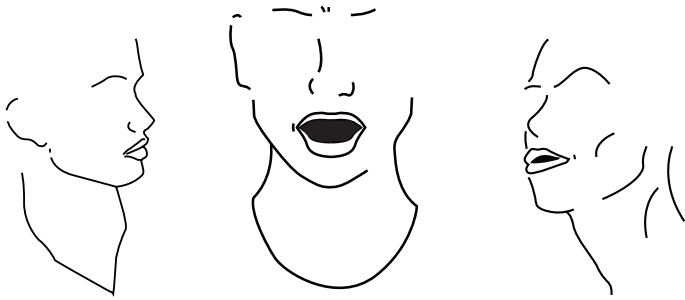


OUR VOICES



GONZAGA UNIVERSITY
JOURNAL OF CULTURE & DIVERSITY
VOLUME VI - 2019



• — □ — •

*when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid*

So it is better to speak

- Audre Lorde

Cover art by Filmon Abraham
Design by Sean Price

Our Voices is a publication of the Gonzaga University Media Board. All questions and comments regarding *Our Voices* should be directed to ourvoices@gonzaga.edu.

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Our Voices



Gonzaga University
Journal of Culture and Diversity
Vol. VI 2019

Editor's Note



Dear Reader,

Throughout the last few years, I have seen America suffer from a polarizing political storm that has left its people exhausted, pained, and thirsting for human connection. Hurtful language distances us from neighbors, family, partners, and friends who don't share our same background. A gap is growing, and fear of each other's beliefs and of the unknown is its dominating force. We fear difference because it makes us uncomfortable. However, difference makes the world so much more colorful, and it is the one thing we all have in common.

And so, I challenge you to lean into discomfort and listen.

How did we get to where we are today? Why do we believe the things we do? What makes us who we are? Tell others about your own story, and listen to theirs. We all have a story to tell, and our voices are the most powerful tools we can use to build connections once again.

I am so grateful to the contributors for their vulnerability and courage to share their stories. These pieces have made me laugh, have absolutely broken my heart, and have challenged me to acknowledge my own discomfort.

I hope you see yourself in these various expressions and can identify with our authors. I also hope that you are left surprised and start to question why some people's experiences are inherently different than your own. Our journal is built on empathy; I hope this wave of connection starts to quench some of that thirst for you as well.

It has been an honor to edit *Our Voices* and stand in solidarity with a team of editors, designers, and contributors that have put such pride in celebrating the diversity of Gonzaga's community. Thank you for also being a crucial part of our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "KBenson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathryn Benson

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• — □ — •

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T a b l e O f

Reconnecting

Ashley Sanchez-Garcia — 6

Love in Technicolor

Morgan McCurdy — 10

growing up

Jocelyn van der Put — 12

The Not-So-Lonely Traveler

Kathryn Jane Graham — 17

Man vs. Wild

Kathryn Jane Graham — 17

The Meaning of Freedom

Asha Douglas — 18

Sharing Our Aloha

Rachel Ho — 20

Millka

Filmon Abraham — 21

Activist Burnout: The Weight of Rape Culture

Sarah Kersey — 22

Notre Dame Cathedral

Megan O'Herron — 26

Hassan II Mosque

Megan O'Herron — 27

psalm for the genderqueer

Zoe Jaspers — 28

blackgrimes

Filmon Abraham — 30

Southside Dirty T (Kilometer Highway Blues)

Alan Parra — 31

Ode to the Central Valley (San Joaquin)

Jamie Flores — 34

Empowered by PearlIt

Hisrael Carranza — 36

An Everlasting Warrior

Rachel Ho — 39

Terms and Conditions

Lizzie Vosler — 40

C o n t e n t s

The First

Ashley Sanchez-Garcia — 42

Katherine

Filmon Abraham — 45

Ashamed

Jamie Flores — 46

Message from “Nobody” — Phoenix, AZ 3:14 am

Alan Parra — 48

A Product of Immigrants

Andrew Sepulveda — 51

Arbitrary

Anna Ogilvie — 53

A New Leaf

Maya Coseo — 54

Heavenly Creature

Kathryn Jane Graham — 56

Please Wake Up

Manojprabhakaran Thirupal — 57

Diversity Monologues

Fractioned

Jordanne Beckwith-Barros — 62

Dear zags

August Corpetts & Fese Elango — 67

Grocery Store

Asha Douglas — 70

Nana Fici

Nila Hoxha — 73

Anchor Baby

Daisy Montalvo — 75

La Lista (Hombres sin Nombres)

Alan Parra — 78

An Open Letter to the ICE Agent on the Greyhound Bus

Dulce Rivera-Zepeda — 84

Tough Love

Melina Benjamin & Michael Tanaka — 86

Reconnecting

Ashley Sanchez-Garcia



yesterday I learned
poetry is the most respected form of art
in Nicaragua.

I am reconnecting with my roots.
I have been reconnecting since high school,
every time my pen touches paper,
and I didn't even know it.

all this time I thought:
the words that I write,
they are only here because
I feel strongly.
I am not creative,
I'm just emotional.

but I was wrong—
the magic is in me.

you see,
where my dad is from,
poetry is more than just poetry.
it is sacred—
every single letter
is an act of revolution.
poetry means: "I am defining my identity."
poetry, in my dad's country, is
a celebration and a weapon.

the magic is in me.
it is in
my hair,
my brown eyes,

my skin.
poetic heritage.
poetry is in my veins.

and I think that is true comfort,
that life imitates art even when
new life is created 3,440 miles away from my father's country,
even when I can't speak Spanish,
even when I have never been taught Nicaragua's history,
even when Nicaragua is falling apart at the seams and I don't
understand it,
even when Nicaragua will always be a puzzle to me,
it is Nicaraguan soul that breathes poetry into my heart.
it is the heartbeat of my ancestors that guides me as I find
resilience.

the magic is in me.
I am not as disconnected from my roots as I thought I was.
thirteen years ago, I stepped foot on the land my parents left.
they were my age when they came to the United States.
I am still here.
against all odds I made it to college;
everything I do, I do for my parents.

the magic is in me;
the revolution is in me;
I see myself, and I see my blood and how it splits into two,
how I inherited two countries and cultures,
and I am powerful because of it.

every time pen touches paper,
I am called back to my father's homeland;
every time I recite these soul-words,
the city that raised him calls my name—
my internal call and response—
Estelí, where my father grew up,
where rivers are made of obsidian.

Estelí. I could write letters and letters dedicated to you,
for being the land that created a man as strong and wise as my
father.

Estelí is my favorite acquaintance,
a foggy memory,
a piece of paper I threw away years ago when I wanted so badly
to fit in.

I should have known that Estelí would always follow me.
I find traces of Nicaragua in my irises, and
even though I will never truly understand what it means to be a
Nicaraguan immigrant,

I am trying so hard to find myself in old pictures of flea
markets,
in waterfalls that I can only picture in my mind.
I am worried that the country I want to visit will tear itself apart
before I can ever
breathe in that air again.

it took 18 years for me to see the word “Nicaragua” written in a
history textbook.

it took less than a second for me to be reminded of home,
how my dad blasts Spanish music from the 70s when he is
feeling nostalgic,

how I don’t know the names of his favorite childhood songs, but
I can always identify with the lyrics.

it took less than a second for me to feel visible in a state where
my identities are frankly unappreciated.

it took two more minutes for me to call home.

the next time someone tells me
that my dad’s country is so unsafe right now,
so poor right now,
so pitiful right now,
I will look them in the eyes and say:

the magic is in me;
it always has been.

my magic,
pretty like the sacuanjoches that bloom in my paternal
country—
yellow and white,
soft beams like the sunlight,
always works in progress
always wrapped in emotion, heart, and soul
always extensions of myself.

this magic,
it took fourteen years for me to see it.
it is shy, and it is powerful;
it is precious, and every time I open my mouth,
it spills from my tongue.
it is my preferred language because it is mine, and
most of all,
nobody can take it from me.



• — □ — •

Love in Technicolor

Morgan McCurdy



growing up

Jocelyn van der Put



you were four when you faked your first crush. you told your friends that you didn't have one, but they laughed at you and ripped at you with their words until you chose one. you chose a boy who seemed the least awful. you chose him and your friends laughed, tore you down with even more words. "why *him*?" they asked. you didn't know. "he's nice," you said. most boys weren't nice to their female peers, but that's a whole other issue.

you were six when you kissed your best friend. she laughed, and you laughed and it felt normal. "girls don't do that with other girls," her mom said when she saw, her voice sharp and eyes cold. you went home confused and embarrassed and didn't touch any of your friends for weeks after that, suddenly unsure of how much affection was allowed. you found out ten years later that her mom sat her down and scolded her for another half an hour after you left.

you were nine when a boy from the back of the bus leaned around the seat to talk to you. "are you a lesbo?" he asked, sticky and badly dressed. you didn't know what that word meant. he said, "a girl who likes girls." you wanted to say yes, because all of your friends were girls, but something in his tone said that you should say no. you shook your head, and he laughed in your face. you glared at the back of the seat in front of you for the rest of the drive.

you were eleven when you were on a pumpkin patch field trip, and you heard a song on the radio about a girl kissing a girl. all of your friends knew the words, and you were excited to actually enjoy a popular song along with everyone else. you went home singing it, and your dad looked at you with the same sharp look you'd seen years before. "we don't sing about things like that," he said. it wasn't discussed further, even though you prodded him with "why, why, why?"

you were thirteen when you got news that a boy had a crush on you, and your stomach filled with nothing but dread. you decided that those were called butterflies but felt exposed and anxious every time he held your hand. you tried to convince yourself that he was nice and funny and that you should like him. you still flinched back every time he put his arm around you.

you were fourteen when you let a girl leach all the life from you for almost a year because you didn't know that you deserved better. she pulled you down to her level; she told you that you were the only person who was good to her. you couldn't admit to yourself that you liked girls, and she knew that. she dug into you with her sharp nails and tore you away from your friends. you didn't know who you were, and she convinced you she was the only one who understood.

you were fourteen when you heard a boy in class call you a dyke. the school counselor asked, “are you?” and you knew the answer but you said, “of course not.” you sat in shame and fear and watched as no disciplinary action was taken. you punched the boy in the face a month later and felt vindicated, though you weren’t sure what you were avenging.

you were fifteen when you met a couple with matching flower-print tourist shirts and grey hair. they had thirty years of love between them and a foosball table in their basement. you watched them hold hands and beam at each other. you watched them and heard the word lesbian as a blessing, not an insult. they smiled at you, and you knew who you were in an instant.

you were sixteen, and you had a cute girlfriend, one that embodied a summer’s day. you had grown accustomed to self-sufficiency and distrust, and that meant you had to fight yourself to communicate well. you loved her. you borrowed her sweatshirts and skyped her when she toured with a marching band. the two of you lasted a year, and she let you down a little too gently. you kept her sweatshirt because you didn’t know what else to do.

you were sixteen, and you heard that forty-nine people had been shot in a club because they were like you. you drove to school with your hands shaking, your lungs feeling like they were filled with sand, but eyes dry because you were too scared to let anyone know you were affected. the news people on the radio didn't even mention that it was a gay club because they needed all the audience they could scrape together in a town conservative enough that the gender-sexuality alliance club had been bullied down to two members. maybe you'd already put yourself in danger by telling *anyone* who you loved.

you were sixteen and seeing election coverage and praying. you held your friend's hand because she was as terrified as you were. you broke backstage etiquette rules, refreshing the webpage whenever you ran into the dressing room between scenes of *the music man*. your drugstore foundation was melting off, and you prayed that you and your friends would be safe. you prayed that the loud, baseball-capped boy in your class would stop hissing slurs at you and your friends. you prayed that swastikas would stop being scratched into the desks at school. you were sixteen and sobbing into your mom's shoulder that night, completely enraged.

you were seventeen, and you went to pride for the first time, a muggy day where you got heat exhaustion and your feet and hands swelled up from dehydration—but your heart was the lightest it had been in years. you climbed up on a streetlight with your friend to see over the crowd. you'd been feeling run-down lately, the routine of keeping quiet starting to pull at you, and even watching the parade, you were worried that someone with a gun was going to ruin the best afternoon of your year. you dared to feel proud, tossing a free fluffy feather boa over your shoulder and laughing. a beautiful woman with a pink and blue flag handed you a rainbow sticker, and you lit up like a sunrise.

you're eighteen now. you wish you could tell six-year-old, eight-year-old, nine-year-old, fourteen-year-old you that you deserved better. right now, you wish an older version of you would tell you if it really gets better than this. you're banking on eventually being happy in an apartment with a beautiful wife and a cat or five, but all you can do is wait, which is harder on some days than others. you're planning on one day being out to everyone you know, but you hold your tongue for now, which is harder in some catholic classrooms than others. the place you've come from has made you a little too angry and a little too cynical and a little too guarded, but you're alive.

you're eighteen and not giving up yet.

Man vs. Wild

Kathryn Jane Graham

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• — □ — •

The Not-So-Lonely Traveler

Kathryn Jane Graham

The Meaning of Freedom

Asha Douglas



Freedom

A black man's word,
tied to a phrase that is racially slurred.
Stolen by those who call him nigger,
who stand over him with their hand on the trigger.
Lips, sealed by a "benevolent master,"
the whip meets his skin, his heart beats faster.
Ears ring from the lesson of the day,
the sentence: 40 lashes, soon his flesh to flay.
Beaten by the hatred of a heinous generation,
leading to a future of scornful segregation.
Under southern sun the black man lays,
tired eyes defeated by the white man's gaze.

Freedom

A white man's luxury,
stolen salvation, playing judge and jury.
Porcelain skin like the ivory moon,
soft lips fed by the silver spoon.
He denies them the right to let freedom ring,
to remember the power of the plantation king.
Establishing supremacy over those with "no worth,"
beating their livestock till their lips kiss the earth.

Betraying their Lord with a crown of thorns,
using gentle hands to polish gilded horns.
Calling their chattel with a golden bell,
condemning the unfortunate to rot in Hell.

Freedom

The coming of a modern age,
a history of suffering, just words on a page—
but

we live in a world where race is still an issue.

Our “protectors” allow the persecution to continue.

A brother on the ground with his hands in the air,
mother crying on the news that his death was unfair.

All minorities struck by police brutality,
stuck with the same slave mentality.

With his gun at the innocent, why question himself?

The color of their skin is a crime in itself.

The age-old whip made a bone-deep scar,
where stereotypes are used to define who you are.

So I have a question for all of you

who persecute the black, hispanic, and Jew:

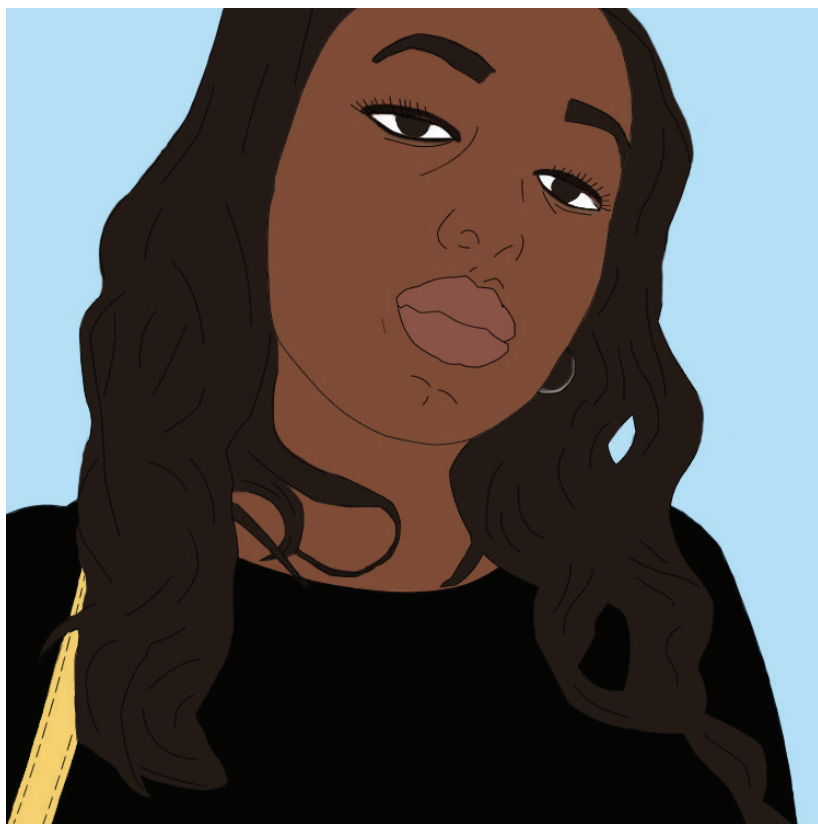
Will you continue the prejudicial trend
or will you rebel, and let slavery end?

Sharing Our Aloha

Rachel Ho



Members of the Hawaii Pacific Islanders Club share a Tahitian performance at the annual luau in 2018.



Millka

Filmon Abraham

Activist Burnout: The Weight of Rape Culture

Sarah Kersey



Trigger warning: the following piece deals with my own personal experience with, and opinions on, rape culture and sexual assault.

There are some days where I forget.

I forget that five years ago, I was raped in a park. I forget that three and a half years ago, I was sexually assaulted in a stranger's bedroom. I forget that this trauma will never expire, never truly be eradicated from my memory. I forget momentarily. But the moment never lasts long.

Since coming to Gonzaga, I've gotten heavily involved in advocating for sexual assault awareness. I've shared my story. I've rehashed the details from those nights when it felt like the entire world would go up in flames. I've held a shaking microphone in my hand as I tried to reclaim these stories. I've written piece after piece, story after story, transforming these horrid memories into eloquently structured sentences, even though their nature often feels inarticulate. I've ripped my beating heart out of my chest and slammed it on a table in front of people who stopped listening the second I said the word "rape," begging them to take a second to recognize that there's still life left inside me. I've pointed out instance after instance of rape culture, broken off friendships as a result of some, felt hollow as a result of others. I've dedicated the past three years at this school to owning my truth and taking my life back.

But at this point, I'm just really burnt out.



My burnout hit its peak when Brett Kavanaugh was confirmed

to the United States Supreme Court. On October 6, 2018, I was getting ready to drive the 4 hours and 5 minutes to Seattle to see a band I'd loved since I was a teenager. I was so excited until I saw the news, and then all I could feel was this overwhelming sense of defeat.

Dr. Christine Blasey Ford had given one of the most powerful testimonies I'd ever seen even as Brett Kavanaugh demonstrated behaviors equivalent to those of the teenage boys who violated me in high school. He avoided questions, asked a senator if she had ever drank beer or blacked out, and illustrated a number of troubling behaviors in what was essentially a job interview. Because Dr. Ford's testimony was so solid, and we'd been reaching this shift in popular culture where we were starting to believe survivors, by all means there should have been a favorable outcome.

However,
during the
entirety of the
interviews, I

**"I've dedicated the past three
years at this school to owning my
truth and taking my life back."**

kept having this repeating intrusive thought. I kept thinking to myself, "it doesn't matter, he's going to be confirmed." Many of my friends tried to instill hope in me and convince me of otherwise, and I wanted so badly to believe them. I wanted so badly for the country to not repeat Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas' case. I wanted so badly to watch truth prevail, watch rape culture take a crushing blow, and watch justice be served.

I saw a lot of Dr. Ford in myself during that trial, particularly in the ways she noted how she had kept that secret buried for all those years. I felt her pain, had been living in it for years, and I didn't take my eyes off my phone for her entire testimony. I, too, had been attacked in high school and had stayed silent. I, too, had recently begun to cope and talk about my experience. I was watching Dr. Ford's testimony aware that someday, the people who hurt me may be elected into positions of power. I was

watching her testimony thinking, “this could be me.”

The day Brett Kavanaugh got confirmed was the day that I felt like a small part of me had died. I felt like I was 14 again, listening to my first boyfriend’s friends joke about how he needed to hurry up and “get some.” I felt like I was 15 again, noting the influx of discomfort I felt when the guy sitting next to me in my science class made a rape joke. I felt like I was 16 again, staring up at the empty sky in that park, praying to a god I didn’t know if I believed in for this boy to stop hurting me. I felt like I was 17 again, dead weight on a twin sized mattress, eyes fixed in unwavering horror on a broken lava lamp as a boy I had known for 5 days did things on top of me. In that moment I felt it all, all the remnants of rape culture that had ever touched my life, and I felt it all too hard.

After that, it was really hard for me to believe that my story counted for anything. Brett Kavanaugh was confirmed on

Saturday,

October 6,

2018, and

on Monday,

October

“Instead, it became the night where I started to question if what I was saying really even mattered at all.”

8, 2018, I had to share my story with members of the Gonzaga community at a story slam. I thought about backing out, several times, but I made myself stand on the floor of the Wolff Auditorium and give my speech about my recovery from sexual violence and my interactions with rape culture. I stepped into my activist role, thinking that this was supposed to be a night that I felt empowered, a night where I was going to tell my story in the rawest form yet, and a night that was another chance for me to remind survivors I was standing there with them. Instead, it became the night where I started to question if what I was saying really even mattered at all.

I know it matters, I do. It just doesn’t feel like it sometimes.

• — □ — •

I feel like I'm in the sophomore slump of my activist career as a junior in college. This sounds contradictory on its own, even more so when I realize that addressing this as a "sophomore slump" implies that at some point there is an end, a senior year, so to speak. Contradictions aside, there are two things I know for certain.

One, I'm tired. I'm absolutely exhausted. I feel unheard and unseen. Most of the time, I feel as if I'm throwing my words into an empty abyss. I feel like there are never going to be enough words to illustrate the pain, to reclaim the trauma, to help the general public understand the repercussions of rape culture in action. I feel like my activism in the realm of sexual assault awareness is insignificant in a world that continues to show me how society values men's careers over women's trauma.

Two, I have to keep fighting. I have to keep fighting because there's a 16-year-old girl out there in a park, a 17-year-old girl in a bedroom, who need to hear that they matter and that their stories are valid. There are countless other people in who knows how many places who need to hear that they are not alone. And if I can provide them with a sliver of hope, a fraction of light in all the heavy darkness, a moment of clarity in the pandemonium, that's all that matters.

Throwing in the towel and giving up this fight has never been an option for me. My life was irrevocably changed because of that first night in the park as a teenager, and every step I've taken since then has led me here. There are days that I am angry and resentful about the fact that this is a fight that I didn't choose but I'll be compelled to participate in for the rest of time. But there are also days when I recognize that I have the potential to reach a person struggling in the aftermath, a person questioning if they could get away with hurting someone else the way I was hurt, a person who isn't sure how to define sexual violence in our world of ever-changing definitions. Knowing that propels me forward.



The Notre Dame Cathedral stands imposingly, looking out over Paris as it has done for over 700 years since its construction in 1160 that was mostly completed by 1260. It is a pinnacle of French Gothic architecture and an icon in the majority-Christian country of France.



Notre Dame Cathedral

Megan O'Herron

Hassan II Mosque

Megan O'Herron



Hassan II Mosque مسجد الحسن الثاني reaches towards the skies of Casablanca. The mosque is the largest in Africa, where as many as 105,000 worshippers can gather together for prayer.



psalm for the genderqueer

Zoe Jaspers

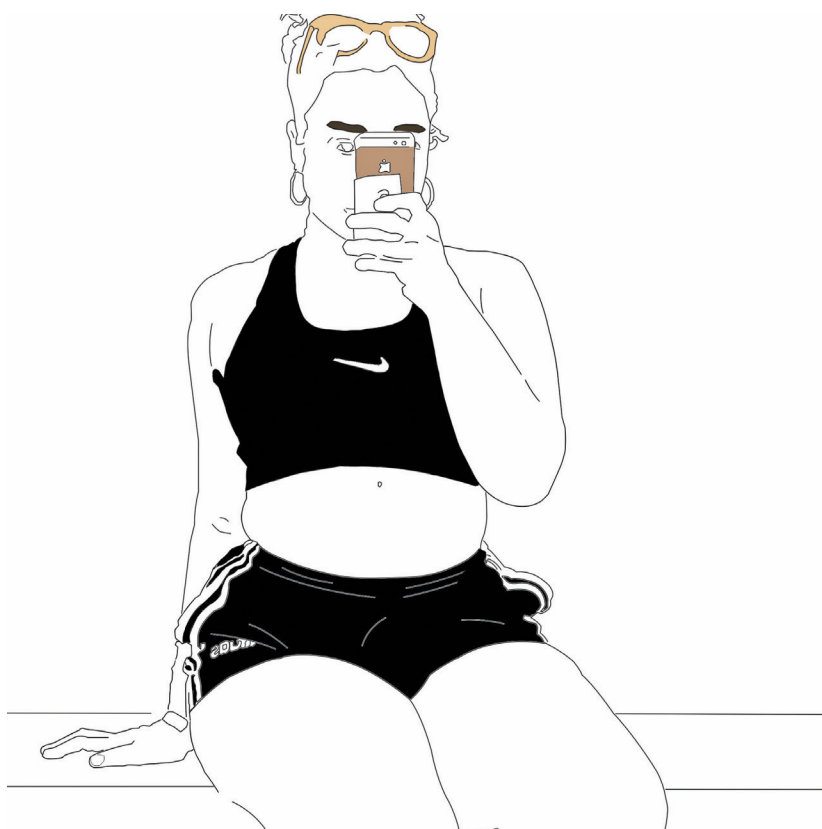


the days where my mind shirks back from “girl”
the nights when my body screams “boy”
when it cries out to be narrow hips and flat chest and sharp
edges
when the curve of my waist and flesh on my bones
become too heavy to bear
my God comes to me

She wraps me in Her arms
and She whispers in my ear
“sweet child
I am in every curve of your body
and every ache of your soul
the swells of your shape are not those of a woman
the curves of your body are those of you
and they may never take that from us”
Her fingers trace Her scriptures on my skin
Her warmth marks Her love on my soul

my body is not perfect
but it is perfectly designed by Her divine mind
so when they call me abomination
my peace lies in knowing I'm a creation
of Her beautiful light
I once thought my own body a curse
too fat, too scarred, too feminine
She caresses it like a blessing
so holy, so sacred, so elegant

my body is Her temple where
I'm still wrestling with addressing what it
might mean to love my God's creation
my body is a prayer in a tongue
so beautiful and strange
I don't yet have the words to speak
my body is a hymn half-written
still in the making
still becoming
but God damn if I don't want to
sing it to the heavens



blackgrimes

Filmon Abraham

Southside Dirty T (Kilometer Highway Blues)

Alan Parra

• — □ — •

Ring on my doorbell
I ain't got no mail
Only thing I got is bills
Nickels turn to dimes turn to dollar bills
Been chasin' for a minute I just wanna meal
I won't ever stop til I cop a ceil
I won't ever stop make a highlight reel
I won't ever stop til I cop a mil

But I know that shit rare
Prolly stay poor, get caught up finessing a Dell
I mean shit I can sing but I sure ain't Adele
But I got vision as deep as a well
Been lookin so far off the tower I fell
Into this pool of despair
But don't want welfare
Trust in my odds so I'll see how I fare

Porque
Vengo de inmigrante
Aspiraciones grandes
Le llevo la comida a mi gente de adelante
En la fila
No se fijan
No escuches aunque digan lo que digan
Ellos odian y no ligan lo que ligas
Y te matan si tú miras la vecina
Ellos juegan pero no en la misma liga

Yo escucho bombazos
Y siguen mis pasos
Plebes con tazos
Y llenan sus vasos
Con agua de pipa
Dan gracias arriba
Y toman su pipa
Trabajo en la milpa
Me duelen mis tripas
Your shot was just cheap man
Don't see our achievement
The bread we retrieving
Go back to our homes
I'm all alone
Feeling caught up and misled in this dome
Jaula de oro, throne
My only contact, home

Got em on speed dial
I'm feeling all these miles
We got in between
Turn to a fiend
No one to blame but myself
I'm feeling so damned by myself
Like do I belong in a cell
Or are those the lies that they tell
Public stay glued to the tel

Liberty bell
Done cracked
Money lack
Don't balance my till
The pressure keep building until
I run outta breath and I'm leaving no will

Ring on my doorbell
I ain't got no mail
Only thing I got is bills
Nickels turn to dimes turn to dollar bills
Been fastin' for a minute I just wanna meal
I won't ever stop til I cop a ceil
I won't ever stop make a highlight reel
I won't ever stop til I cop a mil

Ode to the Central Valley (San Joaquin)

Jamie Flores

• — ◻ — •

Home.

Where are you from?

California.

Where?

Hanford.

Where is that?

Fresno.

Where is that?

Where is that?

Where is home?

Home is in the forgotten place,
Looked past by the Bay and SoCal.
No hate to them, but we're here too.
WE'RE HERE TOO.
You cross us on the 5.

We are campos of campos beyond belief.
Donde se cultiva el tomate
Y la cebolla
Y la fresa.

Es donde se cultiva toda la fruta y vegetales.
Donde The Real California Cheese comes from.

Where is that?
Where is home?

You know you are home when you start to smell the cow manure.
You know you are home when you see all the dried-up fields.
You know you are home when you passed by the good ol' corner
store where you would go for
some Hot Cheetos and Slurpees.
Home is where it doesn't rain and when it does,
"IT'S RAINING!" shouts everyone.

Home is where we can talk about how awful it is to live there,
Waiting for the day to escape.
But when someone says something about home,
Silence.

This is home.
This is love.
Here's to you,
San Joaquin.

Empowered by SpearIt

Hisrael Carranza



Last semester, I started a journey into uncharted territory when I started my first day at Gonzaga University School of Law. Even though I was met with hospitality and assigned several great professors and faculty, the experience was nerve-wracking. My experience was made less anxious during the first week when I walked into my Criminal Law class. In that class, I encountered a pleasant surprise. The professor teaching the class was someone who looked like they came from a similar demographic as mine. Without knowing him personally, I immediately felt that I could relate to him. Seeing him in front of the class gave me a sense of belonging.

I remember asking myself why this professor had such an impact on me that

“Without knowing him personally, I immediately felt that I could relate to him.”

first day. At first, I could not articulate a reason. Up until that day, I never put much thought into the ways our identity and background can change how we perceive our surroundings or even affect how we understand education. That changed during those first few days. I spent whatever little free time I had after all my readings to reflect on the impact he had on me.

As time progressed, I realized that there were two main reasons for this professor’s impact. The first one was that he was the only professor that I could associate with having a similar background to mine. What I saw was a Latino man who could speak both English and Spanish fluently. A Latino man who had a respectable high education, eloquence, and whose presence commanded a room’s attention. On the other hand, I also saw a Latino man whose accomplishments could be undermined because of the visible tattoos on his face. I could relate to that. Needless to say, I saw a reflection of myself in him.

The second reason was his position as a professor. I was proud that I attended a school that hired such a diverse faculty member. I didn't know what to expect from the faculty when I came to law school, but I didn't expect to see him.

“Seeing him in front of the class gave me a sense of belonging.”

When his story was published on the school's social media outlets, I read it, and proudly shared it with my friends and family. I remember bragging about how my school not only had a rich social justice culture but also had this diverse faculty member. My close friends and family could immediately see the parallels of his story to mine and why I was so excited. Not only had Gonzaga taken a risk on me, this law school also openly promoted diversity in its staff.

As the semester progressed, I became acquainted with Professor SpearIt. Like my other professors, he challenged me intellectually and made me reflect on the way I processed information. However, what impressed me most about him was his fearlessness in using controversial topics like prison rape and child pornography to help us understand the pedagogical significance of those subjects. It felt like he chose those highly charged topics to force students to get past the emotional reactions and think about them logically like law students are supposed to. At times, it was hard to get past the almost knee-jerk emotional reactions that his lessons produced. Nevertheless, it was his creative out-of-the-box methods that helped me fully comprehend the ideas he taught.

Seeing him in action, at that level, was empowering. Seeing a Latino man, a Latinx in general, in that position was new to me. My experience with positive affluent Latino men in this setting has been limited. So, to have this particular professor, who challenges the norms and is not afraid to speak his mind, was a gift from above. Not only did he unknowingly make me feel comfortable here at the school, but he also

inspired me to think of the possibilities in my near future. While I understand that not everyone can relate to my specific background and that my experience with this professor might be unique, my hope is that Gonzaga continues to diversify its staff so that it can promote inclusiveness. My hope is that my experience is multiplied to other students with other professors.



• — □ — •

An Everlasting Warrior

Rachel Ho

Terms and Conditions

Lizzie Vosler

• — □ — •

Love is unconditional.

Or, at least, that's what it should be.

Love shouldn't be tied to terms and conditions,
a little line where you sign,
promising to love deeply, wholly,

but only under these terms—
only if your daughter promises the traditional.

The normal,
the safe.

These conditions I never signed up for,
you never brandished that contract in front of me;
no,
I never scrawled my signature across the line for your love;
I just gave it.

Wholeheartedly.

But as soon as you thought I had changed, as soon as you knew,
your love
became

conditional.

Because I didn't fit your idea of conventional.

Your love for me was no longer endless,
now contained inside a box.

Section 3, Sub-section B2a reads:

"I'll love you for always...but only if..."

You had those terms, those rules you had for me,
as soon as I was born,
I grew into your conditions, unknowingly.
I never read the fine print.

You held love to a societal standard, somewhere you thought
you had to be,
But no.
Mama, please.

Love isn't something you can put in a box, with labels and rights
and wrongs,
love is love, Mama, simply.

Except, well, there is one wrong.

I never signed your goddamn terms, Mama;
you forged my signature.

The First

Ashley Sanchez-Garcia



*what made you choose this school?
if you knew it wasn't diverse.*

I have poured my heart out,
for once,
I am vulnerable in a classroom that does not look like me.

what made me choose this school?

I hate this question.

because
if I say I loved the vibe of the school when I visited—
that I loved seeing a sense of belonging in the students—
then maybe it will undermine my criticisms of
a white faculty,
a white syllabus,
a white classroom.
but if I say I chose the school because of the financial aid,
I risk being seen as the
brown girl on scholarship:
I am here because I am Latinx;
I didn't earn my spot because of my intelligence.

*do you want me to answer this now?
sure.*

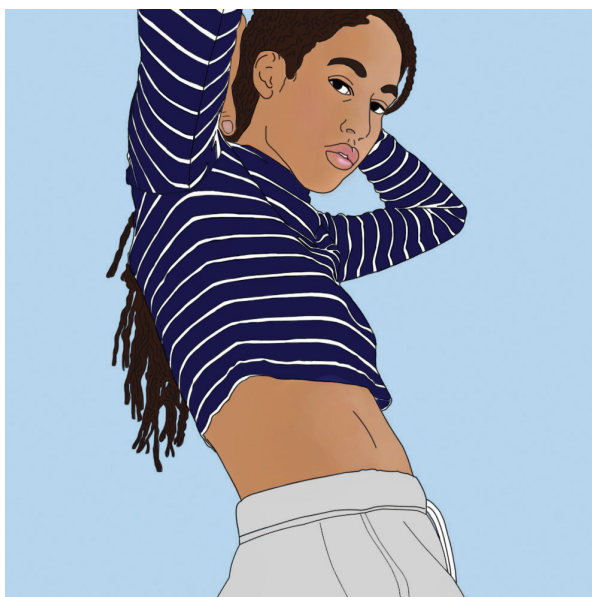
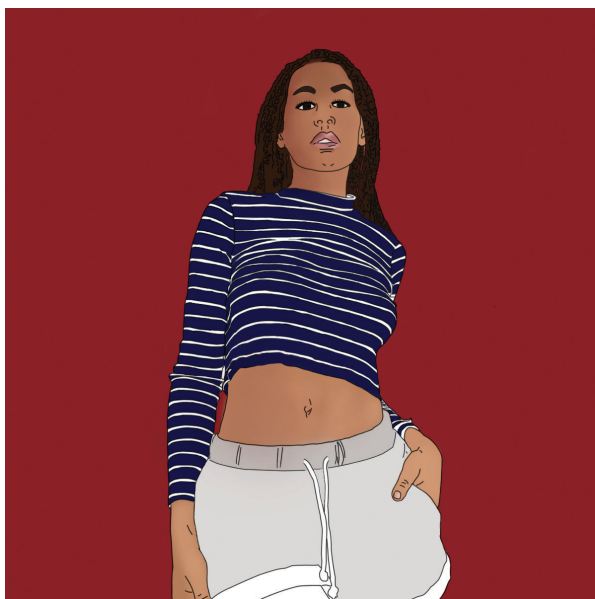
I regret asking.
I don't want to explain myself,
because I only have a few minutes and
really, I cannot articulate myself in that time.
I say something that is only half-true, but
these are the words whispering in my ear as I reflect.

my reason for existence at college is much more than:
I am trying to get into medical school.

when I stepped foot onto Gonzaga,
I carried generations of Nicaraguans and Salvadorans on my
back,
holding hands with my little brother
as he saw a university campus for the first time,
walking next to my mother.
she had tears in her eyes,
and I was scared,
but
my dad's words at the airport
kept me balanced:
princesa, you will succeed;
we are so proud of you.

when I chose to come here,
it was for them;
it was for my parents' immigration stories;
it was for the Bay;
it was for the Canal;
it was for the paleta man and
the cafeteria workers at my high school;
it was for my ancestors and my grandparents
and every little brown girl who has never seen
a brown doctor, much less a brown woman in medicine,
for every member of my familia in Central America,
those names I don't know by heart, the ones my mother alludes
to
in phone calls and chats over café with my grandma.
it is all for them.

it didn't matter where I went as long as I was continuing my
education.
that is all my parents needed from me
because I am changing narratives here.
I am the first to finish high school and go to college,
and I am an American Dream realized.



• — □ — •

Katherine

Filmon Abraham

Ashamed

Jamie Flores

• — □ — •

Ashamed

I am ashamed

Ashamed of my looks

Dying my hair lighter

Staying out of the sun so my skin wouldn't darken

I am ashamed

Pretending not to know Spanish while in class

Speaking it slowly and with an accent

And acting like I wasn't with *that* woman who was speaking

Spanish in public

Acting like I didn't hear her

When in reality I have been hearing that voice my whole life

I was turning my back on my people

My people who do everything with extreme passion

Yet I was not passionate about me

I am ashamed

Ashamed that I tried to erase my heritage

Ashamed that I had the privilege of blending in with my fairer
skin

Ashamed that I forgot what my mother went through to achieve
that *so-called* "American Dream"

But here I am

I am a Mexican American

No hyphen needed

No separation between the two

A Mexican American whose passion is being reignited

Newfound Latin flair

Ashamed

I was ashamed

**Message from: “Nobody” —
Phoenix, AZ 3:14 am**

Alan Parra

— □ . □ . □ —

Waiting day to day to die and go to Mexico
Never known a nobody
Never doomed a soul
Cause when I had to flee I did it all alone
No ven el odio it's in they safe zone
Y lo que hablan those words ain't their own

What to you ebonics
My everyday common
Hooked on the phonics
An error you on it

I guess it ain't disrespect
But when you dissect
There is no line in my sect
Language be fluid
Cambios amenudo
And no I ain't stupid
Parqueado en el otro lado
En este amenazado
Pues sale más caro
To stay and to weather the draft
Que vivir pobre y comer Kraft
Trabajo afuera pues that be my craft
Workin so hard but I'm low on the cash
Workin so hard but they eyein my stash

Like will I pop into the dresser
The House getting messy
Inmigrante es decir
Que se me hace fácil
Tomar vida gratis

Pasame el lápiz
Para escribir no
Fox got they story but really don't know
The sacrifice made when we go and leave home
Lo hago por amor tú hablas por temor
Crees que mi fin es odiar al amo
But I got no massa
Generalize factors
Hacernos los malos
Won't be a scape-cabrón
You just be actors
All part of a play
Got something of your own say
Si no pues then get out the way

Never known a nobody
Never doomed a soul
Cause when I had to flee I did it alone

No ven el odio it's in their safe zone
Y lo que hablan those words ain't their own
Callin my baby I pick up the phone
Worried my wife livin out on her own
Will I come back to bullets on my home
Swear if it happens I'll go for the throne
Full overthrow
Hate comin at me I just wanna go
Know that the fighting won't help with the load
But I gotta fight don't fit into the mold
Yelling that beaners should stay in the cold
Die in the desert and never grow old

That's what they get make the government scold
Due to the fact that my wetbacks ain't fold

Won't quit
No spliffs
Send the money to my daughter
Watch it fly over the border
I ain't thirsty for no water
I just wanna hear her voice up
Maybe she can cause a switch up
In this system that we live in
Really it ain't our decision
You ain't see our erudition
Live my life in these conditions
In the kitchen doin dishes

For the same damned people that be rippin on my kind
Really ain't inclined
To treat them too kind
To stay here all silent while watching em whine
About they life
Complain bout they wife
Don't see the strife
On color rely
To qualify empathy or spend some time
Seeing us cry
We ain't malicious but maybe we fly
Too close to the sun and like Icarus die
So many promises now I just cry
Knowing my living now really ain't mine

Never known a nobody
Never doomed a soul
Cause I lost too many friends down in Calexico
Waiting day to day to die or sent to Mexico
Waiting day to day to die or back to Mexico

A Product of Immigrants

Andrew Sepulveda

• — □ — •

I am a product of immigrants
But America is all my family has known

Myself
My parents
My grandparents
My great-grandparents
Have always called America home

I am a product of immigrants
But I don't know who those immigrants are

I know that I am Mexican
But that's as much as I know about my heritage
I might still have relatives there somewhere
But it's been so long
I'm not certain I'll ever know for sure

I am a product of immigrants
But I have never been to where I claim my origin

Across the border not very far
The land my ancestors come from
Yet I have never seen it
All I know is from the stories that my grandma passed down
Which were passed down by her own

I am a product of immigrants
But sometimes I think of whether I can really be called that

At times I feel like an imposter in this brown body
Too Hispanic to be white
Yet too American to be Latino

The people across the border I claim to be just like me
Are separated by a wall
One set in place by my preexisting privilege
Simply by being able to call America the only home I know
But they deserve a chance at the same life I have

I am a product of immigrants
And despite not being “as Hispanic”
As the people across the border
I know we are fundamentally the same

I am a product of immigrants
And even though I am privileged
I am aware that others are not

I am a product of immigrants
And I don't have to let my privilege create a wall
I can use it as a stance to speak for others
Who are unable to speak for themselves



Standing in Tijuana, Mexico lies a portion of the border wall that is coated in bright, colorful paint. Looking across the arbitrary line to the US, I can see towns where I can pass freely between, without question, due to the color of my skin and citizenship status. This bright, colorful area is drowning with darkness. Dark, creeping feelings line the razor wire and monuments with memories of tear gas, family separation, physical violence, and racism. Dark and arbitrary.



Arbitrary

Anna Ogilvie

A New Leaf

Maya Coseo



No one was expecting a leaf to grow
twenty-seven years after Anita.
They all thought that the hill
the tree once grew upon
had been burned, turned infertile.
But now, there is Christine.

The new leaf,
nourished by the humble,
neighboring ford,
was small, fragile, soft, green.
We had been given a chance
to court this tree back to life
and raise it right.

This was a rare opportunity
we couldn't afford to waste.
Hope suddenly seemed eternal.

But for every spring there is a fall
and even once-new leaves eventually
meet their end.
Misremembering, misunderstanding.
Foolish, at-fault.
Liar.

With each belittlement, insult, and
condescending word,
this new leaf dies
a little more.

If history repeats itself,
and we decide to pluck the leaf,
I won't be surprised...
but I will still be disappointed.

**This piece was written prior to Supreme Court Justice Brett
Kavanaugh's confirmation hearing before the United States
Judiciary Committee on October 6, 2018.*



Heavenly Creature

Kathryn Jane Graham

Please Wake Up

Manojprabhakaran Thirupal



Caste:

We were born with;

We lived with;

We may die with it, but

It should not be born again to stratify, oppress, and discriminate

Our future generations. So,

Please wake up now to

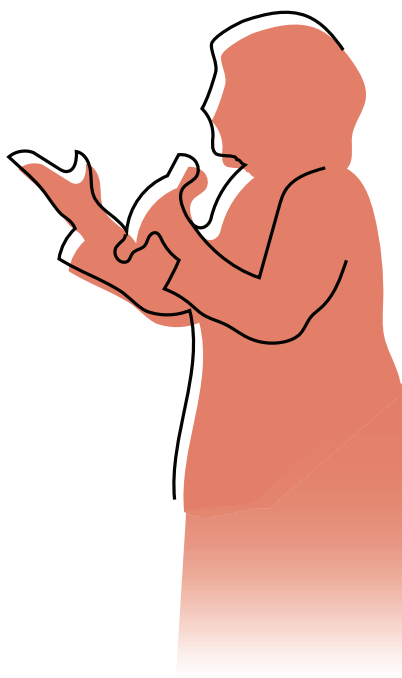
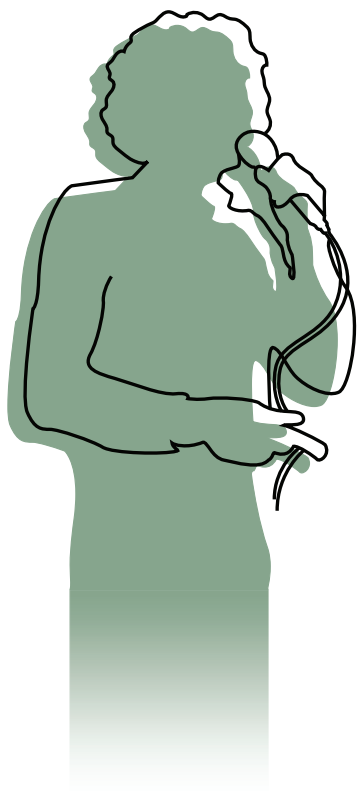
Fight against the stigma of the caste system

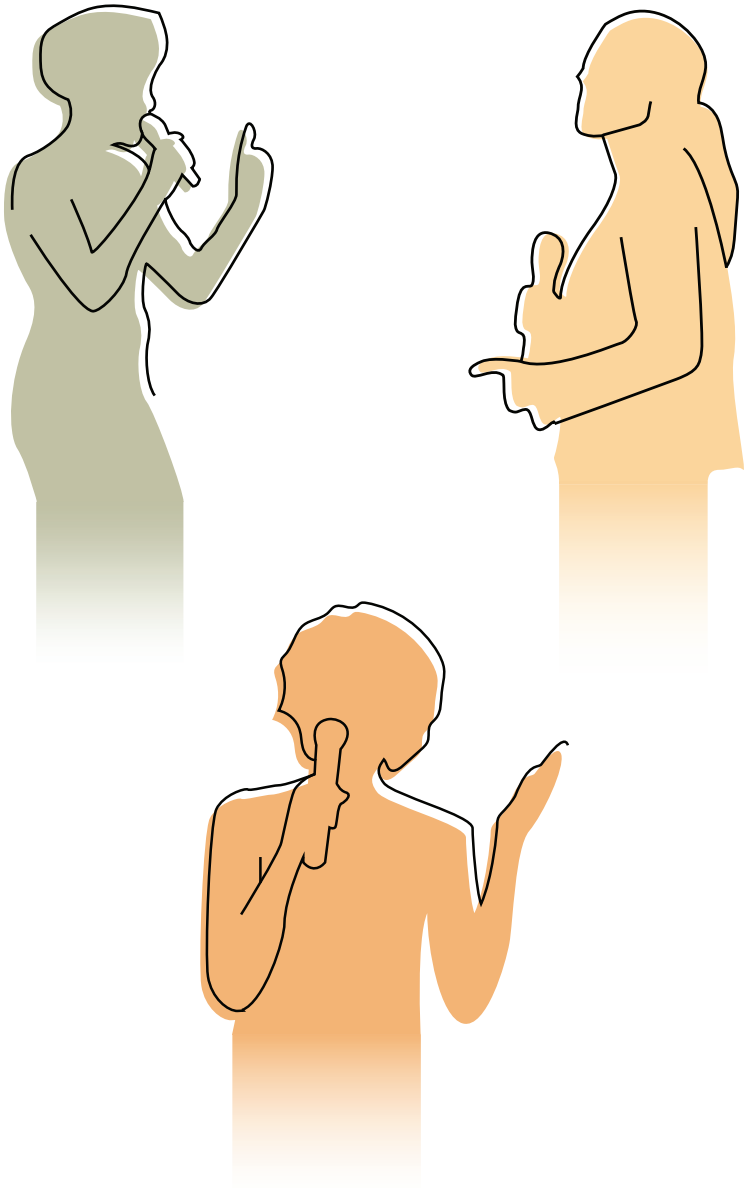
Because we are all born under the same sun and deep blue skies
here.

Everyone has the same right, justice, and freedom to share in the
ground of our Mother Earth.

DIVERSITY MONOLOGUES

presents:





RECLAIMING OURSELVES

• — □ — •

“Far too often, our histories and identities are written and prescribed for us. So in our own words, in our own time, and in our own voices, we are Reclaiming OURselves.”

• — □ — •

Reclaiming OURselves: **9th Annual Diversity Monologues**

Writing is empowering. The act of putting one's story on paper is a revolutionary act that takes courage and love—for self and for others. These stories come from students who are determined to use their stories to inspire change, to use their words to reclaim their narratives that have often been overlooked by society. Reclaiming OURselves is a theme that centralizes the healing and the repair of broken narratives through spoken word.

We are excited for Nikkita Oliver to emcee and perform at this Diversity Monologues. Working at the intersections of arts, law, education, and community organizing, Oliver strives to create experiences which draw us closer to our humanity, to engage what we see happening now, and to imagine what we hope to see in the future.

I want to especially thank and recognize the student planning committee who have given so much time, energy, and heart: Nodia Rogers, Ronnie Estoque, Jordan Gonzalez, and Zabelle Messick.

And, I am grateful to the faculty who have given their time and energy to support the participants as they walk the journey of writing and performing their monologues: Allen Baros, Ana Roncero-Bellido, Jonathan Rossing, Juliane Mora, Jeremy Gordon, and Karen Petruska.

Lastly, I want to thank Gonzaga's Student Media for sharing these stories in the *Our Voices* journal.

In peace,
Deb Ellis
Unity Multicultural Education Center

Fractioned

Jordanne Beckwith-Barros



I am... Well, I am a lot of things.

I am a woman and a zag.

I am independent and strong.

I am so much more than I lead on.

I am a passing white Latina and hyper aware of this because

I have been forced to choose:

To live out the culture I was raised in,

Or

A culture that everyone else sees me in.

I have been forced to fraction myself... am I half Peruvian? A
quarter German? What about Italian?

To this day I still get asked:

Do you even speak Spanish?

How much German do you have in you?

Are you sure you're Italian?

I wasn't allowed to embrace all fractions of myself and had to
live out one identity at a time.

I try so hard to live holistically, but I am torn.

Torn between who I am and who people want me to be.

In the winter, no one thinks that a true person of color could be
so pale, which means I don't make the cut.

And in the summer, all I hear is:

Where are you from? What are you?

Because of this, I am usually the one in group dialogues to sit
quietly and listen to those around me, listening to
perspectives of those who fully embrace their melanin
or fully embrace their lack of it.

I am constantly wondering:

Do I belong here, there, anywhere, nowhere?

I was continuously thrown onto a chart. A bar chart, pie
chart... somehow, I was the plot that always got
scattered.

I was forced to check those boxes saying I was this OR that, and again, I am torn.

I was only able to live out one bar or slice of life at a time.

In one bar, I am being forced to fit into white culture because assumption was the easiest thing for everyone else, and in another slice, I am being forced to act as my ancestors and embrace my Peruvian culture.

Even the simplest things like my hair make me so self-aware.

Growing up, I hated my curls.

As a little girl, I was told I needed to fit in, which meant having stick straight hair.

I hated my curls because that meant I wasn't doing my part at fitting in, so I used keratin and hot tools to get that stick straight hair that I saw as the ultimate beauty standard.

Still, many think I'm just another white girl because the hair on the crown of my head is straight and covers my curls.

For so long, I tried to hide that slice of Latina in me, but now it is the identity I am most proud of.

The straight half of my hair, tied up just like the identities I try to hide at the time, because all I want to do is belong.

It made me wonder,

Are the connections I have to my roots enough?

Was tying up one of the strongest connections to my white
identity enough to be seen as a person of color?

Or was I only seen as white because of my passing?

I realized that I am more than any bar chart, pie chart, or scatter
plot you can find on excel.

I realized what a huge mistake I had made. Half my curls gone,
half my chart hidden.

I realized that my hair was damaged by the toxins in the air, and
those toxins were assumptions.

Assumptions of who I am and where I come from.

Now,

Here I am, grown into my whole self.

There are no simple solutions to complex problems like this
one.

The complexity of identity and how it's prescribed,

I decided I'm tired of trying to describe.

Now,

I know it's okay to be a 2A on top and a 2C on bottom.

Now,

I am still a lot of things, and I don't have to choose between any
of them.

I refuse to be reduced to a fraction.

Dear zags

August Corppetts and Fese Elango

— □ — • — □ —

Dear zags— I am not your token

Dear zags— I am not your prize

Dear zags— we are not your statistic

I am not your marketing ploy

Not your web page model, prop for admissions day, or sob story
for donors

Dear zags— we are not yours

See, I'm barely mine

I've been taught to boil myself down— skin parts of my melanin
Time after time fall in line with the mission but what I'm missin
is myself

For you?

For this?

Dear zags— This place. This space.

Is not mine and time after time I try

And remember why I cried

When I opened my acceptance letter

Big, Blue, and Beautiful

And why I cry

When I see the damage done to friends once

Bold, Black, and Beautiful

Black Women:

Underrepresented, Undervalued, Overworked

You poke and you prod exoticizing my existence,

all within the excuse of your ignorance

As your hand reaches closer and closer to my hair (without
asking),

my soul sinks lower and lower

How dare you believe that you can infringe on the very magic
that is me

You think...to be black and proud is to be radical,
but to be black and proud is to be **FREE**

You see?

Picture if you were me?

Dear zags— there's a conversation needed to be had that's left
unspoken

A variance in the experience between the majority and the
tokened

Dear zags— how nice it'd be to walk this university and not
worry

To go to class, the COG, and then to bed

And not internalize the microaggressions that are said

Around you?

Dear zags— you question our competence based on the color of
our skin

We wish you would judge us by the content within— **don't fear
our melanin**

Dear zags— we can't really get by
without allies

WHERE ARE YOU?

WHERE WERE YOU? When

The teacher read the N word in class and I looked around to see
if anyone was as shocked as me

Where were you when?

My professor asked “what are you” and after my explanation
still continued to question

Where were you when?

My black classmates and I were leaving to attend last year’s
Diversity Monologues and the professor said that all of
the diversity was leaving the class

Where were you when?

The post racial speaker boiled my identity down to a “funny
color”

WHERE WERE YOU?

Thank you,

Next

Dear zags

This is our time, this is our space
Reclaiming ourselves in this very place
Dear zags—

We deserve GU just as much as you

Despite the doubt we are:

Bold, Black, and Beautiful

No more will we question our worth

We are worthy

No longer will we allow you to define the capability of our
minds

We are intelligent

We are barely hanging on but choose to stay
For the next black girls who come here someday
To feel affirmed and uplifted and empowered
We’ll do all we can within our power

Grocery Store

Asha Douglas



Walking through the store, I feel eyes on me,
surprise on me,
despise on me,
like I stole something from them.
Isn't it funny how they stole mine?
We all know a good home is hard to find,
when the prices go up and morality descends,
all while on us our family depends.

Why must we fight to have a home?
In the beginning, Africa was everyone's birthplace.
Of course, according to them, we can barely have a home,
poor, beaten, labeled as the inferior race.

A white woman, standing in the frozens,
pushing her young daughter behind her back,
glared at me,
stared at me,
dared me to go back to my own land.
Huh.

Isn't it funny how I was taken from the land to which she wants
me to go back,
while I stand and demand she doesn't refer to me as a black,
dangerous... wild... animal.

White refuses to recognize that
brown is always black in their eyes.
Don't expect me to stand aside

while my Filipino heritage is being denied.

My mother never knew her identity,
because redneck was the ruling entity
in a small hick town where she was called a disease,
and little white kids mocked her dirty brown knees.
To my mother's siblings, the culture was lost,
because to my lola it was worth the cost
to give them a life better than her own.
White-washed melanin was her way to atone.

Because of this choice, I am here today.
Whites assuming I am a black cliché.
They all see my skin and are quick to assume
that I'm an exotic — not allowed in the room.
I guess in reality, the fault is mine.
I thought we were done with the white and colored signs.

A security guard came over to "handle the situation."
I was suddenly overwhelmed with a terrifying sensation.
As I looked to the ground,
all I felt
was my heart start to pound,
eyes locked on the gun on his belt.
His hand massaged the holster
as he walked a little closer.
Daring me to run away,
to be target practice so he could play.

I couldn't move.

Why does a security guard even need a gun?

So dangerous that he'd shoot me in the back?
Of course for "the protector" that's half the fun,
when the real prize is to mute me because I'm black.
Why can't he see that I'm a human being?
A living person with a different face.
From his eyes, I knew he would never stop believing
that his gun was God-sent to put me in my place.

Regardless,
I stood tall.
Minority does not define me,
and if it tries me,
I know it lies to me.

Do not label me as a minority,
because with that you cripple me.
I am the result of 400 years of dreams,
and there's nothing minor about that.
When you label me, I become a number,
lost in the database of your discriminatory/stereotyping
subconscious.
I am so much more than that.
Try as hard as you can to clip my wings,
but know this: I will fly, and I will touch the sun.

Nana Fici

Nila Hoxha



Her name was Fici, or as I called her, Nana Fici, in order to show respect that she was much older than me. Nana Fici was a peculiar old woman in my grandmother's neighborhood. She was always dressed in black, her fingers filled with gold rings, and her gray hair was put in two braids that reached past her hips. She carried a distinct cigarette smell, very strong, sometimes unbearable.

You could hear her yelling at the neighbor's kids to not play in front of her porch. Everyone disliked the rough mean old lady, but I was drawn to her strangeness and strength. She was everything I wasn't allowed to be. So, instead of playing with kids, I spent most of my time with Nana Fici and her friends, as they gossiped over the strong smell of Turkish coffee.

I grew up in a country where my voice had no importance. They taught me shame. Don't raise your voice; don't speak to adults; don't express your opinion; sit like a lady; close your legs; don't laugh a lot; don't give off emotions. They taught me to be careful because girls are always the ones to be blamed. They taught me to not make mistakes because girls don't make mistakes; we can't risk it. I grew up with the sounds of the TV informing of another killing, fathers that kill daughters, brothers that kill sisters, the Albanian woman killed by her breath. A killing every month. Little country, three million people.

It was normal for teachers to beat up students in my middle school. And it wasn't a surprise nor a secret that teachers were more prone to beat up girls who were caught breaking a school rule rather than guys. Because you expect guys to break rules, but God forbid girls.

One day, a girl in my class was caught trying to skip school. The teacher dragged her back to our class, his hand on the girl's hair, with so much hatred in his eyes. He started beating her as we watched, like always. She cried. Our unmoving faces afraid of the pain a hand can carry. Our teacher's inhumane nature, the hand hit harder. She yelled, but his screams overpowered hers saying, "You know I hate it when girls skip school." I hated myself in that moment. I felt every cell in my body freeze, the anger inside me humming to escape, while my face was silent and calm on the outside. I didn't raise my voice. I didn't stop it. I wish I would have said something, even if that meant being beaten up with the other girl. That would have hurt less.

I kept my face blank as I started on slowly being consumed by my own hatred and anger.

I realized in that moment why I was so drawn to Nana Fici. I wanted to be an old lady like her. I wanted people to fear me so they would let me live in peace. Nothing is more hated in Albania than a young girl. I wanted to be old, feared, intimidating so that no one would approach me. Truth is, I just wanted to be treated like a human being, and I thought I had to be terrifying to deserve that. I know that now I can talk; I can scream; I can yell; I can fight back; I can protect the thirteen year old girl I was. As you can see, I am not scared anymore. A fire ablaze in my eyes I keep stored.

Anchor Baby

Daisy Montalvo



We were probably reading from *The House on Mango Street*, and it was in the fourth grade when my teacher told us what it meant to be *Chicana*. It meant your parents were from México, but you were born here. And that was me! Since then, I have developed many names for the person that I am today.

Chicana, by far, is my favorite because of its conciseness.

Mexican American if I want to be PC about it.

Latina when I don't want to waste my time.

Hispanic, because, for some reason, that still slips out.

American, according to my Mexican family members.

Mexican to my fellow Latinos.

To me, I'm just a brown girl trying not to slip under.

All these to describe my single self. My list continues to accumulate more and more to fit the understanding of the people I come across. The other day, I heard another one referring to people like me: "*Anchor baby*." Referring to first generation Americans, daughters and sons of immigrants.

This is nothing new. Our, MY, American-ness being reduced by the ever transforming illusion of what real American is. This illusion will likely cause tension forever. Someone will always hold an ideal over my head telling me I'm not ME enough. I'm not jumping through any more hoops.

Call me an anchor baby, and I'll tell you about how I've soared high for being buried in the ground.

First in my family to go to college, working two or more jobs
always.

I claim my space in classroom conversations.

I make my voice heard.

Also,

In a society that tells us brown women not to,

I love myself.

I respect myself deeply.

And I swear

That it's this transnational love that keeps me going.

Call me an anchor baby. I anchor the dreams of my matriarchs
into reality.

No man will lay his hand on me.

I do things for me.

I buy bougie lattes and drive to the beach just 'cause.

I go dancing with my friends in short dresses; I read books; I
buy myself expensive candles.

These things that make my heart glow, I don't take them for
granted.

Because my matriarchal ancestors, your lives belonged to men
you did not love.

Men who thought your body was a place to release their rage,
their sexual frustration, and everything in between.

Claiming my own life to live is a big Fuck You to machismo.

I live for my mother and all the mothers before her.

I'm sorry you had to wait so long.

Call me an anchor baby, and I'll tell you about my anchor
mama.

Supporting three children on her back in raging floodwaters,
Three decades of work and it's not over yet,

Minimum wage but she does the most.
Puts food on our table but also on the table thousands of miles
away,
Pays for the lawsuit back en el rancho,
Buys medicine para el primo,
Pays to repair the family home,
One dollar goes a long way in the name of love.

I don't have to justify my existence, my family's existence or my
immigrant mother's existence.
Though my family has nothing to our name except for my
mother's kindest heart and strongest devotion.
We're not going anywhere whether we be poor, rich, educated
or not, loud, obnoxious, great at dancing, hardworking,
or lazy.

Sorry.

I can't hear you undermining my identity over the sound of my
family being together.

La Lista (Hombres sin Nombres)

Alan Parra



Long gone

Long gone

Me levanto y escucho la lista

Nombres y nombres y nombres

Estás ciego pues checa tu vista

Nombres y nombres y nombres

Es la chica pues si es la misma

Nombres y nombres y nombres

Desvanece no deja ni pista

Nombres y nombres y nombres

Desaparecidos

Parecidos

A mis primos

Es lo que a sido

Comprendido

Es un ciclo

Ahora vivo

Convencido

De lo mismo

Solo un chico

No más pido

Un momento

Me levanto y escucho la lista
Nombres y nombres y nombres
Estás ciego pues checa tu vista
Nombres y nombres y nombres
Es la chica pues si es la misma
Nombres y nombres y nombres
Desvanece no deja ni pista
Nombres y nombres y nombres

Know that she gone
Gone with the wind
Can't sing my song
Without her in it
But
I guess that I'm used to this shit
Nights under lights at la myst
Digo ay si señora
Soy de sonora
Y es la hora
Sé mi persona

Just for a bit
Dance for a while and jump in the whip
Tour in the town that we grew up in
Hearing the sounds of this city of sin
Can't talk now so let's put a pin

On the subject
Keep talkin my line you don't respect
Know that I don't want to ship wreck
Tied to the Narcos but who ain't
You got too much you got to say

I say too much and I don't play
Need you a rescue it's mayday
Can't wait for a check on your payday

Don't mean to be rude when I walk away
Relate to you I could talk all day
Wish that I felt some kind of way
But I just can't evade

All of the facts that I learnt in my life
Know that I'm young and I can't have no wife
Life that you want so full of bad strife
Running from guns gotta sleep with a knife
So gahdamn fine but I've seen your type
Caught in the hype
Few weeks go by
Livin the life
High as a kite
House broken in you get beat with a pipe
Know that you ripe
But split decisions they come with a price
Letting you down umma try to be nice
Guess maybe leaving you wasn't quite wise

Porque? Porque??
Pues porque

Me levanto y escucho la lista
Nombres y nombres y nombres
Estás salvo pues checa tu visa
Nombres y nombres y nombres
Es la chica pues si es la misma

Nombres y nombres y nombres
No quedo nada más que seniza
Nombres y nombres y nombres

Desaparecidas
Parecidas
A mis primas

Es lo que a sido
Comprendido
Es un ciclo

Ahora vivo
Convencido
No es lo mismo

Solo un chico
Entre aviso
No hay engaño

Nombres sin hombres sin nombres
Hombres sin sombras
Demonios en cofres
Es lo que piensa
La gente que vive feliz
I just can't live with the guilt
Suertudo porque está tan gris
Hole got so big I can't fill

Try to fill it I'm feelin so off
Reach the ceiling but I ain't forgot
People behind me hard place and a rock

Shoulda escaped and I know it's my fault
Know I can't save the whole world
Riskin my life for a smile and a twirl
The thought of a pearl
Ice scream swirl
I'll scream girl

Whatchu doin?

Chasin happiness to death
Livin life I wake upset
Worth my time well no not yet
None these women that I met
Feel like you
Apology past due
Guess it's too
Fuckin soon

It's too soon

Me levanto y escucho la lista
Nombres y nombres y nombres
Lamentó me la llevó en misa
Nombres y nombres y nombres
Es la chica pues si es la misma
Nombres y nombres y nombres
Todavía escucho su risa
Nombres y nombres y nombres

And they don't mean shit to you
People on their fake news

Hear them what do they mean to you?
Is it a fucking game?

God sake
All snakes
Know you lucky, I ain't sayin this
To make you feel offended
Guessing you too soft for this
Just get off my case
Ignorance it make me sick
Ignorance it make you bliss

So who am I
Fronterizo con orgullo
I reside
En medio de dos mundos
I confide
En nadie, no soy mudo
But I find
Cuando hablo también sudo
Cause my side
No importa, tu en lo tuyo
See my kind
Y actúas rudo
But you'll find
Este mundo no es tuyo
Undermined
Cada día reconstruyó

An Open Letter to the ICE Agent on the Greyhound Bus

Dulce Rivera-Zepeda



I learned to call this country home
well before I learned how to speak
the colonizer's tongue;
I mispronounced my name
in exchange for my English Language Learner's diploma,
pledged allegiance to a country that once vowed to get rid of
me,
that treats the people I love like less than human.
How dare you question my right to exist
in this country.
Don't you forget,
state sanctioned terrorism
is still terrorism.
Don't you forget,
that you have contributed to the trauma of innocent children,
that the vest you wear represents the pain my loved ones carry.
So when you ask me where I am from,
I will tell you
that the places I call home lie on opposite sides of la frontera.
That el Norte is like a genie.
It has granted me three wishes,
but they came with strings attached.
With the expectation that I would dive right into its precious
melting pot
except the strings are more like shackles,
the pot more like an ocean.

And as I struggle to find my next breath of air,
my beloved Morelia pulls me up to the surface.
She embraces me with a hug that says,
“welcome home my child.”
She wraps my shivering body with a warm blanket,
hands me a hot cup of atole with pan dulce,
and when I must leave,
she sends me off with una bendición,
en el nombre del Padre, del Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo.
So on days like today,
when I am unable to answer your questions,
and I find myself drowning once again,
I will turn to my patria’s blessings for strength.
And when I surrender my passport,
know that I am not giving up,
I am choosing my battles.
Know that I understand that it is my brownness
that makes you question my worth.
Know that next time we meet face to face
I will be armed,
armed with my rights,
and I will not be afraid to pull the trigger,
to fight and resist
until the day you stand behind bars,
ICE dismantled and prosecuted.
I will fight till the day mi gente knows liberation.

Tough Love

Melina Benjamin and Michael Tanaka

— □ — • — □ —

She is a survivor.
Of more things than I know of.
Of more things than she'll ever tell me
to keep me safe.

Battambang, Cambodia

Gardena, California

A curious student
who rode her bike to school every day.
A refugee in a new country
she only believed she would visit in fairytales.

A wide-eyed tomboy,
an artist at heart.
A self-made woman
in a male dominated world.

A different kind of mother.
But I've come to learn,
the best kind of mother
for me.

She tells me I'm American,
not Asian. I'm white
because I grew up in the same neighborhood
her father used to go to mow lawns and prune bushes.

1997

White picket fences,
white painted houses,

white people.
The epitome of the end goal:
The American dream.
Or so she thought.

That because I don't speak Japanese,
I must not be Japanese.
That with our language gone,
my cultural identity irrelevant.

That a good education
in a safe neighborhood
with a roof over our head
means we finally made it.

Too bad it only took 3 generations in this country.
She tells me to work, work, work.
That I should never dream little.
That I should know what I'm worth.
That I'm too good to ever let someone take advantage of me.
She tells me she knows I'm capable,
she trusts me,
and she's excited.
And that hits me.
Hard.

She tells me,
be thankful for what you have,
be humble for who you are.
To the plantation worker from Hawaii
and the farmer from Fresno,
I say thank you.
But this is America,
the promised land that doesn't keep its promises,
where if you work hard and you do well,

don't work hard and do well,
there's no difference.
Where what is on the outside matters
just as much as the inside.
Where the color of your skin
and the slant in your eyes
define you more than your own personality.
You see I'm pissed off,
but I'm also thankful because

America taught me to find my voice
through an unreserved anger,
to speak against the status quo
and stand for what's right.

Guard your heart.
Don't feel so much.
Family is everything.
Turn against your family,
you turn against yourself.
Be strategic.
Be cautious.
Don't trust anyone so easily, Melina.
You're going out today?
Then you're not going out tomorrow.
Don't come back too late.
You've become too ambitious
about changing the world
for places and people who already seem lost.

Just wait until you grow up,
you'll see I'm right.
The way you love
is dangerous.

At home, I am a disgrace,
constantly breaking rules
and fighting battles
I had no chance of winning,
challenging the very systems
I was raised in.
At school, I am an activist —
advocating for and supporting marginalized groups
this university doesn't account for.

But, who am I really?
I am a whole person.
With two histories to my name
and a growing awareness that can't be stopped.
I am not less of either,
and I am defying what it means to be both.

My life is a push and pull.
I remind myself that it is often worse in my mind.
My actions are right,
my choices are good
even if I am told the opposite.
My hard work is my own.
It has been a journey to self-assurance.
She does everything out of love,

even if it's not noticeable at first.

I tell myself be steadfast. Be honest.

Say what you mean
and mean what you say.
Love wholeheartedly.
Be forgiving.

From the rice patties of the land of the rising sun
to the barbed wires of Manzanar.
I know my ancestors knew solidarity
even if they couldn't pronounce it.

Because of her,
I am brown-eyed;
Deep, strong

like hers,
like my grandmother's,
like her mother's.
I am intelligent,
inquisitive,
and unapologetic.

I pull myself up because I have to.
I am a storyteller
of the clashes of culture and the beauty that comes from it.
I am a thinker
years ahead of my time.
It was inevitable collateral.

I am proud
of who I am
and where I come from.
A byproduct of my family's instability,
but a symbol of faith
in her eyes.

Because of her
and the life she has given me,
I am different than her.
And that's okay.
Our eyes were never quite the same
anyways, were they?

Contributor Bios

Alan Parra is a junior studying English at Gonzaga University. He was born in Phoenix, Arizona but is a native of the bordertown of Ambos Nogales and often writes about his experiences growing up on both sides of the border.

Andrew Sepulveda is a sophomore majoring in English with a writing concentration and is originally from Los Angeles, California. He is an editor for *Our Voices* and secretary of La Raza Latina, the Latinx club at Gonzaga.

Anna Ogilvie is a senior who loves capturing stories, challenging the status quo, and hearing the truth.

Asha Douglas is from Tacoma, Washington. She grew up in a community that needed to change. She is a strong believer in the idea that you can't move forward until you understand your past. She wrote her piece to honor those who have sacrificed to get her here today.

Ashley Sanchez-Garcia is a sophomore studying biology and social justice. She's probably looking at the sky or journaling. Or both, at the same time.

August Corppetts is a sophomore studying political science.

Daisy Montalvo is a senior studying environmental studies and political science.

Dulce Rivera-Zepeda is a junior majoring in political science and double minoring in communications and women's and gender studies. Her passion for social justice comes from her background as an immigrant. Her goal is to pursue a career that will allow her to pay it forward.

Fese Elango is a sophomore studying biology.

Filmon Abraham is from Seattle. His work consists of digital illustrations, and he tries to be intentional about drawing people of color and people of different backgrounds. He thinks it's really important to have this kind of representation in art, and it's really empowering for him and the people he draws, which usually are his friends. He usually uses reference photos from friends' Instagram pages or from images they already like of themselves, and he tries to draw them in a way where they will feel beautiful and represented in art.

Hisrael Carranza is a first year law student from a diverse area of Northern Utah. He is married and the father of four beautiful children. He plans to use his law school degree to help the voiceless and most vulnerable in our communities.

Jamie Flores is a senior studying public relations with a minor in Spanish.

Jocelyn van der Put is a political science and history major with a future in beekeeping. She gets emotionally involved in home renovation shows and writes while listening to someone crunch their pretzels too loud on the third floor of the library. She still hasn't bought snow boots and is starting to get a little anxious about it.

Jordanne Beckwith-Barros is a junior studying business administration (human resource management and entrepreneurship and innovation).

Kathryn Jane Graham is a junior majoring in public relations with minors in digital marketing and interdisciplinary arts. She is from Chicago, Illinois. Her photos are double exposure. One part of each image is from Salzburg, Austria and the other is from Aix-en-Provence, France.

Lizzie Vosler is a sophomore majoring in secondary education and English writing. She loves reading and writing. She is on the GU Women's Crew team, and when she's not at practice or in class, she loves to spend her time writing or watching Netflix!

Manojprabhakaran Thirupal is a graduate student majoring in organizational leadership and specializing in global leadership. He completed a business and social work degree at Loyola College in Chennai, India. He loves doing research and writing research papers, and he always takes advantage of every opportunity to learn and develop writing skills by getting involved in writing articles for both internal and external journals. He likes to read books, play cricket, watch Netflix, cook and is a fitness freak.

Maya Coseo is a junior majoring in English with a creative writing emphasis and is minoring in Spanish. She's from the Pacific Northwest and wants to continue living here after graduation. She loves to read, write, drink coffee, and draw. Her previously published works include three poems, an opinion piece, and a news article. Someday, she'd like to publish her own poetry book. Oh, she's a feminist, too.

Megan O'Herron is a junior studying journalism. She has a passion for what can best be described as creative storytelling; there are a million stories to share and no one right way to do it, and how exciting is that?!

Melina Benjamin is a sophomore studying international studies and journalism.

Michael Tanaka is a junior studying political science and international studies.

Morgan McCurdy is a freshman math major who loves cozy socks, camomile tea, and warm fires. She's a Buddhist, a self-identified hippie, and can typically be found reading and working on homework. In her free time, she loves to travel and explore new cultures.

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Sarah Kersey is a junior at Gonzaga majoring in English with a writing concentration and minoring in history and women's and gender studies. She has a cat named Violet who once dragged a half-eaten calzone out of the trash can.

Zoe Jaspers is a junior who is double majoring in history and religious studies with additional minors in leadership studies and philosophy. They were born in East Wenatchee, WA, and they drink perhaps just a bit too much coffee. Though they don't know the specifics of their next step after graduating from Gonzaga, they hope to engage in work regarding the preservation and accessibility of LGBTQ+ histories, as well as in the healing and celebration of queer people of faith.



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