

The Blue Guitar

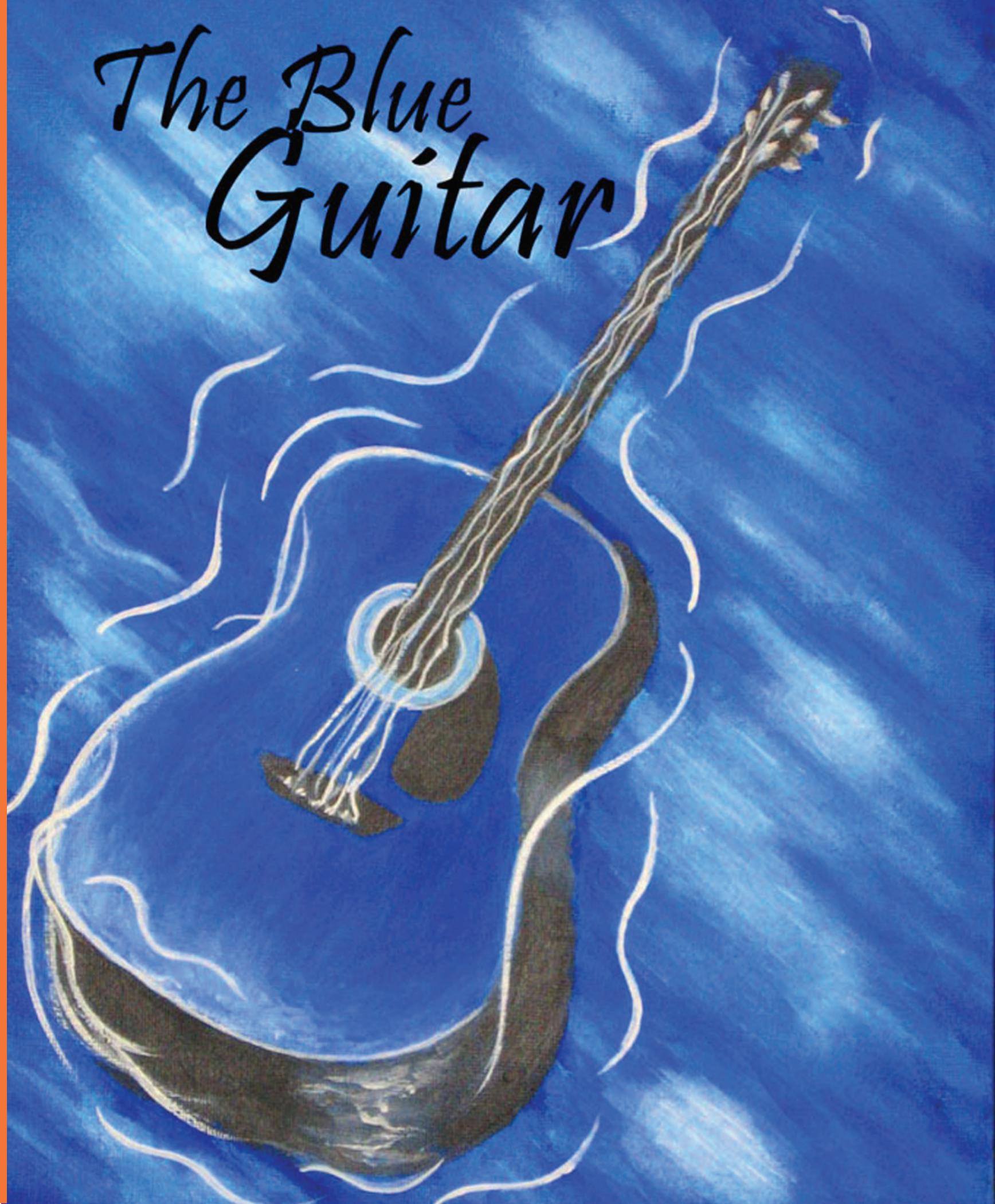


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Editors’ Note

I had the opportunity to speak and show videos and photos about welding and my steel sculptures at a recent Mesa Art League meeting at Mesa Arts Center’s contemporary art-gallery lecture hall. The audience was made up of accomplished artists, so it was especially satisfying for me to be able to share my passion and my process with like-minded, artistic peers.



Co-Editor
Richard H.
Dyer Jr.

A bit over a week later, I toured galleries and spaces in downtown Phoenix during Art Detour 28, visiting with artists and learning about their processes, from ideas to artworks.

We have many thought-provoking written and visual works in this issue. If you like something you read or see, look to the biographical sections of the authors/artists and send them a quick e-mail about what you liked. Encouraging Arizona artists is an important part of my process and should be yours as well.

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www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org

Spring 2016

4 poems by Sue Hyon Bae

Email Home, Lunar New Year

© 2016

—February 19, 2015
Tempe, Arizona, USA

Of course, it's not celebrated here; besides, nothing is new. It's already February; the saguaros in my front yard lean identical angles. I went to work as usual, stopped for a fast food burger. A young black server was smilingly polite to an old white woman screaming for a soda refill. To look away, I read editorials on my phone: Oliver Sacks, at eighty-one, is dying of cancer. *I have been a sentient being, a thinking animal, on this beautiful planet, and that in itself has been an enormous privilege and adventure...I feel the future is in good hands.* How selfishly grateful I am that just when I felt how terrible it would be to grow old like her, someone else reminded me of the possibility for improvement. I know you've already told me this, but it didn't make sense until now. I promise to call the grandparents tomorrow. When one asks me about marriage, I'll try hard to be pleasant. There are little gray birds where I live, bigger than sparrows, fatter, with startled silly black eyes and black bands around their necks. When one runs away from me, the band bobs up and down like a busily chewing mouth. I hope you love the magpies in your neighborhood as much as I love these birds. I hope you're not too offended when you're visiting the crazy great aunt for New Year. I'm going to attempt frying jeon tonight. It probably won't work. Eat double servings for me.



Sue Hyon Bae is International Editor at Hayden's Ferry Review. Her work appears in "Four Chambers Press Presents: Poetry and Prose for the Phoenix Art Museum," Apple Valley Review, Please Hold Magazine, and elsewhere. Reach the poet at suehyonbae.wordpress.com and suehyon.bae@asu.edu.

The Beautiful Country

© 2016

mi: beauty. Not used by itself
but to form other Korean words such as
miin: beautiful person
misul: fine art
miguk: the United States of America.
No, really. Chinese does the same: měiguó.

So: there are literally billions of people
who have this association, USA:
beautiful country, whether we like or believe
it or not — I believe it
sometimes but in those moods
I believe it of the universe

At first you don't know it
the same way American children don't know
the Latin roots of their words
I made the connection
when I was eight but it was meaningless
then America you were so distant
you might as well have been Narnia

Okay so usage transcends
etymology right like when we say
someone's sinister we're usually not
maligning lefthandedness

but the beautiful country is so
plain and open
I mean its meaning

& every time someone complains in Korean
about the American military presence
or the hegemony of American media
the automatic translator in my brain
whispers: beautiful country

it's seriously annoying
but what else can we say? How else
to sum up this place
where I live & vote — I became
a citizen: simin, literally city person,
on October 10, 2013, that was
the year I graduated college from St. Louis,
a year before Ferguson, a month before Jonathan Ferrell,
the year of Obama's second inauguration, Boston
Marathon bombings, George Zimmerman's
acquittal, Detroit bankruptcy, debt-ceiling crisis,
I knew what I was getting into they made it
unnavigably difficult too they lost my paperwork
I complained it was like they were trying
to dissuade me from citizenship
I could have moved back to Korea
or emigrated someplace new
but I voluntarily committed myself to America

Sometimes I feel like I live
in a suburb painted on top
of a Roadrunner cartoon sometimes
the mountain behind my house is a golem
awake but lazing in bed
sometimes on the bus someone
says something ugly to me & I wonder if they
would say the same or nothing
at all if they knew I was / we were
citizens of the beautiful country
sometimes someone demands to know
what type of Asian I am
before they will speak to me
sometimes I am greeted
in the wrong Asian language
poorly pronounced which feels less rude
even though it involves more assumptions
sometimes the beautiful people
eat foreign words first cautious italics
attempts at making the right vowel sounds
soon abandoned & this used to bother me
not anymore say it I'm from Soul I'm a miguksimin

Itinerary

© 2016

For weeks before the trip, you anxious-dream
an infinite airport, you dragging along
a suitcase unspeakably precious, always
in the wrong terminal, following
blurred signs that say Turn Right.

Everything has gone wrong, so you agree,
Turn Right. On the fifth leg
of a centipedal trip, only your left foot
is in this city. Your right foot has gone ahead
to the next layover. Turn Right.

You are moving out in a spiral. Turn
Right. You are conducting
a spiral search pattern of the world.
Logically, it can't fail. All of you will be,
eventually, where you need to be.

4 poems by Esther Schnur-Berlot

The Face of Time

© 2016

Born of wanderers
 we left New York
with promises to stay in touch

Her social worker persona
was always there
 for my chattering obsessions

Never hiding our weaknesses
we spewed self doubts weekly
accepting each others see-saw moods

Taking turns
We flew coast to coast
often meeting midway with mishaps
laughing at the blowout flat
that delayed our trip by hours
to the ruins
 of Chichen Initza

Like lines imbedded on our faces
time has deepened our friendship

I call with good news

*Got the airline tickets
Join you in Hilton Head on Thanksgiving*

Greeted with a flat hello
a measured pause
I hear the dreaded words
ovarian cancer



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, published by the Poetry Corner in Sun City. She also will appear in Poetica's Spring Issue of 2016. E-mail her at iberlot@q.com.

Tossed and Found

© 2016

Bleached by sun – frayed by time
layers of thoughts are piled high

Uneven paper pyramids
of scraps to be sorted

A returned envelope – no forwarding address
another lost friend

Old term papers reveal my unvarnished youth
coffee spills – stain Ayn Rand's rants

Yellowed opinion pieces saved
to support my opinionated views

Good intentions wait
in mounds of diet recipes

I find a never mailed tirade – what a relief
momentary madness has passed

A misplaced telephone number tumbles out
Am I too late to call?

Those yellowing book lists
Are they still in print?

Unsure what stays – what goes
what's a maybe

Fighting off sentimentality
I begin
crumbling up my past

A Brief Pause

© 2016

tilts leaning left
where to place it
leaves me bereft
you insist I punctuate the pause
causing me a pain in my clause
your miniscule swerve
leaves me unnerved
with bouts of coma comma
I become queen of comma drama
please don't get pissed
rambling run ons I can't resist
it was not my intention
to spurn all convention
my stream of consciousness
refuses to abide
do try taking it in stride
stop bellowing
of my stupidity
for ranting on and on and on and on without timidity
leaving all the punctuation mavens
leaving off the page
in a state of rage

Night Has Come

© 2016

With eyes closed
my chattering brain
rummages through careless
words spoken
that cannot be recalled.

My egg shell ego does combat
with all the could've and should've
I would've said
I call upon the living and the dead
to resolve my dilemma.
They refuse.

Senses are overrun.
I gulp down
five milligrams of melatonin
in hope of quieting indecisive voices.

My clenched body unfurls
spooning my husband
awakening him at 3 a.m.

Who are you arguing with?

Creating

By Rachael Cupp

© 2016

The boy watches the television carefully until his cousin on the couch slips off into sleep. Her braids drift sideways across her face, and she wrinkles her eyes in dreaming. The house is warm with the thick air, and the nape of his neck is gently sodden, so he rises, soft as an eyelash, and sneaks down to the back door.

Outside, it has just begun to rain. The faded green paint that clings in patches on the porch is bright with the water. The birds are huddled, brilliant, in the tress. He walks into the yard with bare feet. The cool puddles unwrap the hard ground, and it squelches, slick as butter, between his toes.

He looks around at his toys, all grown a bit more distant in their shining coat of rain, but he's played them all before. In the corner between the back wall and the front gate he finds an old paint tray, abandoned three months ago when his father finished painting the blue upstairs room. The rain comes down harder, and the paint swirls loosely in it, all at once raised back to life. He reaches down and touches it lightly. It trembles beneath his fingertips. It holds all the colors of the sky.

He doesn't have a brush, but it doesn't matter. He brings the tray carefully up the stairs to his room, walking the long way much taller than usual, his body held straight as the walls. He sets the tray like a treasure in the center of his room.

Inside, the paint seems filled with a curious light, fretful and shifting. He sinks a small hand into it, and runs it along the northern wall. The blue streaks down raggedy—listless, robbed

of its magic. The boy frowns, and pulls back the curtains, his hand straining for the distant cord. He paints another streak, hesitant, and there is movement in it, subtle, but true. His one chair is heavy, and when he drags it to the window, he grunts with the effort of it, but it lends him the height to free the glass. He pushes up the window, and the storm comes tumbling in.

His hand is humming with the paint, with the sheer thrilling blue of it, and he swipes a merry circle, a great, graceful living arc. He plunges both hands in, far past the wrist, and the thin paint soars and splashes down, makes small smoking whispers when it hits the ground. He moves his hands, quickly, eagerly. The storm tells him its story, its low voice grumbling with the effort of the truth. He paints it all, his hands circling faster, fingers glistening, all alight within the voice of the storm.

He has reached the east wall now, the north covered top to bottom. He listens to the lightnings, and paints shining solid forms, bright eyed and insolent, with a lengthy span of life. The south wall, the west, he moves in time with the bursts of sound and light. The winds lift him high to the ceiling, and there he paints the melancholy dreams of the clouds. The walls of his room are alive and singing, and even when the storm fades off, the whole of its story remains. He sees it, moving luminous in his eyes as he drifts, lost in grace, to sleep.

The next day, when the painters come, the boy locks himself in a windowless room and weeps. Although it is not the last time he will do so, he will know no loss greater than the dreams of the sky.

Rachael Cupp has a BFA in film and an MFA in Writing. Her work has been published in "Write From Life" and "The Narrow Chimney Anthology." She lives in Tucson and teaches writing at Pima College.

The Stars Guide Us Home

By Mikayla Mace

© 2016

The hotel was as sleek and efficient as a space station. The furniture was simplistic, shiny and black. The dark blue carpet was rough on my feet as I moved across the room. The bed was comfortable but stiff with crisp, white sheets.

Around midnight, I looked out of one of the tall windows. From my fourth-floor room, I saw the amber glow of the city, but I could not see the light sources. Above, the dark sky was midnight blue. The moon was absent, but the city lights outshone most stars. I could only see Orion's belt, his limbs, his sheath and his twinkling sword. Sirius, the brightest star in the Northern Hemisphere, was just south of his belt. That was all that was visible. Only the biggest, brightest stars closest to Earth.

My mind wandered. Then, so did I. I gently lifted off from Earth and instantly sailed through 34 million miles of space and decades of time. I was on colonized Mars in the near-future, after we humans had left Earth to rot and tried to start over.

The same amber light lingered as the half-sized sun set, 141 million miles away. The sky, seen through an atmosphere that is 100 times thinner than Earth's, was dusted with white flecks. I hoped to see one of these specks lose its perfect balance and spill its light across the sky and throw a midnight shadow on the sheets beside me.

The thought of the sheets caused reality to crash back in on me as I sped back toward my hotel room on Earth.

I discovered two things that night.

First, Mars will not be humanity's escape. Humanity has perfectly evolved to fit our environmental niche on Earth, and we must act to sustain our natural environment.

Second, these same stars have been around long enough to witness the rise and fall of the dinosaurs. They have witnessed all of human history in all its glory and its horror. They have aided in our development as a species by guiding us across oceans, inspiring art, music and religion, and revealing to us the secrets of the universe.

But now, we build shining cities that only imitate their constant, glowing wonder. In our pride, we've started to outshine the stars. We forgot that we are part of nature, and in our forgetfulness, we have polluted it, and profited from it, and we will eventually destroy it and ourselves. The stars will witness other species arise and die, and the process will repeat as long as it can.

And the stars will go on shining.



Mikayla writes: "I graduated from the University of Arizona in 2015 with a B.S. in neuroscience and a minor in astronomy. I'm now a graduate student in journalism at UA, and I hope to become a science communicator. I also love painting, drawing, reading and writing. I want to find some way to blend my interests in art and science in my life. You can contact me at mikaylamace@email.arizona.edu."

Surface Tension

By Michaela Webb

© 2016

Wind-bent trees stood rooted in the thin alpine soil like grizzled old men leaning into their canes. Behind them, the ancient quartzite peaks of Utah's Uinta Mountains glowed pink and orange with the last of the sun's rays. I felt a gentle summer wind tugging strands of hair out from under my fleece hat, carrying the crisp minty scent of alpine meadows and trodden pennyroyal.

The previous day, my dad and I had climbed up and over Rocky Sea Pass off-trail and hiked into the remote Upper Rock Creek Basin. We ate the last of our packed food earlier that day. Sustenance until we got back to the car the following evening would be left up to our own creativity.

Sitting on a rock at our campsite, my dad threaded the fly onto the end of the line, squinting as he tied the knot. He handed me the rod. We walked away from camp through the meadow, thick tufts of grass whisking along our nylon wind pants. I hopped across moist boulders to the edge of the lake. I let the rod drop back behind my head, and snapped it forward with all the power that my scrawny 9-year-old arms could muster. The line flew across the surface of the dusky water. I began reeling, grinning with anticipation and the excitement of "hunting and gathering" in the mountains.

Suddenly I felt living resistance at the end of the line. The tip of the rod danced in the air, caught between my determination and the struggling fish.

I pulled up on the rod, drawing the small Rainbow through the membrane of surface tension separating our two worlds. Its movements, so graceful in the water, were jerky in the unfamiliar substance.



Michaela Webb and her father on a backpacking trip in southern Utah a couple years ago.

Continued on page 14



Michaela Webb was born in 1996 in Salt Lake City, Utah. She spent her childhood adventuring outside, and developed a love for the mountains and deserts of the West. She currently studies environmental science at the University of Arizona in order to better understand the natural environment and our impacts on it. You can contact her at michaelaebwebb@gmail.com.

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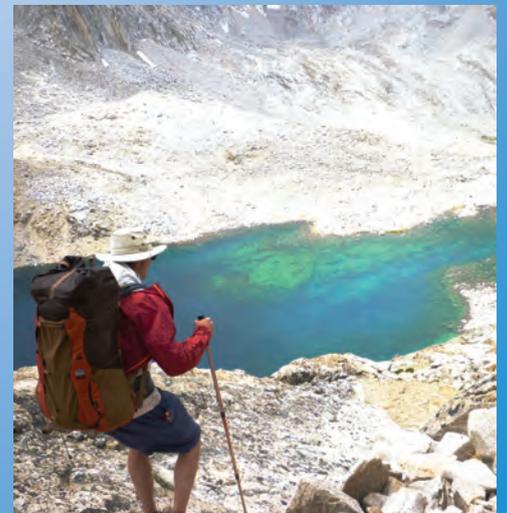
For a while I just held it suspended in the air, unable to tear my gaze away from its big round eye, straining gills and gaping mouth. I yelled for my dad. He helped me pull the hook out of the fish's serrated lip, and I turned away as the sound of flesh and bone against rock split through the silence of the evening.

We cooked the fish on a flat rock over the fire and devoured it, bones, grit and everything, before retreating to our sleeping bags still hungry. Falling asleep that night, my mind wandered through snapshot memories from the trip. I realized that I was glad that we didn't bring enough food. That one planning error was the surfactant that allowed us to immerse ourselves fully in being in the mountains. It sharpened the experience. It turned a trip into an adventure.

In subsequent years, we've backpacked and pack-rafted through Canyonlands National Park on the Colorado River with only half a paddle and half as much food as we should've brought. We've crossed 12,000-foot passes in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the rain without a trail, and we've narrowly avoided hypothermia under a tarp that was a just a little too small to protect us from sideways-driving sleet.

While other people drift to sleep in fully enclosed tents and enjoy filling meals, we'll be shivering and eating the tenth dinner of rice and beans in as many days. Some people might call it "poor planning" or say "You idiots, why didn't you check that before you left?," but we like to call it "adventure."

I wouldn't want it any other way.



On a Line from Adam Zagajewski

© 2016

*Who owns the earth, you
ask, astonished*

A window moon floats quiet
on the glass,
 as close tonight
as the coin that completed
the final payment.

On a Line from Zbigniew Herbert

© 2016

I send you these owl's riddles in the night

A scream so sharp
it cuts the night air open
issues from a soft
and monkish Barn owl's face

while a Saw-whet's single
note keeps claiming ground
in the key of springtime.
One two three four

the Screech owl's swift
acceleration ends with a drop
into silence deep enough
for hiding in. A Great-horned question

is asked in one repeating
syllable, the Elf's
descending shiver becomes
sound flying, and the Spotted

call feels its way through
old growth in a canyon
until all that answers
is creek water. What

is it that strokes
a listener's cheek and slides
back into darkness
like a knife?

On Lines from Paul Blackburn

© 2016

*The tide runs high, the
evening star explodes*

Bringing distances to shore
from beyond the Earth's wide curve,
a salt wind blows
 carrying back
all that ever was thrown
into the water, and laying it to rest
while storms walk on lightning
along a horizon
 already curling up.

Ginger Marie

Glendale Artist



“Angel Lilies”
Watercolor
15” x 22”
2015



The artist writes: “My passion for painting began during a summer program in Michigan where I was introduced to acrylics. From that summer on I was hooked. I won my first art award in fourth grade, and in junior high my work was featured in a local art show. During my high school years in Arizona, I expanded my art studies and won a few more awards as well. My interest in all things art drew me to study interior design, where I excelled in creating renderings and floor plans, and won second place in the Phoenix Design Plaza competition. Watercolor painting became my favorite medium 20 years ago because of how fluid and fun it is to create with. I studied with various local Arizona Watercolor Association artists, and for a number of years I taught beginning drawing and watercolor around the Valley. Three of my watercolors have been in the Arizona State Fair, and this year I decided to turn my hobby into a career. I created a Facebook page Art by Ginger Marie, an Etsy Shop GingersArt9 and began a website blog www.gingers-art.com. Contact me by e-mail at ginger@ginger-marie.com.”

Ginger Marie

Glendale Artist



“Carol’s Bench”
Watercolor
15½” x 14¼”
2015

I paint for the fun of it. I love to capture flower gardens, water scenes and interesting landscape views. My latest passion is painting personal space moments that invite the viewer to sit for a spell and relax. “Carol’s Bench” is an example of this theme. Using a representational style, I add a bit of fun incorporating freestyle shapes and expressive colors. I tend to do all of my painting indoors at my home studio in Glendale. Most of my settings come from photos my family and I have taken. I love taking “photo-shoot” vacations and road trips to local spots like Sedona to add to my photos-to-paint collection. If I live a hundred years, I won’t come close to painting everything I want to capture. Since learning how to paint watercolor, I have found a new freedom and joy using this playful medium.

- Ginger Marie

Ginger Marie

Glendale Artist



“Sea Port Village Flower Cart”
Watercolor
15” x 15.75”
2015

Ginger Marie

Glendale Artist



"Flowers on the Windowsill"

**Watercolor
22.25" x 22"
2015**

Ginger Marie

Glendale Artist



"Point Loma Lighthouse"
Watercolor
15" x 22"
2014

4 poems by Norman Dubie

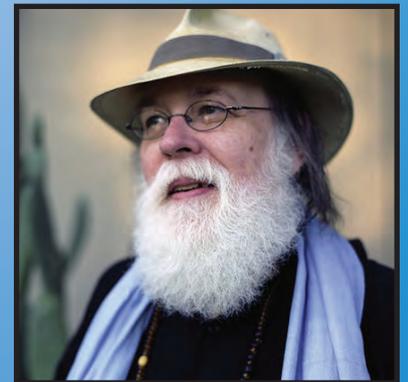
Homage to St. Geraud

© 2016

Sometimes believing in the beauty
of the fresh elevated incarnate existences
of the wheel, he wishes instead

for an eternal status, a
stone and fetal sleep
like that of the uncollected dead
under the linen snow on Everest.

Norman Dubie is the author of twenty-five books of poetry, most recently "Quotations of Bone" (2015). His other books of poetry include "The Volcano" (2010), "The Insomniac Liar of Topo" (2007), "Ordinary Mornings of a Coliseum" (2004), and "The Mercy Seat" (2001), all from Copper Canyon Press. He is the recipient of the Bess Hokin Prize from the Poetry Foundation, the PEN Center USA Literary Award for Poetry in 2002, and fellowships and grants from the Ingram Merrill Foundation, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He lives and teaches in Tempe, Arizona.



In the Transfers of a Long Beard

© 2016

It is talk between a confused veteran
and the old woman flirting
with certain dementia in the cold fog of a bus stop.

He's saying something about phantoms
of faint pastel, purples and yellow,
vaseline thin paper sheen on an old stamp
moving low as a smell
on the other blurring side
of the trees: men
who have been shitting on the run
for all of their short lives. *No question.*

And the sergeant will drop
these common fucks
before they make it, in thought
even, to the shade along the dry riverbed.
Wind now and damn hot, *fuck*, is it enough
to add to this
their now rat-tat opened intestines scrolling in the grasses:

this cancelling the smell that was
common, something
like cinnamon and boiled cabbages. She frowns.

She snickers: young man
it is the odor of oils, cod musk
on an old exercised dog
steaming in from the warm rainstorm
that is your perfume du jour
and more gloom, than boom-boom.

Boom-boom? I can't reason
with myself
let alone with a hero who mews and chatters
like the deer in my back yard
when, god forbid, it drops way below
zero...

The Old Women at Urnekloster House

© 2016

–for Dorothy

Heisenberg on his aunts' ceiling
counting the shut-ins. *One*
giving names to individual
tulip bulbs sighing with the fish bones
and red potting soil on wet newsprint,
another, also mathematical,
obsessing on the current sum of pewter spoons
and the *third* wrapping in wool
a hot teapot her younger sister says
is the color of marmalade custard.

The dog is larger than the rug
he chooses to sleep on
and he's suffering from arthritis.
When he is finally dead the three women
will drag him
down the stairs
on potato sacks they spent
the morning sewing together
as a burial sled.

The blue clock beside the spring onions
should know how long it took
to arrive at the moment
where suddenly it goes still
forever but without the usual importance.
However, physically
its perfect face is not self-conscious
like cereal caught in the sergeant's mustache
if his mouth, still worse,
is a black hole and nursery of suns unbelievably
adamant at the center of its universe.

The fall from one step to the next
releases methane from the dead dog
and Heisenberg thinks this is all
stacked like a model
for reluctant space/time
with a cold flat outcome
for both the dog and the cosmos.

In the Choir Loft

© 2016

The snow collapsed the slate roof
as if in boxes. Dark birds
lifting in the last sifted flour of it.
The blazing egg tempera of a night mural
representing the winter comets
of a lost century: brook trout of icy tails
and then the solemn ashes in heaps
with more snow
over the communion table—its good leg
is a dozen leather bound concordances. The goat
sleeping in the low cupboard with candles
had suffocated in the smoke. Its body now
a larger fraction of snow, wax and more smoke.

The leaning work horses from Quebec
brought down the north wall
of field stone, the giant crucifix
launched almost across the frozen pond.

The priest in his nightshirt
holding a single candle. He had started
the fire while boiling eggs or coffee?
He wasn't certain, his mind
abandoned him in his early sixties.
He blamed the fat nun
from Nova Scotia. He once
loved her. The white mole on the neck.
She simply laughs at him. Her ghost
standing under the horse chestnut tree
down by the dock. She had
passed with the comets. The heated bell

had broken through the ice
and settled at the bottom of the pond. The horses
that pulled down the wall
would drag the cold bell from the water
in early April. Its tongue

was never, ever found. He finally confessed
he was boiling eggs,
which was unseemly for an old priest,
when the gas jets in the kit
flooded there in the dumb light of what,
he allowed,
was a new morning without forgiveness.

He was called Father L'Dieu and the kids adored
him; late in the interview
with the news crew from Montreal, he smiled
adding that the Sisters of Mercy
were a pack of depraved whores.

He was sucking on the icicle
he said was restored to him
from the poor box.

He gave them all the middle digit
and walked off with a urinal
spilling a heavy cream—he'd milked
the cow in the shed
and someone now screamed
that it too was burning.

He threw the milk at it.

Mind Mapping

By Rachel Wehr

© 2016

My hand grasped a blunt, fluorescent pink crayon as I colored in Guyana and Brazil with vigor. My palms were sweaty and my fingers weak. I had just spent over an hour constructing a plate-sized map of the Western Hemisphere. The map was completely inaccurate, but what can you expect from a 7-year-old constructing South America from memory? I drew disproportionately large versions of places that my curious young mind had heard stories of, then oohed and aahed over.

A few days earlier, my grandfather had shown me photos in a thick album with plastic sleeves that revealed glossy, verdant Mexican trees. The trees were loaded with monarch butterflies stopping for a rest along their migration path. Gathering anecdotes and photos in my mind, I drew a Mexico that consumed half the globe.

My sister peeled open a book to display the colorful flags of Central America, and with that, I was hooked. An America that is neither North nor South? Unbelievable, I thought. I proceeded to draw Central America broad and flat to show that I knew such an exotic place existed.

Maps are as fundamental to humans as is the written word.

They allow the mind to conceptualize vast distances and unseen rock formations while displaying the locations of cities, dirt roads, copper mines and railways. With the advent of geographic information systems, hand-drawn and even printed maps are falling out of favor.

But the importance of a paper map cannot be denied in creating awareness of space and distance. This is especially true when Siri can find no other way to U-turn other than to drive in a 2-mile loop around the block. We now rely on a digital voice telling us where to turn, even when a street sign is in front of our face.

It turned out that these years of unrelenting curiosity were crucial in developing my interest in rain forests, high deserts and alpine mountaintops. Drawing maps helped me to see myself as a tiny human tucked away in the Pennsylvania countryside. I spent my middle school and high school years focusing not on prom but on the hope of leaving my hometown. I yearned to reside in one of the crayon-coated territories I drew so carefully.

I am grateful that a paper map will always be something for me to find comfort in. Maps let me see where I have been, where I have yet to see and where I may never go.



Rachel Wehr is a graduating senior in the School of Soil, Water and Environmental Science at the University of Arizona. She is nearing completion of a science degree and can finally indulge in creative writing, painting, and sketching. Originally from Pennsylvania, she now is a self-declared desert rat. Rachel is renewing her love for writing by exploring food and science journalism. She may be contacted at rachelwehr@email.arizona.edu.

3 poems by Tom Cracovaner

Poison toads

© 2016

poison psychedelic toads
invade my backyard
a monsoon plague upon the desert
but only one at a time
they each call out for a lover
but are often left unanswered
they seem to always attract my dog
he hears their call
rinse his mouth
quickly with
rushing water
poison toads



Tom Cracovaner is a poet, fiction author and lyricist/songwriter. Inspired by his travel experiences and life as a recording artist, his works explore the humor and drama of the human condition. He is an Honors College graduate from the University of Arizona and has been published in SandScript Literary Magazine and was named a finalist in the Tucson Festival of Books Literary Awards fiction competition. Reach him at tcracovaner@hotmail.com.

Rumble

© 2016

cars rumble
down the road
their glide on the pavement
echoes for miles
their song fills the
sandy air in morning
clanks and pistons
mix with
songbirds chirping
a song of
delight?
Or notes of warning?

with only one way to go

© 2016

Rain drips
lands and becomes flowing
Water which digs channels and ravines
And multiple gullies
sullied and discolored by sand
and gravel and refuse
from nature and man
alike
akin to spoiled liquid
perpetually moving closer by the
patter and spatter to
oceanic basins
to the bottom
all the way from
high
on heaven's
spigots

Ants on a Log, Caddie on the Fence

By Tom Cracovaner

© 2016

What a beautiful day to be outside! Man, do my trees need trimming. Mistletoe everywhere. If I was that tree, I wouldn't even be able to stand. Well, maybe when I was younger and could carry all kinds of weight on my shoulders. But not now. Posture's horrible. Should probably stretch more. Aching old man bones. Old man bones. Damn cancer treatment side effects.

Wow. Filled two trash cans with trimmings. Grandkids coming over soon. Them growing up without a father sure bites hard in the rump. I should know. Maybe I can get the little fellas out in the nice sun and away from their technology for a little while. Wife calls me in for lunch before the little guys get here. Maybe they'll want to climb one of the trees I just pruned. Maybe they'll run around and want to hide and play fort in the desert. Maybe I'll even get to teach them a thing or two in the time I have. We'll see. Tough sometimes.

I sure like grilled cheese sandwiches on a nice day. When I was a kid I used to rip them up in little pieces and dip them in ketchup like they were French fries. Yup. White bread, American cheese. Ketchup. Sometimes, I even had French fries and dipped the fries and bits of the sandwich one after the other. Right hand over left slopped the fries and grilled cheese chunks in ketchup. Now it's whole-wheat twelve-grain fiber bread and Trader Joe's Cheddar with the vegetarian rennet and vegetarian cheese enzymes. There's basil from the garden and heirloom homegrown tomatoes on the sandwich too. White bread, ketchup and American cheese? Don't go near the stuff. Haven't ever gave up French fries, but my wife Elsa doesn't make them for me anyways. Too much grease she says. I'm lucky she still lets me eat the grilled cheese.

"What time the boys coming?" I say.

"Any minute. Don't be too preachy with them, Stanley. Just enjoy their company," Elsa says.

"Who else will teach them the things I can?" I say.

"Just try to relax a bit. Don't do too much. That's all," Elsa says.

Elsa smiles at me. She likes to see the grandkids as much as me, but she'd just as easily sit by them and unwind while they immerse their little snout noses in their screens and play those ... apps they call them.

"When they get here, I'm gonna—"

"Don't get too excited, your turn on the dishes." Elsa brings her plate up to the counter by the sink and plops it down under the faucet. She wipes her hands on the white and blue checkered

dish towel and heads to the living room to read some more of that cheesy novel that she is trying to finish for her ladies' book club.

"Of course it is!" How do you like that? I scrub those dishes clean. Just put another notch in the bark on the old Stanley chore list for the day. All part of keeping this house in tip-top shape. As long as I don't annoy Elsa too much when I don't sit still, I can keep that chore train a rolling. Honey to do list it ... all day long. If I became a beekeeper like some of my other retired friends then—

"Honey! They're here!" Elsa says.

"Ready or not ... Here comes Grampy Stanley!"

I get to the front just in time to see the two little rascals burst through the door racing to be the first one in. They sure cut their hair funny. I remember Mohawks from when I was a kid when the punks used to have that single file hair broom on top of their domes, but this new do the kids wear these days is like a three in one. Mohawk on the top. Mohawk on the left. Mohawk on the right. Convention long gone. I touch my part to make sure it is still intact. Yup. Still smooth as ever. Fresh cut like those Mesquites out back.

"Wayne, Jonah, get over here and give me and your grandma a hug!" I say.

"Hi, Grandma." Wayne says.

"Hi, Grandpa." Jonah says.

Wayne's older by three years but his slump is so bad he looks almost the same height as Jonah. His glasses are smudged but probably won't notice until he starts playing his games again. Looks like his father's son. I won't hold that against him and I sure hope his momma doesn't. Could be an athlete if we got that boy some exercise. Jonah I wonder about. He's the only boy in the history of this family to be even somewhat obese. I'm not worried about him being an athlete. I just want him to look like a human and not a damn little piglet. Anyhow, movement will be his friend. I wonder if they've even met. At least the little dudes are happy to see us.

"All right kiddos. I know you brought your devices ... but we're gonna go play fort." I say.

"Aww man!" Wayne speaks up real quick. He's a little pistol and probably going to make himself a nice lawyer someday. Kid sure likes to argue. I better plan a few moves ahead of him Bobby Fisher style to keep him on his toes. Jonah just stands there perplexed holding his device by his side all guarding it

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like a mother dove on the nest.

“I already told your momma the schedule for today. Play fort first. Then story time and snack. Then arts and crafts. Then you can have free time with your little computer thingies. Put them on the table.” I say.

Their faces look like I just told them that Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and Tony the Tiger got offed by the evil queen from Snow White or something. It’ll be good for them. I might even be able to squeeze in some of the old Grampy Stanley wisdom. If they have the attention span for it.

“Why do we have to build a fort? That’s stupid.” Man, Wayne is full of questions ... and piss and apple cider vinegar in a dried old wooden barrel. He may have outwitted me on this one. Wit runs deep in this family, sometimes too deep.

“It’s just what kids are supposed to do.” I say.

“Why?” Jonah says. Hmm. I just might be cornered.

“Listen, guys. It’s just fun. Use your imagination. What if you were in a real survival situation and had to build a place to sleep out of this plant debris?” I say.

“Are you saying we’re going to be homeless?” Jonah says.

“No. What? No. I’m saying-”

“Couldn’t we just go to the Housing Department?” Wayne says.

“Or stay with family?” Jonah says.

“No. I’m saying ... Just practice using your imagination. It’s good for you every once in a while.”

The little hostages follow my demands and build what I can only say is a mockery of a little fort out of sticks, branches and some fresh trimmings. The packrats are probably laughing somewhere at the shoddiness of the structure. Sad to say, but my grandkids couldn’t build a fort out of Huachuca if their lives depended on it. I guess there are no builders or architects in this litter. I put them out of their misery, dust them off and bring the boys inside.

“What do you guys want for a snack?” I say.

“Goldfishes with ants on a log,” Wayne says.

“Watermelon ... and peanuts ... and red vines ...” Jonah says.

They push and shove each other trying to be the closest one to the refrigerator. Jonah almost knocks his older brother down.

“Easy there. We have some melon. And peanuts. And celery with peanut butter and raisins,” I say.

“Yay!” Wayne says, regains his balance and pokes Jonah in the gut. At least they have some competitive fire.

“Enough. And ’round here, we don’t eat ants or logs,” I say.

“Grandpa, you know what I mean!” Wayne says.

“Yeah I do. Honey, you want to join us for snack time and stories?” I shout to her in the other room, but she comes in before I finish, which makes me look so bumbling.

“Yes, Dear,” she says.

We get the snacks together and lay them out next to the brightly colored children’s books on the coffee table in the living room. We set them up with lots of room temperature water to rehydrate them. Their faces glisten with sweat and their cheeks are bright red like the heirloom tomatoes in paper bags on the kitchen counter. It makes me wonder if that was such a strenuous activity for these little weaklings then how would they hold up on a football field. Or a diamond? Or the back nine? Oh boy is their skin pale. Reminds me of my daughter when Wayne and Jonah’s father left the family. She’s done pretty good since, but she can’t teach these kiddos everything.

“Which book should I read for story time?” I say.

“Geez, do we have to?” Wayne says.

“What else do you propose for story time?” I say.

“Tell us a story about you, Grandpa,” Jonah says.

“Yeah and make it funny,” Wayne says.

“Do you want it to be true or made up?” I say.

“Something real, Grandpa.” Jonah says.

“And make it funny.” Wayne says.

“OK ... but ... I have one caveat.” They both look at me as if I’m speaking another language. Right where I want them.

“It means, I will do it, but as part of the deal, you have to learn something important from my story and remember it when you’re older and telling tales someday to your kids. Even if it is a very silly story.” They nod their heads. “When Grandpa was a little boy, maybe a year or two older than you, Wayne, he became a caddie.”

“What’s a caddie?” Jonah says.

“Hold on. I’ll get there. A caddie is a person, or in my case, a boy, who carries golf clubs for the golfer. The caddie cleans the ball, watches it and locates it after the golfer hits it, rakes the sand trap, fixes the golfer’s divots and ball marks and if the caddie is a really good one, he even makes suggestions to the golfer on what clubs to use, where to aim and also helps the golfer read his putts.”

“Wow, sounds like a lot of chores,” Jonah says.

“It is. It takes a lot of responsibility,” I say.

“Wait a minute. This story isn’t funny at all,” Wayne says.

“Easy. I’m getting there. Your Grampy Stanley used to caddy for all sorts of folks. Rich fellas, funny fellas, angry fellas, cheap sons of bitches-”

“Stanley!” Elsa says.

“Sorry, Sweetie. Sorry, kids. Cheap fellas, wise fellas, and fellas that taught me new words that shouldn’t be spoken around ladies and kiddos, all sorts ... but I’m rambling. The point is I had great times caddying and meeting all kinds of different folks,” I say.

“Get to the funny part already,” Wayne says.

“OK. So one of these golfer guys, Mr. Bill Mertinsdale, took

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me under his wing. He was a caddy when he was a kid, so he knew the ropes. He taught me about honesty and respect and hard work and when to talk to the player and when not to and where to stand and how to hold the pin and-

“Grandpa!” Wayne says.

“Sorry, so the funny part,” I say.

“Yeah!” Wayne says.

“Well, one day on the eleventh hole, he hits his golf ball into Mr. Robert Chesterfield’s back yard. You kids are too young to know him, but he used to be a famous assistant coach for the basketball team. So Mr. Mertinsdale hits it into the yard, and being a good caddie, I zoom ahead and locate it. It ends up in the fenced in part of the yard just past the oleanders right in between two old orange trees with the trunks painted white and about three feet shy of a brick pathway lined by yellow rose bushes in full on bloom.” I say.

“So what’d you do, Grampy?” Jonah says.

“I ask Mr. Mertinsdale what he wants me to do. He wants me to get it, so I take off my windbreaker and stretch a little, basically ready to hop the fence and get that Titleist 2 DT 90 with the red dots on it just staring me down in the face. I’m just about ready to hop and go, but then we hear Robert Chesterfield’s old hound dog giving us hell for being by the fence. You know how dogs are about territory.”

“So did you get it?” Jonah says.

“Well, I see Mr. Mertinsdale getting a little nervous ’cause he doesn’t want me hurt or anything, but he wants that ball back and I think he thinks this is a good time for another teaching moment in my proper caddy education. He asks me if I think I can get it and I say yeah but I’m scared that the old doggie’s teeth look a little stronger than my soft skin and he agrees and he thinks for a minute and finally says, ‘Well ... Stanley ... there are going to be lots of things you’re scared of in this lifetime and if you quit now, there’s no telling how many times you’ll lose out if you only focus on the teeth. You’re a speedy little guy. Get me that Titleist 2!’ So he distracts the hound over to one side of the yard and makes all kinds of faces and arms waving and noises and the hound barks and barks and I hop the fence on the other end and dead sprint through the slippery wet grass and pick up that golf ball and run as fast as I can back to that wrought iron and that dog sees me and starts chasing me as fast as he can and I get to the top of the fence right as that dog is on my heels and I try to muster the strength to pull myself over and can’t find it anywhere in my scrawny little arms and lucky for me, Mr. Mertinsdale grabs me by the shoulder and helps pull me over just before the dog bites my Achilles. I was proud of myself, but man, that dog almost got me!”

“I guess that story is kind of funny, Grandpa.” Wayne says.

“Funny you should say so. See, the funny part is how Mr.

Mertinsdale never heard the end of it from the rest of the guys at the country club about sending me in there in to get the ball in the first place. It didn’t matter how many times he bought rounds and rounds of drinks for the gang, because from that point on he was cheap old Mr. Mertinsdale, the miserly scrooge who just couldn’t part ways with a beat up old Titleist, so cheap and thrifty that he had to risk the life of a promising youth just to save a couple bucks. And that’s the thing; every time they told the story of how cut-rate he was by forcing me in to Robert Chesterfield’s fenced in yard to get that ball, that hound dog just kept getting bigger and bigger!”

“Good story, Grandpa!” Jonah says. I see Wayne looking nervously at his device on the table. “Can you teach me how to caddie?”

“Sure. I’ll have to take you out on the course while we still got the chance.” I say.

“I still don’t get why it’s funny,” Wayne says.

“Wayne, your grandfather has a different sense of humor than you children,” Elsa says.

“Oh,” Wayne says.

“Gee thanks, Elsa!” I say.

“You’re welcome. Besides. It’s time for Arts and Crafts,” Elsa says.

“Yay,” Wayne says, and he forgets his device which sits dormant on the table.

“What are we going to make?” Jonah says.

I walk towards the backyard door with a couple of ants on a log in my hand to finish my yard work to do list. Arts and Crafts is Elsa’s department.

“Where is Grandpa going?” Wayne asks his grandmother.

“Outside. He doesn’t have the attention span that you kids have. He just can’t sit still and use devices like you or sit and read or do crafts like me. He can’t focus,” Elsa says.

“Oh,” Jonah says.

I hear her conversation in the other room and I open the back door. I’m not sure if I got too much across to those boys, or if they’re capable enough to pick apart what I’m trying to tell them, but I sure hope I have a couple more chances with them when the treatments start working better. As long as they find a strong hand to pull them over the fence.

“He’s a busybody,” Elsa says.

I try to think of something clever to say back to Elsa for her zinger, but a hummingbird buzzes by the red sage bush and I step outside to watch it hover. She might be right about this one.

Jill Friedberg

Scottsdale Artist



“IN OBLIVION”

Photomontage and acrylic on canvas on wood panel

32”x48”

2016



For over three decades following her education at Northwestern University and at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Jill Friedberg has been a nationally recognized visual artist whose works have been exhibited extensively in museums, galleries and universities throughout the U.S. During this time, she developed her inimitable style, fusing her genuine interest in people with her love for expressive art forms. The result is an expression of buoyant exhilaration that is clearly manifested in each of her works. As a lover of foreign places and cultures, she has journeyed far and wide throughout the globe to capture native images ... all the while having the intention and desire of creating new, compelling stories from the visual ingredients she so vigorously gathered from the far corners of the earth. In addition to her work as an artist, she has curated many exhibitions, planned and coordinated cultural events, installed and organized many one-person and group exhibitions at art galleries and served as a judge for many art competitions. The artist's website is www.jillfriedberg.com. Contact the artist at livart4@cox.net or 480-664-4007.

Jill Friedberg

Scottsdale Artist



“Rehearsal at the Paris Opera House”

Photomontage and acrylic and repurposed materials on canvas on wood

30”x40”

2015

In my work I create narratives from the photographs that I have taken for over 30 years. Incorporating in some instances more than 20 layers of my photographic images with acrylic paint, I invite the viewer into a multicolored and multicultural world punctuated with humor, sensitivity and, at times, skewed perspectives. In all of these works, I integrate my photography and painting with a wide variety of repurposed materials such as palm bark, textiles, horse hair, laundry lint, paint palette and pencil shavings, glass, wooden and metal beads ... which are stripped of their intrinsic reality only to be replaced by metaphorical meaning.

- Jill Friedberg

Jill Friedberg

Scottsdale Artist



"Tips Appreciated"

Mixed media

38"x46"

2015

Jill Friedberg

Scottsdale Artist



“Inner Landscapes”

Photomontage and acrylic on canvas on wood panel

32”x48”

2015

Maria and Margaret

By Tony Abruzzo

© 2016

CHAPTER 1

The end was near. The expression on the face of the hospice lady was grim and transparent. She stared at the outside darkness through the open window as she spoke.

“Maria will soon pass. Her vital organs are not working. Most likely by tomorrow morning. She is resting now. I am truly sorry.”

Eighty-two-year-old Pablo Robles looked towards the ground. His eyes closed, hands clenched between his legs. Cecilia’s eyes were red, raccoon-like darkness below. An almost imperceptible cry from her lips. Rosa looked straight ahead at the caregiver and nodded. Carlos sobbed, placed his head on his mother’s stiff hand and arm. Cecilia stood up and stroked the back of her younger brother’s neck. Rosa spoke.

“Thank you for all the help you have given Mom. We are tired. We’ll be back in the early morning.”

The stars and moon shown above as they slowly walked to their vehicles, hugged, and drove away. Each knew that it was going to be a long, lonely, sleepless night. Life would never be the same.

CHAPTER 2

Maria was alone in the dark, dreary room. Speckles of moon light crept through the one window. She used all her strength to open her eyes and to raise one cold hand to her faintly beating chest. Thoughts surfaced in her damaged brain.

“Why can’t I see? Where is my Pablo? What has happened to me? God, help me!”

Her head and chin slipped downward. She saw a faint light, then the outline of a woman, about her age, smiling down on

her. The female presence placed a hand on her shoulder. Maria felt a renewed flow of blood running through her hands. Her mouth loosened as her lips unglued. The vision spoke.

“I am Margaret. God sent me. He knows that you are a special human being because of the goodness and piety of your life. He is sad because of the anguish and frustration you have long suffered and will endure for a while longer. I was sent to be your guardian angel, His instrument, to help you transition from earth to his heavenly kingdom. Please listen to the prayer I was taught by my guardian angel.

“Angel of God, my guardian dear to whom God’s love commits me here. Ever this day be at my side to light, to guard, to rule and guide. Amen.”

Maria’s eyes were wide open and could clearly see. Margaret came closer to touch her cold cheek.

“When we are alone, you will be able to speak to me, understand me. I will be at your side from this moment on and beyond the end of your human existence. We will ascend together to be with Him. The others will not be able to see me.”

Maria spoke.

“How can you help me? Does God love me?”

Margaret smiled, gently placed a hand on Maria’s cold lips.

“God loves you and all His children. He sometimes chooses a guardian angel to ease the pain of the most pious on earth. He knows that the grief of your loved ones in your presence overwhelms you. I am a gift from our Savior. Do not fear death. Welcome it. Absorb it as you attain eternal salvation.

Tomorrow, after the rainbow sunrise passes over the horizon, your earthly existence will end. You will begin your journey. Do not despair. Love that you cannot now imagine or understand awaits you forever.”

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The author writes: “I am 69 years old, married with two grown daughters and two young grandsons. I graduated from Dartmouth College and the University of Arizona College of Law. I practiced as a trial attorney in Tucson for over 39 years and retired a few years ago. I was in the Army and served in Vietnam between college and law school. I really enjoy writing short stories and novellas. My e-mail is ajabruzzo@gmail.com.”

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The presence departed. The room returned to utter darkness. Maria's hands stiffened and her eyes shut down.

CHAPTER 3

Pablo futilely tried to sleep in his lonely, lifeless room. It had not been the same for several years now. He could not resist the desire to relive the past, at least in his distraught mind.

When he first saw Maria in her checkered outfit at the dance, he still in his WWII soldier's uniform since he had no money for clothes, his heart came to life. A quiet shy man, the words would not come when she smiled at him. He managed a small smile and gestured towards the dance floor. She understood. The memory of the way she looked at him, held him while they danced, gave his distressed heart a brief respite. He never loved another woman, did the best he could as a husband. His few sins did not haunt him since he confessed them to God, who forgave him. His idyllic life did not last forever. Maria aimlessly walking through the streets looking for her deceased mother, her aggressiveness towards him, starting a fire in the middle of the night. He could tolerate that, deal with it. But when she became a helpless child again, his manly deficiencies surfaced.

Maria cried in confusion when Rosa firmly held her hand and walked her to the caregiver.

"Pablo, where are they taking me? Stay with me."

Those were the saddest moments of his life and the most helpless he had ever felt. He resented the silence and lack of reciprocal love that he was forced to endure for so long. But now? It was all about to end. The loneliness and guilt went so deep. There was no energy to cry or pray to a God that he sometimes thought had abandoned him. Wondered what he had done wrong to deserve all this pain and emptiness. Knew that it was way too late to do anything about it.

CHAPTER 4

Cecilia, alone in her thoughts, fifty-five years old, divorced with a thirty-year-old married daughter, knew that life was tough, but she was not prepared for the unfairness. The vision of her mother lying stiff and lifeless all alone in that bed tormented her. She thought.

"Why didn't I stick up to Rosa and stop her from putting Mom in that home? I could have taken care of her."

The anger exploded. She leaped out of bed, ran outside, screamed, cried, fell to the ground, and did not hear the sounds of the desert night, the birds whistling by, or see the dark mysterious sky. The thought of her mother near death consumed

her. A huge part of her would soon be gone.

CHAPTER 5

Rosa, fifty years old, married with two grown children, always tried to be the strong one. She had to stiffen the backs of her weak siblings and her overly emotional father. She resented having to make all the tough decisions, to have to step up to the plate time and again because no one else could.

She told her husband that she had to think, needed to be alone, to go outside in the dark night to air her frustrations, even if no one was there to listen. She wondered if God heard her when she prayed. Did He care about her feelings? Why God would do this to her mother, ruin the family, force her to put her mother in a nursing home? She also had to endure the weeping and sobbing of her father, sister, and brother as her mother cried helplessly.

Rosa kicked the fence surrounding the porch and yelled at the stars.

"God, no one is perfect, but my mother was pretty damn near perfect. I cannot understand your ways. Maybe hell awaits me for speaking this way to you. But, fuck it! At this point, I don't give a shit!"

She went back to bed, eyes totally opened, pointing towards the ceiling. Her husband pretended to be asleep. He didn't say a word. He knew that the raging bull lying next to him would be up all night, nostrils opening and closing in anger.

CHAPTER 6

Carlos, a forty-five-year-old bachelor with many love notches on his belt, and several children from frivolous relationships, finally realized what a momma's boy he was. Never married anyone because none of the girls could match his mom's goodness and the unconditional love she gave him. Totally spoiled and dependent upon her graces and encouragement, he was now bewildered, heartbroken, and scared. After consuming four beers with his tequila on his hammock outside, he spoke to the full moon.

"The last four years have sucked. Now what the hell am I going to do? Mom did not deserve this bullshit. I have to take care of dad and be the man of the family? Are you fucking kidding me? Rosa has more balls than I could ever have. Fuck it. Let that bitch do everything. What's going to happen to me?"

He slugged down the last of the tequila and fell asleep with his clothes on.

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They all arrived the next morning by 5 a.m. in separate cars. The head caregiver, an older man with a kind face, whispered to them.

“I’m glad you came early. Maria’s breathing is very shallow. Very close to the end. Maybe each of you want to be alone with her, one at a time?”

The nods were unanimous. Carlos ran to the dimly lit room first. Maria’s facial appearance and demeanor had changed from the night before. Her open mouth startled him. The coldness of her hands and curling up of her fingers unnerved him. His grief and helplessness turned to fear. The tears welled up as the throat dried up. He spoke softly in Maria’s ear.

“Mom, please hold on a little longer. I can’t make it without you. Never appreciated how much I loved you, needed you. Don’t leave me alone.”

As he kissed his mom’s cold cheek, Cecilia touched the back of his shoulder.

“Carlos, say goodbye to Mom. We all need to talk to her.”

His sobbing did not subside as he ran outside the door.

Cecilia sat on the bed, momentarily closed her eyes, and whispered as she opened them.

“Mom, you have always been my hero. Your love has helped me get me through some tough times. Your goodness and quiet strength cannot be replaced by anyone. But now the pain and sacrifices for us must end. It’s time for you to be with God. If there is a heaven, you will be there. Pray for me so that we can be together someday.”

She heard the door open. The sisters’ eyes briefly met as the older daughter sweetly kissed her mom’s hands and quietly cried as she walked away.

Rosa stood before the kindest, most caring, giving person she had ever known. The quiet charisma of the elderly lady in bed had at times bewildered her, intimidated her. She kissed her mother’s cheek and tearfully spoke.

“Mother, I regret, more than you will ever know, that I never really told you how much I loved you, admired you. I am so sorry for not being more like you, someone who loved others, accepted them for who they were, did not try to change them, or judge them. I don’t have much time to tell you things that I hope I have the courage to say.”

Rosa’s facial expression darkened to deep despair as she buried her eyes into her mother’s bosom, now wet by the torrential flow of tears. The words came out in sudden bursts between shallow breaths.

“So jealous of how your goodness got others to do things that my aggressiveness could not. I am sorry for putting you in the home, but dad could not take care of you. We should

have shared in caring for you. I will take that guilt to my grave. Please forgive me.”

The once proud woman was broken. She kissed her mom’s forehead, managed to gasp out a few more words.

“Mother, let go. Your pain is too much for me to see. You don’t have to stay for us. You will be forever in our memories, hearts, and souls. I pray that I can change and be with you in heaven someday.”

“Rosa, are you all right? Is Mom awake?”

The drained, exhausted, worried look on Pablo’s face and sad eyes signaled her to leave the room to allow the married couple of sixty years to say their final farewells.

The short, frail, elderly man in the darkened room placed his face next to the face of the only woman he had ever loved. He listened to her shallow breathing. Light squeezed through the partially open window as the sunrise emerged over the horizon. His eyes had a reddish-purplish hew. He placed his shaking hand on hers. His body quivered.

“Mi amor, my love, I am not sure I can do this without you. So sorry for not being a better husband. Did not love you as I should have. Tried, but not good enough for an angel. God blessed me when he let you love me and marry me. You have been my strength and hope for so long without a word of complaint. Realized how lucky I had been only after you got sick and lived apart from me. I have been so lonely without you.”

Pablo’s grief took away all his energy and felt faint as he struggled to say.

“It is too late to tell you things that should have been said many times before, but my pride got in the way. You have been the love of my life, my reason for living. I am sorry for doing so many things that hurt you. Please forgive me. Pray for me. Ask God to allow me to see you again.”

A defeated old man. Nothing else to say. He kissed Maria for the last time. The light fully illuminated the room as he departed.

Margaret touched Maria’s hand and softly whispered.

“It is time to go, to begin to walk the path to paradise. He is waiting.”

The Mass was beautiful. The eulogies were spoken with pain, sincerity, earnest, and passion. The grief throughout the church was contagious and deep. Margaret turned to Maria.

“Look at all the people who have loved you throughout your human existence. This is your last time to see them on earth. Keep these images forever in your soul. Pray that they will be with you in eternity someday.

“Don’t say goodbye. Say ‘hasta la proxima,’ until we meet

again.”

Maria’s stiff, cold human body was set below the ground, deep into the dirt. Rosa’s head was hidden deeply into her husband’s shoulder. Cecilia and Carlos held up Pablo who nearly stumbled down into the dark, dusty hole where his esposa silently lay.

Margaret turned to Maria.

“Remember, you will always be part of them. Your love and goodness is in their being. That will never end.”

Margaret looked upward. Maria gazed at Pablo, who slowly walked to his son’s car. Several hands on his shoulders guided him. His chin was on his chest, his eyes closed.

Margaret smiled.

“Okay, you can say farewell to him one more time.”

Maria’s soul soared downward and touched her loved one’s face. Angelic words floated in the air.

“Te amo, Pablo, para siempre. Hasta la proxima, conmiga y con Dios, mi amor.”

Pablo felt a breeze of fresh air against his wet cheek, opened his eyes, and momentarily smelled a familiar scent. He then continued his long, lonely journey into self-absorption, pity, and despair.

Margaret faced Maria.

“If Pablo really understood where you are going, and whom you will soon be with, he would not be heartbroken. But your loved one is only human, not capable of truly appreciating the divinity of God’s all encompassing love.”

The two souls ascended, arm in arm, spiritually inseparable. God patiently waited for them. He would soon absorb their essence into His infinite grace and love for eternity in paradise. There would always be room for others to enter His kingdom. Their fates and destinations were totally in their fragile, vulnerable human hands.

3 poems by Michael Gregory

From “Pound Laundry”

© 2016

Willing oneself to disappear
into the numinous other

limpid air aroused by light
the sensuous sublime
a metaesthetic path to rapture
through Germanic territory

A tensile emotion at the sight of this
innate conjunction perceived

between artists and objects their will
to install themselves inside things
to mix themselves in most intimate
recesses of everything met

The lyricism of the masses transformed
into discourse by art

divorcing syntax from grammar
the sensual the natural
in natural supernaturalism
an intercourse of body and mind

Ariadnes and Kalypsos
sisters lovers helpmeets

whose threads of encouragement counsel
divination and heartfelt embrace
made everything possible
even the letting them go

“Pound Laundry,” a book-length sequence based on the work and life of Ezra Pound, is forthcoming from Post-Soviet Depression Press.

One after another put off
on backs of whales or turtle islands
nothing for the most part
particularly oedipal
save that instilled with a mother’s love
in the voice of authority

Who come alive in theory
when addressed in the linguistic
appropriate to the moment, a fair
trade of fluids vital to production
orgasm as *ekstasis*
ekstasis the bottom line.

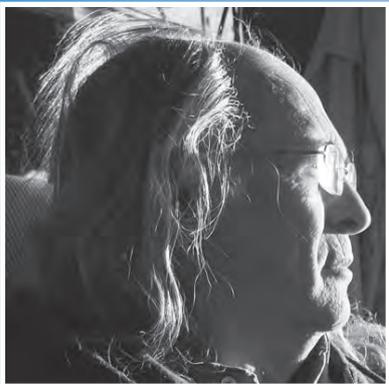
Self-sacrifice a sort of transcendence
not to be encouraged—the reverend’s pitch

for extinction of personality
notwithstanding—catharsis withheld

beyond the pity and fear curtain calls
beyond even the satyr play purgations

interim satisfactions of syntax
anticipations of a remembered past

Continued on page 44



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.”

Continued from page 43

repeatedly resurrected—stanza breaks
commas the sub-sub-subordinate clauses

perfected in the master's *Portrait of a Lady*
displaced by epigrammatic offbeat

perceptions inflections focal points surrounded
by deeply indented tabset space

any metaphysical ladder pulled up
by the last one out through the smoke hole.

History no less than paradise
a matter of *equi* of different color and shape

spurred on apocalypse after apocalypse
plashing roughshod through feathers of blood

revelations redux dissolving the banks
goddesses riding riders astride their beasts

ecstasy lathering their musculature
lips curled away from their teeth as they round

the finials marking the course upward
from Wyncote to Santa Margherita

laying waste the monkey-tailed host
itching to do the evil twin's bidding

reducing the republic to a mass
democracy in pursuit of the greatest number.

Self-abnegation / self-inflation
oneself nonetheless
self-abasement an egotism
intent on outfoxing contingency-riddled
irretrievable and so
unredeemable history

constructing instead a universe
more or less material
phalanxed with particulars
selected for viewing pleasures
scored for moral edification
the satisfaction of creating

by germinal insemination
directly to the cranial vault
not a body of abstract dogma
based on rational evidence
but *states of mind in which certain things*
are comprehensible

a faith which finds its validity
in action a faith without substance
a fascination of images
in sufficient numbers of skulls
to instigate innumerable
unimaginable futures.

4 Poems by Robert Feldman

Paradise Cemetery

© 2016

Mexican madwoman
buried beside nameless Mexican babies
beside scorched scrub oaks

mixed and tasted her teas,
prescribing cures for tuberculosis and la escarlatina

grew fond of her new home
settled in the valley outside Cave Creek

spoke broken English
occasionally seen in town
mailing a letter to her husband in Zamora,
shopping for sugar or infrequent hairbrushes

weekends she'd drag her plant sack
followed by two collie dogs,
hoping to spot a trogon parrot or secret deer

on her tenth July when the rains came
she fell ill,
silence again her only ally

she died as quickly as the rains left the hills,
and her daughter returned to Deming,
this time for good

in '53 she was remembered
given a burial marker,
through the kind graces of the Paradise Cemetery Committee

greenyellow plastic flowers stab the graveyard dirt,
charcoal clouds veiling late afternoon sun,
mountain jays screech, fighting over some burnt out weeds

Mexican madwoman
walk away from the grave,
before the first drops of rain
fall gratefully
back into this empty ground!

Paradise, AZ
1980



Painting by Abeer Ahmed,
provided by Robert Feldman.



Born in Paterson, New Jersey, Robert Feldman was inspired at an early age by members of Paterson's literary tradition, most notably Louis and Allen Ginsberg and William Carlos Williams. As a young adult while living in St. Louis, he organized various poetry readings, produced and hosted a community issues news hour and a biweekly bebop jazz radio program on KDNA-FM. It was during this time his interest and admiration for the Beat Generation flourished. A few years later, he helped found the Bisbee Poets Collective and eventually played a leading role in the success of the Bisbee Poetry Festival. Robert was instrumental in publishing some of Arizona's most influential writers such as Drummond Hadley and Michael Gregory, and in 1980, collaborated with Lawrence Ferlinghetti on his Bisbee publication, "Mule Mountain Dreams." During the '80s and '90s, he participated in dozens of poetry readings around the country. Now years later, he continues to write, paint, and play tabla, besides working with high-school students as faculty advisor of the Park Vista Writers Workshop. The body of Robert Feldman's writing and painting can be accessed at www.albionmoonlight.net; he can be reached at rfeldman@gmail.com.

Ode to a Beaten Church

© 2016

barrooms as homes for broken generations
fleeing intently
runaway railroad cars
streaming down toothless tracks
wet with the fire of endless failures
attitudes of garnished laughter
wild, sad enough to avoid the constant barroom tv blue light,
stagnant cold beers,
screaming the obscenities of doctors' reports
faking hip empathic carings,
avoiding waitresses nervously eyeing the quiet troublemaker,
alcohol can transform anyone
change a soccer player into a dramatist
alter ego
develop clichés
words with no depth
exaggerate whispers from flirtatious animals in heat
who once collectively realized their lives were on the line
but still chose audacious clothes and thick red cough syrup,
the forsaken generations
forgetting the struggles of those before this Poetry,
instead listening to the migraine of television,
bookless,
collapsing into each others' external fantasies of
hot rock and roll,
cool music
loud music
gesticulating music,
wilting beneath skeletons with groomed hair and shiny silver nails
retreating like punching bags
then returning to revisit the inertia of violence,
more of the same
as it was the last time,
all those generations,
careless,
wallowing:
where mass media at last has replaced any image of self-respect,
where the children sing car commercials,
unchanged sad helpless somnambulant eternal desolation angels
so confused of what to live for,
the blatant repetition of contentedness,
nothing extraordinary here,
no crisis here,



Painting by Abeer Ahmed, provided by Robert Feldman.

Continued on page 47

Continued from page 46

no dim vague puzzling streets to glimpse a miracle of the mind's breath,
only polite cynical laughter with the trimmings,
simple hospitality of this age destined to reinvent slavery
shackled to their barroom dreams so consistent and predictable,
only the rapists and destiny hitters now take to the stage,
screw Lenny Bruce
forget Ginsberg
the American banking system has become bard and laureate!

oh where are my armies now?
have we forsaken ourselves,
one another
to the volume of mass media?
does it always take tidal waves
fires in the night
to sober us up straight again?
so relaxed we are
mass alienated apathy on the tip of a match,
striking,
cosmic suicide and romantic decadence out of control,
deodorized and passionless
obese and swooning the surface of an apology

yes, it is us we need to declare
gaze intently into each other's mirrors before the magic's all used up
becomes confined
impassable like frozen waterlines out there lifeless
beneath some lonely midnight below zero highway
waiting for cigarette butts and phantom secretaries to fill in the potholes
choosing immobility
mindlessly leaning over perfect tables to discern the violence of prostitution,
the clash of old discarded paradigms
the cruelty of alienation
the onslaught of specialization
the brutality of voluntary generational suicide...
we are witnesses to the explosion of two runaway trains
that cannot coexist on the same track

1980
Tucson

Tsunami

(2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami)

© 2016

then a window opens
brilliant specs of light
blasting through the rubble
exposing the devastation
Tsunami tidal wave,
innocent humpback whales
bluefish
and human babies confused,
all abandoned on shore,
puppies and 2-wk old petrified sparrows
savagely
brutally
washed overboard

then a window opens
bashed and pelted random fingers
grasping shafts of moonbeams emerge,
hundreds extended in dignity,
pointing
-to where nurses bake fresh brown bread
-to where Fukushima farmers offer drinking water
-to where Tokyo razorblade punk-gangsters begin nurturing babies
-to where Hiroshima mothers struggle upstream
-to where orphaned little league sons grasp a floating door
-to where Banyan trees escape from their roots
-to where island ochre sands recede
-to where gardens and ashrams are waterproofed
then sealed again
-to where volunteers from Sweden and Canada
climb aboard wooden ships
setting sail for Japan,
while the whole world once more swells,
then breathes out,
then recedes,
into a more perfect
colossal unity

December, 2011



Painting by Abeer Ahmed,
provided by Robert Feldman.

On Broadway

© 2016

honking taxis,
windshieldwipers,
unforgiving rain,
washed out purple green stars
red planet awash down lower Broadway

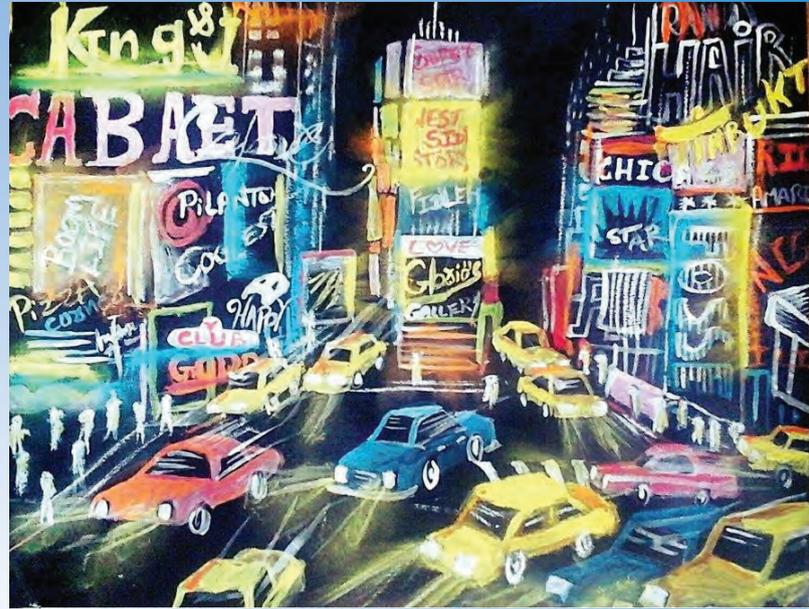
madison smiles
hailing her worn out lover
stooped over some jones st. fire hydrant
chomping on juiced strawberry taffy-
oh sweet momma july!

Laura Nyro's voice scratchy
some boarded up village record store
winos toasting the heavens down lower Broadway
stars celebrating stars on Broadway,
down Broadway,
see, the hustle still exists for lonesome revolutionaries,
hostess cupcake makers,
wall st bankers who don't give a crap about profits
yearning to give money away
dreaming of overtipping all night waitresses,
reborn little boys skipping school to learn
12-string guitar chords
dancers parading behind radio city
wearing scarlet sequence
dancing without borders
jersey runaways without souls
traded them in for looking glass miracles,
and film producers buying hot dogs for invisible folk singers...

everybody
all at once
all strung out on Broadway
together under wet purple green stars,
as the red planet
gratefully exhales
as it should,
damn it!

huh!

Miami, FL
Spring, 2013



Painting by Abeer Ahmed, provided by Robert Feldman.

10 Poems by Richard Fenton Sederstrom

Some Codex Poems

Before I explain the nature of my latest little experiment, the nature of the contents will suggest that these are not new poems. In fact, they are pieces that I have kept “for special,” partly because I think they are special and partly, as reflected in my introduction, they are not poems from a source that is highly regarded. They are, I assure you, all previously un-published.

The non-highly regarded source is the classroom, the ordinary public non-advanced fun-of-the-mill garden-variety high-school classroom, and the reason I wrote these, as I think I explain, sorta-kinda, is that I want that little part of almost everyone’s world acknowledged. As to Willy Loman, “attention must be paid,” at least in proportion to what we share as “lone lorn creeturs” and products of a common culture.

I don’t know how many poets and writers have spent their much of their careers teaching at the elementary and high school levels. Not many, I think, and they are unknown mostly because they have no institution to support them. So I will try to speak for my anonymous colleagues when I declare that we are an appropriate subject and audience for Tomas Tranströmer’s surprising poem, “Codex”—the anonymous practitioners of the arts who spend their lives quietly transferring the culture to next and next and next generations, in a strong sense all-at-once, those minds who eventually and somehow joyfully “can no longer receive,” who “have not stopped giving.”

They rolled out a little of the radiant and melancholy tapestry
and let go again.

Some are anonymous, they are my friends
without my knowing them*

They are like the generations of my own Swedish family, names mostly never known to me, or forgotten, or moiled into the vaguest generic mythos of unheeded family tales, men and women—mostly women—who, whatever their official life-calling might have been, somehow managed to spend much of their lives in the front of the classroom, adding words to the “codex.”

So with ancestries in mind, and the students I have taught and written with also in mind, I have submitted some poems that have come out of the classroom, some of my own pages for the codex. All of them were originally drafted in one classroom or another, especially during years when I visited classes as a substitute after I had retired: rediscovering forgotten territories like biology, or physics, or math, where I could speak again of the wonder of re-capturing pages from disciplines I had long taken as finished for me. It’s an attempt to take nothing as ever finished or ever for granted, “to step over the border without anyone noticing ...”

P.S. I just noticed the typo “fun” in what should have been “run-of-the-mill.” Acknowledge with me if you will Sigmund’s rare but edifying sense of humor, and we’ll leave it as it should had ought’ a be.

*“The Great Enigma,” *New Directions*, 2006, pp. 174-5.



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.

Verb Tension with Pronouns

© 2016

Testing the Life Away

Part 1: Present Tense

I don't know that I like watching this happen.
These children's solemn industry. The lifeless
recapitulation of rote on state-sanctioned bubble-sheets.

Park of me must though, if *like* is the word
or the proper tense. After all, I am here by choice.
I am watching by choice.

It is a nearly perfect picture of what
they always wanted us to be like one day.
But *they* is *us* now: *me*.

Part 2: Future Tense

It is so little of what we want ourselves to be now.
It is nothing of what we want ourselves to have been.

The part I don't like watching
is the same part we may have become.

Maybe it is that part of *like* that is a glare of threat.
I can't turn away, fascinated by some reptile eye.

Like watching the TV surgeon stop a heart
to make it live again until a commercial intervenes.

But it is my poor palpitating heart that will have been
pumping away again in our dubious future perfect.

Real Notes

© 2016

for Jollene Murphy

“They’re real notes. Swear.”

This from the girl with the blue clarinet.

Real blue. “Swear.”

Her notes are blue.

No metaphor. Swear.

What sound it is cannot be written out and out

and out as real notes, no more than whale song,

the real and ecstatic whale,

not the human’s wishful echo of her ghost,

or a wolf in the night.

The soul searching owl. The soul-tearing rapacious owl.

The osprey’s hard starving grief having missed the perch.

The death cry. The victory gasp of the diving fish.

All notes. Swear.

Like the warning sound of a loon after midnight,

perfect sanity translated into madness by the wakened tourist,

the echo note of the nightmare shriek of the lunatic

who sings on the dreamed-limned rack

in the orchestra pit of refining flames, the song of flames.

The real note that marches in perfect, perfect nothingness

before the first note of Beethoven’s paeon to the final silence.

Real notes. Swear.

The exhausted lover pleading,

so so so far suspended beyond the demeaning notes of language.

π

© 2016

Shall we suspend dispute over the issue,
at least for this nodding and windowless
episode in our nourishing lives together,
that, agreeing upon the standard relationship
between the value of π and the definition

of the radius, which barely relates to the ulna
sinister, that fragment of the skeletal structure
that automatically leads a half cupped hand
to the labial orifice and a surreptitious deep yawn,
and that all such concepts are important enough

for someone's Friday exam but nowhere beyond,
that afterwards we all concede to the necessities
of status-determining courtesy?—that the spoon
lies farther from the dish than the knife
not merely because of proprieties involving

who is about to run away from whom,
but that the spoon, having but little edge
to save itself from the evolutionary mandates
of the nature of the knife, requires of Control
for its very existence an edge also of running time,

and that to appreciate the other little drama, vital
though it may be to two disparate utensils,
albeit in the sway of unnatural and therefore
poignant love, may also be part of our duty on Earth,
if that duty is to rise to help maintain the basic

decorum of society and to determine that
the value of π , believed not only to be constant
but only barely finite, must ultimately
be a calculation of faith, but that it cannot
be so without our asking "Why?"

Petitions and Praises

© 2016

A Brief Evocation for Public Education

I.

What pain they earn
for forgetting the Text,
 forgetting the quietude of learning,
 neglecting our vows of their silence.
Nick, Mark, Chase, and Rachel
in their devotion, nevertheless
 resist, like deviant postulants,
 our rigid attention to perfectability.

Be kind:

For I, probably,
have failed to keep them
 in perfect scholarliness.

Be kind:

They wouldn't have complained
at my unschooly behavior
 anyway.

Be very kind.

II.

By nine fifty two
in the hour of Terce
 Colin has read
 a page already.

Rejoice!:

For the passion
of youthkind
 to compress all time
 into the fecund black hole of a single page,

Rejoice!:

For the miracle of
the plurality of voice
 hushed by the miracle
 of forbearance,

Rejoice!:

For the eschatology
of TGIF:
 the sign of Two Forty Five
 in the Hour of Nones (or so) arise,

Rejoice!:

And ascend
into the mercy and grace of an Ending.

Friends Among the Tubers

© 2016

We overhear the teacher announce
“Potatoes will go home tomorrow.”
But whose home? The potatoes’?
My home? Or, now that we
and our potatoes have lived
a while together, become
acquaintances if not friends,
allies if not intimates,
will we take our potatoes
to our hearts? Will we care
for our potatoes, love them,
nurture them, cherish them?

Or will our new cares go the way
of the baby turtles, the Easter chicks—
neglected spudlets, discarded, left to root
and rot under a bed? Even love
is filled with earthy compromise.
If we will not take our potatoes
to our hearts, let’s not forget them
on some lonely floor.
We should rather compromise,
split the sublime difference.
Take them a gentle half way,
boiled and buttered, to the core
of our pleasure, middle ground
of our enveloping selves.

“eLearning”: Amebocytes Choanocytes Porocytes Pigeons and the Rest of Us

© 2016

In this room supplied with so many more computers
than students
in this room with so many more absent students
than present students

in this room where consideration of the eSsent nature of
the unabsent student is foreign to the nature of
the discipline the authorities have eNtitled *eLearning*,

I have just suffered the fulfilling stigmata of two paper cuts,
anachronistic bleeding of my paper-bound soul.
From out the sere goat-skin of my petty sacrifice
I know that I am purified again!

Away from the flayed pinky of my due suffering
the young before me are freed to ply
their sanctified sanitized pursuit

and I am freed
to ascend beyond the Earth-bound query:
How in our Bland New World does the child of *eLearning*
pass the rigors of *Introductory Physical Ed*?

From what cosmic realm will rise the ethereal assessment upon
sit-ups, push-ups, jumping-jacks, and laps around the computer?—
by virtue perhaps of the eLeve perched sweating
at the blue façade of the glowing Microsoft?

Freed as well from the bonds of the eCru reality of dust
from which we have matriculated,
freed from the bounds of question,
from the graphite smears of superannuated quintessence,

now each a once-free cell caught in the matrix of sponge,
each of us separate, each of us lorn,
each an embodiment of Dr. Skinner’s lonely pigeons—

we face the correct pigeon hole and await
another electronic stimulus
empty as always of any nourishment—
discontinuous little synapses in the eTher.

. . . All Hope

© 2016

“Remember, you are not allowed
to discuss the multiple-choice section
of this exam with anyone at any time.

Failure to adhere to any of these rules
could result in invalidation
of your grade.”*

Oaths perish in the flame
of iniquity. Promises
glide grayly Letheward. I dos

don't. But *this* condition is forever!—uh huh,
the forever of a political pledge.
The issue sloughs out of the memory

by way of an epilogical giggle
at the closing of the test room
door. Abandon . . .

*AP Examination Instructions 2008,
©2008, The College Board

The Candy Wrappers of History

© 2016

“God!” the second-year student whines,
“They claim to love the environment,
but they don’t even recycle!”

In his third year he may take
Foundations of Western Philosophy
and contemplate the nature of his pique,

welcome himself, in *Themes of Western History*,
to Sixteenth Century London, Twelfth Century Rome,
First Century Jerusalem.

But if he fails to recycle the scraps, as he will,
the printed pages, the vellum palimpsests,
the speculative papyri of these stories,

he might as well toss that Snicker’s wrapper he’s holding
right there on the mall on his way to his midterm exam
in *Intro to Ecology* and his un-memorable blue book.

To do the right thing right, it is sensible first to wonder why.

Epiphany in Biology Class

© 2016

a short poem mostly overheard

“The Scorpion
is all he needs
to be
and
no more”

“Like Jesus?”

all he needs
to be
and no
more

Rules Are Made to Translate

© 2016

I

Fulfilling my morning office, I turn my back
on thirty-eight processed, packaged entities
of the pre-adult category of citizenship,

and one brand-new teacher, all shined up,
present to assist the “overload”—
my thirty-nine responsibilities. I turn my back

and type into the sense-lacking computer
the apt joke a friend gave as password,
which I share now with the machine only.

And thus I enter the canons of my day.
b·a·r·d allows me to enter my name
into the rites and my mission.

II

t·h·o·u·g·h·t admits me into the bleached
software souls of the people
I am now turned inhospitably from.

For my job I need only see the screen.
But after my moments of picking
at their lives in the gray ether, I will turn

around, and I will wax bardic.
I will intone to them out of the mouthsome
sounds of the elder language:

*Faðer ure þu þe eart on heofunum si thin name
gehalgod*, “Our Father” uttered anciently—
just a harmless example of pedagogical taxidermy,

III

*unsoðed** by the troublesome amen—
and the cryptic plea of “The Wife’s Lament,”
the soul of the ancient role of loneliness,

purgation, loss of hope, lorn of love,
all bound among roots of our primordial oak,
cave—prison, grave, madness, decay—

the great hidden halls of this lost woman’s
deathless agony and our sand-blind
politically illicit search for the live

and unmechanical bardic cognate: grace—
sound steeped in sorrow / centuries past,
of *langoþe leofes abidan / in forlorenes*.**

*Old English *soð* (*soth* or *sooth*), “truth,” twisted
ungrammatically into a verb.

**Literally, “longing for love abiding / in forlorn-ness.”

A poem by Katherine Jeffrey

Nevermore

© 2016

May I just state, love is a strange creature, deemed unfit a desirable teacher.
For all my third degree burns,
Traces of heat imprinted upon his palm,
A stinging substance that lingers on.

Say nay, say nay
Ye shan't ever go away,
Your crooked grin, I own it.

Evermore, my sweet disarray.

In windowless rooms,
Wherever thy spice blooms,
Away from all prying eyes,
Where I shan't be mocked for wearing this disguise.
Your amorousness that once shaped my putrid desire,
Where you left stains of pulchritudinous, from fingertips of your empire.

Say nay, say nay
Ye shan't ever go away,
Your crooked grin, I own it.

Evermore, my sweet disarray.

Continued on page 62



Miss Katherine Jeffrey is a twenty-four-year-old author, and poetry writer residing in the dry heat of Tucson, AZ. Being an only child with a vivid imagination, while lacking the appropriate mannerisms of what a young bright-eyed student should be, she sought the comfort of her pen at a peculiarly early age. Having an obsession with writing based on eighteenth century literature and aristocracy, she hopes to continue her inventions of short stories, poetry, and the occasional novel, however flippantly, until the old withered gray of age creeps up on her. Or at least until the rest of society cannot endure her allegorical fiction any longer. Reach her at Heralllegoricalfiction@gmail.com.

Now a wandering myth,
Where dreams of you threaten to exist,
I press fingers to thy breast,
Where you reside in secret chambers in my chest.
Alas I am ever still your calamity,
Unrequited, bemused, and cruel.
As I prey on the music of your swoon,
And often ponder it's fervent tune.

Say nay, say nay
Ye shan't ever go away,
Your crooked grin, I own it.

Evermore, my sweet disarray.

Yet still I sing where our sunshine kissed,
And brave this curse I know you cannot resist,
Though I see you twist and recoil back to your turmoil,
I find myself unable to follow,
So instead I shall stay and wallow.
For I cannot relinquish the grip from thy hand,
Bleeding heart of mine, forever chained to your demand.
Sing your song one last time, my sweet canary,
You'll always be mine, but alas, you shan't ever be able to rewind.

Say nay, say nay,
Ye shan't ever go away,
Your crooked grin, I own it.

Evermore, my sweet disarray.

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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.

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



The Blue Guitar Magazine's website is www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.
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Check out The Arizona Consortium for the Arts website, www.artizona.org. There, you can sign up for an e-mailed newsletter.

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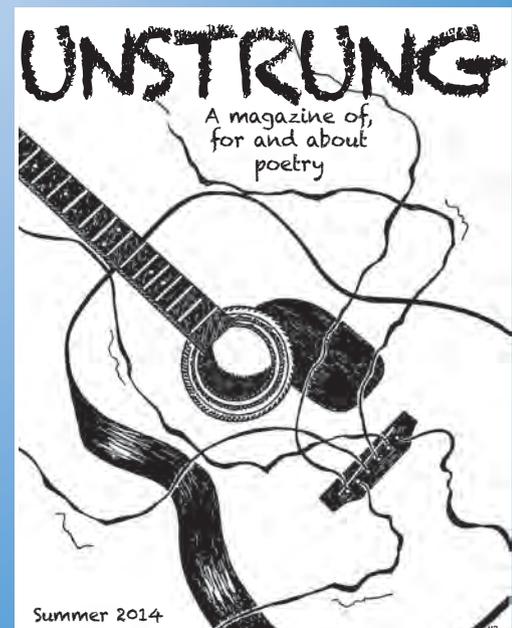
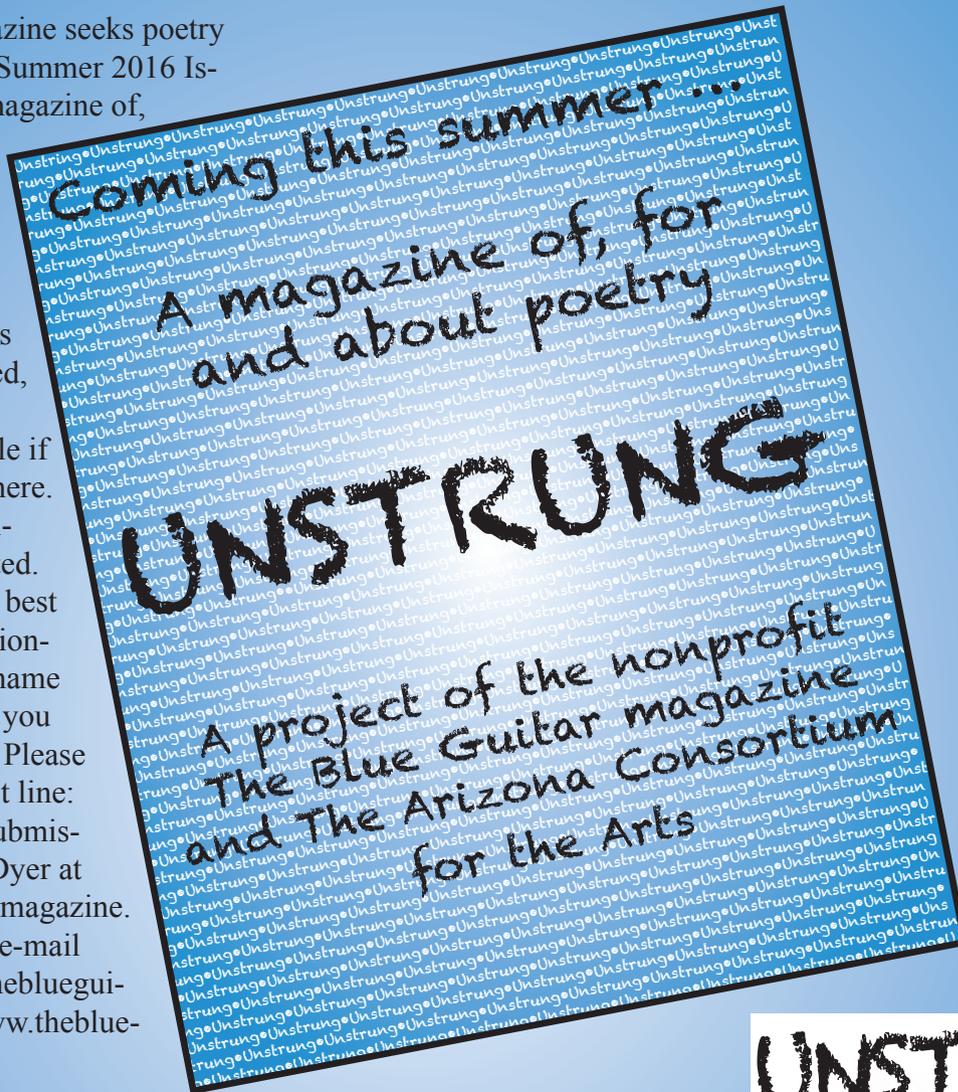
Spring 2016

A Call to Poets for the 2016 Issue of Unstrung

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks poetry submissions for the Summer 2016 Issue of Unstrung, a magazine of,

for and about poetry. Submissions will be accepted from June 1 through July 1. 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.



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, 2016, in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction — all geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Writers must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For additional information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

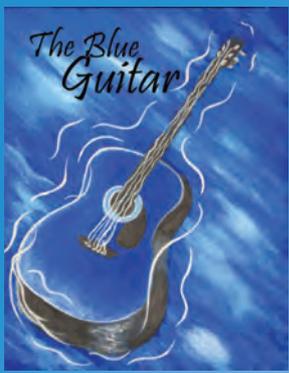
The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine is a project of the nonprofit The Blue Guitar literary and arts magazine and The Arizona Consortium for the Arts. The Arizona Consortium for the Arts is a startup, nonprofit group dedicated to supporting and fostering artists and the arts in Arizona, including the literary, visual and performing arts. For more information about The Blue Guitar and The Blue Guitar Jr. magazines and The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, visit our websites:
www.theblueguitarmagazine.org 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, 2016, 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 additional information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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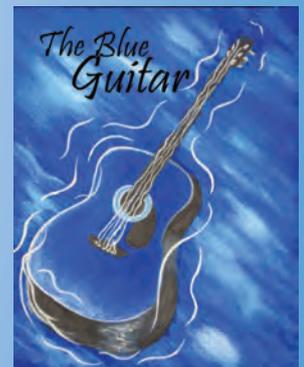


A Call to Writers for Fall

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks literary submissions for the Fall 2016 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 1. 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 2016 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 1. 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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Volume 8,
Number 1
Spring Issue
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*“Things
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are
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upon
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blue guitar.”*