

The Blue Guitar

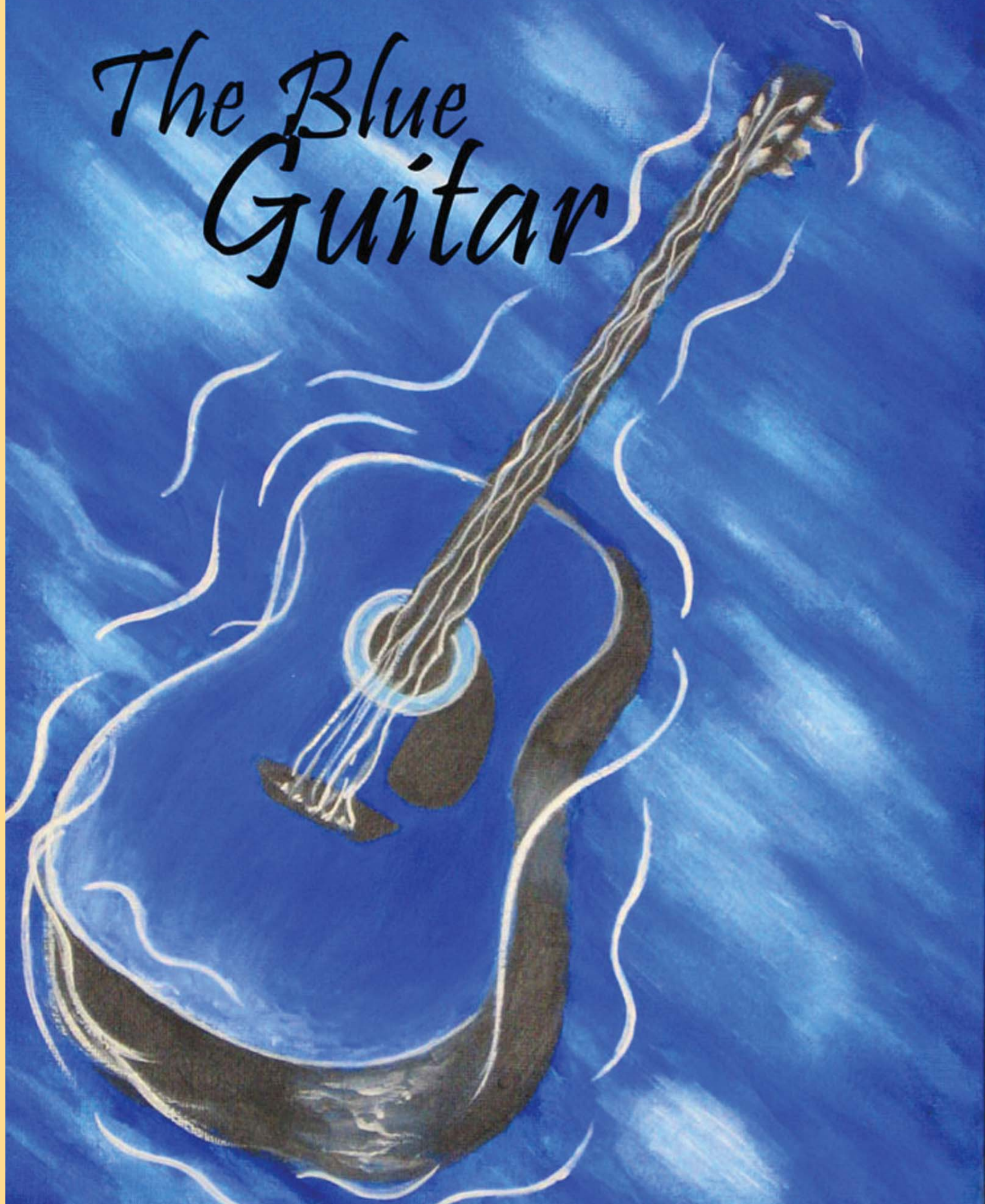


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Editor’s Note

Welcome to the inaugural summer edition of The Blue Guitar!

This edition represents so many firsts for us — our first summer issue — stemming from the need to showcase so many great submissions that came to us for spring, so many that our cup literally raneth over.

Also, after featuring in our first three issues the work of the winning artist in our cover design contest, as well as the work of the two runners-up, for the first time we have opened up the magazine to juried art — for this issue, the works reflect the theme “Images of Summer.”

Distinctive writers, poets and artists — all Arizona residents — have contributed to our first summer issue.

At a time when our society’s one-size-fits-all mentality threatens to overwhelm, our individual voices struggle to be heard. We at The Blue Guitar magazine remain dedicated to these unique voices and are committed to bringing to you our readers their unique reflections of the human heart.

As always, thank you for submitting and thank you for reading!



Rebecca
“Becca” Dyer

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www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org

Summer 2010

Three Poems By Jeannine Savard

Grove

© 2010

I decide to walk deep
into the woods. A bird knocks
as light ascends my spine.
Words drop-off like leaves.
Red pine needles shed from old growth
catch inside my sandal. I slip
closer to brook's edge, a whole drawer of dirt,
dead letters—sliding away.

Zooms and glisks
a dragonfly queries by humming.
Double-winged, it draws a lucent ring
of heat around my head, lowers itself,
pulls back, pulls in: brow to brow—
one throb. One listening.

The Room

© 2010

One I haven't seen before
flashes between the mailbox and the pygmy willow
loaded with its red and white cones.

It is a tangle of leaf shadow,
cubes of grass and weeds
catching a neighbor's jazz on the fly.

Breakfast there is amber accented.
I might be a guest.
I might be a painter, an Agnes or a Georgia,
holding open a drawer with linen-wrapped brushes.

If I hesitate much longer,
the diminishing light won't let me enter.
I also have bones and colored minerals to carry.
The eggs can wait.

Summer Glimpses

© 2010

In the swimming pool
a cricket floats on its back;
the lawn mower groans off.

Some weird bugs invade
the vegetable garden—
lunch: leftover squash.

Chasing its own tail
the cat spins grey-white taffy—
stretches afterward.

Ripe olives roll down
the drive, band of squeaky pearls
cars crush entirely.

A Woodpecker flies
straight for the hole in the palm—
Crow, fit-to-be-tied.

Desert Marigolds
knock heads with wrinkled lizards—
mod wizards look spiff.

Snake skin cellophane
shed over blue granite deck—
Man-friend, nine months gone.

Sugared strawberries,
clouds hang low at the horse track—
Rose wins by a nose.

Turtles mount on logs,
Totems, green and bean-yellow—
Count: two three zero.



Jeannine Savard is an Associate Professor of English at Arizona State University and teaches poetry workshops at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Her new volume of poems, entitled "Accounted For," will be published by Red Hen Press in Spring 2011. Contact Jeannine at jsavard@asu.edu.

Five Poems By Ellen Sullins

Impasse

© 2010

Bedroom door ajar.

Gray cat stands looking out at
tortoise shell cat looking in.

Avoiding eyes, each pretends
not to want to be
where the other one is.

Tortoise shell sits down. Mulls
memories of fine Egyptian mice.

Gray assumes Chinese Cat Contemplating Bug
pose.

Years from now, in this very spot
there could be two perfect skeletons.
One looking out, one looking in.

Jeans

© 2010

blue jeans
new jeans
everything i do jeans
tight jeans
right jeans
isn't that a sight jeans!
worn jeans
torn jeans
feelin so forlorn jeans
bleached jeans
streaked jeans
runnin on the beach jeans
blue jeans
true jeans
livin like i do jeans

My Mother's Hands

© 2010

Thinned skin wrinkles
blue veiny maps brown marks the spot
boney structure knuckles starting to knob
nails growing ridges all this sprouting
from my own startled wrists.



Ellen Sullins lives in Tucson with her husband and their two cats. She is the author of "Elsewhere," winner of the 2007 Plan B Press Chapbook contest, and is a recipient of The New Millennium Writings Poetry Award. Her work has appeared in South Carolina Review, Nimrod International, descant, Calyx, and Concho River Review, among others. She can be reached at esullins@cox.net.

Stray Cat

© 2010

after Bishop

I found a stray cat napping
amid morning papers
forgotten on the porch swing.
Moving to shoo her away
I noticed her bag-lady mittens,
gray with white tips poking through
with one claw extended,
peeling a translucent layer like mica.
Her fox face lay at an angle
on forelegs she hadn't cleaned.
Her nose a nub of charcoal eraser,
and whiskers grew
like filament quills
on each side of that nose.
Around her eyes were rings
of paler gray as if she'd worn glasses
to work all day in the sun.
Then she opened those eyes:
orbs clear as new glass,
pupils quite round in the shade,
irises the green of sea glass -
milky and worn. They noted me
then fell closed again,
though her left ear twitched sideways
and the terminal inch of her tail
flicked twice before
she laid it along her back leg
where the hip's tender curve
exposed her undercoat,
like a slip grown pale in the wash.
And the fur on her side
was the gray of a lake at moonrise,
the swells of her breath made ripples
of pewter, pearl, graphite, ash.
Then she sighed, perhaps dreaming
of birds or mice that got away,
litters she'd nursed, dogs outrun.
And I drew back my hand and left her
to find some rest.

Stone

© 2010

I am no pawn of time and water and wind, as most
Would have you believe - those who scurry like mice,
Too busy or scared to comprehend my powers.
For I am the most patient seductress and time my closest ally.

I spent millennia courting the wind, training the nuance
Of his touch, whispering how to caress my curves just so,
Until my form was pleasing to me. Then I grew bored
And sent him on his way. Perhaps you heard his lament in the pines.

But now the river has risen, drawn close by my throaty hum,
And he will spend the next eon enthralled with me,
Probing each cleft and crevice that summons, pounding
New hollows where I choose to yield, until my shape

Is pleasing to me, or I grow bored and direct my song
To the human world for a quick tryst with one
Who will think it is he who coaxes belly and breasts
From the blueprint I reveal as it pleases me.

That paramour will vanish, as a raindrop into the sea,
But my sculpted form will survive long after I tumble
From the pedestal, bored, and beckon old lovers again
– the water, the wind, and sweet persuasive time.

Four Poems by Cathy Capozzoli

These are from a series of Ghazals I'm working on. Ghazals are 8-line poems following a tradition begun in ancient Persia.

— Cathy Capozzoli

Voices

© 2010

What is lost between packing for travel to a hot place
and the language that erases images from my mind?

A grocery list—authored by one with only two titles
who crumples no paper—is burning. So many pens.

Thin voices call names through the dark,
An infestation of words in the way—

Of hurricanes and freight trains that otherwise
Tear through the night on what tracks.

Kauai Shade

© 2010

This cliff rises almost to those clouds, which shade
the sunlight in a way that is strange to my eyes.

I am seated on a bed of salty vines; thin, crisp
stalks hold lush-chalky leaves, fragrant.

The bent pine above is stunted by near-constant
wind also known by these two ears.

Seasons are the work of the heron's wings on clouds.
How sad for this one to no longer have the sky.

August After Dark

© 2010

Today's sun has filled the air with unburnt sage.
My breath is not enough to move a branch.

Only the night has flowers that bloom, way up there next
to the bird's nest in the prickly arms of the old saguaro.

That cat is feathered feet rising silently over the sand.
Inside, I turn the window blinds from open,

revealing the light and dark of the stars. My eyelids
will stay until dawn then blink those lesser colors.

Clouds and Music

© 2010

Last night gave rain to the Sonoran desert—
strange hands of water prayed on glass.

That tall cactus didn't budge in the wind.
A furred cabaret singer chanted to the thrum.

The last spatter was hours ago. Water still stands.
I understand not knowing where to go.

This morning's sun carries that same tone
for the dark dead beetle in the hallway.



Cathy Capozzoli is a playwright and poet who has lived in an urban locale in Pennsylvania, the foothills of the Colorado Rockies, atop a hillside in Honolulu, in a remote dwelling on the island of Kauai, and in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona. She holds an MFA from Naropa, a Buddhist university in Colorado. She was guest editor of "Many Mountains Moving: The Literature of Spirituality," a collection of creative works from 88 writers and artists from six countries and many spiritual traditions. Her work has been published widely on the Internet and in print, including *Ginosko*, *Blue Guitar*, *Tin Fish*, *New Millennium Writings*, *Karamu*, *Mudfish*, *Meridian Anthology*, and *Hawaii Review*. Four of Cathy's poems have been nominated for Pushcarts.

Southern Discomfort

By Marcia Gold

© 2010

There are things we are dead sure about: the ironclad gate of certainty grudgingly creaks open, just a sliver at a time.

Until now I had succeeded in avoiding this part of the country. Only this occasion could have brought me here: to attend the dedication of a Civil Rights Center in Alabama, surely an oasis in the local political climate. My sweetheart had planned this trip. His education had only progressed beyond the 8th grade because he was willing to make the hard choice of leaving his family. His community's high school did not include him.

Our appearances are quite a contrast, well beyond color. His lank 6 foot-plus body next to mine, just under 5 feet and well-marked by my Slavic ancestors, would be hard to miss. Perhaps our coupling was partly attributed to my own background. My kind had experienced persecution and exile, even genocide, dating from antiquity. The recent history of the Holocaust had born witness to the durability of hate. Could this piece of the world have been able to spit out the bitter seeds of intolerance?

Here we were, approaching a city that had witnessed some of the most violent incidents of the '60s. I girded myself for what might come, finally giving voice to my fears. I was assured, with a nod and a smile that trouble did not lay ahead. The media of that era still haunted me with terrible images of Billy clubs and smashed heads, punctuated with the rush of water from high pressure hoses, pinning people to walls. The anguished cries of the parents whose four little girls had died when their church was bombed still rang in my ears. Somehow, the specter of Jim Crow even hovered over our hasty supper at a Wendy's. Beyond that lay the unknown and darkness.

The anxiety lingered as a progression of broken-

down neighborhoods unfolded. It was clear to me who the residents were. When the landscape yielded to more comfortable dwellings, I easily envisioned who lived there. Finally, we arrived at an area of unmistakable opulence. Doubtless, persons of advantage inhabited these affluent homes, most flanked by lush lawns and three-car garages.

Had the disenfranchised been awarded tokens while the ruling elements continued in elite comfort?

Unfortunately, meanwhile, we had passed beyond town, missed our destination, and were quite lost. My partner decided to knock on a door for directions. I pleaded with him to go back to a business to ask for help; somehow, that seemed more "neutral." He laughed, shrugging off my fears. I cowered in the car as he walked toward a lovely home, imagining the worst. Would there be an insulting order to leave or even a more degrading reaction? I envisioned the occupant to be a tall patrician type, with a shock of silver hair and steeped in tradition.

An elegant and diminutive black man answered my sweetheart's knock. I was certain he was a servant. He made a welcoming gesture and the door closed behind the two men for what seemed like an eternity. When they finally emerged, our host introduced himself: He was a cardiologist and a founding member of the community. The evening ended as we followed him, in his Lexus, to our hotel.

Blindness is impartial to no human group. I was as narrow as I had determined this community was. Fear had resulted in convictions that precluded reality. The only antidote for irrational fear is to confront its roots and be willing to accept one's relation to them. I had anticipated an emotional odyssey, not a geographical one.

– *Dedicated to Al Armstrong, 1918-2008*



This initial venture as a writer marks Marcia Gold's approach to a 4th career. During her several years as a Social Worker, she was also classically trained as a singer, later performing and coaching to the present. The photography bug bit her in the 80s: She teaches this skill for PCC and Oasis, occasionally working professionally. The mother of 5 children, she has lived in Tucson for 36 years.

Signs

By Allison Alexandra

© 2010

Holding a bic pen and digging my toes into the tacky green carpeting, I intuitively poured out a foreboding poem entitled “The Destructive Whirlpool” on college-ruled paper. This impromptu piece was the darkest poem about destruction that had ever come through me. An unhappy high school senior, I was the only child of three still inhabiting my parents’ house in the affluent hills. Most people assumed we had the perfect family. Tears cycled down my pale teenage cheeks. Was this poem a prophecy?

Ravaged by high blood pressure and a host of angry ills, my father seemed to have an invisible dark cloud above his head. My family made sure the exterior of the large house was crisply manicured for the neighbors. To my innocent mind, life could have been a giant hoax. I didn’t know whom I could trust.

Two days after my poem foreshadowed danger, I was there when the phone sounded a shrill ring at 7:05 am PST early May.

I heard the loud click as my father replaced the lemon yellow hand piece on its cradle.

“Randy’s dead,” my father said succinctly.

A clerk in Italy recently found Randy deceased in his rented hotel room for the night. My father’s voice hollowed. I remember the morning dew on the daisies and the Jacaranda tree out in front of the empty house.

I lost my brother.

I had been asked to give a Valedictorian speech in a few weeks to over 400 graduating seniors, faculty, and related families inspiring them to victory. But I was speechless.

It was just two weeks shy of Randy’s 21st birthday.

It looked like Randy could run a marathon. He had been on a solitary backpacking trip through Europe. Did he fall ill? Did he become prey somehow to others or himself? How would anyone know? I felt like a soggy Raggedy Ann Doll, shaky from vulnerability and questions.

My dark brown eyes were half open. I had been preoccupied with a bowl of rice krispie’s and milk, sitting by the wood veneer table with chrome legs. There were 30 minutes before I

needed to drive my silver hatch-backed Toyota down Exposition Blvd. to get to school on time.

In less than a month, I would be walking away with my honors diploma, under my blue cap and tassel. I expected to be free from a distressing high school, swimming in racial riots. I wanted to be free from an imprisonment in a dark house where plants were deprived of enough light to grow.

In a dim hallway by the bedrooms lined with ragged off-white carpeting, there were hung three porcelain birth plates circled by a thin blue tempera kind of paint. It described the details of all three of our births.

Ironically, Randy’s had fallen and broken years ago, leaving a noticeable dark jagged crack across his name and birth date. No one had assigned this much meaning at the time. Now, I think it was one of the signs.

My mother got up in her flannel pajamas and professionally made arrangements for a local funeral. She, herself, was struggling having been diagnosed with a bizarre terminal illness. Her skin was slowly hardening, like a reptile. We expected that she might not be alive in three years, not Randy to be the casualty. It was all very unexpected.

A wave of grief seemed to abscond with everyone’s heart.

We had an older brother, Roger, who heard the brutal news while sitting next to the relatives on the white striped L-shaped couch, under the wall of mounted photos. Randy’s death robbed me of understanding and energy.

I lost my brother.

It was as if time stopped. There was a frustrating time delay waiting for interactions with the Italians.

“Cerebral hemorrhage,” the European coroner came up with after the autopsy, during which they didn’t know where to start searching. Randy looked fine to them, too. They came to believe that an artery burst in his head instantaneously. They think he might have been born with this weakness. I did not know what to believe.

I lost my brother.

Continued on page 9

Editor’s note: Names have been changed.



A native Californian, Allison Alexandra is a talented high honors graduate from the University of California at Berkeley where she earned a B.A. in Psychology. She also holds an M.F.A. degree in Fine Art with an emphasis on Portrait Painting from the Academy of Art University, San Francisco, and several certificates in Holistic Health. She is now developing her writing repertoire with this memoir of the unexpected early passing of her late brother. In the past, Allison has written short stories, poetry, and how-to instructional pieces. Currently residing in Southern Arizona, Allison is an Adjunct Professor with the Art Institute and can be reached at allisonalexandra@msn.com.

Continued from page 8

I cried out loud like a deer hit by a car that came out of nowhere. I did not know if time would advance.

We sat on the long L-shaped couch. I retained a 4" x 6" Kodak photo of the mourning scene that was dominated by a sick, yellowish cast.

My Aunt Ellen said it would get easier over time, and it did. She told me that she had lost everyone in her family. She helped me live through Randy's passing.

My uncle Joe showed me a thin paperback book.

This small book had a photo of an overcast olive sunset and shadowy silhouette on the cover. Inside the book, there were beautiful poems.

It spoke of having the wisdom to live after someone dies. They cannot be separated, life and death.

I loved creativity. The words took me by the hand and gave me hope. The pages are now worn and the binding peeling, but I still cherish the book today.

Randy loved photography.

Roger and I were the ones to make the dreadful voyage from our pampered neighborhood to the International Airport to pick up Randy's surviving items. My little hatchback had escorted us by merging with a predictable stream of traffic that afternoon.

Exhaust and fuel smells pervaded the surrounding air. I observed an ugly brown haze of smog invade the semblance of a blue sky, blocking out some of the sun. It reminded me of the somber home I grew up in where wood fences and tall pines shielded all of the windows from natural light.

Bellowing vibrations from the huge airliners shook us as I pulled the lever to open the heavy car door. It was something like entering a gaping black hole.

I recall leaving and then coming back to the car. We ended up retrieving a 25 lb. backpack instead of our family member.

The Italians sent his full yellow-tagged packs to my family as with the remaining body for the grassy funeral home. One of us must have grabbed his luggage from the mechanical dark grey conveyor belt.

While approaching the car, I found Randy's hand-written journal hiding within his cumbersome, black backpack. It was terrible.

I lost my brother.

And I shivered.

His grey cloth-covered diary was chock full of his travel entries from many weeks of his European trip. It was standard in our family to make such a trek at that age.

Mustering the courage to find his last entries, I read that he was suffering from a bad cold. My heart fell to its knees. It also read that he felt harassed by Italian strangers who were trying to steal his expensive camera equipment. He felt unsafe there. My blood ran thin. I wondered if he had been murdered. The visible entries terminated, leaving the rest of the pages blatantly blank. I

do not know if any pages had been removed.

For the first six months, I would see images of Randy in my dreams. At first, everything went well. Then I would have to remind him that he was dead. I found myself with an empty, cavernous pit posing as a stomach. One day, I awoke and vomited for one and a half hours. It got better, though. We were the youngest ones in our family. We were both quiet artists, of sorts. There wasn't a lot of light in that home to see clearly.

Three years later, I traveled through the same area as Randy while living as an exchange student in the Southwest of France.

Would I outlive my brother's twenty years on earth? I could not count the number of nights that I lied there sweating and fearing I would be found dead, like Randy, in Europe. We were close in age. However, if Randy became "lost" in Europe, I became "found" eventually. Away from everything that was familiar, I managed to find my early childhood passion for art that had been so dominated by a rational scientific dogma.

Time helped to heal.

Many years later around the holidays, I saw Randy again at the airport in one of my dreams. I had never seen him look better. Witnessing a smile from ear to ear, I felt uplifted by cheery buoyancy that I did not know was possible. The details didn't matter.

Eight years later, our father passed away also from his host of angry ills. Our mother's leathery terminal illness went into remission and softened. My oldest brother Roger inherited this house that he used to say reminded him of a concentration camp. He did a complete makeover down to physically relocating the black asphalt of the driveway and the mailbox. The old dark house is not really recognizable now. Large bay windows and life-giving skylights were added.

My idea of death altered. It seemed no longer like a sickening cast iron door shutting on me. It began to appear to be an invisible shift to another level of living. Death looked like a mysterious trip by car, but no one really knew how to prepare one's belongings. My brother Randy and I both graduated that May in different ways.

Randy moved on early. The time has not yet come for me.

I have been lovingly told.

I lost my brother as a teenager. It wasn't easy. His award-winning photographic creations now belong to a memorial fund set up under his name at a place of worship so that others may benefit from his artistry.

I am learning to live and trust each day more fully. I never know if someone walking out the door is ever coming back again. Anything could happen. At some level, I grew to see the hearts of humanity beat together as if belonging to a giant interconnected web. Signs appear, and my intuition beckons. I am learning to honor this.

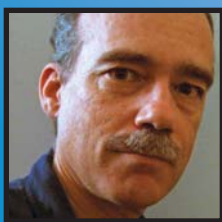
I made a colored pencil drawing of him at rest in a reclining chair and placed it tenderly into a walnut frame. I am still learning.

Charles Harker

Phoenix Artist



“Desert” 2010, Adobe Illustrator



Charles Harker grew up in Arizona and lived in San Francisco and New York City for many years, where he worked in graphic arts. He now splits his time between Phoenix and Mexico City. Many of his images are available for licensing through www.gettyimages.com. Met Life of New York is a recent client. In April of 2010, Harker released “Imaginary Landscapes” (\$24.95, Sunbury Press), a 100-page book featuring 40 Southwest-inspired images. It is available through Amazon.com. See more about him at www.charlesharker.com.

Charles Harker

Phoenix Artist



“Bakersfield” 2010 Adobe Illustrator

Charles Harker

Phoenix Artist



“Berkeley” 2010 Adobe Illustrator

Charles Harker

Phoenix Artist



“The Nude Taco” 2010 Adobe Illustrator

Charles Harker

Phoenix Artist



“Pinacate” 2010 Adobe Illustrator

I'm inspired by fine, commercial and craft art. When creating imaginary landscapes I associate memories to the evolving composition. That's the emotional part. The technical part is mixing pattern, shape, layer, perspective and color for the most perfect balance possible. A recent quote I liked (attributed to Fairfield Porter), "Find the figurative in the abstract and vice versus."

– Charles Harker

Binoculars

By Ruth R. Davis

© 2010

She couldn't breathe. Maybe it was the altitude – she was born by the ocean, didn't like heights and now, at 6500 feet under tall, dry ponderosa pines, her breathing was tight, short, labored. She could hear it inside her but it wasn't audible to the man next to her, sitting behind expensive, high powered binoculars that were aimed at a cavity in a dead tree in the west. He might sit like that for hours if she didn't interrupt with a thought or a question about lunch. It was barely nine, they'd been up for hours, with the sun, with the first birds, with the craving for robust coffee, dripped slowly through a filter, into a thermos, poured into their designated traveling cups. His blue, hers green, same as it ever was. But it wasn't the same. She couldn't connect with the landscape, the blue sky with fleeting white puffs of summer clouds, not even the breeze that blew around her, coating her in chills and isolation.

Had she always felt like this, separate from the earth, the sky, the man? Or was it only since she quit that habit, the one that took her inside, where she could connect her own dots to the wind, the trees. With drugs, the trees breathed and she could name a dozen color variations in their bark – not just brown, but sepia and rust and burnt sienna that turned to black where the curve of the trunk met the angle of morning sun. But today, there seemed to be no colors, just dryness from the three year drought in the forest and in their relationship.

So why had she agreed to come, knowing he would sit under his man hat, binoculars closer to his face than hers had been in months. Maybe if she stopped trying so hard. Or maybe she already had. She'd read an article in Cosmo once, while waiting for her perm solution to take at the noisy salon, Mexican music blaring on the radio and the hairdressers and other clients chatting it up in their foreign tongue and she could catch a word here and there but they talked so fast, she couldn't follow. So instead she let the sing-song of their conversations float around the cotton on her forehead, let their high pitched laughter fill the room as she mentally answered the questions in the magazine to see how much she really loved her man. She remembered thinking then that they should have a quiz to see how much you really loved yourself.

She turns to him. "What do you see?" She is making an effort, like the magazine suggested. "On that dead tree," he says, "a third of the way up, see it, bright red? It's the male summer tanager." He offers her the binoculars but she shakes her head, no. She is too far away and she doesn't want to get up. She sees the flash of red on the bare branch and remembers the first time out with him when the binoculars were new. They were at the river on a clear spring afternoon, everything green and moist and she had sat next to him on the edge of the river bank, watching for movement in the trees to point out to him. She remembers adoring him then, his knowledge of the birds, how he could sit for hours watching them, studying them, how he described their colors to her as she sat there, eyes full open to the sky. He had shown her how to find the bird with her eyes, then hold the binoculars up to her face to bring it into closer view. They had sat there for hours as the sky changed from day to dusk and when she got cold he had wrapped his flannel shirted arms around her shoulders and pulled her in close. That night when they made love he had called her his winged beauty.

She had learned the names of the birds, could tell the difference between the downy and the snowy woodpeckers, even identify the distinct chatters and chits of common songbirds. She wrote stories of their bird adventures and had won second place in a local writing contest. When they moved in together she painted the living room a summer sky blue and they scavenged the thrift stores for bird paintings to hang on the walls. They even planned their vacations to coincide with migrating birds.

But identifying birds in the wild was frustrating to her. She could never see what he saw, could not distinguish colors so far away, not even through his lenses. And she didn't like to sit still and quiet for so long. But she liked where the birds took them – to lakes and forests and especially the coast where she could watch the waves roll in and out while he studied the shore-birds. He sat for hours in his beach chair, with his bird identifying book in his lap and an apple in his pocket. She walked on the long beach, barefoot, her sneakers tied to her belt-loops.

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As the Founder and Creative Director of Spark The Heart, Ruth Davis encourages people to reawaken their passions and dreams and connect more authentically in the world. Ruth leads workshops and retreats that combine practical coaching techniques with creativity and play, giving people an opportunity to explore who they really are and how they want to create richer, deeper, more joyful lives. To learn more, visit Ruth's website at www.sparktheheart.com
Ruth is also the owner of Mac to School, providing one-on-one Macintosh computer training to home users and small business owners. Check out her Mac training website at www.mac2school.com

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She chased the sandpipers and willets at the water's edge and stopped to watch crabs bubble into the sand. She dragged her toes in the sand, drawing a big heart with smaller hearts around it, wondering if they would be there when she returned, or if the tide would have washed them away. Often she would turn around to see if he was watching her but his binoculars were always focused in another direction. She wished he would study her with that same intensity and passion, wished he would describe her colors, her patterns with that same affection that he had for his birds.

They hadn't been to the beach in over a year. Too far, he said, and she knew the long drive would be silent, and not the good kind. She had filled those silences with her drugs and her own voices, buzzing in her head, stories of other people, the words tumbling out onto paper, or, more often, just circling around her mind, where she could pretend that they were her own stories, her own happy life.

She thought she was happy. She had a man, a house, IRAs for their future. They didn't fight. They shared the household

chores. They liked the same TV shows. Wasn't that enough? Didn't all couples drift apart after all these years together?

She looks at him. He has turned his chair to face a low bush teeming with sparrows. His binoculars rest against his chest as he scans the brush with his eyes. How can this be enough for him? Why isn't it enough for her? She wishes for her habit, a slow draw of marijuana to fill her lungs with sweet distraction, easy separation, to take her away from these thoughts, his silence and the whipping of the cold wind.

But she has quit. Twenty four days ago, cold turkey, after finding a poem she had written two years before, about winter trees, a fallen nest, and a woman hiding in her own dimmed light. She had read it as if for the first time, feeling the loss, the distance, the self-inflicted isolation. Maybe only she had left the relationship and he is really still there. Maybe he did still love her. Maybe this really was enough.

"I'm so cold," she whispers. "Here," he says, offering her his jacket, the khaki one with the big pockets that she had bought him for their tenth anniversary. She takes a deep breath and reaches toward him.

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al-Shaitan

By Shaun Al-Shatti

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Open my eyes.
This place... I do not understand. I am trapped in a windless cell no larger than a bathroom. Three white walls surround me; chalky, worn surfaces. This world is bleached. A waxen curtain is drawn. It is sickly in nature; hardly strong enough to survive a summer breeze. A fan hums in the distance; manipulating the thin screen; pressing and pulling it to its whims; mocking me; everything is so far off. A tray lies beside me, a crinkled paper cup thrown clumsily along its borders. A pool of water has begun to form along the base. The water follows the cracks and crevices of the tray; floating through a weaving reservoir of the gods; a glimpse of life in this cold, dead arena.

The paper clothes that I am forced to wear do not provide an ounce of warmth. The freezing air snaps at my skin; I resist the urge to let the numbing cold carve through my body. I must stand for something. Now, even the tiniest victory can drive my spirit. I hear the soft familiar beep in the background. Still alive.

The needle in my forearm shifts. I do not feel it. I do not feel much these days.

The gentle melody of the fan seems to be beckoning me back into my sleep. This incendiary combination of mass amounts of narcotics and the pale, washed out ambience is forging into a symphony, begging my eyes to close.

Suddenly, a shriek pierces out through the night and rattles me out of my drift. There she is again. That woman. Who is she and why won't she stop this torture? I have heard her wailing for seventy-two increasingly brutal hours and yet it always strikes me. I wish that somebody would take her; move her to another level; anything. I hate the sounds she makes. Her shriek carries throughout the hall and penetrates through my flesh like a gunshot, wrenching through the coal and the ice and into the crux of my heart. I can see that endless abyss. The black eyed angels mock me. I will not end up like that. I must believe. I must hope. Without hope there is nothing.

*** **

Open my eyes.
Rays of light streak through the wooden blinds. Sunbeams bounce off of the golden walls and peek from side to side like a mischievous child. The warmth of the morning radiates throughout the room. The glow is palpable. The last fleeting days of the summer truly are glorious. What did mankind do so right to deserve to bask in this glory?

A shrill sound echoes from the background. I fumble around blindly, unwilling to acknowledge what I secretly already know to be true. Just five more minutes.

I convinced myself. Sometimes, it isn't that hard. A simple protest is all the conflict the body needs. Anything to justify itself.

Oh, those were a glorious four minutes and fifty-five seconds. The blaring, metallic cry from the alarm disturbs me from my utopia once again. The alarm is brazen; it does not relent. It implores me to give in. Finally, I submit. The battle is over and that damn plastic buzzer won yet again. With subtle annoyance, I groggily stumble to the bathroom. After an impatient shower and a quick breakfast of eggs and toast, I depart for work.

Routine is such an interesting concept. It has such a negative connotation applied to it, yet it may be one of the most vital belongings that we possess. Nobody likes to admit that they have a routine. No one openly chooses the beaten path. People want adventure; people want excitement; something new and fresh. Despite that, or perhaps *because* of that, the ordinary is what sustains us. Familiarity is our lifeblood.

I am still half asleep as the immense fluorescent sign defiantly stares at me over the horizon: Prime One Mortgage. As I get out of my car I gaze up at the leviathan of a building that I am about to enter. Monstrous. Yet, the white walls seem almost transparent. Age has not been kind. The old bricks have cracks and chips strewn about. There are visible hints of a pale golden mold growing on the dingy corners. Flourishing in such a preposterous manner; well done.

As I open the glass doors a familiar sound hits my ears. A cacophony of dissonant chatter, jangling phones, and various

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Shaun Al-Shatti is a 20 year old student at Arizona State University and is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in English, a minor in Political Science, and is also enrolled in the ASU Writing Certificate program. He enjoys writing more than anything and his main goal is to be able to write for a living. He can be contacted at shaun.alshatti@gmail.com.

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clicks and clacks that create a wall of white noise and hit like a Tyson haymaker. Ahhhhh... the life of office work.

I walk past the customary oddly attractive receptionist and squeeze my way into my home away from home. My prison. There truly is nothing like cubicle life. What a ridiculously tragic concept. A penitentiary, a reformatory, and a mental institution all rolled into one. A modern day Bastille. I am convinced that the cubicle is the direct evolutionary result of the medieval dungeon.

I look down at my cubicle's miserable excuse for a desk. A combination of time and the games that endless boredom brings have turned this once majestic, polished piece into a shell of its former self. The once amber wood has faded into grey, the life sucked from it. Flecks of primer and wood have chipped off giving it a fragile appearance, as if it could give at any moment. On the desk there sits two objects. In the center, there is a large dark phone with a headset attached to it. Directly adjacent, there sits the stack of flash cards that have already been prearranged for me. Each flash card is empty except for three snippets of information haphazardly written in a bold, black typeface. Name. Address. Phone number. Demons these cards are – always mocking me.

Telemarketing is such a unique experience. It is truly absurd to feel such dislike emanate from others. Rage can manifest itself in a much easier fashion when it is directed at a stranger. Countless times a day I encounter these people. Their hatred just oozes through the phone. Chaos in an unblinking world. Once, a man became so angry that I had the nerve to call his house that he proceeded to look up the address of our building and promise me that he would come down here with a shotgun. Incredible.

But, hell, can you blame them? If these people knew that this "Senior Marketing Analyst" advising them to refinance their house, and likely put them into debt, was really just some sixteen year old punk who, in all reality, was completely full of shit, they would be appalled. I, for one, never fault the angry ones. Life is unfair. I would rather them take their fury out on me, a faceless nobody, than take it out someone who is likely far less deserving of it. Shit, at least it makes the day more interesting.

I reach into my desk and find an unopened pack of Reese's Pieces that I had forgotten the night before. I lazily rip it open and pour them onto the desk. Bits of orange and brown scatter about. I begin to sort them into two separate, color-coordinated groups as I grab the first note card.

*** **

I open my eyes.
I am lying down on my stomach. I am on a table.
There are people around me. I hazily try to turn my head.

No such luck.

My world erupts. A bullet rips through my back. My spine explodes with a white hot fury. The black eyed angels dance in my eyes. Unable to see what has happened, I panic. I gasp for breathe and attempt to yell for help. Someone; anyone. What comes out cannot be fathomed as words. Primal, guttural sounds. No syllables are strung together, only a jumble of letters that seemingly trip over each other one by one in an elaborate prank.

I try to move my arm... if only I could fight... my limbs won't listen.

My spine erupts once more. I crank my neck and force my eyes to roll into the back of my head until I catch a glimpse. The pain is unbearable. A large needle has been plunged deep into my vertebrae. A strange luminescent liquid is being extracted from my spinal column.

"Enough," A deep voice says. "We have enough."

"You may take him back to his room now," another voice commands from across the room.

The needle is removed. A shuffling of several feet is heard and my table begins to move. The wheels squeak and squirm their way out of the room. The door is still swinging back and forth when I hear one man clearly tell another, "I have never seen anything like this."

*** **

The doctors tell me I may be paralyzed. They tell me I may never walk again. They tell me I may never speak correctly again.

Worst of all, they tell me that they don't know why this has happened, and they don't know how to fix it.

How does a perfectly healthy sixteen year old lose all motor and speech skills in the blink of an eye?

They are calling it a stroke. Numbness is to become my life. There is no explanation. This is what I am now? A medical anomaly. Just another lost page in a medical journal. They say it must be God's will.

God's will? God's will?!?

I hear whispers that a devil has taken hold of my heart. A curse has been placed upon me. What seemed unfathomable a mere week ago is now a reality. In the Arabic language the word demon is represented with the characters **ن ا ط ي ش ل ا**, or al-Shaitan. These days they say that the al-Shaitan lives within me. Every day my father prays for the al-Shaitan to leave; but he refuses to release me. His unrelenting grip clasps onto my core, and tears at my soul. He rips away the flesh and gnaws at my humanity.

This room is suffocating. These bleached walls mock my inabilities. What have I become?

There is no point. I must not reach that dreaded moment

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when hope becomes hopeless.

*** **

Open my eyes.

I am attempting to convince 476-984-9970, Mr. Parker B. Anthony at 4432 W. Adams Lane to refinance his home. He has a deep baritone of a voice, but yet it holds a certain frailty to it. He has a 4.5% fixed 15 year loan. I lie and tell him that I can top that. We move through the classic steps; the dance of deception across the phone lines. He gives me a refusal; I give him perfect, unqualified hyperbole. His voice quivers. Like a shark ripping through the crystal ocean, I smell the blood, and in the back of his mind, he senses it.

“Well I don’t know, I may need to talk to my wife about this matter.”

“Sir, with all due respect, the longer you wait, the less likely we are able to help you. This is a matter of urgency. This is a matter of preserving your future; your legacy. When I say this is life changing, I mean it.”

“I just don’t understand how you could give me a lower rate...”

“Well sir, it is allal a maaan-nn-ner of fin-nn-nn-aac. Yoou k-k-kont van to...”

My voice stutters as the connection between my mind and my mouth is seemingly broken. I regroup and try again.

Ssoor-or-y I dd-don-nt-t-t nout-tas nat-at-at...”

What the hell is happening?

“Are you drunk son? Ain’t no way I’m doing business with a drunk!”

The click of the phone shakes me like an earthquake. What the fuck just happened?? I try to stand up. My legs don’t seem to understand. I collapse underneath my own weight like a newborn. Gripping the chair, I pull myself up from the world. My limbs are shaking. My mind is racing. I take two precarious, teetering steps; one foot after the other I try to command myself.

For the first time in my life, I can actually feel my brain. Napalm echoes throughout my head, short circuiting the wiring; the cogs are rusting; spasms comes in bursts; torrents of convulsions; the sounds of cannon fire ring throughout my head. I crumple to the floor, unable to withstand the onslaught.

*** **

I am in the passenger seat. My mother is frantic. The Saturn furiously weaves through traffic as if Death himself were pursuing us. The astral cars race past us like stars through the sky. I am confused. I try to open my mouth; I try to understand. No real words come out. This seems to only increase the already skyrocketing level of urgency within her. Her thin frame has never looked stronger.

I feel my eyes roll to the back of my skull. My mind collapses upon itself and the images dance in my head. My future and my past collide. It’s not time yet. I look over the edge of the canyon and see the river. Panic enters my heart as the black eyed angel breaks through. The rowboat flows toward the edge as I sense the darkness pulsating behind me. It can’t end like this. I want to go back. The blackened water rushes below me; the cascade of silence is deafening. I feel the hands of al-Shaitan grip my shoulder. This can’t happen. The force of the push obliterates my being.

I am afraid.

*** **

Open my eyes.

My vision is blurry, but I have no need to see. It is dark, yet, I know where I am.

The persistent beating of the fan still hums in the distance; these three empty, white walls that have become my home. My abandoned empire. My sanctuary. My prison.

I wish no more than to stand from this bed and remove myself from this place. If only my body were whole again. If only it would listen. I have been betrayed by the closest person I know. Myself. I have never felt so alone. Each day I awaken from this endless nightmare, hoping that it is finally over; hoping that it was all a joke. Each day, I am disappointed. Every sunrise comes and goes and my spirit is pulled deeper into the charred waters. A vicious cycle with no end in sight.

I cannot have peace. My body is at war with itself. Even my dreams do not go undisturbed. Whether it is a result of the countless drugs I now depend on, my increasingly detached grip on reality, or perhaps a combination of, the beast haunts my thoughts.

The music of the night is intoxicating. The weights on my eyes are becoming heavier. I cannot resist. My body loses consciousness and my mind drifts.

*** **

I see nothing. This world is empty. A void in the abyss. Deep in the distance I can faintly hear the ring of a phone. It sounds so lonely. I hear a whisper to my left. I turn to look. Nothing. Another mumble echoes behind me; I whip around. Only the black. The ringing grows louder. A soft, fragile chatter murmurs on my right. The whisper’s echo becomes more focused.

“Never seen anything like this.”

A static hum starts to reverberate throughout my head. The ringing grows louder. The whispers are replaced by burning voices. Punishing me. Doubting me. Pitying me. The ringing grows even louder. Deafening. A metallic beep gouges through the world.

Still alive, I tell myself.

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The beep resonates with the static; dissonance and harmony linked together as one. The ringing has become thunderous. A shriek rips through my skull.

I am surrounded.

The world is spinning. I can barely breathe. The natural order is imploding. I crouch with my hands over my head as everything I know crumbles.

An ear piercing eruption rocks my foundation. The flash blinds me. Yet still I can see them. The empty, soulless, sunken eyes.

A dark force hurls itself into my heart. The al-Shaitan is here. The rapture has come. My life explodes with the embers of chaos. It wants me and I can do nothing.

The Pandemonium twists around me, writhing at its feet. My will is on fire. My body is breaking. Everything that I have ever known will cease to exist.

I cannot stop it. The darkness is enveloping my heart, filling it with the coals of hatred and abandonment.

I must hope. I must fight. The roaring will not relent. The flurry of the storm tears my skin apart at the seams. Ripping my will. Splitting my mind. The black-eyed angels gash through the abyss; slashing madly through the flames. I pour every ounce

of my soul and my heart into this world. I want to live a normal life again. This resolution, this purpose; it must mean something. This all must stand for something. I cannot lose to the demon.

A barrage of thunder ruptures through, annihilating the universe around me. Everything except those eyes. Those burning, vengeful eyes. The al-Shaitan will not claim me today.

Without hope there is nothing.

*** **

My eyes burst open. Sweat is pouring down my body. My heart is pounding. From one nightmare into another. I hear the soft familiar beep in the background. Still alive. The gentle hums of the fan radiate throughout the room. Calming.

I look past the paper-thin curtain into the hall. Nurses are bustling about, performing their daily rounds. Hope is everything, I remind myself.

A young nurse delicately slides the waxen curtain to the side and walks towards me. She reaches into her medical pouch and grabs a small silver pin. She gently picks up my arm to perform the same routine test that I have failed for months. Dejectedly expecting the same numbness that has come the countless times before, she carefully pricks me on the fingertip.

It twitches.

Reflections on “al-Shaitan”

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It all happened so fast. Even now, four years later, it feels like a distant nightmare. In a way, the thought that it was once a reality still seems ridiculously far fetched. It is strange. It has become a moment in time that is forever etched within my mind, but yet, I barely remember it. Subconsciously, I think I try to distance myself from it.

The only thing is, I’m still not quite sure what happened. That is what scares me. It was haphazardly called a stroke, but that was more of a formality; a label to explain an unexplainable event. The truth is, there was never a definitive declaration that it was actually a stroke. Besides, that just wouldn’t make sense. A reasonably healthy sixteen year old doesn’t just have an unprovoked stroke, and lose all motor function for months, right? Hell, half a year after the initial shock I was still walking around as if I was drunk; stumbling over words and unable to walk a straight line.

It was a dark time in my life. I was robbed of every selfish thing that I held dear. Having everything taken away from you at such a young age is a frightening thing. But still, in retrospect, I did not handle it well. I cast myself into self-exile. I alienated myself from friends, my family, and those that cared most about me. I still do not know why. I guess I didn’t want anyone to see me so weak. Within my mind, I became bitter.

My teenage angst caused me to say “fuck the world.” Following my recovery I fell hard into a murky chapter of my life of which I am not proud.

In reality though, these things happen. Now I am so far removed from it that memory barely exists anymore. I had not thought about the incident in years until my professor, Julie Amparano, requested that we write a short story as a final assignment in her class. I had never written creatively before, and to be honest, I was quite intimidated. As the days went on, and the story ideas failed to come to fruition, I began to realize that this may be my chance to come to terms with the event that changed my life. The process of writing al-Shaitan became a slow and painful revisitation to a period in time that I had so willingly forgotten.

It became a truly cathartic experience. Only now, as the story is finished, and I am allowed some sort of reflection, do I understand that this experience of loss may have been a blessing. It changed me. It forced me to look upon the world in a different fashion. Without wanting to sound too cliché, it revealed to me the fragility of life and the importance of maximizing the small amount of time that you have on this world. Most of all, it made me realize how blessed I am. It is still hard for me to understand that, but it is a lesson that I must always remember.

– *Shaun Al-Shatti*

Eight Poems By Lauren Dixon

Absence-Seeing What's There and What's Missing

© 2010

I look at my courtyard
after five months of absence,
the potato vine's vibrant
tendrils have taken over,
the electricity meter has
disappeared. They curl,
reaching for their next victim.
Last year this same vine
new to the neighborhood,
burned in the sun,
needing an umbrella's protection
from summer's bully.
The hummingbird feeder isn't
swinging from its perch,
but the small wind chimes
are still singing their song.
The pots left empty are still empty.
The pots left with brave remnants
striving for a season not theirs,
thinking they could make it in the shade-
Eaten by rabbits,
A clutch of hatched quail eggs,
Hidden between pot and wall,
A birth that enjoyed the quiet,
The fountain devoid of water
once gurgled "hello",
its bubbles spoke for the rest,
"Someone lives here, someone cares."
Now courtyard containers begging,
Fill me! Plant me! Make me whole!
I will I say, as I get the hose ready
to clean away the dirt of neglect,
I will.

Swinging Gate

© 2010

There is nothing so lonely
as a swinging gate.
Softly squeaking back and forth
with a breeze, seemingly helpless, or
Banging with a stiff wind,
trying to get attention.
The ancient latch still works, but
it must be done with two hands now,
not an option when arms are full.
Laundry and garbage are the reasons
we go through the gate,
chores always done with a sigh.
Garbage, always dirty,
now someone else's problem.
Laundry smelling of
sweat from working out,
sweat from insecurity,
sweat from sex.
Wiped away by the wash and wear cycle,
Fluffed by the hot bin of purity. Warm and clean.
Done with our duty, we close the gate
relieved of the mundane for awhile,
If left open, a reminder,
we are never, ever done.



Lauren Dixon was born in San Francisco where she attended Lowell High School, then Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. Married for 22 years, she lives in Sausalito, California and Scottsdale, Arizona where she writes and makes jewelry for her business Waterdragon Beadesign. Contact her at redhedlor@yahoo.com.

Maybe No One Taught Them

© 2010

I don't know how a human
can go through an entire day
without being touched.
How can they not have that need,
that connection, that
soft electric wire to the heart?
The wire that brings
life affirming messages,
unspoken compliments,
unsung praises heard by hands,
hands that quell tears,
and disappointment.
Arms that envelope the
body protecting against
what the ears heard-
neutralizing negative
clouds of words,
kicked up by stormy mouths.
We think it's inherent in our makeup.
Lip to lip conversations
numbing the mind,
and firing up the physical.
A cheek kiss goodbye,
the same for hello,
When prompted,
a hug given like
they missed that lesson,
I think if they knew how
precious it was to find
someone who loves them,
in this world-wholly loves them,
the touch would come easier,
They just don't know how,
and it's too late to teach them now.

Rite of Passage

© 2010

She came to visit
on a plane,
She's brave
beyond her age,
Her birthday gone
a week ago,
At seven
turned a page,

I asked her what
she's wanting,
Her glance was
somewhat daunting,
She looked at me,
I looked at her,
Those eyes were
somewhat haunting,

"Your ears pierced!"
Words spilled out a blur,
I said, "That's cool,
I'll ask your mom
if it's alright with her,"
It was. We went.
Pink stones were picked,
She sat real still,
The guns were clicked,

"You're done," I cried,
Big deal I teased,
She beamed such watts,
Her self so pleased.
Mission accomplished,
Carpe Diem seized,
A big girl rite,
Her want appeased.

The honor was mine,
A gift so rare,
Granddaughters grow
Too fast--not fair.
She'll never forget,
When her ears were notched,
A redheaded grandmother,
Championed, and watched.

Mums, Then Geraniums, Then Poppies

© 2010

She was always good with flowers,
Painting like you could pick them,
Geraniums red as indignation,
Mums spiky petals throwing yellow,
Orange poppies,
translucent in the light,
You could almost smell
their stain on your hands,
My rewards came unexpectedly,
I received the Mums for my divorce,
Her validation my decision was sound,
The Geraniums for moving near by,
Her thankfulness,
The Poppies for marrying well a second time,
Her relief I'd be cared for.
She up and left one day but,
I see her everywhere,
She left me bouquets of herself.

Become a Crane

© 2010

Some people are the cranes,
Some are the bulldozers,
Crane people lift you up,
attaching beams of self worth,
building blocks of esteem,
empathy, and compassion,
Bulldozers tear you down,
ripping away all of the above,
so nothing is left
but your foundation,
hopefully it is made of
something strong,
impermeable,
you can always start over,
when another crane person
shows up on the doorstep,
The best idea however, is
to become a crane person yourself,
Then no wrecking ball can touch you.

One Wire Away From Dead Silence

© 2010

Our bond had diminished,
winding down like a clock
with old batteries, like water
circling the drain, stories
were the same tug of war,
those of the daughter,
seventeen, those of the father,
seventeen plus twenty-six,
each stuck in idiosyncratic goo,
a small connection kept alive
by years of my cards, letters,
and phone calls.
He never calls,
He never writes,
He always apologizes,
for his inability to do either,
I always forgive him,
He is thankful.
Our secondhand kinship,
renewed by intermittent visits
across the Suisun sloughs,
the old issues,
sinking into the murk,
letting our new found selves
revive in only the good remembered,
nothing less.

Time Lines

© 2010

Time is etched in fine lines,
smiles leave them near eyes,
frowns leave them near mouths,
lines named after birds, and puppets,
Some are straight, some curved,
deep or shallow, not always
candidates for erasure,
The pretty ones,
have the toughest time
throwing in the towel,
They do their make-up
under 10x magnification,
thicker foundation, extra eye-shadow,
more lip gloss, plucking,
exfoliating, moisturizing,
like more means younger,
Every wrinkle looks like
the Grand Canyon,
Every zit Mount Everest,
Hair grows on upper lips like grass,
The crows have moved in
to roost indefinitely,
I need a mower
and a shotgun.

Five Poems By Michael Gregory

Before My Eyes

© 2010

*long underground, though good I be
- Theognis*

In a perfectly Platonic world
I would gladly look at you for hours,
delighting in the flow of light in the lines
from ankle to hip to shoulder to neck and back

but love in time requires more than sight
since eyes though they may see can never feel
the loveliness within that animates
your breast and gives your skin its radiance

so long before my eyes are satisfied
love reaches out, fingertips, then lips,
urging the tongue to assume each contour
a syllable, each texture a living text

to learn chapter and verse degree by degree,
coming closer with each turn of phrase.



Michael Gregory is the recently-retired founding director of the Central School Project, a cooperative community arts center in Bisbee. His poems have won numerous awards (including a creative writing fellowship from the Arizona Commission on the Arts) and have appeared widely in periodicals and anthologies, including Anon (Edinburgh), Antioch Review, CutThroat, Drunken Boat, The Fiddlehead, Massachusetts Review, Michigan Quarterly Review, Pinyon, Sin Fronteras and Square One. He has published several poetry books and chapbooks, the most recent being re: Play (Pudding House). Since 1971, he has lived off-grid in southeast Arizona ten miles from the US-Mexico border where he raises organic apples and pears.

South Out Of Silver

© 2010

*“a local habitation and name”
- A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

South out of Silver while they still dream
half a moon past midsummer
last night’s full moon performance
in quasi-period Western dress:
lovers confused by an old man’s desire
for the changeling his fairy queen
had nicked and meant to keep for her own.

Dropping down from the high pine
into oak and juniper:
mountains of copper-mine wastes,
carcasses of deer in the ditch,
wrong place at the wrong time.

Over the continental divide
into the alkali sinks:
dust devils raising hell
on both sides of the freeway,
the signs before the cutoff
to Animas warning: EXTREME CAUTION
VISIBILITY MAY BE ZERO.

South again at Road Forks
the olive chaparral giving way
to grazing Brangus and Herefords
heads down and belly-deep
in seascapes of sun-bleached grasses
the blacktop cuts through providing
small game for buzzards and ravens
whose wings appearing and disappearing
against the robin’s-egg sky keep us
from being hypnotized by
the literal meaning of everything
as we head out of the Land of Enchantment
into this corner of Arizona
where one old timer after another
is having dreams they don’t remember.

As Mental As The Gods

© 2010

*from the intuitive
to the abstract*

-James Yorke

1

As mental as the gods,
ideas or purposes
but with any luck
more predictable

space a function of time
time a species of motion
light corpuscular
as well as undulant

the forces of nature its structure
the symmetry expressed
in ungeometric figures
non-linear equations

for infinite lines
in finite receptacles
each particle
liable to appear

in any number of ways
the very act of looking
skewing the results
regardless what instruments

brought into play the object
in question (the thing itself
so called) here and there
at one and the same time

2

Clouds are not spheres says one.
*Sensitive dependence
on initial conditions*
says another. How

*nonlinear nature is
in its soul* says one.
*Period three implies
chaos* says another

calling to mind the nun
who centuries ago
said *One becomes two,
two three, and of the third*

*the one as the fourth
(every human truth
the last truth but one)*
recalling the brothers withdrawn

centuries earlier yet
into their understanding
that one will get you two,
two three, and three

eternity for those
scaling the pyramid
with due diligence
and humility.

3

Claiming insight beyond
the conventional
it was incumbent on them
to prove up their claim

explain themselves in terms
descriptive of the substance
being unearthed, specific
to the undertaking

and at the same time
understandable to
if not the man in the street
a reasonable woman.

The prospective body
so newly discovered
yielding little data,
the old vocabulary

inadequate, the few
words newly coined
theatrical often as not:
no wonder they resorted

to myth and fantasy
figures of speech backed up
with matinee idols
reciting hard numbers.

4

One learns to hope
says another *that nature
possesses an order one may
aspire to comprehend.*

Dearer To Me And More

© 2010

sorrow equal to the love
- Heloise

Dearer to me and more
honorable to you
she said to be your lover
than your wife and all
authorities she cited
agreed scholars and marriage
are incompatible.

What could there be in common
between bookmen
and wetnurses she asked
or books and distaffs?
Or between sacred
or philosophical
reflection and wailing babies?

And besides she went on
they both knew getting married
would never satisfy
her outraged uncle.
Yet he in his folly
persevered and she
in hers acquiesced

so that her kinsmen
despite having given him
the kiss of peace severed
from him those extremities
that most had given offense;
and she after giving birth
took the habit and vows;

and though until he died
they expressed their love
between the lines of letters
articulating their faith
in and understanding
of the perfect reason
pervading divine will

it's said (though to this day
some will disagree)
they never touched again
save with their minds
and in the exercise of
the holy offices of
their respective orders.

Susan In Tucson

© 2010

Dr. Ron came by today (it's been years)
with stories of Nicaragua, *las contras* in Alabama,
refugee camps in Georgia: the whole southeast scene:
Selma twenty years later, subliminal TV ads
for Christ and Big Brother, the brainwash battalions;
the hard sell, God's death squads; and meanwhile,
back in the psych ward with the ex-army surgeons
making electroneurological inquiries
into post-meridian treatment for lost causes,
cross-country travel with his braindamaged buddy.

Then Dr. John came by with theories of polar skies,
apocalypse imminent, the dialectical pair
stretched almost to the snapping point: and then what?
the birth of a third? a squaring of the vicious circle?
(three will get you four and four will get you seven
climbing the Holy Tetractys of Pythagoras)
or will it be just more of the same disintegration,
randomness, a scrambled egg on the face of lauagr?

Questions, questions, the same old stories with a few
new twists pretending to be answers. These are the facts:
Susan. In Tucson. Lastnight. Cancer. Still in her forties.
The clouds this morning at dawn, gold, then crimson, then gray.
The air all day making the edges of things stand out
the way they do through a lens. NASA, Palomar,
microscopes and telescopes, the weather on Mars,
space music inside her Dragonfly Glassworks
played on the shards of a brilliant career
when it was put under control of the Pentagon.

This afternoon at the Queen it's kind of dead, and dead
at the Brewery, dead at the Elmo. Up at Shearer and Howell
it's almost quitting time for the Christmas lights crew,
and later tonight at Elmo's it's Windsong and Dave,
a little country rock, some old timey banjo,
Puglio and Sierra kicking up their heels
while outside on the Gulch a woman in her twenties
sits down in her beer and broken bottle and shakes her head
when her friend, swaying under his own load
tries to pull her up, to make her understand
how very far they have to go before they get home.

Denise Landis

Apache Junction Artist



“Bikini Top”

Acrylic paint on canvas

2006



Denise Landis has dabbled in art since her early college days. However, she pursued art full time in 2000 following a successful career in the mental-health industry. Prior work included creative therapies, marketing and program administration, with each providing excellent skills to promote her art business Landisworks Studio today. E-mail Denise at landis@landisworks.com.

Denise Landis

Apache Junction Artist



“Hotel Del”
Acrylic paint on canvas
2009

My acrylic paintings are inspired by the unique people, places, and wildlife of Arizona and Pacific coastal regions. I focus on a style inspired by the color theory of pointillism. My paintings are abstract images utilizing bright colors that “play” with the viewers’ eyes. They tend to smother the whole canvas with a vibrating action.

– Denise Landis

Arizona School of
Classical Ballet
students performed at
the Blue Guitar Spring
2010 Festival of the
Arts held April 18



Photos by Richard H. Dyer

Eclectic musical performances at the Blue Guitar Spring 2010 Festival of the Arts held April 18



Singer and acoustic guitarist
Jonathan Gabriel



Singer Edna Elizabeth Abeyasundra,
accompanied by guitarist John Calvert



Singer and acoustic guitarist Neil Dicks



Musician Vincent Alexander Chavez



The rock and roll band SMUDD



Arizona Classical Kids musicians

Photos by Richard H. Dyer



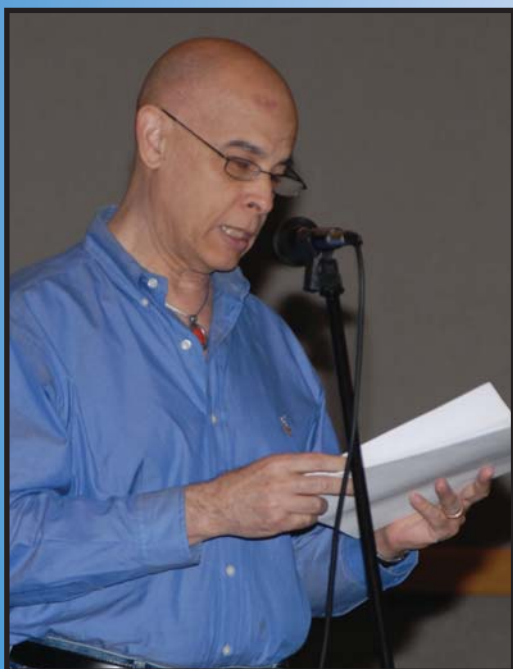
Richard Fenton Sederstrom



Cathy Capozzoli



Eman Hassan



Eduardo Cervino



Sean Medlin



Joshua Hunter Hensley

Authors read their works from the Spring 2010 issue of The Blue Guitar Magazine at the April 18 Festival of the Arts

Photos by Richard H. Dyer



Nikki and Grace Tordil gave a presentation of Filipino Martial Arts

Variety of performances at the April 18 Festival of the Arts



Opera Singer Maria Restivo



Meena Venkataramanan read her work from the inaugural The Blue Guitar Jr. contest for young writers

Photos by Richard H. Dyer

Four Poems By Tim Kelly

Patience will provide

© 2010

From its precious cord of life
Still one ripened apple clings
Missing the blossom she once was
When summer birds would sing
The fall wind sounds its gentle call
The leading in of season's change
It's time the young fruit fell away
And ventured into open range
She wonders what may be her fate
"Will I be cast on rocky ground
Or will the reeds reach up to me
And gently set me down"
There is no need for such concern
A songbird whispered quietly
"When I was young and could not fly
Like you my view was from a tree
Time went on and I grew strong
The day soon came to leave
What I once feared a dreadful plunge
Has truly set me free"
Excitement fills her to the core
The tree must now let go
Patiently, with hand held out
A young man waits below

Painful confession

© 2010

I watch the lights go out
And now I walk in darkness
Yet I had already been in darkness
For tonight I was deeply hurt
Deeper within than I allow most emotions to travel
And from deep within do the emotions rage outward
What anger I show
How I burst my shell of oppression
With an unleashed tempest of my soul
Though I must ask you to understand
I am not a violent man
Rarely am I so enraged
It's just the only way I know
To translate the cry of my heart

Timeless Vow

© 2010

Two endless rays of light
Racing through eternity
Laughing at time and space
Two separate colors
Drawn together on this canvas Earth
To make oceans sparkle
To make dark lands glow
To help dimmer colors
Shine like the sun
And when this living canvas
Blends all into one
There will be two rays of light
Racing through eternity
Laughing at time and space.



Tim Kelly, 43, weightlifting, rock climbing, martial arts; security guard, divorced, born in Novato, Calif., moved to Phoenix when I was 5, been here since, hope to find success as a novelist.

Wisdom

Solomon lying in bed, just before he told God he wished for wisdom above all else.

© 2010

I have to rise early tomorrow, but I cannot seem to sleep.
As soon as the sun rises they will expect my answers.
Men twice my age seek my guidance.
I have been granted the one wish I had always wanted.
An impossible promise has been fulfilled and now I am terrified.
The vast kingdom my Father has built balances delicately on my actions.
Countless lives depend on my words.
Surely my enemies have heard a child is King.
Shall I send messages of peace or will this be the odor of fear that encourages them.
Should I rally my forces and quickly invade to show my might is equal to my Father's?
If I fail the loss will be great and all will fall on me.
I spent countless hours by my Father's side.
I took in his teachings like parched ground drinks the summer rain yet, I am terrified to move.
Soon the sun will rise and I may find my enemies at the city gates.
I may find a turned friend at my bedchamber door.
How did my Father bear it all?
How did he know the chosen path?
If only I knew as he knew.
If only I could see as he did.
If only I had that wisdom.

Two Poems By Rebecca Patchell

Forgotten Things

© 2010

In an elaborate
ceremony
of crosses made of twigs
and tears,
I buried them.
Those things I found
in the trash bin;
on the side of the
road
small animals
insects and toads.
In the alley,
the underside,
the behind life,
I played there
giving the proper
rights
to the small forgotten
things.

Sweeping

© 2010

I am on the front porch
sweeping
away the leaves that were once
green
and dripping with blossoms.
I hear voices, women walking
and laughing
along the streets narrowed by
falling leaves,
and the last seasons cut of grass.
I look up smiling;
there are no women walking,
no laughter springing through
air.
It is but the rustle of once golden
leaves
now brown in the crisp, yawning
breeze
of falling.



Tucson poet Rebecca Patchell writes: "I have a degree in Journalism, which I never used, and a lot of years studying poetry and short story writing. I started writing poetry at the age of 7, as a form of expression in an unexpressive family. Contact me at rbainp@yahoo.com, if you wish."

High Rollers

By E. A. Cervino

© 2010

I walked inside the cyber-café with my last eight dollars in my pocket and searched online for jobs. Disappointed, I opened my email inbox. Among the junk and the Nigerian business offers was one from an unknown source.

Mr. Bronson, this week was your last check; see me at the bus stop by the corner of your house, next Friday night at six p.m. You will recognize me. I have a proposition for you.

Indeed, when I arrived, I knew instantly who he was. I had seen him more than once behind the window at the unemployment office. We talked for a couple of hours, at the end of which I was flabbergasted. He was the promoter of a highly illegal enterprise in which I declined to participate. He made me promise to forget about his proposal or else, and gave me one hundred dollars cash.

That was then, but a year later I called back and accepted the deal.

It was a drizzly late evening. In the parking lot of my apartment building, he handed me an envelope with ten thousand dollars that I left in the kitchen drawer, where my wife would surely find it. I took a peek at my sleeping daughter, tiptoed out of her room, glanced at the thermostat, and raised the temperature to a comfortable seventy-two degrees. Then, I quietly left with him.

The shiny blacktop of the streets reflected the businesses' neon signs, but there were none of those when we arrived at our destination. We parked underground amid fancy cars and glittering lowriders.

In the basement of the abandoned factory, the circle of spectators grew quiet. Their breath steamed the damp environment. Eight American men and two oriental women had each deposited with the promoter a briefcase containing two

hundred thousand dollars. Driven by the excitement of the pot-filled atmosphere, the crowd had added thousands more and before the betting was stopped the stakes had reached over two million. Winners would divide the purse, minus twenty percent for the promoter.

For us, the three contenders, a guaranteed purse of one hundred thousand dollars sat on the hood of the flaming low-rider included in the prize one of us would win.

A truce had been arranged for this night only, and several gangs had come together for the game. They mingled with well-dressed high rollers, who, I had been told, had come to Detroit from as far as Vegas, LA, and Jersey.

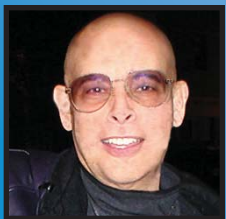
The three of us drew our places by rolling dice, the lowest number going first. We were aware tonight one of us would not only be greatly admired, but also given an invitation for the next event with a much higher prize. But now I was sorry to have been talked into this, regardless how desperately I needed the money.

Mine was the lowest number and I knew I couldn't renege if I wanted to see the sunrise again. Shaking, I went ahead with it. Afterwards my forehead glistened with sweat that I wiped with my sleeve.

The kid facing me had drawn second place. He's young, no more than fifteen – he won't try, I thought, but he did, without hesitation. Nothing happened.

To my right was the third and oldest man. His steely eyes rolled over the crowd; a mocking smile twisted his lips as he spun the chamber of the gun. The shot echoed throughout the basement and simultaneously a geyser of blood splattered the clothes of those in the crowded front row. Filled with ecstasy, they let go a cacophony of throaty growls.

"It's your turn again," said the kid. I puked.



Eduardo Cervino was born in Havana. He was a student of architecture and painting when Castro's regime came to power. Eventually he traveled to Europe and later immigrated to the United States, where he worked as an architectural designer. He has exhibited his paintings in the US and abroad. As an avid reader, he is familiar with Spanish, European, and American writers. Soon after his arrival in the US, he decided to record his experiences with the revolution's lack of compassion, and in 1970 wrote *Unleashed Passions*, an autobiographical novel in Spanish. Cervino also enjoys the short story genre, and two of his recent ones are included in this edition. The dark and magical overtones of these stories are the cultural residue of his native land. He met his wife, Lesley, also a voracious reader, in New York City. Since then, they have independently produced mystery and sci-fi novels, and have collaborated on a series of mysteries with supernatural components. They can be contacted at ecls@cox.net. They are long-time residents of Phoenix, Arizona.

Firefly

By E. A. Cervino

© 2010

The telegram arrived at the house on the second Wednesday of April. My sister Rita told me that a soldier had gone around the neighborhood delivering similar envelopes to the homes of those men the government had branded as undesirable worms.

“A small mob of supporters chanting political slogans followed him,” she said. “When the soldier knocked at a door, they quieted down and pushed each other to best see the faces of the recipient. Many of those people used to be our friends.

“The sky was cloudy; however, Grandmother knew it would not rain. You know ... her joints predict the weather with the accuracy of a meteorologist. All she said when we heard the noise was, ‘bad news’.”

Grandma had a touch of discomfort in her knees, which she mentioned every time she wanted me to help with the garden weeds; however, it was not an inconvenience when I invited her to walk to the ice cream parlor several blocks away. Grandma loved hot fudge sauce over a generous serving of vanilla ice cream. The espresso coffee was never strong enough for her.

I looked forward to these evening strolls, when she leaned on my arm, inquiring how my day had gone.

She was a plump, huggable woman, with the sweetest gaze a grandson could hope for. She delighted in family gatherings and laughed at the dullest of jokes, such was her sense of humor or innate kindness—who knew which?

“I watched from the porch,” Rita continued; “most recipients reacted by taking the envelope and quickly closing the door; some shook with fear and others with indignation.”

“Grandmother had none of that. She stood at the garden’s iron gate, looking the soldier in the eye, like a sergeant. She smiled at him and said, ‘good morning, Miguel’. The soldier was that guy you used to know.”

I knew whom she was talking about; Miguel and I had been friends since we were ten-year-old boys playing under our mango tree. Now, at twenty-four, in fatigues and carrying a pistol, he had become a fanatical follower of the new strongman.

“He hesitated, and then said, ‘good morning; here, take this and give it to him’. He didn’t even mention her name or yours, Albert.”

That day, I had worked until five in the afternoon. After that, I visited with friends in the historical part of town, where four-hundred-year-old colonial plazas, palaces, convents, and military castles, erected by the conquistadors, still stood. Massive, weathered wooden doors guarded the entrances of the moss-covered stone buildings. A few of my favorite watering holes were in that neighborhood.

Throughout the centuries, the cobblestones had been polished and grooved by horsedrawn carriage wheels. The ghosts of history prowled about me as I walked under the ornate balconies held in place by stone columns and arches. On the Plaza Cervantes, pigeons stubbornly refused to yield the road and the little coo-cooing beggars gathered around my feet.

I plunged into the narrow streets beyond the plaza. Evening darkness clawed its way up the walls. Today, as it was in the yesterdays of my great-great-grandfathers, embracing couples inhabited the shadows in the wide portals.

I raised my eyes toward the still-menacing night; from a balcony, a seated, elderly, bronze-colored woman with a red scarf tied around her white curly hair stared at me.

She seems old and frail, I thought, and glanced away for a second; when I looked up again, she was gone.

Old couples strolled the streets. They ignored the more contemporary concrete sidewalks in favor of walking on the cobblestones that shared with them the scars of time. The balmy air wafting from the Bay carried the salty tang of the sea.

I have never been able to decide if I like, or dislike, that smell, I thought.

The restaurant I was searching for was a place where one could always be sure to find a quorum for a lively interchange of ideas, or the latest rumors that now proliferated around the city like cockroaches in the sewer. Not everyone in the large group was present each night. I had been coming in for years.

No one knows when these reunions had started; over the decades, faces changed but the tertulia had remained in the same locale, where the spirit of Hemingway slumped over a drink in his favorite corner.

Of late, although no one had requested it, the conversation was conducted in low voice. The political atmosphere dictated prudence.

Casey, the writer, was speaking when I sat. “Today at the paper they brought a new guy; all written material must go through him before going to press.”

“No surprise in that;” responded Carlos, a young, well-known

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actor. "Since the beginning of the year, all television and radio programs must have socially meaningful content. 'Young worker denounces brother for antisocial activities and becomes hero of the people.' That sort of content. Where have you been?"

"Not watching television, that's for sure," responded Casey."

Raul, an abstract painter, interrupted, "They removed some paintings from the National Gallery, mostly the non-figurative works, and..."

Casey interrupted: "All of them? Including the contemporary room?"

"Of course not," said Raul; "they left the work of the young friend of you-know-who." He tapped his left shoulder with the index and middle finger of his right hand.

Fearful of mentioning names, the people had developed a sign language; this gesture indicated the shoulder pads of a particular commander in the armed forces. The high-level officer was rumored to be attracted to young male artists of mixed race.

Irma, the singer—a lady with a contagious laugh and waist-length hair—was smoking a cigar out of the corner of her mouth. She was explosive in manner, delicious in appearance, and free of spirit. Her voice had made famous more than one composer on the Island. She exuded sexuality, but only the few of us she had permitted to enter her inner sanctum knew her mastery over the world of satin sheets.

She drew on her cigar, and blew toward the high ceiling a series of smoke wreaths that the rotating fan blades dispelled. The attention-gathering ritual was meant to silence everyone so she could speak uncontested.

"The painter you are talking about lives in my building, two floors above my apartment.

The penthouse is being renovated for the officer in question as a hideaway pad. You tell me if this is a coincidence?" She drew on her cigar again. "By the way, both are married."

Amador, a young musician, changed the subject. "You have noticed that tonight no one is playing; it's the first time in four years they have missed their show."

We all looked in the direction of the small stage. I had noticed the lonely guitar on the chair by the piano and its silence was a loud call to the customers' ears. Many came to drink and listen to the house trio—guitar, piano, and bongo—whose records sold all over the world and with whom Marlon Brando had shared raucous nights of drinking and bongo-playing during his escapades on the Island.

I asked, "What happened to them? Do you know?"

"They escaped the Island during the night after their last performance," said somebody in the group. I did not see who it was, and did not care about how he knew.

"I envy them," I said.

Raul looked at me, "SHHH, not so loud; the waitress has

been paying attention to our little chat."

"She is very young, maybe fifteen to eighteen," I said.

"The younger they are, the easier to train as throat-cutters," remarked Irma. "I heard they are rounding up the dissidents and homosexuals. So just in case, it's been a pleasure to have known you all," said Casey.

He lifted his glass, filled with rum, sugar, mint leaves, lime-juice, and soda, above his head. As always, he had consumed several of those and his voice was beginning to garble. He kept his eyes down, gazing at the fifty-year-old marble table of the venerable bar and restaurant.

He continued: "As you all can see, I'm practicing to drink my hemlock."

The marble table had her memories too: *I've heard thousands of stories; my surface has been dulled by the touch of famous hands, from Errol Flynn to Meyer Lansky and Josephine Baker. I have felt the pressing of the poet's pen, the artist's pencils. Novels and plays have been written on top of me, but now, all I hear is sorrow—no creative ideas, no passionate prose are discussed around me. The times are changing, and fear is all I hear.*

It came time for me to go and I said goodbye. It took well over an hour to get to my house in the suburbs. At eleven o'clock I was turning the key in the lock. I tiptoed through the house and into the dining room.

Seated on her favorite chair under the pendulum clock, Grandma was waiting, reading *Death in the Andes*, a novel by Mario Vargas Llosa. She smiled at me and pointed to the telegram resting on the old Singer Foot Pedal Sewing Machine. I picked it up and flipped it around to see the back of the envelope, which I knew would be blank. I sat in the chair next to hers.

"Does Mother know?" I asked.

"I haven't told her."

"It's better that way; she has been having trouble sleeping."

"I know, son... she worries about you."

"I have been expecting this, but was hoping it wouldn't come."

I tore open the envelope; the message was brief and loaded with hate.

Present yourself at the dog track—Stop—Come prepared for field trip—Bring minimum gear—Stop—Long stay—Stop—Maximum effort expected from you to comply—Stop—Time 8:00 A.M. this coming Friday—Stop—

I had seen the sliver of light under Mother's bedroom door disappear. I knew she had been awake, waiting to hear me com-

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ing in. I imagined that she had pretended not to have seen the telegram, and was silently praying in the dark, holding tightly to her strong beliefs before letting herself be guided by the hand of Morpheus.

In the morning, I called family friends to tell them the news of my imminent encampment. Everyone waited for confirmation of those rumors, which might affect them, from a reliable source.

The rest of the day was a parade of friends. Long conversations took place in the living room, and we found the courage to laugh together. Before the night was over, I was packed and ready for the morning trip. Mother, Grandma, and my sister embraced me before I left the house, pretending it was another day at the office. We all had become good at dissembling; it was not my mother's private gift.

The dog track had been a place of flower gardens, men in Panama hats, and ladies under colorful umbrellas. Now it was seamy, with a large expanse of trampled grass and tattered awnings flapping in the wind. Rusted doors and padlocked iron gates were losing the battle against the gnawing of the salty breeze.

Soldiers were posted at each side of the one open gate. It was the access to the track field, not the stands. In the course of the next hour, hundreds of men gathered under the watch of more soldiers looking down at us from the stands. Seated high on the steps, a solitary, scrawny ginger tabby cat licked his ulcerated hind leg.

"Good morning," said a white, suntanned man in his thirties with brown eyes, standing by my side. We shook hands without introductions. We didn't expect a long relationship; introductions were a superfluous exercise, making more difficult a departure.

"Good morning," I answered, and smiled; he seemed a likable fellow.

"Good morning," said a third, much-older pale man, obviously nervous and in search of reassurance.

I smiled at him and shook his extended hand, damp and cold but with a firm grip. I liked this man too. I sensed then that we three would like to stay together. Silently appraising one another, we formed a group, facing each other, but heads rotating as we assessed the situation around us.

The older man took a girl's picture out of his breast pocket; as he looked at it, tears welled in his eyes. I pretended not to notice.

"I thought about not coming," he said.

"This is an island, my friend; where could you go that they could not find you?" I said.

The soldiers began to push us with their rifles against the

fence that separated the field from the stands. Like herders with their sheep, they were neither abusive nor gentle. In the center of the clearing we had left, an officer stood and yelled.

"Let them in. Open the back gate."

The order was quickly obeyed, and trucks pulling commercial cargo trailers filed in. The back doors of each trailer were open and tied against the exterior aluminum siding. At the front end of each trailer, a hole had been cut in the wall to let air circulate inside the plywood-clad interior of the trailers.

"Come on, get in, we don't have all day, you guys," screamed the officer as the soldiers packed us into the trailers.

The three of us were trying to stay together; a friendship born of common misery was rapidly taking shape.

"Let's be the last to climb in," I said; "we will be closer to fresh air by the open doors."

We tried, but it didn't work out that way. We did stay together, but inside the crowd and about ten feet from the open doors.

"By the way, I'm Dr. Falcon," said the tall man I met first. "I'm a veterinarian."

I found a funny coincidence between his last name and his profession, and I smiled widely. He seemed accustomed to reactions like mine.

"I know. Everybody smiles. It helps to make friends."

"I'm Albert," I said. "I'm a student of architecture."

We turned toward the older man.

"I'm a pharmacist. My name is Mario." His face had paled since we entered the trailer, but his lips had darkened.

The trucks began to roll. Soldiers followed in jeeps. The heat inside was building up. We were elbow-to-elbow, holding onto each other or the frame of the trailer. The air movement was insufficient. Sweat and breath combined with unpleasant results, tempers flared, and insults were exchanged; but there was no room for fights.

Three hours later, at the front of the trailer, a man fainted; he was smaller than the rest and air was stale around his head. A commotion erupted and the driver stopped.

"Everybody out, come on, everybody out," ordered the officers traveling in jeeps behind the trucks, and the man was removed and driven away.

"The next time I will faint, so they will take me away," said a fellow near us.

"I'm a vet, not an MD, but I can tell you that by the way that man looked you do not want to leave this truck in his condition. That fellow was cyanotic."

The few moments of fresh air outside the truck provided a welcome relief. The men agreed to keep rotating positions from the back to the front to allow everyone to have a moment of fresh air and a view of the road.

"There is hope for the human race," said Falcon.

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“Does that include those bastards following us in jeeps?” asked Mario.

“Of course; when fear spreads so wide and thick, everyone is a prisoner.”

“Did you say ‘prisoner?’ Don’t be silly—we are guests of the government. Let’s have a positive attitude,” I said.

The night brought cooler temperatures. The headlights of the jeep behind illuminated the interior of the trailer. The fog rose; the mist on the road gave the convoy and the men a phantasmagoric appearance. Hunger pangs twisted our guts, thirst was intolerable, and restlessness had returned.

The convoy had been running on a wet, dirt road for some time when it came to a halt. Outside it was drizzling, and as we jumped down from the trailer, we welcomed it. However, it also meant there were no stars to be seen, no moon to dispel the gloom we felt. The chill increased. Crickets began to sing, frogs were croaking, and then mosquitoes came around – clouds of them.

“Where do you think we are?” asked Mario.

“Does Hell sound good to you?” I answered.

“We have been going south all day,” said Falcon. “We have to be close to the cienagas.”

“The swamp? Oh, God, we had better be within the headlight beams all the time. There could be alligators here,” said Mario.

“Me Tarzan, you Cheetah,” I said, making fun of the situation to hide my anguish.

In the distance, a single headlight appeared, far and faint. It grew steadily until the sound of a locomotive drowned out the chorus of night creatures.

When the train reached us, the soldiers ordered us to climb aboard the empty cattle cars. Falcon and I had to reach down for Mario, who was struggling to get on board. Inside the car, we found a wooden barrel of water and a ladle for drinking. This helped a little.

Larger than the truck trailers, the cars allowed us to stretch out on the floor planks. As we chugged along, although we were cold, the rhythm of the tracks and sway of the cars induced us to snooze.

The doors of the cars were open, allowing the men to stand by them to empty their bladders. Late at night, when I had to go, one man was relieving himself. I stood close to him, minding my own business. From the corner of my eye, a sudden movement forced me to look in his direction; the moon had broken through the clouds, his face was briefly illuminated, and he smiled before jumping out. He was quickly swallowed by darkness.

Shaken, I returned to my place in the back of the car. Falcon was awake and looking at me. Mario was snoring; his hand was holding the picture over his chest. Fearful that it might blow

away, I removed it and tucked it into his breast pocket.

“I saw the man jump,” said Falcon.

“Shit, it scared the hell out of me,” I responded.

“Well, the ‘gators have to eat too. I’m a vet. I know those things.”

“Not funny, Falcon,” I said. “Not everything is a fucking joke.”

“Go back to sleep, Albert,” said Falcon. “‘To be or not to be’ remains the question, and whoever he was, he has chosen not to be. One of the few choices left to us, it seems.”

At daybreak we reached our destination. It was a patch that had been cleared amid a grove of eucalyptus trees, trapped between the jungle swamp and an ocean of sugarcane fields extending as far as the eye could see. Taller than a man and thicker than our wrist, the stalks formed a wall of impenetrable density.

The soldiers emptied our car and two others, and the train continued on its way. Mario stood still until he alone was standing in the mud by the tracks, watching the train speed away.

Despair filled his eyes.

I stopped and waited for him; Falcon followed suit.

In sharp contrast with our lives, the rainy season had blessed the land and awakened the jungle. Scarlet flowers crowned the acacia trees, multicolored blossoms populated the underbrush, and dressed in fine new leaves, the jungle canopy shimmered under the feeble morning sun.

Humidity soaked our clothes, and constellations of moths boogied about our heads. We couldn’t see the splendor of nature. As we marched in line, our heads were bowed, not to the glory of God, but under the weight of our thoughts.

We reached a close-by makeshift camp with fifteen thatched-roof huts in a semicircle. A dozen soldiers had been ordered to stay with us, and they seemed as disheartened as we were. We walked into the hut closer to us. Recent rain had flooded the space, making the dirt floor muddy. The entrance opening had no door, only a curtain made from a piece of jute cloth weighted down by the rain. There were no windows. Anemic daylight filtered between the wall planks, which were rough cuts from the trunks of the royal palm tree ubiquitous on the Island.

The small hut was crowded with hammocks made of jute bags. They hung in two levels from a center post to the perimeter walls like the spokes of a bicycle wheel. It appeared that constant elbow-rubbing was intended to be part of our reeducation.

“Love your neighbors as you love yourself,” I quoted to Mario; I had seen his gold cross on his salt-and-pepper, hairy chest. His stubby beard and puffy eyes made him look increasingly haggard.

“Amen,” he responded.

The soldiers began to distribute small brown paper bags. A

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wedge of yellow cheese, a piece of bread, a mango, and a broken candy bar looked like a gourmet meal to me. Afterward we washed in the narrow, easygoing creek that ran behind the huts.

The men had selected their spots inside the huts, and the three of us tried to stay close together and away from the drafty entrance. Exhausted from the trip, almost everyone fell asleep in the hammocks.

I stared at the two black dots on the back of the red ladybug resting on the underside of the low, palm-leaf roof.

I recalled the old café and the comment about hemlock made by my friend, the playwright.

The ladybug flew away.

“Tomorrow is Sunday,” said Mario from the hammock above me.

“Do you have a date?” I quipped.

“Of a sort. I take my little firefly to church every Sunday morning.”

“Who?”

“My four-year-old daughter. I call her ‘my firefly’ because she was born at night, and she has lighted my life ever since.”

This was a nickname I would never forget. “That’s nice, Mario. Now rest, my friend. I heard the guard say we are going to start cutting down those fields Monday. Today, Saturday, we are free to do as we please.”

“Will they let us go by July, do you think?” he asked.

“Maybe in June when the harvest ends. Who knows?” I said.

“Keep dreaming; we are here for a long haul. After the harvest, they will think of something else for us to do,” said Falcon.

“Firefly was born May fourteenth,” said Mario. “It was cloudy like today.”

“Hope we will be out of here by then,” I said.

I doubt it very much. I thought

Mario didn’t hear my last comment; he was snoring before I had finished talking to him. Other men in the hut snored, some

extremely loudly.

Good grief, I thought; *that’s all I needed.*

I thought that Mario was rather old to have a daughter so young. Before I fell asleep, Mario mumbled something and I paid attention.

“Firefly,” he said softly. “Firefly,” he repeated, and I fell asleep.

Later on, when still lethargic, I slapped a mosquito off my face. I looked at my wristwatch; we had slept through the day. It was late afternoon. I was hot and felt clammy.

“Albert, are you awake? Albert, are you...”

“I am now, Falcon; what do you want?”

“Look at the center beam on the roof, by the wall in front of you.”

“Falcon, I’m tired. Shut up, please; be a nice fellow and let me sleep,” I said.

“Okay, I will let you. I hope you like the *Rattus Norvegicus*.”

“What are you talking about?”

“A rat, as big as your foot. She is looking at you. This species is famous for biting farmers’ dicks in the middle of the night. I know you are a city boy, but the rats don’t know that.”

I finally understood his jargon, and looked at the roof. A rat was on the wood beam close to Mario’s foot. I quickly jumped off the hammock onto the floor and reached for Mario’s arm to warn him. I pulled, but he didn’t react. I pulled again.

“Mario, get up, come on, get up,” I called loudly. The rat ran off and hid in the thatched roof. Falcon got up also.

Mario’s hammock has swaying between the two of us. We had a clear view of his face.

Mario was dead.

I stormed out of the hut and leaned against the wall planks. Agitated, my eyes swiped the expanse between the railroad track and me. A figure stood in the middle of the tracks against the dying sun. As if responding to my stare, it turned around slowly – it was Mario, waiting for the train to return.

Renee Bau

Chandler Artist



“Spectrum”

30” x 40”

Mixed Media on Canvas

May 2010



Renee has been studying and appreciating art from a very early age. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Arizona State University, with a degree in Fine Arts. Her art has been featured in many publications including book covers and magazines. She has done several corporate art pieces and continually does commissioned paintings for private collectors. She is not only an oil painter but also designs for clothing and apparel lines and fine jewelry pieces. You can see her art at www.reneebau.com or you can email questions to her through the contact page.

Renee Bau

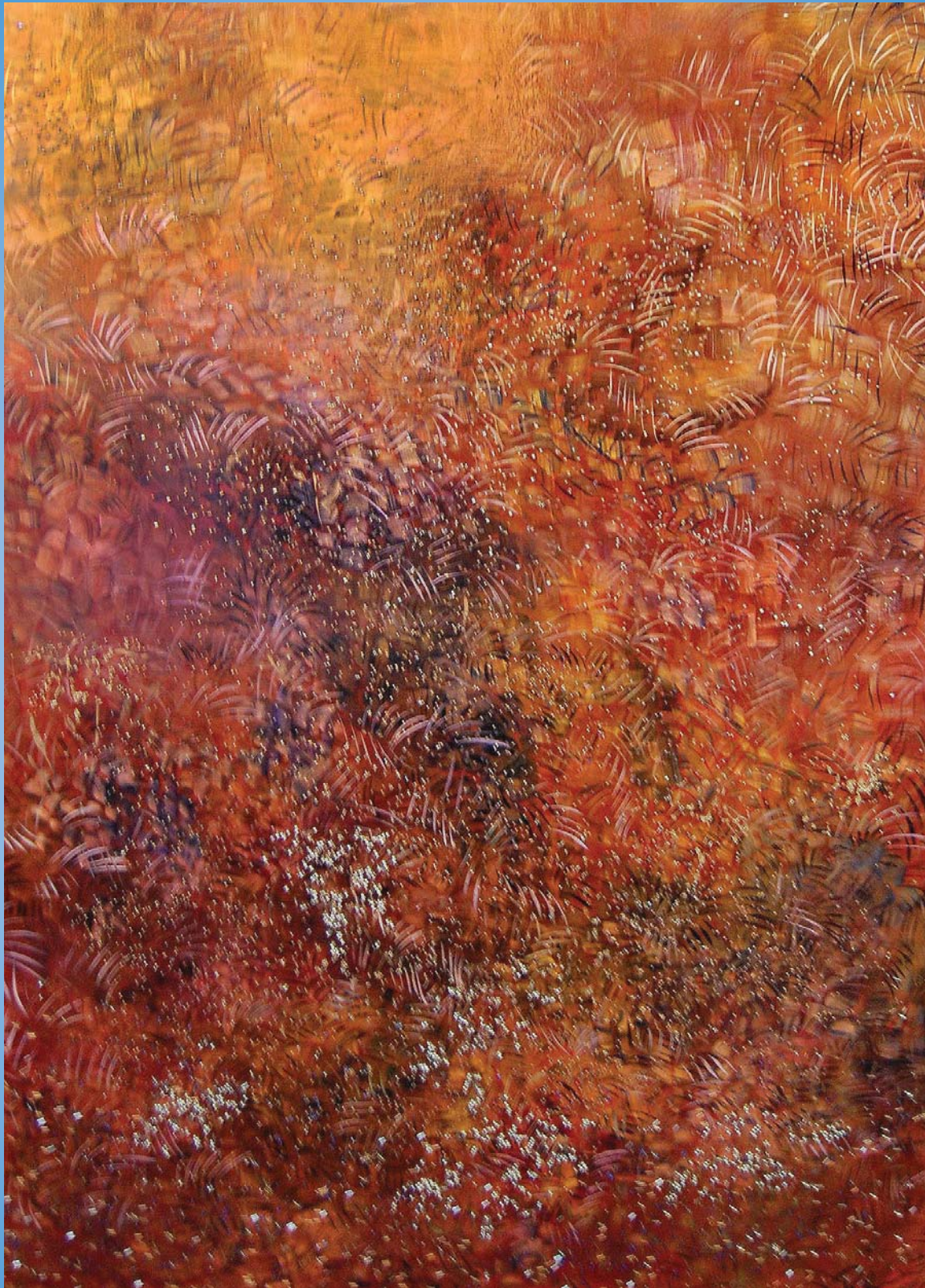
Chandler Artist



"Exhaustion"
14" x 18"
Oil on Canvas
April 2010

Renee Bau

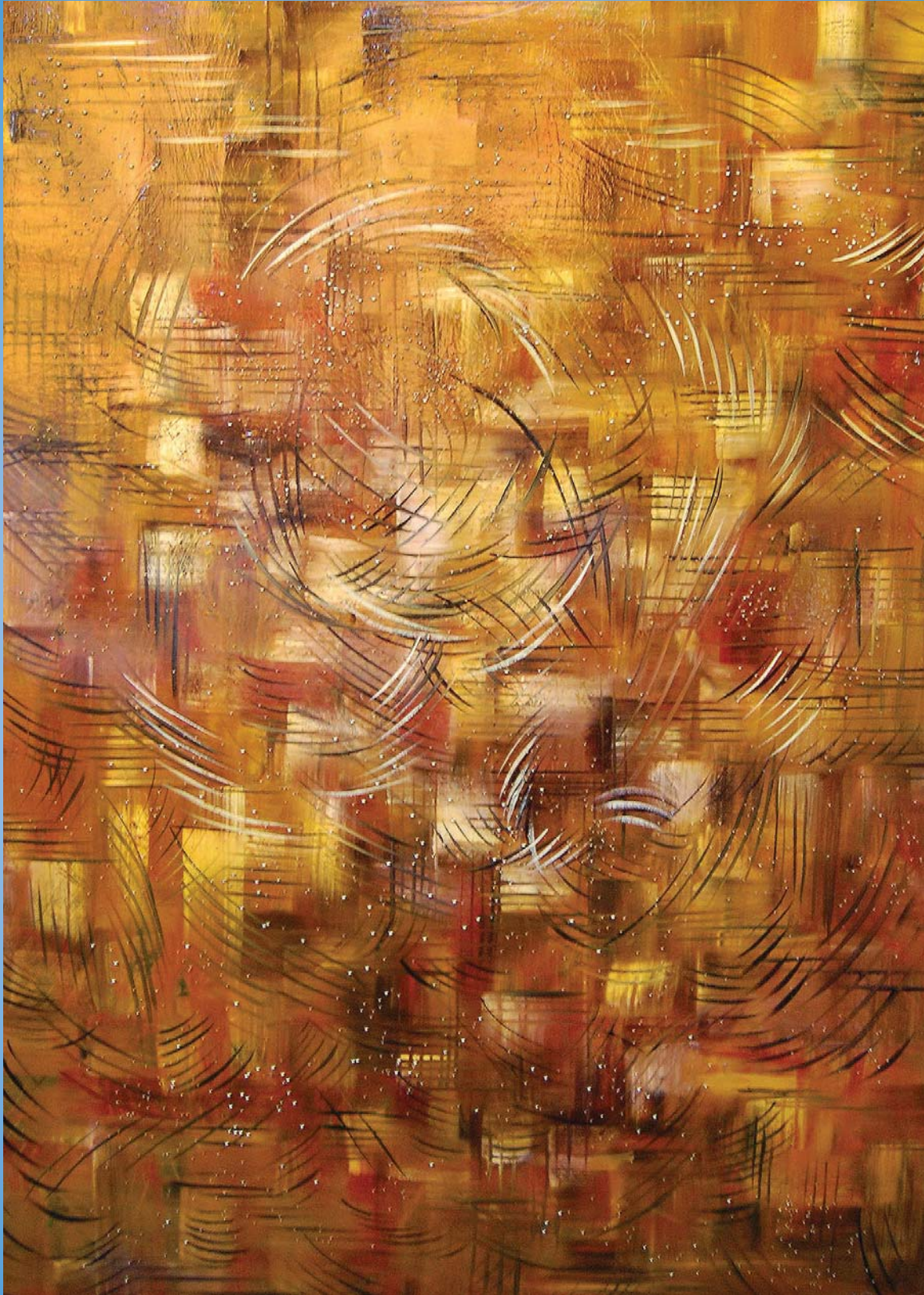
Chandler Artist



"Garden"
36" x 48"
Mixed Media
May 2010

Renee Bau

Chandler Artist



"Dust Storm"

36" x 48"

Oil on Canvas with Mixed Media

April 2010

Renee Bau

Chandler Artist



“Desert Calm”

40” x 50”

Oil on Canvas - Framed

March 2010

Through growth, living, truly seeing and experiencing the world around me, my art has the chance to change in a different way each and every day. I believe when people are truly in touch with themselves, humanity, the world; not only do we grow but so do our talents and successes. When I finally let go of my constraints, my art had the chance to develop in a way I could never imagine. Looking outside of the box is fundamental for me and allows me to express my true self.

– Renee Bau

The Mountain

The lessons I learned on Wayna Picchu

By Lindsay Norman

© 2010

It all started over a glass of red wine at a small kitchen table. Two girlfriends daydreamed about getting out of the rat race of southern California. We were both overworked, underpaid and in need of inspiration. I was the young student struggling to survive in a new city. Liz was the hard-working single in her 30s who always put others' needs before her own. To create our own adventure, we escaped to Peru to see the ancient Incan ruins of Machu Picchu.

When we arrived late morning, the sun bathed the steep mountains with a warm orange glow. The cracked stone ruins stood silently, frozen in time. We looked out over a cascade of stairs, bungalows and sacred spaces nestled on lush emerald hills. We imagined what it must have been like 500 years ago when the Inca grew maize and potatoes on the terraced land. We hired a guide to teach us the history of the Incan culture. He was an old man with leathery tan skin, a native Quechuan, descended from the Inca. I scrambled for my camera, an old beat up Pentax. I couldn't wait to burn these memories to film.

One member of our tour group stood out—Gino from San Francisco. We were instantly connected as the American trio.

After our tour we retreated to the town at the base of the mountain, Aguas Calientes. We were filthy with sweat and rain and we all agreed a swim in the hot springs was in order. While relaxing in the steaming water, we decided to hike 8000-foot Wayna Picchu the next morning. It rises next to Machu Picchu but is far more difficult to climb. Few guides will attempt Wayna Picchu with a group because the challenging day-long hike with rocky stairs quickly tires inexperienced hikers. Somewhat nervously I agreed. It would be far worse to stay back alone without Liz or Gino all day.

At 4:30 a.m. our little trio set out to take on the mountain. The hike started effortlessly. The air was crisp and cool. We saw some familiar faces from the day before and were happy to have comrades nearby. We had to complete the hike in six hours in order to catch our train back to Lima. The hike usually took 10 hours, so we had to hustle.

As the warm sun emerged, the mountain quickly turned into

a sauna. My backpack, loaded with a bulky metal camera, water and food, got heavier and heavier as the day wore on. Liz had tapped a hidden source of energy I'd never seen in her before. She was constantly a step ahead of me, and Gino was almost always several steps behind me.

It was a few hours into the hike where it dawned on me. I didn't want to catch up with Liz, nor did I want to slow down for Gino. I was happy right where I was, going at my speed, in tune with my own rhythm. It occurred to me that I'd never felt that way before. My entire life I'd always struggled to keep up with those around me or slowed down to accommodate a friend. For once, I didn't care about either.

We were almost out of a canyon toward the end of the hike when we ran out of water. I was sitting on a rock to collect myself when out of nowhere a middle-aged woman came up to me and gently said, "Are you thirsty? Do you need some water?"

"Yes!" I shrieked.

She handed me a half-gallon of cold water, smiled and walked away.

We never saw her again. Maybe she was just another hiker with extra water or perhaps an angel sent to save three naïve Americans. Regardless, I'd never felt so grateful and connected to the universe. I felt as though right when I needed help, it was available and that everything and everyone must be connected in some symbiotic way.

We all shared the water and got out of the sticky canyon. We caught our train later that day, barely, and we were off to experience Lima.

Back home, I returned to a life of annoying roommates and rush hour traffic, but with a sense of peace that had grown me beyond my years. I was able to let go of things and people that I no longer needed and make space for new beginnings that I did. I learned to pace myself, just like on the mountain. When faced with an obstacle, I would ask for help, and it would present itself.

The trip was an adventure filled with highs and lows and surprises about the human experience. I now see life as a mountain. It can be rugged and challenging at times, but the lessons are in finding a way to finish the hike.



Lindsay Norman is a senior studying print journalism at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. An Arizona native, she loves to travel and learn something new every day. She can be reached at lnorman07@hotmail.com.

Healed by the Beat of the Drum

By April Stolarz

“To dance is to be out of yourself. Larger, more beautiful, more powerful. This is power, it is glory on Earth and it is yours for the taking.”

— Agnes De Mille

© 2010

Waking up in the same pajamas I’ve been wearing the past five days, I have no desire to leave my bed even as the afternoon sun beats down outside my window. My whole world had come to a crashing halt when my boyfriend confessed he’d fallen out of love with me. Even my bedroom in the house I grew up in — surrounded by pictures of friends, bands and art — couldn’t offer any comfort.

I needed to escape the prison of loneliness, so I fled to my favorite music festival: GrassRoots. Held in upstate New York, GrassRoots is a four-day spectacle of partying, camping and listening to bands from all over the world. The eclectic mix of music ranges from Native American folk and Peruvian electronica to rock, bluegrass, soul, reggae and rockabilly. Because the camping is in tight quarters, festival-goers share food, alcohol, blankets and all other belongings. By the end of the festival, neighbors become family, and strangers become lifetime friends.

Noises in the night

Lying in my tent, I can’t fall asleep, even after an exhausting day of dancing and drinking at the festival. Shrieks, screams, howls, drumbeats and laughter erupt from the woods. The noises call to the wind, to the world, to the wild. A rush of electricity buzzes in my brain. One more “I yi yiiii!” stabs into my ears, and I leap up. I need to join the people creating the noise.

It’s the first night of the festival, and everyone’s welcoming the darkness with music. As I walk barefoot into the woods, a couple greet me: “Hi friend! Happy GrassRoots!” They share the shine of their flashlight as we drift from campsite to campsite.

People I’ve never met smile and hug me when I walk by. They’re eager to share their belongings. “Hey friend, great to see you! Have a glow stick.” “Hi beautiful, would you like any food?” Their kindness is overwhelming.

As we approach the drum circle, I understand why everyone is still awake. A painted naked woman holds a tambourine with one hand and claps her fingers to her mouth with the other. Her knotty hair sways as she sits cross-legged on the dirt. Next to her, a man attacks the bongo drum with his fingers.

Glancing at the crowd, I realize these people are no different than me. They too have work on Monday. The guy dancing naked hollering in the drum circle will be in a suit waiting for the Metro on Monday morning. They too have jobs in cubicles, work the monotonous 9-5, cook meals and wash laundry. They too could be suffering broken hearts.

But at this instant, none of that matters. For these stolen moments they have a chance to really just be.

The power of music

In the morning the sun pierces my tent. Crawling out, I stretch and change into my rainbow-hued bathing suit top and wrap a blue sarong with bright sunflowers around my waist. I place my favorite hat from when I was 7 on my head: a pink-and-red beaded veil with long white lace that falls down my back. I head to the festival to prepare for the Happiness Day Parade.

At the festival grounds I look for Ryan, the artist who’d painted my body the year before. He’s in the same spot, next to a maple tree outside the Happiness Day Parade headquarters, a barn filled with medieval costumes and capes for anyone to borrow.

Smiling as he sees me, Ryan says, “Come here, you goddess! Let me paint you.”

With a brush, Ryan splashes lines of blue and green across my shoulders and down my arms. He presses a small dish drainer around my forehead and airbrushes pink against the holes. In the middle of my forehead he sticks a silver-colored gem. With

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April Stolarz is a New Jersey native who plans to conquer the heat in Arizona while keeping her East Coast flair. She writes, sleeps and writes some more while making time for life and all the details in between. More than anything, April would like to make a career out of bouncing around from one concert to the next and sharing her love of live music with anyone who will listen. Contact her at aprilstolarz@yahoo.com.

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an assortment of other kitchen instruments and metal scraps he airbrushes the rest of my upper body and draws a lime green heart under my collar bones.

“Now that you look beautiful, you better get out there and dance like crazy,” Ryan says.

“Oh, I will,” I reply. Thinking, *you have no idea.*

After the parade I meet up with friends from home, and we’re instantly pulled to the sound of loud bongo drumming. We run right up to the main stage and see four African-American men shining in long, bright blue dresses. It’s the band Samite of Uganda. The frontman Samite wails tribal African songs as the percussion section blooms with conga drums, bongos and native African madinas and kalimbas.

My body starts to move in ways I can’t even comprehend. My arms propel up and down, left and right. I bend close to the ground, spin on my toes and plunge into the air, all the while swinging and stomping to the beat of the drum. Sweat slides across my face, in between my knees. Paint drips down my forehead. My heart thumps louder and wilder with every beat. The music rattles my senses.

People around us join our circle. We just look at each other—laughing, smiling, twirling into a perpetual state of bliss. The 6-foot-tall man in front of me dances in his huge black top hat and long, sparkly wizard cape. The girl next to him, feath-

ers and flowers in her hair, spins in her bright purple, orange, yellow and blue dress.

On the stage I see Ryan dancing and laughing with his friends. Our eyes meet. He jumps off the stage, shimmies over to me, eyes fiery with excitement, and shouts, “You’re doing it! You’re doing it! You’re getting crazy!” He grabs my hand and pulls me on stage.

As we dance next to the band, euphoria rushes through me. My body no longer belongs to me—some other force takes over.

Nothing matters except that moment. I am infinite.

My wizard friend dances on the other side of the stage. He pulls off his hat, shakes his head and dreadlocks tumble out down to his knees. The crowd roars.

As the music stops, I can’t even breathe. Floating in a trance, I walk off stage and bump into the wizard.

“I saw you dancing up there, getting down!” he says.

“Yeah, I saw you shaking out all your dreads.”

He looks at me, snaps his fingers side to side and starts singing, “Life just keeps getting better. Life just keeps getting better.”

A smile sprouts in my heart and conquers my whole face. All the loneliness from the break-up with my boyfriend disintegrates. Laughing wildly, I join in: “Life just keeps getting better. Life just keeps getting better.”

And even if for a moment, I knew it would.

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 now have 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’s vision is to create a multicultural arts center, where children, teens and adults will become inspired, to develop their creative abilities, 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 to The Blue Guitar magazine.



into the lizard's eyes

By Lilvia Soto

© 2010

For María del Carmen Saen-de-Casas

I touch the glasses I brought from across the ocean,
choose the one with the blue-shadowed white blossoms
that fits just right in my drowsy hand.

As the sun rises over the pecan groves,
in my adobe house in Casas Grandes,
within walking distance of the rammed-earth buildings
abandoned more than a thousand years ago
by the original settlers of Paquimé,
I rub the last dream off my eyes
and touch the gold-rimmed tea glass
I bought in the Albayzín,
Granada's Moorish quarter.

Looking out at the autumn sky, yellow grass, naked trees,
I stare at the lizard that comes every morning
to gaze at me as I drink my coffee
and prepare for the day's writing.
The steaming milk with espresso warms my hand,
and I touch, across the window pane,
the lizard's pulsating belly,
feel its beating heart,
its tiny, powerful, beating heart
that vibrates her elongated body
and brings her to my window
to start my writing ritual.
As we stare at each other,
her amber gaze stirs old memories.

The sun sets over Sierra Nevada
while in a whitewashed building along the Darro River,
I sit on a large embroidered cushion
on the floor of a teashop
around a small marquetry table,
holding a shimmering glass,

*When they were expelled from Paradise, Adam and Eve moved
to Africa, not Paris. Sometime later, when their children had
gone out into the world, writing was invented. In Iraq, not
Texas.*

- Eduardo Galeano, *Some Forgotten Truths*

sipping sweet Alhambra Dreams,
savoring honey-dripping pastries,
listening to Carmen tell Anna, Jennette, Duke,
the young Americans studying with us in Seville,
about the Alhambra's Nasrid architecture,
the ceiling of Salon of Ambassadors that represents
the seven heavens of Muslim cosmogony,
the Patio of the Lions,
the fountains and terraced gardens,
the pomegranate trees, the jasmine fragrance,
the stories of Zoraya's doomed love,
of the 32 massacred Abencerrajes,
of Napoleon's attempt to blow up the red fortress,
of the spot, el Suspiro del Moro,
where the last Moorish king cried
the loss of his Al-Andalus kingdom.

Sitting in one of the cafés in the portals around Jardín del
Centenario,
half-listening to Mate and Aída talk about the changes
Coyoacán has experienced through the years,
I look across and see the palace of the Spanish conqueror
who tortured the last Aztec king,
and hear the blind organ-grinder
playing "María Bonita"
the same Agustín Lara tune
I used to hear sitting on my bedroom floor,
peeking through the blinds
at the old man winding his hurdy-gurdy
on the corner of our apartment building

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Bilingual, binational, and multicultural, Lilvia Soto divides her time between Chihuahua and Arizona. She has a Ph.D. in Hispanic Languages and Literature from Stony Brook University, has taught at U.S. universities, and has published short fiction, poetry and literary translations and criticism in Spain, Mexico, the U.S. and other countries. These poems are from her manuscripts on the Iraq War. Contact her at lilviasoto@hotmail.com.

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on Marsella Street.

I drop a coin in his bucket
and make my way through the alleys
formed by the book-fair stalls
in the center of the plaza,
stroll through the rows of tables laden with
new and used books, sheet music, language programs,
magazines, CDs of classical music, indigenous instruments,
love ballads, political protest songs,
poems read by their authors, sung by others.
I touch old favorites,
El arco y la lira
El llano en llamas
Visión de los vencidos
Elogio de la sombra
El silencio de la luna
Los versos del capitán,
leaf through new ones,
touch the pages,
some still uncut, some crumbling,
look at the old photos,
the handwriting of letters and manuscripts,
run my fingertips over the faces, the words,
the white spaces,
Soul-Braille of the lover of poetry,
hear the melodies, the rhythms, the breath,
hear the breath of my favorite poets.

I touch their breaths and their voices,
and my heart shrinks
remembering the ones I will not hear,
the ones I will not touch,
the voices silenced by the bombs
that killed and injured dozens
and destroyed the ancient buildings
of Al-Mutannabi Street,
the historic center of intellectual and literary life
in the cradle of my civilization,
and I say my civilization
for what I love is mine,
even if I have not seen it,
and now, never will.

Of course, those bombs aimed at the love of the word,
at the word of protest and the syllables of love,
exploded first, not in the street of The Poet,
but in the hollow heart of the bomber.

I hear the explosions,

and I touch the flames,
the smoke, the soot, the ashes.
I hear the explosions,
and I smell the blood,
I smell the red blood spurting
and the black ink running
down the booksellers' row
towards the Tigris.

I hear the explosions,
and I touch the grief
for the dozens killed and injured,
for the evil that stokes a sick man's hunger for destruction,
I touch the grief for the attacks on our civilization.

I hear the explosions,
and I touch the fear of the intellectuals and the writers
forced underground,
exiled from al-Shabandar Café, from Al-Arabia Bookshop,
from the Modern Bookstore, from the Renaissance Bookstore,
from their meandering alley of dilapidated Ottoman buildings,
exiled from their Friday rituals of buying books,
discussing politics, reading poetry,
drinking their sweet tea from shimmering glasses,
smoking their sweet-smelling tobacco
from silver, crystal, gilded or colored glass hubble bubble pipes
through the silver mouthpiece they carry in their pockets,
in case someone else has defiled the amber mouthpiece
with his lips.

I hear the explosions,
and I touch the anger of the writers and intellectuals
who wander the world
exiled from their booksellers' row,
from their writers' sanctuary,
from their traditions,
from their book-loving culture.

I touch the gold-rimmed tea glasses,
the ornate, antique pipes with their amber mouthpieces,
the sorrow,
the ashes,
the silence.
I touch the silence and the fear.

And, then, on a smoldering Roman August morning,
when breathing becomes difficult and clay bakes on the sidewalk,
I touch hope.

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Across a Vatican glass case,
I touch the triangular shaped symbols
made by a stylus on wet clay
that was later baked into a rose-colored
inscribed and sealed envelope
for a dark grey cuneiform tablet
from the Old-Babylonian Period,
circa 1700 B.C.

I touch a pink tablet, Number IV of the Poem of Erra
from the New Babylonian Period,
circa 629-539 B.C.

I touch a grey cylinder divided into three columns
celebrating the reconstruction of the Temple of the god Lugal-Marda.
It dates from the New-Babylonian Period, reign of Nabuchadnezzar II,
circa 605-562 B.C.

I touch a legal document from the Ur II Period,
circa 2100-2004 B.C.

I touch mankind's first writing,
invented in Iraq over 5000 years ago,
and I know that no bomb will ever destroy
man's need to leave a written record
of his sorrows, of his loves,
of his triumphs and losses,
of his enduring struggle to construct a world of respect,
respect for humans,
respect for the clearest manifestation of the human.

Back in my adobe house,
near the rammed-earth city abandoned
more than a thousand years ago,
for reasons we don't understand
because their builders left us no written history,
Eduardo Galeano reminds me, from Montevideo,
via a Buenos Aires internet journal¹
that a few centuries after the invention of proto-cuneiform
in Mesopotamia,

mankind's first love poem was written, in Sumerian,
by Enheduanna, daughter of Sargon, King of Akkad,
and high priestess of Nanna, the moon god.

Her poem of a night of passion between Innana,
goddess of Love, Sexuality, and Fertility,
and the shepherd Dumuzi,
was written on wet clay.

Her hymns to the goddess
are the first poems written in the first person
and signed by a poet conscious
of her relationship to the goddess.

Looking into the lizard's eyes,
watching her soft, pulsating belly,
I touch faith,
faith that in Mesopotamia, Uruguay,
Tenochtitlán, or Texas,
in the end will be the word,
the human word of lament,
the human howl of injured justice,
the weeping of sorrow,
the cry of desolation,
the whisper of compassion,
the invocation of the truth,
the proffering of forgiveness,
the melody of love,
even if it has to be scratched
on scorched earth.

¹ "Algunas verdades olvidadas," "Some Forgotten Truths,"
Gaceta Literaria Virtual. Dirección, Norma Segades-Manias,
Gaceta Literaria No. 22 – octubre de 2008 – Año II – No.
10.

Five Poems By Richard Fenton Sederstrom

Thirst

in memory of Giovanni Martoccia

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That time of the day when

Most of what you can do to focus on the necessities
Of getting through the rest of it,

When you might lie on your back in the desert sand

And let your eyes dream their way up through the shade.
But there is no shade,

And so you sit up and tell each other stories about water,

Like Giovanni, who used to tell about
When he was a kid back in Italy

And got old enough to deliver pails of water

To the workers on his father's mountain fields,
And they would ladle from the pail to their lips

And say "grazie" except for one of the old guys.

The old man would take the pail from Giovanni, look
At it carefully, then look back at Giovanni and then

Throw out the water.

Then he'd toss the pail back to Giovanni and say
"Next time, fill it!"

So on one of those next times

Giovanni filled the pail right to the brim, just
So he could walk the full pail all the way

Up to the old guy without spilling a drop or a drip on the side

Of the pail. So the old guy took the pail,
Looked at Giovanni's endearing and conquering smirk,

Looked at the pail again.

Then he tossed out the water, tossed Giovanni the pail
And said "Next time, pack it!"

It's not a story that makes you any less thirsty,

But it helps pass the time in the sun.
Time is small attraction in the splendor of vertigo.



Richard Fenton Sederstrom lives in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona and Mexico and the North Woods of Minnesota, the places in which he was raised. "I am fortunate to have retired from all respectable pursuits, especially teaching. Now I return to the classroom as a visitor, where, instead of teaching out of pedagogy, I teach out of confusion and into it, the way teaching should be done." He has published poems regularly in Big Muddy, The Talking Stick, Red Owl, and Saint Anthony Messenger. He has also been published in Tar Wolf Review, The Tule Review, English Journal, Plainsongs, Mother Earth Journal, and Ruminant, among other journals and magazines. His book of poems, "Fall Pictures on an Abandoned Road" came out last December, and his new book, *Disordinary Light*, has just been published. Contact Richard at richard_sederstrom1221@q.com.

Moment to Moment

agreeing with Stephen Dunn

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Moment to moment, we learned
More at recess than we learned,
Moment to moment, in any class.
Learned how to decide upon the extra
Boy at extra shortstop between first
And second, learned the poetry
Of jump rope and why boys could
Only watch, and jeer when we
Were caught watching. Learned
Thereby the diplomacies of nations.

But if it weren't for the classes,
The drudgery of carrying numbers,
The humiliation of coming back
From measles being confined
To one column still, but also
The rare moments of high
Excitement, that some of us
Don't need to love a wall,
Then we would have learned nothing
From the moments of recess,
The bloodless ways to topple
Columns and walls, the timing
Of our courteous disestablishments.

De Trivia

© 2010

I. Grammar

Math done wrong is a mess,
Disconscionable error.

Math done correctly
Is clean, clear, precise.

Language done wrong is a mess.
Language done right is a mess.

And a wonder – pristine chaos,
Orchidian fecundity,

Adamic primacy
Of original innocence

Leading from void to fullness,
From mere perfection to love!

II. Logic

“ $2+2=4$ ” means exactly what it says –
and nothing.

“I love you” means nothing of what it says –
and everything.

What is the sum of 2 apples
and two kisses?

What is the sum of a pair
of lovers?

System leads toward perfection, passion
toward embrace.

Embraced in both as one, we lead ourselves
toward love.

Love, beyond the wonders of sensuality,
is the gold of the mean.

It is *philia*, our timeless caress
of proportion.

III. Rhetoric

lessons from Algebra I, 1958

My triangle is congruent and I am happy
so long as the length of each of the three sides is equal
to three sides of any triangle in all the worlds!

And I am an included angle
protected by at least two arms
of this trinity wherever I may roam or err.
But where is my congruence if one angle is upsidedown
or skewed somewhere and I cannot pin down
the shapes and make them sit still and quiet, placid

Like the white room of empty paper, eddyless
pond of unaffected mind – mens rasa –
if shapes lie helpless, and –

Language rides around the head trying to sort out
some congruence among racing noises,
not like the triangles that we respect in unison

For their sturdiness and sureness of non-being,
galeproof against any care. Care,
Compassion – manic pulses that,

Like the feline beast Love, are never congruent
anywhere but in their cold definitions.

Or is a leap from mathematics to poetry
Not so far when we find in the relentless
surge of metaphor –

that place in the immaterial stream
With solid slippery stepping stones,
a trinity of beauty leading now and now!
toward the sweet discongruencies of being?

Sanctuary

in memory of Barbie Fenton

© 2010

I have come here for the sun, for the warmth
Of the sun, for the healing clarity and warmth
Of the sun. I am not a mere evacuee.

I have come to the desert for the warmth
Of the sun, for the warmth of the sun
Upon the chill in my consumptive lungs,

Which are clear of all disease, save disease.
The breath I long for is not only the care of enveloping
Microbes. The breath I long for is love somewhere

Out of the end of enveloping lornness, the chill
Of consumption in my heart, for which
I have come for the warmth of the sun

In the desert, to which I am not a mere
Evacuee, the desert where am not here
Only to cough up the microbial detritus

Of the clotted chill in my consumed heart,
The unconsummated distance between my heart
And the horizon of consuming emptiness.

I have come for the empty warmth
Of the consuming desert sun, the chill
Of the consuming lorn horizon

And the sun.

Carpet Cleaner

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– Carol, do we have any carpet cleaner?
– Yes. No. Yes. I think it's under the kitchen sink.
What do you need it for?
– Oh, just a little spill. It's nothing.

It is nothing. It was nothing. After all,
A neighbor it was who needed
The carpet cleaner, and stirred me
From my head-cold filled napishness.

But somehow, now that I am lying
Back down, and the nuisance has left,
With whom I did not register my
Irritation, somehow the interruption

Has grown into something like beauty.
It's in that hesitation that its charm lies.
Yes, no, yes – the liveliness of exchange,
Not the exchange, that will stay with me

Until I actually do get down once more
To napping, or merely sneeze again.

Carson Springer

By Dan Romero

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Carson Springer:

This is the story of Carson Springer, inventor of the first and only perpetual motion machine the world has ever known, a man intrigued by the workings of the unseen movement of just about everything. In his youth, Carson discovered a key that mysteriously revealed to him a hidden code. Even as a boy, Carson was destined to manifest the unseen nature of energy. Raised on a farm in California in the early nineteen hundred's, Carson grew up sympathetic to the plight of the common man. He witnessed the clash of classes and the struggle of the workingman. He was a simple and honest person, compassionate about many things and early on, an intention began to form in him - he wanted to offer salvation to the human race. Carson believed the Industrialized Nations of the world needed to accept a new paradigm, an alternative energy source tolerant to the laws of nature. It was time to remove the arduous labors and dependency on fossil fuel. Little did he know that this conviction would lead him into a moral conflict with a corrupt, secret society based in the most powerful nation in the world; a society motivated strictly by the self-interest and greed of big business and government.

Meeting Carson

My story begins one late evening 100 miles south of Phoenix returning home to Phoenix. I had spent the whole day running sales' leads for Aluminum Siding.

I remember it like it was yesterday. It was a cool, winter's night; I was driving with the windows down and the night sky was lit up with a bazillion stars. Suddenly, it was as if a howling Coyote jumped into my engine compartment. I hit the brakes, noticed I wasn't under power, removed my foot from the brake and decided to limp to the next off-ramp. I was just able to exit the ramp, and coasted onto a gravel road bounded by mesquite and oblique darkness.

Confident and armed with my AAA card I pulled out my cell

phone. Soon, I would be on the move and on the mend; Destination Home was a reality. That was of course until I discovered, after spending a day in the field marketing to the front doors of eager and waiting customers, that my only link to the world - my cell phone - was dead.

It was a beautiful night. I felt if I could only procure the peace and serenity of my surroundings, I would be on my way shortly. I had to get home and definitely didn't need this aggravation.

Parked on the gravel avenue of the stars, I felt completely isolated and alone. As I gazed at the night sky, I found myself surmising my very own theory of relativity. I had found my personal black hole, plenty of space and time and no continuum. I wasn't going anywhere. Now how's that for a brief history of time?

It wasn't long, and now that I think about it; it couldn't have been but a few minutes. A clamoring, instant brush of wind came to stop in front of me. Out of the dust and from the bed of a truck a rope flew out at me. "Put a knot in it," a man shouted. "I'll give you a tow into town."

"Thank you," I shouted back. Where had this old man come from?

I hustled around, pretending to know where I needed to tie it. Somehow, I think he knew I was floundering. From the corner of my eye, as I crouched and braced myself with my hand dimming the headlights, I saw a bright shining hook appear and the heavy chain it was attached to unravel and hit the ground.

From my crouching position, as the dust lifted from the chain, all I could see was the man's silhouette. I knew I was in the presence of a large and gentle man. His voice was soft and soothing as he said, "You're not from around these parts. One of those traveling salesman that come out here now and then from the City, are you?"

As I stood up I could see he really wasn't that big. His clothing bulked him up. He looked as if he were experiencing a

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Dan Romero writes: "I have lived in Arizona for 38 years, I am employed by The Freedom Financial Network in the Legal Resolution Unit. I attend Living Word Bible Church in Mesa, AZ, where I am inspired by the teachings of Pastors Dr. Tom & Dr. Maureen Anderson. I am blessed with a beautiful wife and four children. I am presently and enthusiastically writing 'Realistic Fiction,' just ask my wife ... she can't wait for the heat of summer when I'll forcibly spend more time in the house than in the garage."

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severe winter. At first glance, I could see the solid rock the chisel of time had left behind. I extended my hand and introduced myself. He removed his leather glove with a firm handshake and said, "I am Carson. Carson Springer the Third."

His eyes were bright and filled with determination. I felt at ease. He spoke by means of a simple grammar, and moved about with vigor.

He hooked us up without hesitation and since the transmission was toast, he recommended we'd do fine to tow her with all four on the ground. "Turn the key on, put her in neutral and try to keep up." He smiled as he turned towards his truck. "How do you know the transmission is toast?" I asked.

"Burnt tyranny has a smell all its own," he said. "Picked up the scent a few miles back, when I first came upon you."

Having spent 22 years schlepping, I've met a lot of people in my time. As I was soon to learn; not only did Carson draw on a kind of Herculean inner strength, his generosity was unparalleled to anyone I had ever met.

Small town half way between Phoenix & Tucson.

We came to a stop in an older part of town. I sensed this was Carson's turf. It was late and I wasn't sure how things were going to play out. I began to think aloud. Better first call the boss to let him know of my misfortune and that I won't be able to make tomorrow morning's sales meeting. Secondly, I had to call the wife and let her know. I was like a ship at sea without a rudder, and no wind in my sail.

Carson stood firm, his left arm folded in front of him, his left hand supporting his right elbow and his arm propped up puffing on a pipe. Deep in thought, he brushed his chin with his hand.

I knew at that moment, whether either one of us wanted to admit it, that we were joined at the hip, or should I say, bumper. I felt helpless yet somehow knew that Carson wasn't going to abandon me. He suggested a transmission shop for repairs. He knew the owner but felt that for this night the car would be better off stored at the steel fabrication plant where he sometimes worked.

We drove ten, possibly fifteen miles out of town; with blackness covering us like a blanket. No matter which way I looked I couldn't orientate myself. As we arrived at the plant, I began to feel a little eerie. It was time to cut the umbilical cord connecting us. I was completely dependant on Carson, a stranger, a man who'd appeared out of the darkness in the middle of nowhere and rescued me. Our related two-hour crossing of the remote desert had to come to an end.

We stood face-to-face and I couldn't help but feel how life's lessons seem to bridle our emotions as something gained, lost or taught. Well, I was about to be handed a lesson in compassion. Funny how sometimes our thoughts seem to appear as lightning; their end imbedded in their beginning, their beginning in their

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end.

I could not have been more appreciative in expressing my gratitude to Carson. He may have entered my life from the infinite darkness but at that moment, stood out like the flames of burning coals.

We headed towards the truck and I felt a warm breeze on my face, as if to say; relax and enjoy the ride. I opened the door and the clutter of Carson's world was strewn out across the floor. He cleared the seat and immediately gave me a black and white autographed photograph of Gabby Haze. Just as if it were yesterday, he gleamed as he explained how the 1930's actor would come out to his family's farm for Sunday supper.

It was Francis Bacon who wrote: "The inclination to goodness is imprinted deeply in the nature of man."

I do believe I was in the presence of the kindest man I had ever met. He explained how he was a simple man with very few means. He mentioned that he would take care of the car first thing tomorrow morning and that in the meantime, he would deliver me safely to my home in Phoenix. Before I could respond; he asked: "Have you always lived in Phoenix?"

"You'll do that? Drive me all the way home tonight?"

"It's a nice night," he said "and you're a family man."

"Wow. I really don't know what to say. I can pay you. I will buy the gas; this is really very nice of you!"

"I could use a fill for the return trip," he said.

"Not a problem," I said. "You've got it." I felt like a kid on an E ticket ride at Disneyland. "Back to your question though...no, I haven't always lived in Phoenix. I was born in Los Angeles and raised in the suburbs."

"Oh! Los Angeles," Carson sighed. "The last time I was there was 1932. I attended a science expo at the new Griffith Park Observatory in the Hollywood Hills. My not-so-famous Uncle (whom I am named after) presented the world's first Perpetual Motion Machine at that expo. He called it 'The Carson Springer'."

This began the most mind-blowing story of mystery, conspiracy, espionage and corruption you could ever imagine. I don't believe the elegant and famous screenwriter of the 1930s F. Scott Fitzgerald could have matched this story. Comparing the great L.A. water scandal of the time, which was shrouded in mystery and intrigue and eventually made into a movie, bears little significance to the magnitude of Carson's tale.

Carson's Story: In His Own Words.

I remember it like it was yesterday. I grew up in the San Joaquin Valley of California, the most fertile 2000 square miles of land known to man. A farmer could grow just about anything, while multiple growing seasons provided a hedge against regulation. Each of my father's five brothers'

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homesteads equaled shares of the original Farm left by my grandparents. It was a bountiful life; our extended families were secure and shared an equal alliance to Land, Family and God.

Couldn't imagine growing up in any other place or time... There was plenty of goings on. We lived close to and were closest to my Uncle Carson's family. They had three boys and two girls. It was a second home to me and I spent a lot of time there. Ebb the eldest and I were close in age and we truly enjoyed one another's company. It was Uncle Carson's prismatic and ever-present quest for the underlying answers of nature that provided the exhilaration and ambiguity that are with me today.

We all aspired to Uncle Carson's ravenous quest to de-code the secrets of the Universe. According to him, all knowledge and underlying reality lay shrouded in code, tucked away in a mysterious Gilgul system of cycling letters of an ancient alphabet and Gematria - the oldest science in existence. The study of this universally ancient tradition associates the letters of the major alphabets with the revelation of the deeper 'hidden' relationships of words and phrases. The ideology of Gematria can be explored far beyond simply adding the values of letters and numbers together. It has been said that the dimensions of Paradise were known to ancient civilizations as the harmonious numerical principles that lie beneath the created world.

The most accepted Gematria today is revealed in the mystical Kabbalah where sacred geometry and Bible Code are evident in ancient ruins around the world. My uncle claimed, as a student of creation, that God depicted all that was formed and all that would be formed with twenty-two foundation letters. He engraved them. He carved them. He permuted them. He weighed them and he transformed them.

Mankind has learned the history of mathematics from as far back as the ancient Mesopotamians right up to the 'Human Genome Project.' For at least 4,000 years of recorded history, humans have engaged in the study of mathematics, coined, 'The Queen of the Sciences' by the 19th century mathematician, Carl Friedrich Gauss.

Life on my Uncle's farm gave birth to the self-guided genius of the human mind. He encouraged examination of self-enhancement by the teachings of the ancients, in order to discover our true nature. I have to say there were times when I did not understand the allusion of wholehearted thinking, but I'm thankful for the unconditional training provided by my Uncle. He really did understand great mystical secrets - he knew we lived in a universe of chaos and rectification.

The purpose of the ancient Gematrian numbers with their Alpha meanings is to transmit vital information across time itself. Uncle Carson was convinced that ancient men of wisdom placed this information in the form of a codex in Holy Scripture in the East and could be referenced in the West by the Mayan time-

keepers. In other words, we live in a tangent world of numbers and each of us has a special place to fill. A role for you and me alone, an appointed destiny where salvation waits and where we are no longer made a slave to time.

My Uncle recognized that salvation is already here, all ready granted and that his particular role (destiny) by his particular design (genius) was to make perpetual motion energy a reality for all mankind in every corner of the world. He did not set out to defy the laws of Nature or Thermodynamics, nor destroy the economies of the world. He recognized Heaven's plan to remove chaos and reconcile God's purpose so that no man stands alone and no one person is more or less important than another. He knew the human condition of the 20th century was in need of awakening. He marveled in the discoveries of science and technology.

He proclaimed to the world...Lesson 289: "I was created as the thing I seek."

He believed in our desire to be cast in light; the everlasting eternal light that sheds prophecy to a place beyond comprehension. In our dreams the letter Bet crowns all the visions passing through our heads; giving a blessing to life and form. Not until all dimensions reveal their splendor will the light yield to our desire to be at peace. It is when the veil is lifted to reveal the power of the 72 names of God, the 32 pathways of wisdom and the 231 gates of creation in a holographic universe that man will find an everlasting state of tranquility. Until then, he will remain locked in the Creation myth - an expanding Universe measured by the concept of time and the speed of light.

Let me explain...Lesson 295: "There is nothing higher than delight."

My uncle never thought of himself as spiritual though he attended church occasionally and was a devout Christian. He would rather say he subscribed to the technology of soul. He believed creation to be the sum of all God's thought, and that God's thoughts were numbered into infinity. There was never a time when all that he created was not there. God's thoughts are exactly as they were and as they are, unchanged through time and until time is done.

He stipulated that Prophecy and Mysticism were the awakening phenomena throughout the whole evolutionary process. He believed in the Mayan end date as the alchemic blending of time and matter, as a time when "human consciousness" would reclaim the timeless. The things he dearly loved about Mayan science are exactly what physicists are discovering today. That the underlying nature of reality is vibration, vibratory cycles or waves and that these waves arise by means of a medium and become matter, such as atoms and sub atomic particles. The Mayans believed all reality is constructed by different levels of frequency and by means of a resonant quality. My uncle felt the

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greatest shortcoming of modern science to be its assumption that the only knowable reality is the world of matter, that which we experience through our senses. He felt the properties of resonance allowed for the beginning of understanding coexisting dimensions.

Uncle Carson was happiest and at his most enduring when engaged in the paradoxical conversation of Science and Religion. I never saw him as excited and enthusiastic as when we made the pilgrimage to the open Science Expo in Southern California. What we didn't know then was how that celebrated trip would change our lives.

At that time, Uncle Carson was familiar with The Great Solvay Debates that took place between 1927 and 1930. This was where famous men of science such as Heisenberg, Shrodinger, Bohr, Lorentz and Einstein (to name a few) gathered to discuss the state of Quantum Mechanics. It was in the fall of 1931 after the New York Times' headline read, "Einstein Announces a New Field Theory." We learned that three of the grand masters who helped usher in the new era of physics would be in attendance at the Expo. Hendrick Lorentz - Nobel Prize winner for his work in electromagnetic radiation. Max Plank, a Nobel winner for his theory of the quantum, and the most famous scientist of the modern era, Albert Einstein. Einstein was scheduled to lecture on the law of the photoelectric effect, but instead he and his wife Elsa attended the Hollywood premiere of City Lights as special guests of Charlie Chaplin. My uncle laughed when he viewed the photo of the three of them in the newspaper the following day. After all, he exclaimed; this is the man whose science changed the fabric of the Universe. Good for him, I hope he had a good time.

We were exhausted when we arrived in Los Angeles. Our descent of the San Andreas Mountains dropped us at the bottom of Chavez Ravine, looking directly up at the famous Hollywood Hills sign and the twin sliver-topped dooms of the Griffith Park Observatory. What an exciting time for all of us! The attraction and primary purpose of attending this not-so-famous Expo was to fulfill my Uncle's fascination with a young Belgian physicist and priest named George Henri Joseph Edouard Lemaitre. His intention was to meet Lemaitre and discuss religion and science with the man who wanted everyone to respect the autonomy of what he called 'the two ways.'

Lemaitre considered observation the most important part of science, even though he was a theorist. He was on a tour of American observatories and later would discuss the work of Vesto Sliher at Lowell Observatory in Arizona as cutting edge, demonstrating how distant galaxies show red shifts and are moving away from us. Lemaitre believed this was evidence that the universe is expanding.

A year later the little known, never to be recognized founding

Father of modern cosmology published his paper, "A homogeneous universe of constant mass and growing radius accounting for the radical velocity of extragalactic nebulae." Lemaitre returned to Belgium and published his work two years prior to what would later become known as Hubble's law. It was a fact that Lemaitre did not share the idea of other theorists of a static cosmos. When the priest and Einstein met at the Fifth Solvay International Conference in Brussels, Einstein was quoted as saying, "Your calculations are correct, but your grasp of physics is abominable." Years later Einstein accepted his cosmological constant as the greatest mistake in his life.

This was a time when astronomers and cosmologists were at odds with one another and my uncle played right into the psyche of Lemaitre's creation theory, the 'primeval atom.' If you were to ask my Uncle to describe perpetual motion, his response would be, "It's nothing more or less than a miracle."

He would explain...Lesson 340: "Miracles are a correction."

They do not create or change anything, only remind the mind that what it sees is false. Miracles undo error but do not attempt to go beyond perception. He believed miracles fell like drops of healing rain from Heaven onto the dry and dusty world and that the Yin and the Yang tolerated his awakening in the physics of love (perpetual motion). A miracle inverts perception, which is upside down, and illustrates the Law of Truth, ending the strange distortions that are manifest. The world does not abide by miracles, because it fails entirely to understand the gift of grace.

He felt that the answer was concealed in the everlasting, timeless mind of God. Because Lemaitre did not share conventional wisdom and was both a priest and a scientist my uncle hoped for a meeting with the outcast to help explain the unexplainable. Needless to say, other scientists were uncomfortable with Lemaitre's cosmic origin story because it appeared so close to Christian dogma.

My uncle explained that this was the reason for Lemaitre's isolation in the scientific world. He imagined that all matter and energy was compressed into a single compact particle, and it was the disintegration of this 'primeval atom' that gave birth to our universe. He recognized that space and time could have no meaning until this atom began expanding. The cosmos was born, he stated, "on a day without yesterday." Biblically speaking, this is known as the 'Breaking of Vessels,' the doctrine referred to as 'Bread of Shame.' An aspect of creation that existed before time, a process referred to by Kabbalists as 'Restriction.' Where the proto-Sefirot (soul) could not interact nor give to another. Since they could not emulate God by giving they were incomplete, and could not fulfill their purpose - the light overwhelmed them. Therefore, there was no coercion of the abundance of spirituality, which can cause the souls of humankind to

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undergo a contraction.

The refusal to receive light without having earned it caused separation between the creator and the emanated ones, or souls. This, in turn, coerced the creator to refrain and restrict his beneficence towards humankind until humankind earned the beneficence (free will). As a result, the countless number of souls fell to a lower spiritual level, and subsequently became the source of all evil. The 'Big Bang' occurred when only a thread of the Creator's light was returned, hence the 'Big Bang' doctrine endorsed by modern science said to have taken place 15 billion years ago.

My uncle felt that Lemaitre's primeval atom decay was somehow a paroxysm of his perpetual motion machine. Lemaitre's theories provided the very structure for the magnanimous discoveries in Cosmology we identify with today, such as 'Black Holes' 'The Big Bang' and 'Cosmic Microwave Background.'

This was in contrast to my uncle's work, which assumed a more tangible hands-on approach, and was ridiculed and allied to Illusion, a mockery of every scientific law known to man. He was the laughing stock of the Expo yet there he was in the cross hairs of scientific history-in-the-making.

I shall never forget my Uncle's response to being called an Illusionist: - Lesson 322: "I sacrifice illusions, nothing more. And as illusions go, I find the gifts illusions tried to hide, awaiting me in shining welcome and readiness to give God's ancient messages to me."

It would be years later that my Uncle agreed with me - it had been a mistake to attend the Expo. He shunned the label, 'carnival roadie looking to make a quick buck,' instead continued to make himself at home for three glory days with the great men of science.

At the root of my Uncle's invention lay all the laws of Thermodynamics, which amazingly applied, but not in the usual way. This is what prevented his acceptance into the scientific community. In his opening discourse, in order to make his point, he asked those opposing him for a mechanical explanation for such common phenomena as gravity, electricity, or magnetism. Of course, there is none.

Nikola Tesla, inventor of the AC (alternating current) induction motor was quoted as saying, "Whoever can mechanically explain the electric current will have made the greatest discovery in the history of the world."

More importantly, it was the greatest theoretical scientist of all time, the Scottish born physicist, James Clerk Maxwell who formulated a set of equations - 'Maxwell's Equations' to express the basic laws of electricity and magnetism and came closest to elucidating my Uncle's science. His equations explained light as one form of electromagnetic radiation and predicted that there should be many other forms invisible to the human eye.

He stated, "In speaking of the energy of the field, I wish to be understood literally. The energy in electromagnetic phenomena is mechanical energy. In that space there is matter in motion by which observed electromagnetic phenomena is produced."

It was German physicist, Heinrich Rudolf Hertz in the 1880s who validated Maxwell's laws by detecting radio waves fundamentally similar to light but with wavelengths a million times longer. "Maxwell was right," Hertz said but he concluded that the existence of these other waves was "of no use whatsoever."

But of course we know better...

The key to unlocking the mystery of pure energy lies in the composition of the Earth, Moon, and Sun's magnetic field and beyond - extending throughout our Galaxy into the macro and micro Universe. My uncle believed it was the years he spent verifying astronomical calculations and the dual directional current of energy flowing in DNA that predicted perpetual motion and brought it into existence.

In keeping with the First Law of thermodynamics one cannot simply create energy from nothing. All energy consists of energy transfers/transformations that operate in strict accordance with that Law. He explained that his device did not create energy, but was similar to the way Faraday made use of his lines of force in coordinating the phenomena of electric induction. "I have applied the use of math in a higher order, just as Faraday has." This technology is totally in accordance with the First Law of Thermodynamics. That is also accomplished in accordance with Einstein's equation of $E=mc^2$ originally written as EL (Electricity)= mc^2 .

Let me explain...a new scientific understanding of the universe.

This technology operates on high voltage and low current, the complete opposite to conventional motors. Consequently, it runs cool. This technology does not violate the Law of Conservation of Mass and Energy. On the contrary, this technology validates the Law of Thermodynamics. The only way to achieve the internal production of energy is by supplying the system with high voltage and low current in order to align the atomic domains of the copper atoms in the coil with in the system.

The question is; how do you mechanically and fundamentally explain Magnetic Attraction and Repulsion? Obviously, 'something' is already moving in the electromagnetic field and that 'something' is simply displaced onto the conductor as it moves through the magnetic field. Uncle Carson quoted the great innovator James Clerk Maxwell. "All energy is the same as mechanical energy, whether it exists in the form of motion or in that of elasticity, or any other form. The energy in electromagnetic phenomena is mechanical energy." Remember, as stated by Maxwell, it is in that space that there is 'Matter-In-Motion' by which the observed electromagnetic phenomena are produced.

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It is the special commutate system that generates the magnetic field containing the particles, and allows the continued collapse and expansion of the magnetic field. The net increase of external electrical energy from the systems comes from the energy produced internally within the copper coil.

Remember it was Faraday who gave birth to field theory, stating, "Space is not nothing. The energies of the world are not localized in the particles from which these forces arose, but rather are found in the space surrounding them. Think of it this way, I have restrained the pre-existing 'river of magnetic energy' by electro-magnetically converting mass to energy in accordance with $E=mc^2$."

All machines must breakdown, argued the scientist. Are you not familiar with the Noble Prize-winning work of the Russian-born Belgian theoretical chemist Ilya Prigogine? He was the author of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. My uncle's response was a resounding Yes! He agreed with the principles of the great discovery stating that the law describing the energy exchange in a machine applied to all open energy systems in the Universe. To earn their respect he quoted the work of Prigogone and spoke of the law as a fact of nature. The law of increasing entropy is an expression of the fact that the universe is irreversibly moving towards a state of increased disorder and random chaos.

On the other hand, centropy describes the electrification of matter by negative entropy into the creative process being inverted as M approaches zero. Their response was that any system left with no energy input from the outside will tend to break down. He explained that his invention is a closed system and in general, this is round about the point where he would lose them. No such thing as a closed system, they would reply. No such thing as an ideal machine without any interaction with its environment.

Let me explain...

Closed systems soon reach an equilibrium state of maximum disorder. The molecules of hydrogen in a closed container spread out and their tendency to become more ordered is immediately cancelled out by an offsetting tendency towards increasing disorder, so the net effect is one of maintaining an equilibrium state of maximum entropy. Simply put – it breaks down. No such thing as perpetual motion.

My Uncle lacked the ability and credibility to substantiate his claim...

Not many are aware that Tesla, the flamboyant Serbian engineer, pioneered the first radio signal in 1893. Known as the Father of radio he registered over 700 patents worldwide, as well as postulating a Third Law of Thermodynamics - a 'totally new source of power.' Of course, the disagreements over the nature of atomic energy between Einstein and Tesla are well know and

documented. Branded the mad man of science, his discoveries, long shrouded in secrecy, are the basis for the emerging science of free energy in the world today.

When all else failed...Lesson 329: 'He attempted to explain philosophically that choice was made from eternity - molecules cannot change and be in opposition to themselves.' In the universe exists the three Mothers - air, water and fire. Heaven was created from fire. Earth was created from water and air from breath. The creator decides between them. On a deeper physical level, water represents matter, fire is energy and air is the space that allows the two to interact. Fire, air and water represent the three basic physical forces.

Within each elementary particle, there is a need for a cohesive force to counter the electromagnetic repulsion within the particle itself. This force can be neither electromagnetic nor pionic. It is the breath which decides between the other two. It is this force that allows light particles such as electrons to exist.

Stated another way: - I am I and this will never change, as you are one, so am I one with you. All God's attributes abide in you. Cause and Effect are indistinguishable as it is in Heaven so on Earth. Dare to imagine the limitlessness of energy.

Quantum theory has upset the balance and set a new course; as long as we continue to think in terms of physicality we have given up hope in resolving mankind's problems.

"Gentleman," my uncle continued "the technology before you today is everlasting and enduring. This technology will provide abundant, inexpensive, non-polluting energy to power homes, factories, automobiles, ships, planes, you name it. It will power the world and empower the human race." That's where he should have stopped. No matter how eloquent the explanation, or how close to the uncertainty principle of quantum mechanics - it fell on deaf ears.

Unfortunately, the same would ring true for the brilliant work of Joseph Newman in the 1960's. Newman integrated the work of Faraday and Maxwell, similar to that of my Uncle's work of providing revolutionary new electromagnetic technology. The only people listening at the time were the men in black suits, commonly known as 'G' men in those days, and the CIA today.

My uncle was a kind and gentle man, ahead of his time, struggling to provide the hard evidence of the grand design to Creation. It has been said, "Learning is a result of understanding which is a result of good communication which is a result of a consistent language which is a result of Nomenclature."

My Father tells the beginning story this way...

One morning through the disarticulation of the Sun lifting the morning dew from the earth, a peculiar shape came into view in the field opposite where they were working. Neither one of us had seen anything like it

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nor did they have a clue as to what they were looking at. Carson was drawn to it like a magnet; he took to high ground immediately for a better view of its massive design. Crop circles were considered folk lore, and no farmer, including my grandfather wanted the attention or allegations accompanying this phenomena. They decided to make it their secret for as long as they could.

Carson returned to the sight every chance he could, spending hours measuring and drawing precise details replicating its grandeur. My father watched him hour after hour as he became locked in a trance, staring into the drawing from every angle, checking and rechecking his measurements.

Finally, after months of contemplation and successfully keeping their secret to themselves, it was time to harvest. My father had hoped this would put an end to his brother's obsession with the mysterious phenomenon. It wasn't long before an aerial photograph appeared in the local newspaper. But, that's a whole different story.

My father didn't share Uncle Carson's passion for the mysterious and unknown persona of things. "Brother," Carson would tell him, "Keep an open mind, for only an open mind is big enough to discover the secrets of the universe." His desire to understand and deliver what he called a Divine gift introduced him to the esoteric teachings of Vera Stanley Alder; whose books and lectures at that time led him further into the ancient science of numbers and technology. What he learned was: our world is made of thousands of differing rates of vibration, all these having their origin in the one original vibration of the mind of the creator-or the sum, essence or single number of the whole.

He marveled the work of Earnest Holmes author of "Science of Mind," (1935), and the sleeping prophet Edgar Cayce to name a few. The study of Ancient Civilizations and their mathematical systems taught him (amongst other things) that the strategic tryst of ancient ruins, revealed a field compass reading to the Cosmos, and that somehow the crop circle orientates to this hidden knowledge. All this was beyond my father's intellectual capacity. Over time however, it became evident that his brother was on to something.

It took years of course, including raising a family and the arduous task of running and maintaining a Farm. Nevertheless, Carson managed to devise the world's first perpetual motion machine. His work was based on a platonic study of Ancient Science, believing the ancients encoded their knowledge in their sacred monuments.

My uncle's barn, his work place, was a magical, timeless place where we spend untold hours, usually till early morning engaged in thought experiments, poetry, and meditation always

inspiring and forever expanding the horizons of our mind.

Curious looking mandelas were hung from the rafters. I remember Da Vinci's famous "Wheel Drawing" (vitruvian man) (1492) hanging upside down. Photographs of ancient Temples like the 2,300-year-old Chankillo complex in Peru or Jordan's Ancient City of Petra alongside 3,000 standing stones in France and a Neolithic Passage Tomb in Ireland. Pictures of the Egyptian and Mayan Pyramids majestically enlarged to capture the imagination. Alphabet clocks meticulously hung with the letters running off the clock on to the wall. They appeared to be synchronized as the alphabets changed from Greek to Aramaic in five different languages. We knew they were keeping time with a mysterious and unseen world beyond our comprehension.

Hanging most prominently was a rare and famous photograph, only known as photograph 51. Rosalind Franklin as the true discoverer of DNA took it, never to receive acclaim for her discovery. Her pioneering work clearly proved that she understood DNA as a "double helix" with energy flowing in the opposite directions from the other. This work took her life at an early age from cancer caused by x-ray exposure in her quest to capture the first picture of DNA.

Interestingly enough, the spools of copper wire my uncle continuously cut and worked with mirrored this now-famous photo 51. There was no mistaking the resemblance of the two ostentatious designs, leaving the imagination marveling at the preponderance of the true nature of energy. But probably the most impressive about my Uncle's barn was his library. Here, books from all over the world gathered as the evidence of the pilgrimage of the seeker of truth.

Poetry was my Uncle's passion. He would say...

"The great poets are the true mystics who, through their poems, reveal the presence of

God. Men like Robert Browning, Walt Whitman, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Homer and others of like nature have given us immortal poetry because they had a soulful sense of life." Great spiritual philosophers, old prophets and scores of mystics occupied more than half the shelf space. They all had the same experience, a sense of a living presence.

Lesson 389

"The philosophy of Jesus will remain sound when the belief of a material universe shall be rolled up like a scroll and numbered with things once thought to be real. So will the philosophy of Buddha, Plato, Socrates, Emerson and Whitman be as the philosophy written about today."

My uncle was self taught and not at all proud that he had dropped out of college. He had to admit, his interests did not align with the standard academia of the time. He felt distant and highly critical of the dogmatic approach of the teaching staff.

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As a young man, his thirst for knowledge of the ages led him to the far reaches of the earth. He used to say; he aimed at which-ever direction the wind blew. I remember him saying, "There is a lot of history in the air - an incredibly diverse mix of mol-ecules and particles all with a history stretching back some 4.5 billion years. Someone has to track it down."

He often said...

"Did I tell you the time I came upon Caesar's breath?" And then he would laugh and shake his head "It was only a Caesar salad."

His travels were for his soul's purpose and a *raison d'être* for his life ambition to reveal the concealed.

The Invention...

Mathematics became an ever-increasing and difficult task. He knew that without a mathematical explanation or formula, it would be difficult to gain critical support for his invention.

Nevertheless, Carson maintained (unlike Tesla), that the world was ready for his invention. I watched him bend over for years, solidifying the placement of copper wire as he drew near completion. No one knew what to expect. Containment and decontamination of the device was crucial, and development of the ignition mechanism took as many years as the design process.

The first device was approximately 6"x 2' and 6" x 3' with positive and negative terminals protruding through the wooden box. Ironically, it was a spring that activated the perpetual motion, hence it's name, just like its inventor "Carson Springer."

We had witnessed a number of failures during the activation of the device. Carson never once showed signs of discouragement or defeat. At the same time, we were aware of others working in similar fields and were somewhat apprehensive.

Carson's High Voltage-Low Frequency electrical current was not a complete secret and one such experiment was demonstrated and published in *Popular Science Monthly* in August of 1924. An Englishman by the name of H. Grindell Matthews presented his "Mystery Ray" apparatus. By directing his beam towards the magneto system of a gasoline engine, it stopped the system. Afterwards, it ignited gunpowder, lit an electric light bulb and killed a mouse all in a matter of seconds.

Uncle Carson made sure we were aware of the impetuous Tesla's Magnifying Transmitter experiment in Colorado Springs, Colorado in 1899. Tesla constructed a 50-foot diameter coil of heavy wound copper bars and proceeded to produce fully-fledged lightning bolts over 135 feet. People walking in the vil-lage of Colorado Springs experienced sparks jumping between their feet from the ground beneath them. An electrical flame leaped from a tap when anyone reached for a drink of water and butterflies became electrified - their wings spouting blue halos. Although as bizarre as all this may sound, the inventor (Tesla)

claimed to have demonstrated the practical application of his theory in his experiment - wireless energy lighting two hundred earth connected-incandescent lamps situated 26 miles away.

So you can see how nervous we were every time Carson an-nounced he was ready to demonstrate his invention. We didn't know what to expect. Would he set off a chain reaction to flout the laws of the universe or alter space-time and reshuffle reality as we knew it? It was an opportunity to allow our imagination to run wild and marvel in the speculation of true genius.

Early use of the device...

Once Carson was able to contain the energy and apply that electromagnetic force in the form of electricity, he strategically placed the device for the purpose of irrigation in neighbor-ing farms. He also provided electricity in remote dwellings of migrant farm workers for greater comfort and a higher standard of living.

The Brutal Reality... Lesson 353

"Out of the earth came forth food and out of the strong came forth sweetness." (Shoftim 14:14)

By 1915 the United States had become the largest producer of food, coal, iron and steel in the world. Thanks to new ma-chinery, America's rich natural resources and plenty of cheap labor, big industries made their fortunes. They added to their pre-wartime fortunes by building railroads, mills, shipyards, oil wells and factories.

American businessmen known as robber barons were run-ning roughshod over consumers and employees, based on the fact that government officials were dishonest and took bribes. The rise of industry opened huge gaps between the masses of poor workers and the fabulously wealthy business owners. The biggest of the Big Businessmen gathered as a secret society and it was often said they ran the country. To name a few is like naming a household appliance.

- Cornelius Vanderbilt first built a steamship empire, then the largest single railroad in America.

- John D Rockefeller founded Standard Oil and owned more than 90% of America's oil refineries.

- J P Morgan and his Bank, controlled American shipping, telephones, telegraphs, electric power, insurance and founded the nation's first billion-dollar corporation, U S Steel.

It would take the secret society and a newly-formed govern-ment agency known as the BOI / FBI to squash my uncle's invention and lay him to ruin.

The glory days arrived in America shortly after workers began to organize behind the newly formed Populist Party to make their voices heard. The modern age was introduced dur-ing the roaring twenties as strikes and demonstrations surged across the country. Americans were better off than ever before, enjoying movies, radio, cars and airplanes. People started

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playing golf, tennis and began a love affair with organized sports. Nightly news, entertainment and advertisements came into American living rooms for the first time via the radio. Art, literature and music thrived. Americans believed the road to wealth was as Dr Franklin put it “as plain as the road to the mill or factory.”

Lesson 456: “When nothing is done, nothing is left undone...”

The stock market crash on black Tuesday, October 29, 1929 marked the end of the Roaring Twenties. The Great Depression was the largest and longest depression in American history. At least thirteen million workers, one-quarter of the American work force, lost their jobs. Carson, a student and proponent of FDR’s New Deal, admired Roosevelt for opening up government jobs to blacks, Jews, Catholics, American Indians and women.

Carson explained that the problems had started during the postwar industrial boom. Bigger factories meant more goods produced than could be sold. People went into debt buying goods and stock on credit. American farmers continued to produce as much food as they had during the war; despite the fact that European farmers had gone back to work. Crop prices fell and thousands of farmers went bankrupt. As a young man, Carson remembered those trying times tending to his father’s farm. It became obvious to him that farmers couldn’t afford to buy what the factories had too much of and factory workers couldn’t afford to buy the farmers’ excess crops.

Unfortunately, in the wake of one World War it took another to end the World Depression. Fascism rose to prominence in Germany, Russia and Japan as scared and directionless people looked to powerful leaders for answers. Americans wanted no part of foreign war until the day that would live in infamy - December 7th 1941 when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

Lesson 425

“Noah talked for nine hundred years trying to help people change. They stayed cynical.”

Congress had been leery of creating a national police force; concerned that agents would become a secret police servicing the dictates of those in power. A most valid concern and one which my uncle would bear witness to.

Until J Edgar Hoover became director of the BOI in 1924 the bureau was virtually faceless. Hoover led the bureau into prominence as the premier Law Enforcement Agency of the land and renamed it the FBI in 1935. Their track record for hunting down notorious gangsters earned them the nickname “G Men.” They were named by none other than Machine Gun Kelly when forced to surrender in a Memphis raid in 1933. He was quoted as saying “Don’t shoot G Men, don’t shoot!”

The G Men became folk heroes after the crime wave in the

mid-West was over. The American Gangster slipped into history overnight only to be resurrected on the silver screen. As quickly as the gangster era disappeared, organized crime, by issue of the 18th amendment (prohibition) was becoming a major threat. The Mafia controlled labor unions and major industries from garbage-collecting, garment-making and trucking. They dictated the appointments of judges and police chiefs by bribing politicians and expanding their grip on the country by becoming untouchable.

Everyone knew that organized crime was the single greatest criminal threat in America. Yet Hoover consistently denied what everybody knew. Instead, he concentrated on Human Source Intelligence - HUMINT - a bureau inner secret. An intelligence collection discipline authorized to compile files containing information (smut) on the personal lives of politicians and others. Also employed to protect the competitive interests of Big Business, government and prevent the rising threat of technological and industrial espionage. The only problem with this service was that it was made available to the highest bidder, or, in this case, those who would be affected most by my uncle’s invention.

When it came to the issue of democracy vs. domestic intelligence my uncle often cited the clandestine behavior of the FBI as direct defiance of the fourth amendment of the U.S Constitution. The constant surveillance of my uncle and numerous sabotage attempts were all carried out in the name of national security. The fact is, those in power most feared that Carson’s invention would decentralize the peoples’ access to energy and result in a profound socio-economic impact on civilization worldwide.

The Mob who owned just about everybody as a result of the exploitation of counter intelligence was led to my uncle’s front door by the FBI. Needless to say, the underworld expressed no interest in my uncle’s invention and dismissed it as a fluke.

Lesson 462

“Go and see what the mouth is unable to pronounce and the ear is unable to hear. Do not number the heavens above or the waters below until you have found the son of man within.”

The afternoon sun burned brilliantly on our return trip from the Science Fair. I noticed Carson lifting himself up in his seat, pressing forward as he peered through the waves of heat rising up from the county road.

Looming at the entrance to the farm were two black sedans and a half dozen G Men. Their long stark faces, dark glasses and robotic movements made them appear surreal. They offered no explanation for their presence other than to flash a badge and motion us to continue on. Two days later we received word. Uncle Carson had been brazenly arrested, taken and held in detention at an undisclosed location. It took several days

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and the untiring effort of our local sheriff (whom we all knew) to discover that uncle Carson was being held for associating with a known communist. We all wondered who that might be, though as it turned out, it was all a mistake. The whole fiasco established an arrest record for Carson and unleashed the first of many character assassinations led by the FBI.

Some time later, after things had settled down, we began to realize we were all under surveillance. It was 1935, and the biggest concern for Carson was the fact that there were no visible power lines for miles, yet the entire countryside was lit up like a Christmas tree every night. As obvious as it was to him, it remained a secret for some time to come.

In 1928 the Federal Trade Commission had launched a comprehensive inquiry into the entire electrical power industry, culminating with the passage of the Public Utility Holding Co Act (PUHCA). This caused the breakup of small power companies and again placed the power with the robber barons.

The word was out on my uncle's invention, although he never made an attempt to patent and promote it. People in high places feared the implication of the device and placed a high bounty on my uncle's head, forbidding any and all constitutional rights. We found ourselves living in fear, not knowing what tomorrow would bring. Our everyday lives transformed from playful interactions with the outdoors, family and friends to monitoring the movements of G Men combing the countryside. We grew increasingly aware of their habits and familiar with their vantage points. Knowing these things gave us some comfort when we went to bed at night.

Approximately six weeks after my uncle's arrest he received a certified letter from the legal council of the Chief Engineer of the Army Corps of Engineers' local district. Landmark legislation had recently been passed that recognized the corps' power to investigate proper activity in conjunction with the states. The letter cited "protecting human health while safeguarding the natural environment: you are hereby requested to appear, demonstrate and deliver discourse on the conversion of perpetual motion to electricity."

The letter was received with mixed emotion. Would this help in establishing a forum of communication and acknowledgment of a viable energy alternative for generations to come? Or, was this an attempt to retard any forward consideration and implementation of a most valuable commodity - free non-polluting energy? Needless to say hopes were high. The Science Expo had left my uncle disconnected from the culture he had so wanted to embrace. Now that a second opportunity presented itself, we all hoped this would present his science in a conscientious debate.

Lesson 496

"You cannot see the mercy of the world until you find it

yourself."

The meeting was scheduled to take place at Bristle Air force Base approximately 50 miles northeast of Modesto, a good four-hour drive, straight up Interstate 5.

When we arrived at the base we were greeted by guards and immediately escorted to an enormous vacant hanger. We entered in awe and were instantly consumed by the vastness of the building. A rope corridor led us to an area where sunlight streamed through the massive hanger door, falling just short of the meeting area. Emit and I wore our Sunday best. We were instructed to say very little and were extended a firm and brisk handshake.

Strikingly dressed in full uniform the deputy Chief of the Corps greeted us in a professional and courteous manner and without hesitation introduced us to the others.

In attendance were two engineers and in addition to the Deputy Chief, a particle physicist from the science department at UC Irvine, an environmentalist from the Civil Aeronautics Board, a representative from Congressman Udall's Office and three representatives from the private sector's Electrical Power Industry. Cloaked in the shadows and ever-present were the men in suits and dark glasses surrounding us.

Lesson 505

"Does man forget that we created him out of the void?" The Koran

We were seated at a small table, directly facing the others. Deputy Chief Cowan began the proceedings by welcoming us and expressing his appreciation on behalf of a curious nation as well as those in attendance. He went on to say that the laws of nature are evolutionary and open to interpretation and that the purpose of this meeting was to come away with a better understanding of the unexplainable nature of a seemingly unexplainable source of electro-magnetic energy. "I encourage you Mr. Carson," he said "to please indulge us with your explanation without malevolence or hesitation. We are only interested in learning the truth of your invention. Please proceed."

My uncle began - "Gentlemen, today your function is to either accept or reject the true nature of energy. Let's not allow this function to operate with envy, greed or attack. A wise man once said 'We have all suffered pain until we have defined its hold on us. Then we die to accept our own eternal truth'."

"I would like to open with the Ancient Greek Philosopher Zeno of Elea, born in 490 BC and a member of the Eleatic school of thought. He was recognized by his contemporaries as the most annoying man in the West. He had a paradox, a logical puzzle that seemed intractable to other Greek philosophers. According to Zeno, nothing in the universe could move. Although everybody knew he was wrong, nobody could find a flaw in his argument. Zeno's riddle plagued mathematics for nearly

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two thousand years. In his famous puzzle “The Achilles” Zeno proved that the swift Achilles could never catch the lumbering tortoise because of its head start. The Greeks were stumped by the problem of infinity. It is the infinite that lies at the heart of Zeno’s paradox. Unlike their neighbors to the East, the Greeks were unfamiliar with the infinite, or, the ‘void’ in Western Philosophy.

Zeno had taken continuous motion and divided it into an infinite number of steps. The Greeks assumed the race would go on forever. Even though the steps Achilles took got smaller and smaller the race could never finish in finite time. The Greeks did not have zero, but we do and it is the key to solving the puzzle. The paradox starts with the tortoise one foot ahead of Achilles. “It is sometimes possible to add infinite terms together to get a finite result” Carson said - “to make it simple with respect to time and the story. When you add-up the distance Achilles runs, you start with the number one add $\frac{1}{2}$, then $\frac{1}{4}$, then $\frac{1}{8}$ and so on.”

To the Greeks the numbers weren’t approaching anything; the destination didn’t exist. Modern mathematicians know that the terms have a limit and approach zero as their limit. Infinity, zero and the concept of limits are all tied together in a bundle. By rejecting zero, the Greek philosophers gave their view of the universe the durability to survive for two millennia.

Lesson 510

“In the beginning there was the ratio and the ratio was with god and the ratio was God.” John 1.1

“Not to sound presumptuous,” Carson said “Let’s not make the same mistake and reject what you will witness today, and you have my word, I will not try to annoy you.”

His delivery and explanation was flawless, without interruption or criticism, not at all like he experienced at the Science Expo. Carson not only successfully explained the exchange of raw energy he provided a cross section and open-faced view of his invention that resembled the double helix of DNA. His talk lasted approximately three hours, explaining the new paradigm, which included a discussion of a third law of thermodynamics.

He concluded by saying “You must open your mind to infinite possibilities that can understand a language far beyond our grasp. I beg your forgiveness for this gentlemen, it represents a small portion of your function here today. It is not God’s creation, for it is the means by which untruths can be undone, and who would pardon Heaven? We need to be able to let illusions go. Not to be confused or ignored, Creation merely waits for our return to be acknowledged and not judged. All we are asked to do is accept our part in genuine humility and deny self-deceiving arrogance. I pay homage to the ancients and great scientists that have come before us whose commitment and hard work have culminated in what is about to be demonstrated

here today. It is important for you to know that I do not seek monetary reward or acclaim for my role in the development of perpetual motion drawn from the zero point field of all creation. My commitment has been a life long deliverance through a self-guided course in miracles.”

He lifted a half horsepower electric motor from a canvas bag and connected its wires to the terminals of his device that had been in plain site the whole time. He stepped back and invited each person to inspect the motor and place a hand on the device to verify its cool exterior. As they circled and then took their seats Carson opened the floor for questions. For over two hours he meticulously answered every question with the patience of a third grade teacher. It was obvious there was much confusion and unspoken speculation as to what was to come next. Carson politely gathered his things and thanked those in attendance, and reiterated that he would remain available for future discussions.

As we drove past the guard station and turned south for the long ramble home, Carson quoted the famous sixteenth century theologian and mathematician Pascal who stated “What is man in nature, nothing in relation to the infinite, everything in relation to nothing, a means between nothing and everything.” He explained we had just placed a huge wager today, gambling not only our future, but also the spirit of God in the conscious world.

Lesson 536

“The soul of man is a candle of god.” Proverbs 20:27

I noticed a change in Carson from that day on. His playfulness and cheerful demeanor slipped away. He knew he was in the crosshairs of chaos and apathy, as if the worst was yet to come. He was aware that his salvation lay in the hands of government and Big Business and that the arrogant must cling to words and actions, afraid to go beyond them to experience which might affront their stance.

I remember the day we stood outside the Barn, wincing and watching with trepidation as the onslaught of dusty motorcade led by state police and backed by the FBI entered the farm. We weren’t sure if we should take cover or prepare to defend ourselves. Carson remained calm and assured us everything was going to be all right. A tall, thin, uniformed man appeared from one of the unmarked vehicles and asked Carson to identify himself. He removed a cease and desist order from his inner coat pocket and served it on him. It included the rights to confiscate any property pertaining to the advancement of the potentially hazardous and harmful production of electro magnetic energy.

Carson quickly pointed out that most people were not aware that north of the county road they had entered was public land and everything south was reservation. He excused himself and reappeared with a plot map to verify his statement. He further

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explained that his family had been share cropping with the Pima Indian Nation for generations. Because of this, the removal of private property would be in violation of Federal Law.

He said "I am sure you are familiar with the term "a nation within a nation" so you can see that a different set of laws are in effect where you are standing. The document you so diligently served me today is useless but I urge you to inform those who issued it that they are welcome to visit anytime. Let them know not to be frightened. Tell them forgiveness gently looks upon all things unknown - it is the means by which fear is overcome. Forgiveness releases attack and anguish which is at the seat of fear. Tell them I forgive them."

The official looked at Carson with distress and fully aware he was powerless; he promptly removed the document from Carson's hand and motioned the others to head out.

Lesson 536:

"Like the Cheshire cat fades from view one leaves behind only its grin, the other, only its gravitational attraction." John Wheeler

Knowing that his invention would not survive the hearts of men, Carson suspected it was time to devise some kind of defense. What he needed was politically powerful, energy-related allies so he sought none other than the famous and well-publicized figure of the newsreel and press, Armon Hammer. Carson was aware how in recent years Hammer and his wife had moved to Los Angeles to retire, yet purchased a small oil company and seemingly overnight had taken Occidental Petroleum to prominence as the eighth largest oil company in the world. His pomp and circumstance led the way for the U.S oil cartel to gain a foothold in the Middle East. His honest and elegant demeanor made him known the world over as the "Ambassador of Opec." He was the single most important infidel recognized in the region and the primary reason for the presence of U.S oil companies in the Middle East today. Carson felt that with this man's endorsement, political clout and big business influence he might stand a chance against the tyranny of those against his invention.

Another month passed and Carson was still missing. This time, the Sheriff could not draw a bead on his whereabouts. Carson later told the story this way. As he came out of a local hardware store, he was mutely shown a gun and escorted to a waiting late model sedan. He obediently obliged and was seated and blindfolded. He was ordered to relax because, as they put it, if they had wanted him dead he would already be dead.

For forty eight hours he was questioned at a seaside hotel by suspicious underworld characters. They made it clear that a large sum of money was at stake and were not going to be held responsible for his possible permanent disappearance. He was told it was in his and his family's best interest to explain his

role, reveal his sources and give explicit details as to the intended use of the magical device. They had no idea that Carson felt convinced by an inner certainty that no harm would come to him. Instead, he engaged his hoodlum captors in a discussion on how time is moving at an ever-increasing speed. He asked them to think about how, in an amazing short span of time, we have gone from horse and buggy to air travel. He also cited the communications industry and video transmission. He asked them to consider what can humanity attribute these unique inventions to and why were they occurring right then in time? Electro-magnetic energy was nothing more than an extension of man's awareness into the unseen world. He was able to get their attention onto such topics and lead them away from the brutality of their original intentions to squeeze information from him. He discussed scripture and explained that the Age of Aquarius was nearly upon us. How a new light would be revealed to succeeding generations dating back to the Holy Grail's appearance two thousand years ago.

He spoke about how it is written that a benevolent God wishes to bestow his blessing on all humankind. This blessing was the joy of receiving grace according to the powers of the mystical text "The Zohar." Carson found himself at home with these wayward men who admitted having no ill will towards him or his invention. As a result, Carson was returned unharmed and quite certain that it would be the last he would see of his misguided captors.

Nothing seemed safe anymore. There was no escaping the pursuits of the greedy malcontents of Big Business and politics. We felt protected for the time being on the reservation, but we knew it wouldn't last.

Lesson 605

"If we listen we will hear the waters of the Torah emerging from the smooth precious stones that were derived from the stone called Malchut."

He talked about events that would happen in the end. He knew he was a wanted man with a price on his head. Before destroying all his records and removing the key rudiments of the magnificent design of the device he assembled my two cousins and I in the barn. For weeks we poured over design material. Not easily replicated, we had to put most of what he taught to memory. He showed us how webs of fine copper representing thirty two pathways had to lay strategically over the maze of copper fixed to the bottom of the frame for successful activation. Activation was far and away the most tedious and tenuous to learn, it had taken Carson years to perfect.

He insisted that without fail, a multitude of things had to take place simultaneously for a successful activation. He explained how gravity was a confluence in three of the four letters in the Tetragrammaton. It was the fourth 'Hey' which was a repetition

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of the first 'Hey' in YHVH that provided unitary symmetry as the most basic property of matter. This is the thesis and antithesis, giving and receiving which themselves are manifestations of cause and effect.

He placed certain artifacts with each of us. What Carson had gathered over the years was priceless to us. We all vicariously lived the stories attached to them. Armed with intellect, love and an amazing capacity to forgive others, he wanted us to know we were blessed and that we blessed the world. What we have looked upon we would extend, for we would see it everywhere. We would behold it shining with the grace of God in everyone. He assured us this divine insight was ours to offer everything.

Reality isn't what it appears to be; it has the ability to penetrate our existence at many levels. There is no medium between Universal Mind and us except our own thoughts. Free will reveals our desire to demonstrate who and what we are just as God intended. The Eastern Indians called reality Maya, which means "illusion." They were right. It is a hologram. It is only light. We will no longer stalk time for the moment has come for us to move on. Spiritual growth has begotten us all. We will join the indigenous peoples of the Yucatan and South America to perform ceremony for the return of Quetzalcoatl. Quetzalcoatl according to Enrique Florescano (Mexican archaeologist) is the "Plumed Serpent" depicted in sculptures and temples as a fusion of bird and snake. That signifies the end of a "Great Cycle" the conclusion of one world age and the beginning of the next.

Carson believed what others predicted such as Edgar Cayce (the sleeping prophet), Nostradamus and the Holy Bible about a period of great change. Some saw this time as one of great destruction and pain and a world altered beyond recognition. He announced it was time to remember the Great Spirit and to wake up from a dream that appeared more like a nightmare.

Lesson 682

"O Daniel, make secret the words and seal up the book until the time of the end. Many will rove about, and true knowledge will come abundant."

We were saddened by the thought of leaving our home and the rural life we had come to know. We all knew we had to replace our doubt and fear with faith and confidence. We believed as Carson did that there is an intelligence within us that is led by spirit and leads to good.

I remember the red tail lights fading in the darkness of night - a protective cover for their fêted departure. A part of me died in the stillness of that night as I listened to my inner voice and heard the faint echo of their laughter and sadness. I was not able to make the journey due to my Mother's sudden illness. I couldn't help but feel the loneliness percolating from deep inside as I wept and remembered the events that had brought me here. I asked for the very essence of spirit to now be here. Our being on this earth is often measured by our memories and

I would never forget our celebrated time together. The deepest part of my pain was accepting I might never see them again; it paralyzed me with a deep and unknowable shame. Carson would never have allowed me to feel this way. Right then I promised myself to never accept this parting as defeat or to feel sorry for myself. That was not at all what Carson stood for.

On occasion I would stop to visit the vacated farm and feel the energy they'd left behind. The barn had been completely cleared of the contents Carson had purposely left behind - removed by the G Men. Years later, Ebb returned to share with me their amazing experiences and how his youngest sister Mira had been mentored to engage in the practice of shamanism taught by the high priest of an Ancient society. His stories filled me with that familiar zeal of being together in a constant state of exhilaration and passion.

Carson had contracted a rare fever. Although fully recovered, it had left him in a weakened condition living on a fruit and nut diet. Ebb assured me if I wanted to see him again I would have to venture to their mountain paradise.

Lesson 725: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." Jesus

The years continued to pass and we learned of Carson's departure from the physical plane. I resolved to move to Arizona, a place the Hopi believe to be "the center of the universe." The world began to shrink, owing to the information age, and to my amazement I discovered Janosh - an internationally acclaimed artist inspired by Arcturian's messages who had begun developing art that resembled images he received in his mind's eye. When he posted his work on his website it indisputably and unknowingly replicated the crop circles identified by well-known researchers. Just as Carson believed others are starting to accept that sacred geometry is not only found in crop circles but in everything around us, from the alignment of the stars and ancient architectural structures to inside us in every cell in our body. The hidden codes that Uncle Carson had so often referred to were now displayed on the World Wide Web. I couldn't help but feel a sense of pride and excitement that not only was Carson correct, he wasn't alone. When I departed for Arizona I sensed Ebb was waiting for the right moment to deliver a letter Carson had written me. Ebb wanted me to know I was never far from Carson's thoughts and always in his prayers.

I waited to read my uncle's letter for I new for me it meant getting away and going under the surface of the human landscape. It was atop Bell Rock in Sedona Arizona when I decided it was time. I knew the letter carried a significant and perhaps even sacred message. As I opened the letter I found a second letter inside the first.

The first letter read: Forgiveness ends all suffering and loss:
Dear Carson,

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We, you and I have been dragged through the knothole of time only to arrive at the threshold of a new world order. You will do well to understand past events - as painful as they are have served us well.

I am glad to hear of your journey to the "center of the Universe." You will do well embrace the "Hopi Prophecy." I only wish I could be with you in Oraibi to witness the dance of the "Blue Katchina" signifying the end of the fourth world and beginning of the fifth under the new light of the "Blur Star."

The conception of this four-cornered world structure is not confined to the Hopi alone. We are learning in the sacred Pupol Vuh, recording the creation myth of the "Quiche Maya," the world is described as "four-pointed, four sided, four bordered." This cubical world block is further alluded to in the pyramid temples of the Toltec, Zapotecs and Aztecs, suggesting a world axes as the Hopi.

Soon forgiveness will paint a picture of a world where suffering is over, loss become impossible and anger makes no sense in the new world order. Attack is gone, and madness has ended. What suffering is now conceivable? What loss can be sustained? The world becomes a place of joy and abundance, charity and endless giving. It is now so like Heaven that it quickly is transformed into the light that it reflects. And so the journey which the Son of God began has ended in the light from which he came.

I felt exhilarated and somehow forgiven, but forgiven for what? It was the Law Uncle Carson was referring to, the Universal Law, which is simply blind force as Browning so eloquently put it "All's love, yet all's law."

As I read these words, tears of joy appeared because I knew Carson would forever dwell inside me in my heart. I put the letter down and meditated on its contents I glanced at the second envelope obstinately resting on the red rock, which read 'Open in 2012'.

Lesson 729:

"Open to me the Gates of righteousness, I will go through them." Tehilim 118:19

My amazing rescue from Coyote Highway was nearing its end as Carson plucked his last inspired words from the universal harp of antiquity. As we pulled into Phoenix and made our way to a gas station, I couldn't help but feel sorrow in our parting. I felt I had learned so much in such little time, not just a story about a man and his family, but about Life and Life's inevitable lessons. I was blessed with his story and somehow I knew it was up to me tell it.

Carson had given me clarity and awakened a higher consciousness as to the true nature of body, soul and mind. I learned the universal goal of spiritual practice is to evoke a primordial realization; that all things are inseparably interconnected and in the physics of presence, the entire Universe is composed of transmuting energy. As I look back at these lessons, forever grateful, I have a better appreciation for kindness, love and the power of forgiveness. I have often thought if we could only apply this wisdom and its principles at a conscious level what command we would have of our future on Planet Earth. I take comfort knowing that single-handedly, Carson is out there throwing a lifeline to a broken down motorist and making a difference, one soul at a time.

Beading in School

By Lana May

My name is Lana May. It worked out that I live in Phoenix, Arizona. I work as a librarian at a school. About a year and a half ago, I got lucky and signed up for a “Beadworks” class on the Internet.

I used to work as a designer of clothing for women and used beads only as embroidery on evening dresses. But I really got into the class. And I tried to find out more about bead jewelry online. I tried every pattern I encountered. Later, I started showing my work at school. All of the women really liked my work, and they started ordering necklaces and bracelets for themselves. Children were interested, too, asking questions, trying my works on, asking me if it was easy to learn.

And then it hit me. I should start a bead class at school. I talked to the principal about it and surprisingly she agreed. She told me to give her a list of everything we needed and to count how much it was going to cost for each student.

I did all of that, created a special program and in the new semester in February last year started the class “Beading Is an Art.” I chose that name because beading is really an act of creation, an art of uniting tones and different patterns into unbelievable, beautiful beadworks. But I’m so far from that. I’m learning myself and am trying to make students fall in love with the process of creating art.

I had two groups of students: one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Children were very different in age (in the morning, I had a 13-year old girl and a 19-year old boy), different intellectually and in the will to learn.

Of course, we had some trouble. The main one was children were not used to doing their homework. At this school, everything was done at school. Several students dropped out of my class for that reason. But if you work with beads only two hours a week, I just cannot teach you everything in 22 classes.

After five to six classes, students started doing their homework, and what was interesting is that every break they had after other classes they would spend with me and did everything I would tell them. We had our own little company. Students who did not sign up for my class would join us, too.



Something funny happened once. Like always, students would come to the library for lunch. There were a lot of children from morning classes and kids from afternoon classes already showing up. They were telling each other what happened that day, showing what they did at home. I was very hungry and told everybody that I was going to the teachers’ lounge to get some coffee at least, because my head was spinning. I also warmed up my lunch hoping to eat it whenever I got a free minute.

When I came back in two or three minutes, there were all kinds of cookies, chips and candy on the table. The children got me wrong and thought I didn’t have anything to eat but coffee and decided to hook me up. But when we got everything straightened out, everybody just dumped everything on the table and we ate it all — it didn’t matter if it was theirs or not. It was not like when teachers eat: together but everybody gets their own food. Since then, we always share.

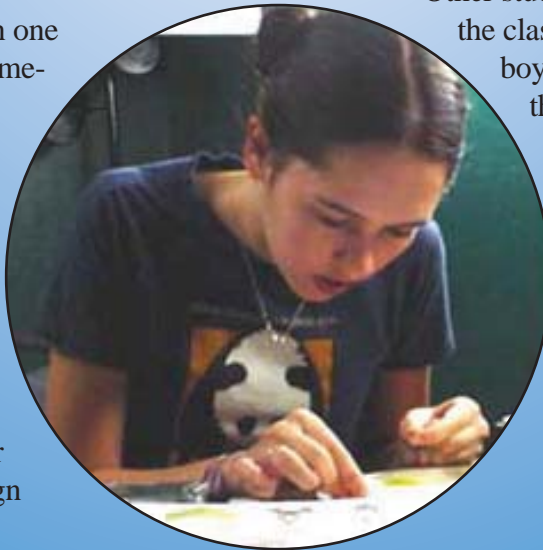
After about nine classes, we had parents come to school. In the biggest classroom where most of the parents gathered, I put up the beadworks that the students had done. You should have seen how proud the students were. They were showing and explaining something to their parents and friends.

But I was very upset with the parents when I understood that most of them saw their children’s work for the first time here at school. Most of their work, the kids were doing at home. They needed very bright places to finish it, but parents did not notice.

Other students were asking me if they could sign up for the class. The main reason: “If Clarence (the only boy in my class) can create such beautiful work, then I can do it, too.”

The next month, parents were at school again. I put numbers on all of the works and told parents to write down the number of the work they really liked. At the end, kids with the most numbers got little presents — several little baggies of beads. You should have seen their eyes, how proud they were.

Now there was time for 22 lessons. During



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that time, I taught my students to read patterns, showed them how to pick colors properly. How to choose the cloth and colors to wear with their beading works. When they first started, they understood that it was difficult but interesting work. You could see that kids were very smart, they understood the patterns, and after 10 to 12 classes they started to feel the thread and have their own ideas. The way they chose colors and the bead sizes, you could see their mood and character.



During the semester, we visited an exhibition of different designers and found out about other styles of this art. It was very interesting to see when kids recognized the patterns that I had explained to them in other works. At the store, they looked at different shapes, sizes and colors of beads. They had a lot to talk about from that road trip.



I united my morning and afternoon classes for the last lesson and we had lunch together. I even invited the principal and gave her a little gift that the students and I had made together. Everyone made at least one inch of that necklace. The principal did not expect it and was very pleased.



After lunch, I asked every student to write an essay on what beads mean to them.

The answers were very different. Several students said that it would be good for their future profession as designers. For others, beads were their favorite hobby. Some found a lot of friends doing it. The main thing is that everyone wrote that now after their parents saw them and the road trip we had, they felt like they could at least do something with their hands, they were very proud of it, and there was something good that separated them from their classmates.



The next semester, I had twice as many students — including four boys. Not everybody could sign up for my class but only those who were doing well in other classes. That's how the school administration was able to raise their school results.

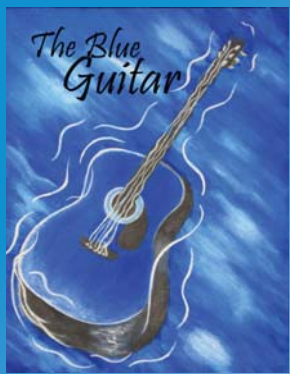


Now, a lot of students buy their own beads and do extra work on their own. They save money for lunch or work somewhere on the side.

For Sept. 11, children made little U.S. flags from beads for all of the teachers. For Halloween, we planned to make little spiders for teachers and a drawing with a web on it. We had a lot of different ideas and plans.

You can check out the works of my students and my own works at my website: www.lana-bead.info.

www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org



A Call to Writers for Fall

The Blue Guitar magazine will accept literary submissions for the Fall 2010 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 15.

Submissions are sought in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction. Writers must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be ac-

cepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. To submit or for further information, e-mail Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.

A Call to Artists for Fall

The Blue Guitar magazine will accept art submissions in all mediums for the Fall 2010 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 15. The art entries, which will be selected by a jury for inclusion in the fall issue, must follow the theme of "Holiday Images." Any artists who work in any visual art media and are 18 years or older and are Arizona residents can submit. It is free to submit and up to 5 images can be submitted. Artists are encouraged to submit images of work by e-mail. Images must be identified in the e-mail with the artist's name and contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. To submit or for further information, e-mail Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.



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



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Summer Issue
FREE!

*“Things
as they are
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blue guitar.”*