

The Blue Guitar



Table Of Contents

Art

Watercolors: “Streetwise,” “Rainbird,” “Wrendology,”
 “Everyday’s Desert” – David Chorlton 10-13

Oils, linocut print, acrylic: “Aqui Vive Abuela,” “Chicago,”
 “Coqui de Cayey,” “No Me Siento Como Yo,” “Que Se Vayan
 Ellos” – D’Marlyd Salort 25-29

Photographs: “Cactuses stand tall,” “A bat lies upside down”
 – Emma McDonough 32-33

Photographs: “Juvenile Orangutan,” “Large adult male
 Orangutan,” “Mother and baby Orangutans,” “Orangutan
 demonstrates its flexibility,” “Komodo Island Pit Viper,”
 “Komodo Dragon shows off its tongue,” “Komodo Dragon
 explores” – Mark Wolfson 34-36

Poetry

“a greek tragedy,” “the art of decluttering, for the hopelessly
 sentimental,” “on the beach in Porto Rafti,” “in a mirrored
 room” – Erin Lorandos 3-6

“June 1963,” “Father and Son Math,” “Call me Ooh”
 – Alfred Fournier 7-9

“Streetwise,” “Rainbird,” “Wrendology,” “Everyday’s Desert”
 – David Chorlton 10-13

“Under the Weeping Willows,” “Someone Formally Known as
 My Sister” – Audrey Sher Walton 14-15

“To Dare” – Mary L. Serantoni 16

“Inchoate,” “Political Poem #1” – Abraham Aruguete 17-18

“Expecting Joy,” “Grace,” “Eulogy for Pat,” “Senescence,”
 “Consolation for an Aging Tenor” – Rex Lambert 19-23

“She Ain’t Just a 2nd Lieutenant” – Kerry Pardue 24

“Dissonance from Row Seven Center,” “Doppelmacher,” “So,”
 “The Many Single VoyageS? of το πλοίο Ηράκλειτος μέσω του
 αιθέρα” – Richard Fenton Sederstrom 42-50

Fiction

“Opera Panic,” “Soda Flavors,” “I Promise”
 – Duann Black 37-41

Non-Fiction

“The Influence of the Wizarding World and Its Characters”
 – Ethan Park 30-31

“Beauty of Life: Through the Eyes of Sabino Canyon”
 – Emma McDonough 32-33

“There Be Dragons” – Mark Wolfson 34-36

Community Spotlight

Phoenix Writers Club turns 100 51-53

News

The 2026 Blue Guitar Festival of the Arts 56

All about The Arizona Consortium for the Arts 57

The Consortium’s vision for a multicultural arts center 58

The Blue Guitar magazine staff biographies 59

Sign up for The Consortium’s e-newsletter 59

Call to poets for the Summer 2026 issue of Unstrung 60

Calls to writers, artists for the 2026 Blue Guitar Jr. 61-62

Calls to writers, artists for the Fall 2026 Blue Guitar 63

Editor’s Note

This issue is absolutely loaded with variety — in genres, writing and artistic styles and the experiences and backgrounds of the writers, poets and artists who are featured. To them we say a big thank-you!

We would be remiss if we also didn’t recognize all of the people in the arts who work in the background as is so eloquently and poignantly acknowledged in Rex Lambert’s poem “Consolation for an Aging Tenor,” found later in this issue. Here’s to the editors, musicians, performers and artists working behind the scenes! Without them, there would be huge holes we couldn’t possibly fill.

As always, keep submitting and keep reading!

Rebecca “Becca” Dyer, Co-Editor



Rex Lambert as a “henchman” in Arizona Opera’s production of Giuseppe Verdi’s “Rigoletto.”

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 @theblueguitarmagazine

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Spring 2026

4 Poems by Erin Lorandos

a greek tragedy

begin your poem with a metaphor that drips
like honey from the comb –
sweet words make for saucy whispers,
in the darkest folds of night – especially
when they come from something sharp

i taste the colors of the sky at day
break, hearing you read your poems aloud
you are aphrodite and adonis, come
together under the myrrh tree
in full bloom

but, their love soured quickly enough, so
be careful with all that wordplay,
it gets sticky just as fast

now i sit to the side of this tragedy,
a modern argus –
my many eyes seeing nothing
that is true, so don't trust
a thing i've said...

my verses will be soon forgotten,
my prophecy reduced
to morpheus' fodder
for tomorrow's sweetest nightmares

ο χρόνος είναι ο σοφότερος σύμβουλος όλων
(time is the wisest counselor of all)
and yet, the children who sit at a teacher's knee
learn nothing at all
of love

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Erin Lorandos is best defined by her Dewey Decimal call numbers: mom, librarian and female writer living in the United States. And, yes, she has the tattoo to match! She has worked in libraries and other informal education spaces for her entire career, and now works in the nonprofit space focused on digital equity. She has been a writer for as long as she can remember, and writes both poetry and fiction. Her recent publication credits can be found at erinlorandos.blogspot.com.

the art of decluttering, for the hopelessly sentimental

step one:

imagine, there was a fire
it will be easier to pretend your
things don't spark joy – if they're burnt
beyond all recognition

step two:

try to sift through the
memories, while the edges are still
smoking. your fingertips are keen
to feel the pain of loss

step three:

become the fire, yourself
take a scorched-earth approach
and rip through the years. feed
the flames with anger, if possible,
keep them hot and hungry

step four:

survey the results –
your rooms will be
as empty and barren as
your heart

step five:

cleanse yourself through tears

remember, you still have
to take all this junk
to the thrift store tomorrow

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on the beach in Porto Rafti

the sea birds, so
light and free and hollow and
pushy – steal the girls’ lunch right
in front of me they
belong here, though, on this
sea-glass stage, we
are the extras who forced
our way in from the back
lots and side stairs – yet,
here we are. our right
to be here negotiated over κρασί
and fried zucchini...in english
of course, earlier we looked outside
our means and he fell in love. but,
it was too much, a
container for a life we don’t live,
but how he wants to live that life –
let’s buy this one, I said, it
is where we are now, not
where you think we should be –
the bay below and the water sparkling
like the diamonds in that incubus song
we listened to when all we could
afford was a shared meal at taco bell
now, look at us, I say – he looks
out towards Andros and
says it’s only enough,
while I’m here
sitting in a room, full
of another language –
is his mind silent

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in a mirrored room

(a viator, almost...after Metallica's Room of Mirrors)

in a mirrored room
all my faults laid bare
i see the way you see me,
all the things that need repair

i cannot hide from my self
in a mirrored room
all my edges shown in sharp relief
you cut off my costume, way too soon

but this room has value, yet –
for you are here with me
in this mirrored room,
your truths are also free

the space between us, clearly defined –
and now i can turn away
leaving you here alone
in this mirrored room

you'll stay

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3 Poems by Alfred Fournier

June 1963

after John Davis, "Bring on the Rain"

It's June 1963. I am not yet born.
Dad returns from work, arms full of groceries.
Mom stands in the kitchen, one hand
cradling her rounded belly, turns down
Nat King Cole on the radio with the other
as Dad sets the bags on the counter.

Mom's "Long day...?" is silenced by a long kiss
dissolving into a quiet hum as Dad's hand
joins hers atop the bulge within which I turn
to press my feet against their touch.
This evokes a laugh, that low boom from Dad,
that voice I love. "I'd say this one's about ready."
Which I don't understand, but do—

44 years later, he will give a bride away —
not his daughter, but my wife—her own Dad
far away in China. He would grin at the lovely
improbability of it. His last son marrying
a woman from the other side of the world,
that mythical land of clever inventions
he loved to joke about.

By then, Mom 32 years gone.
I'd grow to manhood without her,
carry her breath in my flesh,
the dark depths of my eyes. I'd live buoyed
by Dad's booming laugh, grey eyes,
unswerving work ethic and rare pats on the back.

But that's all in the future.
It's June 1963. In seven months
The Beatles will change everything.
In one, I will be born into this house of noisy siblings,
the sound of love taking shape inside me.

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Originally from Royal Oak, Michigan, Alfred Fournier is an entomologist with University of Arizona. He has lived in the Phoenix Valley area since 2005. He hosts online poetry writing workshops for Connect and Heal, a nonprofit organization. He is the author of "A Summons on the Wind" (2023, Kelsay Books), and "King of Beers" (2025, Rinky Dink Press). His poems have appeared in Gyroscope Review, The New Verse News, Oyster River Pages, The Sunlight Press, The Indianapolis Review and elsewhere. Find him on Instagram: @alfournierwrites or at alfredfournier.com.

Father and Son Math

Dad was 40 the day I arrived in the hospital ward.
He held me like a football, secure against his chest,
like when he'd dodged and weaved through a defensive line.

Mom looked up from her woozy sleep, said sternly,
"I mean it Alfred. This one we name after you."
He turned toward the window, secreting a smile.

When he was 17, there was no stopping him,
on the field or in the life he rushed toward. He was sure
he could take down Hitler when he enlisted the next year.

When I was 17, he flipped through my high school literary magazine
but never read a word, as if were in Greek.
One of two times he told me he was proud.

We never spoke the same language. He was ball bearings
and gaskets, oil pans and carburetors.
His huge hands could build or disassemble anything.

I was rain-filled tulips, beach glass and secondhand paperbacks.
My favorite words were *sweet* and *eternity*.
He never made me go to church after Mom died.

The second time he said he was proud I was 42,
accepting my Ph.D. "You almost went wrong," he reminded me,
referring to the time he'd caught me with weed.

"I was hard on you then but look how you turned out."
I let him have that. My sisters helped him to the banquet table.
He was lit up like Orion that night.

I was 47 when my daughter was born, his 25th grandchild.
I propped her close on his hospital bed the day he turned 88,
both of them grinning at some secret joke between them.

He died that October, complications from Alzheimer's. I was 48.
In every picture, he was handsome, sure of himself,
all heart and hands and humor.

"It's no small thing," he told me once, "to make someone laugh,
to turn their day around with a joke. If I can do that, I call it a good day."
He made the world a more livable place one joke at a time.

He taught me to look other people in the eye, to walk
"as if you're headed somewhere." And always to hold what's precious
close to your heart, bobbing and weaving toward the endzone.

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Call me Ooh

“Call me Ooh,” our waiter said.
Short for “Ooh, I wish I knew,”
perhaps, or maybe for the praise
that privately sweet lovers breathe—
his body firm, her body lithe,
as soft and white as falling snow.
Or if his lover is a man, this too
I think I understand. Oh, Ooh,
what secrets will you tell
this little tableful of fools?
Your life a dream you know so well
until you wake and can’t recall.
Oh, mirror, mirror, on the wall,
is Ooh the fairest one of all?

He brought the menus and the plates
and served us with a knowing smile.
We never seemed to think it strange,
this awestruck syllable, his name.
He pushed it out through rounded lips
as if it might be Bob or Joe.
We ate there on the patio
as cars rushed by out on the street.
I paid the check and left the tip,
and Ooh brought boxes for the food.
And no one seemed to think it odd,
the way he met us at the door,
the slow goodbyes like longtime friends.
We thanked him. Ooh said, “Come again.”

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4 Poems by David Chorlton

Streetwise



David Chorlton is of Austrian-English background, and he has lived in Phoenix since the late 1970s. Coming soon is a book of poetry with watercolors that are part of the poems, "Desert of Earthly Delights," thanks to Cholla Needles Arts and Literary Library in Joshua Tree, California.



"Streetwise" watercolor painting by David Chorlton.

Stormlight for the taking,
a coyote pulls the sky behind him, slides
between the natural world and
the manufactured one. Pauses
by some looping palm fronds,
noses the gate
to mystery's back yard
as the couple who spend winters here
take grey steps
around the cul-de-sac so slowly
the sun turns back
to give the day an extra hour of light.
Small world, walking sticks
know the way around it
while nose-high on a cloud
it's easy to cross
from daytime into night, as much
in tune with concrete as
with gravel trails. Not a movement
too slight to pick up on, with all
senses sharpened to a point
he's aware that even

in a mild December there's a chill
waiting for the moon
to guide it from the desert.

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Rainbird



“Rainbird” watercolor painting by David Chorlton.

The kind of day the sky moves into the house
and the street can't remember
ever being desert. Darkness owls itself away
leaving mystery behind. The Cooper's hawk
on the backyard wall doesn't care
about the human world with all its looking inward
to secrets of the heart and trigger-finger
minds. Just waits
as a cold wind sharpens its claws
passing through; woodpecker be gone, mockingbirds
curb your songs, sparrows take shelter
when the weather doesn't know which way to fly.

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Wrendology



“Wrendology” watercolor painting by David Chorlton.

Between brittlebush, stones and the sky
one path says to continue
while another turns back on itself: which way
to go, where does the call begin
with its gravel notes?
It knows where secrets are
though not the how
of getting there. Walking’s fine, to fly
is better, best of all
forget setting out and listen
for the Cactus wren. No good news there, no bad,
only directions past the sprawling nest
in a saguaro’s arms. And further,
to the raspy sound of sunlight caught
on cactus needles, still
reason to go past the corners
and creases of land, a cough
that catches in the desert’s throat.
The rocks impersonate
a raven’s cry, slope leans on slope
and greens into infinity. Let other worlds
have fire and ice, let them bathe
in radiation. Desert calling. Cholla
shines. Bright morning. Somewhere to be,
known only to those
who arrive there.

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Everyday's Desert



“Everyday’s Desert” watercolor painting by David Chorlton.

First breath, the morning moon rides bareback
on the mountain. Darkness shades
to thrashers’ voices, the gravel tracks
soak back the animals who made them. Coyote sharp,
the stones are shifting to make
space for light and anyone
who needs to be alone today. So familiar
the trail as to rest
beneath the rocks, above the creosote, straight
along the border between waking
life and sleep. The far off peaks are blue,
cloudstrings at the altitude at which
stone dreams there’s a forest growing
to be closer to the sky, and here underfoot
shoes crunch their way to be more part
of Earth. Brittlebush upslope, bright
yellow, olive green, no clock
to time when spring arrives. Along a single
thread of trail a Roadrunner
hurries, light into shade, and the shade disappears
in a hollow. Where the trail stops
to look up Rock wrens call high
and low, give voice to formations
assembled through chance. Everything else has fallen
into place: mesquite, arroyos,
yesterday, the years
preceding it, and all the storms the ground has ever
swallowed. Now from overhead
ravens caw down to say it’s good where they are, it’s
desert even in
the air.

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2 Poems by Audrey Sher Walton

Under the Weeping Willows

Under the weeping willows
We expanded our minds

Grove of trees blanketed the space between ground and sky
our constant companion

Safe
under those pendulous branches
compassionate swaying leaves—
sometimes an amber hue sometimes a pistachio green
Safe to undress
each other slowly layer by layer
Or place drops of a different reality on our tongues

Rock and roll coursed through our veins like waves of hope
veil of foliage swayed as if it too had auditory appreciation

And here under the autumn sun,
trying to keep temporal thoughts at the fore
We lounged and contemplated
Philosophized as pens swiftly moved across journal pages

Musky earthy scent wafting through the air
we exhaled our troubles
And let them burn right down to our fingertips
Sharing, passing, rolled up joy
Weeping willows securing our privacy like a haven in a heaven

ground beneath us a cushion
shy sky beckoned to be witnessed
through the pearls of leaf tips that
combed our shoulders with trust

Optimism that we thought we'd never lose
Now
Buried in spinal discs that bulge and hearts that worriedly skip
beats

Looking at images of those trees
Now 2500 miles out of reach

Still weeping
As am I

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Audrey Sher Walton facilitates Wordslingers Writing Group and Tucson Poetry Appreciators. The founder of Write ON! Eastside Writers, Audrey was the associate editor of Awakenings Literary Review & served on the Board of Directors for The Awakenings Project — both support and promote creative outlets for those living with mental illness. A three-time recipient of the Joanna Lowry Prize for Literary Arts and a Pushcart Nominee, she is the winner of Pima County's Family Heritage Project Contest and an Arizona State Poetry Society contest. She penned monthly columns in two Tucson newspapers. Her poems have been published in Zocolo, Aurora, "Write ON! Anthology," The Blue Guitar, Heron Clan, Hydration, Sandcutters, Wondrous Sky, and in her own collection: "All the Colors of My Life Are Red," a part of the University of Arizona's Poetry Center Archival Collection. Mrs. AudreysAcademicAchievement@gmail.com.

Someone Formally Known as My Sister

Uncarpeted floors
Barren windows
Un-curtained and transparent
Yet you keep yourself
hidden
Cloaked in paranoia and regrets

Mired in the onslaught of questions
about your isolation
I can offer no explanation
to quell the curiously concerned.

Devoid of reason, self-induced desolation
lack of solace
I have no answers
Only *you* can unravel your quagmire noose

Shared parents:
smoky photos reveal glimpses of our entwined beginnings
you pushing me high on a swing, coaxing my toes to touch the trees

bundled up in winter gear, arms tight around your waist-
the sled about to descend the snow drenched hill

secrets shared in hushed voices told long past bedtime
Are not enough to sustain the bond
you have battered, broken, and betrayed

Accusations sting to the core
uncontrolled wildfires rage up inside you
your stipulations endless and unfounded

And Still I do not yell, or curse, or tell you that you're crazy
And STILL I let you continue your rampage

Your final demand: severed silence

I can't amend what's transpired or
who you've chosen to become

Any more than I can tell the rain
where to fall
and leave its mark

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A Poem by Mary L. Serantoni

To Dare

To begin again
is suspension
in air,
free fall
off bridge,
hang-glide
float
breezing
over valley.

To say yes,
is big trust
adrenaline rush.
Will piton hold,
will limb bend
to opposite end,
will arch reach?
Can we take thin air
with no margin for error?

Can promise
hold weight
it's given?
Can we begin again?

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Mary L. Serantoni is a poet, lyricist and award-winning photographer based in Arizona, originally from Chicago, Illinois. Her work appeared in Poets for Science (12/20/2025), "Farraday Newsome: Memento Vitae — My Body Is Your Nest," Museum of Northern Arizona's "Poetry Maps" exhibitions (2024, 2025), upcoming Amethyst Review (2), Syncopation Literary Journal (Volume 5, Issue 2), Blue Heron Review (#21, May 2026). She holds a BA from Chicago's DePaul University and is a Poetry Workshop member through a local nonprofit.

2 Poems by Abraham Aruguete

Inchoate

The sun flashes
On again off again
Claps don't make it work
And the rain dances are a die roll.
My English teacher called it "aleatory,"
My math teacher "stochastic."
I'm not sure which one was right.

I would like to grab all the threads
And turn them into wool,
But Fate keeps snapping the damn things.

When God decided between
Esau and Jacob
He surely flipped a coin,
Made some excuse on the end
As he imposed a structure
Onto us dying men.

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Abraham Aruguete is a human being. He has inhabited Northern Arizona for most of his life. He has been published in *Asylum*, *The Blue Guitar*, and *Unstrung*. He can be found on Instagram as [abrahamaruguete](#).

Political Poem #1

I have no scream,
So I must mouth.

The flags rise once more,
Red white blue,
A different configuration,
Swastikas and signs
to the *Birth of a Nation*.

Right wing, the left wing a broken wing,
Online, talking heads, chambers reflect.

Should I blame it on the files,
The hot, drought-filled miles,
Barbed wire and walls,
And masked men and all?

From *Via Giulia* to the Valley
There is dust in the air,
Do swirling devils exist outside our view
Or is it just a cough of the era?

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5 Poems by Rex Lambert

Expecting Joy

Tristesse, my false friend, pull up a chair
but don't get too comfortable.

To what do I owe the dubious pleasure
of yet another visit, and so soon after your last?

You've come again at a most inopportune time.
Just look around. An embarrassment of blessings
surrounds me!

Why are you here uninvited, truant from gratitude?

What must the neighbors think when you knock
and I always answer the door?

In truth I expected joy, tristesse, not you.

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Rex Lambert has been writing and sporadically publishing poetry for over five decades. In 1972, the British poet Thom Gunn awarded Rex's poem "Hope" first prize in the annual Arizona State University creative writing contest. In 1973, Rex was chosen to be the first poet in the Arizona Commission on the Arts' new "Poets in the Schools" program, and in the fall of that year, he was invited to read his poetry with the American poet William Stafford at the National Council of Teachers of English annual convention in Philadelphia. His early poetry is anthologized in "Poetry of the Desert Southwest" and "Southwest: A Contemporary Anthology." He lives with his wife of 53 years, Shirley, a retired optometrist, in Litchfield Park, AZ. In addition to writing poetry, Rex continues to pursue his passions for mountaineering, backpacking, and performing with Phoenix Opera, Arizona Opera, and Utah Festival Opera as a nonsinging actor.

Grace

On any given night it changes—
always—if ever so slightly.
Not so the audience notices,
mind you. It's live theatre
and you only get one take.
But *you* notice, and the director
does too. Count on it.
You'll get a note. In the moment,
though, you can't let it shake you,
throw you off your practiced stride.
At midnight, over three fingers
of the wild bird, you'll ruminare on
that little inconsequential slip
and wonder why you can't ever
make it through a whole show
without at least one small mistake.
Just forget it. Fix it and move
on to the next stumble.
The audience won't know.
They'll always stand and clap
when the curtain goes back up.
And you, mouthing a grateful
thank you under your breath, will
take yet another undeserved bow.

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Eulogy for Pat

You were the quiet man
among four friends,
all of us retired but you.
At lunch sometimes,
your shirt opened just enough
revealed the ruffled edge
of a bandaged butterfly,
or was it the wing
of a small broken bird?
You never offered
and we never asked
what it might be for.

But I later wondered,
was it perhaps a port
into your soul,
a private place
where even friends
are not permitted?
And did you compensate
the greedy boatman
with a glimpse
to ferry you beyond this life,
or did you choose
to swim across instead?

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Senescence

The pages of your life grow glassine now
like old translucent skin yellowed
in a book whose spine begins to split,

and so you pick it gently up lest loosened pages
fall and shatter on the ground, and scatter
a diaspora of memory to the winds.

For you are having trouble bending down
and fear you won't be quick enough
to harvest what might drop,

glean what hasn't blown away, or recollect
how best to put it back into its proper order.

You have, in fact, become your own amanuensis,
no longer leading man you always thought you were,
your life a palimpsest of half-remembered dreams—

monochrome, not color—a record written over
many times with words you should have taken back:
sans serif in the present, sadly serif in the past.

The words you should have written in their place...
oh, if only you could dredge them up in time to set them
down before your body puts such matters finally to rest,

your many *sorries* left unsaid, your *goodbyes* unexpressed,
your crumbling, insufficient book shut and shelved too soon.

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Consolation for an Aging Tenor

for Barry Stein

*My parents were much younger
at my age than I am now.*

But then again, my friend, your parents'
voices were not trained like yours to reach

high Cs, with nowhere left to go but down.
Nor were they burdened by a perfect pitch

that made each off-key note to you
a torturous distraction.

Admit you've always envied them
their steady middle Cs, their lives

predictably G major and set to 4/4 time.
Yours instead was descant, a counterpoint

to theirs, its melody— a theme sung higher—
well beyond their loving reach.

And so your life diminuendos now,
forte to piano, and sadly they are gone.

Please do not despair, old friend.
Somewhere in your night a student

prays a thank you for a gift
the teacher in you gave them.

Choristers pass down the tale of Barry's
sonorous *Salome* Third Jew.

Blue-haired groupies after *Turandot*
still twitter at your Emperor Altoum.

And I remember you as well,
dear friend, in my own dark night,

as someone never calling me the lesser
for the super¹ that I was.

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¹ A *super* (aka *supernumerary*) is a nonsinging actor in an opera.

A Poem by Kerry Pardue

She Ain't Just a 2nd Lieutenant

Not sure where she called home
She stayed pretty much alone
The job was tough, long, and hard
She made it look easy
Setting her emotions aside
She worked on the boys from back home.

When she arrived she was easy going and soft
War changes people brings out the best and their worst
She would not give up on the dying boys
She would order them not to die
Some fought to listen and not give up
A few came home walking and not in a bag.

2nd Lieutenant, I swear at the end of her tour
Was better and knew just what to do
She would work on the head wounds and the blind
She was their sister, mom, and wife
Sitting and talking to them trying to help them find their way
No one knew that at the end of her shift
She would go back to her room and just cry.

In the open at the job, she was calm and positive
No one knew the pain she buried deep inside
57 years later she lives alone at her home, she remembers
And she still cries, but she never became a sister, mom, or wife
“I lost too many brothers; was a widow time and time again;
my sons died - PTSD and Agent Orange is killing all the rest.”

Don't you know who I am?
I ain't just a 2nd Lieutenant, not just Army Nurse Corps.
I am your sister, mom, and wife
Damn it...I order you to live.”

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

D'Marlyd Salort

Southern Arizona Artist



“Aqui Vive Abuela”
Oil on canvas
16” x 20”
2025



D'Marlyd Salort is a Puerto Rican artist who started her life journey with creative expression as a toddler, coloring the family home's walls with crayons, much to her parent's dismay. Though she briefly studied graphic design at Atlantic University, D'Marlyd is mostly self-taught as her interest in artistic mediums shifted towards painting and printmaking. Last year, she participated in the first LGBTQ+ Pride exhibit at La Linea Art Studio where several of her works were on display during the month of June, an exhibition that was repeated this year with several of her new pieces. She has also exhibited at various locations on both sides of the Arizona-Mexico border, including the Nogales Art Museum in Sonora, Mexico, and is working on her first solo exhibition. D'Marlyd is currently based in Southern Arizona with her wife and dog. Connect with her on instagram @palodeacerola or by email at dmasalort@gmail.com.

D'Marlyd Salort

Southern Arizona Artist



“Chicago”
Oil on canvas
36” x 36”
2023

I am a multidisciplinary artist from Boriken, also known as Puerto Rico, and my work is inspired by observations and lived experiences. I use painters knives, markers and bold gestures for my acrylic pieces to express intense emotions. These works tend to come about rather rapidly as I strive to sustain the original idea without interference from outside factors. For my oil pieces I use thin, diluted layers of paint applied hours or sometimes days apart to convey unstructured notions that require more contemplation. I am flexible throughout this process and often the finished work presents differently to the initial concept. While my paintings showcase explorations into my inner world, my printmaking focuses on storytelling and building awareness about my beautiful country and her people. As an artist I see myself as a guide, and my work as a path to encourage viewers to be in tune with their humanity should they choose to walk with me.

- D'Marlyd Salort

D'Marlyd Salort

Southern Arizona Artist



“Coqui de Cayey”
Linocut print
5” x 7”
2025

D'Marlyd Salort

Southern Arizona Artist



“No Me Siento Como Yo”
Acrylic on canvas
35” x 35”
2025

D'Marlyd Salort

Southern Arizona Artist



"Que Se Vayan Ellos"
Oil on canvas
16" x 20"
2025

The Influence of the Wizarding World and Its Characters

By Ethan Park

“Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.”

— Albus Dumbledore

© 2026

The Harry Potter franchise is not only for kids. It also resonates with adults. I first read the Harry Potter books in fourth grade, when one of my classmates would always talk about them in class. Growing up with comic book superheroes and Star Wars, I originally thought Harry Potter would not resonate with me. Plus, I did not like to read long books at the time. One day, I checked out the first book at the school library and started reading it after school. I couldn't visualize the characters like comics and movies, but my imagination and interpretation hooked me into a new world with new characters. Unlike superheroes or science fiction, reading and growing up with the characters felt as if they were real people.

Tom Riddle is one of my personal favorite fictional villains. He was raised as an orphan, like my favorite comic book superhero, Batman. A lot of things, from opening the Chamber of Secrets to his manipulation of Slughorn, exposing the secret to make horcruxes, could have been prevented, but his intelligence and charismatic personality paved the way for him. One example is that he started creating Horcruxes during his final school years after he learned how to make multiple of them from Professor Slughorn. Most villains want to take over the world or become the richest person, but his motive to conquer death fascinated me when I was younger. It was so different and unique to me when I first read about it. It is ironic that he led to his own downfall from his own spell with the

wand he thought he was the master of.

Remus Lupin was a flawed and broken man, but he was one of the best mentors for Harry and the students at Hogwarts. Unlike Harry's previous years studying Defense Against the Dark Arts, Lumin allowed the students in his year to use actual spells during class. The most notable lesson was teaching them to use Riddikulus to turn the boggart into a humorous shape. He was someone whom I looked up to when I was younger. He has shown me that there are people out there who like us for who we are, even if we cannot see it. Lupin saw himself as unworthy and struggled with self-doubt, but his wife, Tonks, and the Order of the Phoenix saw a compassionate, empathetic, and brave person within him.

You either adore Severus Snape or you hate him. He is probably the most controversial and gray character in the franchise. While he messed up a lot, Snape protected Harry because it was his last memory of his former love interest. While Harry looks like his father and has the eyes of his mother, Harry was the closest thing to Lily, and Snape would not want that to go away either. It may not have been obvious from his actions and words, but he always cared in the end. In Harry's first Quidditch match, Professor Quirell used the jinx dark spell on Harry's broom to try to throw off and kill him, but Snape countered the spell for Harry and saved his life. While reading the books, everyone thought Snape was part of the Death Eaters, but he was just a broken man wanting forgiveness and redemption for his actions.

Sirius Black and the rest of the Marauders have some of

Continued on page 31



Ethan Park is a second-year Master's student studying Engineering Science with a concentration in Software Engineering at Arizona State University. Science fiction, mystery, adventure, crime, thriller, and action are his favorite genres. He grew up reading and watching Marvel, DC, "Star Wars," "Harry Potter," and "Mission Impossible" movies, and reading "Harry Potter," "Shadow Children," "I Survived," "Goosebumps," "Diary of a Wimpy Kid," and "Magic Tree House" books. His favorite authors are F. Scott Fitzgerald, Margaret Peterson Haddix, R.L. Stine, Jeff Kinney, and Lauren Tarshis. In his free time, he enjoys coding, playing video games, watching movies, listening to music, and writing. He has also been published in The Blue Guitar Jr.

the best character development in the franchise. Well, maybe not Wormtail. Black was the troublemaker and goofball in the group, but he matured into a loyal and loving godfather to Harry. While he was harsh and protective of Harry, he filled the void of a father that Harry never received when he was living with the Dursleys. Also, he gave him his home at the beginning of the fifth book. When I first read the books, his death hit hard as Harry lost one of his family members right in front of him. Also, the fact that he was framed and sent to prison by one of his supposed “best friends” is traumatizing.

I feel like Rubeus Hagrid as a whole deserves more appreciation in the franchise. He is one of the kindest, compassionate, and loyal people in the entire series. If James and Lily were still alive, I believe Hagrid would be assigned to Harry’s second godfather for everything he has done for Harry. The most notable example is giving Harry a birthday cake on his 11th birthday, even though the Dursleys had forgotten his birthday. While he was framed for opening the Chamber of Secrets and unleashing the basilisk, he tries not to let it define him by not changing as a person. Rest in peace, Robbie Coltrane. Thank you for your portrayal of Hagrid in the live-action movies and for being part of my childhood.

Like Hagrid, Neville Longbottom also deserves more appreciation in the franchise. While he is initially portrayed as clumsy and insecure, he is very kind and loyal to his friends. I wish we saw more character development with Neville. While it is not obvious like Harry, Ron, or Hermione, he goes from shy and nervous to strong and confident throughout the series. Despite not knowing his parents growing up, his parents would have been really proud of him and the person he grew up to be. I think your parents not knowing who you are at all is more tragic than them passing away. Also, his bravery and confidence throughout the series are why he is one of the best Gryffindors in the series, in my opinion.

Molly Weasley was like a second mother figure to me when I first read the books as a younger reader. She is warm, loving, and protective of her children, Harry and Hermione. While raising seven kids is tough, she always showed her love and dedication to her kids. For example, she makes all of them sweaters during the holiday season. One thing that I appreciate about the Weasley family is that their low financial status does not define who they are. That is a lot of courage and strength for the entire family. I admire that. I wish to be a parent figure like

Molly.

I love both Fred and George Weasley. They are both mischievous and humorous. Despite their humorous personality, they are all brave, loyal, and innovative. From creating Skiving Snackbox to Dr Fillbuster’s Fireworks, both of them found ways to create fun and mischievous products. If the Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes were an actual place, I would definitely love to visit it. However, Fred’s death scene hit quite hard when it happened. I wanted both to survive the war and continue running their business. It is not the same without the other twin brother.

I think everyone can agree that Dolores Umbridge is the most hateable character in the entire series. More than Lord Voldemort. She feels like the teacher we all hated in school, and Rowling did a great job portraying it. For example, she punished students because she did not like them as a student. Further, she abused a truth serum to interrogate students. She is like the modern Nurse Ratched from “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.” Imelda Staunton, the actress who plays Umbridge in the film adaptation, did a wonderful job. She makes you really hate her character.

Same as Neville, I feel like Luna Lovegood deserves more appreciation. Even though she comes later on in the series, she is still a key character in Harry’s life. Like me, she is authentic and does not try to fit in with the crowd, especially in this day and age, with the internet and the latest trends. Even though she is not a Gryffindor, she is brave and resilient. She ignores the bad things people say to her, but instead embraces it to be her own person. I feel like she is one of those characters that people should look up to by learning to embrace their individuality.

My world has been shaped by some of the Harry Potter characters by watching and learning from them. From Lord Voldemort’s attempts to conquer death to Neville Longbottom’s bravery and confidence, growing up with these characters shaped both my childhood and adulthood. They taught me to choose between what is right and what is easy in life, and the importance of friendship, family, and love. I do not reread the books as much as I used to, but I almost always watch one or all eight movies during the holidays. The movies are among my comfort movies that I can watch anytime and never get bored. Watching the movies always reminds me of the magical world and its characters. The Harry Potter franchise will always be a huge part of my life, and I always look up to it when I need the light in the dark.

Beauty of Life: Through the Eyes of Sabino Canyon

By Emma McDonough

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I hear the engine hum to life as I place the key into its ignition. The ringing of the seat belt alarm starts to play, sharp and incessant, impossible to ignore. I zone out to the noise, dazed by my responsibilities. Its endless dinging mirrors the loop in my head, a constant repetition of thoughts I can't keep quiet, background noise that grows so repetitive it almost falls silent.

I place my car into drive and start my journey towards the foothills, watching as the sky changes colors and the sun slowly begins to set. The closer I get, the more my mind fills with ease. I park my car and step out, releasing a breath of air I didn't realize I was holding. The desert feels like an old friend to me, although it is foreign to my background. I remember my childhood in Colorado, surrounded by mountains draped in pine trees. This feels different, yet steady and comforting.

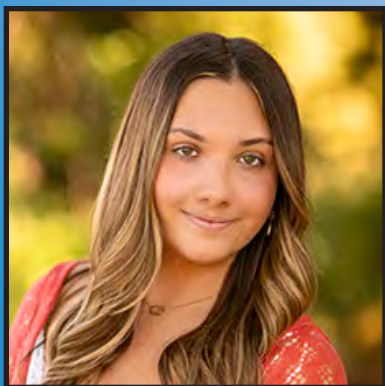
I've been to Sabino Canyon more times in these past three years than I can count. This time, I take a different path, following my passion for discovery. Before beginning my stroll, I spot a dark figure in the distance. I take a closer look, slightly fearful but also curious. I realize it's a bat, laying upside down near the top of a bathroom pavilion. I've never seen one sitting so still and easy to observe. I stare for longer than I mean to, caught off guard by how delicate it looks, almost resembling a stuffed animal.

The cactuses rise like monuments further down the path. I feel like a tiny piece of a larger painting when I look at their silhouettes. Every spine protrudes, capturing the faint glow of the waning sun. The endless circle of worries I came

Continued on page 33



Cactuses stand tall in front of the Catalina Foothills at the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area in Tucson. In 1905, Sabino Canyon came under the national supervision of the U.S. Forest Service. Photo by Emma McDonough.



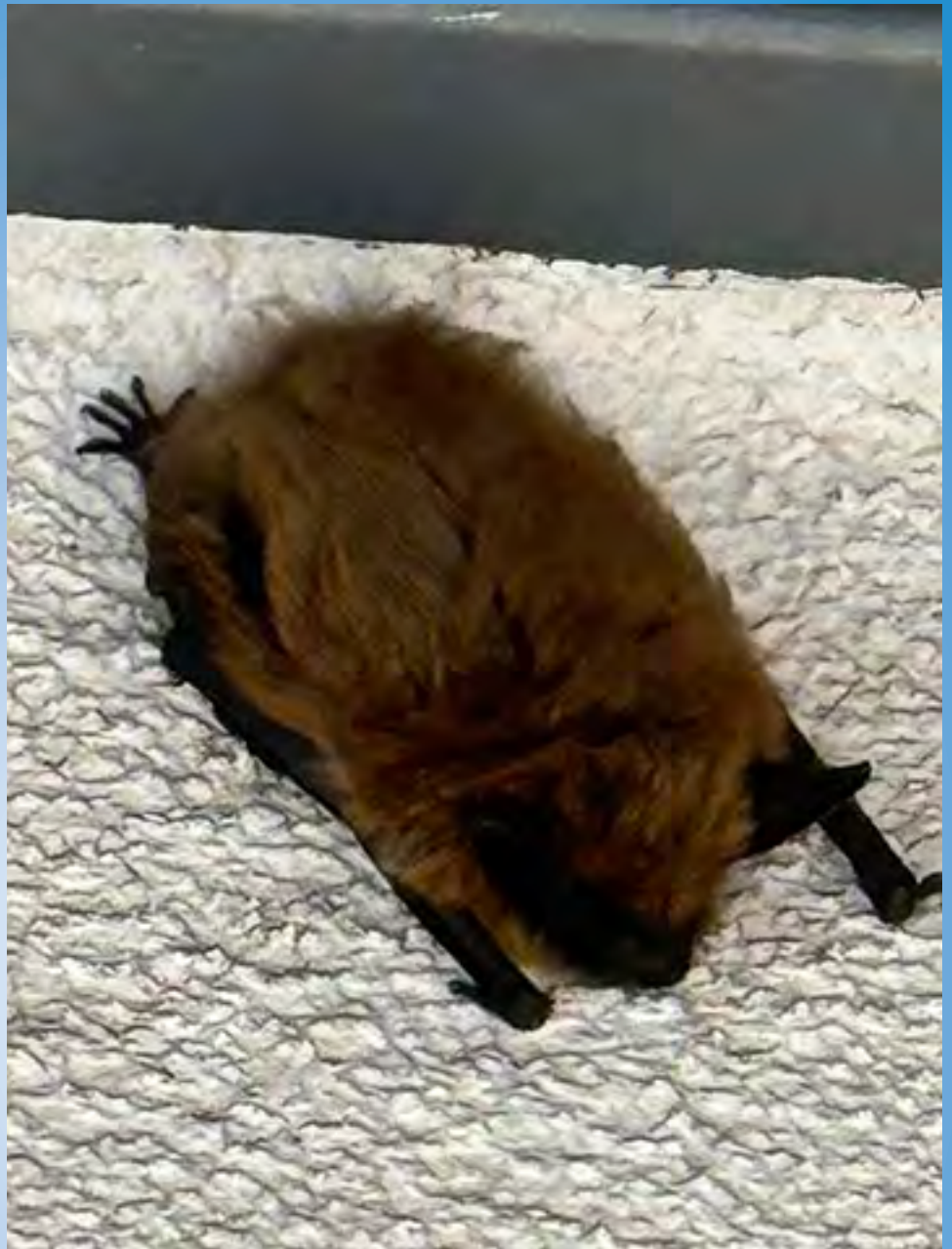
During the fall and summer of 2025, Emma McDonough served as the news desk editor at the Daily Wildcat ahead of studying abroad in Barcelona for the Spring 2026 semester. As a reporter, she primarily works to cover the Associated Students of the University of Arizona. That said, she also has experience with significant feature stories, such as Black History Month at the UA and the consolidation of cultural resource centers. Emma has a double major in Political Science and Journalism, with a minor in Gender and Women's Studies. She currently holds a position at Children's Hospital Colorado as a writing intern. This experience led her to seek out a passion for science journalism. She also works to highlight patient stories of children who underwent extensive treatment at Children's Hospital Colorado, which is what she finds to be the most meaningful part of her job. In her free time, Emma likes to spend time with her friends, family and dogs. It is her aspiration to pursue journalism full-time in her post-graduate career.

Continued from page 32

with — tasks undone, a barrage of notifications and changing dynamics of friendships — dissipate as I take in the natural landscape. Here, nothing feels as urgent as it did before. I slow my pace as the horizon burns with color from the sunset. I think about how rare it is to simply notice the world around me as I feel warm air press against my skin. Nature serves as a reminder of what really matters: not the noise of life, but the beauty of it.

The canyon absorbs the last of the day's light as I make my way back to the parking lot. My thoughts are more relaxed and lighthearted. I think about my personal definition of "science."

It, in my opinion, exists in moments like these, in taking in the natural world and viewing everything as part of a greater cycle. I experience the bittersweet moment of leaving my safe haven when I eventually put my keys back into the ignition. The sunset on the canyon fades in my rearview mirror, and the notifications on my phone begin to ring.



A bat lies upside down on a wall of a bathroom pavilion at the Sabino Canyon recreation area near Tucson. The Tucson area is home to 18 known bat species. Photo by Emma McDonough.

There Be Dragons

By Mark Wolfson

© 2026

I was drawn to Indonesia by one of the most unusual animals in the world, the Komodo Dragon. A dinosaur-like reptile, so large and distinctive that the word lizard just doesn't suffice. The 'Dragon' differs from its fictional counterpart only by its lack of wings and a spark in its glottis.

Of course, Indonesia, renowned for its unusual fauna, holds many fascinations beyond dragons. Orangutans, known as the old men of the forest, are seldom seen, usually solitary denizens of the jungle. They spend most of their time in the trees and are predominantly vegetarians. For many years, it was felt that they were our closest relatives based on their brain and body structure, tool use and emotional reactions. Orangutans will laugh when tickled and interestingly, other than humans, are the only large mammal that prefers to mate face-to-face. We share about 97% of our genes with them while we share 98% with chimpanzees. As genetics isn't everything, I'd prefer to be a relative of an Orangutan.

Orangutans spend the first seven years of their lives with their mothers, and like humans, learn most of what they need to know about survival from mama. All wild Orangutans live on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra in northern and western Indonesia. They're critically endangered with about 50,000 left in the wild.

As a wildlife photographer, I prefer animal subjects to humans and urbanity. However, it's hard to get into the wild without dealing with humanity's cultural landscape. Most foreign travelers arrive via Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, at least for now, as it is apparently sinking. It is the second most populous city in the world on the most populous island — Java.



A Juvenile Orangutan eating a piece of fruit.
(Photo by Mark Wolfson)

Continued on page 35



Mark Wolfson is retired from the practice of Internal medicine in Tucson, Arizona. He was the past chairman of the department of medicine and director of hyperbaric medicine at Tucson Medical Center. He is a nature photographer, writer and promoter of the Tucson Reptile & Amphibian Show & Sale. He has been published in the medical literature, herpetological literature and mainstream periodicals. He has written two novels and has his fingers perpetually crossed.

Current thoughts are that the center of government will have to be moved. The thousands of islands that make up Indonesia are in the heart of one of the most geologically active areas of the world. A volcano erupted about a week before the six of us arrived and another, a week after we left. From Jakarta, we flew two hours to central Kalimantan province in Southern Borneo and observed Orangutans from boats on the Rungan River. The long-haired orange apes are almost impossible to encounter randomly in the wild. In this region, many previously injured or incarcerated individuals had been rehabilitated. Although not protected or enclosed, some feeding does take place, and individuals tend to remain in the area for generations. This allowed us to capture some of the best Orangutan photos I've ever seen.

Before leaving Borneo, we were also able to trek through the rainforest and find the Bornean Keeled Pit-Viper, *Tropidolaemus subannulatus*. As one of our group was a birder, we also spotted several colorful birds including Black and Yellow Broadbills, Green Pigeons and Sulfur-Crested Cockatoos.

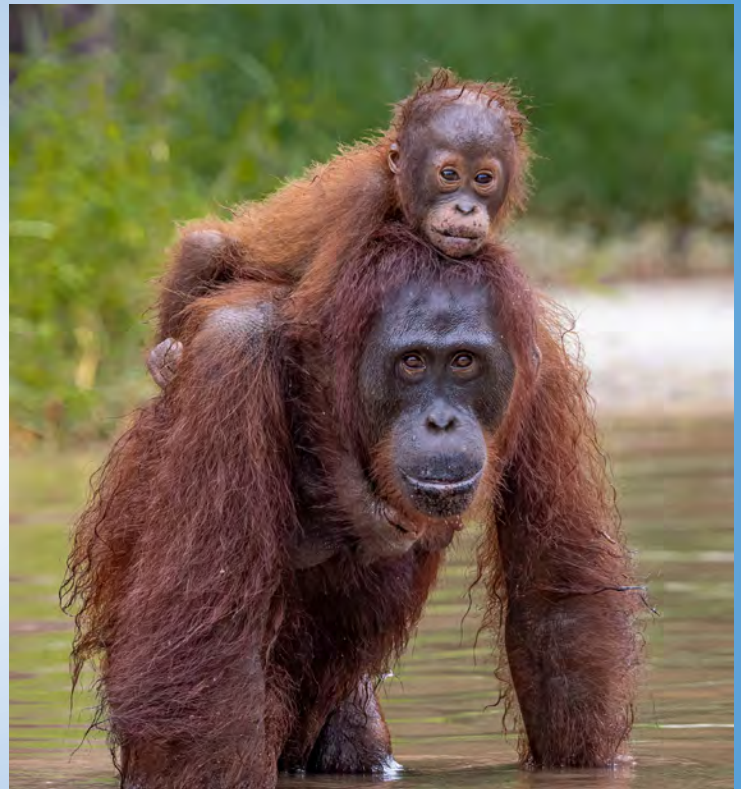
After another night in Jakarta, we again hopped a plane and flew two and a half hours to southern Java. We boarded a 130-foot boat which was to be our home for the next four days and traveled to Komodo National Park, the only place in the world inhabited by wild Komodo Dragons, *Varanus komodoensis*. The park comprises 3 moderate sized islands, Komodo, Padar and Rinca, that are open to visitors and 26 smaller ones that are not. The clear waters around the park are known for an extensive biodiversity of marine life and are attracting an ever-increasing number of scuba divers.

Dragons are by far the largest lizards in the world, and at up to 10 feet long and weighing up to 300 pounds they will eat anything they can capture. Their predominant prey is the Timor Rusa Deer, but they will bring down wild boar and even introduced water buffalo. They have help in taking on larger prey, in the form of their venom that produces profuse bleeding. It can take hours or up to a week to kill. This allows the dragon to use the direction-finding abilities inherent in its long-forked tongue to find a large, succumbed beast. The fork shape of the tongue brings in odor molecules from either side of the dragon's head and allows it to determine the direction of whatever it is tracking. It can then feast at its leisure without the danger of a possibly injurious struggle. In the past, it was felt that trauma and severe bacterial infection were the sole causes of a large prey's demise; the venom was not discovered until 2009 by a team led by Dr. Bryan Fry of the University of Melbourne.

Male Komodo Dragons will engage in combat to establish



Above, a large adult male Orangutan has no natural predators in its natural environment. Below, Orangutans spend the first seven years of life with their mothers. (Photos by Mark Wolfson)



At left, an Orangutan demonstrates the flexibility of its hands and feet in its primary habitat, the trees. (Photos by Mark Wolfson)

Continued on page 36

Continued from page 35

dominance and secure mating rights. As is common in nature, dragons are immune to their own venom. This is a good thing as combat often involves biting and clawing. Female dragons, like most lizards, lay eggs. They will guard their nests from predators and even other dragons. This makes sense as the stiffest competition for any animal is from members of its own species. A female dragon can lose significant body weight during this 7-to-9-month incubation period in which she is essentially fasting.

Once hatched, juvenile Komodos are at their most vulnerable. They will quickly climb trees to avoid predators and, even conversely, the grasp of the now hungry mother. They can instinctively hunt from birth and focus on small lizards and birds until they are sizable enough to capture larger game.

Although the pull of photographing Komodo Dragons and Orangutans was the essential attraction bringing me to Indonesia, as a reptile enthusiast, the potential of finding the Komodo Island Pit Viper, *Trimeresurus insularis*, was high on my list as well. In this, my small group of wildlife photographers wasn't thwarted. Not only did we find the rare blue morph, found only on Komodo, but also the more common green and yellow morphs as well.

For those who feel the tug to visit this largest of archipelagos, one of the most biodiverse habitats on Earth, remember that Komodo Dragons and Orangutans are only the vivid surface of this amazing country's fauna. Discovery awaits.



The rare Komodo Island Pit Viper, *Trimeresurus insularis*. This blue snake is found mainly on the Island of Komodo. It's actually the same species as the white lipped pit viper. (Photo by Mark Wolfson)



Above, a large male Komodo Dragon shows off its 10-inch tongue. Below, a Komodo Dragon explores the Indian Ocean surf line. (Photos by Mark Wolfson)



Opera Panic

By Duann Black

© 2026

Panic ensued before the opera's first act ended. The stage was filled with singers in the middle of the climactic first act's largest production song. The production's starring couple stood at the front center of the stage.

The orchestra pit's floor rose suddenly. It was not an elevator malfunction, as there was no orchestra pit elevator. In fact, the building had no elevators. Panicked members of the orchestra scrambled to get away. Several shoved fellow musicians, chairs, and instruments aside in their haste to escape the perceived disaster.

The opera house floor in front of the stage rose higher, breaking apart. It buckled between breaths before rising again. The audience in the front rows scrambled. People pushed others aside. Many screamed. Panic reigned as everyone clambered to be the first to get away from the immediate area before they were trapped or worse. The screams caused an immediate reaction from those behind them. People stood, curious to see what was happening. Wiser folks rapidly turned toward the exits. The balcony emptied as occupants ran toward the stairwells to the ground-floor lobby and exit doors.

The lead singers were caught onstage closest to the rising disaster. Without warning, they struggled to maintain their footing. Everyone onstage behind them fled in every direction away from the rising bump in the floor as stage props fell.

After several moments of stunned surprise, the lead singer came to his senses. His voice caught the ear of everyone nearby. He boldly declared, "Everyone, please, calmly and

orderly, with polite haste, leave the theatre for your safety. Please help those near you who require assistance."

The volume of screaming and yelling lessened. People helped those who had fallen or been pushed to the floor. Ushers directed everyone to the exits. They kept the crowds moving away from the developing disaster.

Firmly steadying his on-stage lover with an arm around her waist, he directed the audience to exits farthest away from the rising floor. It expanded by the second directly in front of the singers.

"It looks like everyone is safely moving out of harm's way." He flashed a reassuring smile. "Maybe we can move now."

"Please, let's go," Genevieve shook with fear within his grasp. "What is happening?"

"I'm unsure. This is an event the likes of which I've never seen or heard of before."

The floor before the stage buckled without warning. Flooring broke apart, revealing electrical and plumbing fixtures beneath. Thankfully, the orchestra pit was vacant except for a few randomly strewn chairs and musical instruments. The front stage wall cracked in several places, surprising them as they saw cracks moving toward their feet.

A crash behind them caught them off guard. Lighting fixtures were falling from the light beam above the stage. All the stage props were down. The couple would find no easy way off the stage to safety. The stage floor in front of them cracked, buckled, and collapsed toward them.

"Philip, can we leave now?" Genevieve pleaded. "If you're not ready to go, release me so I can run."



Duann Black is an author and poet with stories to tell and things to say. During a multi-year break from emptying ink pens onto paper, she was the chief editor for her husband, Alan Black. They published 20 books, including "Metal Boxes" and "A Planet with No Name." The author published in 2025 "Stories to Tell, Book One" (available on Amazon), the first of a two-book collection of short stories she and Alan wrote. A short story anthology, "Four Adventurous Seasons" (also available on Amazon), featuring her work, was just published. Duann is a well-traveled military retiree, always ready with a story to share.

Soda Flavors

By Duann Black

© 2026

On a balmy Saturday spring afternoon on the patio of Beverly's Beverages Bar, a rowdy crowd debated how flavored souvenir sodas should taste. The owners of the bar, Bev and Pete, thought a nice promotion for the summer months would be non-alcoholic, in-house made sodas served in souvenir cups. The group in the bar's backyard had made the bar their own ages ago, and Bev and Pete valued their opinions on almost every one of their advertising ideas. Their viewpoints were rarely wrong.

"My vote is prickly pear and Loganberry in sparkling water," said Jim Deere. He scribbled his flavor idea on the whiteboard.

"Yuck! I can't imagine those flavors would mix well." Nancy Ferguson tried to squeeze past Jim to wipe his concoction off the board.

Janice Case caught Nancy's arm and spun her around. "No, you don't. Everyone here gets to add their flavor ideas to the whiteboard. Each one deserves a vote."

"Piffle," Nancy huffed. She left the whiteboard alone and silently returned to her lawn chair. Her husband, Charlie, patted her arm and gave her a loud smacking kiss on the cheek. "Love ya, Hun," he said.

Olly, Oliver Ford, spoke above the crowd, "I think pink lemonade mixed with maple tree sap in tonic water would be an interesting flavor."

"Have you ever tried making that combination, Olly, or are you spitballing the most unlikely flavor mixtures you can imagine?" Richie Holland asked.

"Well..." Oliver began, "I'd like to try it sometime. That's why I suggested it."

The group laughed. In spite of differing flavor opinions, they had been meeting on Bev's back patio long enough to call themselves family.

"Hey, Massey, what do you suggest?" Janice asked. "You're always good at coming up with bright drink ideas."

Massey slowly rose from his perch at the end of the picnic table. He absently scratched his goatee as he approached the whiteboard. When he was done carefully printing his suggestion, he answered, "Green apple, Bartlett pear, cranberry, and ginger ale."

"Hear, hear!" John White jumped up, cheering for Massey's addition to the list.

A moment later everyone was clapping and commenting on the idea. When everyone had had their stretch break, the cheers subsided and everyone sat back down, except Steve Farmall.

"I suggest cherry with rhubarb in club soda. The mildly acidic bitterness of the club soda will even out the cherry and add a touch of mineral accent to the rhubarb." He added it to the whiteboard.

Steve's idea put a damper on the group. No one said it sounded like a good combination, but no one attempted to wipe his idea off the whiteboard either. Several folks were obviously thinking about it; their faces contorted as they imagined the uncomplimentary flavor combination.

Janice, being the self-appointed flavor idea coordinator, tossed out a wide variety of ingredients to keep the ideas flowing. She focused on local grocery store stock items such as apples for sweetness, cranberries for a bit of tartness, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, blood oranges, coconut, pumpkin spice, and pineapple.

Camilla Kubota raised her hand. She stood when Janice acknowledged her. "How about mango, pineapple, pomegranate, and green apple in seltzer water?" After a few moments of silence, she added it to the whiteboard.

While Camilla wrote on the board, several people turned away from the patio. Wolfie and Ava Harris, parked at the back edge of the group, were whispering loudly. Ava was the first to notice several folks were looking back at them. "So what're y'all staring at? Can't a couple have an argument in private?"

In the awkward silence, Isabella McCormick stepped up to the patio, retrieved the marker from Camilla, and wrote her idea on the board. "I think root beer with spruce oil in seltzer water will be a winning flavor combination. Wintergreen flavor mixed with root beer will be refreshing in iced carbonated water."

Her actions drew everyone's attention back to the reason they were all parked in the backyard, and the whiteboard filled the patio. Soon others, who had not yet given any ideas, had the courage to voice them. Janice volunteered to write them on the board to speed the process along, as ideas were coming from several folks at once. She was forced to ask them to raise their hands and be recognized so their idea could be added to the board. She did not want any idea missed.

Olly's wife, Elizabeth, better known as Lizzy, suggested lemons, raspberries, and mint in sparkling water.

Charlotte Deere thought kiwi, strawberry, lemon and prickly pear would work well in club soda because the club soda's mild acidic, slightly bitter, vinegary flavor would help the fruit flavors complement each other.

Continued on page 39

Olivia Holland and Mia Massey suggested pink grapefruit, dragon fruit, and raspberry in club soda.

Emma White waved her hand like she was waving the American flag on July 4th. “I have a totally awesome idea! There should be a different colored souvenir cup for each day of the week. Plus, there can be a special flavor combination for each day of the week. That doesn’t mean there won’t be a variety of souvenir sodas available each day, but having a unique flavor on special each day might encourage more folks to come in often to get each of the souvenir cups and sample several flavors.”

Janice found no place to add the idea to the whiteboard.

Betty Farmall provided the solution. She handed Janice the small notepad and a pen she dug out of her purse.

“I think we’re getting a little off the subject. Bev and Pete didn’t ask for our ideas on how to run the souvenir cup promotion, but I’ll write them down and pass them along with a photo of the whiteboard.” She asked Emma to read what she had written to ensure it was correct while the group chatted among themselves.

Suddenly, an explosion of curse words erupted from the back corner of the yard. Ava Harris stood up, slapped Wolfie hard, and stormed off toward the parking lot.

Frank Kubota yelled, “Wolfie, I hope you’ve got a way home or have your truck keys in your pocket. I’d be a long walk home for you.”

Wolfe started walking toward Frank. He turned to see where Ava was heading before continuing onward toward Frank. He looked like he was looking for trouble.

Betty reached out to take Camilla’s hand, and Steve drew them and their lawn chairs away from whatever was about to happen. They gave Frank plenty of room to react if a fight started. Frank was known for diffusing a situation before punches started flying, but he also had a reputation for never backing down from a fight.

Frank pulled his cane from beneath his lawn chair, tossed the chair aside, and faced Wolfe. By the time Wolfe was close, Frank held his cane in a strong defensive stance. Shortly after suffering the injury that required him to use a cane, he studied using the cane as a defensive weapon so he could protect himself and his wife. He refused to be the cripple people might think he was.

Wolfe stopped outside the reach of Frank’s cane.

“Wolfgang, I’m sorry for my rude comment. Is there anything Camilla and I can do to help you and Ava?” Frank held his ground, but did not threaten Wolfe with the cane.

Tears fell from Wolfe’s eyes. He lowered his head. His shoulders shook as he openly cried.

Frank stepped closer and placed his hand on Wolfe’s shoulder. Wolfe responded by hugging him. The men spoke softly while the rest of the patio group held their breath, a couple prayed, and everyone watched.

Soon, Wolfe stepped back and wiped the tears from his face. “I’m sorry. It’s been a rough day. Ava’s father passed away. We got the news just before heading over here this afternoon. We thought it would be good to be with y’all today rather than home alone with our grief. Ava needed a bit of space. I expect her to come back soon. I’m sorry.”

Frank directed Wolfe to open seats at the picnic table close to the patio where they sat down together. “Are you okay to continue on with our quest for the best-flavored souvenir soda for Bev and Pete to serve for the summer?” Frank asked.

Wolfe nodded. Camilla stepped over to give him a reassuring hug and offer her condolences, followed by everyone else in the group. Steve and Betty headed toward the parking lot to find Ava.

When Bev placed the tray she was using to bus tables on the end of the bar she realized the patio and backyard area was quiet. “Pete, I’m stepping out back to see how they’re doing.”

“Okay, just don’t get roped into their conversations. We’ve still got plenty of folks to take care of in here.” He blew her a kiss and returned to washing glassware behind the bar.

Bev expected the patio crowd to be chatting. What she found was a quiet atmosphere. Half the people looked like they were napping, and the other half looked like they were checking their phones for the weather report. “Hello everyone, what flavors have you all come up with? Anything worth trying to make?” She looked at the whiteboard. Her eyes widened in surprise.

“Close your mouth, Bev, before a bug flies in. Are you as surprised as we are at the number of ideas we came up with?” Jim Deere walked over and wrapped Bev in a bear hug.

“Is this all you folks came up with?” Bev looked at the dizzying array of ideas on the board. “I’m wondering how we’re going to get all the ingredients for the flavors on the list.”

“Don’t get yourself upset, Bev. We haven’t voted on which ones we want to try making yet,” Janice said. “We needed a break. Like, maybe a dinner break. What’s on the menu for tonight?”

“The regular Saturday specials are on the menu. The same comfort foods you all have been eating here for years. Our backup cook is working so our chef can get ready for a major cooking contest next weekend. He’s still finalizing his contest recipe. We know it’ll be an award-winning recipe next weekend. He’ll be up against cooks from up north this year. Apparently they’re gunning for him because they think he’s won too many cook-offs and BBQ contests and foodie festival awards. As far

as I'm concerned, he can't win too many cooking awards. He has a reputation to protect, and I'm waiting for something new and tasty to add to our menu."

"I'll get our orders together and bring them to you in a little bit. After dinner, we'll see if we can pare down this flavor list to a manageable size before we head out for the night." Janice paused in thought for a moment, "What's the souvenir cup for these sodas look like? Do you have a sample here?"

"I don't have a sample yet, but I have a picture. We're having them 3-D printed at the trade school. Let me go get the picture to show you." Bev ducked back into the bar to retrieve the completed cup order from her office.

"How's it going out there?" Pete asked as he picked up the tray from the end of the bar.

"The patio crew wore themselves out this time. Half of them are napping, and the others are trying to figure out where to purchase the flavors they want for their drink ideas. We may need to push back the date we introduce our souvenir cup. They filled the whiteboard, and there are some crazy combinations, from what I saw at first glance."

Pete laughed. "Good. We've needed something to keep that crowd alive out there. It felt like they were getting a bit stale. They may be our regulars, but they need to be our engaged regulars. Since we're the town's favorite beverage bar to hang out at, we need to be lively, not stale. Isn't that one reason we're going to introduce the souvenir cup?"

"Yep, and by the way, thanks. It was your idea to give the patio gang the job of coming up with the drink or drinks to put into the new cups. I had no idea they would have so much fun with this. We may find ourselves as the hot tourist stop in town if this goes well."

Bev headed to her office. Janice walked up to Pete at the bar and handed him the patio group's dinner order. "When the food's ready, give me a shout. We'll come in to help haul it outside." She smiled and waited while he rang the bell to get the short-

order cook's attention and handed the young man the food order. "Pete, here's also a list of ideas we came up with that have nothing to do with non-alcoholic flavored sodas." She handed him a sheet of paper torn from Betty's notepad and walked back to the patio.

Pete stopped Bev as she headed toward the patio. "Bev, you've got to read this. Janice gave me a list of ideas they came up with for the summer promotion that have nothing to do with soda flavors. I think some of them are good and will increase our sales."

"In a minute, let me show them the final drawing of the souvenir cup."

She took the drawing outside and clipped it to the whiteboard's edge. "Our summer souvenir cup is a flamingo. You can remove the cup's cap and drink directly from the cup or leave the cap on, the head of the flamingo, and place your straw through the flamingo's beak to drink."

The group gathered around the whiteboard to check out the drawing. Betty, Steve, and Ava were the last to walk up to look. Everyone gathered closely around them. In less than a minute, chatter increased as new ideas came to mind. Janice struggled to write the group's ideas for running the summer promotion and marketing ideas in Betty's notepad before missing new suggestions. In frustration, she stood up, threw her arms up in the air and said, "Stop. You people are driving me crazy!"

Bev heard some mumbled comments, such as "short trip," "nothing we haven't heard before," and "she needs to learn to write faster or bring a laptop."

Allen Case suddenly yelled, "I've got it. Flamingo bingo in the dining room every Sunday afternoon all summer long! It'll be the only day of the week you can get your choice of souvenir cup color and flavored soda. The rest of the week, each day has a specific cup color and a special flavor for the day. For example, Monday is red cup day; the special flavor for Monday is raspberry, pomegranate, and prickly pear with club soda. Tuesday will be another color and flavor. When are we starting this promotion? Tomorrow isn't soon enough!"

I Promise

By Duann Black

© 2026

Pete ended his phone call as Bev walked into the bar from the back patio door.

“Good morning sunshine, or should I say good mid-morning to you?”

“Smarty pants. It’s all your fault. If you hadn’t kept me up half the night, I’d have gotten up early enough to fix you sunny-side-up eggs, bacon, and toast with a pot of breakfast coffee.”

Pete laughed as he walked over to the love of his life. He kissed her. “Liar.” He drew her into a hug and nibbled her ear. “I love you just as you are, don’t change for me.”

“Okay. Remember, you told me not to change. So I won’t, I promise.” She laughed.

“Thanks for the warning. I’ll try to remember that. Now, why are you here this morning? Shouldn’t you be packing for our first vacation in ten years?”

4 Poems by Richard Fenton Sederstrom

Dissonance from Row Seven Center

[A sheaf of notes and a ticket stub found crumpled on the street outside Carnegie Hall after a performance of Mozart's Dissonance Quartet, 10/30/24, shortly before an election]

Now the spell widens. An orison?
The final movement.
But the very, *very* final?

For the player the notes carry beyond,
beyond Mozart himself—mind, soul
left on the score beneath his drawn notes.

Movements deep, a circle of fifths. Or a helix?
Mozart dares a labyrinth of uncontrolled spin.
A consort ghost. Grace notes now we share.

I know it by heart, by hand, by heat and chill,
shared by touch, finger by finger by finger by finger
and both hands. Control is practiced vibrato.

Both hands support and gentle bow to strings
that touch, open to see what I hear again
until some shine wears off their glow
and I squint to read the speeding cadence
until light fades out the composer's notation,

disturbs the radiance of sound beyond
violin, violin, cello, viola, music
from string on string caressing,
eyes closed for seconds only now.

Continued on page 43

Richard Fenton Sederstrom's family moved to the Sonoran Desert of Arizona in 1954. They brought Richard along, for which he is still both appreciative and bewildered. The Sonoran Desert, for all of humanity's wounds and insults, remains a gift. Sederstrom's seventh book of poems, "Icarus Rising: Misadventures in Ascension," which occupies that desert from Tempe to Guaymas, appeared in 2020. "The Dun Box," which regards the "American Century" as a total of minus 21 days in 1945, was released in 2023. "Pewter," attempting to recover some of the chthonic tradition of Intelligent Artifice, is now out under the tender care of The Jackpine Writers' Bloc, the poet's longtime publisher.



What light touch! What light?
What moods: *Adagio—Allegro, Andante cantabile,*
Menuetto and Trio. Allegro molto. Molto.

Remembrance and grief, anger and denial,
submission and fear, loss and Life!
But whose? And whose silence? Now

* * *

I leave my seat and move
sense-ridden outside
with the shuffling gray crowd.

I look at my watch
and stand in the traffic noise at a wet curb
to breathe exhaust once again

—wait far too long for a cab.
To cough in the drizzle and soaking exhaust
is *not* to make music, nor meditation.

My notes should be exhilarated,
and I, fired to step,
even slog among longing notes.

Instead, like a picnic fire in a sudden rain
I am exhausted, notes, brain, all the rest
flopped in a fen of sodden ashes.

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Doppelmacher

I don't know whether the poem
is the Doppel of the poet's
Doppelganger, or vice versa,
but it has always (I suspect)

been clear to me that (following
Mallarme's good ghostly shade)
a poet's job, or fate, is to leave
our smoggy air to accompany

in the page the words. So
it is not only hard to distinguish
the D from the DG, it is perilous
to try—we do all, words and poet,

need to rise back into the air, the air
being necessary, for good or
(cough!) evil. But the reason
I feel the need of the stanzas in Italics,

*is that they distract and explain
the nature of the voice(s) that people
in the civic atmosphere, for good or,
or and/or, evil. In the poem they "come
and go, talking of Michealangelo,"
or the quality of popular cheese;*

*we prefer not to ask, preferring not
to suffer the answer. But the answer
does come, and the poet has to address
the human who wrote the words*

down. The poet, this one anyway,
becomes a memento mori for the poem,
as in Rembrandt's painting of St. Jerome
facing his fate in the Holy Text, obsidian

shadows at his back, his hand shading,
protecting his face from the, my, skull.
There are three of them—Rembrandt,
Jerome, the poem—his back to the black

Continued on page 45

portal, the spiral foreboding stairs
forbidden to either, the room we share,
in solitary clarity, the questionable
protection of a gnarled hand from . . .

Well, once again, that was bone-joy.
I do so relish the warmth and gaiety
of an afternoon free for contemplation
on all that is ashen facelessness.

I think that I may have a good part
of a poem done now, but I need
to find a serious bit to soften the hilarity.
So, Now, let us return to the party. But

first, while I was sitting on the bed
reading things over, one little change
happened. the page recommended
that I looked tired and that I might

do better by it (party or page?)
asleep. REM is ever obliging,
even now, or so we several may
dream some light into the shadow—

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So

many things that happen happen.
Then, after a look around, after
a few minutes of contemplation,
only the edge of contemplation
is left of the thing and the happening.
We look around again for the thing . . .
and a loquacious guest chatters:

*Why do people eat cheese
on crackers? Well, soft cheese,
like Brie or Camembert,
that's understandable. Yeah.
The cheese glues the cracker
together. But Cheddar? Swiss?*

*One bite and the cracker
cracks apart, the dry fragments
fall somewhere, and we look
around and under the coffee
table and under the sofa.*

*We get down. Move the table.
Scrunch under the sofa. But
the bit of cracker isn't there.
It isn't there. It isn't here,
and now what's left of it
is a nibble of cheese we hold
and swallow, and a few*

minutes later only the edge of that
contemplation is left of the thing,
of any thing and any happening.
But we look around once more
into the ripples of some memory
and the ripples smooth out nicely

and we are satisfied that whatever
happened never did happen,
nor did the evidence happen,
nor the contemplation, and we
know for certain that whatever
happens never does happen. Now

Continued on page 47

we already remember that the gun
never did fire, and no bullet
shot through the windshield
and the woman behind the glass
facing the bullet, blood spraying,
did not die because bowed low,

we see it under the sofa right here
where we have been searching,
right therewhere, farther, deeper
and farther into the gloaming.

It is comfortable here in this dark,
an easy dark like the last drift before
a curing void—

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same
dimens
ion ή οποιαδήποτε διάσταση καθόλου.”¹

So
mortality is a matter of time but
that’s no matter at all: who lives
for the moment is immortal,
for the eventual moment anywhen,
at least in space before

the nethermoment
which is dao to the mind
which is entropy to
the universe which is
at rest in its patient zeal.

The artist strives
to ignite the moment,
in order to invite mortality
before . . .
before and after
and . . .

“Nor can
the empty
dimension
be measured
out
in any
rigid code”—

because what can be translated
avoids rigidity?

Continued on page 50

¹ or any dimension at all.

The lyre translates
silent notes
to an unfixable
radiance
beneath the moon.

ναι! λαμπερή λύρα, μίλησέ
μου γίνε φωνή—
yes! radiant lyre, speak to me
become a voice—
Sappho
(trans. Anne Carson)

Entropy? Inner transformation?

*The most beautiful
order in the world
is still a random
gathering of things
insignificant
in themselves*
Ηράκλειτος
trans. Brooks Haxton

yes, Εντροπία
yes, λαμπερή λύρα

Now, —

listen toward the radiant lyre
whose strings touch your silence

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Community Spotlight on the Phoenix Writers Club

Group celebrates 100 years

The Phoenix Writers Club was formed in 1926 and is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

How, when and why was the club founded?

We were started in 1926 by a group of women journalists who were denied entry into the all-male press club.

So, the women started their own club! There were authors, journalists and poets, all ready to share their love of writing.

The Club's first president, Gertrude Bryan Leeper, was the women's editor of the Phoenix Gazette and one of the Club's founders. Leeper was also one of six women elected to the Arizona state Legislature (Maricopa District 7).

These women were so successful in their duties, fears rose that they would "take over the state."

Leeper is quoted as saying, "Women were not trying to take men's places. They are merely trying to find places of their own."

On Oct. 2, 1933, Margaret Wheeler Ross gave a report on a poetry convention held in Denver.

The ASU library archives hold the Margaret Wheeler Ross papers, a collection in four boxes spanning six decades that can be viewed by appointment, and you can still find some of her work at poetryexplorer.com.

In 1955, Marguerite Graper was instrumental in having National Poetry Day proclaimed by Governor McFarland.

Who can join?

We welcome writers of all genres and writing levels. Whether you have never written anything except a school paper or have published multiple books, PWC welcomes you.

Membership is \$40 a year, from October through September. We meet monthly in central Phoenix, and each meeting features a speaker on topics that impact writing and publishing.

The monthly meeting fee of \$10 for members and \$15 for guests includes light refreshments, our speaker, and camaraderie with fellow writers.

Continued on page 52



Above, "Sunday Off Central" Midtown block party, D'Anne Pientka, June Powers, Deborah Partington. Below, at the 2026 Blue Guitar Festival of the Arts, from left, are: Deborah Partington, Cindi Reiss, Beth Johnson and Navissa Kaiser. (Photos courtesy of Phoenix Writers Club)



What is the club's mission?

Our mission is to provide a space where writers and readers can join together, discuss, and grow their skills and knowledge in the craft of writing.

We have been 'Writers Helping Writers' since 1926.

What events and activities are being planned for the club's 100th birthday?

At our monthly meetings, we have been presenting historical stories of some of the instrumental women who started the club, events held, community involvement, publications, etc., from the past 100 years.

In March, for Women's History Month, we presented the

winners of the PWC Centennial Founders Contest, "Pioneering Spirit." Last year, our contest's theme was "Formidable Women," and our winners presented at the Blue Guitar Festival and are featured on our website and Substack.

In November, we are planning a celebration showcasing our history through skits, displays, costumes, food, and drink, as well as a keynote speaker from the writing community.

We will also be sharing our history at the annual Blue Guitar Festival in November.

Want more information? How to contact us

- Phoenix Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/phxwritersclub/>
- Phoenix Writers Club website: phoenixwritersclub.com
- Substack: <https://phoenixwritersclub.substack.com/>



Phoenix Writers Club board members include Beth Johnson, secretary; Ilsa Manning, social media; Navissa Kaiser, treasurer; Cindi Reiss, president/membership chair; and D'Anne Pientka, newsletter/critique group. Not pictured are Eric Miller, website; and Jeff Callan, historian. (Photo courtesy of Phoenix Writers Club)

Phoenix Writers Club

By Cindi Reiss

Way back in 1926, some newspaper gals with gumption
said, "Let's join the Phoenix Press Club." The nerve of their assumption!
The men gazed at them with smiles and smirks, but said they were not allowed.
"We're all professional journalists here, so you dames are in the wrong crowd."

Those feisty ladies were not dismayed; they knew their talents were great,
So they formed their own little writing club, and men were not on the slate.

Gertrude Bryan Leeper became our club's first president and
She was soon an Arizona legislator and women's editor of the Phoenix Gazette!
The women were writers of poetry and prose, bringing characters to life in skits,
They'd dress up in costumes to entertain and inform, all the while using their wits.

During war years, the women held a silver tea to raise funds for British Relief.
And later helped veterans with writing classes to help them live with their grief.

National Poetry Day was established in October of '55.

Governor McFarland had Marguerite Graper to thank for this coming to life.

In the 60's, we offered workshops to members and the public for free

And continued to publish our own works in another anthology.

Our newsletter began in the 70's and is very well read to this day,

It's informative, witty, and telling as our editors do not go halfway.

In the 90's, a barrier was broken as the club first admitted men,

As women, we understood that discrimination wouldn't happen again.

In 2001, a celebration was held at our library, Burton Barr.

Then, five years later, for our 80th gala, a children's book was the star.

Several members wrote of a nine-year-old girl who goes on a fantastical trip,
It debuted at our party as we dressed by decade, and Marshall Trimble spoke with much zip.

Arizona turned 100 in 2012, and we were 86.

BetteLou Tobin wrote a play about our long history in Phoenix.

Restaurateur Jack Durant came to life through Mabel Leo's books

They were adapted into a play, then a movie, as she overlooked.

We supported literacy in the schools by becoming PencilPALS

Corresponding with 5th graders with mailed letters for morale.

Our members write fiction, memoir, poetry, and flash

History, children's, Sci-Fi, with panache!

We collaborate with many conferences and groups,

ASU, Blue Guitar, and POP, are a few.

Now our Centennial is upon us, 100 years in the making.

And Phoenix Writers Club is still going strong, for our talents cannot be mistaken.

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Cindi Reiss' writing journey shifted from skits and programs during her career as a clown and actor to poetry that has fun with rhyme on some days, then delves into memoir pieces on others. Her poems have been published in Paradise Review; Inkwell 2022 Anthology, "Roots, Shoots and Blooms"; ASPS 2022 Sandcutters; Haiku Expo: Arizona Matsuri; Phoenix Oasis Press, "Beyond Boundaries: Tales of Transcendence." Cindi is President of Phoenix Writers Club, which will celebrate its centennial in 2026 and welcomes writers of all genres. She has lived in Phoenix for 50 years but still considers herself a Jersey girl at heart. Her husband, three children, two sons-in-law, four grandchildren and 120-pound granddog keep her grounded in the Arizona desert.



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**Blue Guitar 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.

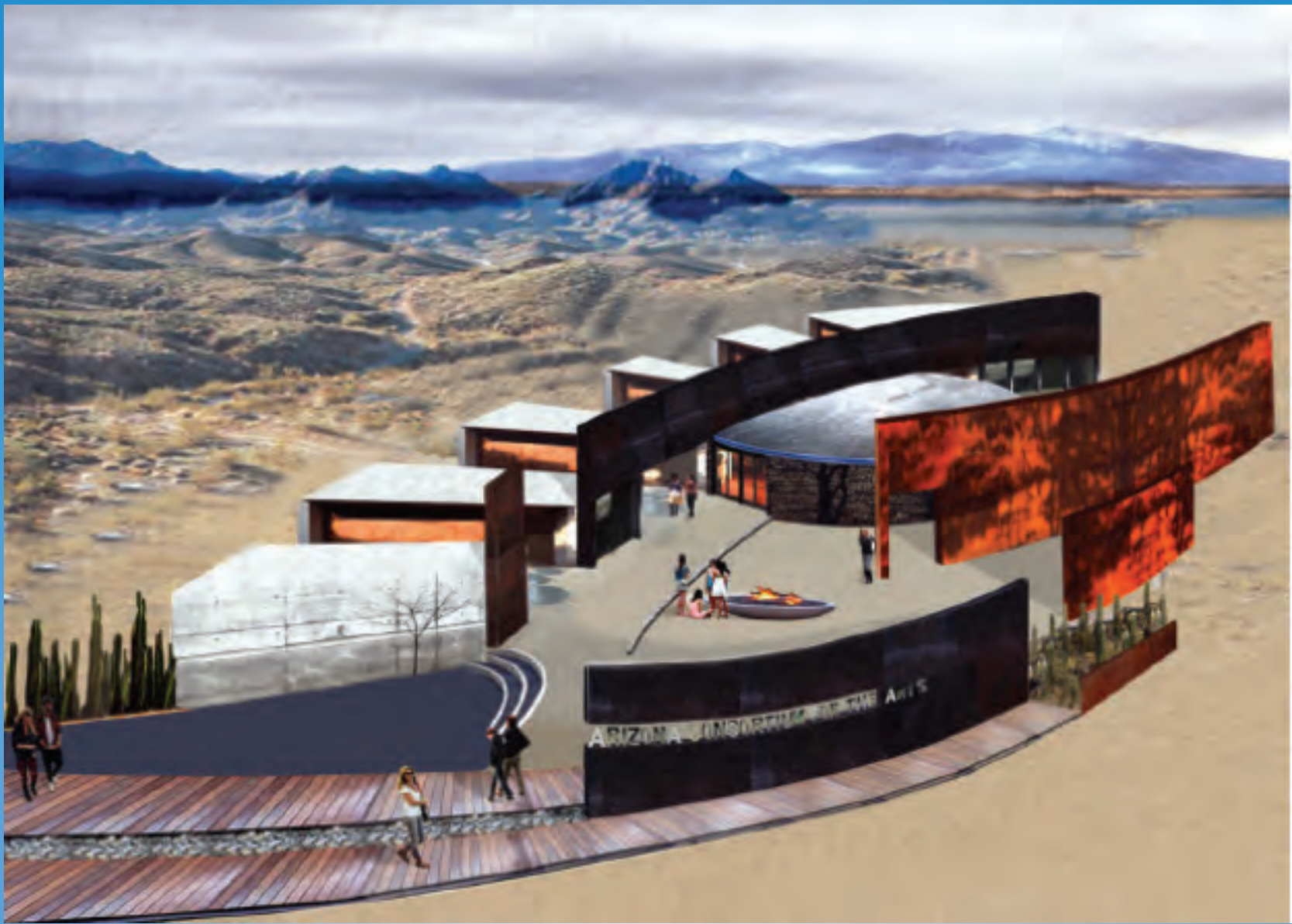
You can become a part of the Arizona Consortium and make a difference. There are countless ways to contribute, and the consortium is grateful for any donation in any form.

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



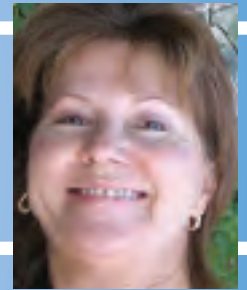
Elena Thornton, publisher: Founder and president of The Arizona Consortium for the Arts, Elena is an educator, artist and poet and lives in Phoenix. Reach her at info@artizona.org.



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.

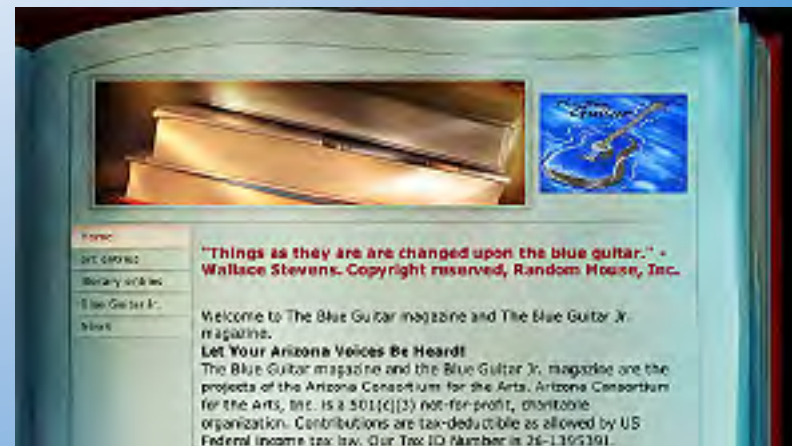
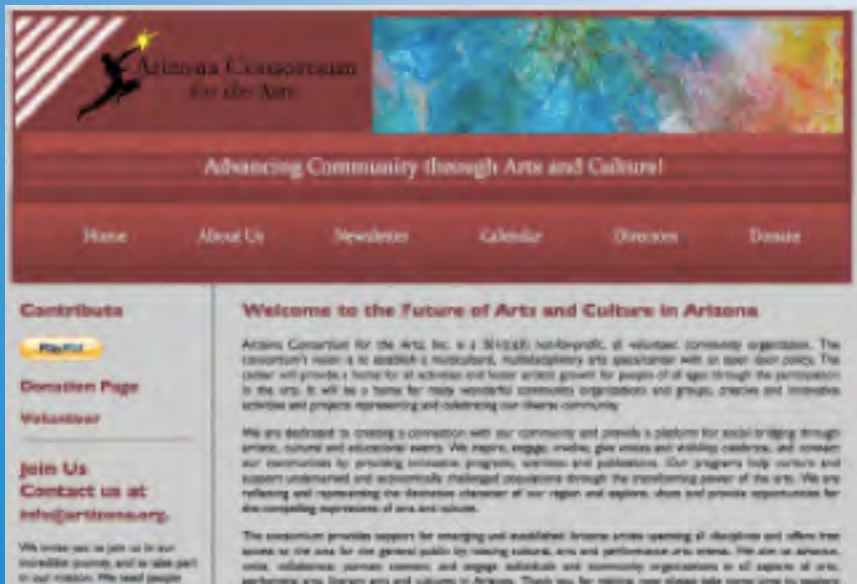


Richard H. Dyer Jr., co-editor: Richard (married to Rebecca, above) is the managing editor of six monthly newspapers and websites in the East Valley, a photographer and a welded-steel sculptor. Reach him at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org.



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



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

Check out The Arizona Consortium for the Arts website, www.artizona.org. There, you can sign up for an e-mailed newsletter. Also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

www.TheBlueGuitarMagazine.org

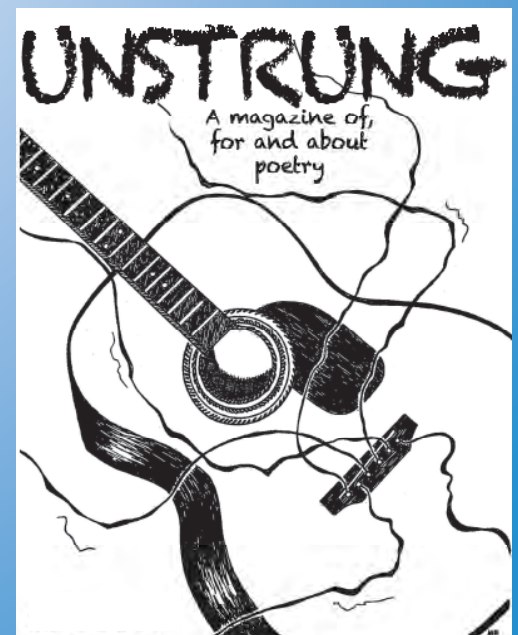
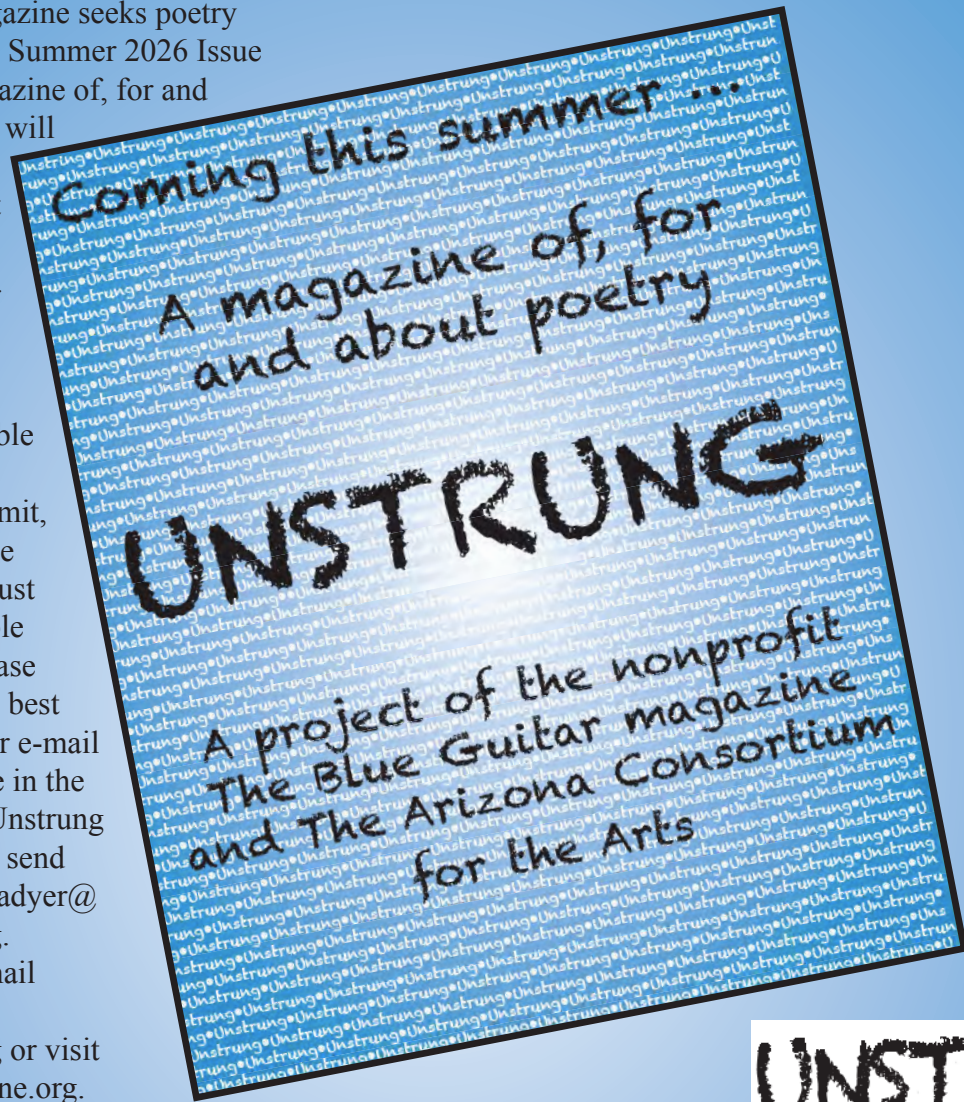
Spring 2026

A Call to Poets for the 2026 Issue of Unstrung

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks poetry submissions for the Summer 2026 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, 2026, 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 (no AI-generated works). 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, 2026, in all media geared to appeal to youthful audiences. Artists must submit original work and must live in Arizona (no AI-generated works). Simultaneous submissions will be accepted, but the artist must notify the magazine as soon as possible if the work is accepted elsewhere. It is free to submit, and submissions may be made in multiple mediums; up to 5 images can be submitted. Artists are encouraged to submit images of work by e-mail; please provide high-resolution JPEGs of 300 dpi. Images must be identified in the e-mail with the artist's name, contact information, titles of works, dates and mediums. Please include your name and the best way to contact you. To submit or for more information, e-mail Editor Richard Dyer at richarddyer@theblueguitarmagazine.org. For additional information, visit www.theblueguitarmagazine.org.

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

A Call to Writers for Fall 2026



The Blue Guitar magazine seeks literary submissions for the Fall 2026 Edition from Sept. 1 through Oct. 4. Submissions are sought in all genres — fiction, poetry, plays, creative nonfiction. Writers must submit original work (no AI-generated works) 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 2026

The Blue Guitar magazine seeks art submissions in all mediums for the Fall 2026 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 original images (no AI-generated works) can be submitted. Please submit images of work by e-mail and 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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*“Things
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