

ACID VERSE THE MIXTAPE



SIDE A

SPEED 33 1/3 RPM

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VOLUME 3

ACID VERSE: THE MIXTAPE

Volume III

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Acid Verse Literary Journal

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Editors' Notes:

Dear reader,

Thank you for picking up the third volume of Acid Verse. This issue, The Mixtape, is a curation of visual and written works that are all inspired by the music forming the soundtrack of our lives. Music makes up one of the first ways our ancestors found a method of expression through their own vocal soundings and experimentation that evolved into music as we know it today. This volume of Acid Verse highlights the interchangeable ways that music is used as a muse itself for different modes of art. Each piece is inspired by the respective creator's choice of song that lent to the collection of works that bring a corporeal vision to the sonic soundscapes that weave our days into nights. A special thank you to all the artists and writers that trusted us with their work, the Los Angeles Poet Society for their constant support and encouragement, and a shout out to Nikolai Garcia for naming this issue: The Mixtape.

Stay creating,
soledad con carne (he/they)

Dear reader,

Music has always been an integral part of my upbringing—from the cumbias blasting a las 6 de las mañana lista para el quehacer, to Chalino bumping through the swapmeet aisles in Fontana, to the sandstorm punk and ska pits in the backyard shows in East Los, to the House-Techno that inspired the “acid” in Acid Verse, and finally, to the sound of the sun, earth, and the Mexica danzantes that drum my heart full. Music is a universal language. Music is community. In Acid Verse: The Mixtape, the poets and artists weave their stories together from their inspiration through music. As I type this, I am listening to vinyl sessions and hearing the DJ do their thing. As you read through Acid Verse, think of each poem and art piece as individual records that your fingers land upon as you're record digging through the pages. You're the DJ of this issue, reader. Feel free to mix it up.

Love,
Tauri (any/all)

Thank you for supporting Acid Verse. We, whole-heartedly, full soul, appreciate you all. Shout out to Soledad for the theme of this issue. We also want to thank you all for your patience in publishing this issue. We are just two Brown Taurus gays with a Taurus Venus that got together to create this awesome journal. Thank you for supporting us!

Acid Verse centers BIPOC and holds space for Undocumented, Disabled, Non-Binary, Gender-Fluid, Two-Spirit, Muxe, and LGBTQ folks.

Acid Verse will not work with artists and organizations that affiliate with police, ICE, politicians, gentrification, and genocide.

Acid Verse honors Mutual Aid and Community.

Acid Verse stands in solidarity with Palestine and for the liberation of all colonized people and land.

The Los Angeles Poet Society acknowledges the Indigenous Peoples' land we occupy: Tongva, Kizh, Chumash, Tataviam, Serrano, Cahuilla, Luiseño, Fernandeño, and all other Indigenous Peoples' land which we stand upon.

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Check Out the Acid Verse Poets Read Their Poems:



<https://soundcloud.com/los-angeles-poet-society/sets/acid-verse-the-mixtape>

Check Out Our Spotify Playlist with Songs That Inspired Many
of These Pieces:



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A blanket of notes by Estephanie seis

I'm surfing the wind
I glide in my wheelchair
Side to side
My hair is doing a dance with
my mascaraed lashes
Left right-left right
Ehecatl caresses every part of my being
The voices in my ear readjust my crooked view
No rose tint here
Just me
all skin n bones
Melodies y Rhymes are my medicine
My morphine
The combination
Melts away
All the worries
All the humiliation
All the bullying
The screams
Here
In the peaceful space I've built
there's always more space for glimmers
Here the child within, my teenage self and my adult self can coexist
Here
I'm abundant
Here, I'm whole



Abierto Los Sabados by Jeanette Benitez

The Neighborhood Brujita by Natalie Garcia (La Brujita Del Jardin)

In my hood with my people and family is where you will find me
It's there where the magic of my poetry, my heart and legacy are written clearly
For everyone to feel, hear and see like graffiti painted on the walls in the San Fernando Valley
The manifesting brujita, reading affirmations, burning sage and connecting the stars
astrologically

Con mucho amor te presento tu fortuna
Virgo always shines through community
Aquarius dances with innovation and autonomous energy
Cancer rises with the Moon and fuels emotional creativity
Leo expresses its charismatic visions confidently and fearlessly
Libra flirts with danger and adventure to balance our reality
Scorpio cultivates artistic forms that mirror true originality
Pisces sings a new tune and note through higher connection and spirituality
Aries burns every bridge that no longer serves their independence and liberty
Gemini speaks the truth with humor and style to shine light on every possibility
Sagittarius rebels against the social structures and creates from curiosity
Capricorn moves with intention to manifest abundance effortlessly
Taurus is the symbol of positivity and gives life to all ideas with love and sensibility

Repeat after me
I am the manifestations and dreams of the ancestors that came before me
I feel divine energy moving through me
I have angels and spirits guiding me
I love who I am and who I am becoming
I speak with freely and intentionally
I see my manifestations unfolding
I know I belong here, there and everywhere
I release what no longer serves me
I breathe in nourishing and healing energy daily
I receive what is Divinely meant for me

the view from the high rise fits in with the rest by Brian Kwon

the sky out here
is a guilty mural

choked baby blue,
white impasto
any claim to innocence
unfurling
unraveling

dreams given motion
through the elegant stroke of an indentured hand

I squint into the shimmering
shy
and
a slim dishonesty
(only visible from a thousand feet up)
winks back

it will still be watching

after the credits roll on western civilization

it will be cool
it will be dim

it will be sitting in the theatre
throwing popcorn at the screen

yet another
rerun

masculine conjugations of destiny
cheap Eastwood cosplay
forcing an abstract grid
onto flat land
and
infant capitalism
between Califas thighs,

history race forward,
funny how it doubles back sometimes

old world ghosts
throwing odd shadows on
grinning skin
casting
fool's gold
into
deathless eyes

Saudade by Giselle Boustani-Fontenele

S a u d a d e

Portuguese for l o n g i n g

the deep l o n g i n g and m i s s i n g you feel for a place or a person

or fios de ovos from that one bakery at Praça da Sé

Maybe s a u d a d e can be expressed in a poem written in English but not in an English word

although let me think about l o n g i n g derived from the word “long” with a short “o”

like awwwww my heart is c r a v i n g the smell of your newly laundered shirts

or the smell of rosemary bushes cause that's what home smells like

Long like a long face like a sad face

So funny that long can also mean sad like my long hair is sad hair please brush out its melancholy

but I'm done talking about hair I'm talking about m i s s i n g a place my shoes have never greeted but my heart often does

the burden of being a daughter of an immigrant whose land longs for harmony

long like my nails trying to scratch out this l o n g i n g

S a u d a d e

a noun for "I miss you"

sau—da—de—sau—da—de—sau—da—de—sau

like a heart beat

that beats

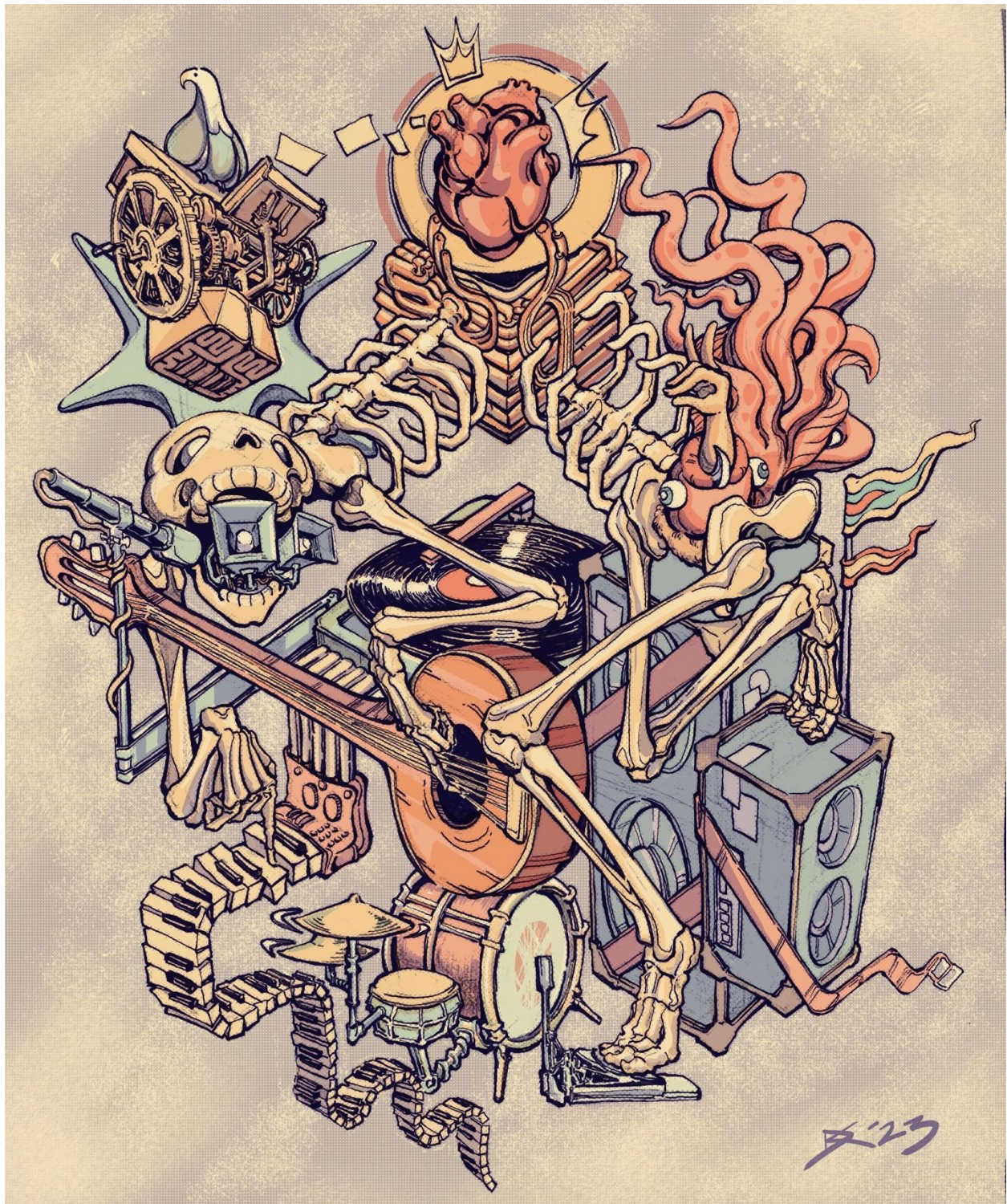
to the frequency of l o n g i n g

don't worry about the government by sel borges

I hope, wherever you are, David Byrne sings
of loved ones visiting your building
and life is going easy for you.
As the song plays, think of me.
Think of that day we waited an hour the 152,
sweaty as we made our way to Winnetka Park,
where we drank sangria out of paper cups and
listened to this song on repeat.
Loving the promise of an easy future.

I'm sitting in my apartment, around the corner
from that stop, and David Byrne sings to me,
take the highway, park and come up and see me.
I get up and catch the next bus and find my way
back to our spot in the grass. I don't shed
the years that've passed. I just take out my phone
and press play, letting the song finish.

I sing along
repeatedly, obsessively,
making sure I ingrain that shit
into my lungs, skin, and bones.



One Man Band by Brian Kwon

My Morning Ride Says Could Be Worse by Jennifer Baptiste

Chaos on Burbank
Death on Vineland
Family friendly with a cardboard sign on Hollywood Way
The rent is late
Health is at fifty percent
But my morning ride says it could be worse
I could be wrecked on Burbank Blvd
By an unknown driver lost and far away
Chatting it up with the passerby that claims
They ain't seen nothin'
I could be dead on Vineland and Victory
Pasted to the pavement in drizzling rain
Surrounded by flesh and car barriers
Blocking the road just in case EMTs find signs of life
I could be a single mother on Hollywood Way
In front of the grocery store holding up a cardboard sign in one hand
And clutching my child in the other
Collecting stares and loose change
Yet still. The rent is still late
Empathy is at one hundred percent
Cuz my morning ride says it could be worse
With chaos on Burbank
Death on Vineland
And a family with a cardboard sign on Hollywood Way

Duality by Jocelyn

Pain refreshes the soul
tears will water the soil
Within time love will grow
Peace will flourish
& we'll remember
the whilst of romance that keeps us yearning
That remind us of the duality of life
To live & let die
To love & let go
To know the dark depths of the soul
In the deepest shadows we will still grow.

Inspired by: Slauson Malone - THE MESSAGE 1

You can't stop us now by Joseph Nuñez

I dedicate this one to the naysayers
To those who scoff at the dreams of visionaries.
To those who earn their living capitalizing on oppression.
To those monsters who turn their weapons on us,
be it rifles or bigoted rhetoric.
No matter how hard you try
You can't stop us now.
Now that we're empowered
by the spirits of ancestors
that run in our blood.
The force that rises up to become
the righteous verse of a people
Undeterred.
Unabated.
Unafraid.
To take the power back
to invest our energy
in our communities
in ourselves.
Our lives are worth more than this.
More than capital gains or debts paid.
More than a credit score
or for-profit wars.
Yes, our lives are worth more than they say.
In fact they are afraid
of the day we all come to our senses
to put aside our differences
and start looking their way.
Marching up to their domain just to say;
No matter how hard you try
you can't stop us now.
Now that we're empowered
by the spirits of ancestors
that run in our blood.
The force that rises up to become
the righteous verse of a people
Undeterred.
Unabated.
Unafraid.
To take the power back
Take the power back poet!

Let our pens bleed
the prophecy of revolution
the scourge of the capitalist.
We will be strong for each other.
Let us collectivize our brilliance
for the overthrow of the elites
for the common goal of liberation.
No matter how hard you try
You can't stop us now.
You can't stop us now.
You can't stop us now.

Unforgettable by Zachary C Jensen

I remember hating when
my grandmother
would play her music in the
evening hours of the house

moments that I felt should have
been filled with the sounds
of the television or
if I was lucky the Nintendo

were overtaken by Patsy Cline and
my Grandma singing
in harmony to *Crazy*
or a duet with Elvis as *Can't*
Help Falling in Love belted
across the hall

I would roll my eyes to every
note of *Moon River* or *Chances Are*
but *Who's Sorry Now?*

I Fall to Pieces thinking
that I'll never again hear her sing
those sappy love songs
that I wished I could block out
but are now *Unforgettable*

because try as I might
I can't remember
the sound of her singing

like the dementia that took
her memory
time has robbed me
of the auditory
recollection that sits on the borders
of my mind

I know it was beautifully
filled with *Stardust* and
please forgive *If Smoke Gets*
In Your Eye brings a tear to mine

but *We'll Meet Again*
one sunny day
and I'll gladly
listen then.

Natural Women by A. Lee

The natural shape of her hips that sway seductively
when she moves left, right, and right again.
The bounce in her bottom when she squats or bends over to
pick up her pen

The softness of her lips that speaks life
into any being

a truth talker

A real Queen

Natural Women

she takes care of home first and knows her worth
a beauty
she's a best friend

She looks like what others dream or even pay for

They all want to look like, talk like, walk like—
she is the standard of a natural beauty

There is nothing average about her
never forgotten there are many replicas of her
but she knows exactly what she wants.

She never questions her worth
she allows others to shine in their own time
never in competition.

She recognizes real, and shares a space while also giving
others grace.

She's a woman of great discernment
She listens to understand, and not necessarily to respond
Many have tried to figure her out
because they don't believe that she's real without a doubt

She doesn't live in her trauma, hurt or pain
and never tries to run game
Never take her for granted because you will never find another one quite
like her

natural woman

She is the canal where life is formed,

creating a nation.

She is every is woman
she births a nation some whom rule the word

She is all of that she is
the inner you I see in me.
Do you see you too?

Nature Woman

OUR HEARTS WILL BE ETCHED ON THE WALLS OF THE UNIVERSE, TO BE ONE
WITH THE STARS by Alexiz Angel Romero

apparently, we are “too woke” nowadays
and can’t tell when something is all in good fun
or just a harmless running gag on the new
multi-million-dollar Netflix comedy special
but the jokes stem from hatred, from the incapability
of comprehending outside man’s box
like a Lovecraftian tale; like an eigensystem
restricting how particles should or must behave
and then the hatred becomes anger
and the anger becomes violence

it always seems our existence outside the confinements of a binary code
made by sad men and their hair-transplant ego is ridiculed
for their simple entertainment, a result of their jealousy of our hot, sexy physiques
but our existence is beyond the computation of their silly programing
our mind, a quantum computer
our bodies, a galactic celestial being chiseled by the entropy of the universe
particles are not confined to any such system
such is uncertainty-- we are here and everywhere all at once

the anger, again, becomes violence
and they exterminate what they cease to understand or control
they try to overwrite us, and leave us barren in a desert
with no food or water

but foolish is their effort because we are eternal
in heart, in soul, in memory
our body is resistance
our love is resistance
our care is resistance
our existence is resistance
we are greater than this mortal world, we are forever
we are a revolution; we are the ones who will bring justice

For the trannies, dis-identifiers, and gender illusionists
For the femme fatales, weirdo queers, and boi dykes

For Caelee Love-Light
For Mar’Quis Jackson
For Destiny Howard
For Diamond Jackson-McDonald
For Daniel Aston
For Kelly Loving

For Tiffany Banks
For Semaj Billingslea
For Acey Morrison
For Ivory Nicole Smith
For Brianna Ghey
For Paloma Vazquez
For Larry King
For Banko Brown

For those now moving with the stars
The world will riot in your name

And I, at the top of my lungs,
will be screaming
Fuck the pigs, fuck the transphobes
Fuck the terfs, fuck the supremacists
Fuck everyone one of you sad motherfuckers
You can suck on my fat tranny dick



Punks, Faggots, Freaks, Oh My! By Kayden Pelly

inspired by "Lullaby" by the Cure

La Araña by Sebastian Camarena

Sounds of scratches coming
 from the corner—
Some sickening feeling, right
 when I see glistening
strings attached to the front of my chest—

My fingers press and pull softly—

A quiet melody only I hear,
 emits from my chest but
 a pain draws near—

The staccato scuttle turns legato,
and I play along to its soothing song—

Something lifts me, estoy asustado—
 Me empieza arañar, an itching
Feeling—Addiction
 to the pressure and

pull,
 the spider's strings possess me—

A quiet melody only I hear,
 Emits from my chest and releases fear.

moon song by Tasha E. Anderson

the sea speaks
splash, slosh, surge
pulses of heaven
celestial ripples
movement, resonance
harmonic parts of a whole
felt on the surface
of my skin & the sea
an unfurled spool
eyelash icicles
earth kissing the sun
moon at her zenith
something is missing?
no, just glistening
sea walls crumble
ebb, fall, flow, rise
seafloors spread
sink and heave
friction that slows
the earth's rotation
pushes away the moon
each form a pause
in a symphony
earth, moon, sun
shift, wobble, tilt
it comes, it goes
it seeks, yet remains
unknown peaks below
the old woman's skirt
the raven
a white egret
a blue heron
a yellow warbler
in the golden marsh
the moon and sun call out
the earth and sea respond
an eternal vision
a vibration, a song

Those Saturday dinners that were supposed to be lowkey but somehow ended up turning into a pinche pari— where my tíos, tías, cousins, second cousins, cousins cousins that I never even met before, all end up at my house by Tauri Angelica Alonso

my three tías with long acrylic nails
would be standing
at the door with aluminum trays
full of carnitas y arroz

Hola hija,
come kiss your favorite tías!
they said in unison.

I never remembered who was who
because their sharpie eyebrows looked the same.
But their nail polish, I remembered:
Tía Gigi, vampire red nails and kitty stickers
Tía Lola, orange rhinestone bedazzled uñas
Tía Tere, bright green curly nails with money symbol\$\$

Their lipstick made my face itch
I always blamed them for me getting chicken pox.

Pretty soon,
I was opening the door for my tíos
that brought coolers jammed with Tecate
to celebrate every time the Chivas made a goal
Or when one of my tías at least got one number
right on the Lotto.

My little cousins showed up with colorful piñatas,
though it was no one's birthday.

We'd sit on the curb, eat Hot Cheetos
play kickball on the neighbor's car
lick jalapeños straight from the can to see
who was the bravest from all the primos.

When the banda arrived,
who was really just my primas
stylin' their best Selena Quintanilla fits
movin' their hips like the "washing machine"

Cumbias, corridos, y norteñas blasted from a light-up, multi color speaker with wheels

Desde the living room to the backyard
everyone was dancing,
pachanga aquí, pachanga allá
holding plates full of carnitas,
y cervezas in hand

mom came in hot con las cumbia moves,
pasito a pasito,
just like from the 60's
The echoes of "uah! uah! uah! uah!"

I switched out of my Vans
into my cowboy boots and cowboy hat,
lista para la quebradita—

Still, I heard dad's voice over the boom of la música:

*mija, subete a tu bici and go buy more chips at the liquor.
& get me cookies and a diet coke 'cos I'm on a diet.*

I'd hop on my bike with cowboy boots and all,
carry a grocery bag around each shoulder
bring the mandado home,
only to hear Dad call me back
soon as I ran out to play on the monkey bars:

*mija, subete a tu bici and get a bag of chicharron,
una montañota de pan dulce,
and coffee for your tias.*

I wanted to lie and tell him the store closed early
But then he would make me go to another store with one of my tías
& I'd have to sit and listen to their obsessions with their current telenovelas:

How Juanita married the rich guy, Fernando and inherited all his money.
So during their honeymoon, her evil jealous twin, Lorena, shows up
and tries to poison Juanita during her sleep only to have Fernando wake up
and stab Lorena in the neck with eyebrow tweezers.
She gasps for 30 seconds— looks straight at the camera,
rolls over, hits her head on the bedpost and faints.
Juanita screams and she and Fernando hold hands and run in slow motion
towards the phone to call for help.
But when they return,
Lorena is gone! The bloodstains disappeared!
Turns out Lorena can't be killed since she was a ghost all along.

Why wouldn't dad just leave me alone or pick on my brother or sister or something?
Pero no!

Fuck, dad, I just wanna play outside!
I always tried to whisper when I cussed,
but that just slipped out.

Hija de la chingada,
qué... dijeste?
dad said slowly,
the curly hairs on his bigote
quivered with each syllable.

Yo? Nada!
I had one cowboy boot in front of the other,
ready to run if I had to.

Mhmmm,
Andalé! subete a tu bici and go get food before your tíos and tías come!

And that's how it went:
the tíos, tías, primos, second primos, y primos primos
just kept coming
& the same thing happened all over again,
next Saturday.



**Inspired by "Vámonos de Fiesta" by Banda El Recodo*



One of One by Maru

*An excerpt from Salted Plastic: The Comedic Horror of Gentrification, originally published as
Salted Plastic: Tales of Gentrification Book 1*

Saturday, October 24, 1:45am by Nathan Castellanos

Hungry Horowitz, gentry “rocker”, and would be literary genius, was up late in his Los Feliz apartment, polishing up his latest and GREATEST.....HIGHLY INGENIUS.....never to be optioned screenplay. Spinning images of awards in his head, he elevated his self-importance into an outrageous fantasy concept that was shit full of incompatible elements. His unmerited delusions ran along the lines of universal acclaim coupled with the label of cult following. Hungry’s rotten brain was geared that way; incapable of seeing the unlikelihood of his aspirations, let alone the polar extremes of the elements he expected to manifest in one big shit soup. He really didn’t get it, that dichotomy was a real thing.....and this was mainly because there really wasn’t anything real about him, his entire personality having been harvested from the culture of the working class for well over three decades.

Hungry was born and raised in Manhattan’s East Village in the early 60s. His mother was Eva Wittenburg, local pseudo bohemian and widow of Gustav Marvin Wittenburg. Gustav had been the head CEO of Wittenburg Ice Cream Co. until he passed away, leaving full control of the company in the hands of his primary debt holders, Eva’s Father and Uncles at Waterloo Coalition Bank.

Eva gave Hungry every advantage and privilege a boy could hope for, albeit in secret, essentially never at home, or in the presence of her peers, wishing to keep up appearances for her act as the impoverished downtrodden artist type. To offset the lack of luxury at home, Eva often had Hungry spend afternoons with his Uncles, Aunts or Grandparents. Picking him up from private school, they would take him out for daily trips to museums, the zoo, concerts, art galleries.....rent collecting from tenants, etc, followed by upscale dinners.....and ice cream. Seeing the contrast in his mother’s behavior at home (in front of her entourage of beatnik wannabe revolutionary suck ups) with how she acted when they visited the Upper East Side Mansions of his Uncles, Aunts, and Grandparents.....seeing this bred a very split nature to his socialization. This led to the steadily growing concept in his mind that he was simultaneously poor and rich. Essentially, unlike Eva, he actually believed the bullshit stories he manufactured about his background. This, unfortunately for him, had continued throughout his entire life.

“I can’t do it!” Hungry cried. “I miss my juicy box.....I miss my New Yorkeeeee!!!!!!” It was a disgusting display; a 50-something year old man crying in the voice of a 12-year-old. “Why did the juice have to run dry?” he went on. “I WAS SOMBODEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!”

Horowitz was referring of course to the reason why he had ended up in Los Angeles. Back in the late 70s and early 80s he had “built” a name for himself in the local punk rock scene in New York. To accomplish this he had essentially burned through various trust funds, spending them all on travel to Western Europe, various tours of duty at Ivy League Universities for music lessons, expensive designer custom made “street clothes”, heroin, and paying locals to

spread word of mouth about his “fame” to the growing new youth culture. He came from that tribe of 77 punk rock little known by most to be nothing but art students in punk rock costumes; the resource kids, the costume “weirdos” that had the time and money necessary to fund their performance. Everything from spending night after night in gritty bars studying the body language and lingo of the “tough crowd”, to slamming speed in alleyways and pissing on themselves; they had the act down to a T, being able to invest the time and money on persona build-up the same way most Hollywood actors do when prepping for a role. Hungry had certainly lived it up throughout the 80’s and most of the 90s, but little by little, his bad investment choices started to haunt him. His mother eventually passed away, and most of her remaining assets were seized by some mystery half sibling of his long dead father. Following this, his uncles cut him off from any further money, seeing everything he was doing as a lost cause. Eventually, languishing in his mother’s old apartment in the early 2000’s, he’d made the decision to migrate to Los Angeles, having heard from other no name wash ups that it was a good retirement plan when all your New York juice with the “in crowd” had officially run out.

“I know what I’ll do!” Horowitz said, regaining his composure, his confidence waxing, the tears stopping. “I’ll gear up, head down to a club, and find some 20-something fresh cuts. I’ll sidle into their conversation, and then not so subtly edge in the fact that I’M A BIG TIME PUNK ROCK LEGEND!!!!” Standing up, he rushed to his wardrobe room (he had a room solely for his clothes). The sound of him ferreting around through hangers and drawers could be heard, coupled with the clinking of chains, the “vvvvvvt” of zippers, and the click of boots on floorboards.

It was quiet for a minute; apparently Hungry had finally found his look for the night, and then.....

“Eiiiiihhhhhhh!!!!” The scream of a hysterical old lady catching a rat (Hungry’s tantrum voice) came from Horowitz room, followed by the sound of furniture breaking, and things flying around and hitting the walls. Apparently Hungry Horowitz, the “big bad punk rock legend”, had just remembered that LA bar hours were not the same as NY bar hours.

Bruja by D.Quispe

Hace siglos solían llamarme de bruja
y confieso aún me encanta el negro
va con el color de mis ojos.

Mis sueños los quemaron en la fogata
entonces me volví su pesadilla
y cada vez que veo sus rostros de espanto
o de asco, o hasta de miedo,
te cuento que gimo, gimo y casi... casi vengo.

Ten cuidado no te acerques
queriendo botarme a la fogata de nuevo!
Con tus "habla fuerte", "maricón" y
"pórtate como un hombre"

Hago magia con los vellos de mi culo
- o es que prefieres verga? -
y pronto estarás de rodillas
suplicando por unos besos más
la próxima semana.

Qué lástima, estoy muy ocupada
hechizando hombres,
quemando sus certezas
- y qué frágiles certezas! -
quemando su virilidad
- y qué frágil virilidad! -
Los estoy quemando en la fogata
de mi cuerpo-culo-verga de maricón.

HARD RESET by Ánuar Zúñiga Naime, translated by Zachary Jensen

hold down
the ignition button and wait
for the system to reboot

this can
take a few moments

if the problem persists think that in the future the sun
will collapse and everything
will be forgotten like a Tuesday
like the second man who stepped on the moon
like David Bowie's normal eye

HARD RESET Por Ánuar Zúñiga Naime

mantenga presionado
el botón de encendido y espere
a que el sistema reinicie

esto puede
tardar algunos momentos

si el problema persiste piense que en el futuro el sol
colapsará y todo
quedará en el olvido como un martes
como el segundo hombre que pisó la luna
como el ojo normal de david bowie



Punks, Faggots, Freaks, Oh My! Part 2 by Kayden Pelly

night stabbing by Jesse F. Mendez

it is 3am and we just got off work.
we're drinking Tecates at the bottom of the stairs,
just below the room where AA meetings are held.
and Hector is telling us about last night, the
stabbing that took place across the street
at Fern's parking lot, he says
he didn't see it happen but the bartender
(who i suspect also didn't see shit)
told him it was over a woman.
and Pedro being Pedro goes something like
"siempre es sobre una vieja," but no one
is listening and we've all gone quiet
for some reason.

the night cuts cold into the bones,
i smoke my cigarette, taking long
slow drags of it, sighing the exhale
up above the Mexican silence.
then Jacobo breaks into story, some telling
of one of his days in Jalisco. the others
brace with hunger, ready to devour his words,
me, i'm no longer following, stuck by the knife
of whether or not i should text you,

but i figure you might be sleeping,
so i don't.

Old Punks by Nikolai Garcia

--with beginning lines from Fugazi

I never thought so hard
on dying before
but then the insurance
agents wouldn't stop
calling about burial
insurance.

I kept telling them
I was too punk
rock to care—
that my final
expense would probably
be more vinyl.

Twenty years ago, my
rage was red
and righteous; my
hair was midnight
blue. Youth was
a neighbor; Death
lived far away.

With fire
in my soul, without
fear in my heart, and
a punk playlist
in my head, I took
my anger to every protest.

There was graffiti
in every step
I took. Vandalism
loved me. Revolution
was around
the corner, and I
would live forever.

These days I let
back pain dictate
my actions. I can't

outrun police. I can't
outrun the insurance
agent's calls.

But I can hang
up on them because
old punks never die.

*"don't cha wish your girlfriend was hot like me?
don't cha wish your girlfriend was a freak like me?
don't cha?
don't cha?"*
- The Pussycat Dolls

don't cha? by Kevin Galindo Madrigal

hot like third degree
burns, you grasp my
steaming neck
the smell of singed
flesh on your lips

you like the pain, love it
when wounds follow
my fingers up & down
your thighs, I've devised
plans to consume you
bit by bit, turn you

magma the way
my mouth spits you
sweltering no salvation
in sight only fire & fight
the largest organ
of your body, skin

& I will melt you
into a puddle
of bones, lust & sin



Bois don't cry Mixed media – 2023 by Sol Qari

con letra de la canción "Nada Me Pertenece" de La Doña

Nada me pertenece by Lorena Madrigal

Renuncio lo material
todo que se quiebra
todo que se gasta
todo que se desintegra

simplemente soy una vida bien disfrutada

Nada me pertenece

Hasta mis palabras
ya habladas
ya escritas
ya compartidas

Nada me pertenece

que liviano es ser
de nadie
pa' nadie
y caminar adelante

Pertenezco a la muerte

Solo este momento
solo ahorita
lo compartimos
ya jamás volverá

Pertenezco a la muerte

Todo se volverá a nada
cada flor y mariposa
cada sonrisa y carcajada
cada fuerte abrazo

Pertenezco a la muerte

ahí si hay certidumbre

con rumbo a la muerte voy a gozar todo
todo lo feo y doloroso
todo lo precioso y bello

todo lo posible
hasta mi último momento

Nada me pertenece
Pertenezco a la muerte

its graffiti cardboard hands grasp the death earth street,
the only thing that it has, and the wind
knocks it
back.



Punks, Faggots, Freaks, Oh My! Part 3 by Kayden Pelly

My Other Place of Birth was Middle Earth by Mike the Poet

All men have secrets and here is mine so let it be known: Sometime around 1989 I started going to Middle Earth Records in Downey. It was damn near the only place between Long Beach and Melrose that you could get rare music on import. Usually I was sitting shotgun in Philip Kwon's 1983 Mazda RX-7. Kwon wasn't even 16 yet but his older brother Young let him take the car and we went all over LA County with the windows down and the music loud. Stop me if you think that you've heard this one before. Middle Earth was where we bought cassette tapes of Depeche Mode, the Smiths, the Cure, New Order, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Echo & the Bunnymen, early U2. I even got the Bowie compilation Changes. My other best friend Phillip Medina was usually with us too. Medina loved the Police, UB40, Scritti Politti, Trashcan Sinatras, Howard Jones and we all loved Morrissey. The three of us rolled to Middle Earth from our neighborhood in Cerritos. Sometimes on the 605 north, sometimes on Lakewood Boulevard down the long thoroughfare past Artesia, Alondra, Rosecrans, Imperial before Firestone. KROQ was our sonic Bible, Richard Blade played our soundtrack, Middle Earth the center of our map where we went to fill up. New Wave was Modern Rock post punk. Burn down the disco, hang the blessed DJ because the music that they constantly play says nothing to me about my life. I got the Stone Roses Fools Gold on import at Middle Earth in 1990. They made me wanna go to Manchester and Morrissey taught me about British poetry: Keats and Yeats are on your side, Wilde is on mine. Middle Earth held the holy grail. All of the answers were there. Within a few years we started going to Aron's Records in Hollywood or other far off stores but Middle Earth was my place of birth where it all started, our oasis in the suburban wasteland. It was dark as I drove the point home. By the time I got to UCLA in 1992 those years of close listening taught me to break down language. I've seen this happen in other people's lives, now it's happening in mine. Lyrics were my liturgy whether it was Morrissey telling me the Queen is Dead or the Digable Planets schooling me on the Black Arts Movement or early 90s hip hop hippping me to Roy Ayers, P Funk and Donald Byrd. The more I heard, the more I learned, the more I explored. There is a light and it never goes out. I dug as deep as I could. Though I was born in Long Beach, my other place of birth was Middle Earth.



Picnic by Caitlin Walton

an inspiration from listening to "Creator, Destroyer" by Angel Olsen

creator, destroyer by Leslie Ortega

Months later, the birthdays pass,
the holiday smell is melting off with the snow
The suffering is at the post office,
A place you no longer need with email y las limousines
that get the tortillas home just right before they need to be put inside the refri.

The suffering is no longer at the supermarket
dressed as a red can that requires the manly grip to get into
we keep things until they no longer serve us.

I wonder how guilt can be so real after death
when in the brightest of days,
Voices can dig so deep.

you are the creator and the destroyer (of these dreams)
creating an image of rights and rights until it goes wrong
Destroy the wand of bippity boppity nope!
you have yet to wash your hands in the L.A. river
Throw it back, the rocks, the forgiven.
You know where there is breath, there is life;
not every sign of filth is a pathogen.

Is it better to give ourselves credit or wait for the paper to be graded?

I could tell you I saw buffaloes grazing in the grass in California,
And you wouldn't believe me
but tell me again
that the rosary won't sting in my hand,
you tease me.

En Otra Vida by Christiane Williams-Vigil

In another life,
I am washing clothes by the river
that snakes past my great-grandma's house.
Blankets on the clothesline sway to the melody of
forgotten *corridos*.
The air flows in and out of my lungs with little effort.
It's thick with mountain air and heat but tastes sweet.

In this timeline,
I was born here on the other side of the border,
wrapped carefully in sacred stories.
The land is not broken or ripped apart by desperate times.
Here I grow *nopales* by the sierras,
clipping off vibrant red and purple tunas
into woven baskets.

I sleep under Chihuahuan Desert skies
watching the clock-like rotation of galaxies and exploding stars.
Below me, would the mines still exist?
And do the men in my family hear the siren call
of silver, gold, and platinum?

In another life,
I will die inside of adobe walls.
My ancestors will return that night to lift me off
this world and pull me into theirs.
And my ashes scatter across beige sands
flowing into the soils that nurture the coming season.

*inspired as an ekphrasis of “The Two Fridas” by Frida Kahlo
by mimi tempestt

mia, the mountain
on my neck sits
spiked collar
in my mouth: a gag: ball: red: spit drips
hand-cuffed
at wrists
i’ll let us sit in this mood
a switch
gift
violin chain-gang
breaks
sliced jokes
into mid-air
“niceties”
in my city
i mourn legends who knew more
about life who carry a switchblade
two at night
face
i’ve moved on from piss-stained streets
the lie sounds better in kaleidoscope
deep you can’t teach a decent revelry of sheet music
for an audience who buys books
to prance bourgeoisie
every saturday evening
you either have the will of god behind your pen
or you don’t genius boxing up heaven
to let the peons penny
their iconography for the sake of hell
said: crying about a day off all i need is
the heart

mimi, the tempestt
the peacock tattoo caressing both of my breasts a
tells every eye landed on
me
i don’t fuck around
all the blue & Black of my
past holds
my grit is earned
i forgot to smile at
the man offering me
a hollywood
contract
he couldn’t
tame the morning star
out of me
& when he goes looking for my or
next
i’ll be two poems
gripping the atmosphere
again
holding the white gaze
hostage *he responded to my song*
like he has me
stuck in his head

s p ill

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s p ill

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Blue in Green by Fabian Rico

The March by danny a. avila III

Black asphalt before me —to the horizons outstretched

Flattened cans and locust— into the earth, pressed

Here they come!

Marching in their platforms and fishnets

The sun begins to rise above the coliseum

greeted with its own reflection

by the bedazzled faces and glittered bodies

weaving through cars and bloated trash cans

Those tired ravers

Those worshippers of sound

March on march on

Crushing glowsticks in their path

Oozing neon into ground

Control by Mr. Chai Tea

I depart
my soles to the route
of least resistance
leaving it to chance

passivity is a right
to live on
without repercussions
behind the chaos of results

to react to consequences
to fall in line
and standby
to the world going by

for when I lose control
it will be too late

My path
rooted my soul
to stand my ground
as I make my choice

left to my own pursuits
is no evil
with truthful intentions
determines order of my actions

being proactive deters
of falling out
being a bystander
to my own destiny

for when I take control
because I decide my fate

Reseda and Collins by soledad con carne

you don't wear those busted T.U.Ks anymore
all the pins fell from your messenger cap
you're not a middle finger in someone's face
all that rage turned into a depressive state.

We used to run screaming
over the Peanuts Bridge
thru the Tarzana Tunnel
to that record shop
across the street from McDonald's.

We would sift thru
old punk records
laugh at the new agers
that act like they're better.

run into Out of the Closet,
practice tying together the strings of fate
hanging from moldy sweaters,
fill our pockets with free condoms
to decorate the neighborhood.

How did it go?
That one song about pictures
and remembering
you
if it was all real?

you called me in a dream last night
your voice was an octave lower
tiredness wrapped around every word

you wanted to know why
our friendship failed

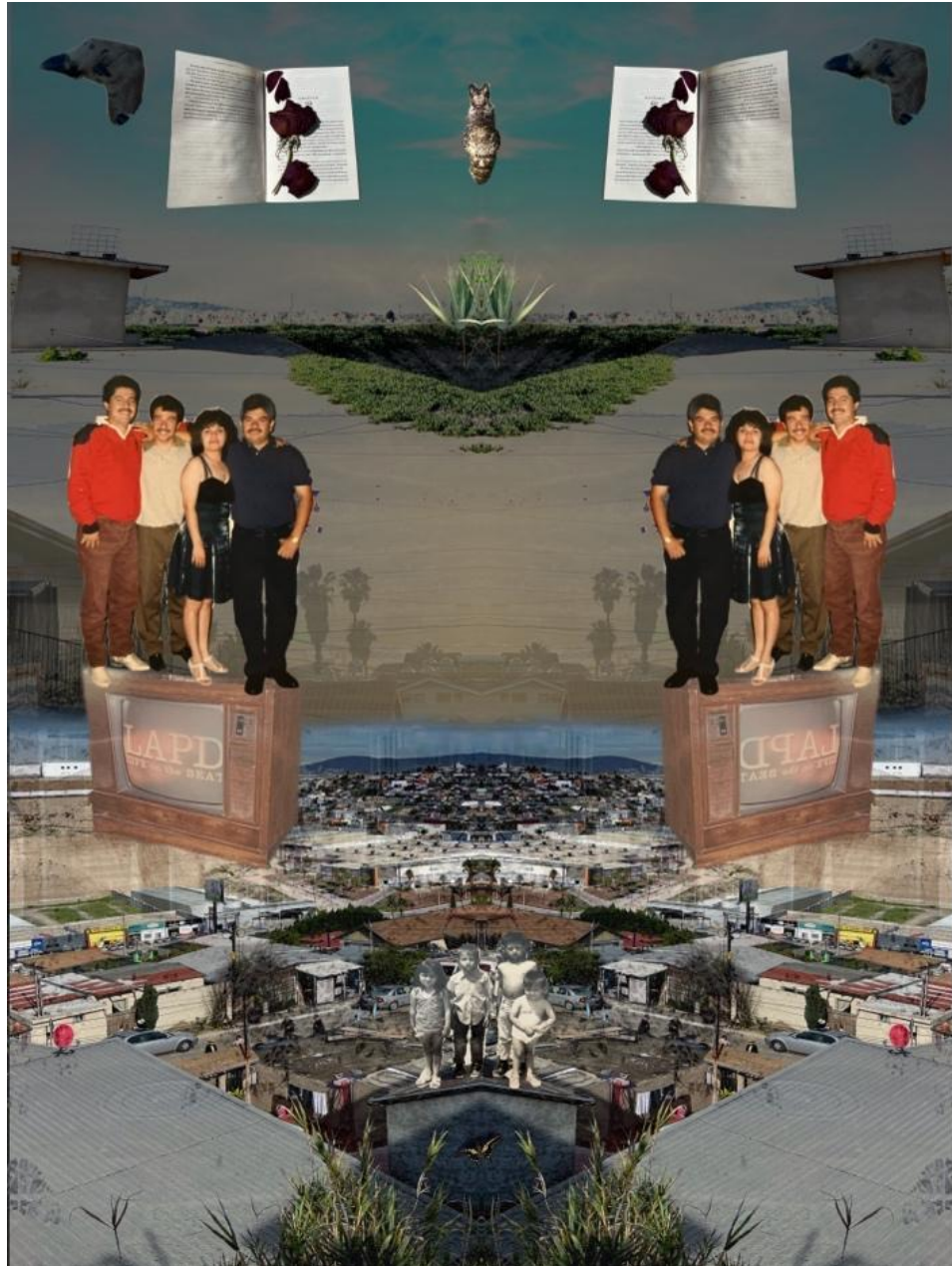
you wanted to know why
your brothers hate you now

you wanted to know
Where you could go (and) (.)
Be loved
again.



Rumbo a Tijuana - digital collage by Yaquelin Morales

"inspired by música nortea, to me this genre of music has an amazing ability for storytelling in a multilayer way. I am specifically inspired by Los Tigres Del Norte because although they are a Mexican group they have been able to connect with many different Latino American countries and have also been able to beautifully tell the story of the struggles of what it means to immigrate into the US and leave your home and family behind."



Rumbo a Tijuana - digital collage by Yaquelin Morales

I Played Him A 2007 Album In 2011, It Was A Disc Error by Raquel Reyes-Lopez

I poured a layer of agave over wound,
packed it with crumbled letters I never
folded into envelopes, never sent, & put
a postage on the tip of my tongue.

I hummed out the entirety of The Reminder
by Feist, as I waited in a page. I stayed seamed
onto book binding, embroidered into edges
was the month I missed you most, *December*.

The world stayed silent, snow fell, my skin
blossomed in Braille, my body hoped everyone
could read me. This pain wanted to stay accessible.

The streetlights flickered, broke, & jazz started
to play from a distance. The notes hovered air,
glowed out a harmony, clothed me in velvet,
silk, fur. I wished you would have popped out
from memory. The music never brought us
together, instead it was just an alarm
that found me.

La Luna by Kimberly Garcia

Her glowing and glistening complexion
Has always held comfort
Knowing no matter where I go
She will keep following me is relieving
Although she has many faces
Her reassuring aura reminds me that
Todo va estar bien
With so much instability in my life
She lends me her mano
To caress my cheek and wipes todas mis lágrimas
With her rough, calloused but warm hands that have never seen rest
Her mature, withered hands that still has life running through
Her protruding emerald veins
I hold them so close
Afraid of letting go
Although everyone eventually needs to leave
In order to grow,
-To change-
That's when her dark side is revealed once again
The part that never sees the time of day
This side is deceitful
Truly a Pesadilla
Like every part of her, this side is strong
Every part filled with true strength
Filled with años acariciando y leccionando
Her dark side is seen
Through her dark gray eyes
They have only ever learned to
Wallow all her
Sufrimiento
That life has implanted in her
I will continue to be here
To appreciate her
Although I spend the most time
With the Sun
My alma is with
La Luna

A Thank You, to the Music by Ga'agé Quetzal

Music is the woven fabric of my life, that grand tapestry of my composition.
Mom loved her hip-hop and rocked out with dad in the home they shared.
My siblings, musicians, master of that powerful sorcery,
But in awe of them, a listener, a storyteller is what I became.
In awe of the power music holds on my heart, my memory.
The music has given me willpower: heaved, stumbled, and at loss.
And the will that I have to rise again, over and over again.
Music is a magic, old and mystifying, a science, strong and unforgiving;
It is the spirits that guide life, and embolden emotions,
The scars that have thickened skin and are woven with song.

Misinterpreted, the lyrics make for breakthroughs in the start of long journeys,
Inferences of instances, where your humanity is at stake.
Before homophobia exists in the world, "I told you I was gay" rose something deep within.
Before anyone told you that your existence was an affront to nature.
Before the anger and confusion welled up in tears on the floor of the church.
Singing hymns with every fiber of your being trying to wash that sin away,
Taking their spoken bullets like the punishment I was sure I deserved.
This evocation, a recollection of stories past, awful, and yet sweet, bitter, and yet fruitful.
The confusion of life without the booster seat, my heart racing against the polyester:
Later my face, hot, and angry, blasting the song in my ears, after my mother died.
Crying, when I realized those lyrics applied to me.
Rejoicing, when I realized that those lyrics applied to me.

This is the music of: courage, affirmation, being in the face of damnation,
Wrapping myself in bedsheets and pretending they are silks,
Wondering why I couldn't be normal, why it felt so horrid and feeble.
In the privacy of my own mind, the guilt of knowing I was not alone:
The voice of those reverent folk, their zeal and affliction,
The emotion of failure, disappointment and pious conniption.
Forever sick, invisible, always scorned by them, judging, and judging, and never accepting judgment.
Then, too, later, when I turned my back the judgment stayed,
Lying in bed assaulted, reeking of guilt and anguish.
Suffocating the room, thick, and opaque with sage, so I could die cleansed.

I recall these songs, these emotions that are attached to them with pride,
I am free now of this scorn, this maladapted teen no longer controls me.
This world I live in is new, it is one that I have created for myself,
I would have it no other way. The scars earned from my miscreance are my badge,
Tears are a celebration of success, that I am still alive, that I could not be killed.
I wonder now what music will play when I look back on this time:
That cacophonous symphony that constantly exists in my space.
When the clock turns further as it does, when I have aged beyond my youth
There will be new songs of triumph, many now without strife.
The music will always be there, scribing, cataloging, keeping me intact.



Strain - sculpture by Erick Romero

inspired by "Came Down Different" by Pardoner

Slowing Things Down by Razeen Ahmed

Because it slows things down
In a world that moves too fast
But also speeds things up with a button's press.
Because it makes the audible visible
And the spins are hypnotic.
Because I have to wait for my favorite track
Learning half the hype comes from waiting.
Because the imperfections
Add to the perfection
And I like those fuzzy crackles
And having to care for my music
Matches my care about music.
Because I drop the needle,
I'm personally connected
As I explore every groove
The machine listens to me
And I listen back.
Because I like buying the ones
By the artists I don't know
And I imagine that they never imagined
That someone like me would hold their pictures
Because surprises are hard to come by
In a world of algorithms
Because it's nice to imagine
I lived before this time
Where Spotify refuses to pay
The artist as fairly as the fascist.
Because I realize
The fascist doesn't have to be paid.
Because at the cost of convenience
I gain power
And at loss of convenience
I gain appreciation...
...Because I have to get up to ip the record
And stop kissing you to do so.
Because I know I'll come back to you
With fresh excitement
Because half the hype comes from waiting
And I'll wait plenty
Just to get to my favorite.

The poem is loosely based on the song "Adam Copies" by Baths

BECOME AS FIRE by Alexiz Angel Romero

throw your corporeal flesh
into the blistering transient dance
in mathematics uncertainty
go beyond the boundaries
of infinite potential
in the senseless ways
of human malfunctions
nevertheless
 rage in the circle
of sweat
 mascara
leather boots
 battle jackets
 stilettos
 fishnets
friends! Family!
Losers! Posers!
Lovers! lovers and lovers and lovers
 nevertheless
for the undying
for the utter beauty in chaos
chaos in beauty
the entropy of your universe
is never zero, you
 are endless
become in your endeavor
kill all evil in the way
your inevitable consumption
 burning of constructions
eat the woods
 swallow the dark
show where you stand

Become
 As
 Fire

inspired by the song "Wishes" by Beach House

Wishes by Angélica Sánchez

Days roll in like nimbus clouds
Above big city
Under-ground

trains you rode
and
slept
on
‘Till I emerged
as a dream
you entertained to believe

You wish for rain
tomorrow write a letter to a friend
you promise to send
If you could only feel
like your hands weren’t borrowed

You stop to cast
your wish
in a fountain you pass
But the coin
with your pocket rejoins

You look up and say –
This floating ball
In space
Will be
Our grave...

But this evening sky
paints a pretty pink,
blue,
lilac
portrait of home
and it all feels still

Rock n Roll by danny a. avila III

i have entered the devil's den

lead by someone who is a sin

someone whose existence is disputed

yet He is here in front of me

in the flesh on steel chair

with a beauty in His lap

a curvaceous six string with electric blood

He strums a little

brushing the chords

readying himself —and the beauty

He penetrates the amp with his jack

now i am an outlaw in a land of sepia

i am a rebel

i am rock and roll and revolution

i am teenagers crowding in leather jackets and suede shoes

i am the deal at the crossroads

i am the tear in the blues

it is loud

it is brash

it is beautiful and tender

then it fades

for a moment there was only music
music that enraptured a midnight audience
just ears and sound
air and flesh
nothing else
nothing left behind

those bigots with their ropes and pitchforks —cannot find us here
where we vibrate amongst the wispy white clouds of marijuana



The Earth in Our Hands - collage- 2023 by Sol Qari

Oldies by Nikolai Garcia

--after Amaud Jamaul Jonhson

you had to have been broken
-hearted twice over by the age
of fifteen, or been born an old soul,

to keep spinning these black discs
on a relic record player while
new songs—whole new albums

—are birthed each day. my father
made this music a soundtrack
to our lives; played at home,

and in the car. songs that guide
you to a lover's waist, or
to the trigger of a gun. I hear

memories in these melodies
that make me smile now
and cry later. I flip

the vinyl over, grinning,
holding back tears,

and let the needle drop.
it's just like heaven...

Abuelita Lupe, the Gold Digger by Kevin Galindo Madrigal

not like Kanye, more Ray Charles
and the purity of his expression
“you’re good to me”
or you’re not

Abuelita Lupe had 9 kids she knows
damn well they wouldn’t fend for themselves
not until they could outrun her and my abuelo.

amá doesn’t like talking about her father.
Pedro was a bad man. once shot a man dead
he didn’t like, those were different times
so I understand the fear and tremble in amá’s voice.

when the funeral arrived, ama didn’t
want to talk about it. she almost didn’t go.

Abuelita went. she had some respect
for the breadwinner. but if you were to ask her
she’d say she was there to make sure
they dug the hole deep enough.

Useless Passion by Jesse F. Mendez

i walk along these dirty beaches
until the moon and winds and crickets
serenade me into angelic despair
since you've been gone
these nights of rapid flutter
seem to me like hummingbirds
desperate for the nectar
of the gods

home from work, i ask for the kid but
i'm told you picked him up at 6.
well it's now 6:31 and i'm in line
at that corner church of the strange & the poor,
waiting for absolution just like the rest of them.
a man in front of me buys boner pills, while
a lady behind me scolds the shit out of her child,
her fatty arm flapping around, Cobra in hand.
me, i'm pissed, no man should take this long deciding
which scratcher to go with. heart so wild and blue,
i wish him loss and infinite vanity, I wish him cosmic ruin,
but the gods are rarely so generous
and besides, i think he might be onto something
so i buy one too along with the merlot
and cigarettes.

back home, the wine spills
unto pages written in blood.

on the balcony, i find myself tonight
surveying the noir of alley and piss,
listening quietly to the cholos light up
to the neighbors beating their kids
to the whispering of my swine blood
to my heart's faint crackle as it burns
with wine, smoke, and stillness of night.
looks to me that all is the same as ever
I'm nothing but a sad fool stuck livin'
that same song of void & fire.

sometimes i think i hear you calling my name
but it's only the moon and winds and crickets.

still, "how beautiful it is to desire naturally
things impossible to our nature,"
or however that catholic said it.



Untitled by Caitlin Walton

Punk by Brian Kwon

old spot got raided
new spot copy pasted
DM'd, text chained,
kept on the DL

don't let any
pigs into this congregation

shadows look different
when cast in flashing blue lights
pompeii bright

sacred circle
huddling
in the rusted-out hulls
of
long-dormant beasts of war
long-since slouched
still-born munitions
 toys
 uncle sam got tired
 of playing with
now given
breath
by

what may have started life in some faraway time
as a
simple chord progression

dusty snakeskin
calluses plucking oiled strands,
a hum
gorging itself on
hijacked power lines
siphoned electricity
hypertrophied
analogue
diaphragm
amplified
emergent
howl

a distant echo
vaults the
rippling waters

shadows dance
no cave
no cage
for this

whirling dervish
elbows out

for a brief sweet moment
we make
mockery of death
we let
curse of land
fall away

we are
paper birds

borne of twin gods

buffeted by twin winds

of youth
and rage

Love Laid To Rest by Jennifer Baptiste

I buried you six feet deep. Laid
you to rest in my heart
And danced around your
tombstone On a grave marked,
“love lost.”
I packed the last of the dirt and stepped over you.

I saw your apparition on my timeline
And blocked you because I don't believe
In ghosts.

I ignored the phantom calls,
Quickly walked past your shadowy mist, And
visions of you in cafe crowds,
To avoid the straight jacket of the asylum
Because I knew no one would believe me
If I said a dead man walked among us.

I opened an urn engraved with,
“All good things come to an end.”
Spread the ashes to the winds
And went for a joyride.

On Fèt Gede I put your
Image on an altar, avec photos, And
fleurs shrouded in
A haze of incense.
I paid my respects

And prayed for your soul to be at rest.

The Manifestations of a San Fernando Valley Kid by Natalie Garcia (La Brujita Del Jardin)

It was 1975 and Jose cruised in his 57' Belair through Van Nuys Boulevard
War, Santana and Ritchie Valens' *La Bamba* played as soon as he punched his timecard
Lowrider

The Mexican and Chicano Anthem
This was the only time he truly felt freedom
Driving so focused on the highway was his only form of artistic expression
On the other side of the town, the Hollywood sign said welcome to the land of the so-called free
Where the gringos lynch the Blacks, Filipinos, and Mexicans, no exceptions, no dogs, no
trespassing.
Lowrider drives a little slower

They erased our history and brainwashed our society
But the truth is written in the bloody soil, and our music and
poetry We sing loudly to break to free
You can't fool us anymore we know our reality
Like every immigrant, Jose drove through every obstacle to manifest his American dream
Lowrider is a real goer

He planted the seeds of freedom, wealth and prosperity
It birthed a new generation, an army of artists rebelling against the racists structures for true
equality His dreams were endless possibilities
They crossed borders, broke through cycles, and created beautiful new realities
Lowrider knows every street

You see, I am one of the manifestations of that San Fernando Valley kid
I was harvested from the muddy waters, the deep rivers, the dry deserts, I am Native
Mexican hybrid Our American Dreams were never about cars, houses or money
We came here to uncover and reclaim our true identity
Claiming the land of our forefathers and mothers
relentlessly To dismantle the systematic structures of
White Supremacy For true democracy and to create a
new ancestral legacy
Take a little trip, Take a little trip and see, Take a little trip, Take a little trip with me



Unoccupied by Jeanette Benitez

Red Laced by Estephanie seis

I've given up the smoke
I had the pleasure of his acquaintance
We met under my trees
He greeted me with animosity
I met him with my anomaly
I planned to show him real love
Insecurity from his mouth
It pushed us worlds apart
He had to settle down
He had a little maturing to do
His eyes were too focused on
Men's temporary pleasures
She was busy breaking cycles
She understood life's real meaning
From a dream, she received
His daddy said
"He needs to grow"
His grandmother said to me,
"Not right now"
So I set him free

Ode to Vietnamese Songs by Phương Uyên Huỳnh Võ

“Tôi hay nhớ về quê nhà vào buổi chiều.
Nhất là những buổi chiều mưa rơi.
Cũng may Cali trời mưa ít không như Sài Gòn
Nếu không tôi đã khóc một giòng sông.”¹

-Đức Huy, in “Khóc Một Dòng Sông”

Lmao you were so uncool to listen to
as a teenager. Friends gossiped
for Bieber or Gaga but I never confessed
I loved you more. Your 90's tangy voice drowning
toward a life you didn't ask for.
You were so mainstream Việt
I couldn't even call you counterculture.
Just me alone, bellowing Bằng Kiều or Minh Tuyết
like I was heartbroken for a friend
who asked my father to adopt her. Years later,
can I bear to tell her, though no whips
welted my skin, my father's anger was no less
than her own? O Vietnamese songs,
how cliché and cheesy were your 2000's lyrics,
all about obsession or a boy cheating but never
the houses that rumbled when dishes smashed
toward the floor, and I turned you down,
softer and softer until
I disappeared. O I miss
Sài Gòn's rain / tiny hooves on tin roofs \ the thunders
a distant danger when my father,
a happy man, a doting figure, still comfortable
in his own skin and tongue, held me close
and stroked my hair.

¹ I miss my homeland in the evenings,
on evenings when rain falls.
Lucky that Cali doesn't rain like Sài Gòn.
Otherwise I would cry a river.



Gothic Catharsis - mixed media piece with 35mm photos by Gisela Tarifa

“This piece is inspired by genres such as Spanish Darkwave, Post Punk, and Metal Art Rock (specifically Deftones)”

Roll the Credits

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ACID VERSE THE MIXTAPE



SIDE B

33 1/3 RPM

PRODUCED BY SOLEDAD Y TAURI