

Azahares



La ciudad roja
Annaya Uberoi (page 26)

Spanish Language Literary Magazine
2021



Las lilas
Martha E. Bieber
acrílico sobre lienzo

Azahares

2021 Edition

Azahares is University of Arkansas-Fort Smith's award-winning Spanish-language creative literary magazine. The primary purpose of this magazine is to provide students and community members with an arena for creative expression in the Spanish language, as well as a literary space for writing that presents the themes of the Latino experience

The azahar, or orange blossom, is a flower of special meaning. Representative of new life and purity, azahares form part of the iconic tradition of the Spanish-speaking world, embodying a freshness of spirit and perspective captured with this publication.

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Mi voz

Lovely Mosqueda Ramírez

Al ver cómo **solía** ser, y probablemente **todavía** lo soy, **comencé** a preocuparme por lo que la gente pensaba de mí y **comencé** a verme a mí misma a través de sus ojos.

Dejé de mirar las estrellas por la noche.

Dejé de soñar despierta.

Intenté meterme en los moldes que me hacían otras personas. Pronto, **comencé** a apagar mi propia **voz** y **comencé** a escuchar las **voces** de los demás.

Nadie **gritó** mi nombre, ni yo tampoco.

~~Mi corazón se detuvo y mis ojos se cerraron.~~

Entonces así, **Nosotros, todos** perdimos nuestros nombres.
nos convertimos en fantasmas.

Creo que tuve **mucha** suerte de no **renunciar** a todo. Estoy segura de que **yo** y **todos nosotros** seguiremos tropezando y **CAYENDO** Quizás cometí un **error** ayer, pero **el yo de ayer sigue siendo yo.**

Soy quien soy hoy, con todos mis defectos.

Mañana podría ser un **poco** más sabia, y esa soy yo **también.**

Estas **fallas** y **errores** son lo que **soy**, componiendo las estrellas más **BRILLANTES** de la constelación de mi vida. He llegado a **AMARME** a mí misma por quien **era**, quien **soy** y quien **espero** llegar a ser.

ME GUSTARÍA PREGUNTARLES A TODOS.

¿Cuál es tu nombre? ¿Qué te **emociona** y hace latir tu **corazón**?

Cuéntame tu historia. Quiero **escuchar** tu voz y quiero escuchar tu **convicción.**

No importa **quién** eres, de **dónde** eres, tu **color** de piel,
identidad de género:

habla tú **mismo.**

Yo, como la **mayoría** de la gente, he cometido muchos **errores** en mi vida.

Tengo muchas **faltas** y tengo muchos **miedos**, pero me voy a **abrazar** lo más fuerte que pueda y estoy **empezando** a amarme poco a ^{poco}.

Así que quiero **animarlos** a que **encuentren su nombre.** Encuentra *tu voz* y **habla tú mismo.**



Aires de primavera

Martha E. Bieber
acuarela

Granada Grateful

Rosario Nolasco-Schultheiss

for my husband, Daryl Schultheiss

Grateful to Tariq ibn Ziyad,
who by way of Gibraltar
carried most precious of civil gifts.

We had nothing to present,
if traveler's yearning.
Still, gifts Granada gave.

Unsuspected.

Although fifty thousand in Sacromonte,
not a buzz from the Roma we heard.
But on ancient Assabic Road, now deserted.

Not for coin or applause,
a Roma played his guitar.
In that old road to the Alhambra.

Unexpected.

Splendors of the Alhambra!
In human swarm anxiously shot,
under moonlight, sacrosanct.

Blessed Granada!

Grateful because my love,
on Assabic soil was both planted and harvested.
Lavender, rosemary, and thyme.

Granada night of magical cooking.
My Alchemist, disease and death unaware,
the Earth's moods conjured.

And in tiny terrace with a view
to that ancient Alhambra,
a toast to its builders raised!

Café de las seis

Edurne Sosa El Fakih

La casa de Rosa Coneja había sido azul, amarilla, blanca y roja en los últimos diez años; ella la pintaba antes de que algún hijo se fuera de casa, para que si se perdían en el pueblo pudieran reconocerla desde la carretera. Rosa Coneja había tenido nueve hijos y doce nietos, pero el martes en que Don Carruca se sentó a tomar café con ella en el solar a las seis de la tarde, la casa estaba completamente vacía. Don Carruca vivía en el páramo de la montaña, y bajaba una vez al mes a comprar aguardiente y tomar café con Rosa Coneja; en sus arrugas se veían las noches de lluvia en que caminaba por el páramo buscando poemas, canciones o recuerdos.

Ese martes por la mañana Rosa Coneja había despedido a su última hija, le metió dos vestidos y un par de zapatos en un costal y le echó la bendición para que San Isidro la llevara con bien hasta la capital. Amparo tenía veintidós años y quería ser maestra; lo que no supo es que, al salir de la casa de su mamá con el costal en la espalda, la casa se quedaría roja hasta que se la comiera la polilla.

Don Carruca despertó de una siesta perezosa en la hamaca. Su casa en el páramo no tenía ni luz ni agua, pero tenía las paredes frías con botellas de vino extranjero, que hacían al sol del mediodía bailar milongas de colores en el piso.

Si el viento del páramo no soplara canciones, Don Carruca hubiera escuchado las dos capillas del pueblo dar las doce. Era un pueblo con una sola calle y media plaza, pero tenía tres cementerios y tres panaderías. El viejo se aparecía como un fantasma en la bodega de Chucho de vez en cuando, caminaba la plaza y visitaba la fosa que se tenía reservada antes de sentarse en el patio de Rosa Coneja a ver pasar el polvo.

Rosa Coneja hizo café para nueve personas porque siempre se aparecía algún vecino o hijo extraviado para tomar café con ella en el patio. Don Carruca entró cansado y se quitó el sombrero en la puerta; entró en la casita roja sin pedir permiso, pasó por la cocina y giró a la izquierda hasta el patio. El viejo se sentó en una sillita de mimbre y se puso el sombrero en la rodilla mientras Rosa Coneja cortaba dos trozos de pan dulce para mojarlos con el café. Se encontraron los dos amigos sentados, desgastándose al sol y a punta de café con pan dulce. Rosa Coneja esperó a que los vecinos o algún hijo los acompañara en el café, pero en esa casa solo quedaban recuerdos y polvo. Cuando ella se dio cuenta de que aún quedaban siete tazas vacías, se supo tan muerta como él.



B-boys - in cemento veritas

Mario Loprete

oil on concrete 100 x 200 cm



Little Patriarchs versus Otherved Folk

Cecilia Rodríguez Milanés

(For Tato Laviera and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez)

Don't they know how far their murdering cancer has spread?

Don't they know their empire is crumbling?

1. Even the insignificant, triflin' fool
can launch an all-out devastating attack
with one little word

sexist

racist

classist

doesn't matter what -ist

one syllable or two, maybe three

wounding

damaging

undermining whatever sense of self

strength

sanity

You wanna ditch the shirt/skirt/suit and go full on SPIC

Come on, cabrón

throw down

Show them your mettle (or blade)

But you have been here before

Seen and heard it all before

Exhausting, right?

You want to reciprocate so bad!

Return, return, return it all like boomerang

weapons dripping venom

lodging their evil right back at them

Instead you reveal that tender and
noble core that love made
share the legacy of principios
show what it means to be a daughter,
una gran hija de gente decente
a beacon of righteousness
Instead you school them
It's exhausting, trust me, I know
Using all of your street and university
cred
Your best "English"

Will they understand?
¿No se dan cuenta de su cáncer
asesino?

2. Will they learn nothing from the
fires
consuming us?
Burning, burning not just us?

While warriors for justice wage peace
Secret forces gas, shoot, abduct
Grandmothers and teenagers arrested
While expressing their first amendment
rights deemed wrong
Everywhere voices raised for

George
Breonna
Ahmaud
Philando
Atatiana
Trayvon
Tamir
Sandra

Botham
Freddie
Elijah
So many names
Say their names
Say their names
Say their names
Say justice

Say there's a better way forward
For all of us
All
Of
Us



fabri fibra - in cemento veritas

Mario Loprete

Oil on concrete 25 x 30 cm

Where is Joaquín?

CARTA ABIERTA

Marcos Pico Rentería

“lost in
... the whirl of a gringo
... modern society”

I am Joaquín
Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales

A la memoria de Vanessa Guillén

En el sonoro Arjé; ventoso, asfixiado:
Fear no more the word you speak,
In a place where no soul can rest from evil,
Retaining the self as it unfolds into the yo form.
No elegí to be, sino que soy:
I am the one lost in the frontier,
There is no whirl,
There is no place,
There was no path for me.
I found a stepping stone,
The refused stone, covered by mud,
A mud that built helical yoes.

I am the YO.

La paradoja es que existo en la sombra de otro, Ápeiron eterno:
Being born into a shadow that brought nothing but a paradox;
There was a war, not one I call mine,
But one that happened to mark me as a Son
Of this forgotten land,
Creating betrayals as much as it has brought weeds,
Land with arid soil and white mountains alike,
Greens and browns and whites and reds
Lined as a final shade of the western states.
And what did you do?

Not a thing.

I lived in a time where O. Paz was strong,
The Priato was nothing but respect and fear,
Nirvana was still crying for pain,
Colosio's flesh was still red,
As the new bloods were about to sprout
In a world where you could still hear the screams of the
1992 fearless souls of South Central.
That was your place, your time, and yet,
You did nothing.
Where was Chomsky, Monsiváis, Fuentes,
The soul of Octavio Paz,
Or perhaps the screaming and elegant voice of Fuentes,
Protector of the dormant voices.
Where was the Subcomandante Marcos always
Fighting with his light eyes of opulent force,
The woken Che in a capucha negra.
Poniatowska protested from her loins,
And we waited for a voice that could resurrect César, our César,
That never would show up again, anger, anger, danger.
Joaquín was found again, once by Allende, Isabel,
Not the Chilean leader,
But an industry-tamed feminist,
Seduced by the towers of paper she stained
And resurrected as a Zorro in a pretty film.
Chomsky was still, statuesque of freedom, but pondered in a better world,
Complacent voices filled a tower of elephant husks,
Bloody husks that were stained by the tons of
Rotten elephant chunks.
The Narco was still not real,
Was just a series of small shanty town businesses,
But the beast was about to roar.
Those corporations would be large enough
To have full books of complicit yoes.

The one voice trusted, was the single
RAYO of the intellectual force.

But, where are you?
¿dónde estás?

A social class has taken our voice,
Our consciousness.

WHO STAYS QUIET AND WHY?

Ya no hay voces que se escuchen.
We are part of a third space where Black and White
Are the main actors, and the shaded-raced, are nothing but a

SHADE
DE FORGOTTEN
NOSOTROS.

But yet I ask, dónde están
El Ilan Stavans, el Junot Díaz,
El Don Francisco, el Chavo del Ocho (RIP),
El Juan Villoro, the nicest caballero,
El Jorge Volpi, the political specter,
Cuarón, kicked by the industria muerta del filme mexicano,
Zizek, voice of the Lacanian past and Freudian future,
As Rulfo walks, or walks around without knowing he's dead,
Gabo with a love letter,
Lezama, quiet beloved by the one and only Cortázar,

Vargas Llosa and his discourse, as a frozen trident,
A hidden force, a frozen poison flask.
A Gómez Peña that is awake, and full of soul;
A Junot that has a past that dulls his pride;
A Pérez Firmat, A Pedro Palou,
A Valeria Luiselli y su Álvaro Enrigue,
A Felipe Herrera, A Yuri Herrera,
A Paz Soldán, and Liliana Colanzi,
Waiting for their voices to be heard,
To be (RE)discovered.

There has been a way to quiet Joaquín's voice,
Bowing down to look at screens
Enchanting falsehoods of monotonic futures:
There is no venas,
Only cable;
There is no speech,
Solo textos;
There is no humanness,
Solo hay frío;
There is no strength,
Solo hay charging stations;
There is no more impact,
Only the shock will work;
There is only numbness,
No pain, no voice.

There is
No
I

There is no Joaquín, nor paper to write on, we are a blank paper
waiting to be written on.

Invisible

Carisa Coburn Pineda

Omar walked on the wooden ledge that separated the grassy field from the playground gravel, his arms outstretched to keep his balance. He hopped down onto the gravel, kicked the small translucent stones with the tip of his sneaker, and watched them scatter. He dragged his feet creating a trail; his shoes filled with pebbles, filling the space between the arch of his foot and the insole of his shoe. The sensation was unusual, a mild discomfort, pressure so dull it was almost absent.

Omar heard the high-pitched sounds of children laughing and shrieking as they played and ran through the playground's labyrinths. Their voices piercing and not soothing like the voices of his friends in El Salvador. Everyone loved the playground designed and built by a famous architect, but to Omar, the castles and drawbridges were imposing. He preferred the swings with the rusty chains in the park of his hometown where he used to sway back and forth, trying to see who could swing the highest. There was no need to scale monstrous wooden structures to get to them. Omar could just run through an open field, feet pounding on the earth, the wind blowing on his face, racing *para ver quién llega primero*.

The school had inaugurated the playground with a ribbon cutting

ceremony naming it “The Creative Playground.” At recess, teachers always said the playground’s full name.

The word got tangled in Omar’s head, so he asked his ESL teacher, “¿Qué es *creative*?”

“Es imagination,” the teacher knew a few words in Spanish.

Creative, he did not think it was appropriate. How could it mean that if castles stood right before your eyes and nothing was left to the imagination?

Mr. Robinson blew his whistle and Omar shuffled slowly toward him, crossing the field, avoiding the wooden structures that gave him splinters. Omar stood near the middle of the line as the popular boys ran from the playground, sweat dripping down their red faces. The girls that wanted them for boyfriends followed them, giggling.

Omar removed his shoes and dumped out the gravel and remembered it was called something funny that was said together like “The Creative Playground.” It confused him at first because he thought they were saying “pee gravel” until he realized they were saying “pea.” It had been special ordered by the architect for its smooth texture, shape, and uniform color.

“Children! Don’t throw the pea gravel!” Omar often heard, following the sharp sound of the whistle.

Mr. Robinson tapped their heads and counted until he reached that day’s attendance number. They followed him single file *como hormigas*, into the building and through the hallways to the classroom. Omar took his seat. Mr. Robinson was his teacher most of the day, but in the mornings, Omar went to ESL. Omar liked ESL; the class was smaller, the teacher went slower, and they played games.

Mr. Robinson began his lesson. Omar tried concentrating. It was too fast for him to understand. He was scared to ask questions because Mr. Robinson did not like repeating himself. Omar’s fear was often confused for apathy. Mr. Robinson regularly sent notes home saying that Omar showed a lack of interest in learning. Omar’s mother would look at the notes and sign them, not entirely sure of what they said.

Omar heard Mr. Robinson ask a question. It sounded like the noise a cassette makes when the *cinta* gets tangled in the player, a slow and warped underwater sound. Even when Omar understood, he never raised his hand. Since he’d lost track of the lesson, Omar began playing with

eraser shavings inside his desk.

"Omar!" he heard Mr. Robinson say.

He hated the way his name sounded in English, especially in Mr. Robinson’s tone. Thirty 4th grade faces turned around and stared at him, their bodies and chairs shifting.

“Can you answer my question?”

It was strange to have all those eyes on him. He wasn’t used to the attention.

“Well?”

Omar stared and remained silent. He didn’t want to say he didn’t know because he didn’t want to seem stupid. He was glad his skin was dark and that they couldn’t see the embarrassment in his cheeks.

“Next time, pay attention Omar!”

Some of the children laughed; Omar was relieved that the moment had ended. He made a mental note to never look like he wasn’t paying attention.

Omar silently counted the seconds until the bell would ring *un cho-co-la-te, dos chocolates*, keeping track with his fingers each time he reached sixty, starting the series all over again.

On most days he wasn't in a hurry to leave, but that day he felt the urgency. He normally felt safe not being noticed, but he was oddly relieved that Mr. Robinson knew he existed, knew his name, even if it was under negative circumstances. There were days when Omar looked at his dark skin and wondered how he could be invisible.

Mr. Robinson called on his favorites, "Chris, Cynthia, Myung, pass out the homework assignment."

Omar didn't like that Mr. Robinson had favorites; it made him think that no matter how hard he tried he would never measure up. Omar wanted to do well to make his mother proud. In El Salvador he'd been the smartest in his school and he liked helping other children, but his grades in the U.S. were low. He thought that after living in the U.S. for a whole year they would improve, but this had not occurred. Cynthia passed Omar the assignment. It was a model of a butterfly and it had arrows pointing to parts for him to label. He hoped it was in the book. Omar put the paper in his folder, and the bell finally rang.

Omar squeezed through the crowd of students that were running, screaming, and disregarding the instructions of

the safety hall monitors. His pace was quicker than usual, but he was still respectful of the rules and didn't run. Omar arrived at his bus and sat down in the first seat. He was glad when everyone was seated and the bus was on its way. Omar liked the front because it was quieter. He liked to look outside the window, but the loud children in the back always disrupted his concentration. One girl, Leana, always laughed and demanded attention. Leana was the most popular girl in school. All the boys liked her. She was in Omar's class, but was older by at least a year and dressed even older. At first Omar thought she was pretty, she reminded him of a gypsy, but then his mother saw her outside the supermarket once and commented negatively on how she carried herself and loitered outside the strip mall near their home.

When Omar first moved to the U.S., he thought that the same noisy children at the back of the bus would be his friends since they lived in the same apartments and were not wealthy like the children who lived in the mansions his mother cleaned. Many were from immigrant families too, but the children were born here and spoke English. Friendships never formed and soon Omar felt the same way about all the children whether they were his neighbors or not.

Omar crossed the parking lot of the large apartment complex and went up three flights. He took his key from his backpack and unlocked the door, closed it behind him, and locked it. His mother kept a note on inside reminding him to do so. She worried about his safety when he was alone, normally two hours. Omar served himself a glass of milk. There wasn't much in the refrigerator; he hoped his mother would bring groceries because he was hungry. He sat down to work on his homework. Omar was relieved to find notes for the butterfly assignment in his notebook from the day before. After he finished, Omar sat down to watch TV.

During the commercials he heard his mother's key in the door. He ran to open it and helped her with the grocery bags, "*Hola mi'jo, cómo te fue en la escuela?*"

She asked about his day and after setting down the groceries, gave him a hug. She began shuffling around the kitchen to prepare dinner, "*Traje sopa de alfabeto.*" She opened the can of Campbell's alphabet soup and poured it into a pot.

Omar asked his mother about work, "*¿Cómo te fue en el trabajo, mamá?*"

"*Estoy muy cansada,*" she said sighing.

Lately Omar's mother tried to clean more houses because the rent for the apartment had gone up. The complex had lost the subsidized status that had made it affordable. Because it was located in a nice suburb and the schools were considered the best in the country Omar's mother hoped they would be able to stay. Her sister, who had arrived a few years earlier lived closer to the city and advised her to stay away from urban problems. Most of the houses she cleaned were close, but she feared that they would have to move.

They sat down at the kitchen table to eat the soup. Omar and his mother smiled. Omar dipped his spoon into the soup and scooped up some letters, eying them closely then commented to his mother about the lack of Spanish letters, "*Hacen falta las letras en español.*"

His mother laughed and replied, "Es que aquí te quitan hasta la sopa" — here they even take your soup away. After dinner they watched TV together until bedtime. Omar's mother went to sleep early to be up at dawn. Even though he was no longer a little boy, she tucked Omar and sang him a lullaby, "*Duérmeme mi niño, duérmeme mi amor. Porque cuando amanezca, ya saldrá el sol.*"

Omar barely remembered his mother kissing him goodbye that morning. They

woke to separate alarm clocks so that he could sleep while she dressed for work. His mother had left breakfast out for him on the table. He ate it quickly and then prepared the items he needed for the day. His lunch tickets were attached to the refrigerator with a magnet, a system his mother set in place so he wouldn't forget them. Omar received free lunches with the tickets and forgetting them meant no lunch. Omar left the apartment and crossed the parking lot to the bus stop. Some children were already there, but Leana and her crew came running as soon as the bus approached the curb. Like his ride home, Omar sat in the front, but in the mornings, he was usually accompanied by one of the scared kindergartners. He didn't mind and even pretended that they were the little brother or sister he had always wanted.

The classroom looked different that day. Mr. Robinson wasn't at his desk; he moved around nervously. A few parents were present, and then Omar remembered, it was the day of the field trip to the museum. He looked at the worthless lunch tickets and scolded himself. His mother had signed the permission slip, but she didn't know what it said, and Omar had forgotten the date and that he had to bring money or a lunch from home.

"Don't forget to turn in your butterfly assignment!" Mr. Robinson said. "Line up! Mrs. Burton, Mrs. Tomkins and Mrs. Osborne are here as chaperones for the field trip."

The class marched to the buses. In the commotion, Omar had not gotten a good spot in line and he feared not gaining a seat in the front of the bus. As he stepped on, he realized that his placement in line didn't matter because Leana and her friends had chosen the front of the bus this time instead of the back. He passed them and sat down two rows from the back. At least it was a window seat and he could look outside. He was surprised when one of the chaperones, Mrs. Osborne spoke to him, "¿Hablas español?"

He nodded.

Mrs. Osborne asked if she could sit next to him, "*¿Puedo sentarme?*"

"Sí."

When he had seen her in the classroom earlier, Omar had sensed that she was from somewhere else. She did not look like the other moms. When she spoke in Spanish his observations were confirmed. But what surprised him most was that Elisa with the blue eyes and goldenbrown hair was her

daughter. Elisa sat with one of her friends in the seat in front of Omar's. She turned around and popped up to face her mother, smiled and addressed her in Spanish. It sounded like a waterfall. Elisa was one of the quiet girls that got good grades; he wondered how she managed not to confuse both languages in her head.

"¿Cómo te llamas?" Mrs. Osborne asked.

"Omar."

"Yo me llamo Elena".

Her name sounded angelic. She asked him about his country. Elena was from Guatemala.

"We are neighbors!" he exclaimed.

She asked about his parents.

"My mother's name is Gloria." He described his mother and her job with pride.

They arrived at the museum and the usual loudness and chaos of most trips did not overwhelm Omar, but instead exhilarated him. He didn't mind Mr. Robinson's yelling.

"Behave! No running, and pay attention!" The groups went different directions. He stayed close to Mrs. Osborne who led a

small quiet group. Mrs. Tomkins' group with Leana's crowd had taken off running despite Mr. Robinson's warnings.

Omar liked that he could ask Mrs. Osborne questions in Spanish when he did not understand. Having someone to talk was different from other field trips where he trailed behind, confused. After a few hours it was time for lunch and Omar remembered he didn't have one. He sat down next to Mrs. Osborne at the museum cafeteria as she and Elisa took out their lunches. Mrs. Osborne looked over and asked, "¿No tienes almuerzo?"

He was embarrassed to tell her what had happened. He didn't want her to think that his mother didn't prepare his lunch; she would have if she had known. He shook his head.

"Yo te lo compro," replied Mrs. Osborne. Omar couldn't believe that she would buy him a meal from the cafeteria. At first, he was hesitant. He didn't know if it was proper, but he was hungry. She let him get whatever he wanted, even Coca Cola. He only got to drink Coca Cola on special occasions, but it was a special occasion. Elisa asked if she could have a Coca Cola, but Mrs. Osborne said no.

Omar then noticed that like him, Matt Tomkins had a cafeteria lunch, but he

also had a sack lunch that he threw away. Some of the kids in Matt's group became jealous, so Mrs. Tomkins bought lunches for those children. They too threw away their sack lunches.

On the ride home, Omar sat with Mrs. Osborne again. He was sad that his day at the museum was over, but he looked forward to seeing his mother to tell her about what he had learned. When they returned, the dismissal busses were already lining up. Omar said goodbye to Mrs. Osborne and hoped to see her again, "*Gracias por todo, Doña Elena.*"

He ran home from the bus stop. Because of the field trip, he didn't have any homework, so he watched TV until his mother came home. When she arrived, she was happy to see the look of joy on his face. He was never excited about his schooldays. Omar told his mother about the museum and his experience at lunch. His mother gently scolded him for forgetting to tell her about the field trip and that he had needed lunch.

She asked if he was polite to the lady that bought him lunch, "*¿Le diste las gracias a la señora?*"

"*Sí, mamá.*"

They spent the rest of the evening talking about what he saw at the museum. His mother hoped that it would inspire an improvement in his grades. She knew that it was discouraging for him to receive low marks. If he did well, it would be an incentive for them to stay in the area. More and more, she wanted to be near her sister so that they could help each other, but she would wait and see what happened at the end of the school year, which was approaching in a month and a half.

After the field trip Omar's fondness for Mrs. Osborne transformed into admiration for her daughter. Omar observed Elisa to get the courage to talk to her. He knew his mother would approve of her as his friend.

One day, he followed Elisa and her friends through the playground. He was careful not to be noticed. They sat in a room of the castle, and he hid in a passageway near them so that he could hear. They began to talk about boys. Christy described how her older sister was dating a boy her parents didn't like.

"I don't know what's wrong with her. I could never date a Spanish guy."

"What do you mean Spanish?" asked Elisa. "I speak Spanish."

“Not like you. You're different,”
Christy said.

“Yeah, you're different,”
repeated Angela.

“You guys don't know what you're talking about. Your parents don't have anything to worry about. I'm sure he's a nice boy.” Through a crack Omar saw tears in her eyes, and her cheeks were flushed.

“Don't get insulted, Elisa. We're not talking about you. You can tell he's Spanish, not like you. You can tell 'cause he's dark.”

Omar felt nauseated and hot. Before hearing how the argument ended, Omar returned to his spot on the border of the playground and the field.

The rest of the year passed by; he never got the courage to speak to Elisa and the day Mrs. Osborne visited the classroom, Omar was out sick. After the summer, when the new school year began, none of the children or the teachers noticed that Omar was absent from Whispering Wind Elementary School.



Suspiro de primavera

Martha E. Bieber

acuarela

La ciudad roja
Annaya Uberoi
fotografía digital





El rojo atardecer

Suny Cárdenas-Gómez

Cielo
Eres mi universo paralelo
Y hoy estoy de pie
En el lugar donde bifurcan
Nuestros caminos
Regalo de la mañana
Habían luces en nuestra estrella
Y ahora sólo queda
La aureola pálida
De tu aura
Espera por un instante
Mientras tú desapareces
Entre las enredaderas
Y el sol se pone por última vez
En este pequeño mundo nuestro
El rojo atardecer abrazando
La niña de tus ojos

Red Sunset

Suny Cárdenas-Gómez

Cielo
My parallel universe
Today I'm standing
In the place
Where our paths diverge
Gift of the morning
There were lights in our star
And now there only remains
The pale halo
Of your aura
Lingering for an instant
While you disappear
Between the vines
And the sun sets one last time
On this little world of ours
The dying red light embracing
The heart of your eyes

Culto para dos

Suny Cárdenas-Gómez

La lluvia reza cien mil padres nuestros
Alcanzo distinguir unas voces
Recostada a tu lado
Mientras mis manos en oración
Susurran por tu piel
Repiten mis dedos los misterios
De las constelaciones entre tus lunares
Respiramos el incienso de tu calor
Una nube que nos envuelve
Quedan en mis labios
Las últimas notas de vino
Santa la noche

Worship for Two

Suny Cárdenas-Gómez

The rain repeats a thousand Our Fathers
I can just make out the voices
As I lay by your side
While my hands
Whisper a prayer across your skin
My fingers repeat the mysteries
Of the constellations between your freckles
Your warmth is an incense
It shrouds us like a cloud
The last notes of wine
Still on my lips
Oh holy night

Nitaina

Darilyn Matos

nitaina

¿Qué es eso? o más bien dicho

¿Qué eh eso?

es guerrera de la nobleza
más antigua que nuestro pasado
pan sobao de la montaña

que hierve sangre india de los españoles

más caliente que la sangre
española forzada
de nuestras raíces africanas

tumbando tambores
tambores tiki tando como gritos de Lares
cosechando culturas que se sienten ajenas

cosechando crisis existenciales,
de identidad, de Tabernas
de cañas de azúcar endulzando nuestro presente

la plena de sur a norte
subiéndonos por las venas,
las caderas de este a oeste

retumbando ese son ancestral
con caoba y cañita.
que plena que bomba más exquisita

que de Orocovis a Lares
sientes el tiqui tá tiqui tá
aún sobre dos verdes senos

aquí hay melaza y de la buena
con ritmo que no se cuela no se estrella
vive la batalla, no se rinde, no se entrega

La tormenta de arena

Dani Putney

bramó por la autopista
el domingo por la tarde;
los disparos de plantas corredoras
destrozaron nuestros coches;
el suelo se rizó
debajo de la carretera;
las serpientes de polvo
nacieron con escamas vivas
y afiladas; los susurros del metal
se oyeron contra el viento,
contra el cielo café;
en este momento
yo reconocí mi cuerpo
como la tierra.

Los pioneros

Dani Putney

En este camino
los hemos matado a todos.
Las caléndulas respiran
la sangre de sus memorias.
 Los fantasmas se quemán
por el cielo—
 los rumores por el cosmos.
¿Los oyes? Al nacer
las mentiras se filtran
 por el suelo de la verdad—
nosotros no lo creemos.
La atmósfera está infectada,
¿la ves? El pasado
no nos dice nada—

El chisporrotear

Dani Putney

Señorito,
dame tu pierna sucia
y dime cuándo pararme,
pero por favor,
 nunca me sueltes.
En un lago de fuego
nuestros cuerpos se ahogan
juntos. Mi corazón
llena tu esqueleto,
¿es esto amor?
Las moscas consumen
nuestra sangre—
escucha—
 tú eres yo.

Celda de tres caras

Marcos Pico Rentería

A Mariachito, in memoriam

*When I was just a baby my mama told me: Son,
always be a good boy, don't ever play with guns.
But I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die.
Johnny Cash, Folsom Prison Blues*

Recuerdo tres instantes de una sola muerte. Misma de la cual me acusan, me acuso, sabiendo a la vez, que soy inocente.

Lo primero que recuerdo es una noche fría con mis botas sobre la nieve ennegrecida recorriendo el centro de la ciudad de Reno. Caminar sin rumbo fue algo que aprendí cuando todavía era muy joven y salí de la casa de mis padres para nunca volver. Esa noche, por un motivo que desconozco, terminé siguiendo a un tipo que salía de un casino con luces verdes de neón. Cargaba consigo un maletín en la forma de una guitarra. Decidí que sería un mariachi, un Mariachito perdido que encontré en las calles de Reno. Lo recuerdo desde otra mirada, una más melódica, digamos.

La segunda memoria viene con la repetición de mis pasos camino a casa. Después de cada concierto siempre salgo del casino repitiendo la última canción de la noche. Mi última canción, por así decirlo, fue mi versión de Creep, el frío me hace susurrar: *I don't care if it hurts / I want to have control*. Ironía sería demasiado, quizás coincidencia; mejor

aún, un azar que concurre, se repite, como se repiten las voces que acaban con mi suerte. Por una razón extraña siento que me siguen, siento una mirada que me busca. El ritmo de las botas sobre los charcos de nieve sucia delata a mi asesino. Volteo, no veo sino más luces de neón confundirse con la nieve que apenas cae y que cobija un cielo rojo, enardecido.

Mi tercera y última memoria de esa noche comienza en el cuarto estrecho donde termina todo. No muy lejos de los casinos con luces verdes de neón y las calles frías del invierno con cielo rojo, enardecido; no supe cómo pude entrar sin que nadie lo notara. Como si supieran que no me metía sin permiso. Yo nunca he querido participar en un asesinato, pero eso nada tiene que ver con que yo quiera presenciar uno por lo menos una vez en la vida. Cuando entré al apartamento supe que conocía cada centímetro del lugar, como si lo hubiese visto con otros ojos. Quizás, sólo era lo genérico de las paredes, de la alfombra que perdió sus tejidos pardos o la cocina acrílica color crema. Me sentía como en casa, pero hoy sentía mi deber de observar y no ser observado. Vigilar, sin ser vigilado.

Sentí un arma en mi mano izquierda, el frío del barril y su copiosa

condición dictada por el viento frío de esa noche solitaria de cielo rojo, enardecido. El rastro de las botas me permitía alcanzar aquellos pasos que casi se me escapan. De un momento a otro no supe cómo había llegado, ni entrado, en silencio absoluto, al cuarto pálido y poco cuidado iluminado por el cielo rojo, enardecido, que se hacía presente por la única ventana del lugar. De repente, desvaneció esta voz.

Caminar nunca ha sido de mi gusto. Los chavos de la banda siempre se ofrecen llevarme, pero nunca me ha gustado que vayan a mi barrio. Aunque nadie me molesta ahí, sé que no se le considera el mejor de los lugares en la ciudad. Hace años que segregaron aquí a la pobreza pigmentada y separada de toda justicia social. Los crímenes no suceden siempre, sólo cuando se necesita resaltar el lugar como un lugar de perdición y desmemoria. Hoy no me despedí de nadie, sabía que los vería en otro momento, aunque no sé cuándo.

Lo escuché entrar, fue inevitable no hacerlo. Me encontré contando pasos sintiendo la textura del piso, escuchando el rechinado de la madera debajo de la alfombra y casi palpando el linóleo barato de la cocina. El

blanco piso opacado por la continua fricción de las botas sería la perfecta lona para retratar las manchas carmín, rosa y cualquier otro tono cálido. El tiempo era el único obstructor de lo inevitable, era la muerte en los ojos como cuando me veo al espejo y reconozco al que desde muy dentro mueve los hilos.

Lo encontré. Sé que vive aún y que nadie lo espera. Lástima que el silencio al fin le hable al Mariachito. Lástima que la clepsidra no se arrepienta. Que la gota y la ribera encuentren confluencia en el instante mismo que decida hacer girar un barril con polvos y metales. Justo al atravesar lo anterior mi mente pongo el dedo sobre el gatillo y tiro.

Sentí un frío como de un tímpano al escuchar girar un tambor y un estruendo casi al tiempo que el martillo buscaba mi último día. No quiero decir qué mil ideas pasaron por mi mente antes de morir. No quiero. No quiero tampoco decir que todo lo que hice me llevó a este punto de mi vida (quizás decir muerte sea más preciso). No quiero siquiera recordar más cosa que mi música. Es solo preciso que muera con un estruendo y el rastro de mí quede marcado por un zumbido alargado, como una gota que no quiere deslizar y llegar a su fin. La

fuerza de mi cuerpo la disipó el mismo
ruido que iluminó el apartamento
sombrió por un solo instante. Vi los
ojos del que multiplicaba mi muerte.

Me sentí él. Quiero decir, ambos.
Pude ser tres en un solo instante.
Disparé, me dispararon, y como un
pecado, gocé al ver el acto. Llegaba
al fin y lo sabía. No habría más texto
en esta historia. Todo maquillado de
rojo y musicalizado por recuerdos
de canciones que nunca llegaría a
escuchar en la ribera vieja.

Pude vivir tres veces. Y fueron las
mismas que morí. Las tres memorias
se juntaron y volvieron a ser una.
Volvió la voz del cantante a ser la del
asesino y la del figón que gozó la
muerte a distancia. Recuerdo tres
instantes de un solo fin. Mismo del
cual me acusan, me acuso, sabiendo a
la vez, que soy inocente. Me encontré
a la misericordia de tres caras, una
celda que llevo conmigo hasta el día en
que escape de esa celda con un disparo
mío, hacia mí, como último testigo
lejano de mi propia muerte.

Cae al fin la última gota de la clepsidra
y vuelvo a la ribera vieja.

Tepalcatepec, 1985

Marcos Pico Rentería

Delfino y María, abuelos queridos

Tepalcatepec explotó en 1985. Los escombros cubrieron la zona comercial tres días después de haber recuperado todos los cuerpos sepultados. Los daños acumulados nunca encontraron responsables; y los historiadores, nunca llegaron a tocar las puertas para hacer preguntas.

—Vale, hazte a un lado que no me dejas barrer, Elío.

—Pino, no ves que estoy sacando la yerbita que sale al lado de la banquetta y la de todo el empedrado.

—No vale, se me hace que nomás estás trabajando pa' seguir oliendo tus fregaderas. Pero si tanto te gusta estar oliendo chingaderas, mira, ahí está esa plasta de perro para que te atasques. . .

—No Pino, no seas así. Solo quiero limpiar la calle pa' sacar lo del día.

—Sí vale, pero ponte a trabajar como la gente decente. Ya te dije que en la parcela hay mucho trabajo recogiendo mango y ayudando en la ordeña.

—Pino, por la Virgencita Santa que vengo mañana en la mañana pa' irnos a la parcela.

—Pero temprano, Elío, y así aprovechas el día como se debe.

—No Pino, yo me voy a poner a trabajar de madrugada cuando los ladrillos vuelen en Tepeque, vali.

—Ay muchacho, allá tú pero por lo menos ve mañana con Lancho y Ramiro a ver si necesitan que les ayudes en la zapatería. Ramiro llegó de Sahuayo anoche y de pronto va a querer que le echas una mano descargando el calzado.

—Pino, pero con la condición de que le diga a Doña María que paso mañana tempranito al chocolate antes de irles a ayudar.

—Bueno Elío, pero temprano y no te vayas por el chiringue que ya sabes que te hace mal. Y alístate para la madrugada a ver si te ocupas en algo bueno.

—No Pino, ya te dije, cuando los ladrillos vuelen en Tepeque yo seré el primerito que se levante, vali.

El viento de la mañana predecía el noviembre en que caería Tepalcatepec a pedazos como cae el tiempo. Los motores de los camiones irrumpían el silencio mientras cargaban la dinamita de la futura presa Chilatán, futuro orgullo de Tierra Caliente, que antes

de construirse, tenía que escombrar su historia que comenzó desde los Pinos.

—Lancho, te mandé a Elío por la mañana para que te ayude en la tienda que con ese muchacho que esperas ya ni te deja atender bien a la gente.

—Ay apá, entre mi mamá y yo ordenamos todo lo que trajo Ramiro. Hasta le pusimos precio y lo acomodamos en la bodega y en los aparadores.

—Y los zapatos que ordenó tu mamá, ¿llegaron todos?

—Sí apá, lo único que no llegó fueron las botas que ordenamos de León, que creo que le tocará ir a Ramiro a buscarlas la próxima vez que vaya por otro pedido, dijo que esta vez nomás pudo ir a Sahuayo y no fue a Guanajuato.

—Ramiro pasa ocupado con lo de Banrural que no creo que alcance a ir hasta el mes que viene. Pero no te preocupes hija, en una de esas nos vamos y sirve que nos damos una vuelta por el Cerro del Cubilete.

—Ay apá, si acabamos de ir.

—Sí Lancho, pero hay que ser agradecidos y tu mamá tiene una manda por ahí que le debe al Cristo Rey.

—Eso sí es cierto, pero llegase a faltar, yo la pago por ella.

—Mija que con eso no se juega, bien sabes.

—Yo sé papá, y sabe que si lo digo es porque yo lo cumplo.

—Mija, lo único que necesitas es cuidar al greñudo de tu hijo y de su hermanito que viene en camino.

—Sí apá, y como dijo mi mamá: “cuida a tus hijos y escóndele las actas de nacimiento a Ramiro que le da por venderlos.”

—Ay tu madre y sus chistes...

Por la tarde los ingenieros encargados del proyecto de la presa Chilatán acordaron con los más viejos dineros de Tepalcatepec otras maneras de sacarle ventaja al trueque. Mientras los ferreteros acumulaban riquezas en sus aljibes escondiendo explosivos de fondos federales, los otros se iban con riquezas de a ratos. La humedad anquilosada de los aljibes servía de bóveda secreta para la tristeza que estaría oculta a ojos que preferirán ignorar la tragedia. Las gotas gruesas, como de lluvia, parecían cebar la futura implosión. Pero no habría regreso. Hoy todos sabemos que Tepalcatepec explotó en 1985 sin saber de dónde salió la chispa que inició todo.

—Mija, ve fíjate en a ver si se fue tu marido con la Chupana, que después de trabajar se van a ver el fútbol a las canchas de la salida.

—Seguro que sí anda allá apá. Pero ahorita no puedo ir a buscarlo, mejor lo espero en la casa que estos dos todavía me dan mucha lata.

—Y los que vienen te darán más, si lo sabré yo.

—Ni me diga, apá.

—Con todas tus hermanas hemos tenido de sobra, hija.

—Dios sabe que aunque me amarguen la vida los querré hasta que lllore sangre.

—Y Dios quiera que nunca tengas hijas, Lanchito.

El sol, que por lo general rompía las piedras en Tierra Caliente, enrojecía el día en que Tepalcatepec explotara. Las ruedas de los carros comprados para demoler el futuro de Tierra Caliente cimbrarían las ventanas de todas las casas a la entrada de Tepeque. Lo que

permanecía sin moverse era la violencia que rendía tributo al pasado turbulento del pueblo. Las voces en la cuadra central se las llevaría el viento pero quedarían incrustadas en el lodo seco de sangre y tierra caliente.

—Pino, si no mueves esa combi te va a pesar, ya verás.

—Mira vale, no es que yo te quiera quedar mal contigo pero que yo deje la camionetita aquí; ya lo había hecho desde mucho antes de que llegaras a la administración de la ferretería. Pregúntale a tu tío por si no me crees, vale.

—Mira Pino, sólo te digo que te va a pesar.

—Te lo voy a decir una última vez, vale, yo no ando cuidándote tus negocios como para que me vengas a decir cómo tengo que llevar los míos, mejor la dejemos así. Tú tienes mucho que arreglar con los ingenieros que vienen de México y un montón de chingadera que guardar en el aljibe.

—Mira Pino, ese trato al fin y al cabo nos va a beneficiar a todos en el pueblo. Bien sabes que como comerciante uno tiene que hacer lo que puede para no morir de hambre. Además, de buenas a primeras, no te metas donde no te han llamado, vale.

—Lo mismo digo y ojalá que no llegue el día de mañana y no te pueda decir que lo que estás haciendo está de la patada, vale.

—Ya te dije, Pino, esto te va a pesar, ya verás.

—Vale, que me pese lo que me vaya a pesar, pero con las palabras en el cogote no me voy a quedar. Mejor que no andes con tus amenazas que bien sabes por dónde me las paso, vale. Mejor regrésate a cuidarle los pesos a tu tío que para eso te mandó al negocio.

—...

Mientras las piedras se atragantaban de sol, las llamas se escondían en los recovecos de Tierra Caliente, las luces se apagaban mientras las campanadas marcaban las últimas horas ese día.

Tepalcatepec explotó en 1985 y nadie supo quién fue el responsable.

El ruido de las baldosas se vencía ante la fuerza de la dinamita que desde un aljibe olvidado había concedido el pronto final de Tepalcatepec. Los gritos entre la tolvanera se confunden con los rechinidos del metal que perdía su fuerza.

Una madre corre
en la azotea sin
saber para dónde.

Un sillón se voltea
como si un manto
cubriera a una niña.

Un padre baja
con su hijo sin
encontrar una
salida.

La Tierra Caliente
cubre el amanecer y
entibia la verdad.

Los abuelos al
instante viajan
al otro lado del
techo.

Una hija seca su primera
lágrima.

La Muerte termina su
día con trece personas
y un pueblo herido.

Un hombre
madruga a
trabajar.

Una madre va al cerro
del cubilete con dos
críos y su marido.

Los camiones de la presa Chilatán salieron de Tepalcatepec en diciembre de 1989. El presidente Gortari celebró el gran logro. Nunca se encontraron los culpables de la noche en que Tepalcatepec explotó en 1985.

Caminos de selva

Suny Cárdenas-Gómez

Hay caminos en la selva
Que se cierran
A tus espaldas
Las ramas engañosas
Se parten ante tus pies
Pero encierran tus pasos
Hasta dejarte adentrada
En el corazón refractado
De una esmeralda palpitante
Cada punto de la rosa
El espejo de su vecino
Así que lleva contigo
Un frasco de agua fresca
Para que no te tienten
Las mieles silvestres
Un puñal de arena
De tu tierra natal
Así no pisarás
Tierras ajenas
Una cadena de huayruro
Y no necesitarás buscar
Los tesoros de la selva
Pero con todo y esto
Nunca regresarás
Por el camino que llegaste

Jungle Path

Suny Cárdenas-Gómez

There are paths through the jungle
Which close behind you
The treacherous vines
Part at your feet
But hedge your steps
Until they leave you deep
In the refracted heart
Of a beating emerald
Each point on the cardinal rose
The mirror of its neighbor
So bring with you
A flask of fresh water
To stay the temptations
Of the wild honey
A handful of sand
From your native land
That way you will not walk
On foreign ground
A chain of huayruro
And you will not need to seek
The jungle's treasures
But even with all this
You will never return
From the way you came



B-BOY 2017

Mario Loprete

Oil on concrete, 20 x 100 cm

Alessandra

Sebastian Santiago

Once,
as children we played
in a storm in the field
beside my grandparent's farm
in Puerto Rico.

We danced barefoot in the mud
to an imaginary tune,
the rains washing us,
cleansing the filth from our flesh,
letting it run, like a destiny,
to the river nearby.

Years later,
while visiting the island,
my family spoke of her as if in ailment,
like someone on a street corner in heels
who hisses at you as you walk by,
like someone huddled beneath a bridge,
their hands trembling with the lighter;

the pipe's dim glow
floating in the shadow.
The last time I saw her,
she slept in her bed
while the rest of the family had dinner.
Her child lay stirring in the crib beside.

Addiction,
when that dull love deep inside of us,
pressed against our bones, catches fire;
a burning of blood-grease
that even the rains can't extinguish.

I looked upon her;
a pile of bones
barely there beneath her blanket,
like that which I'd left tucked beneath my napkin
at the dinner table.

Digging for Lost Temples

David Estringel

Thumbing through *The Borderlands*, I can't help but feel not "brown" enough. I'm Mexican Lite. Got a case of the "coconuts." There are no rageful battle-cries inflaming this breast.

No bitterness lingering on the tip of the tongue (the back of hands and the starch of white collars taste just the same no matter the bearer's color).

No tortured soul, longing for identity and re-appropriation. Just me and this suit of rosy-beige meat that touts my value best in the dead of winter.

"If you're not pissed, you aren't paying attention," some people say. Others, "We're nothing but second-class citizens—wetbacks—to them!" (My back dried three generations ago!)

Then, there's all this talk of The Wall, as if one had actually never existed before in the first place.

How funny people are when the invisible begin to reflect the Spectrum of Things in the cruel clarity of daylight—ancient atrocities shining, unforgivingly, like newly minted coins under brusque fluorescents. When did symbols become more real than the things they represented? (Maybe around the same time 'detention centers' and 'concentration camps' meant different things?) "Better them than me," I would think to myself. "Everyone's got to hate someone, right?"

Call it apathy. Detachment.

Indifference. Call it what you like, but don't let an absence of tears convey a treason of the flesh. I know where I come from and where my people have been. I am one of the many brown bodies that was piled in heaps, used as target practice by Texas Rangers that stood proudly before them, posing for photographs. I swung low from sturdy boughs in the Southwest, proving Strange Fruit—plucked in all its hues and flavors—tastes coppery and bitter in Life's maw. I starved outside with the rest of the dogs, staring into diner windows—mind, body, and spirit consumed—barred from entry, wanting for crumbs. The narrative's my own, but the story remains the same.

I'm no one's *machisto*, gangbanger, Latin lover, wetback, or Spic. I am no one's pimp, *Sancho*, *caballero*, or *maricón*. I can't roll my Rs, I hate tequila, and I don't code switch. Sheepskins—paid by my own coin—adorn my walls, not holographic portraits of "The Last Supper" or La Santa Muerte adorned with plastic red roses from the dollar store. I am not "spicy" like something that is novelly consumed. And I—a being, self-determined, not cast from a vulgar mold—respect God's will as much as

he respects mine (which doesn't say much).

The blood of peasants and slaves, warriors and kings run through our veins. Our ears once heard gods' whispers through the rustling of leaves in the breeze and the trickling of streams over time-smoothed stones. We rode the winds—the sun kissing our backs (not breaking them) — as we flew through fields of pale azure upon Serpent's wings, over treetops and verdant expanses. We ate our enemies' courage and drank victor's wine with lips, stained red, from their skulls. (So, step back with your 'tallboys' and that Four Lokos jive!) This is what lies beneath the skin. Melanin be damned! We are the sons and daughters of Earth and Sky, Aztec Temples of Sun and Moon, buried beneath blanched soil, crowned by cathedrals—papal tiaras anointed by brown blood that pepper the land like so many gravestones.

Remember?!

So, I pray to the Archangel Anzaldua to help me find my lost sovereignty—my words wafting up into the clouds on velvety smoke ropes of sandalwood incense and braided sweetgrass. Tears of honey fall from Heaven upon my

skin, feeding cuts and scrapes no one (not even I) can see. Unfolding her rainbow-hued wings, like Hebe on Olympus, she descends with arms outstretched and an angelic smile. Face-to-face, she pulls me close, blesses my forehead with champurrado-scented kisses then tugs at my ear and says with the fire of cinnamon on her tongue, "*Huerco*, just love the skin you're in!"

Cajeta (Gimme Some Sweet!)

David Estringel

“Gimme some sweet!”
we scream
blessed by your MAD words
BAD words
GLAD words
SAD
letting them scorch palates
y quemar nuestros labios
like Holy Wafers
in the Devil’s mouth.
Give us a taste
of life
your *loco*—
salty and caramel-kissed—
with every candy-flip of the page
forming crystallizations
of lithium-pink
opiate rock (candy)
on dripping tips of *lenguas*
(so ready)
that hunger for the taste
of sweet poets’ milk
melting rains of *cajeta*
upon wanting chins and souls
under hot breaths of your WICKED verse.

“Gimme some sweet!”
gritamos
longing for a fix—
ecstatic
spasmodic
orgasms—
of your word-sugar
(*tus palabras dulces*)

their velvety, fatal stabs
to the heart
(*mi corazón*)
and the backs of throats
(releasing bad blood and MAD words)
like glistening Astro Pops
sharpened and honed
by the spit and rolling tongues
of PrOphETS—
their anointing mouths
and bleeding pens
working their *brujería*—
confectionate necromancies—
upon lifeless eardrums
y ánimas
that languished bitterly
in reductive states
of silent subtraction.

C'mon...

Gimme some sweet!
(Some candied teats to suckle)
Gimme some sweet!
(Sticky trickles of sanctified honey-nectar)
Gimme some sweet!
(*El fuego...el alma en mi sangre*)
Gimme some sweet!
(Good, proper skull-fucks that inject your Truths)
Gimme some sweet!
(A case of “the sugars” that never felt so good)
Ándale! Dame tu dulce
y no me dejes aquí estropeado!
(Don't leave me here CRASHING)

Burn

David Estringel

Life is slow

here in a border town
where lazy palms
scantly twitch in dead breezes—
dry and pollen-choked.
Everywhere.
Nowhere.
Cattle,
brown against my hand
and an expanse of cloudless blue,
meander aimlessly,
chewing cud
that never quite hits the spot.
Their eyes, like minds—
blank—
close to things made new
by the blessing of the sun,
cast downward
upon cracks and clods of grey clay
underfoot,
where a fire burns beneath the ground.

Life is slow
here in a border town,
where—in-kind—
like a shadow
I wait for a shift,
the balm of a breeze
to kiss the delicate yellow from the
retama
and pave my road.
Everywhere.
Nowhere.

Noon rages overhead
(Devil's at the crossroads)
as flames whip and lick the sky,
beckoning
just beyond the watery promise
of the horizon.
So, I close my eyes
here in this border town—
everywhere,
nowhere—
seeing white and the blood
that courses through my veins,
dig my toes into the ground, and
slowly burn.

Lista de contribuidores

Originaria de Cartago, Costa Rica, **Martha Eugenia Bieber** es profesora jubilada. Para ella, las acuarelas revelan secretos, y el acrílico cuenta cuentos. Actualmente reside en Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Suny Cárdenas-Gómez es una escritora Cubana que forma parte de la comunidad LGBTQ+. Ella vive en los Estados Unidos. Suny escribe poemas en español que luego traduce al inglés. Sus temas recurrentes incluyen la identidad, espiritualidad y el amor. Publicó una obra de no-ficción corta en *Legacy* este año.

Carisa Coburn Pineda es costarricense y estadounidense. Se graduó de Occidental College en estudios comparativos de inglés y en literatura en español. Recibió su maestría en escritura creativa de la Universidad de Maryland, College Park. Vive en Burke, Virginia con su familia.

David Estringel es un poeta y escritor que vive en la ciudad de Temple, Tejas. También es el autor de la colección de poemas y cuentos, *Indelible Fingerprints*, y dos chapbooks *Punctures* y *Peripheries*.

Mario Loprete: “I live in a world that I shape at my liking, throughout

a virtual pictorial and sculptural movement, transferring my experiences, photographing reality throughout my filters, refined from years of research and experimentation. Painting for me is the first love. An important, pure love.”

Darilys Matos Acevedo es una maestra y poeta nacida y criada en Puerto Rico que lleva viviendo en Massachusetts los últimos 5 años. Tiene una maestría en publicación, literatura, y escritura, y un bachillerato en Enseñanza de Inglés a Hispanoparlantes en conjunto con un grado en literatura en inglés.

Lovely Mosqueda Ramírez es una Freshman en Springdale, Arkansas. Es miembro de la banda y logró el estatus de All Region. Le gusta escribir, escuchar música y hacer/mirar arte. En el futuro, su intención es ser una persona que otros miren y digan “you quiero ser como ella.”

Rosario Nolasco-Schultheiss es originaria de la ciudad de México. Ha sido profesora en UAFS por dieciocho años dictando mayormente clases de idioma español, y de cultura y literatura latinoamericana. En sus últimos años, Rosario ha descubierto un incremental interés en escribir poesía y ficción. En dar voz a sus ideas.

Marcos Pico Rentería. Profesor asistente de español en Defense Language Institute. Su investigación se centra en literatura latinoamericana, principalmente en torno al desarrollo del cuento y ensayo en la producción mexicana de la segunda mitad del siglo XX y comienzos del XXI. En cuanto a sus intereses principales se encuentra el grupo literario mexicano Crack y el comienzo ensayístico de Jorge Volpi.

Dani Putney es un poeta raro y filipino de Sacramento. Sus escritos aparecen en varias revistas, incluyendo *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *Ghost City Review*, *Marías at Sampaguitas* y *The Matador Review*. Dani vive con sus tres perros y dos gatos en el desierto de Nevada.

Cecilia Rodríguez Milanés nació en NJ de padres cubanos. Sus cuentos, ensayos, y poesía han sido publicados en revistas como *Acentos*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Flash Fiction*, *Saw Palm*, *Kweli Journal*, y *Guernica*. Ha publicado dos colecciones de cuento, *Oye What I'm Gonna Tell You* y *Marielitos, Balseiros, and Other Exiles*.

Sebastian Santiago es originario de San Juan, Puerto Rico, pero creció a las afueras de Detroit, MI. Obtuvo su título de inglés en la Universidad Central de Michigan, donde el enfoque de sus estudios fue la escritura creativa con

concentración en poesía. Sus publicaciones se pueden encontrar en *The Emerson Review*, *Poetry South*, *Up North Lit*, *Scoundrel Time*, *BMPVoices* y *West Trade Review*.

Edurne Sosa El Fakih nació un lunes de 1995. No se puede decir que su éxito se debe a sus cualidades como profesional, supervisora de chistes, doctoranda en siestas y académica de la lluvia; todos sus logros son inspirados en alguien que los hizo mejor. Actualmente vive en Miami, terminando una novela interminable.

Annaya Uberoi es ingeniera afincada en Madrid. Es editora de poesía en *The Bookends Review*, ganadora del Concurso de poesía de Singapur y nominada Best of Net. Su trabajo ha aparecido en *The Birmingham Arts Journal*, *The Bangalore Review* y *The Loch Raven Review*. www.anannyauberoi.com

Roxy Wylie estudia historia en la Universidad de Arkansas – Fort Smith. Le interesa la historia de los Estados Unidos y su relación con España y las colonias en América Latina, especialmente en la edad de revoluciones. Le encanta el idioma español y disfruta de escribir poemas para expresar sus experiencias con la lengua.

Engage in Culture with the UAFS World Languages Department

The literary magazine *Azahares* forms part of the array of professional opportunities which the World Languages Department at the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith provides its students and the greater region. The Bachelor of Arts in Spanish prepares students to meet the qualifications for employment opportunities in medical, business and government service, as well as to complete graduate work in Spanish. As part of the graduation requirement, semester study-abroad options provide Spanish majors the opportunity to immerse themselves in the language and culture of Latin America.

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For more information on the World Languages Department at UAFS, please feel free to contact Dr. Mary A. Sobhani, Department Head at Mary.Sobhani@uafs.edu. Visit us at www.uafs.edu or find us on Facebook @UAFS-World Languages Department and @UAFS Azahares.

Azahares 2022

Call for Submissions

Submission Deadline: Nov 1, 2021

All written submissions must be primarily in Spanish, or if in English, they must thematically reflect Latino culture. All artwork and photography must reflect the culture of the Spanish-speaking world.

Anticipated publication date for this edition of Azahares is Spring 2022.

General Submission Requirements and Guidelines:

On-line submissions only through Submittable.com:

<https://azaharesliterarymagazine.submittable.com/submit>

Poetry Submission Requirements:

Poems must be submitted in the page layout intended for publication
100-line maximum per poem

Prose Submission Requirements:

3,500 maximum word count

Artwork/Photography Submission Requirements:

Color and black-and-white submissions are accepted

Indicate medium used on the submission form (watercolors, oils,
digital photography, etc.)

Save as .jpg or .png file, with as high a resolution as possible
(between 300 and 1200 dpi)



Fabri Fibra - in cemento veritas

Mario Loprete
Oil on concrete

Lo que diferencia azar
de azahar, lo que hace
que el uno no huela
a nada y el otro sí, es
la h, que es una h de
perfumería.

— Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Greguerías



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