

Crab Fat Magazine

fiction | poetry | art | creative nonfiction

QPOC Issue

ISSN: 2374-2526

Crab Fat Magazine
QPOC Issue
ISSN: 2374-2526
January 2016

Masthead:
Caseyrenée Lopez, Editor-in-Chief
Ella Ann Weaver, Prose editor
X. Paul Lopez, Prose editor

All copyright remains with the contributors of this issue.

Dear Contributors:

Editing this special issue has been one of the most satisfying & humbling experiences that we've had the privilege of working on since our inception nearly two years ago. We would like to thank the incredible writers that have breathed life into this issue by pouring their hearts & experience into the words collected in these pages.

From the bottom of our hearts we thank you for your wisdom and courage.

Sincerely,
Caseyrenée Lopez, EIC

Contents:

ritual for staying alive as a black body. | dezieree brown | 4
ziibiwan. | dezieree brown | 6

Sea of Floating Lanterns | Christopher Rose | 8

For Yemaya | Janet Aladetohun | 10

In the Wrong Notebook | Janet Aladetohun | 11

Philia and Neikos | Hamnah Shahid | 12

Skywalk | Hamnah Shahid | 13

Beast, Lost | Heidi Andrea Restrepo Rhodes | 15

The Heresy in Our Bones | Heidi Andrea Restrepo Rhodes | 17

Let the Church Say | Trey Amos | 19

Ayer | Aries Hines | 21

Nina and Me | Aries Hines | 22

Us | Aries Hines | 24

Poems I Meant to Write | Aries Hines | 26

Urban Girl Gets Slut Shamed or How Cleopatra Must Have Felt in Rome |
siaara | 29

Woman | Allyson Ang | 31

A Hesitation Wound Between My Thighs | Laura Villareal | 32

Some mornings you wake feeling especially Black boy | jayy dodd | 33

People with the Bird Gods and Passionfruit Blood | Asdrubal Quintero | 34

Pinches Americanos | Asdrubal Quintero | 35

Late Nights | Forrest Evans | 37

What It's Like | Forrest Evans | 38

Show and Tell Age 33 | Sarah Frances Moran | 39

deziree brown

ritual for staying alive as a black body.

1. dress professional, sharp. leave no trace of anything that can be mistaken for a baller's chain or earrings.
 2. do not eat in public.
 3. do not sit in your driveway.
4. stay away from the gun aisle, toy guns included.
5. scrape that brown epidermis from your skin.
 6. straighten your hair. get rid of every twist
dread kink curl and coil
blooming from your body.
7. pull your pants up.
8. speak eloquently. do not betray any remnants of ghetto slang or any of that hood shit.
 9. appear "unintimidating".
 10. bleach yourself until you are no longer mistaken for midnight.
11. do not call the police.
12. do not sleep.
 13. remind your children there is always a bullet reserved for their skin.
14. be a *good* black.
15. paint your body as the whites of your eyes, as if that alabaster casket will save you.
16. do not travel in groups with other black bodies.
 17. look in the mirror, say *I am not human*. Repeat as necessary.
 18. own the cheapest cars and most dilapidated houses. success is not yours here.

19. don't fuck up. everyone
is searching for an excuse to end you.

20. be white.

ziibiwan.

When I asked you where you came from,
you said mulatto dreams and black boy
fairy tales. I kissed your eyelids with my
fingertips, felt water pushing rough behind
them. Your breath matched the pattern
of my heartbeat, swift and shallow. I laced
my thumbs into your locks, watching
confusion and light-skinned worry pulling
from your scalp and peeking in between
roots. I could hear it telling your story.
I knew where the little boy inside of you
lived then.

When I asked you where you came from,
you said striped war paint and meeting
the sun at the horizon. You held your
hands out to me and I traced the rivers
running through them. You said Ojibwe
and Cherokee blood thrives beneath
your skin; that many years before, your
people roamed this land freely. I saw
them rowing in the rivers, three lines
deep and wide, winding; the boats
small splotches in your now-red skin.
Your ancestors swaddled in deer cloth,
tipping lightly on midnight blue tears
underneath them.

When I asked you where you came from,
you said the corner of racial gratification
and self-hate. You said late night Tuesdays
Redcloud came, smoked, spoke in grunts
and low tones that fell deaf on children's
ears. Talked of trees that called rain
from the sky, and how the clouds knew
when to answer. He spoke of the hunt,
streams of water fresh and bluejay blue,
not enough to put out white man's fire.

I kissed your hands and I could smell
the burning.

deziree a. brown is a black queer woman poet, scholar, activist and self-proclaimed “social justice warrior” originally from Flint, MI. They received their BFA from Hamline University in Saint Paul, MN and are currently an MFA candidate at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, MI. They are also an Associate Poetry Editor for *Passages North* and often claim to have been born with a poem written across their chest. Their work has been recently published in the anthology *Best “New” African Poets 2015* and is forthcoming in *Duende*.

Christopher Rose

Sea of Floating Lanterns

A faded photo of two brown boys
now unfamiliar—a kiss on the cheek,
a crooked smile, palms pressed
and eyes in reverie—
rest beside

a circlet of silver, inscribed but unworn
and an unread, palsied penned letter
carried by a unbowed, wandering queen.
They are placed within
a solitary paper house

that joins a legion of a thousand
love lights drifting past the horizon,
carried on unseen tides until a flame
folds, flickers,
fades.

I place memories of you
on the water, watch them
slip along a morning ocean
so deep it swallows everything
but love and regret.

Christopher Rose is a teacher and poet from Seattle currently residing in Portland, Oregon. His work explores the intersection of the Filipino and Black Diasporas. His work appears or is forthcoming in the *Watering Hole Poetry*, *Anak Sastra*, *Fjords Review*, *The Outrider Review*, *Chelsea Station*, *Glitterwolf*, *Watering Hole Anthology*, *Pariahs Anthology*, and *Death Where the Nights Are Long*.

Janet Aladetohun

For Yemaya

I declare war on the erasing of She.
My body is a humming garden
growing anxiety that stalks the air

The shareholders of Earth say
Girl, you're too pretty to care
They have never carried this weight:

A sobbing sky who mourns
her daughters, watching their
sunflower necks quiver, then snap;

Or how the pulsing moon
is held captive to show the way --
for those who prey do not pray

for more out of this life. I've seen
beauty lynched by the strange.
I've seen curls that could block the sun

Tormented and limp for prying eyes.
I've smelled burning hair
when the rainbow is enuf.

I've tasted the salt. I've licked
my hands laid on our wounds
and between my fingers

shortcomings

seep through. I've seen a swollen
drowned body burst into stories,
history lessons, shameful jokes.

I've seen constellations form
swirl and shine on chemical burns
littered across our forsaken scalps.

I want to believe my fears
were not my mother's
or her mother's
But when a river is called lazy
because she quietly rushes through
the girl whose hair is a solar eclipse

I want these words to spill from my throat:
that river runs and cannot scream,
a man holds her mouth shut

But she does not weep for nothing
she pushes her tides to the heels
of a woman who walked miles

To leave the sun who could kill
she will give her water for her thirst
she will show her light of the moon¹

¹ an earlier version of "For Yemaya" originally appeared in [the coalition zine #3](#).

In the Wrong Notebook

I wrote about you as the rain your body
holds. I wrote about you as tragedy: spilled
ashes in the carpet, a planetary collision,
the flood that swept me up and away;

as a pouring cup of sunlight in the gap under
my bedroom door. I wrote about your cicada
screams and your face split by moonlight.

I wrote your name on the ceiling fan
in dust, on the back of my tongue with ink.
This is how I can believe I am almost
the same as anyone else.

Janet Aladetohun is a Black queer feminist writer, community organizer, and student living in Kalamazoo, MI.

Hamnah Shahid

Philia and Neikos

with
m(your fingers)e
I blow
 smoke
into your lungs
smoke rings spell out y o u r n a m e
the way your tongue
spells out m i n e
when I take a
 drag
with
my [you] legs
ashes
 fall
 from my mouth
leaving a trail
on your body
to help me come
back home
to the home that burned
caught in
u(the fire)s
lit by the cigarette I forgot to put out
when I fucked you

Skywalk

Every day is a balancing act. One foot in front of the other

Check the microscope for mutation, apoptosis, signs of no control check again, again, again for cancer creeping. Every day is a balancing act

Find one toe out of line
Hide. Run for the emergency exit. (don't panic) Ignore the sirens (don't panic) Help is (not) coming.
Check the microscope

scrutinizeanalysewithbeadyeyes. Look for crevices vacuums pot holes and hurricanes
Find one toe out of line.

I can smell it in the air. The monsoon is coming. (just a drizzle) Winds are screaming at (whispering to) me: scrutinizeanalysewithbeadyeyes

The cracks in the dirt will open wide, teeth bared wet lips.
Put the apple in you

r mouth. Underground
and underfire, I can
smell it in the air.

Every day is a balancing
act.
The cracks in the dirt will burst
into
 chasms
that don't chew us.
They swallow us whole.

Hamnah Shahid is a frazzled twenty-year-old with disjointed thoughts and a pen. She is a bisexual woman of Pakistani origin, raised in Canada. Her work can be found in *Mountain Tales Press* and *A Literation Magazine*. She hopes to pursue a career in literature. She has been writing for several years and does so to stay sane, or at least to express her insanity.

Heidi Andrea Restrepo Rhodes

Beast, Lost

(After Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness.')

There is no night left in you, no lingering beast
for me to rest my feathers against in the coldest winter.

There is only your skin, weighted by anvils of ivory,
the impact of a pallid bone beating your oldest fathers
five hundred years before you breathed your first.
There is the bruise it has left on you, the chipped rib,
the dazzling invasion of your melanin,
of every memory bellowing dim.

There is the sting of a mirror casting back
the uproar, the ugly, the honesty of noise.
There is the unsound tongue you ripped from
your throat, the hair's breadth of a word gone sour.

There is your brown blood, rushing river
into mouth of ocean, the day you sold yourself
& gave up the names of your someday children.
There is the motionless haze of every conquered no,
the unceremonious departure of your hand from your
own seed & grain. There is the brank, the collar, the luster
of civilities at the end of a leash. There is the milk
of a settler on your lips, & the dribble of your strange,
spit out like milkweed.

There is the tainted & faceless
almost-corpse you still drag around:
do you know it is your own?

There is the horror(!) reflected in your eyes, the horror,
the mourning stagger, nothing more.
Not your grumble, not your upward howl, only the empty
& glacial silence that echoes hard against capitulations.

No savage storm to refute the claims of rotten,
nothing but barbs and thorns at your hinges,
the countenance of deficiency & tired surrender,
the mislaid façade of sanctuary in erasure.

Your heart, no longer the wet, midnight fruit
I yearn to sink my teeth into; your flesh and wit
sterile. My wild residence, my animal kin(dred), gone.

The Heresy in Our Bones

(After Fanon)

This, we were made to believe,
This, hammered into our marrow,
This unspeaks us from the primary kernel bleeding off the lip:
We germ rot.
Cosmic effluvia, stench of biblical proportion.
We crumb-land,
land for bread, not landed, bread in hand.
We animal, we stain,
We mudded blister recessing to the nub.
We grown our own, seeded long time far,
we taken root & sprung from the very water of our bowels
these trees from which we spin infernal circle, pendulum under branch:
We our skin, shadowed catastrophe,
swarthy dread & grave, we swallowed the decrepit note
crumbling way down to the gag, we
burn our fingers trying, call each scar a perfect stone.
This, now, this:
No home like we, no time like now,
no refuge for precisions so diligently laid out by masons of then,
we fill the underground, we pound the lung like drum,
we catch the force of cry to sing the night, stitch the sting from our backs
we holler our names in the moonless,
we the sun, we lightning flash-bang burning fire,
we beast the lingering order, we underscore our glorious mayhem,
we the splendor, we life & death & dark & day,
we fracture these acres under thrall, like
Big Bang, brutal emergence, like we

birthing ourselves lashing the violent cage,
sourcing a rise from barren hope, piecemeal, we come:
Ferocious, cutthroat dawn.

Heidi Andrea Restrepo Rhodes is a queer, mixed-race, second-generation Colombian immigrant, writer, scholar, artist, and activist. She is committed to creative work as a practice of witness, social documentation, historical memory, of radical healing, of provocation to action, and as a tool for liberation. Her poetry has been seen or is forthcoming in a number of literary journals and anthologies, including *Kudzu House Review*, *As/Us*, *Feminist Studies Journal*, *Nepantla*, *Yellow Medicine Review*, *Write Bloody's 'We Will Be Shelter'*, and others. She currently lives in Brooklyn.

Trey Amos

Let the Church Say

The caps,
of my knees
are raw in this righteous plea

I pray their ignorance into the vast black,
never to be seen again
Why can't some people of color accept that being trans isn't "whites only?"
Is melanin,
not allowed to be wizard?
to be magic spell, hocus pocus reality?
to transition
transform
transcend
the eulogies already penned for us?

I wish I knew how to hide
The solitude of the spotlight can be silencing,
But hiding - well, I don't know shit 'bout it.
True self always saying "tag, you're it."

I wish I knew how to draw
So I could watercolor and pastel my thoughts
Sometimes,
these words can feel like they're not enough

I say I don't give a fuck,
but my family's opinions won't let go of me
Anxiety won't loosen its grip

I wish I knew how to lower my guard
So that every new encounter didn't begin with a pat down

1. I wear two binders. Everyday. I can not, leave home, without it.
2. All my life I've wanted my hips to lie. I found no truth in their swing.

3. I pour the creamer in the mug before the coffee, so the heat of the milky brown can burn slow.
4. The first time I had language for this - I will never forget
I was home one afternoon channel surfing, alone on the couch
I click to MTV
Channel 34 on the big screen that reminded me of an elephant in hue, and size
I saw people of color, skin tones and structures of bones like mine
Learned how to ace bandage bind my burdens from that episode
I wasn't alone from that moment on.
5. I've never loved myself, as much as I do at this moment in my life

I dedicate this poem to 2003
to 2009, to 2012

I look at those numbers, all multiples of three,
and smile
Knowing that even in my struggle there was the Trinity
Holy hell of a breakthrough

The Lord is my shepherd
Thou shalt not lie in the graves they've dug for you
Our Father,
Who art in heaven,
I am not the names they gave me

please,
cover my thoughts with peace of mind
straighten my spine stiff as crucifix with humble pride
shield me,
as the stones fly

AMEN.

Trey Amos is a poetic emcee as well as a Poet Mentor fellow at Youth Speaks, Inc. - a nationally recognized youth development non-profit. He is a trans man of color who likes to write about his identity, the world around him and how he envisions shape shifting said world.

Aries Hines

Ayer

Yesterday I removed two poems from my chest with tears and vodka made
two quiche casseroles for the first time read
bullshit mail meant to shred it remembered and then forgot
to pay my car registration

took part in sanctioned spring cleaning in the fall packed
my lunch considered a breakfast of more than toothpaste tomorrow
finally got the ring out of the tub it will be back
it always comes back because I am the worst at keeping house
and dinner warm on the table when you arrive

prayed away the dog hair off the stairs with a broom and sailors' language
awkwardly responded to my dad's text the more I do it the less it hurts we
both silently repent for all the years we hurt each other folding hope into tiny gestures

julienned potatoes broke a clove of garlic ruined
one baking pan by making it a part time cutting board got nervous
about the recipe and when it doubt add
more cheese wrestled rosemary outside my house threw in thyme
for good measure read about the one thing that keeps relationships going washed
every dirty dish in the kitchen wiped down countertops oven and didn't sweep

because I am the worst at keeping house pretended
I would fold clothes hang up my good dresses I folded
into bed for 1 hour of tv and two hours of online shopping hoped one day I could
make
light of my anxiety listened to the clutch of rain tried to stay up
and went down hard with more thoughts of you

Nina and Me

I pray to the holy Spirit Nina Simone
high priestess of soul bewitching goddess
sorcerer of melancholy

I wait for her
behind the moon
on a cool damp night
in the sweet warmth of my sadness
she always comes

I refuse to dance in the moonlight
she refuses with me

we drink lilac wine burn
curse words and sage pushing
ghost of past lovers out our bodies

we stay up chronicling each heartbreak
like lines of ancestry
these are the ones we've forgotten
just like we said we would

we talk goddamn war
goddamn misogyny
goddamn police brutality and injustice
restless over the dead bodies endless names

we scatter our tears as ashes
all over newborn leaves
freshly sprouted earth
in the soft bird-like buds of roses

we find freedom wrapped
in the labyrinth of love's bountiful palms

we sacrifice
our good dresses
favorite lip colors

best pair of heels
hoping not to be misunderstood
praying the stars accept our humble exchange
beautiful things
for beautiful lasting love

she sweetly sings and I sleep
behind her throat
don't look for us we wild
as the wind

Us

I wake up to a corridor of dancing
sunshine and dust cascading
off your broth colored skin I swallow you
transfixed in the easy job of watching you sleep

It's been 4 years since I had this job
part time work
side gigs
and unemployment were hell

I lay on top of you
align your heart to mine
and sing the song only your spirits hear
this is where I belong

onion layers of questions
click and clack through my head
where did you really come from
how can you possibly love me this much
who sent you to teach me about love

do you realize
at best I am a dizzy poet
diva bitch
part time mermaid hot femme
made for dresses
pizza
star gazing
piles of books and lifetimes of you

do you understand
at my worst I am a beach of anxiety
crazier than you realized
sweeter than I ever want anyone to know

somewhere among
switchblade arguments
disappointment tears

easy digs and reminders
of the pain we've caused one another
there is middle

the place where I meet you
and make the choice to keep meeting you
you are
70,967 hugs
145,321 kisses

I focus on your magic
like watching sweet snow snail
from the powdery sky

I blend my shoulders and breast into your outline
nibbling on your neck closing
my mind to everything except the smell of you

you reincarnate me
as cartoon
as piles of bubbles in lilac and glass hues
as kisses on the foreheads of children

Poems I Meant to Write

When I was unemployed I meant to write poems
about my tiny collapsible apartment
better than Barbie's dream house simply
because it was all mine

I meant to tell you how the bedroom burped
hummed and murmured how the spirits in that bedroom
talked loud and screamed even louder
how the kitchen felt like a fresh stream of water
you could even hear birds chirping and the sticky wet mist
of silence between waterfalls

When I was unemployed I meant to write poems
about my freedom
about leaving everyone I loved
to be birdlike in Oakland with the stinging
tendrils of growing pains behind me

I meant to write more poems about why that time
and space so eerily stares back at me
like a trapped version of my former self

When I was unemployed I meant to write
poems about San Francisco about hot
cheesy pupusas in my empty stomach going down like candy yams
about the tenderloin district where those streets
always made me feel like a slab of prime rib
about Oakland China town the farmer's market
butter brushed coconut buns in pink boxes
about solidarity baby and all my femme adventures

I meant to write poems about myself
before I was unemployed
I would've written
She's a hummingbird
her skin smells goddess baked
her eyes powerful as storms
stunning as Vanessa Williams

or a poem from Nikki Giovanni
or a fucking wax poetic from James
Baldwin and when she speaks in shyness something in her skin conjures
Nina Simone re-collects Curtis Mayfield moonlight and like shining particles
in the night sky fringes on the edge of Miles Davis
her outfits scream eloquently like a silhouette
written by Eric Dolphy signed with a crown by Jean Michel Basquiat
sassy like Eartha Kitt
she is the wind framed
to flow in Whitney Houston's cover album from 85
she is Betye Saar's paintbrush covered in 1940's racism
she's a homemade cake hot off the oven
burning your lip too steamy to eat and too delicious not to try

this was the poem I meant to write about myself before
unemployment officially kicked the shit out of me
wilted me down
bleached me until I didn't have color
held my wrist and wouldn't let me up
pushed me into a hole where I couldn't breathe

I meant to sing every morning I woke up
this wasn't the way I was supposed to feel about my roaring twenties

instead unemployment roared at me
made me fragile replaceable
never a good reason to stop running

it was the master data wipe of all I owned
all my fierce pictures and happy poses
all of my cultural and spiritual education

unemployment took
my favorite dresses and even a pile of books I still miss
it made my identity into tiny morsels
kept me sifting for myself in the dark

made me beg for more scraps
required I explain every penny especially
the ones I didn't have
made me announce myself to everyone like I was prisoner

number 0199563, unit 14, cellblock E

I would've written about all this sooner but
when I was unemployed nobody would open
my straitjacket

Aries Hines is a fierce femme, fucking queer, diva mermaid, and giver of great hugs. She holds an MFA in Poetry from Mills College. She has a ridiculous amount of books and loves nebulae, dresses, and cable TV. Her film work has been featured at film festivals including The Austin International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, her poetry and performances have been published widely and been a part of the San Francisco Queer Arts Festival for her one-woman show “My Dyscalculia Voice” about disability and race, *The Queer Girl Theater Project*, *Colorlines Magazine*, *The Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *Black Girl Dangerous* and more. Her work explores race, identity, queerness, and family. She is currently at work on her memoir *Failed Daughter, Failed Scholar*. She resides in San Diego and sometimes performs for So Say We All.

siaara

Urban Girl Gets Slut Shamed or How Cleopatra Must Have Felt in Rome

it is said in a whisper that is only a whisper
in concept.

i can hear them and they know it.

the tilted heads behind the goblets i gifted them.

their smiles are small white children who have never been scolded or taught
to say thank you or taught to dance

i hear them and they know it

-the uncomfortable laugh after blood

-the washing of hands

-the comfortable laugh after blood

crocodiles flourishing as lily pads they say

i let the night curl up my eyelids

make moons where there should be none

who would not mistake me for the sky and pray?

pity the fool who sees goddess where there is nothing

but whore

who sees queen where there is nothing

but desert & girl & spice & panic & gold & lust & gold & gold & empty & empty &
empty

& panic

surrender running through her long wet and untapped

they talk about my parents

like I am not

in the room.

they say i was raised by the dead in a harem- a brothel baby

they say all the riches I flaunt and I am still halfnaked halfwit they say

to hail from a land where they kill their own people i am a most charming savage

a festering time capsule they have pried open & open & open but do not value

they say I had my children for their government's assistance that I multiply like a

wanton goat that they will kill anything I bear and call royal before the bastards can
inherit their futures.

they say do not save me

pity the fool who tries to save me I don't want to be saved

they say dance

we want to see you dance, the whole world
is talking about it we want to watch up close
as we can without tripping the curse on the tomb
they say I am a library of alchemy shaped like a cast spell
they say pity the fool who runs and hides in the dangerous dangerous black
they say they will never stop talking
about me

siaara is growing her afro so tall God mistakes it for a microphone and decides to speak
into it.

Allyson Ang

Woman

how do you hold your womanhood?
how do you bear it, as it weighs your body down
and forces you to your knees?
my womanhood has become a curse:
it is not in my blood/it is not innate to me/it has been scattered across oceans and
generations/it has been fucked into me and out of me/it has been forced down the
throats of my people/it has stained my hands and my clothes and my heart.

men have built empires from the ruins of my womanhood
and remade me in their image.
I am no more Woman
than I am a church
whose walls echo with still unanswered prayers.

in Sunday school, I learned that my inheritance
was original sin: daughters of Eve were doomed
to carry the burden of her disobedience
to God and to Man.
when I first kissed a woman
her lips tasted like the fruit
that cast Eve out of paradise
tinged with such deadly sweetness
that I had never known.

I do not know how to claim my womanhood.
to be woman is to suffer
and to suffer is to be strong.
I am not strong. I am not Woman.
I am still bleeding from my foremothers' wounds.

Ally Ang is a queer person of color who is undergoing a constant identity crisis. Ally is in a very long distance relationship with the moon.

Laura Villareal

A Hesitation Wound Between My Thighs

Sorry, I borrowed your hand.
You offered it without my asking.
I don't blame you, the fastest way
to the heart is through the wound.
Keep going until the squalene dries
into salt & shells. Pull red tide
from the necrotic tissue.
I dare you,
stop 2 ½ inches deep. Repeat.
My back curved, a scream
netted—my mouth wide
glimmering of abalone.

Laura Villareal is an MFA candidate at Rutgers University—Newark, where she also teaches Composition. Her work has appeared in various places, most recently *Dos Gatos Press' 2016 Texas Poetry Calendar*.

jayy dodd

Some mornings you wake feeling especially Black boy

Some mornings you wake feeling especially Black boy / especially kissing your mother
on forehead before sunrise / feeling the prayers she tucked you each night before /
you wake to streets of neighbor folk grumbling words / some mornings, vultures
circle corners of schoolchildren / black boys stand ready.

Some Black boys especially wake feeling you mourning / feeling birth, and grave and
fresh air and concrete / wake their own bones, their own tongues, their own fists /
especially, the docile, the slight, the soft / some Black boys begin with daily
incantation, / you, mourning them quietly.

jayy dodd is a writer, originally from Los Angeles, now based in the Northeast. An editor for *The Offing Mag* and *Blavity*, his work commits to tenderizing Blackness and vilifying oppressive violence. His first collection of poems [*sugar in the tank*] is forthcoming on Pizza Pi Press.

Asdrubal Quintero

People with the Bird Gods and Passionfruit Blood

streetowners and uptowners like to glance at *my* funds
got that blue card? ya better be parasailing over *La Yucatán*.
better not know how to pronounce that right.
better be a marina white,
southshore blanc
a tommy bahama decked out like his mama
in vera bradley and michael kors, only two to four
when she gets home and the help is pulling weeds and she sees that
"no doing correctamente!"
Ya wanna eat at this cafe?
"Boy, you a sewer puddle,
ya muddle
with tree people
so go swallow
ya coffee grinds
elsewhere."
who ya trying to fool? ya brown metro queer hippy.
we cicada shells that fall off trees
you the joggers
we ESOL classes and pre-k montessori
you vacationers going to *San Juan del Sur*
we *bailadores de café de algodón de bananas y papel*
you people who just discovered *açaí* and *quinoa*
we people of bird gods and passionfruit blood
y somos la gente que dieron sus corazones a la tierra
para cultivar esta ciudad

Pinches Americanos

Pinches Americanos,
that's my catchphrase.
you shackle my hands,
embroil my lands.
you ass-fucked St. Tammany's legacy
and won't let me do the same
to my lovers?

Pinches Americanos.
i build you a clock
and become king of terrorism.
i pay for your bridge
and become king of cocaine.
i write you a poem
and become king of migrants.

Pinches Americanos.
my skin,
rich as earth,
has the perfect contrast for a range target.
my words,
smooth *rolleados como nuestros r's,*
trill for re-education.

my body,
tight as marbles,
aches for your steepled sanitariums.

me meto en tus labios,
tus ojos
tus lenguas.
viejos gringos, escúpeme
sobre tierras indígenas.
and act like
i still don't belong here.

Pinches Americanos.
i take my soaks in your water cannons
i like to marinade in your pepper spray
and mustard gas.

kim davis is your john cena
and i look like your muammar gaddafi.
i'm your five o'clock exhibit.

glance at my caramel
 dance in my tongues
 there's a drive-through window.
 ask the mural if it's indian.
Pinches Americanos.
 donald trump wants to build a wall.
 but, he never ran on these pyramids
 he never colored these cornfields
 he never got with these polyrhythms.
 we'll do you the favor, though;
 of keeping the
 Tyson pig shit farms
 & Walmarts,
 & sinkhole lakes,
 & dying octogenarians
 & hippy gentrifiers.
 bite the hands that feed you.
 trample on the bodies of refugees.
 shoot the harlem renaissance.
Pinches Americanos.
 y'all mushrooms.
 michael brown will rip open the san andreas.
 misty upham will bring about the new dust bowl.
 ahmed mohamed will flood texas with the devil's sinkhole.
 the indigenous,
 the blacks,
 the latinos,
 the colored,
 wait
 outside your fences.
 we're looking
 for the queen of aztlan
 to return and restore the land;
 we're looking
 for the queer revolution
 and creole parades.

Asdrubal Quintero is a Latin poet fresh from FSU, who also dips his hands into theatre and filmmaking. In his free time he's either trying to finish *Infinite Jest* or working on a series of collaborative poems (which someone will hopefully see someday).

Forrest Evans

Late Nights

She's a different kind of night owl—
I call my last a Golden Girl
'cause the pussy was like rose gold
all pink and a hint of brown.

All that melanin and nothing was
deep enough, for her, to appear authentic
but high enough to not have to
actually try and have a conversation.

That's the kind of stuff I like
and can't get over, the basics—
And I know, I know, I know
I know I can't bring you home.

But it feels good to pretend and
plan for it like your parents
are cool with another woman loving
on the apparent fifth Golden Girl.

Staying up late watching *The Nanny*
and all the late night shit you'd
watch only to pass the time or
laugh at, high as hell.

Look to your right, in bed, looking
for the same laugh or expression,
looking stupid, laughing in an empty
bed at Rose and the other three.

The late night shit and empty beds
simply reiterate she's gone
and probably was never truly here,
or, at least, a Golden Girl.

What It's Like

“When has this ever been enough?”
and you can be honest and allow the pain
to struct and fret and stream
down the lips she used to kiss, but no—

She can be another, tossed in the wind,
because the moon and tide
you dated in college gave you every
reason to hate love and pull back.

“You tryin’ to see me?”
and the other hoes you avoid because
they only gave you everything you
were afraid she was withholding.

Forgetting birthdays and sensibilities,
forgetting friends that were simply
“just that one time” and nothing more;
forgetting you’re still mad and healing.

You can be in your twenties and educated;
Young, Gifted and Black— and
not enough to make her stay, or anchor
yourself in a relationship fading.

“She ain’t fuckin’ you like me”
I know, but it’s feels good to think so
or believe this temporary desire to
tease me is more than jealousy.

Forrest Evans is a short story writer, published poet, and librarian. She recently received her B.A. in English from Fort Valley State University and is a graduate student of The University of Alabama. Previous works of Evans can be seen in *The Lavender Review*, *Carnival Literary Magazine*, and *Lipstick Literary Magazine*. A military brat, Evans has returned to the south to continue writing. Evans lives between Georgia and Alabama where she writes and fights education and gender inequality.

Sarah Frances Moran

Show and Tell Age 33

Come here
I'm going to do a magic trick
Where I splay open and you get to see
that space that falls between the cracks
in my memory
where he touched me.

Get real close,
you can see the black spot
and smell the burn.

Don't touch it please,
it can't bear to be smothered
by needy fingertips.

A bomb dropped here.
Right there where the spot is.
It went off like a nuclear holocaust and
this is all you can see.

But look,
look closer.

Look at how the things inside have grown
extra limbs, eyeballs, teeth. How jagged all the edges
seem to be. How sharp those teeth...

Don't touch!

They bite.

Bite hard and have trouble telling
the difference between his fingers
and the world.

But come closer,
witness the rusty covered love that grows
away from my storm.

Sarah Frances Moran is a writer, editor, animal lover, gamer, queer Latina. She thinks Chihuahuas should rule the world and prefers their company to people 90% of the time. Her recent work has been published or is upcoming in *The No Se Habla Espanol Anthology*, *Elephant Journal*, *Dirty Chai*, *Drunk Monkeys*, *Rust+Moth*, *Maudlin House*, *Blackbeart Magazine*, *Red Fez* and *The Bitchin' Kitsch*. She is Editor/Founder of *Yellow Chair Review*. These days you can find her kayaking the Brazos in Waco, Texas with her partner. She can be reached at <http://www.sarahfrancesmoran.com/>.