THE Window

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THE WINDOW: LAGUARDIA'S LITERARY MAGAZINE

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The staff would like to thank everyone who helped put out THE WINDOW:

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He was a young man, thirty-five, and looked as if he had just arrived from skid row. His hair was slightly balding, with patches of dandruff or grey hairs spread throughout. Broad shoulders and massive arms hung limp around a torso like a cut away section of a tree trunk. His boots or shoes covered with mud made it difficult to distinguish.

Gregory Douglas was a loner. He had worked in this cemetery for 18 years. The years, booze, and hard work were all buried in his dark features. His words came slow, low, and simple, and it was clear that the grave digger was somewhat afraid of people and not too bright.

It was Ed the jock's idea, and, of course, his beautiful and bright companion Anna went passionately along.

To most of us, the thought of death is frightening. Lying stiff, cold, and lifeless in a hollow box is a thought we'd rather not think. So who would think that two lively high school seniors would be caught dead in one. The kids these days and their thrilling stunts.

Gregory said he watched them run into the old morgue from the opposite side of the graveyard, and it took some time and courage to follow them somewhat later. Chills ran up and down my spine as I looked at this cold, damp, God-forsaken place. Their little session must not have sparked enough fire because it's obvious that they closed the box to obtain more heat.

"Good thing you came along when you did," I said to the grave digger. He just replied with a dull "Yup." The ambulance raced away, and my investigation here was finished. But a picture of that poor girl and her stupid boyfriend flash again across my vision. Getting into my car, I thought, "You're getting old, Teddy; it's starting to get to you."

Gerard Jabril Abdulwali

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SOLEDAD

Todo es soledad,
todo es diferente,
como si no hay nadie,
como si no hay gente.

Cuando tu no estas,
mi amante en ti piensa,
mi corazón late
solo por tu ausencia
y mi alma en silencio
sola se lamenta.

Cuando to no estas
los árboles lloran,
las nubes se esconden
como si no hay días
como si no hay noches;
y mis ojos tristes
con deseo de verte
sin querer resisten
esperando verte
al día siguiente.

Quisiera ser verso,
quiero ser poema
para estar contigo
una vida entera
y seguirte siempre
aun hasta que mueras.

Cuando to no estas,
todo es diferente,
como si no hay nadie,
como si no hay gente.

Manuel Delgado

WIDOW'S PEAK

incarcerated desires
ripple
caging rapid eye movement
with shadows,
upon shadows,
keeling to vomit
all those shadows
that closed his dreams.

N.E. Hollingsworth
LONG DISTANCE LOVE

She always went there to see if he's coming.

When he did show, she'd die--
her body temperature:
hot/cold/hot/cold.

She made believe she was invisible.
Did he see me?
Is he coming toward me?
Or will another woman race into his arms?

When their eyes met, did he sense her grip the table-top?

"Yo! Where you been hanging?
That's cool.
I'm with some dudes.
Hey, check you out later."

P. Diaz

PARTLESS

I wish to speak, telling of an affinity with you, felt,
though not in word merely.

I would delight in knowing a look from you, inviolable,
oto pierce but endear.

I count it better to reach the heart of you, perhaps, to hold
than not to reach at all.

J.D. Petteys
JUST LIKE THE MOVIES

He had the same experience sometimes with movies. First, you heard how great they were, and then you went, expecting too much, and it was nothing that great after all. But, of course, then you could say you had seen them.

This, he decided, was the same. At least he'd done it. But now that his urge to get high was still there, he had to cop and quickly. Like a desperately starved wild animal, Roy was out pounding the streets. He wasn't very familiar with this area; he was from uptown. There, the dope was done. Violent anger raged within him as he thought of "that Judy bitch" he had turned on just the night before and who drugged him into this letdown.

"Oh, shit, no cash," Roy suddenly thought, as his vision focused on a jewelry store. He didn't pause for a second to think things out. The garbage can was through the window and a handful of blood, gold, and diamonds were sprinting out the subway station.

The transit cop hiding behind the booth gave chase, as the train pulled into the station. A struggle broke out as jewels flew and a gunshot rang thru the gathering crowd. Roy staggered out of the stalled train as two more police were arriving on the scene. A halt and a loud bang-bang came all at once. Roy was finished.

Just as in the movies when you know the ending, the script never has a chance.

Gerard Jabril AbdulWali
Pleasant Cuenca City, Ecuador, is a wonderful place to live. Night or day, this place is alive with excitement. In the daytime, people crowd the streets. They are rushing to jobs, homes, stores, and schools. Taxis honk, buses rumble, and trucks rumble. Litter baskets overflow and bags of smelly garbage line the sidewalks. However, my purpose is to show the funny side of some typical fall activities performed by the most popular bum of my adorable city.

Cuenca was settled by Spaniards in the last half of the sixteenth century. These people planted the pines that today adorn the city's Central Park in greenery. Even at noon, these 270 foot pines plunge the streets into an emerald twilight. Their branches are full of bird nests. Every morning, the gay birds shake the top branches of the eight pines planted in the heart of the park.

Despite the thousands of bums who wander New York City's streets, Cuenca has no more than ten bums. All have nicknames. "Barbas de Cobre" means Copper Beard because he is the proud owner of a reddish and thick beard. In addition, he is always gathering copper wires in order to sell to some jeweler. "Suco de la guerra" means Blond escaped from the war. He is indeed blond but has not escaped from any war. An accident he suffered in the army made him the friendliest bum in the city. He wears green clothes and tells war stories to people who enjoy his funny grimaces rather than his tales. These bums and several more are unique: all of them make Halloween stories come alive. Perhaps Miami Sound Machine's song, "Bad, bad, bad, bad boys..." you make me feel so good," is dedicated to these and not to war. An accident he suffered in the army made him the proud owner of a reddish and thick beard. In addition, he is always gathering copper wires in order to sell to some jeweler.

Maria was born perhaps 50 years ago in a village where pregnant and unmarried girls were not allowed to live a peaceful life. A poor girl, she got pregnant without the benefit of marriage, for nobody cared for her life. In fact, in her original town, gossips played an important role in people's lives. Maria, obviously, was a great source of gossip. Her bad neighbors whispered against her all the time. Mothers used to warn their daughters: "Don't ever go with her because she's a sinner." As a result of this, she left her original town and moved with her baby to Cuenca.

Life in the city was no bed of roses for her. She started her new life working as a housemaid where nobody paid attention to her child. She worked for a few months until she lost her baby. Because of this tragedy, she lost her senses and started to wander the streets. In order to satisfy her uncontrollable bitterness, she made herself a copy of her baby. This copy was an old, dirty bag filled with garbage and some food. Since then, she wears this singular package attached to her body. As soon as people notice her false child, they start to whisper among themselves: "Look at Maria and her guagua."

Maria is a kiss of hell. Just looking at her is a nightmare for many people. Her feet look like a desert's surface. Her nose is a beehive with flies taking the place of bees. Her back is a landing strip where mosquitos happily land. Everywhere Maria goes, she brings insects attached to her body. Whenever she talks to herself or her false child, she resorts to most of the grimaces common to other bums. She speaks a very strange language very quickly. It is impossible to understand a word of the many ones she "throws."

Many stories about Maria and her past frighten people. My eight year old nephew scarred his younger sister by saying that he met Maria after having had a nightmare and that his ugly dream came true. When I was ten, I was afraid of meeting Maria. My classmate had warned me: "Don't ever go see her for you may get bewitched, and who knows if you'll become a bum, too." He added: "In the blink of her eye, your nightmare begins."

Maria doesn't know boundaries; the world is hers. She doesn't really walk; it's her spirit that crawls with her body. Life for her has no meaning. She doesn't know what comes after death. Life and death have no difference as far as she is concerned. The only living beings that accompany her are the insects and rats that sleep with her. When she sleeps in abandoned houses, she frightens the rats that share her "apartment." Somehow or other, rats must thank her because she brings food.

If Maria found Aladdin's lamp and asked for three wishes, they would be food, food, and food. Even though the genie wanted her to marry him, she would say in her strange language: "Give me food and get lost."

"Maria is a humming-
bird in the sense she inspects every garbage can instead of flowers. If you offered her a bunch of flowers and a foul-smelling fruit, she would accept the smelly fruit. She also feels very comfortable when she finds a dirty place to rest. If you cleaned the place she likes, she will move to another, because the dirt gives her comfort. Sometimes Maria "dances," especially when the microbes that pick up the grime of her flesh irritate her. When this happens, she's the essence of ridiculousness. She dances with the sounds that her stomach produces when it is filled with parasites. At this time, people notify the Department of Health about Maria and her dancing. The paramedics pick her up and bring her to the Salvation Army Hospital to end her dancing with an Alka-Seltzer. After that, they give her a bath, change her clothes, and give her a new false baby. As soon as they free her, she returns to live her life.

Now the darkness hides the dirt and the daytime problems. Lights go on everywhere, sparkling like diamonds against the black velvet sky. Cars and buses roll along more quietly. Their headlights light up the night. The tempo slows down, but the action goes on in the city with Maria's life night and day.

Alejandro Meneses Meneses

ICARUS BORNE ON WINGS OF STEEL, ALMOST

Once by pills and
Once by pain and
Then he tried it over again
Icarus
Icarus borne
Borne on wings of steel

Now he lives
Now he stands
Going on with life, a man
Icarus
Icarus borne
Borne on wings of steel

He will live
He'll survive
A grand success, flying high!
Icarus
Icarus borne
Borne on wings of steel

So:
Go to it man
Make your mark
Mold your life with your own hands
You'll pay in the end, but now you'll stand
I can point out no other man

Who makes his mark half so grand
As Icarus
Icarus borne
Borne on wings of steel

unknown student
DEATH ON THE DOUBLE L

It's a hot muggy night and the platform is crowded with sweaty people. In the middle of the platform a young man about 25 plays a guitar and sings a country-western song. When he finishes there's quiet.

"You people sure are quiet," he says. "What's the matter, the heat getting you all down? Maybe I should sing about snow. I don't think I know any snow songs." As he starts to play, the LL train pulls into the Union Square station. People crowd to the platform's edge and push their way into the train. They scatter like mice let out of a cage to empty seats, resting tired, hot bodies as they stretch and lounge in the seats.

My eyes wander to the top of the train and I spot a roach, slowly crawling out of an air vent. He crawls upside down, hoping not to attract attention, to the pole closest to the front of the train. The train comes to a screeching halt at Third Avenue and the roach stops. He doesn't move until he's sure it's safe and he won't fall to his death. He slowly heads back towards the pole.

He begins his long journey down the long, slick, pole. Carefully, he crawls down. No one notices this brave little bug who dares to show his face to this crowd, in order to get this night's dinner, because they're all busy, sleeping, reading, or just staring into space. He finally completes his journey and starts his most death-defying act, to crawl along the floor of the train and survive the scurrying feet. The train stops, this time at Morgan Avenue. People get up and he remains still, hoping to survive.

The doors close and the train starts to pull out and heads for Jefferson Avenue. He's still alive! He crawls towards the door looking for a crumb from a potato chip or maybe a candy bar.

The train comes to an abrupt stop. Again people get up to leave, but more than at the last stop. Even more of a challenge for the roach. Can he dodge all the scurrying feet? My eyes shut tight, I can't bear to see it. His poor little body squashed between that dirty train floor and the rubber sole of a white Puma sneaker.

The doors again close. I feel a strange sense of loss, as I look at his flattened remains. I guess I was secretly rooting for him. Poor little bug, he was just hungry. The train pulls into DeKalb Avenue. More people leave. An old man doesn't see my little, dead friend's body and kicks it out the door. He probably landed on the tracks. What a way to go, squashed by a sneaker, then pushed onto the tracks.

As the train pulls into Myrtle Avenue, I grab my stuff. I look once more at the spot where his body lay. So that's a roach's life on the New York City subway, I think sadly, as the train continues its never-ending journey.

Rosemarie Kessler
Looking out my window, I could see the area of sorrow, where pain and sometimes laughter grew—today pain was growing.

On the corner they stood. She was crying, whispering, "It's going to be all right, really it is." She pushed him away and walked into the court.

The court—court of happiness, court of fear, court of pain—no one ever knows exactly which one it is at which time. However, they do know that all three exist.

When they walked in, no one paid attention; all they ever pay attention to is rubber hitting cement, then concrete, then wood, over and over, rubber, cement, concrete, wood. Sometimes in rhythm, sometimes not, but always continuously.

She stopped crying and just looked around at all the people passing by. It seemed as though no one cared; some would stare, some seemed blind, most just seemed bored—bored with the way life continued to take its toll on them and others.

He moved to her: "Listen, I'm sorry." "Sorry? Sorry for what? You did nothing wrong." "You know I did. You know I did then as I am now." "No, you did nothing wrong then or now. Everything's O.K.! Nothing's wrong. Nothing's ever wrong." "What do you mean by that?" "Nothing! Nothing's wrong. Just leave me alone!!" I could hear the sign of danger in those final words. I could also hear the joy of pain in her tone of voice. Pain always seems to rejoice when taking another victim. It seemed as though this was the end for her, or was it the beginning? Or maybe the end in this case was the beginning; I hoped so for her.

They began to move. She turned and smiled, "Stay here; I'll be back," she said softly. You could tell she had no intentions of returning to this court. He could tell too. "Okay, I'll wait, but please don't take long." "I won't. I promise," she lied. The tears ran down his face, and pain was rejoicing because it had taken another victim.

The court became quiet, and all you could hear was the rubber hitting cement, then concrete, then wood. Rubber, cement, concrete, wood, rubber, cement, concrete, wood, over and over. Sometimes in rhythm, sometimes not, but always, always continuously.

Wandra Allen

Lucinda's eyes like diamonds shone,
And in her slender wrists the moon,
And in her hammock swayed and sighed,
As I drew near, impelled by pride.

Lucinda's eyes like diamonds shone,
All silver in the crescent moon,
As through a buzzing cherub's haze,
I pined to snare Lucinda's gaze.

Lucinda's eyes like diamonds shone,
And in their soft allure the moon
detained me there in dreams for days,
Until I'd gleaned their subtle phrase.

Lucinda's eyes like diamonds shone,
But who can fault the aged moon?
For every man who's dreamed and died
is stirred by woman's sensual tide.

J. Mullaney, Jr.