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Foreword

Transformative Experiences

“Imagination is not only the uniquely human capacity to envision that which is not, and therefore the fount of all invention and innovation. In its arguably most transformative and revelatory capacity, it is the power that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never shared.” —J.K. Rowling

Twenty-nineteen tasted of transformation. It was a year of social change. A year of environmental change. Of enduring change, rebuilding, and innovation.

On December 28, 2019, a series of seismic events began in the southern region of Puerto Rico, which continues to shake us. The quakes sparked dialogue, action, and empathy. They reshaped lives in and outside of Puerto Rico. The lives of those who have had to abandon their homes, those who have taken matters into their own hands to provide support, those close to the epicenter, those from afar, and the diaspora. Experiences like these can be described as transformational or transformative. According to Tufts University's Strategic Plan, transformational experiences “fundamentally challenge a person's assumptions and preconceptions, as well as their beliefs and values, affecting how they understand themselves, others, and the world” (Monaco and Harris 21). Transformative experiences, in turn, cause change or make change occur.

The arts, in their various forms, allow us to creatively construct narratives and share experiences. They serve as vehicles through which we can process and give meaning to the events that shape our lives. The arts, then, become a space where transformational and transformative experiences can be reshaped and explored. They evoke reflection and change for writers and artists alike, as well as their audience, fostering growth and maturity.

Throughout this sixth issue of *Bridges*, readers will find artistic expressions by students from the Intensive, Basic, Intermediate, Honors and Advanced English courses offered by the College of

General Studies. Short stories, essays, poetry and mini sagas recognized in the English Department's 52nd Annual Literary Contest on April 24, 2019, are showcased, as well as visual artwork by students from our courses. Readers will see how students' personal experiences have been transformed into artistic expressions as many have drawn inspiration from their lives to create their works. They reflect social, political, interpersonal and intrapersonal issues. More specifically, they discuss growth, change, opening up to change, overcoming, discovering a new side of oneself, and maturity.

To our students, thank you for sharing your experiences and ideas with us. To our readers, we hope you enjoy what these talented students have to say.

Lena M. Rodríguez Colón
2019-2020 Bridges Committee

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La Cosecha
by Ángel S. Estruche Santos



Stolen Lily

by Kenneth Gutiérrez de León

My body is a house, a temple,
a shrine held by the bones of a worshipper that died.
It's built up on rocks, on sand,
on grounds that will never feel quite like mine.

My mouth is a bell, a gospel,
an opportunity for you to prey inside me
as my tongue turns bitter, turns sour,
turns blasphemous.

My ears hear a chiming, a rumor,
a harmony of whispers echoing through my thoughts.
Their confession of guilt, of sorrow, of tragedy,
my consciousness has buried yet in dreams I recall.

My mind is riddled by the word, the pain,
the agony caused by an ongoing crusade
while the tremors, the shakes, the haunting,
remind me of the lily you stole
from my grave.

And I will always be

by Somaraliz Vázquez Girona

Your words echoed
Throughout my body once hollow
"Slut"
I was
And I always would be

That word
Rooted in my mind -
Carved on my skin -
It was
And it always would be

Until I understood
Having my body invaded
By perverse hands
Does not make me the "slut" you told me I
was
I am not - And I will never be

Even if I wanted to
Even when I learned to love myself
And I accepted my womanhood
Your insults could not keep me captive
And they never will

And even so
If accept my sexuality
If I love myself
Makes me "slut"
Then I am

But do not expect to insult me
With your social repressions
On the contrary, I pity you
For I do not fear myself
I am free, from you and your insults

And I will always be

Aging

by Gabriel O. Camareno Soto

I was yesterday years old
Yesterday years old when I said no more
Yesterday years old when I gave up the notion
Yesterday years old when I needed to reconstruct
Yesterday years old when I had to break out

I am today years old
Today years old when I dream of it
Today years old when I find out
Today years old when I decide to commit
Today years old when I choose another route

I will be tomorrow years old
Tomorrow years old when I become me
Tomorrow years old when I find purpose
Tomorrow years old when I guarantee
Tomorrow years old when I become happy with myself

Savior of the North

by Carlos Pérez Rodríguez

Go forth, shall be worth:
The days without rest, the sleep you avoid.

Vigilant you stay,
Just to keep the lives safe.

As the salvation you bring comes in their way,
You leave their problems in the void.

Go forth, shall be worth:
The wars you fight, the blood you spill.

Bold you are,
Giving it all to the ones who are unknown to your eyes,
but admire you with theirs.

Even when you are afar,
We shall always remember you, hero who scars always bears.

Go forth, shall be worth:
The villages you support, the ashes and the burn.

Silent you remain,
As you watch your foes making a disaster,
Obliterating everything with ravaging fire.

But clever you are, brave warrior,
That soon you realize that these savages are
developing an unerasable stain,
As they will have their own turn.

Keep on going forth.
Your efforts shall always be worth,
Beloved Savior of the North.

Everything is Fine
by Camila Ojeda Ramírez



Camila
Ojeda
Ramírez



A Choice (Excerpt)

by Isaías Mckenzie Gaetán



Dear Mother:

I write to you from North Carolina. It is really bad out here, and the only thing that keeps me sane is writing to you. Despite the fact that the war is finally over, I was offered a job by Col. Schneider. He said something about a holy guild he is forming up, some sort of rehabilitation for veterans like myself. The job consists principally in working as enforcers of the law and guardians of the church, I suppose. He also mentioned something about witch hunting in Massachusetts. This means you should be expecting me home soon. It's been so long since I left and with a swollen heart I say to you that I've missed you and longed to finally be home since the moment I sat foot in this hellish place.

Just a few weeks ago, I was pinned down in a trench; those confederate bastards were gunning us down and throwing hand grenades at us. The fire lasted about 20 minutes. Right when they stopped, I took my chance and ran away from the trench up to the hills. It appeared as if they didn't notice me or just didn't care. I went up to the hills where I made my last twenty-five confirmed kills. When I managed to scatter the enemy away from the trench where my fellows lay defenseless, the remaining

1865

confederate soldiers made an immediate retreat. That's where I met Dominic, the man I told you about in my last letter. He was one of the soldiers that was stuck in that damned trench hole. I am running out of ink now so I'll be seeing you, mother.

I will be returning home soon, mother. With love, your son.

—Jacques.

When civil war started in 1861, all men were obliged to serve in the military and fight for their country. There was no option to decline this order. Lawyers, doctors, college students—like myself— and even slaves were all called to arms, to fight in a war that was not ours. During the war, I became the best marksman of the army. I won medals for killing people. But I did not enjoy it. I felt as if I was being used like a tool. I felt like a monster; 285 confirmed kills is not something I am proud of. After the war was over between the North and the South, another war in the North was breaking out, but for completely different reasons.

When I was about to finally go home, Col. Schneider gave me a job offer. Something that could help me earn money in a fast, "legal" way. He started an Inquisitor Guild dedicated to continue the witch hunts of the



1690s. For many years, he had told me about his hatred towards witches, but it was something else. Him being head of a Puritan church, he had very particular beliefs about male superiority. He was what people today call a misogynist.

My military experience, that I acquired during the war, helped me rank up quickly, so the missions I had were really special cases, mostly for reckoning and silencing pro-witch activists and people who were starting to get out of line. This operation was funded by the government, but to them it was merely a guild seeking to maintain order in the streets. After some time, I retired. I stayed away from them and that path, leaving it all behind me; but no matter how fast you run, there are burdens that will catch you. This is the story of how everything came to an end.

The year was 1878, and I had to make a choice. In the state of Massachusetts, the laws were rather unfair and barbaric towards people who weren't white, wealthy men. Women did not have many rights then. They were merely house workers, ordered to obey; they were expected to be submissive, quiet, and obedient to their husbands. By law, women had to marry at some point in their life; if they refused, they would be looked upon as witches. The same goes for those who opposed the ideals of the church and started to learn to become something more than just a trophy or a decorative piece in the house.

The law bent towards what was convenient to those with power. Witchcraft was a crime, a sin which could only be paid with blood. Some of these victims were not even witches; they were merely women with the thirst of knowledge, the desire to help other women learn so they would be armed with knowledge and not be fooled by those in power. Other cases of execution were people who harbored them and protected them, people who would endorse their practices of "Satanism" and heresy. Thousands of trials were celebrated in the past centuries; thousands of lives were taken on the mere suspicion that they may have been associated in any way to witchcraft. Even though witchcraft was not a crime of concern in Europe during the past years, there were still regions in America where it was still punishable with capital punishment and/or torture. Even after it was already overlooked by courts as a minor, non-threatening practice, some sporadic trials were celebrated, and many lives were taken. It was June 25, 1878, and I had to make a choice.

It was a rather cold summer evening. The air was dense, the fog was thick. As I walked to my favorite tree, where every evening I sat to write verses nobody would recite, I noticed a silhouette under it. As I got closer, the silhouette took form and color. A pair of blue orbs like the eyes of a porcelain doll blinded me. Her eyes looked like a pair of spheres that dared to steal the light out of the entire galaxy. Glowing in the night like the eyes of a cat. Her cheeks were plump and red like roses. Her smile was as bright as the sun shining red behind the clouds. She had a beautiful black dress with a white collar. Her right arm had five wristbands that said "Caritatem, pacem serenitatem, ut, quantum" beautifully written in red. When she

noticed me, saw my attire, the black coat, the boots, a crucifix, the usual outfit of one of them, a witch Inquisitor, her eyes tore up and pulled out an Athame blade from her ankle holster. I saw how her ocean blue eyes flooded with complex emotion such as anger and fear. Understanding what would happen, I kneeled in front of her to show I meant no harm. "Y-you're not one of them are you?" she asked with a trembling voice.

I looked up, only moving my eyes, avoiding any sudden move. "Do you mean an Inquisitor? No, I am not one of those monsters. I do not support their hypocrisy. I do not pose any threat, I promi—" I said, trying to sound sure of what I was saying. Seething her blade, she smiled at me. My heart was beating fast as our eyes met. Stretching my hand trying to contain my emotion, mumbling, I said, "I'm Jacques Trevant."

She smiled and shook my hand. "Autumn," she replied. The moment our skins touched, our eyes met, I felt how our hearts fell in synchrony; beating together, chests expanding simultaneously.

As the sunshine disappeared and the cold moonlight shone bright upon the trees, making them look like giants, it was getting dark. In a swift move, I stood up, looking around to make sure there was no danger nearby. "Where's your home?" I asked as I looked around, scanning the area.

She looked at me with her pale eyes. "About two kilometers away. Why do you ask?" she replied in a soft voice.

I smiled smugly and deepened my voice trying to pose certain amount of swagger, "Hm, I find that too far. A young beautiful lady like you shouldn't walk alone in these places after dark. Perha—"

"Let me remind you I have a 10-inch Athame knife. I can take care of myself. I know this forest like the palm of my hand. But if you're inviting me to your house, I'd gladly accept your invitation," she interrupted me in mid-sentence with a stable and confident voice, so sure of herself, potent and strong.

I immediately blushed and became bashful. That was definitely not the answer I was expecting. My confidence slipped like the sand of an hourglass through my fingers. I smiled and offered my arm; she took it and held on to it. As we walked through the forest, I felt like everything in my life was beginning to make sense. Why I stayed away from the Inquisitors Guild, why I made the choice to abandon them. What would push me to put my trust on a stranger? What would have made me make a choice?

When we got home, she sat on the couch. The warm light of the room made me see her clearly. I saw her aura, burning ever so beautifully. It was a witcher's aura, bright, pale, and warm. Her eyes irradiated kindness and humbleness. I could see in her that, indeed, she was extraordinary, different from the rest of the world. She was special, and she would do something that would change history at some point. I knew deep in my heart that she would do something great, I just didn't know when or how or why. I only knew that whatever it was, it would be something nobody

else would've done.

As I helped her get comfortable, I asked her with courtesy, "Have you eaten today?"

Her confidence vanished like steam. "U-um, no," she replied, stuttering, looking out the window.

It was my chance to impress her; it was rare for me to have any visitors, welcomed ones, anyway. "I shall make you something," I told her, smiling.

Her face lit up with joy. With the food I had at home, I made us a decent dinner. Her eyes lit up. She was delighted with it. I never saw light like the one I saw in her eyes. I saw that she had goodness in her heart; I saw there that all those rumors and tales about witches were all false. She was not ugly; her skin was pale, soft and warm. She was gorgeous.

After we were done, I felt as our souls carefully touched hands and made gentle friction, all this in the moment our eyes met. Understanding what was happening, I stood up and took her plates and washed them. With the corner of my eye, I saw her entering my study room. I stood in the doorway as she looked at my library. She murmured the titles like she was praying. "Fuchs, Leonhart. *De Historia Stirpium Commentarii Insignes*. Basel, 1542. Botany. Copernicus, Nicolaus. *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*. Wittenberg, 1543. Copernican heliocentrism. Baopuzi written by the Jin dynasty scholar Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343), this is a Chinese alchemy book. W-Where did you get this one?" she said with a spark of wonder in her eyes.

I took a copy of English poetry and as I flipped through the pages I said in a low tone, "I've traveled a lot. I got that book on my last trip to Asia."

Her voice suddenly rang louder than church bells on a wedding day. So sweet and innocent, pure and sublime, she asked, "You've gone out!? Wow! You're so lucky, I-I." She paused. Her smile faded. "I have never traveled before. All I've known is here. Ever since they took my family away, I've been alone," she added. My heart stopped as I saw a dark cloud of sadness blur the moon in her face.

I noticed how she trembled. She fell, sitting in the small couch I kept in the room. I didn't know if I should hug her to comfort her; it was clearly my fault. With insecurity, I placed my hand on hers; she took it and held it tight. She looked at me with her eyes shedding tears—the tears of an angel. Her voice was cracking like glass, trembling and sad. "Do you ever get lonely, even when there are people around you?" she asked, looking towards the window with pale and lost eyes.

Taking a deep breath, pausing for a minute, thinking of what happened back in the day, I nodded. I remembered what I did. The lives I took. Innocents that were stripped from their rights, all because they weren't what they were expected to be. Society expected them to be

wealthy, Christian, blind followers of a corrupted system. Those who decided to go another path—the witches, the alchemists, the scientists—were seen as heretics.

The Inquisitors Guild was affiliated with the Puritan church. By this year, there were some areas which still believed that witches were nothing but unholy and sinful. The Inquisitors, on the other hand, were people who were in charge of controlling those who refused to be like them, monochromatic, with uniformity, and "righteous." It was a masked dictatorship where everything was controlled. It was 1878, and I had to make a choice—

Jacques awoke from whiplashes of memories when he realized what was happening. He knew he'd have to hug her, make her feel safe. Carefully, he wrapped his arms around her; she snuggled in his embrace, hiding her face in his neck. She huffed and puffed warm air making him shiver a little. He nodded, but stood quiet embracing her. He held her shoulders and looked into her deep, star swallowing eyes, and asked, "Would you like to stay here for the night?" He paused for a moment, trying to not impose himself, giving her room to answer. "You could stay in my room. I need to study either way, so I won't bother you." He added rapidly, waving his arms nervously.

Autumn smiled, and drying her tears from her rosy cheeks, nodded. Her face went from an expression of grief and sorrow to happiness and serenity. He started preparing the room for his unexpected guest, making sure everything was presentable and adequate for her. Meanwhile, Autumn continued to explore her new friend's library. She kept murmuring titles and looking at the archives, which held information of the world, Europe, Asia, Africa, and even relics from native tribes. She saw something that caught her eye, a wardrobe. When she opened it, her pupils expanded, consuming almost all of the blue in her eyes.

She saw a wardrobe full of knives, of all kinds, including swords and maces, but there was one that caught her eye. She took it and carefully pulled it out of its cover when suddenly Jacques came into the room, startling her. She dropped the sword and yelped, surprised, "I'm sorry, I-I did not mean to intrude and—"

"Hey, do not worry, Autumn. Nothing happened," he interrupted with a calm tone in his voice. Smiling at her, he picked it up and pulled it out of its cover, giving it to her, kneeling as a sign of respect. She giggled and held it incorrectly. He got nervous because he knew how sharp the katana was, she could hurt herself. Carefully, he took the sword away from her. She looked at him like a child about to cry. He took her hands and placed them in the handle, teaching her how to correctly use it. As the moon shone through the window, with simple gestures like that, their souls intertwined.

Sleep had beaten them. They sat in the couch and fell asleep leaning towards each other. Around 2:45 AM, he woke up, noticing she was leaning her head on his shoulders. He removed her hair from her face and gently caressed it, rubbing his thumb on her rosy cheeks. He tried to gently wake

her up, whispering the sweetness of her name, shaking her, but she was too tired, too deep into the dream realm. He got off the couch and looked at her almost as if he was scanning her body. He got close to her, picked her up in his arms and walked to his room, which he already had prepared for the night. He carefully placed her in bed and covered her with the red dyed wool sheets he had. He took his pillow, left the room and spent the night in the couch outside in the living room.

The next morning he woke up early, despite the fact he had slept late at night, to make breakfast for her. As he cooked, he was lost in the thought of her, how they met and why someone like her would be so solitary. He thought of her smile, the sweet sound of her voice, the sweetness of her

name. As his mind flew away, a knock on the door shook him out of his dream. He looked at the door concerned, with contempt and a smidge of fear, not for him but for his new friend who still slept. He heard the door knock again, furiously this time. Jacques opened his drawer and pulled up his sleeves, putting on a concealed sleeve blade. He rolled them down, covering his weapon, and yelled, "Just a minute."

A deep voice replied from the other side of the door with enthusiasm. "Hurry up, Slayer, I don't have all day."

Slayer, that name struck him in the chest like a hot knife on flesh, reminding him what he was, a life taking monster.

The Strange Black Man

by Yeslian M. Figueroa Rivera



Photograph by: iStock by Getty Images

It was a dark, gloomy night on the late 70's New York. A white woman was walking alone when she felt a stranger following her. She started to walk faster and saw the man's face on a store window. He was a black tall slender man with curly hair in dark clothes. Suddenly, a white man came out of nowhere, jumping in front of her and quickly she said to him: "There's a stranger ... a black man following me, please help me!"

The white man ran at the same time as the black

man, but the white man caught him. The woman called the police and they arrived in just minutes. The three of them were taken to the barracks and the black man kept telling them:

"You got the wrong guy, the white man was trying to harm her, I was just trying to protect her!"

But the woman told him:

"Shut up! He was the one who saved me, you're just a stalker trying to get me, you BLACK MAN!" she yelled.

Everything went quiet for a while until the police man said:

"We are going to arrest this black man, you and your savior can go for now, we will contact you later for further investigation."

That's when the white man asked her:

"Can I take you home?"

She answered with a simple "Yes!" while blushing.

On the way home, all they did was talk while walking. When they arrived to the front of the white woman's house, she offered him to enter and he accepted.

The woman was in the kitchen when suddenly she felt something strong hit her head, making her fall to the floor. When she managed to look up, the man stood there with a hammer laughing hysterically and told her:

"You should have believed what that black man was telling you, he was right. I have been following you and planning to kill you for weeks, but this was an option I never thought was the one. Because of that black man I almost didn't make it."

The woman asked him:

"Why me? What are you going to do? The police knows I came with you, they are going to get you!"

That's when the man answered:

"I will say I left you an hour earlier than this, and it will just take some acting to get away with it."

The woman's eyes were wide open and tearing when the man gave the killing hit with the hammer in the woman's head.

Before leaving the house, he prepared everything to make it seem as a robbery that ended up with her dead, and, just like he told the woman, he got away with it saying he saw another black man wondering the woman's house. The police linked the case to the black man who warned the woman, and he never saw the sun light ever again while the killer was free and continued to kill.

The Student and the Professional

by Manuel A. Mas Cabrera

The buzzing of the intercom greeted him as he made his way into the doctor's office. Switching his gaze between the available empty seats and the other patients, he felt momentarily uncomfortable as they flitted their gaze towards him, the strange new interloper. Once their gaze left him as quickly as it had come, he made his way towards one of the few available empty seats in the waiting room, between an old man and a young man only slightly older than him. 'Twenty-seven maybe? Finishing his thoughts on what would be his company for the next hour and a half or so, he sat himself next to the younger one, careful not to disturb any semblance of peace he knew he would be disrupting by his very presence.

The new patient sat himself next to the other awkwardly, and promptly focused on what appeared at that very moment to be the most interesting speck of dirt on the opposite wall. Every now and then, he would shift his peripheral vision rightward to see his fellow patient. From the three or four times he flitted his gaze he took on his neighbors' features. The older of the two was dressed somewhat professionally in a conservative white shirt and black slack combination, appearing to be a professional of some sort. He was somewhat impatiently looking at a copy of *The Economist* while biting his lower lip, as if something about the current state of inflation in the English countryside, if the magazine's cover was to be taken at face value, was the cause of his unease. 'He probably has a nice job, perhaps a personalized desk and his own stationery', thought the younger student. He wondered briefly why such a well-dressed man would ever be in this type of doctor's office. 'This place is more for people like me anyway.' It was true, at least from the student's perspective. The past two and a half years had not been particularly kind to him. It had all gone down the metaphorical hill when he was forced to return from a prestigious course of study at an out of state university due to the manifestation of certain problems-problems he had been going to this doctor's office to deal with since that time. Naturally, his parents had been disappointed about the turn of events, and he thought they looked down at him at having their son extend his university career so he



could-in his own words-"figure stuff out". The process had been a rather uncomfortable one, and he had felt in recent months that life, while becoming more stable, had devolved into a dull routine of osmosis between lecture halls and regurgitated tests. It was after one such particular test that, not being able to realize the point of asphyxiating himself in that room, he had taken the day off and left the university. That was the reason he was in this waiting room to begin with.

After the fourth time the student glanced at the older man, the latter finally noticed him and raised an eyebrow. "You don't seem like the type to just sit and stare", began the older man as the student, caught in the act, returned his gaze to the speck on the wall. "So, mind telling me why you keep looking at me like that?", continued the man. Figuring out his cover was blown, the student reluctantly turned to address the reason for his obsession.

"It's just that, you seem so, this is gonna sound weird....so in control", answered the Student after a while of considering his response. "How do you do it? What's your secret?", continued the Student.

At first being surprised at the young man's response, the elder of the duo quickly masked his reaction. He had an idea what the kid had to be going through, considering their current location, but he was blindsided by the completely erroneous accusation that he , in fact, had his life completely in control.

Biting back what would typically be a caustic remark, he stopped when he got a good look at the kid.

'Can't be more than twenty and he's already here? That's not right,' thought the older man. Looking closer, he noticed the disheveled appearance of the younger man: bedraggled hair, slightly fogged glasses, an untucked portion of a shirt every now and then. The Student, as the older man saw, while not showing outward signs of major problems, did present a few clues in his appearance that gave the wandering eye cause for concern. Slowly putting down the magazine-to hell with the inflationary English countryside-he thought about how he could best answer the posed question.

"Joseph K., the Doctor will see you now." The Receptionist's voice echoed through the quite waiting room, momentarily drawing the attention of both Student and Professional. The Student momentarily paled at the fact he was three letters away from seeing the Doctor. This did not go unnoticed by the Professional, who saw this as the impetus to answer the Student's question.

"You want the socially acceptable answer or the real answer, straight from my heart of hearts?", asked the Professional after two more minutes of silence. "The real one...I guess.", said the Student after getting over the momentary shock. Never in his life had an older person tried to be completely honest with him, so he would take this opportunity. Nodding his head, the

Professional embarked upon what the Student, in the twilight of his life, would consider the most important conversation of his youth:

"The truth of the matter is that I'm not in control at all. I have just mastered the very subtle art of emotionally disconnecting myself from the monotony of life as one of many professional drones that my accounting company hires. My stoicism belies the fact that, inside, I'm as scared and confused about the prospect of another thirty years in the same cubicle as you are right now."

At this the Student recoiled, surprised at how easily the Professional had seen through him. It wasn't that obvious, was it? Sure, the thought of sitting at a cubicle the rest of his life sorting through thousands of pages of depositions, as his sister did, but didn't every twenty something feel like that? Wasn't the feeling normal? The Doctor certainly thought so. "But, isn't this..."; he began, but was interrupted by the Professional continuing his monologue.

"And no, before you say what I know you're going to say, this feeling, the feeling of being completely at the mercy of the labyrinth of institutions that try to illuminate the 'proper' path, is not normal at all. I was just like you once, caught between wanting to prove myself as capable of participating in this Kafkaesque system of work and wanting to follow my own dreams. I wanted to be a writer, you see. I had hopes of seeing my work filling the pages of *American Poetry Review*, but after college, the fact that my student loans needed repaying meant I had to settle for a more achievable reality. I became a technical writer. Do you know what a Bullshit Job is?", finished the Professional, turning so the Student could answer him.

"A figure of speech?", provided the Student. Seeing the Professional's exasperated shaking of his head caused confusion to exude from the Student's features.

"Jane L." The Receptionist momentarily interrupts their conversation, sending the Student ever closer to the path of the Doctor.

"There's this British anthropologist named Graeber, teaches at the London School. A few years ago, he does a survey in which almost forty percent of the respondents describe their jobs as not contributing to anything. He calls the phenomenon "Bullshit Jobs", jobs so meaningless that their only reason for being is to

keep us occupied. The guy argues that people consistently think these jobs should be highly paid but feel depressed when they get paid for doing a job that makes no goddamned sense. Bautman described something similar, "promethean shame", that may have something to do with it. Anyway, the point is that all the hopes and aspirations of young people like us have no meaning in the bigger picture. The best you can do is turn away from it. But you can't, since none of us can kick that food habit we have. So, we go to these places," at this he pointed around the waiting room and continued: "So we don't end up in straight jackets."

At this the Student tried to rationalize what he was being told. The best way was to run away? Hadn't he done that already? Hadn't he thrown everything away to jumpstart his life since coming back to his oppressively small hometown? Hadn't he sacrificed enough hours spent in offices like these so he could have the semblance of a normal life? Apparently, that wasn't enough. He wanted answers.

"But... what if by going away from this, I never find any meaning at all? What if I fail?" At this the Student was paying rapt attention to the Professional, who contemplated his answer for a moment. Seemingly satisfied with his formulated answer, he responded:

"That's just life's great big mystery, ain't it? You never know if you're going to fail to find meaning, or even find it at all. But that's the point of it all: you try to find the meaning, not have these 'professionals' try to do it for you." At that it all clicked in the Student's mind. He knew now what he had to do.

"S. M?", called the Receptionist. Recognizing the Student, she waved him over to the monthly visit with the Doctor.

Standing up from his seat, the Student flitted his gaze between the Receptionist, who was waving him over, the Professional, who was silently looking at him, and the Door, the portal to a life unsaturated with monotony. Gathering up all his courage, he turned and made his way towards the Door. Ignoring the Receptionist's shouts, he crossed the threshold into the City illuminated by the afternoon sun. He breathed. The normally oppressive smell of asphalt seemed to welcome him today, contrasting sharply with the disinfectant of the Office. His destination in front of him, he slipped into the glare of the sun.

Let Me Grow
by Christopher Alvarado Rivera



Christopher Alvarado Rivera
1 de diciembre de 2019

Due Date

by Maricarmen Meléndez de Mirana

Created and prepared for one mission. The master gave all the tools to succeed.

5:30pm- The scene happened in the Natural Science amphitheater.

My victims arrived, looking like zombies.

7:30pm- Mission accomplished, 40% of the students failed.

Who knows, maybe they would have to change the course of their lives.



Photograph: Clipart Library

Beautiful Red

by Kiria González Carrión



"Red": Hermann Nitsch

My first masterpiece. Spilled all over the floor. Tired of hearing the same answers: "You're always doing things incorrectly, go away!" I do the right thing. Once again, others think it's a disaster but for me, it was the most beautiful red I've seen. I closed my eyes and left.



Wisdom Begets Beauty
by Ángel Y. Mercado Meléndez

Home and Identity

by Paola Candelario D'Narvarte



Photograph by: Alexas_Fotos via Pixabay

I choose to reflect on home and identity and how we see them in the “Identity Theory Material” by Peter Roberts and “The man who knew infinity” movie. At first, we see the mention of home in the movie where the couple will live. It seems that both are starting to get to know each other, Ramanujan and his wife love each other, but they must be separated so he can succeed in his studies, beliefs, and specially his identity. In the course of the movie, he reflects on his identity. He doesn't let anyone change his mind, he is committed and wants to show his potential. He gives the best of himself. Going back home, for him is an emotion where his wife and his mom live. When he realizes he is sick, he is more worried about his wife, and he feels saved more than his numbers.

In the course of our lives, we meet some people

who don't accept us or don't think we're capable of doing our best. We have to make the best of our lives and challenge ourselves. Once we know our purpose, we should follow it, and achieve it.

When we think about home, we get the feeling of being saved and loved. We can see it reflected in the movie and how he never forgets where he came from, his beliefs and his family. Before dying, Ramanujan always follows his heart, his home and his identity for the love of the numbers. When his disease takes over, he has already accomplished what he always dreamed of and surprisingly the name of the movie is almost right, due to discovering formulas that let people explore or investigate the black hole.

I can relate my personal experience of what

home reflects on me. I have lived by myself since I was nineteen years old, but there is always a special place in my heart for my mom, dad and grandparents because when I'm with them I feel saved, I feel like I'm loved by them, and that I'm really important and do matter. My identity hasn't changed. I always feel secured, remain strong and love to help others to make them feel they are likable and cared for.

Peter Roberts and the Eurocentric ideas in Carl Jung's *Travel* reading all come to reflect care for home, love, emotions, and satisfaction in their meanings. Identity always reflects on how people are capable of following their dreams and doing all they can to become the future "self" that they always dream of.

Home and identity are deeply connected and they make us feel special and loved. Both of them describe us as the person we are and why we act and think the way we do. Home is where we can trust people who we relate to and we have that special place where we can be ourselves without pretending to fit in.

Home can be where we live or where we feel loved. It doesn't need to be our home, it maybe symbolic and can be that special someone who we feel saved and loved at all times. We can also define home where we feel at peace. It doesn't need to be where we live now, maybe home is where we grew up or where our minds is calm and happy. I state that home isn't a place, it's a feeling.

Another point as Robert expresses is Language which is a universal human factor and in part a factor of place; Language therefore, establishes bonds between all communities of human beings, but at the same time sets up barriers between communities. So true! When I travel, especially to the states and hear someone speak my language, I suddenly travel back home in my mind, here referring of home as my island, Puerto Rico. Then I instantly connect to that stranger and it feels good.

Through identity we can express ourselves, as I mentioned before we don't have to pretend to do something or to be like someone just to fit in. How we think and feel about ourselves it is how we define our identity. When we are young maybe we're still

defining it because our future is a mystery, that's how I see it. Sometimes I feel a little lost just because I don't know about my future, Am I going to be successful? Am I going to have a big family? Will I end up alone with nothing? Am I going to graduate and have my dream job? Well, honestly we don't know and we are never going to know the real answer, but we should not quit and keep following all of those goals and be proud of everything we get to do, and always create new goals to challenge ourselves to be better.

Both of these terms are keys to success for a satisfactory life. Every person needs that special feeling and needs to be confident of his or her identity. It is important to be happy and accept what we have, and make the best of it. We have to be grateful, and know that everything happens for a reason, or that's the way I see it. Something better is waiting and when some doors close, more doors are waiting to open. Therefore, it is essential to always keep one's identity and one's home in the heart.

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Fear

by Verónica Pagán de Jesús



Photograph by: Shutterstock

I am afraid. I cannot escape him. My mind lives in a constant state of fear, and I feel it is a part of me. He left scars on me that can never fade away. They stick to me as an infinite reminder that it was real, that it happened. Time has tried to wipe the memories away, to wipe him away, but it's never succeeded. I can still feel his hot sweaty hands. I can still smell him on me. I can still hear his poison drip-drip-dripping into my head. I can still see him when I close my eyes. I can still taste the bitter 'no' that never made it out of my mouth.

We met during winter, my first love and me. He intoxicated all my senses and dug his roots deep into

me, yet I did not understand at the time. I could not love myself enough, so I found someone who I thought did. Except, he did not love himself either. We were alike in that aspect. Every time he would get himself down, my heart would ache. How could he not see himself as I did? In my head, he was perfect. Everything I could ever dream of was embodied in him. So, when he first forced himself onto me, I was shocked. I wish I could say he apologized, but there was nothing. I wish he would have said it was an accident, but it was not. Instead, the tables were flipped, and I apologized. I apologized for not being specifically clear with my boundaries while he cried

because I made him feel like he hurt me. This incident was never mentioned again. It was buried six feet under, and my lips were sewn shut. That night, the tears flowed endlessly down my red face as I shuddered, and I prayed it would be the only time.

But it wasn't. his huge hands would grab mine and force me to touch him. his hot skin burned away parts of me while I was in his grasp. Time after time, he would insist that I give him what he wanted. "Just one kiss," so I kissed him. "Just one touch," I never said yes. "It'll be quick," but it never was. "I do this because we're in love," but he only loved my body. "Can we do more?" My mouth went dry, my eyes glazed. I was frozen in place as chills went up my spine. I was afraid. To him, my silence was always a yes, so when I pushed him off of me, he was shocked. I never allowed him to do "more," but that didn't mean he would stop trying. In his thoughts I was his, mind and body.

Since then, I would get panic attacks. My mind would go into survival mode and stay in constant fear. Every panic attack was worse than the last. My blood pressure skyrocketed, my hands would drip sweat, I screamed and sobbed and pulled the hair on my head until I saw stars. "I'm going mad," I thought. Fear was etched into my skin and bones. I was nothing more than that.

I crossed hell with burning feet. While there, I relived the same events once, twice, until I lost count. It was only then that I realized that I would always keep going that I felt a change. It took a million and one tries, yet I rose from the burning ashes and sparked life again. Never would I let a man bring me to my knees like a coward. Never again would I let myself think that I am nothing more than fear. I am a field of blossoming winter flowers. I am a phoenix rising. I am resilient.

So, while it might be true that some scars do not fade, this does not mean that they keep hurting. My scars will never fade, but they will heal. Their place on my body is timeless. Their visibility reminds me of my time in hell, which is not necessarily bad. They remind me of my strength and what I am capable of overcoming. I am not a victim of sexual abuse; I am survivor. I am not afraid. I am resilient.

To All the Leaders of the World

by Alexandra Meléndez Iturrino



Politics has long been about personal gain and power, but it has reached too far. Now politics has become a school playground where grown men throw petty insults at each other and, instead of solving problems, they sit on their hands, point fingers at each other, and stab everyone in the back. All while eating at the same dinner table.

This is why I write a letter to leaders across the world, asking you to reevaluate what you stand for. Leaders are supposed to protect and watch out for the interests of their country and their people. Leaders don't just sit in their offices, behind their big desks. They go out on the streets and fight for their people's rights and well-being. Being a leader is not just about having power, it is about taking that power and using it for good, instead of putting personal gain before morals.

People say my generation is dramatic, and that we overreact, and that we stick our noses in issues that don't concern us. But I'm telling you they do concern us, because the decisions being made by politicians today affect our future. Every single decision being made regarding gender equality, civil rights, racism, and many other things, have an impact in our lives. This is why we fight, why my generation stands for something and everything we believe in. This is why I ask the leaders of the world to do the same, to take a stand and become the change that the world needs. To put your country's needs before your own. This is your legacy. This is the world your children, grandchildren and your descendants will live in. So, take a stand. Fight for your people. Fight for what you truly believe in.

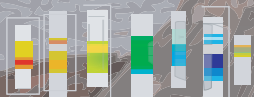
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