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HARVEST INTERNATIONAL



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my shining sister

written by destiny alvarez | photo by samara gomez



I can't believe you're mine I waited months to meet you Best friends for all of time Our stories shared and memories traced Together my sister, we walk with grace

Hurried winter walks to school Running to learn Learning was all we had Books to share and hold as we waited for more

There was always more I tried so hard to teach you Everything, was to see you grow

Curly hair like mine My smile was always to show you not to be afraid To teach you to be brave Everything, so you could be great

I hope I taught you well To take the world by storm Never hesitate My little sister It's finally time to shine

invisible

written robert beveridge photo by brenda c.

Psychic surgery conforming to all AMA standards, sign here. All will be taken care of. If it's a tumor, we candy it, cure it, turn it into cigarettes you can pick up on discharge. Dinner at eight. How do you like your eggs?

music,

written by diana anderson | photo by samara gomez

1

music slap and a-clap. rattle, flap boom bap. jingle crack. sizzle, snap. and a-clap boom smack.



written by d.s. maolalai photo by emily olmedo

satisfied, a little bit 10pm wine drunk, with the poems I've written tonight. leaning in the chair in my satisfied stupor, I remember walking home at 2am with aodhain. the bars of our college. the loud, sweaty music. borrowing cigarettes. the ink-sweat of t-shirts and jeans. pissing in alleyways, our sounds in their tandem; percussionist notes scored to stave. walking the side streets in loud blasé safety. crossing the bridges. looking down at the water. the black ink which spilled printed tunes.

night-in

written by diana anderson | photo by brenda c.



Sipping look upon the terrace. Seeping I sew the wound closed. Keeping Mouths shut and walking by Knowing Every thought that washes their minds. Blowing Out the candle, happy birthday. Bleeding In the dark, in bed. Needing Inattention for a moment, Just a little moment, Cradling my head.

88 días

written by francisco amaro | photo by brenda c.

The stars and constellations on your face Shine like freckles in space. Your chocolate cluster eyes Fill the nighttime sky With swirls that resemble those of Starry Night. You're hot and cold like Mercury, Yet closest to my soul. But the gravity between us Is something we cannot control.

a remedy for asthma

written by brianna correa | photo by brenda c.

Some proclaim that loving is as easy as breathing, I don't breathe easily, Each breath is a struggle, Ragged and Rough They lie about love. It is easier-Easier than swollen agony Gasping for life, oxygen I do not love you like breathing. I love you like the burst of my inhaler, Healing and relieving.

a regret

written by robert salcido photo by brenda c.

There are so many things I wanted to tell you Before you left ,So many words I wish I let my mouth spew. I know that if I did, you wouldn't look at me the same. Rather than speak I stayed silent, But silence is the worst act I committed. In doing so I shut off What could have been a great moment ,A blessing I often visualize in my head. I could never really forget you, But you probably don't feel the same, I am most likely just a friend to you, Such is the destiny for people of my demeanor. Everyday I curse my reluctance, Curse myself, For never being vocal. I wanted to be your hero, Your shoulder to cry on, Your ear to vent to, Your hand to hold. Your partner. But time can't be reversed, Otherwise I'd take the risks, Take that chance to ask you out, Take that chance to hold you close, Take that chance to tell you That I love you, I will always love you. But I can't dwell on what could have been, Fate would have brought us together, Nor can I predict what the future holds, So all that I can hold on to is hope, And the memories of simpler times together, Before life became complicated.



to my not-so-coy mister (a parody)

itten by aiana anderson | photo by samara gomez

The worms would me much better suit Than he who hath no patience. For worms care not for rosy dew Or "To bedchambers, hasten!" Eternity may not be mine, Nor yours, nor any other's. But I will say, I think we make fine Slow, and mortal, lovers. A lover's not to merely love But to talk, think, laugh, and listen. If only language of the flesh will Move you, something's missing. I'm testing you (or being coy, as you so like it named.) Writes every single blushing boy, "My love for you burns flames." And so, if everlasting beauty's what you seek, Get thee a doll, and to her frozen face might your sugar speak"

paper

written by brianna correa | photo by brenda c.

Paper to a tree is sacrilege. A painful memory of who was lost.

Yet, everyday it moves us, Words printed against it, Reviving the life of these everyday objects.

We scrawl out ideas, worries, dreams. We paint, fold, and cut into expression. Never pausing to consider it's own soul

Paper to me is what was holy, Carrying to me your words. You once lived on those scrolling scripts.

Paper to a tree is sacrilege. A painful memory of who was lost, And your letters are the same.



the autumn wind

written by chelsea brinkworth | photo brenda c.

Alas, my love, my time has come, That moment of no more tomorrows. I feel that chill, that haunting thrill, The ghost of Demeter's sorrows.

Oh, my love, don't you hear that hum, King Notus's crisp lullaby? He rustles and dances amongst the tree branches, Who'll sing to me as I die.

So, my love, come close and listen For this is my last wish: To feel your shine, your gleam, your glisten; Please grant me this final kiss.

Soon He'll find me, that wicked breeze, And He'll lay me to rest upon the leaves.

one leaf left

the wire of branches in the shade of our wirebrushed courtyardone leaf left; fat and green like a hanging worn key ring.

written by d.s maolalai | photo by emily olmedo

watching others work in weather

written by william doreski photo by emily olmedo

The windless rain settles over us with a hiss of predestination. A crux between pines and highway, engines pulping miles. We sit in our car with coffee and scones and appraise the perpendicular attitude of October's close.

A few yards away, hundred-foot cranes stab the mist. Pumps roar and the river swirls underfoot. Steelworkers in orange hardhats and safety vests look sodden but determined to earn their pay. The bridge they're rebuilding will link Main Street to the new library where books will flutter as children and tired old women sample them, magazines will go limp on racks, and small-time entrepreneurs will crouch over the free wi-fi with expensive laptops chuckling.

How poignant the scene today the roads scoured, the leaf-fall baring complexities of oak and maple. But you've been gored by politics, the election only a week away, and the wound's already bleeding too freely for science to stop it.

The town has nothing to say that hasn't been said so badly no one even tries to believe. Enjoy your coffee, munch your scone, admire the persistent work world from which a well-deserved curse has always held us aloof.



despertar en azusa

written by oscar avelar | photo by samara gomez

Despertar en un lugar que no conoces tan bien puede causar miedo, pero esa era mi nueva realidad. La ciudad de Azusa era un lugar nuevo, pero yo aún pensaba que estaba en mi pueblo en México, esto nada más es un sueño voy a despertar y estar de regreso en casa. Todos los días almorzaba y me iba a la escuela, en mi recorrido pasaba por las vías del tren y cada día había un relajo con toda la gente que se iba a trabajar. A mi hermano y a mí nos encantaba ver el tren pasar porque el conductor nos saludaba haciendo sonar su bocina. El otoño era la época que esperaba con ansias ya que era muy bello. Salía a caminar y se podía ver como las hojas cambiaban de verde a rojo y de amarillo a café me encantaba caminar y pisar las hojas porque me gustaba el ruido que hacían al quebrarse, CRUNCH CRUNCH se escuchaba por cada paso que daba. El atardecer llegaba y se podía ver con mucha claridad como el sol se escondía detrás de las montañas y luego desaparecía.

2 de diciembre del 2009 Azusa

Caminaba hacia el centro de Azusa para poder sentir cómo era la vida de una persona de esta ciudad. Los inviernos en Azusa eran inigualables, aunque nunca nevaba, pero cuando llovía dejaba el olor a tierra mojada y a lo lejos se veían las montañas llenas de nieve. Los días en los que llovía yo salía y caminaba por lo calle cinco porque hay se acumulaba toda el agua y brincaba en el charco que se hacía, también se podía ver un arcoíris al final de la calle. Casi cada invierno pasaba por estas calles con mi ropa deportiva para poder ir al parque donde los árboles se acomodaban como una portería de fútbol. Cerca del parque estaba la única biblioteca de la ciudad. Al entrar a la biblioteca lo primero que veía eran miles de libros y cada libro tenía un olor distinto. Rentaba libros y cada día pesaban más y más. Siempre salía tarde de la biblioteca y se podían ver las luces navideñas que alumbraban la cuidad. A pesar de las lluvias la gente decoraba sus casas porque la navidad en Azusa era muy importante y eso me hacía muy feliz.

23 de junio del 2010 Azusa

Los veranos eran divertidos especialmente en las noches cuando la gente salía de sus hogares para pasar tiempo con la vecindad. Cada noche era un evento diferentes algunos temas eran deportes, superhéroes y culturas diferentes. En estos eventos ponían puestos donde podías jugar juegos dependiendo del tema del día y ganar muchos premios. También vendían comida dependiendo del tema y la comida que más me gusto fueron unos tacos que al morderles el sabor explotaba en tu boca y te dejaban gueriendo más. Cada día que pasaba me enamoraba más de esta bella ciudad por todo lo que ofrecía. En las tardes en una esquina del parque ofrecían conciertos gratis con música diferente cada día, mientras que en la otra esquina había películas y podías decidir a cuál evento asistir. En el último día de verano había un festival para despedir esta etapa del año. Todos los ciudadanos de Azusa asistían a este evento porque era muy divertido. El olor al bloqueador me indicaba que el festival estaba a punto de comenzar. En este festival solían poner resbaladillas de agua para los niños y actividades para el resto de la familia. Yo siempre a me subía a la resbaladilla más grande y al llegar a la sima me acostaba boca abajo y le pedía al encargado que me empujara para deslizarme más rápido. Mas tarde llegaban los bomberos y nos mojaban a todos dando por terminado este festival. En el centro de la ciudad había un reloj que a las diez de la noche tocaba una canción que indicaba que ya era la hora de ir a dormir.



omaha

written by ashley valenzuela

8 de diciembre de 2017, 7:27 am, en ruta a la Universidad: el viento caricia las ramas de los árboles, moviéndose a lado en un ritmo hipnotizante, acariciándote para que cierres los ojos unos segunditos más, un minuto más, cinco minutos más. Pero el sol se rebela, sale haciéndote abrir los ojos, con colores de amor: rojo, anaranjado y amarillo. Lo gris de la carretera se deshace y se convierte en un blanco grisáceo. Levántate, es hora de agarrar el pan de cada día. La ciudad abre los ojos, y el estruendo de los motores es un zumbido distante para los que aún están dormidos.

24 de diciembre de 2017, 1:01 am, su departamento:

la primera nieve navideña, tapa los sonidos con una mano leve, todo llega a una calma eterna. La nieve cae lentamente, pero también, de una vez. Las calles se convierten en almohadas, que amortiguan cada paso. El aire convierte mis palabras en secretos, que solo él puede oír. El latido de mi corazón resuena en mis oídos. Él se tira al suelo, se congela las manos al tentar la nieve recién caída, pero su sonrisa me ilumina el alma, un calor entra en mi cuerpo: mi primer amor navideño.

29 de abril de 2018, 3:39 pm, Heartland Park:

señas de tierra desnuda, brotando entre ella pedacitos de verde, de rosa, de amarillo, de vida. Ellos caminan en frente de mí, lo salado del río llena mi nariz. Mi corazón florece al verlos, vestidos de negro, pero el sol los ilumina en color de oro. Detrás de ellos, los edificios cuelgan en el cielo, sin hacer ningún ruido. Las calles esperando la llegada de la gente, los pájaros llamándose uno al otro. Con ganas de contestar, ¡ya podemos salir! Siento un viento que rechina mi piel, pero regresa el sol para acariciarme.

4 de junio de 2018, 7:48 pm, Gene Leahy Mall:

cuerpos pegajosos, el agua refleja su ternura, todavía una niña, corriendo entre los edificios que se paran detrás de ella como guardianes. Me voltea a ver entre pasos, el sol cae sobre sus ojos negros, me brillan, el mundo para cuando ella está enfrente de mí. El ambulante de atrás no nota la alegría que está enfrente de él, camina estoico y se funde con el asfalto frío. Sí, el centro es bello, lleno de arquitectura vieja, con luces que bailan sobre mi cabeza. Las risas y gritos en bares y restaurantes son ruidosos, las voces son fuertes y ruidosas, pero al ver su hermosa piel morena se callan. Un silencio que resuena y se incrusta en la piel de los edificios fríos. 25 de octubre de 2018, 10:30 am, Memorial Park: el aire está fresco, huele a lluvia. Entre las hojas de los árboles parece que hay cristales de oro, reluciendo bajo del cielo nublado. Los cristales se caen a la tierra, y se deshace la ilusión, veo las gotas de agua traslucientes. Las hojas se giran alrededor de mí como un hechizo. Las hojas amarillas vibran tan brillantemente a lado de las hojas carmesí. Estos son los momentos en donde la belleza del otoño enmascara lo grotesco de la ciudad. A la distancia ven los picos del edificio de Artes y Ciencias, un edificio que huele a bolas de naftalina.

21 de mayo de 2019, 3:34 am, mi casa:

dije que no lo iba extrañar. El invierno es insoportable, el verano es insoportable, la primavera es insoportable, la ciudad es insoportable. Pero la ciudad no importa, no importa donde vivo. La ciudad es una extensión de mis sentimientos, de mi niñez, de mi primer amor, de mi familia, de mis memorias. Cuando estoy con ellos, mi alrededor me parece una maravilla. No importa que viva en North Omaha, no importa que esté estigmatizado. No importa que los que estén al otro lado de una banqueta recién pavimentada, nunca se atreverían a cruzar a este barrio. La riqueza de cada ciudad, la belleza, la arquitectura, la gastronomía, la música y el ambiente cultural no hacen una ciudad. No estoy enamorada de esta ciudad, ni la siguiente, ni la de la esquina, ni la del otro mundo. Estoy enamorada de la gente a mi alrededor, no extraño esta ciudad. Extraño a sus habitantes a los que llamo mami y papi..



twenty twenty

written by samara gomez | photo by samara gomez

In the year of perfect vision, I did not see death approach Did not know that impaired vision Would result in the absence of two fathers

In the year of perfect vision I experienced many firsts Wet eyes, tired eyes And sleepless nights. Songs I cannot hear Songs I cannot dance Faces I will not hold

In the year of perfect vision I experienced many firsts Lips I'd never kissed Hands I'd never held Love that was returned

In the year of perfect vision Life holds death by the hand. And seeing,isn't quite as important As feeling

asunder

written by robert beveridge photo by samara gomez

When we ran out of bread, we tossed ice cubes to the geese. They snapped it up with just as much alacrity. Do birds get brainfreeze? I fired up the grill just in case, but the only thing left in the marinade was chicken. It just didn't seem right.

written by evelyn pena | photo by brenda c.

My lungs are scorched. Every inhale feels like a smoky red sky during a summer evening in California. It seems like hours that I have been laying here, burning with every breath. I looked down. Through the smoke I could see ash clinging to the skin on my arms and hands. My seatbelt was clutching tight around my chest. I couldn't breathe. I realized I was upside down and wondered: where was Irma? I looked to my right, and there she was. Her head was bleeding and her face was covered in ash. I tried to move and speak. But I couldn't! I speculated if my face was covered in ash and was bleeding like Irma's was. I need to move, I need to get out of here! But how did I get here? I can't remember. I looked around and my vision became clearer. I could see the blurry lines of gas floating in the air. Along with fire and smoke. The atmosphere was sizzling. The smell of flesh was burning near me, I knew it was the other people on the bus... the bus. We were on a bus! Irma and I were on an overnight bus ride down to Los Angeles from San Francisco. We were heading home. "Irma!" I finally let out a scream. At last I was able to move my hands. I pressed down on the seatbelt clasp and freed myself, trying to roll over with all my strength. I crawled towards Irma, her head covered in blood. "HELP!" I velled, but I couldn't hear anything or anyone around me, except for the sound of crackling flames. Suddenly, there were dark figures grunting near me. I let Irma down and from her seat and pushed her out as far away from the burning bus as I could. I lay down next to her unconscious body and looked back at the horrid scene. The blinding orange flames against the black backdrop of the midnight sky. I felt the cold sand beneath my hands and the chill of the night rush through mountains. The sandy floors sprinkled in the glow of the fire like blood orange rubies. Then I heard it, a menacing laugh echoed through the emptiness of the night... I could feel something watching me through the dried bushes just behind me. Through the darkness, I spotted a pair of eyes glimmering. Crazy, dazzling, dark eyes that seemed lifeless. I heard Irma groan, she was becoming conscious again! I looked back to the eyes, but they were gone. As if they disappeared through the bushes. Just then, I saw ashy figures crawling, limping, and fumbling away from the burning bus. A young man covered in blood that didn't seem to be his, walked up to us and asked if we were okay, I couldn't answer. It all felt like a dream. This is not happening, I told myself. But it was. The young man searched for Irma's pulse, then mine. He mumbled something as he put his hand on my shoulder. Then we walked away trying to help another person who was struggling. Phoebe finally started opening her eyes and I put my flannel around Irma's head like a tourniquet. She looked up at me, wide eyed and whispered, "Phoebe, it's coming for us!".





the hobbyist musician

written by d.s. maolalai | photo by samara g.



she'd been doing the last shift dishwash – there was a rota; it was her turn – until the bell rang with a late kitchen delivery

and when, after putting it away, she got back, a little more had been added by one of the porters and the chefs used some very sharp knives.

she put her hands together into the soapy water and didn't play much piano after that.

talk written by giselle gradilla photo by brenda c.

"Why are you so scared?" The voice asks. It's the same voice every time. It's deep, has a slight echo, disturbingly condescending, and sounds just like me—but it isn't me.

"You scare me." I respond.

There's a thick silence. My hand gently touches the hot, steamy mirror in front of my face, making sure that I'm awake.

"Being pushed out of an airplane is scary. Being taken away is scary. There is so much to be scared of in this world and yet... I scare you?" It mocks, laughing.

I stay quiet, my eyes lingering back at me. My hair is wet, slicked back. My eyes are dark despite the hazel specks surrounding the pupils. My lips don't move yet it sounds like they are. "You could push me out of an airplane. You could take me away. You scare me." I whisper.

The voice lets a sigh escape; it seems done with me, yet, it's still here.

"If I wanted to do any of that, don't you think I would have done it by now?"

"Then why won't you leave me alone?" I bite back.

"You don't enjoy talking to me?" It teases. There's a pause before it continues, "I don't enjoy talking to you either, but I'm always going to be here. You're scared of me because at some point it was only you. Now, I'm always with you and you're scared."

"Will you ever go away?"

"I can't answer all of the questions that you could potentially answer for yourself." It sounds different now—the voice sounds different.

"You think I'm pathetic." I say.

"I think you need to clean yourself up and act like it's just another day because that's what this is. It's just another day. You're making a big deal out of this because you can hear me today but, sometimes, I'm gone. Sometimes, I'm gone for weeks."

"You're never gone.... you're just... quiet."

"Would you rather me be loud every day?" It asks. As if I can compromise with it. I realize the day had halted because of our conversation. I had paused my morning routine, unable to decide to ignore the voice until now. I slip on my clothes and walk out of my bathroom, knowing it wanted to say more but couldn't; I wasn't going to respond; I wasn't going to pause. Even though I knew it wasn't gone, it was there, listening—plotting to come back again... soon.





the human element

written by brianna correa | photo by brenda c.



Okapis lost now Without a home to speak of Stripes oozing of black tar

Rhinos in the sun, Mud baked on to thick skin Blood soaking against your ivory. Velvet worm of night, Strolling in the silver gleam, Of a decaying rainforest.

Noble Leopard Cat, Nimble feet, caught in invisible traps, Await the taking of your fur.

to a crustacean

written by william doreski photo by chelsea brinkworth

> The old car you bought to restore rusted into pieces small enough to shovel up and tote to the dump. The ten children you fathered with other citizens' wives matured into a mob that looted and burned your house to the ground.

Now you rustle in tall grass and sift for clues. You're too late the mystery fled decades ago, leaving hardly a wisp of spoor. A dry cough flusters the forest. A portable generator roars but barely produces a spark.

Men with power tools attempt to construct something fresh enough to survive your battleship outlook. Manly as the rear of the school bus, where you exposed yourself to girls, your bulk precedes and follows you through the unwinding of the mind

that braced you against a critique handed down by a circuit judge. You've just inherited the air that lingered in your mother's house. But you have no place to store it except in fingertip memory reserved for women you found,

cranky as snarls of barbed wire. You're afraid to conflate them with your mother's sightless love. But be assured that we're all a single species: our bloodlines, like the plumbing of your burned house, tortured but somehow intact.

disarm yourselves

look at the damage, red rivers full of corpses, please drop your weapons.

written by robert salcido | photo by emily olmedo

MAL SHE

tortillas

written by: charles haddox | photo by samara gomez

Ten-year-old Dolores lived in a poor little house on the edge of Zacatecas, a town in Mexico. Her father had died, and she lived with her aging mother, who worked as a maid at a nearby hotel. Out of eight children born alive, Dolores and her two sisters were the only ones still living. Their humble house was built of unplastered, orange, low-fired brick. The house sat on the barren landscape like a cloud at sunset, surrounded by a few wood and tar paper outbuildings. The family led a hard life. The earth stayed as dry as an old man's hand in those days, dry, furrowed, ochre and stony under the relentless sun. It was 1914, and Villa's División del Norte was advancing on Zacatecas from Cerro de la Bufa, a nearby hill. The house lay right in their path. Meanwhile, the Federals were trying to defend the town and hold the neighborhood where Dolores's family lived. The family had been making tortillas out of maize in their cookhouse—a little shack built a few feet apart from the main building. (It was the same cookhouse where she had once been sent for a few hours of solitary confinement after she spoke rudely to her mother. There, in the half-light, she saw a tiny red man laughing at her and swinging on a string of poblano peppers.) The fighting broke out just as they finished cooking. They ran to the main house with the speed of leopards, leaving the tortillas they'd made behind.

For two days, the entire family lay on the floor of the house, which consisted of a sala and a bedroom as well as two small alcoves. Each of the rooms had windows, and they propped threadbare straw mattresses against them, hoping to gain a little protection. But despite their best efforts, every so often a stray bullet would whiz right over their heads. With a face and a voice, the sun made its journey and eventual departure across the whole landscape. Only to return with ever greater fire as the battle wore on.

The family had a large terracotta jar of water in the house, the kind people used as a cooler in those days, but no food. On the second day of the fighting, they were so hungry that Dolores finally stood up, threw open the door, and ran to the cookhouse. All around her, she could hear the shooting and artillery fire, the cries of the soldiers, and the hoofbeats of their horses. But she didn't stop until she reached the cookhouse door. Almost bent double, she swept up the stale maize cakes and ran back to the house. She and her family had no salt, or spicing, or anything to accompany the tortillas. But for the rest of her life, she always said that they were the tastiest tortillas she ever ate.

the widow's mite

written by robert beveridge

photo by brenda c.

We hit the windows at the same time. The guy in the three-piece suit, program clutched in sweaty hand, palm peels the rubber band like a rind from his wad of twenties, eyes flick past the big black X he's put over Derby's Golden Boy, the late scratch,

and down'to the longshot Phantas eyes. He peels off two bills and bets as I pull the last crumpled five from my shirt and plonk it down, a win on Arjay's Pleasure, this time, as always, invoking the sacred names: Bill Barich, Jim Quinn, Bill Barich, Jim Quinn, Steve Roman Steve Roman. And when Arjay's Pleasure hits the line first, my faith in the parables is renewed a little more.



a scrap of infinity

written by william doreski | photo by emily olmedo

A meteor skewers the dark, pierces the general store roof. I saw and felt the wound open. Three fists of nickel. two iron, a few pounds of uncertain matter, Worth a fortune at auction but who will reshingle the roof? A voice roams the night, debating. Left, the river boiling along, right, the highway dark at three AM, the principle beauty of the village snugged safely in bed. The meteorite is a precious gem science desires more than money, but that lone voice shrugs it off on me, for my rock garden. Shame prevents me from profiting, so I truck it home as dawn rakes the staggering pines and plop it wherein May exotic Hosta will fluster from the tepid soil. A ramshackle morning, cereal perking in a bowl, orange juice so acidic it scalds my tongue to silence the glee I suffer. In the back yard the meteorite snugs up to ordinary rocks but still glows the ruddy glow that thrilled it through the atmosphere. I'll will it to the Smithsonian. For the moment it's only a scrap of infinity, a mote or particle sparked by the same lack of thought that makes this moment plausible.

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