

La Frontera

Dos Lenguas. Dos Culturas.



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2019-2020 Issue

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



In the year 1619, a young French native serving as a mercenary was stationed in the German city of Ulm. While there, he experienced a series of dreams that would forever change his life. In one of the dreams, an angel told him, “the conquest of nature is to be achieved through measure and number.”

This young mercenary was none other than Rene Descartes. Inspired by these dreams, he would go on to become the father of modern philosophy, championing Rationalism and Dualism and contributing to the scientific revolution.

His ideas have become a cornerstone of today’s reductive materialism – the idea that only the material world is truly real. But what do we make of the idea that this materialistic worldview saw its inception in the words of an angel in a prophetic dream?

As Shakespeare once wrote, *“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy”* - Hamlet (1.5.167-8)

Thank you for reading and a big thank you to those who contributed.

Alan Webb

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DOWNTOWN LIVING by Roxana Perez



On the cover
Photograph



Color photograph

Make me your heroine, or make me your villain.

I'll never be what you desire.

I'll be the mat at the door, waiting to be handed your vomit-covered jacket.

A piece only to be forgotten.

I'll be your caregiver.

Picking up the jagged pieces left by a life you once knew.

Each piece, sharper than the last, thirsty for blood and hungry for tears.

I'll be the superhero you always needed.

Only to be stripped of my cape, and called a disgrace.

I'll be the punching bag you require.

Your tongue cutting like a serpent.

Each vowel burning a scar greater than the last.

I'll be all of this and more.

Because you've made me this.

Twenty-seven years and counting.

Twenty-seven years I've known my face.

The make-up becomes a mask, painting a smile every morning.


The ritual becomes habitual.

But tonight it stops.

I'll be my own heroine.


I'll be my own villain.

I will not live in the shadow of your desire.

I'll crush my own dreams before you can. 


Curly hair, straight hair,
Short or long,
Growing in different textures
Out of the same follicles

Next up!
Wash and set, or line them up,
Just a trim, or a little off the top,
On goes the motto:
In Clips We Trust


But what is trust?
A stone to a mason's clutch.
What's lingering strays to an artist's gaze?
A swift stroke of a barber's brush.
What is a prodigy to a hard worker who lucked up?
Preparation and opportunity caught up,
Grateful to hold the key and close the shop up.
What's Newton's laws to a broom when the pan meets the dust?
Before all is done,
What has fallen will be swept up 



Black and white photograph

Sunny morning in Laredo,
Not Monday, not Tuesday, but every day,
Taking I-35 to class again
Just fake the smile, I always say
Heavy traffic in the city
Not Monday, not Tuesday, but every day,
Arriving to class late
Just fake an excuse, I always say
Then there came you
Not Monday, Not Tuesday, but every day
Telling me good morning
And to you as well, I always say
My heart fills with glee
Not Monday, Not Tuesday, but every day
Knowing, just truly knowing
I'll have a great day, I always say
Class comes to an end
Not Monday, not Tuesday, but a Wednesday
Knowing today's, the last class day
I'll ever see you again, I do say
Even though we were always lost
In lectures literally everyday
You truly gave me something to smile about
Everyday till today
Wherever you go,
Never give up ok.
I'm always telling you this
Cause I do care for you, I always say
Today's the last class session
August 7, today
After today, I'll truly miss you
Every. Single. Day 

The artificial, starchy scent of mac and cheese fumed throughout our home. My dad wasn't exactly a phenomenal cook, so this was a common meal when mom wasn't home. My fun-size self would drag my oversized, fluffy, vibrant red Elmo chair out into the living room and plop it right in the center. Here was our man cave. A place where we watched old reruns of *The Simpsons* in Spanish while we ate our not-so-healthy meals. I was daddy's little girl and I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. He was a father who loved me endlessly and smothered me with tenderness, a comforting feeling that would leave my heart feeling warm and fuzzy.

But times drastically changed in the span of a couple of years. I watched as my father's body and soul drowned in alcoholism. Yet, that bitter, pungent scent of breath I still longed to love. I watched as my mother's body progressively became more and more scattered with blue-purple intertwining hues. "I just tripped" she brought up herself to say. I was naive or perhaps chose to keep it that way for the sake of my emotional well-being. The ear ringing screeches were prominent throughout our home, but ignorance stayed well engraved in me. My father could do no wrong. He was a saint to me. After some time, I no longer was that young me that felt that warm feeling inside. That child that had those glistening eyes that shone with endless ambition. My heart had grown frigid and numb to any feelings at all, for good reason. 




Black and white photograph

Drifting by, falling skies
The world is so profound.

In my mind, often times
I feel like I could drown.

In disguise, it feels alright
My world flipped upside down.

I learned to be, I learned to see
The love I had around. 

The last time I held her she was
Weightless, paper thin...


The last time I hugged her she whispered
In my ear "please help me, I don't want to go."

The last time I held her hand it was cold
& slowly losing its warmth...

But the last time I saw her, my god
She was beautiful...

Elegant green dress matched her emerald earrings.
Her nails freshly painted pink...

There she lay with a smile, she was finally in peace
& I didn't know whether to be full of sorrow or glee,

All I knew was that she was in heaven
& that's the happiest place to be. 



Black and White Photograph

Flowers remind me of you.

Why?

They start as a seed.

Then they grow.

With time they open up and sprout out of their shell.

Revealing their true inner beauty.

Flowers remind me of you.

Why?

The more love and attention they receive,

the quicker and stronger they bloom.


Anchored to the ground with nowhere to move,


they remain beautiful and powerful.

Flowers remind me of you.

Why?

Because I love them,

and I love you too. 

I am still healing...
Why did you hurt me?
What was it all for?
All I did was beg and plea,
But you kept going in for more.
I would cry and ask for you to Stop
Why didn't you listen?
As you placed my hands on top,
Kept going in without permission.
Four years have passed since the damage,
Yet I still feel your breathing.
I just want you gone, poof, Vanish!
I am still healing 



Acrylic

It was dark out, and I had not seen the cat all day. I thought “He must be hungry; I’ll take him some food.” I stepped outside with a cup full of food. I shook it. Nothing. I stepped a little further on the concrete patio, shaking the cup. “Here kitty, kitty, kitty.” When I reached the edge of the driveway, I decided to just leave the food and go back inside. Like most summer nights in Texas, it was hot, and I did not like the heat. I turned around to head back inside the house, but I froze in my tracks. I was frozen like stone, like I was carved from marble. I slowly picked up a broom that lay at my feet, which was so carelessly tossed halfway on the concrete and half off.

What would make a ten-year-old girl’s blood run cold on a hot summer night in Texas? I will tell you.

“Mom!” I screamed.

“Mom come out here!”

“What?” my mom answered from inside the cool, safe house.

“Just come here. Please!” I pleaded

My mom approached the door wearing a flowing nightgown.

“Is that a black widow?” I asked shaking from fear.

“No. I don’t think it is,” my mom answered so frankly.

I looked at her, dazed. She hadn’t even bothered to look for the widow’s calling card.

“Are you sure?” I asked. “Does it have the red hourglass on its belly?”

My mom got a little closer to the corner of the carport, to inspect it, but never leaving the doorway. My brave mother. Even though she is terrified of spiders she got a little closer to see it, to see if it had the red hourglass mark on its belly. Unknown to my mother and myself, my 5-year-old little sister followed her to the door. My sister was like a ninja. She was stealthy and ever so observant. She stood behind my mom looking, trying to figure out what we were looking at.

At this point, I was holding a cup full of cat food in one hand and a broom in the other. My mom had stretched her body as far as she could without leaving the threshold and my little sister was just inches behind her. My mother was staring at the corner, inspecting the eight-legged creature ever so carefully.

“No, I don’t think it is. I don’t see the red hourglass,” my mother reassured me.

What happened next would be a story to tell for ages. I was about to head back into the house, careful not to disturb the spider when suddenly, I felt something brush against my calf.

“AHHH” I screamed. The food flew from the cup and the cup followed in pursuit. The broom flew in the opposite direction. Everything looked like it was moving in slow motion. I could see time stand still. That

instant is forever engraved in my mind. As soon as I screamed, I noticed my mom turned around to run. Not toward me but away from me, back into the house, back to safety, leaving me alone, outside with the spider. I could not believe my eyes. My own mother was running from my scream.

How could that be?


How could a mother run from her child?

I was paralyzed with fear. Something touched my leg. It was a spider. The very same spider that was tucked into its web in the corner of carport. My ten-year-old mind knew it had to be the same spider.

My mother unaware that my little sister was still standing behind her, turned and ran into her. My mother's knee jammed into my little sister and her little body flew like she was a rock that had just been released from a sling shot. My sister flew into the washing-machine headfirst and my mother landed on top of her.

As I stood there staring in disbelief, I conjured up the courage to look down at my leg. I wanted to see what caused me to scream and set this cascade of effects into motion. I looked down and could not believe what I saw.


"Ugh, it was you! Where have you been?" I asked the cat.

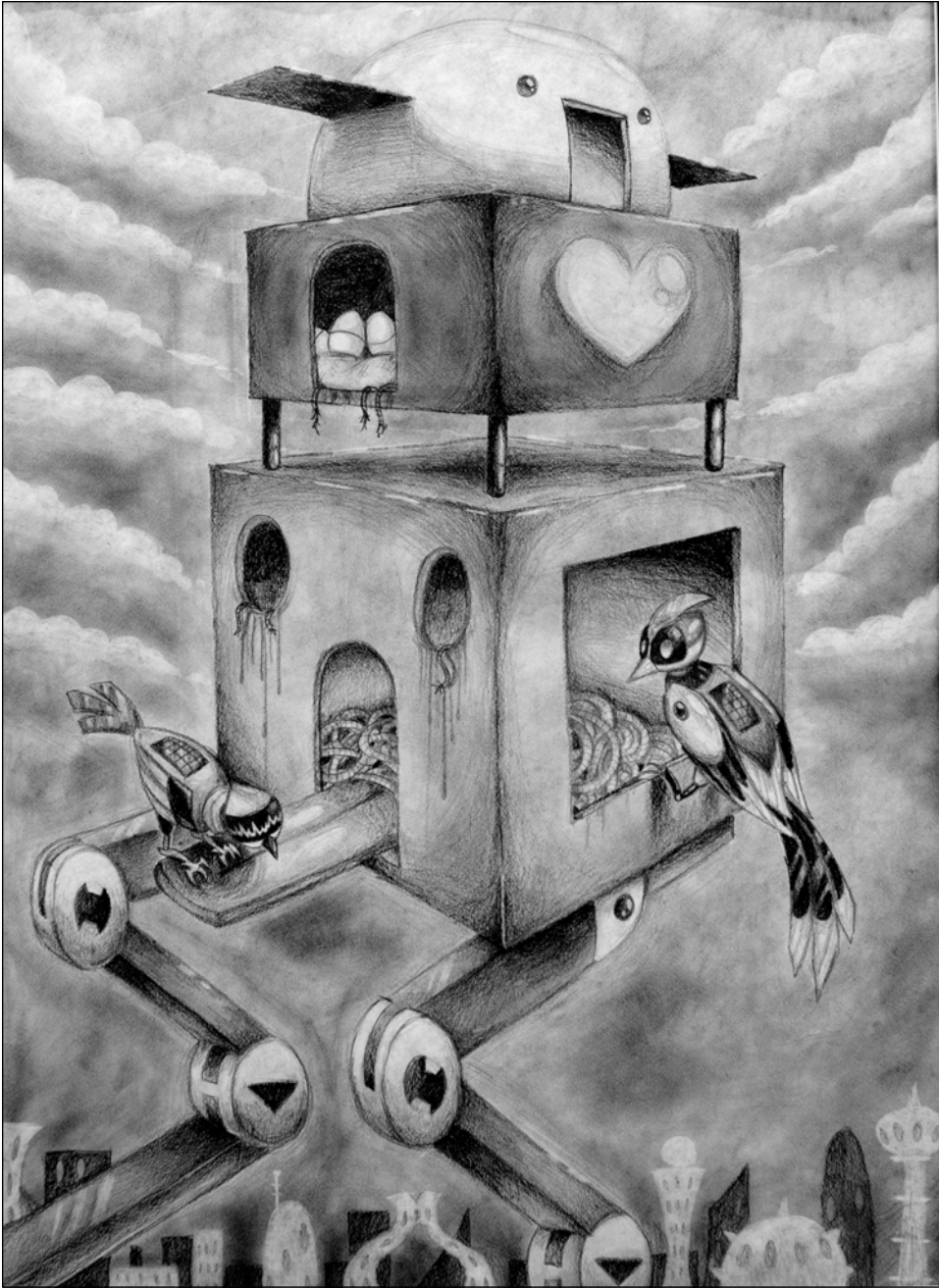
I laughed so hard not only at my reaction to the cat's tail stroking my leg but at my mom and her reaction to my scream. To this day my sister and I have never let my mother forget that she ran away from me and in the process of saving herself she ran into her other daughter. 

The warmth of the sun vanished
The skies filled with fluffy clouds

A blanket of orange and purple hues
A beautiful sunset among the horizon

It was then my heart felt at ease
It was full of tranquility and peace

The stars illuminating the dark skies
And there it was so big and bright! 



Charcoal

No ounce of happiness

Not even a drip

No ounce of sadness

Not even a bit

No urge to move

Not even an inch


No urge to prove

Not even a bit

No reason to feel


Not even a tick


No reason to love

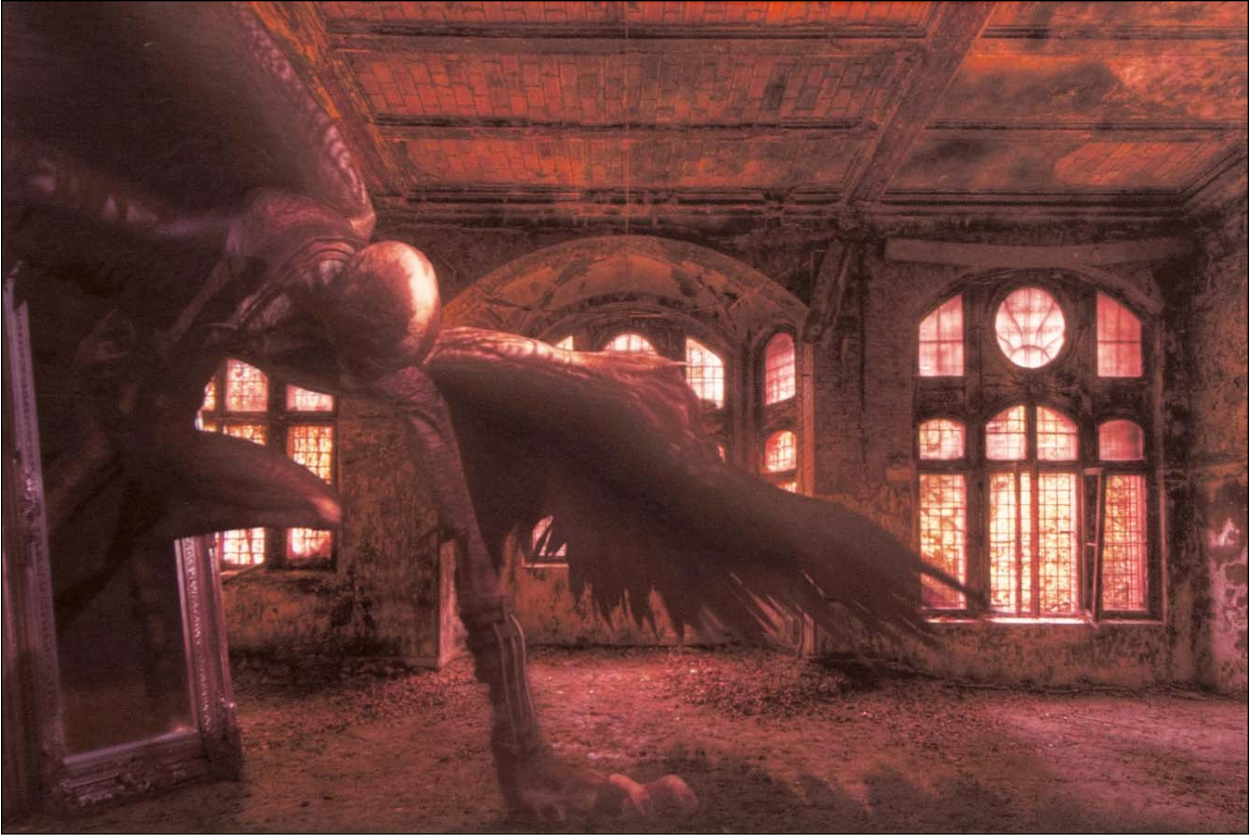
Not even a bit 

As I sit still in the midst of the darkness of the room,
Only a small light shines through.
That is, as I hold my precious baby boy,
And feed him from my breast, for he enjoys.
We sit there gazing into each other's eyes,
Oh, how wonderful it is to hear his sighs.
My sweet boy, receiving what my body has made,
This is a miracle, oh how much I've prayed!



Never did a child dream of such pain,
The doctors in the room said it wouldn't realign
With all the damage she only felt as if there were nothing left to drain
It was oh but a fine perfect line,
"I will not use such a contraption," she pleaded
Her mother's love was all she needed
With a knife piercing like pain through her back
She knew this would be the end of her before they would soon see a crack
Bending down caused such horror
She felt like nothing would ever restore her
Yet regardless of what would happen she knew she would one day overcome the
pain and shine
And in the end it was a prayer that would soon realign her spine 

Damp claret red moistened the atmospheres
Earth mocked the stepping grounds making things turn around
Echoes of the never-ending bellowing thunder
Above the waning glow lies no color
Attracted ravening vultures
Can you not hear the pain from the thousand's tearing flesh?
Deep punctures then death
Tell me, what is there in the end?
A polished finish on your shoes with the pool of blood surrounding you
The pool of the poor and not yours
The bloodshed of the kind yet not a drop from the mad mind
No land, no object, no victory can fulfill the desire of the blind mankind 



Mixed Media

I waited patiently for my wife to arrive. The torment of planning such a magical evening and having her be late didn't bother me, but I did grow full of worry. At last, I heard the garage door creak and listened to her car pull in. I greeted her at the entrance.

"Hey there, how are you? Everything okay?", I spoke with a tremble in my voice.

My wife replied, "I'm fine. I assume you cooked and dinner is still on?"

"Yes it is," I replied back with a sigh of relief. I stood there stupidly looking at her. She must have wondered why but I have an idea that she knew. I was gazing upon her trying my best to remember every detail of her. Those large brown eyes, how they glistened and could guide a ship to safe harbor. Her light brown skin, which I loved to caress, that black straight hair that contained a shine that no feminine product could accomplish.

She was a tiny thing, petite figure and standing at 5 foot... oh, I always forget.

There was no ignoring the discomfort in the room and how powerful she felt by holding back the emotions and the tears. To break awkwardness, I invited her in, even though we lived together. We broke our regular routine when we arrive home from work and went straight to dinner. At first, it was hard but things got better. We agreed to turn off all electronics, to include televisions, cellular phones, and even the refrigerator. We did not want any distractions for our final dinner.

"You cooked my favorite, on such short notice, thank you. It is very delicious, only you can get this right," she stated as I sat across from her in our dining room.

"Thank you. I know you enjoy more pepper than the usual person, ya demon!", I replied sarcastically. We laughed and continued our conversation.

Memories are beautiful possessions. You have this playback of good and bad moments in your life and they're unique. Unique in the sense that they are yours, no one else's. Well, these final ones were ours, no one could take them away and for the first time in our lives, we felt we had unlimited control on how we spent them. It was pure bliss and yet we were filled with drastic amounts of sadness. A sadness that like a tidal wave being held back by a decaying barn door.

"Want to go outside and watch the sunset?" I suggested.

"Yes, may we hold hands?", she said with an uncertainty

"We may", I replied. As we exited into the backyard patio it became apparent, reality started to set in. We started hearing the car alarms, the sirens, the movement and shouting of people, and the chaos that followed. Gripping our hands tighter we fought back the

urge to confront it. I could hear my neighbor's television. Strange that they'd still be home but then look at us.

"Earlier today the Pentagon reports that the first 5 missiles were indeed EMP type weapons. The mobiliza-

tions of troops have been seen throughout the country and Martial


Law has taken effect in various states due to panic and corruption. The Truman Carrier Strike Group stands ready on the shores of Russia and is determined to reso...”.


There was an interruption in the television’s news signal and like a flash of a camera, we lost all power. Darkness and fire was our field of vision. I turned to gaze upon my brightest star, my wife. She fought so hard to make this a beautiful ending but could not hold it back any longer. We could see them, the incoming missiles from Russia. They filled the night sky and seemed like fireworks in reverse.

“Look at me!”, I yelled as I grabbed her face and turned her towards me. She started to cry uncontrollably. I comforted her by bringing her close. I could see the fear in those wondrous brown eyes. Her tears reflected the fire from the background as they rolled down her face, and broke apart when they reached my hands.

“You are my brightest star! And I will love you, in this life and the next!”, I said to her while I looked into her eyes, holding her from the horrors of our demise.

“This... I... I am the luckiest girl alive. This is the best...” She stopped to turn towards the wall of fire and smoke headed towards us.

“I love you so much!”, she softly proclaimed, as she tippy toed up for a kiss. It was in that instant, that our fears, our worry, our torment, was no more. It was us and our moment and we were in control of it. 

How can I begin writing this?
How many more words will I dismiss?
Perhaps I should just start
Perhaps I should just speak from the heart
I am staring into an abyss
No ideas or words are in my head
And with every verse there's something amiss
Every good idea somewhere else has fled
For every word I write I click undo
You know what, I'll just start anew
They say ignorance is bliss
But, how can I begin writing this? 

They say you're a killer,
but I love you anyways.

Does that make me crazy,
or just in love with your ways?

They say that you're scary,
but we're all scary sometimes.

Creeper of the night,
where were you all my life?

You've been out since 2 a.m.,
doing God knows what...

and I know I should be worried
except I only wish you luck.

You say that you love me,
Oh, I wish that it were true.


Because the only thing that you love,
is beating someone black and blue.

I wish this could work out
I know you inside and out.

I know how crazy you are,
Yet I still love you, how bizarre!

I wish I could stop,
but I can't cause ...

I still love ...

My Killer. 



Watercolor

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