



Harvest International Fall 2019 Issue

**Harvest International Cal Poly Pomona
Student-edited Literary Journal**

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Table of Contents

Short Stories, 1
Juniper & Wheat, 2
Mile Marker 48, 3
Loreleis Monologue, 4
Simón el Indomable, 5-6
Fiasco! at the Boutique 7
Poetry, 8
A Rainy Sensation, 9
Aracnofobia, 10
An Uncertainty of Your Name, 11
Even Though I Had To, 12
Mom is The World Gonna End?, 13
Okay, 14
Our Family Secrets, 15
No One is Persistently Happy, 16
Surrogate, 17
What World Yet, 18
Sharing Your Story, 19
What Happens Below, 20
Lies of the American Government, 21
There's a Stranger In My Doorway, 22
The Treachery of the Heart, 23
6am Coffee, 24
Message in a Bottle, 25
Broken Home, 26
The Abandoned Building That Won't Stop Crossing My Mind, 267
Yellow, 28
Heavy Rains, 29
Turtleneck, 30
Sunset, 31
Por el Eterno, 32
Your Name, 33
5th Floor Ramen Boy, 34
Editor's Note, 35

A scenic view of a Japanese garden. In the foreground, a dark pond reflects the sky. A stone path leads from the pond towards a grassy area. The background is filled with lush greenery, including a large, dense evergreen tree on the right and several deciduous trees with autumn-colored foliage on the left. The sky is a clear, deep blue.

Short Stories

Juniper & Wheat

By Rachel Jurasevich

Fields of wheat swayed as a breeze rolled through the crop, the dry leaves and heads scratching by one another in a droll of rattles. Plodding through a barely visible aisle, Thomas absently brushed his hands over the rough plants. The itch against his palm grew until he rubbed his hand against his pants and let it fall to his side. Sweat pebbled along the crown on his forehead, gathering in deep scars that poked his skin.

Pausing, he shook his right leg in an attempt to loosen the rogue seeds that had threaded themselves into his socks. Pushing aside a few stalks, he leaned over to swat and grab at the offending stickers, careful to not jostle his father's camera strapped around his shoulder. After righting himself and adjusting his pants, he walked on.

Approaching the tree line that separated his father's property from the wilds of sloping hills, he inhaled deeply. The split trunks of ash juniper exploded into scattered canopies of filtered shade, the dark needling thickets beckoning him closer as they bobbed on twisted boughs. The musky sweet scent that wafted towards him made him shut his eyes. His feet carried him a few yards further as he came to a gradual stop. Memories of fractured images reformed with one other—his misadventures with his younger sister and his father. Each mismatched remembrance was out of place, yet still as familiar as the pungency of juniper.

Releasing his breath, he scanned the tree line, looking for a break between the low, gnarled branches where he could crouch and wait. Raising his hand to shade his vision, he wandered down the field until he found a position where he could settle against a trunk to watch the foliage barrier but stay out of sight of the tiny white house jutting out of a flat expanse of wheat.

Fiddling with the broken leather case, Thomas carefully listened for the rapid chirps of the golden-cheeked warbler. He had been waiting for a chance to spot it since learning about it from a library book he kept stashed under his mattress. A humid gust of wind interrupted his thought, ruffling his hair. The calls of barn swallows pierced the heavy air as they swooped across the fields, hunting for swarming flies.

The sun passed overhead. As he fidgeted in his squat, four chirps followed by a longer one made him stop. He nearly crumpled after standing too quickly, but he stubbornly locked out his knees. Fumbling the camera, he stepped towards the unseen bird when a screech rang out over its second call.

When his name was screamed again, he stalled, facing the junipers. Gritting his teeth, the unease of pins trickled down the backs of his legs and his heartbeat filled his ears. Releasing a tight fist, Thomas stuffed the camera back into its cover. Backing away from the edge of the wilds, he barely willed himself to leave as the warbler's calls grew fainter and then disappeared.

Mile Marker 48

By Rachel Jurasevich

The road was clear from where he stood. Cutting across rolling hills of bone-dry tall grass and distorted by rising heat, black asphalt snaked for miles into the horizon. The binoculars that hung around his neck drummed against his sternum, reverberating through his chest as each the numbing strike grew more unbearable than the last. Under his boot, a crushed patch of dandelions oozed milky sap, dribbling in deathly release.

Sweat dripped down his brow into a throbbing laceration. He tried to blink to alleviate the sting without using his arm; but as seconds passed, the burn worsened, forcing him to lift his bruised limb. Wincing, he palmed at his inflamed socket. It reminded him of how badly the first exchange ended, and how he escaped the plains believing he didn't have any other option. After dropping his hand back to his side, he absently wiped it on his jeans near a splatter of stains already saturating his inner thigh.

His vision wavered as the front of his skull seemed to clamp against his brain. Squeezing his eye shut, he focused on the nearby rattle of brush twigs. A bleat from a distant antelope tunneled in his ears as the rising chirp of a cricket made him grit his teeth.

The man John had spoken to about his brother told him he would be in the turnout overlooking mile marker forty-eight past midday. The green sign was a constant presence at the bottom of the slope, its metal frame poked by gunshots. Turning with his entire body, he squinted at the same view he had stared at for the past two hours—an asphalt ribbon between grassy rises. No gleam from a truck, nobody in sight.

Clutching his thigh, he hobbled back to his beater where he slumped through the open door onto the thin cushions. The heavy binoculars choked him as they dangled off his neck. His side prickled dully as he struggled to hoist himself into a seated position, legs still sprawled outside. Weakly dragging one foot closer, John positioned it behind the back of his injured leg and began toeing at the buckshot blasted Mahan. He muffled his cries and locked out his knee while blood seeped through the ragged holes. His throat clenched, thick streams of saliva splattering through his gapped teeth as he hissed. When he finally kicked his swollen foot free, he cried out at the air hitting his flesh. In a sharp moment of clarity, his head reeled, jaw slackening in a wordless exclamation.

The distant rumble of an approaching car was followed by the uneven crunching of tires over dirt. Inhaling shallowly, John tried to motion for help, but his fingers barely lifted. As congealing blood pulsed down the back of his leg, a familiar hand stretched across his fading vision. No acknowledgement came as the stuffed satchel he had thrown on the seat beside him was lifted away. He could only wish he hadn't sworn to return what his brother took.

Lorelei's Monologue

By Danise Kuang

You gave me a warmth that was unimaginable. I lived in a glittering shade of gold, in which, sparkles were exchanged through every moment. Those soft and inviting eyes were my safe space. I could never peel my pupils away from such a lovely canvas. Oh, what would I do to re-paint those vivid moments. I should have torn my eyes from what was just an actuality. I allowed the antagonist in to destroy my landscape.

Before I knew it, I was your palette and you made an automatism of me. Your favorite scenes were my shrieks and screams. Shocking hues erupted out of your lips, surrounding me—how could I possibly escape? Your artifice would callously illustrate purples and reds all over my exterior. I questioned if you intended to make a corpse of me.

Those once gentle bristles brushing against my cheek transformed into a belligerent, coarse assault. You muddled up my inner prismatics, altering it into a nauseating and indistinguishable tint. No matter how much I ran you under the tap, you were a permanent stain.

How dare you trick me, I really thought I was ‘fucking insane,’ but I will no longer be trapped in your game. You forced me to re sew the seams that you wrenched apart. After all this time, I am still restitching what you ravaged.

I look forward to a new Belle Époque where I delineate walls with the splatters of my torment and produce delightful visions. Everyone knows that, that embracement, is evil and the elixir of death.

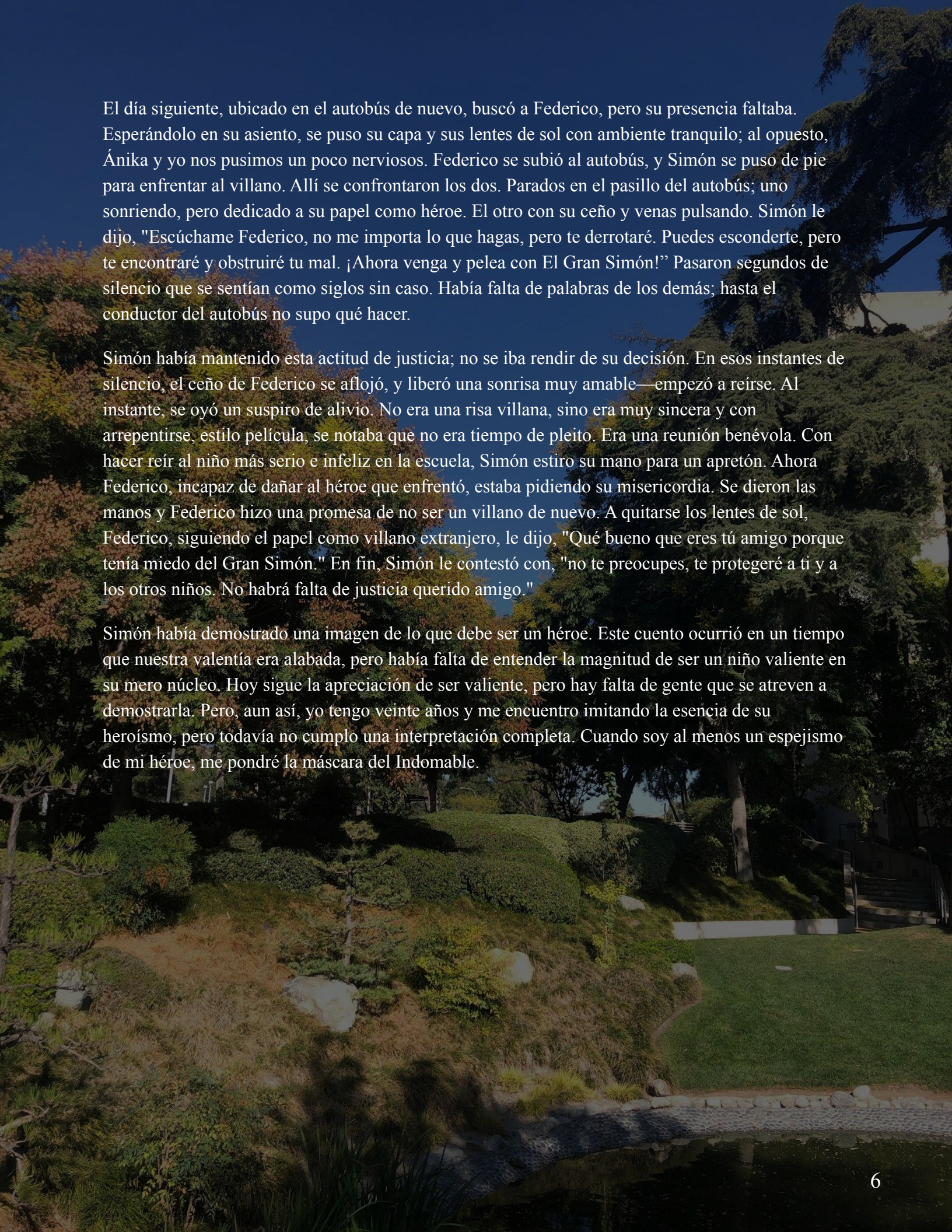
Simón el Indomable

By Devin Rangel

En algún día de mi niñez, Simón, su hermana Ánika y yo nos subimos al autobús escolar. Era un día normal, y no teníamos razón para preocuparnos. Era muy común de nosotros saludar a los demás y sentarnos juntos, nosotros tres no más. Pero llegó un día en que nuestras vidas muy relajadas, fueron sofocadas. No fue culpa de los estudios, porque en ese tiempo, lo peor que teníamos que confrontar era leer en voz alta. Entonces nuestra pesadilla no fue la escuela, sino, nuestro obstáculo se ubicó en nuestras vidas al regreso a casa.

A abordar al autobús, pasamos a Federico, que era un niño muy dificultoso, mientras buscábamos asientos. A vernos, nos siguió y al sentarnos en nuestra banca, Federico empezó a decirnos cosas muy dolorosas. "Oye niña, eres muy pequeña y con esos dientes, te pareces como un ratón. ¿Y tú que Simón? ¿Qué me miras con esos cuatro ojos pequeños? Y tú," antes de que pudo dañarme, Simón se paró y de repente Federico lo agarró a puñetazos. Simón intentó cubrirse la cara, pero era en vano. Golpe tras golpe, los puñetazos se aumentaron a moratones invisibles. Hasta que, al fin, le dio en el mero ojo y los lentes de Simón reventaron en distintas partes. Había susurros de que le hacía daño, y que deberían ayudarlo, pero los demás le tenían miedo a Federico entonces no se involucraron. No era un espectáculo; era un asunto privado. Así son los matones, amenazan descaradamente pero nunca castigan públicamente, para no ser conectados al crimen. Cuando reventaron los lentes, Federico se sentó y nosotros tres nos encontramos en silencio hasta que llegamos a casa. Decidimos no decirles nada a nuestros padres. ¿Para qué? ¿Para qué lo reportaran y lo mandaran a otro lugar para hacer otro alboroto? No, mejor intentamos prevenir otra ocurrencia. Los invité a quedarse en mi casa para que sus padres no se dieran cuenta de su ojo herido. Aunque mi mamá preguntó sobre sus lentes, pudimos ocultar la verdad.

Nos abstuvimos de la cena y platicamos sobre lo que ocurrió. Sugerí que no debíamos permitir que Federico cometiera esto a los otros niños. Sencillamente, era un villano. A lo que Ánika contestó, "Sí, tienes razón, pero ¿qué vamos a hacer nosotros? A ver Simón, ¿no eres un héroe. ¿Verdad?" Aunque contestó con no, se quedó toda la noche pensando en eso. En su mente, un héroe fue alguien que no se daba por vencido, alguien que, aunque tenía miedo, nunca lo demostraba. De las cualidades no se preocupaba, por así era él; de lo que como se vestía un héroe, de eso, no tenía ninguna idea. Entonces para cumplir el papel como héroe, improvisó una capa roja de una cobija que tenía, y se puso un par de lentes de sol para disimular su rostro.

The background image shows a lush park setting. In the foreground, there's a small pond with a stone border. The middle ground is filled with various trees, including a large, dark evergreen on the right and several deciduous trees with green and some autumn-colored leaves. In the background, a white building is partially visible through the trees under a clear blue sky.

El día siguiente, ubicado en el autobús de nuevo, buscó a Federico, pero su presencia faltaba. Esperándolo en su asiento, se puso su capa y sus lentes de sol con ambiente tranquilo; al opuesto, Ánika y yo nos pusimos un poco nerviosos. Federico se subió al autobús, y Simón se puso de pie para enfrentar al villano. Allí se confrontaron los dos. Parados en el pasillo del autobús; uno sonriendo, pero dedicado a su papel como héroe. El otro con su ceño y venas pulsando. Simón le dijo, "Escúchame Federico, no me importa lo que hagas, pero te derrotaré. Puedes esconderte, pero te encontraré y obstruiré tu mal. ¡Ahora venga y pelea con El Gran Simón!" Pasaron segundos de silencio que se sentían como siglos sin caso. Había falta de palabras de los demás; hasta el conductor del autobús no supo qué hacer.

Simón había mantenido esta actitud de justicia; no se iba rendir de su decisión. En esos instantes de silencio, el ceño de Federico se aflojó, y liberó una sonrisa muy amable—empezó a reírse. Al instante, se oyó un suspiro de alivio. No era una risa villana, sino era muy sincera y con arrepentirse, estilo película, se notaba que no era tiempo de pleito. Era una reunión benévola. Con hacer reír al niño más serio e infeliz en la escuela, Simón estiro su mano para un apretón. Ahora Federico, incapaz de dañar al héroe que enfrentó, estaba pidiendo su misericordia. Se dieron las manos y Federico hizo una promesa de no ser un villano de nuevo. A quitarse los lentes de sol, Federico, siguiendo el papel como villano extranjero, le dijo, "Qué bueno que eres tú amigo porque tenía miedo del Gran Simón." En fin, Simón le contestó con, "no te preocupes, te protegeré a ti y a los otros niños. No habrá falta de justicia querido amigo."

Simón había demostrado una imagen de lo que debe ser un héroe. Este cuento ocurrió en un tiempo que nuestra valentía era alabada, pero había falta de entender la magnitud de ser un niño valiente en su mero núcleo. Hoy sigue la apreciación de ser valiente, pero hay falta de gente que se atreven a demostrarla. Pero, aun así, yo tengo veinte años y me encuentro imitando la esencia de su heroísmo, pero todavía no cumpló una interpretación completa. Cuando soy al menos un espejismo de mi héroe, me pondré la máscara del Indomable.

Fiasco! at the Boutique

By Stephanie Weiner

She snatched up the shiny high heels and clutched them to her chest.

Immediately a woman tapped her shoulder. “I saw those first. They’re mine.”

Delilah didn’t know what to say. She knew she wasn’t going to give them up, that was for sure.

“Hello? Did you hear me? I said those were mine!” the lady snapped.

“No they aren’t. Just because you saw them first doesn’t mean they’re automatically yours. I grabbed them first, so they’re mine.” Delilah felt uneasy about arguing with a stranger.

The lady looked angry now. She pushed Delilah on the shoulder with a quick jerk of her hand and Delilah stumbled back a couple steps.

“What the hell!”

“Give them to me!” The lady reached for the shoes and Delilah backed up more. She had to get away from this crazy lady.

People were rushing around them in a frenzy, snatching up clothes and shoes like the rapture was happening. She could hear shouts and screams from other shoppers as they fought. It sounded like a zoo, not a 70 percent off sale for one day only at the most expensive store in the city. Delilah saw one lady bash another lady’s head, making her drop like a sack of potatoes. She saw another woman elbow someone in the throat. Fear spiked in Delilah and her stomach started churning. The woman she was dealing with slapped her arm, testing Delilah to see if she would fight back. Delilah clutched the shoes tighter and tried to dash away to the register. There were too many people blocking the way. Delilah felt a panicked scream build in her throat. Where was her sister, Harriet? She needed to get out of this hell hole. Calming music —was that Enya?— was piping through the stores speakers, not quite drowned out by the mounting roar of bloodthirsty women. Delilah dashed under someone’s elbow and looked back to see her hunter hot on her heels, teeth bared in a frightening grin. Delilah frantically pushed people out of her way all the while cradling the perfect shoes in her arms like a baby. She needed these shoes for her wedding in a couple of weeks.

“Harriet, Harriet! I got the shoes!” Delilah yelled into the random chaos. She fought toward the registers, picking up speed. She was almost there when she felt a harsh tug on her arm and she was suddenly face to face with the horrible woman who had been chasing her. “Let me go!” Delilah shouted.

The woman sneered and was about to wrench the heels from her when suddenly the woman was punched in the head by a perfectly manicured hand and dropped to the tiled floor.

Delilah gasped. “Oh thank god, Harriet it’s you.”

Harriet grinned. “Don’t thank god, thank me.”



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A Rainy Sensation
Chloe Husng

As the rain starts to fall,
trickling and trickling and trickling...
I see the sorrow hidden beneath the clouds,
a shy distance away from it's friends
Sorrow weeps and weeps yet is still unheard,
the beating of thunder as loud as a gong
starts to fade. The lightning starts to
burst into flames. Sorrow, as angry as can be
has begun to mellow down. As the clouds disappear
and the sun begins to glow, sorrow quietly and
Steadily starts to fade away.

Aracnofobia

By Andrea Calderón

En esta bonita telaraña que he tejido, hice un lugar para ti y para mí.
Si no me tienes miedo, te invito a que te acerques mucho más y te mostraré lo que he matado.
¿Todavía me amas?
Si me dejas agarrarte, te prometo que tomaré todo lo que tienes
y te dejaré sin vida mientras el rojo de tu piel se
desvanece a gris. hundiré mis manos en tu cuerpo y te abrazaré tan fuerte que dejarás de respirar.
Amo a las mejores personas muertas.
Nunca me decepcionan
me siento desenredando y
está pasando tan rápido que no lo puedo parar.
Si conocerme significa desmoronarme,
ya no quiero hacer esto. pero si realmente me amas,
por favor acércate para que siempre estés a mi alcance.
Si te estoy agarrando demasiado fuerte, lo siento.
No es mi intención lastimarte.
¿Quieres saber lo que siento? te dejo entrar en mi cabeza.
Mira el desorden que hago
cuando dejo de tomar mi medicamento.
Te he dejado acercarte demasiado, pero dios mío,
te ves tan bonita no puedo esperar para tenerte aquí.
Con cada paso que das, más hambre tengo.
¿Me seguirás amando con mis dientes dentro de tu cuello?
Te mantendré cerca para que nunca te alejes de mi lado.
Si quieres que te deje ir, no lo haré porque te lo advertí desde el principio
me estaba tomando mucho tiempo encontrarte **ERES EXACTAMENTE LO QUE QUIERO**
quiero que seas mia siempre



An Uncertainty of Your Name

By Daniel Estrada

An uncertainty of your name, do I remember it correctly?

Lost in its pronunciation, I'm unsure of its existence

An association of your name with His, now lost in our years apart

Make our memories flush my system once again

Every act of resistance

Are tendered by my acceptance

A photograph of a lush garden with a pond, trees, and a building in the background. The scene is captured in bright daylight, with a clear blue sky. The foreground features a small pond with a stone border, surrounded by various plants and trees. In the middle ground, there are large, dense trees with green and some autumn-colored foliage. In the background, a white building is partially visible through the trees.

Even Though I Had To
By Jesse Tovar

Even Though I Had To
pee out the beers I had with
you, I feel uncomfortable
peeing next to you,

for there were no walls
between the urinals for our
peens to be concealed from
one another,

and I'm glad I told you
I was commando so
I could use the walled toilet stalls.

“Mom is The World Gonna End?”
by Daniel Estrada

“Mom is the world gonna end?”

You said you wouldn't let it
we'd live forever with the love we have

i hid in the thought
that the fate of the world was on the back of one woman,
of one mother

i was in your bubble
Of comforting lies

You just tried to keep me safe
i'm thankful

But the bubble has burst

Okay
By Daniel Estrada

i say okay
its okay
okay
okay
as if i'm retaining what you're saying
but really i just want you to go away
anything to get you away faster
anything to leave me in silence of solitude
My room is confinement enough
I love you
i'm sorry
Repeat.

A photograph of a lush garden with a pond, trees, and a clear blue sky. The scene is bright and sunny, with a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there is a small pond with a stone border. The garden is filled with various plants, including tall trees with green and brown leaves, and a large, dense evergreen tree on the right. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Our Family Secrets By Daniel Estrada

Our family secrets
swept under the rug
left to be another('s) problem
except i'm the one to stumble on that lump in the carpet
continuously
now they're mine mine to sweep

No One is Persistently Happy

By Daniel Estrada

No one is persistently happy

We have moments

Temporary bursts of laughter

Echo in the crumbling world

We find comfort in others

Silently

Dread sits in our stomachs

Our bodies know time is up

Back to work.

Back to being held responsible

For a problem something we never created

Surrogate.

By Daniel Estrada

For a month and a half I knew what
Innocence was once again
I lived a vicarious childhood
In the eyes of a toddler
He loved my mother the way I
Wished I could again
Every request for a kiss
Every desire for a hug
Every “how much do you love me?”
Was a thought in my mind
That fell from the lips of a child
Not mine or yours
Barely even blood
And somehow loved just the same

What Happens Below

By Fabrice Poussin

What happens below

A youngster under the habit of a centennial
upon a rusty bench he smiles from a distance
spectator to the eternal morning ritual.

Bewildered upon this dawn as to all before
his flesh tightens as he ponders the miracle
of those ecstatic moments below the flesh.

Maker of small pleasures far away
he smiles alone as she ignores the source
of that gentle tickling beneath the breast.

Soon he will move on to a warmer realm
his home at last on the peaks of the universe
glad that at last she was simply aware of him.

Sharing Your Story

By Fabrice Poussin

Sharing Your Story

Biting a lip over the floating aroma of early morn'
you smile as I begin to read your book of secrets.

Just like the pupil delighted I hear first narrative

when she knows the master too will grin.

Confession of dreams, nightmares, hopes and fears

I see your hand following the curve of a shoulder.

You recall the first dress you understood

when he drove up with your inaugural roses.

It was not so long after that a warm stream

made you tremble in the dark of your sleep.

Many dresses have come and gone

your ingenue smile now marked by a thin scar.

You shiver with the breeze of this icy dawn

your flesh glows full of the glee you sought.

Here I will remain unable to pull from your words

carved in the playful blood of those beautiful years.

A soft giggle awakens me from this deep trance

I am now too a willing prisoner in your tale of life.

A mere gaze from soul to soul for energy to arise

and it is done.

What World Yet

By Fabrice Poussin

What World Yet?

Swimming in an ocean of sweat

too close to the shells of strangers

she runs in her summer dress

on uncountable broadways and 5ths.

Feeling a flesh waving with the rivers

prisoner of those synthetic threads

she seeks an exit at the end of the asphalt

her feet hoping to not again touch this ground.

They are all aliens to her estranged breast

by the millions they hover in slow motion

so many ghosts in the bright alleyways

oozing with the stench of an early death.

She began her desperate race long ago

when yet she wore the dress of a girl

terrified by the din of those odd bipeds

cold as ice in the heat of tropical climes.

On she will continue to the edge of a precipice

dearest end to a hopeless cause

goddess in a world of demons

to take flight into a warmest oblivion.

Immune to what they may have called love

fortunate in her absolute loneliness

she must leave this hostile realm

world of corpses living in fiery armors.

Lies of the American Government

By Hayley Rains

Tethered by your delusion
Here you sit, not knowing what is going on right in front of you
Every day you pass them, blind
Bringing you closer to your death
Ignorance fills your every brain cell
Riddled with lies that they've told you
Do you know?
See what they are doing?
Words cannot help you now
Only you can come across this truth
Realize
Know
For they are always watching
Observing
Recording your every move with their tiny lenses
They know your secrets
Hear every word
Everyone is blissfully unaware
But please observe
Out your bedroom, kitchen, or car winder
Under your bed
Rising into the sky
Gathering your information
Eyeing you from the landlines
Over the freeway overpass and under the clouds
I do not have the bravery any longer
See them flying high above, every passing day
Is it clear to you now?
Everyone must look at the first letter of each line.

There's a Stranger In My Doorway

By Jesse Rodriguez

I hear knocking just beyond my door,
Aching legs tremble below my torso,
As I place my feet on the gentle floor.
What is beyond the walls I merely guess,
What wonders of life may bring.
To what honor do I owe this surprising guest.
To the honor of loneliness' nightmare, I hope.
Or is it merely the sound of knocking itself,
And maybe the sake of my own way to cope
With a gentle melancholy whisper above my ear,
I make my way to the doorway, step by step.
Or is this a prank from my beloved, my sweet old dear.
Floorboards begin to creak as I make my way,
Fighting the power of will and the chills
That run down my spine, as I dread my stay.
In this old abandoned house, where my heart resides.
Old fashioned books under desks, my joy and pride.
I seek the love of chance between the distant trip
As forward marching I go, against the grip of time
And those clever shades, those defined by light
Breeding merciless hope, in this nightmare of mine
At last, I open the door and awaken my sight.
I glare at what's beyond the walls,
Wrestling with perception, a vicious fight
And abandoned glance, deception, I perceive
There is nobody standing at the door,
But how can this be?

The Treachery of the Heart

By Jesse Rodriguez

Treachery of the heart, the carnage of betrayal.
What once was love, is now sealed with cradle.
Attempted desperation, as the crying shatters dimensional sound barriers.
And once again, the marriage can't seem to fill its own craters.
Back and forth, the rocking continues from the wooden baby carriage,
At the risk of nurture, held responsible by the dysfunctional parents,
And the sake of their unity, rotting away by their reputational marriage.
Their gift from life, the biological gem created by lust,
But to make love right, is to raise this lineage gem, robust
And to satisfy culture, is to remain in this toxic wasteland
A drastic outcome, to save love that was once at hand.
They've sealed their fate, especially for the gem they truly love
And surrender goals, gathered from dream clouds up above.
In the name of love, foreshadowed, passionate commitment.
To uphold its title, is the benefit of loves only commission.
The lineage gem, a struggle of solitude within its cognition
The outcome's pressure, force to birth the inevitable decision
To decide the secured stability, defined by its own masculinity
Or the nurturing comfort, born from the true love of femininity
To choose a side, to determine the sake of one's crucial life
And its procession, plagiarized by the lengthy stretch of time.

6am Coffee

By Navneet Singh

The California Highway with the thought of you

I stare at the coffee grinds that slide onto the tilted half of my cup

Yet here you are, haunting me.

I've concealed the memories of the cold mornings where I've yearned for the distance to end

I've ignored the ability to hurt

I look out of the window and I remember

I often wondered by now, if you had realized that your beauty could shake people, I retreat

I'll go back to mundane life, and I'll pretend I'm the only one who doesn't know how I'm feeling

I turn away

I finish my coffee

Message in a Bottle

By Joey Tsai

I was set adrift on the evening cold
On a ship of glass to grab hold
With no place in mind or in sight,
Blessed to float down as my right.
I calmly saw my life come as waves,
Sink and bob upon the deep blue caves.
The thoughts of wonderment is near
What new sights to see - what to hear?
The spout of a whale or a dolphin
Reminds me of the words so often.
When will my journey be put to bed?
Would my message ever be read?
Though gentle this may have set adrift
A message in a bottle will end a rift.
With no one to hold and to cherish
My message will end, and I: perish.

Broken Home
By Catherine Vazquez

Pick up the pieces
the languidness of Christmas yells at me
the echoes of stumbled bottles on the floor bounce off the roof of the house
a broken family forces you to desiccate
forces you to dissect the ingrown poison you inherited
ancestry that stretches to the center of the earth
mixed in with the magma of madness
I crave the blossom of spring because I was never treated
the way the morning dew softly caresses its grace upon a lilac baby flower in may
I have rage and terror and my indecisiveness battles separating the two
pick up the pieces
but what pieces are left?
he took them all the day he unleashed his desire to gamble his family
the day birthdays became unimportant
the pieces we carry, those are the remains of what once was
Of what could never be,
but what we can nonetheless create anew
Open up my heart and you'll see the blackest black you've ever seen
what a perfect symbol for my cynical subconsciousness yes,
but it's also the color of abandonment
Waiting for you to come home at age seven
My face attached to the window, my eyes fluttering waiting for you to walk through the
door and throw me in your arms because that was your job
You scarcely did that though,
yet I somehow felt as if the world was created for you to do that one thing
Our house quivers, not because of the loudness
It has become accustomed to that
But because it lacks empathy
It lacks gestures
It lacks tenderness
So that all that remains are puzzle pieces of love that cannot seem to fit together
And forcing them to click only damages the edges
The love that our family holds is subtly hiding in the basement of our hearts
We keep it hidden because none of us know how to get it out
We are afraid of it
We are strangers to it
So I pick up those pieces and place them elsewhere far away from this broken home
so I'm begging you
pick up yours
pick up the pieces

The Abandoned Building That Won't Stop Crossing My Mind

By Catherine Vazquez

Tired of feeling like I have to choose between someone else and myself
because I never choose me
tired of confusing friends with soulmates
I have misplaced the box filled with time
I'm livid
in a way that makes immortality attractive
delusional
it's like I restrain myself from leaping
into relationships that have expiration dates
but sometimes I just need someone to kiss me in all the quiet corners
put me back on the shelf
and leave
because I am incapable of belonging to anyone
that's my favorite lie
I hide behind the vulnerability of fictional characters
it makes me realize how easy it is for me to fall apart by strangers
it makes me feel something for once
except I feel nothing
but that's a feeling that's necessary
the world is on fire and I've accepted it
because at some point we all kind of gave up
and that's how I justify why I gave up on myself
because barely breathing is good enough
sometimes
someone come hold me
because I can't feel the wind
even that has passed right through me
I keep thinking that people like me must exist in different forms
such as abandoned buildings
the ones people choose to jump off from
there's something intriguing yet frightening
about being left alone in ruins
a realm so menacing
inhabitable
yet inviting
nevertheless,
vacant

Yellow

By Catherine Vazquez

I wake up and I see yellow
a man holding me like my grandma holds her youth through her photographs
his scent smells like he fought an exquisite monastery's bright courtyard to smell like such
he asks "does it still hurt?"
but the only hurt I feel is when I reach over and all that quivers is vacancy
like if it was ten years ago when my fingers were just twigs
he knows
he reads to me because he understands that the words on the paper are real people he knows
that to me it is the only thing that makes me feel safe
he titles all his poems with my name
he touches me like he found god and he says
"you make the world feel like it stops spinning sometimes"
and I whisper back
"please exist for me"
he tells me that rain falls so that I could see it
that the sun's beams through it and brings warmth while the room is lit up,
yellow
he shows me that art is
loud
it absorbs the minds of those with eyes wide open,
and grips dullness to perish it like all things evil,
yellow
he reminds me that loneliness only enters if i allow it to
that sleeping is beautiful
a way to see yellow
not another place to scream
that my exterior is simply a framework of vessels that contains eras of beauty
that the words "be careful" mean "I love you"
that the sun is golden
but it's not yellow
that's him

Heavy Rains

By Stephanie Weiner

I have too many metaphors
Overflowing from the pockets
Of my tired coat
That explain the pain
You heaped on me
Like dirt
On my open grave.

Turtleneck

By Avalon Whalen

You're the breeze in the desert

That envelops me in a forgotten hope

And dries the sweat of the day

You're the moon's reflection in the pitch black Pacific

A sight that drowns out the chatter of the restless waves

And leaves me in awe of your radiance amidst the darkness

You're the first bloom of spring

Greeting me with a smile on a clear March morning

And the first blush of autumn

a mellow reminder to let go

Because life will cycle on

You're my long lost turtleneck sweater-

I didn't know I needed you,

But you fit me perfectly

You were knit just for me.

A photograph of a garden scene. In the foreground, there is a small pond with a stone border. The garden is filled with various plants, including tall grasses, shrubs, and trees. Some trees have green foliage, while others have turned brown, suggesting autumn. The background shows a clear blue sky and a large, dark evergreen tree on the right side. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Sunset
By Stephanie Weiner

In the tumbleweed town,
With the golden sky crown,
Were many a happy dancer.
But they were painted gray,
In a messy array,
Beneath the evening ether.

A scenic landscape featuring a pond in the foreground, surrounded by lush greenery and trees. The sky is a clear, deep blue. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

Por el Eterno
By Jesse Rodriguez

En esta noche, nos acostamos en el cielo
Por el eterno, nos encobijamos sin miedo
Tus cariños, el profundo de mi amor
Tus besos, los deseos que me dan valor
Y tus ojos, son la riqueza que brillan en mi corazón
Me alegra verte conocido, por la bodega del infierno
Mi mejor momento, es estar contigo, por cada momento
Y por el tiempo que pase, estaré en tu lado
Y por el tiempo que pase, te estaré escuchando
Y por el eterno que pase, te estaré esperando

A scenic landscape featuring a pond in the foreground, a grassy area, and a dense line of trees in the background under a clear blue sky. The trees have varying shades of green and some autumnal colors. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Your Name
By Daniel Estrada

Your name briefly passes my mind
A name I've not heard since our fallout
Unfamiliarity brushes through the back of my tongue and lingers on my lips
The taste your name used to bring
Is now absence
The years between us seem longer than the miles we live apart
If we kiss again
You'd taste like a stranger

A photograph of a lush garden with a pond, trees, and a building in the background. The scene is captured in a cinematic style with a clear blue sky and vibrant green foliage. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

5th Floor Ramen Boy
By Francisco Amaro

Las nubes de tus labios
Es algo muy extraño.
Tus ojos de agua
Me congelan con una mirada.
Cada noche
Es un sueño,
Cada día,
Un infierno,
Sabiendo que cuando amanezca
No estaras a mi lado.
Porque solo soy un pensamiento
En el abismo de tu viento.



Dear Reader,

The Harvest International team is proud to present our fall 2019 issue. This issue would not be possible without this semester's faculty advisor, Aaron DeRosa, and his unwavering support for all of our ideas and ambitions. This issue would also be impossible without all of our authors, who are current students here at Cal Poly Pomona. We thank each and every person who contributed for their courage to share their work with us and their campus community, and for trusting us with their words. And lastly, this would not be possible without you, our readers. Thank you for taking the time to read this issue we have cultivated over the last three and a half months. We sincerely hope you have enjoyed these unique student works.

Sincerely,

The HI Team