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## Willing Beasts

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WILLING BEASTS

A Thesis

by

JOSÉ LUJÁN

Submitted to the Graduate College of  
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

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Major Subject- Creative Writing



WILLING BEASTS

A Thesis  
by  
JOSÉ LUJÁN

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## ABSTRACT

Luján, José, Willing Beasts. Master of Fine Arts (MFA), May 2020 72 pp., 12 references.

“Willing Beasts” is a poetry collection that consists of the title poem then is divided into three sections which are named “Willing Beasts of Rebellion”, “Willing Beasts of Desire” and “Willing Beasts of Groove”. The first section titled “Willing Beasts of Rebellion” consists of poems which are rebellious and protest in nature. The second section titled “Willing Beasts of Desire” consists of poems that more personal in nature and reveal more about my life. The third section titled “Willing Beasts of Groove” consists of poems which are inspired by the songwriters that have influenced me as well as poems which are accompanied by guitar tablature which demonstrate the power that poetry has with music or just as much independently of being accompanied by music.





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## CHAPTER I

### CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

There are varying opinions when it comes to research one should do prior to reading a piece of work. Not just a poem you read randomly but an entire body of work you invest your time to take in. I am of the opinion that an author, or in this case a poet's, motivation and background are important when trying to analyze their writing. You have to ask yourself if you can really grasp what a poem is trying to convey or emote if you haven't quite grasped where the poet is coming from. What moments in their lives have lead them to the overwhelming desire to write and write poetry specifically? What have they studied that has come before them that has brought them to such conclusions? Who are their heroes and how have those heroes help mold the writer and poet you see before you today? What drives them to create and how has that drive influenced what they create?

Those very crucial underlining questions have brought us together in this pivotal practice in which the writer or poet, in this case the poet being myself, tries to answer those questions as well as many others which I might have left out earlier in order to fully grasp why my poetry collection *Willing Beasts* has come to be. Only this way you can see the real me and hopefully understand what it is that makes me tick and compels me to create songs, stories or in this very case poetry. At the end of the day we want to be acknowledged and understood and let me tell you that I am no different.

My story begins on Nov. 15, 1984, the first of five children in the city of San Juan, the capital of the Caribbean Island of Puerto Rico often referred to as “La Isla Del Encanto” which roughly translates to the island of charm, a term which I briefly refer to in my poem “Puerto Rico” about the island. In this poem I also reference more aspects of my home country which I always carry in my mind. I reference the coquí, which is a miniature frog native to the island. This frog is a national symbol for the Island itself. A frog which is named by the sound of the mating call made by the male of the species and can be heard throughout the island at night. The sound of this mating call is a soothing sound to many Puerto Ricans that when heard, especially after being gone for so long, fills one with a tremendous feeling of patriotism and pride. There is a poet that I saw Denice Frohman, who has poetry with that same sense of pride and aching for Puerto Rico, perform at UTRGV. She spoke about her poem “Accents” which influenced me and speaks mostly about her mother’s Puerto Rican soul living in the states. She also spoke about a song which many of us Puerto Ricans hold dear and has become our unofficial national anthem named “Preciosa” by Rafael Hernández Marín. This is a song that inspired her greatly just as it did I when writing my poem.

Towards the end of this poem I also reference San Juan, which I refer to by its nickname “Old San Juan”. They nicknamed the capital city “Old San Juan” due to the preservation of its historical Spanish architecture. The Spanish built forts which would fight off pirates as well as any other enemies. This city is especially important to me since it’s my birthplace. I started my life within blocks of those old Spanish forts, historical Spanish buildings and cobbled stoned

streets. To this day I feel a keen connection to the island pulling on me and calling to me, although I have the misfortune of not being able to visit on a regular basis. I believe that longing the island's presence in my mind and soul is a result of the lack of my closeness with it and is ultimately why I feel that constant calling.

I was born to a father who was born and raised in Puerto Rico and a mother who was born and raised in the northern state of Tamaulipas in Mexico which needless to say has pumped me full of two cultures steeped in history and intrigue. The mixture of each one of their personalities and distinct cultures have shaped the man and writer that I am today. One can't honestly begin to analyze me or what I have written without analyzing the great people my parents are and their great cultures, which they have exposed to me with such pride. Not only do they have pride for their individual cultures but they are also people who have great respect for each other's cultures as well, which has always been a valuable lesson on to itself.

My father is more of an introspective person who is hardworking, quiet most times but adventurous nonetheless. The death of his father (my grandfather), who died a couple of decades before I was to be born and I contemplate in the prose poem "To the Grandfather I Never Knew", at an early age I believe forced my father to grow up sooner than one would like to. He had to take on the burden of looking out for his sister and mother from then on. In this poem I wonder what my grandfather contemplated when his mind would race and whether he even pondered what kind of person I would be even though he had no inkling of me. I wondered what kind of personality he had and wondered whether through my father's eyes I could have a



window to who my grandfather was as a man. The line “What a strange exercise it is to perform when one contemplates the life of a man who has passed from this earth before you could feel his presence for yourself” conveys my desperation to know my grandfather. To this day I have no clue what kind of man my grandfather was because of my father’s silence and reluctance to speak on the matter. From this process in contemplation of my grandfather, my father and a past which I know nothing of I’ve come to realize that death has a keen way of shaping a man.

My father’s lust for knowledge and his ambition to succeed and improve have lead me to be able to live in different sections of this country which has opened my eyes to a greater world before me. My two years spent in Ann Arbor, Michigan while my father attended the University of Michigan in order to complete his Masters in Business Administration exposed me to the English language for the first time. That was an experience, around the age of six, that taught me how to observe my surroundings, mentally detailing everything I see as well the mannerisms and non-verbal reactions of people. Developing the skill of observation allowed me to survive the early days of living in Michigan while I learned the English language, which was utterly foreign to me up until then. I can’t begin to tell you how the importance of being able to observe my surroundings has helped me in my poetry.

The next stop due to my father’s hard work and ambition was in the Southern California border town of Chula Vista in San Diego County. The five years there exposed me to the Mexican culture in person, other than what I had learned from my mother, and a different rhythm of life that few places can provide as well as a diverse population. Southern California is a

beautiful blend of diverse races, cultures and ethnicities which prove to be a big lesson to the benefits of expanding your horizons as a human being. That was an experience which I hadn't had until then considering that Puerto Rico and the state of Michigan weren't a hotbed of diversity during those times. I learned to be all inclusive and have a keen sense of the different rhythms of life that exist out in the world and I feel that radiates throughout my work.

Our final stop, around the age of 12, in the journey my father's employment took me in was back to the region of the world where my mother grew up and that is the Rio Grande Valley. My mother, as I mentioned before, grew up on the southern side of the border but I believe the sides that straddle the border line in the southern Texas region are one in the same in many respects. The Rio Grande Valley had its own lessons in store for me throughout the years that have also contributed to my need to create and the style in which I do so. I have been able to see the real struggle that many of us Latinos have had and continue to overcome. I was exposed to the unfortunate poverty and the corruption which perpetuates that poverty among other things. Living in this beautiful community has given me the drive to write whether it be songs or poems which shine a light to those struggles and to life all around us. You can see different aspects of my life in the valley and what I've observed throughout some of my poems, some of which are more forthright about it and some that lurk more under the surface. The best example of what I have observed and contemplated in my time thus far in the Valley would be my poem "Magic Valley". I named the poem as such because when I was in high school I first learned that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century those attempting to promote the Rio Grande Valley would do so by using the

term “Magic Valley”, a place where Anglo farmers can easily gather water for their farming needs and unfortunately exploit labor from the local Latino population. I attempt to capture the essence of that struggle which continues to this very day.

The term “Magic Valley” is, of course, a term that has been used throughout the years by other legendary poets from the valley such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Erika Garza- Johnson. Erika Johnson herself started her own press which drew upon that term and was named Magic Valley Press. The poetry in her collection *Unwoven*, had poetry which really spoke about life in the Rio Grande Valley and her experiences there. Her poem “Rio Grande”, in particular, speaks about that same pain and struggle with understanding our past that many fellow Valley residents, like myself, grapple with. The line “so clumsily I fall/back in to the/ Rio Grande/ and wet/ have gone home to/ black out pictures/ so no one knows my ancestors”, touches upon that same struggle with identity and the role those before us play in that. My poem attempts to address that same sentiment.

The great Gloria Anzaldúa has a big role in my ability, as a Latino writer, to be able to write and create. Her accomplishments speak for themselves and have opened doors for Valley poets, like myself, that if closed would have kept us from being heard. She wasn’t a direct influence on me but I do understand what she did to ensure that poets like me have the outlet that we now have. Her work is the most in-depth exploration of the Rio Grande Valley and how a term like “Magic Valley” exists in its history. Her work had an influence on my writing before I

even knew she existed. That is the best way I can describe her work in relation to my particular poem in question and any of my other work.

My mother, although hard working and ambitious as well, is more of an artistic free spirit than my father. She is outgoing and makes friends very easily, all traits which I have tried to carry as well within the artist community. She passed on her great love of music to me, which in turn lead me to the desire to write and create my own voice. Without my love of music and getting exposed to such great songwriters and musicians from both sides of the border, I would have never taken the journey to writing poetry and working on my masters in the creative writing field. The music in Spanish she showed me was rich in lyrical content and was proof that words matter and if used in the right way can provoke thought and bring good to a society. Songs such as “Cien Años” by Pedro Infante and “El Jinete” by José Alfredo Jiménez come to mind when thinking of the rich lyrical content that I would hear during car trips with my parents when I was a child. My mother was the one that owned the radio when we were in the family car, so it all started with her. So whether she realizes it genuinely or not she is the reason why I write and why I believe and stand by the power of poetry and words in general. My belief is that turning a phrase in the right way can move mountains. I also truly believe that the misuse of words can lead to world wars and the discarding of their power can lead to indifference, which is just as dangerous.

I speak about my background mostly in the second section entitled “Willing Beasts of Desire”, not only to give you a view into what makes me who I am, not only a man but in this

case more specifically a poet and/or writer. Although nuggets of myself and history are present within my poetry, I tend to try to avoid pouring that into the work. The specificity that often comes with sharing one's story, I feel, narrows the poem's ability to allow you to speculate and draw your own interpretations. That is of course not intended as a disrespect to anyone because I've read great material in which the poet's history is explicitly all over their work, I just don't have the inclination to do the same. The content I write about does have elements and offers to share a few clues into my life but there aren't any specifics which show through, with a few exceptions. I really enjoy operating within the purposely vague when writing poetry at times, which I believe allows for the audience to provoke thought and that ambiguity encourages that same audience to take all sorts of avenues that didn't even occur to me prior to writing the particular piece.

To know where my true inspiration to write has come from then you would have to explore the songwriters that first captivated me. Before I even knew what a poet or poetry was I was first moved by the magical turning of a phrase of my first influences Bob Dylan, Jim Morrison and Tom Waits. I started learning how to play the guitar and piano as a youngster because of tremendous impact they had on me and to this day I still write music and play at dive bars around the state. These men did not only teach me the power of music but specifically the power of words and how certain combinations have no limit to what they accomplish. My love of poetry came from listening to their words. I can still recall listening to Bob Dylan sing the words "How many roads must a man walk down/ before you can call him a man?" from his song

“Blowin in the Wind” and I was struck by the phrase. I asked myself how one line can provoke so many emotions and thoughts? I knew then I wanted to use words as a way to provoke thought, bring overall awareness and impact people’s lives for the better.

These songwriters taught me that words matter and that it didn’t matter how fancy or innovative the music was without a voice and message behind it- then it was hollow. Through listening to the band the Doors, I developed the desire to study their lead singer/songwriter Jim Morrison which lead me to his great love for poetry. The earliest poetry collections I read where authored by him and my earliest work truly reflected that. His collection of poetry, *Wilderness: The Lost Writings of Jim Morrison*, was the first collection I ever read. I started to play with imagery and would later mix them with concrete ideas that I wanted to convey. The poem in my collection which I think best embodies this would be the poem “Willing Beasts” which is the title poem of my collection. The poem has a combination of fantasy and debauchery mixed with the concrete idea that I want to convey which is that we are all willing participants in our defeats and successes to a certain extent. The combination of both concepts in writing is something that Morrison first opened my eyes to.

In the case of Tom Waits, he continued me down that path but also showed me a grittier side to what words could do. He used a lot of imagery that was in the fantasy realm but he would in the same respect use a lot of real imagery of the pain he saw around him. He showed me how beautiful and cruel we can be sometimes and we can all become cogs in a machine if we tune out from what is going on in the world. Although I can point to several of my poems to demonstrate

the influence Tom Waits has had on me, the one poem in my collection that comes immediately to mind when contemplating that very influence would be the prose poem “Taming Timing”. In that prose poem I use imagery, such as the line “Silent screams radiate from an organized flock all wanting what each other has yet settling for what perceived destiny has bestowed upon them revealing itself, that which lies within, as a beaten animal yearning for something further than just mere instinct”, to highlight the feeling that on a daily basis we all become sheep following each other into what was sold to us as the keys to the kingdom when in reality we are lambs being lead to slaughter. I believe we have all felt the desperation of having to seemingly do the same thing day after day and contemplating the merits of perpetuating that vicious cycle. That poem, such as many others in my collection, is written in prose form which gives me the ability to write in a rhythm and with a freedom which I deem necessary to how I create. With the style of prose poem, I feel I am allowed to just write what is on my mind and express myself freely.

Another poem which is dedicated directly to Mr. Waits and which I wrote to attempt in my small way to convey his spirit which draws me in is the poem “Tom Waits for No One”. I was inspired to write this particular poem after seeing a poem Tom Waits wrote in honor of another admired musician Keith Richards, best known for being the guitarist of The Rolling Stones. The poem he wrote for Keith was entitled “A Likely Story” in which he uses whimsical and fantastical imagery to help describe the huge personality and creative that Keith Richards is. After reading his poem, I thought that such a poem should be written about Tom Waits himself if it hadn’t been done so already. I took it upon myself to try to write a tribute to one of my heroes

in the same way. I used his last name in a word play by ending each stanza with the phrase “Tom Waits For No One” and also used images such as “His tongue speaks truth in a fire of whiskey” and “Tom awakens in a haze of cigarette and gargles glass for breakfast” to describe a bigger than life character such as he is.

The other two aforementioned songwriters might have opened my eyes to the world of words, but Bob Dylan himself opened the flood gates to my desire to write. His collection of lyrics, *The Lyrics: 1961-2012* by Bob Dylan, encapsulates most certainly the biggest reason above all what inspires me to write. He has a beautiful way with words and knows how to turn a phrase such as in the lines “You don’t need a weather man to know which way the wind blows” and “Twenty years of schoolin’ and they put you on the day shift” both from his song “Subterranean Homesick Blues”. Both those lines touch upon the climate of our society and how we recognize as well as fit within that structure. That being said, it wasn’t just the way he turned a phrase but it was the realization that he had of the immense power of those words. He also understood that he shouldn’t stand in the way of the words he wrote and he should allow those who came across those very words to make their own conclusions to what they have just come across. The idea isn’t to use poetry or words to preach, the idea is to use words or poetry to provoke thought. He doesn’t desire to tell you what to do but he does intend for you to use the power of contemplation once you hear his stories. It is an end game which I have and will continue to stress throughout my work and anytime I am asked what the purpose of any sort of art or poetry is in my view. They would try to pin Bob Dylan to becoming one thing or another



when I believe all he wanted to do is create and provoke thought and that is the biggest thing I have taken away from him in my writing.

I'd like to show an example of his influence in my writing with one poem or another in the collection but in reality there isn't one poem that personifies his influence on me. The poem "Dylan Goes Electric" is my way to help describe with his own sentiments the true aim of why he creates. I created that poem after years of viewing his interviews, performances and seeing how he articulates himself in the face of such pressure and questions. In my poem I use a mixture of witness and documentary poetry elements which I believe captures the essence of philosophy and mentality in the face of opposition to his experimentation artistically. In my poem I put myself in the mind of Dylan and respond in those situations that he was put in as if I were him. I also present situations in the poem that the real Dylan was faced with during that time. Dylan was always opposed to be bogged down to being considered part of any one genre of music or being labeled such things as "the voice of a generation" or "protest singer". He refused to answer any questions regarding specifics when it came to the imagery in his words or the images he would put in his cover art as well and I try to convey that in this poem.

During my high school days, Bob Dylan didn't just open the flood gates for me but he also opened my world to an entire generation of poets I had no clue existed, which have come to equally influence me and that is the Beat Generation. I would see poets of that generation, during live performances and in documentaries, surrounding the musician everywhere he went. He

understood the importance of surrounding himself with creatives that help push the limits of what words can achieve as well as discover.

This generation of poets and writers made a significant impact on me for several reasons. They were on a quest to see beyond the norms of society and to reach a further understanding of the world and our place in it. Their use of several forms of liberation and their unique reporting on the human condition was not to be denied. They were non-conformists in every sense of the word and practiced an honest form of rebellion that had a pull on my writing, since the day I picked up my first guitar at 17, and influenced the way I saw the world. The way they spoke to the world telling tales of hedonism, the rejection of materialism, liberation of sex, mind expanding drugs and many other controversial subjects which are real and not just something to disregard. They were much more than just that though; they were geniuses that spoke truth to ignorance and indifference. They were not going to conform to what society had become numb to and expected everyone else to succumb to as well.

The Beat generation has influenced my poetry by filling it with a great sense rebellion. Their poetry was full of thought provoking rebellious ideas and concepts which would push the limits of not only creativity but pushed for change as well. I want my work to bring that same sentiment to the current world of poetry and put my part to contribute to its aim to provoke thought amongst its readers. That would also be mixed with my experiences and Latin American roots, which are dear to me.

Several Beats have had a tremendous influence on me such as Kerouac and Burroughs, but the one which I gravitated most to was Allen Ginsberg himself. Allen Ginsberg was my gateway or portal you could say to the world of the beat poets and my introduction to Ginsberg was done by none other than Mr. Bob Dylan himself. My obsession with all things Dylan led me to stumble upon videos of him and Ginsberg having conversation after conversation of all kinds of subjects both in philosophical and exploratory nature as well. Those conversations in question drew me in to the Beat poet's mind and led me to explore his background and work. His continued bravery of always speaking his mind and breaking through barriers, that in all honesty needed breaking, was truly inspiring. He pushed through the limits of expression society tries to impose on its artists, the absurdity of materialism, the needless need for the war machine and many other issues.

Allen Ginsberg's legendary collection *Howl and Other Poems* was his biggest influence on what I am as a poet today. It was also a beautiful look into the man's mind. He held nothing back and didn't allow the calls for censorship to hinder him from his goal of speaking his truth, which I believe is a truth all to this day should continue to hear. The poem "America" from that aforementioned collection of poems is a direct influence to the poem "Magic Valley" in my collection. The way he describes his home, America, was very captivating and fascinating. You could feel Ginsberg's pain, love and anger for his homeland all in one swoop. The words together create what I would call a wonderful symphony of honesty.

I wanted to bring that same pain, love and anger I feel about the Rio Grande Valley into my poem “Magic Valley” that Allen Ginsberg pours into “America”. I wanted to show that I truly believe there is a beauty to this area of the country I call home with great pride. I also wanted to bring to light the injustices and blind eye turned to the ails that its people go through on a daily basis. I wanted to convey the juxtaposition of the Rio Grande Valley with its great people and history all through its streets but with the corruption as well as exploitation of those great people that unfortunately exists. Lines in the poem such as “Why must our youth deny their roots to appease your insanity?” and “When will you shuffle your feet with the pride of a thousand gringos?” are my attempt to try to wake people up to fight for our community. I feel like we suffer as a community silently as we routinely get exploited for the vast array of things we have to offer and then allow those from the outside to create false narratives about us in the process. I want people reading this particular piece to appreciate the beauty of the Rio Grande Valley but also be provoked to search out information or if they are locals be provoked to action to fight such injustices and overall malaise to those aforementioned injustices.

Another aspect I’d like to discuss is my affinity for the themes of “rebellion” and “protest” that permeate throughout my poetry collection particularly in the section “Willing Beasts of Rebellion”. Through my moving around, as I discussed earlier, during my childhood and my desire to search out the many lessons history has to offer, I suppose there has been a spark lit in me that gravitates toward doing my part to upset the status quo and inspire others to do the same. It is a burning within me that howls for truth and gives into the instinct to speak my

mind when I write. My consumption of the music and writings of Dylan, Waits, Morrison, Neil Young and others showed me the need and great change one can help seek when writing for those who might not have the medium to express themselves as we do. The idea that we as writers, musicians, poets and artists give a voice to the voiceless as well as strength to those who so desperately seek it. When I use the phrase “voice to the voiceless” what I mean is that there are people who have something to say but don’t have the skill artistically to convey that message. It is not a phrase I use to belittle or demean anyone because we all have our own voice and our own beliefs. That voice and those beliefs that each of us is equally important. That being said, there are some of us that don’t know how to quite express that voice and I believe it is the duty of writers, artists, musicians and etc. to use the gift that they have been given in order to help people convey those thoughts.

One example of a poem in my collection that conveys this protest style which can be seen throughout my writing is the poem “Caravan of Partisanship”. In this poem what I try to mostly convey is my feeling that we need to reassess who it is we are fighting with and fighting for. We tend to, as a society, fight each other on whatever social or political issue becomes part of the national conversation. When we fight each other we form a horizontal divide amongst ourselves and what I aim to preach is that we create a vertical divide which separates us from the government and its benefactors, which are the corporations and special interests that desire to divide and conquer us. The lines “Must it be you versus me or will we come to the obvious conclusion of us versus them? / Shall we continue to allow ourselves to be divided vertically? /

Or shall we begin to divide horizontally?” in the poem extenuates my view on the current divisive nature that consumes this country and others for that matter. I want to wake people up and have them see that we are much better served fighting those who oppress us and not each other. We as individuals are victims of a system we should fight to improve and change.

Another example of where you can see the protest style in my writing would be the poem “A Manager and her role in the Death of a Banker” which reflects back on my seven-year stint as a banker at a large bank. What those years taught me is the sheep that big corporations make out us hardworking people to be and those who unwittingly become their pied pipers in order to facilitate that indoctrination they so desire to implement. My relationship during that time with my branch manager became very tumultuous because of my need to be appreciated and respected as an employee and her need to constantly have her finger pressed down on all her employees. A practice of pressure which is demanded of her and wrapped in a nice little bow as to convey that undue pressure as necessary for success. I came to realize that no matter how much success you have as an employee you are to be used for every last drop of productivity and discarded once you are dried up.

I developed an anger and animosity toward my branch manager but then slowly I came to realize that she too had become an unwitting pawn in the corporation’s game. She slaved away doing what her higher ups pushed her to do while setting aside any regard for her employees, her health and her mental well-being in order to achieve some level of success that just really didn’t exist. The poem itself took on that same identity seemingly starting off as a poem of angst

toward a particular person, in this case my bank manager, then slowly evolving to feeling sorry for her in a way. She had become a pawn in the game of a corporation and I couldn't quite put my finger on whether she was, is or will ever come to that realization. The line "You are monotony personified and I refuse to crawl into the rabbit hole you unknowingly reside in. I've spent part of my youth raging your subtle and sometimes blunt attempts at indoctrinating me into your world of false delusions" expresses my initial anger with the situation and that quickly evolves to that aforementioned sympathy which is described in the line "Throughout the years I've caught myself looking in your direction, as you engage the next potential dollar sign walking into the branch with their phone held against their ear as to convey some sort of perceived superiority, wondering how you can consider this a life fulfilled. How you can one day retire, grab a lifetime of belongings, pose for a picture with a coaxed smile along with a ten cent trophy and not look back with a thousand-yard stare". In this poem you can really see my struggle with an anger with a particular person while also realizing that my anger and my act of protest should really lie with those who create the atmosphere that breeds such animosity.

Another aspect of my work that I'd like to address is my desire to sometimes write with end rhyme. I am well aware that the style of end rhyme is a style which is not on the forefront of most poets' minds during this moment in history. I am also aware of the stigma and condescension that can be received as a result of writing in that style. I have a great love for rhyme and find that it brings a versatility to a poem in the sense that not only can it be read but it can also easily roll off of the tongue, as they say, when being performed in spoken word.

Of course my love of music and songwriting has influenced my desire to create poetry with end rhyme. Early in my writing journey I made the conscious decision to embrace that inclination instead of run away from it. I don't exclusively write in this style because I believe diversity when creating art is always best but it is present in my work. When writing songs there is usually an inherent yearning for end rhyme and for myself the lines between good lyrics and good poetry are often very blurred. That is not to say that all lyrics in songs are considered poetry in my eyes, but there is a lot of well written material that has the right to be labeled poetry just as any other genre of poetry.

I believe that a lot of good work can both occupy the space of music and poetry at the same time and I explore that within my collection such as in the poem "Righteous Troubadour", in where I use a pied piper of sorts as the central theme of the piece that continually repeats a mantra that I live by which is that we can always be free within a song. No matter the highs and lows that life could possibly bring there is always a song which you can be free and liberated within. We all need a place to escape to when life becomes a burden and for me that place is music and poetry.

The section entitled "Willing Beasts of Groove" is the third section of my poetry collection and it focuses on pieces of writing which are inspired by songwriters or are words that have been put to music which I also have created myself. I wanted to show that the songs which I have written can stand on their own as poetry and make an impact. Pieces such as "I'm your fool" and "Call me the bird" I hope stand as shining examples of songs that can shine just as



brightly without music behind their words and that those very words still hold the same impact no matter how they are delivered, which I believe is a true sign of great poetry. Along with the songs I added the guitar chords and tablature that goes with the corresponding pieces of writing which the music accompanies. Guitar tablature is a musical notation in the form of fingering instead of musical pitch. The lines, located under the poems, represent the strings on a guitar and the numbers represent how far down the guitar's neck/fret board the note is played. The poet Amalia Ortiz did something similar in her book *The Cancion Cannibal Cabaret*, in which she accompanied some of her pieces with its corresponding musical notations. I believe that would be an interesting way readers can also take part in a portion of the experience and see for themselves how the music interacts with the words. It also conveys my strong belief that the words and music are powerful together and just as powerful independent of each other.

After all the information and insights, I have shared about my life and this collection of poetry entitled "Willing Beasts" I believe it all comes down to one desire on my part and that is the desire to provoke thought. The goal of provoking thought is a goal which I believe is very important and essential when trying to create and I strive for that in anything I create. At the end of the day if after reading my work I have inspired others to explore, provoked thought, inspired action and ultimately inspire you to create yourself than I consider my work successful.

I would like my work to be considered a throw back to an era of poetry gone by combined with the Latina American roots as well as the experiences that have made the man you see today. In my opinion in poetry, just as in music, styles and movements happen in cycles.

Those cycles and movements come around again eventually and I believe the time is now to bring that same sense of thought provoking rebellion that was brought forth by the Beat generation and counter-culture. I have a lot of respect for the great contemporary Latino poets such as Raúl Salinas, Amalia Ortiz, Gloria Anzaldúa and Erika Garza-Johnson amongst others, which have shown me a lot about being true in one's poetry. I aim to take what I've learned from them and my earlier influences from the Beats in order to forge my own path in today's world of poets. I want my mixture of prose, free verse and rhymed poetry with my stream of conscious style of writing as well as often found musical rhythm in that same writing, to create my own identity in the poetry universe.

Finally, I would be remised if I didn't mention the tremendous impact the MFA program at UTRGV had on my writing. I felt a great sense of comradery with my fellow classmates during my time here as an MFA student. Having like-minded individuals that had that same urge to create but each one in their own unique way opened my eyes to what was possible in writing. My fellow students showed me that there is a various amount of ways you can express yourself and it encouraged me to view my thoughts at different angles thus opening my possibilities of creation.

It also goes without saying that the professors that I have had the fortune to learn under have left me with nuggets of truth and experience that I will carry with me anywhere I go and whenever I write. They exposed me to great textbooks such as *The Party train: A Collection of North America Prose Poetry* by Robert Alexander, *Poetry: A Writer's Guide and Anthology* by

Amorak Huey as well as W. Todd Kaneko, *In the Palm of Your Hand: A Poet's Portable Workshop* by Steve Kowit as well as Dorianne Laux and *An Exaltation of Forms* by Annie Finch as well as Kathrine Varnes which taught me so much about poetry. These textbooks and my great professors taught me that poetry can take many shapes and forms.

They introduced me to the prose form of poetry, which gave me the freedom to write in a stream of conscious fashion and I used in many of my poems such as "Poem for the Texas Road" and "Such Pursuits". They showed me some lesser known forms of poetry such as the list poetry, best shown in my poem "Imperfect circle of Expression", in which I list the different aspects of my creative process. These textbooks and my professors showed me the importance of how the poem looks visually which I also demonstrate in that same poem. They showed me the interesting forms of documentary and witness poetry which I show in the previously discussed poem "Dylan goes Electric" where I try to speak through the eyes of Bob Dylan. They also showed me how the protest poetry form helps me to convey my rebellious nature in the poem "Across" among others. They opened my eyes to a whole new world of writing that I did not know existed and my growth from the beginning of the program until now is all due to their efforts.

## Willing Beasts (Title Poem)

We are all Willing Beasts

We are all just Willing Beasts

Willing Beasts of our differences

Willing Beasts of lost instances

All decisions left unrendered, pursue us with constant judgment

Willing Beasts of lies

Willing Beasts of disguise

Willing Beasts of long drawn out alibis

The alcohol calls to me so sweet  
Floats on puffs of madness and cheap deceit  
Such as moths to the flame or soldiers born of rage  
Every bit of fantastic curiosity fills this two legged page  
Full of willing beasts of all glory smiles lie  
Leaping to the next watering hole that's much obliged  
The amps they speak to me with no reply  
With the eyes of the glass,  
I confide:

We are all just Willing Beasts

Willing Beasts of leisure

Willing Beasts of pleasure

Willing Beasts of torture

Willing Beasts of fortune

We are all Willing Beasts

Ah yes, we are all just Willing Beasts

## CHAPTER II

### WILLING BEASTS OF REBELLION

#### **Taming Time**

Sun rises eyes opened

Dreams intertwined with reality not knowing where one starts and the other ends and whether the practice of dissemination between the two is a moot point. Awoken to the distant sounds of manufactured rain being used to cleanse oneself of yesterday's follies. Thrown into the pit one feels the unforgiving empty hand that holds the keys to the kingdom yet denies you passage. Silent screams radiate from an organized flock all wanting what each other has yet settling for what perceived destiny has bestowed upon them revealing itself, that which lies within, as a beaten animal yearning for something further than just mere instinct.

Sun rises eyes opened

## **Paranoid Love Rant**

Awkward moments breed insecurities

Tiny instances of stunted innocence

Virgin to the howls of reasonable doubts

Politicians, actors, men of the cloth

All hide behind false makeup

## **Magic Valley**

Magic Valley, I awake to thoughts meandering in the persistent sweat of your embrace

Magic Valley, why must I see poverty beaten all over your face?

Magic Valley, a bump and a six pack is not what a vote should make

Magic Valley, I wasn't born here but a part of you I am

Palms trees cover the compliancy of being marginalized under the Aztec sun

A coke and a taco at the end of a taxing day, don't mind if I do

Numb to the journey of suffocating indifference

Magic Valley, why must your schools be filled with sighs?

Why must our youth deny their roots to appease your insanity?

No wall will keep us from our forefathers or our foremothers

Magic Valley, when will it snow again?

When will you shuffle your feet with the pride of a thousand gringos?



## **Caravan of Partisanship**

With our divisions already formed

Puzzles of distractions birthed by those with their hands fully clenched

On that big stick of authority

Authority over beautifully constructed false narratives

Narratives that cultivate our need to place blame and their need to create monsters among us for  
the preservation of their blind influence

Authority over hope or perceived hope

Authority over a moral higher ground that exists only for self gratification

In a world where there are puppets and their puppets masters

There must be only one question raised

Must it be you versus me or will we come to the obvious conclusion of us versus them?

Shall we continue to allow ourselves to be divided vertically?

Or shall we begin to divide horizontally?

## **Righteous Troubadour**

Although we still can be free within a song,

time is short, the days are long.

Although we still can be free within a song,

there's always a soul's full of instances where you've been wronged.

Although we still can be free within a song,

your path unravels and refuses to comply.

Although we still can be free within a song,

the righteous troubadour does abide.

Although we still can be free within song,

time is long the days are short.

Although we still can be free within a song,

regrets are empty burdens aching for all to sort.

Although we still can be free within a song,

one dance short of that long goodbye.

Although we still can be free within a song,

the righteous troubadour does abide.

## Real Time

As she exudes her misery for all present  
her  
    winding  
        rapture,  
a tale told in real time

### **In All Consideration**

I consider myself alive and buried standing over the brittle foundation of wisdom contemplating the fractured grooves of such times. The heaviest of decisions made by the lightest of fools. The path a sanctuary for salesmen. I consider myself a drifter of thoughts hovering over an “X” marked out on a spot that changes as quickly as it is defined. The purpose of it all a concept that seems to be the grandest of obstacles to production. We are all goods and services for your consumption. I consider myself always a drag and swig away from glory.

## Across

We walk across  
We crawl across  
We drive across  
We scream across  
We lie across  
We cry across  
We swim across  
We dive across  
We die across  
Let me say that again..... WE DIE ACROSS

We climb across  
We plead across  
We work across  
We build across  
We cook across  
We clean across  
We raise your children across  
We mow your lawns across  
We shine your shoes across  
And pick your fields across  
And pay for your schools across

So go fuck yourself with your wall  
Go fuck yourself with your dressed up agendas  
Go fuck yourself with your hypocrisy  
Because when someone will die to get in, it best not be you that tries to keep them out

## Imperfect circle of Expression

This pen is my pistol

These words

are my ammunition

This fresh page of legal pad

is my target

A target made of my

own vision

A vision of my

own erected

and a

production

of my heart

A heart

conceived by

my own surroundings

My surroundings in

turn created this pen

An imperfect circle

## **Eye of False Children**

Spoken words of wasted tries  
Roaming in the morning dew

As I return to my sanctuary  
Home to all that is lust of victory

Licking my as-of-yet transparent wounds  
on the birth of all that is contemplation

To leave the womb of all that you know  
Or venture into the eye of false children

## **Short Rant**

We speak politics, howl in the streets

Cafe patrons, scramble to the scene

Smoking their cigarettes, the town at your feet

While it means nothing, if not to be free

While this all means nothing, if not to be free



## Warden

Warden, warden, warden

You must release my tortured ego

Warden, warden, warden

I am a beatnik caged within these walls

Warden, warden, warden

The conflict inside my head does not cease

Warden, warden, warden

An obscure moan from the outside anguishes

Warden, Warden, warden

This prison of my doing will not be my curtain call

## Desperation

Desperate to kill  
Desperate to love  
Desperate to lie  
Desperate for thrills  
Desperate to consume  
Desperate to presume  
Desperate to cheat  
Desperate to create  
Desperate to unite  
Desperate to rage  
Desperate for peace  
Desperate for war  
Desperate to lead  
Desperate to follow  
Desperate to travel  
Desperate for solitude  
Desperate to write  
Desperate to burn

A desperation unresolved

A desperation given to the universe

A desperation of another time and place

A desperation, a desperation

## **Pocket Full of Poison**

I've got a pocket full of poison

and I'm bored out of my mind

I've got a head full of ideas

while I'm just bidding my time

Nothing seems to matter

and all the bullshit seems to rhyme

There is nothing but schemes for me

which I always take in stride

Nothing ever changes here

This place, my mind, my home

No one ever seems to mind

but when it all comes down for you

Will you make it in, in time?

It  
is  
not  
a  
life  
fulfilled  
without  
free  
will

## **Such Pursuits**

Deadlines are the death of creation. An organic pursuit by structured means. I tire of trying to feed the arrogance of academia. Gatekeepers of legitimacy who stand in judgment and press on with exquisite bravado demanding of me portraits of themselves but then again I might be a slave to delusion, I have yet to decide. I awaken to long streams of words which combinations are strange to the taste. Images coming in and out of focus leaving me in a perpetual state of fuck. Hours spent contemplating hours on the rearing of such endeavors.

## Local Union Square

Aristocrats, punks and thieves

all looking to steal the American dream

A drunk in the rear of a trunk

waiting to bleed

All gathered for if one night only

at the local union square

Houses of the obscure float amongst the interior

waiting on you there

## CHAPTER III

### WILLING BEASTS OF DESIRE

#### **A Dilemma's Reach**

Your Curves provoke desire

Eyes inspire internal war

Doubts remand without end

Soul unknowingly conspires to engulf

Once dealt glory now abyss

Once on fire now dismissed

Freedom an empty pact

Which burns with regret one mind

While howls for truth another

Yet what will be will be

And what is ours we'll one day conceive

## **Puerto Rico**

The voices sway to the pounding of the elegant discord which only a good song could provoke. Surrounded by the life and inevitability of the ocean's whim. We are once in an eternity just as we are a drop in the bucket. Your true charm radiates on through the imperialist nations and conquerors which have tried and failed to silence you. Your coquis use the night's invitation to sing short sounds of relief and familiarity. A frog, although small in stature, which permeates way beyond its perceived capabilities. The juxtaposition of your pure driven sands and vast forests encapsulate all that is majesty and focused fury. My old San Juan, I will grace your cobbled streets, born of pain and rebellion, once again.



### **To the grandfather I never knew**

What stories were left unrevealed? Did my existence ever strike you as a possibility? What did you ponder on such days? You are but a mere fact of procreation because my father himself can not or will not fill in the openings which engulf you. What a strange exercise it is to perform when one contemplates the life of a man who has passed from this earth before you could feel his presence for yourself. The mind runs with memories that just don't exist, yet are still destined to be created even if as false rewrites. As brief as my hope lasted of ever knowing you, brief is this poem which wails for more with no such path available to take.

## **Border Dance**

Let's get in our four wheeled cages. It's such a pleasant morning to eat, drink and screw away the day. Never mind the little man in his authoritative suit asking us to justify our existence on the particular side of the imaginary line we find ourselves on. Free will always present itself as an attainable disaster with miscreants such as us. The makeshift merchants turn over their box of trinkets in attempts to thicken our load along the way to oblivion. A mix of decadence and poverty surrounds our every turn. Moments of reflection and willful ignorance proceed and precede each other in a haunting dance. Ladies begging for change under the bridge, children shining shoes and singing songs of sorrow with their tiny accordions, men in their skull hats and dark sunglasses offering us dental work and drugs all in one breath. What am I to do with such offers when all I want is a muffled conversation and a stiff drink?

## **Society**

I am part of something I wish to escape. Most days I come to the conclusion that I am a fraud and that I am my decisions, those of which I must own. What I'm feeding on are lies, or are they?

How I yearn to make home the outer bands of convention and content. To be chaos and beauty free to whatever whim arises. I am fascinated by the concept of freedom yet my definition changes just as quick as it alludes me.

Society, Oh Society, how I breathe and loathe you in perfect sequence. Your constructs are what madness and common sense are made of.

## **A Manager and her role in the Death of a Banker**

Are you making your calls? Was the customer greeted? Once or Twice? you ask as your insane demands wear me down like the sun's midday gaze. You are monotony personified and I refuse to crawl into the rabbit hole you unknowingly reside in. I've spent part of my youth raging your subtle and sometimes blunt attempts at indoctrinating me into your world of false delusions. Throughout the years I've caught myself looking in your direction, as you engage the next potential dollar sign walking into the branch with their phone held against their ear as to convey some sort of perceived superiority, wondering how you can consider this a life fulfilled. How you can one day retire, grab a lifetime of belongings, pose for a picture with a coaxed smile along with a ten cent trophy and not look back with a thousand-yard stare. You have killed my identity as a banker. Whether your end game was worth its passing or not is for you to conclude.

## **Mad Ones**

We are the mad ones, the shape shifters, the jive seekers, the first spark to the last war, the new sun after the last moon, the righteous troubadours rambling through swigs of alcohol practicing their poses for the day they can become martyrs in the next great cause. We are complicated as we are simple or simply complicated as the intrigue of the unknown sways us. We hold court with tramps, thieves, poets, visionaries, erotic politicians selling you orgasms of emptiness, the blind, the free, the egos which have no need for our reality, 3am critical thinkers, hopeless creatives, hapless romantics and everything in between. We are the mad ones.

## **Things have changed**

How it all shifts in an instance. Circumstance picks its moments to both levitate and suffocate. This film is temporary. Walk along the walls towards the exits and proceed to the adjoining theater for the next plot awaits you. Our urges have to reconcile with the fleeting order of that fact. Wolves are constantly at my door calling for me and I beat my chest in their presence in order to appease them. Your face lines up with the contours of all that I see. You used to care. How things have changed.

## **RGV Studies**

Our heat weighs on me

Elevates

Halls

False Mazes

Full of doubt

Remember

Sheer Laziness

Pulls no Punches

## **For Mr. Ginsberg**

What say you Mr. Ginsberg? How does one reconcile the emptiness with the sustenance that surrounds us? Heartbreak rules the bones, a motherfucker indeed. Forgive my language, Mr. Ginsberg, but some things are deserving of a swearing to the high heavens. What happened to the summer of free love when the mind searched for more than the body could sustain? Has technology killed our ambitions of exploration? Is there nothing beyond the moon? Mr. Ginsberg how do I find inspiration? How can one catalog their dissatisfaction and mental solitude? I have me a good woman while the one I need has her own vows to break. Forgive my rambling Mr. Ginsberg, it could be that the answer is that there is no answer at all.



## **Choices we make**

From time to time I'll find myself close to the Texas/Louisiana border for reasons that aren't worth mentioning. Amongst those I have come across is a young man whose loose attachment to reality I can't shake. With each conversation I have casually witnessed how the mind slowly and painfully unravels with the passing of the pipe. I wonder if a lust for life or a general discarding of it leads one to indulge in such rituals. He possesses a madness which I assume is defined by the line of sight which you currently own. Even as I write this he walks into the gathering of fools with a patch on his eye regaling us with a story of an unprovoked attack at the local dive bar the night before. As much as I care to judge, decisions are simply paths taken in a maze whose rules are established but only are worth the collective value given. Who's to conclude whether the mad man is him or I?

## **Homestead Slacker**

My gaze scans around the room, finally settles in on the clock nailed to the corner above the desk as the hours slip away. The silence speaks in riddles demanding answers of me as the hours slip away. One could easily slit their throat as they are to go for a walk in spaces such as these. Spaces for contemplation, regret and boredom. Assigning values to moments and social statuses to justify such ineptitude. The desk to the bed to the love seat as the television is being interrogated for its pressure points as the hours slip away. The darkness defeats the light and still no comprehension as to what has transpired as the hours have slipped away.

## Poem for the Texas Road

There's something about travel that renews my faith in chaos. Heading into the unknown with a pocket full of coins and a loosened grasp of time. What do you have to say for yourself Tejas? What face will you reveal to me? I am determined to ingratiate myself with the oddities that inhabit your perfectly quaffed scenes. Indoctrinate me into your hallucinogens, your BBQs, your love, your death, your hellos, your goodbyes. Lead us there with your vast avenues filled with gas stations and fruit stands. Upon us only windmills and endless skies which provide for the ranches with their front gates as big as their pride for their precious second amendment. Your atomic bomb has no answer for my rifle. Gather your snacks and memorize your lines because there's lots to talk about.

## **Mexican Mother**

I am teased as one as a human is and I am given to your puzzling demands. “Mother”, I said. “Yes son,” she replied. “Why must this dance take hold?” “That I do not know”, she responded, “but if you come back once more in a state of defeat I will be your undoing.”

## **Ode to Woe is Me**

You reveal yourself as present in the most inopportune moments carrying your woe is me unicorn angst that is of no consequence to those who inhabit the false narratives that you exude.

## Split

The beast in me feeds urges that define us all

The rebel in me longs to rail against every authority that I come across

The drunk in me races the uneven streets singing the songs of the heathens

The clown in me sabotages myself at the finest of moments maintaining the largest of  
smirks as it all comes undone

The poet in me writes about it yet knows nothing

The coward in me holds me in contempt

and for who will win out

it is yet to be decided

## **Quarantine Wishes and Pandemic Dreams**

I march through pandemics with a deafening solitude. Wandering in and out of aisles of mania and boredom. I stumble into inspiration that is comprised of both self loathing and regret before the fact. The words birth themselves then mumble insults at me thereafter. Time becomes a useless concept. The clock now an amusing antique and no longer a dealer of perspective. Panic, the exercise of the day. The television always standing in attention ready for a good scare. Stay inside, the boogeyman has been drinking again skipping from town to town picking up lives along the way. Your uncle Sam demands that you quarantine. I wonder what George Orwell would think of such a command?

## CHAPTER IV

### WILLING BEASTS OF GROOVE

#### Call me the Bird (with guitar tablature)

A7

Gaze in through your doorway

C6 Add9                      A7

Where death lingers on

Am7

With the wheel no longer in spin

C Add9                              Am7                      Am7 #6                      A#m7 #6

The moment has come to run

A7

Early break of mourning

C6 Add9                      A7

She cries with a grin

Am7

We are all much less reapers

C Add9                              Am7                      Am7#6                      A#m7 #6

Of the unforgiving wind

I am the word

Call me the bird

I know the words,

That you most fear.



## We Were Born to be Free (with guitar tablature)

C F C  
I see you standing in the corner  
C F C  
You've got your finger on the trigger  
C F C  
You say love ain't a game  
C F C  
I'd like to see how you figure

Am  
You say you want a revolution  
F  
but you offer no solutions  
Am  
You say you want to take a dive  
F  
to feel you're alive  
Am F C  
but what you fail to see is the rage we breed  
C F C

We were born to be free

C F C  
Take a gander outside now  
C F C  
to the battles you embrace  
C F C  
You say you've never known heartache  
C F C  
Allow me to give you a taste

Am  
You say you want a revolution  
F  
but you offer no solutions

Am  
You say you want to take a dive  
F  
to feel you're alive

Am F C  
but what you fail to see is the pain we breed  
C F C  
We were born to be free

C F C  
I see you standing in the corner  
C F C  
You've got your finger on the trigger

## Youth Machines (with guitar tablature)

          C                                  D  
The way you move, honey, you got me all shook up  
          C                                  D  
The way you groove, honey, I've had about enough  
          C                                  D  
We are the mad ones, we're rolling around your way  
          C                                  D  
You've reached the corner, honey, and you are out of play

Grab your pistol, honey, you've got a lot to prove  
          C                                  D  
and don't be scared, now, this is the life you choose  
          C                                  D  
I hear the gun shots, they're ringing in my head  
          C                                  D  
That is the viciousness of choosing love instead

We're all just pawns, honey, in your dirty little game  
          C                                  D  
The way I see it, honey, we're all the same  
          C                                  D  
The way I see it, you're all the same

Intro, outro and in-between verses

E-----

A-----5-----3---5---3-----3-----1--3--1-----

D-----5--5--3-----3--3--1-----

## I'm Your Fool (with guitar tablature)

Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
Don't be cruel with my weary soul  
Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
I know you have your man, girl, but he's never at home  
Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
You glide oblivious  
Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
I sing that same old tune  
Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
Broken Hearted, but what's a poor boy to do

E5 D5  
Cause you know and I know  
I'm your fool  
Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
Years of longing I've held for you  
Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
A sweet surrender that you've worn too  
Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
But you rather live a lie  
Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
and you know this to be true  
Am C5 D5 Am C5 D5  
Once denied the kingdom what's a poor boy to do

E5 D5  
Cause you know and I know  
I'm your fool

E5 D5  
Cause you know and I know  
I'm your fool

## **Dylan Goes Electric**

They say I am the voice of my generation. They call me a protest singer, folk singer, the messiah or what have you. I enjoy to put them on and profess that I am a song and dance man but in reality I don't know what to tell them. Don't ask me to explain my words because I won't know what to say. I plug in my guitar and now they call me Judas. They tell me every chance they get that rock n roll is a betrayal of my roots. I am booed to the point where booing myself becomes an attractive option. They say they want to shoot me as I stand on stage. Let me tell you I don't mind getting shot, I just don't want to be told about it.

## **Tom Waits for No One**

Tom awakens in a haze of cigarette and gargles glass for breakfast  
He certainly wasn't drinking the night before, that was his piano  
Make sure you make it to heart attack and vine  
because Tom waits for no one

He does his waltz for the down-traughten  
Leads a carnival of gypsies and hobos  
He arrives in a hurricane and leaves just as soon  
because Tom waits for no one

His tongue speaks truth in a fire of whiskey  
Narratives travel from lips to lips  
You best investigate from which he came  
because Tom waits for no one

A man out of place and time  
Performance art of an animalistic nature  
This wanderer calls to you from the grieving streets  
because once again Tom waits for no one

## Free Will Revisited (with guitar tablature)

Am            D5            Gm            Am  
Our consequences hide in all that we've tasted  
Am            D5            Gm            Am  
Dressed up absurdities that we all must adorn  
Am            D5            Gm            Am  
There is no cure for love we all have to face it  
Am            D5            Gm            Am  
Its just a circumstance we all come to scorn

Am            D5    Gm            Am  
Our disillusion lies inside of an iron cage  
Am    D5    Gm            Am  
An institution we all see as home  
Am            D5            Gm            Am  
Your loaded wisdom never has the desired taste  
Am            D5            Gm            Am  
There is no past you lived that's written in stone

Gm    Am  
          Free Will

Am            D5            Gm            Am  
I lose, I kill, I reap, I am what you've spoken  
Am            D5    Gm            Am  
Quiet blinded relief is never the same  
Am            D5            Gm            Am  
Press your lips on tight and offer a sweet sigh  
Am            D5            Gm            Am  
The choices to be made are not for the tame

Gm    Am  
          Free Will

## You Got (with guitar tablature)

You got a grin  
Ten feet wide  
Breeds the riot  
That storms my mind

You got rubies  
You got style  
You got minions  
That will run a mile, for your cause  
Am Gm  
A raised fist to your blood soaked hands  
Is what you got

We've got numbers  
Howl at the moon  
Ramble in prisms  
Yearn for the light of the dawn  
Am Gm  
A raised fist to your blood soaked hands  
Is what you got

Intro

E-----3333333-----3333333-----  
A-----5-----5-----3-----5--3  
D-----3-----5--5--3-----

Verse

E----33-----3---3---3-1-3-----  
A-----5-----5-----3-----



D-----3-----

## **Runs Deep (chant)**

The river runs deep in the soul you know

The river runs deep in the soul you know

We live a lifetime as a rolling stone

The river runs deep in the soul you know

The blood runs hot under the southern moon

The blood runs hot under the southern moon

We run for shelter and the tales we croon

The blood runs hot under the southern moon

Our people rise to the beat of the drum

Our people rise to the beat of the drum

The women scatter to the rival sons

Our people rise to the beat of the drum

The river runs deep in the soul you know

The river runs deep in the soul you know

We live a lifetime as a rolling stone

The river runs deep in the soul you know

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

José Luján earned a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing along with a Graduate Certificate in Mexican- American Studies from the University of Texas- Rio Grande Valley in May 2020. Additionally, He earned a Master's Certificate in Advanced Business Administration in May 2012 and a Bachelor in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing in May 2008 both from the University of Texas- Pan American (former name of previously stated university). He currently lives in the Rio Grande Valley.

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