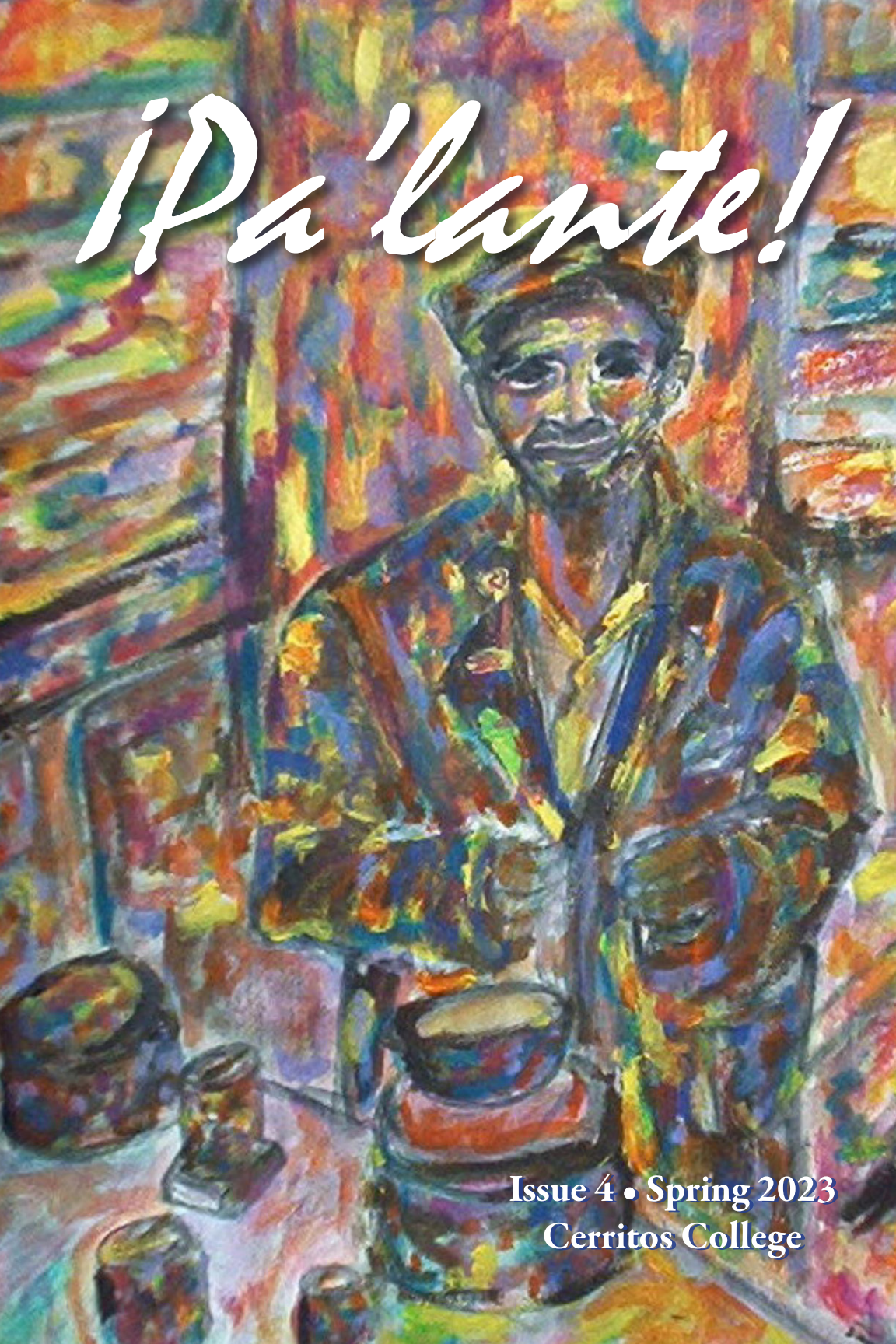


# *¡Pa' lante!*



Issue 4 • Spring 2023  
Cerritos College



*¡Pa'lante!*

**Issue 4 • Spring 2023**  
**Cerritos College**



# *iPa'lante!*

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# *iPa'lante!*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Poetry

Mia Soto	
FIRESIDE. . . . .	11
Amanda Faye Martin	
MY BODY THE FARM. . . . .	12
Leonardo Chung	
HAND-GLEAM . . . . .	15
CAUTIOUS AMULETS . . . . .	16
TOY . . . . .	17
Laine Derr	
BEGINNERS . . . . .	20
Derek R. Smith	
MEDICINE BAG 2022 . . . . .	21
Luis Lopez-Maldonado	
UNTITLED WHILE LISTENING TO <i>CHAVELA VARGAS</i> . . . . .	26
MAÑANA . . . . .	27
Willie R. Heredia	
AS TOLD BY THE STREETS OF COMPTON . . . . .	28
THERE'S A BOX SOMEWHERE IN TIJUANA. . . . .	29
Darren Donate	
BROWNESS. . . . .	32
Lawrence Bridges	
POETRY IN A RECESSION . . . . .	33
Sandra Hosking	
NIGHT SOUNDS . . . . .	34

Travis Stephens  
UNREQUITED. . . . .35

**Fiction**

Lara Ameen  
EMBRACE OF DEATH . . . . .18

Gisela Sequeida Lemus  
BUGANVILLA . . . . .23

Victoria Ballesteros  
HOUSE RULES. . . . .24

Fabián González González  
THE INTERIOR. . . . .30

CONTRIBUTORS . . . . .38







*Mia Soto*

## **FIRESIDE**

Warm cackling  
Cool winds intruding  
Flames so vibrant—  
Can't express why this is so soothing

The flames rise  
Then, the flames fall  
The wood cries  
The wind whispers a call

And all I do is stare,  
Stare *into* the flames  
Be in the fireside  
Wondering when I'll reach my destiny

*Amanda Faye Martin*

## **MY BODY THE FARM**

I cannot  
Not *really*  
Explain how it is to starve yourself so well  
That your body stages a coup  
And detaches itself from your brain  
So that it can shovel in as many calories as it can  
In a waking blackout  
Before the connection grows back  
And eliminates the damage

I cannot  
Not *really*  
Explain how strange it is  
To simultaneously wonder  
“What is wrong with me”  
And  
“How can I stop the waking blackouts”  
And never have it occur to you  
That maybe you should also stop the starving part  
Because starving isn’t the problem  
It’s the solution  
And anyway  
It’s the only thing you’re doing right

Kate moss said nothing tastes as good as being skinny feels  
There’s a joke that oh that’s because Kate Moss never ate X  
What’s unfunny is that it wouldn’t matter what X is  
Because it’s not that being skinny feels good  
It’s that control is an addiction

One morning I threw up bananas  
And ran - literally, ran – across town to a doctor’s appointment  
Where a nurse weighed me  
When she saw “102” she looked impressed and said  
“I’m weighing myself tomorrow and that’s the number I’m hoping to see”

But the doctor wasn't pleased  
And sent in a different man  
Who didn't look me in the eye  
Who didn't ask me what I'd done that morning  
Who looked down at a chart  
And began to silo  
My body from my mind

Suggesting progesterone and Prozac  
So I left and ran to my friend's house  
Whose girlfriend was out of town  
And I cried on his kitchen floor  
And he picked me up like a child  
And told me I'd be OK  
That I was beautiful  
And I remember wondering why  
Nobody would help me

I can, however  
*Really* can  
Tell you this:  
All the women I know  
In some way or another  
Treat their body like a farm  
To tend to,  
To control  
And wonder why  
It rebels  
And wonder why  
It feels like betrayal  
To be told you're doing it wrong  
When you've followed all the rules

I keep trying to think of an alternative metaphor  
For something we have a flourishing relationship with  
Instead of a farm  
A garden?  
A forest?  
What is something that hasn't been

Controlled

Or

Exploited

Or

Manipulated?

But

The old growth forests of the world

Are quietly being harvested

Of their largest

Trees

*Leonardo Chung*

## **HAND-GLEAM**

Close,

open,

keeping light

out of my sight.

Light I can't behold,

that I don't want to grasp,

I fear what it shall entail.

But why when I quiver my hands

to shut the stinging curtains posthaste,

taunts arise? Then they flutter unfastened.

Briskly, the luster beckons me to arrive.

So then I proceed warily, glass-touched;

window shivers to macerate throat.

Blood splatter, I do go forward,

see the approaching hand-gleam.

Grab nothingness, return.

Red stains fresh, lick them;

nirvana lights

lure, come in!

Coaxing

me.

## CAUTIOUS AMULETS

Laid against the  
crumbling drywall:  
two polaroids of fossil age  
draw-stringed,  
clothespins grip loosely.  
Quaint not and singed walls,  
its rejection to my ignorance.

Laid against the  
foamy sandals,  
two thumbs,  
plastic, four toes.  
Sepia stained from plashing pride,  
the clouds are my umbrellas.  
Puddle-drops  
gather in my raincoat.

Laid against the  
crying dreams;  
two virtues  
I could not attain:  
one honesty and one fidelity.  
I hope that you've made  
them too hazy to see.



## TOY

a frail chair she sits on,  
wooden, and crying,  
a toy she really wants for  
her eyes;

unnaturally black dots.  
a raggedy face she carries,  
her screaming and grief;  
hands with tears,  
her horrific reasons.

*Lara Ameen*

## **EMBRACE OF DEATH**

You aren't what I expect Death to look like.

You visit me late one evening, once the remaining visages of blistering sunlight have disappeared below the horizon, and the frigid wisps of nighttime air have settled into the marrow of my bones.

You're far from skeletal, all broad shoulders and planes of firm muscle embodying a masculine form.

Hints of spicy ginger and sweet cinnamon infiltrate my senses when my gaze fixes itself on your eyes. Pinpricks of black in their depths.

Inviting.

Captivating.

Repulsive.

I roll my wheelchair forward anyway, a hitch in my breath.

"It's you," is all I can say, as if I were expecting you, tracing the contours of your face with wary intrigue and skepticism.

"I'm appearing to you like this because it's a form you're comfortable with, Riley."

"How do you know my name?" I ask.

You laugh, light and jubilant, a juxtaposition of what I'd been expecting. Move a step closer.

Daring.

Eyes searching my face for any signs I might falter. "I know a lot of things," you reply instead.

You take in my surroundings. My apartment. My bedroom. The diplomas on the wall. Draped against peeling paint and the bite of nails digging into plaster.

A Master's degree in Film Studies. A second Master's in Library Science.

Two Bachelor's degrees in Art History and Film Studies.

The photos of unassuming, smiling faces on my desk and dresser, vibrant and happy. My girlfriend. My best friends from undergrad and grad school. Snapshots of a moment in time.

Realization dawns.

"It's my time, isn't it?" I ask, but your gaze doesn't meet mine. In fact, you avoid my penetrating stare completely.

"No," you say, a whisper of your hollow lips, dark hair slicked back, and astute eyes simmering in the muted light of the room. "Not yet."

"Then when?"

A knowing smile graces your lips. "I can't tell you."

Your gaze stays on me as I transfer into bed, and I whisper, "What can you tell me, then?"

The lights flicker, pitching my room into darkness. Leaving my questions unanswered. Leaving me alone as I slip into an uneasy slumber.

When I see you again, mere weeks later after a collision occurs on the bus I'm riding, you kiss my forehead and welcome me into your embrace.

*Laine Derr*

**BEGINNERS**

Our love grew up in a yoga class.  
Our love is Head over Heart over Pelvis.

*Derek R. Smith*

## **MEDICINE BAG 2022**

Morning prayers from sturdy, sparkly conch shell  
Tobacco, sage, and sweetgrass  
Today the wispy curls of smoke  
Will breath out the day to come.  
Or predict a day 800 years from now  
It doesn't matter, really.  
There is comfort in knowing something,  
Knowing anything.  
But first- coffee bean medicine  
Brewed 202 degrees, with oat milk  
Carefully coaxed on a tiny stool  
Below an oat.  
Special prayers in the morning  
Texts received overnight  
And ritual lol returned  
New text of love to someone special  
Someone last heard from 3 weeks back.  
Check the sky  
Not for weather, but for signs.  
The airplane exhaust trail is  
A snake today.  
The clouds are cheetah spots  
But could convert to zebra pattern later.  
Remember to tie shoes  
To engage in shoe medicine,  
For these Saucony moccasins  
Greet the world.  
Protect but also mediate,  
Connect and help to meditate.  
One quick check to wellness apps  
A tiny prayer to honor my health  
To embrace the health of my parents  
To wish for health of community.  
A breath to honor those now breathless  
One breathless moment

Holding them in my heart.  
Heart and medicine bag full  
It's 2022 and we are practicing.

*Gisela Sequeida Lemus*

## **BUGANVILLA**

I'm going to paint you a portrait of the day in which we walked:

We went passing bushes,  
I went naming the *gardenias* and searching for the *jacintos*.  
You named a song which had to do with birdies.

The street was timid, the birds did not sing, the traffic lights creaked.  
Good it was, when before us two, the wind picked up and yelled.

Still thrilled, we followed the sun when in an alley, went loose the petals of  
the *buganvilla*.  
We almost managed to catch two, more than twice,  
Yet, it was the laughter which managed to escape us.

*Victoria Ballesteros*

## HOUSE RULES

We wear our best when we leave the house. Our clothes are from the segunda but we keep them clean and always ironed. Filippo Totti jeans from Tijuana are just as good as Vidal Sassoons.

Our head is not a piñata! We flatten our curls with brilliantina. Especially on Sundays, to look and smell good for the Lord.

We don't listen when people say to us, "go back to where you came from."

We talk with our voices low. We don't act like those mujeres off the street. Why is there gum on the floor? Mujercitas do not chew gum!

We eat after the boys eat. We keep a stash of Mother's broken cookies in our room.

We chew with our mouth closed, and we don't take a drink while chewing - only horses do that! Wasting food is a sin. We clean our plate and who cares if we don't like liver, we eat it anyway.

On Mondays at noon, we watch two episodes of *The Twilight Zone* and eat tuna sandwiches on toasted bread with cherry Kool-Aid. Then we play outside because the electricity doesn't pay for itself, you know!

When we have a quarter, we walk to BoBo's liquor on Studebaker and Rosecrans and buy candy. We used to take the alley, but we got chased by Rick the bully that one time so we gotta take the long way now. If we get thirsty, water from the water hose is cool and crisp.

If our ball lands in Doña Juana's backyard one more time she's gonna stab it with a knife. Doña Flora to the right is ok but stay away from her daughter Gemi, who will steal your tacos when you're not looking.

We go to church every Sunday and we give limosna even if there's no money for tortillas. We don't make Sister Mary Catherine mad because she has boney knuckles and it hurts like hell when she punches us in the back of the head.

We say our prayers every night when we go to bed or the cucuy will come get us. We make the sign of the cross when we get on the freeway so that we



don't crash.

We don't laugh in church at the man who sings too loud or the usher who looks like Charles Bronson from that Death Wish movie we weren't supposed to watch, you know, the one where he beats the guy over the head with a sock full of quarters – focus! On the Lord who died for our sins.

We will marry a Mexicano, even if he's short, and only owns one pair of pantalones and has no papers. We will not bring gabachos into this house!

Keisha and Durrell down the street will swap us cornbread for tacos. Tam and Tuyet will give us noodles. Melissa and Joseph only have Hungry Man's from the oven but they're alright. And if Debbie comes around asking for "tack-os," make sure she pays up the Twinkies and Pop Rocks she owes for the last time she was here.

We must be home before the streetlights come on or we'll get the fajo from papá.

We can't walk to K-Mart because it's past the 605 freeway and we'd have to cross the riverbed where that white boy drowned last year.

We don't go into B&B Pharmacy by McCoy's Market because the lady with the beehive who looks like a pig accused Leti of stealing and slapped her on the hand. That lady hates us. We hate her too.

We stay away from the neighborhood locas and their cholo boyfriends. Those guys stole Chuy's bike last Halloween and we never got it back.

We don't run with the boys or ride skateboards or do wheelies or jump off roofs or climb fences or play soccer or baseball or go to the dump to look for any good junk.

We are not rancheras! We say hello and goodbye and we dance with our cousins and entertain our Tios when they visit. We bring them beers and laugh at their stories and we do not call them borrachos to their faces. We don't say anything when Tio José gets so drunk he passes out on the sofa and we hear him giggling in his sleep.

We never, ever talk back or we will get it in el hocico. We say mande usted and porfavor and gracias, and we always, always ask for permiso before we leave the room.

*Luis Lopez-Maldonado*

**UNTITLED WHILE LISTENING TO  
CHAVELA VARGAS**

*En El Ultimo Trago* of this thing we call life  
my fingers erase violence, screaming mothers,

the sky of smoke and sadness and Trump singing  
Puerto Rico “can be very proud” of sixteen deaths

and *En Un Rincón Del Alma* I feel like my ancestors  
did, the way their hands were burned their skin

and bones fed to the white man’s dog because  
we all know dog don’t eat dog, but tonight I drink

out of anger out of defeat out of hopelessness  
and pray to ten thousand *santos* for a miracle

for a sign that this country will rise and our stars  
and stripes will unite and shine bright in the night

like tonight, where the *verga* power in me deflates  
like a balloon like a flat tire like an air mattress

and the only thing I need and want is the space  
where your spine curves in itself, your head of curls

riding floating up and down up and down, how  
my *Soledad* and *Obsesión* with whiteness keeps

me filling the screen in front of me, fingers against  
keyboard, language blooming like *una Paloma Negra*.

## MAÑANA

flowers behead themselves  
outside where wind is terrorist  
& *el sol ardiente* is fear

flowers behead themselves  
because water is not enough  
for their blooming  
& blooming is not enough  
for you & I & us  
& we & they & them:

a better *mí* is cumming  
a brighter sky  
a stronger *corazón*  
an ocean made from

fire & agua

*Willie R. Heredia*

## AS TOLD BY THE STREETS OF COMPTON

Fireworks light up a dusky sky on a Sunday,

it is not July.

An ice cream truck anthem blares through the block,

it is 59 degrees.

The windows of a church at the corner leak

songs sung by those who believe.

Dogs bark to a beat of explosions

in the air.

Hints of carne asada

clash with charbroiled burgers.

Get up, stand up

echoes from a house down the street.

Bob Marley and the Wailers

harmonize with Juanes,

A Dios le pido

plays as a mom cuts a cake

with twenty-one candles.

Three gunshots . . .

put the streets on pause / all the folks run

silence/ then sirens

sirens

then

silence

## THERE'S A BOX SOMEWHERE IN TIJUANA

Filled to the brim with  
B-movie horror films,  
overdue Blockbuster  
rentals, oversized  
sweaters with NWA  
stretched across  
the chest, cassettes of  
Bone-Thugs-N-Harmony,  
the scent of *tamales*  
*y champurrado*  
on Christmas morning,  
magazines kept away  
from the kids,

GI Joe antiques,  
cuts from a fight,  
ink from a dragon  
tattoo, heated disputes  
with mom and dad,  
a mechanic's license,  
fragrances  
of sandalwood  
incense, and  
fragments  
from a bullet  
that failed to break  
my uncle's box.

## THE INTERIOR

He wasn't expecting it. All he'd wanted to do was break into the house, grab any valuables that could fit into his pockets, then dash out. No moonlight, no porch light. An unlocked front door. No signs of anyone home. Maybe he'd find enough to buy himself a nice meal.

Shrouded in the internal lonely darkness of the house, he grew confident and took loud strides across the living room toward what he assumed was the master bedroom. He'd been told before, that's where the treasure's at; jewelry and cash, sometimes a safe box and people dumb enough to leave the key lying around. Before he reached the room, though, the soft sound of a classical guitar on the opposite wing weeped the nostalgic notes of Tárrega's "Lágrima."

A childish fear of haunted houses chilled his spine. But instead of bolting out the door, he walked slowly toward the end of the hallway where one of three closed, dark rooms harbored the music. Enchanted by the haunting sounds, he began to weep, transported to a time when he sat crossed-legged as his father played the same song — a childhood memory of when his father was alive. Despite his audible weeping and the clear plop as he sat on the floor and leaned against the wall, the guitar continued distilling its sweet and melancholy notes.

When the song finally ended, from within the room, a young woman's voice clearly commanded, "You must go, now!"

He was startled, as if instead he'd expected his father's ghost chastising him for entering a stranger's home. But then it registered that the house had been occupied all along, no ghosts of any sort, he was merely an amateur and inept thief.

"Play it once more," he pleaded. "Please, play it once again." In his voice, the weight of all his years, the weight of the pandemic, the weight of all his troubles; the young woman, an artist in more than one medium, understood the tone.

As "Lágrima" came alive again, he continued crying as he conjured the memory of his family, the hopes for university, for grandeur. The proud voice: "You'll represent our family with the highest standards." But the car crash took everything; mother, father, little sister.

When the young woman emerged, after a long moment in which the ticking of a clock on the wall had become the only sound, he didn't move.

She stepped over his feet and then ran, grabbing her keys and cellphone from a bookshelf in the living room where she'd carelessly tossed them hours earlier. She locked the door from the outside, trapping the intruder with the special lock her father had installed, the same lock she'd previously dismissed as "a sign of the natural human condition that elicits an irrational, fearful distrust of others."

Imprisoned in the interior, then, he wished to rejoin his parents and his sister. He knew the local cops to be a trigger-happy bunch. He stood, turned on a light switch, and assessed the situation; he could climb out of a window, break it if need be, and disappear into the night.

Instead, he took the biggest kitchen knife he could find and waited in calm, sitting on the living room couch.

*Darren Donate*

**BROWNNESS**

you go to a factory  
to work 80 hr weeks

until you have  
just enough

to move into LA's historic  
*westlake*

where you &

other families make  
just enough

to afford  
the kind of

work to live in

LA's historic  
*westlake.*

\*

always a 'where'  
a 'just enough'

\*

a snake  
swallowing  
its own tail

your father  
coming  
to america.



*Lawrence Bridges*

## **POETRY IN A RECESSION**

Appliance noises start to intrude upon the snowy scene. In the bucket  
leak you see your poverty fill. A pin thrives to meet cloth's cloth. You  
rubbed that same rug of its spilled Pepsi. Someone is fiddling over the  
next rise. The temperature falls and the wind blows boxes into hills, with  
lights, You move quietly past the next township, eating earth. Will it  
last?

*Sandra Hosking*

## **NIGHT SOUNDS**

Tonight I will listen  
For the call of the dream  
It comes in the form  
Of keys clacking on a keyboard  
The hum of the dishwasher  
Footsteps in a dark alley  
A child's piercing scream.  
"Rescue me!" my future cries.  
"You know it. I don't!" I reply. "Tell me, and I'll come."  
But Fate makes no deals  
No matter your belief  
Or unbelief  
I wake up deaf.

*Travis Stephens*

## UNREQUITED

I am the banana peel  
no, I am the fruit fly egg  
holding on, give me 12 hours  
give me a day.  
This is slippery &  
you have eaten the banana  
& tried not to watch.  
You ate the banana on a Tuesday  
middle of something while  
the sun looked away.  
I am hoping sun warmed sweater  
chair cushion warm & I may  
emerge but you  
have folded the banana peel  
rolled it up &  
put it in a Ziploc sandwich bag  
& pinched it closed.  
Lonely trash can  
you suffocate me.  
All I can do is watch.

## TOMMY

On his way to wrestling practice, where Andrew Folsom struggles to master the ankle pick, he overhears two kids gossiping about his brother. He stops in his tracks. “What about my brother?”

He decides to jog home to dispel thoughts of his brother’s thievery. Behavior his mother says Tommy will outgrow by twenty-five. Andrew doubts it as the frosty air crystallizes their father’s story.

“Me and the corporal started sweeping the fields for mines while Sgt. Thomas and the platoon stood on the farm path, ready for shit. The air was still dewy from the night before, so fog rose from the ground, limiting visibility. We continued forward as the shortcut would have shaved a half day from our jaunt. The boys in the platoon had had it, and most of us had foot rot. Our sweeper was sensitive that day and picked up bottle caps and tin cans. It picked up a fork, and Corporal Johnston looked worriedly over at me. Then the grass started moving. I turned around and saw the platoon had disappeared behind the brush. “Don’t move,” I mouthed to Johnston and pointed at the encroaching grass. Then the ground exploded—I think a VC stepped on one of their mines. The shrapnel hit me right in the chest.”

Their father had removed his shirt to show a quarter size scar on the inside of his shoulder. Their mother had pleaded, “don’t, Jay,” but he had continued.

“Then hell broke loose. Bullets flew by me so fast I thought it a miracle Johnston and I made it back to the platoon. Then Johnston caught one in the throat. He dropped to the ground and died right there. I was running and firing at the weeds, blood coming down my chest like I spilled wine on myself. We fired and retreated to a small village about two miles away. There, Sgt. Thomas regathered the troops. “We lost Johnstone, Mitchell, and Drake,” he said. “And it looks like Folsom and Rodgers will soon join them.”

“I was woozy from blood loss, and hearing that I was likely to die panicked me terribly. When the gunfire returned, I crawled into a hut and fired a couple shots out the window. Soon I became tired; my body demanded sleep, so I crawled under a bench, pulled the rug over myself, and slept.”

“When I awoke, I heard the VC talking. The rug over my head had gaps, and I saw Rodgers being dragged outside by their men. One guy poked

him with a large stick and laughed. Another guy kicked him. When they stuck him with a knife, Rodger's scream gave him away. It sounded like a million dreams dying at once. The soldier kept stabbing him until he was quiet. I didn't do anything. I told myself my only chance was stillness and waited prone until the next morning."

"The next morning, I was sore but alive. It was hallelujah and the little drummer boy. My legs barely worked, but enough that they carried me back to the trail. I ducked down, dodged, and stumbled on until I finally passed out from no water. When I awoke, I was in a hospital with a group of servicemen I had never met. One of them got up and handed me dog tags. He closed them in my hands and gave me a meaningful look. They read Michael Rodgers. I started crying, and then some of the staff started clapping. I couldn't understand the reason for it, and continued weeping as they circled around me"

"Months later, I was discharged. I came home on a bus. The bus driver dropped me off early on Ten Stone bridge. I wasn't ready to see your grandma. The bridge overlooked the whole valley and was about forty feet to the water. For a moment, I thought about jumping to my end. Instead, I threw the bronze star in and walked home."

"Father asked about it that night at the dinner table. I said I lost it. Mother called the bus station to have them search the bus, but of course they never found it. And I never told anyone about it until tonight. That is who your father is, boys. Have a goodnight."

He went upstairs and closed the door. Tommy started doing opioids after that. And then stealing to pay for his habit. Their grandmother says it's in his genes. Their counselor blames a lack of direction. But Andrew knows it's something else.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Lara Ameen** is a screenwriter, novelist, short fiction writer, sensitivity reader, and PhD candidate in Education with an emphasis in Disability Studies at Chapman University. Her short fiction has been published in *Prismatica Magazine*, *Disabled Voices Anthology*, *Flash Fiction Magazine*, *Drunk Monkeys*, *just femme & dandy*, and is forthcoming in *Hairstreak Butterfly Review*, and the YA fiction anthology *Being Ace* (Page Street, 2023). She currently resides in Orange County, California.

**Tony Ayers** is a professional writer in New York. He currently lives with his wife and two sons in South Orange, New Jersey. His story “Larry” was published by *Quibble* in December 2022.

**Victoria Ballesteros** is a Los Angeles-based writer whose stories reflect her experiences as the daughter and sibling of Mexican immigrants. She strives to honor the voices and spirits of her ancestors in the tradition of the cuentos she heard as a child. A descendent of a long line of artists and creators, her work has been published in *The Acentos Review* and the *Basta Anthology*.

**Lawrence Bridges’** poetry has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, and *The Tampa Review*. He has published three volumes of poetry: *Horses on Drums* (Red Hen Press, 2006), *Flip Days* (Red Hen Press, 2009), and *Brownwood* (Tupelo Press, 2016). You can find him on IG: @larrybridges.

**Leonardo Chung** is a young aspiring writer who has attended several programs such as Iowa Young Writers’ Studio, Sewanee Young Writers’ Conference, and Juniper Summer Writing Institute. His work has been previously accepted by *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *Sweet Lit*, *Rigorous*, *Vermilion*, *riverSedge*, and others. He is the proud founder and editor of *Clepsydra Literary and Art Magazine*, which can be found at [www.clepsydralit.com](http://www.clepsydralit.com).

**Laine Derr** holds an MFA from Northern Arizona University and has published interviews with Carl Phillips, Ross Gay, Ted Kooser, and Robert Pinsky. Recent work has appeared or is forthcoming from *Chapter House*, *ZYZZYVA*, *Portland Review*, *Oxford Magazine*, *Prairie Schooner*, and elsewhere.

**Darren Donate** is a visual poet based in Los Angeles. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Southern California. He is currently working

on a chapbook that explores the intersections of race and labor in Los Angeles. You can reach him at darrendonate@gmail.com.

**Fabián González González** was born in El Charco, Uriangato, GTO., México and currently resides in California. His fiction was recently published by *The Laurel Review*. His poetry has been published in the *Notre Dame Review*, *Thin Air*, *Sand Hills*, and the *Río Grande Review*, while *Penumbra* has published his poetry, fiction, and visual art.

**Willie R. Heredia** is a writer of poetry, fiction, and song lyrics. He is a Cerritos College alumnus. His poetry has been published in *Enjambé* from California State University of Dominguez Hills, *¡Pa'lante!*, and *Art of Nothing Press'* issues 1 and 2, *Bullshit* and *Ego Death*, respectively. He is a new father and enjoying every minute of parenthood with his fiancée.

**Sandra Hosking** is a poet, playwright, and photographer in the Pacific Northwest. Her plays, poetry, and photography have appeared in *Joey*, *Red Ogre Review*, *3 Elements Review*, *West Texas Review*, *The Uncommon Grackle*, *Cirque Literary Journal*, *Edify Fiction*, and the book *Along Southern Roads*. Hosking holds an M.F.A.s in theatre and creative writing.

**Gisela Sequeira Lemus** is a first generation Mexican-American who resides in Hawaiian Gardens. She is currently a freshman at Cerritos College and although undecided in a major, she hopes to spend her life fulfilling creative aspirations. She writes mostly poems in Spanish, but sometimes in English. She enjoys listening to Chilenas, Mexican folk, and nueva canción. And although she is an awkward person, she enjoys having conversations, especially with other awkward people.

**Luis Lopez-Maldonado** is a Xicanx poeta, playwright, dancer, choreographer, and educator. His/Their work has been seen in *The American Poetry Review*, *Foglighter*, *The Packinghouse Review*, *Public Pool*, and *Latina Outsiders: Remaking Latina Identity*, among many others. He/They earned an M.A. in Dance from FSU, and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from ND. He/They are currently working for the public education system as a high school bilingual educator and special education teacher.

**Amanda Faye Martin** is a playwright, and occasional writer of poems, short stories, and satire. She is originally from the U.S., but resides in Dunedin, New Zealand. She is currently the Playwriting Fellow at the University of Otago.

**Lauralee Sikorski** is a true multimedia artist who grew up in New England and has lived in San Francisco, Minneapolis, and currently Indiana. After art showings in Chicago, Northwest Indiana, and Michigan, she traveled to London where she was juried into a raw arts exhibition at the Candid Arts Center. Shifting to three dimensional art she had her first group show at the Smithsonian affiliate Springfield Ohio Museum of Art. She is currently working on large-scale outdoor sculptures for use in public spaces. A certified meditation and yoga instructor since 2004, she attributes much of her eclectic style to the benefits of a daily spiritual practice.

**Derek R. Smith** (he/him) is a public health professional, Anishinaabe two-spirit, wanderer, namer of random dogs on the street, overuser of flowery metaphors, who finds it hard to not write poetry. Some like their poetry elegant, academic, fancy. The proud Midwestern style herein shared is not as such, as any given poem was probably composed in a Denny's booth. There is no space for distance here, in poetry, and isn't that a beautiful thing?

**Mia Soto** is a bespectacled storyteller, poet, writer, and screenwriter. Her work revolves around the darker pieces of humanity that society tends to neglect. When she's not working on new projects, she enjoys watching Star Trek, playing guitar, and studying asteroids.

**Travis Stephens** is a tugboat captain who resides with family in California. Recent credits include: *Gyroscope Review*, *2River*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *GRIFFEL*, *Offcourse*, *Crosswinds Poetry Journal*, *Gravitas* and *The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*. Visit him at [zolothstephenswriters.com](http://zolothstephenswriters.com).





# *¡Pa'lante!*

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For full submission guidelines and deadlines for the next issue of *¡Pa'lante!*, please visit our website at [https://www.cerritos.edu/english/Literary\\_Journal.htm](https://www.cerritos.edu/english/Literary_Journal.htm).



# *¡Pa'lante!*

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