

The Blue Guitar



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Editors’ Note

The arts bring people together — and bring out their best. Nowhere is this more evident than at the lively spring arts festivals that grace Arizona, including the Tempe Festival of the Arts, where our parent organization, the Arizona Consortium for the Arts, sponsored a stage and several acts; Tucson’s Fourth Avenue Street Fair, where my co-editor had his sculptures juried in; and our own (can you believe it’s the seventh year?!) Blue Guitar Festival of the Arts, organized annually by our consortium CEO Elena Thornton. Where else in the world do you see diverse crowds contentedly enjoying art — and each other: strolling hand-in-hand, laughing and relaxing. The world would have far less strife if every day were an arts festival. Speaking of art and diversity: This Blue Guitar issue is chock-full, running the gamut of styles, genres and life experiences! Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all of our wonderful artists, poets and writers! Keep up the great work, Arizona, and keep on submitting!



Co-Editor
 Rebecca
 “Becca” Dyer

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www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org

Spring 2015

3 poems by Jeanette Nicholas

Museum Talk

© 2015

Looka there, Nellie. Them
a bunch of them Zulu people
from the jungle.

Oh look, Clara. They
always wear strange clothes.

Lookie, Julie. They
got on some wild hairdos.

Lookit, Sarah. Their
skin is so dark.

Look, Theresa. Their
lips are so large.

Look, Caroline. Their
eyes are so big.

Look, Andrew. They
know how to cry, too.



Jeanette Swain Nicholas grew up in San Antonio, Texas, Canada, and Detroit, Michigan. She is an award-winning playwright, a retired social worker and educator. Jeanette became a poet at the age of 60, became published after age 70, and will present a book of poetry in 2016. Jeanette's poetry embraces the minority experience, the aging experience, and universal communication. She lives in Tempe, Arizona, and participates with the Granite Reef Poets of Scottsdale, Arizona.

Boys Will Be Boys

© 2015

The little blond boys, growing up,
play outside talking
loudly of some cats and dogs
and quarters and bikes, maybe
of girls, often about the new black kid.

The teen blond boys, growing up,
play outside, talking
loudly of some cats and dogs
and dollars and cars, often
of girls, maybe about the new black kid.

The west side blond men, all grown up,
play inside, talking
loudly of some cats and dogs
and dollars and trucks, often
of girls, often about the new black boy.

The east side men, all grown up,
play outside, talking
softly of some cats and dogs
and dollars and cars, often
of girls, often about the new black man.

The old blond men, growing little,
play inside, talking
softly of some cats and dogs
and dollars and chairs, maybe
of girls, often about the new black boy.

Basic Black

© 2015

She was born with the black face she
wears every place she goes/she
goes well dressed, mask washed and pressed.
No man-made polyester. No disgrace.
Why coordinate? All eyes are on her face.

She is overdressed.

Basic black smile is always in style,
but it fades. It stands out, when she
roams about/where she has not been,
but discussed within a den
of all-white women and men.

She is underdressed.

*Yes, I care about people on the street, and
yes, I like my sock drawer nice and neat, and
yes, I'm evil when I've nothing to eat, and
yes, Godfather of Soul has a beat, and
yes, I rather resent the Elite, and
yes, I've visited Bourbon Street, and
no, I don't know Stevie Wonder.*

*Yes, I can sing.
Yes, my bread is whole wheat.
Yes, I prefer loose shoes on my dancing feet.
Yes, I love a warm toilet seat.
Yes, we can talk as soon as we meet and
chat about kings and roaches and things.*

She is black, not colored, and so she can go
and blend into night, as well she might.
Her Costume hides ravel/tears, she knows,
and it won't show dirt the shovels will throw,
and

1 poem by David Chorlton

Etudes on the Road

© 2015

I Hope

The sky is wide and blue today;
it curves
all the way around the world
to where it lost its grip
on another plane that slipped
into the sea.

In the desert
some yellow wildflowers survive
along the freeway edge
with the year drawing to a close
and the radio never tires
of bad news.

But there's hope,
always hope, tagging along
in every journey; a little dog
trying hard to keep up, tail wagging
to show how much
it loves to run.



Author and artist David Chorlton writes of visits to the Chiricahuas: "I keep painting Silver Peak (above), but some of our photographs fit the poem better as it begins in the Interstate and ends on the road shown in the photographs. We love that stretch for its unusual shapes and off-kilter kind of Western beauty! And Paradise is the place where we stay."

Continued on page 7



David Chorlton was born in Austria, grew up in Manchester, England, and lived for several years in Vienna before moving to Phoenix in 1978. Arizona's landscapes and wildlife have become increasingly important to him and a significant part of his poetry. In September 2015, he will participate as a poet in the "Fires of Change" exhibition at the Coconino Center for the Arts in Flagstaff (sponsored by the Southwest Fire Science Consortium, the Landscape Conservation Initiative, and the National Endowment for the Arts).

Continued from page 6

II News

An empty shopping outlet settles
deeper into its foundations.
The broadcast shifts to freedom
in the press. It's all about what we do
or do not hear about Azerbaijan, Turkey,
Iran, while billboards
point the way
to the Adult Boutique and Old Tucson.
Facts are few and opinions
drown them out. The world
is all smoke and no mirrors, with forecasts,
analyses, and doubt
in all directions except where ravens
come down from the sun, black
but shining
bright as truth.

III Truck Stop

The Scenic Route begins at Exit 281
where ocotillo reach for a hold in the air,
dry winter earth glows in the afternoon,
barrel cactus lean toward the light
and wrinkled mountains rest against a straight horizon.
The clouds in Cochise County
rest gently overhead. There are drivers here
whose lives are spent on automatic steering,
who stop only to sleep and to watch
a movie chosen from the rack in the store
where they stop to shower the miles away
before settling down for two hours
of violence to interrupt the peace of the road
at a bargain price of three for ten bucks.

IV Road

Half a moon
above the snow caught high
on peaks to the south –
rock warmth to the north
from the distant
Galiuros –
a broken white line
running seventy miles east
to Lordsburg –
railroad tracks shine
westward until
they pinch together –
no wind today, just
easy distances between
here and there –

V Turnoff

The winter road runs straight
toward mountains lying gray in the clear hour
before dusk
when shrikes fly from fenceposts
to mesquite and back. Then the surface
becomes unimproved, and blue shadows
deepen in rough rock formations
with a few
slow miles of ridge light still to go.

The Contra Dance

By Paula Ashley

© 2015

One glazed eye opens slightly and my cat stares past me. I wonder if she can still see. It is Monday morning. She has not eaten for five days. I find her carrier. She uses her last bit of strength to kick me with her hind leg and tries not to be put inside. I latch the gate. She hates her carrier. She hates the ride in the car. She hates the vet.

The next morning I wake up inside a large antebellum house with a covered porch surrounding the outside. The back of the house looks over a green lawn that sweeps down to a river. I go out the French doors onto the porch to meet my sweetheart, the one I love as my cat loved me. We walk slowly around the house on the covered porch. When we get back to where we started he tells me to go inside and wait for the Princess of Light.

I slip in through the partially opened French doors and find a chair to watch the gala. A fiddler occupies the far end of the ballroom where the contra dancers, stepping through their

paces, sweep up and down. The gentlemen bow. The ladies curtsy. Wine flows from bottles. Beer pours from jugs. Red and green sugar crystals glitter on the white linen tablecloths. I feel the gray of my roots chalk the length of my hair, the color leave my face sliding down my body under my clothes onto the floor. My nails turn blue.

Finally, the Princess bounces in, a young girl on the arm of her sweetheart. "Oh, he has abandoned you," she says to me while smiling brightly. Her hair is blonde and curly. Her teeth sparkle. Her waist is cinched. I had a waist like that once when I was young. "Well, come! We will go out into the sunshine."

Outside I see gossamer butterflies flitting every so lightly over the grounds. I find that my son, gone these many years, has been reborn. My parents are there too and exclaim, "What took you so long? We have been waiting for you." And lying on the starry hearth, my black and white, long-haired cat opens wide her fire-lit eyes.

Self-Storage

By Paula Ashley

© 2015

Number 18. Here's your key. Wanda takes it from the man at the office, drags her walker back to her car, gets in.

At Number 18, she gets out and unlocks the door. She cannot lift the heavy metal rolling door. Thinking about what to do for a minute, Wanda pushes her walker back to the office. Okay, want a lift? the man asks as he gets in his golf-cart. Sighing her regret, Wanda pushes her walker back to Number 18.

The man opens the door and shows her how to push the button

when she wants to close it, then rides back to his office. Mustering her strength, Wanda pulls a tray-table from behind the front seat, then a small folding chair. She takes out two pillows and a blanket. Then she leans out of the locker, pushes the button, and whisks back inside before the door comes down. The door closes slowly giving Wanda lots of time to get back to her chair before it is dark inside. There, she says, they can't put me in the nursing home now.

Paula Ashley is a retired software engineer who earned her MFA from Queens University of Charlotte. She lives in Glendale, Arizona with her husband and an abundance of birds that hang out on the solar fountains in their backyard. Paula has had poems published in numerous journals including: Four Chambers; New Fraktur Arts Journal; OASIS Journal; Sandcutters; The Blue Guitar; The Examined Life; and Unstrung. She also has poems in "Poetry and Prose for the Phoenix Art Museum" by Four Chambers Press and forthcoming in the Good Works anthology "Our Place: Writings About the Earth" by Future Cycle Press.



Hooked on Science

By Valerie Rountree

© 2015

“I hate science, and I’m never going to be a scientist, so why should I do my homework?” As an eighth-grader failing science class, I didn’t know what *science* was and, therefore, to my parents’ dismay, I dismissed it as irrelevant.

The pivotal moment that gave me a new perspective occurred the summer after eighth grade, when I spent two weeks in Belize studying tropical rainforest and marine ecosystems with a group of classmates and my science teacher.

The biodiversity of Belize’s rainforest was unlike anything I had ever seen—from the forest floor, matted with decaying leaves and teeming with army ants, to the understory, singing with red-eyed tree frogs among broad-leaved palms and banana trees, to the towering canopy, where a thick maze of foliage allowed little light to filter down to the layers below.

Reluctantly at first, we followed our local field instructors on nature walks where we saw how evolutionary pressures created extraordinary diversity. The emerald toucans were adapted to fly invisibly through the upper canopy of the rainforest, where the brilliant green, blue and yellow hues of their bodies blended perfectly with the patchwork dome of vegetation. The mottled browns of the nocturnal nighthawks made them indistinguishable from the carpet of debris on the forest floor where they nested during the day.

Our initial reluctance was quickly replaced with unabated excitement.

One minute, we were picking our way through the chigger-

infested grasses in search of red rump tarantulas, whose tiny hairs pose a greater threat than their bite. The next moment, we were crawling through pillowy mounds of leaf skeletons, ignoring the daily storms that left us drenched and caked from head to toe in mud. We could not be distracted from watching the mesmerizing trail of army ants forage for dead insects along their never-ending march.

We were immersed. We were inexhaustible. We were hooked.

My experience in Belize opened my eyes to the true meaning and purpose of *science*. I began to see that “science” isn’t memorized facts. It’s not a classroom lecture, and it’s not a label restricted to biology, chemistry and physics. “Science” is the *application* of a body of facts and the integration of prior knowledge with new understanding.

Most important, science is a way of thinking and a method of problem solving that starts with making observations and asking questions.

My eighth-grade science teacher and field instructors in Belize showed me that teaching is most engaging when it is hands on, exploratory and exciting. I adopted this philosophy when I became a science educator, first in outdoor settings and later in classrooms.

I didn’t need to go all the way to Belize to find this new perspective. I just needed to experience it. I needed someone to frame science in a way that was interesting and understandable. But mostly, I needed to get my hands dirty.



Valerie writes: “After graduating college with a Bachelor’s of Science in Biology and minors in environmental studies and chemistry, I spent several years teaching environmental science, ecology, evolutionary biology and molecular biology both in and outside of classrooms. Reflecting on my process of developing science appreciation has allowed me to both relate to students’ disinterest in ‘science’ and to engage them in new and exciting ways. I am currently a PhD student in the School of Natural Resources and the Environment at the University of Arizona studying climate change mitigation and adaptation. I am also working on a certificate in Connecting Environmental Science and Decision Making, through which I hope to improve my skills as a science communicator.” Contact the writer at vroutree@email.arizona.edu.

Nathan “Capso” Boyce II

Peoria Artist



“In Memoriam”
Acrylic on canvas
14” x 11”
July 2013

Nathan “Capso” Boyce II has always found music, “people-watching,” reading and creating images tethered to his mind’s chaos and curiosity more nourishing than the pastimes others found solace and pleasure in. In his younger years, he looked for escapes from the oftentimes toxic home environment and found nature a worthy place to let his mind free. He gravitated to the wild areas he could access, finding himself intrigued, inspired and deeply connected to the natural scene in a way his peers were not. He was ever watching society from a slightly distanced viewpoint and nature under a microscope. Through a life lightly salted with distorted normality and steeped in chaos, he has found his philosopher’s stone. He transmutes these experiences into inspired creations of both light and dark. The line between the two migrates, bends, crosses and sometimes disappears. Watching his creations inspire, disturb and emotionally move others has helped him realize his destination only before seen as a dream. Art has become his purpose. He resides in the greater Phoenix valley, doing most work out of his home studio located in Peoria. The artist can be reached at BluEvolutions@gmail.com or 602-456-2555. His website is www.BluEvolutions.com.



Nathan “Capso” Boyce II

Peoria Artist



“As the sun kissed the sky”

Acrylic on canvas

11” x 14”

January 2014

I’ve gained a unique artistic voice through the phases and evolutionary changes of life. They have influenced the imagery my mind connects to and pulls from the dimensions that lay beyond. This constant mutation of self is reflected throughout my work, as I attempt to convey the chaos and serenity fighting for dominance within me. Time becomes nonexistent when I create and I feel at peace within the struggle. As if light from multiple dimensions surrounds, then flows through me. Shone through the unique prism of my life experiences. I attempt to transmute and bring it to the place where the radiance and shadows of my soul can be broken down and reconstituted into a new form. Glimmering darkness and luminescence, a soul’s reflection upon the walls of vision, asking to be taken as visual sacrament. Something that can be absorbed, digested by many.

- Nathan “Capso” Boyce II

Nathan “Capso” Boyce II

Peoria Artist



“Nagual Ocelot!”
Acrylic on canvas
18” x 24”
November 2014

Nathan “Capso” Boyce II

Peoria Artist



“Leeya’s Panda”
Watercolor on watercolor paper
12” x 18”
October 2013

Nathan “Capso” Boyce II

Peoria Artist



“Insomnia”
Acrylic on canvas
18” x 24”
March 2014

4 poems by Gari Crowley

The Boss Dog

© 2015

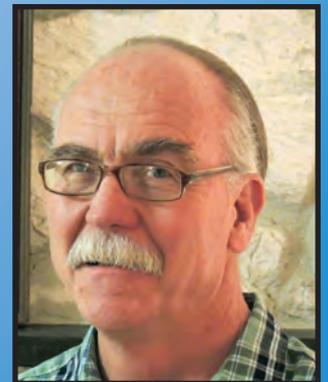
He is old and dying, hanging on in a loathsome frame.

A jowly face full of cigar and sneers is unashamed
of his sinister grin, his teeth stained with coal oil and fire.

He speaks his history mocking the sensibilities of reason with malignity
and invective, vomiting superiority from the evil artifice of his sclerotic heart.

A consecrator of the days when he was zealous for virtue
he has kept the relics and keepsakes of blood and salvation
as buried bones. He is still praising his absolution
from his wheelchair, his eyes still as determined as a pit dog—
still vile, still dying and still eating his own vomit.

Gari is an Arizona native and has lived here his entire life. He is a lover and respecter of the desert. He lives in Sierra Vista with his wife, Linda, and their cat, Sam. He has been employed in the property management/development field as a landscaper and groundskeeper. He is now retired. Reach the poet at arroyo_verde@yahoo.com.



Morton's Fork

© 2015

From dawn to evening she gins up
determination for the rigors of the organism.
She is a combine of moving parts,
a finger stripper and picker
with blood stains on the fabric of her hands.

Working the field, the bolls,
she bends her back like a
jack pump rigged for white gold.
She pushes the limits
of her flesh and consciousness.

Etta Mae has had time to think about
her desire to leave the fields
and the small framed house,
the birth place of her disadvantage.
Maybe she will move to the city, or maybe not.

The sun is on the eastern horizon
venting an effluence of heat from above
the line of sight. Wiping her brow, and considering
her modicum of means, she still hopes that something
will keep her home: maybe her roots and maybe not.

Borderland 1830-1890

© 2015

The sagebrush, mescal, mesquite,
yucca, marshy places,
sacaton grass and black gramma
was the verdant side of turbulence.
There was Tucson to Tubac to Tumacocori to hell
and Camp Grant.

Protrero to Magdalena
was a darker and bloodier ground.
From the Gila River to Fronteras to Bacoachi,
and Janos to Pinos Altos,
there was an equal contest of time and
casualty and trepidation.

We walk where others walked.
We walk upon the names of the
truncated and dispossessed,
the tangible having been leached into insignificance,
buried in caliche and desiccating time.

The inaudible histories of the earthbound
are of quiet unimportance—
unnoted sharers of historical forces
the names of whom were never marked.
It was a beautiful country, a perfect storm.

An Evening Adrift

© 2015

Rush hour,
a drizzle hardly audible
with a scent of panacea.
The sun lists
to the west and mists
hues of rosy orange
light into an evening tryst
as the dusk achromatizes
into darkness, then
lies itself down nocturnal.
From the grand parenthetical
starlight is sifting
through heaven's
sieve while night air
is gravitating as silk
upon his flesh.
In the coolness of the patio,
a microcosm is suspended
upon a chaise
is in an easily disturbed sleep.
A moonlight patina is
glinting the crown of
his alopecic head;
rummaging through a casino
of passe' dreams, ashes of the
mundane, the status quo,
and the game.

Sleeping in the softness
of celestial lights,
a small speck is out of gravity—
gravitas non grata—
adrift from the terrestrial
having gravitated from
the weariness of it all into
a paradoxical sleep.
Those tired voices and the
muttering muffled phonemics
have all rolled over and shut their eyes.

5 Poems by Christa Lubatkin

A long road

© 2015

with a nod to Mary Pipher's "Writing to Change the World"

I am from hunger, ruins, cold and loneliness; I am from mother no father, from sisters gone too soon; I am from bombs, bomb shelters, from dust and rubble; I am from doors shut or blown off, charred walls, no fire in the stove; I am from day dreaming, from night reading under covers; I am from quiet rooms, from meals just for two; I am from dancing, from ballet shoes, from bleeding toes, from tired muscles, from joy; I am from moving to America, from big cars in noisy streets, from too much to eat, from everything tasting good; I am from a marriage that felt good and bad, from children born and raised, from a man that has loved me from forever; I am from mountain trails, from peaks, from struggle, from laughter; I am from lapping seas, from meadows, dusty desert trails, from feeling at home everywhere – even here.



Christa Lubatkin was born in a bomb shelter (her claim to fame perhaps?) and at age 15 immigrated to the U.S. Throughout her life, writing has held her in good stead and writing poetry in particular. She is an enthusiastic hiker and loves the mountains from Tucson to the Alps. Vistas and surprises. Her poetry has appeared in the Paterson Literary Review, Soul-lit and Unstrung.

Berlin

© 2015

Brother is ripped
from brother
sons betray
mothers
Stasi lists
keep score
hundreds die
shot in the river
shot out of the air
shot scaling
the wall.

In the West
ruins
bulldozed
grass grows
re-awakened laughter
arm in arm
in fur coats they stroll –
children demand
a reckoning
from parents
bent on forgetting.

The wall crushed to dust
we are strangers.

Irmgard, my sister

© 2015

Der Rosenkavalier

fills the room. We play
gin rummy in your small parlor
in the nursing home,
take rides
through the *Schwäbisch* landscape.
I wash your hair as sisters do.
Talking of mother is taboo.

We never shared a Christmas.
When war retreated
from German doors
we were not together
for walks along the riverbank.
I found you
in the ebb of your life.
There was no picture of you
under the bed
in the box of black and whites.

What drove our mother to name you
then give you away?
How did she decide
which daughter to surrender?
Did nuns insist
an orphanage is better
than a mother?
What locks did she install
to keep you out.

Spring Time 1948

© 2015

A haze of smoke hovers heavy over the raucous room. Laughter bounces from young men's mouths to rafters. Painted girls flutter like moths wishing to be turned into butterflies; they flash smiles at soldiers in Sunday uniforms. The tang of hops, yeast and desire swirl among the gathered – children really, American boys more than 3000 miles from home and German girls out after curfew bartering charms for cigarettes. Mothers sigh, listening under covers for daughters to slide their keys into locks and creak up the stairs. Sisters wait for stories in the dark, focused on every whisky-soaked word. Butter appears on tables along with visits from fresh-faced soldiers in high-shine shoes; damp hands fidgeting garrison caps. Moths to flames, rivers to oceans, a wide-eyed jump into oblivion.

The Legacy

© 2015

My fathers
marched
in mean-street boots
smashed windows
tore infants
from arms
ripped whips
across backs
saw scum
not human faces

Your fathers
collapsed
to their knees
– revolvers
pressed to temples –
stripped
of all but the fear
of dogs
and men

offspring
of killers
and survivors
our lives entangled
we cannot hope
for a better past

4 Poems by Esther Schnur-Berlot

The Catchall Drawer

© 2015

My tell-tale past is spilling over. A black pearl earring waits for its mate to return. An amber barrette, bobby pins, large hair rollers that kept me from sleep and a small can of hair spray used for yesterday's teased hair, I promise me, to toss them tomorrow. My long hair is long gone along with henna red hair. I've gone wash and wear. Assorted lipstick shades that no longer touch my lips, wait to be culled and sorted. I kept forgetting to dab expensive Paris perfumes saved and saved for special occasions that no longer seem important. Along with memory, the fragrances have faded. A compact given to me on my 21st birthday, once fashionable is now passé but a collectable to keep. No more disguises; massacred false eye lashes, no more pinching eyelash curler, no more mauve eye shadow or thick black eye liner. I can see my mess more clearly today. Tortoise shell frames now frame my eyes. Small perfume bottles rattle around with; nickels, dimes, cinqueto coins, assorted buttons and the tweezers I lost now found. Jars of old dream creams I foolishly believed would keep me wrinkle free and young forever have gone dry. Why can't I resist those free shampoo samples, I haul away from Motel 6 and never use. A few tired tooth brushes lie about, with my other mistakes, the one too long to fit into a traveling kit. Must-keeps are kept close at hand; sun block, lip liners, lip gloss, blush, hair mousse, and a lavender hair pick to pick at new salt and pepper curls. I'm pissed. What's my husband's shaving cream doing in my drawer?



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." Esther also appears in "Desert Voices," 2nd anthology, just published by the Poetry Corner in Sun City. E-mail her at iberlot@q.com.

Moving On

(This was written for a photograph of a tough-looking woman)

© 2015

Trying to shift gears
from yesterday's bad choices
of dropping out
gulping down
uppers, downers
boozing nights
with uncaring men.

I cannot rewrite
the pain
of hardened lines
sinking deep
into my jaw
touching a raw nerve.

Bad habits
streaked with mud
keeps me struggling
to scrub off the past.
Refusing to scream
at your castigating glances

I'm catching the next bus out
I'm moving on.

Priceless Value

© 2015

Truth or Dare. I dare go with truth.

It was 1970. Street smarts and smart dressing gave me entre into the fashionable world of television commercials. I was living the rags to riches story; in my walkup, rent controlled, Park Avenue, brownstone apartment. The jazzy version of “Is That All There Is” kept lingering on. My symptom, the problem without a name, came out in print. Betty Freidan’s book, *The Feminist Mystique* unearthed the earth. Throwing my bra to the wind, I joined hands with women of all ages, many colors, and varied shapes. For that one day, we marched down Fifth Avenue demanding equal gender equality. No more faking it in the bedroom, no more faking, he was smarter than me.

Wanting to strengthen my language muscle, I enrolled in NYU’s college prep. The golden door of second chances opened. Walking out on a meeting, I hear “Where’s she going”? Someone spouts. “Oh – she’s taking classes for her masters.” Never correcting that false statement, I head out in a new direction. Was it to validate intelligence or change careers? Were those long sleepless nights, staying up, whitening out, cutting up and moving sentences about with scissors and Elmer’s glue worth it?

My past serendipitous reading was not inspiring. Opening Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* awakened a sleepy psyche. That rascal, Raskolnikov believed superior beings have superior rights to steal and even murder, without consequences. Fact seems to still follow fiction. The powerful still flaunt their prerogatives over the many. I’m bowled over when I’m introduced to Gustav Flaubert. That man stole my romantic fantasies in writing *Madam Bovary*. I shout out, wake up Emma. Stop day dreaming or was that silent shout out, meant for me.

After many years of wooing a B.A. in Liberal Arts, I’ve slowly transformed without a Eureka moment though saddened that second chance doors are now slamming shut. Our poor huddled masses are still waiting for an opportunity to enter our so called classless society.

My Father's Daughter

© 2015

They were the lean years, my father lost his job, and he was designated caretaker, of his youngest daughter. A thrilled five years old would be getting all his attention. My mother was creative in supporting us, not always the legal way but her way. Born here, Pa didn't have an accent; he was the educated one, attending public school until the 8th grade. Pa treated me like a grownup. He'd look up from his New York Times, telling me about the war, over there.

Before saying prayers, I'd kiss my cat Yatey, who was a stand in for the dolls I never had. When Yatey peed, on my side of the bed shared with my sister, out went Yatey. I'd sit on the floor for weeks; kicking, screaming and crying. *I want Yatey, I want a crying Didey doll, Dotty has a Shirley Temple, and I want one too.* Ma considered crying for a crying doll, a narishkite. Also a waste of good money. Next week was Rosh Hashanah, a time of forgiveness. Ma overlooked my childish antics. I needed a holiday hat.

Even then I knew I'd be wearing the best hat on the block. Pa never looked for bargains. For my first bus trip uptown; tangled hair was combed, dirty scraped knees were washed, new knee socks that stayed up, not old socks that kept falling down, a clean blouse, a flowered dirndl skirt and I was off holding Pa's hand walking to the bus stop. We were on our way uptown to Ohrbach's, the big department store on Union Square.

Bright lights glowed on counters filled with gold, silver and rhinestones jewelry. All that glittered looked real. In the land of plenty; sweaters, slips and silk stockings overflowed on tables. Pa guided me towards steps that moved, directing me; *"step slowly, stand still, hold tight, until we reach the next floor."* My eyes devoured hats of many colors. Crowds of strangers surrounded us. Pa, sensed my fear of getting lost. *"I'll be right here, watching you."* Many hats were tried, until the perfect hat sat atop my head. The navy blue felt hat, with flowing grosgrain ribbon, matched the cape Mrs. Finkel from the 3rd floor had given my mother that her daughter, Etta outgrew. I had an uneasy feeling that the fancy store hat would cost lots of money and Ma would holler. Pa examined the quality. *"Are you sure this is the one you want?"* Nodding yes, we walked to the cash register.

The Days of Awe arrived. After morning synagogue service; family, friends and neighbors all dressed up, walked down to the East River, with pockets filled with bread crumbs. We emptied our pockets, throwing our sins in the tide. Unexpectedly a wind blew my happy hat off my head. I raced to catch it before it flew into the river to drown. Over the winter, the hat slept safely in a pillow case. It was saved from year to year, till it no longer fit my head.

The Missouri

By Melissa Mills

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The sun was setting as I sat on a wooden bench overlooking the Missouri River atop a hill on Olive Street in Leavenworth, Kansas. At the end of Olive Street, half a block from where I lived, a one-way street and grassy embankment pressed against the river. The Union Depot was constructed in Leavenworth. Trains constantly rumbled along tracks, heading west. Someone told me once that a tornado sounds like a train. The first time I saw a tornado was in Leavenworth. I did homework as my friend Dianne worked on her computer. We heard the sirens. By the time we made it to the basement, it was flooded with three feet of water. I climbed on the roof and watched as the tornado ripped across the nearby town of Tonganoxie. The sky was dark and I could only see the funnel beating up the town during flashes of lightning. Dianne told me to go back to the basement. Tonganoxie is a small town, but the tornado wiped it out. I still possess major interest in mesocyclones.

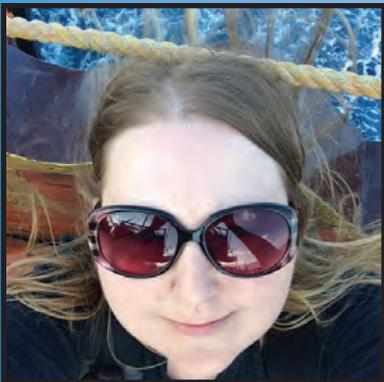
I was a teenage runaway. I imagined my family riding one of the barges down the river and seeing me sitting there, forcing me back to a life I hated. That never happened. They didn't care that I was gone, but this river with the namesake of the state in which I lived from the ages of five to sixteen, reminded me. So, I went there every day to look my demon in the eye. I was no longer afraid my insane family would come for me. I read. I studied. I wanted to graduate so I spent every afternoon on that bench reading. That fall, I was hired as a hostess at a brewery on Delaware Street. It was called "High Noon Saloon" and was located in downtown Leavenworth. I worked almost every night, after school, but I sat on the bench overlooking the river each evening at sunset. I watched the sun go down over Missouri. Maybe it calmed me. At work, military guys handed me cigarettes, still burning, telling me I should have placed

an ashtray at their table. I was only a kid. I didn't think about ashtrays or the military, for that matter. They were drunk. My boss told me not to allow them to treat me badly.

Large crimson barges sailed past, leaving only their blurred V-shaped waves, defining a transition through murky water in ripples that faded until they were swallowed by their own reflections. They were from Missouri. So was I. They announced it boldly with their horns, but I struggled to say it. When I cross the state border into Missouri, I always cringe. A federal prison is a few blocks to the northwest of where I sat. Truman Capote's Richard Hickock and Perry Smith were sent there after they murdered the Clutter family in western Kansas. The Civil War took place in those hills. At sixteen, I watched the full moon display itself over the Missouri as my friend's husband took pictures. I spent New Year's Eve celebrating with nuns across the street. They drank wine and sang "Auld Lang Syne." I'm not religious and never thought nuns wore regular clothes, but they do.

My first car was a 1971 Volkswagen Super Beetle, in baby blue, and I parked it on Olive Street for almost a year. The car didn't run very well. I had to push it and pop the clutch in order for it to start, so I mostly sat in it. Then, I got it running. I drove it to my sister's wedding in the Ozarks the following summer. As I cruised down the interstate, heading south, I tried to avoid being blown off the road by larger vehicles. I drove over night, after work, so it was eerily dark when a burning scent seeped into the car from the hole where the radio was missing. Veering to the shoulder, in the middle of nowhere, I lifted the trunk exposing the engine and saw flames flaring from an exhaust hose. I pulled it out, threw it on the ground and kept driving. Exhaust fumes entered the car so badly that

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Melissa Mills was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, where she lived until the age of five. From there, she grew up in the Ozarks, and moved to Leavenworth, Kansas, on her own to complete her final year of high school. After driving cross-country to explore a new life, she enrolled at the University of Arizona, where she is an undergraduate student. She majors in both English and Creative Writing. She is graduating in May of 2015. Nonfiction and environmental writing are her favorite genres. Contact the writer at melmills@email.arizona.edu.

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when I arrived at my mother's house in the morning, my face was numb.

Back in Missouri. My sister had a baby. My niece was almost one when I met her. I fell in love. My sister used my car as a marriage get-away car. I barely made it home. The car's floorboards had been rotted out completely since well before I purchased it. I lost a shoe on I-70 because I tend to drive barefoot and it bounced out of the car. After the trip, the car no longer started. I traded it for textbooks.

Last weekend, I visited the family I have. I'm not sure if they adopted me, or if I adopted them. After arriving in Kansas City from Tucson, I rented a car and drove 25 miles from Kansas City to Leavenworth. The bench I sat on to meditate as a teenager was still there. I found it aged and rotting due to weather. Sitting on the remaining splintered wooden planks, I watched the sun slide beneath the shadows of the trees. The trees lined a hill that reminded me of my grandparents' property in the Ozarks. I sat on their porch for hours as a child, imagining the Oaks extending their branches and reaching out with bright orange and red leaves to wave at me. Most people get cold when the fall wind blows. I never did. I knew when it blew the trees would gesticulate.

The shirts my senior class printed read, "Leavenworth, it's worth leaving." I found it ironic because I ran away to there. I wonder if my grandmother sits on her porch now. My grandfather is gone. He died six months ago. I was never able to say goodbye and there are no longer Oak trees. My grandparents had to sell them all when my grandmother was diagnosed with colon cancer several years ago. Missouri was worth leaving. Now I have saguaros that reach out in an embrace, but defend themselves with prickly spines. It is a perfect balance of love and protection.

Marais La Nuit

By Melissa Mills

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After several nocturnal hunting journeys through the Tucson desert, in search of a cricket, I resolved myself to drive to Petco in order to purchase one. There was a white barrel full of crickets centered near the front of the store. I saw their dark profiles casting from outside the barrel as they thrashed about, illuminated by the store lights, while they paused occasionally to scope out the scene. All of them likely met similar fates of being fed to reptiles. I had witnessed my friend, Amy, purchase a handful of them to feed to her Bearded Dragon, Rupert, once. I figured my cricket would meet the same demise after I learned enough about it in order to write. What else would I do with a cricket? It would serve the purpose of my muse for a week, and then become Rupert's snack.

I have never been afraid of crickets, or grasshoppers, or anything really. I grew up in the Ozarks. I was surrounded by wildlife constantly. I ran laps in gym class through sharp grass that whipped my ankles with the intensity of fire beneath the May sunlight. Grasshoppers constantly struck my calves, and spat juice onto my sneakers. I was taken down once by a prickly pear cactus that punctured the sole of my shoe. The Ozarks is a strange place. My grandfather dug the cactus thorns from my heel, and I later rode my bike up our long driveway with my brother, Mikey, while we pretended we were in the desert. We attached aluminum cans to the space where our rear tires met the frames of our bikes, and pretended we were riding motorcycles. As an adult, I laugh at that memory because in reality, we were driving cars with malfunctioning catalytic converters, but I still enjoy the sound. And, I live in the desert now.

My idea of a summer vacation was swimming with water moccasins in the river. I was aware of their presence, and noticed their heads pop above the water as they cruised downstream. That was scary, but a cricket is simple, and beautiful in song, and it serves a purpose, unlike fleas or ticks, or even flies. They eat decomposing waste, they provide nutrition for other creatures, and they compose a chorus of sounds.

I wondered how one purchases a single cricket? What will I do with it when I arrive home and my cat thinks I've brought a toy for her? How will I keep it alive long enough to write about it? I brought it home in a clear plastic bag, puffed full of air that was tied in a knot. My cricket was large. The top half was a dark brown shade of walnut, but the underside was shielded in green. I placed slimy overly ripe banana slices and spongy

bits of mango in the bottom of the Mason jar with holes punctured in the metal top. After quickly sliding the cricket inside in order to prevent an escape, I watched it land clumsily upside down, before flipping itself upright again. I went to bed. Then, I remembered crickets chirp. One of my favorite musicians, Neko Case, recorded a song called "Marais La Nuit," which translated from French to "Marsh at Night" in English. The song covered over thirty minutes of crickets chirping as Neko Case sat near a pond at night, and it was meditative because there were no words. There was nothing to think about, only nature. It invoked a remote feeling of loneliness that is simple, intricate, and beautiful. It reminded me of peaceful times when I was a child, alone in the woods, listening to nature, and wanting to record all I encountered.

When I was nine, I had eye surgery on both of my eyes to correct muscle damage I had been born with. I spent the summer in extreme pain. My eyes were waxed shut with antibiotics because I no longer possessed eyelashes to deter bacteria. I often slept on the bottom step of the sweeping staircase in my grandparents' foyer because my grandfather kept the door open at night. It wasn't cold in the house by any means, but I wrapped myself in a silk jacket, and listened to the crickets singing, while occasionally noticing the churning ceiling fan through squinting splinters of light. Crickets provide the background music to silence. That memory told me I could not let the cricket die.

I supposed there was something inherent about bringing a pet home, and naming it. Since I knew I couldn't let it die, I thought of naming it after some male jazz musician as I watched it stroking chords, sliding its wings together in perfect formation, in the glinting light that slid off its long, flat, brown back, exposing the brilliant flashes of green. The light moved toward the long antennae, and projected up, out of the Mason jar. It wanted free from the prison, but I required more time. A male jazz musician didn't fit; besides I was unable to think of one that wasn't cliché. The sounds my cricket made were more organic. They occurred solely in nature. The first night I spent with the cricket, it slid its wings together, strumming a violin chorus of chirping at a rate of 62 chirps per minute. I was unable to sleep, so I counted. Despite the dramatic chirps supposedly only exerted by male crickets, I decided my cricket was female, and I named her Neko. By the third night, Neko was singing me to sleep. It

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was so peaceful.

On the fourth evening, I arrived home from work, and my friend Sonia called to ask if I wanted to walk along the Rillito with her and her two Poodles. I decided it was time to send Neko off on a journey. I slipped the Mason jar in my backpack, and cycled to my friend's condo on Campbell and River. When I told Sonia I had a jar with a cricket, she thought I had really lost my mind this time. I pulled it out, and showed her. I told her I intended to feed it to the Bearded Dragon, but it had more work to do. We walked about a mile, and then I climbed down into the wash. As soon as I removed the lid, Neko did not hesitate to bolt. She jumped about three feet out of the jar, and vanished before I was able to notice her route. I was sad, but happy that she would survive the food chain for a while longer. Sonia glanced at the ground, trying not to laugh. It was a ridiculous scene. When I travel by night to the dried-up desert wash that is my marsh, I will listen closely.

The Quarter

By Fran P. Harris

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Mama held the screen porch door open with her backside and wiped her hands down the front of the long white apron. The one with the heart embroidered on the pocket.

“Where’d you get that quarter, Lilly?”

I was busy pushing the porch swing back and forth with my feet and tapping on the ridges of the rim around the outside of the quarter with the back of my old spoon and singing, “This little light of mine.” I hadn’t heard her coming. I closed my hand around the quarter and felt how round it was, pushed into my palm and I waited for the porch swing to move back and forth on its own. It was cooling down and smelling like night.

Mama hated the banging noise when my friends Markie and Darla and me sat on the porch and smoothed out the rims of our coins so we could use them to make necklaces. To get it right, you had to turn the coin a little at a time and tap away all around the outside edge of it until it was perfectly smooth and stayed round and all the lines were gone. When it was perfect, the pounded out part would make the slightest edge sticking up all the way around on both sides. And if you did it extra perfect, the edge would be completely round without any dips. After the coin was smoothed out, you could make a hole in it – then put it on a string or a ribbon or a necklace chain if you had one. Making the hole was the hardest part, but Darla’s daddy did that for us in his shop.

If we were on the porch and the noise’d finally get to Mama, she’d come racing through the living room, yank the screen porch door open and yell, “You kids stop that racket right now.” She’d been doing that a lot lately. We’d stop for a while but before you knew it, we’d be taking a few taps, then starting up again. If she got really mad, we’d have to move to Darla’s back

steps.

It was just me on the porch now.

“Lilly, I asked you a question. You heard me. Don’t pretend you didn’t. Where’d you get that quarter?” I heard the TV in the living room. Daddy coughed one of his long rattly coughs, flopped down the footrest of the La-Z-Boy, then the TV got louder. You could hear everything going on in the living room when you sat quiet on the porch. That’s how I’d learned that Daddy had a new job again. That we’d be moving in July. To Mobile. Before fourth grade.

“I found it,” I said.

Darla and Markie always had quarters. They were the ones that worked the best. Darla’s daddy said it was because they were pure silver. I’d asked Mama for a quarter, but she wouldn’t give it to me. “That’s too much money, Lilly. We can’t spare it. You’re lucky to get this nickel,” she’d said when she gave it to me. You’d have thought I was asking for a piece of gold.

That nickel, it worked okay, and it was the one with the Indian and the buffalo, but it wasn’t perfect. What I’d needed all along was this quarter.

I tipped the swing forward and put my feet down on the floor of the porch. The crickets had started up – all together, then spread apart, all together, then spread apart, moving each other back and forth like one big chorus wave and me with it. I spotted two lightning bugs in the privet hedge, then they disappeared. You never knew they were there in the day. But when it’d start to get dark, they’d come out. The darker it got, the more you’d see.

Sometimes we’d catch ’em and put ’em in jars and watch ’em light up. All the kids did it. I didn’t like trapping lightening bugs

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Fran P. Harris was an academic and research professional in Hearing Science before pursuing her interests in creative writing. She has over 50 scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals and lay publications on hearing and the effects of hearing loss. Her fiction has appeared in *The Blue Guitar* and *Sandscript*. She lives in Tucson and may be contacted at fphwrite@gmail.com.

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like that, but I did it anyway. I liked chasing after them to see where they'd land. But they smelled when you caught them. I always thought it was fear that made them stink like that. When you put them in the jar, they stuck to the sides like all they wanted was to get out. Their lights didn't last long either after that. Then they'd die, even if you poked holes in the lid and put some grass inside for them to eat.

Most nights, we'd chase lightning bugs then play the dead game in the front yard. I was good at playing dead. When you were "it," you shot each kid and said, "Bang, bang you're dead," and they'd have to fall on the ground. Then "it" would go around to each dead kid and try to get 'em to wiggle. If you wiggled, you weren't really dead and you'd have to wake up, then you were "out." Tickling was the best way to get somebody out. I was real ticklish, but I knew how to beat the game.

The first secret was when you died, you had to be in the right place on the yard – flat and cushiony without any rocks or tree roots or acorns. Then, when you fell, you had to be sure you were in a comfortable position. But the biggest trick for winning was you had to transport yourself somewhere else right after you'd landed on the ground. Usually, I transported myself to the beach. I would lie on the sand and listen to the waves. When somebody started tickling my mouth with a piece of grass, or if Markie said something mean to get me to beat him up – like, "you're so dumb, all you can read is comic books," I'd put myself right smack dab in the middle of the waves – riding them up and down or crashing through all the way to the bottom to look around. It was easy to win. You just had to know the secrets and wait it out long enough.

I looked at Mama in the doorway. She plumped up her hair then crossed her arms again, pushing up her big boobs. "Uh huh. You found it. Where, Lillian? Where exactly did you find my quarter?"

I stuck my hands in the pockets of my shorts – the spoon in the right pocket, the quarter in the left. "I don't remember," I said.

"Look Miss Smarty Pants Lillian Ann Brody. I know you stole that quarter out of my pocketbook. Just tell the truth. You're going on ten years old, and it's high time you stopped telling stories to your mother."

"I am telling you the truth – it's my quarter," I said. The skin on my legs pushed through the spaces in the seat of the swing, and the spoon poked me.

"This is not the end of this. It's getting late. I want you to come inside this house, put on your pajamas, brush your teeth, and think long and hard about where you got that quarter. And the next time I ask you, I want you to tell me the truth. Do you understand?"

"Yes ma'am."

I got out of the swing and went to the door of the screen porch, squeezed by her real fast, ran through the living room so I didn't have to breathe the smoke or look at Daddy and went into my bedroom.

Mama had told me two weeks ago if I made my bed and put my comic books away and kept my shoes in the closet for a week, and didn't backtalk her, she'd pay me a quarter. That seemed like just the right way for me to get my quarter so I did exactly what she said. Every day. And I made her come in to see that everything was perfect. I had started on a Saturday, and I put Xs on the numbers of the stand-up calendar from the First National Bank. It was June. I started on the five. When I put an X on the eleven, I went to the kitchen and I carried her pocketbook with me.

She was stirring a big pot of vegetable soup. Sometimes, she'd let me help her in the kitchen, but mostly she'd say, "I'd rather just do it right in the first place." She smoothed her hands on her apron and looked down at me.

"What are doing messing with my pocketbook?"

"It's today. The day for my quarter," I said. I held the pocketbook up towards her.

"I don't have a quarter, Lilly." I knew that was a lie; I'd already opened up the coin purse in her pocketbook and she had five quarters, two nickels, a dime and four pennies.

"No, Mama. You promised. You looked at my room. I did what you told me. Every day, and I even put my pajamas in the drawer and not under the pillow. Go look again."

"Well, honey, we're stretched pretty tight right now. Maybe I'll have some change to spare in a couple of weeks. I promise. We'll just wait." She turned back to the stove and put the lid on the pot.

I threw her pocketbook down on the floor and ran out the back door. I felt like I was choking and ran towards the woods. Why did I believe her this time? Why did I think it would be any different? Maybe because it was only a quarter. Maybe because I had done everything better this time, made it perfect, just like she wanted. *I promise. I promise we're not really going to the dentist, Lilly. I promise this is the last time we'll move, Lilly. I promise we'll let you go again to the beach with the Sutherlands in July. I promise.* I wondered how much money it took to buy a carton of Lucky Strikes or all that Budweiser in the refrigerator. And I wondered how much it cost to buy a bottle of Flame nail polish. I ran down to my favorite rock by the creek.

I picked up a stick and poked it in the sand and the little holes filled up with water. Tadpoles were playing in the rocks. I could

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stare at the same spot and keep staring and they would disappear like magic. Not swim away. Just poof, and they'd be gone.

I shut my eyes and imagined I was in the water, swimming around the rocks then holding still. Completely still. I sat quiet for a long time and heard the frogs. When I opened my eyes and looked around, everything looked a little different, the leaves were cleaner and the frogs louder. I had gone away and when I came back to the very same spot, all of the earth had shifted around me, just the slightest little bit.

When I got back to the house and went in the front door, Daddy was passed out in the La-Z-Boy. There were beer cans on the end table and on the floor, and the ashtray was full of cigarette butts. I tiptoed past him and when I went by Mama and Daddy's bedroom, I saw Mama's pocketbook on the rocker. I knew she was outside pruning the roses; I'd seen her when I came back. She spent a lot of time in the flower beds. She said it was important to keep things looking well kept.

I went into their room, walked over to the rocker, opened up the coin purse in her pocketbook and took out the quarter. Cool and big and heavy. I ran my finger around the quarter's rough edges, then I pinched the coin purse shut. I would make it perfect.

In my room, I hid the quarter in my pencil box and pushed the box way back in the drawer of the nightstand. I thought about it but left it alone, waiting until it was safe to take it out and start working on it.

Mama didn't follow me into my room after I left the porch, and I put the quarter into one of my matchboxes. My room was dark now. I changed into my pajamas and went into the bathroom to brush my teeth. I picked up the little hourglass Dr. Sprinkle had given me and flipped it over.

"One minute, Lilly," Dr. Sprinkle had said. "Watch the glass and when the bottom's filled up, you can stop. Your teeth have been allowed to rot and that's not your fault. But we've got to take care of them now. These are your permanent teeth, and they'll be with you for the rest of your life if you do what needs to be done."

I'd been so scared when I'd seen where Mama was taking me that first day, when we'd parked in front of the dentist's office. She'd had to practically drag me inside. But Dr. Sprinkle came out into the waiting room, and told me who she was and that we needed to look at my teeth. She took my hand and led me to the back. She told me about all the things in the dentist room, then she told me to get up in the chair so she could get a good look at my teeth. She had the softest hands I'd ever felt in my life and she smelled just like the outside air. Dr. Sprinkle had told Mama

to stay in the waiting room.

Dr. Sprinkle explained everything she was going to do and how we'd work together until we'd gotten my teeth fixed. She'd told me where to put my hands on the chair and how to feel them floating right on the tops of the arm pieces, not to grab hold and to keep thinking the whole time about the air between my hands and the chair. She'd be working on my teeth, water flying all over the place, then she'd say, "Do you feel how warm that air's getting under your hands, Lilly? We're almost done." I'd started with seventeen cavities, but we only had six more to go. She'd talked to Mama about letting my teeth get in such a state. I'd heard her. I hated being in that chair, but I loved Dr. Sprinkle. I did anything she told me to do.

I wondered if we'd move before the last six cavities were filled. I wondered how I would get to Dr. Sprinkle from Mobile. I wondered if there was a train or a bus. I'd looked on the map at school. It was a long way from Mobile to Atlanta.

I went back into my room and sat on the floor, moving furniture around in the dollhouse I'd made in the corner next to my bed. The rooms were cardboard boxes and the top was some pieces of wood I'd found by the creek. I'd made a chest of drawers out of glued-together match boxes and a chair out of Popsicle sticks. I was still working on the rest. I could tell Mama had come in my room, but I didn't turn around.

"Are you ready to tell me the truth?" Mama said.

I moved some of the match boxes around. She kept talking.

"You know, Lilly, it's more important to be honest and to tell the truth. I don't care about the money. If you tell me the truth, I promise you can keep the quarter."

I turned around and looked at her. She was standing on the other side of the bed. Her lips were bright red, and she had on the blue dress with the little flowers she'd been wearing when we went to Woolworth's – the day before I'd asked for my quarter – "Robin's egg blue," she'd said, "just like my eyes," swishing her skirt in front of her long mirror. We'd walked first to cosmetics, then she told me to go look at the toy furniture. When I came back, I saw her take the lipstick and drop it in her pocketbook while the clerk lady was talking to somebody else. We walked out of the store after that. I'd seen the tube of Revlon Cherry Red right next to the change purse in her pocketbook when I'd taken what was rightfully mine.

"It's my quarter. I found it," I said and pushed the small chest of drawers closer to the wall.

She turned and left the bedroom. I opened up the drawer of the matchbox and peeked inside at the quarter. I knew she wouldn't mess with my dollhouse. She said it looked like a piece of trash in the corner, and she didn't care to touch it. The quarter was looking perfect.

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The bedroom door creaked open and slammed against the wall next to the bed.

“Lilly. Your Mama says you stole a quarter out of her pocketbook. Give it back to her.” I turned around. Daddy’s head looked like it was almost touching the ceiling where he was standing on the other side of the bed. His voice made my ears roar.

I couldn’t believe he was in my room. Daddy never bothered me. All I had to do was stay out of his way, and he never bothered me. All I had to do was tip toe around when he was passed out in the chair, and he would never bother me. All I had to do was bury my head under the pillow at night and I wouldn’t even hear the crashing in the kitchen. All I had to do was be smart enough, and he wouldn’t even see me. Mama never got that. She was always fussing at him. Yelling at him. Pushing him about this thing and that thing. Then he’d explode and the whole house would rattle so much I’d have to go in the closet or go outside to find a quiet spot.

“No sir. I don’t have her quarter.” I was shaking all over from the inside out. I bit on the skin inside my lower lip. He headed around the bed towards me, and I could smell him getting closer, and I shot up and ran into the next room. I jumped up onto the bed and backed myself against the wall and screamed until my ears hurt. Screamed as loud as I could. Screamed for anybody. His face was close to purple, and I knew what that meant. I’d seen him this way when he’d beaten my big brother Baker to a pulp. He’d slap Baker for nothing, just for standing there. Then Baker got big enough to fight back. Then, he left home. That was before we moved the last time. I hadn’t seen him since. He’d left for good. Screamed again and again.

“No. Leave me alone.” I couldn’t catch my breath. My chest felt like it had knives stuck in it. “I didn’t do it. Leave me alone.” If I pushed the backs of my hands hard enough against the wall, maybe I could push my whole body right outside. My stomach churned up into my throat. I couldn’t throw up now. I couldn’t.

Mama stood in the doorway with her hands crossed across her waist.

“Hudson. Leave the child alone. Let’s not get carried away here. It’s just a quarter. Leave her alone. We’ll make do.”

His fists were squeezed tight and his arms hung by his sides. His face was poking in and out where he was clinching his jaw. He was about to bust wide open like he’d been doing all summer – when all the talking about moving had started – the screaming and yelling about moving or money. Then something would crash.

Mama said, “It’s okay. It’s okay now. She’s probably telling the truth, honey. Come on, let’s go back to the living room.”

I saw how hard he was trying to catch himself. To keep himself away from me. Him standing there in the middle of the floor; her standing behind him and me in front of him. I saw him trying to decide what was the best thing to do. He took a step towards me, then dropped his shoulders and let his hands go and turned around.

Mama took his arm and turned back to look at me.

“Lilly. Go get in bed. I’ll come tuck you in.”

Tuck me in. Tuck me in. I couldn’t move. I was frozen to the wall. The bed was jiggling under my feet. I collapsed into a big heap and lay there until I could finally slide to the edge. I got off and went into my bedroom. I looked over at the matchbox and crawled into bed. The TV was loud in the living room.

The door cracked open, and Mama came in and sat on my side of the bed. She rubbed my head like my hair was sticking up and needed patting down.

“Lilly, honey. You okay?”

“Yes ma’am.”

“You know how important the truth is, don’t you honey? It’s not the money. I just want you to learn about the truth. Now, my pocketbook is out there in the dining room, on that chair right beside your door. And in the morning, I’m going to look in my coin purse, and find the truth. Nobody needs to say anything else about anything. Right, sugar pie?”

“Yes ma’am.”

“Now, did you say your prayers?”

“Yes ma’am.”

“The Lord has a special place in heaven for good little girls who tell the truth.”

“Yes ma’am.” She kissed me on the head, and when she left, I pulled the covers up tight around my chin.

All the light in the room had disappeared except the lines on the slats of the Venetian blinds where the street light was shining through. They ran across the windows like bars – keeping the darkest part of the night away. I thought about Mama’s pocketbook. I looked over and could barely see the matchbox pushed up into the corner of the dollhouse. I thought about the quarter, still safe. I heard the voices in the living room getting louder over the TV. *Good for nothing sonofabitch.* I lay real still and hummed and took myself to the ocean. The beach felt warm all over the back of my body. Little grains of sand blew across my face. I kept my eyes and my mouth shut tight and breathed in and out slowly, feeling my stomach go up and down. I could hear the waves. My heels sank into the sand as the water pooled beneath them when the ocean came in, then went back out. I wondered if all the little sand crabs had skittered up the beach into their holes or if they would crawl all over my body and tickle me while I lay totally still waiting for the salty water to float me out and wondering where I’d float to next.

Rosalie Vaccaro

Mesa Artist



“Mom @ 95”

Oil

11 x 14

The artist, Rosalie Vaccaro, writes: “I’ve been an artist since I was a kid in elementary school. Teachers recognized my talent and used me to do murals and paint backgrounds for plays and other school events. When I won a scholarship to Arts Students League in New York City, I took the train each day down to 57th Street in Manhattan to take drawing classes. I didn’t continue because I was going to marry my high school sweetheart, who was serving in the Army in Vietnam. We were married and it was awhile before I could go back to college and continue my art studies. By the time I did, I had two children and they were beginning school. With the help of my parents and in-laws, I survived five years of college and received my BFA degree. Their help, along with my husband’s, who has put up with my non-career years, got me through. In 1999, I returned to school for a two-year certificate in portraiture at the Paier College of Art and graduated in 2001. Since I had many years of graphic design and printing experience, the best thing I could do was to work as a designer/illustrator. Working in the publishing and the newspaper business, doing illustration for magazines, taught me many of the values needed to help me deal with my own commissioned work. These were, and are still, respectable positions to be in, but I never found it to be as inspiring or exciting as putting globs of oil paint onto canvas. I love the smell, the texture and the unlimited colors you can create when mixing.” Contact the artist at rovagrafx@aim.com or 480-268-1207. Her website is www.rosalievaccaro.com.



Rosalie Vaccaro

Mesa Artist



**“Jasper Johns Revisited”
Oil and encaustic with
newsprint on canvas
30 x 40**

I may start out with a concept for a portrait or a painting with a figure as the central theme, then as I paint and that paint moves me, an evolution takes place on my canvas. The process is as much a part of the painting as the figure or figures. I may start by doing a small canvas first to block in the subject and using a limited palette. Choosing new colors and working through different experiments with color continue to excite me. Some of these included paintings were done with just a few colors. I've tried works on paper and I've even tried making some of my own pastels. Oil and pastel are my primary mediums, but I still love to get my figures into some great hunks of clay or play with some invigorating watercolors. Doing charcoal portraits are something that I can offer to the walk-about person coming to see my work at reasonable cost. My newest medium is Encaustic painting, which is exciting.

- Rosalie Vaccaro

Rosalie Vaccaro

Mesa Artist



“Trilogy”

Oil on paper on panel

Three paintings as a triptych; each is 12 x 36

Rosalie Vaccaro

Mesa Artist



“Best Friends”
Oil on canvas
22 x 28

Rosalie Vaccaro

Mesa Artist



“The Violinist”

Oil on panel with gold leaf

12 x 16

3 Poems by Selena Valencia

Swirling around in a whirlwind

© 2015

Swirling around in a whirlwind

Vibrant colors

Sea breeze, flowers and autumn

Phenomenon.

So much color but yet, so black

Darkness from within

That engulfs the light

in a shroud of smoke

No flutters, only quietness at a

Standstill.

Happiness in a wind tunnel

Suck the face until the remains resemble that of an addict

In so tight. The skeleton with baby blues

Drainage with dilation

The eye was never safe from the hurricane.

Chaos always loomed

But now the soul is looked inward only by slits,

like coal

Black darkness eager to consume more



Selena Valencia is an undergraduate at the University of Arizona where she is currently studying Art History and Creative Writing. Born in Tucson, she became immersed in writing and the arts at a young age. Along with writing poetry, she also is a photographer and loves to travel. Reach her at selvalen@gmail.com.

Ode to Bravetti

© 2015

My car the ironic

My car the Tucson from Vegas

My car the shattered butt

My car the scare

My car behind bully

My car tow magnet

My car slow motion savior

My car the lightning turtle

My car my home

My car generation protector

My car talks above

My car silver bullet

My car summer night winds

My car hair rising tingle

My car smiling mirror

My car getting low

My car the rave

My car mouse face

My car old age hearing

My car blurred vision

My car youthful old soul

My car lost explorer

My car American dream

My car Who Are You?

Drink me

© 2015

Drink me
I wish I could
Wish I could fall into the bottle and
stay for a long while
sheltered by prying eyes
Alone in my attempts to regain

I'd swim in it
Doing laps
Salty as my face stings
But continuing to dunk myself
Face first
Plunging all the way to the bottom
Seeing how long I last,
until finally come up
Gasp

I felt being near the edge
There you forget much of everything
Except the Now
It's beautiful and scary and sad
All at the same time

But it only stays
for awhile
Finally leaving
Leaving you,
Exhausted and alone

Wanting to go back
Just so you don't think
Give me oceans
so I can stay lost.
Wondering, never wanting land
Make me smaller
but I am already tiny

Stay for the youth
Because adult life
Bares the hidden bottle
Comfort and tempting
The danger

Drink me

5 poems by Tom Erdmann Jr.

A Swifter Stream

© 2015

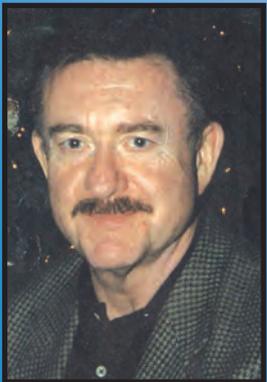
(for Duane Niatum)

Glaciers move ancient bones
closer to the sea.
The white teeth of your ancestors
flash to the sunlight of their return.
Ravens rise out of your words,
their wingtips span the Hohadhuns.*

Your poems rage out of green hills
and forage with the brown bear,
seeking always
a swifter stream, the greatest Chinook.
Like Chief Sealth they storm
into the white man's print.
You are the Changer.

I would walk with you
but my boots are not moccasins.
Their marks leave a loud trail.
Someday, I might see what you see,
when my eyes can hold
what the sun says to trees
and we will speak the language
of these mountains, these streams
and these cawing leaves.

* true name of the Olympic Mountains



Tom Erdmann co-founded the Washington Poets Association in 1971. After 30 years as a member of the WPA board, 25 of them as Contest Chairperson, he moved to Arizona with his new wife, Dyan, in 2001. During his 33-year Seattle teaching career, his high-school students won over 300 local, state and national writing awards. Tom won awards from the poetry associations of Arizona, Florida, Oregon and Washington, the most significant being the Ben Hur Lampman Award given by the Oregon State Poetry Association and judged by William Stafford. Tom's work is published in many journals and ezines, including Seattle Review, Assay, Bellingham Review and Poetz. He has four chapbooks. Tom was an All-American in football and was second in Oregon State in wrestling for Marshfield H.S. in Coos Bay, Oregon. He played both sports, without distinction, for the University of Washington where he received his BA and M Ed. His three sons, their wives and four grandchildren live in the Seattle area. Tom won The Professional Writers of Prescott national poetry award in 2010 and again in 2011.

At A Seminar Titled “Finding Poems In The Dark”

© 2015

He swallows his words;
smothers the flickers of image.
I am scrambling to ascertain
how to discover, “...Poems in the Dark,”
but in the twenty feet between us
words, lines, his poems sink into cracks.

This feels like a conspiracy
as the acolytes near him roar laughter.
His punch-lines are chameleons
that won't skitter into my ears.
His poems will stay hidden
and I'll still be in the dark.

Guess I'll keep finding poems,
the ways I always have, where the devil is:
look for a tail tip flicking from a cave
or for a broken claw in my path
or a bright eye peeping out of leaves....
On Monday I'll inquire about hearing aids

Flika

© 2015

Sometimes we'd tag along the tracks
rousing grouse and routing rats.
You'd flash ahead alarming wren and thrush
then barking back, urge me to rush.

I hopped right down from my platform pine
when you howled, leaped and tried to climb.
Raging through river, woods and beach
we each learned a world the other could teach.

My tie with you, more friend than dog,
a constant couple at constant jog.
One day, when snow came thick and sweet
you dashed the road. You didn't see
that car.

Smoked Oyster

© 2015

My father used an oyster shell ashtray in his hamshack
while he talked to folks on his amateur radio.
He smoked four packs a day—it was a huge shell.
When the ashes started to dribble onto his table,
he would shake the butts into his wastebasket.
Every Saturday I had to take out the house trash
AND that nasty basket. I'd hold my breath
all the way to the burn bin down on the beach.

After dad died, I couldn't throw out that crusty shell,
put it through the washer several times. Scrubbed it like hell.
Now it sits on a shelf above my computer,
deeply stained but it smells better.
I wonder if Dad found the shell, empty, on a Seabeck beach,
all clobbered with barnacles, seaweed and sand
or did he pry it open and take its substance into his own.

That mollusk was an elder of his clan, lived quietly,
staining salt water for plankton
through the gills inside his envelope of shell.
Is there, somewhere, a tide pool
that holds his spirit, waiting to be reborn?
How far dare I push hyperbole
to find the right metaphor for the loss of my father?

Too Soon Old

© 2015

(for Tim Snyder)

You say your friend
has been laid off
and wonders what to do.
Well, it's hard to give advice.
If your friend takes it
and it's bad,
you're out a friend.
If it's good
he gets rich and
moves to a better neighborhood.
My advice to you is
say nothing.

Goodbye.

5 Poems by Karen Call

At the Denver Zoo

© 2015

Since the first time you shouted “WOW”
with your whole body
when you first saw the monkeys,
your eyes wide, lips taut over baby teeth,
arms stretched, hands clenched at your sides
poised for flight
as you leaned toward the enclosure
and watched them fly through the trees,
your head moving in an arc
from one side of the enclosure to the other
like your eyes watched the monkeys twirl
over your crib.

I’ve never said “Wow” again
without thinking of you
at that moment.



Karen Call came to Tucson on New Year’s Eve 2001 from Denver. She retired while in Tucson and stayed to make it her home. Karen has essays in “Crazy Woman Creek: Women Rewrite the American West” and “Woven on the Wind: Women Write About Friendship in the Sagebrush West.” She travels with her husband, Bill, who she met in Tucson, to visit far-off places and their three sons, wives and three grandchildren (so far) in Pennsylvania, Colorado and Oregon. Karen has been working on a book-length collection of poems about her 3-year old grandson Connor. She has been a member of a snail-mail poetry round robin for more than 15 years. Contact her at Karenmb@cox.net.

I Love My Brudder

© 2015

“I love my brudder,” you said last night
as we sat on the playroom floor.
“Hunter is my brudder,” you clarified.

You went and patted him
on the head; it bobbed.
I blinked and you picked him up.
I blinked and you carried him
toward the door. “Daddy!” I called,
“come quick” and Daddy came
and lifted Hunter from your arms.

During bath time you poured
a dish of water on Hunter’s head.
He grinned his toothless smile
through the drizzle.
“See,” you said, “he likes it!”
You reached for the dish to do it again.
“Only once,” Mommy said,
“we must be gentle with Hunter.”

You tossed a monkey and a book
as Daddy diapered him. Daddy
caught the book; the monkey
fell into his face and he laughed.
“I love my brudder,” you said,
“I brought him toys.”

Hunter was in his crib when you
sneaked into his room. You put your arm
between the slats and patted his back.
You smashed your face into the slats
and kissed the air around him.
“I love my brudder,” you said,
as you backed into the hall.

Night-time Rendezvous

© 2015

Last night I heard you get up,
flick on the hall light
and pad quickly down the hall
calling out urgently,
“Mommy, I have to go potty!”
I lay in bed
and watched the street light
peek around the window shade
and saw the closed door
framed by the hall light.
It’s comforting when you call
and Mommy is there.
Soon I heard
“Thank you, Mommy”
as the hallway darkened
and your door closed.
How do I tell you both
to enjoy these quiet moments
in the middle of the night
when it’s just the two of you?
They will be gone much too quickly.

Spring Rain

© 2015

The rain fell,
first just drops as we stood
on the sidewalk and looked up
into the gray sky and then the rain
fell harder and soaked your blue shoes,
the ones you just got for your birthday
and then it came in torrents and water splashed
down the back of your neck and on your cheeks
so it looked like you'd been crying for hours though
you laughed and your blue eyes shined and you ran
and jumped into the new puddles and daddy ran
out of the house and scooped you up in his arms
and I picked up your bike and ran under the
awning. You ran around inside the house from
window to window warm and safe in
new dry blue socks watching the rain wall
fall and make small ponds under the eaves
as you ate apple slices so you could have
a maple leaf cookie with a glass
of almond milk the next time
you were in the kitchen.

The Last Straw

© 2015

You dropped the fire truck
into the potty when you leaned over
to see you had put in it. Mommy called
for Daddy to come and rescue it.

You put flax into your smoothie
and some spilled when you turned
to look at your baby brudder.
Flax fluttered over the counter
and the floor. Mommy swept it up.

You drank milk as you sat and watched
Caillou on TV. The top came off
the Sippy cup and milk spilled
all over you and the couch.

“My goodness!” Mommy said,
“that is the last straw.
We’ve been up just an hour.
Let’s go back to bed
and start this day over.”

Underemployed

By Jenna Whitney

© 2015

I've read somewhere recently that 53% of recent college graduates are either unemployed or underemployed. I consider myself part of the latter, though not for lack of trying for something different. I also consider myself a "recent" graduate, though it's been over 18 months since I've graduated. It's not just me, though. I'm fortunate to be surrounded by friends and peers, former classmates and current co-workers, all of us thinking, "God, maybe I should've gotten a STEM degree." It's in these moments of despair, of extreme self-deprecation that we remind ourselves to keep a positive attitude. "If we ever get too cold, we can always use our degrees for kindling," I told a friend once. I may have saved his life. We're not all screwed, though. I have just as many friends working jobs that offer 401(k) matching as are working at restaurants and coffee shops. For now, I again fall in the latter group, working at a restaurant I was first hired at when I was 17. A lot of people my age don't want to "sell out." "Is my soul really worth health insurance?" a friend asked me recently. It's a hard line to toe, between creative fulfillment and independence. I guess at one point or another, you have to consider which pressure is greater: the pressure not to sell out to corporate America, or the pressure from your father to move out of his house. For some of us, it's an outrage, others don't care as much, but most are us are at least interested in one question: why is it so difficult to land a job?

I attended school at a large public university in the American Southwest and graduated with a degree that my father affirmed by asking me which university football and basketball players were in my classes. It's hard to articulate what it's like to be a college senior, but at the time, it felt like an ambivalence. I alternated between wanting to burn my books, and wanting to weep uncontrollably on my university's Old Main nursing a Diet

Coke can filled with red wine and yelling profanities at freshmen. I didn't really start my senior year of college until January 2013. I had spent the semester prior in New York City participating in what some would call an internship, but would probably be more accurately described as a 3-month-long Facebook lurk. With the coming of my final semester in college came the unrelenting uncertainty associated with life after graduation.

I went to business school, and as a result I was invited to a career fair the winter of my senior year. This career fair was different from the one hosted by my school, more competitive maybe. So, slightly intimidated and armed with a stack of resumes, I went, hoping to line up a job for spring. This particular afternoon, I spent some time talking to a woman hiring financial analysts for a large American investment bank. After explaining the job to me, she asked to see my resume. She looked at it for a couple of minutes before sighing, "Sorry hon," she said to me, "I don't think you'd be a good fit. Maybe you should try Geico." It came as no surprise that a financial institution wanted nothing to do with me. I was more inclined to the creative canon; I studied marketing and English, not finance or economics. With this in mind, I made my next stop at a booth represented by a local marketing agency. "Sell yourself to me." The woman, tall and aggressive, said to me as I walked up. I knew what she meant by this. "Why should I hire you?" is what she was really asking, but I still couldn't help but be bothered by it. It's a concept they drill into you when you study business in general, but especially in marketing. "You're a product, sell yourself." The phrase makes me feel like a stapler at worst, and a prostitute at best. The woman was ultimately unimpressed despite my best attempt at rattling off what's referred to as your "elevator speech," or your "you have 30 seconds to impress me before I leave you in

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Jenna Whitney is a University of Arizona grad living in Tucson, AZ with her collection of desert plants, no cats. Despite what age and gender norms dictate, she prefers gin to red wine. You can typically find her disregarding age-appropriate developmental milestones and non-ironically listening to the Dave Matthews Band. Contact: jwhitney@email.arizona.edu.

shame in this empty elevator” speech. I didn’t let the career fair get me down, though. It was only February, and I had until May to find a job. I wasn’t even sure if a corporate job was what I wanted.

Near graduation, an organization I was a member of posted an Excel spreadsheet to it’s seniors asking them to fill in what’d they’d be doing the following year. Among the responses from my peers were “being awesome” and “getting swole.”

It’s not hard for me to imagine what they are doing now. At the end of my undergraduate “career” as they call it, people weren’t just asking, “*What’s next?*,” but wanted to offer their advice. I spent my 4 years in college waiting tables at a restaurant, so I wouldn’t necessarily describe as successful. While not providing me with a lot of income, it did afford me a great deal of time getting close with my fellow servers. The closer I got to graduation, the advice seemed to be pouring in: “Don’t have children,” one of the older, and admittedly sassier members of our crew told me, “They will ruin your fucking life.” I found this advice useful, but not quite as comforting as “There is no hope,” a line she used with higher frequency.

I’ll mention here that I did get hired for a corporate job. Very soon after graduation I accepted an offer from a large American retailer known for decent pricing, clean stores and forcing their employees to wear uniforms that would flatter no one. I’ll call it Bullseye. After spending a great deal of time deciding whether wearing khaki pants every day was worth a career, I signed my name and became a Human Resources Supervisor. I’ve thought back to this a lot in the past year. I can get a job, I’ve been hired before. Something about the second time around makes it difficult, though, I’m not sure why. I like to think I’m an excellent interviewer. I can throw down words like dynamic and tenacious (though I wouldn’t necessarily use them to describe myself) while I sit uncomfortably in an office in a blazer that looks like it could potentially be from J. Crew or Ann Taylor, but is actually from Forever 21. I have discernible skills, too. I’m an expert in SEO, in that I’m very comfortable googling things. One of my greatest strengths, however, is social media marketing. Facebook, in my opinion, is on the outs. I recently took a course offered by a teenager on how to become Instagram famous. I have 10 followers on Tumblr and a couple of them are people I have never met. The power of influence.

At Bullseye, however, I think it was a hint of desperation on their part and an actual degree and a basic understanding of social norms on my part. That, or a clean background check, I can’t be certain. I was hired by a girl only a few years older than me, who had gone to my school, and who had a level of enthusiasm for selling paper towels that I could’ve never hoped

to reach. I had hoped that when I got my first job it would be the type of job that would make a difference in someone’s life, even if that someone was me. Unfortunately, that wasn’t the case. I spent a lot of time at Bullseye buying snacks and decorating our offices for the holidays. This among sitting in meetings with my peers, trying to figure out how to get the bevy of 17-year-olds we employed to care about their jobs. The fact we spent actual time on this was absurd to me. Time alone was spent much more wisely: figuring out the various cliques that ran the store and the leaders that ran them. It was these girls, painting their nails and texting under the cash registers that were really running the show. And, as a young woman working in HR, someone that was not really supposed to discipline them or give them orders, I was quickly accepted by them. With almost no effort and a little candy, they soon began coming to me with all of their secrets. The girls who worked on the registers were sweet but not very sharp, the baristas who worked in the coffee shop were sassy and the girls on the sales floor, terrifying. Soon, instead of writing schedules or doing payroll, my time was devoted to the girls lining outside my door to tell me the latest. Being on their side did have its downfalls, though. Gaining their trust opened the door to their enduring cattiness. “Your jacket looks like you bought it from Costco,” Elizabeth, a barista, told me one afternoon while hanging out in my office on her break. Unwarranted opinions on my clothing, hair and makeup choices were not uncommon from these girls, but I had learned early on how to handle them.

“Actually, I found it on the floor of the break room last week.” That quieted her, but more likely out of disgust than awe and appreciation for my bargain hunting prowess.

It was all amusing, yes, but at a certain point you really had to wonder what you were doing. *This is why I stayed up all night to memorize direct labor costs for my Managerial Accounting class?* I asked myself, *This is why I missed Senior Bar Crawl to write an analysis on ‘Howl’?*

So when the restaurant that I had essentially grown up in called me and asked me to help bartend through their busy season, I obliged. I can work two jobs, I told myself. I certainly did it on top of a full course load when I was in college. I quickly remembered, though, that pouring shots for the real housewives of Oro Valley, Arizona is a lot more fun than the soul-sucking day-to-day associated with working for a corporation proudly listed on the S&P 500. I left Bullseye a few months after starting back at the restaurant, a decision most people (friends of my parents, people who interview me for jobs) assume that I regret. I don’t regret it though, even though it has sent my life on a different trajectory. I’ve come to understand that there’s a certain degree of transience associated with being 23. For a

Continued from page 55

lot of people, this means finding new jobs and moving to new cities. For me, it meant going back to my old job and moving back in with my parents due to a lack of sufficient funds. Like I said, though, I don't regret it. Working in a restaurant provides you with a certain type of education you won't get anywhere else. There are a lot of stereotypes about the restaurant industry and the people that work in it, and they are, for the most part, very much true. I've seen a lot in the seven or so years that I've been in the industry. Excessive drug and alcohol abuse comes to mind, as does shameless amounts of sexual harassment. Human Resources doesn't exist in the world of local restaurants, which is maybe why I was an apathetic HR. *You're upset your boss said that?* I used to think, *Girl, you should hear the things I've heard.* The most shocking thing I've seen, however, happened just a few weeks ago, when I saw an older gentleman, in a very impressive toupee, pouring packets of Splenda into his glass of Pinot Noir.

It really has been an education, though. By the time I was 19, I knew a lot more about wine pairing than almost anyone my age. I knew the difference between whiskey, bourbon, and scotch and to judge you if you ordered a Jameson Sour. I still cringe at girls who order vodka martinis thinking they're about to get a delicious, fruity cocktail and end up with 3 ounces of well vodka, a splash of vermouth and a lemon twist. I learned how to take a lot of abuse from people, you have to have thick skin to work in the service industry. I had a woman almost make me cry because she was so enraged I brought her a cup of coffee without a saucer. "Who *raised* you?" She looked at me with daggers in her eyes, and I almost lost it. This is when I was younger, and cared more what people thought. Abuse comes from both ends of the spectrum, though. You get close with management, and they think they can say whatever they want to you.

"Jenna, if you take anything out of the window without pulling your ticket, I will punch you in the fucking throat," my manager once yelled at me from across the line one particularly busy night. It's not the best thing to hear from your employer, but I took less offense to it than when he said "I really think you should be wearing makeup to work, especially if you're working behind the bar."

Like I said, you learn a lot. When I graduated college, a veteran bartender looked at me in disbelief, "You started here when you were a senior in high school, and now you're graduating college? I watched you grow up!" I do tell people that I "grew up" in a restaurant. It's hard not to grow up in that kind of environment.

I reiterate: there's a lot of exploitation in the business. I typically don't mind being sexually harassed by my co-workers.

For the most part, if you're saying something weird or morally ambiguous to me, you're either my friend or really fucked up. In my opinion, either excuse is permissible, especially at a place where you spend a lot of the day trying to pass time. The kitchen, or the back of the house, as they're typically called, are the biggest culprits. The words that once scarred me as a fresh-faced 17-year-old with her first hosting job are now used as leverage to get free food. It goes like this: you can call me whatever you want, say whatever you want to me, even give me a hug that lasts way more than ten seconds, as long as I can expect a quesadilla at the end of the shift. My father once asked me if they feed you at work, and sighed when I responded, "Yeah, as long as the kitchen thinks that you're hot. That, or you have drugs."

I do mind being sexually harassed at work by people who are not my co-workers. This might be different if the type of people who ate at my restaurant were young and attractive and not likely to be playing golf with my dad on the weekends. It depresses me to be at a table full of seemingly normal couples when a man puts his hand way too low on my back and asks for another beer. This still shocks me at times and I always immediately turn to the wife, whose eyes are usually dull and seem to say, *I am your future.* This type of thing is upsetting, but admittedly harmless. I can think of two instances where I was actually appalled by the behavior of men sitting in my section.

The first happened while I was cocktailing one busy night in our restaurant's bar. I was a serving a high-top table with two couples who had been spending the evening drinking heavily. I typically encourage this type of behavior because old people who booze are cool and usually like to spend a lot of money. I liked the table and was almost sad to see them go until I handed one of the men the check. It was then that he grabbed my hand and without breaking the uncomfortably intense eye contact that he had established licked my hand up toward my arm. Shocked, I tried to pull my hand back, but not before he did it again, this time in a rapid succession. His friends didn't notice and his wife shrugged, *What can you do,* her face said. I told my friend, a fellow server, this story recently. He looked at me in confusion, and asked why I hadn't slapped the guy. I blamed it on server shock, which is a real thing, but really I'm not one to make a scene, especially in a busy restaurant.

More recently, I was closing the main dining room, when a man came in and sat down alone. He seemed normal enough throughout most of his meal, and I didn't think twice when he mentioned that he was staying at the hotel across the street. He smiled at me when I asked him if he wanted another margarita, "Like I said," he told me, "I'm staying next door while I'm here on business. You should come back with me when your shift is over." *Watch out,* I thought, *here on 'business' staying at a*

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Comfort Inn in Tucson, Arizona. He must be a high roller. The guy, like most of our patrons, was older and rocking some pretty serious dad jeans. I laughed in the way my brother used to laugh when he tried to buy alcohol before he was 21 and the cashier would ask him for his ID. It's the kind of laugh that exudes confidence and makes you feel ridiculous for asking someone who appears to be 19 at most for their ID, or your young waitress to come back to your hotel with you. It was ineffective, though, and when I asked him if he wanted dessert he asked me what was good. When I told him the creme brûlée wasn't bad he looked at me in a way I hope to be never looked at again. "How about this, I'll get the creme brûlée if I can take it with me and eat it off your back at my hotel."

It's hard to smile at a stranger who just told you they'd like to eat fancy custard off your body, but I powered through. Slightly amused and slightly enraged, I went to the kitchen to find someone to tell about this person. My manager was the first person I saw and I almost had to hold her back when I had updated her on what had been happening at table 21. Feisty as it was, and filled with girl power inspired rage, she started to charge toward the dining room. "No," I told her, "Let him stay, he might tip me." Because that's the only way you can get away with that type of blatant disrespect in my book, give me a lot of money. A friend was once left a 100 dollar tip on a 15 dollar check after being verbally assaulted, a memory that gave me hope for my situation. *Maybe I'll be able to buy gas today*, I thought. In the end, he left and I picked up the check, which had a room number and a ten percent tip on the gratuity line. I was offended, I've had tables tell me that I'm the worse server they've ever had, and they even left me 15 percent. I had a woman once who screamed at me when realizing there had been a twenty percent gratuity added to check. "You're not worth five percent," she told me. This guy thought I was worth ten, even though I had given him excellent service and put up with his bullshit for an hour. I was mad, but I guess that's the risk associated with working in an industry that a boy I went to college with, who is now 2 years into medical school, once told me only employed the scum of the earth.

In August, my lease went up and my roommate decided that it was more fun to live with her boyfriend than me. I was about to sign a lease on a studio, when my mother suggested that I stay with her for a while. How satisfying it must have been for her when I agreed, after 5 years of swearing it would be a cold day in hell before I ever moved back in with my parents. The tables have turned now, after realizing how comfortable the bed in my mom's guest bedroom is, that paired with the blackout cur-

tains really allow for a great sleep. Plus, I work in an unreliable industry. I usually leave a shift with somewhere between 4 and 200 dollars and I'd much rather be spending that money on food than rent. I don't think a week hardly ever goes by without one of my parents asking me when I'm moving out. "You begged me to live here," I like to say. "I told you I was moving to the barrio and you almost cried."

"Yeah," my mom says. "That's when we thought you were about to get a job."

And I am trying to get a job. I like serving, but the restaurant I work at now requires that I wear khaki pants, so now I don't really see the point. I go on job interviews about twice a month, meeting women mostly, who work in marketing agencies. They range from kind and insightful to brazen and catty, and my meetings with them either leave me feeling hopeful and energized or completely drained. Most recently, I met a woman on campus, a friend of my father's, who fell into the latter category. Frustrated afterwards, I called my brother, who is about to have his first child. "If your kid wants to drop out of college and be a concert violinist, just let him do it!" A strange way to start any call, my brother was naturally confused, but not unfamiliar with the pressure from our parents to fit a certain mold. Like I said, it's a hard concept to swallow, trying to figure out what to do with your life. I was explaining this to Mike, a former writing teacher, who had agreed to meet me to talk about careers in writing.

"For what it's worth," he told me, "that feeling of uncertainty, of not knowing what you should be doing, it doesn't really go away as you get older."

"You know in that episode of *Entourage*?" My brother interrupted, I had almost forgotten that I was still on the phone with him. I had just told him about the woman who had just interviewed me, who had me meet her in a coffee shop downtown and sat sipping a cappuccino and insisting that I was a brand, not a person. "They're telling Chase he's a brand. They say Apple. Microsoft. Vincent Chase. That's how I'm imagining you in this interview, this lady being like, Apple. Microsoft. Jenna Whitney." I laugh, because this is not exactly how it went. I'm distracted, still thinking about what Mike said. If I'm going to be uncertain no matter what I do, I reason with myself, I might as well be doing something I love. My brother, who had taken my phone call, but should've been working, tells me he needs to go. I hang up, and consider my surroundings when I notice a college tour, high school students curious about the school I had left almost 2 years ago, and with not much to show for it. I couldn't tell if it was depressing or invigorating that I am perhaps the most accurate representation of their future. Either way, I think, I certainly hope they like serving tables. That, or they know how to work a cappuccino maker.

Black Coffee

By Heather Lynn Horvat

© 2015

James set his briefcase on the floor next to his shoes, beside the door as he did for the last six years. He paused for a count of two Mississippi before he walked to the kitchen. Mina's long hair was pinned back. It looked damp, but James couldn't tell. He didn't bother to say hi.

He went to their bedroom to change, the smell of roasting chicken followed him. She called after him to say twenty minutes to dinner. Once the tie was loosened and taken off, his shirt unbuttoned and thrown in the laundry heap, he felt his jaw relax. The muscles in his neck and shoulders released. He changed into mesh shorts and t-shirt, then padded to their shared bathroom. James welcomed the cold tile of the bathroom floor against his bare feet. Not bothering to wait for the water to warm, he splashed his face with cold water.

The cold couldn't clear his head of what he saw today. All he saw was her. With *him*, a man that was not James. At the coffee shop. James had suspected it since he and Mina had come back from Jamaica celebrating six years of vows. He had tried to win her back. But knew it was too late. He swirled tap water in his mouth and spit it out. He still tasted that damn coffee.

The coffee shop: two blocks from his sky rise office. Convenient. James had gone there today for a sandwich and coffee. He saw Mina almost immediately; her auburn hair caught the sunlight like it did the first time they met almost eight years ago. He started to walk toward her. She didn't see him. She laughed. Another man was with her. Her long fingers touched the stranger's hand. James remembered those delicate fingers on his flesh, the way she used to touch him, the tingle and electricity that coursed through his body. Mina was lost in conversation with this man who wasn't James. This man who looked like James, but wasn't James. James' dark hair was sprinkled

with white; the stranger had no white. James was jealous of *him*.

James stood in line, his back to his wife and stranger. He looked back once. Twice.

"Next in line," the slender barista said. She looked young.

"Tall." His voice was hoarse. Sweat pooled under his armpits.

"Cream or sugar?" the girl asked.

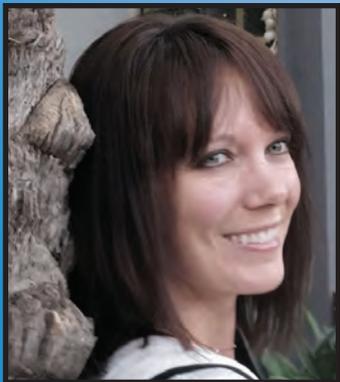
"Black." It wasn't the girl's fault, but he wished it was.

He ate his sandwich in the corner by the restrooms. Mina never went anywhere without using a public restroom at least once. He wanted her to find him, not the other way around. He wanted to see her surprised to find him. He wanted to shock her.

The tasteless sandwich sat like a foreign object in his gut. He tried to drink the black coffee, but grimaced each time he took a small sip. He couldn't go back to the barista to ask for cream and sugar. He couldn't see Mina sitting by the window. He thought he heard her laugh, a musical pitch that he loved. His heart raced, threatened to jump out his throat. He looked up from his half-eaten sandwich, but she was gone. He sat there the rest of the day, nursing the harsh coffee. The office would go on without him. Phone calls would be placed, secretaries would continue to type; no one would miss him. James sat in the hard-backed chair in the coffee shop until it was rush hour; time for him to go home.

James walked back to the bedroom. Nothing was out of place. Bed made, clothes away. Their five year anniversary picture sat untouched for over a year on the dresser. She sported the baby bump well, his hand rested protectively on her belly.

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Heather Lynn Horvat earned her MFA from Southern New Hampshire University. She enjoys fiction that takes her on a journey, whether it is to a far-off place, or to the hidden corners of the author's mind. In her own writing, Heather explores raw human emotion. She is currently working on her first novel about a ballerina, and keeps busy writing short stories and features for a local magazine. When not writing or reading, she enjoys yoga, the outdoors, and spending time with her fur babies. Visit her blog: heatherlynnhorvat.com.

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He picked up the silver frame, then set it down. James hadn't seen her smile light her face that way since the day the picture was taken. He sat down on the bed, still looking at the picture.

It had started with her hair—she used to keep it up. She began leaving it down, curling it, straightening it. He complimented her but she brushed it off saying, “No, I'm not beautiful.”

She denied wearing a hint of new perfume—vanilla mixed with flowers. God, it smelled good, James thought. He stretched over the bed and searched her nightstand drawer until he found it. He still liked the smell, even though she didn't buy it for him.

He had seen the black lace in her drawer. That was an accident. He wasn't snooping. Mina was his wife. He trusted her completely. He just had a pair of her cotton panties mixed with his laundry. When he went to put clean clothing away, he found it, thinking she was saving the black for a special night. That had been six months ago.

James got up from the bed. His stomach let him know he was hungry, despite the acrid coffee taste that lingered. He heard Mina's voice when he walked around the corner. She set her cell phone down, blood creeping to her face.

“Just a reminder for my annual doctor's appointment,” she said. She shook her hair free of the elastic holder, reminding James of the day they had met. Mina had stood in the sand, still wet from a swim, drying her hair. James knew before she turned that he had to know her. They were married within ten months, and in love.

James leaned over to kiss Mina the way he did each day. *Beep Beep Beep*. The timer went off for the chicken. She turned her head. He missed and caught the air instead.

“Where's your ring?” James asked.

She set the chicken pan on the granite, and looked at her hand before answering. “I...don't like to cook with it on. Afraid to scratch it, or get food in it.” She hacked away at the chicken, her back to James.

James moved past her and snatched a bottle of Zinfandel from the metal rack. The *plop* of the cork always had a relaxing effect on him—his second favorite sound. His first favorite was when Mina said his name. She usually called him “babe.” “Hey, Babe. Can you,” always asking for something, but it didn't matter. It still sent shivers down his spine. When they'd made love those first years, the sound of his name coming from her lips caused him to peak.

As she set the table, he watched her body move with a familiar rhythm. The slight tilt of her hips when she placed the plates on the table, the arches of her feet when she carried over the salad bowl. Her jeans hugged her ass perfectly when she leaned to put his plate across from hers.

James took a gulp, then another, of the wine. The flavor was off. The bold spices of the Zinfandel were lost on his tongue. The black coffee had left a permanent mark on his taste buds. He was afraid he wouldn't be able to enjoy her chicken.

“Why do you always wear those shorts?” The edge in her voice made the hairs on the back of James's neck stand up.

“They aren't the same ones each day.” In the beginning, they could finish each other's sentences; now a blackout curtain had gone up between them.

James hadn't heard her laugh since Emma was born. He and Mina had held their baby in the cradle of their arms through the night, until the sun shone through the blinds and light beams hit little Emma's still face. The hospital shift changed and she was taken. They buried her three days later. The female doctor said Mina's uterus was not viable. A good chance she would never carry a baby to full term. James wanted to strangle that doctor, and the next, squeezing until they stopped with the medical jargon. He wanted to protect Mina. He was afraid to make love to her, and instead waited for her to make the first move. She didn't.

Mina cried. Refused to leave the house. James still went to work. He knew he should've been home with her, but someone needed to pay bills and buy food. Then there was that girl; she always greeted him with a smile. He loved going to work just so he could see her. So he could make her happy. So he could be happy.

Why did Mina choose that day to break her crying cycle and come to the office with homemade chicken salad? She set the bag on the girl's desk and walked away. From the beginning, James had thought he never deserved Mina. She was more mature; preferred the high road where he liked to sucker punch his adversary.

After that, Mina didn't look him in the eyes. Her beautiful green eyes never met his. She froze under his touches. She stayed busy: book clubs, knitting clubs, jogging, tennis, but still cooked each night. He didn't ask for it, but it's what she'd always done.

He tried to see the same woman from eight years ago. The woman that he met on the beach. The woman that held him at night. She was there, only a prettier version. Friends said her body had natural elasticity. James looked down at his own stomach, an inflating balloon. He'd promised her a year ago he would start going to the gym. He had been muscular when they met. He should've gone today instead of walking into that coffee shop. He never went out for coffee. He hated calling what should be a size small, a *tall*. And what the hell was *venti* and *grande*? Mina had tried for years to get him to go with her. He hadn't.

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She brought his plate to the table. Her glass brimmed with ruby liquid. James loved that she was still slender. He told her each day how much he loved her, but the words sounded shallow after months of no response.

He heard her laughter mixed with noises from the coffee shop, and looked up from his dinner. He must've imagined it. She looked at her now empty wine glass as if it held the answer to a mystery.

"More wine?" Mina rose and stood over him, holding the almost empty bottle out to him.

James nodded. While she poured, he reached behind her and rested his hand on her back, just above her tight ass. He wondered if that stranger had touched her ass. His hand fell limp against his side. He took a bite of chicken. It tasted wrong. He took another. It tasted worse. His knife clanked against the white porcelain plate. Bitter coffee was all he tasted.

"I saw you today."

"Did you?" She started to clear the table. Neither one had eaten much.

"At the coffee shop."

"You don't go in to those places." She scraped scraps into the garbage. The fork shrieked against the plate.

"Who was that man?"

"What?"

"That man I saw you with. Who was he?" James stood from the table. All he wanted to do was hold her. It had been so long since he felt her underneath him; felt her touch on him.

Mina ignored James and continued to clean the remnants of dinner. She tied the garbage bag and handed it to James. He saw the outline of plastic through the white bag.

"Did you buy this chicken already cooked?"

"I don't always have time to make you dinner." She turned and began to pour another glass of wine. The first bottle, empty, sat next to the sink. A vintage they had been saving for a special

occasion.

He took the garbage outside, as he did every night, while she drank. His breath made puffs when he exhaled the stale air. They had made snow angels in the backyard before Emma had been a thought in their minds. Then drank hot chocolate on the porch and watched the snow gently fall. He held her when she was cold; she was a fire underneath his touch. Their future together had been planned on this porch.

James stepped inside to hear the vibration of her cell phone. His neck and jaw muscles clenched against its constant rattle on granite. At a standstill, they both looked at the lit up phone.

"Are you going to answer that?" He could see she wanted to, the way she looked at it.

"Hello?" He watched her face change from hard and wrinkled to the Mina he saw only in those old pictures. "Yes... Not now."

The bitter coffee penetrated James's mouth. He closed his eyes.

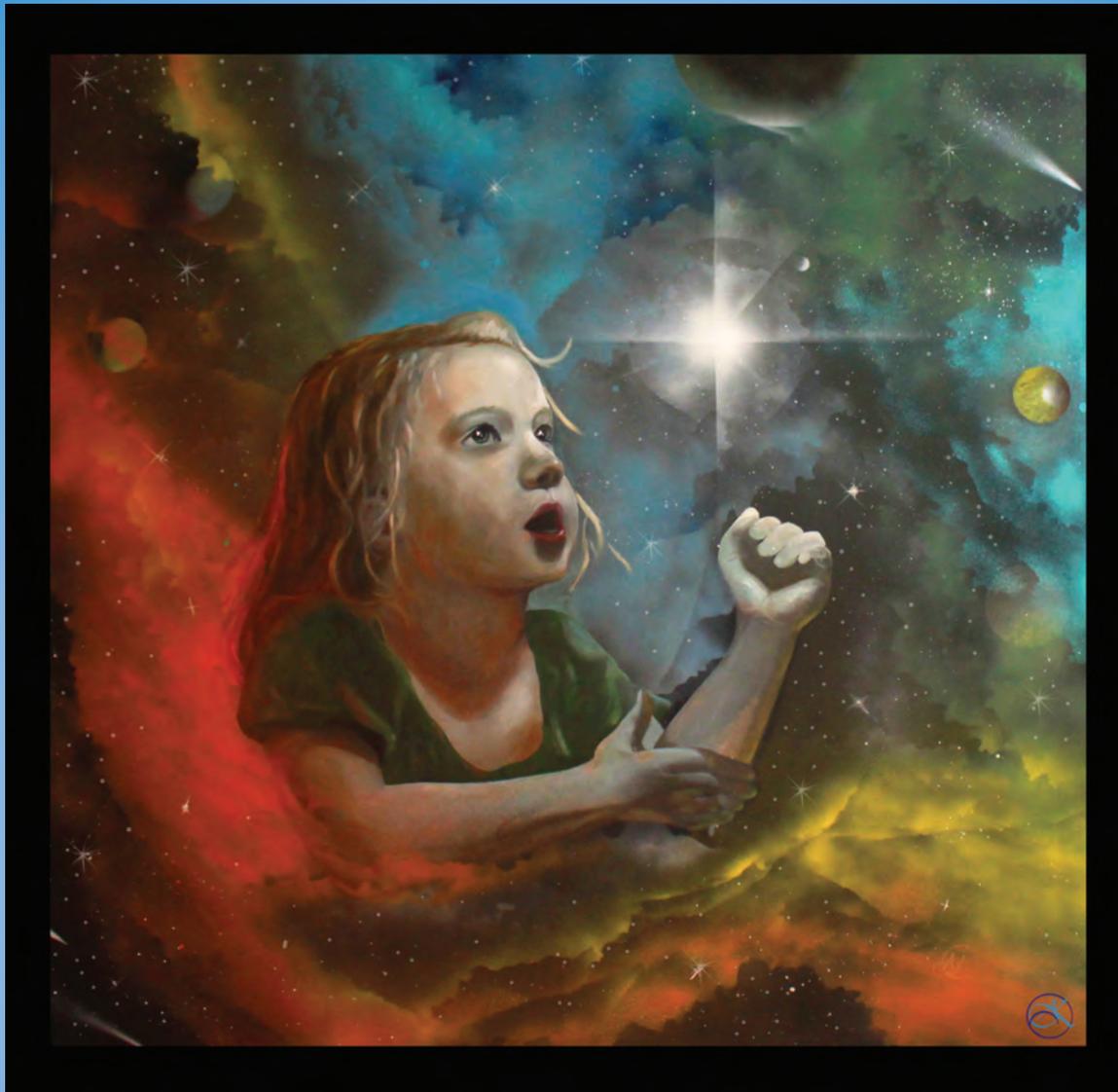
He pictured his hands around her throat. He liked the feel of his fingers touching in front, and squeezed harder so they could overlap. Dreamlike, he saw the pretty barista from lunch with her beguiling smile, and relished how tight he could squeeze. The black coffee threatened to come up. The nurse who took away his baby girl popped into his head, and danced with the face of the doctor who broke Mina's heart. He imagined his fingers flexed and wrapped tighter. He swallowed the lump in his own throat. Mina's arms waved, tried to scratch his face. He dodged the manicured nails. It was almost too easy. He wanted Mina's throat to be that girl's throat, from his office: his one stupid affair he would pay for the rest of his life. He would give anything to take that back.

"I'll call you tomorrow," Mina said, and placed her phone face down on the granite countertop. "What's wrong with you, J?" she asked, using her pet name for him.

James looked at his limp hands. He wouldn't hurt her; even now, he still loved her.

Addison Kanoelani

Tempe Artist



“Genesis”

Spray paint and oil paint on canvas

4 feet x 4 feet

January 2015

Addison Kanoelani, the artist, writes: “I was raised in Reno, Nevada, but moved with my family to Temecula, California, in 2009 for my senior year of high school. In 2010, I attended Brigham Young University in Idaho and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2014. During my time in college, I studied traditional oil painting for portrait art. And after three-and-a-half years, I noticed my paintings looked very similar to everyone else’s. This is when my art began to take a new turn. Venturing into the territories of other mediums, I discovered spray paint art, which unlocked my talent for painting what I’ve always wished for – the stars. Since oil portraits are still very important to me, I found a way to mix the two styles without compromising the integrity of either subject. In 2013, I married my husband, Ryan. After I graduated from BYU, we moved to Tempe, Arizona, for him to transfer to Arizona State University and for myself to explore a new art scene.” The artist’s website is www.kanoelaniart.com or on Facebook at Kanoelani Fine Art.



Addison Kanoelani

Tempe Artist



“The Rapturing Series, Part 1”

Spray paint on canvas

February 2015

My body of work is a mix of eclectic space paintings, including sights like the Milky Way and shooting stars, and also sometimes mixed with oil portraits within the sky-scape. When I look at the stars, and see all the colors, the light and movement, I just can't help but feel inspired. It's a feeling deep inside of me that is grasped by the glory of it all. I feel so small, yet significant at the same time. I feel tiny compared to it all, but as if I still have purpose. It's like a permanent piece of beauty. They have existed since the beginning of time, going through explosions and tumultuous events to be how and where they are today. And I imagine that's a lot like how we are as human beings. We are just as important as that beauty and just as timeless. My body of work strives to make people understand this feeling. I would like the viewer to feel the way I feel when I look at the stars, when they look at my paintings. A feeling of not just awe, but awareness for themselves and everything around them.

- Addison Kanoelani

Addison Kanoelani

Tempe Artist



**“The Rapturing Series, Part 2”
Spray paint on canvas
February 2015**

Addison Kanoelani

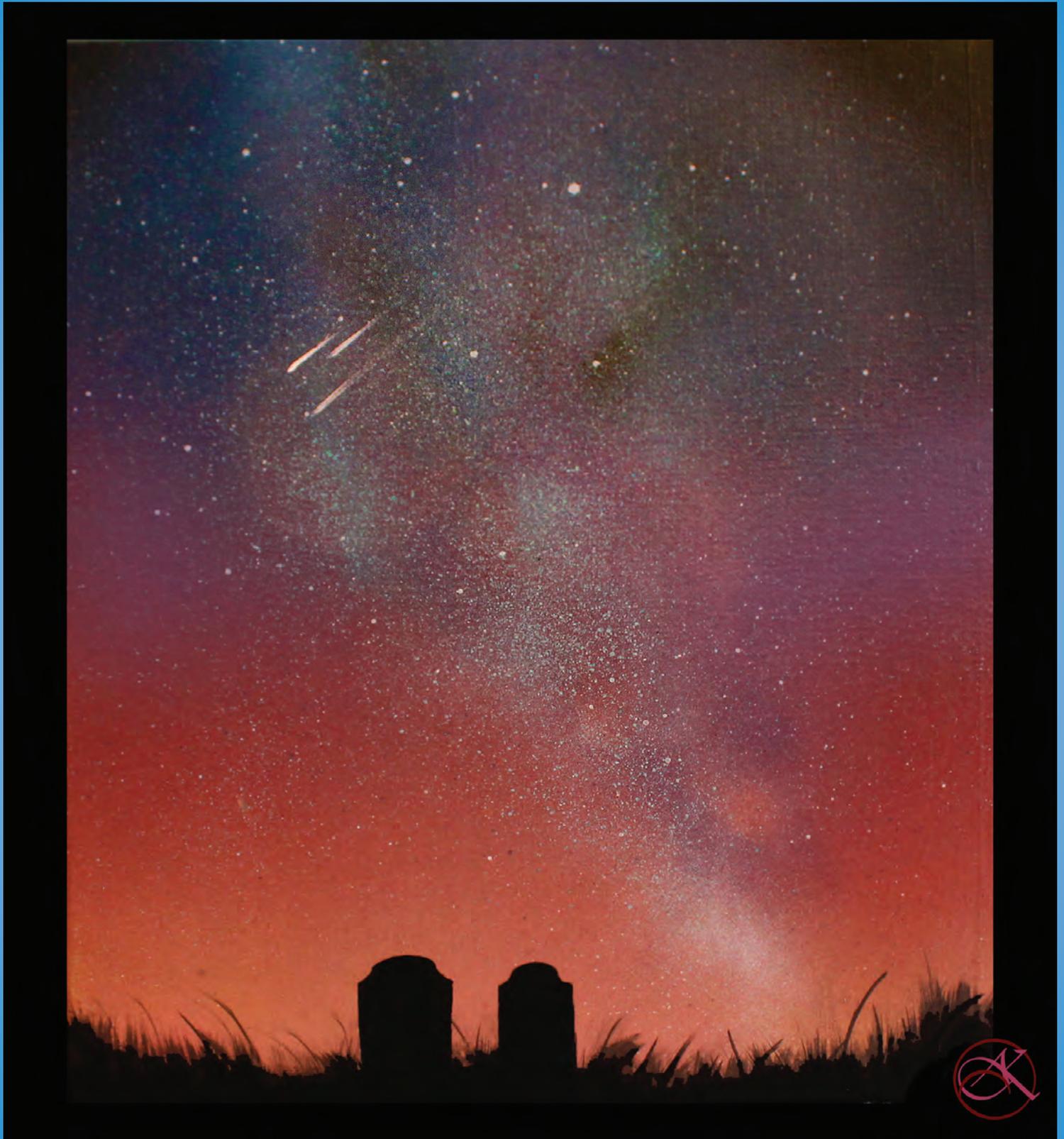
Tempe Artist



**“The Rapturing Series, Part 3”
Spray paint on canvas
February 2015**

Addison Kanoelani

Tempe Artist



**“The Rapturing Series, Part 4”
Spray paint on canvas
February 2015**

8 Poems by Annemarie Eveland

I See You

© 2015

When do I see you?
When there is a chair to move.
When there is a draping curtain to tie back.
When there is a wife pregnant and reclining.
When there is a child with a voice calling you.

I see you also in the places that others do not.
And when there is a hole in earth
That only heart of human can fill.
I see you in the music some hear naught
And in the eyes beyond tomorrow dreams.

There you are also in the grocery store
Packing things for all to enjoy in health
I see it is you who listens with your eyes

And makes each moment of a person
Something worthy when leaving you.
Some say you are intense,
Some say it is your passion
But I see you more
As leading with your heart

In many ways your eyes
See vision far beyond the norm.
Your heart leads you to the places
Where even angels do not tread.
But in such journeys
You seem to find
A heart-full world
That goes beyond
Touching lives that never end.
I see you as forever.



Annemarie lives in a small mountain village in Arizona and travels for work and pleasure. Some of her published works include the poetry books "Reaching for the Sun," "Wisdom of the Heart," and "Love Is My Way." The recently published book "Be the Ripple" (a collection of life stories showing how small actions or events often bring lasting effects or deep insights that can last for a lifetime) is now available on Amazon and Kindle. The additional upcoming books "Hurrah for Humans" and "Real Women Don't Wear Glass Slippers" are true life stories that uplift the human spirit, show the goodness of humanity and the ability humans have to overcome obstacles in their lives and learn deeper truths. Annemarie enjoys nature, traveling, teaching, writing, photography, watercolors, hiking, kayaking, natural healing, quiet contemplation and connecting with people on meaningful levels. She cherishes family, good friends, is an active community supporter wherever she travels and believes, "We are one in spirit, but express ourselves as unique, individuals."

Cracks of Light

© 2015

“You’ll be fine,” they said.
Both strangers nodded in unison.
I knew it was a lie, even then.
I saw the fear in their eyes
As they turned away from me.

I tried to move but could not
I felt myself floating upward
Somehow like my body
No longer belonged to me.

Distant arriving sirens wailed
Becoming louder and louder
As each moment ticked away –
Like waiting for a sentence.

Rain began falling on my face.
It was cool, somehow even soothing.
But their faces still haunted me –
Something unspoken in their eyes.

I never saw my face until later
When the doctors gave me
The walker I said I didn’t need.
I lied to myself to stay sane.

Nothing seemed the same now.
I felt like a menopausal teen.
Erratic, unpredictable, unstable.
Unable to focus, function, think.

It took a long time before
Someone found my head injury.
Then began the long process
Of building a new self.

“Can’t go back,” I told myself.
But how I longed for yesterday
When I could float many projects
And delighted in daily challenges.

Now I struggled for words
To make a simple sentence.
And hid from familiar faces
That had no meaning now.

The scars on my body healed faster
Than my broken brain and heart.
I held such sadness deep inside
For so many unknown reasons.

But finally, little cracks of light
Began finding their way inside me
And I took a deepening breath
And set free some of my longings.

It didn’t happen overnight, but
Rather inch by inch I found myself
Building other nurturing skills
To help me create new parts of me.

I am grateful for the process.
Proud of help I have received.
So much of what was taken long ago
Recycled to me astoundingly beautiful.

Rebuilt through many cracks of light
My inside beauty growing even brighter.
My gratitude to those who helped me
Heal cracks from that moment in time.

The Razor's Edge

© 2015

The brave soul
walks the Razor's Edge.
To live authentically
invites vulnerability.
Your tears speak
what your heart cannot.
In hiding nothing,
we find freedom.
And belonging,
not longing.
You invite me
 To walk with you.

In Celebration of Awa

© 2015

Dark eyes laced with sparkling light,
deep rich skin, glowing beauty within
long slender form gliding gracefully
embracing arms with heart that holds

lips that open easily and want to share
that which is sustaining, regaining, paining
all come with the gift of an authentic soul
and the beauty of a woman saluting life
in all its changing forms and formulas.

Nothing is lost, all is remembered
Shifting through filters of fondness
Whether a wrinkle or a wonder
Embracing all that is there
With the closeness of courage

She reaches for all she loves
With her heart speaking kindness
Healing her world from her heart
Holding her loves in her hands.

Her fears and fearlessness hold equality
And she moves from one to the other
Knowing that all is part of humanity
Yet beyond both, she stands powerful.

In mystic night or brilliant day
There is something within her
That will always find a way
To seek the true self who she is.

An Issue of Greatness

© 2015

there is that part of you
but there I cannot go,
it is so intrinsic to you
that only you can know.

It's a map of human heart
a vision without the eye;
yet, so great it is a love
I find it in you and I.

I cannot give it to you
and you can't give to me.
The only way we know it's real
is by the ways we share.

Like the streams of late day light
or morning's breath of warmth
we see only how it glows
from each one's slice of life.

So, when you feel alone
and when it's dark at day
just remember this secret
and you'll find your way.

For on that path I will stand
and wait and wait for you
for all you are is also me
and together we will renew

A miracle of this special light
that beams from heart to heart
and all we do and think and say
will daily be our joy-filled way.

A Walk in the Shadows

© 2015

My turn will come
to walk into the unknown
Leaving shadow memories
of the ones I once knew.

I'll turn and in the fading day
I'll disappear into the night.

There is but a moment between it
Beyond the bend and boundaries
Unknown and yet surrendering to all
Where I'll carry history in my head
And the lightness in my soul.

But so far I stay and long to learn
More about those deepening thoughts
I have not yet embraced.
So my clinging keeps me here.

Sometimes there is a moment in time,
When I think that all is well
And that I will remember
How to live outside the grace of time;

But, then I find myself forgetting
All that I have promised myself
About that special someplace
Where love is remembered well
And lives inside us all.

A secret place that few remember
And fewer yet take time to visit again.
A place of rapture embraced well
By those with awakened hearts.

Angel Eyes

© 2015

*Written for a special Russian lady
I cared for as Hospice volunteer.*

Bright and sparkling, shining true
I look down into the eyes of you.
With gifts of love, back they shine;
Cheerful still thru mirrors of time.

I hear some history now and then
But who you are is what you lend.
It counts less where you've been,
For what you bring is what you send.

The lines of hard work on your face
Matter not, for what you embrace
Is grander than what's fit for kings.
'Tis wealth of humans that you sing.

I see that life traces in your soul
Is your sunshine a gifted goal.
Your eyes reveal a spirit window
Radiating love to those you know.

You speak my name many times,
In communications cherished fine
"You're so thoughtful, you're so kind,"
"Annemarie!" your words then chime.

Little gestures from my helping hands
You genuinely notice such little things –
For just a blanket, a drink or a touch
You profusely thank me very much!

So, these words come back from me,
For in you, Angel Eyes I see!

Bringers of Things I Love

© 2015

Memories that flood in quiet time
are bringers of the things I love.
In quiet my thoughts are free
To run and play with tree.

In silence I have mostly free
My thoughts that used to be.
This quiet time without deeds
Of other's words and needs

In silence I can call up
The things that nourish me
They are usually spirit things
That keep alive the me I see.

Things that matter naught
To the ordinary days
Things that perhaps
Feed my soul in ways.

And if the gift of time
Presents me some great groan
I will just look and laugh
At their insights shown.

For I know a little secret
That keeps me going strong
It is that my Self can live
Through anything that's gone

In silence I hear you most.
those moments – so real –
when your eyes fill with what
your heart cannot speak.

In the gift of quietness
I reflect upon you
And wait for you to see
yourself through other eyes.

Do you not know
how incredibly
magnificent you are
and what gifts you bring
to our sleepy worlds?

Cannot you see
how your talents bond
with your sensitive soul?

Do you not feel how
your passion ignites
everyone in your path?

Can you not remember
your gift for undaunted loving?

How can anyone tell you –
you are always beautiful?
Draw some strength
from trusting other eyes.

The Grandma From Hell

By Fran Orenstein

© 2015

Staring at my reflection in the elevator doors, I frowned. Not my best morning, but then when was it ever? At least I wasn't parched and faint from the desert heat of summer. It was only a balmy ninety-five degrees in October. Like a Cyclops's eye shining in the moonlight, the silvery doors beamed back at me. I shivered, and glanced at the door leading to the stairwell. Did I really want to climb four flights because some elevator door sent the wrong vibe? Maybe it was the building itself, old, from the 1920s, with gargoyles on the roof and an old-fashioned shoe-shine stand in the lobby.

If I didn't have an early appointment to show one of the apartments, I wouldn't be here at all. Get real, Marty, it's just the ambiance, too retro, and well, old. People liked this kind of atmosphere, or they wouldn't be asking \$1.5 million for a two bed, one bath. At least there was a skeletal, ancient doorman on duty, probably here since it was built. He probably wasn't much protection, but he wore a clean uniform with bright, brass buttons that he had to shine daily; it showed some pride in his job.

Where was that elevator? I heard a creak and a groan. Rolling my eyes, I sent a prayer to the goddess of machines that tonight I would sleep in my own bed and not at the bottom of an elevator shaft. With a final clang and a swoosh, the doors slid open, and I stepped inside, crossing everything I could manage.

The elevator rose two floors and stopped. The doors opened and a woman entered. Short and chubby, with perfectly coiffed silver-blue hair, you would immediately place her as somebody's cuddly grandma, but when she opened her mouth an inquisitor cloned from Torquemada popped out. "Hello, my dear. Are you the sales agent for Apartment 4C?"

I nodded, now sure this was the building gossip. Perhaps if I didn't speak, she would get the message. I grabbed the rail

as the elevator shuddered, bounced and stopped. The light dimmed and all I saw was the shine of her silver lapel pin, shaped like the letter O, or an open mouth. I pushed the emergency alarm, but nothing happened. I yelled for help, but nothing happened.

"Don't worry, my dear. Happens all the time. Electricity isn't quite what it was touted to be by that Edison man is it?"

Edison man, as in Thomas? Great, a power outage and I'm stuck in an elevator with this nosy old woman. She had to know everything, my complete bio from conception to now. None of her business. Who did she think she was?

"So, your first love threw you over for your best friend?"

When did I tell her that? I nodded, praying that the power would come back on and we would move just one more floor. How was I so lucky to get stuck one floor away from freedom with the grandma from hell?

"That must have been terrible and you were only what, fourteen?"

"Fifteen." I clamped my hand over my mouth. Dummy, don't answer, but I was getting sucked into this interview. Had I really gone through fifteen years already? What was I thinking?

"Oh, so young." She pulled the fur stole tighter around her shoulders, fox heads and tails shifting as if they would leap off her ample bosom and rip out my throat.

I moved back until I pressed against the wall, the railing digging into my back. "Um, I'm going to try my cell phone again, maybe the call will go through this time."

"Interesting gadget, that thing you call a cell phone. Where's the dial?"

"What dial? It has buttons."

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An award-winning author and poet, Fran Orenstein, Ed.D., wrote her first poem at eight, and now writes books and poetry for 'tween, teens and adults in a variety of genres. Her published credits include a contemporary woman's novel, mystery/romance for adults, middle-grade novels, YA historical romance and fantasy adventure, chapter books for younger kids, a book of poetry for adults, plus short stories and poems in anthologies. A former teacher, counselor, magazine editor/writer, and manager of women's programs, Fran has also written political speeches, newsletters, legislation, promotional material, and issue papers. Visit her at www.franorenstein.com or contact her at franoren2@yahoo.com.

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“Fancy these new gadgets and so tiny, too.”

I edged around toward the doors, ready to offer anything if I were released from this box hanging by cables, including my first-born if that ever happened. Who was this woman? Sweat beaded between my breasts and elsewhere unmentionable. Blood pounded in my ears. I wanted to reach out and touch her, but fear held back my hand. Would she be flesh and blood? Besides, those foxes had beady little eyes and sharp snouts. Did one of the tails just swish? I closed my eyes as the elevator lurched and the lights came back on full strength. We creaked to the fourth floor, gears screeching. The doors parted and I dashed out. Turning my head, I looked back over my shoulder at the empty car as the silvery doors slid shut with a metallic clang.

I swallowed the bile rising in my throat and looked left and right, nothing. Where did she go? I pulled out my cell phone and hurried toward the beckoning red exit sign at the end of the corridor. Five bars; I pushed a series of buttons. The phone rang and rang. Answer please, I begged inside my head.

“Hello.”

Thank God. “Cara Smith?”

“Yes?”

“It’s Annie Soames, the realtor. I’m glad I caught you before you left. I’m so sorry but the apartment I was going to show you is under contract. I have some others available, also downtown that I’m sure will suit you even better. Why don’t we meet at my office at around one o’clock to go over the listings?”

“Oh, what a disappointment, I was really excited about living in an old classic building. There aren’t many around.”

“I’m sure, but what I have in mind has even more atmo-

sphere.”

“Well, I trust you. See you at one.”

I sighed in relief and clicked off. By that time I had reached the staircase entrance and pushed the crash bar. I peeked in to make sure the grandma from hell wasn’t lurking in the stairwell and scrambled down the stairs until I reached the lobby. The doorman looked up as I rushed by. “You alright, Miss?”

I stopped short, curious. “There was an elderly lady, short and round, blue-white hair in the elevator wearing a fox stole, you know with the heads and tails on it?”

“Sorry, Miss, no old ladies living in the building now, just yuppies and puppies.” He guffawed at his own joke, setting off a coughing spree. Finally able to breathe, he croaked, “It sounds like Mrs. Reynolds, though, but she up and died about seventy-five years ago, so don’t know how you saw her. Always hated those fox furs she wore; like they were eyin’ my throat.”

My knees felt weak and the bitter bile gurgled again. I peered at the metal name tag on his uniform jacket. “How long have you been here, um, Buddy?”

“Long time, Miss. Maybe Wilson was still president, or was it Harding; memory’s foggy. One of these days I’m goin’ to retire and move up to my cabin in the mountains up around Globe. Fishin’ every day, well ’cept in winter, but there’s always ice fishin’.”

Billy opened the door and I rushed through into the fresh air. “Have a nice day, Miss.”

I slid into my car, took a deep breath and looked over my shoulder at the building. I didn’t see Buddy with his shiny buttons, just the reflection of the sun on the stained glass doors. The gargoyle over the portico blinked. I shot out of there, burning rubber.

3 poems by Fran Orenstein

A Fool's Refrain

© 2015

In skin that burns with heat of shame
I wish to play the act again
Recall the words I said in vain
And hope they all forget my name

Words we speak do not reframe
But lie in wait like lurking pain
Unwanted memories remain
To rise unbidden in the brain

In squirming agony we claim
The words and deeds that do defame
Our pride in what we may attain
Diminished by past deed's disdain

Lies About Myself

© 2015

Here I stand upon a daisy dotted hill
Blonde hair blowing in the wind
Whipping across blue eyes
Blinding them to nature's gifts

Tall and slender as the Aspen
Quivering against the gusts
Strong legs keeping balance
And a spine in perfect alignment

But I in arrogant youthful ignorance
Believe that life will always be such
I am the body electric
Glowing forever in the fullness of life

Until the maddening tick tick tick
Moves time inexorably forward
Into the realm of reality
And reflections ripple into truth

What if ...

© 2015

They say what is done, cannot be undone
The past if altered, alters future lives
What if that were true, and all todays were not tomorrows
Would you still step into the fold of space

To venture back and erase the deeds of yesterday
Say no instead of yes, choose a different path
What if it were true you might not exist today
For time was changed by your reemergence as you

Different lovers, generations never born
Another life perhaps shorter but more exciting
What if you had the knowledge of today
Creating a profound effect upon tomorrow

The past beckons through the wrinkle in time
A siren's call to greatness, bringer of peace
What if it were you, that singular soul of change
If not for a simple decision made once upon a time

An Invisible Means of Support

By Dale L. Baker

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Every caregiver needs a support group. You may think you don't need one, but you do. You need a release valve to funnel off the tempest in your brain before it spews too much information all over innocent bystanders.

I embarrassed myself at the grocery store checkout stand one morning. I was piling Richard's supply of mint cookies and candy bars onto the conveyor belt when the sweet little bald-headed cashier commented on the tastiness of the Almond Joys[®] I was purchasing.

"Oh, they're not for me," I had to clarify. "They're for my husband. He has cancer and there isn't much he can eat, but the does have a sweet tooth and he loves Almond Joys[®]. It's so hard to find anything that he wants to eat . . ."

I continued my monologue, sparing few details. I think I even covered a colorful episode of explosive diarrhea while the shell-shocked cashier stared. It was a look like I had written "HELP ME" in bright red letters on a sticky-note and stuck it on my forehead.

I don't remember how I got back to my car. I'm sure the cashier eagerly assisted. As I regained my breath, the humiliation set in. I dropped my head on folded arms over my steering wheel. Here I was, a reserved private person, who just spilled my guts, my innermost secrets, to someone wearing a nametag I had no time to read.

I thought I was handling this caregiver thing so well, when obviously I wasn't. I didn't go to that store again for a long time and I still can't look that nice cashier in the eye. He has forgotten the incident, of course, but I haven't. I never will.

I didn't actually go looking for a caregiver support group. It found me while I was following up on a cancer patient support group for Rich. He was not enthusiastic about talking to other

people with cancer, but I thought it was something he should try. So did his oncologist since he had given us the referral. It pained me to see Rich isolated at home. All his friends but one had deserted him. He only left the house on short errands, which gave him an opportunity to smoke in the car. He only left his chair in front of the TV for cigarette breaks in the garage or the backyard.

Rich did go once to the cancer patient group but he didn't feel comfortable there. He blamed his poor hearing. I, likewise, gave the offshoot group for caregivers a try. It was a warm group. They all knew each other; I was the newbie. We sat on orange vinyl sofas and chairs in a little room in the depths of the hospital. The furniture circled a coffee table where a box of fluffy pop-up tissues was the centerpiece. I went a couple of times but didn't feel it was right for me. It was, perhaps, too early in our cancer journey. Rich and I expected him to recover from lymphoma. The recovery statistics were in his favor

A couple years later, after my grocery store meltdown, I thought again about that welcoming group huddled in the tiny room at the hospital. Rich and I were cancer veterans by then. Lymphoma had been beaten but liver cancer, a cancer with no effective treatment plans, no cures, was our new constant companion. Richard was terminal, it was only a matter of time.

When I returned to the group, I recognized two of the members (both men) from my earlier visits. They were still there. All the other faces were new to me as I was to them. The facilitator, a cancer survivor herself, had us talk one by one. The individual stories, what each caregiver had experienced in the last week, took my breath away. They were brave kindred souls, overcoming roadblocks that I thought were mine alone. Even before it was my turn to speak, I felt as if I had come home.

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Dale L. Baker moved to Arizona in 2012 to start a new life after several years of caring for family members in Oregon. Her public-service career included work at the city, county and state level in the areas of purchasing, claims adjusting and social services. A published poet and short story writer, the author's first book, "More Than I Could Ever Know: How I Survived Caregiving," won two literary awards in 2014 and is on the shelves at Dog-Eared Pages in Phoenix and Changing Hands Books in Tempe. The author facilitates a caregiver support group in her home in Peoria, participates in writer critique groups and open mics in the Phoenix area and loves to dance to songs sung in Spanish with a salsa beat. For details on her writing career and samples of her work, see <http://www.msdaledlbaker.com> or just google ms dale caregiver.

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Find yourself a support group where you can unload the horrors of your caregiver life. They will listen to every word and even ask questions. You'll know all of them by name. They have stories of their own to tell, stories that somehow always sound worse than yours.

1. Men need a support group perhaps even more than women do.
2. Men are more resistant than women to participating in a support group.
3. A man sometimes needs another man who has been there to say, "You need a support group. You don't think you do, but you do."
4. There is something incredibly endearing about a man crying.

"An Invisible Means of Support" is excerpted from the award-winning book "More Than I Could Ever Know: How I Survived Caregiving," one woman's journey, caring for herself and planning her future while nurturing her husband through his five-year battle with cancer. This tender love story offers plain language hands-on advice while questioning the boundaries of devotion and responsibility to those we love who are dying. Each vignette chapter deals with a crisis of daily living in end-of-life care and lists lessons learned for those struggling to handle the stress of long-term caregiving. Topics include choosing the right hospice, depression medication for caregivers, demanding respect and the importance of giving your loved one permission to die.

Poems by Michael Gregory

Five from “Pound Laundry”

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in tongues

from rock to slippery rock cross stream calling
all things by their proper names

as they have made themselves known
to those with ears

negotiating

passages subterranean phosphorescent

into with any luck a way

from the ear’s empathies to the eye’s
pristine diamond silence

to get somewhere flat circumferences no more
than priesters gun sellers or debt brokers go

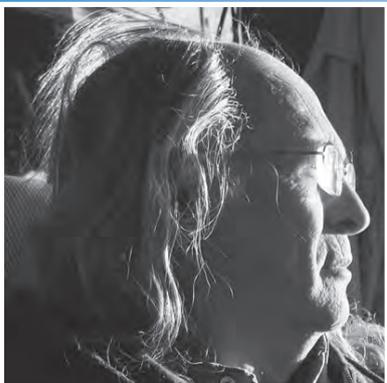
from sight through opinion to judgment from knowing to acumen
through the dark stones of the tower the man-child came to

leaning perilously
against the leaden sky

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These pieces are from the author’s “Pound Laundry” (forthcoming from Post-Soviet Depression Press), a book-length poem based on the life and work of Ezra Pound. The poem consists of voices on a variety of topics, voices that were or were likely to have been going through Pound’s head. Recurrent themes and images (from literary, scientific, economic, political and other sources) play upon each other throughout the book, often in Pound’s own words, or those of others past and present, historical, fictional and mythical.

Widely recognized as a principal instigator, practitioner and promoter of what came to be known as literary modernism, Pound wrote influentially not only on literature, but on drama, visual arts, music and, most notoriously, on anti-capitalist economics and politics. His obsession with these last two topics led to his support of Mussolini during the nearly twenty years he lived in Italy, his arrest at the age of 59 for treason when the US Army occupied Italy in 1944, and his incarceration without trial in St. Elizabeth’s mental hospital in Washington, D.C., for 13 years, until he was released by the Eisenhower administration after having been found mentally unfit to stand trial and no danger to the public or government. He spent his remaining years back in Italy. His 800+-page poem “The Cantos” is considered a reprehensible anti-Semitic and “fascist epic” by many critics, as well as (by some of those same critics) one of the greatest works of high modernism.



Michael Gregory’s books and chapbooks include “Hunger Weather 1959-1975,” “re: Play,” and most recently “Mr America Drives His Car,” selected poems from roughly the last quarter of the last century and the first decade of this one, published in 2013 by Post-Soviet Depression Press. Since 1971, he has lived off-grid ten miles from the U.S.-Mexico border in the high desert grassland of southeast Arizona, the location of his 1975 book, “The Valley Floor.”

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Ridiculous gesture said the younger of the two
to no man in particular like father like son
not like sis eyeballs floating the ghosts of memory
reliving themselves the one holy water after the other
thinly arcing trajectory of angels falling
transformed into the sea of that O so catholic night
outside the house where the lovely woman of means found them
in their usual attitude listing to starboard
when she took them in hand to feel for herself
just exactly how they were hanging

music rhythm emotion

rehearsing the two-fold vision

talk logic thought

signs become song

catching the mind
in words as it moves

proving little
enough
to the point

trusting in more or less

spontaneous emissions

spinning out of the flames

finer than spider's silk

whispering a veiled name

to illuminate something of substance in the moonlight

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During the war to end all wars
the war to save capital from itself
so many didn't come back from or come through
whole, fought like all of them with gas
lies and bloody hands, gun runners
selling to both sides, elastic money
bought across the wires at high mark-up,
the death of one in particular causing
a lifelong sense of loss and survivor's guilt
war just another monopoly
creating demand for its business
intellectual internationalists
enlisted *pro patria* alongside
the loyal opposition the arts of peace
as dead as atheism in the trenches;
 pissing off friends and enemies alike
with his flair for *ad lib* invective
an unflappable sense of his own genius
still young enough to have interest in seeing
how much he could get away with
while blasting with quasi-Cubist and proto-Dada
canons at the staid and strait-laced
out of one side of his Underwood,
recounting troubadours' affairs from the other
finding in ancient Aquitaine and China
refuge of sorts from the current derangement;
 relaxing in converse with beautiful women
the purring of invisible antennae,
engaging with women of means who in a breath
will speak of equality independence
and a longing to serve and sacrifice, a desire
to be wholly used by the one who loves
them, of loving themselves best when in love
feeling most themselves when lost in another
more lovable loving than being loved
though lovable having both use and exchange
value does involve reciprocity;
 having an octogenarian Voltaire
in veiled play on Ovid's tongue-in-cheek
caution a lady *To stop loving and being
lovable, that is the real death*
the daughter goddess returned with knowing eyes
the goddess of mercy and compassion at hand;
 laughing himself silly in the balcony
front row feet propped up on the rail
cowboy hat on amber-waved head watching
slapstick and pratfall before talkies
came in and magic lanterns went out,
sight gags muggings cornball plots
hypnotic characters in close-ups
an almost animal magnetism, written

titles translating their pantomimes so how
their mouths move may tell a different story,
tap dancing all the way home
after an hour of Rogers and Astaire.

After promises broken east and west
patriots betrayed treaties ignored
the red flood sweeping in from the east,
moving with increasing difficulty
through the rising swill of hypocrisy
excreted by the big three setting things in motion
for the next carnage and splitting of dividends;
 focused on being productive not reproductive,
caring less now about form than *praxis*
how to get things done in the real world,
he switched from myths of aesthetic creation
to myths of history and high finance—
a global agrarian economy
a just price based on use value
everyone granted the purchasing power to choose
choosing the true the useful the beautiful
poems having political effect;
 reviving with his *compagna virtuosa*
the baroque red priest they found turning to dust
on archive shelves, giving sustenance
to the self-proclaimed bad boy composer
of *ballets mécaniques* and *sonatas sauvages*
before and after the riots and headlines they caused,
composing his own operatic *montages*
set to the words of Villon and Cavalcanti
with an eye to the likes of Cocteau and Picabia
before pulling out of a Paris taken over
by surreal neo-nietzschean clatter
to swim in a smaller pond south of the Alps;
 agreeing with Dante that empire might not be so bad
so long as the *dictatores* one at a time
or *in senatus* are upright and just,
still trying to figure out where the rot began
that ate the hull that sank the ship that drowned
the crew that sailed out past the gates
into the cold Atlantic of the mind
the euxine Pacific of the heart.

In the collapse following the Crash—
the central banks bankrupting Central Europe
while letting the lesser banks loan at obscene rates
money they didn't have and brokers sell
at top dollar stocks they knew were worthless
to people they knew couldn't afford to lose;
 the utter stupidity and venality

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of agricultural authorities
ordering farm crops destroyed because hungry people
no longer have the money to buy them,
the fox again in the henhouse bankers
inside the mint the infamy of the nation
having to pay interest on its own money,
to borrow it from private parties in order
to keep people from starving in a land of plenty;
 disgust with the liberal establishment
more virulent by the second,
intellectuals of all stripes
fed up with hands-off economic
politics and boardroom ethics,
nostalgia for the past that never was
a kind of obvious inanity
to a decade flooded in theories
of how to get things back on track;
 though he'd made it with ears burning past
songs that might have driven him mad learning
a thing or two about melody in the process,
though knowing his own strings were best tuned
to snowflakes falling in oriental winter
the purring of a cat in his mistress's lap,
knowing you can't play all tunes at once
yet tempted to conclude with friends writing
marching songs for blue and brown shirts,
putting new words to the popular airs of the crowd,
afraid a nation once utterly corrupt
can as Ruskin had warned be redeemed
only by a military despotism,
that western civilization having wound up
as mindless murderous bureaucracy
nothing short of apocalypse would do:
wipe clean with phenolic the *tabula rasa*
refresh with blood the tree of liberty
Fiat lux that those to come next may start fresh;
 though at the top of his game in his fifties
writing off to natural maturation
the fact that smiles let alone joy and glee
(*jouissance* the troubadours' supreme value)
came less and less of late, the light less often
bridging with love aforethought the gap
between life and death, keeping to himself
any qualms that it all might be
pretentious bullshit, the works of genius
crank racist bigot a lonely kitten
crying for attention, the ego throwing up
mask after mask after mask, unable
or unwilling to shape his rhetoric
to his audience, to see that his failure

to dissociate economic
reform from praise of Roman politics
and white anglo-saxon supremacy
kept the bureaucrats and legislators
from hearing his main message at all, he was mad
as a sack of bees that the walls in DC
didn't fall as easily as they had
in the literary Jerichos and that
after he got there out of his own pocket
though they observed the courtesy protocols
due his political ancestry
they gave him even less audience
than Kung got in the Forbidden City:
the insulting smile the humoring the flat
much-too-often mocking refusal to listen
at all to his plan for preventing the next war
by simple commonsense monetary measures
let alone let him bend FDR's ear
on how to achieve moral rearmament,
twisting his already more frequent delusions
into paranoia his fears into anger
his wit into a blunt instrument.

By the time the panzers rolled through the Ardennes
the zeroes into the skies of Pearl Harbor
the bombers into the air over Monte Cassino
the pivot had begun to wobble badly,
dwindling hope turned into vehemence
religious dispute into black bile and spit
his to-the-point arguments into change-the-topic
retreats into nostalgic vituperation
his poetry into counterpoint between
discomposed prose and lyrical brilliance
his upbeat ironic erudition
into recondite tutorial haranguing
his invective into a blue streak
johnny one-note drumming his two-four
refrain *Wars are made to make debt*
his radio persona an out-of-date
out-of-touch hayseed smart aleck
his audience anybody's guess
his quasi-platonist elitism
into Fascist Renaissance daydreams
the vortices of power coincident
with vortices of creative intelligence
running the new corporate republic
on Confucian beauty-as-order precepts
slightly restyled along futurist lines
even *der Führer* might buy into
once he saw how well it worked in Naples.

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Believing democracy the biggest mistake
the previous century made—the rule of gold

displacing the golden rule capitalism
given the state and a free hand on workers—

the anti-Leninist left in France
was longing for a totally new civilization

led by a proletarian elite
an avant-garde aristocracy of producers

an intellectual youth avid for action
that didn't mind calling itself fascist.

The year before the non-aggression pact
the intellectual partisans in New York

believed the workers' revolution still
possible, even likely, in Germany—

Hitler capitalism's true face,
bourgeois anti-fascism one more

attempt by the middle class to avoid its fate,
the war an imperialist machination

the US should stay out of on pain of bringing
neo-totalitarianism back home.

At Bretton Woods the US having entered
the war officially and having three-fourths

the world's bullion at Fort Knox and having
a Kremlin spy heading up its delegation,

naturally refused Britain's plea
to take the world off the gold standard

persuading the allied nations instead
to set up the Monetary Fund

to insure that when the war was over
they would all be in debt to Wall St.

In the year before the liberation
—undertaken as few knew at the time

mainly to appease the Russians for getting slaughtered
on the eastern front in the bloody mess

both sides said was a war of good against evil—
with Germany starting to call the shots

in Italy, Christ's vicar on earth
proclaimed from Vatican City that Mussolini

was the greatest man he'd ever known
without doubt a profoundly good man.

© 2015

All here maybe mad off course
loose in white sheets point blank paper
 many-tongued background noise
looking through any number of looking glasses
refracting various hues and shades of darkness

Yet claim to not be delirious knowing
that that only suggests authorship/
 originality delirium
just as its opposite—claiming to be
insane—achieves discursive reality

Delirium not of the brave but one
coincident with the mental transmission
 electronic media dictate—
to write at all an acting-out of madness
protecting delirium from the loss of its words

A cat may look at a king of the magic mountain
leering and blinking up a tree
 in the pineal colony afraid
the doctors will suck his brain out through his nose
to pay for all that intercourse with the dead

© 2015

Why everyone still seemed to think ordeal
necessary after this many
centuries and so many good answers
obvious enough to anyone
who took time to look, escaped him.
Why in this time of over abundance men
supposed to be of good sense and will
still let arms peddlers and money changers
strap the world to a private interest wheel,
bedeviled his gray matter right through
the twelve years of silence at the end.

In the family album a profile shot
posed on a rooftop with the sea behind,
face lined, wizened presumably
from looking long into his own vision
hearing a music past masters insisted
be sung to a raft of cauliflower ears
lotus-eaters pot-metal tokens in hand
closed minds up their own orifices
whose memories quail at the day before yesterday
who can't help but mistake for dancing their stumbling
from delivery to burial.

Grown long in the tooth despite the long knives,
each bite of the apple revealing the flesh
blue around the edges where his lips had been
insatiable, her shoulders perfectly fit
to his palm her breasts rising to his intention
with an intensity matching his own,
all the rational hesitations cast off
in the gray lynx-light of her eyes fixed
on his where he kneels before sunrise,
lips and tongue performing her office.

7 poems by Richard Fenton Sederstrom

Creosote

© 2015

On the flats below any bajada,
saguaro and tourist-dotted
Sonoran desert slopes,
Pimeria Alta once, *Desierto de la muerte* once and again.

Dragline country now, home of bulldozer, backhoe,
air conditioned developer of city sprawl,
and nine thousand year old climax forest!

Real and authentic hidden epitome of the desert
ripped from its unpitied landscape.

Creosote bush, *Larrea tridentata*, survives anyhow
from under the blade, indigenous desert weed
of who knows how many ancient uses lost,
because the O'odham were draglined in their day—

and the smell of the Sonoran creosote,
whose oldest ring of clones resisted human interference.

Nine thousand years.
Rain scent of desert wild,
weed-rooted in its holy circle.



In his fourth book, "Eumaeus Tends," the poet admits: "By choice and necessity, I lead an eremitic life. I have not been educated in what is called 'creative writing.' I do not deserve to display the credentials of the MFA, and so I cannot be regarded as a professional poet. I like it that way. It is probable that I make many mistakes. I am inclined to allow the beginnings of my poems to wander in prosy fashion and let rhythm take over when it has a mind to. Still, my mistakes are my own. But if anything I say is worth saying, the worth is my own too. I'd like to think that those who look at the poems may gain from my mistakes and venture their own. We may learn together and enjoy together the adventure of making language and sharing it." Contact the poet at richard_sederstrom1221@q.com.

August Afternoon at Play

© 2015

Dozers and graders have dug and straightened
and smoothed a new six-foot berm in the landfill.
We back the pickup near the berm, the new spot

for new trash, remove our ladder and haul the load
of cut palo-verde and mesquite out by the bottom
branches, lay it down all of a thorny piece.

A dump-truck pulls up, noses up to the high berm,
drops a load of busted-up road, concrete chunks,
hundreds of pounds per chunk, behind the truck.

Berm at the nose end, concrete at the ass end,
he scratches his pate and asks if we have a shovel.
We wonder to him what good it would do

if we *did* have a shovel. He climbs into the cab and sits.
We listen to the news for a few minutes and smoke.
Then we leave. We leave our ladder behind us.

“We work together . . .” thinking ahead or not.
In the desert summer, heat is the equalizer,
maker of the common mind, our *genius ludi*.

Lucretius' Dervish

© 2015

Once I could enjoy
 sitting for what
 seemed to be
 listless and perfect
hours watching Sufi
 motes dance among
 listless bars of
 sunlight flowing
from my window.
 Now I do not think
 I can see
 those motes any
longer, though sunlight
 bars still attract
 the microscopic
 to my inner eyes. Nor
do I float or spin
 in dreams any longer.
 Except for now,
 when sun charged
motes twirl again,
 and my meandering
 pencil distracts
 my eyes from needing
to see.

Feeding

© 2015

A Gila woodpecker
approaches the peaceful station
of our vulnerable hummingbird feeder.
The woodpecker attacks, or seems to,
has no choice not to, no matter how peaceful
the bird is in his neighborly intentions.

Lacking the hummingbird's instinct and skill
for control in stasis,
lacking a perch to sip politely from,
the clumsy woodpecker
catches such of our imitation nectar as it catches
by ramming itself against the plastic flower—

a battleship trying to nudge its way
alongside a poor fishermen's wooden pier—
in just the careless manic discourtesy
by which the creatures who manufacture
imitation nectar and plastic blossoms
drive away the hummingbirds of nations.

The brute innocence of unexamined power.

The Return Conestoga

© 2015

*January, 1967, United Airlines,
evening flight from Chicago. Rain*

Chicago wasn't so ripe for the picking.
The open collars aren't rubes anymore.
Still un-tied, they own Harvard law degrees,

Lake Shore penthouses, contracts, theories
of arbitrage and cultured cynicism.

At thirty-five thousand feet above the hearth,
home is the hunter, almost. Almost.

Some read, local papers, business journals,
Wall Street, Barron's, TheTimes.
Some only pretend to read, and I play the game.
I'm not reading the book in my lap.

We pretend together, pretend to invent
the singletree and yoke, the arrowhead, fire,
silent loving smiles, discover salt. Preserving nothing,
we spread salt on our native ground.

Few choose to eat the airfare dinner,
sodium banquet passed round by the smooth
vacancies our masters breed and mold.

Americans all, are we not our own small masters?

Not many cocktails purchased or dreamed of.
Salesmen, but no golf course coarse jokes.
The American businessman is tired to his bone.

Anonymous, the checked sports coat next to me,
large with salesmanship and cigar smoke,
aims straight ahead, straight for Pittsburgh,

focuses tunneled, unblinking into familiar bowels—
home, children, fire for barbecue or alter.

Did we earn our rest and bread today,
Hunt, build, cut wood, prepare a prayer?

We think business is not awfully good.

No cocktails.
No shoptalk.

The plane slogs though a clay of gray drizzle.
Pittsburgh, once you jailed Chicago's poet.

A Grace from the Usurer

© 2015

In dubious honor of Robert Rector and the Heritage Foundation

“They can’t be poor.
They have refrigerators.
Let them afford their refrigerators.
Let them afford
the gift of the refrigerators we sell them.
Let them afford
some of the cost of the food
in the refrigerators we may repossess.

“Let them,
if they can and Oh . . .
Oh we think they can, know they will,
should agree to, pay interest on
credit cards for the food they lavish
on their refrigerators,
pay for the copper they borrow with the gold
we demand.

“So that
they will have nothing left
whereby
to afford the painful luxury of their tears:
Wherefore
we do declare them happy.
And so they shall be.
And *we* shall be consoled.”

Zhuangzi's Monkeys

© 2015

I

Formless gray bug fumbles into a corner of my eyeshot.
I two-hand swat it for its mosquito pretension.

Some admonition might Zhuangzi give here
casually to ward off disaster to the ambitious,

from the shadow now of his westering way,
the crumpled silk of his small fame.

II

Will the next monkey to read Master Zhuang learn?
No. He will be hired as a prodigy to perform,

reading loudly to masses who will destroy him
in their envy, their formaldehyde admiration.

III

A trophy fish, perfected in plastic
but surely not its old self, hangs high,

proud on a suburban wall, admired for size,
shades of color, poise of attack stroke,

is nevertheless dead for the beauty endowed it.
Zhuangzi, poet of no size, but shades of color,

poise of no attack, hangs nailed to the trophy wall
of my molded, shaded, buoyant, polystyrene

notions, all spaced in bucolic clutter.
And my own raw pelt?

IV

In my way I follow the master's indirection,
avoid intent. Pelt stretched here, wrinkled there,

balding and baggy-eyed, I have subtly avoided
the eight by ten glossy by way of the program

of unstudied inaction. But what about legacy?
Ah. Styles change. What does the man of summer Dao

know about the great world's taste in the demimonde
of monkeys? Only, how to avoid that tree.

Chet Provorse

Peoria Artist



“Heredity Construct”
Digital photograph
2009



Chet Provorse, the artist, writes: “I represent a diverse photographic life experience in fine arts, marketing, photojournalism, community-service documentaries, multimedia and commercial video productions. During over 40 years of image making, I have honed my style while exploring creative vision focused toward unique impressions that reveal and impact. My photographic interests are rich, varied and always evolving, earning national, regional and local recognition in solo and juried exhibitions, as well as in international publications and on Arizona public television.” Partial publication credits list: Arizona Consortium for the Arts; Arizona Humane Society; Arizona Illustrated, KUAT-TV Public Television; Arizona Science Center; The Buffalo Evening News; Habitat For Humanity; CBS Channel 5 Television; Mesa Tribune; Native American Connections; Native Peoples Magazine; New York Times, Sunday Edition, Arts Section; Phoenix New Times; Popular Photography Magazine; Scottsdale Views; The Arizona Republic. The artist can be reached at imagyst@cox.net or 623-341-2842. His Facebook page is www.facebook.com/Imagyst.

Chet Provorse

Peoria Artist



“A Dusting”
Digital photograph
2010

I am a visual “imagineer” seeking to create images that explore and provoke while revealing some qualities of my character and interpretation of the world’s realities I encounter. My imagery is my visual voice filtered through my eyes, values and experiences. If you were to know only one thing about me, that should be my passion for photography. My camera and my mind’s artistic eye allow me to create visions which others, though looking, may not see until my images stand before them. This is my gift, this is who I am and the visions I share. Purposely, my imagery does not present all that was before me; rather I share impressions, fragments and illusions that require the viewer to create the rest of the image’s world through their mind’s eye and “realities” using what I have revealed.

- Chet Provorse

Chet Provorse

Peoria Artist



"Desert Flight"
Digital Photograph
2006

Chet Provorse

Peoria Artist



“El Espacio de Margarita”
Digital photograph
2009

Coming Oct. 25, 2015!

The Annual

Fall Festival of the Arts!

**The Annual Fall Festival of the Arts will be noon-4 p.m. Sunday,
Oct. 25, at the Historical Society Museum at Papago Park,
North College Avenue, Tempe.**

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**

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: The last Thursday of each month, 5 p.m. to 7 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.

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 or 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.

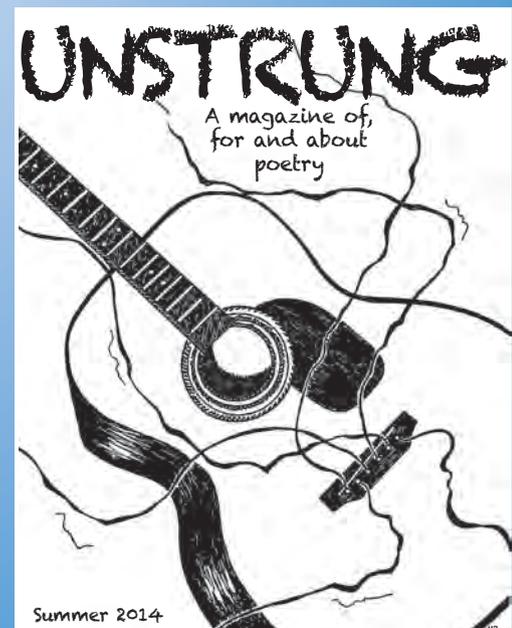
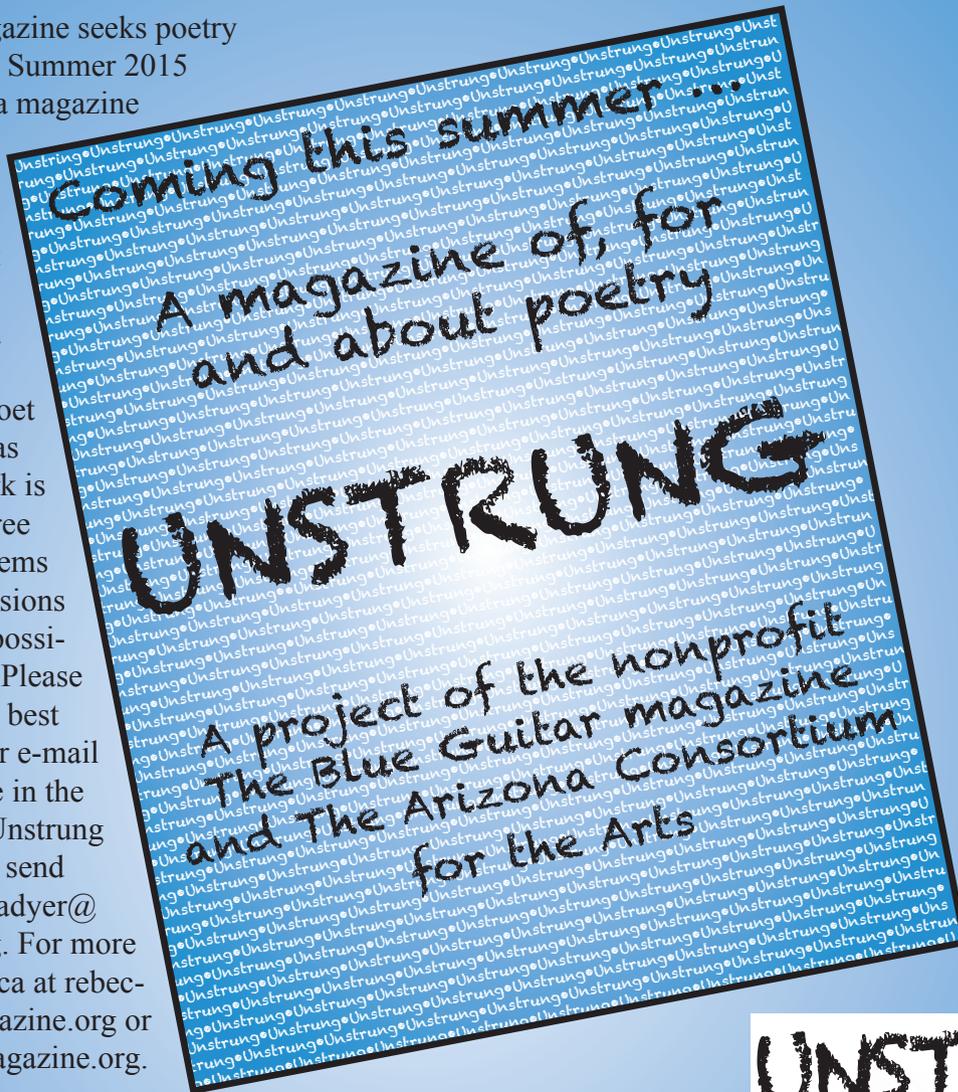
Designed by Effie Bouras, the Center will feature numerous spaces for the arts in all genres, performances and presentations. A flexible and variable seating performance theater for rehearsals, concerts, theatrical presentations, video art and films, lectures, meetings and recordings will be available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

A Call to Poets for the 2015 Issue of Unstrung

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks poetry submissions for the Summer 2015 Issue of Unstrung, a magazine

of, for and about poetry. Submissions will be accepted from June 1 through July 3. 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. Submissions must be in the best shape possible and publication-ready. 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. For more information, e-mail Rebecca at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org or visit 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 and 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.

Rebecca Dyer, co-editor: A Tucson native, Rebecca is a poet, journalist and teacher now residing in Mesa with her husband, Rick, her Blue Guitar co-editor. Reach her at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.

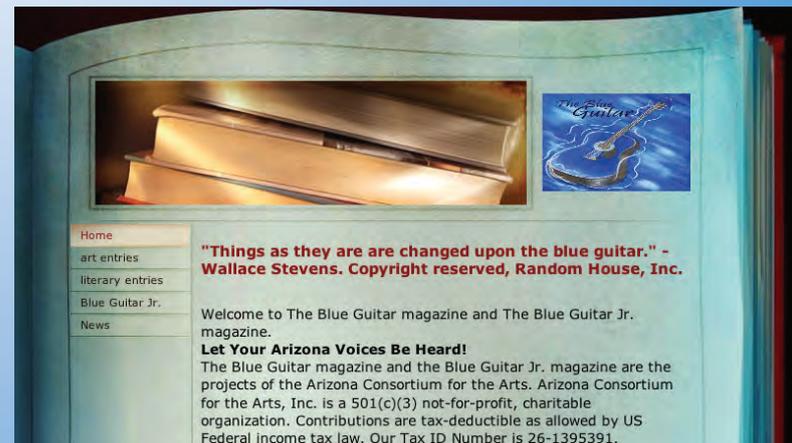


Richard H. Dyer Jr., co-editor: Richard (married to Rebecca, above) is the managing editor for three weekly newspapers in the East Valley, a photographer and a welded-steel sculptor. Reach him at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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.

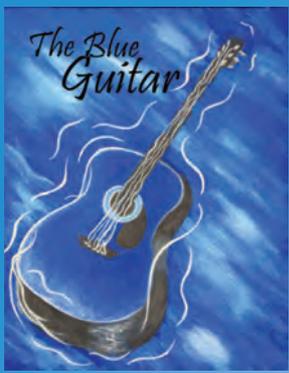


Check our websites for news on the arts



Check out The Arizona Consortium for the Arts website, www.artizona.org. There, you can sign up for an e-mailed newsletter.

The Blue Guitar Magazine's website is www.theblueguitarmagazine.org. Like us on Facebook. Follow @BlueGuitarMagAZ on Twitter.

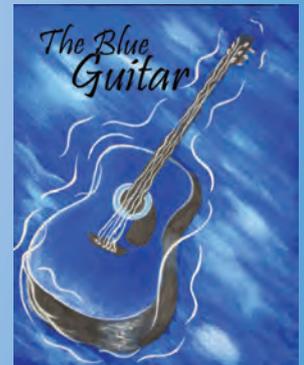


A Call to Writers for Fall

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks literary submissions for the Fall 2015 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 2. Submissions are sought in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction. Writers must submit original work and must live part- or full-time 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. Submissions must be in the best shape possible and publication-ready. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

A Call to Artists for Fall

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks art submissions in all mediums for the Fall 2015 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 2. Any artists who work in any visual art media, are 18 years or older and are part- or full-time 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. Submissions must be in the best shape possible and publication-ready. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Richard Dyer at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit 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 and www.artizona.org.

“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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A Call to Writers for The Blue Guitar Jr.

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

The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks literary submissions for its next annual issue for children and teens. Submissions from children and teens and adults who write for children and teens are sought by Oct. 1, 2015, in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction — all geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Writers must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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www.theblueguitarmagazine.org and www.artizona.org.

A Call to Artists for The Blue Guitar Jr.

Open to children and teens who are artists
and to adults who create art
for children and teens

The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks art submissions for its next annual issue for children and teens. Submissions from children and teens and adults who create art for children and teens are sought by Oct. 1, 2015, in all media geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Artists must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the artist 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 mediums; 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, contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. Please include your name and the best way to contact you. To submit or for more information, e-mail Editor Richard Dyer at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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Volume 7,
Number 1
Spring Issue
FREE!

*“Things
as they are
are
changed
upon
the
blue guitar.”*