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## The Drive

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THE DRIVE

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THE DRIVE

by

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## Critical Preface

### I.

*The Drive* is a hybrid-poetry collection containing lyric poems, as well as fiction and non-fiction prose pieces, that explores the impact of different types of misogyny and violence against women, with a particular focus on the phenomenon of digital violence. This collection presents different voices and stories that examine themes of violence against the female body.

*The Drive* was born from a poem in which I describe a Google Drive link created in October 2020 and shared through Twitter, where women anonymously submitted the name of their abusers, the school they went to, their age, and the type of abuse they suffered. On the first day that this drive became available to other women, the list had fifty names. The next day, there were over eight hundred names of young men between the ages of 20 and 25 who lived in Ciudad Juarez and El Paso. I wrote this first poem to describe the various impacts a drive like this can have on a community, then I realized that I needed to delve further into this issue by writing about another Google Drive. About a year prior, a similar link was leaked on Twitter, only this link was used by men – some who also appeared in the list of abusers – to share, and sometimes sell nude pictures of women from Ciudad Juarez and El Paso. The photographs were circulated without the women's consent. *The Drive* explores the many different sides, issues, consequences, and impacts these situations can create. The impact abusive situations like these can have on women is also examined along with the commodification of women's bodies and a victim-blaming culture, fostered by these types of drives. As I developed *The Drive*, I realized one element that needed to be present as well was the idea and possibility of the re-writing and reconstruction of different narratives. I wanted to explore different territory by letting these stories be known and presenting perspectives that may not be usually seen in popular media.

## II.

The importance of understanding that language and circumstances evolve, especially during the past decades with the use of online spaces and social media platforms, is crucial to understand the background of this collection. The term “digital violence” is fairly new. The term cyberbullying has been accepted and understood for a few years now. Yet digital violence is a different type of harassment. Jordan Fairbairn explains in Chapter IX of her book *eGirls, eCitizens: Putting Technology, Theory and Policy into Dialogue with Girls’ and Young Women’s Voices*, “Online harassment is understood as a form of sexual violence in part because of the emotional distress and breach of an individual’s sense of safety” (Fairbairn, 234). Fairbairn further explains that “when people’s safety and integrity is compromised online, they are marginalized and/or pushed out of these spaces.” (234). Fairbairn notes the importance of understanding the definition and effects of digital violence. She continues, “Not only does online sexual violence harm those targeted, it creates a culture where sexual abuse and harassment is expected, tolerated, and/or encouraged, and women and girls are held responsible for their safety and blamed for their victimization” (235). These notes are crucial to understand the overall definition of what digital violence is and how it is presented and dealt with in this manuscript.

One of the poems from *The Drive* titled “Recomendaciones” deals with digital violence in connection to the “Ley Olimpia.” This is a Mexican legislative reform which sanctions the distribution of sexual content without consent, and it recognizes digital violence as a type of crime, which is sanctioned with fines or with up to six years in prison. This reform was made possible by the efforts of Olimpia Coral Melo who suffered digital violence and harassment after her boyfriend uploaded a sexual video of them without her consent. But even after this legislative reform has passed, Olimpia is continuing on the fight, to bring attention to digital violence and



work on the root of the problem. Olimpia has come up with a phrase and hashtag used around social media to help people understand that what is virtual is real, “Lo Virtual es Real.” In the United States, there are federal laws that “address online abuse, including stalking, interstate threats, harassment via telecommunications, hacking, and identity theft.” (PEN America) yet a clear section on digital sexual violence has not yet been integrated. I think it’s important to explore what type of impact – if any – has this legislative reform had in the digital world in Mexico and how these issues are being dealt with in the U.S.. In the meantime, this manuscript calls attention to the different effects of digital harassment and violence.

### III.

*The Drive* is a reflection of my own poetics, which is driven by a need to use writing as a platform for causes, movements, moments and people – myself included – who need more attention and awareness. Writer Jean-Paul Sartre’s *littérature engagée* – engaged literature – is a concept similar to what is presented in *The Drive*. In *What Is Literature?* Sartre insisted on the responsibility of the contribution of an artist to society for the larger good and argued that by engaging with others through art, we can also understand ourselves and the power of change. Sartre writes, “The ‘engaged’ writer knows that words are action. He knows that to reveal is to change and that one can reveal only by planning to change” (24). With this collection, I take a similar approach of engaging with the universal issue of violence against women to understand and process it on a personal level and to use it as a tool for greater, common good. I’ve always thought of creative writing, and art in general, as a lifeline that we are all meant to find. Some lifelines we find a deep connection with, while others help us become more conscious and empathetic of situations that we hadn’t been before. Ultimately, I think the role of literature is to create a connection between reader and the speaker or the book itself.

Months after the Google Drives were posted, I noticed people had either stopped talking about them or they were referred to in a judgmental and mocking way. I felt compelled, then, to slow down and shut down all the noise around me, so I could focus my writing on providing an alternative to stories that continue to be misrepresented and misjudged.

As I started working on *The Drive* I kept questioning my own voice and my own self. I questioned my word choice and use of language through the pieces I was developing. *The Drive* helped me develop language as a form of voice of agency, self-defense, reframing or re-constructing different concepts, stories and myths, and as a contribution to different groups and movements looking to end violence against women.

Part of the poetics behind *The Drive* is the use language as a form of defense and retaliation because the collection was born from the ways women have written about their abuse or have named their abusers as a means to seek justice. I wanted to continue with that form of use of language as part of my poetics presenting them in prose and poetry form. The film *She Said*, directed by Maria Schrader, is based on the non-fiction book by journalists Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, in which they describe the process through which they investigated allegations of sexual abuse against Harvey Weinstein. The film explores the difficulty of writing about the abuse these women went through, especially since many of these women were terrified of testifying or giving interviews about their experiences, out of fear of the exposure ruining their lives further. I was able to connect with the journalists' efforts telling the stories of women abused by Weinstein, in order to expose the abuse, as well as change the narrative in which men like Weinstein are untouchable. *She Said* also makes an effort to portray the importance of understanding the difficulties women face while trying to speak up about the abuse they endured. A common response after the Google Drive, where names of men were posted, was to blame

women for not speaking up earlier or not having gone to the authorities instead. *She Said* is a reflection of the internal and mental processes and struggles women go through after being abused. The film shows the courage that these women had to speak out against a powerful man and a system that had silenced them for years. It also shows how women feel more open to report their abuse once they have the support of other women who have been through similar circumstances. The ways women are encouraged to gain collective courage to speak out against their abusers is one of the elements and descriptions I wanted to include in this collection. I wanted to show how language can act as self-defense and be a form of agency of change in which multiple voices can lead to a revolution.

When working on *The Drive*, I learned how to create enough distance and keep a balance between my personal and objective connections to each piece. I wrote about difficult events which I had also been affected by in different ways. I either knew people on both lists from the El Paso and Ciudad Juarez community, which I am part of, saw them be affected by this or I was also directly affected by these events. Annie Ernaux's *A Girl's Story* is a book source I drew inspiration from for *The Drive*. This book is a memoir in which the author revisits and retells her experience at a summer camp as a teenage girl. One of the qualities I took inspiration from was Ernaux's ability to be able to revisit memories as an adult, especially memories that may include traumatic experiences that hadn't been properly processed before. Ernaux has the ability to create enough distance, to step back to try and comprehend events from years prior. She achieves this while maintaining closeness with the reader who is allowed to enter a space the author created. She writes with honesty yet does not replicate any violence from her past and these triggering events. She processes these experiences with the wisdom of her as an older woman and honors the innocence and inexperience she had as a teenager. Ernaux writes:

“But what is the point of writing if not to unearth things, or even just one thing that cannot be reduced to any kind of psychological or sociological explanation and is not the result of a preconceived idea or demonstration but a narrative: something that emerges from the creases when a story is unfolded, and can help us understand – endure – events that occur and the things we do.” (98)

Ernaux’s insight into the process of writing about past traumatic events, helped fuel the continuation and exploration of themes and conversations that needed to be had after the Google drives were made public. This is one of the purposes behind *The Drive*, to create and re-write a variety of narratives that emerged from these events – in order to try and understand the underlying issue behind the sharing and uploading of women’s nudes, as well as the role of these drives for women who have suffered abuse from their partners. However, like Ernaux, I needed distance in order to create these pieces that take on different perspectives, are carefully crafted, and realize the book’s main intentions. With sources like Ernaux’s work and with the construction of this collection, I was able to find that balance by writing pieces which are deeply connected to me, as well as others that are more objective.

#### IV.

*The Drive* began with a poem, yet I later included fiction and non-fiction pieces. In his description for a course on hybrid poetry, Ocean Vuong writes, “poets have decided, despite investing so much time in it, that the lyric would no longer suffice their aspirations. What happens, then, when the lyric is not enough? When social and national crises become catalysts for ontological disintegration?” Vuong then adds:

“What happens when a piece of writing challenges the preconceived parameters of its genre, rendering itself elusive, amorphous, and yet still insisting on its value as a means

of intellectual and emotional discovery? What use are genre labels, and can these terms be modified alongside the development of inter-genre writing?"

These questions were crucial in the process of putting together *The Drive* as a whole and the importance and significance of having a collection that blends and combines genres and forms. All of the pieces presented are meant to create an "intellectual and emotional discovery" and each piece reflects this because of the form it is presented in. Hybrid poetry is used in an effort to face and disintegrate a crisis like digital violence.

Although *American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry* does not focus on poetry collections in which mine could be included, it also presents different ideas that can be associated to this collection, like the questioning of boundaries in poetry. In the introduction, one of its editors, Cole Swensen writes about the history of hybrid poetry preceding from movements from the twentieth century, like the New Criticism movement which demanded that "the poem be a worked object of art rather than a spontaneous expression of personal feeling." (22) or the Opposition movement as a "form of a resurgence of formalist work." (22) Later on, Swensen notes the complexity of the history of hybrid poetry, writing, "American poetry finds itself at a moment when idiosyncrasy rules to such a degree and differences are so numerous that distinct factions are hard, even impossible, to pin down." (22) Swensen continues, "Instead, we find a thriving center of alterity, of writing and writers that have inherited, and adapted traits developed by everyone from the Romantics through the Modernists to the various avant-gardes, the Confessionalists, Allen's margins, and finally to Language poetry and the New Formalists" (23). William Carlos Williams's work as an example could be included as part of the history of hybrid poetry. Published in 1923, Williams' collection *Spring And All*, a freely organized mix of both prose and poetry, represented during the Modernist period represents a need for a new approach

to poetry where the reader has an opportunity to interact with the way the pieces and pages are arranged. As such, Swensen describes hybrid poems as works that “often honor the avant-garde mandate to renew the forms and expand the boundaries of poetry – thereby increasing the expressive potential of language itself – while also remaining committed to the emotional spectra of lived experience.” Following Swensen’s description, *The Drive* expands on the uses of language in order to present it in different forms, each with its own objective.

In this manuscript, the “expressive potential of language itself” is also increased through the use of the line and the use of question marks. The poems focus on the use of line as a voice of agency speaking against silence or as a form of silencing violence. The poem “You Are the Room Where It Happens” acts as an example of the use of line to increase the potential of language and silence:

“...Why you shoot  
pepper spray – instead of spiderwebs –  
from your wrists. How you turn loud  
music into deafening silence. Why  
your “resting bitch face” becomes your armor.”

Each line of every poem was carefully crafted to create meaning for each of them in all the poetry pieces. The use of question marks can be found in both poetry and prose pieces in this collection. Through poems like, “Three Options,” “Actual Teenage Justice,” or in the fiction piece “The Thing,” the use of question marks helps to hold ambiguity and complexity to each of the characters and stories presented. This choice was made in order to portray the difficulty of processing and going through experiences of violence.

In her literary review, “American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry,” Renée Ashley writes about this anthology and the importance of hybrid poetry. Ashley describes a hybrid work of poetry as “a category that is utterly apt and filled with possible and promising

permutations. It's also a signal that a poetry reader's arena of expectation must be wide open and poised for change.” (189). Therefore, this book uses hybridity to challenge the readers' expectations by presenting stories that change in form, genre, and lyrical voice.

My personal history with books that can be considered hybrid, in terms of drawing on different types of poetry and traditions, began with Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric*. In her book, she uses different mediums and references to photographs, paintings and videos while interweaving lyrical essays throughout the book. I was also influenced, when writing *The Drive*, by Rankine's use of the second-person perspective. It is through the use of the second-person perspective that Rankine creates an atmosphere where readers can place themselves in the same position as the speaker, along with various forms and mediums throughout the prose poetry pieces. Similarly, *The Drive* includes different forms and some pieces in the second person point of view to have the reader understand the perspective of each speaker. The poem “Abusive Drive” is an example where the reader is placed in the perspective of the speaker.

“Then you see it. His name  
is one of the very few that is in all caps.  
He screams at you  
after all this time.”

Another example of an earlier work in the historical context of hybrid poetry, is Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee*, which Arielle Greenberg calls, “the mother of all hybrid genre poetry collections, *Dictee*.” Cha's incorporates in *Dictee* various literary forms, languages, and mediums like photographs, maps, and other documents. *Dictee* also varies in its form through the rhythms and structure created – where some prose poetry pieces occupy different sections of the page, some leaving more white space than others. Cha also changes the pacing and tone of some of the pieces by introducing short sentences, “Violation of *her* by giving name to the betrayal, all

possible names, interchangeable names, to remedy, to justify violation. Of *her*. Own. Unbegotten. Name. Name only. Name without substance. The everlasting, Forever. Without end.”(88) *Dictee* was not only an inspiration for this collection in terms of form and structure but in theme as well. Cha writes about different women’s stories, from Greek mythology, religious, and historical figures as well as her mother. By including different mediums and forms, she gives voice to all these women and the story of their true identities – which is one of the aims of *The Drive*. I chose to elevate something that had been unattainable, to twist concepts regarding women’s bodies and their freedoms by adding a feminist approach. I also wanted to explore the perception of certain stories about women and their portrayal throughout different centuries. Moreover, like *Dictee*, certain poems in *The Drive* reframe and rewrite the stories of mythological and historical female figures to portray the effect these stories have on the reader as well as to insist on the need for new stories to be told, new ways for women to be represented.

*Litany for the Long Moment* by Mary-Kim Arnold also helped me examine hybrid poetry in a contemporary context. This is a blended-genre collection with poetry, fiction and non-fiction pieces. *Litany for the Long Moment* is composed by a collection of poetic responses to questions asked by the Social Welfare Society of Korea, lyrical essays and use of documents, pictures and letters, for the author to understand the process of her adoption and search for her birth parents. Arnold uses various genres to explore complex themes like personal, linguistic, and cultural lineage. The first page of Arnold’s book acts as an introduction to what the rest of the book achieves – a use of multiple mediums and documents as a form of metaphor of her trying to find her lineage and identity. Over a Korean travel certificate, Arnold quotes Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, “My work, until now, in one sense has been a series of metaphors for the return, going back to a lost time and space, always in the imaginary...”(1). In a similar manner, I wanted to explore



*The Drive* as a series of metaphors, like “the drive” representing not just the shared Google Drive links, but a metaphorical drive that the speakers and characters take in their journeys through self-discovery and healing, and the drive that fuels them through those discoveries. These metaphors are also presented through different genres and mediums – like using screenshots of some of the comments from the Google drive with the names of abusers, or Mexican government websites which give specifications of the Ley Olimpia. Arnold’s book helped with the structurization of a collection that encompasses various genres and approaches to a broader issue, with cohesiveness and common threads to its best approach.

#### V.

This collection introduces different characters, each imagined and created to tell a different story while keeping a common connection with the overarching themes. Early on in the process of writing *The Drive*, I noticed that some of the stories seemed too similar to each other. It was as if the story was being repeated over and over. This of course is an example of what occurs in real life with situations of abuse, digital violence and sexual commodification – where the stories are repeated, resulting in a never-ending cycle of violence. But for the purposes of *The Drive*, I needed to work on making sure that these stories were coming from different perspectives, for the purposes of structure, while also portraying that this is all part of a cycle and a system that has been in place for many years.

For this collection I created different characters, stories and perspectives that I believed could have resulted from the events regarding the drives. *Women Talking* is another source of inspiration to include different perspectives and descriptions to a common occurrence. The film, written and directed by Sarah Polley, portrays a story inspired by real-life events that occurred in a Mennonite community in Bolivia. In the film women and girls discovered they had been raped

in their sleep, then were made to believe that ghost, demons, or their imaginations were the reason for these attacks. The women of the colony decide to gather to dry and decide between three options: stay and do nothing, stay and fight, or leave their communities and homes. At the beginning of the film, a text states: “What follows is an act of female imagination.” This refers to what audiences see in the movie – the discussion between women leading up to their final decision – which is not exactly how the issue was resolved in this colony, but what the writer and director of the film imagined could have happened. The rest of the movie reveals the different perspectives of this issue from multiple women and how in the end, they reach to a conclusion of leaving the colony for their own good. *The Drive* – in part – is also an “act of female imagination” whereas some of the stories and poems presented act as a form of response, coming from my own creation and imagination to the events of the Drives. By also writing pieces from the voices of different women, including some historical and mythological figures, a reframing and new perspective was imagined and then put to paper. Therefore, presenting their true value and importance to break with patterns of violence, abuse, silencing and erasure. Additionally, much like in this film, in *The Drive*, I made a conscious choice to not exemplify or replicate violence. The violent acts that the women of the colony suffered are never directly seen in *Women Talking*, the aggressions are just mentioned or referenced. In this manuscript, language choice was always important in order to avoid these stories replicating violence and abuse by any means.

## VI.

There is a variety of themes that *The Drive* explores. The first theme covers the digital world and issues such as: the violation of privacy in terms of digital information, presented through the issue the sharing of nude pictures without the consent of the person, the impact and

significance of online harassment and digital violence. Other covered themes are the objectification and commodification of women's bodies, victim-blaming culture and the concept of the nude. Examples of these themes are presented through pieces that feature mythical and historical figures like Venus and Eve. All pieces present different narratives, stories and points of view connected to these previously mentioned topics and themes. I wanted to create a type of "poesia de denuncia," but at the same time I wanted for these poems, fiction, and non-fiction pieces to do more than focus on feelings of powerlessness or defeat; I wanted them to empower these women who were affected by either of these Google Drive lists.

With *The Drive*, I wanted to shed light on the growing frequency and societal impact regarding the problem of violence in digital spaces. As we have seen in the last several years, posts on social media about experiences of digital violence are seen more frequently, along with posts of women sharing their stories about their abuse as a warning towards others. According to the United Nations Population Fund – which is the United Nations Sexual and Reproductive Health Agency – through a study with the Economist Intelligence Unit, "85% of women reported witnessing online violence," (UNFPA). Additionally, I present a reflection on the construction of social structures that abuse and blame their victims for decades and show the need for deeper and new change. I introduce the argument that even though the abuse caused and found online may seem relatively new, it comes from a problem that has been sustained in society for hundreds of years prior.

Because of the abuse and violence that exists in offline and online spaces, the use of language as defense is another common theme, presented through poems in which the poetic voices respond and share their experiences in terms of abuse. The poem "Shrine" presents a speaker who builds a shrine to her abuser and burns it. Some pieces shift in poetic tone to create

a sense of retaliation towards harassment, and objectification within each piece. Two poems that reflect this are “Privacy” and “You Are the Room Where It Happens.” The objective behind the pieces which focus on reframing is to present different characters or voices of women, and how they are given back the power of telling their own side of the story or create a new one for themselves. Through the speaker, the goal is for *The Drive* to create awareness of the use of digital spaces and the necessity of new and alternative spaces where women are given the opportunity for their stories to be shared.

Another thread line which can be found is the deconstruction of the nude. One of the first sources which helped and inspired these pieces was Melissa Lozada-Oliva’s poetry collection *Peluda*. I found Lozada-Oliva’s work to be a great example of a book that presents the body as a central image or metaphor to carry or portray a larger social issue. Lozada-Oliva presents poems that explore the perception of body image against western or American beauty standards. Similarly, *The Drive* aims to explore the learned perception of women’s nude bodies, their commodification and giving back agency and power to those women and their bodies. Lozada-Oliva writes:

“We don’t want to be the destinies our bodies  
carved out for us with knives passed down  
by generations of fathers & fathers  
but we are ready  
we are more ready  
than we thought we would be  
to show you our tits to show you our teeth.” (26)

The speaker in many of Lozada-Oliva’s pieces is often very self-aware and sincere when it comes to describing the different experiences that are engraved in women’s bodies. I learned from the tone and the exploration of the body of this poetry collection how to frame many of my own pieces.

The objectification of women's bodies and the effects of the violation of digital privacy and commodification of them is also explored. As an example, the prose poem "Up in a Cloud" follows a speaker and her experience of finding her nude picture on a shared link or on a digital cloud. Khadijah Queen's collection *I'm So Fine: A List of Famous Men & What I Had On* was a reference for this piece. Queen's use of format, tone, and subject matter were especially important as inspiration from her collection. In her book, Queen describes a series of interactions and chance encounters with famous men, exploring power dynamics and gendered experiences that are nonetheless common to most women. Queen also touches on the effects of living in a victim-blaming culture and how it affected her judgment and opinions; she writes, "...so when she went public about Cosby drugging & trying to assault her I immediately believed her & not him I have seen enough of powerful men by now to know she had nothing to gain by going public..."(27). I touch on this effect in the fiction piece, "The T-Shirt" which is a fiction piece from the point of view of a character who finds out her best friend shared his ex-girlfriend's naked pictures online. Queen writes prose pieces in paragraph structure, which creates a conversation-like rhythm in which she narrates these often-invading interactions and experiences. Therefore, the form, tone, and subject matter of Queen's Book were elements I incorporated in *The Drive*.

## VII.

*The Drive* is separated into four sections, each containing a different thematic scope while telling an overarching story that connects all of these themes. The first section includes pieces which introduce the main narrative of the Google Drives. Two examples are the poem "Abusive Drive" and the fiction piece "The Drive," which deal directly with the impact and description of these links. The second section contains pieces which serve as different voices who all respond

to the drives and issues arising from them as well as vindicate for themselves, such as the poem “Our Bodies Are Battlegrounds.” This is a poem that acts as a response to the invasion of privacy in connection to women’s bodies. The third section presents pieces where each voice is given the space and opportunity to tell and retell their own stories. The poem “Venus” presents an alternative view of the image and perspective of the figure of Venus in mythological and artistic contexts. And the fourth and last section acts as a section where the possibility of healing, like the poem “Murmuration,” which presents the metaphor of an aviary murmuration as a group of women who are healing and protecting each other.

The first poem of the book is “Mona Lisa.” Like the last few verses of the poem state, “Maybe behind those eyes and that smile/she was trying to tell us/her story.” This piece acts as an overall introduction to the book’s tone and purpose. “Mona Lisa” introduces the idea of plurality as a “they” while the last poem in *The Drive*, “Always Becoming” is written in first person plural, rearticulating plurality as a “we.” I wanted to show a progress from the first poem which speaks of only one woman, one story, and opens up the possibility of truly knowing her story. And in the last poem the speaker’s voice turns into a chorus of women who are now redefining their stories together. I wanted to show that progress of dealing with crises and issues found throughout the collection and the possibility of change found within a community.

## VIII.

In conclusion, there is a systematic issue of violence against women, but it is important to understand and call attention to the fact that sexual violence can occur in both offline and online spaces. *The Drive* illustrates that violence does not happen in a vacuum, and it comes from learned and inherited behaviors. There is a systematic and sexual violence and harassment that women have always experienced in everyday life. In some cases, images and videos are part of a

false narrative where women are manipulated and commodified. This is an evolving issue that needs to be treated and stopped by reframing society's view of the victim and the abuser. Digital violence exists when there is a creation of a hostile environment, but the blame is not to be put on the victim, because even though there was an agreement, there was also an infringement of such agreement. Through reforms like the "Ley Olimpia," it is possible for a society to understand that women own their bodies, their images, and stories and therefore they should be in control of the narrative and have the right to decide if they want it to be shared or not.

Therefore, this collection is meant to contribute to conversations surrounding feminism and the commodification of women's bodies, while pushing the urgency and importance of redefining what violence is and how it affects digital spaces. Jordan Fairbairn, previously quoted, also mentions:

"We should not think about "lowering" our bar of what constitutes violence, but expanding our field of attention and responsiveness. In that regard, law and policy have important symbolic roles to play. Violence is an abuse of power that hinders a person's ability to be physically and emotionally safe in the world. This world includes the Internet." (245).

Much like Olimpia Coral Melo's "Lo Virtual Es Real" Fairbairn also emphasizes the need of expanding our area of responsiveness when it comes to the different types of violence against women.

*The Drive* acts as an effort to contribute to the redefinition and illustration of violence in digital spaces as well as the exploration of issues from where this type of violence originated from, in order to push for attention and change. This collection is in itself a drive containing a contribution to a larger and collective archive of information. This is a collection existing against

the backdrop, and in counteraction, of other drives where acts of violence that are being shared and stored. *The Drive* is the power and stamina the speakers of all these pieces obtained through controlling and owning their own narratives. *The Drive* is also an intricate road, where we learn from different stories and perspectives, some similar to our own, leading to a final destination in which we seek to encounter true change.

Within my own poetics, I am constantly questioning whether my work is doing enough or creating the effect I want it to. I understand the limitations as a writer covering only a glimpse of such a complex, ever changing issue. In W.H. Auden's poem "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" the often discussed and questioned quote, "poetry makes nothing happen" is found. This could be a way of looking at this manuscript and the limitations of poetry. However, in Auden's poem, this line continues to say, "it survives, A way of happening, a mouth." This manuscript is "a way of happening," where all the pieces act as agents of change against violence and abuse while contributing to a larger, shared conversation. Ultimately, by making *The Drive* happen, it acts as proof that these stories exist and will survive too.



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## Mona Lisa

The passing of time reflected  
in yellow tint. Under faint light,  
the sea behind her. With weary eyes,  
and that type of beauty men believe  
they desire, but are troubled  
by. Tourists walk, trying

to decipher where  
she came from. Some whisper  
*She's smaller than I thought.*  
*I thought she would have a prettier face.*  
*Is she really smiling?*  
*Maybe someone could've asked her to smile more.*

They don't wonder if  
her name can stand on its own  
without having to include a man's  
in the same sentence.  
If she was recognized  
on the streets, for no more  
than her looks.  
If her value relied just on silent

posing. They would rather have her  
forever be an inexhaustible portrait  
of fame that a man took credit for.

Other voices whisper  
*I heard that she is the true artist*  
*and this is the perfect self-portrait.*

They might just be right.  
Maybe behind those eyes and that smile  
she was trying to tell us  
her story.

## Abusive Drive

You hear about the list from your friend  
“Have you seen what’s happening on Twitter?” she asks.  
You grab your phone and open the app  
your fingers linger  
for a second, you remember that old saying  
“El que busca encuentra”

Then you see it. His name  
is one of the very few that is in all caps.  
He screams at you  
after all this time.

EXTREMELY VIOLENT WHEN HE DRINKS  
it says  
ABUSES WOMEN  
it says  
MAKES MISOGYNISTIC COMMENTS TOWARDS HIS EX’S  
it says  
HE VICTIMIZES HIMSELF  
it says  
PSYCHOPATHIC BEHAVIORS  
it says

You tell your friends about it and they  
say they’re glad and they  
ask whether you wrote him in the list but they  
don’t know that you  
would never  
be able to expose

your open wounds  
which are now shared.  
You feel selfish because somehow  
you felt special  
about being the only one who  
had been at war with him

Now you realize  
there’s an entire damaged entourage  
besides you.  
You also realize that you are not the one  
who was brave enough  
to speak up.

## Loop

your hand grips my wrist  
your mouth warns me to stay  
your hollow tone echoes through me  
this is the end

your hand rubs the back of your neck  
your movements are blunt  
your eyes stare at the ground  
this is when you admit you betrayed me

your longing gaze is gone  
your hands are cold to touch  
your embrace feels like trying to hold a ghost  
this is when you're hiding something

your arms hold my waist  
your face is cradled in my neck  
your restful breath is mesmerizing  
this is when you spend the night

your hand reaches mine  
your arm gently brushes the small of my back  
your eyes shimmer like sunrays on glass  
this is when you first kiss me

your gaze meets mine  
your crooked smile is captivating  
your steady steps lead you to me  
this is hello

## The Drive

I stand in front of my bathroom mirror and put on a trimmed red lace matching set. I feel a tingle and a knot in my stomach. Except for the holiday underwear with “wreck the halls” written in the back, I’ve only ever bought plain and simple underwear. The thin fabric feels soft against my skin. I put on Gabriel’s white Rolling Stone’s t-shirt next. I tie it up front with a hairband and tuck the extra fabric inside, making it a cropped top, exposing my midriff and the new red underwear. I take a selfie of just my body, then I place my phone over the sink and set the timer on. I have no idea what to do with my face, so I crop it out of every picture. I can’t think of any seductive poses, let alone any seductive expressions. I feel like a Picasso painting, only instead of fragments of faces that are abstractly placed around the frame, it’s just my body trying to fit into small and provocative fragments framed inside my phone camera.

First, I send a picture of just the red lace set to Gabriel, a preview. We’ve been dating for nine months. One morning, a few days ago, after spending the night at my place, he sat up in bed, smiled and asked if I would ever send him nudes. “Me mandarías una nude?” he asked. I stayed quiet for a moment then I agreed. I wondered if I was meant to ask for pictures of him, but I never mentioned the subject again. Neither did Gabriel. But I replayed our conversation over and over in my head, wondering if I should have answered in a more eager tone, or maybe a more casual one. I still wasn’t sure.

I head back to my closet and hang Gabriel’s faded white Rolling Stone’s t-shirt. That’s the shirt he was wearing the night we met. My best friend Layla dragged me to a house party where I disliked almost everyone, so I hid in the kitchen to avoid any interactions. I knew everybody would just get their drinks and leave. Then a guy with a Rolling Stone’s t-shirt and black Adidas sneakers stayed too long, making what seemed like a much more complex drink

than beer or tequila with Fresca. He smiled at me and began making his drink in a red cup. “She Wolf” by Shakira began playing from the stereo in the living room. He first started bopping his head then he continued to sing, knowing every single word. I laughed a little too loud. Gabriel stopped singing but continued to dance a bit while looking back at me.

“What?” he smiled.

“Nothing, I just didn’t expect a guy like you to know this song.”

“What do you mean?” He said, “it’s Shakira. She’s a goddess.”

“She is and this is not even one of her best songs,” I said. “I know this is not the time nor place, but I’d kill for someone to play “Antologia” here.”

“Antologia,” he said then grabbed his chest near his heart and leaned his head back. I, in response, touched my heart, too.

Then we introduced ourselves. Gabriel asked if I wanted a whiskey sour. I’ve always hated whiskey, so I declined at first. But Gabriel convinced me by saying his whiskey sours were the best ones in El Paso or possibly even in the entire state of Texas. He brought over two red cups with ice sloshing around. The sound reminded me of waves crashing near the beach. I tried it and told him it was an “OK drink” for a house party, when in fact I actually really liked it. He offered to take me home and, on the drive back, we discovered that Shakira was the only thing we both liked in terms of music. We were complete musical opposites. Gabriel told me about the first time he saw Shakira on MTV. He was seven years old, and he’d never seen a black and red-haired Latina rocker before, so she was his first crush. When I thanked him for the ride and did not offer him to come in, he smiled and kissed me on the cheek, which surprised me.

We started dating soon after that. Whenever Gabriel would wear the faded t-shirt after spending the night together, I would steal it in the morning. I wore it so much that he ended up



giving it to me. He even wrapped it in a small white box with a big red bow and said it was my shirt now. In that moment I knew I loved him.

I feel butterflies in my stomach as I review each picture of myself, selecting the ones with the best-looking angles, the ones where the light hits just right, hiding most of the stretch marks on my thighs and butt. Gabriel has obviously seen every inch of my skin already, but I think it'd be nice if I could at least fantasize about being silky and smooth for once. Like those ads for women's razors where tanned, long-legged women pretend to shave non-existing hair.

The swoosh from my phone sending the pictures makes the butterflies in my stomach flutter aggressively. I'm not sure if it's because I purposely haven't eaten anything today or if it's just nerves. After a few minutes Gabriel replies: "I love you so much, Mia." Along with fire emojis.

Later in the evening, we're sitting on my couch while watching *Psycho*. Every now and then, out of the corner of my eye, I catch Gabriel looking at the picture I sent him.

"How long will you keep staring at that?" I cover my face and laugh.

"Not sure," he says. "Maybe I'll print it out and carry it in my wallet."

"God, no."

"The only thing I kind of hate is," he pauses.

"What?" I try to say casually while cracking some of my knuckles.

"I can't see your face," Gabriel says.

"Isn't that the point?"

"Not really. But oh well maybe next time."

"Next time?" I stand up from the couch and pat him gently on the shoulder, "sure, next time."

“I’m serious,” he laughs.

“Sorry to disappoint you,” I say, “but the dirty pictures shop is permanently closed.”

“Then I’ll go on strike until it opens back up again.”

I smile and shake my head. I bring back some popcorn, sit next to him and we finish watching the movie.

--

Gabriel and I are having takeout out in my apartment patio. It’s Thai food night. We’re both drinking whiskey sours in red cups. When we’re finished, Gabriel sighs and looks over onto the street. He says how comfortable he feels when he’s here. After a couple of minutes in silence, I ask him to move in.

“Are you sure?” he asks.

“Yes, you’re always here anyways,” I roll my eyes.

We both laugh and then I tell Gabriel I will give him a spare key so he could start bringing his stuff in from his place. The sliding door from the patio is open and I suddenly hear a bunch of notifications from my phone, which I left charging on the kitchen counter. I groan, grab my red cup, and stand up to see what’s all the fuss. It’s probably Layla having another Tinder date crisis. I look at my phone and see 45 messages from a group chat with my friends.

Layla: Can u believe this?

Michelle: Dude, wtf

Stephanie: Alexa’s in it, guys.

Arianna: Fucking men

I have no idea what’s going on. I scroll through the messages that keep on coming

then finally see where it all started. A link that Layla sent. She says some girl on Twitter leaked it and wrote about how she found this google drive where a bunch of guys from El Paso and Ciudad Juárez share pictures of naked women. Men usually sell the pictures; others just upload them. I click on the blue letters that take me to a Google Drive folder titled: “El Paso Nudes.” The drive has over a hundred names. I scroll through and see the names of girls I knew in high school, some of them have kids of their own now. I can feel the shrimp pad Thai going up my throat. I inhale deeply, trying to control how my stomach is turning now, and look for my own name, exhaling loudly when I don’t find it. I look over to Gabriel who’s now in the dark, his face illuminated by the screen of his phone. I turn back to my phone and scroll down until I reach the end of the list. That’s when I notice a separate folder titled “Anonymous.” I click on it, and I see almost a hundred more pictures of women with cropped or blurred out faces. Then I see it, the red laced underwear, and that damned t-shirt. I drop the phone onto the kitchen counter. I look back again at Gabriel who’s now looking at me. When he sees my face, he stands up, tripping over his own chair. I walk away as fast as I can, but I can barely see straight. I get to my room and lock the door.

As Gabriel begins to knock, I rip his shirt from the hanger in my closet. I find a box hidden behind my shoes and place the scrunched shirt in my left hand inside it. I see the rest of the shirts I had planned to throw away but never did. Guns N’ Roses, the Ramones, Tupac, Arctic Monkeys, Wu-Tang Clan, some anime show I never learned the name of. Different versions of myself, gathering dust in a box that could never find its way to the trash or to a Goodwill even. I finally notice the dust particles against the light, now covering my room.

Part of me wants to keep the door closed and hold on to the initial feeling of magical butterflies going through me, underneath each shirt I wore for someone else. Now there’s only a

phantom feeling that I cannot really recognize anymore. The butterflies turned into moths, eating away at who I used to be and waiting for dust to gather and new fabric to consume. It's time to set them free.

I open the bedroom door and walk past Gabriel, back to the kitchen. I stand in front of the sink and dump the rest of my drink down the drain, ice cubes collecting on the steel strainer. Then I grab the bottle of whiskey and pour a good amount inside my cup.

"I think I know what's going on, Mia," Gabriel says in a tone I had never heard before. "But you have to let me explain."

When I place the cup's lid on my mouth, Gabriel's silhouette seems to blur and disappear into the background and his excuses sound like mumbles to me now.

I close my eyes then chug the whiskey. For the first time in my life, I enjoy the way the liquid burns down my throat.

## Up in a Cloud

I never thought I'd see myself up in a cloud. I thought I'd be stepping on fluffy, cotton-candy-like ground. I would easily adjust to living without gravity. I'd peek through the suspended water and ice particles and pinpoint all my favorite places from the world below me. Yet there I was; in a picture he uploaded to the drive. I always pictured it as this virtual place above everyone, where some people could reach up and grab any information they wanted. Their arms stretched, holding on to as much as they could. I realized this was one of the very few photos he shared of me with the world. I had been almost begging for him to post a picture of us on Facebook or Instagram and he'd say he wasn't a "social media person," whatever that meant. There were no uploads to ever come from him. My presence in his life was just a big fog. Except the picture of me lifting his t-shirt up in front of a mirror, trying to show a little cleavage. My neon green phone case covering almost my entire face – the only smart choice I made that day – and behind it, me waiting for a praise from him. SHIIIT , he'd text later. Which is exactly what I thought when I saw my picture among the rest of the other women. My head was never in the clouds. My body was.

## Shrine

A coffee sleeve, your name  
on it. A memory of  
your hand brushing  
over mine. The way my mouth  
was inescapably found  
by yours.

A pink post-it note where you wrote  
“I love you,” the smiley face hanging  
from those words. A receipt  
I used as a bookmark. My unused notebook  
for our French class.

A golden, silk, blouse you gave  
me for my birthday. I made sure to wear  
it over the bruises you gifted me  
every now and then. Gold truly  
makes even the darkest  
colors sparkle.

The letters you wrote me. Faded  
ink, blurry pencil smudges and a hint  
of the palaces you built  
for me in each paragraph. I keep  
a candle next to them, balancing right on the edge  
of the table. The flicker of a flame anticipating  
ashes from you.



## Eve

In one version Adam stood to the side  
as the snake was being condemned.  
But what if Eve decided to transform the snake  
into a female companion. Giving the snake back  
its legs and adding wings,

which tear through  
the iridescent scales of her back. With the shed skin  
Eve weaves a cover of her own.

They ride together. From land to land,  
Eve was able to build  
her own paradise. She learned  
there is more life beyond the trees. She's walked  
over cracked soil and made orchids and tulips grow.

And after centuries she's been known  
as Mother, Partner, Mistress, Witch, Nymph, Muse,  
The Question, The Answer, The Poem, The Metaphor,  
The Free Woman.

Who struts barefoot through any road  
with her accomplice who helped her  
develop an immunity to venom.  
She is beyond a forbidden myth,  
she is evergreen.



## Ars Poetica

Poetry is the rope  
that hangs  
over the cliff.

Anchored  
to a brittle branch  
from the sturdiest tree.

It is often me  
on the other side, holding  
tight.

## The T-Shirt

“What’s the difference between Tylenol and Advil?” reads Gabriel’s text message.

I let him know I can just bring him both options as I stand in the middle of the medicine aisle in the grocery store. I also offer to bring him some real food since I know that his diet has consisted of twinkies, ramen noodles, and bourbon lately. It’s been a couple of days since his breakup with Mia. I feel pretty bad for him. I liked Mia a lot, I thought she was the one for him.

I’m walking towards the checkout area then I bump into a bearded man with blue eyes wearing a faded Rolling Stone’s white T-shirt. The guy seems familiar, but I can’t quite place him. I try my best to sneak around him and take a picture with my phone. I text Gabriel and ask him if he knows him. Gabriel texts back “That’s David.” Then he explains he’s Mia’s coworker. I now remember him from her birthday party from a few weeks ago. Gabriel asks about what he’s wearing.

“Why does it matter?” I respond.

“He’s wearing my favorite shirt that I ended up giving to Mia.” He texts.

“Damn, that’s messed up.” I reply and he leaves me on read.

I’m pretty sure he must be looking for more liquor to drink right now. I hurry to find an open register, it’s right where David standing in line for. He’s buff and tall, I honestly do not judge Mia, but I still think that was a pretty shitty move from her. I decide to take my chances to try and investigate this situation a bit further. Maybe I’ll be lucky, and he won’t remember my face from the party. I tap his shoulder and ask where he got his shirt from.

“From a friend,” he says.

“Your friend has good taste then,” I smile back at him.

“Well, she was going to donate it,” he says. “So, I decided to take it.”

At least he said “friend” I guess that’s a good sign. I nod my head and keep on smiling then go back to my phone to text Gabriel. But then I hear him talking to me again.

“Hey, aren’t you friends with Mia?”

Shit, he did recognize me. I explain that I’m actually friends with her ex. He lets out a small “oh” and his face changes drastically. I tell him how sad it is that they broke up, but he doesn’t respond or even nod. I say how Gabriel’s having a hard time and he laughs dryly. I just stare at him, waiting for an explanation to his rude response.

“It’s none of my business,” he says. “But he fucked up, so maybe he deserves it.”

“What to do you mean?” I ask.



He asks if I know why Mia dumped Gabriel. Then I realize I don’t. I didn’t really ask Gabriel and he gave me very little information about it. He’s always been very private about his romantic life. The only thing he talks about is how crazy the women he dates turn out to be. He always says how even though he doesn’t believe in Karma, that he must’ve done something in his past life for having such “bad luck” in dating. Gabriel told me that Mia was angry about “stupid shit” and that she just ended up dumping him for no good reason.

David tells me that Mia had sent Gabriel some nudes and he ended up sharing them online. I asked David a few times if he was sure. But I couldn’t believe it. I’ve known Gabriel since first grade. I tell David that maybe Mia is just confused. Although now I feel like the only one who is confused in this whole situation. I go back to my car and toss the grocery bag with the Advil and Tylenol in the passenger seat. I stare at the two pill bottles. I really don’t know the difference between one brand or the other. I begin to think that there are a lot more things that I don’t actually know anything about.

## How to

 **How to**



- 
-  **how to** look for a file on google drive
  -  **how to** erase a file that was shared without my consent
  -  **how to** block men who are harassing me online
  -  **how to** file a report on digital violence
  -  **how to** be heard and respected
  -  **how to** erase myself from the internet
  -  **how to** create a new online persona
  -  **how to** stop feeling defenseless
  -  **how to** reclaim my body

## The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Reynolds Pamphlet

The morning after the drive went public there were over 700 names. I read my ex-boyfriend's name on the list. I had this gut feeling – the one I constantly had with him, a dark cloud constantly looming over me during our entire relationship – that I'd find him there. There was no chance or room for mistaking him for another person. His name was one of the very few typed in all caps. It seemed fitting with the type of person he was. “Siempre anda en boca de todos” like my mom used to say.

Next to his name, his age, and school he went to, the text said:

ALTAMENTE AGRESIVO CUANDO ESTA BAJO LA INFLUENCIA DEL ALCOHOL, MALTRATA MUJERES, HACE COMENTARIOS MISOGINOS A SUS EX Y SE VICTIMIZA, CONDUCTAS PSICOPATAS.

I recognized everything that was typed here. This list, these descriptions, like a flashing warning to not enter the wrong side of the freeway, for all of those with access to this link. All of it was true. I knew how aggressive he could get, even if it never happened when I was around. Yet he could point out a different person that hated him from any crowd we were in and proudly announce how he could beat any one of them up. I knew about those misogynistic comments, yet I only truly noticed them after we broke up. I knew he played the victim – it seemed as if the entire world was against him, and he had no idea why – but I was always willing to come and rescue him. I carried the weight of his mistakes with me for years. I knew about the many times he tried therapy and how he stopped taking medication for his anger issues. And I knew about the abuse, I had my own long and secret list of it.

I don't know what hurt the most. Whether it was the fact that I didn't write him in, and that there was at least one woman out there – I was sure that there were a few more of us who

weren't surprised to see him there – who included him on that list. Or the fact that I wasn't the one who was brave enough to speak up. I knew the truth and kept it like those secrets that everyone in the family knows yet no one speaks of. Like the one about the uncle who's a drunk and has another family on the bad side of town. Or the cousin who's always done drugs, the one who rarely shows up to family gatherings, but when he does no one ever treats him differently. He was my secret, of the family we said we would build one day.

The Google Doc got shut down the next day. Men who were on that list defended themselves over social media, men who were friends with the abusers stood by them, some stated that these women should file an official police report or a legal complaint instead. “You all are ruining these men's lives,” some said. I saw the world I knew slowly burn over arguments, even some jokes, through Twitter and Facebook for a few days. And during as weeks went by, I couldn't stop wondering what to do or say next. I struggled to find a way to respond to this.

In *Hamilton* Eliza Schuyler burns all the letters that Alexander Hamilton wrote to her, after reading about his affair in the Reynolds Pamphlet. This was a document which Alexander Hamilton published as a defense against accusations that he was stealing from the Treasury Department. In the Reynolds Pamphlet he described an affair that he had with another woman to try and save his name and reputation from the allegations. After the focus is turned to Eliza, she says: “I'm erasing myself from the narrative. Let future historians wonder how Eliza reacted when you broke her heart.” She described her pain, embarrassment, anger – which I related to – but I always wondered how she managed to do this with complete sternness and why she chose remove herself from this narrative.

I always had big birthday parties when I was younger. On most of those parties, a kid always ended up making me cry. Whether it was a girl who said she would take away all my

presents, or another girl who got angry at me for inviting someone she didn't like, a kid spilling orange soda on my new dress, or a kid saying I looked ugly. One thing was sure, I would be crying at some point during my party. My mom would pull me to the side and tell me to rise above and put on a smile. She'd say I needed to be grateful and polite to all those guests who came to celebrate me. So, I learned to pick myself up, wipe my tears away, and forgive whoever hurt my feelings. I learned to hide away how I felt from a very young age, but I always knew I wasn't very good at it. Eliza was the ultimate example of "hurt-girl-who-rises-above-it-all" for me. But was this something she truly wanted to do? Was something I needed to do?

Years later almost no one mentions the list. But I still carry it with me. And even if the words, that some brave woman wrote, still question why I – the one he used to call "the love of my life," the one who stayed over ten years by his side, the one who still carried him like a wine stain over white clothes – wasn't part of this narrative. Why I let myself stay in the shadows, stay in denial.

Maybe "Burn" would've been more special if Eliza burned everything down, maybe she needed to be written by a woman. And now I am choosing to create and share my own narrative. I have pen and paper here; I get to write my own story. I don't have to let "future historians wonder" how I reacted, maybe they do need to know just how heavy it was to try and carry all of this. And I won't just be erased, I will let my words create me and this story anew.

## Our Bodies Are Battlefields

*"I think I developed language skills to deal with the threat. It's the girl thing to do – you know, instead of pulling out a gun."*  
-Barbara Kruger

A disembodied  
face, split  
into positive and negative. Light  
against dark, perfect  
symmetry, the long-awaited equity.

Your body  
nonexistent yet coveted. Invaluable  
yet admission tickets are free. They'll decide  
who to deny access to, yours  
will be the first to be  
a no body.

You connect two combat zones. You are  
the land you're fighting in. You are  
the land you're fighting for. Your voice

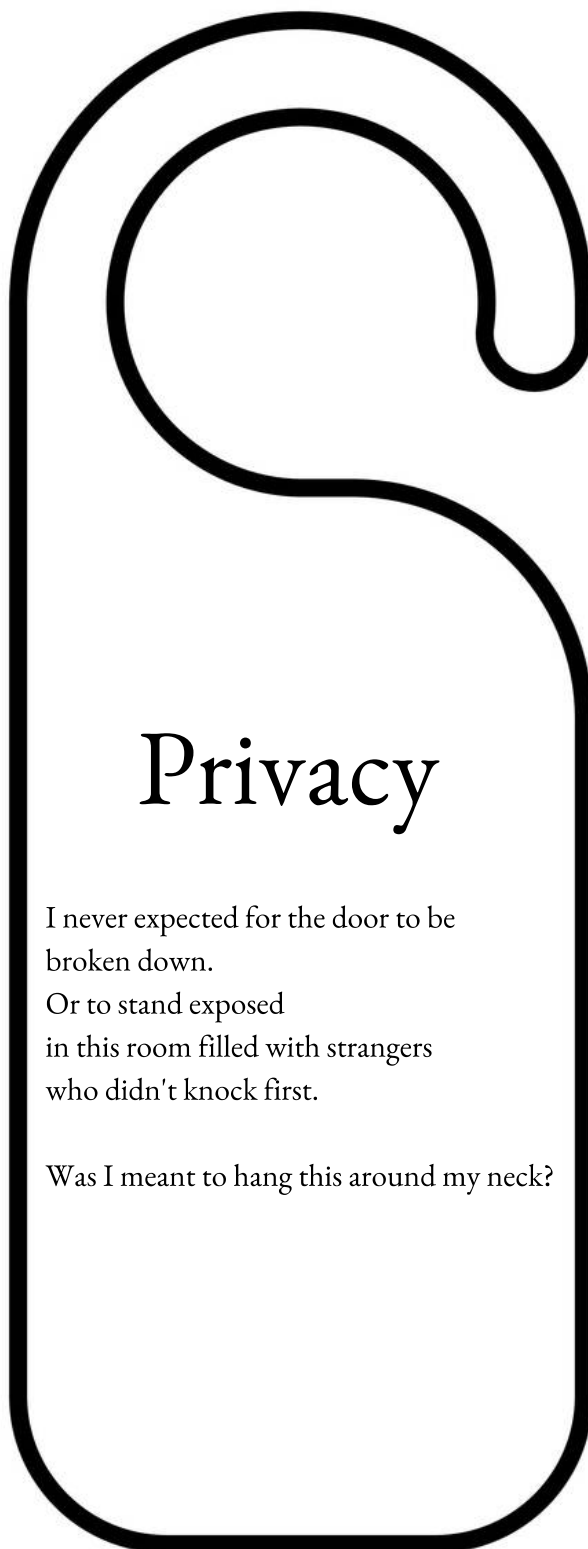
is a  
warning shot. The echoes  
of each syllable slipping from your lips will reach  
their ringing ears in the aftermath.

Your eyes meet ours, you are  
what lives beyond beauty. You exist  
in the body that is invisible for others. You choose  
what gets to be your

battlefield.  
You recover what has been taken from you, slowly  
and by the hand guide it back  
to homeland.



Privacy



# Privacy

I never expected for the door to be  
broken down.

Or to stand exposed  
in this room filled with strangers  
who didn't knock first.

Was I meant to hang this around my neck?

## A Perfect Crime

He watches another true crime documentary. Almost all the elements are there. The suffering victim who is accused of her own abuse. The authority figures who pretend to listen and ask invasive questions. The blind witnesses, and the silent ones beyond the screen, watching hour after hour of this show. Passing around the evidence like popcorn. The culprit that remains hidden until now. Hours later he wakes up, sweaty forehead, hands bloody, a racing heart. He hurries to his bathroom sink to see the water turn crimson while washing down the drain. He knows that this is not an unsolved crime. The culprit was here all along, binging on bodies that never agreed to appear on his screen. He's an active participant and all the evidence points back to him who nonetheless will make it out of this unscathed. He'll reach for the remote control and move onto the next show.

← Supuestos Victimarios Jrz/EP

Hoja 1

ACOSADOR, ABUSA DE MUJERES Y TAMBIEN DE MENORES DE EDAD, CHANTAJEA PARA OBTENER FOTOS E INCLUSO SEXO, ADEMAS INTENTA EMBRIAGARLAS PARA PODER CONSEGUIR SEXO, MANIPULADOR, TE TACHA DE PUTA SI ES QUE LLEGAS A HABLAR MAL DE EL O DE SUS ACCIONES, TIENE FOTOS DE MUCHAS MUJERES CUANDO ERAN MENORES DE EDAD, Me violó, me manipuló para creer que fue algo normal, tiene fotos de muchas mujeres y ha dicho que si se sigue hablando de el va a pasar las nudas por medio de un perfil falso, me tuvo retenida dentro de un carro y me comenzó a tocar a la fuerza. Manipulador, amenaza con mandar tus nudas, abuso sexualmente de mi cuando tenia 16 años tambien sufrí maltrato psicológico por parte de el

ONCEAVO FORMULARIO DONDE SE LE ACUSAN DE LOS MISMOS HECHOS, UNA DE LAS VICTIMAS CORROBORA LA INFORMACION se como pudo ser coordinador en NSP y nunca hicieran nada y todavia le permiten participar en el grupo pastoral juvenil zin hacerle nada , se siente inseguro y protegido por todos sus amigos que saben que es un abusador y aun asi lo protegen y si les reclaman algo se hurlan de ti y hasta de loca te tachan de mentada que es peor si el que abusa de las chavas o sus amigos que siempre han sabido lo que hace y lo protegen

completa las odiaba y me siento muy mal de no haber estado para ellas por eso el día de hoy yo digo esto

mucha mierda ,hasta los directivos les decían cosas

Me aventó al sillón de su casa y se puso encima de mi no me dejaba irme y me gritaba cosas asquerosas y quería besarme a la fuerza me sostenía de manos y pies.

**Quiero tener la seguridad**

Mensajes incomodo con intenciones sexuales y morbosas, el siendo mayor de edad y yo de 17

Es una experiencia propia, me reenviaba fotos yo subía diciendo que le mostrara más parte de mi cuerpo y que me imaginaba en su cama.

Me drogo y abuso de mi en una fiesta, él y un amigo suyo, solapandolo cuando lo enfrenté.

**de poder avanzar**

tiene un grupo de messenger donde sus amigos se pasan packs de chavas que fueron su ex o que estan saliendo ademas es un acosador de menores de edad

es un machista retrograta

Jamás se lo dije a nadie con detalle y mucho menos con nombre, siempre pensé que no contaba como abuso porque era mi "novio" y técnicamente no me defendí.

**y llegar a mi destino**

HACE COMENTARIOS MISOGINOS A SUS EX Y SE VICTIMIZA, CONDUCTAS PSICOPATAS

**sana y salva.**

POR FAVOR NO!  
Lo acabo de subir pero POR FAVOR QUE NO SALGA, ya que posee fotos comprometedoras mías y es capaz de exponerlas y me podrían sacar de mi casa si esas fotos dan a la luz. POR FAVOR NO!

Era menor de edad, yo 16 y el 18

No se si a otras parejas le paso lo mismo

History of the Nude

Jacopo Tintoretto - Sandro Botticelli  
Bob Guccione - Tiziano "Titan"  
Gerard Damiano - "Titan" Vecelli  
Ruben - Noé - Hugo  
Aldo - Noé - Alejandro Jodorowsky  
Pedro - Alberto - Andrew Blake - Hugh Hefner  
Oscar - José - Luis - Juan - Gerardo Guccione  
Mario - Martín - Marco - Ruben - Damiano  
Gasper Spinelli - Anthony Laguerre - Andre  
Antonio - Tiziano

## Conditioning

Good girl was taught to keep her face and dress clean from food stains. She never eats cherry popsicles, even though they're her favorite.

Good girl smiles and hugs every family member. Even the estranged uncle who always smells like booze and lingers when she hugs him goodbye.

Good girl knows the right answer to what the English teacher is asking but keeps her hand down so her classmate stops calling her a four-eyed nerd.

Good girl paints her nails pink, instead of black.

Good girl was told she couldn't have a boyfriend until she turned 40. Her first relationship happens when she is 20.

Good girl says yes to being touched by her boyfriend even when she's not in the mood.

Good girl learns how to disassociate when her boyfriend yells at her while she's driving.

Good girl pretends to laugh when her boyfriend jokes about her "eating like a cow."

Good girl does not respond to the text messages from multiple women saying her boyfriend asked for naked pictures of them.

Good girl knows that tears are not a complimenting look. She swallows them, puts on a smile – this is what she learned she wears best – and ignores the painful lump on her throat.

Good girl takes naked pictures of herself to assure her boyfriend's love.

Good girl wants to feel chosen.

Good girl is hurt and tired.

Good girl fears her anger, she believes it's a sign that something's wrong with her.

Girl, you don't always have to be good.

## Actual Teenage Justice

Response to “Canceled at 17”

To Fiona:

Did you read your name in someone else’s story:

“Fiona dumped him.”

as another cheap catchphrase?

Did you feel like you were just

hollow, marketable feminism?

“Good for her.”

Were you forced with the responsibility  
of protecting your abuser? Did he ever text you  
in the middle of the night, demanding  
to know why you told everyone what he did?  
Just like he demanded you to send him nudes?  
And did you respond? Or just left him  
on read, wanting to ask why he did it  
in the first place.

Did you feel safe when speaking  
to someone older than you,  
about this secret that was only meant  
to be kept between you and the person  
you loved? Did you have an answer  
when they asked why you  
sent those nudes.

Was the blame forced on you?  
Did it feel like carrying someone else’s textbooks  
every day? Soon your arms got numb,  
your shoulders adjusted to the added weight, your back  
curved into a question mark. Your eyes learned  
all the patterns of the floor tiles from the school hallways.

Did you feel like your voice was stolen?  
Like when boys hide your backpack. Only this time  
it feels like it’s taken away forever and no one  
is willing to admit its hiding place.  
You learn how to live  
in the gaping silence.

Do you wonder if anyone is asking if you’re ok?  
Has anyone reached out since?  
Did journalists offer to write more about *you*?

Know that you are not a footnote.  
You are not a chapter, a reference.  
You are the entire story, one in need  
of a better ending.

## Pain Into Fuel

I wrote so much  
about our catastrophic life  
that life itself began  
catching up to my words.

I tried clawing metaphors out  
of my body but they weren't enough  
to save me. I filled jars  
with words, bathtubs  
with my poems, yet I hear  
the echo from the void you left  
inside me.  
I tried crafting a happy ending  
out of  
suffocating  
air.  
I turned pain  
into fuel.

I once read that poetry would never  
forget me.  
Now I wonder: will it  
save me?



## You Are the Room Where It Happens

The dagger you brought as evidence  
is pointed back at you. You hold and aim it  
back to explain why every night your hands  
become sharp as car keys. Why you shoot  
pepper spray – instead of spiderwebs –  
from your wrists. How you turn loud  
music into deafening silence. Why  
your “resting bitch face” becomes your armor.

And they say they are trying to understand.  
Yet they fail to see that nerves of steel won't cut it.  
Yours transform into barbed wire, piercing  
right through your skin, hoping  
this will keep unwanted hands from touching you.

And you make sure they see  
the engraved “I embrace the worst-case scenario”  
on your sword. They begin to hear  
how your steps make the ladder - the one  
they made you climb in the first place - tremble. Soon  
you take control of the room.  
You are no longer an outsider.  
You are the room where it happens.  
You ask the right questions. You own  
the entire fucking building.

### Three Options

“We have been preyed upon like animals. Maybe we should respond like animals.”  
– *Women Talking*, Written and Directed by Sarah Polley

Do we do nothing  
and remain suspended in time?  
Genuine flesh over an immobile  
body, like stuffed animals  
showcased behind glass.

Do we leave the spaces  
that were also meant to be ours?  
Let the fog of ashes from our fire  
settle after we're gone. Let the men adjust  
to the low visibility  
and the deafening silence.

Or do we stay and fight  
through screens and clouds?  
Crystal and ice clusters  
stuck to our knuckles to prove  
we will not be stopped,  
silenced, erased. Let them  
know, they haven't seen  
what fury is.



## Venus

I've been found and pictured bathing  
at the edge of a pond deep in  
the forest in a blossoming clearing. I am  
the connection between  
the rational and the sensual.  
With every curve and crease, my naked  
body radiates over velvet blues. I've been  
carefully placed and arranged  
to seduce thousands of eyes

and minds. My body has been carved  
from marble. My body scattered  
into pieces that have been forgotten  
in the rubble. I stay immobile,  
wondering what matters most.  
Is it the way I looked before,  
while I was complete, or the way I look  
now? Do you care enough about my past  
and how I got here? Or does my value  
increase while I stand  
broken before you?

I was born from abuse and suffering.  
Yet here I am emerging from the sea  
to bring fertility back  
into this barren and dry land.  
And here you are, a witness  
to this miracle. Violets all around  
me, at my disposal for any necessary potion.

Whether in a bath or birthed  
in a meadow and with no myths  
of my own – only known as  
a renamed Aphrodite. When you look  
up at the night sky  
trying to find the brightest of the planets  
you'll whisper my name.  
You'll know me as a driving force  
of life. A natural pursuit  
of pleasure, and the possibility  
to be fit for more than love.

## Possibility

A blinking line in  
an open  
white space.

## My Name

Whenever he used my full name, it always meant bad news. That's how he let me know he was angry about things that were usually out of my control. He learned how to weaponize it and when to pull the trigger. With all the letters of my name he wrote the headline during the evening news. The same letters he used to let people know who was in those pictures. Suddenly my name on that drive seemed more intimate than the lingerie I wore. But when I left that was the last time I let him use it against me. I needed someone to take care of my name even if I wasn't in the room. Even on a shared cloud, I will let it morph, reverberate, exist in any space it needs to.

## The Thing

“What is The Thing?” I read out loud from the billboard to my right while Mark and I drive by through the I-10 on our way to Phoenix.

“Maybe it’s a fly with a tiny top hat, behind a glass display,” Mark says.

“Or a bright, glowing rock from outer space,” I respond.

“The skeleton of El Chupacabras.”

“A beating heart from a stingray.”

And we go back and forth like this. It’s a tradition that we created ever since our first road trip to Los Angeles together a few years back. We began dating freshman year of college. We were in the same RWS class, and we were some of the few students who actually responded to the terrible questions the professor asked. We hated the awkward silence that came after the professor asked what we thought of the readings that clearly almost no one had done. Then one of those times Mark and I saw the annoyance in each other’s eyes and laughed a bit. Afterwards we’d always walk together when class ended. That was three years ago.

We took our first road trip to Los Angeles to see Twenty One Pilots in concert. We spent most of the little money we made as undergraduate students on the concert tickets themselves, so we had to drive all the way to LA. On the road we began noticing these billboard signs that promoted “The Thing.” I had seen these signs all my life during family road trips through the I-10 from El Paso through Arizona. It was only until Mark and I were on our first road trip that we really began paying attention to these signs. For miles and miles all we’d see were these big yellow signs with bold blue letters that invited travelers to see the “Mystery of the Desert,” or “Seeing is Believing,” “A Sight to Behold.” Others had pictures of aliens, dinosaurs, or even the souvenirs they sold on Exit 322. It became a bit ridiculous to see how many signs they’d put up

and how unappealing they were, yet somehow, we were intrigued as to what was this “Thing.” Mark and I began theorizing about what it could be and every time we’d take the I-10 to drive to LA or Phoenix – this was at least twice a year, depending on how many concerts and trips to Disneyland and Universal Studios we could afford – we’d come up with an idea even more absurd than the last. We had promised to finally find out what The Thing was on our next trip which never happened.

For a few months, prior to when everything exploded, I’d sense something different in him. He was on his phone a lot more when we’d go out. After asking him to join in on the conversations with our friends, he’d leave his phone face down on the table, something he’d never done before. He started drinking a lot more than usual. He would have a couple or a few beers, then he began drinking whiskey along with more and more beers. He’d be the life of the party if we had friends over to our apartment, but as soon as they’d leave, I could feel a thick deafening fog invade every room of our place.

One night he had a couple of his friends from his accounting classes over. Every time he had them over, he’d always let me know ahead of time and extend the invitation. He loved having me around his friends but was also glad if I made plans of my own that day. Either plan worked for us. That night I got home earlier than he did, and he arrived late with new friends I’d never seen before. He stumbled when he walked through the door with them.

I sat down next to Mark on our couch. No one asked my name, but I bit my tongue and kept smiling. I tried finding a bit of comfort in this situation and decided to place my hand on Mark’s knee like I usually did, but right when I made the move, Mark pushed my hand away. This time I began chewing on the inside of my cheeks and around my inner lips. I began tasting blood at one point as the minutes went by. I decided to excuse myself from their conversation



about politics and on whether Trump would run for re-election or not. No one really noticed, they just kept on with their conversation. And just when I was about to enter our bedroom, I heard one of Mark's new friends – the loudest one – ask him if he knew who Leslie was.

“Damn right he does,” the other guy responded. “Of course, we know, right Mark?”

I heard Mark let out a dry laugh and heard them high five in agreement. Mark came to bed a few hours later, smelling like a mixture of Whiskey, cheap beer and cigarettes. I asked him the next morning if he knew a Leslie, and he said he had no idea what I was talking about and kept scrolling through his phone. The feeling I held for months, as I held my breath and bit my tongue, trying to avoid confrontation, all of it kept growing.

A few weeks later I saw an announcement that The 1975 were going to be in Phoenix. I told Mark about it; he'd been in a better mood for a couple of days then. I felt like he was trying to make up for all those weeks of drinking and weird vibes.

“We can go if you want,” Mark said in a voice that sounded like a kid who had just been scolded. I bought the tickets in that moment and Mark said he'd pay me back soon.

“Maybe we can finally find out what The Thing is,” he said later.

A couple of months before our trip to The 1975 concert in Phoenix, I was on the phone with my best friend Karla. She'd just broken up with her boyfriend the night before, so she'd been crying, laughing, and cursing him out on the other side of the phone for about an hour now. Finally, after making comments on how she was doing better off, how he'd be the one who would regret this decision, and all common things you say in hopes of making your friend feel better after a breakup, I told her how we could try changing the subject to distract her now.

“Sure,” said Karla. “Actually, I did have some chisme for you.”

“Spill it,” I said.

“Did you see that there’s a Google Drive link that dudes are passing around with nudes from many different women? It’s been public for a few days now.”

“What? That’s so disgusting,” I said, “Did the women know about this?”

“Of course not, Sam. These are trash men we’re talking about, of course they’d make shitty moves like that.”

“It’s awful,” I said, then my interest peaked a little. “Did you see the list?”

“I did,” Karla responded. “Ana was in it, dude, and she has a kid now. I felt super bad.”

We talked about all the women we knew and how disgusted and angry we felt about this. Hours later Mark arrived home and I tried mentioning my excitement for our upcoming trip, but he seemed to be elsewhere again. I began telling him about this Google Drive thing, to see if this would catch his attention and maybe we’d have a conversation. Even if it would be about terrible gossip. He sat across the kitchen table from me, drinking a coffee and barely saying any word, his eyes glued to his phone all the time. I had lost all my patience by finding out about this that I snapped at him.

“Are you even listening to what I’m saying right now?” I asked.

“I am,” he said. His eyes looked up at me for a moment, then they went back to his phone on his lap, underneath our kitchen table. I stood up and took his phone and held it up in the air with my right hand.

“What the fuck, Sam?”

“Would you just pay attention to our conversation for a minute?”

“I am! Just give me my phone back.”

I was about to give it back then I felt the phone repeatedly vibrate. I glanced at the screen and saw the name Leslie pop up as different Instagram DM notifications. “Was it you Mark?” “I

know it was you, I just want you to admit it.” “WTF Mark, just answer me.” “Call me right now.” “You asked me for nudes to share them? Just be a man and admit you fucked up.” One message after the other came up. I looked back at Mark, and he had the same look my little brother had that time he broke our kitchen window with a baseball.

Mark danced around the fact that he’d been texting and seeing Leslie for a while now. He said how he’d met her at a party and how she was the one chasing after him. He said he didn’t think this would affect our relationship since they hadn’t slept together. He never admitted to having or sharing the nudes. After screams and tears I asked him if we could take a break. He said that “breaks” never worked, either we were a couple, or we weren’t. “Either we make this thing work, or we give up,” he’d said. It took me a few days with him still living in my apartment as if nothing had happened, to realize that we’d stopped being a couple for a while. We barely liked each other at this point, I just couldn’t accept it yet. It was time to pick up the shattered glass on the kitchen floor. I thought I could sweep it under a rug, pretending it never happened, hoping nobody would notice anything was broken in the first place. But inevitably the shards would end up cutting whoever stepped over the rug. I could also cover the window with cardboard, maybe even an old piece of wood, but I’d be choosing to cook and eat in the dark. Or I could finally put the ball back in a drawer, pick up the broken glass, throw it all away, not minding having some cuts here and there. Then I’d try my best to find a replacement. I started to like the idea of a remodeled window.

Now, months later, I am driving through the I-10 on my way to Phoenix. This is the first time I drive this far by myself. I pass by the familiar yellow billboards and realize I am just a couple of exits away from the “mystery of the desert” exit. I decide to stop by and finally find out what The Thing is. I park in under the big 50’s horror comic-like sign, there are barely any

cars around. I enter the store and look for the entrance to “The Thing.” A store clerk finds me roaming around and asks me if I’m interested in the attraction. Before I can clearly think, I respond, “Actually, no.” Then I walk back to my car.

I realize that I don’t really want to know what “The Thing” is. Maybe The Thing is a fog that looms for months over your head, eventually takes over your body and paralyzes you into staying somewhere you don’t really want to be in. Maybe you didn’t want to bother The Thing, you let it sit on your couch, grow bacteria on it, but you didn’t want to upset it, so you smiled and agreed to its every need, and it ended up contaminating you as well. But maybe The Thing is a body that cannot be owned, compartmentalized, or passed around by strangers, no matter how hard you force it. Maybe The Thing is learning how to go through life on your own, or how to live without sending what you need to the back of the room. Maybe The Thing is a mirror where future you is looking back, thanking you for walking away, for realizing there’s no monetary value to you. You cannot be commodified; you exist beyond a spectacle.

## The Eggnog in The Back of The Fridge

I bought a small carton of eggnog  
before Christmas.  
I kept saving it thinking  
I'd be in the mood one night  
for a glass.

I didn't check the expiration date  
when I bought it.  
After a few weeks I was glad to see  
the date was farther away  
than I thought.

Christmas came, then New Years,  
then Valentine's Day.  
Each time I opened the fridge I vowed  
to either drink it  
or throw it away.

March came, I shoved  
the eggnog behind  
the oat milk, yogurt,  
the half-eaten chicken alfredo,  
meant for two.

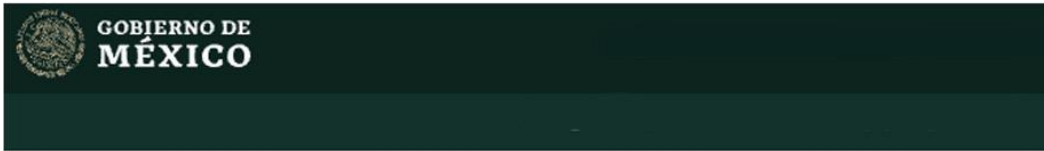
Still, I couldn't bring myself  
to throw it away. Until my fridge  
smelled like a backpack in which I forgot  
a pb&j sandwich.

I guess I was waiting  
to feel in the mood.  
Or maybe I was hoping  
it would never expire.  
Until the stench penetrated  
everything around it. I wanted  
it to last forever.  
I didn't want to throw away  
what I thought I really wanted.



and you will see me  
in them, *tómame en tus manos*, feel  
free to grab what you can carry, *if*  
you can carry it as well as I did.

I was the Atlantic, you were the Pacific.  
The day our waves recognized each other  
they tore.



~~Si fuiste víctima de violencia digital denuncia en el Ministerio Público de tu localidad.~~

Y si después de implementar una ley y seguir estos pasos, todo sigue igual

~~Recomendaciones ¿Cómo mantener chats más seguros?~~

la siguiente (que debió ser la primera) recomendación es:

~~Bloquea tu celular~~

**Deja de comercializar y objetivizar**

~~Instala un sistema de bloqueo en tu celular (pin, contraseña o código) los cuerpos de las mujeres.~~

~~Revisa permisos y accesos~~

**Toma responsabilidad**

~~Antes de descargar las apps revisa permisos y accesos, así podrás saber cómo manejan tus datos y privacidad. sobre las opresiones creadas con cada click.~~

~~Fijate en la mensajería instantánea~~

**Concientiza**

~~Si utilizas aplicaciones de mensajería instantánea cerciérate que tengan cifrado de punta a punta. para lograr un cambio real y duradero.~~

~~Verifica en dos pasos~~

Date cuenta de que

~~Activa el sistema de verificación en dos pasos.~~

**lo Virtual**

~~Bloquea la pantalla~~

**es Real.**

~~Activa el bloqueo de pantalla.~~



## Ars Poetica II

Let my poetry outlive me as I cross-stitch  
my words onto a canvas.  
A clear image  
of the world inside my head.

Donde se plasma mi esencia en todas  
mis historias por contar.  
Let them come to life whenever,  
however they need.

## Incantation

I speak to you from the same tomb you left me in.  
I took my melted candles, the tireless flame  
of fire and wheeled you out of this body.

Hear me, I call on you  
from the other side where there is only static  
coming through a now cursed screen.

I speak to you as I hold my own lifeless frame.  
I carry these traces of passed around body parts  
in my own hands, lay them onto the recesses of the earth  
so that it may accomplish what you couldn't.

Your ground trembles with anger at my powerful  
incantations, yet it was you – among all men  
who made it possible for others to access  
our private arrangement.

I invoke your name and see my own  
reappear from the shadows.  
I – a glaring proof of magic – cast this spell  
from my glowing, radioactive recipe  
without an antidote. This spell  
and I will be permanent.

## Futuristic Body

A hundred years from now  
my poetry floats through the air  
you breathe.

My words turn into visible coding.  
Like blowing on a dandelion,  
you see my ones and zeroes  
pass you by.

With my coded poetry  
I built the Woman 3000.  
A hologram which replaces  
women's bodies. This allows  
no chance to be seen or touched  
by external and unwanted beings.  
Yet men yearn to hold  
flesh instead of tiny pixels.

The only remaining body,  
made of real skin and bone  
has no monetary price.  
But it is not as simple  
as stretching out a hand  
and touching it. It is not just a click  
on a phone. A sharing  
of a link.

I've created  
a mechanism that scans retinas  
looking for pure intentions. To bring  
this body back to safety.  
And so far, I haven't found  
a worthy subject  
to test this out.

## Ode to a Nude Shared Without Consent

O perfect angle, O perfect pose  
your most coveted and previously concealed  
areas. You show confidence, steal  
his breath, make his heart rate spike.

More than showing smooth skin, it is  
reassurance. To share  
what you look like upon dim light, in  
a state you reserved for two gleaming eyes. You want

to see the brute curiosity as those pupils dilate  
when landing on you. You want to feel  
the rushing pulse, the gentle hand against  
what you let those eyes see.

Until you fall in the hands of a man with  
a smartphone or computer which means any at all.  
Thus, you open the door where you once  
peeked through the keyhole, wondering what  
was on the other side.

Here and now, you find strength within your exposed skin.  
You stand even straighter. You strap on  
your highest heels, you are

unreachable, beyond the one who shared  
what was only meant to be his.



## Medusa

The coils of my spiraling snakes around my head  
can give you wisdom and power.  
Can heal and immortalize you.  
But you are too afraid to look.

I have never been terrified of the power  
behind my own gaze. I wish  
to be dangerously feminine. Reborn  
from chaos I become the emblem  
of the female erotic strength  
which you most fear. I find beauty within  
the horror you try to cause.

My spilled blood does not drift away.  
I use it to create new worlds  
where women like me  
can safely belong. Where we live and let live.

I am no longer a thing  
in the midst of things or a necessary  
and punished victim.  
Judged, categorized, externally identified,  
threatening and reduced to  
existing for others.

With severed radiance I am the one  
who now holds the mirror.  
Because it is your own  
appearance that fossilizes you.

## Amarre: A Spell

A red or pink candle  
A veladora  
A journal  
A pen or pencil  
Incense  
Lighter

Take a moment to center yourself.  
*A moment that was meant for you and your partner  
But was shared with strangers.*  
Connect your breath and body.  
*Your body now up in a cloud, a drive  
being passed around without you even knowing.*

If you're comfortable,  
*Which you were never asked about in the first place.*  
say a prayer like this one –  
“I call on you Madre Tierra, my deepest knowing, my angels  
guide me as I call on the energy of healing to gain back my own body.”

Continue breathing and in your journal write down  
the link to the drive where you will find yourself  
or who you used to be. Write the name of your abuser  
anonymously, as a warning for other women  
like you, out there.

Burn the paper from your journal.  
Draw a bath in a candle-lit room.  
Add a dash of honey that can sweeten any unhealed areas.  
Crimson clover to cover  
what has been uncovered by many eyes.

Release and reclaim your body.  
Now is the time to bring in what you truly desire.  
If needed, light another candle  
and chant until you find yourself again.

## Tóxico/Tóxica

tóxico, tóxica

*adjetivo* · nombre masculino o femenino

1. [sustancia] Que es venenoso o que puede causar trastornos o la muerte a consecuencia de las lesiones debidas a un efecto químico. "un producto altamente tóxico"
2. *Adjetivo* Que es producido por una sustancia tóxica.

La gran mayoría de mi vida crecí con el miedo a enfrentarme con algo tóxico. Aprendí a nunca beber ni tocar frascos con stickers amarillos, una calavera, y letras negras que me advertían que algo podría hacerme mucho daño o incluso matarme. Como típica Mexicana, crecí con la escena del *El Chavo del Ocho*, donde Don Ramón advierte del peligro de ciertas sustancias y/o circunstancias tóxicas. Esta palabra fue de las primeras lecciones de vida que tuve, y de las primeras definiciones que tuve que aprender a identificar.

Seis meses después de la ruptura de mi última relación, mientras intentaba unir mis piezas rotas con ayuda psicológica, una noche recibí una notificación de Facebook. Algún desconocido había comentado una foto mía. Me pregunté como pasaba esto, si mi perfil es privado. El comentario era sobre una foto etiquetada de un año atrás, que había subido mi ex-novio a su perfil – la única que llegué a convencerlo de subir, ya que según sus palabras, las redes sociales “no le interesaban mucho.”

Y en la foto se desprendía una conversación en los comentarios.

-“Tu morrita?” Comentaba el primer extraño.

-“La tóxica,” comentaba otro.

-“La que lo hizo llorar,” continuaban los comentarios.

-“Sí, ya dejenme llorar,” comentó mi ex-novio.

Esta era una conversación donde yo era el foco, donde públicamente se hablaba de mí. Yo era la audiencia de mi propio juicio y aun así no pude defenderme mientras mi abusador seguía con el juego de palabras. Frente a un mundo virtual sentí como se me fue colgando un letrero que advertía a otros de algo que ni yo entendía. ¿Como poder aceptar una nueva definición a una palabra que ya conocía? ¿Como aceptar ser nombrada con una palabra que no me describe realmente? ¿Cómo podía yo ser el daño mientras fui yo la dañada?

Meses después, el nombre de mi ex-novio apareció en una lista de Google Drive donde se le acusaba de abuso emocional. Esta vez los comentarios de desconocidos no aparecieron. Las voces que opinaban en aquel momento, ahora se quedaron calladas. No hubo juego de palabras, nadie lo llamó tóxico, aunque salieran a la luz sus conductas abusivas. Y el siguió con su vida.

Después de años creo que al final pude comprender que si miras solo desde del interior de la botella de veneno, el exterior te parecerá tóxico. Tal vez quien crea el peligro termina creyendo que todo lo que se encuentra en el camino tiene la culpa del daño que este mismo ha causado.

Desde entonces he decidido borrar esta palabra de mi vocabulario. No creo que existan personas



tóxicas. Existen lados de historias que no se cuentan y que otros deciden interpretar. Hay abuso que es invisible ante otros y existen puntos de heridas que la gente decide omitir y terminan dañando a los demás en su paso. Y que en algunos casos, se deciden trabajar y sanar. He aprendido a diferenciar a las personas heridas que hieren sin responsabilidad alguna de las que hieren por error y lo logran admitir. Y ya no tengo miedo de enfrentarme con algo tóxico, porque al fin sé cómo se ve, y si logre sobrevivir al daño una vez, lo puedo hacer de nuevo.

## Dying Suns

“I know the only force I can possibly enact on him is to allow myself to become a nuclear inferno, engulfing him, yes, but also converting myself into something else...”

– Chanda Prescod-Weinstein *The Disordered Cosmos*

I am a dying sun that runs out of hydrogen, explosion after explosion, until I can no longer take it. I am a dying sun with a nuclear inferno, propelling death after death.

I am a planetary nebula created after the explosion. The view may be beautiful on the outside, but up close and inside, my life-sustaining planets are expiring.

I pretended to be a self-sustaining woman who had made her own hurt turn invisible to become more appealing. I pretended to be a warrior.

Abuse looks and sounds so familiar. Like the warm feeling from an open flame. Abuse is realizing you got burned even after someone made you believe you wouldn't and then forced your hand directly into the fire.

A survivor is a person who, despite almost dying, continues to live. I am a survivor, shrinking, pulsating, and growing in cycles. I create my own cosmic dust out of this painful explosion in and all around me.

I am a survivor sending shockwaves that ripple through and reach other planets out there that need their story to be told. This is mine and their nuclear infernos engulfing something bigger than ourselves.

I keep adding words to a blank page. I keep adding chapters to my story to see how it changes, and how inevitably it'll keep changing me. I keep burning and raving. Nevertheless, the tragically beautiful nebula keeps on glowing.

## Body as Planetarium

Her skin is Mars, its thicker atmosphere created  
after foreign eyes desired and judged her.  
Clothed herself  
in a dusty, cold desert.

She is Venus, who chose  
a different direction than the rest  
of the galaxy. Who needed  
to take on her own journey. Her rage made her  
the hottest of the planets by learning  
it is either burn or be burned.

After seeing and collecting  
many moons, she is Jupiter.  
All of those that men once  
brought down for her are now exhibited  
as a pristine collection of her own.  
That red mark which reminds her  
of the great storm she had to endure, she carries  
it with pride.

Perceived as cold, but her dazzling,  
icy rings, are what makes her  
unique from the rest. She is now known  
as “Spectacular Saturn”

And in this created world, inhabited  
by ice mountains and ice-covered  
plains, you can still hear the frozen, dwarfed echoes  
of her voice trying to reach back to Earth.  
She becomes Pluto, questioning  
her place in the system, trying to find  
where she belongs.

And once in a few decades  
you can catch her as a comet illuminating  
the sky. Her body splits into thousands of pieces  
igniting the dark blue night in a meteor shower  
with the light claimed back  
as her own.

## Heart-wrecked

I was told I needed to be heartbroken  
to understand breakup songs.  
Others treat heartbreak as a vacation cruise-ship.  
They ignore that I've been on this sinking boat  
before, and I've been trying to make sense  
of this lingering sorrow.

I'm always heartbroken. Even  
when you can hear my laughter  
from the other side of the room.

When he left, the flood came. His soft breaths,  
coming from his side of the bed, were washed away.  
Now there's only my gasping  
for air in the middle of the drowning nights.

Yet my lungs regenerated when learning how to take in  
fresh air. New tissue formed over what had been inundated.  
Somehow, I still see some traces of rotten flesh  
reminding me that I survived the wreckage.

## Body of Mine

My body carries memories of phantom limbs, the ghost of arms once wrapped around me and the warm hands that thawed my frozen fingers. Invisible scars cover my heart like cobwebs I keep forgetting to dust.

I know the road my tears take down my cheeks like the road I take each summer through I-10 all the way to a California beach.

I catch glimpses of past loves every now and then. Crystal crumbs settling on the optic nerve tugging at what is now lost.

My body has the power of invisibility yet sometimes it can take up too much space.

Every now and then I can see new smile lines begin to form and I wear them like gold medals. I carry laughter tattooed on my back and use the leftover sadness to support my spine.

My body celebrates the stories that it carries on every vein, every pulse, every single renewed cell, every heartbeat.

### Ars Poetica III

I am not afraid to show  
how words healed my wounds. I write my way out  
of a bleeding heart, I make the shattered  
pieces glimmer. I will make my poems  
glisten for someone else, too.

## Murmuration

A synchronized cloud, celestial strangeness  
moving through sundown, deterring  
predators. We multiply and act  
as one large being to create  
confusion and resistance.

We flutter together and become  
a swooping liquid mass.  
We carry a collective responsibility  
to gather and share information  
crucial for our survival.

No risk  
where there are  
thousands of No risk  
No risk me. where there are  
No risk No risk No risk thousands of  
where there are where there are where there are  
thousands of thousands of thousands of  
No risk No risk me. No risk No risk  
me. me. thousands of  
where there are where there are  
thousands of thousands of  
No risk No risk  
where there are  
where there are  
where there are  
thousands of thousands of  
thousands of thousands of  
me. me. where there are  
No risk No risk  
where there are where there are  
thousands of thousands of  
No risk No risk  
me. me. thousands of  
thousands of  
No risk No risk  
me. No risk where there are  
No risk where there are  
thousands of thousands of  
where there are where there are  
thousands of thousands of  
thousands of thousands of  
me. me. thousands of  
me. where there are  
thousands of thousands of  
me. me.

## Nuestro Fuego

Que mis palabras se queden  
grabadas sobre los brazos  
que me sostienen en esta brigada.

Que se incendien  
nuestros restos, los que echaste al olvido. Porque  
ya no es mi voz la que escuchas, es de ellas.

Y aún con el tiempo, aún lejos  
sientas el calor de una llama que parece  
callada, pero logra transformar todo a su paso.

De este, tu incendio, solo quedará  
nuestro fuego.



## Revelation

Even if my story is written in scarlet,  
I left my mark in yours, a sweet rebellion  
from the rare soul you let drift by, like a comet.  
You will know my secret but proceed with caution.

I took all my dried-up land, offered it to the ocean  
and the waves brought back this revelation.

## Always Becoming

We are not the bridge joining us  
to who we will become.  
We are not our before, we are not our after.  
We are always  
in motion.

We are not a picture, frozen  
in time, the fossilized memory  
of a fleeting kiss that once meant  
home.

The venom someone kissed  
into our mouths settled  
in-between skin and bone. Our veins  
radiating  
within this darkness.

We become a guiding light.  
We are  
always becoming.

## Vita

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