

# La Frontera

Dos Lenguas. Dos Culturas.



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Dos Lenguas. Dos Culturas.  
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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

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*"Princess of Silence*

*Unfailing great Lady of Heaven*

*When she speaks heaven shakes*

*Open-mouthed she roars..."*

These words, so prescient of modern poetry, were taken from the "Sumerian Temple Hymns" and written over 4,000 years ago in the city-state of UR. These are the words of the first *known* author in the world. Her name was Enheduanna. She was a Prophetess, a Poetess, a Princess and a High Priestess. Her words and ideas exhibited a large sway over a society widely believed to be the birthplace of writing. She ended her compilation of hymns with this statement: "The person who bound this tablet together is Enheduanna." In doing so, she became the very first author to sign her name.

Nancy Herschap and Alan Webb

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## UNTITLED by Alejandro Romero



**On the cover**  
Photograph

It's not your fault  
sister  
que ese mugroso put a roofie  
in your Jack and Coke,  
the other night  
y amaneciste  
adolorida, ashamed, asustada.  
The bruises on your breasts  
tell the story  
you can't remember.  
Que hicie?  
Who did this to me?  
How did I get home?  
You wrap yourself in a cocoon  
Of despair and weep  
in the darkness of your room.

It's not your fault  
sister  
que your pinche step- brother  
pulled down your pants,  
showed you his pee pee  
when you wandered in his room,  
pornographic images flashing on his tv.  
"Papi! Papi!"  
You ran looking for safety.  
"Guerca cochina,"  
His anger radiated  
"No seas mentirosa!"

He pushed you away and  
at six  
you saw the world for what it is:  
A hostile place for women  
even little girls.

It's not your fault  
sister  
que some perv predator: un tio/abuelo/step-dad  
inserted a finger in your vagina  
violating  
the sacred  
--you didn't even bleed yet  
-"Donde esta la nina?  
-Dile que venga pa' 'ca."  
You made yourself disappear:  
in a closet, under the bed, in the garage--  
kept the horror to yourself  
because  
who would believe?

It's not your fault  
sister  
that your daddy  
leaves your  
girlfriend  
messages  
like: "Keep away from my daughter!  
We don't want that shit around here!"-  
scaring everyone  
who would love you  
to scatter in the wind like ashes,

forcing you to suppress  
who you be.

It's not on you.

Manita.

Tu

no tienes

la culpa.

Dry those tears of shame.

Ponte los pantalones,

Madre.

Take my hand.

Deja de llorar.

Rise

Manita-

like the gift from God

that you are

and

let

your

light


shine!

Take back


your

power


y dale

pa' delante! 

Growing up the young girl's mother always told her she was a beauty for her pale skin and long curly hair. She was told that boys will go crazy for her one day; little did the mother know that men would want her as well.

On a Saturday afternoon a birthday was being celebrated that the young girl and her mother were invited to. She wore her silver one piece swimsuit and stood out from all the kids because of her pale complexion. There was a man lurking around the lake watching the young girl without her noticing. He was a guest; he was the uncle of the birthday boy. The young girl played in the lake with a friend and noticed that the man went in as well. He approached her and asked if he could play as well. She pleasantly said, "Of course", he began to get closer, smiling as if she didn't feel the discomfort running through her body. He laid his crusty hands on her small body, his arms hidden under the water where no one could see. The fear could be seen in the child's eyes, she was horrified. The young girl screamed but no one heard, it's as if her voice vanished in the air and her lungs gave up. She felt more pain in her heart than in his fingers striking her with every grunt, the tears running down her face waiting for the pain to end. The man finally finished after what felt like a lifetime to her, she stood there not moving a muscle, her body frozen from the trauma as he laughed walking away. She'll remember that day until she dies. I'll remember his face and that cruel smile until I die. My heart sank on that lake that day. 




El diablo has been haunting me since I was a little girl  
When I was 4 I used to walk around my house wearing my little pink dresses.  
At a young age my abuelita warned me  
"Quitate esas cosas que el diablo anda suelto!"  
I never knew who el diablo was until one day a 30 year old cruelly abused my cousin when she was on her way to her school  
El diablo lives in the body of an old man that followed me to my house yelling  
"Don't make me chase you chiquita que estas bien bonita"  
My shorts were not an invitation to my body  
My shorts did not give you a right to call me chula nor bonita  
But I was thought to never voice my opinion because "Calladita me miro mas bonita"  
Because I should be afraid of what el diablo can do to me  
El diablo is present every time a man eats me up with his eyes even though I'm wearing jeans and a sweater  
El diablo is present every time a man honks at me when I'm walking on the streets after I get out of church  
El diablo is present every time I was forced to cover my shoulders in high school because they were a distraction to boys  
But, how long will I keep quiet?  
Diablo don't try to keep haunting me  
I'm tired of being schooled every time I want to wear my favorite skirt, my summer crop tops and my sun dresses  
Because next time you try to be present in my life I will not back down and I will voice my opinion  
Tell you that my body is a temple that you are not allowed to enter  
My legs won't shake anymore every time you come near me  
Because I'm no longer afraid of voicing my opinion against your machismo that has been haunting me for years  
This time I'm not afraid of you diablo and I will never be. 



Black and white photograph

You are my headache  
my hard to think straight days  
my sleepless nights  
delivering my worst nightmare  
To you  
I hope you are never forced out  
of what's supposed to be home  
only because mom needs another day alone  
I hope you never drive just to drive  
because you have nowhere to go  
Back to mom  
my diary  
my teacher  
my motivator  
yet the only reason I can't leave  
Please don't leave me.  
Reader  
I hope you never feel the only home you've ever known  
is more like that of a correction  
I hope you never receive a call that she's found a gun  
and resent the caller for letting himself be shown out  
but then again,  
so did you  
and you speed across town  
not knowing if you'll reach what's supposed to be home in time  
not knowing if she'll have a pulse when you finally make it  
I hope you never experience the adrenaline yet emptiness  
of storming from room to room  
trembling at the turn of every knob  
not ready to find her  
Feeling silly for checking behind curtains

But there's that little part of you...  
What if she is back there?  
Wouldn't want to waste a search party's time  
"That's daft; she's been in the bath all along"  
Mom  
It's hard to tell which of us is the selfish one  
It's you  
for leaving me alone  
for passing your social anxiety  
onto me  
then just leaving me!  
And it's me  
for insisting you carry on  
living in that twisted head of yours  
because I can't be left alone.  
Because you, with your episodes  
and tantrums  
and unpredictable personality  
are all I have.  
Please don't leave me. 

I watched in stunned silence as you wept.  
Your long, matted, dirty hair hid your face from me.  
I was just a child and you looked like my Grandmother.  
Why have you been forgotten?  
How did it get this bad for you?  
Where do you sleep?  
I reach out to hold you and tell you it's going to be ok,  
but my mother pulls me back.  
I beg her to let me help her and she hesitates.  
I give you all my allowance and you smile.  
As I walk away I turn to see you one last time.  
Why are you throwing the money in the air?  
My mother holds me close and tells me,  
"Some people are homeless for a reason." ◆



Color Photograph

The memory still holds as we strive for peace  
we march for dignity because it will never cease.


The meaning of equal, we remember it well  
a man gave a speech in the dwelling of hell.

Riots followed that revolted laws,  
the powers spoke from daunting halls.

He had a dream until his death  
he wanted liberty from social unrest.

Many do not know he was shot to death  
continued mourners followed the bequest

He is remembered for his best words--  
I had a dream, bellowed and unheard

His inspiration is left to stand  
for his life and his human rights plan. 

A tragedy it was  
The rise and fall of every man, Othello  
Naïve a man he was they say  
A fool, to blame, a sinner  
Deserving of his fall

Quick are men to judge  
To hate, despise Othello  
How little they know  
They'd too be doomed  
They'd love and mourn Othello

Of a simple mind he was  
Knew only of whips and war  
He overcame his chains  
And rose above a slave  
Though not above the dreadful name, the Moor

In a new land as a victor praised  
But remained and unwelcomed stranger  
Admired by most men  
And newly wed to pure youth  
Was not enough to keep him sane  
For Iago was his fall

As a slithery snake in a new babe's ear  
The devil sowed the seed of deceit  
And like a thirsty sponge  
He took the malice of it all  
And went off to find his peace

More tricks the wicked devised  
To usurp the blinded Moor  
With the handkerchief at last  
His seizures drove him mad  
To the point of no return, poor Moor

His poor bride was no more  
For Othello took her soul  
A pitiful misjudgment that was  
But more tragedy was to come  
Bloodshed for those to blame

Brave heart faithful Emilia  
Confessed her husband's sin  
And with a strike from his dagger  
She laid by Desdemona and slept  
To escape the Evil tried  
But caught he was by the just

Oh, but on their knees they stood  
Still was Othello for the worst was past  
Awake and aware of the fruit he ate  
With boldness wore his shame  
And with a sad calmness redeemed himself

But at the end they loved the Moor  
And honored their fallen Othello  
Into the sea Desdemona and he  
And that is the story


The Rise and fall of every man, Othello









Black and White Photograph

Fake smiles, fake lives  
fake friends, fake likes  
Instagram this, Snapchat that  
everyone's lonely, everyone's sad.  
Too depressed, but never show that  
reality shows weakness  
and weakened "we're not".  
Take a good selfie, post it and lie  
show that your pretty  
while hiding your flaws,  
We're all liking other pictures  
other fake lives  
while scrolling down our feeds  
sitting on a couch. 

This traffic light inside my head  
Is always green but never red.  
My dreams, my thoughts and all my fears  
They speed past my listening ears.  
I close my eyes to block it out  
But inside my head they rush about.  
I take deep breaths to slow it down  
But upon my face appears a frown.  
My heart beats fast  
But my breathing then slows.  
I breathe in life, then out it goes.  
My body's numb, yet i feel my tears.  
I've lost count of the days, the months, and the years.  
This traffic light inside my head  
I'm scared of the day when it turns red. 


Solitare is something that is  
Neither here nor there  
It is a state of mind  
That comes with a hot stare

For me, it is the whispers of the trees  
And the rough ground beneath your knees  
That you feel when you pray  
For the sickness to go away

It is the taste of flat cola  
That you enjoy outside  
It is the faces of your friends  
That have something to hide 




Color Photograph

They said not to go out at night  
I am female.  
They said shorts or skirts  
I am female.  
They said be careful how you dance  
I am female.  
They said not to drink too much  
I am female.  
They said I can't say no  
I am female.  
They said I wanted it  
I am female.  
They said it was my fault  
I am female.  
But he is the one that touched me without consent  
He is male.  
But he is the one that wouldn't let me go  
He is male.  
But he is the one that wears less clothes sometimes  
He is male.  
But he is the one that drank too much  
He is male.  
But he is the one that ignored me when I said NO!  
He is male.  
They said. They said. They said.  
I am female.  
But he is male. 

Sorrow filled the empty clouds  
A company of clustered thoughts  
Rain poured in lonely routes  
A hint of hope remaining locked  
Their company had been an illusion  
It gets louder every night  
The ghost had not been a delusion  
It dims the brightest light  
There is nothing more in this lifeless place  
No hands to hold  
Only a bewitching maze  
That had promised a sea of gold  
Shrieking cries form a thousand echoes  
The glass endures desperate attacks  
It is finally time to let go  
A connection that could never last  
The last grain of sand welcomes a wish  
To be set free an incomplete longing to be missed  
The limit has been reached  
The faint whisper of the ghost  
Seduces me to hold a brush  
Converted to a mindless host  
Craving to feel the rush  
Red paint splatters on the floor  
Gasping loudly from the sharp thrust  
No more need to feel alone  
An end to this toxic lust




Sea drops run into my eyes,  
and they are difficult to contain  
They're spreading like rain  
Like a hurricane coming my way  
Bury a seed in to dirt, and it will flourish  
But it is hard to bury your tenderness in to the dignity that vanished  
Love has sharp spikes  
As well as bright skies 





Black and White Photograph

Walking on the street all I hear is "Pretty!"  
How I wish to hear "She looks so smart!" or "Hey, you're strong!"  
I want to wear the clothes I want based on how I feel,  
not on what others think.  
I want to be measured based on my courage, not on my looks,  
because women don't like that our face or body defines who we are,  
but instead our fierceness and dedication.  
I want to give my soul the recognition of something much more than just "pretty."  
I want to surpass my complexes and society's stigmas,  
to be judged because of my impressive mind and intellect, not just because of my  
beauty.  
I want to be myself,  
free and calm. 

Trembling heart lead by the sight  
Awaits the perfect secondhand  
Smile and blindness, all is bright  
God knows this moment has been planned  
Skin as gold and hair like night  
I hold my breath to take his hand  
Eyes so dark with so much light  
Will he ever be my man?  
Feels so right love at first sight  
Forever since that magic night





Color Photograph

Mind over matter but,

My mind is empty

Stuck in my lies

I dream of Bentleys


Feel my demise


The world is against me

I see your disguise

You're just pretending

Feed me your lies

But my mind is empty 

It Is Never too Late (never give up)  
Our days are short, but are enough  
The days can run smooth or rough  
Surely our days can be tough,  
But know that life does not rush  
Our days create motivation for new beginnings  
As long as you are trying you are winning  
Small, tall, young or old  
Know it is never too early or late to gain control  
Follow your biggest dream  
Do not be afraid to be extreme  
Our days have a tendency to knock you down  
Stay strong and do not let the days push you around  
It is not a deadly sin  
To know that there is greatness within  
It is never too late to understand  
That achieving your goal should be your plan. 

Take me to the Border where the sky is blue.

Take me to the Border why don't you.

Take me to the Rio Grande where the water is strong.

The Rio Grande where it can't be wrong.

Take me to a blue clear sky in Del Rio.

This is the place a little better than Laredo.

Take me to an open Falcon Lake.

This is where we can lay down our stakes.

Take me to Rio Grande City.

This is where all the girls are pretty.

Take me to Freer.

So I can shoot a deer.


Take me to Brownsville.

This is where my heart heals.

Take me to El Paso.

Don't forget your lasso.

Take me to the Southern Border.

Where life is never shorter. 



Color Photograph



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