The artists in this magazine are sharing a part of themselves with us. Their pieces speak for themselves. I hope that in respecting their work, we will be inspired, self-reflective, introspective and able to open ourselves to our own vulnerabilities.

-Hannah Shaheen O'Malley

"as a woc artist, there is, and will always be context in my work. yes, others who do not know or understand the context will engage with my work. yes, some things/themes may be universal. but something can be universal and remain within context. others may not grasp the context, but this does not mean they should throw the context away. they should try to critically engage with it, and then if they can not grasp it, leave the art intact with the understanding that it is not meant for them. context is important. it matters. especially for me as a woc, it is essential to the core of my work. i would like people to see the color in my work first, to honor the culture in my work first, to meet my name and recognize the heritage behind it. context matters. context matters. context matters. deeply. to me. there are some poc artist who desire their work to reach everyone across strata, which allows context to be redefined, and i honor this. i think that we as poc are not all the same in the desired context around our work, but, i do know that at the heart of appropriation is a disrespect for the exquisite and wondrous ‘self’ our work springs from. who we are matters and is etched into our art. my simple assertion, is that this needs to be respected."

—nayyirah waheed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dos Lenguas, Natasha Torres, Tatiana Sanabria and Valerie Garcia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resist!, Aidan Davis aka ART.EMI(S)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am king, Aidan Davis aka ART.EMI(S)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pérdida de Purity, Cynthia Vele</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Mother, Bennie Guzman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seated Lady, Gisselle Perez-Leon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wombs of Canoes, Heidi Sue Angueira</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Women, Gisselle Perez-Leon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anzaldúa Letter Praxi 12, Chinyere Okogeri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled, Sahara Zamudio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster, Kristi Carey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody Has Their Own Baggage, Stacey Stein, Rachel Drucker, Emily Rooney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The non-crisis of C. elegans’ identity, Priscilla Van Wynsberghe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Had to Die Before I Could Be Born Again, Anzueth Gonzales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster, Romelia Loaiza</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The House on Jones Street, Heidi Sue Angueira</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain to Reign, Sharon Nicol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rican Woman Madness, Valerie Garcia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This Ayotzinapa Called My Back”*: An Artistic Reflection on Erasures, Absences, and Silences, Anna Rios-Rojas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For those who do not speak the language of the oppressor*,
your language never had a chance.

En la escuela
mi jente, mi lenguaje
were shamed.
It was not right, correct,
so the oppressors language became my own.

I became fluent in erasure.
The more I perfected my sentence structure,
the more fragmented I became.
Forced to assimilate and mutilate,
who I am,
to pass.

I am the embodiment of missings, of lackings, of losses, of insufficiencies.

As a kid
I was shamed for my Spanish
now English runs rampant through my thoughts,
my writing
my dreams,
and I am shamed for that, too.

I speak a hybrid language.
My Spanish trickles into my English,
and my English invades my Spanish.
Tengo verguenza,
I stumble in English, tremble in Spanish,
and live between the fissures.

I am the embodiment of mixtures, of combinations, of pairings, of juxtapositions.

I am ashamed that my own language is foreign to me.
I am a foreigner to white America.
I am a foreigner to Latinos.
I am neither here
nor there.

My mother used to say
“No aprendo el Ingles,
but I’m forgetting my Spanish,
me voy a quedar muda.”

My tongue ripped from the seams of my mouth because my Spanish is not proper my English accented and unperfected yet assimilated into your imaginary.

I am the embodiment of missings, of lackings, of losses, of insufficiencies.

“Hey! What’s your name?” They say.
“Which one?” I wish to respond.
Tatiana, Natacha, Valeria *Spanish accent*
The name that speaks truth to who I am – my Latina identity

Tatiana, Natasha, Valerie *English accent*
The name that masks who I am.
That I use to make you feel more comfortable,
that I use to accommodate you.
That is accented by the colonizer.
The name that erases me.

I am the embodiment of mixtures, of combinations, of pairings, of juxtapositions.

My Spanish has been bled out from me.
Its warmth no longer runs the length of my veins.
Its thickness has ceased to pump from my heart to my brain,
from my brain to my heart.
Its richness has left me.

Mi lenguaje
contorted and patchy
flows gracefully from my mouth
like a ribbon in the wind
tying two worlds together
into a singular existence.

I live in between worlds.
I dance with two tongues.
My language validates my borderland realities.

I am the embodiment of missings, of lackings, of losses, of insufficiencies.
I am the embodiment of mixtures, of combinations, of pairings, of juxtapositions.
And I am.
But I am neither here
nor there.

*Note: This poem speaks to our shared experiences of marginalization due to our languages, and Puerto Rican and Salvadorian/Columbian identities within the context of the U.S. and Colgate. While the (proper) English language is the language of the oppressor, we recognize that (proper) Spanish is also the language of the colonizer, an undeniable fact that we must reconcile with.
To Be Free I Must

Resist

Patriotism
Imperialism
Colonialism
Capitalism

Assimilation

 ze/she said:
“the need to reflect on my mission
the state
feminism
women
the need to resist my mission
the state
feminism
women”

“my body is a political issue
I am no wasted life
a link the boots of your massaiah
I will lay waste to anyone who denies my rights
the reality of my life”

“I will take the noose off my neck
the night I’m fuckin’ ain’t be no nigga”

There will be no masters.
we burn this world together.”

Resist

the exclusive
classism
against
women
race
racism
Patriarchy
the state

If I get free today
the destruction of whiteness
the freedom to consume
male
feminine
woman
nigra

I am not Mother.
I am King.
I am no caretaker.
These tits ain’t free.
I am King.
Somebody told me to aim for queen,
Aim for wife,
Well, if wife is to be mother,
If wifey is to coddle and feed,
Then I am King.
Is this too aggressive for what a woman should be?
Brotha, I am woman
How are you going to tell me what I should be
I bleed once a month and you ask me what is that shit
It’s called strength muthafucka
I will define my own woman.
Take several seats
Because I am King.
Oh, do I scare you?
If you fear me, you fear my audacity to call myself equal
if that is so, you are no king of mine
I am King.
Does that emasculate you? Really?
Then you must question if you ever found me equal anyway
"Kings" went 'ungendered' long before women were relegated to queen,
So I am King.
Threatened?
You must question did you ever love me anyway.
You love me making dinner, but not washing your own dishes.
You love the image of me sucking your cock,
But not me crying on your shoulder.
These tits,
My milk,
Ain’t free Brotha.
Yes, pay me what you owe me,
Because I am King
My kings were not raped and beaten for nothing
My kings did not toil this land for nothing
My kings did not play massah’s toy soldier for nothing
Kingship is ours
And I will lay waste to anyone who questions our royalty
Fuck being a pawn
Screw being Queen
I am King

Note: Personally, I believe that God is my one true king, so don’t get it twisted. I simply want to challenge the idea that I am only a mother to be milked. I am no cow. I also want to credit Stacy Anh Chin for influencing the part about periods.
Cuando yo era una niña
mi Papi me decía que sea como mi Mama.
Virgen.
Antes de casarme, me rogó, me suplicó que sea pura.
La pureza, un símbolo significante
que refleja los valores de la familia.
Ser virgen como María, madre santa.
Ser limpia como una paloma libre
alcanzando al fin de los nubes.
It wasn’t until I was introduced
to terms like feminism
that I started to question Papi.
El sueño de cada niña dicen
Que es encontrar el amor.
Pero mi sueño era el contrario.
Mi terror era caer en los brazos
De una bestia. Controlador.
Sin poder ejercer mis derechos.
De mujer.
Soy mujer.
Soy libre, soy única, y soy
La futura creadora de vida.
Mi primera vez en la universidad,
Conocí a esta bestia.
Y esta bestia me quito
Lo que Papi dijo.
El velo blanco imaginario
Se había teñido a la fuerza.
Y era entonces que me di cuenta
Que este sueño del amor
Era una mentira mortal.
La bestia me perseguía
Y yo, como flor débil
Arrancaba mis pétalos para el
Gusto de la bestia.
Nos usábamos el uno al otro tan bellamente:
el poder recrear la estabilidad temporal
en tiempos de separación.
Dependiendo el uno en el otro
para la calentura
de lo que significa estar en casa.
Esto ha sido nuestro error mas productivo.
Porque aunque era algo tóxico,
un engañoso sentido de protección,
amor y dependencia fue
lo que nos consumió.
Y ahora ando perdida
Pero libre del que robó
Mi humanidad.
INDIAN MOTHER BY BENNIE GUZMAN
WOMBS OF CANOES
BY HEIDI ANGUEIRA
A river of women flows through me,
their ancient bones tumbled into blood red clay—
the silt of centuries carried by the current,
A deposit of genetic alluvium thick in my mouth,
as wisdom that must be spoken.

Mothers,
whose blood runs through me,
your knotted, coffee-colored hands
gloved in regolith,
toil in a garden on which I will feast.
The same fingers braid onyx stands of silk,
and gently pull the crowns of babies
out of darkness into being.

Sisters,
whose blood runs through me,
chant my name in sacred songs,
and rouse me awake from recurring nightmares.
You send relentless smoke signals,
“It is not your fault.”
You summon circles of triage,
life support through merciful hands—
strangers and teachers,
the “auntie” who was just a distant relative.
The syrupy sustenance is all I ever needed.

Women,
whose blood runs through me,
who came before
carve a path I will not stumble,
the rocks made smooth
from their blood
and their backs.
In their eyes, I see myself
as a warrior running with wolves.
They whisper to me through time and space,
“Do not forget who you are, my beloved.”

Sacred Women,
carry me through meandering streams
and wild, rocky knickpoints
safely in wombs of canoes.
Dear Gloria Anzaldua,

Similar to you, I wrote because it was the one place—and I say place because writing takes me to a different world than what I’m in, it takes me to a place free of worries and stress—that liberates me. A place where as you said, I could record what others erased from what I spoke; rewrite the stories that people wrote for me; to learn about myself; to come to terms with myself and strengthen my identity. More so, to validate myself as not the pile of shit that people categorize me as but as the woman I am and plan to be. Writing allowed me to be me and not worry about the political correctness of what I wrote but to speak from my heart and not from the slang I communicated with my friends or the “proper English” I communicated with my parents, teachers, and peers. Through writing, I could articulate as I feel and not as others pleased. Writing was to confront those demons that we, women kept hidden in our thoughts but thought about when we went to bed. Writing was dangerous but liberating. Writing allowed me to be naked without getting fined for a display of public disturbance. But it was these same feelings that made me not write; that made me zip my lips and lock away the key. Writing scared me. Writing meant that I couldn’t hide. Writing meant that there was a chance that it could go in the wrong hands and be judged, humiliated or better, connected with.

Writing stripped me of the clothes I shielded myself from. The same clothes that hid each part of my frightening truth from the light and did not allow judgment to seek through or even microscopes to analyze my every choice I’ve made. And as my clothes acted as this safety net, I buried things that needed to be brought to the light to ensure my own progression and others. These clothes that I hid under and added to, shielded me from the world—a world I needed to be a part of if I was going to claim it’s structure and follow it’s rule.—These clothes hid my experiences of family problems and sexual abuse that I needed to share to those who have went through these experiences and didn’t know where to go from there whether up or down and reassured others that they weren’t alone. These details and stories of my life that I hid to avoid judgement and the lumping into living racial stereotypes, were the same details that could empower little girls, women and even boys to stand up from such experiences and be more. Be more than the hands that touched you and made your body dirty and disgusting in your eyes. Be more than the tears you shed over people that didn’t give a flying damn about you and your life. Be more than the thoughts and stereotypes that society put on people “like you.” Be more than what you think you can be. Writing helped me find my self worth, helped others find their self worth. Helped others learn and avoid and even fight back. Helped others speak up.
"Writing was to stop others from writing my story and claim my own pen."

Your way of describing of what writing meant to you and meant to others that tell their tale of intersectionality in a patriarchal society speaks volumes. Your writing allowed me to see that writing was an act of survival, a “quest for the self” that others looked at as other or inferior. Writing was the way to mend the connections between those of women with color whose differences had them exiled and ostracized from the “normal” white. Writing for you and others was the way to confront the patriarchal demons which stopped others from living to write about them. Writing drew the inner and external demons out of their hidings and onto paper with the use of a pen. The power of writing was that it came freely and revealed something deeper that yearned to be talked about but was never given the right context. Writing held power in it’s ability to move and transform others who read it and experienced it. Your writing was a measure of how naked you chose to expose to the world while putting yourself on the line for judgement. Your advice to empty myself and allow myself to embrace new ways of perceiving the world is something I pride myself of doing. Observing and learning rather than acting on impulsive and being one sided has allowed me to truly understand the motion of a feminist, of a third world feminist and as a well-rounded individual. Writing was to stop others from writing my story and claim my own pen and etching that i felt described me fully. Writing allowed me to throw away the academic standards I held for myself and just speak uncensored and real, to go wherever my mind took me. To understand that I’m not alone by the collection of letters gathered in this book that touch different lens of my identity. I now understand how important it was to publish a book that represented a variety amount of experiences that could reach a bigger audience and have the audience feel as you and others recalled what you went through. It wasn’t much about the words but the story that these females and yourself told that showed a bigger picture that was not just black and white but black, white, latina and asian. It gave voices to the unheard in a black and white society and added some culture. It gave voices to the silent. It awoken emotions that we often hide to get along with others but more importantly it developed a sense of sisterhood. A bond that I was not alone, that others felt the same way despite the different context and that i was justified in being mad and wanting change. Your writing represented life. Your life. My life and many others.

Writing is revolution. My revolution. Her revolution. Our Revolution and I realize that now, only I hold the pen to my story and to give it to someone else would be injustice.

From Your Sister,

Chinyere Okogeri
Emotionless
Cruel
Abusive
Alcoholic
Misogynistic
Angry
Unattached

Born and raised in this culture, how could I not be?
But I am none these things

I am not your protector
I am not your superior
I am not your gladiator
I am not your soldier
I am not your bread winner
I am not your champion
I am not your macho man
I am not tough

No se lo que es el machismo. Pero si se que nunca lo fui.
Machismo has come to be synonymous with the darkest assets of Latino culture.
What does it mean to be a man?
Is it just possible to just be my own?

Masculinity is fluid,
But this was never the plan
In the blueprint of how to be a man.

I find myself breaking masculine norms,
I find myself comfortable within masculinity.
I find myself embracing the machista.

The contradictions.

Perhaps it is the pride,
But denying my machismo would mean denying my father, his fathers, my culture, my people, my country.

Still, I must be aware and critical of the flaws that come with machismo.
Where can I draw the line between constructing my own identity
“free” of the socially constructed ideals.

Todos estamos enfermos. Enfermo de una sociedad que condena a todos a la patriarca. esta enfermo de lo que es ser macho — lo que sea que se signifique esa cosa.

I am imperfect
I am vulnerable
I am equal
I am demonized
I am commercialized
I am commodified
I am advertised
I am criticized
I am growing
I am unsure
Everybody has their own baggage

Rachel returns from back surgery and can no longer carry books on her back...

I wish my dad would stop drinking.

I know I’m going to suffer for the next 5 years.

If my friends find out I’m gay, they’ll need to walk to me.

Everybody has their own baggage.

By: Stacey, Rachel, and Emily.
Male or Female?

Reality isn't always straightforward.
I never gave much thought to how I would die. Death seemed like such a distant concept. But it wasn’t; I died at the young age of 18. The difference was that no one cried at my funeral, there was no mourning, no casket, no grave stone to mark the place where I laid. My death was a different kind of death. My corpse was still deteriorating and my skin grew pale and my soul was slowly retrieving from the body I once knew. You see, it all started in college, ah yes, college. The fountain of knowledge, the place where everyone is original in their college applications but fail to accurately represent themselves, the place where everyone is a dedicated spring-breaker and you become someone that knows someone, that knows someone. College is the leverage that stamps you as the ultimate representation of success. I wanted that stamp right on my forehead for everyone to see. I wanted those around me to shine a light onto that freshly pressed diploma that authenticated my knowledge and skills and would ultimately guarantee me a job. You see, I was the first one in my family to go to college, or so that’s what I was told. In high school every teacher and peer reminded me that I was capable of being someone and the statements were never “if you go to college” but rather “when you go to college.” Because both my mother and father (at the time) had not gone to college I failed to recognized that my aunts from both my mother and father’s side were educated women in biochemistry, international relations law, and business administration. Everyday my teachers would whisper in my ear you are a “first-generation-college-bound student” and I happily regurgitated that onto every internshop, resume and college application. I didn’t really know what it meant but I knew it would get me somewhere since every other student who had used it was in Harvard, Yale, Stanford, MIT, UCLA, UC Berkeley you name it. At night I would lay the futon of our one bedroom apartment and contemplate my life away from home. I pictured New York City the farthest point from California. I was so desperate to leave home and see the world. I wanted to leave California and say that I was cultured and well-travelled while at the same time I was annoyed whenever my mother would tell me that we would go to Mexico for the weekend and visit our family. I had lived by the border my whole life and going to Mexico wasn’t “travelling” that was living. When I received my university acceptance letter I knew that was my ticket out and I took it, no questions asked. That was the first time I took a bullet but didn’t register the pain.

I took the second bullet on the Fall of 2011. I was a freshly imported California girl that was ready for the New York State market. The problem was that I was too green and I stood out amongst all the Channel-blushed-cheek-J.Crew wearing girls; I felt out of place. I didn’t understand how I could feel so lonely and different in the place that had once seemed like paradise. I would regurgitate I am a “first-generation-college-bound student” with a wide smile hoping that those around me would praise me for my accomplishments but was instead greeting with looks of shock and confusion. How was it possible that my parents had not gone to college or that I had never been to summer camp before or that I didn’t know where Nantucket was. “Wow. You speak Spanish? That’s awesome you can tell by your accent” they told me. My accent? I didn’t have an accent. I knew so many ESL learners back home and man did they have an accent. I was English proficient, or so I thought. During our weekend trips to Mexico I was told that I was so lucky to be American and speak English and that being bilingual would get me very far in life. Well...that semester it didn’t get me as far as I thought. No one spoke Spanish or any foreign language outside of the academic setting. My only Spanish outlet was speaking with my mom every once in a while. I had to limit our contact because I wanted her to think I was having the time of my life. Truth is I was sad that there was no one I could joke around with in Spanish or sit and watch a Telenovela. Watching Univision and Telemundo wasn’t a thing and I learned very quickly that I had to get rid of that habit or else I would never bond with those around me and make any friends. By the end of the first semester I vowed to limit my Spanish to home calls and to mimic the way my peers spoke in and outside of the classroom that way they wouldn’t be able to tell that I had an accent. It was difficult but I said my goodbyes to Spanish and didn’t look back.

I love food. I always have. Back home my nana would greet me with a warm guisado and aguas frescas when I came back from school. Coming home was always a surprise because I didn’t know if mole, pozole, or pollo en salsa verde would join us for dinner. In college I was also greeted with a surprise. On Mondays it would go by Couscous, on Tuesdays by Tofu, on Wednesdays by
with a surprise. On Mondays it would go by Couscous, on Tuesdays by Tofu, on Wednesdays by Pizza on Thursday by Risotto and Fridays were a wild card. I was surprised every day of the week and I was even more surprised by the end of the month when the scale greeted me with an extra fifteen pounds. How was it possible that such bland and flavorless food would skyrocket my weight when back home I would go for seconds and thirds and still maintain my regular weight. I was in the middle of nowhere not even remotely close to New York city so I knew that flavorful food would be something that I would have to give up. That was when I took the third and fourth bullet straight to my gut and thighs and conformed to horrible and expensive food that only gave me stomach aches. But as much as I hated the food I knew that with every bite I was becoming more like my peers: more American. So I proudly chewed my food and praised the Italians for such wonderful lasagna when in my mind all I wanted was to taste the flavor of home.

When sophomore year came around I took the final bullets the ones that turned me into ashes. One Monday I replaced my hoop earrings for pearls, my comfortable jeans and sweaters for freshly ironed blouses and dresses and replaced my Carmex for lipstick and mascara. That day I visited foreign Greek houses and flirted with the hostesses around me in hopes that they would like me enough to want to be my friend. I flipped my hair, tilted my head and laughed at every joke on queue. I crossed my fingers and prayed that all of my efforts would be rewarded and they were. That Saturday I received an invitation to be a part of the elite-society on campus. I gladly accepted my invitation and gave the down payment for my new group of friends. I had made it and I was at the top. My tears and silence had been rewarded and I was now a sorority girl.

Several months later as I finished washing my face I stared into the bathroom mirror and I didn’t recognize the girl staring back at me. She was too pale, too sad, too empty to be me. This was no longer the California girl that I once knew, the one that felt blessed to have the opportunity to go to college and live away from home. No, she was someone different someone foreign to me. This girl didn’t speak Spanish, didn’t like spicy food and didn’t wear sweatpants to class and she felt entitled to the education she was receiving. She blended right in with the homogeneous student population you couldn’t tell her apart from the rest of the crowd. It was as if the girl I once knew had died somewhere between her dorm room, the dining hall and the classroom.

It wasn’t until a year later that I stumbled upon that same girl, the one I once knew. She looked tired but still energetic. Sore but still strong. A little pale but still full of color. I shyly asked her where she had been this whole time and she simply whispered “I got lost.” We shared a bed that night and silently agreed to leave the past behind and focus on forming our new life together. It took me a year to rise from the ashes and reclaim my agency and my roots. I didn’t realize that I was slowly killing myself with every step as I tried to assimilate to a white American society. I had failed to see that my peers were pushing me to erase my language, my culture, my history and ultimately my identity. I wasn’t good enough for them the way I was. I need to be like them so that they wouldn’t feel threatened. So that they wouldn’t have to make adjustments to their way of living to accommodate mine. So that they wouldn’t have to sit and shift uncomfortably in their seat as I conversed with my friends in a different language. So that they wouldn’t feel like foreigners whenever I practiced my Mexican culture. Assimilating made me feel like I had the upper hand. And I did. I had an advantage over my Latino peers who couldn’t pass as white. I had been conditioned to believe that being an elite, white, educated female was the standard to strive for and I absolutely bought that idea. I did everything I could to mimic and eventually fit the standard that I was presented with only to realize that I was miserable and that no matter how much I tried to fit in (and was successful in doing so) I knew deep inside that I was still an outcast. I didn’t belong with this group of people because there would always be a part of me that would yearn for the other half of my identity. I had to become a “full” American to realize that I was also Mexican. I had to become monolingual before I could appreciate my bilingual heritage. I had to consume western European food before I could savor the flavors of Latin American dishes. I had to be a member of the social elite to understand the wealth of a low-middle class status. I had to die before I could be born again.

"I HAD TO DIE BEFORE I COULD BE BORN AGAIN."
Mother promised
we'd never live in apartments again,
Since the kids in the complex
bashed Chuck's head open.

So we moved there.

Cold, concrete floors,
mice, disgrace
and termites
filled the walls.

The cracks in the cinderblocks
were so wide,
I could watch for the school bus
from inside my room.

I had many nightmares
there—
of devils and killers,
goblins and gods.
I always ran to Chuck
and crawled into his bed.

One night he was not there—
I heard him crying
through a cracked pane.
Sobbing.
"If this is all there is in life,
I want God to kill me now."
I cried too.
I was 6
and Chuck was 13.

We lived there
for seven years—
fleeting for my mother,
but most of my childhood.

It was there
that Nikki said,
"I can't play with you anymore
cuz mama said your trash."
I believed her.

I no longer live there.

I have my own house now,
more beautiful than any sweet
dream.
Chuck has one too—
And I don't believe
for even one moment
that I am less
than other people.

No.
No more of that.
I've been taught to fear you
‘Pull out your jackets and umbrellas people, the storm is coming’
Gray skies
Like the strands in your hair
Forever reinvented by wisdom
Thicker for it, yet more delicate

Delicate,
a delicacy on the tongue of the parched
Yet heavy in communion with your own

I've been told to protect myself from you
The weight too much for these loc(k)s
The moisture not worth the pounding
So I don a shower cap

I check my backpack every morning to make sure that I have
protection
Rubber
boots
Dotted with hearts
The same way your H2O dots mine
You make up ninety-two percent of my blood
My heart beats because of you
My heart beats for you
It tells me to follow you
where ever you go

You are my life source
The pond in my backyard
The fruit of my faucet
I'm twisted open because of you
For you

Mixed together we make the ultimate concentrate
Because sometimes I steal from you...
I take from you to sustain myself
Because I need you
I need you to survive
I need you, to survive

I extract you from the channels that you try to drift away in
I dilute myself with you.
I need you.
Too much of a good thing can kill
Is there rain in the afterlife?
You are bodiless. Shapeless.
The definition of transfiguring and transformative
I can see your rain turning to reign
Maybe you'll continue to bless me from the clouds

.....Somehow I know you're meant to clean me
'Rican-woman-madness

is just another word for love,

she is born of the chains of slavery and genocidal history furiously against the backdrop of Spanish barbarism.

Antonia Dodds

Valerie Garcia
Artist Statement:
On the evening of September 26th, 2014, the bodies of 43 students were stolen, “were disappeared”, as they made their way back to their teacher training school in Ayotzinapa, Mexico. As an artist, I struggled to make sense of what felt so insensible and to put into words my sense of despair, disorientation and indignation in response to such a sense-less atrocity. Struggling for words and colliding against the limits of language, I turned to a visual poetics as a means for uttering the unspeakable, for marking the unrepresentable. Using the rudimentary tools of black india ink on white paper, I created this image to speak back to the forms of state-sanctioned violence that could render the seemingly surreal real—the politics, policies and processes of power that would render the lives of 42 young men, soon-to-be-teachers, from working-class backgrounds, disposable--erasable. As an artist and activist, turning a blind-eye is never a choice. We, as a world, are going blind from so much turning of blind-eyes. We struggle with our myopia and collective forms of blindness in the face of growing inequality and injustice. Some lives are worth being seen as worthy; others fail to register in our field of vision; they blur far too easily and quickly from our historical memory. I have always seen art as a way to return the gaze, to move us to “see”, and to shift the kind of optics we have of the world towards a vision of greater social justice. Art, as Gloria Anzaldúa also noted, can indeed be our most accessible means for resisting and speaking back to empire, colonization, imperialism, and other forms of domination festering in the crevices of everyday life. The image that thus began to form on the page is an articulation of my indignation; it is a symbolic representation of the role that differing forms of erasures, absences, and silences continue to play within marginalized communities of color. Linking Ayotzinapa to the larger circuits of global capital and Empire, we must confront the reality that the project of Empire and colonial domination has always been contingent on processes of erasure and “disappearances”—the strategic absence and forced submersion not just of flesh-and-blood (marked) bodies, but also of epistemologies—the disappearing and submersion of voices, perspectives, and (her)stories. Our past has taught us that erasure can operate as the ultimate form of violence.
our backs
tell stories
no books have
the spine to
carry

women of colour - rupi kaur
A HUGE THANKS TO:

Che J. Hatter
Letta Palmer
The WMST Faculty and Staff
Everyone who contributed to this magazine, be it through submissions, support, or their existence.
ALLEGORICAL ATHENA
A COLLECTION OF THE WORK OF STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY

SPRING 2015
VOLUME 20
COLGATE CENTER FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES