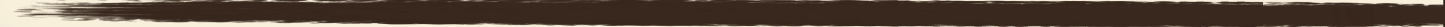


Leonardo



35 Years
of
Leonardo

2026 Literary Arts Magazine





Leonardo

Student Fine Arts and Literary Magazine
Central New Mexico Community College

2026

Leonardo 2026

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About Us

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Leonardo, founded in 1991 by English faculty Dr. Gerald Gallant, is the annual student fine arts and literary magazine of Central New Mexico Community College. Since 2024, *Leonardo's* staff consists of student editors enrolled in the General Honors: Literary Magazine publishing class instructed by English Faculty. The team of student editors work collaboratively, doing everything from calling for submissions to selecting works, from copyediting to graphic design and layout, from promoting to managing the magazine. *Leonardo* accepts work from all CNM students. *Leonardo* uses a student-created rubric and democratic selection process to select works in creative non-fiction, poetry, fictions, visual art, music, and multimedia. This issue is brought to you by funding from the Executive Council of Students (ECOS), CNM's student government organization.

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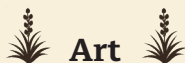
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*Find Leo Longform and our
audio recordings here!*

Zachary John

Blue Hair Violinist; I Madonnari



Leonardo 2026

A Feather to Some

A feather to some
Is a memento to me
A single part of her fanned-out wings
Freely given and eagerly received
Just a feather, some may say
But when your passion has wings
That feather is a promise to stay.
A beautiful span across the skies
Like angel's wings
Brilliant and beautiful red
Deeper than the blood within me
Flying free and fast
Able to be anywhere and any-place
Yet that place that she chooses is at my side.
She made that promise long ago,
One that I honored as well-
To seal the pact that was made
What better a gift
Then a part of her own coat
A feather given, received
And kept forever
Close to me
So, to some this may be just a feather
But to me, and to her, a promise; forever



Morning Walk

The sun wasn't up yet, but its rays were peeking over the horizon, breaking through the night's darkness. The air was still and cool, the hum of the buzzards had stopped, and the chirping of the birds hadn't yet started, so her footsteps on the gravel echoed loudly. She couldn't remember how she came to be walking along this long dirt road, but she was compelled to keep walking, as she knew she was going in the right direction even though her destination was unclear. Instinctually, she knew she was where she was supposed to be, the same way a bird always knows the path home.

Her memory of anything before this morning was fuzzy and distant, the same way that a dream is hard to reach after waking up. She had flashes from her memory, but they were disconnected. She couldn't be sure what memories were old and which were newer. She couldn't recall waking up that morning or leaving her home or how she got so far away from home. She tried to close her eyes and focus on the flashes of memory, but it was like watching a slide show of pictures instead of a movie, and all of the pictures were out of order. She then realized that her feet hadn't stopped moving, she had been placing all of her focus on her memories, and her eyes were tightly shut, but her feet were still carrying her step by step along the dirt path...

Continue reading on our website...



Digital Zombies

Coffee maker running, news already open on your phone, depressing headlines blurring together into one streak of light. Scrolling mindlessly, spiraling about the uncontrollable events as you wake up every morning. Perhaps before you even step out of bed, blue-tinted screen greets you, stronger than the weak sunlight outside. Stronger than the cat's pathetic meow as it cries for food. Lunch with friends, but it's silent. One, two, three blurry-eyed zombies, caught up in the web of social media, on the pretty patio of the nice little café, the tiny birds chirping, looking for crumbs. Pictures of food, photoshopped within an inch of their life as you mindlessly eat your own — coffee with a cat face in the foam, a nice stack of imperfect pancakes, direct contrast. Unknown, unnoticed, obsolete.

Always checking emails, see the screen when you close your eyes, the colorful home of your online life. Partner's free hand clutches yours, TV running, intense background noise, as you stare instead at the phone in your hand. Lie together, but so far apart. There's an abyss now, that even a connected world can't bridge.

Lights off, cat sleeping happily on your feet. Bright white light is blinding in the darkness, but you endure. More news, more stories, more of other people's online life. Bloodshot eyes stare into the darkness after the screen dies. Nightmares, brain running full speed, overthinking. Blinding, swirling colors, stories, lies, plug in your brain; try to absorb it all.

2:00 a.m. Finally, sleep. Wake up tired, reach for the mothership. Press start on your digital day.



Santiago Manuel Lozoya

Subhumans Rats Jacket



Leonardo 2026

Poor Boys

I let out a frustrated sigh as I once again unraveled the mess that was my attempt at tying a tie. This stupid, long, thin piece of black fabric was making me lose my mind. My dad always did it for me in the past, but I can't ask him to do it for me now. I grab my phone from my dress pants' back pocket and pull up a YouTube tutorial. I look back at the mirror while glancing down at my phone every two seconds. That's when I get a knock on the door.

"Honey? Are you almost ready?" I hear Mom's voice from the other side of the door.

"Almost. Just gimme a minute!" I say back.

After a moment of silence, I hear Mom's voice again, "Can I come in?"

I let out a sigh, "Come in."

As Mom entered the room, I focused on my reflection in the mirror. She had a small smile on her face as she walked over to me.

"How's it going?" she asks.

"Fine," I reply as I keep focusing on my tie.

Mom stops behind me, watching as I continue my battle with a piece of fabric.

"Would you like me to help?" she asks.

"No. I've got this."

"Okay."

We stand there in silence as I complete the final steps of the process. I tighten and adjust the tie before fixing the collar of my white button-up dress shirt.

“Can you hand me my jacket?” I ask.

“Sure,” she replies as she reaches for the suit jacket, which is lying on the end of my bed.

She then helps me put it on one sleeve at a time. I adjust it before looking back at my reflection. I looked so formal, with a black suit jacket, white button-up, black dress pants, and black dress shoes; it just looked weird. I kept adjusting the suit jacket, dusting the sleeves with my hand, and re-adjusting my tie as I tried to get used to this feeling. Mom remained silent the entire time. I finally turned around to look at my mom; she was wearing a long black dress with short sleeves, her black hair in a bun. She smiled at me as she reached out to grab my upper arms and gave me a once-over.

“My handsome boy,” she said quietly.

She rubbed my shoulders with her thumbs before pulling back.

“We’ll be leaving in five, so make sure you have everything.”

I gave her a nod in response, and she kissed me on the cheek before leaving my room. I grabbed my phone as another text message came through. I replied with a quick ‘thank you’ before going back. As I scrolled through my phone, looking at all the people who had messaged me in the past couple of days, I couldn’t help but be slightly taken aback. So many people I hadn’t talked to in years were reaching out; it felt surreal. I checked the time and put my phone in my back pocket before heading out.

Mom was on the phone. As she grabbed her keys and purse, she pointed at the front door.

I headed out the door as the sound of my mom unlocking the

Hannah Van Court

car sounded. My younger brother Joshua was already waiting, playing on his Nintendo Switch. His outfit was the same as mine. He moved around and got into the rear driver's side. I got into the passenger seat, looking back at him as I heard the sounds of whatever game he was playing.

"You good?" I asked as I looked out the front windshield.

"Yeah, I'm fine," he replied.

I went back to being silent as I pulled out my earbuds and started one of my playlists, Ophelia by the Lumineers, beginning to play. I watched as Mom locked the house before walking to the car. She headed to the driver's side and got in.

"I'll see you in a few minutes," she said, seeming to be at the end of her call. "Alright. Bye."

Mom put her phone down before putting on her seatbelt and starting the car. The drive over felt like it was taking forever, yet no time had passed as we pulled up to the church. It looked like we were one of the first people to get there, seeing as there were only a couple of cars already in the parking lot. We walked up the steps to the open double doors where the Pastor was waiting for us. He hugged Mom, saying a few things to her in a low volume. He gave Joshua and me hugs and some kind words before we walked in.

I was walking behind Joshua when I saw him stop. I looked to see him staring straight ahead, his breathing heavy. I looked where he was, looking past the doors into the church sanctuary. And there it was—a long, brown, rectangular box. I walked up to him, wrapped my arm around him, and placed my hand on his shoulder.

“Do you want me to walk with you?”

After a moment of silence, I heard him say in a strained tone, “Yeah.”

“Okay,” I replied before we slowly started to walk in together.

The box seemed to get bigger and bigger, as we got closer to it, more menacing. Joshua stopped halfway across the sanctuary. I squeezed his shoulder.

“You’re good,” I whispered encouragingly, “Just focus on getting to mom.”

Joshua took some deep breaths before he kept walking, keeping his eye on Mom, who was already there in front of the box. She turned to look at us as we approached, giving us a smile, her eyes glistening. She held her hand out for Joshua to take. Joshua moved away from me as he walked over to Mom. He took her hand before looking into the box. I heard a strange, garbled sound from him before he hugged Mom rightly. Then I walked forward, my own fear rising as I looked down into the box. The coffin.

There he was, Dad. I don’t know what I expected, but he just looked...normal, like he was asleep. I stared down at him, his eyes closed, his hands placed on each other on his chest, put in his finest suit. But I knew if I touched him, all I would feel is cold. I looked over to see my brother’s shoulders shaking as he cried into Mom’s chest. I looked at Mom’s face; she was clearly trying to hold it together as best as she could. I heard our pastor talking to someone, and I looked back to see my older sister, Sarah, talking to him. She looked over at us before heading over. She put her hand on my back as she also looked into

Hannah Van Court

the coffin.

She gave me a watery smile before hugging me. We didn't need to say anything to each other. As we separated, I looked to see more people at the entrance of the sanctuary. As they headed over, it was basically the same thing. An "I'm sorry," a hug, maybe a few more words, then on to the next person. It just became a routine; I could do that, I could do a routine. Mom, Joshua, Sara, and I eventually sat down in the front row of seats. People kept coming, more words were said, more tears, so many people.

As I sat there, I could hear people talking. People aren't as quiet as they think they are.

"Oh, those poor boys."

"How sad."

"They're so young."

It was going to be a long day.



Sabrina Salazar

Boys in Fort



Leonardo 2026

A Toddler's Guide to Life

If you're reading this, it's because you're a toddler. Or you're a parent reading this to your toddler. If you are neither, take this opportunity to reflect on your toddler years to pass down the wisdom you've accumulated and use it in your own life. In this short self-help article for toddlers, you can expect me to tell you what no one teaches you about being a toddler. If you're worried about my credentials as an eighteen-year-old high schooler, I assure you it's been at least fifteen years of reflection on my part. Not to brag, but I'm pretty sure my frontal lobe is also developing at an at least average, if not more than average, rate. If you read my advice, yours can too, regardless of what age you are.

The first thing you need to know about being a toddler is that communication should be your No. 1 priority. Simple phrases work best in any situation. Your first words will become your lifeline in getting the things you want and need. Learning a language is difficult, and to be honest with you, people may not understand you for a while. This is why I find it important to tell you that there are other options for communication besides speaking. Yelling, crying, and even screaming may get you more than what you anticipated. It's not a guarantee that you'll get exactly what you asked for, but it is a guarantee for attention, which might be just as good. This will work at almost any point in your long life. Almost. When you're a toddler, it's acceptable because it's what's expected of you. Then, there's a period of time when such actions will be frowned upon and scolded. However, there comes a time when you have just enough authority that you can yell

all you want and hardly anyone will say anything about it. At least not to your face. What I should warn you is that it can also get you in trouble with the wrong people.

Rules are everywhere, and no one ever tells you all of them. I would love to help you if I could, but the issue is they change all of the time. There will be some times when you're given directions for what to do and what not to do. In circumstances like that, you'll realize that even those rules can change quickly and for little reason. It can be as simple as someone having a bad day. What earned you applause yesterday could get you a timeout today. One moment, you're "so independent," and the next day you're "too young" or even "too old." Consistency is a myth that adults pretend to believe in. What you need to learn now, while you can, is not how to memorize rules, but how to survive them. Personally, I find that being agreeable and exceptionally easygoing is the way to get ahead of the rules. What other people may call a "suck up" is actually just a highway to avoiding consequences. Otherwise, you'll find yourself apologizing for things you never knew were wrong.

Apologizing never feels satisfying for anyone, especially if you're in the phase of "childhood narcissism" that developmental psychologists love talking about. The truth is: everyone hates apologizing, especially anyone who finds themselves in any role of being responsible for something. It's an act of humility that can be very honest when done correctly. I would advise you take your parents' advice to learn to apologize correctly. An apology is not "I'm sorry you feel that way." That is just called switching the blame and is only an indicator of how much

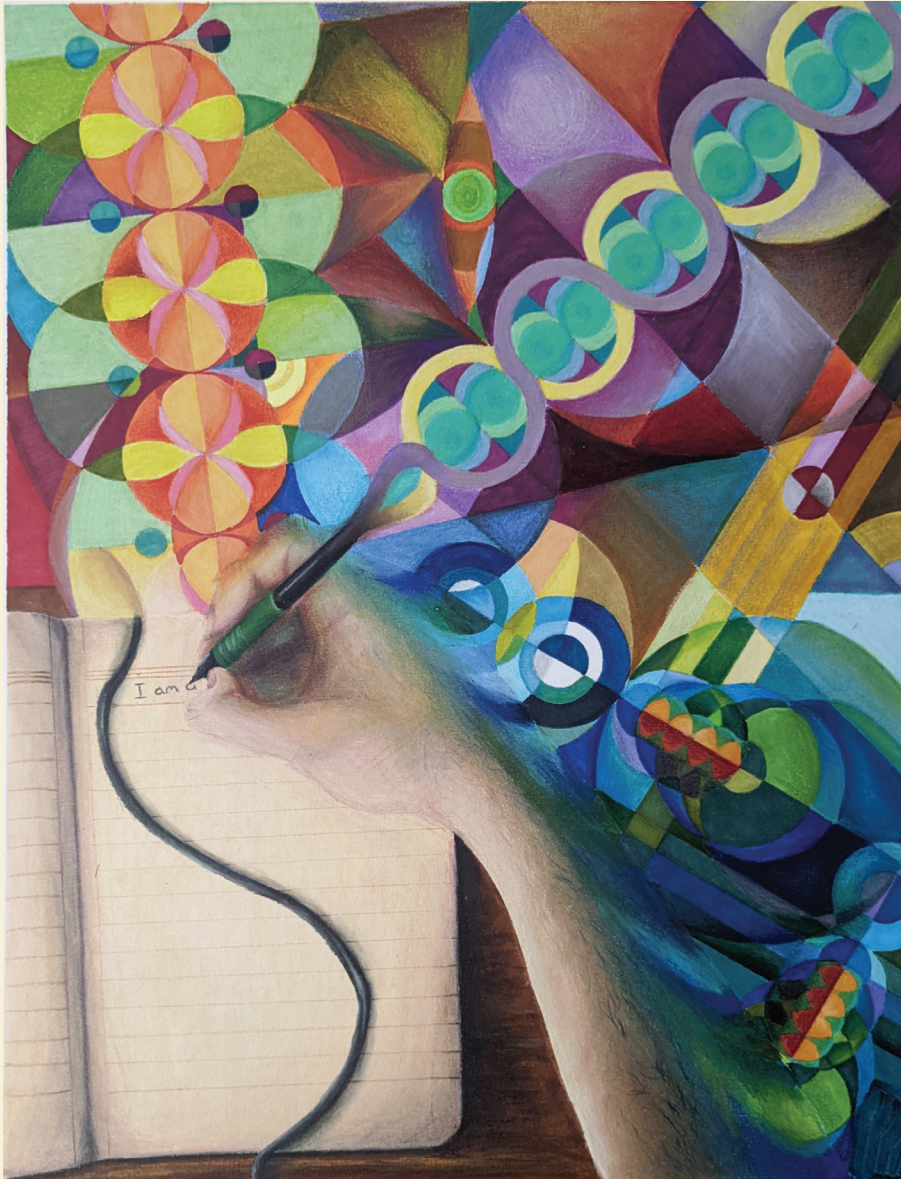
Isabella Sisneros

you struggle to admit you were wrong. Another way not to apologize is by crying until someone else apologizes to you first. You may think it's slick and manipulative, but more people can see through that than you think. Now, don't misunderstand, it is hard, but not that hard. You may find times when you're being forced to apologize for something you don't feel sorry about. While I fully support intelligently spoken confrontation and standing up for yourself, ultimately, this decision is yours and dependent on context. The important lesson is that you learn to say "I'm sorry for..." and, at the very least, try your best to not do it again.

The final thing I would like to emphasize for you, as a toddler, is how to actually grow up. You may wish every night before you go to bed that one day you'll finally be old enough to do something you've always wanted to do. You might hear from adults all the time that they wish they were young again. As a recently formed adult who was a kid six months ago, I'll be the first to say "don't take it for granted," but I don't blame you for wanting to grow up quickly. So, if you want to grow up quickly, I have bad news for you: you probably won't. Most likely, you'll just get taller, and when you're thirty-five, you'll find yourself relearning how to do the same things you learned at three. Don't expect yourself to be a great communicator just because you had another birthday. You only master what you actually practice.

I wish you all the best of luck on surviving toddlerhood. I have full faith in your journey from babbles to intelligent conversations. Should you ever find yourself in need of more life advice, feel free to let me know. I am also a babysitter/life coach for hire.

I Am



Easy No-Bake Cheesecake

Ingredients

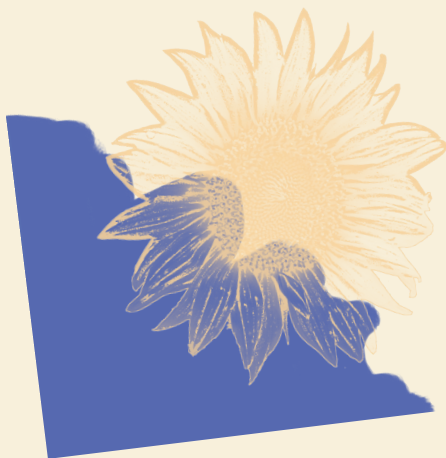
- 8 ounces cream cheese (1 block), softened
 - 3/4 cup granulated sugar
 - 1 tub whipped topping
 - 1/2 cup sour cream
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 1 graham cracker crust
- 1 can cherry or strawberry pie filling or cut up fresh strawberries and blueberries



Photo by Esperita Lopez

Instructions

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the cream chesse , sugar, sour cream, and vanilla extract.
2. Mix until smooth using a hand mixer (or stir well by hand).
3. Fold in the whipped topping until fully combined and creamy.
4. Spread the mixture evenly into the graham cracker crust.
5. Top with cherry or strawberry filling.
6. Refrigerate for at least 2 - 4 hours, or until set. Slice and serve chilled.



Happy
Hatch-oween



Slow & Steady

Thou shall not pass,
Oath to always know myself.
Rules say you need to make it when young,
The truth couldn't be more wrong.
Owning up my trust,
I am right where I'm supposed to be.
So much for blame.
Everything is in my name.

Thankful for all the nays,
Appreciating all the lies.
Knowing what I know,
Everything is in perfect order,
Special chances are worth the wait.

To all the ones that make it late,
Hard work pays off.
Even when life is rough,
It's worth it when the going gets tough.
Recall, the longer you wait the more you get.

Thou shall not forget,
I am the greatest in the longest race.
My time will come!
Enjoying my time in every process.



Invaders of the Valley Saloon



‘Invaders of the Valley Saloon’ was made in collaboration with CNM’s Film & Digital Media Program in Spring of 2025. The entire set was designed and built from the ground up by students. We have since went on to win some awards and screen in the film festival circuit at events such Albuquerque’s Film and Music Experience, and even international festivals like the Almeria Western Film festival in Tabernas, Spain of Spaghetti Western fame.

View the film on our website.....



Self-Portrait



It's Easy to Indoctrinate a Girl

Reviews and analyses of Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl" reliably focus on the themes of feminism, post-colonial survival, and social integration. I'd like to take my analysis in another direction, substituting these "traditional" interpretations with an allegorical theme of political indoctrination. There is ample symbolism taken from the powerful dialogue that easily supports "tradition." This symbolism also supports my alternative theme. I'll aspire to skew this by using the narrative lines to illustrate how there are many parallels to the processes of political indoctrination.

In a classical political sense, indoctrination most often manifests in our schools and through dictatorial state-run media. It's not too far a stretch to see that in "Girl" the "state" is symbolized by the household and the "dictator" is the mother. It's a reduction of the larger system to the more manageable domestic sphere, where the mother's lecturing and purity-shaming is the inescapable propaganda seen in totalitarian regimes that limit voice and thought.

Let me share a few examples of my reasoning.

A foundational aspect of political indoctrination is sanctioned appearances. Several times this is referenced in the story, like the line "this is how you iron your father's khaki shirt so that it doesn't have a crease." The symbolism here is two-fold: maintaining a status quo cultural constant and a regimental norm for societal compliance. To be a functional and valued member of the totalized society, there are specific requirements for how a member must present themselves with specific expectations of conformity. The khakis represent these societal

Steve Bringe

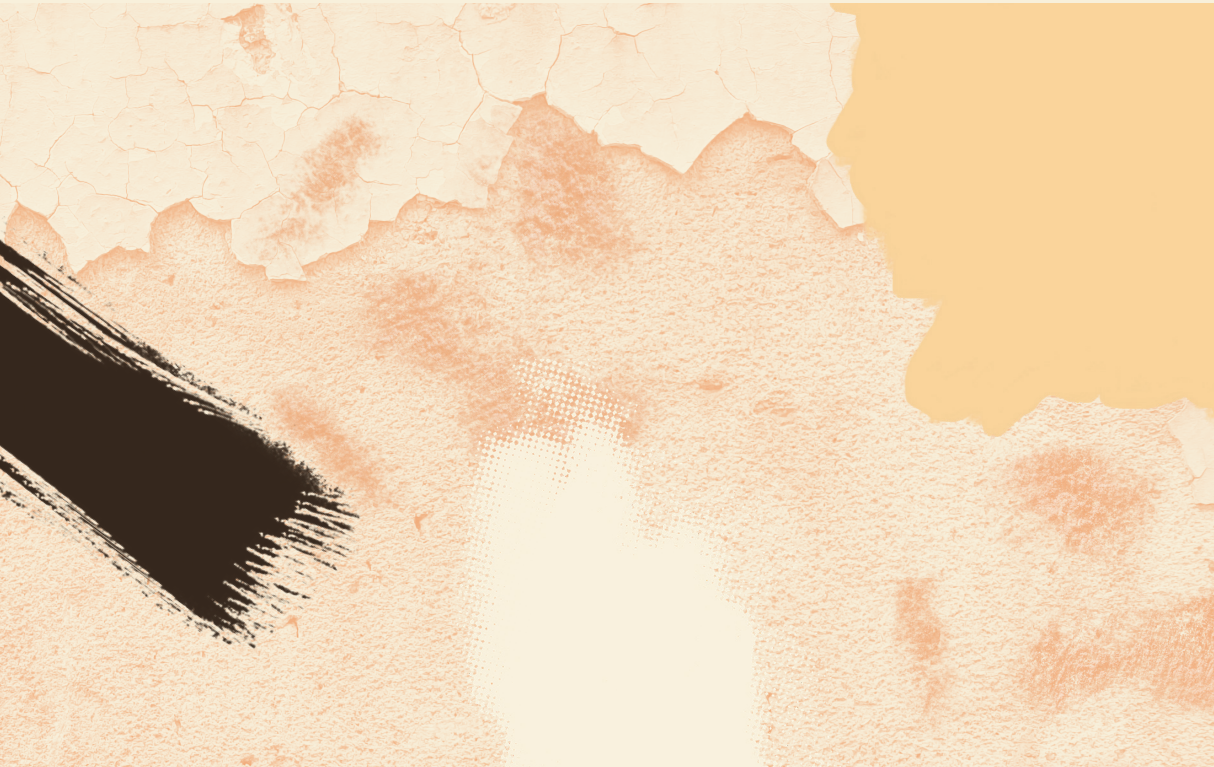
mores, and the creases represent the constraints of these mores.

Another hallmark of political indoctrination and the control exerted by indoctrination is the spectre of constant surveillance. Take the line “this is how you sweep a corner; this is how you sweep a whole house; this is how you sweep a yard” as an illustration of the concept. “Sweeping” in this sense can be interpreted as that act of an Orwellian Big Brother (in this case Big Mother) and pointing out that no matter where the “sweeping” occurs – the corner, the whole house, the yard – there is no place to hide from the surveillance.

I mentioned that purity-shaming is a primary control in political indoctrination, and the story has several examples of just this. Most notably, there is the repeated reference to the archetype “slut” – “on Sundays try to walk like a lady and not like the slut you are so bent on becoming.” It’s a predetermined criminalization of unsanctioned behavior. Step out of compliance and you’re now a “slut,” or a political dissident. And when the girl protests and explains she doesn’t sing the benna, to prove her adherence and loyalty, the mother ignores this fact and reinforces that dissidence isn’t tolerated. Propaganda outweighs reality. And as a last observation on purity-shaming, no political indoctrination scheme is complete without “othering” and defining the “enemy within.” Introducing the Wharf-Rat Boys, “you mustn’t speak to wharf-rat boys, not even to give directions.” It’s purity-shaming turned outwards, the male equivalent of the “slut,” and it’s insinuated that Wharf-Rat Boys are an already ostracized class with dangerous ideas and methods. Any contact or conversation is prohibited by threat of being ostracized and outcast yourself, where even a hint of discussing

unapproved thoughts – “directions” – can be the mechanism of ultimate betrayal to the state.

“Girl” closes with one final warning to the girl, the metaphor of the bread. Bread is nourishment, but it’s also economic and societal reward. Nourishment is requisite to survival, and this closing threat states this: If the mother (dictator) in her household (state) fails to properly mold the girl through political indoctrination, the baker (the policing arm of the state) will deny her the bread (the means of survival). The final message is stark: Comply or starve.



Kristian Rodriguez



Sunset at the Rio



The Heart of Albuquerque

Running down from the north and cutting through the center of Albuquerque is the Rio Grande River. Along the river's shores lies what is known as the Bosque, meaning "forest" or "woods" in Spanish. It gives a lush, green contrast to the stark, sandy brown of the desert. Winding, veinlike rails run through the Bosque along the Rio Grande, giving residents of Albuquerque a chance to escape from the hubbub of city life into the cottonwood trees. Having such a place in our own collective backyards is such a privilege; it connects us to nature, reminds us that there is so much more to life than working a nine to five job in the same grey buildings day after day. It is the coronary artery pumping lifeblood through the heart of Albuquerque to all who live near it, man and beast alike. It represents the intersection of urban life and untamed nature.

When venturing into the Bosque, one is sure to have some kind of sighting or encounter with the local wildlife. I have seen coyotes trotting through the brush, carrying a freshly caught rabbit to feed their pups. Elusive porcupines hide high in the treetops, observable by those with a keen eye. Cranes can be seen swooping down when the river runs high, hoping to catch a tasty treat. There is something comforting and grounding about seeing animals in their habitats, simply existing the only way they know how. It reminds me that we live alongside a world exponentially bigger than ours, one unconcerned with the social constructs we humans are burdened with.

As someone who lives with chronic depression and anxiety, the tranquility of the Bosque speaks to my soul. I come here during

Ben Hall

depressive episodes or anxiety attacks to walk the trails and take in the wildlife around me. There is something grounding about not just seeing nature and its beauty, but feeling it with the other four senses. Feeling the breath of a gentle wind against my face, tasting the pollen cascading off the flora, hearing the rushing of water, and even smelling the droppings left behind by geese all contribute to a feeling of oneness. After walking for a while along one of the paths, there are ample stumps or collapsed logs along the riverbank to sit and process my feelings. Getting away from the concrete jungle provides clarity on life and makes everything seem simpler. Remnants of human activity still pervade the wilderness of the Bosque, however; it is still in the heart of the city, after all.

During one of my first ventures into the Bosque, I went with a friend who is familiar with the area. She is one of many cyclists who regularly utilizes the Bosque's trails to get her cardio in. She wanted to show me the "glass graveyard;" when I asked what this place was, she said I would know when we got there. We walked southbound from the Hispanic Cultural Center along a winding path. Eventually, past rows of massive jetty jacks and Russian Olive bushes, we came to a fork in the trail. One path continued along the shore, and the other jetted off to a small hill with glass shards curiously strewn about it. At the apex of the hill, I was greeted with an astonishing sight: a vast clearing in the woods with glass shards covering the ground. It was as if the glass itself was growing from the soil, like razor sharp blades of violent grass. A strange and hauntingly beautiful symbol of mankind's influence on the natural world.



The glass graveyard is not the only example of human activity disrupting the environmental serenity of the Bosque. From wooden plank crossings over small trenches in the ground to massive concrete bridges allowing cars to pass overhead, the city of Albuquerque has made its mark on the Bosque. Furthermore, every year fires erupt in the Bosque from careless cigarette smokers or unhoused people lighting a campfire to stay warm. The place is a perfect tinderbox of dead or dying cottonwood trees, after all. This is compounded with the gradual drying of the river itself, a growing problem due to climate change and water management contracts with Colorado and Texas. The margin between nature and human society becomes more razor thin by the day.

I won't pretend that I have any answers for this or don't enjoy the comfort given to me by the advancements of our era. All I can say is that the Bosque and places like it are cherished by myself and so many others. Life would not be the same without these natural areas in our cities providing respite from the rat race. To me, the Bosque is profoundly important. Not only is it home to trees that give us the air we breathe, but it is an escape from stress and panic, a chance to reconnect with the simplistic purity of our world. Most importantly, it provides sanctuary for animals and plant life who, were it not for such places, would be driven out by man's domination. It is a natural treasure of our city, one that we must not take for granted.

Simon Pratt

Feared Belonging



6th and Gold

At first glance, the bus stop on 6th and Gold doesn't seem like much. A scrappy metal bench, the side panel scrawled with graffiti, the faint smell of exhaust and sunbaked asphalt. Most people drive past it without a second thought, eyes forward, music up. But for those who wait here, this little patch of sidewalk is a crossroads, a brief pause where lives that might never otherwise touch share a few suspended minutes.

There's a rhythm to the waiting. The student with earbuds scrolling through her phone, the man in work boots balancing a paper cup of gas station coffee, the older woman with the grocery cart talking softly to herself. Then there's the quiet solidarity, a nod, a shared glance if the bus is running late, a stranger offering a lighter or a seat. No one really says much, but there's a hum of understanding; we're all waiting for the same thing.

I've stood here too, watching shadows stretch across the pavement as the sun sinks behind the mountains. Sometimes I catch myself studying the faces around me, wondering where everyone's headed, what part of their day I've stepped into. It's in those moments that the stop feels more than a place; it feels like a mirror of the city itself.

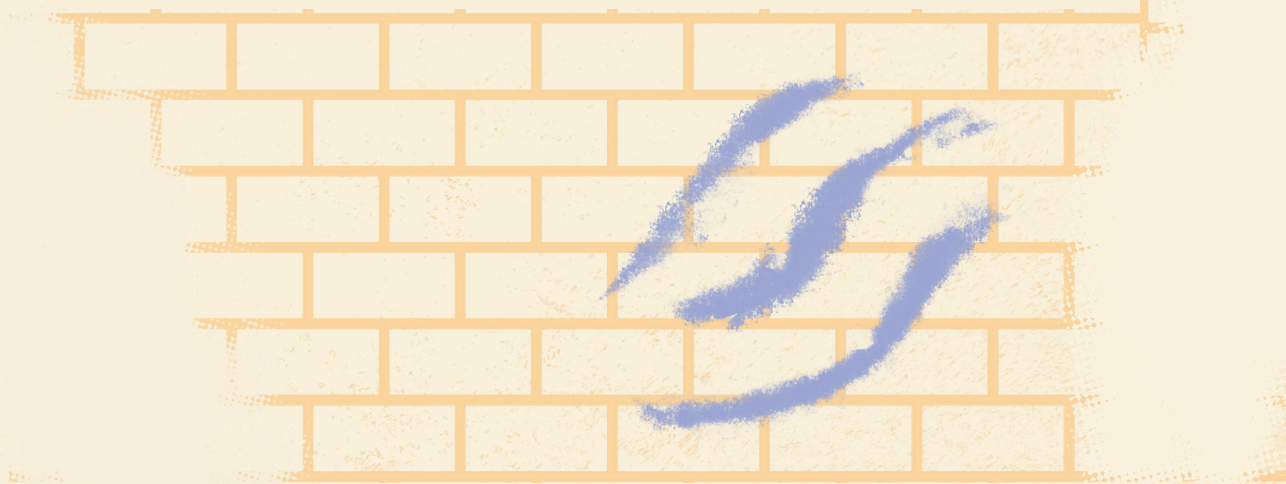
The bus stop is a lesson in patience and impermanence. It belongs to everyone and no one, workers, students, elders, the unhoused, all equalized by time and the schedule of something bigger than them. In that sense, it reveals something about Albuquerque. For all its beauty and grit, this is a city stitched together by waiting. Waiting for paychecks, waiting for recovery, waiting for justice, each just a few stops

Angel Garcia

away.

Here, class is visible but softened. A nurse in scrubs and a man with a sleeping bag share shade under the same cracked shelter. The bus stop becomes its own kind of community, built not from stability, but from quiet resilience. Built by people who keep showing up, who stand in the sun, who wave the driver down, who keep moving forward when the doors finally hiss open.


It is easy to overlook places like this. But if you stand there long enough, you start to feel the weight of it, not as a symbol of poverty or neglect, but as proof of persistence. The bus stop on 6th and Gold is a reminder that even in a city riddled with trauma, connection still happens in the most ordinary places, in the waiting, in the small talk. In the shared understanding that everyone, in some way, is just trying to get to the next stop.



What Did You Think

We heard that fire rained from the sky sometime yesterday
In a country at war
Fireballs into nuclear sites--- fire and fire only mean
More flame, what did they think, that explosions and bombs
Would be accepted with open arms,
What did they think, that fire raining from the sky
Could be seen as a gift of peace, what did you think
When you read the news last night
That glowing blue light and the images and stories of destruction---
That drug that keeps us all addicted to the fear, uncertainty
And doubt, keeps our bloodshot eyes on the screens and
Not the skies, lies and not the stars, what
Did you think, did you think
Or cry---for the ashes and the flames
For burning lives and scarred remains, what did you think---
Did you forget yourself, lose yourself in the destruction
Of a dream of a united world, alone in a country
Ripped apart at the seams and united
Only with hatred and war?

The Battle

 *Themes of abuse, violence, and death*

My name is Eliborio Matthew Ayala. I am currently incarcerated for an armed robbery and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon charge that I committed when I was 17. Before I get into the present tense, let me tell you what got me here. I was born in Albuquerque, NM, on May 27th, 2006. I grew up on the westside with my mother and big brother; my mother was an alcoholic and constantly in and out of abusive relationships. Shawn was one of her boyfriends, and the first 2 or so years they were together were fine. It all changed when they both started drinking heavily. Shawn was an angry drunk and would beat my mother. Having been in past abusive relationships, my mother thought that it was his way of showing her love. I don't have enough fingers on my hands to account for the times my brother and I had to pull Shawn off our mother, but despite the beatings, she still didn't leave...

Continue reading on our website...




Absence



Leonardo 2026

Fool

 *Warning! Themes of racism and death*

A car engine revved as it drove along the dirt highway. Hoots and hollers were being shouted at the tall man running away from it. A foolish man this was. Sneaking out after dark to play dress-up as a rich man. Wearing his father's best black suit that sagged at the bottom and gifted cufflinks from his grandmama. Going to the only integrated bar five miles from his plantation. He should have known the consequences of walking too close to the white neighborhood. Now he ran as fast as he could. His mama always told him he was the best runner in all of Alabama. He was as fast as a train. But at that moment, he couldn't hear his mama's words of encouragement. Only her reprimands, "Them folks only gon see your skin. Ain't no place for you out there. Go up North if you wanna play pretend." Tears filled his eyes. He was sorry for being a fool. Now the blinding lights of the car flashed in front of him. He heard one more curse before having to meet the wind with the rest of his people.

Annie Mitchem

Interview with a Vampire



Leonardo 2026

• 35

Dane Corbin



**Lover's Eye
Chatelaine**

In These Echoes

The voices never leave. They cling to the roof and the furniture, seep through the walls and up through the floors. They cry out after dark before I light the candles. Sometimes, I swear I see them, soft blurs that hover, brush through door frames and through my body.

The only place they never go is down into the dark of the basement. They never follow me into the cavernous library with its ceiling-high shelves of colorful books.

When the sun rises over the distant line of towering trees, they grow weaker, melting slowly back into the background and I settle at the writing desk in the corner to transcribe their whispered lives and histories into brightly colored, leather-bound books.

The page is full. The story is done. I close the book cover, run my hand over the flowery embossing at the base of the vibrant cobalt spine.

The sun is setting again, and the whispers are growing stronger, louder, more insistent, but I push them to the back of my mind, lifting the stack of finished books.

In the library, I place them on shelves, organized by color and by shade in a perfect rainbow of sorrow, joy, hatred and anger, any other beautiful and messy emotion that plagues the human condition. There, they join countless others in cataloging the stories of the lost and forgotten, the ones too scared to move on, or the ones unable to.

The voices, the spirits, the trapped souls too burdened to make it to their promised heaven, their perfect afterlife, they're afraid of this room, afraid of the history seeping into the air off pages and out of ink. Afraid of what it means to remember the things that burden them

N. Page

that keep them here in this run-down house on the hill where the sun always shines and the state of decay is beautiful and haunting. Afraid of the weight that follows knowledge.

The dark is absolute now, upstairs and outside. The voices are reaching their fever pitch, clawing at the door, begging me to join them another night to listen and collect their stories, anything to keep them alive. And so I join them, let them guide me upstairs into the candle-lit kitchen, where I make a cup of tea and hop up on the counter to sit and listen.

Stay, stay with us till morning.

And it's here, night after night, among these echoes that I lose myself.

DIY Under the Disko Ball



Gabriella Sanchez

2 Face



Lily Unbloomed

The winds blow with the fierce gale of an all-too-familiar, harshly violent storm, whipping the woman's hair back and forth with such vigor that thick knots tangle themselves near-instantly through drenched strands. She stands, swaying slightly, on the dangerously crumbling edge of the White Cliffs of Dover, staring out into the crashing waves far below. Their chaotic clashing reaching up towards her in wild tendrils of dark water, desperately clambering up the sharp cliff face as the storm grows ever harsher. Her lips are numb as she speaks in low, rapid prayers; her raw throat bleeding her voice out into the air, only to be lost within the cacophony of thunder clashing sea. Her skin is bright red wherever it peaks out from the tattered remains of a black satin gown, growing painful in the icy chill she stands in. In her hand is a small lily, cut from its stem before its bloom ever really began, its green bud weeping with the rain that pours from blackened skies. As incomprehensible time passes, the storm roars and screams in its sacred rage, and the woman's prayers grow louder in response. Her heart bounds with the beat of lightning and thunder, and her eyes flash white as the air thickens with ozone. With a final scream ripped from both woman and storm, her legs collapse beneath her, and she falls into the crying waters below. The small lily lays, beaten and broken on the cliffs' edge, water running down its stems in rivulets, crying alongside the drooping storm clouds in their wailing grief.



Drain

Leonardo 2026

Study of Bones



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Un cigarro viajaba por la carretera,
cuando se encontró con tres tigres.
ellos estaban apilando rocas
una encima de la otra en un círculo,
y se levantaron árboles de humo.

El cigarro era envidioso,
sus alas estaban plegadas-
alas de hielo,
las alas de un tren.
Los ascensores se alargaron
hasta que los pájaros eran oscurecidos-
los tigres estaban excitados
y comenzaron a matar ellos mismos-
suenan como una siesta.



Las nubes llenas de leche
se escapó,
y el cigarro fue con ellos.
Tiene muchos kilómetros por recorrer
hasta que encuentre su nido,
el nido de su nacimiento.

El nido del sol-
donde hay pulpos grandes
recogiendo seda
para las estatuas
hechas de verde-
los ríos verdes del sol,
los pies fríos del tiempo.

Es bueno saber
que los tigres no fuman cigarros-
los puros más puros.

A Daughter Blooming: A Letter to Mom

Eyes that we share,
So calm, so full of care.
Carry my dying identity
Into an unknown reality.
Lead me up the path to grow,
Into your precious flower, and sow.
Will my feelings to flourish,
Under your love and nourish.



Can I be me?

Could I be free?

Am I real?

Do I reveal?

Ask me.


But I can't guarantee,
That the person I always knew,
Or the uniqueness I thought to be true,
Will become the daughter you cherish,
And forget the son who perished



My Personality Mask



Self Portrait of a Guilding Light



I was not born a beacon—
I was hammered into brightness,
tempered by fire and fracture,
made of every moment the world
dared me not to go on.

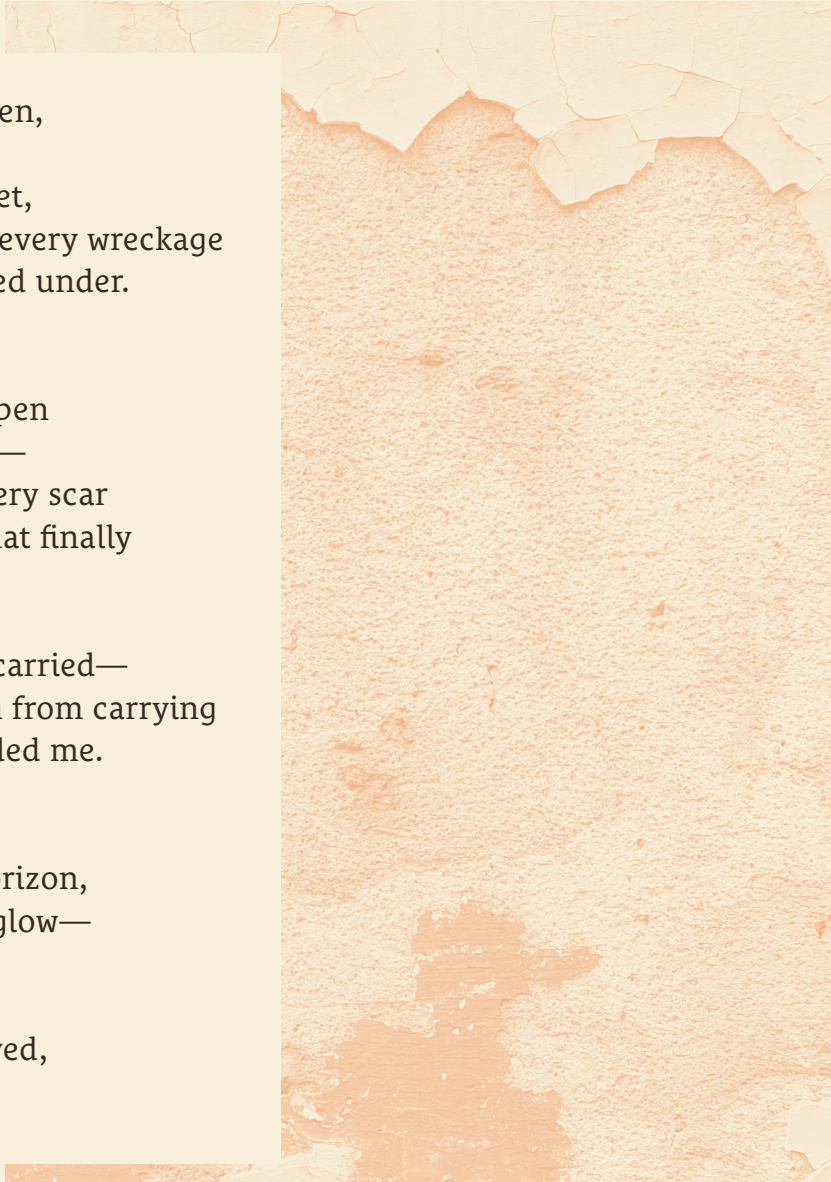
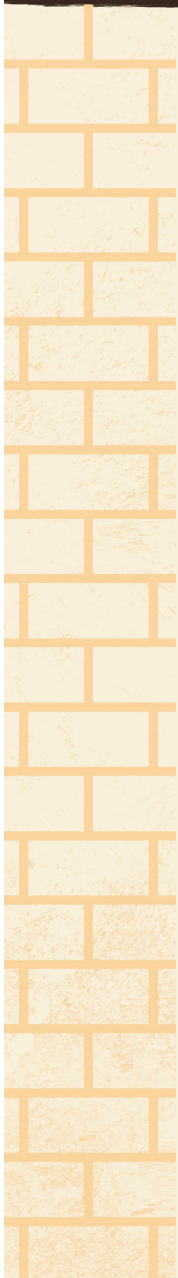
Once, I flickered.
But I learned to burn.

I am the coal that held its own spark,
the iron that stayed molten long enough
to become form instead of
heat learned into will,
will lifted into light.

Do not call me fragile.
I have outlived every night
that swore it would swallow.
I have stood—uninvited,
unrelenting—
a spine of flame against collapse.

My glow is not gentle.
It is bone-deep endurance—
a signal fire for whoever is still crawling
through their own unlit hours.





Even when I am unseen,
I am present—
pulse like, flaring quiet,
a steady yes beneath every wreckage
I refused to stay buried under.

I have been broken open
but not broken down—
I carry the map of every scar
like a constellation that finally
recognizes itself.

I am not the lantern carried—
I am the lantern born from carrying
what should have ended me.

And if someone,
far from their own horizon,
stumbles toward my glow—
let them.

Not because I was saved,
but because I stayed.

Mary Sanchez



Eloisa 1



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Leaves fall and cover the ground,
They make a cool crunching sound.
Red and yellow, brown and gold
Some are new, and some look odd.
I walk through piles and hear them crack,
I kick a few and don't look back.

The trees look bare, the sky feels gray-
I know that means fall is on its way.
The wind blows fast, then slows down low,
It moves the leaves where it wants them to go.

They dance around like they're alive,
Like little boats in a leafy tide.
The air smells sharp, like dirt and trees,
And kind of smoky, as a fire breeze.

Truth Will Free You



The Storm

I Feel the Storm Calling,

I feel the storm calling...

As if each crack of thunder, each streak of lightning, every drop of rain is searching for me

A tempest of movement, a storm of song stretched across the earth and just out of reach-

If only I could see it, I'm sure I heard its call, but my senses break bitterly in my moment of
need

My eyes snapped shut, my mouth seals suddenly, as my nostrils go numb,

I've lost myself but I can still hear, I've lost myself but it has to be here

I've lost myself, without my senses-I must find the storm.

I hear the tempest call

I hear the desperate pain of the falling rain,

I hear it strike in anger with bolts shot from cavernous clouds

I feel the shaking shame of thunder tamed begging for my call-

I feel trapped within the eye of it, trapped within the heart of it, blind and barren my mind
stolen away.

Jack McHatton

As I began to scream, breaking away the seal on my cracked lips so that they may cry out
I begin to breath so violently, so desperately, that my nose bled and broke to smell-
Clawing at my hand, tearing at my wrists, so that I may feel the rain
But all I felt was pain.
I begin to cry but had no tears left, with nothing but my fears my eyes were dry
Why couldn't I feel the storm
My strength was failing me, and the ache in my chest weighed me down upon the ground like
an anchor bound to my back-
I hear the storm calling, I know it must be here
I hear the storm falling, I know it must be near.
Maybe that's all I need
My ears can heed its ancient call,
Maybe that's enough
I let the anchor take me to the ground and focused on the sound of the storm unchecked
unmeasured yet found-
I listened closely to the drum of thunder, the tapping of rain, and the song of the weary wings of



the wind-

And there it was,

It was all around me

Waiting for me to notice,

I had found the storm.

I felt cold and quite uncomfortable, feeling a tapping upon my brow

So I wiped my face of falling rain

I wiped my face of blood and tears,

I wiped my face coated in cold fears

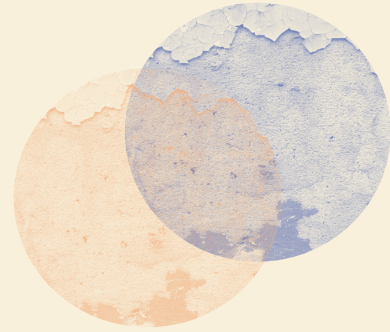
I wiped my face with thunderous rain.

For a moment I felt brand new, I felt a peace like no other-

But storms are bittersweet

For peace gained through falling rain,

Never seems to last



Mickey Lusk

**Invocation for Sore Eyes
on the Plains of San Augustin**



 LG K8 2017 

WARNING! Themes of grooming, eating disorders, and suicide!

Congratulations!

You've finally reached the age of getting your first real phone-
This device comes packed with knowledge, games, and the internet
Included in your first real phone is Subway Surfers, Instagram, and a man twice your age.
Your friends will all be jealous of your bright pink case
Your teacher will not be pleased her star student is distracted in class
Your mom and dad will be happy you can reach them safely
Your favorite influencer will tell you to skip meals.
Your first real phone is the perfect way to connect to people just like you!
Join a Discord server filled with kids who enjoy Minecraft
Participate in a TikTok trend and earn hundreds of views
Log onto Twitter to learn exactly how to make a noose.
Your first real phone is your transition into adulthood
It is the perfect way to prove to everyone you are mature
The proof comes from the comments on your posts
When you receive the attention from a popular streamer.
Your first real phone will introduce you to a whole new world!
Search up fun games to play with your friends during a sleepover
Watch how your favorite movie was animated
Find out eating cotton makes you feel full.
As a fully grown woman with her first real phone you must expect pushback
Be prepared to throw up after every meal
Never come forward about the creep in your dm's
And remember, the internet hates victims who are still alive.

Enjoy your first and last real phone!

Overcoming Shame

From a young age, I learned that school wasn't just a place to learn; it was also a place for me to prove myself. I grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and attended Kit Carson Elementary School. My parents both immigrated from Mexico to the United States and only completed middle school, so they always stressed the importance of education over everything else. Therefore, my academic success was far more than just grades. It was also how I gained my parents' and teachers' respect. I raised my hand in response to every question, read more than was required, and intentionally went after every sticker and gold star. Even though my parents weren't always able to fully understand the work I was doing, their support meant the world to me. However, despite all that gratification, by the fifth grade, I started to recognize that there were parts of myself that I was ashamed of and wanted to hide, even at school, the one place where I should feel comfortable.

The things I kept quiet about always seemed to stem from home. My culture was present in every room of our house. In the smell of food coming from the stove, the background of Novelas, the Spanish music blaring from the radio, even the questions my mom asked me about my homework that I couldn't fully explain to her. I became good at answering in English even when I understood her perfectly in Spanish.

Shamefully, I felt annoyed by my mother at times. At parent-teacher conferences, I sat in the middle of plastic chairs, doing my best to translate while my mom smiled and nodded, even when she didn't understand. The teachers said not much more than "muy bueno!" to



her, but the pride on her face was so bright, I almost forgot how much I feared and dreaded those days. At school, no one made fun of me directly, but I could feel the difference.

I felt it one afternoon in the elementary school cafeteria. A group of kids, who I thought were cool and desperately wanted to impress, leaned over the table, giggling and talking about how gross beans were, how they make you fart, and how they look disgusting. They pulled out juice boxes and Lunchables, quoting jokes from shows I'd never seen and talking about the new Nintendo DS games and Xbox that they just got. They knew words I didn't, laughed at things I didn't understand, and always seemed to have the newest thing. I laughed with them and agreed, even though I knew a pot of beans waited for me at home every day. I loved beans, but at that moment, I murmured my agreement and felt my cheeks flush with embarrassment because I knew it was a lie. I wanted the packaged snacks my classmates pulled from their lunch boxes: crackers with cheese, juice boxes, and peanut butter sandwiches. Not the meals I brought from home; my meals had a scent, not a bad one, just something that couldn't be ignored.

The last real memory I have from elementary school is the fifth-grade spelling bee. My teachers chose me, along with about twenty classmates, to represent our grade. The first round, on a hot Thursday morning, was the English one. It was held in the main gym. Four of us walked through the giant, heavy, green double doors. The gym smelled like floor polish and sweat. Up front was a tall table with a thin cloth tossed over it, trying to pass as a podium. It was simple, but to my ten-year-old eyes, it seemed serious. Rows of metal folding chairs waited,

Daniella Magallanes

cold and stiff, with our names taped to each seat in alphabetical order.

The teacher called us up one by one. We spelled words, asked for definitions, and used them in sentences. My palms were sweaty. I bounced my knee and wiped my hands on my pants. Winning was important to me. My classmates began spelling words incorrectly and were sent back to class one by one. Eventually, only I and a few teachers remained. The room was silent except for a few claps. I smiled, but I felt a little shaky. Still, I felt proud. I won! I did that!

The following day was the Spanish spelling bee. Same gymnasium. The same creaky doors. Same stiff chairs. Walking in, I felt the same nerves and excitement. I was confident I would win again, but that morning, they had announced my win over the intercom to the entire school. Suddenly, the thought occurred to me: if I won the Spanish spelling bee too, I'd be "that girl," the super Mexican one everyone noticed. I didn't want the attention, the stares, the whispers. It wasn't something I planned. When my name was called to the podium, my mind blanked for a second. Then, just like that, I spelled it wrong: "b-e-n-t-a-n-a, bentana." The silence hit me first, and I looked down, hiding the feelings of shame and relief I felt at the same time.

In the days after the spelling bee, that feeling of relief started to fade. My mind kept replaying how I stood there and spelled the word wrong on purpose. I told myself it wasn't a big deal, but the truth is, it was. I sat with the guilt, and then came the memories. I kept thinking about that day at recess, a few of my classmates lined up against the wall, kids laughing and talking like normal. A boy looked at me, then at another girl, and casually said she was prettier. Like it was just a

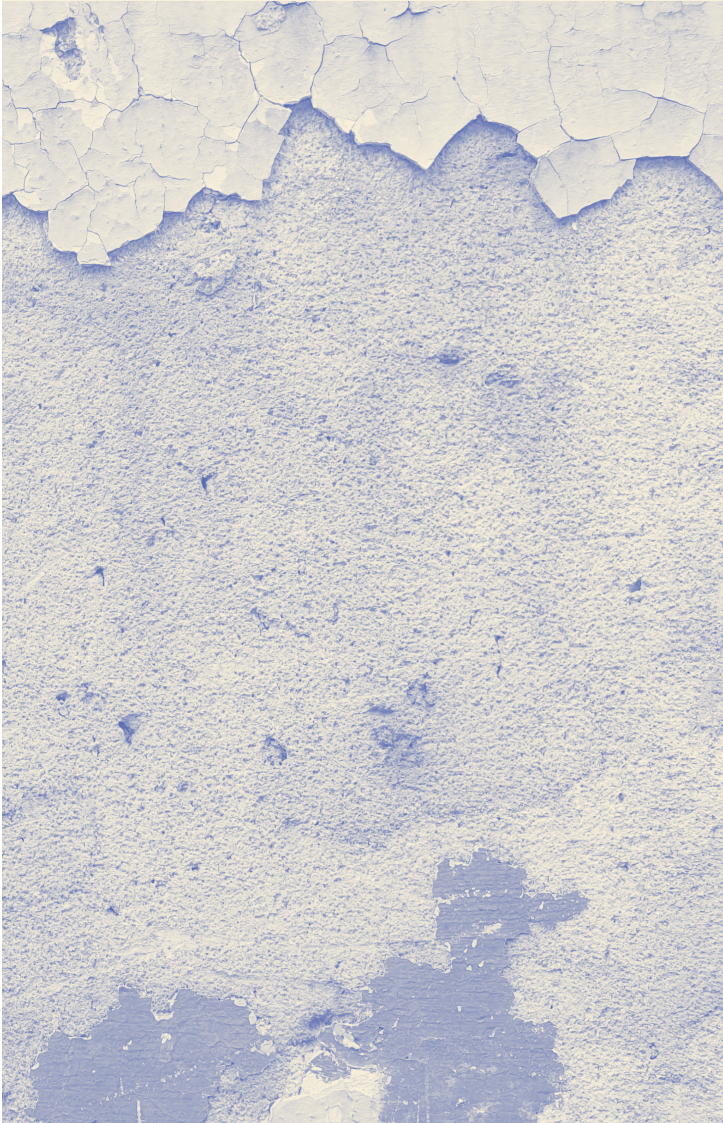
fact. Most of the girls in my class had smooth, light brown or blonde hair that lay flat and shiny. They always wore matching outfits. Their shoes were clean, and there I was in the same hoodie, with hair that puffed out regardless of what I did, and arms that I began hiding without thinking. I didn't say it aloud, but somewhere in my mind, I began connecting the dots. Perhaps I looked this way because I am Mexican. Maybe this is why I didn't fit.

Moments like standing frozen at the podium, spelling "bentana," or standing at recess hearing I wasn't the pretty one left me completely defeated and ashamed of myself. But their judgments were never about how I looked or the traits I carried that set me apart, specifically. They singled me out because I was different. When I think back upon that spelling bee these days, being different has a whole new meaning to me now. My uniqueness is something I've learned to value. I love the smell of beans and fresh tortillas in the kitchen, with Spanish music playing loudly as I cook. Spending afternoons like this, laughing with my mom and watching silly telenovelas, has become one of my favorite moments. My friends tease me, saying that I'm like a Mexican grandma in the ways that I cook and take care of the people around me. I'm not doing these things because I must. I do them because I love them, and when I feel that old tug of shame, I take a deep breath, and I tell myself being different isn't a problem to me anymore.

The Garden I Grew From



For I Am But a Cloud



For I am but a cloud
Sailing calmly in the breeze,
Though the wind may not care
For the marvel it frees.

For today you shall find
A new painting in the sky,
But by sunset, I'll pass
With one last bid goodbye.

If there's one thing to leave:
Find the beauty in all.
For I am a mere cloud,
And my time will be small.

Contributor Bios

Dane Corbin: Having been raised in a strict fundamentalist Christian sect, Corbin's work explores religious doctrines and their effect on Western culture.

Based on two Georgian fashion trends—watch fobs and chatelaines (indicators of wealth and status), and lover's eye jewelry (symbols of private relationships during a time of rigid social codes which heavily restricted public interactions between different sexes and classes)—this piece is a commentary on Christianity as a method of social control of sexuality and queerness. "I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and make thee a spectacle." Nahum 3:6

Lover's Eye Chatelaine, p.36

Jessica Diaz is a Navy veteran and writer whose work explores resilience, memory, and the weight of lived experience.

Self-Portrait as a Guiding Light, p.48

Jules Flores is a surreal and fantasy mixed-media artist who works primarily in acrylics, gouache, printmaking, ceramics and other craft materials. Her artistic style reflects her imaginative childhood and is inspired by the work of John Tenniel, Yoshitaka Amano, Arthur Rackham, and Maurice Sendak.

Happy Hatch-oween, p.17

Alicia Franklin Garcia: This story is inspired by a common theme of grief dreams, I hope others can find solace in it as I did when I wrote it. and I hope you enjoy my work.

Morning Walk, p.3

Lydia Gachupin: The LG K8 2017 was my personal first "real" phone. One I wish I hadn't gotten so early. To be black is to know the dangers of false equality: Our bodies may never be found, and our stories may never be told.

LG K8 2017, p.57, Fool, p.34

Contributor Bios

Pilar Tellez Giron: Pilar is a student who enjoy writing poetry that reflects on personal growth, nature, and human emotions. Through writing she explores how everyday experiences can inspire reflection and change.

Leaves, p.51

Rise Griffin: My name is Vashad Frink, also known as Rise Griffin. I'm an author, poet, motivational speaker and disability rights activist.

Slow & Steady, p.18

Ben Hall: I was inspired to write this piece about the Bosque here in Albuquerque after my many walks along its trails. It is a profoundly beautiful place and one of my favorite parts of living in Albuquerque.

The Heart of Albuquerque, p.25

Mickey Lusk is a painter and experimental harpist working with ideas of decay, finding consolation in the inevitable movement towards chaos. This piece in particular reflects upon the plains and the feelings of detachment spurred around the Very Large Array, the blinding vastness of the landscape and of human impact.

Invocation for Sore Eyes on the Plains of Saint Augustín, p.56

My name is **Stephen Landis**, a published author and poet from Albuquerque, NM.

For I am But a Cloud, p.63

Santiago Lozoya: Subhumans Rats Jacket is a piece of wearable art, combining acrylic paint, brass studs, and leather naturally distressed over time into an expression of the DIY ethos of the anarcho-punk subculture.

Subhumans Rats Jacket, p.5

Siv Limary: The golden light of spring awakens truth and authenticity. Light is my inspiration.

Truth Will Free You, p.52

Contributor Bios

Annie Mitchem is a Visual Artist located in Albuquerque, NM, creating work with an emphasis on Black culture, color, portraiture and Afro-surrealism.

Interview with a Vampire, p.35

Daniella Magallanes: I am a first-generation college student about to finish my first year at Central New Mexico Community College. I'm majoring in AEC Technology. Construction and Engineering are one of my special interests, but I found a lot of self-reflection and self-love in my English 1101 class my first semester at CNM. I'm excited for you to read my creative non-fiction piece about growing up as a child of immigrant parents.

Overcoming Shame, p.58

Jack McHatton: Poetry is the essence of all the noise around us. I am grateful to write, and I hope you enjoy my work.

The Storm, p.53

I'm **Neisha Nichogi**, a 47-year-old visual artist from Albuquerque, New Mexico. I'm studying Fine Art at CNM and I love painting. My Personality Mask shows my interest in color, shape, and who I am, using simple painting methods with layered texture to show how memory makes identity. Outside the studio, I'm a caregiver and homeschool my 12-year-old son, balancing family life with art.

My Personality Mask, p.47

Isabella Sisneros is currently a senior at the Public Academy for Performing Arts and dual-credit CNM student. Her piece, A Toddlers Guide To Life, was inspired by her journey and experiences with adulthood.

Toddler's Guide to Life, p.12

Kevin M Sheetz: Kevin M Sheetz was born in Chicago and has lived in New Mexico for most of the last fifteen years. He has self-published several books and is currently on the Board of Directors of the Albuquerque Zen Center.

Todo de Nuevo, p.44

Contributor Bios

Mary Sanchez is an oil painter born and raised in Albuquerque, NM, who lives and works in Corrales, NM. She documents her life through portrait and landscape and is influenced by the shapes and colors of the southwest. Mary is currently attending Central New Mexico Community College to complete her Associate's in Fine art Studio. She is planning to continue her art education and will eventually transfer to the Art program at the University of New Mexico.

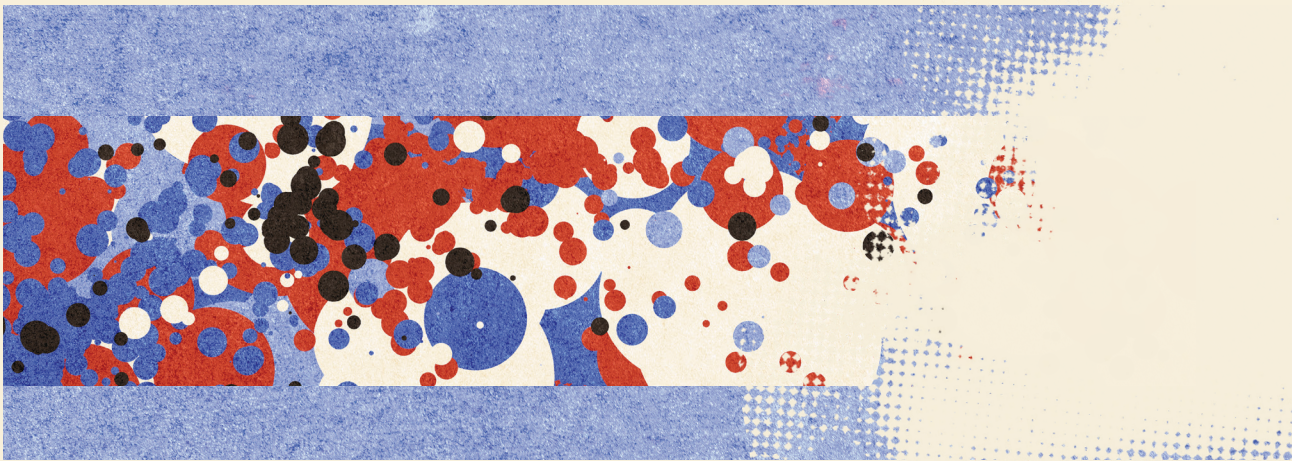
Eloisa 1, p.50

Ashlynn Joelene Trujillo was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where her love for reading and storytelling inspired her journey as a writer. Known for her outgoing personality, she brings audacious energy, creativity, and a unique voice to everything she creates.

Groupies: Born To The Music With Glitter in Their Hair, Leo Longform

Brittany Weber: When I was writing this poem, I honestly just let my mind flow through the emotions I was processing at the time. This was a manifestation of my inward-self coming to terms with being queer.

A Daughter Blooming: A Letter to Mom, p.46



35th Anniversary Tribute



35th Anniversary Tribute



Leonardo 2026

Afterword

This Spring 2026 semester, Leonardo met its third General Honors class of student editors, a new team of five. Leonardo, an undergraduate student literary magazine, is more than a singular opportunity for students enrolled in the General Honors class to create a professionally produced publication. As Leonardo invites all CNM students to submit their creative work for consideration, it also offers them a supplemental learning opportunity to practice and engage in their craft and a chance to reach an audience beyond their classrooms.

Beginning with a comprehensive review of peer institution literary magazines, including last year's edition of Leonardo, this year's student editor team built on the changes and successes initiated by last year's team. They moved from 70 to 80 pages; in addition to using Adobe InDesign for graphic design layout, they used Procreate for digital illustration and GIMP, a free, open-source raster graphics editor; size moved from a standard 8.5"x11" rectangle to a perfect 8"x8" square; the call for submissions grew to include a culinary arts category, and it broke its own record by having received 162 submissions, up from last year's 137.

Like last year, we created a criteria-based rubric reflective of the course learning outcomes, focusing on resonance, voice, artisanship, and diversity. Student editors used this rubric to engage in a democratic selection process, using rank choice voting, resulting in 44 individual pieces chosen for print publication, two additional longform pieces chosen for online publication at leonardomag.com, and 17 pieces receiving honorable mentions.

Through collaborative processes, the team coalesced around an "Overgrown Urban" design theme and agreed to continue Leonardo's accessibility by selecting dyslexia-friendly fonts and including audio recordings of pieces if the writer consented to such. We aim to continue to improve in this area next year, too.

It's with great pride that I sign off on Leonardo 2026, an edition that truly represents the wider CNM community. Thank you, student editors, for centering the community part of our college's name, and thank you, readers; this edition of Leonardo is for you. - Jessica Mills

Special Thanks

Executive Council of Students (ECOS)

Adrienne Gonzales, College of Liberal Arts Associate Dean

Chris Prentice, CNM General Honors

Rebecca Aronson and Sandra Rourke, Visiting Writer Committee

Prytania Jobs, Director ITS CSS

Tiffany Tomchak and Marley Jameson-Sisneros, CNM Libraries

Kristin Gonzales, CNM Academic Affairs Specialist, Liberal Arts

CNM faculty who welcomed our Call for Submissions classroom visits

Main and Montoya campus TLCc Computer Help tutors

CNM Marketing and Communications Office (MCO)

Matthew Cuneo and Starline Printing

Amaris Ketcham, faculty advisor for UNM's Scribendi

Honorable Mentions

Longform Fiction

- “White Noise” - Jessica Diaz
- “The Grinning Shape” - Alina Promise
- “Watchers in the Fog” - Joseph Treen

Fiction

- “Dreamland” - Winter Tolson
- “Primetime” - Brandon Stivers

Creative Non-Fiction

- “Tomatoes and Avocados” - Pilar Tellez Giron
- “I Grew Up Where She Fell Apart” - Aliyah Montano

Poetry

- “Goodnight my Beloved” - Brenda Hollingsworth-Marley
- “Fractured” - Jessica Diaz
- “Sin Titulo” - Kevin Sheetz
- “Self-Destruction” - N. Page
- “Pain Speaks in Silence” - Brittany Weber

Art

- “Perseverance” - Zachary John
- “Ascensolation 6” - Winter Tolson
- “Orchard” - Mickey Lusk
- “Jewel, A Small Metal” - Neisha Nichogi
- “SK8 Daze” - Samantha Hanes

*Find honorable mentions
here!*



Leonardo Editorial Staff

Faculty Advisor



Jessica Mills

Social Media Manager



Emma Bizzell

Section Editor



Grace Bradley

Managing Editor



Esperita Lopez

Digital Editor



Kendra Marshall

Webmaster




Fritz Shaw

2026 Mascot



Yoshi

Photos by Emma Bizzell



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
Leonardo 2027
Open April 10, 2026 - February 11, 2027

All CNM students enrolled during Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2026, as well as Spring 2027 semesters, are eligible to submit works of art, poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, music, multimedia, architecture, cosmetology, and culinary arts.

**For full submission details, please visit:
leonardomag.com**

**Questions? Email:
Leonardo@cnm.edu**

Leonardo thanks all students who submitted to the 2026 edition and the faculty who encouraged them to do so. With record-breaking submission counts, we had the privilege of reading, reviewing, selecting, and editing a full body of work that truly exemplifies our broader CNM community. We at Leonardo hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as we enjoyed publishing it.

**Never stop creating!
Your Art Matters!**