After what seemed to be one of the longest winters ever, the sun has lit up these spring days as well as people’s spirits. Spring brings with her fresh hope, fresh air, and fresh starts. Last weekend, which was filled with 48 hours of perfect weather, was the perfect motivator for spring cleaning in my house. With windows opened, I tackled the grime, dust, and dirt that had found warm, homey places in nooks and corners over the long winter.

With shovel, rake, and wheelbarrow in tow, I added room and beauty to my gardens that were screaming with color for joy for the new season. My children helped me look for large stones in our backyard to add to the border of the gardens. We finally were able to pry loose beautiful stones that had been buried deep by years of storms, moss, and dirt. Proud of our discoveries of these treasures, we gently placed these stones in the wheelbarrow to carry them to their new homes where they could bask in the sun and no longer hide in the ground.

Each semester it seems for many students that the dirt pile of student issues is still under the rug – issues related to racial dynamics in and out of the classroom, campus tensions around identity-based housing, and the growing student frustrations around “being real” about the discourse (or lack of) about racism and other forms of oppression. Can we not just sweep all of the dirt from all corners of campus into one big pile? Well, the winds would carry it all back…each and every time. That is the nature of our world. Sometimes I do wish I had one big vacuum cleaner to suck away all of the recurring negativity that finds itself in the nooks and corners of students’ lives. Is it JUST that students will be graduating with an unsettled acceptance that the racialized experiences they have had throughout their academic year and look forward to what’s next – as soon-to-be graduates, as SOURCE group signers, and more. I have seen how older students have dusted off chairs for their younger peers. I have witnessed how two students have opened windows together and reached out to touch the sky. I have been a part of student celebrations of new seasons and of old. And I have seen many students not be afraid of getting dirty.

We all have the ability to help clean up this campus for each new season. Let’s all do our part. We do not have a giant racist vacuum cleaner, but what I do have is the light that comes with students unearthing every so often the stones of hope. With the spring semester almost coming to its end, I have felt the power of Spring stirring the winds in and out of the Cultural Center. I have seen how the stories of history, struggle, community, and hope that the Cultural Center and SOURCE student groups were built upon are resurfacing as students place closure on their academic year and look forward to what’s next – as soon-to-be graduates, as SOURCE group signers, and more. I have seen how older students have dusted off chairs for their younger peers. I have witnessed how two students have opened windows together and reached out to touch the sky. I have been a part of student celebrations of new seasons and of old. And I have seen many students not be afraid of getting dirty.

To better serve and retain students of color and international students, the Lebrón-Wiggins-Pran Cultural Center provides a range of programs and resources to support and promote the success of students of color and international students at Hampshire College.

Additionally, the center provides programs and resources to the larger campus community for engagement in issues related to race, culture, and under-representation, with the underlying goal to effect social change.

We enhance our longstanding commitment to community and social change by:

- providing and advocating for services, programs, and resources that assist international students and students of color for a successful transition to, matriculation at, and graduation from Hampshire College
- offering services, programs, and resources that foster academic success among international students and students of color
- ensuring a space for multicultural community building, individual expression, and the exchange of ideas
- fostering leadership skills for multicultural competence for students of color, international students, and multicultural student groups
- continually examining the fluidity of race, culture, and identity; specifically examining how race and culture intersect with other social identities and their impact on one’s view of self and of the world
- serving as a campus partner in promoting multicultural competence through community engagement on topics related to race, culture, and under-representation
I’m overwhelmed by the incredible amount of creative work that Hampshire students produce. We’re an unmatched bubble of creativity, with students who are able to so diligently put together the culmination of their past four years (five years for some) into a last hooray – a DIV III project. More than the excitement over DIV III projects, I am infatuated with the people who take on this year long task. In this vain, I would like to make my “last letter from the editor” to bid farewell to five amazing and resilient individuals, who make living on campus as a person of color and an international student much easier – our Cultural Center staff graduates.

Daliza Nova, our Peer Mentorship Coordinator, wrote an amazing (and LONG) DIV III about housing structures; Prateek, the CC’s Design Coordinator, took on a dual DIV III project, he built a car – like literally, this dude BUILT a friggin’ car! And, he did an amazing photography project taking photos of students; Stephanie Lim, Arts Coordinator wrote about transnational adoptions; and J.D. Stokely put on an amazing theater production called the Sexual Liberation of Mammy; and Ria, the quiet storm, who I adore and look up to with much admiration.

Seldom do the good work these folks do at the CC get recognized. And quite frankly, they take on the complicated responsibility of producing programming and being default ambassadors and counselors to the SOURCE community. That is no small task. I would wish them all well in life, but really I don’t need to. Because somehow I know, they will all turn out just fine.

Both of my parents are Black. But in the first day of life on this earth, the babies in my family would not look out of place clasped close to the chest of a Chinese woman: we have light skin with yellow undertones, eyes that slant and a full head of hair that refuses to curl. Days later, our skin gets darker and within weeks, months our hair texture changes, gradually, until it reaches varying levels of coil, wave and kink. By age 3 it is straight up nappy.

[Scene 1]: Sacrifice

I am 4 years old and have learned a few things about beauty from my mother. She says, ”it hurts to be beautiful,” as I complain while she tries her best to de-tangle the mess on the top of my head. “Well, then I don’t want to be beautiful!” I whine with tears in my eyes. My father looks at my mother with a sly smile and shakes his head. He squats down to my level. “Yeah, she’s evil isn’t she?” He pokes out his bottom lip and sends a look of sympathy my way. “Shut up, Cobbie.” My mother laughs a little and gently rubs the sore spots. “Eeevil,” he whispers in my ear. My mouth lets out a little laugh as a tear slips down the side of my face.

[Scene 2]: Surrender

My mom gives me a hat that I don’t want to wear. It’s itchy and I don’t like the way it looks. She tells me to quit acting up and that, “it’s too cold to be cute, Courtney.” Being “cute” refers to appearances, it also refers to my little attitude. A blizzard is on its way. I open the door and find out the hard way that being cold hurts and doesn’t even come with the consolation prize of feeling pretty. I feel scammed.

[Scene 3]: Sit Still

I am 5 years old and in Kindergarten. I am sitting on a pillow, on the floor, in between my mother’s legs. Where I Am Coming From or Courtney Hooks, As Herself.
Welcome to Christopher Street: A Night with Queer Youth of Color

by Steven Emmanuel Martinez

It’s 12:35am and police officers are getting ready to dispatch the queer kids from perhaps their only solace of safety at this time of night—Pier 45. Following the officers is a member of the Christopher Street patrol, a slim, black bearded man, who dons a red cap and a red jacket with the words “Guardian Angels” encrypted on the back. His presence is snidely booed by some of the queer kids. They begin to get louder as the man stands in unity with the police officers. He lets out a small grin, which infuriates one young man who yells, “Get the fuck out! Get the fuck out!” The other gay kids cheer and applaud. But some refuse to be fazed, brushing the man aside as though he holds no existence.
Clothing; the transgender female whose Adam’s apple, dyke whose mother hated the fact that she wore masculine him out after learning of his queerness, therefore inducing a story: the Black gay 17 year old, whose parents kicked who steps onto the pavement of Christopher Street has the Christopher Street and 7th avenue corner. Everyone queer kids of color. All of whom enter the street through Christopher Street is a hot spot for predominantly greet a male friend with an intense hug and a kiss. with Vaseline. For a moment he lets go of his boyfriend to is his boyfriend. The feminine man is carrying a Louis fitted cap with the letters NY scripted in yellow, and reach just above his ankles, white Nike uptowns, a Black with her outfit. A masculine gentleman has a scripted there’s a drag queen with colorful locks of hair—bronze, These nights always bring in all types of characters— kids flocking onto Christopher Street and into Pier 45. and warm enough to enjoy outside, always has the gay collide, and the temperature is cool enough for a jacket, Cool nights like this, when winter and spring in which he doesn’t go out to patrol his neighborhood. The Christopher Street patrol is run on a volunteer basis and was founded by Dave Poster (or Uncle Dave depending on who you’re talking to), a short, Caucasian older gentlemen, in his early 70s with bushy black eyebrows. He created the patrol in the early 90s to reduce the theft in the area. He has been running the patrol for nearly a decade and has yet to miss a weekend in which he doesn’t go out to patrol his neighborhood.

Cool nights like this, when winter and spring collide, and the temperature is cool enough for a jacket, and warm enough to enjoy outside, always has the gay kids flocking onto Christopher Street and into Pier 45. These rights always being in all types of characters—there’s a drag queen with colorful locks of hair—bronz, silver, and gold, not the best mixture of color, but it works with her outfit. A masculine gentleman has a scripted tattoo that reads salvation. He wears white capitols that reach just above his ankles, white uptops, a Black fitted cap with the letters NY scripted in yellow, and holding his hand is a much feminine man, who I assume is his boyfriend. The feminine man is carrying a Louis Vuitton bag, his shirt is tightly fitted, and his face shines with Vaseline. For a moment he lets go of his boyfriend to greet a male friend with an intense hug and a kiss.

Christopher Street is a hot spot for predominantly queer kids of color. All of whom enter the street through the Christopher Street and 7th avenue corner. Everyone who steps onto the pavement of Christopher Street has a story: the Black gay 17 year old, whose parents kicked him out after learning of his queerness, therefore inducing him to turning tricks to make ends meet; the self-identified dyke whose mother hated the fact that she wore masculine clothing; the transgender female whose Adam’s apple, tricks for money. Many of them come from broken homes, a lot of them were kicked out, and some have run away due to the neglect or abuse they suffer at home.

“I was homeless for about 2 months before my mom let me back in. I was turning tricks for some time. It was quick money, easy money, but I hated it,” says K.S., his eyes moving away from my face. At 16 K.S. came out and, with a less than supportive mother, he had nowhere to go but Christopher Street.

“Honestly I don’t know what I would have done without Christopher Street,” K.S., searches around Pier 45 at the other teens knowing some of them share the same story. “It helped me survive for a while. I’m not proud of how I had to do it, but I did it and I don’t offer any apologies about it.”

Christopher Street and Bleeker only a block south of Pier 45 is where many of the sex workers gather to turn tricks. The spot usually attracts older white men, many who are married with children, a large percentage of who are coming from New Jersey.

“Prostitutes are usually on Christopher and Bleeker,” K.S., says to me as we trail the block. For the most part the block is empty.

“Anyways, yeah, I hate fake people. I’m going to be honest. I prostituted when I left home. And that’s another thing. A lot of these niggas’ that come out be lyin’ when they say they be kicked out. They are looking for sympathy and shit. A lot of them run away because, yeah, I guess ‘cause their parents don’t accept them, but the way I see it if your parents still love you and still give you a place to lay your head at then you should be grateful. I don’t have that. So I left.”

Jonathan recalls having to crash in homes of his friends, park benches; sometimes the man who he ‘serviced’ were paying to have for a hotel room in exchange for tricks.

The clock ticks Tam and without any words the youth begin to retreat out of Pier 45 and onto Christopher Street. The streets get crowded now with all the teens drifting onto the boulevard in crowds. The kids of Christopher Street never travel individually they travel in herds—voguing down the avenues, stealing kisses from their partners, the flashing gay boys assembling to cover their blemishes, the aggressive girls ankling their ace bands around their cleavage to hide the appearance of their breast. My eyes set upon the openness the queer teens share with one another, something not at all unusual for me to see, as I come here often; but for some reason as I jot down my notes all of the action around me becomes more and more apparent.

Christopher Street is a metropolis filled with cafes, video stores, leather fetish shops, bars, and sex shops, a street that many call the epicenter of gay America. The queer kids who Rock here are predominantly Black and Latino, the Caucasians can be found in Chelsea. The segregation is quite evident, yet it is rarely talked about.

Jonathan sits on top of the fountain that greets those who walk onto the boardwalk of Pier 45. He lights his Marlboro cigarette, the third since we began our interview, Jonathan is a 19 year old androgynous gay man. He’s wearing baggy jeans, with a baggy shirt, but his mannerisms are quite feminine, he stands about 5’9, with a foul mouth, and intense facial features: a defined nose, high cheek bones, and golden nut eyes that reveal tragedy, neglect, but amid it all, a resistance to misfortune.

“You know what I hate? I hate people who can’t tell the truth,” he says with his cigarette hanging from his lip. “I can’t stand fake people. People who swear shit is sweet. A’ight, on the real—”
For years community members, predominantly white, many of them paying thousands of dollars a month for an apartment, have complained about the noise level on Christopher Street. An array of board meetings, petitions, and rallying has follow the tenants and the queer kids on Christopher Street every year with both sides arguing that they have just as much right to the area as the other. These events are all a result of the 11pm curfew that the locals want to implement on Pier 45 because the noise level is unbearable. This has many of the youth arguing that the locals only want them to retreat because they are of color.

Perhaps the noise level is a bit exaggerated. An older man sticks his head out earlier that night, and politely says, “Lower the music please.” The young man outside of the car sucks his teeth—his companion ups the music. The older man retreats with a deep sigh and shuts his window in frustration.

This would have been OK if it was earlier, but it was 11pm, almost midnight, and it was a Thursday night.

“Yeah these faggots get loud at times. I use the word faggots, because it’s always the faggots that are loud. Yelling stupid shit so that they can be noticed.”

Jonathan exclaimed almost frustrated. I lost the gentleman who with sophistication shook my hand and greeted me with a smile.

“But I’m saying still, where are they going to--- nah, where are we going to all go? For example if there’s a guy who lives down Christopher Street and he’s probably going to get harassed ‘cause he feminine.”

Jonathan prompted me to remember a cold December night when I was returning home from a party in New Jersey at 5AM and exiting the PATH train (a train line that connects New Jersey to New York City) at the Christopher Street station. I found young people, some as young as 14, lying on the ground of the station sleeping. Where were their parents? This wasn’t a rhetorical question. I looked within myself, and for a moment, I thought I had the answer. Perhaps they’re homeless too. But I was 18 and I knew better. Their parents were home asleep, nestled in warm quilts, comforted by fluffy pillows and not hardwood floors. Something about myself being queer and of color and being able to return home to a warm environment, to a mother who has never thought twice about abandoning me as her child, just didn’t feel right and until this day has yet to register with me, I find it unfair. I could sleep knowing that I can wake up to my mother’s kisses and “I love you” but these young gays and lesbians cannot, because they don’t bend toward societal perceptions of what love should look like.

As I walked with Jonathan and his friend L.R. out of Christopher Street I turned to notice that the pier was becoming barricaded. They’re barricading our safety spot? I shook my head and looked over at Jonathan, about to ask him his thoughts on the barring of the pier when I overheard someone in front of me asking the person beside him, “Where you sleeping tonight?”

I looked over at the gentleman awaiting his response. He fidgeted, looked worried, and a bit uneasy, “I don’t know yet I’m going to try going uptown and see if the shelters aren’t full.”

Jonathan, L.R., and I stopped in front of a Chinese store where two young men were battling in vogue, an artistic form of dance, usually comprised with model-like poses, and picturesque dance movements. The crowd surrounding them—about 15 people—were yelling and chanting in excitement.


“No. You?” He asked almost stubbornly.

“I wish,” I responded.

A crowd began to walk past us heading up Christopher Street. For years community members, predominantly white, many of them paying thousands of dollars a month for an apartment, have complained about the noise level on Christopher Street and began to cheer and yell not as a crowd surrounding them—about 15 people—were yelling and chanting in excitement.

“You want to finish the interview?” Jonathan asked trying to upstage the noise.

“No,” I responded.

“Did you finish your interview?”

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With that we joined the crowd marching up Christopher Street and began to cheer and yell not as a statement, but because this is our space too—and like the $4,000 a month apartment renters, we too call this our place—and we cannot be told otherwise.

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Strategic Plan. It has in it some really strong parts. There's a diversity initiative that's coming out of the Hampton College. There have been some discussions. There are some parts like the Hampton College space. Community space is apart of everything. Its part of everything you need to make a good college, and diversity is sort of like that.

SM: I definitely want to ask you about the diversity plan.

MF: We are in the cone of silence here.

SM: What can you tell us?

MF: You know what everyone else knows.

SM: What's the diversity like on the search committee?

MF: I don't know.

SM: You are looking for a candidate?

MF: I'm looking for what most people on this campus is looking for. Somebody who really is proud of and loves the diversity and is committed to core values of the institution. Which includes, the core pedagogy, the commitment to social justice, the commitment to diversity. It has to be someone who can lead Hampshire, and leading Hampshire is a complicated matter. But I think one of the lessons of the last several years is that leadership Hampshire has to be collaborative and consultative. It doesn't mean you can't act, you do need someone who is strong and that can take it all in, listen to a lot of voices and then who can make the best decisions even if it isn't the most popular decision. I think the other thing is about resources. There's so much potential here. We've done an incredible amount under "more is less." I keep thinking about what we can do if we have more. I want Hampshire to be as great as it is.

SM: Are you allowed to tell me about the applicants?

MF: I'm not part of the search committee. That's why I can't talk about it. I know what everyone else knows.

MF: I don't have any inside track here.

SM: What are you looking for in a candidate?

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Every year the subject of identity based housing gets brought up in some form or another. Usually the question center around whether identity based housing is a relevant function of the Hampshire community. Yet in the attempt to characterize Hampshire as an environment intellectually beyond issues of oppression and marginalization, a larger question isn’t brought to attention: what are the current problems facing the sustainability of identity based housing?

Right off the bat the policies and language surrounding identity based housing come to mind. Like much of the language used at Hampshire, the language around identity based housing is confusing, vague, and relies heavily on implications. There is no standard, clear cut definition of what identity based housing means as an operational definition. There are no following clearly outlining the necessary procedures for sustainability. Essentially there is a lot to be desired. For a month community members have been in meetings to flesh out such language.

From a personal perspective, I see another issue facing identity based housing which meetings cannot solve. American society on a whole has lullled itself into a deeper fantasy about our country being post-racial, post-homophobia/transphobia than before. We’re in a world where people who point out the racism of cultural appropriation are labeled as being oversensitive or ignorant of historical cultural exchanges of traditions amongst people. Such claims, however, don’t consider the difference between consensual cultural exchange and blatant theft of cultural practices. We’re in a world where people think the success of certain gay and lesbian celebrities like Ellen DeGeneres means that homophobia is not a problem anymore, because if it were an open lesbian like her couldn’t be successful. Yet the suicides of several LGBT youth at last fall easily debunks the idea that there are queers, they’re here, and America’s certainly used to it. We’re in a world that pretends the majorities of the histories composing this country aren’t immigrant histories, and to deny entrance to newer generations of immigrants because they aren’t pilgrims on the Mayflower is contradictory to the founding values of this country. We’re a world where misguided allies think they can reclaim slurs due to existing friendships, and are disappointed when they are denied tragic attempts to show they are indeed “down with the people”.

Instead of generations interested in understanding the mistakes of our collective ancestry as a global culture. Instead of utilizing such knowledge to work towards a better world, we are instead defaulting to positions of ignorance, apathy, and general disdain for discussing and acting within the political and cultural framework for “those complicated issues”. Such a plague on the collective conscious of our world makes no exception for a school like Hampshire. Just because our community works to include anti-oppression work into its pedagogy doesn’t prevent our student body from ignoring the need to carry anti-oppression work from the classroom to the living spaces to the study spaces and support centers. Anti-oppression work is slowly being supplanted by the desire to appear liberal. What was one a viable political philosophy has been dwindled to an identity where people can easily stake the claim “I’m not a racist. I’m not homophobic or transphobic. I’m not against XYZ. I am perfectly right on in the world of political correctness.” Yet the claims of liberalism are progressively lacking the necessary groundswell needed to bring true change to this country and ultimately the world. It’s difficult for a group of people dedicated to anti-oppression work to push against a current of those who don’t see its validity.

This push and pull between active and passive is at the heart of the identity based housing problem. We are working against many factors, but most important we are working against a clock. There isn’t enough time to reverse the damage done to a generation of people lulled into a false sense of complacency. There isn’t enough time to educate people on the continued need for identity based housing as a safe space for historically oppressed, under represented or underserved populations. Instead those dedicated in whatever capacity must push forward to change the structure of identity based housing for future generations. We must work to engage students from all walks of life in the conversation, from prospective accepted to incoming. And meanwhile, in the private moments we take to ourselves, we must hope, dream, and even pray for a day when the collective conscious has shifted, and the relevance of identity based housing is no longer questioned, but implicitly understood.
But I Love It
by Brittany Williams

I love how it feels when it touches my back
From the way it rubs up against me when it feels soft
And other times when it's nice and hard
Though it's usually supple and gentle
There are days when it's rough and tough...
You know, the days when you just can't take it
Days where you spend... time after time trying to handle
it—but you can't...
I especially hate it when I try to get it all in but it
doesn't go
That's when I realized I had to try it all natural...
You know with nothing coming between me and it
No man made concoctions to keep us apart
I could just love it unconditionally whether it's soft or hard
I never had to worry about it being dry though, you
know I got that under control
I've been dealing with it this way for about 2 years
When I first told my mom she was scared but supportive
She told me if I was ready and I thought the time was
right that I should go for it
None of that cliché PROTECTION stuff... Just do it...
I know somebody in here has to feel me? No?
(sigh)... I tell you... It's so so hard dealing with black
hair... But I love it...

BYB
by Brittany Williams

Being young and Black on the Westside of Atlanta
meant being cool...
Instead of listening to the stories of cats, who wore hats, in
all Black, with actions that were down-- rather than
jeans we decided to ignore them... Where girls wore-
Mini skirts in middle school
And brought babies to show and tell
Arriving to school late and leaving early to hang with
men more than twice their age
Where idolizing Beyoncés who won't read beyond 8
lines because they were taught to sing and rhyme by
the time they were 9... was the norm.
And memories of educators telling us we could be more
than what we see within the realms of Westside projects
became the beginning of another WestSide story
Instead of Maria Maria it was Brittany Marie
The oreo, the cracker, the boujee wanna be white girl
who thought she was better than everyone
The oreo because she read books and made straight
A's
The cracker because she wore polo's and Chuck Taylors
Boujee because she had long good hair and always
walked with her head high
And all of the above because of the obvious... Skin
color...
Because of course self pride and nonconformist reactions
meant acting in a way that wasn't Black
Fast forward. 25 college applications. 23 acceptance
letters; commitment to Hampshire College.
Young. Black. Inner city... Subtract the predominance of
Black and insert whiteness.
Introduction to a culture of privilege and power where I
almost always felt the poorest in the room
Where questions about my happiness are asked daily and
assumptions of anger are in abundance
To be young and Black at Hampshire is the expectation
of calling out ignorance; breaking down stupidity; and
bare the weight of having to shrink in your seat when
you're the only Black student and you're asked about
the one African diasporic content based discussion in
an entire class... The assumption that you can speak for
all Blacks...
Where titles like Woman of Color, Person of Color, and
Student of Color are placed on you without explanations
of what that means
Where togetherness turns into a cultural lump, melting
pot, too hot to discuss and too important to dismiss...
Black because of my racial heritage...
A woman of color because it's more comfortable for
whites to say...
and
A student of color because the color experience of non-
white students is important
And all of the above because it's PC to recognize the
differences we see even though we ignore the (re)actions
that happen as a result
Being this light skinned young Black woman once meant
being confused and constantly negotiating the way I
identify to please those around me... Today it means
being who I want to be whether it is accepted or not.
The chickens were the early birds, it was una
the house taste the fruit but so would the passer byers.
covered the sidewalk, and not only would everyone in
the neighbor's daughter would move with it the mangos
bore so much fruit that some branches would drape
bear good fruit, he would say. At times, the mango tree
"Si tratas a los arboles con amor te daran
chickens, and even the fruit trees in the house.
reminded all his grandchildren and children that they
sleep. He shook the house with his snore, but it's what
time to feed his gallinas y gallos. Everyone in the house
expensive alarm; he woke up every day at the same
biological clock was on point, better than any cheap or
he always woke up so early, but he didn't complain his
he hears them when they're not being loud;
“Como un pajarito, sin molestar a nadie.”  Like a little
About papa, he always said he wanted to die
granddaughter got attacked by a chicken for touching
To get to the back yard he had to pass the living room,
way out of the bathroom and into the backyard. It was
heated to the sound of the chickens, and roll
around in bed for a little bit before he actually managed to
giant belly making it harder to stand. His
around in bed for a little bit before he actually managed to
to up, his giant belly making it harder to stand. His
He hears them when they're not being loud;
I'm coming he would inform his chickens as
wake up to the sound of the chickens, and roll
around in bed for a little bit before he actually managed to
giant belly making it harder to stand. His
He rocks himself in the rocking car enjoying a glass of
Hearing the chuckling of the chickens and
They speak for a few more minutes, and then
year old got too hurt. He would make breakfast for his
grandchildren every morning after feeding las gallinas. Chocolate con pan, oatmeal, or a fresh squeezed juice
was on the menu, and thinking about the menu for
lunch was added to the list every morning, and he never
forgot to make sure if he had enough dried corn.

Eventually, Papa was left con sus pajarritos and a
friend for company in the house because his daughter
moved to the states along with her kids' grandchildren.
But the summers were always very active, that's when
his grandchildren all returned. He always made sure to
take mangos when they weren't quite ready yet and
store them until his granddaughter and daughter came
back. When they would arrive on the island although it
wasn't mango season, they always had mangos, not
only that, but fresh chicken and even pigeons.

The pigeons were faithful visitors of the house
on calle cuantro manzana 3616, they were there every
day at the same time. The electric cable would be
completely covered as if the palomas were just standing
on air. As he threw the corn it would rain pigeons in
front of the house, rushing, like it was their last meal.
The smile on his face when the birds would shower the
front of the house was contagious, he radiated and
happy took a new form.

Papa would make lunch and dinner more often
than his daughter would, "estas de vacaciones" you're
on vacation, he would say, and she never opposed
because she understood he wanted to do it for her.
Some days he would wake up earlier than usual and
head to the backyard as he did every morning. But
instead of coming back empty handed he would return
with one chicken on each of his hands. That day the
meal would be fresh chicken, and that day his daughter
would also cook, and he would only cook the arroz con
habichuela, with no chicken.

**
On the morning of October 4th, 1999 papa woke up like
ever other morning. He rolled around in bed, put on
his slippers and walked over to the yard. This morning
though, one of his chickens was missing. He walked
from the back yard to the front of the house and on
the sidewalk found his gallina, muerta, just laying there
lifeless.

"Cono, ese maldito perro!” That fucking dog!
he cursed one of the neighbor's dogs for killing his
dear bird. He picked up the chicken and took it to the
backyard. He then went to the kitchen picked up a
glass of hot chocolate and a piece of bread. As the
phone rang he passed his granddaughter sitting on the
the table eating breakfast, and answered.

*Aqui quillao, el perro me mato una gallina pissed
off a dog killed my chicken, he explains to his daughter
who's calling from Spain.

"Ay papa tu, y tus gallinas"
Que hubo? My name is Diana Isabel Diaz Munoz and I have been a SOURCE Group Coordinator (SGC) since January 2011. I was born in Cali (unfortunately not Cali-fornia but Cali, Colombia also known as the world capital of Salsa). I immigrated to the United States on August 7, 2004 to reunite with my mother in the heart of Jackson Heights, Queens, NY. Even though it was not my decision to leave my childhood friends, my family, the tropical weather, the great grandma’s cooking, the all year long happy people because there’s no winter to cause seasonal affective disorder, I found out that it was meant to be for me to leave and like my first fortune cookie said on August 9, 2004, "today is the start of your new life." I dominated English very fast and easily assimilated to the New Yorker lifestyle, always busy and in a rush. My education experience has been beyond what I imagined for myself when I was 12 years old. I thought I was just going to finish secondary school and go to the university my mom went to and study medicine there. Instead I went to an international middle school and high school where I learned the value of diversity and where accents and clothing became unnoticeable. Then ended up in a non-traditional college where we learn because we want to learn. I came to Hampshire in 2009 looking for a well-rounded education, and ready to integrate arts and medicine into some sort of division work. However, after a couple of courses and a lot of introspection I realized that public health is what I am passionate about. Of course as a Hampshire student I am not solely interested in public health, but also in media studies, Latin@/Latin American studies and Mandarin Chinese. I am a signer for Raices and as I said before an SGC for QIPOC, Umoja, PASA, DIG and Mixed Heritage. Working at the Cultural Center has been great, everyone welcomed me wholeheartedly and that’s just great.

Fantasy

by Foto Hamilton

No need for a beat
I'm ready to speak some things
I keep looking up, buried, and dipped in chocolate thoughts
beneath what's so easy to see
So what's then eating at me,
so eagerly I wanna scream "Hey how's your evening"
No please, don't perceive me as a being who's being to cliche'
when I say your face is so serene to me
And what seems to be so
EYE CATCHING, JAW DROPPING,
is the way you smile your teeth at me
and say "I'm doing good"
see and be good
well I think well, but time will tell if you'll join the same team as me
and periodically that team of we
will take on the world so seamlessly
"oh that's cool"
but I really don't know what you think of me
and we all got flaws of ours so yours aren't a thing to me
so easily I'm aware of the way you wear your hair
and them jeans that bring out those curves you bare
but really
I could care if your breast would impress all my mans...
giving you the saying...
"yes you can...
anyway I said this only inside
just an emotion, a notion of one day eloping
with this special kinda guy
BYE
On a cold Saturday morning, I stood from the chair and looked through the window: the trees had not moved since last week and the birds that fly in circles around them were not there either. From behind the trees, a wind blew the old leaves towards my window. I opened it to feel the breeze and noticed, at the bottom of the screen, a small creature moving calmly up the stool and into the room. I left the window opened for a moment. I walked back-and-forth from the window to the door, contemplating on matters neither obvious nor too important. I took the seat and placed it in front of the window. I looked down at the stool, and the creature seemed to be looking at me.

The colors of the day had also changed. Evening was coming faster each time, so the sky was dark by the time it was a little after six. The colors of dawn did not remain the same. From behind stool of the window. This had never occurred to me. The creature was beginning to feel a bit sleepy until I noticed the creature would mean that I have no sense of guilt, no shame of myself.

I enjoyed its company, and that was my final thought about the creature. I didn’t talk to it. I just thought about it. I didn’t talk to myself as I looked at the creature. I didn’t talk to it, that would be silly, but I did talk to myself as I looked at the creature. Then, for the first time, something else happened that made me re-think about the poor creature. I thought about its situation. noticed that it had been in my room for two days without any food. It was mostly moving from one place to another, but never did it bother to search for any food beyond stool of the window. This had never occurred to me. I was never too interested in insects the way I was then. The colors of dawn did not remain the same. From behind stool of the window. This had never occurred to me. The creature was beginning to feel a bit sleepy until I noticed the creature would mean that I have no sense of guilt, no shame of myself.

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What is Left is What Will Remain

by Melanie Lopez

As though the world isn’t full,
Without a connection to those who have passed.
When the rain falls,
When the sun rises
I am always O’odham

Si’alig to Hudnig
0 to 99
I come from land of my ancestors, I come from the earth.
I am always O’odham

I\’ll never leave his people without purpose,
He never leaves us alone wondering of his return.
Himdag is what’s left of him and it’s what we have to share
Mumsigo, Hua, Gomill,
I am always O’odham

What is left is my Himdag is scarce.
Time is changing day after day.
People are not as connected as before.
But as I grow older, as generations die and grow
I am always O’odham

Tohono O’odham
“The Desert People”
Created by I’itio but destroyed by Mi:lgan
As long as we still walk this earth,
We will always be O’odham

Jalissa is my youngest sister. She attends Maynard Jackson High School formerly Southside High School in Atlanta, Georgia. She is the popular girl in school, although she would never admit it. She says, “My school is very friendly in that way. We don’t separate into groups of cool kids and geeks. We all just talk to everyone.” I’m not sure if I believe that everyone in her high school talks to each other without conflict, but I definitely know that everyone talks to Jalissa. Every time she hears the phone ring, it’s for her. I’m surprised my mother doesn’t make her pay the phone bill. I joked that she’s humble in her popularity, and she laughed. In our initial meeting at the West End Library, Jalissa entered the meeting room wearing her hot pink and black track jacket, with a light blue and green shirt underneath reading, ‘Smart is the new Gangsta’. All heads turned, and she spoke, “Hey ya’ll”, waving her hand. The beauty mark beside her nose rose as her high cheek bones formed into a balanced smile. She found a seat at the table with the other participants and began talking.

Jalissa appears to like being the center of attention, from wearing flashy clothes to commenting on people’s every move, not so much in a judgmental way, but more to be funny. She wants everyone to know her name and who she is. Her boisterous laugh echoes through the air, often making it hard for others not to laugh along with her. With broad shoulders and long legs she glides through a room. In the library, she moved deliberately, being sure to fill in the room. Back at home, off duty, she moves slowly around the kitchen table and our little brother’s toys. She’s hyper aware of space and how she moves through it. I guess that’s the dancer in her.

As if I didn’t know it already, she tells me that she loves to dance, and how she would love to tell me this story of how her outlook of education changed with this one occurrence in school. Jalissa choreographed most of our conversations, characteristically starting off each story with, “Well.” Her story of change, as she calls it, is one of the biggest lessons that she’s learned in school. She explains, “Well, it was the last day before we got out for winter break when an announcement over the intercom abruptly interrupted a conversation that I was having with my friend. It was Mrs. Connelly, the school’s registrar. I could tell by her scratchy voice – always sounding like she needs a glass of water. Over the intercom, she said that if anyone failed a class that semester we would get held back if we didn’t go to summer school. That was it, the announcement went off and I continued talking to my friend. I really didn’t worry about anything, even though I did have two low grades in my classes. I was just ready for vacation.”

“About an hour later, the bell rang and we were out for two weeks. Free of school. Everybody burst rushed the door, falling all over each other to escape. I was in there pushing and shoving people over to get my taste of fresh air too. FREEDOM! When I got home, I put my book bag in the corner and made me a sandwich. After that, I sat in front of the TV and went to sleep. Much of my break went the same exact way. Before I knew it, the two weeks had passed by and I found myself back at school sitting in the counselor’s office holding my breath. Mr. Scott, who never wore deodorant, handed me some summer school papers and I threw them away. Well I didn’t exactly throw the papers away, I filled them out and gave it to him, but I never went, I threw them away in my mind…I never went to summer school. I spent the whole summer not thinking twice about summer school. I got me a job instead. I was making money and hanging out with my friends having a good time.”

“BIG MISTAKE! I got to school in August, fresh dressed like a million bucks of course, and my schedule had a 10th grade homeroom on it. Dooom. I was so embarrassed! I had to talk to the thirsty throat lady, Mrs.
Connelly, the musty man, Mr. Scott, and everybody else knew them 3 months before I convinced them to put me into my rightful homeowner. There was so much going on at school, so much paperwork, processing and more processing, sending it here and sending it there, giving me the run around. It was the most stressful thing that I have ever had to go through. They finally figured out that I had more than enough credits to be in the 12th grade all along. I was too thorough. Why couldn’t they figure that out at first? I don’t know. I guess it was all worth it in the end, because I’m now where I’m supposed to be.”

“So what did that teach you, Jalissa, and how does that have to do with your relationship to your education?” I asked with a smirk on my face. She threw her head back and put her hand on her face, saying, “Well” and lingering for a minute. “This taught me that I cannot blame everything on the teachers and administration because it was all on me. I slacked. I messed up, and I had to fix it on my own, which was difficult. So my lesson is learned, if something is done right the first time, it makes things so much easier. I think that’s what teachers and parents try to tell us all the time” She smiled then let out a deep sigh of relief, letting me know that she was finished. “What about, what does this experience have to do with your relationship to your education?”

“Oh yeah” she says, “Well, I take my education for granted of a lot of times. Things come easily to me, so I do my work just to get it over with. I don’t know, I think this experience has a lot to do with my relationship to my education, because it shows that I have to take education more seriously, as in taking it more seriously. I know that I still have a lot to learn, and I need to put more effort into it.”

When she was done talking, I asked her why she wanted to tell me that story so badly, and she said because she’s really proud of herself, “although it came from an unfortunate situation”. The ability to prove that she can do something for herself was empowering. She didn’t ask anyone for help, she knew what she had to do in order to not be retained. This lesson is one that she will keep with her beyond high school. Sometimes, the best lessons come from personal experiences and not from reading the lessons talking at you about lessons they’ve learned that they want to pass down to you. Some may call that “learning the hard way”. But she learned nonetheless.

* * *

Jalissa is fervent in all things about herself. She’ll say things out of the blue and laugh hysterically about them. “When it comes to dancing and music, the loves of my life” the sixteen year old tells me. “I don’t know which one I love more, it’s like breath to life...one cannot exist without the other. In fact, I wake up every morning at 6:00am to go to the gym. I go from Frank and Wanda on V-103 ‘The People’s Station’, blissing through my entire day, I do this out of a compulsion! ‘What if I don’t do well? What if the school likes everyone else. It took me a minute to realize that that way they don’t fill my stomach. ‘What if I don’t get accepted?’ I asked. ‘I mean that I don’t have to feed into what they want, or what they want me to be. They do not make me a whole person. I mean that I always be me, Jalissa – the one and only. No one can take that away from me. Besides, part of me believes that they are just jealous of me – I’m too real for them. That’s even how I feel about the people I go to school with now, but in High School they give me more respect because I am different.”

“For a second I found myself responding differently to Jalissa. Why are the only options, college or the military? I was thrown off, because I saw Jalissa as a vibrant student with the passion and talent to do anything. Why would she want to do such a thing? I mean, they’re so drastically different from another one?” I said. She replied, ‘Well, I’ll be living in this country for most of my life, why wouldn’t I?’ I thought to myself, let’s see - war on innocent people, death, injustice, greed, I don’t know, just those little things. The look on my face must have given what I was thinking away, because she said “what?” “Well Jalissa, I don’t think that makes a lick of sense, and I really don’t believe that is a strong enough reason to go to war and risk your life for this country.”

“Jalissa switched the conversation, “You know how we grew up Rastafarian?” “Yeah” I said. “It had such big impact on who I am because of the way we carried ourselves, you know covering our hair and wearing long skirts down to our ankles. I never really paid attention to people though, until I got to high school. That’s when people started noticing me and asking me a lot of questions about why I dressed the way that I dressed. I started changing really fast. I didn’t want to be seen as one of those people that dress up for school like everyone else. It took me a minute to realize that you can’t just ‘fill your stomach’.”

“Jalissa’s 9th grade Humanities teacher was the best teacher that she says she had. He no longer teaches at her school, but she still wrote a letter to him to show her appreciation:

Dear Mr. Styles,

Remember when you told me that no matter what my family does or where I come from, it will not determine how far I will go? Well, I remember and I will never forget those words you spoke. “You always spoke the truth. You didn’t only feed us information from the books, but real life lessons that we can take with us and learn from. You taught us that nothing will be given to us, and we will have to work for everything we want. You’ll be proud to know that I’m striving hard and working hard to get what I want.”

I wanted to thank you for waking up each morning and loving what you do. Thank you for seeing me as more than a paycheck. Thank you for always giving 100%, even if you weren’t up to it. Thank you for being my teacher. There’s not much to say, just that you’re a really great teacher, and I always looked forward to going to your classes and learning something. You are very appreciated and respected. Wherever you are now, that your students are lucky to have a teacher like you! Thank you.

Your biggest fan,
Jalissa

Jalissa looked at me and said, “He really was a good teacher.”
“So, let’s talk about family Jalissa.” “Family?” she asks in an uncertain tone.

“Yes, family” I say. “Tell me about your family and how they play a role in your education.” At first she looked at me, and then shuffled in her seat and then said, “Niajah, really?” I told her, “yes, really. But if you don’t want to do it, I can’t force you, but I would really like if you talked some about it.” Rolling her eyes and letting out a heavy sigh, she says, “okay. But it’s not like you don’t already know everything.” “That’s true,” I say, “but I want it to come from you.” I tell her she can stop whenever she wants.

“Well, my mom, your mother, is the type of person that will be like, ‘yeah, you finished high school, now let’s see if you can finish college, then we’ll celebrate’. She is definitely the person that pushes me further. She would be disappointed if I didn’t finish. Graduating from high school is something that is looked at as a great achievement in my family whether you’re a boy or girl. But I would say that the girls are more accomplished than boys. I mean, that’s just how it is. The boys, I guess everyone really, depends on the girls in the family. In a family of 10, there should be choice of whose house we’re going to spend time at. It shouldn’t always have to be at one the girls’ houses. To me, that shows how the guys really need to step it up on all levels.”

“I don’t want to disappoint my mom. Making her come up to my school or teachers constantly calling her will only stress her out. I feel like if I just sit down and do the work, she won’t be disappointed or stressed out about me getting suspended, so I’d rather just get it right the first time. I don’t like to see my mom struggle the way that she does. She told me that she had to go to pregnant people’s school. Even though that’s funny in a way, it’s sad too because she didn’t get the whole high school experience, she was pregnant at 16, she didn’t even get to be a child.”

“I’m proud of my mom because she has done so much and overcame so many obstacles. She went to Atlanta Area Technical College to get her associates degree to own her own business. I’m so proud of her, even though it took her so long to do that, that’s just because of money though. She’s 45 now, but it was a while before she became a registered daycare provider. My family plays a big role in my education, because they make me better. I always try to make them proud.” “Aw, that’s so sweet Jalissa!” I tease her. “Whatever, Niajah!” She stops. “Is that all?” I ask her. She says, “Yup!” “Are you sure?” I ask. “Yeah, I’m sure.” Just like that we’re done. I look at her and smile, telling her “thank you.” She laughs her goofy laugh and asks, “For what?”

The sounds of fire crackers, dancing, and the roar of a billion people echoed around the world, as Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the captain of the Indian cricket team finished off the world cup finals in style. His final shot, smashed for six runs into the stands, delivered India their first world cup in 28 years. In a nation which is obsessed with Bollywood and Cricket, you can believe that April 2nd, 2011, was one of the happiest days in the history of post-independent India.

The politics, economics, societal differences, were all put aside for the month of March-April, as India went against 13 other nations to compete for the Cricket World cup. They went in as favorites to win the title, but would be the first team in cricket history to win a world cup on home soil. They beat the best, to be the best. Facing Australia, the defending champions for the last 12 years in the quarter finals, Pakistan, their arch rivals, and possibly the biggest rivalry in sports history, in the semi finals, and finally Sri Lanka in the finals. Expectations were high, people were preparing, for April 2nd would be one of the most momentous or disappointing days in the lives of many Indians, not only in India, but around the world. It was also to be the final world cup match for the greatest batsman of all time, called the little master, Sachin Tendulkar. Indians had one final request for their little 38 year old hero, who has been carrying Indian cricket on his shoulders since he was 16, Sachin Bhai World Cup Dila de(Sachin Brother, Win us the world cup). Once we won, he was paraded around the stadium by his fellow teammates, while 1 billion fans were bowing at the little master.

6000 Miles away, I was sitting, watching this momentous occasion, of course the boundaries of nationalism still engorged in my mind. Hampshire education tried to affect the way I enjoy my sports. But I didn’t care, I didn’t care about those boundaries, about that familiar rhetoric, no one was going to stop me.
me from being proud of my nation that day. I dressed up with my Indian flag behind me, off to watch the game at 4:30 in the morning with my 3 other Indian friends, accounting probably for 90% of the Indians on this campus. Unable to sleep, we went through 8 hours of shouting, cursing, clapping, and screaming, until finally, coming to the realization that we had done the unthinkable. While at home millions of people paraded the streets in celebration, we tried to be with them in spirit, by having a tiny celebration in Greenwich, but what a celebration it was. Struck by the happiness of the occasion and the disappointment of not being home to witness the anarchy, I was torn between my joy and sorrow. At the same time, I realized that it is these little events, these small moments that transcend the boundaries of politics, economics, and of course the line. At least for that one day, for those few hours, these differences are forgotten, and a collective happiness is experienced. Not that they can be ignored, or thrown away, but they are put by aside as this joy breaks boundaries, bonds people. 2 days later of course, India is back to normal, and those vast divides, corrupt politics, and distorted and un-distributive economic policies are once again born by the vast majority of the population.

It’s bewildering however, even amongst an avid sports fan like me, how those few moments can transcend these vastly existing differences, fragmenting society on any other day. When that final shot was hit, it wasn’t the huge skyscrapers, the astonishing growth rates, and the nuclear deals that made people proud to be Indian. It was a group of individuals, athletes, from different castes, classes and religions, that came together and struck down the divisive politics of our notorious and power hungry politicians and elites. So even though it could be regarded as just another final, the point is that it is these little moments that stand out in the lives of many individuals and communities. We should never forget as students and responsible members of our community, that as we fight for justice, peace, and unity on a larger scale, it is these small events that bring people together, spreading happiness, uniting us as human. Let’s fight for our struggles, but keep a light head while doing it. Let’s see people as people, and not just a person, directly related to their political agenda; as it is also these little interactions that make a difference. Let us remember that even though macro policies implemented by governments affects daily lives and communities, such small events can do so as well. Let’s make the difference, one step at a time, but enjoy the little moments of joy that life brings us. April 2nd was one of the happiest days of my life, and I’m glad to share it with a billion other people. It is cricket that did this for us, it is cricket, that for a moment, brought us all together.

A goodbye from the Graduating Staff
[including the photographer]