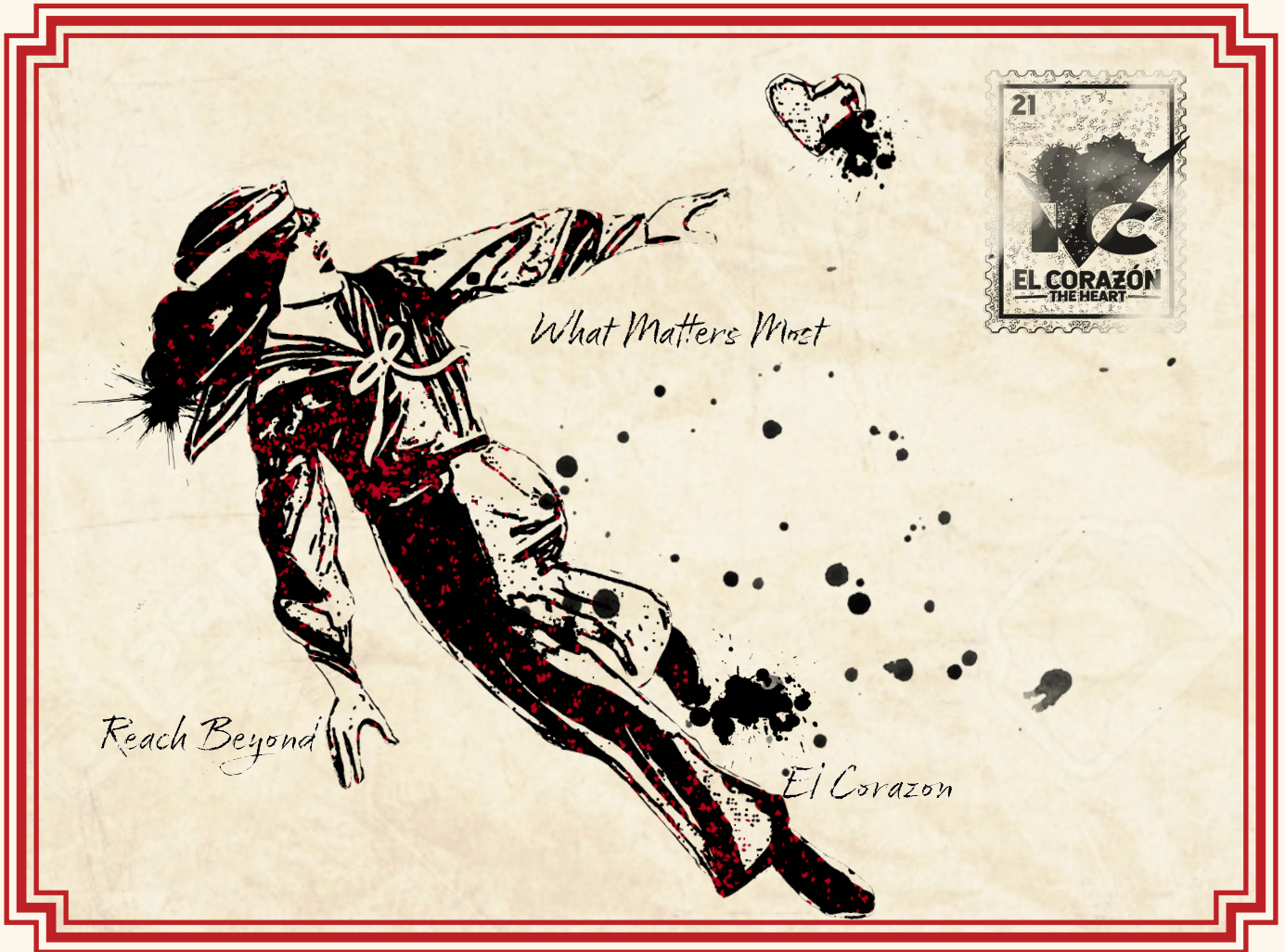


Imperial Valley College



2025-2026

A Journal Publication For Imperial Valley College Students

Table of Contents



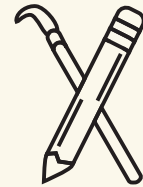
Creative Writing
pg. 2-10



Music
pg. 11



Graphic Arts
pg. 12



Drawing/Painting
pg. 13-14



Poetry
pg. 15-21



Essays
pg. 21-28



Photography
pg. 29-30

Purpose:

To provide students at Imperial Valley College with opportunities to share their work with a wide audience.

It will allow students to submit entries in a variety of categories and to be recognized for excellence.

There has been no such campus-wide opportunity for honoring and publishing student academic work.

A project of the Spencer Library faculty and staff, EL CORAZÓN will allow students to present their work, and have selected submissions published and displayed on the library webpage and in the library.

I am proud to offer this publication as a tribute to the Arts at Imperial Valley College. I want to thank our students, our staff, and our faculty for the work that they do to champion the arts. Published herein, you will find the work of our students as they get an opportunity to share their talent. These students represent the future and are poised to represent our community and our school. We are proud to share our work here.

Dr. Hector Garza, PhD, MFA
Dean Arts, Letters & Learning Services



Creative Writing

I Pattern With Yarn

By Valeria Renteria

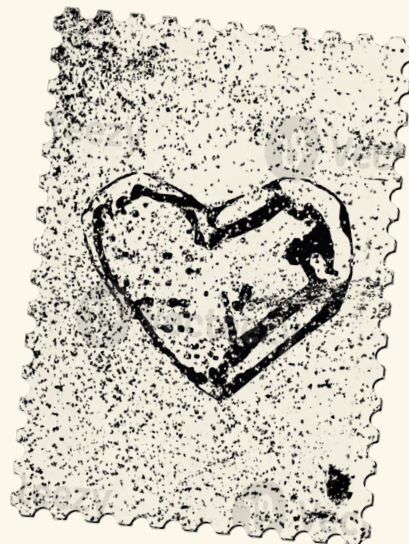
As my persona continued to develop through changes over the years, I have always leaned towards crafts that set themselves apart from my career-oriented passions. You see, my main passion involves social welfare and law. I am aware that this passion requires my critical thinking skills to be exercised continuously. However, my attention to detail flourishes whenever I engage in the craft of crocheting.

Crochet is a craft that enhances my attention to detail. Every chain of yarn must follow a pattern to result in a neat textile layout. Therefore, to begin crocheting, a blueprint for your piece is necessary for the hook to follow the pattern. As do I, I reflect my need to follow a blueprint that guides me through the passages of life. Ultimately, I have concluded that I am the only one in control of the passage-way I wish to pursue.

Every crochet project I engage in has allowed me to express my most creative side. The pieces I can create are endless—from garments and blankets to tote bags as substitutes for plastic grocery bags. My care for the

environment can be expressed through this craft, as yarn is a sustainable material. My attention to detail when crocheting can shift to the attention I dedicate to the environment's well-being.

The endless possibilities this hobby provides keep me fixated. The loops and tightening of knots reinforce the integrity of crocheted pieces. Crochet strengthens my ability to coordinate my attention to detail in every project. The various yarn creations I have made are symbolic of my creative determination. And so I knew, I pattern with yarn.





Fruitless Labor

By Marilyn Rodriguez

“Hello? I’m here. V-”

“So you are. Come! I truly believe I’ve reached a breakthrough this time!”

The scientist beckons the native to come. There is a smell of sickly miasma that permeates the place. The room is dimly lit, with the only light source being near the scientist, lighting a beastly apparatus. A big white hexagonal machine with several tubes of mostly visceral solution dominates the room. Upon the native’s closer inspection, the scientist seems to have various beakers and test tubes littered across her desk, a couple of them being toppled over from carelessness. There is a loud mechanical humming coming from the beast, of which the scientist seems to be well adjusted from. The scientist is busy, her attention diverted from the native, tinkering with various different tubes. She reaches for a tube slightly away from her reach. The native notices this, and picks up the clear tube.

The scientist takes the tube, **“Thank you, friend. Your blessing, please?”**

“What is it you wish for?” asks the native.

“Wh- I’ve told you many times. Did you forget?”

The native sighs. **“I need you to repeat your wish again to grant it.**

As I’ve mentioned before, I do not have control in what ways El Destino grants your demands”

“Alright, fine. I want to get a blessing to start a business in this country. In a liquid solution, please.”

The native emits a bright light, turning into a spark that reaches the scientist, then promptly complying and turning into a liquid form, of which the scientist captures in a beaker.

The native frowns, **“I really still don’t get why that works. Why do you even need it to be a liquid anyways?”**

“You simply do not understand my intellect, dear friend.” says the scientist, **“You say blessings are received in the womb before birth, yes? Why, here is a perfectly healthy fetus, nearly fully grown. By adding this wish to the creature, I use it as a surrogate to let God listen to my demands.”**

“...Is that why you made

a wish for a native fetus a few days ago? And which one are you even praying- Nevermind,” The native pauses, **“I did come here for another reason besides to assist you.”**

“Oh? Do tell.”

“Mira, It has been great working with you. Really it has, I’ve learned a lot, and I’ve gained a lot more power since. You see, before I joined you, I had a prometida—that is, kind of like a future wife—who I had been with and have been supporting for a while. She has been missing me, and has been awaiting my return. Recently, she has confessed to me that she has been pregnant with our child for quite a while. She did not want to rush me before, but now she believes that it will be born soon, and wants me to at least be there for the child. Because of this, I fear I will have to cut our negotiations short.



You understand, I hope, the need to take care of a child? I ask again, are you sure you want to do this? Do you not have anyone who would miss you in your native country? You say using this unborn lab child may work, but how certain are you that you will get what you desire from them? There is a saying in my family, Tengan cuidado con lo que deseas, and it's there for a reason. It means "be careful of what you wish for". I have seen the way wishes of this kind turn out, and it is typically not good. Please do consider going back to your family, if you have any. I'll leave the keys of the lab here." With that, the native takes his leave.

The scientist scoffs, "How does he expect me to leave now, when I am so close to my scientific breakthrough! If I were to get a blessing, I would finally be able to succeed in creating a business here. It is much easier to succeed in this less competitive environment! Why would I leave this place when it has plenty of resources for my dream? He is going to regret abandoning my project." With that, the scientist gets to work. Setting up the apparatus and the proper material, the scientist inserts a small amount of the aqueous wish solution into the lab

grown developing child, and a bit on herself. Having the center of the desk lit by candles, she speaks aloud, "Oh great god of wishes! Whoever is there, grant my wish! I wish to have a blessing for myself. I may not be from here, but I am well capable of being just as capable as the natives here! Please, grant my desires!"

There is a bright light which envelopes the room. The child seems to have grown a bit bigger, but nothing else seemed to have changed. Just as the scientist was about to admit defeat, a strong yet quiet voice was heard. "You wish to gain a blessing? Very well. Let us test your commitment. If that is what you truly desire, please give us some blood to show your bond to us."

"Ah, some blood?"

Very well. Ah, it seems the blood from my failed experiments has dried. You will have to do." The scientist temporarily removes the now grown baby from the apparatus. Taking a scalpel, the scientist makes a small incision on it. When it begins crying, the scientist puts it back into the machine.

"So that is the extent of your will," the glow dims for a moment, "And if I

were to say we needed more blood, how would you react?"

"I would give more. I would do whatever it takes for a blessing." "So do it."

"Very well."

The scientist makes another, much deeper, incision on the baby and puts it back. It has stopped crying. "You do not lie. You have the commitment, but your intentions are not pure. You have made the bond with us with another child, but did not think to spill the blood yourself. We do not wish to associate ourselves with the horrid crimes that you are destined to commit. Please do not attempt to contact us ever again."

The light ceases.



Marilyn Rodriguez (aka Kris) was born in El Centro, CA. They're majoring in Pre-engineering and hopes to transfer to SDSU to major in Computer Engineering. They do writing and art as a hobby and would like to minor in the arts. Their favorite dollar is 2.



A Bright Yet Dull Future

By Cesar Lopez

Welcome dearest reader, today I will take you through a journey. Not a particularly unique or fun journey mind you, in fact, this is a simple journey, which takes place in a simple day, from a simple man, whose name is so dull I seem to forget.

I:Wake

His day starts like any other, an alarm; an alarm set at the precise time of 5:30 AM, which as per the recent census, is the average wake up time with a 100% rate. Now this man has customized his alarm clock by having the algorithm choose today's greatest generated hit to wake him up while really showing off his personality! Suddenly, the music was interrupted by a computerized voice, "Good morning Phillip" Oh that's right, Phillip was his name! "Today is September 4th, 2073, we got perfect weather at a wonderful 106 Fahrenheit, or 40 Celsius." Phillip was pleased by this, he's been yearning for chilly weather recently. "In today's news" the clock continued "are the Spautherners responsible for violence? Drugs? The rise in taxes? The TRUTH may shock you". A tinge of concern filled Phillip's head, questions without answers.

But quickly his worries died down, as he remembered that he would get the answer to those questions at another time. The only thing he had to worry about at this moment was getting ready for today's work, every other concern was merely a distraction. "Simplicity is the key to success after all!" thought Phillip. After refocusing, Phillip looked down at his handy dandy 'Everyman's Guide to Seizing the Day! 2063 Edition'. It was so current! It truly was the envy of Phillip's workmates. Phillip flipped to the chapter on starting the day:

"A morning routine should start as early as possible to maximise opportunities

and productivity, and should consist of the following activities:

- 1: A mildly intense workout, while in theory a more intense workout would be ideal, the everyman does not need or have the time to waste on such luxuries
- 2: An ice cold shower, this is to wake up the mind and relax the muscles
- 3: Clothes.
- 4: Breakfast.
- 5: Head out, so you may do your part, so we can keep a peaceful present!"

"Wow!" thought Phillip "Having to not manually update step 3 and 4 is such a relief." Phillip went to his walking machine, nothing special just the standard issue machine with a mediocre touch screen. After watching a series of commercials from the great 4 corporations, Phillip got a light jog in, then straight to the shower. Phillip approached his closet, on the door were 3 Large labeled buttons: 'Work';'Home';'Outing'. At the bottom of the button labeled 'Outing' was another label, it said 'Cannot use until monthly outing at 09/26/73'. Phillip had been looking forward to it, he wonders what he will be given this time for food this time around, maybe a burger? Or perhaps he would get lucky and get a steak dinner! Regardless, he had to live in the now.

Thus with a heavy CLUNK The 'Work' button was pressed, and the closet door opened to reveal the same outfit of a red, short sleeved button t-shirt, black dress pants, thin black socks and Black dress shoes, lined up filling the closet, all made from the finest synthesized materials the everyman could afford. Normally, the standard issue shirt would be white, but as compensation due to his biennial vacation being canceled due to a scheduling conflict on the bureaucratic side, Phillip was given the option to customize a component of his work outfit for the year, so he decided on a red shirt so that he may pop while still looking sharp. Previously he had been assigned blue, which he enjoyed, but the company of people who had also been assigned blue was not always the most pleasant.

It is now 6:20 AM, national breakfast time. In the kitchen, Phillip had a variety of gadgets and gizmos, including tubes on the wall, a machine in his kitchen counter, and a machine with a drink dispenser. Phillip approached the delivery tube, a tube that delivered mail, food, and a variety of special sponsored trinkets. Above the tube was a shielded screen, it displayed "Today's breakfast is Bacon, a Hashbrown, and Moz™ sticks". "Oh boy, Moz sticks!"



Phillip thought, “must be leftovers from last weekend’s ‘Italian Remembrance Bonanza’ special lunch”. Phillip walked up to the delivery tube, and 3 sealed cans came dropping down one by one, which Phillip caught diligently. They were all simply labeled with a picture of the food they contained, except the Moz sticks, which additionally had the word “RESEALED” stamped across it in bold red letters.

Phillip then placed them into a machine that was installed into his kitchen counter, which was simply a silver cube with a perfectly sized circular hole for cans. Phillip then pressed a big red button on the machine with a satisfying CLANK, and the machine shortly after spat out all 3 foods, heated and plated up. As Phillip finally sat down to enjoy his 20 minutes of breakfast, he thought. He thought about the moist hash browns, the rubbery bacon, and the chewy Moz sticks, which stringed a white mozzarella like substance as he took a bite. He thought about his workout earlier, where he matched his personal best for a mile. He thought about his worry free life, which had been simplified by his given routine. He thought of the drink machine in his kitchen, he wanted one, but he knew he could not have one yet. And weirdly, he thought of Bill, a fellow worker, who had recently been taken on conspiracy charges. “Shame, I liked Bill”, he thought, “but a cog that is not willing to spin breaks the machine, and a cog that breaks the machine is not worth keeping around!”.

II: Work

Commuting for Phillip was a relatively easy affair. The first step as it was for many, was to walk to the nearest Ride Sharing Station. Phillip loved the walk there, it wasn’t long but it

had a lot to see and experience. The glow of the LED signs, showing the many groups and companies that shape his life. The smell of the thick air, filled with the hard work from the nearby canning factories. The sound of cars zooming fills the air as much as the sounds of cars standing still.

Phillip noticed how neat the streets were once again, not a piece of trash in sight, all thanks to the nightly clean up crew! As Phillip took in the environment, he took a moment to think about the hard work his governing body puts into making sure he lives happy and safe.

This line of thinking made Phillip start remembering a field trip he had taken in middle school to see different government buildings, which included one of the nearby canning facilities. Phillip started to think of a detail that really caught his attention, the nets. Outside the factory was some strange netting, which he couldn’t quite understand the purpose of, and the tour guide would simply not acknowledge. Naturally, he asked about it. Phillip remembered his face, he remembered his furrowed eyebrows, and the slight mouth gape, “What?! Oh, those nets... are so we can move machinery from the second floor to the first! Now I can’t say more, let’s move on”. Before he could ask details of this machinery, and how it was automated, his group started walking, and his teacher sternly pulled him aside. “I am happy that you seem so passionate about our government, but remember the prayer, and no more questions from now on”.

Suddenly, Phillip snapped back to the present. “Why would I

need to know what the machines are like?” he thought, as he quickened his walking pace “Right now I only need to know I am right on time!”. When Phillip arrived at the Ride Sharing Station, there was already a line, a common occurrence, as ride sharing was the regular way to get around, as personal cars were a luxury. However, today must’ve been Phillip’s lucky day, as Phillip got to take the spot that belonged to the person in front of him in line, as they were taken away by the local authorities. “Oh my, must’ve been one of those horrid Spautherners.” whispered a person behind Phillip “Oh I am no question about it, they must’ve done something horrific like in the news, that must be what happened.” another voice chimed in. Phillip felt relief.

After approximately 10 minutes of waiting on the front of the line, a car happened to pull by, nearly filled to capacity, only space for Phillip. Phillip did not mind however, he knew this was a sign that the system was working at max efficiency, which made him feel like his trust was well placed. After he found a spot, all of the strangers looked at each other, nodded, gave a quick “bless the lord”, the electric motor of the car whirred and it took off.

After the ride, Phillip arrives at the WUC (Workers United Center), a hub for all worker type citizens. A swarm of people, wearing a variety of colored button t-shirts hurriedly walk past each other, without uttering a single word. The building itself was a massive one story building, the front having walls made of only windows that lightly display commercials for a variety of products. These advertisements were put there to remind the workers what they were working towards. The happiness that each product can bring them clearly displayed in the glass screens, which were so well kept they reflected upon each worker who walked by. Phillip stopped briefly to look at one of the advertisements for Moz Sticks. It showed a caricature of an Italian man taking a bite out of a Moz Stick, with various slogans scattered around. “As if it never left us”, “Now with stuffing!”, and “Experience Italy once again” “I do miss it” thought Phillip, feeling some melancholy, before getting a pep back in his step.

At this point in his day, Phillip starts going through the tasks in his brain. What kind of



spreadsheets will he fill out? What kind of articles will he have to revise? What photos will he have to edit? It was exciting to him. To be able to work in the federal editorial branch was quite the honor to him. Inside the building, there was a large central, which if you were to get an overhead view would make for quite the fascinatingly large square. All along the walls of this square were elevators, with barely any space between them, all labeled by number and letter. The letter indicated which side of the square they belonged to, and the number the order. Phillip must hurry to his elevator, elevator "16B", in order to get to his workplace on time. He was already 30 minutes early, he doesn't want it to be any less. Inside the elevator there were two large red glowing buttons, one labeled 'work' and the other 'home', Phillip firmly pressed on the one labeled "work" with a big CLICK, the elevator whirred to life, and started to head down to its destination.

Once the elevator door opens, Phillip takes a good look at the office, rows upon rows of suffocatingly small cubicles, designed to save space. Each one came equipped with the best computer the government could afford for this! Sure they were 8 years out of date, but no one minded, as they were reassured the resources were going to better causes! They also came with a dashboard with two big red buttons. Phillip went to his cubicle, neatly organized and ready for today's tasks, which were neatly placed in his cubicle. Today's tasks included recontextualizing news stories to fit the truth, editing pictures to convey the correct emotions, and logging statistics approved for use. The office quickly filled up with people like Phillip, all wearing outfits like Phillip, but not quite the same, as Phillip had the shirt. Phillip felt pride in his individuality as he saw each person get out of his sight into their identical cubicles. Phillip felt ecstatic and ready to start the work day at the ripe hour of 8:30 AM, but he knew he had to hold off as there was one more thing they had to take care of. As if by divine intervention, a lifeless humanlike voice comes booming through the intercom system. "EVERYONE PLEASE GET IN POSITION TO RECITE OUR DAILY PRAYER". With nearly the same mechanical precision and timing as the components of a manufacturing machine, everyone

in the office, even those not in a cubicle, stood up, then proceeded to face their flag, proudly displayed in the center of the wall that all their cubicles face. They then, without missing a beat, and without even a thought, start simultaneously reciting a prayer: "Please lord, become all knowing, so that I may enjoy what surrounds me. As Ignorance is bliss Please lord, become my shield for the unknown, so that I may bask in normality. As Routine is comfort Please lord, become the paint brush, and turn the colors of the world solid. As Harmony is key"

Afterwards, a brief silence.

Then everyone eagerly sits back down, ready to work, and begin their work cycles. Phillip's average cycle looks nearly the same everyday. Phillip first grabs a freshly generated article, whether it's for use on radio or television, and looks for any phrasing mistakes. Whether it's grammar mistakes or factual mistakes, he corrects them according to federal guidelines. Then, he looks through the new pictures given to him by his computer, and edits them for any visual unclarities. If a picture does not fit the article, then he modifies it to do so, if a picture of the lord looks unflattering, he gets them to look their best, if a picture does not convey the correct emotions, he corrects that too. Finally, any statistics relating to the stories or future stories get given to him and logged in a spread sheet for future internal use and modification. After that, he edits another story, another picture, another statistic. edit, edit, log, edit, edit, log, edit, edit, log. Phillip finds his flow within this cycle,

until before he knows it, it's 1:30PM, time for their voting break. Everyday, every work place is given 30 minutes to pass out that day's lunch, in exchange, all of the workers get to vote on a variety of issues presented to them by the governing body. In every cubicle, the two big red buttons lit up, and the computer screen would display the topic of voting and the two options. Today's issues included: Tomorrow's meals, and a minor zoning dispute. Phillip was mainly concerned with the meals, as for lunch they had an option for a steak dinner, which was his pick versus a burger meal. He could not believe it, the exact type of meal he had in mind for his upcoming day out. This was the type of important decision he and every citizen looked forward to voting on. Their voices heard, the concern of the governing powers over their well being and happiness was apparent. It made Phillip feel free, it made Phillip feel powerful. And as Phillip basked in this feeling, he submitted his votes using one of the buttons with a distinct CLIP.

A message popped up on screen "NOTICE REGARDING THE MEAL VOTE: DUE TO A SURPLUS IN SUPPLY, TOMORROW'S VOTED WINNER 'STEAK DINNER' HAS BEEN OVERTURNED BY THE COUNCIL, AND WILL BE REPLACED BY A 'MOZ STICKS© GALORE' MEAL. THANK YOU FOR VORING. BLESS THE LORD". Phillip stared at this message for about a second, before he shrugged it off and went right back to work. "They had a good reason, it's for my own good" Phillip thought, "Plus, I like Moz Sticks". After several more hours of continuous work, it was now 8:30 PM, time to go home.

III. Sleep
10 PM was the daily curfew, so



everyone had to rush to make sure they made it to their homes in time, rushing right out of work with no time to think. There was often traffic because of this, more reason to rush out of a work place. Today was not different, as right at 10PM, Phillip walked into his apartment. Phillip now immediately beelines it to his closet, clicks the 'Home' button with an old familiar CLUNK, and quickly changes into the comfortable outfit. Phillip then heads to his kitchen and turns on the drink machine, after a second, the screen on it displays "APPROVED". Promptly, a cup with brown liquid is dispensed out of the machine, which Phillip then takes to his room, and places on his night stand next to his alarm clock.

Phillip then promptly sat on the side of his bed which was closest to the night stand. This was all in preparation for the final part in everyone's daily routine, the "Goodnight Broadcast". In preparation for it, a single continuous tone was played on the radio to prevent anyone from going to sleep. This specific broadcast was an oddity to Phillip, because even though it was a part of his daily routine, he cannot seem to recall what exactly was contained in it, all he knows is right as it starts, he wakes up feeling rested and ready the following day. Suddenly, right at 10:10 PM, the tone stopped and the broadcast began. The voice of a man came through the radio, a very familiar voice to Phillip and every other citizen: The Lord. "Dearest citizens, tonight is yet another night that I bring you this nightly broadcast to end today's hard work. As part of an open information act made so that I lead you with full trust and willingness, I will now tell you

exactly what we did today..."

Phillip's heart skipped a beat, and his ears perked up. Phillip listened attentively to every detail, the truth about the amount of "machines" in the factories who were "decommissioned", the purpose, or lack thereof, that he was working for, the reason why he was led to hate the Spautherners, and the reason why other civilizations seemingly had crumbled. Every aspect of his life, in a brief 20 minutes, was dismantled and given a new cruel purpose he had never even thought of. The horrific evil he had willingly followed, the ignorant comfort he had seeked, and its price. As Phillip was still processing the shock and horror of what he had just heard, the broadcast started wrapping up, "... now as I understand, these truths may be too cruel for you. I see it as a necessary price for me to maintain my power I need in order to give you exactly what you want. To prove this is the life you desire, I now give you a choice. That drink you mindlessly poured yourself as part of your routines is a special formula. You drink that, it will help you forget the last 20 minutes. You drink that, and you will find comfort, and move on with your routines, your chores, your lives. Or you choose to live with the reality of what we must do to ensure our comfort and v. Take your choice now. End of broadcast". Phillip stared at the brown liquid. He realizes this is the first significant choice he's made in his life, or at least the only one he remembers. No buttons, no flashy graphics, no simple choice 1 and 2, instead he was faced with his own place in this world. A rush of emotions flooded Phillip, but mainly guilt, guilt that he had given in so easily before, that he had never attempted

to fight this, that he had allowed himself to become so enclosed and obedient. How many times had he downed this cup of ignorance? Phillip thought of all the possible choices he could take right now, and landed on three possibilities. He only contemplated them for a short time, he knew the leaders had too much power, too many resources, even if he could against all odds get others who did not consume this brown substance, they would be taken, and not given an end to their routines, to their work. Then came the idea of not drinking. He knew that he would have to pay a price to live with the truth, which would only have one end, a merciful end to the cycle he had been stuck in, a cycle he now knew he could not possibly break out of if he continued to wake everyday. Which led him to his final choice, which made him feel like a coward. A coward who would rather bask in ignorance, and continue a routine without question of why he does what he does. He felt guilt once again, for being a part in allowing this to get to the point of no return, a point the next generation would be doomed to experience. With that Phillip downed the substance in one swift motion, stifling his tears and sobs, alongside the ones of those around him. Suddenly, everything Phillip had just learned was gone, and a feeling of deep euphoria hit him, everything became blurry and his head felt light. Phillip laid in his bed with a loud THUMP, a huge satisfied smile across his face, enjoying the sensation of his bed sheets, the warmth both inside and out, it all felt right.

He was ready for yet another average day for yet another average guy.



Cesar Ivan Lopez Figueroa was born in Mexicali Baja California, Mexico, and raised in Calexico California from the 3rd grade onward. He is majoring in Computer Science and hopes to attend San Diego State University. However, his ultimate goal would be to work in any medium in which he gets to entertain people in any way. He mainly wants to make people laugh or smile through his work while giving the most fun experience possible.



Creative Writing (Español)

El Jardín

By Genesis Becerra



Cuentan que hace mucho tiempo, mucho antes de que nuestros ancestros nombraran las estrellas, existió un jardín. Un jardín lleno de flores brillantes, de diversas especies, únicas en su belleza. La leyenda cuenta que este jardín sigue creciendo. Pues por cada lágrima que una mujer derrama nace una nueva flor. Esta historia se contaba generación tras generación entre las mujeres. Unidas todas. Una madre consolaba a su hija mientras le explicaba aquel jardín que nacía mientras se derramaban lágrimas. Se dice que el sufrimiento en la tierra no era en vano pues algo bello crecía en aquel lugar prometido lleno de flores. Al final de la vida de una mujer, se le contaba la parte final de esta creencia. “Toda aquella lágrima derramada por angustia quitando paz, hoy la verás transformada en flores. Se te devolverá todo aquello que perdiste al llorar y el jardín te renovará. Volverás a la tierra en forma de tu flor, apareciendo una y otra vez ante los tuyos.”

La Vida Es Fria

By Issa Silva

Esta voz pertenece a una mujer de 26 años atrapada entre el amor incondicional y la oscuridad de su mente. Madre de cuatro hijos, todos menores de tres años, libra una guerra constante contra la depresión severa y el agotador trastorno de estrés postraumático (PTSD), heredado de un pasado de trauma y adicción.

Ella es la prueba viviente de que la batalla más brutal se lucha en silencio. Cada día es una actuación, un acto forzado de fe donde se coloca una máscara de

fortaleza para ser el faro de sus hijos. Sus noches son un infierno privado de ansiedad y soledad, donde se abraza a sí misma para no desmoronarse por el peso de sentirse un error.

Su poema es un grito ahogado de auxilio. Es la confesión cruda de una madre que está muerta por dentro, pero se niega a cerrar los ojos porque en la risa de sus pequeños encuentra la única chispa que la obliga, cada mañana, a fingir que está viva.



He vivido aquí, en este maldito país de lágrimas que saben a sal. Mi cama, desde niña, siempre fue una barca que se niega a anclar, sin final. Miraba el techo, mi única compañía, mi confesionario sin respuestas. Y el mundo, allá afuera, vibraba con felicidad y armonía que a mí me daba náuseas. Todos a mi alrededor sonriendo, ¡gozando de esa luz de verdad! ¡Esa paz que no me encuentra!

Y yo, solo yo, conocí la pena seca, la amargura en cada cosa. La vida es fría, y en esta vida traicionera, mi corazón ya no es de carne, está hecho de piedra. Mi llanto ha sido mi sombra más fiel, mi única ola constante.

El reloj golpea la hora y el silencio de esta casa se siente gigante. Sigo siendo la niña de antes, la que en ese cuarto oscuro y silencioso se refugiaba, la adulta que no sabe cómo sanar, ahogada en el mismo llanto que la ahogaba en su niñez, incapaz de irse. Sus risas de día, las de mis amores, ahora son cuchillos afilados en mi espejo. ¿Por qué yo? ¿Por qué esta herida que no tiene cura, este maldito complejo? Quiero esa paz. Deseo esa felicidad ardiente... pero mi destino me da espinas. Anoche, otra vez, mi cuerpo tembló, el alma suplicó un final, un corte. Me caí en la cama y busqué lo que jamás vino, lo que me hace más fuerte: Me abracé a mí misma, tan fuerte, sintiendo solo mi pulso para no irme. Mi mano, la única que me queda, subió a mi cara, a mi rostro que quiere hundirme. Acaricié mis propias mejillas, intentando ser mi refugio, mi amor que no existe. Mis lágrimas, solo mías, las limpié con la misma palma que de niña me consolaba mientras me perdía viendo el techo de mi habitación triste. Sola, en la oscuridad, me miento hasta el sueño, mendigando un respiro en vano. Mientras todos descansan, yo lloro, y el llanto se queda pegado a mi mano. Y el monstruo regresa, se arrastra desde la mierda de mi pasado, con su voz murmurando. «No sirves. Eres una falla. El mundo está mejor cuando tu vida se pierda». ¡La ansiedad me rompe! Me roba el aire, me obliga a creer que soy solo un error, que ni mis hijos, ni su amor, me dan derecho a este maldito sentimiento de agonía.

El deseo de irme es un veneno dulce, pero mi deber me ata. El grito de auxilio se me queda atorado, me ahogo en mi propia maldita pena. No puedo gritar; no voy a

dejar que me vean muerta por dentro. Tengo que ser el faro. El maldito centro. El sostén de todo este invento. El sol se alza, y yo llevo horas en la guerra, maquillando la mentira. Cuatro vidas me esperan. Mi única vida, mi mira. Ellos me rescatan, sí, del abismo y de las garras del trauma. Pero el postparto me quema, soy una vela que arde sin santuario. Me exijo ser perfecta, fuerte. No voy a dejar que nadie vea la plaga. Sola, en la cocina, el cansancio me tumba; duele cada juicio que me amarga. Las miradas que me señalan, el maldito murmullo de la gente que me mira. No entienden mi infierno cruel. No ven que el amor que les doy es la única sangre que me hace serles fiel, que la fuerza que cargo es el peso de no permitirles sufrir, jamás, por mi culpa. Pero de repente, el más pequeño ríe en la cuna, un sonido puro y claro. Y la de tres años me mira con esos ojos profundos que me recuerdan de ese maldito agujero oscuro del que me arrastré hasta encontrar salida. En ese instante fugaz, el abismo se cierra, el monstruo se silencia un poco. Por ellos, siento un amor tan gigante que en mi pecho roto se vuelve un foco. Ellos son el único cielo que mis ojos de llanto pueden t chispa, por su vida, tengo la obligación de respirar.

Mi vida es fría, y mi corazón de piedra es mi máscara más fuerte. Cada sonrisa que fuerzo es un puñal de agonía forjado en mi coraje. Mi alma grita en silencio, en este eterno, solitario, oscuro viaje. Me levanto. Sonríe. Lucho. Soy La Máscara.

Pero si me miras de noche, solo verás a una mujer que se abraza a su raíz, hasta que el miedo se rinda. Y mañana, por ellos, esta mujer muerta,

fingirá que está viva.



Music

Hello Mom

By Maximiliano Padilla



SCAN ME!



Born in Mexicali, BC but raised in El Centro, CA, local artist Maximilian released his acoustic-pop debut EP back in 2024. This year, he released and submitted a single titled, "Hello Mom" depicting a sweet and relatable everyday story between a mother and her son through their texts. Maximiliano Padilla is currently pursuing a major in Accounting but his musical works are the counterweight that keep his life in balance with the world. His motto is *Ars Longa Vita Brevis*, Latin for "Life is short, and Art/Skill takes time." Check out his music on all streaming platforms.

Me Desea

By Hebert Chavez



SCAN ME!



Graphic Arts



Waffles and Associates: Radicals

By Tenoch Alvarez

My name is Tenoch Alvarez, and I've been attending IVC since 2022. A lot of people assume I am pursuing an art due to the amount of effort I put into these projects, but I actually got a degree in computer science and am currently trying to get transfer credits and a certificate in trade work. Originally, I started doing hand drawing artwork because I really wanted to make a video game and had an idea for one in 2016, but I needed a medium to put the game in, so I decided to try and hand draw the whole thing. However, since time has passed and art direction changes and plans on what the actual game would be I tried many ideas which led me to do 3D art/animation in 2019. Since then, I bounced between 3D and 2D but find myself better with making 3D characters. The art project I submitted was a 3D render of the best characters I've made so far in Blender.

When does it end?

By Denine Rodarte



Denine Rodarte is from Imperial Valley, California. She is currently pursuing her education while balancing life as a dedicated parent and full-time student. Denine is passionate about helping others and is working toward a career in the healthcare field education in nursing after transferring to a university program. She is motivated by her desire to make a meaningful difference in her community and provide compassionate care to those in need. In her free time, Denine enjoys spending time with her family, learning new skills, and staying focused on her academic and career goals.

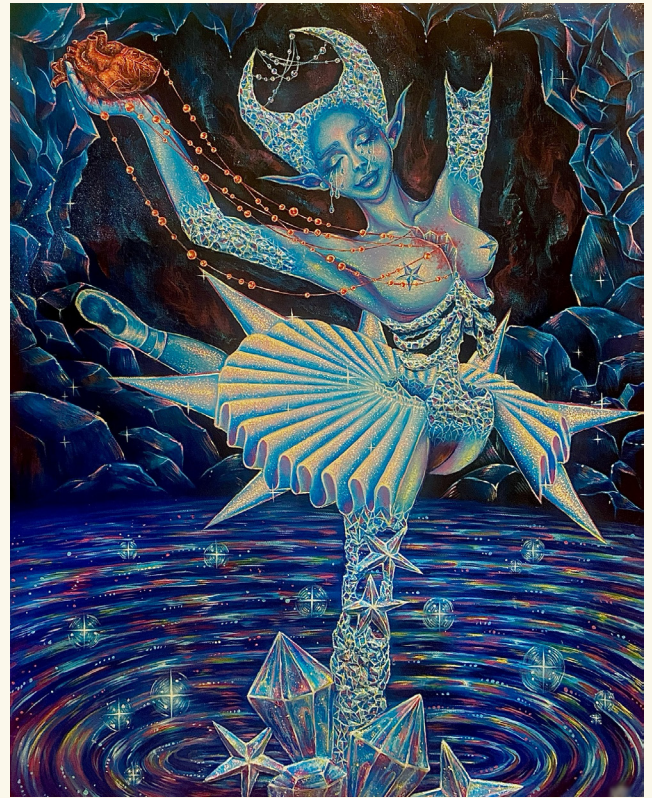




Drawing/ Painting



Kimberly Rodriguez is a 19-year-old artist raised in El Centro and was born on July 21st, her main art style consists of fantasy and weird like themes with vibrant colors included, but is also experienced in realism painting and other styles of art. As of right now, she is a college student at IVC, working towards her biology bachelor's degree. She is not necessarily studying for an art-related career, but she still keep practicing and promoting herself as an artist in the valley because art is something she knows will always be a huge part of who she is and is something want to be able to make a business out of if possible, even it's on the side. She does art commissions for people in the valley while she studies in school. She works with both oil and acrylic paint. A lot of her work is on @ArtsyKRL on Instagram!

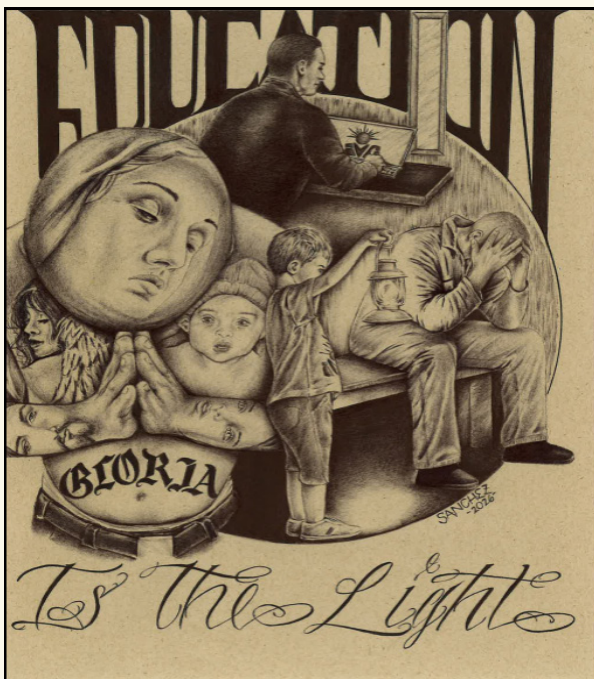


Crystal Dancer

By Kimberly Rodriguez

Education is Light

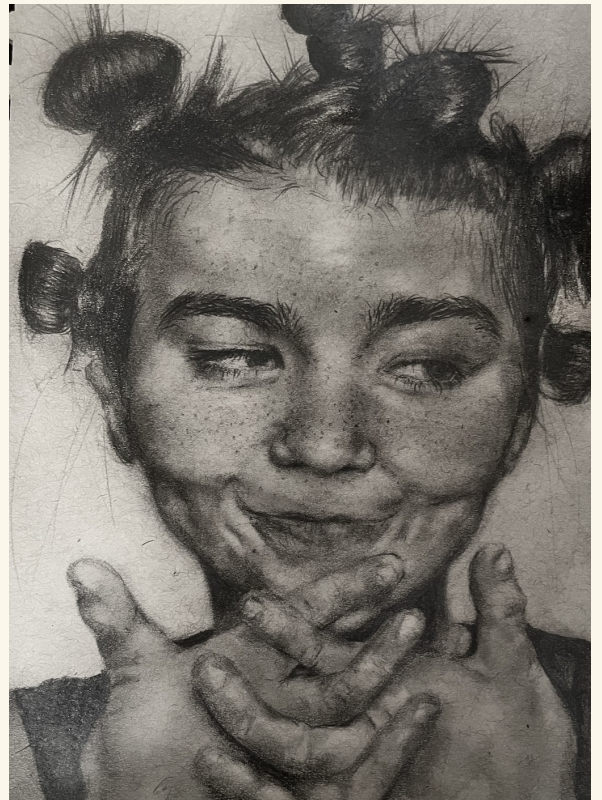
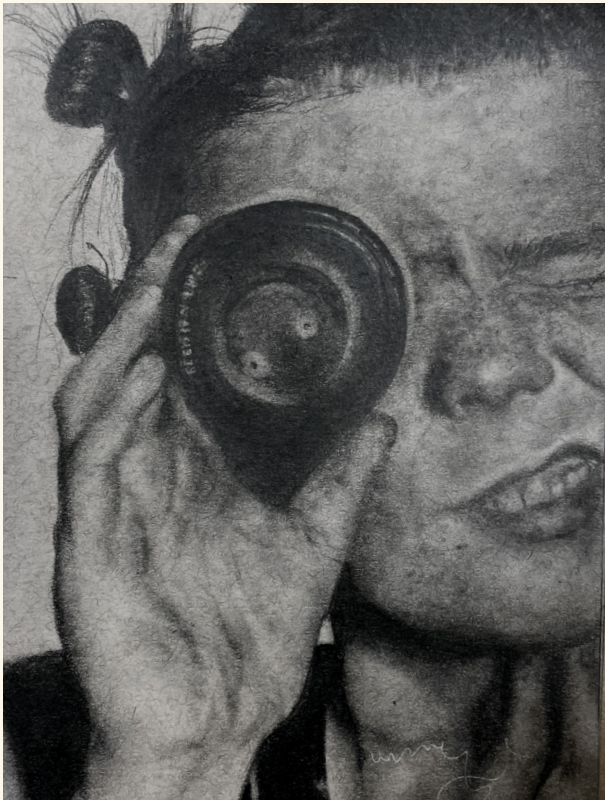
By Julio Sanchez



Hello, my name is Julio Sanchez, I am a student at Imperial Valley College, who is incarcerated at Centinela State Prison. I would like to foremost take this moment to say thank you for allowing us this opportunity to share a little of ourselves. I would like to share a piece of my artwork, drawn specifically for Imperial Valley College.

It is inspired by goodness, and the light education has brought to many of us in the prison population. Especially, for many of us who have been incarcerated for several decades and never imagined that we would actually hold tangible College Degrees, and the actual concept of higher education in our minds and hearts. Coincidentally, just today I was given my Associated Degree for which I have worked hard for. As mentioned, this drawing has been inspired by my personal experience of actually being incarcerated at a youthful age of seventeen three decades ago. To the joy and wonder of being able to study and expand my knowledge for a better life. For this I will always be Thankful...Thank you all who have made all this available and true.

I love Björk (Series) By Arianna Godoy





Untitled



By Luisa
Bareno



And if I carve out a miracle
 From my ripped wings
 Would all my suffering
 Be worth a thing?
 Would it make the scars on my back beautiful?
 And turn my tears into diamonds?
 Would a creation so perfect
 That is makes even the Gods tremble
 Make up for all that was lost?
 Would it fill my cracks with gold?
 Would it stop my sordid thoughts?
 If I turned my ripped wings
 Into something that will outlive me
 And let generations touch the same sun
 I could never get close to anymore
 Would it make the fact
 That I lost myself in the process
 A selfless sacrifice
 Rather than another sad song?

Poetry



639 Hz

By Yeleana
Alvarado



Synchronicities have surrounded us neatly since our commencement Laid out the stage,
so our souls could dance together

To step, to gesture, to turn, and jump with one another

To balance and align the performance as we dance our way through life

The discords and concords that have emerged restlessly throughout our amity Instilling
the insight to differentiate such beautiful and such ugly

Elegance to the dynamic that showed us how to gracefully fail and wretchedly succeed
with one another

To the tenderness that flows from our friendship and fills our hearts so everlastingly

To the serenity and warmth that interweaves into our spirits even on the coldest of days

Grace to the elusive and indescribable feeling our connection bestows To the friendship
that is more than flesh-to-flesh closeness

To our love and devotion that is deathless

and follows each other into countless lifetimes

Gently, eternal friendship.



What is Free Will?

By Kevin Patino



Kevin Patino is from Calexico, California and is majoring in Mathematics at Imperial Valley College. Inspired by personal experience and the patterns that shape the world around him, his writing explores identity, emotion, and the tension between logic and human nature.

I was raised on borrowed voices,
Shaped by hands that never asked Who
I wanted to be

But free will came quietly-Not as
rebellion,
Not as fire, But as a question

Why do I think this way?
Why do I follow paths I never chose?

And in that moment of asking, A door
cracked open

I stepped through it alone, Roots
tearing from the soil That claimed
they owned me, Heart shaking at the
thought Of growing somewhere new
Maybe none of us are born free Maybe
we become free
The first time we decide Our past is not
a prison

Maybe freedom is simply The courage
to rewrite The story we once obeyed-
The quiet choosing
Of who we will be When no one else is
watching

1350, November 22nd, 2025



Poetry (Español)

Estabilidad By Janai Jimenez



Que vergüenza
Que apenas te conozca
Y no pueda evitar sonrojar
Con el simple gesto de tu mirar

Me das un nervio Y una calma
En este mar turbio
En el que vive mi alma

Nunca yo había sentido Tan serena
insistencia
No me dejas en el desierto Eres una
brisa tan fresca

Nunca yo había visto
En alguien tanta seguridad
No me inundas con un torrente Sino
que eres tan paciente

Eres el riego de mi vida Que la hace
colorida
Te espero y ahí vas a estar

De ti no me voy a alejar





El Corazon IVC



By Silviana
Sánchez García

Estar en plenitud de vida

**Es uno de los mayores atributos
Que hoy feliz se puede disfrutar.
Como el corazon que bombea
Y da vigor al cuerpo**

**Asi el alma ansia, poseer otro dia
Y contar pasos en garantia.
Revoloteando el espiritu Entre
jardines ardientes y existentes
De mentes brillantes y absorbentes
Que dependen constantes del aula.
Un dia levantaran vuelo La
comunidad alevosa
Que desafio y piso
suelo**

**Del corazon de la ensenanza.
El edificio yace tranquilo
El cuaderno hoy no se toca
Transformacion digital
En todo sentido toca.
El joven tumultoso toma nota
Reforzando el corazon
Que aunque viejo
Todavia palpita, al ver un aula.**

**Simple expresion
Experiencia sin derrota
El alma joven aun nota
Belleza del arte, que hoy brota.**





Mi vida dependía de tus manos: El poder silencioso del amor.

By Beatriz Ramirez



En el momento en que tus ojos se cruzaron con los míos, aún no sabías que mi vida dependía de una decisión tan simple y tan inmensa al mismo tiempo: elegirme.

El destino todavía no había revelado su historia para nosotras. La vida estaba frente a ti como una página en blanco, esperando a que alguien tuviera el valor de escribir las primeras palabras.

Quizás yo nunca estuve en tus planes. Tú ya tenías tu propio camino, tu propia vida, y probablemente mi existencia ni siquiera había pasado por tu mente.

Y sin embargo, la vida a veces actúa de maneras silenciosas y misteriosas, entrelazando destinos mucho antes de que entendamos por qué.

En algún momento, algo nos unió. Llámalo destino, casualidad o ese hilo invisible que a veces conecta a dos personas que, sin saberlo, se necesitan profundamente.

Sea como sea, ese hilo terminó guiando tu corazón hacia mí... y mi vida hacia la tuya.

Abriste la puertas de tu casa para mí, pero lo más importante aún, abriste la puerta de tu corazón.

Me recibiste incluso cuando todo a nuestro alrededor parecía incierto. Muchas personas me rechazaron, tenían miedo quizás de hacerse cargo de una persona desconocida, o quizá fue el

miedo a una responsabilidad tan grande. Cuando el futuro estaba nublado y otros podrían haberse rendido, como pienso que fue el caso de mis padres biológicos. Aunque esa será una respuesta que quizás nunca sabre. Tú elegiste quedarte. Elegiste el amor, elegiste tomar mi mano para guiarme y sostenerme hasta el último día de tu vida, estuviste siempre a mi lado. Y con eso, cambiaste mi vida.

Me diste un hogar: un lugar donde ya no era solo otra alma perdida intentando encontrar su sitio.

Me diste tu amor: paciente, firme, sin condiciones. Y con el tiempo, me diste algo más grande que todo lo demás: la oportunidad de vivir una vida con sentido, con dignidad y con esperanza.

Hay muchas personas como yo. Niños cuyas historias comienzan con ausencia, preguntas que nadie responde, silencios que pesan. Algunos somos abandonados desde que nacemos; otros, un poco más tarde, por razones que quizás nunca lleguemos a comprender. Comenzamos preguntándonos dónde pertenecemos o donde pertenecemos?

Pero la vida, a veces, pone en nuestro camino a personas extraordinarias. Personas con corazones lo suficientemente grandes como para recibir a alguien que no nació dentro de su familia, pero que con el tiempo se convierte en familia de verdad, por medio del amor.

La adopción no es solo generosidad. Es humanidad. Es tomar el mundo frágil de alguien y prometerle: no tendrás que enfrentarlo solo. Es amor sin límites y dar a alguien un fundamento que nunca tuvo. Es decirle, sin palabras: "No temas"

"Estoy aquí, contigo".

Hoy escribo esto para que más personas comprendan lo que significa darle a un niño indefenso una oportunidad de vida. No se trata solo de ofrecer refugio; se trata de darle amor, identidad, dirección y pertenencia.

El universo entero de esos niños descansa en las manos de quienes deciden cuidarlos. Por eso vivo cada día con gratitud.

Recuerdo a mi madre adoptiva, cuyo amor cambió mi existencia. Ella convirtió lo que pudo



haber sido una vida rota en una llena de posibilidades. Su bondad fue la luz que me guió incluso cuando el camino se veía oscuro.

Sé que lo que más deseaba para mí no era solo que tuviera una buena vida, sino que aprendiera a vivir con la misma compasión que ella. Que viera el mundo a través de sus ojos: entendiendo a los que luchan, sintiendo empatía por quienes se sienten olvidados, extendiendo la mano cuando alguien lo necesita.

Y cada día intento honrarla.

Si puedo llevar aunque sea una pequeña parte de su bondad a la vida de otra persona, el amor que ella me dio nunca desaparecerá. Seguirá creciendo, pasando de un corazón a otro, tal como pasó del suyo al mío.

De esa manera, su amor vivirá para siempre.

Si mi historia deja aunque sea una pequeña huella en alguien, espero que recuerden esto: un solo acto de amor puede cambiar una vida entera.

La adopción no solo le da un hogar a un niño.

Le da amor.

Le da un futuro.

Le da una voz.

Le da un lugar en el mundo.

Y en algún lugar, ahora mismo, hay niños esperando que alguien los vea y les diga: Tú perteneces conmigo.

“La adopción no es solo generosidad. Es humanidad.”



Essays

People enjoy doing many things during their free time, whether it's working out, reading books, or simply playing video games. For me, one of the things I enjoy the most is the arts. My inspiration for the arts comes from simple memories I share with my older sister. I believe most younger siblings get their interests from their older siblings. Which is why many of the things I like are because of her — whether it was drawing together, having a similar taste in music, her introducing me to new artists, and watching films with our siblings. I've always found it amazing how creative people can be, how they're able to make something beautiful just by imagining or dreaming about it. I also think it's beautiful to be able to create music, it's not a talent of mine but I truly do enjoy listening. Art is everywhere — in colors, sounds, and

even the buildings around us. Architecture itself has to come through many designs and lots of creativity, every building begins through a sketch or an idea. Since the arts can mean many things, they include painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, cinema, music, and theater. I confidently would say I enjoy looking at every single one of them, but the ones I'm most drawn toward are painting, music, and cinema.

Painting is a kind of art where people use colors, brushes, and imagination to make pictures on a canvas. Paintings can show real things like people, animals, and nature. However, it's not only meant for things we see in the outside world — it can go as far as ideas, feelings, or even dreams. For artists, painting can be a powerful way to express themselves. People look at paintings to feel something — it could be peace, joy, or even surprise. I'm interested in a lot of art shows myself, and I often feel amazed by the things people

How Art Connects Us

By Fernanda Gomez

create. How can other people's minds be so creative? Salvador Dalí is an example of how not all artwork has to make sense.

He turned his dreams into paintings, like in *The Persistence of Memory*. This painting might just look like melting clocks and a strange background, but it shows so much creativity and uniqueness. I would've never thought of something like that. Though some paintings may not make sense in our reality, they can still be meaningful and special to those who create them. I enjoy abstract art because it doesn't have to be perfect or realistic — it just has to make you feel something. Some people think realistic painting is the only kind of art, but there are many different styles. Creativity is very important in painting; you can't just copy what you see outside and call it creative. Painting teaches us to look at the



world differently and to find beauty in the smallest things. It brings emotions to life.

What is music? Music is an organized sound created to express feelings, ideas, or mood. It uses rhythm, melody, and harmony to make something enjoyable to hear. For many of us, music helps us understand and cope with our emotions. Anyone can relate to a lyric, even if the inspiration behind it came from something small like eating a banana. Music also has many genres, and it is not limited to one feeling or meaning. It ranges from pop, country, hip-hop, and my personal favorite, Spanish rock. One of my favorite bands, Caifanes, has an extremely popular song called “No Dejes Que.” I remember my sister going through a tough time in a relationship, and she would listen to this song constantly. Some lyrics say, “No dejes que nos coma el diablo, amor / Que se trague tu calor / Que eructe mi dolor.” I didn’t understand it at first, but when I listened more closely, I realized the singer doesn’t want “the devil,” or negativity, to destroy the relationship. He is begging for their love not to fade away. Maybe that’s how my sister felt at the moment. After that, I started trying to understand every song I listened to.

Sometimes I catch myself relating to the lyrics more than I expected. And sometimes, it’s not even the words, simple melodies can also help me feel calm and relaxed. For example, the beginning of the song “Stairway to Heaven” has a soft guitar that sounds almost like angelic. It feels like the music itself is painting a peaceful scene. That’s why I believe music doesn’t just help with emotions—it also helps you reflect on what you’re going through, and it reminds you that you’re not the only one who has felt that way. Or sometimes, you simply enjoy the sound of a song.

Movies are a form of entertainment for everyone. We can watch them in theaters, or we can stay home and stream them on platforms like Netflix or HBO. However, movies are not just simple entertainment. Cinema is also a form of art. Many people work together to create a movie, and each role matters. There are directors, actors, camera workers, and editors. There are choices in lighting, music, special effects,

and storytelling. All of these pieces come together to make a movie or to inspire others. Because cinema is art, it can also inspire us or change our perspective. Creative films can shape either our opinions, create strong emotions, and even change how we view society. Movies can also be very influential, almost like propaganda in the past, when ads were used to convince people to buy things or join the army. Films connect to people’s feelings too. We’ve seen many people cry during emotional scenes—I know I have a lot of times. For example, I cried during the movie *Coco* because of how wholesome it was for me. People can also connect to the characters or situations in movies. For example, the category of “coming-of-age movies” means a lot to many viewers, because sometimes the characters go through the same things we do. When people watch these movies, they might say things like “You remind me of this character” or “I really relate to them.” However someone might say it, the point is that people see themselves in movies. Actors also feel this emotional connection when they take on certain roles. For example, Ariana Grande spoke in interviews about how meaningful it was for her to play Glinda in *Wicked*, because it reminded her of special childhood memories with her family. Finally getting that role meant a lot to her, just like how many actors feel when they play characters that matter to them. Overall, movies stay with us through the memories they create, the opinions they shape, or the ways they inspire us. They are not just a simple form of entertainment, it’s an art.

A lot of people often ask me, “How are you able to do that?” or are surprised when they see me draw with precision and detail. But I believe everyone is creative in some way. The arts are not just about being talented—you can admire paintings, music, or theater without being great at creating them yourself. I admire my sister, who introduced me to painting and she seems to have a natural gift for picking up any instrument. While I may not be as skilled as her in music, I still find it beautiful and inspiring. Being able to create melodies just by listening and connecting them feels almost as if the music has its own words, which you then match to create an even better lyric. Cinema is another form of art that involves so many creative elements—from the work on set to the cameras, lighting, music, and special effects. All of these aspects can inspire us, lift our mood, or help us connect to a story. Everyone has experienced a connection to art at some point, even if it’s something as simple as relating to a lyric in a song or relating to a movie. Sometimes I wonder if people notice how much of their surroundings exist because of art—buildings that began as sketches, songs created years ago, or films that still move us today like the classics. Whether or not they do, art will always be fascinating. It shows how creativity has no limits and how imagination can shape our society. In the end, art isn’t just a hobby—it’s a way of seeing, feeling, and connecting to the world around us.



Work Cited

Halle, Howard. "Why Is Salvador Dali's Persistence of Memory so Important?" ARTnews.com, 27 June 2025, www.artnews.com/art-news/artists/salvador-dali-the-persistence-of-memory-why-so-important-1234745589/.Links to an external site.

Caifanes. No Dejes Que... YouTube, uploaded by Caifanes - Topic, 6 Nov. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-WZVOXyhY-4.Links to an external site.

From Neglect to Success: Navigating life without Parents

By Danielle Soria

In my childhood, Isabel was the outgoing, funny, and mature friend. She was always super positive and always seemed to know the answers to life's challenges. I used to love talking to her about how our futures would unfold. We would dream about what we would do and where we would live. Her dreams were always very ambitious, and I knew she would become something in life. At some point down the line, I did notice a change in her. She seemed more distant and serious, and at the time, I didn't understand why. Sometimes when my mom would take her home after school, I noticed her parents were never around. It was only after seeing a repeated absence of her parents that I started to question if that was the

reason she started changing. I didn't know it at the time, but her parents had basically made her have to fend for herself and her siblings. This was the catalyst that sparked her unrelenting drive. Many other kids would have crumbled in this situation, but not Isabel. She used this to push herself into a successful career in finance, but this didn't come without many emotional scars and feelings of abandonment.

In this day and age, how much of an impact does a parent's absence have on a child?

Parents are the primary source of a child's development in their early years of life. The impact on a child is crucial as it sets the stage on what they can expect their life to look like. A parent's absence can lead children to "develop defensive behaviors to hide their negative emotions, such as excessive confidence, arrogance, aggression, or rebellion" (Bawaba). As a result of these behaviors, neglected children often have difficulty forming quality relationships and generally end up having either mental issues or issues with substance abuse. For Isabel, the decisions made by her parents play a huge role in her future and her ability to navigate through life.

In the research article "Impact of Child Abuse Education on Parent's Self-Efficacy: An Experimental Study" Sabina Balkaran discusses children and the different abuse and effects that they endure within their home and school environments. Child abuse is often thought of to be mostly physical but there are many different forms of child abuse that aren't talked about. The lesser talked about forms of abuse are sexual, mental and emotional abuse. It can be argued that these types of abuse can be equally as harmful, if not more harmful. Child neglect is a form of mental/psychological abuse that has been a big health problem in the United States. It is actually one of the most common issues that plagues American household. The impact of neglected children often ripples into adulthood and can cause trauma leading to alcoholism, drug abuse, suicidal thoughts and risky behavior. Children who are neglected fail to thrive and grow within society because they are not given proper nutrition, clothing, or hygiene. Children can also face sexual abuse, which includes inappropriate touching and sexual activity with a minor. Sabina Balkaran



found that this type of abuse happens a lot within the school system from teachers, school staff, and other students. This shows that abuse can happen not only at home, but at the environment they spend the second most amount of time in, at school. In terms of the emotional abuse children face, this is also something that can occur at home and at school. Some forms of emotional abuse are yelling, sarcasm, name calling, and embarrassment from teachers or their parents. She uses the example of a teacher referring to a student with Down Syndrome as “Slow Sarah”. This type of abuse has a lasting effect and makes children feel high levels of insecurity and hostility toward their teacher or parent. These different types of abuse can lead to a child having anxiety, depression, eating disorders, low self-esteem, shame, and the list goes on. Abuse typically results in the child needing coping mechanisms to deal with daily life and the trauma they went through.

In the newspaper article, “Two-Pronged Attack on Child Neglect,” Schrapel, Simon discusses that there is an increasing issue of children and parents not being able to handle the pressure of their demanding lives. He discusses how some parents want to be present for their children, but many struggle with their own personal issues. These adults are often faced with difficulty in their relationships, issues pertaining to substance abuse, and mental illness. This in turn results in actions that negatively affect a child through neglect or abuse. This goes into the author’s main point pertaining to the

importance of providing support for the children. Schrapel, Simon asserts, “Our community can no longer afford to ignore the problem confronting our children who are struggling with the trauma of abuse and neglect in insecure and inadequate placements. We are not only subjecting them to further harm and developmental delays but depriving them of the most precious of commodities - love and nurture. These impacts will sadly last a lifetime” (par. 2). Ignoring a child that has gone through neglect or abuse can cause lasting trauma. This is precisely why I believe that supporting a child with love and nurture can help them develop to become well-rounded adults. If we don’t support our children, it can cause tremendous damage to their health and their future.

Abandonment is to desert someone or something with the intention of not returning. As a parent, there’s a fine line between letting a child be independent and abandonment. Some parents think this style is okay without realizing the lasting effects it could have on a child. According to Better Family Relationship, “Children may experience feeling of loss, rejection, and insecurity after abandonment” (0:35). The cause of abandonment can result in a child having to grow up faster than they were intended to and face mental issues. For Isabel, the trauma that she faced had a lasting impact and made her a different life for herself. Often when children grow up with absent parents, they tend to exhibit the same behaviors, but Isabel was able to break the cycle. She was mature for her age and had to grow

up faster than most children because of her parents’ absence. She handled tough situations from a young age that forced her to learn how to fend for herself. At a certain point I started to see Isabel change as we grew older. The abandonment of her parents made her more serious, more closed off, but very independent. From there, she forged her own path and had the ambition to become successful. When Isabel was younger, her parents were often never around. They wouldn’t show up to her school functions, be present at her soccer games, or be home after school. When she got home, she would care for her younger siblings, and she would even prepare meals for them. Whenever our friends would have outings, she couldn’t come to hang out with us because she was too busy being a mother figure to her siblings. She had no choice but to mature at a young age. She was an adult long before she turned the age of 18. Isabel was wise beyond her years, not because she wanted to, but because she had to.

I got to Isabel’s office around noon. As I was waiting for her to get done with her meeting, her assistant offered me coffee. Her office was neutral, with a beautiful white oak desk. As I was looking around, I saw this beautiful black and white photo wall she had of places she had traveled to and achievements she had received, right next to it was a picture of us when we were kids. Looking at it brought a tear to my eye and how far she had come. When I turned around there she was with her beautiful, luscious hair dressed up in a black pants suit, with her clipboard. She apologized, “Sorry I’m running late, my meeting went a little longer than expected. I was meeting with the finance director.” Isabel seemed a little flustered but greeted me with such excitement and went to go take a seat in her big beige office chair. It’s incredible that the woman sitting in front of me accomplished so much. Statistically, children of neglect often don’t go on to have successful careers. She was never supposed to be here, but through sheer will and determination she made it. I asked Isabel what the most difficult thing was about growing up without parental guidance, and how she coped with that. She



replied, “I felt like I had a huge weight on my shoulders,” referring to her parents always being absent, “I had to cook, clean and look after my younger siblings.” She went on to say that those were some of her toughest times and felt as though her childhood was stolen from her. When she spoke those words, I felt her pain and could see her getting a bit teary eyed. As we talked about moments from our childhood, I decided to ask Isabel about how she got into finance and how her upbringing played a role in it. She explained, “I always knew I was going to end up in finance because my parents always mismanaged their money.” They were never home because they would often go out to gamble while she stayed at home with her siblings. This often led to past due bills, which made it more difficult for them to get by. Isabel recollected that “I knew I never wanted that life for myself.” Children who grow up in this type of environment tend to repeat the same behaviors of their parents, but not Isabel. She was dead set on her life being much different. Isabel used this past experience as a reminder of a life she didn’t want to build for herself and made her want to better her future. She admitted that building healthy relationships were difficult, but she had to let go of her past trauma. She explained, “I had to keep reminding myself that my past didn’t define me. I had big goals that I wanted to achieve, and I know if I was stuck in the past, I wouldn’t be able to move forward.” Isabel wasn’t going to be another statistic that came with being a child of neglect, she was a fighter. Upon reflecting on her life, she admits that the absence of her parents made her life much harder, but it made her who she is today. She wouldn’t have it any other way.

This I Believe: Isabel’s life to show us resilience and determination. She transformed that into strength and purpose. From a young age she faced challenges that would have left her emotionally damaged, but she came out stronger because of it. Isabel overcame her struggle and had the drive for more in her future. The absence of her parents forced her to mature early for her to take on the task that adults normally handle. She didn’t let that sway her down the

wrong path or demotivate her. She turned her tough childhood experience into a positive one. The determination helped her succeed in finance. Through this project I’ve learned that appearances can be deceiving. Isabel being that ambitious outgoing girl I knew to serious and distant was a response to the challenges she was facing at home. Many children like Isabel have faced similar upbringings with parental abandonment. It’s important to know that we never know what someone is really going through behind closed doors and not be so quick to judge. Even though Isabel, childhood was stolen from her due to neglect from her parents, she used her past as a reminder of a life she didn’t want for herself. She says, “I had to keep

reminding myself that my past didn’t define me.” Isabel knew if she was stuck in the past she wouldn’t be able to move forward. Isabel is currently a successful finance manager at 30 years old. She has just recently gotten her master’s degree. She still takes care of her siblings. She has created new goals for herself, and one day she dreams to open her own office with her own employees. Isabel and I have remained great friends till this day, that picture in her office of us as children will always remind her of the small moments of happiness she had in her childhood. This is a reminder that our difficult times met with strength and courage can make us capable of anything if we just keep going.

Work Cited

- Balkaran, Sabina. “Impact of Child Abuse Education on Parent’s Self-Efficacy: An Experimental Study.” Walden University, United States -- Minnesota, 2015, ProQuest, (<https://ivc.idm.oclc.org/dissertations-theses/impact-child-abuse-education-on-parents-self/docview/1719538765/se-2?accountid=38876>). Accessed 22 Sept. 2025.
- Bawaba, Al. “How Parental Absence Impacts a Child’s Development.” Albawaba, 30 Nov. 2023, ProQuest, <https://ivc.idm.oclc.org/newspapers/how-parental-absence-impacts-childs-development/docview/2895285474/se-2>. Accessed 22 Sept. 2025.
- Better Family Relationships. “What Are the Psychological Effects of Parental Abandonment? - Better Family Relationships.” YouTube, 1 Sept. 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqRUj300V2U>. Accessed 22 Sept. 2025.
- “The Effects of Childhood Abandonment in Adulthood | Dr. Greg Jantz Explains.” YouTube, 16 Sept. 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJfPGq7OCTw. Accessed 22 Sept. 2025.
- Schrapel, Simon. “Two-Pronged Attack on Child Neglect: [1 State Edition].” The Advertiser, 02 Nov. 2007, pp.18. ProQuest, <https://ivc.idm.oclc.org/newspapers/two-pronged-attack-on-child-neglect/docview/355268312/se-2>. Accessed 22 Sept. 2025.
- Scott, Isabel. Personal interview. 23 Sept. 2025.

Crossing every weekend, making sure we had our sentries and visas on us and living in a border town was something that I saw as completely mundane. With time I realized around my teen years the stress surrounding having to renew a visa; the large folders of documents going back so many years I couldn't understand why they would even ask for that. Yet I think the moment when I realized how completely different my life was compared to my parents, only because I was born in the United States, was when I turned on the news and saw how ICE agents were camping outside of immigration courts to detain people showing up to their mandated Court hearings -people who were immigrating "the right way"

How does a country built from immigrants treat them so cruelly? Since the first Trump administration ICE has been given the instruction to be as cruel and unconstitutional as needed to meet their large deportation demands. "But who exactly is getting sucked in? Not folks with serious criminal history. ICE's own records show that only 13 of the 225 people arrested during that operation had serious crimes on their record." (Dalmia). Through hatred, disregarding the constitution and uprooting American values, the administration passed unlawful bills to strike terror onto the population. ICE raids are anti-American and pro-hate.

Dalmia Shikah's article on Netflix documentary "Immigration Nation" sheds light on the cruel reality of being Undocumented. ICE raids have been a topic that we have seen on the news

these past few months, but the severity of the cruelty that this law enforcement branch has been subjecting to the people they have detained, paints a clear picture that this isn't about legal procedures, it's about a hatred of immigrants.

The Netflix documentary follows journalists who get in contact with someone that was part of past ICE raids; describing the twisted ways the officers spoke about detaining people they knew had no previous criminal history. Apart from this, ICE used deception and lies to get inside the building- identifying themselves as police officers and then arresting the family that let them in. Alongside the deceitful ways of detaining people, ICE has shown that they are a vindictive organization. "When some activists got into a heated exchange about this

Ice Raids Tearing Apart American Values

By Franka Jauregui

with an official at a press conference, he responded: "One more profanity and I'll pick you up myself." The activists won, and Carmichael's replacement scrapped the program on his first day. ICE instantly started plotting reprisals. Over the ensuing weeks, it assembled 50 agents and created six transport teams to patrol Latino neighborhoods, often in unmarked cars." (Dalmia). Unless they claimed to be



Figure 1. Photo depicting ICE agents with their faces covered as they detain people on the street. (Photo by Alex Milan Tracy/Sipa JSA)(Sipa via AP Images).



U.S. citizens, the agents would intimidate them into being fingerprinted on a mobile machine, arresting them on the spot if no match was found. Patrolling Latino neighborhoods in often unmarked cars they would stop people in: gas stations, traffic lights or on the sidewalk, using only a simple excuse. A clear sign of racial profiling. This supports my claim that ICE as an organization is fueled by hatred instead of protecting citizen safety.

In the article Immigration Nation Brilliantly Captures the Brutal Logic Behind America's Immigration Enforcement Regime, We as readers see in the better light the injustices of recent ICE raids since early 2017, In contrast with the Netflix documentary that this article describes, that makes the viewer follow ICE agents during the "Keepsaferaid". In the article we have a more subjective view and how this is a clear pattern of hate and racial profiling. Although ICE throughout the documentary try to shield themselves with the ideology that it's just a job and someone has to do it, in this article the author states that "Still, the glimpse we get reveals an agency that thinks nothing of inflicting the cruelest punishment for the smallest offense, and sometimes for no offense at all—all because the people concerned were born on the other side of the border." (Dalmia). The real life accounts of how cruel ICE is can only aid to paint a clear picture- The United States, especially the Trump regime, is anti-immigrant. Making sure even no offense illegal immigrants get punishments not even the felon President is subjected to. Of course Dalmina's words can be labeled as biased as the author is from an immigrant background herself. But the evidence in the article and documentary is too direct to refuse.

Anti-American refers to the notion of being against the Constitution or against core American values. The current ICE raids are anti-American. Although many people may view the raids as the complete opposite, from their point of view these raids targeting immigrants are a showcase of their 'patriotism'. But these ICE raids cannot be a clearer example of authoritarian scare tactics; using the military for personal gain and disregarding the Constitution. As news keeps on rolling out it is hard to



Figure 2. Still from Netflix documentary "Alone in America" by Linda Freedman, depicting an immigrant toddler separated from his parents, pleading his case in front of an immigration judge, using headphones to listen to the translation.

deny that most of the victims of these unlawful searches are Latinos and brown people (Middle Eastern & South Asian). The initial stops are mostly unlawful without the required Reasonable Suspicion of an immigration violation. The documented cases of agents breaking into cars and homes also support this claim- the violation of the Fourth Amendment. As well, the incessant pressure of having people of color carrying around their identification and papers of legal status to show any law enforcement is infringing on people's Fifth Amendment to remain silent. Even without looking at the legal constitutional standpoint of this argument, ICE raids go against all fundamental American beliefs- In this way ICE raids are the epitome of flawed morals. Doesn't the inscription underneath the feet of Lady Liberty say "give me your tired and your poor"? Does the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag not end with "...and justice for all"? Why do these feelings start and end with white people? If all but Native Americans are immigrants on this soil.

How can we decide who is deserving of justice, and who of the tired and poor are given an entryway? That's why for me these ICE raids are anti-American.

Every year, different months, I would see my parents get ready for their Visa appointment to renew their work permits. My mom had to have her hairslicked back for the picture. Simple professional attire to give off a "good impression". Aunts, uncles, and my grandparents called them a few days before wishing them luck and giving them the positive reassurance that they would get the stamp of approval. I would always notice the huge folders they brought with them, a suitcase full. I remember staying quiet, trying to process what tricks officers were playing. My dad spoke up, "Times are changing, in the interviews they're asking harder questions, asking for niche and specific documents, it's obvious that it isn't a recollection of data, more of a test trying to see if you give them a reason to deny what you're trying to renew". My dad talked about this shift he noticed about people's

opinions of immigrants. “But it is surprising sometimes, that people have such jarring stances. Back then I would say it was just an extremist person in a sea of thousands of sensible people. Right now it seems everyone is getting a pass for saying their most hateful opinions out loud”.

But my Mom and Dad made sure that they weren’t going to sit still and let the world come crashing down. They’ve seen the same news I’ve seen, normal people doing the right thing, trying to make a better life for themselves -getting ambushed by ICE when going to their mandated Immigration Court dates. I know that no matter what comes, my parents will find a way to keep themselves up right, but the horror stories we hear, about people getting picked up for no reason and shipped to a country far away, into a large prison with no visitation, just because they looked like me -that’s something that keeps me up at night.

As a first generation American I knew the difficulties my parents faced, but now with the more obvious hate against Latinos, usual paperwork stress turned into being scared for their lives when going to visa appointments.

Isn’t America the land of the free? The home of the brave immigrants who decided that they wanted a better life outside their country because they couldn’t get the lives they wished for their children or for themselves? That is why these ice raids go against our values as a society. They’re unconstitutional and illegal. Although the US is very controversial globally, one thing that it’s always been

the best at is being a melting pot of cultures. But having an organization dealing with immigration and customs that only cares about getting people who aren’t right out of the country is the biggest action of white supremacy there is knowing this country has land that is not ours but the native Americans. My parents filed and documented their past to make sure they did everything correctly, to make sure that an officer didn’t have an excuse to turn them away. I know my parents weren’t the only ones who’ve done that. That’s why I’m afraid to know the total number of people who are as meticulous and careful but are still being ripped apart from their homes and families because hatred has decided to lead America, terrorizing its citizens. That’s why ICE raids are anti-American,

and a clear sign of this country’s descent into fascism and authoritarianism.



Franka Jauregui is from all over Imperial Valley, being born in El Centro, living in Calexico, graduating from Southwest Highschool and spending most of her time in Mexicali. She is a Political Science major and wishes to transfer to a UC, hopefully Berkley. Law School is her biggest aspiration after getting her bachelors. Social justice has always been a source of inspiration to further her education and strive to be better, she tries to find a message behind every book, song, and painting!

Work Cited

- Dalmia, Shikha. “Immigration Nation Brilliantly Captures the Brutal Logic Behind America’s Immigration Enforcement Regime: The new Netflix docuseries is a damning indictment of ICE.” reason.com [BLOG]Reason Foundation, 2020. ProQuest, <https://ivc.idm.oclc.org/blogs-podcasts-websites/immigration-nation-brilliantly-captures-brutal/docview/2786735628/se-2>. Accessed 22 Sept, 2025.
- Kam, Min K. “ICE RUSES: FROM DECEPTION TO DEPORTATION.” Columbia law review, vol. 122, no. 1, 2022, pp. 125-172. ProQuest, <https://ivc.idm.oclc.org/scholarly-journals/ice-ruses-deception-deportation/docview/2628334319/se-2>. Accessed 22 Sept, 2025.
- Baio, Ariana. “Blow for Trump’s ICE raids as court upholds ban on snatching people based on appearance or job: Plaintiffs said they were intimidated by ICE agents, who did not identify themselves or reason for arrest, while waiting to be picked up for a job.” The Independent (Online)Independent Digital News & Media, 2025. ProQuest, <https://ivc.idm.oclc.org/other-sources/blow-trump-s-ice-raids-as-court-upholds-ban-on/docview/3235842099/se-2>. Accessed 22 Sept, 2025.
- Renkl, Margaret. “The Profound Inhumanity of ICE Raids: [Editorial Desk].” New York Times, 23 May, 2025. ProQuest, <https://ivc.idm.oclc.org/newspapers/profound-inhumanity-ice-raids/docview/3206727759/se-2>. Accessed 22 Sept, 2025.
- Gammage, Jeff, et al. “A Chilling Effect: ICE raids instilling fear in Philadelphia migrants.” Philadelphia Daily News, 30 Jan., 2025, pp. 4. ProQuest, <https://ivc.idm.oclc.org/newspapers/chilling-effect/docview/3161418834/se-2>. Accessed 22 Sept, 2025.
- Roth, Emma. “Trump says foreign workers are ‘welcome’ after ICE raid in Georgia targets hundreds of South Koreans: After sparking outrage from the South Korean government, Trump said he didn’t want to ‘frighten off’ foreign investment.” The VergeVox Media, 2025. ProQuest, <https://ivc.idm.oclc.org/blogs-podcasts-websites/trump-says-foreign-workers-are-welcome-after-ice/docview/3250375755/se-2>. Accessed 22 Sept, 2025.



Photography

Where life
finds
sweetness
By Beatriz Ramirez

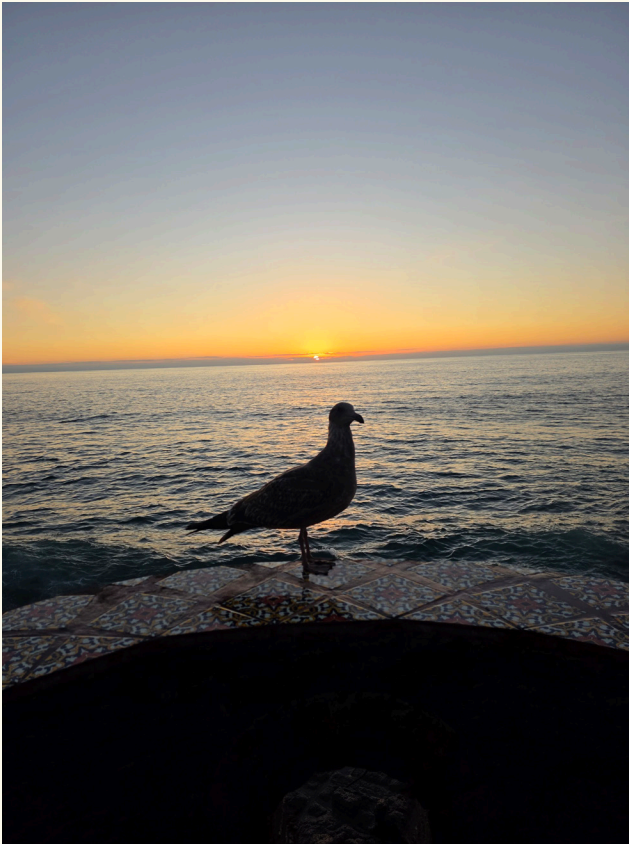


Mi Corazon al terciopelo

By Viviana J. Leon



My name is Viviana. My photographic work focuses on the environment and landscapes. I enjoy capturing the beauty of nature and everyday moments, highlighting the subtle details that often go unnoticed.



Dilian Caraveo is from Calexico Ca., but she was born in Mexicali, BC. She has a bachelor's in Education Sciences from Universidad Autonoma de Baja California. She has been married for sixteen years, she is a mother of two beautiful daughters. She loves to spend time with her family, teaching children and teenagers about ethics and history. Dilian enjoys wellness and fitness lifestyle. She likes traveling as much as possible, learn about different cultures around the globe, and to be a full-time mother currently.

Serenity and temperance

By Dilian Arely Caraveo González

SMILES AND TATTOOS

By Jazz Ledbetter



Jazz ShaMari Mikeda LedBetter was born in Hartford, Connecticut on October 14th 1990 of Jamaican, Cuban, and Indian descent. Since a child in the Cayman Island she had a strong passion for art of all forms. Fashion, music, dance, visual, and literature. Known for bold, abstract creativity. Forming a new genre.

Up-cycled, reused, double entendre, dual masterpieces in support of SB707. Attending school primarily in Southern California, moving to Imperial Valley in 2018. Currently studying Studio Art and Lithium technology at IVC. She has received many accolades for the impact she has contributed throughout the last decade, receiving recognition from the state senators for her advocacy. Jazz is not only an artist, but an author, advocate, and activist for many social injustices. All proceeds of her creations and donations go to support her foundation "Harlot Heart". For more information follow @harlotheart_united on all platforms.



Return to Sender



Many thanks to the faculty and staff in the Arts, Letters & Learning Services Division who put much time and effort into scoring student work and producing this publication and the Artists' Reception.

We are grateful to have the support of the Imperial Community College District Board of Trustees and Dr. Lennor Johnson, Superintendent/President, and a final THANK YOU to all of the talented students who submitted their work!

Special Thanks To:

Raul Aguilera	Manuel Guzman
Justin Behrens	Carol Hegarty
Dr. Hope Davis	Dr. Michael Heumann
Jorge Estrada	Lency Lucas
Toni Gamboa	Jose Bernardo Olmedo
Dr. Hector Garza	Dr. Jose Salvador Ruiz



Design and Layout By:

Juan Jose Padilla

Printed By: IVC Reprographics