

The Blue Guitar



Table Of Contents

Art

“Persimmon I,” “Persimmon III,” “Persimmon III”
– *Lydia Quinones* 3-5

“Peeking Cat,” “Pansy Power,” “Pansy Cat,” “Jungle Cat,”
“Adenium – My Desert Rose” – *Laura Fellows* 14-18

“Alone Time,” “Superstition,” “Serenity,” “Awakening,”
“Rolling Hills” – *Leslie Walker* 29-33

“Life on Shady Lane,” “Just Dandy,” “Untitled,” “Five Zero
Eight” – *Joanna Proffitt* 52-55

“1, 2, 3 Ready or Not,” “Fishing,” “Peek-a-boo,” “Trying to
Get a Drink,” “Looking Good” – *Pamela Parker* 64-68

“Dancing Tree ‘Aqua,’” “White Lines,” “Berry Circles,”
“Watermelon Circles,” “Site Seeing” – *S.A. Benkiel* 76-78

Poetry

“Clouds” – *Meg Files* 6

“Betty,” “Willcox Elementary 1960,” “The Greek in the Quail”
– *Gari Crowley* 7-9

“Voluntary Exile,” “Landscape of a Child on Her Way to
Greenbriar Elementary,” “Appeal to the Red-Tailed Hawk,”
“Death of a Ground Squirrel,” “Father and Daughter,” “Last
Judgment” – *Paula Ashley* 19-24

“Self-Actualization,” “Change” – *Marshawn Antinisha* 27-28

“Piano Strings,” “Empty Spaces,” “To Live,”
“Perfect As Me,” “Once Upon a Vine,” “Skeletons and Ghosts”
– *April Anne* 34-39

“Gone Awry,” “What She Thought,” “A Friendly Ear,” “A
Brief Pause,” “Replaying Orwell’s 1984,” “He Fiddles While
We Burn,” “I’m That Nasty Woman,” “O’ Beautiful for
Spacious Skies” – *Esther Schnur-Berlot* 40-47

“Modern Era,” “Rebirth,” “In the Abode of She”
– *Heather Henry* 56-60

“Report from the Center,” “Interrupted Night,” “A Place
in History,” “A Sign Along the Way,” “Midday on Central
Avenue,” “For the Day’s Last Thrasher in the Yard”
– *David Chorlton* 70-75

“True Solidarity,” “The Soul,” “Paradise,” “Legos,” “It,”
“Inferno,” “Coming to Peace,” “Bleed (The Door)”
– *William Renfro* 81-93

“Blue-Eyed Cat,” “Cold Soup,” “Her Name Was a Lie,” “Mind
in a Box,” “Cold Nights with Jennifer” – *Julio Castro* 94-98

“What is seems,” “Autumn Early Light at Chauvet,” “After
Time After,” “After the Scent of Rain,” “Common Icons of
New England,” “We Shall See in Repair the Roads to Our
Future,” “Cathartes aura in Opere et Veritate” – *Richard
Fenton Sederstrom* 103-111

Fiction

“What Remains” – *Miriam Black* 10-13

“A Heart’s Desire” – *Sydney Avey* 25-26

“Poppies and Pendants” – *Lysa Cohen* 48-51

“Heard” – *Kayla Adamiec* 61-63

“Crazy Beauty,” “Unforgettable Summer”
– *Julio Castro* 99-102

Non-Fiction

“A Walk along Cienega Creek” – *Jason M. DeLeeuw* 69

News

Friday Night Writes 112

The 2017 Fall Festival of the Arts 113

Open Mic: A celebration of the arts 114

All about The Arizona Consortium for the Arts 114

The Consortium’s vision for a multicultural arts center 115

The Blue Guitar magazine staff biographies 116

Sign up for The Consortium’s e-newsletter 116

Call to poets for Summer 2017 issue of Unstrung 117

Calls to writers, artists for The Blue Guitar Jr. 118-119

Calls to writers, artists for Fall 2017 The Blue Guitar 120

Editors’ Note

Three rites of spring let me know the season is here. One of them is our annual Blue Guitar Spring Festival of the Arts, beautifully organized by Arizona Consortium for the Arts Founder and President Elena Thornton and featuring incredible performers in music, literature and culture. The second rite is our annual Blue Guitar Spring Issue. This issue is no exception as on these pages you will find an amazing array of talent, styles and genres reflecting the wonderful art and literature to be found across the spectrum in our state.



Co-Editor
Rebecca
“Becca” Dyer

The third rite of spring is a symbol of the constancy of art: With little water and in the rockiest of soils, the palo verde survives and bursts forth each year in a profusion of yellow. Just like the palo verde, all of the artistic talent to be found in this state cannot be contained. Fittingly, the palo verde is our state tree. Art will survive, indeed thrive, even in the most adverse of conditions. All the more reason why we must continue to create. Keep creating, Arizona, and keep submitting your beautiful work!

– Co-Editor Rebecca “Becca” Dyer

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Spring 2017

Lydia Quinones

Phoenix Artist



“Persimmon I”

Impasto acrylic painting

2016

The artist writes: “My mother’s family is Filipino and my father’s family is Yaqui. My works usually encompass Native American and Asian themes. My sculptural works often combine wool weavings, silk cocoons and Ming Dynasty porcelain. Due to the Japanese occupation of Manila during World War II, my grandparents’ home was heavily influenced by Japanese decor, especially with block prints that my grandfather collected by a Japanese Kamikaze pilot who turned to art after the war. My latest painting series of persimmons is based on recollections of visiting my grandparents when I was a child. During the month of March, my latest painting ‘Gold Persimmon on Red’ will be sold at the {9} Gallery for the fundraiser Red – An Art For Life Event to benefit the Phoenix Shanti Group. The color red, in my paintings, signifies luck and power while the gold signifies wealth. The yellow version is available in options of home décor at <https://www.redbubble.com/people/hauntedteashop/works/25572399-yellow-persimmon-on-red?asc=u&ref=recent-owner>.”



Lydia Quinones

Phoenix Artist



"Persimmon II"
Impasto oil painting
2016

"When I was in my twenties, I moved to China. The winters of Inner Mongolia were dry, dusty, and biting. I resorted to carrying hot, boiled eggs in my pockets to keep warm, as I frequented the street markets in search of the baskets of persimmons. The persimmons were shriveled from age and cold, with a powdery white mold dusted over them. A vendor once told me that the 'sweetest fruits only grow in the harshest conditions.' I feel that such a concept can be applied to many instances of physical and emotional hardships in life. I hope the viewers will reflect on their own hardships and the sweet rewards, when they see my art."

- Lydia Quinones

Lydia Quinones

Phoenix Artist



"Persimmon III"
Impasto oil painting
2016

A Poem by Meg Files

Clouds

© 2017

"I've looked at clouds from both sides now"

— Joni Mitchell

The sky is full of water unseen
without clouds. When droplets join
droplets, gravity makes rain.
Our father loved clouds. *Look.*
That's a bear. And now it's opening
its mouth, and now it's a dog.
My sixth-grade science project
was clouds, and I remember
Dad always loved them. My poster
described the types, in lovely
words—cirrus, cumulus, stratus—
but now I know they blacken and
morph into nothing that can
be classified. What else
did our father see—a dairy cow,
a cavalry horse, an elephant?
He woke his daughter at dawn
to photograph the sunrise in her pj's.
The sky is not above us—we live
within it. The sky vibrates here
in the waning light, and our tears
are rain, and clouds quilt the sky.
Father, in their moods
I see your countenance,
the milk-streaked sky, the luminous
towers, the watercolor sunset.
What are the creatures
in your clouds now? You, who
taught us to look to the sky,
now we know the flood
of light in darkness, that glory.

—for Harold Stever Bryan
(1920-2016)



Meg Files is the author of the novels "Meridian 144" and "The Third Law of Motion," "Home Is the Hunter and Other Stories," "The Love Hunter and Other Poems," and "Writing What You Know," a book about using personal experience and taking risks with writing. She edited "Lasting: Poems on Aging." Her stories and poems have appeared in many publications, including Fiction, Writers' Forum, Oxford Magazine, The Tampa Review, and Crazyhorse. New poems appear in Miramar and the anthology "Driftfish."

3 Poems by Gari Crowley

Betty

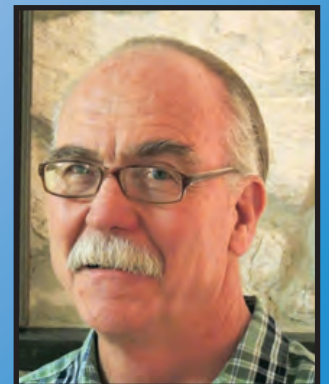
© 2017

A simple thought on a spring evening of someone I used to know.
From a measure of time, a journey that has taken untold turns,
a memory, opaque, of someone I will never see again.
What it is that matters I am not sure. I wonder, truth be told,
to where you did go, Betty, from somewhere around nineteen-eighty.
I only ask as a matter of time, thirty-eight years or so.

I contemplate reasons and itemize clichés that still hold true.
It may be the losses I discounted, the matters of regret,
reverberations of my foolish youth and its consequences,
the passing of ships in the mortal night's indifference or a
civil musing, only a regard that all is well and happy.
For what it's worth, Betty, time is such a long and quiet distance.
It only makes sense to let it breathe and to let it go in peace.

The spring air breathes through the twilight window, my heart at days end asks—
To where did you go, Betty? Somewhere, from around nineteen-eighty.

Gari is a native of Arizona and has lived here all his life. He lives in Sierra Vista with his wife, Linda, and their two cats, Tony and Baxter.



Willcox Elementary 1960

© 2017

When the firmament
of boyhood
had processed
girls
Hortensia and
Josephine
and me (my
cuffs
rolled up and a
butch haircut;
their wavy
black
hair
and natural looks)
flinging on
the playground
swings,
our
juvenescent antics,
romping on the
elementary
turf,
having taken the
step into
metaphor;
birds,
bees,
of familial
innocence, in
skylarking
play.

The Greek in the Quail

© 2017

Traversing the
Sonoran neighborhood
of enemy territory,

Gambel's quail running
between cover
travail a crowded terrain.

A long standing
extant extended
family

bantering toward
the olive
tree,

one generation
coming while
another ceasing.

Making the best
of their search
for survival

under empirical skies,
among warriors
of the ground,

raiders of
tradition and tales—
always in the moment.

Quail rustle in the leaves,
their eventuality
prepared before them.

Delivered up to their
enemies, submitting
to the punishment.

Always strangers
in a strange country.
A tragic destiny, to end.

Gone now after
fifteen years,
victims of their nature.

Mortal fate is hard;
best get used
to it.

What Remains

By Miriam Black

© 2017

The noise from Oracle Road intensified when the Snow Birds arrived in November. Four lanes now with a speed limit of fifty miles per hour. Cars and trucks whooshed, brakes screeched, horns honked and the very irritating cough of motorcycles made it impossible for Doris to find peace on her patio. In the summer, the heat drove her inside and now it was the traffic. She hadn't been out for longer than fifteen minutes before she moved back into the silence of her home.

Sometimes she had one good hour to sit out on the patio, sip her coffee, watch dawn touch the Catalina Mountains and the palo verdes sway in the breeze. When they'd bought the townhouse so many years before, there was no way to predict the multitude of developments that would proliferate around Oracle Road. Block after block of massive buildings, squeezed together between parking lots. They popped up like the mushrooms that had grown in the forest behind Doris's house as a child. No forest here. No mushrooms. Only anonymous buildings and parking lots.

And stores. So many stores. They engulfed her small home. Mattress stores, gas stations and nail spas. Why were there suddenly so many mattress stores? How many mattresses do people buy in their lifetime? She could probably google it and discover an answer. But what difference did it make?

How old was their mattress? Now hers alone. She continued to sleep on her side, forty two years on the same side, the right side as one faced the bed. Another thing that didn't matter. Joe had liked to fall asleep with the television on but she hadn't turned it on in the bedroom for three years. Instead she'd curl up with her face near Joe's pillow and try to remember what he looked like. She had pictures, lots of pictures, but they didn't

show the sweet hairs that always curled along his neck or the plaid pajamas he loved. Not one picture of him in his pajamas, or of him coming out of a steamy shower, or reaching into his closet. The motion of him beside her forever. Empty now. Surrounded by hollow space.

Here I go again, Doris thought as she poured her second cup of coffee. Full of self-pity and sorrow. "Feel your feelings," the grief counselor had told her and then said, "Don't hold on to the pain." So confusing. And she knew it didn't matter. No one cared one way or the other whether she stared at Joe's pillow or became a vegetarian. Even her son, who called once a week from Atlanta, didn't really care about her. "I'm just fine," she'd tell him every Sunday morning. "Feel great. No worries. How are you?" And he'd be off talking about his lawn, the addition they were building, anything but listening to her.

Well, he probably did care. He called, but what could she say? Hey, I'm tired of living. I know I have grandkids but I don't really matter to them. She couldn't say that even if it was exactly what she felt. It would just upset him. He'd offer suggestions. Come live with us. Volunteer somewhere, you'll feel better. But nothing could put Joe back on his side of the bed. Pathetic, she thought. He's dead. Move on. She was sick of herself.

She stood in front of the full-length mirror on the bathroom door for a little conversation. "Doris, you're getting close to swallowing a bottle of pills. Is that what you want? Get over yourself. I am sick of your self-pity." She actually spoke out loud to the old lady in the mirror every morning. The woman who sort of looked familiar although the one in the mirror was skinnier, slightly more faded, and saggier than she remem-

Continued on page 11



The author writes: "I've been writing for years, but only now, in retirement, have I been able to truly focus. My first novel, 'Turtle Season,' earned first prize in 2013 for literary fiction from the Midwest Independent Publishers Association. Three of my short stories appeared in Sand Script 2016. Through my characters, I explore a constant preoccupation in my own life – how do we as humans manage the inevitable and often very surprising events that change our lives? How do we rediscover or maybe recreate ourselves? What keeps us resilient through the often treacherous journey? Born and raised in Minneapolis, I have lived in Israel, Los Angeles, Seattle and Truth or Consequences. Now, in Tucson, I am concentrating on my second novel, 'Prayer to a Feckless God,' as it emerges. I can be reached at miriamruthblack@gmail.com."

bered.

Still in her nightgown and slippers at ten in the morning, she leaned in to study her new hair color. “Not bad,” she said. “Doris you look like your mother now. Strawberry blond. The old lady color, sort of like a field of wheat at sunset.” She got out her mirror and checked the back. “At least you didn’t go dark like Cindy’s husband. White stubble on his cheeks and perfectly dark hair. Looks ridiculous.”

Doris took one last careful look at her hair. She had to admit she did look less dreary, at least on the outside. She’d had it colored because her neighbor, Cindy, wouldn’t stop nagging. “You might scare people with that thatch of gray hair. Get it styled. Color it. Fix yourself up.” Cindy spent a lot of time fixing herself up. Chemical peels, highlights, low lights, manicures, pedicures, anything that would keep her looking sixty, especially from far away, rather than seventy. Doris knew she’d even done Botox.

Cindy did care about her, but Doris wished she’d stop saying, “We’re going to juice you up. Let’s get you married again or at least a boyfriend.” Cindy’s agenda for Doris.

Cindy and Carl, her husband, had dragged Doris along with them to a dance at the Senior Center about a year after Joe passed. She hadn’t bothered to color her hair then. Carl had been polite and asked her to dance first, but then a very skinny bald man with hairs poking from his ears asked her to dance. He danced okay so it wasn’t too bad until he mumbled about how well Viagra actually worked. At first she thought she imagined it, but he leaned in close and whispered in her ear, “I’m hotter than I was at twenty.” It did give her pause, but nothing fluttered inside, no rush. She often didn’t feel much with Joe either, maybe tiny little flicks of a flutter, but she was used to him. Viagra or no Viagra, it seemed like a lot of effort for nothing. Although everything else did as well.

But Cindy refused to give up. “Doris, you are going to just dry up and die one of these days. We’ll smell you when we’re walking the dog.”

She was full of suggestions — library book clubs, Spanish lessons, volunteer opportunities. “Go anyplace where there are other people. Forget about all those couples that haven’t called you since Joe died.”

Then just the other day Cindy stopped by with her dog Murphy, a yellow lab, who weighed a good one hundred pounds and always wiggled his way to Doris in a frenzy of excitement. She kept a box of biscuits ready for him. Murphy always expected a treat.

“You know,” Cindy said. Her calculating tone was familiar to Doris. Another suggestion was imminent. “You know, I really need your help. Remember I dance with the Alzheimer’s pa-

tients over at Colonial Acres on Saturdays? Remember? Well, I need some help.”

“How about a cup of coffee.”

“Don’t distract me. It’s fun. You’ll love it.”

Colonial Acres resembled dozens of other buildings that housed the aged in Tucson, long flat beige boxes with handicapped access driveways. Joe had been in rehab there after his stroke, but never made it back home. Cindy drove around to the back, to a separate building Doris had never noticed. They were buzzed into the locked building. They came through to a small reception area where Cindy signed them in while Doris stood behind cursing to herself, still shocked that she had agreed to come. She knew a smile was frozen on her face as the Volunteer Coordinator thanked her for helping Cindy. “Everyone loves Cindy here. I’m sure they’ll love you too.”

Not what she was looking for. Cindy had known she could move Doris with guilt. “I wouldn’t have asked you, but I really do need help. You know, I’m always happy to be here for you. If you could help me just this once.”

Dancing with Alzheimer patients. Seriously? Doris had no idea how to prepare. What does one wear? She’d decided on a blue polyester pantsuit, little pumps that matched, and pearls. When Cindy, wearing yoga pants and a tee shirt, picked her up, she realized she’d overdressed. But Cindy had prepped her about what she was supposed to do. “We’re there to get them moving, smiling. Anything we can do to keep them connected to the world.” That hit a chord with Doris. She knew she wasn’t very connected either.

They were escorted to a large room where the patients participated in the Educational Opportunity before dancing. A young woman operated a laptop which projected a YouTube video onto a large screen. She read each title loudly to the residents. The Colonial Acres logo decorated her lavender polo shirt. As Doris looked around the room, she noticed a few other young people who wore similar shirts, apparently the uniform of the aides.

Near the projector a thin woman sat and moaned loudly, while another told her to shut up over and over again. Doris wasn’t sure what she was supposed to do, so she chose a seat at the back and observed while Cindy walked between the chairs and said hello to the patients. She ran her hand across the cheek of the woman moaning. “Hi, Ellen, I’m so happy to see you. You look gorgeous today.” And then a hug for Audrey, who stared at the ceiling. “I love your blouse. Very stylish.” Cindy stopped at every chair with a touch, a comment or a hug. Some patients reached into the hugs and hugged back, others smiled and some scarcely noticed the attention.

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11

Doris checked her watch. An hour and a half to go. She couldn't imagine any of them moving, let alone dancing. No way. One look at the fifteen or twenty people seated around the room made it obvious to Doris that there was her own kind of disconnection and then there was the kind around her, people with completely empty eyes. An absence of being. One woman barely blinked, her eyes wide open, as if surprised, without a flicker of life except the drool that slowly dripped from her open mouth. Every few minutes an aide came by with a tissue to wipe it away.

Funny YouTube videos of dogs followed one about dolphins, followed by cats playing pianos. The moaner continued to moan, moving from a steady hum to a high coyote-like howl, up and down the scale she went. A tall, hefty aide sat down next to her, took her small hand into his own large hand and tried to comfort her. She sat quietly for a moment and then started moaning again. Doris had no idea what it meant, if anything. Was she in pain? Was the woman trying to say something? Was it perhaps involuntary? Each time the woman's voice reached a crescendo, Doris's stomach clenched. She feared the woman who continued to yell "Shut up" would hit the moaner. Doris had googled Alzheimer's earlier in the day and read about belligerence and anger, so she anticipated possible violence. But nothing happened. Most sat passively. Quietly. Even the shut-up lady showed little emotion or intention to act.

Finally it was dance time. Doris followed Cindy to the party room where she helped move the chairs into a circle and the tables back against the wall. Cindy started the Rock and Roll CD she played every week. Oldies but goodies. Only fast dances, Cindy had told her. Doris went back to the education room to help the aides move the patients. Some were in wheelchairs and the aides wheeled them from one room to the other. The others sat in their chairs or stood immobile. Some trembled and others stood firm, indeed rigid, like pillars. Again Doris cursed Cindy silently for forcing her to endure this confusion and pain. No one saw her. Doris was as invisible in this room as she was in her own living room. Irrelevant to these people.

Cindy just kept being cheerleader. She'd wrap her arm around someone and lead them to the dance room and come back for someone else, guide them as they stumbled along. Doris mimicked her behavior, acted as if . . . as if she cared . . . as if she could help . . . as if it mattered. Music filled the halls. "Wooly Bully." What a crazy old song. The beat intense. Doris noticed the shut-up lady was now saying Wooly Bully, not necessarily to the beat, but the words were precise. Wooly Bully and then her hands clapped, again not to the beat. But

they clapped.

It was clear to Doris that Cindy really did need help. A few family members started to arrive and focused on their loved ones, to hold hands or sit next to them. One couple danced, and the blank look on the tiny woman's face was transformed and radiant as she did some form of dance to "Rock Around the Clock." Still many sat alone and unmoving. So again Doris mimicked Cindy's behavior and invited people to dance. One galumph of a man, who wore a Wildcats jersey and shorts, walked toward her and began to sway as Doris took his hand and moved it back and forth to the beat. His face remained vacant. When the song ended Doris thanked him and without any eye contact, he answered, "You're welcome."

Doris had loved to dance with Joe, loved his arms around her, loved being guided around the dance floor or twirled about. This was something very different, but she found her body responding to the old familiar tunes. The patients responded too. Not that suddenly their faces were alert, eyes sparkling. Far from it. But she could tell that some synapses connected to something, some energy awoke. When "Calendar Girl" played, Doris could hear the words coming from many of them. They sang in many keys at different rhythms, but they knew the words and they were singing.

Doris formed a group of three patients who moved to the next song in a circle, then danced with a thin man in a sports jacket, who could do the triple Lindy, which she hadn't done in a lifetime. Only fifteen minutes left and she could go home and never come back.

She saw Antoinette sit down and went to invite her to dance, or rather encourage her to get up off the chair and move. Cindy had told her all about Antoinette on the ride to Colonial Acres. She had been a well-known television personality. Pictures of the patients lined the walls and the one with Antoinette's name showed a stunning woman with long auburn hair posed along a Red Carpet in an emerald green gown. Now Antoinette hunched over at the waist, her head faced the floor while her arms stretched downward, and her fingers picked at some invisible substance, pick, pick, pick. Even in a chair, she reached down around the legs and picked with her face lowered so only the top of her head was visible. Cindy had said that no physical diagnosis explained Antoinette's posture.

Doris had observed Antoinette dance with Cindy and therefore knew it was possible to get her up and moving. She reached out her hand to Antoinette and said, "Come dance with me. It's so much fun."

What an idiot, Doris thought. What an inane thing to say. But Antoinette's fingers clutched at Doris's hands like a claw, and she did get up. Antoinette's arms moved up and down

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

along with Doris's to the beat of "The Loco-Motion." They stood in one place. Antoinette's head remained lowered but began to sway from side to side. She wore flowered shorts, an elegant red tee shirt and silver flats. Doris wondered who helped her dress. Who chose her clothes? An aide? Or did Antoinette? Wrapped in her own thoughts, Doris was startled when Antoinette's head shifted slightly upward and her blue eyes latched onto Doris's with a deep, penetrating stare. No one had truly looked at her all afternoon, let alone with a direct gaze. Was there intent behind that stare? A question? A message? There was something haunting about Antoinette's eyes moving over Doris's face. Nothing hostile or kind, but simply there. No agenda. Doris felt goose bumps, and all the while "The Loco-Motion" played in the background and their arms pumped up and down to the beat. It was the first time she'd actually seen Antoinette's face, the dark circles surrounding her large eyes and her puffy skin. Antoinette had seen her. Maybe the look lasted ten seconds, maybe thirty before Antoinette lowered her head again. Doris had no idea. But there had been a connection. Some meaning, although Doris had no idea what, or even if anything had really happened. She wondered if she mattered to Antoinette. And mostly she wondered if any of it made any difference.

Doris thanked Antoinette for the dance and unwound Antoinette's fingers from her own. She led her back to a chair where Antoinette quickly resumed her picking.

"Last dance," Cindy called and Doris had another go at the Triple Lindy. Cindy hugged each person. Doris smiled and stood in the background. She couldn't believe Cindy's kindness, her loving nature. What could bring someone back to volunteer with these people week after week for years? Whatever it was, Doris knew she didn't have it. The receptionist punched numbers into a keyboard and they were out into the afternoon sun. Only then did Doris realize the only windows inside faced a small enclosed courtyard with no view to the outside.

Doris barely paid attention as Cindy chatted on and on about the afternoon. Her own thoughts drifted as they drove south on Oracle Road. She noticed landscaping around the condo complexes, palo verdes and mesquite trees lining the walking paths. Solar panels now covered the parking lots. From a distance, she saw children playing on a balcony. But as far as her mind drifted, it kept returning to Antoinette's stare. Somewhere in that disjointed body and mind was still a person and that person had seen her. How odd. She no longer felt totally invisible. It was all jumbled in Doris's mind, but one thing was shout-out-in-neon clear to her after dancing with the Alzheimer's patients. It would be difficult to continue to cling to her sadness and self-pity.

What was left? Maybe only a question to answer. Even if Joe was gone, along with his loving care and deep interest in her. Even if she didn't really matter to her son or grandkids. Even if her life didn't matter to anyone else on the planet, she was stuck with the question of whether or not her life mattered to her. She knew it was time to find out.

Laura Fellows

Sedona Artist



"Peeking Cat"
Watercolor
February 2015

Laura Fellows paddled and played her childhood summers away with her sisters on and in the Greenbrier River in West Virginia while their mother painted on the screened porch of the family log cabin and their father did repairs and built additions. In the evenings, the family played music on the porch. This early exposure to art, music, nature and practical mechanics fostered an insatiable desire for a life packed with all of that. Just as her father returned home with his family after the summers to his "real job," Laura developed a professional career while continuing to navigate the river of her creativity. A spontaneous move to Arizona as a young adult changed the external scenery, but her art has continued to reflect her internal world, which is filled with music, flowering plants and her therapy cat — Lena. A dream of following her mother's footsteps into oil painting dissolved as she fell in love with the potential of watercolors. Her mother's work was always a study of light, no matter the "subject," and similarly, Laura continually portrays musical themes, no matter what the subject. She has a strong desire for accessibility in her art and strives to abstract the musical elements while developing integrity and accuracy in her portrayals of musical instruments, flowers, and cats. The artist can be reached at laura@bossarosa.com.



Laura Fellows

Sedona Artist



“Pansy Power”
Watercolor
March 2015

“My painting and music are so entwined, at times they seem the same. Perhaps that is part and parcel of my synesthesia. When I listen to music, even in my mind’s ear, I am aware of three-dimensional lines that I feel compelled to follow – with my hand, a brush, or a mental image only I can see. When I paint, the music follows me into the painting – the tempo and rhythm structure the forms, the texture and dynamics lead to drama or visual subtlety, and above it all the lines I hear flow around the painting the way I sense them. I paint almost exclusively from life, which leads me to paint my beloved cat, flowers, and musical instruments. Nevertheless, these are vehicles and the true subject in all of my paintings is the music pulsing and flowing beneath the watercolor images. I struggle to master the form of the cat, flowers, and instruments. This quest involves studying botany, playing music, and contemplating the form of the cat. But it always goes back to the music. Five years ago, my paintings typically included musical instruments, but my obsessive desire is to portray music without tipping my hand by including a guitar or a cello.”

- Laura Fellows

Laura Fellows

Sedona Artist

**“Pansy Cat”
Watercolor
March 2015**



Laura Fellows

Sedona Artist



**"Jungle Cat"
Watercolor
February 2015**

Laura Fellows

Sedona Artist



**“Adenium – My Desert
Rose”
Watercolor
August 2015**

6 Poems by Paula Ashley

Voluntary Exile

© 2017

Rather than join the armies
of commuters
racing to cubicles with no windows,
she created her den
in a box in her backyard.
The yellow flowers of the ash
shook their pollen
onto the rosemary
under the trees.
The women who gathered
together on the pages of Facebook
didn't see what she saw.



Paula Ashley is a retired software engineer who earned her MFA from Queens University of Charlotte. She lives in Glendale, Arizona, with her husband and an abundance of birds that hang out on the solar fountains in their backyard. Paula has had poems published in numerous journals including: *Four Chambers*; *New Fraktur Arts Journal*, *OASIS Journal*; *Sandcutters*; *The Blue Guitar*; *The Examined Life*, and *Unstrung*. She has poems in "Poetry and Prose for the Phoenix Art Museum" by *Four Chambers Press* and in "Weatherings" by *Future Cycle Press*. The poet writes, "This selection of six poems are the first six poems in my manuscript 'Transparence of My World.' The inspiration for these poems comes from 'Transparence du Monde' by Jean Follain as translated by W.S. Merwin. As I am not wise enough to speak for the whole world in the manner of Jean Follain, I used the poems as prompts to create my world, or my slice of the world here in the Sonoran Desert. After writing my poems, I read the credits and found the translated poems came from 'Usage du Temp.' I ordered this book from a small bookstore in Switzerland for a very modest price. I found 'Usage du Temp' contained a collection of small works by Jean Follain, perhaps chapbooks, and that Merwin's selections did not all reside in the section 'Transparence du Monde.' There are 54 of these poems in my collection."

Landscape of a Child on Her Way to Greenbriar Elementary

© 2017

The great silence of the street in morning
broken by the song of the mockingbird
perched on the trash barrel
by the curb
waiting for pickup
while armies of ants line a trail
from the barrel to their den in the lawn.
The wasps making honey
from flowering mesquite.
The weeds in the yard of the man
with no wife or mother-in-law
to scold him.
The rabbit sitting motionless
by the neglected plaster angel.
All these foretell the magnificent dawn
when the child dons cap and gown
and leaves forever.

Appeal to the Red-Tailed Hawk

© 2017

O Hawk,
do not scan the neighbor's yard.
Yes, it is vacant now,
the neighbor sent to senior living.
Oranges no longer juiced
litter the ground.
Memories linger in the shadows
of those golden days
when she came out to gather them.
Ground squirrels play hide and seek,
their mounds now undisturbed.
A sign announces "FOR SALE"
to cars passing by.

O Hawk,
She lives, though at a distance,
and may new neighbors bring
young children here to play
and drink the juice of oranges
before they fall forever
to the ground.

Death of a Ground Squirrel

© 2017

Under the yellow bells,
a feral cat tortures the flattened being
red eyes still roaming in its skull
blood oozing from its side.

A hawk hovers
in a nearby tree watching
for when the cat is finished
with the creature.

The lilting voices of the neighbor's daughters
rise over the landscape
their hearts as carefree as mallow blossoms.

The ground squirrel remains motionless
until the cat drags it off
to leave under wild grasses
growing sadly in the alley.

Father and Daughter

© 2017

She was born in the middle of his studies,
orange blossoms begetting fruit
under the window
where her mother was visited
by a public health nurse.
Her father raised his voice
demanding silence
when he was with them
so his studies would not be interrupted.
She learned to make no noise
and later to spend her time
in her room reading
late into the night.
Her mother gathered fabrics
and threads and went
to her sewing machine
by the window.

Last Judgment

© 2017

When the hot days of summer
have melded into autumn,
when the scarlet days of autumn
have given way to frost,
will I have left my papers in order,
cleared the clutter gathered
by my days on this earth?
Will the ash trees shade my garden?
Will the rosemary call
the lesser goldfinch to come
down from the mountains?
Will the apricot mallow
bloom with the winter rains
and the desert marigolds thrust
their heads up from seed
dropped carelessly by birds?

A Heart's Desire

By Sydney Avey

© 2017

Winter mornings, Em envies Earnestine. Her cousin is interning in Arizona, managing a cultural center and performing at storytelling festivals. Em would like to move somewhere like Arizona, where there is warmth and light.

Em takes the short flight of stairs from her tiny loft bedroom in three steps. She stands in the art co-op space she shares with painters, potters, and bead makers and takes a centering breath. These are the artists who keep Teapot's gift shops supplied with local merchandise.

She is alone in the studio. Most of the artists have homes, children, day jobs. Wrapping her sweater closely around her shivering torso, Em follows the light in the co-op. Mornings, she stands at the counter under the window crushing bits of paper into pulp and turning the slurry back into paper for her journals. When the light deserts the window above the paste-spattered sink, she moves to her art table and works at binding her books.

Sometimes clouds park in an eight hour zone over the tiny skylight above her head, and her mood darkens. Today, she flips the switch on the only lamp she owns. The lightbulb flickers, pops, and signals its demise in a puff of smoke. Now it really is too dark to work.

Out on the sidewalk, Em fingers the peplum hem on the stiff corset she has buckled over a lacy Victorian blouse. Her boots click on the pavement. Her boot heels are worn down to the shoe nails. They tip her off balance. "Chin up," she tells herself. She shifts her weight forward in the ill-fitting footwear, limps to the corner, and pushes through the doors of the Beanpunk Café.

"Wow, this place is crowded for the middle of the day!" Em

tosses a purple throw pillow off the green seat of a low-backed sofa and makes room for herself beside her friend Elle. "I hope all these people aren't out of work and looking for jobs."

"Are you looking for a job?" Elle hands her a copy of the Teapot Times. "There are exactly two job listings in Classifieds."

"I need to give it another try. My last lightbulb burned out and I can't afford to replace it. I had to get dressed in the dark."

Elle admires the softly flared skirt that completes Em's outfit. "You may not be able to see yourself in the mirror, but trust me, you look adorable."

At the condiment counter, a Bluetooth hanging off a man's ear suggests that the loud instructions he issues into the air might be intended for an actual person.

Around a nearby table, a moms' group shows remarkable focus on the apocalyptic bestseller they are discussing. Nearby, their toddlers bang toys on their stroller trays.

Scattered about, college students Skypeing with study buddies raise their voices above the laughter of the early release school kids who are watching YouTube videos.

Em closes her eyes and cups her ears. A touch on her elbow brings her back. She follows the point of Elle's finger to a mug waiting for her on the coffee table. While Elle twists a lemon into her espresso and sips the strong brew down to its dregs, Em retrieves a tea bag from her pocket and dangles it around in the hot water. Hissing steam and clattering dishes prevent further conversation.

Beanpunk regular Pastor Jerry is unaffected by the din. An electric field of calm seems to surround the wiry cleric. He makes his way over to where the girls are seated, pulls a busi-

Continued on page 26



Sydney Avey is the author of two historical fiction novels, "The Sheep Walker's Daughter" and "The Lyre and the Lambs." Her work has appeared in Epiphany, Foliate Oak, Forge, American Athenaeum, Unstrung, Ruminant and MTL Magazine. Sydney has a degree in English from the University of California, Berkeley, and has studied at the Iowa Summer Writing Festival. She writes about our human experience and the faith journey. Sydney and her airplane-enthusiast husband divide their time between the Sierra Nevada foothills of Yosemite, California, and the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. Sydney enjoys theater, travel, and choral singing. Visit Sydney's website at sydneyavey.com or contact her at sydneyavey@gmail.com.

ness card out of his shirt pocket, and sets it on the table. Em smells latte and sugar doughnuts on his breath. *How does he stay so skinny when he eats like that?*

The pastor leans over and whispers words into Em's ear that prickle the skin at the base of her neck. "Bill Murphy at the new museum is looking for help," he says. He straightens up. "Oh, and check your email this afternoon."

Late in the day, the sky clears and the temperature warms a few degrees. Em walks to the park behind the library where she knows she will find quiet and free wifi. She sits on a stone bench and punches in the number on the business card Pastor Jerry gave her. The position is administrative and likely already filled, she's sure. But no, the curator is looking for someone special to do paper conservation, a process that reverses damage done to maps, prints, artwork, and paper documents. *Wow!* She has spent the past two years teaching herself that process. With visions of lucky stars and lottery tickets dancing in her head, she sets up an interview.

Heart pounding now, she fires up her tablet and sees a message from Shiloh Temple. It reads, *We have good news for you. Please set your spam filter to receive messages from Your Heart's Delight.*

Em checks her spam folder where she finds and approves an email.

Dear Heart,

Send no money. No representative will call. We have one simple request. Think about what you treasure. That is where you will find the desires of your heart.

Em powers off her iPad. The late afternoon sun warms her shoulders. She takes in a deep breath, releases a sigh, and talks softly to the breeze. "What do I love? I have tried so hard to turn my expensive degree into a teaching job, but what I really love is restoration—turning something worthless into something beautiful."

She breathes the silence, feels a lightness in her being. The honeyed scent of flowering quince fills her nostrils, leaving a sweet taste on her tongue. What does she treasure? This moment, where time stands still. Here, where circumstance recedes and hope flowers. For one still small moment, nothing blinks or beeps. The only sound she hears is Love calling her name.

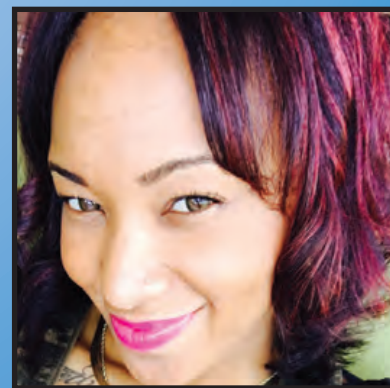
2 Poems by Marshawn Antinisha

Self-Actualization

© 2017

When a man wants a woman, he makes it known.
He goes above and beyond to ensure that it's shown.
A woman's heart will be smiling from the attention alone.
When a man wants a woman, she won't have to question.
His infallible love won't be a suggestion.
Yet a mere reflection of his heart.
He influences his love right from the start.
As a provider and a protector.
He will never neglect her.
The power of a Man is exciting and essential.
Within the hierarchy of needs, should be presidential.
I'd like a headstrong man, leading the way. For my enormous heart, what's he willing to pay?

The poet writes: "San Diego, born and raised, beautiful weather and ocean waves. Raising two soldiers, knowledge is in the eyes of the beholder. Life's what you make it, I'm living proof." Contact the poet at rcpbreathe@gmail.com.



Change

© 2017

I'm ready to change the outcome,
I know that I may be a doubt to some,
It's time to revisit the plans in place,
Defining all of the negative faces,
I haven't always made the best choices in life.
It wasn't meant for me to be his wife.
Embarking on a new design
Set sail for Gods blessed timeline.
I'm ok with the changes he requested of me.
Just tryna see who he truly wants me to be.
Casting out all of the negative entities,
Shining and full of this energy.
I'm ready now, full force, there's no stopping me!

Leslie Walker

Mesa Artist



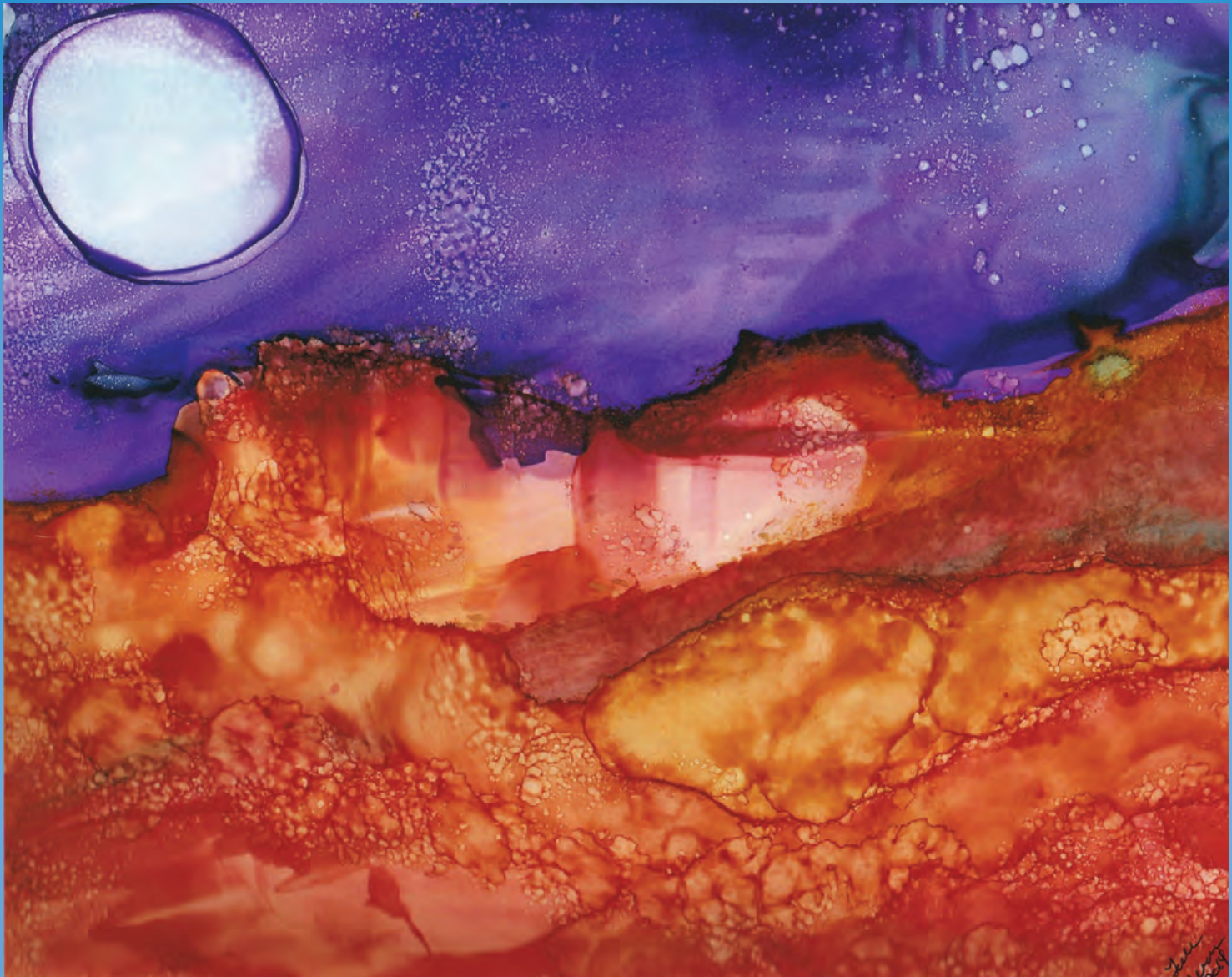
“Alone Time”
20” x 25”
Alcohol ink
2015



Artist Leslie Walker writes: “My grandparents were instrumental in helping develop my creativity. I remember many days watching Bob Ross in their TV room and creating with supplies they gave me. My grandmother would exclaim over anything completed, even when it was a terrible mess. In 2011, my family and I moved to San Tan Valley, Arizona, from Kentucky to be with my husband’s family. He grew up at the base of the Superstitions and missed the climate. This is when my art really began to flourish. Being from Kentucky, I was awestruck by the wild horses and the beauty of mountains that were so different from where I grew up. We have since moved into Mesa, and I have explored many more mediums. My loves are colored pencil, mixed media and ink. I always come back to the vibrant ink. I love to share my passion of art with others and often teach small groups. My favorite thing to teach is how to manage stress through creative exploration. I am fortunate to be able to work at a local art store as the demo artist, allowing me to network with other creatives. More of my work can be found at www.artistlesiewalker.com.”

Leslie Walker

Mesa Artist



“Superstition”

9” x 12”

Alcohol Ink

“I create art to be able to get through my days. One could say it is my coping mechanism for stress. Quite often, I will paint nature scenes with vivid inks as seen in ‘Alone Time.’ When I painted this landscape, it was at the time the largest painting in ink I had done. To me, it was a sort of meditation and the place I would have liked to be sitting on that particular day. Trees feature a lot in my work. As a sign of strength and shelter, they remind us that we all weather our own storms but can come through still standing. This is something I teach my students. Paint what you feel or where you want to be. Let your canvas or paper hold the emotions. Art, like life, is not perfect. However, it can be a beautiful, joyous, messy, ridiculous ride.”

- Leslie Walker

Leslie Walker

Mesa Artist



**“Serenity”
9” x 12”
Alcohol Ink
2014**

Leslie Walker

Mesa Artist



“Awakening”
9” x 12”
Alcohol ink
2016

Leslie Walker

Mesa Artist



"Rolling Hills"
4" x 6"
Alcohol Ink
2016

6 Songs by April Anne

Piano Strings

© 2017

I can see the truth in your eyes
so stop feeding me your bullshit lies
we've hit this topic many times before
and it always ends with me walking out the door
yet I keep coming back to you
always feels like the right thing to do
I'm your dirty little secret
so wrap me in piano strings
and hide me between the sheets
where no one can find me
except you
I'm tired of feeling used and unappreciated
our predicament is so outdated
spinning in circles till I can't find straight
and your timing is always too late
you want me when I'm not around
and when I'm there you're nowhere to be found
yet I keep coming back to you
always feels like the right thing to do
I'm your dirty little secret
so wrap me in piano strings
and hide me between the sheets
where no one can find me
except you

April Anne is originally from Boston, MA, but has called Arizona home since 1990. April has been writing music and poetry since she could put a pen to paper. Her lyrics always come from a place that she knows, her life. She has lived major ups and downs and all are reflected in her music. When she is in love, she writes songs that could melt any man's heart, but when she's been hurt, she writes lyrics that touch many deeply. She admits she has made many mistakes, but if given the opportunity wouldn't change a thing from her past, for they all made her who she is today. No matter where life leads her, we can always rest on knowing she will be singing about it in one way or another. April released "Unbroken," her first full-length studio album, in February 2017. These six songs are included in that album. Visit her websites: www.reverbnation.com/aprilanne, www.facebook.com/aprilannemusic and www.aprilannemusic.com.



Empty Spaces

© 2017

The jagged teeth of the city
from up here looks so damn pretty don't ya think
don't ya think the way the light hits your face
amid the backdrop of this place
takes my breath away
we find comfort in the empty spaces
we find comfort in the sweet embraces
we find comfort in the empty spaces
'cause when I'm with you, you stop time, stop time
when I'm with you, you heal time, heal time
it took forever to get up here from there
from there the hike was unforgiving and long
so long
but now that we've reached the top
nothing's gonna stop us now
just watch us now
'cause when I'm with you, you stop time, stop time
when I'm with you, you heal time, heal time
you heal time
we find comfort in the empty spaces
we find comfort in the sweet embraces spaces
'cause when I'm with you, you stop time, stop time
when I'm with you, you heal time, heal time

To Live

© 2017

You take that first step and it's so scary
will you fail or will you fly
if you want to live you can't be afraid to die
I've taken a thousand steps
made a thousand mistakes
but with each step I know what it takes
you have to believe in yourself
no one can do it for you
so enter stage left and let the lights shine upon you
if you want to live you can't be afraid to die
I've taken a thousand steps
made a thousand mistakes
but with each step I know what it takes
if you want to succeed you have to risk it all
I've taken a thousand steps
made a thousand mistakes
but with each step I know what it takes

Perfect As Me

© 2017

I use to hide amongst the shadows
afraid to be who I am
because I was different
and some didn't understand
overanalyzing the mundane
but needing not to be the same
picked on because I wasn't tall or the prettiest girl at the ball
always thinking something's wrong with me
never realizing I'm perfect as me
so I made myself invisible from the world
a shadow of who I was meant to be
convinced I'd never be incredible in this world
and that's how it was meant to be
picked on because I wasn't tall or the prettiest girl at the ball
always thinking something's wrong with me
never realizing I'm perfect as me

Once Upon a Vine

© 2017

Life's not like the fairytales I read about as a child
there's no crazed witch out there running wild
and I can't spin hay into gold
and there's no painting to stop me from growing old
'cause I've dealt with my fair share of toads
and I had no problems telling them to hit the road
life's not like the fairytales I read about as a child
there's no crazed wolf out there running wild
and your nose won't grow long if you tell me a lie
for my heart and my mind will no longer be denied
'cause I've dealt with my fair share of toads
and I had no problems telling them to hit the road
so I will follow the bread crumbs

Skeletons and Ghosts

© 2017

She lives in a world of skeletons in closets
and secrets kept behind the blinds
tells herself lies and hopes that one day she'll believe them too
she loves to play head-games
no time for chess when there are hearts to break
she makes the rules up as she goes
not a care for anyone else
she lives in a world surrounded by the ghosts of her past
hoping they won't see her if she looks the other way
she loves to play head-games
no time for chess when there are hearts to break
she makes the rules up as she goes
not a care for anyone else
she lives in a world of skeletons
she lives in a world of ghosts
she makes the rules up as she goes

8 Poems by Esther Schnur-Berlot

Gone Awry

© 2017

Gingerly I step around
fault lines to avoid traps

Accidental stumbles ignite
flaming cascade of words

Lashing winds blast
stinging ice pellets –

Rivers of spite harden
Underfoot – ice crackles

In an inevitable fall
I crash into the deep

Cool air is craved
to tamper fiery rhetoric

Reaching out
I grope for sanity



Esther Schnur-Berlot is a transplant from New York City where she worked behind the scenes in TV commercials and then on to California where she taught wearable art. Now living in Tucson, she devotes her time to writing poetry. Esther's poetry has been published in the California State Poetry Quarterly, the Sonoma Collective and "Desert Voices." Esther also appears in "Desert Voices," 2nd anthology, published by the Poetry Corner in Sun City. She is also in Poetica's Spring Issue of 2016 and Poetica's Fall Issue of 2016. E-mail her at Lberlot@comcast.net.

What She Thought

© 2017

She walked to the rhythm
of childhood voices
filled
with mother tongue's
laughter and sorrow

Unaware of poverty
she stirred heaping doses
of warm Borscht Belt humor
to feed an optimistic outlook

Her language was void of Moon and June
she wanted no rules to inhibit
imagination, passion and ecstasy

She hoped to awake you to poetry
She searched for words to tell truth
She searched for words to hide lies
She wanted to give voice

to her confusion, despair and fear
that one day she'd be forgotten

A Friendly Ear

© 2017

I do not spend days
tweeting, twittering
or undress emotionally
on face book

I barely find time
for my life
without peeking in
on unknowns wishing
to be friended

I do indulge
in talkathons, walkathons
snail mail and E-Mail
exchanging
my bitter
and sweet moments

The comfort of friends
voices and ears
have always
sustained me

A Brief Pause

© 2017

leans left
where to place it
leaves me bereft
You insist I punctuate the pause
causing me a pain in my clause
That miniscule swerve
leaves me unnerved
with bouts of a comma coma
reducing me to queen
of comma drama
Please don't get pissed
rambling run-ons I can't resist
It was not my intention
to spurn all convention
but
my stream of consciousness
refuses to abide
do
try taking it in stride

Stop bellowing of my stupidity
of ranting
 on and on and on and on

Without timidity
 I leap off the page

leaving all the punctuation mavens
to rage
 on and on and on and on

Replaying Orwell's 1984

© 2017

*Who are you gonna believe, me or your lying eyes.
— Groucho Marx*

An acid laden inauguration
bends the arc of truth
from city on a hill
to a swampland

*Does two plus two
still equal four?*

The showoff kid from Queens
dances to tune of "My Way"
double dipping
on his Presidential salary
playing the game of Monopoly
trading hotels and golf resorts
with hanging tax chads
remaining forever
in audit limbo
In gangster bravado – he taunts

Whatta you gonna do about it?

He Fiddles While We Burn

© 2017

Sucked into the vortex
of a Lewd, Crude, Dude's
incendiary Tweets
that roll
off the seat of his pants
invading my quiet space

Concentration gone
Reason rattled
Poetry eclipsed

The gravitational pull
of panic and outrage swell
The bridge of education
needs repair
Cash is frittered
on a Wall that divides
We sit in despair
lamenting a crumbling Wall
that separates
 Church and State
Music cannot calm or compete
Constant clamor invades
the polluted air we breathe

I'm That Nasty Woman

© 2017

forced into a dark alley
to seek an illegal abortion

I'm that Nasty Woman
hiding in shelters refusing
to remain raped and battered

I'm that Nasty Naked Woman
displayed on men's bulging tattoos

I'm that Nasty Woman
pushing husband to see a doctor
wiping away his Men Don't Cry tears

I'm that Nasty Wife
who never contradicts her husband
but lets him have it
when ogling other women

"Such a Nasty Woman"
does not cede power
to the Commander and Chief's
toxic masculinity

O' Beautiful for Spacious Skies

© 2017

Do not go gentle into the night
As my country tis of thee tweets bigotry
Rage, rage against our loss of sight

Do not be silenced by dogs that bite
Disdain macho voices of misogyny
Live in hope – they may see light

Rage, rage against tribal rites
Let angry voices simmer in poetry
Born to express our Bill of Rights

Do not be silenced by the Right
Who are wrong to curtail Liberty
Free choice lives on – to fight
Fear not the strong man's spite
He spews wrath without dignity
Rage, rage against the alt-right blight

O' Beautiful for spacious skies
Do not go gentle into the night

— *Inspired by Dylan Thomas' villanelle, "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"*

Poppies and Pendants

By Lysa Cohen

© 2017

Ambient strains of music drifted through the car, as the clock on the dashboard ticked away the minutes, keeping time like a metronome, while Emma waited for her daughter. Parked in front of the junior high, she watched as mammoth SUV's cut in front of smaller sedans, in an intricate waltz for the prime spots near the school doors. Above, the wispy clouds from earlier were converging, turning an ominous shade of gray as the plaintive notes from a piano mirrored the gathering darkness. The storm, when it hit, was going to be severe. Moments after the final school bell the back door of the car opened and a small, sullen pre-teen flung herself inside with an audible huff.

"Hi, Honey, how was school?" Emma asked her daughter. Looking into the rearview mirror, she was met with an annoyed scowl, the signature of sullen preteens the world over. It was going to be a fun night. Her older daughter, Evie, sailed through her pre-teen years with ease. There had been no outbursts, or arguments; no hormones or drama. But in the year Emma and her daughters had moved to Emma's childhood home to care for her mother during her cancer treatments, there had been nothing but drama. Emma couldn't even remember the last time she had seen Dela smile.

Emma took the answering grunt as affirmation that her daughter's day had been uneventful.

"What are we having for dinner?"

"Chicken."

"Again?"

The accompanying sigh was loud. Emma was sure that if it had been delivered on a Soap Opera, her youngest would have been awarded Drama Queen of the Year award.

"Yes, again."

"But we had chicken last night."

"We had baked chicken last night, tonight is Chicken Alfredo."

"That just means leftovers with cheese sauce."

"Don't forget broccoli. Leftovers with cheese sauce and broccoli." Her attempt at levity was met with a glare.

"I hate broccoli!"

Emma closed her eyes and counted to five, praying for patience to the patron saint of . . . well, whatever patron saint was in charge of single moms raising preadolescent girls.

"Since when?"

The accompanying eye roll and arm cross were the epitome of preteen dramatic.

"Since forever!"

"Is that a fact?" Emma indulged in some eye rolling of her own as she pulled into the line of vehicles leaving the school. For the countless time, she mentally cursed the makers of the giant SUV's. No one needed a vehicle that large unless they were a seven-foot tall basketball player chauffeuring other seven-foot tall basketball players. A small, petty voice in her head suggested that the size of the SUV's were an overcompensation for other . . . *lesser* . . . endowments as she narrowly escaped a potential sideswipe.

"Yes."

"So that was a different kid eating broccoli last week?"

"I have a sister."

Sarcasm, thy name is Dela. "I'm aware of that. Forty-three hours of labor."

"Ewww. That's so gross, Mom."

Emma stifled a laugh. It was good to know that she still had

Continued on page 49



A native of Arizona, Lysa Cohen tightropes the divide between professional musician and writer. As a multi-instrumentalist, she contracts out to record labels and bands while working her way through graduate school. She has her M.Ed. in Education, and in December 2017, she will finish her MA in English and Creative Writing with a concentration in Fiction. When not performing or studying, she can be found working on her next short story, blogging about education, or writing songs for various bands.

Continued from page 48

some power when it came to raising her daughters. Even if it was only the power to horrify them from time to time. “So why aren’t you eating broccoli?”

“It gets stuck in your braces.”

“You don’t have braces.”

Seconds ticked by in silence. A glance in the rearview mirror confirmed the crossed arms and mutinous glare Emma had come to know so well. Next would come either bargaining or the ever-ready threat of running away to her father’s house.

Not that her ex-husband would ever take responsibility for his daughters. Even if by some chance he did, Emma knew that his young wife would never stand for a sullen teenager taking up residence in their spare bedroom. How do you explain to a preteen that her sainted father traded in his family for a twenty-two year old singer who was better known for her topless Twitter posts than any actual talent?

“Can’t I have something else?”

“No.”

“But I really want sushi.”

“No.”

“Why not?”

The last was said on a drawn-out whine much in the way of a dying vacuum cleaner motor or a cat with its tail closed in door. Forget patience, it was time to play the mom card. “Because I rearranged my entire schedule so I could cook tonight.” It was the possibility of the ever-illusory family dinner that prompted her to leave work early. With her work schedule and her mother’s doctor appointments, dinner was usually a rushed, no-frills affair.

“Jordan’s mom lets her have sushi.”

If Jordan’s mom told you to jump off the nearest bridge would you do that too? Holy crap! Now she sounded just like her own mother. When had that happened? “Tell you what, when Jordan’s mom offers to fund your upbringing, you can have sushi for dinner every night. Ginger and wasabi, too.”

“You’re so mean! You would let Evie have sushi. She’s your favorite.”

Emma struggled to hold onto her patience. “Mothers don’t have favorites. It’s rule number eight of the Mom Code.” Although, if they did, her favorite might be the one who was currently at the library writing a paper. But mothers didn’t have favorites.

Through the rearview mirror, Emma watched Dela slump lower in her seat and glare. She wanted to say something. But what? Weren’t mothers supposed to fix all the problems and have all the answers? Silence was her only companion on the remainder of the drive home. As Emma pulled into the driveway, Dela flung herself out of the car and stomped into the

house, front door slamming shut behind her.

Emma was slower going inside. She stood several moments on the porch of her childhood home staring at the black painted trim, now slightly peeling, around the faded red door. She couldn’t remember a single time, when her father had been alive, that the front door had ever looked so shabby. A thread of guilt wormed through her and she made a mental note to repaint the door and trim over the weekend.

Emma flinched at the crack of a slamming door on the floor above she pushed open the kitchen door and walking inside. She collapsed onto a kitchen chair and dropped her head onto her arms with an audible groan.

“Long day?” Emma’s mother asked as she sat down at the kitchen table.

“Long drive.”

“Traffic?”

“Dela.”

“Ah.”

Lifting her head, Emma ran a hand through her hair. “I swear that child belongs to some teen-tribe. Hide the conch shells or she’ll have me voted off the island. Or better yet, the knives. With my luck, one day she’ll try and pull a Menendez.” Her attempt at humor belied the tightness in her chest and pressure building behind her eyes.

Her mother’s nod was that of a veteran parent who had raised a teenager and lived to tell the tale. “Boys or make-up?”

“Sushi,” she said.

“Sushi?”

“Sushi.”

“I don’t get it.”

Emma’s hand made a sharp thud as it met the top of the table with more force than she had intended. “Apparently Jordan’s mom lets her have sushi and I’m a bad parent because I make her eat broccoli.”

“Well, sushi is a gateway food. It could be worse. She could be eating rice noodles or miso or, God forbid, tofu.”

Emma’s face briefly smoothed as she rolled her eyes at her mother’s attempt at humor. “Funny, Ma. Did you hear back from Dr. Banyon today?”

Her mother pushed herself up from the table and walked to the refrigerator. “I found a new brand of pasta at the store today.”

Emma watched her mother look through the refrigerator. “Mom, did Dr. Banyon call today?”

“It’s freshly made at the store. The clerk promised that it’s much better—”

“Mom!”

“Really, Emma. There’s no need to shout. She called a

Continued on page 50

couple of hours ago.”

“What did she say about your treatments?”

When her mother didn’t answer right away, Emma was suspicious. “What did she say about your treatments, Mom?” she asked, again concern filling her. Something wasn’t right. Her mother was acting strange, evasive.

“Not much.”

Emma frowned as she got up from the table, taking a package of chicken from her mother’s hands and putting it on the counter. “That doesn’t make sense. Last appointment she was worried enough about your numbers to order all those extra tests.”

“She just wanted to be thorough,” her mother said with a shrug.

“Maybe I should call her just to be sure,” Emma said, putting down the knife she had just picked up as she watched her mother move to the other end of the counter.

“I told you, I already talked to her. She wasn’t concerned.”

When her mother didn’t quite meet her gaze, Emma knew something was wrong. “But I’m concerned. What aren’t you telling me, Mom?” she asked.

“Nothing. Everything’s fine.”

Emma took a step toward her mother, her voice tight when she spoke. “You’re Stage Three, Mom. Everything is definitely not fine.”

Her mother crossed her arms over chest, her chin raised stubbornly. “Don’t talk to me like I’m a child, Emma.”

Emma took another step forward, her eyes clouding. “I’m not, Mom. I’m just worried. Your health is . . .”

“ . . . *my* concern.

“It’s my concern, too. I moved here to take care of you.”

“I never asked you to. You did that on your own. You never asked what I wanted.”

Emma took a step back. Through the kitchen window she saw lightning flash. “That’s not fair. You were sick all the time from the treatments and couldn’t take care of yourself. I had to move home. I had to help.”

Her mother’s voice rose in agitation. “I’m not a charity case!”

“I know that, Mom.”

“You never think about anyone but yourself. You have to be the one in charge. You have to be the one who saves everyone else.”

“Mom . . .”

“Even my illness is about the sacrifices you made. *Your* move home. *Your* fight with Dela. Forget it, I’ve lost my appetite.”

“You’re not being fair to . . . where are you go . . . Mom?”

Emma reached out at hand to her mother, but she was already gone. Her breath hitched in small gasps as she stared at the empty doorway. Raising her hand to her face, she pulled it back when she felt wetness on her palm. Seconds or minutes passed, measured by the steady fall of rain on the window. It wasn’t until lightning flashed again that she finally turned back to the stove. With wooden movements, she prepared dinner, though her heart was no longer in it.

Outside, a crack of thunder heralded the promised storm as rain began to strike the windowpane in fat drops that ran together before streaming away. She couldn’t recall the exact day that had she become the enemy. She couldn’t recall when the days had all started running together and falling away like the rain on the window. She had only planned on staying a month; then the summer; now it was going on a year.

She thought about the piano in the living room that she hadn’t touched in months. She thought about the joy playing had always brought her. The immense satisfaction of mastering seemingly impossible pieces. The freedom she found in the notes and melodies.

Now, instead of getting lost in notes and melodies there were doctor’s appointments and treatments. Instead of freedom there were responsibilities. Instead of joy there was frustration.

Emma had read the articles. She knew she had the right to expect appreciation for her sacrifice and express her thoughts and feelings. So why didn’t her mother understand that?

Emma told herself to stop her nonsense. There was always something to make you feel hurt and unappreciated if you looked hard enough. Even if her mother didn’t want her help, the truth was, she needed her. She needed Emma to schedule appointments and administer medication. She needed Emma to discuss treatments and follow up with the doctor.

Emma had finished cooking dinner, mechanically putting the plates on the table, before yelling up the stairs. “Hurry up! Dinner’s on the table!” If her voice was hoarse, she no longer cared.

There was no answer. Emma counted to eight in her head, and then counted again. “Dela!” Emma called again, struggling for patience.

No answer.

Pulling in a breath, she counted to ten before taking the stairs two at a time to the second floor. The irritation that had mounted as she climbed the stairs exploded when she saw Dela’s room was empty, then quickly turned to panic. Emma’s breath caught as she saw the open laptop on Dela’s unmade bed, a list of flights to Phoenix on the screen. Outside the wind hurled rain against the window in an icy blast. Inside

Continued on page 51

Continued from page 50

the room, Emma whirled ran back down the stairs, past the framed pictures of her childhood. Past the pictures of her grandparents and father.

Reaching the bottom landing, grabbed the kitchen phone from the wall. Her fingers were scrambling to dial. Twice she almost dropped the phone from her shaking hands.

Everything went still as she heard the steady clicking coming from the living room.

Tick. Tick. Tick. Tick.

“Del?” The word came out on a breathless rasp as she replaced the receiver and walked toward the sound. “Del?”

Tick. Tick. Tick. Tick.

The clicking got louder with each step. Her breath came faster and her hand shook as she reached out to push open the door. Everything inside her warned her not to open the door. She closed her eyes and listened to the steady ticking, inhaling a shallow breath before struggling for another.

Emma pushed open the door to see her mother and Dela sitting at the piano, picking out the melody to a song Emma had played when she was a child. It was the first song Emma’s mother had taught her to play. It was the first song that Emma had taught Dela to play. Hands, so much like hers, shaped the familiar notes and chords of the piece. Emma watched as together, grandmother and granddaughter played, notes slipping through the air like the opalescent drops of rain before slipping into the night.

Joanna Proffitt

Surprise Artist



"Life on Shady Lane"

Photograph

2015

Sedona, AZ



A legal assistant during the week, Joanna Proffitt enjoys pursuing photography in her free time. She considers herself a "faux Arizona native" (born in Chicago but raised in the Valley of the Sun) and previously studied film photography at Glendale Community College. Her work often includes architecture, nature or landscapes. Never one to sit still long, she can often be found taking a road trip (or at least planning one) to visit and photograph an interesting or unique place around the state. She often shoots with her iPhone since she always has it with her. Her photography has been included in numerous juried group exhibitions throughout the Phoenix area, including shows through Herberger Theater Art Gallery, {9} The Gallery, West Valley Arts HQ, West Valley Art Museum and WHAM West Gallery. You can find her on Facebook at: Joanna Proffitt Photography and on Instagram at: joannaproffittphotography.

Joanna Proffitt

Surprise Artist



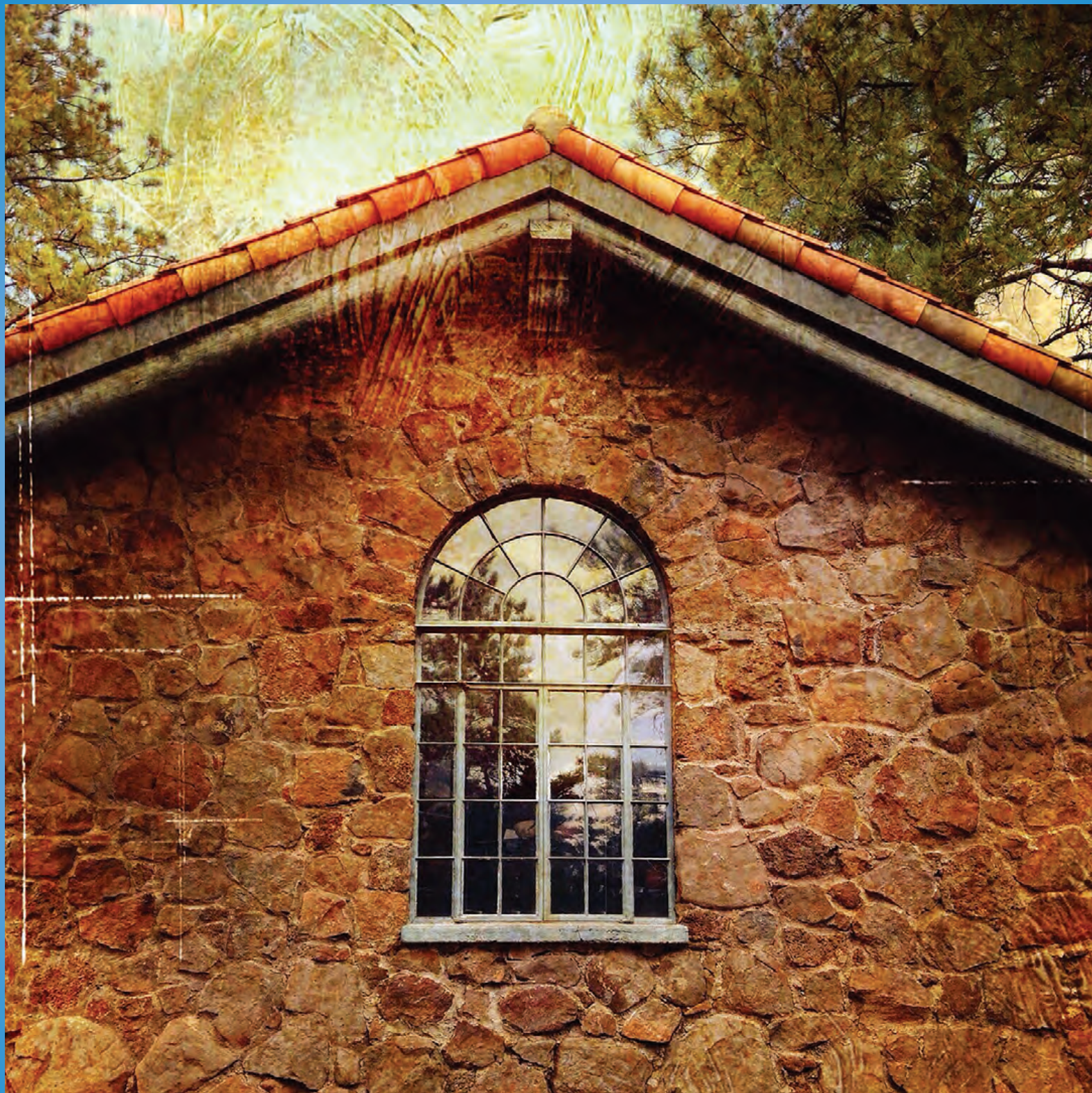
**“Just Dandy”
Photograph
2016
Phoenix, AZ**

“These photographs were taken on various trips around the state. I am often drawn to objects that are worn or aging. I appreciate the rich history and stories these items and places contain. They have the ability to take us to a different place in time, often a simpler place. I also enjoy exploring objects, often botanicals, up close. They can reveal mini worlds in and of themselves. Their patterns and intricacies are fascinating and quite beautiful.”

- Joanna Proffitt

Joanna Proffitt

Surprise Artist



Untitled
Photograph
2015
Flagstaff, AZ

Joanna Proffitt

Surprise Artist



**“Five Zero Eight”
Photograph
2016
Tucson, AZ**

3 Poems by Heather Henry

Modern Era

© 2017

In the stillness
Your heart talks
Your mind considers
Your soul guides
And yet you choose
Aimless chatter
And idle inquiries
Every single time.



Originally from the Midwest, Heather Henry considers Arizona her home after 36 years of residency. Inspired to write from a young age by the works of C.S. Lewis, Madeleine L'Engle, and Stephen King, she was moved to write poetry after being exposed to the poems of Robert Frost, Walt Whitman, and John Keats. More recently, she has been influenced by the works of Nikki Giovanni, Maya Angelou, Rumi, and Erin Van Vuren. She resides in Tucson with her husband, where she spends her free time gardening, belly dancing, and enjoying the occasional ramble. Readers may contact her at hhenrycreates@gmail.com.

Rebirth

© 2017

I kept it all
Perhaps, it was
Ill-considered,
But, I kept it.
It sits, quiet—
No longer Pandora's Box
Full of restless memories.
Just quiet, now.
And I remember it all,
Of course I do.
It's never been just me,
It was never just you.
I danced with a stranger
And gave my heart away
Somewhere between hello
And goodbye...surprised
Because I never wanted you
Until I did. And it was fierce.
My heart was yanked outwards
Branded, enraptured,
And cast aside so quickly
All I had left to do was jump.
So I jumped.
Hit the bottom.
Broke, got up,
Crawled, walked.
You couldn't begin to understand
How much it all cost me—
The price of admission
For transforming my soul
Was this breaking apart.
It was agony, fucking hell.
I was burned, obliterated...
Shattered within, without,
And reborn, reawakened.
Handed joy on a silver platter.
Rebuilt with the same parts
Rearranged into new spaces,
I became free.
And, I have been loved fiercely.
Wrapped tightly – the Moon's son
Protects and cherishes his bride.
Safe, respected, adored, and valued,
I became as luminous as a pearl,
As hard and brilliant as a diamond.

Continued on page 58

I am beautiful, and I am
Terrible to behold.
That fragile creature awakened
And the universe roared my name.
I am ancient, and I am new.
So gaze upon this band of light
That replaced the circlet
Of fool's gold and glass...
The strength of the word,
Creates the ceremonial currency.
And, I AM She. But all you see
Is a pretty face and nice ass.
You relate to beauty with a desire
To possess it, but once claimed
You toss it behind you, forgotten,
The hunt on for the next treasure.
I remember. And the memory is tired.
I forgive you
I forgive you
I forgive you
I forgive me.
Love and hate are the same beast.
Feed one, tame the other.
Starve one, enrage the other.
Free one, you free them together.
Let's try. We did. Broke a few eggs.
It doesn't matter...timing is
Everything. And so is gratitude.
A million stories I could tell
About how it really went down
But the only one that matters
Is now. And now. And now.
In THIS moment, you are
A stranger – whole and complete
A world waiting to be created.
Reborn over radical yearnings
A luminescent, enlightened child
This is my wish for you...
Absolved of anger, we are children.
And this is what I must remember.

In the Abode of She

© 2017

I am quiet
Until listened to.
Provided with
An appreciative
Audience, I shine.
Bursting out,
Eyes flaming,
Hair torrid, free.
A hundred goddesses
Giving birth to me...
And I am their daughter,
I AM the SHE who is
As Wild as the ocean
As Changeable
As the sea.
I am complex.
A Phoenix
Forever a mixture
Of flame, ash, and flesh.
I am:
Complicated,
Passionate,
Emotional,
And deeply
Kind.
I run with the wind,
And sleep beneath the stars.
A hundred chains
Would kill me;
Love's whisper
Sets me free.
Diamond tiaras
And denim
Suit me equally well.
Easily ignored
Until I'm seen.
Under the gaze
Of a curious eye,
I am magnetic.

Continued on page 60

Continued from page 59

My light
Burns true
Keeping torches lit
Long after others
Sputter out –
Out of my being
The Flame of Life
Is rekindled.
I have been called forth,
Daughter, Reborn as Wife.
I am simple until I am known.
Don't let my honeyed smile
And gentle posture
Lull you into certainty –
I am no kitten,
My claws rip and tear
As forcefully as any lion,
As viciously as any panther.
Lazy lovers' trespasses
Bring no mercy from me,
But the gentled laughter
Of a thoughtful watcher
Turns this heart's key.
I am the She who lingers
Long after...
There is no other Me.

Heard

By Kayla Adamiec

© 2017

Hello? Can you hear me? Oh! It works! Mama! Papa! It works! Itworks! ITWORKS!

Eyes: Mama drops on knees, forward

Ears: Mama says, "Clara, baby, I hear you! I hear you! I love you!"

Feel: Hugged arms neck hair face torso touched

Smell: Roses

Taste: ----

I love you, Mama! Papa, I love you! You hear me! ThankyouthankyouthankyouDr.Sullivan!

Eyes: Doctors walking monitoring doing Dr. Sullivan crying

Ears: Dr. Sullivan says, "Of course Clara, thank you."

Feel: Gripped arms held hands touched face

Smell: Roses

Taste: ----

No, Doctor; I am happy. Mama, I love you. Papa, I love you. I am happy.

Eyes: Nurse walks clipboard excited Dr. Sullivan gestures screen Dr. Sullivan walks door closes

Ears: Nurse says, "How did this happen? What was Clara's condition?"

Dr. Sullivan says, "Clara has been diagnosed with...."

Feel: Kisses on face hands running through hair

Smell: Roses

Taste: Blueberries

4 Hours Later:

My name is Clara Hopkins. My mama's name is Jessica Hopkins. My papa's name is Horace Hopkins. I really like the name after our names. It is so pretty. My birthday is in February. I was born in 1996. Did you know my birthday is soon? When is your birthday? I like chocolate cake! That is blue. It is a tree. That is an airplane. It is big. Can we go look at trees? Yes Dr. I am not hurting, that is a triangle. B-I-R-D. C-A-T. H-O-R-S-E. B-A-L-L-E-R-I-N-A. I am a good speller! I like seeing my words on that screen! Jim and Jane play. Yes, I understand. I don't know. No! Let me try. S-O-L-G-E-R-Z. Am I right? Soldiers? I never saw that word. I'm sorry. I know it isn't my fault. I know it is just who I am. I know. I've heard it before.

Eyes: Window Airplane Clouds White Stripes

Ears: Dr. Sullivan says, "Maybe someday you will fly on one, Clara; we could go together."

Feel: Dr. Sullivan's hand shoulder

Smell: rubbing alcohol

Taste: Raspberries

I see the airplane. It looks so small. Yes Doctor? We will go? On an airplane? On a boat! I have never been on a boat. Where are we going? What will see? I have never heard of the Nobel Prize. Mama gave this necklace to me when I was little. She says that it will keep me safe and that I will never be alone. Have you ever been alone? I was alone in a garden. Papa found me and showed me the roses. He gave one to me. I thought it was beautiful. Have you seen a rose before? They are soft. Like

Continued on page 62



Kayla Adamiec is a student at the University of Arizona studying biological anthropology and genetics. Her stories are almost always based on dreams she has; however, this particular one was inspired by her struggle with scoliosis for which she recently had surgery to correct. She's a fan of stingrays, Star Trek, chocolate, genealogy, steampunk and lolita fashions, gardening, and gems and minerals. She would like very much for you to email her at kayla.adamiec@outlook.com.

Continued from page 61

a teddy bear. I have a teddy bear! It is yellow! With a blue bow. Blue is a pretty color. It reminds me of the ocean. Have you ever been to the ocean? I haven't. But I will now that we will go, I will see it!

4 Months Later

Eyes: red curtain podium Dr. Sullivan crowd chairs

Ears: Dr. Sullivan says, "And now I would like you to meet Clara, the young girl who tried the experiment first....Clara? You can are connected now."

Feel: Mama hand shoulder wheelchair forward

Smell: ----

Taste: Strawberries

Hello! My name is Clara Hopkins. You are pretty! What's your name? I like the color blue! I am here today with all of you because my life was changed. There are a lot of you! I've never seen so many people! Mama taught me to read and do math. Papa teaches me about flowers. I really like roses! I like yellow roses with orange tips! They are so pretty! I want to be a gardener when I am all grown up. Just like Papa. Papa! Come look at all these people! There are so many. This is Papa. I can read and spell, because Mama reads a book to me every day for one whole hour. Can you believe it? That is how I learned to spell. Look I can spell soldiers. S-O-L-D-I-E-R-S. Did you know soldiers are nice? I met one on the way here! He said I was beautiful. He was so nice! I can read along with Mama. Sometimes, I even finish the page before she does. But sometimes, she turns the page to quickly for me. It's like a race! Have you ever raced before? It's fun! I can multiply twelve times twelve. It is one hundred forty-four. I am very good at math! It is fun! Sometimes, before people understood me people would stare at me. They would look at me like I was a banana peel. Have you ever been looked at that way? Mama and Papa always tried their best to make me feel like any other kid. Didn't you? Every day! I know that my parents love me. I love you, too! That's the one hundred sixty-first time I've said that! I've counted! I never said it before. I never said anything! Have you ever said nothing? Do you know how it felt? Sometimes I was angry. Sometimes I was sad. Sometimes I was hurt. Have you ever been hurt? I fell out of this chair once! That hurt! But it was a different kind of hurt when people looked at me that way. It almost hurt more. Do you ever feel that way? Do you? But not anymore! I'm special! People read what I say and they are fascinated by how it works. Can you believe it? I have never been so happy! Never! And I've eaten a lot of

cakes! But it's a different kind of happy. It's the kind of happy that makes you feel like you will never be sad again. Have you ever felt like that? It's a beautiful feeling. One that I'll never let go of. And if you ever get it, don't let it go either. Because you never know when you will get it back....if ever.

4 Weeks Later:

Eyes: Error

Ears: Error

Feel: Error

Smell: Error

Taste: Error

I am here shaking. There you are screaming. I am wishing I could tell you. You can't hear me, but please can you save me? Hold my hand can you? I wish you could know what I have to say. I don't want to die. My life has only just begun.

4 Hours Later:

Eyes: Ma....ma Pa....pa Dr.... Sull....iva

Ears: "What hap....when did....she....why did this....what do you mean....seizure....a failure?....happen again? Look!"

Feel: hands needles

Smell: roses

Taste: cherries

Mama? Mama! I was so scared! What happened! What's wrong? Will I be okay? Am I going to die? Please don't let me die! I love you Mama! I love you Papa! I don't want to die! What happened? I had a seizure. Will it happen again? Will it get worse? I don't want to die!

4 Weeks Later:

Eyes: Error

Ears: Error

Feel: Error

Smell: Error

Taste: Error

You said that this wouldn't happen again. You said that if it happened again I could die. You made a promise. Are you going to break that promise?

Continued on page 63

Spring 2017

Pamela Parker

Mesa Artist



**“1, 2, 3 Ready or Not”
Black-tailed jackrabbit
Photograph
Aug. 21, 2016**

The artist writes: “As a kid growing up in Arizona, I have always had an interest in photography and never had the opportunity to follow that dream growing up. I told my husband of my dream, and for Christmas 2014 he surprised me with a Nikon D5200 DSLR camera. My photography adventure began. After several weeks of playing with my camera, I realized I needed to take classes and enrolled in an online course. It was an international photography school and I graduated in July 2015. I’m still learning and I know I will never stop learning this beautiful art form. I fell in love with nature and wildlife photography and I’m out every weekend improving my art. My husband and I go RVing every chance we get, visiting our magnificent state, so I can practice and photograph our wonderful wildlife. I have had the honor of several of my photos being featured as Photo of the Day on the Arizona Highways magazine website and Friday Fotos theme on the Arizona Highways Facebook page. I was thrilled to be a finalist in the 2015-16 photography contest through Arizona Highways magazine. I live in Mesa, and you can check out my work on my Viewbug page, <https://www.viewbug.com/member/PamelaPLPPhotography>, along with my photo of the day on my Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/joyofbellydancing>. Contact me at plpphotography@cox.net or 480-962-6303.”



Pamela Parker

Mesa Artist



**“Fishing”
Snowy egret
Photograph
Nov. 11, 2015**

“My passion is photographing nature and wildlife. I love watching the sun come up, sitting by the edge of a lake or pond, capturing the golden light on the wildlife as they begin their day. There is a peace that early in the morning. I’m currently working on finding my style in this wonderful art form. To take my photos to the next level, I’m adding quotes and creating short video slide shows put to music and featuring them daily on my Facebook page. I’m always challenging myself to try new techniques to enrich my photography.”

- Pamela Parker

Pamela Parker

Mesa Artist



**“Peek-a-boo”
Gila woodpecker
Photograph
Nov. 26, 2015**

Pamela Parker

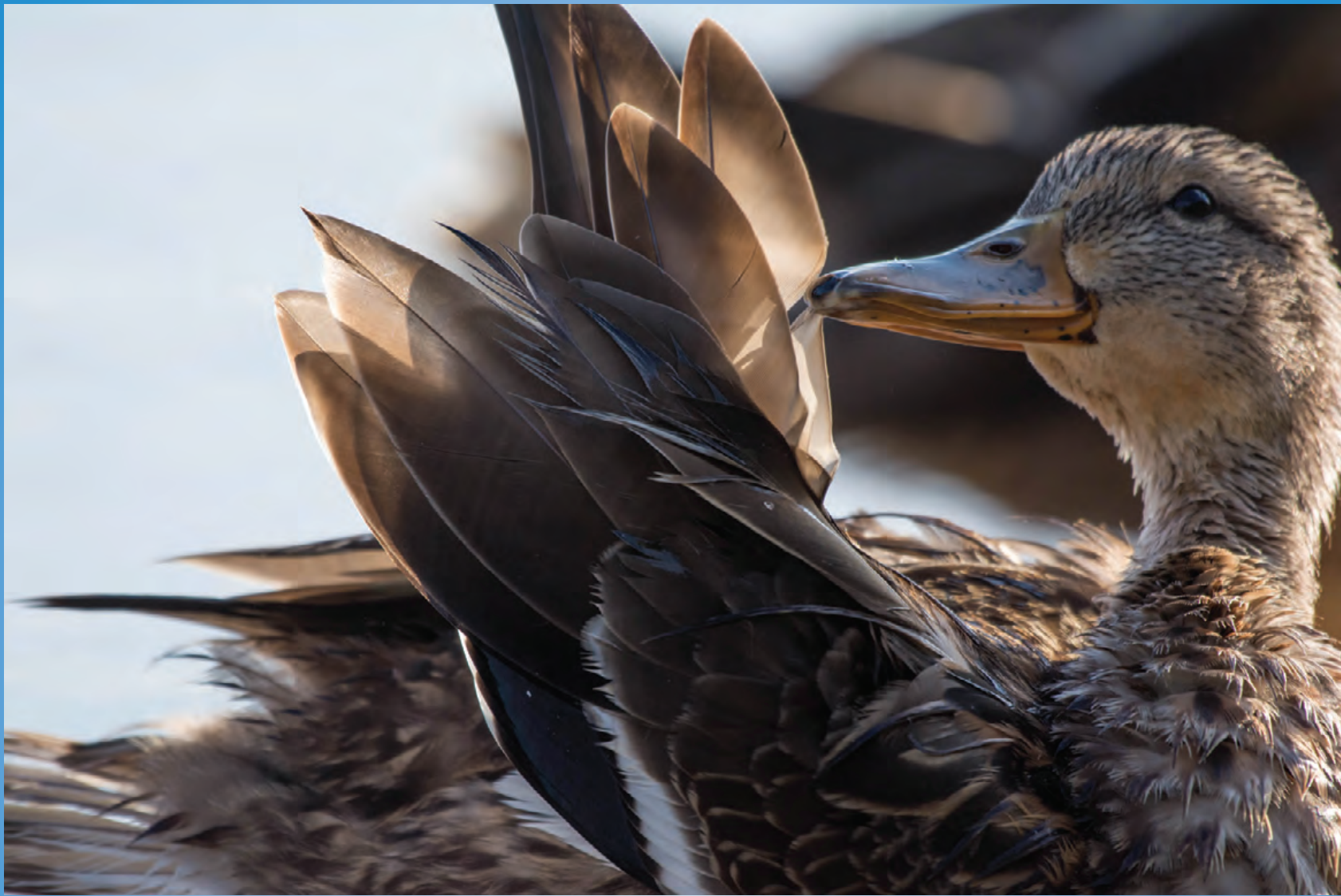
Mesa Artist

“Trying to Get
a Drink”
Mockingbird
Photograph
Aug. 21, 2016



Pamela Parker

Mesa Artist



**“Looking Good”
Mallard duck
Photograph
Aug. 21, 2016**

A Walk along Cienega Creek

By Jason M. DeLeeuw

© 2017

It is dawn. The first rays of the new day are just striking Rincon Peak. Other than the sound of gravel crunching on the trail beneath my boots and the occasional chirp of a bird, the desert is silent. Ocotillos wave their spiny canes in the morning breeze. Barrel cacti, prickly pear, and banana yucca stand like sentinels along the path. The pungent smell of creosote is in the air. This upland region lies in the transition zone between the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts, southeast of Tucson. It is an astonishingly unique and diverse area, especially for a desert. But I am not here to admire the desert. I'm here to experience something else. I pick up my pace.

The trail moves quickly downhill now and brings me to the edge of Davidson Canyon, a small ravine. The riverbed on the canyon floor is dry. As I descend into the canyon, it is cooler; the sun is still too low. The plant life down here is different. There are grasses like blue panic, johnsongrass, even Bermuda grass, all invasive species, growing in thick clumps along the banks. Other species, such as seep willow and tamarisk, attest to the occasional presence of water. But there is none here today. I continue northward. Here I see trees, I mean *real* trees, like true willows and cottonwoods, some reaching 75 feet in height, towering over the canyon. The air cools and becomes moister. I finally reach what I have come to see: the cool, clear waters of the Cienega Creek Natural Preserve.

To the desert dweller, Cienega Creek is truly an oasis. Born in the Canelo Hills in eastern Santa Cruz County, the creek flows toward the northwest for almost 50 miles until it turns

into Pantano Wash, which cuts through Tucson and eventually merges with the Rillito. It is one of the most intact riparian zones in the state. Although much of the creek's flow is underground, shallow bedrock within the preserve pushes the water to the surface, producing a perennial flow that supports countless animal species and creates a green belt of vegetation that stands in stark relief to the surrounding desert. Here, life is abundant: Insects buzz in the air, small fish flit in the water, and birds dart from tree to tree.

Upstream, vegetation is thick along the banks. With their shade, tall trees grant me a reprieve from the sun. Grasses line the shady bank and muffle my steps. In some places, the creek is covered with thick algae, but the water is refreshingly clear. Continuing upstream, I notice the flow diminishes, eventually ceasing altogether. It is surprising to see the creek appear, as it were, out of nowhere from the sandy riverbed. Upstream from here the riverbed is dry for miles, filled only when rains are heavy. As if it can sense this, the desert pushes back: Mesquite trees, yuccas, and even saguaros appear closer to the riverbed.

I turn back. The sun has begun to warm things up but I hardly notice it along the creek. As I climb up out of Davidson Canyon, I take one last look and am struck by the contrast Cienega Creek brings to the desert. Riparian areas like Cienega Creek are as valuable as they are rare: They make up less than one percent of Arizona, yet they play a vital role in maintaining the diversity of the Sonoran Desert, supporting up to 75 percent of our native wildlife species at some point in their lives. They are truly a precious and irreplaceable aspect of our desert experience.



After working as a high-school teacher, Jason M. DeLeeuw decided to go back to school and study his passion — plants. He is currently working toward a degree in Sustainable Plant Systems at the University of Arizona. He loves spending time outdoors camping, hiking, and watching his garden grow.

6 Poems by David Chorlton

Report from the Center

© 2017

There's hunger sprouting at the outskirts
of the city while a nerve
snaps at the center line
along every road and interstate
releasing traffic to the wild
to learn how to survive. It has become impossible
to distinguish speech
from the sound a sewing machine makes
when trying to mend
what has come unraveled. Music
is code for news, with baroque for breakfast,
something twelve tone later, and finally
smoky Fado songs intended
to bring home tears from the exile to which
objectivity had sentenced them.
Too late to call back midnight; this
is the time we never
set the clocks for.



David Chorlton is a transplanted European, who has lived in Phoenix since 1978. His poems have appeared in many publications on- and off-line, and reflect his affection for the natural world, as well as occasional bewilderment at aspects of human behavior. His newest collection of poems is "Bird on a Wire" from Presa Press, and late in 2017, The Bitter Oleander Press will publish "Shatter the Bell in my Ear," his translations of poems by Austrian poet Christine Lavant.

Interrupted Night

© 2017

The view from the kitchen window
is of a peaceful plastic bin
consisting mostly of its shadow
with a blue lid floating
underneath the streetlamp,
the darkness wrapping houses
whose people are asleep, and behind them
white electric drops of light
along the empty parking garage
for a high-rise whose three-letter logo
screams power at the stars.
There's just enough light at three
in the morning to tell
concrete from grass, and to see when a cat
perks his ears when he wakes.
It's a little bit de Chirico out there
while in the house the furniture
stands guard over the silence
that lasts until daylight
when the birds come down
to feed on the crumbs
of our nightmares.

A Place in History

© 2017

A cat is yawning on the wall
beside the fairy duster where the bees
are constant motion
on a Sunday afternoon whose sky
has quieted to grey
from the early sun that warmed
the Incas in the juniper
and the neighbor's T-shirts on his washing line.
It's a day for staying home
and reading the comparisons between
evils past and present
so commonly available now
that fact has overtaken fiction in outpacing
the imaginable. The choices range
from Russian to Italian to German with power
as the common language. We see
what's happening, we just don't know
how to say it yet.

A Sign Along the Way

© 2017

From one daily walk to the next
the signs of disquiet
change depending on the chosen route.
The edge of desperation
moved today to Seventh Street
where someone left behind
a small memorial
to herself before stepping closer
to infinity. Set carefully down
on a patch of wet grass
wedged into the angle
between a small apartment house
and the back wall of an office
were a Bible and a still
three-quarters full bottle
of perfume, reminiscent of the poem
by Akhmatova
in which a maple leaf is placed
at the Song of Songs. But the packet
almost empty of a manufactured
foodstuff could not help
but suggest a poverty that makes
the taste enough
to stave off hunger for a while.
Alongside these, neatly folded
with a cord wound tight,
a monitor lay dormant after
measuring the pressure of her blood,
whoever she was
when she rested a while
before moving beyond the reach
of the current
or any other administration.

Midday on Central Avenue

© 2017

There's a freedom rider in the bike lane.
The small flag on a stick
attached to his handlebars
is dwarfed by the one on a six foot staff
from which it streams to indicate
without any doubt
which country we are in.

 He's head down
and intent on beating the next lights; O say
can you see him
pedaling hard? He's an anthem
on wheels, a proclamation of independence,
the call of the wild in a civilian zone.
It's just another day

 of history, the eighth
of February in the year twenty seventeen,
with a helicopter hanging
on a sunbeam while a group
of demonstrators call to make migration
a human right. Those of us out walking
pass each other by

 without knowing
which side the other's on, but aware
that as we take another step
we are divided by the center lines
along the streets of home.

For the Day's Last Thrasher in the Yard

© 2017

A thrasher in the mulberry tree
turns his orange eye to take stock
of what surrounds him
as night reaches the state line.
It's evening in New Mexico

and late afternoon in the yard
where he perches in wan light
while the Pacific Ocean still shines
all the way to where the Earth ends
with shearwaters, terns
and the albatross older than time
flying from century to century.
The thrasher's two-note call

addresses sunset
but by six o'clock it's darkest
on the television screen the moment
evening news begins
with anger in its voice
and no mention

of birds, not a sparrow
to dispel the gloom,
the earthbound gloom,

of amateurs taking power
over earth and water, air and sky.

S.A. Benkiel

Phoenix Artist



“Dancing Tree ‘Aqua’ ”
Acrylic painting
48” x 24”



The artist writes: “My passion for drawing began at a very young age, which led me to complete a bachelor’s degree in Studio Art from Arizona State University in 1991. Upon graduation, my dreams of becoming an artist were placed on hold due to my enormous student-loan payments. I returned to school for business management and have a successful career as an IT project manager. In 2014, I rediscovered acrylics while drinking wine with friends and realized how much I was missing by not pursuing my passion for art. I always doodled and drew my friend’s dogs and cats but never tried to create a collection since graduation. It was time I resolved my work and life balance issues, therefore I stopped traveling for work and started drawing and painting daily. Later that year, I started to set up tables at various art fairs in Phoenix and Tempe. I was honored to sell my art at {9} The Gallery in Phoenix for First Friday and at the Arts & Grand Ave. Fest. In 2017, I proudly became a ‘Nasty Woman’ artist to support Planned Parenthood and woman equality. I am pleased to participate in both the Phoenix and Tucson Nasty Woman Art Shows. I am currently working on two commissions and my ‘Continuous Loop Series,’ which I hope to complete in 2017. I created the Facebook page S.A Benkiel that has a sampling of some of the art I completed over the last three years but am currently working on a website that will be posted later this year. I can be reached at Sbenkiel@aol.com.”

S.A. Benkiel

Phoenix Artist



“White Lines”

72” x 36”

Acrylic painting

“The ‘Continuous Loop Series’ takes my passion for color, shapes and emotions and brings them to life. Each day I paint circles and scrambled settings to create a storyline that allows the viewer to make their own interpretation. As in the words of Edward Hopper, ‘If I could say it in words there would be no reason to paint.’ ‘Dancing Tree “Aqua” ’ is inspired by the Arizona trees and landscape. The painting promotes the environment struggle that plagues our planet in a sarcastic subliminal way. The dancing tree picks itself up and dances its way to find the water it needs to thrive. The continuous loop of circles represents the colorful lies that climate change isn’t real when overwhelming scientific evidence says otherwise. ‘White Lines’ depicts an electrical storm of feelings of being blue. The small continuous circles never end, the white lines spread the sparks and the large circles are the shields embedded for protection. ‘Berry Circles’ and ‘Watermelon Circles’ are two examples of paintings inspired by fruit colors and my love for jolly ranchers, lolly pops and anything sugar-based. They inspire cheerful pleasure and pure sugar addiction. Circles are continuous looping cravings I experience daily. ‘Site Seeing’ depicts a continuous loop of buildings that spins and never ends. I infuse color where color doesn’t exist, and buildings are aligned in different perspectives since we all see our cities and towns in different ways.”

- S.A. Benkiel

S.A. Benkiel

Phoenix Artist



“Berry Circles”
Acrylic painting
24” x 36”

S.A. Benkiel

Phoenix Artist



"Watermelon Circles"
Acrylic painting
18" x 24"

S.A. Benkiel

Phoenix Artist



**“Site Seeing”
40” x 36”
Acrylic painting**

8 Poems by William Renfroe

True Solidarity

© 2017

What if you were never told no...
And the sweet nectar of life
Was abundant
And lovely

What if you received so much love
That you believed your opinion
And likeness
Truly mattered
To the world.

What if, you received praise
Not for winning
But for simply being
And trying

What if your failures were not
Written in stone.
Inscribed on the tablet
That is your mind
But on a white board.
Easily erased
And written over

What if people looked at you and felt safe
And didn't smile and glance
At you.
Only to evaluate your every move

What if, you were raised not to defend
But to create.
And uphold the ever elusive
"American Dream"

What if you reigned
Feared enough to repel rebellion
And loved enough to incur protection
From any who strays from the path
Of righteousness



William Thomas Renfroe, born in Tucker, Georgia, came to Tucson in August of 2015 out of high school. Mainly he pursued sports because it is one of the two things he considers to be therapeutic. His senior year was the first he began keeping the poetry he has written because it was for a class; however, upon performing each piece he received constant praise from students and teachers. It was because of this that creative writing developed into his constructive obsession, feeling that this was the only way in which he could ever truly convey his thoughts and emotions to the world and hopefully help change it for the better. He tells of many conflicts within himself, stressing the condition of being human and its advantages and disadvantages. He takes pride in the performance of his work as a means to connect emotionally with each reader. Contact him at Trenfroe13@gmail.com.

Continued on page 82

Continued from page 81

What if, you abolished suffering?
And exiled pain
And bound up wrath
And threw them into depths of space
To be taken
By suffocation and deprivation

What if, you spoke to the Sun
And the stars
And asked them...
To never end their light

What if, you bargained with the moon
And winds.
To only bring the tides
And rain to promote life

What if, you held the hand of God
And pleaded...pleaded
For him to remove the evils
That plague mankind

What if, He set fire to greed
Reducing it to ash
To rubble
And dropped it into
The volcanoes on Venus

What if, He allowed you
To tame gluttony
And transport the fruit of the Earth
Wherever necessary
Without griping and objections

What if, He seized control of lust.
Eliminating sex for competition
Reinforcing the concept of love.
And being in love

What if, He cleared away envy
Destroying stratification
Erasing color
Equaling genes

What if, He motivated sloth to dive into the sea
Knowing it couldn't swim
Watching it sink to the bottom
Where it cannot be revived.

What if, He questions your pride?
And you answer, "I do all through Christ who strengthens me"
So He questions all man's pride
And you answer, "Because of you, they are me"

What if, such a thing could be?
And glory shined
Yes, all the time...
What if...
What if...

The Soul

© 2017

Where is it?
Away, away
Flushed down the toilet?
Poured down the drain?
Left out in the rain
To drown, to drown
In the tears of angels,
Who have fallen to the ground.
And cried themselves into a fit
That's heard around the world...
And thrown the heavy objects
Round that frightening
Boys and girls.
And dogs and cats
Have yet to learn
To cope
With such a boom.
And send their cries
Roaring back
Despite their shaky moods.
Is it hidden with the dogs?
Well that'd imply it's scared
Of all the devils that arise.
That's not the case
So with the dogs it surely
Does not
Reside.
Well is it with the cats?
Oh no, not those atrocious things
With influence from them

It sure would be a
Heinous, grotesque being.
And no,
It's not with flightless birds
That roam across the ice.
Because the cold would crush
It whole
And then he would be cursed.
The truth is...
I do not know
Where it makes home
And it's not up to me.
The one who has it
Hidden away...
Well they're the only key.
So hopefully they'll come
About and save the wretched he.
Until that time
It's fine to say
That he will know no peace.
And die and die
They all will die
When preyed upon by he.
The one who failed
To show his love
And tossed all
Out to sea.
In a holey boat,
With a shredded sail,
And no
Real company.

Paradise

© 2017

Eyes closed
I transcend this horrid place
To a realm where pigment has no face
All beings are clear bodies no organs to decay
Nothing to rot when their lives are delayed
No blood to run will overcome with pain
No tears to cry when hurt for such things don't exist
Although I am not like them they do not judge
No, "Who is this?"
No, "Why are you Here?"
No, "You don't belong."
They live on...
To them I am simply a being... not an alien I speak, "Who are you people?"
They do not respond... they live on
I look around once again
Still I see no flaws
"Am I dead?" ... "Is this heaven?" ... "Have I made it?"
I run no reason why but it's more space... no buildings, no large structures
"Is this heaven?!" I yell into the face of a passing being
He walks on.
Not even so much as flinching
"Speak to me, Please!"
I have not come to be ignored
"You accept all but me?!"
For shame!
My belief has shifted
This is truly Hell.
I see a gold flash
Someone finally noticed me
My mind reached its limit
"Am I dying again?"
Stuck in a world whose people have no face
Soon I began to pace
I sit
For days
In anger and pain
I am no one to this Realm
Insanity finally reached
I pass out...
My eyes open
"Are you okay?"
"You can see Me?"
"Of course."
"Why was I first ignored?"

Continued on page 85

“I yelled and I screamed and no one cared!” Once again I was alone
They walked off as if I didn’t exist
I am near death. I let go.
One thought goes through my mind
Anger is non-existent here
Pain is non-existent
Therefore, I do not exist
I cannot see the paradise
Too late...
I’ve died

Legos

© 2017

I've built a world
Upon my floor
Where there's no conflict
Among kin
I am commander and chief.
The Almighty.
I, am a god.
The little green men do my bidding
The dinosaurs are my dogs
Batman and Superman are my counsel
They kill all who oppose me
I, the horrible tyrant
Yet I know not to venture out
Among the beasts who stand taller than I
I absorb their pain through the barrier Between our lands
Stricken with misery
I cannot let my people see
My weakness.
The constant anguish
A man... portraying a god
Walking not amongst, but beside them
And as the war rages on
Across the barrier
As I ignore the screams
That echo out
The devilish howls.
The thunderous bumps.
The hateful words that I bound up.
The silence...oh that gruesome silence
On both sides of the barrier
Within the wall
Among my realm
The fighting has ceased.
Total war is all I know
Spare no son
Spare no daughter
Spare no child who's seen
The slaughter.
For they will come for me
And spread their ghastly history
To rebel against my hopes of peace.
I do not know the other side
In fear, I've never tried to find
Any message in its Madness
In the cold that stains the door
In the hate that brands my mind

Continued on page 87

Continued from page 86

And forces ice to eat my heart
Melted away only by the innocence
Of ignorance

These Legos are my ignorance.
I mold reality
Of simple bricks

Influence all speech among its people Emotions are unknown
Because I do not feel
For these plastic people
And could just as well incinerate them
And laugh it off
Yet I won't.

For they have never caused me
Any harm.
Nor hate.
Nor shame.

I

Maybe it began from birth
I repressed most
So I know little of myself
Of the joy I was supposed to feel.
As a child
I was paved into a dense mass
Compacted with false hopes and lies
And unawakening "I love you"
I was never the right kind of black
I was reserved
Quiet.
An active mind
Consumed with vicious wrath
That I dare not let out unless alone.
And so, I confined myself to my purgatory
And etched my demons to the canvas
That was the headboard
"Grab the knife to seal your pain"
"Trap the beast and hide your shame"
"In the wood that watches you"
"Day after day, moon after moon"
No matter the harm done
I would not allow the passage
To the real world.
And placed it in the back of my mind
After it fueled me
And kept a stern face.
Through all my rejections
Big and small
For sanctuary
In my purgatory.

I bleed myself dry
And made the walls cry tears
Of suffering
And compassion.
Then, the door swung open
And my mother eyed me
And yelled at me... for the walls
And I rest my weary, angry soul
Atop the bed
Watched by the dead
Memories.
The haunting, childish memories
Cast aside in order
To attempt
To make sense of myself
And my actions.
Yet it will not happen
For even without concrete visions
The rage will not subside
And with it comes
The destruction.
Of everything that I touch
Of every person and which
I have shared
An intimate moment
And taking time to burn
A wanted perception of myself
Into their mind
And force them to love
Me...
As I cannot do this myself
Although I crave the feeling.
Until the moment I sense
My own disgust
And lacerate my sentimental presence
From Theirs
To reseal the brute
That is me.
Driven chiefly by mockery
And separation
In body and mind
From the likes of humanity
I boldly retain one likeness
I die
In time
Or by force
A fate question
And welcomed
Yet a fate nonetheless
I am a complication.
Remembered to be
Forgotten.

It

© 2017

In purest form
It strides to be
Everything that is considered strange...
Deviating from “norms”...
The nicest and the meanest
The heartfelt and the heartless
The soulful and the soulless.
Burning to claim its place in time,
as the only It who could do everything
With such perfection
Such, terrible excellent
Such, comprehensive confusion
A boom of lightning.
A flash of thunder.
The barking of a rooster
The crowing of a dog...
The stillness of vitality
The liveliness of death.
Who dares to understand It?
It who smiles when others cry
And shames the ones who laugh
As It wails in dull terror
It, who feeds off the tears
And the joyful hopes
Of all
It.
Is the achievement of failures
The downfall of success.
A martyr for the wealthy
A champion of the poor.
The selflessness of gluttony
The selfishness of sharing
So... Who dares to love
It.
The glorious nightmare
The wolf in sheep’s clothing
The charming beast that hides
In masking noises.
It.
The extroverted introvert.
The uncelebrated...yes
The uncelebrated undefeated

Continued on page 89

It.
Ignored.
Steadily ignored
And led astray for reasons unknown
To It.
The sad old It
Who no one visits
Until the casket is Its home
And they are forced to recognize
That It was once too a human.
Full of emotions.
Illogical in concept to Himself
Bound because no one understood
His perception and power
Abundant in sanity.
Labeled as cowardice
Because He knew not to extend
Beyond the borders
That encourage His demons
To reveal themselves.
It... Him
Him... It
You'll never quite know
What makes the damn thing
Tick.

Inferno

© 2017

A dull pain creeps over
The body.
The mind ignores the warning
And proceeds into the flames.
Passionately searching for relief
In the dry, desolate desert
From the nectar of life
That keeps all mankind
Afloat.
Only if they are not
Dense.
In this desert the nectar hides
In strange looking trees,
Both tall and short
And covered in needles
To cut and to stab you
To bleed and to gash you.
But only, if and when you attempt
To obtain its hidden nutrients.
And try you do
And scream and brew
As your good intentions painfully,
Dreadfully chew off the flesh that is you.
And your voice it booms...
Echoes and looms
In horrible joy as you pull
Out the heart of the strange tree
To hold.
To inherit.
To enjoy.
To consume.
And you live
Although bruised
Your wounds will not ooze
And the scabs will heal up
And the skin will renew.
So tell me, "Was it worth it?"
Imperfectly perfect.
Would you do it my friend...
All over again
If it meant that you would never
Be lacking in pleasure
And that nectar of life
Was always renewed.

Coming to Peace

© 2017

It is easy to say
That You've forgiven.
It is simple to smile
To hide Your face.
But...
Where is peace?
Buried deep down
In the chaos...
Deep down
In Your soul...
Deep down
In the madness
That's soon to eat You
Whole
If...
it is not contained
And burned to a crisp.
The only known way
To kill this beast.
And then will You find peace...?
Hell no.
So... Why try You might ask...
Why cry... You might ask...
Why live You might ask...
Why die You will ask.
And You have
Over and over.
'Cause no one can outrun hurt.
No one can evade heart break.
No matter,
How strong you try to make your body.
No matter,
How fast you think you can run.
No matter,
How smart you think you are.
No matter,
How boldly you proclaim your immortality in this mortality.
You will not escape
You feel...
Because You are human
You rot...
Because You are flesh and blood.

Continued on page 92

Bone and muscle.
Now... Minus
The flesh, blood, and muscle.
That is Your final form.
And you can't reanimate
A skeleton
There is
No heart
No brain
So no pulse.
No soul.
So that's why You should die.
Over and over.
And always come back to life
As many times as You can.
And live...
In any way that brings You joy.
And fight...
'Til you find what frees You.
And love...
Please make sure to love
'Cause that's the closest
You'll ever get to finding
True Peace.

Bleed (The Door)

© 2017

This is me.
The only way I'll ever spin
Onto the white
I bleed.
Onto the canvas that's cold
Onto the paper...so bold.
The solemn way to get my point to hold
I bleed.
I reduce myself
To ink... to ink
I reproduce my mind
I think... I think
I find the time
To blink... to blink
I take my heart
My blood as stamp
And write the truth
As it prevails.
I use my words
To escape my hell.
I bleed
An offer to keep open my cell.
With every stroke the door she roars...
With every word, I become sore...
With every line, I leak some more...
Until I can't quite see the floor.
But look...but look
The door! The door!
Is open wider than ever before
I stand to run
Right out the door, but slip and fall and hit the floor.
I bleed...some more.
I awake to see the doors...no more.
And so, I take back to the board.
White, empty, ready for war.
I inscribe again
My conflicts
My chores
And repeat the process...
As mentioned before.
Knowing my freedom will never
Be worn.
No matter how much of my blood I award
To the monstrous being
That patrols the door.

5 Poems by Julio Castro

Blue-Eyed Cat

© 2017

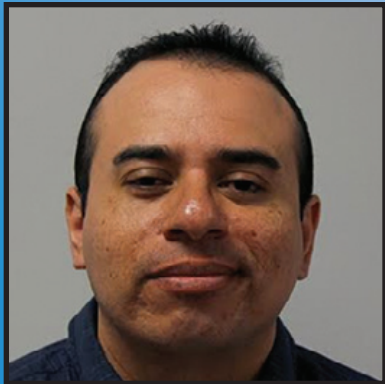
Blue-eyed Cat,

Once I saw your eyes, I got addicted to them
I saw the ocean and got lost in your world.
You storm into my room in the middle of the night
Desperate to get my attention
You love to play with yourself in front of the mirror,
Even in the coldest nights you love to get wet.
When I want to pet you down, letting you know who the master is,
Your golden hair makes my fingertips numb,
A cold chill runs in my veins, sweating away my anxiety to get to you.
As you crawl to me with the same eyes as a serial killer
Daring me to show you more of my affection,
You rub yourself on my body and begin to lick yourself.
The scratch marks on my back are the signs of your love,
A love that only lasted dusk till dawn.

Blue-eyed Cat,

The nights are very lonely without you
The mirrors in my room look for your reflection,
Waiting for your climax to come.
You left me at sunrise without saying a word,
Forgetting who I really was.

Blue-eyed Catherine, this is my way of saying good-bye.



Julio Castro enjoys writing poetry and crime fiction. He was born in Mexico but has been living in Tucson, Arizona, since he was a kid. Julio was fascinated as a teenager by the roles his idols play in Mafia movies, like Robert DeNiro in "GoodFellas," Al Pacino in "Donnie Brasco" and James Gandolfini in the show "The Sopranos." Julio has been a student at Pima Community College, where he has published three poems and one non-fiction story in the past three years in the Sandscript magazine. Julio's ultimate goal is to publish a crime-fiction novel and share his stories with the rest of the world. Reach the writer at juliocastro1one@gmail.com.

Cold Soup

© 2017

Last night, supper got colder than usual
I sat down by myself and stared at the seventh-grade picture hanging by the wall
I let my mind run wild, and I saw the best of it
I discovered my worst sins, in a blink of an eye
Words got lost traveling over my tongue,
The only thing I could do was hold on to my memories.

As I saw myself trying to be a tough guy at age fourteen, running wild in the streets
Holding knives like samurai swords, fighting for honor.
I took a deep breath, and found myself in the back of an alley,
Gunpowder stained my right hand, marking me a sinner forever.
That same year cocaine planned a date with the devil,
Where he made my face numb until I couldn't feel his slaps.
His demonic laugh had echoed in my mind for years,
Until I turned around, and let God slap me on the other side of my cheek.

Around the same age, I felt God's warm companionship next to me, holding my hand,
It was the first time I overdosed and where I saw the devil sitting, front row seat.
God made me spit the heroin on the devil's foot,
Where his red eyes have been tormenting me since then.
I was a lost boy, fatherless, with no hope or future at all
I was getting ready to graduate from a maximum security prison.
When someone else took that degree away from me,
A lost soul who crossed paths with me, told me to stop following him
Walking through fire was his profession,
"A better outcome was waiting for me, right around the corner,"
The lost soul said and disappeared.

Fifteen years later I walked by the corner, looking like a lost tourist,
Asking people for directions and advice.
But I only get one.
Be happy that you are alive.

Her Name Was a Lie

© 2017

When I first heard your name, I felt hope.

Loneliness made me look for you
I wanted to feel you, touch you,
Get lost in your world.

I overheard that your love was extremely addictive,
That your hugs were very warm,
Even in the coldest nights
Your presence was undeniable.

When I first extended my hand to you,
I felt the high qualities that make you
Who you are.
One of a kind female, brave
With lots of courage and endless daring actions.

You swept me off my feet,
It was a very special love,
You were the rock in my saddest days.
My sorrow disappeared in your presence
Your kisses made me sweat the pain away,
Every time you touched me
I felt the chill of your love.
I felt guilty seeing you melt in front of me
Your smell of euphoria numbed my heart away.

I also heard that everyone loves you,
But you don't really love anyone.
Your soul is black as your hearth.
If your name is actually heroin,
I guess I'm just another victim of yours.

Mind in a Box

© 2017

They said the books in school would make you smart
I gave it a try once but failed,
I don't know the times tables, nor do the times tables know me.
The only time I know how to count or subtract
Is when my drunk father slapped my mother at night,
His offensive words would echo in my ear, so S-L-O-W.
I didn't have a chance to misspell each word.
I know the square footage of my house
Since I was three, I've been trying to hide in every corner I found.

At five years old,
I was forced to learn how to lie
The man in a suit came over once a month
Armed with a pen and paper, trying to figure out this piece of hell.
Where our own Satan orchestrated the best dialogues I have ever heard.
Each Monday of every month I could see the beauty on my mother's face,
After that, the marks and bruises would be my mother's permanent make-up

At twelve years old,
I listened to a song that inspired me
Man in a Box used to echo in my ears
And I was Alice, trying to break the chains
I left my fears, sorrow, and anger hanging on my closet.
A closet so big I never found the light switch,
I ran from home non-stop, chasing the brightest star in the sky.

Now I drive by the old house
Where I see a lonely old man sitting on the porch,
His big brown eyes scream for forgiveness.
I pull over on the driveway like a complete stranger,
Looking at his eyes, feeling his regrets.

Cold Nights with Jennifer

© 2017

She began the night with a lap dance
Her body is a work in progress
Her eyes follow me with a glimpse
Her body develops a shower of crystal ices
Jennifer is cold as ice

She doesn't feel it
Her sweat dripping from her neck
Giving drinks of lust to my eyes
Her high-heeled stilettos leak blood
She's been stepping and crushing hearts
Her claws are made of silk
Where she tears flesh softly
Jennifer is cold as ice.

When the dance is over she'll meet me in the corridor
Where she doesn't let thoughts escape out of my mind
She feeds herself like a psychopath watching me suffer
At midnight her body reaches 30 degrees
When she drinks anti-freeze coolant from a champagne glass,
She drenches her organs till they get numb
Her internal wounds turn to frozen scars
Jennifer is cold as ice.

She blows kisses from a distance
Where her lips scar my neck,
Her tongue licks my blood
She swallows and then spits my DNA
There's a shimmery light at the end of the corridor
Where I convince Jennifer to walk along with me
She hesitates ...
But ten minutes later Jennifer is melting in the palm of my hands.

Crazy Beauty

By Julio Castro

© 2017

It was early in the morning; I was dressed to impress, looking very sharp with my suit, tie and my freshly-shined shoes. I smelled great, had a positive attitude and was ready to take over the world.

As I was making my entrance into LAX, seeing all those people waiting in line made my stomach upset. I just couldn't stand the look on their faces, waiting, complaining and stressed out from the ordeal of airport security. So I decided to make the best out of it, sit down, relax and wait for the security people do their job.

I began to think of my ex-girlfriend. How it was possible for her to break up with me after five strong years of a relationship? Her lame excuse was that my new job was going to separate us from each other. I had just gotten promoted to a better position at my company that required me to fly all over the country to ensure that contracts were being fulfilled.

Hell, my girl was hot, brunette with big brown eyes and her body was like a goddess. She looked just like a picture in a Victoria's Secret magazine. But what the heck, I was a single man again. I was barely 23 years old. What with a great job with a big future in front of me and not much to worry about I thought I didn't need love back then.

As I turned to my left, the smell of a woman's fragrance awoke my sixth sense. A woman in her early thirties sat next to me. She was wearing a tight bright red dress, with a white belt on her waist. Her black high heels made her legs look longer than what they appeared. Her smile was sparkling white and a diamond heart pendant encircled her neck. Her face was flawless and angelic. When she smiled at me, her big brown eyes making contact with mine, she took my breath away.

"May I sit here?" she asked me.

"Of course you can," I responded, staring at her beauty.

"I see you're not carrying luggage, just a laptop. Are you waiting for someone or are you going somewhere?"

"Yes, I'm going to Miami, but only on a round trip," I responded. "Or at least that's what I'm hoping. I'm just going to close a deal for the company I work for and I should be on a plane back home tomorrow night. But if my clients don't like the deal, I guess I will have to stay longer to negotiate everything. By the way, my name is Frank." I extended my hand and waited for her to greet me.

She hesitated for a second and responded, "Nice to meet you, Frank. My name is Marie D'Adiaro."

"So, you are Italian, huh?" I asked. "Do you know how to speak Italian?"

"Yes, I am Italian," she replied, looking both ways. "My parents brought me from Italy when I was two years old and they have always spoken to me in Italian. It's a little weird because we do live in America, but it is what it is. We are very proud of our roots."

"So, Marie, it's not my business, but where are you heading to?" I asked.

"Nowhere!" she responded. "I'm just here waiting for the love of my life. My fiance is coming in from Miami to visit me. He's a businessman just like you, so he doesn't have much time to share with me. He told me his flight will arrive at 10:00 AM but I got here early. I really want to see him so badly. I love him very much."

When I heard Marie saying this, it made me realize how important love is in everyone's life. For a moment we didn't talk. She kept looking all around her, waiting for the love of her life to arrive. After a few minutes, she got up and began to walk in circles. To some people waiting in the airport she looked like a security guard on duty. But to me she looked more like a supermodel on the catwalk.

She came back and sat next to me again and said, "I got a good feeling about this. Last night when I spoke with Joe he told me he had something very important to tell me. We've been talking for a while now. I hope he's decided to take me to live with him in Florida. I do believe I'm wife material. I cook, clean, wash, sew and I can bake for sure. I'm ready to take the next big step with Joe. I'm so excited to see him!"

I got up from my seat, grabbed my laptop, and said, "It was a pleasure meeting you, Marie. You have a good one and good luck with Joe."

She nodded at me and I began the hike to the security gate. Forty minutes later I was in the airplane, looking for my first-class window seat. A well-dressed man in his early forties was already there, occupying the aisle. His face was expressionless. He didn't even bother to look at me. He was just a stone. I sat and began to relax for the coming five-hour flight. As I was getting ready to take a nap, the guy called the flight attendant and asked her for a whiskey sour. The drinks kept coming and

Continued on page 100

the guy began to let loose.

“Excuse me, young man, do you think I can talk to you for a minute?” he asked. “This crap I have to tell you is killing me since last night.”

“Sure, why not?”

“I messed up ... I messed up big time,” he said. “I’m a coward, just a piece of garbage.”

“Take it easy, my man, relax. My name is Frank. What’s your name?”

“Pleasure to meet you Frank, just call me Piece of Garbage.”

“OK, sir, tell me why you are so upset?” I asked.

“Are you married, or do you have a girlfriend?” he asked me very seriously.

“I’m single, sir. I broke up with my girlfriend a few days ago. Why?”

“Well, don’t take too long to get yourself some new loving, because a man always needs love from a woman,” he said, gulping down his fourth drink. “Let me tell you something. I met a woman walking on the beach a few years ago. Instantly I fell in love with her. I felt young again, just like you. My life began to get excited again. I felt the butterflies in my stomach. It was the same way I felt when I was with my girlfriend, back in middle school. The only problem was that I could just see her every month or so and just for a few days. But those few days to me were months, or maybe even years. Every minute I spent with this woman was a lifetime to me. It was a magic time, a total sharing with the woman I loved.” He called the flight attendant and asked for another drink. This one, too, was gone in an instant.

“It sounds like you were very in love with this woman,” I said.

“Yes, I was, or maybe I still am. If you could only see her I bet my life you would fall in love with her too. Her long black hair, her beautiful smile, and those big brown eyes of hers could hypnotize any man on this planet.”

“So what happened with her, why did you guys break up?” I asked.

“Tragedy was just waiting around the corner for me, ready to strike. That woman, Frank, was my mistress. I’ve been married for 15 years and have four children.”

I slowly looked at him. It took a moment for his story to sink in. He then said the unexpected.

“I arrived last night in L.A. I called her but I couldn’t tell her

the truth over the phone. I’ve been awake the whole damned night, trying to figure out how to tell Marie I would never, ever see her again. But I just couldn’t do it. I guess I am nothing but a coward. I just jumped on the first plane back home.”

I couldn’t believe what I just heard. I knew he was talking about the beautiful woman I had just met. I kept my mouth shut and kept listening.

“Marie didn’t really deserve this. But my wife and four children didn’t deserve to be left alone for my stupidity. It’s all my fault. I wish I had never met her, and none of this had ever happened.” He ordered another drink and made short work of it.

We landed in Miami. We shook hands. I went my way and he went his. An hour later I arrived at my business meeting and did my presentation. I was a mess. I wasn’t thinking of the contract. I was thinking of Marie the whole time. The customers didn’t go for the deal I offered, and told me they needed more time. I called my boss and he gave me orders to stay in Florida until I could close the agreement.

It took me two days to get the job done and to convince the people that our company could work with theirs to our mutual benefit.

I took the first flight to LAX. There were a lot of reporters in the airport. They were talking about someone they called “The Crazy Bella.” It was Marie. She got frustrated when Joe never showed up to see her. She had waited there for three days. She knew in her heart that she would never see him again. She began to scream in Italian, “Ha rotto il mio cuore! ha rotto il mio cuore! Idiota, idiota, idiota!” As the anguished minutes flew by, her screeching began to get louder and louder. “Egli mentire a me, egli mentire a me, e mi ha detto che mi ama. Miserabile, miserabile, miserabile!”

The security at the airport took control of the situation, but Marie was too much to handle. She was in custody for hours and never cooperated with the security officers, who finally called LAPD to come and investigate the incident. By the time the police arrived at the holding room, it was too late. Marie’s heart was broken in pieces and there was nothing in this world that would ever fix that. The tight bright red dress was found on the floor, the diamond heart necklace in her hand. She had used her white belt, at one time the least significant thing in her wardrobe and now the most notable, to hang herself. Marie died from a broken heart and no one in the world knew why except me.

Unforgettable Summer

By Julio Castro

© 2017

At the age of eight years I was in fourth grade, it was the last day of school. Mrs. Garcia was very pleased to announce she was going to be teaching next year in fifth grade, so most of us would end it up in her class next year. I didn't mind at all, Mrs. Garcia was very nice but she always gave us tons of homework to stay busy and active. It didn't surprise me at all when she told the whole class that for summer we had to write two pages of something awesome we did in summer. Last day of school went quick and next thing I knew school was over.

I went home and my mother was crying next to my grandmother. I was very confused but they were tears of joy. My grandmother told me to come over; she gave me a hug and told me, "Tomorrow, finally you are going to meet your father for the very first time. I want you to be very happy." I was shocked when I heard that; I only met my father in pictures and letters he wrote me every single month. I began to learn how to read at age five, because I was very curious to see what my father wrote to me all the time. Having my mother read all those letters I received from my father weren't enough to me. In all those letters my father wrote to me, he always told me he couldn't wait for the moment to see me. The day was tomorrow and I wasn't prepared at all. My older sister and my mother went to visit my father so often, and I always asked myself why I couldn't go. My sister always came home saying it was a big castle where daddy lived. He was surrounded by enormous walls and there was a very loud noise coming from inside those walls.

I imagined my father living in the old castle, living like a gladiator fighting dragons, demons and always fighting for honor like in the movies. I always wondered why my father lived there, and the curiosity of knowing the castle was always on me. I always asked my mother why I wasn't able to go and visit my father and she told me when I grew up my father would explain everything to me. Everyone in my family was very happy. I remembered my grandmother lit so many candles that I thought there was a power outage. Because that's something that my grandmother would do every time the power was gone. My grandmother even put a note on the fridge saying, "I will go and pick up my son tomorrow at 10:00 AM." I remembered the whole night I was very nervous, my stomach hurt very much and I constantly was in pain. For whatever reason, I didn't sleep well the whole night.

The next morning I overslept and I woke up to my house

being in chaos. The sound of the mariachi music confused me and most of my relatives were already home. They were decorating the house, with balloons and welcome home logos. The smell of chorizo penetrated all over the house. It almost made me want to vomit. I looked at the time and it was already 11:45 a.m. I was very upset; I thought for one moment I finally was going to see the castle that my father lived in all this time.

I went back to my room crying. I cursed so much at my mother and I even said I hate her very much. I was so upset that I went back to sleep again. I remember dreaming that I was in an arena; there was lightning and a thunderstorm on the way. I was standing, holding a sword, wearing metal armor. I was surrounded by a lot of gladiators trying to show something to me; they all were carrying armor, helmets, swords and axes. There were lions and tigers in cages growling — making everything seem very real. There were people on the podium screaming their lungs out, cheering to see the violence about to happen. I remembered one man in particular. He was standing in the middle of the arena, and he just stood there looking straight at my eyes. His eyes were very blue, and he had a scar on his face coming down from his left eye to his lip. In front of him, there was this man, who was on his knees with his hand tight down the back; he was blindfolded and blood was dripping from his face. The scar man got closer to him, took his axe out, and chopped his head off. The sound in the arena got louder; I could see the puddle of blood coming from the man's neck. In a matter of seconds, the rain washed away the blood like nothing ever happened.

In that very moment, I felt something on my face that made me wake up. It was a teardrop from my father; I was face to face with him for the very first time in my life. My father looked very much different from the pictures he used to send home, he always looked mad and his look was very intimidating. But not today, my father was in tears. His look of intimidation and anger faded away when he saw me. He hugged me and the first thing he told me was he never was going to leave me alone again. I was very happy to have my father with me; I knew for sure my life was going to change forever. My father was happy to see my room; I had a lot of books, trophies, medals and spelling bee awards I had won in my elementary school.

I remember the best times of summer were early in the morning. My father used to wake me up around six in the morning, and we rode our bikes in the mountains. My father loved to

Continued on page 102

Continued from page 101

ride his bike and let the cool breeze hit his face. He told me he felt so alive every time that happened. We spent most of the time together, even my sisters and mother were mad at me for always chasing around my father everywhere he went. One night, I was very tired, my father took me to the park early that day and I came home and went straight to bed. An hour later it seemed like the smell of rain woke me up. I went outside and I saw my father standing by himself looking at the sky. The sky was dark gray, the lightning sounds were very loud and the rain was approaching. My father made eye contact with me, and I noticed something different in him. His look of anger was back in his eyes; he extended his hand and held my hand very tight. We went and sat on a small bench we had on the front porch. We lived up on a hill and we could see the rain begin to drop from the sky from a mile ahead. In all this short time I had been around my father I had never asked him why he never allowed me to go and visit him in the castle. He looked directly into my eyes and told me:

“You are a very special boy and I love you very much no matter what. You are old enough to know the truth about me; I had never lived in such a castle. It was a maximum security prison where they put very bad people that had done something wrong in life. Before you were born, I committed a crime and I was sentenced to spend almost nine years in prison. At first I didn’t care much, I had been in jail plenty of times. But when your mother told me she was pregnant and you were going to be a boy, I was heartbroken, devastated. I told your mother never to bring you to a place like this. I don’t care if you are two years old or forty. I don’t want you to ever step a foot in any prison. Prisons were made to break people’s spirits; if you are not a bad person you will turn into one no matter what. Prison yards are like gladiators’ arenas, you have to fight all the time or you will get hurt or killed. There are all types of animals and there’s always people watching what you do to take advantage of you.”

My father gave me a hug and told me, “I want you to promise me something, no matter what, I want you to always protect yourself at all time. No matter what the consequences are, always stay true to what you believe and never show fear to anyone.”

The rain got to us and we were soaking and wet. My sisters came outside the house and we began to have fun under the rain. Finally we decided to come inside the house. We cleaned ourselves and we sat down for dinner. My grandmother cooked

my father’s favorite dish, mole poblano with rice, beans on the side and flour tortillas handmade. As we were ready to start eating, a knock on the door made my stomach hurt. Out of nowhere, it seemed like the knock was inside my stomach. My mother went and opened the door. A guy walked inside the house. He began to wipe his feet on the floor mat, looking at the floor, and I couldn’t figure out his face. He gave a hug to my mother and waved at everyone in the house; my father got up from the table and went and greeted the man.

The man gave my father a hug and also a kiss on his left cheek. They looked very happy to see each other and went outside to talk. I looked at my plate and saw my father’s face covered in blood. I shook my head, and I looked back at the plate again and it was back to normal. I got up and went outside to see my father. The rain was very heavy and the winds were very strong. Both of them were smoking a cigarette on the porch. I stood next to my father, and he held my hand very tight. My father introduced me to his friend and the man slowly turned around and looked directly at me. His eyes were very blue, and the scar on his face was unforgettable; he extended his hand and my heart began to pound very fast.

I left the man with his hand in the air without shaking it and went back inside the house. I sat in the living room speechless; I knew the man’s face. My father and his friend went inside the house and my father told my mother he was going to take a ride with his friend. I ran towards my father and begged him not to go. His friend took another look at me and walked outside; he told my father he was going to be outside in the car waiting for him. It didn’t matter how much I cried and begged my father to stay. He told me that guy was his longtime friend and promised me he was going to come back home soon.

I remembered feeling emptiness in my body when I saw my father walking away from me. My father never made it back home, he was found dead in the middle of the street a couple of miles away from home. I imagined the rain washing my father’s blood away, when he was fighting for his life. Two blocks away, they also found a car crashed into a tree with a dead man in the driver’s seat. It was my father’s friend who got sliced in his throat before he could shoot my father in his chest. My father fought for his life again, but this time he lost his battle. I can’t believe in three months I had lived a lifetime. Changes in my life forever. Two pages of writing something amazing in summertime for my fifth-grade class. How to explain what I lived in a three-month period. I guess to me it was just an unforgettable summer.

7 Poems by Richard Fenton Sederstrom

Poems in Memory of Nick Salerno *frater et magister ludi*

What is seems

© 2017

always to be and be and solid—
No No No!
Not always!

All that is always is never
all ways but not all ways never either
neither of which may (may not)

exist (!)
seems always to be—seems—
love—

like
“Love, Nickie” or
“Love, Dickie”—
pudgy valedictions, silly, age-old, respectable

is
being love actually but always. For us
always for the same reason
is love

The young mother
in the row of seats in front of me
here in the dentist’s waiting (always waiting)
room

reads to the blond toddler on her lap,
Words. And pictures readable only by her child
about the Tooth Fairy.

Close attention as palliative. Daddy texts.

It is not the catalogue of memories we long for
but the real, solid and whole person we demand—

even knowing that whatever is real, solid and whole
ever was the unreal, dissolved and unwholesome

in ourselves that we grieve
and not the contents of the urn closeted somewhere

real, solid in each discrete particle of ash
and as whole as the image of smoke can be whole.

Richard Fenton Sederstrom was raised and lives in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona and the North Woods of Minnesota. Sederstrom is the author of five books of poetry, including “Eumaeus Tends” in 2014. A new book, “Selenity Book Four,” has just been published.



Autumn Early Light at Chauvet

© 2017

Retire to the cave.

Try to match the flicker of mortal torch
to the flicker of the torch behind your eyes.

See. Touch what scares you so badly.

Or, since you cannot know,
choose an image.



That aurochs.
Her honed horns. Her
unendurable force of

muscle, hoof, neck muscles rigid
against her spine's angry bone. Projectile of thunder.
It is the cave, the beast, and inside it all

what you may perceive as you—and death. Elect
to jump somewhere in the confines
of the darkness and binding rock.

Or elect to face the animal and die.
30017 was a bad year, run of seasons
an election of fears you are well evolved from.

30016 will be a better year. Light up
the cave then and let shine out the new. The rising
fire of your torch ignites the eye of the aurochs

and she elects to move.

The photo of a scene from Werner Herzog's film "Cave of Forgotten Dreams" was taken by Richard Fenton Sederstrom.

After Time After

© 2017

After we have gotten to know each other for a few
more decades
or sometime impossibly geologic maybe

then we can walk together,
look at the colors, shapes, or what is shapeless
to any other creature but still recognizable.

The woods we have gotten to know so well or not so well.
Talk about, perhaps, that showdown
between the fox and the groundhog

and what genius protected the one from the many
and the many from the one, the nature of standoff
that in the absence of love saves the potential.

Or wonder together why the language of crows
seems so different today when nothing else is different.
Or so we had thought

before the crows thought to remind us
and remind whatever is so silent
down there in Fenton Fen

where we had got used to the spring peepers
peeping in impossible decibels

for love love love !!!

and while we let the conversation enter
the common silence,
we can start

to gesture toward the shadows looming in our direction.
Take Ithaca, the gesture offers.
Welcome to the next dust

and start to get to know each other as well
here or Ithaca or, no no no!:
both, neither and therefore when/wherever.

After the Scent of Rain

© 2017

*(In the city we awaken
to the dry fragrance
of creosote from what is left
of our drag-lined Sonora.)*

Like Sappho

Sonora survives i[
] fragments
gro[]tiful

again and still

after []
take seed in[]ghost
]ancient so[]l []

Wi[]leaths

Common Icons of New England

© 2017



this is not the place
to consider
the directions
we might or might not
take



this is the place
to look about and consider
the directions we
have been given—
have given—
look up
and down
in and out
of our lives

Continued on page 108

Continued from page 107



once
you have found
the place
the second time
the third
will come
or come back
to you
and . . .
and



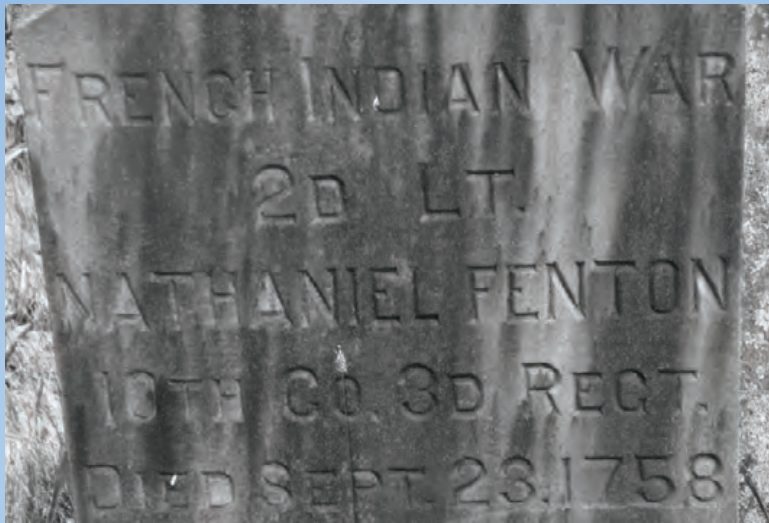
hit the eye like
the hapless language
of our ancient children

Continued on page 109



's headstones

:



Photos from Old East Cemetery, Willington, Connecticut, were taken by Richard Fenton Sederstrom.

We Shall See in Repair the Roads to Our Future

© 2017

Where shall we find a secure bridge?
Where shall we find a bridge so secure that we can drive over it
and not be distracted

by the knapped shine of the dark river below,
the river we cannot see through concrete rails but which we might see
if we dare stop the car

and look down through the broken concrete of our surfaces.
We might see the river between ledges of concrete
framed by rusting rebar.

But we will not stop.
We may be followed tonight.
We have been followed all day so far and so far.

Ah well.
We know that we will be followed tonight
and that we will still and ever be followed.

Followed.
Followed, we drive.
We drive only as fast as our cracking surfaces allow us.

We drive steady.
We will leave the bridge in time maybe
to leave the car and walk below—

beneath the bridge where we may be secure.
In our breath of security we will lie beneath the bridge.
Before we sleep we will look up into the stars

framed by the rotting concrete and rusting rebar,
and we will pray to dream that we do not see the surface
begin to crumble down,

begin to be trampled
by the machines and boots that will in-
augurate the heartbeat and throb of our new security.

Cathartes aura in Opere et Veritate

© 2017

for David Chorlton

1

Squat junipers dot valley and mountainside
in the desert view from David's photo.

Juniper boughs, cool green on the dexter side of the landscape,
some tree, in shadow, arrests a partial symmetry on the sinister.

Symmetry is a human craving, desperate and consoling.
Below notice to the vulture

whose consolation is to perch atop the skeleton
of another juniper, the human camera's

2

middle focus.
A purification.

It is desert.
Desert translates light to clean air and arid breeze.

3

That sere, petrified gray branch will support the vulture
and generations of vultures to come.

The vulture's bland attention purports a view
that two beings understand the fortunate life of the vulture.

One is the photographer
who frames the subtle asymmetric wonder of the vulture's world.

The other is the vulture, who sees and tastes that world
and its symmetric Stygian counter-world: like as not the same place.

4

Ah, but one other being too—an obfuscated interlocutor:
the poet: vulture's dys-symmetric confidante.

The title is translated: Turkey Vulture in Deed and Truth.

FRIDAY NIGHT *Writes*

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

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

About The Arizona Consortium for the Arts

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

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

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



a gallery, theater setting.

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

Jr. literary and arts magazine for youth.

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

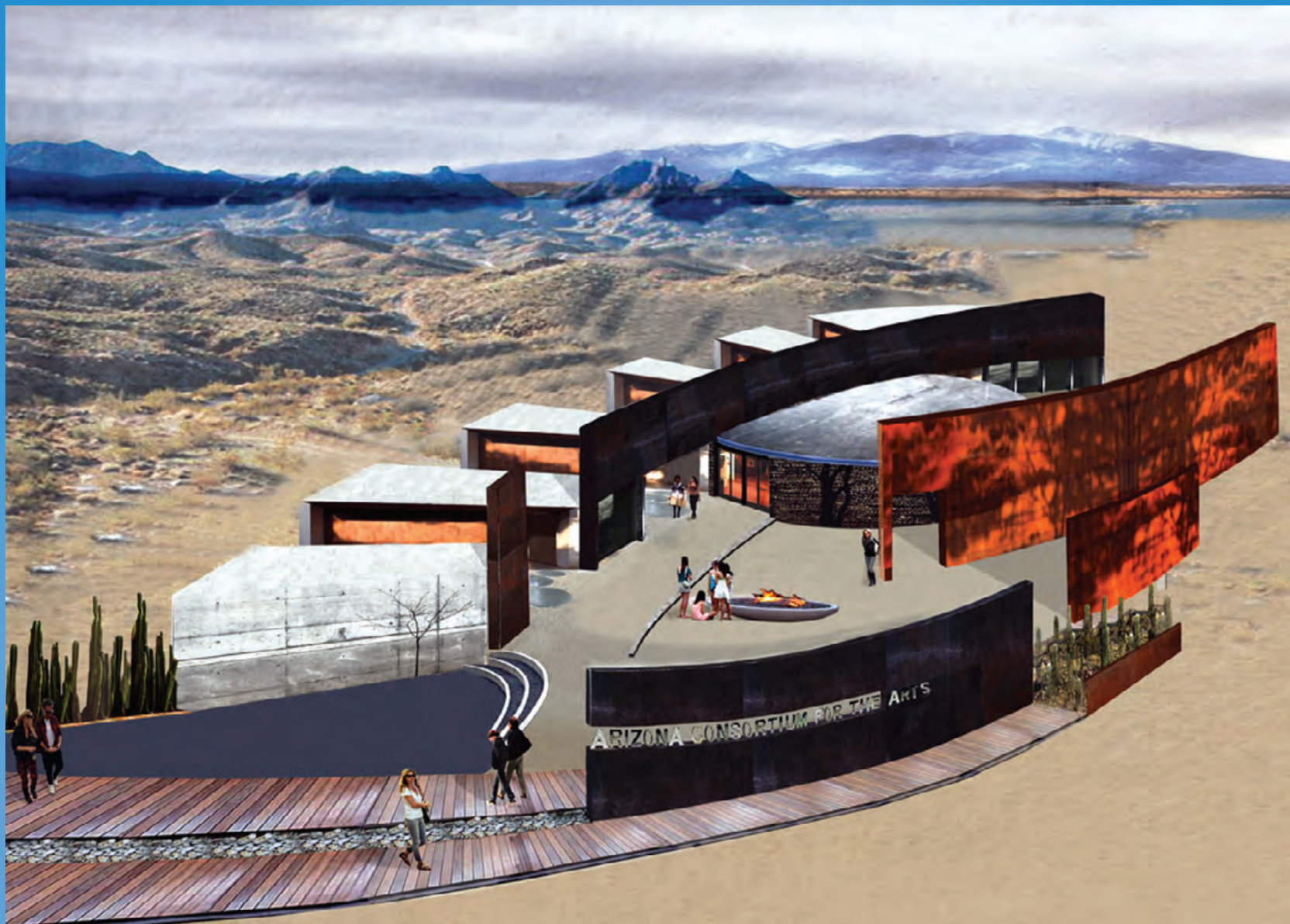
There are countless ways to contribute, and the consortium is grateful for any donation in any form.

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

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

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

Thank you for your continued support!



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

The consortium's vision for a multicultural arts center

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

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

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

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

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

Meet the staff of The Blue Guitar magazine



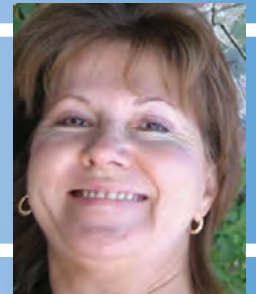
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Rebecca Dyer, co-editor: A Tucson native, Rebecca is a poet, journalist and teacher residing in Mesa with her husband, Rick, her Blue Guitar co-editor. Reach her at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.

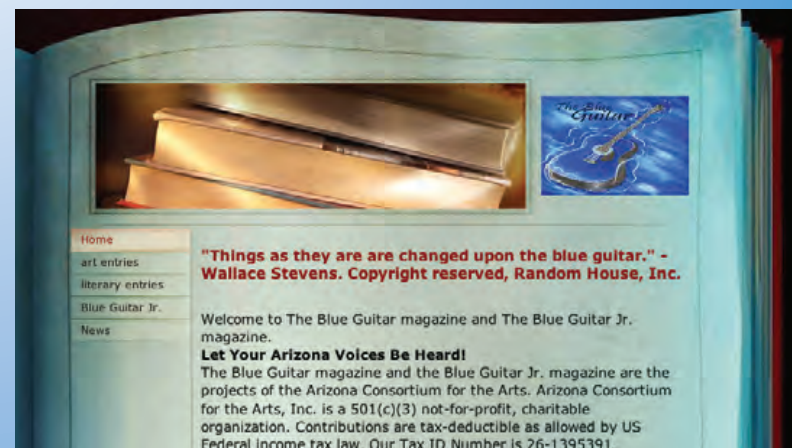
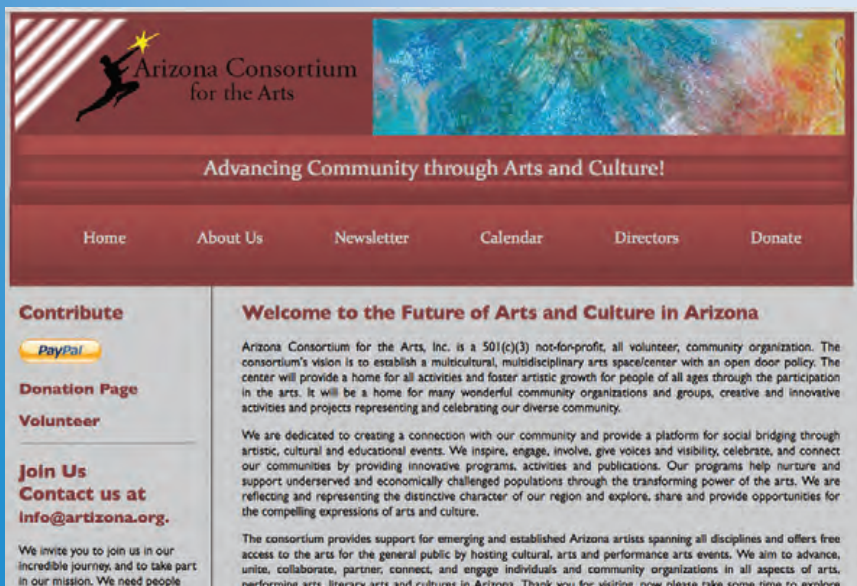


Richard H. Dyer Jr., co-editor: Richard (married to Rebecca, above) is the managing editor for three weekly newspapers in the East Valley, a photographer and a welded-steel sculptor. Reach him at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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



Check our websites for news on the arts



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

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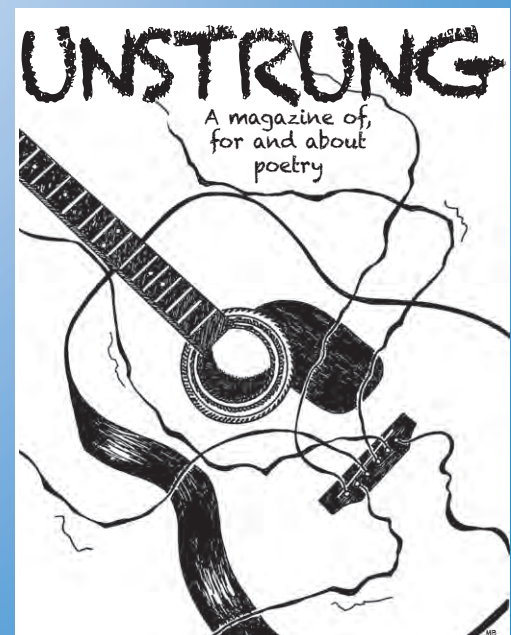
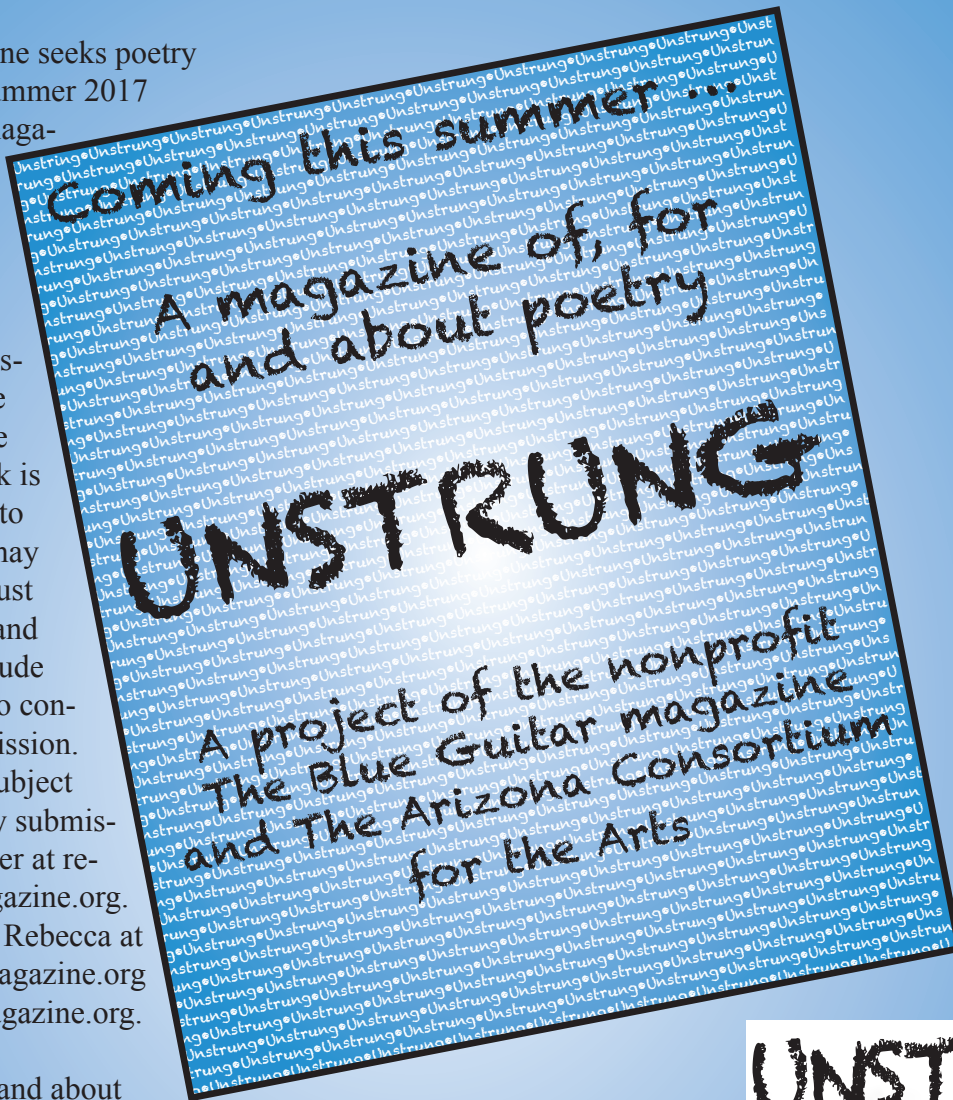
Spring 2017

A Call to Poets for the 2017 Issue of Unstrung

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks poetry submissions for the Summer 2017 Issue of Unstrung, a maga-

zine of, for and about poetry. Submissions will be accepted from June 1 through July 4. 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, 2017, 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, 2017, 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 Fall 2017

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks literary submissions for the Fall 2017 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 4. Submissions are sought in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction. Writers must submit original work and must live part- or full-time in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. Submissions must be in the best shape possible and publication-ready. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

A Call to Artists for Fall 2017

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks art submissions in all mediums for the Fall 2017 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 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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Number 1
Spring Issue
FREE!

*“Things
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