



2021

Introduction: Poetry

Ricardo Quintana Vallejo

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Recommended Citation

Quintana Vallejo, Ricardo (2021) "Introduction: Poetry," *The North Meridian Review*. Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 12.

DOI: 10.7825/2769-5115.1048

Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/thenorthmeridianreview/vol2/iss1/12>

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IV. POETRY

Introduction:

Ricardo Quintana-Vallejo, PhD.

The North Meridian Review sought poetry that takes a snapshot of the grief, uncertainty, and withdrawal that characterized the year 2020. At a time where the comfort and expectations of routine became a source of anxiety, we turned to poetry for scrutiny and respite.

We were fortunate to receive poems that depict a range of experiences and sensations: the sense of annoyance in the early days of the pandemic, when we thought that we would be back in our schools and workplaces by the end of summer; the reshaping of our everyday lives because of homeschooling and home-office; the anguish and chaos faced by healthcare workers; the echoes of other viral pandemics such as HIV; and the upheaval of our interactions and relationships, embraces given through Zoom.

Finally, several poems in this collection address our shared global anxiety. Discourses of globalization imagine our existence as digital beings, hyperconnected to each other internationally, watching the same videos and films, conversing as if we were in the same room, despite the geographical realities in which our bodies dwell. Yet no other event in recent history can foreground how corporeal we really are: a strain of crown-shaped RNA has overhauled many of humanity's mundane and momentous practices, from how we work and shop to how we get married and celebrate graduations. Unfortunately, our realization of global bodily interdependence also bred racist and xenophobic images and sentiments in the poetry we received. I rejected every single poem about bigotry and hate because our objective in collecting these poems is to enable connection, catharsis, and empathy.

We gave preference to poets from the Midwest in accordance with the journal's obligation to serve its community and region. However, we included poems from all over the United States and abroad, including Mexico and Australia, to provide multifaceted perspectives on an event that affects humankind.

This collection includes the esteemed work of two poets, David Estringel and Lisa Bullard. Their poems are reprinted here for accuracy and were previously published online. Although not about the COVID-19 pandemic, they are a valuable addition to this issue.