



La Frontera

Dos Lenguas. Dos Culturas.

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LaFrontera

Dos Lenguas. Dos Culturas.
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



We often see the creative process as a hobby, something separate from the reality of our everyday experiences. What good is writing a story when there are bills to pay? What good is sketching or sculpting or taking photographs when the world demands practicality and productivity? Creativity is often the first thing we abandon when life becomes overwhelming, as if imagination were a luxury reserved for quieter, easier times.

But creativity is not an escape from reality. It is one of the ways we make sense of it. Humans have been creating for as long as we have existed. Engaging in the creative process allows us to slow down, to listen to ourselves, to give shape to thoughts and emotions that otherwise remain unspoken. And there are real benefits to engaging in the creative process such as reduced stress, sharper focus, a stronger sense of identity, and a renewed ability to problem-solve. It doesn't matter whether you are a professional or a beginner. What matters is the act of trying, the willingness to engage creatively and exercise the imagination. When we create, we practice patience, resilience, curiosity and even self-awareness, virtues that quietly improve every area of our lives.

Perhaps the most important benefit is this: creating reminds us that we are more than our obligations. You do not need permission, profit, or an audience to create something meaningful. The act itself is enough. Allow yourself the time and space to engage in your creative process, if not for the many benefits, then simply because to create is to be human.

Thank you for reading,

Alan Webb

YO SOY DE LA FRONTERA by Andrea Yirhe Soto



ON THE COVER

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Photograph

Crowded buzzings
and alcoholic prophecies,
your dizzying smoke scent
overwhelms me, unravels me.
It means we are nothing
if not lovers, archnemeses
because nothing is romantic,
and when you look down at me
angels singing, the ambient roaring,
my hand rests flat on your chest
naturally, as if it has any right to,
yet our bodies magnetize together
by instinct, as if they are
meant to be this way
and a world existed
where we could allow this,
this thing eating away
to devour us, and we would never,
ever be starved of each other again. ◆

She's not as special as a lily, nor perfect as a daisy.
She is a rose.

Given to all who love, then thrown to the side,
She is a rose.

Red like love or red like blood from pain only she knows,
She is a rose.

Grows thorns to keep greedy hands at bay, yet still, they grab.
She is a rose.

The beauty she holds leads others to believe they have more claim than she does,
The price of being a rose. ◆



Photograph

We walk on lines both blurred and clear,
Through borders shaped by hope and fear.

Beneath the sky, a fractured dome,
We seek the place that feels like home.

The wind whispers in tongues unknown,
A bridge to lands where dreams have grown.

But in the heart, a truth remains
The strongest roots defy all chains.



The thunder rumbles trembling through my body.
As the Lighting Strikes, it courses through my veins.
I feel a sensation I have not felt from anybody.
Suddenly, I'm now as fast as a Plane.

The thunder roars like wild applause:
I hear Nature's voice, without a pause.

It now spirals up from deep within,
A fleeting thrill admits my Sin.

So let it rain and let it roar:
I'll chase this Freedom evermore.

Within this newfound Chaos I do find,
A temporary peace to unwind.

Alas! The Storm will now fade away,
When morning dawns on tangled gray.
Yet when it stirs again someday,
I'll greet its Wrath as it calls me by my name.





Photograph

That Empty Chair is filled with memories,
Those memories are filled with might.

Your laughter lingers, whispers soft and light,
A distant shining star in the darkest night.

Your absence is felt in every chill,
My world keeps spinning, yet it's still.

Though time may cure and heal my heart,
The love you left me will never part.



God is the collection of all those moments of goodness—
An unexpected surprise,
The aroma of your cooking, your unmistakable laugh,
A shooting star that lights up the sky and then goes away—
Your smile.

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An unexpected surprise,
The aroma of your cooking, your unmistakable laugh,
A shooting star that lights up the sky and then goes away—
Your smile.

Our mind is unable to imagine an end to it all.
It seems to be endless.
It probably is, but not in the way we think. ◆



Photograph

My name has been like saving someone
else's seat at the table.

Someone else's things, their bags.

And no one comes to claim them.

So, I've been carrying the weight of another person's life.

"She's not home right now. No- no- she'll

Be back soon. I'll leave a message."

I'm never going to hear back from her.

I'm just an answering machine.

"Just hold on. She's on her way. Uhm. Yeah,

She'll get back to you"

BZZ BZZ BZZ BZZ BZZ BZZ BZZ-





Photograph

Luca had always loved soccer. From the time he could walk, he would chase after anything that rolled: balls, cans, even crumpled pieces of paper. He wasn't the biggest or the fastest kid in the neighborhood, but what he lacked in size, he made up for with skill and determination.

Every day after school, Luca would sprint to the local park, where his friends gathered for pick-up games. The park wasn't much, just a dusty patch of grass with two rusted metal goals, but to Luca, it was like stepping onto a grand stadium. The cheers in his head were as loud as any crowd.

Today was different. Today was the neighborhood championship, the game everyone waited for all year. Luca's team, the Southside Tigers, had made it to the final, and they were facing their rivals, the Northside Falcons. Both teams had been battling through the tournament for weeks, and now, everything came down to this.

The sun was beginning to set, casting a warm golden glow over the field. It was tied 2-2, with only minutes left on the clock. Luca's heart pounded in his chest. His legs felt like lead from running all afternoon, but he couldn't stop now, not when they were so close.

His teammate, Carlos, dribbled down the field, weaving between defenders like a dancer. But just as he reached the box, he was tripped by a Falcon player. The referee blew his whistle - a penalty kick.

Luca's coach pointed at him. "You're taking it, Luca," he said, his voice calm but serious.

Luca swallowed hard. He'd taken penalties before, but never with so much on the line. His teammates patted him on the back, encouraging him, but all he could hear was the thumping of his own heartbeat.

He placed the ball on the penalty spot and took a few steps back. The Falcon's goalkeeper was tall, with arms that seemed to stretch forever. Luca glanced up at

the goal, then back down at the ball. He had to focus. He had to believe.


The referee blew the whistle.

Luca ran forward, his mind racing. Should he aim left? Right? Go for power or placement? In the split second it took to decide, Luca saw an opening. He struck the ball with the inside of his foot, aiming low and to the right.

Time seemed to slow down as the ball sailed through the air. The keeper dove in the right direction, his fingers brushing the ball, but it wasn't enough. The ball slipped past him and into the net.

For a moment, there was silence. And then... the park erupted. Luca's teammates swarmed him, lifting him off the ground in celebration. He couldn't believe it. He'd done it. He had scored the winning goal. The final whistle blew, and they had won the championship.

As the crowd cheered and his friends hugged him, Luca looked around at the park. The rusty goals, the dusty field, it wasn't much, but to him, it was everything. Soccer wasn't just a game; it was where he felt alive, where every kick mattered, and where dreams were born.

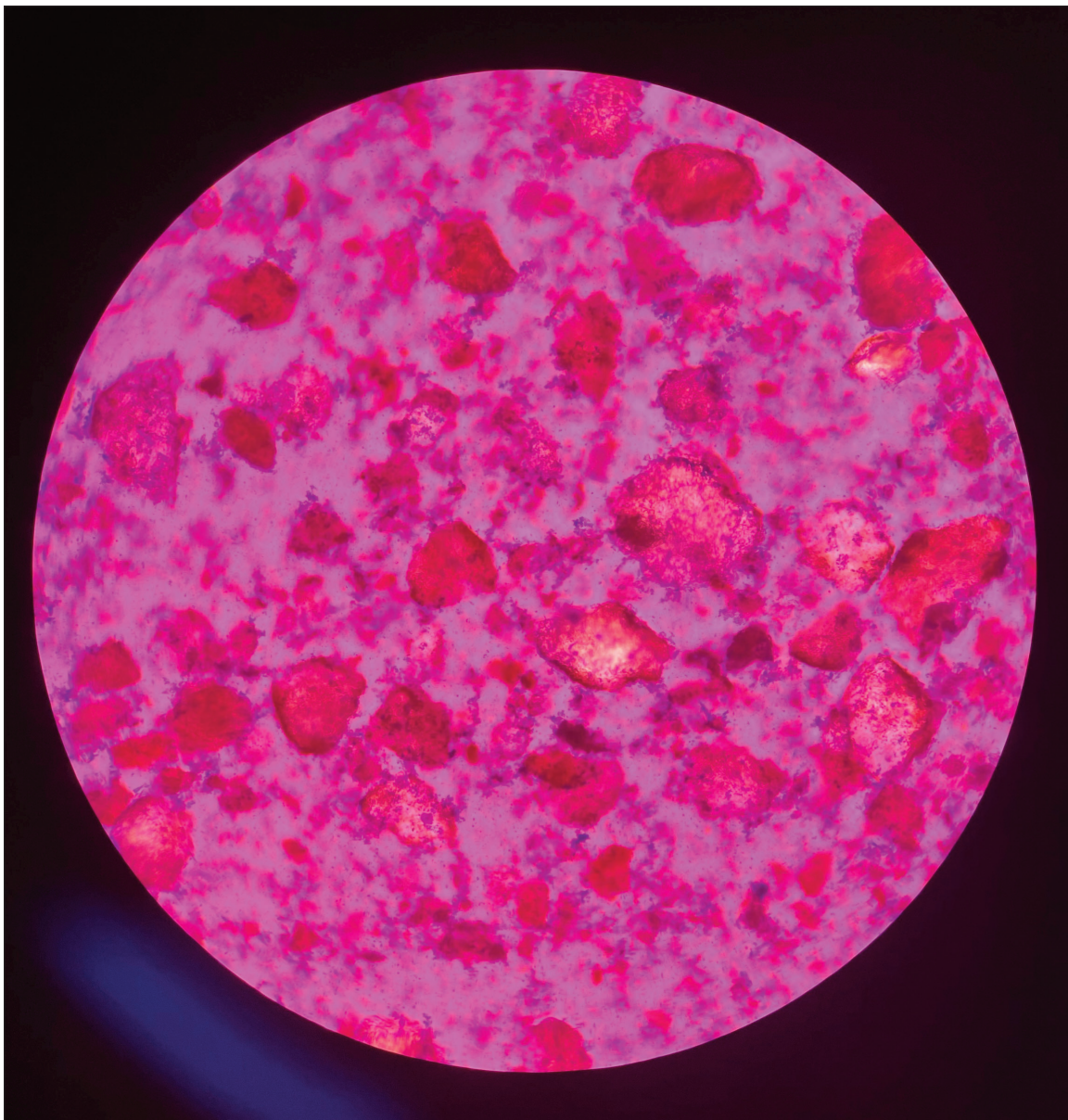
Today, his dream came true. 



Photograph

Little rabbit, opal eyes what awaits you in the skies?
Why do you stay within the clouds pondering those little vows
you made to the heart of your spirit?
Your eyes so bright,
You blur them with tears.
When you recall those lost years,
When you were locked within a cage,
Too tired to rage,
Filled with stars and constellations,
But now I carry you to your calm, quiet, safe destination.





Photograph

I have always heard, "never have regrets."
Live in the moment, and don't ask for it back.
Don't wish to change what has already happened.
But I say, now I have many regrets,
And a regret so big I can only pray for it to be forgiven.
What has already happened can't be rewritten.
Now that you're gone,
All I'm left with is this overwhelming of regret,
A moment of time that can't be taken back.




He was a man who had left
his home and traveled miles to come and
live the American dream.
He brought with him a thick accent and
a suitcase full of stories of trauma to tell,
too many to fit in just one suitcase.
English wasn't his first language,
but survival sure was.
He'd often cry alone.
Tears of sadness would tumble out of the heavy
bags set underneath his eyes.
He was tired but couldn't express it,
silenced by the want to be strong,
but broken by the need to be enough
for his little one.
He was an immigrant in his own
Life, a stranger lost who couldn't find his way.
He only knew to survive, but
he never truly learned to live.
He is my father, to
whom I owe the world
and beyond. ◆



Photograph

In a sunny yard where the daisies shine,
Lives a boy named Alex who loves his dog.
This clever dog once drew a line,
And joins him on his morning jog.

They race through fields, in the morning breeze.
Rolling in grass, and very tall trees!
With loud barks of laughter and playful leaps.
It's a bond so deep it will always keep.

Through muddy puddles and evening strolls,
Together they walk, as two beautiful souls.
In every adventure their hearts intertwine.
Oh, what a love so divine! 

Your tiny hands,
Your tiny toes -
Oh, how you've grown.

Those tiny toes have become a memory,
A memory I seem to relive daily.

Sleepless nights have become a fever dream.
The newborn stage was short-lived.
I reminisce about how tiny you were.

Oh, my sweet baby!
I wish I could turn back time!
To those days when you were small,
my big, sweet boy.





Photograph

I brought you blue bonnets.
They're your favorite type of flower.
My breath reeks of alcohol.
If only I had called.
I'm shattered without you.
What am I supposed to do?
I miss my lover.
Without him I cry harder.
Now the tombstone has blue bonnets.



Una voz que caminaba,
Con la memoria quebrada.
Pies descalzos sin camino,
Y unos ojos sin destino.

Dos columnas inamovibles
Tienen ruina en sus jardines,
Y tallado en la dureza,
Un tambor que nunca suena.

Y un pintor pintó dorada
La mañana esperanzada,
Redimiendo a los perdidos,
Encarnando el verbo ungido.

Los diluvios de los ojos
En redoma ha recogido,
Y los hace cristalinos,
Y se vuelve un camino.





Photograph

Upon the cross, He bore our pain,
A crown of thorns, a world to gain.
With love so pure, His heart did bleed,
For every soul, He met our need.
Nails of sorrow, hands so wide,
He took our sin, our shame, our pride.
In endless grace, His love won't cease,
Through His sacrifice, we may find our peace.



The line flies free, with a perfect arc.
It kisses the lake with a gentle splash,
Ripples pushing towards the shore.
The reel turns slow, with a steady glide,
Drawing the lure through the water's ripples.
A lure dance is unseen beneath the surface,
Where mystery lurks and patience rewards.






Photograph

In the depths of night, the stars do shine,
Their light casting shadows divine,
A tapestry of wonder above,
A sight to behold, a gift of love.
Each twinkle a promise of hope,
A reminder that we all can cope.
In the darkness, there is always light,
Guiding us through the endless night.



In the chill of winter's embrace,
I find a calm, quiet peaceful place.
The snowflakes fly around in the air,
A silent beauty, that can't compare.

The crisp, cold wind blowing on my face,
Brings a smile I can't replace.
Bundled up in my cozy blanket,
By the warm and loud sound of the crackling fire.


The world is so quiet and dark,
Feeling like it's just me on the spot.
In the cold, my heart feels just right,
Loving the winter night 



Photograph

It was frozen to the core - the hunk of ice I called my heart,
Then came you, a masterpiece, a living work of art.
You melted the ice like a popsicle on the hottest summer days,
A warmth you'd only find from the sun's brightest rays

Out blossomed flowers that longed for your sunlight.
Only you could make my heartbeat just right.
Without you, the petals began to wither away.

Still, I'm glad you were the only one to witness my heart in such a way. 

She likes to read;

He likes to run.

She likes to observe;

He likes to ignore.

She likes to escape reality;

He likes to run from problems.

She believes in mortality;

He believes in catastrophe.

She wants peace;

He wants to leave.

They both want unity,

But where could that be?





Photograph

They're baaaaack! Unlike the visitors in a ghostly movie from the 1980s, my wife and I are ecstatic to see them in our yard. We have been blessed with precious little hummingbirds that now visit us year after year. We watch them through our kitchen door and windows as they buzz around the yard from feeder to feeder, and when the spring weather brings blooms, they dine on delectable flowers. Often, we have as many as five or more tiny treasures of nature entertaining us with their midair dancing and aerial acrobatics as they meet and chase each other away from what they each claim as their property. Although we have four feeders, kind of equally spaced around the yard, these birds are highly territorial, and each claims the entire area as its own.

We especially enjoy watching one or two of our mini visitors when they momentarily cease their almost endless flying and rest on a feeder or at a high vantage point, where they oversee their domain and swoop down to chase away any invader who approaches. It is rare and highly surprising when we see two hummingbirds sharing the same feeder, but that hardly ever lasts very long before the newest supreme sentinel of the region chases both of them away.

A few of the birds in our yard, although they are without distinctive markings, we like to believe have returned to us after their winter sojourn to warmer climates because they know we appreciate seeing them, and we happily provide them with nourishment. From time to time, we are graced by the presence of a hummingbird we call the King, a bird with stunning colors of iridescent green on its head and back, a white belly, and vibrant red on its throat.

Once in a while, when we're on the patio, a bird will come and hover very close to us, and we're treated to the distinctive musical humming of their beating wings. With their enthusiastic yet discreet chattering, we can imagine they are whispering their secrets to us.

Ahhh, and the orioles that stop by to see us daily. They are such a treat for our eyes. The first one, a male, arrived three years ago, a truly magnificent sight rarely seen in Laredo. Male orioles are brilliantly, brightly colored orange and black, and their female partners, with their soft yellow underbellies, are truly a delight to behold. They almost always travel together, although we often see a cautious and protective male approach first, and only after determining that the yard is free of any immediate danger does he signal his mate to join him.

After a quick internet search about orioles, we learned that they are attracted to orange colors and that they enjoy eating oranges. So, I bought an oriole feeder that had places to attach half oranges. The very next morning, I had an extraordinary opportunity to see a male and female oriole at the feeder. The male was

selecting the choicest morsels of orange and placing them directly into the beak of his partner. Each serving brought squawks of appreciation and seeming demand for more from the female, and the dutifully devoted male answered with ardent action.

Over the following days, we observed that orioles were visiting the hummingbirds' nectar feeders, and a little investigation revealed that indeed they do enjoy sipping sugary nectar as well. So, we installed a special, orange-colored feeder with larger openings for the orioles to insert their beaks. The orioles graciously share their feeder with the hummingbirds, which thankfully don't try to claim it as another of their own and try to chase the orioles away. We placed this feeder on the patio close to our kitchen door so we can easily see the beautiful birds from our dining table. They visit us throughout the day, staying only long enough for a rapid refreshment or a few nibbles of orange while they remain continuously on guard for danger. This year, the oriole couples have begun bringing their young to enjoy the offerings we have for them. It is a bountiful source of pleasure for us to know that we are helping them with their families.

Recently, one early morning, as I was about to leave for school, my wife cried out to me to come and help a baby bird. I wondered how she thought I might help. Bird whisperer I may be, but sadly, I'm not medically savvy about them. She told me a little one had flown against the kitchen door and was lying on the patio. Fearing the worst, I hurried to render assistance to our fallen feathery friend and saw a very young female oriole. Her beak was open, and her chest was rising and falling. She was alive, but what could I do? I picked her up and held her pocket-sized body in one hand while I softly stroked her head and protected her with my other hand. I had to leave soon, but I couldn't abandon her lying on the patio floor, vulnerable to the keen olfactory senses of roaming feral felines prowling neighborhood yards in search of morning meals.

I brought the birdling into the house and asked my wife for something to put it in while we determined our next steps. My wife found a box with a lid, which we could use to temporarily contain the small creature. As I carried the dear one into the living room toward the box, I noticed she had closed her beak. I hoped it was a good sign that she was recovering. The instant I set her into the box, she began hopping around, and before I could close the lid, she flew to the top of a stereo shelf on the side of the room. I couldn't reach that high to try to catch her, and even if I could have, I was afraid of clutching her too tightly. So, I brought a broom and used it to carefully direct her toward the kitchen door. She flew across the room to the curtain's top edge on the opposite wall. I had no time for such games. I raised the broom in her direction again, and she flew up high to the cupboards in the kitchen. At least we were making progress.


I asked my wife to open the kitchen door and stand aside so the bird wouldn't be too frightened to leave.

Once she was clear of the exit, I made a final, slow, sweeping gesture with the broom near the bird, and at last, our young guest flew out the door to freedom. We enjoyed a quiet moment of satisfied relief and thankfulness that we were given the opportunity to be part of the God of all living creatures' plan, to allow that bird to live and bring happiness to others.

We quickly looked outside to be sure our little visitor had flown away safely and hopefully toward home, and we noticed the other birds on the patio hadn't seemed to pay any attention at all to the near-death experience of the little one and our rescue of her. We weren't expecting a warm round of thanks, but we might have appreciated a couple of chirp chirps of recognition for our humane endeavors; however, all were occupied. Birds will be birds!

The orioles appeared quite pleased that my recent internet research, done for their benefit, had been rewarded with the discovery that a favorite food of theirs is grape jelly. On the patio, close to the nectar feeder, we had added another orange-colored feeder designed to accept grape jelly jars; gravity allows the jelly to flow out little by little as they eat, letting them consume as much as they wish. They love it!

Unfortunately for the orioles, sparrows also love the grape jelly. The orioles don't mind sharing, but it seems like the sparrows like to invite the whole neighborhood clan to come over and feast. They can devour an entire jar of jelly in a single day. Although our sparrows do not enchant us much with their grey and brown colors, we do like to see their activity in the yard; they don't make much of a mess, and our mosquito population has taken residence elsewhere.

The hummingbirds mentioned that I should advise readers that, since they are unable to visit all homes in Laredo, y'all can stop by here to be mesmerized by their airborne antics. They added that you're welcome to add sugary water feeders and flowers to your yards and patios, and if you do, they will spread the word to their friends to come and visit you, too. 



Photograph

Leaves of honey gold and claret,
Blanket trails where footsteps tread.
Sparkling air through the trees,
Sweater weather, autumn breeze.
Cool within the air, even though hearts are warm,
In relaxed layers, we find our form.
Warm temperature wrapped tight, knitted hugs,
Warm cocoa sipped from our favorite mugs.
Nights by the fire,
Memories shared, motive to inspire.
Singing gentle songs,
In this embrace, everybody belongs. ◆



Photograph

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