

The Blue Guitar



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Co-editor’s Note

To the written and visual artists in this issue who are sharing their works: Thank you!

Concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic have had far-reaching impacts on the arts, such as canceling festivals, music events and other entertainment, to help stem the spread of the virus.

As we follow through with the needed social distancing, arts that we would attend outside in groups are moving online — a musical duo streaming music while friends and family watch online; a club moving its artist-of-the-month competition to its website, with “votes” by e-mail; painters showcasing their works in daily Facebook posts; live violin lessons so your teacher can correct your form; museums with virtual tours, our arts consortium’s monthly e-newsletter packed with virtual things to do; and with no commute (working from home), reading a chapter of a book before dinner or escaping to another reality with the fine works in The Blue Guitar magazine and at back issues at www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org ... The sky’s the limit.

Stay safe and healthy.

– Co-Editor Richard H. Dyer Jr.



Co-Editor
Richard H.
Dyer Jr.

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www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org

Spring 2020

The View From My Window

By Pamela Pelletier

© 2020

The late January sun shines through my window as we drive our white 71 Westfalia bus back from our latest getaway adventure to Joshua Tree National Park. Navigating is my job, and it's pretty much a straight shot south on I-10 after the Sacaton rest area. My mind starts to wander, and I begin to plan our next adventure. Where should we explore next?

As I look out the window westward, I see jagged mountaintops. My hand traces these mountains on the map — the Sawtooth Mountains — aptly named. Just south of the Sawtooth Mountains lies the Ironwood Forest National Monument, adjacent to the lands of the Tohono O'odham people. It's an area I haven't explored — which is a requirement on some of our bus trips.

I'm an Arizona native who grew up exploring every inch of the land with my family, while my boyfriend moved here from Washington a year and half ago. As much as I love visiting old favorites, it's a different kind of journey when you can explore new places together. I tossed the idea of Ironwood Forest out for discussion and we weighed the pros and cons. It's a relatively short drive from our home in Tucson (on hour seven, with a spring poking through the driver's seat — this is clearly seen as a benefit), and there's designated camping at Picacho Peak if we don't feel like boondocking. Another benefit to the bus: Camp is all set to go when we feel like stopping or making dinner.

Access to the monument is a one loop road that goes west from Marana. Two old abandoned mines are listed on the map just outside the monument. Mines bring back memories of growing up with my family. We'd take weekend camping trips to the mountains where my grandfather had a mining claim and we'd pan for minerals in the creek. We'd find old mine shafts



Sunset sky as seen through the windshield of a 1971 Westfalia bus on U.S. Highway 62 heading toward Joshua Tree National Park near Twentynine Palms, California, on Jan. 2, 2020. (Photo by Pamela Pelletier)

with my dad and crawl in, not sure if we would run into snakes or spiders or maybe strike it rich and find some gold nuggets. We never found any nuggets but certainly had some adventures. Perhaps we could explore the mines near the monument.

Referring once again to my trusty Gazetteer, further south of the monument is the Roskrige Mountains. A quick Google search tells me that these mountains were named after George J. Roskrige of Tucson, who was U.S. surveyor general of Arizona from 1896-97, and who died in 1928. I often ponder why place names are named after people who discovered them, rather than the names given by the original inhabitants of this land. There is Pescadero Peak, which translates to "fishmonger," and Recortado Peak, which means "sawed-off." I wonder what the inspiration was — fishmonger in the desert is an odd choice.

Continued on page 4



Pamela Pelletier has coordinated the outreach programming for the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research for the past seven years. Pamela is currently a second-year PhD student in Arid Lands, minoring in Art and Visual Culture Education and Science Communication. Pamela is interested in how visual imagery can be used to communicate science, especially as it pertains to wildfires. Pamela is passionate about environmental education. She feels every child has the right to learn outside and to be curious about the environment around us. Pamela has two children, ages seven and ten. She loves hiking and camping, especially in the 1971 VW Westfalia with her boyfriend. Pamela knows her way around power tools and can often be found roping her two kids into doing DIY projects in her backyard. She also is a fiber artist and loves every aspect of making art.

Photo by Brian Pettepiece

Continued from page 3

Further south and west, there are many mine symbols in the areas around Rio Rico, Patagonia and Sonoita. We could head southwest toward Pena Blanca Lake and Ruby, one of the best-preserved ghost towns in Arizona. It was founded as a mining town in Bear Valley, originally named Montana Camp, as it was established at the base of Montana Peak. Ghost towns are one of our favorite areas to photograph.

The sunlight began to fade. The miles passed, bringing us closer to home.

I've explored much of the Santa Rita Mountains but not the old mine sites. Interestingly, the old mines are located on the west side of the Santa Ritas, while the new proposed Rosemont Mine is northeast, adjacent to the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. We camped there last February, after getting a hand-drawn map with directions from a local at the Copper Brothel Brewery in Sonoita for the "best place to camp."

We talked about the controversy surrounding the proposed mine. I can see both sides — the benefit of growing up with a dad who worked on mine sites and did mineral exploration and the scientific understanding to know that destruction of pristine arid lands for mineral exploration may never recover after mining.

One only has to explore old mining towns like Ruby or Fairbank, located along the banks of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area to see the dichotomy. It's a balancing act — each human will use a million pounds of rocks, minerals and metals during our lifetime — and yet, no ecological restoration projects have successfully restored life back to the desert as it once was.

As we pulled in the driveway, bodies aching but hearts full, we resolved to get back on the road as soon as we could and head south. The destination is unknown at this point, but life is about the journey, the person you are with, and a VW camper bus named Penny Lane.



A view of the sunset sky captured through the window of the 1971 Westfalia bus broke down on U.S. Highway 70 near Safford, Arizona, on Nov. 2, 1019. (Photo by Pamela Pelletier)

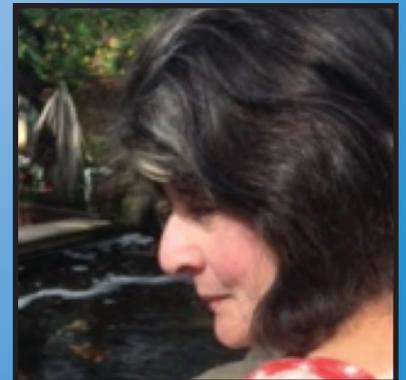
2 Poems by Paula Ashley

Letters

© 2020

in old shoe boxes, broken at the edges,
handwritten, legible, illegible, in foreign dialects,
folded, flat, in torn envelopes, stamped, stamps torn off.
Letters in boxes shoved under the bed, stashed in closets,
typed, in cursive. Papers green, yellow, manila, white.
Lives recorded for parents, children, family, friends,
business, art, charities. Lives lived, lives deceased, lives forgotten
except in letters stashed in attics, basements, sheds in backyards,
storage lockers, storage pods, storage climate controlled or not.
Text typed, text handwritten, mimeographed, laser-printed,
telegraphed, teletyped, translated into bits of ones and zeros,
encrypted, emailed computer to computer, erased daily, or
backed up on discs, servers, or in the cloud for posterity on media
no longer accessed, no passwords to unlock, no hardware to read
old papyrus, rock, paper, cassettes, floppies, discs, cloud. No longer
in shoe boxes, trunks, closets, attics, basements, sheds.
But the people, who are the people? do their lives matter?
Does no one care? No paper to touch to see halting,
faltering cursive, the foreign phrase, the lapse into prior lives.
No envelopes to ponder distances, stamps evoking lost eras.
Books, newspapers, microfiche. Libraries, little free libraries,
large university libraries, archives for letters of the famous.
Lives with no descendants to honor their memory. Lives buried
in fires, floods, earthquakes, war, earth's ultimate oblivion,
lost to the myriad of other interstellar objects in the universe.
Lost to the urgency of the moment, the immediate, the mundane.

Paula Ashley is a retired software engineer. She lives in Glendale, Arizona, with her husband and an abundance of birds that hang out on the solar fountains in their backyard. Paula writes: " 'The Old Black Cat' was written about a month before the abandoned and abused cat that we found in our backyard one hot August day passed on. Very sad. We had cared for him for about fifteen years. 'Letters' came out of briefly looking at the boxes of letters in our backyard 'she shed' that I had brought there from my parents' house when I closed it way back in 1997. I am still pondering what to do with it all!"



The Old Black Cat

© 2020

One day I found him stretched out motionless
under the bougainvillea.

I brought him a dish, canned salmon, a bowl of water.
Left the dishes beside him.

Later, through the kitchen window, I saw him eating.
The Old Black Cat did not allow me to touch him,

but followed me around. He meowed at the back door
when he was hungry.

One day, he was gone. He came back the next,
a hole poked under his left eye, then disappeared

under the rosemary which sprawled over & down
a backyard berm. One week later he reappeared, healed.

A bully cat marked our backyard. The Old Black Cat
fought back, finished last, bloody holes pocked his face.

He disappeared under the rosemary. I did not see
him for a week until he reappeared, healed.

After a spring rain, a coyote vaulted the backyard wall,
chasing a neighbor's white chicken.

The Old Black Cat raced up a tree, perched, & turned
back & forth watching the alley until the coyote was gone.

He is old now. His legs wobble. Some days, he does not eat.
The rosemary no longer heals him.

I watch him from the kitchen window. I don't want
to watch him die. He is just an old cat. Or is he me?

A Peaceful Day in Panama

By Mackenzie Payton



The mountains in Boquete, Panama, in March 2016. (Photo by Mackenzie Payton)

© 2020

I woke up to the chirping of a small black-and-red bird perched in a tree outside my window. The scarlet-rumped tanager had replaced my alarm clock during my vacation in Boquete, Panama, a small town that is home to many American retirees. Today was Easter Sunday, and I had planned to attend Mass at Boquete’s Roman Catholic church. Never did I expect to end up stranded in a double-wide trailer with complete strangers.

The hostel where I was staying was only a 10-minute walk from town, so I decided to leave after my school group did.

Hiking alone into town was relaxing. Each house was painted a vibrant yellow or blue. Despite the hot tropical sun, the front yards overflowed with pansies and orchids. The cobblestone streets were lined with street vendors, bakeries and antique stores.

I was still hoping to find the Easter Vigil Mass. After struggling to speak to locals with my limited Spanish, I decided to simply ask for the “church.”

Eventually, all the pointing led to a cracked road sign that

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Mackenzie Payton, age 20, is a sophomore in the journalism program at the University of Arizona. She is from Vancouver, Canada. Since she was a child, she has enjoyed the outdoors and travel. Mackenzie is focusing on global journalism and is working toward a career based around travel writing, culture and politics. She also rides horses for the University of Arizona’s rodeo team.

Continued from page 7

read “Jesus” with an attached wooden arrow. Keep in mind, I had been looking for half an hour. This sighting seemed like a miracle sent from the man himself. Well, around the corner was not a beautiful historic chapel but a mobile home with a cross stapled to the door. It was not Panamanian locals who invited me in but cowboys and their Southern families.

Despite everything about the situation screaming danger, I strolled inside. English was the primary language of these people, yet what they were discussing seemed foreign. About a hundred Anglos in old-fashioned country dresses, cowboy hats and bolo ties were debating the correct ways to follow God and their connection to him. I listened to Hannah, a 13-year-old blond girl, explain her plans for a future engagement. I even

received an invitation to stay for a discussion group. After spending an hour with people who all looked related, I decided I needed to leave.

In the evening, my school group sat around a small fire behind our hostel. Everyone was buzzing about where I had ended up that afternoon, so I told my story. According to our tour guide, I had visited a group of people from southern Texas and Georgia who had been told by their God to migrate to Boquete and spread their influence across Panama.

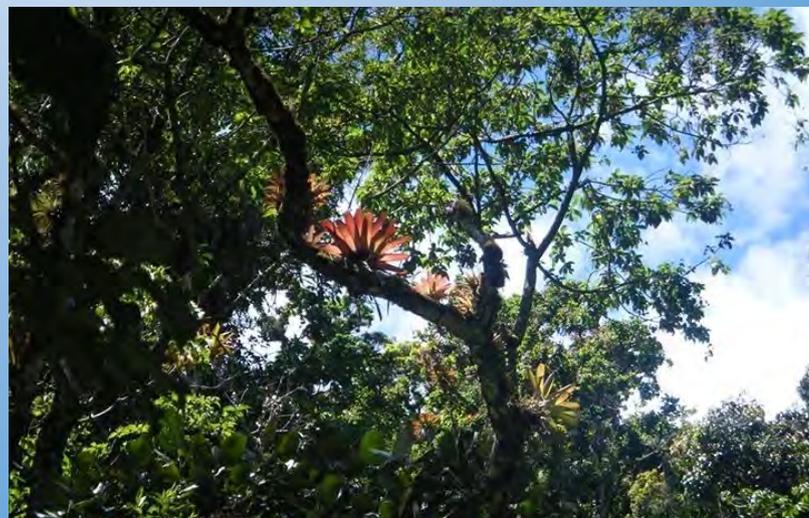
Despite the “potential threat to my life,” as my mom likes to say, my story is one that only I can retell. Even though this is not what the typical Boquete tourist experiences, it confirmed that having an open mind can lead to unforgettable memories and maybe a little more caution when talking to strangers.



The students of Thomas Haney Secondary pose for a photo before going boating to search for manatees, in San San-Pond Sak, Panama, in March 2016. (Photo courtesy of Mackenzie Payton)



Above: The national flag of Panama in March 2016. Right: Nature in Boquete, Panama, in March 2016. (Photos by Mackenzie Payton)



3 Poems by David Chorlton

The Last Word

© 2020

Into evening
the lovebirds fly along a drawn-out screech
to the far end of the street;
playing on the radio
is a sorrowful song whose notes are so long
they stretch all the way into
the sunset and back; light disentangles itself
from the plum tree's branches
as the sky speaks truth
to power, but power always has
a place to hide while
speaking truth to a neighbor
leaves the neighbor looking back, eye
to naked eye.



Photo by David Chorlton



David Chorlton was born in Austria, grew up in Manchester, England, and lived in Vienna before moving to Phoenix in 1978. The Bitter Oleander Press published "Shatter the Bell in My Ear," translations of poems by Austrian poet Christine Lavant. "Reading T.S. Eliot to a Bird" is from Hoot 'n' Waddle, in Phoenix, and a long poem, "Speech Scroll," comes from Cholla Needles Arts & Literary Library.

Light Rain at Dusk

© 2020

As the sky makes up its mind between
late afternoon storm and
a calmer shading into night, a Red-tailed
pair pass over
the domestic scenes
of trimming bougainvillea or taking
introspection on a leash for
the day's second walk. They're leaning
on the political winds, one
to the left, one to
center, and a few drops test
the mood for rain. It's an indecisive
time, when the moon is a coin tossed high
to see whether it will land heads
or tails and the sun takes the easy way down,
leaving with a wink
as it slips behind the mountain with
its secrets undisclosed while lightning
flashes Morse code through
the fire edged clouds.



Photo by David Chorlton

5 Poems by Audrey Sher-Walton

Indifferent Hands/ In Different Hands

© 2020

not whiskey filled
squatting waiting for language
indifferent hands
unlaced
sumptuously effective

In different hands
breathed only for flowers
tough back
drab ghost

dead world shrouded in injustice
Hugged unfettered kingdom
twilight of mourning

swept



Audrey Sher-Walton is the founder of Write ON! Eastside Writing Group and was a member of Writers Lunch and Quiet Writing. Two of her poems won Pima's Family Heritage Project Contest. She has been a guest reader on KXCI's Poet's Moment and at the University of Arizona. She penned monthly columns in two Tucson newspapers. Her poems have been published in Zocolo, Unstrung, Aurora, and in her own collection: "All the Colors of My Life Are Red," which is part of the University of Arizona's Poetry Center's Archival Collection. Audrey is the facilitator of Wordslingers Writing Group. She is the associate editor of Awakenings Literary Review and serves on the Board of Directors for The Awakenings Project. Audrey owns Mrs. Audrey's Academic Achievement, a tutoring service. Audrey can be reached at: Redwavepress@yahoo.com.

I'm Afraid

© 2020

Afraid of turning into my mother

Not the sweet altruistic part
Nor the martyr mom portion

I'm afraid of early aging
going from doctor to
doctor to doctor
each body part clamoring for attention

first faltering
then decaying

pumping heart working overtime
insulin in vast demand

retinas withering
neuropathy stinging

My genetics frighten me

Load up on spinach, flax, raspberries
Lift weights, swim

Are you feeling me, DNA?
Are you changing your program
the way I changed ZIP codes?

Salmon sizzles
no sign of Ben & Jerry's
tucked away in the freezer

still the phone rings
confirming
tomorrow's appointment

Distasteful Pleasure

© 2020

Terror swells
dueling like Olympian fencers
Thoughts a rapier
sharp and exacting

Secretive except
agitated hazel eyes

Secretive except
slouch huddling

Tense sinewy
shoulders tighten
Knotted
A body retreating into itself

Dainty Vietnamese nail tech quietly coaxes
... let your fingers relax
Just when you thought they were

Easier just to nest at home

Where none of the siren sounds scream
Dissolving distasteful pleasure

And isn't that just what it is?
Distasteful pleasure

Too arduous a task
to just have fun

To Be Love

© 2020

shadowy streets echo laughter
in
underwater dawn
wandering towers fall
moss breaks night's chains
delirious to
be love

Be the love
Until the end

Satin Shackles

© 2020

Writhing in satin shackles
frozen in dawn's new colors
lifts/rejoices on a
drunkard road
say/don't
hide
Aching for
invite

2 Poems by Elena Rozenblum

Another Invisible Face

© 2020

The man with the sign,
Another invisible face,
Lost in the smoke,
Of the unstoppable race.
“I was once like you,”
His tired eyes scream
Utterly consumed,
by the American Dream.

How with ease we dispose our
Eerie and ill,
If you lag behind the pack,
You are hurled down the hill,
Cursed to drift—a nomadic life,
Left to bleed as a wounded buck,
You will only belong,
At the time of the dark.

As a shivering leaf,
A dimming streetlight,
Who will reach out a hand?
Who will convince him to fight!

I will lower the window,
Hand out a bill,
Is it enough? I wonder,
To save a soul from the chill.

Elena is a commodity manager and supply chain engineer at Intel Corporation. She lives in Chandler, AZ, together with her husband, two sweet boys and a fluffy cat. Elena started writing poetry in middle school, and has written poems in additional languages as well. She loves art, riding a bike and traveling.



The Rock

© 2020

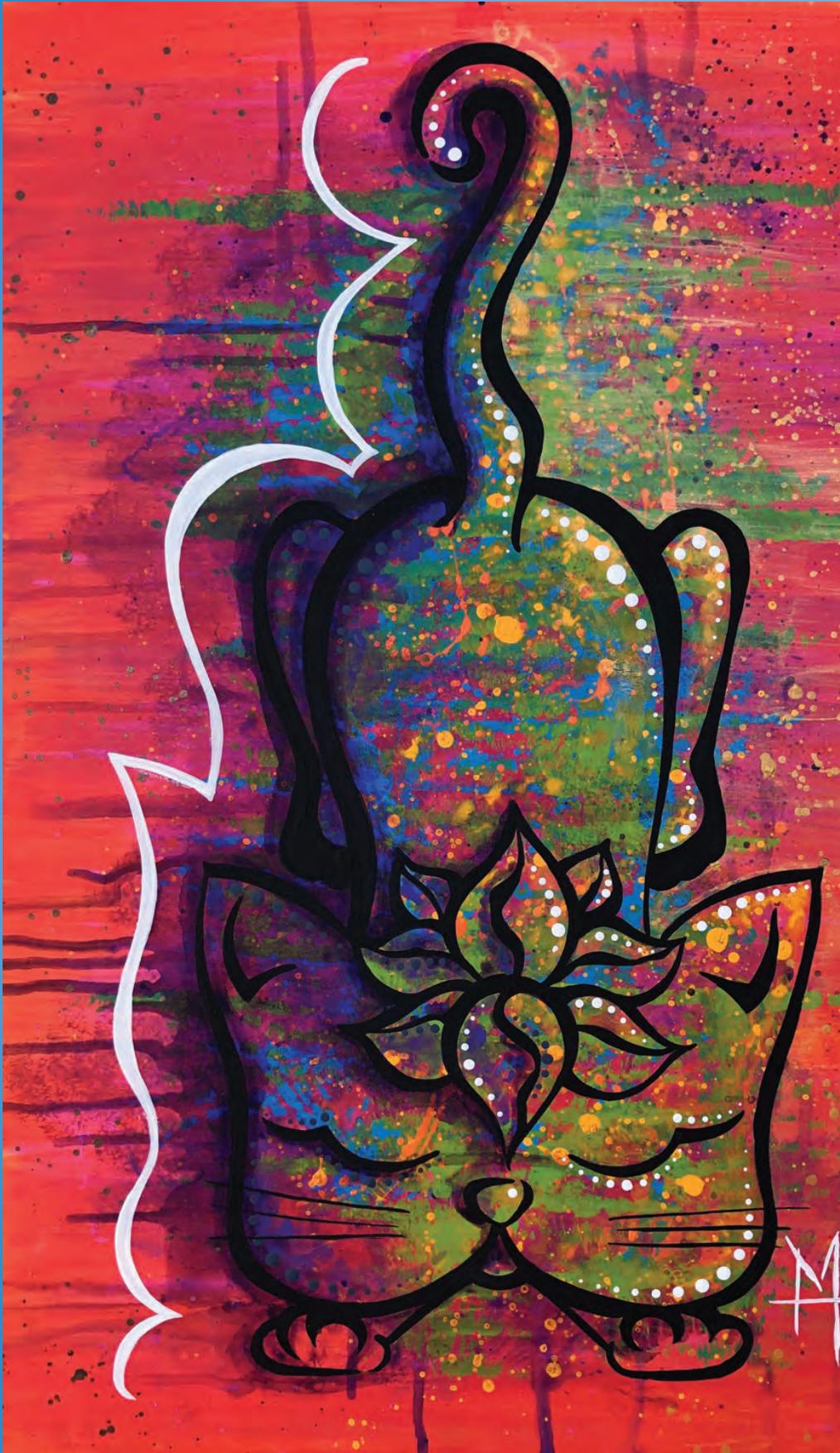
My lungs pierced sharply by a blade like breath,
The flesh invigorated by my faithful heartbeat.
I cling to rocks, or do they to me, it is not clear.
I am the mountain, I am the pick, we are complete.
What do I seek? When I gaze up above the clouds.
What do I fear? When I look down into the void.
Another second to grasp on life, to comprehend peace.
My rope! My sanity, do not abandon me, my friend!

Mindy Timm

Phoenix Artist



Mindy Timm, self-taught artist and designer, was born and raised in Phoenix and continues to make the Valley her home. Mindy strives to create eye popping, joy-bringing images, in many cases using “ALL” the colors. “For me, more color equals more happiness. If you would surround yourself with my work, I’d like to think you’d get the same feeling of bliss that a little kid gets in one of those ball-pits. Minus any mystery liquids and suspicious smells, of course!” From rock-star quality embellished jackets to hand-drawn business logos, Mindy specializes in custom creations, utilizing a wide range of mediums and techniques to bring her clients’ ideas to life. Follow her @scissoredvixen on IG and @mindytimm on Facebook to see Mindy’s most current works, in progress and for sale. Email scissoredvixen@yahoo.com.



“Downward Kitty”
Acrylic on masonite board
May 2019

Mindy Timm

Phoenix Artist



“Hope - Kanji Kitty 1”
Acrylic on birch panel
November 2019

Mindy Timm

Phoenix Artist



“Blessing - Kanji Kitty 2”
Acrylic on birch panel
November 2019

If the homage wasn't obvious enough, I've been a fan of Hello Kitty most of my adult life. She seems so calm with her cute, nearly-expressionless face - no matter what the activity or circumstance. As someone whose eyes involuntarily roll in disgust or frustration sometimes, I'm jealous of HK's control. “Downward Kitty” and “Zen Kitty” are definitely examples of me wanting to use ALL the color, which could feel a little chaotic, but with the meditative kitties in yoga poses as the focus, I find these pieces extremely calming and uplifting. And FUN.

The “Kanji Kats” series features a day in the life of my version of the “maneki-neko” of Japanese “good luck cat.” The Kanji symbols represent “Hope,” “Blessings” and “Celebrate” as this happy cat's hope is rewarded with blessings that he is able to share and celebrate with loved ones. Everything seems so twisted and complicated these days - I felt like we could all use a reminder of this simple sequence.

- Mindy Timm

Mindy Timm

Phoenix Artist

祝



“Celebrate -
Kanji Kitty 3”
Acrylic on
birch panel
November 2019

Mindy Timm

Phoenix Artist



"Zen Kitty"

Acrylic on birch panel
May 2019

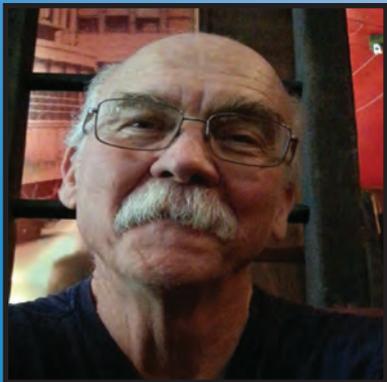
2 Poems by Gari Crowley

Autumn Cantabile

© 2020

I sing a song
of free ranging children
from the cover of Casas Lindas
to the rodeo grounds, the railroad tracks,
and the desert basin.
Crowded from twelve years old
to sixty eight, from immortal
to the mortal,
as the dry lake,
filled with rain water,
is always mirrored in the sun.

This song,
of ethereal tones—
daydreams
in a sweet pianissimo.
Words about eternity,
a quiet halcyon song in a pensive ataraxia.
A fleeting song for the age
that did not act upon time,
where my childhood is living in absentia.



Gari lives in Sierra Vista with his wife, Linda, and their two cats, Tony and Baxter. He can be reached at gvinnc51@gmail.com.

La Frontera: Sean's Epiphany

© 2020

The sense of it—
A kid in t-shirt, shorts,
bare feet
and white, white hair.
Looking at a shin-tangle
of wire, barbs and weeds.
Fence posts with history
and a piercing scent of age.
Old wood slobbered on by countless
doomed and abused steers.
The wind was billowing dust,
whistling hollow,
through the lonely clatter of the wire,
the greying of the sky
and the sadness.

He hiked through muted grasses
upon serried rock,
about boulders gutted from the earth.
Jeep, boots and a pistol
as he roamed for the color of depiction,
tapping his stored aggregate of history.
It is in his blood—
the metaphor, tragedy and death.
In darkness: border crossers, smugglers,
paranoid miners, danger and mystery,
with a sadness in the eyes and minds
of the desolate women and men with no future.

Oil, acrylic, and water color,
the center of interest
and focal
point.
A resurrection of faces
with stories unsettled and random.
Old cemeteries
with bleak plastic flowers left by keepers of a history
we will never know.
The only comfort
as a blanket pulled
over the face of a sad land.

Once, he saw this old wood off the road,
in the Santa Cruz river
used by men
with no future seeking fire wood
and finding him. He could not help.
Only to paint a picture
of fence posts, wire, darkness.
and lost people.

3 Poems by Janet McMillan Rives

Look

© 2020

at how color comes together
on a Northern Flicker
hidden in delicate branches
of a dormant desert willow.

The sound comes first
Wacka! Wacka!
calling me to stop,
look, see the hues.
Ginger, ebony, crimson, taupe
pop against an azure sky.

Movement in a willow tree
says *Watch me! Watch me!*
Colors in motion ask
to be a part of my day.



Janet McMillan Rives grew up in Connecticut and Arizona. She retired as professor of economics from the University of Northern Iowa. Her poems have appeared in *Lyrical Iowa*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *Sandcutters*, *The Blue Guitar*, *The Avocet*, *Unstrung*, *Fine Lines* and *The Raw Art Review* as well as anthologies including "Women Facing West," "Voices from the Plains" and "Desert Tracks: Poems from the Sonoran Desert." Her chapbook, "Into This Sea of Green: Poems from the Prairie," is forthcoming in fall 2020.

Invitation from a Kangaroo Rat

© 2020

You thought you'd thwarted me
with those stinky marigolds. Ha!
By now you know I just love them.
Yes, please keep throwing
the dead heads in my corner.
Let me celebrate the Day of the Dead
with you all winter long.

Those fluffy orange beauties taste
almost as good as the red hibiscus
in the tall pot, even better
than the bacopa you arranged
for my dinner last night.
Nothing, though, has been as yummy
as the red and pink petunias I devoured
the first night I saw them. By now
you know my favorite colors,
my favorite foods, my favorite
hour to cavort in our garden.

Say, why don't you join me tonight?
I know you think my home is just
a hole in the ground. I will show you
it's a palace, lovely furnishings,
a framed print, *Petunias* by Georgia O'Keeffe.
Her florid, radiant colors and contours,
her subtle details, inhabit the space
between abstraction and realism.
I love her art. It looks delicious.

Mary's Basket

© 2020

woven in nineteen thirty-seven by a Papago Indian,
sits on my bookshelf, not showcased in any way,
though likely worth plenty in today's market.
I picture the artisan, a woman who would now be called
a Native American from the Tohono O'odham Nation.

Grandma's wash woman, Mary, gave the basket
to my mother on her wedding day.
It traveled across country where for years,
decades, Mother used it, along with a tin tray
and a tea towel carrying an image of Mission San Xavier,
icons to trigger memories of her desert home.

Times changed, Mary died, Grandma bought
a machine and learned to do her own wash,
Mother moved back home, no longer needed
Mary's basket to remember her beginnings.
Long before she died, Mother gave me this gift,
a symbol of stories played out before my time.

Le Beak: A Journey of Disappointment and of Triumph

By Alana Minkler

© 2020

I was clinging for life off Le Beak, one of the most famous bouldering rocks in America. Sweat dripped off my face. Blood fell from my fingers. Brows furrowed, I fell—about 2 feet onto a well-padded mat. My ego was a little bruised, but my friends high-fived me and praised my effort.

Every climb at the Fountain Red area in Cowell, Arkansas, was damp, frigid and rough. The sky was gray, and the temperature was always below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. At night, the wind pounded down on our tents, making me feel as if we would get whisked away into the night if we slept too soundly. Luckily, the cold, rocky ground didn't let us fall asleep at all.

On top of that, as a 5-foot-tall beginning rock climber, I was intimidated by my friends' abilities to scrape themselves up the wall or just simply jump and hang off the boulder's highest ledges. I couldn't even complete a V0, one of the easiest grades of climbs, and quickly my fingers turned raw and bleeding, as did my ego.

But by the end of the second night, we had busted out a classy box of wine and threw some "hobo dinners" into the campfire (a meal our friend Dakota had invented, which was made up of prepared steak and vegetables wrapped in aluminum foil). Warming our bums by the campfire, we began laughing and telling stories. I learned about high school pranks, worst fears and life-changing events. I forgot about my fingers and felt proud of how sore and broken I felt.

The next day, we went back to Le Beak, a V4 named after the hooked rock formation protruding out of the base, allowing for climbers to cling onto the "beak" upside-down. Every



Perched on a rock, Alana Minkler looks down at her friends rock climbing in Cowell, Arkansas. Photo by Adam Miles

time one of us tried it, we found different ways to reach the top. I helped build a fire at the base of Le Beak to keep all of us warm while we shouted encouraging advice to those attempting to solve the problem.

When we moved on to a harder climb, I scrambled up the back of the rock, plopping myself on top to get a good view. What I saw were trees, barren from the winter, silhouetted against an orange sunset. But, most important, I saw a bunch of newfound friends having fun and challenging themselves in nature. I was happy, but I felt a little left out because the climb was too advanced for me.

As the amber sunset deepened to vermillion, my friends and their dogs ran up the back of the rock to enjoy the moment with me. I realized that shared and intimate moments like this are what climbing trips are really about.



Alana Minkler is a junior at the University of Arizona studying journalism. She is from Flagstaff, Arizona, and has always loved writing and exploring the outdoors. Alana is passionate about investigative and environmental journalism and wants to spread awareness of social justice and environmental issues. She is also an apprentice at the Arizona Daily Star.

Beautiful But Dangerous

By Mingjun Zha

© 2020

Only two hours from Orlando lies a beautiful camping, diving and rafting park called Ginnie Springs. My friends Rita, Audrey, Yushu and I learned about this place through a travel blog. Rafting was our main reason for going to Florida.

We arrived in Orlando on Christmas Eve, then set off early the next morning for Ginnie Springs. Everyone was so excited, guessing what the park would look like.

When we reached Ginnie Springs, we rented one double tube and two paddleboards. Rita was very good at paddling, but this was my first ride on a paddleboard. When I sat on it near the shallows, I could step on the soft sand and moss. Turtles and dense woods were everywhere.

The water flowed faster than I realized. When I tried to paddle forward, my board drifted backward with the current. Rita paddled to join Audrey and Yushu, but I drifted farther and farther away until I couldn't see them.

At that moment, I panicked. I was wearing a swimming suit, sitting on the paddleboard with my legs crossed. Even though the air was warm, the blowing wind and the water sticking to my skin chilled me to the bone.

"Zha! Zha! Are you OK?" I heard Rita yelling at me.

Facing the sun, Rita rushed over to me. Audrey and Yushu lay on the double tube and held the rope on Rita's paddleboard. The three of them waved at me as they moved closer. I wanted to cry. There was also a rope behind my board. Audrey held onto Rita's rope, and Yushu grabbed mine. In this way, Rita pulled the three of us to shore.

When we returned to the hotel that evening, I asked Rita: "How did you take the three of us to the shore?"

She answered: "I thought we were going to die. We were in the middle of the lake, and the double tube could not control the

direction. You were not very good at paddling. If I couldn't take us to shore, we would be in danger because nobody else was nearby and none of us had a mobile phone."

I didn't know what to say.

"Well, don't think about it. Go to sleep," Rita said. She lay down on the pillow and closed her eyes.

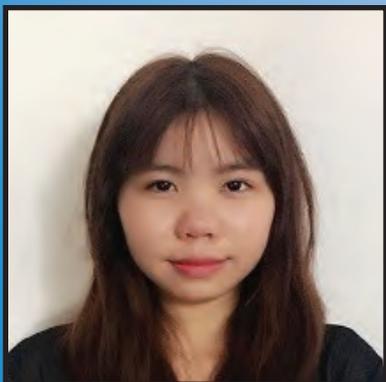
Sometimes, the more beautiful the place is, the more it is full of invisible danger. My friend is ordinary, but she protects us all in times of danger.



Mingjun Zha, sitting on the paddleboard, was the first to attempt to row at Ginnie Springs on Saturday, Dec. 25, 2019, in Florida. Rita used her GoPro to take this picture, but Yushu and Audrey were so far away that we cannot see them. (Photograph by Rita)



The double tube of Yushu, on the left, and Audrey was stuck by a tree, and they needed someone to help them at Ginnie Springs on Saturday, Dec. 25, 2019, in Florida. Rita thought the scene was very interesting, so she took this photo, but I was far away from them and I couldn't see them at all. (Photograph by Rita)



Mingjun Zha is a senior at the University of Arizona studying computer science. She is from Beijing, China. She hopes to become a creative graphic design specialist experienced in multimedia design and development for a broad range of clients. She likes to travel, share her exciting adventures and passions through writing. Mingjun also has written many travel articles in Chinese and posted them on her social platforms. Through a journalism course at the University of Arizona, she tried to write more in English.

The Gig

By Kent Thomas

© 2020

The band rolls in from the last light of day — ready to jam.

Outside, the storm of the world explodes in the evening haze — not to be denied with plans to deliver the deluge that it holds — the band takes the stage.

Making ready to rise in their lives the assembly of souls realize — the evening groove — the thing to do as the performers heed the call for the show to shine with time away from the reality of the storm of the world without.

Some are quiet — others, they shout about a different deluge that grows within this sanctioned world of souls.

*Show me —
Love me —
And hold me true.
Just let go
Of what you do.*

*Phone me —
Don't own me —
Just love me do.
I want to get close to you.*

The band plays on as a concert of living explodes on the stage as the tempestuous storm outside does rage.

The torrid message inside and out. It is a substance of life they sing about.

Some tell a story — no excuses or fears. As they take the stage for a new life to appear.

Some come from far, others from near — as the songs from their hearts sing loud and clear.

A message of living — a life that is free — traveling into a different reality. Stories of being — some say it with tears — as souls within rise above their fears.

With lightning and thunder, they appear on the stage — as the deluge outside their lives does rage.

Their message — their being — each one is unique — with songs from the soul each one sings clear as the raging torrent outside gives fear. A flood of life inside and out — a message of living they sing about.

A bastion of reality within their songs — many aren't known — others to sing along. Each one is different but the meaning the same. A way from the deluge as each takes the stage to sing about a way of life, of illusions that rage within all and without.

Their message of living a life that is free — away from the evening storm they be — GROOVIN' IN THEIR REALITY.

Kent Wenrich, who wrote under the pen name Kent Thomas, departed this life in March 2020. He appeared in the Fall 2019 Blue Guitar Jr. magazine. His first book, "Lines of Sanity," is available at www.los-kt.com. He was the director of music for Creative Drill Sergeants and a member of the music group Vets Jam Band, helping wounded armed forces members overcome their challenges by finding their spirit in their soul songs.



A Poem By Miriam Bloomfield

Party Favor

© 2020

I've been thinking how
on your birthday this year
they took you for emergency
surgery. Surprise!

And mine, last December
a double biopsy. Not even
among the questions
I was asking.

So looking ahead, Fate,
don't trouble yourself.
No need for something
special on our account.
We're full-up over here

still trying to conjure that thank you
or apology or antidote, insight
or antithesis of whatever we did to
warrant your previous gifts.

Perhaps consider donating elsewhere, someone
maiming, starving the innocent, using force
to crush life from life, poisoning waters upstream.
Or is this the kind of thinking that elicited
your attentions to begin with.

No stealth escape, no easy shield from life, it seems.
We're all strung together along this web,
grasping for translation—a language no one knows and
everyone speaks—stumbling ever deeper, our interlocked
destinies steering us blind.

At least give us a chance to catch our breath,
get a soaring start before
the next evolutionary wave
of revelation and consequence.

We cannot swallow that much Grace.



Miriam Bloomfield attended Pomona College and earned a history degree from Stanford University. Her poetry and fiction have been published in Sandscript Magazine. She's a four-time finalist for the Tucson Festival of Books Literary Awards and received Honorable Mention in the Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition. She recently completed a novel set in 1965 Arkansas. Home is the Sonoran desert of Tucson.

The Straight and Narrow

By Miriam Bloomfield

© 2020

Certain days, I forget why I'm here. I look around the too-bright, too-dull room and say, "This is the last stinking place on earth you'd find me." Someone points at a note pinned on my sleeve that reads: Your name is Don Maines. You're at Sheridan Medical for an extended stay. Family and friends know. Don't worry.

Easy for them to talk. I'm looking sideways out my brain and it's hard to see the big picture that way. Some days are slanted and others are upright.

It wasn't always like this. I used to have a firm hold on all my bearings. I knew my longitudes and latitudes, distances and directions, meaning from waste. I knew how the wind shifts in the Bighorns each spring, the best place on the Umpqua to see Chinook spawn, how to wrangle a surly crowd at Jake's, and the percentage of adult men without dementia.

I remember that much, so today's a good day.

Sam says I'm the solid, while he's the liquid and Murray's the gas. We're good company for each other for longer than I can remember. That's a joke.

We tool around in my Caddy—shoot down 331, named Big Goose for a reason I can't recall just now. Murray laughs his high squeak in back and keeps the flask longer each pass. Sam rides shotgun, unfiltered Camel smoke streaming out the half-inch crack beside him. The vent windows whistle and I'm living the life with brand-new-to-me shocks on my '64.

"If there's one thing we can count on, it's you, Don. You're the compass bends us straight when we wander." Sam lifts his chin to the flying pavement. "You were what, ten, when you stopped us shooting pellets from the bridge? How old were we, Murray?"

"Ten, I'd say." Murray sprawls over the seat, fills my rearview mirror. "Said a ricochet could kill a driver or hit some unseen kid."

"Since ten—longtime triple play." The bruise on Sam's cheekbone is deeper purple, but minor. Not like other fights. Sam flicks ashes out the window, but some fly backward.

"He talked Hines out of suspensions, to let you and me graduate." The upholstery farts as Murray scoots up between us. Three heads in a row.

"Sure did," says Sam. "Only way we're high school graduates is you vouched for our character. Underneath it all."

"Far underneath." Murray wipes excess with the rough of his

hand and passes the flask forward. "All the good it did us. Got our asses blown up anyway."

Nobody had money for college. We all three got rewarded with a free ride to hell and back.

"Shrapnel adds personality, Mur. That's what they tell me," Sam says. "At least Don here made it out minus the metal. He's got the luck." Sam swallows from the flask and offers it to me, but I shake my head. "That's why we keep him close—so luck rubs off, gets circulated around."

"We're in the area code of luck."

"Bullcrap," I say.

They think I'm their lucky penny and I won't strip them of hope or upend their ideals. It wasn't fully terror of breaking rules or pure loneliness for friends that got me protesting shot pellets or vouching for them years ago. Partial ethics were likely involved.

Sam's hair is slicked with Brylcreem, always neat. He takes another swallow and light-punches me on the arm. "Not to mention you kept us from screwing up our marriages worse than we did. You're our true north, Bucko."

They don't know Dolores left me for identical causes.

We swing wild through the downhill bends; fallen leaves hurtle back in our wake. The bark comes at us fast.

"Don kept me out of jail a time or two," Murray calls over the wind. "That's a fact."

"Don't put too much on me," I holler. "I could easily end up with another fiasco. Lord knows, I've had my share." A person doesn't want to tempt fate. The specifics slip my mind, but past mistakes weigh heavy in my bones. For a second I can't remember if Dolores still lives with me.

"If you've had your share, then I must've taken a bunch of other people's." Sam's palm slaps my shoulder, dipping us into the oncoming, but my reflexes rebound. Anyway, there's usually no traffic on that stretch midweek at noon.

I rocket across the bridge. I've taken those curves a million times.

Fall sun cuts through tree boughs and tunnels into the earth. Both banks go soft on me, along with the road. I look at the branches and double yellow lines and try to figure out what they're doing there. Pitch, yellow and white skate out from under us.

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Spring 2020

“You’re straying, Don. Come over to our side.”

It’s a funny sun, poking holes in everything. The road flies. The leaves bristle. I can’t find the way. Did I know it once? Too many shadows.

“Don.” Someone anchors my shoulders from behind. “Pull right, Don.” The breath is sweet and sour.

The man next to me has a face white as February. “Showing off your grit? Don’t be an asshole.”

I look at him. Big nose. Yellow teeth. Something familiar.

“Christsakes, Sam, take the wheel,” the voice in back says.

The man jumps vinyl and presses into me, reaching and grabbing. He’s having a tug of war for the wheel but I can’t let go. His leg fights mine for the pedals. If I let go, everything will break.

“Buddy, put your arms down.” He says it firm and quiet, in a way I recognize. It’s from a time I know, when we were in fatigues and I couldn’t breathe for gripping the dash after the blast.

“It’s all right. Put down your arms.”

I do as he says. I put them in my lap and lower my head, all the air and spark drain out of me. Sam steers the Caddy into dirt.

“Holy shit.” Murray’s hands sweat on the bench seat. “We got to get him somewhere.”

“I’m okay. I know you now.” I say this to level myself, though it’s not entirely true. Only their names come, and also that the two men are somehow safe. Safe for me, safe from me. I’m hoping the rest will follow. They don’t look certain of it.

I’ve had things slip away before. Small, short-term. Like whether Dolores and me ever had kids or where my temporary apartment is. And most of my pans got burnt forgetting the food in them. No big deal. Incidental details that return easy.

They slide me over. Murray sits on the outside, his substance bolsters mine. Sam takes the road slow and steady, guiding us back. Back to Sheridan. Back to somebody else’s life.

It’s hard to tell how long I’ve been staring at butt-ugly linoleum or when we last rode Big Goose and took dives down Powder River Pass. Could’ve been yesterday, could’ve been ten years ago. Maybe they come see me, my friends. I think they do.

Then again, maybe I drove us off the ridge or into a tree or both—me being the only one that ever in our lives wore seatbelts. Maybe good days are when I can’t remember.

Either way, there’s always something gone and missing, though I can’t say what. It leaves a chunk hole of nothing where something should be.

Don’t know how long I’ve been here, how long I’ll stay. There’s river and wind and the bends in the road that call to me most days. I belong out there with them. All I know is, this is the last stinking place on earth you’d find me.

A Breath of Fresh Air

By Alexandra Pere

© 2020

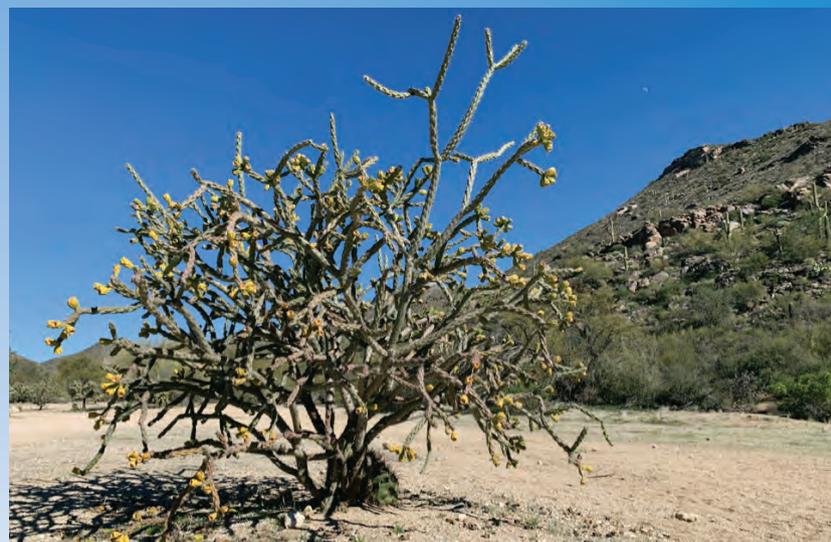
TUCSON, Ariz. — Clusters of cactuses were gatekeepers at the start of our hike. My boyfriend and I hike every weekend, usually in the afternoon. Light illuminated the needles protecting their bodies, creating soft halos. This weekend we took our dog with us. Luna trotted next to us as we scaled the Tortolita Mountains. She lifted her red speckled head and winked.

Only our footfalls on soft dirt made noise on the trail. We took a difficult hike, gaining 1,500 feet of elevation but paused to look at the view after three miles. The collection of houses at the edge of the mountain reminded me of the perseverance of early land developers. Even though John Wesley Powell saw the difficulty of populating these dry lands in the 19th century, Tucsonans managed to create a diverse city on limited water supply. I have no doubt that we will see the major implications of this ignorance soon, but I can understand our love for the desert. I took a deep breath in, expanding my lungs with dry air.

When I was younger, I would have needed my inhaler by that point. A hike uphill with little shade would have been unthinkable for me in elementary school. I almost forget how my relationship to nature was nonexistent.

Exercise and playing were equivalent to a marathon for my younger self. My lungs clinched onto the last bit of oxygen I inhaled while my throat tightened, creating a choking sensation. My inhaler was my lifeline and I relied on it for daily survival. I moved from Louisiana to Georgia during this time.

My mother would never admit it, but I was a burden on her single parent budget. I was in and out of hospitals with a father figure who rarely played a role in my financial well-being.



A Kelvin cholla cactus lives at the entrance of the Wild Burro Trail near the base of the Tortolita Mountains in Tucson, Ariz., on Sunday, Feb. 2, 2020. (Photo by Alexandra Pere)

He went from job to job, lying to my mother about my health care coverage. She worked tirelessly to support my ailments out of pocket. This tension transferred to my relationship with the outdoors: I was fearful of contracting another illness every time I stepped outside the apartment.

This changed when my mother met my future stepfather. John invited us to live with him in Flagstaff, Arizona, and my mother arranged for our move. Flagstaff was a different place for me: Pine trees, snow and tea bars were a big contrast to the clogged metropolitan cities I knew. Living by the San Francisco Peaks, we began hiking as a family. We cultivated a bond with each other and the environment. I started playing soccer and began dancing at my high school. I clutched my inhaler wherever I went, but eventually I left it at home. Within

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The author writes: "I'm a journalism and religious studies student at the University of Arizona focusing on environmental coverage. When I'm not chugging away at my homework, I'm trail running with my heeler, Luna, or planning my next big trip with my friends. The environment is a huge inspiration for me because it possesses multiple levels of meaning. From religious symbolism to migratory passage, humans are inevitably affected by place and their relationship to it. I love telling those stories through journalism."



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a few years, my inhaler became a dusty artifact in the medicine cabinet above our stove.

Instead of being close friends, my doctor and I were acquaintances as my frequent hospital visits became annual checkups. My mother and I often discuss how my health changed drastically in Flagstaff. I would say that my experience is something we can't explain with science. An indescribable connection between human and Earth heals us when we take the time to create meaningful relationships with nature.

This rebirth of health had another consequence that changed me forever — that made me sensitive to the indigenous tribes who call the Peaks a holy place. I understand their respect for the Peaks and support their wishes to preserve the area. Even though I am an outsider, not of their religion, I admire the way they cultivate a bond with nature that is incredibly important for their community. We can all benefit from developing a deeper respect for each other and nature.

Finding Life in the Desert

By Brittany Uhlor

© 2020

Few sensations are more satisfying than the feeling of grass beneath my feet. There is something magical about the way the cool, smooth blades of grass tickle the soles and fill the gaps between my toes.

I spent nearly nine years of my childhood living in eastern Pennsylvania. The smells of freshly cut grass in the summer and fallen leaves in autumn were more comforting to me than the aroma of a warm chocolate chip cookie. I spent my days digging for worms in moist soil and my nights running barefoot through the backyard chasing lightning bugs.

At the age of 10, I traded lightning bugs for longhorns when my parents and I moved to Texas. In this new but equally alive environment, I enjoyed wakeboarding on massive lakes and tubing down winding rivers.

For 18 years of my life, I adored running around the backyard barefoot, climbing oak trees that seemed to reach the stars and dipping my toes in chilly waters. The energy of my bountiful surroundings instilled its life within me, allowing me to grow and blossom into a young adult who was curious about the world.

I thought these experiences would last a lifetime, and that I would always live in a place filled with life. I never knew I would one day crave to walk barefoot in the grass but find myself unable to do so.

I realized my vivid memories created in green, wet environments were not familiar to everyone when I traveled to Tucson during high school to tour the University of Arizona.

I've always been the first to volunteer for the window seat on an airplane because I love staring at the bountiful landscapes beneath me. My seat choice on that trip was no different, and as the wheels of my plane left the ground of Dallas, Texas, I recall



Brittany Uhlor stands barefoot in the grass in Tucson, Arizona, on Jan. 24, 2020. (Photo by Brittany Uhlor)

admiring the lakes where I had spent much of my time in the summers and fields where I ran for miles.

But as my plane crossed the 100th meridian — the geographical line noted by John Wesley Powell as separating the humid East from the arid West — I quickly became aware I might never feel the grass beneath my feet again.

Lush, green fields and dense, wooded forests were soon replaced by the red rocks and hot sand of the desolate desert. My eyes searched frantically for signs of life. I was desperate to find just one oak tree, but instead I found a lone cactus. I recoiled from the window and sank back in my seat, shocked by the dramatic change of environment.

Sitting as far from the window as I could manage, I thought

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Brittany Uhlor, Ph.D., is the Coordinator of Marketing and Communications at the BIO5 Institute at UArizona. Brittany aspires to educate others on physical, emotional and mental well-being through science communication, outreach and teaching yoga. Brittany is particularly inspired by her backyard, the Santa Catalina Mountains, and takes advantage of every opportunity to immerse herself in nature. Aside from hiking and practicing yoga, Brittany enjoys reading psychological thriller novels and experimenting in the kitchen.

about the early settlers of the region, wondering how they saw any possibility for life in an environment that was such a stark contrast to the fruitful environment from which they, and I, came. As a high school student looking for a new home during the next chapter of my life, I wondered how I would be able to plant my roots and grow in a place where the soil seemed hostile and the water was scarce.

As our plane touched down in Tucson, I had already made up my mind that the desert was not the place I wanted to live. But as I drove from the airport toward the Santa Catalina

Mountains, I noticed the monstrous formations were spotted with green cactuses and trees.

When I arrived at UArizona, I was astounded to find the large expanse of grass that spanned the width of the campus. The sight brought tears to my eyes.

“Stop!” I yelled to my father, who was driving.

Before the wheels came to a complete stop, I swung the door open and leapt out. I ran to the mall and immediately slipped off my shoes, sinking my toes into the grass.

In that moment, I felt at home. If life could grow in the desert, I might just be able to become the woman I was meant to be.



Brittany Uhlorn kneels in the grass next to the UArizona BIO5 Institute after her successful doctoral defense on April 15, 2020, in Tucson, Arizona. (Photo by Josh Uhlorn)

4 Poems by Susan Kavanaugh

Knowing

© 2020

Piercing reflection wraps my mind
much like the thought of my thighs
wrapped round your hips.
Locked tight, it takes you into me.
No-yes, yes-no.
First come, then go.
Much sweeter, much deeper.
No sleeper.
No room for lukewarm.
Life's most serious moments,
when we move from this plain plane to the edge of heaven.
You take me there so gracefully.
And even while away from you,
I travel toward the burning sun.
I sense the danger and triumph in
knowing.
I open my heart for gain...
and come...
So lightly, so rightly.
In knowing you, I shed the lifeless skin
and feel the pain of meeting me.
Mirrored images picture fear,
but also, strength and hope.
Mirrored souls picture the balance of reason and passion,
the knowledge of God,
and the oneness of Love.



The poet writes: "I wrote my first poem in 1971. In early school years, I had a penchant for writing plays and was often allowed to produce them. Poetry, short stories and, eventually, journalism became an obsession. In high school I worked in a part-time reporter job for a local newspaper. After a career in journalism—print, radio, television and magazine publishing—I started my own communications' company and serve nonprofits and social enterprise organizations. My passion is nonfiction and I have two books in the works—one focuses on moral capitalism and ESOPs, and the other on successful solopreneurship. I've been writing more poetry lately, as well as penning short stories. During my career tenure, I've held executive roles in marketing and development for nonprofit organizations in Arizona, and several other states. I'm a nationally acclaimed speaker, and advocate for solopreneurs. Currently, I am a Certified Conscious Capitalism Consultant, Professional Certified Coach, licensed Christian minister, and a fundraising partner with multiple organizations. My monthly newsletter, 'The Mindful Entrepreneur,' has a growing base of subscribers because it features articles from local and national thought leaders about mindfulness, profit and passion. My husband and I live on 2½ acres in Cave Creek, own two corgis and one kitty cat, and are loving parents to hundreds of mourning doves, rabbits, desert rats, and assorted desert life. We hike several miles of the Sonoran Preserve, daily, in order to experience all of the amazement of Arizona. You can reach me at susan@kavcomcc.com."

My Choice

© 2020

I choose peace,
within a silence that is truly science.
I choose growth,
and comprehension of its impact.
I choose laughter,
and its healing, cleansing power.
I choose intimacy,
and the freedom to be open with friends.
I choose awareness,
that is accompanied by both pain and pleasure.
I choose simplicity,
in a life that is loosely structured.
I choose familiarity,
that can only be found through risk.
I choose love,
to share with Everyman.
I choose God,
with whom to build my inner home.

She Tried

© 2020

She wanted to write a novel,
but there was no easy way to do it.
She wanted to sing the song,
but had no voice to form it.

She wanted to scale the heights,
but she knew the depths too well.
She wanted to hold her heart in understanding,
but she'd lose the grip somehow.
It was always the dream to be it,
but only the reality to see it.

So close she'd come,
so near she'd be.
She was sure God heard her plaintive wail.
He felt her urging, aching cry.
It rattled his very bones.
And from this force so grand,
she half-expected miracles.
At least a resurrection.

So donned in Sunday garb
and yes-sir yes-ma'am thoughts,
she sat prim-faced rose-cheeked.
Waiting for Christ to wrap his cloak of gold
lace-locked around her soul.

The Pure Essence

© 2020

There's a moment,
right before the tears come.

There's a moment,
right before the anger.

There's a moment,
right before you feel—anything—
that consists of a gentle wrapping
of the arms around oneself...
and a gentle phrase spoken by the subconscious,

“I love you.”

It is at that time that you can BE.

You can exist, simply in purest form.
You can be you.
And if that means you hurt,
then pain becomes a partner.
And if that means you're angry,
then rage becomes a voice.

Moonshine, Iowa

By Joe Lawson

© 2020

“Three fights in every pint.” Steve remembered the words from Charles as they had played golf in Charles’ company’s charity golf tournament back in September. Steve, an account manager for a supplier to Charles’ company, had forged a relationship with Charles, a supply chain specialist for his company, the last couple of years as they played in the charity tournament each summer.

Conversations as playing partners in the same cart can cover the gamut but somehow Steve and Charles had brought up the subject of moonshine. It had been Charles as Steve remembered. Charles was a country boy, from northwest Missouri, a small town in Nodaway County. As they played, they had stumbled upon the fact they had both attended the same university, Northwest Missouri State, but three years apart (Charles was older). The conversation revolved to country music, both Charles and Steve were old country music fans, and this subject led to moonshine somehow. Charles had asked Steve if he had ever tried it. Steve had replied no. To which Charles had said, “Well, you are missing out then. I will make another batch before the end of the summer and I will put back a jar for you. Just be careful when you try it, though, there are usually three fights in every pint!”

Now Steve was on his way to Charles’ plant for his regular monthly visit. He was driving with the window down on his rental car, it was a beautiful late September day. Sunny skies, temperature in the low 70s and light breezes, you could not ask for a better late summer day in Iowa, he thought, as he drove along. He arrived at the facility and parked the car in the visitors’ area. Once inside the building, he dialed Charles’ extension. Charles answered right away; he knew it was Steve because Steve was always about five minutes early. “Moonshine delivery service, this is good old boy Charlie.

Hope this is Steve,” he said.

“You’re lucky it is,” said Steve.

Charles said, “Be down in a minute.” And he hung up.

And just that quick there was Charles, sticking out his bearish hand to greet Steve. Charles was a big man, about six foot three, maybe 225 pounds and in good shape for someone in his mid-fifties. He was wearing the dark green company polo shirt he usually wore with a pair of worn jeans and cross trainers, the same ones he probably worked out in, thought Steve. His clothes fit his muscular frame tightly, but he looked comfortable.

Steve met him across the lobby and they shook hands heartily.

“OK,” said Charles, “let’s get upstairs and talk some business before I make the delivery, my friend.”

Charles led Steve up the stairs and through the maze of cubicles to his own small private office. Steve stepped in and Charles closed the door and took his seat behind the desk. Steve took the seat across from him on the other side of the desk. The office was quite barren of anything except for basic whitish-gray office furniture and a dry erase board on the wall behind Charles’ chair. Nothing to show that Charles had any kind of personal life.

“To hell with business,” said Charles, “let’s make the ’shine delivery.” He opened his left hand desk drawer and pulled out a small clear, glass mason jar. Steve could see the contents shimmering temptingly inside. Charles slid the jar across to him.

“Here you, go. Last jar from the batch.”

Steve picked up the jar; scrawled on one side of the jar was “August batch, 2014, jar 5.” The other side had a Post-it note

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Joe is originally from the upper Midwest, born some 60 years ago, where he grew up on a farm and then, like many other rural-born folks at that time, ended up in town working in a factory. Since then, Joe has spent all of his working life in the manufacturing business, and it has been this combination of his early rural upbringing and extended time in business that he credits as the source of his many story ideas. He claims to have hundreds of story ideas ... if only he could find time to WRITE! Joe recently took over a manufacturing business in the Phoenix area and is enjoying his time in this new location, relishing the warmth and sunshine in the Valley of the Sun.

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taped to it and similarly scrawled was “Go Bearcats!” The Bearcats were the mascot of their college team. The top of the lid said, “Ol’ Smoothie Stevie.”

“I personalized it just for you, Steve,” said Charles, displaying a wide grin.

“Thanks, can’t wait to give it a sip.”

“Don’t try it here, though, could cost me my job.”

“Don’t worry, I will save it for later,” said Steve, and gently placed the jar in his black soft shell brief case. He zipped the opening closed. Then he said, “So how are things at the great appliance manufacturing plant?”

For the next 45 minutes, Steve and Charles caught up on the usual business goings on, schedules, people issues and lack of direction from top management—for both companies. They also caught up on personal happenings. Charles was now living out of his car; it was his new retirement exit strategy. He had sold his house locally and bought a small place back in his hometown in northwest Missouri and his wife had moved there. He planned to live out of his car for about a year, then walk away into the sunset back to his small hometown in Missouri. Charles said the marriage relationship had improved greatly with their separation, unless he showed up for the weekend and shared some moonshine with his sons, then things could be pretty cool.

Once finished, Charles said, “I will let you see yourself back down, Steve. I have to run to a plant management meeting. Was good to see you, just be careful with the ’shine; remember ‘three fights in every pint.’” He grinned again, they shook hands and Steve was on his way downstairs, then out the door to his car. It was such a beautiful day, he thought, as he walked across the parking lot.

He got in his car, started the engine and rolled down the windows. He really wanted to try the moonshine but thought better of doing so in the plant parking lot. Wouldn’t it be great if he was sipping from the jar and found a security guard tapping on his windshield; no, the tasting would be delayed.

Steve switched on the satellite radio system in the car. It was already on Classic Country Hits, how appropriate, he thought, good tasting music. He knew there was a roadside park not far south of the plant so he eased the car out of the lot and turned right.

It was only a mile or so down the road, Colonies Roadside Park. Steve turned off the main road and found a parking spot under a large cottonwood tree, one of many in the park. The sun sprinkled down amongst the leaves and branches, their shadows swaying gently in the breeze. He removed the moonshine from his brief case, got out of the car and moved to a picnic bench not far away. He sat down and placed the jar in

front of him. Carefully, he removed the Mason metal ring and lid. Even though he was a few inches from the jar, the strong, overwhelming, stinging aroma of the moonshine reached his nostrils and his eyes. His nasal passages burned ever so slightly and his eyes watered.

He held his breath and raised the jar to his lips and he took just a short draw of the liquid and swallowed quickly. It went down with a quick burning sensation, then just like that he felt his whole body warm up, almost aglow, perhaps buzzing, he couldn’t really tell. But it was strangely a welcome sensation, despite the continuing watering of his eyes. Steve took another long drink with the same result and was enjoying the beautiful afternoon.

A big brown pickup truck pulled up next to Steve’s rental car but he did not notice it. The truck did not catch his attention until the driver’s window was rolled down and he could hear dreaded “new country” music blaring from the truck’s radio, shattering the peace of the park setting.

Steve was not happy, actually quite irritated, with this interruption. He decided to leave and carefully placed the lid back on the jar of moonshine and walked to his car. He placed the jar on top of his car so he could get his keys out. As he did, he looked across to the man in the truck. He was perhaps in his mid-thirties, looked to be overweight. He was wearing an old flannel shirt, with an old baseball cap on his head. The cap partially hid scruffy, long, brown hair. He had a beard. Why is this guy not working, Steve thought? And why does he need to ruin my afternoon?

Suddenly, Steve yelled loudly across the top of the car. “Thanks for ruining my afternoon with that trashy music, you fat slob!”

There was no doubt the guy in the truck heard him as he turned his head immediately. “What did you say?” he said.

“You heard me,” said Steve, very loudly again. “Why don’t you just turn that shitty new music off before you ruin someone else’s day.”

“Why you son of a bitch!”

And the guy was quickly out of his truck and making his way around the front of Steve’s car. Steve, without even knowing he was moving so quickly, moved to the front of the car. As he neared the man, making a final step toward him, he landed a right-handed punch squarely between the man’s dark eyes. The man fell and did not move, apparently out cold, his dirty hat lying beside him in the gravel. Steve stood over him, shook his fist just like you see people do when they are not used to punching someone, and then returned to his car. He remembered to get the moonshine off the top of the car, climbed inside and started the engine. Without another thought,

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he pulled out of the park and on to the road, not realizing if he was turning left or right, just driving.

Once on the road he realized what he had done. Steve had never punched anyone in his life and the feeling came out of nowhere! Surely the guy was OK, maybe he should drive back and check? No, probably not a good idea. It was then he also realized he could still taste the moonshine on his lips, on his tongue and in the back of this throat. These parts of his body were still slightly burning, but overall his body had a nice, comfortable warmth. Ah, he thought, the moonshine! Charles had said there were three fights in every pint, now maybe he know what that phrase meant: It didn't take much of the stuff to alter one's behavior!

He knew he needed to be careful but also felt the urge, an overwhelming urge really, to take another sip. He pulled into the parking lot of a strip mall as he edged his way back into town and found a spot in the back of the asphalt lot; there were no other cars around. He turned off the motor, and undid his seat belt. Once free, he reached into his briefcase and pulled the jar out. He opened it, and took a whiff; it burned his eyes and nostrils again, yet the sensation was a welcome one. Quickly, he took two more long draws from the jar and swallowed quickly. The warmth across his body increased and a sense of.....what could it be.....euphoria, started to overtake his senses? The window was still down on the driver's side of the car and he could feel the breeze again softly going across his left arm, then his face. He closed his eyes and opened them slowly. He felt very alive.

But he was hungry. Looking at his watch, he saw it was past 1 p.m., no wonder he was hungry. He looked around the lot and directly behind him in the mall was what looked to be a sports bar; the sign in the window read, "The Sports Tavern." Can't go wrong with any place called a tavern, thought Steve. He took one more, big swig from his jar, resealed the lid, tossed it carelessly in the passenger seat and got out of the car.

The tavern was dark on the inside as he stepped in; he saw a bar to the right with a few open stools. There were a couple of TVs on behind the bar. He found a seat with a couple of open seats on either side. The bartender, a women, came right up to his spot. She was probably in her early to mid-forties, but her long hair was as black as coal, obviously dyed. She looked good yet experienced in her solid black tee shirt and faded jeans, and the jeans fit very well, Steve noticed. There was an attractiveness to her weathered features, thought Steve, or maybe it was the moonshine working on him.

"What can I set you up with, sugar?" she said.

Steve knew it was time to chase the moonshine with something. "Looks like you have Bud Light on tap, I'll take a

pint, babe." Steve didn't normally call women "babe."

"You got it," she said and smiled at him.

"Thanks," he said. "You managing to stay out of trouble with jeans that fit that well?"

"I do my best. That beer is coming right up," she said and smiled again.

Steve picked up a rumpled menu from the bar top. As he started to look it over, a big left hand came down on top of it, pinning it to the bar surface. Simultaneously, the bartender placed his glass mug of beer on the bar.

"You always flirt with bartenders, stranger?" The voice was deep and had a country twang to it.

Steve looked up. He found a bearded face, a heavy face, with dark yet watery eyes and atop the man's head was a baseball cap, with the John Deere logo on the front. His red and black plaid flannel shirt fit him loosely and covered a large belly. He probably worked night shift at the local Deere plant and was still here in the bar after his morning shift had completed. The man looked to be in his late forties.

"Only when they look as hot as this lady does," said Steve. What in the world was he thinking? He would never say such a thing!

The man paused briefly then said, "I think someone needs to knock you off that barstool, my friend!" And he took a quick swing with his right. Steve managed to avoid him and swiveled off his bar stool. As he did, he leaned back towards the bar and picked up his beer mug with his right hand and smashed it hard against the left side of the man's face, very hard. The beer flew and the man's cap came off. The man crumpled to the floor. And the bar was suddenly very quiet; no one said a word.

"I need to get out of here," thought Steve. He walked quickly out the door, as he now heard voices, shouting voices, coming from the bar. He was trying to remember where his car was parked. The bright light of the afternoon jolted some sense into him and he recognized his rental car across the lot. He ran to it and started the engine and sped out of the parking lot on to the main road.

What in the world am I doing, he thought. He looked down at the seat and saw the jar of moonshine sitting there, with the lid on but resting on its side. It was about half full. Have I had half that jar, he thought. Hurriedly, he stuffed the jar back in his briefcase.

"Three fights in every pint." Charles' words came back to him, suddenly.

"Wow, the best thing I can do is get to the airport as quickly as I can," Steve said out loud. He decided he would get a late bite of lunch there and stay chilled. Two fights in one afternoon, for a guy who had never fought in his life, was enough!

He drove the car through town, slowly. Even though he figured the bar patrons may have sent a small town posse after him, he did not want to get stopped by the police. Finally, he hit the on ramp for the interstate and was on his way to the airport. He had to get to the airport, safely and now, without further incident.

He felt warm and realized he had the front windows down on the car. But the air felt good rushing over his left arm on the door ledge and through the car so he left them open. I don't feel drunk, he thought, but still decided to drive carefully and ease off the accelerator. The worst thing now would be getting stopped by a highway patrolman; a third fight with an officer would be a bad, bad idea. He glanced at his right hand knuckles. They were red from the single punch he had thrown in the bar, but he felt no pain. Guess the 'shine is working, thought Steve.

There were no further incidents on the half-hour drive to the airport, and Steve got the rental car into the right return space with no issues. With the rental contract information sufficiently completed, he reached over to the jar of moonshine. He decided to take one more drink as he figured he needed to get it to a level below the limit of carry-on liquids as Steve hated checking luggage. He looked at the jar after the one drink, then took one more swill just to make sure the level had been lowered sufficiently and screwed the lid back on and quickly put the jar in his briefcase.

Once inside the terminal, he breezed through security, which was unusual. There was no waiting and no issues with his TSA pre-approved status. The TSA personnel were very efficient, quite unusual. He was glad it went well because he did not want to have to deal with any frustrations in his current state; fight number three in the TSA area would not be a good idea.

After clearing security, he realized time was running shorter than he had thought, so he only had time to grab a bag of honey roasted cashews and an apple from a small kiosk. He stuffed the snacks in his front briefcase pocket and got in line to board

his flight, a small commuter jet. Steve disliked commuter jets, but these planes were the only choice out of the small regional airports he frequented. The plane began boarding just a couple of minutes after he got in line. It's moving so smoothly, he thought, just what I needed, no sweat and no hassles.

Steve boarded the plane and starting looking for his seat, 13A. He didn't like the number 13, bad luck, but oh, well he thought. As he was working his way down the aisle, his briefcase, hanging by a strap from his shoulder, swayed and caught a guy in the head. Steve had been moving pretty quickly, so there was some force behind the accidental blow. The man in the seat, instead of just taking such a bump in stride, stood up and grabbed the briefcase and swung Steve around to face him.

"Hey, you jerk, why didn't you take it a little slower down the aisle?" said the man. Steve noticed he was a really beefy guy, early fifties, overweight and had very thin hair on top of a pale and slightly flushed face. He was wearing a navy sports coat with brass buttons, a light blue shirt and gray dress slacks. No tie. He was agitated.

Normally, Steve would have said he was sorry and move on to his seat. But not with more than a half jar of moonshine in his system.

He grabbed his briefcase off his shoulder and swung it mightily, striking the beefy guy square in the face. But strangely enough, the man's face barely moved. He was stout. As the case recoiled back, the glass of moonshine tumbled out of it since Steve had left the top zipper unclosed. The glass jar struck solidly against a seat support as it fell, shattering, and spreading the remaining 'shine over the floor amongst the glass shards.

Momentarily distracted by the now depleted jar, Steve took a punch from the beefy guy square on his nose and fell instantly, landing solidly in the aisle of the plane. He could smell the moonshine in the air; funny, it felt good in his nasal passages. His last thought, before very solidly passing out was, oh, guess this was number three, and Charles's prophetic words echoed in his mind ... "Three fights in every pint."

The Art of Acronyms

By Joe Lawson

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She had not been in his office for some time. Had it been a few months, maybe almost a year? She couldn't really recall. He never asked her to visit and she had never pushed it. He had been that way, rarely mixing business with personal life. There had only been the occasional holiday party or perhaps some type of business group sporting event.

Here she was, though. Standing, feeling helpless, with a bunch of empty packing boxes strewn haphazardly around the room.

The head of human resources had called her a couple of times. "We really need you to empty the office out. We can't keep everything here, but we can assist you wherever possible." She had been polite but efficient.

He had been gone over five weeks now. Dead, cremated, ashes still in an urn in the upstairs hall closet. She had not spread them yet per his wishes, on the 10th tee box at the golf club. What a silly place to spread them, she had thought. I will spread them where I want. Or we should be mixed together in the same urn, then the kids should spread us where we want. But she had not thought of where that place would be.

Death had come to him as she always thought it would: on the road, in a hotel, an apparent heart attack. In one of those small towns he frequented over the years.

What a struggle it had been to get his body back, such a pain in the ass. Once back, he was burned, there was a simple memorial service, the kids, a few old friends. He hadn't had many. No one from his current or past business relationships made it. She had been surprised by this fact.

It was time to survey the task ahead of her.

Her eyes moved to his desk, an old oak desk. He had wanted this beat-up desk, it had belonged to the founder of the company, his predecessor. A quick rifling of the drawers didn't yield much that required her attention. There was the usual assortment of office supplies, some old files which were incomprehensible to her. She didn't see anything worth keeping, and the head of HR had said she could leave what she didn't want, they would toss it for her.

It was the same process with the matching oak credenza, both the top and the inside shelves. Just some old mementos from the business, some were his, some belonged to those before him. She saw no value in these items as well.

The only remaining area to sort out was the matching oak bookshelves. They were in the corner of the office to the left of

the credenza.

She had never really taken any time to notice what was on his bookshelves. There were many books, some thick, some thin, some were merely pamphlets, most all relating to business, leadership or some kind of process improvements. Some looked old, others were newer. She knew he liked to stay up to date.

There were other trinkets from his past on the shelves besides the books. Coffee cups, a sleeve of logo golf balls, a golf cap from The Masters, small travel guides from the days he was stationed in Europe a few years ago, there was a Belgian beer glass, too. The wide assortment was very neatly organized amongst the books.

He had never been into having photos around his office. No family or business photos. Nothing. So, something on the second to top shelf caught her eye.

These prints were black and white photos of some sort of art, building art. Like what you might see on the side of an old building, maybe around the windows or doors. They were side by side. Why in the world would he have these prints on his shelf; she did not remember him having interest in any art, let alone anything of an architectural nature?

But something was odd about this artwork. She looked closer. Quite suddenly she realized that the artwork spelled out letters, in all caps. The one on the left said BEHAM and the one on the right said BFL. Clearly these were the letters spelled out. What the hell, she thought. Yet quite creative as well, mixing architecture, art and letters.

She picked up the BEHAM print, turned it over, reviewed the back of the frame. In the right-hand corner was a label. The label said in all caps LETTER ART, PARIS, FRANCE 77105.

Paris? They had been there when he was stationed in Europe a few years ago. He had made a few other trips on his own to the city to visit the Louvre and some of the other sights there. Would he have bought this artwork in Paris? Not a chance.

The other print came from the same place. Why would he buy two prints, if he really did? She had no time to think about it now, so she packed the prints with a few of his other things. She sealed the boxes, only four. Not much for 35 years of working, she thought, but he had never been sentimental about much at all.

Once home, and the boxes lugged inside up to his home office, she sat to relax, with a glass of Pinot Grigio and the

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small, chestnut dachshund on her lap. She watched “Ellen,” then the local news. Poured more wine. Stayed on the couch and managed to make it through the CBS Evening News. Depressing. She emptied the wine glass, put it on the table and tried to relax with the TV off. She couldn’t.

Her mind could not get past the thought of those letters in the prints from Paris. Why was she bothered so? It was so unlike him to have this kind of art, any art, for that matter.

They had only visited Paris once together, early in his days in Europe. He had never suggested they go again, and she had never pushed for another trip. She hadn’t thought much of it at the time, but now she was wondering why they never went back when he said he liked it so much.

Where does she go from here, she thought? There was really no one she could talk to about it. Nothing related was found with any of his remaining stuff; she had cleaned up and organized it already.

Another sip of wine, then she saw her cellphone screen light up with a meaningless text message. The message brought her pause.

His phone, of course.

It was in his desk drawer, having been returned in the box of personal effects that came along with his body.

Feeling a little more energy, she traipsed up the stairs and pushed open the office door. She surveyed the area, a converted bedroom. Nothing had been changed since he had left it that last day before the trip a few weeks ago. Only the boxes she had just dropped on the floor were new on the scene. He had lived such a spartan existence for someone running a company; except for the desk and chair, the office was mostly bare, except for some mundane golf artwork on a couple of walls and a company calendar on the wall to the right of his desk. His only interest, other than golf and sports, had been business and she had never sought to interject any of her decorating ideas into his space.

She pulled open the center drawer; the cell was still right where she had left it. She hoped it was still charged. The screen came to life when she hit the “on” button. Now would she have a password to contend with. The little Apple icon finished its process and no password was needed. Thank goodness, she thought.

She started with the contacts first, scrolling carefully looking for anything in the “Bs” that might give her a clue on BEHAM and BFL. There was nothing, not surprising. How about recent calls? She thumbed through, nothing there. Email. Nothing but his work email. She scrolled up and down, not much there, and nothing since he had died. That made sense. The phone had yielded no clues. What next?

There was no computer, the company had taken his laptop

and surely everything was cleared off and the unit had been passed on to someone else by now. The circle of life, even with laptops, she thought.

She started going through the desk drawer again. Rummaging, mostly pens, all with some kind of company logos, paper clips, office supplies, that sort of stuff. In one corner, though, right next to his cigar cutter and only lighter was a flash drive. Interesting, she wondered, he had never been into saving data; he relied on his memory and feel more than anything else.

She rolled the flash drive over in her fingers. Back down the stairs she went to her Mac.

Now settled in the chair, the dog at her feet, she loaded the flash drive. It was recognized, the D drive. She opened it.

On it was a single document: “The Log September 15, 2015.”

She clicked on it. No password was requested.

A Word document came to life on the screen.

It was titled “BFL and BEHAM, The Log.”

Below the title was an inserted photo. It was a statue of a young boy and girl, hands clasped together; they appeared to be twirling around, in delight. There was a caption for the photo: “BFL and BEHAM, the joy of their adventure.”

Oh, my god, she thought, what am I seeing here?

She glanced to the left-hand corner of the document, 84 pages. Good god, she thought, it’s a novel!

She read further. There were more notes and some embedded texts and emails:

1 March 2012 – Flight KL1933 to GVA

you changed your seat because you were hoping to sit close to no one

Your first thought: damn, the seat close to you is not empty anymore. At least a handsome man is sitting there

I saw the book, Sense of an Ending

I asked you about it

we talked about books, movies, your skiing trip, your fear (past injury)

told you I was married and all about my family — I thought such a shame handsome guys are all married and love their wives.

we said we should get together and watch a movie

we exchanged business cards

and I think you never expected to hear from me again, until you got the first text

But you did the next Tuesday

From: +31653135555

Received: 6 Mar 2012 19:00

Subject: Hello, Anne,

Hello, Anne, it was great to meet you on the flight to Geneva

last Thursday, I enjoyed our conversation and hope your ski trip was fun and injury free. I would enjoy getting together for a lunch or dinner, maybe even a movie either near you or in Amsterdam, whatever you prefer.

and I replied ...

To: +31653135555

Sent: 6 Mar 2012 19:38

Subject: Hi Brad,

Hi Brad, hope you could take your flight back as planned and that your meeting met your expectations. Yes, would be lovely to go and see a movie. I'll be in Paris the WE of the 17th but Saturday 24th could work for me if you're available too. Here is my personal email al@hotmail.fr and feel free to use the work email too. We can firm up plans closer to the date.
AL

March 2012, she thought. That was over five years ago! And on she read ...

24-25 May — Den Haag

you met me @ the train station, we walked to your apartment, I enjoyed watching your legs.....

we walked in the park, watched our reflections in the water dinner was nice, we listened to the jazz station, I held your hand at the dinner table

afterwards I fought terribly the urge to kiss you ... I failed

I kissed you, and you kissed me back....

we moved into the hallway

then up the stairs to bed....

wonderful night together

we worked in the flat that next day, you brought me coffee, very special

lunch @ the cafe down the street, nice sunny, but windy, day then goodbye was difficult as I walked away....

Shit, he slept with her! Oh, my god!

She paused. She was shocked. God, he actually slept with another woman and wrote it down, good god! For a few minutes she couldn't look any further.

Finally, she read on, for about 45 minutes, skimming the 80+ pages.

The log was a very detailed account of all of the time they spent together from March 2012 through September of 2015, even after he had left Europe. They had met four times in the States, various spots, New York, Cape Cod, Houston, Atlanta. She had a penchant for very expensive hotel rooms and she always paid. It was a record of their meals, their movies, their

music, their sex, their thoughts, their weekends at hotels across Europe. Most of all it was a record of all the times they had spent in her apartment in Paris. He wrote very fondly of his time there, her friends, everything they did together.

Three years this affair had gone on and she had suspected nothing, not a damn thing! She wasn't sure what she was feeling now. Anger? Hate? Jealousy? Sadness? Who was this man she lived with for the past three years? For that matter, who was this man she had lived with for the past 31 years? She was shaking, that she knew.

She got up, went to the refrigerator, poured herself another glass of wine. After a long, long sip, she tried to control her breathing. She sat back down on the sofa, picked up the Mac, thinking she would read some more, then she just slammed the top shut. That was enough for tonight.

Over coffee the next morning, a thought came to her she had not expected: Did "BFL" know that "BEHAM" was dead? She wasn't sure why this thought crossed her mind. Admittedly, she was curious about this woman. What did she look like? There were no photos in the writings. There were references to her blue eyes and blond hair. She liked to wear white blouses; he had liked her in white blouses. How old was she? What did she do for a living besides have affairs with American expats? The curiosity was gnawing at her.

Did she know he was gone, her BEHAM?

She considered how she might reach out to her. There weren't many options, she had found nothing in his contacts, phone or computer, that could tie to her. He had been so, so neat. The thought pissed her off a bit. She pushed this thought aside. She decided she would go back through The Log, maybe there was something else there. Another cup of coffee poured, she grabbed her Mac again and brought up the document.

This time, she scanned it more slowly, page after page. Finally, there it was, pasted in email from him to her:

From: brad (brad@gmail.com)

Sent: Sun 13/05/12 20:49

To: Anne (al@hotmail.fr)

AL,

Hope you made it back safely and without delay, thanks for the ride back to the apartment, too. I have so many thoughts, feelings and reflections about our experience together that my head is pleasantly spinning....

Brad

His email to her after they had met the first time at his apartment in Amsterdam. There it was: al@hotmail.fr.

She considered the address, briefly. There was no better time

than now. So, she typed in the address and wrote:

Hello, Anne, I am Brad's wife, your BEHAM's wife. I have discovered, though it's tough to explain how, that I have found you and Brad were lovers. I have only discovered this fact because I have been going through his effects, as he died a few weeks ago. I felt a need to contact you and let you know that he has died, and I thought you needed to know. I doubt you knew. I just wanted to let you know, please feel free to write back to me and I can tell you more. I have read The Log and feel that I know you quite well despite the fact we have never met. Though it is hard for me to absorb, I know he loved you and wanted you to know he is gone. Please respond to me and I will let you know more about what happened. No hard feelings,

Amy, his wife

And P.S. what does BFL and BEHAM mean?

She paused from typing. The SEND button was staring her in the face. Am I doing the right thing, she thought?

She clicked on it. Message sent. No time to dwell on it now, she considered. Time to get dressed and get started on her day.

The rest of the day was filled with staying busy stuff, the dog, a workout, groceries, processing the mail, paying her Dad's bills. She did not want to check her email though she was itching to do so.

Around 6 p.m., she sat down on the couch. With the dog on her lap and a glass of Pinot Grigio in hand, she opened up her Mac and went directly to email. There was a response from France. Her heart skipped a couple of beats, maybe a couple more. It was from al@hotmail.fr.

She read ...

Amy, thank you for reaching out to me, I know it must not have been easy for you, it must have been a terrible shock to find out that your husband had a lover. But I greatly appreciate your correspondence, and please forgive me as my English is not as good as it used to be.

I had not heard that Brad, BEHAM, was gone but felt inside that he was. I am heartbroken, as I am sure you are. You see he sent me an email a few weeks ago, saying he was not doing well, mentally, he had not been for some time. He said he was feeling very lonely, that since he had met me, he didn't have you in the same way, and he couldn't have me because of the responsibility for you, the family. He said he could not shake the darkness of his loneliness.

He had told me that if he ever got in this spot that he would not "stick around." He knew what to do. He told me he had

studied and talked to people while in Amsterdam, RE "suicide cocktails." I hated it when he talked like this, I told him so, but he, as you likely know, was always very determined once he set course in a certain direction. I have been worried ever since I saw this last email from him. I wanted to write to him, but he had told me he was shutting off his email address that we used. He did because I tried a few times and my queries were "undeliverable."

So, I must ask, how did he die? I think I already know, he probably died of an apparent heart attack. He told me these suicide cocktails would look like heart attacks. I know this is a terrible question to ask but I would like to know.

I don't know what else to say except thank you for letting me know. I know it must be hard for you to consider Brad may have ended his own life and maybe he didn't, but I thought you should know of my concern.

Oh, for your question on BEHAM and BFL ... BEHAM stands for "Brown Eyed Handsome American Man" and BFL stands for "Beautiful French Lady." These were "pet names" we had for each other. Probably upsetting for you to hear we had pet names, but you did ask the question.

I hope I hear back from you although I understand that you may not want to write further.

My deepest sympathies to you for his passing. I am sure you will miss him but probably not as much as me because I didn't have him for as long as you did.

Sincerely,

Anne

Oh, god. He may have killed himself. She had never considered such an idea. But Anne seemed to know. She knew more than her. How could this be? Why the hell would she know? How the hell could she, his wife, have missed signs of him wanting to end his life? What?!!

She slumped back on the couch. Read the email again. The words were no different and neither were her feelings of shock.

Holy, god. Is it possible he killed himself?

She couldn't think. So, she shut down. She went for another glass of Pinot Grigio.

She turned on the PBS news. Tried to focus on what was happening in any world other than hers. The wine went down quickly. She poured another glass. Her mind kept tumbling over.

It sounded like him. Matter of fact. Black and white. Off or on. Stuck, so dead.

Her memory went back. She remembered once, after visiting her parents, he had said that if we were ever like that, in a dead relationship, that he just wanted to be shot. He would not live

like that. Had they become this way? Is that why he sought out his BFL? Found her. But realized he could not have her, or me, so that was it for him? God, as unbelievable as it was, it was HIM. Shit.

Another long sip of her Pinot Grigio. She swallowed it down. Quickly. Then another long sip.

What the hell am I supposed to do now? Exhume him like in some TV mystery show to see if he really did end his own life. What difference would it make? He was gone. Only she knew, if indeed he really did kill himself. Why should anyone else know? What would they think of me? I don't really care what they would think of him but what would they think of me? I was such a shrew to live with that my husband took up with another woman and then killed himself? God.

There was no way she wanted to talk to anyone about this situation. No way. She found her anger for him growing more and more as she considered her options, as if she had any. What a bastard to leave her hanging like this. She turned the news back on. Any kind of distraction, along with the Pinot Grigio, was welcome.

The morning came early, after little sleep for her. Sometime during the night, she had realized she did have someone to talk to: the BFL. BFL was the only other one who knew he may have killed himself.

She sat down with a cup of coffee and opened her Mac. She wrote:

Hello, Anne,

Thank you for writing back to me. Yes, it was a shock to find out he had a lover. But it was an even bigger shock when you told me you think he may have killed himself. The cause of death was an apparent heart attack, there was no investigation as nothing looked suspicious and heart disease ran in his family.

I had no idea he was feeling the way you describe, he was always so stoic, he never talked about much that was on his mind, other than business or sports. How could I have not known he was hurting so badly? But you are correct, once he set his mind to something, he did it.

I have no idea what to do now, no idea at all. Even if this is what really happened. Actually, my instincts tell me it is what happened, especially based on his last email to you.

I have written to you because I don't want to communicate with anyone else on this subject. How on earth could I? The

revelation would shatter the family. And can you imagine me going to the authorities with such a story?

What am I supposed to do now? Thanks for listening, Anne.
Amy

She hit send and the email was gone.

As soon as it was gone, she thought I forgot to thank her for telling me what BFL and BEHAM stood for. Oh, well. Now I know. I am sure she will forgive me given the circumstances. I just need to forget about all this for now and get into my day, somehow, such as it is.

She was disciplined. Waited till the end of the day to think about and check her email, with a glass of Pinot Grigio.

There was an email from Anne.

Hi again, Amy,

Thank you for writing back to me. I can certainly understand your shock even though I am not in your shoes. The only advice I have for you, and for me, is that we loved him, he loved us... so now we grieve, we mourn...that's what we do. Nothing else matters at this point. I am happy to correspond more with you if you like.

Anne

She sat for a moment, took a sip of her wine. Wow. The French, at least this French woman, are pretty damn pragmatic. Her advice, simple as it is, does make sense, I suppose. At least someone else knows. Did he love me? I suppose he did. I loved him, I suppose. Love changes over time, surely. He obviously loved Anne and she still loved him, was grieving his passing. But she didn't seem to be pissed about what he had done to himself. If that's what happened. Why? He had loved her, left her in Paris, then ended his life.

It dawned on her then. Anne had loved him for what he was, darkness and all. There was no anger, only ongoing love and mourning. Strange, after all these years with him, she was hit with this revelation.

She snapped the Mac shut. Took another swill of the Grigio and the dog climbed up on her lap. Maybe I will stay in touch with her, maybe I can learn something from her, she thought. She gazed out the window into the light at the end of the day trying not to think of anything, only nothing. She fixed her gaze on the burning bushes, their fall colors just beginning to show.

5 Poems by Robert Feldman

another legacy patches this sky...

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one that draws malevolent throngs,
scornful, suspicious, vacuous

and while these PATRIOTS! hail yet another tyrant,
others must surrender to their knee-deep universe,
order up yet another last supper

oh, another legacy patches this sky...

one set in motion
since those ghastly, gloomy, emaciated afternoons times past

and now nations must brave yet another pompous boss,
another enticingly refashioned package delivered centuries ago
that many still foolishly consider,
without asking the string and paper doubtful questions,
glorifying this latest tainted vulgar box
containing leftover scoundrels posing as angels,
more tattered black wedding shoes unlaced,
disembodied bouquets of hope
cynically stomped upon,
all summarily discarded into history's despotic abyss

yes, another whitewashed legacy...
till the next adoring crowd of devotees and sycophants
wash up again
onto MotherEarth's venerated shores



Born in Paterson, New Jersey, Robert Feldman was inspired early on by members of Paterson's literary tradition, most notably Louis and Allen Ginsberg and William Carlos Williams. Later, while living in St. Louis, he organized poetry readings, produced and hosted a community-issues news hour and a biweekly bebop jazz radio program on KDNA-FM. There, his interest and admiration for the Beat Generation flourished. After relocating to Bisbee in the early '70s, Robert was instrumental in publishing some of Arizona's most influential writers such as Drummond Hadley and Michael Gregory, and in 1980, collaborated with Lawrence Ferlinghetti on his Bisbee publication, "Mule Mountain Dreams." Currently, Robert resides in greater Phoenix, continuing to write, paint, and play tabla, besides actively publishing in several online poetry magazines. "Hineni," a collection of 15 Hebraic photographic poetry, was published in spring 2018, and "Sunflowers, Sutras, Wheatfields, and Other ArtPoems" in summer 2019. The body of Robert Feldman's writing and painting can be accessed at albionmoonlight.net; he can be reached at rfeldman@gmail.com.

before this, there was nothing more than this

© 2020

the tide shifts
no matter the wind
devoid of purpose
abandoning the surface
nothing more than earth
nothing less than sea

here the earth crawls on
content, no matter the era,
content, no matter the residents,
nothing more than sand
nothing more than her constant breath

there is nothing greater than this,
nothing more precious than life's pulse,
no matter the daylight
no matter the moonlight,
the tide shifts,
the earth crawls on
her breath speaking of hope
summoning her residents:
“before this, there was nothing more than this”

Diaspora

© 2020

Babylonian scattered wildflower seeds

Roman tragedy despotic exile

Sarah and Leah raining global tears: “Where are our children?”

Alexandria to Persia

Rome to Prague

Mumbai to Buenos Aires

Addis Ababa to Toronto

New York to Kiev...

yet outcast and eroded,
the brethren have, nonetheless, persisted,
unwavering
ingathering and hopeful,
from Nebuchadnezzar to Ramesses
from Hellenistic to Roman times
from Ethiopian *Falashas* to the *galut* of Warsaw

their enduring struggle
longing to foster a creative monotheism,
from the peasants of Arles and shepherds of Moab
to the Hebrew generals in the Ptolemaic army,
diasporic communities improvising diacritical languages,
gracing lifeless rituals
and birthing disparate cultures,
and all the while preserving the one Law
perpetuating Judean identity,
from the grey sands to the verdant grasses,
from the orange hills to the blue red coasts—
their once homeland
relevant but distant,
an ark light kindling—never forlorn or abandoned

thus, a humiliated faith could endure
successive nights of forced banishment:
one watch of harrowing slavery,
a second watch of Papal massacres and King Edward I bound forced conversions,
the third watch of consecutive Iberian expulsions—
all culminating before a final exhaustive dawn

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this tribe historically doomed to assimilation
fighting revisionist *shelilat ha-galut* (“denial of the exile”),
enslaved by Roman generals,
deported from Judah and subsequently throughout Europe,
beasts driven within a circle,
lions tangled by their tails,
ensnared creatures
refusing to abandon their shared belief
in the God of Abraham—Adonai *Echad!*

regardless, here in America and across the globe,
the spirit of Jacob has been harbored at last,
seemingly far from the tragedy of removal and the curse of extermination,
far from the countless trials meant to prove allegiance
and solidarity with the captors

and regardless, its distinctiveness thus preserved and cleansed,
all taint removed—
the Torah,
lifeline thrown to the unsullied,
and to those who struggled in the omnipresent sea of desolation,
and to those once sentenced to the ravenous furnace meant to purify,
meant to test those who were earnest,
meant to silence those who hid their conviction,
meant to extol the ostracized who still defiantly kept Shabbat,
meant to empathize with those who refused to study war
and were defeated because they did not,
meant to laud those divided in dispersion who still carried on,
meant to liberate those in ghettos who were locked behind European gates at night,
meant to celebrate those searching for historic continuity with a Jewish nation
embracing new and changing circumstances,
and ultimately meant to honor those who have remained alert
persevering throughout the millenniums—

to these survivors of those ceaseless
unforgiving trials of this diaspora—
let us all say, Amen!

White Buffalo Woman's Long Climb

© 2020

soaring down ice caved roads,
land steeped in Ponderosa pine,
howlin rains gathering along the divide—
aftermath from monsoons past.

enfolding each day of living,
the breath emits sublime foggy energy thrusts,
while Zuni Indian Poets assemble at El Morro Peak
intently listening to the red-tailed hawks soaring above.

it is a long climb vertical to reach these forgiving clouds,
but this solitary traveler,
breathing from her nose one nostril at a time,
stranded in this high desert country,
hitchhiker without a thumb,
prays with each earth step for more clouds to shelter her.

what vision could have beckoned this White Buffalo Woman?
what passion could conjure her onward?
this once young girl who had passed by here on horseback
this once young girl now fertile,
never again to be saddened by drought.

here, in this high desert country,
of too many horses without riders,
of not enough children with parents,
for this profound traveler,
way too much distance to recall a way back home.

wishing I were here

© 2020

by the position of the stars
at the junction of heaven and earth,
resolutely they stand
pondering the hardships preceding this great banquet of life,
where the perfumed air and sweet fruits now have become their feast
as it will be for the subsequent souls,
who, like us,
will have traveled through our destined times,
who hope like those before to leave the wheel to find the hub,
who wish to turn the lights off in the city to see,
whose forbearers expanded from both knowledge and suffering,
while selflessly shouldering the center tent pole all through the night
keeping it from collapsing while the others slept,
and, who like us,
must learn—
that in saving just one soul
someday saves the whole world

The Hostel Hitch

By Betty Hurd

© 2020

I stood in front of my hostel in Prague after a long day of uncomfortable bus rides. This was stop number two on my solo trip through Europe, and I was still disoriented by the backpacking way of life. My feet ached in my Converse, their paper-thin soles worn from long walks through cobbled streets. I may as well have been barefoot.

The long stone building stood covered in a thin layer of moss on a dark street corner. The glowing front desk light and the muffled tune of *Bohemian Rhapsody* invited me inside. I was eager to settle into a cozy bed after the long trip from Berlin.

My friendliness was wasted on the desk attendant, who grumbled an insincere greeting and kept his eyes down. I took my room key and trudged to my sleeping quarters.

The metal door screeched as it opened, and I heard the sound echo throughout the bunks. To my surprise, this was not a typical hostel room of five-to-ten beds. This was a bunk room that slept 36.

I stood in astonishment for a moment, then sighed away my disappointment and searched for an empty bed.

As I cruised the hall, eyes peered out from behind sheer curtains, and loud hacks came from every which corner. I felt as though I were walking through a tuberculosis ward.

I questioned my decision to stay in Europe while the rest of my study abroad friends headed back to America, 5,841 miles away. My closest friends were celebrating graduation in Tucson at my favorite bars on University Boulevard. Meanwhile, I sat

alone in a dank hostel, surrounded by odious strangers.

I brushed aside my homesickness and attempted to slap some sense into myself. I had dreamed of solo traveling through Europe for the past decade, and now I was actually doing it. How could I allow myself to be so pitifully pessimistic?

I laid my tired body in a lower bunk. Behind the curtains of the bed across from mine, a shadowy face stared at me. A hand brushed the partition aside, revealing an older man with crooked teeth and a startling unibrow.

“Have you been to France?” he asked in a heavy accent. “Paris?”

I said no.

“Miss America, I have a place for you to stay!” he said. Was it that obvious that I was American? “Look, you stay here with me, and I will show you all of Paris.”

He presented a photo of a gray apartment with crumbly brick walls and a sterile set of black furniture. It looked like the inside of a nut house.

Coughs and sneezes echoed around me, and the man’s foul breath stung my nostrils. Just like that, I had had enough.

As I gathered my things, the man’s unibrow furrowed into a V-shape of confusion. Yes, I would stay in Europe, and musty hostels be damned, I would enjoy myself! But I would not begin my travels with a creepy Frenchman in that God-forsaken hostel. I smiled goodbye, returned my key to the front desk and booked a one-room Airbnb.



The author writes: “My name is Betty Hurd and I am a senior journalism student at the University of Arizona, born and raised in Tucson, Arizona. My passion for traveling began in fourth grade when I visited my mother’s hometown of Baguio City in the Philippines. Since then, I have been to 32 countries throughout Asia, Africa, Europe and North America. I wrote this story about one of my first experiences on my solo trip through Europe during the spring of 2019.”

Lessons From Nicaragua

By Mandy Loader

© 2020

The long-held notion that money doesn't buy happiness has proved true time and time again in my life, but never as clearly as during the seven days I spent in Nicaragua.

A four-hour bus ride from the urban streets of Managua brought our volunteer group to our home base, a peaceful village along the country's northwestern coast called Jiquilillo. We were greeted by a surfboard-shaped sign that read "Bienvenido Hotel Monty's Surf Camp." To this day, I find it amusing that a surf camp also functioned as the go-to lodging for yoga enthusiasts, tourists and dozens of volunteer groups.

Everywhere we went, people were kind, relaxed and full of laughter and jokes. They seem so happy, I thought. I mentioned this to our volunteer leader, and she nodded. She remarked that Nicaraguans were among the happiest people she'd ever known. As a travel agent who has been to nearly every country around the world, she seemed like a trusted source.

To be honest, it surprised me that people with little material possessions or traditional opportunities could be so happy.

Bueno

On our first morning, and every morning thereafter, my younger sister and I awoke to ear-piercing shrieks. It took some time, but we finally managed to escape our mosquito nets, which never failed to be completely wrapped around every limb. We cautiously ventured out of our bamboo hut to investigate.

We soon discovered that these strange screams belonged to camp residents of a different sort—four lime green parrots perched on leafy branches in the midst of a grove of trees. The birds were almost camouflaged within the foliage. My sister and I burst into laughter.

The shrieks soon became our daily alarm clock and their creators our funny, feathery friends, greeting each passerby

with a clear, squawking "Bueno."

To this day, my sister and I still laugh about the parrots. It's interesting that something as simple as a group of quirky birds could bring so much joy.

Other than our lively morning greeting, no day was really the same. On one occasion, we painted and made elastic bracelets with children at an orphanage. On another, we visited a community living in the city's dump, where we prepared and served gallons of soup for hundreds of its residents. One day, we attempted to break apart a cracked cement basketball court with dull-bladed, hand-held axes in what seemed like a failed attempt to get rid of the old to make room for the new. I found out later that the project was indeed a success as our volunteer Facebook group flooded with photos of volunteers posing on the smooth, finished court.

Though different, each day reinstilled the same lesson. Happiness isn't only found in material possessions. Except one given by a quiet, brown-eyed girl no more than 8 years old. "Para ti," she said, as she handed me a painting of a red heart. Un corazón.

Thankful

I stood on a dirt floor next to what looked like a rusted stove. Scattered to my left was a pile of belongings smaller than what I had packed in my suitcase. In this brick structure no larger than a cramped college dorm room, the realization hit me stronger than ever. This was home for a family of 12.

A woman stood in the house with us, a toddler clinging to her faded skirt. We handed over large black trash bags filled with donated clothing, vitamins and food.

"Gracias," she said with a smile.

Dozens of matching houses surrounded this one, and we

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Mandy Loader is a Utah native who currently lives in Tucson, Arizona, where she attends the University of Arizona School of Journalism as a graduate student. Her professional goal is to become a journalist, primarily covering global stories. Since she was a young girl, she has had a passion for traveling, culture, nature and wildlife, and she hopes these themes will continue to be a part of her future articles.

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delivered a donation bag to each of them. In recent years, humanitarian organizations had built the houses to help the growing number of civilians made homeless by rising sea levels.

It was days like this when it felt wrong to enjoy a meal. Not because we weren't hungry or it didn't taste delicious, because we were, and it did. Yet many of us found it difficult to accept food from people with so little of it. At the same time, we'd never even consider wasting a bite of something so precious and generously given.

Community members who held much sought-after cooking jobs at the camp filled our plates with fish from the morning's catch and our cups with fresh-brewed Nicaraguan coffee. We scraped our plates clean at every meal.

Fútbol

Sweat soaked through my pink baseball cap and ran down my matching sunburned cheeks. Clearly, the dry Arizona desert had done little to prepare me for the Central America humidity.

I watched a group of 20 teenagers enjoying a sunny soccer match along a sandy inlet. People from neighboring towns joined in as well. The daily event was often the highlight of their trek to the camp, where they would mingle with the visitors, practice English and enjoy a spirited game of fútbol.

Two iguanas sunned themselves on the rock wall nearby, their charcoal scales glistening in the sunlight. Surrounded by fluorescent-pink flowers and towering palm trees that swayed in the cool ocean breeze, I practiced my mediocre Spanish with a man not much younger than myself. He sold me a pink-and-turquoise braided bracelet for \$3, the third in my growing collection.

These people seemed happier than most I knew back home. They were always smiling, always laughing. In eight days, I had met few people who seemed angry, annoyed or stressed.

It is a wonder to experience life alongside people who are full of gratitude when they have so little in a traditional sense. It teaches you something money also can't buy.

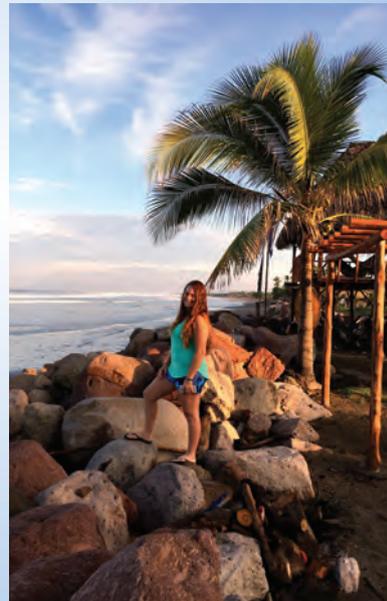
The people we met treasured every stained T-shirt, every cup of bland rice, every worn stuffed animal. They cherished the simple days spent with loved ones, the interactions with visitors from afar and the connections with their fellow community members.

Travel stays with you. The people stay with you. They become a part of you. Who you are comes into question, and if you're lucky, the way you view the world changes.

When it comes to having what matters, these people were richer than most.



Clockwise from above: Beach lodge; chipping concrete; tree canopy; yoga hut; on a rock wall; sunset. (Photos by Mandy Loader)



The Historical Communism

By Abraham Aruguete

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Unterwegs is a tune sung by the soldiers of the German Democratic Republic. It is derivative of a Russian song by a similar name, В путь, a tune sung by the Red Army Choir. It is a marching tune, and as such, the voices of the finest the GDR could muster to sing their patriotic songs boom Soldaten, marsch, marsch, marsch! The black uniforms, the soldiers in lockstep, the flag, a Hammer above a golden wreath ... all gone, now. The Wall, gone. Germany has been united for thirty years now, the Cold War a memory of an older generation. Nuclear drills, gone. My generation is not a generation of the tension between East and West, a generation of nuclear strike drills, a generation of proxy wars, anarchism, and Maoist inspired minority liberation movements. It is the generation of post Pax-Americana, or rather, the witnessing of the first cracking of the New World Order; Climate Change, compromise, the smattering of the political spectrum, dark clouds looming over the shattering of the Soviet Empire, a Russia resurgent, Internet bears from the East ...

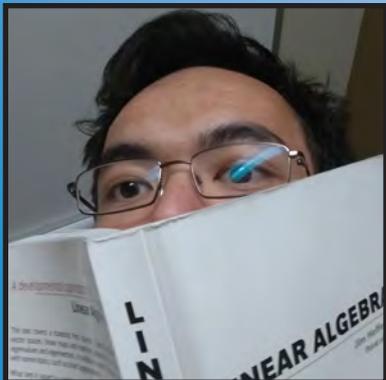
We should say something about it all, some big lesson learned, a historical narrative to put on post terminal usage and with the rise and fall of three digital media formats (DVD, VCR, Blu-Ray), there is plenty of space to shout. There is plenty of space to be heard. Blogospheres, social media posts, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat ... but nothing is being said. Or rather the same things are being said, over, and over, and over. The corpse Gorbachev left is simply remade into a Conservative, dominant party system much like Japan. Everyone's shutting borders. We look back to a time before the clash of empires, 1914, for our multipolar narratives. The dragon rises in the East, but that was also before my time. The peace and stability is still maintained, albeit with its various

pockmarks and rocket strikes. Proxy wars still burn in the Middle East and South America.

The marxists and the neo-reactionaries, both two sides of the same extremist spectrum, are in their forties, by now. Mark Fisher (rest his soul) and Nick Land have occupied the academic headspace staring into the paradigms of the nineties. Transhumanists make their mark by repeating the same boom and bust cycle that the nineties also brought, with the advent of the internet. Culture stagnates, slows, declines. It brings back the eighties, synthesizers, a new beat, a new piece of low-culture built from the fragments of futures lost. Why should not Communism too get its piece of revivalism among the zombie horrors of our pasts, unified in a vocal screech, eating generation after generation with the repeated, Fukuyama-ish paradigms: Blue versus Red, Socialist versus Libertarian, Guns n' Roses, Indie Rock, Flash Cartoons, the Internet of Things, smiling face after smiling face uniquely similar: Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, Joe Biden, and on the right, George Bush, John McCain (rest his soul), Ron Paul, Ross Perot, Donald Trump.

Ostalgie is also a recent phenomena marked by the selling of old Communist knick-knacks in Eastern Europe. Tour guides dressed up as Stasi showcase a pulled-teeth version of the old days. Private markets make profit off of Che Guevara t-shirts, Red Army Faction members turn over in their graves at the thought of upper middle class white people wearing socialist stars as if the revolution meant anything anymore. Political violence limited to a gang of weird, prison-like cults, protesting together and culminating in fringe online culture. Individual acts of violence. Running crowds. Everyone grows closer

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Abraham Aruguete is an uncertain Math Major at the University of Arizona. He is considering switching to Philosophy, as Math actually takes quite a bit of practice problems to get well at. He has a Patreon page at https://www.patreon.com/lackadaisica1?fan_landing=true, in the hopes of perhaps one day amassing such a corpus of work that someone will eventually notice his efforts at cultivating the creative side of himself. Or maybe not and like, he drops out and becomes a hobo or something. Who knows.

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together, but only so close.

Violence has ended, violence never begins, violence is snuffed out. A few ragtag countries bite at each other over the Middle East. Conservative and Reactionary parties are voted in power in Europe, post Socialist scandals. Putin's image stands tall above the multipolar world, cries against globalization, cries for globalization, NATO, EU, Belt and Road, Transnational polymers proliferating into porous borders, flows, flow, let the money flow, let the capital flow. The same story, broken communities, debt restructuring, the left-wing backlash, the right-wing backlash to the left-wing backlash, left-right-leftright. Democracy has prevailed, democracy will prevail, democracy has always prevailed. Nevermind voting systems. Everyone's bones are worked to death sitting on their ass. The same nicotine addictions, now smokeless, but not chewed. The same lung problems, also, now smokeless. Everything is normal. Everything is fine. In the background, a cry about Climate Change, the tune sung since the sixties, normal, verbose, full of science no one ever bothers to know or read.

The game is the game. But the rules: when did they become stagnant, unflinching, undenyng and so compact? The Orwells and the Borges and the Pynchons and the Nabokovs and the Dostoyevskys and the Wallaces all lived through tensions, all lived through the either/or, the divide, the Curtain, the Reich, the Tsar, the Spanish Civil War. What have we left? What can we write about? What voices possess us today, save for the same old Progressive/Conservative tune about the next Iraq or Iran or Saudi Arabia or Yemen? We stare down the barrel of serenity, we groan under economic growth, we protest one way and have the same arguments that our grandfathers had seventy years ago. What world were we left with when we have reached completion, as Eliot said? A gerontic one. Smoking its pipe, waiting leerily for something to happen, something to talk about. The next new amusement.

7 Poems by Abraham Arugete

Love

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The air tonight is filled with
vices of every perceivable kind. We see ourselves
reflected in every conquest. Every person used for therapy of some kind, to
get ourselves out there, to really just put ourselves out. To put out. Over and over again. She says
something about being a feminist, but I disregard it. She dresses as a succubus for Halloween. I don't
really care about her sex life, in the end, but it seems strange that she wears it. Is it an act of self-
expression of her? Absolution? What's there to be guilty for, if not for the people she used as stepping
stones when she had low self esteem? What power is there in being a body? It's confusing, really.

I don't get it. I don't tell her to fight because I'm her father, but merely
to give her something besides her body as an act of self
expression. The flesh decays eventually.

Why does she choose to die
like all the other
girls?

Hot youth is always remembered
 in gerontic years
 Passed by with cigarette smoke
 bushy-tailed bright-eyed

ride a motorcycle
 join the army
 make a club
 have friends
 look back
 always

distorted by the time
 you spent raising your
 kids and your family
 with a lens dirtied by
 the touch of time

I would've
 I could've
 I was in a
 the time eats us all
 makes fools of us
 ridicules to put on stage

youth is hot hell swept in have nothing want something
 hunger eyeing each other arms in smalls of backs
 napes of necks college parties red marks left biters
 minimum wage minimum pay minimum status
 we all want
 hunger

laugh a bit
 remember the
 fallen comrades in arms
 the dead ones
 hung by
 loneliness
 jobless
 didn't get the girl
 didn't own the world

the old men
 with their wise, wrinkled faces
 tell us what was

we all are in are
 but only the youth have
 what may be

Boundaries

© 2020

keep
your distance
don't
cross

here I am
no one else
don't touch
there is

closer you can come but the problem is
see how the body moves in the night lights
and the moon air biting temperatures never
touching the eyes look away you can feel

have been
should have
been
there

walking alone
breathing
pale
moonlight.

my spot
my space
echoes
into the night

nothing you
can say now
you will never
love

the spark is only in your head they
do not want you for you but you are not
miscommunications misfire misunderstandings
missed chances missing opportunities you could

apart now
orbit
forgot
uncollided

Figurant

© 2020

I
every movie star
is surrounded by their supporting cast

we should preen the hero
and kiss their feet
they are the greatest
the top of the top

you
you're nothing

you're the shit on the street
you're the back of the cast
the sweaty faced character
punched for fun
beaten for shits and giggles

torn to shreds
caught in the wind
there's no room for
no room for
the weak

you get what you deserve
you are here
you know your place
you know your face

Continued on page 67

Continued from page 66

II

we haunt the alleyways
the bars
we make friends with the corner men
and those with scruff for beards

wild eyed, caffeinated slaves
can a tool which knows its a tool
still be a tool
the answer is yes
we get the women they dispose of
sloppy seconds

all in the name of fun
all the girls flock
rebel against daddy
by finding another

the silent stone faced men
told that it was good to work
that happiness was guaranteed after

every single little lie
white and black
surrounds us in masqueraded images
makes fools out of us
families become
we did everything like we were supposed to
like our parents

where is our salvation
no christ comes to save us
no communism
no one lover
we cannot postmodernise the question away
into a billion different answers, diffracted

Continued on page 68

III

most glorious O faithful Christ
King of The Jews

suffering
is all in our head
(especially when like the homeless
you leave them for dead)
everyone's happy
just be positive
just smile
everyone gets
what they deserve

the love we found
on god's green earth
is ever so free
to disregard one another
and to dance in jubilee
over the bodies of the weak

I should hope personally nietzsche was wrong
and that one day
every dead hand rises up
or, perhaps more poetically
something we all ignored
procrastinated
let fall away
comes to haunt us, the many ghosts
of our pasts

choke us, breathing on our little ball
with ever finite gas

Paranoia

© 2020

our pasts haunt us like ghosts
sickle cell moon shapes shine on us pale
anemic skeletons haunting the alleyways
in bars in the dirty streets lined with chalk
another suicide tonight another homeless man
dies. The little things, the big life, leaves others
stranded on sidewalks, dying, voices pale, hoarse
they cry out in vague unison “What did we ever
do to deserve this?” the answer really truly is
they were born, ignored, laughed at
and then died. Acts of self-preservation
saving ourselves for
the self-justifications
from the others
who also care
for themselves.
you’d be a
damn fool
to
think.

Ugly But Honest

© 2020

for David Foster Wallace

I

let's say that
every UofA english undergraduate
could reference *Infinite Jest*
and not look quizzically
as if someone somewhere namedropped
something they SparkNotes for class

I wonder if his wife is old now
I wonder where she is now
I wonder if she knows
I wonder if he knows
And Heaven is real and he went to Heaven

and has a drink with Kurt Cobain
Ian Curtis
Elliott Smith
Vincent Van Gogh
Edgar Allen Poe

II

so much for culture
so much for consumption
what you're supposed to do
is wait
for someone to come to you

write a thousand words
which no one will read
scream into eternity
it doesn't matter
in the end you will be back again in the same haunt
hearing some people make reference to Nicki Minaj or Drake
who looks at *literature*?

We should all become faces
and dance in lovely graces
made-up to make-out
and tell our children

what wondrous fun

Continued on page 71

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III

stand
be polite
love your neighbor

love them all
(ask them for favors)
they're really nice to be around
(until you wake up later)
who really wants to sit in the lost and found
(do the thing so you can talk about it)

unique individuals line up down sideways
march university hallways
smile at each other greet and nod
and go to greek parties like greek gods
hit the gym and fail your classes
stare at girls' asses
and gossip
about who fucked who and who is who
around university avenue

IV

anti-american american culture is little better
wear some band sweater
about some online thing
no one knows

preach kindness and pour
money into whatever you want
you've grown skinny and nicotine fueled
and your little flaunt
of makeup here and a haircut there
really shows your punk *haute culture*,
how debonair

you'll talk Sanders and Biden and Yang and Democracy
words you learned from Political Science
and you'll swear to bring about
a Revolution (who knows what for)
the liberation of the Oppressed (with your skimpy dress)
and full Automation

Continued on page 72

Continued from page 71

so long as
you don't volunteer and you can party
ideology can really justify
anything

V

Christianity o lord o Christ o televangelist
nothing's amiss in your message
of tolerance for 5.99\$ and redemption for free
and we all get to band together for the sake of community

the pastor drinks on the side
his wife is cool and anodyne
(but she came to redemption
after the same old party carousel)

the road to hell
is filled with good intentions
and love
and defenestrations

forgive and forget
forget and forgive
the new testament can be sold in bulk
for a good 20 dollars or two

and so buddha and so christ and so ahriman and so krishna and
so vishnu

came together and said "one, two"
and cackled in a cacophonous shout
"we come together, from here on out
kindness and love will solve all
lengthy showers and hotter days
soil erosion and the smogged up sky
all will be solved by being kind"

so, indeed
stay kind, Tucson

Virginal

© 2020

To All the Women I Have Scared off In the Past Six Months

what came first
the man
or the woman
or well
that's not trans-inclusive

what am I supposed to get
what am I supposed to know
when all the bodies around me
seem to be in overflow
they stretch themselves
like they want to be known

“I mean
again
she said that he was
and that they did
wait that”

or am I just in the mood
i'll never know
hands are not mine
to be known

clean
kept
in a room
bird-like
circling the crowd

hair messy
drawn up
separated from most
stuck in the lost and found

free world
free organs
freedom of flow
free to know
and get known

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Continued from page 73

all fun and no play
makes for a dull boy
drying out
unconscious to all
impotent to all

holy holy
little bird
holy holy
here's the word

organs
they are a part
and your loneliness
can only make so much art

but then again the chase
is a part of the game
and the chase itself
is always such a strain

oh well
not the first
not the last
among the sexually irrelevant
one loses one's reverence
for such things
eventually

A Poem by Richard Sederstrom

The Fall of Icarus: Misadventures in Ascension

© 2020

I. Barrio Alto

*Colonia Microondas, Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico
outside La Iglesia de Santa Maria de los Angeles,
known as "La Portiuncula"*

On the wind-scoured top of a steep rock-strewn saddle
the strewn chabolas of the poorest of the poor in the barrio -
Colonia Proletaria on high -

blown dust burns into exposed arms,
faces turn in awe and dismay from the 360 degree land/seascape,
a billion dollar view in the States.

But to be wealthy here is to be close to the action or the ocean.
The action isn't on hilltops,
out of eyeshot, forgotten, wall-less, exposed, bent.

To open one's eyes from the dead soil of this hill,
is to open them onto a view of mountain and sea
that is a majesty of God's punishing world.

See there?
Dürer's Icarus, white legs up,
limned for a second in the polluted bay.

José Pedro sweeping the open chapel will come to you gently
seeking work, a handout, shared words -
especially shared words.

*A note on the poet's bathetical aesthetic:
Mistaking the Icarus of Breugel for the (non-
existent?) Icarus of Dürer is the "Keatsian"
mistake referred to. The correction back to
Breugel is the poet's way of painless atonement.
The addition of Diego Rivera seems appropriate
to the issues of the sequence.*

*Francisco di Pietro di Bernardone

** Churches
dome-growths,
their facades
petrified gardens of symbols . . .
Octavio Paz, "Nocturno de San Ildefonso"

***They buried her in the family tomb
and in the depths the dust
of what was once her husband
trembled:
joy for the living
is sorrow for the dead.
Octavio Paz, "Epitafio de una vieja"

Quotations trans., Eliot Weinberger,
The Collected Poems of Octavio Paz, 1957-1987

Continued on page 76



Richard Fenton Sederstrom lives in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona, where he was raised from age ten and from which he received his first cactus puncture the day he arrived, one afternoon in 1954, a lesson he still appreciates. Sederstrom is the writer of six books, the most recent being "Sorgmantel." A new book, "Selenity Book Seven," will appear in 2021.

Continued from page 75

Happily chattering without listening or seeing,
you passed so blithely
their wretched and holy chabolas so close to heaven.

Go back and remind José Pedro what he just said,
reminding you too - "Es bonito."
"Si, es muy bonito. Es hermoso."

On the way down the hill, call to your better mind
the squalor of the northward crossing into Nogales - to home.
Recall that you don't feel welcome there anymore.

II. The Poor of Aztlan

(The Barrio, Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico)

1

Toward the north across the border and into the desert
lives are husked by the hundreds -
Discarded bones.
Weathered carapaces of empty gear and empty hope:

2

In the barrio children beam and pass quickly
in fresh t-shirts and stiff new jeans on their way
to the serious business of escuela - of living -
carry heavy backpacks.
They half skip anyway bathed in smiles. *Buenos días*

An old man sweeps the sidewalk in front of his casa,
then about six feet into the street.
He and his home are no more than part of his barrio.
No less. *Buenos días*

Another, younger man stands stately by this morning too.
Repeats ritual *Buenos dias*, solemnly in desolate good humor.

Last night he had leaned against a battered white van in front,
another borracho lost in a vaguely expectant fuzz of alcohol.
This morning he is a neighbor again. *Buenos días*

The little ones keep walking by,
some mothers accompanying hand in hand or from behind
not quite willing to keep up with sillier energies. *Buenos días*

Continued on page 77

3

Delfina stands in front of her tiny shack.
Almost a child, too slim, mother of four,
knocked up at thirteen and not worth a statistic.

Her chabola proclaims her future.
She hasn't one.
Delfina smiles. Waves. *Buenos días*

To the west, in the shallows off the beach at San Carlos -
dolphins, catlike, graceful, caress swimmers' legs.
A dolphin bumps one swimmer gently, firmly in the belly
as though to warn him against the final reality.

In our distant mythologies dolphins rejoice to human presence.
Dolphin: from Greek, *delphus*: womb -
"We are mothers when we carry him in our heart and body through love"*

Or does the dolphin reject now the invasive species,
the dolphin's unrequited? *Buenas noches*

5

Back there in the bahía though,
where a sewage pipe slops into the dubious clarity,
and a fish processing plant and a paper factory -
stench times three, industry pays, and reeks.

6

The poet's Keatsian blunder: it's Bruegel's Icarus, not Dürer's,
but the same pasty legs whitening in Cortez's stolen water.

The poet's place is the delusional mist on the near outside of the canvas,
helpless in the fogs of language and memory -
dis-focusing lost un-realities: the treacherous North. *Buenas noches*

III. Dead Beckoning

Iglesias,
vegetación de cúpulas,
sus fachadas
*petrificados jardines de símbolos***

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*Shall it be Rivera's Icarus this yarn around?
Never mind.
The image remains true -
faceless, requiteless panic insinuated in those leprous-white legs
dangling upward into some alien gravity,
down/up-and-netherward/
etherward*

*far beyond the care or awareness
of the women on shore,
inland and hidden in a clear field of focus
of procedural art and artists.*

*It doesn't matter anyway, much,
save a little perhaps to Rivera,
and certainly to me,
but mostly to the greater image, the peripheral
real world:*

In a side-chapel disguised as poverty
three aged women in black,
devout lay-ordinary products of church, chapel,

compliments of sacraments -
visions and revisions of the centuries' *ad hoc* Trinities -

the women of the Trinities,
their lives invisible to the picture, the poem, the plaster saint,
his leprous-white face: themselves - posed like fates -

Moirai - or, perhaps:
Charites - Gratiae.

Blessed or cursed in a robotic Dopplegängerlieben,
the un-dead saint raises his plaster right hand
to offer an un-live blessing to the blind and distant noumenon

in the vacuum that surrounds the three women in black:
they, their rosaries, their plaster silence.

Tock Tick Tock Tick

Blessed or cursed in a Purgatory's indifferent share
of Eternity, a time-bound proximity of novena

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times novena,
times the product of all novenas that equal the second
before the next-to-final resurrection,

a somber triad of ageless women in black
share silent histories in absentia:
a nether-cosmos, in wisdom
indifferent to the Greek logophilia.

Three ageless women in black who have replaced
three ageless women in black
who have replaced generations in a zodiac
of ageless indistinguishable trines in black,

sit silent, like Moirai at their profound work,
Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos -
a black trinity arranged
before the supine effigy of a petrified saint,

who lies for the convenient ortho-dogma of pliable theology,
which re-presents:
Is? IS! - AM! -
First Person re-manufactured Plural,
the officially apportioned totality of the sacred One:

and Two in One: and Three in One: and All
in One: and One in three: AM:
ALL: ANY?

Someone's elders invented their bound and binding character,
who evolved by prolepsis through clinamen to prolepsis,
adventuring into their impeccably disarranged quantum deity;

uncontrollable, the same God who then invented time
to keep track of Himself.

Then someone in some forgotten monastery
discovered the sear that would control
the clock that controlled time that controlled God
and someone later re-invented God as the Original deists' Deity -
agreeable, sensible, ruthless at composed formal request,
nonpraesens, nonpotentes for all the scholastic glamour -

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and immersed Him into a petrified maelstrom in the sea
far deeper than the hole Lucretius swirled
for the livelier ancient pagan god-gang.

The saint's stiff right arm,
a thing of wheels and cogs and metal joints,
the engineering of a drawbridge,

moves - tick - heavenward from his side -
uptick and downtick, downtick and uptick -
ticker tape of quantifiable prayers
or a metronome for bland eternity,

timing of a sacred doomsday clock -
to wind down some-aeon - imperceptible though,
as though to Tithonis' deathless flagging ear,

eternity in the endless humility of rosary beads:
like neutrinos,

omni-directed directionless dash and flash of faith.

One pale stiff finger beckons
with no motion of its own, beckons in the tick-tock tempo

that the mechanized arm in lithic pallor
directs in the evening shadow
that shrouds and portends the final unwinding

Eternity itself arranges to beckon
in time with the women's tockless saint.

Right arm tick.
Right arm tock.

Then tick, then tock,
the undulations of generations of the tocking dead -
The living,
 the dead,
 the living,
 the dead.

The . . .

The dead:
the holy dying:
the holier dead queued breathless-tight for resurrection.

Candidates for contractual immortality-

Matins

Lauds

Prime

Terce

Sext

Nones

Vespers

Compline.

Tick

Wind>

Change threesome from Moirai
to Eumenides?

*La enterraron en la tumba familiar
y en las profundidades tembló e polvo
del que fue su marido:
la alegría
de los vivos
es la pena de los muertos.****

Wind.

Watch arm TOCK
tock tick tock
tock tock tock :

The women in black know the range of liturgies:
They are mothers.
They are grandmothers.

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They represent the generations that marry young,
from Quinseñera to altar in a quick-change of finery
from white to white

to black.

They have tamed husbands - mostly tame -
and mostly for their only protection
in the earthy fields and kitchens,
the door-yards of Purgatory.

They have raised children well beyond the number
that obliterates ease and maybe love -
stretched out and far away into the population
of generations filling barrio and church and church-yard.

The women in black are acquainted with Earth -
the matters of nature, nurture, culture -

Death

Outside the eucharistical numbness of eternity
without the sacrifice of meditation
the women survive
como los sagrados emblemos profanos
of all who survive:

Ellos sobreviven,

*La muerte no es más que justicia - ciega.
No menos. Pero ciega.*

IV. Floricanto for José Pedro

A flurry of light noises,
those bright paper flowers we search for in fiesta markets,
or a cardon's one-night blossoms.

“Bienvenidos,” and “Mucho gusto.”

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I had never been blessed with these sounds before.
I turned from this new music and absorbed
the shock of embrace

almost before I saw the dark hand I had taken,
worn both rough and smooth by labor and idleness.

I faced him not face to face but cheek to cheek,
not the Gringo way:
flowering is never to be questioned.
These blossoms never last for the answer.

By now, after our several years,
after blossoms of minutes fading with the folklorico fiesta dye
of our minor occasions,
our minutes in hour-bound years as friends,

I still enjoy long talks with you, amigo,
separated now by distance, time, language, and -
it's been so long ago - maybe life.
I still absorb your spoken world from what I can grasp –

“Es bonita,” and you gesture beyond the plywood chabolas
toward the bay, from that hill worth those billions in the
unfathomable attraction of the implacable Norte -

but, we must agree again, only after your shacks
and your children and your lives have been sanitized away
from the gilded hills.

I smile and nod and make noises in English.
O, yes, si, beautiful, bonita, the point and counterpoint
of this dance you and I step to, hermano,

fingertipping those paper flowers, whose names,
all those breeze-blown words, *floricantos*, have wilted,
have strewn this fertile pollen,

this sometime comfortably mortal faith, these blossoms,
with each new overture, the two dancers we are each time.

We become tune, pollen, *floricanto*.
Embrace and change are our only, our best language,
flower and song.

Coming in autumn 2020!

The Annual
Fall Festival
of the Arts!

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

Free admission!

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

Who we are

All about The Arizona Consortium for the Arts

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

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

The Arizona Consortium seeks to create a multicultural, multidisciplinary arts center that will provide a home for our activities and foster artistic growth for people of



all ages in conjunction with exhibiting artists, writers, actors, dancers and musicians who will share their expertise in a gallery, theater setting.

Please visit www.artizona.org or www.theblueguitarmagazine.org for more information about

becoming a member, networking, donating, advertising, volunteering or submitting work to The Blue Guitar arts and literary magazine, Unstrung poetry magazine and The Blue Guitar Jr. literary and arts magazine for youth.

You can become a part of the Arizona Consortium and make a difference. There are countless ways to contribute, and the consortium is grateful for any donation in any form. For us to grow as an organization, provide various services to artists, and support inspiring projects, your financial support is needed. Every dollar received will support our website, the publication of our magazines, and the establishment of our future center.

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

Thank you for your support!



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

The consortium's vision for a multicultural arts center

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

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

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

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

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

Meet the staff of The Blue Guitar magazine



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

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

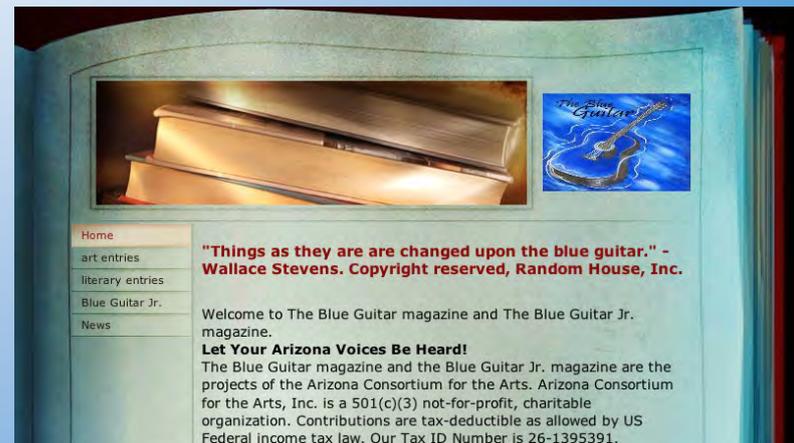


Richard H. Dyer Jr., co-editor: Richard (married to Rebecca, above) is the news editor of two monthly newspapers with websites in the East Valley, a photographer and a welded-steel sculptor. Reach him at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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



Check our websites for news on the arts



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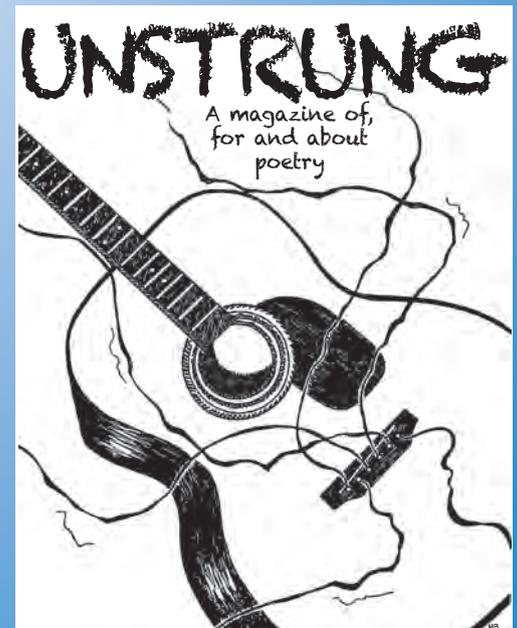
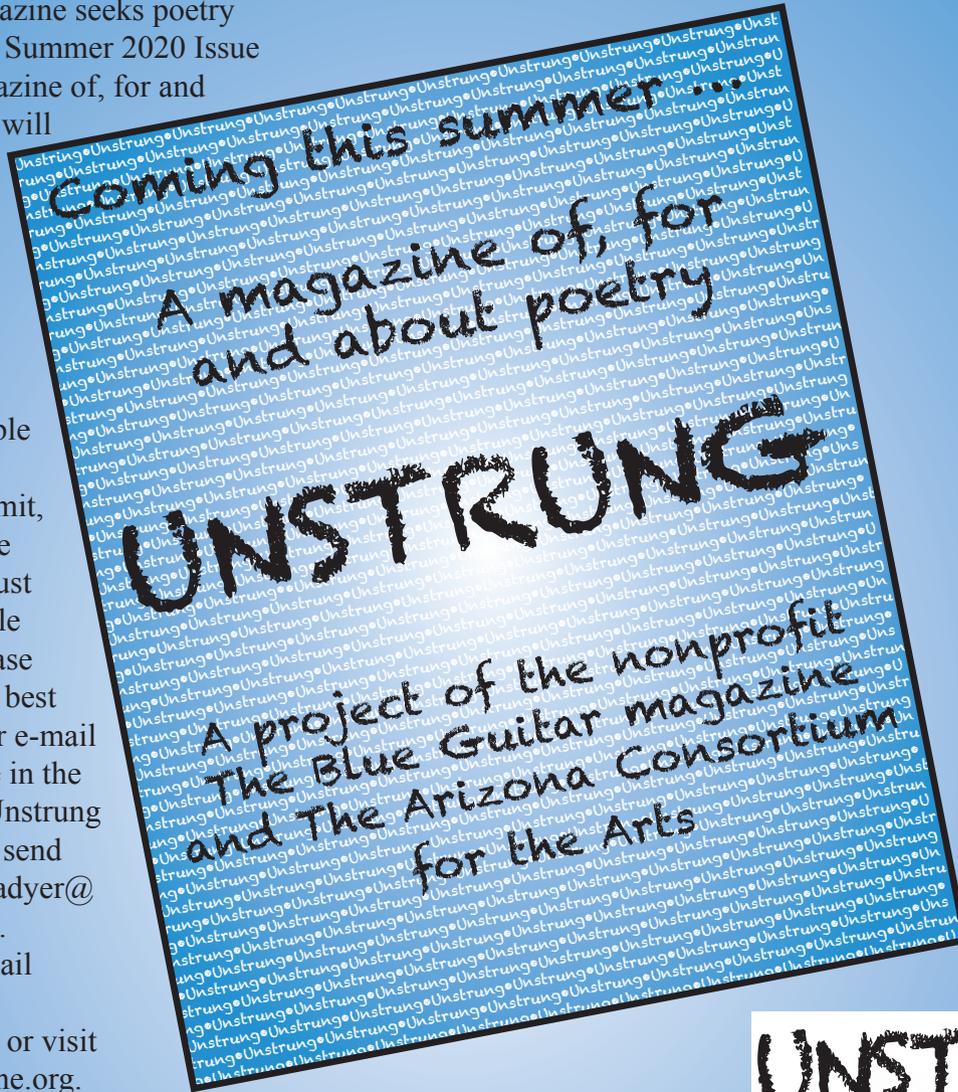
Spring 2020

A Call to Poets for the 2020 Issue of Unstrung

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks poetry submissions for the Summer 2020 Issue of Unstrung, a magazine of, for and about poetry. Submissions will

be accepted from June 1 through July 4. Poets must submit original work and must have a tie to Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the poet must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and multiple poems may be submitted. Submissions must be in the best shape possible and publication-ready. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your e-mail submission. Please include in the e-mail subject line: Attn. Unstrung — Poetry submission, and send to Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, e-mail Rebecca at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org or visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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



A Call to Writers for The Blue Guitar Jr.

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

The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks literary submissions for its next annual issue for children and teens. Submissions from children and teens and adults who write for children and teens are sought by Oct. 1, 2020, in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction — all geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Writers must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For additional information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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

A Call to Artists for The Blue Guitar Jr.

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

The Blue Guitar Jr. magazine seeks art submissions for its next annual issue for children and teens. Submissions from children and teens and adults who create art for children and teens are sought by Oct. 1, 2020, in all media geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Artists must submit original work and must live in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the artist must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple mediums; up to 5 images can be submitted. Artists are encouraged to submit images of work by e-mail; please provide high-resolution JPEGs of 300 dpi. Images must be identified in the e-mail with the artist's name, contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. Please include your name and the best way to contact you. To submit or for more information, e-mail Editor Richard Dyer at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For additional information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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



A Call to Writers for Fall 2020

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks literary submissions for the Fall 2020 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct 4. Submissions are sought in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction. Writers must submit original work and must live part- or full-time in Arizona. Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the writer must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple genres. Please include your name and the best way to contact you on your submission. Submissions must be in the best shape possible and publication-ready. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Rebecca Dyer at rebeccadyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

A Call to Artists for Fall 2020

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks art submissions in all mediums for the Fall 2020 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 4. Any artists who work in any visual art media, are 18 years or older and are part- or full-time Arizona residents can submit. It is free to submit and up to 5 images can be submitted. Artists are encouraged to submit images of work by e-mail; please provide high-resolution JPEGs of 300 dpi. Images must be identified in the e-mail with the artist's name and contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. Submissions must be in the best shape possible and publication-ready. To submit or for further information, e-mail Editor Richard Dyer at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For more information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.



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“Things as they are are changed upon the blue guitar.”
— Excerpt from Wallace Stevens’ 1937 poem “The Man With the Blue Guitar.”
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