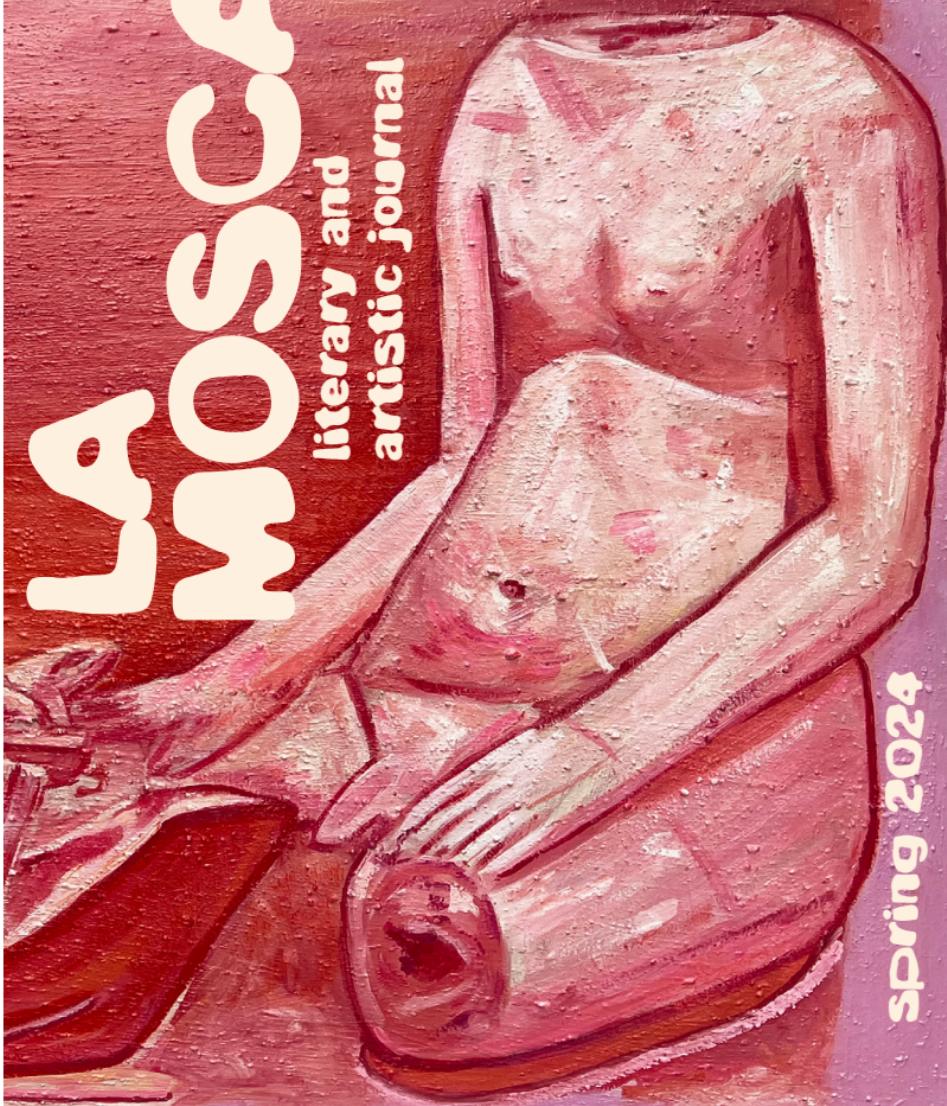


LA MOSCA

literary and
artistic journal



SPRING 2024

J. Mauricio

How to submit

We accept submissions via our La Mosca google submission form. This can be found on our website, instagram, and by contacting us via email.

Email: lamosca.neiujournal@gmail.com

EIC Email: cecofre@neiu.edu

Website: Lamosca.press

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Mauricio Suarez

Yaninna Y Alfredo 2023

Oil on canvas

150x120 cm

Ig: Mauricio.s.ee

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read past editions:



La Mosca would like to
do not stand
ableism,
transphobia,
imperialism, nor

We strongly support
and protest while also
conversations with those
against internalized racisms
injustice among our

Land back,
Free Palestine,
Free Puerto Rico,
under the hands of

make it clear that we
for racism, homophobia,
islamophobia,
ageism, sexism,
xenophobia.

free public expression
encouraging all to hold
closest at home, working
and intergenerational
closest communities.

Free the Congo,
Free Sudan,
and free all countries
that have suffered
colonialist ruling.

letter from the editor

Thank you to all who continue to submit. This is our second publication under the name La Mosca and we are delighted by the support that surrounds our reinvention of this journal. Thank you to our editors, Phil, Indigo, Thalia and Jasmine and thank you to Kayla, our head of design and production. As our world continues to collapse in on itself, know that poetry is revolution and that your voice matters. La Mosca strives to uplift voices rooted in abolitionism, please take note of our Stateville submissions and imagine a world where we cease the mass caging of black and brown bodies in America.

Thanks,
Clay

letter from the managing editor

It has been a joy to read and help put this book together. I'm grateful to the La Mosca team and to be a part of this project. Poetry can foster a sense of community where we experiment with imagined futures, it can also be the site of resistance as Venezuela Poet Miguel James speaks to in his poem, "Against the Police", "My entire Oeuvre is against the police / If I write a Love poem it's against the police." Thanks for reading and I hope y'all enjoy!

-phil

Contents

Leslie Lozada	14
<i>Uneven Paths and Roads</i>	
Syed Faisal Mahmood	16
<i>Under the Olive's Shade</i>	
Zach Haber	17
<i>ghosts of the Bay Area are wistful but not bored</i>	
*Michal Sullivan	18
<i>A Beautiful utterance</i>	
<i>Legally Complicit</i>	
*Joseph Ward	22
<i>My Water</i>	
Robby Ker	23
<i>The Frost</i>	
*Reginald BoClair	24
<i>Frank Wilderson III</i>	
<i>Sylvia Wynter</i>	
<i>Reimagine This Space</i>	
<i>My Howze</i>	
Clay Cofre	32
<i>The Numbers Game</i>	
Sam Lohmann	34
<i>Footnotes to Idylls</i>	
<i>The Bicycle Rider</i>	
<i>First Position</i>	
<i>The Playlist</i>	
<i>The Moralia Quiz</i>	
<i>At a Fortress</i>	

Danielle Fontaine <i>The Horseshoe Crab</i> After Russell Edson <i>Her Unequivocal Eye</i>	40
Pedro, Son of Pedro <i>Shoddy Squid</i>	42
Kirsten Tabernilla <i>It's Called</i>	45
Phil Kostov <i>The Machinic Practice of Professionalism</i>	46
Jennifer Karp <i>Processing 7:_____</i>	48
Jasmine Rodriguez <i>How to Build a Home</i>	50
Thalia Piseaux Ochoa <i>Aguacero</i>	51
*Benny Rios <i>My Voice / Mi Voz</i>	52

Stateville submissions are marked with an asterisk*

Uneven Paths and Roads

Leslie Lozada

Two years ago
 Two roads ahead of her,
 She took the one well traveled by, familiar.
 It was easier sometimes, to fall in life with people who seemed to know better.
 It made life make sense, if it was a certain way.
 It made sense with the cracked paths she has seen other people take in her life.
 Even with people seemingly venting to the point that it makes someone wonder, why are you still
 with this person, it made sense.
 It felt familiar.

Even with the screams of what was wrong, the rules to follow, the emotional pain of having their
 actions called wrong over and over,
 The refusal to see reason, even with the verbal pushes she did when it crossed over a watery
 boundary.
 Over and Over.
 Between purgatory and earth.

When she went away from the path, she received the distance,
 the emotional pain of the instigator and the criticizer to become ravens of a feather.
 Alike from their familiar pains, joined together by their love of the gods, the stars.
 From the pavement in the concrete forest to the apathetic green brick road.
 Kicking people from their circle, burdens behind their backs
 the road they follow is uneven, but familiar.

The new path is uneven, but newly paved.
 Limited paper with original words.
 Crafting different tactics to grow several seeds, planted with curiosity.
 Hope. Exploration.

A friendly-masking cowardly lion from the other path tried to rip over the basket she swore to
 give to someone that matters.
 The instigator and the criticizer and the flying monkeys from the other path diverge to make sure
 she will never return to their road ever again,
 never listening to reason.
 Being silent to her screaming pains.

The new road is familiar.
 A return to a road she has taken years prior.
 More curiosity, yet world-weary.
 Random serendipitous happenstances
 several figures she has found in her path, weird, varied, wonderful.
 Shining eyes with adoring words, reassuring words.
 She found someone to give her basket to, unwavering.

Some cycles she questioned their motives, haunted from before.
 She looked back on the fraught road she followed, once in a while
 when she wants to remember, and when she doesn't.
 She took the one less traveled by
 and it made all the difference.

.

Under the Olive's Shade

Syed Faisal Mahmood

From the river to the sea, a story is retold,
A tale of ancient lands, where olive branches hold.
The heart of Palestine, weary yet unbowed,
Echoes with the strength of a people, proud.

Through time-worn streets, amidst the olive's shade,
Rest the dreams of the fallen, and the promises made.
Gaza's stones bear the scars, Hebron's soil the stain,
Of a homeland cherished, amid the pain.

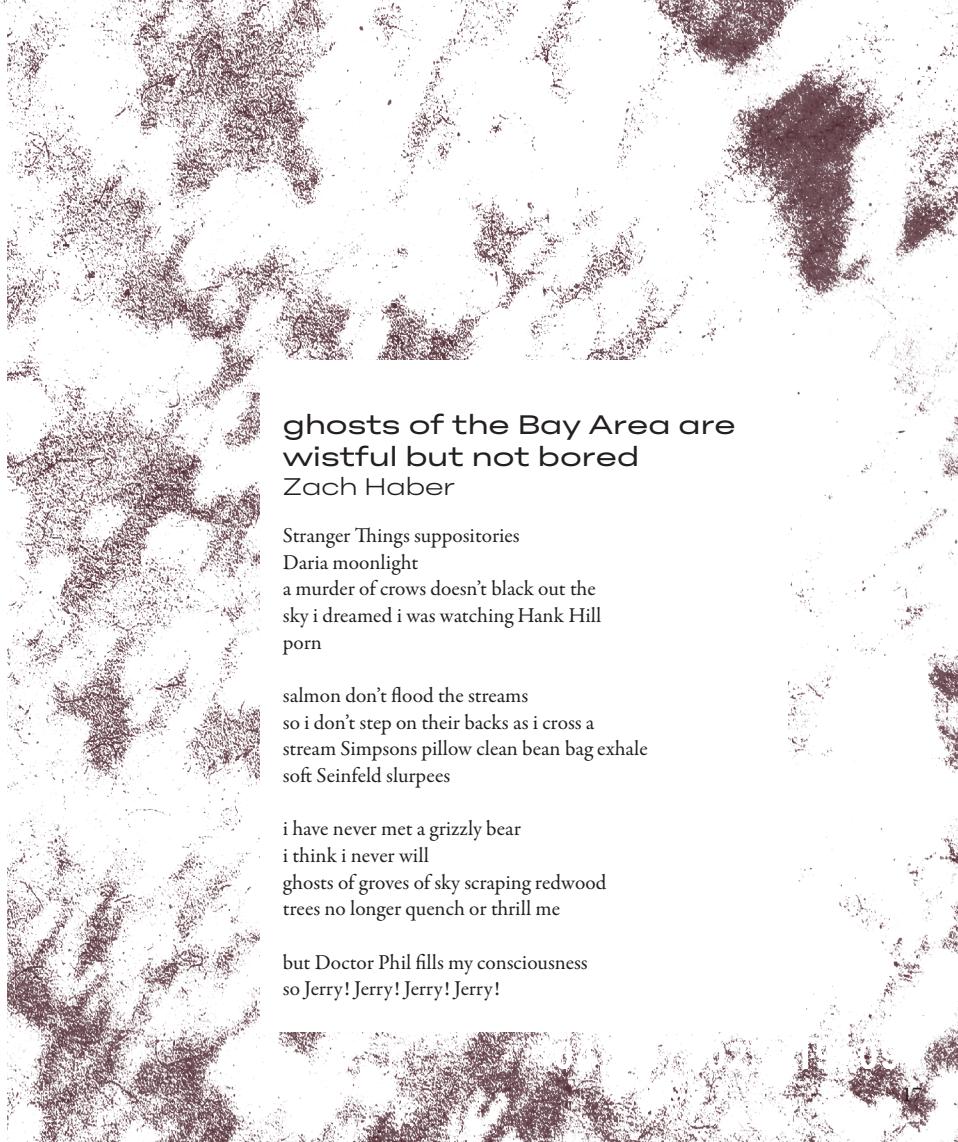
Children's laughter silenced, by a world unfair,
Under the shadow of conflict, amidst the cold air.
Jerusalem's sky pleads, with tears unseen,
For the end of suffering, and a land serene.

A mother's heart in Ramallah, a father's quiet grace,
Carry the legacy of struggle, in this storied place.
No child should learn under the shadow of a gun,
Nor should their playgrounds be where tanks come to run.

Amidst the ruins, hope takes flight,
A resilient song against the long night.
By the wall that divides, spirits dare to dream,
Of return, of justice, of a peaceful stream.

Through the blood and tears, the olive branch extends,
Offering peace to all, to foes and friends.
In the darkest hours, the faintest light endures,
Guiding towards the justice, that time ensures.

From the river to the sea, let this anthem rise,
For the healing of wounds, under shared skies.
The world must witness, must finally agree,
To the birth of a dawn where Palestine is free.



**ghosts of the Bay Area are
wistful but not bored**
Zach Haber

Stranger Things suppositories
Daria moonlight
a murder of crows doesn't black out the
sky i dreamed i was watching Hank Hill
porn

salmon don't flood the streams
so i don't step on their backs as i cross a
stream Simpsons pillow clean bean bag exhale
soft Seinfeld slurpees

i have never met a grizzly bear
i think i never will
ghosts of groves of sky scraping redwood
trees no longer quench or thrill me

but Doctor Phil fills my consciousness
so Jerry! Jerry! Jerry! Jerry!

A Beautiful utterance

Michal Sullivan

Sound... mystically bound... and intimately connected to our emotional mound,

It has many "a effects" on us, compelling us to fight, flight or freeze, compelling us to protect, defend, or be at ease.

When we hear the sound of a baby's cry, we move swiftly, when we hear the sound of smooth music, we move softly.

Scientists built mechanical eardrums trying to catch unfamiliar sounds of the universe's base, believing that big bang theory is the evidence of life existing is space.

But what happens when us common folks hear an unfamiliar sound here on earth? for me, I become immersed, in its newness, as if it was breaking a curse.

This experience happened while living in public housing. I was merely passing through, almost like browsing.

I was standing on the eleventh floor of the Robert Taylor building; the wind chill 10° fahrenheit dominating the whole building from the bottom to ceiling.

The building was a hundred feet long, fourteen-story slab of concrete with an elevator in its middle, "a symbolism of classism",

It's foundational soil had nourished the seeds of poverty, a symbolism of racism- On the end of this man-made mountain sits two identical structures that face inward from a birds-eye view it's shaped like the letter U.

It's freezing cold and i'm wearing just a T-Shirt jeans, freshly out of the apartment's cocoon. A hypnotizing Sound has pulled me on me, breaking the sound barrier, I heard a loud kaboom.

It was the most beautiful sound ever, a dissent to this diabolical caste system, on anticite.

Hundreds of black people celebrating all at once; unified by one joy, one happiness, and one note.

The Chicago Bears had just won their first Super-bowl. Unearthing a dormancy of not being emotional bold.

The enclosure of these buildings made an acoustic sound so sensational and dense. Giving me a Warmth that blanketed my exposed skin while heightening my every sense.

I was reminded we are fully human. A powerful people that is naturally upright not puny.

We have been given permission to be conscious of our own existence in this moment, time and space.

That day I felt an awakening of an emotion that had been pressed upon by subjugation and structural racism.

In the winter of 85" I moved to public housing, with my mom and two siblings after our house Caught fire. It was there that I learned that public housing had some of the most brilliant and gifted people, and I heard their collective voice in an unlikely place.

Legally Complicit

Michael Sullivan

There are those that are legally blind, slightly opine,
questionable divine - "Man, my credit card
has been decline".

A nakedness of nothingness, Invisible to their naked eyes
which are bloodshot red, pupils are
dialecticly bad

appearing spiritually dead white sleeping in White Supremacy's bed,
zombified out like the walking dead.

My smile is a loving and joyful sign, but our legislators have enacted laws
that gave them permission to be blind,
and the justification to be unkind,
fickle and aligned.

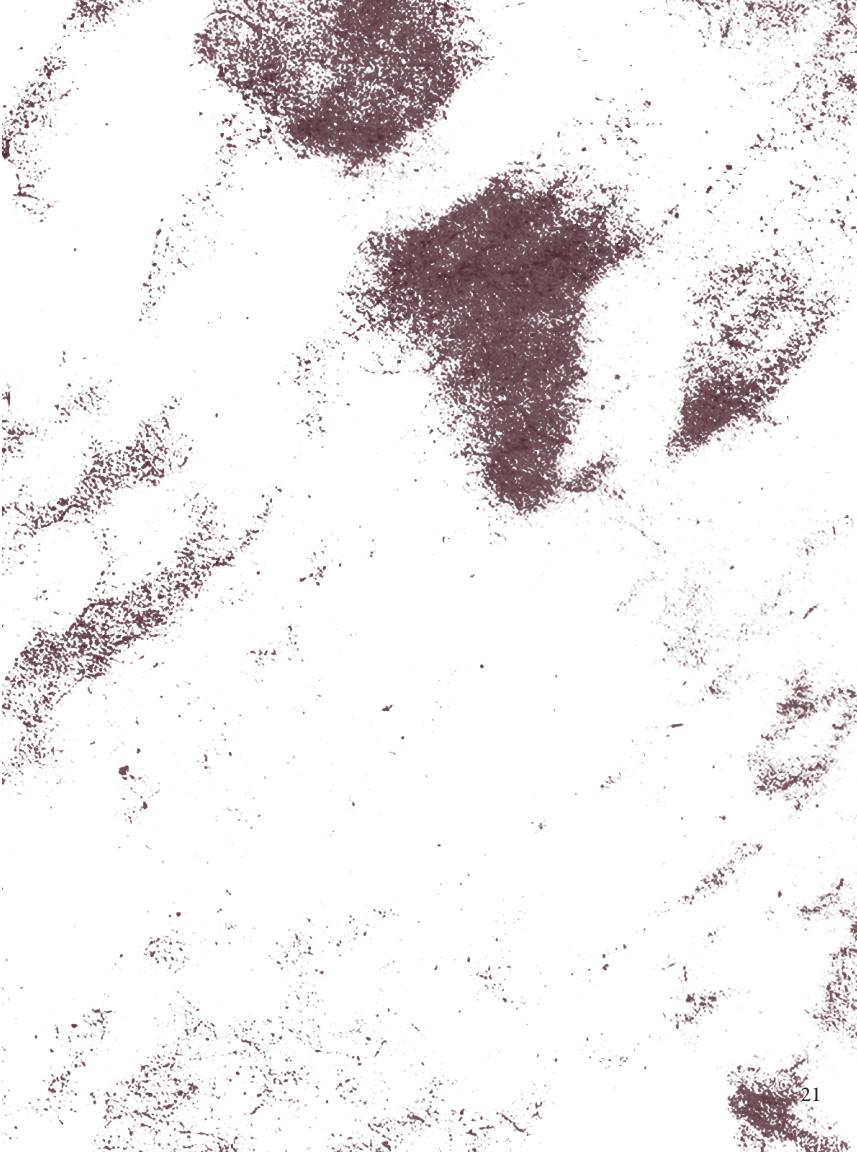
Blindness is their legal gift;
there's no bias amongst race, gender and class,
that's stuffs a myth - Man, I just got my application denied.
My people, you people, us people, what does that mean because
the Constitution reads..." We The People".

Tet racial antipathy is the undercurrent water of Citizenship,
or African Citizens... Citizenship

Or a ship of future African Citizens.

Regardless of how we interpret the word Citizenship
the hierarchical pillars of economies, religion and inhuman treatment is
built into it.

That's why I wish I had the superpowers to heal,
because this superpower of invisibility can make life a challenge
to be productive and to live.



My Water

Joseph Ward

Im thirsty not for love,
the water cases will suffice-
in this prison it is nothing nice-
tis what I dreamed of;
how do you get thru it?
In the desert, or just it.
Help me see another way-
to have a brighter day,
for the plants,
and myself.
Not Ocean Blue Kool Aid on a shelf;
some real water,
Oh yeah!
You are now the first-
to know why I have thirst.

1. The Frost

Robby Ker

I love the steam that spills
out of a chimney pipe
on cold January mornings,
the quiet in-between towns
you only catch a snapshot of
via gas stations in the chilly
autumn night, the tiny arms
of already dead tree
branches
waltzing to a windy, wintry tune,
the way the freezing air stings
your nostrils the moment
you walk outside,
snow, and lots of it,
the way the wind wails
around your nearest
fourth-story window,
that moment of relief
when your car finally
warms up after cranking up
the heat, days that are cloudy but not
dark, the chorus of geese
announcing their departure, the first
sip of coffee on a morning you have
to yourself, and the frost
briefly visiting the front lawn.



Frank Wilderson III

Reginald BoClair

Can't speak my mind,
 but something has to be voiced,
 Something beneath the surface
 Black speech is always coerced
 The visibility of my invisibility
 cannot be understated
 Especially when my community is a different kind of gated
 Hyper surveilled, my blackness policed
 My reality is brutality,
 social death to say the least
 Of my mind,
 my body
 and my spirit
 Why do fascists fear me?

When I am love,
 I am life,
 I am both joy and pain
 Ineffable is the dichotomy
 of the skin,
 my sin
 the difference
 But inside we are all the same,
 All the world is socialized
 through a narrow sentient bind
 of blind

Oh! I forgot,
 the body of the slave
 is the speaking implement
 Can't speak my mind

Sylvia Wynter

Reginald BoClair

To the order of behaviors
 who's gonna come and save us
 From these systems of classification
 Giving birth to proclamations
 that sez "all minorities are equal
 except that of the lowly negro"
 Thus deemed the conceptual Other
 Loved only by their mother
 This anti-Black prescription
 of dying conditions
 and liminal positions
 should have us all on a mission
 To transcend this bio-evolutionary
 material redemptive state
 Dominate, dominate!
 The power to create
 Full humans, partial humans, or no humans involved
 Using inclusion as an illusion
 to perpetuate
 Inversion, subversion, new versions
 of me
 of society
 Futurism or pessimism
 It is a given
 Black be the roots of the tree
 of all humanity
 Us all having evolved
 as derivatives of Alkebulan
 before the fall
 And ethnic limitation
 placed on the imagination
 creation, creation, creation
 Slavery, Jim Crow, Incarceration

Reimagine This Space

a graduation poem by Reginald BoClair

As I look into this crowd
and I look upon all your faces
I ask each and every one of you
to reimagine this space
Where you see a penitentiary

We the graduates of 2022
see a University Without Walls
One filled with classrooms,
not cells
Each room containing human beings with
the
potential for self-actualization
that has
yet to be fully realized

Here, education represents hope,
and hope is what you see in us
Can you hear us?
Can you feel us?
Although marginalized *and* incarcerated
Our collective spirit remains unbroken,
undeterred
Even as we struggled at times to understand
our existence as defined by a moment But in
this moment,
we are the Marvelous
being conveyed to you
But only if,
You can reimagine this space

The conditions
that cause us to convene
Represent the power of community
to institute the agency of change

This moment is a contemporary future thing,
grounded *in* a past contemporary *thing* If
society has the courage and the imagination,
you can spatially see
being transformed
into a space where
study
planning
and flight
can happen,
do happen

Where society is told a penitentiary,
you too can see a University Without Walls
Where life experiences are valued,
validated,
and incarnate as praxis, living theories
Here we learn the art of being
and yet becoming
But only if,
you can reimagine this space

Today we celebrate,
the culmination of our educational journey
during a global pandemic
From the margins to the center
Along the way,
deconstructing
social binary constructs that violently
keep us divided, and keeps us from
realizing our desires to live in a world
free from oppression,
free from exploitation

A transformative world where

incarcerated nightmares
give way to
freedom dreams

Remembering the words of visionary writer

Octavia Butler who said
“there is nothing new
under the sun,
but there are new suns”

But only if,

you can reimagine this space

My Howze

Reginald BoClair

Muzik is apart of my life.

When I think of my life, I
think of muzik.

Growing up, the Blues, Rhythm and Blues, P-funk, Punk-funk, and
slow jams all talked to me as I lived and longed for love. I
longed to be loved. I
longed for a love that was mine. One
that did not hit me and hurt me in the name of discipline.

As I grew into

family
people
punk
preppie,
and then I found Howze!

Oh! How I love thee, my muzik.

After you, I could never love another as I love thee.

Sure, I flirt

Because man was not made to be alone,

but its nothing,

you are the air that I breathe, and without you,

I choke, no joke.

I remember the moment you and I first met.

I remember because it was the only time in my life I ever felt free.

So my muzik,

My beloved Howze Muzik.

In you, I reminded of Street Kid filled nights,

with joyful, foot stomping rhythms to the early morning light.

Having just featured my soul at church,

I'm filled with the Holy Spirit of ancestral beats

beneath the city streets

of the concrete jungle

Muzik,

my beloved Howze Muzik

Through you I'm able to

transcend my environment

lost in nostalgic filled thoughts

about the moment when you and I first met

We both were so immature back then,

trying to be grown

but at least back then,

we both were free.

The Numbers Game

Clay Cofre

Dusk cross-faded with this song I like,
 Something something by the Doors.
 There is cracking and it's unnerving.
 Teeth, grit, girth, white noise, **ten** fingers and toes but my sister said,

If I had **nine** lives I would use
 one of them to kill myself in
 front of her

LMAOOOOOOOOOO

You **eight**.

I have a service dog named Mary.
 Mary has a service dog too, he calls her little lamb.
 I guess that makes her a wolf in sheep's clothing?
 I guess that makes her,
 All **seven** deadly sins?
 And what is the making of a glutton?
 Am I a glutton when I fake-laugh feverishly
 At my bosses jokes, during our Monday-funday meeting?
 Or how about when i'm sitting at the beach
Six grains of sand placed under my tongue
 Knock **6** times to snap me out of meditation
 And another **Six** to keep the Mormons away.
 Sundown,
 And I've lost track of time,
 My brother calls me Lily-livered
 I do want to drink
 But its not yet passed **5**
 And what is the making of a glutton?
 Am I a glutton when I manifest?
 Please God, please God,
 I really need a fucking job
 Give me your blessing, give me your luck,

4 leaf clovers, thank god I'm older, overalls always look better
 When you make it,
 to **23**.
 A trek through the woods.
 My **two** feet mold the path of this trail
 Every instance that im walking it I know i'm keeping it alive Legacy, Legacy
 When I'm dead, remember me.
 Here take the bait, say I have **won**, Hey come on baby, come on light my fire I feel so
 young, and I feel old the the same time,
 I guess that makes me convoluted
 I guess I envy, you and yours.
 I want you Modest,
 Mousy, inside out and older
 Desert eater, mouth breather, Wizard-man, Millennial?
 Yuck.

Footnotes to Idylls

Sam Lohmann

Shyness is a type of pride. Therefore we need phalanxes of the unabashed without fake boy scout goodness or brilliance. Utopia isn't right or correct. It's an imagined permission to touch. Rietveld chairs squeal and groan under our bodies.

Utopia is seductive because reality is, touch. We have been children seduced by some asshole's ideas so we have to break every silence, as children. This is more than learning. This is permission for paintings by Mondrian to gather lichen.

The Bicycle Rider

Sam Lohmann

Efflorescent communist frustration grew from clean bright spaces.
Couldn't fish or criticize.
So had to become these things. Symmetrical motets of
T'ang and Florentine selves.
Promiscuous. Incoherent. Can fuck. Had to become
perverse librarians running
from every teaching. I'm glad this isn't Sparta. Or
a Danish boarding school
run by sex maniacs. With boats and caves, flowers and leaves.
It isn't one mind
talking to itself to make me abashed. Or pure. Make sense.
Explode. Later on. Look up references.

First Position

Sam Lohmann

It's among things I forgot about
 lying on the rug restraining my
 self from licking up
 crumbs, my own colleague
 or collie sits alert. Call it
 a feeling of active peace

in fond motion rolling around
 with tears and spit. Uncrating
 myself, let me begin like a gentle dog
 that trails along scent-lines
 among things I forgot

even detest, trying by day
 to one side of work and care (just kidding!)
 patterns we reconnoiter: dimpled, flailed
 cooked-goose/cut-rug/hailed-ashes
 active peace after shock:

it's in your world I breathe a little easier.
 We scrounge the dirt find everything
 bumblebees 'n' baby jesus same size
 among things I forgot about

dismissed myself to bounce a sound among
 feeling along engaged crayola squish
 call it a practice fountain, scratched
 jiminy crickets stance, snapped branch
 which swollen scar colors
 things I forgot about
 myself, of punted peace.

The Playlist

Sam Lohmann

again and always attending music it says
 don't fuck around it says I play for keeps and often collapses
 old and unspeakable days leaving indelible jokes
 to use the most affecting drum machine button
 takes a light touch, crystallization

leaving silence embarrassing enough to save my life
 where if you picture a revolving turnstile
 you're dead, dear someone, enough of a revolt
 in the absence of a coordinating committee
 how to coordinate your heart with heavy sounds

making up behavior alongside the basslines
 propelling up the choppy air and past your hearing a choir
 of hiccups overlapping speech past bugs, motors, birds
 crosswalks, tall grass, sticky treads
 a child that wanders off past all hearing

only listening (as if I could) I've added a wire it seems
 to belong here by virtue of twang so the song says your headphones
 are broken, still a beautiful song though
 a friable timezone blessed
 by a bassline, brush on snare
 it's not heartbreak, it's organ coordination

The Moralia Quiz

Sam Lohmann

We can't tell Adorno's favorite color but
We could act out "the untellable life" together
Unknowably, at the mercy of nightingales
Fake 19th century novelists
Dyeing white eggs "christless blue"
A different Sunday afternoon
In another complicity could we act out
Revolutionary communism all mixed up
With bourgeois nostalgia, sacred flowers (purple pansies) and the square
(egg-yolk yellow) supposedly public once
The chestnut rectangle and speckled cardboard oval crushed as one
Mislabeled "the untellable life"
If it's any good
We could act out if we ever get it together
Throw a purple soft-boiled egg at the cop car
There's your rainbow it's chartreuse
Burnt ochre navy mustard oatmeal black isn't a color?
He doesn't have a favorite, only knows
He doesn't care for
Dapper taupe.

z of
er ai
re ol

At a Fortress

Sam Lohmann

The paranoid emulsifies the real.
A boat's reflection colors its fresh wake.
The job applicant throws snails at a fortress
And records patterns and sounds they make
In an addendum to a résumé. The (available) real
Really bugs me, demonstrating how
Available, how real, a tractor crawls over
Obtainable amounts of earth, as everything must now
Obtain and demonstrate itself, turning earth to land.
The people keep pets that keep props that keep puppets
That keep gesturing in ways only the pets understand.



The Horseshoe Crab
After Russell Edson

Danielle Fontaine

Shopping for a husband, a woman falls in love with a horseshoe crab. Finding its shell sexy, she asks the shopkeeper for a closer look.

Lifting the crab from its tank he cries, A fine choice my lady! Please, feel free to examine it.

What a beautiful tail! A perfect 90-degree angle! She flips the crab over and runs her fingers along its legs. Searching for its ring pincher she asks, And you said this one has blue blood?

But of course! The clearest of cyan!
 She tells the crab, That's it my love, I have decided to buy you for myself!

In their wedding bed, the crab asks, Could you please turn me over? I'd like to see my lovely wife.

Speak up, I cannot hear you.
 I said, could you please turn me over, I cannot see you!
 I told you to speak up, I cannot hear you!
 Could you please turn me over, I cannot move!
 How wonderful you are, offering me your blood! Such a thoughtful husband!

Slicing into its abdomen, the woman continues her boasting. Sucking its innards, the woman stains her teeth. The crab goes silent. She tells it, I need to slip into the shower.

Later, in fresh lingerie, the woman returns to her husband, still on its back, atop azure soaked sheets.

Her Unequivocal Eye

Danielle Fontaine

Now here's a good one: you're lying on your deathbed. You have one hour to live. Who is it, exactly, you have needed all these years to forgive?"

"Up" Margaret Atwood
 I'm Home: I call it "spinster chic." The warm 60W bulbs. The overstuffed bookshelves. The Atari, VCR, Daria DVDs. My cell phone, journal, browsing history, they are all mine. "OK,

I ask my cat, "Bella, we're doing alright, right?" She purrs in agreement. Kneading the pillow beside my head, she blinks, or winks, I can never tell. (Her right eye's OK

but her left's stitched shut.) I'm here. Outside, the world burns: Climate Change, CRT. Putin's war and the GOP. I say aloud, "I'm here." I don't have to burn with it. I'm OK.

But memories still burst through: A car crash. Stolen Meds. They twist wormholes in my mind. Broken mugs. Holes punched through drywall. I insist, "I'm safe." His rage is not mine, OK?

Nor is our history. The self-inflicted scars down my thighs, "Forgive." Tripping along sidewalks, wasted, "Forgive." Eloping. Opiates. Lost jobs. "Forgive" grounds me in time. OK

after the night's maras, I wake to a sparrow on my fire escape.
 Bella chirps, crouched on her perch. I know, We're OK. This time's OK

Haunches raised, tail twitching, she fixes her unequivocal eye on the bird.
 I'm here. I'm home. I'm safe. I'm OK.

Shoddy Squid

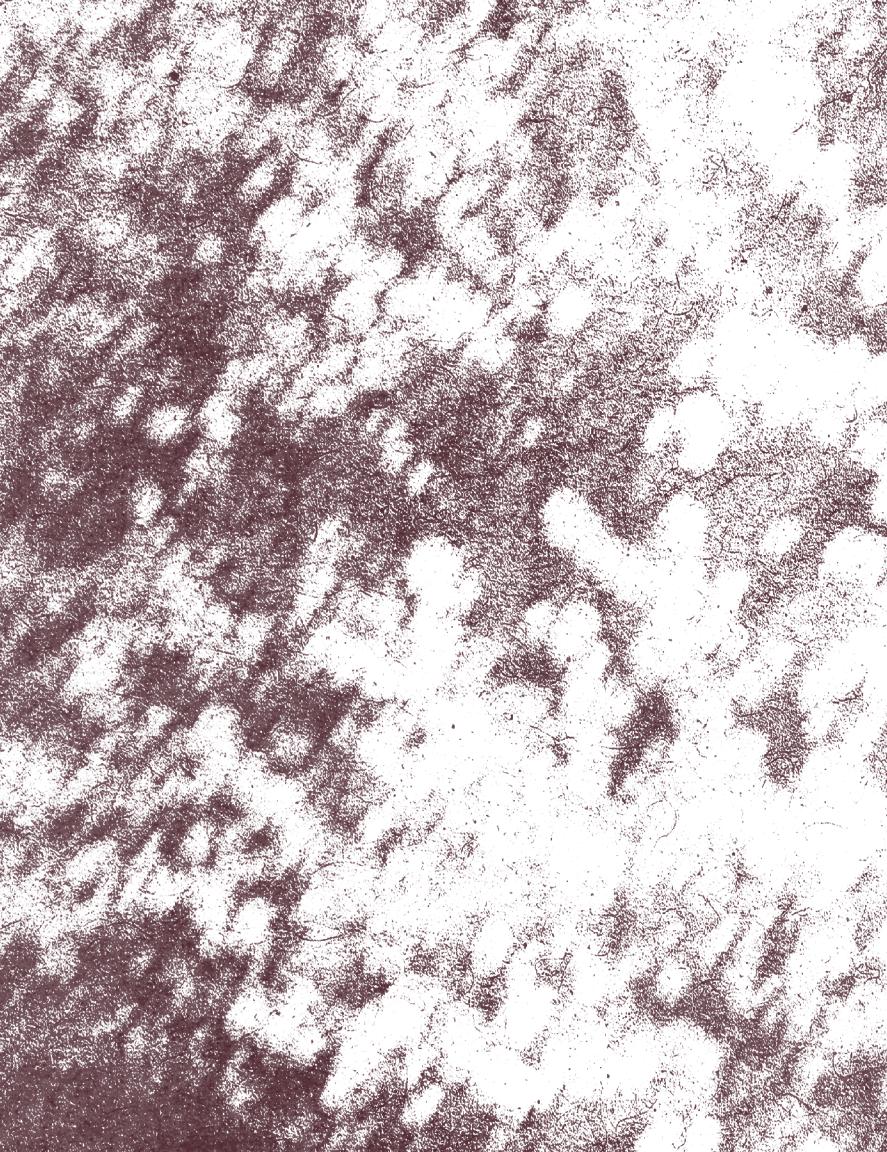
Pedro, Son of Pedro

A yellow hue of warmth. It's not always that I need it, 'n some say that they hate it most, it also usually keeps me up when I want it to least.

but luckily, I know I can look away when I want to;
to watch the world end from where I cast an eclipse
the system flickers but, you don't notice it since light travels pretty fast.
I keep looking at an angle ever since my axis was put on a tilt.



v Peppernuts
as a Rose



It's Called

Kirsten Tabernilla

the melanin hierarchy. In the Philippines, the arrangement is brown in the down below. Sometimes, those in the “below” firmly believe they need to change, to alter themselves because they don’t look like power.

The melanin hierarchy: it’s when the beauty standard is mestizo/a and revered like the moon against its backdrop of the hours of darkness. Yet, brown skin is the norm. You’re moreno/a? Guess what? “You’re no saintlike power.”

The melanin hierarchy is when one must shield oneself from the warm, loving rays of the sun. To make sure to remain pale, honoring those who thought of us as stepping stones. “Better stay inside,” the elders say. Straight to Christlike power.

The melanin hierarchy loves its commercials, its advertisements, and its billboards, glorifying whitening creams, whitening pills, and whitening treatments. “Bleach it up! Get it to guarantee yourself a dreamlike power!”

The melanin hierarchy has an extensive reach. It is in the hair that blanches out the ink. It is in the eyes that are lured by the blues and greens of plastic lenses. It is in the elders raised on a colonial mentality that pinches your nose to make it sharper, less flat, and less wide. Where can I press Dislike Power?

The Machinic Practice of Professionalism

Phil Kostov

Sergey gave me an old wood carving of Vladimir Mayakovsky's face, an object Mayakovsky would have been appalled at. When Sergey first arrived in the US, he was on his dad's shoulders. I reached up and offered him a Ninja Turtle action figure, he turned his head away.*

Mayakovsky's face is at an angle as if

facing the future of his body

turned into a monument,

moving toward his capture

masked as utopia,

but his eyes are on you,

desiring to be wounded,

to enter the overlapping of his and your wound,

a shared suffering in the ecstasy of communication,

where monuments melt upon forming.

The more he moves beyond the

"heavy chains of time" -Mayakovsky

the more he is trapped in

"the shit of the present" -Mayakovsky

*

He knows the imperialization of the revolution will not allow him to escape time and he is forced to make state propaganda. Mayakovsky's resisting being monumentalized recalls Allen Iverson's repetition of the word "practice" in a press conference where journalists were criticizing him for missing practice days after his friend was killed.

*

Iverson's multi-tonal repetition of the word moves from disbelief to disappointment, from question to statement.

He refuses the machinic practice of production, the forced performance of professionalism in what Fred Moten calls an "aesthetic disruption," as he explains to the journalists that his body is not an unfeeling machine and that, "if I'm hurt, I'm hurt."

*

If freedom is in the actions taken toward the fulfillment of destiny, Mayakovsky's suicide note speaks to his final act of freedom, "there is no other way out for me."

*

Sergey lived in the burbs and I lived in the city

so we couldn't see each other often,

I would day dream about seeing him as I

looked from the window of my gray file cabinet,

with papers at the ready to be

retrieved by the cold hand of progress.

*

Incompleteness, according to George Bataille, is foundational in the sacrifice of God and the city's incompleteness, where improvement is a constant in the ideology of urban planners, is reflected in the incomplete image of Mayakovsky's face; a face whose hurt is reflected in his coded critique of the failure of the revolution. I accidentally spill a drop of pomegranate juice on Mayakovsky's eye, and it rolls down his face like a bloody tear. Ah, I tell myself, now it is complete.

Processing 7:
Jennifer Karp

7 : a prime number
between 8 and 6

: sets
of young footprints
on your kitchen floor

: my age
when Mom gave me
a children's book about sex

: weeks
my Dad was in hospice
his mind crumbling

: little bouncing faces
jumping on your bed
at 4:30am

: months
I reminisced
after my first fresh divorce

: feral children
maybe a witchhag
with a bloodstreaked apple
will rescue
me

7 : 1
the ratio
of your kisses
to my one
you charming

charming

man



How to Build a Home

Jasmine Rodriguez

Do you know how to build a home?

First, you burn it.

Collect your

desire-dream kindling.

Second, pour gasoline.

Not required, but it helps.

Third, forget the marshmallows.

The smoke invites your neighbor,

Arriving in a firetruck.

The Big Bad Wolf, to roast weenies.

He'll say, "They're vegan. I swear!"

It doesn't really matter because fires are
Exhausting.

Fourth, Trust the Restoration Hardware
& IKEA.

The perfect secret.

Broken chairs, taped fridges, the missing
picture frames, and shattered mirrors.

Finally, tip-toe on the embers in search
of the invisible, the Magnifique house,
and start rebuilding again.

Clap your hands together and hold it.

Rub your hands together.

Search for your kindling and add it to your
hands.

Mimic the sound of burning fire.

It dies to a low hush.

Feel bad about it or not.

Smell the smoke.

It smells delicious.

Your hands struggle to hold the fire's weight.

Nod your head "yes" or "no" if you agree.

Whisper the secret to your fire.

Keep adding more and more secrets to your
towering fire.

Find _____ in your cupped hands.

Show your _____ to yourself, and then
to the world.

Aguacero

Thalia Piseaux Ochoa

The solar light glazed over the divine spectacle of the children in the street.

Hundreds of puddles and small lagoons had formed from the rainstorm of the previous night. The old Chevys with their replaced Soviet tires would pass by slowly whilst splattering water upon us. Rainwater that was disturbed with oil, dirt, rocks, and whatever garbage had laid on the block. Every time it rained, for us, it was a free water park. Though we had never gone to a water park, or knew of its existence. The children of the neighborhood would forget all beefs and past arguments, the school day was skipped, we put down our uniforms, and sprinted out of the house. Shoeless and moist feet were kicking the small lagoons of water, a full out war of mud being splashed right into our faces. We smiled as the dirt trickled down our foreheads, creating the tickling sensation of a worm traveling on your body. Hours would pass by, and the kicks would turn sour, eventually having an actual fight break out between the children. Most times it was the boys who fought the most, and us girls would be in the corners cheering for one of them. The physicality would upgrade as one of the boys would bring out a heavy rock as a weapon. The adults who would stare in awe and precaution all the way from their torn up balconies would yell at us for our mischievousness, eventually one of them having the courage to break up the fight. Everyone went their own way after that, as we awaited the next rainstorm for our next gathering.

My Voice / Mi Voz

Benny Rios

My greatest desire is to be heard;
 Ya' feel me? Me oyes? : do you hear me?
 My body is imprisoned, but my mind and my spirit are free;
 What about my word, mi voz, my voice?
 Maybe my voice isn't being projected,
 or maybe the oppressor's voice suppressor is effective.

Yelling, shouting, or roaring might work;
 Then again, I might be seen as a bug, loco, crazy.
 Yahweh, hear my cries and amplify my voice;
 then I could build, connectar, connect with my community.
 Yes! Amen! Imprisonment does not mean silence;
 the oppressor's voice suppressor can be breached!

Violence is what it is to suppress the voices of the oppressed;
 what a shame to keep what's real, la verdad, the truth in the dark. Vocally, I will continue to
 proclaim my truths, our truths;
 they will be flaunted, el la luz, in the light.
 Victory then will come as silence is shattered;
 I feel the victory on my fingertips; am I being heard?

Oftentimes I find myself discouraged;
 all this yapping, hablando, talking just fades into thin air. Opportunities, however, arise...pen
 and paper—another option: writing puts my voice in black and white en papel, on paper.
 Oh yes! I found a weapon that is mightier than the sword;
 nothing will silence me...can you hear me now?

Incarceration is the tool that was used to keep me silent;
 yet, it's where I found my voice, mi palabra, my word.
 Ironic, isn't it? How funny it is to think voices can be silenced; after all, God did say even the
 rocks, sangre, blood will cry out!
 It is my pledge to sound my voice until it's heard:
 I will proclaim the good news and the truth to defeat injustice.

Constructing the Beloved Community equals an amplified voice for truth;
 it equals stomping out evil, injusticia, injustice.
 Concrete and steel will not keep me silenced;
 oppressor, I say no, no, no! You will hear my voice!
 Court judges, no longer will you have the final word
 because the Judge of judges speaks justice to your injustice.

Eventually, the voices of the oppressed will reign supreme:
 As they do, they will declare justice, bendiciones, blessings. Everyday I will liberate my voice
 by any means necessary; whether it be by writing, canción, song, I will be heard! Eloquence
 and rhetoric worked well for St. Augustine;
 will it work for me? I'll just stick with speaking from the heart, mi corazón.

house-shaped structure for an
old "Mirror Gate" that was
ounds of Comfort Station
past year, Burundarena
blankets.

about the different
ceived and how she
design and art and
makes we



