

dime



the arts & literary journal of
Donnelly College

VOLUME 9, SPRING 2021

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Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award Winners:

Poetry
The Return by Jaretsy Cruz Castaneda

Visual Arts
Mismo Color by Yailyn Flores

Academic Essay
Solitude’s Effect on Mental Health by Arden “Gracie” Meade-Esvang

Creative Nonfiction
The Unwritten Rules of Living in my Mexican Household by Hugo Juarez Avalos

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and the
Sister Mary Faith Schuster Awards

Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award Winner

The Return

Jaretsy Cruz Castaneda

I was raised to remain afloat. It was more of a requirement. I am the oldest, so it made sense. My only job is to stay afloat, to drift away on the boat of life, and prevent others from sinking. Everyone must chip in however they can to keep the rotation of generations moving. I thought I was okay with it. I had to be, right? I am not drowning. I am on a steady stream afloat to reach the shore that will make everything worth it. I will be able to smell the fresh air and touch the stable and eternal ground even if for a moment. Before it's ripped out from underneath. I must return with more than what I was given. I have to, but I'm so tired. Not swimming while slowing watching the boat fill up with years of wind hurling waves wounds. You try and try to look for the source of water seeping into the boat to sink you down with the rest. But then you stop. You look at what's in front. It hurts more than ever. How can I come back to what sunk me down in the first place? Why must I return as a form of obligation to the former space?

I was raised to remain at home. It was more of a rule. I am the oldest, so it was a practicality. My only job is to remain accountable, to draw a life for myself, and prevent my brothers from diminishing. Everyone had to chip in so we could keep the home we built functioning. I thought I was okay with it. I had to be okay with it. But I am on a steady road to reach my dream that will make everything worth it. I will be able to support myself and independently live my life as I choose for a split second. Before I return to what brought me here. I must return with gratitude and assistance. I have to, but I'm so tired. Not living while slowing surviving with years of taps of disapproval fill my head and heart. I try and try to do my best for the source that gave me life and the littles that keep me going. But I had to stop. I had to look around. It hurts more than ever. How could I remain in the space that broke me many of times? Why must I return to the continual tapping of dependency?

Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award Winner

Mismo Color

Yailyn Flores



Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award Winner

Solitude's Effect on Mental Health

Arden "Gracie" Meade-Esvang

The thought of being alone is scary. Many of us would not consider choosing to be alone, but during this Covid-19 pandemic, that choice simply is not ours to make. This pandemic is spreading a sickness, and it is not just the virus. Many people are feeling the impact self-isolation has on our mental health and it makes us wonder why people would even choose to be solitary. There are benefits as well as negative side effects to isolation, whether it is the voluntary kind or not, so striking the right balance between solitary and social life is vital to our mental health.

Solitude, generally, is the state of being alone, but it is one of those words that can take on an array of different possible meanings given its context within a literary work, and with that comes a myriad of connotations, including the predisposed ideas the reader might already carry. In the literal sense, solitude is to be without the other, but implied is the ability to self-reflect, to better oneself in "the arena of self discovery," as Deresiewicz puts it in his 2009 article "The End of Solitude" (8). He describes solitude as a state that brings such benefits as "the propensity for introspection . . . [and] sustained reading" (16), but if solitude apparently makes everyone smarter, then why is it such a foreign concept in today's society?

The advent of the information highway has gifted all of us with the powerful ability to communicate with virtually anyone, anywhere, instantly, but as Deresiewicz argues, "it has quickly become too much of a good thing" (10). This state of hyperconnected every waking moment of our lives has desensitized us to the feeling of being in company. "What does friendship mean when you have 532 'friends'?" (11). It is no wonder that our society fears aloneness: how can we learn to enjoy something if we rarely experience it (12)? Not only is it difficult to find time for self-reflection if we are answering text messages and replying to tweets all the time, but also just the idea of being by oneself is rather intimidating; "it takes a willingness to be unpopular" (21). Spending most of our time socializing leaves us no room to stop and reflect upon the choices we have made and have yet to make. Without moments of self-discovery, our personal identity begins to fade away and we become defined strictly by our public interactions. This does a disservice to the complex subtleties that make up our personalities, neglecting the potential we have for a strong relationship with ourselves.

However, the idea that solitude brings on self-discovery is not quite the complete truth. As Neil Ansell is quoted as saying in Zaria Gorvett's article "How Solitude and

Isolation can Affect your Social Skills,” “When you’re alone, you start to lose your sense of who you are, because you don’t have an image of yourself reflected in the way that other people react to you” (Gorvette). Just like what Deresiewicz said about the internet, too much of a good thing can be a bad thing, and solitude is no exception to this. The size of our brain is actually linked to how many people we can expect to be acquainted with at any given time (Gorvette). “Socializing is like a mental workout,” but if we don’t keep exercising that muscle, the “lack of socialising can make [our brains] shrink” (Gorvette). In 2019, a study was conducted on some Antarctic explorers who had to live in a research station, isolated from society, for 14 months, and MRI scans that were conducted before and after the trip showed that the areas of the brain that dealt with memories had actually gotten smaller (Gorvette). We can only assume that the lockdown is having the same effect on us.

Why are we like this? Why do humans naturally react this way to both solitary and social extremes? While it is possible that self-reflection is unique to humans, the underlying mechanics can be explained by evolution. If we look at other members of the animal kingdom, we can see similar behavior: birds traveling in flocks, fish in schools, and wolves in a pack. Prey traveling in groups have a better chance of surviving potential predators. “To be kept in solitude is to be kept in pain, and put on the road to madness,” says renowned biologist Edward O. Wilson in his 2013 essay “Evolution and Our Inner Conflict.” We have an “overpowering instinctual urge to belong to groups,” and being part of one is a “large part of [our] identity” (Wilson). We define ourselves by who we choose to associate with. Not only do we tend to gravitate towards people with common interests, but people with common beliefs and morals. The primordial survival instinct guiding us is saying that if we have similar goals, we are more likely to accomplish them together. And if someone seems to display goals or morals that conflict with our own, we might subconsciously perceive them as a threat. So being in groups is our natural state, but this does not discredit the value of solitude and reflection.

Few would argue that self-reflection is not useful. Self-reflection is the product of the human ability to comprehend our own mortality in abstract terms, to look at ourselves from the outside in. Thinking about our own demise is almost as scary as the thought of being alone. In this sense, loneliness is the primordial dread that our lives could be in peril, so we had better get with the group before death finds us. This motivating fear is what has pushed humans away from extinction to become the most powerful species on the planet. As Neel Burton puts it in his article “The Joy of Solitude,” loneliness is “the conflict between our desire for meaning and the absence of meaning from the universe.” This explains the religious aspect of solitude and how religious devotees are able to retreat in isolation for long periods of time without feeling lonely; they are content with their perceived meaning of the universe and are not afraid of death. If the thought of their own demise does not shake them, nor would being alone.

If we are able to come to terms with our limited time in this world, then how are we able to use solitude and self-reflection to our advantage? Burton says, “Our unconscious requires solitude to process and unravel problems, so much so that our body imposes it upon us each night in the form of sleep.” While we sleep, our brains process information and rejuvenate, and we can trigger these circumstances by taking a break from the task at hand to just let our brains “reset” as it were, analyzing in the background. When we are in a social setting, our brains cannot do this since all of our energy is being devoted to the situation we are in, which is why it is useful to retreat from the situation, “free[ing] us to reconnect with ourselves, assimilate ideas, and generate identity and meaning” (Burton). It is useful to do this as it serves as “social training” that lets us reemerge with a fresh mindset, making it easier for us to avoid letting our impulsive emotions cloud our vision and thus affect our decision making, as long as we do not retreat for so long as to cause damage to our brains. We should go into solitude with the intention of returning to society in a timely manner.

Unfortunately, retreating from a social situation can sometimes be perceived as rude. The moral implication of solitude is arguably the most controversial aspect of the topic. Choosing to be solitary at certain moments can seem rude since it can come across as choosing oneself over others. If everybody everywhere suddenly decided to fully isolate from society, how could society progress? Christopher W. Tindale, in his timely essay “The Moral Sense in the Time of the Recluse,” argues that in the midst of a crisis such as this global pandemic, there is a social expectancy for altruism. “The professional carer becomes the paradigm of the hero whose daily routine demonstrates the possibility of sacrifice” (Tindale). If our healthcare workers all retreated to a state of solitude during the times in which they are needed the most, that would be considered selfish and harmful; we generally expect others to act for the greater good. And for the general public, the moral priority associated with communal bonds is replaced by the priority of the greater good. “Encouragements to stay home are not framed in a language of morality.

Right actions are appropriate to the occasion, not correct in terms of some moral code” (Tindale). Solitude is not intrinsically good or bad, it depends on the situation. And while this might sound obvious put into simple terms, far too often do we forget to examine how certain circumstances alter our moral judgement, and the Covid-19 pandemic is a prime example of such circumstances.

How do we determine the right balance between socializing and solitude; how do we make sure one does not overtake the other? The right balance would allow both to coexist simultaneously, and the circumstances for that to occur are when they benefit each other. We should socialize to gain the comfort of companionship and to explore others’ ideas of ourselves, and we should find time for solitude so that we may use that information to reflect on our own choices, their implications, and how we can come back to the social settings with new ideas and a better mindset. Socialize for the self and the other, seclude

for the self and the other. By considering how we benefit ourselves and others in every activity, we move toward a healthier state of mind. “This is a time to reflect on those values that guide us, preparing the right arguments for the right moments . . . It weighs on us all that the rhetoric of care should not die with the virus” (Tindale).

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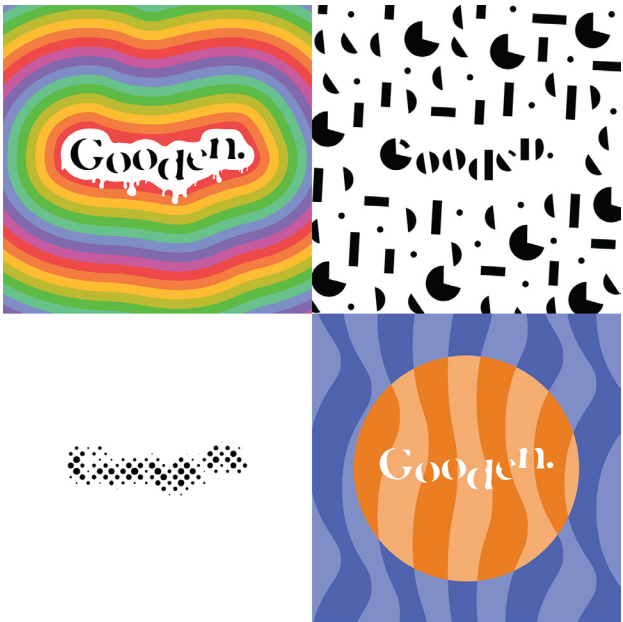
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Gooden.
Arden “Gracie” Meade-Esvang

Sister Mary Faith Schuster Award Winner

The Unwritten Rules of Living in my Mexican Household

Hugo Juarez Avalos

In Mami and Papi's household, it was nearly impossible to do anything with them having rules set out to go against me every which way. If I wanted to go out, I had to be home by 9pm and not a minute late, or else I was going to get a face full of *chancla* (slipper). Or if I really wanted to go out, I had to go through obstacles just to get them both to say yes. There have been countless times where I asked Mami if I could go out and she responded with the *preguntale a tu papa* (go ask your father), and then I would go ask Papi, and he responded with *preguntale a tu mama* (go ask your mother). It almost felt like The World was out to get me. It was an unwinnable cycle.

Rule #1: You must give Mami and Papi two weeks' notice if you wanted to go out! But remember: no always means no!

Growing up Mexican in the United States is exactly like that. I am stuck between two forces that simply do not give me enough. And when they do, they chew me up and spit me out with confusion that does not let me live the life I want. It is all about living in between two worlds. I am Mexican in Mami's and Papi's house, but I am American in The World. If you have ever watched the biopic of Selena, there is a scene where Abraham, Selena's father, says something very memorable that basically explains the story of my life. He says, "We have to be more Mexican than the Mexicans and more American than the Americans, both at the same time!" I didn't realize that until I was a Freshman in high school when I took my first Natives Spanish class and realized how broken my Spanish was in comparison to my Spanish teacher's from Queretaro, Mexico, who spoke perfect Spanish.

I was just a kid. I had the world in my hands. To put it simply, I always played by the rules. I played by what the American society gave me and played by what Mami and Papi gave me. In other words, I wasn't the typical Mexican trope in so many American television shows and Hollywood movies that always used the same stereotypical depictions of Latin American peoples. I wasn't the "Cholo/gangbanger" stereotype, or the "Spicy Latin Lover" that the media loves to put on us, or even the "only Spanish-Speaking person in the room" stereotype. I was simply just me, with the extra flavors of being Mexican and Latino who just so happens to be born and raised in the U.S. I am the first in the family to do what an American citizen can do that my older brother and parents couldn't do... such as voting, having a social security number, and going to college... In other words, I am a first-generation kid. I like to call myself the "awkward Mexican boy" name that stems

off of the idea of not fitting in either side of culture, and instead, settling for the balanced unbalanced of both worlds.

Rule #2: If you're the first to be born with citizenship, you are the backbone of the family.

I was the first one in my family with citizenship so that meant that I was my parents' quickest way for them to get *arreglados* or fixed with citizenship papers. This meant that any kind of trouble was off-limits. My parents are serious when it comes to having their children become successful, especially if one of their kids has citizenship. They wanted us to do well in school and go to college. Which isn't a bad idea. Though, before, when I was able to first explore my identity, I did not have a good balance between the two worlds that I lived in which led to complications where I was upholding an American facade that overpowered my Mexican household to the point where I would lose aspects of my culture. This is why living in-between two worlds became an ice-breaking moment in my life. I couldn't show My World at home to The World, but I also couldn't show The World that I know to my parents. Upholding an image that covered up My World was what kept me in a constant loop of confusion about what my identity was, and it led to the erasure of parts that were once important to me.

I was very close to losing my ability to speak Spanish. Thankfully, I was saved by my Spanish teachers in high school who cared a lot about our ability to speak it. I became very fluent in both Spanish and English... But... please don't make me use words that somehow have one meaning in English, but have another meaning in Spanish... I learned that the hard way when I found out that *embarazada* and "embarrassed" are not interchangeable between the languages...

Rule #3: Don't Speak English in the house or else you get hit with whatever Mami and Papi have in hand. Only Spanish in the house!

If there is one thing about speaking Spanish, it's that it is the gateway to finding out more about the things you did not know about your Mami, Papi, tios, tias, abuelas, abuelos, suegros, suegras, etc., and by "things," I mean gossip. You do something that Mami doesn't like and she tells my Tia Rosi, Tia Chela, my prima Maricela, Abuela, my Sobrino Adolfo, even my nietos know... and they're not even alive yet! But if there is one lesson my parents taught me about speaking Spanish, it is that while they may not be able to authentically teach us everything about our culture, we should never forget our Spanish... This was primarily due to the reason that we live in a country that doesn't have an official language but loves to tell Spanish-speakers to speak English, which only leads to the Americanization of my peoples. And also, because it's part of who we are. We'd be nothing without Spanish. Try telling a story in Spanish to a Latino who speaks only English and they'll think you're crazy.

In my home, words in Spanish were just jumbles of sounds that collectively made words. My parents only taught me how to sound out certain words, but never how to write or read them. I also knew English. English in my home is not spoken as much as Spanish, but it was treated as a tool to get ahead in the United States. I remember so many moments in my childhood when my parents got a letter in the mail from the government, and with my second-grade education, I was expected to translate every word on the pieces of paper... It never ended well...

Learning English was essentially a form of survival in the American world. My mother wanted to learn English as part of launching her career in a cleaning business, but her pride got in the way, and only got to learn the basics. My father learned broken English when he lived in California during his teenage years after moving to the U.S. so that he could get by with other Americans. My older and younger brother learned English simply because that's what the American Education System needed from them.

I learned and perfected my English because I wanted to assimilate to American culture as means of acceptance into The World. But I soon realized that it would disconnect me from My World that I loved. I copied how Americans say certain words to not be made fun of for broken English. I followed the "sounding white" insult that is put on many kids of color who assimilate to American culture. And there were times where I found myself laughing at Mami and Papi when they would say certain words with their broken English.

I had to learn to stay balanced between speaking Spanish and speaking English by understanding that I am not defined by how good I sound, but by appreciating them for being each their own form of communication. I also learned that I was simply projecting my insecurity onto my parents when I would laugh at them for their broken English.

Rule #4: Respect Mami y Papi! Don't you dare talk back to them!

Everything that I learned about my culture was through the mouths of Mami y Papi who were big on storytelling and speaking Spanish in the house. There was always something very captivating about how my parents told stories about their lives before they became who they are now. Not only that, but it is crazy to think that the people who raised me lived a whole other life before they became owners of a cleaning business, had three children, all while living in the heart of Kansas City.

Rule #5: Family is home, and home is family, no matter how many fights we have.

One of the biggest lessons I learned through my parents was that family is home, and home is family. I learned that through many instances in my childhood, sitting on the dining table after a hearty meal where they started reminiscing about their times in Gomez Palacio, a place in Durango, Mexico where both my parents grew up. My father loved

talking about his misadventures when he later immigrated to Los Angeles, California, and my mother would speak about how much she loved listening to my father and his band and living on a ranch as a little girl.

My mother grew up in a traditional household with many sisters. Her father, before he passed away due to heart failure, was a musician, so she was surrounded by the sounds of accordions and guitars that make up what is considered *Norteño*, making her having a keen ear for music. I remember many Saturday mornings where she would blast Jenni Rivera as she cleaned the house from top to bottom.

Rule #6: Saturdays are for cleaning! La Casa must always remain clean! Turn on some music to get you moving!

Music played a huge role in my life. From Selena to Valentín Elizalde, music was a way for us to heal. I was influenced by my parents; taste in music with the sounds of *Norteños*, *Cumbia*, *Rancheras*, *Corridos*, *Banda*, *Tejano*, etc., but with living in Two Worlds, I also loved listening to Hip-Hop, Rap, R&B, Punk-Rock, Pop, etc. From birthday celebrations to having it as background music while cleaning the house, it filled our house up and has created memories that I never want to forget. I remember so many times in elementary when Papi came to pick me up from school and you could hear the *Nortenos* and *Rancheras* being played from a mile away! It has even made its way into the shower where we blast music as a way to let the next-door neighbor know we are showering! Hearing the sounds of accordions and guitars of *Bandas* that my parents loved to the production of many American songs, music made a great way for me to reconnect with my roots and have an appreciation for both the worlds I was living in.

Rule #7: No matter how “not-hungry” you never throw away your food!

I also found that food was another way for me to connect with my cultural roots. Mami's cooking is great, but Papi's is exceptional. Papi grew up with a love for cooking. Whether it is eating what I call “struggle meals” to what he would consider the epitome of exquisite meals: tamales, pozole, and Menudo! Despite his humbling upbringing, he truly was a chef at heart. During his time in California, he worked at many places to earn a quick buck to survive. From being a kitchen crew member at country clubs to working at Chinese restaurants, his love for cooking never went away. This is primarily the reason why I love food because Papi had a good touch when it came to cooking. I knew I was Mexican when Papi told me that *tortillas de maíz* are the equivalent of a fork AND a spoon. And that *salsa* is not a *salsa* if it doesn't sting your tongue off. Ever since then, I knew that every household meal we had should always be accompanied by a handful of warm tortillas fresh off the *comal* and *salsa* that will make you sweat! Papi knew how to make mouthwatering food. I sometimes would prefer it over my mama's cooking (please don't tell her I said this).

Rule #8: Papi may be the one who cooks the best, but Mami is always the one who has the final say!

Mami was a very hardworking woman just like Papi. I grew up in a household where I saw my mother as the head of household. She made anything happen with a snap of a finger. She taught me to respect and self-advocate. Though, both my parents taught me the importance of pushing for the things I want in life, even if it means to be rebellious (I may have made up the rebellious part but considering that they are going against all odds for the life that they deserve, they sure are creating a son who always seeks challenges and improvements). My parents, after twenty plus years of living in the U.S., may have distanced themselves from what they once knew was home, they were able to re-create what they once defined as home here in the U.S. Our house doesn't follow a traditional household, but it follows who we are as a family. I realized that my home is perfect just the way it is.

Rule #9: Siempre sigue adelante, con nuestra ayuda y el favor de Dios (Always keep going, with our help and God's favor)

Despite once feeling a disconnect from my own cultural background, there's something special about the way I live my life in the in-between. I found my way back into My World by reflecting on those memories but feeling confident with The World. I recollected the feelings that I have about being American in the outside world and being Mexican in my parents' home by mixing those terms and creating the culture I want for myself. Living in between two worlds has meddled its way into each other, creating ripples of confusion that I still bear to this day. But regardless, even though the way I carry myself in The World and how My World is special in its own way, I learned that maybe some rules are meant to be broken. I once felt like I was lost in between two worlds that had rules that were meant to be followed or else I'd fail. But it's worth noting that one should master those rules so that they can break them like a pro. Maybe I should not say that I have to break my parents' house rules whom I respect so much, but instead, break the rules that The World has set out to restrict me from my true self, that is where the rules are meant to be broken.



Nobody But Somebody
Keilyn Alvarado-Ortega

Cloudy Days

Keilyn Alvarado-Ortega

Why don't you understand that I miss you?
I reminisce of all the time we spent together
I miss you
Maybe I feel like this because of the rainy weather

They say absence makes the heart grow fonder
It's true
and all this is happening when I'm next to you

I look in the mirror and ask myself
Who are you?
Where are you?
How could it be?

I'm lost looking into the mirror
A never-ending spiral ascends from the eye
I keep convincing myself with lies
Making up excuses in my mind
But are they even valid?

Why don't you understand that I miss you
I reminisce of all the time we spent together
I miss you
Maybe I feel like this because of the rainy weather

But after days and days
When the weather has changed
My feelings stay the same
My heart hurts oh how it hurts
It still hurts
I'll pretend it's all due to rainy weather
I fall in this sweater weather
Tethered to you

Why don't you understand that I miss you
I reminisce of all the time we spent together
I miss you
Maybe I feel like this because of the rainy weather
When will it pass, these clouds that are overhead

To America

Juliet Her

Dear America,

My parents don't often talk about the war. My father was just a baby when he came to you, and my mother, she was born five years after, living her twelve years in Thailand before her family would move to you as well. There were no stories of war they could tell, only ones they learned in your history classes.

But my uncle has a different story. He's the oldest, still in his preteens, when he held my father as a baby and ran for his life. He was in his adolescence when the war happened. My uncle doesn't often tell these stories, but a heavy silence would fall when he does, and people would listen. His voice was always clear and stagnant. His voice never seemed to waver, but his eyes looked glassy. They looked outward as if remembering the bloodshed. He would tell about how they would walk along rainy paths, the storm washing down streams of blood. How they would hide under cold dead bodies to avoid capture, and how they struggled to get past the Mekong River, being lucky enough to buy passage on a raft with the very little money they had left.

"We always had to step over dead bodies." He said, "There were dead people everywhere."

He never seemed affected by these words, but his eyes told a different story. They told the story of war.

You know the events of the Vietnam War. It was a story recorded in your history books; a story taught to your people about the bloodshed and tears. I know there was conflict with the war. Your people had different thoughts on the matter. Whether they should send their loved ones to die to help those overseas. It's a story I know and a story I have learned, but your story is different from mine.

That's because I have learned another story. A story spoken through testament of those who have experienced it, not from your view, but that of my people. The Hmong people.

The Secret War is not known to many, but those who do know engrave it in their hearts and minds. The CIA hired the Hmong people to help the United States' army because of their experience with the Laotian topology and thus, they would become soldiers to aid your people. The Hmong troops fought bravely, protecting the US soldiers from communists, blocking the North Vietnam supply route, and rescuing fallen pilots. Both Hmong and American soldiers fought like brothers on the battlefield, watching each other's back and fighting alongside each other. It was supposed to bring some hope, even

if it was bloody and gruesome.

But after your loss, the CIA left Laos and that so-called brotherhood was quickly demolished. The Hmong soldiers were abandoned and, in the end, suffered heavy casualties fighting in the Secret War. They were left for dead. The only way they could escape was through pure perseverance: traveling through the thick jungle forest in all weathers and hours, hiding under dead bodies to avoid death, and crossing the treacherous Mekong River.

All of this, I would hear in my uncle's stories—his stories of survival. You do not know about the hardships of the Hmong soldiers who were left to die, nor are you aware of the hardships they had to endure during their voyage to reach you, some not even making it to what you call the American dream.

My people's culture, their history, their voice. They bring in a grim reality to my birth and a harder truth that I must swallow. Their stories talk about cost. The cost it took to get here, and the pain they had to endure. America, do you know this story?

Sincerely,

A Grandchild of the Hmong



Students 4 Social Justice

Yazmin Bruno Valdez

Equality - Idea of Hope

Ian Valencia

As a student and an active citizen of my community, I have a strong and well-defined perspective of what equality really means: equal protection under the laws, protection against immigration status discrimination, sexual orientation discrimination, racial discrimination, and educational discrimination. The 14th amendment in our constitution dictates that we all have the right to be treated equally. Nevertheless, several individuals are suffering from discrimination as a consequence of the lack of equality in our society. This situation reminds me of a quote that my government high school teacher used to tell us “the words are powerful on paper, but the struggle to put them into practice has just begun.”

I came to the United States two years ago; I was born in Mexico City. As an immigrant student and an English language learner, I got to know other students who came from Latin American countries. I met my best friend Oscar, a 20-year-old Salvadoran guy. He has been living for four years in the country, and despite his undocumented status, he decided to conclude his High School education. Throughout his four-year High School education, Oscar faced onerous challenges. His father passed away in a work accident; he fell down off a roof. His mother, an aged woman residing in a low-income Salvadoran community, couldn't find a job. This situation forced Oscar to work every weekend on roofing to support his family. When he finally reached his senior year, he acquired good grades. He won a silver medal; an award that is given for academic excellence. His hard work definitely paid off, and he won the Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship. Even though Oscar worked on roofing, his dream was to work as an air conditioner technician. Exhilarated, Oscar applied to different colleges. Nevertheless, he later found out that he couldn't be accepted in any of those colleges. It was a requirement to provide a social security number and a USCIS Number. His immigration status was an impediment to achieve his dream of having a better life through education.

Today, Oscar works on roofing with his grandfather and cousin. He has not forgotten his dream. He still reads books in English. He still likes math, science, and art. A few weeks ago Oscar started a legal process to become a lawful permanent resident alien (A green card holder). He applied for a green card for employment-based immigrants. As stated in the U.S. citizenship and immigration services, the government provides a variety of ways to become a lawful permanent resident through employment. Your eligibility is based on your skills and profession. In the future, the process to obtain a residency might be easier. US President-Elect Joe Biden has the intention to provide a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. He will offer a unique opportunity for people living in the same circumstances as Oscar. As my best friend continues his way to achieve his goals, he hopes to receive one of the most important rights written in the Bill of Rights; “Equality”.

Harvey Milk, an American politician and activist for the gay community, once said that “all young people, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, deserve a safe and supportive environment in which to achieve their full potential”. Marcus, a friend of mine, describes the atmosphere in which he lives as uncomfortable. People around tend to make impolite judgments about him based on his sexual preferences. Marcus is a normal person. I met Marcus at school, he is a good student; he has good grades, and he is always willing to participate in class discussions. He has a job; he works in a restaurant in the afternoons from Monday to Friday. Marcus is fascinated with his job, but sometimes the clients and his co-workers are rude. They discriminate against him. There are several reasons; his flowery face mask, his voice, his attitude, his clothes, etc. Marcus is often a victim of prejudices and homophobic commentaries, even though it is prohibited to discriminate against a person based on his beliefs and preferences. Marcus had a strong desire to address this situation, and he decided to take the first step.

He joined a local LGBT club. This club gives psychological support to its members. They feel free to share their feelings. They interact with each other in a safe environment. Furthermore, They use social networks to connect with the heterosexual community; they post articles, news, and stories about its members. As Marcus defends his identity from intolerant people, he hopes to be treated equally. He hopes to be fully accepted. At the end of the day, Marcus is not different from me or the people who discriminate against him. He is just a person with a different sexual orientation.

Oscar and Marcus have something in common, they want equality. We all have the right to be treated equally and fair treatment, same opportunities, including the right to education and being treated with respect. The government plays a huge role when it comes to terms of equality, but we should remind ourselves that we are responsible for our own actions and the notion of equality starts with our everyday actions; the way we treat people. I hope that people change their perspective on reality by developing a sense of humanity. Eventually, people like Oscar and Marcus will enjoy the most basic social value: “equality”.

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Sparky
Arden “Gracie” Meade-Esvang



Gracie Bell
Arden “Gracie” Meade-Esvang

Feldman's Critique

Yazmin Bruno Valdez



This mural was created by father, daughter duo “Lucky” and Anita Eastwood, and can be seen from 18th St. and Quindaro. This mural was started in response to the Black Lives Matter movement that was sparked after the death of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd earlier this summer. The mural was finished on June 15th, 2020, and is on the street side of Pete’s Barbershop, a Black-owned business in Quindaro. The mural is mostly made up of spray paint and acrylics. This mural takes up an entire side of a building and is a pretty prominent size.

The mural is a landscape of a little Black boy on one knee writing with chalk on the floor. There are floating words on top of the boy that says “I will...” and in colorful chalk that the boy seems to be writing with it reads “INSPIRE”, “BREATHE”, “grow”, “LEARN”. To the right where his shadow is showing you can see his shadow is not normal as it seems that he is wearing a graduation cap despite him being in normal attire. He is wearing a white tank top and black jeans with Nike shoes. In the middle of the mural, you can see the iconic “Black Lives Matter” letter abbreviation. The artists that created this mural are a Black father and daughter that hoped to bring inspiration to the Black children of Quindaro and create awareness.

The tone of this painting is very inspiring while at the same time it evokes deep emotions that come along when thinking about the inequalities Black people face daily. The artists developed a sense of unity with all the components they included in the mural and even though it is a simple concept they added so much depth by adding in words that were used for the movement. The mural brings about a sense of lack of movement

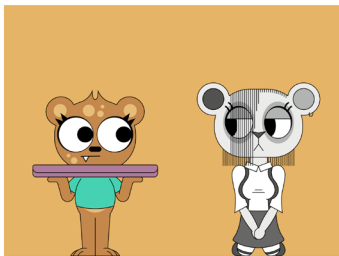
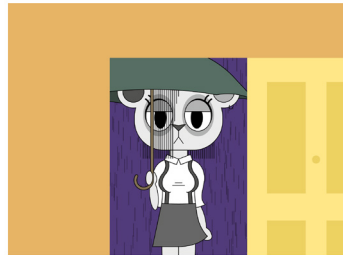
with the position that the child is in. The artists did this in a very intentional way. We all have seen the video of George Floyd being suffocated by the police officer and how he was just on one knee not moving, completely still while Floyd was gasping for air. We also have all seen Colin Kapernick taking a knee in a sign of a peaceful protest during his football games, completely still and calm. The same can be found in the mural, with the child kneeling, writing with his chalk but doing so in a way that brings about resilience. The focus of this mural is the literal message of Black children growing up to inspire, breathe, learn, and grow. That is why the artists chose to use chalk colors that would stand out and left everything else in the mural more dull focusing on using a more gray color palette. That of course also creates contrast, as the artist chose to do this with bright red, blue, green, and pink to bring about a higher concentration on the words surrounding the child. In the mural there is a clear usage of texture, and value. There is a clear emphasis in texture on the boy's white tank top as you can see the scrunched up shirt since he is kneeling. Value can be displayed in the way that the artists chose to include the child's shadow. The shadow is subtle and sticks to the gray color palette the artists chose for the background. It is a meaningful detail to see that the shadow tells a story of the importance of education with the graduation cap.

The mural is a piece that focused on bringing a message that was universal and that touched not only the Black community but the general population. Someone like myself who is not Black can see the mural and see how important it is to encourage young children of color to pursue their dreams and support a movement that believes in the equality of all humans. While a Black child can see this mural and see inspiration that is different from all the other media they may consume that tells them Black skin is a crime. The symbolism in this mural is very apparent; the message is clear, Black Lives Matter. This piece seems to be a very personal piece as it was created by a Black man and a Black woman who wanted to bring inspiration to the youth and hope to their community.

I saw this mural for the first time driving home from one of my runs, and it brought me to tears. Unlike other murals around KCK, which there are a lot, this mural calls for social justice. The mural, for example, in Rosedale that tells the story of their community and important members of Rosedale, was made to celebrate that specific part of the city. This mural however, could have been placed anywhere in the United States and heavily inspired and touched the people who saw it. The usage of storytelling and the symbolism that can be found in this artwork is so intricate and admirable. This mural to me means so much to me because of the message it brings to the Quindaro community. The mural is literally up the street from Carl B Bruce middle school, the former Northwest middle school. That means that whenever children will ride the bus to school in the morning they will see that they are capable of doing so much more than what society expects from them; that the burden of racism will not win in the end because their community stands strongly behind them. This mural brings about a positive change and influence to not only our Quindaro community but Kansas City, Kansas as a whole.



Worn Out
Hugo Juarez Avalos



First Date
Arden "Gracie" Meade-Esvang

As My World Keeps Turning

Antonio Betts

Today, blacks say, the standards for blackness are even more irregular than during the civil rights movement, when commitment to the cause was the primary yardstick. "Every oppressed community, or any community that thinks of itself as a community, has drawn lines and says certain behavior puts you outside the community," said Roger Wilkins, professor of history at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. "For black Americans who live in a society where racism exists, it is legitimate to set parameters. In arguing how best we struggle, there is some political and intellectual behavior in which you engage that keeps you from being a black person." Divisions After Desegregation. Lifestyle is also a distinguishing factor. What marginal degree of upward mobility some blacks have experienced in the post-segregation era has segregated them from blacks who are poor, undereducated and living in inadequate housing.

What defines me is as a black man living in America I experience what it is like to be a African American male in this society. I can say that there is a disadvantage for me and those before me and those after me as well for that matter can probably say verbatim is the same thing I also experienced. I'm not going to lie and say it was a great deal at least. I'm the son of Merlia Betts and William Franklin Betts Jr. I experienced a childhood that I was normal, but was it normal?

I grew up fatherless in my life and on top of that he passed away when I was 13 years young and that is the one thing missing from my life, I never got the chance to ask why he stayed away from me or what happened between my mother and him. You grew up knowing your father so why didn't I get to experience what a lot of my friends got to experience as their father being at home with them when they needed it? Then on top of that, I met my brother in the 6th grade at summer school, two younger sisters 2 years ago, so even today I'm finding out who you are.

Living a better life alongside my fiance became even more important how I live it as well. I have so many questions I would have loved to ask him but I can't physically, I just pray to the Most High to continue to keep my mind wise and keep guiding me.

My work ethics come from my mother, I watched her countless times working overtime to make ends meet, just to make it in those times wasn't hard but it wasn't easy either and the reaction she got from other co-workers and patients as well definitely help me understand why I work the way I do no matter the task, I give it my all. So I can say that is what makes part of me. The rest came through trial and error and now at 42 years young, I can definitely see where I made mistakes coming up is what makes me in today's time.

But in between the time of childhood and as an adult today there was a period of time in which we may call Generation X, but for me, we called it the Golden era or simply the 90's. What was African American culture like in the 1990's? Let us begin with 1990 of course and I'm eleven years old, heavy into Nintendo video games with friends of mine, bike riding and getting ready for Junior High. African Americans became more and more free and accepted as the 90's came along.

My Grandfather was a very important person in my life cause he was a revolutionary from the 60's and from Arlington, Texas. He used to tell me to read up on Stokely Carmichael and Malcom X to helped me see things more clearly as I got older and to study them as well as he did, because in his eyes Carmichael who was a branch off Martin Luther King Jr. tree should have been the leader of the Civil Rights Movement because of his resistance toward white america and fought back. My Grandfather told me once I read those books I would get an idea of what is going on a far as how African Americans are being treated in America and he also would tell me stories how blacks couldn't cross Troost Ave to go over to the westside and other parts of the city that was cut-off from blacks.

He also told me about JC Nichols and how he kept blacks from renting any homes or apartments and that is just a little bit of racism in Kansas City and as I got older I started to see what I was blinded by as a child because as a kid I did not understand it at that time is why I am at times for me because I know what I know now I wished a million times I could do it over but that is something I'll just have to learn to live with.

By the 1980s and 90s, hip hop culture had become infused in black youth culture. Chuck D, of Public Enemy once claimed that rap music was black youth's CNN. This study places black youth politics within the context of broader U.S. and African American politics, centering the political imagery of black youth and how they expressed themselves in the area of culture. Black youth expressed and represented their political imaginary in music, film, and clothing on various such issues, such as apartheid, mass incarceration, and police brutality. Even though the civil rights movement awarded some societal privileges to African Americans, it is shown through black youth hip-hop culture that discrimination and violence against black people continued.

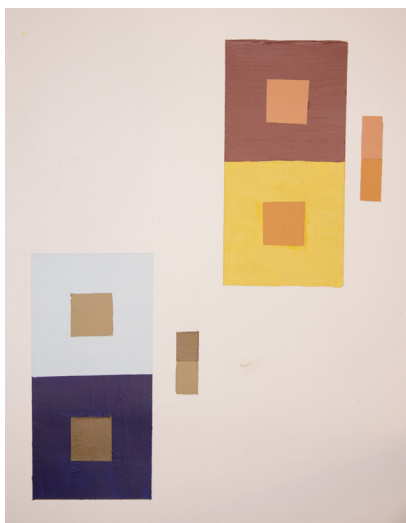
African American culture at that time despite the technological advances that gave us widespread personal cell phone usage, the internet, email and the dotcom boom, the '90s got off to a rough start for the nearly 30 million Blacks in America, particularly for those who lived in South Central Los Angeles.

Three days into March 1991, one of the most savage beatings ever caught on camera was broadcast on air and online. Unarmed Black motorist, Rodney King, was pulled over by police, ordered out of his car and beaten by multiple officers as others stood by watching. A bystander filmed the encounter and submitted it to local news stations.

Viewers were shocked and appalled at the brutality of LAPD officers. After those who stood trial for King's attack were acquitted just over a year later, South Central erupted into riots that lasted five days. Race relations collapsed. Thousands were left demoralized and wondering what would happen next.

Congress would pass the Civil Rights Act of 1991 and the Hate Crime Enhancement Act of 1994. James Byrd Jr. would be dragged to death by White supremacist thugs in Texas. Washington, D.C., would see its first African-American female mayor, while Kansas City, Missouri; Memphis, Tennessee; Denver; Houston; St. Louis; Dallas; and Jackson, Mississippi, would all break the color barrier for the first time in their respective mayoral elections. Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois would become the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate. Dr. Mae Jamison would become the first African-American woman in space aboard the shuttle Endeavor. Tiger Woods would become the youngest person and the first African-American to win the Masters Tournament in Augusta, Georgia. Black churches all over the South would be mysteriously torched and no one arrested for the crimes.

The 90's for me was great, despite the bad. I bestowed onto myself was just fun for me but at same time I now see where I could have made better decisions for better outcomes for my future. I look forward to conversations with him growing up in this new world and man he has any idea of what is to come into his life I want to be there to advise him to become wiser than smarter not saying being smarter is not great, but at one time in my life I had an older man tell me it is better to be wise than to smart. I know what he meant by that now.



No es lo que parece
Yailyn Flores

La Luz de la Noche

Angel Hernandez

Los muertos disfrutan de la vida
Mientras que los vivos le temen a la muerte
Algunos dicen que por la bebida
Pero algunos tienen poca suerte.
Las calaveras salen disfrazadas,
Las brujas todas bien bañadas,
Porque saben que en estas fiestas,
Todas están puestas para la orquesta.
Yo estaba tranquilo,
Tomando, bailando, y disfrutando
Cuando volteo y con la luz de la luna,
Veo tu hermosa sonrisa.

Mi corazón se agita,
Mi corazón palpita,
Si de verdad pudiera te llamaba Afrodita.
Renazco con tu amor,
Y ni siquiera el sol,
Tiene tanta suerte de estar en tu calor
Eres un tesoro,
Creado por un dios,
La fruta prohibida, una tentación
Figura divina, sonrisa que ilumina
Voy a ser tu Ángel, te lo digo en esta rima.



Can I Keep Her?

Arden "Gracie" Meade-Esvang

God's Got This!

Patricia Madison

I go to God when I'm feeling sad and blue.
Yes, that's exactly what I do!
COVID has us all so alarmed,
and it's brought to us so much poverty and
harm. No matter which way I turn,
To the left,
 To the right,
It seems to be right there.
There are so many reminders of it
everywhere!
So, when I get discouraged,
and I feel so all alone,
Yes, so very alone...
I go to Him,
Because He's so strong.
He gives me strength each and every day,
and there's so much more that I could say!
He is my rock!
I will not stop!
Yes, God is in control!



Pacapillar

Arden "Gracie" Meade-Esvang

Why Bother?

A Reflection

Hugo Juarez Avalos

Understanding individual responsibility to our planet has never been a concern for me in the past up until now. After doing extensive research and consulting many sources over environmental ethics, I have realized how important it is for us humans to start taking action now than ever before. When I think about the terms “environmental ethics” and “sustainable solutions,” they remind me of the ineffective methods of conserving our planet that is doing more harm than good. Simple solutions like “changing our light bulbs to energy-saving light bulbs,” or “going green,” are band-aid solutions over deep wounds that do not address the underlying issues of climate change and instead, comfort our egos that contribute to the negative effects of capitalism. We must abolish those mindsets for actual effective methodologies to continue the conservation of our planet.

With that, Michael Pollan puts it best when referring to the tendencies that make us think we are helping the planet, but in reality, we are not when he calls them “cheap energy minds.” Cheap energy minds are mindsets in denial that think their small contributions are enough to help the planet. After learning about how much work we need to do to conserve this planet, I no longer have a “cheap energy mind.” In the past, I thought that just recycling, using less water, and not a lot of electricity would help. I now know that they are only effective to a small extent. Industries that specialize in manufacturing goods are large contributors to climate change and do not consider strong methods and instead follow an endless cycle that Project Drawdown puts it best: “Take, Make, Use, Trash.” This cycle perpetuates the destructive nature of capitalism where it doesn’t consider methods in the conservation of the planet.

Although many have recognized the issue of climate change and that we must maintain the environment, one thing that we forget to consider is the implementation of actual effective methodologies, and instead opt for “cheap energy,” as Michael Pollan says, that keeps the negative cycle going. Even if we, as individuals, implement more sustainable methods into our daily lives, such as starting gardens in our backyards, using compost, or having a plant-based diet, we must find bigger ways to dismantle capitalism as a whole. In my opinion, stricter laws and regulations should be put forth towards large companies and industries that hold the most responsibility in creating the issues we have that pertain to environmentalism. Sandra Steingraber would say that the antidote to despair and inaction is action, in which I agree to a full extent. While we can implement as many small solutions into our lives as we’d like, the biggest action we must take to remove a lot of the environmental issues we are experiencing is through dismantling capitalism. We must favor a society that promotes effective methodologies that still benefit our society, but keeping the planet safe and sustainable.

I am Sua Luna/Yo Soy Sua Luna

Sonia Ruelas

Yo soy Sua Luna

nací pensando que en la tierra en la que nací siempre estare ahí

I am Sua Luna

born thinking that in the land I was born I will forever be there

Estoy atrapada en un enredo con los que les llamamos gringos

I'm trapped in a tangle with what we call gringos

I am American

Desde niña aprendí dos lenguas

Since I was a little girl I learned 2 languages

My parents made sure I spoke English so I can pledge every morning in school

have that choice to watch pbs kids or el chavo on the weekends

Mi identidad centered on I am American

Being placed in a bilingual classes because of not being able to pronounce words like my teacher

Being questioned where are you from?

I didn't look like the blond haired girls in my school

Even though I was born in the United States

I felt like I had more in common with my cousin in Coahuila Mexico

Yo Soy Sua Luna

Mis papas llegaron a los Estados Unidos con mentalidad que yo viviera el sueño

Americano

My parents migrated to the United states with the mentality to live the American dream

Mis papas ganaron y perdieron

My parents have lost and gained

More opportunities to live.. la tradición a muerte (the tradition has died)

Qué es lo que es vivir en América?

What is it to live in America?

Yo Soy Sua Luan

(I am Sua Luna)

The calendar marks December 12

Normal day in America, pero en Mexico (but in mexico)..

You would hear loud drums playing, beads hitting with the rhythm

Look out the window

A group of people dancing around in a single line

Dressed in beautiful colorful feathers

Sing along in the background

En el cielo una hermosa mañana La Guadalupana

Live in reality

My calendar marks December 12
A normal day like any other day
I am Sua Luna
My blood marks three colors Verde blanco y Rojo
Mi llanto es el de la águila (my chant is of an eagle)
My flag of the land I live in
Red and white strips with blue and white stars
Yo Soy Sua Luna
My parents thinking if they did me good or wrong
I am Sua Luna
I am a daughter of Immigrants
Representing the phrase Ni de aqui ni de aya (not from here, not from there)
I was born in the United States
I never felt persecuted or in danger because of my American birth certificate.
Pero vivir con miedo (but to live with fear)
Knowing one day my parents could be ripped from my side
The fearful word deported
I am Sua Luna
I am one of the bean
Sangre Mexicana viviendo en los Estados Unidos(Mexican blood living in the United States)



Gooden Street
Arden “Gracie” Meade-Esvang



Beginning
Yailyn Flores

The Fighter

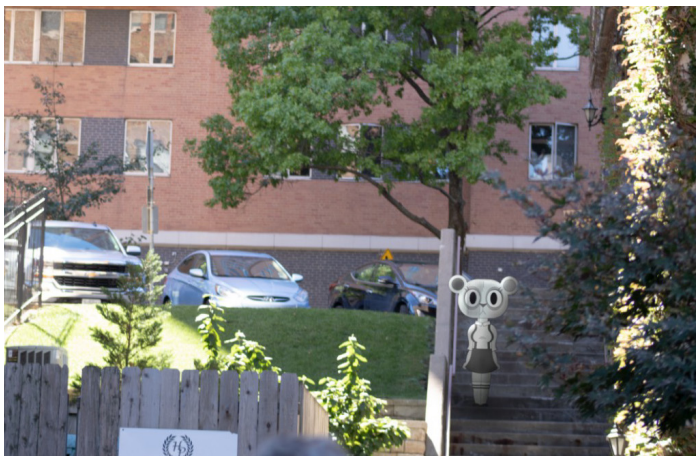
Danny Zavala

When I used to be in weights class, we used to work every part of our body, lifting all kinds of things. It was an amazing class and I enjoyed every bit of it, helping me become a stronger and more confident person. But about twice a semester, we'd do what's called "max week" which meant we'd max out that entire week and tried to beat our personal record. While a fun experience, it was quite possibly one of the most stressful weeks of my life, mostly for the fear that I was going to disappoint myself. I've been a skinny person all my life, it's something that has been my biggest insecurity and something I'm ashamed of honestly. All my uncles would tell me to eat more or lift more weights, but they couldn't understand that I did all those things, it's that my body has a harder time gaining mass due to my fast metabolism. So, when I joined weights class, I joined with the intention of proving them wrong and bettering myself. Throughout the whole class I would do well, surpassing my expectations and even surprising my friends. When it came to max week, it's when all my stress, anxiety, and fear would kick in. I would stress because I feared I wouldn't be able to reach my goal or even get close to it. My anxiety would kick in because I feared embarrassing myself in front of everyone. And my fear would kick in because I was afraid of hurting myself, hurting my back or neck. There's one particular exercise that really got to me and that was the hang clean, it's where you throw yourself upwards with the bar and catch the bar near your shoulders with your wrists bent. I've injured myself with this exercise in the past, I injured my wrists extremely badly. I caught the bar wrong and my wrists bent really far backwards and messed them up terribly. It came to a point where I couldn't move them for a month, for the pain was too intense. So, when it came time to max out in the hang clean, I was so nervous that I'd wait until everybody had gone to go try. When it inevitably came time for it to be my turn, I went to go to the bathroom quickly to catch my breath and give myself a little pep talk. My whole life I've been bullied, mocked, and taunted for being who I am and over things I simply have no control over. I've suffered from deep depression because of the same distress, the self-image in my head is an image filled with nothing but negative thoughts. For so long I've been told to look a certain way but it's hard, it's difficult to achieve such alterations to my body that I end up blaming myself for not trying hard enough. When it came time to go lift, my heart was racing, my eyes were sweaty, and my breathing became irregular. It felt like a movie, one of those Rocky movies, where Rocky is about to give up but then stands back up on his feet and wins the fight. For what seemed like a whole hour but turned out to be just 20 seconds, I became Rocky. A lot of times the most draining part of a workout isn't the workout itself but the mental state one is in before doing the workout. The whole week I've been stressing about not being able to live up to everyone's expectations, that I forgot to acknowledge how far I've come. Over the course of several months my strength has increased and my endurance has risen. So, when it came time to max out and prove to myself once and for all that I have gotten stronger, when I blinked, the bar was near my shoulders feeling almost weightless. Turns out I had underestimated myself, the coach

ended up telling me to go up by twenty more pounds! My brain the entire time has been tricking me into believing I was weak and fragile like a glass of wine. Ever since then, max week has become one of my favorite weeks in weights class, it was the first time in a while where I felt excited to be showing off my abilities. For what really helped me was breathing right and believing in myself. For there are situations in one's life that no one will be able to help out and the only other person there with them is their self. For the mind is either one's greatest enemy or their best friend.

Ironically, the biggest weight I had to carry to get to where I am now is the weight of my own self-hatred. Days were spent where I didn't feel good enough, that everything would be so much easier to just give up. The corner of my bed became my best friend and the darkness that gloomed over me became my new blanket. The voice in my head telling me to quit got louder and louder, I wish it would just go away but it only grew louder. I'd close my eyes before passing any mirror as I knew that looking at myself, I'd see all the imperfections, the flaws, a loser, a failure, the person my uncles would see. I would hold in my tears in fear of not being "man enough" when asked if I was fine, the answer would be yes. Giving up seemed so easy to do, who will stop me? Who's going to be the one to tell me I'm worth it? That I can do this and that it's not all too bad. Who would be there to turn on my lights when the world seemed so dark? No one. Only me. It sucked to say but it was true, I was the only one who would be able help me get back up. It would hurt, every step taken to get closer to my goal would hurt so much. I wanted to give up, but I knew I had to keep pushing, keep moving forward, keep fighting but most importantly, never give up. The nights spent contemplating my self worth, all the memories of being told I wasn't worth it, my own self-doubt, I was tired of it. Time to show them a new me, show them how great I am, show them that they were wrong.

The biggest thing I had to do to accomplish this was believing in myself, talking to myself and reassuring myself. When it comes to challenges like these, no one else is going to help lift that bar for me, no, it's just me. A moment of truth to see if all the hard work I've put in will pay off. Everything, everyone who's doubted me was on the line, it put my mind into a spiral. As mentioned, my love for Rocky movies goes beyond comprehension, but when I see him, I see a coach that's been there for me when I most needed him. In the film Rocky Balboa, Rocky tells his son, Rocky Balboa Jr., "Let me tell you something you already know. The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place and I don't care how tough you are it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it. You, me, or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done!" (Rocky Balboa 2006) Since first hearing that, I've been living by that quote. I realize that in order to get anywhere in life, accomplish anything big or small, I must believe in myself. For there will be days where I'll be alone with no one to help me, so it's crucial I can pick myself up. For the insecurities that used to haunt me is now my driving factor to get better and do better.



Staring
Arden “Gracie” Meade-Esvang



Celty Hare
Arden “Gracie” Meade-Esvang

The Road Ahead

Sunita Kalikote

A young man walks through what was once a meadow, he has walked this path many times for the same reason each time. It is the only water source within a 20-mile radius, and although the water is long since contaminated, it is the only source of drinking water he can come across for himself and his family. He knows the routine as he approaches the still, murky, yellow water. He makes sure not to get any of the water on any exposed skin, as well as keeping a vigilant eye on the area around him to make sure no one is trying to make an easy mark of him. The resource wars have completely dismantled most government's around the world, and South America has not been spared.

He hastily fills the jugs of water, once they are full, he surveys the perimeter of the lake and takes a long look at the factory that lies upon the hill. "Damn factories like that are what destroyed this world", his father's voice echoes through his head, a feeling of sadness washes over him. His father had been right, big corporations and giant industries had destroyed this world. It pains him to remember his father, but it had been many years ago since cancer destroyed his lungs. Holding him in his final moments as he violently choked on his blood was something, not even the strongest liquor could help him forget, but he was a man now he had to provide for his family.

This bleak story is something that seems purely fictional to some, to others it's a story of a not so distant future, and the subject we all keep sweeping under the rug is climate change. As Rachel Carson stated in "A Fable for Tomorrow", "We don't nurture nature like we are supposed to." We blindly use crude oil, dump biochemical waste into freshwater sources, pollute the air at such a rate that it is changing the climate of our planet. Some might argue that those alive today will never see such a bleak future, so why should we care? Those are the same people who think recycling helps. In some cases, ignorance is bliss, this is not one such case.

Some may argue that they recycle and try to live "green" lives. However, this equates to putting a bandage onto a broken arm. You cannot expect to combat a huge crisis with very simple and small things, even if the whole world were to do the most basic things to combat climate change it would not be enough to reverse the damage done. As Derrick Jensen, and Stephanie McMillian listed off in their book "As the World Burns: 50 Things You Can Do to Stay in Denial" small simple things are not the solution. To think simply doing something such as recycling to help is almost as bad as being oblivious to the problem. Recycling aluminum cans, for instance, you might think would be an effective way for you to fight climate change, but it is not. The factories to reproduce and redistribute these cans are damaging the climate, even more, the second time. Each can take the same amount of fuel, toxic gases, and other natural resources to make

the second time. So, if recycling won't help, changing a few lightbulbs won't help, and planting a couple of plants won't help, what actually will help you may be wondering?

We need worldwide awareness of the subject; climate change affects the entire world and all generations to come. Sadly, not every country is enlightened like the United States of America. Some countries still do not even consider women as their equals, and this backward way of thinking is only helping to create an inevitable disastrous future. For example, Nepal uses menstruation huts. These huts are for women who are on their periods, they force the woman out of their homes into these huts in this barbaric tradition. How can we expect people like us to understand the magnitude of climate change?

We need our governments to step up. The people we put into power to step up and stand up for what every logical, reasonable person is thinking. We all share this earth, and together our future generations can share it without the harsh reality of a disastrous future as the story at the beginning of the essay foretells. So how can we help? How could the few of us willing to stand up to this crisis manage to absolve all the wrongdoing? We can spread awareness to those who are ignorant of it, we can petition to make this subject a matter of worldwide concern. We must unite no matter what country and ethnicity to meet this giant foe. We must educate more people on this subject and use this knowledge to stop big corporations from destroying ecosystems and dumping toxic wastes into our world's water sources.

The journal of Environmental health states that many third world countries are starving due to overgrazing and erosion. Furthermore, about 1/3 of the world's population is without safe drinking water, this will only continue to increase as the rising demand for energy to fuel economic development rapidly increases.

Our world leaders must stop the massive and agitated uses of our world's natural resources to make any significant difference. Unfortunately, this decision is up to those who seem to not care whether we will have resource wars and have no safe water to drink in the next 100 years or not. We must step up and make them understand that we the people have had enough of big corporations destroying our precious planet. We must take action and show facts to the government that makes this crisis completely aware of the world.

As from "A Fable for Tomorrow" another thing killing people and ecosystems is man-made chemicals such as pesticides, along with greenhouse gasses caused by fertilizers used extremely commonly by most farmers around the world. Cutting down the meat industry could very well cut a chunk out of climate change. Growing crops without chemical pesticides and greenhouse causing fertilizers could help to knock out the food industries part of climate change, as well as more people making a change to the less meat-based diet.

The reliance on beef and poultry market is harming the ecosystem vastly, 26 percent of the ice-free land on the planet is occupied by cattle if we could cut down on the heavy reliance of cattle-based food markets we could use more of that land for nature and reserves. This would greatly reduce carbon emissions and also reduce nitrogen-based fertilizer. Sadly, out of most articles only about 2.4 percent address the roles of food on climate change, and with that said greenhouse emissions make up for 1/3 of global warming. As stated in the "The Climate Crisis at the End of Our Fork" if no solution is found by 2080 New York could very well feel like Georgia.

According to this website, climate change communication 54% of the United States general population acknowledge the crisis of climate change, meaning 46% of the United States general population are unaware. That means we are not educating enough people on this very important subject. How can we educate more people on this? By making the topic more important, by having more awareness in the media. Scientists everywhere are trying to warn us of the impending demise we are causing upon us. Yet local governments just blow it off as people making a mountain out of an anthill.

That's we need to work harder and spread awareness, such as COVID-19, we must address this very seriously and action must be taken, even in our own homes. Planting a garden, taking a bus to work, not buying meat-based products or dairy, all these things even small can help, and they can help even further if you try to educate others in your community on the matter. You can lead by example and have others who do the same, these small victories can lead to more awareness and eventually a solution.

The more people that are aware of the problem, the more people will try to come up with a solution. If everyone becomes more aware and alert to the problem, we can take the problem to the government and show them this is not something people are taking lightly, this a real problem that must have a solution. Our future generation does not deserve to have to live in a world we have destroyed, entire species have gone extinct many times over due to our over expansion and industrialization; entire ecosystems wiped out from our hunger and greed of natural resources. Think, there is a limited supply, how long until it runs out?

We must continue to further educate people on this matter, especially those in third world countries. Women in third world countries especially are not educated enough on the matters of climate change. The "Health and Education" article speaks about how educating women would substantially help climate change, not only could it decrease emissions by 51.48 gigatons, it would also decrease STDs, and unwanted pregnancies, also vastly increasing the minimum wage for women. Educating women in third world countries can help developing countries to develop further by increasing civil rights and public awareness.

The concern of climate change has concrete evidence behind it, it is not a theory. In this essay, I have provided many reasons and research about the ongoing crisis. However, many who read this may think that this doesn't apply to them. Yet it does, it is the responsibility of everyone aware of it, and it is our responsibility to inform those who are not aware of it. We must unite together to inform others and to create projects to innovate a common goal of raising awareness and conquering the problem of climate change, we must get our leaders to pursue more greener energy and to let our natural resources replenish before there is none left.

My dear reader, I challenge you. I challenge you to write an article about your thoughts and opinions on climate change, I challenge you to plant a garden, to start a petition on the use of pesticides and greenhouse fertilizers. We are all just temporarily living on this beautiful planet, and if we don't stand up to save it, our beautiful planet will be destroyed along with all the beautiful creatures on it. Try yourself to go green, make a garden, plant a tree, go vegan, and inform others of this crisis.

It is our job to do something about this, because if we don't who will? Do you want to have any responsibility for making this planet adjacent to the story in the beginning? Will you stand idly by and let governments and big corporations destroy our planet? I would certainly hope not. We are stronger together, united we stand, divided we fall. Are you up for the challenge? If you are well or wealthier you can take it upon yourself to help enlighten other countries about this crisis, and as well as teaching them better ways of farming and education, ways to teach them to stop overgrazing, and stop the use of greenhouse emissions.

Any of us that can petition to our government about the problem of global warming and climate change, make our voices loud and our actions just. If we stand together in unison and enough of us do we will see a change, we cannot be scared to take action or our time will be up and the crisis will reach its climax, and by then when the governments of the world begin to take the subject seriously it will be too late for mother earth.

Before it is too late, spread awareness, teach those who are ignorant of the problem. Take this to heart and try to make a change of lifestyle for the betterment of mankind and the earth. Care for those around you and reach out and influence people to make changes in their daily lifestyles as well. Even if our actions are not enough at least we can try, because giving up means we have truly lost.

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Planet Not Plastic
Yazmin Bruno Valdez

A Tradition Runs In My Veins

Angel Hernandez

“Mexico Lindo y Querido” A phrase that I’ve been hearing since I was born. I come from Mexico, a country full of riches, flavors, music, traditions, and more. I lived there for 11 years of my life, and throughout that time, I was taught many different stories and traditions, passed on by generations. All tough there are many, there is one tradition that always brings joy and hope to my life. Día de los Muertos (Day of the Death) is a tradition that comes from many many years ago. Its origin dates back to the Mesoamerican cultures that inhabited the Mexican territory before the arrival of the Spanish, such as the Mexica, Mayan, Mixtec, Texcocana, Zapotec, Tlaxcala and Totonaca ethnic groups. Originally, according to the Mixtec calendar, it was celebrated during the ninth month of the solar year.

The Day of the Dead in the indigenous vision implies the temporary return of the souls of the deceased, who return home, to the world of the living, to live with their families and to nourish themselves with the essence of the food that is offered to them on the altars placed in their honor. Personally, in this celebration, death does not represent an absence of life but a living presence in fact; death is a symbol of life that materializes on the altar offered. In this sense, it is a celebration that carries great popular significance since it includes various meanings, from philosophical to material.



Every year many families place offerings and altars decorated with cempasúchil flowers, papel picado, sugar skulls, pan de muerto, mole or some dish that their relatives liked to whom the offering is dedicated, and as in pre-Hispanic times, Incense is placed to aromatize the place. Likewise, the festivities include decorating the graves with flowers and many times making altars on the tombstones, which in indigenous times had great

significance because it was thought that it helped lead the souls to travel on a good path after death. Tradition also indicates that, to facilitate the return of souls to earth, marigold flower petals should be spread and candles placed tracing the path that they will travel so that these souls do not get lost and reach their destination. In ancient times, this path led from the family home to the pantheon where their loved ones rested.

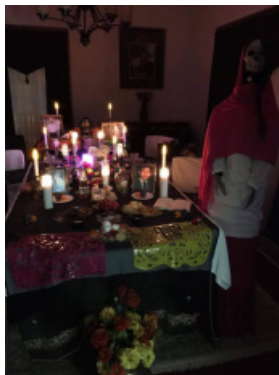


The main thing I always enjoyed about this is that foreigners see it as a celebration, yet they do not understand the meaning of it. We as Mexicans embrace death because inside of us you know that even if we are afraid to die, we know that this will happen one day and it's exactly why we enjoy life with the knowledge of what some day we will not be able to anymore, apart from the fact that we remember our ancestors. We don't celebrate death, we celebrate the fact that our family comes back to see us after so long. The reason why we dress and put on makeup is so the ones who passed away aren't afraid of us. I remember my grandma telling me I needed to choose my outfit because my grandfather was going to come visit us. I dressed as a pumpkin that year, and we bought food, drinks that he loved when alive, including tequila and clamato, got cigarettes and bread so we could "taste" it one more time.





I continued dressing every year. We would go to the mercados and find everything we need for those three nights. It all starts October 28th. The very first candle is turned on and we also put a white flower, which receives the lonely souls. We keep getting everything prepared. October 29th, the second candle is turned on and now we put glasses of water, for the souls that were forgotten. October 30th comes and we all have to prepare to start giving kids candy, scaring them and giving them a reason to come back dressed next year. Apart from the ofrenda, we also put decorations all over the place, making it look spooky. A new candle is turned on, another glass of water is put, and now white bread is added for the souls that left without eating, or the ones who had an accident. October 31st more kids come, more candy is bought, and more things are added of course. A new candle, more water, more bread, and now we add fruit. This is to receive our ancestors. Finally November comes. November 1st is one of the craziest days to give candy, and it's also one of the most special days during this time. This is the day that all the souls who died when they were still kids come, so we put all the food on the altar now. We're celebrating that the whole family is here. November 2nd is a day that we celebrate for the adults that we miss. These souls come to see the altars that we created, taste the food and drinks that we gave them, and spend time with us. We also create the path so they know where to go once they get to our house. Finally, November 3rd is the goodbye. We turn on one last candle, and we say goodbye to the souls and we ask them to come back next year again.



Next, these are some famous poems in Spanish about Day of the Death and also a poem I wrote myself to celebrate this beautiful festivity. These poems are really special in Mexico because they have an energy that brings back memories and sends chills down the spine of whoever that reads them.

Poesías de Otro Mundo

En los Ojos Abiertos de los Muertos

Jaime Sabines

En los ojos abiertos de los muertos
¡qué fulgor extraño, qué humedad ligera!
Tapiz de aire en la pupila inmóvil,
velo de sombra, luz tierna.
En los ojos de los amantes muertos
el amor vela.
Los ojos son como una puerta
infranqueable, codiciada, entreabierta.
¿Por qué la muerte prolonga a los amantes,
los encierra en un mutismo como de tierra?
¿Qué es el misterio de esa luz que llora
en el agua del ojo, en esa enferma
superficie de vidrio que tiembla?
Ángeles custodios les recogen la cabeza.
Murieron en su mirada,
murieron de sus propias venas.
Los ojos parecen piedras
dejadas en el rostro por una mano ciega.
El misterio los lleva.
¡Qué magia, que dulzura
en el sarcófago de aire que los encierra

Talpa (Fragmento)

Juan Rulfo

Algún día llegará la noche.
En eso pensábamos.
Llegará la noche
y nos pondremos a descansar.
Ahora se trata de cruzar el día,
de atravesarlo como sea
para correr del calor
y del sol.
Después nos detendremos.
Después.
Lo que tenemos que hacer
por lo pronto
es esfuerzo tras esfuerzo
para ir de prisa
detrás de tantos como nosotros
y delante de otros muchos.
De eso se trata.
Ya descansamos
bien a bien
cuando estemos muertos.

La Luz de la Noche

Angel Hernandez

Los muertos disfrutan de la vida
Mientras que los vivos le temen a la muerte
Algunos dicen que por la bebida
Pero algunos tienen poca suerte.
Las calaveras salen disfrazadas,
Las brujas todas bien bañadas,
Porque saben que en estas fiestas,
Todas están puestas para la orquesta.
Yo estaba tranquilo,
Tomando, bailando, y disfrutando
Cuando volteo y con la luz de la luna,
Veo tu hermosa sonrisa.
Mi corazón se agita,
Mi corazón palpita,

Si de verdad pudiera te llamaba
Afrodita. Renazco con tu amor,
Y ni siquiera el sol,
Tiene tanta suerte de estar en tu calor
Eres un tesoro,
Creado por un dios,
La fruta prohibida, una tentación
Figura divina, sonrisa que ilumina
Voy a ser tu Ángel, te lo digo en esta rima.

Living Alongside Foreign Fighters

Denisse Gonzales

My parents worked long, hard hours at minimum wage jobs for as long as I can remember. In my family, it was customary to have only one parent at home every night. It was a “tag, you’re it” relationship. Their time at home was split so that one parent was always at home taking care of my siblings and one parent was working. Four kids needed looking after, including myself. That is four kids to feed, bathe, walk to school, protect.

I am the daughter of two immigrants, born in Mexico City, Mexico. In the early 1990s, my family moved to Kansas in hopes of supplying a better life for their only daughter. Little did they know that they would soon have a second baby girl as I was in my mother’s belly. Diving into the unknown, the adventure and experience would be the turn-a-round of her life. My father obtained a job at a construction company in the first week of being in this new country. He would go on to have the same job for the next 22 years of his life.

The first few months in this country were tough on my mom and dad. Many people blame immigrants for coming into this country to “steal jobs.” My parents did not come into this country wishing to disrupt anyone’s life. People don’t understand the effects of living in a country where you are unwelcome—they were told to “learn English” at the grocery store, learning the bus system to make it to work on time. People who lack empathy repeatedly criticized my parents. They did not come to this country to take from your family, they came to provide for their own. I’ve often wondered how my mom and dad gained the courage to get up and leave their home in Mexico. They left their families behind. Off to a new place with a foreign language, with just the clothes on their backs and a few savings. They came to the United States, got jobs, bought a house, and raised their family with no help. Completely blind. An experience born from the love of their children. A hunger to succeed in this land of the free.

Violence, crime, corruption, and poverty are a huge problem in Mexico. This is the reason many families emigrate from Mexico into the United States. If there were more opportunities for Mexico’s people and less corrupt, money-hungry Mexican politicians, fewer people would migrate to the United States. Immigration is not what many people think. The people leaving their country of origin are not bad people. However, people should not have to leave their homes to have a safe, financially stable life. They should have the opportunity to immigrate to another country if they choose, but should also be able to lead a safe, regular, prosperous life in their home country.



Dear mom and dad,

*Thank you for your hard work. Thank you for your sacrifices.
I wish to one day be able to repay you for all you have done
for my siblings and for myself. You deserve the world.*

My parents' first-born child is competitive and wants to succeed. She always tries her best, she is very hard on herself. Karina, that is my sister's name. My parents brought her to the States at the age of six months old with the hopes of giving her a better life. A good life with good education and plenty of opportunities. She is a DACA recipient, a program that temporarily protects immigrants from being deported and gives them eligibility for work permits. The program allows for infinite renewals until recently. She relies on the DACA permit to work, go to school, drive legally, everything. She must re-apply for it every year and a half as it usually takes months to get approved. It is a costly process and is not always guaranteed.

Under the presidency of Trump, she did not know whether she would renew her DACA. Unable to make plans for her future because of the uncertainty: would she have to go back to Mexico, a place she has not been to in over twenty-two years. What about the studying she's completed, and the money and the sacrifices to get her degree? Imagine coming this far to be turned around and sent back to "your country". A country you do not know. This is the country we were raised in. This is her home.





Dear big sister,

Thank you for always setting the example for your younger siblings, who have always looked up to you. You're smart, independent, and ambitious. I wish to one day be like you and hope to one day make you as proud as you've made me.

When I graduated high school and was deciding where to go to college, the number one questions on my mind were, "who is going to pay for my tuition?" "Where will I live?". My dad's first concern was that it would be difficult for me to get used to being away from my family and my home. My dad shot back with "you've never been away from home before. Not even for a whole week". They are always worried. Always praying for my safety. They understand the difficulty of fitting in and being accepted in an environment where minorities are often overlooked. I got to see this side of my parents often.

I know my mom and dad love and care and want the best for my siblings and myself. It is difficult to be upset with the two most special people in my life, who traveled a long way, so my siblings and I could have a better life. My parents frequently share stories of their upbringing – stories marked by hardship. My mom would have loved to finish school or get a GED. My mom always says, "my main goal is that you study, that you graduate from college and you give your own family a great life. The day all my children are graduated from college, are self-sufficient, and happy, that is the day I will feel like I have succeeded as a parent". This is the life of many immigrants who also want the best for their children.



Dear mom and dad,

Everything I do, I do for you. To make you proud. I appreciate you. Karina appreciates you. Alejandra appreciates you. Alex appreciates you.

It is challenging to buy a home, being from somewhere else. You don't know the language or how the money system works in this new country. That was the case with my parents buying their first home. I have lived in this house for as long as I can remember. My parents owning this house was an enormous achievement. An American dream was achieved. Their hopes of providing for their children, giving them a home, came true—an unattainable goal for many. They checked off that goal in a matter of a couple of years.



Dear childhood home,

The house my immigrant parents worked so hard to turn into a home. You are the result of my loving parent's hard work. I had many great times living at this home. I will never lose the good memories.

Being an immigrant doesn't mean you don't move ahead. When you decide to leave your home country it's not always because you don't like who you are or where you came from. There is a story behind every immigrant that comes to the United States. My parents moved from Mexico so that their kids could have the opportunities and jobs that were not accessible in Mexico. An immigrant is someone that decides to leave their family, home, friends, house, job, a whole country in search of a better life. It is not easy to live somewhere you are not always welcome. We are often criticized not just by the people who in this country, but also by the people we leave behind. I am proud of my immigrant parents. It is a great experience to form my own identity with this mixture of my Mexican heritage and upbringing exposed to my family's challenges. They adapted to their surroundings.



Orgullo

Hugo Juarez Avalos



The Sweet to a Sunny Day
Rubi Perez Vazquez

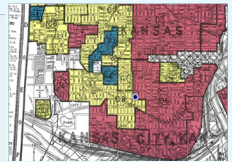
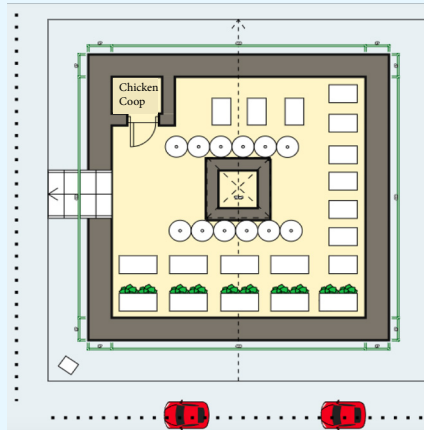
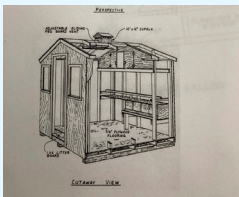
A GARDEN FOR EVERYONE

Donnelly College, Kansas City • Student Team D37

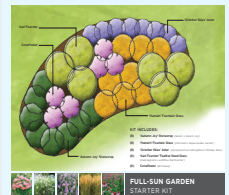
a greener approach to groceries

Goals

- Turn our campus into a Net-Zero campus.
- Help curb the urban heat island effect.
- Recognize the beauty of native gardening and restore the beauty of the neighborhood.
- Educate students and staff on sustainable agriculture within urban spaces.
- Engage the community through partnerships to continue the conversation around the importance of green infrastructure.



Redlined neighborhoods are roughly 12 degrees hotter than "desired" neighborhoods. Wyandotte County is vulnerable to rising temperatures, and has far fewer trees, fewer parks, and more heat-absorbing pavement than whiter, wealthier parts of our city.



4x10 naturally treated wood raised beds • sandy loam, topsoil, manure, and compost • full sun garden with native plants • chicken coop • compost pile • dripping and sprinkler irrigation system

A Garden for Everyone

Abigail Mejia-Sanchez on behalf of the RainWorks Team

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 this year's Sister Mary Faith Schuster Awards. We could not create this journal without your kindness.

Finally, thank you to all of our supporters, particularly Lawrence (class of 1956) and Joan Ward, whose generosity supplies the publication costs as well as the Sister Mary Faith Schuster Awards.



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