

Stephen F. Austin State University

**SFA ScholarWorks**

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

---

11-2022

## Cry Wolf

Olivia Claire Acosta

Stephen F Austin State University, [olivia.c.acosta@gmail.com](mailto:olivia.c.acosta@gmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds>



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

[Tell us](#) how this article helped you.

---

### Repository Citation

Acosta, Olivia Claire, "Cry Wolf" (2022). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 474.

<https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds/474>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu](mailto:cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu).

---

## Cry Wolf

### Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).



CRY WOLF

By

OLIVIA ACOSTA, Bachelor of Arts

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

December, 2022

CRY WOLF

By

OLIVIA ACOSTA, Bachelor of Arts

APPROVED:

---

Dr. Elizabeth Tasker Davis, Thesis Director

---

Dr. John McDermott, Committee Member

---

Ms. Rebecca Spears, Committee Member

---

Dr. Lauren Burrow, Committee Member

---

Dr. Sheryll Jerez  
Interim Dean of Research and Graduate Studies

## *ABSTRACT*

*Cry Wolf* is a confessional poetry collection told in three sections about an at-work stalking. This collection also alludes to the Brothers Grimm fairytale, *The Little Red Riding Hood*. The sections of *Cry Wolf* include “The Wolf,” which introduces the speaker’s discovery of the work-related stalking. The second section, entitled “The Fur,” is where the speaker empowers themselves to file a Title IX report about this dilemma and Red cloaks herself in the wolf’s skin. The final portion of the collection, entitled “Red’s Home,” gives the audience a view of the speaker's self-love as they maintain it through trauma. This section also introduces another, more welcome, significant other who displays the contrasts between intimate love and stalking. Within the last section, there is also the unification of having a group of supporters surrounding the speaker to aid in the process of healing as well as recognizing the speaker’s own empowerment and breaking taboos.

## *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

I'd like to thank my mother and father, who inspire me to be an honest poet. I'd like to thank my sisters for motivating me to be my best woman and writer. I would also like to thank Will Stiles, for helping me breathe deeper through this journey. I'd like to thank each of my fellow Research and Teaching Assistants within the SFA Graduate English program. I hope to pay it forward through your own theses, and into my career. I'd also like to send my deepest gratitude to all of my thesis board. Thank you for your support, patience, and helpful feedback throughout this journey. As teachers, artists, and scholars, each of you motivate me to be honest and bold. I'd also like to send appreciation to Dr. Sara Henning, for helping me discover the topics that approach *you* with a pen in its hand. And thank you, reader.

## Contents

Abstract .....	iv
Acknowledgements .....	v
Vita.....	lii
Part One: The Wolf.....	1
Stares.....	2
Encounters with The Wolf.....	5
Excuses I've Heard About Being Stalked.....	6
Little Red Cries at the Title IX Office .....	7
Cry Wolf .....	9
The Meeting of Wolf and Red .....	11
If I Go Out in the Woods Today .....	12
Part Two: The Fur.....	13
How I Got My First Fur .....	14
Elegy for Lost Survivors.....	19
Red Admits She's a Workaholic.....	20
Birdsong.....	22
The Lone Wolf (Imagined).....	24
Enemy .....	26
Postscript: After the Title IX Meeting .....	28
Part Three: Red's Home.....	31
Red Time Travels to Reminisce about her Long-Distance Boyfriend.....	32
A List of Scenes Throughout a First Date .....	33
Red's Home .....	34
Wedding Cake.....	36
Wings .....	37
Love Spell.....	38
Wolf Now Gone.....	39
Pool Day.....	41
The Oven Burn I Got from Roasting Vegetables Last Tuesday .....	43
The Pride.....	45



Shedding the Red .....	47
I'll Go Get It: A Love Letter to Myself .....	49

## **Part One: The Wolf**

**Stares**

Parking

garage,

fourteen

steps.

I

once

dreamt

of

these

stairs

and

to

step

into

a

secure

future.

Now

I

dread

this  
gray,  
heaving,  
stomping,  
wolf.  
It  
begs,  
aches,  
scratches  
wanting  
me  
to  
look  
through  
the  
grates  
to  
see  
if  
the  
Camry  
is

parked

*(It is and so is he).*

As

I

stare

down

to

stairs

and

open

space.

As

I

stare

down

to

*stares*

and

open

space.

## Encounters with The Wolf

I walked alone to my car that October night  
8:30.

You waited there, next to your Camry.  
*Goodnight*, you said.

I replied in niceties:  
*Have a good one.*

The next morning, you were standing  
in the same place.

New clothes on, gelled hair.  
I asked, *did you ever leave?*

With a laugh,  
and a quiet reply,  
*I just know when you get here.*

### **Excuses I've Heard About Being Stalked:**

*He's just lonely* I'm alone here my family is four hours  
away my boyfriend lives in the west my sister in the mountains  
to be alone is a necessary part of life but I do not stalk  
to feel alive and you say *okay, but he needs help* *Liv* well if he needs  
help he should've gotten it when he said his mental illness  
was becoming a problem to everyone he met it's a crutch  
and something to lean on but what pisses me off is when  
you say *don't worry about it* because turning a blind eye  
doesn't help me or others who die inside and dread the march  
to the car that is like a deathly game of hide-and-seek on weekday  
nights when I drag my nude heels through nails and heart  
palpitations and I am left panicking in the driver's seat  
I wish people believed me but instead I get half-hearted glances  
and the kicker *he's just who he is* this is the worst one  
of all the poison apples wrapped dripping a caramel cover  
of sweet seething pity because you're making it okay  
for him to trace my footsteps and follow me you're making  
it okay that he watched me leave and arrive to work today  
with no words spoken you're making it okay you're making it  
okay you're making it okay you're making it okay  
when it is *not* okay.

## Little Red Cries at the Title IX Office

And every time I've said it

I'm shouting in a void

into an abyss of mahogany walls,

in counseling pamphlets, the bosses are required to give.

*Why do they only trust what comes from your shaggy mouth?*

*And do not hear*

*the women who cry in paperwork*

*of stalking occurrences and*

*Title IX incidents?*

Gripping onto their pepper spray like a dagger

*Are we too weak? Do we scream too softly?*

And every time I've said it

It's like shouting into a void

A

Void

Avoid

I'm trying to avoid you now,

but you still watch as I take

different tactics to walk

to the parking garage



Main to North, North to Starr

My mace is close, you never far.

Always catching my scent

Watching me walk to my car.

I imagine my musk hits your nose like sweet, copper blood,

So, you must find me more, in search of the tin scent

that left you hungry.

What was once a parking garage,

morphs into coffee shops, parking lots,

the building may lock, but you do not stop.

*How did you go from some guy I met in school to*

*this predator following me to my car?*

## **Cry Wolf**

If I don't cry wolf,

No one will see.

No soul will hear

No nightingale sings.

People will neigh,

And say, "*you're naive.*"

Killing their darlings

and suspicions they see.

If this moment isn't uttered,

And left unscathed.

Another will suffer,

another will be chased.

You may say I don't suffer,

and that I am falsifying.

But really it is another

life not worth dying.

I am not the only one,

It is not only me.

And if I don't cry wolf,

nobody will see.

## First Meeting of Wolf and Red

“ She did not know what a bad sort of animal he was,  
she did not feel frightened.”

Jacob and Wilhem Grimm, *The Little Red Riding Hood* (1697)

We didn't meet in the brush of a green meadow,

no red cloak, no woodland deep.

No, we met in a Zoom meeting.

I said I was new, then

a red bubble

popped in my message screen.

He said, “I can give you a tour sometime if you're free.”

I was uncertain, I thought he was sweet.

Like the artifice

of a Pixie Stick.

The powdered, sugary, candy

hits your lips. Knowing the end

when enzymes break into glucose,

and you can feel the fake within your blood.

But this was a sugar high

impossible to shake.

### **If I Go Out in the Woods Today**

In a brush of green with little prey

Scurrying around, nothing to hide

I'm bedecked in my ruby-red cape and open sky.

But lurking, lurking

in the deep

a wolf stomach is growling

in the green.

He doesn't eat me

in the end.

I take him

and make him a

specimen.

An example of a wolf

who stalks women.

## **Part Two: The Fur**

## **How I Got My First Fur**

**I**

I was twenty-three and walking into the office  
to sit and sign a dotted line  
declaring he was my *stalker*.

A term that hadn't crossed my mind  
until the Title IX representative spoke of it  
on a phone conference the week before.

I spent the week in meditation,  
wondering if his apparent obsession  
was true at all or a fantasy in my head.

I was twenty-three and walking from the office  
one Wednesday morning  
with a sweet police officer with silver hair, Dan.  
Headed to the same parking garage where the wolf  
made me his victim,  
to get a new parking pass  
on the floor below the parking garage.

The night before I'd seen the wolf in the same garage

standing quietly, almost lurking,  
whispering a soft “goodnight.”  
So soft, I almost couldn’t hear it  
and asked him to repeat.

*What an attention glutton, what an asshole. I thought.*

## **II**

I made sure to have the escorted meeting on a Wednesday morning.  
Early in the crisp, cool, incandescent air  
so he wouldn’t catch my scent.  
My sweet Yves Saint Laurent  
perfume reminded me of summertime.  
I wouldn’t let his stare  
stop me from being myself.  
The smell of my defiance followed me.

## **III**

I was twenty-three and the parking lot office clerk-  
a woman, glanced at me with sad solidarity.  
As if she’d done this before,  
with a woman just like me.  
Helping a victim become a  
survivor.



I felt the Title IX adjustment form  
was criminal to hold in public.  
Still, I passed the form to her under the window,  
we stood in silence.

#### **IV**

Driving down the driven road  
displaying my new parking pass  
I noticed new things.  
The monarch butterflies, the sun beginning to heat the grass.  
And I realized, I was safe.  
that, yes, I was stalked,  
but now I was going to a new spot.  
It took so much life  
out of me,  
knowing I was being looked at  
every step away from my car  
Every morning.  
Every morning.

So, I sat in this new burrow

in a new parking garage surrounded by staff cars.

I didn't have to fear

being hurt on the way home.

I didn't have to call my mom

or my dad or my sisters while walking

in case

anything happened,

and I cried for the first time in a month.

**V**

A year later, twenty-four.

I walk into the parking lot office with dignity

to re-file the form

and tell the same woman of my Title IX parking adjustment

A place that I had cowered into before,

became a place of my own.

A year ago, when I walked into the Title IX office

to report a stalker.

I never needed a huntsman,

to kill and skin a wolf as a trophy for me.

I got him myself.

Cloaked in wolf fur, my trophy,  
drenched in ink and signed forms.  
Marching on a carpet of paper trails  
and warns to all:  
if another wolf turns a corner,  
they will only add to my collection of furs.

### **Elegy for Lost Survivors**

You are all with me when I walk up the stairs. Your stories cloak me like the wolf's skin on my shoulders. You helped me get to the car without wondering if he was staring at me. I know you fought to the end. A diamond, never rough. They might have followed you. Silenced you. Gaslit your pain. Boys will be boys, yes. But women will fight. And after all the running and hiding, you deserve to rest. You deserve abundance and joy, sunshine, to be seen. It is a service to tell your story

### **Red Admits She's a Workaholic**

Blazing through papers and emails  
seeing to every page with persistent rage  
as a form of stress relief.

Each email I send is like biking  
another mile, an accomplishment  
towards a marathon.

A grad student with an agenda, too much caffeine  
and a vivid, waking dream of walking across a stage with a master's degree.

Behind the paper skyline  
and the comfort of my crammed shoebox office  
a wolf lingers at my door  
waiting for his moment to pounce. Or leaning  
on the side of his car  
watching me unpack my things  
with such nonchalance, I disregarded it  
as a man with a crush who would never get me.  
But then it kept happening.

My family tells me "Keep your head  
down and get out," and I do.

The work is first.

Through and through.

But I cannot forget that

crooked smile he bears

capturing my attention and says *hello there*

like he fucking won.

## **Birdsong**

A birdsong is not sung  
by a female bird, but a male  
trying to woo a female.  
For courtship, breeding,  
territory. You wolf,  
you touched my leg  
In a friendly pat while you sat in my office  
laughing at me for not wanting to work.  
Breaching a boundary inside my body.  
I knew this was too far,  
and you wanted more than to be friends  
but had no substance to seduce me  
other than to a wide-eyed stare and a pat.  
A wolf masked as lamb,  
it was clear when you followed me home.

And in some sick way I found forgiveness  
(I felt sorry for you,  
and your sickness).  
But I never felt any better  
than when I let go  
and sought forgiveness in myself.

It's never wrong to ask for help,

And learn to not lean into

The subtle undo of a birdsong.



## **The Lone Wolf (Imagined)**

“As wolves love lambs  
so lovers love their loves.”  
Plato

I knew I was a wolf when I saw my first girl.  
I looked her straight in the blank face and asked her to dine at  
Denny's. A place made to make a lady feel  
at her best. A diner warped in time  
just right for a man to make  
his move. After, I wanted to have more than just one,  
I wanted another with hair as crimson as her cheeks,  
or another with charcoal hair laid on her back like a cape.  
I wanted a woman with secrets of beauty and a mouth.  
For me to tell her my way  
over pancakes and to take her home to momma in my Camry.

I'd buy a lady a slew  
of A-line dresses and pumps  
just for her to notice  
that I am not man, but wolf within.  
I ache for the romance of Plath and Hughes.

I yearn to be a muse  
to a woman with a mouth and a mind so holy  
for only me to behold.

I watch Red walk home because her steps  
curve like the swayed line in her penmanship.  
She wore a red turtleneck and had kinky chocolate hair  
with a voice poignant as chai tea.  
And I felt hungry again.

## **Enemy**

Sometimes I am the one who follows me.

The one who eats the sheep and hunts me down,  
sometimes I am my own worst enemy.

The tap of midnight solace stops at three

I am alone again; I ache for sound.

Sometimes I am the one who follows me.

I wish for miracles and crystal strings,  
harps and sweet angels descend around,  
sometimes I am my own worst enemy.

That night I dreamt a wolf chased after me  
but it was only me when I turned round  
sometimes I am the one who follows me.

I couldn't wake myself, I started to scream  
I woke up in cold sweat, a moisture-crown  
sometimes I am my own worst enemy.

I seem to follow me each night, I flee  
into the spoken carousel, I round:  
Sometimes I am the one who follows me;  
Sometimes I am my own worst enemy.

## **Postscript: After the Title IX Meeting**

### **I**

After the meeting, I ached to be free. Buck wild in a wicked world that makes women fear themselves. I wore the red heels I wanted, and they clicked across the hall. The sweetest dress and the red coat without the trepidation of a wolf. I counted the days I would go without a wolf sighting. Crouching, lingering in his work wear, at the edge of the stairs, waiting for me. Anticipating a laundry-list of questions, he'd ask for hours of my day. After the meeting, I felt the tension dissipate like the air escaping a can. I approached my car in the burst-violet Texas night, next to the police station, and realized I was not drained, I was happy. I soft smiled as I grabbed my keys. You were someone else's case.

### **II**

After the meeting, I wanted to scream. I'd glue his face on cardboard and hold a sign of his crimes. I'd run around the library, jump in the street, flashlights on posters. When I signed the dotted lines, the deal was made in privacy. The parking lot a sanctuary delt in quiet. The sacred moment in a mahogany hallway uttered silence as its bind. If I cried, it would reverberate permanently. The cry would end up in courtrooms, restraining orders, a paper mâché of crime. To piss off a wolf is a death sentence. I'd be prey for life.

### III

After the meeting, I wanted to survive. To sneak away from him in silence of night. In hopes he'd forget and take to a different path. One night he approached me, asked me where I'd been all these weeks. I lied and told him I'd been busy. Somehow, some way, he believed me. He'd forgotten what my fear smelled like all these weeks. I told him I left something behind, and he went peacefully. The next day I went to work, he was hiding in a cigarette on the edge my new garage, looking out to the building. We said nothing.

### IV

After the meeting, I was afraid to tell my friends and family with no proof but breath. A statement that would defy gravity and settle in the room like morning fog. There are no scars, cuts, bruises to bare. Nothing I can put my finger on to prove I wasn't a liar. I feared they'd cover their excuses onto my suffering and place it on their mind's back burner. But my pain was an electrical fire, lingering, shocking. The breath that left my body in obsidian ash. The constant search for him following me home was never over. Just subsided.

## V

But it's never over, is it? I still fear I'll wade into his birdsong to be trapped in a cage again. He could follow me after I graduate. He could watch me drive home until I'm forty. A mental slash cut into the forest of my psyche. I let it go in the days passing. In empty parking garages. In my friends and family saying they'd beat him up if they saw him. In the afternoons in the gazebo with my work friends, saying I should've told them earlier and they could have walked with me. In the mornings with my boyfriend on the terrace, telling me I deserve to be happy. In the moments in the night where I find I've forgiven myself before I drift to rest.

### **Part Three: Red's Home**



## **Red Time Travels to Reminisce about her Long-Distance Boyfriend**

Traveling is like a secret word we share.

You travel to me

and I travel to you

so, we can travel each other.

I wish I could go back to my past self

and tell her to be thankful for the days together.

I could remember as I lay here alone

thinking about

the layers of you

next to me

the sandalwood scent

of your warm skin after a shower.

I wish I could wake

where the curtains were keen blue

in a dark room

and I'd see you and the

sun-kissed streaks of your hair

in the morning light.

As you travel your finger

everywhere.

### **A List of Scenes Throughout a First Date**

1. First kiss in a Houston airport arrivals gate.
2. White, astigmatic headlights and knee-shaking to dinner, nervous talking.
3. String lights shining on a stain glass mosaic
4. Fireworks on the lakeside, cuddling in your fleece coat
5. One kitchen spotlight hanging over the bar
6. Swimming beneath obsidian light
7. A cerulean morning with a sheer curtain filter
8. Daylight as you make my coffee and tell me *good morning*.

## **Red's Home**

Home is looking in a silver mirror  
and seeing my frizzy brown morning hair in it.  
Each strand of hair looks as if it has been struck by lightning.  
Messy or neat, knotted or straight.  
It reminds me of my grandmothers',  
now grey and coiled, but just like mine.

Love, home is when you wrap your arms  
around me at night  
before we drift into oblivion.  
I smell the clean air of sheets and hear the whirling fan.

Home is King's Beach, California  
on a sunny June day  
when I scraped my toe  
on a rock beneath the waves  
you ran out of the water  
to search for a Band-Aid.

Home is golden frames  
bordering family photos

that slips me into  
its memory. Each time I  
glance into the photo  
smiles an old version of me.

## **Wedding Cake**

My love, you stood in the morning sun next to the strain Wedding Cake and asked me to take a photo over Facetime. Your sweet smile beamed through the phone. You then went on about its THC percentage and its pepper undertone. I could tell you were happy about what you grew, proud. You wouldn't stop talking about it as if harvesting it was the icing on the cake of the grow. As I got my make up on for work, you watered a 200-gallon pot for 3 or 4 minutes. I could hear alarms going off in your pocket for a different task. I see you here now in our one-bedroom apartment, and miss your joy. That pride you felt when you were doing some cool weed thing, I knew nothing about the layers of it. It's waned since they haven't paid you, and since you left. But I imagine it will come back in time. Like the top tier of a wedding cake that newlyweds eat a year later. The layers of your joy will return in a year from now just as sweet as it left you.

## **Wings**

### **I**

I fell in love with him because he had wings.  
The ability to fly at a moment's notice with ease.  
We bumped into each other  
at my sister's wedding,  
and grabbed hands coincidentally  
during a Grand March.  
He made me laugh  
and I knew I liked him.

### **II**

I've always learned to make home  
on the ground I grew up on.  
But I grew to see  
I had wings of my own.  
That I could fight my battles myself  
instead of being in a place  
of needing you for every flight.  
That I could go  
and spread my wings.

## **Love Spell**

I miss the way you slept with your mouth open and how you used to twitch and accidentally hit me. When we'd get pissed drunk and too invested in Survivor reruns on weekends. The way you wrote "LOVE" on the guest list of a wedding and I took too many koozies. This one-bed apartment feels half lit now you're gone. Off to Tennessee for jobs. I feel the pang of the meager two hours we chat for that we traded for the future. I know you feel it too. The pang of loss of a home together. But we plan to watch the sunset and talk about paranormal activity. We dinner date, Door Dash some food to each other or complement my reheating skills. The sunset rains out, we wait until next week. We watch movies and TV shows in sync. I bitch to you about my day. I laugh at a joke you make and suddenly, I am transported. I see you on the other side of the couch playing your online pool game and crossing your legs on the plush ottoman. Time never passed, you never left. I see the blanket fort we made our first week here while watching *Better Call Saul*. The floral sheets suspended on the ceiling pushed by tacks matched with blue stripes on the latter. Pillows on the floor. Binder clips for the door. For a minute I am at peace. I look down to check the time and the room empties. Dark in the night, golden lamps to shine. You fall asleep on the phone and so do I. It is the past I miss, but the future I strive toward. Love is time passing onward.

## **Wolf Now Gone**

You scurried  
off to another  
burrow to feed.

Your office says *vacant*  
on a blue sticky note.

Yet in some sense,  
you've stayed on the tongues  
of people's mouths  
like onions or garlic.

I wonder  
if I might see  
you here again.  
Nostalgic, wishing, wanting  
white hallways to  
flaunt in.

You'd skim the pictures  
on the bulletin



and see you're

*vacant.*

But I'll stay content, still, whole.

If I saw you prowling in here for food,

I'd give you the same grin you bared to me

when I was fresh blood.

## **Pool Day**

Summer sunscreen coats my pale  
skin as we venture to another afternoon  
with mixed drinks in cobalt YETI's,  
snacks in hand, in preparation to float  
and flow within the whimsical  
teal-hued gated apartment pool.

If nobody's there to see us humiliate ourselves,  
we swim across the crystalline pool on one breath,  
and I do backflips as you count  
them until I am dizzy on the come  
up when I emerge from the deep end.

We play childhood pool games  
and get competitive  
about who cheated their way  
into winning sharks and minnows (it was you).

Sometimes you sink within the sapphire  
deep, legs crossed as you hit  
the gritty bottom just to sit;

To see the pool from below.  
Other times we float apart,  
feeling the water for ourselves.  
United by the unruffled, placid  
stillness of the deep.

I drift across the pool in natural stillness,  
taking a tour of the trees  
above. You swim beneath the deep, like a shark  
in water just to see me jump as you pinch my sides  
and call me *Baywatch* or lifeguard because of my cherry  
red swim top.

## **The Oven Burn I Got from Roasting Vegetables Last Tuesday Night**

The swollen burn pulses in hot crimson  
fresh from the oven. Hot and heated skin pains my forearm.  
As I dispense mustard on the burn,  
I talk to my mother on speakerphone  
in the oven-heated kitchen  
surrounded by flaxen-hued wood  
that the nineteen eighties would've fawned over.

She tells me it won't scar,  
but the welt will turn  
into flaky skin with red hues  
and a glossy coat of Neosporin twice a day,  
and not a popular condiment used on grilled hot dogs.  
Looking as if I am a basket-cased  
woman with a story pulsing  
on the side of her forearm.

As I jolt my next helping of condiment  
on the burn,  
my mother hears me wince as  
the mustard farts to its end.

She sighs, adjusts the phone, and  
beckons her knowledge about fire:  
*Burns heal from the inside out.*

## **The Pride**

I strut with a fleet  
of strong lionesses  
to the parking garage now.

We hoist Hydro Flasks  
the size of our forearms,  
reaching the weight of a small dumbbell,  
tinted in lime green, clementine, fuchsia.  
To swing at a predator  
if they pounce in the night.

We speak about the game  
of graduate school  
and our loved distractions  
from a life anticipated.

We discuss strategy  
in case someone attacks:  
You will sweep the feet,  
I will take the head,  
she will handle upper body,

the other will attack the remainder.

Together we are unassailable.

We are better

bonded in one unifiable pride

than separated, ostracized,

swept into competition, or

taken for granted.

Fighting and tearing hair

over a person

or a paycheck.

We are not our odds,

but our favors

## **Shedding the Red**

She walks in the grass  
with her feet bare,  
and stares to the sky, just wondering  
when the dreams that she keeps  
will glide in to her hands  
so sweet.

In time she learns  
where her body meets itself  
and the shape of her curves  
and the soles of her feet have grown  
into words of what people say:

*you should be thinner*

*you should be smarter*

*South Beach is better*

*less carbs and more water.*

*Deny their prescription*

*take in the conviction*

*that maybe you're better*

*off as a victim.*

But darling if you listen  
to a word they say



you are throwing  
your whole life away  
for a person who doesn't know shit about you.

### **I'll Go Get It: A Love Letter to Myself**

If I want to remain  
in Walmart sweatpants,  
and my stain-riddled  
Australia t-shirt I found at Goodwill  
and not brush my hair,  
become a recluse,  
with greasy McDonalds  
staining my lips  
and fingers every day,  
I'll do it. But probably not, I can't sit still.

If I want to work  
until I can afford a  
black BMW 220i coupe,  
and live next to a Whole Foods  
with a housekeeper,  
a trainer and a nutritionist,  
diamonds by the dozen,  
I'll go get it.

If I want to spend

eternity in the woods of Washington,  
growing my own vegetables,  
killing for my meat,  
living in a quaint cabin,  
between somewhere and nowhere,  
with a meager fire  
burning against the cold,  
and a heaven full of stars,  
I'll be it.

If I want nothing but rose  
petals on the floor  
trailing where I walk  
and hair like baby's breath,  
with a gown of wisteria,  
and grass filling  
all four corners  
of my apartment,  
I'd love my room-garden.

If I want to quit  
my job to become a

beach bum on the Gold Coast,  
in tune with the waves  
and its gravity,  
beneath me I'd see seas  
of families, reefs, homes,  
enemies, anemones,  
and fins alike,  
skin almost carrot-esque,  
hair blonde as sand,  
I'll swim to the deep for it.

If I want a large house  
with bay windows made  
into a reading nook,  
and a sunroom  
to grow basil and chrysanthemums  
within its translucent yellow walls  
like a curtain it falls  
to the bottom of the tile room  
warming every corner,  
I'll go get it.

## VITA

Olivia Acosta completed her high school curriculum at Kingwood High School in Kingwood, TX, in 2016. She then enrolled into Lone Star Community College for one year and completed the remainder of her Bachelors of Arts in Mass Communication with an emphasis in Multi-Platform Journalism with a minor in English at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, TX. After graduating in December of 2020 with her Bachelors, she began completing her Masters of English with an emphasis in Creative Writing at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX in January of 2021. While working towards her masters, she worked as a Graduate Assistant working on social media, and Teaching Fellow, teaching Composition I and II for a year. She plans to graduate with her Masters of Arts in English in December of 2022. After graduation, she plans to continue teaching and writing while she begins working. Her works of creative writing have been published in *The Piney Dark*.

Permanent Address: 22711 Whispering Timbers Way.  
Porter, TX 77365

Style manual designation: Modern Language Association Style 10th edition.

This thesis was typed by Olivia Acosta in Times New Roman.