

The Matrix

fall 2013

WORDS FROM PLU
SOCIAL JUSTICE
DIRECTORS

ON BEING
ASEXUAL

COMMON GROUND

PHOTOGRAPHY,
POETRY,
AND MORE

IVORY STAINED RED

THE IMMIGRANT NARRATIVE
IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

DEAR READERS,

THIS SEMESTER HAS BEEN a combination of excitement, energy, and nerves. This is my first semester as Editor of *The Matrix*, and I've been quick to uncover the joys and the stresses of being the single spearhead of a student publication. It has been gratifying to see *The Matrix* grow from a cauldron of vague ideation into a physical publication. *A wonderful whirlwind.*

This semester's issue of *The Matrix* is an incubator of sorts. In choosing the theme of "common ground", I sought to engender and encourage conversation regarding shared mission and goals between and among seemingly differentiated groups.

Specifically targeting the "PLU trinity" of Diversity, Social Justice, and Sustainability, I wanted to create a space in which individuals could explore the intermingling of these concepts in concrete ways as members of the PLU community. I hope to use this issue as springboard for subsequent issues— specifically the Spring 2014 issue, which will focus on collaboration and coalition-building.

Mirroring the diversity of students, this semester's issue includes a wide array of content, combining poetry and prose with photography and personal testimony. Each contribution has a unique interpretation of the overarching theme, yet can be placed into a larger movement of collective voices calling for social change.

I am excited to release this Fall 2013 publication of *The Matrix*! I hope that this issue inspires you to seek out ways in which you can find common ground with others within and beyond the PLU community.

— Ruthie Kovanen '15 *Editor*



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THANK YOU!



ADVISOR

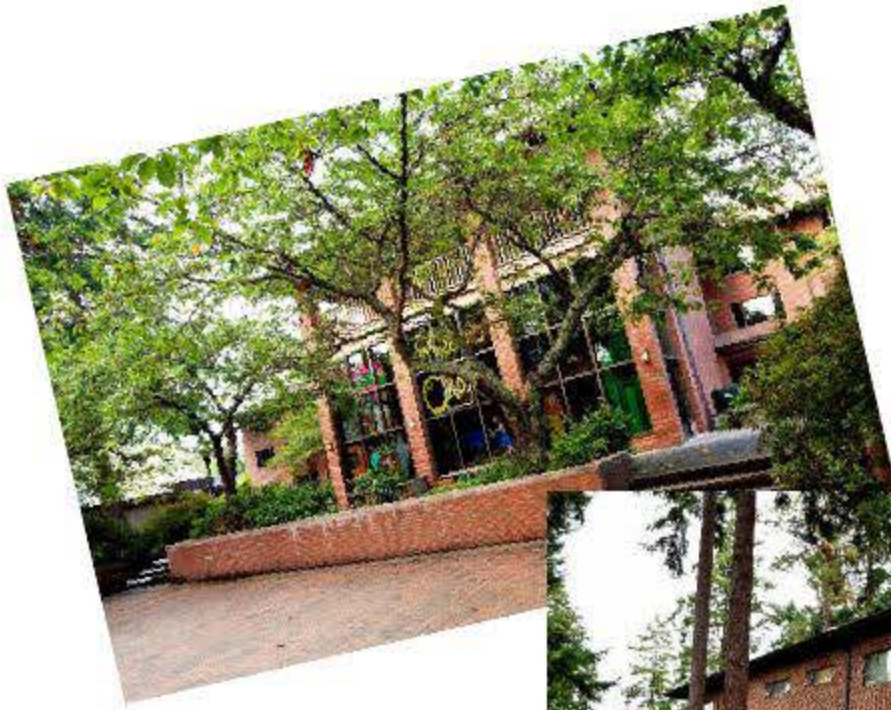
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READERS LIKE YOU!

{TABLE OF CONTENTS}

WORDS FROM PLU SOCIAL JUSTICE DIRECTORS	PAGES 4-8
ON BEING ASEXUAL <i>LEAH LARSON</i>	PAGES 9-11
IVORY STAINED RED <i>LAURA JOHNSON</i>	PAGES 12-14
UNCOMMON GROUND <i>ANDREW TINKER</i>	PAGE 15
PHOTOSET <i>SAIYARE REFAEI</i>	PAGES 16-17
UNDOCUMENTED <i>KATELYN CHRISMAN</i>	PAGE 18
THE IMMIGRANT NARRATIVE IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST <i>BRIANNA WALLING</i>	PAGES 19-20
I ASKED WHAT JUSTICE MEANS <i>KRISTIN HAYES</i>	PAGE 21
HE <i>KATELYN CHRISMAN</i>	PAGE 22
LETTING GO <i>KATELYN CHRISMAN</i>	PAGE 23
AHISMA <i>ELIZABETH VALDEZ</i>	PAGE 24
RECUPERACIÓN/RECLAMATION <i>ELIZABETH VALDEZ</i>	PAGE 25



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WORDS FROM PLU

SOCIAL JUSTICE DIRECTORS

HERE ARE SOME STORIES from the Social Justice Directors who currently serve on the residence hall councils on-campus. Their statements include their reasons for becoming involved in their RHC's on-campus, as well as social justice issues they are personally passionate about. Their position on Residence Hall Council includes planning social justice related events in their residence halls, and being an advocate for social justice issues on-campus.

BRIANNA WALLING '14

*POLITICAL SCIENCE & GLOBAL STUDIES
HISPANIC STUDIES MINOR*

RHA SOCIAL JUSTICE DIRECTOR

ICURRENTLY SERVE AS THE SOCIAL JUSTICE DIRECTOR for Residence Hall Association, and have had the privilege to work with each of these RHC directors this year. I chose to be involved with RHA this year for my passion to create socially just communities on-campus. I spent a semester abroad in Argentina, where I encountered social justice issues ranging from women's rights to gay rights to indigenous rights. I was inspired daily by people's stories about the Dirty War, living in poverty, and much more. Coming back to campus last Spring I found it difficult to find a place to tell these stories. I have found the social justice director position to be a space to reconcile the issues that I became so deeply concerned about. The social justice director last year was a co-author for the Gender Neutral Housing initiative which passed last spring. This is an example of the admirable work of RHA and ASPLU on-campus. Ultimately, the collaboration of minds and the work ethic on this campus has the power to create transparency for a wide range of social justice issues in our PLU and surrounding Parkland communities.

ANDREW TINKER '16

ECONOMICS AND HISTORY

PFLUEGER HALL

I'M A HISTORY MAJOR, which means I'm perpetually bombarded by the question, "So, what do you plan to do after college with that degree?" Usually I smile and talk about how history majors develop analytic skills that can be useful for jobs in law, politics, and business. What I don't often bring up is how the history work I do breathes life into social justice issues. Complex issues like discrimination and oppression haven't always existed in their present forms; they change and mutate in different places and times. By reading slave narratives from Barbados, feminist literature from revolutionary China, or working class protests against textile mills in England, I'm not just memorizing facts and dates that I can replicate on an essay and then delete from my memory. Rather, I'm learning that resistance has always happened where injustice has sprung up, that victories can be won against intolerable cruelty. I'm learning that history leaves humanity with a litany of its wrongdoings, but also shows us the ways to correct them and create a socially just world.

KATY LEONARD-DOLL '16

ANTHROPOLOGY

HARSTAD HALL

CHOSE TO BE the Social Justice Director for Harstad because I feel very passionate about social justice issues. When people ask me which issue I am most passionate about, I can't just simply pick one issue; I'm interested in so many. I am most interested in social justice issues revolving around poverty, water rights, women's right and indigenous rights. I also strongly believe in advocating for the issues I am passionate about and by becoming a Social Justice Director, I hope to promote others to advocate for issues they are passionate about. I want to spread information about social justice issues to as many residents as possible so they are aware of and keep in mind the inequalities and injustices within our society. The more informed we are of these issues, the better equipped we are to begin to right the injustices. A perfect place to begin or continue these actions is right here at PLU.

CAITLIN DAWES '16

SOCIOLOGY, GERMAN MINOR
HONG HALL

"Assumptions"

LIVING IN A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY, it is only natural to assume that people are heterosexual. But then we hear about other sexualities that people identify with, usually emphasizing on gays and lesbians. For example: if we hear that someone who identifies as female and is in an intimate relationship with a female, they must be lesbian. Similar with someone who identifies as male and is in an intimate relationship with a male, they must be gay. Why is it that we link together sexuality as a binary?

In the song "Black and Yellow" by the well-acclaimed rapper Wiz Khalifa, he says in one of his verses, "she not a lesbian, but she a freak though," stating that if he is having a three some with two females, that they are not lesbians. He does not take into account that they could be bisexual or pansexual; just to name a few of the various sexualities besides gay, lesbian, and straight. It is very difficult to not assume that someone is straight. Growing up in this American society it has become a courtesy to ask about the interest in the opposite sex, because to assume otherwise is considered rude. But on the other hand, to devalue other sexualities that have no binary is also demining to others.

Sexuality is fluid and flexible. Although I might identify as pansexual one day, that does not mean I am confused when the next day I say I identify as lesbian. Sexuality is not binding. People change, feelings change, and the only reason we have categories for sexuality are to put people in boxes.

Stop and think: does it really matter how they identify?

SARAH HENDERSON

ORDAL HALL

I WANT TO ADVOCATE for the people who aren't heard. I want to speak up for the quiet voices, the ones which aren't represented. And contrary to popular belief, that may not mean speaking up for those who in the rest of our society would be the voiceless: the oppressed, the undervalued and unappreciated. At PLU, the underrepresented voices are often the more conservative ones; the ones who may be uncomfortable with radical social change. Their voices matter too, even if they disagree — especially because they disagree — with the majority of the PLU student body. Every voice is necessary for a functioning society. Every voice should be heard. My worst fear is that the voices of those at PLU who may be more conservative in their beliefs, morals, and values are being overpowered by the voice of change. And while I am beyond ecstatic that the voice of radical change is so loud at PLU, just because someone disagrees doesn't mean their voice should not be heard, doesn't mean their opinion is not valid. I am here to represent EVERYONE because of what they have to say, no matter what it is. That is what Social Justice means to me.

ALLISON
HAKANSON
FOSS HALL

WE CAN BETTER EDUCATE PLU students about social justice by integrating it into other events and aspects of campus. By making social justice education more accessible to the students who may not come to events geared specifically to social justice, we can educate more people. We can start in our own residence halls and plan events that incorporate social justice into everyday life.



ON BEING ASEXUAL

LEAH LARSON '15

ENGLISH (WRITING) MAJOR, PRINTING & PUBLISHING ARTS MINOR

THE CONCEPT OF A PERSON WHO ISN'T INTERESTED IN SEX befuddles most people. It's completely beyond them. Being attracted to someone of any gender is frequently listed as one of the trademark experiences of being human, along with eating. People who are asexual are looked upon with a mix of shock and disbelief. They're treated like amoebas or children who haven't reached puberty yet. And I am one of them.

Asexuals don't experience sexual attraction. Some of them have libidos, some of them don't, some are repulsed by sex, and others are all right with it. Just like with any sexuality, people fall on different parts of a spectrum. Personally, I am a full-blown asexual; I have never experienced sexual attraction and I am completely indifferent to sex as an activity. However, there is more than one way to be attracted to a person. Our society tends to focus almost exclusively on sexual attraction. However, romantic attraction is a huge part of any relationship. People have romantic orientations in the same way that they have sexual orientations, but they tend to be less strict about them. It's more common to find a heterosexual man who is heteroromantic but can still picture himself in a romantic relationship with another man than it is to find a heterosexual

man who is heteroromantic but can picture himself with another man sexually. For my fellow asexuals, our romantic attraction solely determines our relationships.

It has always been obvious to me that I didn't quite fit in with the norm. When my friends and I were 12 years old and having sleepovers, we would discuss our crushes and which teen celebrity was cuter. I always felt as though there was something in those conversations that I did not fully understand. I never had a crush on a boy in the same way my friends would—I never cared about what their muscles were like or the way that their hair swooped perfectly over their eyes. I was

“ I'D REMAIN QUIET AND MY FRIENDS WOULD TYPICALLY ASSUME THAT I FELT THE SAME WAY AS THEM.”

always more interested in people's personalities and the things they did. While my friends were interested in those things as well, the topic of conversation was never about how people like

Rupert Grint were hilarious in the dorkiest way possible. They always tended to focus more on Ryan Gosling's abs or Leonardo di Caprio's amazing shoulders. They'd discuss them for hours on end. I never quite knew what to say when we would talk about these things, so I would simply choose whatever statement was said the most (i.e. "Ryan Gosling has a totally hot 6-pack") and repeat it. After that, I'd remain quiet and my friends would typically assume that I felt the same way as them.

People have the amazing tendency to insert their own feelings into other people's silence, and I took advantage of that for the majority of a decade. This phenomenon is

seen in places besides those of people who are struggling with their sexuality. For example, if someone is being bullied and no one stops the bully, the victim may assume that everyone around him or her is okay with what is happening. Our society is structured in a way that has made it so that a lack of disagreement is viewed as an agreement, which is simply false. People who are silent, people who do not offer their opinion, and people who hesitate frequently disagree, yet have something stopping them. Whatever is stopping them needs to be addressed—whether it's someone being bullied or the insecurities of a 13 year old girl who doesn't find anyone attractive.

The few times I've been in relationships, they have never worked out well. My first boyfriend was a boy named Patrick. We were 14. He told my friends that he had a crush on me but was too shy to ask me out, so my friends pressured me into asking him out via a text message. Patrick was a nice enough guy. He was goofy. While he wasn't the smartest person I knew, he was very curious and he liked talking about things. Our relationship lasted all of a month; it mostly consisted of him trying to call me and me avoiding him. I broke up with him after my friends told me that he flirted with another girl at a party.

The ending of our relationship was the first thing since my friends had first started discussing their crushes that signaled to me that I might not be completely normal. I felt completely indifferent towards Patrick throughout our entire relationship: I only asked him out because my friends told me to, I never actually bothered talking to him, I broke up with him because my friends told me to, and throughout the entire thing

“ I WOULD BE LYING IF I SAID THAT THE DAY I CAME OUT TO MY FAMILY WASN'T THE SINGLE MOST EMOTIONAL DAY OF MY ENTIRE LIFE.”

I did not care at all. I wasn't remotely upset that Patrick had cheated on me according to middle school standards. And over the next two years or so, Patrick and I dated several more times at the urging of my friends. At one point I kissed him out of a mixture of obligation and curiosity, and later told my friends that I thought kissing was boring. I broke up with Patrick for the last time when I was 16 years old. When I broke up with him that time, I told him it was because I couldn't handle having a relationship with him anymore. The truth was, I was *never* able to handle having a relationship with him.

Patrick later claimed that he cheated on me because I didn't seem interested in him sexually, which is completely true. One afternoon I was at his house. We were cuddling on the couch and making fun of some bad made-for-TV movie on the Lifetime channel.

I started to fall asleep. He woke me up, commented on how sleepy I was, and then asked if I wanted to go to the bedroom. I thought to myself: "Oh, sweet, I can take a nap in there."

As soon as we got to the bedroom, Patrick immediately started passionately making out with me. I could feel his teeth. It wasn't pleasant. It was more like he was trying to get all the meat off of a drumstick than kiss me. I was completely uninterested in whatever he was trying to do. I was under the impression that we went to the bedroom so that I could take a nap. I pulled away, tried to fall asleep on the bed, only to be met once again with drumstick kisses. That cycle repeated for about 15 minutes until Patrick finally gave up and we went back to watching bad Lifetime movies. I fell asleep. It did not occur to me for over a year that Patrick was trying to get past 2nd base. I finally understood his actions when a friend had pointed them out to me later on. To say that I wasn't interested in Patrick in a sexual way is a bit of an understatement. The concept of linking Patrick with sexuality is still beyond me. Regardless, we broke up; he got into heavy drugs, dropped out of high school, and now works at a bowling alley.

Despite how obvious my asexuality was to Patrick, it was quite the surprise for my parents. Granted, they were quite supportive at first, and were mostly concerned if I was happy or not. They quickly transitioned into what I call the "Well, At Least She Isn't Pregnant" stage. They continually asked me if I was healthy or not, and were really adamant in believing that something might be hormonally wrong with me. No matter how much I reminded them that I've been asexual

my whole life and that my doctors have said that I've been healthy my whole life, my parents kept saying that I should visit a doctor to be sure. The next stage was the "Slightly Misogynistic Empathizing" stage, in which my mother insisted that not all women experience sexual attraction. According to her, I'm as normal as can be. In fact, I'm just like her. She focused solely on romantic attraction and *look at what a great husband she got*. My father insisted that I was simply scared of relationships and hiding behind a sexual orientation. When I told him to f*** off and hung up, that ended his thought process pretty quickly. It ended it immediately, in fact. Some people would say that I'm disrespectful to my parents. I would say that they're disrespectful to me first.

Thankfully, my parents are now stuck in a blissful stage that I call the "Mostly Ignoring Asexuality but Also Mostly Supportive of It As Long As I Get Married One Day" stage. I have no idea if I will get married or not, but the fact that it's an option manages to pacify my parents for the time being. Ideally, they will eventu-

ally reach what I refer to as the “Rigel” stage, named after my friend Rigel. Rigel listens to what I have to say and accepts everything I say about my experiences at face value. He questions me only for clarification and never to play devil’s advocate. He does not attempt to empathize with me because he knows that it’s not completely possible. He knows that doing things like equating my not experiencing sexual attraction to not liking a certain food would devalue my experiences. However, I realize my parents will probably never be like Rigel. Which is why I text him every single time my parents say something idiotic about asexuality, and we make fun of them.

I would be lying if I said that the day I came out to my family wasn’t the single most emotional day of my entire life. It was more distressing than when my goldfish died, when my best friend in 6th grade said we couldn’t be friends anymore, and when my pet dog of 18 years died. I wrote my parents an email. I cried the entire time I was writing it. I sent it to them. I cried until they replied. I read their reply. I cried, then out of happiness, but nevertheless it lasted for several more hours. I cried that day out of a sense of fear that I have never experienced before that day. Psychologists frequently list parental acceptance as being one of the most important things for children to experience. I was skeptical of that fact until I came out to my parents. I’m usually of the opinion that if a person doesn’t accept me they don’t belong in my life. I can dismiss them. However, I cannot dismiss my parents completely. Sure, I can tell my Dad to f*** off and hang up the phone when he’s hurting me. However, I cannot cut them out of my life in the same way that I can cut out a rude classmate.

Before I came out to my parents, I was out with just about everyone else in my life. Coming out was old hat to me. I knew how to do it and I was at the point where I could do it casually without thinking about it. Not with my parents. I had to phrase it just right to them. I had to make sure that the letter I wrote was absolutely perfect, both grammatically and content-wise. I had to lead them down a very specific path and pray that that path led to them still liking me. I had no reason to suspect that they wouldn’t. I also had no reason to suspect that they would still like me beyond them accepting me for the past 20 years.

However, I also knew that I couldn’t continue to live in silence around them. I couldn’t survive another summer with my mother constantly asking who I thought was sexy, why I wasn’t dating anyone, or if I was “some kind of lesbian.” I couldn’t survive another summer of constantly *almost* outing myself to them, of feeling dirty when I referred to myself as heterosexual, or of feeling like I would never be good enough for my family, just because I’m not interested in people sexually.

Asexuals like me experience a unique kind of oppression that greatly differs from other people who fall under the queer umbrella. Asexuals have never been

murdered for not liking anybody, we don’t have to fight for a right to marry, we’re typically not bullied in school, etc. Rather, I live in a constant state of feeling like an outsider. I’m not heterosexual, but I experience many of the privileges of being heterosexual in that people are typically not prejudiced against me. They’re just ignorant to my entire existence and think of me as an amoeba. I’m not homosexual, or bisexual, or pansexual, but by not being heterosexual, most people would sort me into the “gay” category. Even though I’m not gay. The LGBTQ community has been fighting

“ AS MUCH AS BEING ASEXUAL CAN BE DIFFICULT, I DON’T WANT TO BE ANYTHING ELSE.”

for years about whether or not to include asexuals, and there’s a very vocal group that strongly believes asexuals do not belong in the queer community. They believe that because asexuals don’t experience any form of active prejudice (i.e. no one shouts slurs at us), we don’t deserve to be part of the queer community. But, that leaves me nowhere. If I’m not heterosexual and I’m not queer, that doesn’t leave me as anything. Just because no one has ever slammed my head into a locker doesn’t mean that I’m not a sexual minority who needs a voice. Most people don’t even know about asexuality; society can’t hate that which it doesn’t even know exists.

To be asexual is to frequently feel as though you’re missing something. Society constantly tells me that because I’m not sexual, that I’m missing part of the human experience. I don’t particularly want to experience this “missing part”, though. From what I gather, being sexually attracted to people comes with its own set of problems that I don’t want to deal with. Sexual attraction can destroy people’s friendships, whether it’s because two friends like the same person, one person likes one friend but not the other, or someone’s significant other cheats on them. I enjoy not having to deal with those problems, but even more than that, I like myself — even if people tell me I’m not completely human, that I don’t exist because I’m neither queer nor hetero, or because my parents will likely never reach the “Rigel” stage. As much as being asexual can be difficult, I don’t want to be anything else.

IVORY STAINED **RED**:

HUMANS, ELEPHANTS AND THE SEARCH FOR JUSTICE

BY LAURA JOHNSON '16



Laura Johnson '16
Biology and English

JANE GOODALL, the world-renowned Chimpanzee expert, once wrote in her memoir, *Through a Window*, "Cruelty is surely the very worst of human sins. To fight cruelty [...] brings us into direct conflict with the unfortunate streak of inhumanity that lurks in all of us" (306). Goodall's prophetic words about humanity's capacity for cruelty acutely communicate one of the most serious obstacles facing those who seek to understand and combat injustice in our world: our

own conscious and actions. When we, the citizens of the developed world, stumble across the harsh realities of injustices occurring around the world, we are shocked and outraged. Such actions surely must be abdominal! The passion that such reactions quickly build can be a strong force for change, but can also become a short-lived emotional hindrance to taking the first crucial step towards activism: learning the scope of the injustice we so fervently wish to right. Thus, as I attempt to weave together the issues of sustainability, social justice, and diversity, my purpose is not to support just one perspective or one voice. Rather, I wish to argue that any injustice must first be met with

**“ ANY INJUSTICE
MUST FIRST BE MET
WITH A PASSIONATE
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UNDERSTANDING ”**

a passionate curiosity engaged in understanding, then action. For when Goodall speaks of cruelty, she reminds us that inhumanity is not reserved only for those who commit cruel crimes, but also for the bystanders who remain passive, and the majority of the world that is shielded from these harsh realities. Therefore, in the spirit of seeking common ground as students, activists, and residents of this Earth, we must attempt to combat

our own ignorance first with knowledge.

There have been many issues that have taken ahold of my heart as an undergraduate, through which I have developed a passion for social justice. Last year, I came across a startling issue of National Geographic focused on the situation elephants face around the globe. This catapulted me into a world of terrifying events, visual images, and ultimately, tragedy. In particular, it was investigative reporter Bryan Christy's October 2012 article entitled "Blood Ivory" that stunned me to my core. He documents how in January 2012 hundreds of elephants were slaughtered en masse in Cameroon with military precision as riders carried AK-47's and rocket-propelled grenade launchers to the battlefield (40). The goal of this slaughter was simple: collect as many priceless ivory tusks as possible to later be sold and distributed on the illegal ivory black market. As I stared at those glossy pages recording the images of desecrated elephants, corpses violated without mercy, intense emotions began to boil within me. However, as I continued reading the account of Christy's exploration of the Asian ivory trade, I began to realize this issue's complexity was too much to be solved by any immediate action fueled only by newborn passion. For the situation in Cameroon is but one occurrence amongst many. The now illegal importation of ivory has become an economic system sustained by the demand of religious ivory ornaments, statues and luxury carvings with centers of commerce in Asia and Indonesia. Thus, the injustice facing elephants extends beyond poaching; it is a remnant of the cultural traditions of luxury ivory carving and religious artifacts. An issue that first appeared to me capable of simple solutions is actually steeped in the intricacies of humanity's indifference to fellow species, cultural practices, and the economic order of the day. How does one even begin to sift through such a complex problem?

In an attempt to answer this question, I turn once again to Jane Goodall. The nature of this moral paradox lies first in our failure as a species to recognize our own place not as conquerors of nature, but as integral participants. Detailing the limitations of such a narrow worldview, Goodall writes, "Most of us, when we ponder on the mystery of our existence, peer through but one of these windows into the world. [...] We clear a tiny peephole and stare through. [...] It is, after all, like trying to comprehend the panorama of the desert or the sea through a rolled-up newspaper" (11). Goodall is critiquing and emitting a warning about the impact that such a narrow view can have on

our understanding of the world. By considering only our own experience, we are blinded to a multitude of perspectives. Thus, as we attempt to find common ground on this

and how we are propagating such actions. The answer lies in the religious and cultural relationship that humans across the world have with elephants. Throughout human

“ IN THE SPIRIT OF SEEKING COMMON GROUND AS STUDENTS, ACTIVISTS, AND RESIDENTS OF THIS EARTH, WE MUST ATTEMPT TO COMBAT OUR OWN IGNORANCE FIRST WITH KNOWLEDGE. ”

issue, we must step outside of ourselves for a moment and understand our connection to nature — our connection to the plight of elephants around the world. This issue is not beyond those who are halfway around the world. As part of the Earth’s ecosystem, every human being is implicated in this tragedy.

One of many defining arguments that have long separated humans from other organisms is the higher-level cognitive function that we culturally associate as quintessential to human beings. In her book, *Elephants on the Edge*, G.A. Bradshaw, an ecologist and psychologist in training, discusses a scientific breakthrough that links both humans and elephants. Bradshaw writes, “Neuroscientists have found another explanation for why we can feel and anticipate what an elephant is experiencing. The answer is mirror neurons, tiny brain cells wired for empathy [...] the discovery of mirror neurons has articulated a much-needed bridge that can span the gap between cognition and biology by providing a neural mechanism for the psychological phenomenon of empathy” (Bradshaw 10). As Bradshaw declares the implications of this scientific breakthrough are far reaching, there is much to understand first about mirror neurons in context to human relationships before that of our natural environment. For far too long in the history of academics there has been a division between the realm of the biological body and the realm of the emotive mind. Starting notably with Descartes, the ideology of dualism has continued to maintain that there is no connection between our emotional life and our biological bodies. Yet, the discovery of mirror neurons allows for a neurological pathway through which we can chart the emotional experience of empathy. Helping to bridge these factions is biological support that helps in changing the rhetoric surrounding empathy — rhetoric so crucial in connecting human beings to our environment.

The relevance of the discovery of mirror neurons in elephants is not simply to validate the empathetic connection countless people have experienced with other species, but to underscore that just as we seek justice for other humans in need, so should we seek justice for other animals on the Earth. While this notion may be obvious, putting such a concept into practice comes with a host of complications. If we begin to approach the global situation of elephants through the outlook of empathy, then assessing the paradox of humanity’s economic, cultural, and religious relationship with these animals demands just as much attention to seeking multiple perspectives. If injustice is more complicated than we first believe, Goodall’s reflections regarding cruelty are especially helpful in this endeavor. For the issue today is not just acknowledging that there is injustice towards elephants, but also to better understand what is at the heart of the illegal ivory trade

history, the elephant has served as an important symbol of nature’s innate power and of faith for many cultures. As Christy delved into the illegal ivory trade in Indonesia, China, and Thailand, he found a paradox between those who revere elephants as part of their tradition and those who exploit elephants as an economic resource.

In Thailand where elephants are a national symbol, the use of ivory is reserved largely for religious purposes. For example, Buddhist monks have long fashioned amulets to bring luck and protection to the owner. Today, Kubra Dharmamuni, a Buddhist monk and mahout (elephant trainer), distributes blessed amulets to his 100,000 followers in Thailand (Christy 46-47). As an outsider to this culture, I find this relationship between religious reverence and economic or material use paradoxical. However, just as human cruelty is multifaceted, the religious use of ivory in Buddhism is intricate. Christy details how Buddhist monks perform *kai quang*, “the opening of light,” to consecrate religious icons. To them, ivory is a more “precious material” than gold that should be used “to be respectful to the Buddha” (Christy 52). The use of ivory as a precious, sacred material in Buddhism parallels humans’ use of other animals. Just as humans eat the meat of livestock, and use plants for medicinal purposes, elephants have provided a human resource for centuries. Within any of these issues, the source of injustice is created when humanity steps past a line of sustainable use of resources into practices fueled by greed and economic gain. Thus, the cruelty facing elephants in conjunction with the economic use of ivory in the world today is an issue that cannot be ignored any longer.

Viewing this as an outsider, the connection between religion and the economic value of elephants seems cruel, or disjointed at best. But, the situation surrounding the ivory trade is no small issue, and it cannot be explained swiftly. In 1990 an International Trade Ban began to combat dwindling elephant populations due to hunting around the globe. This ban stipulated that ivory could be collected from culled or naturally deceased elephants to maintain a value market for many countries (Christy 53, 54). Bradshaw sustains that the by-products of culling and trophy hunting contributed to 29 to 56 percent of the value of elephants in Botswana from 1989 - 1992 (236-237). To many of these African and Asian countries, the loss of this franchise would be detrimental. Still, as this only accounts for the legal ivory trade, the indifference of buyers making religious artifacts continues to be a grave concern facing elephants.

While there might be some who continue to use elephant ivory in a sustainable manner that pays respect to the animals who produce it, this broader injustice is not fueled by these few examples. Rather, at the center of the problem facing the religious use of ivory is the indifference that is often shown towards the source of the raw

material. Working undercover in Indonesia, Christy discovered firsthand the reality of the illegal ivory trade. Traveling throughout the region, Christy wrote of the use of ivory in the Catholic religion. On the isle of Cebu, home to the renowned church of Santo Niño, "the link between ivory and the church is so strong that the word for ivory, *garing*, has a second meaning: 'religious statue'" (Christy 40). This strong connection between faith and a demand for ivory has stretched, as Christy discovered, to the illegal sale of ivory in Indonesia. Father Jay of the renowned Church of Santo Niño in Cebu said to Christy on the topic of buying ivory, "the new ones are from Africa. They come in through the back door [...] you buy the ivory, which came from a hazy origin, and you turn it into a spiritual item" (41). As demonstrated by this Catholic priest, when elephants are merely conceived as a resource, the economic gain of ivory takes over as the only way we view elephants relating to humans.

If we, as humans, step aside and fail to consider how the ivory trade impacts animals, the environment, and the future, then this issue has become only a basic model of economics: when there is a demand, there will inevitably be a supply. As frustrating, infuriating, or tragic as the situation facing elephants is, the core cause of indifference towards other species is a plague of society that extends beyond these mammals. In an article entitled "An Animal's Place" journalist Michael Pollan questions the traditional social constructs surrounding the role of humans in nature through the issues of vegetarianism to America's food production system and consumer awareness. Pollan writes, "a tension has always existed between the capitalist imperative to maximize efficiency and the moral imperatives of religion and community, which have historically served as a counterweight to the moral blindness of the market." Asserting that history provides an example in which our capitalist tendencies have been reined in by our moral codes, Pollan would look at the situation facing the elephants similarly. As the economic advantage of the ivory trade has been established worldwide, our moral obligations to nature and elephants have seemingly been forgotten. The study of humans' relationships with animals, anthrozoology, attempts to bridge this gap by reminding humanity of the significant impacts our interactions have on the natural world. Yet, how do anthrozoological experts see humans' moral obligation to elephants?

Anthrozoologist Hal Herzog, formally an animal behaviorist specializing in snakes, studies humans' relationships with animals in his book *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat*. Herzog asserts, "I oppose testing the toxicity of oven cleaner and eye shadow on animals, but I would sacrifice a lot of mice to find a cure for cancer" (11). Living in the "troubled middle" of the issue of animal rights, Herzog demonstrates that in this complex moral middle, we often only have our intuitive classification system to determine what species in the animal kingdom warrant our love, our avocation, and our consumption. To place this argument into perspective, to one side of the middle stand activists like Goodall and G.A. Bradshaw, who speak for the rights of elephants everywhere. On the other side are the craftspeople, corporations, and distributors that represent

the prevailing economic and corporate perspective. While there are a slew of reasons for each person to justify where they stand on this spectrum, in light of the elephant crisis, intuition cannot continue to be the sole criterion humanity uses in judging how we interact with elephants. We must look across the chasm that divides us from them in order to understand what is truly at stake. Thus, let us practice instead the act of questioning the causes of indifference. If we look to understand humanity's indifference to our relationship with other species, we will begin to consider the implications of the source of ivory, the future of elephant herds, and the empathetic link between ourselves and these gentle giants much more clearly.

If the purpose of considering the situation facing elephants in light of the illegal ivory trade was to gain knowledge about the complicated nature of injustice in our modern world, then that leaves the glaring question, "where does one go from here?" If one tries to find an answer to this simple question, the passion that is so often ignited when we first see injustice is rekindled. The stark reality is that elephants are a dying species. In the African continent, 93 percent of the elephant population of North Luangwa Park in Zambia has been killed (Bradshaw 61). As only one example of the devastation that we as humans are wreaking on elephants, this situation demands our attention. Instead of rushing into action, remember that through knowledge about an issue, there is common ground to be found. Just as a single voice cannot be heard amidst an opinionated crowd, neither can other species speak up for themselves. If we attempt to combat our internal dissonance as mem-

**“ EMBRACE COMMUNITY,
ADVOCATE, SUPPORT,
AND ABOVE ALL, BE
EMPATHETIC.**

bers of first-world cultures by speaking out alone, we are not embracing all the lessons that our empathy may teach. By embracing the connection between humans

and animals, let us embrace the connection between the multiple perspectives that humans have as well. There are activists out there who share in your passion, and collaboration within your cause will enrich your understanding of the solutions and actions needed to combat an injustice. Let us learn together the scope of injustices in order to create better solutions, effective actions, and strengthened bonds. Embrace community, advocate, support, and above all, be empathetic. For if we are to overcome the streak of inhumanity within, we must do it together. A world combating injustice is a world in which our lives exist parallel to that of elephants, other organisms, and each other — not as masters and slaves but as brothers and sisters.

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UNCOMMON GROUND

ANDREW TINKER '16
HISTORY AND ECONOMICS

Where was I standing when John Brown
Took up arms to fight a revolution with slaves
Under rule of plantation squinting and calculating Virginia
They'd entered the equations of rebellious slaves into
Their metric of oppression and adjusting the knobs and gears
But they hadn't entered white men giving blood and dying traitors
To end inhumanity in slavery they saw non-humans toiling

I know I wasn't at Harper's Ferry with him seizing federal armament
And when he surrendered failed with revolution crashing down
With freed slaves dead or imprisoned with gallows strung up around
Them but that's the hallmark of the slave society the noose
Constantly bandied about waiting to gobble up necks
And the thrashing words of threat and violence each structure
For execution speaks volumes in creaking tones straining under bodies

John Brown stood on uncommon ground when he said no
But it isn't this man that we should focus on it's the figures
Peering at him with calculating stares trying to wash his feet away
In global warming flood waters that sweep foundations from movements
Look closely at how the grounds of justice are being muddied
By the melted glaciers that stood since humanity first stood from its
Broken back huddle in African forests
See the rushing roaring rivers bringing away sediment
And carrying the graves and foundations away from society

The ground we stand on opens its song with the flowers tuning
And with great error and price that song can be a wake up alarm
To legacies of oppression borne in skins and words and actions
And I may not have been standing when John Brown tried to
End plantation evils in the South by arming the slaves
But I can stand now to say that the ground under our feet is precious
That environmental disaster is not socially neutral
The ground we stand on isn't equal and it's too uncommon
To let it be submerged under oceans and seas too large

"Ave Que Emigra"
Saiyare Refaei



"No Más Sangre (Para las mujeres de Juárez)/No more blood (For the women of Juárez)"
Saiyare Refaei



"May Day 2012"
Saiyare Refaei



SAIYARE REFAEI '14

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

MINORS IN ANTHROPOLOGY, HISPANIC STUDIES, AND STUDIO ART

I HAVE TO ADMIT, I fall under the wonderful cliché that studying abroad was a life changing experience. In addition to all of the language-learning, education about social justice issues, relationship-building and cultural immersion, I also found a renewed passion in art. While studying away on the PLU Oaxaca Gateway program the fall of my sophomore year, I made friends with an Oaxacan student taking a woodblock printing class. To my naivety, I had never heard of such an art form and asked him if he would be willing to teach me. From my first hand printed woodblock prints in Oaxaca, I learned that PLU offers printmaking classes with wonderful facilities. I began printmaking classes my junior year and I have not stopped printing since.

This past summer, I received a Wang Center Research Grant to return to Oaxaca and interview artists about the impacts of the North American Free Trade Agreement and understand more about the importance of artist collectives. In my spare time, I took a printmaking class at the Rufino Tamayo Studio of Fine Arts alongside Oaxacans of varying ages, students from Mexico City, and even adults from as far away as South Africa and Tacoma. As I interviewed artists, especially those whose art delves into addressing social justice issues in Mexico, my prints began to reflect these themes.

"May Day 2013" and "No más sangre (Para las mujeres de Juárez)/No more blood (For the women of Juárez)" were prints I made at the Tamayo in Oaxaca. "May Day 2013" depicts friends and fellow PLU students marching during the Seattle May Day Rally on International Worker's Day. "No Más Sangre" was influenced after reading about the horrific abductions, rapes and murders of women in Juárez, Mexico. Both of these prints are dry points made from reused milk cartons. Even though it was the beginner's technique as I first enrolled into the printmaking class at the Tamayo, I was astounded that such prints could be created with such innovative methods. Lastly, I created "Migration is Natural" this fall semester back at PLU. It is a reduction woodblock print inspired by an interview with an Oaxacan rug weaver this past summer, who spends four months out of the year picking berries in Canada to economically sustain his family.

Throughout my experiences connecting with artists in Oaxaca and in the United States who advocate through their art, I have learned that art can serve as a way to educate and instill a consciousness of past and present social justice issues. By creating such a style of art, I desire to infuse a sense of knowledge and hope into the viewer so that they too can share their knowledge and hope with others.



UNDOCUMENTED

KATELYN CHRISMAN '14

ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISPANIC STUDIES

what would happen if a paper no longer defined our existence
our humanity
our personhood

what if a paper no longer carried the weight of thousands of miles
vanishing human beings through time with ink that smudges, words that shrink
and fade
and define the state to which we can live

transnational migration
crossing tribulations
feeding the mouths of those who battle our right to be

let me walk alongside you
let's throw pebbles along paths of the strangers who define our rights in this
place
based on breaches of human rights
perpetuated stereotypes
egotistical rhetoric that shapes our very identities
and fires its guns at our marches toward reclamation

I will walk into the fire with you
and I will take some of its burn
I will let it smolder my skin in the battle that I call
existence

they can take my papers, my humanity, they can take my color,
they can have my birthrights and the smudged ink pasted on my skin
I don't want them
I will no longer be filled with exclusionary disillusionment

underneath my skin is a nation
we are an extension of one body,
there is no beginning and no end to us
they can't tell us what "grades" of people we are
based on the word "citizenship"

they can't take our dignity
they can't take our love
unless we let them

THE IMMIGRANT NARRATIVE *IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST*

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 marked a turning point in United States immigration history. Following these tragic events, America's previously naïve and open outlook on border security drastically shifted. When nineteen individuals hijacked the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, there were thousands, if not millions of foreigners and immigrants the U.S. government knew nothing about. Some were here legally, but others illegally. Some of those here illegally had overstayed their U.S. tourist visas, but others had crossed thousands of miles of desert and lightly defended borders between the United States and Mexico. The political landscape that exists now is strikingly different. Individuals who cross the border are criminalized if they do not seek appropriate paths to citizenship. This article will tell their stories – stories often forgotten in the midst of political battles and long-winded debates.

Many PLU students don't realize the relevancy of immigration to our campus. It seems as though the political spotlight is always put on Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and California when it comes to immigration policy. Many students are unaware of the unique location of Tacoma. In fact, I would venture a guess and say that less than half of our campus has heard of the Northwest Detention Center and why it exists. The Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma serves as the mid-way point for immigrants – an overwhelming amount from the Hispanic community – to likely be deported back to their home nations. The detention center is the largest in the region and the fourth largest in the nation. And it continues to expand in detainee capacity.

BRIANNA WALLING '14

*POLITICAL SCIENCE & GLOBAL STUDIES
HISPANIC STUDIES MINOR*

What does this mean? It means for each detainee, Immigration Customs enforcement (ICE) – the large private group that oversees detention centers – makes a substantial profit. They make even more of a profit if detainees are held longer. This means the incentive to locate more and more undocumented immigrants in Tacoma and the Northwest results in officers becoming increasingly "successful" in their ability to find undocumented immigrants in the area.

The effects of the privatization of these prison-like facilities is that detention centers have a huge incentive to hold detainees longer, rather than deport them right away and expedite the process.

“MANY PLU STUDENTS
DON'T REALIZE THE
RELEVANCY OF IMMIGRATION
TO OUR CAMPUS”

In a world where these facilities were under public jurisdiction of the federal government, these facilities would serve more like processing centers that would be quick and short gateways to deportation, because the interest of the federal government is deportation for the sake of national security. The result of this has been long-winded maltreatment of immigrants in detention centers across the country.

A report done by Seattle University revealed

disturbing evidence of violations of basic rights in the Northwest Detention Centers. Many individuals reported malnourishment, sexual harassment, invasion of privacy, and detrimental effects on mental health after time spent being detained. The stories and quotes cited by Seattle University were appalling and make you feel a little sick as you read them. I had the opportunity to travel to the detention center this semester, and while I didn't go inside, seeing the outskirts of the center brought back the same uneasy feelings I felt during a tour of a detention center used to detain people during the Dirty War in Argentina. Surprisingly, ICE only reported 11% of detainees to have what they considered violent criminal backgrounds or any foreseen threat to society. It's unthinkable that the U.S. is still using tactics on innocent individuals that we would regard as violations of International human rights law in other countries.

“ WE CAN FORM AN ALLY NETWORK FOR THOSE WHOSE VOICES ARE OFTEN DROWNED OUT IN MUDDLED IMMIGRATION DEBATES ”

If the U.S. is going to use detention tactics at all, it should only be used for cases where individuals pose an imminent threat to the broader society.

I think PLU students need to be aware of the uniquely positioned campus that we all call home in one way or another. In addition to the Detention Center in Tacoma, it's important to shed light on immigration issues on our own campus. PLU has a number of undocumented students on-campus (the exact number is unavailable, but as time goes on this number will likely increase). It's incredibly difficult to share this information with professors and other students, because of the culture of fear that U.S. society has cultivated in the lives of undocumented immigrants. PLU is a relatively supportive campus when it comes to these issues. The Hispanic Studies Department has a large ally-base for these students and provides good resources for students who

might need someone to go to.

On the other hand, there is little awareness on-campus of the implications of being an undocumented student at PLU. Having been a tour guide for the past three years, I have learned how to tell my story as a PLU student and what my study abroad experience has meant to me, and the benefits of financial aid packages at PLU. It's really unfortunate that the PLU student narrative is not necessarily universal. To think that students who worked so hard in high school to be able to come to college – in many cases they were the top of their classes – to not have the same resources and privileges of other students is disheartening. If you are undocumented, this means you can't travel abroad, fill out the FAFSA like everyone else, and likely have gone through a lot of obstacles to get to college in the first place.

If you read this article, I hope you gained awareness of two major relevant issues to PLU. The first being the detention center in Tacoma and the implications of this to the surrounding Tacoma community. The second issue, and most home-hitting, is the undocumented student narrative here at PLU. If you are interested in breaking out of the "Lutedome", you can contact CCES to find out how to be involved with serving immigrants on and off-campus. PLU even has an ESL program twice per week where PLU students help teach English to individuals in the Hispanic community. Even if you don't get involved, just being aware of the relevancy of immigration to Tacoma and our campus is so important. When we come to realize the hardships of immigrants for Tacoma residents and PLU students alike, the more we can form an ally network for those whose voices are often drowned out in muddled immigration debates. It might take years to form a civil rights movement on the immigration front. But until there is enough of an ally support network for the rights of this marginalized group in our society, large corporations such as GEO will continue to exploit the basic rights of humans for the sake of profit—and their actions will go unnoticed.

I ASKED WHAT JUSTICE MEANS

KRISTIN HAYES '15
*PSYCHOLOGY AND WOMEN'S &
GENDER STUDIES*

"Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought."
— Audre Lorde

I asked what justice means:

"Just behavior or treatment,"
Where just means,
"Behaving according to what is morally right and fair."

I asked what mercy means:

"Compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm."
Where compassion is,
"Sympathy and concern."

I asked if my identity is made out of color;
Am I shaped by an education,
A body,
Or a vocabulary,
Where words and language define me.

Am I isolated from a deeper love,
When I fail to see the person as a tapestry,
Or a manifestation,
Of where they have come from and
What they have seen.

When I stopped for long enough to truly see
The woman on the poster
On my bedroom wall
I remembered.

So easily forgotten
Are the ways we are the same,
If we let borders, color, Gods, or sex
Write the stories of who we are,
Who is left to read them?
When we are all trapped in construction,
Who is left to create?

Honesty is where I start,
When I can speak my deepest fears.
Where privilege is the root of shame,
Truth emotionally paralyzing,
And life seems so abused.

If my liberation is only possible
When all chains are broken,
Will I ever move from my corner of the uni-
verse?

If every last hope for freedom
And bliss is lost,
Where can the revolution start?

Yes I have felt shame
For the place where I was born,
For a prescribed privilege
And the worlds I don't know.
Yes I want to grapple with the pain
To better understand,
And bring knowledge of our humanness
So we can live among our land.

Although I have been blessed
To be writing this today,
I will dedicate my words to
Those who need a chance to say:

Although I am one person,
My words and thoughts are real.
Although I have one voice,
My speech cannot be silenced.
Although I have one heart,
I've felt the hearts of thousands.
Although I cannot change the world,
I refuse to stop trying.

"I feel, therefore I can be free."
— Audre Lorde



HE

KATELYN CHRISMAN '14

I am not he.

I like people not pronouns,
I like feelings not frigid
ignorance.

if I could
I'd glue us all together on a glass mosaic
blend identities into a conglomerate of art
that heals and shakes and defies the rigidity of society's molds.

I would.

I am more than a rib.
more than a sidekick, more than they tell me I am.

they keep stretching my body to fit a label on my bruised skin, but that won't ever fit.

LETTING GO

KATELYN CHRISMAN '14

I grew up by the river
where wild roses wrapped around my torso
and sunlight kissed my eyes and woke my body
mountains stood, bodies outstretched
carrying me like a small child,
gifting me with legs to run without stopping
and lungs that couldn't ever let me go
the moon and I shared stories
she forgave me
for being foolish
and naïve, and gullible
she forgave me for letting my salt tears fall to the ocean
after my body had trudged in battle
fighting for something already lost

he grew up in black, in mounds
he grew up wading through tar and battling violence
he grew up binding his body to unforeseeable forces
not knowing how far they would take him
but allowing them to feed at his skin
without letting go

he looked at my glassy innocence
and shook my body upside down
biting the buttons of my blouse with his bare
teeth
finding corners to traverse
to invade
sliding his hands over my untouched
skin
not letting go
he told me to be quiet, he didn't listen

and I
I'm still searching
for my voice, for energy
as I return to the river
wild roses wrap around my fragile figure
mountains lifting my body
sunlight kissing my wet eyes
the moon painting wisdom in my dreams
and telling me to let go
to live on
in the brightness of my being
because that
can never
be lost

Yesterday

I lifted a slithering earthworm
from the rain-drenched pavement
and placed it safely in the grass.

Today

I forgot to take the baby spiders out
at my friend's house.
They were sucked up
by the vacuum,
as living dust.

Tomorrow,

no,

now,

from this moment forward,

I am practicing being mindful.

I do not step on ants,

I turn over beetles

along the path.

I pay attention

to the billions of miniscule hearts

and souls that

speak to me

in tiny voices,

fluttering wings,

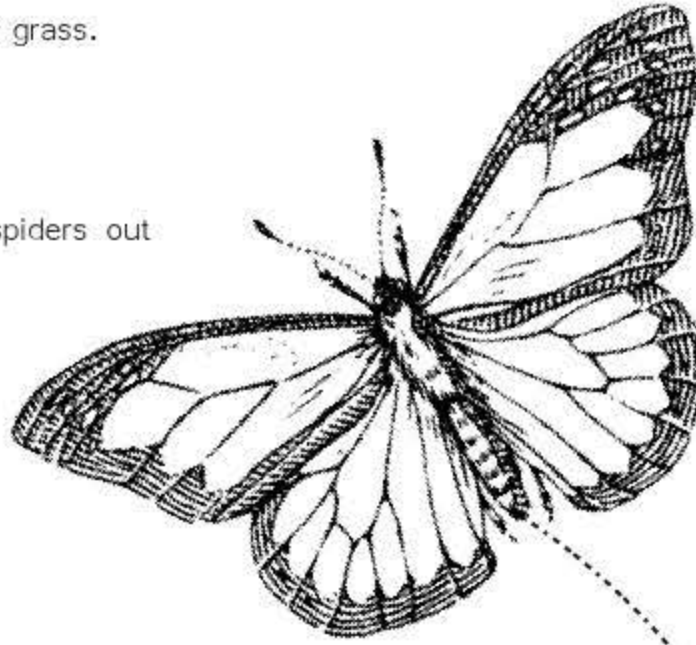
sticky legs,

eyes meeting,

tongue licks on my skin.

Ahisma

ELIZABETH VALDEZ '14
HISPANIC STUDIES
WRITING MINOR



{Recuperación}

ELIZABETH VALDEZ '14

En mi cuarto

siembro bellotas

que crecen

y rompen las paredes.

Año tras año

las ciudades desaparecen

debajo de los robles.

{Reclamation}

ELIZABETH VALDEZ '14

I plant acorns

in my room

that grow and

break down the walls.

Year by year

the cities disappear

beneath the oaks.

THANKS FOR READING

{THE MATRIX}!



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Sax·i·frage



The Matrix
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