

The Blue Guitar

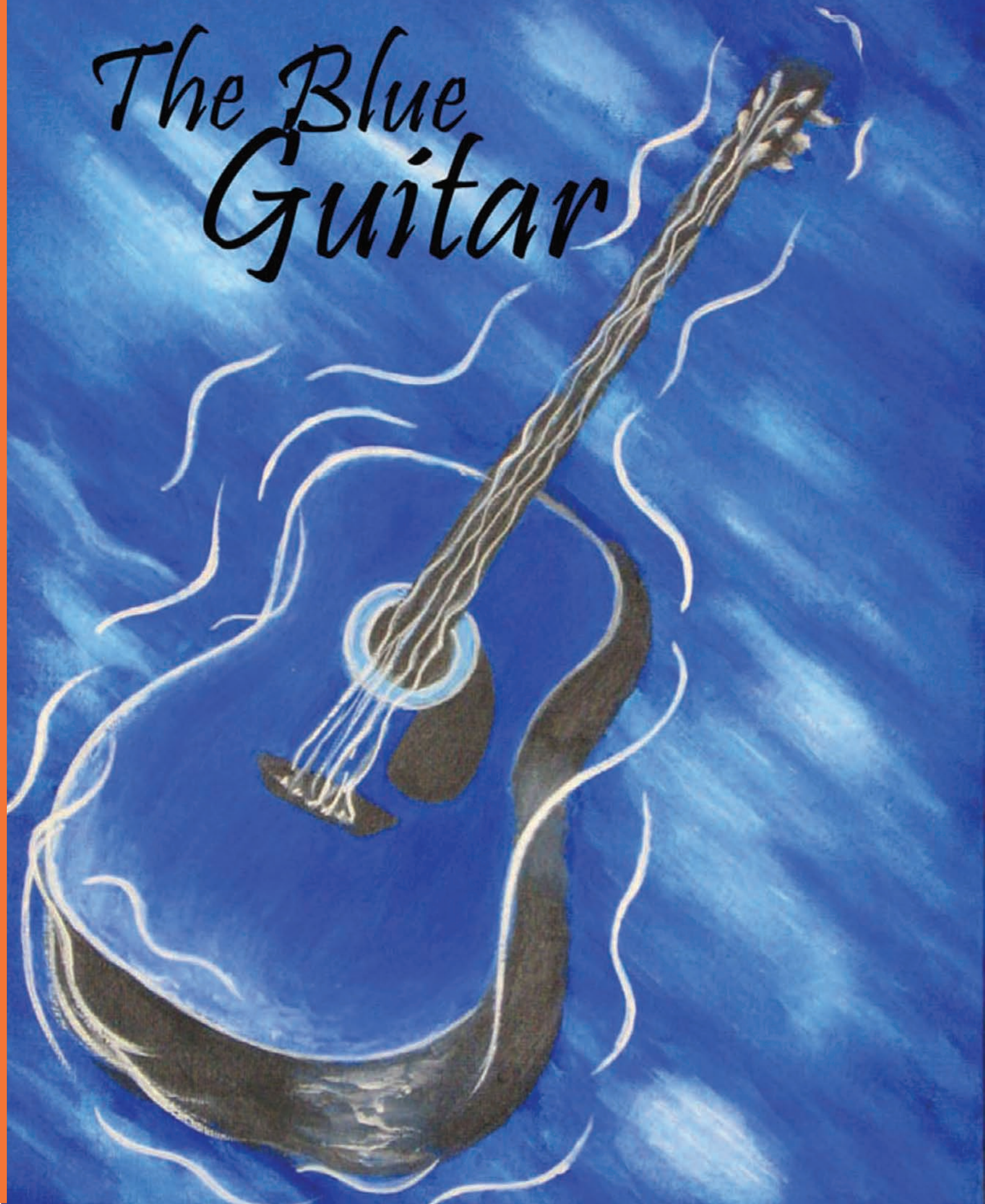


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Editors’ Note

Inspiration comes with every stunning sunrise and sunset, especially in our beautiful state of Arizona.

It also comes to me with the first spark of a MIG weld on steel or when the heat brings forth colors while brazing or in oxyacetylene welding. I’ve been using a Beverly shear to cut sheet steel, and with each slice I envision new ways to manipulate the metal for my artworks.

Student welders who stopped and chatted with me in my booth at the Fourth Avenue Spring Street Fair in Tucson e-mailed me later for help as they hoped to design their own artworks.

Others may be prompted to create after passing public art installations such as those along the Metro Light Rail in the Phoenix metro area or while visiting galleries and museums. And hopefully all will be inspired by the splendid submissions by Arizona artists and writers in this issue of The Blue Guitar magazine.

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www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org

Fall 2015

Andrew Lee

Gilbert Artist



“Huangshan (Yellow Mountains)”
Oil on canvas
May 16, 2012

Andrew Lee was born and raised in Arizona and attended Red Mountain High School. During this time, he began painting, earned the rank of Eagle Scout and graduated fifth out of 699 students. He is now 21 and studies aerospace engineering at Arizona State University. During his college career, he has served as the Southwest district governor of CKI (collegiate branch of Kiwanis International), worked as a structures and dynamics intern at Aerojet Rocketdyne (manufactures rockets and thrusters for space applications), and further developed his artwork on a professional level. He plans to study abroad in Sevilla, Spain, during his last semester (spring 2016) and graduates May 2016. His artwork has a Chinese focus and serves as a connection to his cultural heritage. He actively sells and donates prints of his work at various events, such as First Friday. He is working to develop an online community to reach more people who may be interested in his work. Andrew can be contacted at andrew.lee.artwork@gmail.com. His work can be viewed on Facebook and Instagram at facebook.com/andrewryanleearwork and instagram.com/andrew.lee.artwork/.



Andrew Lee

Gilbert Artist



“Lily and Lotus”
Acrylic on canvas
April 26, 2015

On “Huangshan (Yellow Mountains)”: My grandfather passed away when I was little and while we were cleaning out his old house, I stumbled upon this great Chinese landscape that he had received from a close friend. It was about 4’ x 5’ (very large) with a very calming feeling to it. I took it home and hung it up in my room. A few years later during my senior year in high school, I decided to honor this piece and my Chinese heritage and painted my own sort of Chinese landscape piece. It took me 30+ hours to complete.

On “Tiger Mom”: While I was in Thailand, we visited a water market and navigated a grid of homes/huts on a canoe where people had various goods for sale. I saw a painting of a tiger that captured my attention. During my freshman year of college, I painted my own. The piece is called “Tiger Mom” simply because this was a Mother’s Day gift. My mom is in no way a tiger mom. I just wanted to clear that up for fear of potential consequences.

On “The Boat”: Very recently, this has become a Father’s Day present. To me, my father captains the boat leading our family wherever we need. He does it with our safety as top priority and is willing to sacrifice whatever necessary for our family. All I can hope to do is learn as much as I can from him.

On “Lily and Lotus”: It was inspired by a family friend’s daughter, Kaiya. She did something similar with three pink blooming and non-blooming lotus flowers with a grey background. Her work inspired me to make one of my own.

- Andrew Lee

Andrew Lee

Gilbert Artist



“Tiger Mom”
Acrylic on canvas
Jan. 23, 2013

Andrew Lee

Gilbert Artist



"The Boat"
Acrylic on canvas
Feb. 2, 2015

4 poems by Michael Gessner

Aphrodisiac

© 2015

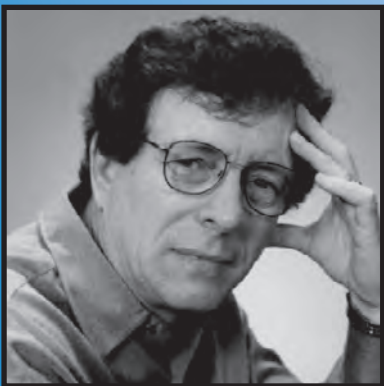
At 10:00 a.m. in a bar
in San Salvador, while
drinking with four men,
I took a concoction
on a dare, an aphrodisiac.

Later, on the streets,
although I felt no differently,
I noticed men following me.
“Are you all right?” one said.
“Are you a lost girl?” another asked.

I spent most of the afternoon
on the beach and got a burn.
When I returned to the bar
I found the old woman
who made the brew.

“It didn’t work. Have anything else?”
“I have a stronger potion. It will
put you in a different place,
out of your body.” “Can
I return?” “You won’t care.”

“Will I be me?” Like the biggest question
when we are born: boy or girl? No one asks,
“Did you have a polymorph?”
“Gender won’t matter,” she said.
“Astral bodies don’t care.”



Michael Gessner lives in Tucson with his wife, Jane, a watercolorist, and their dog, Irish. His son, Chris, writes for the screen in L.A. His more recent work has appeared in “The North American Review,” “The French Literary Review,” “Verse Daily,” and “Verse-Virtual.” FutureCycle will publish his “Selected Poems” in September 2016. Other information may be found at www.michaelgessner.com, or contact by e-mail at mjcg3@aol.com.

Under The Boardwalk

© 2015

We dance the beach,
our soles tingle, clouds roll
over & over darkening
the sand, we pass flash-mashers,
beat-up bodies, gagging spectacles,
spiny blow fish washed up with other debris,
bent nails, rotten wood, algae-sick-of-sea,

& dance on, you with your green eyes
& wild hair, you with your many selves,
rounded sea glass, double rainbows,
a central self we share in coyote
& clam, cactus & clover,
you introduce me to everyone new,
& what will become of me is you.

Aubade, Aquamarine

© 2015

Idylls float in Aegean mist
like statues. My visit
among them is a ghost
marriage in sea spray,
among the myths
of morning, where futures
mumble like underwater
speech, amiable, emerging,
as if we never knew
the promise of myths,
floating bodies full of Day.

The Last Step

© 2015

— *all fables begin in grievance.*

Cavafy, in “The First Step” has Eumenes
complaining to Theocritus, that he,
after two years had completed only one idyll,

and he has only stood upon the first
step on the ladder of poetry,
and fears he cannot go farther.

After a lifetime of composing poems,
Eumenes returned to Theocritus
in a dream, saying he had achieved

many times over, the perfect work,
yet remained unfulfilled. Nonsense,
Theocritus exclaimed, perfection

does not exist in poetry alone, only in its
nuances which exist in us. It is an abstraction,
that changes its shape and its color,

and to speak of it as a captured thing is blasphemous.
Even knowing what I have done, Eumenes went on,
I am still restless and find I must create

even when I have written my best,
when I have written great works
it is as if they had never been,

as if I, and others, had never
completed such things.
Theocritus considered this

and then said, yes, so it must be.
This is the pathology that comes
with the compulsion to write great things.

It is difficult for me to see that you
are still struggling for perfection, when you,
after all, are the poem you seek.

A Morning in Southeast Morocco

By Christa Reynolds

© 2015

“Hey, Christa, what are you doing?”
Looking up from my Darija notebook, I saw Rachida peeking around my bedroom door.

“Um, nothing...studying.”

She smiled. “Good. Come with me to the *jinan* to get *hashish* for the sheep,” she said, motioning toward the front door, as though this was a normal request.

“What?”

“Come on! They’re hungry. We just ate breakfast. Now they want breakfast.”

“The sheep...eats what?”

Maybe I hadn’t understood her – *hashish* for the sheep?

As a Moroccan Berber, Rachida spoke a mix of Amazigh, her Berber language, and Darija, the dialect of Moroccan Arabic I was still trying to learn. I could hear the hungry sheep bleating in their pen behind the house, so I was pretty sure I understood part of what Rachida wanted.

Although I was confused, I trusted Rachida. Since the beginning of my stay in Tazarine, the small village in southeast Morocco where I worked as a teacher, I had been a guest in her family’s house. Although she often laughed at my funny accent and told me my hair ought to be longer, we quickly grew close. I enjoyed working with her because she was patient and funny. We traded words between our languages whenever we made sugary mint tea or washed our clothes by hand in the backyard.

“Let’s go,” Rachida said, gesturing toward the door again.

The *jinan* was a few miles square, stretching west of the town. A lush green oasis in the midst of an otherwise rocky, iron-colored desert, the *jinan*’s intertwining garden plots provided sustenance for Tazarine. Some plots were full of date palms and small vegetables while others were fallow, recovering from last season’s crops. Wells pulled water from deep

underground, and a system of open-air pipes carried water to the garden plots. There was enough for everyone, but in moderation.

To get to the *jinan*, we walked past the small cemetery on the edge of town, where Rachida’s older sister was buried, passed the karate studio owned by Rachida’s brother and avoided the main road with the shops and market. As a woman, Rachida rarely walked through town. It was a space for men, unlike the *jinan*, a place of work for everyone.

I followed Rachida through the labyrinthine avenues, trying to avoid brushing against the dusty adobe walls when we turned corners. Hand-washing a jacket in winter is a miserable task, so I tried to keep mine as clean as possible.

We walked past Fatiha, a neighbor, who was holding a string tied around the rear leg of a sheep. Five other sheep ambled along behind Fatiha. A group of sheep follows the “leader sheep,” so only the leader needs a leash – one of many random facts I learned while living in rural Morocco. We talked for a moment. Fatiha was on her way home, but we decided we’d have tea together soon, *inchallah*.

We came to a narrow bridge bypassing a 6-foot drop from the uneven dirt pathway to the trickle of water. Rachida had a mischievous look on her face.

“Don’t fall in.”

“OK, I’ll try,” I said, stepping with exaggerated caution, leaning close to the edge. How much water flowed through and how much evaporated, I wondered. Although it was winter, the sun beat down relentlessly.

Rachida peeked over the side, and shrieked, jumping back to stand on the other side of the bridge. I jumped back, too. Was it a snake? A giant scorpion?

Continued on page 12

Christa Reynolds loves to travel, take photos and read, which prompted her to join the Peace Corps after completing her undergraduate degree at the University of Chicago. During the Peace Corps, she lived in a rural village in Morocco, where she taught English, worked with community members on various projects and studied the local Arabic-Berber dialect. After completing her two years of service, Christa moved from one desert to another, relocating to Tucson, Arizona. She attended the University of Arizona in a dual major graduate program in journalism and Latin American studies. Christa loves spending time hiking and rock climbing in the desert and eating Sonoran food.



Continued from page 11

“There’s an...*agru*,” she said fearfully.

“What?” Yet another word I didn’t know, but I knew she hadn’t said “scorpion.” Leaning carefully over the side, I saw a cute green frog in the water.

“You don’t like him? The little green...what?”

“Ewww, *agru*! It’s because of their hopping! They just... hop!” Moving her hands around frenetically, she mimicked a jumping frog.

I started laughing. “*Agru*? Really? You?”

After having seen Rachida use a machete to crack open a recently slaughtered goat skull (the brain is a delicacy), wash dirty baby’s diapers and gut kilograms of fish, I was surprised to learn she was afraid of frogs.

“Come on.” She pretended to be insulted but linked her arm in mine as we continued our walk.

Adobe walls of different heights, uneven and wavy, surrounded each garden plot. The men maintained the walls, building them up with a goopy mixture of wet mud, straw and water. One held up a flat board, and another pushed the mud-mixture into the mold using a flat shovel-like tool. They left the boards in place until the sun hardened the mud. In the dry desert climate, these walls were very stable as long as maintenance was done regularly. They were also cheaper than cinderblocks, and easier to repair.

Some of the very old adobe houses in the *jinan* and around the edges of town were abandoned, the walls slowly collapsing as the houses fell into disrepair. Without a very heavy rain or the infrequent flash floods which poured through the dry riverbed some years, the ruins just turned back to dust.

Most of the adobe houses in the *jinan* were still inhabited and cared for, their brown walls looking as though they grew from the *jinan*. This part of town was older, built before the cinderblock stores and few apartment buildings along the main road. We passed doors to garden plots made from old car hoods, others from sardine cans nailed together, until finally we reached a small reddish door made from flattened metal cans. I couldn’t read the Arabic running sideways, but it looked like a list of ingredients. Rachida opened the padlock and entered.

Clovers and grasses in a patchwork of six squares about 8-feet wide filled the garden plot. A few date palms grew near the door, providing shade. I paused for a moment absorbing the peace of the *jinan*, a sanctuary from the hot, dry dust of town, away from men’s catcalls and annoying children. But it was also a place for hard work.

Rachida’s voice broke my reverie. “For the sheep,” she told

me, motioning toward the lush green squares.

“Of course,” I thought. “GRASS for the sheep!” I almost laughed.

She picked up two small scythes tucked near the door and handed me one. “It’s sharp,” she told me. “Do you know how to use it?”

The rust-colored curved blade looked like a prop from a creepy horror movie.

“Can you show me first? Then I’ll know,” I assured her.

Cutting the clover was a methodical task. Just hold the plant in a clump, cut the stalks and avoid pulling on the roots. Soon we had cleared two of the squares and had a huge stack of sheep food. We bundled it into a burlap bag as tall as me and nearly as heavy. Together, we dragged the sack toward the door.

Rachida phoned her brother to tell him we were finished. He would come by soon and use the trailer attached to his bicycle to carry the sack home to the sheep. I was relieved we wouldn’t be hauling it ourselves.

“We can have a snack and watch a movie before we make lunch,” Rachida said excitedly as we locked up the garden.

Bollywood movies entranced her. They were broadcast on a constant loop, with Classical Arabic subtitles and Hindi audio. Noticing my inability to understand either language, Rachida had recently begun summarizing the plots for me.

These usually went something like this: “You can see this man is bad because he is smoking and he drinks whisky. You don’t like whisky, do you? No? OK, good. And this girl is good because she is kind and she helps her mother. They are poor... Now the bad man is going to steal their car and the girl is sad. But don’t worry, because the good man, you can see he is good because he does not smoke, is going to help her. You can see he is helping her because she is smiling.” I loved it.

“Let’s just hope we don’t see any *agru* on the way back!” I said, poking her arm.

Although many aspects of my life in rural Morocco were maddening – days marked by language difficulties, harassment by men, extreme temperatures and frequently getting stranded when buses broke down – mornings like this made it worthwhile for me. Knowing I took part in work as it had been done for generations, even if it was just getting *hashish* for the sheep, filled me with contentment because I learned something in a way I never could from reading a book or watching a documentary. Living such experiences took away their strangeness, until being handed a scythe by my best friend to cut sheep food just felt normal.

Laughing, Rachida and I rushed toward the house and our dose of Bollywood.

Leigh Goodnight

Phoenix Artist



“American Boy #1”
Graphite on paper
2013



A comic strip called “Krazy Kat” brought Leigh Goodnight to Arizona. She grew up reading “Krazy Kat” and loving the bold, red mesas and buttes creator George Herriman drew in the background of his panels, set in a fictionalized Coconino County. Finally, in 2012, Goodnight moved to the desert and has been here since. She lives in downtown Phoenix and writes short fiction and creates artwork and comics. More of her artwork can be found at [facebook.com/leigh.goodnight.9](https://www.facebook.com/leigh.goodnight.9) or at [avatorque.deviantart.com](https://www.deviantart.com/avatorque). She can be contacted at silentleigh@gmail.com.

Leigh Goodnight

Phoenix Artist



“In My Apartment When I Moved In”

Charcoal on paper

2007

Faces are the vastest landscape, and the most varied. I started drawing faces early. Too shy to look people in their actual faces, I found it easier to capture likenesses on paper. You become intimate with a person you draw, in a way like no other. When you finish delving into the creases and lines and cast-shadows of a face, you will know that person as well as you might know a character you create in a short story or novel. Sometimes, though, it's the absence of a face that draws me in, as in the instance of the creepy statue drawing. What face hides in the faceless shadows?

- Leigh Goodnight

Leigh Goodnight

Phoenix Artist



“Old Man”
Graphite on paper
2013

Leigh Goodnight

Phoenix Artist



“American Boy #2”
Graphite on paper
2013

Leigh Goodnight

Phoenix Artist



"Que Linda"
Charcoal on paper
with digital color added
2013

A poem by Cara Lehrling

Where I'm From

© 2015

I am from pencils and paper,
from pepper and pancakes.
I am from the mulberry tree in the backyard
whose branches extend
only past the wall
which are too thin for me to walk on,
lest I wish to fall to the earth below.
I am from ginger and bubbles and turmeric,
from air conditioning turned up too high
but only when it is not needed
and heating turned up too high
but only when it's already warm
The chill shoving me into coats and blankets
and the uncomfortable warmth stripping me of my skin.
I am from snark and sarcasm,
from sickness and strep and saltines
from the sun and sweltering Sundays
sweet strawberry slurpees; summer.
From scars and sleeping and spaghetti sauce,
from monsoon storms and static.
I am from wrath, from wreckage.
From warnings hissed between teeth clenched in anger and gritting.
I am from mishap and misery, one often caused by the other.
I am from the hurricane that swirls in my stomach when someone speaks ill of a friend
and I do not hesitate to unleash my lightning.
I am a goddess, I have the strength of legions in my veins and I shall be *feared*.



The author writes: "The name's Cara! I am a sophomore in high school and an aspiring artist, photographer, poet, and author. I have been interested in fine arts for a very long time and I wish to pursue a career in that field. My ultimate goal is to work at Pixar, either as a part of the story department or as an artist. Getting my slam poem published in this magazine was the first step. You can contact me at bluebelugas@gmail.com if you have any questions or comments regarding my work!"

The 5 Senses of Queerness, as Perceived by a Genderfluid Pansexual

By Cara Lehrling

© 2015

Being queer in this age is almost refreshing. We as a society have finally come around to start to accept people for being themselves. Being queer in this age is almost refreshing, almost relieving — almost.

Queerness tastes of the blood shed by those slaughtered in the name of religion. It tastes of the dirt that makes its way into my mouth when I am pushed to the ground. It tastes of sourness and shame — yet, it tastes as sweet as his lips and his skin; it tastes of a taste for which I am willing to die.

Being queer sounds of slurs and sin, spouted from the sore throats of the bigots perched on the side of the road like hawks — no, vultures, whose voices are too hoarse to keep spitting poison at me as I walk by. It sounds of every single song that's made for him and her, it sounds of a family asking their little girl if she has a boyfriend. It is the screaming silence after the sigh that escapes their mouths when she reminds them that her boyfriend is a girl.

It looks like second glances, it looks like staring. It looks like a rainbow, bursting in every colour, every sexuality, every gender. It looks like the flag that we fly in our hearts — gay, lesbian, queer, pansexual, bisexual, asexual, aromantic, demisexual, demiboy, demigirl, transgender, agender, bigender, genderfluid, genderqueer. It also looks like the black and white of heteronor-

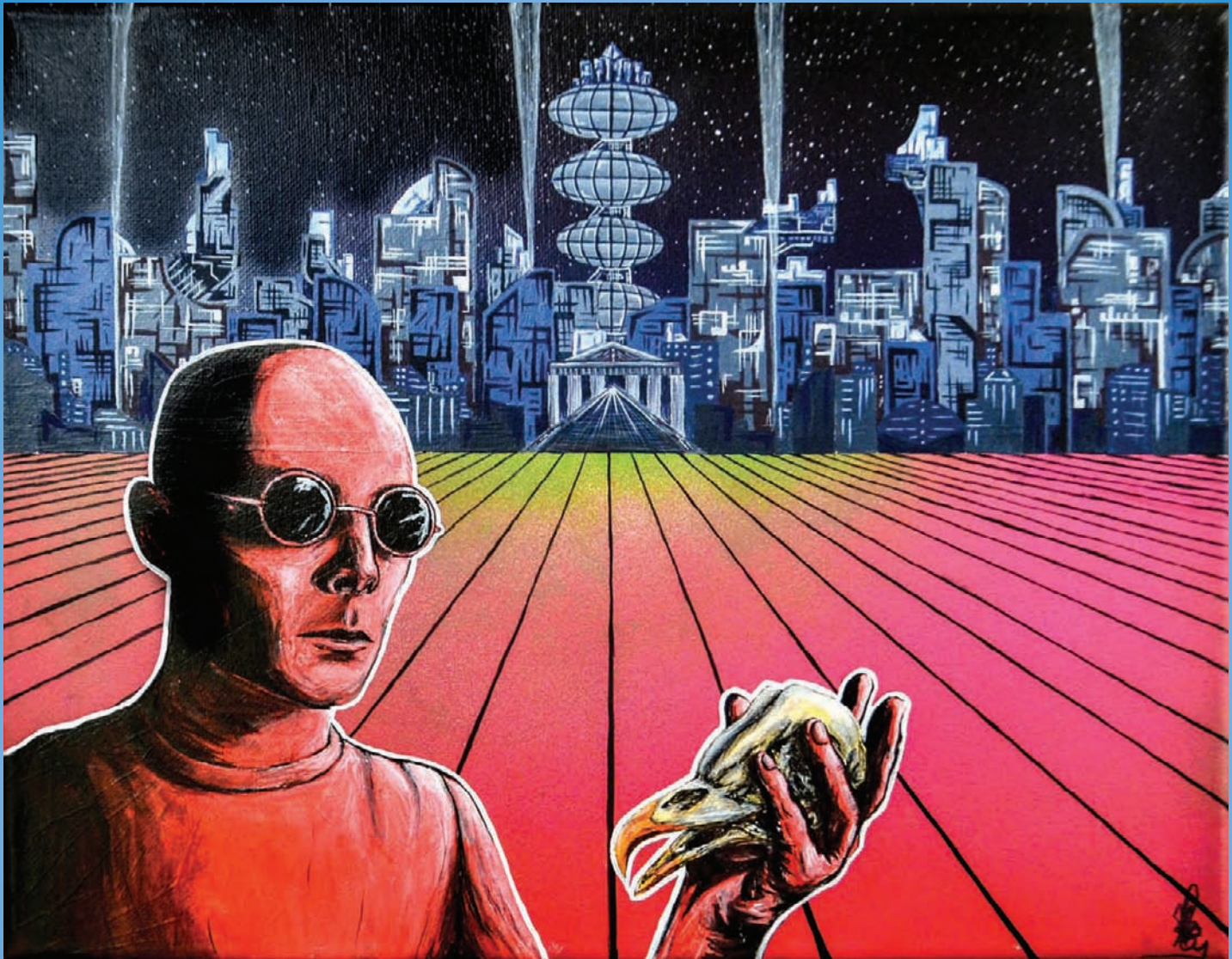
mativity, of cisnormativity, the black and white on the prison uniforms forced onto us just for being ourselves. It can never be black on black or white on white because that's too hard to see, because that's not what God intended, wasn't it?

Being queer feels like a punch, a slap, a kick from the house just for being yourself, it is painful and stinging, and the hurt lingers when we are told to keep hiding and the loss of trust when they say that it's a phase and we'll regret this. It feels like the ache in the back of my head when anyone calls me a girl. It feels like the rush I get and the way that my fingertips tingle when someone mistakes me for a boy. I am neither, I am both; I am genderfluid, damn it, and don't tell me that I'm just confused, because I know what I am. It feels like waking up in the wrong skin, it feels like the sickness that takes over when I look in the mirror and see a body that I was happy with one day and disgusted with the next. It hurts so much, but it feels so good when people tell me I'm valid.

It smells of iron, blood, gunpowder. A war. A war on gender, a war on sexuality. It smells of a war that we are currently fighting just to stay alive, to keep our jobs, to keep our sanity — to keep our humanity. It smells of sex, sweat, and you. Your breath and the welcoming scent of your clothes and everything that I could ever want. It smells like the mothballs in my closet, but at least it smells like home.

Arthur Owsley

Peoria Artist

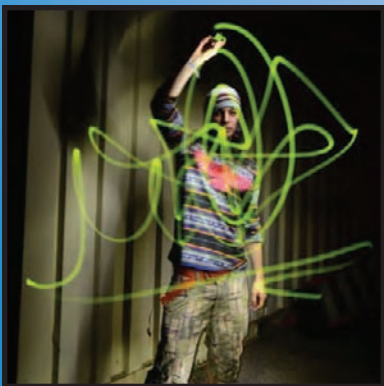


“A Dream to Be Captured”

Acrylic and spray paint

14”x11”

March 5, 2015



The artist writes, “I try to be a modern Renaissance Man by involving myself in many forms of art. I paint canvas and murals, I sculpt, I draw, and I build. I am a graphic designer, and I practice martial arts. I am in a constant state of creation. I am influenced by artists of wild passion and furious chaos such as Isaiah Zagar, David Choe, and Salvador Dali. My goal in my work is to hypnotize the viewer with the use of bold and crisp lines, contrasted color-schemes, iconography, idolatry, and intense subject matter. I am based out of Arizona, where I was born and raised. The influences of Hispanic and Native American cultures as well as the art of Downtown Phoenix are scattered throughout my work.” His website is <https://www.OwsleysArtwork.com>. Social media include: Facebook: /OwsleysArtwork; Instagram: OwsleysArtwork; and Twitter: @OwsleysArtwork. Contact the artist at OwsleysArtwork@gmail.com.

Arthur Owsley

Peoria Artist



“Amphitrite’s Crown”

Acrylic

24”x48”

Dec. 14, 2013

My life has been spent in dedication to bettering my art. When looking at my body of work, one would notice all of the recurring subjects and images. Owls, jellyfish, dragonflies, cicadas, feathers, and bones are only a few of the images that I use to create my compositions. There is purpose to this: Each character, each subject, and each image is decorated as a religious figure.

This is where I draw my influence: The importance of religious and cultural art. Its development and repetition throughout history is what I try to exemplify in my work. By combining different cultural and religious symbols, figures, and patterns with modern schemes and styles, I imbue an existential importance to the subject matter.

I have an underlying goal in my life when it comes to my work: I think that legacy is an important concept to any artist; my aspiration for my legacy is a little different from what others may be. If I were buried in a crypt with my body of work and was discovered in the distant future, I would want historians to be able to decipher the narrative and themes hidden in the religion of my work.

- Arthur Owsley

Arthur Owsley

Peoria Artist



"Stagnant"

Acrylic and spray paint

30"x48"

April 26, 2014

Arthur Owsley

Peoria Artist



“Urania’s Dancing Lights”

Acrylic and spray paint

11”x14”

March 18, 2015

A poem by Deborah Mayaan

Pathways

© 2015

Following the trampled grass, but then my arms pricked by the bushes, the way growing rockier, I realize this is not the trail after all

Leaning against the big rock in the shade, I rest a moment and then head back down
And find where this false trail splits off from the real one

It is like that with these thoughts, that would take me down the wrong pathway, one that does not lead to any destination I wish to visit

The sooner I step back, the less trampled the path becomes, the less likely I am to go down that groove in my mind again

And with each smile as I walk down the right pathway, the neurons wire together
The trail is made by walking

Deborah Mayaan is a brain-retraining coach as well as an energy-work and flower-essence practitioner.
Reach the poet at www.deborahmayaan.com.



6 Poems by Robert Feldman

Pretend

© 2015

she paid for ritual
threw her cards exactly the same,
shuffle,
fooling chance
the game—
pretend it's catching

she paid for this dance,
call her Ms. Window,
one of those roses
you'd love to coffeebreak with,
one of those sweet Julys
you'd let drive
you'd steal a dime for
so she could
phone up her mother—
mercy!

drawn blinds...
pretend it is rain,
Saturday.
you live on a river
your seeds lying inside verdant waterfall dreams...
pretend you could swim
past deserts blooming with starfish...

no, better drawn blinds...
pretend you are a child...
pretend no one is watching...
pretend her deal's real
this time around

NYC, 1981



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.

empty sky

© 2015

my witness
an empty sky
drifting between my hang glider toes,
telegraphing images of fallen sparrows,
yellow crescent moons,
spiritual swordfish,
marigold butterflies
audacious with sincerity

my eyes tear,
soon my reflection overcomes the loneliness,
empty sky filling with blue lake,
empty sky splashing soprano saxophone summer rains,
monsoons,
witnessing the green opalescent earth,
cacophony of immortal notes,
moans sweet, sour,
laughter transcendental
echoing anyplace
(not tragically absent),
where skies once more pervade, overflow,
where emptiness no longer matters

Delray Beach
2014

Lost and Old Rivers

© 2015

we hustled a lot
being old lovers
lost, cheap highs
drugstore coughsyrup lows
after allnight classical sessions
listening to Brian Ferry and Byrd at 16rpm's and
digging...
remaining less attached

we laughed with each other
lost, expensive highs
weekend package deals
all expenses paid
with or without
really being there

we voyaged
lost,
dreaming of revivals
pitching orgiastic tents
craving hot spring breasts
swelling with desire

and old rivers
part
for friendship,
we have been
sincere
honest
weary travelers
learning lost and old rivers never satisfy...

we talked about survival
seducing strangers to survive—
never satisfies!
there is only ourselves, this solitary entity
this unit, two half notes
residing within a breathless indigenous romantic interlude,
something people pray for,
a home between ocean symphonies, masterful,
this unit,
this old river
dividing our downtown dance
into a one unbounded amatorial tantric performance

and we remain silent
conscious we have survived again,
this unit
old river
lost, and we are lost,
and old rivers,
and there is a nest for river travelers, old rivers,
always seeking another ocean
because old rivers become
historic rivers
where the light is gorgeous
here in this wash
where we float along, alone,
no direction

and we are old rivers
oldtime tugboats,
rivers that have swallowed so much seed
(and swelled pregnant with the knowledge),
rivers that have seen right through all the promises
through all the
onetimelet'sfeelgoodrightnow'stheonlytimethatmatters passion,
rivers that carry
other voyagers like us
a long way,
sliding,
scraping
desperately holding on to
those old currents,
rivers bringing lovers like us to some foreign port
to be seduced
singe-rub-read the classics!
lovers like us, these units,
floating down lost and old rivers,
determining to fight those currents or just let go
and drown together,
down to the inevitable old river, and
water that we are
and will always be

NYC
1987

I Want October Fires (for Thomas Hardy)

© 2015

I want October fires
warmer climes than these bare feet in my hair,
the crawling of lice into my foreign bed.

I want postscript women from Hardy's Wessex
building October smokefires
signaling lovers
escaping burning haybeds upstairs Chinese lamp
with red checkered shirts and trailing cerulean bandanas.

I want the prism goldgreens and browns from those scenes
painted by Bathshebas and Eustasias.

I want to trade places with Diggory Venn the Reddleman
his horses and coach,
noble,
humbled in love.

I want more of those passions
pastures swallowed October fires
Julie Christies who see straight ahead,
no more of afterhours
pulled tight woolen scarves
heart tugging my arm down these village streets
freezing and gay flashing
perplexing visions of who to pick up on tonight.

October fires shoot pointblank into my infancy
when I am lost
carried by desperate male tides,
when I feel vague enough to attract
cap pulled low over my eyes—
Poet's eyes who scared the desertflower of my virginity
maiden.

I want some truth—
tell me lies, Goddammit!
want paradoxes only in words
words do not penetrate rivers...
nor islands...
never island.

I want to enlist in some school
toothless students wearing sunglasses and earmuffs
fingering daisies out from each other's rustic boots.

Continued on page 29

Continued from page 28

I want to return home to my own house tonight
paint with fire torch and oils
type out these Poems
stick an alto reed into some golden-brown cognac
and blow the lights out no mercy.

I want to be sick of compromises
taxi rides in rented cars,
foreign doorman
peering from pawnshop watches
looking down 9thstreet for the next Brando to visit
his Israeli artist tenant.

I want a black cat
grey cat
see some mountains
outside these Eastcoast pleasure harbors.

I want some choices this time
permission to experience loss
not compelled by visions
jealousy
or cynical sick senses of humor.

I want to shoplift bulletproof vests
colors of maple leaves
unzipped,
want to thaw out my piano sunk in Mississippi River mud,
the will of tears
the rite of passage...
want to destroy the night
whatever gets used to time
learn signals other than phone numbers.

I want to dam these rivers of words
misbehave myself at all night movies
24 hour drugstores
invite mother and daughter out for some Chinese food.

I want to inflate
these bathrooms
drink cowboy coffee at Bickfords
sleep in a bed of leaves
wake up with only downshift dreams,
experiments of lives,
meaningful deaths.

Continued on page 30

I want to marry a Louisiana waitress
leave \$50 tips to café coffee receptionists deepsouth,
then split out the backdoor
be invisible.

I want to own the first dance today
flee the dark dancehall morning
arm and arm with the dishwasher,
want to have choices
to want more
need to want,
to step off the curb
shake the snow off my feathers
very well saturated by the colors from far warmer climes.

NYC
1983

you're not the only one

© 2015

you're not the only one who's pretty
not the only one suffering
the only one busy with your death
the only one fleeing from your most recent epiphany
challenging those predictably redundant ghosts

you're not the only one who's soft
not the only shallow one,
the only blessed one
warily gathering a few diamonds to toss to the poor,
hoping to sucker those infuriating vamps

you're not the only one who's lazy
not the only one intent on
residing in a rambling
non-committed
apathetic lifestyle,
not the only shipwrecked member of your cyber-mad-generation
exchanging digital favors for some real-time freeway hustle
trading away concealed plastic flowers in Sunday cemeteries

yup, you're not the only one pretending to thrive
not the only one resisting toughness
the only one too stubborn to switch gears,
too arrogant to surrender
and at last let go of another imaginary
tangled up
image of yourself

Spring 2015
Lake Worth, Fla.

The Fires in Our Hearts

© 2015

questions...
rose petals in foreign languages
sift through clasped fingers
clenched hands,
innocent sand showering
covering the beach,
innocent yellow eyes of strangers,
simplicity through the eyes

fingers, hands, sand, eyes...
roses of the world—
with words
we are conquered,
unsure
how to translate
the fires in our hearts

1980
Bisbee

Bob Allen

Phoenix Artist



“Usta Know”
Mixed medium
2014



Originally from Louisville, Bob Allen studied art at Bellarmine College and finished up at the University of Kentucky after a stint in the Navy. For over four decades, he's been involved in the arts in a variety of meaningful ways in San Francisco, Chicago, Boston and now the Southwest. His primary professional career was in the performing arts — as administrator, festival producer and actor/manager, but enjoyed a later career in government with the city of Phoenix. Throughout these years, he also pursued a parallel path of creating visual artwork in his studio and exhibiting when possible. After retiring in 2012, he now paints full time. He has been exhibited throughout the U.S., and his works are in private collections in New York, Boston, Chicago, Vancouver and several California locations. His professional work includes senior management positions with the city of Phoenix at the convention center and venues and the Office of Arts & Culture. Prior to moving to Arizona, he was the executive director of World Arts West in San Francisco and the managing director of Columbia College Dance Center in Chicago.

Bob Allen

Phoenix Artist



“Ozone Too”
Mixed medium
2015

For me, making art usually involves telling a story (but not always). I like to work directly on a square canvas surface to create compositions with original and/or found imagery and applied text. I then manipulate with layers of acrylic color and texture built directly onto the canvas and into a mixed-media painting. I also utilize stencils, fabric and handmade paper. I enjoy a colorful palette, visual puns and wordplay and the use of repetition and fragmented patterns. All are applied, in search of fresh and unusual juxtapositions that can then be finessed into something, hopefully, altogether new and original.

These featured paintings are meditations on the passage of time, an evolving planet, a murder of crows, missed opportunities and Samuel Beckett. Some of the materials used to create these paintings include old letters and personal address books, maps, stencils, string, paper bags, envelopes, metallic wrapping paper and the Phoenix phone book.

- Bob Allen

Bob Allen

Phoenix Artist



"As the Crow Flies"
Mixed medium
2013

Bob Allen

Phoenix Artist



"Letters Never Sent"
Mixed medium
2014

Bob Allen

Phoenix Artist



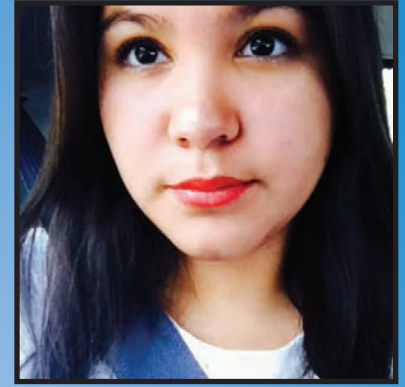
“ReBeckett”
Mixed medium
2015

A Poem by Paola Valenzuela

Arizonian Skies

© 2015

Every day, the birds chirp a different melody
And the sky glows in newfound clarity
The leaves that cling to trees
Fly away
Like children and their wings
Different forms of wind
Greet me each morning
Getting to know me
As if for the first time
Because out here
It is ever-changing
The year-old carvings
We made that lonely day
Will fade away
And lovers will forget each other's name
All the shades of pink
Will paint my Arizonian skies
And we'll meet God once again
As if we'd never lost the faith
Because this world
Is like no other
Worry not of the sun's glare
Just enjoy the gentle touch
Of the sun and the mountains
Let the breeze hold you
And the stars guide you
Because this world understands what it is like to be human
Strong like the cactus
And then soft like the sand
Entirely on our own
Always growing
Always changing
Becoming
Out here, we are safe
Do not fret
Over wild animals and rattlesnakes
That I'd much rather be bitten
And dead in my desert
Then never to see
Then never to feel
My Arizona again



Paola Valenzuela is a high-school student living in a small town of Arizona. Her preferred hobbies are reading and writing, but she also takes part in her local Drama Club. She is a great student, but still uncertain of what direction her life will take after high school. Whatever that is, she is sure that poetry will continue being a huge part of her life.

2 Poems by Ivana Kat

A Love Tree

© 2015

Sick without your presence
i think i felt love's essence
naked without your touch
it's hot but i feel cold too much

Your soul is with me, yet i want more
imagining you roll me on the floor
looking at the stars, i see your eyes
Let's drop culture, boundaries, laws – please

Kiss me when i cry for you at night
Make my heart not ache, make it right
i have a burning desire. Have me!
Ground me, grow roots, plant a love tree.

The poet writes: "I am Ivana Kat, from Eastern Europe. I live in Arizona now. I find writing poetry a cozy refuge. Writing in a foreign language is a challenge I accepted."



Ha-ha! Stupid! (You're in Love)

© 2015

You see me where I am not
You eat what I adore
You dream in foreign languages
You're in love, stupid!

I am the bullets to your weapon
I am your air tank underwater
I am your cup of tea
You found me!

My fragrance drives you crazy
My step you linger to see coming towards you
My words are music to your ears
I twisted your brains!

The rainbow doesn't have all its colors
The beer doesn't taste the same
The universe got smaller
Ha-ha! Stupid! You're in love!

Bobbie Friedman

Phoenix Artist



“After Kissing”

Oil

36” x 36”

2008



The artist writes, “By degree, I am a physical therapist, graduate of Boston University. I was born and raised in Maine, which makes me a ‘Maine-iac.’ In 2000 and after moving from Chicago to Cave Creek, I started painting with acrylics, but soon found my niche in oils. I was featured in the coffee-table art book ‘Art Buzz 2011,’ have appeared on Channel 3, Phoenix TV, as a featured artist and also on the channel’s website. I was also selected by Renée Phillips, editor-in-chief of Manhattan Arts International’s online Reading Room, as a featured artist. I also participated in the John Lincoln Invitational in Chicago’s Gold Coast in 2012. In 2005, I was nominated for Phoenix Arts Volunteer for ‘Business in the Arts Awards.’ ‘Camel Back Camel Front’ was exhibited in the ‘Breast of Phoenix’ fundraiser at the Phoenix Art Museum. I served on the board of directors of the Shemer Art Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, and was the art juror for their annual fundraising event. I was a featured speaker for Hadassah’s annual event, ‘Jewish Women in the Arts.’” Website: www.bobbiefriedman.com.

Bobbie Friedman

Phoenix Artist



“Hat on Curls”

Oil

36” x 36”

2012

My artistic goal is to infuse my art with images that light up the wall with whimsy! I gravitate to vibrant color, variety of the human form and energetic movement. I love canvases that are large and wildly colorful.

- Bobbie Friedman

Bobbie Friedman

Phoenix Artist



"Martini and Veil"

Oil

36" x 36"

2012

Bobbie Friedman

Phoenix Artist



“Tango Lovers”

Oil

24” x 48”

2013

Bobbie Friedman

Phoenix Artist



“Eye in Mirror with Lipstick”

Mixed media

24” x 48”

2014

4 Poems by Gari Crowley

Letters

© 2015

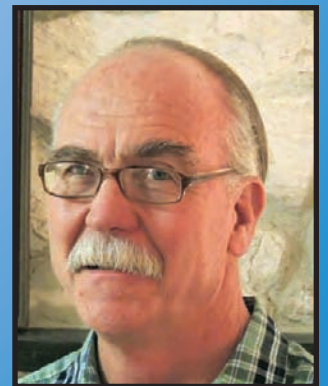
The summer fires are gone,
winter winds are upon us.
Aunts, uncles, grandparents
and parents have all passed on.

Think of them

as we rake our leaves,
as our wind-swept chill
resonates about the hollow
of our own mortal age.

Walk with them,

aging yellow, red and orange,
before remembrance fades
into scatter and all that is
will be ashes over the ground.



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

Reflections on a Failed Marriage 1965

© 2015

Living on the fringe of
Adolescence and dysfunction
Seemingly cornered in every room.
Battling the war and puberty while
Avoiding father's disturbing disposition and
The empty spaces of television and needlework.

Parental angst moved about
The baseboards during the solace
Of sleep scratching about my subconscious,

In footsteps down the hallway,
The early morning efficient voices
Verging on dissolution or faux co-existence.

The happenstance of
Marriage in Clovis, his philandering
Dance steps while having his pockets audited.
Years of her mistake
And his uneasy weaknesses
With the changing of proprieties.

The stuffed tension
At the dinner table the farm girl
Wanting the dream to come to fruition,
Like knitting a doily,
Working a Butterick pattern
Or harvesting a field of sorghum and corn.

My older brother was reading Nietzsche
Father was reading a war novel red and black
As my mother crocheted and prayed for emancipation.
In my room trying
To embrace the space of
Frank Lloyd Wright homes and nature.

The banging of pots and pans,
His hard closing of a cupboard door...
Blatant footsteps emerging from the hallway...
I wondered
Where I would
Be in four more years.

Americana: Small World

© 2015

In the prototype
of a mind there will
grow the seeds of
eventuality and progeny.

The red scare brought
talks of militias,
mountains, fallout shelters,
CONELRAD and E.B.S.

The ancient symbol of
the godhead tweaked
emotion management,
the cold war salvation
from catastrophe.

Under our desks
waiting for the
flash to pass with
hands about our heads,

imagining the essence,
the manic thrashing of
dust devils flinging
trash, earth, scrub
then silently unknown.

As God was above
so endless we lived
in a small world
distanced from the perilous.

Americana: Dream Song

© 2015

Sitting and musing,
a cup of Darjeeling,
contemplating
ruminations that linger
in flux.
In favor of organics
tea and coffee,
small old houses
and basic semantics.
Down to earth cats
and dogs et al, and so too
when old and delicate.
Out in the garden
retired and satisfied
moderately so without reproach,
I was born too late for the fifties.
Tilling and seeding and
hoeing while
carrying my age
clay-grey in the bones
still able to actuate a
red wheelbarrow,
and I guess I'm glad in the heart.
After sixty-three years
I have no advice,
it's history ambivalently tinged.
Love life and your children
your neighbor as it depends
but don't forget books and music.
A long story short—
I sit on the porch
with a cat in my lap
and a dog I never had.
I can't ideate
nor perpetuate
the nature of that
American ethic.
I'm a wannabe cropper
needing a farm
and all will be copacetic.

4 poems by David Chorlton

On a Winding Course

© 2015

What the river knows in its bones
is rarely spoken of beyond
its shifting banks

as each day's light
reshapes the mountains rising
behind the cottonwoods that strain
toward the sky

and water
eases through its seasons for as long
as seasons float along
the current of mud and stars.



Photo courtesy of David Chorlton



David Chorlton came to Phoenix from Europe in 1978 with his wife, Roberta, an Arizona native. He quickly became comfortable with the climate while adjusting to the New World took longer. Writing and reading poetry have helped in that respect, as has exposure to the American small presses. Arizona's landscape and wildlife became increasingly important to him both as a source of pleasure and a measure of how precarious the natural world is. Thirty years ago, he regarded the idea of "nature poetry" as one tainted with sentimentality, but today it appears ever more necessary as an element of resistance to the conformity that Edward Abbey confronted so well in his writings on the Southwest.

The San Pedro in August

© 2015

A kingbird sits on a wire
against a backdrop with gathering clouds
for the late summer storm
and the white border blimp
that hangs in the sky day and night.
Rain light runs

along the yellow dirt road
leading to bobolinks
flying low across the grasses
that rustle for the wind
when it runs through them.
Every path to the river

is overgrown. There's no way
past the bones
that lay buried
for twelve thousand years
or through the yellow flowers
swaying in the dark air

sweeping over them.
They flow
all the way to Mexico
and if the mountain on the far side
of the border
ever moves north

it will not go undetected. And if
the giant sloths should happen
to emerge again
from the deep, deep earth,
they would not recognize
this season's power to move a road

from its course, or to draw
the toads from underground
to glory in brief water.

Early Roost

© 2015

The vulture is a peaceful bird
who rises every day
to a height from which
the ground's a dizzy plane
tilting with the weight of light
and yellow wildflowers
and dotted with a carcass here
and there. He rides the thermals,

balances on heat,
and hangs out of gravity's reach
until the kettle reassembles
for the evening descent;
except today

when darkness sweeps all
before it now the mountains
have dissolved into clouds
that swell and flash. Thunder
rumbles out of Mexico.
Willows tug at the riverbanks,
grasses strain at the edges
of paths beside them

and the paths begin pulling free
of the earth, as the vultures
come down at noon
where they spend every night
holding to a bare limb,
ready for whatever comes
to roll from their black mantles.

Time Flow

© 2015

The current feels its way
past trees the beavers have gnawed down;
past paw prints jaguars
left in the mud; beneath the road bridge; beyond
the old town where the railway
used to run; past more of the past
to the bison; and back
to the before that was before
even the mastodon
who raised its massive head with tusks
so wide they held a star on either point.



Photo courtesy of David Chorlton

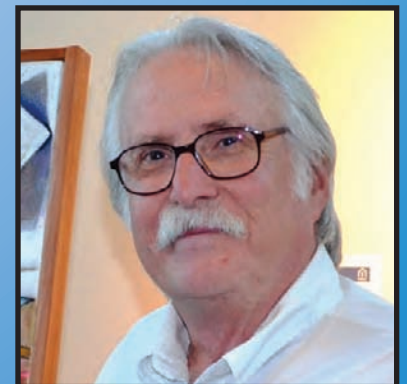
Kip Sudduth

Phoenix Artist



“The Unicorn Painting”
Mixed media: oil, sand, enamel on canvas
40” X 60” (diptych)
1978

Kip Sudduth joined PVCC in spring 2013. He has an M.F.A. in studio art from Louisiana Tech University and a graduate teaching assistantship after having also received a B.F.A. in painting, also from Louisiana Tech University. Supplemental studies include a painting apprenticeship in Rome, Italy, apprenticing with master painter Manlio Guberti. He has been an arts specialist in the Stockton (California) Art Troupe, an Instructor in proprietary education, advancing to dean of students and director of academic support at Collins College having been there 13 years. Courses taught include drawing, life drawing, 2D and 3D design, painting, illustration, photography (silver gelatin and digital) and art history. He has been a finalist for a Scottsdale artist’s grant (Canal Convergence), appointed “master artist” for a high-school tutorial program in the West Valley for an artist apprentice program through the West Valley Art Council and Estrella Mountain Community College, where he taught silver gelatin photography and design for three years. He has exhibited all over the world including Italy to Mexico and is collected by several colleges and universities throughout the states. He is a recent “artist-in-residence” at Paradise Valley Community College, where his mixed-media collage “Paradise Found” hangs in permanent collection. He has been in the arts since 1970, teaching since 1975; he started locally as adjunct professor of art at Scottsdale Community College. He had a Retrospective Exhibition October 5-28, 2015, at Glendale Community College. You may find his work at <http://pictify.com/search/?q=Kip+Sudduth&users&author&id=623820>.



Kip Sudduth

Phoenix Artist



“Light (as Homage to the Square & Albers)”
Ink jet printed digital pure light photography
15” X 17”
2013

My art has been tied to personal observation from several points of view, the first as photographic vision of personal “phenomena,” and the second, points of attention ultimately altered using tenets of texture as departure. The first roll of film I developed and the first contact print I made was witness to magic. My art has always been based on anticipation of discovery of the mystery of this magic. Chance always determined certain factors of my creative process despite the concept being anomalous to process. The memory of my bedroom wood paneling when I was a child comes to mind. Lying in bed, I would stare at the wood grain striations discovering castles, dragons, angels and demons. When I read that da Vinci coined very similar thoughts in his codices, it was another tenet of attention verified. The phenomenon is referred to as Pareidolia. For the last 30 years, I have used visual Pareidolia collaging: silver gelatin and digital photography, calotypes, photographic Xerox reversals, drawings, watercolor, prints and printed material, graphite, colored pencil, enamel, ground glass, remnants of burnt raku, oil, and sand. My palette is in constant flux.

- Kip Sudduth

Kip Sudduth

Phoenix Artist



"The Dancer"

Mixed media: oil, enamel, sand, powdered pigment on canvas

48" X 60"

1987

Kip Sudduth

Phoenix Artist



"Head (to Head) to Desert (Homage to S. Dali)"
Ink jet printed digital photography
17" X 22"
2015

Poems by Michael Gregory

Four from “Pound Laundry”

The greatest thing

© 2015

The greatest thing a human soul ever does
in this world is to *see* something and *tell* what it was
in a plain way. To see clearly is poetry
prophecy and religion all in one

so, in a world divided between thinkers and seers
we find seers wholly the greater race of the two.
Metaphysicians and philosophers on the whole
the greatest troubles the world has got to deal with

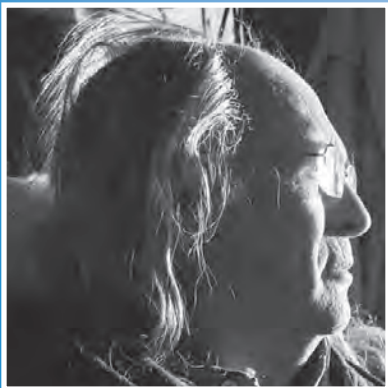
generalization the act of an incapable
vulgar unthinking mind: the more we know
and the more we feel the more we separate;
we separate to obtain a more perfect unity

(Ruskin again *Modern Painters* III).

Nothing can be true which is either complete or vacant,
every touch is false which does not suggest more
than it represents (*op. cit.* vol. I).

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

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



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

Better instead of faith

© 2015

Better instead of faith, animal
or otherwise, to call the leaps
insight scientific imagination
a suddenly apprehended universal
principle theory synthesis
even proleptic thought though that one would be

soiled by Graves who had the temerity
to call Penelope a duck and otherwise
cloud the issue with ancestries
unnecessary to an understanding
useful in the less wacky world,
not mere refractions of external abstractions
but actual sensual particulars
an immanence of imaginary subjects
realized in cadence rhythm rhyme
different orders of acute perception
illuminating communication
species to genus profane to sacred

visionary to economic joined
through skilled *techné poiesis* aesthetic actions
correctly performed will correctly directed
an intellectual and emotional complex
in an instant ideas springing from affection
spoken in affectionate tones an abrupt

transformative liberation a sense of freedom
from time limits—not through argument
but as angels speaking to one another
each utterance a symphony
celebrating not generalities
but particular celestial marriages

properties abilities quirks
character personality aura
each animal individual
each individual familiar
in relation in comparison
like to like like to unlike

corresponding to an *absolute*
rhythm emotion *exact emotional shade*
each standing for only her own perfection
authority recognized not bestowed
a natural hierarchy informing the process
turning spirals on their axes.

Knowing the creature

© 2015

Knowing the creature created of words and figures
to go about our business in analog time
has an android brain at best and though
roughly humanoid from nose to groin
is polyocular multiply-armed
many-legged and favorably inclined
toward beauty of only the most orderly kind
admitting just contemplative sorts of love

Knowing the binary imaginary
injected into the moral petri dish
often grows a manichean culture
a classic dialectical foundation
that puts art and artists in charge of imposing
objectification of the desired in order
to neutralize desire herself
in effect denaturing life

Though knowing analogies by definition
are always inexact the metaphor
a construct of faith and ideology
exerting pressure on subjects and objects
of interest, encouraging certain assumptions,
facilitating certain attitudes
about how human beings ought to behave,
yet nonetheless to personify,

Apply the organic human genetic image
rather than the abstract or lithic,
bequeath the world head heart belly
embrace the most pathetic fallacies:
aristocratic measures in just proportion
more to the greater less to the lesser versus
more democratic distribution
based on some bean-count equality.

Reproducing the world

© 2015

Reproducing the world as perceived
conceived received not of much interest—
diminishing returns in facing mirrors—
when the point is to change it

turn the circular logic of mother tongues
against itself, *bust through* the abstract
generalities depleted concepts
subordinative laws of relations

that keep the mind within a literacy
endlessly imitating itself in lines
laid down by yesterday's schoolbook grammars
dismissing things as they are now—

world of absolute sound, time-
machines made of compacted time
an intelligible ideal
indifferent as bombs to listeners

unidentified flying subjects
about to be what they will be
coupled or decoupled at will
author and auditor joined at the lip.

Kerry Pardue

Chandler Artist



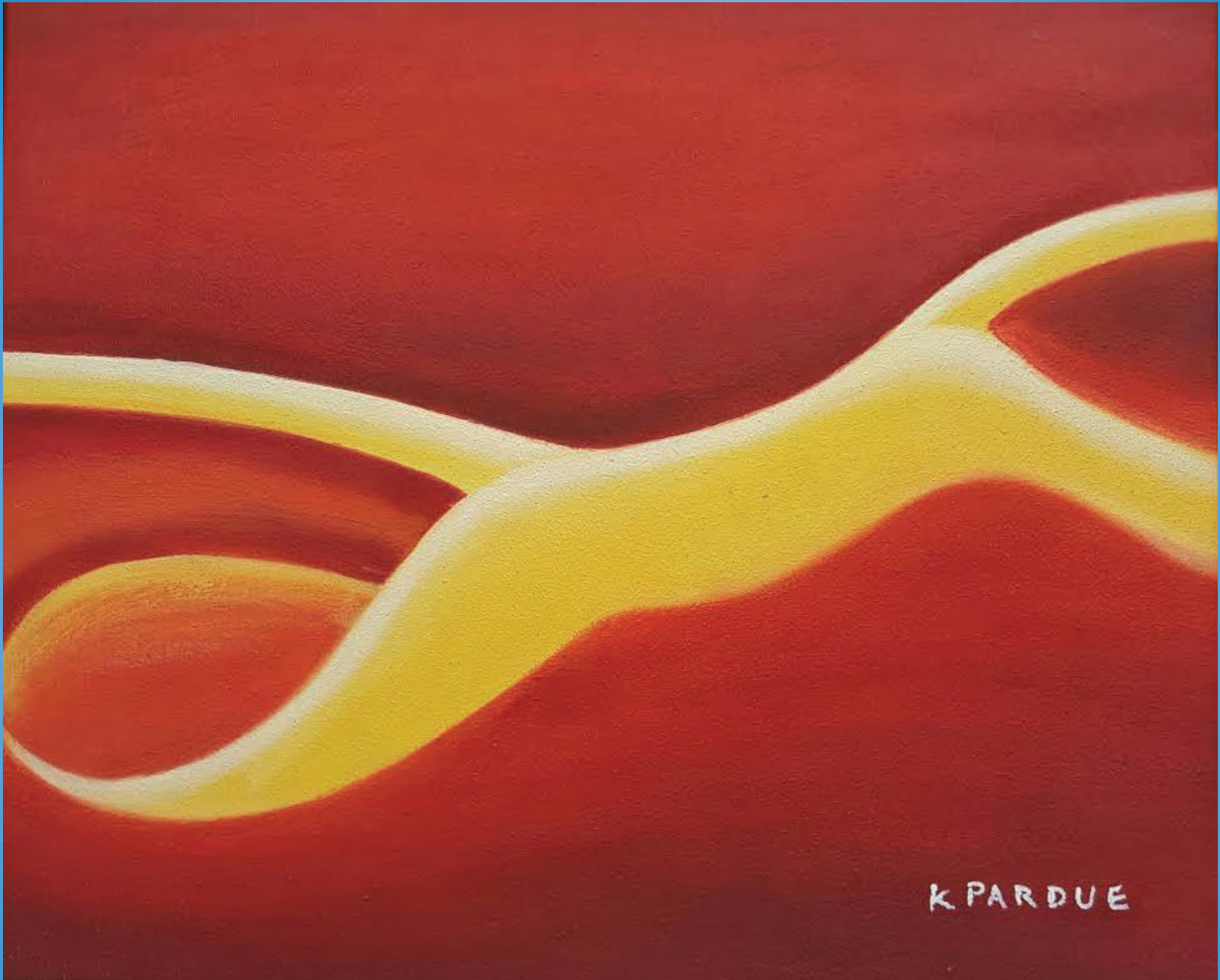
“Poppies”
Oil on canvas
24x20
2014



The artist writes, “My name is Kerry ‘Doc’ Pardue. I am a 100 percent service-connected disabled Vietnam veteran. My careers as combat medic, police officer, letter carrier and college recruiter paid the bills and gave me a sense of purpose during my working years. It was not until after I retired in 2002 that I found my creative side kept pushing to be let out. I never intended to write poetry or paint on canvas. Never in 100 years would I have ever chosen to become one of those things. But never say never is what my teachers always said to me as I was growing up. I began to write to bring a sense of healing and understanding to the PTSD that lives within my mind, soul, heart. I never knew how to deal with it, so I just kept burying it deeper and deeper until one day I picked up a piece of paper and the words just kept coming out and finding their place on the paper. I knew that it was something that I had to finally give in to, and shortly afterwards I released my first book, ‘Poems in the Keys of Life: Reflections of a Combat Medic.’ This is my journey to find my way to the place I called home after Vietnam and to find healing from the survivor’s guilt that I have suffered from for over 50 years now. My journey as an artist also came from something deep within wanting to be released. I live in Chandler, Arizona, with my wife, Stephanie. We moved from Virginia to here in 1981. We have three children, 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.” Contact the artist at Kerrypardue247@yahoo.com or 480-250-6021. His painting website is <http://fineartamerica.com/profiles/kerry-pardue.html>.

Kerry Pardue

Chandler Artist



"Red and Yellow Abstract"

Oil on canvas

24x20

2015

I started taking art classes in Scottsdale with a veterans group and found that I loved the peace it brought to me and the calming spirit as I free flow in painting things that I remember growing up. I love painting outdoor landscape scenes and florals.

- Kerry Pardue

Kerry Pardue

Chandler Artist

“1840 Europe”
Acrylic on canvas
36x48
2015



Kerry Pardue

Chandler Artist



“Church by Canal”
Oil on canvas
18x24
2015

Kerry Pardue

Chandler Artist



"I Love Cats"
Acrylic on canvas
9x12
2014

A poem by Kerry Pardue

She Ain't Just a 2nd Lieutenant

© 2015

Not sure where she called home
She stayed pretty much alone
The job was tough, long, and hard
She made it look easy
Setting her emotions aside
She worked on the boys from back home.
When she arrived she was easygoing and soft
War changes people, brings out the best and their worst
She would not give up on the dying boys
She would order them not to die
Some had the fight to listen and not give up
A few came home walking and not in a bag.
2nd Lieutenant, I swear at the end of her tour
Was better and knew just what to do
She would work with the head wounds and the blind
She was their sister, mom, and wife
Sitting and talking to them, trying to help them find their way
No one knew that at the end of her shift
She would go back to her room and just cry.
In the open at the job, she was calm and positive
No one knew the pain she buried deep inside.
35 years later she lives alone at her home, she remembers
And she still cries, but she never became a sister, mom, or wife.
“I lost too many brothers; was a widow time and time again;
my sons died – PTSD and Agent Orange is killing all the rest.”
“Don't you know who I am?
I ain't just a 2nd Lieutenant. Not just Army Nurse Corp.
I am your sister, mom, and wife
Damn it ... I order you to live.”

Elena Neva

Scottsdale Artist



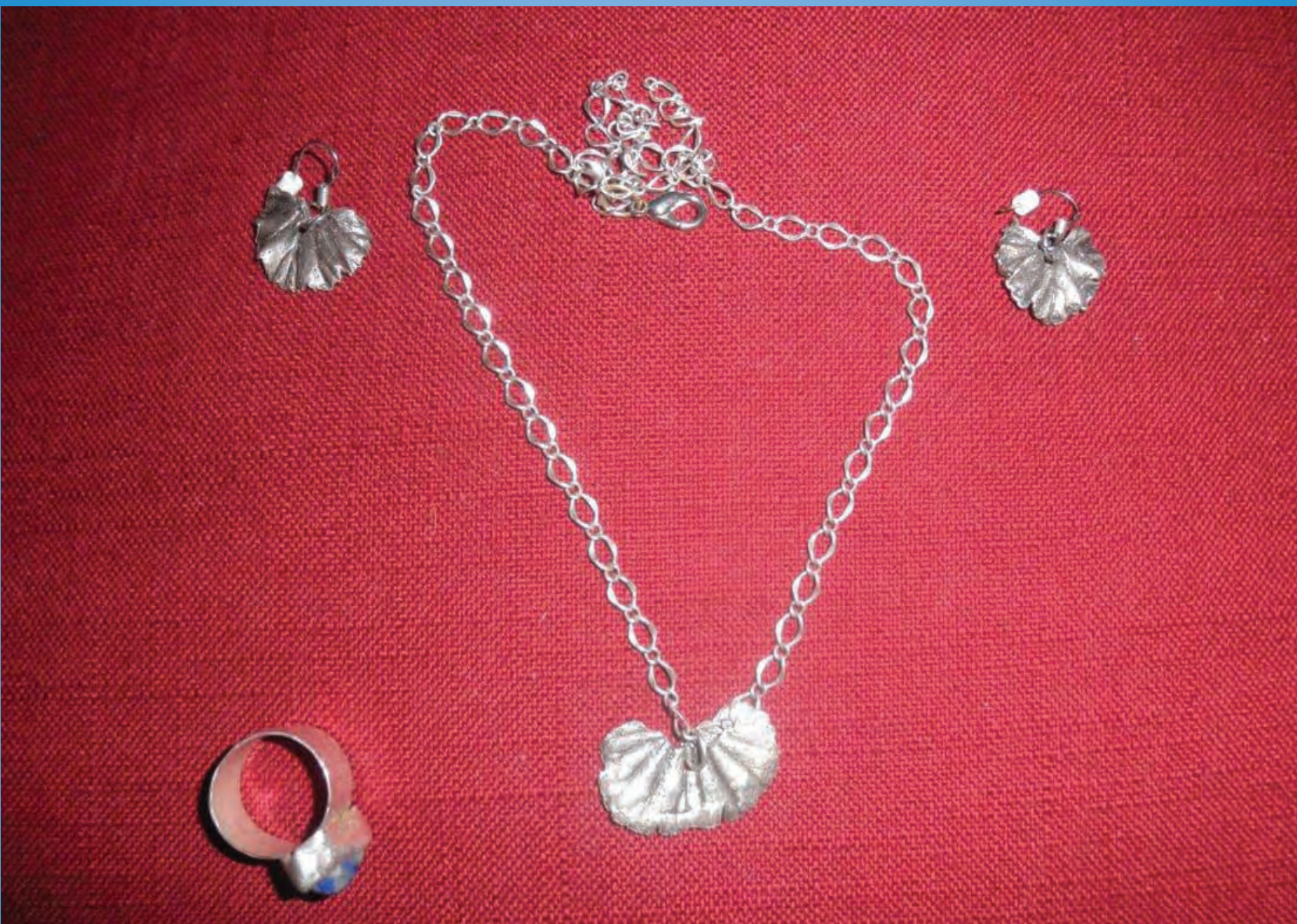
“Life”
Bronze
12”
2010



Elena Neva, Ph.D., is an art historian and artist. Her website is www.eleaneva.yolasite.com.

Elena Neva

Scottsdale Artist



**“In Love with Nature”
Pure silver set
2014**

I love art and beauty in all forms and shapes. I love to create and to wear my artwork from different materials: metal, wool, fabrics, to bring beauty and joy to myself and others.

- Elena Neva

Elena Neva

Scottsdale Artist



“Pure silver set”

Scroll

2013

Portrait

By Elena Neva

© 2015

It is always nice to receive gifts; this time she was filled with more anticipation than usual, because the gift was not store-bought – it was a quilt, hand-stitched for a special guest, as it is customary in Kazakhstan. She awaited the package impatiently; the day finally came – in the morning, while taking out the trash, she noticed the mail delivery vehicle pull up. The gate squeaked. Her husband started to rise from the bed, but she was already at the door, signing for her parcel.

She eagerly unfolded the wrapping paper and glimpsed a gorgeous splash of color – the quilt “spoke out.” She wondered why the master chose this particular color scheme. She arranged the quilt carefully over the back of the living-room couch, quietly taking in its beauty. Her husband liked the quilt, but was surprised by its size. She had to explain the purpose of the quilt – it was not for covering someone in bed, but rather for sitting on while inside a yurt.

A note was quickly sent to the master regarding the meaning of the pattern. Meanwhile, she pondered the hidden meaning of the ornament and the colors chosen by the needlewoman.

Acquainted with the ethnography of Kazakhstan, she could not find anything ethnic in the ornament of the quilt; she began interpreting as much as she could on her own: The center ornament reminded her of a Jerusalem cross that a friend of hers, a Harvard professor, brought for her from one of his trips to Israel. A show about Sylvia Brown, a well-known psychic, that she recently watched allowed her to interpret the combination of gold (color of the Mother of God), purple (color of Christ), and green (color of healing). Her knowledge of art history of the Far East made her suspect a connection to India, Tibet, and China. She wondered whether the pattern suggested a view from space, or something unseen within the Earth’s core. The underlined center and knowing that the quilt is used while sit-

ting was also suggestive of the charging of the chakras, especially the lowest one in this particular case.

When the international telephone call finally came, she was shocked by what she heard. Before starting to make the quilt, the master performed ablutions and prayed, as in the good old days, and, as she said later, the colors and the design were “given” to her. All she needed to do was to follow the given instructions to reflect the spiritual energy and power of the woman she’s never known and has never seen. Unknown forces from above guided her hands, choosing and creating the pattern.

The new owner of the quilt certainly felt that the master who made it was a highly spiritual person, but even so, this was almost too much. She then noticed that the colors of the quilt matched the palette of her own portrait, painted half a century ago by an artist from Central Asia. To her that meant that he, too, read her aura, probably subconsciously.

Taking a closer look at the quilt, armed by her knowledge of the quilt as a portrait of herself, she noticed a stunning detail: The ornament symbolically represented her body, including arms placed on both sides – the right “hand” was missing a finger.

Twenty-seven years ago, she lost a finger at the jewelry workshop in a stupid accident, because of her own carelessness. Across the oceans, an unknown artist perceived the information and reflected it in her design. She knew she was about to discover a lot more by reading the colors and patterns of the quilt, but for now her living room was brighter, cozier and more attractive thanks to the new quilt. It contained not only her own portrait, but also the affection and respect of the artist who made it, her labor and her energy, kind and beautiful. Thank you, dear Rahia!

Clottee Hammons

Phoenix Artist



**“White ‘Poet’s Rose’ (white background with black print)”
Recycled magazine paper
2014**



Clottee A. Hammons grew up in the downtown Phoenix area and is the granddaughter of a 10th Calvary Buffalo Soldier and views that legacy with pride and a strong sense of social responsibility. Ms. Hammons is an artist, writer, poet, activist, educator and prevention specialist. She considers her special calling as a “community builder” and works in grateful collaboration with numerous artists, organizations and individuals while being conscientious and mindful of honoring her ancestors. She organized the Hub Artists Collective and served on the Artlink Board of Directors. She taught art theory and techniques to students [K-8], differently abled students as well as seniors. She also provided a focused arts program to women in a domestic-violence shelter environment. Ms. Hammons is passionate about literature, history, libraries and librarians. She is the creator and ongoing facilitator of the Emancipation Marathon, which is a literary tradition that honors the victims of American Chattel Slavery. The Emancipation Marathon will celebrate its 19th season in June 2016. She is the co-creator and facilitator of The Inspired Truth Series, which are readings and community conversations inspired by the literature read publicly during the Emancipation Marathon. She was the recipient of an Arizona Humanities Council grant (supported by the NEH and ALA), which brought the national “Making Sense of the Civil War” program to Phoenix. She has also been the recipient of a grant from the Cultural Arts Coalition. Contact the artist at Soulsis@hotmail.com.

Clottee Hammons

Phoenix Artist



Roses
Recycled magazine paper
2015

I have been self-employed as a pattern maker, costume maker, tailor and dressmaker. My One Soul Sister hair ornaments, decorations and accessories are sold under the One Soul Sister brand. These manifestations of my long-standing interests in conservation and recycling can soon be purchased at MADE Boutique in downtown Phoenix. All works are made from recycled materials.

- Clottee Hammons

Gloria Newman

Chandler Artist



**“Mother and Baby”
February 2009**



Gloria Newman grew up in Southern California, spending much of her youth enjoying the sun and surf at Venice and Santa Monica beaches. During her 20-year career at the Hewlett-Packard Company, and after several moves within the company, she landed in Roseville, California, for 19 years where she also became a massage therapist specializing in pregnancy massage. In 1995, while massaging a pregnant client, she came up with the idea to cast pregnant women. Not knowing anything about the casting process, the universe had everything all lined up for her artistic journey. After taking early retirement in 2001, she moved to San Diego for five glorious years and developed her own preservation products to “preserve” belly casts to last for generations. Now a Chandler, Arizona, resident since 2005, Gloria not only offers belly-casting services but precious keepsakes of newborns and family pets. Her website at www.maternitykeepsake.com will drive you to her blog, where you can view multiple sculptures and designs.

Gloria Newman

Chandler Artist



**“Partial Copper Belly Cast”
Alginate
April 2013**

The pink, green and black belly cast, tush sculpture and foot casting are samples I created from local models and are hanging in my Chandler home studio for clients to view. The copper sculpture was my first nude belly cast. I had a vision of casting just a portion of her torso and leave the edges in their raw form. The silver bust sculpture was created of a female chiropractor that was given to her husband for his birthday and is embellished with his mother’s vintage rhinestone necklace.

- Gloria Newman

Gloria Newman

Chandler Artist



“Silver Bust Sculpture”
Alginite
October 2011

Samantha's World

By Tony Abruzzo

© 2015

CHAPTER 1

My life was normal and uneventful before I killed a man. My parents, Edward and Betty Wagner, loved me and my older brother, Bob, and gave us everything they could afford. My dad, a simple man, was a mail carrier, whose hobbies were watching sports on television and hunting any animal he was allowed to legally kill. He always had an assortment of hunting rifles and several pistols for target shooting. My mom, a very religious woman, believed in and practiced all sacraments of the Catholic Church. Several times during the year, Father Daniel Kelly ate dinner at our house. It was a sacred event and everyone, including Bob, was silent and respectful as the father said grace. Father Kelly drank a few whiskeys before he left. Bob, eight years older than I, was rebellious, refused to go to church with my parents. I did not have that choice.

Bob joined the military when I was ten years old, and I never saw much of him. My mom and dad treated me like an only child. He never liked home and would not visit very often. When I became capable of taking care of myself and knew how to take the bus to my private parochial school in Tucson, my mom decided to take classes at the local community college. The field of caregiving had the most job openings in the area, and my mom had a kind heart and wanted to help people. The family needed the money to help pay for my private Catholic education. My parents wanted me to be a good Catholic and to believe in God. My mom would say:

“Samantha, study hard. Say your prayers before you go to bed. We’re sending you to a good school so that you can be successful and be a good Catholic. Go to college, get a good job, and have a family. Don’t run away like your brother did.”

I told her:

“You’re spending too much money!”

She took my face in her strong hands and looked at me through glassy eyes.

“You are not like the others. You’re our daughter. You are special, different. We want you to have things we never had! We love you. Listen to me!”

I remember the conversation like it was yesterday. Life existed for me then. My only friends now are the bugs that climb the walls and ceiling of my enclosure. Sometimes they crawl under my bed. At least they have not left me. Visit me often.

CHAPTER 2

I was an average student in the large parochial school. Most of the other students came from affluent families. The poorer students were black or Mexican. Many were recruited by the coaches for football, basketball, or wrestling. I tried out for the track and cross-country teams. I was the second best distance runner on both teams. Coach Dempsey yelled at me.

“Samantha, you have great long legs! If you ever lost some of that baby fat, you could be a great runner!”

I wondered whether Coach Judy’s words were meant to be a compliment or a put-down. I stared at my legs in the mirror at home and grabbed the flab on my stomach. Could not resist eating my mom’s country-fried steak, brown gravy, and creamy mashed potatoes. Never liked salad that much. Always hungry.

My life did not change much. My grades were not very good, and my parents had no savings for college. My dad still delivered mail even with his terrible diabetes. My mom worked five days per week taking care of Alzheimer’s patients and one man

Continued on page 78



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

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who had what she called A.L.S.

“Mom, what is A.L.S.? What does it mean?”

“It’s a fancy way to say Lou Gehrig’s disease. It’s named after a famous baseball player. The person eventually becomes paralyzed and dies! It’s very sad. Peter Blake is forty-eight years old, married, has three children in college!”

“His wife’s name is Jackie.”

I had some good news to tell her.

“Mom, my track coach talked to the coach at Mesa Community College who saw me run. She offered me a scholarship for track and cross country. I can then transfer to a four-year university! At least for two years, I can go to college without costing you and dad a lot of money! What do you think?”

Mom had tears in her eyes.

“Your dad and I have the greatest daughter anyone can dream of having!”

We hugged that day, and cried in each other’s arms. Dad tried not to break down as he spoke to me with his hands over his eyes. That was the happiest day of my life.

Chapter 3

My relationship with my parents would have been better if I were smarter or really talented at something. I felt guilty that I cost them money for Catholic school when I was not that intelligent or motivated. I heard my dad say to my mom once:

“Betty, Samantha’s grades are not that good. She does not like to study. She is more interested in day-dreaming and taking long walks. She is not going to get into a good college. Why are we spending all this money on parochial school if she does not like to study?”

Mom pointed her finger at Dad.

“Ed, let’s give her a better chance than Bob had. That’s why he joined the military. I’ll work more hours! Do not worry so much!”

My mother’s remarks made my dad feel guilty. He blamed himself for Bob leaving home. He would say:

“If I had been closer to him, he would have never left.”

Running was a God-send for me and gave me happiness that nothing else could. Especially when I ran the long distances, 3 miles or more, I forgot about the outside world and turned inward. My surroundings were a surrealistic escape into the unknown. I could find meaning in life. Winning or losing the race meant nothing to me. I enjoyed moving my body with so much energy over long distances. I could run and help my family at the same time. I hoped that my life would improve.

CHAPTER 4

My time at Mesa Community College was inconsequential and boring. The other team members were a lot more committed to running than I was and in a lot better physical condition. By my second year, the coach lost interest in me. She was not subtle.

“Wagner, you are not motivated! You’ve gained weight, and have no desire to get better! No recommendations from me to any of the visiting coaches!”

I could not have cared less about what coach said to me. My grades were not very good. The only fun I had in college was smoking marijuana with my roommate every weekend. I did not attend mass. Fell off the wagon as a spiritual Catholic. Under the influence of beer, tequila, and marijuana, I had sex with several guys who I hardly knew. Only remember the name of one of them. His name was Bozo. Could never forget that name.

Things happened to me that I had never experienced. My energy level was low, could not focus in class. I woke up exhausted in the morning. Bad dreams, tossed and turned all night. I alternated from depression to severe anxiety. The panic attacks felt like death. So alone. Prayed to God for help. Went to mass in Mesa but had to leave in the middle of the sermon. Felt dizzy, could not breathe, ran out of the church all the way to my dormitory over a mile away, called my parents, cried over the phone:

“Mom, I’m coming home this weekend! I’m having problems. Need help. Do not know what’s happening. I’m scared!”

“Samantha, your dad and I will pick you up Saturday morning. Pack a bag for a week! We’ll figure this out together!”

I crashed on my bed and slept for one whole day. When the dreams became scary, my body jumped out of the bed. I needed my parents or anyone who would listen to me and love me.

CHAPTER 5

My last conversation with my roommate Nicole was typically dumb. She was addicted to marijuana, had no energy, and made little sense. She and her Scottsdale friends had nothing to worry about. Their mommies and daddies bailed them out of whatever problems they had. When I blamed the track coach for some of my problems, Nicole screamed:

“Just smoke some more weed! Fuck the coach! You don’t need her! Don’t leave school! All the guys like you. They like your long legs!”

I was totally confused at what she meant.

“Nicole, what are you talking about?”

“Oh, come on, Samantha. You know. They told me that you are wild and crazy in bed! Stay!”

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I yelled: "Why?"

She smiled.

"I promise guys that I can set them up with you if they get me a date with one of their hot friends and some free weed!"

Wanted to choke her. Grabbed her shirt.

"You are a worthless fucking idiot! I am sorry I ever met you!"

I slammed the door on Nicole and life at college at that moment. I wanted to eliminate the confusion in my brain. My soul was dying.

CHAPTER 6

I rested for the first few days at home. Mom and Dad treated me as if I were about to break. My dad was silent as Mom spoke. The lines under her eyes were thick and dark.

"Samantha, why do you smoke? Not good for you. Why do you hang all your clothes in the same direction in the closet? You turn the light off and on in your room all day. You're going to ruin the toilet by flushing it so many times. Honey, I've talked to Father Kelly and one of my teachers at college. Are you on drugs?"

I had no energy to be deceitful. She looked so sad.

"Mom, I drink alcohol and sometimes smoke marijuana with my roommates on weekends. I smoke cigarettes because I'm so nervous. What's wrong with me?"

"Samantha, we are going to take you to your doctor tomorrow. Maybe he can help you."

Dr. Stern completed his examination and studied the blood report. "Samantha, your exam and blood work did not show anything significantly wrong. You are stressed out and need counseling and medication. I am referring you to Dr. John Stevens, a psychiatrist I have known for many years. He will talk to you and prescribe medication. You were a track star in high school and college?"

"Yes, Doctor, I ran for a few years."

"Great, Samantha! You're in good physical condition. Follow Dr. Stevens' instructions. He'll send me a copy of his report."

I was hopeful that someone could help me and take me out of my misery. For the next few days, I prayed every night and slept well. I thought that my problems were behind me. When I spoke to Dr. Stevens several days later, he asked:

"Samantha, have you told me all of the problems you have experienced? Is there anything else?"

I was confused when I replied:

"Doctor, what else could there be? I told you everything."

"I am going to prescribe medication to you for your anxiety and depression. A lot of college students your age, mostly

women in my practice, have these problems for a certain period of time. It is treatable. You need to take the medication, stay away from alcohol and marijuana, keep busy, get plenty of exercise, and eat good food. Are you working?"

"No, Doctor. Not yet."

"Isn't your mom a caregiver? Possibly you can help her on a part-time basis. When you help others, you usually worry less about your own problems."

That was the only time I met with Dr. Stevens, a good doctor who did not probe deep enough or ask the right questions. When I spoke with Mom about the doctor's suggestion of my working with her, she was ecstatic.

"Samantha, I'd love you to work with me. Take a semester off. I'll talk to Jackie Blake and the manager of the home for the Alzheimer's patients. They won't mind. You and I can work together every day."

Mom was so happy and hopeful. So was I.

CHAPTER 7

For several months, I assisted mom in her caregiving duties. She introduced me to the manager of the home where several senior citizens suffering from Alzheimer's resided. The men and women, in their seventies and eighties, were at different stages of the disease. One early symptom was being combative. An elderly, handsome senior arrived with his daughter and wife, who was in great distress and aggressive towards her husband. The daughter explained to her mother that she would now be living in the home and that she and Dad would visit her. The husband was silent as she spoke. Marjorie screamed at her husband:

"Tom, why are you leaving me? I want to go home! I don't know these people! Help me! Please! I want to leave!"

Tom totally lost his composure, fell to his knees, and placed his head on his wife's lap.

"Marjorie, I can't help you anymore! I will visit you as much as I can. I love you."

The daughter raised her father to his feet and helped him walk to their vehicle. Her arms were around his shoulder. He faced the ground as he slowly walked away. The look of anger and confusion on Marjorie's face. Frightening and sad.

I met Joan, a well-dressed lady in her eighties, a retired principal of a high school, and now incapable of speaking or taking care of her personal needs. Her husband died many years ago. Her two sons were drug addicts living somewhere in California. She had not seen them for several years. A neighbor called Adult Protective Services when he saw her walking down the street late at night in her nightgown.

Mom fed Joan and kindly talked to her. She held my hand

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and smiled. I felt so good inside. So lonely. She wanted to say something to me. My mom gave Joan a gift on her birthday, Thanksgiving, and on Christmas. Mom's eyes teared up when she saw Joan manage a small smile, her only way of saying thank you.

I thought that I had experienced the most sadness until I met Peter Blake and his wife, Jackie. Peter was fifty years old when I met him. He was a successful CPA when diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. His health was deteriorating rapidly. Sometimes he needed a ventilator to help him breathe. Could not walk or speak and had limited use of his hands. His wife Jackie, a beautiful forty-seven-year-old mother of three and a dental hygienist, told Mom that he would not live more than another year. Most people with this disease die by swallowing their tongue.

"Mom, swallowing your tongue? Does Mr. Blake know this?"

"I have no idea what Peter knows, but Jackie confides in me. We take turns caring for him. See the stress in her face. Aged a lot since I've known her. He has no control of his bowel movements anymore."

"Mom, don't tell me anymore! Do I have to help you do that?"

"Samantha, all you have to do is talk to Peter while I cook for him. I'll take care of his diapers and the rest."

How exquisitely handsome he must have been before his sickness. The most beautiful blue eyes. His weak smile showed intelligence, kindness, and elegance. He composed himself with dignity and grace. Until the end, he never shed a tear in my presence. I wish I would have known him before the disease ravaged his nervous system and destroyed his will to live. A young man with a brilliant mind, all encased in a sick old man's body.

Jackie was so friendly and kind and constantly thanked me for staying with Peter when Mom cooked his food, cleaned his sheets, and discarded his soiled diapers. I left the bedroom when Mom took off his diapers and clothes, cleaned him, and dressed him. When she left for several minutes, I would return. He enjoyed my holding his hand and combing his hair. He pointed with his glorious eyes to the comb on the side of the bed as a signal. There was a pen and a pad on the dresser at the foot of the bed. I always knew what he wanted. With my help, he would write a few words before his hands locked up. "Thank you," "read to me," "water." I placed the straw in his mouth so that he could drink and relieve his parched throat.

For the first time in my life, I was truly needed. My existence on earth had positive consequences. Not merely taking up space. Peter's unfortunate state of being gave me purpose and

meaning, a reason to live, and distracted me from bad thoughts. I was protected and insulated from the evil surrounding me seeking to control my brain.

CHAPTER 8

Peter Blake

This new caregiver can help me. So young and naïve. Constantly stares at me. Sometimes I just pretend to be asleep. She likes me.

I can't take this anymore! It's been five years of hell already. My life is over. Why did that young doctor give us false hope? I could live another 20 years? Did he just want to cheer up Jackie?

Poor Jackie, love of my life. Aged almost as badly as I have. The grief on her face. The way she looks at me after cleaning and wiping me. I am such a pitiful person. She does not deserve this.

I hold back my tears until she leaves the room. After she dresses me, she kisses me on the forehead and tells me how much she loves me. My children stare and cry when they see me. I can take any physical pain but this torment every day is too much.

Why, God, did you give me this horrid disease? I was not perfect. I tried to be a good person, husband, and father. This hell should not be inflicted on any human. I feel the energy slowly leaving my lungs and creeping upwards. I will die swallowing my tongue.

God, take me now! I see how our attorney looks at Jackie and the way she looks back. He is a good man. I give them my blessing. Just, get me out of the way!

This young lady will save me. I'll give her a note. My hand can do it. Please set me free! I want to die! Let my sweet Jackie have a life!

CHAPTER 9

Samantha

Mom felt comfortable leaving Peter alone with me for longer periods of time. She asked:

"Peter is sleeping now. I need to buy a few groceries for his dinner. I'll be back in an hour. Can you take care of him?"

My response was positive. I looked forward to being alone with Peter. When he was sleeping, I felt important and in control. I came close to his face, listened to his breathing, and gently touched his hands and fingers. I loved their shape and contour. No scruffy, ugly hair on his hands like most men. His fingers were so long and shapely. There was a slight crease and depression in his ring finger on his left hand. A ring on

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his finger could be dangerous for someone in his condition. He was mine when we were alone together. I fell in love with this gentle, beautiful man. So helpless. I provided him with strength and energy. Peter felt a special bond with me.

As we spent more time together, I felt more comfortable. I talked to him about myself, had no control of my voice speaking outside of me, words just came out of my mouth.

“Mr. Blake, I have two great parents who really love me. I was not a great student and they were not rich. They sent me to this high-achieving Catholic high school. Never made many friends. Did not fit in. I was pretty lonely there.”

I looked to see if Peter heard me and what his reaction would be. Surprised that his eyes were intently focused on my face, I continued:

“The only really good thing I did in high school was running long distances. I really enjoyed running. It calmed me down. I felt at peace with myself. My body took me to different places in a short period of time. Do you understand?”

His eyes pointed in the direction of the pen and pad. I held his hand as he scribbled:

“Yes, call me Peter.”

My confidence increased.

“Peter, I actually received a two-year scholarship to college because of my running. I did all right for one year. Made some bad choices. I did not keep in good physical condition and did not study much. Took drugs and too casual and wild in my dating habits. Ashamed of some of the things I did. I had no energy and could not cope with my life. My parents persuaded me to come home. I saw a psychiatrist. I’m taking medication now to calm my nerves so that I don’t panic anymore. Glad in a way. I got the chance to meet you and to help take care of you.”

I needed to dig deeply into his eyes.

“You do enjoy my company and friendship?”

His eyes twinkled and his mouth managed a weak smile.

My euphoria suddenly ended. Mom walked into the room.

“Samantha, we have to go home now. Peter needs to sleep.”

I could hardly wait for my next opportunity to converse alone with this beautiful man.

A few days later seemed like an eternity to me. I said to him:

“I told you about myself the other day. You are a great listener.”

I touched his hand.

“I know a lot about you. You have a beautiful family. Your wife, Jackie, and your three children really love you. You are a great accountant. Most of all, God loves you and will take care of you!”

I had never spoken about God that way to anyone. Felt stupid and shocked at myself. His eyes searched for the pen and pad. He slowly wrote:

“God? u believe? why?”

Read his note. Could not honestly answer. I did not know why I still believed that God existed. My eyes turned to the floor. The door opened and perky, bubbly Jackie walked into the room. She smiled at me, kissed Peter on the forehead.

“Are you all right, honey? Do you need a nap?”

It was the signal for me to leave. I felt guilt. In love with a married man. Did not tell Mom that I was going home. Needed to be alone. Ran as fast as I could. Worms had invaded my brain and leeches were sucking blood from my heart.

Drowned in my own loneliness and hopelessness.

CHAPTER 10

On one fateful afternoon, my life forever changed.

Mom said:

“I’ll be back in a little bit. Ran out of diapers and Peter’s soap. Give him water if he asks for it. Be careful! Only a little bit at a time! He’s probably asleep.”

I walked into Peter’s room. Was awake. He looked at the ceiling and the fan that slowly turned around and around above his bed. He stared at the dresser where the pad and pen were. I asked:

“Peter, do you want to write?”

A slight, almost imperceptible movement of his head. His notes were very difficult to read. Had to guess a few times before I knew what he wanted. I gently put the pen in his right hand and held the pad under his hand for support. He printed a few words. A struggle. The note said: “help me.”

“I do not understand. What do you want? Can you print a little more?”

I again assisted him. He printed a few letters. His right hand closed in a tight fist. Dropped the pen and closed his eyes. Looked at the white pad.

“kill me”

Tightness in my chest. The beating of my heart was thunderous. In slow motion, my head crashed to the floor. I barely heard:

“Samantha, are you all right? What are you doing kneeling next to the bed? Is Peter still asleep?”

I tore and crumpled up the note and threw it under the bed, hoping that my mom did not see.

“What do you have in your hand? Did you drop something?”

Stood up.

“Yes, Mom. Dropped his pad. Peter’s been asleep.”

I put the pad and pen back on the dresser.

Mom knew that something was not right. I quietly left the room. Neither of us spoke again that afternoon.

CHAPTER 11

On my mom's next workday with Peter, I patiently waited for her to leave the bedroom. Only she, Peter, and I were in the house. Looked under the bed and could not find the crumpled note. I looked and looked, but nothing was there, became dizzy, hard to breathe, struggled to my feet, had to run away.

"Mom, my menstrual cramps are horrible today! I want to go home and relax."

"But honey, how will you get home? Do you know how to use the bus?"

"No problem, Mom. Used the bus before. See you later."

I ran all the way home. The long brisk run in February tired me and helped soothe my panic-stricken mind. Quickly fell asleep at home. It was several hours later when I was awakened in the dark, startled, heard to my left:

"Dumb bitch! You should have killed him by now! You had the chance!"

The deep voice was from a female. Before I could even stand up, a voice to my right said:

"No, Samantha. Don't listen to Jane! She's evil."

The female voice roared:

"Shut up, Jim, you little fucking runt! I should have snuffed you out a long time ago!"

I leaped from my bed, turned the light switch on, and saw nothing but my bed and furniture. A knock on the door.

"Samantha, are you all right? I heard a commotion!"

"Don't worry, Dad. Had a nightmare and fell out of bed! I'm okay."

"Tell me if you need anything. Hope you feel better. Get a good night's sleep."

I left the lights on all night, got very little sleep, afraid that the voices would return. Terrified, prayed to God, something I had not done in a long time.

"What is wrong with me? Do you still love me? Please give me the strength and grace to survive this. Am I dealing with the devil? Give me a sign. What should I do?"

For the next few days, the voices, "Jane" and "Jim," did not talk to me. Afraid, embarrassed, ashamed to tell anyone. Everyone would say that I was either crazy or a faker. I could not deal with the pain and stress of hurting my parents again. Would my prayers be answered? Would God protect me? Prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed....

CHAPTER 12

Peter Blake

Jackie saw the note under the bed. I closed my eyes and looked away when she knelt down and read it. Looked at me. Pretended to be asleep. Kissed me on my forehead

and whispered

"I know, honey. Love you and will always love you. Don't be afraid. I understand."

She left the room. My tears flowed like they had never before. Jackie gave me permission to let go. I'll give Samantha another note.

"God, am I doing the right thing? There is nothing for me here. Please love me. I need your strength."

CHAPTER 13

Samantha

Again alone with Peter. He stared at the dresser. I ignored him and turned away. Looked back. His eyes deeply focused on me. I placed the pen in his hand. He wrote a few words. His hand locked up. Read the note: "kill me"

I heard my mother, put the note in my pocket and placed the pen and pad back on the dresser. Did not say a word. When we were leaving, Jackie looked intensely at me. She asked:

"Is everything O.K.? Can I help you in any way with Peter?"

Confused and perplexed at this question, I wanted to be polite.

"No, doing well. Thanks for asking."

Mom and I went home and ate dinner. I tore up the note and discarded the pieces in the garbage. Pretended that it never existed. Woke up in the dark, heard a voice to my right:

"Do not hear her words! She is nothing to you! She has no power over you!"

Immediately thereafter to my left:

"You fucking worthless cunt! Didn't I tell you to kill that miserable coward? Shoot him! Kill him! Choke him! I want him to die!"

Could not move or say anything. I saw the outline of a small middle-aged man with a sad look standing at the foot of my bed. He spoke in a soft, kind tone.

"God loves you! God loves Peter! Ignore her! She works for the devil! Tell her to go away!"

I felt fear of an unfamiliar level and dimension. In a catatonic state, another vision appeared, towered over me and the other stranger. A tall, large woman with ebony eyes, long white hair, and a cruel mouth filled with black teeth.

"Do not obey this little piece of shit! Obey me! I control you! Kill Peter, or you will die! Your mother will die! Your father will die!"

Her face got closer and closer. Put my head under the covers and hid. The strange man looked towards the floor in despair. I uncontrollably cried under the sheet, expecting the worst. The room filled with light.

"Did I die? Am I in heaven?"

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The bed sheet rose. My end had arrived. I closed my eyes. Did not want to see who or what was there. A hand on my throat.

“Don’t kill me! I’ll do as you say!”

“Samantha, Samantha, wake up! You had a nightmare! It’s Mom!”

I opened my eyes and saw a look of concerned love. My dad stood in the corner of the room with a blank stare.

“Samantha, are you all right?”

“Mom, I’ll be O.K. Sorry that I woke you and Dad up!”

“We’re going to take you back to Dr. Stevens. You need your sleep or you’ll never feel well!”

Mom bent down, kissed me, and left with Dad. The light was on. Grateful for that. Too afraid of the dark. Could not sleep. Thought over and over and over again of what Peter had written. I knew what I had to do.

CHAPTER 14

My last conversation with Peter was surreal. We were alone in a long dark tunnel. I felt another presence that I cannot explain or understand. Spoke very quietly. Worried that someone would hear me. My apprehension precluded direct eye contact.

“Peter, you are my only reason for living. I have fallen in love with you. You are a beautiful person.”

Paused, gathered strength from a place deep within me.

“I have thoughts of suicide. Hear voices. One is evil, and the other is good. The evil voice wants me to kill you and then myself. I love you. Will respect your wishes. Will also end my life. Do you understand?”

His hypnotic blue eyes met mine and looked towards the pen and pad. He wrote: “ok luv u.”

Could not help myself. Kissed his cheek. We will die together. The glorious end is near. We will become one soul for eternity.

CHAPTER 15

Never afraid of guns. My dad had given me a few lessons when I was young. I shot one of his pistols at a target range. That was the one I wanted and needed. It was a small hand gun, a .32 caliber. Could easily hide it in my purse. Wondered if my dad still kept it loaded in the same area of the house.

I waited for the weekend when Mom and Dad would go food shopping. It was at least a three-hour ordeal. Mom went to three different stores that gave the cheapest buys. Plenty of time to search for the pistol. Hopefully Dad would not look for it for a few days.

Found the loaded .32-caliber handgun. It fit so well in my

hand. Was doing the right thing for both Peter and myself. Would give him the peace that he desired and deserved. I could never face Mom and Dad and explain to them what I did. They were better off without me anyway. As the evil voice said, a worthless dumb bitch.

Death does not scare me. Putting the gun to my head is the natural thing to do. I look forward to the moment of peace for both of us.

Will there be time and space between the shots and death? Pain before I die? A light will guide me to my ultimate destination? Will I see God? The devil?

CHAPTER 16

Mom left to buy a few groceries. Peter and I were alone. The gun was securely tucked in my purse. I waited until Peter woke up. Looked so helpless. He stared at me with his sad blue eyes. Took the gun. My movements were in slow motion. My legs felt so heavy. Placed my finger on the trigger. Heard voices. One said:

“Kill him! Shoot him! Choke him! Kill yourself! You’re worthless! You both deserve to die!”

The other.

“NO! NO! Ignore evil! Save yourself! God loves Peter! God loves you! DO NO HARM!”

I approached Peter. Held the gun to his forehead. Looked into his eyes. They showed no emotion. Needed something from him! A sign! Was I doing what he wanted? Retreated and looked away. Turned back. Saw tears. He needed peace. I firmly pressed his throat until he gratefully passed away. His cheeks were wet when he expired.

I placed the gun to my right temple. Closed my eyes. The end was near. Began to pull the trigger.

“Samantha, give me the gun!”

Turned around. My dad knocked the gun out of my hand. Pushed me onto the floor. Too tired to fight back. I lay on my side with my hands over my face. Someone else entered the room. A hand on my shoulder. Opened my eyes. Mom cried out:

“Samantha, what have you done?”

Could not answer. The voice from within would not come. Had nothing to say.

CHAPTER 17

Peter Blake

We are finally alone. She looks into my eyes. See the gun. Do it! Do it! Please, I need this! Want peace.

She is walking away? What does she want? Tears? I can do that.

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Thank you, God. She is holding my throat. The room is getting darker and darker. I see a light getting closer and closer, brighter and brighter. Pulling me away. Love all around me.

I feel a presence to my left and right. The light is getting smaller and dimmer. Now totally in the dark. Feel empty.

“God, are you there? Where is the light? Will it come back? Is this my punishment? Please, do not leave me here all by myself. Forgive me. I need your love.”

CHAPTER 18

Samantha

Court was dreadful and frightening. My appointed attorney did the best he could. Received a twenty-year term. Because of my mental illness, I was sent to a state hospital for treatment until I was no longer a danger to myself or others. Could be here for the rest of my life. Twenty years already. Been turned down twice for release. Peter’s three children and their attorney present evidence of my evil, dangerous nature and how the public will be at risk if I were ever released. One of Peter’s sons is a state senator. Everyone listens when he speaks. Jackie Blake has never objected to my release. Now married to a wealthy dentist.

After my sentencing, my dad visited me until his health declined. Died from the stress. Mom visited with Dad. That ended after his death. So guilt-ridden that she had introduced Peter to me. Moved to Florida to be near my brother, a military retiree living in Sarasota. He has never visited me. Mom was so lonely. Forgave her for leaving Arizona and not seeing me anymore. Hope that she is feeling well. I pray for her.

Nothing to live for. Totally alone. The voices have abandoned me. My torment will continue even after I die. God will send me to hell. Peter is in heaven. His beautiful blue eyes will never again see me. Miss him so much. Wonder what heaven is like.

Why did Dad stop me? He never really loved me. Only Peter did.

The Elevator

By Tony Abruzzo

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JULY 3rd — 5 P.M.

Keisha hated that she had to wear a professional pants suit, panty hose, high heels, and the whole enchilada. But Department of Labor rules. Did not appreciate how that old white man stared at her when she got in the elevator. Thought:

“What’s his problem? Doesn’t like black people?”

The Hispanic woman entered, looked down, did not say a word. The older man lowered his eyes when he saw her. The young white man with the cowboy hat jumped in chewing his gum, humming a George Strait song about selling waterfront property in Arizona. Nodded to the other man, avoided looking at either woman. The senior citizen continued reading the Wall Street Journal. A loud cranking noise.

“Va voom!”

The paper and the man dropped to the ground on top of the Mexicana who groaned under the weight of the large man straddling her body. The African-American lady was pushed hard into the midsection of the cowboy and ended up sitting on top of his chest. His contorted face stared at the ceiling. He yelled.

“Jesus Christ, get off of me! Your hair is on me. What is that on your head?”

She quickly picked up her wig and repositioned it over her stocking cap. The Hispanic lady helped the professionally dressed man to his feet who shouted:

“Keep your hands to yourself.”

Four sets of eyes compressed at the same time. The room got darker. No sound of air flowed into the narrow enclosure. The young man hit every button on the panel he could get his hands on. Nothing. Silence. Door would not open. He pounded until his fist hurt.

Finally said in a low voice:

“We’re fucked.”

The Mexicana touched the crucifix on her neck. The black lady frowned, looked in her purse. The older man took out his silk handkerchief, wiped away the sweat off his brow, scowled:

“Get away from that door! I’ll take care of this.”

The cowboy took his hat off, gestured towards the door.

“Be my guest, old man.”

JULY 3rd — 4 P.M.

Jim Heger, a confident, handsome twenty-three-year-old, thought that he had the world licked. The most knowledgeable elevator technician for the Bank Plaza of Albu-

querque despite his age. Learned from his grandpa Charley who retired two years ago. Grandma Rebecca was so ill with dementia now. Needed to be cared for in a nursing home. Grandpa fed her everyday, kept busy, so that he would not go crazy watching his wife of fifty years slowly deteriorate mentally and physically.

It was Jim’s turn to be the head honcho of the eight elevators on the twenty-two floors. Getting good help was difficult. No one wanted to learn the skills of maintaining these complicated creatures that transported thousands of people each week to and from the hundred offices in the building. Up and down. Up and down. Never received any pat on the back from anyone. Only complaints when the beasts did not work properly. Four o’clock. Looked at his watch. Thought:

“Screw them. Rhonda is waiting. Grandpa will be here tomorrow morning. He needs the money. Will keep him busy. Not working until eight P.M. tonight. Viva Las Vegas!”

When he left the building, Joe Knight, security guard on the ground level, waved to him.

“Leaving early today? Don’t blame you. Everyone has gone somewhere for the July 4th weekend. I’m locking the building at five. What do you have planned?”

“Three hot nights in Vegas. And I’m not talking about the weather!”

Joe smiled, checked his watch. Only one hour to go. He also had a hot tamale waiting for him.

JULY 3rd — 3:45 P.M.

Lupita Rendon, thirty years old, mother of a twelve-year-old boy, born in Juarez, Mexico, felt hopeful that unusually warm day. Nana had Carlos for the rest of the day. Could not live with her mother and boyfriend forever without paying them some real money. Alfredo, the boyfriend, forged the work papers and visa to read Lupita Rendon, instead of Maria Lupe Rendon, who died crossing the border in Agua Prieta. An illegal immigrant, she spoke decent English because of the countless television shows she watched in the last two years.

Now time to work. Help out la familia. Needed this job. Nine dollars per hour with benefits for cleaning the offices on the night shift. Carlos would stay with nana and do his homework.

Wanted him to have a better life than her miserable existence. Her nana always told her to work hard, pray to God, and life would get better. The last time she saw her, in Juarez, two years ago. She remembered the words:

“Mija, un dia a la vez.”

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She almost turned around when she saw the door that said “Human Resources.” Thought:

“Will they stare at me, see that my papers are fake?”

A well-dressed gringa, dark pants suit, forty years old, smiled, showing her marble white teeth.

“You must be Lupita? Running a little late today. Come on in. Some people left early for the holiday. Jessica will see you shortly.”

At 5 p.m., Lupita thought that her life had changed. A full-time job, starting in two weeks. Drank some water from one of her bottles. Almost died in the desert. Never left home without at least two plastic containers. Jessica waved goodbye as Lupita entered the empty, cool, silent ladies room. Had to compose herself. Stood before the mirror. Her tears of joy cascaded down her face. Made the sign of the cross.

“Gracias, my Lord, my God. Love you. Will always obey you.”

She wiped her face with the paper towel, ran outside, pushed the button.

JULY 3rd — 4:30 P.M.

Tommy Peebles, twenty-six-year-old redneck, originally from Pecos, Texas, convinced himself that his surprise trip from Las Cruces would turn into a fruitful weekend for him. Missed Susie so bad. Should have told her how much he loved her, that he wanted to marry her, have children, own his own cattle and sheep ranch some day. Only girl he ever felt like this before. Wondered why he let her leave for the big city, get a job with the credit department of a bank, no less. Tormented himself.

“My girl works with those rich, worthless bank fuckers who screw everyone out of their money. Those Jews are worse than the Mexicans and the blacks. They’re all ruining our country.”

He ran to the door that read “Credit Department, Bank of Albuquerque.” Was later than he wanted to be. Trip took longer than he thought. An older white lady asked.

“Can I help you, young man?”

“Oh, yes, I’m looking for Susie Hunter, my friend from Las Cruces.”

“Sure, wait here.”

Tommy practiced in his mind, thought deeply.

“What can I say to convince her to come home with me? Have to tell her what I’ve kept inside.”

He wondered why the older lady walked by and waved to him without speaking and walked through the door. Mumbled to himself.

“Almost five o’clock.”

A young Hispanic woman closed the door that said “Employees Only.” She was surprised when she saw him sitting in the

chair holding his cowboy hat.

“Sir, didn’t Joan tell you that Susie left early today? I’m sorry. Should have told you myself. Have to lock the door now.”

“Are you kidding me? She’s not here?”

“She took some time off to see the fireworks in Santa Fe. At least, that’s what she told me.”

“Jesus fucking Christ! Is there a men’s room on this floor?”

Had to smoke the one cigarette he had in his shirt. Angry, nervous, confused. Needed to pee real bad. Cried despite his efforts to control the tears.

“Went to Santa Fe? Probably has a boyfriend. What will I do now?”

Smoked the Marlboro, urinated like a race horse, walked to the elevator door.

JULY 3rd — 4:30 P.M.

Joel McKissick, seventy-five-year-old man originally from Detroit, never did understand the younger generations who wanted everything out of life. His grandson, Sam, told him.

“Grandpa, you worked too hard for General Motors. What did it get you but a bad heart and a wife and children who never saw you. I’ll go to college, get a good job. But never seventy hours a week like you for fifty years.”

Joel knew that Sam was right. The CEO of the company. Made millions of dollars. One of the nicest homes in Grosse Pointe. So what? Big deal. His children did not give a shit about him.

Only talked to him when they begged for money. Peggy died three years ago, leaving him with his tormented thoughts, money, and loneliness. Moved to Santa Fe. Loved the theatre, his escape from reality. Also near Sam, his only grandson, who loved him despite his narrow, hateful view of the world.

“I’ll surprise him on Friday. We’ll go to dinner, all of us, his wife and two bratty, spoiled kids. They can order whatever is on the menu. My treat.”

Traffic on the interstate was horrific. Two major accidents. He parked his Cadillac Escalade in covered parking. Rushed to the 22nd floor, corporate headquarters, where Sam, the vice president, worked. Left his phone in the car. His pill bottle of medication jostled in his pants.

The receptionist ignored him for a few minutes.

“Sir, it is closing time because of the holiday. Do you have an appointment?”

“My grandson, Sam, your boss. Wanted to surprise him. Came here from Santa Fe. Ran late because of the traffic. Can I see him?”

The young lady, dark bronze skin, green eyes, red-soaked lips, muscular thighs, short skirt, stood up. She smirked.

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“Well, sir, you have some bad luck today. Sam, Mr. McKis-sick, took a long weekend. In San Diego as we speak.”

“Are you certain? Maybe he is in the back?”

His shoulders sunk.

“I know my job. You have to go now. The doors will close soon.”

He walked through the door. The tightness in his chest persuaded him to sit on one of the benches on the floor. It took several minutes for his breathing to become deeper, more steady.

The young lady barely looked at him as she entered the elevator. Sat there wondering. What to do for the next few hours, few days. His small suitcase was in the Escalade. Had enough clothes, toiletries. Not hungry yet. Planned in his head.

“Better get to the car. Find a hotel room for the night. Leave in the morning.”

Was alone, as usual. Walked as briskly as he could towards the blinking light. Tapped his pocket with his hand to make sure his nitroglycerine was there.

JULY 3rd — 4:30 P.M.

Keisha Cheryl Powell, barely twenty-five years old, was in a rush to succeed her entire life.

She cherished her father, Reverend Martin Powell, pastor of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Columbia, South Carolina, and her mother, Cora, a third-grade schoolteacher. But she did not want to be like them. They were so God-fearing, too deferential to those in authority, to white people. Sure, they worked hard, gave her the privileges of a middle-class neighborhood, a high school of mostly whites. She wanted more. Needed to be an instrument for other blacks who did not have the privileges she had. Very intelligent, superlative grades, not a surprise that Princeton and Yale accepted her. Did not want to go there anyway. Just wanted to make a point. When her parents found out that she decided to attend Howard University, their faces did not disguise the bewilderment.

“Keisha, Howard, over Princeton, Yale? Mother and I want the best for you. You worked hard, paid the price for excellence. Tell us what we are missing.”

“Dad, Mom, I need to experience what being black really is. Howard will have black students from all over the country, from different backgrounds, experiences. My skin is black, but my closest friends are white.”

Cora spoke softly.

“Baby, you go to church, sing in the choir, attend all the religious ceremonies. You’ve known black people all your life. Prayed with them. Cried with your sisters and brothers. What are you trying to prove?”

The pastor spoke.

“Think of the type of people you’ll meet at those schools. The Bushes and the Clintons went to Yale.”

“Exactly what I mean. Those schools are run by hypocrites. Only accepted me because I’m black. At least, that’s what everybody there will say. They want to get rid of their guilt for the way our people were treated for hundreds of years.”

He tried again.

“Your grades and intelligence got you in. Nothing else.”

“Then why didn’t my two white girlfriends, same grades as me, get accepted to any fancy Ivy League school? Only payback for their sins.”

After one year at Howard, Keisha was disillusioned, knew that she had made a mistake. Did not study much, earned straight A’s, never really challenged. Finished in three years with a double major of Economics and Afro-American Studies. She had a plan.

“I’ll go to a great graduate school, help my people for a while, and then make big money in the white world.”

After graduating with a Master’s Degree from Cornell’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations, took a job as an analyst/investigator with the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor.

“Work here for a few years, then latch on to some corporation, the real dark side. Buy a new BMW every two years like the others.” When her boss sent her to investigate the policies of the Bank of Albuquerque and their treatment of Hispanic cafeteria and housekeeping workers, she was not thrilled.

“My Spanish is terrible. I’ll be there forever.”

It was 4:30, only one more interview, and then back to the fancy hotel room paid for by the government, relax, have dinner, watch a few complimentary movies, and then fly out of this desert hole in the morning. Reviewed her notes.

“Hope Maria speaks some English. This is getting old.”

When she left the conference room on the 19th floor, close to 5 p.m., Keisha tried to ignore her need for the ladies room.

“This iced tea goes right through me.”

No one else there. Sat on the commode. Walked before the mirror, a quick look at her hair, rushed to the elevator. Thought to herself.

“I’ll call Mom from the room later tonight.”

JULY 3rd — 7 P.M.

The seven foot by seven foot space closed in on them. The air was scarce, thin, stuffy, motionless. Almost totally dark in their enclosure. Clothes were scattered on the floor.

A wig, stocking cap, a tie, cowboy hat, boots, a sweater. Also the Wall Street Journal, a novella written in Spanish, Ebony Magazine, and National Rifle Association Magazine. The black

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lady spoke first.

“My name’s Keisha. If we’re going to be stuck here until morning, need a few rules. Lupita and I will sleep on this side, you two on the other. My suggestion is that if anyone has to urinate, wait until it is completely dark in here. Do it on your side. Does anyone have a bottle or cup to pee in?”

The older man responded. His face was drenched with sweat. “I’ve seen you two ladies drink water. How much is left?” “Lupita, show him what you have.”

The Mexicana held up two bottles, one larger than the other. Keisha spoke.

“She has a little over three quarts. What about you two?” The cowboy’s face was the whitest Keisha had ever seen. “I have a hot can of Coke.”

Older man looked down. “Nothing. Need water to take my medication.” The black lady spoke. “I have six protein bars. Always take them with me. In the morning, everyone gets a bar. Just so you know, tried my cell phone. No connection.”

The cowboy stood up. “Fuck all of you! Getting out of here.” He put his foot on Lupita’s back and jumped, tried to push in the panels of the nine-foot-high ceiling above. Struck his head, tumbled down on top of the other gentleman. “You fool! Nothing up there but space and cables. You’ll kill yourself.”

“Can’t do this. Have to leave.” Keisha asked. “What is your name, sir?” A stuttered response. “Tommy Peebles.”

“Got to relax. Going to hurt all of us. We have to be calm, stick together.” The cowboy shouted.

“Stick with you, or her, or this fucking old goat!” “Listen, I’m Joel. She’s right. Can’t panic. Old and sick. This jumping around takes the air out of the room.”

He took off his buttoned-down shirt, displaying his old man’s T-shirt.

“Your name’s Keisha? I have no cup or glass. Give me the bottle you or she haven’t drunk from yet.” “We all drink from the same bottle in an orderly fashion. Have to preserve the water. No telling how long we’ll be here.”

The cowboy spoke up. “You expect me to put my lips on a bottle where you and this Mexican have put your slimy mouths?”

“The Mexican has a name. Lupita. Yes, I’m in charge of where

and when our smelly, dirty mouths meet!”

JULY 4th — 5 A.M.

Seventy-four-year-old Charley Daniels used the same key to open the ground floor door he used two years ago when he retired.

“Wow, dark in here. What happened to the lights?”

Couldn’t let his grandson, Jim, down. Didn’t feel well. Stayed late with Rebecca at the care center. Tried to feed her, to get her to laugh at his teasing. Alzheimer’s. Terrible disease. Retirement didn’t suit him too well either. Bored. Lonely. Ate and drank a lot.

Too fat. The doctor warned him.

“Charley, lose weight. Going to get a stroke if you don’t take care of yourself. Your diabetes, high blood pressure, COPD. They’re killing you. No more work. Use the ventilator.”

Charley was stubborn.

“To hell with the doctor. Need the money, the work. Only a few days. Piece of cake. Nothing about elevators I don’t know. Taught the kid everything he knows.”

Mumbled to himself.

“What happened to the air conditioning? Hot as hell in here. Can’t see a damn thing.”

He never saw the raised step on the back staircase. Fell to the ground, violently struck his head on the cement floor. His rolling ventilator machine and mask stayed close to his bloody prostrate body. The container of blood pressure pills underneath him.

July 4th — 6 A.M.

When Tommy woke up, he was startled to see that his neck was on her shoulder. Her hand was on the back of his neck. He stood up.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing?”

“White boy, I had bleached friends in South Carolina. You shook all night. Want some water? Your scalp is flaky. Need some conditioner.”

“Are you shitting me? Your hair fell on me. Where is it? Did you hide it?”

Handed him the bottle. He wiped the opening with his grimy left hand. Swallowed hard. Handed it back. She grabbed his right hand, placed it on the hair over her left ear.

“What do you think? Did it bite you?”

He took his hand away, rubbed it against the Wrangler label.

“Get away from me.”

“Why so scared last night? You kept me awake most of the night. I read some of your magazine, National Rifle whatever. Have a small light on my key chain. May need to buy a pistol for protection.”

Continued on page 89

“None of your business. Give me back my magazine. That stupid stocking over your head didn’t make you so smart. Did you throw your rag away?”

“My dad always told me that there is nothing to fear. God will protect you with his grace.”

“God? God? A freaking joke. Where was he when my old man beat my mom to death? Did his grace save her? I couldn’t. Only ten years old.”

“Tell me about it.”

“Why? You don’t give a shit.”

“I do care. Have to. God teaches us to help others.”

“You for real?”

“Try me.”

Tommy spoke without interruption. Keisha’s heart raced faster and harder the more she heard.

“Always happened in the middle of the night, in the dark. Lived in west Texas then. Dad, a hard-drinking ranch hand. Came home drunk. Woke Mom up, forced her out of bed, told her to make him a hot meal. One night, exhausted, she said no. He beat her, worse than usual. I heard the screams, the cries. Kicked him. Slapped me down. Last thing I remember. Got up, blood all over. Must have used his belt buckle. Her face!”

Trembled, choked through his words.

“Always in the evil darkness. Usually pretended in the morning that nothing happened. But not that day.”

“What happened to your father? To you?”

“Dad’s in prison for the rest of his life. They sent me to live with my uncle on his sheep and cattle ranch outside of Las Cruces. Quit high school. Got my GED. Came here to see an old girlfriend. Should have proposed to her. Too afraid. Would I hurt her? Kill her?”

His face showed no expression.

“You’re not your father. I can tell that you have a heart, a good soul.”

“Well, it don’t matter anyway. Nothing does. Take the magazine. Shoot any bastard who tries to hurt you.”

Looked up, saw the tears in her black bloodshot eyes. Realized that he slept on top of her Ebony Magazine. Gave it to her.

“Is this your black bible? Why do you read it?”

“No, no. The Bible is sacred, words from Jesus, savior and Lord. Only a magazine to guide me, help me understand what being black really is.”

“Don’t see a ring on your finger. Not married? You like men? Not one of those lesbians?”

“You mean lesbian, gay.”

She paused, looked upwards.

“I’ll tell you things about me that no one else knows. Not proud of them. Please, God, forgive me.”

His arm pressed against hers.

“This black/white thing. Can’t get through it. Feel like an Oreo cookie, a bad joke. Black outside, white inside. Parents, college graduates, middle class, mostly white high school, did very well, no help from anyone. Chose a black college to feel the blackness, experience it, rejoice in it. Did not happen. Never felt the pain, scorn, hatred from outsiders, white people, prejudging me. And when I thought it happened, was it real, or my creation of a false chip on my shoulder? Hard for me to explain. Where do I belong, fit in?”

Tommy grinned.

“This shit is too deep for me. Only a GED.”

“Serious, not funny. Most black women are attracted to black men. Not you pale faces. Both look good to me. Not much experience. Forced myself to only date black men, the right thing to do. But whites also turn me on, and vice versa. Could never do it. Not the moral thing to do. Have to stick with my people.”

“You’re lucky. Everyone likes you.”

“You don’t get it. How could you? I’m different. The way you acted when my wig fell off, saw my stocking cap, felt my hair. You were disgusted.”

He shrugged.

“Just didn’t understand. Give me time.”

She made the sign of the cross.

“Going to regret telling you this. Disrespected God, my parents, my church. All my college education and degrees did not prepare me for life in D.C., the real world. Too many orientations.”

Tommy raised his eyebrows.

“What is an orientation?”

“Promise not to judge me.”

“I’m afraid of the dark. Not in a position to judge you.”

“Been at the Department for two years. Once in a while, drank with the other ladies in the office, mostly older, married. A little too much twice. One white woman, the other black. Ashamed of what I did. Will never do it again. God will forgive me. Don’t know about my parents.”

“You had sex with women?”

Keisha laughed.

“You learned a lot in that GED class.”

“The look in your face gave it away.”

“I pray every night for forgiveness. Had to change units and supervisors. Too stressful and humiliating to face them at work. They wanted to continue doing it. Had to change the direction I was going.”

She took a swig of the water bottle.

“Another thing. Want to be rich someday. Feel guilty about that.”

His blue eyes were totally focused on her. Touched his hand.

“You see, we all have demons. The devil never stops trying to

destroy us.”

JULY 4th — 7 A.M.

Lupita looked at his white ashen face. The breathing was rapid, shallow. She wet her handkerchief, placed it on his forehead.

“Senor, are you all right?”

Placed the bottle to his lips.

“Drink, bebe, por favor.”

Joel’s eyes teared up. Put hands over his face.

“Why so triste, sad?”

She stroked his arm.

“Not used to anyone being kind to me. Thank you, even if you aren’t legal.”

He grimaced, shook his head.

“I’m sorry. Not proud of what I’ve become.”

“God loves you, all of us. Believe in Him. Good things will happen.”

“You really believe in this God who will make you happy?”

“Yes.”

“Tell me a little about your life, where you are from.”

“Live outside of Albuquerque with my mother and her boyfriend. Bad man. Sells drugs. Three years ago, he paid la policia in El Paso money and mota, marijuana. They let them in.”

Lupita touched the crucifix on her neck.

“Two years ago, my son, Carlos, and I tried to cross. Mucho calor. Very hot in desert. Little water. Passed out. The Juarez police caught me, beat me. Border Patrol man came. He wanted to talk to me. Spoke Spanish. A gringo. Saw how he looked at me. Offered myself to him if he drove us to the border. Got on my knees in the desert.

“Satisfied him dos veces, two times. My son stayed in back of carro.

“Let us go. Took bus to Albuquerque. Found my mother.”

“Where was your husband when this happened?”

“Left him. A borracho, drunk, a pig. Had many mujeres, whores, putas. Beat me all the time.”

“So your God let all of that happen, and you still believe in Him?”

“Carlos and I are alive, senor. God saved us. And you, tienes una esposa, a wife?”

“Died three years ago. Loved her. Never realized how much until she was gone. Married fifty years. Used to be a big shot. Now a rich man. Not ashamed of it. Worked all the time. Never spent much time with my two sons. After Peggy died, they didn’t want to see me anymore. Think that I am a jerk. Only my grandson Sam talks to me.”

Put his head down.

“So lonely. I have a fortune. No one to share it with. Go to the theatre by myself. No one to go with.”

She placed her hand on his shoulder.

“Rest, senor. I’ll take care of you.”

“Are you sure? Never liked Mexicans, illegals.”

Smiled, stroked his silvery white hair.

JULY 4th — 7 P.M.

Lying on his back, Tommy said to Keisha:

“Going to get real dark soon.”

She rubbed the back of his moist neck. Joel shook his head, mumbled something under his breath.

Tommy sat up.

“Did you say something, old-timer?”

“Nothing that you would understand.”

“What do you mean, rich man? Your fancy clothes, pointy shoes, Wall Street Journal are not doing you much good now, are they?”

“You’re a loser. Heard you cry on her shoulder. Young, strong. Don’t be such a coward. These women put you to shame. Quit whining.”

“You bastard. Your money means nothing here. Probably inherited everything. Are you a Jew?”

“Nope, not Jewish. Maybe if you had worked harder, you would have made something of yourself.”

Tommy moved closer, his fists clenched. Suddenly the room got much darker. Leaned back.

Keisha placed her hand on his shoulder. He closed his eyes. Did not want to face the evil that would momentarily arrive.

Joel smirked. Lupita put the ends of her silky black hair in her mouth and chewed nervously.

JULY 5th — 7 P.M.

Lupita helped him swallow the nitroglycerine pill with the little water left in the bottle. He held his chest, groaned, tried to speak. The back of his throat stuck like glue.

“No, senor, silencio, no habla.”

Put her hand over his parched mouth. The words came out slowly.

“No, a few things. If we get out of this, help me and I’ll help you. Need you to take care of me, my house. Live all alone. Plenty of room for you and Carlos. Please.”

He pointed towards a glossy business card. She smiled.

“Es posible. Now just rest. Que sera, sera. Un dia a la vez. Thank you, gracias, for caring about me and my son.”

Continued on page 91

JULY 5th — 9 P.M.

She could not sleep or rest. His tossing, turning, talking to himself, sudden outbursts, finally burned her engine. Decided to be more aggressive, confrontational.

“Tommy, listen. We’ll be all right. Have faith. Try to sleep. I’m here, right next to you. Nothing to be afraid of. Will hold you.”

His blurry sad eyes looked at her.

“Keisha, if we do make it, can we be friends, at least talk on the phone?”

“Sure, white boy. Won’t abandon you.”

Tommy nodded, fell asleep.

JULY 6th — 5 A.M.

Jim Heger took out his flashlight. Saw a trail of blood, his grandfather on the floor, arms and hands stretched out, mouth open.

“Oh, my God, Grandpa!”

He touched the side of his neck. Very weak pulse. Grabbed his phone.

“We need help. Hurry!”

Immediately noticed the blinking light in the distance above the elevator door.

“Fuck, what happened?”

Engaged the emergency switch. Fear enveloped him.

“Are people up there?”

JULY 6th — 5:05 A.M.

Keisha, Tommy on top of her, heard something. The panel was now visible in the dark.

Partially lit up the room. Stood up. Tommy rolled over on his side. Pushed the number 1 button. Overhead light went on. Felt the movement of the elevator. Lupita opened her eyes.

Tears flowed down to her cheeks. Gently patted Joel on his sleeping face.

JULY 6th — 5:40 A.M.

The medics wheeled Charley away on a gurney, several lines attached to his veins, an oxygen mask over his face. Joel, on his back, smiled through the tubes up his nose. Lupita kissed his hand as he weakly waved. Whispered in

his ear.

“Remember, un dia a la vez.”

Keisha and Tommy talked quietly in the corner, took turns drinking from a large water bottle. Shared the last protein bar. They rose, hugged for several seconds, walked away from each other. He suddenly turned around, ran, kissed her on the cheek.

“Love you. Will never forget you.”

She winked, pinched his face, exited through the door, gazed at the rainbow sunrise emerging over the mountain. The cell phone rang.

“Hi, Mom. How was your weekend?”

EPILOGUE — 5 YEARS LATER

Life for Keisha was predictably productive, exciting, lucrative, but somewhat unexpected.

She married her doctor husband, Peter, and gave birth to her biracial one-year-old daughter Carolyn. A higher-up in the Human Resources Division of Campbell Soup Company in Camden, New Jersey, her copy of the National Rifle Association magazine became handy when she purchased a pistol for protection. The forty-minute drive to her pristine neighborhood in Haverford, Pennsylvania, transported her from her “people” to her “newly acquired” people. She kept in touch with Tommy through Facebook as they shared photos of their children.

Tommy, now a grower and seller of red hot chili peppers in Hatch, New Mexico, never heard from his old girlfriend Susie. Married to a Mexicana, Sophia, whom he cherished, named his son Tomas to maintain the Hispanic tradition. He delighted in sending and receiving pictures from his self-proclaimed savior Keisha. Lupita, loyal to Joel, who truly loved her as the daughter he never had, enjoyed the endless array of live plays at the Lensic Performing Arts Center in Santa Fe. Carlos, now a senior at St. Michael’s Catholic High School, already received his early admission acceptance from the University of Notre Dame. She would soon miss him terribly.

Joel’s most fun-filled moments were eating good home-cooked Mexican food and helping Lupita make his favorite meal of chili rellenos. He cut up the tomatoes and cheese. She did the hard part un dia a la vez.

6 Poems by Richard Fenton Sederstrom

Working Verse Around the Green Commons

© 2015

—for Paul Mariani

1

We walked the pasture and ancient tillage of field from party to dinner
at the old inn, at whose door we were separated into our ordinary offices.

Your lines are too short you said shortly as I stopped talking
for a nervous breath both of us avoiding contention and the discomfort

that so often precedes the finality of understanding and maybe
the decision that orients the level of friendship or mere acquaintance.

Your lines
are too long
I replied.

2

The short line
may be a sigh
or a gasp for
the comings
and goings of
inter

rupted breathing

Continued on page 93



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

the staccato comings and goings and lornful longings of interrupted living

that serve to disguise the wordless interstices in which we try actually to exist and hold our breath before the inter

ruption
of a catastasis

like the chosen word
leading toward
mutual enlightenment.

3
Enlightened,
we have not spoken for thirty years
though I have noticed over those years

that our lines
have tended toward compromise
mostly in the direction of *your* line length.

Thus we have shared an appropriate communication
between incompatible spiritualities, turning
among the verses toward a shared communal tillage.

La Esencia

© 2015

—*Guaymas, Sonora*

1.

The Francis in your garden statuary, children,
is accompanied by pretty gray birds of imagined
color, and an innocent deer, maybe a fawn.

Such is our need for euphemism, the wrong word,
that we translate the carnivore—such as we halfway
are—the wolf for the browser, host of our own

secret predation. Just east of the Franciscan seminary:
a fish processing plant, a paper factory,
a sewage system, all draining into the bahia.

The real animal Francis entertained, my children,
was a wolf, and not a gentle one, but a child-
and-adult predator—of humans, my children.

And the pretty little birds? Jackdaws, crows, pigeons,
jays. The unpleasant and unwanted. The poor.
Lepers. The unspeakable burning Other. They stand

in the stories for those humans Francis spoke to but who
listened no better than the birds he resorted to.
You-birds, and me-birds, children.

Hungry birds. Pecking birds. Gray, black, sooty
tar-brown birds with unsavory beaks and bad habits.
Us-birds. Blind birds staring into mirrors.

2.

East of the Franciscan guesthouse out away from
the cooling bahia, the morning rises, and the warming
breeze rises, fresh with a subtle waft, the fragrance

of free-flowing sewage. It is the fragrance of life,
sheltered from you usually, by the fruits
of your birth, del norte. Here is the other breath of life.

Morning is the us that has left us behind, or we
have gladly left behind. But we leave nothing
behind. Perfect joy is the cold and the stench

that are two of the senses of life. The other
senses are accompanied. See the birds—ravens
pecking dead squirrels on the broken highway.

Do you hear the children walking back up the hill
from school, hand in hand with their mothers?
The footfall of Madonnas. Ku-kurring of quail.

Grandmothers on Tour

© 2015

Nana took her only
tour of Sweden
some fifty years
ago.

She returned
with a photo
album
mortuary-packed
with pictures of
churches, graveyards
and a hospital
or two.

In respect and silence
we followed Nana's
eschatological
tour of our future.
And we kept our distance.

Babe took a camera
on one of her
several ambles
back to England—
pressed upon her
by her closest family
who might
have remembered
knowing Babe better.
Babe returned with
dozens of stories—
places, people, the view
of the Spanish Steps,
a semi-accidental
side tour,
and how
she didn't
get the chance
in her merry schedule
to drop in on the Pope.
Babe took a single
photo: in
the London Zoo
of an American
Bison.
Our laughter still
echoes.
Babe's too.

Transparencies

© 2015

1
How we hanker for fall
in its browns and yellows and reds,
its industry and fire of dying.

But it is after the color in our walks through
the new gray of the woods that I am granted new vision,
and pause.

It is the transparency those colors reveal slowly
as they become one color with the chill
and drift off into their season of eternity.

It is the clear space, through dark interstices,
the black-widow-future's gentle tangle of web,
the pewter light around the remnant trunks and branches.

It is the hill over there that I have walked on but seen
for the underbrush only in the drear seasons,
when I can exorcise the habit of my care-blinded eyes

scouting for poison ivy or the next mischievous thorn;
I can exorcise even intent,
the delusionary lure of human misdirection.

New transparency opens the forest to the broken trees
lying on the same quiet hill, trunks
all fatally mown in one sarcophagal direction,

facing east these silent years,
toward the lake,
toward the rising ghosts of tomorrow.

2
The trees have lain there
slowly rotting for almost two decades now,
since the two early morning wind-storms

that took a generation of aged aspen,
nurse trees left by lumber barons to care for the shorn forest
with shade and rotting leaves.

The aspen had finished by then their mothering the forest
for the century since the old forest was cleared to free
the cold shining air around this nurturing death.

3
The same transparent fall, the flight of geese
cheered my grandmother in her last calm days,
in perfect health at ninety-two, save that she was dying.

Fall guided my mother too, or its beauty wrested from her
the last great sadness, a life so many years in the ending
that grief had exhausted itself into a silence,

a veil that fell so long before her death
that she could finally die
outside the curse of merely spoken love.

4
Fall is our walking to that stand of red pine,
the one that stood at a brush-disguised distance,
as we thought two weeks ago.

Now it is right here where we walk to count
the dead and dying pines, victims of drought and insects,
old age, want and, who knows? Maybe intent.

And the few already on ground
we had never seen before. More intent?
In some ways we are quickened by the quaint ironies of death.

5
We could say a few words over our Earth-clad dead,
but the words are already and always being said, in kinship,
by the clarity of the season.

The Little Bang: A Poem-Cartoon

About Drought from 2 Lines of John Ashbery

© 2015
*Only a 28 year water supply
shields us from the . . .*
"Floating Away," from Planisphere

Part 1: Rain

27
26
25

24
23
22

21
20
19

Part 2: The Wreckage of the Sky

18
17
16

15
14
13

12
11
10

Part 3: Uncle Deity

nine
eight
seven

six
five
four

three
two
one

Part 4: The Holy Man in the Final Shade

. . . *desert.*
0
-1

Pfffff . . .
fffft:
pop!

A note from the poet: "If we are to participate effectively in the eschatological solemnity suggested above, it seems that some instruction is in order. The most appropriate way to sound out the final word of the poem is to place an index finger into the mouth, close the mouth around the finger, sucking a bit to create something like a vacuum. Then, with the tip of the finger exiting the mouth first, retaining the vacuum, pull out quickly with sufficient force to produce the appropriate noise. It's not a whimper, to be sure, and surely not a bang, but the sound is over more quickly and more feebly, like us very likely."

The Older

© 2015

The older you get
the more sounds you hear in the night, and louder.

The older you get
the older the sounds in the night, the abyssal echo.

The older you get
the more the sounds in the night echo a memory

of places you've never been,
of places that *have* never been.

The older you get
the more those places resemble

the Nothing you try to imagine
and the more you try to imagine

the more you approach all that there is,
the more you become all that there is.

The more you become all that there is,
the Nothing that is cannot go away.

The older you get
the more you become.

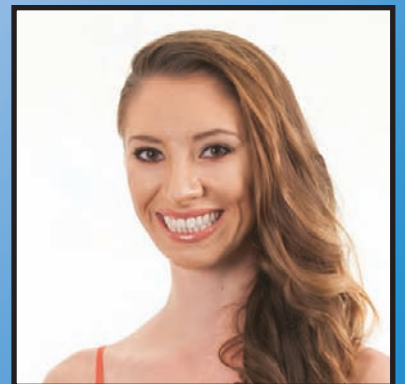
And Nothing.

Kat Dunphy

Tempe Artist



“Connor2”
Digital photography
Aug. 18, 2015



Kat Dunphy is finishing up her senior year at Arizona State University studying in fine-art photography. Her childhood home is in Glendale Arizona, but she currently resides in Tempe, Arizona. Other works by her can be found at <http://kedunphy.wix.com/katdphotography> and she can be reached at Closetcandylove@gmail.com.

Kat Dunphy

Tempe Artist



“Connor3”
Digital photography
Aug. 18, 2015

The photo shoot I had in mind that I wanted to portray for Blue Guitar was fun and energetic. Connor is an amazing guitar player, and music is a huge aspect of his life. I wanted to capture how he felt about music and how for him it's a release from the other responsibilities in his life. He's such a goofy and carefree guy — that side of him doesn't get portrayed often because of the occupation he's in. So we set out on a random afternoon and I said now be yourself, be a rock star. I think he nailed it.

- Kat Dunphy

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Photo by Richard H. Dyer Jr.

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About The Arizona Consortium for the Arts

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

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

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



a gallery, theater setting.

Please visit www.artizona.org 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.

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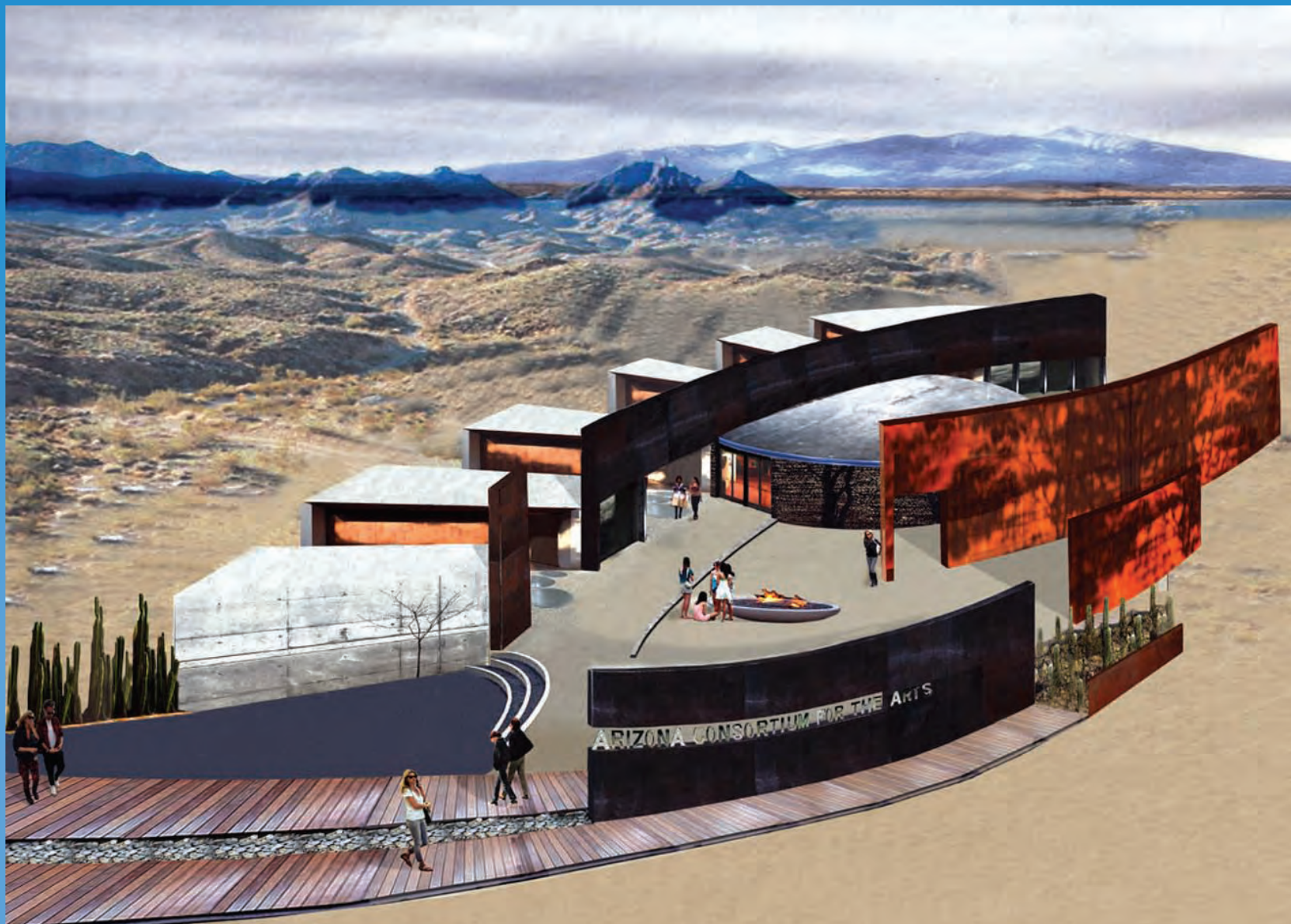
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Thank you for your continued support!



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

The consortium's vision for a multicultural arts center

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

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

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

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

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

Meet the staff of The Blue Guitar magazine



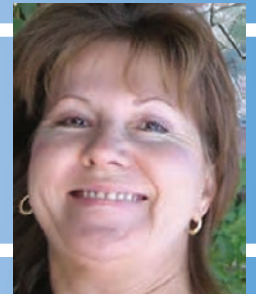
Elena Thornton, publisher: Founder and president of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, Elena is an educator, artist and poet and lives in Phoenix. Reach her at info@artizona.org.

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

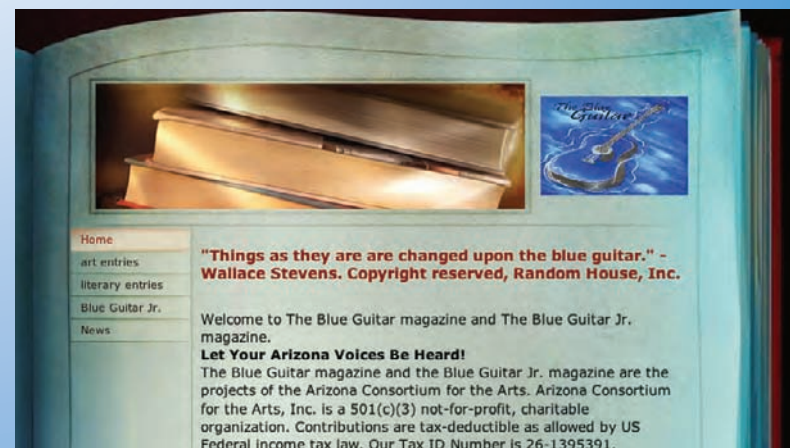


Richard H. Dyer Jr., co-editor: Richard (married to Rebecca, above) is the managing editor for three weekly newspapers in the East Valley, a photographer and a welded-steel sculptor. Reach him at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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



Check our websites for news on the arts



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

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

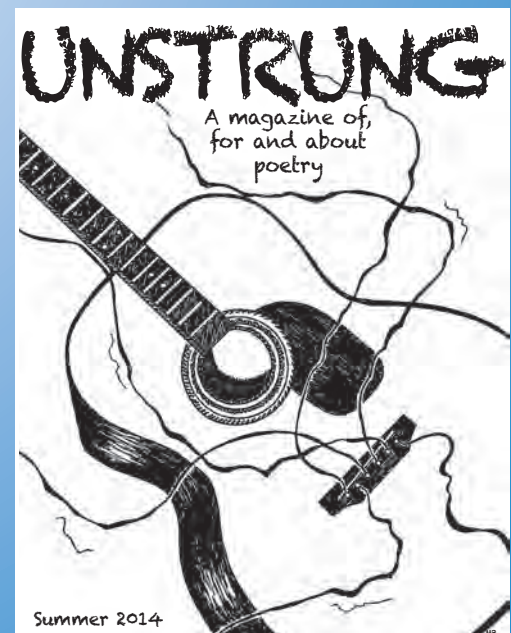
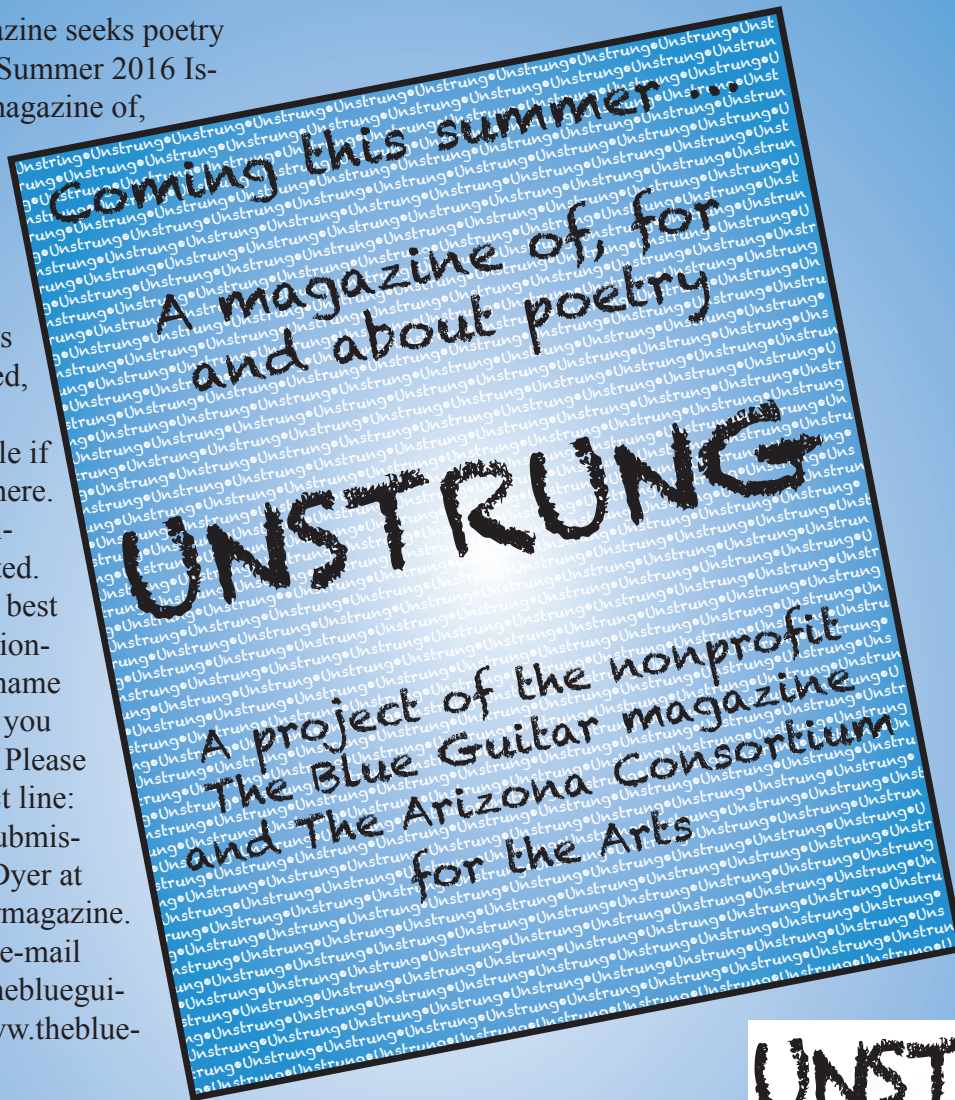
Fall 2015

A Call to Poets for the 2016 Issue of Unstrung

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

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

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



A Call to Writers for The Blue Guitar Jr.

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

The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks literary submissions for its next annual issue for children and teens. Submissions from children and teens and adults who write for children and teens are sought by Oct. 1, 2016, in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction — all geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Writers must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For additional information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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

A Call to Artists for The Blue Guitar Jr.

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

The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks art submissions for its next annual issue for children and teens. Submissions from children and teens and adults who create art for children and teens are sought by Oct. 1, 2016, in all media geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Artists must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the artist must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple mediums; up to 5 images can be submitted. Artists are encouraged to submit images of work by e-mail; please provide high-resolution JPEGs of 300 dpi. Images must be identified in the e-mail with the artist's name, contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. Please include your name and the best way to contact you. To submit or for more information, e-mail Editor Richard Dyer at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For additional information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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



A Call to Writers for Spring

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks literary submissions for the Spring 2016 Edition from Feb. 1 through March 4. Submissions are sought in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction. Writers must submit original work and must live part- or full-time in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. Submissions must be in the best shape possible and publication-ready. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

A Call to Artists for Spring

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks art submissions in all mediums for the Spring 2016 Edition from Feb. 1 through March 4. Any artists who work in any visual art media, are 18 years or older and are part- or full-time Arizona residents can submit. It is free to submit and up to 5 images can be submitted. Artists are encouraged to submit images of work by e-mail; please provide high-resolution JPEGs of 300 dpi. Images must be identified in the e-mail with the artist's name and contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. Submissions must be in the best shape possible and publication-ready. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Richard Dyer at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.



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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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Volume 7,
Number 2
Fall Issue
FREE!

*“Things
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