Poetry

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*Editor's Picks All submissions are original unedited works.
When provided by the author, a short biography is displayed at the end.
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Essays and Short Stories

Geography (Legan)
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My Hispanic Experience (Titus)
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Parable (Aragon)
Tall Grass, Farmhouse (Laws)

Contact Us!

hispanicexperience@csupueblo.edu
BILLY'S LETTER TO LEW

Lincoln County/ Thursday 20th 1879

General Lew Wallace:

Sir I will keep the appointment I made
but be sure and have men come that you
can depend on. I am not afraid to die
like a man fighting but I would not
like to be killed like a dog unarmed.

...It's not my place to advise you, but
I am anxious...and perhaps know how
men hide from Soldiers better than you.
Please excuse me for having so much
to say and I will remain -

Yours Truly,
W.H. Bonney

I adjourn to the bar at La Fonda
where the bartender asks, "Iced tea?"
not Dos Equis at 2:15, after the cathedral
tolls the quarter hour. Close to Indian Market,
I take the last seat when other afternoons
I'd fill the second stool.

Billy’s letter to Lew, on wall of museum,
forces a break, knowing I have more notes
than I'll ever use. Last night’s The Letter,
opera from a Somerset Maugham novella
made into movie for Bette Davis,
was hard to hear, rewriting in my head
the English libretto as I listened
to give rhythm to the words.

But what has me sitting at the copper bar
of La Fonda is how literate the Kid's reply
to Wallace's offer of clemency is, more
literate than Lew's letter to him, also on
the museum wall; and Lew wrote Ben Hur.
And in all I've heard and all I've read,
I never knew the Kid was a writer,
outlaw since early teens, long since
gone to any school.
Kyle Laws’ poems, stories, and essays have appeared in magazines for twenty-five years, with three nominations for a Pushcart Prize. *Poetry Motel’s* Suburban Wilderness Press published a chapbook *Apricot Wounds Straddling the Sky*; and Kings Estate Press put out a collection titled *Tango*. Broadsides and other limited editions include *Yellow Woman* (Look Quick), *Starlings* (Speakeasy), and *Kyle’s Clam Chowder* (Alpha Beat Press). Her work has appeared in anthologies about the Jersey shore, Western plains, and Florida; and on subjects from prose poetry to beauty. She edited the 2008 volume *From the Garret on Grand: On Miss Lonelyhearts and the Virgin of Guadalupe*, and the 2009 volume *Midnight Train to Dodge*. Lummox Press is bringing out a full-length poetry collection titled *Wildwood* in 2011.
¡Cállate! / Shut Up!

¡Cállate Y Ponte a Trabajar!
Decía Papá—
¡Necesitamos el dinero!

Be Quiet! SPEAK ENGLISH!
Decía la Maestra—
You need to Better yourselves!

SHUT UP AND GIVE ME 50!
My sergeant would shout—
We have a mission to do!

Háblame, dígame su Historia,
we are here to learn from each other

......It’s okay to talk!

por Herio

---

I am Herio Rosales-Llamas; I am a sophomore at CSU-Pueblo. I am a nontraditional student studying Spanish, Art and Chicano Studies. I bring with me my experience as an immigrant, child laborer, ESL student, military veteran and now as a university student. I was born in México, immigrated to Washington State at age five, joined the military after completing high school and now enjoy living in Pueblo, Colorado. This poem ties in all my experiences while hinting at my struggles.
CIRCULAR BENCH HUMMING WITH THIGHS
AS FLUTE PLAYER SINGS

this rocking back and forth
this motion of mother to child
this breath
this pushing
this birth
a lunge of spear
this tearing of flesh
this rock  this rocking
this stone  this stoning
this rising of earth
this laying of hands in river
this washing of clay
this bending back
this coiling
this circle of breath
this rising into a building of stone

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**Conquest**

When I tell this
You will have the feeling
Of being separated from your-self.

Of inside coming away from out,
Of your lightest part being caught
And blown off by the breath of doubt.

You will see that your mother
Was also the thresher's grain,
And fell the blood of strangers
Being washed inside your veins.

Hearing this
You will want to remember
What your heart, skin and eyes
Gave away but never said;
That the mingling of conquest
Is not yet dead,

And
That the singing of your distant grandfather
Is in a language
You do not understand.

~Melissa Kelley

melissa.kelley@colostate-pueblo.edu
My Bio:
Born in Pueblo, Colorado but grew up in Westminster, Colorado. Graduated from Metropolitan State College of Denver with a B.A. in Physical Anthropology, minor in English Literature. Worked as an archaeologist for the Forest Service in Utah and as an Education/Curatorial Assistant at Rosemount Museum in Pueblo before staying at home for several years after the birth of my son Garrett and daughter Juliana. Returned to work at CSU-Pueblo as an Administrative Assistant in Admissions & Records. Currently taking leveling classes to prepare to apply to the M.A. Program in English next Spring. Maternal grandparents from New Mexico (grandmother) and Mapimi, Durango, Mexico (grandfather) and raised in a loving, wonderfully bilingual home full of the smell of chiles and frijoles. ☺
COYOTE FENCE

How do I tell you about
the fence out the window,
snow draped like taffeta
or satin of a woman's gown
clinging to dark brown shoes,
how I try to put it on paper
with sepia & burnt sienna,
how all the buildings are
a dusty peach that run into
the coyote, softer & easier
to touch than his feral skin,
how the planks have knots,
and eyes and noses, but
no mouths to bark at
the frozen rain.

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¿Cuántas Manzanas?

¿Cuántas Manzanas por un vin?

One Manzana

Two Manzanas

Three Manzanas

Four...

Hay! A’pa’

It's way too hot to pick one more— I want to go play!

por Herio

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Dance to Death

When I’m alone with my chai tea con leche, I tear it up. Doña Sebatiana will transport me
in her carreta de la muerta to the dark world. Dios, let me dance my way out. Dance to death! If
laughter is the best medicine, dancing is the cure.

El hombre de las películas

soy el pájaro de la muerte,
el fuego negro de la oscuridad.

a la largo la frontera
las mujeres llaman mi nombre.

dicen: es el gringo muerto,
andaba por el río bravo.

es la maquiladora de Hollywood,
su dinero queremos quemar.

Una biografía corta:

David Lee Wright es un poeta con demasiados nombres contar. Esto es su primer poema escrito en español.
El Joventud

Qué se puede decir
Cuando el cuarto es llena
Llena con el corazón de una madre
Su vida, cambiado por todo tiempo
No hay palabras que se puede tocar
Como las olas del mar
Un mar de tristeza.
Fotos, candelas, lagrimas
Pero ahora, no recordamos los tiempos tristes
El mundo no puede ser tuyo
Entonces, lo tomaremos
Para ti
Siempre en los corazones de ellos que ti conocían.
El mundo de la guerra
Por mi amigo Chance

afuera, no hay palabras:
y trabajo bajo tierra
como cascote,
dónde cambio la suciedad
en la sangre de los libros.

afuera, no existe dado:
no estoy seguro cómo
recomendar los ojos a la divisoria,
ni pastiche a las pantallas,
porque afuera, no hay los idiomas.

sólo sus piernas y sus brazos,
sólo la garra y la ala de las noticias,
y sus orejas, sus manos roto,
no se han olvidado
la guerra afuera.

Una biografía corta:

David Lee Wright es un poeta con demasiados nombres contar. Vive en el pueblo con su hermoso novia, y un gato llamó Sita.
Regreso a la madre tierra

I walk into the church... el niño dios me esta mirando

Padre nuestro que estas en el cielo....

I feel the foreign eyes seeing through my skin... ellos saben que estoy diferente

Santificado sea tu nombre ruega por nosotros tu reino......

I kneel for the alter... oigo los monjas resando con fureza que viene de su fe....

Hagase tu voluntad.....

I try and find an ounce of confort in this temple of my people...pero estoy frio

Así en la tierra como en el cielo.....

I don't think i can fit in.... Siempre voy a ser un gringo

Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día...

I sit in silence as the other follow in prayer.... Ellos saben que no se que hacer

Perdona nuestras ofensas como también nosotros perdonamos......

The father prays and we get ready to leave..... vamos a la tierra de mis padres

a los que nos ofenden no nos dejes caer en tentación ......

I land ill never fit into.....yo soy Americano para siempre

y líbranos del mal...Amen

-- Gustavo Endara
Honduras

Home for the poor
How weak is your door
Rotten and wore
I see an eyesore

The things that you lack
Are traded for black
So dark is your black
I'll never come back

Home for the poor
You have a decor
It's mainly a bore
But it's still a decor

The things that you lack
Oh the things that you lack
Are modest in fact
Since your family is back

Gary Marple

I am a senior at Colorado State University - Pueblo. I'm majoring in math and physics with minors in business administration, chemistry, and Spanish. Last summer, I spent a week in Honduras in order to help out at one of the medical brigades. At the site, we cleaned teeth and removed lice from kids' hair. We also had the opportunity to meet a family that lived in this tiny little "house." The house had a dirt floor and was about 10'x10'. In order to help these people, we poured them a concrete floor so that the inside of their house wouldn't get muddy when it rains. Their house was the inspiration for my poem.
I am a white woman, born into poverty.
As a child it mattered not, not of things or lack thereof,
But of happiness, playfulness, a pure joy of friendship.
I lived in the ghetto, grew up around gangs, and the gangs were my friends.
I went from Kindergarten to Graduation with these friends.
My house was never tagged, my windows never broken,
Because I am Julia, a mere white woman who grew up in poverty.

I am cliché, my father left, he has since died,
My mother is poor,
With only a high school diploma holding our small family above starvation.
My brother was constantly in trouble, with my mother,
And sometimes with the law.
I tried in hard in school,
Society promised an exchange, good grades for a better life.
What I did not know was that Because I am a white woman,
Society would not help me, regardless of my poverty.

I tried to ignore the discrimination.
All around me, my gang friends received federal funds,
State funds, Local funds,
Help from my schools, easier classes because English is not
The Language of choice.
Every standardize test demanded that I bubble in my ethnicity.
White.
Caucasian.
I bubbled in my skin color, again and again.
Never once did I bubble in my ethnicity of
Indian, Polish, Ukrainian, English, or Irish.
And because I followed protocol, they graded my tests harder,
My schools funding was easier to obtain if I was a different color.
But I am a white woman, born into privilege simply because I am white.

I endured the whistles of the Mexican workers, while walking home from school.
Just like every other impoverished girl, regardless of “privileged” skin color.
It was just something you ignored, as you hoped they didn’t follow you home.
The white men and women, looked through their noses,
At the men who worked 16 hours a day,
Who lived at below the state minimum living wage.
I hated these people, so condescending and arrogant,
How dare they be so haughty at people, who try so hard;
Even if I had to worry about my safety with these scary and strong men.
I hated those white people.
But I am a white woman, born into poverty, so I am ostracized from my “people”;
The people of the same skin, the same family history.
My culture, as it is claimed to be.
But I was born into the ghetto, and therefore apart of the second class. 
But I was never apart of my friends life, like the people of the same skin were. 
I was never invited to the family reunions, and Mexican holidays.

I am a white woman, and have felt the pain of racism. 
I have been called Cracker, even though my family has never lived in the south, 
Controlling southern Slavery. 
I have been called Puta and Perra, 
Because I am a white woman who befriended the Mexican Gangsters. 
But I am a white woman, so therefore am privileged, 
And so society claims that racism and ugly bigotry do not affect me. 
I am not entitled to white privilege, nor to the Mexican culture, 
I am simply a white woman born in poverty, 
And society wishes that I become 
A white woman who will die in poverty.

- Julia Brown
LA CONQUISTADORA ARRIVES NEW MEXICO, 1625

Our Lady of Peace, she is called in Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi. Tears flow across the aisle, periodic hand raising to brush them away. I feel relief, release, a faith residing in wonder. I light a votive for a lady wrapped in blanket, clothed in patterns before Cortez, a breast plate, and a crown, carrying a child gowned in white. Offering to a changing world.

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La Nieve

La nieve que cae lentamente
Cubriendo los árboles y la carretera
   El silencio y la belleza.
   Amo la nieve fácilmente
Latina

What does it mean to be Latina?
Is it your skin color?
Is it your culture?
Is it the way you were raised?
Being Latina is everything…
From the women that you are
To the way you express yourself
Being Latina is having pride of who you are and where you come from
Latina is a word to describe women of poise and purpose…
Women who are proud of their roots and showing it with pride.
What does it mean to be Latina?
It means being a strong, pride women.

My name is Clarivel Olague, double major at CSU-P in Social Work/Spanish with a minor in Chicano Studies. I was born in El Paso, Tx but raised in a small town called Ordway here in Colorado. I like to write on my spare time and being with family who I love very much. I live life to its fullest and I'm very proud to be a Latina.
Sparrow sent to smash my shameful head and heart — drink from me — your first taste of smack. Forgive me for being addicted to crack, for drinking to falling down — for being fifteen, scared; forgive me, ‘cuz it kind of hurts. Selfish vata wanting to have teenage fun, forgetting to sacrifice, living in the school bus, in the cold, cold cave, addicted to love; forgive me, ‘cuz it kind of hurts. Prayers could not change me — it took falling for you to keep me from drowning. Por las cochinadas dudas — these dirty doubts, unworthy of devotion.

SKY

Blue of pajamas of an old woman
that try to be baby blue as if
her body could go back
not just her mind

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The Día

Este es el principio de un nuevo día. He sido dado
este día usar como quiera.

Puedo perderlo, o lo uso. Puede hacer que este día
es un día largo para ser recordado por su alegría, su belleza
y sus logros, o puede estar llena de remordimientos. Lo que hago
ahora es importante porque estoy cambiando un día de mi vida
por él.

Cuando mañana llegue, este día habrá pasado
para siempre, pero mantendré algo con lo cuál he intercambiado
por él.

Puede ser no más que una memoria, pero si es
una que merece la pena, no me arrepentiré del precio.

Quiero que sea un beneficio no perdido, buen no mal,
éxito no fracaso.

Aubrielle Williams

Soy una tercera de Pre-Vet estudiante en Colorado State University-Pueblo. Juegaba para el
equipo de fútbol femenino durante 4 años. Estoy minucioso en español y química y
quiero ir a la escuela de veterinarios después de terminar mi grado.
Vengo de otro mundo.
Yo vengo de un mundo muy extraño,
Un mundo viejo,
Un mundo muy raro.

En mi mundo no había juguetes.
No existía la televisión
No teníamos ni videojuegos,
Construía mis propios juguetes.

Mi televisión era mi mente,
Mi parque era el bosque
Mi padre era mi sastre,
Mi madre mi enfermera.

Ahora estoy aquí
Y soy un extranjero
No estoy agusto
Porque soy de otro mundo.

My name is Edwin Nieto. I am currently a jr at CSU Pueblo where I am majoring in spanish and education. I am the son of immigrants from El Salvador who were escaping from the civil war. I grew up in Los Angeles California and atended school there until high school. I joined the Marines and retired in Colorado Springs in 2009. My goal is to gradúate with a masters in spanish and teach at the university level. I love Spanish and the spanish culture and want other people to experience the culture that I love.
What is a Chicano/a?

Me, you, him, her, them

What are you?

An immigrant in the struggle

A job taker

Are you a farm worker?

Are you educated, did you finish high school

Are you a Cholo, Chola?

What makes you, you

Do you know or have an idea who you are

Are you confused and abused

In a cross roads of identities

What are you?

An illegal alien

Or what some people call a Pocho

Are we in this together?

Where are you from

Here, there, every where

What do you call home?

The United States, Mexico, Central America?

Do you speak, read, and write fluent Spanish?
Who are you; what am I
I call myself a Chicano/a
What does that mean?
Are you an immigrant, Pocho, Americano, an activist?
No I am a person
With feelings and emotions
Yes I do use aqua net
Beans and rice is an essential item in my house hold
Typical stereotypes of a Mexican house hold
But that’s not a reason why I call myself a Chicano/a
Am a Chicano/a because I have power
My voice counts
What you think doesn’t phase me
I am a strong warrior of this place we like to call our home
Or our second home
Because when am here am from over there
And when am over there they say am from over here
But I am from here
The mother land we like to call Aztlan
Where the blood of my ancestors was shed
Where I; and my people are coming back to
We are not coming here illegally we are coming home
Want to know why; because it’s a place where I am from
Where you are from

A place to finally call home again

Mother, Father, Brother, Sister, Son, or Daughter

We call our self’s Chicanos not because they named us that

Because we took charge and being a Chicano/a is something we are proud of

Chicano/a power

It’s the identity we have searched for

We are all the same

Some speak Spanglish

Second, third, fourth generation

Some never left

We are the future

We are the foundation

We are Chicanos

My name is Nykol Jefferson and im a shopmore, my major is criminology/criminal justice. I took Chicano studies for a learning experience of my own. Im a proud Chicano and wanted to learn more about my culture as a whole. I learned so much and my Creative Writing peice is about what is a Chicano/a

Thanks, Nykol Jefferson
Who I am
I am the son of two immigrants
Two immigrants who are now American Citizens
I am the son of two proud and diligent Latinos
Who I am always proud to carry their blood
Who is always proud to carry their last name
I am
I am proud to be known as a Latino
The son of a Mexican mother
The son of a Peruvian father
And most of all as their son

Who am I
I am the first American born citizen in my family
To graduate High school
I am the first to go to the University
And I will be the first to graduate from a University in the United States

I am
I am proud to be known as a Latino
The son of a Mexican mother
The son of a Peruvian father
And most of all as their son

I am the prodigy of two diligent Latinos
I am a Latino
I am not a static
Or a generalization
I am a rebel
A rebel for Latinos
A rebel for the world to see
A rebel who has a mind of his own
A rebel that wants to prove the world wrong
That Latinos are not ignorant, bad, or criminals
I am a rebel who wants to be successful
A rebel who wants the world to see
Latinos are also able to accomplish a college career
A Latino who with unlimited freedoms that this country provides
Can help us demonstrate who we really are
Intelligent, diligent, wonderful and proud people

Who am I
I am a Latino
The son of a Mexican mother
The son of a Peruvian father
My name is Christopher Lazarte, I currently a freshman attending Colorado State University-Pueblo but will transfer for the spring term to California State University-Long Beach. I am originally from and graduated High school in California but choose to come to Colorado State University-Pueblo to be closer to my dad who currently lives and works in Denver, Colorado. I took Spanish 301 during the fall semester at CSU-Pueblo.
A Quiet Paradise

A sanctuary is defined as 1) safety or protection 2) a natural area where birds or animals are protected from hunters 3) a holy or sacred place, such as a church, temple, or mosque. Many people can say that they have one place or some things that they would call their sanctuary. For some, this sanctuary may be a memory. That is exactly what mine is, and it includes a few things that could also be considered a sanctuary: family, a location, and religion.

My sanctuary began freshman year of high school where I met a fellow named Oscar. He was a foreign exchange student from Ecuador that year. We became close friends and after two years I went to visit. Oscar’s family was at the airport to greet me. His mom, dad, and younger brother all made the two hour drive with him to get me. Later in the trip, I met his mom’s side of the family. We had dinner with them practically every weekend while I was there (two months). Nurhy, Oscar’s mom, had three brothers and one sister. I never met the sister. Two of her brothers lived in the grandparent’s home, with their wife and kids. I grew very close with this part of Oscar’s family. We traveled a lot for Oscar and his brother Xavier’s soccer games. In Quito, I met Oscar’s dad’s family. I met his parents, two sisters and their families, but did not get to meet his brother. Then in Guayaquil, I was able to see four generations when I met Nuhry’s grandma: Her grandma, mom, her, and Oscar. Each member of Oscar’s family, that I met, was wonderful. They took me in as if I was their own. They treated me with respect even though I didn’t speak their language, Spanish. Nurhy was the best. She was practically my mom. She took such care to make sure that I had fun and was safe. The food she prepared for me was normal, but I noticed that she gave me
extra care when we were at the beach and everyone else was eating some style of fish, but she made pork, mashed potatoes, and rice for me. The love she showed will always be remembered. Martin is a cousin of Oscar’s who was about three years old. He became my little buddy and we played games a lot. Each individual touched my life in a special way.

In order to meet the different members of the family, we had to travel, like I said for the soccer games and for fun as well. I arrived in Quito, by plane. The flight took about eight hours total, from Colorado Springs (with one stop in between). They lived in Ambato, which is a city in the mountains. I felt at home, because it was like I was in Colorado. These mountains however, were much greener than Colorado’s. Guayaquil was more of a coastal city, by a river, but it was extremely humid. Nurhy’s aunt was very excited about her air conditioning. There was a lady in Ambato who was excited about their dryer. Ecuador is a third world country, which was a huge culture shock for me. There were buildings half decayed on almost every block. Stray dogs were everywhere as well as young children working the streets for money. This was saddening, but the country was incredible. The drive from the mountains to the beach was gorgeous, at parts, there were random waterfalls coming out of the mountainside. Tungurahua is a volcano that was puffing smoke when I visited. The view from Oscar’s grandparent’s house was amazing. The weather was warm the whole time I was there, June and July. I was not able to see the jungle area, but with the threat of malaria I did not mind. The county was very diverse though, and extremely beautiful.

The final aspect of my sanctuary is the religion. Oscar’s family was predominately Catholic. The cathedrals were beautiful. The main one in Ambato was
white and at night it was lit with purple lights, glowing among the rest of the city and the cars passing by. I did not understand any of the services, but sometimes that happens even in English, or it did when I was younger. When we traveled to Quito, I met Oscar’s aunts who were Christian, which is what I am. I was thrilled because they were working on an AWANA song. AWANA is a church organization that is apparently all over the world. Children go to learn bible verses and play games in the gym. His aunts in Quito also spoke English, which calmed my nerves. I enjoyed seeing how the different branches of religion were portrayed in a different country.

My trip to Ecuador is hands down my sanctuary in the form of a memory. I love Oscar’s family, the beautiful country, and the comfort of religion. I have not had another experience quite like that one. It will always be remembered because of the special place it holds in my heart. I can always look back on the memory and think of the wonderful time I had, and all the new experiences I was blessed to encounter. The world is a mystery, I hope to discover it one country at a time with Ecuador forever in the back of my mind.

Short bio :) Oh goodness... Drew Legan, I'm 20 years old. I will be graduating in 2013 with a major in Spanish and a minor in Italian and French. I play defense for the women's soccer team, this being my first year. I love different cultures and languages. I hope to become a translator.

Drew Legan
HISPANOS EN CAÑON CITY

Si ustedes hablan con un norteamericano en Cañon City, les dirá que no hay hispanos en el pueblo, tal vez aceptará la existencia de un par de mejicanos y nada más. En cambio, si ustedes le preguntan a un latino, él o ella les hará un relato de los muchos hispanos de diferentes países que habitamos “La Ciudad del Cañón”.

Por ejemplo, un latino les contará de los colombianos que venden café en el “farmer’s market” todos los sábados durante el verano; o sobre los mejicanos dueños de los restaurantes “El Caporal” y “Toreros”; o los muchos otros mejicanos, como los que viven cerca de Florence, trabajan en la lechería y crían caballos de carrera.

También un hispano les dirá sobre la abuelita hondureña que ha vivido aquí más de 200 años y conoce o se inventa la historia personal de casi todo Cañón. Es posible que hasta les converse sobre la dominicana, a la que nadie le entiende ni una sola sílaba pero a la que todos quieren por alegre y generosa. Estoy segura que así mismo les platicará de la japonesa que en realidad no es japonesa sino colombiana, la que trabaja en “El Anex” y que cuando le mira a uno y se da cuenta que uno es tan latino como ella, pues se le quita lo “geisha” y te regala una sonrisa del tamaño de la luna.

Un latino les contará de la doctora argentina, una de las dos únicas pediatras que ejercen en el pueblo; o tal vez sobre los puertoriqueños, que cuando se encuentran de compras en Walmart la gente piensa que se están peleando, pero en realidad solo se hayan gozando del “shopping”. También, podría decirles de la ecuatoriana, muy conocida por arreglarle la computadora a todo el que se lo pida si a cambio le ayudan con esas exquisiteces domésticas a las que ella le tiene terror -limpiar, cocinar, lavar-.

Entonces, como habrán notado, los norteamericanos de Cañón City no se han dado cuenta de los muchos hispanos que con ellos co-existimos y co-habitamos; y el hecho de saber que ellos no saben, no nos da pena, nos da risa.

How Women Created Men Myth:

Dark-skinned women with amber eyes were the first. Las mujeres dreamt of men and built them out of clay and twigs, los hombres son bonitos smelled like earth. Los ellos resisted las mujeres’ chi-chis as long as they could, until por la noche, todo la gente tumbled into lust. Their body heat melted the rocks beneath them and turned flesh and bones into lava. The ground shook and rocked; large manzanas toppled from trees. The serpent was knocked senseless, while the women laughed until they peed.

In English:

An important Hispanic Experience of mine has been my time at CSU-Pueblo as a Spanish major with Spanish being my second language. I think it has given me a unique perspective on not only the language, but also the culture within the language. I have had to go outside of my element many times and prove that someone can speak Spanish who is not native and does not look like she could speak the language if taken at face value. In doing that, I think I have learned a great deal more about Spanish culture than anyone else who has not learned the language. I have learned that words have different meanings depending on the person and place you are speaking them. I have also learned that while it is a tremendous challenge to have a major in a second language, it is also one of the most rewarding. Not only have I expanded my vocabulary and knowledge of the language itself, I have learned about poetry and symbolism within Spanish scholarship. This increased amount of knowledge has inevitably helped my analytical skills in all of my other courses and not just those in Spanish. In all, my time at CSU-Pueblo as a Spanish major has increased my depth of knowledge and allowed me to experience the world around me from not only an English-speaking perspective, but a Spanish-speaking one as well.

En Español:

Una experiencia hispánica importante a mí he sido mi tiempo en la universidad de CSU-Pueblo con mi especialización de español que es mi segunda lengua. Pienso que ha dado me una perspectiva única en no sólo la lengua, pero también a cultura dentro de la lengua. He tenido que ir fuera de mi elemento muchas veces y probar que alguien sabe hablar español que no sea del país hispánico y no mira como ella podría hablar la lengua si estuvo tomada en el valor de cara. En hacer eso, pienso que he aprendido mucho más sobre cultura española que cualquier persona quién no ha aprendido la lengua. He aprendido que las palabras tienen varios significados dependiendo de la persona y el lugar en que los están hablando. También he aprendido que mientras que es un grande desafío para tener un especialización en una segunda lengua, pero también es una de la recompensa. No sólo he ampliado mi vocabulario y el conocimiento de la lengua sí mismo, he aprendido sobre poesía y simbolismo dentro de la lengua española. Esta cantidad creciente de conocimiento ha ayudado inevitable a mis habilidades analíticas en todos los mis otros cursos y no solo étos en español . En todos, mi tiempo en el CSU-Pueblo como especialización español ha aumentado mi profundidad del conocimiento y ha permitido que tengo la experiencia el mundo alrededor de mí no solamente de una perspectiva de habla inglesa, pero de habla hispana también.

To whom it may concern:

Attached is my entry for the Hispanic Cultural Experience Showcase. Also, below is my biography and name spelled out. Thank you!
Biography:
My name is Britney Titus and I am a 21 year-old Senior at Colorado State University-Pueblo who will be graduating in May with a degree in History and a degree in Spanish. I also have minors in Political Science and Education. Throughout my three years here at Pueblo, I have been actively involved in not only my academics, which I have an accumulative 3.5, but I have also been involved with both university and community organizations. I have served as Vice-President of the Political Science Club, Senator for the Associated Students’ Government, and also on other various campus organizations and committees as well as volunteered for a number of community events such as the TLC food drive and Rake-up Pueblo. Through these commitments, I have learned an incredible amount about the culture and community that surround our University. After graduation, I hope to begin law school in Fall of 2011 to pursue a career in either constitutional or criminal law.

Thank you,

Britney Titus
Vice-President Political Science Club
Colorado State University-Pueblo
email: bk.titus@colostate-pueblo.edu
My Homegirl Don’t Eat Pork

no chicharones, no manteca, no chile verde con marón, cochina…but she wants me to give her my recipes. I tell her, jita, real Mexicans don’t cook with olive oil, whole wheat, organic chicken! Pero, because I love the challenge, I drag out the tamale pan—you know the big ass one you have to store in the garage cuz’ it’s so frickin’ huge and your kitchen is so damn small, enit? I take my gringa loca, Candie, shopping. I pass by the pork for the pinche chicken and grow sad, lo siento. Then comes the choice, instant or old school masa harina, instant? You sure? I reach for the lard and Candie gives me the evil eye. So, I settle for shortening. Spice aisle, ah! Oregano, cumino, garlic, chile pequi!!!! And she says, “Not too hot or spicy.” And I’m like WTF! For reals?

I move onto the hojas and reminisce: mom and dad used to drive to Florence in their ’67 Chevy to visit their friend, Corn, to buy his hojas—he grew the best maize in the county. His husks had flavor! Simon! Mama’s tamales a two hundred year old recipe. Orale!

They’d slaughter a pig and make chicharones and lard from the drippings—grew their own chile, herbs and grind their corn into harina in the molcajete made of lava stone; they roasted that meat until it fell off the bone—la familia todo would shred the meat and spread the masa on the hojas. The kitchen aroma would knock you out; it was so spicy! Caliente! Neighbors would show up—relatives came out of the woodwork—outlaws came out of whatever whole they were hiding in—la musica would begin and before you knew it—you had una fiesta! The beer cans poppin’, tequila spillin’—everyone ate-drunk-sang-danced and praised the cooks! Everyone knew the tamales had lard and didn’t give a pinche chingon! “Organic” tamales taste like caca compared to the genuine thang’.

The next day we would scream for ice cream, steam came out our chulos, our heads were pounding from the tequila, the butt was on fire, and still…we had tamales and cervesas for breakfast. Ah, las nuevas tamaleras.
Diego Garcia

A week later, the Latin Locos boarded the cargo plane and were strapped in face-to-face with marines on leave. An officer came around and checked their straps and told them to put in their ear plugs. The engines began to whir and the man shouted over the roar,

“If we crash over water use your flotation device; if we crash over land, don’t worry about it.”

Everyone laughed. Lana’s stomach began to knot up and her feet began to itch.

The nine hour flight over the Indian Ocean took the Locos from the United Arab Emirates to Diego Garcia. They were strapped inside a huge cargo plane with their knees rubbing up against giant marines wearing shit-eating-grins. Yezzy flirted with every man on board. Luna’s eyes bulged and his face was sweating and his knees were twitching.

“Lana, do you think my guitars made it on board? I didn’t see them get loaded at Camp Doha.”

He began chewing his finger nails. Lana pointed to her ears that she couldn’t hear over the loud engines. She closed her eyes and braced herself for a rocky ride.

The plane landed safely; Lana unclenched her teeth, farted, and let out a sigh. She tried to walk; her legs wobbled. She prayed,

“Thank you, God, for getting us here safely and out of the friggin’ desert.”

Their arrival to Diego Garcia was greeted by men and women in civilian clothing holding mixed drinks with umbrellas:

“Hi I’m Sgt. Martinez, this is Captain Ramirez, Lt. Garcia, Capt. Sanchez, and Sgt. Medina, welcome to Diego Garcia, Camp Justice.”

The Locos performed every night for a week and every night afterwards went with their hosts to discos and beach parties. Luna and Lana drank iced tea and watched as Yezzy guzzled tequila shots and danced with Sgt. Martinez. On the fifth night the gang took them to the British Club, a bar open to civilians and military. When they arrived they were greeted by some Merchant Marines from the Philippines and several British officers. Marines, Navy, Air Force, Army, drank side by side with Brits, and Portuguese Sailors. Booze flowed like lava and the ocean waves pounded a rhythmic beat along with the jungle drums. One of the Portuguese sailors, at sea too long, took a fancy to Lana. His hair and beard were long brown masses of dreadlocks with strands of copper and red running through like ribbons. His clothes were clean but wrinkled and he smelled like motor oil. The Merchant Marines looked like drunken pirates, bottles of booze in their hands as they chased women down the beach.

Lana’s pirate was dancing with himself and zig-zagged towards her. He pounced like a dog in heat. “No gracias. No!” She politely refused his advances. Luna watched the scene unfold and
began to roll up his sleeves. Lana glanced over at Luna (the only sober man on the beach) and winked at him as she made the first move. As the pirate put his arm around her shoulders she gave him “the old one-two punch” straight to his gut. He doubled over in pain and fell down in the sand. Everyone laughed. Luna sat back down and smiled.

*The Locos were in Diego in October, the month with the heaviest precipitation of the year, annual rainfall is 102 inches and about 80 degrees every day. The breezes keep the humidity down, but the island is low and has no wind breaks. Tropical cyclones are frequent.*

Everyone danced and sang at the top of their lungs with the band, the rain began to fall, the wind began to blow, the waves of the Indian Ocean hit the beach and knocked over tables, chairs, sailors…the women’s sarongs sailed away and still they danced on. Shirts were blown off of the men and the rain poured from the sky in torrents, everyone danced on. Yezzy, Luna and Lana stared in disbelief at their hosts. They shielded their bodies behind the bandstand and held on for dear life. The party shut down when the electricity went out and the storm moved inland.

The morning came, the sun rose, and the rain dissipated. The Latin Locomotions walked together to the mess hall.

“Good morning, Pork Chop!” The cook flopped two pancakes on Lana’s plate.

“Good morning. How are you today?”

“Good, good. Have nice day, Pork Chop.”

Yezzy nudged Lana in the elbow. “The cook has a mad crush on you, Lana.”

“He’s calling me a pork chop.” Lana gave Yezzy a push towards their table.

“No, he’s calling you a pocha. He’s teasing you because you don’t speak Spanish.”

“Ohhhhhh! I get it.”

The three Chicanos ate in silence and smiled at the cook and the other locals who worked in the mess hall.

Lana whispered to Luna, “What language do they speak here? They look like Philipinos.” She looked up as Sgt. Martinez entered the hall and sat down with the Locos.

“Actually they’re called, Chagossians or Ilois or Chagos Islanders. They’re Creole-speaking people, mostly from Africa, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Somalia, but there are a few of South Indian descent too. They were brought here as slaves by the French in 1776; some came as coconut plantation workers during the 19th century. In the sixties, the Acquisition of Land for Public Purposes enabled the Brits to acquire any land they liked for the UK Government. The Indigenous people were forcibly removed by the British government so that the island could be used as an American airbase.”
“You’re a walking encyclopedia.” Yezzy smiled at her friends.

“Actually, it’s all right here in this brochure. How’s breakfast?” Sgt. Martinez shook Luna’s hand.

“Great. So how did it become a U.S. military base ruled by the United Kingdom?” Luna looked around to see who was listening to their conversation.

“Let me see that brochure.” Yezzy grabbed the brochure as the Sgt. poured himself a cup of coffee.

Lana was quiet during breakfast. Yezzy and Luna talked about their plans for the day while she continued to write:

*October 25, 1995*

*Dear Journal:*

*I’m on an island in the middle of the Indian Ocean near the equator between Africa and India. We left the UAE and flew in a cargo plane for nine hours to get here. The men outnumber the women two to one, so women are fought over and are a hot commodity! The men have been very respectful to me. They think Luna and I are married because we act like an old married couple; they know we don’t drink, so they leave us to ourselves. The women here are mostly single but most of the men are married. Because there are not enough women to go around, the men get drunk and fight each other for the women just like cave men and the women cheer them on. Every night there is a party on the beach. I am going deep sea fishing tomorrow with Yezzy and hope my Dramamine keeps me from getting sick. The locals come to every show and stay to help pack up our equipment. Last night one of them asked me,*

“In U.S. you live on reservations?”

*I told him, “No. But we have Native Americans living on reservations.”

“Oh. Are there many of them?”

“About a million. They’re about 2 percent of our population”

“We are two thousand Chagos.”

“That’s all?”

“They stole our land. They stole your land too?”

“Yes, they stole our land too.”

“I hope you get your land back someday.”

“I hope your people can return home to your island someday.”
Last night in Diego

Lana, Yezzy, Luna and the locals packed up the equipment; they walked along the beach together in the moonlight; their eyes glistened as they caught the moon rays. In the distance a donkey brayed and they all laughed: Chicanos and Chagos in paradise.

In 2006, the British High Court ruled that the 1967 depopulation was unlawful, and that the Chagossians were entitled to return to the Chagos Archipelago. There are now over 4,500 Chagossians waiting to return to their homeland. The U.S. government refuses to allow them to return to the island because they feel they

El coyote, pendejo, wore una pistola, so todos would know who was boss. Dizzy with wine, el coyote forgot to howl at the moon. The spellbound desert creatures schemed todo la noche to make la luna loca de masa. Their battered lil’ hands pounded out the tortilla: shards of blistered skin bled onto the moon and stained the face crimson. El coyote woke from his drunken stupor and grabbed the bloody moon. He kneaded the tortilla into a woman with olive colored eyes and lugged her off to his cave. The desert creatures laughed at the fool with his masa wife, hearing the cabrón howling all night.

TALL GRASS, FARMHOUSE

I walk down a field of tall grass, following directions of a woman who preserves food in a yellow farmhouse. She tells me to take a dirt road that is rutted with rain to where it fades into the woods, then walk back up through the fields. I follow her words & hands as they mold cheese before taking it to a small house behind the kitchen to cure. I've pulled this cheese from the teats of the spotted cow in the tall shack they call a barn, the regular milker telling me the cow had been on a machine a long time before she came to them. The teats have deep scar tissue that you can feel when you strip the nipples with the palm of your hand.

I wade through deep grass and wander to the edge of water rushing crevices of stone, through a fence with a pattern that cows cannot go through - the twists & turns too abrupt - and loosen the circle of wire over a blunt pole, gate falling to leaves embedded in grass under the canopy of trees that gather at the river. I swing my feet over the bank knowing it will be cold. I like the contrast of feet submerged in a rapid river with the sun on my face in late summer. When I stretch them out to dry, the beads of water sit for a long time in the high mountain air, feel like tiny pins. I look at the hills in my growing restlessness, put on cotton socks that I have laid over my shoes, my feet still with the rush of water, arches aching, wanting to be stretched by a run through tall grass. I walk slowly down the path which takes me close to cattle, wondering if they are going to be as generous with their scars in this deep grass, their home.

Kyle Laws’ poems, stories, and essays have appeared in magazines for twenty-five years, with three nominations for a Pushcart Prize. Poetry Motel’s Suburban Wilderness Press published a chapbook Apricot Wounds Straddling the Sky; and Kings Estate Press put out a collection titled Tango. Broadside and other limited editions include Yellow Woman (Look Quick), Starlings (Speakeasy), and Kyle’s Clam Chowder (Alpha Beat Press). Her work has appeared in anthologies about the Jersey shore, Western plains, and Florida; and on subjects from prose poetry to beauty. She edited the 2008 volume From the Garret on Grand: On Miss Lonelyhearts and the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the 2009 volume Midnight Train to Dodge. Lummox Press is bringing out a full-length poetry collection titled Wildwood in 2011.