

THE FUHA ZINE

EDITED BY FUHANIANs
WRITTEN BY FRIENDS OF FUHA



FUCK YOU, HOUSTON'S AWESOME

CONTENTS

Untitled by Catherine Martin	8
I only wanted her for her taco materialization	10
abilities by Randall James Tyrone	
Looking Back by Reyes Ramirez	12
Curiosity Hydrant by Roger Seward	13
Americana Princess by Adrienne Meyers	14
From mangos to Mango's by Andre Habet	15
Snake Country by Jeni Mcfarland	20
When You Are a Little Bit Homeless by Anthony Sutton	22
Seen In Rive Village by Lindsey Slavin	23
Untitled by Josh Davis	24
To the Chiflada Who, as I Later Found Out, Stopped	25
Answering My Calls because She Thought I Was Cheap	
by Edward Garza	
Houston Is Everything by Melissa Dziedzic	27
Bios	29

INTRO

My roommate is a theoretical physicist who recently told me that he wasn't very clear on the concept of a zine. I also remained unclear on this front until Lindsey Simard, Zinefest Houston's former mastermind, explained it to me during an interview.

She said that a zine was just a DIY thing made by an individual or group to disseminate their ideas. What ideas? I asked. Well...any was her response. The answer she gave satisfied me due to its ambiguity, or more aptly, its looseness.

During our time at FUHA, my three collaborators and I met with many Houstonians who produced wonderful art across the spectrum of mediums. More than half of the time though, these artists seemed at odds with the people who appreciated their work. Frustration with their lack of success whether monetary or otherwise caused them to take for granted much of what I had come to love about Houston in my short time here. Their position as makers of art caused them to feel all the ills of Houston unlike art's appreciators who could walk in and out at their leisure, experiencing only what they like.

Now just a week away from leaving Houston for at least the next two years, I hope that whatever we've done with FUHA has encouraged a few people take some chances. Included here are reflections, works inspired by and about Houston by people who've done exactly that. We hope it encourages you to think about your own take on the city and the pieces of it that you've carved out for yourself.

So take a seat in the dingy armchair of your choosing and I hope enjoy this zine.

—Andre Habet,
FUHA co-founder

UNTITLED

by Cathrine Martin

I came to Houston a couple times as a kid, for the museums and such, but I don't consider those my first nights in Houston. That honor is reserved for a weekend in June 2009 - I'd driven to my uncle's house in the Woodlands the night before, and in the morning he had taken me to my orientation at the University of Houston. He dropped me off by the dumpsters, because we couldn't figure out where the entrance was and I was frustrated and grumpy. In case you haven't smelled them yourself, the dorm dumpsters are not the most flattering introduction to a new place. It was hotter than I was expecting, and I surged into Oberholtzer Hall greedily, not for the next two days, but for air conditioning.

I'd already decided that I was going to hate Houston - I'd met exactly one person who had gone to the college I was to spend the next four years at, and she'd said "legit" at least fifty times. Here's a list of things I don't consider legit: the "L" word, humidity, girls who still wear those black plastic chokers like it's the nineties. Everything Houston stood for at that point. As well, my only previous overnight stay at the campus had shown noon on a Saturday to be devoid of all humanity, the acres of school grounds populated only by squirrels. I was sure that I was going to be the only person in college, without a car, incapable of doing anything except crying alone in my dorm room and eating little packages of Gushers until my head turned into a strawberry.

I made no attempts at friendship until halfway through the first day. Nobody had said the "L" word yet, but I was deeply suspicious and didn't want to start a friendship with someone only to have to drop the acquaintance later. Then, at my Honor's College orientation, there was a face in the back a bit handsomer than the rest. Maybe I could stir myself for some flirtation, I thought to myself, and introduced myself to Scott Dailey, who became one of my best friends (but don't get excited about the romance guys, he also looks a lot like my priest and I'm not into that kind of stuff). Scott introduced me to his orientation roommate, who led us to meet a new friend, who introduced us to a fourth, and before Scott and I knew it, we were blowing off the afternoon orientation activities and driving down to Kemah boardwalk, "Tonight's Going to be a Good Night" playing in the background at least a thousand times. (It was 2009 guys, I don't want you to think it was foreshadowing) We rode the Boardwalk Bullet and then we drove back, the Houston skyline twinkling in front of us as we reentered the city, and I felt like I was coming home and that the people in the car with me were my family.

I ONLY WANTED HER FOR HER TACO MATERIALIZATION ABILITIES

by Randall Tyrone

It was Montrose. It was night time I was starving. I wanted Mexican food. I was lost. I needed help. I need a prostitute. Prostitutes are the questionable man's tour guides. Difference is their public relations are shit. "Seek a prostitute's help." Is all my instincts kept saying. Yes, my instincts Or maybe intuition? I don't have a lexicon. I have a hunger. I have no existing prostitutional experience. I've seen HBO. That's reality. This is reality. I shall be a satisfied taco muncher today.

I scoured that god damn street looking for my guardian hooker. Yes she, men scare me. She would be self-identifying; my beacon lady of the street light. I spent hours. I lost weight. I gained anxiety. I followed woman. I needed her. I went down the wrong way on a one way. She turned out to be homeless. I didn't give a shit. I said, "Mexican food?" She asked, "Where is the Women's Shelter?" I said, "Taco info first." She didn't want to negotiate.

My gas tank gave my stomach companionship. It was a setup. It ate. I cried behind glass at the frozen Mexican food in a Shell gas station. I was asked to leave. On my way out, I screamed, "This is one of those things polite commentary and a Plan B you can't fix!" I saw her. Finally, her, in casual flats brandishing a seductive beer belly with un-matching underwear/swim suit combination leaving the dark behind the station, was within vocal reach. She

came around that Shell's corner like the sun around the horizon. And like the Sun she blinded me with high beams. And I know that's an inaccurate metaphor, but fuck it. I'm a still a feminist. I'm still hungry. A guy skipped away behind her.

I asked, "Hey how much for-" She cut me off with, "You got protection?" I was appalled. I said, "Of course I don't. I came to you thinking you'd be already equipped with said, 'directions'." She looked confused. I was disappointed. Nothing works like you hope in life. Excluding George Forman Grills. But excluding the George Foreman Grill, everything blows; even my prostitute. She let me down. "What is your customer satisfaction rating?" I asked. She adjusted herself; I sniffed my hand.

LOOKING BACK

by Reyes Ramirez

When I was a child, I took
the key from underneath
the welcome mat, and sat on
our couch, tired from school.

And because I was a little shit,
I waited in selfish hunger
for my mother to come home
from working two jobs:

scrubbing white baby asses
and the blind elderly, hunched
over like peeled shrimp
with her callused hands.

While she boiled rice
and chopped tomatoes,
I told her everything I knew
except the fact that I loved her.

And now I know
that the body is only temporary
and then it really starts to hurt.



Roger Seward "Curiosity Hydrant"

9"x 12" Acrylic on Canvas



Adrienne Meyers "Americana Princess"
Digital Collage

FROM MANGOS TO MANGO'S OR A CARIBBEAN KID'S ACCOUNT ON LOVING MUSIC IN HOUSTON

by Andre Habet

"I miss the part of Fanaticism that involves unrequited longing."

— Steve Almond, *Rock and Roll Will Save Your Life*

I missed the first concert I was going to attend in Houston. A girl in my poetry class had invited me to catch a Local Natives show at Mango's, a place I remember a Yelp reviewer calling "the greatest vegetarian restaurant in the Montrose area." This was at a time when the word "vegetarian" was still as new to me as "Montrose." With no idea about who this band was, I took to the Internet and found singles that seemed okay, but weren't great to my The XX-tuned ears.

Six months prior to that time, I had moved into my cousins' house on Cypresswood Drive in Spring, for the fall semester of '09. There, I shared a house with three cousins and their significant others. It took me some time to realize that I was miserable, to notice that spending each weekend eating fast food (a novelty that wore out quickly) following shots, beers, and bong hits did little more than sedate me until Monday.

Resolved to change that, I decided on doing something drastic. I started talking up the cute music major in my class. She caught my attention with a shirt that contained spoilers for genre films. By

this alone, I took her to be the type of person who might know where the things were that would interest me, although I wasn't sure what those interests really were yet. She never spoke to me very much, and I'm certain now that she found my interest in her very strange, but because she played violin, wore clever shirts, and didn't shirk away when I said hello in the halls, I figured she could be the one who led me out of my cousin's man cave and into the light (spiffy glasses included).

I woke up from a nap a the day of the show and saw a text from violin girl that said she was in line and that I should hurry if I wanted to get in the show. In theory, if I brushed my teeth and left right then I would've made it in time. But then I realized that my Volkswagen was shit and probably would die on me going or coming, that I wouldn't be able to find parking and would miss out on the show anyway. I realized that violin girl was probably just being polite, and was in all likelihood hoping I'd be a no show. I thought I'd look strange standing there, listening to a band I was indifferent to with a girl I didn't know, and her friends who probably were much cooler than me.

So instead, I got up out of bed, washed my face, brushed my teeth and settled in for a Law & Order marathon.

II

At a time when Linkin' Park's Hybrid Theory and Sum 41's Does This Look Infected? ruled my portable CD player as a combat-ant against my sister's booming stereo of boy bands and pop starlets, the real gift of 'shotgun' was control of the car's radio; something neither of us had during a taxi ride one night during a family vacation to Merida. In taxi's backseat, we pouted and grunted at such volumes that the taxi driver cranked up the radio. Sandwiched between Spanish pop songs were the familiar snares and oh oh oohs of Gorillaz's "Clint Eastwood. By the chorus, we quit sulking and reveled in the rare experience wherein the two of us were enjoying the same song.

Once Gorillaz released their 3rd album, Plastic Beach, and selected Houston as one of their tour stops, I knew I'd have to make my way to it. Up to then, I had only ever been to the Toyota Center a single instance for a Rockets game for which I paid only ten bucks. Now I was sitting at my computer and scrolled between ticket options to find that tickets hovered between seventy and a hundred dollars. With the sort of pulse-pounding action I rarely experience from physical exertion, I punched in my debit card info and bought a mid-level ticket, knowing it'd mean cereal, Ramen and dollar menus for at least a month.

After a set by N.E.R.D., the stage went dark before lighting up again, large fluorescent blue letters spelling out G-O-R-I-L-L-A-Z illuminated the collection of musicians that took up the entire stage. Plastic Beach's 'Orchestral Intro' began in a manner infinitely more beautiful than its album counterpart. Had the show ended then, I would've considered it a success. However, Gorillaz went on to play a two-hour set that saw De La Soul, Little Dragon, Bobby Womack, and Chicago's Hypnotic Brass Ensemble make appearances that took me beyond anything I thought could be done in a show.

Gorillaz are no longer together. I've met two other people who were at that show and those exchanges are riddled with synonyms for 'great' 'once-in-a-lifetime' and 'fucking great.' On a bus occupied by those going home after late-night shifts, I listened to Plastic Beach on my iPod hoping to evoke the feelings that were so dominant just a few minutes earlier and heard little but the snores of the man sleeping behind me.

III

The problem with meeting people who share your interests is that more often than not those people will be a lot more knowledgeable than you about the things you care about and also more articulate at discussing those passions.

Although I had spent my miserable year in Spring discovering obscure music blogs, I found myself mute whenever people mentioned anything about Houston bands. Despite having checked out

several shows, I had yet to see a native Houston act perform. I wasn't sure where to find them, and those who I would overhear talk about Houston always spoke about it negatively or dragged Austin into the conversation. The few friends I had were writers with little interest in finding these places, or commuters who spent their free time in distant places like Katy, Sugarland, my abandoned Spring, and beyond.

Like my first attempt at attending a show in Houston, it took my interest in a girl to find a Houston band so I could wow her with my 'undergroundness' on a first date. It was on one of the English building's cluttered corkboards that I saw the flyer for the Tontons tour kickoff concert, which will forever stand to me as proof that flyers occasionally do their job of getting asses to places unknown.

The night of the show I found myself at Fitzgerald's with Melissa, a cute, smart girl who I was now certain liked me based off the kiss we shared before entering the venue. Already aflutter with good feelings, we swayed together through sets from A Sea Es (their 1st ever show), Featherface (who I'd unknowingly seen at Frontier Fiesta the year before), and the marquee act. Through those four hours of playful sounds, raucous guitars, and the Tonton's Asli Omar's sensual voice, it became apparent that, if it were up to me, I'd be with the girl I was dancing with for a long time.

I wonder if Melissa would have said yes to a second date if the show had bombed. I like to think yes, but her take on that night always suggests that the music had plenty to do with the image of me that was still forming in her mind.

IV

I consider my fourth year in Houston the equivalent of a bonus round. For a while I had been certain that graduating from the University of Houston either meant grad school or returning home to work until grad school happened. When grad school didn't work out in the Spring of 2012, I scrambled to find a means to stay in Houston in spite of my soon-to-be expired visa. Managing to keep my job with the university, I spent my last year in Houston working part-time,

doing video interviews for FUHA, hanging out with Melissa, and finding bands to fill the time that homework had once occupied. These four pursuits often mingled in ways that led to some of my best overall Houston moments, which included impromptu interviews at shows, writing articles during work hours, and attending shows in an unprecedented spontaneous fashion.

Despite attending several shows at its neighbor, Avant Garden, I had yet to see a show at Mango's since the bands playing there more often than not had names that were neither clever nor memorable. Arriving there, I was unimpressed by the place. It didn't seem ideal as a music venue and the beer was a dollar more than I figured it ought to be given the place's dive-y nature.

Once boredom overtook our crowd, and the specter of unfinished homework came over my friends, we decided to head out. While the others said their goodbyes, I returned inside just as a person in a featureless white mask adorned with feathers, white plastic jumpsuit and sparkling silver Toms took to the stage. I was prepared to witness nothing special from the performance. Then an image appeared behind him and with that image came music that was landscapes by way of I's and O's.

Soon after I was tugged by the arm and out of Mango's, making a note of the guy's name: FLCON FCKER. I messaged him a few days later, asked him for an interview, and unlike several of the bands I had asked up to that point, he was excited and remains one of my most-viewed Houston acts ever since.

Four years since I flaked on making it to the Local Natives show [a fantastic concert, according to anyone who attended], I live about a five minute walk from Mango's and pass it by on my way to Avant Garden's happy hour or my biweekly trips to disco Kroger. Occasionally I'll slow down if the music piques my interests and even sometimes lock up my bike next to the graffiti-riddled bus stop, ready to take in something new one more time.

SNAKE COUNTRY

By Jeni McFarland

"That's Snake Country," my husband says, standing at the window, eyeing our backyard.

"What're you talking about?"

"Come look." He points through the window.

I come look. I hadn't noticed, but he's stopped mowing the far corner of the yard. Snake Country is a patch of wild grasses, untouched, untouchable.

Before moving to Houston five years ago, I thought Texas was all snakes and poisonous spiders, tall cacti and ten gallon hats. But I have yet to see anything fiercer than a tree roach.

Growing up in Michigan, my mom always had a garden, with lettuce, melons, and tomatoes. Last year, I planted tomatoes and cantaloupe in the far corner of my yard. I agonized over them during the drought; I watered morning and night. I palmed the caked soil. Vines pushed up and crawled over the wooden beams I'd used to section off my garden. The leaves scorched in the high sun, curling, yellowing, then browning. Birds flew in and pecked at the unripe tomatoes, so I swaddled the plants with netting. When temperatures climbed into the 90s, the ants invaded. I gave up gardening all together. Weeds soon crowded out my vines. At summer's end, when temperatures dipped low enough to work in the yard again, I found a cantaloupe nestled up behind the garden's wooden boarder. It was fully ripe, and when I sliced it, it wasn't very sweet, but extremely juicy.

Snake Country is fruit that grows in spite of me.

"I'll get the weed whacker," I say.

"You can't go into Snake Country," my husband says, working hard to keep the corners of his mouth down. "You'll be killed."

"We can't just leave it," I say. "What about the HOA?"

When we first moved here, we considered buying a house in the country. Except there is no country in Houston; we would have had to move out past the suburbs, and endure an hour and a half commute morning and night.

My husband's parents still live in his childhood home, amid cornfields, just up the road from a gravel quarry. Their lot has a field of wild grasses sprawling between the house and the creek at property's edge. In summer, my father-in-law mows a lawn-sized patch in front of and behind the house, and lets the rest grow unadulterated. Sometimes in the fall, my mother-in-law asks my husband to set fire to the grass. Burn it down so it can rise again.

Snake Country is too lush for burning.

My husband and I go outside. We stand together at the edge of Snake Country, looking into the grass. We may be searching for snakes, for fruit. The grass is a tangle of southern green, a thick, rich enduring green that could be masking anything. Snake Country is its own microcosm. It's dense pine forests, sunlight slanting through. It's rivers and lakes, rolling glacial hills, robins in the summer, maple trees with leaves a blaze of color. It's tree fruit, always ripe, always plentiful, always permissible.

WHEN YOU ARE A LITTLE BIT HOMELESS

by Anthony Sutton

You'd be surprised by how easy it is to get around Houston on foot!

I sure was, but
that's because I at least have a car to live in!

And really, I have enough money to stay in Motel 6 another night, easy!

You wouldn't believe how great last night was!
I turned on the tube and I finally saw my first episode of Girls and
Lena Dunham's TV parents were over and she had an OCD breakdown
where she did things 8 times in a row, which I feel would happen to me, except

in real life, when things repeat, it happens with more irony.

For instance, I had a roommate who lived in his car,
slept in the parking lot of Target,
and one day woke to find that the whole city had frozen over,

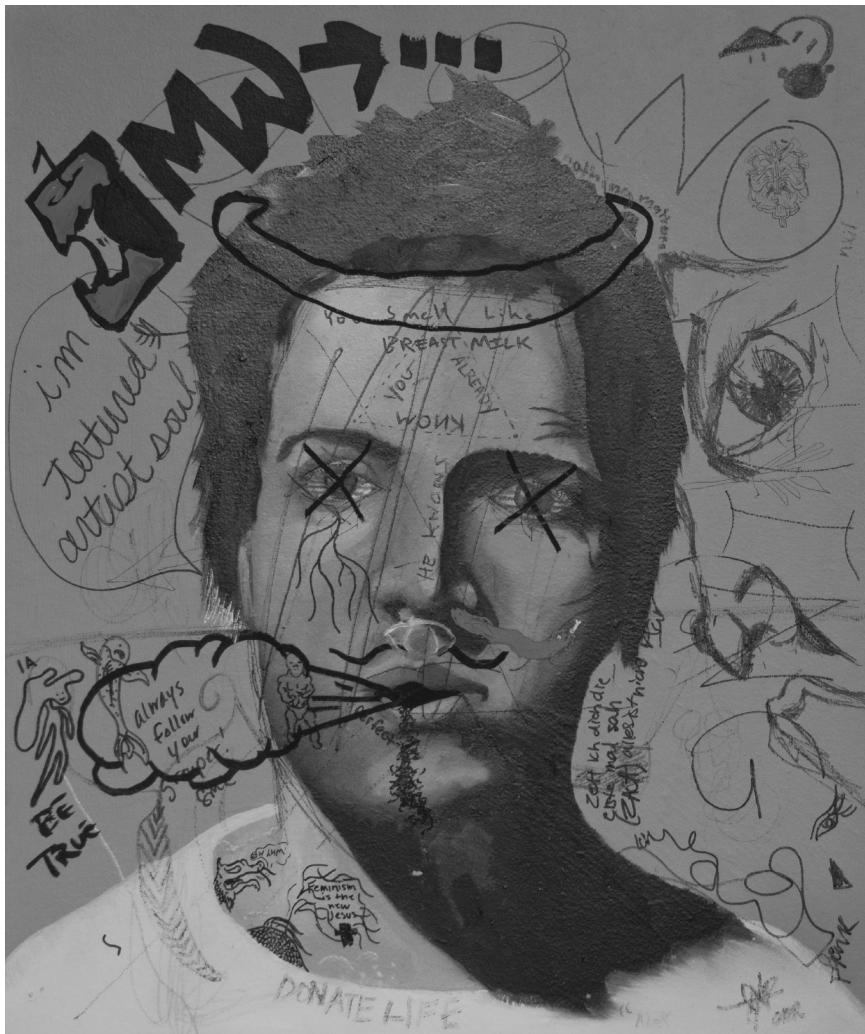
and there I was last night, all my possessions in the car, same time of year,
looking in the Motel 6 mirror,
tossing white towels I washed my hands with once
like God dropping a snowstorm onto the earth.



Humans of Houston "First Friday BBQ Fire"

Lindsey Slavin

Photography



Josh Davis "Untitled"

???

TO THE CHIFLADA WHO, AS I LATER FOUND OUT, STOPPED ANSWERING MY CALLS BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT I WAS CHEAP

By Edward S. Garza

Chiflada, Span., n., a childish, wild female, often materialistic

Yes, I admit it—I like to save money. I like getting the most for my dollar. And this is a vice? I'd understand if you just didn't like me (which, I'm sure, was a possibility). I'd understand if you thought I was dull and too thin. But "cheap"? How about "thrifty"? I'd even take "frugal."

Was it because on our fourth (and final) date I took you to Taco Cabana instead of Ninfa's? Don't mistake me, Ninfa's was a place I would've liked to have taken you—a place I could've afforded taking you—but, if you remember, the movie started in an hour, so we needed to eat somewhere quick.

Also, did you ever consider that the places I love going to—parks, art galleries, the beach—just happen to be inexpensive? Trust me, I would gladly pay more for these things, but, by the universe's grace, I don't have to. This is whereas the places you like to go—deafening dance clubs, restaurants with 30-minute wait-times—cost a lot of money. Part of me thinks that's the only reason you like those places.

Let me refresh your memory regarding the story you've been circulating with your girlfriends: you offered to pay for my two tacos. As I recall, I picked you up at 1:00 because the museum tour started at 1:30, but you shuffled down your apartment's stairs hungover. You were starving and

HOUSTON IS EVERYTHING

By Melissa Dziedzic

needed something to soak up the Smirnoff in your stomach. So we went to Doneraki's, and because you wanted to apologize for ruining our plans, you offered to pay for my modest meal. You insisted—aggressively—so I obliged. And then you proceeded to spend 19 count them 19 minutes in the restroom while I sipped my limonada, the best part of that day, and watched the Astros trounce the Cubs. When you finally came out, you looked like the vomit flew out of you like a demon-spirit. Never an “I apologize,” never a “Buying your two tacos and limonada was the least I could do.” It cost me the same amount of money to pick you up and drop you off.

I'm more foolish than I've admitted. I should have known you were a chiflada the first time you pulled out your bucket list from your purse. You did that. With all those sub-bullets concerning houses, cars, and dresses, you should've distilled 20 goals into one: “Get rich or suck a rich dick.” Finally, let me make a distinction I should have made earlier: while I may have been “cheap” in your eyes, I've never been “broke.” “Cheap” is a choice; “broke,” not so much. And “cheap” is dependent on what—or, in my case, whom—I spend my money on. And some people, they just aren't worth it.

I've lived in Houston for my entire life. There are those who would say that I've only really lived in Houston for the past four years—years I've lived within the city limits—but I would argue that those are people who don't really understand Houston. Houston is not simply defined by the politically set “limits” that only really decide whose responsibility it is to repair a road, or whether the hastily installed red light cameras are legal. Houston is a bulbous mass of communities, a quilt of neighborhoods with city- and town-scapes as distinct and diverse as the people who live in them. On the Northwest corner of the outer loop, I grew up as the suburbs around me expanded, though I wouldn't say that this particular landscape was either distinct or diverse. I don't recall ever patronizing independently owned and operated businesses aside from the few Chinese and Mexican places that were almost always tucked away in a strip center between a dollar store and Baskin Robins.

Towards the end of high school a friend and I visited the Heights—specifically, 19th street between Heights and Shepherd—and I fell in love. I loved that everything about this short leg of street was completely foreign and explor-able. I could walk from one place to another! To fifteen-year-old-me this street was the first glimpse at freedom from the oppressive monotony that was all the suburbs seemed to have to offer. Before this revelation, she and I had two choices about where to go out: to go see a movie or to go walk around the mall. Now we had the Heights. And, when we tired of the Heights, we had Montrose.

BIOS

Josh Urban Davis has an elephantitis tesseract penis that explodes in the Andromeda galaxy to the sound of a Philip Glass orchestra on crack. He lives in Houston.

Adrienne Elyse Meyers is a Junior in the Fine Arts Photography program at the University of Houston, a native Houstonian, and arts enthusiast.

Melissa Dziedzic is FUHA's biggest fan. In her mind, our videos are only surpassed by videos of wild buffalo, and twelve-year-olds dispensing guinea pig wisdom.

Edward S. Garza graduated with his Bachelor's degree in English from the University of Houston, where he earned the Lawrence Prize in Nonfiction and the Gentile Scholarship in Literary Criticism. His writings have appeared in the Houston Chronicle, OffCite, and several online journals.

Andre Habet received his BA in Creative Writing from the University of Houston and will be attending Oregon State University in Fall 2013 for an MA in Rhetoric. He is the co-founder of FUHA and laughs too loudly at his own jokes.

Catherine Martin is feeling 22, loves Hello Kitty, and writes the famous food blog arbitrarycriticism.com.

Jeni McFarland a Michigrant who'll start the MFA program in fiction at University of Houston Fall, 2013. Her work appears in Forge, Spry, and Glass Mountain.

Reyes Ramirez is a proud Houstonian. He graduated from UH in 2012 and is currently pursuing his MFA in Creative Writing from Texas State University-San Marcos.

Jairo razo is a graphic communication major at the university of houston. in his free time he is the weird guy walking down the street taking pictures.

When it came time to go to college, I didn't journey very far from home. With no long-instilled aspirations to become a Longhorn or an Aggie, I went to the university that happened to both specialize in a new-found passion of mine, and be a half an hour away from home. Situated just a few minutes from downtown (and every other centrally located part of Houston you could ever want to go) the University of Houston very quickly became my home. Whether wandering around campus at every hour of the day (and night), taking impromptu midnight trips to Walmart (at the time, a trip outside of 610), or driving around River Oaks looking at gigantic houses until the neighborhood police started tailing us, the campus and the city were ours.

I'll be moving away from Houston this September, but I don't want to leave. It has and is everything that I would ever want in a city (aside from widespread public transportation). I don't know how I'll live without the Mediterranean food, the people (friends and family alike), and the other great things you can find if you simply look. Everything feels like an adventure because you have to work for it. ~~Every ounce of unique enjoyment that you can find in Houston must be earned.~~ It's a tough city, in every way, but if you take the time to look you can find whatever it is you're looking for.

Roger Seward is an artist living and working in Houston, Texas (www.rogersewardart.com). His artwork explores human nature, the natural world, philosophy, sociology, and personal interactions

Lindsey Slavin is a proud Houstonian with a BFA in Sculpture from the University of Houston who currently juggles jobs at Blaffer Art Museum, d. m. allison art on Colquitt, and Art League Houston. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions and in the Aletheia Arts and Literary Publication.

Anthony Sutton received his B.A. in English-Creative Writing from the University of Houston where he was a Senior Editorial Assistant for Gulf Coast and Poetry Editor for Glass Mountain. He is currently poetry editor for Houston and Nomadic Voices and blogs for Ostrich Review.

Randall is a humanoid that writes self-incriminating poetics and flash-fictions. He just wants to hold you, gurl.

THANKS!

Thanks to all our contributors and friends who have and continue to make Houston an amazing city. H-town's lucky to have you.

A huge amount of gratitude to the people who followed FUHA since its start and gave us the willpower to continue when our Youtube views were a single digit.

Also thanks to you, intrepid reader, for taking a chance on this zine. I hope you find yourself in a week in a place unknown, your head bursting with wonder.

A black and white photograph of a textured wall, possibly concrete or stone, with a staircase railing visible on the left and a couch on the right. The text is overlaid on the wall.

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