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Berkeley Literary Journal  
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Spring 2019

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**Adhan**

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**Annular Solar Eclipse**

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Dear reader,

Berkeley Law students share a history of building community with one another to effect institutional change. Where this school has fallen short, its students have stepped up. They have demonstrated against Prop 209 and founded the East Bay Community Law Center. They have started legal-services projects and formed a coalition to develop and share wellness resources. To honor this continuing history of coalition building, the theme of the spring 2019 issue of ; *see also* is solidarity: its locations, its embodiments, and its fragilities. We are so thankful to our contributors and excited for you to witness their takes on this theme.

In fiction, we have “SJW and Other Stories” from an anonymous contributor. This satirical set of stories reflects on different hallmarks of the Berkeley Law experience: HaLo’s con-law class, that LRW memo on the unauthorized practice of law, and cover letters in which we sell our traumas for a job. If you have ever been a Berkeley Law student, these stories will be instantly familiar to you.

In nonfiction, we have Angela Moon’s “From Me to You.” This essay offers a stunning meditation on the threads that bind her to the people she has worked with: a North Korean refugee learning English, a queer man seeking asylum in the U.S. “In the end,” she writes, “distance puts all of us apart. But we are connected by a common purpose, to advocate for human rights, and to share the stories that brought us here.”

In poetry, we have two poems:

- Raja Krishna’s “Lost Appetite” presents a *then* and a *now*. Placing these periods side by side, the poem shows how an “opportunity to learn” connects them—and how that connection is frayed by the speaker’s change over time.
- Henry Leung’s “Annular Solar Eclipse” describes what has happened “since the abandoning.” It testifies to what stays constant even as other things change: “though / I didn’t will it,” says the speaker, “the sun keeps rising,” preventing the “full darkness” they expect to find in abandonment.

Finally, we have three series of photographs:

- Abdiel Ortiz Carrasquillo’s “iPhone Friends” delivers moments, small and large, of people in each other’s company. Whether it is two individual figures sitting on a log or the jazz band playing on the street, each moment evokes touches of harmonious coexistence, solace, and quiet joy. The black-and-white colors bring out the central figures in each photo, keeping every moment simple and crisp.
- Dru Spiller’s first collection “Remembrance” touches on monuments that pay homage to past events. “Graffiti” portrays a stunning display of street art that envisions people in peace and togetherness. “Refugees Welcome” sends an explicit message of open arms, a direct contrast to the brewing xenophobia and hostility in our global politics. “Adhan” shows four women together, deep in prayer. The picture shows only the backs of their heads, covered by hijabs. One can imagine how seriously they contemplate, as they face

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their outside surroundings, together in their faith. The word “Adhan” translates to the Islamic call to prayer.

- Angela Moon’s first collection “Symbols” captures artifacts around the Bay Area that remind us to persist in our aspirations of justice. The second collection “Applications” considers whether artwork depicting quiet solidarity meshes well with physical practice in the fight for rights, such as a protest in front of San Francisco’s city hall.

Happy reading!

Amanda Miller  
Angela Moon  
Ari Chivukula

Bill Nguyen  
Dru Spiller  
Henna Kaushal

Luna Martinez Gomez  
Olivia Gee  
Saffa Khan

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## From Me to You: Solidarity with Those We Serve

by Angela Moon

I only knew how she felt after she told me her complete story.

“After I escaped North Korea, I was in China. We moved across 4 different provinces over ten years – me, my mother and sister – to escape the police. We couldn’t stay at one place for long because we could get sent back to North Korea if we weren’t careful.” She said. Her voice dipped into silence, a contemplative silence as if she were sifting through past memories. I was almost afraid to ask more questions, for fear that she might walk herself back into a tunnel of dark memories and stay there.

But she tells me *I’m okay* when I ask, so I move on with the interview. I tell her it’s okay to stop at any point, if she feels uncomfortable. It is her story.<sup>1</sup>

Grace is a survivor of trauma, repatriation, family loss, and torture. She is resilient, a quality I recognized when I started teaching her English in 2015. We focused on her studies most of the time. But occasionally, she mentioned clues of her past, in little pieces like a jigsaw puzzle. I remember when I first met her, she had said in her bright voice, “Oh, you’re 19 years old! That’s funny, you’re my teacher, and I’m older than you.” Then in a more subdued tone, perhaps a little sadly, “My younger brother would be the same age if he were still here.”

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In the spring of 2017, she and I sat, connected to each other only by the small glowing screens of our phones and wireless connection. Facetime closed up the many miles of distance between us. By this time, she had moved to Maryland to work. Across the glowing Facetime screen, I ask her to tell me about her experiences as an undocumented North Korean refugee in China.

She tells me as much as she can, how she stayed there for ten years, constantly in fear that she and her family would be caught and sent to North Korea. She tells me about her fears of deportability, followed by anxiousness. *Any time the police might come. Any time we could be separated. Any time we could get sent back to North Korea and killed.* She was in fact sent back three times to North Korea and treated as if she had been a traitor, even tortured. Her mother and sister suffered similarly. Their scars wide open, it takes enormous persistence to escape again and again until they reach the United States, their final destination.

I do not know what it is like to be her, considering my privileged background. But I try my best to listen, to imagine what it must have been like. It is an uneasy challenge: how do I become a true advocate, someone who understands what the other has been through, when I have not personally been through those hardships? Do I have the right to speak for someone, to write about their past?

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<sup>1</sup> Grace is her real name. She has granted permission to mention her story in this writing.

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I can only say I tried my best. I write up a case study about Grace, and how it illustrates one example of the ways North Korean refugees navigate border controls and their migration paths. But it impacts me deeply because I realize I want to know more about how we can stand by people like Grace.

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Later, in the fall of 2018, I am a first year student at Berkeley Law. Along with my fellow classmates, I join a student-initiated project called the California Asylum Representation Clinic. In October of that year, I meet my first client in a legal immigration setting. The East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, in Berkeley, bustles with activity while a few clients sit quietly in the waiting room. The space is a small basement of an old Church, with signs in Spanish and painted murals on the walls. My client Julian<sup>2</sup> sits in a chair with a backpack. He smiles a little cautiously, but with some hope when my co-intern and I greet him.

I do not know how comfortable Julian feels about sharing his story with us. But just as I have with Grace, I listen. Julian explains that he wants to find safety in the United States. He wants to escape abuse from his home country simply because he identifies as an LGBTQ individual. *Persecution on the basis of one's affiliation with a social group.* These words ring in my mind, while I type up his account. At one point, he pauses and comments, "I feel so much safer here in the US. I found an affiliation that supports me, and I am happier here. I don't have to hide who I am." He looks at the stack of documents in front of us, perhaps wondering what the future might hold for him. I wonder if he has been getting sleep lately.

We meet Julian two or three more times. It is a gradual process that builds up his application, just as much as it builds up trust. When we write up his asylum declaration, we ask him to look over it and tell us what he thinks. At some point in the process, we have become a team, rather than having hierarchical force fields drawing lines between us. We hope that we have filed the best case we could. We keep our fingers crossed that the result will be good.

Later, Julian completes his asylum interview, about two months after we filed his case. The interview is the final step before we receive his decision. Two weeks afterwards, we find out he was granted asylum. I am finishing class when Julian texts me the news. The rest of the day feels like a dream. Finally, Julian is free.

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I always remember how things end. At the end of our time together in Chicago, Grace took me in her car – the one she saved up for years to buy when she started working in the US. She rounded up her other teachers, and a few others, and took us to a Chinese buffet place. Despite our protests, she insisted on paying for all of us. "It is my treat!" she said. Then she smiled and told us, "I'm leaving Chicago now, but I'll always remember how you helped me. Thank you."

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<sup>2</sup> Julian is a fictional name. My client has granted permission to mention him, but under a different name. Personal details of his story are not present in this writing.

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*No, thank you.* I want to say. Thank you for sharing your past with me. Thank you for exposing my privileges as I learned about your own background. For making me realize, there is much that connects us despite our initial differences. And here you bought me dinner as a way to look back on our experiences together. But really, I should be thanking you. You were more than just a student, but a friend and much like an older sister.

I hugged her before she left Chicago. Perhaps what connected us together is not just that I was a teacher who helped her achieve her academic goals. It is shared empathy and feeling that bonds us. Grace trusted me with her story because I could listen. She also told me because she was driven by her own sort of public interest mission: to educate as many people as possible about the North Korean situation, by using herself as an example. I learned a great deal about North Korea and human rights because of her efforts. I decided to support her, to join her in solidarity, along with many others who were similarly touched.

Last year, I read an article where Grace traveled to Oslo, Norway to speak to the United Nations about North Korea and the human rights abuses that continue there. She tells her story to the audience, re-telling it to a large audience as she has done many other times before. She speaks to demonstrate how she and her family lived through these traumas, but more importantly to ask them to remember North Korean people like her. Don't forget that this is still happening, she says, we shouldn't let this go on. I know in my heart Grace is not alone.

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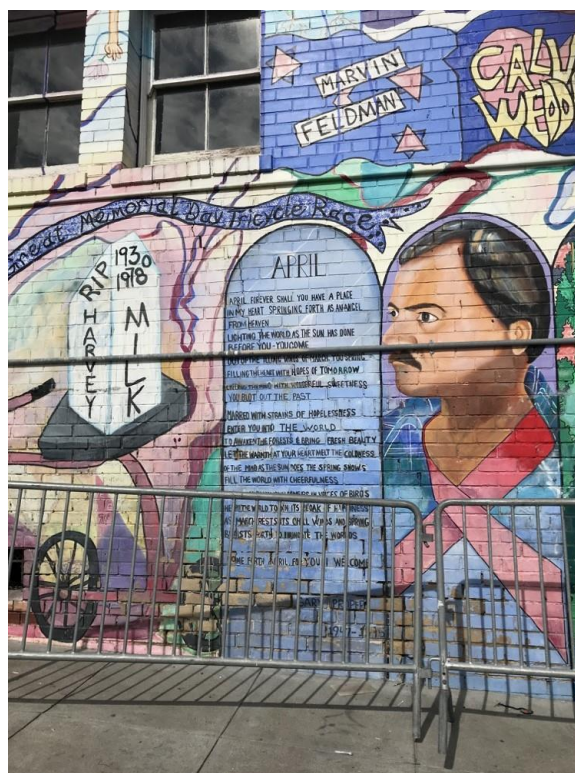
In the end, distance puts all of us apart. But we are connected by a common purpose, to advocate for human rights, and to share the stories that brought us here.

I still keep in touch with my students and clients – I sent Grace a message just this February to thank her again. She was a large part of the reason why I felt driven to go to law school. I also connect with the other North Korean students I used to teach in Chicago. I send messages to Julian and wish him luck as he embarks on the next steps after he has gotten asylum – work authorization and more.

My anthropology professor once mentioned that we are “homo narrans” – people of stories. The stories of the people I serve resonate with me. When I think about how Julian finally received asylum status, I know that this is not solely a product of my own work, but rather a collective mission. The outcomes that make our public interest work fulfilling come from *us*. It is because of *us*, the larger group who shares an idea of what it means to advocate for what is right. I am hopeful we will continue to keep this spirit of solidarity as we move forward.

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**Symbols**  
*by Angela Moon*





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**Applications**  
*by Angela Moon*





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**lost appetite**  
*by Raja Krishna*

*then*

A museum was inescapable  
Every word, every sign, every caption a trap  
Look at every painting  
Touch every exhibit  
Ask every question  
Don't miss  
This opportunity to learn

*now*

The hallways are blank  
Eyes glazed, medicated calm  
Ignore the posters, skip the panels  
Question it all, but  
Ask no questions  
Drifting through  
This opportunity to learn

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### **Percentage SJW at Berkeley Law**

*by Anonymous*

0%: sole goal is to do corporate law. Didn't get into a higher ranked school. Got in off the waitlist.

10%: wants to do corporate law, but feels bad about Trump and thinks doing a SLP would be cool (for a semester).

20%: enjoyed their SLP, tried a clinic, and might do some pro bono work as a summer associate.

30%: woke enough to attend a few Henderson Center lunch talks. Loves Oppie.

40%: took Ha-Lo's con law class, but only because Chem's was full.

50%: took Ha-Lo's con law class on purpose.

60%: comes to Berkeley wanting to do public interest. Did the math on law school expenses and took a 1L job at a law firm.

70%: calls out the prof when she glosses over the racial implications of *Shelley v. Kramer*.

80%: organizes protests during reading days.

90%: wants to get a PI fellowship, but obviously not one from Skadden.

100%: not a human being, but a composite of amicus briefs, petitions and the tears of Attorney General Xavier Beccerra.

110%: member of FedSoc.

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### **Most Creative Responses to Cold Calls**

*by Anonymous*

“You know professor, I was just about to ask you the same thing!”

“As MLK Jr. once said, ‘The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.’ I believe the facts of this case bent us further towards justice.”

“Objection: beyond the scope.”

“I would love to answer this question, but I think [student sitting to the right] has a better response, so I yield my time to him/her/them.”

“It depends.”

“I was actually involved in this case, so I think I should recuse myself from participating in this discussion.”

“I plead the 5th.”

“My dog was gonna eat my casebook...then someone shot it and we got into property dispute, so I couldn’t do my reading.”

“I learned in LRW that I’m not allowed to practice law, so I can’t answer your question.”

“I don’t know.”

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## **Diversity Statement**

*by Anonymous*

Dear faceless law firm,

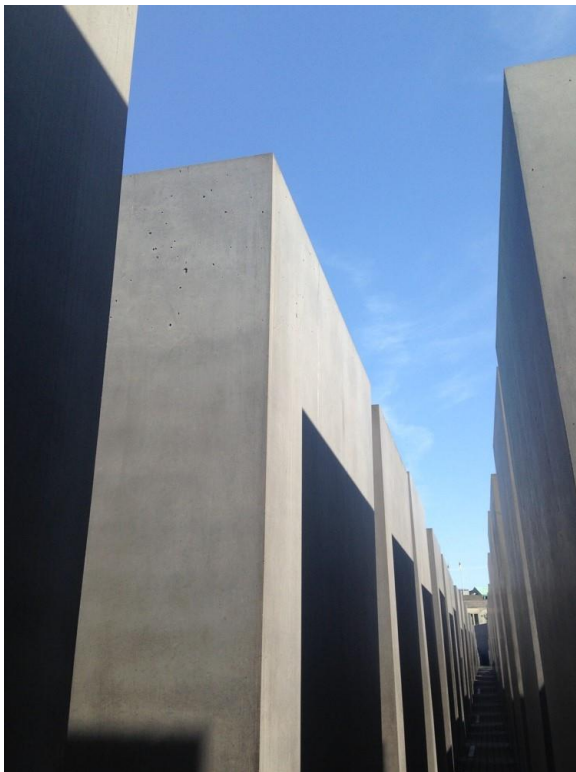
My name is [redacted]. I am extremely interested in working for your law firm, mostly because it's prestigious and law school has evoked my inner gunner, but I'll list other reasons to make you think I'm not basic. I know you only want to hire me because your clients are demanding more diverse counsel (because it makes them look better), so let me exploit my diverseness so you feel better about hiring me instead of someone who looks just like you.

I went through [redacted experience]. I only talk about [redacted experience] with my therapist because it is something I have a hard time talking about, but I'm telling you about it now in the hopes that you'll give me a job and get me out of my crippling debt. Not that that experience alone is enough--I still have to distinguish myself academically from my peers who have far more resources and connections than I do. What I probably don't realize now is that once you hire me and splash me across your website and promotional materials, you'll assign me soul-crushing work that I'll bust my ass on, only to realize that I should have spent less time busting my ass and more time "networking" and making cis white men who only like talking about sports and beer like me. And sure, you'll drag me out of my glass prison everyone once in awhile to show me off to clients and new recruits in an effort to seem edgy, but really you just want me to relive my trauma as a marginalized person and pat yourself on the back as if you've saved me. I'll pretend I don't mind, but really I'll be counting the days until I'm free to use my law degree for more than just padding your clients' coffers. And then you'll go on to capture another credulous law student who believes the myth that you can have a meaningful life at a big law firm.

Best,  
[redacted]

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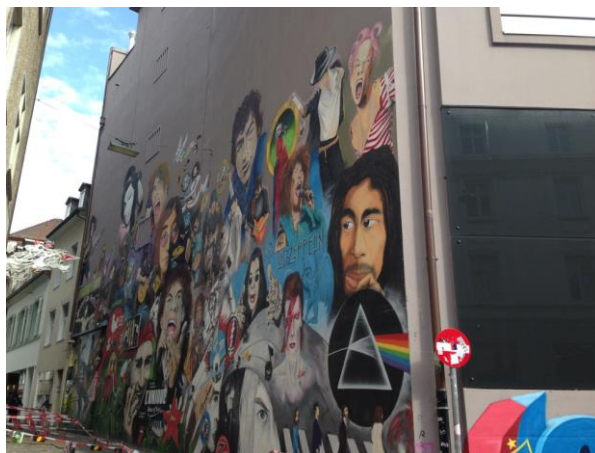
**Remembrance**  
*by Dru Spiller*





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**Graffiti**  
*by Dru Spiller*



*; see also*

**Refugees Welcome**  
*by Dru Spiller*





*; see also*

**Adhan**  
*by Dru Spiller*



*; see also*

**Annular Solar Eclipse**  
*by Henry Wei Leung*

I've emptied my socks  
every morning and evening  
since the abandoning;  
the pebbles have gotten smaller.  
My toes lift the tide, and though  
I didn't will it  
the sun keeps rising.

Now the moon yawns across it.  
The only shapes cast are those  
obscuring the way.

I open and close windows  
expecting to find full darkness,  
some proof of our being  
under some god's nail, proof  
of our being in time.

I had punched a hole  
in paper through which  
to watch the eclipse.

Now I put the paper down  
and look the sun right in its  
crescent eye.

It is still so whole  
it burns.

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**iPhone Friends**  
*by Abdiel Ortiz Carrasquillo*

