



MISSION COLLEGE
SANTA CLARA

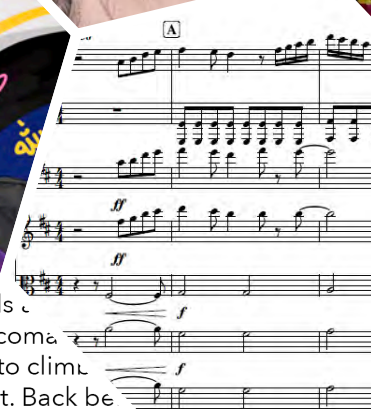
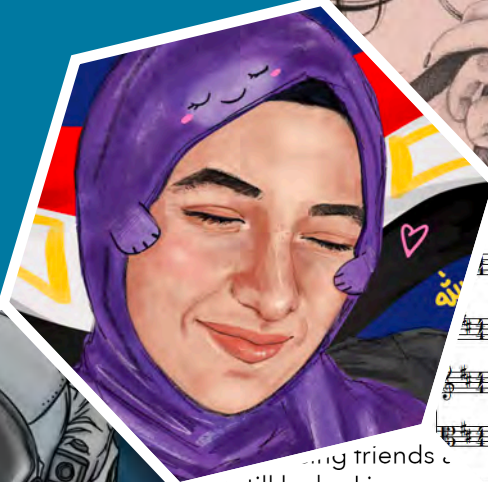
Mission Review!

2024

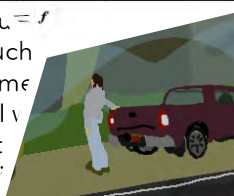
4th Edition

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shment. If I look way back to before, I
ght you were crazy if you told me that
mom, a fiancé, and the most respons'



Welcome to The Mission Review!

We at The Mission Review! are passionate about literature, art, community, and diversity. Some of us in these pages are seasoned and experienced poets, writers, and artists. Others are conducting passionate early experiments. Some of us possess artistic vision stretching far into the future. Others seek momentary stays against the stresses of daily life. But we all create. And all of our voices and visions matter. This includes you! Let the literature and art in these pages activate your imagination inspire your creativity. Then join us. The Mission Review! is here to stay, a place to celebrate and uplift our diverse Mission College literary and artistic community.

Overseen and sometimes nurtured by English instructor Ted Shank, these submissions represent our Mission College community. We hope you enjoy them.

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Luigi

Luis Cervantes



FALLEN

Hector Ascencio

Thuggin since a youngin
 Can't help it
Fallen head first to the streets

This game shows no love
Surely not what it first seemed
 Too deep to call it quits
Now i'm playing this for keeps

Tryna live to see tomorrow
While i'm pushin out this C
 Three letter Boys
Have me sweating in my sleep

The block is Frozen cold
So on me i keep my heat
 Either at my waist
Or tucked underneath my seat
 All to see a better day to
Bring something home to eat

A Thousand Tears

O.C. Blue

The day I cry a thousand tears,
Is when I walk through Grandpa's backyard after years,
And see the climbing Jasmine vines,
Start to fade and decline.

That'd be the day when I go through his garden,
And see the plants in pots and cartons,
Have all withered and died,
Without a caretaker to keep them alive.

That'd be the day when I walk on the pool's deck,
The one he built and kept in check,
And see it decay and weakened,
And all the memories with it have ended.

That'd be the day that the fig tree,
The one that has held up my cousins, siblings, and me,
Has been cut down,
Leaving the backyard barren.

That'd be the day when the rusty swing set,
Where I've made memories that I won't soon forget,
Breaks due to wear and tear,
From all the good times throughout the years.

That'd be the day that Grandpa's workshop,
The one where he has made many beautiful woodworks and props,
Has declined and collected a new kind of dust,
One of stillness, one of rust.

That'd be the day that the Foosball Table,
The one we played with when we were able,
Leaves the upstairs office,
Leaving behind an empty space.

That day would come,
When I am forced to move on from
All the good memories,
All the childhood years,
All the things to tug on my heartstrings.

That day, when it appears,
Is when I will have cried,
A thousand tears.

A Rare Gem

O.C. Blue

Your name suits you well,
The name of a gem so fine.
And one of high quality,
Is an even rarer find.

Your brilliance shows,
Like the bright red of the gem.
It is hard to ignore,
Your glow overwhelms.

Like the gem,
You banish sorrow.
Whether it is from your hugs,
Or you listening to my woes.

Like the gem,
You are precious.
Your smile it brings joy,
The happiness you bring seems endless.

Like the gem you shine,
Your presence is divine.
And you light up the room,
By being silly and kind.

But like the gem, you have your flaws,
We differ in thoughts and beliefs.
You have your sadness too,
Your anger, and your grief.

Yet it makes me love you more,
And smile from cheek to cheek.
I still love being around you,
Even when things are bleak.

Your listening ear, your ambivert nature,
Your passion, your encouragement,
And your interests makes me lament,
That we took so long to meet.

A rare gem, you are indeed.
I am lucky to have found you,
Out of the piles of rhinestones.
Yes, this is true.

Your name suits you well,
It captures your beauty.
I hope you keep shining,
Like the wonderful Ruby.

The Apple

O.C. Blue

The Apple's bright red skin,
Luscious and plump,
To me, it beckons,
As it falls to the tree stump.

Among the thorny vines,
Among the rotting leaves,
The sun makes it shine,
Resting upon the weeds.

I have no more sense and logic,
The fruit is hypnotic.
I forget the law of nature,
If it's bright, it's toxic.

The sweet aroma,
Fills my nose.
The smell of a sugary rose,
Masks the venom of a cobra.

I take a light bite,
I open my eyes wide,
The flavor it ignites,
My tastebuds with desire.

It tastes of candy,
Its flesh is soft, the skin crunchy.
However, I found that,
The aftertaste was quite nasty.

It has turned to mush,
It is black and moldy.
Its disgusting flesh,
Spills onto me.

Black Hole of the Intrepid

Damon Broussard

I am as lost
in your eyes
as a sailor gazing in the eye of a storm,
drifting in dark waves
toward some place.

I am lost,
but not astray, I'll explain.
I'm relieved from my familiarity;
the long-grown vines and roots
of prolonged sadness that haunts
3 A.M.

Let me rest here, darling,
Become so incredibly lost
with me
that we both forget what it means to search;
and together drift into the dark.

Let my promises gently kiss
the bruises you've stored in your closet
and all your reasons that you've hid from reason
To dance with chance

I AM LUIS

Luis Cervantes

I am Luis,
Birthed into shark infested waters,
Struggling not to drown, Fighting for survival
Freezing waters and sharp teeth turn me into a fighter.

During darkest days, Praying for something brighter
Heavy loads, never getting lighter
Floating, but never raising higher.

Rusted chains only squeeze tighter.
Hopes And dreams And all of my desires,
Drift away as I'm submerged into deeper colder waters.

I can't breathe! I suffocate, my chest is all on fire,

I hit the bottom wrapped up in chains and discarded fishing wire

As I sit and ponder on my situation, looking dire,
What will it take to break these chains, and rusted razor wire?
To float up once again and, drift on warmer shallow waters.

FROZEN TIME

Luis Cervantes

Once again it's Valentine's Day
We are close Yet so far away
Suspended up high, I'm Frozen in Time

My heart beats memorize on rewind
Thoughts of my___love divine,
The one who was so hard to find
Of us together, our bodies entwined.

Precious memories pass me by,
I reach out to grab them, for they dance before my eyes

My heart drops, the image shatters remembering they're just memories on rewind,
I plummet, falling back into real time,
I suffer, I'm in anguish for the illusion escapes my sight,

My eyes sweat, what is this?!, a man doesn't cry!
I find comfort, I'm okay soon we'll meet again and together we will fly,
Defying laws of gravity and even freezing time,
Together forever, Cruzandra, Love of mine.
Please be my sexy valentine.

Obscure Life Changes

Helen Chang

A holiday poem for this year
Covid came and ruined it here

Hoping things will get back
to the way it was
So we can live
Without the fuss

Wearing a mask
Is how we must survive
Hopefully soon
We can once again thrive

Times have been
Really rough
But let's attempt to
Be brave and tough

Together let's
Make it through
And maybe have
A brew or two

See you guys
Next year
And wishing to
Rejoice without fear

Paying Homage to My Grandmother

Helen Chang

Oh, I miss your kindness
Oh, I miss your laughter

The love you share
We feel it deep and clear
You always put aside your needs
For us to feel at ease

Can't believe you're not on this Earth
I've known you since my birth
Saving my life as a baby
And now your love is absent daily

Reminiscing eating at your dining room table
Eating Korean food, we were delighted and grateful

It is difficult for me not to see you next to me
But in the end, I'll see you when my soul is free

Oh, I miss your.....
Oh, I miss your.....

What Once Was

Julie Padgett



That Someone

Emilie Gonzales Cerna

She is, in some ways, a very sad woman, very unloved.
But you only see her smiling, living to love others.

Someone who you could easily forget and remember
since she gave you some of your happiest moments.

Someone who tried to heal every visible and invisible wound
even though that meant creating and opening hers.

Someone whose kisses meant leaving a memory in you
A memory that will make you smile every time you touch that place.

Someone who wiped all the tears on your face with her soft fingers
and wiped her own in a lonely room.

Someone who tried to give you every single star you wanted
but received just words in exchange.

Someone who needed a person that loved her the same way she did.

You Are Not the Muse

Emilie Gonzales Cerna

You are the paper and the ink,
the fancy typewriter and the pen.
You are the notebook on the old desk
and the fragile graphite of the pencil.
You are the brown palette of the painter,
and the thin brush suddenly in motion.

However, you are not the ideas in their mind, the fingers on the keys,
or the muse of the artist.
And you are certainly not the astonishing skills,
There is just no way that you are the astonishing skills.

It is possible that you are the writer's favorite pen,
maybe even the stains on the painter's hands,
but you are not even close to being the emotions embodied in each
piece.

And a quick look in the studio will show
that you are neither the accomplishments on the shelves
nor the desired goals on its walls.

It might interest you to know,
speaking of the unique perspective of the artist,
that I am the inspiration that makes them feel alive

I also happen to be the sleepless nights,
the sudden idea at midnight
and the tears of joy in the tired eyes.

I am also the sketches in the notebook corners
and the beautiful words in the writer's mind.

But don't worry, I'm not the paper and the ink.
You are still the paper and the ink.
You will always be the paper and the ink
not to mention the fancy typewriter and-somehow-the pen.

The Love in the Knowing

Emilie Gonzales Cerna

Before, when I thought about knowledge,
all I thought there was to know was what the books offered to us.
Science, History, Mathematics, and Language.
Topics of which you can become bored of,
For what I think is a lack of connection.

When I met you, I realized that knowledge
Wasn't limited to books, and the desire to knowing
Can become your day-to-day.
Every day, I wanted to know more about you,
Your history, your philosophy, and your anatomy
To later memorize every detail later at night.

You are the topic I will never become bored of
To which I will dedicate the rest of my days
To memorize every single word, movement, and detail.
I will become the only expert and professor
Able to recite your words and describe
Every feature of your face, even the smallest mole.

The most beautiful of all will be
getting to know you every day.
Your new hobbies and dislikes.
And be the first one to read every new chapter of you.

Quagmire of Grief

Julie Flores

I said, "Ohhh kaaay."
The moment
THAT moment
I was told you were
gone.
Your heart stopped.
My heart stopped.
Driving home
Processing
What that even meant
NUMB

Sitting in my car
Knowing
Feeling
I should have a different
reaction
I had
NONE
Sitting in my car
ALONE

It was only an hour
before
you answered the phone
Winded
saying,
"Hey, I fell.
A friend is with me.
EMS is coming.
When they help me up,
I will call you back."
My response,
"Ohhh kaaay."
Click.

That was it.
THE END.
The end of our
human
relationship.
Our earthly bond.

I forced
Myself to cry
Because I knew
I should.
Why didn't I cry?
The calm dullness.
SHOCK
Prepared me for the
torrential
storms
WATERFALLS
That were to come.
That never stop.

REGRET
I wanna take back
"Ohhh kaaay."
I didn't mean,
"Ohhh kaaay."
What I meant to say is,
I love you!
You are my
BEST friend.
My person.
My only
REAL friend.
The only person that
"gets me."
You make this world a
brighter
caring
more beautiful place!
TECHNICOLOR!
With unicorns,
butterflies,
gummy bears
And MAGIC!

You make people
Strangers
Friends
critters
ME
Feel seen, heard, and
LOVED.
SPECIAL.

It is your GIFT!
One of many
And I am so
Blessed, honored, and
lucky to know you!

That is not what I said.
And now you are gone.

Things are not "Okay."
The world is a mean
cruel
and ugly place.
The world could use
your wisdom
your humor
your light
And it is dark.
I am dark.

You showed me color
and light
Unicorns and the
impossible
You illuminated my little
world when I needed it
And now I am without
even a flashlight
Because you are gone,
gone away on a celestial
voyage
without me.

I am still here
Left behind
in the dark
Alone
Lost
Like before I met you.
With nowhere to go.
Looking for home.
In darkness.

BATTLING ADDICTION

Jamie Gamon

So there I was, bloody, broken, and bruised. Defeated. Methanpeta-man had beaten me again. I feel like he is getting stronger. As I try to get up, I feel the weight of his foot on me. I look up just to see him smiling and laughing at me.

“Fuck.”

I’m thinking of ways to get him off me. And as soon as I’m ready to give up hope, I look to the side and I see her. My savior. I’m saved.

My Final Goodbye

Maria De Carmen Soria

Not destined to be here forever
But never was ready to say goodbye...
COVID... COVID...
How I wish you never came by.

Rough scrappy hard working hands...
Smile that brightens up a room...
A heart that stopped beating that made mine ache.

Wished we had the time to reunite again...
Wished we had the time to have one last hug...

Cried you a river for years back to back...
Was mad with the world not understanding...
how I've wished you'd come back.

Took one dream to see your smile again...
How can I be mad when I've seen you're at peace.

It's time now to say goodbye.

Smoke N' Mirrors

Maria De Carmen Soria

*Staring at the sun rise over the hills.
Waiting for the kill*

*Feel light as a feather.
Watching what everyone calls a beautiful view.
But don't see the beauty.*

Waiting.. waiting.. and waiting

*Only thing I see is the demons coming my direction.
Staring right through the trees*

I see you... I see you...

Got me falling to my knees to teach me a lesson.

*I wonder. was I ever really happy?
Now that I see you clearer.
Was it just smoke and mirrors?*

El poder de las Fronteras

Urania Morales

History has a way of repeating itself.
Spaniards ravaged through our beautiful Mexico in the 16th century
25 million to 7 million within a blink of an eye

Two hundred years later, Anglos decided Texas was their home.
Texas was part of our beautiful Mexico.

Forty six years later, the United States decided it wasn't enough.
Mexico once again lost another limb.
Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas were born.

While borders uplift the victor, the loser is oppressed.
Que tristeza.

History continues to repeat itself.
The United States allies with wealthy Mexican landowners,
expanding business is an all time priority.
Mexicans lose more land.
The value of the peso depreciated.

What other options do my people have?
Work for American businesses
or search for a better life "en el norte?"

Perhaps, we are gravitated to return back to our homeland.

I wish my father would talk about his journey to the United States.
I can only imagine the fear, the uncertainty.
Leaving his parents and siblings behind.
¿Quién va a cosechar el maíz?

No, we have to always think about the family first.
Our inner feelings are second.
"Mijo, déjame darte la bendición."

Leaf

Jakob Morales Contreras

The tale of living life as a leaf
Is often overseen for the life of the tree
It blooms in spring and wilts in fall
Now upon its tale let's recall

As it blooms shades of green, providing photosynthesis
Sprouting out from not, as a butterfly from chrysalis
Shapes and sizes, growing sporadic
In line with life, fully synchromatic

As the little leaf wilts, its colors set ablaze
Lit up, like a Van Gogh, passing through each phase
"A Wind Beaten Tree"
An early work of thee

As all things do, its returned to its start
As a star transcends, from glowing to dark
Reaching an end, returning to infinity
Returning to all, becoming serenity.

Float

Anna Pavlovec



Love is Lost

Jakob Morales Contreras

Why am I,
In a love, unrequited
As I approach she flees, like a dove, or a crow
Like a river's stream, with a raging flow

As I pursue,
Unrelenting
With a love that is true

Yet by her gaze I'm deterred
With eyes heavy and serene
As she gazes at me, her hatred is inferred

Love and hate, like yin and yang, in a dance
My mind in a prison, eternally entranced
The more time I give, the colder she grows
Like chilling, weeping, winter willows.

Tension

Jakob Morales

Rush
Self-focused we all are
Fixated on making it work
As the common man rushes to work
The average student with a fruit in hand
Defined by rules and imposed goals
We all
Rush

Purpose
Late to work
Late to school
Making parents happy
Making ends meet
Alone around people
Simply seeking
Purpose

Nature
A tree along the sidewalk
A grass path visible as you walk
As bushes and roses guide one's path
Yet surrounded by stone
Detached and entrapped
Away from
Nature

The Poem is Poeming

(aka Gen Z is Writing Poetry Now, So Strap in :)

Julie Pagett

Writing poetry isn't really my thing
But I wanted to submit something
And I just realized that every line ends in 'thing'
That's poetic, right?
Dang it

My City-My Love

Hieu Pham

An afternoon
Missing old beloved Hue City.
The warm roof of the four seasons of love,
Remember the purple color of Hue,
Remember the Perfume River,
Remember the voice and the gentle rain of Hue!

Has Spring come? Winter is not far away.
Wet eyes filled with words of love and remembrance.
The old road is still waiting.
Call me to the end of the horizon.

The moon is still here,
The night cry is still there,
Mom is still with me, still smiling.
I raised my eyes and looked at a million stars.
The warmth around here is still abundant.

Misplacement

Filiberto Quintana

You say I was Lost.
Nah, I just have not been found.
Have you found yourself?

Because I look around
I have been mis-placed?
I was not yours after all.

So I don't look for me
I have been home all a-long.
Who, is lost and found?

The Girl Who Lives

Mittee Su

Every day I sit by the window
Hoping a certain envelope would fly in
Delivering
The key to my delusional dream.

It invites me into an untouchable world-
One that I can never be in,
One that could never exist.

Oh, to be a student at that school:
Prancing the hallways amongst wizards,
Lazily sitting by the lake,
Nothing happier than to be there.

Spells I cast through sheer willpower,
And potions brewed to perfection,
My feet lift off the ground
As my broom flies with uncertain certainty.

In the common room, I lounge
In the courtyard, I laze
In the dining hall, I feast
In the Great Lake, I swim
On the school grounds, I walk
On the Quidditch pitch, I fly.

Hours I would spend in the library,
Among story-high shelves of books,
Warm sunlight spilling through the lancet windows.

I zoom through the air with grace,
Taking in the smells, the sounds, the bliss-
Letting the wind tickle my skin and
Blow my worries away.

The castle stands tall at the tip of the mountain
And my heart swells with happiness at the sight of my second home.

Queen of the Night

Illustration for the fairy tale "The Blue Bird"

Anna Pavlovets



Exploration

Katie Miller



The Falling Rain

Blake D. Schindler

on the street, in the twilight gloom ...
i stood in the falling rain.
through the drip, drip, drops.
i thought i heard a faint sound a sound
of whimpering coming from a dark alley.
as i approached the alley, the whimpering
grew louder ... louder, then, it stopped.
through the drip, drip, drops.
i knew my quarry was there ... there
in the shadows in the falling rain.
what had happened to cause my quarry ...
to quiver and hide in the shadows, the shadows
in the falling rain? through the drip, drip, drops.
i thought i saw movement ... movement in the shadows,
in that dark alley, in the falling rain.
there ... under the cardboard.
was that a whimper ... a whimper in the falling rain?
yes, yes it was ... through the drip, drip, drops.
bruised and badly beaten ... underneath the trash,
in the falling rain ... through the drip, drip, drops.

Missing

Blake D. Schindler

in the pre-dawn hours of the night before,
i got up and got out of that place.
the gentle giants of Ganymede were
closing in on me.
i felt their eerie presence, i had overstayed
my welcome.
i raced toward the airport, amber
caution lights flashing all around.
my escape pod almost entered an
exposed trench.
i climbed an ever-swerving path,
the summit rapidly approaching.
all around the path, snow gathered,
glistening white.
when i rounded the final curve,
i saw that the snow was ghosts wrapped
in white sheets.
the sheets were lined up like piano keys...
except that there were multitudes of pianos.
next to the ghosts stood a solitary steel warehouse.
i looked inside but it was empty.
beyond the warehouse i beheld a forbidding ravine.
the ravine beckoned to me urgently.

the giants of Ganymede were pushing me...
pushing me toward the ravine.
in the ravine, I beheld a single overturned escape
pod not mine.
something drew me down into that ravine,
down, down, ever deeper.
suddenly, i was jolted
by the shrill ringing of my alarm.

Caged

Arizona Suzanne

My skin oozes,
My flesh crawls,
My body eats me from the inside.

Smiling at strangers in front of me, pretending to be at peace, my body screams enduring
incessant pain.

Please, no more, that being everyone adores continuing to suffer more and more.
Veins forced with what I need to live, hands swollen harder to ignore, I hate the body I
reside in.

Filled with scars, my body was not meant to be a roadmap.
Please let me claw out my eyes and rip all my hair out.



HOME ONE DAY

Raul Telez

Almost 8 years it has been
Since I've been home

Never lost faith
Missing family and friends

Feeling stressed out
Might get life behind bars

I was 18 now 26

Now I see life differently

As another year passes by
I just wish to be home one day

NEVER FORGOTTEN

Raul Telez

I am home behind concrete walls
Surrounded by friends and metal doors

—

The smell of jail made food
not the same like once before

—

Back at moms, chili beans and eggs
A daily meal with so much grace

—

Parents sister, and bro
room full of laughter and love

—

Never forgotten memories
That's where I want to be again

Frisco Fiasco

Christina Walsh

Here it is sunny and bright,
Until you come to the night.

A place where the Dahlia is in bloom,
And a darkness looms.

Come see the Golden Gate
You might find you have met your fate.

Hills upon hills throughout The City
It's the drugs that kills most of The City.

Come to see Sunset City,
Here in the Golden state,
You might leave with nothing but hate.

A stroll through the tenderloin gives light,
To the dragon being chased in a fight

Homelessness surges, until,
Panic and paranoia submerges.

Putting yourself into the shoes of one of these,
Poor, hungry, addicted, shelterless souls,

Will reveal how much power the drugs hold.
And you might get sucked in,

Never to leave Frisco again.

Sonnet 18 Parody

Maryam Wazwaz

Shall I compare thee to a winter's night?
Thou art less turbulent and less flurry:
Rough storms do quake the damned woodlands of November,
And winter's lease hath all too long a date:
Sometimes to ruff the eye of the storm surges,
And often in her silver gleam obscured,
And every upheaval from upheaval sometime despairs,
By chance or by nature's changing course untrimm'd:
But thy finite winter shall surely depart
For restored possession of that centered felicity;
For shall Life prevail thou soul in her light,
When in unadorned lines to time thou redeemed:
So long as men can conquer and or eyes can fancy,
So long revere this, and this grants esse to thee.

Kid Show Characters 2024 Reunion

Julie Padgette



Universally Sound

Maryam Wazwaz

And I stared up at the mid afternoon horizon
And I watched it turn into night fall,
covering the canvas blue with violet and red
What more beautiful of a transition could be
To then fade to black,
Welcoming the the glints and gleams of illuminating light

And I stared up at the the glowing man in the sky
The pale visage of the Moon
his features obscured
Corrupted by crates,
during such unfortunate events
How violent of a time he once witnessed
Now he sits into place, rest assured is he

Those times he had onced faced
Times of maelstrom and uncertainty
The formation of the great beyond, Still had yet been upon us

An Eruption
How could it have spread so far and, big
Causing disruption and disarray, bang
And as the dust swirled and settled,
The inception of the universe was becoming

And some of the scatter began to glow, a star
Praised by its constituents, around they revolve in devotion
The loyalty of such a wondering body,
But One of which
could be set apart from the others

This one could sustain life
Its inhabitants day and night dependent
It was formed from the same dust and scatter as the others
It survived and endured the same Eruption

Hometown

Cong Wu

The sweet potato
hiding by the stove
loving fire secretly

Ambiguous aroma
filling the past time

The rice soup
sliding into the water ladle
kissing sugar gently

Sweet taste
drawing my childhood

The permanent cinnabar mole on my chest
the eternal white moonlight in my heart

Taking a boat of homesickness
rippling in the soft waves of time

I am in a trance
gazing into the past now
staring at my hometown here

I Can Imagine

Cong Wu

I can imagine
a noisy snow
and
a silent wind

I can imagine
a flowing mountain
and
a towering river

I can imagine
a flipped universe
and
a regressive time

Everything
is reversible
except
my love for you

What If...?

Cong Wu

If there were no ants anymore
would the earth be lonely
I would
expand the anthills
and bring some fireflies
to go living

If there were no fish anymore
would the ocean be lonely
I would
catch a bunch of bubbles
to make a belt
and tie it on
to go swimming

If there were no birds anymore
would the sky be lonely
I would
collect some fallen feathers
to make wings
and wear them
to go flying

If there were no humans anymore
would the world be lonely
I would
Oh
I forgot that
there would be no me anymore

The following three found poems were created by students in Professor Shank's English 5B, English Literature, 17th Century 34to Present, course. This assignment asked students to form a poem from key words and phrases of Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* that, together, illustrate the traits, qualities, and overall mood and tone of the Byronic Hero.

A True Hero

Khudeeja Ahmed

A true hero,
For An uncommon age The true Devil
Ancient, brave

Shone valorous, god of War Forgotten is the condemned road

Youthful hope, I depart,
The waters heave upon the rocks,
The ocean's gale bound my steed,
And the tempest's dark roar seized fast my heart

The sands of life, my weary grief,
This old ambition but a selfish dream
The silent knife, this silent strife
The soul seeks refuge in its haunted deeds

Wild fantasy, whirling flame
Boiling bitter my youth became
And the spell closes with its silent seal
Wrung with the wounds that kill not, but ne'er heal

I Depart, Chasing Youth's Fond Prime

Kyara Valera

I depart, chasing youth's fond prime
Mixed with thy spirit
Of silent, sharp endurance

Mighty in the olden time
Wandering outlaw
Longed to woe on holier ground

Few earthly thing found favour
I traverse earth, invisible but gazing
The waves bound beneath me as a steed

I seize the theme, piercing the depths of life
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
In the soul's haunted cell, worn with pain

I changed

Strength to bear what time cannot abate
Found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand
Pride, worse than adversity

I depart, grown aged in this world of woe

Byronic Hero Found Poem

Zahra Najeebullah

a shameless wight
prone to joy and ungodly glee
awful deeds
haunt him with the threat of justice
weary of his lack of morality
sensed the feeling of satiety
detested he in his native land,
which appeared more lone to him
than the melancholy cell of an eremite.
he loved but one,
sick at heart
sullen tear starts
waters heave around him
winds roar and lift up their voices
since his young days of passion—joy, or pain
of selfish grief
grown old in this world of woe,
can be fame, ambition, conflict, love, or sadness
with the keen knife again, cut to his heart

Revolucionaria/Revolutionary Woman

Fernando Garcia



Time Travel

Carlos Arellano

Adolf Hitler had a good head start over Matthew Esperanza. Matthew was thinking of a quick way to kill Hitler's personal guard but for a World War II soldier he sure picked a wallop. "I wouldn't want to wrangle with that guy if I lived in this timeline," Matthew thought.

Matthew taunted his opponent who threw a right hook that would have left him unconscious had he not blocked most of the brute force and countered with a front kick. The Nazi folded into a 90° angle and looked up in rage only to be met with a side kick so hard that Matthew felt the man's teeth crunch under his steel toe boot. Looking down at the inconspicuous soldier, Matthew stomped on his goal to make sure he didn't get back up.

"Now it was time to find the biggest bastard of this century," Matthew thought out loud as he wondered if Hitler had alerted the handful of generals that were supposed to be at this clandestine gathering. He wiped any traces of his own blood and left the conference room in the abandoned theater.

As Matthew exited through the side of the building, shots rang from the bakery or what was left of it from across the street. Throwing himself behind a concrete barricade, Matthew felt a bullet pierce through his leather coat and nick his side.

"Aargh," Matthew grunted and realized how lucky he was that the bullet hit him instead of the hand grenade sitting in his coat pocket. He took out the grenade and his pistol from the coat then took off the garment. He then pulled the pin from the grenade and threw the coat towards the barricade next to him. Nothing. These men had many years of experience so they did not fall for the trick.

Matthew threw the grenade that he had patiently waited to explode right through the broken window. He heard what were about to be shouts of panic and cut short by the explosion. Running towards the scene with his gun in hand, Matthew took a look around.

He missed his chance to create a better world.

Among the uniformed bodies and German metals that decorated the wreck, not one of them was Hitler's. At any moment these town ruins were about to be swarming with Nazi military. One of the faces intact on the bodies that Matthew recognized belonged to Heinrich Himmler, who was Hitler's right hand man.

"He's got to be somewhere around," Matthew thought as he drew his pistol.

Matthew checked the kitchen and came back around the counter. He heard a small shuffle under the counter floorboard and wasted no time shooting five times in the direction of the sound. There was another sound followed by rumbling.

"Shit, the cavalry's here," Matthew said.

He bent down and pried the floorboard where he shot open with his fingers. Hitler lied there still with blood seeping from his torso. Matthew shot Hitler two more times in the head. The sound of gunfire attracted attention from some of the German soldiers that were pouring into the area. Esperanza pulled out a small laser like device and set the numbers from 1940 to 2057.

Cutting a hole into the air, Matthew slipped back into his own timeline before any Nazi arrived at the scene.

*

"What the hell is wrong with you Matthew?!" said Sam as he opened his door and saw his friend wounded. Matthew had lacerations and bruises but walked in casually.

"Sam I don't ask you questions about your line of work," Matthew said and sat down on the couch. "Just help me out and I'll stay out of your skin for a bit."

"Matt, do you realize how much time it will take for me to individually close all those wounds? A lot of time, and I have to be at the hospital in less than two hours."

"I won't stop bleeding from my side and you're worrying about being late to work?" "Your life isn't the only one I need to save," Sam replied.

Review of Ocean Vuong's *Time is a Mother*

Izabella Concepcion

Resilience in Waves. A review of *Time is a Mother* by Ocean Vuong.

A week before the semester of spring, I skimmed through the syllabus for my ENG1B class with Professor McGee (amazing professor btw!!) and grew anticipation when I realized which poet's poetry collection would be tackled. Ocean Vuong. Although I have not had the time to read any of his work prior to this, I have heard exquisite reviews about his writing. I am the type of reader who would stalk the author and go on GoodReads to read through other people's opinions before actually reading. Vuong says in an interview, "*When I write, I feel much larger than the limits of my body. There is a mystery you tap into that is much bigger. And the poem becomes just a glimpse into what you reveal to yourself.*" With "*Time Is A Mother*," you would have to scrape the entire collection down to grow some sort of understanding, and everyone would have their own, unique interpretation, especially the poet himself (I have long reconciled myself with this ambiguity).

"*The Last Prom Queen in Antarctica.*" The title of this piece made me wonder what it would entail. It always becomes a mystery. My initial thought was, "*It seems like it's just a ramble about his life.*" I could not comprehend it no matter how hard I tried that day. One morning, a week before I had to submit my paper, I sat down and simply read the words out loud; the frequency of reading created a much clearer perspective. The poem touches on human conditions through Vuong's eyes-how he viewed the world, his family, his sexuality -and he was defiant. "*I want to / take care of our planet / because I need a beautiful graveyard,*" Vuong wrote (pg. 37). That was when I started repeating the title in my head, then figured how Antarctica is known as a harsh place, its extreme weather conditions making it a challenging place to reside in. I could not take it literally; Vuong's life had no connections, what's over, to Antarctica, or so I thought. It is a place of adversity, of difficult times. It is absurd to think of the juxtaposition between a prom queen and Antarctica's landscape, yet Vuong had the ability to find beauty (As most prom queens ought to be) in circumstances that were heavily unlikely, no matter how much time had passed for him to fully do so.

An entire section of the poem was dedicated to his emotions as a child, whilst being around his father's presence, where he mentions how, given another chance, he would have chosen the life where he plays the piano. The sound of each note rings my ear as it reminds me of myself. At the ripe age of five, I was told to focus on playing the piano. Unfortunately, I was overall not interested. While that was not the end of my musical background, a part of me regrets not using that privilege when I was younger, but I also could not blame myself. I had another perception of what fun was; I was just a kid. Maybe it was the nostalgia of being a kid, the desperation to understand what was in front of him at such a young age, that Vuong was imagining as he wrote, hoping to go back in time and pivot every single bad thing that happened. *"Broken keys, Bach / sonata..."* (Vuong, pg. 37).

He moves on, bringing up how his father chased his mother *"through New England's endless / leaves"* (Vuong, pg. 37). Half of me considered he could have been chasing her because of love, of familiarity, because despite the troubles, he was still her husband. I have brutally observed how, sometimes, it could all go wrong, yet love remains. Their entanglement with each other was once there. Do not take this the wrong way, I have no intentions of romanticizing abuse, nor will I vindicate his father's actions. But, I have had conversations with people that were like his father, and I have continued to wonder every night why and how they could do it: a continuum that solely permeated my entire being. An abuser is capable of inflicting cruel, inhumane acts toward their victim only to later profess love.

The other half of me, the other half of me could imagine him simply chasing her around the house to physically abuse her as the story puzzles out: *"Maybe I saw a boy / in a black apron crying in a Nissan / the size of a monster's coffin & knew / I could never be straight"* (Vuong, pg. 37). The apron evoked readiness, specifically readiness for conflict, *"...& knew I could never be straight"* (Vuong, pg. 37). Such vulnerability was shown through his words, how a boy could experience the wandering of who he really is. The amount of sense of self became overwhelming, how Vuong went from talking about his childhood, to his parents, to his sexuality. There is a hint of melancholy in his words, a child wondering about its place in this world. You could imagine this as he briskly frees himself: *"Maybe, / like you, I was one of those people / who loves the world most / when I'm rock-bottom in my fast car / going nowhere."* (Vuong, pg.37).

As an eighteen-year old emerging adulthood, I learn more about the world as I allow myself to get outside and experience life. I will not know everything, as my years of living will not be enough, although I wish to make the most of it. This book of poems shows exactly that. Acceptance shown not only in words, but in memories. I hear myself as a child giving herself a pep talk; I hear my grandma sit me down and talk to me in her loud yet unconventionally sweet tone; I hear the voice of my friend whom I have known for years, foreseeing our friendship's end, as I watch myself love them from afar. Acceptance is not being apathetic about it either, it is letting life happen, taking on opportunities, working with passion and gratitude along the way, until your dying breath.

Acceptance was what Vuong portrayed in the last poem of this collection, *"Woodworking at the End of the World"*, a beautiful narration of Ocean Vuong's essence. There is a vivid awakening in his tone as he talks about the little boy in a Ninja Turtle t-shirt. Crickets are loud; however, he becomes in so deep with nostalgia, he disconnects from the environment he is in. Vuong traverses us to a chapel: *"If I stayed on my knees, it would keep all my secrets"* (Vuong pg 112). In Christian beliefs, God is omnipresent. And in church, one repents. He hears the boy say, *"It's okay. I forgive you"*, reconciling with his past, accepting his present (Vuong, pg. 112).

I would also like to recommend my recent, favorite read, *"Lie With Me"* by Philippe Benson. Benson is a French writer remembering his adolescence, through a clandestine affair. Benson's passion reminded me of Vuong. Raw vivid descriptions evoke poignancy that affected me deeply; their vulnerability was shown on pages I could return to whenever I hoped to do so.

"Time is a Mother" was a transcendent human experience. With complete transparency, there were times I viewed Ocean Vuong as a masochist. But then I continued to read, and I empathized with this man I have never met. I formed a connection with him. I, too, have experienced fear. I have imagined losing my mother, as well as failing to imagine. In the end, change was inevitable. *"How intimate it is,"* I whispered to myself. I remain resilient and passionate, as Vuong was.

"But to live like a bullet, to touch people with such intention. To be born going one way, toward everything alive. To walk into the world you never asked for but then choose the room where your hunger ends—which part of war do we owe such knowledge?"

– Ocean Vuong, *Nothing*

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"Ocean Vuong: 'When I Write, I Feel Larger than the Limits of My Body.' | Louisiana Channel." YouTube, YouTube, 6 Sept. 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5NuCrAkjGw.

A Small Survivor

Otoniel Cornejo

In a dim and shadowed room, Doña Consuelo kneels at her altar touching a burning match-head to a glass candle cradled in her small hand. The orange flame trembles and twitches the shadows cast by the angelic figurines and saintly statuettes surrounding her. She rocks her petite stature murmuring her daily prayers.

As the rising sun peeks through the windows of her humble home, Consuelo rises with it, steadying herself on a plain wooden chair and pushing up off her knees.

At 80 years-old, she has maintained her morning ritual and workaholic ethic despite the surgery on her left knee. Only with high heels can she walk comfortably in her stilted manner, but with a straight back and a chin up the people of our town admire and revere her, nonetheless.

Hhhmmm, today is going to be a blessed day like any other, she thought, though she felt a firm determination to do something that was unlike her usual mornings.

Donning her long sleeve peach dress with floral designs, she fluffs her short hair into a puffy round auburn cloud, and is heading out when she hears yelling at the back door.

"Consuelo, Consuelo!" She turns back to what sounds like a young boy. Nearing the door, a sudden banging on it erupts making her jump a step back.

"Please, it's Angelo. Open up! I need help!. They are going to kill me!" Quickly she opens the door and in tumbles Angelo gasping for breath.

"My God" she says, locking the door shut. "Who is after you? And where is Mary?"

Wide-eyed he whispers, "my mother is in the city but Malandro and his goons are after me. Please help me."

Not only was Malandro evil, he was pure ugly too. With the face of a bulldog and an underbite to match. She pulls the chair to him and demands to know what happened.

Angelo sits and explains that last night he heard that Malandro was searching for any boy able to hold a rifle to recruit, and death to anyone who refused. Not until he saw men in vests with ski masks and guns going door to door, did he believe the rumor. Hiding under his bed, just as they busted through the front door, he heard a stampede of boots ransacking the place with their two-way radios crackling interference. Only when the quiet down cleared the noisy nightmare did he brave to run to Consuelo's home.

She knew that going to the police would not help because most of them were corrupt and the rest wouldn't interfere with Malandro or his bribes. Their policy was to protect their Pesos and not the people, especially the poor.

"Wait here," instructed Consuelo. "I'm going to call Martin."

Leaving Angelo to get her cell phone, she couldn't help but notice how vulnerable the little creature looked, skinny and with his hair disheveled.

"Hello?" came the familiar voice on the line. She was overjoyed that Martin answered and then remembered why she was calling. Scolding herself for letting emotions sweep her to a past of intimate history, she forced the memories aside and came to the present moment.

"I don't have much time, but I need help Mart," she said, hoping he wouldn't be sour about how the relationship ended.

A pause, then to her relief he spoke. "Yes of course. Anything for the senorita of my life."

She had to stifle a laugh. Just like the legendary tales of Don Juan they both knew growing up, Martin still tried to impersonate the heroic knight who would have any woman as the legend goes. But that was why she loved him; except for the womanizing she still would have been with him.

Rehearsing the plan one last time she asked, "are you sure you want to do this? It will be torture or worse if we get discovered."

"Yes, I'm sure." Martin sounded offended and then said, "I would die for my Primrose, the only flower that keeps its beauty the biggest the longest out of all the others."

Consuelo had never heard of an honest cheater like him before.

It was noon and she hurried back with a shawl and dress calling for Angelo.

"Here put this on," Conseulo told Angelo.

He tried to protest. "A dress!? No way I'm putting that on"

"Would you rather be stripped naked and tied up," she shot back. With a sigh he got into his disguise.

Making sure the street was clear, Consuelo opened the door and casually unlocked her car.

"Move, head down and no sound," she warned.

They hurried inside and drove to the corral where she keeps her beloved pigs. Arriving at the gate she spotted Martin raising the rails around his truck bed with three pigs loaded up.

Rushing Angelo to the back of the truck, Consuelo voiced her expectations. "Get in. Wrap this blanket over you and a pig, and don't complain."

With a grimace and covering his nose Angelo tucked in with the cleanest pig as Martin finished roping a black canvas cover to the corners of the rails.

Inside the truck, Martin squeezed Consuelo's hand for reassurance and took off towards the city. Passing a squad of Malandro's men, they only glanced over and didn't care much for the snorts and oinks of the pigs.

Arriving at the checkpoint they were filled with dread. Consuelo gasps, "My Lord, there is Malandro."

Malandro was barking orders at his man checking cars though.

"Hurry it up, cabronés!, he says. The Federalés want to come give us some trouble." Waving the next car through, Malandro chose to personally check Martin's truck.

Squinting at both of them with his beady eyes he approaches without a word and heads directly to the back of the truck. Unconsciously, Martin grips the wheel tighter and Consuelo makes the sign of the cross when suddenly the rhythmic rotors of a helicopter and distant sirens are heard.

"It must be the Feds! Martin says this with enthusiasm. Just before Malandro could reach for the lumpy blanket he hears his radio static automatic fire and a voice shouting that they are under attack; The feds are here!

Malandro yells to clear all vehicles to position his roadblock of armed trucks and men to fight the Federal government.

In the midst of the chaos Consuelo realized the blessing and looking into Martin's eyes she simply said, "drive."

That feeling of determination returned from this morning and she was certain it was truly unlike any other. In view of the city lights, she tells Martin to let the boy up front

"He smells," Martin replied. "Besides you and I have a lot of catching up to do my superwoman."

Consuelo was too tired to hide her smile and thought maybe if he behaves he can be my sidekick.

Italian

Tyler Lawhead



Tyler Lawhead
Italian (2013)
Oil on canvas
38" x 48", Framing

Do We Value Ourselves When We Use A.I. For Writing?

Thomas Fritz

“Act so as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, at all times also as an end, and not only as a means” -
Immanuel Kant

When Immanuel Kant spoke about treating people as a goal and not as a means, I think the analogy could also be applied to things that are of value to the person. In today's world, what we value is what we spend time doing. Therefore, in the process of writing, we learn it as a goal to be able to write better and to understand ourselves better. But lately with the development of large language models referred to as artificial intelligence, students have used this tool to bypass the learning process and produce a paper to submit. What impact has this new technology had on the perceptions that students have on education? For myself, I believe that the use of AI in writing has reinforced task-oriented thinking in students rather than experience orientation. I will go more into depth with Immanuel Kant's quote, explore AIs short comings in creativity and share some personal experience with using it.

Immanuel Kant was a man with a goal to produce pure reason by de-constructing morals and perceptions of reality. Through his work he produced a valuable rule to treat a person as a goal and not as a means. When I was learning more about the use of AI in writing, I immediately thought of this teaching from Kant. It not only applies to people but also to things that you value. In terms of education, students often value the degree over the material that they learn and the development of AI to produce papers in a fraction of the time has led students to believe that this is a real substitute for their work. So, for a student using AI to produce a paper, the learning process and self-development is not the goal. To a task-oriented student, the goal is to complete the assignment whereas a student who is experience-oriented will take in the information, process it, and produce a paper which has caused them to become a better writer and a better person from that experience. Without experiencing the process, self-development does not occur when it is outsourced to a machine. So, with the addition of AI, students view generating a paper from tools such as ChatGPT as equal to writing it themselves. What's important to that student is that the task was completed.

Some personal experience that I have had, when it comes to using tools such as ChatGPT, would be the realization of how limited this tool is. We as human beings have the power to produce new information and new insights. The way that large language models work is by reading millions of texts produced by humans and storing all that information in their system. Essentially these models would be like Google becoming a person who you can talk to and ask questions of. Although this may seem to be a powerful tool, it is limited in the realm of creativity which is essential for writing. The ability to critically think is unique to humans. AI may have the appearance of creativity, but it only stems from the work that has already been done by people. So, a student using AI to generate a paper will think that the paper is creative enough for the project; however, upon further inspection, the work that AI produced is creatively superficial at best. I think my classmate Javier Valdivia's insight in the discussing the topic, sums this idea up well: "Sure, it can create 'perfection,' but if it ever reaches the point to where almost every submission uses AI, then none of them would be unique, none of them would be able to reflect the creativity of a student, or to understand their thoughts and perception of the subject". Javier is not alone in this insight that AI has the appearance of intelligence but lacks the essential component of intelligence which is creativity.

Finally, how does a student's view on education change? I can say that I have been viewing education as a means to a goal of a degree which is a means to a goal of a career. When talking with my cousin who obtained her master's degree in classical art, she told me she did it because she wanted to learn more about art without the intention that this would financially benefit her. Luckily, she was able to land a job as a professor at a private Christian school. But this idea that she wanted to attend college only to learn a subject was novel to me. So much of the time, the goal of education is to graduate with a degree. This perception is being reinforced when students use AI for creative writing because the goal isn't learning the subject, English. Writing is only a steppingstone to graduation and it's a means that many students do not want to do.

Personally, I enjoy writing and have not submitted a paper generated by AI. I have however used AI to help me generate ideas or topics to talk about when it came to writing a report on the American Civil war. AI is good at giving you a broad list of topics and snippets of information about a large variety of subjects. When I had to writing about the impacts the American Civil war had on the economy, I asked AI to list 4 major factors about the economy in the American Civil war. It then generated a few ideas and from there I had a foothold into the subject and could

research more and write about it. One could say I should have known the factors that impacted the economy at that time, but I was task oriented and only took American history for a requirement. I didn't view it as essential since I have been studying American history for a long time outside of academics. On subjects that I value, I take the time and enjoy the process of learning and soak in the information that I find useful and valuable. Maybe the key to students appreciating education is their perception of its value.

So, in conclusion, AI has reinforced task-oriented thinking by outsourcing the learning process to a machine which bypasses the self-development of the student. It also moves a student to view education as a means to an end and not as a goal. Large language models have their uses but not for creative writing because they can produce deceptively intelligent work but creativity superficial. If we value something, then treat it as a goal and not as a means. Creative writing is a chance to explore yourself and the world, rather than focusing on the task, orient yourself to the experience of the process.

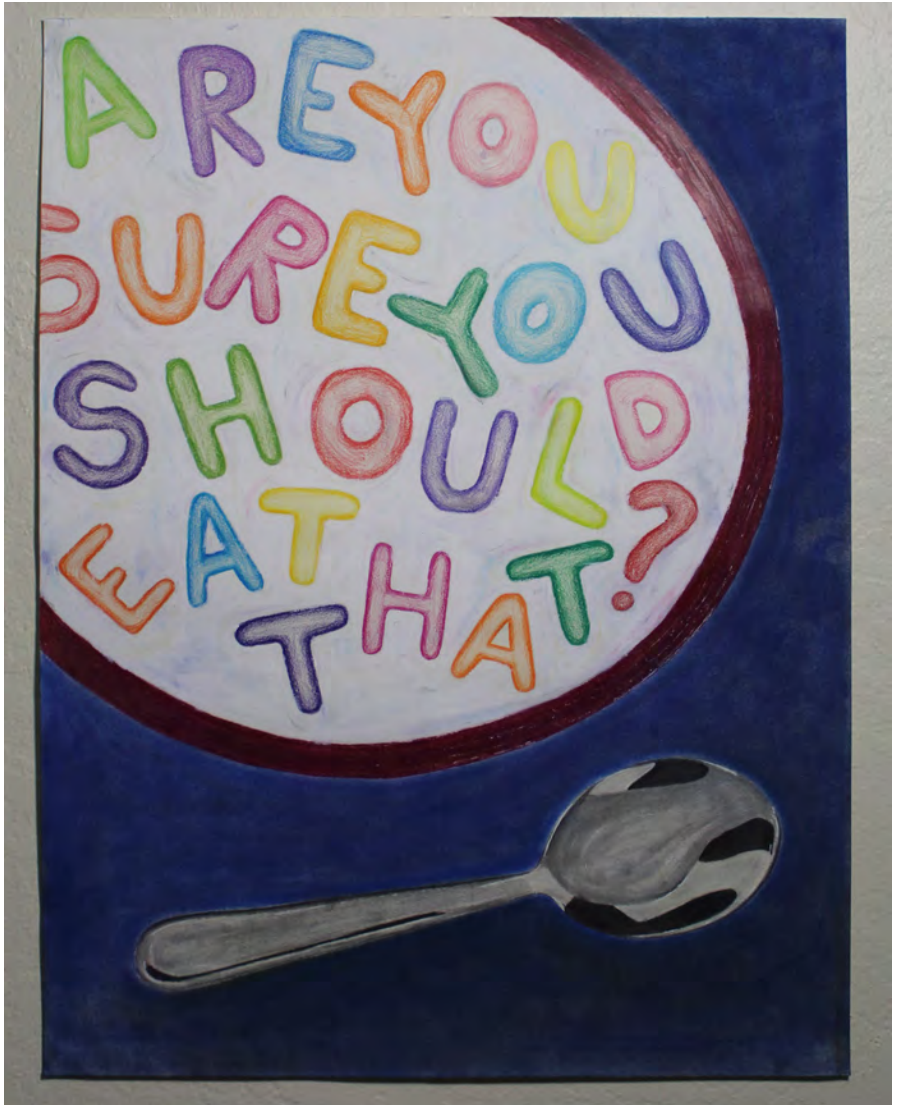
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Accessed Mar 25, 2024.

Eat

Tyler Lawhead



El Tacuache Knight

Fernando Garcia

A highly respected Oaxacan Tacuache Knight wearing the most prestigious body armor decorated with jadestone and a colorful feathered headband stands tall on a hill looking down at his village.

“PATA RAIS” (Brave Foot).

The Flat Foot people have resided in this beautiful valley filled with green leafed coated trees where rays of sunshine pierce through and illuminate the world under this canopy for generations. Jaguars roam free, eagles hover, and wild animals lurk in the mist.

Strange But True

David Goeke

I do not look my age. Nor do my sisters. It runs in the family. This is a nice problem to have.

Soon after moving to California I rented a small old cabin in Devonshire Canyon in San Carlos. It is not very big, nor in good condition, but perfect for a single young man of modest means. It is perched on a ridiculously steep hillside, a five-story walk up from driveway to front deck; good, because the living room sits practically on top of the street.

Ostensibly the place has two bedrooms but the second is good for little more than a desk. It is split level, with the living room and deck a yard below the bedrooms, dining area, kitchen, bath, and an anteroom off the kitchen. It is an odd place. The back windows look out to a stone retaining wall and up the steep hill. Not a perfect home but it served me well for nine years.

The house has a deck with good sun. The whole place is enveloped in lush overgrowth, ivy, shrubs, vines, briars, and oak trees. Every year this enormous yellow rose bloomed in the back yard. The flower was bigger than a cabbage. A unique variety of needle point ivy grew that I have never seen before or since. Luckily I took cuttings. The house was infested with roof rats. No amount of extermination changed things. Then I took custody of two cats for friends traveling abroad. One was this beautiful, enormous, lanky, muscular, primordial Abyssinian. Huge dead rats started to appear everywhere. The rat problem vanished. So did all the mule deer who ate my flowers.

Despite all the disadvantages, this odd little house was a wonderful home, especially on weekends. In the morning I would wake up, make coffee, smoke a huge joint, and lounge on the deck with my coffee and newspapers under bright sun and blue sky. One sunny bright cannabis infused morning a man knocked on the door to say he liked the house and would I sell it. He was Caucasian, my size, a bit older, aquiline nose, tight curly gray hair, blue eyes.

With all the overgrowth this house is nearly invisible from the street. How anyone could even find it is puzzling. There is so much not to like about

the place. His interest seemed odd and misguided. Who would want to buy a run-down falling apart rat infested tiny old place falling off the foundation with a sagging roof on a noisy street in this neighborhood? I was busy with coffee, newspapers, and a really nice buzz. It was a lovely morning. I did not want to talk with anyone. I did not want to waste effort explaining I was a tenant not an owner. I did not want my landlord selling the place. I gently said no thank you, shut the door, and went about enjoying my privacy, coffee, newspapers, and sunshine.

Many years later. Another blissful sunny weekend morning. Once again I read newspapers, enjoy coffee, and bask under the perennially beautiful morning sun. I read a sickening article in the local paper about bloody, horrific, brutal sex crimes by a sadistic knife-wielding child abuser, tried down the road in the San Mateo

County Courthouse, convicted by the county prosecutor, and sentenced to prison. I see his picture. Same guy.

The Spy's Lonely Heart

Emilie Gonzalez Cerna

It was about time, maybe a bit too late. Her coworkers had warned her, and she completely ignored them, justifying her actions with lame excuses.

“Fuck, Rouge!” she mumbled to herself, washing the blood off her hand while they trembled like they did the first time she killed someone. She knew that getting attached to her targets was the worst thing to happen. Getting close to them was a mistake. Now there was she, a self-promise broken, and her career and life in a thread. But how could she not fall for the only love shown to her in her lonely and careless life?

Her enemies had become the medicine she needed for her growing emptiness, the new sense to enjoy her job instead of the adrenaline and luxury. The feeling of being worshipped and seen, forgetting her life in the shadows and an empty, momentary house. The love was fleeting, yes, but enough to make her heart race again with excitement and, sometimes, for her ego to be fed.

Her first sign was keeping the gifts. Before, she would throw or burn them, even if they were worth thousands of dollars. She couldn't leave a single trace. Still, as her need grew, so did her collection of enemy gifts. They became a reminder that she was still loved, that those men loved her in a way she had not experienced in a long time.

Then, it was how long it took her to do the jobs. If it was possible, she was done with the target and intel collection in hours, being the longest mission of two days to persuade her victims into her web before she killed them mercilessly. Slowly, it took one, two weeks, up to a month. It was like a quick relationship with a gruesome ending in which she enjoyed every word, gift, and touch those men gave her while she told herself she was just toying with them and no feelings were attached. They did and said everything she wanted and needed, and it felt sickly powerful and fulfilling. Especially her last target, a businessman who seemed to have fallen too deeply for her. So much that she had followed him into the abyss.

Her hand reached desperately towards the scissors, and without hesitating, she made the first cut. Other, and other. It was neither the best nor the worst haircut, but that did not matter, only that she had to change. Change everything and bury her current identity.

As if she did it every day, she prepared the hair dye, her breath still short while her mind went back and forth with what she had done, her tears, her finger pulling the trigger, and the terror in those eyes. "Time to go white..." she whispered, trying to push away the image of her cradling the man in her arms while she apologized and saw the light fading away in his face. He loved white, and she knew it.

Breaking Point

Sama Elbaramawi



Life Goes On

Katie Miller

I remember the day as if it were yesterday. The air was heavy with anticipation as my twin sister Josie and I returned from our dance class, the day's fatigue temporarily forgotten in the rush of excitement. It was 5:30 PM. The familiar smell of Mom's cooking greeted us as we pulled into the garage, our nanny navigating the familiar route home. By 5:56, we had recounted the highs and lows of our day to Mom while unpacking our dance bags, each minute moving us closer to the moment of truth.

At exactly 5:59 PM, we gathered around Mom's computer in the living room. The application website, Ravenna, was our gateway to the future – or so we thought. Josie (my twin sister) and I exchanged anxious glances as Mom logged in. "Who first?" Mom's voice broke the silence. "Josie," I said. The seconds ticked by—3, 2, 1—and with each school application she clicked, hope dwindled. Rejections. Waitlists. No celebratory confetti. I watched as disappointment shadowed Josie's face, the impact of each 'No' evident in her eyes.

It was now my turn. 6:07 PM. I braced myself, knowing the odds weren't in my favor either. As Mom repeated the process, the same messages appeared. Rejection. Waitlist. Again and again. Looking up at Mom, I felt a surge of self-blame. We were supposed to be the ones who succeeded at everything, yet here we were. The sense of failure was new and stinging, an unfamiliar burden for a ten-year-old.

From that moment, I learned an invaluable lesson—life doesn't end with rejection. Though at the time it felt catastrophic, it was merely the start of a different journey, one that would shape the very essence of who I would become. If not for that day, I would never have had the unique experiences that have come to define me. So, if you ever feel upset about a rejection, acknowledge it, but move on. Life will go on.

Home Cooked Meals

Katie Miller

As children, Josie (my twin sister) and I often grumbled about returning home to eat after ballet. It sounds spoiled, I know, but the truth was we craved the independence and immediacy of fast food—Wendy’s chicken nuggets, In-N-Out fries, a crisp Sprite. These were our preferred rewards after a long day of dance and discipline, not the “fancy” or “nutritious” meals awaiting us at home.

Back then, before my parents’ divorce, family dinners were a big and elaborate event. Mom and sometimes Grandma would prepare at least four dishes every night—a meat dish, a vegetable, soup, and rice. It was a labor of love that I didn’t appreciate at the time. The realization of how fortunate I was only came later, which happened as a result of a friend’s envy of my home-cooked meals.

As we grew older and more independent, particularly after the divorce, family meals became less frequent. By the time I was fifteen, family dinners were rare events, and only happened as a result of guilt over Mom’s complaints that we had lost our sense of family unity.

It wasn’t until I battled with my eating habits—avoiding anything cooked by Mom or Grandma for fear of the ingredients—that I realized what I had missed. I had rejected not only the food but the familial bond that came with it. This strain, compounded by my sister’s similar food aversions, made family meals impossible.

It took years, but I eventually learned to appreciate the effort behind each home-cooked meal. I regret not recognizing the care embedded in those dishes sooner. Now, I cherish every opportunity to sit down to a family meal, understanding the full weight of the love infused in those homemade recipes.

Cooking is an art, an expression of care. It took me years to see that, but now, every bite reminds me of where I came from—and the simple joys I once took for granted. So please, enjoy home cooked meals while you can.

Prologue: The Flight

Katie Miller

As the airplane engines roared to life, I settled into my seat, bubbling with anticipation. Shanghai was no stranger to me—I had visited multiple times before. But this time was different; it was just my grandparents, twin sister and I. As I settled into my modest economy seat next to my twin sister, my gaze drifted to the luxurious comfort of the business class section where our grandparents reclined. I couldn't help but feel a twinge of envy.

I peered out of the airplane window, mesmerized by the ever-changing landscape beneath us. The sprawling cityscape of my hometown slowly gave way to lush green fields and meandering rivers. Josie, my twin sister, and I exchanged glances, our eyes gleaming with excitement.

As we settled down into our seats, I took the complimentary blanket and pillow and set it aside. Taking a moment to observe my surroundings, I couldn't help but notice the diverse mix of travelers. Some were there to reunite with loved ones, embark on a well-deserved vacation, or engage in business endeavors.

The hours on the plane melded into one another, blurring together as we lost ourselves in books, movies, and the occasional game of "I Spy" to pass the time. At some point, exhaustion washed over me like a gentle wave, and I surrendered myself to a deep sleep, my head finding solace on the plush armrest. As the hours ticked by, the airplane occasionally jolted with turbulence, momentarily rousing me from my slumber, preventing me from falling asleep.

Mid-flight, I felt a tap on my shoulder. Turning, I saw Grandma holding a bag of cut-up skinned apples, a familiar snack she often prepared. As always, the apples had been soaked in salt water to prevent browning, ensuring they remained fresh and delicious. The combination of the sweet apples with subtle hints of salt created a delectable snack, offering a satisfying sweetness without being "too sweet".

“谢谢外婆 (Thanks, Grandma),” I said, beaming at her as she handed me the bag. The crisp scent wavered through the air, making my mouth water; It was just what I needed.

“没问题 (No problem),” Grandma replied, her voice filled with warmth and tenderness. “在你吃的之前, 千万不要忘记用纸巾擦手 (Remember to use the wet napkins I gave you earlier to wipe your hands before eating).”

I nodded eagerly, clutching the bag of apples tightly. “当然, 外婆, 我不会忘记的 (Of course, Grandma. I won't forget).”

Her smile widened, and she patted my hand gently. “好聪明的孙子。现在就享受你的小吃吧! (That's my clever grandchild. Enjoy your snack now!).”

As I savored the crisp and tangy flavor of the apples, Mom's parting words flooded my mind. Just before we said our goodbyes, she pulled me aside with a sense of urgency and gave me a request. She asked me to be there for our grandparents, to lend them a helping hand whenever possible and not to be a burden. It was a reminder that time was catching up with them, a realization that slowly dawned on me as I grew older. After enjoying my apples, I spent the rest of the time engrossed in my favorite show.

Lost in the plot, I fell into a deep slumber, the fatigue of the long journey finally catching up to me. When I finally stirred awake, a soft glow from the airplane window greeted my bleary eyes. As I sat up, rubbing the sleep from my eyes, I noticed a small bag placed on the tray table in front of me. A smile tugged at the corners of my lips as I recognized Grandma's distinctive handwriting on a note attached to the bag.

“(亲爱的 Katie, 起床后请用洗面奶洗脸, 用牙刷刷牙。记得至少刷两分钟! (My dear Katie, when you wake up, please use the face wash to wash your face, and the toothbrush to brush your teeth. Remember to brush for at least two minutes!)” the note read.

Careful not to disturb my sleeping sister, I silently slipped out of my seat, my body protesting the hours spent in a cramped position. As I stood up and stretched, I felt the stiffness in my neck and muscles from the prolonged inactivity. I took this opportunity to freshen up, then quickly returned to my seat feeling rejuvenated and ready for the rest of the journey.

Once the plane landed and the seatbelt sign turned off, I eagerly waited for the rows ahead of me to start moving. As we slowly approached the exit, I couldn't help but steal a quick glance out the window, taking in the sight of the bustling airport grounds. Despite the fatigue evident on people's faces after the long journey, there was a palpable sense of relief in the air.

Since we were a bit behind, I quickly scanned the crowd, searching for the familiar faces of my grandparents. There they were, waiting for us in the front, smiling.

Together, we made our way to the baggage claim area, where the conveyor belts carried an assortment of bags. Grandpa tried to single-handedly take all of our luggage, but I recalled Mom's requests and offered him a hand. I knew my sister and Grandma were frailer, so I took this responsibility upon myself. With sharp eyes, I located our belongings and assisted in retrieving them, one by one. The weight of the bags tested my strength, but I persevered, determined to make it easier for my family.

With our luggage in tow, I loaded them onto a cart, and took charge, pushing it forward with a sense of purpose. I could see the satisfaction and delight on my grandfather's face as he couldn't stop smiling, giving me the nickname "小精钢 (little stainless steel)." Proud of this nickname, I continued to lend my strength to any task that required my assistance, knowing that it brought joy to my grandparents.

As we made our way through the airport, the journey felt complete. We had arrived at our destination, united as a family, and ready to embark on the next chapter of our adventure.

My Journey to the United States

Priscila Moreira

When I arrived in the United States in February 2018, I had no idea what life had prepared for me and which challenges I would face as an immigrant. I came from Brazil, running from a beautiful but violent country, with the hopes and dreams that one day I could provide for my family. My dad was attacked at the small store where he used to work, and this guy put a gun to his head and locked him in the bathroom. That was it for us. Everything was hard, and now we were traumatized by the events and without hopes of having a better life in Brazil. We came to the United States to pursue the American dream; however, I did not know how much I would have to sacrifice and how many barriers, including the language barrier, I would have to overcome to be where I am today. I have learned that the life of an immigrant is shaped by the obstacles we face and the chances we take.

I was never a prodigy student in Brazil. In fact, I was exactly the opposite. I was a troubled student who suffered for long years from attention disorder, and adding to that, the guilt of being gay in an extremely Christian family. I started my life in the United States, cleaning houses and working at a local restaurant as a dishwasher. It was hard, but most people don't know, but you will accept anything they offer because you have no other option. I worked for myself, but my reason is my family. My mother struggled her whole life to accept who she was, and her depression left her incapable of facing the world outside. I learned how to be resilient in this new world. I am a first-generation student trying to write a different story for my current and future family. I want to be able to look back and have no regrets. I strive to be the best I can because I hope the future will improve.

Looking back, I see how much I have grown in the past years, but sometimes I still feel I am the same scared woman from 2018. I guess this is something we carry for the rest of our lives. The impostor syndrome is something that many immigrants struggle with because we had to grab opportunities, and nothing was given to us.

Today, I realize I am here because it took me 35 years to realize my strength and capability. When I was younger, I suffered at school because I was a "slow" student, but what we did not know back then was that I had attention disorder. Before, I used to be ashamed and not want to talk about that young girl because I thought I was what people said to me. However, when I look back, I think about that girl with compassion and wish I could tell her she would be okay. I am here to show others they can, succeed even if circumstances tell them otherwise.

I remember joining an event at college with the EOPS program where I had the opportunity to listen to this inspiring woman, Dr. Hortencia Jimenez, where I learned about the importance of what she calls "celebrating yourself." By celebrating and honoring yourself, no matter how big or small your accomplishments may seem, you embrace the journey of self-discovery and self-love. Recognizing your achievements, no matter how modest they appear to others, cultivates a positive mindset and fuels your inner resilience. By acknowledging your value, you pave the way for continued growth, resilience, and the courage to pursue your dreams. I learned that it does not matter if I am an older or so-called "late in life" student. We need to take every step forward and not backward. We are here to celebrate our victories and learn from our mistakes as we navigate life's unpredictable path with resilience and grace.

The Hijabi

Rida Raziuddin

When I was in the 4th grade, I wanted to wear the hijab really badly. No, it wasn't because I felt a sudden, irrevocable peak in my faith. I was nine. It was actually because my best friend was a "full-timer" hijabi and I wanted to match with her. I wore a crisp, white, stretchy cotton scarf for three days to school before my mom told me to stop. I was shocked. My mom wears the hijab. If anything, I was expecting her to be proud of me for taking such a big step. She explained that I was just too young and that I should only practice it once I'm sure I've understood what it means to wear the hijab. I grudgingly complied, but from that point forward, I always knew that one day, I would be a hijabi.

In retrospect, I'm grateful for her advice, because it allowed me to ease into the habit of the hijab on my own time, free of external pressures from anyone. I don't think I would be as comfortable as I am now, wearing the hijab, if I had started at nine years old. The hijab has a profound significance in Islam, rooted in the Quran and Prophetic narrations. One verse of the Quran that is often cited as guidance for dressing modestly says, "Tell the believing women to lower their gaze...not to reveal their adornments...Let them draw their veils over their chests..." (Quran, 24:31). Aside from the fact that it's a command from God, the hijab can be a tangible expression of a person's faith, and it allows for the wearer to assert her religious identity, especially in places where she may feel misrepresented. Ultimately the hijab is a decision that every Muslim woman is left to make for herself.

Only after wearing the hijab did I understand my mother's concerns more deeply; wearing a hijab isn't without its challenges. For starters, there's often an assumption, from within the Muslim community and society at large, that wearing the hijab equates to religiosity. As Muslims, we are meant to strive to be the best, but in reality, we are all humans too. It's true that the hijab is not simply a physical state of dressing, it's meant to be followed up by modesty of the heart (cultivating sincerity, kindness, and compassion to others) and embodying Islamic principles in your thoughts, words, and actions. Hijabis can be subject to error as well, but unfortunately, their mistakes are almost always put under more scrutiny and judgment than others. This higher standard placed on hijabis can exacerbate feelings of pressure.

Additionally, it can often be dangerous to wear the hijab in Western societies, especially during moments of heightened socio-political tensions that breed anti-Muslim rhetoric (for example: the years following 9/11, former President Trump’s “Muslim ban”, and more recently, the Palestine-Israel war).

There’s also the less severe yet consequential and depressingly prevalent misrepresentations of what the hijab means, seen everywhere, from entertainment to secondary educational curricula. A close friend of mine was describing a graphic novel she was made to read in Honors English, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi. The book follows the life of Satrapi as a child during the Iranian Revolution in the 80s. A major theme in the novel is how women were being (and as we know, still are) forced to wear the hijab and face dire consequences when they failed to comply (as an example, see Mahsa Amini). My friend pulled out the book from her bag and flipped through the pages, pointing out one comic frame in particular that made her uncomfortable in class. It depicts two groups of women protesting. One was clad in shirts with their hair cropped short, chanting “FREEDOM, FREEDOM!” The crowd opposite them is dressed in all-black burqas chanting “THE VEIL!” in support of the Iranian government’s coercive hijab laws.

Immediately, I could tell why she felt the way she did. The two protesting groups, juxtaposed, were the direct antithesis of each other. *Persepolis* is no doubt an important book recording the political climate of Iran at the time and what its government policies could entail for women. There is no uncertainty about Iran’s hijab laws being oppressive to women (not to mention unIslamic: see Quran 2:256); however, this does not mean that every hijabi woman is oppressed, in Iran or elsewhere. What made my friend feel uneasy was the fact that the only representation of Islam and the hijab in the entire class was so negative and polarizing: one that equates the veil as the opposition to freedom. It leaves Muslim students, like my hijabi friend, feeling misrepresented.

To narrow down the hijabi experience to one singular narrative would simply be inaccurate. In places like France and Karnataka, India, rather than fighting against hijab laws, some women advocate for the right to wear the hijab, specifically in schools where veiling has been banned.

For me, an American Muslim, the first word that I came to associate with the hijab was liberation. In the Western World, women are taught their strength is in their appearance, how they are seen by men. We often hear “everyone is beautiful”, while simultaneously seeing a specific beauty standard that is curated to the male gaze. Dalia Mogahed, the head of re-

search at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) in D.C., explained on The Daily Show how the hijab comes into play in the midst of this. She says, "Oppression means the taking of a person's power". Fundamentally, the hijab "privatizes" the wearer's beauty. So calling the hijab oppressive, insinuates that this privatization is oppression. "What does that say about the source of a woman's power?" Mogahed asks.

For women who chose the hijab, like me, liberation is not exclusively from the "choosing"(while that does play its part), it's from being exempt from the aforementioned beauty standards. I feel free because I'm deciding what is considered beautiful in the eyes of God (i.e. modesty) is more valuable to me than what society considers beautiful.

The hijab is a testament to what it means to be confident. I don't wear the hijab because I am ashamed of my ugliness. I wear it as an acknowledgment of my worth. I know that I am intelligent. I know that I'm beautiful. I don't need anyone to tell me that, to confirm it for me. I know it so well that I don't require anyone's validation besides God.

Many Muslim women feel offended when they hear the "oppression" comments about their hijab, not only because it's simply not true, but because it paints us as individuals with no agency. Like I have no autonomy in my own life. Like I came this far just to have my intellect questioned as if I don't have enough brains to make an informed decision for myself. It is offensive.

In my hijab, I feel more seen than ever. I give the people I interact with no other choice except to place their attention on my words and actions, not my appearance.

Mogahed calls her decision to wear the hijab "a feminist declaration of independence" in her TED Talk. That phrase makes me roll my eyes but I get what grounds she's coming from. In terms of combating objectification, the intentional and modest way of dressing that comes with the hijab is the most effective way to do that. The hijab is inherently protective. Again, it gives people no choice but to focus on what the person who wears it has to say.

"Every religion has its distinct characteristic, and the distinct characteristic of Islam is modesty" - the Prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him)

A Warm Embrace.

Sama Elbaramawi



Butchering Chickens

Blake D. Schindler

It's a sight to behold. In order to fully understand the saying 'running around like a chicken with its head cut off,' you've got to experience it firsthand. That's the only way to truly understand the saying, and you've got to witness it from the moment the head of the chicken gets lopped off until the rest of the chicken falls down dead on the ground. The amount of time varies because chickens are pretty animated, so it could take anywhere from a minute to two minutes before it is all said and done. Basically, it is going to take a while and during this whole time, the chicken's heart is still beating, and the blood is still pumping. The chickens with their heads lopped off are trying their damndest to run around.

The only problem is, they can't see where they're going because they ain't got no head and they ain't got no brain. They just got legs, so they're just going every which way full tilt crashing into whatever is in their way. If they crash into a tree, they'll ricochet off that tree and go in a different direction. It looks like bumper cars. If you've ever seen that amusement ride at the carnival where all the cars are bouncing off the walls, they careen off each other and kind of get stuck in the middle because they don't really have anywhere else to go. Maybe you understand the concept. If there is an open space where they can bounce around, they generally don't get stuck in a corner where they can't go anywhere, but they do careen off of things. They would ricochet off the fence if it got in the way. The fence was usually made out of chicken wire and posts, so the chickens weren't getting through the fence, but they would ricochet off of it and go in a different direction.

While they were running around without their heads, blood was just squirting out of their necks like a squirt gun except it's was at the top of their neck. With each pump of the heart, the squirt got a little bit shorter and a little bit shorter and a little bit shorter and a little bit jerkier and a little bit jerkier and a little bit jerkier until finally the last few squirts came out. When there was no more blood, the chicken plopped over dead and then it was done.

Depending on the chicken crop any given year and how many chickens she thought we would eat through the winter, my mom would decide how many chickens to butcher. We always butchered the chickens in the fall before it got too cold. Generally, my mom would butcher twenty-five to forty chickens. Butchering chickens was a process. The first step of the process was to kill the chickens and drain the blood. The easiest and most humane way to do this was to cut off their heads and let them run. This killed them and drained the blood out. Since it was a process

and this was only the first step, my mom would lop off the heads of all the chickens one right after the other until all the selected chickens had their heads lopped off. Thus, it was quite entertaining watching those chickens run around.

While the chickens were running around, there was a huge pot of water boiling on the side of the yard. That boiling water was the second step of the process and was used to scald the chickens once they plopped over dead. To do this you had these big pairs of tines that you used to grab a hold of the legs of the chickens, and you had these big leather gloves on, so you didn't burn yourself. You would have two chickens, one for each arm. You would dunk two chickens at a time into the scalding water. You would hold them there until your whole body was just humming in synch with the boiling water. When your body was rolling with the waves of the boiling water, that's when you knew the chickens were ready to come out of the water.

Once you hoisted those chickens out of the water, they were good and scalded, so the feathers would just pluck right out of the chickens. Once the feathers were plucked, they were put off to one side because once they were dry, they would be used to make feather pillows. The chickens were then gutted and put into the freezer ready for the winter months.

This was a pretty normal event living on the farm, but there was this one time that was exceptionally memorable. I was maybe three years old, and I was standing outside the fence because my mom didn't want the chickens to get near me and get blood all over me. I was just watching my mom lop the heads off all the chickens and it was kind of fun to watch the chickens. As my mom was doing this, I saw this snake slithering by, so I called out to my mom. "Mom! Momma, there's a snake over here!"

As soon as I looked up and said that to my mom, I looked back down, and it had disappeared. There were chickens running around both with and without their heads which I didn't consider at the time. I was three. What could you expect from a three-year-old? Constant vigilance? It just disappeared. My mom ran over and said, "Where's the snake?"

It didn't really matter because she wouldn't have done anything anyway because she was deathly afraid of snakes. If she had actually seen it, she would have probably shat her pants. She probably thought I was screwing with her, but I wasn't. I had seen that snake, but it just disappeared. My mom just said to me when she didn't see it and I couldn't see it anymore, "You're probably just seeing things."

"No, mom, there was a snake here."

My mom shook her head and went back to what she was doing and resumed lopping off chicken heads. A little while later after she had scalded them all and plucked out all the feathers, she was now cleaning the chickens out. She started cleaning out all of the guts from this one chicken and out slithered the snake. It slithered right out from the in-nards' of that chicken.

That chicken had eaten the snake whole. It was just a little garter snake. I guess it wasn't in the chicken long enough to begin the digestive process. When my mom opened up the ass end of that chicken, that snake just slithered right out. Oh my god! As soon as that snake came out of there, shit went flying everywhere. That chicken went like one hundred feet into the air, or at least that's what it looked like to me. It probably only went like ten or fifteen feet, but it looked like a hundred feet to me. She flung it as far as she could into the air and screamed at the top of her lungs while running away like a bat out of hell. She ran as far as she could run across the farmyard. They hadn't been invented yet, but if I had a video camera, this would have been THE America's Funniest Home Video for sure. The only thing I could think to say, and I said it was, "See, I told you mom. There was a snake."

When my mom could think straight, she said to me, "Wait 'til your dad gets home!"

I thought, "Oh shit," and I said to my mom while throwing up my arms to shrug, "What did I do?"

My Grandfather's Pen

Himangi Sharma

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to touch the Ruby Sword and hold it in my hands.

In the Delhi National History Museum, the curator, my grandfather, let me touch everything, from marvelous ancient sculptures to antediluvian pots and pans, except for the one thing I really wanted to touch: the Ruby Sword. Its sheath made of silver and the sword itself from the purest iron, the rubies adorned the grip of the sword, gleaming and shining, enticing me to touch it. Rumored to have once been wielded by the best kings of the past, the heirloom was priceless. Without the historical value, gem appraisers valued the jewels themselves to be over ₹20 crores.

I would stare at it, from behind its glass veil, wondering the amount of history it witnessed: the battles and wars, the enemies it destroyed, the values it preserved. The weapon stood smiling, greeting the foreign tourists warmly, as they swarmed around the most famous artifact of the East. They were just interested in taking pictures to prove their acquaintance with the precious sword; I on the other hand only cared to touch it for the nostalgic effect of being one with the history of my country.

After spending the first six hours of my day learning about history, my grandfather would homeschool me from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in arithmetic and English.

"Math and words are in everything we do, and everything we do is in history," he'd say.

I loved writing. For at least thirty minutes a day, my grandfather made me write. I wrote wild tales of faraway lands with unbelievable and mystical creatures and characters. The heroes and heroines of my stories always saved the day with the Ruby Sword. My grandfather loved reading my imaginative stories and would always smile faintly at the mention of the Ruby Sword in them.

The only other object my grandfather never shared with me was his fountain pen. It was as old as the British Empire, he claimed. The pen had been passed down in our family, from one generation to the next, but my grandfather never got the chance to give it to my parents. His fountain pen was, "the real Ruby Sword," according to him. I disagreed.

Sure, the resemblance was indeed astonishing; his pen was silver with small red rhinestones encircling the rims. I used to think that if the Ruby Sword were to one day morph into a pen, it would look like my grandfather's pen. Still, it wasn't as treasurable, neither in historical or monetary value.

Sometimes, the fact that he wouldn't let me use the pen was quite upsetting. After all, I had never seen *him* use it. I wondered, *Just as the Ruby Sword drew blood for centuries, passed down through the generations, does my grandfather's pen also write with red ink?*



Years passed just this way. I was soon off to the best college for writers in India, the Wordsmith's University, in Mumbai. My grandfather handed me a small package with a red ribbon tied around it as I boarded the train. I began tugging at the bow to open the box, but my grandfather interrupted me, "Open it when you reach." So I obeyed my grandfather, hugged him, and sat down by the window, as the train chugged away towards my future.

It was unreasonably hot in July, and I was exhausted by the time I had finished unloading my luggage. I flopped onto my bed, my head turned towards the night table. The gift my grandfather had sent me sat there, waiting impatiently to be opened. So I sat up and opened it.

I just sat there, mouth open and disbelief filling my thoughts. There lay the "real Ruby Sword," my grandfather's pen. I hurriedly pulled off the lid, revealing a clean silver nib. I rummaged through my drawers looking for paper and finally pulled out a slightly dusty napkin.

I held my breath as I put the pen to the paper. I closed my eyes and wrote out my name. I opened my eyes, expecting to see my name in gorgeous and fine ink, only to be disappointed by a mere empty imprint of where all the pen has touched the napkin. I scribbled furiously, but the ink refused to display itself.

All that time, he kept this broken pen to himself, and didn't let me touch it. Now, he gives it to me with no ink! I thought.

I opened the pen to scrutinize its ink canister. Sure enough, it was empty. It wasn't just empty though, it looked like it had never seen a speck of ink; it was clean as brand new. I peered inside the small hole at the top. To my surprise, I found a roll of paper jammed in. I struggled to get it out, and after a few minutes, I unrolled it, revealing my grandfather's neat script:

They say the pen is mightier than the sword. They aren't wrong. A pen is a far more dangerous weapon than any sword ever made. My grandchild, I hope I have taught you to wield your weapon gracefully and thoughtfully. You were born with a gift that seldom others are blessed with. This very pen has seen its fair share of war, used to sign many petitions and draft many pamphlets that encouraged violence and discrimination by our forefathers. In my hands, I have reined in all that anger and bitterness. I have bought a new canister for you, out of which hopefully some good will come. Now, I hope, as I pass this pen down to you, you too shall continue this era of peace, and one day, find a worthy heir to our legacy. You will go far, my child. Spread your wings fully, and never clip those of others.

Love, Your Grandfather

I smiled and held the pen and the note close to my heart. Suddenly, everything pieced together, and I figured out the jigsaw puzzle that had been my past, and now, I was ready to solve the riddles of the future. Though I'd never know what color ink the pen used to bear, I knew what it was used for and what it could be used for, given the chance.

And at that moment, I realized that my childhood dream to touch the Ruby Sword had finally come true.



Verduzcun

Filiberto Quintana

It's the year 1469 in the land of Verduzcun. Churumuco, the main bride of Lord Zicuiran, is in preparation of a ceremonial birth. Sacrificing her life to birth 5 children with God-like abilities. She is sweating and screaming "Zicuiran ... Zicuiran I'm afraid."

Elderly women are holding her legs bent to the knees up high to her face. Churumuco's impregnated stomach expands and moves around as if creatures were trying to break free, ripping her open from the dark line underneath her belly button.

"They are coming," the elderly woman says.

Santos a boy screeching like a bird born with beautiful feathered wings.

Hydro a boy gasping as if drowning, born with gills was set in a "pila", a clay tub. A girl the princess Senia born with scales and beautiful reptilian eyes.

Tekundo crying in a roar like a jaguar is a boy born with claws and the teeth of the pheline beast.

Churumuco screams to the top of her lungs into a dark shadow. And then back to bright light an energy type matter with no face no body floating but crying like a baby emerges; he is the youngest named Kingtahu. The Lord is near.

Memories of her

Christina Walsh

Hey, it's the girl who you probably never thought would end up this way. The same girl who never went to school and thought dropping out at 17 was a great idea. Who was that girl? It was me, back when I thought I had no other choice and nowhere to call home, no one to come home to. Back when depression and addiction were my only means of a life lived. When I was losing friends and family left and right from overdose and still locked in a comatose. Way back when I never thought it was possible to climb ladders so high that if I fall, I will immediately regret it. Back before I knew what it meant to love and be loved with a powerful devotion. Before I ever had my senses awakened by the touch and smell of a newborn baby girl in my arms, looking to me for comfort and nourishment. If I look way back to before, I would have thought you were crazy if you told me that same girl would be a mom, a fiancé, and the most responsible adult who thrives in school and thinks she has what it takes to get into the most competitive colleges next year. I am that girl who overcame the odds that were against me for so long that it almost seemed impossible, until I realized that I'm possible.

I Didn't Think of it That Way

Nicole Willard

I Didn't Think of it That Way: Learning from Globally Trained Educators

The experiences children have in early childhood settings lay the foundation for how they will view the world as they grow older. Globally Trained Educators (GTE) play an important part in shaping the experiences of young children. GTE are educators with training from outside the United States. These educators may have education or training in the early childhood education (ECE) field; however, many of these educators have training outside the field. When immigrating to the United States, GTE may choose to work in ECE for a multitude of reasons.

In many cases GTE are choosing to work in ECE because their primary education and classes will not transfer to the same degree here in the United States. ECE is considered an “easy” field to enter in many states as there are less requirements to enter the field than other professionalized settings. However, the skills and experiences that these educators bring to the classroom provide a depth to the experiences offered to children in the classroom regardless of their formal education.

Working in the ECE field for the last 15 years, I have seen a multitude of educators with many experiences. Having extensive coursework and training in anti-bias education and culturally responsive teaching, I found myself reflecting on the ways I could bring more diverse perspectives into the classroom so that it accurately reflected the diverse world that the children are part of. Though even in my heightened awareness, one particular moment changed course for me.

One day a child named Isaac* walked up to me while I prepared the tables for snack time. He had stripped his clothes for the third time that day after a splash of water got on his shirt. Isaac asked for help, but being in the middle of something I asked Isaac to try himself before I would come over to help him. Isaac laughed and walked across the room with his clothes to Meera*, an educator who came to the United States from India, and asked her to put on his clothes. She stopped what she was doing and put on his clothes, chatting with him about the “soup” he was making in the water table before his clothes got wet.

During lunch that day Meera and I discussed the moment, laughing and joking about how Isaac had gone to Meera knowing that she would put the clothes on for him instead of having to do it himself. The discussion continued as Meera explained that in her culture those moments are about connecting with children. It was not about building independence, but instead about showing your love through helping them. It was then that I realized that I had seen Meera's intervention as robbing Isaac of a chance for self independence. However, in my quest to build Isaac's independence I had taken away his chance to connect and feel cared for by me.

It was at that moment I realized I had spent so much time advocating for inclusion and diversity. I had trained my peers on creating a culturally responsive classroom, yet I acted in opposition to everything that I valued and strived to emulate by judging Meera's reaction to Isaac. This is just one example of how educators with global training may be viewed differently as their cultural experiences look different than what educators trained in the United States may have experienced.

Educators with global training bring their experiences to their practice as a teacher. When the majority of educators have a similar practice to you it can be easy to expect everyone to have the same intentions behind their practice. However, this experience is an example of why reflective practice if your personal pedagogy is important. GTE have a personal pedagogy regardless of training. Whether GTE have been formally trained in ECE or not, their personal experiences and cultures make up their personal pedagogy.

This pedagogy and these personal experiences shape their interactions with children, families, and staff. While Meera has a mathematics degree from a school in India and no prior ECE experience to start at our pre-school, she had perceptions and ideas of how children should be treated. While educators need to have some understanding of child development, the experiences and skills GTE may have outside the field impact their experiences working with children.

Meera's exchange with Isaac reminded me that culturally responsive practices apply beyond the families. In this scenario, I worked to be inclusive of the families' cultures and beliefs in the classroom; however, I was blindly missing opportunities to be intentionally inclusive of educators whose cultures and training varied from mine. In being unaware of this, I missed opportunities to incorporate new experiences in my curriculum, as well as to deepen my own practice by learning from Meera.

In reflecting on this interaction, it is clear that the experiences and perspectives brought into the classroom by GTE are invaluable additions to ECE settings. Meera's personal pedagogy and experiences provided a lens for me to evaluate my own assumptions and served as a reminder that it is essential to include educators in culturally responsive environments. By creating a community that values the inclusion and diversity of children, families, and educators, we not only enrich the early childhood experience of children, but also deepen our own professional growth. As society continues to recognize the importance of the early childhood education field, it is important to embrace the unique perspectives of GTE and recognize the impact they have on educators and the children that they work with.

*Names have been changed

The Four Nobles

Katie Miller

THE STORY OF THE VERY BEGINNING

13.8 BILLION YEARS AGO A "SMALL FIREBALL" APPEARED

OH! FI...T

10^{-35}

INFLATIONARY PERIOD

THEN SOME SMALL DOTS STARTED TO APPEAR

10^{-33}

ELECTROWEAK EPOCH

AND GOT BIGGER

BANG

BOOM

KABOOM

ALL UP AND DOWN QUARKS KEPT TO THEMSELVES UNTIL THE FUNDAMENTAL FORCES (EX. GRAVITY) CAME TO BE

OOO THAT LOOKS...

UNTIL ONE DAY...

AWW CUTE

NOW THAT QUARK LOOKS SO PRETTY!

AAAAHHHHH!!!!

PROCESS OF HADRONIZATION

WHOOOSH

THE "STRONG" FORCED PUSHED THEM TOGETHER, AND IT WASN'T JUST THEM.

I GUESS WE'RE TOGETHER NOW?

+300,000 YEARS

THE QUARKS FORMED "PROTONS" AND "NEUTRONS" - ELECTRONS THEN CAME AS WELL AND JOINED...

OKAY

RI, COULD I JOIN?

BUT COULD YOU KEEP SOME DISTANCES?

NUCLEOSYNTHESIS

SO NOW, A "PROTON", A "NEUTRON" AND AN ELECTRON FORMED TOGETHER TO CREATE AN ATOM!

POOF

AND MORE SPECIFICALLY, HYDROGEN, HOWEVER, THERE WERE OTHER ATOMS FORMED LIKE HELIUM ALONG WITH TRACE AMOUNTS OF LITHIUM AND BERYLLIUM.

HYDROGEN

HELIUM

AND NOW, THERE ARE SO MANY ATOMS WITH VARIOUS COMBINATIONS OF QUARKS CALLED "ELEMENTS" WHICH THERE IS A TABLE FOR...

PERIODIC TABLE OF ELEMENTS

TO NOW

Time to Believe (music)

Nicholas De Guzman

It's Time to Believe!

The musical score is for the piece "It's Time to Believe!" by Nicholas De Guzman. It is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 150. The score includes parts for Piano, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. A section labeled 'A' begins at the first measure of the piano part. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes in the left hand. The violin parts play a melodic line with a forte (ff) dynamic. The viola, cello, and double bass parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes and a forte (f) dynamic.

4

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three measures, numbered 4, 5, and 6. The Piano part features a complex texture with sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The Violin and Viola parts play a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and some sustained notes. The Violoncello and Contrabasso parts provide a simple harmonic foundation with quarter and eighth notes.

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

7

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

p

p

B

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a chamber ensemble. It features five staves: Piano (Pno.), Violin I (Vln.), Violin II (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Cello/Double Bass (Cb.). The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The Piano part has a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The Violin parts have sparse, melodic lines. The Viola and Cello/Double Bass parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns. A section marker 'B' is placed above the Piano staff at the beginning of the final measure. The dynamic marking 'p' (piano) is indicated at the end of the Cello and Double Bass staves.

11

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score is in D major (two sharps) and consists of five measures, numbered 11 to 15. The Piano part is the most active, featuring a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The Violin, Viola, and Violoncello parts are mostly silent, with some notes appearing in measures 14 and 15. The Contrabass part provides a steady bass line. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) for the Violin, Viola, and Violoncello in measure 14, and *pp* for the Violoncello in measure 15.

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

pp

pp

pp

17

Pno.

Vln.

Vln. *mf* *p*

Vla. *mf* *p*

Vc. *mf* *p*

Cb. *mf* *p*

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a chamber ensemble. It begins at measure 17. The piano part (Pno.) features a melodic line in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The violin parts (Vln.) play chords in the first measure, then move to sustained notes. The viola (Vla.) and cello (Vc.) parts also play chords initially, then move to sustained notes. The double bass (Cb.) plays a rhythmic eighth-note pattern throughout. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano). The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

21

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 104, starting at measure 21. The score is for a chamber ensemble consisting of Piano (Pno.), two Violins (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Piano part features a melodic line in the right hand with slurs and a steady bass line in the left hand. The Violins and Viola play sustained chords, while the Violoncello and Contrabass play a rhythmic eighth-note accompaniment. The page number '104' is at the bottom left, and 'Mission Review 2024' is at the bottom center.

24 C

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is for Piano (Pno.), the second for Violin (Vln.), the third for Viola (Vla.), the fourth for Violoncello (Vc.), and the fifth for Contrabass (Cb.). The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. Measure 24 is marked with a circled 'C'. The piano part features chords in the right hand and bass notes in the left hand, with a dynamic marking of *p*. The violin part has a melodic line starting with a dynamic of *p* that increases to *mf*. The viola part is silent. The cello part has a short melodic phrase starting in measure 25. The contrabass part has a bass line with a dynamic marking of *pizz.* (pizzicato) in measure 25.

31

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vln.

Vc.

Cb.

arco

f

p

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 106, starting at measure 31. The score is for a chamber ensemble consisting of Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vln.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Piano part features a complex texture with arpeggiated chords and moving lines in both hands. The Violin parts have melodic lines with some dynamics like *f* and *p*. The Viola part has a melodic line with some dynamics. The Violoncello part has a melodic line with some dynamics. The Contrabass part has a steady bass line with the instruction 'arco' above it. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with a clean, professional layout.

36

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

39

Pno. *ff* **D**

Vln. *ff*

Vln. *ff*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

Cb. *f*

42

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

The image shows a musical score for measures 42, 43, and 44. The score is written for Piano (Pno.), Violins (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Measure 42 features a piano accompaniment with a rapid sixteenth-note melody in the right hand and a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand. The Violins play a melodic line with a fermata over the first measure. The Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass provide harmonic support with sustained notes.

44

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 110, starting at measure 44. The score is for a chamber ensemble consisting of Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Piano part features a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note runs in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The Violin parts play a melodic line with some grace notes and slurs. The Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass parts provide a harmonic foundation with a steady eighth-note bass line. The score is written on five staves, with the Piano part occupying the top two staves.

47

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Ch.

Detailed description: This musical score page shows measures 47, 48, and 49. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Piano part (Pno.) is written in grand staff notation. In measure 47, the right hand plays a continuous sixteenth-note ascending scale, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. In measure 48, the right hand continues the scale, and the left hand plays a more complex rhythmic pattern. In measure 49, the right hand concludes the scale with a final chord, and the left hand plays a series of eighth notes. The Violin I (Vln.) part has a fermata in measure 47 and then plays a melodic line in measures 48 and 49. The Violin II (Vln.) part plays a similar melodic line. The Viola (Vla.) part has a fermata in measure 47 and then plays a melodic line. The Violoncello (Vc.) and Contrabasso (Ch.) parts play a simple harmonic accompaniment of quarter notes in measures 47 and 48, followed by a more active accompaniment in measures 49 and 50.

50

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

mf

mf

mf

mf

55

Pno.

Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

fff

fff

fff

fff

fff

fff

fff

fff

Biographies

Khudheeja Ahmed

Biology Major

Hello everyone! My name is Khudheeja. This is my second year here at Mission College. I am studying Human Biology currently. I look forward to working in the healthcare field in my career. I enjoy reading and writing fiction and poetry and have been doing so for most of my life. I am taking an English class at Mission and really enjoying it.

Carlos Arellano

Mission College's Rising Scholars Program

Carlos Arellano is a 23 year-old first generation Mexican American from San Jose, California. Carlos joined Mission College through an educational collaboration with the Santa Clara County Main Jail. Carlos -also known as Kooky- loves football, basketball, rap music, and helping others. Carlos is a barber, and a rapper in progress. He aspires to be a philanthropist and continues to write his story.

Hector Ascencio

Mission College's Rising Scholars Program

Hector Ascencio is a Hispanic student, father, and an aspiring rapper born out of San Jose, California. He joined the Creative Writing class at Mission College to further his writing skills and further expand his lyricism. His music is a reflection of life through his eyes, his experiences, trials and tribulations. You can discover his music on TikTok as Barbas.007.

Damon Broussard

English Major

Damon Broussard is an artist and creative director, majoring in English at Mission college. He plans to earn a bachelor's degree at San Jose state, with a minor in Japanese. Damon is a lover of languages, arts, aesthetic, and paying deeper attention to the finer details of the world and interpreting it into his own words and experiences. When Damon is not reading books or studying Japanese, he is deeply involved in artistic works, and collaborating with artists from all around the world. He's been making music for the last fifteen years, and he's been involved in visual media for the last ten. With his expertise in both, he launched a curatorial label six years ago that blends the two mediums into a cohesive experience and hopes, at some point, to work in Japan.

O.C. Blue

Jazmin Estrada is a Sociology major in her second semester at Mission College. She has an obsession with birds, mythology, and writing stories with her boyfriend. She has always loved drawing and painting and uses it to put her feelings and thoughts into colors and shapes. She started writing poetry when she started questioning her sexuality and needed a different way to understand what she felt. She hopes to share her art and poetry to help people understand that they are not alone on their journey of understanding themselves.

Luis Cervantes

Mission College's Rising Scholars Program

Luis Cervantes was born and raised on the East Side of San Jose. He from a Mexican American home. This is his first semester as a student at Mission College taking Creative Writing through the Main Jail in Santa Clara County. Luis is an aspiring artist and poet. He never thought he would ever be incarcerated, but this has been his life since a young age. Luis hopes to gain his freedom soon and be a full-time student at Mission College.

Helen Chang

Business Major

Helen Chang is a student and mother pursuing her associate's degree in Business. She plans to transfer to San Jose State University the following year. Helen Chang is a mother, college student, and wife. She has been attending Mission College for three years and plans to attain an AA-T Degree. Afterward, her objective is to transfer to San Jose State University and continue her education in order to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Business.

Yzabella Concepcion

Mathematics Major

Yza is entering her second year at Mission College majoring in Mathematics, aiming to transfer into MIS, she is also the President of Mission College's Society of Women Engineers (yes this is also a call for our STEM enthusiasts out there!!)

Otoniel Cornejo

Mission College's Rising Scholars Program

At 28 years of age, Otoniel Cornejo realized his purpose: I am human with a cause to make the world a better place and with writing ... I can do this.

Nicholas De Guzman

Nutrition Major with Communications Certificate

Nicholas De Guzman is a first generation Filipino American student at College aiming towards a master's in Nutrition and Dietetics. In the 5th grade, he picked up the Violin and has loved playing and creating music ever since. He has picked up other instruments such as guitar, piano, bass, and played in various ensembles and bands. In the future, he hopes to release his own pieces and songs to share his passion of music with the world.

Sama Elbaramawi

Art, Graphic Design, Sociology, General Education

Sama Elbaramawi is a senior at Mission Early College High School. She is double majoring at Mission College, pursuing her Arts and Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences AA degrees. She utilizes art not only as a means of expressing herself and her background, but also uses it to bring her creative writing and character designs to life.

Julie Flores

Julie Flores is a Mission College alumnus and lifelong learner who returned to explore her interest in starting a food business by joining the Hospitality Management, Culinary Arts & Baking/Pastry programs. Julie advocates for the student's voice, works to improve the image around mental health, pushes for a more sustainable campus, and wants to start a Mindfulness Baking movement. When Julie is not on a college campus, she is a world traveler, urban farmer, photographer, free-form poet, and cat whisperer.

Thomas Fritz

Human Biology and Nursing

I was born at a very young age in Costa Rica. My parents are missionaries in Costa Rica and Nicaragua which is where I spent most my life. I moved to Hawai'i during my high school years and afterwards went straight into the work force. I moved here to California in 2019. I decided that I wanted to join the medical community to specialize in preventative medicine and family care. I have a 4-year-old son who loves to explore the world with me.

Jaime Gamon

Mission College's Rising Scholars Program

Jaime Gamon is a talented writer with a voice that is both fierce and tender.

Fernando Garcia

Mission College's Rising Scholars Program

Fernando Garcia has been incarcerated since he was 17 years-old. He dedicates his time to art, writing music, exercising, being a student, and creating art specializing in portraits. Though he finds himself incarcerated, Fernando keeps a positive attitude and a hopeful outlook on life. He's interested in continuing his education at Mission College if he get the opportunity to come home. You can follow Fernando's art work on Instagram @sinnersity.

Dave Goeke

Math and Physics Major

Math and physics major at Mission College. Former STEM tutor at the tutoring center. Currently working part time in the Educational Technology Services department. Works part-time as a sailing instructor in Redwood City

Emilie Gonzalez Cerna

Psychology Major

Emilie Cerna, originally from El Salvador, is a first-year student at Mission College. She is majoring in Psychology and planning on transferring to San Jose State University after her second year to earn her bachelor's degree and continue studying to earn a master's degree. She has been writing stories since a very young age due to her interest in literature, a hobby that was incentivized by her family, friends, and professors to develop into a constant habit. She has become passionate about creating worlds and transmitting emotions and knowledge to readers through her words, writing both poems and stories with different genders.

Tyler Lawhead

Design Major

Hello! I'm Tyler Lawhead, and I am a sophomore at Mission College. I am pursuing a degree in Design with a focus on Graphic Design, but I have experience in oil painting, drawing, and ceramics. I will transfer this fall and have been accepted to the University of Michigan's BFA Art and Design Program. I plan to pursue a career in Design, as I am very passionate about publication design, but I also wish to pursue a path in marketing. Thanks to my time at Mission College, I will graduate with a 3.87 GPA, Dean's List, 1st Place in the Mission College Speech Tournament 2023, and the Jack Lucas Memorial Scholarship recipient.

Arizona Martinez

English and Creative Writing Major

Arizona Martinez is a second year Mission College Student who enjoys putting her words out there through her artwork and poetry. She is majoring in Creative Writing and English, in hopes of eventually transferring to Goddard College to finish her degree and pursue her dream of writing a memoir. Arizona's goal has always been to bring awareness to those that deal with chronic illnesses through her work. She wants it so that more open conversations can be had about the daily pains that disabled people have to go through, as well as their struggle to be seen and heard as more than just a person with a disability. She wants there to be more of a focus on advocacy for all illnesses, but especially invisible ones in children and youth. After having gone through 20 years of her own struggles with medical issues, she wants to be an advocate for others and wants her work to make a difference in everyday people's thinking and awareness of what disabled people have to deal with.

Katie Miller

General Ed and Graphic Design Major

Katie is a high school student who is dual enrolled at Mission. She is majoring in Graphic Design and plans to get a few certificates such as Digital Media For Marketing as well. She aims to go to a four year university after she graduates from her high school.

Urania Morales

General Ed, Human Biology, and Nursing Major

Urania Morales is currently attending Mission College. She is finishing her undergraduate studies to obtain an Associate's degree in Human Biology. Her ultimate goal is to obtain a Bachelor's degree in Nursing. In her free time, Urania enjoys singing and recording covers. She also loves trying new foods.

Jakob Morales Contreras

Anthropology Major

When I was 5 years old, I was diagnosed with Blount's disease. Growing up I was in and out of the hospital with constant surgeries. Constantly in casts and being in constant recovery, I had setbacks placed on me from interacting with others. Being inside so much allowed me a newfound appreciation for things such as Video Games, and literature. I liked reading books a lot and played video games like Minecraft with my brother. During covid my surgeries intensified as a new surgery was offered to me for better results. Being isolated due to covid and the surgeries the year after the vaccine was released introduced me to a close relationship with a counselor at my middle school. Dealing with some bullying, she informed me of an opportunity at a dual enrollment high school leading me to Mission College. I'm now enrolled at Mission Early College High School.

Priscila Moreira

Political Science Major

Priscila Moreira is a Political Science student at Mission College. She plans to apply to Stanford, UCLA, and UC Berkeley and transfer by Spring 2024. Priscila is enthusiastic and deeply engaged in campus activities. She holds the ASG president position from Summer 2024 until Spring 2025 and is also the student representative at the Academic Senate. She is a proud community college student who expresses her gratitude by giving back to the Mission College community.

Julie Padgett

General Education and Psychology Major

Julie is lying on the carpet in her house, writing a biography. Julie is not really sure how to write a biography. I know they have to be written in the third person- I mean she knows they have to be written in the third person. She takes classes at Mission college. She is going to keep this biography short because it's late and she wants to go to bed.

Anna Pavlovetc

Graphic Design Major

Anna moved from Russia to the United States in 2016, shortly after earning her bachelor's degree in Architectural Design. She lived in South Bend, Indiana, for five years before relocating to California in 2021. During this time, she worked as a freelance illustrator. Anna is currently studying Graphic Design at Mission College and plans to receive her certification in the spring of 2025.

Hieu Pham

Social Work Major

Hieu Pham is a second-year student, currently majoring in social work at Mission College. She was born and raised in Central Vietnam. Three years ago, she left Vietnam for America. Everything was difficult from the beginning, she missed her hometown very much. She thought that there was something special about Hue that lingered in her heart. After that, one day, the memories, love and remembrance for Hue suddenly revived in her heart. For her, Hue City is ancient and charming with its own color. At that time, the remoteness of the Central region no longer had any meaning compared to the length of endless nostalgia.

Filiberto Quintana

Mission College's Rising Scholars Program

Filiberto Quintana was born in San Jose, California and is expressing his creative thoughts via his writing from Santa Clara County's Main Jail. Filiberto believes that life can change.

Rida Raziuddin

Biology Major

Rida Raziuddin is a 16-year-old aspiring writer, with a keen interest in commentary and analyses on politics, social issues, and religion. She loves taking photos on film, reading, and sitting in the sun doing absolutely nothing. She tries to bake but usually fails horribly. As she puts it, "I like doing a lot of miscellaneous things, am I good at most of them? definitely not!" You don't need to be good at things to enjoy doing them though.

Blake Schindler

Taking English Courses for Personal Enrichment

Blake Schindler is taking Language Arts not for transfer and is trying to improve his writing skills. Blake says, "I am a retired professional student of sorts and a former software development test engineer here in Silicon Valley." Blake previously served over 20 years in the United States Army before settling down with his wife of 46 years in Santa Clara, California. He has one daughter residing in Santa Clara and one son. Blake's passions are writing novels and poetry. He also publishes a blog about military humor. But you would never guess the subjects of his works from his background in electronics, computers, and finally to network engineering.

Himangi Sharma

Premedical Biology Major

Himangi is currently 17 years old, and a second-year Premedical Microbiology major. She is on track to graduate from Mission with honors and three Associate's Degrees in Spring 2024. She hopes to transfer to a university in Fall 2024. She wants to pursue a career in medicine, combining her passion for service and curiosity for science. In her free time, she likes to watch movies, read books, dance, travel, listen to Spotify, jump on her trampoline, and spend time with friends and family.

Maria De Carmen Soria

English Major transferring to San Jose State

I will have to admit that younger me, and even me before this 2024 Spring Semester I would have never thought that writing poetry would be something I would be doing or starting to do. I have always been the girl to enjoy writing and reading memoirs. I feel that sharing my poetry is me stepping out of my comfort zone, but this is also a big step to show my own self that I can do what I set my mind to, and that we all can start from somewhere, the important thing is to take the first step.

Mitee Su

Taking Math Classes

Mitee is a Junior at Mission Early College High School who enjoys dancing, baking, and eating food. Although she is unsure of her path in life, she dreams of living in nature and enjoying a wholesome lifestyle.

Raul Tellez

Mission College's Rising Scholars Program

Raul Tellez is a first year Mission College student. He is 26 years-old and from Mexico and raised in San Jose, CA.

Kyara Valera

English Major

Kyara Valera is a first-year student at Mission. She is majoring in English. She enjoys meditative practices such as creative writing and Tahitian dancing.

Christina Walsh

English Major

Christina Walsh is an English major transferring in the fall to either UCLA or Stanford to pursue a Ph.D in English and Creative Writing and hopes to become a College Professor and Writer in the future. She hopes to come back to Mission in the upcoming years to tell her story and inspire generations to come.

Maryam Wazwaz

Political Science Major

Maryam Wazwaz is currently a third-year high school student aspiring to pursue a career in law after completing a bachelor's degree in Political Science as well as a minor in Physics or Psychology. Maryam has been passionate about poetry since the age of eight, having her work published through a poetry competition when she was only in elementary school. Her poetry is inspired by the nuances of humanity. Though cliché, she is most inspired by works of Shakespeare, Robert Frost, and William Ernest Henley, and their efforts have motivated her to continue to develop her passion for poetry and writing. Maryam is the founder of the Robotics Club at her school and is also the project manager for a curriculum that aims to teach elementary school students about climate change and how to protect the environment. Outside of school, Maryam's favorite hobbies include painting, reading, and tinkering with cosmetics.

Nicole Willard

Sociology, Education, Social Justice

Dr. Nicole Willard is a first year student at Mission College. She is majoring in social and behavioral science, with a focus on courses in social justice. She is currently serving as Interim Director at a preschool in Northern California. Nicole has a B.S. from Wheelock College in Developmental Psychology and Early Childhood Education. She has an M.S. in Teacher Leadership from Quinnipiac University. Nicole has been working in the field for almost 15 years. During this time she has found that one of the most important assets to children's educational journeys are the relationships they create with teachers and classmates. Nicole earned her Doctor of Education in Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Leadership at Northeastern University. Through this program she researched ways to provide accessible professional learning opportunities for early childhood educators. Nicole serves on the state board of the California Association for the Education of Young Children as the Quality Initiatives and Accreditation Committee Chair. She is passionate about creating a more equitable field for children, families and educators.

Cong Wu

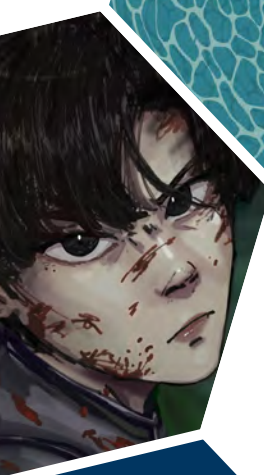
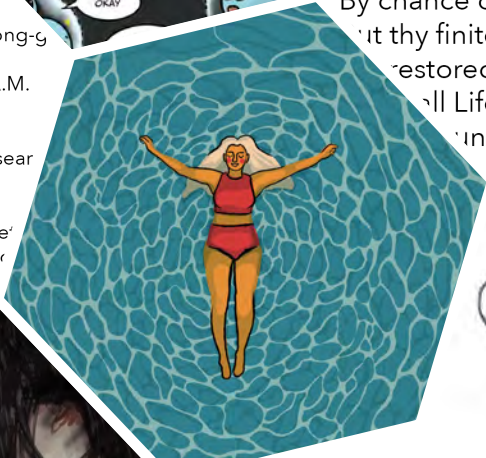
Computer Information Systems Major

Cong Wu is majoring in Computer Information Systems(CIS) and taking Advanced English as a Second Language(ESL) classes at Mission College. She is an accomplished poet who has written and published some poems in her language - Chinese. She was an editor in China and is looking for a new career path in the USA.



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filling the past time

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sliding into the water ladle
kissing sugar gently

Sweet taste
drawing my childhood

the permanent cinnabar m
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