



**BIEN ACOMPAÑADA
PRESS**

ISSUE III

EL PODER DE MI...

Cover Photo:

Guamo

Desirée Rivera

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Bienvenidx to our third issue, El Poder de Mi.

When Krystall and I considered the prompt, I think we both felt the need for empowerment. Daily life under this administration has at times been- more than exhausting- depleting of all hope. We felt the need to provide, you, our readers with a space to reassert your power collectively. We envisioned a collection of pages where- however short-lived ink on paper may be- you'd be able to draw from every time you flipped a page.

We'd be remiss and neglectful to not make mention of the unfortunate timeliness of this issue given the events of August 3rd, 2019 in my hometown of El Paso, Tejas.

TW: Gun violence, xenophobia

For as much as I would like to give the following sentences some sort of poetic flow, I do not know how to keep grief from its choppiness. The 3rd of August was a pivotal day in many of our lives. My community now knows and measures the passage of time in a binary of "before the shooting" and "after the shooting." CNN, NBC, ABC, BBC, and every other news outlet flooded the city with cameras only to end up erasing from the narrative the same community they consumed. Their cameras merely scavenged for images of tears and brokenness. Twenty-two killed. Their footage failed to catch the "after." Twenty-two killed. They failed to catch the paranoia that lingers thickening the air for the next two, three, six, eight days. Twenty-two killed. They failed to catch the way in which a venue full of people nervously side-eye each other every five minutes and jump collectively at a loud noise. Twenty-two killed. They failed to catch the tired stares and short smiles we exchanged at supermarkets/parking lots/mundane places of our daily routines saying "I know, stranger. Me too." Twenty-two killed.

And so, sitting here in my deep rage and sorrow, I've pondered on our prompt and, like you, asked myself where my power is. You see, my power is in different places at different times. My power may at times be my body disrupting Robert O'Rourke in protest. My power may at times be my voice with its Chicana Spanish running over dirty looks at full speed. My power may at times be my fingers typing away to empty my soul into a couple of verses at 2:27am. However, the one constant place where my power is found is in you.

Mi comunidad.

You have developed a continuous conversation where every piece of your art adds to the harmony of this network. You, our readers, have developed a community that transcends borders. Your beautiful works have brought me solace and for that I am forever grateful.

We hope that this issue can bring you too some solace and that you rejoice in the extensiveness of OUR power.

In solidarity,

Gaby

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Dearest

Pour me from the painter's hands
Into the foam of the moon
On your water,
I'll be the dark edge of the earth
You be the grey in a smattering of light
Let us never again suffer
Except each other
I would block the fallen of each oak's lonely limb
How long that one held on
You'd say
What a fighter, that sweet leggy bark of dark
And I will kiss you goodnight for the ten thousandth time
Since we learned what rain meant by sadness and the gathering of crows
Oh friend, I lend you this heart
Which has been so thoroughly broken
It no longer misses any of its pieces
And we are sister
of mountain,
and river
The borrower, the giver
Of light, listen,
you have poured me
from the moon into the angel's hands
Painting dark into form,
with these hands
These glorious truck stop prayers
Become the way we are
Just off the beaten path
How like Jakob we wrestle and we rise
Beyond what cannot ever again be the same.

James Diaz

The Poem Beneath The Poem

They said someone must be keeping score
walk slowly
know that this road leads to another road
that there are night killers
inside all of us

I choked back the words I could have given you
had I not already disappeared
into bleeding earth

was it heaven when we shook
from alcohol withdrawal
when they said: draw
what you feel
and we ripped the paper in two
and slowly ate it

did your brother make it to the coast in that beat up old car?

I also don't know what to do with my body

poets are always talking about coasts and lighthouses
it makes me queasy
how polished their words
like something you'd be afraid to break in a store

because how could you ever pay for something like that?

James Diaz

The Power of Me

The power of a Mexicana

That makes me not be scared I'm walking alone at night
that makes me know how to grill with charcoal and make tortillas
by hand and speak and curse and use double entendres that are better
than any that's what she said moments that the Gringo can have.

The power of my appearance

That makes everybody smile back when I smile
and offer me things when I don't ask and give me things when I ask
and give me indecent proposals that I have to turn down and Cat calls
that have made me stronger.

The power of my saying no

Being strong enough to call out a man for trying to take advantage of
me and ask him if he's going to rape me if I say no and having him
stay back.

The power of my saying yes

That open doors and opens windows and lets me see so much of the
world and lets me touch and feel and taste and smell and feel so much
more than what I know most people get the chance to.

The power of my identity, an identity that has been constantly chang-
ing with the places I visit and the accents I pick up, with the music I
listen to and the music I play and the music I share. An identity where
I can be an artist or a spectator,

a performer,

a playwright,

a scholar,

a receptionist,

a girl that sweeps hair at a salon ,

a girl that writes briefs that get people life-saving benefits,

a worker that bottles and restocks spices and vinegars ,

a student ,

a daughter ,

a wife ,

a patient ,

a citizen of the world ,

an immigrant ,

a scared child,

a woman,

a human being.

Florencia Ulloa

when i take a step, i make a queer sound.

TW#homophobia #transphobia

i sense the tremble
of the world as i stomp
in and out of a politic
out to get us: the living
and loving, the secret.
fragmented. within trills
of violence, beyond yawns
of silences, i dance a pulse
of difference and deliverance.
i sing a psalm song of truth.
i cannot be silence: the body
expels this—our awed wisdom—
through its waking existence.

Ariel Estrella



Jessica Aquino
Nepantla, 2018
Mixed Media
Dimensions Variable



Water life

Desirée Rivera

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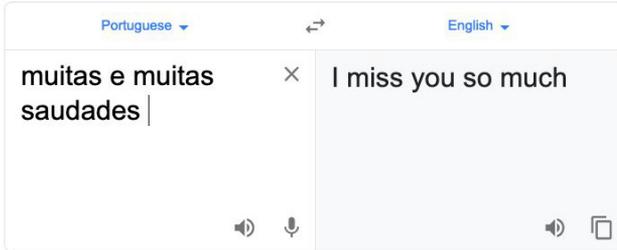
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muitas e muitas saudades

Nicole Oliveira



house

noun

/hous/ a building for human habitation, especially one that is lived in by a family or small group of people

home

noun

/hōm/ the place where one lives permanently, especially as a member of a family or household

Há um ditado que diz:

casa é uma construção de tijolos

*lar é uma construção de **valores***



this old house

i yearn for the home I used to know,
the familiar one with the floors that creaked to greet me after a long
day
the cracks in its walls reminded me, even on the worst of days, that
imperfections were a thing of
beauty

when i struggled to love myself, i poured my love into this
house
until it ceased to be one
it was a home

much has been written about the portuguese word, *saudade*,
a cross between melancholy and nostalgia
a longing for something that was never truly there
how could you really miss it?
it can't be translated

but the idea of *home* is universal

in portuguese: *lar*

agora, a nossa casa e um lar

now our house is a home

my blue house, my blue home

when my home away from the ivory tower was stifling

when i was desperate to find my place

even though it came at the cost of forgetting myself,

when i wanted to stop my feet from dangling into the un-
known,

when i was frantically grasping at straws to feel *something*,

searching for a sense of security and comfort that no one
and nothing could provide

i found solace in the old frame, whose crumbling facade

defied the odds of time

but this home was never real

it existed in my imagination

i nurtured it into existence, believed in it, *loved* it

i needed to

i wasn't strong enough to brave the world
But at home, i could cry,
i could laugh,
i could scream

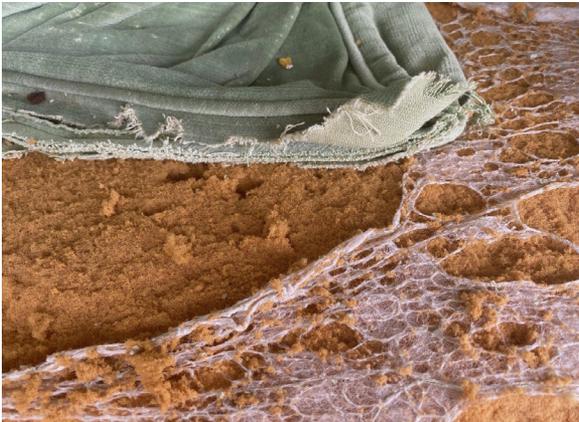
i was safe

but this house has worn me down
it was never mine to begin with

i'm an amorphous mass of muscles and veins with-
out skin

i've been peeled to expose *everything*

i'm completely raw



this house mocked me for not being stronger,
mocked me for my pain,
mocked me for my trauma,
grimaced at the smell of my tear-soaked pillows, moistened
in the night when no one could hear me
it was a new kind of loneliness

even today,
you can see it in my face
 you can see it in my eyes
i age 10 years in 2 weeks
the sadness is palpable

home does not exist anymore
the home is now a house
it is devoid of love
 it is devoid of empathy
 it is devoid of peace



it's an old house with a crumbling structure

it could fall at any minute

it may fall sooner if it continues to be provoked

i no longer seek refuge in the sweet embrace of its many
rooms or the picturesque views of its porch

instead, I yearn for the home I once had--filled with warmth
and compassion



home is nowhere

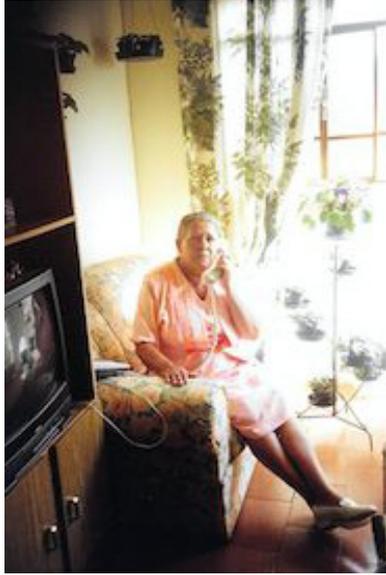
the sadness is palpable,
but the bitterness does not have to be



i'm tired

i hope that one day i can find my way back to my beloved
blue home,
that it can find its way back into me

but for now, this house is not a home
and for that, i grieve



Olá,
Com sorte, no resto a alegria
de viver.
Muitas, e muitas saudades
Ass: Aurora
25/02/97

“muitas e muitas saudades

25/02/97”

“i miss you so much

25/02/97”

Mother, I'm homesick.

You sat in a pew at the godless chapel three years ago.

You sat, bowed your head.

What did you pray for?

For me, 2,000 miles from home?

2,000 miles from you, from the place that kept me safe and supported.

What did you pray for?

The echoing silence — dense, damp, and so thick — crept inside me.

Bouncing down my throat, bouncing new fears into me.

It's still somewhere inside me, making my soul shrink.

We were never enough to fight that threatening dose of empty chapel, were we?

I should've known how cold I was going to feel, how painful the wind would be.

Red on my delicate skin.

Cold nostalgia in my bones, unbearably heavy and opaque.

I couldn't have known, and you won't know.

You won't know that the boy who was once my friend cornered me in the laundry room.

How he yelled at me, how I cried and couldn't sleep for three days because my door wouldn't lock, and he lived right below me.

You won't know that I watched my friend sob in bed for an hour

and a half,

how he would say “I don’t want to be alive anymore I don’t want to live anymore” over and over.

You won’t know I lived off of caffeine and nicotine for days at a time, too nervous to eat.

You won’t know I fell in love with a girl.

You won’t know how useless, how powerless I feel every day.

If you knew, where would the God you prayed to be?

Although I was 19, you tucked me into the unfamiliar twin bed that day.

Adiós, corazoncito de pollo. Te queremos mucho.

Turn the lights out, but please leave my nightlight on.

Mother, there’s no shade in the shadow of the cross and I’m so cold. Can I come home now?

Viri Garcia

Learning to Live Without Power

Okay so there were no currents
running because YOU
wanted dance class or ice cream at the gas station or rather...
writing around myself (so small and
darks skinned, you can't tell where the ugliness begins, it was okay
now and then?)
well it's just a little difficult. I'll continue,
it all started with watching her boil water, observe
the fingers just blueish at the tips. I knew it,

fire was all we had for a while.

I only questioned later,
when I met myself gilded at the shore, crashing in the
diamond waters. The veil between me and my friends caught me
out there. Fresh Fish. While I was little though
Our joints chriped up the stairs, we were made from the same
hard wood!
Promenading with the girls, probably laughing and screaming as if
the two lived as roommates.
Pop the stopper in!
My sisters and I together first. Maybe Mamí after? My father may
have prayed, but
I never heard that shit. He was in his office, with the winter
like how Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior breathed (god my god,
it is so frigid and I just want you closer)
The radio drank battery so we cleaned on Saturday as usual,
Monchy y Alexandra, the whole affair, and with our layers on
(little girls wore long johns like every other soldier) we swept
clumsy behind her. Our dust is in the corners still

Again and again, I torture myself: it feels like I decided to be my
father's son and not my mother's daughter. So I am spending
the poem praying.

Izzy Pottinger

A Poem for my Brothers

How some nights you can't sleep
And you can still smell the place you crawled out of
And your heart is a river of fire
And I know people have told you your whole life
That you never had it as bad as I did
But that's not true my brothers
You had it so bad I can hardly write these words
The place that stank with clothes piled high and our parents checked
out
They thought we were slaying dragons
But we were writing spells for how to make them whole again
We thought if we said the words in just the right way
they might come back to us
Then we learned the language of silence
Of how to hold it in
We built rockets under our skin
For distant planets in our broken brain
We cobbled together something from nothing
Oh my brothers, I know the past is a haunted house
And I know you just don't want to go in anymore
And that you're always burning
You think love is something you'll always get wrong
Like they did
"No son of mine"
And you went screaming into the night
And brother you never stopped
Our father's anger like cyanide in every tooth
I know what it costs to cross this bombed out valley
That you're afraid you've become the place that could never hold you
right
And that you'll poison every stream with your tiny strung out hearts
Would you believe me if I told you were wrong
That you're so whole it hurts
That to heal you've got to finger the place they shattered
and realize they broke nothing permanently
that new bones sprout like prayers from dying gardens

that you can give and receive love
that you don't have to write spells to make people whole
that you can just be-
my brothers,
you
can
just
be
whole.

James Diaz

Soy del

Yo soy del hilo y la aguja,
Soy de los nopales- a prickly flowering Queen of the Summer Solstice
a brave pioneer of the desert sands.
I am from the helianthus annuus
who rises early just to greet morning's dawn.

I am the menudo after a Sunday hangover, and the last drips of tequila.
From the Elena's and the Torres- Rojas

I am from the overly sensitive, and the "machos" del rancho
From "arriba, abajo, pa' centro, pa' dentro!" and "Aqui-No Esta!" I am
from el cielo, el espiritu,
y la mama tierra, amen.
Soy de los mero mero petateros, Gringolandia, USA

From the lonesome bayleaf in the barbacoa to the tortillas recalentados.
I am from mother and father's diasporic dance with the Coyote,
and the roses they promised to the Guadalupana thereafter.

From Kodak Moments to the 50+ pictures uploaded to the cloud.
My body is engraved in black ink, a bookkeeper of memories, her-stories
and intergenerational
dreams.

Sangre de mi Sangre/ but you called me 'child of the north'

The first time I met you, I failed to speak Spanish.
no 'buenas tardes', no beso, or a handshake
I swear by la Virgen de Guadalupe,
my jefes taught me better.

It was your stature that left me speechless,
Grandeur than a tree, your indigenous roots were unearthed:
The color of your skin

was like the chocolate milk in my coco puffs,
silk and sweet. Your round face
and cacao beans for eyes—there was no mistake:
I am the 7th heir to Huitzilopochtli's throne, and the living proof
began with you.

Comales hotter than mom's chiles en vingaré burned:
at the age of 7, I was initiated when
my fingertips grew thick hardened layers
de-sensitized by wild flames.
Flipping tortillas—we did
all in the name of cultura.

Abue, I too, know of el xochitl, el nopal, y la salsa picada—a meal
fit for humble queens.

'If abue lived here, she would bake cookies like those gringo
grandmothers do on the tele,
but instead of cookies, she'd make pan dulce.'

'If abuelita lived here, she'd be my alcahueta, my ally, and I
her right hand warrior

Porque ya sabes, abuelitas be loving their nietos more than their
actual children'
But I wouldn't know.

Because the first time I met you, I failed to proclaim myself:
a child of no land.
A daughter in a diasporic dance
caught between "just enough" and "not enough."

I ran around the Earth eight times
just to finally reach you.
That night for dinner, I reached for a tortilla
but you gave me a spoon.

My mestizo heart sank.

Sangre de mi sangre, but you called me 'child of the north',
assumptions bigger than el Rio Grande came between us.

The first time I met you, I could not speak loud enough to tell you:
I loved you and that I heard a lot about you
Years after this encounter
I continued to hug you in my prepubescent sueños while
singing our own corridos-that-could-have-been.

Jessica Aquino

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Salsa Fresca

Tell me what's the flavour,
They'll say it's a fruit not a veg.

The squeeze, the slice, against the counter
hard top, spread open

spilt, drips its seeds
body to board. Decisions deliberate

mixing up the labour of ancient
gods, claiming stolen treasure

sun-kissed flesh dressed in
cumino, strong, in reprisal;

a dash of salt sprinkled
curing what was bruised,

stripped and diced cilantro
lands like gulls on a sea of red

swilled in lime and brimming in garlic.
Chips cut its surface

like those galleons piled high,
delivering a forgotten taste

of famine and plenty, spiced with
cultural appropriation in every bite.

TAK Ezringer

The Food's Delicious, You're Not Welcome

Once adults become a certain age
it's a matter of time before they reminisce
to talk of the past
and say it was better

Ethnic food piled high
they'll question Why, dear friend,
aren't you afraid?
and lick their lips in satisfaction

It requires a stranger, light-skinned
without a funny surname
to offer up dishes, exotic recipes
on familiar ground

This individual, welcomed like a pet
loves the taste of cheeseburgers
heats up the grill
to fire up their lies

The irony of being accepted
the memory of a childhood
chewing her up and spitting her out
just a little taste

garlic sautéed softens
too much spice can ruin the meal
adulting in measured cups
does not guarantee the right flavour

The common denominator loves the food
but does that mean its balanced?
I've learnt to share those dishes while I continue
to get burned in places unseen and am
left with scorched pans, unable to replace them.

TAK Ezringer

El Rio Vergüenza

I bathed in the river shame
when I kissed the earth of my birth
I did not know then how I washed
myself in those waters and tasted
the anglophone soil tart
on my monotongue

I had ten years
I had zero excuses
the waters of vergüenza
soak deep in the bone marinate
the marrow in bitterness only detectable
by the second tongue

Twenty years on I yearn
to return to that land surrounded by deep water
and dry my bones in the sun
to kiss the tierra de mis antepasados and taste
the sweetness of soil hispanofona
on my twin tongues

Spenser Santos

I fell to my knees

I fell to my knees
and kissed the earth
embraced the anglophone soil
when I returned from Puerto Rico

It shames me to say it
If I try to say it
mi mouth evita las words
la lengua heavy and inmóvil
I break into babble
y entre los idiomas es
lo innombrable
esta vergüenza escondita

I had nine years

That's no excuse
I was already running

Spenser Santos

Estela

Hablo un idioma inexistente
Yo llegué al español como un estudiante
sin interés
y constantemente ausente
Mis abuelos me corregirían
pero por el tiempo que yo decía mis primeras palabras
todos fueron muertos
y yo no tuve el pasaporte que representan las conexiones familiares

Así soy explorador solitario
cartógrafo de la lengua
y dibujo un mapa de las regiones de este mar musculoso
Yo floto en las olas ondulantes
Mis dedos arrastran al agua
como el marinero viejo de uno u otro poema
Saboreo la sal en el aire
pero no puedo hacer vibrar mis erres
si tu pudieras oírme
es casi como mi lengua no funciona
y mi mapa es de mano infantil
donde dice <<Aquí hay dragones>>
El monstruo es una muñeca de palitos

Quizás esa es la razón
en inglés el surrealismo me frustra
pero en español es la poesía de todos mis días
las imágenes rotas
la sintaxis dubitativa
la gramática torturada
la énfasis extranjera o antigua
como si un anglosajón intentara hablar mozárabe
como si yo hablara una lengua antinatural a la lengua
menos el subjuntivo
porque y aunque la lengua debe ser mía
no se siente bien en la boca
y mi aliento no es merecedor
de las palabras que digo
<<Sea la luz>>
y la luz es débil

una bombilla sin filamento
y mi creación es imposible
y yo el dios que fracasó

Paso la rema por la melaza
y continuo
al horizonte donde la costa
existe o debe existir
con esperanza
de compañerismo
de educación
de que mis hijos pueden navegar
mejor que su padre
Estoy perdido en este mar
no puede nombrar las islas
ni las corrientes
ni cualquier cosa
excepto mis pensamientos
y la única cosa que deseo
es un familiar
para corregir mi curso
y bautizarme en el agua lingüística
al punto de ser renacido
bilingüe
completo

Spenser Santos



Insavive Species

Desirée Rivera

EL

PODER

DE

MI

COMUNIDAD

August 3, 2019

TW: Guns, Murder, Racism, Violence

“Border towns are like cousins,” my mom would say—
Before la frontera existed, there was only la tierra.
And people would walk across and back—always.
The border came later, seeking to categorize those
Based on the side you were on. But one can never
Set a division within a people’s shared blood,
Continuing on as they usually did, interacting with those
Across the way—and then some.
Paso del Norte still exists in the spirit of its descendants
Who call it home, though Juárez and El Paso carved up the region
By name since at least the 1800s. But a name only does as much as
you let it.
People cross as their family always does, just for a little while,
To shop at the urban centers, “Mexicans” and “Americans”
Who don’t stop to consider what sets them apart,
Nor did they ever mind in the first place.
There was nothing out of the ordinary at Cielo Vista that morning
As people convened at Walmart to prepare for the beginning of the
School year, getting supplies and whatever else they needed
Before heading back home via the Ysleta-Zaragoza that afternoon.
But eerie calm is always what precedes unspeakable tragedy
Borne through blinding hatred.

My mom told us about it with tears in her eyes,
Recounting the history and shared community again
And again, as she remembered staring as a child
Out towards Del Rio, a little girl in Acuña
Who did not see an alien land, but rather a shared historia,
Before her family moved to Fort Worth.
“That’s near where he used to live, too—it could have happened
there,
And I never wanted to think about it
Until it wasn’t my choice.”
Lying awake in darkness, I tried to swat the same thought away,
Until I had to accept that part of me wondered
If it was just a matter of time before it came true.
There’s nothing else you can do when confronted with the actions
Of those who seek to destroy, writing manifestos
Against your very being under the cover of darkness,
Cowardly opening fire on innocent people
As others commend him for it.
These horrific thoughts keep circling around my mind,
Increasing in number until I feel I’m going to implode,
Everything reduced to a jagged “22” seared in my mind.
And lying down is truly the easiest thing to do, isn’t it?
Pero necesitas recordar, siempre necesitas recordar,
These same cowards desire that exact reaction—
Through intimidation comes silence—and through silence,

Victory. Do not let them have that
When they take away everything else you have,
And leave your people bleeding out on the pavement,
Staining the ground on which they have walked for generations—
All of that done for the sake of what they want most:
Tu voz.
And even though it's harder than anything else you will ever do,
And even though it seems worthless, screaming in tears
Against the cacophony of racist, vituperative invectives
They are powerless to resist you
The moment you continue fighting
And remind them you have not ceased
To exist.

John Colie

Génesis de la marcha

“Anger is a grief of distortions between peers, and its object is change”

Audre Lorde. *Uses of Anger*

Los seres humanos sintieron, por primera vez, la necesidad de manifestarse, de expresar, todos juntos, a los cielos, al viento, a los dioses, lo que guardaban día a día, piel adentro: sus rabias e inconformidades, sus deseos y miedos, sus preguntas y exigencias, que recibían siempre, a través de los conductos regulares (rituales, cantos, bailes alrededor del fuego) la misma respuesta: un gran silencio con sus muchos ruidos, el espacio, los otros cuerpos y las cosas, y, en ocasiones especiales, una que otra tormenta, uno que otro desastre natural o las llamas, abriéndose paso en la maleza, voraces, amenazantes. La antipatía de un universo que no responde de manera articulada a ninguna réplica o súplica humana, venga en el formato que venga, era bien conocida para estos bípedos, todavía inexpertos en el arte de marchar, pero ya con el germen de la necesidad de ponerse de pie, de caminar juntos, fuera de sus cuevas, para decir. Decir a pesar del silencio denso, rocoso que recibían de vuelta. Decir a través de una imagen sostenida por sus manos que les permitiera mostrar su voz.

Habían dibujado bisontes, mamuts, ciervos y renos en las piedras, adentro de las cuevas, donde vivían. Superficies rocosas recibían los trazos de sus animales y costumbres, del movimiento de sus días, de su necesidad de cazar y alimentarse, de recibir protección ante toda amenaza, de tener la libertad de respirar, pararse, caminar, vivir donde nacieron o en el lugar donde los vientos los trasladaron, después de inundaciones o sequías. Pero ahora ha dejado de ser suficiente para ellos tan solo trazar animales sobre las piedras: algo insensato ha ocurrido, algo que desborda los límites de su paciencia, algo que sacudió la subordinación “natural” de su sangre a lo que simplemente sucede —no quedan rastros de lo que se trataba específicamente ese algo, pero sí de lo que despertó en sus órganos,

que estaban acostumbrándose apenas a las lógicas de la tierra—. Este algo hace que sientan la urgencia de trasladar su decir fuera de las cuevas para aclamar lo primordial: sus necesidades vitales, su “derecho” a existir —para ellos, derecho era, en ese entonces, una pulsión, un rumor, la marejada de su sangre repitiéndoles sin lenguaje: vives, la vida te honra, tu existes, la honras—. Así, toman en sus manos lo que encuentran —la piel curtida de animales que cazaron en los últimos días— y en su revés, donde no hay pelo, dibujan líneas, caminos hacia su propia voz y la de otros, rugidos, las palabras que todavía no conocen, sus contornos. Garrapatean con sangre, con tintes de plantas y frutos, con su saliva oscurecida por la tierra que se metieron previamente a la boca.

Así lo hacen, y con todas estas figuras que salen de su cuerpo, de su piel adentro, van a la intemperie: si hay lluvia, se mojan, si hay sol extremo, se dejan quemar por sus rayos. Caminan, sin detenerse, hacia un destino común, el que se inventan: la piedra más grande, el árbol más viejo, la llanura que se alcanza a ver apenas —una raya entre el cielo y la tierra—, y alzan las pieles de animales sobre sus cabezas o las ponen frente a su pecho. Hay quienes las sostienen con palos secos o con sus lanzas, y sin saber que marchan, marchan. Si los dibujos que han trazado en las cuevas tienen el propósito mágico de hacer que los animales no dejen de aparecer frente a ellos para calmar su hambre, estas imágenes buscan trasladar esa magia fuera de la cueva: que esos trazos sean capaces de hacer aparecer la indignación, la rabia, el desasosiego, esas emociones desconocidas que se presentan en el estómago y en la garganta, en forma de una asfixia colectiva, de una grandísima náusea. En este mundo, todavía sin religión, sin escritura, ni palabras, ya existía la urgencia de salir en masa, la necesidad de convertirse en ruido, en rumor, en algo parecido a las palabras: manifestar el cuerpo más allá del cuerpo, y hacer que otros ojos testifiquen las figuras del descontento, de los animales que muerden y habitan el lugar de una rabia tan primigenia como la piel que recibe la voz.

Juliana Torres Forero

ARTIST BIOS

(in order of appearance)

James Diaz

James Diaz is a Taino Puerto Rican native and the author of *This Someone I Call Stranger* (Indolent Books, 2018) and editor (along with Elisabeth Horan & Amy Alexander) of the anthology *What Keeps us Here: Songs from The Other Side of Trauma* (Anti-Heroine Chic Press, 2019). In 2016 he founded the online literary arts and music journal *Anti-Heroine Chic* to provide a platform for often unheard voices, including those struggling with addiction, mental illness and prison/confinement. His work can be found in *Yes, Poetry*, *The Colidescope* and *Isacoustic**. He resides in upstate New York, in between balanced rocks and horse farms. He has never believed in anything as strongly as he does the power of poetry to help heal a shattered life.

Florencia Ulloa

has returned to Ithaca a couple of times, finding in this bubble the peace to be herself. A Cornell alum with an associates degree in Spanish Literature from Madrid and a playwright, director, and actress for multiple Ithaca performances, her poetry and music has been a part of her for as long as she can remember. She currently juggles 3 jobs and works 12 hour days 6 days a week, and writes every chance she can in her off times.

Ariel Estrella

Ariel Estrella (they/them/elle) is a queer Latinx scholar hailing from Queens, NYC who focuses their advocacy on fostering beloved communities. For three years, they headed a column for their college newspaper on the politics of love. After graduating, they worked in community-based arts and labor nonprofit organizations. Ariel is now pursuing a doctoral English degree with a focus on queer of color lyricism. Their writings have been included in anthologies published by Arsenal Pulp and Tia Chucha Press. www.arielestrella.com

Desirée Rodriguez

I'm originally from the Bronx, NY and moved to Ithaca 4 years ago (via grad school in New Haven, CT). I'm a mother and an artist. Much of my art is emotional and includes threads of pain and healing that are expressed in different ways, such as through grief or a feeling of separation. My work is informed by my South Bronx upbringing, the beauty of Vieques, Puerto Rico, and my identity as a Nuyoricana cut off in many ways from the island.

Nicole Oliveira

is Brazilian-American and originally from Queens, NY. She is currently a senior in the American Studies Program at Cornell. After college, she hopes to continue onto grad school to get an MFA in creative writing.

Viri Garcia

My name is Viri and I'm a student at Cornell. I was born in Mexico but grew up in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, right across the border. The piece I'm submitting is about how moving to Ithaca/attending Cornell took away so much of my power, but I hope people can still enjoy it!

Izzy Pottinger

Izzy grew up in a mixed Caribbean household with a Dominican-American mother and Jamaican father. He is transmasculine and writes about his life and queerness on his confessional Instagram @popperpoetry. He is a 2019 graduate of Cornell University. He is a multimedia artist who focuses mostly on narrative and experimental film, as well as DIY curation work at pop up galleries in his basement. He feels the most powerful when he is laughing with family.

Jessica Aquino

Born and raised in Santa Ana, CA, however I'm currently living in South Philly. I identify as a Xicana, chingona who's always on the move. I just graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with my Masters. I had the great opportunity to receive the only travel scholarship from my graduate school, thus this past August I went to the motherland, Mexico Lindo. There I was inspired to write some poetry as well as to learn from my ancestors and the art of weaving and fibers.

TAK Erzinger

TAK Erzinger is an American/Swiss poet, artist and teacher with a Colombian background. Her poetry has been published by The Curlew, The Cirrus Poetry Review, The Beautiful Space Journal, The Mojave He[art] Review, The Avocet, The Rising Phoenix Review, I-70 Review and more. Her debut poetry collection entitled, "Found: Between the Trees" (Grey Borders Books 2019) is a chronicle about a life interrupted by mental illness. Its poems are a reflection on how love, nature and hiking nurtured and fostered an injured soul suffering from acute-childhood trauma and PTSD, leading to a path of redemption. This collection takes the reader on a journey of love, loss, forgiveness and healing.

Her close relationship with nature and her struggles with PTSD feature prominently in her work. The themes in her poetry touch upon varying degrees of loss, forgiveness and healing, as well some environmental and social commentary.

She lives in a Swiss valley with her husband and two cats.

John Collie

Though my name implies otherwise, I am part Mexican, as my mom and her family are all from Ciudad Acuña, a border town in Northern Mexico. My Mexican heritage has always been a large part of my identity, one that has come under siege in horrifying ways over the past few years. I wrote this poem concerning the El Paso shooting in August and what that nevertheless reveals about the power we still possess in our community--I hope you enjoy reading it.

Spenser Santos

Spenser Santos is a poet and translator based at the University of Iowa. Their poetry has appeared in *Puerto Rico en mi Corazón* and *Weird Cookies Poetry*, and their translations have appeared in *The Cordite Review*, *Little Village* magazine, and on *Asymptote's Translation Tuesday* blog feature.

Juliana Torres Forero

Literata y escritora de Colombia. Cursó la Maestría en Escritura Creativa de NYU. Ha publicado sus relatos y poemas en revistas virtuales como *Viceversa*, *Sombralarga* y *Temporales*, y en revistas impresas como *Prólogo* y *Lxs Bárbarxs*. Le interesa apoyar a otras mujeres escritoras y artistas en sus procesos creativos, por lo que ha organizado micrófonos abiertos dirigidos a ellas en Bogotá y en Nueva York. Ahora vive en Ítaca, NY, donde cursa un doctorado en Literatura en el Departamento de Estudios Romances de la Universidad de Cornell.

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