

# 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

Acid Verse is an online and in-print literary journal published annually by Los Angeles Poet Society Press

### 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 of orgullo for my cultura. 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, Fernandefño, 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

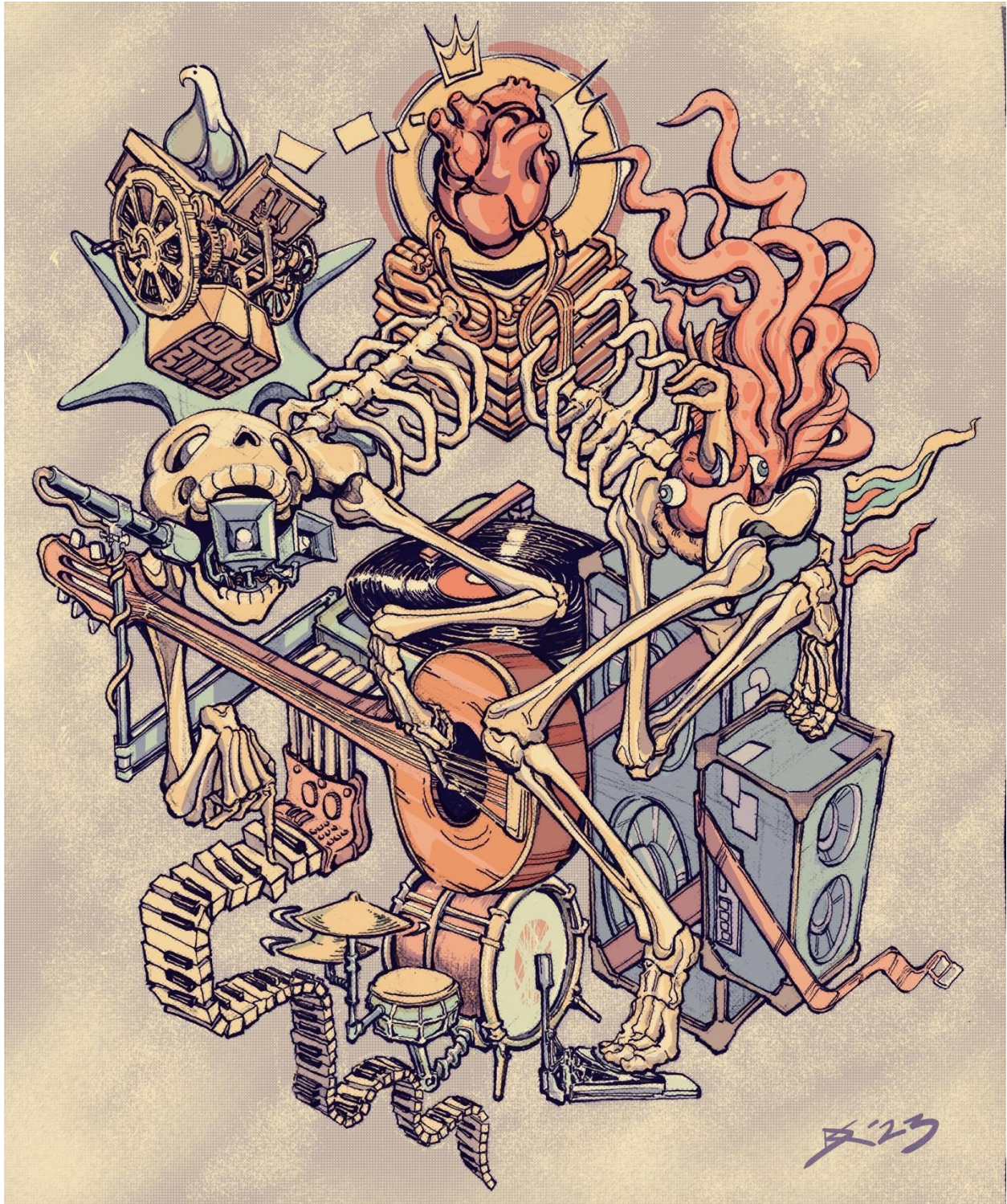
to the frequency of l o n g i n g

**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 all 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.

As the doorbell kept ringing  
the living room became too small  
Dad grabbed stacks of emergency chairs  
and placed them all over the house

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 scratchers.

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' in their best Selena Quintanilla fits  
they came in tornado-ing their hips,  
doing best impressions of the "washing machine"

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

Everyone was dancing,  
holding plates full of carnitas,  
cervezas in hand

my mom's laughter roared—

mom came in hot with the cumbia moves,  
pasito a pasito como 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—

Then I heard Dad's voice over the boom of Banda El Recodo:

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

I'd get on my bike, with cowboy boots and all,  
carry a grocery bag around each shoulder  
bring the mandado back 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 how the plot thickened in one of their many current novelas:

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 more 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  
and the same thing happened all over again,  
next Saturday.

*\*Inspired by "El Paso Del Gigante" by Grupo Soñador and "Vámonos de Fiesta" by Banda El Recodo*





It's usually some indie song  
about heartbreak.

So that I can put myself in  
situations, both real and imagined.

where I pretend I'm in a silly  
rom-com whose main character  
looks nothing like me, likes to  
cook, maybe even lives in a cool  
city.

or who sits by themselves, buys  
themselves flowers, and sometimes  
cries more than you'd like to admit.



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 Yorkeeee!!!!!!” 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 “vvvvvpt” 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



**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 Dignable Planets schooling me on the Black Arts Movement or early 90s hip hop hiping 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  
breasts a spiked collar  
in my mouth: a gag: ball: red: spit drips  
hand-cuffed  
at wrists  
i'll let us sit in this mood  
holds a switch  
gift  
violin chain-gang  
breaks  
sliced jokes  
into mid-air  
"niceties"  
in my city  
star  
i mourn legends who knew more  
about life who carry a switchblade  
my or 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  
atmosphere  
for an audience who buys books  
to prance bourgeoisie  
every saturday evening  
*song 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  
i need is

the heart

integration

**mimi, the tempestt**

the peacock tattoo caressing both of my  
tells every eye landed on  
me  
*i don't fuck around*  
all the blue & Black of my  
past  
my grit is earned  
i forgot to smile at  
the man offering  
me  
a hollywood  
contract  
he couldn't  
tame the morning  
out of me  
& when he goes looking for  
next  
i'll be two poems  
gripping the  
again  
holding the white gaze  
hostage *he responded to my  
like he has me  
stuck in his head*  
all  
the heart  
*he won't find  
another one*





**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  
and 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

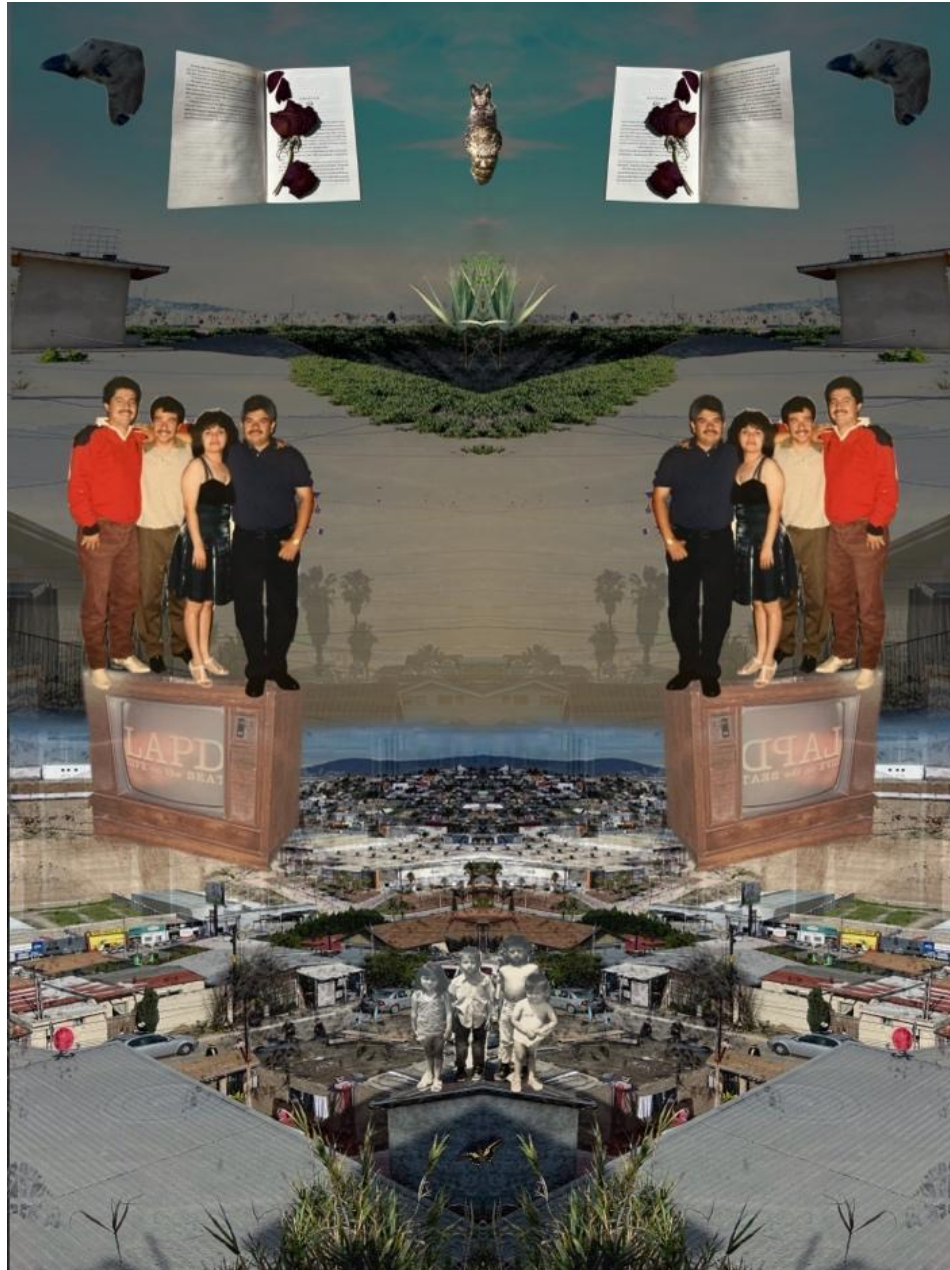
you wanted to know why  
your brothers hate you now

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.

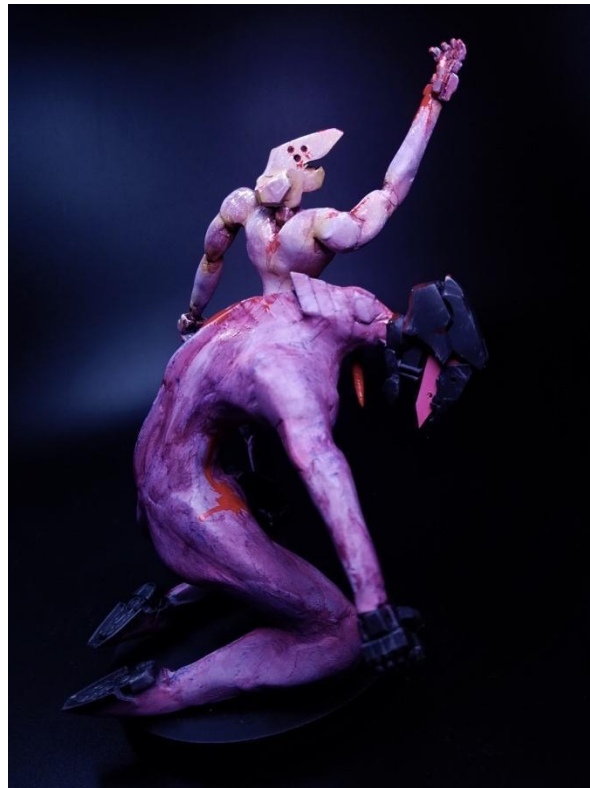
Misinterpreted, the lyrics make for breakthroughs in the start of long journeys,  
Inferences of instances, where your humanity is at stake.  
Before homophobia exists in the world, "I told you I was gay" rose something deep within.  
Before anyone told you that your existence was an affront to nature.  
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 connoption.  
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  
        stiletto  
    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

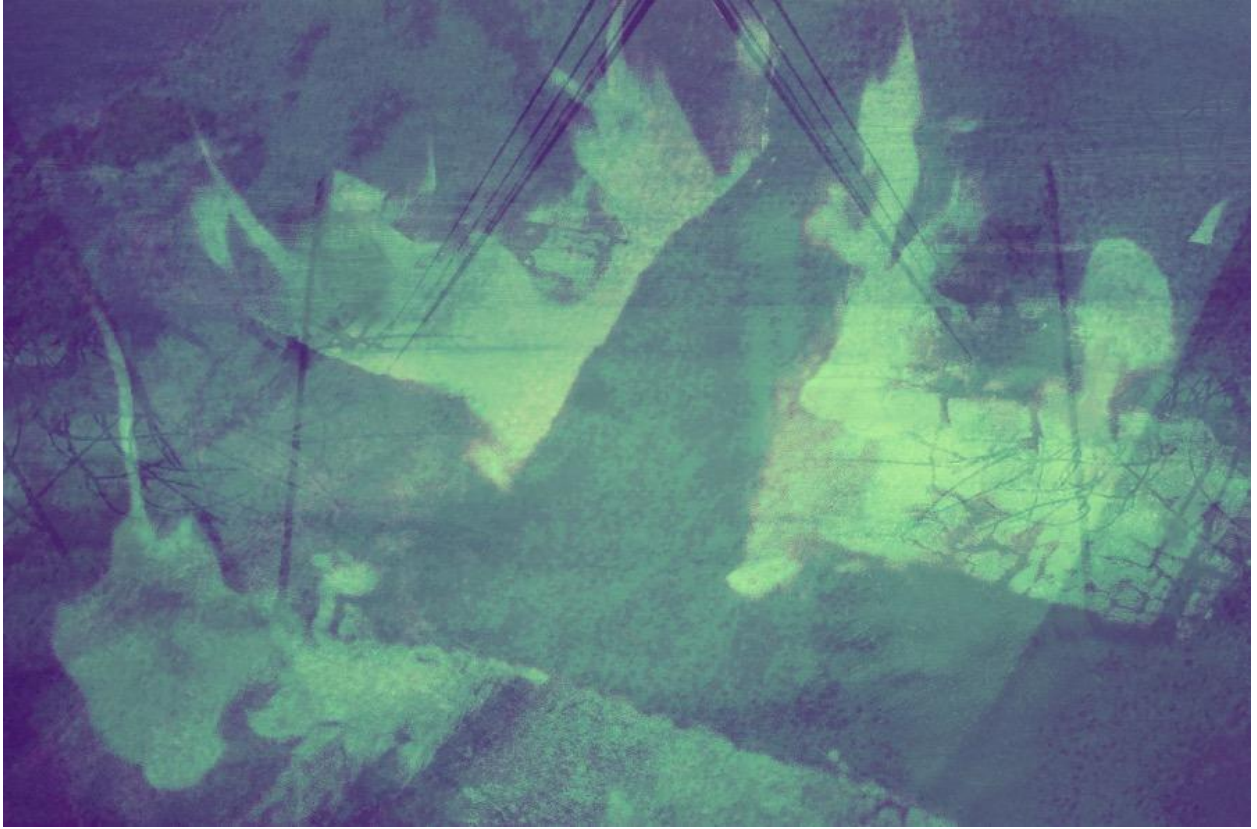
“Tôi hay nhớ về quê nhà vào buổi chiều.  
Nhất là những buổi chiều mưa rơi.  
Cũng may Cali trời mưa ít không như Sài Gòn  
Nếu không tôi đã khóc một giòng sông.”<sup>1</sup>

-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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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)”*

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# ACID VERSE THE MIXTAPE



**SIDE B**

**33 1/3 RPM**

**PRODUCED BY SOLEDAD Y TAURI**