

## The Botanical Garden

By Victoria Vera Zafra

It was 54 degrees on this Wednesday morning. For any Floridian, it was a beautiful day. The blue sky covered every inch of my higher peripheral. The sun was shining rays of heat that kissed my skin through the glass window of your maroon Saturn. Happy love songs filled the car's atmosphere as you held my had. "I wanted to take you to this botanical garden we have here. I thought it you would like it with the weather being nice and all." A smile played on my lips, knowing that the simplicity of viewing the surplus of colors in nature would be perfect. When we arrived, you guided my hand towards the door of the garden, bringing my fist to your lips and kissing it. Glass windows and walls sparkled with dew from the humidity, shadowing the beauty that was held inside. On the brick path, we walked holding hands. Yours so cold yet bringing comfort as they engulfed mine. Green moss covered bits of pots and bricks as we walked through. The tiny green hairs hugged their surroundings before introducing the true beauties of their bigger counterparts. Orchids and other flowers of which I did not know their names, sat along the path of bricks. Some protruding into my view, others requesting a glance. Their colors balanced with the greenery like a kaleidoscope. We chose to sit on a bench next to the manufactured pond of water, where Lilly pads floated.

Water trickled in the background. I raised my glasses to my nose to attempt to read the plants botanical names. I peered at one called "Cheiranthus Cheiri". The orange and yellow petals hung daintily from their pistil. "I can't even pronounce their names," I laughed. You tucked a piece of hair behind my ear. "I have never been here before. I know you like plants and have a lot at home," you said. While your words are so minimal, I'm aware of how much meaning our time here has for you. You really tried. A butterfly flew past my face making me flinch. You chuckled your hearty laugh, "it is just a butterfly". "I know," I said with furrowed brows, watched where it sat. The butterfly bat it's wings over the yellow petals of the Cheiranthus Cheiri.

"You know butterflies actually have transparent wings? They just have a lot of scales that reflect certain colors when light hits them," I said confidently. You smile, letting me nerd out as I usually do. "It works for their protection. They can blend with their surroundings through their colors. Predators stay away from them the more colorful they are because they assume they might be poisonous," I continue to rant.

Even though we are both sitting here, in love, happily, I wonder if the butterfly can hear my anxiety. I know you can. Because you see me clearly, completely transparent. We are both new at this. Being together on a date. It has been so long since we were alone in person. And while I'm grateful for this moment, I am aware that it will end. Tears well in my eyes, this content wont last forever. It is limited and so are we. I wish I could blend into my environment and you only see my joy instead of knowing I am counting down the minutes till this ends.