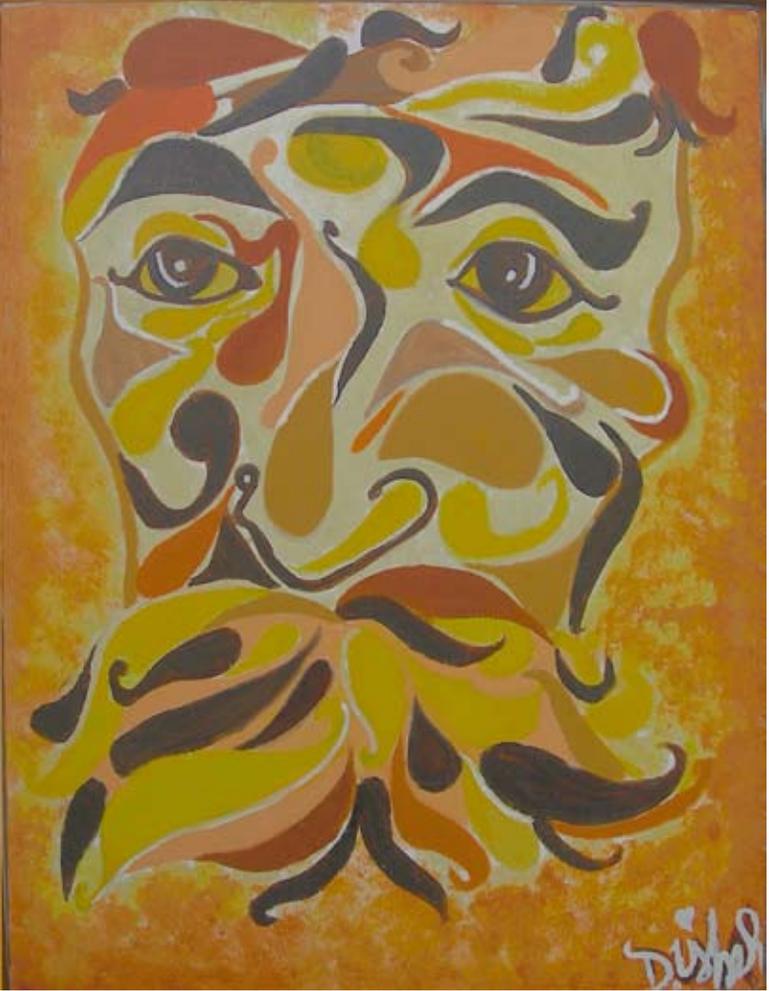


# ¡ESCRIBA! ¡WRITE!

A BI-LINGUAL JOURNAL OF STUDENT ART AND WRITING



VOLUME 5, JUNE 2007

EUGENIO MARÍA DE HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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A CAT'S MEOW PRODUCTION

COVER: Vanessa Usher, "Modern Hostos"  
BACK COVER: Joe A. Bermudez, "Pillar on GWB."

**Introduction**

Miriam Laskin and Jennifer Tang 5

**Poetry**

Miriam Boza Olivari Reply to Neruda 7

Miriam Boza Olivari Pledge of Naucrate 8

Nicole Goodwin Precious Offering 10

Nicole Goodwin Sound of Silence 11

Nicole Goodwin Symphony of the Scribe 12

Pierre Iboudo Poem on Global Warming 13

Sandra May Flowers What a Week! 14

Tanya Mercado Growing Pains 15

**Short Fiction**

Tanya Mercado Life: A Short Story 18

**Creative Non-Fiction**

Victoria Lambey Born in Prison 24

**Essay**

Lucia Garcia Art and Anatomy 27

**Introduction to Art and Photography**

Ian Scott Painting 32

Jennifer Tang Photography 32

**Art and Photography**

Andreina M. Hiraldo Self-Portrait 33

Anthonia Seriki Birds 34

Elayne Vanderbilt Geisha Rising 35

## ★ TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONT)

Sakina Hassan	Mike	36
Migdalia Torres	Focusing on a Straw	37
Anthonia Seriki	Shadows	38
Brian Miller	Hubble Bubble	39
Ptah Miller	Neruda	40
Candido Rodriguez	Leaf	41
Kyle Cooke	Rappers 07	42
Marielkis Liedias	Las Reglas Del Jefe	43
Kiyasha Spencer	Queens/Albany	44
Ashley Ray	Toddler Running	45
Alicia Campuzano	Two Worlds	46
Joseph LaMonica	The Urban Mary	47
Migdalia Torres	Child	48
 <b>Poetry</b>		
Sandra May Flowers	Never Too Old to Learn	49
Sandra May Flowers	Get Up On Your Royal Feet	50
 <b>Essays</b>		
Lucy Liliana Alvarez	The War Against Bacteria	51
Senobia Farrell-Ortiz	Turning My Eyes	55
 <b>Women's History Month</b>		
Jerilyn Fisher	Introduction	62
Anthony Zagami	Dolores Huerta	63
Milagros Peña	Elizabeth Blackwell	65
Ira Browne	Dolores Huerta	67
Anderson Villanueva	Dolores Huerta	69
Vincent Russo	Elizabeth Blackwell	71

## INTRODUCTION ☆

Welcome to Hostos Library's fifth annual issue of *¡Escriba!/Write!* With this issue, we are living up to our "2006 Best Small College Student Literary Magazine for the Eastern Division" of the Community College Humanities Association. We are so proud of the writing, art and photography submitted by Hostos Community College students and we know that you will enjoy this collection and be inspired by it. In fact, we hope that any Hostos student who has writing or art that they would like to see published, will contact us and submit your creations for publication next year.

In this year's issue you will find essays on a wide range of topics. Some of the work was submitted to us with the help of professors from other academic departments who suggested that their students work on submissions. Thanks to professors Francis Singh, Olga Steinberg, Flor Henderson, Jerilyn Fisher and Alphonso Siverls for "hooking us up" with students who contributed. In addition, we got invaluable help from professors Ian Charles Scott and Maria Dumlaio for working with us to connect with our painting and photography students. A few examples of the variety of pieces in this year's magazine are: personal narratives, an analysis of anatomy and art, the "low-down" on how to use antibacterials or disinfectants to keep your house germ-free; and of course we also have a short story, poetry, and a selection of the many great works of visual art. Finally, we want to highlight our inclusion of the First Place, Runners-up and Honorable Mention winning essays in our 2007 Women's History Month contest.

As you browse through the paintings and photographs selected for this issue, you will be astonished by the wide range of ideas and viewpoints expressed by our students. Many of these paintings are self-portraits that reveal how our students see themselves and the world. Through their art you will get a sense of their innermost selves, encompassing the psychological, religious, social, and cultural. In ad-

dition, you will find a series of extraordinary photographs produced by students in Hostos' new digital photography course. Commonplace objects such as a drinking straw and a floating leaf are transformed into objects of unusual and profound beauty in the hands of our talented student photographers. These works of art reveal how we can all transform the ordinary and banal into riveting and powerful expressions of the human spirit.

*¡Escriba!/Write!* is one important way that Hostos Library supports the diversity and talents of our students. We continue to remind our contributors that we love to publish work in Spanish and any other language students write in, as well as English. This year we have one very fine poem written in Spanish (and which is inspired by the poetry of Pablo Neruda, the great Chilean poet) and we hope that next year we will receive more literature in languages other than English. But as you will see, the reflections of experience, the perspectives, beliefs and visions of our diverse student body shines through. And while we celebrate these differences, the magical thing about literature and art is that we each can find reflections of our own lives and experiences in the selections we publish here.

**APOLOGÉTICO A PABLO NERUDA** ✧

Reply to Neruda's 20th poem in  
*Veinte Poemas de Amor y una Cancion Desesperada*

*Te recuerdo hoy con este verso triste  
me amaste y yo aunque a veces no te amé  
siempre fui tuya, y por tu quena canté  
Bajo las estrellas el monte se desviste.*

*Hoy extraño el temblor de la tierra en tu piel  
el ardor de tus besos en mis pechos blancos  
el dolor de las piedras bajo los mantos,  
y el sabor de tu carne sazonada en miel.*

*Hoy aunque mil veces ya fui de otro  
te extraño por que te extraño, Neruda  
Hoy te pido perdón por que está oscura  
la noche negra en la que fui de otro.*

*Este el último perdón que te suplico,  
esta es mi última noche de suplicio,  
sobre tu manta de piedras yo fui amada  
bajo tu monte de estrellas agitada.*

*Te extraño por que te extraño, Neruda!*

★ PLEDGE OF NAUCRATE TO IKARUS

To Professor Frances Singh

In front of the sea waiting for the awakening of the sun  
I'm counting the stars that are gossiping about me  
even if I'm hiding in shadows that they can't see,  
drops of many tears are beating the sand in loud dun.

Daedalus the sculptor that worked for my master  
loved me and bought my freedom with a bluebird  
that could sing one hundred melodies that were gird  
inside a hole in its cage that carefully was plastered over.

Pleasant Minos let me go without a riddle quest,  
happy I fulfilled my husband's desires: I was alive  
and dear Ikarus, nobody like you will ever arrive,  
at my empty womb that forever will be your nest.

The Sun returns from his long dream, to the empty sky  
with clouds that I can see through a rainbow of tears  
the mountain is flat and the wind yields to my ears:  
Ikarus can fly!, Ikarus can fly!, Ikarus can fly!

Where do you see my son? my eyes are full of shine  
Is he up in the heat or is he down in the cool?  
Is his father with him or has he abandoned my fool?  
Could I kiss his lips again or shall I kiss his shrine?

The wind answers my questions with a foaming voice:  
"From an imperfect father comes an imperfect son  
two perfect sets of wings in secret, they carry on  
with thread and wax the feathers slowly take their poise."

The wind pauses his talking and my heart stops its beating,  
I need all the silence I can get from my despair  
but speak up and tell me all about that pair,  
my owner is the king and with his time I'm cheating!

“Woman, your son is flying up into the holy deep  
he is having a most wonderful time but there is a price  
for happiness, remember the bluebird's sacrifice,  
trapped forever in a cage, weeping his songs?”

“Your fair son's wings are falling apart and so is he,  
my lord the Sun melts the wax that the feathers hold  
the young man didn't remember what his father told  
now he is drowning in the sea and is not a matter of me.”

My son is dead and I'm alive, my son was my life  
the sea brings to me the wings because I want to fly  
up to the Sun that is calm, so I can ask him why  
You melted the perfect son of a husband and his wife?

A partridge is picking my feet daubed in wax and tears  
and the wind is shaking my wings while he yields in my  
ears:

Naucrate can fly! Naucrate can fly!  
My fair woman bye!

NICOLE GOODWIN

✧ **PRECIOUS OFFERING**

I give it to you  
With all the warmth of my  
Hands

An honest offering for the  
Masses to supper  
Meals ready to nourish the  
Soul

I sit inside a world of hunger  
Myself

Wondering if you too  
Care to dine

Notice how it moves through  
The air

As graceful as a jungle cat  
Light, like goose feathers

Thankful am I  
For this simple time in  
My own space

In my own skin  
With my own self to lean  
Against

A day without missing you  
Terribly

Like the lonesome cry  
Of a loon at midnight

NICOLE GOODWIN

✧ **SYMPHONY OF THE SCRIBE**

It tramples like rain  
And crashing in like thunder

Lightning, like I have always  
Feared to love and know  
Contently

A storm brews in my head  
I hear it loudly in my ears

This is the closest I have come  
To the voice of God  
In all his light and glory

**POEM ON GLOBAL WARMING** ☆

I am sorry kid,  
Could you possibly forgive me?  
I am sorry because the reason of your hurt is me.

Today you are hot because yesterday I did not care.  
Today you are dying because of me and it is not fair.

I should have listened when I was told to reduce my smoke  
I could not understand that I was contributing to the fog.  
Did I really need to ride in these poisoning cars?

All I know is that now it makes you feel bad.  
I destroyed the umbrella that was supposed to protect you  
And now you are shivering and it is raining on you.

You will not even get to know these animals that lived at  
the Poles  
They were so beautiful; oh I am sorry for my faults

I am sorry kid. Could you possibly forgive me?  
I am sorry because the reason of your hurt is me.

★ **WHAT A WEEK!**

I went to work every day this week.  
I had to go for a wage I did seek.  
The tax man sent a warrant out to me,  
Saying, "Your taxes are overdue since 2003."

MCI called me on the phone,  
Saying, "Pay your bill if you want a dial tone."  
Then Con Ed came banging on my door  
And said, "If you want lights to see, you better settle the  
score."

So far, my week was going just great!  
Then came the gas man to put the icing on the cake.  
He said, "If you're planning to boil or bake,  
Be quick, for your meter we're about to take."

Just when I thought everything was going stable,  
I was proven wrong when Time Warner cut my cable.

How the time has gone!  
The wonderful days of yesteryear.  
The years of laughter no more  
replaced by days of pain and nights of tears  
A sad farewell to the days of play  
a torturous hello to the days of labor.

I remember my youth,  
How fast I wanted to grow up.  
Now that I have,  
I long for my carefree days.

In a sense there was more freedom:  
No worries of bills,  
No concerns for the IRS, I  
Went to school,  
Even had something called recess  
Which now has been replaced with  
Nothing more  
But a one hour lunch  
If you're lucky.

Those wonderful summer days!  
I just spent them in the park,  
Played on swings and slides  
As the sun's rays danced upon my face  
The snow days were great,  
I had snowball fights and made snow angels,  
Then hear my parents start calling  
"Come inside for some hot chocolate."

I remember the days after school.  
Milk and cookies waited for me

A TV in front of me  
And a close friend beside me.

I loved the dance festivals  
And finally getting a chance to dance around the Maypole.

I also remember my first crush,  
And that's when it all changed.  
Friends began to change—  
To develop in areas I didn't.

Oh, the pain I felt!  
When no guy looked my way.  
Friends were always picked  
I was always left.  
Made fun of for being different  
Just because I didn't develop like others.

Going through my teens  
Ashamed of how I looked.  
Why couldn't I be loved?  
Why wasn't I wanted?  
Being developed couldn't be that important  
What about inner beauty?  
Too sensitive, I became  
So I enraged to get rid of the pain.

I hated everyone  
Wanted no one,  
Except one person  
That one special person  
Who could take me in his arms,  
See me for my inner beauty.  
Appreciate that

Fall in love with that.  
Ask me to be with him forever

He can see past my hurt  
He can see past my tears  
He can see past my anger  
And help me escape all my fears

He'll help me rekindle  
The bright light of my youth  
I will feel reborn.  
I'll feel renewed.

I would be able to look into the mirror  
Finally able to say  
"I remember you.  
That special little twinkle in the eye  
That wide toothy smile  
Welcome back, Beauty.  
He saw you way down deep  
And brought you back from the dismal abyss."

★ **LIFE: A SHORT STORY**

She looked out into the ocean. Searching for peace. She fell to her knees in the sand sobbing in her hands. As tears streamed down her face, she looked up into the sky and called out to the heavens, “Where are You now when I need You the most?”

Not knowing what else to do, she walked along the shoreline. She didn’t care how far she was from home. She wanted to escape... wanted peace... wanted happiness... just wanted to be accepted for who she was and not what others want her to be.

When did this happen? When did life get so hard? So alone in a cold world. There was a time when her life was sheer happiness and delight... where every morning felt like Christmas. Every day used to bring more joy into her life. It was something that was always looked forward to. Even when hard times hit, there was so much love for her. She was able to get through it. Life really was like a box of chocolates for her. It was exciting and enticing. There was always something new for her. Even after her Grandmother’s death, she still was strong... a little weaker... but still loving life.

It seems like all at once everyone turned on her. Pressed her to be someone she wasn’t. She became confused. She didn’t know who she was anymore. At 26 years old, she’s still searching for the person she is to become. But she knows. She’s trying to break free. There’s such a deep battle within her soul on which person to allow to come to the surface... the person she is: the woman who loves life and lives for it... the woman who can be sexy while still being respected... the woman who wants more than anything to experience life and not to shy away from it. Or should the woman others want her to be come out: the woman who is still a child in so many aspects... the woman who is terrified of life and of people... the woman who trusts no one and has no friends... she’s not even a woman at all... that person is still the 17-year-old girl who had her heart broken after her Grandmother passed away and so many boys broke her heart and made fun

of her... still the insecure girl who doesn't know what to do with her life... who doesn't know what to do when a guy approaches her... she doesn't know whether to run or talk.

So many things worry her now. Pressed to take medication because her family thinks she's crazy. She isn't crazy. She's just desperate to be the person she's meant to be... and not the person everyone feels and wants her to be. She longs to be an individual who thinks for herself... not have other people think for her.

Her new problem is how to break free from the chains her family and others have put her in. How does she become free like the birds who fly through the clear blue sky on a warm summer day? Free like the fish who get to swim through an ocean filled with wonderful treasures and deep bright colors? How can she be as bright as the sun again? Such a beautiful and bright smile she had. Was always able to light up a room when she would smile. People loved that about her. They loved to hear her laugh. They said, "You can tell she enjoys life!" And she was so desperate to share the love she had that ran so deep through her body. She longed to have that special twinkle in her eyes again when she experienced something wonderful or if it was just a gorgeous day. When the sun would hit her face, she was even more beautiful. But no longer. Clouds have taken over her. There are no more smiles... not even a hint of a twinkle in her eyes. So many things push her deeper and deeper in heartache and into a realm so far from others, she has to wonder if she'll ever be with people again.

The sun has begun to set. The water is starting to rise. Seems like the ocean is trying to take its claim on her. The water is rising higher and higher. She doesn't notice. Too engulfed in her pain and in her thoughts, she continues to walk. The water has risen to her waist. But some rocks are in her path. She climbs the rocks. Scrapes her knees. Settles down on the rocks as blood seeps through her bruises...just as her pain seeped through her heart and soul.

She watches the sunset. All the different colors in the sky. So beautiful. Different shades of red, orange, pink and even purple just splashed all across the sky. The sunset shares some things in common with her life. She thinks about all the different times in her life...the times that were hard, being represented by the reds in the sky... the times that were fun, represented by the pinks and the oranges...and the times when life was so blissful it felt like she was a part of royalty, which is represented by the purples. But just as the sky becomes a darker red and soon fades into nothing but blackness, so has her life. Seems like her tears are no longer made of crystal, but of blood. Causing her to go blind. Now all she see is darkness.

But even in the dark sky, there seems to be a little bit of light...almost like a twinkle. It looks so familiar. She thinks back on her life and remembers the twinkle in her eyes she once had. Yes! That's it. Could it be a sign of things to come? Is that a sign that her twinkle will be back? A man once described looking into her eyes was like looking into the sky on a clear night and seeing all the stars. That's what she was so focused on. It put her into a trance.

She was no longer aware of the rising waters. Just as her life was, in a sense, beginning to drown her, so were the waters of the ocean. No matter what, she couldn't take her eyes off of that star. Just one little star had so much meaning behind it. It was so bright... enough to make the darkness seem like a dream... like something that wants to overtake a person. But as long as there is a little light, it can't fully take over.

It had to be a sign. There was no other way to take it. Get through the dark times, and the twinkle will come back. It will no longer be sunsets...but sunrises. But will she remain around long enough to see those sunrises? With the rising waters, she begins to think about her life as it is. Can she get through? Another crystal falls out of the corner of her eye. Doubt begins to take control of her mind...blinding her. The

star is beginning to fade. “NO!!! Come back!!!” The water has taken over her body completely.

So there she lay... water surrounding her. One voice calling out to her from the shore. But it's muffled under the water. Another voice joins the first...one she hasn't heard in a long time. “Could it really be?” she ponders. Running out of air, she allows herself to be brought to the surface. She isn't sure which way to turn to face the shore. Her vision is blurred from the tears she shed with new hope. Frantically she pushes herself to turn, afraid he would leave her once again. But there he is... still calling out to her from the shore. Who should she return to? Both hold special places in her heart. The first one would do almost anything for her. The second... who knows! How much does he care for her? So much would keep them apart. The only thing that keeps her apart from the first is their troubled past.

Who to go to? She isn't sure. But she begins to swim to shore anyway because both contain that hope she is so desperately seeking. “But he belongs to someone else. I have no claim on him. The first I know is mine. If I have no claim to the second, why is he here? Why does he come and call me back?” She stops dead in the water. Doubt has come into her mind again. The choices she must make. Yet looking at the two she cares so much for, she is unsure of the decision she must make. Not strong enough to make that decision, she decides to stay in the water and wait to see what happens. Keeping her distance for now seems to be her only option.

She finally came to rest on shore. So many thoughts still haunt her. “I know who I want to be. I know what I want. Why can't they accept me? Do they really love me?” She sighs. “What am I to do?” Slowly she stands and walks along the shoreline until she reaches a house. Looking at the windows, she sees her reflection. Her eyes are red and swollen from crying. Her hair is stringy and wet. She's lost almost five pounds in two day's time.

As she's trying to assess the damage to her physical parts, someone comes to the door. It's a man. He looks at her with pity. Asks her if she's all right. Invites her in. As she enters, she notices the walls are a very light blue, like the sky. The ceilings are white. All of the furniture is white. She was brought to a room on the far side of the house. The man did not say anything to her...only directed her where to go. In this room, there was only a bed and a nightstand. The stranger told her to get some rest. She had a long journey ahead of her. "What are you talking about? What do you mean by me having a long journey? Who are you?" The man said nothing. Walked out of the room and closed the door behind him. Not knowing what else to do, she walked to the bed. Obviously there was no other choice for her but to lie down and get some sleep. She hadn't slept in two days anyway. She was tired.

She slept in fits...disturbed by her dreams. Too many voices. Too many demands. Can't make sense. A distant voice calls to her. It is such a peaceful voice...unfamiliar. It begs her to focus on his voice. She tries to block out all the voices so she can isolate the one. The other voices are getting louder each time she tries to run to the single voice.

She begins to tremble in her sleep.

"Grow up!" Once voice screams.

"What are you doing?"

"You have such an attitude problem."

"You're always depressed."

"Take your medication."

Too many demands! She begins to lose her grip on all that's real to her. She tries one last time to focus on the one voice. She puts all of her energy into it... but it is nowhere to be found.

When she finally awoke from her sleep, she noticed she was no longer in the room of the stranger. She was back in

her own room. Not wanting to be there, she quickly got up and dashed out of the house. She ran to a hill about a mile away from her house that overlooked the ocean. Standing at the edge, she started to think. Looking over the edge of the cliff, she noticed jagged rocks at the bottom peeking out of the water. She sat down.

Staring out at the ocean thoughts began to run through her mind. People began yelling at her again. They began to point out all of her mistakes. They shouted at her how hurt and disappointed they were in her. She came to realize that despite her accomplishments nobody was going to forgive her for the mistakes she had made. Nobody cared about how she was trying to get her life back together. Everybody would remember her for the wrong she had done. What kind of a life was that? She couldn't live here with everyone thinking these things. So she came up with her plan. She decided it was time to take action. She stayed at the cliff anxious for the sunset. She began to feel peace as the time approached. Finally the time had come. As she noticed the different colors that were being painted across the sky, she began to say her farewell to those she loved and whom she thought loved her too. With one last breath she stood up... walked to the very edge... and jumped. The last words to leave her lips were, "Dear God forgive me." And as the sun set on another day, it also had set on her life.

## ★ BORN IN PRISON

My nephew was born in prison. First of all, I'm Juanita's sister and she's in jail. She has been sentenced for a very long time. I'm going to visit her. As soon as I walk through the door, she says, "Vicky, I had the baby, it's a boy. He's eight days old and his name is Juan Carlos." She looks around the room, her eyes are reddened. She cries, she weeps; she passes left, right, back and forth. Pivoting and turning suddenly to face me. Glaring straight into my eyes, then she looks up toward the ceiling of the room and says, "I don't eat, I stopped smoking back in 1995 and now I'm smoking 3 packs a day." She lights one cigarette after another, presses them out, looks for a match, and hunts for another pack. Only in state prison have I seen someone craving cigarettes.

Juan Carlos lies there in the crib and stares at his mother as her arms reach out to pick him up. Holding his little hand tightly, she examines him. In fact, I can see that she is bonding with the baby. She mentions her concerns that she has tested positive for the HIV virus. Although the baby has also been tested, the results have not come through. There is likelihood that he may also test positive. Juanita also mentions that she would really like to see the baby grow up to have a normal life. In reality, "He can only be with me for twelve months" she says, "because I can't get out of here. I'll have to give him up. I love Juan Carlos! If I give him up, he would grow up feeling betrayed and if I did, it would only be to protect him."

After I left the prison I thought about Juanita and Juan Carlos. Actually, because of my love for Juanita, her concerns became mine. I wondered what would happen to Juan-Carlos if the City takes him. Several times in the subsequent weeks, I had the wish to call her. This was of course, impossible. She has no phone. Eventually, one month passed by and I decided to go see Juanita and the baby again.

She tells me that the results of the HIV test for the baby have come back inconclusive. She also shows me pictures she has taken of the baby and says, "Here, take one."

I see that Juan Carlos has grown and is doing new things. His eyes seem to shift when I walk into the room, and he's also making sounds. For the first time, I hold Juan Carlos and notice how he's grown to be so cute; he's also gained weight. The little baby I saw in the beginning is now a little chubby and is trying to hold his bottle.

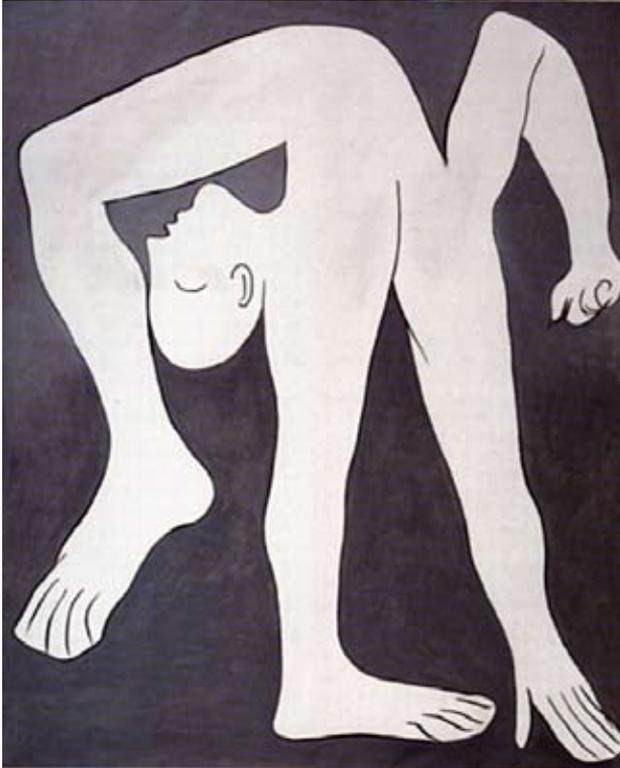
It's time for me to leave. I hate to say goodbye to Juan Carlos. Although it has only been two visits, I really feel drawn to him. Immediately, Juanita's concerns ring out in my mind. I start thinking, "would this child be better off if he was taken from her?" Knowing what I know of foster care in New York City, I am certain that his life would not be better. As I'm traveling back home I take out his picture and I start to realize that Juan Carlos needs a home, sufficient food, a place to play, and a real education in small classes so that his life can make a difference. Foster care in any case, is not disposed to offer him his options. I know foster care cannot provide Juan Carlos with the soaring loyalty that Juanita feels.

Months have passed by since my last visit to Juanita and the baby. The more I keep looking at the picture, I decide to go back and visit the baby and discuss with Juanita the possibility for me to take Juan Carlos home and take care of him until she gets out of prison. We talk about me taking him to visit her every two weeks so that she can have a relationship with her baby.

Years have passed by and I have grown to love Juan Carlos. Now I am faced with this dilemma that someday I will have to give Juan Carlos back to his mother. I go back to prison alone to speak to Juanita before she comes out of jail and tell her, "Juanita, you know I've grown to love Juan Carlos. He is now a part of my life. Do you think you can stay with us when you come out so that we can both take care of him?" She agrees. She comes out when Juan Carlos is three years old and he is currently enrolled in day care. We make

arrangements for me to drop him off in the early mornings and for her to pick him up in the afternoon.

Juan Carlos is a very happy child. He's learning his ABC's and numbers. He's now five years old and Juanita's health is deteriorating. The doctor says she won't make it past three weeks. I turn to Juanita and ask if I can legally adopt Juan Carlos. She approves. We did the paperwork. A month later she passed away. I have to explain to Juan Carlos about his mother's death. I thought about how I would tell him when he grows up because I consider him my son. Maybe I won't even tell him; to make it official, I'll just change his last name.



Pablo Picasso, "The Acrobat."

Many people think that there is no connection between visual art and anatomy. However, artists of all times have studied anatomy to create realistic images of humans in their work. The ability to create a life-like image of a person became less important with the discovery of photography. Nevertheless, artists still study anatomy and use their knowledge of anatomy in their works, but in a different way than before. The importance of relating art and anatomy is to understand the true message the painter wants to transmit so that observers can have their own interpretation similar or

close to the artist's ideas. Pablo Ruiz Picasso is one of the artists who used anatomy in his art to represent his ideas.

Pablo Ruiz Picasso (1881-1973) is recognized as one of the best artists of the 20th century. He was born in Malaga, Spain, but lived most of his life in France and frequently visited Barcelona. Picasso's father was Jose Ruiz Blasco and his mother was Maria Picasso Lopez. Picasso decided to take his mother's name because Picasso sounded unique and it was better suited for him. Picasso's mother had a strong character, and was usually more responsible in finding ways to overcome the family difficulties. Picasso never liked the idea that their family depended on rich relatives who had economic advantages, and he was happy to inherit his mother's personality that helped him to fight for a better life.

Picasso's father taught art at the Academy of Fine Arts in La Coruna, Spain. From a young age Picasso was interested in art. By the age of 14 he had already sketched the Study of a Torso, and After a Plaster Cast without any help from his mentors. At fifteen years old he already had a studio for himself, and was allowed to practice and study the artists of the epoch. Picasso's early paintings showed his talent and are famous today.

Early in his work, the main characters in Picasso's art were people of low social status, so-called social outcasts. Picasso identified himself with actors and circus performers, because it was their job, as well as his, to provide entertainment to the public. However, artists, actors and circus performers were not considered a respectable part of society because of the way they lived and their low socioeconomic status. Picasso used a clown as an example: clowns are paid for making people laugh, but their presence and emotions are ignored by the public.

One of Picasso's greatest achievements was his contribution to the creation of a new art movement, Cubism (1908-1917). According to Cubism's declarations, paintings meant

something different from common sense, therefore Cubism downgrades others art styles' meanings and purposes. Cubist art is usually unclear to viewers, because with light in the painting coming from all directions (bottom, up, right, left) it is impossible to distinguish between solid and empty spaces or between convex and concave forms.

Cubism's popularity lasted until 1910-12, when Picasso introduced a collage, the style that employs three-dimensional objects in addition to a single plain canvas used by painters. Use of the collage technique makes cubist art look more realistic. For instance, more realistic shapes were depicted in paintings, as compared to the distorted and exaggerated shapes of original cubism.

Surrealism is another art style and was mostly popular in 1925-1936. Surreal implies that some weird, unnatural thing that would not normally happen does happen in paintings. Therefore, surrealism was a type of art movement that attracted artists who wanted to represent abstract ideas and emotions like those that come in dreams, to represent the power of sleep and the power of creativity of the mind. Picasso was surrounded by many surrealists, but he insisted that he was not a surrealist. Picasso said "Some called my work at that time, 'Surrealist'. I am not a Surrealist. I've never been outside the real. I've always stayed at the heart of the real." Picasso used to say that his paintings were not supposed to be clear and straightforward because the point of the painting was to represent (by adding pieces) and hiding (taking away pieces) things that occur in real life.

#### "The Acrobat"

Influences of Surrealism and Cubism can be seen in Picasso's 1930 painting, *The Acrobat*. At first glance this painting represents the human body, but when the observer takes a closer look, he realizes that something is wrong here. The acrobat's body parts have only basic shapes, and no muscles or internal structures are shown that might reveal more

about the components of the acrobat's anatomy. Just look at the head, which appears to be inferior to the neck, or at the thoracic (chest) part of the body that appears to be cut off. This painting can be interpreted in many ways, yet from my point of view, Picasso was trying to show that the human body is not perfect, that it constitutes complex structures; that while it evolves, its structure also changes to provide for better functioning. Perhaps, Picasso could have used this painting to illustrate communication, because physiological changes are needed for body movements to take place. Moreover, the acrobat in the painting does not show any facial expression that might indicate the mood of the acrobat. I think it is because in this painting Picasso wanted to represent an idea of the acrobat rather than a real person.

Picasso could have meant that a body can be observed, but the inner working of it is not completely understood. Or he could mean that the anatomy of the body is not something he is interested in. The position of the head and absence of the thorax are anatomically incorrect, but add to the meaning of the painting. It may mean that the head has many functions, including psychological functions such as mind work and imagination that are far away from what is happening in reality. Maybe Picasso wanted to let the observer know that the body does many complex functions and that it can be weakened or distorted if it is not taken care of. Another meaning of the painting may be to tell us that there are things in bodies that are considered normal (usually perceived as good) and abnormalities (that is, most of the time considered bad or not common by people).

Picasso usually used blue colors for sadness, or pink for happiness. In the Acrobat painting, Picasso only used blue colors and the acrobat has distortions which might indicate some of Picasso's personal problems.

Picasso was aware of the structure and function of the human body, but the organs were not important to the message he wanted to deliver through his painting. Remember

that Picasso always thought that he did not have to paint reality exactly as it was, but according to his style. It could be that Picasso does not value the functions that the human body performs, or he is not satisfied by it. Picasso understood that the human body was complex, and that everyone is anatomically different in their external parts. Also, Picasso always thought of his artistic style as something different from reality, something that adds uniqueness to the personality of the subject in the painting. The acrobat's body in the painting is distorted because from Picassos' point of view, his distortions show better the life of the acrobats than the true anatomy of the human beings.

Picasso knows that the anatomy of the body is not the same as the distortions he made in his painting, but that was his way of representing reality more clearly than using a more realistic style. This painting could have meant different things, but the meaning for one person might be very different from someone else's.

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★ **INTRODUCTION TO ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY**

There is a book by James Elkins called *Why Art Cannot Be Taught*, a title that always alarms Art professors! However, he has a valid point. Conventional teaching methods do not really apply in teaching art. Art teachers can do innumerable demonstrations and talk about all sorts of techniques but the actual act of putting paint on canvas is like a different world, one where you encounter your inner barriers; the act of engaging them and pushing through, creates the art.

All the paintings in *¡Escriba!/Write!* were created by Hostos students who are set loose and with my guidance are then on the track of their own experience. The journey is fascinating. Please join us in these pages and explore the realizations they have made and perhaps prepare for your own quest. Or, as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe has written, “Whatever you dream you can do, begin it now! Boldness has power and genius in it!”

*Professor Ian Charles Scott*

The stunning photographic images featured in this issue of *¡Escriba!/Write!* were created by students in Hostos’ new digital photography course. Using digital technology and the lens of a camera, students captured their experiences of everyday life and expressed diverse and unique perspectives. Commonplace objects such as a drinking straw and a floating leaf are transformed into objects of unusual and profound beauty, while others examine the faces of children and the urban landscape. These powerful images remind us that we can all transform the ordinary and banal into riveting and powerful expressions of the human spirit.

*Jennifer Tang*



Andreina M. Hiraldo, "Self-Portrait with Anatomically Self-Healing Heart"



Anthonia Seriki, “Birds”



Elayne Vanderbilt, "Geisha Rising"



Sakina Hassan, "Mike"



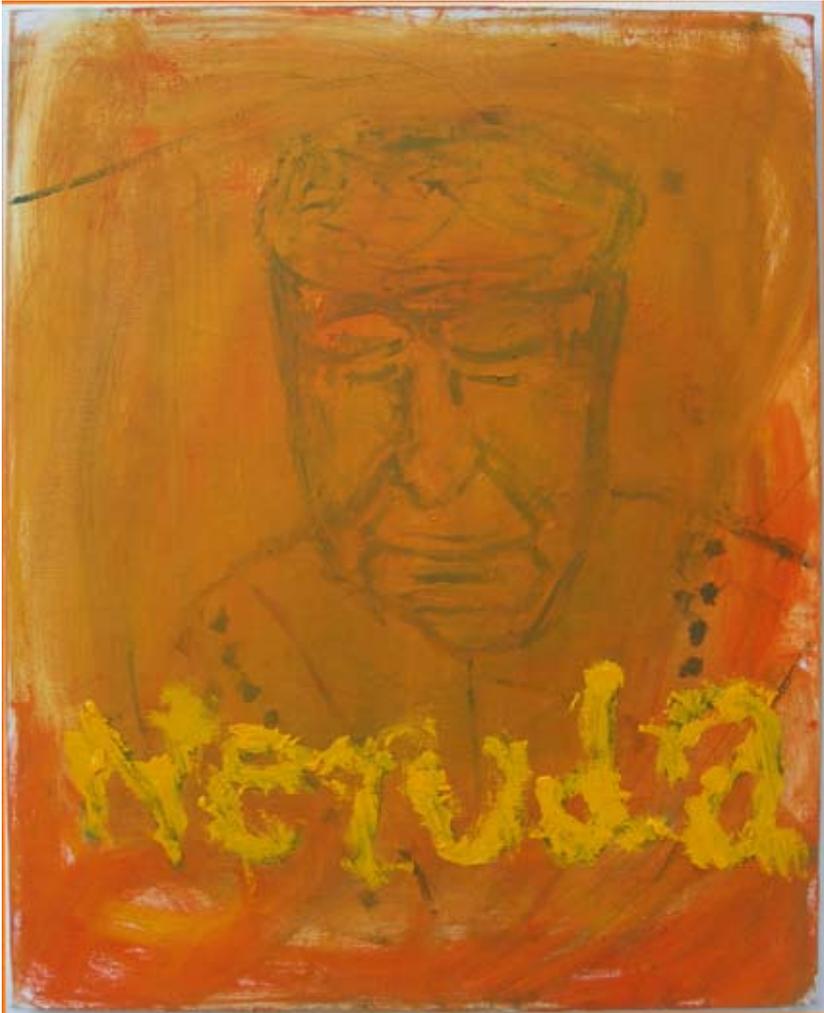
Migdalia Torres, "Focusing on a Straw"



Anthonia Seriki, "Shadows"



Brian Miller, "Hubble Bubble"



Ptah Miller, "Neruda"



Candido Rodriguez, "Leaf"



Kyle Cooke, "Rappers 07"



Marielkis Liedias, "Las Reglas Del Jefe"



Kiyasha Spencer, "Queens/Albany"



Ashley Ray, “Toddler Running”



Alicia Campuzano, "Two Worlds"



Joseph LaMonica, "The Urban Mary"



Migdalia Torres, "Child"

**NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN** ☆

“You go to school? You’re too old.”  
Yes, unfortunately that’s what I was told.  
But guess what! I am very bold.  
In my eyes, I can always learn.  
Ignorance surely has to be spurned,  
For my textbook pages I will turn.

Whatever you say, with school I’m not through,  
Because education is good for both me and you.  
One day maybe you’ll change your view.  
It doesn’t matter what your age may be  
In this sweet land of liberty  
You can be one hundred and study for a degree.

Expensive? Yes, getting knowledge may be  
But ignorance, tell me! Is it free?  
Yes, education costs a big price  
But on education I roll my dice.  
I don’t care how long it take me,  
I’ll study and study until I get my degree.

You are never too old or dull to learn.  
If you dropped out of school, go back and return.

★ **GET UP ON YOUR ROYAL FEET**

I will not tell you again, to wipe those tears,  
And gather up those many fears,  
Put your walking boots on,  
And your boxing gloves of gold.

Get up on your royal feet,  
And clean up your royal seat.  
Have you forgotten who you are,  
Of that royal line that goes way back far?

Pick up your royal crown of gold,  
Dust off the dirt; it is looking old.  
Now put your crown back on your head,  
Do not remove it unless you are dead.

It is time now for you to disrobe,  
And put back on your royal robe.  
Never be ashamed to walk tall,  
When you've seen the light, show it to all.

**THE HOUSEHOLD WAR AGAINST BACTERIA** ☆

During the last decade, the words “germs” and “bacteria” have become buzzwords for danger. Any individual concerned with his/her loved ones’ health wants to eliminate germs from their surroundings. Thus, people are buying tons of antibacterial products now available for the consumer. In fact, the entry of products containing antibacterial agents into healthy households has escalated from a few dozen products in the mid 90’s to more than 700 today (Levy, 2001).

Now, the questions that arise are: How beneficial is the introduction of all these antibacterials into healthy households? In what quantity? Which ones? And the list goes on.

To benefit from using an antibacterial product, it is of the utmost importance to make sure that the substance has qualities appropriate for its intended use within a given situation. It is very hard, if not impossible, to generalize about antibacterials based on their benefit-risk properties, since these criteria will vary significantly from product to product and/or from one situation to another.

Something I feel causes confusion is the lack of clarity in the medical literature about the meaning of the words antibacterial and disinfectant. Are they different or the same? According to medical dictionaries, the definition of a disinfectant is: “A chemical or physical process that kills or inactivates microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses and protozoa.” On the other hand, the definition of an antibacterial states that “an antibacterial is an agent that destroys bacteria, their ability to reproduce and interferes with their growth and reproduction.” “Disinfectants have a wider spectrum... they include viruses and protozoa,” but antibacterials are limited to bacteria, thus antibacterials are disinfectants. (all definitions from [medicinet.com](http://medicinet.com))

What are some common antibacterial agents? These may be divided into two groups according to their speed of action and residue production:

1) Non-residue producing: This group contains antibacterial agents, such as alcohol, chlorine, peroxide and aldehyde among others, that act rapidly to destroy bacteria but disappear quickly either by evaporation or breakdown and leave no residue behind.

2) Residue producing: These are mostly newer compounds, such as triclosan, triclocarban and benzalkonium chloride that leave long acting residues on the surface and thus have prolonged action.

How beneficial are antibacterials? This is where the fun begins! They are definitely effective in killing bacteria, although there is controversy surrounding their health benefits. Scientists are concerned that the widespread use of antibacterial agents will select bacteria resistant to them and cross resistant to antibiotics. Also, if antibacterial agents alter a person's micro flora, this may affect the maturation of the T helper cells that participate in immunoresponse, which may lead to a greater chance of allergies in children (Levy, 2001). Basically, scientists worry about people cleaning too much. In fact, a targeted approach to cleaning is often recommended (Mencarelli, 2001). Routine daily or weekly cleaning of the home to remove dust, etc, has an impact in reducing infectious disease. Regular cleaning removes the "breeding grounds" for germs. Detergent-based cleaning (making sure surfaces are properly rinsed), combined with selective disinfection of surfaces where hygiene failure could carry the risk of infection, seems to be a smart approach. For example, disinfecting could be used on contact surfaces where raw meat is handled, or on sink handles that are hard to rinse properly. Keeping balance, in other words, is the key. Many experts believe that the use of disinfectants creates a false sense of security, and this leads to people relying on the antibacterial action of the product and

becoming lax in their own hygiene habits. Use of antibacterial is not an alternative to normal hygiene.

Which antibacterials to use? Well, personally, after reviewing the literature, I gravitate towards the non-residue producing antibacterial agents. Even if there is controversy and nothing has yet been proved, the general consensus is that non-residue producing agents do not create resistant bacteria, which is important for me. This especially concerns me because of the reported links between resistance to antibacterial agents and tolerance of bacteria to antibiotics (Levy, 2001). Is it possible that this new world of household disinfectant abundance is the cause of recurring ear infections so common in our babies and toddlers now? It would be very important to find out!

Drugs resistance is often caused by long-term exposure to low-level concentrations of an antibacterial substance. This occurs with residue producing agents like triclosan. It was demonstrated that triclosan-resistant mutants were in fact also resistant to several antibiotics (Sliwa, 2003).

In most cases, washing with regular soap and rinsing with running water followed by thorough drying is still considered an important way of preventing transmission of disease. Doing this is important after engaging in activities like manipulating garbage bags, going to the rest room, changing a dirty diaper or handling raw meats that could cause contamination.

Several common agents like 70% solutions of ethyl or isopropyl alcohol, hydrogen peroxide or bleach, are effective against a wide variety of disease causing bacteria. These destroy various cell components at once, rather than attacking a specific bacterial process like residue producing agents do.

We have to remember: we exist in a world of bacteria, not the other way around. We must think in terms of changes in the microbial ecology around our infants and homes and its effects on us. Making peace, not war, makes more

sense. It is true, we need to control pathogens that cause diseases, but a full force war against bacteria is impossible to win! They were here millions of years before we were and, who knows; maybe they'll outlive us and be here when the human race is long gone.

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## TURNING MY EYES TO THE LIGHT ☆

Why are my eyes so itchy? I had one of those good itches the other day; you know, when you stop what you're doing and start rubbing. Sometimes it makes me drool. I've been like this for three months, with my eyes dark red and itchy. My friends and family were looking at me as if I were high. They would say "what the hell were you smoking?" I was forced to go to the doctor by my mother, who took the day off for me.

I started to get worried. My mother would never miss work for anyone. She's not an affectionate person. I know she loves me, but she wouldn't say it to me or my brother. My doctor's name is Antonio Cortez, a tall man with a big nose and balding. He wears glasses like me and when he leans close to me he smells of peppermint.

I told him that my eyes were itchy and red, and it was also hard to keep my eyes open in the light. After telling him this, he took out a little flash light and put the bright light in my eyes. "Okay, turn your eyes to me." I felt my eyes—it was like looking into the sun on a summer day with no sunglasses on. I had to tell him I couldn't take it any more. He said that he didn't know what was exactly wrong with my eyes but he was going to send me to two specialists.

He gave me a referral to see an ophthalmologist by the name of Olive Green. At first I thought he was joking. The name of the doctor was so funny. But he gave me her card and that was her real name. He said I would also be seeing a rheumatologist too. This is a physician who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders, including arthritis.

And so my journey began with my first trip to the rheumatologist, Doctor Jane Hatt. She was further away from Doctor Cortez' office. I was on that bus so long that my butt started to hurt. The area was nice; a lot of elderly live in this part of the Bronx. Everywhere you looked, salt and pepper heads, It was like Atlantic City on a Friday.

I walked a little from the bus stop. The leaves were turning colors and the air smelled crisp since it had rained the night before. I got to the office on time for my appointment. I saw an older couple occupying two of the seven chairs of the Doctor's small practice. The receptionist looked like she was in her late forties; every one looked up at me as I walked in.

I thought they were thinking that I was in the wrong place or maybe I was picking up my grandma. I gave her my information and sat down in the waiting room, it smelt like mothballs and Bengay. I went into the examining room and the doctor looked me over. She looked like she was in her early sixties but in great shape. Her stomach was flatter than mine and had toned muscles. The smell of old people was stronger in this room. The kind of smell that came from a nursing home stale with a hint of urine. Not strong enough to make you say "what the hell is that?" but enough to keep all questions for later and help things move as quickly as you can.

We went into her office which amazingly didn't smell like old people; maybe better ventilation. It was nicely decorated with Chinese writing and landscapes and the sound of the rock fountain was very relaxing. Dr. Hatt said she needed bloodwork and to make an appointment at the front desk to come back in two weeks. She said that she wanted blood work done at a specific hospital to make sure that there were no mistakes from my primary care doctor. I felt like I was getting the life sucked out of me.

The next week was my appointment with the ophthalmologist. I really wanted to see the woman with the name Olive Green. What were her parents thinking? Again, I had to make this long trip on the bus but not as long. The rheumatologist's office was 45 minutes from Dr. Cortez. Dr. Green was only 25 minutes away.

I got a little lost on the way. I got off at the right stop but this was a residential area and I headed in the wrong direction. The weather was nice and cold, over all great for walking. After a phone call, I was put back on track and got there only five minutes late. When I got to the building, I took a short trip on an elevator. I went down to a basement-type office, with lovely marble badge floors and a Persian area rug.

The doctor had antique ophthalmologist tools which made me very nervous. I imagined a doctor using what looked like dentist tools, going into someone's eye, my eye! But the staff was very friendly, the receptionist was close to my age, and I didn't feel out of place. When the doctor called me into the examining room, my heart was in my throat. The doctor looked sleepy; her eyes were low and it looked like she had had a long day.

She had big eyes and medium length dark brown hair. The lights were off and she had me read off letters on an eye chart. She then moved her chair close to me and said "I'm going to stick this pen in your eye to measure your eye pressure." What!?, I remember having said that out loud. This pen looked like an oversized whiteout pen, and the tip had a tiny button on it.

Dr. Green put some drops in my eyes; within seconds they started to feel numb and big. She put a rubber cover on the pen, it reminded me of a condom, and she told me to relax. I had this pen going in to my eye and she wanted me to "relax." To an extent I felt trapped, but at least she used protection first. After she used the pen, I had more eye drops put in to dilate my eyes.

She took out a light from her pocket. "Can you look at the light?" God no, my eyes started to water. The light felt like a hot poker that just came out of the fire. Those two minutes felt like an hour. Dr. Green took pictures of my

eyes. Thirty minutes later, she told me that my eye pressure was extremely high and if left untreated I could go blind.

My heart skipped a beat. My mother and father came in to pick me up. It was like something out of a movie, me blind. My mother sat down when I told her what the Doctor said. The Doctor showed the pictures to my dad on the computer, which was a waste of time. My dad is a simple person and wouldn't know the structure of the eye or comprehend it if you pointed out the problem and explained it.

Dr. Green told us that I appeared to have Uveitis. Uveitis involves all inflammatory processes of the middle layers of the eye, also called the uveal tract or uvea. The uvea includes the iris (colored part of the eye), choroid (a thin membrane containing many blood vessels) and ciliary body (the part of the eye that joins these together). The uvea is very important because its many veins and arteries transport blood to the parts of the eye that are critical for vision.

Symptoms of uveitis may include: Eye redness and irritation, blurred vision, eye pain, increased sensitivity to light, floating spots before the eyes. Uveitis has many potential causes, including infection with a virus, fungus, bacteria or parasite, inflammatory disease affecting other parts of the body, or injury to the eye. There are four types of uveitis: Iritis is the most common form of uveitis. It affects the iris and is often associated with autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis. Iritis may develop suddenly and may last up to eight weeks, even with treatment.

Cyclitis is an inflammation of the middle portion of the eye and may affect the muscle that focuses the lens. This also may develop suddenly and last several months. Retinitis affects the back of the eye. It may be rapidly progressive, making it difficult to treat. Retinitis may be caused by viruses such as shingles or herpes and bacterial infections such as syphilis or toxoplasmosis.

Choroiditis is an inflammation of the layer beneath the retina. It may also be caused by an infection such as tuberculosis. Dr. Green gave me some eye drops to bring down the pressure in my eyes. As it turns out I didn't have rheumatoid arthritis, or any other problems that could have caused the Uveitis. So how did I get it? The search continued at the infectious disease doctor's office.

Dr. Peter Willcan's office was in Montefiore hospital in the Bronx on the third floor. I had to sit in the waiting room with all of these people who had god knows what. If anyone sneezes on me I will scream. I was called in to his office and sat in the examining chair. He wore light brown pants with a white button shirt with matching tie. He looked like he was his late forties. I told him he was brave for working with patients with unknown diseases. He laughed while he looked at my chart. He said my blood test didn't show anything out of the ordinary, and I don't have to see him again. One less doctor to see. But who was next?

I went back to Dr. Green. She had new eye drops for me and directions to The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary on 14th street in Manhattan. It was crowded. I got to the elevator and pushed 8. This place was nice, the outside wall of the doctors office looked like a highly paid lawyer's office, with burgundy wood panels. The receptionists were very professional, each at a computer with cordless headsets and a pen in hand. I gave them my information and waited in the office. There was a great view of the city from this office.

My name was called and I headed to what I thought was the Doctor's office, but it was another waiting room with nurses. I waited until a very short woman in a pink nurse's uniform led me into a examining room where took my eye pressure with a pen. She put some eye drops in to dilate my eyes and left the room. She came back in two minutes and seemed to be frustrated that my eyes weren't dilating fast enough for her so she put more drops. She put so much in my eyes that liquid ran down my face and got on my shirt.

I was then given big plastic sun glasses, the kind that elderly people are given after eye surgery. I was lead in to another waiting room because I couldn't see. I was told to sit and not open my eyes. I sat there wondering if anyone was looking at me.

I had my first taste of being blind, and hated it. I was so sleepy when I finally did see the doctor. I told him what was wrong and about all the people I'd seen. He said, "Don't worry, we'll get everything taken care of. Relax and turn your eyes to the light." I could hardly see anything, I fought to keep my eyes open.

He gave me a prescription for new eye drops and to make an appointment for next month. On the way home I dropped the prescription at the drug store and took a nap. Two hours later I went back to the store to pick up my eye drops and the bullshit begins. I can't get my eye drops because it isn't covered under my insurance, HIP. The problem is that the doctor that gave me this prescription isn't a HIP doctor.

I've been nice, but right now I don't give a fuck. One small bottle, the size of your pinkie finger is \$83.76. WHAT! The second cost more than that! Who has that type of money! I haven't taken any of my drops, trying to solve this problem which caused more problems. I had to take showers in the dark.

My mother opened the door and I yelled NO! IT HURTS! The smallest amount of light hurt my eyes, I was living in the dark. I could not bear to turn my eyes to the light any more. I have been a quiet person all my life but there is just so much shit a person can take. It wasn't until I started arguing with people and taking down names—that I got things done.

I never went back to The New Eye and Ear clinic. Dr. Green was upset when I told her what happened. She put me back on track with my eye drops.

This eye condition came out of the blue. No one ever came up with an answer. Dr. Green said I could have this for the rest of my life and is still puzzled by how I got Uveitis in the first place. “I’m lucky that way,” I said.

★ **INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

Each year, as part of our Women's History month celebrations, Hostos Community College sponsors a competition for participating English 091 and Language and Cognition 091 classes. Choosing between two women of achievement, students research and write essays favoring one of the two honorees. They argue for one of these two women as having accomplished greatly against particular odds and thus serving as the best role model for young people who will learn about her story and her hard-won goals.

This year, students wrote about either Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to become a medical doctor in the United States (1849); or Dolores Huerta (b. 1930), who helped launch the labor movement in support of migrant workers. After researching and writing essays in class, students and their professors select the best essays in each class and these are reviewed by a committee of readers who designate several which will be awarded prizes: first place, runners up and essays deserving of honorable mention. At the end of March, to bring celebratory closure to Women's History month, there is a campus-wide ceremony at which winning students read their work and receive beautiful certificates of achievement.

Readers of *¡Escriba!/Write!* will see how personally and intellectually engaged our winning writers are in advocating for the woman each chose for her or his essay. Through this contest, students learn about outstanding women whose stories demonstrate how important it is to study women's history. In our schools, in our courts of law, in our churches, in our families, there are still inequities that inhibit women's potential. The remarkable women in history we learn about each year offer exemplars of courage and commitment, reminding us that, simply by learning about and sharing women's stories of achievement, we can advance the fight for equal rights, a fight which is not yet won!

1st Prize winner

Which woman should have an award named after her: Elizabeth Blackwell or Dolores Huerta? Both are excellent candidates for this great honor. They were caring, fearless, leaders in a time when women were persecuted and treated as second class citizens, who were beneath men. These traits are important for any woman who aspires to excel in today's world. Aside from the facts, I know you can only choose one. So I would like to nominate Dolores Huerta and I will explain why.

Dolores Huerta was a caring woman who wasn't satisfied with just teaching children. She also was a social activist and did community work around the barrios. Dolores organized citizenship classes for immigrants while also testifying before state and federal committees on health matters facing migrant workers. She saw people who were in need and took action, which shows a certain selfless attitude that is rarely found in today's world. If more people were to put more effort into helping their fellow man, maybe some of the issues we face such as poverty and hunger in Third World countries can be helped even a little by donating food or money. The smallest gestures go a long way.

Apart from being caring, Dolores Huerta was also fearless. Many of her activities placed her in personal danger and also had her arrested more than 20 times. Her style was forceful and uncompromising. During a peaceful demonstration in San Francisco against the policies of presidential candidate George Bush, Huerta was severely injured by police officers and their batons. She suffered two broken ribs and a ruptured spleen. After recovering from her life-threatening injuries, she continued fighting for the same issues that nearly got her killed. Her actions speak volumes. She showed that if there is something that you feel passionate about, if you get knocked down in your goal to achiev-

ing what it is you're fighting for, you have to get back up and continue to be relentless until you receive what it is you want and are fighting for.

Huerta was also a born leader. Unlike most Hispanic woman of her generation, she went to college. She also helped shape and guide the United Farm Workers Union (UFW). Dolores brought together feminists, community workers, religious groups, Hispanic associations, students, professors, and peace groups to fight for migrant workers. Leadership is a quality that every person should strive to have and Dolores had it in abundance. Showing that you're a leader is important because in today's business world, bosses want someone who can make things happen, instead of watching idly from the side. People look for someone who exudes confidence and has a presence that says "I can get things done."

In conclusion, even though I believe that both Elizabeth and Dolores are great candidates for the award, I feel that Dolores Huerta went well and beyond on how she spent her life. She dedicated her life to other people that she didn't know. The sacrifices she's made are unbelievable and would make her a great role model for any woman and even all men.

## ELIZABETH BLACKWELL ☆

I am a mother of two girls and I learned that you want to recognize a woman whose life story and achievements best represent a woman's triumph over barriers, a victory that will inspire girls and women today. There are two important names under consideration. The first one is Elizabeth Blackwell (the first woman to complete medical studies in the U.S.) and Dolores Huerta (lobbyist and co-founder of United Farm Workers). I nominate Elizabeth Blackwell for the award because she will be an excellent role model for women students who want to succeed. Mrs. Blackwell fought with determination and dedication to succeed against tremendous odds. Her accomplishments need to be known by all young girls who need to fight against the odds to get ahead.

Nowadays, we have many resources that will help our young girls succeed, but these girls need determination and dedication when they face obstacles. Dr. Blackwell showed great determination to demonstrate in the nineteenth century that a woman can succeed even though women at that time didn't have many of the rights that we have nowadays. For example, she chose a medical career when at that time it was not acceptable for a woman to be a physician. She was rejected by 29 medical schools before she was admitted to Genova Medical College in 1847. Dr. Blackwell was a determined student who overcame many obstacles to become a doctor. She said that she proudly walked to school every day even though male students looked at her as a rare person.

Dedication and discipline are very important to be good learners, and some young girls don't have those characteristics that they need to achieve their goals. Elizabeth Blackwell will inspire these girls because she was dedicated and disciplined. Girls need to read about how she dedicated many hours studying and working to something that she loved, which was medicine. For instance, Mrs. Blackwell found a way to teach herself medicine. She found a doctor who would give her full use of his medical library. In exchange, she would teach at his school, working there ten or

twelve hours a day. She also studied anatomy in the evenings with a doctor who offered to tutor her privately. “It was quite difficult at times, but I knew I could do it,” she said.

Another important reason why Dr. Blackwell will inspire girls would be her accomplishments, since most of them benefited women. Elizabeth Blackwell founded the New York Infirmary for woman and children; She was the first woman to have her name placed on the British Medical Register. She began the women’s Medical college at the New York Infirmary and she taught at England’s first college of medicine for women. Furthermore, she pioneered in preventive medicine and in the promotion of antiseptics and hygiene.

Undoubtedly, I believe that Elizabeth Blackwell will be the woman who will inspire girls to persevere against the odds in our fight for equity. She was a person who fought with determination and dedication to achieve her goals, so she serves as an important symbol for women who have barriers to overcome and need to continue struggling for equity.

**DOLORES HUERTA** ✧

I believe that this year the Women's Achievement Award should be given to Dolores Huerta for her work and accomplishments as a social leader and union leader of workers. I believe that bringing her story to light will motivate and inspire young women to stand up for what they believe in.

Dolores Huerta was born in New Mexico on April 10, 1930, but she later moved to Stockton, California where she was raised by her mother and grandfather. Dolores watched her mother work very hard to support the family through the Great Depression. Not too long after moving to this mostly farmland area, her mother purchased a hotel in which Dolores and her family lived. Her mother would often let farmers stay in the hotel for free because they could not afford a house or shelter. Seeing this made her want to make things better for her people and for farmers.

In 1960, Dolores organized the Agricultural Workers Association (later the United Farmworkers Union) which was an organization fighting for the rights of Spanish people and farm workers. She helped pass the legislation allowing Spanish people to vote in their native language. She also played a very important role in having the drivers' test also be available in Spanish, for Spanish speaking people.

Even as she did all these wonderful and groundbreaking things for the Spanish community, her main objective was to make sure that farm workers and their families were taken care of. As a respected activist, she had the trust of many, many farmers—which was proven in 1966 when her and thousands of vineyard workers went on strike. It was a 25-day march for better wages and benefits. During this time Dolores insulted the California Governor by saying that he didn't care for the farm workers. Her words meant a lot because he needed the Spanish people to vote for him in order for him to win office of governor again. So he gave the vineyard workers better pay and benefits. This is just one example of her many protests, boycotts and non-violent ways of getting things done.

I believe Dolores Huerta should win this award because she came from the hard struggle of a single parent to being able to have her words reach masses of people. She is inspiring not only to young farmers of today, but to women of today. She lets people see that if you believe in something and you work hard for it, your goal can be achieved. She inspires young Latino women to work hard, get an education and be something in life. She inspires mothers to be more than just a mother, be a leader to the youth, and once again, to fight a good non-violent fight for what you believe in through knowledge and education.

In a period of time when the United States had the most changes in Civil Rights, there was a woman that fought for equality. This woman was from a different ethnic background than those great leaders of her time such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Rosa Parks, but she also experienced racism in her teenage years. Her name is Dolores Huerta. She is one of the greatest women in the world. She accomplished what others told her she could not accomplish. In the 1960's, when Hispanic immigrants were not allowed to vote, work or have worker rights, Dolores Huerta fought against these odds.

Dolores Huerta was born in Fresno California in 1930. Her parents were immigrants from México. Her father was a seasonal worker and a miner. Her mother, Alicia Chavez, worked as a cook in two restaurants during the sad economic period called "The Great Depression." Dolores' parents divorced when she was three years old. Dolores worked and helped her mother in her daily duties at Richard's Hotel which her mother bought from a Japanese family. Dolores's mother gave immigrants free food and sometimes let them stay in empty rooms at the hotel.

Dolores Huerta was an activist since she was 15 years old when she became the leader of a Girl Scout troop. One of her great achievement started when she and her scout troop started fundraising activities to support USO troops during the World War II. Dolores Huerta's early years guided her to caring about her people like her mother taught her.

Racism did not make Dolores stop being a nice young person and a fearless woman. During her senior year, after getting many "A's" on reports, papers and essays, Dolores received a "C" as her final grade. This was a surprise to her because she thought the teachers were not fair to her. Another fraud was when she won an annual Girl Scout Essay Contest. The prize was a trip to the Hopi Indian Reservation in Gallup, New México. She had all the permissions from her teachers to let her go on the trip but it was denied by the

Dean of Girls. She reacted and felt that she was denied because she was the first Latina to win the contest. This event of racism did not stop Dolores' passion to achieve her goals. Instead, it helped her courage to earn success.

Huerta attended college and earned a teaching certificate. She started teaching grammar but suddenly she quit, and she said that "I could not see farm worker's children come to class hungry and in need of shoes." And later she added, "I thought I could do more by organizing their parents than trying to teach their hungry children." With these words, she realized that her people (immigrants) and the farm workers needed support and workers' rights.

After she realized what her people needed, Dolores Huerta started fighting for workers' rights. In 1955 she co-founded the Community Services Organization. But she kept doing her work without rest and then founded the Agricultural Workers Association (Farm Workers Union) in 1960. She succeeded in obtaining the removal of citizenship requirements that were too hard for immigrants in California to get.

She was also a master piece in the passage of legislation allowing the right to vote and right to take the drivers license examination in Spanish because most of the immigrants could no speak fluent English. Dolores was the heart and soul to success for the Chicano workers. She obtained favors and benefits for them. I admire the laws she worked for. For example she supported a 1962 law repealing the Bracero Program, supported 1963 legislation to extend aid to families with dependent children to California farm workers and the 1973 Agricultural Labor Relationships Act. During these activities Dolores was beaten and arrested 23 times for participating in peace strikes and non-violent activities. I admire her passion to help others even she got hurt.

Women are considered the "soft sex" or "fragile" part of the society but what Dolores went through in her life doesn't look like women are soft.

**ELIZABETH BLACKWELL** ☆

Celebrating Women's History month this year by recognizing a woman's triumph over barriers and achievements that will inspire girls and women today is an excellent idea. The best person I believe that will represent this is Elizabeth Blackwell. As the first woman who received an M.D. degree from an American Medical School, she would be the best candidate for Women's History month.

Elizabeth Blackwell was not only the first woman who received an M.D degree; she was an immigrant to America. First she had to overcome barriers of being an immigrant to a new land. Her determination and persistence in achieving her goals would not be halted by her or any one.

As a young woman Elizabeth was inspired to become a doctor by a friend who was terminally ill. Her friend suggested she would have been spared her worst suffering if her physician had been a woman. Elizabeth was very determined to get a medical degree, and nothing would stop her from this.

In the 1800's, women had very little or no opportunities to improve themselves. Knowing this, she pursued a career that was strictly a male occupation and was forbidden for a woman. As a woman, there were many obstacles that were in her way, but she overcame them. Her accomplishments were outstanding. She opened her own dispensary when she was refused a job at one that she applied for. She also opened an infirmary for women and children that later on provided training and experience for women doctors.

Elizabeth had many accomplishments, but it was how she inspired women, which was her greatest achievement. She inspired her sister, who received a medical degree and helped her at the infirmary. Other women at that time who were too frightened to pursue such a career she inspired, and become close confidants with.

## VINCENT RUSSO

In closing, I urge the Council to choose Elizabeth for all the great achievements and doors she opened for other women to follow. She is one to admire and strive to be like. She is a big part of our history and should not be forgotten.



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