A Celebration

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What began as an image became a story. I pictured hands raised into the air, basking in the moment and enjoying the little victories. I wanted to talk about a celebration yet not portray it as an isolated event. I didn’t want to show happiness in a bubble, I wanted the truth behind it. I wanted to talk about the things that we fight the hardest for and the moments when we were inches from quitting but then didn’t. These are the reasons we celebrate.

**ARTIST STATEMENT:** ANGEL MAURICIO MARQUEZ
Lips chapped
The passing winds burn
From the smell of salt, I’d say it’s close
but it’s never easy remembering the beginning.

These toes have gone numb,
cyclically slamming down onto the concrete
Joints stiff,
like a hinged gate left alone after a Floridian summer.

How close could we be?
I’m not quite sure if this scene seems familiar
or if it’s simply a figment from my memories,
a thought recycled from a distant youth with blurry blockbuster daydreams

My legs and hands start cramping.
The right knee buckles but I straighten back up
as if a single thin string
held together all these broken things
from falling into pieces.
If I slowed, I’d topple over, I thought.
The tiny voice settles in
doubting my decisions,
pain its main ally.

Dissonant, my mind.
Yet around the corner I see gull’s
swimming against the elements.

The ocean waves before my eyes, its crash a valiant battle cry.
So I raise my arms into the night
and stumble across that yellow line.

The tape falls
and sinks below the grains of sand.
A wail escapes itself from beneath my hands.

Knees drop down onto the ground.
too many failures, I cannot count.
Tears collect at the corners of my mouth
and I think to myself,
now this
is a celebration
Angel Mauricio Marquez is a Latin American first generation army soldier, third year osteopathic medical student and occasional writer.