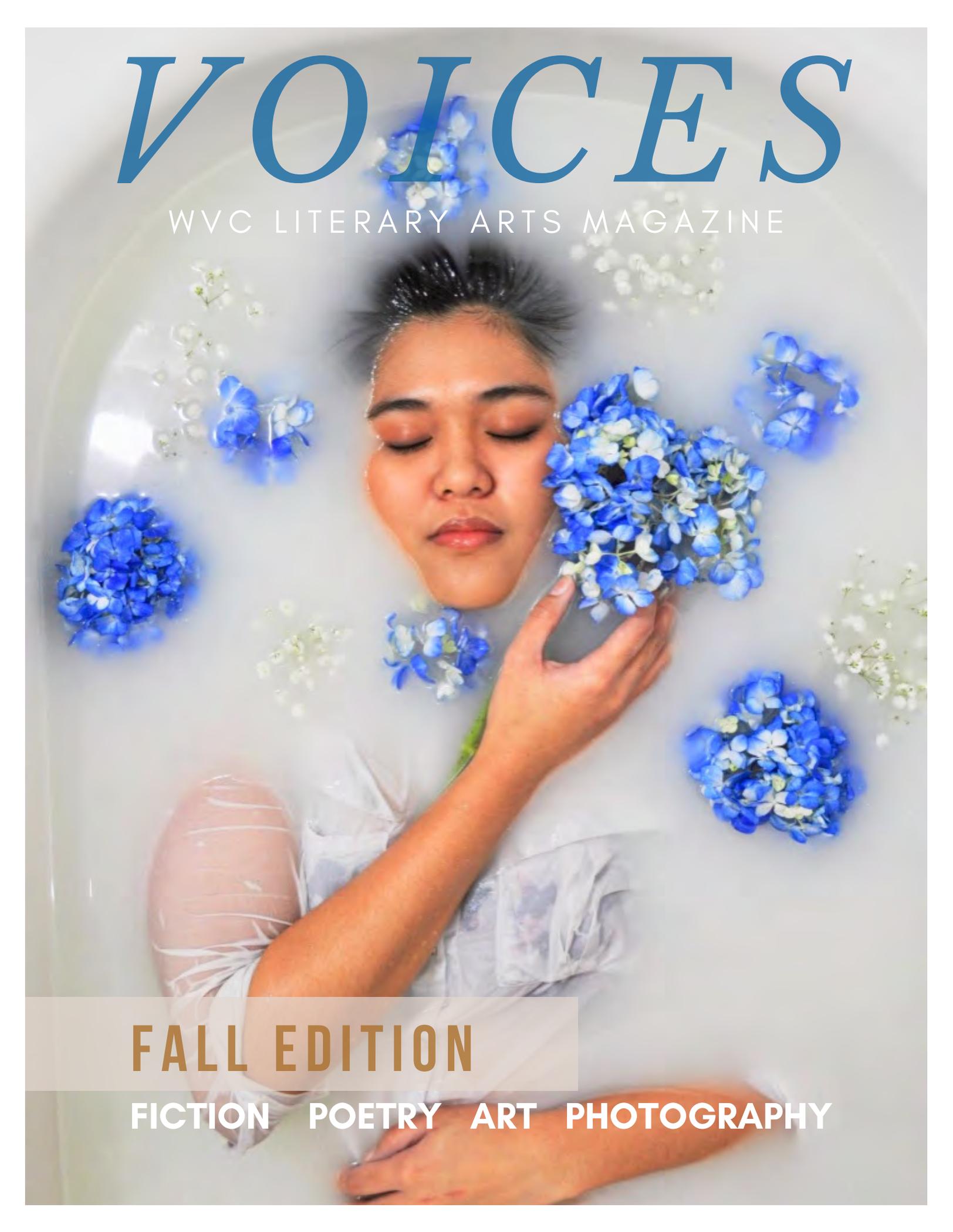


# VOICES

A photograph of a woman with her eyes closed, holding a bouquet of blue hydrangeas. She is surrounded by other blue hydrangeas and small white flowers in a white tub of water. The overall mood is serene and artistic.

WVC LITERARY ARTS MAGAZINE

**FALL EDITION**

**FICTION POETRY ART PHOTOGRAPHY**

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*Everyday Life* by Alma Rashidi

# I AM ROSAMIE

WRITTEN BY JOSIE MCGUIRE

EXT. SOUTH CALIFORNIA BEACH— EVENING

The sun has tripped barely below the horizon and the air itself seems to be breathing blue. A hint of stars freckle the stretch of sky above. The palm trees are shadows almost unrealized against the shore. Kind-eyed ROSAMIE, perhaps aged forty-five, perhaps aged sixty, steps dripping out of the ocean. Her hair is black and frizzy with salt water. The woman sloshes ashore with her surfboard by her side, heading towards the large campfire surrounded by laughing and drinking teenage boys. CHAD greets the approaching figure.

CHAD

Yo, Mama Bautista! Any choka' waves today?

ROSAMIE

Yes. It was...good day.

Chad grins as she slowly clambers to her knees beside him. The other boys--JOHNNY, GABE, JASON, and LUKE --cheer and greet Rosamie, crowding around her, white California teeth bright in the blue-lit evening. Rosamie settles in just so. Her charmingly heavy Filipino accent colors every word.

ROSAMIE

Bring me my basket, you foolish sons of foolish mothers.

Jason, a broad-shouldered floppy-haired young man with a lazy eye, bows like a knight of old, and presents the basket with a flourish. Rosamie resists a smile, but it tugs against her lips nonetheless. Jason sees it and gives a mischievous look that Rosamie dismisses with a wave of her hand. She unloads a log of pitsi-pitsî (a traditional Filipino dessert) on a plate of white and blue china. Johnny, the youngest among them, reaches out a grimy hand, but draws it back at Rosamie's laugh.

JOHNNY  
Sorry.

Luke pushes up his glasses with a twiggy arm and rolls his eyes.

LUKE  
Yeah, Johnny. Keep your gross little hands to yourself.

ROSAMIE  
Shut up, Luke.

The group laughs. Gabe slaps Luke on the shoulder. Luke looks the other way.

ROSAMIE  
Now. After grace has been said, my horrors, we will eat the pitsi-pitsî. Pray for us now, John.

All bow their heads.

JOHNNY  
Dear Holy Father, thanks a ton. Bless the pisty-pasty to our bones and help 'em grow a lot. I, uh, thank thee for the gnarly food again, I guess.  
Amen.

The boys jump on the pitsi-pitsî delightedly. Rosamie looks over the ocean with a melancholy air for a moment before Jason approaches.

JASON  
Hey. Can I talk to you, Mama? In private?



ROSAMIE  
In private?

Jason tugs her over to the stack of longboards beside the outhouse.

JASON  
They found us.

Rosamie clutches her mouth.  
Her eyes daze over and a flashback begins.

JASON (O.S)  
Mama? Mama, you okay?

EXT. SHIP- DAY

Rosamie and BENJIE BAUTISTA hold hands on a balcony of a ship sailing on the ocean. Both of them have wedding rings on. They're smiling. Rosamie rests her head on his shoulder.

INT. HOSPITAL- EVENING

Benjie is in a hospital bed, pale as death.

ROSAMIE  
Benjie, gaga ka.  
Tanga, tanga, tanga!

BENJIE  
Call me stupid if you like,  
but I am right. Do not pay  
any more for the medicine.  
Take care of yourself.

ROSAMIE  
Hindi! Hindi ko gagawin ito! No.

She sobs.



*Stranger Things* by Anu Bavra

EXT. ROSAMIE'S APARTMENT- DAY

The surf gang--Chad, Jason, Luke, and Gabe--are walking past Rosamie's apartment, rowdily shouting and punching each other on the shoulder on the way to the beach. Luke is holding a boombox blasting out Duran-Duran. Rosamie watches out of the window as Johnny struggles to keep up with the older boys. They are all unkempt, straggly, and hungry-looking.

JOHNNY

Hey! Wait up, guys! Guys?

The other boys laugh and walk faster.

CHAD

Keep up, donk.

Chad snatches Johnny's hat and tosses it to Jason, who tosses it to Gabe, who puts it on. Luke looks disdainful of the entire business. He is the most well-kept of them all.

JOHNNY

I hate you!

Rosamie looks over at her homemade chicken adobo and back at the boys disappearing into the distance. She twists her wedding ring.

EXT. CRACK HOUSE - EVENING

Rosamie's arms and hands are covered in blood. She is handcuffed to a radiator. There's a gun in her face.

HOODED MAN

Where's Jason, bitch?

What did he do with the money?

ROSAMIE

I don't know.

The unseen hooded figure slaps her viciously with the butt of the gun. She dribbles blood from her mouth but doesn't flinch. She stares him straight in the eyes.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's raining. Rosamie sips her tea sitting in her comfy chair near the window. She pulls her blanket closer and smiles. She then looks out the window and sees Jason and Johnny huddled together under a balcony on the street. She sighs and puts her coat on.

INT. WALMART - MORNING

Rosamie is a cashier. She stares blearily at the customer yelling unintelligible English noises at her. She rubs her forehead.

INT. CHURCH - EARLY AFTERNOON

Rosamie sits in her pew listening to the preacher. The majority of the other church members are white. The ones in her pew shift uncomfortably. Rosamie tries not to notice.

EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Rosamie is walking down the street with groceries in hand. She is bumped into by a man in a business suit talking on a bluetooth. She drops her groceries and is forced to pick them up. He ignores her and continues past, actually stepping on the plastic bag in the process.

EXT. STREET- NIGHT

Rosamie goes to Jason and Johnny under the balcony.

ROSAMIE

Come. It is too cold tonight.  
I have room.

INT. CRACKHOUSE - EVENING

The hooded man lowers his hood and crouches by Rosamie's side.

HOODED MAN

Look, lady.  
I'm not here to slap you around.  
Just tell me where that piece of shit is  
and I'll let you go.

EXT. BEACH- DAY

Rosamie does an excellent boogie on the surfboard while Gabe falls off his board.  
The Surf Gang looks astonished.

ROSAMIE

I have passed your silly test, boys. Now will you listen? You need to go to--

Smash cut to the memories blurring faster and faster.

Gun.

Rain.

Walmart.

Church.

Beach.

Apartment.

Blood.

Benjie.

Rosamie is faintly aware of Jason shaking her.

JASON

Mama! Mama, wake up! We gotta go!  
Mama, can you hear me?!

*Lioness* by Regine Quintos



ROSAMIE

Yes, idiot. Listen up.

Jason blinks. Rosamie steps away and gestures for Jason to take the boys.

ROSAMIE

You need to go.

Where I told you long time ago.

Jason nods but pauses when Rosamie doesn't follow.

ROSAMIE

Take care of yourself.

JASON

No!

Rosamie glares. Motorcycles are heard in the distance.

ROSAMIE

They come. Go!

Jason grabs the boys and they flee. Rosamie waits on the beach as the Biker Gang roar up to her. The Hooded Man steps off and laughs.

HOODED MAN

Who even are you, lady?

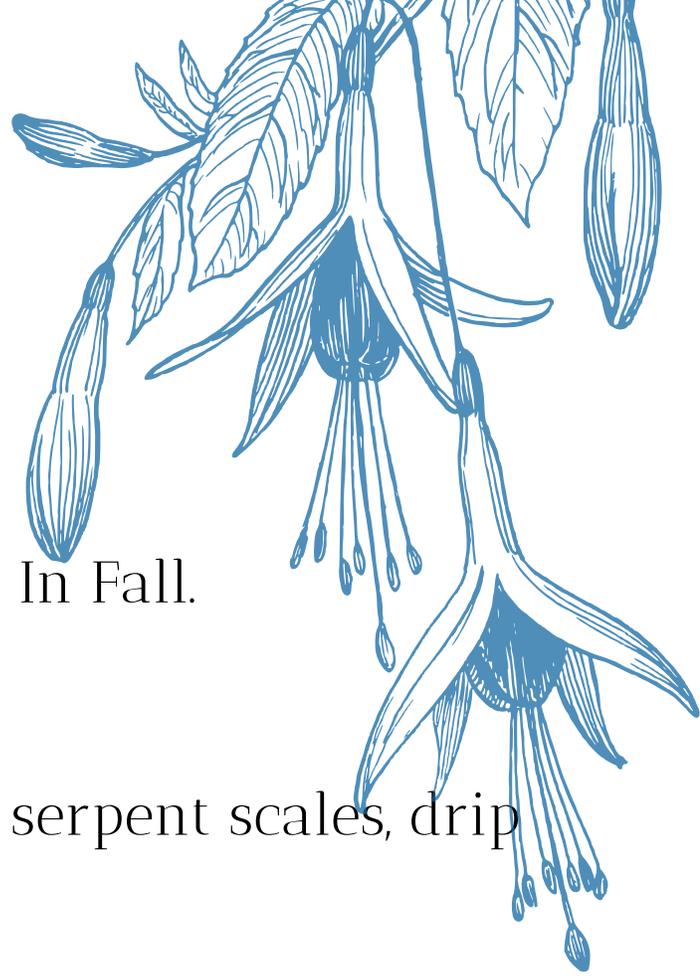
ROSAMIE

I am Rosamie.

FADE OUT.

# IN FALL

WRITTEN BY JOSIE MCGUIRE



In Fall.

Shed your pretence

let the leaves, those serpent scales, drip

slow

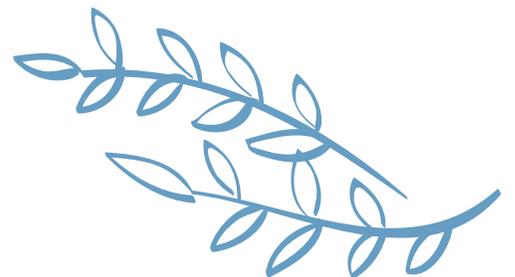
You must rub it raw; nothing's

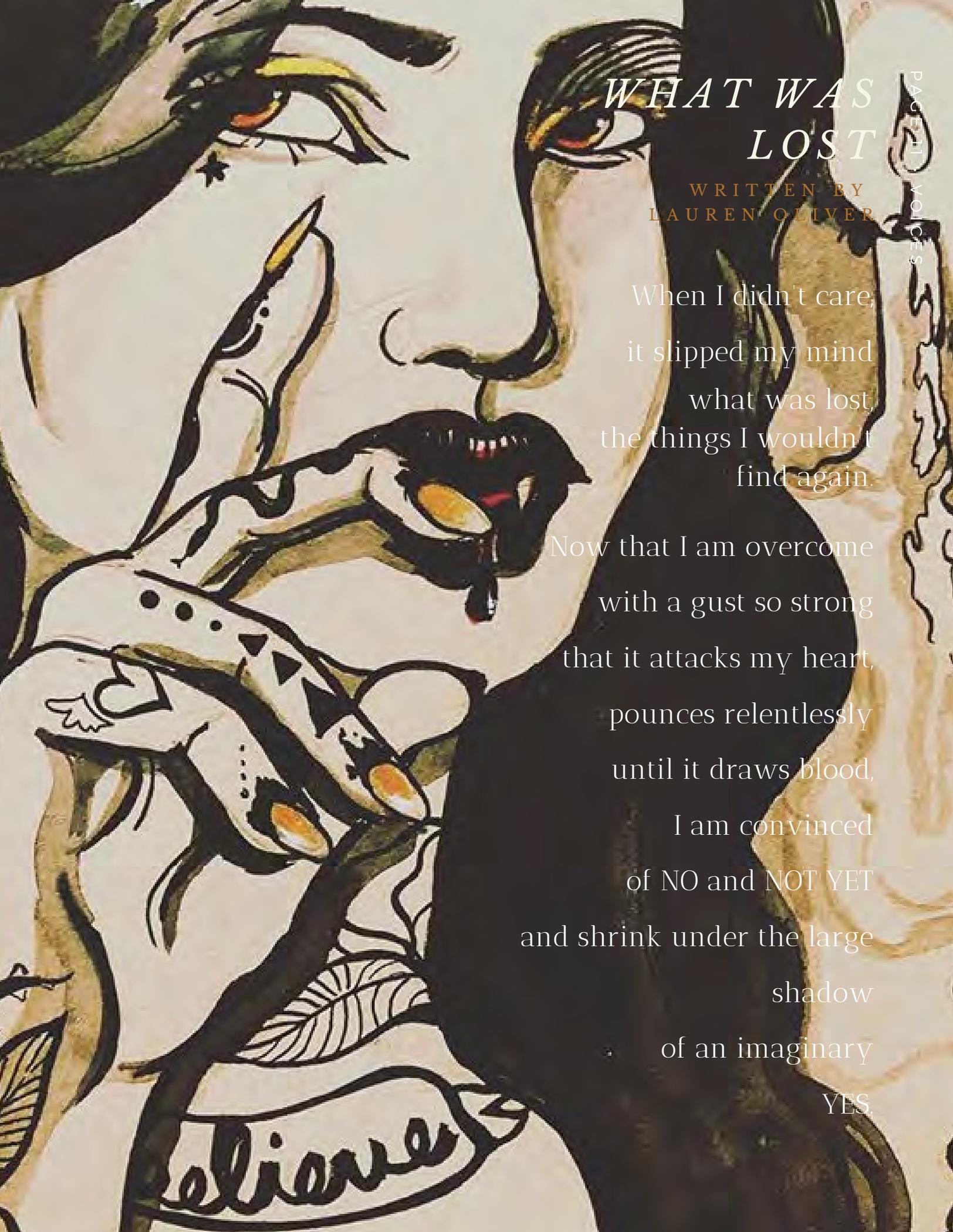
stickier than a lie.

Death blooms sallow on your naked frame

But fear not, friend - -

(In fall you will arise.)





# WHAT WAS LOST

WRITTEN BY  
LAUREN OLIVER

PAGE 11 VOICES

When I didn't care,  
it slipped my mind  
what was lost,  
the things I wouldn't  
find again.

Now that I am overcome  
with a gust so strong  
that it attacks my heart,  
pounces relentlessly  
until it draws blood,  
I am convinced  
of NO and NOT YET  
and shrink under the large  
shadow  
of an imaginary  
YES.

believe



*Black Dog* by Madeleine Meredith

# GOODBYES

WRITTEN BY LAUREN OLIVER

I wanted those words  
to squeeze my heart  
until my eyes erupted,  
exploding with stinging lava.

I hate that I am relieved,  
that the air I  
so long rejected  
is now mine to breathe.



# ART



WRITTEN BY  
LAUREN OLIVER

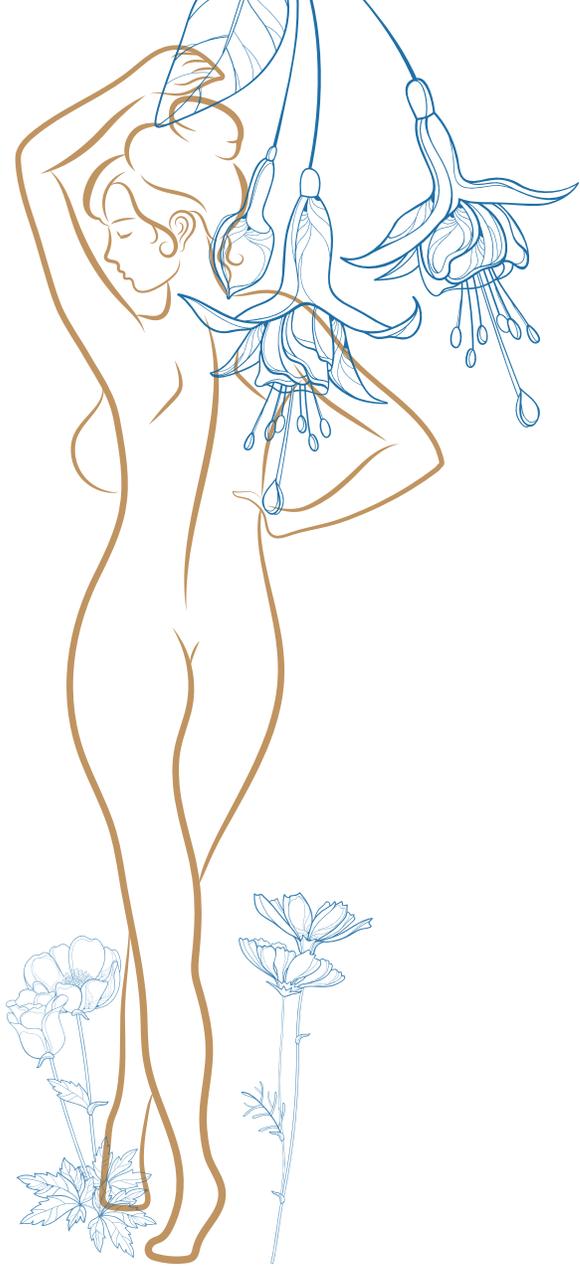
When I met you  
a little butterfly nestled its  
way into my heart,  
and I still feel its wings beating.  
It jostles me awake in the dead of night.

Sometimes it wraps itself so tightly  
around soft things hiding in my chest  
that my lips quiver too much,  
and I can't organize or explain it.  
I can't put into words  
the fluttering wave of wings,  
which smash themselves against my insides,  
paint them a million colors  
that are bright and dark and deep.

And you'll never see it,  
but I wonder if vision divine  
could penetrate my skin,  
traveling deep enough inside me  
to notice its little antennae,  
watch this butterfly dance and leap and  
fill my blood  
with screaming song.  
I wish you could know,  
and with rapid heartbeat,  
I imagine your butterfly  
carving my name  
on your heart,  
and imagine myself  
scrawling every color and melody  
inside you.



*Warm and Cold Art* by Alma Rashidi



# NAKED WOMEN

WRITTEN BY SUSAN LOMASNEY  
& JULIANA MEDURI

Heroically nude,  
a stray bare breast and occasional bare feet  
Amazon warriors  
battle, bathe, and live beautifully,  
both naked and in armor

Bathing Beauties,  
diving in to wash,  
Covered in water,  
they are completely exposed  
It simple, or is it sexual?  
Is her bare skin for us to see?

Or just a trite image?  
Heroically nude,  
a beautiful image,  
Amazon warriors  
fight and die  
side-by-side.

Naked men jab and slice,  
but the women still entice.

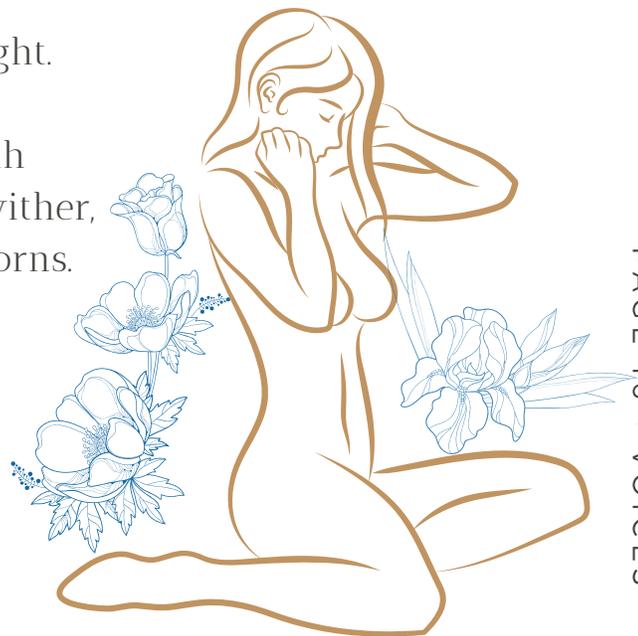
A beautiful death  
is what she may face.

Bleeding, dying  
but still glorious in their fight.

A titillating cameo  
of the moment before death  
reminds that every rose can wither,  
no matter how sharp her thorns.

Keep her close,  
keep her armored,  
watch her back

They will take her life,  
they will claim her image as their own  
See the Heroine, she is glorious,  
and so much more.



# SIRENS

WRITTEN BY  
EVAN BROWN

The cries of law again. When patterns  
make you remember, then forget.

The cocktail bar made handsome  
profit last night, yet they may never fix

the sign that flickers Morse code out to  
forlorn cab drivers and empty store windows

The morning keeps apologizing  
for having come so soon. Droplets

of people, as if from pipes  
of copper, trail out slowly from tall doors

as resinous as their eyes. Collar-stay commands  
come from uniforms, fall flat

and are therefore lost—but one man  
turns his head so quickly

that he must hear a sound  
like his name. The light

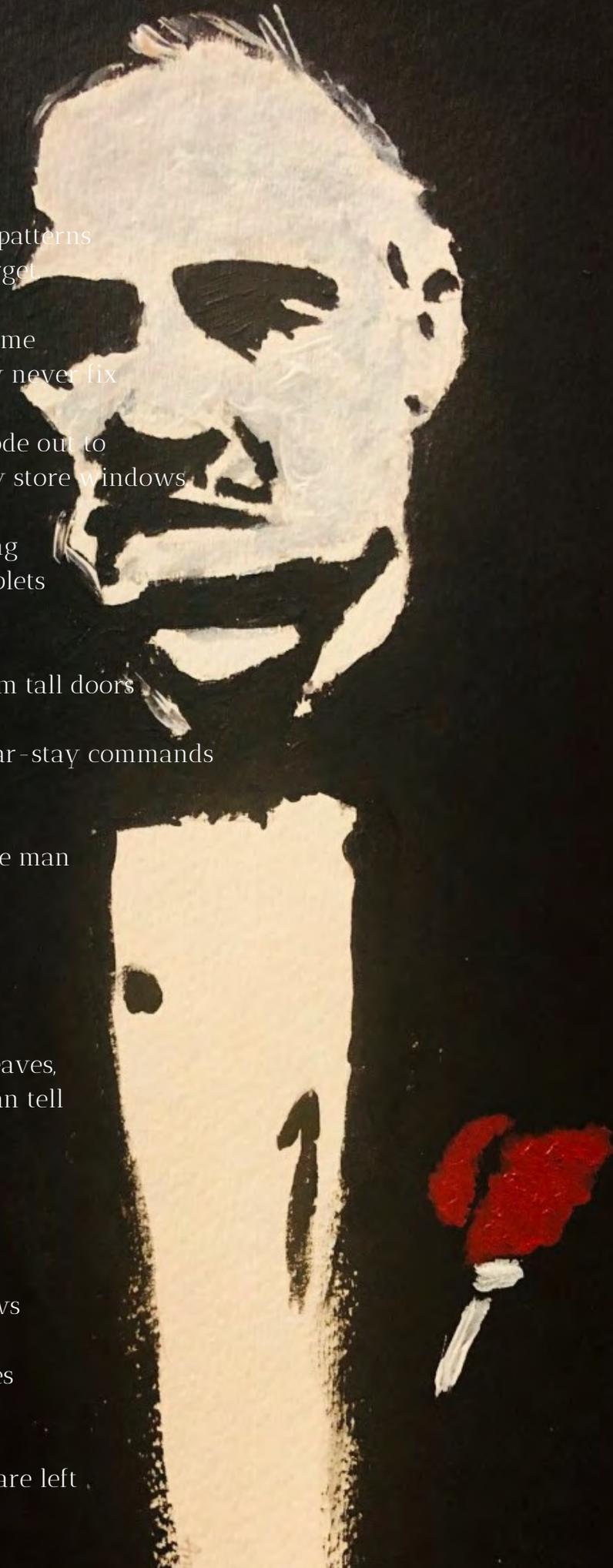
shuffles coyly through tree leaves,  
ashamed to even be there. I can tell

that the feet of the man  
are now ineffective, his focus

heaved upward at the fleet  
of hotel rooms whose windows

glare fiercely, throw the cycles  
of clouds into the wholes

of his eyes while the crowds are left  
laboring to get going.





*Punk Skull* by Anu Bavra

# *MASK OF STEEL*

WRITTEN BY FRANCESCA TORRES

The masks we wear upon our faces,  
cover the eyes that recognize,  
the signs that we have lost all traces,  
of the selves we've left behind  
The firecrackers drown themselves  
Quick to put out their own wicks  
Gunpowder plays as dust on shelves,  
whose clouds serve just to make them sick  
And shaking earth sits still now,  
Somehow afraid of sun and shade  
It was scarred, we don't know how  
We only see the wound it made  
We can't make out each line or word  
Courage we need is all we see  
So we let the carved out edges blur  
Yellow fear with red bravery

# FRAME OF REFERENCE

WRITTEN BY  
JORDAN ZACHARY ELLIS

I consistently refer to my body,  
as I walk through my quarter-  
life crisis, as old. Not like old milk  
left in the fridge too long, I've yet  
to go bad, but the kind of old where  
standing up comes with a soundtrack.

The mountains around my eyes that  
form with every smile I make show  
that the paths I have walked, both  
near and far, experienced just as much  
sun as they did storms; I've learned to  
always keep an umbrella handy.

The whiskers that fall from my chin  
present a life that has been lived, each  
inch of hair containing its own  
memories.

When I look in the mirror each morning,  
a live painting framed by the mist  
forming  
at edges of the glass, I look at each stroke  
that the brush of life has left on my  
canvas,  
and I stare into my own soul with only  
one question: is this the same frame  
of reference that the rest of you see?



*Dragon Art* by Alma Rashidi

# BUTTERFLIES

WRITTEN BY BOBBIE CABRAL



butterflies,  
the high staying up late brings  
it makes my bones feel hollow,  
and at the same time so heavy  
makes my head spin  
my anxieties dwindle  
so I can console them with absent  
reason

(it's the closest I've gotten to endorphins since I quit)  
(but I don't dare say to say that out loud)



that misty peripheral consuming my  
vision  
tunneling  
swimming  
falling  
in that sweet sickness

(this lust, I realize, is metamorphic)  
my scars are used cocoons  
(I realize, my killing of self syndrome)



they aren't butterflies

# THAT THIRD CUP

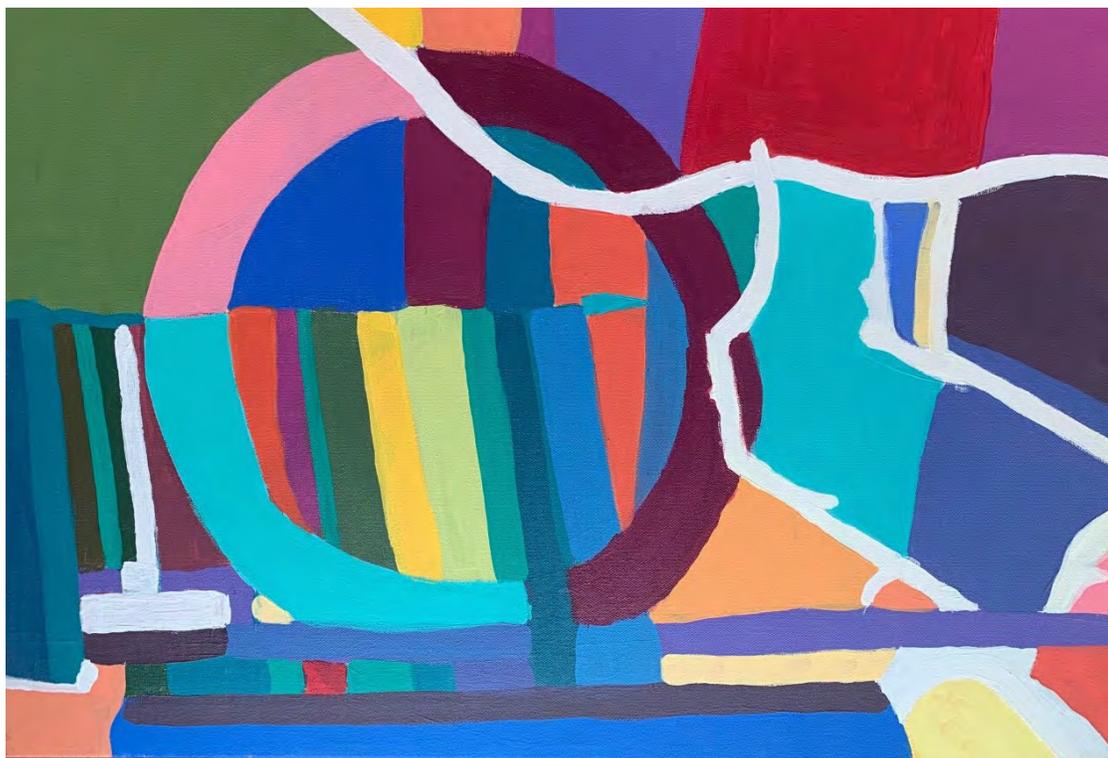
WRITTEN BY  
JORDAN ZACHARY ELLIS

I think about my dreams almost  
as much as I do reality.  
Ironically, the third cup of coffee  
in my hands is telling everyone that will  
listen  
just how much I avoid sleep.  
That dreamscape holds a rough landing,  
slamming into my heart with  
the weight of lost memories,  
those that were forgotten  
as new ones took their place.

The first cup of the day is a welcoming,  
reality's way of reminding me that  
I have a life that needs living.  
The second cup is the one  
that actually wakes me up. My third,  
however, is always special.  
More than coffee makes a  
home in that mug, comfort  
mixes in as well,  
a good mood as light hearted  
as the liquid.

That last cup of java is  
what jerks me away from my daydreams,  
what keeps me grounded when  
I don't feel the ground beneath my  
feet. Its that warm feeling  
that coffee fills your throat,  
and then your soul, that I need.  
I need it to feel free from a reality  
that has shackled me to my own  
delusions.

At the bottom of my empty cup  
the light side of a brown moon swirls  
at the edges, different phases of the  
same day.  
At the very least, it gives me the energy  
I need  
to make it to the end of the day, the  
energy I  
need to make it back to my own little  
world.



*Still Life Art*  
by Alma Rashidi



*A Mother's Love* by Regine Quintos

# PROGRESSION OF TIME

WRITTEN BY  
MICHAEL CELSO

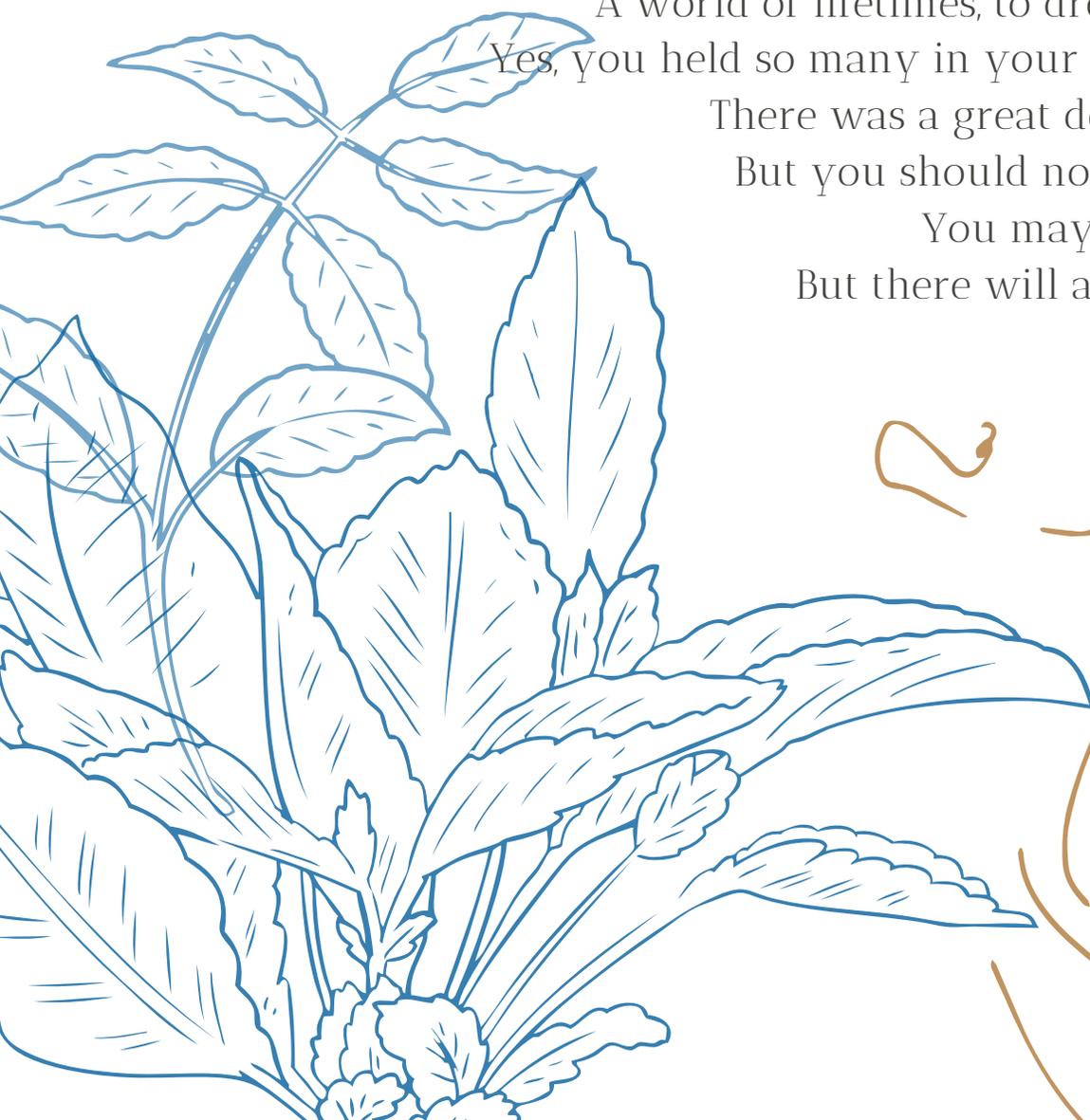
Progression of time  
Maybe it will rhyme  
Letters on a page  
Scrambled to mean something  
Only understood when interpreted through our own  
cultural lens  
Cave drawings  
Shapes we recognize  
Johnny Cash's tribe had in the past called written language  
"The white man's talking leaves."  
Our hearts do more than just pump blood.  
It's been raining a lot.  
It might soon flood.  
Thank you it's fine, it's ok not to care.  
It's not written in the rules.  
We were animals once, too.  
Now we wear clothes.  
We drive fancy cars. We don't run from snakes.  
The water is too far.  
We all have egos.  
It's a second-hand existence.  
We are aware of our thoughts but we think within a system.  
We are a herd on stampede.  
Too busy to help one another.  
We have no natural predators.



But people are starting to stop and turn around  
And face the almighty dollar.  
Kindness is free.  
The lizard said to the sun.  
My child, I will keep you warm.  
The sun is lonely you know.  
That's why it burns so brightly.  
It has been hurt before and it cries wildly.  
Someday it will settle and so will we.

This time we spend together is only eternity.  
It will someday close its eyes.  
And rest from its slumber.

A world of lifetimes, to dream in comfort.  
Yes, you held so many in your warm embrace.  
There was a great deal of suffering.  
But you should not feel disgraced.  
You may be asleep now.  
But there will always be faith.



# *VOICES*

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2019

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