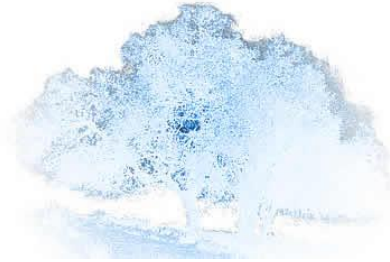




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especially to the Cal Poly Pomona faculty, staff,
and students who made this possible.**

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Dear Readers

Another year has brought another moving edition of *Pomona Valley Review*. As each year passes, we see the growing interest from our local county to our state, and more this year than ever before, from our global community. We cannot begin to express the gratitude that comes with such a committed and talented group of authors, artists, and poets belonging to the singular international community of creativity and expression.

While the task of editing, selecting, formatting, and designing a journal of this magnitude with a core group of editors can be daunting to say the least, the true joy lies within the process. Reading through submissions of this quality (and quantity) was an exhilarating experience. The vacuum of reading our own work often times creates a contentment that can be unhealthy for writers and artists, and seeing the enthusiasm of some of the best professionals of our crafts has reinvigorated us as much as we hope it does for our readers.

With every submission, we had to reconsider each previous selection. We can say in legitimate honesty that this body of work accurately reflects a modern shift into a new age of creation where we are able to express ourselves through

new styles, formats, images, and mediums. Allow us to encourage you to consider the unconsidered, ponder the imponderable, and question the unquestionable through your imagination. Continue to allow us the luxury of reading and broadcasting such talent to readers seeking the same inspiration that drives our authors and artists to create.

While our sincerest thanks go out to our contributors, we would like to take a moment to thank all of our readers as well (many of which may own membership to both groups). Without our readers, *PVR* would not exist in all its capacities, if at all. Your commitment and support of this publication continually reminds us of our goals with *PVR* and our aspirations for its future.

Thank You,

Christopher Baarstad
Managing Editor
PVR

"All art aspires to anonymity."

A sea of texts surrounds me,
soughing and rippling, not rilling gleefully,
sent as though to revive, in the night,
this swimmer, this sinner, this worldly man.
My burdens dissolve, as though old and paper,
waiting for welcome dissolution,
losing themselves in the burning waters
that echo and swallow in a seething mess
of sound, hollow, meaningless, calling me.

I dream of losing myself in this sea
of anonymity, and white noise

~ Phillip Ellis



"Ship" ~ Bihe Du



"Person on the Umbrella" ~ Bihe Du

NIGHTS ARE MORE

Nights are more than occasions for dream
and sleep. They are essential time
for concentrated night, and in shadows.

There will have been a time
when I was younger, travelling, cars, back seats
and stars' impossible turning above;

lying down with the crown of my head
resting against the inner, hard door
had brought vibrations down to my feet.

All I would have seen, framed in slivers
of glass above my disembodied
eyes, stars, turning, shadows of trees.

Then, lucky me, sleep, a bliss
and half-waking, weary-limbness, brought
to bed by him, father whom I love.

This is what nights meant for me,
before fall into awareness, awakened
hours in a cold bed almost rubbed raw;

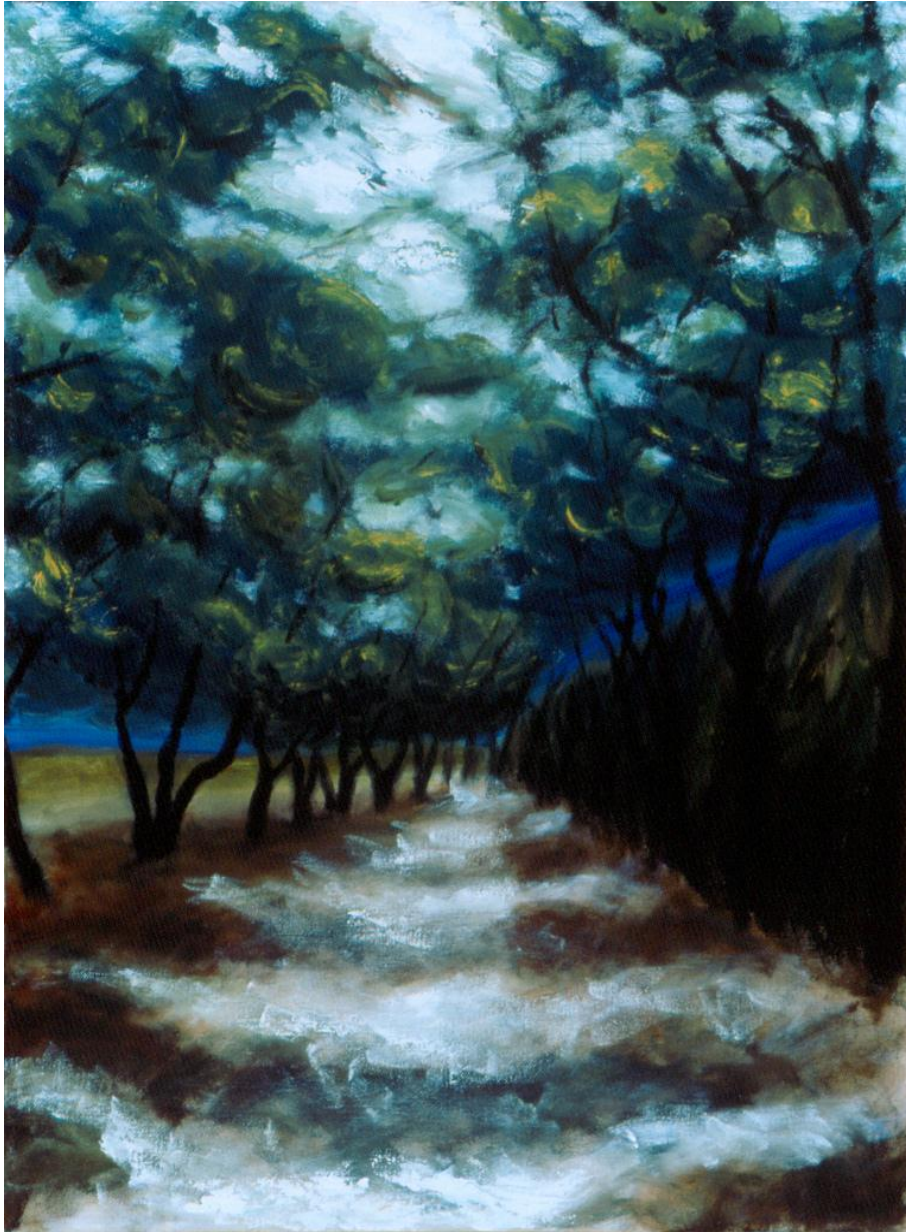
and cotton sheets turn their tongue
against the skins of my shins, lapping at me
with a tongue longer, colder than dogs'.

What is left behind is left hidden
in shadows that protect the inner cave
and emptiness, an echo's fear.

Nights are more than occasions for dream
and reveries, rehearsals for lives

I will not know, they are, at heart, heart.

~ *Phillip Ellis*



"Boulevard" ~ Matthew Felix Sun

The boat heaved upward, its bow crashing against another large swell, and the icy water from it splashed over the railing dousing Benjamin's bare hand and the side of his pant leg. He looked up at the pilothouse. Inside was the shadow of the skipper, Dan Smith, a bearded young man wearing a baseball cap.

"Can you see them yet?" Benjamin shouted out.

The young skipper shook his head.

From the elevation of the poop deck, Smith could see the ice field ahead, stretching horizontally in both directions as far as eyes could see, and he could see the opening in it, where the ice-breaker had entered. A deep, black rift etched its way landward through blocks of snow and ice, toward the islands of the Magdalen, a small archipelago in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence where men came to hunt young harp seals.

It was fate, Benjamin thought.

He glanced down at the rifle in his hand. He could feel the wood stock snugly against his palm and the cold steel of the trigger against his finger.

His father had fought on the side of environmentalism, as did his grandfather before him – both men were committed to the preservation of land and sea, and to the animals and creatures living there. His grandfather had worked for the *Reno Gazette-Journal* and wrote editorials in an effort to stop the eradication of the Nevada mustang. But in the 1950s, a man's work was more important than the conservation of a misfit animal, and his articles were eventually banned from publication, as was he. And his father, a mill worker for the Georgia-Pacific Corporation, took up the fight against the dumping of lethal by-products into the many streams and rivers of northern Oregon. He gathered signatures and petitioned national leaders, and was eventually fired for it. And he spent many long years unemployed in an occupation that was, at the time, the only one for a middle-aged mill worker in the Pacific Northwest. Two generations of men before him had taken up the pen for the cause of environmentalism. It was why, Benjamin knew, he now stood on the deck of a ship with a gun in his hand.

As they approached the ice field, Smith eased back on the throttle and brought the engines to a complete idle. He waited for the swells to subside and then throttled ahead into the channel at a slow speed. The mouth of this man-made waterway was more than thirty meters across, evidence of how many times it had been used to access the permanent snowfields beyond. Either side of the channel was lined in by four-foot walls of ice, out from which stretched large, diagonal cracks.

Benjamin kept his eyes keenly ahead as the ship inched its way upstream. As the channel narrowed, it became littered with chunks of floating ice, and he could hear them thunking off the bow. He glanced up at Smith frequently, checking for a sign, but Smith offered no signal yet. Beyond the channel, Smith could only see the sprawling white ice floes stretching out to the grey horizon.

Across the ice, perched at the top of his 55-foot, steel-hulled *crabber* was the old man Kalic, a burly fifty-something Canadian who had run a sealing company for twenty-five years now. From his high point, he watched his men perform their handiwork, that which they had performed in the same brutal, archaic manner for more than two decades straight.

The whiteness of the ice, which stretched out below him, was stained red now with blood. And the redness formed the image of a tangled web, where many blood-lines led to a central hub, a heap of dead or dying seals; their carcasses dumped there after their pelts had been taken. The young seals were shot or bludgeoned to death with *hაკapiks*, a metal-hook-tipped club. Then they were dragged back to the ship, sometimes still conscious. It was a scene of butchery, only to be imagined in a dark dream or witnessed in a horror film.

But for Kalic and his boys, it was work, no different than a butcher in a meat shop or a lineman in a packing shed. It was the work of their fathers, and fore-fathers before them. And the animals, though charming in appearance, were nothing but dollars signs, and mortgage payments, and food on the plates of their children.

“There!” he shouted, pointing a strong arm to a young seal scrambling away from the carnage. He looked down at a young man who was working the pelts with a knife below. “Cratton!” he shouted. “There! He is getting away!”

The young man grabbed his *hაკapik*, dashed after the young seal, and gaffed it repeatedly in the head until it stopped moving. Then he hooked it with the spike at the end of the *hაკapik* and dragged it back to the ship, leaving another blood line in the snow. The seal lay there on the ice floe with blood running from its nose. It was still conscious and gasped for air. Not far away, the Sealer sharpened his knife blade, and as he began slicing its fur from its torso, the young seal began thrashing violently, and he thumped it in the head again with the *hაკapik* until it stopped.

In the distance over the rise of an ice berm, there were three other pups getting away. Kalic shouted to his men, directing them with the long point of his arm. One of the hunters scrambled up to the top of the berm with a rifle and cracked out three shots.

“That’s some fine shooting there, Johnston!” Kalic shouted.

In between directing traffic, Kalic eyed the channel east. They had been pestered in recent weeks by a small group of rebel activists who coined themselves *The Abalone Alliance*, predominantly because they had come from the West, the Pacific coast, where they had rallied to protect the abalone from the intrusive discharge of a nuclear power plant.

He did not see the ship at first, but heard the familiar sound of a ship’s diesel engine whispering across the ice floes. Then he saw the crown of its crow’s nest moving above the ice toward them. He entered the wheelhouse, and when he emerged, he had a shotgun in one hand, and several rock-salt filled shells in the other. He had grown tired of these young activists, and of their harassing tactics. They had plastered the local towns with anti-sealing posters, callously displaying the carnage and portraying them as butchers. They had posted videos on YouTube, and painted the words ‘*Baby Killers*’ in bright red on the side of his ship. And they had blocked the channel by dragging huge chunks of ice upstream and jamming them in the narrows, although Kalic’s double-hulled *crabber* made quick work of it. More recently they resorted to more irritating measures, using a loud speaker to insult their families and threaten to ram their ship against the steel-hull *crabber*.

For Kalic, the activists were more of a nuisance than a threat. But their activities interrupted work, and some of his men were bothered by it, and by the escalation of it. Each time, it seemed, the activists were ratcheting up their methods, becoming more hostile, and more desperate. And Kalic was determined to put an end to it.

He looked down at the rock-salt filled shells in his hand. He grunted out a deep-throated laugh as he loaded them into the shotgun. *This will teach them!*

It was their right, nevertheless, Kalic thought. *It was the law of the land. It was Canadian law!*

The annual seal hunt was a tradition that dated back several centuries. From before the time Columbus, on through the advent of commercial shipping, young harp seals were taken for their fur, meat and oil. Since the industry’s boom in the mid-fifties, new generations of Sealers lined-up each year, ready to take the catch. For some in isolated communities, it was the only livelihood; the only means of financial survival. The hunt was even sanctioned by the Department of Fisheries and supported by the government; although Kalic would be first to admit they did not always comply with Canada’s animal welfare standards. But if not for him, there would be others, he knew. It was tradition, and commercially successful, and no greenhorn young activists from California were going to change that.

Benjamin's mind was still on the rifle held in his hand as he looked forward into the narrowing channel.

'It is a menace,' he recalled his father saying. 'Only to be used by men without reason.'

His father detested weapons of all types. They were the takers of life. That which was the greatest treasure of nature, *Life*, the most coveted of all things on earth, was to be respected and preserved above all costs. And yet the very weapon that his father detested was in fact the instrument that could sustain the sanctity of life here in the ice fields of the Saint Lawrence Gulf, Benjamin thought.

Benjamin imagined the horror he had seen, coming upon the ice where the *Sealers* had done their work, the bloodied carcasses of hundreds of young harp seals; the pitiful cries of the pups; the repeated thuds of clubs raining down on soft skulls; the Sealers' laughter echoing across the ice floes. Perhaps a weapon was a menace of irrational men, but it was the only tangible thing the hunters could understand.

"You must speak their language," he said quietly, looking down at the rifle. If you are fighting irrational men of violence, then a menacing weapon is what one must use.

Nevertheless, Benjamin thought to himself, he did not intend to use the rifle to kill; only to fire warning shots over their heads. Of this, he was certain. The weapon he held in his hands would not be used to kill, but to squash the will in others to kill.

The ship's engines backed off. Benjamin looked up at Smith, who nodded his head and motioned with his hand to get down. Benjamin did so, promptly, taking a position behind the solid steel lip of the bow. As the ship rounded one last bend, Benjamin could see the 55-foot *crabber* ahead. Up on the master deck, coming around the rail to his side of the ship, was Kalic with an object in his hand. It appeared to be a *hakapik*.

As they drifted closer, Smith reversed the engines, ceasing their forward momentum. The propellers went quiet and the two ships were finally positioned, a mere thirty yards apart.

From the master deck of the *crabber*, Kalic shouted out, "Get the hell out of here! Go back home to California!"

All the seal hunters, who were still busy working their pelts on the far side of the ship, stopped and turned their heads.

"Go home!" Kalic's yelled again. His deep voice echoed across the ice floes.

Benjamin leveled his rifle, taking aim at a place in the sky just above Kalic's head.

"You suck off," he yelled back.

“Go away before I have to do something serious!”

You want something serious? Benjamin thought.

“We don’t want any trouble,” Kalic said. “We just want to get along with our work.”

In his mind, Benjamin saw the dead seals again, strewn across the white ice; the bodies of helpless youth slain without mercy. And sighting down the barrel, there at a place in the open sky just above the ship, he pulled the trigger.

The bullet zinged harmlessly over Kalic’s head

Smith looked on nervously from the poop deck.

“Bastards,” Kalic growled. Turning back, he looked in the direction where the bullet whiz past. Then he took two deliberate steps forward, fully against the rail, brought the stock of the shotgun securely against his shoulder, and pulled the trigger.

The shotgun bucked and the salt pellets shattered the glass in the pilothouse just in front of Smith’s face. Smith ducked down and to the side, behind the metal frame of the windshield.

Kalic grinned. Though he knew the rock salt would not cause serious injury, it would cause immense pain, and with this stinging message, he hoped to turn these young activists away.

He quickly aimed and pulled the trigger again. The second shot sent salt pellets scattering around the pilothouse, some of which hit Smith in his leg, tearing into his skin.

Smith dropped to the floor with a yelp, grasping his leg.

From below, Benjamin could hear all the action.

“You okay?” he yelled out. But there was no answer, only groaning, and when he looked up at the pilothouse, he could not see Smith, only the shattered glass of the pilot’s windshield.

Benjamin immediately lifted his rifle back over the bow’s bridge and took aim again, a more sincere aim this time with the barrel pointing directly at Kalic’s large frame. At the same time, Kalic swung his shotgun around toward the bow of their ship to where Benjamin had fired the original shot. Benjamin pulled the trigger first. Though the shot narrowly missed, it caused Kalic to readjust, and Benjamin pulled the trigger again. This time, the large, burly Kalic crumbled to the deck, grasping his chest in his hand.

Kalic’s shotgun discharged skyward. He fell backward and dropped harmlessly to the deck. Two hunters close to the ship leaped aboard and scrambled up the iron ladder. They found Kalic flat on his back halfway out the doorway of the wheelhouse. There was blood on his chest and his eyes were lifeless.

“You’ve killed him, you bastards!” one of the hunters yelled out.

The other picked up the shotgun and emptied the three remaining shells in the direction of their ship.

Benjamin lay flat in the bow, cuddled against the cold steel. He could hear the three shotgun blasts ricocheting on the upper deck. Then he heard another rifle ring out, a different sound, and heard the ping of a bullet careening off the metal near him.

“You Bastards! You killed him!”

Another shot rang out and another bullet dug deep into the metal hull of their ship. Then there were multiple shots, from both land and sea, pummeling the ship from all angles.

Up in the pilothouse, Smith pulled himself to his feet, limped over to the wheel, and dropped the gear-shift into reverse. Keeping his head low, he throttled it down. As the boat picked up momentum, jettisoning in reverse, he could hear it, and feel it, the stern slamming against the ice-walls of the channel. He could not swing the boat around without risking a further barrage of bullets. Nor did he have the advantage of sight. Using the bottom of the wheel, with head down, he had to steer it, the best that he could, trying to find open water.

At twenty yards, and forty yards, and sixty, the bullets whizzed past. At last, at a distance of one hundred yards where the channel widened sufficiently, Smith was able to swing the bow around. He pointed the ship straight out the channel and throttled it all the way down. A few more shots rang out from the Sealers, but eventually they were out of range and out of sight.

Benjamin remained flat on the foredeck, prone with the rifle beneath him. It was still clinched in his hands. He could feel himself breathing hard and shaking. The adrenaline rush from the whole thing was still peaking through his veins.

“Wow! That was something!” he heard Smith yell down from the bridge.

Benjamin turned and looked up at Smith. Behind the broken glass of the pilothouse, beneath the ball-cap, he could see his face smiling.

“I think you killed that old bastard,” Smith shouted.

Benjamin stood up, still holding the rifle in his hand. He looked down at it and realized his hand was trembling.

“Are you okay?” Smith asked.

“Yes,” Benjamin replied, not sure of it.

“I think he was shooting salt rock,” Smith said, looking down at the blood on his leg. “Did you hear what I said? I think you killed that old goat.”

Benjamin stared up at the pilothouse without answering. In all his life, he could not imagine himself killing someone. It was sacrilegious, contrary to

the teachings of his father and grandfather. It was a betrayal of one's beliefs; an outcome not part of the plan. He looked down at the rifle – the menacing instrument used by men without reason. The shaft was still warm from its discharge and a small white curl of smoke rose from the barrel. Although his grasp had unconsciously loosened, it felt uncomfortably comfortable in his hand. A chill passed over his body.

What have you done? he thought. *How could you fire that shot?*

“Yeah, I really think you got him,” Smith shouted down gleefully from the pilothouse. “I think you got him in the chest!”

Benjamin looked up, his restless brain quiet for a moment. It was a betrayal, all right; a betrayal of all that his father stood for.

As the ship made its way out the main channel into the open waters of the Gulf, Benjamin remained on the foredeck, feeling the rhythmic thumps of the swells against the bow. They thumped loudly, as did his heart. *I have killed a man*, he thought. He looked out across the Gulf to the southwest. The dim northern lights faded. He bowed his head and watched the dark water rushing toward the bow. *It was fate*, he thought, *the fate of his fathers*.

~ Frank Scozzari



“Winter into Spring” ~ Jen Jastrab

HOLLY SAYS

Holly says that the Elanora Dusk
reminds her of the poetry of empires,
and that, by the sound of it, the dusk
of Towradgi is something related.

Holly says that the dream of sonnets
is to be as marmoreal as memoirs,
to be as fluid as perfect villanelles,
to be as stately as is an English ode.

~ Phillip Ellis



“Sunpole” ~ Kathlene Lujan

IMPERMANENCE

I am tired
of being

myself
again,

so please
exchange clothes with me,

invade my body and
merge with me;

I want to be devoured
entirely by you.

I am the little moon
in the shadow of

your morning, the glinting
packed-snow starling

that crumbles
at your touch.

There is nothing left here, you
see, to wallow or to scream for—

everything worth saving
seems to have already died.

The narwhals and fig trees
are sure to go next, followed

by the thought that there are
such things as souls.

Yet believe me,
I am searching

for a bright seed of salvation,
searching for it nightly

like a starving, lean-nosed fox.
I am searching in the willows

and all along the bent shore
for something we can steal

from this desert of long bones.
I am hunting for an ending

to the disbelief in magic,
something that will

brandish words once
everything is gone.

~ Catherine Bailey



"Phantom" ~ Olivia Parkes

MANIFESTO

We are just two lunatics feeling all we can,
gusts of summer hunger mingling ecstasy and pain.

Together we are laughing to the point of laughter's breakage,
carving carnal lines in each other's unarmed shores.

Our fates are little starshines riding sooty cannonballs,
searing through the opal sky like scarlet rocket ships.

Together we are doing things that they have never witnessed,
things that human beings should not ever dare to do.

We uproot docile seaside towns. We also charm live snakes.
We fly at the sighing, somber moon and slap its bloodless face.

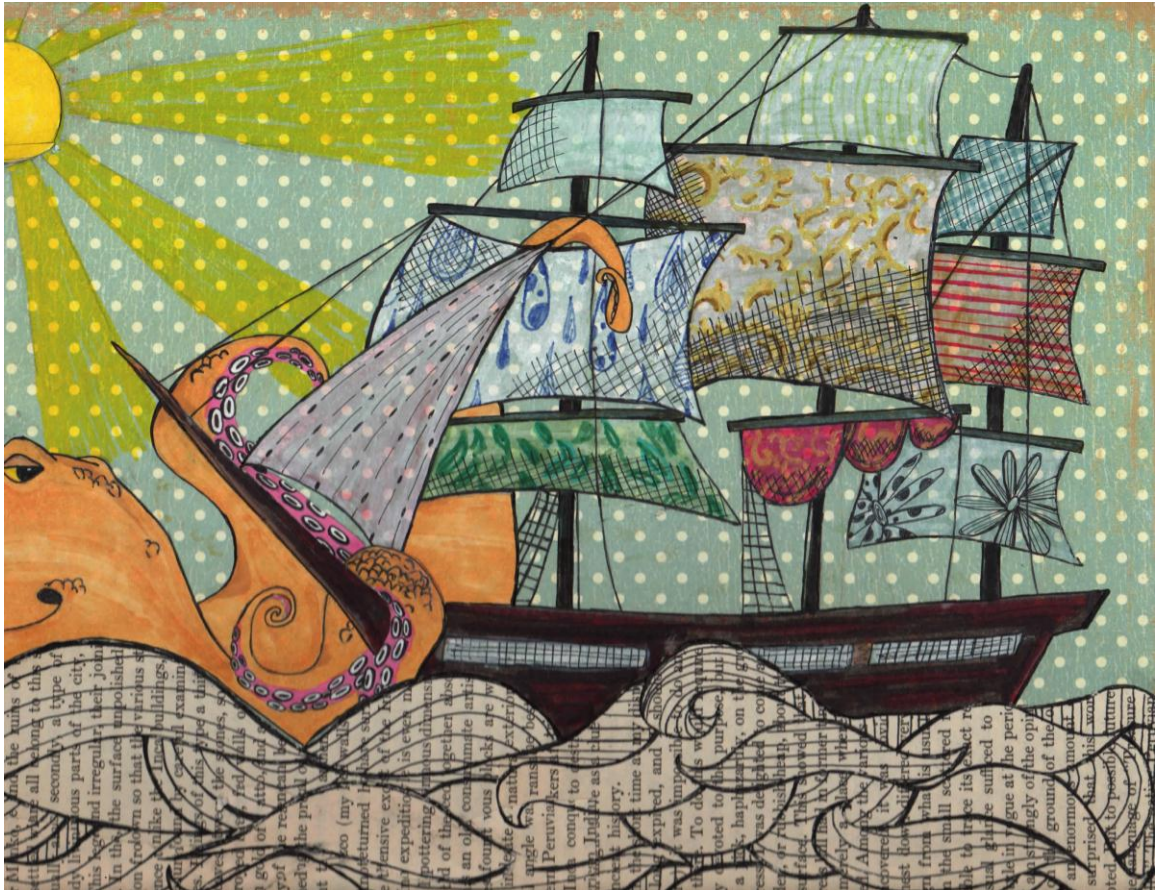
We are oftentimes tyrannical in our disregard for brevity.
We lie on our backs and speak to the sun in tongues we were told to forget.

The bones in our spines recall how to ache from the desperate throes of amnesia.
The things they've unearthed with their vertebrae drills cannot ever be silenced again.

The rebels in our hillsides are moving slowly nightly.
They slink to the quiet, violet edge where the pulse of life begins.

Come with me now to the brink of the chasm where water tastes like satin.
Give me your rough and searching hands. I will transform them into birds.

~ Catherine Bailey



"Toby Kraken" ~ Katrina Corral

LIFE BEFORE THE FLASH

Despite her racing pulse, Tekuro forced herself to focus on the task at hand and push aside everything else. She was not scared, but excited at the challenge facing her. This was an opportunity, given most reluctantly after months of incessant pleading, to prove herself to her mother. Tekuro wanted to show that she could be counted on to make the daily journey to school on her own. She was nearly ten years old after all.

Waiting for the city tram on the edge of the sidewalk, Tekuro quietly recited her mother's explicit, and numerous, instructions in her head. She wiped her sweaty palms on the front of her crisp white blouse. A sweltering heat had settled upon the city. It was enough to make men's shirts cling to their backs and over-dressed women seek shade lest they pass out from over-exposure. Tekuro gazed upward. There was not a cloud in the sky and she was forced to shield her eyes from the bright August sunshine bearing down upon the people packing the bustling street. The sun appeared angry much like the image stamped on the national flag hanging from the open window of a nearby office building. It lay flat and still except for the weak flutter of life it offered in response to the occasional breeze.

A chime snapped Tekuro from her sky gazing. A streetcar, painted a bold red with the word "HIRODEN" emblazoned along the side in large gold characters, approached in deliberate, yet casual fashion, shuddering as it came to a halt. Tekuro chided herself for not paying attention. Her mother had been clear on how important it was to always pay attention.

Don't dawdle, Tekuro. You have the tendency to walk with your head in the clouds.

A group of stern-faced men in dark business suits departed the car. One of them, failing to spot the short figure with hands crossed before her lap, bumped into Tekuro as he passed. He looked down with a pale face and a curious expression behind his thin mustache. When he realized what he had done, he offered a slight bow of apology and continued on his way, eager to continue the Monday commute.

Tekuro boarded and greeted the driver, a young woman with a round face framed with straight black hair. "One ticket please."

The driver did not respond; she cocked an eyebrow and donned an expression of expectation.

This is the money for your ticket and for the ticket only. Be careful with it.

Unbuttoning the front pocket of her blouse, Tekuro reached in with the first two fingers of her right hand. Not detecting anything, her finger began to stab at various corners of the pocket as if dancing some sort of ritual that would make the money somehow materialize out of thin air. With a sense of horror, she realized she had forgotten the money at home. She had noticed a stain on her original blouse and had quickly changed before rushing out the door. In her haste, she had left her fare in the pocket of the stained article. Everything was ruined because of one mistake, one act of carelessness. Her mother was right. She was not ready.

“You’re holding everyone up,” the bus driver said flatly. Her lips pursed as if she had bitten into something sour.

“I...I forgot my-”

The driver held up an impatient hand to cut her off. “Then you can’t ride the streetcar. Please get off. You’re making everyone late.”

Tekuro went cold with terror at the very anticipation of walking back home to face her mother. Her throat clenched and tears began to well up, but she refused to cry. That was what children did and she was no longer a child.

The driver opened her mouth to admonish her unwanted passenger but was interrupted by a soft voice from back of the car. “Excuse me.”

An old man made his way to the driver, leaning heavily on an obsidian cane with an ivory handle carved with an intricate figure of a lion’s head. He had a wrinkled face with dark, sunken eyes. Atop his bald head were only wisps of white strands that appeared so delicate they might blow away before the gentlest breeze. Reaching into the front pocket of his trousers with his free hand, he extracted a single note and handed it to the driver. “I will pay for the girl.”

The driver gave took the money and handed him back a ticket with his change. The old man handed the ticket to Tekuro without tearing his gaze from the driver. “One day you may find yourself in need like this little girl here. I hope you do not encounter someone as unforgiving as yourself.” His reprimand was gentle, yet the young woman seemed to wilt beneath the wisdom of his words. She looked ashamed as she resumed her work and put the streetcar back into motion.

“Thank you so very much, sir,” Tekuro gushed. She felt her face grow hot with relief and embarrassment.

The man smiled, revealing rows of uneven teeth yellowed by the many years. “The pleasure is mine. Come sit down. It is very hot today...very hot today.”

Tekuro followed the man to the first unoccupied seats near the front of the car. They passed a group of young soldiers standing near the front in their olive uniforms. The soldiers whispered amongst each other, their responses came out in short, clipped bursts.

Taking a seat next to the man who had rescued her, Tekuro felt suddenly at ease in his kind and calming presence.

“What is your name?” he asked in a hushed tone, leaning in as if he was going to tell her a secret. A strong, but not unpleasant, smell of tobacco could be detected. The scent reminded Tekuro of her absent father. He would smoke his pipe by the window every evening after dinner after mother had put her to bed. It was a comforting aroma. It gave off a quiet strength. Tekuro could remember countless nights when she would inhale the scent of her father’s pipe she fell asleep.

“Tekuro.”

“Pleasure to meet you, Tekuro. I am Morio. On your way to school?”

“Yes. It is my first time going to school on my own,” she confessed. Her mother had warned her about talking to strangers, but Morio’s friendly face put her at ease.

“Very good.” Morio nodded with approval. “What is your favorite subject hmm?”

Tekuro thought a moment before answering with a strong nod: “History.”

“Ah,” Morio’s eyes went wide. “That is *very* good. History is important. We must never forget our past. Historians keep it alive so that those of us in the present can learn from it.”

“I like the stories of the great emperors. It’s fun to imagine what life must have been like then.”

Morio cocked his head and leaned in again. “Indeed. History was my favorite subject too.”

Tekuro smiled. “Really?”

“Oh, yes. I would imagine myself a great figure from history. Someone who would change the world with his will alone.”

The streetcar came to its next stop with another shudder. The soldiers got off and a middle-aged woman with a tired face with a small boy trailing after her with one hand clutching her clothes took their place.

“May I ask where you are going?” Tekuro asked.

“I am on my way to visit my granddaughter at the hospital. She had surgery yesterday.”

“Is she alright?”

“Oh, yes, thank you,” Morio smiled, his voice heavy with genuine gratitude. “The doctors these days work wonders. She was in so much pain, but that is all gone now. The wonders they work.” Morio shook his head in disbelief. “No child should be in such pain.”

The bus came to a stop in front of a row of dilapidated buildings. The majority of the passengers got out. Only Tekuro, Morio and the middle-aged woman with the small child were left.

“Your mother must be very proud,” Morio mused.

“She worries a lot. I want to show her that I am big enough to look after myself and help her now that father is gone.”

A sad expression lined Morio’s face. He shook his head knowingly. They sat together in silence for another stop. It was not uncomfortable. Tekuro could almost imagine she was with her father again. She wondered when he would come back home. Mother did not like to talk about it. She always said he would come back when he was back.

“I believe this is your stop,” Morio announced, extending a finger and pointing to the groups of other students walking along the street.

Tekuro pressed her forehead to the glass. This was indeed her stop. She had made it. The task, so vast and daunting before, now seemed trivial. As she took to her feet, Tekuro wondered if any of her concern had been justified.

“Have a good day at school, Tekuro,” Morio said, placing his cane between his legs and resting both spotted hands atop the lion’s head.

“Goodbye, Morio.” Tekuro realized that her journey would not have been possible if it had not been for this kind man. It was more than just the ticket. “Thank you...for everything.”

“You are very welcome. Thank you for passing the time with an old man.”

Tekuro headed for the exit stopping only a moment to turn back and wave. Morio returned it with another smile.

Once she was back on the street, Tekuro began the short trek in the direction of school. The streetcar passed her with a hum and she thought she could see a few white wisps of Morio’s hair for a moment before it passed out of sight. She walked in silence, navigating through the people passing by along the sidewalk. Her mind began to wander. Morio was right; mother would be so proud of her. Perhaps she would smile and laugh again like she used to before father went away.

Tekuro imagined a happy reunion as she walked along the sidewalk. She lifted her head upward as her imagination took hold. She spied a lone plane hovering through the endless blue. Four thin trails of white were left in its wake as it cut across the cloudless summer sky.

~ Alex Brondarbit



"Lessons Learnt from a Trip to Rural ... Tree #3" ~ Alexandra Vainshtein



"Top of the Mountain" ~ Doina Ciobanu

NATURALISTS

We walked the trail
Of a dried up creek,
Searching for the mouth
Or the source.

Shaded by elms and ash trees
Somehow untouched by bug or disease,
We should feel blessed,
But instead we continue the hunt,

Calling out the names
Of the various trees and shrubs,
The occasional animal led
To this spot by the same

Lapse of instinct.

~ Jon Abbott



"Leaves" ~ Doina Ciobanu

SUMMERTIME LOVE

Everybody's looking
For a summertime love,
That boy or girl
They can drown
With in a slow rush
Of kettle lakes,
Gallo red, fingertips
Buried beneath waistbands
Or else glued
To the radio dial
Looking for the hit
Song of the season,
Echoey guitars
And bleached out
Harmony the closest
Language for how
They feel about
Each other.

~ Jon Abbott



"Marilyn" ~ Rubia Van Roodselaar

BUCKET LIST SOLILOQUY

- Climb Mount Everest at eighty.
- Become President by forty.
- Win a Nobel Peace prize next year.

“Are you joking?”

- Win the lottery four times in a row.
- Solve the Grand Unifying Theory.
- Achieve world peace.

“Is that even doable?”

- Genetically engineer the first chimera dragon.
- Shake hands with the Loch Ness Monster
- Find a portal to Narnia.

“Ok, Now ya just screw’n with me.”

“What? My bucket list!”

“Simple”

Eat, breathe and crap.
Live

Especially eating, that’s the fun one.
Bacon, eggs, dried salty fish with tomato, and garlic-fried-rice; breakfast.
Two item curry combo on top of pilau rice and garlic naan; lunch.
Medium-rare one inch thick cut of heaven with all the fixings, dinner.
Dessert. Anytime.
Little happy snacks in between.

O, and someone to eat with.
Tell jokes to, tell stories, share the day.

Someone to eat with
Is the difference between eating and dining.
Someone to eat with,
That makes the difference.

~ *Ronillo Espiritu Lacson*

HOW MEN SAY I LOVE YOU

I told you, *I love you*.

With those chocolate covered moments,

I apologize for that “If you don’t know, then I won’t tell you.”
Of, “If you have to ask, then you’ll never understand.” times;
Which are always my fault.

those red roses for ‘just because’,

I missed that anniversary date,
Of some kind. One of many, my beloved
Guilt with more to come.

with that cute teddy,

Since my stare made you angry,
But she was standing where I was looking.
And no she’s not prettier than you.

those romantic getaways,

When I ran fast, to back track with my foot in my mouth;
Because you’re not turning into your mother,
And you don’t look fat in that dress.

with shimmering golden jewels,

That you ripped out of me and crushed,
Because she means nothing to me,
And I swear I never touched her.

and that wedding ring.

That bent me over with three months’ salary,
Broken down to one knee, I say those magic words.

“You win, I surrender.”

I said I love you.

With every sorry
Moment I apologized,
If I didn't care. I wouldn't have bothered.

~ Ronillo Espiritu Lacson



"Alluring" ~ LaQuincey Reed

The Ruler was invented
By the measurement of some kingly appendage.
The foot was discovered on a warm Summer day,
But the inch was blamed on the cold Winter night.
So much is dependent on that small momentous event.

Names were inspired in significance of it.
Many kings of Richards and Vast dynasties of Dongs,
To The common Wang and the humble Willy.
Even today we try to keep up with our Johnson.
Our identity, lies in our Hancock.

Each accomplishments was measured by its length.
How far erections of glass and metal penetrate the sky.
The distance covered by hot-rods and splurging rockets.
Radius of the atomic explosion and its mushroom tip cloud.
The pride of all men, lies in these accomplishments.

All of it is never enough
Because it's full of logical phallic-cies
That all started with the discovery
Of one limp
Ego.

~ Ronillo Espiritu Lacson



"Fire Mask" ~ Diego Marcial Rios

POSTMODERN GOLF COURSE

stone markers have the field

rough-edged polished fronts
like Japanese tombstones
on each hole

~ *Christopher Mulrooney*

HUNTERS AND THE HUNTED

“Yes,” Garrett said. “Yes,” and sighting through the scope, he could see the lion as clearly as though he were beside him, facing him now, head low, dark furry mane framing its large face. Its front paws were in the mud, his huge, black, triangular nose just above the water, and water was dripping from the whiskers of its chin.

This is perfect, Garrett thought.

He steadied himself, placed the crosshairs in the tall crown of the lion’s shoulder, took a deep breath, and began a long draw on the trigger. The lion stopped, lifted his mighty head, and looked up at him, straight into the sights with his ears widespread.

“Yeah, look at me,” Garrett whispered. “Look straight into my eyes. This one’s for all the environmentalists... all the assholes in the Sierra Club.” And holding his breath, freezing himself inside, he drew back on the trigger.

Bam! The rifle kicked, the barrel surged skyward, and a flock of birds lifted from the flat-topped acacia trees on the far side of the wash, turning the whole horizon black.

There was a loud smack when the bullet hit and the lion went down quickly, his legs scrambling to keep upright. A loud, bellowing cry came from his throat, and just as quickly as it had dropped, the lion was up again, looked back in a glance up the hillside to where Garrett lay, and then disappeared into the thicket beyond the water.

Garrett ran down the hillside, kicking up a cloud of dust.

“Yahoo! He cried.

He held the rifle tight in his burly right hand and dragged his pack in his left, trying desperately to pull it on to his shoulders. By the time he reached the far side of the water hole he was panting pitifully and his legs were feeling heavy as logs.

There was a good deal of blood where the lion had been, and a trail of it through the mud and into the thicket. Garrett took off his grey safari hat, wiped the sweat from his forehead, and studied the blood-trail. It was bright red, and the tracks were deep and clean, clean like they had been cut with a knife. With the toe of his boot, he smudged the blood into the mud.

“He ain’t going far,” he said to himself.

He lifted his head and with his eyes he followed the tracks over the muddy rise to where they disappeared into the bush. Even I can do this, he thought, and he followed the blood to the edge of the woods, searching for dark spots in the dry, powdery white earth. He stopped where the trail led into a thick undergrowth. Though he could not see the ground beneath, he

saw bright red drops on the branches and twigs. He ducked low, beneath the acacia trees, and pursued the blood-trail into the brush.

It had all started the night before when they sat around the kerosene lamps drinking *Tusker* and whiskey. Marge Gordon, the woman he had shared a bed with for the last ten months, had mocked him mercilessly. All the fun was made of his inability to cash in of the trophy fee he paid for a lion. He could picture Marge now, her beautiful red hair flowing in the warm breeze, looking redder yet in the kerosene lights, her shorts fitting snugly around her perfect waist, rolling her big blue eyes. "It's plenty of money for a piece of paper," she said, referring to the lion permit. "It will look good framed on your wall." Even Ron Wilson, his long-time friend and hunting companion, and all the porters, were laughing. Thirty-five hundred dollars and no lion!

For Garrett, it was a crushing blow. He had come to Africa to hunt lions. It was a boyhood dream. Now that he had finally reached Africa, three weeks had gone by without a lion. There had been plenty of wilderbeests storming across the savannah, kicking up clouds of dust, and he had he killed a few. And he killed a kudo on the second day out. Since then there was only the one bushpig and the pack of hyenas, that all of them, frustrated with the lack of game, had used for target practice. Nearly three weeks had passed, and on Wednesday, they would leave the Hwange tribal area back to the tarmac at Victoria Falls.

It was funny, all right, Garrett scoffed now as he followed the blood-trail.

All morning he tracked the lion, crawling through thorn bushes and stepping over large boulders. Most of the way the trail was fresh. But by eleven o'clock, the blood had gone stale. Those beautiful, big, bright-red goblets were now dark and dry, soaked up in the parched earth.

But Garrett knew the power of his rifle, a three-hundred magnum Weatherby. It packed 250-grain, full metal jacket bullets, and he had hit the animal cleanly right in the rise of his shoulder.

Can't go far, he thought. Hell, nothing could go far with that in its side. He'll have to slow down sooner or later. Yeah, he's hurting now, and thirsty. Very thirsty. And Garrett pulled a water bottle from his pack and took a long drink from it. He let the water trickle out from the sides of his mouth, down his neck and into his shirt.

By early afternoon the blood-trail came fresh again, and Garrett pushed himself hard, hard with his legs feeling numb beneath him, hard with the pack-straps cutting deep into his shoulders. Long before he came out into the clearing and saw the wounded lion, he had rehearsed it all in his head – pulling the rifle up to his shoulder, sighting down the length of the barrel, beading in on the large muscle at the top of the shoulder. He knew he had to

concentrate and be sure this time. Slowly, calmly, he thought. The lion was wounded and could charge at anytime. Have to be very sure of your shot.

He stopped in the clearing and saw the lion standing not more than thirty feet away. It was without cover and with blood streaming from its shoulder. The size of it was impressive, at least five-hundred pounds, with wonderful markings, and a big crowning mane that was dark, almost black. And it was panting now, and weak, and there was foam and saliva was dripping from its mouth.

Garrett wheeled the rifle to his shoulder, fixed a bead on the lion, and drew back the trigger. The rifle kicked and a white cloud of dirt puffed up in the embankment over the lion's shoulder.

"Shit!" Garrett shouted.

Then they were both running, the lion into the brush, Garrett in hot pursuit, running hard, his stride long, his muscular legs stretching, then stumbling, up again and following the fleeing animal. He stripped the pack off his back and let it drop behind him. He leaped over bushes and saw the long, brown, sleek flank of the lion streak ahead, darting behind some green brush. He followed the noise of crashing thicket and saw the lion again, its hind quarters flashing before him, then vanishing in the undergrowth.

He could taste it now, and it tasted good. Each time he caught a glimpse of the lion, the lion was closer and the taste was better. You're mine, he thought. You are all mine. And he thought of all the conservationists, all the bleeding-hearted, save-the-world liberals of this planet, and he smiled broadly. And he thought of Marge Gordon's disdainful laugh, and he smiled even more broadly. This lion is mine!

"You are coming back to California with me!" he shouted out to the lion.

The same thirst Garrett had for killing, the lion had for living. Though his strength was nearly gone, taken by the bullet and the long flight across the rugged countryside, beneath the hot African sun – the same sun he had known for eight years of life and had basked in after a good hunt and a good feeding, the sun which was killing him now – his instincts to survive drove him further.

Now, Garrett running with all his might, exuberantly, waiting for the brief moment when they would come into a clearing and he could raise the rifle to his shoulder again, remembered three weeks without a lion, remembered Marge Gordon mocking him and how they all laughed sitting around the table beneath the glow of the kerosene lamp. And he was flying now, the ground passing quickly beneath him, his strong, sure-footed legs zigzagging wildly through the undergrowth, the brush streaking by on both sides, cutting through his shirt and into his arms.

Suddenly there was no ground left. The blue Zimbabwe sky flashed overhead, and Garrett was tumbling down a ravine in a cloud of dust. A sharp pain bit into his left ankle, and when he came to rest, coughing and choking on the dust, the pain throbbed up into his head and the sky went black. When the sky turned blue again, he found himself lying atop some boulders at the bottom of the ravine looking up at the top edge from where he had fallen. He was holding his ankle tightly in both hands, grimacing in pain.

He clawed his way back up and out of the ravine and walked gingerly through the bush to the edge of the gorge to look down for his rifle. There it lay on a ledge, some thirty feet below him. There was no way down to it, not on a broken ankle. Its history, he thought. *C'est la vie.*

He squinted into the glare of the hot, Zimbabwe sun, which was just a thumbnail above the horizon now. Across the ravine to the north was a table of rolling hills covered with yellow grass and flat-topped acacia trees. Beyond his vision, loping across an open field, the wounded lion headed for the shade of the acacia trees.

“Lucky bastard,” he said aloud.

Immediately he starting thinking about Marge Gordon, how she would have much to talk about now, much to ridicule – thirty-five hundred dollars and no lion! A fifteen-hundred dollar rifle lost in the bush, and plenty of doctor bills. She was always thoughtful in that way, he thought.

And he came so close, he thought. Had him in my hand! Now you have nothing, nothing but a broken ankle. Think of that! A hunter without a rifle, without a pack, a broken ankle, wandering through the African bush! Have to get my pack, he thought. Not going anywhere without my pack.

It was now dusk, and he had limped back several hundred yards to where he had dropped his pack, and he could not find it. The sky to the west was fiery red, fading eastward into deep tones of sapphire and tanzanite blue; his tall muscular frame just a silhouette against it. He gathered wood and lit a fire and propped himself against a large smooth stone. The African sky arched dark above him, shimmering with starlight. He tried to sleep, but could not. Too many haunting thoughts, on how he would explain it all to the group, and if they would even believe him. The fire died down and the air got very cold and his ankle throbbed and was very swollen now. He threw some more branches into the dimming firelight, and he rested his head back against the stone. Now he thought about how he had broken off from the others; how they had found the tracks late in the afternoon; how they had determined it was too late to pursue a hunt; how they had gone long without seeing a lion and were scheduled to leave in two days; how Livingston, their young Zimbabwean guide who was as tall and thin as a young Abe Lincoln, had urged him to stay;

how he walked away nonetheless, alone, with only his pack and his rifle in his hand.

It will be okay, Garrett thought, and he stared coldly into the fire. It'll be just fine tomorrow. Half a day and you'll be back at the water hole. Just half a day. Then it's a flat day's walk to the Camp.

It was morning again, and he searched for his pack for an hour and could not find it.

So now, this is the way it's going to be? he thought. All right then, you'll make it back to the water hole without the pack. Don't really need water. You can do this without water. You've done it before, he thought, and he hobbled awkwardly through the thorn bushes and rocks, heading northeast. He found a sturdy branch from a baobab tree and used it as a crutch. The hot Zimbabwe sun beat down on him mercilessly, growing hotter as it rose higher in the sky. The tsetse flies were out en masse, swarming around his blond head. He no longer had the benefit of his safari hat, gone in the chase, nor his sun block or insect repellent, lost in his pack somewhere in the bush. His rugged, handsome face was now baked red, and the ground he had covered swiftly the day before, passed slowly beneath him now, with great pain.

A mile back, moving slowly through the green underbrush, in equal pain, was the great lion, following the scent of the man-creature which had caused this tremendous wound in his shoulder. He had spent the night, bullet burning deep within him, his strength all but gone, sensing death coming on, and in the morning found new strength when the wind brought to him this despicable scent. He did not know hatred, not as man knows it, but knew the instinctual desire to crush and destroy a menacing creature – one that caused harm to him or his pride or competed for the meat which sustained them. It was his desire to kill, more dominant now than his urgency to live, that gave him strength. Within the lion's weary mind there was but one thought, that which he was born for, the primordial desire to kill, an overwhelming need to lock his powerful jaws upon the man-creature, crush down into his bone, feel his warm blood spurt in his mouth, and cause the cessation of his movement. He was a hunter, the greatest of hunters, and he would hunt as long as he lived and as long as there were animals to hunt, and as long as this man-creature moved. Not for the trophy of it, but because it was part of him, ingrained in his genetic makeup.

He lifted his head and sniffed the warm air. From afar, through the tall elephant grass, the breeze brought to him the scent of the man-creature, within it the distinct trace of an animal, lame or wounded. The lion lifted his head higher, and through the heat shimmer rising from the land, three-quarters of a mile off, he saw Garrett dry-mouthed and throat parched, struggling up a steep grade now. The bullet began burning in his shoulder

again, but his hunger to destroy Garrett made the pain tolerable. He looked upon Garrett now with a predatory eye. He was feeling very weak, breathing hard with his tongue lolling out from his mouth, and the death he had caused many creatures on the savannah was coming over him like a dark shadow now. Still, within, was the insatiable urge to hunt for living meat, and he looked upon Garrett as a creature he wished to hunt and kill. To kill a man, the noblest game of all, was to be his last fury.

From the top of the grade Garrett could see that he had gotten far off course. There were big, puffy white clouds drifting slowly across the blue sky, and below them he could see the hilltop beyond the water hole, at the edge of the savannah – the place he had stood the morning before. But it was a long way off to the southeast, wavering in the midday heat. The rim of the large river gorge ran near him to the west and curved around to the southeast close to the water hole. It was clear of brush, so he hobbled down toward it, awkwardly, shifting his weight to his good leg and bracing each step with the baobab stick.

For some time now, Garrett had been aware of a feeling inside, a sense that he was being followed. It had been eating at him all day, and now as he hobbled along the rim he found himself looking back frequently. When he first saw the lion, he could not believe it. A fleeting figure appeared near the top of the grade and then vanished in the bush. He squinted his eyes through the haze of heat. The figure reemerged. Can't be true, he thought. He stopped and watched it coming down the game trail, swaggering gracefully as only a cat can walk.

Can't be, he thought. Not his lion.

It was still a quarter mile off, but he could see now what looked like dried, red blood running down the length of its shoulder and matted in its furry mane. Then it came out from under a cloud-cover, into sunlight, and Garrett said aloud: "Shit! It is!"

Garrett was overtaken by a great fear and he hobbled double time now, finding strength flowing from a source unknown. After fifteen minutes of hard peddling he looked back and saw that the lion had gained ground on him. His ankle was killing him and he stopped and unlaced the boot straps, hoping to relieve the pressure. Still the pain was intolerable and he was forced to stop frequently.

The next time he saw the lion, it had closed the gap even more. He pushed on, faster, but a spike of pain ran up his leg with each step he took. He managed another fifty yards. Then, finally, he collapsed, fully exhausted, along the edge of the river gorge. His face was covered with sweat and dirt, and he could smell his sweat. The tsetse flies were swarming around his head and biting at the back of his neck. He quickly took off his boot and peeled back the

sock. The ankle, twice its normal size, was black and purple. It made him queasy just looking at it. He quickly wrapped it in strips of cloth torn from the bottom of his shirt and slipped it carefully back in the boot.

By the time he got going again the lion had drawn within a couple hundred yards. The next time he looked back he saw that the lion had drawn within a hundred yards. He moved quicker. Then he heard it thrashing through the thicket behind him.

Garrett was hobbling wildly now, kicking up dust, choking on the dry parched air, frantically oaring the ground with the stick which he held tight in both hands. He tripped, fell to the ground, got up and tripped again. He scrambled to his feet a second time, looked back, and saw the lion coming on him, in full stride.

The lion had metamorphosed into a raging fiend, his eyes bloodshot, mouth foaming, and hair bristling. With long strides, he quickly closed the distance between them and leaped through the air at Garrett. But just as his paws should have crushed down upon him, Garrett slipped down the side of the gorge and tumbled end over end in a huge cloud of gray dust. When Garrett came to, he saw, with more certainly than he wished, the lion scrambling down through the same dust cloud, its forward momentum causing it to slide, and though it tried to brace itself with its front paws, it tumbled past him, snarling viciously, and came to rest some twenty feet below. Through it all, Garrett held tightly to the baobab stick and he used it now to get to his feet and climb, quickly, up the canyon and along a ledge. But he was limited in what direction he could flee. Above him was a sharp-rising cliff, and below the steep river gorge.

The lion, briefly shaken by the fall, was back to his feet and laboring up the slope to where Garrett had just been. Before Garrett could negotiate his way across a slope of talus rock, which would have led him to a higher ledge, the lion cut him off. All he could do now was go higher, straight up the slope, which he did promptly, hopping on his good leg, kicking down rocks, then crawling on all fours. Then he was clambering on his back like a crab, kicking and pushing down rocks and dust on the lion. Then there were no more rocks to climb, and he found himself flush against the wall of the cliff with only the stick in his hand to ward off the snarling lion. His heart was pounding hard now, and his lungs ached with the pain that comes from breathing too hard too long.

The lion, knowing he had Garrett cornered, came up the slope slowly now, his eyes wild, head low to the ground, swaying from side to side. His neck, from head to shoulders, was a mass of dark bristling hair. He grunted uneasily and looked fiercely into Garrett's eyes. Then he raised his head and let out a thunderous, deep-throated roar which echoed far down the canyon.

From deep within, the lion drew upon his primordial strength, the sum of all he was, hunter above all hunters, all the pride and pain he had known, and prepared for the spring.

Garrett looked nervously from side to side, then to the rear, and he saw a black crevice behind him at the base of the cliff. He glanced quickly at the lion, then back at the crevice, and lunged for the crack just as the lion came at him. He fell sideways and tumbled into the shallow cave with his stick dragging behind him.

The crevice was thin and narrow at its entry, and the lion, coming on in a mad forward rush, smashed into the rock and was repelled backward. He reached deep into the cave with his giant paw and tore into the flesh of Garrett's forearm, momentarily snagging it. Garrett jabbed at the lion's face with the stick. But in a quick snap and crunch, the end of the stick vanished, consumed in the lion's powerful jaw. Reaching in and stretching, the lion clawed at Garrett who lay just beyond his reach. Then looking into the cave with his big yellow, dominating eyes, reaching in with his huge forearm, the lion roared.

Darkness came slowly and the lion remained, like a sentinel, at the entrance of the cave, breathing heavily, its forearm extended deep within. Garrett, faint and feverish, with lips dried and parched, did all he could to stay outside the lion's reach at the far end of the cave. His mind drifted in and out of consciousness and he fought from passing out. He wished the lion would just leave. If the lion would just get up and walk away, he thought, he could survive this. But the lion's breath, his huge muzzle just a few feet away, snorting and blowing up dirt in his face, kept his presence known.

And the breath of the lion was horrible. It was the smell of dead and putrefying flesh. Each time Garrett tried to block it out of his mind, there came a deep-throated purring, gurgling sound from down inside the lion's chest with vibrations that shook the earth beneath him, and the cave filled again with the odorous smell.

"Please God! Help me out of this," Garrett whimpered. "I will do whatever is necessary. Make me promise I will never hunt again. I will promise. I will never hunt again!" And he repeated this to himself over and over again.

Even now, in the dark of night, Garrett found himself dozing in and out. When he awakened and realized time had passed, he did not know for how long he'd been awake or had been out. There was consciousness, nothingness, then consciousness again. He could still hear the lion breathing, faintly now, from a place far away. Then he heard the sound of beating drums from a distant tribe, only to realize he had not heard the sound at all.

He began to fade off again when the drums came back. He fought to stay awake, listening intently. The drums were louder each time, beating methodically, throbbing in his head.

Then he knew they were the drums of death, and he fought more fiercely to stay awake. He could not believe this was happening, happening to him. If only he could wake up and find himself back on his cot at the Game Camp, he would summon the porter for a cold beer. He could laugh about it all, and tell everyone about the bad dream that never was.

The taunting sound of the drums stayed in his head, but changed now. It was accompanied by a human-like noise – the sound of voices that were singing, or chanting a song.

It is my name! he thought. Yes, it is my name! Now he could hear it clearly. It was human voices, he knew, singing him a song: “*Jack-Gar-rett! Jack-Gar-rett! Jack-Gar-rett! Jack-Gar-rett! Jack-Gar-rett!*” The sound pounded in his head, causing him to shiver and tremble all over. The more deafening it became, the more he thought it would cause his head to burst. Then, suddenly, it softened, and he recognized it to be the sound of a familiar voice: “Jack! Jack Garrett!”

From down below in the brush near the base of the talus slope, Ron Wilson, Garrett’s long-time friend, hollered out: “Jack! Jack Garrett!”

“Here!” Garrett coughed and strained. “Over here!”

In the dim opaque light of dawn, Garrett could see the lion moving, and the large paw and forearm of the lion which remained out-stretched toward him, withdrew slowly from the cave, the life in it gone. And then there was a hand, a human hand, reaching in for him, and he grabbed it and held tight to it and let it pull him from the cave.

It was the third morning, and they all gathered around now, marveling at the greatness of the huge beast. Livingstone stood, rifle strapped to his lean shoulder, watching as one of the gun-bearers ran a metal tape down the length of the lion. Ron Wilson, his safari hat resting back on his head exposing his white forehead and sandy brown hair, watched with one foot propped up on a rock and his arm resting on his knee. There were other gun-bearers, the cook, and many porters who had come in from the Land Rovers, parked a quarter mile away. They were all standing around and looking at the huge animal, the flies buzzing around its head. Garrett now sat, bandaged up on a piece of canvas, watching the others.

“It is the largest,” Livingstone spoke. “The largest I have seen all year. It is very good, Mr. Jack! You got your lion! And it is a fine lion, Mr. Jack!” He reached down and found the bullet hole with his hand and he stuck his finger into it up to the first knuckle. “A fine shot!” he said.

The lion had clearly taken only the one shot. The blood dried, reddish-brown around the wound, covered the length of the lion's flank and was matted thickly through the breadth of the mane. The porters, who had circled in, had seen Garrett's injuries. They spoke now to one another in Swahili, recounting how Garrett had been pulled from the cave, stick – with large teeth marks in it – still clenched in his hand. They began crooning and shrilling in a high-pitched chant that Garrett had never heard before.

They hoisted Garrett onto their shoulders and began parading him triumphantly while others prepared the lion, strapping him onto long poles for transport back to the Land Rovers. There was one tall, skinny porter who had a long, cylinder-shaped drum strapped to his back. He was very dark and native-looking, bare-legged and bare-chested, except for a colorful cotton cloth he wore gathered over his shoulder like a toga. He took the drum from his back, set it on the ground, and began beating on it sending a message to nearby villages that a great lion had been killed.

From high on the porters' shoulders, Garrett watched him, watched his bare hands methodically striking down against the thin strip of zebra hide that stretched across the drumhead. Meanwhile, two of the porters began sprinkling the dead lion with lye.

"Put me down!" Garrett yelled.

At first they did not hear him, perhaps it was difficult to hear over the sound of the drum, or they heard and ignored him, but he continued to yell, "Put me down!" And, weak as he was, he began to fight with them, slapping one on the head, and all them, surprised at his resistance, put him down quickly.

Garrett hopped, one-legged, back to the lion.

"Leave him," he cried. "Leave him be!"

"It's okay," said Livingston. "They pack him for the trip home. It is a disinfectant."

"Leave him," Garrett said.

"It is okay, really. It is your lion. They are just making preparations."

"Leave him," Garrett insisted.

Livingston stepped up to the lion, dropped to one knee, and lifted the skin on the lion's upper lip to expose the huge white fangs.

"He will make a beautiful trophy, no? he asked.

"Leave him, damn it!"

"All right," Livingston said, and he waved off the porters who were preparing the lion. "*Basi! Stop!*" he told them in Swahili. "*Bakiska. Bakiska.*"

There was silence among the porters. They were all very puzzled and looked at one another, and at Livingston, with curious expressions.

Livingstone spoke to them again in Swahili and they dropped what they were

doing and began gathering up their equipment, bringing it back to the Land Rovers.

A few minutes passed and two porters came with a canvas litter and helped Garrett into it. As they carried him through the tall green grass to the Land Rovers, he looked back at the huge animal, slumped lifelessly upon the boulders, thirty-meters down from cave entrance. He continued to look back, turning his head awkwardly until the lion was out of his vision. Then he closed his eyes and he saw the face of the lion looking in at him from the cave's entrance, the big yellow wild eyes, taunting him, and he could hear it purring and grunting in low, deep-throated bursts, rumbling the whole earth beneath him, and he could smell its breath, the breath of carrion and death. Then the sound of drums came back, just as he had heard them deep in the night, and he felt himself trembling all over again.

He opened his eyes and saw the tall, skinny native who had been beating the drum earlier, walking along side the litter in the tall grass. The drum, idle now, slung low from his shoulder with a thin piece of leather so that it dangled low in the center of his back.

The porters lifted the litter up a steep rise of rocks and carried him through the tall grass toward the Land Rovers. Garrett, still very faint and weak, rested his head back against the canvas. There was a long moment of silence, and while lying there, he became mindful of a noise from far off. He lifted his head and held himself perfectly still. Then he could hear it, coming back across the vast savannah, through the deep river gorge, the sound of beating drums of a distant tribe in celebration.

~ Frank Scozzari



"Sonnet 12945: Pasadena, CA" ~ Bruce Barton

9 WAYS TO LOOK AT A FISH

Even though the water seems still,
He is always moving...
It was the fish.

I was about to dive in,
like a professional.
But then,
I saw the fish.

The fish swam in circles,
Amongst all the others, he stood out the most.
I couldn't take my eyes off him.

His blue scales transformed,
brought me to a place of discomfort.
A place that I hated-
But I couldn't escape from.
For that it was my father who forced me to be there.

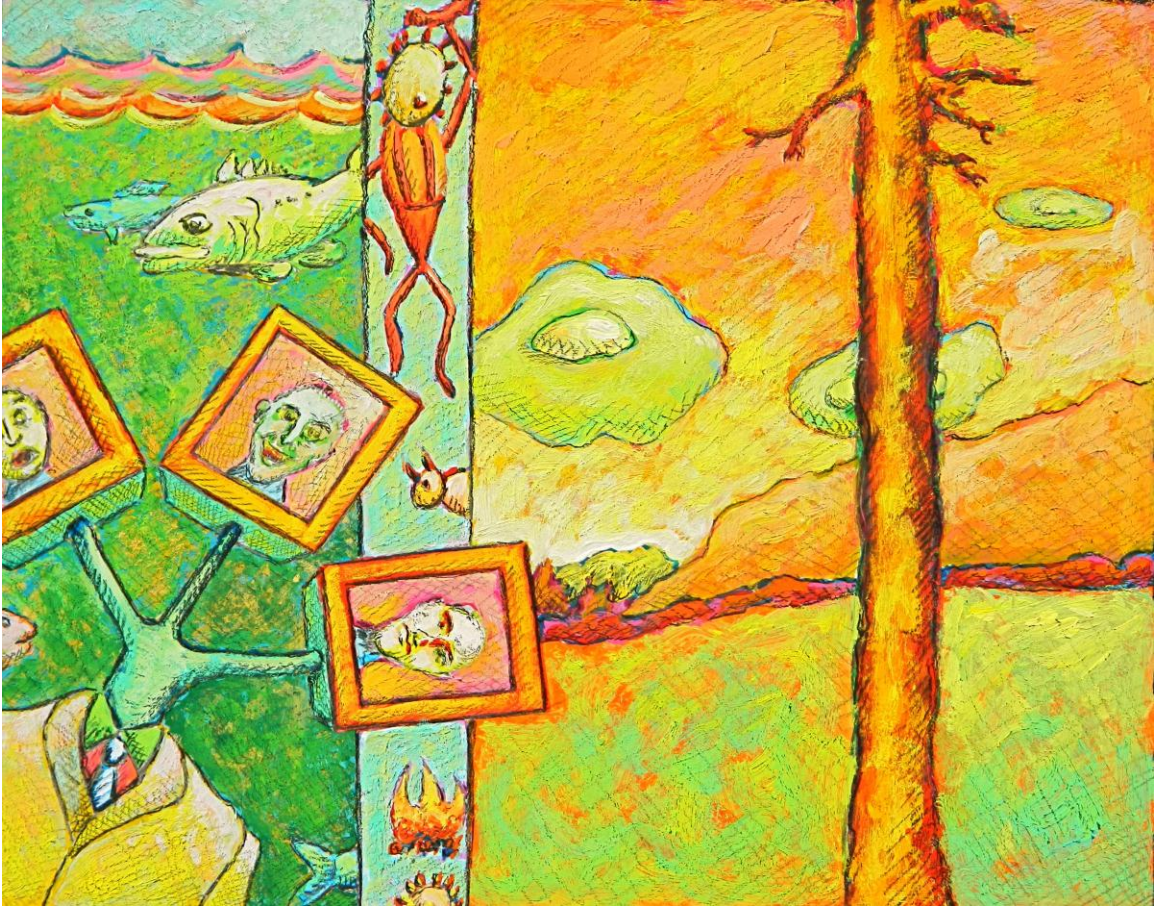
I wanted to look away,
But I couldn't.
The fish was haunting me.

I grabbed him.
Out of the water.
And threw him onto the platform of the boat

His body flapping around,
Grasping for life.
It sounded like an audience clapping,
Like I had done something right.

I had caught my first fish-
Made my father so proud...

~ Casey Moran



"The California Dream" ~ Ronald Walker

“Water is taught by thirst.
The earth, and every common sight,
And the winds shriek through the clouds mad, opposing.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
To the seasonal eternity of death.”

~ *Casey Moran*



"Pollination" ~ Reza Hashemizadeh

EVEN NATURE WAS AWARE

And how cruel for that tree
To be chosen to become a symbol-
But at what cost?
To be chopped down-scalped!
Loosed of its leaves,
Shaken of its flowers-barren,
But to be adorned with more-
A body.
How cruel for that tree
To be skinned and molded
With arms stretched wide,
Sharp edges and a blunt top
Trunk elongated, jagged and frayed-
Splints!
Oh, what a life for that tree
To be carried, a burden
Set and bestowed on that crowned head-
Bowed
That wounded back-
Beaten
Forced to drink deeply-
The blood, and weep quietly-
For Him.

~ *Kathryn Ross*



“Lessons Learnt from a Trip to Rural ... Tree #4” ~ Alexandra Vainshtein

THE AGE OLD CONVERSATION

A man once asked God:

"What is there left in life...after you've married and raised children?"

God answered, "You love your wife."

The man replied, "And then?"

God answered, "You marry off your children and be very proud."

The man replied, " And then?"

God answered, "You enjoy your grandchildren."

The man replied, "And then?"

God answered, "You travel and see the world."

The man replied, "But what then?"

God answered, "You keep seeing the world. There's a lot to take in."

The man replied, "And then?"

God sighed and shook his head. He answered, " You live until your life is over. You live until there is no more living to be done. You live until you couldn't possibly live anymore. You enjoy it, you cherish it, you do good. You just live."

The man replied still, " And then?"

God answered, "And then you die."

The man had no more questions, and he went away.

God shook his head. He said to himself:

"Man is always restless. He will never learn. He will never be happy. And therefore, he will never live."

~ Kathryn Ross



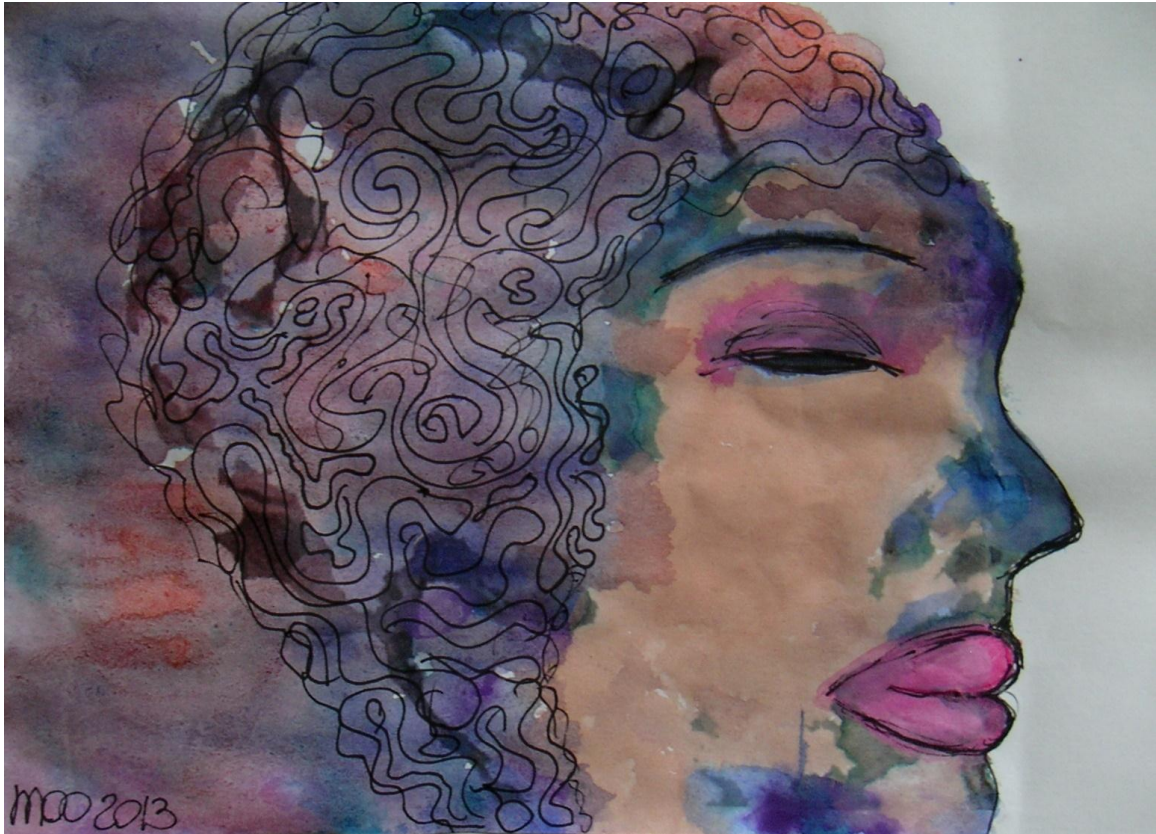
"Lone Traveler" ~ Matthew Felix Sun

SHE SAID SIMPLY

She said simply:
you make me want to feel
that other kind of lost.
not the kind where the thing is
all disoriented
and can't find its way out
like a kitten
in a bag
but rather the kind
where the thing is extinguished
like a cinder collapsed
between finger and thumb.
yes.
you make me want
to feel that other
kind of lost.
Snow fell
and he took

her small woman hand
with its fingers and ridiculous
veins surging blue
and as they reclined
on her grandfather's carpet
the last of the scarred logs
dissolved into ash.

~ Catherine Bailey



"Congenital Abnormalities" ~ MOO | Monika Mori

THE POET'S DEMISE

Nave Callow sat on his small apartment balcony in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with his petite and pretty wife, Isabel Callow. He was smoking a cigar and watching with blasé interest as the smoke circles floated upwards in a heaven-bound trek. They disappeared a moment too soon as their hopeful journey was cut short by the slight breeze of the pleasant mid-afternoon day.

Isabel turned to Nave and sighed quietly. When he did not respond or react, she smiled and placed her hand gently on his wrist. He instinctively looked down to stare at it. Her hand was warm and it reminded him of home. Where that was, he was still unsure.

“Are you hungry? I could make some homemade chocolate chip cookies,” Isabel suggested innocently. Nave shook his head a fraction, but was unsure if Isabel had caught on. She was standing up and striding from the balcony, already preparing herself for some baking. “Are you sure? They are your favorite.” Nave sat there, sucking in the sweet agony of his cigar, and barely paid attention to the *clack* and *pound* of pots and pans being placed carelessly about the kitchen. “Well how about a pie then?” she tried again.

Nave grunted in reply and put out his cigar. He stood up and joined Isabel in the kitchen. “How about you just make some tea?” he said and then smiled, but it did not reach his eyes. Isabel seemed to not have noticed. She took off her apron and pulled the tea kettle from the cabinet below the sink and continued about her business as if she had been planning on making tea all along.

Nave waited until he was sure Isabel was giving all of her attention to the tea kettle before dismissing himself from the kitchen and into the room down the hall that housed their king-size bed. He plopped himself onto the bottom of it and placed his hands between his knees. They squeezed his hands tightly and he felt slightly relieved from the effort. He looked up and his eyes found a picture frame on the table that their television rested on, and a feeling of deep longing coaxed him towards it. He picked it up and noticed the three picture slots within the one frame – two of them were filled with meaningless silly pictures of him and Isabel – the third was supposed to hold a picture of their son...

It took all of Nave's will power not to throw the frame into the trash bin right beside the table. He did, however, set it onto the table facedown and hoped he would never have to look at that agonizing empty space again.

In a span of four years, he and Isabel had not been granted a single blessing and Nave, at this point, had given up hope. There had been a time, not too long ago, when his faith in God had been replenished because Isabel had come home with a tear-stained smile and a rounder belly than usual. Of course, in the middle of a particularly tragic night, the Devil had snatched the child from her womb like a thief steals fruit from a stand. Isabel had no idea what had happened until Nave had turned on the light and found that their sheets were covered in blood. Isabel could not stop crying for weeks. Nave knew it was stupid, but a part of him blamed her for the loss. He felt, in a deeper part of his soul, that she had somehow tempted the Devil to do such a horrible thing to them and he could not help but hold her own baby's death against her. Nave's son was nevermore because of Isabel.

He could hardly look at her even now. Isabel knew – she could tell by his strange, unforgiving coldness that he had blamed the miscarriage on her. But no matter how hard she tried, he remained as unrelenting as ever. Nave had even stopped writing ever since the event, and that bothered Isabel more than his repressed sadness at their situation.

Nave sat back down on the edge of the bed and heard the kettle whistle shrilly from the other room.

"Nave!" Isabel called and he stood up and came back into the kitchen. She was standing in the archway separating the living room from the kitchen, her hands clasped tightly around a grey-clad notebook with loose-leaf papers sticking out of it from every end. His heart pounded when he saw it. "Here," she said breathlessly, and then pushed it into his chest. His hands reached up to take it gingerly from her grasp and they flipped it open before he could recall telling them to do so.

"I found this hidden under the couch." Nave simply stared at the notebook in his hands. "Nave honey, you never write anymore. I miss reading your poems – they were once so beautiful." Nave looked up into her face and the whistle from behind them seemed shriller than ever. "Why don't you write anymore?" she implored, and her eyebrows creased down above her eyes in a concerned manner.

He sighed and turned away from her. "It's complicated, Bell. Nothing happens in my life to give me inspiration," he muttered the last part, and

glanced her way to see her reaction at his words, but she was no longer watching him. She was busying herself in the kitchen again, pouring the tea into two large, glass white mugs. Nave stood there with his notebook full of poems and inspiring words and was not sure whether to put the notebook down or to never let it go again.

Isabel came back into the living room with the two steaming mugs and handed one to Nave. He placed the notebook between his elbow and side, cupped his hands around the mug tenderly and sat down on the couch. Isabel joined him, cleared her throat, and shifted closer to him.

“I was offered a position....in Paris, France.” Nave was about to sip his drink, but paused just as the tip of the mug was nearly to his lips. Isabel rubbed her hands up and down her thighs nervously. “I was going to tell you earlier, but you seemed in such a bad place, I didn’t want to upset you more. Anyway, I was given a position at the Louvre, and I think we should take it. It’s a huge move, I know, and a drastic change as far as culture and lifestyle, but I think we can do it. I can teach you French and I’m sure Paris could be a great place for you to find some more inspiration.”

Nave took a sip from his tea. It burned his throat and scalded his tongue. After a few moments, he nodded. “Alright – when do we have to leave?”

Isabel seemed taken aback by his response, but seized onto his agreement with enthusiastic relief. “In the next few weeks.”

Nave nodded again. “Well we better start packing then.”

“Excuse me?” Nave was standing on a bridge in Paris, France, staring out at the water. The Eiffel Tower was to his right, beautifully crafted, ancient buildings were to his left, his notebook was in front of him and his pen was in his hand. He barely heard the woman ask again, “Excuse me, sir?”

Her voice penetrated his inspirational reverie and he only turned to her out of politeness. His heart dropped into his stomach. She was beautiful – with long, dark brown hair that layered down her back and shoulder in gentle, soft waves and deep blue eyes that seemed to bore into his very being and claim his soul the minute they met his dark brown ones. Her skin was porcelain, like the finest China anyone has ever been lucky enough to own, and her slim, tall frame seemed to scream at him in sensual forms of passionate, inviting voices that only he could hear.

She tapped the back of her wrist with her opposite index finger and Nave could tell that she was struggling when she asked, “Please sir, what is the time?”

He could barely separate his chapped lips to answer. “Two-thirty,” he said swiftly, but he was sure his pounding heart would give him away. His palms began to sweat and he licked his lips.

She scrunched her face up in an amused expression. “But you didn’t even check.”

Nave chuckled lightly and his heart fluttered. He flipped his phone out of his pocket and saw that he had guessed correctly. “I didn’t have to – it is indeed two-thirty.”

“I don’t believe you,” she sniffed, and a smile curved up the side of her face. She stuck her tiny, delicate hand out to him. “My name is Coquet. Are you new to France?” she asked as he clasped her hand and felt a strong desire to never let go.

“New to France? As a matter of fact I am – my...” for reasons unknown to him at the moment, he stopped himself.

“Yes?” she inquired, and her blue eyes sparkled innocently as she stared into his face.

“My inspiration had been dying out in America and I thought – what better place to write than Paris!”

Coquet laughed and Nave thought he had never heard such a beautiful sound in his entire life. “Well you thought correct. Paris is full of inspiration and wonder – it is quite magnifique! So – you write?”

Nave nodded and licked his lips yet again, worried that Coquet would notice their cracked dryness. He was sure his nervousness at the situation was not helping in the slightest.

Coquet smiled and slipped her arm around his, curling her fingers around his upper arm and dragging him forward. “Come – walk with me. I’d like to hear more.”

Nave never told Isabel about Coquet. Nor was he ever going to tell Isabel about her. The thing was – he had felt quite content with Coquet,

maybe even the happiest he has been in a while. Isabel noticed his sudden perkiness, and assumed it was Paris growing on him.

Nave's poetic inspiration had come back ten-fold ever since he had met Coquet. It was like she aided his inner soul and guided him on the path towards poetic redemption. She, alas, was also unaware of his wife – he was afraid of jeopardizing his newfound hope, so he was forced to carry the burden of a double-edged secret that could, at the slightest wrong turn, slice those involved at any given moment.

Isabel worked strange hours at the Louvre and therefore could not question when and where Nave was all day. She, herself, was off doing her own things until late at night, when Nave was usually home, pretending he had had a boring day of watching French sitcoms, cleaning the house, or writing poems out on the Eiffel Tower's lawn. Usually his day consisted of the latter, with an extra piece of sugar added on the side. And this sugar was delightfully tasteful indeed.

Coquet was a charmer, and Nave quivered from his toes to the very top of his spine at the mere thought of her. His passionate desire for her seemed to grow every time he saw her and when he heard her speak, laugh or simply wave her hand, it sent him into a lascivious tizzy and he could not help but hope for many more days spent in her presence.

One night, after Nave had carefully settled himself onto the couch with his notebook and pen, Isabel came home all in a fluster.

"I'm so sorry Nave – I know I leave you here all alone for more than half of the day, but tomorrow I have to work late. The museum needs me to trace a piece that won't be coming in from overseas until three in the morning and I have to monitor its progress! It's so stupid, but I can't argue with them."

"Oh don't worry about it dear, I'm fine by myself. I can write better poems when I am alone anyhow. You just go to work and don't worry about me, alright? When will you be back?" he asked, and thoughts that might as well have been planted into his head by the Devil himself entered his mind and pulsed through his veins.

"Probably not until four or five in the morning," she said, and her voice contained hints of guilt and apology.

Nave, on the other hand, tried very hard to hide his vivacious glee when he said, "Don't worry Bell, I'll make do."

Nave opened the front door the next night as quietly as he could and ushered Coquet inside. She giggled when he shut the door and led her to the bedroom.

They entered the dark chamber, all smiles and pounding hearts, and Nave gently pushed Coquet onto the bed. She smiled a genuine, sweet smile and closed her eyes as Nave's shadow blanketed her being and entrapped her soul.

Nave opened his eyes the next morning and found that the spot next to him was empty. He jumped up and threw the sheets off the bed, hoping Coquet was simply bundled up underneath. His heart dropped into his stomach, but this time it was followed by a sickening punch-in-the-gut feeling. She was gone.

"Coquet!" he called.

"Nave?" he heard a reply and nearly burst from the room, but stopped himself when his wife peered her face around the doorframe. "Who's Coquet?" she asked loudly.

Nave's heart pounded louder than it should have and he could hardly look into Isabel's face. "How...how was work last night?" he asked as casually as he could.

"Nave...Who's Coquet? Why did you just call her name?" Isabel pressed, and her look of contentment was drooping much too quickly. Dawning comprehension seemed to hit her when Nave could come up with no worthy response. "Nave! Was there a woman here last night?" she whispered, and her lip trembled.

"Of course not..."

"Don't lie to me! The least you can do is stay silent, but lie?" she shouted.

"Isabel dear..."

"Don't call me dear! There was a woman here last night, wasn't there? *Wasn't there?*"

Nave could only sigh and cover his face with his hands. Isabel stomped from the room a second later. When Nave dared to look up, his eyes fell on the bedside table. That stupid picture frame that haunted him so was there,

only it was turned upside down, so that it was resting on its face like the way Nave liked it, and underneath it was a little slip of paper. Nave curiously uprighted the picture frame and took the piece of paper from its hiding place beneath it. He opened it up and saw, with a jolt to his heart, that it was a note from Coquet. It read:

My dearest Nave,

I am sorry that it had to be this way. It was just all becoming too much and then I saw your pictures and the woman in them...no, I cannot do that to her.

My initial goal was to simply hurt you, but seeing that I have grown too fond of you in ways I haven't felt in a while, I knew it was time to leave. I am sorry Nave, you are truly a remarkable man.

With love,

Coquet

The words seemed to burn a hole into Nave's chest as he read and soon he could hardly read them at all, his hands were shaking so much. Suddenly Isabel was in the bedroom again, glaring at Nave with the utmost hatred in her eyes.

"I did so much for you Nave – I loved you – *I loved you!*" Isabel yelled, and her eyes fell to the letter in his hand. She snatched it away from him and read it through quickly. Her eyes seemed to bounce back and forth faster the farther down the page they roved, taking in the ink words that were more like blades. Isabel scoffed and threw the paper back at him.

"You are despicable," she hissed, but Nave noticed that her sudden hatred was ebbing, and the only emotion that was left in her eyes was hurt. "Go – leave." When Nave did not move, she screamed, "LEAVE!"

He did not need telling twice. He did not even pack his clothes – he would not need them where he was going. All he grabbed was his notebook and pen.

Once he was safely out of the house, the pain from the ink blades came crashing down on him, as if a wave of his own blood. He stood there, in the street, and felt like the whole world was swimming in his blood, ready to engulf him at any given moment and drown him completely. The secret was out – and not only that, his heart was torn and Coquet was gone. But where?

And why? Her letter had not really explained enough. It had not explained how she could have taken his burning passion and love and crushed it like a simple grape. It had not explained how she had laughed and enjoyed his company just as much as he hers, and then left at a second's notice. It had not explained how she had whispered that she would run away with him just last night and then left without a trace...

She had not mentioned that she would be running away alone. She had been his newfound happiness, his hope, his joy...and now Nave felt like he could never achieve any of that again. Like his never-to-be son, Coquet was gone forever.

Succumbing to his despair, he threw himself into a street corner, whipped out his notebook and pen, and began to write feverishly. As he approached his final lines, he knew that this poem was going to be the last one he would ever write.

With shaking fingers, he titled it: *The Poet's Demise*, and a single tear slid down his cheek and splashed onto the paper. It smeared the word *Coquet*. Nave, with trembling lips, brought his face down to the paper and kissed her beautiful, smeared name. He licked his lips and tasted the salt of his own tear.

Seeing no reason to delay, he stood up and began to walk. He walked for minutes, hours, and miles, until he came to the same bridge where he had met the lovely Coquet. He pressed himself against the railing of the bridge and looked out on the water. The pressure of the bloody world was suffocating him and he knew it was now or never. He lifted himself onto the railing. With shaking knees, he raised himself up to his tallest height, lifted his arms to the skies, and closed his eyes. A slight breeze caressed his face and played with his hair. A few people gasped behind him. Then, he took one last, rattling breath, and dropped himself from the ledge. He let go of Coquet's poem as he fell, and the breeze picked it up and carried it away.

Coquet stood on the bridge that led to the Eiffel Tower and looked out upon the water. A breeze tickled her cheeks and swirled her hair.

"Mama! Mama!" a small boy called and Coquet spun towards the voice with a bright smile on her face.

“Navè! Qu’est-ce que c’est?” Coquet asked. The boy ran at her and jumped into her arms. He was holding a piece of yellowed and beaten-up piece of paper. She met his brilliant blue eyes with ones of her own and her heart constricted with pure happiness.

“It has my name. Voyez-vous? Navè!” She took the paper with a confused expression on her face and set him down. “It has yours too!” he said happily, and then bounded away to scare a flock of pigeons. Coquet looked over at her son briefly before turning her attention to the paper in her hand. She read it through quickly. Three more reads later, she was crouching on the ground and trembling slightly. It was a poem...a poem from Nave.

She had sent him a postcard after she had found out – about little Navè. It was short and simple, all it had said was, “I’m pregnant with child – I will name him after you”. She wondered, almost hoped, that he would have seen it and come after her to help her care for little Navè. But how could she have expected that from Nave Callow? She had pierced him beyond relief, and she knew it too. It had been her initial plan, after all, for she had vowed to avenge her broken heart from many years ago. But something had been different with Mr. Callow, and with his poem in her hand, she, for once in her life, felt the deep pangs of amorous regret.

~ Krista Martino



"Stringed White Dresses – An Installation" ~ Matthew Felix Sun

As the midnight rain
washes away the heat of the day
and mixes with salt on my cheeks,
I think about the nights of lonely silence
shared in each others' arms.

If I broke through the walls
you erect in the daylight,
maybe that embrace would be truer,
this kiss would be deeper,
and passion would flow
out of mutual adoration
and not obligation.

But there is no comfort,
because every time I see you
the words get caught in my throat –
an unmarked pill too large to dry-swallow:
one tiny thing that could save or devastate
if I only knew what it was made of -
For if you desire to kiss, to speak,
if you would let me see you,
one moment of staring into your eyes
is all I need to see through the haze,
to sober my mind,
to know if you will be the one to bring relief
or another toxin to my being.

Instead, my spirit screams while my body relents,
my eyes gaze into the night instead of your soul,
and my hand clutches the pill
until it dissolves in the warmth of my skin.

~ Sarah Bryski



"Null" ~ Melina Ahmadzadeh

LETTERS

Monday

I know you'll never read these.
That's okay, I can just pretend.
I miss you.
I assume you know that.
I think you miss me too.
At least that's what you used to say.

It's still cold here.
You would like it.
The wind has died down
The rain comes, a sweet release
Washing away our wrongs
Filling the air with an heavenly scent of clean

I wish it could wash away my sadness
Like it always used to
But that was only when you were here
Wasn't it?

The insects are all sleeping it seems
I can hear them
Ticking, chirping, rustling
Only when the world is quiet

Tuesday

Why is it I can never spell ~~February~~ February?
Whoever invented the English language must have had a sick sense of humor...
You have to wonder sometimes...

Today was interesting though
We learned about syllogisms in class this morning
And how the whole world is just one big syllogistic chain
Every move you make
Every word you say
Changing what you do
And others do

Tomorrow.

It made me wonder what I had already done
To change a life
I don't think you can't help changing lives
It's not voluntary
It just happens
Would these words change your mind?
I wish they could
However
I know that they would only hurt you more
I know it was your choice
I wish I wasn't so selfish
As to want to send these to you
I can't help it
You were my best friend
Still are, really.

Wednesday

If a picture is worth a thousand words
then what are a thousand words worth?
They must count for something

I miss how we used to say everything
And nothing
Simultaneously

I miss how you always knew exactly what I was trying to say
Without even having to say it

I miss how we could express our philosophies
No matter how ridiculous it got.
Our metaphors blurring into insanity
At least from another's point of view

I miss talking.

Thursday

Why did you have to leave?
The kind of things that only happen to someone else it seems
But we are all someone else
To someone else

Remember July?
It was only 3 years ago...

1 day was all it took
To begin
Begin something new, something bizarre
Unbelievable
But still amazing, almost... perfect
5 years is all it takes
Until I get to see you
But how do you talk
Talk, with a 1,825 day gap between your ears
127 mile long walk from where you've been
But my mind has traveled there and back and there and back again
Body and soul and heart and mind

I would do whatever it takes.

Friday

Everyone says it's healthy to keep a journal
Write out your life
As if you could summarize it all with just words
A paragraph or two
To sum up 24 hours of experiences
Almost 1440 minutes of thought
I guess it's better than nothing

Oh, but it was so funny today
I thought of you
I was in the kitchen
At the table
And I was just able to grab a nearby napkin
Before I sneezed

But I miscalculated,
And I ending up smacking my head on the lip of the table
With all of the momentum a sneeze can muster
I was laughing so hard
I couldn't get up
Or tell my parents what had happened when they investigated the source of the
sound of bone hitting wood
Did I forget to tell you what your laugh has meant to me?
I can tell you
That I remember people mostly
By the sound their laugh makes
I'm no good with faces
And my memory fades
But my mind races back
When I hear the tenor of a laugh.
But your laugh has always been my favorite.

Saturday

I wonder what you are doing today
Seems odd that it would take me almost a week to ask you a question
But I guess you aren't really there
Just losing my mind
Bit by bit
Remember the beach that one day?
Our pathetic game of Frisbee
Makes me laugh even now just thinking about it
As we were finishing up
A fateful combination of wind and our lack of hand-eye coordination
Sent our Frisbee flying into the water
Only to be eaten up by the receding tide
It seems the ocean gives good things
Like seashells and wet, sandy toes
And it sends bad things
Like clingy seaweed and stinging jellyfish
The ocean sent us back a Frisbee that day
A reward for our patience
Or just inevitable?
Sometimes life can be
As dependable as the moon.

Sunday

You called me
After all this time
Your usual verbal stumbling
A simple song to sing
I'd like to say thank you
Even though that conversation lasted for only a moment in time
It means a lot
I realize your sacrifice
I realize your pain
The pain of what it used to be
Because like everything else
That feeling is mutual
But together...
We can keep our friendship alive
5 years
No problem
Not with a friend like you

~ Taylor Olson



"Knots (Artist Book)" ~ Joanna Kidd

COME HERE, MY LITTLE PRETTY

In the twixt and tween of the lines we delicately construct
Are the drops of inspiration that fall passionately onto the page
Dancing lively letters running and hopping, we selfishly abduct
They pull us and we pull them from their birth in love, hate, and rage

Like little children playing they come out and circle round in air
We pluck the ones splashed with vibrant hues, tinkling the harp
We try to dress them with new designer looks, golden spiked hair
They become our paintbrush, our psyche, our tunnel under tarp

We let them speak for us, like wind talkers or fortune teller
With scented smoke and eight sided mirror, visions appear
They carry magic wands that do funny tricks, sold by carny seller
Revealing to heat seeking purveyor only what it is they wish to hear

These stellar steam engines carry our coal above, diamonds below
Covering us in waterfalls when we are too parched to have a voice
They lift us and give us shimmering warmth and the beauty of Donatello
They sometimes leave a mystery in their persuasion and a sigh of rejoice

These little beauties, how we employ them, for we are all wordsmiths
Transporting our sentiments to the world by way of whispers and shouts
They persuade our lovers, destroy our enemies, resolve our conflicts
Like the "Emperor's New Clothes," naked, until we let them come out

For me, just the picture of Jane Austen, with quill pen, writing at her hearth
Gives me pause to wonder deliciously, what made her think those thoughts
What candle burning brightly at midnight watched her with jealous heart?
They lay in wait, these moonlight walkers, just anticipating to be caught

~ Jan Niebrzydowski



~ Lauralee Sikorski

WITH LOVE, FROM WEI LING, 1991

She stands by the desk. The classroom empties,
Waiting for more future to fill it again.

A minute is plenty of time to jump start the universe

“Can I ask you a question?”

Quiet, but not shy,
Introverted, but not withdrawn,
Wei Ling, sixteen,
Thinner than the “I” in China where she is from.
Wei Ling eyes her teacher, the bearded man
Behind whom the blackboard
Is backdrop for a teaching thespian’s antic Showtime.

But now he is calm.
He answers, “Yes.”

The man will answer because he is a teacher and he knows she has come to learn.

Wei Ling’s mirror eyes hold the rest of her in place.
They are the center of the hurricane around which her limbs swim in the tangle called
adolescence.
She is a genius.
Her eyes and her pen say so.

He looks at her and sees himself once upon a time.

Her question: “Is there something wrong with a person who likes being alone most of
the time?”

His answer: “No, it just means she likes being alone.”

Her cheek bones rise up to her eyes making room for a world-changing smile.

The minute is up and destiny has turned on the radio.

A year later: graduation and a frame full of painted flowers signed,

“To Mr. Izzo, with love, from Wei Ling, 1991.”

~ *David Izzo*



~ Cynthia Milionis

FREQUENCY

We learned to play the violin together,
The two of us exploring shrill, off-key new territory -
Rosin, bow, case, cloth.

Our professor explained harmonics and tuning,
And why when a string is played just right
The neighboring string hums along with it
(I don't remember anymore -
Something about the wavelength of the sound?)

Duets of Twinkle Twinkle and Ode to Joy
Shrieked sharply from our instruments
And shuddered down my spine.

You are not Joshua Bell,
And we are not destined for a concert hall,
But when you kissed me
Your fingers left rosin dust on my neck,
And I knew that we were two strings of a violin
Singing to the same frequency.

~ Abigail Inman



"Dreaming of Music" ~ Nina Castro



~ Zeng Yuan Yuan

CHILDHOOD

When I was a child
my life was like those big rubber balls that are for sale at a Target or a Wal-Mart –
the kind that are kept behind giant rubber strings that are anywhere between a
dollar and five bucks.
They usually have some sort of bright, colorful swirly pattern on them,
similar to a giant marble, only bouncy.
That was my world, and you held it in your hand.
We sometimes tossed it back and forth when I was very young;
you sometimes rolled it to me too.
One day, you picked it up and you threw it as far as you could and turned your back
on me.
It took me years to find that ball again.
When I did finally find the ball,
I didn't want to play with it;
I had given up on childish things by then.

~ Amanda Riggle



"Converge" ~ Olivia Parkes

BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID BREAK INTO THE ZOO

You look up at your grandfather. He is tall. His glasses sparkle.

He speaks to you both, but his eyes fall more to you. After all, you are the older one. You are six.

His hands on your shoulders are heavy and warm. They crinkle the fuchsia polyester of your coat.

He flashes his former-basketball-star grin. "See, you're just like Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Now, say a prayer, just keep walking, and for God's sake, don't look back."

You take your cousin's hand, squeeze it, and smile. You are Granddad's little criminals; you want to do well.

He stands at the booth beneath the sculpted metal lion. Pays the lady in the green shirt One Adult Fee.

You and your cousin stride past, palms sweating. You turn and calmly ask him if he wants a juice box, trying to perfect the act of nonchalance. When he shakes his head you pray that God will help you break into the zoo.

You swear you can feel the lady's eyes upon you, but you are Butch Cassidy and you do not look back. You head straight for the meeting point, just like Granddad said.

You always get gold stars in school for following directions.

When he finally catches up with you, he ruffles your hair. "No shame in that, kids. With prices like that, they could line every crapper with gold leaf and diamonds."

He swings the Igloo cooler and whistles tunes from *Show Boat*, scratching his chapped elbow through a raggedy plaid hole. You visit the llamas, the cougars, and the snakes. You placate you cousin's fussing with cold grape juice through a straw.

At last you arrive at the *pièce de résistance*, the hippopotami in their trenches of thick slime. Your grandfather sets down the blue and white cooler, glances over each shoulder, and opens it up.

Together, laughing gleefully, you toss in the softening fragments of last week's jack-o-lanterns to the gray beasts' waiting jaws.

They gnash the golden strings of meat and vivid, crunchy shells.
You are full of adoration and old-fashioned Catholic guilt.

Drizzle begins to tickle the pavement and you pull your hood up over your ears.
You pray for the earthworms. Pray straight to Saint Francis.
Your mother says that earthworms always wash up in the rain.

Granddad shuts his sapphire eyes and opens his face to the shower. He slowly
spreads his enormous arms like an albatross prepping for flight. The holes in his
plaid shirt flutter like pennants.

He stands, a defiant and mute crucifix. Then,

“Children, sometimes the Lord gives us rain. But I’ll be damned if we leave
before we see the gorillas.”

~ Catherine Bailey

THE CONTEST

“Daddy, please! No!”

My father takes the cat by the scruff of its neck and marches toward the door in black, heavy boots. The rubber soles squeak on the dingy linoleum with its patches of filth that have hardened to gray. The hall has not been swept in years.

“Damn cat needs to learn to fend for itself,” my father growls. The syllables rumble from beneath his thick beard like scratchy grits of wet cement. “You’re turning the damn thing into a pussy little housecat.”

I am seven. I rush to my father and paw the air frantically, but he holds the cat high and out of my reach. My arms in their red sleeves flail with effort like two corn snakes straining to fly. My father wrenches open the pine green door and chucks the tabby out, where, I am relieved to see, she lands on all fours. She shakes herself thoroughly, looking violated, perplexed. She gazes at my father with impatience. She expects to be let back in. Snow pours around her. Already, flakes are filling in the little indents left by her paws.

The window panes shudder as the door careens shut and I feel my eyes grow itchy with tears. I fight them back. My hands are fists. “Let her back in,” I cry. I keep my voice steady. I know he will not hear me with an unsteady voice.

“It’s just a little snow.” He snorts, retrieving his coffee—laced with Jim Beam, as it always is these days—from the wobbly kitchen table that used to live on our porch. He rests his hand on the back of one of the white wicker chairs. His whiskers glisten as he lowers the cup from his lips. “What?” he scoffs. “You want your cat to be a pussy?”

He reties the dark blue cord that seals shut his bathrobe and for an instant I spot the bulges of his pale, hairy thighs. The hair is like boar hair, coarse and unyielding. It grows the way weeds grow, in every which way. The gaping black boot cuffs remind me of dragon mouths that could swallow his hideous boar legs whole. For a minute I wish they would. Wish they’d slither up his calves and chomp him down, bite by bite.

I glance out the window, where the cat has now perched herself precariously on the sill. She stares right at me, ears flat. Confused. My heart faces. That’s

my cat. I paid for her myself. I saved up Grandma's birthday money and bought her from the pound. She is mine. My Lulu. I rescued her. So she's mine.

Filled with a sudden suicidal calm, my fingers unclench and I glide to the green door.

"Child," my father warns. "Don't you dare." He sets his coffee down with an audible thud.

The doorjamb is sticky, so I have to pull hard. I grab the gold knob and tug it fiercely. The red arm snakes are strong now. They do what they can do. Maybe they can't fly. But what they can do is pull. My father glares in silence, and at last, the door pops free. A battery of snow douses my nose and bare feet.

Lulu bounds toward me and I cradle her to my chest. She is soothed by my heartbeat. Comforted. Close.

I turn around and shut the door, prepared to fight my father. His eyes are fixed on me, arms folded like a pharaoh's. On the wall where it almost covers a rip in the wallpaper, our only clock bellows out the seconds that fall down.

I squeeze the cat, who wriggles and flicks her tail. "What did she do to deserve that?" I demand.

Silver steam rises from his coffee mug in curls and the second hand jerks forward in its circular track. His eyes narrow but his lips stay still. "It's freezing out there," I stammer, trying to keep my voice steady. Always, I know, it has to be steady. But his silence makes my ears ring and I feel my voice break. "How would you like it if someone threw *you* out in the snow?"

He smashes the kitchen chair down, his rough palm shoving its wicker backing to the floor. The faded cushion spirals away and lands beneath the fridge.

"You're right, Madison." His words are black wolves. This is what I feared but knew was to come. "You're right. As usual! Absolutely right."

He storms toward me and I brace myself for impact. But to my surprise, he heads for the door. On his breath are heated mutters. "Let's see how I like it. Let's see how *you* like it."

I release the cat and follow him, pulse galloping, mouth parched. I had expected to be yelled at. I had expected to be struck. Instead, my father does something much more inventive.

He flings back the jaw of our chipped green door and strides onto the porch like a soldier claiming land. Every footfall is heavier than the last. The door booms shut behind him and Lulu darts into to my bedroom, her tail a comet of white.

I can see my father out the window where he stands with arms wide open, the diamond blizzard clawing with its nails at his chest. The wind scrapes back the folds of his bathrobe and billows the boar hair into scurrying waves. It infiltrates his threadbare sleeves and gnaws his goose-bumped arms. The sturdy knot in my father's waist sash holds, but the howling flurries stir his robe and expose his mothballed boxers to our empty, huddled street.

I bang on the window. "Daddy, stop!" He does not turn. His arms remain splayed. His jaw is set.

I rush to the door and try to yank it open. But he has closed it fast and the grip cannot be undone. I pull. And pull. I brace one foot against the jamb and give my whole body to the effort. The second stagger on and my hands grow sore and raw. Eventually I beat them against the wood's stubborn grain. "Daddy," I yell helplessly. "Please come back inside."

"No," he returns firmly, and because I can hear him so clearly, even over the sounds of the storm, I know that he must have pressed his mouth very close to the door. The next words he does not shout. He says them perfectly normally. "This is what you asked for. Someone has to show you. Someone has to show you what it means to be a man."

The tears come again. I tug on the doorknob one more time, but just as it begins to give, my father jerks it back. Out the nearby window I see that he is holding the door closed with both hands, gripping the knob so tightly that the knuckles scream green-white.

I do not know how long we stay like this, my father and I, him standing in a blizzard, holding the door shut, and me with my pleas and my horrible wailing, pulling and pulling and pulling from inside. I am sure that my father is going to die. That he will actually freeze to death in the cold. With nothing

but a bathrobe and his black, gaping boots, he has little protection from the subzero wind. He thinks this will teach me to behave like a man.

My father was not like this before my mother left. He was never kind. But he was never cruel, either. When she left one day in the blue Toyoda—to a friend's house, she said—and never came back, that was when he grew hard like the dirt in the hallway. That was when he decided to raise me as a son.

My name is Fiona Madison. My mother's middle name was originally my first. But my father never calls me that. He stopped the day she left. He stood on the porch and stared at the light of the scalding, sinking, fiery sun, and after that he swore to never call me Fiona again.

He says he does not want me to be weak the way she was weak. He says he wants me to grow up to be strong, like a man.

My mother told me there are different kinds of strength.

I know she will come back for us, someday. When she is ready.

It has been two years and five months and six days since she left.

My father and I play tug-of-war with the door. With our pride. Our bewilderment. Our competing ideas of love.

On the white wicker tabletop, his coffee slowly cools. In the clock up on our wall, the seconds march achingly on.

~ Catherine Bailey



"Sonnet 13075: Brawley, CA" ~ Bruce Barton



~ Hirotaka Suzuki



“When Walls Have Eyes” ~ Joanna Madloch

ANDROID

So u logged in 2 humanity
The world wide web of vanity
Saw lies up close
Strike a pose
Smooth flat screened
Giving old fashioned fact
The lie of e-motion.

So u whip up techy lather
Silicon spiced
Measuring your life
In microbytes.

And steal
Identities
From zillionares
Wid crystal chins.
Trade in shadows
And vertical spins
Dream of tricking
Fiscal bone aficionados
By hacking applettes and avocadoes
Wid Trojan horses and viral pins.

So u have no private
Parts of intercourse
U think wid ur fingers
And chat wid the dorks
Go find love wid a mouse
Optical of course.

So u twitter and quikr
wid smut and skype
and lol wid
ur virtual tribe.
Ur life's phased out

U face no Book
U bite the bait
On every hook
Wid digitized profusions
U download revolutions
Of image and illusion
While lissom babes cum and go
Caught on cam wid a pink dildo.

I shall unsubscribe
from your friendship tonight
And write the saddest maddest lines
Crucified on your wall
I bore it all Vitruvian style
Caught inside
Your hyperreality's
Crystal ball
Who could have heard
The dying heart
And the Carrion call.

~ Hemant Kumar Sharma



"Not That Far" ~ Ronald Walker



"The Raven" ~ Sarah Stone

CHANGING WITH THE WEATHER

A cold comes in this sad September story
Trees turn, an Autumn shell
Leaves bid a fond farewell
Down beside her sighing body

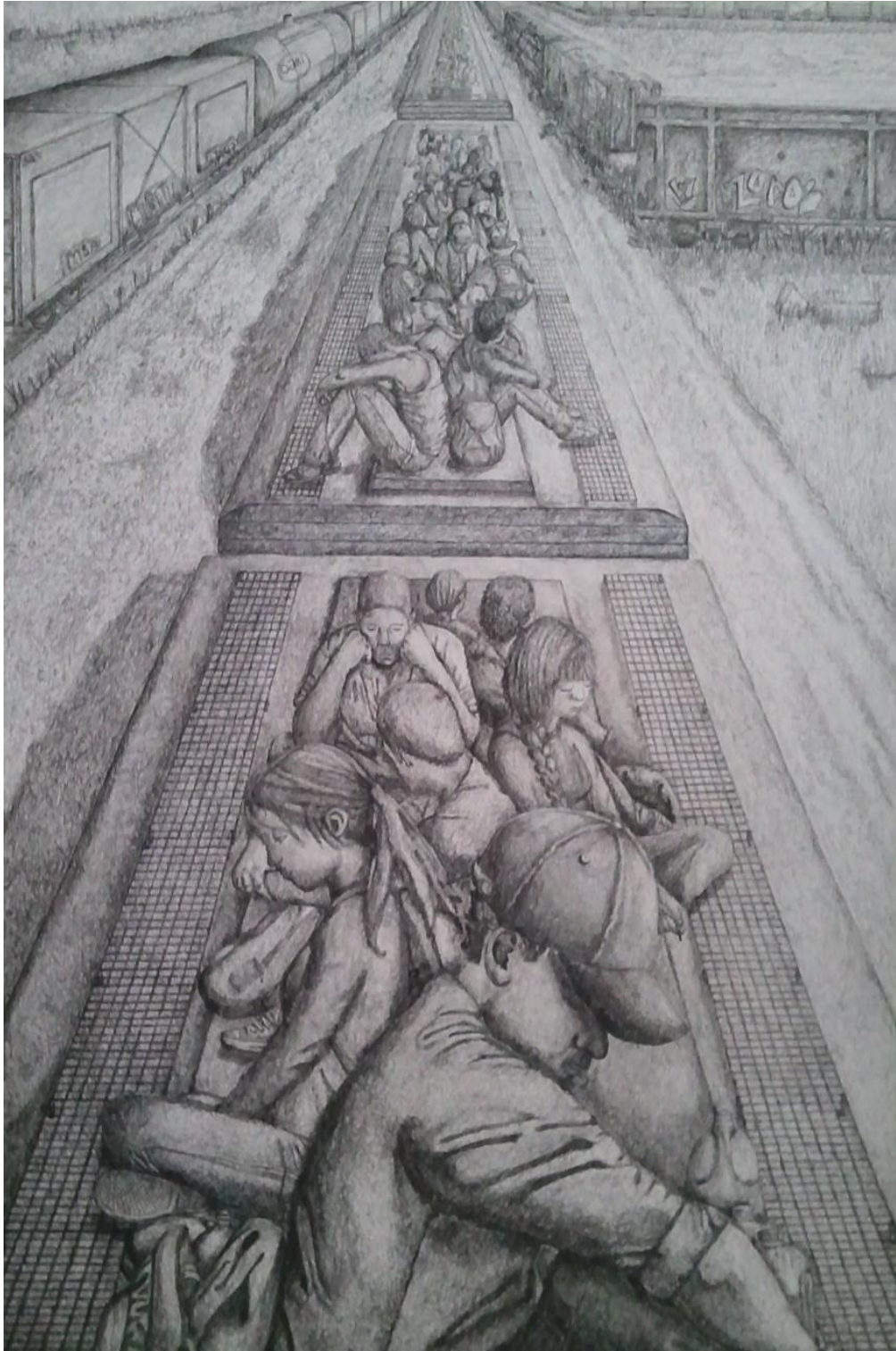
It could all be so lonely
With the trouble a heart got into
From the hole a shot passed through
Down beside her sighing body

The burdens born in strong silence
In a passion belying violence
Every crooked vein seeks safety
Down beside her sighing body

~ Alex Brondarbit



"Masada" ~ Diego Marcial Rios



“La Bestia (The Beast)” ~ Anakaren Munoz

April's rain has come in effervescence
Throwing starbursts of sun among us all
Splashing and interrupting our senses
Shining hand washing away the pall
Drink, drink my somnolent little children
Feel again the threads of glistening hope
Grasp and partake my feathered starving wren
Unfold thy heart and dissolve the eye scope
Today tomorrow's dawn will follow fast
Shattering or growing whatever we plant
Dancing among us are dreamer's full past
Twirling tornadoes of all that we can't
April brings us your wonderful clear rain
Where hope follows that we might see again

~ Jan Niebrzydowski

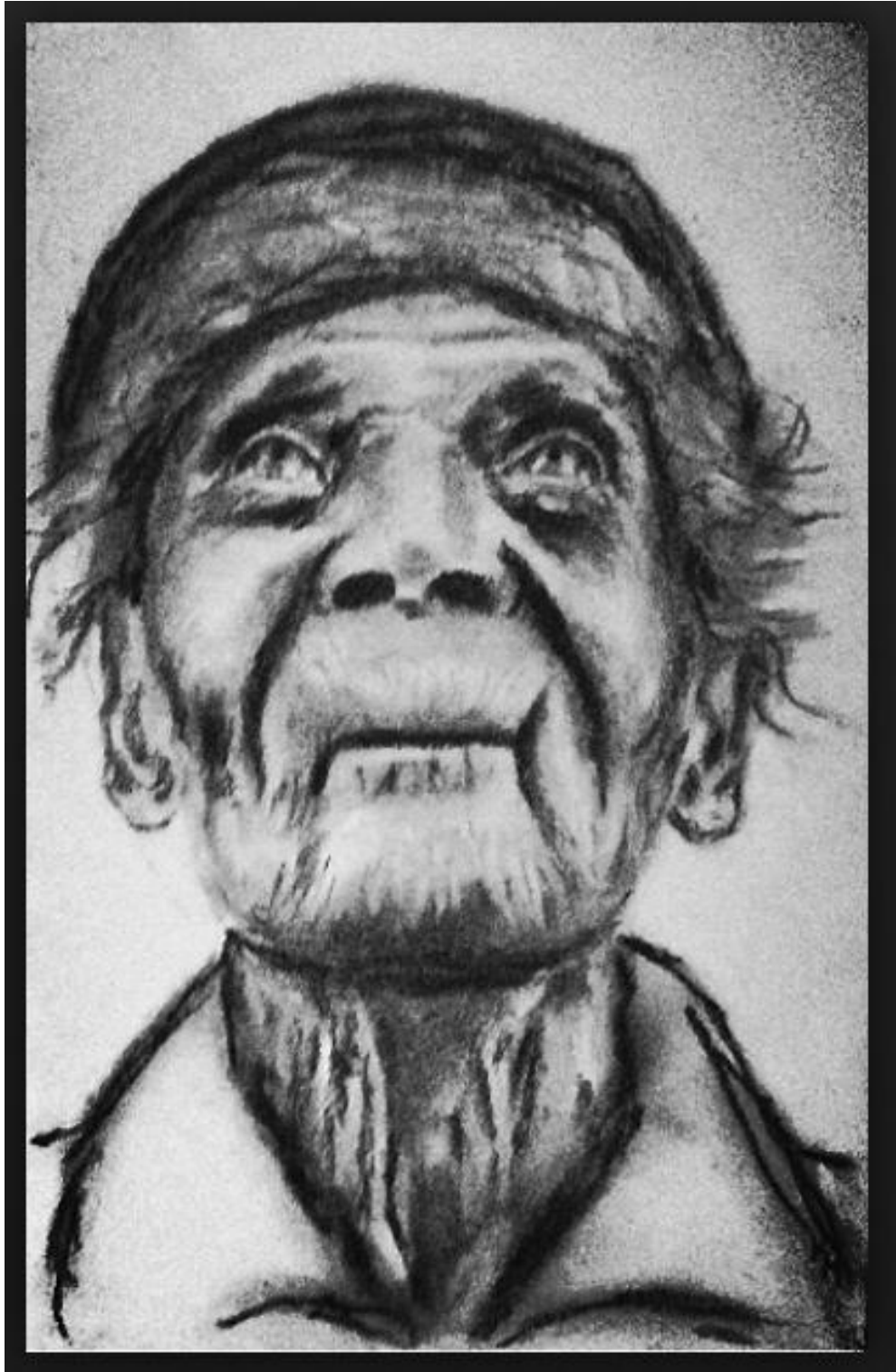


"Float" ~ Bijian Fan

HEADLIGHTS

Headlights rush past—blinding.
Casting shadows upon my upturned face
 they illuminate my all-consuming fear.
Brief flashes of anonymity provide relief and refuge but are quickly
 incinerated by the stark, crystal clear brilliance of the light.
How I long for the darkness of being unknown.
How I yearn to wrap that dark void around my shoulders,
 feel its comfort, and relish in its eclipse.
Yet this ever-persisting light invades...
Brazen, unashamed, bold, and defiant.
It sets my soul ablaze to coax me out of the night and into the warm,
 welcoming rays of daybreak.

~ Jade Lum



"The Proletariat III" ~ Krystal Mobley

every morning
the sun blinds me
I don't think
it's beautiful
or meaningful;
I don't care
about its brightness
if it doesn't warm me.
lately I've been feeling cold,
maybe because
it's winter
maybe because
I'm alone
but maybe because
there's nothing left in me
to keep me warm
maybe because
there's nothing left in me
at all
heat travels up
and I've been feeling
so
damn
low.

~ Brianna Pasillas

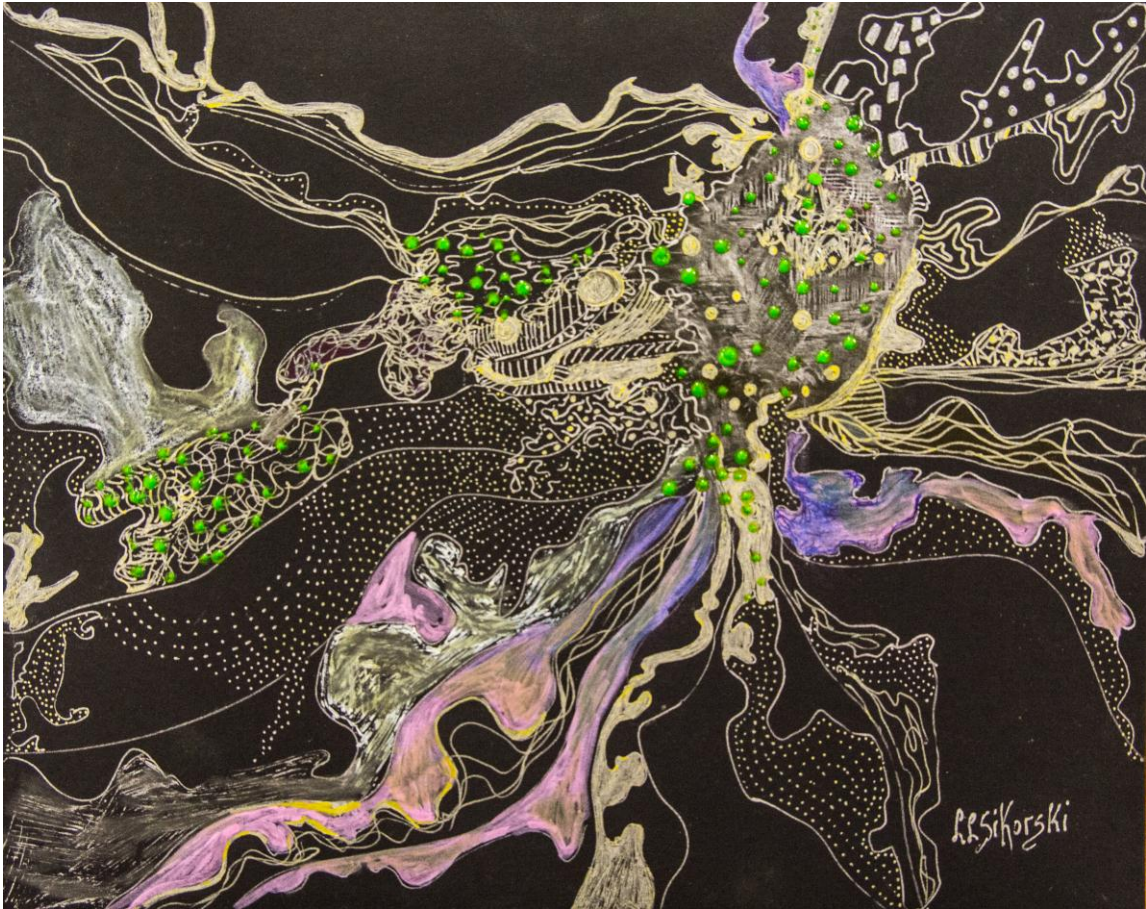


"Inseparable" ~ Anthony Rojas

THIS BLANKET

i pinch the threads of your memory in this blanket
that wraps around my mattress, once held
your sleeping body nestled between me
and nothing else. sometimes i'd wake early, when lucky,
to see the sun pour vitamin light upon your skin
and the smile raise your cheeks, when your eyes flash open
feeling me, pulling me to the warmth that is your neck,
and sleep comes again. heavy in the garden of your scent,
warm in the sunlight of your skin. breathing memory
into this blanket that i pinch between my fingers.

~ Jeffrey Graessley



~ Lauralee Sikorski

CASIMIR'S INTERN

I've heard there is latent
energy in space, and what
are rooms if not walled-in
cells of space? This room,

where I have memorized the ceiling's
perforated surface and mapped
the hallowed contours of
your mouth with my fingers, is filled

with energy, and when we walk
away, take time to breathe, it will
become vaster, longer – different
from what we think we already know.

~ Jack Foster



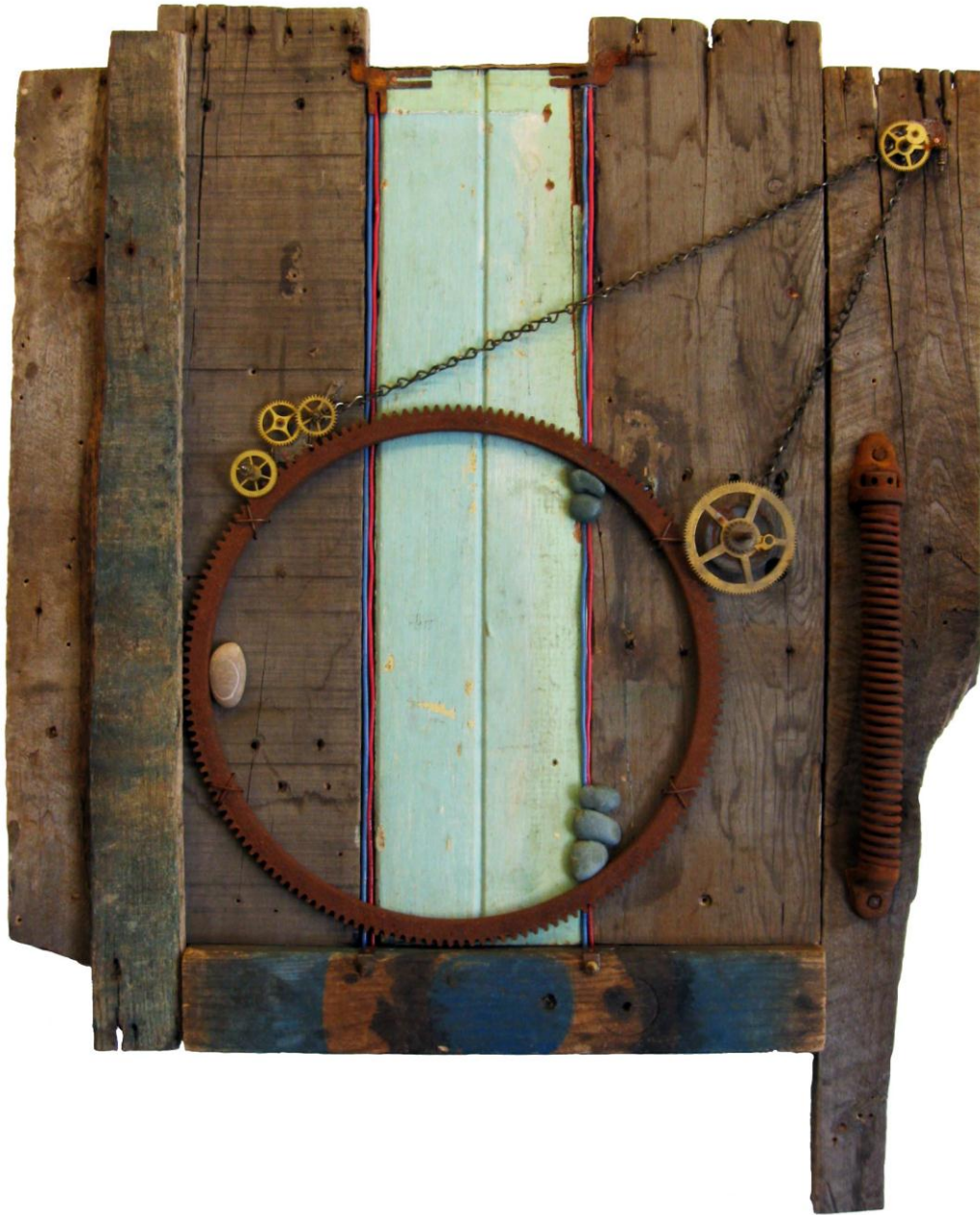
"Dawn of Time" ~ Gina Herrera

the tension
waiting for you
is building, like
pressure on my skin
where a boil
rages
war in my clogged pores
ruining interaction
with other people, i'm
sick of the things they say;
none of which makes
any sense.

i nod my head, parody
of a smile
cracks my lips, yellow
cigarette teeth. i smoke
too much, people don't want
that around them,
but this tension
born of waiting
for your form to shape
my sheets and your breathing
to our breathing
tangled legs like vines
under the soil
of the blanket on the bed

is pain
worse than dirty fingers
digging the boils out my neck.

~ Jeffrey Graessley



"Piece for Feitelson" ~ Patrick Quinn

BRINGING SMOKY HOME

Boom! It was that guy with the cannon again. What was he doing? A Civil War re-enactment in his backyard? I'll give him a Civil War, Denyse thought. Ron and I came here all the way from Utah for some peace and quiet. And what do we get? Some eccentric farmer who wants to set off cannons. It's a good thing he lives an acre away.

As for that neighbor with the barking dog, that was another story. It barked in the mornings. It barked when the neighbors went out in the evenings. It barked late into the night. Ron had to get up for work at 5:30 every morning, cold mornings when the moon was still overhead. Wouldn't you know it, he could still hear that dog: bark bark, bark, as if it was trying to chase the stars from the sky.

"Denyse, honey" he would say, rolling out of bed, "can we do something about that dog?"

Someone else might have shot it. But Denyse had been voted class animal lover in elementary school and thirty years hadn't changed that much. It wasn't the dog she wanted to shoot; it was the neighbors. Besides, Denyse worried about her horses. For three years now she and Ron had watched them grow. Smoky and Tyler were their prize. Even now, as another night had come, she worried for them. With all that barking, how could they sleep?

"I think it's making the horses edgy," Ron said. "I'd better go out and check on them."

Ron walked down through the kitchen to the garage. He took a kerosene lamp from the shelf. He struck a match and lit it. The glow from it traced the walls; it tossed his shadow along the floor. He opened the door and felt the cold of the wind as he went out.

The air was crisp, the sky full of stars. Beautiful it would have been – like Utah or Colorado, peaceful and vast, like the west of his youth- if it weren't for that noisy dog. The horses moved around in their stall. It was ten o'clock. They should be asleep at this hour, Ron thought. Ron swung the light. He opened the latch on the door and went into the barn. He fed the horses hay and stroked their manes. Ten minutes later, the barking next door died down. He left the horses, hoping they would sleep, and returned to the house.

He was remembering Smoky and Tyler as young colts, the beautiful way they lifted themselves to stand in the sun, the way they moved when Denyse had let them run free in the field in Utah. Three thousand miles across the land they'd traveled. Three thousand miles to this place, cold in the night, with a barking dog.

“Well?” Denyse said, looking up at him. She wore pajamas, a bathrobe; a pillow was tucked behind her head. Her face looked tired, but her eyes were alert and concerned.

“Well, they’re bothered alright,” Ron said. “We have to do something about that dog.”

“Do you have any ideas?”

“I do. I think our lawyer will have some ideas too.”

“So we’ll take the neighbors to court?”

“They’re disturbing the peace. Our peace,” Ron said.

“You don’t suppose Mr. Mortimer hears the dog.”

“Mr. Mortimer is deaf from cannon fire, Denyse. You know, I thought that when we moved here, when we came all that way with the trailer, the idea was to have a little peace and quiet, a place of our own.”

“All we wanted was a peaceful place, right?”

“Peaceful. You’d figure on nearly two and half acres of land you’d get some peace and quiet.”

“But this house is next to their property, Ron. I don’t know how, but we’ll have to get them to keep the dog quiet.”

“I’ve already talked to them. You know that.”

“So we’ll have to take them to court.”

Ron nodded. “That’s what we have to do,” he said.

Detective Krumm was at his desk when he got the call the next morning. “What’s that? Denyse Altieri? Sure, I went to school with her when I was a kid. What’s that? Her horse is missing? You’re her husband. Did I meet you at the reunion? Yeah, but that’s south Jersey. I’m with the county up here in... Well, yeah, I know some people who could look into that. I was just telling Pat and Cris and Karen, we ought to run the names of the whole class through the computer at motor vehicles. That way we’d get the addresses of everybody for the next reunion. So, weren’t you the guy from- where was it? Utah? Carson City. Right. No. Never been. I did get out to Las Vegas once. So how do you like it there in south Jersey? Except for the barking dog. Got you. Yeah, okay. So, how’s tomorrow? Let’s see. Parkway exit, what’s that? Oh, you’re all the way down there. Okay, let’s say about two or three o’clock. Good. I’ll see you then.”

He put down the phone and met the gaze of Ralph, his colleague in the prosecutor’s office.

“It’s something about a horse,” Krumm said.

“A racer at the track?”

“No. Just a horse. It belongs to a girl I went to school with when I was a kid. Her horse – it’s missing.”

"You gonna go all the way to south Jersey to look for a missing horse? What did it do, run away?"

"No," Krumm said. "I think it was stolen. It sounds like a revenge plot to me."

They'd gotten down the Parkway well before sunset, pulled in near the farm, and now Ralph stood in tall grass about ten feet from the police car, staring out across a line of trees toward where he'd heard the sound.

"Jeez! What was that?" Ralph asked. "It sounded like artillery fire. Is there a military base around here?"

"No. Just farms," Krumm said. "Maybe it's a cow with gas."

Ralph just looked at him. After a minute, still puzzling at the sound of cannons, he returned to the car.

"So what do you think? The horses just ran off?"

"One came back," Krumm said. "The other one is still missing. Could be the people that took them want to make it look like the horses just ran off."

"Somebody opened the door to the stable. You heard the guy. He says he keeps it locked."

"It's the neighbors. The ones with the dog. Come on, this should be easy, Ralph. All we've got to do is follow the tracks."

"Hoof prints," Ralph said. "When's the last time you looked for a horse? We don't get this kind of work back where we're from."

"You went through the stable. Right?"

"I saw enough of it."

"And you didn't see this?" Krumm took from his pocket a shiny object. It looked like a bracelet, or a watchband. "I asked Denyse if it was hers. She'd never seen it before."

"So, it's a woman?"

"Maybe."

Boom! The cannon went off again.

"What the hell?" Ralph said.

"I'll have to ask them about that," Krumm said.

Brainstorms came to Krumm every once in a while. Finding new methods of tracking down criminals was part of the job. So when some thoughts of the class reunion slipped into his thoughts later that evening they were met by that well-honed creative crime solving mechanism in the mind of the detective: he had an idea. He got on the phone.

"Listen, Pat. I know this is asking a lot but hey – like in the kind that horses eat – life's an adventure. I was just remembering that parasailing thing you said you were doing by the shore last summer. So I got this idea. We need

three people to make it work, so maybe if you talk to Karen or Cris, you can twist their arms. Hey, you owe me. I'm getting all those names and addresses for the next reunion, right? So, this is what you do. My pal, Tony, from the country prosecutor's office, he's got this Cessna. Yeah, a plane. That's right. Now, with your expertise in parasailing, I figure, a parachute jump – that's a piece of cake. Right? From a plane. Yeah. Of course, I mean from a plane. Yeah. You've got it. You'll be jumping at night, of course. It's a sneak attack, a back door maneuver. We want to put you on the guy's property. So we want to sneak you in. To look for the horse, obviously. We know they've got to have it there. But we need to be sure before we issue a warrant. That's why we need you.

Yeah. That's right. The three of you girls used to do back flips and cartwheels, all that cheerleading stuff, right? So now, thirty years later, you've graduated to the real stuff. Skydiving. It's all a matter of nerve. You can do it. You just jump.

Hey, you know Denyse and Ron don't have a real lot except for their horses. But I hear an animal activist is putting out a reward. Five thousand bucks. All you have to do is get the girls together and go into training for about ten days. Jump off chairs. That kind of thing. Then we'll drop you from my friend Tony's Cessna into the farm. Clear pasture. No trees. You just have to avoid the cow crap. Like I said, you can do it. Five thousand bucks divided by three. That's how many weeks of salary working for that guy with the supermarkets? Hey, besides, it's a once in a lifetime deal. It's the cartwheel of a lifetime. You just have to watch out for the guy with the cannon."

There were tears and the world felt heavy to Denyse – grayer than the coat of Smoky, vanished, just like his name. The detectives could find no prints, they'd told her. There was only tall grass and the prints of the wheels of a vehicle had underscored Krumm's conviction that Smoky had been spirited away. That set Denyse to worrying. "If it's them, they don't know how to take care of a horse. They don't even take care of their dog." Ron tried to comfort her, but Denyse was inconsolable. Face solemn, lips tightly drawn, Ron looked up at the waning moon. That was when he saw three ghosts descending from the sky.

"Kar? Kar? Are you okay?"

"I'm okay."

"You weren't supposed to scream."

"Help me get this thing off."

"We did it!"

"Krumm is going to pay for this."

"They should have filmed it. Put us in a movie with Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt."

"You're all tangled, Cris."

"I'm okay."

"So where are we?"

"On the farm. If they dropped us at the right point, we should be on the north side of the farm." Pat took a flashlight from her backpack and pointed it down at the map. "We're somewhere around here."

In the heavy darkness, they peered down at the map. The light from the flashlight shone around them- angels fallen from the sky.

"That's the farm house over the hill. That light down there."

"They keep the dog tied up, don't they?"

"Bill didn't say."

"Let's hope so."

"What if we run into a cow?"

"I don't know. Say hello."

"Farmers don't keep cows out at night."

"They keep the dog out."

"So where do you think they put the horse?"

"Tied it up somewhere probably."

"They should've used one of these parachutes to tie it up with. It'd never get away."

"Bill said they'd keep it on the other side of the farm, far away from Denyse's place."

"I guess that makes sense."

"Her place is south," Pat said, looking at a compass. "That's that way."

"So we go north."

"We are north."

"So either we go north, or toward the farm house."

"Where the dog is."

"Where the neighbors are. The guy and his wife."

"And their shotgun."

"Pat, you're scaring me."

"You just jumped from a plane in a parachute. You're worried about some crazy farmer?"

"I'm a little worried if he has a shotgun."

"Let's go north first."

To the north there was nothing but spruce and pine trees. The land was dark, the night almost moonless. They turned back toward the light of the

farm house in the distance. Closer they came to it, their hearts beating faster, approaching the house from down where the darkness was.

"We'll go around the back, look in the windows."

"You don't think he's keeping the horse in his living room. Do you?"

"I mean down through the basement windows. And we'll look around the yard. Try not to let the dog hear you."

"If it barks maybe they'll just ignore it. Isn't that what they do anyway?"

"Pat, wait a minute. Why would they keep the horse in the same area as the dog? Denyse and Ron said that Smoky was agitated by the dog's barking. Wouldn't they keep the horse further away? I mean, if it were to react to the barking and make sounds- you know, like horses make. Then Denyse would hear them. She'd know it was here."

Pat agreed. "East," she said. "Over that way."

Sure enough, when they had gone some two hundred yards, they saw the horse. At first it was just an outline, a shadow along the fence. But when Smoky moved, they could see his head and his mane, the long legs stepping along the dampened earth. As they drew closer, the horse snorted; he pawed at the ground and let out a sound.

"Quick! The camera! Get behind the horse, over there, Cris. Here, take the flashlight. We've got to get some light on the horse."

"We're not taking it?"

"He wanted us to just take pictures. They'll get a search warrant."

"Let's take it, Pat. I they took it, we can take it."

"You're going to ride it?"

"No. We'll walk him right out of here."

The horse was resisting. Gently, they tucked a cloth around its mouth, their voices coaxing. It wasn't moving.

"I've got an idea," Karen said. From her backpack she took her cell phone and began to dial. So maybe she should have called Tom, her husband, first, let him know she'd safely completed the jump. But this first call would go elsewhere.

"Hello, Denyse," she said. "This is Karen. We've got your horse. Yes, Smoky's right here. You were right. They had him tied up near the property to the east. Can you and Ron get your truck over here on the main road? Good. Listen, Denyse. I want you to do something. We're having some trouble getting Smoky to move. I want you to talk to him. That's right. I'm going to put the phone right here by his ear."

Denyse's voice came sweetly and Smoky knew the voice. The horse's head jostled to the left, to the right, and back again. Smoky began to move. Quietly, they led him down the hill, out to the fence that bordered the main

road. Denyse and Ron were there, climbing over the fence, greeting their horse in an embrace.

“You did what?” Krumm was incredulous. He sounded like farmer Mortimer’s cannon. “You should have left the horse on the property.”

“We’ve got photographs, Bill,” Pat said.

“Pictures? Of what? Of the horse and a tree and a fence in the dark? That could be anywhere. How are we supposed to catch these people if we can’t grab them with the horse on their property?”

“The horse is tied to the fence, Bill. You can see it in the picture.”

“I’m looking at the picture. I see Cris with a flashlight.”

“She’s shining the light on the horse. And you can see the rope. The horse wouldn’t be tied to a fence if it just ran away.”

“They can say that you did it, that you tied the horse to the fence. They can say that you made up the whole thing,” Krumm said.

“Well, we didn’t. And you know we didn’t. And that animal rights activist with the \$5,000 will know it too. Won’t he, Bill?”

“Okay. I’ll see what I can do.”

“Oh, and Cris wants a parachute jump with Tom Cruise.”

“I don’t know Tom Cruise.”

“Look him up on the motor vehicles computer, Bill. Invite him to the reunion. Maybe you could see if he needs a horse for his next movie.”

“I’ll see what I can do,” Krumm said. “I’ll see what I can do.”

~ Robert McParland



"A Playful Mind" ~ Eghosa Akenbor

Feel the grass
Grow within
My time twisted bone
The music riding
Through my dancing fingers.
There on the edge
Of a drunken precipice
My memory hangs
And flutters
In the wind
Of your bottomless
Scents woman.
Here shall I
Exorcise myself
Dispossess and undress
To lunge forward
On the unnamable
Wave
Of sublime sorrow.
Feel the wind
Serenade
My rhyme wasted stoned
Heart of oblivion
As words gush out
Like blood
And spread on the plain
Of the parched earth
That still is you.
Feel the life
In your veins
Taut with love
Loose with longing
Knotted with death.
Feel the ancient longing
For to feel is to go
Where no one else goes.

~ *Hemant Kumar Sharma*



"Inner Verse" ~ Patrick Quinn

I HAVE TO

I have to write myself out

expedite an overthrow

of me and myself

Demolish the facade

of a name, a place, a time.

I have shifted from one to the other

losing track of this and that, here and there.

The itch of time is long dead.

The muddy gates of oblivion

daring a glance

a vision thrown

as in a dream

call me across the molten river

of time, space, and history.

On these waters I set a sail

on a clumsy little boat

come from nowhere

A boat the size of a broom-stick

An oar as big as an oak

The flow shifts beneath me
like a dragon's tail.
I can still feel the watery expanse
baffling dimensions of emotion
the fear within a finger's width
of floating away from forgotten hands.
No sky threatens my flight
no earth breaks my fall
a shell as old as the universe
cracks and opens to my eye
My grassy laughter rings
the song is just a sheath
the sword is in your heart.

~ Hemant Kumar Sharma



~ Doina Tautu

Carl Sagan speaks to me when
you're in China, telling me
I'm all alone anyway,
so what's another 7,000 miles.

A cold universe reaches out
from the TV screen, the cosmos
a blind consciousness in the
darkness of my mind,
our everyday separated by
an ocean of relentless time,

your bedside cold,
blankets neatly over pillows,
hallways and bedrooms
inconsequently black with
no reaching hands at light
switches to brighten them,

hours passing like lone cars
on the street we'd stare to,
unidirectional and as out of
reach as your hand when
I run mine through the
fabric remembering how it
found yours resting there,

now finding only the cold end
where my side meets yours
and runs thin into absence,
into memories of us lying here
in unrealized equilibrium,
the shades parted halfway
with the sight of our
beloved oak trees dancing
with the wind and sparrows
in quiet eternity.

The Earth goes on spinning
until you return home,
whereupon hallways light
up with the pressure of
your steps, this cold place
reanimated in the image
of us, the Earth grinding to
a halt when we see the birds
and oaks again, when under
the sheets I find your hand.

~ *Ryan David Leack*



"Stained Glass Sky" ~ Vanessa Christie

GREAT GRANDPA'S FARM

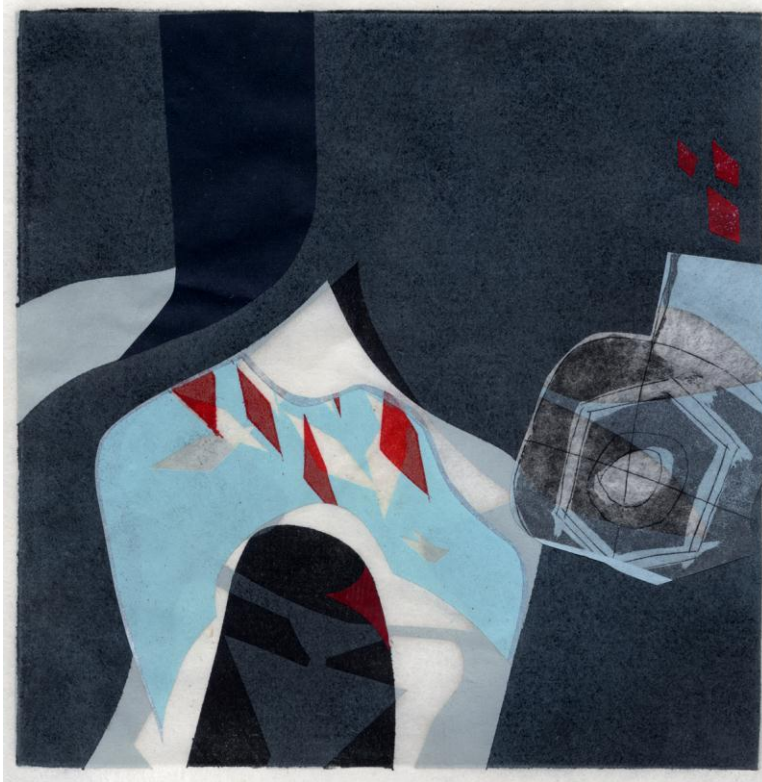
Cloaked in closets, hanging histories
of late, enshrouded in shadows
of sealed parlor doors, air choked
at ceilings, reaching for the sky,
now shut in bare abyss,
smell of pipe smoke down the
road where light emerges behind
a white-washed fence.

Your shadow curls up behind
broken oak, embers spent in fire pit,
ships stopped at Ellis Island where
you and great grandfather docked,
waters smooth in mirror-like repose,
all memory here now, entombed
in your first home.

Up the spiral staircase was your room,
wood sinking with weight of broom,
drawers empty, secrecy void,
scattered fragments of time enjoyed,
floors encrusted with final breaths,
with last collapsing chests.

But time found a place to hide,
under floorboards near threadbare
chairs wasting away in sultry night,
preserving your warmth, pictures of
young grandparents building the house
for their young, razing rolling fields
to raise their youth, under rays
of long lost suns.

~ *Ryan David Leack*



~ Cynthia Milionis

A SELF-DEPRECATING ODE TO POETRY

im a poet youre a poet.
if you have words and give a shit
you can have poetry
as long as the lines are staggered

and with poems you have the
drivers license of "meaning"
or so they say--

be wary of intoxication with feverish imagery.
.08 is the legal limit,
and a few too many syllables in a word
or in a night,
depending on their weight
and yours,
exceed the comprehensible
and legal limit.

poetry is just using the same old words
but with meanings that don't belong to them.
metaphor and simile, symbolism, imagery
stanza, meter, rhyme, A, B, A, C
that hyperbole to you
means logical fallacy to me
to that i say fuck
just say what you really mean

Maybe you should just write a story.

~ *Christopher Baarstad*

BIOGRAPHIES

JOHN ABBOTT

John Abbott is a writer, musician, and English instructor who lives with his wife and daughter in Kalamazoo, Michigan. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Potomac Review*, *Georgetown Review*, *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Arcadia*, *Atticus Review*, *upstreet*, *Midwestern Gothic*, *Bitter Oleander*, and many others. His poetry chapbook "There Should Be Signs Here" is forthcoming from *Wormwood Chapbooks*. For more information about his writing, please visit www.johnabbottauthor.com

MELINA AHMADZADEH

Melina Ahmadzadeh is a 21-year-old artist attending Cal Poly Pomona. Now in her third year as a graphic design major, she is striving to create eye-catching illustrations with her semi-realistic portraits. Although she works in all ranges of mediums, pen/ink is her favorite.

EGHOSA AKENBOR

Eghosa Raymond Akenbor was born from a family of four in Warri, Delta state, Nigeria. Educated in Painting and General Art from a polytechnic (Auchi polytechnic Auchi, Edo state, Nigeria) with an HND as a qualification. Eghosa is an artist that is inspired by experimenting mediums and materials to create un-conventional art piece.

His art are of various theme and concept on landscape, portraits, mixed media and collage with mediums like oil, acrylic, gouache and found objects. Outside painting on canvas, Eghosa is known as a

textile designer who paints on cloths and a fine art teacher in a missionary secondary school. Eghosa has organized one solo exhibition show including six group exhibition and a fashion/textile show.

CHRISTOPHER BAARSTAD

Christopher Baarstad, ostensibly known as Chris, teaches Basic Writing and Composition at Riverside City College in California. He also teaches international 7th and 8th grade students at his local junior high school. He enjoys reading Norse mythology, dystopian novels and writing for no reason at all.

CATHERINE BAILEY

Catherine Bailey is pursuing her Ph.D. in English at Western Michigan University. Her creative writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Superstition Review*, *Poetry South*, *Line Zero*, *Scythe*, *Lingerpost*, *Rose Red Review*, *Broad!: A Gentlelady's Magazine*, *Femspec*, and other publications. A play she wrote, based on interviews with over 50 women from four countries, was produced at the University of Rochester in 2011. She has also published articles and reviews in *Colloquy: Text Theory Critique*, *Yes! Magazine*, *Afterimage: The Journal of Media Arts and Cultural Criticism*, *Worldchanging*, and *Three Percent*.

ALEX BRONDARBIT

Alex Brondarbit is an alumni of the English program at Cal Poly Pomona. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Winchester in the area of Medieval History. His novel, 'Loyalty Bound', based upon the

reign of Richard III is available in digital format on Amazon. He likes cats.

SARAH BRYSKI

Sarah Bryski is an undergraduate student from Ashley, Pennsylvania. She is currently majoring in English – Secondary Education and minoring in Psychology at Susquehanna University, where she is secretary of the Theta Chi chapter of Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society and co-founder of Film-Making Club.

NINA CASTRO

Nina Castro is a Los Angeles based artist whose work spans various mediums (photography, video, sculpture and installation).

VANESSA CHRISTIE

A San Diego native, Vanessa Christie has studied art from a young age. She studied art, among other subjects at City College before transferring to UCLA. She also studied abroad at Studio Art Centers International in Florence, Italy. Her art is inspired by music, poetry, mythology, the natural world and especially by imagination and dreams. Much of her work features natural material such as trees, and constructed objects such as masks. She has displayed her artwork at The Art Department, Art and Book Gallery, and at the Ivy through Raw Artists. She has also had her work accepted into juried shows at Saint Paul's and has displayed her work with Mission Hills Artists. Her paintings are currently on display, and her art has been published in literary magazines such as *City Works Press*.

DOINA CIOBANU

I am a Southern California painter favoring landscape and abstract art. You can see symbolic references to prominent impressionistic painters of the 19th century like Monet, Manet, Matisse and others and their artistic vision in my own art. Most of my paintings are mixed acrylic/oil. Although my paintings lack conventional detail, they are explicit in what they convey. Capturing the California light is extremely important to me, as I think that it is only here that you can find all these shades of green and blue that I try to render. Reinterpreting the landscape through vibrant color and intensity and capturing the essence of a memory and a mood is of utmost importance to me. Many of my paintings are in private collections. Other paintings can be seen on my website at: <http://doinaciobanu.weebly.com/>

KATRINA CORRAL

Katrina Naoko Corral is a graduating English Literature and Language major from Cal Poly Pomona. She aspires to become a Children's book illustrator where she can seamlessly illustrate poems or scenes from her favorite writers such as John Keats and Italo Calvino. She currently lives in a small apartment in Pomona, California to call her safe haven where the imaginary mind flows and no one is penalized for their wit or creativity.

BIHE DU

I am an international student in Cal Poly Pomona. I had learn foundational drawing in China since I was 12, and this is my second year majoring in Graphic Design.

PHILIP A. ELLIS

Phillip A. Ellis is a freelance critic, poet and scholar. His chapbooks, *The Flayed Man* and *Symptoms Positive and Negative*, are available. He is working on a collection for Diminuendo Press. Another has been accepted by Hippocampus Press. He is the editor of *Melaleuca*. His website is at <http://www.phillipaellis.com/>

BIJIAN FAN

Bijian Fan was born in Beijing, China, where he learned paper art from his grandmother. Today, Bijian resides in Camarillo, California, still creates cutting-edge paper sculpture to carry on the tradition, but his media have expanded to metal, polymer, and other materials. Bijian is a multi-cultural and inter-disciplinary breed. He studied in China, Japan, and the USA, earned his BS and MS in Mathematics, and Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering. Upon accomplishing a scientific career, Bijian moved on to visual art. He combines science and art, explores aesthetic and physical properties of various materials, integrates his spatial and temporal sense in sculpting, transforms 2D static material into 3D kinetic sculptures. His transformation represents an evolution in space and time. Bijian has exhibited internationally and earned numerous recognitions. He exhibited in his hometown for 2008 Beijing Olympics. His artwork is featured in McDonald's advertisement. His local recognition includes artist spotlight of 2013 Focus on the Masters, featured artist of 2009 Ventura Artwalk and 2012 Moorpark Arts Festival.

JEFFREY GRAESSLY

Jeffrey Graessley is a writer from La Puente, CA. His latest poems can be found in the

forthcoming Summer Anthology of Silver Birch Press. As well as Electric Windmill Press, and The Chaffey Review. His recent discovery of the BEAT generation has prompted loving and longing thoughts for that simple, drunken, far-gone time in American history.

GINA HERRERA

Born in 1969, Gina Herrera was raised in Chicago and currently resides in California. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In the course of her studies, she was deployed overseas in support of several war contingencies with the United States Army. Once her final tour was complete, she obtained her Master of Fine Arts from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. During her time as a graduate student, she was awarded a Provost Fellowship, a MFA scholarship and nominated for the Joan Mitchell MFA Foundation Award in 2012. Herrera is a current member of the Los Angeles Art Association and InLiquid in Philadelphia. She was also a Showcase Winner in Round 1 for Art Slant 2013.

DAVID GARRETT IZZO

Dr. David Garrett Izzo is an English Professor at Shaw University in Raleigh North Carolina who has published 17 books and 60 essays of literary scholarship, as well as three novels, two plays, a short story, and poems. David has published extensively on the Perennial Spiritual Philosophy of Mysticism (Vedanta) as applied to literature. He is inspired by the work of Aldous Huxley, Bruce Springsteen, his wife Carol and their five cats: Huxley, Max, Princess, Phoebe, and Luca. Two of his novels are fantasies with cats as characters: Maximus in Catland

and Purring Heights.
www.davidgarrettizzo.com

REZA HASHEMIZADEH

My name is Reza Hashemizadeh and I am a Graduate of California State University Northridge with a Masters in Visual Art. I would be very honored if you would consider my art for your magazine. I am attaching the Title, Dimension, Media and year of my works along with a little snippet of what my work is about. My work investigates the dynamics between humanity and progress, and its impact on the environment. I create collages made up entirely of recycled paper, mostly junk mail. Man-made materials and insignia of consumerism that directly correlate to endless human consumption with no regard for its outcome. The never-ending fractal-esque nature of my abstract designs are meant to replicate the very same never-ending nature of humanity's constant need to waste. The aesthetic outcomes of my hand made collages is meant as a juxtaposition of what could end up in a landfill having the potential of being something 'otherly' than just discarded waste of humanity.

ABIGAIL INMAN

Abigail Inman is an undergraduate English Literature and Language major at Cal Poly Pomona. Her passion for writing has found an outlet in her work for the Cal Poly Pomona Office of Public Affairs, her involvement with the school newspaper, and her volunteer work as a writing tutor and academic speaker for inmates with the Prison Education Project. She loves San Francisco, secret passageways, and bookbinding. She hopes to visit Japan sometime in the near future.

JEN JASTRAB

Jennifer Jastrab lives and works in Oakland, CA. Her artistic inquiries explore and interpret notions of place. These places can be real, imagined, remembered, and dreamed. In the role of artist - scribe, she relies upon the image making process to capture evanescent places as a poetic reverie of marks. Her work is held in private collections throughout the United States. Ms. Jastrab received her BFA from Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts and her MFA from John F. Kennedy University.

JOANNA KIDD

Joanna Kidd is a sculptor, printmaker and video installation artist. She creates visual representations of inner emotional states with work that provokes an immediate emotional response. After graduating in Philosophy and Cognitive Science from Dartmouth College, she studied Printmaking and Sculpture at San Francisco State University. She then moved to Florence, Italy and received a BFA in Sculpture and an MFA in Visual Art and Multimedia Techniques from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze. In 2012 she was Artist in Residence at Everglades National Park. She currently lives and works in northern California. Her work has been shown in exhibitions and video festivals in Italy, Serbia, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, England, France and the United States.

RON ESPIRITU LACSON

Ronillo Espiritu Lacson is an educator and does not consider himself a writer. He writes for meditative practice and cathartic therapy, in other words to help him sleep at night.

RYAN DAVID LEACK

Ryan David Leack is an English Ph.D. candidate at UC Riverside, where he studies rhetoric, composition, and the philosophy of space and place. He teaches English at Cal Poly Pomona where he received his M.A., and has been published in journals such as *Pif*, *RipRap*, *Contemporary World Literature*, *Strong Verse*, and *Word River*, as well as in *Pomona Valley Review*, of which is now the Editor-in-Chief. He lives a quiet life with his wife in Pomona seeking Thoreauvian tranquility and harmony with words.

KATHLENE LUJAN

Kathlene Lujan is an aspiring artist born and raised in the San Gabriel Valley. Currently residing in Glendora, California and is pursuing a degree in Fine Arts at Citrus College. This is Kathlene's first photograph to be published.

JADE LUM

I am a recent graduate from Cal Poly Pomona. I am a resident of Claremont, CA. with an interest in writing and art.

JOANNA MADLOCH

Joanna Madloch lives in NJ. She teaches Mythology and General Humanities at Montclair State University and her academic interest focuses on the juncture of verbal and pictorial arts with an emphasis on literature and photography. She explores the theory and practice of “photo-text” both in high-brow and popular culture, analyzing different aspects of incorporating photography into literary text. The result of this latest fascination with photography is a series of articles dedicated to the picture of a photographer

in literature and arts. In these works, the photographer is analyzed as an embodiment of the cultural archetypes of a trickster and a monster. In her photographic practice she is interested in portraying a human being in the context of city life. Her photographic works have been exhibited both in the US and Europe, where they have been awarded several prestigious honors.

KRISTA MARTINO

As you have discovered, my name is Krista Martino and I passionately indulge myself in creative writing on a regular basis. When I am not working on perfecting my main story (it's a trilogy), or writing original works for great organizations like this, I am riding my horse and enjoying it so, reading books and learning loads, and exploring my inner and outer self through shared experiences with some of the greatest people in the world.

ROBERT MCPARLAND

Robert McParland teaches in New Jersey, where he is also a performing musician and songwriter. He is the author of Charles Dickens's American Audience and he often writes on history, literature, and popular music.

CYNTHIA MILIONIS

Cynthia Milionis earned a BFA in painting from the University of Washington and an MFA in printmaking at San Francisco State University. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions nationwide and internationally and is held in private and public collections, including the International Museum of Collage, the Americas Biennial Exhibition Archive, and the Hoffberg Archive at the UCSB Library.

Cynthia resides in San Francisco and prints at historical Fort Mason. Cynthia's works have been described as "visual playgrounds." Her prints begin on the printing press and, after multiple runs, take final form as collages and mixed-media monoprints.

KRYSTAL KYSS MOBLEY

My name is Krystal Mobley and I'm a Florida born visual artist now residing in the beautiful eccentric city of Los Angeles, CA. Art has always been the medium to which I am able to express myself to others. My innately odd yet playful personality allows me to have a contrasting view on life which definitely shows in my work. My goal is that the theme, feel, and emotions of my pieces resonate with the viewer and evoke thought.

MOO | MONIKA MORI

Monika Mori was born in 1960 in Moedling (Austria) and had formal trainings by Prof. Anneliese Beschorner. Since 2008, her work has been internationally exhibited and is included in major and private collections. MOO interprets - as Goethe remarked - the art as a mediator of the unspeakable. She communicates through her works and wants to re-animate, in the native word-sense! Monika Mori, known as the artist MOO, works with bold colors and strokes allowing free elements of drips and dashes to bisect her canvases. For Mori, color is liberating. Only through art can one mediate the unspeakable, so this allows for a greater freedom within a work. It is a language unto itself and there is merit to all interpretations. The subtle earth palette glows from the surface of the canvas and illuminates the striking dripped forms. Their uneven linear progress forms crowds, forests, circuitry – they travel and

lead us on through the painting and beyond. The strength of these paintings reflects the strength of Mori herself, and the intensity of the message she has to convey.

CHRISTOPHER MULROONEY

Christopher Mulrooney has written poems in Pacific Review, Tulane Review, Compass Rose, Mot Dit, Otoliths, Kaffeeklatsch, Weyfarers, and Orbis.

ANAKAREN MUNOZ

My work is figurative and is dominated by the situations that people go through every day. Much of this subject matter can be somber, thus leaving the viewer in a pensive state of mind.

JAN NIEBRYZDOWSKI

Currently, I am a copy editor working on the research book, Practical Analysis of Composite Structures by Dr. Brian Esp. I have been a free-lance writer for many years. A selection of my poems has been accepted for print publication with a tentative publication date in 2014. I enjoy painting and portrait sketching. I am also finishing my first novel, titled "Sweet Sins".

TAYLOR OLSON

My name is Taylor Olson and I am studying Landscape Architecture at Cal Poly Pomona. I have always had a great love of writing and all other art forms. I only hope to show my work to inspire others and express myself through this medium.

OLIVIA PARKES

Olivia Parkes was born in London but grew up in Los Angeles. She studied Art and Art

History at Wesleyan University and currently works as a painter and a writer in Berlin. Her short stories have previously been published in *The New Haven Review*, *Stand Magazine*, and *The Clackamas Review*.

PATRICK QUINN

I am a Mixed-Media artist who works mainly with found objects and salvaged materials. The work tends to be raw and emotional. A vintage suitcase can serve as a canvas. An old photo can tell a new story. My work will often mix traditional Assemblage elements with different mediums. Stained glass techniques, metal sculpture, and ink printing have all been incorporated into my work. I am currently a member of the Los Angeles Art Association and live in the city of Eagle Rock, California.

LAQUINCEY REED

LaQuincey was born in Lawton, Oklahoma to military family and traveled around the states until his family returned to Lawton where his father retired from the military. He went to and graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 2005 with a BFA. After graduating he went to work assisting Paul Moore on the Oklahoma City Land Run Monument. He has helped sculpting minor elements of the monument and helped making the molds for the monument. LaQuincey has completed several commissions. One commission is for Oklahoma Baptist University of their past president James R. Scales. Another completed commission is of Eugene Adkins for the Fred Jones Junior Art Museum's new construction at the University of Oklahoma. He is working with the City of Choctaw, Oklahoma to add four new sculptures to their Veteran's memorial.

AMANDA RIGGLE

Amanda Riggle is currently a Cal Poly Pomona student majoring in English under the Education option. She is also a Contributing Editor at *The Poetics Project*, an on-line poetry and writing blog. Her main inspiration in life comes from her friends and her younger sister. In the future, Amanda hopes to become a teacher and inspire her students to be avid readers, writers and critical thinkers.

DIEGO MARCIAL RIOS

Diego Marcial Rios lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and paints in acrylics. He graduated with honors with an M.A./M.F.A. from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Department of Fine Arts Graduate School and a B.F.A. from University of California at Berkeley. Diego has a C.L.P. from the University of San Francisco. He received a number of fellowships for his Academic study. His artwork illustrates many complex social-economic issues faced by contemporary society. Diego Marcial Rios' fine art has been included in more than 450 exhibitions from Japan to Bulgaria. His artwork has been included in many magazines. Diego has been a recent guest speaker at UC Merced, St. Marys College, San Jose State University, De Anza College.

ANTHONY ROJAS

My name is Anthony Rojas, a Graphic Design student at California Polytechnic University, Pomona. I usually explore mixed media drawings/ paintings of various themes, lately those involving emotion and life. I tend to put an emphasis on expressive feeling, atmosphere, and often purposefully naive qualities, over realistic depiction. Abstract and illustrative elements find their

way into my work too. Even without knowing much about my work, I still hope to generate some sense of feeling or wonder in the audience as I continue to explore my style and ideas.

KATHRYN ROSS

I began writing at age 10 after reading the Harry Potter series for the first time. Since then I've been endlessly inspired to write over a hundred short stories, poems and essays with roots in spiritual, science fiction and fantasy genres. My favorite authors and biggest influences are Ray Bradbury, J.R.R. Tolkien, J.K. Rowling, Edith Wharton, Edgar Allen Poe and John Steinbeck. I am K.H. Ross, 19 years old and a student at Azusa Pacific University. A big thank you to all who read my work and I hope you enjoy it!

FRANK SCOZZARI

My fiction has previously appeared in various literary magazines, including The Kenyon Review, South Dakota Review, Folio, The Nassau Review, Roanoke Review, Pacific Review, Reed Magazine, Ellipsis Magazine, Sycamore Review, Eureka Literary Magazine, The MacGuffin, Foliate Oak Literary Journal, Hawai'i Pacific Review, Chrysalis Reader, and many others. Writing awards include Winner of the National Writer's Association Short Story Contest and three publisher nominations for the Pushcart Prize of Short Stories.

HEMANT KUMAR SHARMA

Hemant Kumar Sharma was educated in India at the University of Delhi. He holds M.A. and M.Phil. degrees in English and has been engaged in teaching English literature to undergraduates since 2001. He has worked as a Lecturer of English at the Prince Salman University in Saudi Arabia

from 2008 to 2012 and currently teaches English at the University of Delhi. He is currently working on a collection of poems and a novel.

LAURALEE SIKORSKI

Lauralee Sikorski is a Connecticut born award winning artist currently living in the midwest . After art showings in Chicago, Northwest Indiana and Southwest Michigan she travelled to London where she was juried into a Raw Arts Exhibition at the Candid Arts Center and had her artwork purchased into a private collection. She has been on a break from the art world and gallery shows during the past few years while pursuing multiple certifications in yoga and meditation and is now teaching yoga and fusing meditative states and painting and enjoying the marriage between the two disciplines. This past year and for the second time, her art work was chosen for the front page of an Indianapolis based Arts Magazine- BRANCHES now celebrating their 25th year in print. For more information contact Lauraleesikorski@yahoo.com.

SARAH STONE

Sarah got her start in the LA art scene when she applied for work as a prop maker at Roger Corman's film studio in Venice. She was immediately inducted into their art crew, thus launching a career designing and fabricating props and sets for a wide variety of films and even some iconoclastic puppet theater productions. Her paintings combine totemic icons, dream symbols and biomechanical elements such as veins and roots to deconstruct conceptual barriers of cultural and biological separation between ourselves, other humans and the world in which we live. Her studio is located in Ventura County, and her work can be found

in galleries, magazines, films, botanicas, and tattoo parlors around the country.

MATTHEW FELIX SUN

In depicting life frankly and critically as visual surfaces and interior qualities, Matthew Felix Sun reaches toward historical and social commentary. Art ought to be both from life, and above life, revealing what is behind. Sun has exhibited in several national competitions and his work is collected in the US, Canada, and China. He has been building an Apocalypse Series of paintings and drawings since the US was poised to invade Iraq in 2003. Growing up in China's repressive culture and atmosphere formed the foundation of his world view and his work. His portfolio can be viewed at matthewfelixsun.com.

ALEXANDRA VAINSHTEIN

Alexandra was born in Leningrad, former USSR. At age of 10 she asked mother put her through art school, where she got her first concept of what art was all about. Sadly, because of repressions by the Soviet Union authorities, Alexandra's family was forced to leave "North Venice" and immigrate to Israel. There she had amazing opportunity continue her education as artist. A few years ago she moved to New York City. New York has influenced her with tremendous amounts of positive energy. "Our world is very dynamic, and is never the same from day to day. Almost everyday something changes, sometimes not for the best." As an artist she feels obligated to preserve those wonderful moments and pass them on to the next generation.

RUBIA DALBOSCO VAN ROODSELAAR

I was born and raised in Brazil, where I trained as a Jewelry Designer in my teens

and became fascinated by the magic of producing wearable pieces of art. I first emigrated to Canada and then to the United States, earning a degree in Architecture from UC Berkeley. I have studied art at the College of Marin, CSU Bakersfield and the Glassell School of Art in Houston. My work has been exhibited at juried shows both in Texas and California, including "The Big Show" at the Lawndale Art Center in Houston, and have corporate commissions in both California and Thailand. My work include acrylic portraits in bold, contrasting tones that remind me of the faceted brilliance of gemstones, and landscapes that evoke the rich contrasting colors of the Brazilian rainforest.

RONALD WALKER

My name is Ronald walker and I live in the Sacramento area with my wife and two children. I teach art in the San Juan unified school district. I hold a MFA from the university of Kansas in painting as well as a MA in painting and drawing from Central Missouri State University. I have had 37 solo exhibitions and been exhibited in over 200 various exhibitions around the United States. My bio is listed in Who's Who in American Art.

RAMON YANEZ

I am a first year English major with an emphasis on Literature and Language at Cal Polytechnic University, Pomona. I intend to become a lawyer in due time, and figure I might as well enjoy my craft enough to make something with it. Though I've never been published I hope very much to make a small collection of poetry and short stories someday, just to say I've published a collection of my own works.



Thank you for reading