



W
Z
T
R
E

MAGAZINE
OF THE ARTS

VOL 2

FALL 24

MAGAZINE
E N T R E
OF THE ARTS



Volume 2 | Fall 2024

Entre: Magazine of the Arts
Placentia, CA
Founded in 2023

Volume 2 | Edición 2
Fall 2024

Entre Magazine is an independent literary magazine with a postcolonial mission: to challenge and deconstruct the concept of identity through the works of--primarily--queer and/or Latina/o/x/e artists. This magazine serves as a type of *nepantla* ("land between"), a space created as a response to the need within the greater literary and academic communities to bring visibility to these artists - these *atravesados* - to empower them to express and reconcile their *inbetweenness* with a modern/colonial world otherwise hyper-fixated on labels, restrictions, and the persistence of keeping us divided.

Entre is published twice yearly, once in the spring and once in the fall. All artists published within this volume retain the rights to their works.

"A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. Los *atravesados* live here...the perverse, the queer, the troublesome...in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal.'"
—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

Please direct all inquiries to entreliterarymagazine@gmail.com

Entre: Magazine of the Arts © Copyright December 2024
All rights reserved to contributors and artists upon publication.

www.entremagazine.com

FOUNDING EDITOR

Ray Páramo

COVER / MAGAZINE DESIGN

Ray Páramo

COVER ART

The Canyons Between

Martha Guillen-Paramo

SPECIAL THANKS

Dennis López

Sherwin Kawahakui Ranchez Sales

The Acacia Group

(California State University, Fullerton)

Aachal Patel

Ani Ramirez

Athena Vasquez

Daniella Gomez

Galleyway

Lauren Campbell

Lori Marin

Kayla Baeza

Mariah Dao

Nazzi Haririnia

Raul Meza

Shannon Henning

BENEFACTORS

Shannon Henning

PRINTER

Smartpress

950 Lake Drive

Chanhassen, MN 53317

ENTRENOS

From the Editor	2
Ray Páramo	
Don't Cry for Me, La Llorona	9
Jordan Alejandro Rivera	
Annoyed Aubade with Breakfast	10
Isaac Salazar	
Yorick	12
Audrey Brown	
Proof of Life	13
Oswaldo Vargas	
none of that lesbian shit	14
Cynthia J. Roman Cabrera	

You Decide	21
Audrey Brown	
Elves Chasm, Grand Canyon	22
Heidi Mordhorst	
white faces	23
Jerad Carson	
She/They	24
Natalie Aronson	
Shall I Stay?	27
Mya Gibson	
Too Rare to Die	28
Audrey Brown	
Faces	29
Oswaldo Vargas	
Anti-Kintsugi	30
Saturn Salama	
New York Vertigo 1986	32
Heidi Mordhorst	
downlow	33
Jerad Carson	
Testimony	34
Tyesha Harvey	
Rose Duty	38
Oswaldo Vargas	
If I Were the Man	39
Mya Gibson	
Humano (After "Axólotl" by Julio Cortázar)	40
Jordan Alejandro Rivera	
Divers	42
Michael Paramo	

FROM THE FUTURE

In a time of uncertainty and grief, it brings me joy and, honestly, assurance, to be releasing the sophomore volume of our independent magazine: *Entre*. In the wake of the recent presidential election results in the United States, many of us have experienced a sense of hopelessness, fear, or even exhaustion--a wave of melancholy that momentarily, perhaps, drowned out our better judgments or even our willingness to continue to fight for a better future, one in which rights and civil liberties are not continuously threatened or diminished, a future in which people from marginalized communities -- like the very communities on which *Entre* is focused -- can exist and express themselves with pride and purpose.

The primary mission of *Entre: Magazine of the Arts* is to

showcase the works of artists from the queer and Latina/o/x/e communities in order to bring to them both visibility and empowerment where it is otherwise notably lacking. *Entre* is a *borderland* magazine with a *postcolonial* mission. That said, as I continue to further refine my voice as an artist and expand my knowledge regarding the accompanying scholarship of my now-post graduate studies, I find myself further compelled to explore the meaning of terms like “borderland” and “postcolonial” as they relate to this magazine’s vision and intended purpose.

I have recently been reading Frederick Luis Aldama and his exploration of postcolonial and Latino borderland narratives. He raises interesting points regarding academia’s tendency to oversimplify, to rely on identity politics to label and frame theoretical scholarship or genres of art; he instead argues for the use of terms like “borderland” and “postcolonial” as thematic identifiers. Simply put, he illustrates the inherent universality comprising borderland and postcolonial art -- these works are not restricted to their use of subject or identity of artist, but rather, are connected to one another through their themes of resistance, dislocation, fluidity, introspection, and experience. It was with Aldama’s approach that I considered the works featured in this very volume, many of which explore not only the aforementioned themes, but an underlying borderland aesthetic as well, both in the figurative and literal sense.

The multifaceted characteristics and metaphors of the borderland are first seen in this volume’s cover art, which, like with the cover of our premiere issue last spring, was

created by my talented mother, Martha Guillen-Paramo. In *The Canyons Between*, two rock-like figures face one another, an aqueous substance spewing forth from their mouths -- the very substance for carving a divide between them. The viewer might wonder, *What does this substance signify? Words said? Words unsaid?* Above, in a swirling sky, the image of a deer-like animal leaps over a candy-colored moon, representing a spiritual crossing -- something that bridges the two realms, the two figures. As is demonstrated in the work, a canyon is a complex type of borderland that embodies an intrinsic element of separation. Canyons are spaces to be crossed or descended upon. They can function as obstacles that divide, but they can also signify resilience and change -- carved from the hands of time and flowing, fluid forces that, though perhaps small at first, have the ability to eventually enact great, significant change, erosion against structure and frameworks that might otherwise restrict or constrain. This type of imagery -- and the emotions that arise when one is caught in, and speaks out from, "voids" or "abysses" between worlds and frameworks, canyons of instability and marginalization -- persists as we move into the volume.

Take, for instance, Oswaldo Vargas's poetry, which thematically explores the space between two states of being -- life and passing in "Proof of Life"; validation of beauty and lack thereof in "Faces"; feeling the freedom to express queer love publically without judgment and the harsh reality dictating otherwise in "Rose Duty." In Isaac Salazar's "Annoyed Aubade with Breakfast," the textual form

of which evokes a canyon-like structure, the speaker reflects, with frustration, on the increasingly desperate conditions of life in America. Similarly, Tyesha Harvey's powerful spoken-word poem, "Testimony," navigates both a lamentation of, and a vow to challenge, institutional and historical structures of racism, sexism and ageism. Mya Gibson's "Shall I Stay?" highlights the hypocrisy of the promise of America from the perspective of a Black woman, and the tragic need for people of color to often assimilate in order to have the opportunity to attain (the myth of) the American Dream. These artists, alongside others including Jordan Alejandro Rivera in "Humano" and Heidi Mordhorst in "Elves Chasm, Grand Canyon," all consistently speak, in one way or another, to the complex and harsh experiences accompanying the types of identities -- queer, Latina/o/x/e, neurodivergent, etc. -- that are persistently othered by hegemonic institutions, identities that, while caught between conflicting ideologies or opposing worlds, also seem to find hope or resistance in the power of their own communities.

This observation takes us back, then, to my opening statement regarding our particular point in time: an uncertain, unstable time, that is, unfortunately seeing a push to silence or dismantle the types of *borderland* identities and communities mentioned above. Now more than ever, creative works like the visual art, nonfiction, and poetry featured in this volume are starkly poignant, and it is with pride that I bring them to the page to be engaged with, considered, and shared. We must always remember the power and importance of art and its ability to enact empathy,

to encourage or incite change, to provide perspective on new experiences. Despite the forthcoming challenges ahead, *Entre*, though small, will proudly remain a borderland/postcolonial space in which these traditionally underrepresented or silenced artists can openly share their thoughts, beliefs, perspectives, and experiences; a space that will continue to endure and function as a platform for such voices to ring loud and true. Let our art live on and empathy and education to blossom as a result.

Con fuerza,

Ray Páramo
Founding Editor
December 2024

VOLUME 2

EDICIÓN 2

otoño



Don't Cry for Me, La Llorona

JORDAN ALEJANDRO RIVERA

The truth is you couldn't drown me – still, that didn't stop you from trying. As a child, I would get skittish around bodies of water that I couldn't see to the bottom of, so when I heard you wailing from the muck-covered shore of Lake Erie the first time, I ran. You didn't quit though. You bubbled up, the blue prune of a ghoul you are, from Tía Isabel's above-ground pool only a few days later. *Ay mijo, soy tu madre. Ayudáme, mijo. Ayyyyyyyyyy, ayudáme.* You should've known my mom doesn't speak Spanish. I ran and hid under the couch until you left. The last time I saw you was later that night, as I was sitting on the toilet watching YouTube on my iPad. My butt started to tickle, so I jumped up as you emerged, tangled in seaweed locks of hair. *Pinche chamaco, ¡voy a matarte!* you wailed. But, I aimed an emergency pee-stream at your face and used my foot to flush you down. I really shouldn't have stolen all of those Pokémon cards.

Annoyed Aubade with Breakfast

ISAAC SALAZAR

I can't believe
morning's

colonization
its light

swelling
to the ceiling

of the sky
shameless

as a drunk
who is me

with these
ceiling fan

thoughts
because

I can't seem
to reckon

with another
full day

where
my eyes are

stale & lost
like bread

crumbs
outside

the rooster
liquid laughs

& the sheets
go up

in flames
in the kitchen

my novio
a bowl of suns

waiting
to become

one



Yorick

AUDREY BROWN

multimedia: acrylic, gold leaf, and satin varnish on canvas, 15 x 12

Proof of Life

OSWALDO VARGAS

When the fence runs out of fencing and all I can hear are the foxtails / calling the spaces between
these leg hairs home \ I know I am passing / I think that's the star I'm supposed to see \
expanding into pinks and purples / I can read back the white Sharpie on barn pole \ like I wrote it
yesterday / decoded \ when you offered to help decode it / the coordinates \ for where our laughs
were interrupted / only by the newest v-formation of geese \

none of that lesbian shit

CYNTHIA J. ROMAN CABRERA

When I met Andreina, I was hardly queer. We met at our tiny women's university in Baltimore where women were drilled to be transformative in the world. It was in my junior year when my life felt uncertain and complete with possibility. I met a small group of dope women to grow with, but I was lonely. Having left New York City was difficult for me because it was a place where I never had to explain where I was from—it was understood. The boroughs were in silent agreement with its self-determined etiquette. I missed being around Dominicans and Boricuas. I had not taken for granted being able to hear Caribbean Spanish in the streets. So, when friends urged me to meet the hot new *maybe* Latina—a much-needed addition to our bland white-serving institution—I jumped on the welcoming crew con booty shorts and all.

She was wearing a tie-dyed t-shirt and loose pants. I was not accustomed to seeing someone who was so chill so attractive: part of her signature look. New York was unforgiving to anyone looking dusty in public. So, I introduced myself and said, *What year are you?* She was a freshman from an international boarding school. Her face lit up pink and kind with a deep smile. When she introduced herself as Piña, my confused face made her elaborate. *My family refers to people who are annoying as una Piña*, she explained, branding her “pineapple” for the rest of her life. She explained she was from Venezuela, *but people never know where that is, confusing it with Minnesota*. We laughed.

Oh, do you speak Spanish? I asked. I was so excited to have another Latina on campus. My gringo classmates called me exotic, saying I had an accent, which was news to me.

When I was nervous around new interesting people, I often did stupid things. I could laugh too loudly or I could stutter and spit chewy Spanish words. Nonetheless, speaking Spanish made me self-conscious, and lacking -perfect- pronunciation had me sweating bullets. In New York, we spoke Spanglish, or a Dominican Spanish with lots of bites in the words. I could read, understand, and write Spanish, but something about pronouncing the words -correctly- made me feel like an idiot. In my Spanglish gibbering nonsense, I commented on her earrings to steer the conversation. She wore a pair of dangly silver earrings—swirling caged blue stones. I asked if I could see them; they were magnificent, and they reminded me of the Wonderball candy from the bodega. Without thinking, I popped one right into my mouth. I did not realize what I had done until I spit it out to return it. I swore to myself (and my *pendejadas*), mumbling *Sorry*. Relatively unfazed, she laughed, barely dismissing my gross mistake. After that, we would see each other in passing, me hoping to get a chance to talk to her just a little longer.

One night, my friends and I were in my dorm room drinking, *perreando* and singing to the dirty lyrics of our adolescence. *I want to kiss you*, I slurred drunkenly to Andreina. *You have to say that when you are not drunk*. She smiled back. Unfortunately, I was headed to Spain for a semester abroad that spring. Midway through my program, I received a message from her on Facebook, sending me the

lyrics to a popular Victor Manuelle song “*bésame espectacular, bésame hazlo ahora.*” I blushed, embarrassed, giddy, and moved by her confidence. But I was also ashamed. She was in my thoughts. I was in denial. People like me were not supposed to like women.

Homophobia ran deep in the family. Homophobia runs deeper within Latinos; machismo keeps women in a chokehold for choosing something other than a man. As it happens, after my acceptance into an all-women’s university, my mother warned me *que no me venga lesbiana a está casa.* Returning a lesbian could be worse than getting pregnant. I was taking a huge risk even fantasizing about her. I was NOT into women. I was confused, but I was straight. What could I possibly know of loving a woman?



When I returned to the United States, I was pressed on getting ahold of Andreina, asking friends if they had seen her on campus. Like star-struck lovers out of a novela, we spotted each other and ran across the hall. Afterwards, we spent every day together, afternoons hiding under the campus gazebo, getting to know each other. There was a shift in my understanding of relationships because I was falling for her personhood rather than her gender. Our love was unlike the messages I received from heterosexuality because it expected nothing of me. I was drawn to her truth because it resonated with the life I wanted. One afternoon, while in her dorm room, I readied myself to leave but felt the urge to tell her straight up: I was not a pendeja. *I like you*, I proclaimed matter of factly, but I don’t

but I don't want any of that lesbian shit. I puffed my chest out like a proud gallo. There was a wall built in that statement. She shifted in her bed, hands interlaced behind her head, and said coolly, *okay, just let me know when you do.* I walked away and one week later, well, we were definitely doing all the lesbian shit.

What I knew of lesbian relationships was from stereotypical, sex-obsessed movies and porn sites. In high school, lesbian friends spoke, often indifferently, of the toxic masculinity that existed in the stud community in New York. I did not identify with the prescribed labels. None embodied me—having a sexual attraction to men but in love with this woman. Today, those labels have shifted drastically. But then, that “lesbian shit” meant sifting through the complexity of gender expression, sexual orientation, or sexual practice. For example, foreplay was foreplay, not sex. But foreplay in the lesbian community is sex. I had no idea what it meant to be in -like- with a woman. So, when we kissed and my earlobes were numb, flooding like a waterfall, I could not deny my attraction to her. Despite it all, and to her confusion, I believed we had not had sex. Clearly, I had a lot to learn.



We fell in love easily. The sweet space where time moves in sync with your breath. The next thing I knew, it was the end of the summer. The flowers were dewier, rosier. Her hands were always there, grazing my cheek and bringing me sandwiches. Our love was sweet and slow like a lazy Sunday morning. We moved with the routine of every person, every hour. We painted our very own skies

pink and purple and orange, bursting with love's blush. Our love had been one that slows and flows through you, one that wishes to love the aching and the good parts of you.

Yet, our relationship was an exchange of long-distance periods, the first being her study abroad in Italy, where we grew to know each other beyond the physical. I learned a lot from her at this time. Our identities were starkly different; she was a mellow artist from a family solving disputes through communication, and I was a loud bitch from The Bronx brought up on ass beatings, anger, and passive-aggressive silence to move about the world. We had to learn to communicate given our distinct upbringings, which was and continues to be a challenge. We have also navigated a complex legal system in order to remain together. As a visa holder from a politically and economically fractured country, Andreina did not have the stability, means, or ease to put down roots anywhere at the moment. Deciding to stay was expensive, lengthy and exhausting.

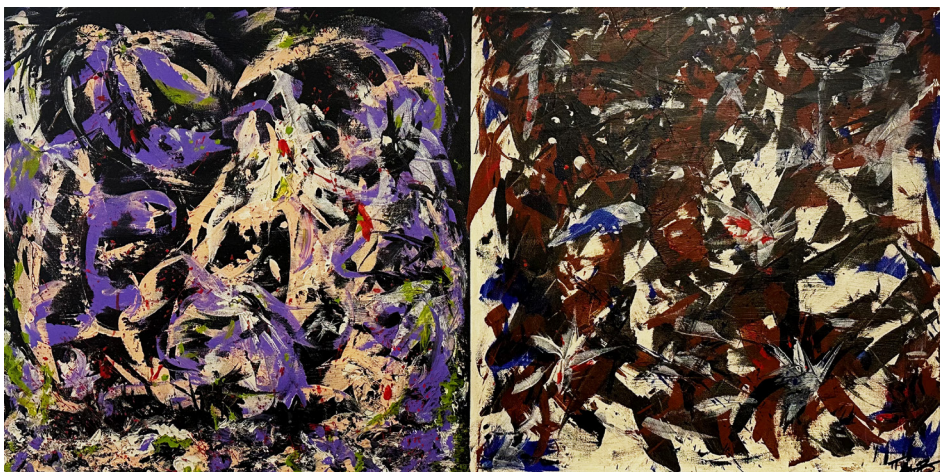
In 2017, she left the United States for Chile when her student visa ended. I remember watching her pack her suitcase and being swollen with dread. I could feel myself spin out of control. My mouth was cotton as I stared helpless at my barely furnished apartment, watching her willingness to leave. I spiraled with selfishness. I wanted to be put first without acknowledging the huge leaps we needed to take individually to be whole in a partnership. She would not be around to help me build a coffee table or greet me after a full day's work. She would be living a new life without me. I held her and wept, not knowing when I would feel her hands again. As a

holder of a powerful passport, I kept thinking, *let's just get married and if you want to leave the States fine, but at least we should create a security back-up so that it can be easier for us to get back together.* I was naive to think it would be easier, but border systems work because they enforce control over people. Our lack of financial capital kept us at the mercy of uncertainty. I remember the guilt I held about wanting her to assure me that she would indeed return. She could not guarantee that. We did not have the circumstances to make those decisions in a hurry. To be able to choose. So, I helped her pile her suitcases into our friend's car, avoided collapsing entirely, and hurried away. And just like the first time she left, she did not look back. Always leaving everything behind. The buzz of insistent restlessness in my head grew louder the further she went.

I love that being *in* love and combating structural barriers feels impossible, and we have had to discuss the harsh reality of remaining together. In the six years we have been together, about three of those have been long-distance. Around the time of her departure, I moved from Baltimore to Philadelphia to pursue a Master of Public Health, major changes which signified the start of my depressive episodes and panic attacks. My anxiety led me to use her departure as evidence that I was unworthy of her staying. Grappling with abandonment most of my life made it all the more challenging to live apart. I was not able to separate our relationship from the uncertainty of the future and the continued hurdles we would face to make it work. She has since lived in France, and now Spain. With every tearful goodbye, it took us further from our dream of owning a cute spot in a great

city, witnessing each other's endeavors, and traveling, like our couple friends have had the privilege to do. Sometimes it feels like we are behind in life, despite the unique challenges our friends have not faced.

After completing my master's degree, I decided to temporarily move to Spain to finally be with her and figure out a plan to be together. Although the system continues to be against us, as queer immigrants anywhere, we will face the brunt of the gaps in those systems. I remain hopeful that with the support and love of friends, therapy, and our deep love, we will prosper. I would welcome arriving at a moment of peace for our love to flourish without deadline, without legal process obligations, and without the pain of being apart. If her happiness means that lesbian shit, then that is exactly what I want.



You Decide

AUDREY BROWN

multimedia: acrylic and satin varnish on canvas, 48 x 24

Elves Chasm, Grand Canyon

HEIDI MORDHORST

Knives of water
cut **me** through,
the blades
themselves
not **sharp** at all,
but patient **and** rhythmic
like a steady **drum**
of **hands** on my
stony **skin**.

Tomorrow is as yesterday;
abrasion is as **melting**.
Each drop is **trapped**
until, **in** the day's heat,
its **path** is released to air.
As **much as** my walls
recede **they** also
reveal the **long** building
of my layers. **Tour** time
with your eyes, be **taken**
by the way I am not **heir** to
any **music** but the earth's.
Imagine all the **sand**
that has and would **escape**
this endless flow.

I've met the elves, harp and drum and kin to me.
Trapped in this chasm, they long to take their music
and escape this endless flow.

white faces

JERAD CARSON

The mimes seek a voice that they cannot comprehend. They insist that it's real and that they'll find it one day with an unwavering faith in the "fairness" of the universe. They gesture to each other and compare contusions like Rorschach tests. Even after a thorough psychological inventory of all contestants, no one can decide the victor of the Oppression Olympics, but they all participate in the orgy afterward as a consolation prize. The stolen and bloodied land beneath their crowded feet is dense with the skeletons of generations of indigenous and enslaved peoples who have been conveniently forgotten. A rift in the earth grows. What about their surviving bloodline is special? What key in their genetics requires that they go on creating more mimes besides a narcissistic streak and a distaste for condoms? Maybe there isn't a reason. Meaning is conveyed because someone performs it so, but nothing holds intrinsic meaning, at least not in the mimes' world. Some of them think victimhood is a state of mind. History shows that reality is no different, dictated by those whose names precede their person, whose ideologies and governments form weapons against others. Sometimes, death is a way of life, and the real horror is the amusement park ride to distract you from it. By the time you realize that you can't get off, it's too late. It continues spinning ad nauseum. A silent poet performs for an audience without applause. This, too, is a shadow on the cavern wall.

She/They

NATALIE ARONSON

She
felt alone.
They
really weren't.
But it felt like it.
To her,
she was this
parasite.
They knew
they weren't.
But what if she was?
They were?
She was?
She was
scared.
They were
scared
to be them.
To be her.
To be both.
It felt so right,
on those nights when they were with friends.
It didn't matter who

or
what she was.
But with home comes
just
Her.
She wanted to be she/her
but they wanted to also be they/them.
That self-acceptance,
that took so long,
that instant okays
that came from friends.
She/They.
She/They.
She had spent countless,
sleepness
nights over
She/They.
She/Her
was easy.
(When she wasn't called sir.
The androgyny hurt
sometimes.)
They/Them
was not.
(What would their family think?
It had been a struggle for Dad to get over the whole lesbian thing.
Now this?)

Why were they so difficult
to love?)
She/They felt so natural
after all this time
of that internalized struggle
in their full identity.
She had taken so long
JUST
realizing
their sexuality.
This
she hadn't given much thought of before.
But
She/They
was
Natural.
To her,
To them.
And that
was all
She/They
needed to
know.

Shall I Stay?

MYA GIBSON

Shall I Stay?

Stay in an America that claims it cares?

Stay in an America who will put me on the street?

Stay in an America where I'm at a disadvantage simply because the color of my skin?

I live in a pleasant house

With a pleasant backyard

I try hard to not say "ain't" or talk with my given slang

I try to straighten my hair every morning

And use foundation three shades too light

I reject the notion and ways of my ancestors

With kinky afros and righteous shouts of freedom

Dear ancestors – I haven't forgotten about you

I simply don't want to be diminished

So,

I blend in with Thee, America.



Too Rare to Die

AUDREY BROWN

multimedia: acrylic, gold leaf, and satin varnish on canvas, 30 x 16

Faces

OSWALDO VARGAS

The acne scabs are all that stand
between me and the stranger

one supermarket tile hop away
from no longer being a stranger

My patron saint is the steam
rising from both our heads

the store intercom calls my name
and my name only

the animal nesting between my cheeks
is waiting out front

it never wakes up from hibernation
but this is an emergency

a boy called me beautiful
for the first time

Anti-Kintsugi

SATURN SALAMA

i remember, eighth grade
i'd spend a whole day painting
but one wrong stroke and
i'd throw it all away

i remember, high school
i'd throw my heart on the wheel
mold it then glaze
but in the fire, it'd break

i've always loved a little too late, a little too much, on the wrong side of
something i can't put my finger on, something on
the tip of my tongue

and i know in college
i ask for all your time and
i love what's mine but
i'm too honest

and i know in law school
I won't let my voice drown out
i'll risk my pride just
to speak my mind

i'll always love a little too late, a little too much, on the wrong side of
something i can't put my finger on, something on
the tip of my tongue

in a courtroom
i feel the heat of you and
in your bedroom

you kiss me and it doesn't mean anything and
in between getting you off and
knowing i'm not
what you want me to be

i love you wrong

not like any of the people i want to be

i've always loved a little too late, a little too much, on the wrong side of
something i can't put my finger on, something on
the tip of my tongue

and i guess the point is
i've always seen the cracks on my skin
never tried to fill it
with gold or any silver

i just let it be
i pick my battles
i've always seen the chasm
i just love you anyways like it will change
anything

it hurts me to complain
but i never thought i'd make it to eighteen
i thought i'd stare down
the bottom of a bottle
thought i could stop it
and set me free

maybe that's why i always read the last page first
i need to know how it ends, i need to know that it ends
even if it's bittersweet

New York Vertigo 1986

HEIDI MORDHORST

What I am I'm huge I'm high.
Arrive in Red Hook subdeep July
I alight. afire and mighty
queen of the borough.
Suspended

Arrive and then descend.
I go vertical. I dive.
upside under bricks and bridges.
Submarining blind.

Where periscope disturbed. ascending
to this island state. a nation
of buildings crushing up and looming.
I'm flattened. I'm pinioned
to Manhattan's curbed and canyoned floor.

Who ballooned deflated.
barely standing five feet high. I
glimpse sky between scaffolds.
This vertigo is not from heights
Brooklyn. or other wise

downlow

JERAD CARSON

the forbidden phrase manifests spoken in tongues locked in a kiss behind closed doors dare not speak the word that chokes—brings him to his knees he pleads forgiveness for his transgressions no penance for the vain sinner who seeks his mirror two crucifixes feeling for one another in the shadows until they swell and come alive he is risen he hath come

he shall leave a secret stored away in that void he rebuked for so long he waits in that purgatory telling himself he is free but that self is always coming and going and the reflections shift ceaselessly he sees him for eternity in love with the danger both God and a stranger

Testimony

TYESHA HARVEY

It's the Assata in me, the Booker T., the Sojourner Truth. Chains is all we gots to lose.

There will be landfills with mines on this journey of growth but through those pitfalls remember Jakes said it best: every inspirational testimony has to pass a test.

This is my testimony.

I came too far to give up now. See I got something to prove to dem folks and I owe myself this win too. Each time life lets me down, I think of where I began and how far I've come — from taking places on drunken stages with faceless patrons, nine-inch heels, heavily intoxicated, pedophilistic tricks or should I say pricks, sicker than sick.

Shawty make you holla for a few hundred dollars. Champagne rooms but beer budgets for the souls sold, shattered dreams, went from collecting paper to writing papers, from club back rooms to college classrooms — pull out my chair. I earned my seat here.

This is my testimony.

I came too far to give up now

On this planet, this plantation, mental chains replaced physical chains, money exchanged cause massa plays on our background of emotional pain. Negligence, physical, mental health and sexual abuse. Soft whispers of I love yous in exchange for red bottom shoes. Now bring Daddy home another bankroll.

It's a game where everybody loses. Take that back. I THANK YOU! I THANK YOU! AND I THANK YOU! God built me beautifully, perfect divinity, until the world rerouted me, groomed me, gave me to the streets to set me up for the corporate pimps that were next. Squares just have a host of different pimps, johns, and stages, this testimony was written for me without my permission. No escaping nor running away, just moving beyond, getting through to some kind of new tomorrow.

This is my testimony.

I came too far to give up now

Rode Tubman railroad to set us free! The conductor took me cross country and abroad, from Times Square, Hollywood lights, arrests at customs in Heathrow to name a few. That choosing fee wasn't too extreme but choosing me to choose us was the pure extreme. Homeless nights with newborn twins, riding trains to the next bag to trotting infants with diaper bags. No bands, prayers, hope, faith bonding me.

This is my testimony.

Girrrrrrl, it's not that hard, remember who you come from. Booker T. slept on concrete streets, Phillis Wheatley gave you poetry, Queen Nzinga warrior souls live within, When, " I prayed for freedom for twenty years, but received no answer until I prayed with my legs, " Frederick Douglass yelled and I let my legs carry me.

Through the hard nights I hear the ancestors talking to me, realizing I went from high rise condos to roach filled one bedrooms. How did I get here?

Mommy we depend on you, my children cry. Late nights on work nights as I study on bare floors with lantern lit nightlights. Welfare lines, sleeping on street cars, motor cars. Most days I didn't see myself making it this far.

This is my testimony.

I came to far too give up now

Little mama hold your head up cause you came too far to give up now. Take a bow and scream out loud! Truth is! Ain't I woman! Truth is! I started a journey to break generational curses like Sojourner. Truth is! I will fight to the last breath in me. Truth is! I'm still that woman with the Angela Davis stance, I am no longer accepting things I cannot change but changing the things I cannot accept.

This is my testimony.

There's more fight, more life.
More fight, more life.
More test.
Test because what is a testimony without a test. No regrets.
I thank you!
And I thank you!
And I thank you!

This is my testimony.

I came too far to give up now!

Rose Duty

OSWALDO VARGAS

I bargained with the sun
for another drop of sweetness
hanging from your brow,
unsure where they will land
but secure in the shape
they'll take and how even the vapor that's born after
can watch me, tour-guiding you
through our capitol's rose garden
and under its snapping flags, breaking
the creak
between our veins,
thinning out
before the stranger calls us fags
and after —
it is my duty to open
my eyes skyward, pupils
so dilated
I can take in more
than just sun.

If I Were the Man

MYA GIBSON

If I were the man
And you were the woman
I would whistle at you from my car
And tell you how nice your ass looks

If I were the man
I would tell you how pretty you look
When you wear red
Which is my favorite color

If I were the man
I would say that you should always wear your hair up in a ponytail
A pixie cut? Why would you want that?
I love women with ponytails

If I were the man
I would tell you she is just a friend and I was drunk
And you'd believe me
And let me in again

If I were the man
I'd thank God for making me one
And not making me a woman instead.

Humano

After "Axólotl" by Julio Cortázar

JORDAN ALEJANDRO RIVERA

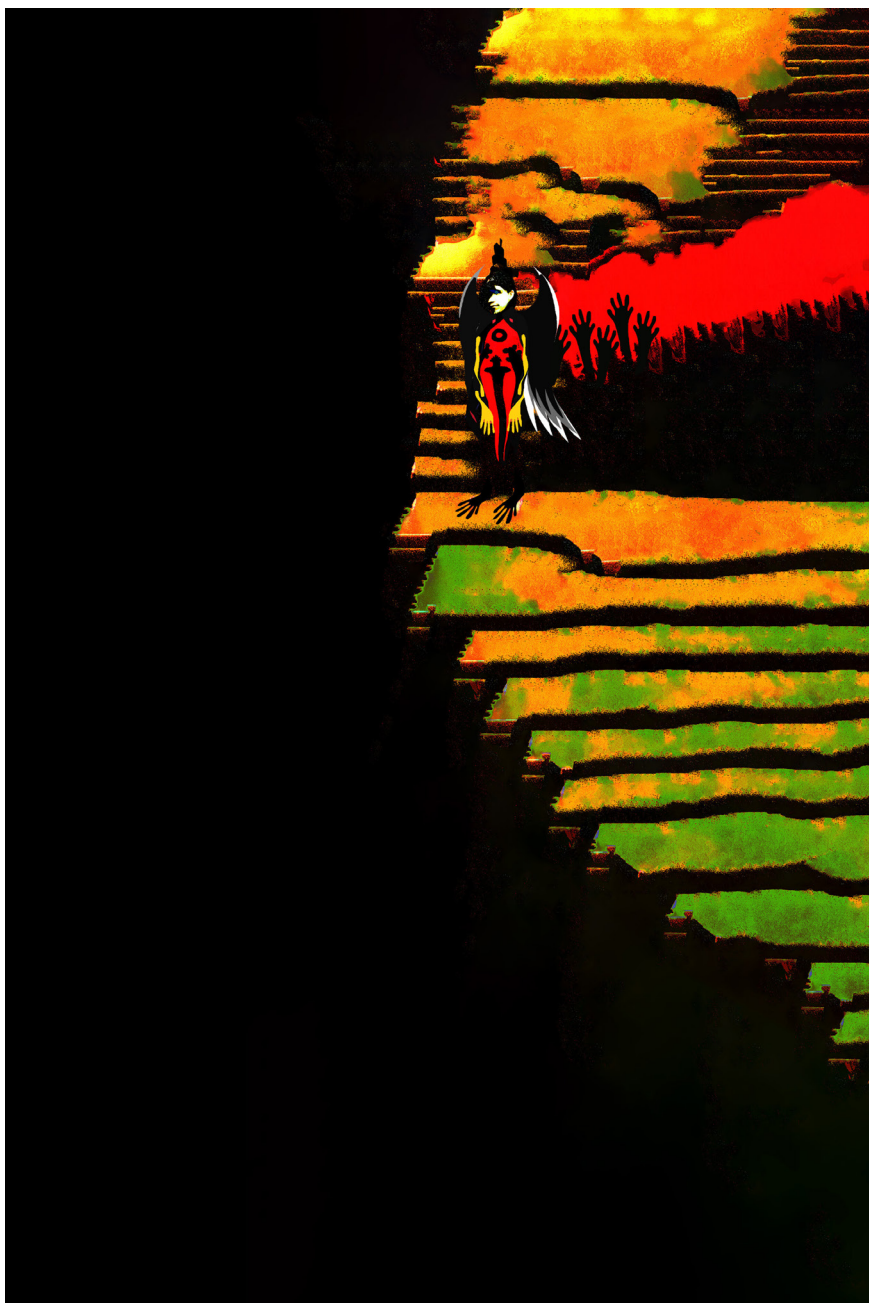
The sun stays high
this wet March day,
on the duckweed branch
I deposit 1,100 eggs
then, I scooch away
over to my flat rock
anchored to its edge
I doze far, far, far...

Limp earthworm
dangles above me
attached to a rod.
I wiggle up, clamp it
Squish, squish, squish
The meat settles me
when I meet its face,
staring from beyond.

Two giant fish eyes
pierce the glass.
Tan, unslimed skin
and its head covered
with black stringy gills.
Yet no water to filter
amidst the dry air
holding my worm rod.

It finds me everyday
when the last light breaks
and we look at each other
as I drift away
into its murky brown pools,
the warm water of Xochimilco.
I want to deposit eggs
in its dark nest of gills

After I snack on a shrimp,
I see myself in the eyes,
a reflection of black beads.
I float up above the tank
into my itchy green uniform
feeding the pink axolotl
that looks back at me
and we become one amphibian.



Divers

MICHAEL PARAMO

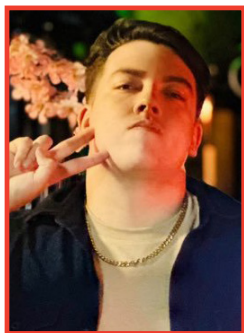
digital art

ARTISTS

ARTISTAS

contribuyentes





JORDAN ALEJANDRO RIVERA (he/him) is a 23-year-old queer Xicano writer living in Boston. Jordan is passionate about mutual aid and wants to see a free Palestine in his lifetime. His work is featured in *fifth wheel press*, *Writers Resist*, *HAD*, and others. Read more at jordanarivera.wordpress.com or at [@jordinowrites](https://twitter.com/jordinowrites) on X.

ISAAC SALAZAR is an Austin-born and Houston-based poet. His work is published or forthcoming in *AGNI*, *Dead End Zine*, *Honey Literary*, *The Acentos Review*, and *Where Meadows*, among others. He is a graduate student at Rice University. Instagram: [@eyesac_saladbar](https://www.instagram.com/eyesac_saladbar)



AUDREY BROWN is a self-taught, Latina and queer-identifying artist from Nevada who is based in Los Angeles. Art, specifically painting, has always been an outlet since she was a child as a way to express and release her imagination and energy. She was particularly captivated by Mexican folk art, Expressionism, and the skeletons of *Día de los Muertos* which provide the muse for the custom skeletons she creates. She has recently been experimenting with abstract as a way to expand herself as an artist and help empty her mind of expectations for the outcome and allowing the work to manifest itself in the present moment. She hopes to merge the two themes in her future work and have them displayed in galleries to be enjoyed.



OSWALDO VARGAS is a former farmworker and a 2021 recipient of the UndocuPoets Fellowship. He has been anthologized in *Nepantla: An Anthology Dedicated to Queer Poets of Color* (Nightboat Books, 2018) and the forthcoming *Here to Stay: Poetry & Prose from the Undocumented Diaspora* (HarperCollins, 2024). His work can also be found in *Huizache: The Magazine of a New America*, *The Common*, *The West Trade Review*, and

Narrative Magazine (among others). He lives and dreams in Sacramento, CA

CYNTHIA J. ROMAN CABRERA is a Dominican and Puerto Rican native of Brooklyn, New York who grew up in the Bronx and Washington Heights. She is a storyteller, essayist and poet exploring culture and identity, cityscape, familismo, and the healing of her inner child. Her work often uses Spanglish as a literary tool to tell stories on the diasporic challenges of first generation U.S. born people.



In her free time, she nurtures her love of learning and reading in cute bookstores, and chases down any opportunity to satisfy her inner *comelona*. A trained researcher and evaluator in Public Health, she is energized by tackling complex, systemic social and civic justice issues. She is also a *femme* person in love. By sharing who she is as a human, she hopes to invite others to break open the writing field with their stories. She has been published in *Brooklyn Poets*, *changing womxn collective*, *HerStry*, *Breadcrumbs*, *Moko Magazine*, *Spanglish Voces*, and *Bronx Magazine*. During the Spring of 2021, Cynthia was named a Brooklyn Poets Fellow. Her debut chapbook *belonging, on self: poems on dominican healing*, is out now.

HEIDI MORDHORST is the author of two collections of poetry for young readers and contributions to journals and anthologies for both adults and children, most recently *POETRY BY CHANCE* (Button Poetry, ed. Taylor Mali) and *DEAR HUMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME: Poems on Climate Change in the US* (Paloma Press, ed. Luisa Igloria et al). She has taught in classrooms for 37 years and recently served on the NCTE Excellence in Poetry Award Committee. Heidi provides multiarts poetry programming for young writers through her organization WHISPERshout Writing Workshop located in Silver Spring, MD, where she lives with her lesbian wife.



JERAD CARSON is a California-based writer, poet, and educator. He is currently pursuing his MA in English with a research focus in queer theory and literature from California State University, Fullerton.

NATALIE ARONSON (she/they) currently resides in Fontana, California with her dogs, where they are working on their Masters degree in Literature. She got her bachelors in English, delving into creative writing, with a minor in gender and sexualities studies. With their areas of study, their hope is to combine her writings and life experiences into something for readers to relate to. Their passion for exploring LGBTQIA+ representation, as well as mental health issues, had led them to wanting to discuss what is often not explored in society.





MYA GIBSON (she/they) is a student at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) whose poetic themes are centered around personal subjects such as race and womanhood to name a few. She is located in the Ladera Heights area of Los Angeles, California. She has always been a native of California and does not plan on relocating. She has previously been published in CSUDH's Annual Literary Journal,

Enjambéd, and also was seen in CSUDH's newspaper issue in early April. When she is not busy conducting undergraduate research within her university, she can be found analyzing different movies and texts that interest her. She hopes that with each poetry piece that she creates, there is someone on the other end of the "screen" who knows that they can do anything. Alongside this, she feels like bringing issues on race and womanhood to light will be a catalyst for societal change. Her Instagram handle is @mya_the brain

SATURN SALAMA is a queer multiracial college student from San Diego, currently working towards his B.A. in Literature and Writing. He enjoys playing guitar, working on his innumerable writing projects, and making a mean cup of chai. Saturn will write about anything, but he often comes back to water, self-reflection, and the inherent fluidity of being queer and brown in America. He hopes to become a lawyer and a published author of many, many books. His dream is to live in the city, then in the countryside with at least four cats, one sheep, and a gorgeous garden so he can make fresh salads every day. He loves lists, a breeze on a particularly hot day, and the magical sound of the sitar.

TYESHA HARVEY is an aspiring writer and spoken word artist who has performed locally in the Los Angeles area on several poetry platforms and shared her works and story through literary arts. She uses creative writing as a therapy to heal past traumatic experiences and help heal others. For more poetry and events, follow her @candybabypen on Instagram.



MICHAEL PARAMO is a Xicanx interdisciplinary artist and researcher. When Paramo was a graduate student in 2016, they created what would become AZE (azejournal.com), a community journal for asexual, aromantic, and agender creatives that would go on to reach over 10,000 followers on social media. AZE has been referenced in several peer-reviewed publications as well as in popular fiction writer Alice Oseman's *Loveless* (2022). Paramo's own works published on AZE have influenced discourse on the split attraction model, transphobia in a decolonial context, and the whiteness of the asexual community. Paramo's debut book *Ending the Pursuit: Asexuality, Aromanticism, and Agender Identity* (2024) is a blend of critical analysis, personal memoir, and poetry that is oriented toward deconstructing modern/colonial notions of sexuality, romance, gender, and identity. The book was listed in Ingram Academic's Sociology Catalog as a course-recommended text for educators. A book review for *Foreword* noted, "moments of vulnerability breathe life into the text; most effective is Paramo's inclusion of personal anecdotes."

A final thank you to all of the artists, mentors, family, and friends who helped bring *Entre* to life through their contributions, support, and encouragement. This would not have been possible without you.

ENTRE MAGAZINE

Volume 2 | Fall 24

CONTRIBUTORS

Jordan Alejandro Rivera

Isaac Salazar

Audrey Brown

Oswaldo Vargas

Cynthia J. Roman Cabrera

Heidi Mordhorst

Jerad Carson

Natalie Aronson

Mya Gibson

Saturn Salama

Tyesha Harvey

Michael Paramo

COVER ART

Martha Guillen-Paramo

WWW.ENTREMAGAZINE.COM

