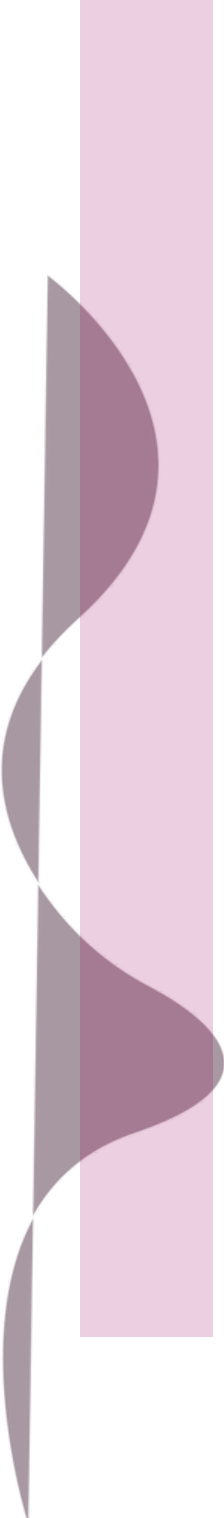




Speak the **SOJOURNER**

February 2025
Seattle University take over



Speak the Sojourner is the monthly e-magazine of Hinton Publishing, a small, independent publisher serving underinvited voices in the Pacific Northwest.

Hinton elevates the talents of authors from communities that have historically faced disadvantage, disregard, and marginalization.

Speak the Sojourner seeks to provide another avenue for these authors to share their fiction, essays, poetry, and other works, with the goal of lifting their voices into the broader literary landscape.

It was our honor to partner with SU, and publish the work of their brilliant and talented staff and students. We hope this preview of our magazine leaves you wanting more!

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Not Home

By K.C. Major

The Tacoma sky is clear, its harsh icy blue proudly showing off. The soft whirl of the air conditioner can be heard as I awkwardly balance the plastic Target bags in my arms. My brother and I sit tensely in the back of a Toyota Camry. Despite it being September, it's much cooler than Chicago, than home. Yet even with the chilly breeze both in and out of the car, my hands grow clammy and my body runs hot. I stare out the window as the trees disappear in a flash. I know we're near when the trees start to turn into skyscrapers. I sit in the

car questioning whether the nausea I feel is from motion sickness or something else.

Looking out the window, I can't help but stare at the people. The couple who's sitting at a cafe table, laughing at whatever is on the girl's phone; the little girl who smiles brightly as her mom captures a photo of her; the man in the corner with his tan corgi, moving his head to the beat of whatever song he's listening to while waiting to cross the street. They seem so content, so fulfilled, yet I can't help but feel unsettled as I stare blankly at them. The vibration of my phone pulls me away from them. It's a text from my dad, reminding me to message him when we get to my new room, my new home away from home.

The car finally arrives. I stare out the window, unsure if this is the right place. My brother and I struggle to get out. I try to stifle a laugh as he blows his hair out of his face; he sends me a glare. The car slowly disappears onto the streets. My brother and I just stare at each other.

"Aren't you gonna go in? Are you even sure this is it?" he says.

“I don’t know. I’ve never done this.”

We keep bickering back and forth in Spanish, while the people on their 10 am morning runs brush past us. Eventually, I remember that I have indeed done this before for orientation, and the driver had dropped us off on the opposite side of the building. My brother huffs as he drags his large deep teal suitcase up the hill while carrying three stuffed Target bags and a backpack on his shoulders. As we walk, I hear him mumbling about how I could’ve chosen any other city with no hills. I can’t help but agree as I stare down at the steep hill, praying I don’t twist my ankle going down.

As we approach the glass doors, I see a multitude of people moving boxes, suitcases, bins, bags, and large red carts filled to the brim. The live chatter suffocates me as I continue walking towards the entrance. It isn’t until we reach the entrance that an overly-friendly woman greets us with an enthusiastic “hello”, one that she probably doesn’t even get paid much for.

“Welcome to SU! Are you checking in?” the blonde pale woman asks, so sickly sweet.

Her words make this more real. She gives us instructions and points us towards the check-in line. I’ve seen lines as long as this for concerts, movie screening premieres, shopping centers, places where people were eagerly excited to do something, but I can’t seem to find much sense to this eagerness. I can’t tell if I’m just bitter or if it’s the nerves. Nothing here is like home. I haven’t heard a single person speak Spanish. No one seems to understand the conversations my brother and I are having. At home, there would be someone who speaks Spanish in the line. At home, someone would understand the conversation my brother and I are having. At home, the lady who greeted us would have spoken Spanish. This, however, isn’t home.

Thanks to my light packing, we don’t need a big cart, so we skip the line pretty quickly.

The elevator is crammed. The red cart takes up the majority of the space and it doesn’t help that my brother is 6’1”, nor that I’m 5’11”. The longer I’m in the elevator, the harder it is to breathe. It feels like an eternity has passed in

twenty seconds until finally, the elevator dings.
“Fifth floor. Going up?” the monotone voice says.

We have to maneuver ourselves strategically and quickly before the elevator closes. I manage to ram my carry-on by the door to prevent it from closing on my brother. The last thing I need on my conscience is his death. I already have the emotional distress I caused my father at the airport weighing on my shoulders, I don't think I can handle any more distress.

As we walk towards the hall, my feet feel heavier with every step. My arms feel sore and heavy. I keep repeating to myself that everything will be fine. But what if it's not? I've never lived with someone else before. Hell, I've never even heard of moving out until you were married, or thirty, or both. What if my roommate thinks I'm talking about her to my family when I call them? My mind keeps spinning with what-ifs as I walk down the hallway. How long is this hall anyway?

We finally get to my dorm. I haven't even noticed my floor is Pokémon-themed until I look at the Pokémon card with my name on it. In any other

scenario, I would've enjoyed it. I loved watching Pokémon with my brother, but now all I'll think about is how I won't be there and he'll still be watching, without me.

I place the key in the lock. I dreadfully turn it and push the door open. Soft chatter greets me as I open the door slowly. The chatter comes to a stop as I step inside. Six different faces greet us when we walk in. The two older girls look practically identical. They have long wavy hair that brushes past their shoulders. They have pale complexions. One has soft little freckles adorning her face, while the other has a sharper jawline. Next to them is what I assume to be their parents. A smaller old man is to the left of the freckled sister. He's of a tanner complexion, wearing a black North Face jacket that seems too early for this weather. Next to him is his wife. She has soft facial features, and her skin is like milk. She has a soft floral dress, and unlike her husband, has no sweater. At the other end of the bed stands a little girl and boy. The little boy is dressed in khaki pants and a blue dino shirt that says "Rawr" while the little girl is wearing a white flowy dress. She has cute little flower bows and plastic white heels to match.

We continue walking in to unpack. The room is so quiet I can hear my brother breathing.

Awkward smiles are exchanged as my brother wheels the suitcase and carry-on inside the room.

This doesn't feel like my room. This is what I imagine people in New York City pay \$3,000 a month for. I'd never thought there'd be a room that could be smaller than mine. No one talks. It's so quiet my ears hurt. My brother and I keep staring at each other as he puts everything on what is now my bed. Should I talk in Spanish? Is that proper etiquette? What is proper etiquette? I'm freaking out. I have no clue what to do until finally, the silence breaks.

“Mija, apurale para que la muchacha acomode sus cosas agusto.” Hurry so that the girl can unpack comfortably.

I don't know what it was, but something in me snapped. The room felt lighter, and my lungs loosened. I felt like I could finally breathe. That small man, with dark brown hair and fawnskin had done more for me with one sentence than he could ever comprehend. Their conversation continued. The room was filled with

light-hearted chatter. Suddenly the words I grew up hearing surrounded me. My brother looked at me and gave me one of his rare smiles, the one where his dimples showed through. He knew what I was thinking; I didn't have to say it, though with him I never really had to.

My brother and I don't say a word to each other as we unpack. We let soft chatter warm us up while we put away my clothes. It was comforting – they were comforting. When we finish, my brother is the first to speak.

“Ya tienes todo? Me tengo que ir en un poco o si no voy a perder mi vuelo.” Do you have everything? I have to go soon or else I'll miss my flight.

Our backs are facing the small family, yet I can feel their stares being etched onto the back of my head. As I turn to respond to my brother I catch a glimpse of the parents. They, too, looked relieved. The family all huddle to the door. As they exit, my roommate's parents stand at the door before saying,

“Tengan un buen dia. ¡Mucha suerte! Espero se cuiden entre ustedes.” Have a good day. Good luck! I hope you look out for each other.

I wave goodbye as I watch the door close. The room no longer looks small. I stand in the center of it, looking around. It definitely isn't my room. As I stare at the field outside the window, I observe the trees. The leaves are changing colors, from green to yellow, to red, and to brown. I look at the sky. There still isn't a cloud in sight, but the blue had turned soft.

This definitely isn't home, but I don't mind.

To Go Tenderly

By Arin Kwan

A decorative horizontal line with a wavy, undulating pattern in a light purple color, spanning the width of the page.

Beloved is the tragedy told in reverse:
A happy ending at the start,
A great celebration
Followed by a slow and aching
Slip into the depths of despair

And Eurydice, dead man walking,
Death seeping from each toe
Pressed desperately into cold earth,
Leads Orpheus, man who

Sows life into green, growing things,
Deeper down the throat of hell.

And if Orpheus, man of endless life,
Followed the stench of evil,
Eyes fixed upon Eurydice's back,
Never seeing the road ahead:
Could they escape happily

Nestled against each other
In the depths of the earth,
In the womb of fire,
In the circle of hell
Reserved for those who have
Committed no sin
Except for love.

Love, higher than the most beloved stars,
Kept them bound and bonded.
Trust, deeper than hallowed stone halls,
Kept them close and ever within reach,
From the biting scree of doom to the
Winding vegetal burrow of home.



Sept. 8th, 2020

By Keagen Brooks-Torres

hands press on each side of our valley

smoke over sky spits in our clay bowl wrapped in juniper

drink smoke with our stung eyes

take turns keeping watch

telephone poles resting

red sleeping bag on the garage floor sinking into cool smooth

sand

mashed bananas mix with ash

clink fork

on glass

something to chew on / for your crumbling throat / set a timer (for your good humor)

under white linen

remember the creases on your drenched shoulders

remember your wooden spoon circling / remember your heavy flesh dragging past the
fossils

remember your footsteps in the damp soil

remember when it was just you and i and ambling steel

skeletons

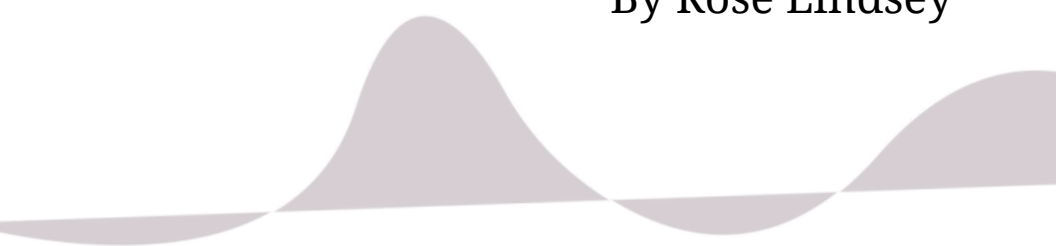
washed in orange

shined clean

neopphemeratic vanguard

Following Amber Flame

By Rose Lindsey



to love's liturgics i have become
chickenscratch coward
a fool for seeking that devil may care
caressing my shrugged shoulders
i drip aphrodisiac sex
a settling into absence
the wounds ooze & i rub that ointment
along every inch of form –
this the mandible, this the vehicle,
this the unsexed font –
find me lover where liturgies dissolve
where lines trail into stretch marks
& i am fool without falling

I.

have always been enamored by eyes
amorous seeing-throughs I breathe
that red sensual dust whenever I
meet eyes; this the fallacy:

when eye & I become indistinguished
vicarious intermixing of vital fluids
there is only a sharing;

show me your starward eyes
head resting on thighs gazing up as though
I shared the blue of the sky
charting constellations in my irises
seafaring spirit see how

this is the fallacy:
in this act we consummate intention & discovery
catching drifting I's across grocery aisles
eye feel your I & eyes rise
an aubadic movement

my eye is the horizon
your I is the sun rising
this is the fallacy:
when orpheus breathed that red sensual dust
they were never he or she
enamored by I's knowing
looking-back is seeing-through is sharing

II.

of wands
sparking vessels
I have pulled in all love readings

(invigora)tic bibliomancy
each reading is a loving
an energy offered new
a phoenix emerging from red dust

wands
sparking sight illuminating opportunity
I have pulled in all love writings.

union through burning
this yearning youth seeing themselves
reflected forward

I cannot help myself
brandishing branch
even if it peels skin
overheats my fingertips
this is a loving
a marseaic matrimony
I know marriage as two wands
marrowed & marred

III.

a stemma swallowed; pollen spread; petals unfurling
from unbloomed adam's apple; my body has been plant;
chlorophyll callouses; rooted rot;

the metaphor is too apt
there's no sense holding it any longer my body is burdened
singed lethargic i swallow liturgy vex virginity i embrace empathy
i think & i return to aspen tree shaking-through from base
of spine eyes covering i pale limbs & she sees aspen i hope i think
& is it not enough to be weighted extended outward in-action
i can't know anymore my body is (un)loved i think & red
dust clogs my nostrils maybe i sprout from it like plant



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very special Seattle University
edition of Speak the Sojourner*



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