

# THANK THE BLOOM

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PEN AMERICA

2023 PRISON WRITING AWARDS ANTHOLOGY

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**THANK THE BLOOM**  
**2023 Prison Writing Awards Anthology**

First edition

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Honorable Mention, Fiction

# Hinges & Runners

MATTHEW MENDOZA

Sometimes Marren came home late. Instead of going inside, she wandered around the neighborhood. She raised red mailbox flags and left dirty notes in mail slots. She smoked cigarettes by the pools of the bigger houses and buried the cigarette butts in the soil around the sago palms.

If Marren was high or limpid with dulled expectation and wanted to fuck or wasn't done fucking, she snuck into her house through an unlocked window, even though Big Archie was a light sleeper and kept guns in the house.

Sarah with an H told Marren that lip balm silenced hinges and runners, but she liked to wake Big Archie, the hard steel against her forehead as they both pretended that she was the intruder.