

La Frontera

Dos Lenguas. Dos Culturas.



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



The border is often depicted as a place of separation, an area that exists to delineate the ending of one country and the beginning of another.

However, those of us who live here recognize that the truth is often less clear. This threshold of two countries is a place of integration, not separation especially in our city of the 7 flags where ties run deep and generational.

The memory of when we gathered to celebrate my younger brother's birthday always drives this point home for me. It was the first birthday after his death.

My brother is buried just 15 miles and another country away. In fact, he's buried on top of my grandmother. In El Jardin de Los Angeles the dead are buried three deep. My younger brother is buried on top of my grandmother who is buried next to my grandfather. Three spots taken. Three left to fill. Not too long after his death, we visited his grave to celebrate his birthday. We gathered from both sides of the border, family and friends.

By the time the mariachis arrived, we had already set up the folding tables. They were overflowing with food and alcohol, especially with Buchanan's Scotch Whiskey – my brother's favorite. The mariachis began with a song they played many times that day. It was the same song they played at my brother's funeral - "Un Puño de Tierra."

The song, my mother's favorite, was the perfect choice - a song about death, but also about life.

And so we cried. And we toasted. And we laughed. To keep warm on the unusually cold day, we shared the few coats that were available, and we told stories, and we poured whiskey onto my brother's grave.

I think about that day a lot. We poured imported Scotch whiskey onto a Mexican grave containing a U.S citizen - in another country but only 20 minutes away from our house.

Where else but on the border could such a memory be made?

Alan Webb

SUNSET by Darren Smith



ON THE COVER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Take a Break	3
JFK	4
A Kind of Radiance You Only Have at 19	5
Tracks	6
Can't Sleep	7
Saving Grace	8
Colors	9
Purple Fire	10
She	11
Blood	12
Her	13
Who am I?	14
Eclipse	16
It is Bright	17
The Assignment	18
Core Memories	19
A Dreamer	20
The Haunting Ballad of Existence	22
Anxious Love	23
The Exit	24
In a Universe...	25
My Aviation Dream	26
Untitled	27
Life	28
My Name	29
Dreams	30
Amor Eterno	31
Love	32
My Saintly Flower	33
Single Mom	34
Ready to Ride	35
At the Gate	36
Rialto Hotel	37
Dear Love	38
Feeding the Ducks	39
It's No Longer Just Me	40
College's Sweet Autumn Embrace	41
Catch the Waves	42
Sundown on the Sea	43




Photograph

Today I land in New York City.
I'm leaving behind the house and people that built me.
On the plane I sit next to the man humming "Crimson and Clover."
With tears in my eyes, I call my mother on the layover.

I take the train to Brooklyn from Jamaica Station.
Quicken my pace and map my reservation.
I meet my new roommate, Sherry, at an Indian restaurant.
We bond over boybands while sharing butter chicken with naan.

Soon, I'll be starting nursing school.
And I can't wait for the weather to get cool.
I keep dreaming about ice skating at Rockefeller.
And sitting on a bench in Central Park, reading a romance bestseller.

My bubble is burst as my name is called.
I walk across the stage feeling phony and small.
Obtaining a diploma, I feel like it's not mine.
Wearing a cap and gown, my father says it's my day to shine.


I pray that New York waits for me.
And that she forgives the fire I bring.
I think about her like it's a personal retreat.
I could almost compare her to the South Texas heat. 

I am 19 today.
But I was just 18, I swear.
I know I'm going to be 20 soon,
and 30 seems inevitable.
But today I am 19.

I cried about 19.
The same way I did at 18,
and 17,
and 16 before that.

It seems that I'm doomed to cry on my birthday.
Yet, I don't think it's a coincidence anymore.

I dread getting older.
I'm losing my youth,
and I'm losing excuses.

I am too old to cry on my birthday,
and that makes it worse.
I'm too young to mourn my youth,
but too old to not recognize it,
and I'm afraid it is starting to slip away. 



Photograph

Miss how I would smile as a child, ain't been there for a while.
Now I'm reminiscing and I can't sleep.
Tossing, turning all through the night, meditate and try to find
Balance, but I'm tripping and I can't sleep.
And zombies from way in the past just keep coming back.
Old things I revisit and I can't sleep,
And I just wanna get out my head, and get up into bed.
Even then I'm dreaming and I can't sleep.

 Ringing in my ears, it's not the alarm.
 Wiping on my eyes, but I don't need to yawn.
 I ain't get out of bed, just feel a little depressed.
Well I dug myself into that hole so what the hell should I expect?
 I was just tired, more stress prior,
To the thoughts that made me go "Screw it, just get higher."
 And I get faded, 'til my vision blurry,
But eventually I come down and start to freaking worry,
 Again about everything that's not meant for me.
And these old memories stretching my soul very thin,
 But I won't go there again; I'm focused,
 Greened out, grinning, getting green like ogres.
 You ready? We gon' show 'em it ain't hocus pocus.
We gonna have their respect when they start to notice.
 We realizing what we been dreaming.
 Then once again the cycle begins, damn.



Beneath the sky so blue and wide,
Where nature's wonders gently hide,
A shadow blooms in bright colors,
Oh, that's a scene that fills my heart with light.

The leaves fly in the gentle breeze,
Whisper secrets among the trees,
In the serene and peaceful place,
Yes, I did; I found my calm, my saving grace.





Photograph

Purple fire, it could start,
Burning wild, burning hot
Back in the mind to be forgot.
Poet's sorrow, poet's joy
Thrown around like a toy.
Shaking. Breaking.
Worn down.
Left to be lost and
Never found.
Poet's love, poet's hate.
Neither can I escape.
Happy smiles, angry tears
Forever haunt me
Through the years.




She looks at her hands,
She looks at me,
She feels my arms,
She feels my face,
But she doesn't ask.

She looks at me,
She cries,
And so do I,
my eyes shut down,
Regret is what I have,
And forgiveness is what I crave to earn,
From the girl that I no longer am.

A second or two,
My eyes open,
And her eyes do too,
Concern filling hers,
She looks ashamed,
Ashamed of her arms,
Her mind and her face,
But she doesn't dare to talk.

She looks,
She sees,
She understands the lines,
I stare at her with fear in my worn-out eyes,
She stares back at me with her bright ones,
I don't dare to talk,
And she still doesn't ask.

It would be easier if she wasn't me,
But she is and will always be,
Just like the mind that owns me,
She will own this body in the future,
And I own hers,
Or what is left of hers to see. 



Photograph

I stare at her hard,
Filled with disdain and disgust.

So many flaws—

I have to pause,
To look and analyze.

Her oversized shirts,
Shorts that hang loose.
Her waist, a width that defies,
Her thighs, robust, unrefined.

A face decorated with zits,
The lists I could make,
Each number, a flaw to state.

She's just ugly.
How could he like her?
It doesn't make sense.


I want to punch her.

But if I did,
The mirror would shatter.



I am a man; I am a child.
I am a father, and I am a son.
I am weak, and I am strong.
I like to laugh when my heart is happy.
I cry when my heart feels pain.
I love to love, and I love to be loved.
I am loved, but I am sometimes feared, and I am sometimes hated wrongfully.
I am sensitive to the feelings of others around me, but sometimes I don't care.
I try to understand, but I try harder to be understood.
I am lost if I have no one to care for.
I would die tomorrow if no one cared for me.
I am respected by most, and I am thought a fool by some.
I am a romantic, but sometimes my heart is as cold as ice.
My eyes are aware of the beauty of the world in all of God's and Man's creations, but
too often I walk in the dark of my fears and preoccupations and I cannot see.

I need to be touched and held.
I need to touch and to hold.
I am as hard as the bark on a tree.
I am as soft as the moss that grows on the bark.
I learn, I teach what I have learned, and I learn again.
Sometimes I feel empty and sometimes I feel alone.
I like to see a baby laugh.
It hurts me when I see a woman cry.
Sometimes I feel that I am an island alone in the ocean.
Sometimes I feel that I am a taxi on a crowded New York City Street.

I have known the pain of being alone in a crowd.
I have known the joy of being cherished.
I have known the agony of rejection.
My heart has many wounds and scars.
I regret that I have been the cause of wounds to other hearts.
I have felt the pain of too much tenderness.
I am a man of few words, but with some people and about some subjects, I can talk for days.
To some I am selfish, to others, I am a fountain of generosity.
I feel most happy when I make another feel happy.
I do not fear dying, but I do fear the unknown of death.
The history of my life is a book open to all, but my heart and mind are open to only a few.
I am wise in the ways of the world, but I am a minnow in the sea of the universe of knowledge. 



Photograph

In the shadows made by one being
A love that faltered and turned to fleeing

The chains that held very tight
A heart once bright

The weight of blame
Now burned with shame

Each insult made a hole in my heart
Now it's over and I am able to re-start

I'm no longer trapped
I'm no longer attached

Now I see sunlight
It is very bright



The clock is ticking, the deadline is near
I have to finish this assignment, but I'm filled with fear
I don't know how to start, I don't know what to write
I wish I had more time, I wish I had more light
But I can't give up, I can't let go
I have to face this challenge, I have to grow

I have to find my voice, I have to find my flow
I have to trust myself, I have to show
That I can do this, that I can succeed
That I can learn from this, that I can lead

That I can overcome this, that I can be free
That I can finish this, that I can be me





Photograph

“What do you want to be when you grow up?”

The generic, ask every kid you see, question from adults.
Little me was never content with just one choice,
so she had a new answer every time.

Her fascination with the moon and stars
made her want to be an astronaut,
so she could literally reach for them herself.

Her love for the sea and all that lived in it
made her want to be a marine biologist,
so she could spend her life saving theirs.

Her passion for arguing over things that were important to her,
and always being right,
made her want to be a lawyer,
so she could devote her life to arguing over important issues,
and always being right.

Her need for everything to be the way she wanted them to be
made her want to be an architect,
so she could build from the ground up.

Her inability to be inferior to anyone
made her want to be an entrepreneur,
so she could be her own boss.


Her nurturing soul and love for children
made her want to be a nurse in the NICU,
so she could heal babies who were sick.

Her devotion for animals
made her want to be a veterinarian,
so she could be around them all the days of her life.

Her big appetite and open-to-anything taste palate
made her want to be a food critic,
so she could eat everyday for free.


Her love for storytelling and expressing her thoughts on paper
made her want to be a writer,
so she could relive her greatest moments as many times as she liked.

Her longing to fly
made her want to be a pilot,
so she would never have to come down.

Her inner happiness called from every corner of the world,
so she vowed to see every bit it had to offer.
A dreamer, they called her. 

In the cosmic theater's shadowed realm,
Life's mysteries loom like a haunting spell.
Surprises, eerie as the midnight's shroud,
Our hopes and dreams, beneath the moonlight, still.

In this enigmatic frontier, where futures bewitch,
Amazement lingers, a spectral twitch.
The universe, a crypt, its secrets concealed,
In its mysterious grip, we find rest, revealed.

So let's savor the journey, in the gothic night,
As life's dance, macabre, takes its flight.
In the tapestry of existence, a Poe-esque art,
Embracing the wonders with a haunted heart. 

When told I am blessed,
I only feel stressed.

Surrounded by folk so closed-minded,
I can only acknowledge that they're blinded.

By ignorance so bliss,
It fills my world with darkness.

This darkness makes me unsure,
How can my love be so "impure."

New possibilities are represented by a dove.
So, I can understand that my one good feeling is represented by love.





Photograph

In a universe filled with hue, I find my charm.
With each stroke of a brush, a canvas can disarm and harm
A masterpiece born, from my heart and despair,
Expressing emotions can be rare.
Through vibrant hues and shades, stories unfold,
Whispering secrets, bold and untold.
Art, a secret language that can be expressed or suppressed,
A window to the soul, a moment of rest or distress. ◆

In the blue sky where dreams take flight,
I found my purpose, my heart's pure delight,
Above the white clouds, where eagles dare to roam,
Lies the realm of my cherished aviation home.

In the cockpit, I know it's my turn,
Wings of steel and engines that burn,
To conquer the heavens, and touch the stars,
I'll follow my dream, no matter the scars.

From sunrise to sunset, I'll chart my course,
Guided by stars and the silent sky,
Over the mountains and oceans,
My aviation dream is in my capable hands.

I'll dance with the wind, where gravity's is no longer tie,
I found my home, where my life belongs,
Although turbulence and storms exist,
I'll brave the unknown and I will persist.





Photograph

In life's grand tapestry, we weave our tales,
A dance of sunsets, whispers in the gales.

Each day a canvas, painted bright and bold,
A story of courage, of young and old.

Through joyous laughter and the tears we've shed,
In every step, our paths are widely spread.

Embrace the journey, with its ebb and flow,
For life's true beauty in its moments grow.



A child is given a name, I was Abiel.
I gave that name a purpose, and brought upon some shame.
I grew defiant, trying to understand a world,
Trying to find a place where my name meant more.

I was Ob, AB, Obregon and Abiel.
Different places gave me a name,
which pretty much meant the same.

But there is one name I still can't believe,
A name so real, it fits me.
Dad is my name, and that is me.



In a world woven with dreams so bright,
A young man loves, 'neath the moon's soft light.
With hopes as vast as the starry night,
He builds a future, glowing and right.
Together they stand, hearts entwined,
A tapestry of love, uniquely designed.
Through challenges faced, and fears unconfined,
Their bond grows deeper, fate redefined.
In love's sweet embrace, they find their way,
Creating a world where forever they'll stay.





Photograph

I Love You in Every Universe.....

Of the multiverse, of parallel realms

Of the sails of world ships, or the multi-versal helms...

From the sailors of the stars to the makers of space,


To last raindrop of water standing still on leaf of Lotus...

From the abyss of the unknown eternal mysteries,

From the silent dances of the galaxies to the march of

Raining symphonies...

From no sound space to keys of Mozart's piano,

Be the moment I saw till now, 1 million years ago 

One morning God bestowed on me a blue little flower.
He whispered, "Love, protect, and guide it, hour by hour."
I watched it bloom with each passing day,
Under the sun's warm embrace, and starry nights at bay.

Love and laughter, like a gentle rain, did shower,
Upon this little flower.
See it grow, soon it will radiate its own power.

One night, I slept full of bliss. As my eyes open, my blue little flower at miss.
Rainy days and gloomy nights lay ahead.
Sorrow and pain poured on this mother.

Then, God's voice whispered, "You loved, protected and guided him back
to me. In my garden, now he will be." ◆

Being a single mom is not for the weak.
At times it feels like I'm at my peak.

It can also get very difficult at times,
but it is very well worth the climb.

You wonder if you're doing fine,
and remind yourself to always shine.

For you will always have them by your side,
no matter what coaster you ride.





Photograph

Last time,
Born of pain,
Still standing in the rain,
Forever fighting,
Until there is no more lightning.
Unemployable is my fate.
Can you relate?
I'm at the gate,
Expecting to graduate,
Turning on a dime,
Making the most out of my time.





Photograph

Dear Love,
My heart hurts for you.
While I'd like to explore you,
The fear creeps in that I'm already feeling too much.

With our time running thin,
It feels more of a sin,
To try and turn from you.
I yearn for you.

And those moments in which you look at me as if the whole
world has disappeared,
Will you stay with me here?
In the timelessness?

I try to capture each detail like a portrait,
And cling to you without forfeit.
For as long as you hold to me,
Or until you feel you must go.





Photograph

Reckless journeys, running wild,
Anxiety is easily quieted with the presence of society,
The freedom of a child.

But then came you, so unexpected;
Your comfort now my only goal,
Your sanctuary I erected.

And though my consequences are no longer just mine,
I carry the worry with ease
Because your happiness is on the line.

The urge to ease my burden and to flee,
Is quickly dissolved when I remember it is no longer just me.






College has brought me a sense of autumn's embrace. As nature's transformation sheds its leaves that turn from green to symphonies of gold and amber hues. Its chilly winds bring the whispering reminder of change, of a life that is ever evolving such as the seasons that change.

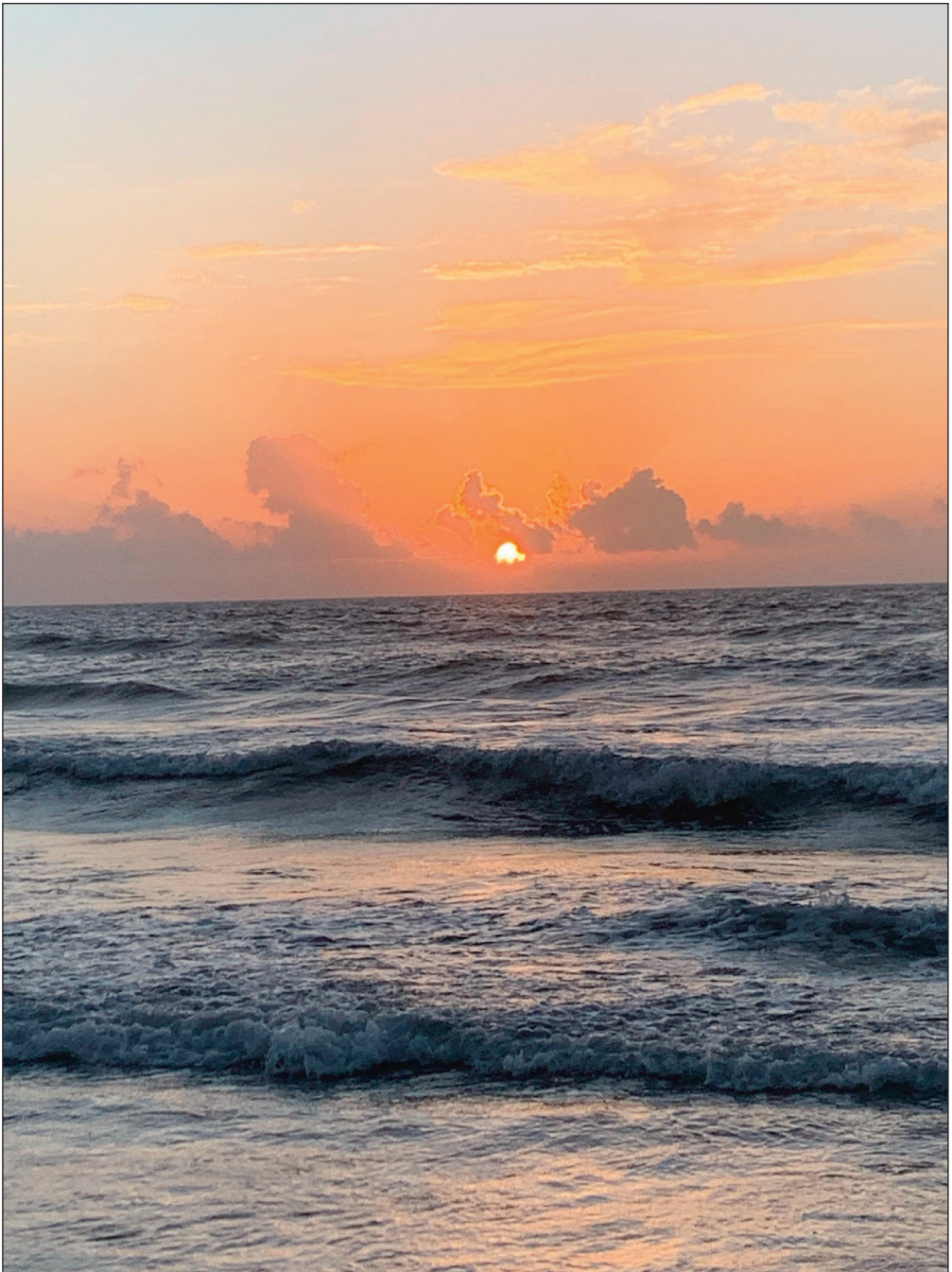
And just like the trees, let go of the old and make room for the new beginnings, embracing transformation wherever life takes us, welcoming the unknown with courage and grace.

The sun, beaming fiery rays of light, sparkled upon the ocean surface; the star radiating warmth in the air, arms paddling into crystal blue, heart racing in his chest, the surfer grew apprehensive for the oncoming wave of destruction he dared to challenge in front of a horde of watchers.

Once an award-winning surfer, he had never witnessed an opponent as monstrous as the one before his dilating eyes, yet he grasped his ambition tightly.

Focused on the approaching obstacle, he steadied himself on the board and began to glide across the water with ease. The moisture, sharp and bitter, spritzed over his tanned skin; he was drenched in the salty liquid.

Vocal chords strumming, hands clasping, the swarm of people on the beach shore hollered with euphoria as the surfer danced with the sea. Satisfied and radiant, the surfer made his descent to the shore in this monumental moment, embracing family and friends. He had never felt so alive. 



Photograph

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