Corresponding Voices

Volume 11

Edited by
Jules Gibbs, Kathryn Everly,
& Tere Paniagua

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## Contents

### Safia Elhillo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Meat Has A Shelf Life Our Bodies Are No Exception</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qur’an Redux</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asr, New York City</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isha, New York City</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tincture</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim / Dissolve</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edelweiss</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As A Child I Decided I Did Not Want To Be Young</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Mother Meant To Name Me Yasmeen Then A Woman Named Safia Died</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Poem</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rohan Chhetri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish Cross The Border In The Rain</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonnet In The Late Style Of Fall</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem With Ritual, Broken Guardrail, Imaginary Novel, &amp; Curse</td>
<td>24-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood Recital</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equinox Transit</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elegy To The Mouse With Its Soft Head Crushed In The Tomcat Mousetrap</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Riversongs</td>
<td>29-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladku River, Nepal</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DÂŚÂI</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jessica Scicchitano

Speaker, Reader

The Last People Left On Earth Will Die Happy
Duende In Camden
For N:
Voodoo
Orchestrated Moan
*

Stendhal Syndrome¹
Project Mkultra
My Name Was Nearly Taylor

José Sanjinés

Aula / Classroom
El Sueño De Ariana / Ariana’s Dream
Besar A Un Coleóptero / To Kiss A Bug
Bruno y las estrellas / Bruno and the stars
Piscicultura
Noel Quiñones

Translation 64
Ars Poetica 65
A Poem For Saints 66
Mr. Quiñones 67
Stay 68
Bronx River Forest 69
Parallel 70
Growing Old Is Learning To Use Your Hands To Hold 71
Until The Next Plebiscite 72
From Mire, Tenderness 73

Contributors 74-75
This is the first full issue I’ve edited since the passing of Corresponding Voices founder and editor Pedro Cuperman. All honor to his name. I try to proceed in the spirit in which he would do things, but if you knew Pedro, you know how impossible that would be. Pedro was a magician of the human spirit, a conjurer-trickster-guru who opened up space for unexpected vibrational resonance between poets, artists, musicians, students, colleagues, and friends in a way that will not be duplicated. Nevertheless, I think this issue would have delighted him. This year, we present five visionary poets who spark the magic of correspondence in the way Pedro always intended — a polyphonic, synaptic leap across pages that results in unexpected but vital communication between disparate people, places, eras, ontologies.

In these pages, ancient stories converge with a new myth-making, something Jessica Scicchitano takes up as a “spiritual ovulation” where “bombings married constellations and kitchens,” in the imagined physics of the inner life. Safia Elhillo and Rohan Chhetri write of the oceans and rivers of their respective childhoods – of bodies mapped by water crossings and waters mapped by body crossings, death stalking our literal and metaphorical borders, liminal zones where humans emerge and dissolve, immersions where Elhillo envisions “the age of dark bodies offering themselves to the water” and Chhetri senses “our pain deities drowning out of us.”

Our dead are with us, even translated through us, these poets seem to say. “There is a reckless translation in me always” writes Noel Quiñones, as he follows his “strange obsession with tongues” and the “raucous nature” of ancestry to “its epicenter.” Contributing Editor Kathryn Everly points out that José Sanjinés’ work — here in both Spanish and English — is very much about the idea of translation as both linguistic and experiential. Everly writes: “Sanjinés reminds us that poetry is always a form of translation, the world rendered in words. He reminds us that at its best, a poem converts everyday distractions into opportunities for the essential optimism.”

Each of these poets twists us through a unique phenomenology of the self, explored through its ecologies and microbiomes — a mango picked at the apex of its life, meatbone of love and long hair, vats of moonshine and milk,
masticated raspberries that fill a bronze tub, the ungreased French fry — these poems are bursting with sustenance and succulence. More urgently, the poems here grapple with the ways that experience is often indigestible, with how, even in its richness, life often offers us emptiness, gaps and fissures, moments beyond language, resistant, finally, to articulation. It is the poem’s job to rush into such spaces, to let language perform a kind of spiritual CPR via the spectacle of simulacrum, what Scicchitano calls “the mined diamond moment of our being here.” The poem puts pressure on image and idea; of our inclination to build stable meanings, the poem shows us how language threatens to scatter at any moment. Sanjinés explores this through characters brought to the brink, the “undecipherable life” blessed “with a kiss,” or lovers who “loved each other feverishly” but cannot make love — the ultimate failure of articulation — for fear of bringing “another creature to this world.” Quiñones senses these absences as a matter of lineage — “as I speak my grandmother is reminiscing in a place that does not exist anymore” — his own utterances a paradoxical function of what cannot be revived. Chhetri writes of a “misery language without speech” and also a “found narrative, white root translucence drinking every animal trajectory of me.” Similarly, Elhillo takes this up from the subject position of a speaker between nations, where “neither land has a word for the haunting inside me.”

Pedro conceived of Corresponding Voices as a project that would foster the kind of unscripted dialogues and intersections that depart, startle, delight, disrupt, and rearrange thinking. His aim was always a diverse assembly of voices, although he was skeptical of the word “diversity,” which he felt fostered a kind of “tourism” of others’ psyches. Rather, he aimed to “discover... the value of cross-fertilization.” The delight I think he might have taken in this issue is the same delight I hope you will take, in the sheer power and vibrancy of these five distinctive voices. There’s also a delight in taking them together, as a collection that says, among many other things: look how strange we are to each other and to ourselves, and in that, how alive, how akin.

— Jules Gibbs
ALL MEAT HAS A SHELF LIFE OUR BODIES ARE NO EXCEPTION

in loving him i marry a shining new set of fears  i wake before him
in the ashen light of morning & listen for his breathing  touch him
to feel that he is warm  full & humming with blood
has not died in the night

*

i spend my days in pleasure & saffron  the color of light
the color of someone else’s life  i cannot trust it & waste the most
luminous of its minutes  thinking that maybe i have died
& i miss him as i am touching him as i am spooning honey the color
of our borrowed lives into a cup

*

i slice a mango picked at the apex of its life  i feel the color
of its insides  i feel ripe & bursting with my own living
its frothing  its insistence  i know i am tempting fate
inviting it to cut me open  while the meat inside is brightest
**QUR’AN REDUX**

five times a day i recite a prayer
transported by a fatherless prophet

an illiterate prophet that is our miracle
the perfect rhyme the miracle is language

& some i know by heart i learned the verses as a girl
& like a girl my citadel is shame meant only

to be mnemonic a way to learn my prayers to fit them
into my mouth my eroded imperfect mouth

unfit for the miracle of my first language
doorway through which the world enters me

& leaves behind its silt pollutes my first tongue
verily with hardship comes ease verily verily

mouth as a prison mouth another home that cannot hold
prophetless mouth mouth without a miracle ameen
he leaves & i bruise shallow dark filled
with blood beneath the skin’s weak border

i wanted to be good a girl who could count
among her victories rising every day from bed

still i wake in the bloom of late afternoon’s light
from a dream weighted by his faraway & blurring face

hair fulvous & shot with amber in the sun the wound
an unlocking door & in the dream we had a daughter

we named for an island in the dream he is not himself
in the dream he does not leave & this is the reddest of its fictions
ISHA, NEW YORK CITY

i leave for days to sit inside the translucent skin
at his wrists & the smoke we sent twisting
into the flat black night

he has gone & i file down to my raw pink beginning
i give my name back to the dead woman
i descend a line of blood & find others
who belong only to our own dark & copper taste

i should want to survive long enough to outlive
my particular beauties i should want to survive
long enough to forget ever wanting to be touched
TINCTURE

dried hibiscus swelling back to life in the amber pot of tea before me in the translucent red i still imagine when doctors whisper about my blood its missing the dirty water trickling through my body & making me quietly disappear & today i want to like smoke unspooling itself or in the ocean suspended like my rotting heart inside my own liquid chest i want to disappear like so many girls before me color of night & camouflaged by its shadows color of forgotten names language of lost words lost girls to disappear is my inheritance & i citizen my own absence pledge allegiance to the aperture i pray to leave behind
it was the age of dark bodies offering themselves to the water the oldest way there is to die to join the history of bones tessellating the sea floor

shipwreck fallen lung raft gone missing in the night

where i’m from a child belongs to somebody & washes ashore where i’m from a child belongs to somebody & soaks into the pavement

& neither land has a word for the haunting inside me this mounting by spirits the ghost stranger with my face the child i’ve never met splayed out like a starfish outlined on a sidewalk on the ocean floor
it might be true

enough bad love will make you [go quiet]

you’d rest your head in my broken lap
& think i’d stayed alive only
to meet you

you taught
me all the lonely colors
copper & lapis & purple

they chewed off all my fingers

answer me

anyway now i only
go through the motions
unbraid my hair to let the new man
sleep with it draped across his shoulder

boil water for bloodshot pots of tea
& sit watching him happen to me through the smoke
AS A CHILD I DECIDED I DID NOT WANT TO BE YOUNG

my mother whisper-cried into the phone at night
across the line my father’s voice chewed her leathered heart

& i could not leave in search of quiet
i did not know how buses were boarded

or how taxis were hailed or which fires
made food & which made danger

i would sleep  impatient for adulthood
& its crisp promise of competence

today i am maybe partway there if only twenty-six
but again i burn my knuckle on the roof of the oven

again i miss the bus forget my keys lose my wallet
pick at a loose thread on my blouse until it unravels to a proper wound
MY MOTHER MEANT TO NAME ME YASMEEN
THEN A WOMAN NAMED SAFIA DIED

but what would be my name without my ancient & purpling grief
& what if the ocean sealed its wound could i be

were i not fluent in all the sounds of ripping a body can make

what i mean is as a child i could not bear the acrid smell of metal

could not touch even a doorknob with an uncovered hand the doctor
studies a vial of my blood & everywhere everywhere everywhere

everywhere everywhere everywhere everywhere the smell

what i mean is in a paralleling life where the blood does not wilt inside me
an alternate girl named for a flower hair brushed & clean of knots

opens her mouth & everything it pours names the language
mine & mine & mine & mine & mine & mine & mine

& if i had a language what would it do

to the shape of my mouth & if i had a country
what could have been my name
for you i’d make a song fit into the gap in your teeth
if housed in your mouth my name sheds all its vinegar
sheds every moment it was spoken with shame & if
you want i’ll say i was never trespassed & if you want
i’ll be glistening & new i close my eyes & inside they
are red in the sunlight i say your name in
future tense i say your name in my first tongue
for you i’d never die
FISH CROSS THE BORDER IN THE RAIN

One June day, I go down to the river with Father.
I take his old scooter, and he rides pillion
Singing songs because the breeze makes him young in the face.

The dam in the kingdom across the border is relieved.
When we reach, the river is a gray slither
Of silt and gravel torn from the gorges.
A few men are fishing with a lead battery
casting a high voltage wave across the water.

Discs of current round the startled fish belly up.
We sit and watch the river nip the embankment.
Behind us the villages bloom outward in circles of death.
Jungles Grandfather cleared when he first crossed the border.

Half of these villages once belonged to him, Father says.
By the time he died, he’d given everything away.
As if ceding wholly his grip on the land
And what he thought it owed him.

Now shoal after bright
Shoal of fish heave the nets. Stunned
For a minute, the fish dream up new lives.

They wake, suddenly old, huddled in a foreign prison
GASping against each other’s gills
Blinded like a sack of mirrors.
SONNET IN THE LATE STYLE OF FALL

We do not know it yet but it speaks to
Our old suspicion of beauty. Wind riot
In streets, the soughing deeper in leaves
Now they’re turning that brittle brick-red.
Light shortens for us too, we use what is
Left, and in turn reveal our slow spoil.
But what is the heat of so much beauty
Before death, this carnival in the garb
Just to throw some leafminers off the scent.
Sleek motorbikes soon useless in the sleet
Power through streets in the crush of leaves.
The trees, never having moved, know this:
With bound feet our hands become pleading
Things, misery language without speech.
Night of liminal rain. Fall rain like a hose sluicing down the butcher’s platform after a long day. This morning the high wind, sun crowning out of the double gloom, the empty starling nest swayed in the treetop.

There are things I have to close before winter comes, openings, wounds like windows left unlatched in the blizzard. Once I could prism the motherlode to a single point of devotion, meatbone of love and long hair, the thick strobelight of ardor fracturing back toward a single source. Now I have to write the warmth back into my hands, my old talons want the grip of things long ago. Now things lie diffused on the earth but from a great height you begin to see again.

After a long stay in the mountains once, when I came down I was changed. I loved her still, but without madness. Her body cold against my arms, I insisted she stay in bed a little longer. I resented her but knew the blue arm of frost was all mine, growing inside me.

I’d seen too much. Sucked on broken spears from the frozen waterfalls when stranded in thirst, seen black bears bounding the trails when it grew dark. I’d seen a village direct the madness of men through capricious deities. Time must be named its stochastic nature shaped in the ritual of our birth, I told her.

I didn’t sign up for this, she said and drove away. That night, she totaled her rage against a broken guardrail the car bonnet caved into her chest.

I let her go then Wrote the great unforgiving tale of madness from the wreck—

Found narrative, white root translucence drinking every animal trajectory of me. In improvisation, I couldn’t see myself. I simulated an intensity of her death truer than her blood-rimmed face of survival in the hospital bed. The way you discover a new word and see it everywhere, something followed me that was formal, observant, rote. Followed my protagonist home into the ruined tea estate. Always make your character wait for a greater madness. I did. Left him in the vortex of that village where the soldiers had moved in making the clubhouse their barracks, I left him there with his minor grief, left him where the dead of the town had begun talking through a little girl:

broadcasting first the ghost of the last British planter in town, a prisoner of war-turned-priest, who fell in love with a native woman and was lynched outside the
factory in 1951. And the little girl? She was the one from our forefathers’ origin tales. Centuries ago in the ancient mountain village, where the clan first named this curse that would follow them back one day in a town under siege, a little girl laughed under a full moon one night and jumped into a vat of boiling milk.
BLOOD RECITAL

A zebra finch sings in a cage, but born
Inside doesn’t know it. Orange beak
Tweezing into the feeder. It tumbles its head
In water, preens, then perches on a stick

To let out a wormy little turd in white.
It’s been doing that all day, chirping in misery
For a mate. Trying every permutation of its one song.
All its bright plumage going to waste.

Then as if to catch a breath it goes quiet
The waning light grows stranger, & crickets
Begin. The hedge sparrows lift off into dark.

Some wind cleaving through leaves.
Then no wind at all. The rocking chair still
Like someone shot in the forehead.
EQUINOX TRANSIT

Mild morning on the first day of fall, treetops in the wind asking Must it be... Empty streets, few leaves on the ground. Yellow butterflies like messengers of grass. Round grey sparrows flit about the flower beds. No dark squirrels, though, handing out flyers to the black mass. No light in the attic windows: obsidian eye-slits of a Sybil gazing in. No light into the mouldy scream-room beyond the pale insects on the sill of a half-boarded window. Jet plane roars in the sky like a god convulsing in a night terror. One impatient tree letting go, stamping the sidewalk laden with its own green now festering yellow: leaf after leaf swirling down at each gust. Something about it that of a piebald gypsy horse with its shy flamboyance. Only one human being at a time on the long suburban street now: an old black man in a red shirt on a motorized wheelchair passes at the edge of the frame a little girl on her way to bible study. They shall reserve the easy formalities, observe the cold custom of dry countries. Somewhere, someone drunk is riding a lawnmower into a greenhouse. Somewhere motorbikes power through the well of death. A kind of chirping fills the air; passerines or crickets, hard to tell, faking their bit on the last String Quartet. It must be. A flock of blackbirds stitch a slow veil across the sky. They bring to mind a large Hasidic family I once saw at a grimy Greyhound station, attired in heavy black, slumped in the cold benches of the waiting room at dawn.
ELEGY TO THE MOUSE WITH ITS SOFT HEAD
CRUSHED IN THE TOMCAT MOUSETRAP

From the kitchen window where I’ve just tossed your frigid body, so stricken with extruding the ghost all night it looks like something uncoupled from a crucifix, I watch you land belly up in the snow. When I hinged back the guillotine from your bludgeoned head & dragged you out — smear of peanut butter on your whiskers, one clean ear folded back embedded into the bruise, a dry speck of blood on your forehead — I wondered whether you tasted what you came for in the dark. For days you scurried around the house, driving grown men to plant baits. And not what I wanted to be this morning: the first to discover you at my feet, muzzle clamped in the fatal saltlick, frozen in the tentative, & propped up against your belly like a prize hunt, as I stood waiting for my coffee to brew. It gave me no joy. I whispered an empty apology out of habit, as I rolled your body — astonishingly pink on the underside — onto a dustpan. But before I cast you out into the cold hoping the neighbor’s cat gets to you before it thaws, I examined you under the light. Not the dark slits of your eyes like the ill-lit subtraction of long haunted rooms, but your limbs, like that of something stillborn, pale digits folded like a dead monk’s against the grey ease of death.
TWO RIVERSONGS

Raïdāk River, Thimpu

Wind braiding through pine.
On a fog-rimmed cliff, I faced the abysmal green
And pissed into the breeze.
Stranded halfway to the capital
In a foreign country our jalopy, an 800 Maruti
Fumed at the bonnet with the fan belt
Combusting in a jet black foul
Like something ailing exiting a child.

In my language, there is a name for this music,
This shape, integritas, long aerial notes
Heaving through each needle until
The conifers swell with a low sibilant underroar.

But standing there, dick out against the abyss
The dusk and the gray fog gulfing in
I shivered and couldn’t remember a thing.

When we did make it to the city that night,
Tired as drunken night truckers who fall asleep
Straight on the wheel as they pull in
To the grimy harbors of the border town at dusk,
We only wanted to drink

To defer this holy sleep folding back inside us.

On the riverbank
Under the bridge, where we reached
Feeling our tired feet on the warm boulders,
We sat facing a jangling river. In the dark
Its only form: the flowing.
Someone lit up something we could smoke,
Released sleek-throated bottles out of misery.  
The night air descended like a caul

    Then as if a heavy lid were pushed above us:
The moon

    A bright column fell not on the long water
But on the blanched foreheads of my friends
And I read therein something
Monstrous, dear old familiar something

Dragged from our childhood
Come back bright as itself.

I felt it leap
Across my chest, a black groundswell
Of blood moving in.
LADKU RIVER, NEPAL

That afternoon the man at the reception offered to pack a little lunch for us, and drew us a map to the river that comes down, he said, in icy flares straight from the torso of the Mahabharata Hills at the foot of the village. Our bodies dimming from the finitude of how long we were allowed each other in this country, we left the resort hiking downhill, facing the Langtang Ranges, now emptied of clouds. We held hands as if holding each other aloft, as if aware of each ache lighting up the other’s bones. We heard the water from the red dirt road beside a bullet-ridden primary school, past the bend where feral monkeys sat baring their brown teeth, sunning their genitals: we heard the smooth rockbed being strummed upon. When we reached, two village kids stoning a water snake: a flash of grass green wriggling headless in the riverbed, unaware. The water so cold, neither of us had the heart to go in first, the surface turning glass-hard, impossible by the minute. Then, You dipped a foot in, your shriek a knife grating through, your hips & back gliding buoyant in the cold rush as you held a mossy rock underneath & fell silent. I followed, watching the wet hair clumped around your face and thought of blindness as mercy in the face of death. I thought of us and the longing we were making out of this immersion, the pain deities drowning out of us giving us this irredeemable illusion of lightness, even love.
It is childhood again. None of that new money in the family yet. Only the smell of new
clothes and small bills still cool from the bank vault. We’re looking our best huddled
in the back of a Canter the factory is letting us use for a day. Our great-grandpar-
ents are alive, giants walking the earth still. We see them once every year on this day.
Later, they will go, one following the other within a month, but today, that irrevoca-
ble, heavy curtain hasn’t fallen in our lives. Later, we’ll tremble in our sleep, like the
branches of a tree whose base is grafted by an unseen hand. Then we’ll leave, all in
directions sudden, uncharted as death itself. We’ll forget the way to the old house.
But today, we’re going there, shaking together in the back of this truck, singing. Our
foreheads itchy and fragrant in a pink crust of vermilion, yogurt and rice beads. This
is the big day that brings the branches back to seed in the old house, the blood back
to the hearth. Dozen goats fattened all summer have been slaughtered one by one
for the feast. By the time we arrive, they’re simmering in a cinnamon gravy we can
smell from the bend of the old school nine houses away. Great-grandfather, old doc-
tor, paces the courtyard, waiting for us. All his eight daughters come home today.
The wind is cool, his wrinkled face dappled in sunlight pouring through palm trees.
Standing there he begins to believe this could go on forever now. Death is still a long
way off: she’s lost on a highway somewhere, crossed a wrong border into another king-
dom looking for him. Gazing into the bright fields he sees a straw-head, then his old
white shirt buttoned up on a stick cross, leaning halfway in the shock of yellow maize.
JESSICA SCICCHITANO
The reader should hope this is something that can be fixed.
The reader should know there is a permanent lacking.
The speaker speaks in summer when it is hot and things are prone to wilt.
The speaker needs patience a nervous energy requires.
So does the reader.
The speaker endures a panic attack described as “spiritual ovulation.”
When the speaker was alone in a bookstore, the panic returned.
The speaker should focus.
The reader should accept this offering of the speaker’s affection.
When the speaker has these attacks, there is time to notice simple things.
The reader should notice sirens or weeds or trains.
The speaker should see what is in and around the speaker’s face.
The speaker rolls her eyes back in her head and listens.
The speaker is seized.
The reader is excited.
Artifice, beauty, and silence do all the work for the speaker.
The moon’s reflection over the river is there for the reader.
The speaker feels free in a way unparalleled by reason.
The reader knows no technique to bring the speaker out of pain.
THE LAST PEOPLE LEFT ON EARTH WILL DIE HAPPY

Lovers had bills to discuss. There were jokes of punching tax joyously onto ticker tape while estimating the cost of moonshine vats for the end of the world. It was sweet to make sweet of chores, marriage, perceived loss of freedom, apocalypse, whatever echoes the end of self. They knew not to give is to lose. Bombings married constellations and kitchens, stars as light bulbs now part of the floor plan, the rubble turned balustrade, a point from which to view chandeliers made macabre. There were jokes to calculate before decaying into the most threatening tales of themselves. They laughed at cars driven by pride, people afraid to die intoxicated, in pairs, in piles. Rows of cars billowed exhaust of those running from loss; winter coughed. The sky gave them snow and when whittled by warmth, chose to freeze again. Lovers discover freedom as icicles, as melting threats, the large, lonely ones found crowning empty houses.
DUENDE IN CAMDEN

Lucy, hair an electric moss like that of the ivy attached to the lattice of America, a battle between the heaviest oxidized dye job. Lucy, coiffed by her 12-year-old daughter, too, stands behind the corner of their Camden market booth, a cheap copper homage to her hawking mother as healer, a ring as “free gift”, the don’t-forget-rheumatic-cure swathed in pearls, both bands and bodies anorexic bent, the daughter left her name unmentioned, their eyes said they hadn’t had decent brie and my observation brought me over saying, London is an attempt to heal

Lucy, detailing tales on the craft of my purchase (jewelry box), nodding at warp speed on 12’s dream of ballerina blasé-gamine, only in America, neither of them had been. 12’s twirling weak pirouettes to a loud elevator tune. Lucy, whose figure resembled a wilting oleander launched me saliva first into a beta-blocker hunched over, to fork over £15, I focused on 12’s wet glittery eye shadow, thinking no crinoline will save you, no fresh tuberose in your hair, saying America will wait for you
FOR N:

New York City:
Shh, I know your troubles with Bastille Day,
ten days before my birthday.
We celebrate by burnt wine, meat,
illegal fireworks, high pigment lipstick
taxied ‘round Columbus Circle,
attach artifice, paint avenue,
bludgeon, blow open.
I can’t continue, with you.
I tirelessly fill casts shaped of your promenades,
beaks of West End highway crows, drips, drip,
they dazzle cold.
Blood and steam took conversation,
chose stolen scissors to
gnaw the quick of intention from
our bewilderment. I sculpt ash from dead
lightening bugs armed with machine guns
that pump you plump with
an afterthought of smolder.
Washington Square,
mouth your afterthought.
The dedicated gestation of
going down on a graveyard
are drowned in the fountain
of Lincoln Center and its scent
of masticated raspberries
fill the bronze tub, an ocean,
an aggregate of washed-up syringe,
the hi-def zoom on an ex-sea foam pixel
and a sun-fucked version of wood.
VOODOO

I woke up glowing before having time to swallow it whole. I have never kissed someone’s ribs before. I could hardly watch. I die at the thought of tasting stale. I vibrate, seize, twitch. I beg of you: do not turn on me, turn me into you, put me deep inside sleeping you and take me away. It is not your everyday I love. Let me preserve each of those nerve endings. Why are they endings when they only begin the idea of a grinding backbone? Your cheek, sweat caked, baked to a warm. A new kind of human, I can smell that. I forbid you to take this from me, this new body, this buzz.
ORCHESTRATED MOAN

Pills dangle from every mouth at the opera house while I tell myself to get out of the way, get out of the aisle.
I know the composers have sex, the orchestra, everyone up there.
I know by the disintegrating formula in the smallest echo of vibrato, soprano
an antonym of stutter, no place safer than another.

Look, these performers have lost their heads, shrive
with patented mechanical instruments
only living when handled by a human being.
I am terrible in first person, a less-successful ornament
next to the hands of woman pulling her mouth
open wide as advertisement.
She belts the Italian for “half the trouble you get into comes from coming,” our drugs half-life, our wide-set pupils,
our performances, our aural and erotic poisons.

Goodbye powerful scales, I have been experimenting with tenderness and I seem to have forgotten what I wanted this poem to consist of, love?
Syracuse, 7 PM, you and I
in the bastard hour of evening.
My breathing is shallow from
how long you have taken me
into your arms. If I were able to live
for continuous eras, there would be
multiple, radical, unfathomable
plot twists as we eased into the dirt
of one another’s years. I have made it
through twenty-seven, but the measure
of desire exceeds my short decades.

Syracuse, our bodies are holy
and not separate, our bodies pulled
through a knot of snow squalls, the boats
of Onondaga Lake. I don’t have enough breath
to live multiple lives or skin to graft beyond you.

Syracuse, your pale blue church is knot
carved and abandoned but its yard trees strung
with lights, with death in season:
red, green, and white mechanical candles
lit for each fallen leaf, electronic leaves shorting bright
toward the bone cold. Together we possess the same rare
blood type of nighttime that plays on the radio channel,
airwaves illuminating choral organs
and the organs of our body. I imagine
it is the church speaking to me, and so you. Stay, you say.

Syracuse, I will spend my life serving your sky
my idea of the holy, the laureate of our mutual
decomposition. We grow painfully fast toward tomorrow.
**STENDHAL SYNDROME**

Together we have spent the last two fourteenths of March, Pi Day 3.14, I walk into the eternity of the museum with a painstaking heel.

Poor lighting, a Soviet glare. Someone should take care of that. Someone should take care of me: a garish item in nice isolation. Impasto swatches. Thick Stalinist stone.

I wish I could go back and read my old philosophy exams as narrative, as terrible verse and wish. You move close to me by the copy of O’Keeffe, the mined diamond moment of our being here.

Once the fraught starfish of my left hand pulled a tarot card from a deck where several small swords punctured a large sword:

“must fight what pierces me.” You are her self-made cage, mine the diamond in me. Outside, the wind mauls the city.

No one else in the museum. Unlike me, cubism is not preoccupied with the end of things.

In the gift shop, pillboxes but no postcards with smoldering acts of Futurism, no security shot of your arm lacing my shoulder.

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1 “Stendhal Syndrome is a heartbeat, dizziness, fainting, confusion and even hallucinations when an individual is exposed to art, usually when the art is particularly beautiful or a large amount of art is in a single place. The term can also be used to describe a similar reaction to a surfeit psychosomatic disorder that causes rapid of choice in other circumstances, e.g. when confronted with immense beauty in the natural world.”
Not long ago on a talk-radio show was a conversation on LSD administered to the public for possible demolition of emotional barriers.

A testimonial of the experience details a desire to enter the throat of a platinum blonde mannequin dressed in sequins, large close-ups of flowers. She was described as a woman who got drunk with Argentina, a hybrid of leaning and bohemian, open to drug you with reward.

“It was an armamentarium metamorphosing over time. There were memos and letters. Visions of personal items, too: golf scorecards, college essays, all the drugs I’ve taken on my hard drive, a rented room with heat. It was too much to resist.”

Later in the interview, star witnesses said people woke up at four-thirty in the morning to study their condition, half-dead from “Sex in Outer Space,” the lonely maelstrom of clicks and clacks, a noble cause and the victorious disability to obtain them.

To think, nerve endings crushed in A New Concept of War, brutality without lethality, characterizing humanity by hallucination, decorating our enemy with ethos through chemistry.

The discourse through the radio into the effects of ‘nervousness’ seem reasonable, a systematic effort with a new vista of control. Are we undesirable, ill equipped to develop sound in any kind of sober word?

“I need to know everything that has happened to me because it could give me some peace and fewer nightmares, I have found a mixture of defensiveness and empathy, some people find it satisfying to look back and condemn if it lends itself to redemption.”
MY NAME WAS NEARLY TAYLOR

If I am a river, its current is smoke.
If he is a river, its sediment is us.

I need to return to the city of nurses who slapped us both.
He needs to return to New York, patch over his slurping black holes.

Why does New York insist on varnishing blue over a red state?
Why do the nurses insist on silt, sadness?

My brother talks of vanished moss on my hand,
dreams a séance where a ghost flew up my nose.

My brother contradicts a pig’s a pigment, suggests a suicide hotline,
promises a stain that drizzles the entire way down.

Who will tell this story? Into the gravel he goes and sings.
He will tell this story: lacks an emergency exit and cilia can’t dial 911.

My mirror reports to me: a holy roller, bulldozer, no boudoir buffoon.
His mirror reports to him: I dream those days over and over again.
JOSÉ SANJINÉS
José Sanjinés

AULA

Vivía en el aula de una vieja escuela
Remodelada para conservar su encanto.
En la sala había un viejo pizarrón
Al que añadió estas palabras:

Mi corazón está vivo

Desparramados en esa alegría
Nos acogieron los ensoñados
Signos de una vida plena
De arte y de literatura.

Tapas de libros,
Caballitos,
Y en un altar,
El viento.

El profeta trabajaba ahí
Cuando parecía dormitar.
Todo era nuevo para él
Menos el porvenir:

Narraba cuentos anónimos
De seres que conocía,
Alcobas que recordaba
Y extraños viajes nocturnos.

Mito, le decían,
Pero él, en su aula,
Con mirada suave o seria
A la indescifráble vida bendecía con

Un beso
Es de noche, me dijo,
Y nos quedamos absortos
Mirando un cometa que caía
Extraviado con dulce y suave fuerza.

Es de noche
Y la clase
La da el aula.
CLASSROOM

He lived in the classroom of an old school
Remodeled to conserve its charm.
There was a chalkboard in the room
On which he wrote these words:

    My heart is alive

Scattered in that happiness
Welcomed us the dreamy
Signs of a life full
Of art and literature.

Book covers,
Little horses,
And in the altar,
The wind.

The prophet worked there
As he seemed to doze.
All was new for him
Save the unforeseen.

He wrote anonymous stories
Of people that he knew,
Of rooms that he remembered
And strange nocturnal journeys.

Mito, they called him,
But he, in his classroom,
With a soft or serious gaze
Blessed the undecipherable life

    With a kiss
It’s nighttime, he told me,
And we became absorbed
Watching a comet that fell
Astray with sweet and gentle force.

It’s nighttime
And the classroom
Gives the lesson.
**EL SUEÑO DE ARIANA**

Una noche Ariana se durmió escuchando el segundo movimiento de la séptima de Beethoven y soñó que era el flujo de la música.

Un pequeño ser etéreo se acercó a ella en su sueño y, creyendo que lloraba, le dio un beso.

Ariana se despertó en su sueño.

— ¿Quién eres? — preguntó el pequeño ser.

— Soy el segundo movimiento de la séptima de Beethoven — respondió Ariana sin pestañear.

— ¿Quién te dio ese nombre? — preguntó el pequeño ser —. Yo diría que te pareces a las flores.

Y se echó a dormir junto a ella, escuchando.

Cuando Ariana se despertó en la mañana, Bruno la miraba y la admiraba. Detrás de él, en la ventana, vio una nube o quizás tan sólo el cielo azul.

— Soñé que era un río de flores” — le dijo ella.
**ARIANA’S DREAM**

One night Ariana went to sleep listening to the second movement of Beethoven’s 7th and dreamt she was the flowing music.

A little ethereal being approached her in her dream and, thinking she was crying, kissed her.

Ariana woke up in her dream.

“Who are you?” asked the little being.

“I’m the second movement of Beethoven’s 7th,” she answered without batting an eye.

“Who would give you such a name?” asked the little being. “You look like flowers to me.”

And he fell asleep next to her, listening.

When Ariana woke up in the morning, Bruno was looking at her, admiring her. Behind him, in the window, she saw a cloud or maybe just the light blue sky.

“I dreamt I was a river of flowers,” she said.
**BESAR A UN COLEÓPTERO**

Bichitos que vuelan a mi página mientras me siento afuera y leo
Me recuerdan, sobre todo cuando aterrizan en mi labio o son grandes,
Qué tan tontas son estas palabras; nada místico, nada que descubrir
Con patas largas o delgadas antenas, nada que corregir, nada
Interesante, sigan tropezándose conmigo alitas, o no, es todo…

¿Oye, Joyce, sigues por ahí?
Porfa mándame un cacho de figuratividad
Por aquí, bueno? Necesito besar a un bichito

En mi.
**TO KISS A BUG**

Little bugs, flying down to the page I read as I sit outside,
You remind me, especially when you land on my lip or are big,
Just how silly these words are; nothing mystical, nothing to find
Out with long legs or thin antennae, nothing to correct, nothing
Interesting, just bump around me little wings, or don’t, it’s all...

Hey, Joyce, you still around?
Pray send some figurativeness
This way, ok? I need to kiss a bug

In me.
Apenas terminó de leer un maravilloso horóscopo en el periódico, Bruno manejó hasta la gasolinera del ñato para comprar billetes de lotería. Escogió los números y se metió los boletos en el bolsillo, lugar donde quedaron hasta la hora de poder cobrarlos.

Fue entonces que Bruno regresó a la misma tienda donde el mismo empleado sombrío le entregó una serie de papelitos que decían NO ES GANADOR en varios tonos de tinta roja. Salió de la tienda y se fue desencantado a la universidad donde enseñaba una clase de probabilidad bayesiana.

Como era el primer día de clases la dedicó a conocer a los estudiantes. Cuando terminó la clase, Bruno subió corriendo a su oficina. Algo había sucedido en la clase que lo hizo abalanzarse al periódico para leer su horóscopo. “Luna ausente, fuera de curso, pero Mercurio alado, un verdadero dardo, buen día para comenzar comunicaciones o renovar viejos contactos”.

¿Qué hacer? Poniendo en práctica el método analítico que había aprendido en El arte de mirar, empezó a mover los ojos de un lado a otro de la página, pasando de las letras grandes a las pequeñas, y viceversa. Su práctica terminó de golpe cuando, entre letra pequeña leyó: “¿Tiene preguntas o comentarios? Escriba a Sortilege ...”

Bruno encendió su computadora y escribió el siguiente mensaje:

Querida Sortilege:

Los boletos de lotería que compré en el día de suerte redonda que señalaste la semana pasada resultaron un balde. Pero de alguna manera se puede decir que la suerte me tocó hoy. Te explico. El semestre pasado tuve en mi clase a una tal Beca Maragna, la portera del equipo de fútbol de la universidad. Hoy fue el primer día de clases y una muchacha enérgica, Nina Salazar, se me acercó para decirme que está en el equipo de fútbol. “Ah, ¿conoces a Beca Maragna?” le pregunté. “Estuvo en mi clase el semestre pasado”, y añadí: “Cuando no juega el equipo siempre pierde”.

José Sanjinés
Dije esto porque me lo había dicho Beca, y porque supuse que la nueva alumna tenía que ser una delantera o al menos un mediocampista. ¡Pero no, resulta que Nina es la otra guardameta! Hagamos cuentas. Hay más o menos treinta jugadoras en el equipo de fútbol. Mis chances de que la nueva alumna fuera la otra arquera eran menos que los de ganarme la lotería.

Bien irónico es tu sentido del humor, Sortilege.

Bruno tecleó su nombre en la parte inferior del correo electrónico, mandó el mensaje y apagó la computadora. Extendió bien el periódico sobre su escritorio y se concentró en comer el choclo hervido que había traído de casa preguntándose qué otras sorpresas le depararían las estrellas.
BRUNO AND THE STARS

After reading a particularly fortuitous horoscope in the paper, Bruno drove immediately to the nearest gas station to buy lotto tickets. He played the numbers and put them in his pocket where they stayed a few days until it was time to cash them in.

Bruno went back to the same gas station where the same unhappy teller handed him back a set of papers that read NOT A WINNER in various shades of red. Feeling let down, he left the store and rode to the college where he taught a class on Bayesian probability.

It was the first day of the term and he got to meet the students. When the class was over Bruno climbed the stairs to his office in a hurry. Something had happened in the class that made him rush to the paper to read his horoscope. “Moon off course, but Mercury winged, a real dart, good day to start new communications or renew old contacts.”

What to do next? Practicing the analytical method he had learned in The Art of Seeing, he moved his eyes from one corner of the page to another. Shifting from big to small print, and vice versa. His practice stopped suddenly when, in the small print, he read: “Questions or comments? You can write to Sortilege ...”

Bruno turned on his computer and typed the following message:

Dear Sortilege:

The lotto tickets I bought on the super lucky day you announced last week turned out to be a real bummer. But you may say I got lucky today. You see, last term I had in my class a Faith Farley, the starting goalie of the soccer team. Today, first day of classes, an energetic brunette, Becca Austin, told me that she is on the soccer team. “Oh, do you know Faith Marley?” I asked. “I had her in class last semester.” And I added, “When she doesn’t play, the team always loses.”
I said this because that’s what Faith had told me, and because I assumed the new student had to be a striker, or at least a midfielder. No, it turns out that Becca is the other goalie! Let’s do the math. There are about thirty or so players on the soccer team. My chances of getting the other goalie were slimmer than my chances of winning the state lottery.

Some ironic sense of humor you have, Sortilege.

Bruno typed his name at the bottom of the email and turned off the computer. He spread the paper over his desk and concentrated on eating the ear of corn he had brought from home wondering what other surprises the stars would bring him.
—¿Cuál es el pez más lindo? — preguntó Ariana.
—El pestaña — dijo Bruno recogiendo con un dedo una pestaña que reposaba en la mejilla de Ariana. Se la puso en el pecho pidiendo un deseo, que en realidad eran dos, porque Bruno era prevenido.
—¿Y cuál el más curioso? — continuó ella, siguiéndole la onda.
—¿El pez gato? — sugirió Bruno.
—No. El pesquisa — corrigió la rubiecita conteniendo la risa.

Bruno se dio cuenta que habían dado con un nuevo juego.

—¿Y cuál es el pez más triste? — añadió ella como un canario que saca al azar otro papelito de la suerte.
—El pesimista — dijo Bruno, filosófico.
—No. El pesadumbre — dijo Ariana riendo victoriosa —. El pesadumbre acompañado por su amigo, el pésame con mocos y pañuelo. ¿Y sabes cuál es el pez más hediondo? — preguntó sacando un pie de entre las sábanas.
—El pezuña — adivinó Bruno gracias a la pista —. ¿A que tú no sabes cuál es el pez que crece en aguas frías?

Ariana dio un par de vueltas a la adivinanza.

—No será éste bicho — dijo posando su mano cálida.
—No. Es el pezón, corazón — dijo Bruno acariciándole el seno.
—¿Y el que a ratos quiero retorcer? — replicó ella.
—No me digas.
—Tu pescuezo, pituco.
“Piscicultura” is completely untranslatable, not because of meaning, but strictly because the words share the same root word pez, “fish” in Spanish. It would be similar in English if someone were to take to word “cat” and morph it into a feline tragedy or catastrophe and then into a kind of device to launch tigers into space or a “catapult,” and so on. The poem is a conversation between two lovers in bed, and the intimate verbal sparring reflects a kind of romance of words, the riddles a celebration of language and absurdity.

— Contributing Editor, Kathryn Everly
NOEL QUIÑONES
TRANSLATION

Huracán, translation Taíno God of the wind. Your name was the first compromise between god and our people. We proved translation does not dilute divinity. But how many decades does it take a prayer to forget the face of the priest who first uttered it?

Huracán, mantra whispered, translation allowed in the barrios until we remade you from our lungs. Meaning carry forth, translation kidnapped, meaning float upward, translation swelled belly en la aguanegra.

Huracán, is this another test, another harvest, a reckoning come back again. In 1901 Hurricane San Ciriaco allowed America to reshape the Puerto Rican peso, worth half their dollar. I imagine a maelstrom of coins, I imagine a fury of paper bills as what we thought was gold became worthless translation I am watching what I thought was pride become worthless. La isla, a translation in progress, as I speak my grandmother is reminiscing on a place that does not exist anymore.

Huracán, do your dozen names make you feel like a saint? San Ciriaco, Hugo, Irma, Maria, I know I should not mock divinity, especially a god so content with it’s halo, it mispronounces noose and an entire island says Jones in perfect English translation we could rename you a thousand times more and still you would resemble the same repetitive wailing.

Huracán, I am so tired of being proud of you, so tired of our endless ballads, so wasted off our dinner table conversation. You say But at least they love our culture translation is that saliva or salt water, are you thirsty or drowning? Are you mispronouncing mirror as morir on purpose?

I would trade anything for a place to call home that does not have an identity crisis every time a rich man opens his wallet.
ARS POETICA

My poems must be redacted,
I fear my Mami will find them
strange
obsession with tongues
and saliva for lovers, my favorite
words
are in-between, abandon,
translation
I want
too many men in fantasy.
Ay dios, this is the way
I feel on some mornings.
Yesterday my best friend told me his mother
painted his nails, alignment. I want
the certainty poems do not bring.
I am very lonely.
There is a reckless translation in me always.

Inescapable but god, I am
thrilled by the heat of you.
Mami, will you hold me
as I am? Will you hold me
to the sun.
A POEM FOR SAINTS
after John Wieners

I sit in St. Brendan’s. At 10:22 AM with Mami the divorcee. She teaches me Communion. Take your sin hot at the mouth. Up the street under belt buckles my spine cups her gift—The ritual. We make it. And have made it. I am blood and blood is beckoned. Soon I will pick up the phone Papi, please take me. The poem does not lie to us. But she does, alive in the glamour of her work.
MR. QUIÑONES

Papi hangs the gold trimmed frame with our last name embroidered, a history scrolled from a Spaniard’s mouth everyone loves. Actually, no one questions it. Not even me.

Papi takes me to his office in the financial district. American Express, where the yachts encircle all the exits. From the window you can see the city so thick with its polluted movement.

Where did he apply to college again? I’m sure they have affirmative action for him there.

I’ve seen my father salsa step his temper into eloquence. He once flooded a train car when a woman called my cousin a spic. Outside, through the 4 train window a sign says ALL BRONX-BOUND SERVICE DELAYED but we don’t go that far uptown anymore.

My face lines the balconies of my father’s desk, I can’t turn away from this collage of aging, all I did to follow him, all he did to run away. Somewhere in the attic of my father’s throat is a manuscript he wrote under the name Julian Quinn. If I ever pursued my passion I would have used that pen name.

In my father’s new house, upstate there is a door with my name hanging as a false blessing. All his guests say He must love escaping up here.

I type my name, accent-crowned, into the computer. I follow its crooked, red carpet to the doorway. I disrobe and enter.
I call him when I know I am wrong, smug in his greeting
with the knowing trial, the satisfaction of error. Papi,
stopped bickering with love when he met his husband.
When we argue, he says what you’re saying is air,
you need to listen to the river, tu ere presentao
except when it comes to your own choices.

Only right I confess, inside I’m a mess.

She, as in all the rocks in the current, converges
at my throat. Where I learned to lie and lay, tell
women I am very, very lonely / I am very,
very busy draining swampwater from my thoughts.
Serial in my wanting, I blame the divorce yet again
perfection is the last deer in the open field I thirst for.
Antlers you could carve a heart into, presenting flesh
as wood. I hang them on the top shelf of my closet.

Only right I confess, inside I’m a mess.

When my face is damp, I bear the scent of abandonment
the snake who knows its skin best when it condenses.
As I shed this failure, I grow accustomed to running
upstream where I confuse desire and deserve. I drink
smaller and smaller handfuls knowing I cannot stay.
I see my reflection in the water, I call home again.

Only right I confess, inside I’m a mess.
If you hated being home why not go and live in the forest. Wild thing only getting wilder, tall as the trees living in the forest.

He wanted to join the army, fingers caressing hollowed bullets hanging from his neck, he tested himself living in the forest.

He spent afternoons throwing snowballs, stones in their wombs, at cars driving by, said he practiced on animals living in the forest.

*M1903 Springfield* is a bolt-action rifle, only a disciplined reload required. A steady eye as he fed the tree’s carcass, living in the forest.

His father came to visit him twice in his life, once when he was born and again when he was *a man*. Said he learned more living in the forest.

I loaded the clip, he squeezed his brown thigh into the airsoft muzzle
*I want to know*, Daniel said. I pulled the trigger, the echo living in the forest.
At Bainbridge Avenue, McDonald’s and McKeon Funeral Home sit parallel. When Grandma can’t take the grief she asks to go eat, her husband becoming an illusion of distance. She ungreases each french fry with a napkin and a scowl, asks for no salt but they don’t do that shit here, only permutation of sickbody. Us, enough but no, my family follows her here like stones sinking. My uncle arrives with his blood replica of Grandpa, herding five children from the children’s room downstairs in between cigarette pulls. I do not want to die. Someone is wheezing but I cannot tell who, they all have Grandpa’s last name.

I find a picture from 1998, a primary colored stethoscope in my ears. Listening to his heartbeat, he pretends he is dying. I save him, again and again I save him.
GROWING OLD IS LEARNING TO USE YOUR HANDS TO HOLD

My Mami doesn’t leather her insults on her palms anymore, they bounce atop the furniture like baboons leaking their circus hearts, what joy My reckless vines of lineage, never have I professed to own them as mammals relearning their thumbs. Your grandmother use to swing a thousand chanclas like rain falling across the house, I willingly become the next knotted love I follow this raucous nature to its epicenter: Tata, how harrowing to find fingers still practice passing after death. What if growing old is just a slow transition of sorrow: My Welo in Tata’s fingers, My Papi in Mami’s palms. A fist full of women, I count my children, they know how I feel by the way I hold the air.
UNTIL THE NEXT PLEBISCITE

119th, the seven dead anniversary
( hold this for Blanca )
this little fight, Jones and his hunger
for pesos, you can read English
now, don’t waste this gold.
Savages always waste regalos
from / home / not home.¹
She thinks Gabriel committed suicide²
because being both a country / not a country³
takes a toll on the mind.
Can you point to us on a map?
I swear we look like (               ).⁴

¹ The old Taino gods gave us words that snuck into the English language and stayed. Am I the spy or the traitor? There is no difference now.
² There is a history of dying and/or dead Puerto Ricans whose talent surpassed that of the normal artista. Maybe I am using suicide as a plot point, maybe Gabriel, native to la isla, had other intentions.
³ If the proudest people in the world cannot decide what they are proud of, our loyalty is out on loan.
⁴
FROM MIRE, TENDERNESS

after Aracelis Girmay

Say Mire, here is my saddest thing. That’s all.
Mire, your father snapping tickets at Bay Cinema
now abandoned, funny king of soft mold, malleable. Mire
across the way, Mami, bracelets of popcorn butter and staring
at a language she couldn’t master. Mire your first reversal, dirty
and playful sin. You see them laughing, watching movies.
Mire you lied, mire, your mother, not alone. Your father in love.
Mire the butterfly effect, your birth a butterfly, your stupid unsatisfied heart a butterfly.
Mire mire, Victor Hernandez Cruz, speaks of Puerto Ricans, speaks of how
they ask you to look at language, mire use your eyes to hear nene!
Mire, coño your voice
What an unletting, rivers of look
at what is not there, concrete. God damn, mire magica y santeria, and mire the old gods
because the new god is damn biblical, mire the bible, mire the bible as a glass
of Merlot over time. Even Mami drinks now but only when joyful.
Mire the Dinosaur Park, your first childhood
memory. Mire your memory, your only happy, insignificant memory, of them together
that’s all. Mire the dream where your father opens his mouth
and only the sound of slamming doors. Mire why are you crying? You don’t exist
anymore. Mire your bruises, your bruises untethered to a mother, what a beautiful
color you can’t remember. Mire, nene isn’t that the point.
CONTRIBUTORS

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Safia Elhillo is the author of *The January Children* (University of Nebraska Press, 2017). Sudanese by way of Washington, DC, she received a BA from NYU’s Gallatin School of Individualized Study and an MFA in poetry at the New School. She has received fellowships from Cave Canem, The Conversation, Crescendo Literary, and The Poetry Foundation’s Poetry Incubator. In addition to appearing in several journals and anthologies including *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*, her work has been translated into Arabic, Japanese, Estonian, and Greek. With Fatimah Asghar, she is co-editor of the anthology “Halal If You Hear Me.” She is currently a teaching artist with Split This Rock.

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Rohan Chhetri is a Nepali-Indian poet. His first book of poems, *Slow Startle* (Winner of the ‘Emerging Poets Prize 2015’) was published by The (Great) Indian Poetry Collective. A forthcoming chapbook of poems, *Jurassic Desire* (Winner of ‘Per Diem Poetry Prize’) is slated to be published later this year from Per Diem Press. His poems have appeared in *Prelude, Rattle, Vinyl, EVENT, Literary Hub* & was recently translated into French for Europe Revue. He was a 2016 Norman Mailer Poetry Fellow and recently won the Joyce Carol Oates Award for poetry.

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Jessica Scicchitano was born and raised in Syracuse, New York. She is the author of the chapbook *Dear Bucolic Landscape*, and received her MFA in Poetry from Syracuse University, where she was the Nonfiction Editor at *Salt Hill Journal*. Her poems have appeared in *Sixth Finch, Prelude, Potluck*, and more. She hopes to host a segment on the Home Shopping Network and spend retirement at the Chateau Marmont. She lives in Philadelphia with her three-legged cat and two-legged partner.

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Born in La Paz, Bolivia, Dr. Sanjinés has lived in the United States most of his life. Among the things he enjoys are sailing and traveling by train. He is currently President of Coastal Carolina University AAUP Chapter. His recent scholarship explores the possibilities (and limits) of today’s multimodal systems of communication. He has published numerous articles in journals such as *Semiotica, Signs and Society, Studies in Communication Science, Sign System Studies, Semiotics, The American*

**Noel Quiñones**

Noel Quiñones is an AfroBoricua from the Bronx. He has received fellowships from Poets House, CantoMundo, and the Watering Hole, and his work is forthcoming or published in the Latin American Review, LIT HUB, Pilgrimage Press, Best of Kweli Journal Anthology and ¡Manteca! An Anthology of Afro-Latin@ Poets. Noel is the founder of Project X, a Bronx based arts organization, and was most recently named one of New York State’s 40 Under 40 Rising Latino Stars. Follow him @NQnino322.