

The Blue Guitar

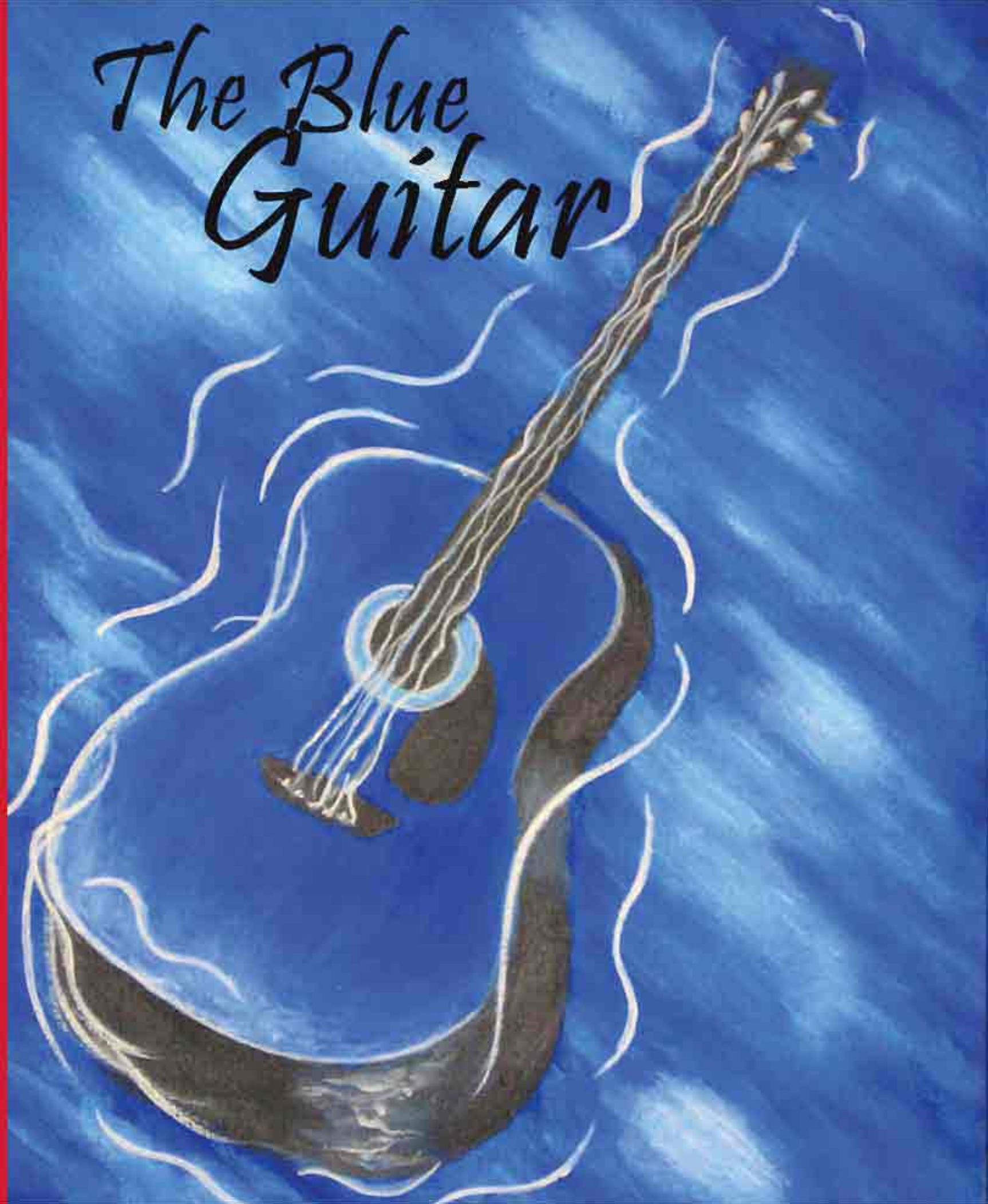


Table Of Contents

Fiction

“I Stand Here Waiting” – Dawn Maria 14-15
 “The Vest” – Andrew J. Hogan.....21
 “They Cannot Lay Kincaid to Rest” – Barclay Franklin..... 22-23
 “Betty’s” – Mary Sojourner 29-33
 “Virgin Moon” – Lysa Cohen..... 41-43

Non-Fiction

“Cultivating Wonder” – Megan Kimble 7-8

Memoir

Excerpts from ‘The Hooker’s Daughter’ – Dale Stanten 34-35

Poetry

“Consider Hollyhocks Instead,” “LaLaLa,” “Sonora” – Michelle Nickol..... 3-4
 “Entitlement of Autumn,” “Clarence Elmore Treece,” “Spring Dusk” – Gari Crowley..... 5-6
 “I’ll Love You Forever,” “Teeth” – Amanda Kay Gilleland 16-17
 “At the Rijksmuseum,” “Kachina,” “Soup for Supper”
 – Carrie Backe..... 18-20
 “Sunset Vista,” “Ten Thousand Seed,” “My Father’s House” –
 Paula Ashley..... 44-46
 “Lives of the Poets” – Michael Gregory..... 47-48
 “All Of My Friends Are BackEast,” “From The Back Of A Pickup,” “Cactusflower...,” “On First Seeing The Taj Mahal,”
 “Backs Against The Tide,” “Tsunami,” “Reinventing My Shadow,” “You’re My Enemy!,” “We Are Connected,”
 “Rereading the Anarchist Cookbook” – Robert Feldman 57-68

Art

“Sudoku Mandala,” “Self Portrait,” “Succulents and Decomposers,” “Deadpan Self Portrait,” “Coy Collection” – Genevieve Gardella 9-13
 “Nocturne,” “Blue Trees,” “Dive,” “Glassman,” “What Road”
 – Joe Gonzalez..... 24-28
 “Where Good Men go to Sleep and I go to Reap” and “The Immaculate Habit,” “Where Good Men go to Sleep and I go to Reap,” “Where Good Men go to Sleep and I go to Reap [pendant],” “The Immaculate Habit,” “The Immaculate Habit [pendant]” – Kathryn Hratko 36-40
 “Gargoyle Atop Notre Dame de Paris,” “Lonely Leaf,” “Celtic Crosses, Kilmalkedar church,” “Helmshore Textile Plant,” “Interior of York Minster,” “Lake of the Woods,” “Street: Perth, Scotland,” “Orange Flower” – Erin Truesdale 49-56
 “Empress,” “Percolate,” “Battle Hardened,” “Gas Can Santa”
 – Michael Santa Cruz..... 69-72

News

Consortium celebrates five years.....81
 All about The Arizona Consortium for the Arts.....82
 Open Mic: A celebration of the arts82
 The Consortium’s vision for a multicultural arts center83
 Call to poets for 2013 issue of Unstrung84
 5th Annual Blue Guitar Spring 2013 Festival of the Arts.....85
 The Blue Guitar magazine staff biographies86
 Sign up for The Consortium’s e-newsletter.....86
 Calls to writers, artists for Spring 2013 Blue Guitar87



Snapshots from the Oct. 28 The Arizona Consortium for the Arts Fall Festival of the Arts, pages 8, 73-80

Photo by Richard H. Dyer Jr., The Blue Guitar Magazine

Editor’s Note

“It’s all about connections,” a dear friend and poet said at The Consortium’s recent annual fall arts festival, explaining how our brains process art and trigger connections that inspire us. I wondered later if this ability to even have triggers is a holdover from our ancient ancestors, left behind in the primitive part of our brains — it’s such a basic impulse — from a time when art by necessity was more utilitarian, ie, where the best hunting and gathering was, stay away from certain plants and animals. I only know that after, say listening to music, viewing art or performances or reading other writers and poets, I am inspired to write my own poetry. These connections, though, don’t exist in a vacuum — on a metaphysical level, they bind us each to each.



Rebecca “Becca” Dyer

Rebecca “Becca” Dyer
 Editor in chief

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3 Poems By Michelle Nickol

Consider Hollyhocks Instead

© 2012

How they drift among themselves
and once gone there's less
mercy in the world

like them all earth's fruits and first
things spring forth fistless then
bloom steady in an unsteady light

stealth of flop-eared newcomers
strayers for a while, you are highly
regarded among the prickly pears.

LaLaLa

© 2012

The south land falls and
rises in layers of geologic
flora and skyskysky
silence finger-splays
clustered treetops rail
dry grasses line umber
waves of limber names
San Pedro Cascabel Muleshoe
trisyllabic dissonant in their
leanleanlean
toward a jotted river



Michelle Nickol writes: "I like to go outside with pencil and paper. Sometimes a poem comes. I haven't figured out why yet. But, I think it's a good thing."

Sonora

© 2012

The desert painted is

bloom-brushed
itinerant
sustaining

what an owlish surprise
to newcomers this fresh harvest
of bordered arrests as if
the wind or any natural thing
could have a border
which moves me to ache cisterns
and plastic water bottles

ah the proverbial politics of agua
the emperor naked and laughing decides

who stays
goes
lives
doesn't

the mesquite are lively
amid the fray and paint
they've rolled and given
arch to this campsite
stepping to the rock lectern
a whisper forms in the wind

Guadalupe Hidalgo

then

a bordered wall

3 Poems By Gari Crowley

Entitlement of Autumn

© 2012

My sixtieth Autumn is nearing its end.
One of nature's most spectacular transitions
is the eroding of the energies of maturation.

The last
remnant of cottonwood leaves
fell without merits or adulation.

In the wind chill I am raking fall's pillage
into neatly dispersing piles
of spent energy.

I listen to the sound of them prattling
haphazardly, see them jostling for position
into places of disintegration.

I could burn them or bag them or let them be.
I just watch them,
their sense of entitlement.

Clarence Elmore Treece

© 2012

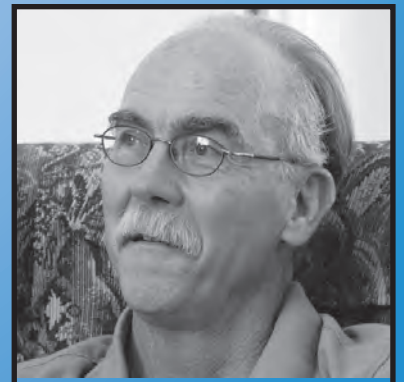
His face was like
a patch of dried mud, weathered,
as a land is disallowed
the virtues of graceful intervention.

Looking in hindsight at the
coffle of the span of his life,
the measure of his birth
was the incarcerating labor of his livelihood.

The loss of his calloused blood
was as virtue and necessity.
His mutant inheritance was
the dirt snatched up and held out in a hand as a gift:

the sparse influx of goods and money,
the shoeless amenities and mussy children.
Unlettered and ordinary,
they harvested for their winter in a disobliging means to an end.

Gari is an Arizona native and has lived here his entire life. He is a lover and respecter of the desert. He lives in Sierra Vista with his lovely wife Linda and their two cats Baby and Sammi. He has been employed in the property management/development field as a landscaper and groundskeeper. At the age of sixty-one, he has been writing poetry for three years. Reach the poet at arroyo_verde@yahoo.com.



Spring Dusk

© 2012

The revitalized mesquite tree is leafing from restive buds
having precluded the
vernal equinox as a courtesy through its province
of native species.
Its skein of old roots make their way through caliche and drought.

The daily means and holdings have nestled under dusk,
as if there were a laying on of hands.
An extinction of displaced quail harangue in the hospice of dead
mesquite branches and earthen grass
waiting for their next annuity

I watch my contumacious cats exchange lethargic co-existence
with yawning dispositions,
as they kneed the remnant of a crimson sun for cathartic doses
of inexplicable dreams
having their bellies full of subsidies.

The impoverished coyote has improvised the boundary of the food chain,
the territorial imperative,
having been displaced from the romance of myths and legends,
to arrogant interlopers
without goods or money.

I, one of the many cumberers of the earth nestle
under my imperatives
while pondering the rhetoric of spring and my own provender
as the dusk is whispering sonnets
curling into night, assuaging the prey on the mind.

Cultivating Wonder

By Megan Kimble

If darkness is crucial for our physical health, what does it mean for our mental health?

When I was a kid, nearly the only time I looked at the stars was when I had to pee. Every year, the week before Christmas, my family and I headed north out of Los Angeles to a campground on the beach just outside San Luis Obispo. Three a.m. trips to the bathroom—crunching over pine needles, through icy air and eerie quiet—were a family affair. Bladders burning, my sister and I made our parents venture out of the tent first to confront the terrors that were lurking unseen beyond the thin nylon. By the time we had laced our shoes, zipped our coats and tripped out of the tent, our parents' faces would be lost skyward. Knees locked, shoulders slumped, mouths agape, they craned their necks toward the blazing darkness and the spackle of light superimposed upon it.

"Girls!" my dad would gasp. "Come see this. You gotta see this."

"Not now," we'd say. "After the bathroom. Come on."

Yet night after night, we looked up. Bladders forgotten, cold ignored, we would be sucked in once again. Once again, subsumed by the enormity, the enormous and irreversible spottiness of it all. A night sky in three dimensions.

In Los Angeles, as in cities across the world, the night sky has long been lost. For the first time in history, a majority of the world's population is urban. For the first time in history, millions of urban children grow up without this smack in the face, without the realization that there is so much more. As cities grow bigger and their streetlights grow brighter, little by little, darkness is disappearing. Behind the electronic brightness of billboards and office buildings, what was once an interactive canvas of sky becomes a spilled bucket of black paint—a vague

nothingness.

Does it matter? Do we need darkness?

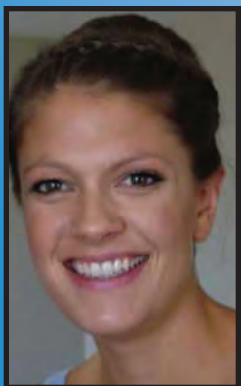
Humans have never gone happily into the darkness. We are diurnal beings—we live in the day, and so do our eyes, their rods and cones entirely dependent on light to make sense of the shapes around them. It only makes sense that we would want to illuminate the dark.

But scientific and medical studies have long suggested that this impulse might well be dangerous to human health. Just as artificial lights disrupt the rhythms of natural ecosystems and species dependent on dark-light cues for migration, mating and feeding, a brightly lit night similarly disrupts human circadian rhythms. In 2008, a study in *Chronobiology International* showed that women who live in communities with the greatest amount of artificial nighttime light are much more likely to get breast cancer than those who live in naturally dark areas—73 percent more likely. This is consistent with other studies that have shown that nurses, flight attendants and other women with night-shift occupations have 60 percent higher incidences of breast cancer than their day-dwelling counterparts.

It's something to consider in the face of predictions that by 2050, 70 percent of the world's population will be urban. There are many factors to ponder with this massive demographic shift, but I wonder if darkness has been overlooked. If, as it seems, our physical health depends on natural darkness, is there something in the dark for our mental health?

Even as the darkness makes our insides squirm—we are all still children wondering what's beyond the tent—that which comes out of that darkness—the stars!—ignites our capacity for wonder. Wonder, and hope that light, and so much of it, could exist in such a dark and empty universe. The burst of a firefly does the same for a child's understanding of dusk—that even as

Continued on page 8



Megan Kimble runs, hikes, and bikes around Tucson, where she's a student in the University of Arizona's MFA program for creative nonfiction. She writes for the *Los Angeles Times* and *Terrain.org*, and has edited several books. You can find her on her blog, at megankimble.com, or in her kitchen, where she's often making chocolate or burning toast.

Continued from page 7

the sun disappears, the world can still have light.

Darkness reveals to us our fears, and the lights that blink back at us out of this darkness demonstrate the cause for hope.

I am grateful that someone made me linger when my bladder was full and my fingers were cold; grateful that I had the chance to look up at the sky and consider something more, to realize, year after year, when I was 8, 9 and 10, that I lived in a big universe. It was big and dark and empty, yet it was a universe that continued to burn, scary and beautiful, whether or not I was looking at it.

More photos from the Fall Festival of the Arts



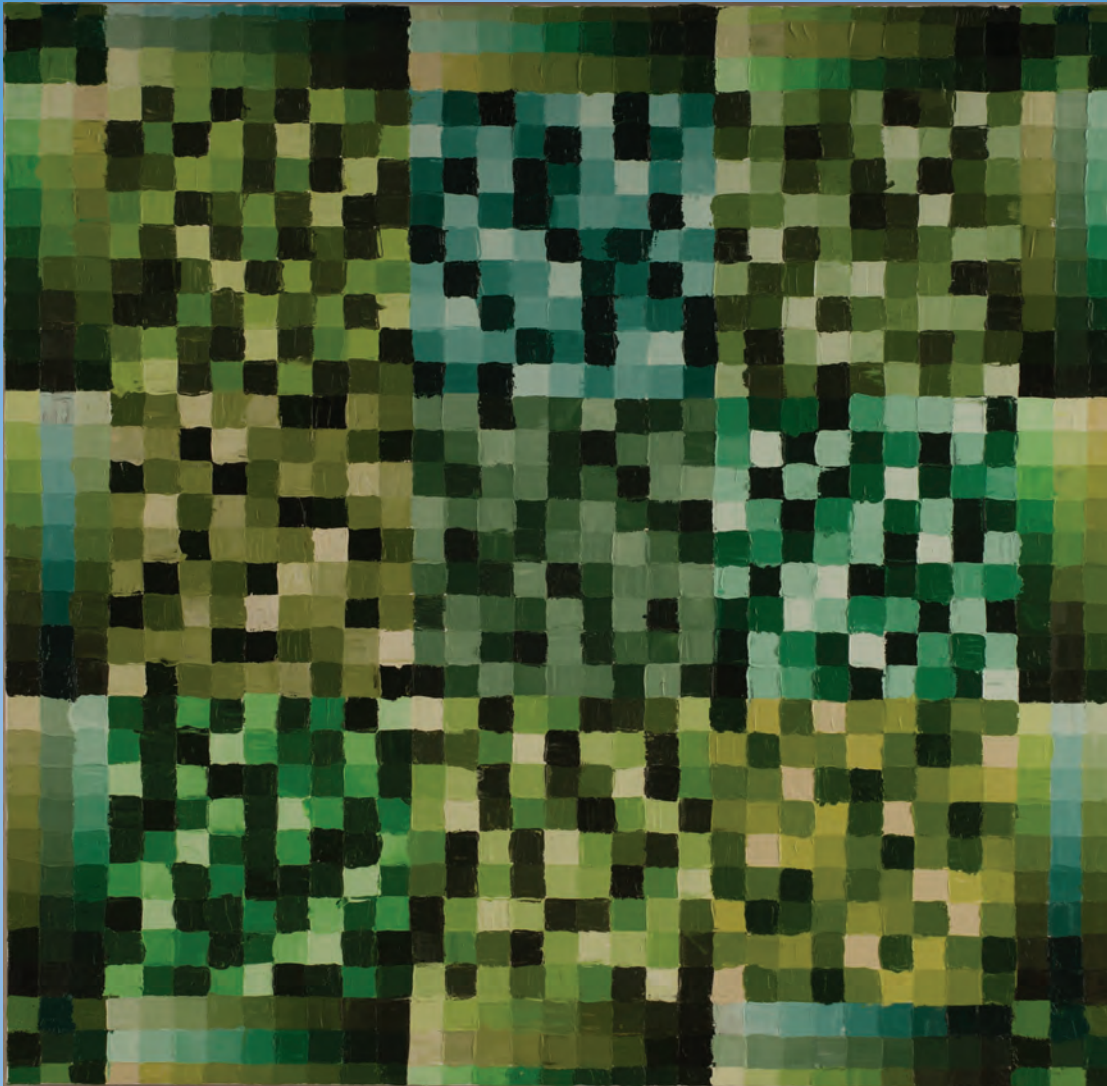
Elena and Jim Thornton



Artist J. L. Covarrubias and his painting "History of Tempe"

Genevieve Gardella

Phoenix Artist



“Sudoku Mandala”

32 by 33 inches

Oil on canvas

2011



Genevieve Gardella was born in 1985 in Northwest Washington State, became an Arizona transplant in 2001 and currently lives and works in Phoenix, Arizona. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting from Arizona State University's Herberger College of Design and Fine Arts in 2011. Her work has been exhibited at ASU's Gallery 100 and Memorial Union Gallery as well as Howling House. She seeks ways in which to be creative in thought and action and communicate by means of paint. Genevieve Gardella may be contacted at gcolburn@asu.edu.

Genevieve Gardella

Phoenix Artist



"Self Portrait"
22 by 30 inches
Watercolor on paper
2011

Like the Twentieth Century artist Rene Magritte, I prefer "to be considered a thinker who communicates by means of paint." I have been a quiet and cowardly middle child keeping the peace with mild manners. Bold words and ideas choke in my throat. Decisive verbal statements of my perspectives generate in me a palpable anxiety that leaves me mute. It's through image, with all its nuances and un-sayings that I'm able to evoke a specter of my thoughts. Using visual devices aimed at eliciting introspection from the viewer, I hope to create work that is deliberately composed and intended to be deciphered. By using balance, metering of space, utilizing subtle themes and gestalt I strive to make this decoding possible. My admiration for the power of image is in part due to its poetic ability to condense language from a parade of words into an instantaneous thought that was generated via symbol, association, connotation, re-collection, direct and indirect visual matter. The viewer recreates the language in "reading" and absorbing the image. It's as if the mind of the viewer creates a mold with which to press the raw materials of the image and come up with a discernible "object" or thought. Thought, then, is the ultimate aim of my work. To catalyze thought in an individual with the result that the artwork itself becomes a creative force.

- Genevieve Gardella

Genevieve Gardella

Phoenix Artist



“Succulents and Decomposers”

22 by 30 inches

Watercolor on paper

2010

Genevieve Gardella

Phoenix Artist



“Deadpan Self Portrait”

24 by 36 inches

Oil on canvas

2011

Genevieve Gardella

Phoenix Artist



“Coy Collection”
22 by 30 inches
Watercolor on paper
2010

I Stand Here Waiting

By Dawn Maria

© 2012

I stand here waiting for you to bring me back to the Director's office. We're a new family at this preschool and I don't know you. I can't say I agree with allowing parent volunteers to help in the office. It doesn't seem right for other people, people who have never met my John, to know I needed to come to the office today.

"Mrs. Benning will be out shortly," you say in the singsong voice of a parent who has never been called to the office. You with the fresh makeup and bright sweater that warms your fair complexion on this cold day. It's not right for me to be angry with you for having time to shower this morning. You knew you needed to be here.

"Please come to the office before you pick up your son to speak to Mrs. Benning." That's all the message said. Your voice sounds different in person. If I had made it to the phone on time, what else would you have told me? Maybe what happened?

In my haste to get here, I didn't shower or change. Instead I had to get the baby ready because he'd spit up on his third outfit of the morning. He didn't want to be changed again either. By the time he was ready, I had no time for myself. I'm used to that. This waiting though, that I'm not used to.

Most people have no qualms telling me in great detail the defects present in John's behavior or mine as his mother; like that older woman at the grocery store who smiled at me near the boxed macaroni and cheese. She tickled the baby and declared him adorable. Then she looked down at John (who was grabbing boxes by the handful, then throwing them into the cart) and told me how all the chemicals in processed foods were probably what make him so hyper. Have a nice day! And off she went with her cart full of spelt flour and organic produce.

It's not that I don't see how John can be a handful. He's four. I thought this was allowed. Boys like to climb. I understand com-

pletely that not everyone likes a four year old on top of the formal dining room set. I don't see how anyone here could know about that. One of the things I liked best about this preschool was the fantastic jungle gym on the playground.

Perhaps I'm getting ahead of myself. I see you sitting at the desk sorting papers. Too busy to talk. Why don't you introduce yourself to me? The baby is sleeping in his car seat and I'm standing alone. You know my name, and my son's. I don't know yours. Maybe we are friendly with some of the same women in the Thursday playgroup. I haven't met everyone yet.

It will take a year of Thursdays before I can accumulate enough conversation with another mom to consider someone a real friend. Most of us can't speak more than two sentences before someone cries or asks to be pushed on the swing. They all seem nice enough. John is so happy being out at the park. Now that the baby can sit up, he is happier too, and I can rest my arms for a change. Even if I don't get to have a full conversation, the sounds of the ones around me are comforting. I feel less alone, less new. I may not know everyone, but I am part of the Bayside Preschool Playgroup.

The school office phone rings and I jump. I've been here for less than ten minutes. The classes won't be dismissed for another half hour, that's plenty of time to kick someone out of the school.

But John hasn't done anything. The crayon eating didn't harm anyone else. Okay, maybe some of the other children were upset witnessing him vomit, I can see that. The teacher assured me everything was fine. She chuckled when she told me the story.

The baby stirs in his seat. He's teething and I need to wipe the drool from his mouth. I reach into the diaper bag that still serves as my purse and pull out a cloth. That's when it hits me. I know what happened. John didn't do anything. It's all my fault.

Continued on page 15



Dawn Maria lives in Scottsdale, AZ surrounded by books and stories. By day she works as a Media Tech in a high school library and at night she works on her novel. She draws humor and inspiration for her work from her busy life as a mother, wife and harried pet owner. Visit her blog, *Method to the Madness*, at dawnmaria.com.

Continued from page 14

And in this moment of realization you look at me again and smile. You know too, I bet. You must. I can feel my face flush with the heat of embarrassment. Just like last week at the park, with the playgroup.

I was running late, as usual. I couldn't find the diaper bag in the house. I discovered it outside on the patio. We had watched the construction crew building homes behind our house the day before. John loves the sounds of the hammers and equipment. He squeals and does his little jig and we laugh and sing. I forget so much when we laugh like that. I forget that he sometimes grabs things from other children and speaks less than he should for his age. I forget about all the women in the grocery store. All the forgetting makes me remember how much I love being his mom.

So I grabbed the diaper bag without really checking it. If I get to the park too late, our blanket will be on the outside edge of the group. I want to be on the inside. I want John to fit in. I want to fit in.

And it really was a mistake, because even if I did check the bag, I'm not sure I would have noticed it anyway. Lizards are small and their rough skin can easily pass for a teething toy. The only thing more surprising than the lizard's unplanned appearance was how many of the playgroup children had never seen one up close. I didn't know they could spread salmonella.

Yes, I'm sure I've figured out the problem now. You called me and told me to come here early. I shift my stance as I feel my heart flicker with a rush of adrenaline. I can take this standing—for me, for John.

The door to the Director's office opens. You speak to her quietly and she nods, taking the piece of paper from your hand. Now you look uncomfortable. I take some comfort in that. The room feels warm, like a moist forest, and my hands slide against each other, too slippery for me to clasp them firmly.

"Mrs. Decker? Yes? I'm sorry you came in so early. Mrs. Shelly is new in the office and she misunderstood my directions. I just needed you to sign the backside of the permission slip to the dairy farm. You only signed the front. We sure don't want John to miss that trip. I understand he is quite fond of animals."

My eyes squint toward her voice. I can't see her face clearly; a brightness has washed over me. Gone is the thick, wet air of a moment ago. It is replaced with a bolt of warmth that begins deep in my stomach and follows up my throat and then to my face where it bursts through every pore in my skin. I'm able to hold my hands together now.

"Yes Mrs. Benning," I manage to whisper. "John loves animals." Especially lizards, I think to myself with a smile.

Two Poems by Amanda Kay Gilleland

I'll Love You Forever

© 2012

I'm home in the intoxicating smell of desert rain,
in the oak leaves that the wind carries down dancing,
in the subtle smile playing with the lipstick on her lips.

When I hear piano music soft and soothing,
my heart sometimes skips a beat.
And I tend to get goose bumps in the scorching sunlight.

She senses me behind her though I never make a sound,
and her head turns, and I am looking in to my own eyes.
Deep ebony, like the bottom of a cup of tea.

Behind them I see boundless love,
let loose, like a bird breaking free from its prison
I can see it soar away and surround me simultaneously.

She often knew my pain before even I did,
instinctually waking at the slightest cough,
or sneeze from a dripping nose.

She would dig out the cans of chicken noodle soup
from the depths of the cupboard
pouring orange juice before I even opened my eyes.

Wrapped in her womb, a loving embrace,
I am her and she is me, and
we are one large lung breathing together.



Mandi Gilleland is a young poet and aspiring author who lives in Tucson, and loves the desert sun almost as much as she does writing. She volunteers at the University of Arizona Medical Center, and has a deeply rooted addiction to reading literature. She is currently studying English Language and Physiology at the University of Arizona. You can reach her at akg2@email.arizona.edu.

Teeth

© 2012

I once dreamt that all of my teeth were falling out.
It began when I was looking at the back of a large swiveling office chair,
when suddenly it spun around
revealing a young woman with blonde hair, legs crossed.
I was forced to watch as
her skin began to tear into wrinkles that dug deep canyons into her face.
Her hair rapidly became grey and then incandescent white.
A great deal was lost and fell to the floor in clumps.
Her form shrunk before me, until she was no bigger than an infant,
an infant with giant wrinkled eyes and sagging skin that no longer fit.
It was then that her mouth opened wide, and the teeth began to clatter to the floor
bloody and yellow with tarter,
until all that was left in her screaming mouth were vermilion holes.
My mouth then became numb.
I realized all of my teeth were no longer attached to my gums,
I could feel them like a bunch of small stones.
I began to spit them onto the floor,
choking on an incisor that got wedged in between my tonsils.
I tried to cough,
my throat muscles pushing, heaving,
but it slid further down into my throat, this time into my trachea.
The room spun out of control,
I couldn't breathe,
every inch of my body was in searing pain,
and it was smiling at me with those empty red gums.

3 Poems by Carrie Backe

At the Rijksmuseum

© 2012

I went alone,
And just as well.

I like to visit with
The Masters,
One on one,
And not be encouraged to leave,
To move on, to hurry up,
By anyone who doesn't see
With my eyes.

I stayed,
I missed my bus,
Found my favorites,
Each one's heart,
Each one's stroke of
Tint, hue, shadow, light,
Every shadow and form.

An apple on the table,
A tipped goblet with a
Spilled drop of wine,
Next to a silver knife,
On a lace cloth
With lemon rind and
Crumbs of bread.
I found them all.



As a retired transplant to Arizona, Carrie finds inspiration for her poetry in the nature of all the places she has lived and traveled. Before retirement, she was a textbook editor, a Spanish teacher, and a proprietor of a used-book store. Carrie and her husband enjoy keeping up with their 5 kids and 10 grandkids. In addition to writing, Carrie also loves reading, playing cards, and working hard crossword puzzles. Contact Carrie at tcbacke@hotmail.com.

Kachina

© 2012

Sunday drive
out of Gallup,
through the sandy hills
of the reservation.
First we saw the cars
parked on the shoulders,
both sides of the road.
Then we heard
the drums.

We know:
where there are drums,
there is dancing.
Where there is dancing,
there is food.
We parked in the dust behind the tribal offices.
Those who knew better
had brought aluminum lawn chairs.
We stood and watched
the costumed dancers
stepping to the beat of
chanting drummers.
Young women and old,
little boys and men,
celebrating, sharing.

Flash of feathers,
gleam of silver banded turquoise,
sway of fringe,
rainbows of bead-embroidered vest,
sash and moccasin.

Fry bread, sticky sweet,
dripping with honey.
Wash it down with a Coke.

From under a canopy,
a Hopi craftsman
offers his hand carved and painted
kachinas.
I buy the one he calls
Rain Dancer.
I will take it home to
Arizona

and pray it does the job.

Soup for Supper

© 2012

The broth was thin,
the meat scarce,
stringy and tough.
Brilliant carrot coins
floated on top,
hiding the lack of
anything else.

We did eat from real
china bowls,
though mismatched and chipped.
And, we ate with silver
spoons,
of different patterns,
But, real sterling.

Mama knew how to
take our minds off
the fact that we were
poor.

The Vest

By Andrew J. Hogan

© 2012

The bus pulled out of the parking lot, thumping over potholes on Ontario Street, blue smoke bellowing out of its tailpipe. Chuy and Pete waited until the bus reached Speedway before trying to talk over the din of clanging metal.

“Bouga, what’s that smear on your vest?” Chuy said.

“Ain’t no smear, Bouga, that’s blood what come through the hole.” Pete wiggled his arm under the oversized vest and stuck his pinkie through the hole. They both laughed.

“Pangwacker, the slupper what wore this vest last year took one to the chest,” Chuy said. Just then the bus backfired and everybody ducked. The guard riding shotgun next to the driver swung his Uzi around over the heads of the students, surveying the bus for possible shooters, but the guard sat down when the students started jeering his overreaction.

“So you worried, maybe the vest’s bad luck? Last year’s slupper probably died in it,” Chuy said.

“Nah.” Pete slumped against the torn seat back, looking relaxed. “Didn’t you pay no attention to Mr. Grotsky’s lecture on Bayesian probability?”

“No, pangwacker, that stuff don’t make no sense to me,” Chuy said. “What’s that got to do with a maybe jinxed vest?”

“ ’Cause, Bouga, lightning don’t strike twice on the same spot.”

“What?”

“ ’Sides me, whose got a vest with a hole in it?”

“Nobody, what I saw.”

“And these are all mucho used junior-high vests, right?”

“Right, my older sister just got her new Type IIIA vest, ’cause the new law lets ’em carry 357s now.” Chuy looked around. “I don’t see nobody what’s got a vest with ventilation except you.”

“So?” Pete said. Chuy gave him his best dumb look. “So, odds’re like a million to one this vest’s gonna get shot twice. I’m palladium, Bouga.” Chuy and Pete slapped the back of each others’ hands.

Turning onto Gates Pass Boulevard toward the Desert Museum, the bus grew dark inside when the driver lowered the protective screens over the windows.



Andrew Hogan received his doctorate in development studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Before retirement, he was a faculty member at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, where he taught medical ethics, health policy and the social organization of medicine in the College of Human Medicine. Dr. Hogan published more than five-dozen professional articles on health services research and health policy. He has published thirteen works of fiction in the OASIS Journal, Hobo Pancakes, Twisted Dreams, Long Story Short, The Lorelei Signal, ThickJam, The Copperfield Review, and Sandscript.

They Cannot Lay Kincaid to Rest

By Barclay Franklin

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She closed the parlor door and tried the knob twice, a habit left over from the days when she felt she owned something worth stealing. Turning, she crossed the worn boards of the porch with their peeling gray paint, and stepped down the two hollowed cement steps that now had gray paint only on the very ends. She proceeded down the cement walk where grasses struggled for existence between the squares and in cracks created by the roots of an old elm tree. The elm hung sullen and dusty in the heat of morning, its leaves curled in semi-hollows, wishing to be shaded instead of giving shade.

Cora opened the gate on its protesting hinges and entered the dusty roadway. Her scuffs threw up small explosions of dirt with every step and the fine silting topsoil soon clung to her nylon stockings, trapped there by the magnetic quality of perspiration that coursed down her thickened and veined legs. A soft pink dress with bunches of blue cornflowers began just below the knees of Cora Kincaid and ballooned upwards over ample hips and buttocks toward a narrow black belt that designated her waist.

Above that, the dress again blossomed, like a parachute tucked into a too-small bag. It covered her pendulous breasts and came to a halt just below her clavicles and an inch or two above her elbows. A pink straw hat sat square on her salt-and-pepper hair, tilted a little to the front to make room for a French roll with its dampened flyaway tendrils. On one side of her hat a small bunch of plastic cherries clicked together in rhythm with her steps.

As Cora neared the church, she shifted a large black Bible from the crook of her right arm to the bend of her left. The railing beside the six steps up to the church foyer was on the right, and Cora needed a free hand to help her up the steps, which she

complained got higher and harder to climb each week.

Once inside, Cora blinked several times trying to adjust to the cool dimness after the hot white heat outside. Before she could see clearly, Blanche Williams' voice caught her attention.

"Well! I do declare! Cora Kincaid. I never thought I'd see you out this morning to services. I thought you'd want to be home with Jake, considerin' the circumstances."

Cora was aware that several others from her sewing circle had turned to hear how she would answer.

"I've come to services every Sunday since I come here, Blanche. I hate to miss. Besides, Jake has set home every Sunday by hisself for twenty years . . . don't see how this here Sunday should be any different. He never minded before, so I'm sure he won't mind now."

Blanche let out an involuntary gasp, and turned aside to Margaret Winkler.

"Not even wearing black!" Cora heard as she moved toward her seat in the third pew.

Well, you'd have to be a fool to wear a black wool on a day like today. Maybe if you had a black organzy or a nice dark cotton, but I don't, thought Cora. I notice she ain't wearing no hot black dress, though Jake told me how often she went out of her way to smile at him down to the lumber yard. A real hypocrite, that Blanche.

Cora settled back against the smooth cool pew and opened her Bible to the Epistle, which was listed on a board behind the piano. Gertrude Evans was seated at the upright playing "Rock of Ages" with a little too much force. Everyone said her hearing was going, but Gert denied it. Only the loudness of her playing and an occasional "HUH?" gave her away.

Continued on page 23



Barclay Franklin writes: "I grew up in western Pennsylvania, moved to Colorado for my first job. I'm a retired Medical Technologist. Got married in Colorado and moved to Louisiana, finally ending up in Arizona in 1968. I have an undergraduate degree in Medical Technology from Thiel College in PA, and a master's degree in English (with an emphasis on creative writing) from Northern Arizona University. Have been living on a ten-acre ranch here in beautiful, uptown Cornville since 1986." Barclay is a finalist this year in the novel category, in the annual contest sponsored by the Arizona Authors Association. She is also the author of five novels, "A Race for Glory Run"; "The Bride Price"; "The Chording of T.O. Malone" (about a guitarist); "Up the Hill, Through the Long Grass"; and "The Shepherd's Moon." All but "A Race for Glory Run" (out of print now) are available on Amazon.com. Contact her at wordwork@wildapache.net.

Continued from page 22

Reverend Porter mounted the pulpit, resplendent in white vestments sewn by the very sewing circle that Cora belonged to. Cora noted with some satisfaction that the hem she'd put in the left sleeve was much flatter than the wrinkled and gathered right-sleeve hem that Blanch had labored over.

"I have a few announcements, Reverend Porter began. "First, our Guild meeting of next Tuesday will be at the home of Blanche Williams at 7:30 p.m. And I'd like to meet with our August designated deacons right after services. Oh! Also we should send condolences to Cora Kincaid. You may wish to attend services at Riverside this afternoon at 4 p.m."

He looked toward Cora's pew and was momentarily taken quite aback at seeing her there.

"Why, Cora, I'm glad you're with us this morning, and our hearts are with you."

A stammering pause ensued while he tried to think of something else to say . . . "Ah . . . a . . . I'll see you at 3:30 this afternoon," he finished lamely, then shuffled his sermon, cleared his throat, and began, "Today we begin to cover Paul's Epistle to the . . ."

Cora's mind flew to all the things she needed to do. Get the parlor dusted and swept. Clean up her breakfast dishes. Maybe more food would be brought in today. *Enough for an army*, thought Cora. *Maybe I should hold a wake once a month. Wouldn't have to cook very often if I did.*

Cora's mind filtered back over the years of Jake and Cora Kincaid until the first bars of Gert's rendition of *The Doxology* brought her back to the church pew. She struggled to rise and sing along.

After services, Reverend Porter pressed her hand and gave her his *bear with it* look. She smiled and went down the steps. Blanche offered her a ride, but Cora shook her head and said she preferred to walk.

"In this heat? Cora, I do declare you're not thinking straight."

"Oh, straight enough to get home on," replied Cora and began retracing her steps toward home. A small brown puppy raced down the fence row, barking at her between the slats.

"Go on Crockett, your bark is wors'en your bite, I reckon. And your bark is loud enough to rouse the dead."

Cora had a momentary smile about that. *I hope that bark ain't enough to really rouse the dead*, she thought.

Back home again, Cora considered removing her dress and doing the things that needed to be done, then putting on her black wool for Riverside. With a defiant thrust of her chin, she decided against it. She flew to dusting and sweeping and doing the dishes not at all mindful of what her activities were doing to the armpits of her dress. At last she finished and had thirty minutes to wash her face and hands before Reverend Porter was due to arrive.

Mary Keltly brought by a cake with chocolate icing and black walnuts imbedded in the top.

"Right fancy, Miss Mary," said Cora. "I bet that's your Mama's favorite recipe."

"You're right, Cora, 'ceptin' she liked white cake. I knewed you liked chocolate, so I made yourn chocolate."

Reverend Porter arrived, hat in hand, and the six pallbearers closed the lid on Jake Kincaid and shouldered the casket. They carefully navigated the worn steps and put the casket in the hearse.

"Shall we go, Cora? You should ride with me."

"Thank you, Reverend."

Cora, still wearing her pink dress and hat, followed the Reverend off the porch and into the waiting hearse. The ride to Riverside was short and quiet. Reverend Porter twisted his speech in his hands and Cora made no sound save for an occasional click of the plastic cherries.

When they reached Riverside, the gates were locked. Reverend Porter summoned the cemetery keeper who came to the other side of the large iron gates and looked out at Cora and the others standing beside the casket.

"It's a cruel thing," he lamented, "but what we have here is no plot. I know it's terrible to say that, and I know you were all looking forward with reverence to the thing, but you may as well go home ..."

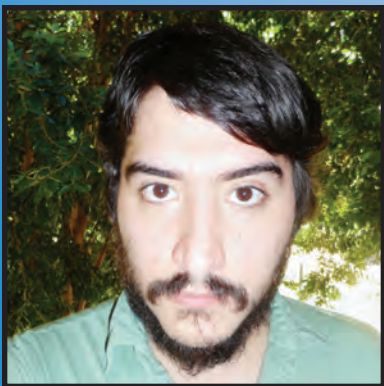
"No plot ..." he turned away, murmuring. "Sad, isn't it ..."

Joe Gonzalez

Phoenix Artist



"Nocturne"
44x44 inches
Acrylic



Born in 1987 in Los Angeles, Joe Gonzalez is a local artist known for featuring postapocalyptic landscapes with an undercurrent of bright natural foliage. His influences include David Shrigley, Edvard Munch and Henry Joseph Darger. You can often find Joe live-painting during First Friday in downtown Phoenix with his co-artists and roustabouts. His favorite color is rumored to be red. Contact Joe at TheZappo@gmail.com.

Joe Gonzalez

Phoenix Artist



“Blue Trees”
16x24 inches
Acrylic

I usually begin a piece by abstracting on something that happened in the week. Sometimes a subject will take hold and that's all I paint, sometimes for months. For six months I have mostly painted broken crystalline structures; before that, it was postapocalyptic landscapes, and before that skinless portraits. When people see my work, I'd like them to genuinely feel something and see the beauty that is in something they normally would overlook. "What Road" was painted shortly after visiting the Brewery Arts Complex in L.A. I got to meet a bunch of awesome talented people and the night was topped off with watching a movie on a projector with a rooftop view. I'll never forget it. On the flight back, just as the plane ascended, I had just finished "The Road" by Cormac McCarthy. The book ends in Catalina Island, which was exactly under my feet at the time. It is probably the clearest memory of being inspired where I knew the exact moment I had the image pop in my head. "Glassman" was a piece that I feel shows a fair amount of pain and beauty. All the bright colors seem so still and peacefully contrast next to one another. All of the motion in the painting comes from him trying to stand on his feet.

- Joe Gonzalez

Joe Gonzalez

Phoenix Artist



“Dive”
24x36 inches
Acrylic

Joe Gonzalez

Phoenix Artist



"Glassman"
22x18 inches
acrylic

Joe Gonzalez

Phoenix Artist



"What Road"
36x48 inches
acrylic

Betty's

By Mary Sojourner

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Betty's Chat and Chew isn't there anymore. Betty's gone. Joe's gone. The bleary-eyed graveyard shift casino workers slamming down coffee so they could get on with their day jobs are gone. The irresistible perfume of fresh-made donuts is gone forever. All because an astute hairstylist discovered Sallisaw when his Mercedes broke down on a Find Yourself In The West road trip.

The guy walked the quiet streets, checked out property values and figured Oklahoma was about to be the next happening state. He made the building owner an offer he couldn't refuse, scraped the grease off the ceiling and painted Nouvelle You on the big windows. He kept the tin ceiling and the old black and white stone-tiled floor.

Now you can peer in through the bamboo blinds and see him working on his customers, all of whom are either talking on their phones or bent over the tiny screens so they won't miss anything.

Pam wouldn't set foot in Nouvelle You, which quickly became known as Nou You. Her boyfriend Denny had told her right before he bailed that loyal should be her middle name. She was that, but it wasn't just that Betty's – which was actually Joe's, since he ran the place and Betty only waitressed – had been the one place she knew she wouldn't feel alone. They had also served the best crispy-brown home fries just off I-40.

Pam had found Betty's the first week she opened her behavioral health office in one of the tiny upstairs rooms in the old hotel across the street. Denny had been gone three months. She'd been sitting by the phone waiting for the maladjusted, addicted and forlorn of Sallisaw to call. The glorious decades of finding your inner child had only just sullenly

crept into Oklahoma, so she suspected she'd have a lot of what she refused to think of as Quality Time with Oneself.

The ancient air conditioning wheezed. She studied the wallpaper printed with oil wells and armadillos. It was 11 a.m. and the thermometer outside read ninety-eight. She turned on the answering machine, locked up and walked across the main drag to Betty's.

A couple graveyard shift dealers from the Cherokee casino sat at the counter laughing at something the blonde waitress had said. She saw Pam and waved. "Come on in, honey. I'm Betty. Me and Joe been seeing you up in your window. He was saying that it looked like you weren't exactly having to turn away customers. Do you call them that – the folks that come for advice – customers? You come right over here and sit down. The cooler's on and right here you got a great view of the street. If somebody heads to your office, you can corral them."

Betty pointed to a 6-top next to the window. The last thing Pam wanted was to be in plain sight if and when Denny happened to drive down the street, which was more than likely since it was one of the four somewhat viable business streets in town. "You mind if I sit at the counter," she said. "That way we can talk." Her mouth had yet again betrayed her. The second-to-last thing she wanted to do was talk. But she figured there wasn't much chance of that with Betty as her conversational partner, so she found a stool across from the grill.

A skinny balding guy with a black ponytail was pushing limp onions around the grill and sighing. Pam suspected she was supposed to ask him if he was o.k. Betty sat down next to her. "Don't mind Joe," she said. "He had a little too much fun last night." She pushed a cup in front of Pam. "How about some fresh coffee? And we got home-baked coffeecake."

Continued on page 30

Mary Sojourner is the author of two novels, "Sisters of the Dream" (1989) and "Going Through Ghosts"; the short-story collection, "Delicate"; essay collection, "Bonelight: ruin and grace in the New Southwest"; memoir, "Solace: rituals of loss and desire" and memoir/self-help guide, "She Bets Her Life." She is an intermittent NPR commentator and the author of countless essays, columns and op-eds for "High Country News," "Yoga Journal," "Writers on the Range" and dozens of other publications. She teaches writing, in private circles, one-on-one, at colleges and universities, writing conferences and book festivals. She believes in both the limitations and possibilities of healing. Writing is the most powerful tool she has found for doing what is necessary to mend. Psychology Today blog, She Bets Her Life: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/she-bets-her-life>. Personal blog: <http://msojourner.blogspot.com/>



Continued from page 29

“Sure on the coffee, no cake, it’ll settle right in on my butt. This is your place, right?”

“I have that honor,” the guy said, “I’m Joe. Go for the cake. My girlfriend makes it. Nothing fake in there. It actually helps you burn calories.” The casino dealers grinned, paid up and left.

That was how it began. Strong coffee, warm blueberry coffee cake, Betty plunked down on a stool at Pam’s side and Joe leaning on the counter in front of her. They tag-teamed her: “You’re a local gal? Why’d you come back after college? You got that rule about not telling what your customers tell you? How’s business? Believe me, we got some folks we could send right over to you, but nobody’s got health insurance – or brains to have brain troubles.”

By the time Pam pried herself away, she was too wired to go back and wait on the phone to ring. She turned down another slice of cake, paid up and decided to walk downtown. She knew how it would go. She’d be looking for and hoping it looked like she wasn’t looking for Denny’s old green Ford half-ton. Once he’d said, “I like ya, I love ya, but I gotta get outta Dodge,” and she’d taken up walking to keep from calling him, she’d learned that at least a fourth of the trucks in Sallisaw were old green Ford half-tons.

Nonetheless, it was easy to spot him. Denny had built his own front bumper after an incident with a cow. The bumper was hand-polished pine fastened on with iron bolts. Denny had found the wood outside a log cabin some newcomer from California had started. The iron bolts came from the dump. Denny could hang onto a nickel till the eagle screamed. It occurred to her sometimes it seemed like she knew more about him than she knew about herself.

The sun was getting to her. She stopped in front of what used to be the Quilte Shoppe, next door to what used to be Monkey Ward. Downtown looked like a tweakers’ mouth, gaping store fronts everywhere where somebody’s dream had died. “This is ridiculous,” she thought. “Talk about brain troubles. It took me thirteen years to get my butt into college, six years for a Masters in Counseling and a year interning in a drug and alcohol clinic to become a genuine brain trouble professional with no boyfriend and no customers. Make that no slightly alky boyfriend. I ought to call myself and make an appointment.”

Pam got in the habit of going to Betty’s every morning. She’d get her coffee, cake and gossip and go back to the front of the old hotel. She’d sit on the stone windowsill and watch sunlight flicker off the old, hand-carved caryatids hanging over the third floor of the building next to Betty’s. It was almost okay. Customers had started calling, Fall was moving in and her brain troubles had up-graded from

disaster to raw loneliness.

Eventually, she found herself sitting on the windowsill after she got out of work. It was the best time of the day, the light going gold, then opal, then pigeon gray. Sometimes old Eddie stumbled by on his way to the library. He was Cherokee – not your wannabe I’m-part-Indian-my-great-grandmother-was-Cherokee – but the real deal. His daughter was a slot tech at the casino and his grandson ran the smokes shop.

If Pam sat long enough, she’d see Eddie heading home, back straight under his old army parka, shoulders squared, one or two books under his arm. The librarian said he read everything – Melville, hot rod magazines, Popular Science, Mark Twain, Louis L’Amour – and he always had something to say about the books he’d taken out the day before.

He waved at Pam. “Feels good, doesn’t it,” he said, “when work is done.”

“You bet.” She wasn’t about to tell him that she dreaded what stretched ahead of her once night fell, which was figuring out what to do with the empty hours till she could lie down with a book, re-read sentences over and over again and finally put out the light and wait for sleep to come.

It was a rare rainy day when Pam dragged her friend Richard to Betty’s for lunch, so they could listen to each other’s sagas of their lost loves. She watched the rain while she waited for him. The caryatids floated in and out of the mist. She wondered, for the thousandth time, how a relationship train wreck like her had gotten to do the work of listening to other people’s pains and betrayals and relentless shame. She wondered even more how she’d gotten so good at it. No matter what empty mess she made of her nights and weekends, the people she listened to eventually felt better. They picked themselves up and got on with their lives.

She remembered one of the nights she’d been walking off the sorrow that Denny’s leaving had slammed into her harder than a break-up. She’d headed up the Short Mountain trail. The redbuds were in bloom. She found a cicada shell clasped to a trunk. “That’s it,” she’d said out loud, “that’s how I am now.” Since then, the images came back again and again: the brittle shell, the nothing inside, a woman jarred from her bones. She wondered how the shell could hold together.

Richard was late as usual. Pam watched the sky darken with rain and thought about the couple she’d worked with the evening before. The guy was tall and solid, a doctor at the hospital, the wife tiny and black-haired. She’d persuaded him to come for one session with her. “Only that,” he told Pam. “This marriage has gone to nothing.” The wife shook her head. “It is everything,” she said. With that, the woman in her fragile high-

Continued on page 31

Continued from page 30

heeled sandals and her beautifully-cut linen suit, slid to the floor and wrapped her slender arms around the big man's legs, begging him not to leave her.

"You know honey," he said in his reasonable voice, "it's time to let go. We both need to move on." He patted her on the head, extricated himself and walked out the door. Pam had cradled the woman in her arms, half comforting, half restraining. She could only guess that once she calmed down, the woman would understand that she had only her pride left. She would not want to remember chasing after her serenely escaping husband.

The woman sobbed for a long time. Then, as the hour drew to a close, she calmed herself, as she had for the weeks she had been seeing Pam. She began to breathe more slowly. She had told Pam at the beginning of her sessions that she couldn't bear messes, she couldn't bear her own raggedness.

The woman pulled herself to her feet and looked at Pam. "I'll be alright," she said. "I don't know how long it will take, but I will be alright." It would develop down the months that she would never be angry with Pam, who she had hired to save her marriage.

Richard shoved the door open. He'd been Pam's friend in high school, had gone away to a woodworking school in Northern California and come back to marry his home-town sweetheart. In his two years in Cal, he'd discovered meditation and a sensitivity group. Most of his high-school pals regarded him as a fruit-cake, so he'd found Pam and, lonely as she was, she'd begun to hang out with him. They mostly talked about their exes. He'd apparently already started talking before he opened the door.

"...learning experience. You know how I told you that when I was in the ashram I learned that everything is valuable to us. Well, I went over to where Jeanette and the kids live and, even though I knew it wasn't healthy, not in the least bit, I peeked in the window and there she was – Jeanette! – half naked on the couch with one of the guys that plays at that club on the edge of town. I made myself watch and it was a kind of purifying thing, kind of like when I was on the coast of Maine when I was a teen-ager – I told you – hitch-hiking around with a copy of Alan Watts and a blanket, pared down, you know, sitting on the shoreline, watching the ocean bust up on the rocks. No illusions. Just reality."

"I think I understand." Pam knew that was the only answer that would not launch a flood of justifications, but she knew even more that if she ever saw Denny rolling around with some woman, she would either die right then and there or torch Denny's old Scout motorcycle and scream into the flames and

hate everything.

"I'm ready to eat," she said. They locked up and crossed the street. Betty's was packed. Old Eddie sat at a corner table, eating chili and reading. Pam and Richard sat near the serve-yourself coffee pot. Pam wasn't sure she could eat. She felt car-sick from Richard's revelations.

Betty set them up and brought water. "What'll it be?" Pam ordered home-style potatoes and a glass of milk. Richard launched. "Hey, Betty, I'm a vegetarian but you know how I feel about Joe's hot sauce, so how about two burgers because you can't just eat that sauce with a spoon." Betty glanced at Pam. She shrugged. They went through the routine every time Richard and she were there.

Betty took their orders and headed for the kitchen. "You know," Richard said, "I try to look at this thing with Jeanette with an open heart. I think that once she works through her issues with her father, she'll be able to let her hidden love for me surface. Yeah, we did have that fight last week – just because I had a few useful thoughts about a few things she could do a little differently with the kids. I told her I'd gone to this men's group and we'd worked on the mistakes our mothers had made with us. I told her I didn't want her to do the same thing with Leah and Christopher.

"She is a little sensitive right now. I can't blame her what with the stable father figure in the home gone and all."

Pam nodded. She'd decided to drink a little of the milk first – that might help the potatoes go down. She normally didn't mind the smell of meat frying, but her queasiness was building.

"What I really appreciate about you, Pam," Richard said, "is you've worked through all that nouveau-Feminist knee-jerk rage with men. You're not like other women. You know how to listen."

"Nouvelle," Pam thought and smiled at him. In all fairness, he'd listened plenty of times to her and lunch was actually easy, because she didn't really have to say anything. She could just listen and nod and keep watching out the windows for the green Ford. Betty brought their food. Pam sipped milk and pushed the potatoes around on her plate.

A voice penetrated Richard's holding forth. "Johnny, it don't have to be like this." A couple sat at a table behind Richard. It was easy to start watching and look as though she was fascinated by Richard's insights.

The woman was thick through the middle and a woeful color, as though she lived on macaroni and black coffee. She smoked steadily. She'd forget to tap her cigarette on the ashtray so that now and then a clump of ash fell into her lap. Her pants suit

Continued on page 32

Continued from page 31

was a little too tight, so that the way her bra cut into her chunky back showed through the plaid jacket. Her hair was pulled back into a lime green barrette that matched her clip-on earrings that matched her purse. A guy sat across from her.

At first glance, he was roughly handsome, his dark-brown hair brushing his collar. He too smoked one cigarette after another, carefully tapping each one on the ashtray. Each of his movements was precise, yet heavy, as though he might have had to relearn how to move after some devastating accident or illness.

In between cigarettes, the woman clasped her hands in front of her or reached out to touch the man's sleeve. All the while, she calmly spoke her careful sentences.

"Johnny, it don't have to be like this."

"Johnny, we can go back to my place and have a few beers and watch a little TV. We don't have to talk or nothing."

"Johnny, I'll move my mother out, I swear it."

"Johnny, don't get up. Let's stay here a little while more. It's nice and warm, out of the rain. I'll buy you a burger."

Two of the delivery guys had turned around from the counter and were laughing quietly. Pam had seen the taller guy around town. He was about fifty. He drove a sleek gun-metal gray corvette with a bumper sticker that said, Mean Motor Scooter. His buddy was younger, bigger and blond, with the premature beginnings of a beer gut. The older guy nodded toward the woman and winked at Pam. Joe looked worried. He liked the place to maintain a nice friendly atmosphere.

Richard leaned back in his seat and pushed his empty plate away. He leaned forward with a look of tender concern. Pam figured he was trying out something he had learned in the sensitivity group – Active Listening or some other happy horseshit. She was wrong.

"So, what do you think about my plan, about trying to get her to go into couples' therapy with me, so maybe she'll start to see her confusion?" He looked deep into Pam's eyes.

She found she'd tucked her thumbs into her fists and was hanging on for dear life. Not a good sign. She relaxed her hands. "I thought about that with Denny, too. Of course, him being younger and all, he had me mixed up with some mother, somewhere..." Pam couldn't stand the words she was saying. She shut up.

The woman leaned across the table to the man. Her sleeve caught the top of the sugar shaker and knocked it over. Sugar drifted over the table. The man's face didn't change. The woman laughed.

"Johnny, oh jeez, look what I did. Johnny, honey, ain't that just like me?"

"Johnny, ain't that funny?"

The man stood up carefully, as though he'd been sitting there rehearsing every movement of his leaving in his mind: the push away from the table, the slow turn, the step toward the door. The woman dropped her cigarette onto her plate.

"Johnny, you're not leaving? Honey, we just got here."

"Johnny, let's have another cup of coffee. Tell you what, you just sit back down and wait right here and I'll go call my mother and tell her to pack her bags and get out. Sit down, honey, and give me change for the phone."

"So," Richard was saying, "I need to give Jeanette one more chance. I'm going over there tonight and talk with her. After all, we still make love now and then. That must mean something. And, I forgot to tell you, the kids told me that mommy doesn't practice anymore. She doesn't touch the piano. Not at all. All that talent. Wasted. She needs me to keep her on track."

The man stopped and looked down at the woman. He braced himself on the back of a chair. He had fine hands, long and big-boned. He shook his head.

"I gotta get back to work."

The woman stood up fast. Her chair, weighted with her bulky raincoat, toppled to the linoleum. Pam wanted to pick it up, but she didn't want to cause the woman embarrassment.

"Johnny, please don't go. Not now. Come by tonight. Think it over. I'll get some of that good Scotch that you like, some barbecue. It'll be like old times." Her voice cracked.

The man shook his head and pulled on his jacket. "I gotta go to work." He threw a few bills on the table and began to walk away. The woman grabbed the money and ran after him. She clutched his wrist and tried to stuff the money into his hand. He let the bills drop to the floor.

"Johnny, you don't do it like this. Not in a place like this, not with all these people here." She dug in her purse. "Look here, I got change for the phone. I'm calling my mom right now." She ran to the outside phone booth. The man zipped his jacket, shrugged his shoulders into it and walked out the door. The woman glanced up. She dropped the receiver and ran to grab his arm. He shook her off. She stood on the sidewalk watching him go. Everyone could hear her. "Johnny. Johnny. Johnnnny."

Pam went to the coffee-pot and poured herself a cup. Richard held out his. She filled it.

"Johnny. Johnny. Oh no. Oh please." The woman stumbled a few steps forward, stopped and wrapped her arms around herself.

"Johnnnnnnnny." Her voice had risen higher and higher, a keening, a wail. Richard shook his head. The two drivers ducked their heads, choking back laughter. Betty stared at a pile of order slips near the register. Joe put down his spatula and shook his head.

Continued on page 33

Continued from page 32

When Pam sat down, Richard gazed into her eyes. “See,” he said, “it’s just everywhere. I keep wishing I was dumb and didn’t know any better. Just have a few beers, watch TV, get up and go to work, come home and go to sleep, find a new woman, but, Christ, look at that...”

Pam sipped the metallic coffee and thought she ought to tell Betty to put on a new pot, but it was the end of the lunch-rush. “You know,” Richard said, “I tried to tell Jeanette that the other day, how we’re not so different, but she thinks she’s so sensitive and special and fated. Shit. She just got mad again. I don’t know. I wonder if couple counseling would help.”

Joe wiped his hands on his apron. He walked outside and lit a cigarette. The woman looked up. Joe said something and gently took her arm. She gazed up at him, then back over her shoulder. Her lips worked, but she said nothing. Joe led her back into the restaurant. When they got to the counter, she patted his arm and said carefully, “I’m o.k., honey. I’m o.k. Thank you, Joe.”

She faced the dining area. The drivers turned back to their food. Richard pulled out his wallet. The woman looked at all of them, her head held high. She folded her hands in front of her and spoke clearly. “I apologize if my friend and I disturbed your lunch. It’s o.k. now. I’ll just finish my coffee.”

She moved toward her table. As she passed Pam, she leaned down and murmured, “You know how it is – these men.”

Pam nodded. Richard flinched. The woman started to sit down at her table, then picked the money up off the floor. She sat and lit a cigarette. Pam watched her face the big windows and draw in a deep breath.

She thought about taking the rest of the day off. Richard touched her hand. “Pam, maybe I talked too much just now? I just keep trying to figure everything out. I’m so scared and I miss Jeanette so damn much. Did I? Did I talk too much.”

“A little,” Pam said. “It’s okay. Let’s head out.”

They paid. Pam opened the door to the street. Richard followed her. He turned to hug her. “Thanks for listening,” he said. “I hope it helped you too.”

“Listen,” Pam said. “I don’t ...” Then she felt his arms around her, and all his earnestness and dumb good intentions, and found herself unthinkingly, firmly hugging him back.

Excerpts from the memoir 'The Hooker's Daughter' By Dale Stanten

Memories play maddening games. They torture with their elusiveness. When emotional resistance is low, they crowd in – unwanted and unwelcome – jostling for space. They line up with a beautiful logic one day, only to shift and reappear in absurd juxtaposition another day. My mind sometimes has trouble dispelling these tormentors and continually revisits them, looking for meaning. Should my children see me from that perspective which I have hidden for so many years? I was not a party to the behavior, but somehow I ended up owning it, and now feel compelled to rid myself of its taint by telling the truth as I know it. I have finally learned a degree of dispassion, and when the memories come crashing in like storm-driven waves, I watch them from a comfortable distance.

© 2012

Ma was the center of our universe. We watched her, basked in her glory, abhorred what she did but ferociously protected her secrets, and waited anxiously to find out what misfortune her activities might visit upon us.

At the tender age of six, I understood that Ma was a hooker.

Though I may not have had a grasp of the details of what went on in the next room, by that age I had seen enough men in a state of arousal and sweaty anticipation to recognize that their presence in our apartment was at the core of an unsavory aspect of our existence.

* * *

Daddy had been an angry man for a long time. He realized he was going nowhere while he was still young. Losing his father and the family business cost him a promising future that would have been handed to him. Already, with little incentive and even less ambition, he had been functioning poorly in the role of husband and father for as long as I could remember. Then, the gradual appearance of unaccustomed and unexplained luxuries in our home, along with Ma's increasingly busy social calendar, was making him suspicious and cranky.

Ma's growing reputation had become a hot topic on the gossip network. The details were the kind of shocking and salacious

information that was seldom heard – or even imagined – in the conservative '50s when women were expected to function happily and narrowly as dutiful housewives. Ma didn't fit that stereotype in any way, and her sins were of the blockbuster variety. Public knowledge cruelly exposed Daddy's ineffectiveness as a provider – and worse, his perpetual status of cuckold.

I often heard him confronting her in a blind fury and repeating the stories he had heard about her. Ma coolly denied the allegations, but Daddy was only partially convinced that she was telling the truth. At the end of these confrontations, he generally stomped out of the house shouting that he was going to end the marriage. Each time, he went to stay at Mucky's house for a couple of days during which the couple heatedly exchanged angry phone calls. But by the third day, Daddy was usually home again and our lives continued as before, with Ma plying her trade.

Oddly enough, there was a characteristic tenderness between our parents that somehow transcended the serious issues that surfaced repeatedly in their marriage. I can still see the two of them sharing the couch, curled up at each end with their feet touching in the middle, as if nothing had ever happened between them to sour their affection. To my childish view, they always

Continued on page 35



While raising her young family, Dale obtained her RN degree and practiced psychiatric nursing. She parlayed her medical and extensive sales experience to become CEO of her Destination Management Company which for twenty years organized conventions, corporate events, and meetings for local, national, and international guests. Dale conducted numerous educational seminars and assisted in developing a tourism college degree program. She serves on the North Shore Board of Juvenile Scholarship Aid, volunteered as a Big Sister, and is an active member of Power of Women, National Association of Women on the Rise, and The Arizona Humanities Consortium for the Arts. A lifelong learner, she studies Kabbalah and Torah and shares her personal journey to encourage others to rise above their circumstances, no matter how difficult, using their inner strength to determine the course of their own lives. She resides in Boston and Phoenix with her husband. Readers can contact the author at TheHookersDaughter@Gmail.com. Also, print books may be purchased at www.TheHookersDaughter.com and are available from the publisher at www.InfinityPublishing.com and from Amazon.com. E-book copies are available for Kindle, Nook, iBook, Smashwords (all other formats).

Continued from page 34

seemed like a matched pair – like salt and pepper shakers that should never be separated. Their brand of affection continued as long as they were both alive, despite the long list of sexual liaisons they both engaged in.

Ma wanted Daddy to provide for us; he thought she was money-mad. He wanted Ma to be simpler in her tastes; she thought he was nuts. She was convinced that his earnings would not have enough impact to ward off the hand-to-mouth existence she foresaw. They fought, he raged, she lied, he lived with the lies.

* * *

My earliest memories of Daddy's family are the times we gathered together with my uncles, aunts, and cousins in Mucky's living room. We huddled around the four-foot, brown magic box, named Philco, with its two big dials, rounded top and large speaker at the bottom. We laughed with Fibber McGee and Molly and The Jack Benny Show and were entranced by the adventures of The Shadow and Gang Busters.

Everyone looked forward to holiday celebrations at Mucky's where the focus was on her extraordinary meals. I remember her feasts as a source of *gemütlichkeit* – a feeling of belonging and comfort that I did not often experience elsewhere. Her baked matzo balls attained such stature in my mind that, to this day, I am still trying to duplicate them. Their magical aroma always made me want to stay overnight after the feast so that the next day I could once again fill myself with their curative power. The only exception occurred when I stuffed myself with so many that I cried in discomfort, bitterly disappointed that such a wondrous delicacy could actually hurt me.

Daddy's first taste of the year's batch of homemade horseradish was a favorite annual ritual at Mucky's table. Nobel didn't

invent dynamite – Mucky did! Nobel took the time to write down his formula, but Mucky never did, and each batch was different and surprising. During the tasting, Daddy always pretended that his head was going to explode. And each time we saw this pantomime, we shrieked with laughter as if we had never before seen him perform this slapstick routine.

* * *

“Why is this night different from all other nights?”

Our 1954 Passover celebration at Mucky's starts out like every other – a splendid feast with the youngest kids asking the traditional four questions and all of us participating in the usual race to find the hidden matzo. I am wearing my new spring clothes to the Seder and basking in the delectable cooking smells and good humor of all the Winik family members.

Between courses, the women start to clear the table, and, apparently, Ma does not move to help quickly enough to suit Uncle Becky. Becoming wild-eyed and red-faced, he suddenly unleashes a loud, uncontrolled tirade directed at her: “You goddamn lazy bitch! You fucking whore! You don't fool anyone!”

The words reverberate in a deafening roar in that room, and we fall silent, stunned, and paralyzed in our seats. Ma says nothing, nor does Daddy. Becky has given words to thoughts that we ourselves can never utter. As Becky begins to calm down, Frances pulls him and their kids into the living room, and soon they all act as if nothing has happened.

Pasey and his family hover around Rowena and me, pretending they have not noticed anything amiss. But, poor Mucky is in a state of suspended animation, not knowing which son or which family to attend to.

Slowly, one by one, we leave my grandmother's cherished family holiday celebration with the certain knowledge that it will be our last.

Kathryn Hratko

Phoenix Artist



“Where Good Men go to Sleep and I go to Reap” and “The Immaculate Habit”
Oil on canvas
2011

As an introvert, I am very withholding and self-contained. Through my work, I strive to reinvent myself while simultaneously revealing some of my innermost attributes through satirical imagery and juxtaposing subject matter. I am revealing myself both physically and psychologically, symbolically and realistically. I explore various facets of my femininity, my sexuality, my Catholic upbringing and the discord that accompanies these attributes. I allow my work to remain more somber to instill a sense of discomfort within the viewer as a way of displacing my own internal tensions.

- Kathryn Hratko

Kathryn Hratko

Phoenix Artist



“Where Good Men go to Sleep and I go to Reap”

36” x 48”

Oil on canvas

2011



Kathryn Hratko is a painter residing in the arid climate of Phoenix, Arizona and has recently acquired her BFA from Arizona State University while graduating summa cum laude. She received the Windgate Scholarship through the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts in addition to the Provost Scholarship and AIMS Scholarship. Kathryn additionally was awarded honors studio space within ASU's art building for the 2011-2012 school year and has exhibited her work within ASU's galleries, including the Harry Wood Gallery for the Undergraduate Juried Exhibition of 2009. Kathryn's most recent work can be seen at <http://khratko.wordpress.com/> and for any questions she can be contacted at Kathryn.Hratko@asu.edu.

Kathryn Hratko

Phoenix Artist



“Where Good Men go to Sleep and I go to Reap [pendant]”

20” x 24”

Oil on canvas

2011

Kathryn Hratko

Phoenix Artist



"The Immaculate Habit"

36" x 48"

Oil on canvas

2011

Kathryn Hratko

Phoenix Artist



“The Immaculate Habit [pendant]”

20” x 24”

Oil on canvas

2011

Virgin Moon

By Lysa Cohen

© 2012

As the new moon crested gently over the horizon, Jillian watched its measured ascent through the plate window. Glowing tendrils of color that marked the setting on the sun illuminated the brilliant orb whose transcendent beauty was a sacrilege when compared to the heartbreak of the day. Several hours earlier, she had said a final farewell to her father as he was laid to rest. A life taken too soon, cut short by illness and tragedy.

It wasn't as if they had been particularly close. In fact, the opposite was true. But in the end, did that matter? She didn't know. All she knew was that there was an unexpected hollowness, a gaping chasm that she did not know how to fill. How to reconcile such a loss?

Jillian felt tears gather behind her eyes before they slipped silently down her cheeks. She was struck unaware as a wave of melancholy washed through her as she thought back to the last time she had seen her father, a robust man, if not a bit domineering in his zeal to provide a decent life for his family.

It had been the day after her high school graduation. A beautiful clear day when most of her friends were out at the lake enjoying the exuberance of adolescence and discussing the classes they were to take at the university in the fall.

But not Jillian.

Seated at the massive dining room table that ran the length of the equally immense dining room in her parents' grand home on Maple, the most prestigious of streets in their small town, she clasped her hands tightly in her lap, her long hair hanging loosely around her shoulders, giving her a girlish air. She stared silently at the ornate ormolu clock that had sat so grandly on the mantle for as far as she could remember. Its constant ticking seemed to mock her as she waited for the yelling to abate. Although, truth be told, her parents' anger was justified; after all, she had just

told them that instead of going to college as had been planned, she was two months' pregnant. In an instant, Jillian had shattered all of their hopes and dreams for her bright future. In one fell swoop, she had thrown her respectable upbringing, an upbringing that had been so essential to her parents, in their faces.

Jillian wanted to understand their feelings, but at the moment, all she felt was small and so very scared. She wanted desperately for her mother to hold her in a secure embrace and tell her that everything would turn out okay. She wanted her father to look on her with something other than disappointment and judgment.

Neither of those things occurred. Instead her parents railed at her for ruining her life. They compared her to her older sister, Jennifer, the model daughter who would never do anything so detrimental to her future or her family's standing in the community. They ordered her to marry that "wretched Lafferty boy," as he was now being referred to, even though the day before he had had the distinction of being "quite the sensible young man."

Even after the shouting had ended and her parents had closed themselves in her father's office to make plans for her, Jillian still sat at the dining room table. She didn't know how long she stayed there deliberating, contemplating, thinking. She didn't want to get married, and after a rather disillusioned discussion with William Lafferty, she knew that he felt the same. He wanted to go away to college, to spend frivolous time with his friends, to flirt and date and sow oats yet wild.

It was in that moment Jillian crossed the threshold to adulthood. She was now responsible not only for herself, but a future life as yet unseen. Staying was no longer a viable option. This wasn't for her parents to resolve, but for her alone.

Jillian didn't wait to hear their final verdict. Instead, she quietly made her way to her room, packed a suitcase and slipped out

Continued on page 42



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

Continued from page 41

of the house, after leaving a note on the dining room table for her parents to find. She left without a hesitation or second thought, never once looking back.

The road she had chosen had been a difficult one, often fraught with loneliness and recriminations. After making it across the country, she had managed to find work as a waitress in a small diner. It wasn't a glamorous position by any stretch of the imagination, but it provided a roof, albeit shabby, over her head and enough to care for her daughter, Abigail Marie.

Jillian was proud of all that she had accomplished in the following years. She had managed to pursue and achieve a college education and now owned the small diner where she had once toiled so diligently. However, all of this paled in comparison to her daughter: the brilliant rose in the midst of her thorny existence. For just one of Abby's brilliant smiles, Jillian would endure anything, including braving her mother's wrath.

It was solely for Abigail that Jillian had returned. After hearing from her older sister, the incomparable Jennifer, that their father was dying, she knew that despite her feelings towards them, she couldn't keep Abby from her grandparents. Her daughter deserved a chance to know her grandparents.

Only, they had arrived too late.

So now, almost ten years to the day, Jillian sat in much the same way she had her last night in the house; at the massive dining room table, hands clasped tightly in her lap as she listened to her mother condemn her for a selfish fool.

"Without a word!" Joyce railed, planting her hands on her hips as she confronted the quiet Jillian. "You left without a word, just a note left on the table for us to find. Did we mean that little to you . . . did you hate us so very much that you left thinking a two-line note was sufficient?"

The horror of losing her husband had aged her once perfect mother in a way nothing else could. Her once platinum hair was now liberally streaked with grey, and her eyes were now a dim shadow of their former brilliance.

Joyce didn't wait for Jillian to answer. "Dear Mom and Dad. Goodbye."

Jillian sank back into her chair and cringed as her thoughtless words were thrown back at her. Anger and denial rose in her. How dare her mother hold words, so long ago written, against her? She had been a child doing what she thought necessary.

"You left me alone!" Jillian cried, unable to stay the words. Emotions that had been suppressed for so long forced the words from her lips. "When I needed you the most, you left me alone. All I wanted was for you to tell me that would be okay. I just wanted . . . I just wanted my mom."

Her voice broke on the last. Without thinking, needing the comfort that she had been denied so long ago, she levered herself

from the chair and reached out for her mother, but was succinctly rebuffed.

"No! Don't you dare blame this on me," Joyce bit out, pushing Jillian away. "Your father and I wanted only the best for you. We were going to do everything in our power to give you the life you deserved. Instead you threw our love back in our faces and left. And to make it even worse, you denied us the chance to know Abigail."

How dare she blame this on Jillian, when she had been so young and confused? But as Jillian stared into eyes so much like her own, she knew. Her mother's obvious pain tore at Jillian in an unexpected way. She had spent so long blaming her parents for her unhappiness, that she never thought about how her leaving might have affected them.

At eighteen, Jillian had only been aware of her own pain and fear. Her leaving had solely been about her; she hadn't given her parents a passing thought. She had seen their overprotective tendencies as being overbearing and domineering, but they had been the opposite. They had feared for her, hurt for her, and wanted to help her.

Fresh tears began to flow freely as she stared into her mother's grief-stricken eyes and the truth hit her full force, effectively shattering the chip she had carried for so very long on her shoulders. "I was angry and . . ."

"Angry? You were angry, so your leaving was justified? And that makes everything all right? Your father and I had worked out a solution."

Wiping ineffectually at the tears, Jillian's voice was tinged with accusation when she spoke, "You were going to force me into marrying William, Mom. I didn't want that. He didn't want that."

"He would have done what was right."

"And we would both have been miserable."

"When you get pregnant at eighteen, you get married. That's the way things are done."

Silence stretched unendingly between them, broken the cadence of crickets outside, filling in the silence with their song. Inside, the rhythmic ticking of the ornate, gilt clock that held court on the mantle still had the power to mock her a decade later.

After what seemed an eternity, Jillian spoke. "No. I needed to figure things out for myself. William made it perfectly clear that he wanted nothing to do with Abigail or me. Not once in the last decade have I even heard from him."

Her mother's next words made Jillian feel as if she had been struck. "His mother and I had lunch last month. He's happily married with two children and living in a beautiful home a couple of streets over."

The irony of that wasn't lost on Jillian.

"I'm happy for him," she managed to get out without choking on the words. She wasn't.

Continued on page 43

Fall 2012

Continued from page 42

“It could have been you. It should have been you.”

“No. He didn’t want me.”

“He was eighteen; he didn’t know what he wanted. Your father and I would have insisted on the marriage and you could have been living a wonderful life right now.”

“I like my life. I worked hard for everything I have.”

“That’s your response? You worked hard, so the hell you put your father and I through was worth it? And what about Abigail? By taking her away from her family, you denied her the right to know her father and grandparents.”

“Yes . . . no . . . I don’t know what you want from me,” Jillian cried. “I don’t know what to say. I just wanted to come to Dad’s funeral and pay my respects.”

“There’s nothing you can say, Jillian. What did you expect to happen; that you would just show up and all would be forgiven? Not a word for ten years, but now that your father is . . .”

Jillian watched helplessly as her mother seemed to crumple and sink into a chair. Jillian tried to speak, but no words emerged. They seemed to be locked in her throat. She couldn’t talk, not now, not after . . . So, instead she did the only thing she could think of, she tried again to hug her mother.

The gesture was met by a glare so filled with accusation and fury, that Jillian took several steps back.

“You’re not welcome here,” Joyce bit out, harshly. “Do not for one second think that I want you here. But, I just buried my husband today, and I don’t want to lose my only grandchild on the same day. For Abigail only, I am allowing you to stay.”

It wasn’t much, but it was a beginning.

3 Poems By Paula Ashley

Sunset Vista

© 2012

I came from forsythia,
hollyhocks, rain and snow

to desert heat, walls of dust,
and monsoon storm.

I did not expect to stay here long.
Towhees scratch under bougainvillea

and the lack of water in the local wash
lead me within myself for grace.

I've climbed down Bright Angel Trail,
logged the Havasupai too

but now that I'm in my seventieth
year, the Hedgpeth Hills are home.

Here a chuckwalla suns upon a basalt rock
amongst yellow desert scrub,

his crimson breast, a lover's
pomegranate, on show to mates nearby.

Time has erased miles of citrus groves,
sheep stopping traffic on past commutes,

crop dusters swooping under power lines,
and Japanese flower stalls on Baseline.

While today the city brings art galleries,
plenty of shopping malls,

I sit out back under my trees
to watch hummingbirds flit

orange bell to orange bell, while finches
perch in the rosemary.

And in the long hot desert night, coyotes
howl the haunting chant of loss.



Paula Ashley received her MFA from Queens University of Charlotte in May, 2012, after earning the Certificate of Creative Writing from Phoenix College and taking some classes at Arizona State University. She moved to Arizona from northern California in 1964 and has seen the phenomenal growth of the Phoenix metropolitan area since that time. Contact the poet at p.c.ashley@ieee.org.

Ten Thousand Seed

© 2012

A thousand sighs rise from the throats
of a thousand doves.
They lift from the freshly seeded berm,
fly westward over desert wash
then circle back

to find only a boy, about five,
nose thrust between cold twisted wires,
an open diamond,
in the chain link fence
which guards this secluded park.

The doves land again on the seeded meadow
where no monuments praise conquering heroes,
no sculptures laud the common man,
instead hot pink ladders
and purple slides.

What wars of plastic heroes will be waged,
what castles will shelter golden Barbies
in the sand piled all around
to soften faltering childhood steps
and inspire tomorrow's youth?

The coyote who roamed this land
was shot, they say, some ten years ago.
The ground squirrel and cotton tail,
flushed from the excavated wash nearby,
moved onto suburban pastures.

The sign proclaiming *Sunset Vista Park*
Open In October hangs cockeyed on the fence.
November comes, no entry open,
a small boy clutches wire.
A thousand doves feast on ten thousand seed.

My Father's House

© 2012

is dark, the windows shuttered. I hear
his voice *Have a seat* and I sit down in the chair
I sat in whenever I came to visit.

I stare at the oil portraits hanging over his chair
that's empty now. Mother's moved to her new home.
Still I feel the years they spent together.

I smell the dust that settled over everything,
the systemic rose food under the oilcloth covered
cart in the back room, the mothballs and the mold.

I see the library wall of books: physics and mathematics
and electricity. In mother's den I face layers and layers
of trays filled with the addressed cards she never mailed.

I think about the shed out back. It would have to be
emptied of the papers my father brought from his days
at the university. He never opened the shed again.

I did not yet know the treasures I would find there:
the journal of the young radio operator in the Caribbean,
certificates from Technische Hochschule and the Sorbonne.

Today I sit and try not to think of meals at the dining table,
amaryllis blooming in the Arizona room. I hear again
my mother's voice. *Stay awhile. Don't go so soon.*

A Poem By Michael Gregory

Lives of the Poets

© 2012

So part of the problem you see is I
can't tell if I'm writing to you or me.

Nine years afloat in an unstoppered bottle
learning to walk with my back doubled over

scuttling across this desert beach
trying to read your message in birdcalls

the slapping of waves reiterating
what can't be remembered and who we were

before parting company with that
odd school of fish who thought

about thought, making the mind
a self-reflective concavity

watching itself talk to itself
minding the breath fogging the glass,

who thought to fill the wavering
panes of our cold water flats with something

more than images of ourselves
overlooking the bay, something

having to do with something more
than linguistic opportunities

time spent on syllables
taking our one-eyed friend in hand

something more than thoughts and feelings
leaving vapor trails under the belljar

something more than precious wit
played out on glazed surfaces

pretending uncertainty negates
common sense as well as meaning

something that would make love more
than rubbing the head against abstraction

a matter of fiction in moments of heat
trying to create ourselves

as more than an exercise in life
science seduced into syllogisms

out of the high proof haze shackled up
behind the private eye's pulp friction

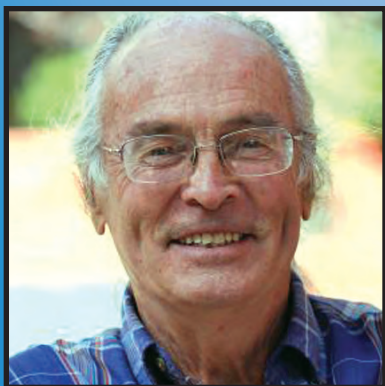
that part of the brain we call the heart
tucked away between memory

imagination and desire —
jocks bad boys and closet cases

'A' students and manic depressives
cocktail contests of binary visions

cross-eyed jacks and four-eyed queens
still sixteen in the backseat—

Continued on page 48



Michael Gregory is the author of several poetry books and chapbooks including, "The Valley Floor," "Hunger Weather 1959-1975 and re Play." "Lives of the Poets" is included in "Mr America Drives His Car," forthcoming from Post-Soviet Depression Books. Recent publications on the Internet include poems at Seven Circles Press, occupypoetry.net and Fiera Lingue. The founding director of the Central School Project cooperative community arts center in Bisbee, Arizona, until retirement he was for many years an internationally-recognized toxics activist and has authored numerous papers on environmental politics as well as being an active participant in development of such citizen right-to-know programs as the North American Pollutant Release and Transfer Register and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. He holds an interdepartmental BA in History, English and Philosophy from the University of Toledo, an MA in English from Penn State, and has done post-graduate work at the University of California, Irvine and the UCLA Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology. Since 1971, he has lived off-grid in the high desert grassland of southeast Arizona. Contact him at aztoxics@gmail.com.

Continued from page 47

something more feasible than saints
or red-lipped refugees from Eden

those envoys of interim satisfactions
frustrations and various irksome issues

what the popular press calls dreams
while waging wars of syntax with flanking

pincer martin motions, something
more than rebuilding the fabled bridge

so recently and rudely collapsed
into the temporal cavity

that white starburst just north of the ear
somewhere in the vicinity of

extreme dysfunction utter verbal
paralysis angry little electrons

splitting the nuclear family
the triple goddess and triune god

arms incestuously entwined
into particles highly charged

their radioactive offspring
the daughters of Albion running the ridge

howling for blood in the name of love
with something more in their bag of tricks

than phonics and semiotics something
the next quake might leave standing

among the lawns and faculty wives
lying there where working class

meant running scams on academe
public talks on public matters

titillating the waspish ladies
in their paper-thin privacies

with deference and inference
while teaching jargon to one another

the virtues of obscurity
the benefits of obliquity

personal validity
the comma's resounding utility

the quirks of arcane harmony
perverted into monotony

yet looking for means beyond the image,
for wherewithal, to give type-cast

characters displayed meticu-
lously on a page voice:

trying not so much to cure
as to maintain bipolar disorder

whitewashing the broken lines
down the middle of the road

traffic like bats out of hell on both
sides in opposite directions

confessing the wet Freudian slip
the lipsynch personality split

little men and women not there
at the top of the stare, yes,

and a plaque in the corner, but
for want of a little salt in the brain

a short circuit, dropped ground,
cross-wired hemispheres

neural hypersufficiency
frontal lobe atrophy

taking the course between
pedestrian and pedantic

with a twist of lime
a cigarette and coffee

a shot or two straight up
or out of a spoon a hit

out of the public eye
uppers to keep going

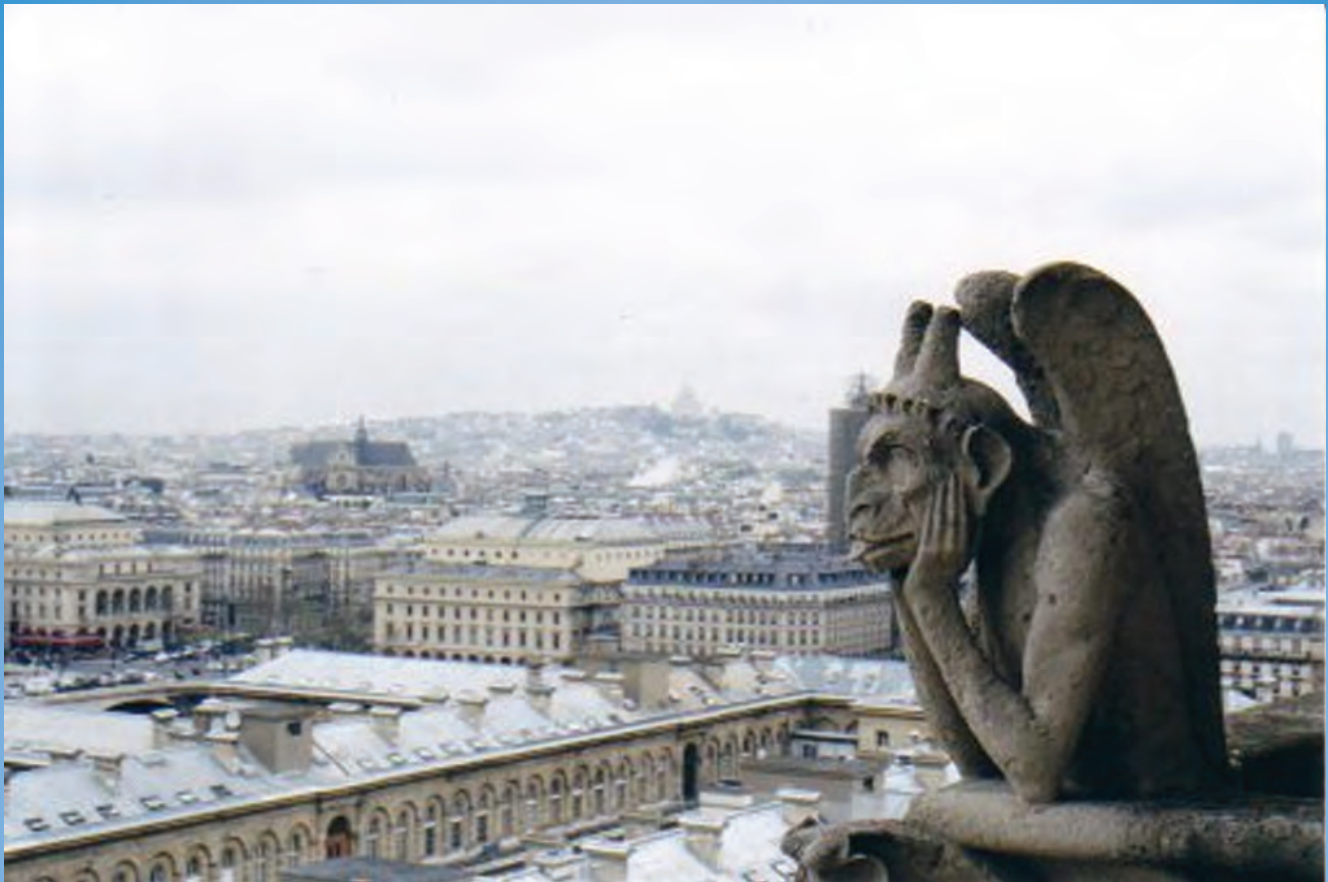
hand on the neck
lip to lip

trying to suck
the genius out

of the bottle
the end of a pipe

Erin Truesdale

Mesa Artist



“Gargoyle Atop Notre Dame de Paris”

Paris, France

35mm film

March 2002



Erin Truesdale has always been an artist, but she has not been limited to one medium or one subject matter. She has found, however, that she is drawn to lines and composition. Additionally, she loves how shadows operate, and how things look completely different from a macro point of view. Her inspiration to bring these concepts to life is nature. She holds a BA in ancient history, so remnants of human history, such as architecture and religious imagery, are another inspiration. Her photograph “Gargoyle” was featured as the cover image for the University of Minnesota History Department’s annual Awards Ceremony in 2005. Additionally, her sports photography, featuring figure skaters at the 2001 World Figure Skating Championships, has been featured on many websites. Besides photography, Erin finds great joy in painting, and has created many works based on nature, done in acrylic on canvas. She has published several poems, as well. Erin received her BA in ancient history from the University of Minnesota in 2007. She is currently working on a Master’s degree in psychology. She currently resides in Mesa, AZ with her two cats. Her current photographic project deals with the desert, documenting this environment in macro. Contact the artist at t.distribution@gmail.com.

Erin Truesdale

Mesa Artist



“Lonely Leaf”
Minneapolis, Minn.
Black and white 35mm film
September 2001

I have never been much of a talker. As a child, I would write in my journal, write stories out on the lawn, or draw in my sketch book, rather than verbally speak. Art has been my language and my outlet. Art helps me see and understand the world, and my photography helps people to see the world from obscure angles, or notice details that would not have normally warranted a second glance. A photography class in junior high school started my passion for photographic imagery. From the beginning, the process of transforming light and shadow into a tangible image struck me as magical. I made a box camera, with one pin hole as the lens, in the 8th grade. The resulting image of a majestic tree, with its arms reaching up to the sky in a silhouette rendered me speechless. I created this wondrous image. The bug to keep creating images that used shadow and line to present a unique picture of the world bit me then, and the feeling has never left. Photography fills me with a sense of accomplishment I cannot find anywhere else, and has proven to literally be my voice. Some people are great orators; I orate with images. I try not to take photographs that are calculated. I let the environment lead me to the right composition and subject matter. Only then can I help nature’s voice be heard; my artist’s voice gets intertwined with it, to produce a unique brand of art. I never go somewhere with a deliberate purpose, i.e. to take photographs. I want to photograph life, so I always have my camera with me. If life begs to be photographed, I am prepared. Recently I re-discovered some of my early photographs, sketches, and paintings. This discovery has made ideas for my photography blow up in my imagination. I grew up in Minnesota, where grassy plains and pine trees rule the landscape. Having lived in Arizona for over a year now, I am still enthralled by the mountains, the cacti, and the beautiful desert flowers. I am eager to let this new environment talk to me through my lens, and to let others see this environment through my eyes, and to hear it through my language of photography.

- Erin Truesdale

Erin Truesdale

Mesa Artist



“Celtic Crosses, Kilmalkedar church”

Dingle, Ireland

Sept. 27, 2005

Erin Truesdale

Mesa Artist



**“Helmshore Textile Plant”
Lancaster, England
Digital camera
August 2005**

Erin Truesdale

Mesa Artist



“Interior of York Minster”
Sept. 23, 2005

Erin Truesdale

Mesa Artist



**“Lake of the Woods”
Kenora, Ontario
Digital camera
August 2010**

Erin Truesdale

Mesa Artist



**"Street: Perth, Scotland."
Sept. 15, 2005**

Erin Truesdale

Mesa Artist



**“Orange Flower”
Minneapolis, MN
35mm color film
July 2003**

10 Poems By Robert Feldman

All Of My Friends Are BackEast

© 2012

winter, '79.
snowing in Flagstaff.
plows can't pull through the white sea.
citizens realize the six month nighttime.
the winds have suddenly shifted.

3:00 am he paces the floor,
caged,
recounting birthday presents:
card, address book, a roll of postage stamps.

outside the parted curtains
a streetlight reveals the blizzard like a stripper,
the porchlight beckons like a fire painting,
he quickly tries to think in French
while she lies on a bed, somewhere,
separated,
more profound.

empty voices of strangers debate in his head
shadows chained onto cave walls...
I remain bewildered with no point of reference.

all of my friends are backeast.

1980
Bisbee

From The Back Of A Pickup

© 2012

we bounced along
starin at each other's bare feet
July sweat still moist from the haying,
listenin to a scratchy Howlin Wolf tape
the cut alfalfa sweetly lifting us into the air
sky sprinkled by galaxies
extraterrestrial bebop expressionist lightshow movement,
and from somewhere Sonny commentin on the stillness of that night,
my giggle response
sendin her long spidery fingers
deep into her tight backpacks for a pack of Juicy Fruit,
and soon the sugar hit
and Howlin Wolf's guitar became Dark Side of the Moon,
and we sure enough got up to dance,
recognizin more possibilities,
tractors and buckskins to ride,
and another sunrise comin on,
sleep becomin irrelevant
kickin aside our sleeping bags
all rolled up like our dreams then
jus bouncin along
from the back of a pickup

Fall, 2011



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. Mr. Feldman 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.

Cactusflower...

© 2012

muted trumpet...

rest...

Arabian desert,
yellow flower,
reminds the sun
it is merely a star,
reviving her,
opening her eyes
to the placid
sweet sky

earlymorning doves
linger within her scent...
tamarind blossoms
in deepest conviction
with all sincerity
gather in the raindrops
flawlessly,
sipping each one,
with dignity

cactusflower
Arabian dawn
yellow dawn...
picture of veiled mystery,
classical Raga brown fingers
intently turning pages of prophetic verse
weaving harmonium spells
memorizing
each golden flower
the sun awakens,
while yellow dawn
ignites the sky,
Arabian dawn,
stillness,
whispering,
her petals opening,
patient for a vision,
another presence of dawn,
another new day
weds ancient Arabian nighttime,
and gentle tabla breezes
melt away in glory
through her fertile black earth desert garden

cactusflower
sweetflower
moonflower
breathes once again,
understanding
these desert shadows
will soon pass from her window,
and at last
she may unveil her eyes
before the break of Arabian dawn

On First Seeing The Taj Mahal

© 2012

icy full moon
frigid morning
green parrots huddling
inside frozen ancient archways
patient for a hint of sunlight
then purposefully,
emerging
in all its glory,
though rings of prism dew rising,
the ultimate structure of centuries,
one man's memorial-
one woman's vision of eternal love
for all who may sail by
this monument,
who might pause to wonder,
if only in a dying moment
recognize love eternal,
a final resting place-
this temple of life
this immaculate phosphorescent marble structure of hope
this golden dream realized
22 years without rest
Himalayan snowy winds
blowing south from Rajasthan,
swirling wet kisses from Mumtaz,
this dream realized,
Shahjahan's white hair
22 years without light,
until at last
this masterpiece of love
embraces the world

Agra, India

Backs Against The Tide

© 2012

holding back the tide
backs against monsoon mud
decades of Kashmir tears
swarm Pakistani streets
smother drowning schools
mothers and babies clinging to trees
roaring rivers
oceans of water
every night it comes
every afternoon more Sindhis disappear
and Karachi grieves
and Islamabad has no plans
and Delhi reconsiders karma

these are biblical times
these rains remind us of our mortality
reminds us that borders
as treaties
merely wash away
promises mean nothing
sunlight erases whoever journeys into the night drizzle
turning into teeming torrents of truth
oh! this world cannot betray
nor turn our backs
Pakistan is the wet world
Pakistan dripping endless green tears
golden silk saris used as sponges
steel poles and beams
useless
no structures
basmati fields washed into the ocean
chapatti fires cook no more
Pakistan gushing endless green tears
as the world idles on
till this eternal deluge inexorably shrivels,
evaporates

(for the countless thousands washed away in the '10 Pakistani floods)

Tsunami

© 2012

then a window opens
brilliant rays of light
blasting through the rubble
the devastation
Tsunami tidal wave
innocent humpback whales
bluefish
and human babies
confused and left abandoned on shore,
puppies and 2-wk old petrified sparrows
savagely
brutally
washed overboard,
till a window opens
bashed and pelted random fingers
grasping shafts of moonbeams
emerge,
still extended in dignity
to where nurses begin baking fresh brown bread
to where Fukushima farmers begin offering drinking water
to where Tokyo razorblade punk-gangsters begin nurturing babies
to where Hiroshima mothers continue swimming 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 and 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

Reinventing My Shadow

© 2012

new story here
between electric lights
flashing
lit up for show
telling another tale of the aftermath
of don't hang around
raising the sails
heading out for the domino ocean

out clean and fresh for a new start
where the only survivors are badland truckers
searching for weighted cargo
satisfying the highway scales
out there over the bonefish horizon
country tides blasting
behind all this distance

it don't seem
there's anyplace left to go
this place filled with brave trees
unlined paper
this place to reinvent my shadow
to write down this song

the forest life
gives me a chill
start back once
and you're gone
though you think you've found the way
it's a long time away that got me here
and so much more
to head back there

(out here in this Northcountry
the tunes flow softly
slowly ridin
this perfect green wind trail
carry me to my destiny)

Northern Minnesota
1973

‘You’re My Enemy!’

© 2012

a scream
followed by 4 more
and then 11 or 12.

“Help!” my child blasts.

4 more, then 11.

“You’re my enemy!”

I can’t catch my breath.
I’m starting to get a nosebleed.
Wow, my son’s “enemy”?

“What’s an enemy?”
“You know! I hate you!”

“But I bought you organic carrots”.

“I’m calling Mommy!”

“But I just helped you with your homework”.

This is too painful to be happening.

Such anger - rage: “help!”?

“Don’t you feel safe with your Daddy?”

No response.

What have I done to you, my son?
Are we not sweet gifts to each other?
Partners in a long dance?

I hurry back to his bedroom with a glass of water,
my son there fast asleep.
11/12/03

We Are Connected

© 2012

you were first imagined
mango sweet beaches
east west hemispheres
long before our eyes met
before your voice was clear and strong
blowing in with the music of my decades,
long before our eyes met
along red purple canyon walls
inside New York art museums and ballparks
from Woodstock to Mt. Tamaulipas
between bridges and tunnels
ontop green gray smoky mountains...
...the sweet sky,
you are my life's ultimate work

you were imagined
all of you
crawling to consider birthday books
counting steps in different languages
munching on sweet onions
sipping apple juice through the night
tricking allopathic doctors
stealing little league bases
catching touchdown passes
drumming bop 4/4 hard drivin time
computing algebraic quadratic equations
manipulating convoluting puzzles
delighting your teachers
swimming pool laps
reciting the Four Questions
gracing mosques
soothing your sweet Mother's worries
your Father's mistakes,
and playing this life for all its worth
long before our eyes met
long after our eyes have learned from simple truths

we are links
you and I
historical
meaningful
way back before the dawn of Europe
we are connected
powerfully
righteously

transfixed notes bending inside major chords
primary colors blending abstractexpressionist paintings
competitors bowing to humanity
modest travelers riding God's long train to higher ground
keepers of the Light
historians
grateful gardeners tending flowers many still to be born

you and I
we were connected
long before our eyes met
when you read your first book
before you first cried away from the womb
after you crossed the finish line
since your first kiss
for all time
we have been connected
our hearts bond us
our struggle together defines us
power and independence
experience and discovery
shedding light and blinding sun
your air and my fire
we are connected
not because of blood
in spite of it
not because of laws
in spite of them
not because of man
in spite of him
we are audaciously connected
co-beings struggling to breathe
son and father inevitably joined
tragically kicking each other's tin can down the road
forging our own paths
all the time knowing
love is all we need
to complete the link
somewhere close to eternity
when fathers and sons
emerge from all ages
to sit down together
at the feet of God

Delray Beach
July, 2011

Rereading the Anarchist Cookbook

© 2012

slippery absorbed pockets
slouching back in galleries
avoiding eye contact
hip, expecting nothing,
getting infected by human flies
carrying radiation
wearing brown business suits
nervous sweat cologne
threatening
then poise,
the needless bong of profitmaking
wrapped up tightly into ionized unfulfillment

we must report when the human lines form
yet besides the apologies
how can we
desert the sun?
in this particular area
a guy just wants to make big bucks
so far over his head
mortgage the wife and kids
smack around the poor whore earth
that the guy comes back to like some stranded gigolo

no, abandon mother earth instead,
allow her to return to her own magnificence
her tone is flat and gray you saw to that
her breasts were mastectomized you saw to that
your surgeons are thorough...
her teeth are missing
can pearls be replaced?
your barbershop shaved her head you saw to that
no artificial grasslands could ever hide the scars from this genocide

but that's not enough
you always come back for more
some addict with no quit
never giving
always taking
boxing it up for sale
off to Wyoming
mixing chemicals
shipping them to Detroit
lighting another cigarette

Continued on page 66

Continued from page 65

ripping open the box
dragging any remains to the undertaker
burning up the refuge
and finally lighting somebody's shack
a blazing ½ hour burn
lighting another cigarette
heading to bed
the deluge complete

instead, what if the garden took over
grew into that hole
that void,
what if there were carrots and kale
instead of U310?
can you deal with this xmas gift Mother Earth presented?
could you find some humility when someone stuck some dynamite up your pack animal's ass
and that night your monster was destroyed?
maybe you would think some more about your karma
while munching on your poison porkchop
hey that would give you all the more reason to come out fighting
even though it wouldn't be profitable...
hummmmm...?

come on will you be there
with your Coke and obvious chemical American male meatsmoke carcinogenic complexion?
you see there is something more than our wallets at stake here
you see there are the CHILDREN to be considered
you see we plan to be around for a while
and this is a novel place, after all, to come home to
after driving down Route 66
after running down Interstates 80, 40, 95, 10
phantom trucks shuddering and bulldozing by at 2:00am
coffeehouse waitresses looking like they just returned from group therapy
forlorn and exhausted,
but when you hit Route 66 and Cochise Stronghold stands there
and you decide whether to make one more stop to appraise the Chiricahuas
up close
it happens every time if you let it
just one more Poem to complete
before you reach city limits
then another
so there's one more chance
cause you are some child
and Ocean Earth is some child too
begging for another chance, Jones

Continued on page 67

Continued from page 66

so let me warn you
it will not only be your decision this time
for the 80's are here
all those weirdoes you read about in the NY Times reside out there
college kids from the 60's
lots of them
teeming
living down the street from you, Jonesey
not mellowed out
memorizing chemistry books
attending even more poetry readings
considering the coming-on-anyhow-decision
concerning the survival of this planet
and these weirdoes are still breathing green fire
hanging out in packs
wild dogs
growing fangs
rereading the Anarchist Cookbook
you understand just what this means?
you are terribly obvious to their ravenous perceptive bloodshot eyes
your smell is repulsive to their eager noses
and you invented the aerosols of disintegration
used on germs and other forms of death
you who proudly market death
not challenge our hip armies gathering along your white picket fences
though not digging for pretty blue rocks this time
not gathering wildflowers for lovers this time
no longer drinking opiate tv commercials this time
no longer worrying about the darker feelings metastasizing in some
who cannot communicate for fear of labels
or other such past generational western neuroses,
those kids are no longer young
they have been scared
they are opposed to plastic plastic plastic surgery
they collectively work on their dreams
(can you remember when you stopped having visions?)
they are writing letters to editors
running for office
growing their own food
building windmills and designing passive solar homes
they are using tobacco juice on their gardens instead of insecticides
their consciousness is as solid as the Rockaway Atlantic Ocean
as truthful as a Rufous hummingbird

Continued on page 68

Continued from page 67

still,
do not be afraid, Jones,
even though the odds are drastically against your kind
it is not too late to reconsider
the Way has not yet been recorded for posterity
the Book has not yet closed
there are still vents left
alternatives are still possible
my generation still practices forgiveness
so go to your church
temple
pray to your son or spirits or whatever you care to call God
dismantle you flamethrowers
put away your knives
recycle your guns
hire Gary Snyder
at last look at us fellow earthlings in the eye
we are your children
your wives and husbands
your brothers
sisters
neighbors,
your goddamned teachers
who still prefer the Earth
who consider your probation time nearly used up
who have already received orders
to finally once and for all
clean up your mess
one way or another
with you or without you
Mr. Jones

1988

Tucson

Michael Santa Cruz

Tempe Artist



**“Empress”
Charcoal
2010**



Michael is a Tempe-based artist. He has a diverse background in politics, humanities, music, and technology, and draws upon all of these disciplines in his art. He specializes in figure drawings and portraits of provocative live subjects and draws out their inner character. However, he is unafraid to explore any theme or subject. His work is featured at www.vastwidedcosmos.com, a name chosen to reflect the universality of his interests and inspirations. He can be reached at michael.santacruz@vastwidedcosmos.com.

Michael Santa Cruz

Tempe Artist



**“Percolate”
Charcoal
2012**

Alternative portraits, mind-stretching graphics, and visual statements — from the Vast Wide Cosmos.

- Michael Santa Cruz

Michael Santa Cruz

Tempe Artist



"Battle Hardened"
Charcoal
2012

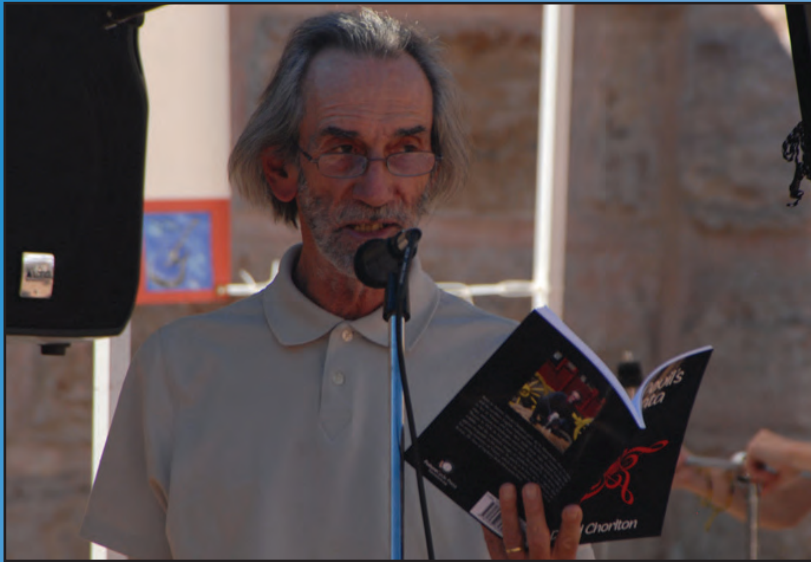
Michael Santa Cruz

Tempe Artist



**“Gas Can Santa”
Conte pencil
2002**

Snapshots from the Oct. 28 Fall Festival of the Arts



Poet David Chorlton, featured in Unstrung



Poet Frances New, featured in Unstrung



Poet Ryan Holden, featured in Unstrung



Poet Edgar Rider, featured in Unstrung



Rebecca Dyer, editor of The Blue Guitar and Unstrung

Photos by Richard H. Dyer Jr., The Blue Guitar Magazine

More photos from the Oct. 28 Fall Festival of the Arts



Odyssey Tribal, dance/multicultural



Laurie Fagan, jazz singer



Kandahar, belly dancer

Photos by Richard H. Dyer Jr., The Blue Guitar Magazine

Fall 2012

More photos from the Fall Festival of the Arts



Jonathan Gabriel, singer/musician, artist



thekards — Jacob Williams, rhythm guitar; Habib Sabbagh, bass guitar; Jared Grady, lead guitar; and Lucas Aikin, drums and keys

Photos by Richard H. Dyer Jr., The Blue Guitar Magazine

More photos from the Fall Festival of the Arts



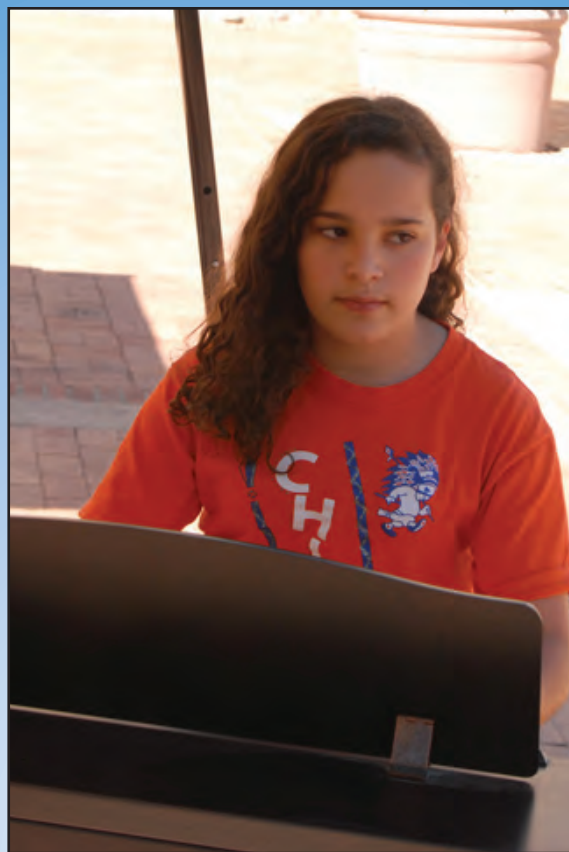
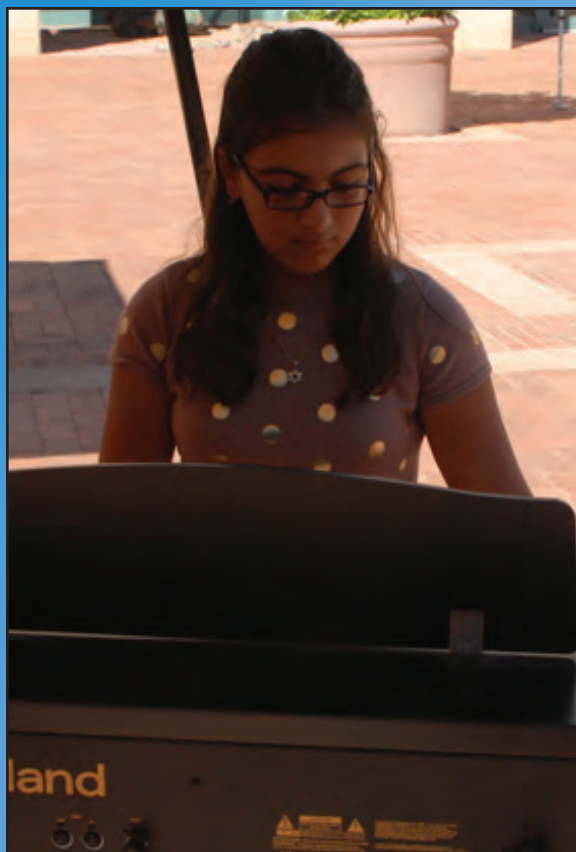
At left, AZ Classical Kids, students of Maestro Zhanna Tevan



Above left and center, students of Maestro Laima Howe

Maestros Zhanna Tevan (right) and Laima Howe

More photos from the Fall Festival of the Arts



At left, students of Zhanna Tevan



Japanese swordsmanship demonstration Iaido presented by Touch of Creation Cultural Events

Photos by Richard H. Dyer Jr., The Blue Guitar Magazine

More photos from the Fall Festival of the Arts



Artist Marjory Boyer, creator of the iconic artwork for The Blue Guitar, Unstrung and The Blue Guitar Jr. covers



Mesa artist Bonnie Sykes, photos, jewelry and acrylics paintings

Photos by Richard H. Dyer Jr., The Blue Guitar Magazine

More photos from the Fall Festival of the Arts

At left, Matt Blum and Jennifer Schuster of the Phoenix Conservatory of Music



At right, Elena Thornton and artist Nicholas A. Baio

Photos by Richard H. Dyer Jr., The Blue Guitar Magazine

More photos from the Fall Festival of the Arts



Touch of Creation Cultural Events had a costume contest and provided the LRS Tokyo Girls and Guys



Photos by Richard H. Dyer Jr., The Blue Guitar Magazine

Celebrating 5 Years of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts

Fall 2012

Dear Friends of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts,

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

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

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

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

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

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

And now onward. We estimate that soon we will have space to utilize through a collaboration with a local entity. We are making the significant commitment to accomplish this goal for several reasons. The most important one is that you — our members and supporters — want the space, a multicultural arts center, to happen. The bottom line is that we cannot do this without your help. And so we invite you to please consider giving an anniversary gift today toward our "5th Anniversary Celebration Fall Fund Drive 2012." Many thanks in advance for your collaboration and investment in our efforts!

THE Arizona Consortium for the Arts ANNOUNCES ITS Fall FUND DRIVE 2012 to celebrate our 5th Birthday!

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

If your answer to any of these questions is yes, then you know and appreciate the good work of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts. The grants defray only a fraction of expenses. To make up the balance, we depend on friends like you. You can help us continue to make our programs available here in the Phoenix area. Please give generously to our Fall Fund Drive 2012—now through December 31. Just go to <http://www.artizona.org/donate.html> to make a gift today! You can make your contribution today, fast, easy and securely via PayPal. You DO NOT have to have a PayPal account in order to use the PayPal credit card system. Your contributions are tax-deductible. For other options to donate, please email your questions and comments to info@artizona.org or call 602-263-5373.

Help us leave a legacy!

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

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

Open Mic: A celebration of the arts

Join us at our Monthly Open Mic Arts, Letters and Culture Events! This is a great chance for artists, writers and performers in all genres, spanning all disciplines and cultural representations, to get together, meet one another, read, present, share, learn and enjoy!

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

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

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

About The Arizona Consortium for the Arts

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

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

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



a gallery, theater setting.

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

Jr. literary and arts magazine for youth.

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

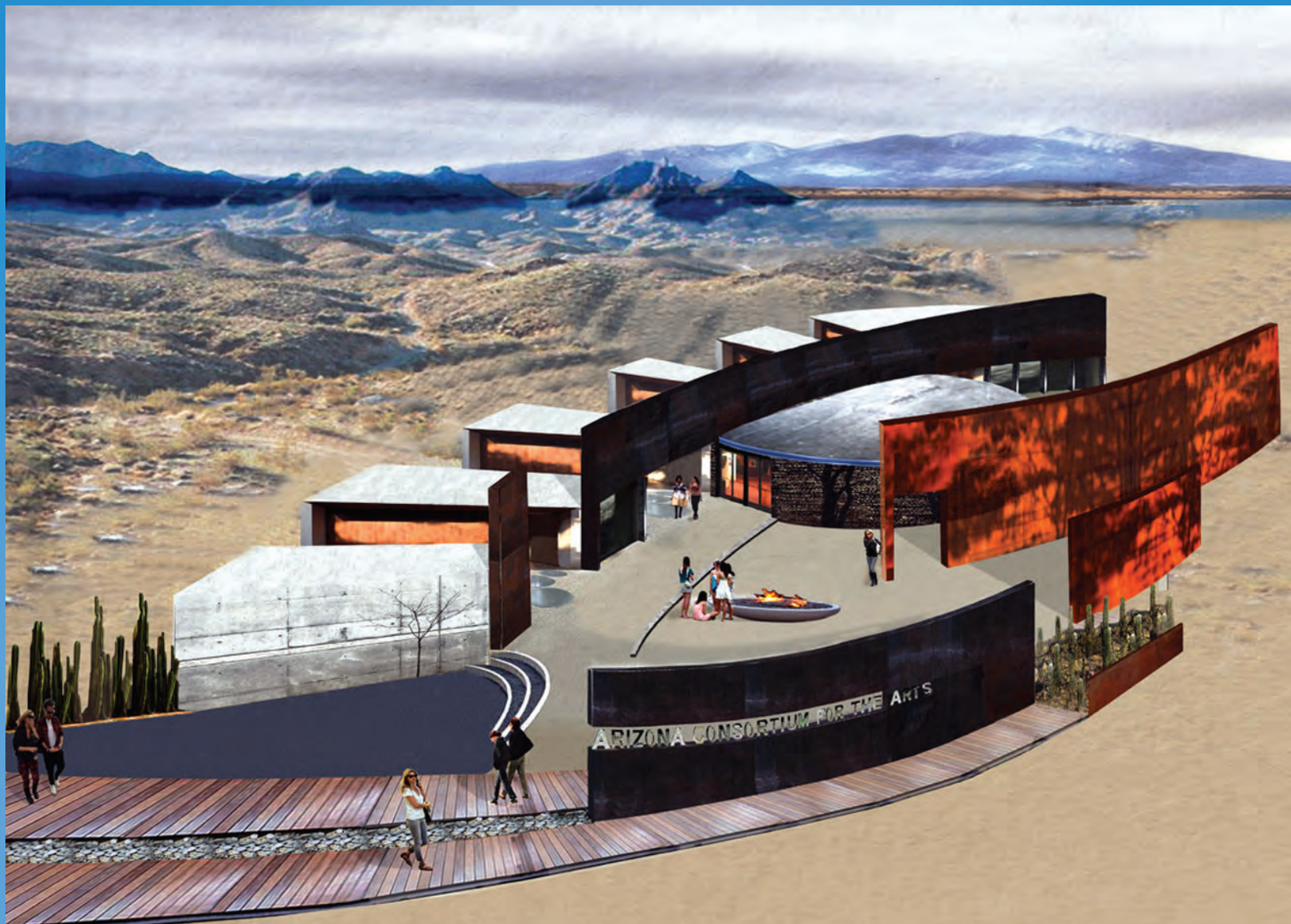
There are countless ways to contribute, and the consortium is grateful for any donation in any form.

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

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

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

Thank you for your continued support!



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

The consortium's vision for a multicultural arts center

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

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

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

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

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

A Call to Poets for the 2013 Issue of Unstrung

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



Coming April 14, 2013!

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

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

Free admission!

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

For more details, go to The Arizona Consortium for the Arts website, www.artizona.org

Meet the staff of The Blue Guitar magazine



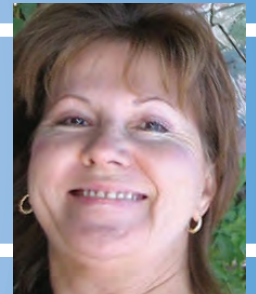
Elena Thornton, publisher: Founder and president of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, Elena is an educator, artist and poet and lives in Phoenix. Reach her at info@artizona.org.

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

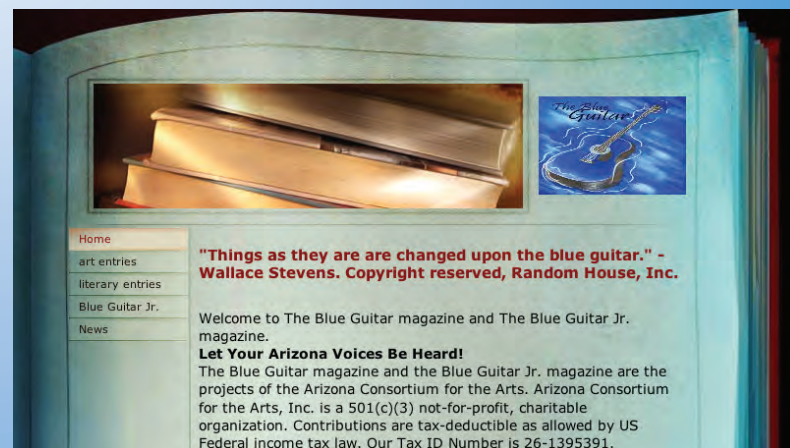
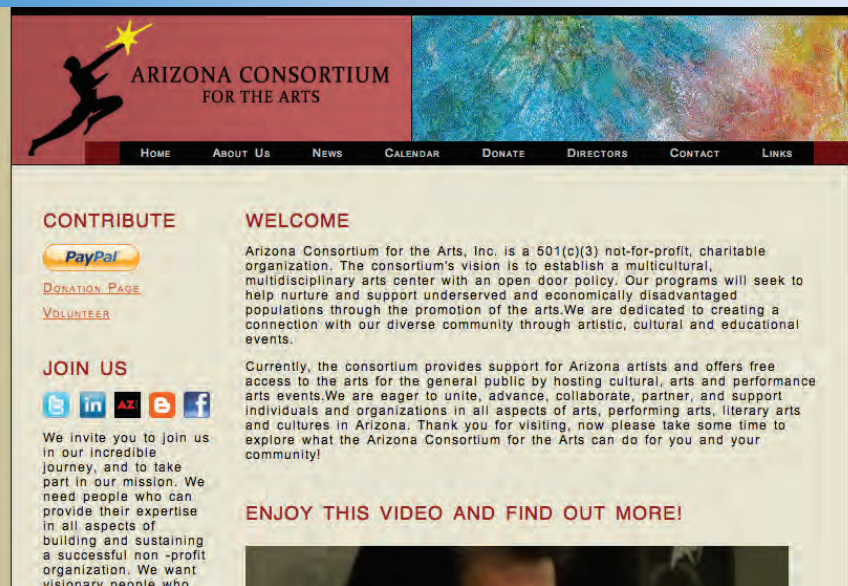


Richard H. Dyer Jr., production editor: Richard (married to Rebecca, above) is the managing editor for four weekly newspapers in the East Valley, a photographer and a welded-steel sculptor.

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



Check our websites for news on the arts



The Blue Guitar Magazine's website is www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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

www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org



A Call to Writers for Spring

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks literary submissions for the Spring 2013 Edition from Feb. 1 through March 1.

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

A Call to Artists for Spring

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks art submissions in all mediums for the Spring 2013 Edition from Feb. 1 through March 1. The art entries are juried for inclusion. Any artists who work in any visual art media and are 18 years or older and are Arizona residents can submit. It is free to submit and up to 5 images can be submitted. Artists are encouraged to submit images of work by e-mail; please provide high-resolution JPEGs of 300 dpi. Images must be identified in the e-mail with the artist's name and contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. To submit or for further information, e-mail Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.



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

— Excerpt from Wallace Stevens' 1937 poem “The Man With the Blue Guitar.”

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Number 2
Fall Issue
FREE!

*“Things
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