

# The Blue Guitar



# Table Of Contents

## Fiction

“Audrey” – <i>M. A. Noeth</i> .....	3-6
“Youth at Night” – <i>Kiel Warren</i> .....	18-20
“Dog Mom” – <i>Jill Pierce</i> .....	21
“The Strážce” – <i>Lysa Cohen</i> .....	31-33
“Shine Like The Sun,” an excerpt – <i>A. L. Means</i> .....	38-39
“The Raven Box” – <i>Ann Stratton</i> .....	47-49
“The Ultimate Memoir” – <i>Sharyl Bales</i> .....	62-66

## Non-Fiction

“Cochise Stronghold” – <i>Susan E. Swanberg</i> .....	11-12
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## Poetry

“The Transit of Venus,” “At The Kitchen Table,” “At Sea” – <i>Kaitlin Meadows</i> .....	7-8
“Please Call,” “ReReading History,” “Flickering Lights” – <i>Esther Schnur Berlot</i> .....	9-10
“Lucy Admires the Painting of her Room,” “Nightmare Before the Wedding,” “A Woman Reading,” “Alice of the Lines” – <i>Paula Ashley</i> .....	22-23
“Monsoon Do Not Forget The Sonoran Desert,” “1979 Cadillac DeVille,” “Main Street America,” “Memories Of Me - Sold,” “Floating Through Seasons” – <i>L.J. Lenehan</i> .....	34-37
“Rain,” “Père Lachaise,” “The Return,” “Letter To A Poet” – <i>Michael Gessner</i> .....	45-46
“Bulletproofing,” “Daffodils,” “Let Them Wear Mink” – <i>Lilvia Soto</i> .....	50-53
“Kootenai/Kootenay Suite,” “Rain Journey,” “La Golondrina” – <i>David Chorlton</i> .....	60-61
“Family Chat” “Paper Boy,” “Poor Hat: Li Po and I Get a Head,” “Changing Light,” “Cornered,” “Elegy for the Last Iguanodon” – <i>Richard Fenton Sederstrom</i> .....	67-70

## Art

“100 Squares,” “Cloudscape,” “New Day,” “Plain View,” “Sonoma Spring” – <i>Denton Loomis</i> .....	13-17
“Tango Soul,” “Jazz Singer,” “Cowboy Dreams,” “Remembering Joy,” “El Ritmo De La Musica,” “Sunflower Blessings,” “How I Remember You” – <i>Janet Blumenthal</i> .....	24-30

“Red Flash,” “Cowboy Tom,” “Pink Peonies,” “Sunrise in Surprise,” “Cowboy Belt Buckle” – <i>Corinne McAuley</i> .....	40-44
“Generations,” “Limitless,” “Papago at Dusk,” “Submerged,” “Veiled Peak,” “Verve” – <i>Nicole Royse</i> .....	54-59

## News

Community Spotlight Q-and-A with Kas Winters .....	71-75
Calls to writers for Blue Guitar Jr.....	76
Consortium celebrates five years.....	77
5th Annual Blue Guitar Spring 2013 Festival of the Arts.....	78
The Blue Guitar magazine staff biographies .....	79
Sign up for The Consortium’s e-newsletter.....	79
Call to poets for Summer 2013 issue of Unstrung .....	80
All about The Arizona Consortium for the Arts.....	81
Open Mic: A celebration of the arts .....	81
The Consortium’s vision for a multicultural arts center .....	82
Calls to writers, artists for Fall 2013 Blue Guitar .....	83

## Editor’s Note

Five is a special number for us: Just this past year, The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, our parent organization, celebrated five years of networking, nurturing, inspiring, supporting, programming and promoting the arts and artists in all genres and in all cultures. As 2013 progresses, The Blue Guitar heads into its fifth year of publishing and presenting the beautiful works of talented literary and visual artists. And on April 14, The Blue Guitar Spring Festival of the Arts will mark its fifth year of showcasing performances and displays of arts and culture (please turn to Page 78 for details). It’s been an exciting five years of helping to enrich our state through artistic and cultural endeavors — but equally importantly, it’s been a fantastic five years of being enriched by all of YOU! Here’s to even more years of wonderful opportunities, adventures and experiences — in multiples of five — ad infinitum!

Rebecca “Becca” Dyer  
Editor in chief



Rebecca  
“Becca” Dyer

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Spring 2013

# Audrey

## By M. A. Noeth

© 2013

Must've been Sunday. Audrey – I asked myself – how did you know such things? It was sight, I tell you, pure divine sight. I didn't even need a calendar, or a clock, or anything. And I sure wasn't one of those fortune-tellers like at my eight-year birthday party last year – you know, the ones with the yellow fingernails and those creepy hump backs. Nope, the source of my powers was simple. I was an Environmental Listener – state of the art, master of the craft. Yes, eavesdropper was the common term. But let's face it, name-calling got pretty old, and finger-pointing, well, it'd been out of vogue for years.

That's right. I was one of the best, and I hadn't even gone to college for one of those Listener degrees or anything. Didn't need one. I was one of the rare few who'd learned from the streets. Thank you, thank you, too kind. But really, applause wasn't necessary.

I tell you though the job required heavy-duty ears and brainpower for all those cryptic messages of the confidential sort. Well that, and a bit of bravery. Our kitchen closet was damp and bad for the lungs. The smell of sardines – when a can broke back in February – made breathing impossible. And the rats, they were crawling everywhere, I just knew it. This wasn't an assignment for the tender-hearted, that's for sure.

“And why do we have to invite her again?” asked Dad. Through the door the war raged.

“Grow up,” Mom said.

Yep, there was no question about it. Mom and Dad were having a Grandma Fight. Such hostilities didn't just happen any old time. No, they were occasioned for Sundays, sometime late morning. The .0001 margin of error was strictly standard.

“You can't mean to tell me it doesn't bother you?” Dad liked restating his point.

“Quit it, you're talking about my mother.”

“Elaine, the woman is whacked. Someone needs to lock her up. Wait, do you hear something?”

“Hate to break the news to you, Dave.” Mom did have that temper. “Some people actually like the dear sweet women that bestow them life. Is respect too much to ask?”

“Sweet?”

“You weren't even using that golf club.”

Being married sure must've been boring. My parents couldn't even find anything new to fight about. I didn't see the whole point anyway. It wasn't like they'd stop inviting Grams to Sunday dinner.

“Forgot the silver, have we?” my dad asked. “Elaine, you of all people.”

Yep, they sure liked to argue and waste everyone's time. Closets did get dark. A rat pulled at my sneaker. Shoelaces made good nests. But more importantly, the whole thing was quite time-consuming. Like I didn't have anything better to do? Listening through doors was no easy feat. Maple's a thick wood.

“Audrey, are you in that closet again?” Dad yanked the door-knob.

Blinding light flashed into the closet. Didn't they realize how dangerous it was to startle people? Adrenaline pounded in my chest.

The doorbell rang. Yep, it was Sunday – twelve-thirty to be exact. Like every Sunday, the doorbell began, and if my divine abilities hadn't faltered, I'd say it would keep ringing till it turned into one long buzz, worse than a dying bird, which at least you could've shot. That's what my dad always said.

I ran out of the closet and past my dad. He was probably grumpy, so I made sure not to look at him. The front lines of

Continued on page 4

Originally from rural New York, M.A. Noeth moved to Arizona in 1996 and never left. Every time she hears her favorite bird call, the song of the mourning dove, she knows she is home. M.A. received a bachelor's degree in British literature from the University of Arizona and currently works on short fiction and her first novel. She lives in Tucson and remains seduced by the plants, sky, rain, and birds of the desert. M.A. Noeth can be contacted at [m.a.noeth726@gmail.com](mailto:m.a.noeth726@gmail.com).



### Continued from page 3

a Grandma Fight always required participants a cooling-down period. Grams had that effect on people.

Dad beat me to the door. Figures, dads were like that. And naturally, he got to open it too. This Sunday, Uncle Philip arrived first.

“Phil, good to see you, old boy.” Dad slapped Uncle Phil on the back. “How’s that alma mater treating you these days?”

Uncle Phil was still in college. Working on a bachelor’s in something called Urban Planning. Of course after everyone went home, my dad would discuss in precision the pros and cons of Phil’s academic longevity, as Dad’d phrase it. The whole thing sounded pretty prestigious to me. But for some reason whenever Dad got to the part where he mentioned Phil was “still in college,” Dad always added five extra l’s to the word “still” and said it super loud. How on earth could Dad’ve thought we couldn’t hear him? Mom and I always sat right next to him on the sofa. We were supportive like that.

“Well, study hard and use my tax dollars wisely.” Dad always knew the perfect way to word things.

“Uncle Phil!” I said.

“How’s the little beetle-bug?”

“Come on.” I grabbed Uncle Phil’s hand. Uncle Phil loved my nail polish. I knew he’d go wild when he saw my new Taunting Tangerine with Glitter. It was my favorite.

From my room Uncle Phil and I heard the next doorbell, which actually amounted to five prolonged repetitive beeps. My dad’s older sister Aunt Sarah, her husband Christopher (never slip and say “Chris”; Sarah was good at winning arguments), and their son (named Fritz, don’t ask) arrived. Sarah was a half-foot taller than Chris--topher. I couldn’t imagine why there was the fuss. I tried to ask Sarah why she acted so embarrassed, but for some reason my mom elbowed me in the ribs every time.

“It’s just Sarah,” I said to Uncle Phil. “Sit still, your nails are wet.”

When we returned to the living room the doorbell was silent. It would stay like that for a long time.

“Phil, you let her paint your nails again? Why in the world are you so kind?”

“Mommy, don’t you think Uncle Phil looks pretty?”

“Audrey,” my dad said, “I think your uncle might be going for a different look.”

At 2:35 the bell rang again. Grams was late as usual.

Dad opened the door. “Fran, how good of you to join us.”

“Would you look at that.” My mom peered over Dad’s shoulder. “Perfect timing, the dinner timer just went off. Mom, how do you know these things?”

“Fran, do you realize how long we’ve been waiting for you?” my dad asked. “We’re starving, dinner’s now cold.”

“It’s a mother’s instinct,” Grams said. “I can hear that timer ten miles away, I always say.”

“Fran, you sit here next to me.” I’ve never figured out why my dad always wanted to sit by Grams at dinner. After everyone went home, he’d complain about her non-stop. I’m sure he had a good reason though. He’s a smart guy.

Grams sat down next to Dad, and everyone else found a chair. I got stuck sitting next to Uncle Christopher.

According to Dad, the serving of food should be a solemn occasion. Dinner should receive the respect food deserved, he’d say. That day, we started out quiet, but before even the mashed potatoes (lumpy mind you) finished their march around the table, Grams could no longer hold it in.

“All this month Sizzler’s running a lovely two for one lunch special.”

Mom always said Grams possessed a rigorous spirit with a thirst for life. Dad always said Mom was full of it. I wasn’t sure who was in the lead there, but thank God for Grams. Talking always made people much more respectful for broccoli. And that’s what I always said.

Dad coughed. “Fran, didn’t we--”

“Mom, I need to go grocery shopping,” my mom said. “What were you saying about that sale on cantaloupe?”

“Sizzler coats their shrimp in this batter that just melts in your mouth. It’s a secret recipe,” Grams said.

“Personally I find,” Uncle Christopher said, “the whole chain a bit on the musty side.”

“Have you considered the issue of ventilation?” Uncle Phil asked. “You’d be shocked at the percent of public facilities that never meet health code.”

“Fran-- ”

“Mom, did you see the picture of the potbelly pig in today’s paper?” my mom asked.

“Every time I walk into one of those restaurants, green phlegm just starts rising.”

“The little thing was in this baby buggy. A bonnet on its head, and a pacifier sat smack in the mouth, right below its big fat snout.”

“Statistically speaking of course.” Universities were all about proportions.

“Elaine, let me talk,” my dad said.

“Oh just too too cute. Mom, you got to see that pig, you’d die.”

“Fritz,” Aunt Sarah asked, “why don’t I see any broccoli on your plate?”

“Perhaps because I’m not having any?”

“Sarah,” Uncle Christopher said, “he’s fifteen years old.”

“Oh, pardon me, my apologies. I wasn’t aware your only son had grown too old for vitamins.”

“Fran?” my dad asked. “Fran, do you realize you acted inappropriately at Sizzler back in March?”

“Uncle Phil, have you ever played *Dungeons & Dragons*?”

Continued on page 5

Fritz asked.

“I was not aware of the changes in broccoli protocol.”

My mom continued to get my dad’s attention. “Dave--”

“Fran, I’m waiting. Do you realize--”

“That baby pig was darling.”

“For crying out loud, let him eat what he wants.”

“Christopher, I will not be spoken to in that tone of voice.”

“Fran, you cut through the buffet line.”

“Dave--”

“Fran, you snuck through the line without paying.”

“Dave--”

“You’re a threat to society, Fran.”

“David--”

“You’re an outright raging criminal.”

“David Anthony, that’s enough.”

“Christopher, I will not be condescended to, discussion over.”

My mom turned to Grams. “If you want to go to Sizzler, I’d love to go with you.”

“Have you ever been a warlock, Uncle Dave?” Warlocks were difficult roles to play. Fritz knew these things.

“Fran, what do you have to say for yourself?” my dad asked.

Everyone turned to Grams. She continued crunching her salad; I don’t think she realized everyone was staring at her. After a while, probably about thirty-seven minutes, she looked up.

“Elaine,” she asked my mom, “is this salad dressing new?”

“Shit, you don’t know the half of it. Gaming’s intense, man.”

“Fritz, watch your mouth.”

“Let me guess, it’s balsamic based?”

“Mom? What did I say?”

At that point Dad made a loud groan. “Fran, you’re not even listening to me.”

Grams scraped her salad bowl and looked up at Dad. She had this foggy far-away look in her eyes. I think she was starting to go blind. It’s common for old people.

“Dave, would you like to go with me and Elaine to Sizzler?”

Grams asked. A piece of lettuce was caught between her front teeth. When she talked, the leaf moved up and down, and it wiped away her lavender lipstick. Grams turned to me and smiled. “Why little Audrey, you sure are welcome to come too. I know you’ll simply love the fried shrimp.”

“Leave my daughter out of this.” Dad threw his napkin into his salad and got up from the table. “This is ridiculous.” When the front door slammed, everyone blinked. Well, I did.

“Why didn’t I get any potatoes?” Fritz did look hungry.

Apparently, as was just brought to everyone’s attention, for some reason during the course of communication – probably from the lack of Dad’s requested silence – someone terminated the revolution of the mashed potatoes. Thank goodness for Un-

cle Phil. He had the problem-solving thing down, the effects of university life no doubt. Within seconds Uncle Phil rescued the forgotten bowl from the end table and renewed table circulation.

Fritz sighed. He liked mashed potatoes.

“Well, I guess that’s that,” Uncle Christopher said.

“Eat your turkey.” Aunt Sarah was good at directions.

Uncle Christopher ate.

For some reason the table got quiet then. If you listened hard enough, a person could hear every mouth in the room chew. The sound got loud. Halfway through dinner, without warning or proper notice, I might add, Uncle Christopher lurched for the pile of extra napkins in the middle of the table. Unfortunately, the first sneeze was quicker. Even I, seated all the way at his side, received the effects of the ample mist. Uncle Christopher suffered from allergies.

It wasn’t till the chocolate cream pie that Dad wandered back into the house. He must’ve sat down in the living room because we all heard the football game announcer start talking.

“Dear,” my mom yelled from her seat. “Would you like me to heat up your dinner?”

Dad must not have heard. Only cheers from the game came through the walls. One by one, people left the dining room to watch the game. My mom left to wash dishes. Eventually, only Grams and I remained at the table.

“Sundays begin a new week,” Grams said. “Such days call for celebration. Two desserts are in order.”

Grams knew, she’d lived a long time. Hence, we took advantage of the wisdom of the universe and each cut ourselves two slices of pie. Mom’s china plates proved too small, but Grams said they’d fit if we piled the pieces one on top of the other. Grams was right again. She sure knew a lot about pie.

“So Lady Audrey, tell all,” Grams said. “How is that farm of yours these days? Those unicorns are getting mighty pretty.”

Grams seemed to annoy my dad a whole lot, but I wasn’t sure. No one else had the decency to ask me such intelligent questions. Maybe my dad wasn’t always right.

“Well, I tell you, the work’s exhausting,” I said. “Especially with the arrival of the flying horse.”

“You mean to tell me you own a real live pegasus? I’m spell-bound.”

We continued to eat and sip our teacups of milk from my mom’s Rosette Blush collection. A very delicate line of china, mind you. Grams drank tea and coffee at her house, but when she visited on Sundays, she preferred to drink milk with me. Mom’s best linen covered the table.

Just then the dining room door flew open. “Ah-ha, I knew it! Caught red-handed, Fran.”

Grams looked over her teacup.

### Continued from page 5

“Dad, would you like some pie?”

“Audrey, I didn’t realize you were in here.”

My mom walked in from the kitchen. “Dave, why don’t you join me. Here’s a towel, you can dry.” Her voice didn’t sound normal. It was all soft and soothing.

Grams just sat there with that blank stare of hers. I hadn’t noticed before, but her pie must’ve splattered because whip-cream and chunks of chocolate pudding were caught in the netting of her hat. Grams looked down and continued to eat. I figured if it didn’t bother her any, her pie hat sure didn’t bother me.

Dad followed Mom into the kitchen, and I – not daring to test Mom with requests for a third slice – left to join the others in the living room. I walked into the middle of a heated discussion on the merits of *D&D* strategy. Fritz and Uncle Phil were deep in debate.

“But you’re not considering the political implications.” Fritz’s face was red. Sweat rolled down his checks, and drops of sweat were making his pimples glow.

Uncle Phil read one of his textbooks. He looked up from time to time at the TV screen. Fritz started to wheeze.

“That woman!”

We heard the scream and everyone raced to the kitchen. There was my mom, stomping her feet, flapping her arms; her fists flew in the air. If I didn’t know they were reserved for little kids, I’d have thought Mom was throwing a temper tantrum. I looked around. I knew it, nothing for cover in sight. How could an Envi-

ronmental Listener work without proper resources?

“I can live with a few missing pieces of silverware. And I’ve been patient. Haven’t I been patient, Dave?”

“You’ve been a saint, Elaine.”

Just then, brakes screeched and a car pulled out of the driveway. All heads turned to the door.

“It’s Fran,” my dad said. “She’s left for the day.”

But Mom and her (for lack of a better word) tantrum hadn’t finished. “But the china? I’m drawing the line. Dave?”

“Yes, dear?”

“We’re locking her up. I’ve had it. No mother of mine. I tell you, she’s a raging criminal. Thinks she can get away with this? Her and those sticky fingers.”

“The proper word,” Fritz said, “is kleptomania.”

“Mommy?” I asked.

“I’m getting you an entire set of new golf clubs, Dave. No, no but’s, I’ve decided.”

“You mean, Grams’ll be getting them.” Fritz loved to laugh.

“But Mommy,” I said, “Grams and I hadn’t finished talking about the flying horse.”

“And when my mom visits next Sunday, we’re hiding your new clubs in the basement.”

It was simple. Grams was in the right. No one saw all the neat things about her. But I did. I had divine sight. If they just would’ve asked me. I’d known all along. Well, maybe not.

“Mommy,” I asked, “can I have a piece of pie?”

Insight was hard work. This was a three-dessert kind of day. Times like these, a person’s got to take chances.

# 3 Poems by Kaitlin Meadows

## The Transit of Venus

© 2013

That last day  
There were troubled undercurrents,  
Riptides in your dark room,  
Music lost in the throat  
Of the parched wren  
On the empty cabin's window sill.

The fruit had fallen, uneaten,  
At the rotten root of the sacred plum  
You pruned back every winter  
And fertilized only last spring,  
Giving the harvest,  
When it came,  
Away.

An anguish of cloud  
Worried the serrated mountains,  
And lightning in an electrical shatter  
Drove its fire across the bruised sky.  
No hope of rain.

Your finger-frayed work gloves  
Were still stuffed into the torn pocket  
Of your threadbare denim chore jacket  
Hanging on a rusted nail  
Beside the door  
You never locked.

I found you  
In the hay maw,  
Face up,  
Wide steel blue eyes open,  
The goats in their stalls  
Udders taut,  
Stamping their feet,  
Silent with hope.

Now no chore needs doing  
And at dawning,  
Venus no more lifts itself up  
For your wet eyes  
As the goats wait,  
Full of milk,  
Yearning,  
For your rough gentle hands  
To open  
The font  
Of their rich milk  
Once more,  
To fill the battered bucket  
With the steam and froth of  
Their gift,  
In turn for yours.

Venus has sunk now  
Forever  
Behind the last cold mountain  
Of another lonely morning  
On this spinning earth  
Without you  
To marvel  
Or celebrate it  
And the big tarnished moon  
Of my broken heart  
Holds your light,  
Dimming.



Kaitlin Meadows is the Mistress of Merriment at her enchanted art studio The Creative Cottage where she teaches creativity and art classes, makes masks and books, paints and sculpts, works with clay and invents mischief. She holds a twice-monthly writing circle called Word Weavers for women interested in writing and sharing in a nurturing environment. Please check out her classes at: [www.thundermoonstudios.wordpress.com](http://www.thundermoonstudios.wordpress.com) or visit her website at: [www.kaitlinmeadows.com](http://www.kaitlinmeadows.com) or contact her at: [paloma@dakotacom.net](mailto:paloma@dakotacom.net).

# At The Kitchen Table

© 2013

the day is spreading  
its lovely plumage  
over the kitchen garden,  
Queen Anne's lace,  
an ornate doily  
thrust up like an antique parasol  
over the star blown asters  
and peppered marigolds

the daily fresco of our lives,  
sienna and verdigris,  
a fist of garlic,  
vin ordinaire,  
a salad of topaz peppers  
and heirloom tomatoes  
aswim in balsamic vinegar,  
basil pesto on buttery pasta,  
mozzarella and gorgonzola,  
and crusty bread for sucking up  
the olive oil speckled with oregano

it is the custom of this house  
to celebrate life  
with gratitude,  
openly and with relish,  
and I find  
as the days fleet by  
ever faster and more complex,  
that I keep to the simple traditions  
of food and family  
gathered together  
at this life scarred  
butterscotch pine  
kitchen table  
with deep reverence,  
hearty appetite,  
and, always,  
much awe

# At Sea

© 2013

the echo of the waves  
throws its voice into my throat,  
my bones betray me  
as they grind their ends together,  
complaining,  
my blood refuses to be pushed  
any longer through  
the narrow cobbled avenues  
I have made of old wide highways.  
I long to be debauched,  
satiated,  
filled with second helpings,  
knees bruised  
from too much prayer,  
fingers stiff  
from worrying the beads.  
I pole my raft  
down your undulant river,  
against the current,  
bucking the tide,  
like a black, reed-slender eel  
I come with a jolt  
of unexpected electricity,  
like some phosphorescent fish  
I glow unseen  
at the bottom of the deep, turbulent  
sea of you,  
a dim light flickering  
to help you find  
my dark treasure,  
the loot I have gathered  
for your pleasure.

# 3 Poems by Esther Schnur Berlot

## Please Call

© 2013

Not ready to let go  
of you, my dented, chipped  
and rusty old friend  
I snuggle into your worn  
torn interior  
and hug  
the wheel tightly  
this frosty morning.

My foot gently tap, taps  
your gas. You sputter spit  
a growly grumble  
and die.

The unthinkable ignites panic  
I rev up the engine  
the 3rd time  
finally  
your engine hums.  
With a blast of energy  
we're propelled out  
of the garage.

Feeling sassy we cruise past  
men of taste,  
who stare wistfully  
in our direction.  
I park for needed coffee fix,  
returning to find a note  
left under windshield

*If you plan to sell red Mazda pickup  
Please call.*



Esther Schnur-Berlot is a transplant from New York City where she worked behind the scenes in TV commercials and then on to California where she taught wearable art. Now living in Tucson, she devotes her time to writing poetry. Esther's poetry has been published in the California State Poetry Quarterly, the Sonoma Collective and Desert Voices. E-mail [iberlot@q.com](mailto:iberlot@q.com).

# ReReading History

© 2013

Lost in ramblings  
I searched footnotes

for glimpses of shrouded  
secrets hidden in shadows

ambushed by horror  
I wail

*Why, Why, Why*  
I wallow – in sorrow

for blood spilled  
in a story

without  
a beginning, middle  
or end

# Flickering Lights

© 2013

crawl into yesterday's child  
kindling Chanukah menorah  
huddled around waning candles  
sing-singing – ancient rituals

Time moves me forward  
to a new terrain  
Glittering lights – light the dark  
of winter. The snow bound city  
is awake with Ma's voice calling

*If you'll come home for Christmas  
I'll make potato latkes.*

Winter bones chill.  
The stranger within transplants  
herself to warmer climates.  
Solstice season shoppers  
dash about trees decked  
in faux snow as mall carolers  
Hark the Herald Angels.

Stepping into Tucson's night  
stars flicker with memories.

# Cochise Stronghold

By Susan E. Swanberg

© 2013

I climb into the truck and check the map again. After I leave Tucson, I-10 E to El Paso drifts past towns with names like Dragoon, Cochise and Bowie.

My daughter should be with me. This should be her pilgrimage.

As I drive, the sights and smells of the Southwest bombard me through the gap in the driver's side window—dry desert sand, sage, the smoky smell of mesquite. I'm headed to sacred places that don't belong to me.

With an iPod blaring my favorite oldies—"Wild Horses" is the song of the day—I take AZ-186 past Willcox for about 33 miles. I pass hills with the faces of recumbent deities, lips open, praying to the skies. The road rises up and down, following the gentle curves of the valley floor. Dry, sandy grasslands dotted with cattle extend for miles. There must be water somewhere, but I can't see any.

The valley is surrounded on two sides by craggy hills and on the third side by a range of mountains sprinkled with snow. The mountains rise like spiky islands from the grassy valley surrounding them. These peaks are named after the Athabaskan people who once roamed 15 million acres of land, including southwestern New Mexico, southeastern Arizona and the Mexican regions of Sonora and Chihuahua.

I turn right onto AZ-181 and head toward the snowy peaks. In seven more miles I reach Bonita Canyon, part of the Chiricahua National Monument in the Chiricahua Mountains.

My daughter, Dana, has a legitimate claim to the sacred places of the Chiricahua. My former husband and I adopted her when she was a week old. Our sweet, dark-haired, dark-eyed baby was born four weeks early to a 15-year-old mother. We whisked Dana away and took her home.

It was only later, several years after the adoption was finalized,

that we learned about the rich heritage we had unwittingly taken from her. Still later I would wonder whether the loss of family ties going back for generations could be the source of my daughter's pain.

Dana is part Apache. We'll never know whether withholding this information was an oversight on the part of her birth mother, or a calculated strategy she used to avoid Native American adoption laws. When I did find out the truth, I felt guilty about depriving Dana of her legacy.

"*Childhood living is easy to do,*" sings the iPod. "*The things you wanted, I bought them for you.*"

The history of the Chiricahua Apache is a compelling story of migration, survival and confrontation with a European culture that preferred to dominate rather than coexist. Descendants of Siberians who crossed the Bering Straits more than 13,000 years ago, the Apache traveled south from what is now Alaska, then wandered east. The exact timing of these migrations and the history of the Apache and other Athabaskan peoples is fiercely debated by geneticists, archeologists and anthropologists.

The Warm Springs Apache (a branch of the Chiricahua) used Cañada Alamosa, New Mexico, and the nearby hot springs as a sacred seasonal encampment. The Apache survived by hunting and gathering, subsistence farming and raiding the Mexicans who also inhabited the region. The Mexicans raided back. In fact, years of mutual raiding and kidnapping resulted in the mixing of these two peoples. Many Apache family names are Mexican names.

European settlers who moved to the region decades later found the proximity of the Apache to be an inconvenience. The Chiricahua had established what the Europeans thought were temporary encampments along the banks of the Alamosa River.

Continued on page 12



Susan E. Swanberg has worn many hats. She practiced criminal law, conducted research in genetics, and now studies journalism at the University of Arizona. The common thread among her interests is writing, including legal writing, scientific writing, science journalism and creative nonfiction. In her essay "Cochise Stronghold," Swanberg combines all of these interests. Her daughter, Dana (at right with the author), is working and studying in California. Swanberg lives with her husband, two horses and four dogs at the foot of the Santa Catalina Mountains in Catalina, Arizona. Swanberg can be reached at [Swanberg@email.arizona.edu](mailto:Swanberg@email.arizona.edu).



## Continued from page 11

Depending on the season and the availability of game and other food, the Chiricahua would migrate from one encampment to another. These movements were not consistent with the European notion of land ownership, so the European settlers thought the lands were theirs to claim. The Chiricahua, in turn, conducted raids on the settlers, taking what they wanted.

In the 1800s, the United States Army decided to remove the Chiricahua from the Cañada Alamosa region. Plans to resettle the Apache backfired, and a series of battles with chiefs like Geronimo, Mangas Coloradas, Victorio and Cochise ensued. Outgunned and outmanned, the Chiricahua eventually retreated to a small area in New Mexico not far from Cañada Alamosa, where many were eventually subdued.

Their most famous leader, Geronimo, was arrested and taken far from his home. He died in prison, never seeing his sacred lands again. Chiricahua families were separated and dispersed. Many children were sent to government boarding schools, where they were forced to cut their hair, wear European clothes and give up their language. Remnants of the Chiricahua people joined other Apache groups, such as the Mescalero, on reservations in the Southwest.

Dana's adoption was open, so we had contact with her birth mother over the years until Lisa (her name has been changed) hit some rough spots, making it risky to remain in communication. Before we drifted out of touch, Lisa provided a few clues to Dana's origins. Her ancestors were from Monticello, New Mexico, the name the Europeans gave to Cañada Alamosa. This meant that Dana was probably Chiricahua.

One day in a restaurant in California, I saw a picture on the wall showing a young Native American girl who looked just like Dana at the age of 5. The girl was the granddaughter of Cochise, a Chiricahua Apache warrior.

Over the years we tried to interest Dana in her genealogy, but she brushed it off—the same way she brushed off the taunts of her peers. “Wetback” or “dirty mutt,” they called her. My heart broke, but Dana was tough.

Like her birth mother, Dana hit some rough patches in her teen years. Dana became a hair-pulling, fingernail-scratching fighter with a nasty right hook when her classmates' taunts finally got under her pretty brown skin.

Eventually it was too much. To save Dana, we had to risk destroying her by sending her away to boarding school for a while. We felt as if we were repeating an unholy history.

*“You know, I can't let you, slide through my hands.”*

It was around that time that I began my search for something that would help me to understand my daughter. I found solace in a visit to Cañada Alamosa. The Internet site where I found a map called the place a “ghost town,” but there was still a small

community there, nestled in the valley. In about 2004, the village square was composed mostly of dilapidated buildings. I took a few pictures, planning to return in the future.

Chiricahua National Monument is beautiful. The air is cooler and crisper in the mountains. The canyons and valleys there are green. Animal life is abundant, and sheltering trees line the banks of streams that flow in the spring. The mountains rise up in strange, organic columns—formations that look as if they are about to topple. From the outlook at the top, you can see more craggy peaks. It looks like a perfect spot for an encampment.

Explaining my quest, I ask a Forest Service employee about the Apache. Yes, they were here, but Cochise Stronghold, less than an hour away, was better suited to the needs of the Apache. In the Chiricahua Mountains, she says, you would not be able to see who was sneaking up on you.

I head back to the highway, back past the cattle grazing, back past the praying heads until I hit AZ-191. I take the route to Sunsites, passing roads and gravel pits named “Apache” this and “Apache” that.

Overhead I see a flock of birds—hundreds, maybe thousands of them, wheeling and turning like a school of fish. They turn and disappear—dark backs turned away from me, white bellies blending with the light-colored sky. This is a place where one could hide in plain sight.

I turn right onto Ironwood Road and drive until the lane turns to gravel. The dry, grassy valley gives way to a fertile riparian canyon. The trees are filled with mistletoe, luring the sweet-sounding phainopepla. The Dragoon Mountains rise above like a fortress—not as high as the Chiricahuas, but high enough to be a great vantage point. From the Dragoons, Cochise could see anyone who might approach.

Cochise was never really conquered. After his death, he was buried in a secret location, somewhere in the Dragoons.

There's no time today to go to Cañada Alamosa. That will have to be a trip for another day. I want to do more research before I visit Monticello/Cañada Alamosa again. Maybe I can organize a guided trip. I want to be prepared—and there's someone who should be with me when I go.

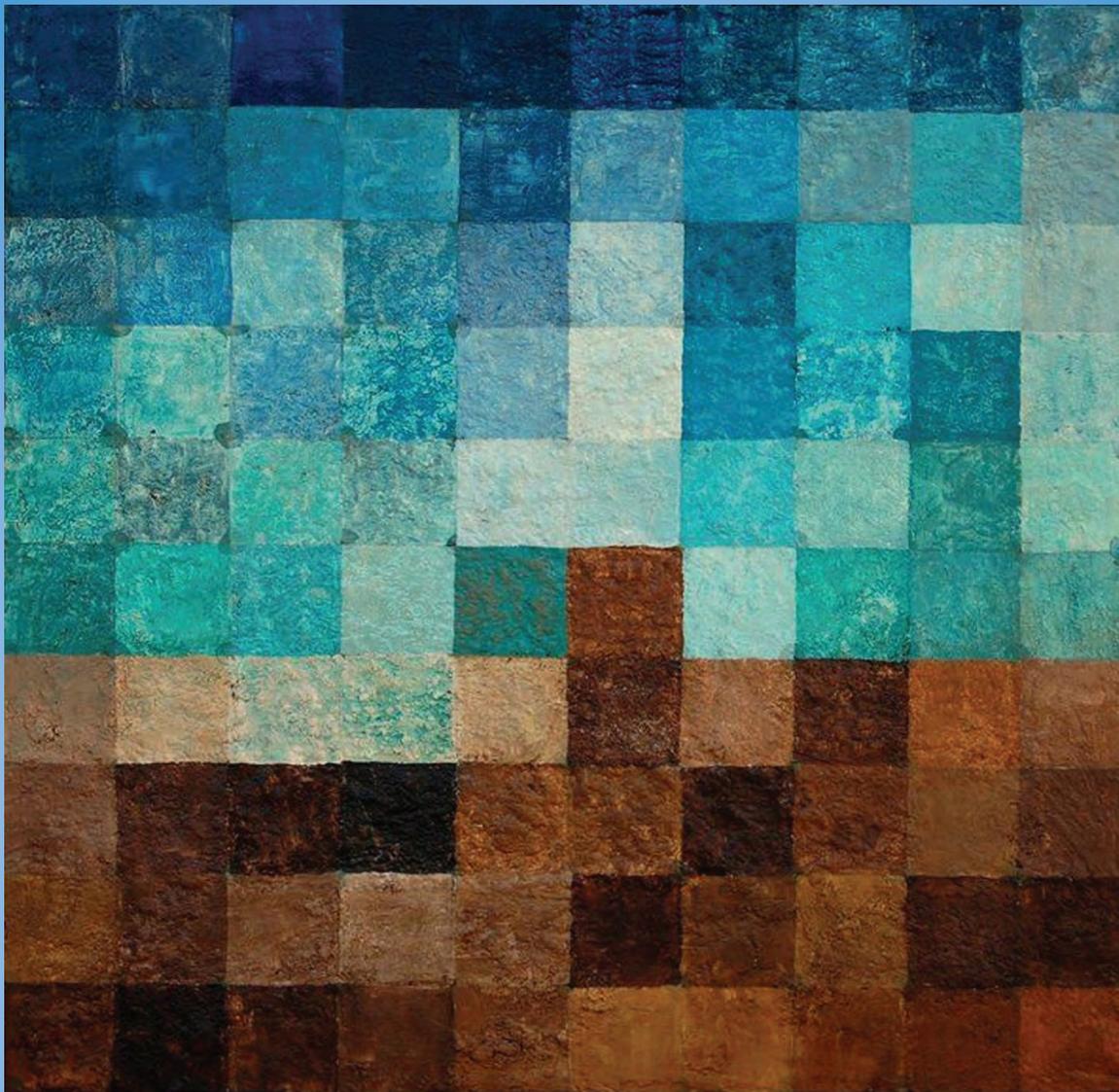
When Dana came back from boarding school, she had changed. She understood that to survive, she had to choose her battles. She had to learn to find a place and a way to fit in while still remaining true to self. She's a lovely non-conformist who knows what she wants. Nothing will stand in her way. She's brave enough and tough enough to work in a prison fearlessly, side-by-side with the inmates, but tender enough to remember Mother's Day.

She's in college now and doing well—Phi Theta Kappa, even. She has a tattoo of an Indian maiden on her left arm. She found some distant Native American relations on Facebook. Someday I'll visit Cañada Alamosa with her.

*“Wild horses—we'll ride them someday.”*

# Denton Loomis

Chandler Artist



**“100 Squares”**  
Acrylic on wood panel  
30” x 30”



Denton Loomis was born in 1962 and raised in the Sonoma County town of Santa Rosa. Both his mother and grandmother were artists, and he began painting and drawing in earnest at the age of twelve. He moved to Arizona in 1983 to attend college and has been here ever since. Though his career has not always been art-related, he continually found ways to express himself through graphic design and illustration. Enjoying the “second half” of his career, he now finds himself riding a wave of creativity and paints primarily landscapes in oil, acrylic and watercolor. Contact the artist at [dentonloomis@gmail.com](mailto:dentonloomis@gmail.com) and see more of his work at [www.dentonloomis.com](http://www.dentonloomis.com).

# Denton Loomis

Chandler Artist



**"Cloudscape"**  
Acrylic on wood panel  
30" x 15"

If you look around your environment with clear eyes and a gentle heart you'll notice beauty everywhere. That's how I see the world around me and it is that world I try to translate in my paintings. I have lived in some amazing places like the soaring redwoods of northern California, the rolling hills of both Napa and Sonoma counties covered with vineyards and oaks all the way to the rugged ocean, and the wonderful Sonoran Desert where I find myself now. All of these places, even where they are covered in asphalt and concrete, are amazing to paint, and it is my life's goal to paint it all.

- Denton Loomis

# Denton Loomis

Chandler Artist



**“New Day”**  
**Acrylic on wood panel**  
**30” x 13”**

# Denton Loomis

Chandler Artist



**“Plain View”**  
Acrylic on wood panel  
48” x 30”

# Denton Loomis

Chandler Artist



**“Sonoma Spring”**  
Acrylic on wood panel  
12” x 12”

# Youth at Night

By Kiel Warren

© 2013

**W**e have a mission tonight. We're going to set off fireworks out in the cotton rows of Queen Creek. The poor farmers won't know what hit them, and we'll be gone before the cops show up. We think. We're pretty sure. We don't worry about it too much. It's 1999. Fireworks won't be legal for years.

There are six of us between two cars. 8,000 pounds of pure American muscle ripping up the loose grit, spilling fine dust into the cooling night air. Out here you trade the burning fever of street heat for the dull nostril crawl of the cow patty. Meanwhile the center of Phoenix is a heat island. Light rays pound all day long on the hundred miles of city asphalt; at night the brutal roadways turn into God's radiator. Not so out here. Not yet. Not until these cotton fields turn into a parking lot for a Target. Everything changes.

I should mention the muscle: a '94 Ford Escort (two-door, hatchback) and a '97 cherry red Pontiac Sunfire (room for two). Yes, I know what you're thinking, and it's true. We rule the streets.

I drive the Escort with Gillian in the passenger's seat and Brandon and Jenny in the back. None of us couples. Nikki rides shotgun in the Sunfire, driven by Opie (yes), with a cache of fireworks stuffed in between the bucket seats on the tiny back bar. Nikki, my girlfriend, chose not to ride with me. We are already drifting apart; news to me.

Nikki and I met at my after-school job. She's a bit older, already graduated. Our whole group met there; a shared dismal retail horror keeps us together. We all sell electronics with passive disinterest, bonding first over a terrible Saturday morning meeting, one of those useless burdens of part-time employment. Afterward we all drove around together, much as we do now, with aimless purpose.

Our trip begins in Gilbert. It's a busy little town, east of Phoenix, not far from our destination. South Gilbert and Queen Creek used to be stuffed with dairy farms, manure stench everywhere. I catch a whiff of it now, my hand dangling outside, tapping away on the car door. Summertime, July probably, a cool 75 degrees. Summer nights never get that cool anymore.

There's a break in the monsoons that weekend and the dust settles. We restless youth strike out to fix our boredom. I like nights like these: rare bouts of humidity, a streak of heat lightning on the horizon, desert calm.

Jenny tosses her CD case up front. One of those enormous old vinyl things stuffed with every disc in your collection. Did you try and cram the liner notes in front of the discs too? Jenny does not. Gillian flips through it, and I take my eyes off the road every now and then to take a looksie. In 1999 every single person under the age of 30 owned *Sublime*.

"... *And Justice for All*," Brandon notices it and considers it.

I fumble around and look in the rearview at Jenny. She smiles; we make eye contact, then she turns back to the window. "You like Metallica?" I ask, getting all excited. See, I love Metallica. My fingers stop tapping a beat on the car door and start mimicking the chords of *The Four Horsemen*. In this 30-second moment, I completely forget my girlfriend in the car ahead, and become transfixed on the possibility of Jenny. I like her; she might like me. My thick freak brain couldn't process mutual affection back then.

"I like that one song. You know the one. The one my brother plays all the time ..." she mumbles, staring off into space: the hazy, star-devoid space. In this valley we see everything through the impolite tint of smog that denies us the nighttime beauty so obvious in other parts of the world.

"*One*?" I mutter.

Continued on page 19



Kiel Warren lives in Gilbert with his lovely wife, Jennifer, beautiful daughter Kate, and dictatorial Corgi, Ike. He teaches English at Corona del Sol High School in Tempe. A graduate of ASU, he has lived in Arizona for over fifteen years. You can reach him at [kiel.warren@gmail.com](mailto:kiel.warren@gmail.com).

**Continued from page 18**

“Yea, that’s it!” she smiles and snaps back into the conversation.

Everyone likes *One*. I instantly remember Nikki in the cherry Sunfire and wonder what she’s thinking right now. We’re together all the time, so this is a rare moment. I wonder if she’s thinking about me.

“Yes!” Brandon exclaims. The CD doesn’t hesitate; it finds its way home.

Gillian sighs. She looks at me as if I should do something about it. I don’t. A gruff voice barks through the speakers. Gillian sighs again, “this is so stupid.”

Brandon is the whitest guy Gillian and I know, and then this happens: My tiny two-door hatchback becomes a threatening gangland cruiser blasting the arena rap of DMX. We all had our idiot tastes.

Her hand goes immediately to the volume buttons and cranks it down to manageable levels. Brandon groans, Jenny laughs, and I wonder what Nikki is thinking.

Our cars turn down Rittenhouse. Queen Creek is Nikki’s country. She lives with her dad in Gilbert, but her mom dwells out here. Nikki knows all the back roads, through all the farmland, every path for tractors and pickups. Little four bangers aren’t supposed to take them. We do a lot of things we aren’t supposed to do.

A few minutes later we reach our staging area; Opie’s car flush with a variety of illegal fireworks. He’s devout; the kind of Catholic that never eats meat on a Friday, yet here we are.

“How was the ride?” Opie asks through our window. The awkwardly polite redhead pulls a monster Roman candle from his trunk. We tell him the ride was fine.

\*\*\*

Jenny and Brandon hop out to organize the fireworks. Gillian and I stay in the car, the radio turned way down now. She wants to talk.

A few awkward moments go by before she asks, “Do you really want to be with Nikki?”

“What? No, I mean ... sure,” I say.

She laughs. “You don’t know?” Gillian knew me very well.

“It’s just ... I don’t know. I like her and all, but ...”

“If you have doubts you need to end it.”

“We love each other, right?” I ask.

“If you don’t, it isn’t fair to tell her that. She loves you, so if you don’t, you need to break up with her,” she says. “Stop wasting her time.” It won’t be the last time someone has told me I’m wasting their time.

I barely argue with her. I don’t ask why she brought it up. Gillian has a good sense about these things. I’ve known her the longest, longer than even Nikki. I never had the courage to ask

her out despite whatever crush I might’ve had. That’s not exactly right; she dangled a date right in front of me. All I had to do was ask. I couldn’t do the math. How I ended up with Nikki is a mystery.

We have a new boss at work; Steve, he’s a Mormon. Six months from now, Steve and his wife separate. The reason being that Gillian and Steve will start dating two months prior to that. She’s 18; he’s in his late 30s. A full year from now, Gillian and Steve are going to run away together, and I won’t hear from her again until 2005 when I happen to bump into her at ASU and we share an awkward hello in the rain before I retreat to English class. Right now she’s a close friend, and a girl I wish I’d made a move on.

\*\*\*

I step out onto the dusty road, our impromptu staging area, and Nikki runs into my arms. There’s no tension. Not like there eventually will be. The road bisects two enormous tracts of cotton. They don’t make good cover, not like corn. However, the main streets are incredibly far away on either side.

Nikki hugs me and we kiss, and I stand there, jaw set, in the middle of a person’s entire livelihood. We have a choice to make, namely our direction. East or west, does it really matter? After we shoot a dozen or so fireworks, the police lights will spring to life, north or south, and we’ll retreat in the opposite direction. I never considered what would happen if the sirens came from both directions. We leave a lot to chance.

Brandon and Opie get ready to set off that Roman candle. There’s a breezy cool warmth out here, no heat island. A desert, the way it should be in the early evening: chirping insects, a lone dog woofing in the distance, a solitary car on the horizon, no streetlights, where everyone’s voice is just a bit too loud.

“Did you *enjoy* driving with Opie?” I ask. I controlled back then. In small ways, so I couldn’t even notice myself doing it.

She ignores the question, grabs my hand and we run behind Jenny. Gillian stands close to Brandon. We want them to date. They never do.

Opie goes to light the candle. He’ll be my sponsor for Catholic confirmation next year. It only takes me a year to regret ever doing it, and I give up the faith a few years after that. Opie will go away to veterinary school, and I’ll never hear from him again.

The candle goes off. Frenetic light sparks off the base and the tube detonates balls of fire high in the air and we all “ooo” and “ahh.” Brandon lights a bottle rocket and it goes terribly wrong shooting straight into the ground. He’s okay, so Jenny laughs at him. I wish I could remember the last time I talked to Brandon. There must have been a moment when I deleted his number.

“Let’s go to California,” Nikki whispers, her eyes wide and cheeks rosy. She always wants to go to California. There was

**Continued on page 20**

always another adventure to have. I nod my head. I can't shake Gillian's warning.

I can't make Nikki look like the bad guy. At 18 I didn't understand this. I didn't understand growing apart. I didn't understand how painful it is when one person does, and the other doesn't, or hasn't. We have different goals and I'm scared to confess mine. That's why I keep my mouth shut, and nod "yes," no matter how many dirty looks Gillian gives me.

They let me light the biggest of the bottle rockets. I take a moment, deciding whether to shoot it over the eastern or western field. I choose. Something goes wrong. It shoots right into the cotton. I freak out. I hadn't considered lighting an entire field on fire.

"Relax. The plants are all wet from watering," Nikki says.

She's right about to say it again when cop lights pop from the south. They're much closer than usual. We don't even have time to pick up the extra fireworks.

"Leave them!" Brandon yells, and we all cram into our respective cars. We've never been caught, so we're laughing like crazy. It's all in good fun.

This time Nikki gets in the front seat with me and we hold hands. Gillian's in the back, disappointed. She knows I won't say anything. She knows I don't really love Nikki. Jenny climbs in too, and this time Brandon goes with Opie.

We've done this crime twice before, and both times the cops give up the chase as soon as we leave the fields.

As our cars peel out onto the main road, more sirens pop on from the west. Way off in the distance, yet on the same road. They see us. We are such dumb kids.

"You idiots oh my god!" Gillian screams. This is the first time she's come out with us. We told her nothing would go wrong. She kicks me in the kidneys through the seat.

Brandon must be driving the Sunfire because it starts to speed up. Opie would surrender immediately. Holy crap, he's going to outrun the cops. I have to keep up. I can't get left behind. Brandon flips off his lights. I do the same.

He slows, barely, as we approach a stop sign. There are no other lights coming from either direction, so he blows right through it. I hold my breath, and let slightly off the accelerator as if that will make any difference at these speeds.

An alcohol counselor once told me that the main cause of accidents between drunk drivers in Queen Creek is cruising with lights off. See there's a lot of annoying four-way stops out here, and you don't want to keep stopping on your way home, so you

pull the same move Brandon just made. What happens when two people do it?

"We're breaking the law!" I yell as my car roars towards the intersection. I consider closing my eyes. Nikki squeezes my hand while smiling cool as a cucumber.

Jenny laughs as per usual. I've seen her the most in the intervening years. Every time we trade phone numbers and agree to catch up disbelieving that it has been so long.

Gillian has her head in her lap. We're all so young.

We make it. My Escort survives another day and we catch back up with the Sunfire. The police lights dim a bit as they fall back.

Eventually the streetlights pick up and Brandon veers around a turn; we cut up a back road under the shade of giant orange groves. Between this thickness the cops will lose us. Our savior groves are a Wal-Mart now.

\*\*\*

Back at Nikki's house we lounge on her couch while her parents sleep upstairs. Those of us that remain after our brush with the law share a few beers. I have a few more. Later that night I tell Nikki I love her. Gillian knows I will.

We're all directionless. I'll break up with her eventually, but I'm not ready yet.

And I'll lose touch with everyone in this room. The friendships will be paved over with bitter in-fighting and broken hearts. We all have choices to make at the cusp of our twenties. None of us have intersecting paths; we don't want to admit it, so we spend the evenings rebelling against nothing.

That's youth.

\*\*\*

A farmer, awoken by youth at night, leans over the fence on his small wooden porch. He looks out across rows and rows of cotton and smiles at the fading police lights. He used to be able to grip the railing firmly. Now his hand aches. In his day the children had more respect for a man and his land. This land that has been in his family for generations.

In the morning his wife will ask him about that man again, the man who wants to buy the land, and free them of their obligation. He doesn't want to give it up.

"You can't do this forever and the children don't want to be farmers," his wife says. "Do you even want to do this anymore?"

He reconsiders. Maybe he doesn't.

In a few years they retire. He sells the land, and the rows and rows of cotton become rows and rows of cheap housing, and the dirt back roads become asphalt with street signs. The heat island grows.

# Dog Mom

## By Jill Pierce

© 2013

I am a self-proclaimed dog Mom, consciously choosing four-legged furry children over two-legged less furry ones. The commitment is far shorter, and dogs don't talk back.

Being a dog Mom, I don't have to ask myself what mortal parenting mistakes I made for which my child will someday pay. When I look at my dogs' faces, I don't wonder if they silently hate me for something I did to them without intention, because my mother and her mother before her couldn't know a different way of parenting. When I look into their eyes, I see adoration, acceptance, and unconditional love.

Their playfulness defeats the anger my mother so firmly planted in me before I could defend against it. Their silly antics quiet the anger I remember in my mother's voice when she laments not getting grandchildren from me, the anger which always bubbles under my skin, the anger which warned me so many years ago, "Do not have children. Do not continue the cycle."

I don't remind my two Boxers on a near-weekly basis they were a mistake, that they were never wanted. Instead, I savor every moment I have with them, because ten and a half years go by like a snap and I'm saying goodbye to the best friend I ever had. I cannot walk past them sitting on the sofa without scratching their ears or kissing the top of their heads. My dogs will never spend a day wondering if they are loved.

I don't have to confess to my dogs I had two before them I never told them about. Two who share their blood, exist in the world, but to them are nonexistent. I don't let them believe they were my only two, and then look into their eyes and see the ones I gave away.

I won't be seventy years old and still feeling the guilt I had for once taking my anger out on my dog. He forgave and forgot as dogs do, and I vowed to never do it again. I don't worry that he'll never want to see me again because of my cruelty.

My dogs are recipients of the love I could have lavished on a child. They have been spared the mistakes I would have made with a child. And we are all the better off.



Jill grew up in the Pacific Northwest and moved to Tucson in 1989. Although she makes her living as a painting contractor, her passion is writing. Jill's work has appeared in *Natural Awakenings Magazine* and her first book of essays, "Four Square, Tales of Life" was published in Spring of 2013. She lives in Tucson with her husband, John, and two Boxer dogs, Roxie and Jack. You can contact Jill at [jillpierce82@yahoo.com](mailto:jillpierce82@yahoo.com).

# 4 Poems by Paula Ashley

## Lucy Admires the Painting of her Room

© 2013

*Madame Lucy Hessel at her Dressmaker's Table,*  
Edouard Vuillard, 1908, oil on cardboard

Edouard,  
you remember my room at Chateau Rouge.

Like your mother  
I labored at the needle – La Belle Époque  
demands fine dress.

That husband of mine, Jos,  
had no time for me there with that tart,  
Odette, hanging out at his gallery in Paris

but you –  
I took a room there for you too.

How we walked together in the gardens  
when day's light dimmed –  
nasturtiums sprawling over the rocky path.

The light  
the ambience  
the fresh air –

## Nightmare Before the Wedding

© 2013

*Wolves Descending From the Alps,*  
oil on canvas, William Hamilton

Snowflakes crystal the air.  
She shivers knowing  
what she does not know:

the black glove dropped  
on the white marble floor  
of her father's castle.  
She closes her eyes.

Night gathers. Dark clouds  
hover over the mountains.  
Wolves are hungry,  
nothing to eat for days.

Nails scratch the hard granite,  
growls no longer distant.  
The way back is threatening;  
the way forward sheer, slippery.

Wolves gnaw the stallion's hooves.  
Fear bulges the eyes of her guide,  
her father's minion.  
Her gown transparent

to the encroaching storm.



Paula Ashley received her MFA from Queens University of Charlotte in May, 2012, after earning the Certificate of Creative Writing from Phoenix College and taking some classes at Arizona State University. She has lived in Arizona since 1964. Paula writes, "These poems were written in response to paintings at the Phoenix Art Museum. The stories attributed to the scenes are all mine."

# A Woman Reading

© 2013

Antonio Rizzi, oil on canvas, 1876

Her silk gown glows  
in moonlight against the dark  
brocade of the sofa.

She lifts her head to read –  
a novel? her lines for a play?  
prayers from an ancient text?

She dreams of life  
outside the manor, meeting  
friends, drinking wine and dancing.

She hears a noise downstairs  
or at the gate. She rises,  
goes to the window,

lifts aside the heavy drapes.  
Her husband after a night  
carousing hands the reins

of his dark horse to the stable boy.  
The white moon casts  
silver shadows

on the cobblestone street.

# Alice of the Lines

© 2013

*untitled*, 1941 oil on canvas, Alice Trumbull Mason

the abstract mother figure hovers over  
dominates an amorphous shape  
her child I'm sure

a child who floats in space rushing out of his mother's  
reach grabbing crayons to color  
the table the window coverings

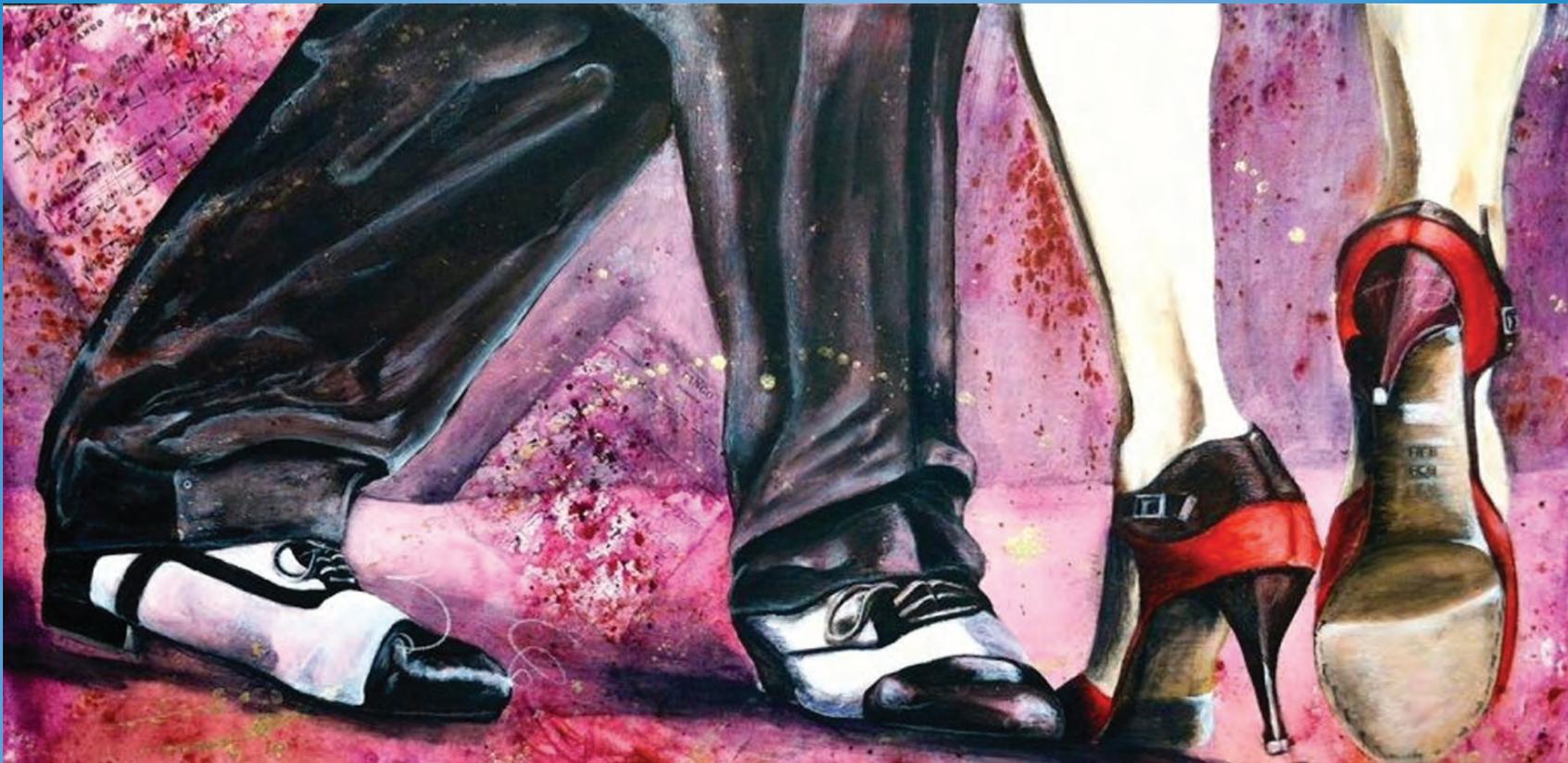
though only colors of earth are seen red, gold, mustard, khaki  
the child unfinished passes out of sight

I am the mother struggling  
to contain raw form inside the lines given me at birth  
lines which turned and broke

I am the child unformed coloring outside the lines  
across the canvas that is still my unfinished life

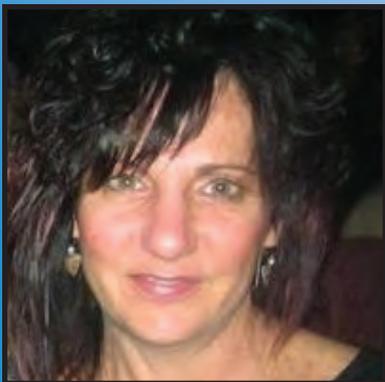
# Janet Blumenthal

Phoenix Artist



**"Tango Soul"**

**Acrylic original painting  
2013**



"I am currently published through Bentley Publishing and licensed through Joan Cawley Gallery. I have sold my own artwork for years both in Arizona and in the Midwest. Shows include: Arizona Fine Art EXPO, Scottsdale AZ, 2011-13; Tempe Festival of the Arts, Tempe, AZ, 2011-12; Fountain Hills Art Festival, Fountain Hills, AZ, 2010; Sedona Arts Festival, Sedona, AZ, 2010; Artworks Gallery Jefferson Pointe Mall, Fort Wayne, IN, 2006-09; Three Rivers Festival, Fort Wayne, IN, 2006-09; and Covington Art festival, Fort Wayne, IN, 2006-09." Contact the artist at [blusmood@msn.com](mailto:blusmood@msn.com) or at her website, [www.moodindigoart.com](http://www.moodindigoart.com).

# Janet Blumenthal

Phoenix Artist



**“Jazz Singer”**  
Acrylic original painting  
2001

Life has a rhythm all its own. The Heartbeat of the Universe is constant and powerful. Within this rhythm is the healing power that can lift you from any circumstance. To paint or draw, sing a melody, or dance a rhythmic dance, they allow these healing powers to move through you. This creativity comes from a much higher place. This is the place where miracles occur. This is the place where all negativity can be eliminated and only love and light shine through. So, paint, sing, dance, or feel the creativity of another .... and let the Heartbeat of the Universe become the rhythm of your own soul.

It is my desire to bring joy and a smile to the world with the use of my artwork. Music and the Arts are so much a part of our lives. My artwork conveys the rhythm of life. It takes the viewer away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, into a world of creativity, song, and dance. This creativity comes from divinity, and if this healing force touches just one person, then I have succeeded in the use of my gift.

- Janet Blumenthal

# Janet Blumenthal

Phoenix Artist



**"Cowboy Dreams"**  
Acrylic original painting  
2013

# Janet Blumenthal

Phoenix Artist



"Remembering Joy"  
Acrylic original painting  
1998

# Janet Blumenthal

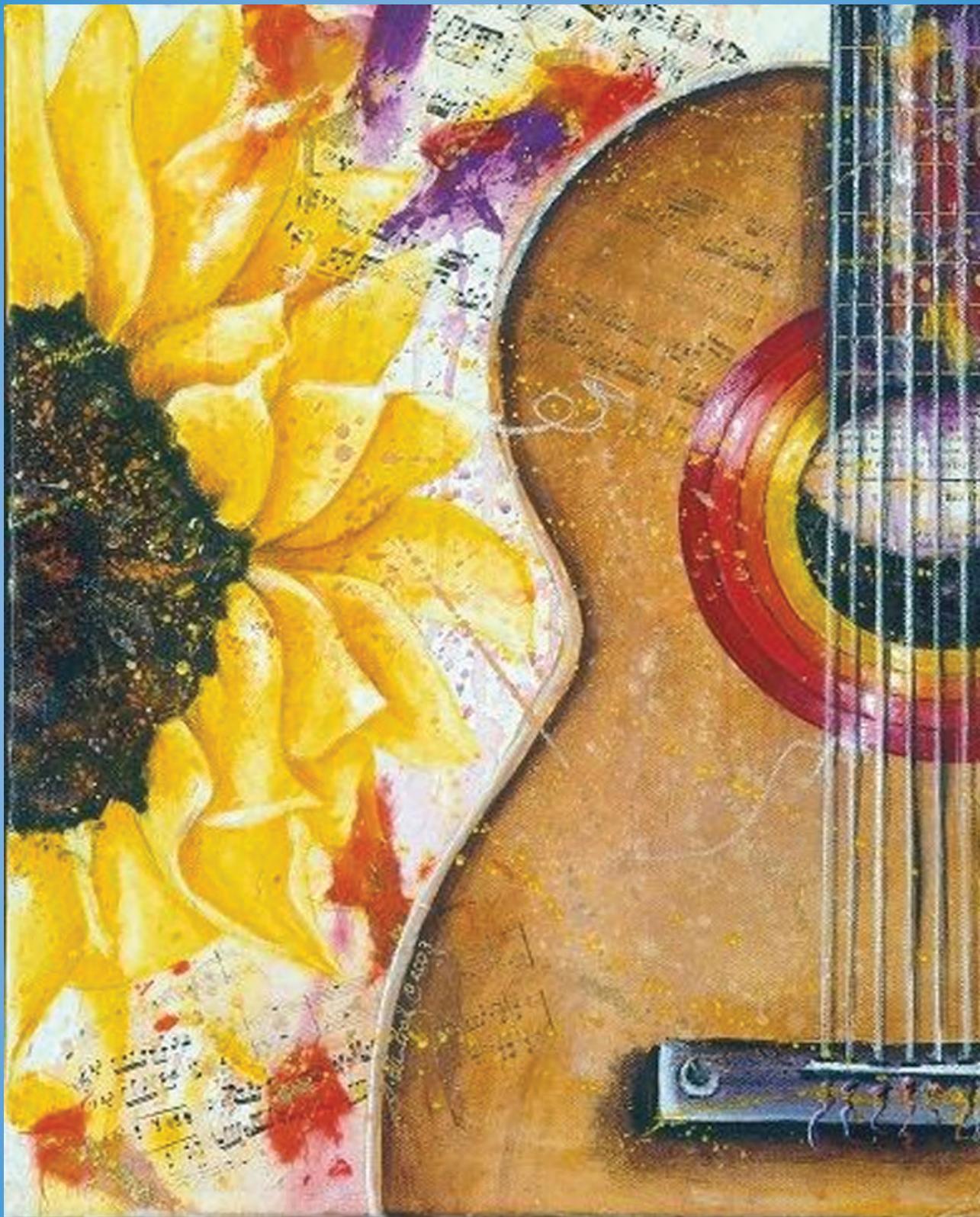
Phoenix Artist



**"El Ritmo De La Musica"**  
Acrylic original painting  
1999

# Janet Blumenthal

Phoenix Artist



**"Sunflower Blessings"**  
Acrylic original painting  
2004

# Janet Blumenthal

Phoenix Artist



**"How I Remember You"**  
Acrylic original painting  
2007

# The Strážce

## By Lysa Cohen

© 2013

“The Strážce,” Professor Ava Mulovich lectured from behind the wooden podium. “Who was she? Why is her story so important to Slavic folklore? And for that matter, is there even a modicum of truth to said story? Or, is it a complete fabrication that has been told and retold for hundreds of years?”

Marevna Bartunek-Korolevich leaned back in one of the uncomfortably hard chairs in the large amphitheater-style lecture hall, inconspicuous among the dozens of students. Pushing back a heavy skein of long dark brown hair, she peered intently down at the young female professor.

Looking no more than in her early twenties, Marevna easily passed for one of the many coeds surrounding her. No one would ever believe that she was going on 3,236 years old. Well, except maybe for Ivan, her husband of 3,215 years. He took great delight in reminding her of her advanced age every birthday, usually by way of a bonfire of candles on her birthday cake. The last one had nearly set their home on fire and she was still scrubbing melted wax off the floor. Marevna made a mental note to conjure a new scrub brush when she got home.

Marevna refocused her attention on the lecture. She had returned to the mortal realm for a specific reason, to hear the renowned Professor Ava Mulovich’s take on the legend of the Strážce. And that was a subject that Marevna was intimately familiar with, given that she had been the first Strážce.

The professor was pretty, but young, Marevna thought, watching Ava rake a hand through her long hair and adjust the tortoiseshell-frame glasses. Around her neck, an antique blue topaz and gold pendant caught the light and twinkled. To Marevna, though, octogenarians would seem like toddlers.

Marevna wondered if Professor Mulovich knew what life and

fate had in store for her. If not, she would soon enough.

“Well then, let’s delve into the twisty-turvy world of Slavic storytelling and find out, shall we? The term *Strážce* comes directly from the Czech, meaning *guardian*,” Professor Mulovich lectured. “There is no indication as to when the story first emerged.”

*What?* That caught Marevna’s attention and had her sitting up straighter, her eyes narrowing slightly. Annoyance bled out of every pore as she seethed inside. There had most certainly been a *beginning*. A big honkin’ end-of-the-world-as-you-know-it beginning. And Marevna should know since she had been there.

“According to oral traditions, the Strážce was a mortal woman who was charged with protecting the key to Svargo, called the amulet of Perun, named for the god of war. Svargo, if you remember from the last lecture, is the heavenly realms where the Dievu, or Slavic pantheon, reside. It’s reminiscent of a giant forest. Very green, very lush. A calm, peaceful place.”

Marevna watched as Professor Mulovich gave a fluttery motion with her hand much in the fashion of Chandler Bing from the now-syndicated television show “Friends.” “If a land of trolls, gremlins and all matter of beasties could be considered peaceful.”

Leaving the podium, the professor continued to lecture as she walked the length of the pit before stopping to lean against a long table that stood nearby.

“Folklore portrays her as a warrior. She fights the vampires, demons and the forces of darkness in her quest to protect the amulet of Perun.”

Professor Mulovich paused, a smile curving her lips. “And yes, my pop culture-inclined students, that is a Buffy reference. Although not the Strážce, Sarah Michelle Gellar was rather handy with a stake.”

Continued on page 32



A graduate of Ottawa University, Lysa Cohen is a GED instructor at Mesa Community College, where she spends her time educating and inspiring her adult students. In addition to her duties at the college, she also teaches violin, is a member of the Chai Strings, and is working on a full-length novel. Contact her at [lysa@live.com](mailto:lysa@live.com).

### Continued from page 31

The class laughed, but not Marevna. She rolled her eyes at the bad joke. *This* was the famed professor of Slavic folklore? Seriously? Marevna took great offense in being compared with a tiny TV star who was in need of a good size sandwich, even if she did catch the show in syndication on occasion. She really couldn't help it. There was just something about Spike that made her smile.

“Okay, so back to our young heroine. How did a mortal become the guardian of the not-so-pearly gates? Why was she, out of all the people in the world, entrusted with such a dangerous destiny? Well, that's simple. She killed a snake. But not just any snake. The Zaltys. Here's the story. The Dievu, as we have already discussed, live at the top of the World Tree in Svargo. At the base of said tree dwelled the Zaltys, a green garden snake. The Zaltys was the protector of the gods and goddesses. The gatekeeper to Svargo, if you will. But all was not rainbows and kittens for the Zaltys. He harbored intense jealousy that he was charged with keeping all from ascending the World Tree and entering Svargo, including himself.”

Forcing back a huff of disgust, Marevna glowered from her seat. *Killed a snake? That's what the renowned Professor Mulo-vich was teaching?! That Marevna killed a lousy green garden snake?! What was wrong with this generation? Where was the deference? The worship?*

Marevna certainly had not become the Strážce by killing a *snake*. The Zaltys was no mere snake, and it was certainly *not* dead, even though she wished he were.

It was because of her, Marevna, that the Dievu still existed. Again and again, she had fought back demons bent on destroying her pantheon. She had single-handedly averted not one, but six apocalypses. Apocalypses? Apocalypi? What was the plural of apocalypse?

The very fact that she needed to know that was proof positive of her impact on the world. It was because of her that they were all sitting in this overly bright, drafty lecture hall listening to a professor prattle on and on about syndicated TV programs and little garden snakes.

Crossing her arms over her chest, Marevna choked back several sarcastic retorts, her attention no longer on the lecture. Without warning, memories, sharp and jagged, ripped through her. Closing her eyes against the horrific images slamming through her, Marevna took several deep calming breaths. It was a useless endeavor because even after thirty centuries, she could still feel the unbearable torture.

\* \* \*

Darkness lingered on the fringe of Marevna's consciousness, dark and insidious. Screams of the tortured split the heavy, suf-

focating air, already rife with the stench of death and decay. Prostrate in a heap in the dank corner of the tiny cell, she bit back another cry of agony as a rat came forth to gnaw at her raw flesh. She tried to bat it away, but her broken arm wouldn't move. The mere twitching motion she made caused a fresh wave of anguish to slice through her already devastated flesh.

Pitiful mewling escaped from her ravaged lips.

The last beating had been the worst. Marevna thought it would never end. She had prayed for it to end. Prayed for death. Over and over, she could feel the lash rip through her skin, tearing off slices of flesh until blood ran in rivers down her ravaged body.

But there was no death, no relief, for her.

What a difference a day makes. The insipid words ran through her mind on a wave of silent hysterical laughter, followed closely by tears.

A day ago, she had been happily celebrating her twenty-first birthday. A day ago she hadn't known anything of hell dimensions or demons. Now she knew. Now she was trapped in the darkest reaches of Peklos, the Slavic hell realm, sold into slavery by her family, the very people who were supposed to love and protect her.

But after her first vision, they could not get rid of her fast enough. She was tainted. Evil. Cursed with the second sight. And this was her punishment, an eternity of pain and torture.

Tears once more flooded her eyes and fell in rivulets down her face as she called out for the gods to save her. There was no answer. Even they had forsaken her.

A small sound, barely perceptible, caught her attention. Barely raising her eyelids, because she was in too much pain to move, Marevna stared in astonishment at the man standing in the doorway of her cell.

She could tell by his aura that not only was he a Válečník, an immortal warrior to the Dievu, the Slavic gods, but also their protector, the Strážce. He was tall, muscular and beautiful. So beautiful, that it hurt to look at him. He had to be an angel. An angel fallen to earth with long dark hair and icy blue eyes. A long broad sword hung down his back over his leather leggings and tunic. Around his neck glowed a large blue topaz amulet, its colors swirling in the darkness of the cell.

The Válečník strode forward with a deadly swagger. Dropping down on one knee, he leaned close to her. “Marevna,” he whispered, brushing back a lock of her blood-matted hair. “My name is Cieran. I was sent for you.”

Hope flared brightly in her. The gods hadn't left her to die. She was going to be rescued. A fresh wave of tears flowed from her eyes, this time with gratitude. Marevna tried to sit up, but her body refused to move. Too many broken bones made movement impossible.

“No, don't move,” he said, his head bowed, hidden in the shad-

Continued on page 33

Spring 2013

ows. “Oh, poor dove. Look at you. You must be in excruciating agony.”

At his deep, soothing voice, relief flooded through her. He would save her. He would . . .

That flicker of hope withered and died as he slowly raised his eyes to her, grinning with wicked intent. “But it’s nothing to what you will be in.”

Marevna opened her mouth in a soundless cry of terror as she saw lethal interest flash in his pale eyes. He wasn’t there to save her.

Lowering his head, he ran his tongue over one of the long gashes on her cheek. “Mmm,” he growled low. “The power in your blood is intoxicating. I can’t wait to drain you of every drop.”

“No, no, no,” he tsked when she tried to shift away from him. “None of that now. Perun said that you were special. Precious. Well, let’s see just how precious you really are.”

All she could do was lie there in horror as he reared back and fangs exploded into his mouth. Razor sharp, they glinted in the darkness of the cell. She watched as he came closer and closer, his breath hot on her skin.

At the first pierce of his fangs, she tried to scream out.

“Go ahead. No one can hear you scream, piglet,” he taunted her, raising his head mere inches.

Marevna again cried out sharply as he sank his fangs deep into the raw flesh of her neck. Agony exploded through her body as he drank deeply.

Pictures of Cieran ripping through other warriors flashed through her mind. She was sharing his past, reliving his kills as she felt her life draining away with her blood. For that split second they were connected and she could read his every thought and intention.

With her death, he would take her powers.

Evil, dark and insidious, surged hotly inside Cieran and he glories in it. Her blood was a sweet elixir, full of power. He could feel it imbuing him with strength he had never felt before. She was a font of untapped magic and soon it would all be his.

Just as he felt her remaining lifeblood draining away, Cieran felt himself being torn from her and hurled across the cell. The crunch of bones breaking was loud in his ears.

Fire raced over him and he lay writhing in pain.

Cieran looked up to see Perun, the god of war, towering above him, his face set in grim lines. Perun’s massive battle-axe bearing his symbol, a hexagon with six lines protruding inward from all six points of the symbol and connected in the middle, swung threateningly at his side.

His eyes were as cold as steel when he looked over at Cieran lying on the other side of the cell. Perun advanced on the downed warrior. “You betrayed me,” he growled, his voice low and menacing.

Cieran struggled to push himself to his feet. “I did not betray you, War. She’s a worthless mortal. Who cares?” he spat, blood flowing from a long gash above his eyebrow.

“I care,” Perun bit out between clenched teeth. “By taking her blood you commit treason. She is not just a mortal. She’s gifted with the sight. She’s one of us and you sought to steal her powers.”

With a blast of lightning, Perun blasted Cieran in the chest. Blood erupted from the wound.

Cieran screamed in white-hot agony as he was thrown against a rough stone wall, before landing on the cell floor.

“Your life for hers,” Perun spat at the downed warrior. “It is only fair.” Yellow light erupted from his hands as he blasted Cieran again and again, until he was a writhing, mewling heap. He didn’t kill the Válečník, that pleasure he would save for Veles, the god of the underworld.

With one final blow, Perun wound his hand around the amulet and yanked it from around Cieran’s neck.

Brilliant white light arched through the chamber and slammed straight through Marevna. She screamed as fire roared through her veins, knitting together bone and tissue. She felt herself being lifted high in the air as energy amassed and exploded in a conflagration that ripped the amulet from Perun’s hands.

Swirling faster and faster, the energy turned yellow, then red, and then blue. The amulet winged through the chamber straight towards Marevna. Reaching out, she caught the amulet, and let its power course through her until she was whole again. Completely healed and thrumming with power.

Standing tall, Marevna hooked the amulet around her neck and changed the destiny of the Strážce forever.

# 5 Poems by L.J. Lenehan

## Monsoon Do Not Forget The Sonoran Desert

© 2013

So hot; the sky a pasty sun burn,  
blades of grass like colorless straws  
poke through dehydrated dirt,  
like little cacti spines  
the state sandpapered  
from Gustnado attacks,  
thundering clouds arrive  
air displaces  
in a cooling dance,  
of fury  
the aroma changes  
as the first rain drops land  
angry  
annoyed  
at another meteorological event.  
With vengeance:  
barren water banks over flow,  
roads become inaccessible,  
floods take over,  
thunder and lightning take confront the sky.  
Gone, as quickly as it came  
leaves turned green,  
dehydrate, moments later  
hoping  
next year's monsoon will not forget:  
the Sonoran Desert.

## 1979 Cadillac DeVille

© 2013

Grey, silver lucidly swirling clouds, display  
a premonition of my death. Urgently, calling  
me home to remember my dreams.

Innocent dreams of youth I foolishly  
locked in the trunk of my impounded  
1979 Cadillac DeVille.

Faded metallic green with a stale smell  
of other people's lives. Her brakes didn't work.  
Sun burnt interior thinned her original material.

One hundred and eighty horses underneath  
her hood. I never started her up  
just in case she would not stop.

Many a hot day spent behind her wheel sipping  
ice coffees and dreaming of my own  
immortality. Moving on:

I went to Ireland, she went to the breakers,  
now my youthful dreams are locked  
in an Arizona inferno eternally.



L.J. Lenehan is an expat poet living in Ireland. She is creator and author of "Stories of my Soul" (<http://www.facebook.com/StoriesOfMySoul>) and "L.J. Lenehan: A Working Woman's Laureate" ([www.ljlenehan.com](http://www.ljlenehan.com)).

# Main Street America

© 2013

Born at two o'clock, on Route 66, it was spilling.  
First crime delivered; no one to celebrate my heir.

Stuck in a two bit tourist town;  
I promised a life away from here.

Where opportunities afforded to affluent would be his;  
Never occurred to me the criteria for that was being aristocrat.

Dusty streets, littered with middle aged men; playing dress up,  
In motorcycle leather, exploring,  
Another, suburban crisis.

The moment I saw him; I committed to a new way,  
Two hundred in my pocket; I bought a ticket to Los Angeles,  
City of Angels.

My newborn whimpered, in the heat;  
An idiot in a Roswell shirt asked me if I ever saw an alien;  
"I'm looking at a clone of one."

My boobs like balloons, filled with cement;  
Abandoned my bra in the bathroom stall.

I filled the air, with sour milk and sweat;  
Put water on my newborn's head.

Bought a copy of Arizona Daily Star cost a dollar eighty nine;  
Covered, my infant son, from dazzling sun-rain.

Front page news; two teens sentenced for killing a family;  
Disintegrated, in the rain.

Stepping on the train; I wished I erased my name and number,  
From the bathroom wall in that Irish Bar; his father put it there.

No air conditioning on the train;  
Orthodox Jews across from me.

I exposed my breast; to feed my child;  
They looked at me in disgust.

**Continued on page 36**

Continued from page 35

My tongue snuck through my lips, wiggled,  
while I hissed with the vengeance of a startled rattlesnake.

They whispered “drug addict,”  
The little girl behind them shouted, “I want to see the dragon too.”

Rolled in to Union Station, two a.m.;  
The security guard moved us on.

I walked until I saw a man in a car with a martini glass;  
I asked him if he knew of a motel.

Get in, he said, I have a hotel, forty dollars a night we have Playboy and HBO.  
He put the martini in the ashtray, drove oblivious to stop signs, traffic lights, pedestrians but  
the drink never spilled a drop.

Finally, we arrived;  
He had a mail order bride.

Walked to the room; eyeballs jumped at us through the windows;  
Sheets were rented,  
There was no Bible,  
I held my baby.

Wondering, could I rewind time?  
Call a do over.  
Be one of those soccer moms; with a make-over.

The sun rose;  
I begged the bride to give me a job, cleaning the brothel.  
Reluctantly, martini drinker agreed.

Every night I watched; the suburban mother’s sacrifice, one by one,  
No man heard, “Not tonight, honey.”

I feared the urban symphony:  
Of fallen needles, sirens, prostitute whistles, gun shots.

I held my boy near and told tales of a brand-new life, until,  
One day we left for the unknown, again,

This time away from Main Street America.

# Memories Of Me - Sold

© 2013

At eight o'clock, in the black of night:  
we agree to meet at the back,  
where there is no light.  
I will wait, expectations packed.

A few minutes late, I impatiently apply  
more lip gloss, awaiting your arrival  
hopefully hiding misguided  
annoyance. Sitting in a car called: denial.

Scornfully, I know: it won't work,  
you were not interested, wistfully,  
I daydream it will, but you: always smirked  
skilfully dismissing my ideas as sinful.

I already knew - but suddenly - I realize:  
you aren't coming, there is no value  
on the shallow attraction - you were long ago crystallised.  
It was a game: not to be continued.

Alligator tears flooded my heart  
my simple disposition: left me deaf and dumb.  
You are the one my mother warned me about, bogart  
of emotions, demanding all you couldn't give, leaving me numb.

Emotionally bankrupt, you abandoned me in that car park:  
a generic version of myself - you stole my memories  
of me and sold them on, without feeling or remark,  
menacingly devoting yourself to a life of debauchery.

# Floating Through Seasons

© 2013

Oh, how this Island of Saints and Scholars  
beguile me, heavy snow this morning  
especially for the working class of Sheriff's Street  
twelve years on this road, I like it here, I know the score,  
never a Saint on 'The Street'  
many a failed Scholar  
myself included,  
half ten and winter's morning is gone  
autumn sets in, with a heavy rain melting the snow  
without an umbrella, I go in search of my creator,  
buying the kiss I head back to my apartment around noon,  
in my confusion leaves bloom  
back in my room I tie up the dinosaur  
praying to St. Christopher to keep me safe  
on my trip,  
the air has dried and a warmth invades me  
all the anxieties of people I let down drift away  
floating above I notice bareness, in the room  
a skeleton on the floor  
I've been here before  
observing an unlived life  
in a perfect clarity  
floating through seasons  
this time forever.

# Shine Like The Sun

By A. L. Means

© 2013

## An excerpt — Chapter One

Light and a beat. The one so piercing it fogged his eyes with iridescence, the other a heart-churning pulse with no discernible point of origin.

He staggered on to the angular wooden deck extending from the house, and skipped over the cracks between the planks in mimicry of a childhood game. It had been so long since he had moved. Really moved, that is. Would anyone care? Was he even capable?

A tremor rumbled through his torso — his own faltering voice, it dawned on him, self-activated by nervous energy. And then, dazzled by shimmering beams from the east and intoxicated by the moment, he could hold back no longer. Glass clapped loudly on wood as the bottle dropped from his hand. Voice synchronized with steps in a self-absorbed fantasia. Yes, he still had it. He could still rock 'n' roll.

“Hey, what the hell are you doing? You trying to kill yourself?”

Damn. He wasn't ready for an audience just yet. Whatever happened to privacy?

“Nothing, love. Not doing nothing. Go back to bed, will ya.”

He glanced hopefully up at the window where long blonde curls glowed in the first rays of the morning. So lovely, and yet so opaque. Even as he spoke, she began brushing her hair in electrostatic sweeps, as if unveiling before life's morning shift.

A few of his friends had tried to warn him. Great body, they had said, but too young for you. She won't be able to empathize. She's too pretentious, with that name pronounced like 'theatre.' She'll make up for it in other ways, he remembered telling them. The body had won out, hands down.

Syllables slurred once more as he craned to placate her. “Embre, I just ...” She cut him off.

## Synopsis for “Shine Like The Sun”

As the new century dawns, Roy Huntley is in his early 50s and well past the usual shelf life for a rock and roll star. He has had his share of fame and fortune, and settled for a scenic Shangri-La in Arizona and a second wife young enough to be his daughter.

Hanging out with fellow British bandmate Chris Russell has passed the time nicely for a couple of years. But time to reflect has had its down side. A chance to reactivate their rock group revives dormant dilemmas. Is Huntley ready to let go of the role that has been so central to his life? Is he still capable of a comeback? Questions of legacy and self worth come into play. After all, performing music and the accompanying acclaim seemed to have come to him as a birthright. Leaving the old life behind seems to be the rational choice. It's not so easy to walk away though. There's one last chance to prove himself. As the group assembles for its comeback concert without him, Huntley confronts his estranged colleagues. His credibility hangs in the balance. Even Huntley isn't sure what he wants. But his fans have not forgotten him. Whether he likes it or not, he can't escape what he has become. Even his wife will not allow that.

“How can I sleep when you're acting crazy out there? You shouldn't be flinging yourself around like that — not with your heart.”

Still veiled in shadow, he winced at her cold tone and the sting in the last four words. If only she had said it with more of a lover's concern perhaps he could have told her.

“I wasn't flinging myself around, Embre, I was ... Oh, never mind.”

Continued on page 39



A.L. Means grew up in Britain and has lived in and around Phoenix, Arizona, for 30 years. As a journalist, he has covered music, entertainment and the arts for British and U.S. media. In addition to the novel “Shine Like The Sun,” his works of fiction include a set of short stories entitled “Foreign Ways” and a children's story, “The Trouble Upstream.” As Andrew Means, he has written biographies of novelist and essayist George Orwell and the rock group Pink Floyd as well as “Some Memories,” a memoir about the childhood of the late Country-Western singer Marty Robbins, who lived in the Phoenix area in the years before World War Two. <http://meansal.wordpress.com/fiction-2/>

What was he doing, anyway? Royston Gerald Huntley stared glumly into the invading spectrum. The landscape was losing its anonymity. The curtain of Supai sandstone which loomed over his central Arizonan home had lost its power to protect, and all around him amorphous shapes were congealing into detail and color. His world was revealed once more as a vast amphitheater of burnt ochre, flecked with juniper green and capped with fathomless turquoise.

He sprawled on the jutting platform, contemplating the view and anticipating the usual uneasy sequence. He'd drink too much, and Embre would sulk with the taciturnity she had made into an art. Or a weapon. Or, on occasion, a tool.

"What are you looking for?" she'd say, after coaxing from her partner. "Why do you keep torturing yourself? If you need a change, let's get away for a while. Take a holiday somewhere."

He would say nothing. He didn't know what to say. What does one say about the passing of decades to someone yet to experience it? Or all the road signs and departure gates he didn't need to see again.

A hawk was searching for breakfast on the mesas, but evidently Embre had returned to bed. It was still too early for her usual recourse after marital discord — driving down, that is, to the faux adobe bazaar in the center of town, where she'd find catharsis in the purchase of yet more clothes and artwork. It didn't spell therapy to him, and he'd long given up protesting that the whole point of owning a home of modern design was light, space and paucity of decoration. But what the hell. There were so many things they didn't understand about one another. The difference, he was convinced, was that he thought about it and she — in her unapproachable, uncompromising youth — didn't.

His own relief at times like this was a phone call to his enduring companion, Chris Russell.

"Come over and have a beer. I need someone I can communicate with."

If he came, they'd sit side by side and gaze, outrunning their memories among the canyons and stampeding clouds on the horizon. There was nothing really to say — not that hadn't already been said at some point. All the same, it was uncomfortable maintaining the silence. They'd sprawl over the cushioned lounge chairs on the deck, lunging at a six pack or jug of margarita, and sending shards of ice skidding over the polished mesquite planks and shattering on the paintwork of the Jaguar convertible and Range Rover parked below.

"Not bad for a couple of old bastards from south London, eh," one or other would say. Or something of that sort.

"Hand us another of them fags, mate. And cut out the philosophy, will ya?"

It was a ritual with them, joking about how they'd come so far in the world.

# Corinne McAuley

Surprise Artist



**“Red Flash”**  
**Glass beads**  
**2012**



“I am an artist who fell in love with beads 12 years ago and never turned back. My desire to experiment, play and fail have brought me to this amazing place in my creativity. Six years ago, I took the leap of faith and started working on my art full time. In doing so, I was able to experience being the Artist in Residence at The Farm at South Mountain (Phoenix), allowing me to show my art, teach my skills and coordinate people of like minds together for lectures, sales and learning. To put together this extensive one-month series of activities used my business and artistic skills to ensure the success. In addition, I have participated the last 4 years in Hidden in the Hills Studio Tour, which is an art show and tour hosted by the Sonoran Arts League. I was recognized for my unique beadwork being displayed at the show in The Arizona Republic 2009 and The Sonoran News 2009 and 2011. I was interviewed for Creative Beading Magazine (Australia) in 2010. Two of my beaded tapestries were incorporated into the article. I participated in the juried show Celebration of Artist 2012, which was hosted by City of Peoria/West Valley Art Museum. My “Cowboy” placed 3rd. Each of the above accomplishments have been stepping-stones to where I am today. Understanding that progression is based on relationships. Each step has introduced people, materials, techniques and venues, with an ongoing pinch of growth for each. I have surpassed my dreams and slowly addressing one goal at a time.” Contact the artist at [corinnemcauleyfineart@msn.com](mailto:corinnemcauleyfineart@msn.com).

# Corinne McAuley

Surprise Artist



**“Cowboy Tom”**  
Glass beads  
2012

Working with beads came to me later in life. I have always felt artistic but had difficulty finding a path that I would take into the future. I started working with beads in 2001. Since then, I have taught myself the current techniques that I use to create my art.

I do not limit myself to one style or concept as my inspirations and ideas change. The only constant is that any of my art must include beads in the design. I work in both 2 and 3 dimensional art.

I create beaded tapestries (bead fabric) that reflect my inspiration of the moment in an art rarely seen. Subject matter can be the Southwest, people, nature, abstract etc. In addition, I create sculptural, embellished and tactile art all consisting in whole or part of beads.

My inspiration comes from anywhere and everywhere. I can look at the architecture of a building, a bird, the tire tread on a dirt road, advertising in a magazine and get an idea for a piece of art that I want to create. The transformation of an idea consists of me working through my head the process to create and then allows my passion and creativity to flow into the construction of a piece of art.

If I create these works with the intent that I or others feel some emotion about the piece that will either intrigue, heal, amuse or provide some longing thought, then I have succeeded.

- Corinne McAuley

# Corinne McAuley

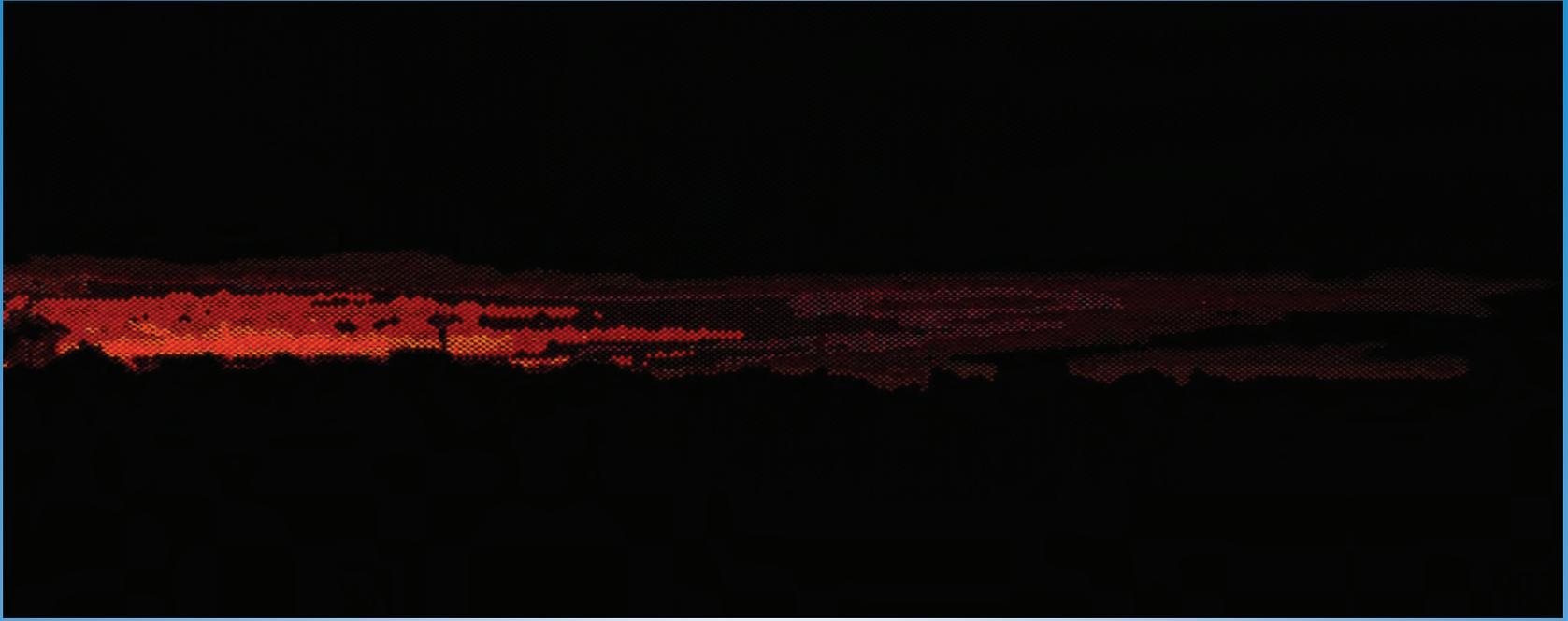
Surprise Artist



**“Pink Peonies”**  
**Glass beads**  
**2009**

# Corinne McAuley

Surprise Artist



**"Sunrise in Surprise"**  
Glass beads  
2010

# Corinne McAuley

Surprise Artist



**"Cowboy Belt Buckle"**  
Glass beads  
2011

# 4 Poems by Michael Gessner

## Rain

© 2013

It's been raining all day, raining in suburbs, in city parks,  
& continues in sheets across avenues, stalling traffic,  
bouncing in waves off glacial curbs, & will in turns, reduce  
itself to a patter, then to finger-taps—tap—tap—tap—drops  
down gutters and down spouts, only to gather strength  
for the next downpour or the next—raiment after raiment—  
breaking levees, flooding villages, sweeping them out to sea,  
it is raining somewhere always, even now the rains rain on tin sheds  
& tile roofs, it rains in the barrio & in the banlieue, & in the financial  
district, rains rain on the roof of le Moulin de la Vierge & the lovers  
who wait inside, & it rains on the steps of Montmartre, but here  
this morning it is raining over my house, a monologue of rain,  
& therefore it is raining too where you are, & the rains are not the tears  
of infant angels for our world's sake, they are not the rains of Zeus,  
or another god inseminating the fields of Mother Earth, or clouds of science,  
they are the patterings of an unknown companion, lost and distant,  
and now returned to wrap this house in sheets of rain.

## Père Lachaise

© 2013

Leaves clatter down cobblestones like tin cups,  
and empty souls move about the Sunday-children  
who laugh and chase each other down  
the cobblestones, chattering after themselves  
they give a half-life to this city  
of images, human and divine,  
where no one lives, and no one dies,  
where families collect their young  
at the end of their visit, and leave this place  
to the leaves that swirl in wheels . . .

When Mars, the Gorgons, Lamia,  
and the warheads are sleeping,  
and I am vacant, no longer thinking,  
when all things are absent  
you arrive, a ghost anthology written in the dark  
of other lives; lovers and lovers' art.



Michael Gessner lives in Tucson with his wife, Jane Catharine, their son Chris, and dog Irish. His more recent poems have appeared in *The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine*, *The French Literary Review*, *Rue des Beaux-Arts*, *Glimpse* (Toronto,) and *Jacket2*. His latest collection is *Beast Book*, (BlazeVOX, 2010). He will be reading from his new collection, *Transversales* at the Tucson Festival of Books in March, 2013. Other information may be found at [www.michaelgessner.com](http://www.michaelgessner.com); e-mail at [mjcg3@aol.com](mailto:mjcg3@aol.com).

# The Return

© 2013

With a tour group closing in, we left Wilde's sphinx  
where sentiment always is, & followed the Avenue Circulaire  
to the wall of the communards, then to a bench across from a cenotaph,  
broke a baguette & stared as mourners stare.

Behind the bench, a grassy hill, & behind it, a boulevard  
we could not see, but over the tiers of trees,  
a French girls' choir gave its rehearsal from some high-rise;  
angled notes folding & unfolding purely on decisions of air,

& went on like this for an hour or more, & the repertoire complete,  
the girls with ribbons in their hair, as if performing for  
Experience for its own sake, bounced down stairs  
to waiting cars, cafés & girly affairs.

Evening came. What was left but the long walk back,  
a decanter of wine, house red, in one of those cafés on rue Cler.

# Letter To A Poet

© 2013

Permit this brief intrusion into a life  
of uncommon callings, simply to say  
what I read this morning shimmers  
like the gold foil musings  
in the compositions of the Masters  
of Sunlight, its memory reflects  
in my palm, flake of tremulous gold.

# The Raven Box

By Ann Stratton

© 2013

“When my men brought you down,” the big man said, “you had wings.”

“Do I look like I have wings?” his prisoner asked, scoffing. He was not especially tall, fine boned, with a long torso and broad shoulders. His face had a distinct American Indian cast to it, he wore neither shirt nor shoes and his hands were cuffed behind him. The two small puncture wounds on his chest surrounded by scorched skin still trickled blood. He looked rather pale and shocky, maintaining his balance more by willpower than natural ability, supported by a large uniformed man.

“And claws and fangs.” The big man shifted his weight and groaned. “Damned hip. One of you get me a chair.” He settled into it gingerly and sighed in relief, a tall Anglo man who was not as thick and strong as he might have been once, but still not in the least weak. His hair might be silvered out from blonde, but his eyes had not faded and the grip on his cane was firm. “I do admit the wings disappeared before we could get a good look, but the claws and teeth stayed long enough to get pictures. It’s a good trick. I’d like to know how you did it.”

The little man half turned and flapped his hands at his captor, turned back and bared his teeth. “Do I look like I have claws and fangs? So are you going to charge us or are you going to just make fun of me... Walter?”

“You know my name; you should have known I don’t let just anybody rummage through my belongings.” Walter Langstrom looked around the gallery and turned his attention to the other prisoner, a blonde Anglo woman trembling in the grip of another large uniformed man. “You, I am going to charge. I don’t appreciate theft, Francine. I’ve worked hard to get what I own and I intend to keep it.”

“We weren’t stealing it,” Francine declared in righteous anger.

“We were returning the box to its rightful owners!”

“Of which I am. I’ve paid a good and fair price for the box and have kept the bill of sale. Only the man I bought it from knows what happened to the receipt. But how can you say who the rightful owner is? The Raven Box pre-dates any modern tribe—I’ve had it dated—and each face is carved in a different prehistoric style. Tell me who claims it and I’ll tell you if they have a legitimate claim.”

Francine bit her lip and dropped her eyes in embarrassment.

“I thought so. Fringe extremists who have no clan ties. Don’t take it too hard. You’re not the first idealist they’ve suckered into doing their dirty work. I’ll consider dropping the charges in return for your contacts’ names and addresses.”

“I won’t talk.” Francine drew herself up and squared her shoulders bravely.

“Suit yourself. We’re tracking several groups. Yours is just one of many.” Langstrom picked up a couple of wallets off a side table, looked through them both and pulled a driver’s license out of one, comparing it to his first prisoner. “Terry Littlehorse. That’s not your real name, is it?”

“It’ll do. Names are temporary, at best.”

“So what’s your interest in the Raven Box?”

“It seemed like a good trick at the time. Who knew your security carried stun guns?”

“Who indeed? Tell me about these, Terry.” Langstrom took a digital camera off the table, paged through its contents and handed it to the man guarding Littlehorse, who held it up so his charge could look at the saved images. Several showed Littlehorse’s unconscious face with his lips gingerly pulled back from teeth better suited to a coyote. More showed his hands and feet,

Continued on page 48



Ann Stratton recently retired from 22 years of getting to know Cochise County. Her new career includes cat pillow, construction laborer and boat driver, and doesn’t include nearly enough writing.

**Continued from page 47**

all four appendages armed with powerful birdlike talons, hooked and sharp. The last showed his back, adorned with two long thin scars on either side of his spine that started just at the shoulder blades and extended to the bottom of his rib cage.

Littlehorse shrugged. "So?"

"So? Tell me about it."

"You were seeing things. Can I have my shirt back? The breeze from the window is cold."

"First, another look at your back."

Littlehorse snorted. "You really have a problem with these imaginary wings, don't you? Well, look for yourself then." He turned around so the light fell on his perfectly normal and unscarred back.

"Where's the scars?"

"Trick of the light. You only thought you saw scars. Can I have my shirt back now?" Langstrom gestured and the guard draped it over Littlehorse's shoulders. "Thanks. So, now what?"

"What indeed? You said you wanted to play a trick on the white man—this white man, actually—and gullible I'm not. The trick's on you, Littlehorse. But what's in the box? It doesn't have hinges anywhere we can find, it doesn't have a lid, but it's not a solid block of wood. Something's inside it, it shifts when the box is moved. Something solid. In the x-rays, it looks like a couple of rocks—something metallic and the other too fine grained to define."

Littlehorse shrugged. "They're a meteor and a chunk of flint."

"Are they? When you opened the box, the whole room lit up. How'd you do that? What's in the box?"

"Just a couple of rocks."

"Don't jerk me around, Littlehorse. They are as much rocks as you are a petty thief. What's in the box and how did you get it open? Nobody could find the lid."

"It's my box. I'm the only one who knows how to open it. I built it, after all."

Langstrom shoved himself up out of his chair. "Now we're getting somewhere. What lit up the room when you opened the box, Terry?"

"Pieces of the sun, Walter." Littlehorse had a smirk on his face, watching Langstrom. "When I stole the sun from the King of Night, it was hard to part with it, so I kept a couple of pieces and made a box for them. I'd like to get it back. I traded it off a long time ago for food when times were hard."

Langstrom smirked back. "It's been traded for food many times since then. The man I bought it from used the money to pay the rent and buy groceries for his family. But you tell me the box holds pieces of the sun, and you say they're just a couple of rocks."

"Because they are."

"Well, which is it? Pieces of the sun or a couple of rocks? Make up your mind."

"I don't need to. I know what they are. Give the box back."

"Prove it's yours and recompense me for my time and effort and I will consider it. If the box really holds pieces of the sun, it's a considerable source of power and worth much more than its immediate monetary value."

"But they're just a meteor and a chunk of flint unless you know. Until you really believe that they are pieces of the sun, they're just rocks."

"We saw the room light up when you opened the box."

"Yes, because I know what they really are. I'm the one who put them in there. Surprised me, though—I haven't seen them in a thousand years. I almost forgot to sing them down when I opened the box."

"We recorded everything. What's to stop me from transcribing what you sang and singing it myself?"

"That was the binding. But you're not me. To you they're just words. And if you did get the box open, you'd just find a couple of rocks."

"If they're just rocks, then why the elaborate raid to get the box back? You can pick up more rocks anywhere."

"But they wouldn't be my rocks then, now would they? I want them back. And the box. I put a lot of work into it."

"I have to compliment your skill. It's a very fine piece of work. It seems as if we are at an impasse. I don't intend to give up either the box or the rocks, whether they're a piece of the sun or not." Langstrom grimaced, rubbed his hip and found his chair again.

"And neither do I. What do we do now?"

"Well, I do have you, and I do have the box and the rocks. I have everything, don't I?"

"So? And what's to stop me from just walking away? I can look like anyone I want."

"Hmm ... a stun gun takes care of that."

"Don't be too sure. Nobody's ever kept Raven captive for long."

Langstrom's eyebrows went up and he leaned forward. "Oh, so now you're Raven. That may be true, but I only have to keep you as long as it takes to find out everything you know. Which is more than just the box." Langstrom leaned back again. "Does that frighten you?"

"Certainly. Being dissected hurts. I've been killed more times than you have years. But then, being dissected is nothing compared to the trouble I've put myself to for you human people." Littlehorse gave the assembly a long exasperated look.

"Trouble indeed. In the end, you've always benefited or gotten the best of the deal."

"So what's the deal?"

**Continued on page 49**

### Continued from page 48

“There isn’t any.” Langstrom shoved himself up out of his chair and gestured to his security guards. “Let’s go.”

Littlehorse heaved his shoulders and bounced. Huge black wings exploded out of his back and mighty curved talons sprang out of his feet. The security guards fumbled for their holsters and scrambled for cover as the wings came down in a gust of wind that blew small loose objects everywhere. One of Raven’s taloned feet snagged his guard’s shirtfront, scoring flesh underneath. The man squealed and tumbled backward clutching at his wounds.

The other guard had gotten his stun gun out. Raven made a mid air twist and brought his wings up for the next stroke. The man ducked the slash of sharp primaries, his aim ruined for an instant. Raven caught the man’s wrist in his talons and used the momentum of his down stroke to pull the man off balance and into range of his teeth, long and sharp as a coyote’s.

A gun went off, freezing everyone in surprise. Langstrom leaned on his cane and wagged his gun at Raven. “I really wish you hadn’t done that. Do you know how hard it is to get decently trained security people? Good help is so hard to find.”

“They weren’t so much help.” Face and chest smeared with blood, fanged, clawed and winged, the man with the wings and claws looked absolutely nothing at all like the man Terry Littlehorse who had broken into Langstrom’s private museum.

“No, they weren’t. Don’t give me any more trouble, and fold those up will you? There’s just not enough room in here for them.”

Raven stood up slowly. Balancing on taloned feet, he pulled in his wings but didn’t close them up. “I can’t. My hands are cuffed.”

“And the cuffs aren’t coming off, either. Move along here, hurry it up.”

The security guard Raven had clawed but left alive suddenly said “ow” and went down, clutching his head. Pale and shaky, Francine stood over him with a small solid sculpture in her hands.

Raven sprang, ramming his shoulder into Langstrom’s stomach while he was distracted. Langstrom went down gasping in sur-

prise, with one of Raven’s talons clenched around the wrist of his gun hand and the other’s claws at his throat.

“Where is the key to the cuffs?” he demanded.

“Do you really think I’ll just give it to you?” Langstrom pulled desperately at the claws at his throat with his free hand.

“No, you wouldn’t.” Raven turned to the woman. “Find the key! If it’s not in the guards’ pockets, it’s in one of his.”

Francine put down her sculpture and groped gingerly through her downed guard’s pockets, still staring at the fantastic figure dominating the room. “Are you really Raven?”

“The one and only. Hurry up.”

Langstrom kicked and shoved, almost throwing Raven off. Raven shifted his weight and closed his talon. Langstrom screamed and struggled to pull sharp claws out of his collarbone.

“Hold still! And you, find that key!” Raven’s wings thrashed as he scrambled for balance.

Francine rummaged frantically through the dead guard’s pockets. Finding nothing there, she crept to Langstrom’s side. Raven loosened his grip so she could get to Langstrom’s shirt pockets, but she sat still, staring in fascination at the taloned foot.

“Raven’s just a story,” she said, wondering. “A, a human face for, uh, randomness and chance. Raven doesn’t really exist, but... your feet... You have wings...”

“Yes, I have wings when I want to! Move it! I can’t stand this way forever!”

The guard she’d conked groaned and moved and Francine squeaked and made a hasty search, coming up with the key at last.

Raven rubbed his freed wrists and stepped off Langstrom’s body, grinning at the woman with his ferocious teeth and bloody face. He pulled her close, tenting his wings around them and gave her such a long deep kiss that she fell against a nearby cabinet, gasping and flushed when he let her go. “Wind’s breath, I do love them dumb.”

Raven laughed a singularly snide laugh and brought his wings down in a powerful stroke that lifted him off the floor. When they came up he’d shifted to his avian form, a large black raven. With a derisive caw, he caught the Raven Box with both feet, and flapping furiously, carried it out the open window.

# 3 Poems by Lilvia Soto

## Bulletproofing

© 2013

Traumatic brain injury is the signature wound of this war.

- Lt. Col. Rocco Armonda, neurosurgeon at the National Naval Medical Center

### Level I

Wear the Standard PASGT (Personnel Armor System Ground Troops) helmet your government issues you.

It offers good ballistic protection.

Please be aware that your head is much more susceptible to blunt trauma than your body.

Any impact of a bullet on a helmet will cause injury and can cause death.

You improve your odds with head protection, but no guarantee of invulnerability can be made.

### Level II

BulletProofMe Body Armor recommends that you upgrade your helmet with their Foam Impact Liner (\$14) or, better still, upgrade to the ACH (Advanced Combat Helmet) or the MICH (Modular Integrated Communications Helmet) their interior pad system offers outstanding comfort and blunt trauma protection (\$490-\$515) or you can just convert your old PASGT to the new MICH with a comfort pad system (\$95).

Continued on page 51



Lilvia Soto was born in Chihuahua, México, in 1939. She has a Ph.D. in Hispanic Languages and Literature from Stony Brook University in Long Island, N.Y. She has published poetry, short fiction, literary criticism, and literary translations in journals and anthologies in the U.S., Canada, Spain, Mexico, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela. She has an English-language manuscript of poems about the American Iraq wars and another English-language collection of poems that dialogue with Iraqi poems. She has also completed an English-Spanish collection about language and her experience living in Spain. She is currently working on a bilingual collection about her return to Mexico in 2004, where she lived for six years, and the recovery of cultural and familial roots. Contact her at [lilviasoto@hotmail.com](mailto:lilviasoto@hotmail.com).

Level III

Thank your parents for paying for your education,  
get a scholarship, work your way through college.  
Do not let the armed forces promise you an education  
after you complete your obligation to them.  
It will be hard to attend classes in a wheel chair  
take notes with a prosthetic hand  
concentrate with a pounding headache  
learn with a damaged brain.

Level IV

Choose a blue-blooded family to be born into.  
If your ancestors made their fortune in tobacco, copper, oil,  
armaments, pharmaceuticals, private prisons,  
outsourcing, money laundering, or even in peanuts and bananas,  
you will have no need of a helmet.  
No need to consider its weight, side ear coverage,  
pre-drilled front hole for night vision goggle mounting,  
or whether it has a 2-, a 3-, or a 3/4-point chinstrap.

You will have no need to measure the circumference of your head  
for even if they don't make a helmet small enough for you,  
you will have the money and the cronies to get elected,  
start a war, and send others to battle wearing their standard issue,  
bubbling with excitement to spread democracy  
and start a new round of arsenal building.

# Daffodils

© 2013

They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude,  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the Daffodils.

— William Wordsworth, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

Choman, imagine  
your people living with dignity in their country  
my people living in peace in their ancestors' land

your people and mine breaking bread  
celebrating their kinship

your neighbors and mine  
burying their grandfathers when they die of old age  
my neighbors watching their daughters having babies  
instead of flying around the world  
to kill other people's daughters.

Imagine a world without dictators or invaders  
where soldiers are gentlemen  
who defend the honor of women  
and help the victims of earthquakes and hurricanes

a world without border walls ghettos prisons  
without barbed wire or munitions factories

a world where men use their creativity  
to discover the cure for cancer  
where he who develops bombs  
invents drones  
and practices torture  
is recognized as sick  
and embraced by his community  
to soothe his separateness  
to remind him  
of his true loving nature

Written in response to Choman Hardi's "What I Want" and "My Children." Choman, a Kurdish poet living in England, wrote a doctoral dissertation at the University of Kent that focused on the effects of forced migration on the lives of Kurdish women from Iraq and Iran. She has three poetry collections in Kurdish, one in English.

a world where we will never see daffodils sprouting  
in the midst of poison clouds that smell of apple and garlic  
where the first sign of Spring blooms golden as life reascent

where daughters inherit their mothers' books  
and their fathers' gentle manners  
where children speak with pride their mothers' tongues

where the only thing nearing extinction is greed.

Imagine a world where children need a dictionary  
to learn the meaning of war  
where people shake their heads  
when they read about *Empire* in ancient history books

where babies are welcomed as blessings  
and guided to know  
in every cell of their bodies  
their connection to the wind and the stars  
the stones and the rivers  
the birds and the whales  
the buffaloes and the daffodils

a world where your children, my children  
and our neighbors' children  
feel in their hearts  
their connection to the wolf and the lamb.

# Let Them Wear Mink

© 2013

*Semper Fidelis*

To the brave men of Company Echo

They placed dummy marines made of  
cardboard cutouts and camouflage shirts  
in observation posts along desert highways.

They scrounged for armor  
swept roads for bombs  
and held their Humvee doors  
with their bare hands  
but the explosives were powerful  
the steel of the company's scraps,  
too short.

With no devices  
to block makeshift bombs  
the young men from Company E  
lost limbs and lives in Ramadi.

Better for them to have made  
a dummy president  
a dummy secretary of defense  
an entire dummy congress  
to place along the halls of power  
and take the flesh ones to Ramadi.

Their black ties and cowboy boots  
would not have foiled the bombs  
but maybe their women's silver embroidered  
gowns, jeweled straps, duchess satin coats  
could have served as  
designer body armor.

# Nicole Royse

Chandler Artist



**“Generations”**  
Acrylic, ink and paper on canvas board  
36 x 24 inches  
2006



“I was born in Las Vegas, Nevada, but I spent the majority of my childhood moving around a lot with my mother. Eventually, I ended up moving back and forth between Orange County, California, and Arizona. Due to my mother’s instability and her addictions, I went to live permanently with my grandparents, settling in Tempe, Arizona. I began exploring the mediums of art at a young age. I found a connection with painting, which helped me to express myself. I went on to study and graduate with a Bachelor’s of Arts degree in Art History from Arizona State University. I am currently pursuing my art career. I am the full-time artist as well as the Curatorial Assistant at the MonOrchid Gallery in downtown Phoenix. I reside in Chandler, Arizona, with my family.” Contact the artist at [www.nicoleroyse.com](http://www.nicoleroyse.com).

# Nicole Royse

Chandler Artist



**"Limitless"**

**Acrylic on canvas**

**18 x 24 x 2 inches**

**2010**

My artwork focuses on abstraction of form through the use of line and color by working with Acrylic and Oil paint on canvas. I focus and draw on the natural world that we encounter every day and throughout the course of our lives. I aim for my work to be modern in esthetic by using clean lines and a bold color palette while maintaining an elegant simplicity of form. Through my examination and exploration of the natural world and my inner self, I am led on a journey of rediscovery where I must sift through the complexities of life.

My artwork is also in many ways a reaction to my life experiences. Everyone experiences a wide range of events, reactions, emotions, and beliefs; through all of this a history is created that essentially makes us who we are today. This history and journey is important, unique, and essential to every one of us. In each of my artworks I try to examine my life, a memory, or an event through which I use line, color and texture as my tools. Through each painting I express a pure and simple idea, an idea that others may reflect on and connect to while encouraging them to examine their own lives in some way.

My Floral artworks and Layers series are a perfect example of this because each work examines my life, my childhood, and issues. A childhood that was by no means idyllic or always beautiful. Each line, color, and each layer of paint indicates something. That my life was not simple, which is expressed by the complexity of the overall form, yet rather it was chaotic and at times complicated. This is revealed through the unpredictable textures, unique shapes and bold colors. However, there is a sense of order and calmness, expressed quietly through my use of clean distinct lines and repetition of colors. My paintings are simplistic yet complicated, beautiful but intriguing and therefore sacred and important to me as an individual and as an artist. I use my artwork as a tool to invite viewers in, to examine not only myself but also themselves and society as a whole.

- Nicole Royse

# Nicole Royse

Chandler Artist



**“Papago at Dusk”**  
Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 24 inches  
2007

# Nicole Royse

Chandler Artist



**“Submerged”**  
Acrylic on canvas  
11 x 14 x 2 inches  
2012

# Nicole Royse

Chandler Artist



**“Veiled Peak”**  
**Acrylic on canvas**  
**36 x 24 inches**  
**2007**

# Nicole Royse

Chandler Artist



**"Verve"**  
Acrylic on canvas,  
18 x 24 x 2 inches  
2010

# 3 poems by David Chorlton

## Kootenai/Kootenay Suite

© 2013

### *Morning*

A train calls out to the coyotes  
who call back  
through the mist  
as the fields rise to surface in the day.

### *Kootenay Forest*

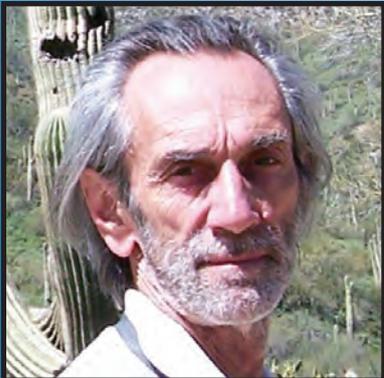
A fallen syllable lies on a bed  
of silence in a forest  
where the constant chattering  
of water overflows  
the consonants collected on the path  
where spoken words  
guide only the blind.

### *Preserve Pond*

The sky between the reeds  
is broken every time  
a grebe dives  
to fish in the darkness  
swelling behind the clouds.

### *Forest Wren*

By elderberry glow between crossed shadows  
where the forest is dense,  
a trail feels its way to the Winter wren  
with its tail in a shaft of light  
that streams directly from the glacial sky.



David Chorlton was born in Austria, grew up in England, and spent several years in Vienna before moving to Phoenix in 1978. He pursued his visual art and had several shows as well as writing and publishing his poetry in magazines and collections, the latest of which is "The Devil's Sonata" from FutureCycle Press. Although he became ever more interested in the desert and its wildlife, the shadow side of Vienna emerges in his fiction and "The Taste of Fog," which was published by Rain Mountain Press. Contact him at [rdchorlton@netzero.net](mailto:rdchorlton@netzero.net).

# Rain Journey

© 2013

Picacho Peak is hanging from the clouds today  
and rain pools  
on the summer hardened surface  
of silver grey desert.  
After the storm passes

high grasses thicken  
and push into the glow from clouds  
rolling down  
through mountain oaks  
that stretch into the night.  
Two raccoons

with green light in their eyes  
look from the bank  
of a fast running stream

at bats  
making the darkness move.

# La Golondrina

© 2013

It's been seven years  
since the two friends were last together;  
seven years between Las Cruces  
and Tucson. Now they're sitting  
at the open end  
of their station wagon, singing  
to mesquite and ocotillo  
where swallows curve  
and circle through light washed clean  
by monsoon rain. An evening rock  
juts toward the fading  
valley running south into  
another country's night. They know  
a song in Spanish  
about lovers and a nest. It's upbeat  
until you know the words.  
Everything's so beautiful here, they say,  
so green. Yes, we reply, greener than we remember  
and we've been coming  
back each year  
like the swallows in the song  
to their nest. The ladies ask us to sing  
with them, at the part  
when the nest stayed empty.  
And we don't know whether  
it belonged to the rough-winged or the violet-green.

# The Ultimate Memoir

By Sharyl Bales

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**B**EFORE TIME BEGAN: An infinitesimal shimmer in the black void of space spins hotly along a predestined path, weaving its way betwixt and between its celestial family until, finally, it stops; exactly where it belongs.

Time is far beyond the horizon.

Drawn to this ethereal body that will one day be called Sun, smaller, duller, cooler spheres now pay homage in their orbits.

One particular sphere, the third from its Sun, is slowly, but violently, changing. On the face of the young planet, the waters of the primeval soup eventually cease to boil and the slowly shrinking seas are forced back even farther by cataclysmic upheavals of the solid parts of the mass to form towering mountains and rocky, barren plains.

Land! The firmament! It rose up from the depths of the oceans to reach for the heavens; to dominate by its height the bleak grays and dusky blues of the water with its vast empty brownness.

Millions upon millions of years disappear.

Then, upon a well-laid foundation, the land yields a blade of grass which, in an epical sort of way, multiplies into flowing fields of grain. One tree begets a forest and one vine a jungle and, in a relative space of time, the once desolate acres are blanketed in a rich emerald cloak laid down in patterned swaths to cover the former nakedness of dirt and rock.

The land is busily preparing itself to become a home for still unknown, but soon to be, creatures of every shape and size. For already, the waters have conceived and the synthesis of life is complete. A single cell of perhaps divine origin has replicated millions and then countless billions of times in an unending sameness, yet, in certain small, but significant ways, quite differently. Slowly at first and then more and more rapidly, the essence of a multitude of beings bursts upon the boundaries of

infinity; exploding with the limitless possibilities of creation.

Century follows century into millennium after millennium. Being relative only to those that can see its end, however, time still has no consequence.

There is no sentient being on the land to behold the first creature tenuously emerging from among the abundant life that has shared its watery womb. For while the land lays anxiously awaiting its fulfillment, the seas hold a wealth of life. Because, here again, on another planet and in a different time, an immortal germ cell, bearer of life, has once more begun its journey from single cell to complex organism. Now, the cell is being carried onto dry land by certain adventurous creatures and upon their protean forms lays the ultimate destiny of this young world.

I cannot confirm this, Dear Reader, but it is the cosmic creation story told to me by the most venerable priestess I have ever met. How she knew this, I do not know. I can only tell you that the tone of her voice had the ring of absolute truth and her eyes held the wisdom of the ages. Perhaps, she had memories that went even farther back in time than mine?

I have lost count, My Friends, of the number of lives I have lived. Until this current existence, I never knew why I remembered so very many of my prior lives. Mendel (1885) certainly blazed an early trail through the forest of ignorance as to our origins, but he was rapidly followed by others who also traversed that dirt pathway until, suddenly, they were cruising along a genetic super highway. Those early pioneers who trekked along identifying chromosomes and the ribbons of DNA and RNA marked their trails so well that future geneticists could carry on more complex explorations until the road has become almost fully visible. While it may still be quite murky to we non-scientists, nevertheless, the work in the last hundred years or so that lead

Continued on page 63



**"Although I was born in Jamestown, NY (hometown of Lucille Ball!), my parents moved to Phoenix when I was eleven so I am a longtime resident currently living in Scottsdale. After retiring from an active career as an insurance executive, I turned my extensive experience in writing technical articles to my first love: fiction. I have written one historical novel and completed the first three novels in my Signe Mystery Series. I am currently working on the fourth Signe volume. The Signe Mystery Series is available on Lulu.com." Contact the writer at [sharylbales@ymail.com](mailto:sharylbales@ymail.com).**

to the understanding of modern day genetics gave me a glimmer of what might have happened and why I have these memories. Kudos to Morgan (1911), Drs. Crick and Watson (1953) and to so many others who have roared along and provided us with such startling new data. More about this later, Dear Readers!

THE DAWN OF TIME: My memories go as far back as the Dawn of Time which is what I call the first existence that I recall with clarity. I used to call each of my prior lives an *'awakening'*, but today I call them ... Oops! I am getting ahead of myself.

I now approach the twilight of my present life and in such twilights the memories are always the most vivid. In the event that the word *'senility'* comes to mind, I assure you this is not the case. Over my many lifetimes, I have come to think it is merely that the busyness of my existences has declined to where I am more open to these memories.

I have been a slave, a courtesan, a queen, a beggar, a pirate and many things in between. I have led many mundane lives of which I choose not to write as it would bore me to tears and likely you as well, Dear Readers. Then, too, there are cotton clouds that surround some of my other existences as if I was not meant to remember them in any detail. Perhaps when I passed on, I was too young in those lives to hit the save button, so to speak.

At any rate, I have decided that this is the right time and the right place to share a few of the stories of my many lives with you whom I have never met. Although, maybe I was acquainted with you in a prior life. If so, I hope you were someone I liked!

Memoirs are much in vogue these days and I certainly have a long one to write. I cannot begin to touch on all of my history, but I will share several of my stories in the hope that others like me who have the *'memories'* will feel free to share their own.

I know there are others who have the memories. But, even if I had never met anyone else with this ability – and I have met a few – I would know they exist. Just think of the many cultures that, even in this day and age, revere and pay homage to their ancestors. There are reasons, My Friends! Perhaps subtle reasons, but they exist. Read Job 12:12: *'With the ancient is wisdom'* or words to that effect. I know he had the memories. Oh, yes, men have the memories too. Almost all of human culture is based upon the wisdom of the ancients; both male and female. Although, cultural wisdom is not always a good thing as it has often been cruel. Thankfully, the human animal is constantly learning and thus adding to or deleting from its previously accepted base of cultural norms.

This is the first of my many lives in which I have felt completely safe to finally tell my story. Even a few centuries ago, I would have been stoned or burned at the stake. Can you imagine what kind of evil spirit or witch people would have thought me if I began to share my history at that point in time? It does not

bear thinking!!

Please do keep in mind, Dear Reader, that I have set myself the difficult job of attempting to translate ancient concepts into modern English. Not, as I am finding, an easy task.

I cannot tell you what or who we were in the very beginning as it would make no sense to you. I do not know what labels have been placed on us in these modern times. *Homo erectus?* *Neanderthal?* *Cro-Magnon?* We were simply small, dark people who were very different from the other creatures with which we shared our fields and forests. We communicated with signs and what I suppose we would now call guttural sounds. In particular then and perhaps in much of the world even now, we did not have the ability to live on our own. Our strength came from banding together with others of our kind. We had neither the swiftness of the tiger nor the stealth of the lion. We had neither claws nor fangs to protect us. But, we did have unique ways of using our brains. And, we had what are now called thumbs. Such seemingly small things with such enormous consequences! Our hands could grasp objects and our minds could grasp concepts. Our hands grasped branches. Our minds turned the branches into clubs and eventually into spears. In what I believe is the correct modern day parlance: How cool was that?

My people rarely traveled more than short distances. Occasionally, however, I found myself with a nomadic group and, after untold generations of migrating northward, we were neither so dark anymore nor so small. At some point, we spoke a language of sorts. We were very primitive by the standards of today, but we had no comparison. We – I will use the word clan to represent us – thought we were an intelligent and handsome people.

We most often married people of other clans; only the best specimens, of course. Long before the science of genetics evolved, the village wise ones (both men and women) studied the stars, the births and the characteristics of those who mated as well as their progeny. Developed over countless generations, their observations of our small and relatively static population were codified into rules for mating that were rigorously enforced. One did not mate with a parent or with a sibling or even with a close cousin. Such an action carried the highest degree of censure: banishment. And, of course, Dear Reader, in those days being sent out of the clan was a death sentence. In that primitive time, as I mentioned before, one needed the resources of the group in order to survive. We had this figured out way before John Donne although, perhaps, we never put it quite so eloquently. Of course, he likely had the memories too!

I feel as though my lives have been shaped by circumstance much like wind and water transform a landscape. I have been rich and I have been poor. I have been master and I have been slave. I have been good and I have been bad, but, at least, I have

Continued on page 64

never – to my recollection – been evil and I have encountered it enough times that I am confident I can recognize its face.

To modernists, I have been an animist, a pagan, a Jew, a follower of Islam, a Deist, a Catholic and several other varieties of Christian. I do not recollect that I have ever met a god of any name let alone GOD as many of today's major religions think of Him. (And, today, it is always HIM even though this is a relatively new phenomenon in the overall course of humankind.) I have been honored to meet many men and women whom I considered to be holy, but none who claimed to be a god. (Well, except for Pharaoh, but that is another story.) Perhaps because I have worshiped so many different gods over my lifetimes, I find cynicism an easy mask to wear.

One important thing I have learned without question, however, is that faith and ritual are as necessary to the well-being of humankind as water and food. It encompasses folklore, legends and other seemingly otherworldly beliefs, but it is, perhaps, the single most important thing that makes us human rather than animal. This need for bonding to others of our own kind has changed its face over time, but not its essence. We require communion; a sense of belonging to something far bigger than ourselves. Perhaps, it is a higher form of pack mentality? Here are possibly the most important things I have divined from my former lives:

Our BRAINS require government or else there is anarchy.

Our SOULS require spiritualism or else there is despair.

Do keep in mind, however, that tyranny – sooner or later – is always overthrown. The human '*pack*' requires guidance; not subjugation! If in your culture you absolutely MUST embrace tyranny, at least practice benevolent dictatorship!

MOVIES OF MY MIND: In this present day and age, I refer to my '*awakenings*' as Movies of My Mind. In most of my lives, I was afraid of these flashes of the past when they first occurred. But, after the first shock of recollection, I knew them to be true and that I had had them before. An event, a face or sometimes just a word triggered a sharp memory and I would know. It really is almost as if a movie is playing within my head. For example, the recent situation in Rwanda immediately made me think of my time in Amazonia. There, of course, the men set off to wage war on a distant tribe and never returned. The circumstances were different, but the result was basically the same. In the absence of men, the women had no choice but to take up the reins of leadership and find a way to provide for the sustenance of the tribe. Here I feel compelled to add that we never, never, never cut off or mutilated our breasts! Snugly taped, yes. It was not, as the saying goes today, rocket science! More a form of basket weaving.

Of a sudden, Dear Readers, I find myself smiling. I can almost hear you thinking: '*Well, get on with it woman! Give us data!*' (*Data apparently being one of the present-day gods.*)

Very well, then. Here are a few stories you might enjoy.

During one of the more interesting of my earliest lives, I was chosen to be an acolyte of the moon goddess. It was a hazy, long ago age. There were twelve of us; all young girls ranging from four to fourteen summers. Summers being roughly the equivalent to the present concept of a year. We were all virgins, of course, and the priests and priestesses dedicated us to serving the Queen of the Night. For some reason, we were never allowed to mention Her name except in the most sacred and secret ceremonies. Even to this day, I hesitate to reveal it.

We were pampered. We were well fed. We were bathed with herbs so that we smelled like a spring field of wild flowers. We were honored by the rest of the clan only slightly less than we honored the Great Goddess. But, then, when we had served our time, we were sacrificed. You must understand that we did this willingly. Well, most of us. I recall that I escaped with a young priest who was not, perhaps, as dedicated as he should have been. We fled into the forest and thence to a distant land. Fortunately, we found others of our kind, lived as mates and had our children. I had a long and interesting life before I passed on to my next awakening.

Another life that I recall with clarity was – at my best estimation now – approximately 3000 BCE as they say today. At the time, it was simply the Year of the Flood. I was a slave to one of the daughters of Pharaoh although even at the time I had a vague memory of being a princess at one time myself. Unfortunately, I was beautiful. This is not false modesty. I found myself summoned more often by Pharaoh than by my mistress. Of course, I bore several children to the embodiment of the gods; four male children and two females. The males were given favored status in Pharaoh's house. One became a powerful priest, another a famous architect and the other two were made nobles. The girl children were married; one to a wealthy merchant and the other to a distant prince. As far as I knew, they were all happy and what more could a mother want?

In one of my more recent incarnations – circa 1700 – when I was about seventeen, I dressed as a young man so I could take ship with the pirate Captain 'Calico Jack' Rackham. In addition to the normal crew was Captain Jack's paramour, Anne Bonny. We were a fun-loving bunch of pirates and had a merry old time as we sailed the Caribbean looking for booty. Anne candidly admitted she had a roving eye, but that her eye should fall upon me, the only other mare among the stallions, was the greatest irony and definitely the best joke! We had a great laugh over it and became '*bosom*' friends.

Unfortunately, at one point, we were captured, tried and sentenced to hang. Fortunately, the judge was a rather stodgy old coot so when we told him that each of us was with child, he reacted as we expected and stayed our executions until after we had given birth. With a bit of luck and the assistance of a few

Continued on page 65

### Continued from page 64

friends, we escaped that fiendish place, but, for reasons of our own, each of us determined to go our own way and I never saw Anne again. I proclaimed myself a widow, had a lovely baby, married and then had several more children. I hope Anne fared as well as I did.

**A FAR MORE SIMPLE PAST:** Time was irrelevant for such a long period of time in my earliest existences that I cannot even begin to describe its length in modern terms. One awakening was much like any other and very little changed. Of course, I had a different family and often lived with a different clan. However, when I look back now through the telescope of time, I can see differences in the way we looked, in the way we communicated and in the way we lived.

I can now clearly see how bodily attributes and styles have changed over my lifetimes. In general, humans are taller, have less protuberant noses and possess much less body hair. That said, in this so-called modern age, styles seem to change not only very quickly, but rather dramatically as well. The prized Rubenesque-figure of not that long ago would, in this 21st Century world, simply be fat or is it more politically correct to say *'weight-challenged'*? Alternatively, in every past culture, a size zero was seen as hideously undernourished and, particularly in clan times, would likely have been left behind at some point as an unhealthy specimen.

Still, change in the long ago past was a mere flake in a blizzard as compared to the last thousand years; most especially the last three or four hundred. Now in the 21st Century, even the amazing changes that were made in the 20th Century seem less significant.

The internet has brought the thoughts and ideas of millions of people to an almost instant fund of knowledge. To me, it is like building cathedrals out of air which fan the spark of creativity to spires of heretofore unknown imagination. I feel as though I am living inside a wildly spinning kaleidoscope with colors and images flashing faster than I can assimilate them. Can this be good for a human brain that is certainly adaptive, but which, in my experience, needs time to come to terms with new ideas? After all, it took time to build the pyramids, to construct bridges or to assemble airplanes. People knew they were coming and they could adjust.

Or is it, as I fear, that I am just getting old?

Be that as it may, wouldn't it be ironic if the next great civilization changer – and there have been many, My Friends – was neither a cataclysmic weather event nor a bubonic-type plague, but a virulent computer virus that somehow takes away the electronic lifestyle we have created and forces us to start over again from scratch? I wonder who would be the most successful at adapting; those with the memories or those without?

**ALAS, I AM NOT A SCIENTIST:** One thing I know about my

birth and rebirths is that they are not consecutive. Sometimes centuries or even millennia go by and I am nothing or, at least, I am cognizant of nothing. But, eventually, I return.

I do know with certainty that I have always been female in the lives I remember. In this Age of Discovery as I mentioned earlier in this story, I have learned that females have two X-chromosomes and males have one X- and one Y-chromosome. I have come to believe that the chain of X-chromosomes which lives in me is unbroken. Perhaps, to paraphrase the title of a wonderful book, it takes the *'perfect genetic storm'* for me to know who I am and what I have been. Perhaps in those prior lives that I do not recall, I was a male and the genetic storm did not occur for me?

I believe we all have the potential to remember our beginnings. In fact, I have come to believe that we are all reborn to the Earth and that Heaven, by any name, is the promise of a life hereafter right here on our own planet and that this promise was made by those who had the memories. If you remember what I said earlier, it would have been very dangerous in the past for anyone to proclaim a future based on their own memories of rebirth. What better way to bring the word of this marvel of nature to the masses than to design a Heaven? No one back then knew about the presence of genes or chromosomes. But, I am convinced that many *did* remember their distant pasts. Perhaps imperfectly, but they applied their knowledge as the times permitted. Of course, this does not in any way mean that there is no God by any name you choose to use. It may merely be God's way of allowing us to be created. The mysteries of the infinite are mysterious indeed! Despite my numerous lifetimes, I assure you, Dear Reader, that I have no definitive answer!! Questions, yes. Answers, no.

Perhaps Hell is the future life for those with bad genes because their rebirths were just as awful as their previous lives? Can *'bad genes'* create memories for cruelty, laziness, melancholy or insanity that can be triggered by the right genetic storm? Today, we are told that hereditary traits are passed along from parent to child and, perhaps, from generation to generation. If so, can the Hell of bad genes be fixed by scientists or have we humans been fixing them for ourselves all along?

In the Christian bible, the *Book of Genesis* tells us that first there was light. Then, water, land, vegetation, the fish of the seas and the birds of the air. Then, of course, along came animals and, subsequently, humans. How did those who wrote the Bible surmise this sequence so many centuries before Darwin? Were Darwin's theories based on the fact that he had the memories? Even if *'memories'* are not recognized or acknowledged as such, is there an instinctual understanding of the past coded into everyone's brain? Are some of us more able to tap into that coded knowledge base? How fun it would be if, in a future awakening,

Continued on page 66

Spring 2013

### Continued from page 65

I find that there is no longer a need for the machine known as a computer because we have learned how to access the innate database in our brains?

If my story does nothing more than encourage more people to open up their minds and get into touch with their own memories, then I have fulfilled my purpose. We are told today that genes mutate and that mutations lead, evolutionarily, in a new direction. Perhaps, humans have somehow influenced their own genetic mutations throughout history; without realizing it, of course. If we all come from the same place, someone must have broken the mold at some long ago point in time and, if it can break once, why not again and again? Whether that is found to be true or not, could it really hurt to look for positive influences? I think not.

I do not believe that even the scientists of today, who have advanced knowledge to such an incredible extent, know the function of all parts of the human brain. Is it possible that much of the brain is taken up with memories? A storage house, if you will, to hold the accumulated information inherited from all past generations. Similar, perhaps, to the primordial development of animal instinct?

IN SUMMARY: I apologize, Dear Readers, but as I told you in the beginning, I am now an old woman and I am growing weary. For now, I leave you with these closing thoughts:

Where do we go from here? Will technology prevail or will it be the sheer numbers of a particular culture that will dominate in the next century?

If it's sheer numbers, personally, I vote for the Catholics to take over the world. The church has had its ups and downs, but – trust me – they had a plan and they stuck to it. Quite simply, it was the Law of Large Numbers. It was long-term and it was brilliant! Reproduce, reproduce, reproduce. Even in today's world when birth control is more acceptable, it only takes a few families to begin

to influence the dynamics of a city or a region or a country. Not immediately, of course, but over a period of time. Five pairs of mates who each have five children who each have five children. Do the math!

Alternatively, I may well wake up in my next life being Chinese. That culture has certainly been making huge gains in recent history. Well, admittedly, they made quite a few in ancient times as well, but that was then and this is now.

I have seen the kinship of man evolve since the beginning of time. Very, very slowly at first and then more and more rapidly until now it seems as though we are racing through a vortex of time and space. Where will it end? I wish I knew, but, then, I will likely find out. As will you, My Friends, whether you remember it or not!

The one thing in this current life that concerns me is that we are nowhere near a consolidation of thought that will bring all humans together – male and female, nation and nation, religion and religion, culture and culture – in an amity that will ensure our long-term survival. Believe me, sexual, cultural and religious differences are immaterial in the overall scheme of things. What matters is the willingness to work together not only for short-term survival, but for the future survival of you and yours! And, of course, me and mine!

Never forget that, although our paths may have diverged along the way, we all came from the same place. We may be able to trace whose ancestors were descended from Mohammad or who came over on the Mayflower, but I defy you to determine whose predecessors first crawled out of the primordial muck.

If I never have another awakening, obviously, I will never know what has become of the world as I know it at this point in time.

On the other hand, if I do come back and find that this planet has been screwed up even more than it is today, Dear Reader, I will be very annoyed!

# 6 Poems by Richard Fenton Sederstrom

## Family Chat

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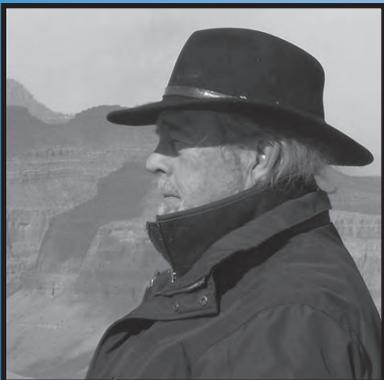
“She’s worse,” he says, like that,  
But not worse than what.  
We don’t express our feelings much,  
Or well, around here.

“She’s worse.  
She’s been kind of out of it, these last four days,  
So we’re taking her to the hospital.”  
We go back down the hill.

Nancy would have asked what we might want to drink.  
“We have some lemonade I think,  
And maybe a Coke. Iced tea?  
Jim, do we have iced tea?”

“You want a cup of coffee?” he’d ask instead.  
“No, thanks.” We’d sit on the couch,  
Answer the annual questions, mostly  
About the brothers I’ve hardly seen in years.

Together we’d intone the memorial to last winter’s weather,  
“But maybe we’ll have snow this year, finally.”  
We’d shrug in solemn agreement, nod, almost smile,  
Step out the door again.



Richard Fenton Sederstrom lives in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona and Mexico and the North Woods of Minnesota. His book, “Fall Pictures on an Abandoned Road,” was released in 2009, “Disordinary Light,” in 2010, and “Folly, A Book of Last Summers,” in 2011. Sederstrom’s poems have appeared in *The Talking Stick*, *English Journal*, *Plainsongs*, *Big Muddy*, *Mother Earth Journal*, *The Blue Guitar*, *Memoir* (and), and *Ruminare*, among other journals and magazines. Fortunate to have retired from all respectable pursuits, especially teaching, he returns to the classroom as a visitor. Contact Richard at [richard\\_sederstrom1221@q.com](mailto:richard_sederstrom1221@q.com).

# Paper Boy

© 2013

Because you remember  
those kerosene lamps,  
the ones we sometimes  
played with at road construction  
sites in the nights way back then,  
that sometimes exploded,  
shot into the night—  
you may know what it felt like  
at the start of the dark morning  
I fell off my paper-laden bike,  
when the canvas bag  
of cold war intimidations  
bounced on the pavement  
and the end of a handlebar  
punched into my gut.  
I didn't think I would  
ever breathe again, never  
knew before that morning  
how much I still enjoy  
the explosion of my  
second first breath.

# Poor Hat: Li Po and I Get a Head

© 2013

*I take off my cap and hand it on a jutting stone;  
A wind from the pine-trees tickles on my bare head.*  
Translated by Arthur Waley

A small advantage: having  
so little hair remaining  
while I vacate use.

I loaf in my boat,  
motor and mind extinguished  
for the silence of breeze.

My boat bobs in the decaying  
wakes of distant speed boats  
muttering in the silence.

That same breeze,  
the stillest smallest  
voice of molecular isness,

whispers gently through my hair.  
It sings lotus-softly  
with perfect carelessness,

hair through hair by hair,  
each fine and delicately  
tuned old filament

tickling my bare scalp  
into a ripe wheat field.  
Discrete golden caresses.

My hat sits collapsed  
only a couple of feet  
from this unharvestable joy.

My hat reminds me how close  
is our customary loneliness.  
Poor hat!

# Changing Light

© 2013

A hummingbird, iridescent in green  
Only a few seconds ago, terrified

Now, a matte flutter of black ash  
In the shadows of speeding commuters,

Trapped between parallels of traffic.

She whips in panic, spins a gray haze of wing  
Against the lethal human fate of servitude  
To these lines of mechanized infinity.

Tiring, she sacrifices this dull  
Geometrical inevitability for the sureness  
Even of the pavement she struggles from also.

She accepts the finality of life  
As though a sure death,  
Even so black and foreign as this one,

Serves life better than eternity,  
Fulfills the blind promise of creation.

# Cornered

© 2013

He asked us to describe the corner of the room.  
Some eyes are expansive, lead from the vertical  
line outward to the poster of the bear  
to the photo of a mountain waterfall,

to the window, off to . . . nothing but the next corner.  
When do we get to stop? Some eyes delve, stare hard into  
the medieval epistemology of the simple geometry,  
the vertical intersection of two vertical planes.

But where do the planes begin to intersect?  
In what molecular realm do they meet or merge,  
tiny particles of anxiety blending, deepening  
toward the infinity of corner?

The atoms of eyeshot merge with atoms  
of the two walls, atoms of intersection,  
the inevitable freeze when warm perception  
meets with no horizon at all.

# Elegy for the Last Iguanodon

© 2013

*In Memory of Intwy*

O Great Cud!  
Magnificent Chomper!  
You have not chewed on  
Earth these epochs past —  
Thousands of millennia, all lorn now  
Since we have chanced to converse  
At the distance of time and size  
Your dinosaurian  
Eminence commands.

Behind eyelids pressed  
hard to my pre-memory  
I see you wrest dumptrucks of milfoil  
And swamp iris  
From the muck at the lakeshore —  
Your beak, so massive, so delicate.  
I watch you chomp stems and leaves'  
Purple and blue spring and summer blossoms —  
Loosestrife, heal-all, pickerelweed, gentian.  
And green — amaranth  
And asphodel of Elysian pasture.

Back and forth slide  
Your hugely engineered jaws  
So finely evolved out of the dim  
Birdiness of your ancestors —  
Back and forth in contemplative slowness  
While the shadows of  
The shadows of poems  
Undulate in the skull that sweeps slowly  
Back and forth, back and forth  
Over the disintegrating gallons of undressed salad.

I would sing the blues for you but your world  
Is so green, so moist — soft green slowly  
Blackening into the slurry of progress —  
That I cannot refract  
From the sheen the blues I feel.  
So I will sing the greens for you  
A trope of green counterpoint to the dirge  
That mourns your innocent extinction.  
Chew on, chew on, carbonic emblem  
Of our disposable human future.  
Chew on, Iguanodon.  
Chew on.

# Community Spotlight:

## Q-and-A with Kas Winters

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**What do I think is/are the biggest challenge(s) facing the arts today?**

Priority is the biggest challenge. The arts have been labeled as “fluff” in our society. They are considered to be non-essential and not worth being kept in budgets or schedules. Legislators and administrators in our schools obviously consider the arts a low priority because they have made broad cuts in creative classes of all sorts. There are even school districts without librarians! Sports, construction projects, and administrators appear to be favored when the funds are doled out. Bands and orchestras are dropped along with other music, art, drama, dance classes, and similar activities. Many families have tight budgets, and attending performances is rarely at the top of their budgeting list. For some, there is a concept that “The Arts” are for the elite; these individuals think they would be out-of-place and uncomfortable in the company of the crowd they envision attending.

Cost is the second challenge. Because just about everything can be watched on electronic viewers of all kinds, those who have never experienced artistic performances live or walked through galleries, aren’t likely see the value of including these options in their budgets. Of course, artists need to make a living and deserve rewards for their creative abilities and effort. Production, facility costs, staffing, and marketing expenses for artistic events are astronomical. Operations for performing arts must be funded by ticket sales and donations. People appear to be willing to purchase expensive computers, cell phones, and other electronic gadgets, so the challenge is to find ways to expose more people to the excitement of on-stage professional performances and events so they will be viewed as a higher priority.

Time is challenge number three. People are too busy. Their schedules seem to allow little time for stopping to smell the roses or relax and enjoy arts presentations. Even children in elementary school have overly full days. Parents are working and kids are in after-school activities, sports, and classes. Taking time to expose children to the arts isn’t on their “List of Things to Do.” Often getting the younger generation inspired about a play, dance, performance, or exhibit is a means to involve parents, who just might adjust their calendar to see what their child has discovered.

**What do I think is the best solution for dealing with these challenges?**

Educating adults and exposing children to the arts can change this. It isn’t an immediate answer, but I believe it will work, because I’ve done my share of both and seen progress. Among my many roles, I count being a Scout leader, teacher of after-school programs, and someone who has worked with other youth groups and church groups, as my favorite activities. I was successful at involving most of their parents, too. My goal was to offer children a smorgasbord of experiences. We

**Continued on page 72**



**A mother, grandmother, volunteer, and mompreneur, Kas Winters puts a lifetime of ideas collected from working with hundreds of children into the books she writes for families. As an author, illustrator, and publisher, Kas, the owner of Wimark Communications and Everything Family, has published 98 books, including many for children and parents. More than 100 authors from all over North America are represented on her extensive website. She has always been involved, and in love, with the arts, with a special fondness for Broadway shows, classical music, drawing, crafting, and singing in the choir. E-mail her at [kaswinmark@yahoo.com](mailto:kaswinmark@yahoo.com).**

## Continued from page 71

went camping and fishing, toured science centers and did experiments, rode horses, learned about rocks, and hiked. We also went to plays, did activities with music, made puppets and produced our own shows, danced, listened to samples of classical music, opera, and jazz, did crafts, sewed and stitched, cooked and baked, and so many other things. For them, it was just a taste—an exposure to the arts, the outdoors, to cooking, to writing, and so many varied areas. Their parents were often drivers or chaperons at the events and sometimes received their own initial exposure to artistic performances. I can remember one mom who had never seen a live event on stage until she went with me. Since then, she has seen ballet, Broadway shows, and the symphony—all with complete delight.

Many of the kids I taught are now parents of children today. While I'm not in touch with all of them, I know some do have children involved in the arts. Perhaps those introductions made a difference. If nothing else, having those opportunities, they grew up with less of a prejudice against the arts, less fear of the woods, and more excitement about experiencing things they might not have thought of doing otherwise.

Tell the stories and offer glimpses and mini experiences in the arts. Providing free “sample” performances for the public is something I see as a very positive step toward exposing people to the arts so they will hopefully find something quite pleasing. We have taken children to Steele Indian Park for a performance by the Phoenix Symphony where they received red pipe cleaner wands to help direct the music, and to other parks to see the Arizona Ballet perform pre-season, to the Great Arizona Puppet Theater for special events, to performances at other locations to listen to folk music or bluegrass, and to participate in activities at the Phoenix Annual Parade of the Arts. These tasteful introductions take away the cost challenge, and reduce the time commitment. Everyone enjoys the event together. Memorable times like these remove the stigma that the arts are reserved for the wealthy. Many schools take advantage by taking classes of children (and parent chaperons) to arts events. I remember kids getting a big kick out of actually getting to play an instrument at a Phoenix Symphony “instrument petting zoo.” Those are the little things that can make a life-changing difference to participate and enjoy performances.

Bring artistic experiences into the schools in creative ways. Perhaps a set of tickets to a cultural event can be provided as a prize for a school contest for writing, drawing, performing, etc. Some schools do assemblies and bring in special guests. Students get excited about seeing professionals and will remember being in the audience to watch a ballet dancer, instrumentalist, or other

artist speak or perform. (I've done many “young author” talks and the response is always exciting. Students react positively to presentations by people who share their stories with them. It helps youth believe they can accomplish their own dreams. Often, they want to imitate the speaker. I have also published books for students I met through these talks and the results have sometimes been life-changing.)

Many campuses have after-school programs which introduce arts into the lives of children who might not participate in other ways. (I'm currently teaching a class of 3rd through 6th grade students in one of these programs. They are writing, illustrating, and taking photographs to create their own magazine. Their work will be printed to allow students to receive printed copies of their publication.)

There are many simple ways to share enthusiasm about “The Arts.” Most of them require bringing the ideas to smaller groups where friends connect with friends and share their experiences in the process. Bring art awareness into workplaces and other situations where you gather with friends and associates. Be creative! Silly things come to my mind, but then, the unexpected gets attention. Just imagine, for example, coming to work at a corporate headquarters and finding an artist painting on a canvas in the lobby, listening to a violinist perform at a light rail station, watching a person get up from a restaurant table to sing an aria to the waitress, or being surprised by a flash-mob dance at the mall. Things like this are actually happening and people are paying attention!

Solutions involve more than one person sharing the arts. Many people do have an appreciation. We need to encourage advocates to participate by sharing their excitement and inviting others to get interested and involved with them.

Other kinds of solutions include voting for people who support the arts, communicating with school administrators about the need for arts as well as sciences and sports, and, of course, getting involved. Some will, and some will not—but as long as some WILL, we can change the current perception that the arts are “fluff” and give them higher priority.

**How would I rate how Arizona as a state fares with the arts? Good, bad, could be better?**

Arizona has a marvelous selection of art experiences available! My introduction to art happened in Pennsylvania where I discovered Broadway shows in Pittsburgh at the age of ten. It was love at first sight, and I've been addicted ever since. Arizona became

Continued on page 73

Spring 2013

**Continued from page 72**

my home when I began high school, so I really have no other state with which to compare it. The range of possibilities here is extensive and the quality is as professional as it can be. Could it be better? Perhaps. Any situation has room for improvement, but what we have to share is incredible.

In fact, Arizona has an extra wealth of art possibilities. Not many states can boast the marvelous cache of historical art to be seen here. We have ancient petroglyph art throughout the state and places such as The Deer Valley Rock Art Center many other museums where it is easy to view the work of artists from the past. In addition, we have multicultural arts everywhere. The Heard Museum, Museum of Northern Arizona, and so many others offer glimpses into the artistic abilities of a variety of cultures. We have the Phoenix Art Museum, with exquisite changing and regular exhibits that appeal to a variety of interests. (Memories of their Ansel Adams show, several years ago, still delight me.) There are other art museums all over the state, each with its own focus, and every one of them is filled with outstanding creations.

Our performing arts are some of the best ever! Gammage, The Phoenix Theater, Chandler Center for the Arts, Orpheum Theater, Arizona Broadway Theater, Herberger Theater Center, Mesa Arts Center, Higley Center for Performing Arts, Celebrity Theater, and others continue to bring the best of Broadway, musical theater, drama, and top entertainers along with shows of every kind. (And those are just some of the many venues in the Valley of the Sun. Tucson, Flagstaff and other areas also offer live sublime theater opportunities.) We can enjoy The Phoenix Symphony, which includes everything from Saint-Saëns Piano Concertos to a Pirate's Adventure for families to Pops, including music from "South Pacific" or Big Band selections. Our Arizona Opera and Phoenix Ballet are outstanding (and the powerful advertising for the Arizona Opera is some of the best I've seen). There are many similar possibilities around the state.

Our libraries book special speakers, performers, artists, and even bring in puppeteers and crafters for hands-on workshops. We have festivals all over Arizona. There are artist/painter festivals, craft shows, every kind of music event including Fiddling Contests, dancing from ballet to square dance events, "Wild West" re-enactments, parades with marching bands and artistic floats. Having attended a number of these, I've been impressed and have enjoyed music, art exhibits, dance, crafters, and so many other performers. Our colleges and Universities have award winning art programs. The Christmas performance of the combined choirs at NAU (Northern Arizona University) was one of the most impressive productions I have ever attended.

All in all, Arizona has a absolute cornucopia overflowing with arts to entertain visitors and residents alike. As one who has traveled all over our state, I am pleased to have been entertained everywhere I went. There are talented performers in small towns as well as the cities. The natural beauty we enjoy, from sand dunes in Yuma to tundra on the San Francisco Peaks, from stands of Ponderosa pine trees on the Mogollon Rim to saguaros in the deserts, from vast canyons to caverns, from sunrises to sunsets, surrounds us everywhere as part of our artistic environment.

### **What do I see as the family's role when it comes to children and the arts?**

The role of family is, in my opinion, the most important of all. It is where arts are introduced at very young ages, provided in various ways throughout a child's life, and hands-on participation can be encouraged in an amazing number of ways. We never pushed any one area but made sure our children were exposed to all kinds of possibilities. Creativity was an integral part of everyday life. When you think about it, the arts play a role in everything we do and are either an essential or at least, a satisfying part of most activities

It is impossible to look around with noticing the work of artists expressed in our lives each day. We see drawing, illustrating, painting, designing, decorating, printmaking, calligraphy, and creative typography. Three dimensional art includes sculpture, carving, woodworking, molding, crafts of all kinds, pottery, clothing design, stitching, weaving, needle arts like embroidery, crochet, or knitting, jewelry, floral design, fabric and textile arts, and even visually appealing food arrangements and cake decorating. Other visual arts are performed with light, natural materials, and even computers. On another scale, beauty is shown through interior design, architecture, product design, photography, video/movie creations, and video-game design. In addition to visual arts, music—vocal, instrumental, percussion, and digital—all come to mind. Reading, writing, poetry, storytelling, and drama each hold a place of honor. Dance is performed with dramatic expression. How can we avoid involving our children with art on as many levels as possible? We can notice how their skills and ability to innovate develops over the years.

Encourage toddlers and young children to express their creativity. They can "finger paint" with yogurt or pudding. (Sometimes it's OK to play with your food.) As they get older, introduce various age-appropriate art supplies (crayons, non-toxic paints and markers, colored pencils, etc.). Including plenty of paper to be filled with their imaginative ideas. For children's sculptures, salt dough (1 cup salt, 2 cups flour, 1 cup water, 1 Tbls. oil) can pro-

**Continued on page 74**

**Spring 2013**

vide fun for days. Store unused dough in the refrigerator for up to a week and air-dry or bake finished projects @ 350° until hard. Salt dough projects can also be painted. Let youngsters draw chalk pictures on pavement outdoors or use a big paintbrush to “paint” the sidewalk or outside walls with water. Give them T-shirts to tie-dye, paint, or color with markers. Provide stencils. Rub crayons over paper with leaves underneath to make textured prints. Take a string dipped in paint and make a squiggle with it on a sheet of paper, then cover the string and paper with a second sheet of paper. Hold the top sheet and pull the string out, to make a string-painted design. Color in coloring books using any colors you choose. Paint pictures. PLAY with art.

Make simple non-specific materials, such as recyclable containers, cardboard tubes, tape, scraps of wood, yarn, fabric, and paper, available and let children use their imaginations. Einstein said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For while knowledge defines all we currently know and understand, imagination points to all we might discover and create.” This applies to children, too. That creative part is not usually developed through classes, electronic media, or activities that are pre-programmed with instructions, color-by-numbers, “Do what I do,” or “assemble the pieces to make it look as shown.” Creative imagination (and an appreciation for the arts) happens when children have time to daydream, to investigate nature, watch bugs, play in blanket tents, to make rhythmic noises with pots, pans and kitchen spoons, and other unstructured play. Adjust materials and situations to the age, ability, and safety of children.

Scrap-crafts are wonderful fun! What can you make with clothespins, paper bags, paper plates, craft sticks, pipe cleaners, empty spools, pom-poms, pieces of felt or craft foam, empty containers, or paper cups? Answers to those questions are determined by imagination and ingenuity. This is a process through which children learn to see themselves as artists and eventually to really appreciate the art of others as well.

Expose older children to art events, shows, museums, craft sales, as well as magazines, books, and web sites that features works of art. Make it a normal part of what you do and no matter what field they work in as adults, they will retain an appreciation for artistic endeavors.

Play a variety of music—at home or in the car. With little children, dance to music, sing along, clap, hum, march, tap your feet, and make music a normal way to enjoy time together. We played all kinds of music in our home, including classical, marches, country, rock, folk, and music from different countries. (As our children grew up, we learned to listen to their music as well.) Let

children make their own instruments and play along. It might be as simple as putting dried beans inside two paper plates and stapling them together to make a rattle. Pots and pans with a wooden spoon, or paper bag maracas filled with noise-makers and closed with rubber bands make a rhythm section for little ones. As children get older, introduce toy instruments and then, perhaps, real ones with instructions for playing them (if they show an interest). You can have a great time with a kazoo or even wind chimes. Several of our children and grandchildren played in school bands. (We’ve been band parents forever.) Our family traditions include watching parades and enjoying concerts.

We sing together, especially in the car. Our now-adult kids will sing harmony if we are riding someplace together, especially if it’s around Christmas. It is possible to disconnect ’tweens and teens from electronics, and it can be memorable time spent together. (There were times when our older kids listened to their stations or recorded songs and times when we would sing or listen together.) We attended countless performances as a family. Sometimes it would be at a school, at church, or even at the mall or holiday events. Occasionally, special holiday gifts were tickets to see professional musical performances on stage. Together, we’ve also watched musicals, musicians, and similar programs on TV and made special events out of doing so. (Popcorn was sometimes included.) Currently we have season tickets to attend the Broadway shows with our daughter and granddaughters at Gammage. Our thirteen-year-old granddaughter has been busy sharing those experiences with her friends and has changed the minds of at least a couple who thought musicals would be “boring and stupid.”

Dance was also introduced early on, first as “let’s pretend” that included makeshift costumes, playing ballerina, and twirling. We’ve even been known to get a large family group to dance around in a circle, laughing like crazy. Together, we have enjoyed watching “The Nutcracker Ballet,” older movies with Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly and others with dancers. All of our granddaughters have participated in dance. Two are currently in performing groups. Our children and grandchildren have all had the opportunity to see professional performances at Symphony Hall and appreciate them.

Quite simply, there are countless possibilities for bringing art into the everyday life of children of any age. The earlier you begin, the more natural it seems to a child. Art is everywhere. Take walks and look at nature’s art. It is exquisite. Give a child a camera so they can capture beautiful memories. Listen to the birds sing. Dance and run in the sun, or even in the rain. Art is enjoyable.

**What would be my advice to future generations about keeping them going?**

The most memorable civilizations in history created art which is still enjoyed today. During those times we also see advances in science and other areas. The two do, indeed, feed one another. Art and Science are not opposites but are joined together by imagination and inspiration.

When we look at historic remnants of ancient Rome and Greece we stand in awe of the sculptures and architecture. We are aware of writings and poetry. The Renaissance brought us the glorious work of Michelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci. It is in Leonardo that we see a true collaboration of art and science. Everything from his paintings and sculptures to his flying machines are artistic, creative, and innovative. He said: "Learn to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else."

In more modern times we see the designs of Frank Lloyd Wright combining art with science. His comment on imagination was, "An idea is salvation by imagination."

If we listen to some who were famous for their advances in science and other areas we are again reminded that creativity and art are part of all arenas. One of my favorites is this one by Albert Einstein: "It would be possible to describe everything scientifically, but it would make no sense; it would be without meaning, as if you described a Beethoven symphony as a variation of wave pressure."

We need to realize that creative expression is more than window dressing on life. It is not "fluff" or non-essential. Without the ability to think creatively, forward thought in the sciences and all areas would eventually cease. Surround your self with beauty at home and take notice of it in nature. Learn more about fine arts. Support them. Enjoy performances and exhibits and share them with others. Get involved in your own creative arts. Our enthusiasm is the best invitation for others to become involved.

"Get involved in the arts and take as many people with you as possible. Imagination and creativity keep life moving forward."  
— Kas Winters: author, artist, mother, grandmother, teacher of youth

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# A Call to Writers of Children's Literature for The Blue Guitar Jr.

**T**he Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks literary submissions for its annual issue for children. Submissions are sought 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 Rebecca Dyer at [rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org). For more information, visit [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org).

The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine is a nonprofit project of the nonprofit The Arizona Consortium for the Arts. The Arizona Consortium for the Arts is a startup, nonprofit group dedicated to supporting and fostering artists and the arts in Arizona, including the literary, visual and performing arts. For more information about The Blue Guitar and The Blue Guitar Jr. magazines and The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, visit our websites: [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org) and [www.artizona.org](http://www.artizona.org).

# Celebrating 5 Years of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts

**Dear Friends of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts,**

The Arizona Consortium for the Arts is 5 years old and we want you to join us in celebrating this milestone by looking back at what we've accomplished with your help and encouragement, and looking forward to celebrate, friend-raise and fund-raise so that we can continue in our vision to add dynamism and vitality to our communities in establishing a multicultural arts center and leaving a legacy for this generation and future generations. It's been an amazing ride since we began in the fall of 2007. Over the course of our five-year history, The Arizona Consortium for the Arts has carved out a distinctive role among the region's thriving arts and cultural institutions as a unique organization. The Consortium also partners with other organizations and provides children and adults with a wide range of programs with hands-on, up-close encounters with their own creativity and previously untapped talents. And that's just for starters.

One of the best known and most prominent projects is the highly acclaimed The Blue Guitar Magazine, noted for both its quality and its range. The Blue Guitar is a literary and arts journal/magazine. It features Arizona emerging and established writers and artists. The Blue Guitar has drawn statewide submissions and is currently published online. The magazine has thousands of readers in Arizona, throughout the country and abroad. We also publish The Blue Guitar Jr. Edition, which features works by children and works by adults who write for children. The editor in chief of The Blue Guitar Magazine, Rebecca Dyer, was nominated for the Governor's Arts Award in 2012. The inaugural issue of Unstrung magazine was launched in the summer of 2012. Unstrung magazine is solely dedicated to poetry.

Another popular programming is the Consortium's annual Blue Guitar Festival of the Arts. The Festival features our local musicians, dancers, singers, cultural presentations, and readers from The Blue Guitar Magazine. The audience is treated to a varied program that runs the gamut from theatre and dance to music of all genres and spoken and written word presentations.

In addition to promoting a wide range of programs in the visual, literary and performing arts, The Arizona Consortium for the Arts maintains a varied and growing portfolio of programs, projects and services for artists, audiences, and collaborating organizations.

In our five-year history, the Consortium has supported visionary, adventurous and thought-provoking artists spanning all disciplines. During our Annual Blue Guitar Festival of the Arts and our Annual Fall Festival of the Arts, the public celebrates our artists through presentations, exhibitions, readings and performances. Some of the performances feature local arts and cultural groups that partner and collaborate with our Consortium. We have also partnered with area educational institutions and businesses for our events and festivals, such as: Arizona State University, Mesa Community College, the Arizona Historical Society Museum at Papago Park, Artisan Markets, Dog-Eared Pages Books, Desert Ridge Marketplace and many others. Our capstone achievement came when we were recognized and received a grant from the Arizona Commission on the Arts and when Rebecca Dyer was nominated for the Governor's Arts Award in 2012.

Our No. 1 priority is always to support and give voices and visibility to Arizona artists in all disciplines and genres, organizations and audiences, through continuous events and festivals free to our community, while utilizing our magazines, websites, newsletters and social media sites.

And now onward. We estimate that soon we will have space to utilize through a collaboration with a local entity. We are making the significant commitment to accomplish this goal for several reasons. The most important one is that you — our members and supporters — want the space, a multicultural arts center, to happen. The bottom line is that we cannot do this without your help. And so we invite you to please consider giving an anniversary gift today! Many thanks in advance for your collaboration and investment in our efforts!

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## **HELP KEEP OUR 5 YEARS OF ACTIVITIES GOING!**

Have you attended our monthly open mic arts and cultural events or the Annual Fall Festival of the Arts or the Annual Spring Blue Guitar Festival of the Arts for the past 5 years? Have you read/contributed to our Blue Guitar Magazine, the Blue Guitar Jr. or the Unstrung Poetry Magazine? Did you know that it is free to join us, all of our events are free to the community and it is also free to submit to our magazines and to download and read them from online. Do you enjoy our events, monthly newsletters, websites, videos, "A new beginning" Blog, or "Ask CJ" Blog?

If your answer to any of these questions is yes, then you know and appreciate the good work of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts. The grants defray only a fraction of expenses. To make up the balance, we depend on friends like you. You can help us continue to make our programs available. Please give generously! Just go to <http://www.artizona.org/donate.html> to make a gift today! You can make your contribution today, fast, easy and securely via PayPal. You DO NOT have to have a PayPal account in order to use the PayPal credit card system. Your contributions are tax-deductible. For other options to donate, please e-mail your questions and comments to [info@artizona.org](mailto:info@artizona.org) or call 602-263-5373.

Help us leave a legacy!

Thank you very much for your support of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts for the past 5 years!

We would also like to give a huge thank-you to the Consortium's Board of Directors, our supporters and all of our volunteers!

# **Coming April 14, 2013!**

**The 5th Annual**  
**Blue Guitar**  
**Spring Festival**  
**of the Arts!**

**The 5th Annual Blue Guitar Spring Festival of the Arts will be noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, April 14, at Desert Ridge Marketplace, Loop 101 and Tatum Boulevard, Phoenix.**

## **Free admission!**

**Join us for an amazing free showcase of the arts, with music, dance, cultural presentations, art activities for children and literary readings!**

**For more details, go to The Arizona Consortium for the Arts website, [www.artizona.org](http://www.artizona.org)**

# Meet the staff of The Blue Guitar magazine



**Elena Thornton, publisher:** Founder and president of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, Elena is an educator, artist and poet and lives in Phoenix. Reach her at [info@artizona.org](mailto:info@artizona.org).

**Rebecca Dyer, editor:** A Tucson native, Rebecca is a poet, journalist and teacher now residing in Mesa with her husband, Rick, The Blue Guitar production editor. Reach her at [rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org).

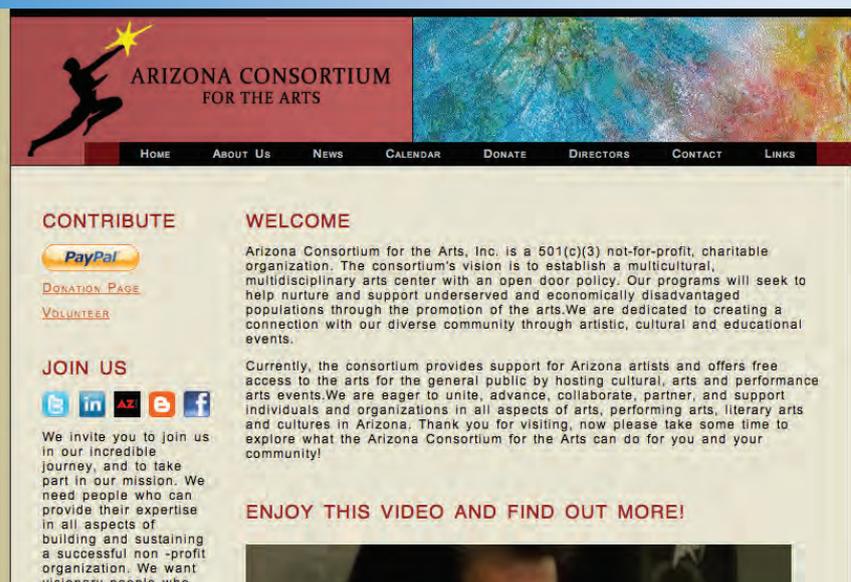


**Richard H. Dyer Jr., production editor:** Richard (married to Rebecca, above) is the managing editor for a monthly and three weekly newspapers in the East Valley, a photographer and a welded-steel sculptor.

**Marjory Boyer, cover design artist for The Blue Guitar:** Marjory, of Scottsdale, is an award-winning artist, muralist and an acrylic painting instructor. Her biography and contact information are available at [mboyerart.com](http://mboyerart.com).



## Check our websites for news on the arts



The Blue Guitar Magazine's website is [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org).

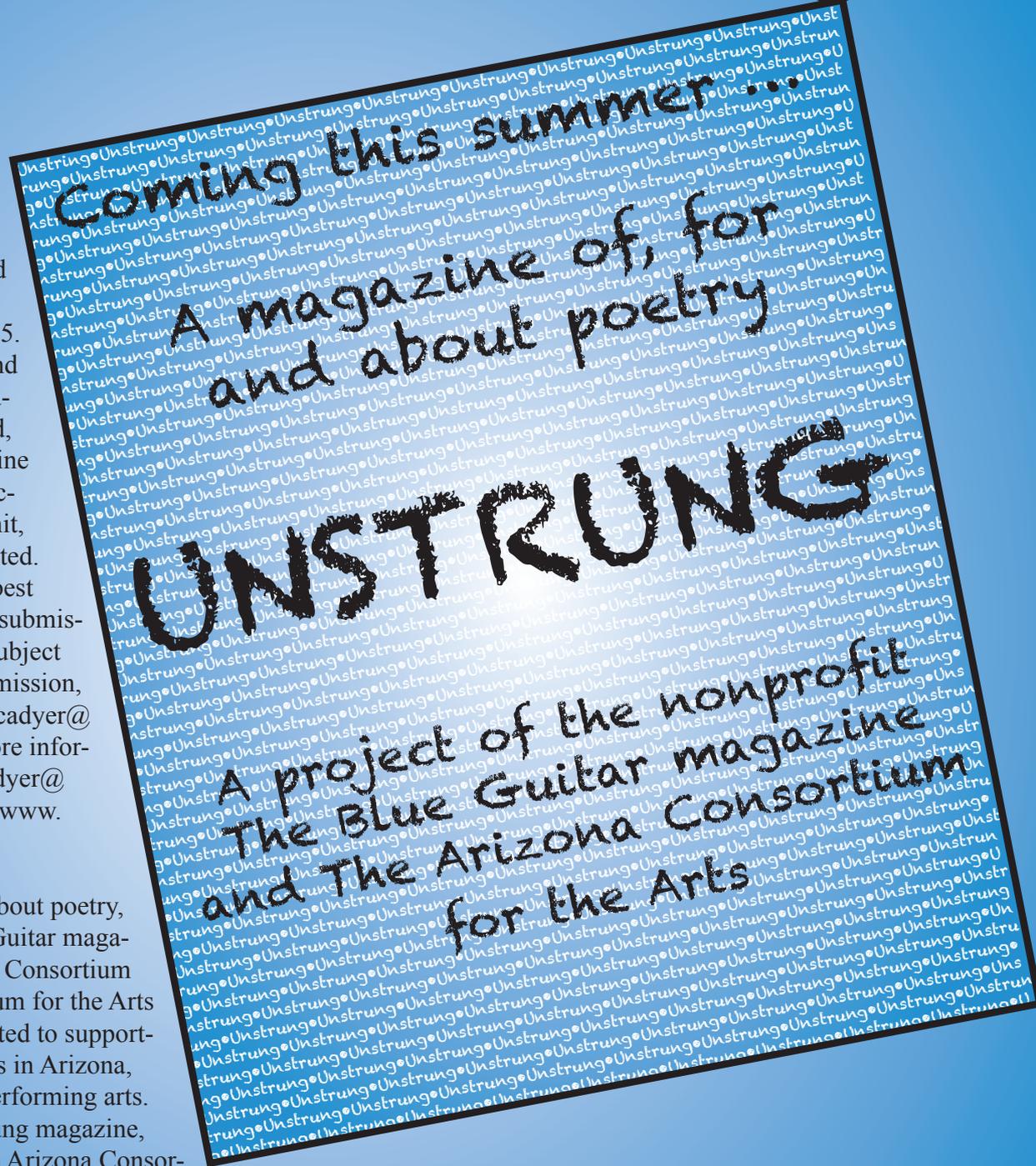
Check out The Arizona Consortium for the Arts website, [www.artizona.org](http://www.artizona.org). There, you can sign up for an e-mailed newsletter.

[www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org](http://www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org)

# A Call to Poets for the 2013 Issue of Unstrung

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks poetry submissions for the Summer 2013 Issue of Unstrung, a magazine of, for and about poetry. Submissions will be accepted from June 1 through July 5. Poets must submit original work and must have a tie to Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the poet must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and multiple poems may be submitted. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your e-mail submission. Please include in the e-mail subject line: Attn. Unstrung — Poetry submission, and send to Rebecca Dyer at [rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org). For more information, e-mail Rebecca at [rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org) or visit [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org).

Unstrung, a magazine of, for and about poetry, is a nonprofit project of The Blue Guitar magazine and the nonprofit The Arizona Consortium for the Arts. The Arizona Consortium for the Arts is a startup, nonprofit group dedicated to supporting and fostering artists and the arts in Arizona, including the literary, visual and performing arts. For more information about Unstrung magazine, The Blue Guitar magazine and The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, visit our websites: [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org) and [www.artizona.org](http://www.artizona.org).



# Open Mic: A celebration of the arts

Join us at our Monthly Open Mic Arts, Letters and Culture Events! This is a great chance for artists, writers and performers in all genres, spanning all disciplines and cultural representations, to get together, read, present, share, learn and enjoy. A featured artist is showcased for the entire month!

**WHERE:** Dog-Eared Pages Books, 16428 N. 32nd St., Suite 111 (just south of Bell Road), Phoenix, AZ 85032; (602) 283-5423.

**WHEN:** Every last Sunday of each month, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

We also address key issues in contemporary art and culture, exchange ideas, learn new things through rigorous talks, conversations, debates and readings in an informal setting. Join us! Everyone is invited to bring a friend(s) and enjoy exciting conversations in the beautiful surroundings of the neighborhood bookstore. Meet new and old friends and enjoy! All programs are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Elena Thornton — (602) 263-5373 or [info@artizona.org](mailto:info@artizona.org).

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## About The Arizona Consortium for the Arts

The Arizona Consortium for the Arts is a Non-Profit Organization approved by the Arizona Corporation Commission in February 2008. We hold a 501c3 tax-exempt status.

We are all-volunteer. We are educators, artists, performers, writers and supporters of all artistic endeavors, and are proponents and supporters of the rich, vibrant and diverse community of the Greater Phoenix area as well as the entire state.

The Arizona Consortium seeks to create a multicultural, multi-disciplinary arts center that will provide a home for our activities and foster artistic growth for people of all ages in conjunction with exhibiting artists, writers, actors, dancers and musicians who will share their expertise in



a gallery, theater setting.

Please visit [www.artizona.org](http://www.artizona.org) or [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org) for more information about becoming a member, networking, donating, advertising, volunteering or submitting work to The Blue Guitar arts and literary magazine, Unstrung poetry magazine and The Blue Guitar

Jr. literary and arts magazine for youth.

You can become a part of the Arizona Consortium and make a difference.

There are countless ways to contribute, and the consortium is grateful for any donation in any form.

For us to grow as an organization, provide various services to artists, and support inspiring projects, your financial support is needed.

Every dollar received will support our website, the publication of our magazines, and the establishment of our future center.

Please visit our donations page, <http://www.artizona.org/donate.html>, and donate today!

Thank you for your continued support!



A rendering of the consortium's dream multicultural arts center by Effie Bouras, building designer, Mechanik Design Office, LLC.

# The consortium's vision for a multicultural arts center

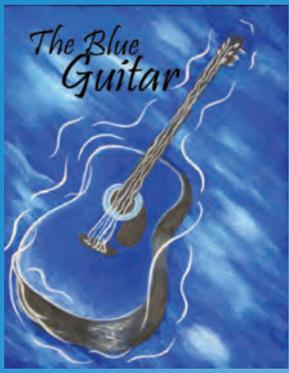
The rendering of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts' dream multicultural arts center by Effie Bouras, Building Designer, Mechanik Design Office, LLC.

The Center will be a source and a destination for creativity and inspiration. It will be a home for many wonderful community organizations, creative and innovative multicultural and multidisciplinary activities, classes and projects representing and celebrating our diverse community.

The Center will be a cultural icon in the Phoenix area. The

Center will be an inimitable foundation for a unique experience, one that you'll want to share with family, friends and community.

Designed by Effie Bouras, the Center will feature numerous spaces for the arts in all genres, performances and presentations. A flexible and variable seating performance theater for rehearsals, concerts, theatrical presentations, video art and films, lectures, meetings and recordings will be available free-of-charge or at a minimum cost.



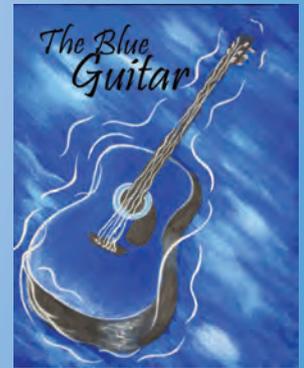
## A Call to Writers for Fall

**T**he Blue Guitar magazine seeks literary submissions for the Fall 2013 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 4. Submissions are sought in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction. 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 Rebecca Dyer at [rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org). For more information, visit [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org).

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## A Call to Artists for Fall

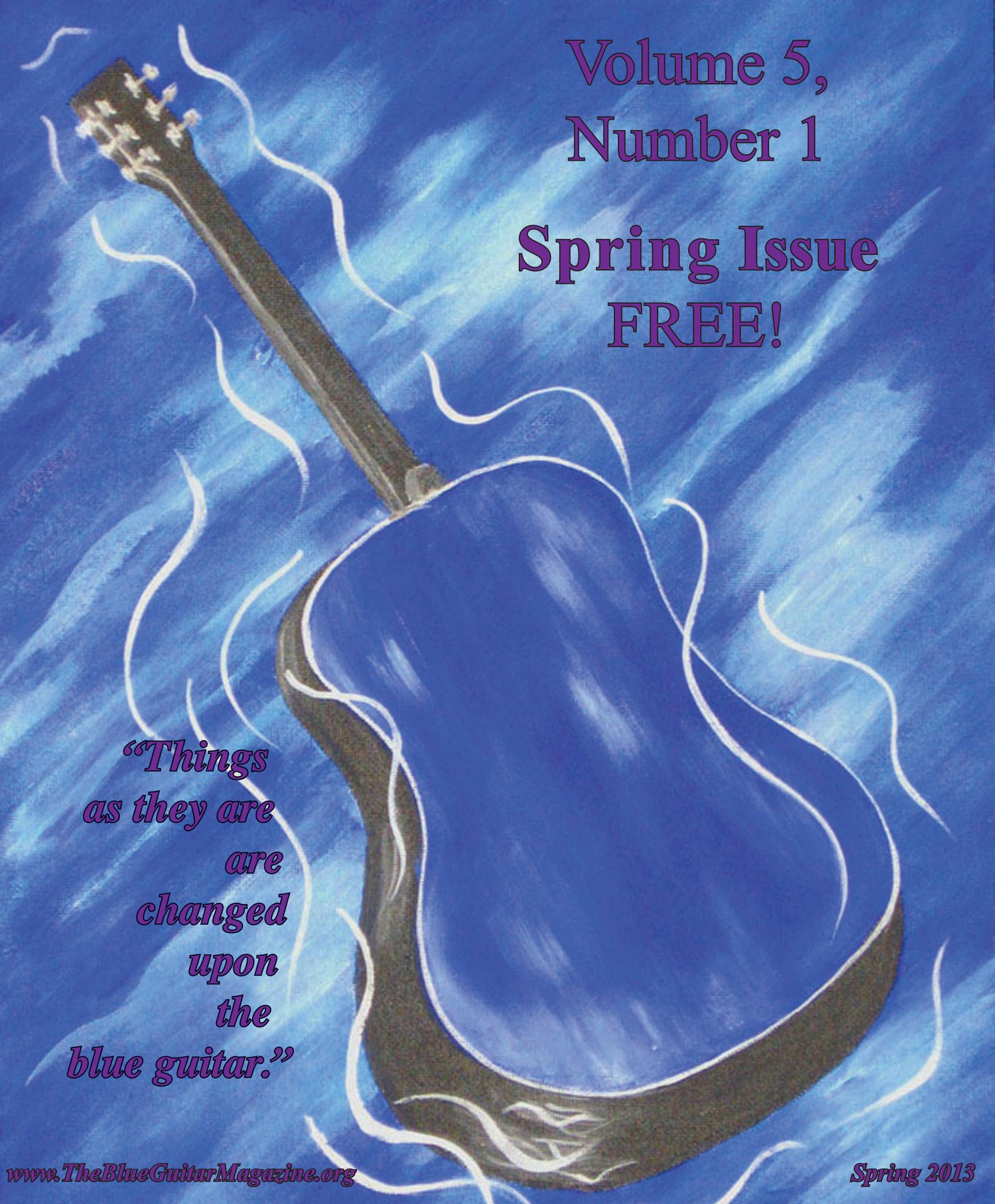
**T**he Blue Guitar magazine seeks art submissions in all mediums for the Fall 2013 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 4. The art entries are juried for inclusion. Any artists who work in any visual art media and are 18 years or older and are Arizona residents can submit. It is free to submit and up to 5 images can be submitted. Artists are encouraged to submit images of work by e-mail; please provide high-resolution JPEGs of 300 dpi. Images must be identified in the e-mail with the artist's name and contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. To submit or for further information, e-mail Rebecca Dyer at [rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org](mailto:rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org). For more information, visit [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org).



The Blue Guitar magazine is a nonprofit project of the nonprofit The Arizona Consortium for the Arts. The Arizona Consortium for the Arts is a startup, nonprofit group dedicated to supporting and fostering artists and the arts in Arizona, including the literary, visual and performing arts. For more information about The Blue Guitar magazine and The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, visit our websites: [www.theblueguitarmagazine.org](http://www.theblueguitarmagazine.org) and [www.artizona.org](http://www.artizona.org).

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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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Spring Issue  
FREE!

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