 12. I am still not fluent in English, yet I am bilingual. I still struggle with grammar in English. Whenever I speak with my cousins who were brought to the United States at very young age, I mostly speak in English. I have Nepali friends with whom to I use both languages (English and Nepali) to communicate, and I speak Nepali with my family.

I translate for my parents and relatives whenever they need something to be translated, but I struggle translating some words. I end up explaining it using English words. I fear losing my own language someday because I am putting every possible effort to become fluent in English.



**New Orleans' Community in 2005, on the Patio of the Blessed Mother Mary**

**1st row from left to right: Mother Silvia, Sisters. Lourdes Lara, Ester, Fatima, Isabel, Lidia, Margarita, Gloria, Teresa, Alicia, Claludia and Gabriela.**

**2nd Row: Sister Cecilia, Magdalena, Silvia and Lourdes Garcia.**

**Sisters Cecilia, Alicia and Silvia are now living in the Kansas City Community.**



**“Dog in Historic Costume”  
By Roger A. Berg III**

Haiku  
By Arie Juarez

Donnelly College:

Unique and diverse students,

Together as one.

We worked all day until Saturday night. Finally, we got some sleep, but still we had a lot of things to do the next day. I did not remember if we had the Mass early in the morning, as usually did; however, we continued working. Around 9:00 a.m., Sister Silvia gathered us in the living room, she said: “I heard that this will be a rough hurricane, but we do not have enough cars. So, those who wish to leave, you can do so, but you have to do it as quickly as you can.”

Eventually, what happened is the city’s authorities gave certain time to evacuate the town because when the hurricane comes, the city closes; it is too dangerous. Therefore, you have to decide. In that moment there was silence. Each one of us had to choose to leave or to stay. In my mind passed a lot of thoughts. “What will happen if I leave? I would not forgive myself if something happened to the sisters,” so I chose to stay. Immediately, as everybody made their own decisions, those who agreed to stay resumed working. There were a lot things to do. Then, we split in

different assignments. Some moved the furniture out from the window and others unplugged all the electronics, others collected water in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to use later for the bathrooms and other purposes. Usually, the people of New Orleans secure their windows with a piece a wood, but we only taped it with masking tape in case the wind broke the glass. Also, we washed and ironed clothes because we knew there

will be no water and electricity for days. By the end of that day, we were exhausted, but almost everything was done. Even later in the afternoon, we received some phone calls from friends that worried for our safety.

In the afternoon, the dark clouds covered the sky and I heard the violence of the winds. At night we put our mattresses in the hallway of the second floor because we were afraid that the strong winds would break the windows. Katrina was expected to hit Monday early in the morning. We had just the radio to listen to the news.



**Patio of the Blessed Mother Mary during Hurricane Katrina**

Sunday night we scarcely slept because the winds pushed a window all night that was covered with wood from past years. I do not know what time finally I got some sleep. When I woke up in the morning, all the lights in the hallway were gone; I could hardly see. The sisters were still sleeping, so I stayed lying down in my mattress until they gradually awoke. Afterward, we opened the doors from the rooms, in order to get some light to read and say our prayers. In the morning, the wind was still blowing. We started feeling hungry, so we ate breakfast. We had brought some milk in an ice box and cereal, and we opened a can of sausages. Later in the afternoon we couldn't hear the wind anymore, so we went down to the first floor.

Finally, we were allowed to see outside. Everything was calm and quiet. Everything looked safe; we resolved to go the Chapel and pray. By noon we went to the dining room and we had lunch. At the end we noticed

row of three black chairs. I remember the first day of school in the United States when I neither spoke nor understood English that well. I was so nervous because I knew it was not going to be easy. The lady handed me my schedule and took me to my first class.

My teacher introduced me to the class and asked me where am I from. I didn't quite get it, so she brought a world map and asked me where am I from again. "Nepal," I told her pointing at the little country on map.

### **Confused about My Nationality**

After my family left Bhutan and came to live in a refugee camp in Nepal, I was born there. I grew up in a place where I was confused about my own nationality. Because my parents were citizens of Bhutan, they were called Bhutanese. Even though I was born in Nepal, I was not considered a citizen of Nepal. I was citizen of nowhere.

But whenever people ask me my nationality, I claimed myself to be Nepali even though practically, I am not Nepali. My parents and others living in refugee camps spoke Nepali, so I grew up speaking Nepali. In school I was required to take Dzongkha, which is a language of Bhutan. I remember learning Dzongkha in third grade, which made no sense at all. My Dzongkha teacher used to walk in the classroom with his book and start speaking Dzongkha. My parents did not even learn Dzongkha after being born and raised in Bhutan. My mom and dad used to get upset when I used to fail Dzongkha tests. After taking Dzongkha classes for four years, I learned to speak and write a few things in the language. It has been six years since I last spoke Dzongkha, so now I have lost it.

### **Traditions for Women in My Culture**

Women are meant to be submissive in my culture. It is something I never liked about being brought up in these traditions. I grew up seeing all the elderly women in my family wearing long skirts all their lives. I know they expect the same for me as well. There are strict rules for women, and they have little freedom. Being a woman in such a strict culture is a difficult experience because I live in this country of freedom but I am still expected to follow a more conservative culture's rules for women.

The other day, I shared my plans of going on vacation with my friends. My mom denied it, and instead she offered a vacation with my brothers. I grew up hearing, "Girls can only leave home when they get married." I know it is how my mom and grandma were brought up, and that is why they try to pass on those traditions. I remember one time my

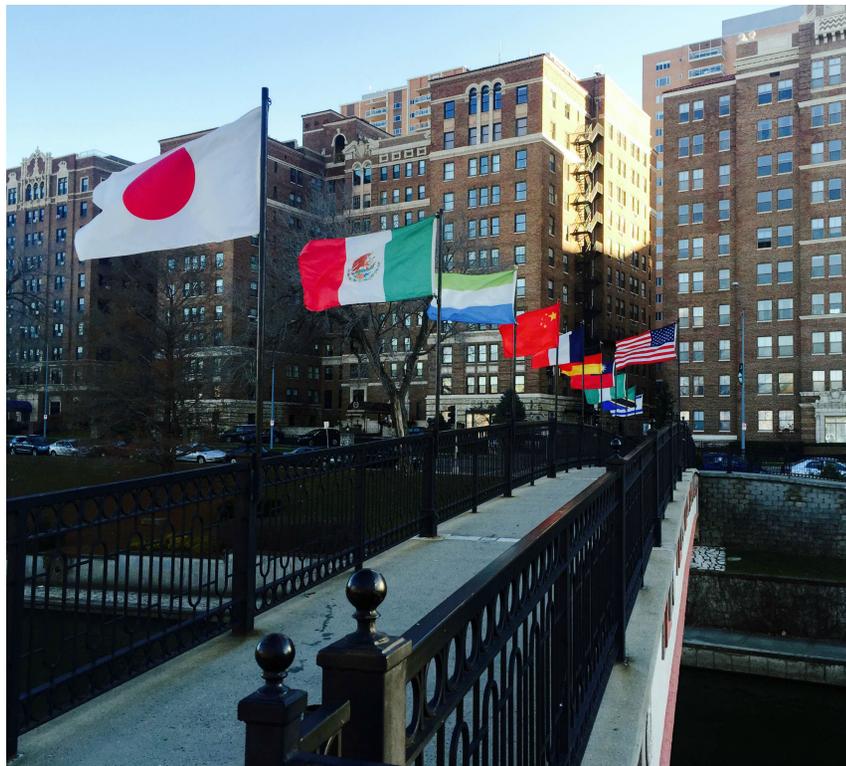
## “My Language is My Identity”

By Saraswati Kharka

Gloria Anzaldua put together different pieces of her experiences in an autobiographic essay, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue.” She explains her experience of speaking different forms of same language and the traditional boundaries of a woman in her culture. She even listed several languages she speaks depending on the people she is around with. She explains that “Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language” (27). I agree with her position because no language is incorrect if people can communicate using it. Anzaldua and I have the same experience of dealing with different forms of language.

### The First Day of School

“Just have a seat here and I will print out your schedule,” said the lady in the Counselor’s office of Central Middle School, pointing at the



Untitled Photograph  
By Rosa Pacheco



Our boats and our rescue

water coming from the bottom of the dishwasher. We were surprised since it was off. More water started coming in from the patio door. At the beginning we tried to start mopping it, but immediately we realized that we could not. So, we pulled things on the top of the tables, but in a matter of minutes the water was rising, so we ran again to the second floor. I remember stopping for a minute and to see through the kitchen window to see our backyard completely flooded. I wondered, where did the water come from? Later, through the radio we heard the levees of Lake Pontchartrain were broken.

It was amazing seeing our entire neighborhood surrounded by water. We could not believe it. We were trapped for three days until volunteers from Lafayette (a city 30 minutes from New Orleans), came to rescue us. Thanks to them we were able to escape from what the news deemed a “poison swamp.” Eventually, I was able to not be anxious every time I hear the winds blow. In comparison with the suffering of other people, it was not too hard to handle. In that circumstance, I was able to appreciate the advantages of living in community. The support and encouragement were essential in that moment. I am so grateful that we were safe and nothing bad happened to us during those days.


**Winner**
  
**Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award  
Poetry**

**“Are You Living Your Dream”**

**By Roemello Thompson**

Always work hard and always dream big,  
 Life took a turn, a wife and 6 kids,  
 They all turned out good, so that made him proud,  
 Military bound as he smiled and bowed,  
 His father worked hard in the Jim Crow South,  
 Always had time for his kids, and never let them put their dreams aside,  
 So coming up, life was hard like cement, like wearing a metal coat.  
 Dreams of getting out the hood; having a steady job, never going broke,  
 He wanted to eat like royalty, 5 star meals every night.  
 The man told him he couldn't do it, but he kept putting up a fight,  
 At the speed of light he'll make it arrive, drive till the gas light comes on  
 Work his fingers to the bone until the streetlights shine,  
 Dreams changed, but he has a life now, a darn good one at that,  
 Kept the mindset that he was a man, not a doormat,  
 No one could walk on or over, nor pull and push him around.  
 Born in another state, but slowed down in this town,  
 His only dreams now are seeing his grandchildren blossom into adults,  
 Teaching them people are going to insult  
 And they need to fight the impulse,  
 To strike back isn't winning, it's just feeding the fuel,  
 The wise man said, “Don't let the young fool kill the old fool.”  
 I asked any advice for the people getting started; this is all he could tell,  
 “Get an education because it is essential, and stay the hell out of jail.”

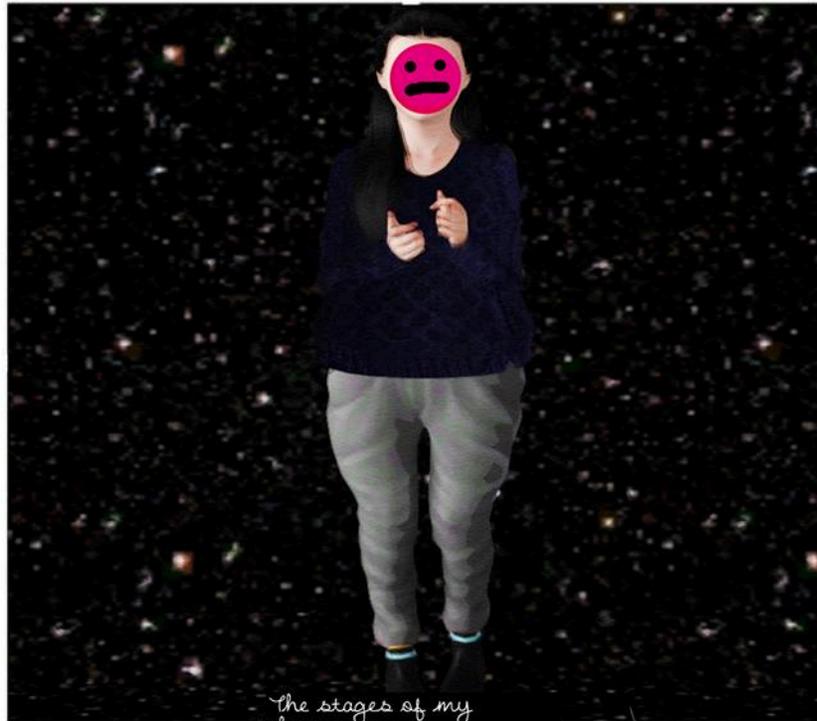
I FEEL STAGE ONE AT THE MOMENT. IT FEELS LIKE THIS ONE WONT TAKE LONG TO BE OVER. SOMETIMES IT GOES AWAY BEFORE STAGE 3 WHICH IS GREAT AND VERY HELPFUL FOR ME.

EVERYTIME I HAVE AN EPISODE I HOPE THAT I DONT HAVE IT WHEN I GOT TO SCHOOL. BECAUSE ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS TO DO IS TRY TO BE THE PERSON I REALLY AM WHEN IM NOT DEPRESSED.

WHEN PEOPLE FIND OUT ABOUT MY DEPRESSION THEY SAY THAT THEY'RE SORRY, WHICH ISN'T SOMETHING THAT MAKES ME FEEL BETTER.

ITS AN ILLNESS THAT AFFECTS MY WHOLE BODY AND I UNDERSTAND THAT, YET I AM NOT ASHAMED OF IT., AND ALTHOUGH I CAN CONTROL SOME OF MY SYMPTOMS IT DOESNT MEANTHAT I CAN CONTROL MY DEPRESSION COMPLETELY. AND THATS FINE, BECAUSE MY DEPRESSION DOESNT DEFINE ME.





*the stages of my depression*

**1**  
 my depression starts with stress. which causes me to become angry and unsociable. I try to treat people better than i feel. Because questions about how i feel make me uncomfortable.

**2**  
 I become careless and untidy to the point that i have to force myself to do basic things like wash my face, shower, and change my clothes. I over eat or dont eat at all..

**3**  
 I cry and feel angry at myself for things i cant control. but at the moment, whether i can or cant control something doesnt matter, its still my fault. I also can't sleep or sleep to much.

👁️ Winner 👁️  
**Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award  
 Visual Arts**



**"Van Gogh's 'The Road Menders'"  
 By Roger A. Berg III**


**Winner**
  
**Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award  
Fiction**

**“Revelation”  
By Elizabeth Torres**

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, it’s cold outside; I am waiting on the train headed to Chicago to arrive. I feel like it has been forever and the train is not here. The time is 2:37pm and as I hear a lady over the speakers announcing the arrival of the train, I start shaking and doubting myself. I don’t know if I am making the correct decision. Should I get in this train and get this over with or should I turn around without looking back? I take a deep breath and decide it is time to man up and get my butt up on that train. I take my place and as I am there waiting on the train to start heading its way, a woman about my age sat across from me. I couldn’t help noticing she had a strange look in her face, a look that reflected total pain and sadness.

The train is in motion now; all I can do now is think about this woman: something horrible must have happened. I am intrigued; all she does is stare out the window holding on tight to a notebook. It’s obvious she is fighting her own tears. Should I talk to her? Should I simply mind my own business? I have my own problems and she is just a stranger, but if she is only a stranger why can’t I forget about it? I do not know this woman but I feel like I do, I feel the need to reach out for her.

“Let those tears out, it will make you feel better and it will ease the pain a lil faster.” I second-guessed myself on doing that but even though she barely looked at me, I noticed she dropped a tear as soon as I spoke. So, I reached for my backpack, took some tissues out and handed them to her. She didn’t hesitate to grab them and with a knot in her throat she said thank you.

At that moment I had the audacity to introduce myself to Grace - I later found out that was her name. I had never met this woman before, but I felt the need to make her feel better, something inside me was telling me to. She inspires trust in me. “I don’t know what happened to you, but be sure that everything will be better.” I felt satisfaction when I saw her give me a small smile. “That is much better; we have to learn how to smile even during harsh times, I am going to tell you a story, the story of why I am taking this train.” She just looked at me; she was willing to listen to

although I no longer have severe depression, I still get moderate or mild depression at times.

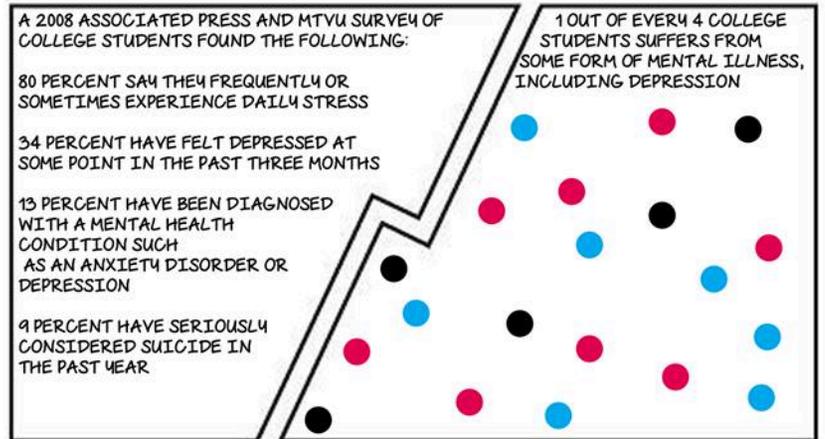
Which I hadn't had until I started attending college.

I really wasn't surprised because I knew that depression is very common in students, especially in college students.

the stress of having, class, work, homework, and having to study two hours a day for each class is too much sometimes.

I no longer have severe suicidal thoughts like I used to.

sometimes I want to lay in bed and stay there forever, which is normal when having episodes of depression.



My depression is a reaction to my stress levels.

It may not make sense to some so the way I like to explain is by using metaphors.

when a computer is overloaded with games, extensions, apps, etc... it becomes slower.

sometimes it even crashes and shuts down.

thats how my brain takes stress.



without them hearing anything from each other until one day, my dad found her and that's when he discovered my existence. Supposedly my father spent all those years looking for her, because he never stopped loving her, but even though my mom still had feelings for him, too, she wasn't willing to commit the same mistake again. She rejected him. My father understood and respected her decision, but now that he knew of my existence he wanted to take care of my expenses.

My mother never cashed any of the checks he sent, so it eventually stopped coming. Along with the money, there was always a letter directed to me. Those never stopped arriving. My mother always kept the letters from me until, for some unknown reason, now.

That is when I realized that my father cared about me at least a little. He wanted to be present in my life somehow. I have so many questions for him, like why did he only send letters to me and not come look for me, to meet me? What would have happened if twenty years ago my mom would have decided to tell him she was pregnant? Would he have stayed with his wife or would he have chosen my mom? This is why I am on this train; I am headed to seek answers.

"Sorry, I probably bored you to death with my story." Grace looked up at me, gave me a smile and I suppose I also inspired her trust because she started telling me her story, why she was on this train. She was on a vacation when she received an unexpected phone call from home, announcing her father's death; she was heading back home to her father's funeral. As she was telling me her tragedy, the knot in her throat came back, along with tears. I wanted to comfort her, I wanted to hug her but I didn't. I cared about this woman I just met, but why?

I cannot believe my dad just died, he was so full of life, and I had just left for a couple of days and now I find myself sitting on this train to go home to my dad's funeral. All I wanted to do was cry and cry while holding the journal my dad gave me for my birthday this summer but I tried to hold my tears back. All of a sudden, the passenger sitting across from me tells me that it is okay to cry and hands me a tissue. I do not know who this man is; all I know is that he introduced himself as Jason. Out of nowhere, he starts telling me a piece of his life story and how he was on his way to meet his dad for the first time after twenty years. I am usually a very reserved person, but today I do not know what got to me, maybe it was that I was feeling vulnerable about my dad's death but after he told me his story I felt the confidence to tell him mine.

"Now I know why you are on this train, but you do not know why I am." Two days ago I left Chicago for some "me time," but this morning

SATURDAY, 14, 2015

SLEPT IN UNTIL 3:00PM

ENERGY LEVEL

LOW

HUNGER LEVEL

MODERATE

DEPRESSION

LOW

LEVEL

Off to a good start, except for the fact that my back hurts and my hand is numb which tickles when i move it. anyways i really want some breakfast.

FAMILY CURRENTLY NOWHERE IN SIGHT, PROBABLY LEFT TO GO EAT.

NO POSITIVELY LEFT TO GO EAT.



NOTHING BUT AN OLD COFFEE CUP, A SOCCER BALL, AND SOME PLANT

I SHOULD CONTINUE WITH MY COMIC. DO I START FROM THE BEGINNING...

OKAY LET'S DO THIS.

I'M READY



~~Her name is magaly.~~  
Definition of depression according to google:

de·pres·sion

də'preSH(ə)n/

noun

1.

feelings of severe despondency and dejection.

**Untitled Graphic Memoir**  
By Magaly Pereyra

FRIDAY 13, 2015

things to Remember

- \*its skay to give up
- \*its skay to be sad
- \*its skay to not care
- \*its skay to be depressed.

I HOPE THIS HOMEWORK ISN'T OVER THE TOP BORING, STRESSFUL. PLEASE? OKAY, LET ME PUT MUSIC ON AND LETS CONCENTRATE ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT



OKAY LETS KEEP THIS GOING WE'RE OFF TO A GOOD START...  
OKAY.. YES..  
WAIT DOES THIS MAKE SENSE? HOW DO I EVEN EXPLAIN THIS?  
  
I CAN'T DO THIS, ITS TOO MUCH, I ALSO HAVE A SPECH DUE.. NOPE.  
  
I'M DONE FOR TODAY.

OKAY AS GOOD AS THIS SHOW IS I SHOULD REALLY BE DOING HOMEWORK SO I CAN WERK... GAWD I'M SO CORNY.  
  
LET ME SEE IF-  
  
WOAH!?WHAT IS HAPPENNING!

I received a phone call from home telling me my dad passed away. He had a heart attack. I was devastated; I cannot finish understanding how this happened. Just two days ago he was so full of life; he seemed so strong and healthy. He was always so loving and caring towards my mom and me. I grew up as an only child; my dad always talked about how he wanted to give me a brother but never could. My dad was the best, but what can I say, he was my dad. I find it hard to believe that all of a sudden he is gone without ever coming back. What hurts the most is that I was not able to say goodbye properly. I feel like I never told him how much I love him and how much he meant to me. At the same time, I feel guilty for not being there when it happened.

As I was telling Jason about my misery, I could not help crying, but I felt like he truly cared, I felt like I could tell him anything and he would be there willing to listen. Why did a stranger make me feel such confidence? It was as if I knew him from way back. I was interested in what happened to him and it seemed like he was interested in what happened to me. "Thank you for listening to me, it made me feel better, I appreciate it."

"You're welcome, your father sounds like he was great guy, and I'm sorry this happened to you." Listening to Grace speak, I realized I cared about her even though I didn't know who she was. She opened her notebook and showed me a photograph of her father. As I saw his picture I felt in shock, I couldn't believe what my eyes were seeing. I didn't know what to say or think...the man in the picture was my father. How was this possible? How small can this world be?

Grace is my half-sister and I just discovered my questions were going to remain unanswered, my father died. Now all I can do is think to myself, should I tell Grace or would it be better if I remain silent? What is she going to think about this? I was so confused, I had never met my father before and now I never will. I finally realized why Grace inspires such trust, it was blood calling. I decided to reveal my discovery to her. I showed her a photograph of my father, our father, and hoped she didn't have a negative reaction.

I looked down to my journal and reached out for my dad's picture to show it to Jason. As I did that I noticed his face changed completely, a strange look invaded his face for a moment.

"What is wrong, is everything okay?" He stayed quiet for a while, it seemed like he wanted to tell me something but words were not coming out of his mouth. When he was finally able to speak, he reached out for his backpack, but this time it was not to get the tissues—it was to show



**"Maria & Her Mom"**  
By Paw Poe

me a picture of his dad. To my surprise it turned out to be a picture of my dad.

"What are you doing with my dad's picture? Where did you get that from?" Then, I realized that my dad was the same person that twenty years ago decided to stay with my mom because of me, losing the woman he loved. Jason was my brother. What other secrets did my dad keep from me? I might never know, but Jason made me feel such confidence that I am glad he is my brother. I looked at him, smiled, and hugged him.

Something strange happened. She looked at me and smiled. I smiled back and we hugged each other. We might have never met before but it felt good to have a sister. For the rest of the trip, we chatted and chatted without stopping. We shared a similar pain, me never meeting my father and her losing hers. We had built a special bond without knowing who each other was; this was the start to a new life.



**Untitled Photograph**  
By Michelle Hernandez

---

**"Pure Nature"**  
By Nancy Garcia

Deep in pure nature.  
Surrounded by wild animals,  
The pure smell of flowers and trees,  
The wet grass on my feet.  
Step by step by step  
I can feel the drops of rain  
Cold and soft is the green path on which I walk.  
The gorgeous smells, colors and view.  
Nature is magical.  
Nature, pure nature  
Green colors, drops of water  
dropping from one leaf to another.  
Deep in pure nature, thinking deep in my future.  
Deep deep nature so beautiful and green.  
PURE NATURE

**“Dreams and Goals”**  
**By Keosha Mwangi**

*For Tracy*

Beautiful, intelligent,  
butterflies, oh how time flies,  
Such struggle, and pain,  
yet accomplished goals and  
achievements,  
Sadly, not those on which she can  
live upon,  
Strong, independent, dedicated  
and loving,  
but only to those who are to her,  
She's understanding, and as sweet  
as the summer night,  
protecting and providing only for  
her own.

Witty and and honest,  
compassionate and ambitious,  
only she would be the one to  
know how great it is  
for a mother to support and  
encourage a child,  
to push them along the path of  
education,  
Her dreams and goals made,  
yet deferred,  
My dreams and goals made,  
not to be deferred,  
but yet, to be achieved,  
and brought beyond that.

**Response to *Enrique's Journey***  
**By Perouska Kiniti**

The bond between a mother and a child is priceless. The first day the baby is born is a celebration. The mother carried the innocent child for nine months, went through labor pains that are indescribable, and then an “angel” was born.

The bond is formed once the mother feels the little kicks in her stomach and then it's solidified when she sees the baby for the very first time. Though hard to believe, once the bond is broken, it is hard to build it up or develop it again.

In *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario, Lourdes left her two kids behind in order to provide them a better future. As Enrique grew older, he began to deeply miss his mother and craved seeing her. The fake promises of her going back home never seemed to be fulfilled, which angered Enrique.

Every year, Lourdes promised that she would go home and every year, she never did. Enrique would tell Belky, his sister, “I need her. I miss her. I want to be with my mother” (19). A few years after Enrique and Lourdes were reunited, even though the love was still there, Enrique harbored feelings of resentment and anger towards his mother.

As time went by, Enrique and Lourdes realized they were strangers to each other. Neither of them knew what the other person liked or disliked (195). When I first arrived to the US, my eldest would always tell my mum to call me so we could talk, and she did. Even though he didn't say much, we would have a mild conversation. Now, six months later, he does not want to speak to me. When my mum calls him to talk to me, he says “No! Am full.”

I do realize that he is still a child and he doesn't understand much of what is going on, but I feel the distance. He used to cry for me and now all he does is maybe say hi and give back the phone to my mother. My youngest, on the other hand, tries to talk, but he doesn't know who I am. I always tell him I love him, and he says it back, but it doesn't mean much to him; he simply repeats what he hears. The feeling that I am just a mere memory to my kids is horrifying. I am so scared that when I decide to go see them, they will both look at me and wonder, who are you? I feel the bond slipping away each day, and I don't want to accept it. It is easier to deny than to accept. Denial is my friend right now. If I were to give in to reality, I would have to go back to the life I had before coming here; staying in the house with my kids hoping someone will employ me or waiting for my parents to give me money. As for now, my only solution is to persevere and console myself that this is the best thing to do. Lourdes finally met her children, so that gives me hope. My time will come, hopefully sooner rather than later.



**Handmade stuffed snowmen.**  
**Materials: socks, rice, buttons.**  
**By Marika Diyali**

## **“The Man You Have Become”**

**By Luiz Valdez**

You are a man with a gentle and pure heart  
just like the person who brought you to this world.  
He showed you everything that you now have become,  
You wish you had said, “Te amo, Papa” one more time.  
Battles that you fought,  
You have become the soldier that you have dreamed of.  
Now that you have conquered those struggles,  
The memories will never rot.  
You have conquered, not with weapons,  
But with effort, sweat, and affection. How can you still be standing?  
With all this evil that has come to you. You strive for success, to  
create your own business, not just any kind of business, but the kind  
that will bring the family together,  
the kind that we will make us whole again,  
But for now it has to wait.  
You’re focused on being a chef now.  
You bake, you cook, you cut,  
You smell your food as if it were the first breath you took.  
Chop. Chop. Chop, just like a butcher shop.  
You’re good with knives.  
I’m just glad it changed your life.  
Now that you followed a path, it’s time to open a new one  
When you do, don’t be afraid, or give up.  
Have faith in your dreams, just like the dreams you once had.

Now that I am a college student, I know the importance of knowing how to speak, read, and write standard English; however, that does not mean that my native tongue has to disappear. I am my language, because after all, I know that is what molds me.

As I sit here and write these few words in Spanish, I can’t help but think about the student next to me who is struggling to write a few words in Spanish for her assignment. She is a Latina girl, born and raised in Mexico, yet she can’t write a few words in Spanish. This is what oppression has done to our people’s tongue. It has told us that we are wrong our whole lives, and it stripped us of what makes us who we are.

We are not a wrong language. We are not an insignificant dialect that can be forgotten. *Nosotros tenemos el poder de cambiar el mundo una frase a la vez, y con el favor de dios lo haremos.* As I continue my life, I know that it is vital that I speak English as well as Spanish; however I will never forget my roots a native Spanish speaker. Everyday that I speak to my mother on the phone, I say “*Hola mami, que haces?*” When I chat with my friends I say, “*Hey, ya hisistes la homework de math de el otro dia?*” When I get a compliment from my husband, he will tell me “*Que linda estas.*” It is nearly impossible to forget my language because it is a big part of me. It follows me around everywhere, and it is something that is inevitably dear to me.

So to those who have told me to stop speaking Spanish because we are in America, I can only answer you with the words of my mother, “*No me digan que no puedo hablar en Español porque estoy en los Estados Unidos, porque Mexico sigue adentro de mi.*” Do not try to abolish my linguistic power because “*solamente dios del cielo me lo quita.*” I am who I am no matter what.

I feel sorry for those who have let this foreign culture get the best of them. They have forgotten a piece of who they really are. For me, nothing is better than expressing who I truly am by the way I talk.

At this point in my life, if a teacher asks me to repeat, “*Theee peencil is yeeeeelloowwww.*” I will simply respond with, “*The pencil is yellow,*” “*El pencil esta yellow,*” and “*El lapic es amarillo.*”

determination. I was determined from that moment forward to speak the best English could. Mi papa me decia “mija yo estoy orgulloso de ti, porque por lo menos tu si estas estudiando, y vas a aprender.”

When I had mastered English and I got to middle school, it was a whole different world. One where my friends, the Spanish speakers, and I were oppressed and forced to speak English. When we were alone, we would talk our own little mix of Spanish and English. We called it Spanglish, though the most commonly used name for this language is Chicano Spanish. Un día el profesor de la clase de matemáticas nos descubrió hablando español. Yo le dije a mi amiga, “Que vas a hacer today en la tarde, vámonos a una part.” El profe nos regano y nos dijo que, “In school, you WILL speak English.”

That was the day that I decided that something had to be done about this kind of oppression. No nos pueden prohibir nuestro idioma, no nos pueden cortar las lenguas.

When I reached high school, I knew that something in me was not the same. I knew my roots and I knew my language, and that was something that I was never going to lose. However, school systems could not prohibit my native tongue. I knew I was not alone, and with the help of my amigos and companeros, I would call attention to this matter.

Over a period of time I developed a small group in school, full of Latinos and Latinas who were ready to fight for their tongue. So we developed an idea and took it to the school principle. Shockingly, our idea was approved and our “Spanish Club” was formed.

Ese año nos hizimos líderes de nuestro idioma. Una maestra me dijo que nunca dejara de ser quien Soy, porque la realidad es que aunque nosotros queríamos ser como los güeros, nunca se nos va a quitar el nopal de la frente.

In Spanish Club, we were free from the idea that we had to change who we are and what language we spoke, just because we had to fit in. Estamos en estados unidos, pero mi Corazón está en México.

### “My O.G.” By Orvin Williams

*Dedicated to Edward Bell*

My O.G.  
He had dreams of big lights, Hard wood and pushing a rock  
Not street lights, sirens and pushing hard rocks

Karma caught up, put into chains  
Like slaves in his grand mama’s days.  
Trying to figure out what is there to change,  
Had a Queen named Hope that got him out of the game  
O.G. tried to get rid of his ways,  
O.G. doing well, no drugs, no guns  
No more blunts and bongos,  
Just work boots and prayers that he makes it home

O.G. Still dreaming, ain't no end to that,  
Thinking back on how the streets made an impact  
Now he a basketball coach and a  
teacher

But if you ask me, O.G. just a  
preacher,  
Raising young rebels to become  
leaders,  
Not the average stereotype  
I guess he was my prototype  
because he changed my life  
He taught me life wasn’t a game, I  
had put up a fight,  
Listening to him I’ve been doing  
alright  
Whenever I lose focus, I just pick  
up the phone;

I remember O.G. telling me,  
“The object of a dream is that you  
can't obtain it — that's why it's a  
dream!

Little Bro, don’t dream; set goals.”



“Teddy Bear”  
By Roger A. Berg III

## Untitled Poem

By Arie Juarez

She is hurt, but no boy took her heart and smashed it into a million pieces. She was 5 when the seed of self-hatred was planted in her head. People would come and go just to water that seed.

Not a thought about why they did it or how it would affect her crossed their minds. It grew, covered every inch of her body. And now she can't love herself because she is lost in a forest of hate. And if she thinks she is finding the exit, someone comes by and sinks her deeper than she was.

She is hurt. Although she tries to fix herself, it is not enough. All these lies stuck in her head.

“You're not good enough.” “You're ugly.” “You can't do anything.”

But I believe she can. She hates every inch of her body and can't see how beautiful she truly is.

She can't see how amazing and wonderful she has become.

She is hurt. But she tries to fix herself. People push her down but she always gets back up.

She is hurt. And her mind is filled with lies. And we try to show her what she truly is — beautiful.

She is hurt, but she is not broken.



Untitled Drawing  
By Eduardo Vazquez

## “My Linguistic Struggle”

By Eva Loya

“The pencil is yeeeellllloowwww” my kindergarten teacher would sound out to the class every morning as a warm up for the day. I would repeat “de pencil is jeellllloooooowww” with a heavy Mexican accent that I struggled to get rid of in my early days as an immigrant child. “The dooog is brooown.” I would repeat the best I could, “de doogg ess brauuun.” My first language was standard Mexican Spanish. Mi mama y mi papa me hablaban en español todos los días en la casa. Era el unico idioma que yo conosia. When we migrated to the Norte or what immigrants call “los Estados Unidos,” I was only five years old. Mi mama me desia, “Vas a conocer a niñitas gringas de ojos azules, y te van a decir haw arr ju.” I was mortified at the fact that I would have to learn a whole new language that was so foreign to me, yet I was even more scared at the fact that I left my life behind in Chihuahua, Mexico to start a new one here.

When I started kindergarten, my first days were a blur. I didn't know where I was, I didn't know who I was with, and I'm sure that at some point I didn't know if my mom would ever come back for me. The first day felt eternal to me. In my class my maestro was a tall, blue eyed guera. My mom would say, “Tu maestra siempre trae las narices bien rojas.”

We started out by introducing ourselves in my colorful kindergarten class. I saw creamy faces, I saw pale white faces, and I saw deep shades and mixtures of brown faces. The first boy started. “My name is Aaron.” I was astounded by how perfect he sounded when he spoke. The next few kids were like me. “Mi naim es Bernardo” said a heavysset boy who appeared to have the same complexion as me. It was at this moment that I knew I was not alone.

When my turn came to introduce myself to the class, I struggled to mutter out “mi naim es Eva.” As we were introducing ourselves, I noticed the disapproval of our heavy Mexican accents in my teacher's face. This caused two very different emotions inside of me. One was pure anger at the fact that she hated me for the way spoke, and the other was

This was the time I broke my toes on my right foot; I was in pain getting on the floor so fast.

*“Whoop whoop!”* My mother and I could sense the death, we heard it diagonally across the street from our house. *“Taleah! Stay on the floor, okay? I know your toes hurt but don’t move, okay?”* The Q had a crime scene that made everyone come outside as soon as the police arrived. *“Shit, wad dafuck happen yawl?”*

*“I jus got home and this shit happen’d Barbara you know wad happen’d?”*

*“Naw, we hit the floor when we heard them shoot’n. ”*

*“It’s always something. ”*

*“Aww okay, well, yawl ight tho?”*

*“Yeah, we’re okay.”*

A teenager and a middle aged man were killed in a bad drug deal. There were two shots to the teenager who died, and one shot to the man who lived. The Q brought sorrow that day as if it were the street of death. *“Oh my Gooood, wad’s goin on, family, who did it? Who kill’d my grandbaby?”*

*“Grandma, we kno who did it. Monk did it, we gone kill him, we gone kill dat nigga, dat stupid muthafucka!”*

The family of the teenager surrounded the crime scene. Fifty people cried in the atmosphere of death. People were falling on the ground in sorrow. Their hurt and pain made gravity control their bodies as if they themselves had lost their lives. *“Grandma, don’t look, please don’t look!”* *“No baby, I need ta see my baby!”* The grandmother is walking with two canes, trying to overcome the story she heard of her grandchild being shot, in her mind, thinking he survived the gunshot wounds. *“Grandma, go home, please!”* The Q was a street that became an individual community, but had non-stop crime. Quindaro Street was a nice quiet street when I was born, but as gang members, along with criminal family members, kept moving on, everything turned around.

What happened to our street? The name came from the Native Americans who lived on that land and now people turned it to a land of crime, death, violence, and pain. *“Get on the floor now!”* The Q has changed. *“POW, POW, POW.”* The Q still has bullets of death flying on the street. STOP. PLAY. FAST FORWARD. PLAY. STOP. EJECT.

## **“My Time”** **By Taleah Berger**

### *New Beginning*

*“Shhhh, don’t wake her up!”* March 30, 2001, the beautiful day when I turned five years old. I could hear everyone talk about an awesome party they were having for a princess. Around nine in the morning, I woke up hearing my family talking amongst themselves as if I could not hear them. Even though I woke up early, I could only hear fragments of what they were saying, I kept hearing, *“okay...okay, you cover...the cake with a towel, you...now the balloons.”* I walked from the bedroom to the dining room. STOP. Everyone had a dramatic pause because the birthday girl was up. No one said happy birthday, just a simple *“Good morning, Taleah.”* PLAY. Everyone continued talking among themselves about my birthday party.

I knew they were going to hide everything from me, but I knew what they were doing. My mother wanted everything to be a secret. Everyone was trying to be inconspicuous like they symbolized themselves as the F.B.I. or the C.I.A. and their mission was to throw me a party. STOP. FAST FORWARD.

I saw the beginning of my party. I was sitting at the dining room table in the living room. There were family members along with people I didn’t know. They were gathered around the table, smiling and laughing with happiness. *“Okay, everyone, on the count of three, sing happy birthday to the princess. Ready, one, two, three...”* STOP. REWIND.

My daddy is in front of me saying, *“that’s my baby, she’s my big girl!”* Excuse me, but I haven’t seen my dad in a long while but he finally sacrificed and managed time to come to my fifth birthday party. What upset me was that he had the nerve, the balls, and the audacity to bring his girlfriend to my party. I could sense my mother’s insides boiling and she was being super pissed off. *“Who invited the chick?”* Oh. Daddy did. STOP. PLAY. My eyes widened and I was happy, seeing a princess and a Barbie birthday cake in my realm, including my Barbie doll in my left hand. Then everyone began to sing, happy birthday to me. STOP. FAST FORWARD.

The party is over, everyone hugged me and left. I am going to bed reminiscing about a wonderful birthday party my mother threw for me; reminiscing like a movie. STOP. PLAY. REWIND. PLAY. FAST FORWARD.

*The New and Old Beginning, Designed by Growth*

Twelve years later, my mother spent a certain amount of money out of her normal budget to throw a birthday party for her daughter again. FAST FORWARD. My mother invited people to help celebrate my seventeenth birthday. My mother and brother were the main family members who always attended my birthday parties. At the end of every party, something unexpected tended to happen, which symbolized a new beginning. But, it was actually the old beginning because my seventeenth birthday was a repeat of my fifth birthday.

“Taleah, don't be hurt or sad because nobody came to celebrate your birthday.” My mother could feel the pain I felt every time she invited someone who didn't show up to my birthday parties. I felt her heart bounce like a basketball in pain because she knew that my family and friends barely support me in anything. STOP.

I grew away from depending on people to support me in any of my events. I grew away from letting others control my emotions, because no one supported me. PLAY.

March 30, 2015, I threw my own party. The only person that supported me was myself.

*Neighborhood — The Q*

When I had my fifth birthday party, I lived on Twentieth and Quindaro Street (also known throughout Kansas City, Kansas as The Q). I did enjoy my fifth birthday party, but after the party all who remained were my mother, brother, and me on the Q. The Q was a neighborhood where drama, death, drugs, prostitution, and crime took place. Growing up on Quindaro, when we heard our neighbors argue, my mother said, “Marcus or Taleah, turn up the volume on the t.v.” When the three of us heard the gunshots of death, I heard, “Marcus, Taleah, get on the floor now and crawl to the back room, now!” I could see the aggravation in my mother's eyes. She could visualize the thoughts my brother and I had because of the continued shootings around Quindaro. Our hearts ached because we want to move away from the drama and gang-affiliated street. The gang and family members were the Quins. “Taleah, the Quins are bloods or they hang with the gang members, if I am correct, but they are a family though, anyway, they were the reasons why that last drive-by was so crazy and long.” The Quins were the drama family. I could not walk down the street when the streetlights came on without the teenage Quins messing with me. Bullies. The Quins were the main problem why Quindaro was dangerous street. Every time I turn around, they are

involved in a drug heist, crime or drive-by. The Quins brought tears to the Street's name. STOP, PLAY.

*Dope Man - Our Protection*

*“Big lot of money, nothing less than a twenty  
Yo, you want a five-oh, the Dope man got plenty  
To be a Dope man, boy, you must qualify  
Don't get high, off your own supply!”  
-Dope man – (Jackson, Banks, Rolison)*

Our protection was the quiet drug dealer across the street. His name was Dollar Bill. He knew me and my brother since we came into this world. “POW, POW, POW!” Dollar Bill knew to watch over our home. Dollar Bill had three men at his house and once they came outside, they would begin to fight in my grandmother's plants on our lawn. “Get da fuck out dat lady's yard!” The men went to the alley behind Mount Sinai Missionary Baptist Church and kept fighting. Dollar Bill made sure that no one came on our yard or even stepped on our porch to start anything. I liked talking to Dollar Bill because even though he was and still is a criminal, he had love and compassion to protect my home. His hugs were cozy, as if I was hugging stuffed animal. Dollar Bill had a lot of obstacles to face because of what he did. STOP. FAST FORWARD. PLAY. “BOOOOMMM!” “Somebody's house is on fire!”

My mother said someone threw a cherry bomb onto Dollar Bill's house. The reaction of Dollar Bill was not what anyone would have expected. He was calm, but upset. He had to rebuild the second floor of his house as soon as possible, because winter was around the corner. Indeed, after everything Dollar Bill went through, he still protected my home because he cared. To this day, he still lives in that same house.

*“Whoop Whoop”*

“I saw unmarked cars headin' towards the Quin's house. I was talking to Momma Cheryl and the cars almost hit me drivin by. But it was da D.E.A. comin' to stop a drug deal from happ'nin.” “Whoop whoop!” My mother was confused about what was really going on, even though they drove by her recklessly. Who knows what is going to happen next on Quindaro?

The Q always had crime, as if crime was meant to be for Twentieth and Quindaro. “BANG BANG BANG!” “Hit the floor. Hurry, Taleah!”