

The Blue Guitar Jr.

*Featuring
literature
and art
for youth*

The 2018 edition



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“Things as they are are changed upon the blue guitar.”
— Excerpt from Wallace Stevens’ 1937 poem “The Man With the Blue Guitar.”
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Sun, Sand, and Snow in Ancient Egypt

By Shreya Bansal

© 2018

Kissa Bassily loved the idea of snow. Living in ancient Egypt, she had never seen snow. All she knew about was heat, sun, and sand. She read the hieroglyphs on the temple walls every day, tracing her fingers over the symbol for snow. She listened attentively to the elders as they told stories about the last time it snowed — which had been over a hundred years before. Every night before she went to bed, she wished for it to snow, but every morning when she woke up and ran to the window, she would sigh in disappointment when all she saw was sand. Miles and miles and miles of sand.

After a while, she gave up wishing for snow. However, one winter morning, Kissa woke up and hopped out of bed. When she looked out the window, she couldn't believe her eyes. SNOW! White, fluffy snow covered every inch of her village. Even the large pyramids in the distance were covered in snow. Snow piled up the walls of the village temple and covered the ancient statues. Even more snow filled the marketplace.

Kissa ran for the front door, but before

she could leap into the snow, her mother stopped her.

“Kissa!” her mother yelled. “Stop right there!”

“But, Mom!” Kissa cried, “It snowed! I want to play in the snow!”

“You have to put on your shoes if you want to play in the snow,” her mom said.

Kissa ran to the basket where her shoes were. She pulled on her sandals and once again raced to the door. She flung open the front door and belly-flopped into a giant snowdrift. As she sunk into the snow, she realized how cold it was. She wiggled her way out of the snow and back into the warmth of her family's hut. She shivered as she closed the front door.

“You look cold, Kissa,” her mother said.

Shivering, Kissa said, “I'm freezing!”

Her mother laughed. “Well, Kissa, snow is cold.”

“I didn't know that snow was so cold!”

Kissa ran to her room and put on all of her clothes. She raced back to the front door. She pulled open the door and jumped into the snow. This time, she was prepared for how cold it was. For the rest of the day, Kissa played in the snow.

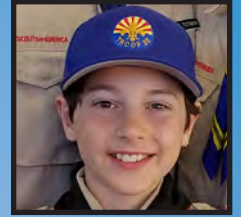


Shreya Bansal is a first-grader at Basis Chandler Primary South. She loves dancing, swimming, and playing tennis. When she grows up, Shreya wants to be an artist.

Artwork by Logan Totman



**“Anti Angry”
Pencil sketch on paper
12/25/17**



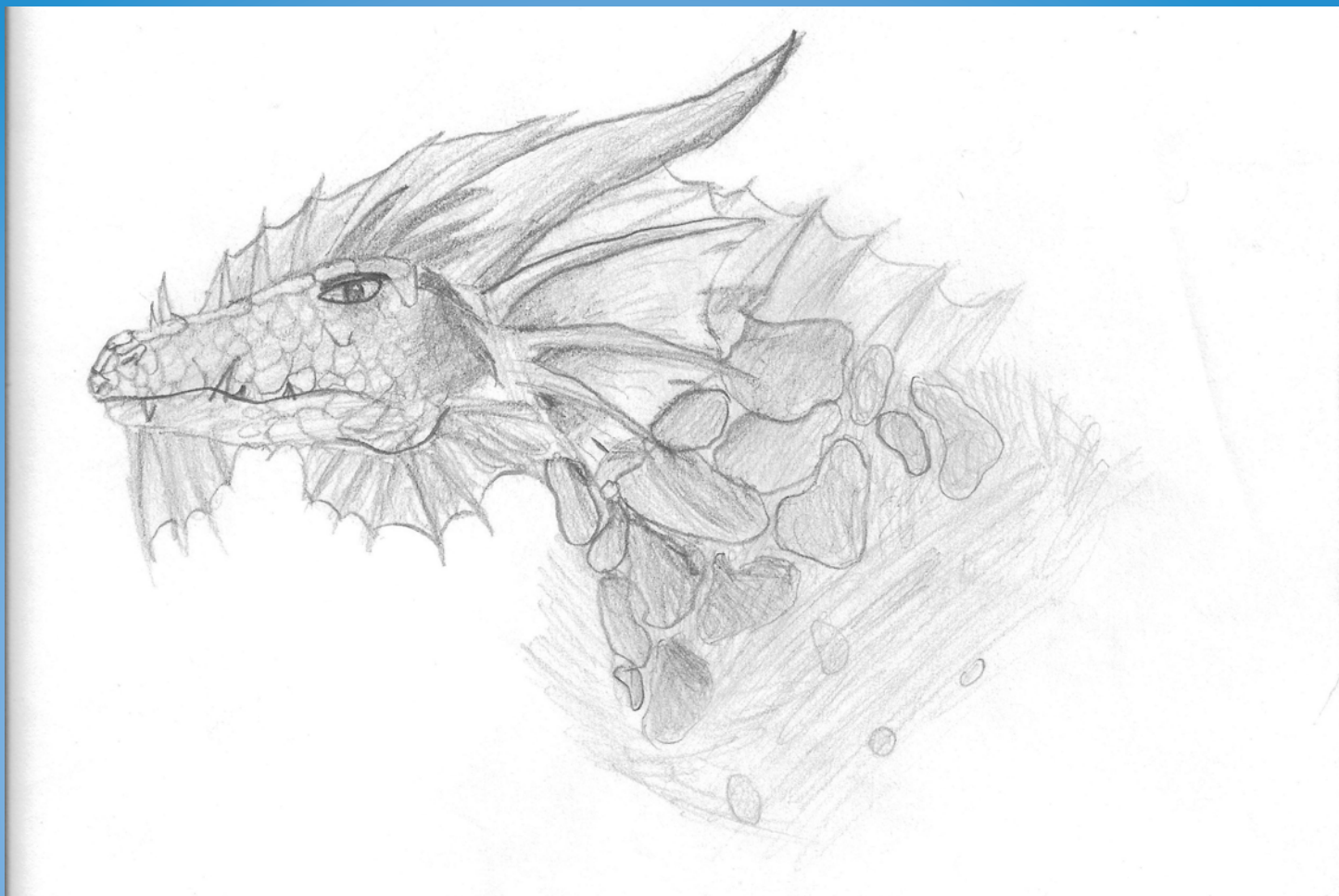
Logan Totman is 11 years old and lives in Phoenix with his mom and dad, brother and three dogs. His favorite subjects at school are art and math and he loves to use his imagination to entertain people. Logan is inspired by music and his everyday surroundings and has a special interest in dragons and mythical creatures. He is an active member of Boy Scouts and enjoys camping and outdoor adventures. Logan's interests also include metalwork, building with Legos and hanging out with his friends and family. Logan's art has also been featured in the Spring 2018 District Art Display by the Paradise Valley Unified School District. Logan's favorite fictional characters are Spiderman, and the symbionts Scream and Venom and his offspring Carnage.



"Birdasaurus"
Pencil sketch on paper
4/2/18



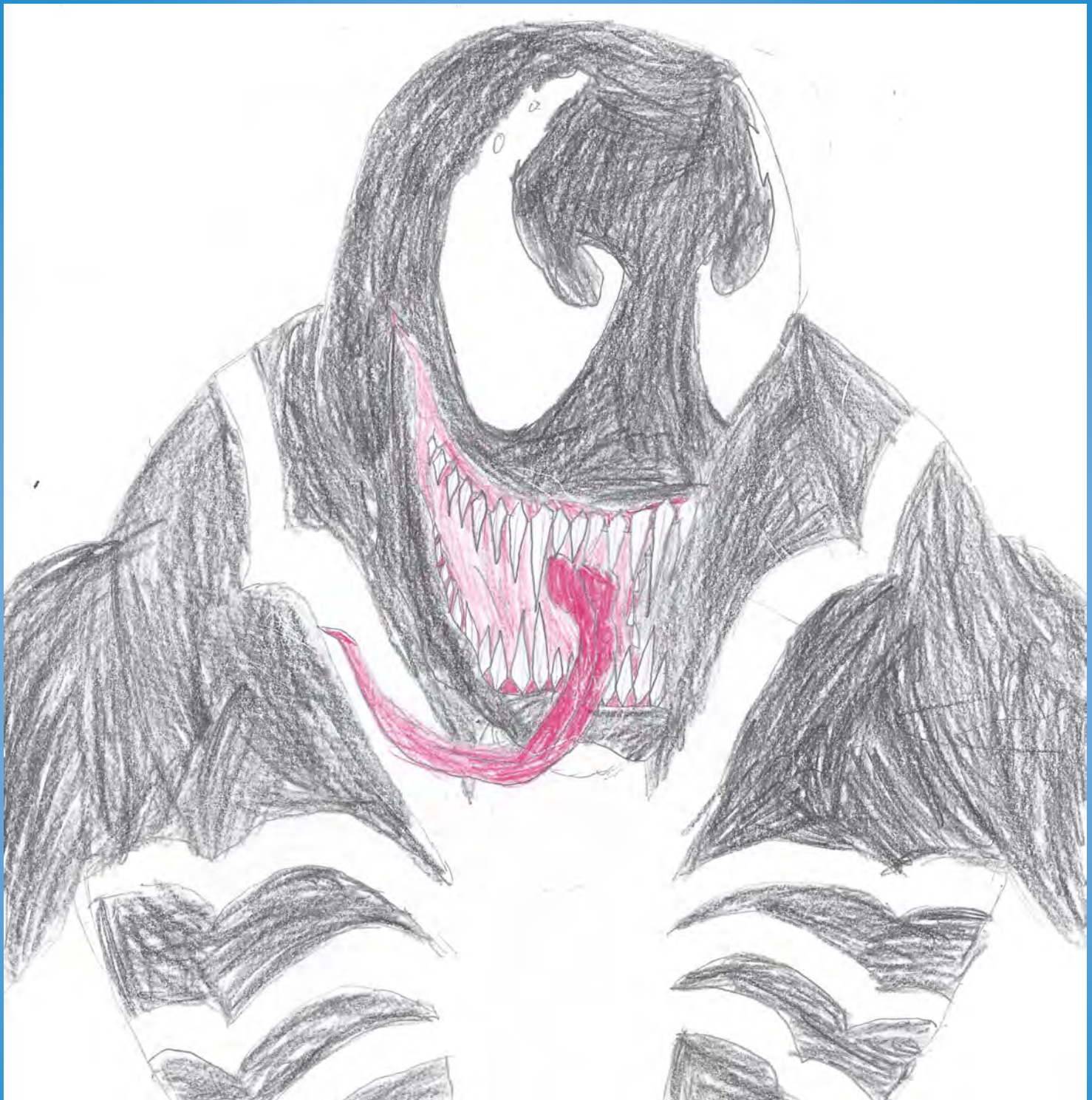
“Griffin”
Pencil sketch on paper
3/15/18



“Originality”
Pencil sketch on paper
2/20/18

“My art comes from imaginative and creative ideas that spin in my head. I do believe in dragons, that they existed before the dinosaur age. When I first drew a dragon, I had this link to them. Art is a way for me to escape from the real world and just let my hands and imagination take over.”

- Logan Totman



“Venom”

Colored pencil sketch on paper

10/3/18

The Farms Robbery

By Vrinda Bansal

© 2018

When we walked outside to The Farms, Shireen and I could feel joy running through our bodies. We loved painting pumpkins — pumpkin painting is painting small pumpkins. It was our first time at a farm. We raced across the meadow and jumped over to the pumpkin-painting spot as our backpacks flapped. But when we arrived, there were no more pumpkins!

We went inside and asked the director where the pumpkins were.

“They are right outside in the pumpkin patch,” she said.

She went outside to the pumpkin patch and checked. When she saw that the pumpkins were gone, she accused us of stealing them because our backpacks were full.

We let her check our backpacks and she realized that she was wrong and gave us \$100 in return!

The pumpkins were still missing and we needed to find them!

As we looked around, Shireen saw a man with the stolen pumpkins and ran toward him. We knew it was him because we saw him with a few pumpkins and his bags were full. He saw us and ran away.

Right when we were about to give up,

a good idea popped in my head. I told the person who was taking care of the pumpkin-painting station that since it was rainy we would be able to hear the noises he made with his feet and we could mark down his tracks because it was sandy and muddy and we could see where the footprints were leading.

We knew he was the thief because he was carrying some of the pumpkins. When asked, “Why do you have the pumpkins?” he said that he thought they were balls of candy and took it for his town.

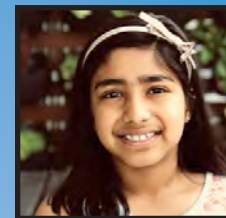
We thought that he must be lying because we didn’t believe that someone could mistake pumpkins as balls of candy.

So we told him to tell us the truth; otherwise, we would call the cops.

He said that he wanted to make money by selling the pumpkins. He said that he needed money for his house because they were very poor and they decided to steal the pumpkins.

“You shouldn’t steal,” I told him, propping my hands on my hips and giving him my most stern glare.

“Yeah,” said Shireen, mimicking my pose. “You should work hard and make money the honest way.”



Vrinda Bansal is a fifth-grader at Basis Chandler. She loves reading, swimming, riding her bicycle, and playing tennis. When she grows up, Vrinda wants to be a physician or a scientist.

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We told him to give us the pumpkins.

“No!” he said. “However, I will give you one pumpkin each if you don’t tell anyone I took the pumpkins.”

“No,” I said. “If you don’t give them back, I am calling the police.”

Then he said “fine” and dropped the pumpkins.

Then the director said, “You should not be stealing. How about I give you a job.”

“Thank you!” the man exclaimed. “I will work really hard!”

I asked the director if Shireen and I could paint pumpkins.

“Of course,” she said. “If it wasn’t for you two girls, I would have lost all the pumpkins from the patch!”

Day of Life in the Underworld

By Aneesh Velicheti

© 2018

One day I woke up in the Underworld. The sky was still dark, but when I looked at my clock, it read 30:00. I was late! It was pitch black, but I could make out everything because of the light coming from my body.

“Uh oh!” I thought. My teacher and king of the Underworld, Hades, was going to be mad!

I got dressed really quick. Opening my dresser, I pulled out my favorite “Cyclops Rule!” T-shirt and wrestled myself into it. I shoved my foot into my sneaker and I was just about to dive under my bed in search for my other sneaker when I heard my mom’s footsteps in the hall. My bedroom door slammed open and I heard her yell, “Cronos, you are late!”

Snagging my shoe, I scooped back in time to see her slip on a toy I had forgotten to put away the night before.

“I told you to clean your room!”

“Sorry, Mom. I forgot,” I said.

That’s when she got really angry. Smoke started pouring out of her ears as she told me to clean up my room.

“But I’m late for school.”

“Then go eat your breakfast,” she growled.

I rushed downstairs and gobbled down

my breakfast of spiced zombie eggs & ham. Leaving my plate on the table, I grabbed my backpack and sprinted out the door to the bus stop. I was almost there when I realized that I missed the bus. Gray grass crunched under my feet as I ran to Skeleton Street, then turned left onto Demon Drive. Another left had me on Hellhound Highway.

When I got into school, I went to the inside of the cafeteria, and hurried to Room 4, which was labeled “Cyclops Only.” I was right, Hades was very mad when I stumbled into the classroom.

“You’re late!” he yelled, his eyes turning a brilliant blood red.

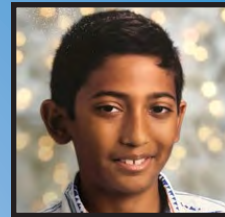
“I’m sorry,” I said.

He glared. “You have detention for the next week!”

“Yes, sir,” I responded and slid into my chair.

The rest of class passed slower than it ever had before. After the next class, my best friend, Polyphemus, said that maybe I could make Hades a lot of magical swords so he would not make me go to detention.

I thought that was a great idea because Hades wanted to take over Mount Olympus. When lunch was over, we got



Aneesh is a fourth-grader at Basis Chandler Primary School. His interests are reading, playing tennis, and building with Legos. When he grows up, Aneesh wants to be a lawyer or an engineer.

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teleported to shop class.

In shop class, I made several magical Stygian iron swords and celestial bronze shields. After school, I brought the swords and shields to Hades.

Hades gave a rare smile and said I did a good job, so I did not have to go to detention.

“Yay!” I thought. I decided when I got home I would play Monsteropoly with my friends. However, when I got home, my mom yelled that I had to clean my room, so my friends had to wait.

Firefly Queen

By Michelle Ann Vincent

© 2018

Have you heard the story of the firefly queen?
She had begun her day in her most usual way
As the moon rises and the sun goes away.
With lots to do while the moon shown down.
She flicked on her light to fly into town.

She was waving her tail on her upwardsy flight
Flitting and floating and enjoying the night
When suddenly somebody turned out the light!
Where is our firefly queen?

Did you happen to see her?
Where did she go?
She was seen over there only moments ago
Where the breeze blows the grass to and then fro.
Oh poor little firefly queen.

I have a plan, just hatched under my hat!
I'll go this way and you go that.
We'll meet in the middle by the crop-tailed cat,
To search for our firefly queen.

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Above and below, acrylic on wood panels artwork for "Firefly Queen" by Mindy Timm.



Michelle Ann Vincent, a transplanted Arizona native, has been writing creatively from a young age. As a predominantly self-taught, multitalented and multimedia artist, she dwells between what is and what magic can make of it ... if given just a little love. Michelle can be reached at artbizbridge@gmail.com or on Instagram @thevinnievicent.



Mindy Timm is a Phoenix-born and -raised, self-taught artist and designer with a diverse yet cohesive style. Influenced by a love of quirky retro graphics, Hispanic folk and religious art and bold colors, Mindy's themes range from whimsical characters to dreamy interpretations of desert flora and all manner of whatever strikes her fancy in between. Go to www.mindytimmartist.com or www.society6/mindytimmm. Reach the artist by email at scissoredvixen@yahoo.com.

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She's not by the pond.
Not out on the lawn.
I asked that cross cat, but he only yawned.
Not under the hay.
Nor up in the rafters.
Not playing in the garden
to her sweet children's laughter.
Where is our firefly queen?

Maybe she has gone very far.
Or could she be somewhere trapped in a jar?
Maybe she's visiting some faraway star.
What a lucky little firefly queen.

Did she decide to stop lighting the night?
Or did somebody snatch her?!
Did she put up a fight?
I feel we must find her. I hope she's all right!
We'll find her, our firefly queen.

It is getting quite late and the crickets say "chedeep."
The toads and the dragonflies have all gone to sleep.
We'll try to sit here and not make a peep ...
And wait ... And wait ...
For our firefly queen.

Light softly flickers, we open our eyes
and what do we see to our wonder and surprise?
A thousand bright fireflies take to the skies!
There she is!
The firefly queen!



Above and below, acrylic on wood panels artwork for "Firefly Queen" by Mindy Timm.



The Spider Bite

By Keegan Diaz

© 2018

It was the worst experience I had ever had in my life! A spider bite! On Sunday afternoon, I noticed that something was on my foot. It looked like a mosquito bite, but it didn't itch. By Monday it had grown, but still didn't hurt. On that day, my parents, cousins, little brother, and I went strawberry picking and then up to Mystery Spot — a really cool place in California where strange things occur in a circular area that makes you look taller than usual and makes things that slope down look like they slope up. I had a fun time there and had no problems with walking and doing the activities.

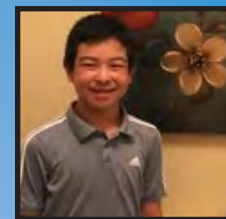
However, on Tuesday, I made the biggest mistake in my life! My two cousins came over to swim and to sleep over. I shouldn't have gone swimming. The bite had opened up after I had scratched it, but I ignored all the warnings and jumped into the pool. As I hit the water, millions of hungry, microscopic species of bacteria and organisms rushed into the open wound and started feasting on my juicy flesh full of rich blood. After I swam that day, the bite started to swell up and pus, infected blood, and discharge started to ooze out of my foot. It was SO gross! But, also kinda cool.

My grandma knows a lot about traditional eastern special herbs and teas that will help prevent or cure diseases

or sicknesses. Growing up in a Chinese family, we usually rely on Eastern remedies before Western medications. My grandma's favorite medication rub is Tiger Balm and bai hua yo. She told me that when she had any problem with her health, she would use any of those two medicines. My grandma helped me suck and squeeze the venom out with a suction cup and applied ointments on the wound. The wound felt fine on Wednesday, but it got worse the next day. On Thursday, I couldn't walk nor move my foot. Every time I moved my foot, it felt like my foot was being stabbed by a sharp spear. We tried everything — we used 10% iodine, Neosporin, Tiger Balm, and bai hua yo (white flower oil).

These ointments always work, but not this time. Nothing worked!

My grandma told me that we were going to the doctor. I figured that we were going to the Urgent Care Clinic. I envisioned an ER full of patients who needed desperate help, and the sound of heart-rate monitors beeping in the background. I was shocked when my mom, grandmother, brother and I drove up to a house. It was a small, everyday house in a quiet neighborhood. We walked into the house and were greeted by a doctor. She was tiny, and her face was creased with age and wisdom — or at least



Keegan Diaz is a sixth-grader at Basis Chandler. He plays the piano, French horn, and guitar. Keegan loves to make people laugh, play guitar pieces, and write. When he grows up, he wants to be an ophthalmologist.

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that's what my mother said. I just thought she looked old. But, I'm 11, so basically everyone who is not my age looks old to me.

"This isn't so bad," I thought to myself as I entered. The house was separated from the main house and it was very small. There was a bathroom, one room with a work desk, a small counter, a stove, sink, and two patient beds. There was an herbal scent, sort of like burnt grass. I later found out that the scent was burnt sage. The doctor was warm and welcoming. She sat me down on a little chair and elevated my foot on top of a nice, cool, though completely uncomfortable bed.

The bed's padding was so thin that you could feel the wooden board and the metal rods under it. It felt like sitting on rocks, but above the rocks was an unfolded cloth.

The doctor immediately knew that it was some kind of an infection that was caused by a spider. She showed us some pictures of her most recent patient who also had a spider bite. Then she explained what she was going to do. She first sprayed some water with some sort of medicine and sucked out some of the infected blood from my open wound with a suction cup, and poked some holes with a needle so she could drain out the infected blood if it got trapped in a certain spot. After the holes were poked, they surprisingly stopped bleeding.

I then realized that the water was supposed to soothe and relax the pain in my foot. It wasn't until then when she drew the little needle out off the case to puncture holes so the blood would drain out.

"Ahhhhhhhhhh! Why did you let her poke me?!" I screamed. I then realized that she only poked me a couple of times, and it wasn't that bad.

The doctor patted my knee and reassured me that the procedure was almost finished. She explained what she was doing and why she was poking the holes. I felt a

little better once I understood.

Soon, the doctor managed to displace all of the infected blood and pus beneath my first layer of skin. By the look of how bad the infection was, she determined that the infection would go away in four days.

The doctor said that if I wanted to heal faster than four days, we should see the doctors at Urgent Care. I wanted to heal faster, so we decided that it would be best to go there.

We thanked the doctor and left. After dropping my grandmother and brother off at home, my mom and I headed out to Urgent Care. We sat down in the waiting area. The nurse called me in, sat me down in a room, and we talked about when the infection started, how did it start, and how did it feel. The doctor came in and said that in order to get the infected stuff out, we had to numb the area and cut it open, again.

I looked at my mom wide-eyed as my heart raced. The last doctor had poked holes in the bite, and now this one wanted to poke even more holes! I saw the doctor come in with the equipment on a rolling cart. There was iodine, aesthetic, a scalpel, and a roll of gauze. She explained everything I would feel and what she was going to do to me. She first cleaned the area with iodine. She then injected the anesthetic into my wounded area three times. First, I felt a pinch; second, I felt some tingling, then I felt a burning; finally, I felt like there were worms swirling under my skin. It was weird, but kinda cool.

The anesthetic numbed my foot instantly. I felt no more pain and just pressure. The doctor squeezed the infected stuff out of my foot. This was so disgusting that my mom couldn't even watch! I thought it was cool. On the gauze was dark blood, and a faded yellow pus that looked like snot. The doctor did her job and wrapped my foot up with gauze.

After the procedure, I was able to walk a little bit to the car. After we arrived back home, I watched TV to forget about the horrendous day I had.

The Consequences of Freedom

By Rachel Woosley

© 2018

I rush towards my room careful to avoid my sister, knowing that if she sees me, she will have a list of chores for me to do. With every step I take, I relive the argument we had over dinner. I hate it when we fight. Reaching my door, I push it open only to have it fly out of my hand and almost hit the wall. Closing my eyes, I count the seconds waiting to hear the telltale sound of her feet marching down the hallway. After a moment, I breathe out when I realize that she must not have heard me.

Sprinting to the other side of my room, I stare out between the iron bars lining my window. In that moment, my room feels like a jail cell and I know I have to get out of there. I grab my camera bag; its slight weight is a constant reminder that freedom is only an escape away. I sling the bag over my shoulder and consider the ancient lock on my window. My motions are slow and measured as I pull on the latch hoping it is unlocked — to my luck it is. I pluck the lock free, shove the iron bars aside, and with a slow nudge the window pushes open.

I slide out over the sill, my camera bag slung over my right shoulder and step onto a pipe covered in moss and sludge, not even wanting to think about

what is inside the pipe. With a light push, the window swings closed and I leap to the nearest ledge so I can climb up the crumbling and cracked wall. Pieces of plaster fall to the street below as I scramble over. Slinging my leg over the top of the wall, the rest of my body follows.

A quick glance confirms I'm alone. "Oh thank God this place isn't infested with anything or anyone," I say to myself, savoring the solitude of the stolen moment.

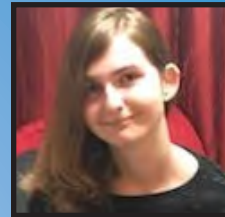
I drop my bag and rummage through it for my hefty camera, shoving rolls of film and maps out of the way. Looking through the viewfinder, I line up a perfect shot of the city and take a few snapshots. The deepening golden hue of the sunset through the city's rooftops into relief softens the sharp lines.

"Excuse me, what do you think your doing exactly?"

The sudden voice startles me and I whip around to see security. I slowly slip my camera into my bag.

"I'm just, uh, looking at the view."

"Sorry, there are restrictions for this building and I'm going to have to check your bag."



Rachel Woosley is a sophomore at The New School of Arts and Academics in Tempe, Arizona. She is a member of VISIONS, an honor program for 3D art. When she isn't studying, she enjoys writing poetry, drawing, sleeping, and playing video games.

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I zip it shut, not wanting him to see my camera. I know that cameras are not allowed in this building and I don't want him to take it away. In a burst of motion, I whip my bag over my shoulder and dash across the rooftop. With a leap of faith, I hurtle to the next building over.

Crashing into the roof, my legs wobble and almost collapse under me. Gaining my balance, I run as fast as I can. My lungs, on the other hand, don't want to cooperate and I gasp for breath as I sprint across the blacktop. I spot the air conditioners stacked up alongside one another covered with webs of wires, and I take refuge in the small space between them.

When I hear footsteps, my face drains of color as I'm filled with fear. Scooting backwards to the pipes, I bump into one of them as I make my way down to the ground below. Steam so thick it is like slime drips from one floor to the next, pooling on the cracked cement. For a moment, I am filled with relief at having outrun the security guard, until I hear a devastating cracking noise, louder than my sister's alarm clock. I turn to see that my beloved camera bag has caught and tangled between two pipes. Salty water clouds my vision as I untangle my bag and make my way down

to the street floor.

When I land on the broken concrete sidewalk, I stare at the ground, trying to stop the tears pouring out of my eyes, but they run like a broken dam. I feel as if I had just lost my best friend. With every step, I watch the remaining color fade from my town. Reaching my home, I climb up the moldy pipes to my broken window. I slip my way into the window only to come face to face with my irate sister.

"I better be dreaming right now, or so help me." Her voice was like a whip as it cracked with fury.

"So what if you weren't?" I asked, slumping against the wall. At that moment, her sister's anger paled in comparison to losing my precious camera. "It wouldn't make a difference. Well, at least in your case."

"First of all, where were you?"

"Out."

"You should have finished those dishes hours ago."

"I was on an adven-"

"You went out, without my permission, refused to do the other half of your chores, and snubbed me with returning."

"At least I told you what I did and didn't lie."

I slid to the floor, as my sister stormed from my room, the door slamming behind her.

A Poem by Rachel Woosley

Flower

© 2018

In the beginning, I was confused.
I was perceived as a literal flower,
calm
fair
yet most importantly “perfect.”
But nothing in the world is ever perfect,
so why give me the title?
Perfections are dissections of every part of the world around us,
yet neglecting the rejects that make them perfect in the first place.

I grew up, confused.
I was placed in rows alongside dozens of foes who would do anything to abuse and accuse one another for a spot in the top.
And with the definition of perfection stuck like a piece of gum stuck to the bottom of a shoe;
I watched as everyone began breaking into groups of few and leaving my side faster than being able to give the devil his due.
I was forced to make do and go continue my life,
as if it was brand new.

I was, misused
Perfection was an injection into my life that made it corrupted.
At home there were disruptions that were only accepted because of the label I was given.
The abominations that were considered to be my own generations are more of aggravations than Family.
I ask once more ... Why give me the title of perfection. When nothing in the world is perfect?

Multiplayer Video Games: We All Have a Role to Play

By Ethan Park

© 2018

I started playing video games when I was in third grade. My family and I were living in Ontario, Canada. On this particular weekend, my cousins and extended family had a big reunion. Autumn had long since descended, blanketing the ground in leaves and filling the air with an icy wind. Despite the cold, the leaves beckoned to be piled for small bodies to hurtle into. Unfortunately, our parents decided that the weather was too cold, so we were not allowed to play outside. I was sad, but only for a little while because my cousins called and showed me Club Penguin — which became my first multiplayer game. My cousins and I crowded onto my dad's office chair — a beat-up leather chair that swiveled with the smallest provocation. Yet that afternoon it held still, allowing my cousins to introduce me to the game.

As they played, my eyes were riveted to the screen — it was as if my favorite childhood cartoons had come to life! I had a longing to waddle with the other penguins and hop with the puffles in glorious two-dimensional cartoon bliss.

And then the first speech bubble popped up above one of the characters saying “Hello.” THE GAME COULD TALK!!!!!! In that moment, my life changed. I responded as fast as my little fingers could type. Within moments, I had made a new friend — another young boy from the United States. After a while, my cousins got bored and left, but I still played, messaging with HoppyBoy12 — or as I found out later — James.

Within a few months, I had friends all over the world. While we played, we talked about school, and life, and the game. I got to see how kids from other countries lived and what was important to them. When I outgrew Club Penguin, I ventured into other multiplayer video games. By sixth grade, I was playing Poptropica. Since this game had more complex stories and teamwork was required, my kid-like messaging transformed into strategy sessions. Several of my school friends played this game, so in the afternoons we would meet up online, connect with other kids from all around the

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Ethan Park is a freshman at Arizona State University majoring in Statistics. He enjoys hanging out with his friends, watching movies and television shows, listening to music, and playing video games. He wants to be a statistician when he graduates.

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world, and embark on quests together. We took turns leading the group — this was the first time I understood what teamwork really meant. I was no longer by myself; I was part of a team, a real team — as real as a baseball or football team. I counted on my teammates and they counted on me.

Playing multiplayer video games has shown me that there are many people out in the world who have the same interests that I do. It is really easy to be the loner kid — the quiet kid who does not make friends easily. When you are online talking — or typing — with people who you know like the same things you do, it is a lot easier to make friends. When I am playing multiplayer video games, I get to be myself and not worry what other people think of me. Multiplayer video games gave me more confidence to talk to more people in school. Since my online friends were supportive for me, I knew that I could make friends in person, as well.

Not from Around Here

By David Anderson

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Kiho sat in the left-seat of the flying saucer facing the many flight controls. His sweating palms made piloting difficult, and the maze of panels made it worse. Father watched each of his clumsy selections and enjoyed pointing out his every error. Kiho needed a solo flight to pass the license examination and study away from home. He only left the privacy of his bedroom to practice. Caught outside his room, Kiho was lectured by Father about his latest school report or another problem. That lecture always degenerated into a tirade on youth's carefree life. Escape from Father's rage was Kiho's goal.

Father wiped a smudge of dust off the control panel and directed a thought to Kiho.

These next planets are another test of your flying skills. Improve from your last trial.

I'll try, Kiho thought back to Father.

It is difficult with eight planets and multiple asteroids. Weave the saucer between those eight while avoiding those gravity traps including that little blue-green world.

Why?

The trip guide reports its natives torture their captives. Avoid it always.

Their saucer cruised into the planetary system. After passing two pale blue globes each with wisps of white clouds, they approached a stunning gas titan. An orb of pale yellow at the pole warmed to vibrant orange at the equator capped with a halo of rings. Kiho marveled at the planet's rings sparkling as a billion diamonds. Distracted by the vision, the oscillating hyperdrive gauges went unnoticed. Two loud bangs echoed throughout the saucer as it shook and decelerated. Kiho grabbed the steering column as he fell forward.

It's not my fault! I didn't break it this time.

Turn off the hyperdrive!

Aren, Kiho's father, headed into the engine compartment. He made these flying lessons careful and humorless. Multiple people flew with no standards. He had taught himself to fly. His son needed the practice to learn proper flying habits instead of hiding. After his birth, Aren determined that Kiho should learn appropriate life skills. Inside the hyperdrive compartment was pitch-black. Aren thought to activate the lights, and nothing happened. He thought harder, but still nothing. He felt



David Anderson was born in Fargo, North Dakota, at the peak of the baby boom. His family moved south to sunny Albuquerque, New Mexico, two years later. The race to the moon spurred him into space-travel tales that led to an enthusiasm for science-fiction. He lives in Phoenix, Arizona, with his spouse, Debbie.

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around for the manual activation control and switched on the lights. Smoke hung in the compartment while two ruptured coolant pipes hissed and moaned. The stink left a bitter taste in his mouth.

At least the backup saved the fluid.

He slammed his fists into the enclosure wall; the blow rang all around the chamber.

Why do these things happen?

Only one location for repairs existed way out here in this wilderness. Aren doubted that backward world had the technology for a flying saucer or much else. He kicked the compartment door closed.

Father stormed back into the cockpit. Land on that forbidden one.

A few minutes ago you said never land there. Yes, that is what I said. Do it anyway.

Kiho rolled his eyes. I want to go home.

That planet is the closest source of repair parts. So land now.

Kiho coasted the craft lower into the star's gravity well to the third planet. He searched the navigation computer for a landing site. Many recommendations lay in far north or far south. Kiho revised the requirements to examine only the temperate region. The network returned fewer but improved sites.

Kiho thought to Father. A clearing in the northern hemisphere surrounded by dense trees but not too close to any inhabitants.

Very well.

Father opened a small compartment under the controls and retrieved a tiny bag. He handed Kiho a worn earpiece. Keep this translator in your ear. Those natives are so backward they still use speech.

Dezi drove the aging family minivan down the narrow roadway. Her teenager's uniform was a tee shirt, patched blue jeans, and new sneakers. Her flowing, blonde hair tied into a ponytail. She needed to pass her driver's test for a summer job and extra cash.

"This two-lane highway leads back to home. You're doing well. Stay on your side." Dad glanced from the passenger seat.

She approached Giant's Bowl, a massive boulder in front of a stand of aspen trees. One of many infamous hideaways for couples as boys boasted of their adventures there even if those deeds never occurred. The roadway ran through an old-growth forest.

Dezi studied the view. "I love this drive."

"Eyes on the road."

A man and a tall boy, both dressed in drab flight suits, darted out from the rear of the boulder. The speeding van shocked them as their eyes widened. They froze on the asphalt as the family vehicle sped towards them.

"What?" Dezi stomped on the brakes.

The tires screeched in protest of the sudden change in purpose. The car shook as its speed decreased. She skidded it to a stop on the road's shoulder.

Dezi caught her breath. "Dad, how did they get here?"

He punched the dash, and the glove box dropped open with a thud. Bradley closed his blue eyes and counted backwards to ten.

Her dad's angry reaction shocked Dezi into silence. He slammed the door. "Dezi, you handled that well."

Aren coughed and swallowed hard, "Kiho, did we land away from native settlements?"

Kiho hung his head in silence.

Bradley opened the door. "Why are you in the

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middle?”

Aren forced his voice to stay calm. “We do not need your help.”

“You’re standing on the highway without a car in sight and claim you don’t need help?”

“That is correct.”

“What broke?”

“The cooling pipes ruptured.”

“I’ll bet you’re searching for a way to fix it.”

“Those parts are difficult this far from home.”

“We’ll drive you to Cooper’s Auto Supply. You’ll find parts there.”

Dezi captivated Kiho. Her long hair and simple attire differed from the girls with cropped black hairdo using too much makeup back home. Kiho cleared his throat. For once in his life, he spoke up to his father. “She, I mean, they’re our quickest path to the repairs.”

These backward natives of this little, out-of-the-way, a planet tucked in an obscure corner of the galaxy had scant chance to repair his saucer. If he gained replacement parts, the sooner he could escape this wasteland.

Aren frowned. “We will go.”

Kiho remained outside Cooper’s, ready to disappear when his father’s temper erupts. He watched Dezi follow her dad up to the glass entrance and then retreated.

“What was that?”

She sighed. “I’m avoiding the cashier. He dates too many girls at school and brags on his blog. What’s your excuse?”

He pointed towards Aren. “Father’s too embarrassing. It’s better to stay out.”

Bradley led Aren in the car-parts store. A young clerk stepped around a Formica-topped counter. “Can I help you?”

“This guy needs to mend his car’s cooling.” Bradley motioned to Aren.

“We stock parts for most makes and models, even imports. Where was it built?”

“We are not from around here.” Aren scanned the shop. The short counter supported two cash registers divided by a wired telephone. Behind stood a shelf with an array of catalogs listing car supplies from across the world.

“Check in aisle three.”

Bradley directed Aren down the third row to search and handed him a rubber hose. “These connect the radiator to an engine.”

Aren examined the tube and squeezed it.

“This will never work! It is too soft to survive our vehicle’s power train. I need larger diameter pipes with increased heat-withstanding ability.” Aren discarded the example.

Bradley shut his eyes and breathed while it bounced over his shoes.

“Let’s try Bond and Son’s Supply next door. It’s only a mom-and-pop plumbing parts, but they’ll have large metal piping.” Bradley picked up the hose.

“Why didn’t we go there first?”

“I understood you needed to fix a car, not a house.”

Kiho remained just outside the plumbing store with Dezi. “This breakdown made your dad very grumpy. He must love his car.”

“Father always has a temper. Yours is nice, though.”

“He’s teaching me to drive, but won’t let me date.”

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How fair is that?" She brushed strands of hair out of her face and smiled.

"Didn't you consort with the boy from school?"

"No way! Dad's dating rule kept me from being mentioned in his blog of conquests."

Kiho grinned. "Then, you don't have a social partner?"

Bradley wandered in looking for the owners while Aren paced desperate for replacements. Bradley pointed Aren into the first aisle.

"Pipes are in that direction. They start small and go to house size."

Aren searched through the bins and tried to wave away the grime.

"Bradley, it's time you visited," exclaimed the store owner.

"Ma, it has been too long, but we've been busy with Dezi's driving practice."

"My grandbaby's here, too?"

"Out front talking to that new boy." Bradley frowned spying Dezi and Kiho outside laughing and giggling together.

Ma glanced out. "He looks nice. It could be worse."

"She's not ready to date yet and doesn't understand boys or their desires."

"Dezi's growing up despite you, not because of you. She's old enough to drive; soon she'll be in college."

Bradley changed the topic. "His family car stranded them on that road out of town. His dad's furious. I don't want to fall into that trap again." He pointed over his shoulder in the general direction of Aren.

"These are the replacements. We can leave." Aren came up from behind holding two large cast-iron pipes.

Bradley's pupils swelled, and he took several breaths.

"Aren't those too big for your car's engine?"

"These are the best parts, given the available technology."

"What car is it?"

"We need to go." Aren set his free hand on his hip. Bradley fumbled for his wallet.

"Brad, we'll settle up later. Say hello to Dezi for me."

"Thanks, Ma."

The drive up the narrow highway was too quiet. Kiho wanted to continue conversing with Dezi, but every time he coughed in preparation to speak, Father stared at him.

Dezi parked the van across from the Giant's Bowl.

Aren grabbed one pipe and pointed to his son. "Get the other so we can go."

They checked both ways for more vehicles on the roadway.

Bradley searched the forest. "Where's your car?"

"Our vehicle is in a small clearing hidden from the thoroughfare." Aren adjusted the pipe on his shoulder.

"Were you four-wheeling?"

"What does that mean?"

"Off-road driving."

"We were far off any road."

"We'll help mend your truck."

Aren grumbled, "No, I will complete those repairs alone."

"You may need more parts or tools."

Aren's temper exploded. He threw his pipe. "No! I'll do this myself. Doesn't anyone ever listen?"

Dezi ducked behind her dad, but she couldn't resist peeking around his shoulder to watch the fireworks. An embarrassed Kiho brought up the rear.

Bradley stared at Aren. "I know what you are."

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Aren shot back, his eyes narrowing, "What could you know? You're too backward."

"You're mad at the world. Mad because of something that happened long ago. Something small, but it eats at you daily, and every negative event, no matter how little, adds to your rage. It builds and affects your relationships, which upsets you more and reinforces that anger."

Aren glared back at Bradley.

"You can leave that enmity here far from home."

"Kiho, we're leaving this planet."

Kiho shook his head while his feet remained still.

Bradley glanced at the two youths huddled together.

"Your son is coping by separating himself from you."

Aren stomped his foot. "We're going home."

Kiho closed his eyes and wished he were in his room.

Bradley folded his hands. "Your temper drives everyone away."

Aren's face reddened. "Yes, now."

Kiho spun around and covered his ears.

Bradley nodded to Aren. "Let go of your anger."

Aren took several deep breaths and looked into Kiho's eyes. "I'm sorry. Please return with me. Mother will be worried sick without you."

Kiho stumbled a few steps back from his father. "I'll go back for Mother, but not for you."

Bradley read Aren's and Kiho's expressions. "That's a step forward. It gets easier with each step."

He held out his right hand towards Aren. "Bradley Bond."

Aren looked and shook the outstretched hand. "Aren Jaja. Thanks for your charity enabling us to leave here."

Kiho turned and waved to Dezi. "Goodbye."

"You're leaving, and that's what you say?"

She grabbed him and kissed him. Her arms encompassed him in a tight embrace as their lips sealed

together. He raised both arms around Dezi. She pushed him back and pointed her index finger at him. "There's a goodbye to remember."

Kiho just stood there with his arms still extended around the now-absent Dezi as his lips formed a grin.

Bradley sighed in relief, and his complexion returned to normal.

Aren lifted a pipe up again. "Kiho, time to repair our vehicle now."

Aren and Kiho carried their pipes across the road to the massive rock. Kiho paused and blew a kiss at Dezi before Father yanked him behind the boulder.

Dezi looked at her dad. "See, I handled cars and boys. May I date now?"

"We'll discuss that with Mom. You did well today."

Dezi hopped into the minivan's driver's seat and fired up the motor. Her father jumped in the front seat.

"Do you know the way home?"

The successful hyperdrive repairs increased Aren's self-confidence and reduced his anger over these failures. He yanked the translator out and rubbed his ear.

Father thought to Kiho. This trip tested your skills more than planned. Let's put these speech translators back and head home.

The natives were not backward as earlier. The last survey was years ago, Kiho thought back as he took the pilot's seat and adjusted the myriad of controls for launch.

They have grown since we published the last guide.

She was nice. Kiho flipped switches and set dials and breathed out a sigh of relief when their saucer rose off the blue-green world. He plotted the course as the twinkling stars steadied into brilliant lights.

Kiho was surprised when Father smiled for the first time in years.

A Call to Writers for The Blue Guitar Jr.

Open to children and teens who write
and to adults who write
for children and teens

The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks literary submissions for its next annual issue for children and teens. Submissions from children and teens and adults who write for children and teens are sought by Oct. 1, 2019, in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction — all geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Writers must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For additional information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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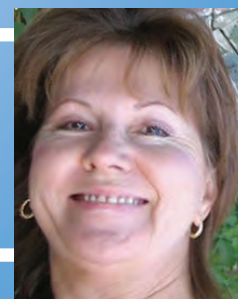
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*Blue Guitar Jr.
will return in
2019!*

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blue guitar.”*