

2ND PLACE WINNER FOR FICTION

RAINBOWS

AUDREY ELLIS

Thongs. Lots of bright fluorescent pink thongs running throughout the tightly packed street. Even with intense humidity in the air, the partygoers continue to parade up and down the road. As the drunken men and women run wild from bar to bar, clouds swarm up above the excitement. Thankfully, to spare the crowd from the wrath of humidity, huge drops of rain pour down and wash their tanned bodies free of supposed sins. This day has been long awaited and some clammy weather is incapable of dampening the spirit of the colorful parade.

Overhead, flowing freely in the wind are hundreds of rainbow flags hang proudly from the antique Victorian buildings. As the rain falls, the sun shines through drops of liquid light, causing a faint rainbow among towering buildings in the distance. Festive shouts and exclamations fill the humid air while sounds of New Orleans jazz vibrate from inside the buildings. Cigarette smoke reaches up and blends into clouds that fill the sky. The historic street smells similar to an old casino, where sometimes rolling the dice and taking a chance pays off. Air reeking of smoke, alcohol and other fruitful beverages fill the lungs of the joyous men and women as they celebrate among each other.

As rain falls upon faces in the crowd below, it creates a camouflage, making it impossible to identify sweat from precipitation. The heavy rain combined with the harsh humidity causes discomfort among a select few, however for the most part everyone continues to prance around in jubilant manner.

Gleaming neon lights slowly twitch on as the rosy pinks, deep yellows, and vivacious oranges of the afternoon sky fade away into darkness. As the heavy rain calms into a light mist, the crowd slowly disperses into the bars where they will spend the majority of their night, continuing to celebrate this freeing day.

SHE'S A STREET PERFORMER

DELANEY RYAN

she is asking what shes worth
fingers pluck and chords hum
some say shes worth a smile
some say shes worth a wave
some say she's worth dragging their children away
transactional glances and crumpled dollars
make her heart valid
make her art good
her hair sorely sways
her whole body plays
looking out to the walking world
"is this what i'm worth?"
teeth shine like nickels
"is this all i'm worth?"