



ARTICLES:

Ary Malaver. "La omnívora brevedad en <i>Cartucho</i> de Nellie Campobello."	2
Veronika Brejkaln. "Sips and Giggles: Alcohol, Tragedy and Ideo-Aesthetics in <i>La sombra del Caudillo</i> ."	11
María G. Hernández-González. "Petro-masculinidad y paisaje postcolonial en <i>El niño y la niebla</i> de Roberto Gavaldón."	20
João Albuquerque. "Jorge Luis Borges' Poetics of Narrative Fiction: Magic Causality and Defective Memory."	29
Luis F. Avilés. "La hospitalidad lingüística y la crisis de la mediación fronteriza en <i>Los niños perdidos</i> de Valeria Luiselli."	37
Irina R. Troconis. "Leaky, Dead, and Restless: Afterdeath in Contemporary Venezuelan Fiction."	46
Cristóbal Garza González. "México y Alemania: Crónica de una literatura no anunciada."	56
Jorge Camacho. "El cuerpo mártir: religión y 'reproducción' sexual en <i>Francisco</i> de Anselmo Suárez y Romero."	67
Carolina Rodríguez Tsouroukdissian. "A trilingual reading of 'A cartomante' by Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis."	76
Gabriel Lesser. "Racial Violence and Visual Media in <i>Vista del amanecer en el trópico</i> ."	82

CREATIVE:

Sandra Gutiérrez. "Closed Doors."	89
Andreea Ciobanu. "Las estrellas de Orión."	90
Sean MacGinty. "Isla del Sol, Lago Titicaca, 2008."	91
Maria León. "Manhood."	92
Dan Russek. "Tres sonetos epistemológicos."	96
Jose-Gabriel Almeida. "Great Deception."	98
Scott Ruescher. "Barrio Boston," and "Earth Day."	103
Chloé Georas. "lo imposible palidece ante la improbabilidad de no morir cada día."	106
Alexis Levitin. "Joy."	108

REVIEWS:

<i>The language of the in-between. Travestis, post-hegemony and writing.</i> By Erika Almenara. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2022. Reviewed by: Ignacio Sánchez Osos.	112
<i>Futuros menores. Filosofías del tiempo y arquitecturas del mundo desde Brasil.</i> De Luz Horne. Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2021. 294 páginas. Reviewed by: Gonzalo Aguilar	114
<i>Decolonizing American Spanish: Eurocentrism and Foreignness in the Imperial Ecosystem.</i> By Jeffrey Herlihy-Mera. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2022. 284 Pages. Reviewed by: Leila Gómez and Javier Muñoz-Díaz	117

Great Deception

Jose-Gabriel Almeida

ABSTRACT: A father trying to save the relationship with his son involves deceiving him.

New York City 1989

Carlos was a gifted saxophone player that captivated listeners. His unique timbre lit up the show, gathering a large crowd on the sidewalk. Under starry skies, he performed on the sidewalk outside Mickey Mantle's Bar on Central Park South.

Night after night, delighted audiences applauded with enthusiasm. These people rewarded his effort with some pocket change into his kitty, which lay set over the pavement. The young musician was destined for the ladder of success. At the bottom stood this kid from El Barrio with dreams of glory; at the top stood the world's stage: If only talent alone would've been the sole criteria for the bridge between the gap.

His climb began back in 1977 when he was only nine years old. That year the Yankees reached the World Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers. The year before, the Bronx Bombers had been swept in four games in the best-of-seven-game-series by the Cincinnati Reds. And for fourteen years before that, no Yankee team had made the playoffs at all. So what were the fans to expect? The general feeling was that this new and talented bunch, which included the great home slugger Reggie Jackson, would play as never before, but eventually lose as always.

As a loyal Yankee fan, Carlos hoped with all his heart that they would win. He even asked his father Rodolfo to join him in prayer. Rodolfo was happy to oblige. Every morning during the days of the competition, they would pray together, seeking divine intervention for the sake of the Yankees. The Yankees managed to tie the series at 3 and 3. And for the final game seven, Rodolfo went one better. He bought a saxophone.

"Play tonight and they will win."

"But dad, I don't know how."

"You'll learn."

That night, under a beautiful autumn breeze, Yankee Stadium exploded with excitement with the full capacity crowd screaming at the top of their lungs. While Carlos played his little heart out from the bleachers, the Yankees won in spectacular fashion on the field, with Reggie Jackson hitting three homeruns, but what made Reggie's feat more remarkable was the fact that he hit the three homeruns off three different pitchers and each homerun he hit, he hit them on the first pitch no less. The Bronx Bombers were finally once again World Champions. Ever since he could remember Car-

los had been fascinated by the seven wonders of the world, the remarkable, grand-scale monuments which included The Colosseum in Rome Italy, The Great Wall of China, The Taj Mahal in India, Christ The Redeemer in Brazil, Machu Pichu in Peru, The Chicken Itza in Mexico and Petra in Jordan; sights that have captured the imagination of artists and scholars for centuries: sights so beautifully sublimed they almost seem like optical illusions.

Since the Yankees had overcome insurmountable odds and once again become World Champions after so many years, Carlos came to consider them as the new wonder of the world, imagining a monument of the team assembled on a mountaintop with a gigantic bright orange sun up in the sky, like a melting pie, burning in the background. Convinced that his off-key toots had inspired them to victory, Carlos became hooked on his horn.

Rodolfo was glad at what he had accomplished. Raising a boy without a mother took some clever maneuvering and now he felt glad that he had cleverly given his son a new dream in life.

Carlos was a loyal father in the true sense. After the death of his wife getting marry again was never an option. No one will come between them. The best future for his little boy was all that mattered. Rodolfo's parental clutch would prove his biggest asset and his fatal flaw in the years to come.

Ever since Carlos was born they lived on the second floor of a two story building in Spanish Harlem. Doña Esperanza occupied the ground floor. The old lady took a liking to the young single father and his infant son. That was a blessing. Rodolfo relied on her to watch over the baby while he was away at work. In those days, he drove a cab for a living. The money was good and he saved every nickel. But he dreaded the long hours that kept him away from his pride and joy.

When Doña Esperanza died suddenly, Rodolfo was devastated. Her passing was like losing a second mother. On top of that, he had no one else to care for little Carlos. The kid was still only five. Rodolfo made the most out of bad situation. He tried talking to the landlord so he could rent out the apartment Doña Esperanza had left behind. Taking over that space was crucial for a plan he had in mind. But the greedy landlord who owned the property rejected his offer, citing that he could get more money for the apartment from an outside tenant.

"I want that apartment, you follow." Rodolfo pressed the Landlord

But no words could convince the shifty little man. Then Rodolfo went one better. He bought the entire two-story unit.

Rodolfo backed the bloodsucking landlord into a corner by speaking to him with the only language he could not resist. He put a hefty offer on the table and practically snatched the property from the landlord when the shifty little man dove for the money like a hungry wolf and ran like a thief.

Making the dwelling his own, the cab driver dad became a stay-home father. He opened up a bodega on the ground floor. From there Rodolfo could make a nice living and watch over his son as he grew into manhood.

After that miracle night at Yankee Stadium, Carlos gave himself a mission. During the next twelve years he locked himself in, literally. He distanced himself without a backward glance from any distraction for his dream of becoming a saxophone tenor. Besides school he never went out anywhere else. After doing homework, he routinely came down to the bodega and helped out his father until closing time. Late at night, the rigors of a grueling day did not keep him from going back up to his room and practice with the saxophone. The young man and his music became so inseparable that he even slept with the saxophone by his side.

Carlos, now in his teens, knew he was overextending himself. Apparently Rodolfo thought so, too. He encouraged his son to get some fun out of life outside the goal he had set for himself. Going out on date with a nice girl would be a start. Only the innocent young man had no clue how that worked. Rodolfo explained that by tradition it was the man's place to initiate the encounter and not the other way around. The gentleman approach was to ask the lady for a date. Carlos had great admiration for his father and respected his good judgment, but this business about asking a girl on a date did not sit well with the teen-ager.

Since his youth Carlos had lived and breathed the lonely world, imaging himself with no one else but his father at his side. As far as girls, of course, there were feelings involved, but not now.

Maybe later. His mission of turning out as a saxophone tenor took center stage above all else.

Because he wanted to be the best, Carlos practiced with the aid of musical sheets from the recordings of the great masters like Charlie Parker and Stan Getz. Carlos was determined to someday hit the perfect note. When he finally did at the age of twenty one—managed by years of effort that had completely isolated him from the outside world—he was ready for the big time, but not for the raw of life. The blows came fast and hard when a new excitement came into his life.

That new excitement was called Adonay.

One night while walking the streets, Adonay bothered to stop by and watch Carlos play. Amid the crowd she stood out like a figure of glory, looking young, sweet and full of wonder. Her striking beauty captivated the young musician. At one instance they exchanged smiles. That was a big turning point from which Carlos would never return; he felt madly in love, even though he had no idea what hit

him or what to call it. All he knew is he felt different in a way he had never felt before.

Thrilled by the prospect of meeting Adonay, Carlos wrapped up his playing session quickly. He then approached the young goddess with a smile as she was leaving so he could speak to her, except he had no clue what to say.

Adonay tried to help get the words out. "You want date?"

This caught him off guard, taking the wind out of his smile. Carlos did not know how to respond. He was confused with disbelief. A girl asking a boy on a date was unheard of for him. In his world, the man was always supposed to make the first move. He felt flattered that such a beautiful woman would take interest in him. What man would not want to spend the rest of his life with her, he wondered. Yet, she had chosen him. Adonay took his hand ready for the romantic flight, but Carlos hesitated.

The big question in his mind still eluded him—why should he be so lucky? Then he was confronted with a powerful revelation. When he asked her why she had come on to him so strongly, she explained that it was only a business transaction. Adonay, it turned out, was a prostitute. She worked the strip along Central Park South. Carlos felt as if a stampede of some wild animals had mowed him down. Horses, he figured, riding at full speed over him. The pain of jealousy pounded his chest, but his young heart was lost in the grip of love at first sight.

For the next several nights, Carlos put away his saxophone so he could follow her everywhere. Adonay would normally not entertain the advances of any man that was not willing to indulge, but she was amused by his innocence and felt bad for the wounded look in his eyes. Carlos liked her attention towards him, not caring about her past life, just as long as he could be next to her. The infatuated young man eventually asked her to marry him. Adonay accepted the proposal as a way to get rid of him. Carlos took her approval as a sign of love.

"I can't wait to tell my father" "Not your father."

"Yes. My father."

When Carlos told his father about the whole incident, Rodolfo became angry. The first thing that came to Rodolfo's mind was that Adonay must be a snake on the prowl, hunting for some fresh meat. He yelled at Carlos that he would never accept such a woman and to get on with his music. For the first time Rodolfo had lost his temper towards his son. Scolding his boy annoyed him, but he was firm in his reaction. Only Carlos wouldn't hear of it. He was not about to give up on Adonay, but he also wanted to keep the common ground between himself and his father.

"Dad, you said I could date girls" "I said a nice girl."

"But she loves me, dad." "Carlos, she's a prostitute."

Carlos shut the words out of his mind. All he understood was that Adonay and he loved each other. What could be better? In his eyes, that was all that mattered. He burst out of the house against his father's will, announcing that he was going for a walk and to please not wait up for him. He didn't want to hear more about the

subject. When Carlos walked out, Rodolfo lowered his head, closing his eyes with disappointment, but he found comfort in the thought that his son will soon come back home.

Carlos made all kinds of plans for himself and Adonay. They would get married, that was a must. A few years down the road they would have children. Meanwhile, he could work the bar scene playing the saxophone. Whatever little money he earned would sustain them through the lean times. But playing in bars was only a temporary gig until his promising career would flourish.

Then the big payoff would come in. They will have money to burn. Some day he would build her a palace where they could live and grow old together.

At first, Adonay saw Carlos as nothing more than her ticket to a better life, the way out of the streets. In the course of a short time, however, she had grown fond of his affection for her love and in turn started warming up to the possibility that she was capable of falling in love with him as well. He made her feel special, something no man had ever done before. She realized with enthusiasm that Carlos was gradually finding his way into her heart. Many times she had read stories about how people would fall in love and the feelings involved. And yet, somehow, she had never imagined anything remotely like this. The tender butterflies of passion consumed her.

But just when Carlos thought Adonay was his, just when he thought that he had the woman of his dreams in the palm of his hand, she told him that it would never work out. Adonay said that in time he would have a change of heart about her past. Once he would come to his senses, he would eventually walk out on her and leave her all alone and heartbroken.

In her young and rough existence, she had built the resilience to handle just about any kind of suffering. However, abandoned by the man she loved, she was all but certain, was not the kind of pain she could endure. With no other option, Adonay decided to go back to the streets; the only life she knew, where getting busted up inside had no major repercussions. On the streets, the skin thickens and the soul hardens. A loving heart is too fragile.

During moments of despair, she had always dreamed of a special light that would shine on her with hope. Perhaps one day that light will glow on her dark and dreadful world. For now, all she could do was buy herself time and keep dreaming for that day to finally arrive.

Carlos went to Rodolfo in tears. How could she not love him? Why did she prefer to be with all those men? He knew that this feeling for her was eating away at him, but without her, he felt excluded from the future.

"She's not meant for you, son."

But Carlos still wouldn't see it that way. Like any kid in love for the first time, he had an aversion to being the rejected lover, refusing even to take into consideration the kind words of a loving father. When Rodolfo tried to offer him a warm embrace Carlos resisted him.

"Maybe you are not meant for me, dad."

"You are all I have." "Not anymore, dad."

Carlos turned and left the room as he done before, only this time with no word if he was ever coming back. Rodolfo broke down in tears at the way his son was growing apart from him. What hurt the most this time was the uneasy feeling that possibly Carlos might not want to return home.

Meanwhile, Adonay had cleaned up her act. She was no longer walking the streets. In her quest to better herself, the former prostitute had landed a job as a waitress. Making an honest living gave her seriously eroding self-worth a boost. For the first time in her young life she felt a genuine sense of value as a person. This was an outlook she welcomed with open arms. Staring in the mirror didn't hurt as much anymore.

With her new sense of purpose, the first thing that came to her mind was Carlos. Thinking about the whole scenario, it made sense. Carlos was willing to take her out of a life that she had been forced into, and in fact: he had offered her the prospect for a better one. Now she was willing to take the chance and go with him. The place didn't matter. Just as long they could be together.

Maybe Carlos was the light she was waiting for to shine on her dreadful world after all. Adonay dreamed about the day when she could finally be together with the love of her life. Sooner or later Carlos would find her, she was certain. But the light, as she would drastically find out, would shine ever so briefly.

During this time, Rodolfo had been looking for Adonay as well. He got word that she lived in a one-bedroom apartment in Washington Heights in upper Manhattan. Rodolfo went to see this woman. Reaching her doorstep, the angry father rang the bell. Adonay at that instance had just finished coming out of a shower. The bell was music to her ears. Thinking it was Carlos, she opened the door in her bathrobe with her hair still dripping wet. The sight of Rodolfo took her by surprise.

"Who are you?"

"I am Carlos' Father."

Adonay opened the door wider inviting him in, even though she suspected that if Carlos happened to find her and came in right at that moment, he might get the wrong idea, anyone might. Sunlight streaming through the window poured all over her and she glowed in striking splendor and her dark eyes sparkled. Rodolfo regretted her beauty and wanted to punish her for it. He was standing in front of the object of desire, the forbidden fruit that had alienated his son away from him. He walked in and got right to the point.

"My wife died giving birth to Carlos and I never married again, you follow," he said with forward motion forcing her to retreat across the room. "I raised that kid all alone. He has never been around women. You are the first girl in his life and you can't let that cheap smile fool him."

These were strong words that hurt even stronger. By now they were standing just outside the bedroom. Adonay was sur-

prised that she had allowed herself to be backed up into a corner. Her street-bred temperament was well conditioned with reserves of stamina to wear down any man's daring approach toward her. But she had noticed the strength of mind in Rodolfo's eyes about keeping her away from Carlos and her stamina had buckled under his parental urging to reclaim his son. The words he had spoken kept recurring in her head, kept haunting her. A deep sense of terror overcame her delicate beauty. She felt Carlos was beginning to slip away from her hands.

The trembling young woman regained her composure when she heard a familiar voice and the pounding on the door.

"Adonay," called Carlos.

"Carlos," responded Adonay.

Adonay ran to answer the door while Rodolfo sneaked out of sight into the bedroom. In Rodolfo's thinking, he always identified the meeting point between what could possibly be achieved with words and what was certain to be accomplished with actions. As the situation remained, talking Carlos out of his desire for Adonay was a losing battle. Another measure must be taken.

Rodolfo had failed to make Carlos understand that getting involved with Adonay was a big mistake, even though he had tried every trick in the book. So he decided to figure out a way to build courage and go for one better, regardless of the possible dire outcome. He had to go one better, come what may.

While hiding in the bedroom, Rodolfo waited for the right moment when he would make his move. He had a fifty-fifty chance of success. Like the pieces on a game board of chess --the right move meant victory, while the wrong one, meant absolute defeat. With what he had in mind, he was afraid the odds were against him. Deep in his heart, he was overwhelmed with the distinct notion that his plan could backfire and he would end up crushed by methods of his own device, but he felt compelled to make any desperate attempt that will bring his son back to him.

Meanwhile, Adonay opened the front door and Carlos burst in with the saxophone hanging from his back. They immediately fell in each other's arms. Carlos enjoyed the scent of her wet hair and the feeling of her soft naked body under her damp robe. She felt completely protected in his arms. They loved one another; there was no doubt, and there was no doubt that they would've been happy together.

Suddenly, Carlos saw something that chilled his bones, a colossal horrific sight which brought down his world to pieces. He was staring at Rodolfo emerging from the bedroom with his bare chest exposed. Adonay understood right away what was happening and became shocked with fear. In her immediate reaction, she tried to plead with Carlos not be fooled. Her effort never got the chance. Carlos pushed her straight across the room, landing her on the couch. Looking into his eyes, Adonay realized in a moment of horrible certainty that nothing on earth would convince him otherwise. Her fate with him was sealed. The doomed young woman burst into tears.

Meanwhile, Rodolfo had stood still like a statue outside the bedroom. It was stressful standing there under the sunlight that stretched from the window. A thought occurred to him: that it must be autumn somewhere in the world right now, where the temperatures are cool and the fall foliage is in full effect. Not where he was standing, where he was standing the air felt oppressively hot and everything looked gloomy and shrouded in grey. Gray has no hue. Gray is essentially the color of bad weather. Gray is the color of pain and agony.

Rodolfo had observed in complete silence Adonay's downfall at the expense of his merciless act. For the first time he made a sound. Rodolfo let out a gasp of air; sweating out the moment, while he waited for his son to cast judgment on him.

Carlos turned slowly and locked eyes with his father. For a moment, Rodolfo almost came forward with high hopes that Carlos would understand that what Rodolfo had done was the desperate act of desperate father who was trying to do the best for his son and that the bond between them remained solid --son, can you ever forgive me?--but he stopped himself before even getting started. The hate in the eyes staring back at him, he thought, was too powerful. This is precisely what Rodolfo had feared. He had executed his plan. The move, however, had backfired and now he was torn apart. The discouraged father remained back in place, looking straight at his son, who was standing there with the saxophone hanging from his back.

Outside, it was late evening, and the silence inside the apartment blended with the undecided hue of the hour that precedes the minute instant just before dawn.

Carlos had almost reached his dream of becoming a world-acclaimed saxophone tenor. Looking through the lens of time, Carlos realized that he had come a long way from the sidewalk on Central Park South where he had delighted street audiences under starry skies night after night. As far back as he could remember, he had always dreamed of the world's stage. He remembered being at the bottom with visions of glory at the top of the global arena. If talent alone would've been the sole criteria for the bridge between the gap, he would've made it. But it was not to be.

Looking further back on the lens of time, he realized just far he had come from that fateful night at Yankee Stadium when he became hooked on his horn. The thought that it had been his father who had encouraged him on his path to glory did not escape him, but he was equally conscious of the hard reality that it was his father who had crushed the very dream he had

inspired in him. What his father had done fit properly into a betrayal of the highest order and he could not bring himself to glorified him in any way.

Then Carlos severed the last link he had with the man who had been his hero all his life. He freed himself from the strap of the saxophone, letting the instrument slide off his back. The saxophone landed with a heavy thud on the floor.

Without any other gesture, Carlos walked out. The room was

left in complete silence with Rodolfo frozen in place and Adonay hunched over on the couch. She still seemed to be in shock while Rodolfo realized that this was more than what he had bargained for, saying, "He'll never be back."

These were prophetic words. Neither Adonay nor Rodolfo ever saw him again.