



ENJAMBED



California State University
DOMINGUEZ HILLS

ENJAMBED

Enjambment

The continuation of the sentence without pause beyond the end of a line, couplet, or stanza.

Enjambed Multi-Literacy Mission Statement

Enjambed is a Multi-Literacy Magazine composed of creative works including, but not limited to poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and art. Enjambed is a collaborative effort among different departments on campus. Members from the English Graduate Association work together with the support of the English Department to select individual works for publication. Together with the Art and Design Department, the English Graduate Association chooses and designs a yearly issue that is distributed across campus. Enjambed encourages all current and former CSUDH students to submit their work for consideration. Enjambed not only provides CSUDH students with the platform to publish their work, but it creates opportunities for students to manage and participate in the publication process.

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A Note from the Editors

We were scared at first. Scared of the massive endeavor we were charged to undertake. But we maintained a clear idea of what we wanted Enjambé to be: an outlet for the myriad voices present on our campus. California State University Dominguez Hills is such a diverse place, and not just ethnically and culturally. We wanted Enjambé to reflect the beauty of our differences while celebrating our unity. Yet oftentimes amongst other CSUs, our campus is written-off and ignored. So we wanted to disrupt previous notions associated with students from Dominguez Hills. We wanted to carve our identity.

The theme, *A View from [Here]*, is an attempt to assert our collective voice—a way of reminding the rest of the CSU community, and the city, that we are here, and we are flourishing. The stories that fill these pages are a creative reflection of our students' efforts, capabilities, and endurance. Each narrative and image gives voice to a unique perspective, and each challenges us to think about the places we inhabit.

This year, CSUDH celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Watts Rebellion. Some of the work within this book features our students' tributes to the uprising that gave us a university in Dominguez Hills. While honoring the past, we hoped this issue would also underscore a counter-narrative exemplified by our campus' very existence as a place of intellectual liberation. This book serves as both a testament to the wonderful communities that define our campus and as an affirmation of our realities.

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POETRY

Poem of Us

Toumik Asatoorian

Let's run through the empty halls of castles,
Hands clasped tightly together,
Let the echoes of our feet ring like sirens in the night
And I will chase you like a dream.
When the sun rises in the morning
Run faster, because we will outrun it.

And if we are separated,
Through long forgotten passages
Just scream my name and let your voice guide me
Through silent halls
Your words will be like breadcrumbs left behind,
I will pick up the letters and syllables off the stone floor.
And follow them to you, but you are gone.

The pond outside is a mirror holding our memories,
Each teardrop ripples them away.
I dive headfirst and for a moment forget everything
The splash slowly settles and there I am
Immersed once more with smiles, movie stubs, sleepless nights
and that first kiss.

I dry myself off with the towel of tomorrow,
Toss it over some branch and leave that pond behind,
I know it will always be there ready for me to dip once more
But for now I move forward, the memories still dripping with each
step.

Where I'm From

Devin Bell

You can buy Border dogs - bacon wrapped hot dogs
(that good ish) - on the street at 2:30 am; Heavens'
scent

You can buy crack and black tar heroin - an illicit
cocktail (that good fix) on the street at 9 am;
Hell's spent

Studios film movies; headliners, headshots, dream big,
big shots, silver screen glory, lights, camera, action!
Coming attractions. Picture rhymes.

Children chase ice cream trucks; pushcarts, Pushpops,
peddlepushers, mistuned musical stories, never
grow up, cone or cup? Summer time.

Jacaranda petals drop, spotting and dotting the suburban
sidewalks; warm, welcoming, branched
awnings lean

Traffic mixes, winding and grinding against the bound
concrete; old Converse calling cards hanging canvas
the scene

Hidden subway graveyards and lost orange groves
below, ghostlands gone gradually under the mean
moan, below my hometown. Resounding. Profound
then leaving incomplete memories to burn.

I'm a west coast girl

I'll never forget how you feel, no matter where I go in
the world

Los Angeles, You stained my heart like late night french fries or
pancake scrambles from any Denny's or Norm's and
hit me hard like the bowling balls on the refurbished
Gage Lanes

Los Angeles, I know you like I know my family and my friends,
I know you'll change but always be the same

Cookie Dough

Brenda Bran

Tengo miedo

I don't know what the next step is
I hold off real life cause I don't know what I want
Twenty-three years and I still can't figure it out

I'm not cookies yet, I'm still baking--right Buffy?

Leo todo, but I don't understand it
I'm almost done and you say I'm qualified
Qualified for what?

Puedo hablar de libros y escribir hasta que mis dedos sangren
But I'm no more qualified to do anything than the dude at the
liquor store who sells me my pack of cigarettes

I listen to you speak about the issues that plague humanity
And I'm into it—I am. I am. I really am. I am?
Y que?

What happens next?
Do I write a paper that will in some way change humanity,
publish it, and live off the royalties?

[Escribir? There's no money in that. Go into nursing. That way
you can get a job...lots of jobs in nursing]
She was right, but I didn't care.

Y ahora que?

I can communicate effectively—that's marketable right?

Pero en que?

*Cuando me pregunta, what are you doing with the rest of your
life?*

hablo rapido and use overly complicated words to confuse you
You stare, and I stave off tears

Je suis ici and view is one of confusion and fear.

The Port of San Pedro

Naomi Cahill

While I lay in bed the ships come and go
To the ports of the world's many places
The day is still dark and the foghorns blow
Fading wakes are the ship's only traces.

San Pedro is a seaport of the world
Many ships sail into her "angel's gate"
The wooden docks where many lines are curled
Are jammed with ships while those at anchor wait

Lumber schooners and fishing boats return
Their waterlines low from all that's inside
Unloaded while the midnight candles burn
They'll leave at early morning's highest tide

The port stays the same all night and all day
San Pedro's scenes and sounds are here to stay

Out and About

Sal Casas

It's Friday night and let's see what's goin' down
So me and the crew gone roll up and roll out
to the spots where we look up to the clouds
And no doubt I be thinking bout shit before they taking me out
Will it be from the gun or the gavel no matter the situation
I'm just having a time fuck a hassle being destroyed by water
displacement
Its dark in my mind so is outside
It's a good time to post and talk about the 9 to 5's
How we runnin up a system to chase nickels and dimes
We losin' time to run around like canines thinking everything is
fine
Trying to see what's the punchline
Me? Im in it to see a different place where if I stepped outside I'd
exchange air for grace
Im falling back into my mind and think
When the world will hit its brink
Will we float as ash or be in chairs screaming at the shrink

Poetry

The Boy from Boyle and Whittier

Emmanuel Flores

I was a boy looking for coins on the floor
With my plastic toys
Then the cops come to the door
I flew over to my uncle's house

I saw magazines with baby birds
My tongue was sore
I was looking for coins
Watching blue frames on the wall

I stole a map from the floor
I was a bird looking out the window
The streetlights were too bright
I'm wingless bird with no mouth

Age Seventeen

Ebony Haywood

Age Seventeen

Ryan Logan—

dead

at the age of

seventeen.

I don't give a fuck about my life,

He said to me

weeks before

he was shot to death

on the streets of

his neighborhood, his place of birth, his community, his history.

His identity

is now another statistic,

another African American misfit

that we'll bury

and tell ourselves that nothing could have been done to save

America's

son.

Ryan Logan,

dead

at the age of seventeen.

Up, on a Hill

Felicia Martinez

The heat today was unbearable. Misty warmth hung around my neck like an anchor. As lovely as I am, I am no hothouse orchid and humidity is not my scene.

I was uneasy and my mind turned to strange thoughts tinged with the tropics. I parted the banana leaves in my mind and walked into a lovely state of somnolence, the kind of relaxation that allows you to see through the day's clutter.

The soft cool breeze came through my window and over my face. Finally, I could breathe again. Sounds of Chet Baker floated into my ears drowning out those damned parrots.

The room was dark except for the street lamps pouring sodium through the curtains. The light on my MacBook pulsed like a heart, beating beating beating, casting a soft glow on the wall behind it. I curled up on the sofa thinking bad thoughts about good men. My eyelids didn't stand a chance.

My breathing slowed to match the rhythm of the light. Sleep was near. What would await me in my dreams, what lessons would I learn, and who would come to visit me? A flash of gray fur and the twitch of a tail bright me back to reality.

I guess I could pick this back up tomorrow night.

Professional*Rudy Marquez*

When I walk around campus, people feel my presence,
Not because I walk with overwhelming confidence,
But because of what I wear.

Students confuse me as a professor,
Like I have the same education and wisdom,
As if I've been given that caliber of knowledge.
Professors view me as accomplished, self-disciplined,
Successful, and deserving.

When I walk around my city, people feel my presence,
Not because I walk with overwhelming confidence,
But because of what I wear.

Women view me as stable, safe, secure,
As if I'm the gentle knight, ridding them of
Neglect and pain.

Men view me as trusting, genuine,
And most importantly, loyal.

When I walk around my home, no one feels my presence,
Not because I walk with no confidence,
But because my appearance makes it worse.

The mirror is the only honest soul.
The mirror shows a felon, thief,
Cheater, con, and most importantly,
A loyal liar. If only I could have eyes
Like the city and campus.

On a Covetous Love of the Tongue

Kimberly Miller

It belongs to me – this white page full of words – the
sounds and symbols,
Latinated, orthographically disputable – it,
they, all of them,
belong to me.

Oceans were crossed on ships
to make it bend to my will – cabins
full of night-hued limbs,
cabins full and sick,
spaces ravaged,
colored by another worldly sun
all the way to Atlantic sands splattered with
the red of my mothers...
footsteps and cotton blooms,
hardened fingers, toes, backs
and lashings fit for lips,
each made it mine own tongue.

This belongs to me – your English
belongs to me now – no longer
yours alone, see – I've already dipped
my toe
in its chlorine-laced pool.

Elegba and Oshun,
salty things and Great Migrations – Oklahoma,
Texas, Tennessee – looking for Earth
in Watts and just north of 90th – awarded this
to me.
Whether it be bent by my perpetual “be”
or skewered by my double negative,
there's no way this ain't mine.

It belongs to me like the hook of the hood
and the round forever of the sunglasses you wear

in the dark of the subway station – all of it,
curves and shards,
belongs on this tongue and in this hand,
my shot of soju on your hottest summer day.
From the coasts of the Pacific and
all the way to the crown of my kinky-haired
head – here among graffiti cures and curses – it all
belongs to me.

Flower and dirt, leaf and root
can't take their shapes from my lips;
neither can the particulars of your prescriptive
or your literary canon, sunbathing in Granada Hills,
reddened now, browned now, burned black,
the inevitable ring of dirty light that is
the streetlamp glow half-heartedly illuminating
a spot,
two feet wide,
of Central Avenue.
Like the reek of pepper parts
seeping from Tampico Company's graying walls
in the morning
they follow me, hungry little children,
loyal as dogs,
enchanted
because my voice makes their shapes sound like songs.

These are mine, these are mine – they
are no longer yours alone.
These are mine,
these are mine.
Can you hear it, too?

I

Kyle Moreno

balloon animals
ride the inflatable ark
strung to a clown's wrist.

II

Kyle Moreno

the lone spork asserts
itself in the silverware –
new mighty hybrid.

27

Amanda Powell

How long this life
that an average artist might
long for posthumous recognition

in lieu of feeling ecstasy from
one moment of high, bleeding
into the merciless self-hatred

necessitated by the next.
Why wait in line at Starbucks
when, baby blue, still smoldering

American Spirits- you
didn't understand
that We
are inextricably intertwined,
like strands
of DNA, or the flyaway

wisps in a
young girl's pigtails:
Us, you, me, and the absurdity

of reading your eulogy -
At 27. I'm 28 now,
You - three months older, than

Me- exactly. So what then,
you thought you could be 27
forever?

I said things, at your cliffside funeral,
two blocks from the high school,
that night
poetic things,
like:

"I can't imagine you resting in peace,
you had far too much to finish."

And we wore those shirts you used to silk screen
with your face on them, in the style
of Obama's HOPE campaign

Hope. Wish you'd held onto her,
a bit harder. I know she's an elusive
bitch,

but, the apex

of the Vincent Thomas
Bridge, you daft mother fucker,
you truly believed yourself to be

Jesus Christ reincarnated,

With perhaps a dash
of Kurt Cobain too.
How can I continue
to pine for the ashes

of both a good friend,
whose truth countered my
whimsy

and a narcissist,
I thought I knew.
Nothing new- no one new, pain recycled.

Still hard to digest,
I could try to convert you
to reason, to Buddhism

to make you see the hole
you left, in the Us,
when you mistakenly hit pavement-

not water, 250 feet below.

Why,
do I force myself to
think about blood splatter, irreparably
broken bones,

and:
what if it wasn't instantaneous?

Shhhh...remember when
we crawled side by side
into and through this four letter word,

This obscenity called Life?
Crawling first in the house with the yellow tub
neighbors, babies...and then, too soon,

Bar crawls, crawling across continents
Why'd you have to jump
off the train, so early?

You fought the hard fight, Ryan;
that constantly learning,
blazing, burning,
limit spurning

mind of yours battled depths and heights
few can fathom.
I know, I've been there too.

But why did you leave me
to cry myself
to sleep at your grandmother's house,
drunk, hysterical...holding onto your

poor, poor, mother, and your
last pack of cigarettes. I cried myself to sleep,
at your grandmother's house, that night

and the next, and on your birthday,

The third of June, 1987. Well, I
should be getting back to work...
but I keep hearing "pavement"

each time my coworkers say payment.
Paid with your life. What kind of mistake
could possibly warrant such a heavy toll?

By the way, I wish I could call you to chat,
let you know that
I think my boyfriend is trying to break up
With me,

You would have had some good advice,
about all that nonsense. I'd have loved to know
your snarky opinion on the matter- not

that you really believed in love.
That's okay, I'm not so sure I do either.
The love of a brother, yes.
The love of a mother, yes.
But not the possessive love
of a lover.

Which is funny, because
mine
asked me, the other day

as we were rolling rocks,
dice faced at the video poker lounge
Did you love him?
And I could say

..of course,
but not like that.
You fool, you were always teaching me something
Even in passing, you've taught me

to be careful. To check the surf forecast

before riding the highs,
lest I get pummeled by waves
caught in an undertow of unreality and lust

Just-
know that I'll be looking for you
under
every night sky we've ever stood beneath,

Whether apart or side by side in space,
forever together in some nook of our hearts.

Parts of Speech, Slurred by the Sea

Amanda Powell

It felt normal to frolic
around with of above all about within his
presuppositions,
To pick up shells with her toes, in winter-
fling them towards the foam
While flirting with the waves
and cavorting with the tide,
in arabesques and fish dives.

You spoke to me in superlatives
It was the best, and sometimes, the worst,
but always- the most.

Untitled I*Amanda Powell*

I need a man who speaks to me
in poetry,
below an awning
sewn of star

A man who speaks,
(to me!!)
in poetry, never yawning,
Never far.

Who speaks to me, in poetry?
Over yonder, there you are!

The man who bequeaths
to me
myself, as seen,
through eyes betraying awe.

IV

Javier Radillo

I was busy outside trying to figure out a
Worm
one afternoon.
My Father called me in
His breath was brown with whiskey.
He sat me down and lit his cigarette,
“Son, I’m gonna give ya some advice
That’ll save you a shit load’a troubles, ya listenin’?”
I looked down at my white-muddied shoes
“listen-
If you don’t love her—don’t fuck ‘er.”

I didn’t listen.

V

Javier Radillo

The woman sat there,
Wrapped in incense covered shawls of navy,
Violet and black.
Amethyst and quartz hung from her neck in
Chunk-laces.
She told me to uncross my legs,
 “keeps me from seeing good.”
She held my palm in her hands,
Age hadn’t loosened her grip.
She traced out the lines that crossed and
splintered. She hesitated
at the mount of Venus,
her violet eyes narrowed and
the furrow in her brow softened and saddened
she didn’t look at me,
 “I see no one.”

Los niños de la tierra

Zoe Ramirez

My father would take us with him to cut people's grass—
we helped water the flowers and cut trees.
At the end of the day my brother and I would pile
in next to him on the black vinyl bench of his '63

Chevy and watch him shift the gears
from up behind the steering wheel,
sifting through his motions to comprehend
how he knew to shift and when.

At home, we pulled the lawnmower and edger off
the truck bed using a cracked wooden plank as a ramp,
sometimes rushing down too quickly
breaking again and again the worked old wood.

*Take your time while you have it.
You'll need that wood to make my box later.*

I would watch my brother ignore this warning
and dig into the yard with his new splinter
waiting for los niños de la tierra° to crawl out
white and translucent from deep saturated roots.

Déjalos. They will keep me company soon.

Before my brother could try to destroy
their impossible bloodless bodies, I would fold them
back into the earth like seeds, burying them again
in the portent stillness

where they might wait
to grow into life, I waiting for my father to see
this meticulous repair of the niños tierra,
to show him I understood.

Swapmeet Stories: #5

Zoe Ramirez

It was always the blind accordionist
to greet you and occasionally
a white-suited Catholic missionary
with his change bucket.

It was the old woman squeezing *agua fresca*
that smelled like holy water
on your fingers after church,

the child suddenly lost
in the crowd and his mother's frantic
realization

it was always the talking the rapid beats
in tune in time in sounds from within

holding us all
together in a streaming river
of people with dark hair
and deep eyes, with deep roots
in southern lands they might never see
again

except

in the faces passing the blind accordionist
always there to greet you.

Swapmeet Stories: #13

Zoe Ramirez

You would dress me like we were going to misa
in shoes too white and dress too short
for the a slip that covered my too-long legs.

“We are going to see Hosanna,”
the curandera that released your tears
with her long winding smile,

until you, mother, would apologetically stifle.
Hosanna would come out from behind her stand
to cure you of your burden.

I would busy myself reading labels on each
plastic package of herbal remedy:
Yerba buena. Uña de gato. Diente de león.

And slowly I would inch my way back to your familiar arm,
brown and writhing with the sinuous roads
of incessant blood within.

Except that day the arm wasn't yours.
I cradled the tightened limb for a moment, afraid to look up
at Hosanna who looked down to me

with her long winding smile
that told me
you are free too.

The Moon is Down at Union Station

Hector Reyes

and there is an old ghost at the train stop,
an old black man leaning back in the bench,
a charcoal sketch in the pre-dawn light,
the white blur of a newspaper face down
in his lap. I do not want him to turn
to see his eyes, only whites, the color
of sun bleached teeth.
I stand behind him until
the train howls down the tracks, heralded with red lights.

The old man is gone, the newspaper
still on the bench. I pick it up as
I walk past, the train is almost empty
an old woman sleeping on the second tier.

Poetry

Looking through the window I can see
the moon is out again,
beside it are two other planets, glimmering
distant scraps of carbon and silica suspended flashing below
its dull weight, traveling despite their
stillness, rolling over out in the cold, spinning madly,
I know, even after they have vanished from my sight.

Me is My Culture

Jennifer Roseblade

Point of view
Déjà vu,
The city trembles right in front
Of you.
Like a body, it impresses,
And offends.
The hills are its tresses,
The lapping waves its conscience,
The sometimes starry sky, its treasure.
Homelessness is real:
Streets lined with tents
And shopping carts full of possessions.
Walls where some sit and lean and shit.
In LA are enmeshed power and submission,
Heavy money and free spirits.
Both burdened by the past,
Yet, pushed towards the future.
Amidst the art, the traffic, the food,
There are people mulling.
Some consider 401ks, some their next meal,
More obscure than these,
Some reflect on their identity.

The busyness with work is not enough
To satisfy being.
Education is plentiful, with loans to spare,
Yet, it does not quite fill the void.
Maybe ancestry can complete
The idea of me.
Great grandparents from Germany,
From Sweden,
From Mexico.
A complete recipe for
No culture.
I am something.
Yet, I am nothing.

However, my dreams still make waves and
I will not be rendered by this lack &
Some shout Italian!
Some, Latino!
Others, European!
I admire them all,
Even the ones who suffer social judgment,
Because they are something.
I am me.
Me is my culture
In this trembling city.

Where we come from

Jon Sebastian

We named our children after towns,
But didn't give them a map to find themselves.
Now they scour the big city streets
When the sun goes down,
With listless eyes
And blistered feet...
Searching their veins for a way home.

Untitled with Noise*Ashley Smith*

There was a strong swoosh of motion,
accelerating
with intense speed as my eyes
followed the pencil, abruptly.
My fingers grasped it harshly and
intensively
without making the mistake of letting it
bounce off the wooden table.
In my near left,
the popping echo from
Julie's gum made its way into the ramble of my thoughts.
I had to endure it for the next
several minutes until 2:00.
Resting my chin in the palm of my hand, my eyes
danced, swiftly, across the room at the others
who were internally battling sleep or
the ones who were rushing with words
over words.
Paper planes flew with a motor sound that followed
the lips of laughter.
I ducked for safety.
A guy, peculiarly dressed, emanated gas sounds
from his mouth.
As if he were mating for his own.
My head rested on the table,
Mr. Pen's words...began...to...fade away...
My eyelids began increasing in weight as my
surrounding
became blurry.
Then the bell rang.

“Así Era Doña Carmen”

M. De Sol

Así era Doña Carmen; llegó con el perfume de una mañana de primavera, con la tenacidad del perfume del mirto, con la rebeldía de las orquídeas de invierno, con corazón galopante y fiero,

Así era Doña Carmen; con su caminar erguido e impetuoso parecía desafiar al viento mismo, al candente sol de verano, a la furiosa tormenta,

Su figura enigmática y firme semejaba la metáfora empecinada del eterno camino; de melancólica voz, cual la voz adolorida del ave en una lluviosa y agonizante tarde de invierno,

Así era Doña Carmen; de rostro sereno y de mirada cansada, cuando se sentaba pareciese que el mundo mismo descansase con ella, cuando se ponía de pie el mundo parecía ponerse de pie para ella,

Así era Doña Carmen; dama de pocas palabras, de mirar sereno que poseía el alma, de corazón abrazador, y de infinita tibieza,

De tez morena y de largo cabello azabache que pareciese abrazarla al caminar, Así era Doña Carmen; su llegada iluminó el instante, eterno amor despertó en su Padre, arrebato en su Madre, admiración incesante desató en extraños,

Se fue en una caprichosa y sombría tarde de verano, digna y valiente, vivió vehementemente, amó incansablemente,

Así era Doña Carmen; parecía detenerse el tiempo como si quisiese irse con ella, el perfume del salvaje mirto se desvanecía, las azaleas gemían en su rincón, las orquídeas se marchitaban silenciosas,

Se detuvo el rebelde sol y el vaivén incesante del viejo camino como para regalarle un fugaz minuto de caricia...

Así era Doña Carmen...Dama valiente como ninguna...Dama amada como ninguna...Dama eterna...*mi ABUELA*...

“That’s How Doña Carmen was”

That was Doña Carmen; she came with the scent of a spring morning, with the tenacity of the myrtle perfume, with the defiance of orchids in the winter, of galloping and fierce heart,

That was Doña Carmen, with her impetuous and firm walk seemed to defy the wind itself, the sizzling summer sun, the raging storm,

Her mythical figure resembled the everlasting metaphor of the obstinate road, of melancholic voice, as the distressing voice of the bird on a dying and rainy winter afternoon,

That was Doña Carmen, of serene face and profound gaze, when she sat down it seemed that the world itself rested with her, and when she rose the world seemed to rise for her,

That was Doña Carmen; lady of wise words, of tranquil eyes that possessed the souls, of blazing heart and infinite warmth,

Of long onyx hair embracing her selfless silhouette,
That was Doña Carmen, inspired the moment she came, eternal love awakened in her father, uncontrollable anguish in her mother, incessant torrent of admiration she was blessed of,

She vanished in a capricious and dreary summer afternoon, dignified and spirited; vehement she lived, loved tireless,

That was Doña Carmen, time seemed to cease as if to go with her, the perfume of the wild myrtle seemed to fade away, azaleas wilted in their corner, orchids wilted in profound silent,

The rebel sun and the incessant existence of the old road stopped in a timeless mythical moment of anguish ... as to give her a fugacious minute of a tenuous caress [Se detuvo el rebelde sol y el vaivén incesante del viejo camino como para regalarle un fugaz minuto de angustiante caricia],

That was Doña Carmen ... fearless and beloved lady as no one ... eternal lady ... my Grandmother ... mi ABUELA ...

Sisterwife

Christine Walker

My partner in tiki crime

The person that shops with me with both of us finding nothing
Sharknado. SyFy channel. 3G sharks. All of them.

Blasters. Damned. Capt Sensible. Say wot.

Girl dates

Hairdresser soulmates

My been there done that better snark buddy

The bravest woman I know – because we know our fears

Tying to lose my selfishness yet wanting to hold on

I remember the conversation at Lawry's Carvery in SCP before
the Blaster

And being amazed

The calmness you approach life with – good and bad

The dark moments

Austin. The start of new. It is fitting it starts with A

My soul cries out alone missing you already, but I won't let you
see it now

There are others that will miss you. Some more than me, some
in different ways.

It is not like you are moving to another planet.

Cell phones texting Facebook airplanes welcome to the modern
world

Leslie version 3.0

Austin. Take care of my sisterwife.

California Gold Rush Prime

James Wesley

California never ran out of gold
 Gold ran out of California and came back because there's no
 place like home
 Let's go on journey through L.A
 I'll give you a free tour
 Let's walk up the ramps of the blue-line stations
 103rd street station, Compton station,
 Grand, Pico and Adams stations
 Listen to the nations
 Of pain, pride, and prejudice in the form of lyrics
 Hip-hop, singing, and spoken word in their rawest forms
 Gold
 From gangsters to descendants of the ancient slaves
 Hear the spirit in their music
 The natives shake hands as they exit the train
 The rhythmic dudes groove showing the rookies how to do it
 You're looking for gold right?
 Well lets take a ride on the blue line train
 The green-line is too quiet
 Do you hear that?
 If you don't you will soon
 Walking up and down the train exercising beautiful vocals
 No tip hat, just spreading the art
 His lyrics. Her lyrics.
 Untampered with by the education of music
 Just raw
 Gold
 Are you looking for a twist to mainstream music?
 Take some of the free Gold from the hearts of L. A's artists
 Pressure is said to make diamonds
 Oppression makes diamonds
 Poverty makes diamonds
 Pain makes diamonds
 In California, diamonds make Gold

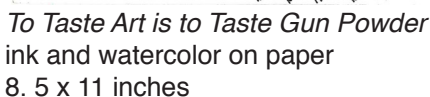
ART

Cynthia Arias-Martinez



Art

Backyard Rails
digital photograph



To Taste Art is to Taste Gun Powder
ink and watercolor on paper
8.5 x 11 inches

Reem Atallah



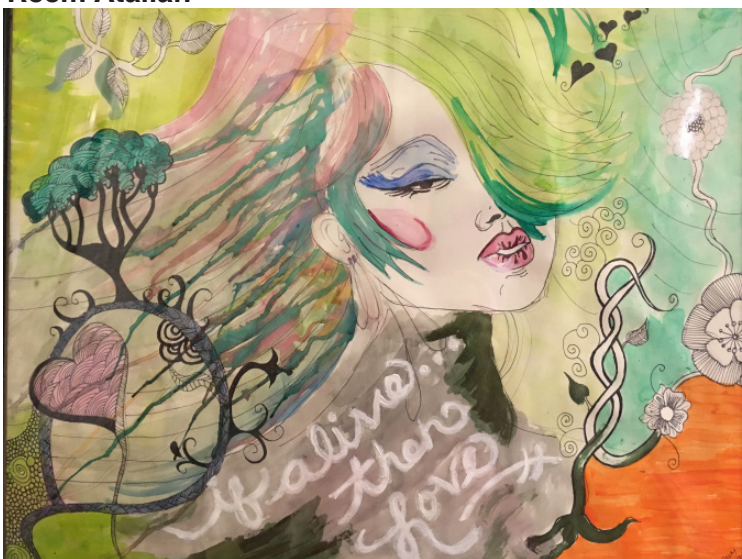
Gone
acrylic
16 x 20 inches

Reem Atallah



Untitled 1
watercolor on paper
20 x 16 inches

Reem Atallah



Untitled 2
watercolor on paper
20 x 16 inches

Brenda Bran



JR From the Street
digital photograph

Shane Branley



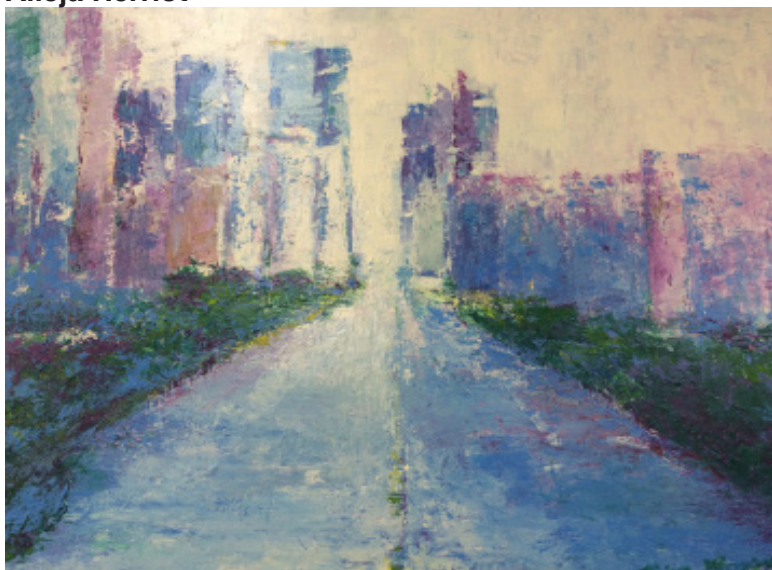
Untitled
digital photograph

Calvin Cheng



Tilt from the blkandwht series
digital photograph

Art

Alicja Herriot

Los Angeles in the Fog

acrylic on canvas

24 x 36 inches

Jennifer Henriquez



Art

Bob Marley's Downtown Work
digital photograph

Jennifer Henriquez



Congested
digital photograph

Jennifer Henriquez



L.B. Lights
digital photograph

Art

Michael Huezo



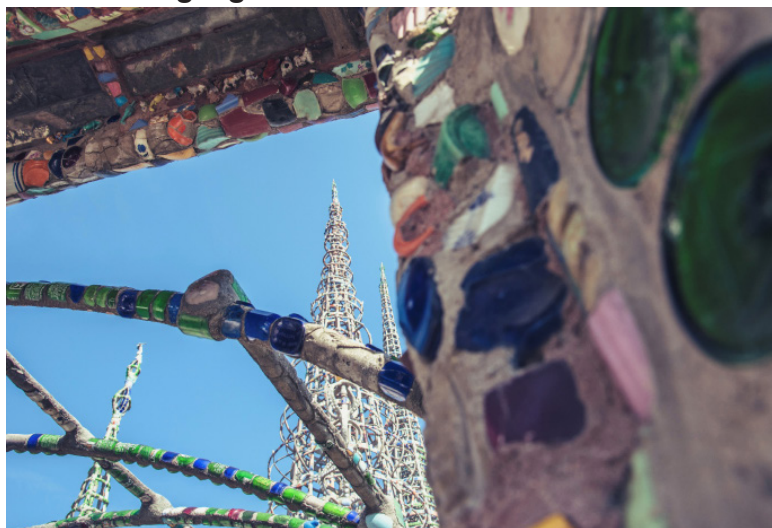
What a Town To See
digital photograph

Michael Huezo



Stand Tall. Never Fall.
digital photograph

Patrick Kamgang



Untitled
digital photograph

Felicia Martinez



Angels Flight

120mm film, gelatin silver print

11 x 14 inches

Felicia Martinez



Lamp Post
 35mm film, gelatin silver print
 8 x 10 inches

Felicia Martinez



Art

Train on Mission Drive
color positive 120 mm film, inkjet print
8 x 8 inches

Reyna Mendez



Untitled
digital photograph

Ricardo Naranjo



Art

Power
digital photograph

Chris Quock



Day Labor
digital photography

Naohiro Taji



Untitled
digital photograph

Nicholas Tucker



Central Avenue Heritage
digital photograph

TROSE

Same City Through Young Brown Eyes

Cesar Amparo

“Oh my god I love L.A! It’s like New York but everyone’s rich and smiling all the time. Well except for all the plastic surgery and dogs in purses it’s great and I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else.” She smiled while she was talking and she was so pretty. She was something I had never seen in person at the time and I never understood why. People like her seemed to only exist in movies and T.V or at least it seemed. She was pretty, had blue eyes, and really light skin, something I had only seen before on T.V and in movies. I don’t quite remember what it was we saw on that day maybe it was a T.V show or an interview, but we were children and naïve. We were oblivious to the world we lived in and how different it was from how people like her made it seem.

“One day Ima get a girlfriend like that.” Juan said to me with a dumb smile that I remember thinking made him look stupid. “She says she lives in the same place as we do but I have never seen someone who looks like her around here.” I told him. He always wanted to sound smart in front of me even as kids. He even tried to explain this to me in the most half assed way a child who was barely learning fractions could muster. “That’s just cause they live far from where we are but it’s the same city.” At the time I didn’t know what he meant just that she was probably as far as past the last street where my mother told me to never to go after dark.

“She said everyone in the city is rich, are we rich too then?” I asked Juan again and he gave the same unsure yet stupid face. “I think so, I mean my mom and dad both work a lot and our house is bigger than the neighbors’. So probably yeah.” I started to wonder if I was rich too like the woman and my cousin Juan. Just at that moment my mom came to pick me up and take me home. I said goodbye to my cousin and my grandma and left with my mother.

On the way out we passed by a police car near the end of the street. He reminded me of the lady because he had light skin and blue eyes but he didn’t seem nice like her. He was arresting a man on his car and was yelling at him. That man didn’t look rich and the officer didn’t smile, so at that point I started to doubt what that lady had said. My mother told me when we stopped at a red light to not look and to be careful around policemen. I never understood why she said that when I thought police were supposed to protect

us from bad people, again I was naïve at the time. Even walking home from school I saw the cops looking at me with very ugly faces and felt a little scared and I wasn't sure why. It would be a few years before one first stops me to ask me where I'm headed and what I'm up to on that very street corner.

Everything on the way home was different than it is now. The sign that now says "Welcome to Watts" was just a dirty spot filled with trash. On that spot and on many others as we entered the freeway there were many people in dirty clothing asking for money. I looked at them and I knew for sure that these people were not rich. Rich people don't ask for money I thought, so I knew then the lady was lying or at the very least exaggerating.

The next day Juan and I were walking home from school. On the way we saw several bigger older kids on the corner. We walked to the other side of the street and went around avoiding walking by them. We did so and we were able to get home safely even though we had to cross an extra street to do so. We saw another kid walking on that very street we crossed heading towards the mob of punks. As soon as he walked by they swarmed the kid and were saying things like 'wassup homie', 'where you from', 'what you got in your pockets'. We were far enough to hear them but too far to see what actually happened to the kid. Juan looked at me and said "damn, poor kid". We arrived home soon after, I felt relief it wasn't us but felt sorry it even had to happen.

As we got home we were hungry and my grandma wasn't at the house. Juan looked at me and said my grandmas not home, want to get a burger?" I checked my pockets and took out a crumbled dollar. "I only got this I said." "Don't worry I got you." Juan said pulling out three dollars and two quarters from his pocket. I looked at him and thought wow "he really must be rich." So we headed to the corner next to the fire department where the best burgers in the world are served, something to this day I still believe.

When we arrived the usual things were there. There was a man dressed in rags who smelled like beer and the school urinal talking to a young man who was always laughing and drinking and smoking with him. While awaiting our order people kept on coming up to the man and they gave him money and in return he gave them little bags. Still naïve at this point I assumed he was selling candy and stared at the man. My cousin saw me and told me not



to stare, my guess is he actually had some idea that it wasn't candy, or perhaps he just didn't like the look of the guy. He was like my older brother after all. Once we got our food we left for my grandma's house again.

We didn't have cable at my grandma's house so we just watched whatever was on, usually educational shows for kids. I still thought about the lady and her false claims of the city we shared. Juan's older sister Claudia walked in and asked us if we had already eaten and we laughed and smiled with food still in our mouth. "Yuuueeeaa" we muffled. She laughed and went back to her room. I followed her since I liked to hang out with her there. She was playing music as she always did.

A song came up, and I listened to it carefully clinging to every word. *"To live and die in LA, it's the place to be. You've got to be there to know it, what everybody wanna see."* The lyrics made me think if anybody's captured the city the way I know it was this guy. Little did I know it was Tupac Shakur's song "To Live and Die in L.A." I never heard truer words at that point and some lyrics stood out in particular, *"It's the City of Angels and constant danger. South Central LA, can't get no stranger. Full of drama like a soap opera, on the curb. Watching the ghetto bird helicopters, I observe"* I have seen all this but not what the woman spoke of. *"cause would it be LA without Mexicans? Black love brown pride and the sets again. Pete Wilson trying to see us all broke, I'm on some bullshit. Out for everything they owe, remember K-DAY Weekends, Crenshaw – MLK"* once I heard this I knew that the reality we lived in was different from that of that lady, pondering how it could possibly be the same city.

At the time I was just a child and never knew the stigma of growing up in such an area. As I grew older I saw the same city but with different eyes. It was a ghetto they called it, a cesspool, there's nothing but hoodlums and gang members, anyone from there will never make it. I look back to this now as a young man and stand as evidence that this is not true.

Despite what others may think of the city. The things they say about this city. Despite what different lifestyles there are in the city. Despite the struggle faced in the city. Despite everything else even this area where I was mugged, harassed, and looked down on, it's still MY CITY TOO.

I wanted, I want, and I hope...

Toumik Aastoorian

When I was a kid, I wanted to play the piano, guitar, drums and the harp. I wanted to snow board and surf. I wanted to jump from one large rock to another and not be afraid. I wanted to dance with the girl; you know The Girl, and look good doing it. I wanted to fly a plane so fast that the Earth would move and I would be standing still. I wanted to dive into caves with only an underwater flashlight and a snorkel. I wanted to walk into an office that overlooked the city, and tell my assistant, "I think I'll fly to Costa Rico today," I wanted to run so fast that even the sunset could not catch me. I wanted the day and night to not matter, hours and minutes to fade away and every second to stretch into forever.

And...

I still want to climb mountains, and feel the cold air needle its way through my arctic jacket. I still want to sail, alone, through turbulent waters and let the roll of each wave carry me deeper into nothingness. I still want to taste a peach that was never intended to be eaten but just happened to be within arms-reach.

And...

I hope I can see a glacier one day and ride a roller coaster without the safety bar. I hope when the time comes I will jump with both eyes open. I hope the Pacific Ocean never ends.

Every day I find myself adding to the things I wanted to do, the things I still want to do, and the things I hope to do.

I hope I can start.

Unstuck

Livia Bongiovanni

*Billy Pilgrim has come unstuck in time—Kurt Vonnegut,
Slaughterhouse Five*

There is something wonderful about old friends.

One of the reasons for this is that you've known each other for so long that you no longer feel the need to communicate in complete sentences. A single word contains a hundred references to any number of shared experiences. Even a glance speaks volumes, conveying more than words could possibly say. You've become so familiar over the years that you know everything there is to know about one another, and there is a kind of comfort in that familiarity.

The real joy, however, comes not from familiarity or a shared repertoire of references and in-jokes. True joy comes from the ability to instantly revert back to the age that you were when you first met.

Old friends make us capable of time travel.

I was eleven years old when I met Nikki, and I am eleven years old every time we are together. Such was the case one wintery afternoon in Seattle.

We had taken the bus into the city from Fort Lewis, where her husband was stationed. They only had the one car because Nikki couldn't drive. I was too broke to afford a rental. The weather was beautifully overcast, and the bus comfortably warm. About an hour later, the bus had stopped, and we stepped out into the freezing cold air.

The sky is a light, cloudy grey. I can't see the sun anywhere, but I know it must be up there. I shiver in my zippered hoodie and jeans. The scarf wrapped around my neck is doing nothing to block the wind chill, and I fumble in my pockets for my fingerless gloves. This is no gentle sea breeze, but the North Pacific winds in full force. I wind my scarf tighter around my neck, trying to bury my nose deeper in the fuzzy, blue fabric.

Nikki is dressed similarly in jeans, sneakers, and a zippered

hoodie, but the cold seems to bother her less. Whereas I am wearing a long sleeved shirt under my jacket, Nikki is sporting a bright pink T-shirt. Her rich brown hair is pulled into pigtails on either side of her softly rounded face, reminding me of the time when we first met. She was wearing pigtails then, too.

"Hey! Is your name Livia?"

I turned around, feeling awkward in my red and white PE uniform. The fabric was thin and cheap and stuck to my legs. My last name was written in big, capital letters across the front of my shirt and the leg of my shorts. I nodded at this strange girl in pigtails and glasses who stood with a surprising amount of confidence despite the awful uniform.

"I'm Nikki. Our moms work at the same school. My mom told me to say hi to you."

"Hi," I said.

"Hi," she said back.

I follow behind Nikki as we wander up and down the block looking for street signs. Disoriented by the cold and the wind, we take out our phones and look at Google maps until Nikki finds a street that she recognizes. Two lefts and a right later, we stumble upon our destination.

Pike Place is one of the few year-round farmers' markets with permanent standing structures. It is also one of the largest. While famous for its fish, Pike Place is also home to a variety of artisans who produce everything from the finest baked goods to children's toys. So naturally, the first thing that Nikki wants to show me is Rachel the pig.

Have I mentioned that we are both eleven?

Nikki points to a trail of golden hoof prints (Footprints? Trotter prints?) embossed on the concrete. The trail leads to a bronze statue of a happy looking pig. Her girth and overall amiable expression remind me a bit of Nikki's old golden retriever, Rosie.

"Watch this!" Nikki said, "Rosie can carry her own leash."



Nikki dropped the hot pink leash on the grass and I watched as Rosie picked it up with her teeth and carefully folded it in half, and then in half again. Pleased with her work, Rosie picked the leash up and carried it in her mouth the rest of the way home, her reddish gold fur glinting in the sunlight as she waddled down the block.

"This is Rachel," Nikki tell me, "she eats money."

"Rosie ate the house one time."

"No, really?"

"Yeah! She chewed a whole corner off the side of the house when she was a puppy. She ate half a phone once, too."

Now I notice the slot on her back. As it turns out, Rachel is actually a life-size piggy bank. A nearby sign tells me that that the proceeds go to a charity fund, so I feed her a couple quarters and take her picture. It occurs to me that Rachel is a nice name for a pig.

I'm still freezing, so we walk to the Starbucks next door. THE Starbucks. The first Starbucks there ever was. Patient zero of the pumpkin spice latte epidemic. We order a couple drinks and I am thrilled to find that they have spelled my name right. The coffee tastes the same as any other Starbucks, but I decide right then and there that Seattle is the best city in the world.

Having fortified ourselves against the cold, we set out in search of adventure. Neither of us has very much money, so we are relying on our innate ability to entertain one another.

We duck inside the main building and are greeted by rows upon rows of market stalls in either direction. A hundred different conversations bounce off the walls and are lifted up to the ceiling, where they echo momentarily before becoming lost in the sea of voices. Unlike the crisp greyness outside, the market is bursting with warmth and light. The whole place is lit up like Broadway, with lightbulbs running the length of the ceiling on either side of the corridor. The hallway smells of fish and salt and flowers. I slowly begin to loosen my scarf.

The stall closest to me is selling flavored honey. I go to taste one of the samples, but Nikki pulls me in another direction, promising something better. We move away from the hustle and bustle of the

main entrance towards a quieter area. There is a cart selling fresh made mini doughnuts, and I can feel my stomach beginning to growl as the smell wafts over me. Nikki orders half a dozen with powdered sugar. I get mine with cinnamon sugar. The vendors, who look young enough to be brother and sister, scoop the doughnuts out of the sizzling oil and toss them in brown paper bags with our chosen toppings. I can feel the warmth seeping through my gloves as I grasp the paper bag in both hands.

There is nothing comparable to the taste of a freshly made doughnut. It is impossible to be sad while eating one. Doused in sugar, they are the perfect compliment to a chilly afternoon. Huddled in a corner somewhere away from the flow of traffic, Nikki and I devour our treasures. I can feel the doughnuts sitting in the bottom of my stomach, warming me from the inside out.

Now that Nikki has shown me the three most important things at the market, we really begin to explore. As it turns out, Pike Place is full of hidden avenues, side alleys and secret passageways.

"Take the rolling cart down to the dumpsters and throw this trash away."

My mom was staying late after school to get her classroom ready for Open House the next day. Nikki and I were there to help. It was well past nine o'clock, and the entire campus was pitch black. My mom gave us a flashlight, which didn't help very much.

Nikki and I made our way down to the playground and over to the dumpsters at the edge of the fence. It took the two of us to hoist the massive trash bag into the dumpster. On the ground, a few feet away, was a door. Someone had presumably left it there, not bothering to get it into the dumpster. Nikki and I looked at each other and then at the door. We started walking back to my mom's classroom.

"It's probably a doorway to another dimension or something," Nikki said.

"Yeah," I agreed. "Probably."

We kept walking.

"You know," I said, "If we don't open it, it actually will lead to another dimension."

We stopped. We looked at each other. We ran back to the



dumpsters.

There was nothing but asphalt underneath.

We head down one such alleyway and find another row of shops away from the main drag. There is a store selling vintage prints, and Nikki and I immediately go inside without having to say a single word to one another. I start flipping through the art nouveau posters and vintage advertisements. Nikki finds an old stack of MAD magazines. It doesn't take long before we start pulling out the most ridiculous images we can find: WWII propaganda, advertisements for exercise equipment, anything with nudity. We show them to each other, saying "Look at this!" with nothing more than a glance, and burst into silent laughter.

Nikki buys a couple of postcards and we continue our walk down the alleyway. We come to a stop in front of the World Famous Giant Shoe Museum. We exchange looks, and turn to examine the wonder that stands before us.

The museum takes up a section of wall, which is decorated to look like an old circus poster.

"World's LARGEST collection of GIANT SHOES"

"See a SHOE Actually worn by the WORLD'S TALLEST MAN"

"SEATTLE'S SHOES OF MYSTERY"

Prose

In one corner of the wall is an oval window covered with a red velvet curtain. Nikki and I continue to stare.

"What do you think it is?" Nikki asks.

"A museum full of giant shoes, presumably."

Some searching reveals a place to deposit coins. The price of admission is fifty cents.

Nikki and I exchange glances again. We want to know what's behind the curtain, but we're both too chicken to find out. It's awfully quiet in this alleyway and we're starting to suspect that this attraction makes noise. What if we're discovered?

"Should we do it?" one of us asks.

"Maybe someone will walk by and put money in."

As if on cue, a family of four wanders by. One of the kids runs right

up to the window and starts examining the words on the wall. She asks her dad for money. Nikki and I wait while she drops the coins in the slot, pretending not to watch.

Our suspicions are confirmed. The shoe museum makes A LOT of noise. Lights flash and Oom Pah Pah music appears out of nowhere.

The curtain opens up to reveal, as expected, a large shoe, about 25 inches long. It dances in the window for about thirty seconds and then the curtain snaps shut again, ready for the next patron. Mildly amused, the family moves on. Nikki and I start to lose it, managing not to crack up until the family is out of earshot.

An hour or two later, all traces of the doughnuts are gone, and we can feel our stomachs rumbling with hunger. We make our way over to Beecher's for lunch, where I order a bowl of mac and cheese. Nikki is one of the few people I've met who doesn't like pasta, so she orders a ham and cheese sandwich instead. We sit down in front of the large glass window that looks into the dairy and watch as the cheese we're about to consume is being made. A few minutes later, my name is called. They spelled it correctly.

"Olivia?"

"No," Nikki corrected her friend, "Livia."

I looked up at Kim, Nikki's friend, who I was meeting for the first time. "It's ok," I shrugged, "I get that a lot."

Now that we are full, we go back to exploring. By this time, we've already seen most of the shops. We've browsed as much as we are able and bought as much as we can afford. Then Nikki finds a darkened hallway with a staircase leading downwards. We decide to see where it goes.

Cautiously, we make our way down the stairs. We pass through the cloud of conversation happening in a restaurant somewhere above us and skirt our way around the ringing of glasses and the clink of cutlery. We emerge outside in another alleyway, surrounded on either side by tall, brick buildings. The wind brushes up against my cheeks, carrying an odor that I can't quite place. We stand there for a moment examining our new surroundings. I hear Nikki's voice behind me exclaim, "Oh my God."

I turn around and suddenly realize what it is I'm smelling. Wads of



gum. Thousands of them. Covering the wall of one building all the way from the ground to well above my head. The effect is almost like sprinkles of confetti, all blues and greens and pinks. The colors are mostly faded, but the smell remains--an indescribable bouquet of mint and fruit and cinnamon. I start to gag as the wind brings another whiff to my nostrils. The pieces of gum on the window ledges have all been stretched to look like icicles. Neither of us is able to look away.

"I think I've heard of this," Nikki says.

"What?" I reply, trying not to take and breathe at the same time.

"No, this is like a *thing*. This must be the gum wall.

We pull out our cameras and start taking pictures as though we've discovered the long lost city of Shangri-La. We have to get documented proof or no one will believe we were actually here. Nikki hands me her camera so I can take her picture in front of the gum wall.

Just then, an elderly lady walks by and offers to take a picture of us together. As a native of this land, she is unaffected by the power of the wall.

I stand next to Nikki, trying not to think about the mountains of saliva behind us. The camera clicks, and we thank her for her assistance. By this time it is starting to get dark, and we make our way back to the bus stop, shielding ourselves as best we can against the icy winds.

Just a few months ago, I got a text from Nikki with a news link telling me that the gum wall was coming down for cleaning. Apparently the digestive properties of the saliva, along with the combined weight of the gum, was starting to damage the structural integrity of the building. I followed the story of the gum wall's removal as cleaning crews came in with hazmat suits and steam guns in an effort to loosen the gum from the foundation. They succeeded.

According to one article, however, the city plans to reinforce the building so that the people of Seattle can create an entirely new wall of gum art. Icicles and all. I am not one hundred percent certain as to the reliability of this source.

But I doubt that anyone would be able to stop them if they tried.

Offside Reading

Brenda Bran

“Papi, podemos ir a—”

Daddy, can we go t—

The sound of the television drowned out my voice, but I hoped my dad heard me. Almost immediately, he stood up and yelled rapidly at the tv,

“Mira, mira, mira, mira!”

Look, look, look, look

Like many children around the world, I grew up watching my dad watch futbol—yes I mean soccer, not that ball-carrying-armor-wearing-hardly-ever-kicking tackle ball that most people in the States call football. Many of my Sunday evenings were spent watching a blurry green field with little dots running from one side of the field to the other. Sometimes a pass would make my dad jump out of the couch in anticipation. If the next sound was Andres Cántor’s voice bellowing “Gooooool!” then my dad would pump the volume on the tv as he jumped up and down in celebration. Most of the time, I didn’t know what was going on, but I wanted to join in on the jumping, so I too yelled and jumped up and down like I understood what the sports ball was all about.

But pretending could only get me so far, especially when the commentators would yell out soccer terminology that I didn’t understand like “ahora va Guerra con la pelota! Se la va a pasar a Cienfuegos—no esta adelantado”

**Edited translation for the Spanish deficient:

here comes Guerra with the ball! He’s going to pass it to Cienfuego—no he’s offside

Adelantado means he’s ahead, which is what you want when you’re trying to score a gol right?

I asked my dad what they meant by “adelantado,” so he explained. What he said, I don’t know—so I just responded with a pensive—but ultimately feigned—“Ohh, okay!, that makes sense” and let him return to his game.

What the heck did adelantado mean?



Then Cienfuegos made a pass, and the receiving player was standing so close to the goal that I was sure that the ball would go in, but the ref whistled and Cántor's deep resounding voice reverberated through our living room, "Esta fuera de lugar!"

Huh? He's exactly in the lugar he needs to be to score! What you mean he's not in the right place?!?

I was confused, but I didn't want my dad to notice, so I sat quietly till it ended. After the game, the broadcasters went onto the pitch and interviewed a few players. I didn't know any of them, well except for the guy who came out on all the Toyota commercials, Mauricio Cienfuegos—the biggest deal to hit El Salvador since...okay the biggest positive thing to hit El Salvador in a long time—we got pupusas, enpanadas, and a severely crippled economy that has led to a rise in violence and a massive exodus of children—but I digress. Cienfuegos walked by the broadcasters, but they did not stop him for an interview. I noticed my dad rolled his eyes and muttered something under his breath.

"Que paso? Why don't they ask him questions?" I asked
What happened

"Es Salvadoreño," he responded
He's Salvadoran

"So?"

A stillness overcame the room that made me uneasy. I didn't think my question was a big deal, but the look on my dad's face told me otherwise. I don't remember the details, but I remember feeling angry, frustrated, but most of all disappointed. My dad explained some of the tensions between people from Mexico and individuals from Central America. He explained that in order for anyone in Latin America to make "it" in the Spanish-speaking world, they had to go through Mexico, but for irrelevant and obviously ridiculous reasons, that was more difficult for people from Central America to do. His suggestion that Cienfuegos wouldn't be interviewed because he wasn't from Mexico angered me. Here was this wonderful guy who was just selling Toyotas to the entire L.A. area, and they couldn't interview him for three lousy minutes? Like seriously?

So I looked him up. If Univision and Telemundo wouldn't give me the information I wanted, I would find out for myself. I started reading my dad's Sunday edition of *La Opinion*, the Los Angeles Spanish newspaper, but it took me twice as long to read things in Spanish than it did in English. One Sunday, while my dad and I were at the corner market, I asked my dad to get me the *L.A. Times*, it was the only other newspaper I knew about. He agreed and when I got home I dumped pounds of the Sunday edition into the trash and dove into the sports section. Unfortunately, I was a bit ahead of my time in the mid to late 90s. The MLS, Major League Soccer, was just beginning, so media coverage of it was minimal. My plan to learn about Cienfuegos backfired, and I hit a dead end, which only intensified my anger toward Univision.

The day my family finally got an internet connection was glorious. I was able to translate a lot of the terms my dad and the commentators on tv used during matches. Terms like "fuera de lugar" became "offsides," "tiro libre" became "a set piece," and "falta" became "foul"—I know that last one should have been obvious, but I didn't speak "sports" in English, so as obvious as it may seem...it wasn't.

I could finally look up Cienfuegos and Cobi Jones, an American soccer player who was also ignored by the Mexican media. In interviews, they mentioned their dreams of playing European futbol, specifically the teams that they would play for should they ever have the opportunity. Real Madrid, Manchester United, Barcelona, and Chelsea (for some reason my dad really likes them? I'm more of an Arsenal girl myself) became the focus of my research. I started reading up on these teams and their players. For some reason, it was a huge thing for me to discover that the biggest stars on these teams weren't European but South American, oh yeah and that one Mexican player I didn't like, Hugo Sánchez, but he's not important. I read up on the South American players: Romario, Cafu, Dunga, Maradona (dude is crazy, I mean not many players will justify cheating as a divine act of God—now known as the "Hand of God" incident, but man could he control a ball—I still like Pele better though), and Ronaldo (no! Not CR7, the real one. The Brazilian one). I also looked up a few European players like Van Basten, Klinsmann (he now coaches the USMNT—United States Men's National Soccer Team), Zidane, Figo, Maldini, and Ballack (I only learned about him in 2002, but



he's my favorite player of all time so he needs to be in here for obvious and arbitrary reasons). I read about their camaraderie, their technical styles, and the different experiences these players were having off the pitch.

Although I don't remember racism ever being the main focus of the articles I read, it was like a dark looming presence that people didn't talk about, but they knew it was there. I read stuff, but I also listened to my dad and his friends talk about Pele and his impact on Brazil. Pele is a legend. Most soccer fans agree that Pele's name is synonymous with the "the greatest that ever lived"—unless one is a room with Maradona fans, the discussion then quickly escalates and random acts of hooliganism might break down, but of course I exaggerate.

Anyway, the consensus among my dad's friends was that Pele's impact wasn't just on the pitch, but he had a dramatic social impact on Brazilian culture. They claimed that Pele's unique ability with a soccer ball began a national dialogue on race relations and that because of Pele, the government and society slowly became more tolerant of dark-skinned Brazilians. I wasn't sure if their claims were real or not, but the suggestion fascinated me and made me wonder about Cienfuegos. Then it was his fault he wasn't on Univision. He wasn't good enough to change attitudes, so he didn't deserve my attention...right?

I kept reading up on other players and listening to occasional interviews on tv. We didn't have cable—nor was *Sports Center* the massive enterprise that it is now—but I remember listening to a player discuss his experience walking out of a stadium. He told the reporter that someone was yelling racial slurs at him and demanding that he go back to Africa. I don't remember his name, and I feel horrible about it...he wasn't even from Africa. He was Jamaican. He was accomplished. He was great on the pitch. But more importantly, he was human. That was the first time I really thought about my own prejudices and my anger. When my dad told me about the tensions between Mexicans and Central Americans, I blamed Hugo Sánchez. As the Mexican Golden Boy playing for Real Madrid, he became an easy target for me. He was the face of an institution that marginalized my culture. And yet, I was dismissing him because he was from Mexico. It was a complicated and really uncomfortable realization. I felt ashamed, confused, and lost. So I read. But I was no longer reading about

soccer, I was reading to understand why. What makes it okay to have racial or national prejudices? Why did I focus on differences? Why did I take so much pride in learning that South American players could be stars? Of course, these questions are ones I'm asking myself now—with my years of wisdom, maturity, and a B. A in English Literature that helped me think about racial constructs and stuff—but back then all I really wanted to know was why do Mexicans and Salvadorans hate each other. My research led me through really dark places online, a few historic events, but ultimately didn't answer my questions. I didn't understand the root of these tensions, so I decided they didn't exist. If they did, they were stupid. If I was going to dislike Hugo Sánchez, I needed a better reason than his nationality. Lucky for me, he had a slew of character flaws that I could easily pick from—diving on the pitch, short fuse with refs and players alike, and cockiness that rivaled Kanye West...okay that last one might be a bit of an over-exaggeration. But Sánchez's nationality would not be the reason that I did not cheer for him. He also played for Real Madrid, my favorite Spanish club, so my acceptance of him became a little easier too.

But where did these feelings of resentment come from? Why were cultural and racial divides so embedded in our culture? These questions continued to bug me. One tired afternoon, I walked into my boss' office, Amelia, and she gave me a term for them: dominant narratives—stories that become so pervasive that we internalize them and begin to project them out onto the real world. She explained that she framed her classes around these stories in an attempt to have her students think critically about their own perspectives and question the root of their own prejudices. I didn't say much as she talked about it—I hardly ever do. But I thought about it on my way home, especially as I drove past the StubHub Center, formerly the Home Depot Center—the place where I cheered for every country that wasn't Mexico.

Soccer had given me a start. At the time, there were numerous stories about Dani Alves, Jozy Altidore, and a number of other players facing racism abroad, so I researched. Reading once again became the tool through which I could disarm these prejudices. I thought that if I understood why, then these racist preconceptions would no longer exist—temporarily forgetting that the rest of the world wasn't partaking in my own studies—self-centered I know. I complimented my research on players with social justice

articles and a number of scholarly works that explained dominant narratives. I saw Amelia frame her classroom around issues like this, so it is possible. I'm not quite certain how I'm going to do it, but I want my students to have similar uncomfortable moments where they question everything they think they know and actively choose to find out more for themselves.

What About Bob?

Bennilynne de la Cruz

Sami:

Sami paused at the crosswalk and squinted against the glare of raw, seven a.m. sunshine as she searched for Bob. Commuters lingered at the stoplight to gawk at the 7-11 across the street. An ambulance crawled through the tangle of police, news crews and onlookers. From the police walkies, hollow voices squawked about an assault and a possible 5150. A huddle of police officers kneeled, struggling to subdue someone, or something, that growled. Despite the freshness of this early hour, with its crisp breezes and salty air, her stomach clenched; she had to find Bob.

Around two a.m., she had been in her darkroom. With a magnifying glass, she had been examining new images of Bob, the resident homeless man in her neighborhood. Hmm, something was different, something unseen by her naked eye. Each day, at lunchtime, Sami would pass him, usually while he was finishing sun salutations, on her way into 7-11. After chatting with Brian, the clerk, Sami would go outside. Armed with her daily coffee and cigarettes, she would join Bob, who would already be seated in lotus position between the trash can and the patch of grass and dandelions adjacent to the blacktop. She'd light two cigarettes and toss one. Eyes closed, he'd pick the filter end out of midair every time. Cigarette dangling from his lips, and eyes still shut, Bob would press his palms flat together and bow from the waist. Sami would bow in kind and mouth "namaste." He never spoke, and she envied him his stillness, his peace. During yoga class, she'd channel him as she tried to soothe her inner cacophony of doubt. But as she remembered last night, Sami realized she knew nothing about Bob.

At three in the morning, Sami had jogged the four blocks to 7-11 to tell Bob: her latest collection had been hanging at Haute Coffee for barely a week, and she'd just read an email confirming the sale of a photo of Bob in Proud Warrior pose. Sami considered giving him half, but decided on \$20 instead; she owed rent, whereas he paid nothing for the stars and sun and the 7-11 awning that he called home. When she arrived at the store, she forgot her news. Bob was pressed tightly against the brick wall as if trying to hear with his whole body what was happening inside. This was not



yoga. Instead, his stillness belied that of a tensed, starved animal. Still, she lit two and waved one, even blew smoke at him. He only nuzzled his face against the brick and whispered to it. Straining to understand, she inched forward, close enough to brush the long, lank hair from his scruffy face, and stopped. For the first time, she smelled him--rank, rotten, steeped in urine. His ratty jeans and flannel seemed damp. Even under the yellowed lights, she knew that it was blood that coated his hands and clothes. Now sobbing, he petted the brick, shushing it as one would a dog just hit by a car. To comfort him, she also petted the brick wall. Bob began howling and stomping his feet. Brian rushed out. Pushing between them, he wagged his finger at Bob and told him calm down; it's only Sami.

Trembling, she let Brian lead her away. He told her to go home and explained that Bob was mostly harmless, especially because he was barely 5'2", but, like everyone else, he had his bad days.

She shook herself. That was last night. By today, Bob would have cast off his nightmares and eased back into Proud Warrior mode. Except that across the street, the policemen rose. They were crushing against each other to contain between themselves a flailing mess of limbs. Although she still could not see him, and had never heard him speak, she knew that it was Bob screaming, "Sit Ubu sit," over and over again. Behind him, two officers led a muscular, hulking man to a squad car. His nose was shattered, his face was a garden of swelling, he limped. Most distinctive, though, was his tattoo: a zipper that began between his brows and ran back over his bald head and down his neck before vanishing beneath his wife beater. She wanted to photograph this man, but knew that she would not take one shot of him if he had hurt Bob.

Ariel:

Eww, that's the 7-11 where that smelly homeless guy touched me last night. I wonder why those reporters are there? Anyway, I was coming out with a six-pack and he, homeless dude, was kinda in my way. He stuck his hand out and was like, "What would you do for a Klondike Bar?" I turned really fast to protect the beer, and I slipped or something. But I was totally fine. I could've reached the door handle, probably, but then he grabbed my arm. Eww! So I screamed and I kicked him. I didn't mean to make him bleed, but so what? I mean, what a pervert.

And then Drew got out of the car to see if I was ok. He is so sweet! Then for some reason the guy started singing the song from that cat food commercial, you know, “Meow meow meow meow meow meow meow meow.” Drew just went off and started kicking the shit out of him. Kimmie was in the car and started honking the horn, so we looked up. She was tapping her Apple watch. OMG!! It was already midnight. Drew shoved homeless guy into the weeds and we took off. I looked back and saw him pulling napkins out of his pants and wiping something, probably his own poop. So gross. Oooh, what are those cops doing? They’re kinda hot!

Betty Bang-Bang:

She crouched behind the dumpster at the donut shop and peeked at the 7-11 across the street. In the parking lot, cops strutted around, patting their shiny batons. EMTs wheeled a stretcher past protestors with signs that read, “Homeless people are people too.” Fuck those people. They didn’t know Bob. Ok, everybody knew Bob was homeless, crazy, stinky. But, they didn’t know him.

Last night, after they had found her hidden stash, Raoul and Zipper had come for her. Afterward, she had woken up in the weeds next to 7-11. Sirens were wailing and she thought, who called the cops? Then, as she blacked out again, she noticed that the sirens were fading away, going to help somebody else, somebody who didn’t get paid to fuck people.

When she opened her eyes the second time, she was lying across Bob’s lap while he stroked her hand and shushed her. His jeans felt crusty, greasy. And then she realized that they had shredded her dress, her “lucky” dress. She blinked to stop the tears (a trick she’d learned from other girls in Raoul’s stable), but this time it only made “shouldn’a done this, shouldn’a done that,” spin around in her head faster, like a broken record player. Bob was blinking, too; it didn’t surprise her. She’d seen him crying over idiot pigeons that couldn’t fly away fast enough from rush-hour traffic. Like a magician, he pulled a stream of paper napkins from his pockets and patted her face. “I’ve fallen and I can’t get up,” he said. When the napkins came away red and sticky, she knew why she couldn’t smell him. He guided her to her feet and wrapped a gigantic trash bag around her. Bob never looked her in the eye, and even while he repeated, “I’ve fallen and I can’t get up,” he was watching something over her shoulder. They walked to the corner where he

left her and wandered back to his usual spot at the brick wall.

She heard Bob screaming now, but stopped listening when she recognized the man on the stretcher. As the ambulance door closed on Raoul, she gasped, then winced as the crusting scab on her lip broke open. She forced her lips shut while she watched the cops “help” the bloodied Zipper into a squad car. Raoul and Zipper knew Bob, now; those bleeding hearts still didn’t know shit. But, what could she do? Who would listen to her?

An American Dream: A Series

Jennifer Henriquez

移民男孩 (The Immigrant Boy)

An absent father brings his estranged son and wife to a strange land far away from everything they knew. What they see: paved roads, tall billboards, and orange-yellow tinted street lamps. *I hate him. I miss home. This place smells funny. Food tastes different. I want to go home.* The father tries to cheer his unhappy young son. He promises a lifetime of memories, and a better life. They left their home for a new place, but he died. He dived. They were left alone. Always alone.

The immigrant boy grew up. He was a halfling. Not quite a man, yet, not quite a boy. He was quiet and unsure of himself. He never deviated from the path that was carved out in front of him. He wanted to fit the mold and be perfect. Yet, innately he could not stay the path. What was he supposed to be? Before he was a native and now he was he an immigrant. Strange and scorned he missed his home.

But he grew up and met a girl. An inoffensive and nice girl. They fell in love. She was rich and he was poor. A pauper to prince story. They eloped and now they were both poor. Two kids later, he felt uneasy. Marriage was hard and their story was not perfect. He needed an escape and wanted more. *More?* He could not define this feeling. He was restless.

Then one night, he met another girl. An immigrant, like him, and they danced. She was different and he felt at peace. In their shared difference, he felt like he belonged. *I like her.* They danced. Yet, he was conflicted. Two girls and two paths. Could he not have both? Then the immigrant girl uttered, "I'm pregnant".

He was scared. He did not know how to respond. The immigrant girl waited expectantly and he turned away. The immigrant girl was left alone.

But he came back, he had a responsibility. Two responsibilities, in fact. No—he shaped this complication to fit the mold. A complication wrapped in pink. He had a daughter. He was happy and the daughter was sad.

La Immigrante (The Immigrant girl)

*“Estoy embarazada.”
Eso fue lo que le dije y no me digo nada.
Nada!
Que le pasa?
Que es eso?
Que cre?
Cre que no me lastima!
Que no me duele?
Me duele!
Me lastima!
Me duele, ¿cómo es que no dijo nada
Se quedó allí sin decir nada
Estoy...
Estoy decepcionada.
Yo creía que los hombres en este país serían diferentes
Porque esto siempre me pasa a mí?
¿Por qué no puedo encontrar a alguien que me entienda?
Alguien que me quiere ayudar de veras.
Alguien que me apoye.
Estoy sola otra vez.
Otra vez, sola.
Nimodo, ya lo hice dos veces.
Pensé que sería diferente esta vez
.....*

“¿Qué voy a hacer con un bebé triste envuelta en rosa?”

*“I’m pregnant.”
That’s what I said and he said nothing.
Nothing!
What’s wrong with him?
What is that?
What does he think?
Does he think this doesn’t hurt me?
That it doesn’t hurt?
It hurts!
I’m hurt!
It hurts, how is it that he didn’t say anything?
He stood there silently
I’m...
I’m disappointed.*

*I thought the men in this country would be different.
 Why does this always happen to me?
 Why can't I find someone that understands me?
 Someone that really wants to help me.
 Someone that wants to support me.
 I'm alone again.
 Oh well. I did it twice already.
 I thought it would be different this time.*

.....
 "What am I going to do with this sad baby girl wrapped in pink?"

(The American Daughter)

Shh...I won't tell
 Don't worry this nose and these black brows they ain't yours
 Brown skin and black hair who can tell. Almond shaped eyes;
 well, a billion got 'em too--don't they?
 Got nothing of yours: no house, no name, no tongue--except
 blood.
 Tears, guilt, and shame that's what I got plenty of

So--
 Run.
 run run run little immigrant boy
 run away,
 run all the way to Cherokee Drive.
 Away from Stewart and Grey.
 Away from L.A.

Something Delicious

Ashlee Papillion

I was on my way to the golden arches when I caught the scent of something delicious coming from another direction. It'd been hours since I'd last eaten, so I'd been headed straight there. I started to ignore it, but something about that wonderful aroma kept nagging and pulling at me. I instantly knew that whatever that ambrosia-like smell belonged to, I'd never had the pleasure of sampling before. So I changed course. What harm could there be in trying something different? Besides, I'd heard that McDonalds wasn't a "healthy" choice. Anything that smelled this good had to do wonders for the body.

As the smell grew stronger, I saw a magnificent, vibrant green stage-like platform up ahead. It was one of the most peculiar things I'd ever seen. Atop a tall, slender column, it spread out widely with conical pillars along the edges. The look and feel of the place was almost as though it was saying it wasn't open to the public, but rather that only a select few had the honor of entering. Of course this didn't bother me. There'd never been a place I couldn't enter. The area didn't seem exceptionally high class, plus no one was really around, so I passed easily between the vivid green columns.

Prose

Once inside, I noted that, unlike the outside, the floor was a gorgeous, pulsating red. It was everywhere, except for a strip of bright green in the dead center, as though it was dividing the place in two. Weird, but then again, interior design wasn't my thing.

Just as I was about to begin my exploration of the area, a huge mosquito dashed right by me, forcing me to jerk to the side to avoid it. The thing was huge and I wanted to avoid him touching me as much as possible. Mosquitos were the worst creature ever to have wings being nothing more than flying needles. Plus, they were annoying. Nasty little blood suckers.

After a quick look around, it didn't take long to see there was nothing to eat; but that didn't mean there wouldn't be. Maybe they just hadn't brought it out yet. I knew this was the right place though. No matter which direction I went, the scent was strongest there. So I decided to wait for it. Surely it would be along soon; and then there'd be a feast.

While waiting, I began to wander over towards the center of the dais. There was something about the contrast between the vivid green and radiant red that disturbed and yet drew me. The fact that the appetizing aroma also seemed to originate there didn't help. Unfortunately, as I was nearing it, I bumped into one of the red pillars placed around the green strip. Pillars I hadn't noticed before since they blended in with the floor. Jumping to the side, hoping no one saw, I crashed into yet another one. Before I knew it, the floor rose and the tapering green posts snapped together sealing me inside. Panicking, I searched for a way out of the now dark room only to realize I was effectively trapped. Stopping to listen, and perhaps to gather my wits, I heard a muffled voice exclaim: "Dude! I just saw a fly get eaten by a plant!"

Loss

Jana Pandula-Park

My father-in-law is 91 years old.

My father-in-law was born in 1924. He is part of the “Greatest Generation,” that ever decreasing group who grew up during the Depression, and then went off to fight World War II. After the war, my father-in-law, or Pop as we call him, left the Navy, became an engineer, and started working for a large gas company in Texas. Eventually, he got married; had two children; retired from the gas business; went back to school to study accounting; became a CPA; worked as an auditor for Harris County in Texas; and retired once again.

Fifteen years ago, at the ages of 77 and 80, respectively, Pop and my mother-in-law, Lynn, moved to California to be near my husband and our family. They bought a three-level condo near the ocean and enjoyed having their grandkids over to swim in the condo pool.

Lynn died in 2010 at the age of 90, and Pop, then 87, learned to live alone. Every day he went to noon Mass just as he had done with Lynn. Wednesday mornings, he went to Bible study. On Friday afternoons, he played Bridge at a local senior center. He read the *LA Times* and *Wall Street Journal* daily, and had subscriptions to a small group of magazines including *National Review* and *The New Yorker*. He loved to argue politics, and every evening, he fixed himself a bourbon and soda and watched the evening news.

The Car:

About three years ago, I started to notice that Pop’s driving abilities were deteriorating. He couldn’t turn his head fully when making lane changes or backing up; he didn’t stop before crosswalks, but rather, stopped after he was part-way in an intersection; and he accelerated from point to point, lead-footing on the gas and then slamming on the brakes. I refused to drive with him, and I told my kids that they were no longer allowed to drive with Grandpa. I said to my husband:

You should check out your dad’s driving. It’s scary. Maybe he shouldn’t drive anymore.

Months went by. We talked to Pop about giving up driving, but he said,

I'll know when it's time to give up. It's not time.

11:30 pm. The phone rings. Unless you are expecting the arrival of a baby, nothing good ever comes of picking up the phone at 11:30 pm.

Hello.

Hello. Do you know Mr. Robert Park?

Who is this?

This is Officer Thomas of the Highway Patrol. We have a gentleman by the name of Robert Park here. He was stopped for speeding and reckless driving. He's confused but we found your number in his cell phone.

Is he okay?

Yes. Just confused.

Where is he? Where are you?

King City.

King City? Huh?

Yes.

King City is 50 miles north of Paso Robles, 175 miles north of Santa Barbara, and 270 miles north of Hermosa Beach where Pop lives. My husband gets on the phone and talks to Officer Thomas. Arrangements are made to have Pop's car towed back to Hermosa. Pop will ride back in the tow truck under the care of the driver.

When Pop returns at 3:30 am, my husband is at the condo waiting.

What happened?

I was going to Target. Then the police officer stopped me.

Pop has no recollection of how he came to be in King City, a five hour drive north of our local Target, but that night my husband takes his car keys away, and that is the end of Pop's driving.

The Condo:

Pop continues to live alone, but he can no longer go to Mass every day. On Friday, I drive him to Bridge at the senior center, and he



takes a taxi back home. Because Hermosa Beach subsidizes taxis for seniors, Pop is able to take taxis to the grocery store, the bank, Bible study, and his favorite restaurant. On Sundays, my husband picks Pop up for church, and afterwards, we eat lunch either at our house or at his condo. I notice that Pop is struggling to go up and down his stairs. His bedroom is up on the third level, and after lunch, he slowly and shakily totters upstairs to take a nap. I also start to notice that things are not clean. Although Pop has a cleaning lady who comes in every two weeks, the dishes and the kitchen are dirty. I set the table for lunch, and the forks are sticky, the glasses don't look like they've been washed.

I don't know how much longer Pop's going to be able to go up and down those stairs.

I know.

I hope he doesn't fall.

I know.

My husband's sister comes to visit. In her take-charge way, she tells my husband.

Pop can't stay in the condo. We need to find some place for him.

She drives Pop around to check out some of the assisted living facilities in Hermosa. He goes along, but he's non-committal.

You can't stay in the condo. It's too hard.

I'm not ready. I'll know when it's time.

She flies back to her life in Northern California.

Two months later, Pop decides to "test out" the assisted living place for a month. We move his bed, dresser, some chairs, a couch, a folding table, some lamps, his computer and computer desk, and his clothes and toiletries to his two-room abode. We also bring personal items, books and pictures to make it homey.

This is a really nice place, Pop. I think you're going to like it.

This place is full of old people.

A Year Later:

I pull up to the assisted living home. Pop has a 10:am doctor's

appointment, and I'm here 30 minutes early just in case. He's not in his room. I ask Sharon at the front desk.

I saw him go in the dining room a few minutes ago.

It's only 9:30. I check the dining room, and there he is drinking coffee. He has the place to himself. coffee. He has the place to himself.

Jansky! What are you doing here?

You have a doctor's appointment, Pop.

Eh?

A doctor's appointment, today at 10:00.

Oh, Dr. Chang?

Dr. Wong, Pop.

Oh Dr. Wong. Two Wongs don't make a right!

Yes, Pop.

Pop stands up slowly. He uses his walker for support and balance. He was using a cane for a while, but then he fell, and the staff made him start using a walker. As he stands up, I look at him. He is wearing a tan-colored jacket that is zipped up half-way. The front is peppered with stains of various shapes, sizes and colors. Underneath is a white undershirt, also stained and wet-looking, possibly from the coffee. The fly on his pants is unzipped, and the pants also have food stains along the thighs. I can't take him to the doctor like this.

Pop, you need to change.

Eh?

You need to put on clean clothes.

Really? No.

Yes, Pop. Let's go up to your room.

We slowly make our way to the elevator. Pop shuffles behind me with his walker. When we finally get to his room, upstairs, he sits down and I select a shirt and consider pants. No time. A clean shirt and jacket will have to do. I help Pop off with his jacket and shirt, stuff the dirty clothes into his laundry bag, and help him on with his clean clothes.

Pop, can you zip up your pants?

Eh?

Your pants, can you zip them up?

Oh, I can't, Jansky.



He stands up, holds on to the walker, and I zip up his pants. We hobble back to the elevator, go downstairs, sign out at the desk, and shuffle to my car. As he positions himself in the front seat, I fold his walker and throw it in the back. I'm exhausted. It's 9:55.

Friday Bridge:

On Fridays, I drop Pop off at the senior center to play Bridge. I make him a lunch – sandwich, chips, carrot sticks – and after Bridge and lunch, he takes a taxi back to assisted living. I make sure he has \$20 and a copy of his address in his shirt pocket. One afternoon, assisted living calls me.

Mrs. Park, this is Sharon at assisted living. Your dad just arrived in a taxi, and there is a problem because he doesn't have enough money to pay the driver.

He has \$20 in his shirt pocket.

The driver says he owes \$58.

What! How much?

\$58.

I don't understand. The senior center is like 5 miles away – I don't know. The driver wants \$58, and we don't keep money here at the desk --

Is the driver there? Can you put him on the phone?

Hello?

Hello?

Oh, I need \$58, ma'am. I drove the man here. I need to get back to work.

I don't understand. You drove my father 5 miles, and it costs \$58?

No. No 5 miles. No. We drove to Marina del Rey.

Marina del Rey! You drove above the airport? Why would you drive above the airport?

The man said to drive there. He didn't know the address.

But he has it in his shirt pocket.

I don't know. He said to drive north of the airport. To turn left. I don't know. I need \$58. I have to go back to work.

Okay, okay. I'll come over there. I'll be there in ten minutes.

I need to get back to work. Someone needs to pay me.

The Phone:

Pop calls me every day. Sometimes it's three times, sometimes it's four. Often it's more.

10:30 am

Jana. I need to go to the hardware store to get a key made for the condo.

Good morning to you, too, Pop. I gave you a key last time I was there.

Oh, okay. Bye.

CLICK

10:33 am

Jana, I need to go to Albertsons to buy bourbon.

Pop, we just bought bourbon on Sunday. Don't you still have some?

Oh, yes. Bye.

CLICK

10:37 am

Jana, I need to go to Kincaid's for lunch.

Pop, it's only 10:30. It's not time for lunch. They don't open until 11:00.

Eh?

Kincaid's isn't open, Pop.

Oh, okay.

CLICK

10:42 am

Jana, I need to make 8 copies of the condo key. One for you, one for Bob, one for Kelly, one for Gabe, one for Rose –

Yes, Pop.

CLICK

8:30 pm

Jana, are you picking me up for church?

Pop, it's 8:30 at night. There is no church.

Eh?

It's night, Pop! There is no church.

Oh, okay.

CLICK

A Well-Fitted Bra

Paula Starr Sherrin

They grew overnight at the first sign of blood. At least, that's how I remember it. Yesterday, I could button my shirt; today I can't. Dad says, "Congratulations! Now you can get pregnant." I am eleven and do not understand irony or much of anything. Mom proclaims, "Every woman needs a well-fitted bra," as if it is a law beyond dispute. My mother is an expert in buying clothes and behaving properly, so I trust her about these things. I am not a child anymore; I'm a woman. An outing is planned for the following Saturday. We will walk to Frederick's of Hollywood in the Valley Plaza Shopping Center to purchase my first bra.

This was in 1970, and Frederick's was not what it is today, a poor woman's Victoria's Secret. Frederick Mellinger, who went by the name of Mr. Frederick because that's what designers do, is the inventor of the push-up bra. He started a small mail-order company that supplied "intimate apparel" to the girlfriends of World War II GI's and grew it into a nationwide chain of boutiques that sold garter belts, crotchless panties, and cut-out bras to suburban housewives. My mother had been a Las Vegas showgirl, which means she wore shiny outfits and danced while balancing heavy, elaborate headdresses. She was accustomed to glamour and thought this the best place to purchase a starter bra.

Saturday arrives, and mom spends the requisite two hours in the bathroom "putting on her face". She is beautiful without makeup, but she seems to enjoy pampering herself. The cosmetics she buys, Helena Rubenstein, are very expensive, and my father complains every time she goes shopping, but I think he is happy to have such a pretty wife. The foundation makes her skin glow. The lines of eyeliner and eyebrow pencil are drawn with a steady hand, yet thoughtlessly after so many years of practice. The eye shadow compact has five bright colors, and she uses all of them. I study the process from my spot on the fuzzy-covered toilet seat, admiring the palate of colors and array of jars and boxes essential to the process. Everything has a lovely fragrance. Sometimes, I get distracted by a cobweb in the corner or play with the toilet paper roll, but always return to watch and learn. This is what women do before they go out: they color and pencil and contour themselves to put their "best foot forward". This is why she tells me to put on Mumm cream deodorant and to stand up straight. She wears a smock over her dress to keep it from being soiled with makeup. She never leaves the house without looking beautiful, and I am always proud to be

seen with her.

We walk to the shopping center along Vanowen because it takes us past the park with its full shade trees and red brick recreational center. Victory is a longer walk anyway and is marred by dull concrete office buildings and the sounds of traffic. I am wearing blue denim pants from Sears with an elastic waistband, my loosest-fitting shirt and white Keds. Our first stop at the shopping center is always See's Candy. Mom buys a milk chocolate Bordeaux for herself, and the lady gives me a different one to sample. Most of the time, the candy is good, but sometimes they give me rum raisin or marshmallow that I eat to be polite. We walk past the shoe repair owned by the old man whose skin is dark and taut as leather, and we look in the window of the Jewish bakery with its rotating display case. We always buy bobka for my dad, but I like the petit fours. Every place feels friendly because they are familiar, part of the routine of our lives.

I had seen the Frederick's display window before on our walks, but it was something I noticed absent mindedly, thinking the garments were pretty, but never going inside. Now, I'm really looking at the display in my newly-conferred womanhood, and I notice the framed portrait of Mr. Frederick leering at me. I have never used that word "leering" before, but I know that that is what he is doing. He is in a suit and tie, with greasy dark hair and a dark mustache like my father's. There is also a sign with a quote from Mr. Frederick: "Why hide your sensuous, sexy body? Let my fashions show your man where to look!" I have seen men in the neighborhood leering at my mom. Sometimes, they lean out of cars and say things. I don't want men to look at me like that; I want to be invisible. Years from now, I will take Art History and learn about the male gaze. Today I feel it. The mannequins in the window look like the ones at Sears and Penney's, but they are wearing sheer, lace-trimmed underwear in lurid colors: stop-sign red, turquoise, and dark purple. Lurid is another word I've never used before.

My mother has shopped here before, and the saleswomen greet her by name. Both are older than she and, like so many of her friends from the "old days" in Las Vegas, were once beautiful, but now are worn out, used. One is fat with pendulous breasts that continue to sway though she is stationary. The other is somewhat thinner and less jiggy with eyebrows that have been



plucked and arched into an expression of perpetual surprise. The contrast between them is funny to me. Later, mother will tell me that she suspects they are lesbians, but will not explain what that means. They make small talk and the saleswomen say how cute I am. Their voices are deep and rough from smoking. My mother and they speak about me as though I'm not present. I wish I had magic so I could disappear for real. Then, having dispensed with pleasantries, they get down to business.

The large one fetches a measuring tape from a drawer behind the glass-topped counter and proceeds to measure my midriff and bust, as her partner looks on nonplused. Having placed me in the hands of professionals, my mother browses the store, picking up various items from displays and inspecting their quality. Doubting what the measuring tape reads, the woman takes my fledgling breasts in her two hands like she is testing the ripeness of two pieces of fruit, like they are not part of me. This startles me and I feel my face burn red. "She's gonna be a big girl," the woman announces. My mother nods resignedly, and the thin one seems shaken by the revelation. The two women confer a moment, and the thin one goes to the stock room for some bras for me to try on. Not knowing what else to do, I begin to pick up and inspect merchandise like mom. I pick up a pair of what look like panties, but have a slit down the middle part where the crotch is supposed to be.

"What are these?" I ask.

"Crotchless panties," she replies.

"Why are they crotchless?"

"Access."

The astounded one returns with a selection of bras, "foundation garments" she calls them, and I am ushered into a cramped dressing room with mirrors on the three walls and a door that neither locks nor fills the door frame. At first, the woman means to stay and help me, but I assure her that I know what I'm doing, that I've watched my mom do this a hundred times. She rejoins the others, and I'm relieved that she will not see me without my shirt. Their conversation moves on to the topic of mutual acquaintances who have divorced, died, or are still doing burlesque, but no longer in one of the big hotels on the Strip. There is a moment of silence as though all are dead.

Trying on the bras makes me think of Goldilocks and the Three Bears – this one's too big; this one's too small; this one's just right – only none of them is just right. The cups sag pathetically, and the colors that looked so pretty on the mannequins are ridiculous on me. The thought makes me laugh out loud, which summons the stout woman to ask if I need help. She is peering over the top of the door, and I'm embarrassed for her to see me half dressed. She enters without knocking and adjusts the straps of the turquoise demi-cup bra that I am wearing. "She needs a B cup," she calls to her partner, who returns to the stockroom. Their attention embarrasses me, makes me wish I was a ghost who could float through walls like Casper. When the one with the remarkable eyebrows returns with a new assortment of bras, I have to assure them both of my competence to dress myself. Otherwise, I think they would have stayed, examining me over the entirely inadequate door.

The new bras fit at least, and some of them are in neutral colors that don't make me laugh at my reflection. I adjust the straps on one that is flesh-colored, a little lighter than my own skin, which is still brown from a Valley summer spent in the pool. I look at myself, all three of me, in the surrounding mirrors. I don't feel like a woman, but I am one. Even look like one a little. Being a woman means you do things like wear bras and makeup, even if you don't want to. You have to have good posture and be polite. And you have to give access. I don't know to what exactly, but I know it has to do with panties and leering. Mr. Bursack, our next-door neighbor who gets a case of seltzer delivered weekly and who always wants me to sit on his lap by the pool, wants access, I think. His grandkids are nice to me. I used to love going swimming, but bathing suits look a lot like women's underwear. I look at my reflection, and it makes me cry.

The Artist Formerly Known as Mom

Paula Starr Sherrin



Ordinarily, when an individual has multiple aliases, one expects them to have a lengthy criminal record. Perhaps, a photograph of them hangs in every post office and police precinct in the nation. A coast-to-coast APB is sent out, warning law enforcement to approach with caution. However, Loraine Starr was neither armed nor dangerous. She was not a criminal at all; at least, no charges were filed that I knew of. She was a dreamer, and her many names represented all her unrealized hopes. She was my mother.

She was born Lorraine Hewitt on October 31, 1925 in San Francisco, according to her baptismal certificate. Her unnamed mother was likely unwed. This was a genealogist's assumption based on the social norms of the time. Circumstances of her adoption are sealed, which was common in those days. Her original birth certificate cannot be obtained, but a second certificate was issued listing her birth parents as Richard Patrick Finn and Estelle Beatrice McCollins and her birthdate as September 8. Estelle's birthdate was September 7, and Loraine thought the change was made to flatter her mother. The filing date of the birth certificate was falsified to support the revised narrative. Thus, she became Mary Loraine Finn, the second "r" in Lorraine being dropped for no known reason.

So far as she knew, Loraine was the product of a mixed marriage of sorts. Though both were strict Catholics, Estelle was "lace-curtain" Irish, meaning that she was educated and valued culture and refinement or, at least, aspired to value them. She had gone to nursing school, and this rare female education gave her additional superiority. Serving in the Army Nurse Corps in WWI made her tough. Shows of emotion were vulgar, and smiling was frowned upon. Loraine noted that her mother was "a great Catholic, but a lousy Christian." Richard, on the other hand, was "shanty" Irish

and proud of it. Born in the gold-mining town of Bodie, CA, he had been a manual laborer and fruit packer before landing a job as a stationery store clerk in San Francisco. He spoke Irish, played the fiddle, and competed in the Hibernian Games in 1899, winning medals in the pole vault and shot put. He was also fond of making puns. Although of no importance today, this difference frequently caused conflict in the home. Not surprisingly, Estelle was the disciplinarian, while Richard did all within his power to undermine her authority. Richard allowed Loraine to engage in such unrefined activities as chewing gum and going to the movies. She loved him dearly.

Loraine attended Catholic school, but was never a particularly gifted student. She spent two years in the second grade because she couldn't learn to read. In hindsight, she was probably dyslexic, but there was no awareness of learning disabilities in the 1930s. She described herself as plain looking then; the bowl haircut her mother gave her certainly didn't help. Once, when walking through Golden Gate Park with her mother, she was approached by a talent scout who complimented her. Though her mother chastised him for being forward, this meeting planted the seed of her show business aspirations.

Richard and Estelle took in a succession of foster children during the 1930s. One such child named Vena became a close friend of Loraine's, and the two stayed in touch all their lives. Her parents wanted to adopt a different little girl, one with dimples and blonde ringlets like Shirley Temple. Estelle fussed over her like she was the real thing. When the social worker saw how jealous Loraine was of the attention her mother gave the child, she denied their application. Loraine remained their only child.

With the physical changes of adolescence, she grew more beautiful in features as she grew in height, stopping at 5'7". She wore her gently waving brown hair like a film star of the time, Veronica Lake, parted so that one side of her face was mysteriously covered as with a veil. This was called the peek-a-boo look. During WWII, she worked at the United Service Organization (USO) serving punch and dancing with the servicemen, many of whom were shorter than she. It was here she began to develop her sassy, irreverent sense of humor. She learned to tell jokes in addition to her inherited gift of punning. A couple of the more forward GIs called her Mickey Finn, after the knock-out cocktail, and the name stuck. After high school, she took a job with Standard Oil operating a comptometer, a sort



of prehistoric adding machine. Her cousin Monica McCollins, who was an executive secretary, got her the job. At twenty-one, she married Robert Stout at Ramona's Marriage Place in Old Town San Diego. Robert always called her Lori, though she hated the name. She confessed once that she only married him to get out of her mother's house. At least he was Catholic. They divorced after two years which is a mortal sin, but she had had enough of being called Lori.

About this time, Loraine was fired from Standard Oil when an exective caught her daydreaming for several minutes while filing receipts. Seeing that beauty was not a commodity to be wasted, she answered an ad from a nightclub that was looking for chorus girls. She danced at Bimbo's 365 Club on Market Street for a number of years. Loraine was the dance captain at Bimbo's, and this often pitted her against other dancers who wanted to advance their careers at her expense. One time, an argument erupted backstage that almost came to blows were it not for Loraine's quick wit. She and another girl were trading insults when Loraine countered with, "Everything about you is loose, even your liver." This made everyone laugh so hard, the argument was forgotten. At some point in the late 40s or early 50s, Loraine went to Hollywood to be a movie star, changing her name to Loraine Knight because it sounded English and not Irish. Paradoxically, she started dying her hair red in order to be more memorable to casting agents. This worked for her to a limited degree, and she can be seen performing innocuous tasks in the background of scenes in several major films of that era, such as *A Star is Born*, *Carrousel*, and *Rebel Without a Cause*. She even appeared in an episode of *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson, though in what capacity is unknown. Elizabeth Van Dreel, a friend from Bimbo's in San Francisco who sometimes went by the name Ellesa Dante, persuaded Loraine to join her in Las Vegas, where fame and fortune surely awaited.

Loraine was a dancer and showgirl in Las Vegas for several years at major casinos on the Strip that have long since been demolished: *The Flamingo*, *The Last Frontier*, *The El Rancho*, *The Silver Slipper*, and *The Sahara*. There are many photographs of her dressed in elaborate bustiers, midriff tops and tap pants, or flowing gowns – all covered in sequins. Showgirls had to walk gracefully in heels while balancing enormous, heavy headdresses, their upper torsos motionless as their legs Tiller kicked. Loraine made this look easy and won a number of awards for posture.

She worked for several choreographers who were famous in their day, but whose names no longer inspire awe, as they once did. During her off hours, she earned extra money working as a shill. Her duties included looking pretty, being friendly, and convincing witless men to gamble recklessly. She never said whether she dated any of those men. She did mention that Stubby Kaye, a popular comic actor of the 1950s and 60s, took her to the fights every Friday night, and the others she dated were entertainers, gangsters, or nuclear physicists. Although the details of their meeting are unknown, Loraine met Elvis Presley during this period. Unimpressed by the most famous celebrity of the time, she found him to be “greasy.”

Somewhere around 1957, she began seeing Milton Starr, a slightly older Jewish man, five inches shorter than she in flats, who was the stage manager for Betty Hutton’s show. Betty was the Beyoncé of her day, a recording artist and performer on stage and screen. Betty was known by those close to her for violent, alcohol-fueled outbursts as much as for her singing. On January 5, 1958, Loraine and Milton were married at the Little Church of the West with their friends Frank DeVito and Marit Angel as witnesses. Marit was also a showgirl, a stunning dark-haired Norwegian a full six feet in height, and Frank was a miniature Italian who was a drummer in Betty’s orchestra. The wedding photos are delightfully comic, the wedding party of tall women and short men forming a human picket fence.

At some time before the birth of their daughter, Paula Ann Starr, in January of 1959, Milton and Loraine had moved to a Hollywood apartment near the studios. Milton continued to work for Betty Hutton, accompanying her on a tour of Japan. They looked forward to the big house in the Hollywood Hills they would have, and Loraine imagined she would return to acting after the baby. Betty had wanted to be the child’s Godmother and bought her several expensive gifts; however, because she was not Catholic at the time, Loraine would not allow it. It’s not clear whether it was this slight or some other fit of pique that caused Betty to fire several members of her entourage, including Milton. Whether he blamed Loraine for his unemployment is also unclear. He was 45, jobless, father of a newborn, and husband to a woman whose chief skill was being pretty. When his old friend Remo Belle offered him a management job at his new drumhead manufacturing company, he jumped at the opportunity and never worked in entertainment again.



In 1963, they moved to a less-expensive apartment in North Hollywood to be closer to Milton's work. Embarrassed by their turn of fortune, Loraine and Milton became increasingly less social until their only night out was Frank and Marit's annual Christmas Eve party. During this period, Loraine would often speak of what she would do when her ship came in. Would this ship bring all she desired, or would it take her away? She never said, yet she seemed certain it was just beyond the horizon. Loraine found work as an extra on occasion, and she volunteered at the local park teaching a weekly exercise class. She briefly taught at a modeling school with her friend Elizabeth. Mostly, she stayed in the apartment. She seemed always to be washing dishes. Milton grew overweight and bitter in the factory. The shame of being ordinary and working-class settled like an obscuring fog, casting gloom on the marriage and child that should have illuminated their lives. Both drank a considerable amount. Maybe, the ship ran aground. They did not enjoy parenting and no longer reveled in each other's company. There were loud arguments and terrible silences. Though they never divorced, both had lovers who disappointed them. Milton's death in 1982 from a sudden heart attack must have been as much of a relief to him as it was to his survivors.

Loraine's daughter got married in 1986 and immediately started a family. When she announced her pregnancy, Loraine's initial response was, "I'm not old enough to be a grandmother," but she eventually took on the role and played it well. She began dating Lee Berg, another Jewish man, but more her height, who had been an accomplished writer during the "Golden Age" of television. When Lee moved in with Loraine, she told her daughter it was because his apartment was being painted. The paint must never have dried. Together, they would speak of what they would do when their ship came in, and no one ever had the heart to challenge their fantasy. When Lee died of cancer, Loraine may finally have come to realize that her ship had been redirected elsewhere. Perhaps this is why she kept quiet when she suspected her own illness.

By the time Loraine told her daughter about her symptoms in 1994, she had been bleeding for over a year. This information was withheld, she said, because she didn't want to worry her. Loraine underwent a hysterectomy and radiation treatments. She seemed to be recovering well, but suffered a stroke a few months later. A hospital psychiatrist said she shouldn't be on her own anymore, so her son-in-law, his dad, and a couple of brothers moved her into her daughter's house in Culver City and put her valuables in

storage. They threw out her collection of rubber bands, twist ties, Vogue magazines, used and washed foil and plastic wrap. They tossed canned and packaged food that had expired in the 70s. Like many children of the Great Depression, she was a hoarder.

Many things went in the trash that, had Paula not been with Loraine in the hospital, would have been saved: Loraine's collection of Las Vegas swizzle sticks, Milton's Russian tea glasses, and Paula's Get Smart lunchbox, among other souvenirs of better times. The psychiatrist also took her off a variety of mood elevators and pain relievers that various other doctors had prescribed. With neither Scotch nor pharmaceuticals to mitigate her emotions, she was deeply resentful at being dependent on her daughter. She missed her possessions and asked about them frequently.

She did not articulate her feelings, though she still had the power of halting speech after the stroke, yet she made her displeasure known in other ways. She was demanding, – unreasonably demanding – easily annoyed, and angry. She required 'round-the-clock care, and neither her daughter nor her husband got a full night's sleep. Their two daughters, then four and eight, were sent to their aunt's farm for the summer because Loraine's care took so much energy. Paula wondered if they felt punished; she certainly did. Loraine experienced a great deal of pain, and Advil wasn't cutting it. Tests revealed that the cancer had metastasized throughout her digestive tract. She needed professional care, so her daughter reluctantly put her in a nursing facility near their home. A few weeks later, on August 21, 1995, she died in her sleep at the age of 69.

There is much that is unknown and much that has been left out about Loraine Starr. She could be tightlipped about those parts of her past that were not glamorous. Much of the information here was gleaned from vital records and newspaper clippings. When her obituary ran, Paula received many phone calls from her mother's old acquaintances, including her ex-husband, Bob Stout. At her memorial, all her friends came to tell stories about her, but none that her daughter hadn't already heard. They talked about how beautiful she was, how glamorous. Nothing was said about her intelligence or her sense of humor, and she possessed great wit. Nothing was said about her character. She was my mother.

Candy

Christine Walker

November 25, 2014 at 11:22am



The day has come. The day I never wanted to happen, but knew it would. Candy has been diagnosed with a tumor in her nasal passage. It started out as a sneeze here and there, and then the sneezes turned bloody. She started to snore like an old man. The decision was made with the input from the vet to not pursue aggressive treatment. Candy has a heart mummer and beginning stages of kidney failure. This is not surprising in a kitty that turned 18 years old in October this year.

Candy was born at Thompson Tank Mfg. She was a shop kitty, semi feral. Grandpa gentled her down. The tale goes that her momma was killed and she was left alone. Grandpa was a tough SOB that lived larger than life, yet never met an animal that he did not love. He loved Candy. He named her Baby and brought her inside with him. She slept in his hat. I can close my eyes and hear Grandpa talk to her in his special animal voice, Baby, hey pretty Baby, what is a little thing like you doing". Grandpa called my mom in tears; Candy was playing in the gears of the metal polishing machines. He stopped two crews and crawled into the machine to get her. At that point, he realized that the machine shop was no place for a curious little kitten that would follow him around. Mom called me; her house was full.

I met Grandpa in front of Mom's house an hour later. He handed me a very small bundle of black and grey fur. Candy was tiny; she never got bigger than 7 lbs. My tough as nails grandpa was crying. He loved that little thing, and he knew giving her up was the right thing to do. I promised him that I would love her, give her a good home, and he could come visit her. I took her home, and the first thing was to bathe her. She was full of oil and grit. As the black

lather rinsed, her fur beneath was white and grey. Grandpa did come over a few times for dinner and holidays. She remembered him, and snuggled right into his lap.

Baby was renamed Candy, I just could not see calling a grown up female cat Baby. Two songs influenced the name, Candy by Iggy Pop and I want Candy from Bow Wow Wow. Mostly the Bow Wow Wow song as Candy has a very distinctive meow and was quite vocal.

Zelly was excited about having a kitten; my big tough Sch III malinois was an excellent kitty momma. Candy was her special kitty. Candy was not so sure about Zelly at first. The first meeting started and ended with Candy exploding into a giant (for her) puffball. Zelly ever so patiently won her over. It was very common to see Candy curled up with Zelly, and Zelly licking Candy's head into a perfect wet mogwai. When Zelly left us and we brought Clara home, Candy was having none of it. That is not my mommy dog. Candy then became the matriarch of the house. Candy would clean Clara's head and ears just as Zelly cleaned hers. The big difference is Candy rules with an iron fist. If Clara tried to leave or shake her head before Candy was done, Candy would bit her ear and start over. Candy has raised three Malinois. All of them know that Candy is the boss. In these past months, Clara, Sophie and Cooper have all been so very careful with her. Checking on her, licking her head, gentle head butts, and just being on the bed next to her.

Candy has been my lapcat for 18 years. She sleeps on me every night. It does not matter how much you toss and turn, she can out log roll any lumberjack. She rules with a sharp velvet paw. She caught a rat that made it inside when the bathroom was being remodeled. She reenacted the fight scene with a toy mouse on top of me every night at 3 am for a month. Her cry could be heard 4 houses away. I was on the phone with IT fixing the company laptop, and the workman finally asked me if I needed to go take care of the baby. I laughed- um, no that is my cat playing in the other room. He was so relieved; he was thinking he needed to call child protection services for her. Candy has a personality 100x bigger than her little body.

There are two things candy loves, being on my lap and being warm. Her nicknames include lizat and dragon kitty. She sleeps



on the floor furnace grate over the pilot light in summer. She loves the pilot light on the stove, especially in the morning sun. The pink fuzzy winter blanket on the bed is hers; she will paw at the cover until you expose the blanket for her to be on. My throw blanket, the fuzzy side, is hers. She sleeps either in a little kitty ball or she sleeps in such angles you can see where the dragon wings are under the fur. When George was alive, he would antagonize her enough to get scorched by the hiss we could hear thought out the house. Smaug has nothing on Candy. I refuse to believe that Candy would ever antagonize him first. In these last months, she was not able to jump up onto the stove. Instead we found morning sun in the patio. The sun filters in the windows and warms the chair and the dog bed. When the chair became too big of a jump, the dog bed was claimed. She is there now, sleeping. She is a 4 lb little ball in the center of a bed designed for an 80lb dog. The bed can barely contain her.

Today, she is going to enjoy the sun. I am going to sit with her and maybe pretend to do homework. Perhaps I will just look at her. She is my last connection to my Grandfather. She is the last cat that was raised and lived with Zelly. Today I am going to honor my promise to my Grandpa. Just as he knew it was the right thing to do, I know I need to do the right thing now. We have an apt at 5pm, after the sun has gone down. Candy, I love you. More than I can say. So I will hold you. And do what is right by you.

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of the Eiffel Tower at night. The tower's intricate lattice structure is illuminated, creating a golden glow against a dark, black sky. The perspective makes the tower appear to converge towards the top of the frame. Overlaid across the middle of the image is the word "ENJAMBED" in large, white, distressed, sans-serif capital letters. The letters have a grainy, textured appearance, with some internal details visible, giving it a stencil-like or weathered look. The text is slightly tilted, following the upward angle of the tower.

ENJAMBED

