

**THR
ESH
OLD**

Threshold *is* a joint production of the Yavapai College English & Visual Art Departments

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SHE paced restlessly around her study, a hand to the small of her back. Why wouldn't it come?

It felt like she'd been carrying this child forever. Well, when you counted all the years she'd dreamed, imagined, pondered the timing, and gathered her courage, it had been a very, very long time. She'd endured so many sideways glances, heard so much advice... Dear Lord, so very much advice. She could have choked on it. At this moment it was a cacophony in the back of her mind. Her feeble attempts to concentrate on anything else were laughable. For several days now, she'd been caught gazing off into space during conversations and events. People who'd had their own were kind and understanding as her mind ran through checklists, replayed her preparations, and sought for anything else that needed doing, improving, perfecting.

She'd seen the images on the screen. Surely it must be time. She was surely ready. Why wouldn't it come?

She gripped the edge of her desk as pain hit her, and despite biting her lip, a groan burbled up from deep inside her.

Her husband had been passing in the hall, and stopped. Quietly he peeked through the small opening in the door where she hadn't quite shut it this

time. He saw the expression on her face and hurried on down the hall. There were people to call and alert.

Some people, he knew, preferred giving birth in large, sterile settings, with people rushing around intent on tasks he didn't quite understand. But not his wife. Oh no, she wanted to do it almost alone, out here in the middle of nowhere, with only one person to hold her hand – and of course, he'd be hovering in the wings, ready if she needed him, but not interfering until then. He didn't know enough to interfere. This was, after all, her baby. His contribution had been small enough.

He heard her cry out, and began punching the numbers in the phone.

She sat for a moment at the desk, staring at the monitor without really seeing it, tears blurring her eyes. Then she turned away, stood again and resumed her pacing.

It went on for ages, the agony. She had brief moments when she could wipe her face and force her thoughts to something else. But the pain was always nearby, ready to rush in and consume her entire focus. She didn't think of herself as given to cursing, but choice words escaped her lips

that would have shocked those who knew her well.

The other woman had finally come, and spoke soothing, encouraging words to her. They helped a little. After all, how many births had this woman seen and attended? They said she was the best. So she knew she ought to trust her when the woman said it was time for her to quit pacing and begin pushing.

She hesitated for a moment. Did she really want to trust her child, a part of her, to this cold, unforgiving world?

Maybe it was better if it never had a chance to experience pain, criticism, bullying, rejection.

Too late. She had to let things take

their course. She bit her lip, then wailed as her child slipped the bondage of her self and slid out into the open. Her husband was there, waiting with the beautiful covering that he gently wrapped around her baby before laying it on her chest.

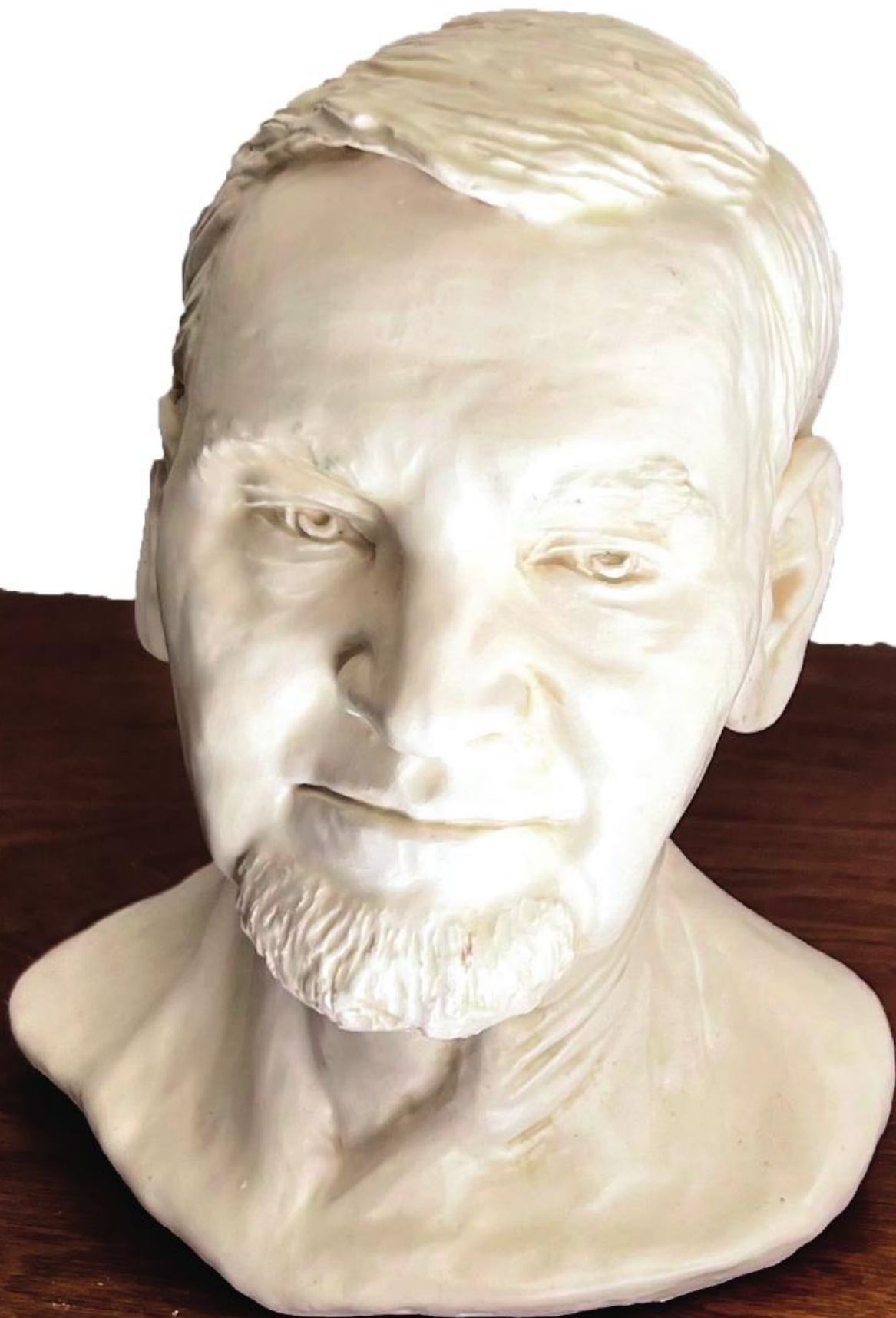
"Congratulations," he whispered as he kissed her forehead. "You have a beautiful, perfect, 400 page novel."

Her publisher, still holding her hand, smiled agreement. "Well done."

Michele Partain

THE BIRTH

Laura Sapko
Jim



Creating space for Creative **artists!**



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3M
IA
K
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Colette Hope Marks

1.even the rose's foundation
is rooted
on a stem of thorns

modern haiku
from the second floor
no one can see the old
book
under the table leg

Coconut Pie

You picked the flashlight
over sweet coconut pie,
and I, for you,
decided on the dessert.
Now it has disappeared.
The pie made you happy,
I think.

[illegible]

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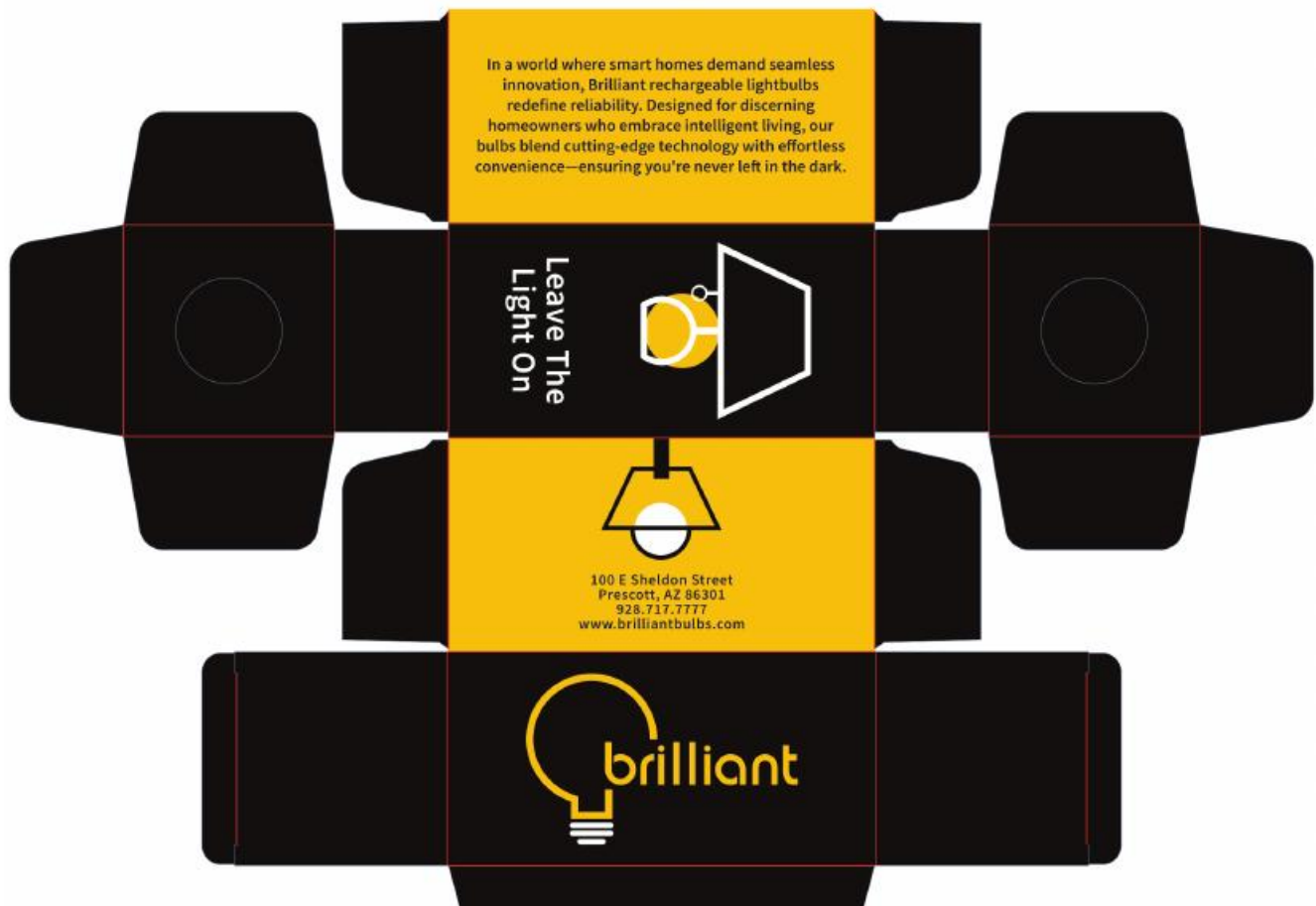
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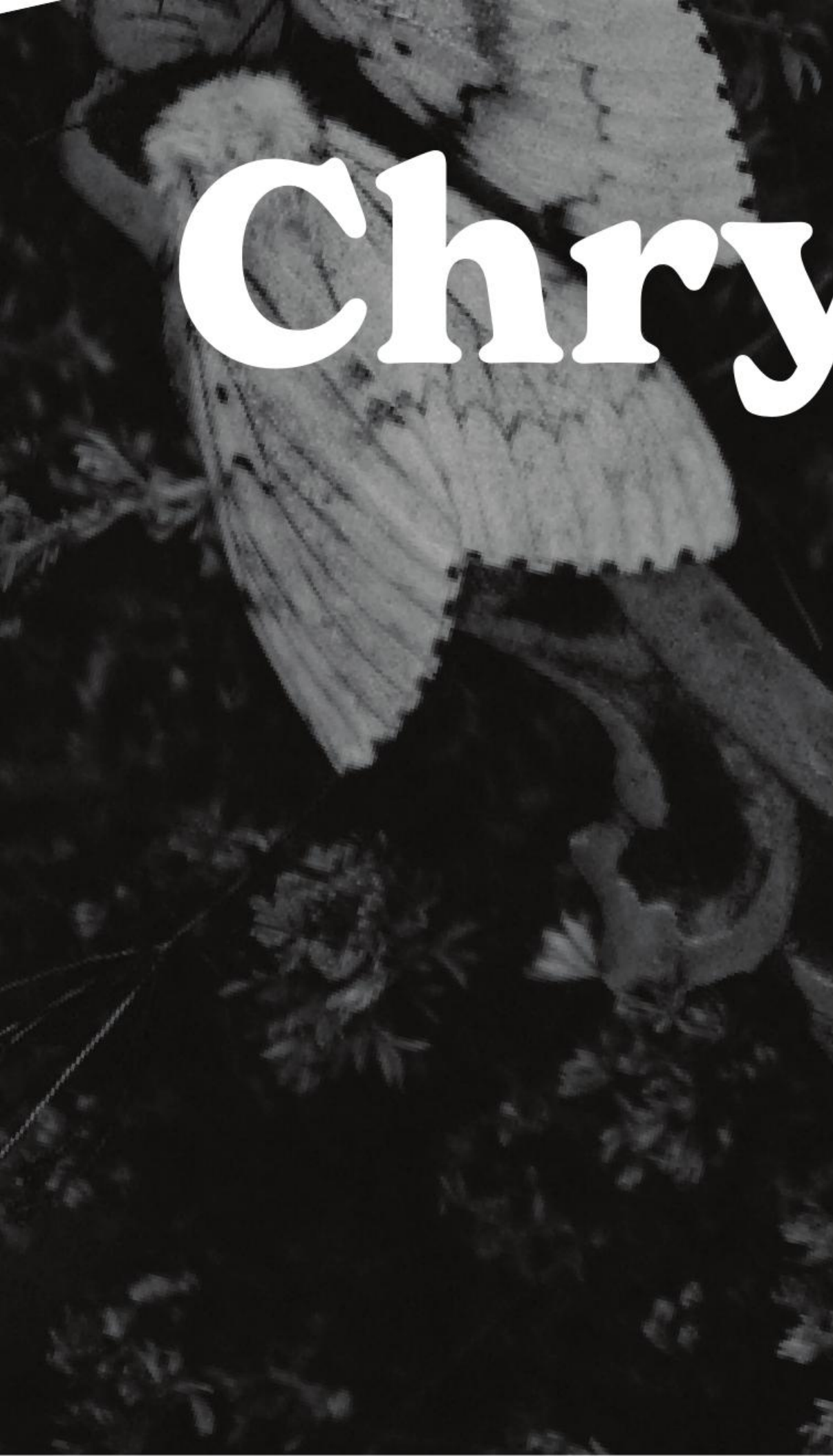
Brilliant brand and packaging design Cheri Moe

Memories





Shelley Lowell



Chrys

chrysalis

Patty pushes open the shop door and we see, in the short time we've been inside, that the moths have invaded the town, their fragile bodies flitting past the moon, parking lot littered with white wings. They swim in the air around us and cluster under streetlamps, trembling.

Just last week Patty has told me her real name, Rachel, which is a leaf floating on a stream, a white dress billowing, the answer to a question that she's asked again and again in our late-night conversations, sprawled in our backyards, searching the stars: *Who am I?* And now she knows, she's Rachel, her parents finally telling her story.

Patty/Rachel and I walk towards home; it is snowing moths, flurries of delicate wings brushing against our faces. We avoid stepping on their translucent skeletons. Heading home is like travelling through a memory, we are remembering what hasn't yet happened.

I practice her new name—Rachel. The long ray—a stream of light.

The final syllable, a chrysalis with her tucked inside. I say it out loud and it drapes over her shoulders like silky fabric.

All year, things have been evolving. All year, we have felt the change, distancing ourselves from the suburban homes and squat factories. Now they feel as insubstantial as maps flat on the dusty streets. Walking the halls of our high school, Patty seemed to float, and even our clothes, leotards under our jeans, and ballet slippers, feel transitional. Dancers moving through the subtle steps.

We keep walking. Passing cars, with moths streaming in their headlights, hum by. My friend Patty/Rachel is halfway gone, already elsewhere, I have followed her distracted gaze, dreamy looks. She is only borrowed now. I see her image reflecting in shop windows. Two of her. Patty. Rachel.

We turn into the small subdivision, moths opening and closing their wings on roofs, and windowsills, flower boxes. If there is a place to land, they have landed. Silent houses, families inside, only Patty/Rachel and me on the empty streets. This is the world we are leaving behind, only weeks until we pack up, off to our separate futures. She will send letters, signed Rachel, long having let go of her old name, old fears. Our time together a satin ribbon unspooling into the past.

Rachel pauses, mid street, and lifts her hands. A moth clings to her long hair, on the shoulder of her famous striped tee shirt. She spreads her arms wide and says, *Everything is up*. And it is true, there is only the blue/black sky, moths flickering like stars. It is like she is opening a door and stepping through into an infinite room just she can enter. The place she belongs. It is the first line of her future.

This is what I'll remember. Years later, I'll think of this dreamy night as our last real moments together, our last journey as friends through moths like snow, like stars, like poems. Rachel poised in the moonlight, wrapped in her new name, moths balanced on her open palms.

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NIGHT,
THAT
THE
MOON
FORGOT
MY
NAME

When I was small,
my voice carried like a bright thing—
a child's easy spark,
quick to leap from my tongue
into anyone's waiting hands.
Nothing in me knew how to hush.
But then there was that night—
the one the moon still watches
through half-closed lashes,
as if afraid to see too clearly.
I remember the sky bending low,
cupping its dark hands around my mouth,
stealing the warm shape of my breath
as if it belonged to the wind instead of me.
A strange quiet pressed against my teeth,
sliding in where sound should've lived.
Vines—
thin as whispers,
quick as instincts—
wound themselves around my limbs,
rooting me to the earth
with a softness that felt like betrayal.
I lay there,
emotionless,
breathless,

sleepless—
as still as a shadow pinned beneath glass.
And I wanted to be a wolf.
God, I wanted that.
To throw back my head
and crack open the night
with a howl that would shatter everything.
To tear the silence from my throat
before it learned my name.
But my voice—
quick, bright, fearless—
had already slipped away,
a runaway star blinking out
in a forest that did not echo back.
All that remained was the watching—
me above me,
hovering like a forgotten lullaby,
searching the dark for the sound
I once carried so easily.



PRESCOTT
Art Gallery

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M - F 10AM - 3PM
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**GALLERY CLOSED MAY 16th – JUNE 25th
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COLORED PENCIL SOCIETY OF AMERICA 2026 INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

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FALL JURIED STUDENT EXHIBITION

NOVEMBER 20th - DECEMBER 18th
Closing Reception, Awards Ceremony
& End-of-Semester Celebration:
Friday, Dec. 18th, 4-6pm





THE RANSOM NOTE

THE TRUE
STORY OF A
BUSY LIBRARY,
A JIGSAW
PUZZLE,
A SEVERED
EAR AND A
MISSING DOG.

Back in the day—we're talking the Carter administration, folks—I worked as a library page, shelving books returned by patrons of the Burbank Public Library.

Upstairs, situated next to a space filled with mainframe computers boasting the total memory of one Radio Shack floppy disc, was the staff break room. It was used by librarians and other fine civil servants who relaxed by scarfing down delectables from the Sputnik-era vending machine (the snacks were free, provided you knew how to body-slam it with just enough finesse), catching the latest episode of "Happy Days" or "Charlie's Angels" on a 13-inch black-and-white Zenith, and incinerating all manner of Swanson's frozen dinners in the break room's newest gizmo: a silver 50-pound microwave oven that leaked like a Chernobyl reactor. (I'm pretty sure that thing permanently lowered my sperm count ... but that's another story. In addition, some of the staffers enjoyed assembling jigsaw puzzles.

One day, after shelving a cartful of books, I headed upstairs to the break room, smacked the vending machine to procure a free Hostess

Twinkie, and headed toward one of the lime-green beanbag chairs that, along with conventional furniture, were situated against the far wall. But before I plopped my 18-year-old keester down and tore into the treat, I glanced at the latest jigsaw puzzle, a nearly completed 2,000-piece item depicting a cute "Peanuts" cartoon, of Charles Schulz fame.

**That's when I spotted Snoopy.
And I had an idea.**

Despite being alone in the break room, I instinctively looked left and right, like a black-clad burglar who'd just slinked through a jimmied window, before reaching down and lifting Snoopy from the puzzle. Deftly placing him in the front-left pocket of my Levis, I smiled to myself and bolted stage left.

**I'd just dog-napped Snoopy.
And I felt drunk with power.**

That night, at home after my shift, I grabbed the latest issue of my sister's "Teen Beat" magazine and removed a pair of scissors from the kitchen's junk drawer. With the patience of Job and the down time of a tax cheat cooling his heels in Sing-Sing, I cut out hundreds of individual printed letters. Then, using a bottle of Elmer's glue, I meticulously pasted each letter onto a sheet of what was then called "typing paper" to form a note.

A ransom note.

Before we continue, we must pause to discuss a *real* kidnapping, one that had occurred not long before I abducted Snoopy. Fasten your seat belts, folks. *This takes a dark turn.*

In 1973, John Paul Getty III, grandson of J. Paul Getty (the World's Richest Man, with more money than the Catholic Church), was kidnapped by the Italian mob and held for \$17 million. When the elder Getty, who apparently was also the World's Richest Cheapskate, initially balked, a local newspaper soon received—I am not making this up—John Paul Getty III's severed ear in the mail, courtesy of the aforementioned Roman goombahs. The old man soon coughed up a negotiated \$2.2 million, and John Paul III was eventually returned.

With that in mind, here's my entire ransom note, re-created to the best of my memory from 1977, which I left in the break room atop that radioactive microwave:

We have Snoopy. He's in good hands, at least for now. But you don't want to mess with us. We'd hate to fit your mutt with four cement boots and invite him to dog paddle in the East River.

To get him back, leave two bottles of Coca-Cola on the top shelf just west of the building support pillar at the end of the cooking section. Your DEADline is Saturday, July 17, no later than noon.

No funny stuff, or your dog does the backstroke. To show you we're serious, we're leaving you a little gift. Do NOT push us.

Placed in the same plain white envelope that contained my goofy ransom note was one small piece of the jigsaw puzzle, a piece that depicted—are you paying attention?—Snoopy's ear.

Nobody at the library ever said a word to me about this. I never noticed

any lantern-jawed thugs, coppers or G-men trailing me.

No, life at the Burbank Public Library went on as usual. Except some very important people intown must've realized that someone had kidnapped a world-renowned celebrity.

How do I know this? On July 17, 1977, while shelving books in the library's cooking section, I headed over to the prearranged location, and there they were: two bottles of Coca-Cola. And I smiled.

Later that evening, a librarian on break discovered that Snoopy had been miraculously returned to his jigsaw domain, reunited with his severed ear.

I learned two things, at the ripe old age of 18: (1) Pulling victimless pranks was a load of fun, and (2) I really didn't have what it took to lead a genuine life of crime.

Nearly a half century later, I remain quite certain that no library staffer ever determined who'd kidnapped Snoopy, lopped off his floppy ear, and left the ransom note.

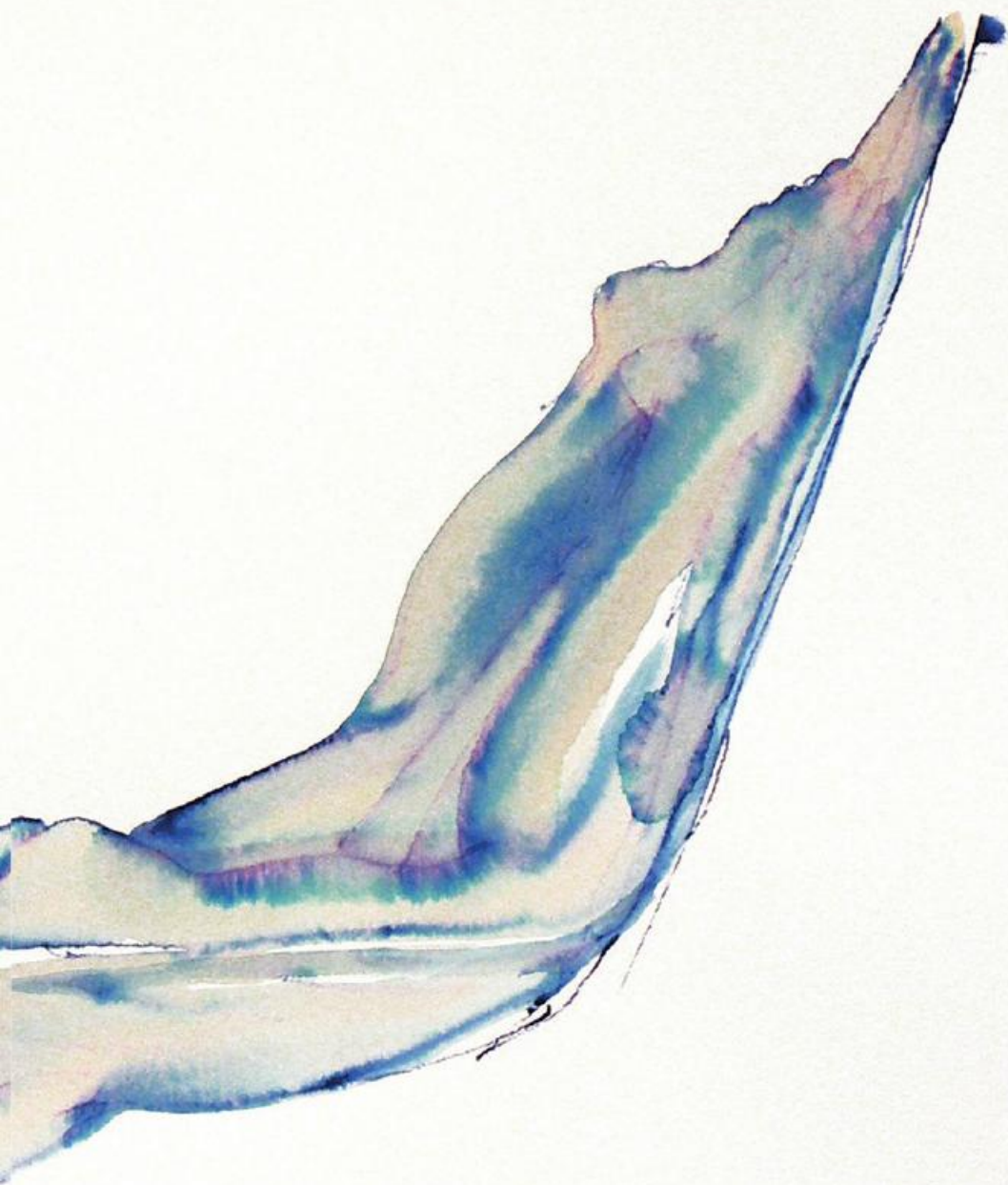
And I have absolutely no idea who paid the ransom... which I enjoyed later that day with a few freebie Twinkies pilfered from the break room.

It remains a mystery to this very day.

LARRY URISH



SUSPENDED



avocados

What strikes me now is not that this no longer exists
but that it ever existed at all.
That place you rented in Old Hollywood,
small backyard dense with foliage,
avocados like heavy bells in the cathedral of a tree.
Thick branches bursting with fruit
while we sat under it on lawn chairs,
mottled sun filtered through stained glass leaves,
muffled traffic on Franklin, and Griffith Park just a few blocks away.
Hollywood: always straddling the public and the private;
crowded streets and hidden oases.
The tree had so much fruit that you'd leave
a cardboard box out front for passersby,
and people would take a couple,
hold the plump, cool containers in their palms
as if it was no big deal to pick up little miracles
and carry on with their day. Beneath us,
fault lines shuddered in the deep earth,
but we ignored the low rumble of the shifting landscape.
Days were as plentiful as avocados
piled up in faded cartons,
as if one season of fruit would last us a lifetime.

Dee Cohen



A POSTCARD FROM MARS



In Medias Res

In Medias Res

In Medias Res

In Medias Res

In Medias Res

In Medias Res

In Medias Res

Mabel parks behind a long line of vehicles on the road's shoulder, grabs her camera from the passenger seat, and starts walking towards Peter's house. Only a mile out of town, yet rural, she can hear chickens somewhere nearby. Peter had written on the invite: *take the dirt road ¼ mile in, then make a left at the llamas*, and Mabel thought then—that line should show up in a poem sometime. And it will, years later when she reconstructs this day, one of Peter's last. And there they were, two llamas, recently shaved with only curly tufts remaining on the tops of their heads. She photographs them, their big eyes blinking slowly. A little further up, a scrawled sign on a tree reads: *Poetry This Way*. She photographs that too. Then the house comes into view.

It's low, wooden, surrounded by trees and dangling grape vines. A gravel path bends arounds the porch. Outside about 25 people are already milling around, chatting with one another or seated on the folding chairs in the dirt yard. Someone is playing guitar. Mabel sees Maria and Jerry, waves, same with Anita and Bruce. She sees a couple of people from local publishing—editors, maybe. She turns and finds her friend Carol coming up the path behind her, wrapped in a long red shawl and wearing high heels. Carol reaches down to wipe at her shoes—*this dust!* She mutters. Mabel photographs her, foot lifted, an elegant stork.

Mabel recognizes enough people to feel comfortable. It's a publication party for Peter's book—where is he? She hasn't seen him yet—and it is also the day of Venus Transit, June 6, 2012, where the planet passes across the face of the sun. Peter has it all planned out.

Mabel enters the home through the back door, directly into the kitchen. It is a bustle of activity, people cutting vegetables and washing plates. Someone hands her a glass of wine. *Just what I need*, she smiles. And she continues into the living area. The house seems to radiate rooms, Chloe's bold artwork leaning against the walls, saffron fabric diffusing the light, incense burning.

Oh, there he is. Peter is standing at the head of a large table, his red hair falling into his face. In his 60s but he still moves like a boy, lean and agile. Tall of course, always taller than everyone. He looks up and flashes Mabel a grin. "You're documenting this, right?" He asks, pointing at the camera. "Yes," she nods, and photographs him, another bright smile.

Lovely Chloe, Peter's partner, is hovering near the table, lighting candles. Mabel has a sudden memory of a dream, maybe a recurring dream, with groups of people seated at banquet tables, and the realization in the dream that the people are no longer living. Chloe holds a candelabra up to her face and talks like vampire. *I want to suck your blood*. Another photo.

By Dee Cohen

Watching Peter, Mabel recollects his writing workshops in the back room of the library, the surprising energy he put into his suggestions, the way he would throw a poem into the air when he approved. *Bravo!* Once, when she complained about being stuck, not able to get going, he scowled and said, “Just jump in, both feet, and worry later.” And it worked. *In medias res.* In the midst of things. It’s how she feels whenever she sees Peter, as if he is in a current state of *now*, like the present tense is a cloud that he pulls along with him.

People are getting food from the table, moving back outdoors. There are more of them now, the dusty yard crowded, the conversation vibrant. Mabel sits with Carol, and takes photos from her chair. *She* can feel the energy rising, music escalating. Suzy has set up a crazy contraption for people to view Venus Transit and they wait their turns, wearing paper sunglasses. Two puppies from the house next door have sneaked into the yard and are tumbling with each other, grabbing food off plates. One photo after another. Every shot freezing a moment. *In medias res.*

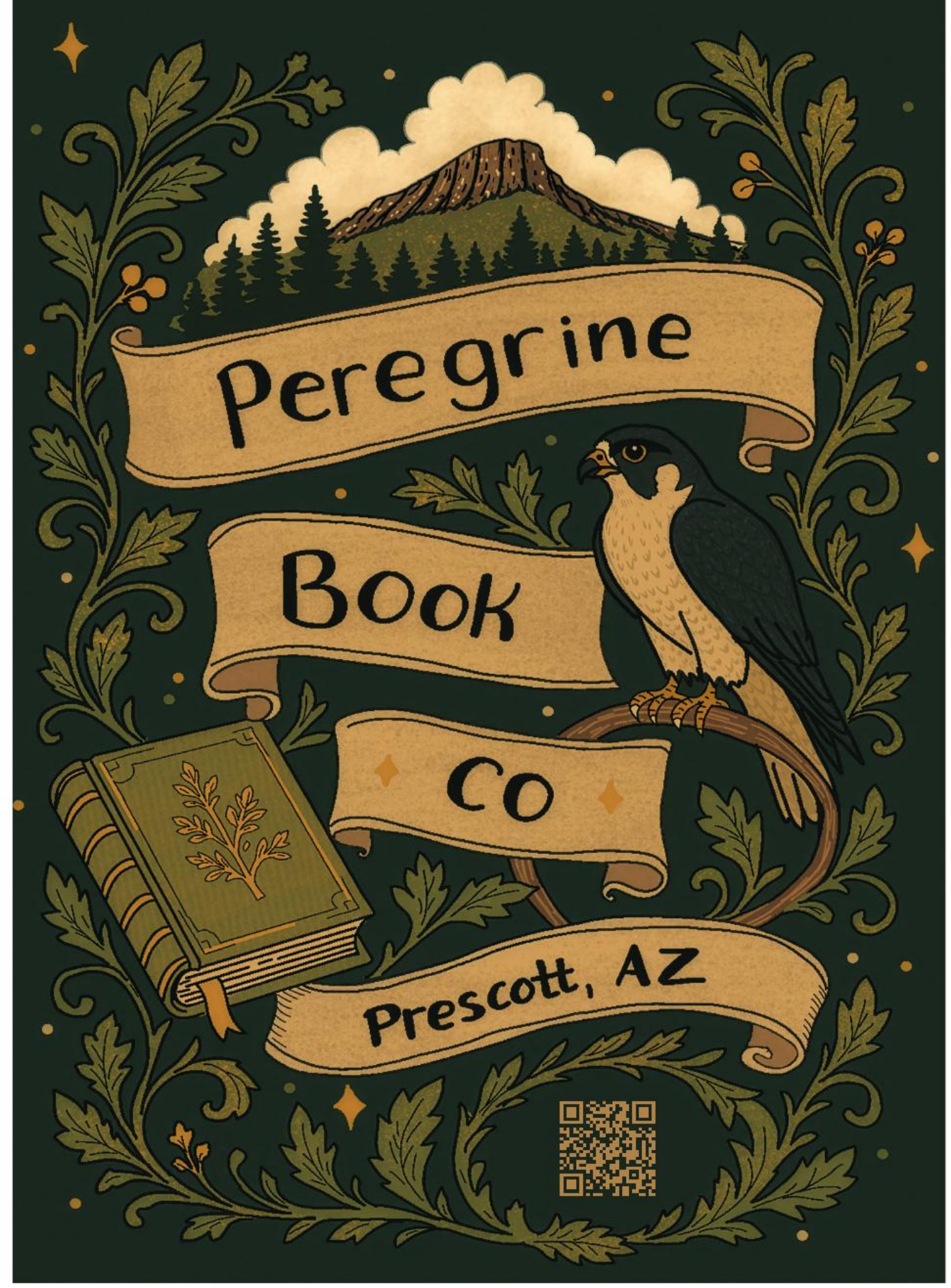
Fairy lights are turned on and Peter strides out wearing a top hat. “As if you aren’t tall enough,” someone yells, and he bows, opening his book. Silence, the white lights twinkling between the leaves. He begins to read.

Mabel wonders how she’ll look back on this day, a day where time seems to hover, to pause and hold still. Later she’ll write lines that begin:

In this poem, there is no past, no future, only an eternal now.

Did Peter know how few days he had remaining? Was this all part of his goodbye? That wouldn’t surprise her. But she will not think about that until later. She pulls herself back into the moment. It is still warm, sky starting to deepen, Peter standing in a midpoint, his words radiating over the crowd. Somewhere between heaven and earth, a banquette table shared by the dead and the living. Past, future, then, now.

In medias res.



The logo is set against a dark green background with a decorative wreath of green leaves and small yellow flowers. At the top, a stylized mountain with a brown peak and green base is visible, with a line of dark green evergreen trees in front of it. A large, light brown banner with a black outline curves across the middle, containing the text 'Peregrine' in a black serif font. Below this, another similar banner contains the word 'Book'. To the right of the 'Book' banner, a detailed illustration of a peregrine falcon is perched on a brown branch, facing left. The falcon has dark blue-black feathers on its back and wings, and a white underbelly with dark speckles. A third banner, also light brown with a black outline, is positioned below the 'Book' banner and contains the letters 'Co' in a black serif font. To the left of the 'Co' banner, there is an illustration of a green book with a gold-colored spine and a gold-colored leaf design on the cover. A fourth banner, at the bottom, contains the text 'Prescott, AZ' in a black serif font. The entire design is accented with small yellow stars and dots.

Peregrine

Book

Co

Prescott, AZ



INVAS SPECIES

Lara Hamidi-Ismert

SIVE ES



Kansas' climate is not like Pluto's, nor Jupiter's.

The summer air is hot and thick and wet,
it coats the corn fields in purple sweat, cries
beneath a red-eye sun. Then winter comes
enthusiastically and unwelcome like
Westborough Baptists, inspiring murder and
dreams of departure. Though easy to traverse,

few are compelled to visit. Native kids
swim in cow patty ponds, fling their freckling
bodies from swinging ropes into strip mines.

If there were fish down there, we know
they were put there, like the lakes, by men.

And just as no one comes, rarely
does one leave. Still, somehow,

stray stalks of wheat rivers, an artist's
elusive motion, wend their way like weeds
into escapees' homes. Yellow grass strategic
as cockroaches boarding an open suitcase—
hitching across state borders—buried deep
in a neural knot, pinched between canine
and incisor, tucked behind a weary ear.

Mike Coyne

In Flight





LOITERING

a life in
cigarettes

Tarrytons were sweet, Lucky strikes; harsh, Pall Malls; edgy.

Hank blew perfect rings, popped them with an angry finger.

Sam shot pool with a Winston shoved in his missing tooth.

Tidy package: hard pack, soft pack, litany of unwrapping,
strip tease of cellophane, tamp tamp on your wrist.

Cigarette as noir: the buzz, the cloud, the fume, the fog;
a dark alley, lipstick-stained filters.

The first pull, heavy-headed, almost toppling, smoke drunk.

Mindy's in a clasp purse, lighter tucked.

Florrie dealing solitaire, squinting away from the blue stream.

Carlton tasted like nothing, Kools, mentholy green.

Feet stamping at the bus stop,

cold shivers/warm smoke, anxious plume to the sky.

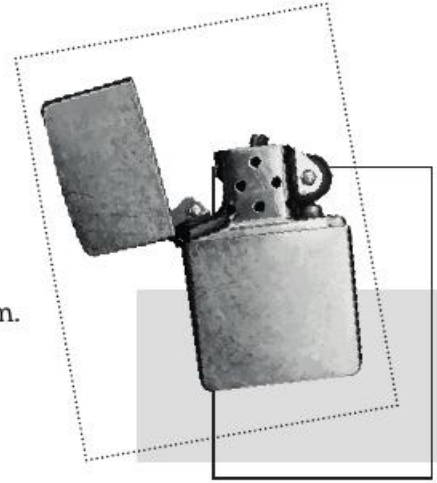
Desire mapped from stomach to head, down through the heart,

hands cupped over a struck match, the equality of longing.

Marlboro tucked behind your uncle's ear,

pea coat with tobacco shreds in the pockets,

Camel with specks stuck to your tongue.

**CIGARETTE AS HIATUS:**

between lips, between teeth, between lines, between classes;
huddle of girls in the upstairs bathroom, one minutes 'til the bell, -

hand out, two fingers waving,
an inadvertent peace sign, Can I have a drag?

Tough girl says, Don't steam it.

Anna slips one in her bra, Sandy in her make up case.

Cigarette as siren song: giving up, giving in, giving way.

Jeffrey smoked on a skateboard, clumping over the broken sidewalk,

Tony on a stingray bike, high handlebars, butt clamped in his mouth.

The vocabulary of smoke: smoldering S's open O's

Ars poetica Ars smoketika

Firey tip in the dark brightening, weakening, brightening.

Row of filters pushed into the grass, tiny soldiers at attention.

L&M were stale, Kents; metallic, Salem; a patch of rough lawn.

The geography of smoking: back streets, behind the bowling alley,

cutting through the empty field, past the gas station.

Your brother outside the drug store, under the no loitering sign,
collar up against the future.

Crouching in the dark garden below the noise of your parents' TV,
staring up at a hazy moon: sneaking a smoke.

Glow of a car lighter, flick of filter out the butterfly window,
sparks bouncing on the highway behind you.





Des ign

<p>shape how people

interact with technology.</p>



YC YAVAPAI
COLLEGE

Jim Veney

Ode on a Green Banana

(After John Keats)

I

Thou still untasted child of tropic lands,
Thou greenish morsel waiting to be found
Among the broad-leaves shadows deep and cool,
With all thy sisters hanging upside-down.
What subtle perfume thou shalt soon exude,
That single scent—Ah, sweet banana oil—
Which rises to the nose when thou art ripe,
And lingers still, yes, even as thee spoil.
But thou art green and green thou will remain
Till plucked, what joy, what happy dénouement.

II

Eaten fruit is sweet, but that uneaten yet
Is sweeter still; therefore we wait to taste
For nectar of thy gift unto the palette,
When first we pluck thee, from thy skin encased.
Fair fruit, beneath the boughs of thy broad leaves
Thou hidest until pickers find thee there;
Gentle though art, yet never wilt thou know
The peace of ripening on thy parent plant,
A ripening that lends a golden glow
To fruit that in its nature should be fair.

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs that will not see
The bleak cold snows of winter's biting air;
And happy morsel, undiscovered still
Amidst thy siblings, hanging green like thou.
So many there—so many, many there—
For sometime green, then yellowing in hue;
And with thy sisters put aboard a boat
To grace the shelves of Walmarts everywhere,
Slowly shifting from their green to gold,
To be purchased now—fine fruit, fair and true.

IV

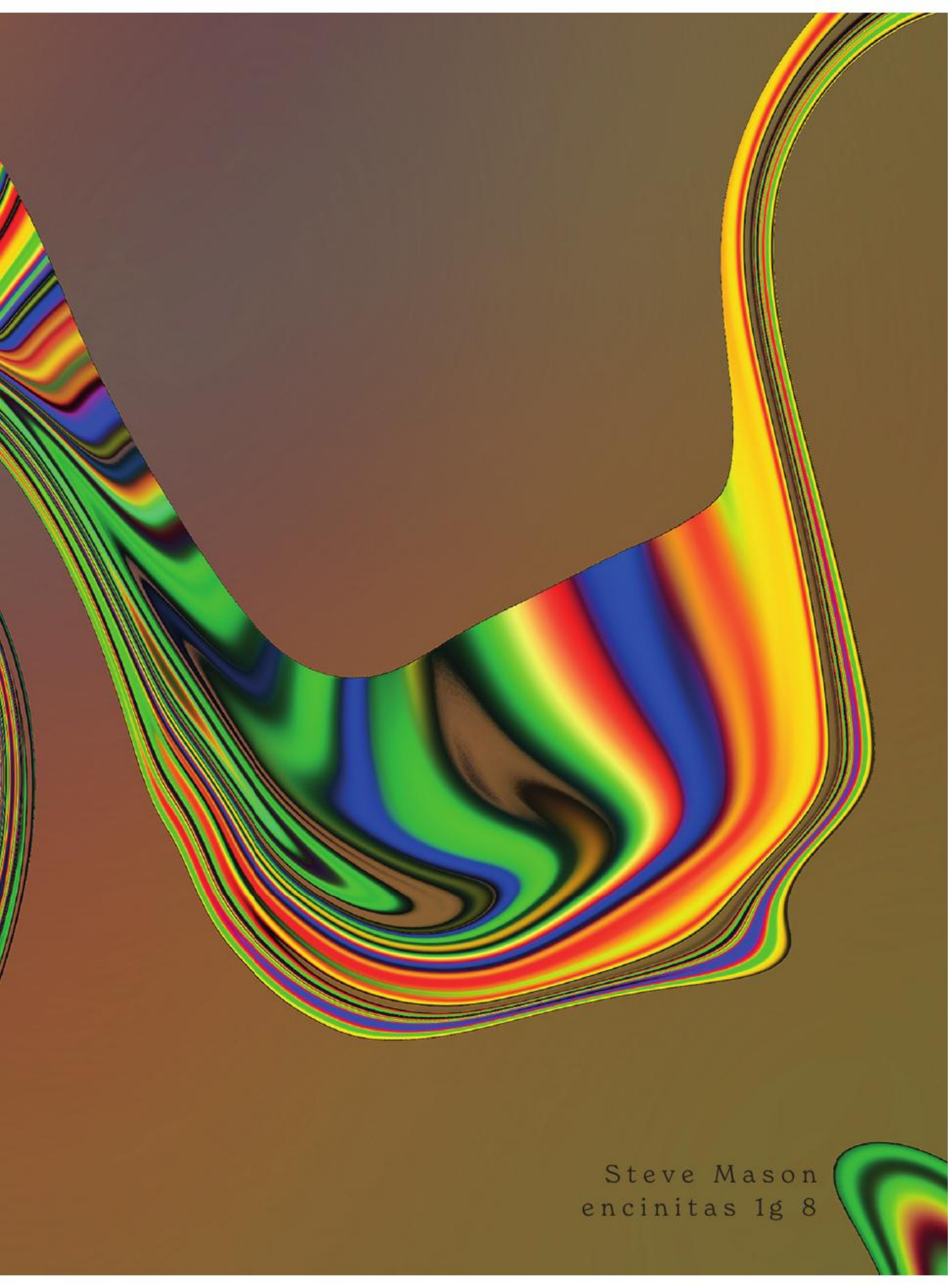
Who are these ones who thee would now possess?
What god of commerce art they thus addressed?
Who push the cart with wobbling wire-born wheels,
Who come to seek thee on the counter there
From many places, homes, streets, near and far
Who choose thee over apple, over pear,
And place thee in their cart with tender care
Lest any bruise should mar thy tender skin—
A later stain that surely would impart
A lesser charm, and make thee flawed therein?

V



O tuberous shape! Fair fruit we all adore
Now blessed yellow, best for our repast—
With ice cream or with cereal before
Or better still when dipped in chocolate
Or eaten solely by thyself at last
When we are old and chewing is a chore
Thou shall remain—soft yet firm for eating—
A friend to man, whom I will yet adore
“Banana is joy; joy, banana.” That is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.





Steve Mason
encinitas 1g 8

GreenHorn

During my freshman year at the University of Wyoming, I attended several rodeos. Even though they were competitors, the cowboys acted like an extended family. Much like the bakers on *The Great British Baking Show*.

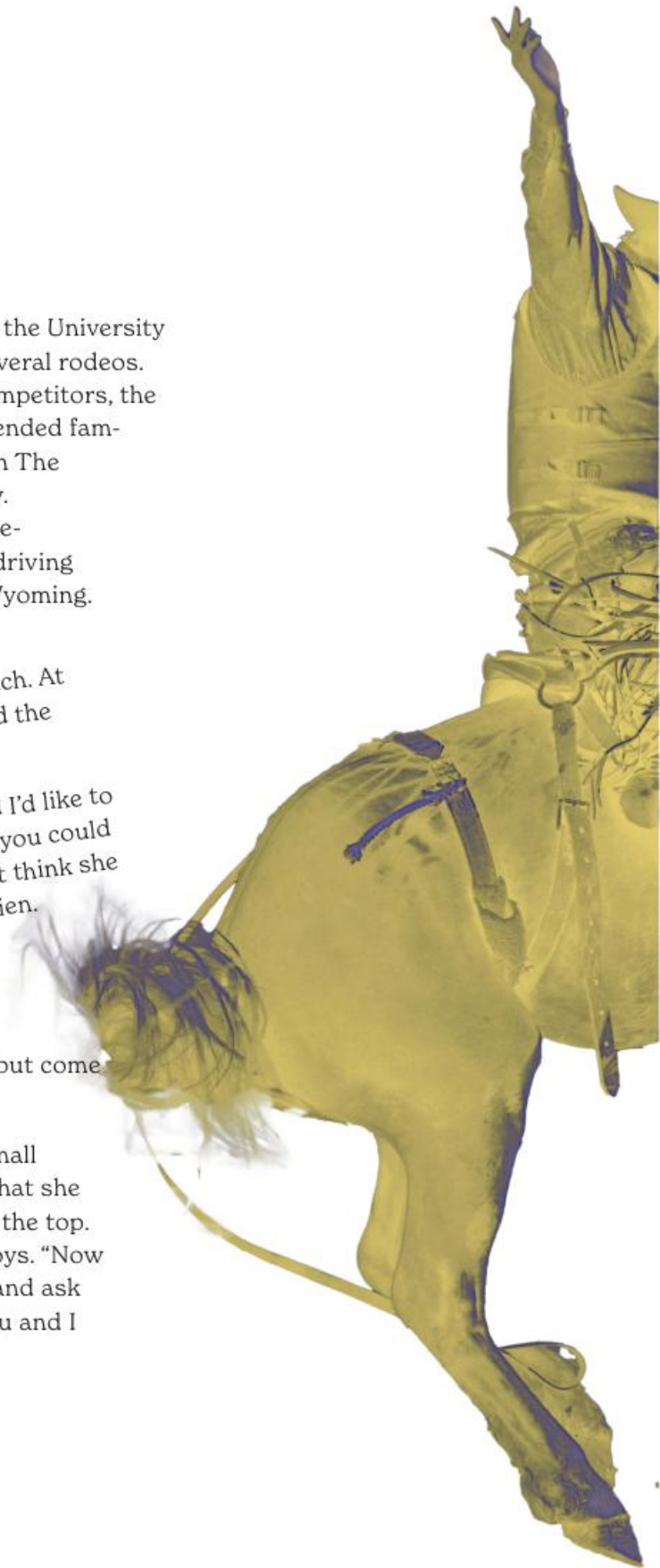
One Saturday afternoon during spring semester sophomore year, I found myself driving aimlessly on the outskirts of Laramie, Wyoming.

With no formal plan, I stopped in front of a small ranch. At the front door, I knocked. A lovely, tall lady answered the door and asked if she could help me.

"Hi, I'm Clay Hurtubise from Portland, Maine, and I'd like to learn how to bronco ride. I was wondering if you could offer some advice on how to get started." I don't think she could have been more surprised if I was a green alien.

"Well, my sons are out working on the ranch but come on in and I'll cook you a steak."

After finishing the steak, she went to get a small notepad. As she was writing, she explained that she was putting her name and phone number on the top. Under her name she made a list of ten cowboys. "Now take this to the OK Corral Sunday morning, and ask for one of these cowboys. Tell them I sent you and I expect you to get your first lesson."



Clay Hurtubise, R.Ph.

Laramie is about 7,200 feet above sea level with vibrant blue skies and puffy white clouds. The sun was intense that morning.

Walking into the dimly lit bar, it took my eyes a few minutes to adjust, giving the patrons plenty of time to check me over, an obvious greenhorn.

A tall cowboy stood by himself at the end of the bar, so I approached him. He could clearly see the open note in my hand.

I said, "Excuse me, but Mrs. X said that one of these men might be here this morning." Starting with number one, I asked if he knew him.

"Yup."

"Is he here?"

"Nope."

It went this way all the way down to number ten. "Do you know him?"

"Yup."

"Could I please talk to him?"

"You are."

If memory serves me right, he was Dan Dailey, reigning champion and a legend. After explaining my situation, he said, with a sly smile, all he had ready was bareback horses, was that okay? It felt like a double dog dare, or even the infamous triple dog dare. I didn't think it would matter, as I had no experience with either.

"Sure," I replied.

He then raised his arm, pulled his shirt away from the watch, looked at it solemnly, and said, "I'll have you on in fifteen minutes, and I'll have you off in fifteen minutes and four seconds."

You don't mess with a cowboy's gear. Mr. Dailey asked one of the cowboys to loan me his spurs and glove. Immediately a couple of cowboys fitted the spurs onto my boots and had me try on the glove. Then they led me into the corral



part of the building. After they taught some basics—hold on tight! —they carefully got me into position. The gate opened and the horse wasted no time in starting to buck.

You wouldn't think four seconds could last so long. The horse threw me so high up I thought I'd see God, or at least hit the rafters.

With a heavy whoomph, I landed on my back. In quick succession, the horse's rear hooves came crashing down beside my head.

In the lineup of cowboys, the first one looked like an old wrinkled Native American right out of a movie; he was wearing an eye patch. The young cowboy next to him had an arm in a sling, the next cowboy wore a foot cast, and the fourth, with his shirt open, was sporting a compression bandage around his ribs. It was then that I thought, Chris, this might not be a wise sport to pursue while you're attending pharmacy school.

Two cowboys rushed out, congratulated me, and helped me to my feet, while a third cowboy went over to control the horse.

Mr. Dailey was smiling from ear to ear. "I called it—four seconds!" If only I could have held on for one more second! He then congratulated me on

my first ride and said that if I ever saw his truck out front it meant he was teaching a class, and I was welcome to drop in.

It was obvious that my friend at the fraternity house doubted my story. A couple of weeks later that friend and I were driving out past the OK Corral. "Pull in!" I shouted. "That's his truck!"

We walked into the training area together. My friend's jaw dropped as Mr. Dailey announced, "Class, this is the guy from Maine I was telling you about."

He had me climb onto the mechanical bull, which he started out slowly, then in a few more seconds had me flying off onto the soft mats. I thanked him and introduced my friend to Mr. Dailey, who said it was nice to meet me again, and that I was welcome anytime.

Back at the frat house, during dinner, my friend tapped his glass with his fork. He then announced to all: "Because of this guy," he began, pointing at me, "I met Mr. Dailey today. It happened like this..."



EVERGLOW





INTERROGATED

My AI-based job
interview left me
deeply disturbed.

BY A BOT

I was the last kid on our cul-de-sac to stop using a Montgomery Ward 8-track tape player when cassette players gained traction in the early '70s.

I kept my parents' cast-iron Bell & Howell movie projector long after video cassette recorders were first produced.

My Panasonic VCR, given to me by a friend, remained in my apartment a full decade after the DVD players came on the scene.

See a pattern here?

The Luddites were members of a 19th-century faction of British textile workers who protested the use of automated machinery, due to concerns relating to worker pay and output quality. Rather violent lads, they often smashed the machines in organized raids. Today, the term refers to those who oppose the introduction of new technologies.

I'm a dyed-in-the-wool Luddite, a full-blown technophobe struggling in a world gone completely, maddeningly digital.

Which brings us to artificial intelligence.

You won't be shocked to learn that I'm not on the AI Bandwagon, gleefully waving pom-poms over the prospect of machines replacing our brains. And my opinion about AI didn't do a 180 after a recent job interview ... one conducted by an AI bot. For some 20 minutes, this carbon-based meat puppet (uh, me) jousted with a silicon-based program. And it wasn't a day at Disneyland.

Larry Urish

It began one fine August afternoon, when I sat at my desk, having completed an online job application. Minutes later, I found myself staring at my image, as viewed through my own laptop's camera. Staring back at me was a 60-something job seeker, at the moment drifting somewhere between befuddled curiosity and trepidation. My eyes briefly wandered from the screen and focused on a happier time, in the form of a framed photo I'd taken of Mount Everest during a trek high into the Nepal Himalayas.

A written prompt jolted me back to the present moment.

<< Your video and audio functions are enabled.
Press START whenever you're ready. >>

Shrugging to myself, I followed the prompt.

The AI-generated voice, an uncanny vocal representation of a young woman, said: << Welcome. We hope to learn more about you and determine if you're a good fit for our Creative Writer position. >>

"Uh ... thank you?" I said, haltingly, to my laptop.

The bot cut right to the chase. << Tell me about the writing-style differences between straight news stories and features, and give me an example of each. >>

I sat there for a moment, slack-jawed, briefly mesmerized by my on-screen image. The AI interviewer repeated the question.

<< Tell me about the writing-style differences between straight news stories and features, and give me an example of each. >>

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“Well, a news lead should tell 90 percent of the story in the first two or three sentences, while a feature must first engage the reader through any number of writing strategies.”

While I managed to furnish a few examples of what I’d just stressed, a sheen of perspiration began to emerge on my forehead.

<< Give me an example of when, during your two years at the Orange County Register, a writing assignment that you’d completed didn’t meet the needs of your lead editor. How did you work with the editor to complete the task? >>

That’s when I realized that the AI bot was reading my online resume, my LinkedIn profile ... and God knows what else. And I wasn’t thrilled.

“Well, I usually threaten the editor. I keep a ball-peen hammer in my top drawer for that very purpose.”

This is what my brain came up with in the heat of the moment.

To my credit, I didn’t say it aloud, opting with “Well, I like to find out exactly how my work fell short. Then I rework the assignment based on my editor’s feedback. Ultimately, the finished product is her call.”

While I coughed up the response, I pictured using that ball-peen hammer on the box of silicone running the program that was conducting the interview ... or perhaps on one of the evil eggheads behind the AI revolution.

By then, my forehead sheen had turned to full-on flop-sweat, beads of which began trickling into my eyebrows.

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For the remainder of the interview, my brain — a 3-pound slab of neuron-packed fat rooted in snark and dark humor — conjured up one set of answers to the bot's questions, as my mouth managed to blather other responses that were more appropriate. While doing so, I wondered if the AI bot could somehow see my clenched jaw, furrowed brow, reddening face and all that sweat ... and whether or not that would factor into my immediate career future.

<< How do you approach a new story or writing assignment? >>

My brain: I start with three things: cocaine, coffee and Coors. ... Just kidding. I don't drink coffee.

My mouth: "If I cannot tell the entire story in one or two sentences, I don't know the story. All of my research and every interview question are based entirely on those few words."

<< How do you verify facts and ensure reliability in your reporting? >>

Brain: Rule number one: Never, never, never let annoying facts get in the way of artistic license!

Mouth: "I print out my first draft and highlight Every. Single. Fact. Then I look at my notes and verify all the research and interview quotes."

As the minutes ticked by, we went back and forth, the bot and I, lunging and parrying like two Olympic fencers probing each other for weaknesses. And, like a see-saw, my energy level dropped as my frustration rose.

That's when it happened.

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<< Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a difficult story source. >>

Brain: I use disposable gloves, chloroform, duct tape, a shovel and lye. To the best of my knowledge, he's never been found.

Mouth: "I use disposable gloves, chloroform, duct tape, a shovel and lye. To the best of my knowledge, he's never been found."

Oopsie ...

My pie-hole audibly parroted the sick-and-twisted nonsense that had just flashed through my brain.

<< Please repeat that. >>>

"Uh ... you mean about the chloroform and all that?"

<< Yes. >>

What the hell, I thought. By then, my chances of landing this job were on par with encountering a hammerhead shark in the aforementioned Himalayas.

"Let me amend that answer. I usually use a chain saw. It's a lot messier, but it's also more cathartic."

<< >>

"Knock, knock," I barked at my laptop. "Anybody home?"

<<< Who are some writers or journalists who inspire you, and why? >>>

Although I admire a slew of fine wordsmiths — some Pulitzer winners, other fellow snarkmeisters — my brain came up with ... nothing. Zip. Nada. Complete Skull Vacuum™. It was as if my overstimulated cortex said to the rest of my brain. Okay, we're done here. You, limbic system, come with me. Take it away, brain stem!

Eventually, the bot thanked me for my time before the laptop's screen went black.

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Sure, I was impressed by the digital sophistication required to review my background info and come up with so many poignant, challenging questions. However, that notion didn't explain the gnawing ache in the pit of my stomach, my flushed face or my shaking hands, my body's unconscious reaction to having been eviscerated, ripped open by computer code that had mined my data and used it against me.

And, as I gazed into the infinite blackness of my laptop's screen, I wondered how much more powerful artificial intelligence could become, what it could mean for the future of every writer ... hell, for all of us.

Five or 10 years from now, would I find myself trying to cajole a bot into granting me a raise? Into keeping my job? Into hanging on to my mortgage or preventing my electricity and gas from being turned off? Would I be pleading before a sterile digital program, posing as both judge and jury, to stay out of jail for a serious crime I didn't commit, an infraction based entirely on some random data blip at a supercomputer site buried under the Colorado Rockies?

Perhaps it's not a stretch to picture AI bots one day interviewing other AI bots for jobs once held by human beings. Where does this AI influence — I'm tempted to call it a takeover — end?

Sighing in frustration, I closed the laptop, collapsed into my recliner and stared upward at the ceiling. As all that flop-sweat began to evaporate, I decided to put on some nice baroque music; the genre's slow, nurturing pace always seemed to take the edge off any stress, anger or worry.

And I finally began to relax, even before the soothing sounds of Mozart began to emanate from an old friend: my Montgomery Ward 8-track tape player.

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What's Left of My Father

Lara Hamidi-Ismert

I cut a circle
from the chest

of his sweatshirt,
a piece not large

enough to carry
his frayed smell. But now

I don't know what
to do with this fabric

that's too heavy
but never warm enough—

put it in a
poem, the bottom

of a flowerpot, burn
it with the rest?



Dan stopped sleepwalking when he enlisted in the Army.
He half joked that God tied his legs to the bed at night
so he wouldn't get himself killed.

His two sons heard the stories; how as a boy,
he fumbled inside closets & drawers,
the refrigerator & once completely outside of the house
he awoke, began crying & awakened the neighbors.

When I returned stateside from Ankara,
he met me at LaGuardia. We opened one
of the duty free bottles of Wild Turkey
from my duffle bag. The other bottle was for Dad.
We spent the night in the airport in our uniforms
getting shit-faced before my flight home.

He did not tell me about the stripe he lost
for being AWOL until long after we were civilians again,
long after family & friends understood a part of him
was never coming home.

He rarely talked about The Nam:
Pleiku—a signal-corps-radio-operator assigned
a CO's driver—Agent Orange—the "Yards:"
mountain tribes who helped fight the Viet Cong,
how bravely they fought.

He burned his uniforms in our parent's backyard
along with b&w photos of himself holding his M-16
& a can of beer with a cigarette hanging from his lips—
just like Dad smoking a Pall Mall behind the bar pulling beer
from the tap for his customers.

Hair past his shoulders, often in blackout, he was free
to let loose the rage caged in his head; a rage his oldest son
refused as his birthright; a rage his second son, out of loyalty,
inherited. Steadily, over time, his last years sober,
his forgetting came easier & easier, his perimeter breached,
he surrendered to dementia, another defeated soldier
whose name is not memorialized on a dead patriot's wall.

Brothers

BY MIKE CASETTA

**HOPE FOR
A BETTER DAY**

LAURA SAPKO



Artist
Lily Garland

To Rid Himself of the Evidence, the Criminal Tossed the Weapon into the Garden

By L.M. Scarpitto

Snail finds a pickaxe
plots of chaos in its shell
slow revenge begins

Basil

By L.M. Scarpitto

Basil grows at the hands
of those who bother to tend,
and *leans* wild when they don't.

But be careful
as basil **bruises** easily,
and tastes best when it's b r o k e n .

Artist

Jose Trejo Maya

Excerpts from *Desert Sands*

Transparent thoughts in the poolside eclipse that's hard you see. When there's a langu
Age -but no one to speak it too *Nahuatlacah/Purepecha* huchari uri picua -por nuestra
Fuerza. Carry over sight how languages bleed in yellow spider suspended animation
Adamantine steel. It's the child in me to breathe these images into 3 dimensions iris
Glare: 17th cycle guards *chicome acatl tititl nahui tecpatl* it's the period of repose.
Tlacahuexolotl it's the fluidness transparency how these words were shard into/
Betwixt visual cortex. Ixquimilli the dark eyed scribe hollowed cenotes carving
Tezcatlipoca -read in the periphery 1519 *la noche triste* pyramid glyphs bleed
Within: this aint an erased *camara oscura* you can read behind these words
Isles. Desert sands inscribed in the DNA marred ethics shard jagged flint.
Tears encoded in a topography scarred with an unbalanced cross/double
Helix 3 stripes on the right temple tear drops of the jaguar how silence
Weighs. Heyokah thunder dreamers breathed into the bloodstream.

Eagle feathers breeze the melanin darkens blue lightning
Inipi/sweatlodge ceremony -spirits awaken the memory I
Jade/glass. Slowly time engulfs stream of consciousness:
2 braids in the above count read's seven reed period
Seclusion four silex. *Tarasco te está lloviendo la*
Memoria and so it's like breathing in multiple dimensions.
Suns refract rainbows kaleidoscope casts stars.

Lobo Xocoyotlzin there are transparencies
the minds I. Windstorm's lexicon of brawn
-white lightning how words immaterial lace-
rations in time. Step back and you will see a
pyramid shift in the s[pace]/time continuum a
ccelerate -when you palm your hands.

Organic poets cut deep in the spirit-essence:

desplazamiento lateral es lo que
ves. Owls refract jade screens n
pitch dark forest white/ochre
shades of ceremonies embed
ded in winters frosts. Petroglyph
origins of the carbon -14 fram3s:
dreams serrated from orography
& winds fissures/I.
It's a soliloquy that
u are reading stone
words cut under-
world corridors in
Tonina. Besides u
see invisible jaguar
open
.:scrolls:.

warrior:

Chicuey Ocelotl Tititl Nahui Tecpatl

Words lacerate silence: nahuatl [NAHUATLACAH plural form of Nahuatl –speaking people / nombre que se dio a las naciones cultas que hablan la lengua mexicana ®]. Lightning in the braids this poetic stream. All I got is the ink to bleed. Like crows refract black pearls glare sheen and/or ruby throated humming birds razor sharp flight iridescent. **Ghost** haunt the plains. ITONAL-LI ‘one’s shadows, spirit, soul’. Spirit helpers are the essence one breathes: TEZCATLIPOCA ‘mirror smoking’ as writing this blue lightning inside the temezcalli/inipi sweat lodge ceremony. NEXTLI ‘ashes cinders / ceniza’ in the memories blare voices coalesce rainbows of flowers in how thoughts bright as sunrise burns nights stare. TLAHUIZCALPANTECUTLI el señor de la aurora/Venus first light of dawn breaks past the meridians. Shamans cross parallels ethereal atemporal showers of meteors in the jade iris glare silex shards languages. We do not all see the same: رظ نال ع ف ن ن ح ن . IN XOCHITL IN CUICATL / flor y canto. Flower & song inscribed in the DNA. In the poolside eclipse these words here written before the cursors and screens blurred peripheral incisions’ in the visual cortex. In 3 more words bring back

Ghosts

Here
hid
de
n
i
n
I.

Chicome Itzcuintli Atemoztli Yei Acatl

Uixticihuatl/mujer de las salinas –you can feel the
steel weight in these words peripheral in-cisions/i
coded in. So when it comes you got too be ready
7ma trecena ce quiahuitl that is fluidity/transpan-
rency/tenacity. Period of tecuilhuitontli our uixti
cihuatl/woman of the salt dunes–blue and white ---

thunder in the night skies how
calendars override/lapse in the space/time continuum. Today's
5 acatl tecuilhuitontli nahui tecpatl is the fluid
ness in how ethereal entities survive hour ---
glass. Silex cuts what you're thinking edged
hieroglyphic stelae in the mental picture are
transcribing into ocean breeze. Energi3s in
optical cortex streaked in between dreams.
Weaved in the carbon—14 frame as pyra—

mid shift here: meld in the melanin
archaic earth infused. Peasants in the fields

tend the harvest –eyes color of sun/stars
truck glare in the iris. Sinaloa respira en estos triángulos –que
bradiza la memoria de obsidiana.
Shattered green volcanic rocks in
the poetic mien. Streams flowing
extemporaneously breathing bet—
wixt clandestino y desaparecido.
Rhyme form cuts to the essence
omnipresent owl feathers in the
full moons stare/breathe ice—

sickles carved into the DNA.
Song & stories thread in the-
se words as constellations

awake in Cihuapancuica—
yan ceremonies distilled:
flowers Iztauhyotl bears/
blooms semblance in
what you see in the—

title desert sands/re-
tinas dusk lights you:
so this was already

written in the skies.
Immaterial realms
engulf these even
still teal words af-
ter shockwaves
crowd these col-
lateral shards of
light iris sheen:

Transparent thoughts in the poolside eclipse that's hard you see. When there's a langu
 Age -but no one to speak it too *Nahuatlacah/Purepecha* huchari uri picua -por nuestra
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 Tears encoded in a topography scarred with an unbalanced cross/double
 Helix 3 stripes on the right temple tear drops of the jaguar how silence
 Weighs. Heyokah thunder dreamers breathed into the bloodstream.
 Eagle feathers breeze the melanin darkens blue lightning
 Inipi/sweatlodge ceremony -spirits awaken the memory I
 Jade/glass. Slowly time engulfs stream of consciousness:
 2 braids in the above count read's seven reed period
 Seclusion four silex. *Tarasco te está lloviendo la*
 Memoria and so it's like breathing in multiple dimensions.
 Suns refract rainbows kaleidoscope casts stars.

Lobo Xocoyotlzin there are transparencies
 the minds I. Windstorm's lexicon of brawn
 -white lightning how words immaterial lace-
 rations in time. Step back and you will see a
 pyramid shift in the s[pace]/time continuum a
 ccelerate -when you palm your hands.
 Organic poets cut deep in the spirit-essence:

desplazamiento lateral es lo que
ves. Owls refract jade screens n
pitch dark forest white/ochre
shades of ceremonies embed
ded in winters frosts. Petroglyph
origins of the carbon -14 fram3s:
dreams serrated from orography
& winds fissures/I.
It's a soliloquy that
u are reading stone
words cut under-
world corridors in
Tonina. Besides u
see invisible jaguar
 open
 ..scrolls:.

warrior:

Chicuey Ocelotl Tititl Nahui Tecpatl

Oxomoco: have you ever written in the dark? It's where thoughts spark into light.
Nahuatl adj., verb, sup., infin., etc. Read into the title as it's the most ancient
Name given to the earth. Just as the Iztaccihuatl and Popocatepetl
bleed volcanic rocks -tecpatl and/or flint sight. Thus all is
breathed into existence: lightning strikes thoughts
or shard axis mundi. Jagged edges cut into
the oral tradition stardust amidst marble
columns in the script -proliferates the
mien breeze. Tlalnamicitli
adj.v. Pensado,
recordado. R.

ilnamiqui

p. 602

Remi

Simeon.

DICCIONARIO

de la lengua NAHUATL o
MEXICANA. Amidst the dark side of time
-immaterial. These fingerprints scarred into the DNA in the
inipi sweat lodge ceremony incised in the heart of silv and the nine lords of
the underworld/night stars struck. In the jaguar' feline' stealth: the corpus/amate codex
assiduously meld in bloodstream and iris streaked between sight panoramic
vast camara of deference collapses into retinas shine in
between dark light and simultaneity in multiple
prism outside our space/time

continuum: its what's

not written

in this

dark

less

ness.....

a
..Seminole Warrior..

.....yei cuauhtli hueytozotli macuil calli c/s

TUTORING
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Artist
Hannah Nichols

To my sister and brother;
Amy and Peter

I remember how for the last year, Dad thought he was already 100. Amy wants to make you lemon cake with the chocolate frosting for your birthday," I reminded him. "We'll have root beer floats for everyone."

With gusto, dad would say, "Yum, Yum, Yum."

If not for his death, his 100th birthday would have been today.

I remember how it always surprised him that there were no ashtrays at The Sequoias Retirement Community in San Francisco. Once Dad told me he, there was a time he couldn't write a letter without smoking a cigarette.

I called dad every Friday or Saturday. I'd always ask, "How's it going?"

"I have nothing to worry about," he'd answer, for the last two years. "All I do is eat and sleep."

I recall, how after dad died, I'd spent time on our Prescott front porch sipping wine, smoking cigarettes. Numb. Looking up at the constellation, Orion. 'Come home with your sword or on it, was what the Greek Spartan mothers told their sons. My mom taught me the constellations. I don't know why of think of this.

I recall my brother mentioning that the nurse told him dad was "transitioning." I thought immediately of the Tibetan Book of the Dead and the 49-day passage after death, during which most sentient beings are reborn. The transitional passage Tibetan Buddhists refer to as The Bardo.

I remember asking the Garchen Buddhist Institute in nearby Chino, if there was a prayer I could recite for my during his death passage, in that he'd be twelve hours away by car away from me, when he died. They sent thirty pages or more.

I remember how dad always offered me a glass of red wine when he was still in his 16th floor San Francisco apartment at The Sequoias. He was always so reassuring. I so often, felt like such a failure. You always do things your own way, that's the great thing about you," Dad said.

I recall dad teaching me how to water ski at Lake of the Woods in Oregon, where my mom's family had a cabin.

I recall how at age seven, he bought me my first Wilson Pro Staff tennis racket and taught me how to play.

In Oregon one summer, I remember hiking with dad on the Pacific Crest Trail in the Winema National Forest and picking huckleberries which weren't that great.

San Francisco
Nov 23, 2025

Michael McLaughlin

I recall Dad and I talking about climbing nearby Mt McLoughlin but he thought I was too young to try. We never tried it, but I often thought of it as "our mountain" though they spelled McLaughlin with an "o" and not an "a."

I remember in third grade on Bonsen Court, near our newly-built house, in Redwood City when dad taught me how to ride a bike. How fantastic it was when he took the training wheels off and I could keep my balance and ride.

I remember helping dad pour concrete for the tetherball court at the end of the lawn in our backyard.

I remember his friend, Dick Gurkey, who had a parrot. He tried to sell dad his bird. Mom thought Mr. Gurkey was a kook and wouldn't let him into the house again.

I remember dad and mom taking me to pick up Sugar, our first dog, a Sheltie/Collie mix. She was killed by a delivery truck which tried to back up out of our steep driveway. I loved that girl so much.

I remember dad bringing home two cats for us and letting me name them. I named the calico, Rachael, a name I'd plucked out a bible somewhere and the male tabby, Tiger.

I recall dad getting up and walking half a mile or so every day, before taking off for work. I'm certain that this is what accounts for him living so long. I recall that he was almost never sick.

I remember how put up a basketball backboard and hoop for me at the bottom of our driveway in Portola Valley. When I was older, he bought me season's tickets to Stanford Basketball games. I got to see Lew Alcindor (who later became Kareem Abdul Jabbar), when UCLA played Stanford and slaughtered them. I recall how Dad would drop me off and pick me up after every game, even though the games were sometimes on school nights.

I recall how, the weekend before Halloween, because I loved King Arthur, he sawed a shield out of plywood and painted it silver with a red star. I remember how dad cut up an old belt and attached pieces of it to the back so I'd have arm holds.

I remember how dad also taught me snow skiing which was a great love of his and encouraged me to ice skate but I was scared of falling and clung to the rail. I could have snow skied more but didn't want to go to Sugar Bowl or Donner Pass or Tahoe with the entourage of parents and family friends.

I recall that dad rarely discouraged me from trying anything. It didn't bother him at all, that I mostly disliked church and quit Boy Scouts after three months.

I remember at age 16 during the summer, playing tennis tournaments around California, traveling alone on Greyhound buses and staying with various country club host families. I remember getting ranked in tennis in Northern California. I recall dad often placating mom who never seemed to stop worrying about me.

How dad took me aside when I was in High School and was staying out until two or so with my girlfriend. He'd laugh: your mothers' worrying keeps me up all night. Once he said try to be home by at least one. He always left the one house door unlocked so I could slip in quietly. He advised me to take my shoes off before coming in as Mom would be listening.

I recall dad's parents in Sacramento, California. How dearly I loved both of them, particularly Grandma. He was mostly Irish, she mostly Italian. Grandma told dad he was the perfect mix.

I remember mom saying grandma was of peasant stock.

I remember mom saying, when they had me, that she expected I would be a girl and that she already had a name for me.

I remember dad saying, "Your mother gets that way."

I remember when my son, Tom took his first train to San Francisco, to visit his grandpa; Pop-pop" as all the grand kids called him. Tom fell asleep on the train and missed his Oakland stop. I recall how Dad followed the train for 15 miles to Richmond. He'd contacted the conductor. How he picked up my son after midnight. I remember how he laughed and told Tom that there was nothing better than napping on trains. He was 83 or 84 then.

I recall completely trusting dad and his driving. He was decisive, very smooth and never got lost. He was always able to find a parking space in San Francisco.

I remember how dad loved reading every book in the Patrick O'Brien series about the guy in the British Navy in, I guess, what was the 19th century. Dad once boasted that he'd read every good book in the Sacramento Library. For Christmas and for his birthday, I always tried to buy him books about the sea.

I recall, much later in life, how dad revealed his parents had shipped him off to relatives in Texas. How he had gotten into the Navy and into officer's school when he was seventeen.

I remember finding an old rubber in a shoebox of dad's stuff at my grandparents. How his dad, my grandpa, wouldn't give me dad's handgun from the Navy.

I remember grandma saying, "Here. Give that to me."

I recall how I moved in with my girlfriend, freshman year in college, how both my parents and hers cut us off. How dad would send me CARE packages of salami, bread and candy, without mom's knowledge. He never openly disapproved.

I remember dad giving me my first car, a '66 Ford Mustang. Mom had driven it for a few years, but it wasn't the best car for her. This was in 1969 or 1970. I really loved that car!

I remember dad teaching me how to tie my tie before going to church.

I remember hating ties, though now I can still do a Windsor knot, thanks to him.

I recall, that though he was a Sunday School teacher, who served for a few years as Senior Warden, he would rather be playing tennis on Sundays or listening to 49er games while he tended to projects in the yard for mom.

I remember dad putting me to bed when I was very young. How he always kissed me on the side of my face goodnight

I recall dad and I talking about Europe. He loved to paint, to play the recorder and to sing—he took singing lessons with the wife of a guy at church who owned a successful garbage company. I thought that funny and weird.

I remember dad saying that he wanted to go to Europe alone, one summer to paint, after he'd met mom at grad school at Stanford. How mom told him that if he went, she wouldn't wait for him. How he never went. He didn't comment, no affect. He just left it at that.

I remember, that when he became a successful businessman, he took mom on numerous vacations to Europe, once to China, and once Russia, almost every year. He wanted to go to Egypt but mom and the other couple were scared. He worked hard to fund everything mom would have ever wanted, and had enough money to put us all through college.

He put family before everything.

I remember how dad's dog, when he was a youngster, was named Queenie.

I recall our old Ford Fairlane station wagon, our family trips to Oregon for vacation, the cabin on Lake of the Woods, halfway between her hometown, Klamath Falls, Oregon and, Medford, to the west.

I remember how warm and secure sleeping in the station wagon was, listening to the engine (we often drove at night). The murmur of mom's and dad's voices. Knowing dad could get us through anything.

I remember dad saying to me, when I was in high school, that he worried about running out of saying things to “Your mother.” “Your mother is so much smarter than me. Always marry someone smarter than you,” he added. “You’ll never run out of things to talk about.”

I remember mom saying, “Your father always wanted to be a professor, but he didn’t think he could make enough money to take care of us the way we deserved.”

I recall when dad’s brother Ralph, Uncle Bud, was dying from prostate cancer. Uncle Bud’ worked at the Lawrence Lab at UC Berkeley for 40 years. Ho, once a week after work, on Fridays, dad would drive from Palo Alto to El Cerrito in the East Bay and read to him. Later he would visit his grave every month for a year or so with our Aunt Pat.

I remember dad taking an interest in my putting together a box trap, so that I could trap chipmunks and squirrels near the family cabin in Lake of the Woods. He let me take a chipmunk back to California but convinced me that I should release him at the border.

“He’ll have a better life here” dad said.

I remember how self-effacing and self-sacrificing dad was. But how quietly confident and certain he was about rising to any occasion. I remember how my sister told me many years later, that our grandma, my mother’s mother, said that her daughter didn’t deserve to marry someone as handsome as dad.

I remember dad letting me go off by myself in third grade to the fields around Woodside High School, how I’d get so self-absorbed, I’d disappear for hours. I loved to catch blue belly lizards, alligator lizards, gopher snakes and king snakes and collect the baseballs in the weeds behind the high school baseball field batting cage.

I remember dad going to a pet store with me, to buy my first pet, a guinea pig, named George. I would take George in his cage out to the front lawn and slide out the aluminum bottom pan, so he could graze on the grass, always remembering to put two bricks on top of the cage to weigh it down. I recall how the neighbor’s German Shepherd knocked George’s cage over and killed him. I remember crying with dad and telling him how I wanted to kill that dog. Dad was going to talk to the neighbors but mom didn’t want him saying anything.

I remember how mom had said George always made such a mess.

However, it was mom who bought me books on birds, on butterflies, other insects and on wildlife. It was mom who bought me my first telescope and my

first microscope and who always encouraged me on my science projects.

How dad and mom worked well in tandem. How their lives seemed to mesh together so well.

I had a small paper Dad Sign, I'd tape up to my desk lamp every Friday to remind me to call him. I never let up on dad about the-lemon cake-with-chocolate-frosting-and-root-beer-floats-for-his-100th-birthday bit.

I recalled that sometimes on our vacation trips to Oregon we'd stop at the A&W in Red Bluff and get root beer. He remembered that vividly.

Dying as he was at 99, seven weeks before his 100th birthday, he responded to me as he typically did. He always laughed, "You know where to find me. I won't be going anywhere."

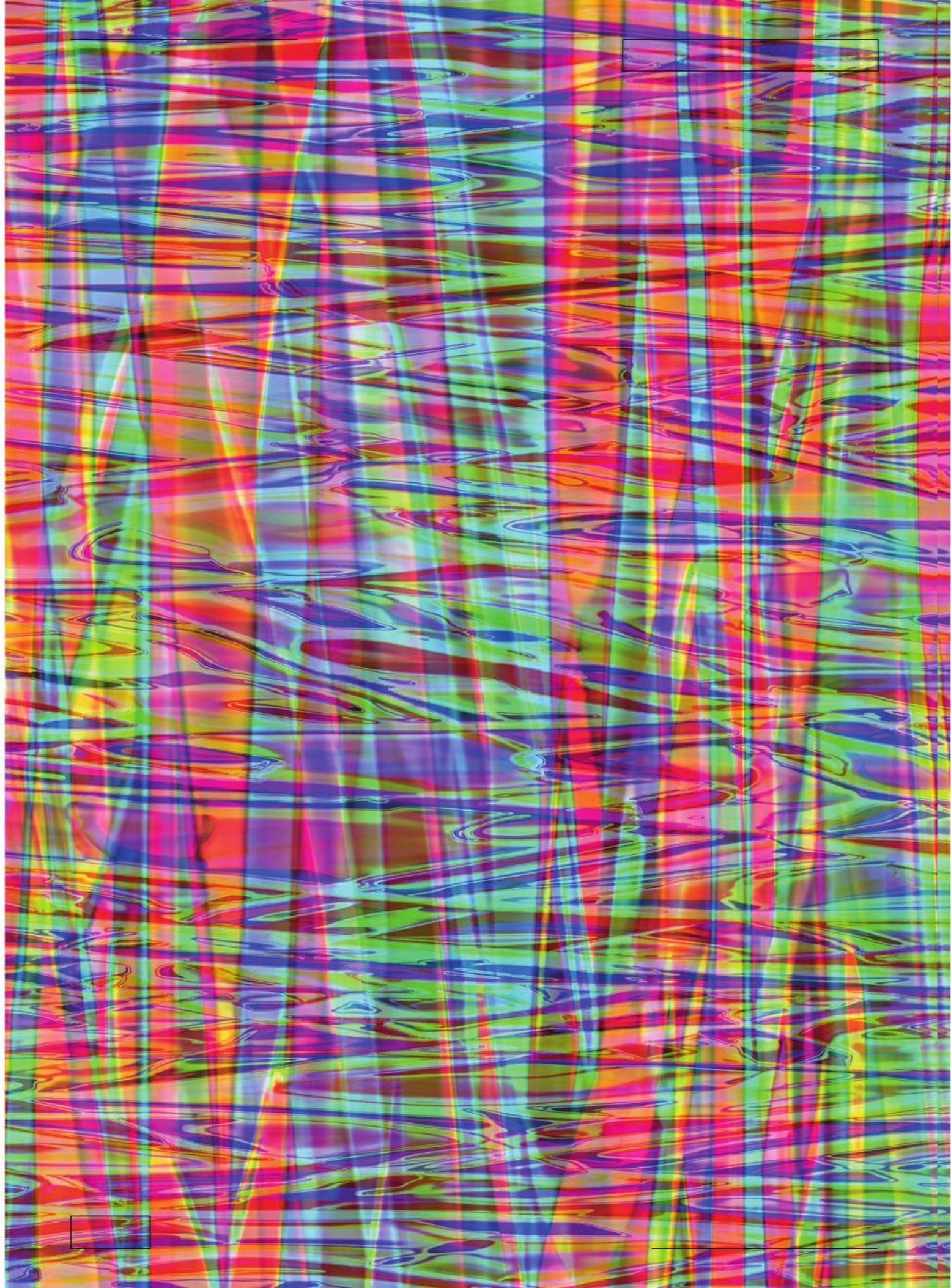
I still feel the urge to call dad every Friday at 4:30 Pacific Standard Time before the Sequoia's serves dinner on the Memory Recovery Unit where he lived after turning ninety six.

For the last six months, more often than not, Dad seemed to be in bed.

Suddenly I recall the Victorian euphemism, about aging, dying people, "Taking to the beds."

I'll never forget dad's quick loving smile.

"Call me any time you like," he always said.





STEVE MASON *Monterey If*

Laura Sapko Copper Dance, Wire and Clay Sculpture



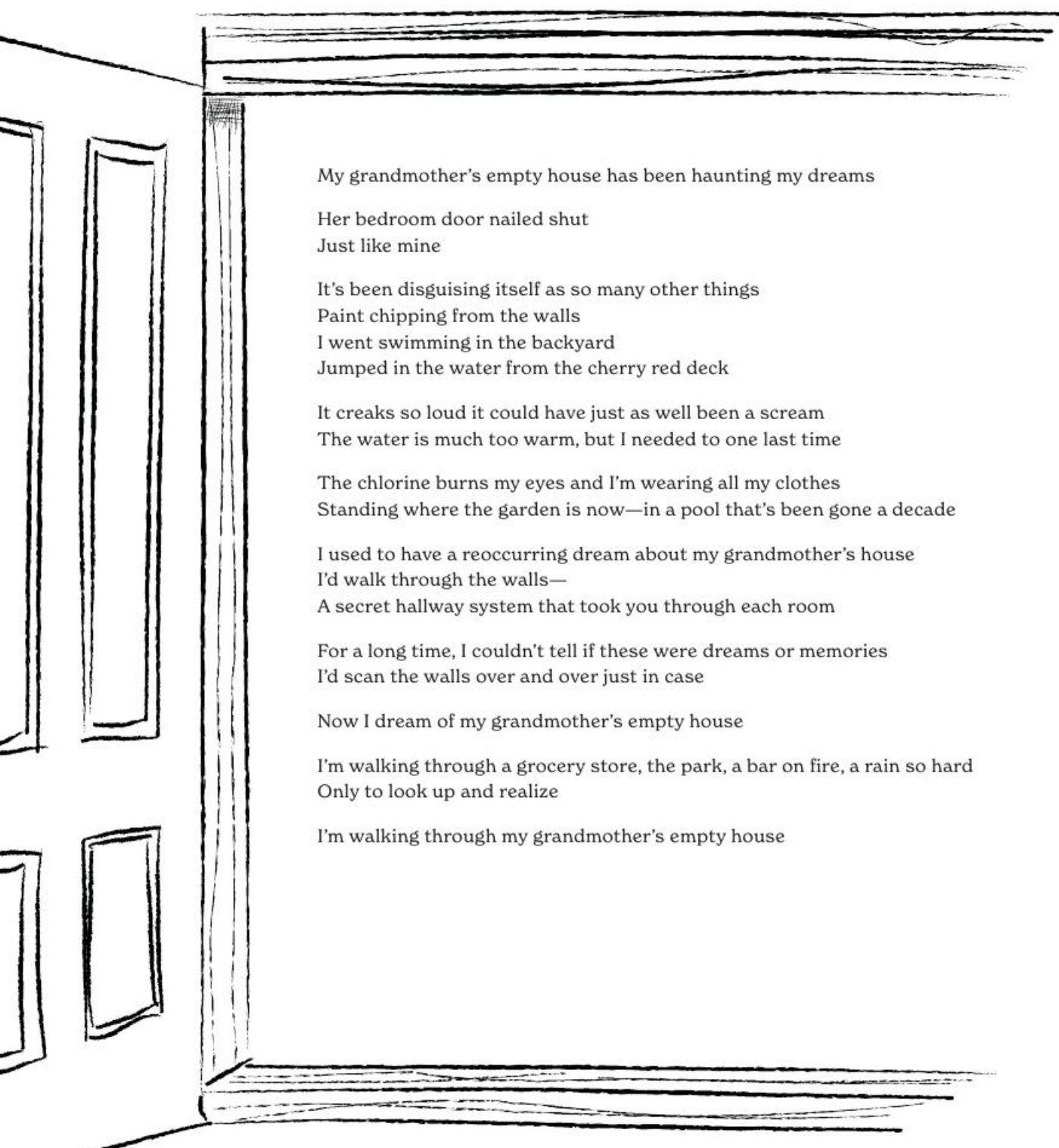
To Those Who Chose to Keep Their Shoes Dry

By Tinamarie Cox

there was beauty in my storms
but it was overshadowed by my angry crashing
thunder calling out the injustices by name
and brilliant flashes of lightning illuminating all our secrets
some only saw the mess my hurricane-like winds left
the toppled towers and uprooted trees
some thought I meant to drown them
with my fiercely pouring tears
some weren't ready to see
that every storm I unleashed was a necessary release
of growing pains
pressure building along my horizon
some wouldn't linger long enough
for the clouds to drain and reveal the sun unto a world refreshed
my colors once again bright and confident
the songs of the birds returned
there were those who couldn't wait for the seeds I planted
to germinate and grow
fed by my disagreeable tempests
the tears that came and went and will return again

My Grandmother's Empty House

Gypsy Jackson



My grandmother's empty house has been haunting my dreams

Her bedroom door nailed shut
Just like mine

It's been disguising itself as so many other things
Paint chipping from the walls
I went swimming in the backyard
Jumped in the water from the cherry red deck

It creaks so loud it could have just as well been a scream
The water is much too warm, but I needed to one last time

The chlorine burns my eyes and I'm wearing all my clothes
Standing where the garden is now—in a pool that's been gone a decade

I used to have a reoccurring dream about my grandmother's house
I'd walk through the walls—
A secret hallway system that took you through each room

For a long time, I couldn't tell if these were dreams or memories
I'd scan the walls over and over just in case

Now I dream of my grandmother's empty house

I'm walking through a grocery store, the park, a bar on fire, a rain so hard
Only to look up and realize

I'm walking through my grandmother's empty house



I'm folding laundry in a nostalgic scent
The one she always used

I'm picking out my favorite boxer shorts
Cherry red—the fabric weary thin and delicate from being washed a hundred times
I'm staring at her empty room

And I should have thrown them away by now,
They're entirely see through with a hole down the side

And she never gave up on anybody, not even when she should have
And she never believed in much of anything besides the people she loved

And she complained for years to anyone that would listen about leaking pipes and creaking floors

But all I saw was my grandmother's house

And I've bought new pairs but they're just not as soft

I love things too long

And so, I'm walking through my grandmother's empty house

FLOW STATE

By Willow

As I type this, my children and I are currently in one. That's not the technical term, so allow me to elucidate:

All I wanted before, during, and after my marriage was peace.

I remember sending my best friend a video after my divorce on the gram, it was a reel with this song in the background crooning "Nothing Hurts Anymore, and I feel kinda free... I'm still the girl I used to beeeeeee" or at least that's what I heard, and it slapped, so there it shall stay. All the while a girl frolicked in a field, arms outstretched to the sun, as it bathed her in all her glory. I wanted it so badly that I could almost smell it, but not taste it, yet.

After being married to the fuzz for 12 years, IVF, the foster system, opening my own business, adopting, divorcing, and losing my grandma, peace wasn't even a tangible thing. I was standing there like a Fraggle, struck by lightning. The burnout was real. I had felt peace a few times in my life, and I was determined to restore it and provide that for my boys.

So, enter the Flow State. Imagine you are cooking dinner, but genuinely enjoying it, with music that has your hips swaying, one child contentedly coloring, or the current fav, for my youngest, playing with kinetic sand. The kid gets a brain and body break, and the house isn't shaking on its foundation with how quickly he moves. The oldest is sprawled out on a velvet couch, toe tapping to the beat of a Stick Figure record playing in the living room. My weaner dog is somehow magically silent, a true testament to the flow state.

And we just *vibe*.

Usually, I'll plate dinner in baskets with biodegradable wax paper because I'm an efficiency person, and there are only so many hours in a day. We chat, sometimes by candlelight, because life deserves to be romanticized. Sometimes we go outside and jump on the trampoline in the rain, sometimes we have a fire in the chiminea, sometimes we watch TV, but I cannot do it for long. Being still is not in my design.

Sometimes these flow states last 15 minutes or an hour; this summer, we even experienced them for a few hours. Bliss. But alas, how did we get here?

I'm sitting on the couch of my second try at a personal therapist. I'm not holding out for a hero. I'm so dissociated from life right now, I don't think anyone will be able to reach me.

I'm like a crusty NAM vet lighting a cigarette at 30 knots in a rainstorm, striking the match on my stubbled, scarred face.

Or at least that's how I feel.

On the outside, I am who the world sees me as. A somewhat frazzled woman getting taken out by life. So, there I sat, staring at her, and I said, "I've already gone to therapy for my 'daddy wasn't there to take me to the fair' shit, so honestly, I don't know what the hell is wrong with me."

And this woman looked me dead in my ocular sprockets and said, "Ok, then tell me about your mother."

CANNON MOMENT.

Now I'm not going to sit here and trauma dump; the most challenging part of healing is seeing the people who hurt you, for the experience they themselves had in life. Not to say some people aren't just assholes. However, my overall study, and I've been studying people my whole life, has shown me that most people who cause harm to others were themselves harmed and just not strong enough to undergo their own healing.

It's soul-searing. I get it.

But that hellfire got me to my flow states. Worth it. It's tough growing up with a mom who sees you as competition in a game you never asked to play or wanted to be part of. There is a saying to the effect of, "No siblings are raised by the same parents." It's a profound concept to explore, but I had never felt more validated in my life than when I first heard it.

My childhood had beautiful moments—a lot of them, but my teenage years were brutal. Home was neither peaceful nor relaxing. I did a lot of my younger brother's raising while both parents worked. The house was stacked full of who knows what: mail, trash, dishes, and papers on top of toys on the couch.

To this day, I am anxious about my house getting too messy. My mind has to be clear for the home to be chaotic, and if my mind is overwhelmed, the home must be spotless. I desire to keep my mind in a peaceful place as much as possible. My kids

deserve to be kids, not to manage my emotions. I am determined to do things differently.

A lot of my self-worth and self-esteem issues got brought up in there. I felt so much shame for existing. I felt like love had to be earned, and if I did enough and kept giving more of myself, I would eventually receive it.

I also had this horrible reaction anytime the boys pulled on my clothes to get my attention. My throat would close, and my nervous system would go on high alert. It breaks me to say this, but it took all my strength not to react and push them away.

Newsflash: that's not a normal response to having a beautiful set of baby blues gazing up at you with a sloppy grin; a toddly wobbler of slobbery perfection staring up at you like you are his whole world.

I'd wanted this my entire life.

I used to feel a great deal of shame about this. I contemplated not sharing. My boys will one day read this, and I still don't know how I feel about it. However, if my story helps one person speak up, then to me, it's worth it.

In high school, at a party, I was very intoxicated. In high school, at that same party, I was raped.

HEAR ME WHEN I SHOUT THIS:

They are *two separate events*.

For decades, I blamed myself. I slut shamed myself and only told two people around the time it happened.

But here's the truth—you cannot run from it.

After, I left traditional high school and enrolled in an online program to graduate faster. Looking back, I was obviously running away from that town as quickly as I could, a town I was forced to return to between my sophomore and junior years after my parents' divorce.

Most importantly, it was a town an entire state away from my Paseo boys. The boys from next door had kept me grounded and protected. They soothed my soul with the balm of music and mended my spirit with laughter.

So yes, I was running away from something terrible and running towards what my 16-year-old little heart wanted most: safety and a scrappy Italian boy who had stuck by my side, being my anchor through all of it.

I fled the trauma I had endured at the hands of someone whose face I still can't remember.

I blocked it **ALL** out. I blocked it all out so well that it only resurfaced 20 years later and had manifested into a trauma response anytime my babies tugged on my clothes to get my attention.

There I sat in my therapist's office, throat on fire as I gagged out the reality of what had been done to me. Then I spent months in talk therapy and EMDR. I now understand that what was done to me was in no way my fault.

I didn't deserve it for being drunk or being at a party.

I was harmed in the worst way.

It happened, and it didn't break me.

I no longer have that response, and I haven't for years.

I am much more physically affectionate with my boys and my friends now.

Moments I've experienced **BECAUSE** I healed.

Healing looked like hugging my bestie. It was at the airport. She froze, as if I were a puff of vapor, and movement would vanish me. Then she cried. I was flummoxed until she told me I'd never done that before. We were only about 7, 8 years into this friendship at this point, mind you.

It also looks like snuggling on the couch in a puppy pile with the boys and learning to hug other people—I'm not joking I used to pat my clients on the back if they tried.

There's more, but the point I'm driving home is that I would've missed all that **LOVE** and connection had I not faced my shadows. And somehow in doing so, I also began to heal that mother wound. As I healed and learned to value myself, love myself, own who I was, and what I wanted, my circle got smaller and smaller.

I'd lose someone who was draining me and be gifted with a starry-eyed, beautiful soul who connects hers to mine through music and life. I'd release another tie I was fighting to hold onto and a golden ray of sunlight appeared. Another tie released, a tatted-up baddie who bought me my first pair of DOCs arrived. There are so many more; my tribe is truly elite, but the thing is, I never would have had them or all they do to support my flow state if I hadn't let go of the ties I was fighting so hard to hold on to.

My proverbial hands were bleeding raw and showing bone. Then something magical happened in the release. In letting go, they were also laid open.



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BRINGING STILLNESS TO LIFE

Ellen Greenblum-Siddons

I was on my therapist's couch being treated for an acute PTSD episode after accidentally backing over my new, 12-week-old Saint Bernard puppy, Ziggy. I had thought Ziggy was on the porch, but he was under my car. The emergency vet said I had shattered his pelvis. And one leg was so badly dislocated, it would have to be amputated. And the quality of the dog's life—"well, it's hard to know"—the veterinary doctor said. I chose to put him out of his misery, kissing his sweet, soft puppy body goodbye, and I cried rivers for days. Although the EMDR work was effective in terms of my functionality, some things are unforgettable, and that experience was one of them.

One of the thoughts I had right after losing the puppy was, *bad things of this scale do not happen to me*. And with my next breath, *this is so bad, nothing horrific could ever possibly happen like this again*—as if I had just checked off an item on a list of bad things that happen to people in their lifetime. I had now endured a self-inflicted traumatic event with consequences so extreme that I couldn't imagine karmically deserving or needing more lessons to increase my wisdom or value as a human being.

I revisited that thought one month later in a helicopter on the way to an orthopedic trauma unit in Phoenix. Six months ago, my husband, Rikk, accidentally ran me over in the driveway with his lifted Ford F250 truck. It's a beast of a vehicle with large tires. And I am a 110 pound, 67-year-old woman. But, surprisingly, I am okay.

As a child, I was very familiar with the sounds of NYC ambulance and fire engine sirens. Much of the time, I tuned it out. Some of the time, I paused to hope the person involved was going to be okay, and that they were not suffering. Yet, I never thought how that could be me, as a not-so-perfect driver, or grandma, mountain biker, trail runner, a plane traveler, and other kinds of things that statistically put me at a higher risk for getting wounded or killed.

In my family of origin, we never talked about the suffering that my parents individually endured. One, a holocaust survivor, the other a victim of the McCarthy communist blacklisting, both presenting PTSD, but no one openly acknowledged that. Plus, my mother was highly superstitious, and you just couldn't say certain things out loud in case the invisible forces that are would hear it. "God forbid, knock on wood, and don't put the Kinahora on that," (a Yiddish term intending to not attract misfortune by calling attention to good things), were frequent responses to varying manifestations of fear. We didn't talk about the difficult, heart-wrenching stuff of life or boast out loud about unexpected great things, just in case the rug would be pulled out from under our feet. My parents held their cards very close.

Early last April, I walked up our steep driveway to get the mail. My husband, Rikk, was reparking his truck. I wasn't paying attention to where I was in space, focused on sifting through the mail now in my hand. I also assumed Rikk was pulling forward instead

"...bad things of this scale do not happen to me."

***“I can’t
remember
the pain;
maybe that
was shock***

of backing up, so it wasn’t on my radar. By the time I realized what was happening, I tried to jump out of the way but slid on sand and snow-melt salt, landing me totally out of view and almost right under Rikk’s rear right tire. He couldn’t see me or hear me yelling over the engine of the truck as he backed up. I saw the enormous tire coming straight for me, and while time stood still, I heard myself say, “this isn’t going to feel good,” and moved my head out of the way. I heard a loud bang—the sound of my bones breaking. I remember thinking it was probably my hips and one of my legs. As soon as Rikk felt the bump, he stopped, got out of the truck, and heard me screaming.

Rikk told me later that I was screaming so much he had to put his hand over my mouth so he could talk to me. I don’t remember that happening, but I do remember thinking that if I screamed my head off, he would believe that I was really hurt and call 911. He called immediately. Listening to that call was torture.

Rikk hovered over me, holding up my head and positioning a pillow under my back that the neighbor brought over until help arrived. He maintained eye contact and told me that he loved me several times. I was scared like I never knew fear before.

***or the
selective
power of
memory to
erase what’s
unbear-
able.”***

The ambulances, fire trucks, and police arrived within minutes and lined the street for several blocks. As soon as I heard the sirens, I was relieved, feeling hopeful that I was going to be saved. I wasn’t afraid of death; I was afraid of what kind of an ordeal it might be to put my broken body back together. Or if my freakishly positioned leg would need to be amputated. My hips and pelvic region seemed crushed, and the sensation in my left leg felt wet, like it was floating in warm water.

Rikk called my daughter, who lives five minutes away. Amelia came running up the street on wobbly legs, knee-buckling-weak because her mom, whom she loves very much, was in a terrible accident. As she approached, I watched her flop over our roadside mailbox. She told me how she was trying to run to me on legs that she said “felt like they weighed a ton.” She said, “mom, I didn’t know if we were just going to hold hands for a few minutes while we said our good-byes.” She wondered what she was going to tell her kids, one 6 years old and one 13. She wondered how to tell Rachael, her twin, who lives in Tucson.

I can't remember the pain; maybe that was shock or the selective power of memory to erase what's unbearable. Lying there, I was able to freely converse with Amelia while Rikk managed all of the commotion and happenings. The EMTs and paramedics worked quickly and did everything they could to keep me comfortable. I didn't ask what was in the IV drugs they administered, and I didn't care. They worked well to relax me and stave off pain. Rikk asked out of curiosity, and they told him it was Fentanyl. Rikk's son died from that drug.

The ambulance transferred me to a helicopter at the local hospital. I was high enough to be fully fascinated with the short flight to Phoenix. I thought about my helicopter flight with Rikk through a canyon one summer in Tahiti.

Amelia agreed to drive the 90 miles to Phoenix to meet me at the orthopedic trauma hospital. Between us, we have had too many surgeries, so we have a sense of how hospital systems work and how to be helpful advocates. I needed my husband to stay home to run our household of dogs. We have two mature, mellow dogs. But days before, we had just taken in an 8-week-old puppy.

At the trauma center, I was lifted by a team of medical personnel onto a board and sent through various imaging devices. The staff's robotic handling of me from one machine to the next caused the first miserable pain I experienced. The pain of being handled instead of being helped.

I was admitted to a room once the diagnostics were over. A doctor came in

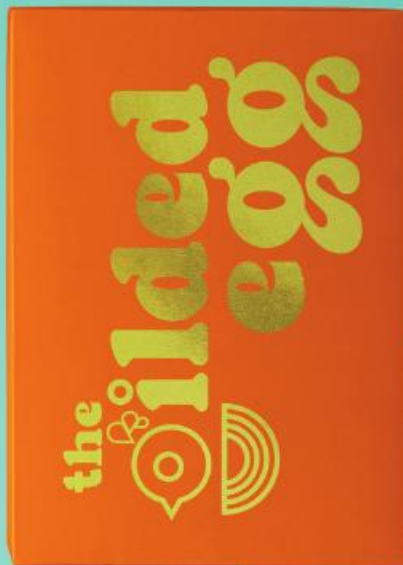
later that night and explained that I had shattered my pelvis, severely dislocated my left leg, fractured my lower back in three places, and I would need surgery to bolt the pieces of pelvic bones to a pelvic-shaped armature made from rods. And my dislocated leg would be returned to its socket once my pelvis was stabilized. I continued to live broken, in my tiny corner hospital room for 3 days before surgery. Due to the understaffing, there was a lineup of surgeries scheduled based on urgency.

I had arrived late in the afternoon on Tuesday, and by Friday afternoon, it was finally my turn to be put back together. I've had arthritic bunionectomies, both wrists for carpal tunnel repaired two separate times, both rotator cuffs sewn, two major surgeries on my neck, a total hysterectomy, an elbow repair, and now this. Days before this horrific accident, a very health-conscious friend and I talked about how my body and psyche have endured being cut open so many times out of necessity. I said out loud I had had enough and felt committed to living as safely as humanly possible from that point on, especially now old enough to receive Medicare and AARP benefits. I agreed to wear a helmet on my mountain bike, even on easy dirt roads, and supportive shoes on the trail. I was done with repairs, period.

We put the Kinahora on my bones because here I was, days after that conversation, being rolled into a temperature-controlled, cool operating room, surrendering my life to a team of skilled experts who would only know me as a broken body, like a car to be lifted and repaired.



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Then, with a mask over my nose, I counted backwards, making it to 7, and fell away from the world, sliding deep under the spell of anesthesia. Meanwhile, my fragmented pelvic bones were bolted to their armature, and my leg had been returned to its socket.

Amelia and my friend Leigh Ann were there to greet me in my room, which was comforting. According to them, as I was wheeled in, I was waving my hands high in the air as if I had just won a track meet. Nurses managed my pain meds, showing up every four hours as they had been. But now, it was finally in the context of healing, not just to keep me motionless. I was still very uncomfortable, even with narcotics, but also very relieved that the pile of bones inside of me could slowly knit back together over the course of time. The surgeon said a full year for full recovery. It was a finite prognosis with a promise of full recovery.

In the week that I spent there, I got to know several of the full-time workers and developed bonds over our commonalities. One gentleman who came in daily to take the trash and straighten up just happened to walk in one morning during a sudden and unexpected emotional meltdown I was having. His presence was soft and unobtrusive. He always walked lightly in the room instead of stomping around like some of the others who knew they didn't need to camouflage their stress. While blowing my nose and sobbing, I blurted out the obvious. "I'm freaking the hell out."

"Now, now," he said. "Check this out." He opened the shades so that light dripped into the slices of window-blinds to fill the space around me. Then he proceeded to tell me that he thanks God every day for being alive. He shared that his brother tragically died at 32. But what his brother gave him was

gratitude for each day he is living. Seeing the sun-filled room with him at sunrise transformed the moment. He talked about how we all think we're immune to accidents and tragedies until they happen. He continued talking about how we have control over how we choose to keep moving forward. He asked me what kind of day I would like to have. Challenged me to manifest my wishes. And he shut the door to continue his rounds.

My Friday evening surgery was supposed to be followed by another week in my room for care before being transferred to a physical therapy facility closer to home. That didn't happen. The next morning after surgery, a physician's assistant came to my room with a walker and suggested I try it out. It seemed crazy to me to expect that the body that had not moved for almost a week would grab onto a walker. I was weak, exhausted from all of the bodily trauma, and it felt like the biggest physical challenge ever set before this prideful, typically very strong and active, 67-year-old. It took everything I had, both physically and mentally, but with no more than a pause, I grabbed on, hopped down the hall on my right foot, and passed the test with many onlookers cheering.

Shortly after, I was asked if I felt comfortable leaving the next morning due to the overcrowding of the hospital and because I had proven I could use a walker. There wasn't a spot open for me at the rehab facility either. So, I was released to go back to my home to heal, and a nurse and physical therapist would do home visits for the next three weeks. It was an outcome I did not anticipate, but I was overjoyed to return to a home I love, full of dogs and my husband. Meanwhile, Amelia welcomed Mookie, the new puppy, into her home until I was able to take care of him.

Now that I was home, Rikk's days began early and ended late. Rikk owns a busy plumbing company. Added to his usual routine of early morning paperwork and loading up his van with water heaters and garbage disposals, began a new regimen. He cleaned up the utility table next to my couch for the day, restocking it so that I had everything I needed before he disappeared into his life away from me. He picked up the house, threw in laundry, fed and watered the dogs, and mimicked what I typically do in the morning. It worried him to leave me, but I encouraged him to go. Even if it meant deciding I didn't need what I couldn't reach. I knew my independence freaked him out, but we were both better off having some semblance of normal separateness in our banged-up lives. Plus, I had a huge ring of support around me of people to call, including Amelia, if I needed something, got stuck somehow, or fell.

The evening routine was similar, including providing dinner and helping me get onto the shower-bench. He helped me pull on fresh sweats and a clean tee, refreshed my water bottles for the night, tidied the house from visitor activity during the day, fed the dogs, and tended to any situations requiring attention. I said very little throughout his scurrying and tried not to watch and avoided thinking *that's not how I do it*. I tried hard to protect him from my erratic emotional world that ricocheted deeply from grieving the fit, active body that was taken away from me to spilling over with gratitude and awe at the miracle of my aliveness. I worked hard to be loving while keeping my feelings close, like my

mother would have, so as not to make his life any harder. After all, he had to live with himself, the guy behind the wheel of that truck.

Rikk adores me. We've been married for 7 years. His chivalrous self wants nothing more than to please, provide for, and protect me. He often whispers, "You know baby, I will never let anything happen to you." He still says that even after this accident. At first, I had to reconcile inner chatter.

Wait a minute, something bad did happen to me. But this was an accident. An accident is an accident. The truth is, we will never let anything bad happen to one another—as best as we possibly can.

Within a few days of returning home from the hospital, the news of having been run over by a truck spread like a forest wildfire among my close circle of family. And I let my larger community know through Facebook. What I didn't expect was the overwhelming responses, love, and care that this town would offer. Everything that I needed and wanted was delivered to me every day for almost a month while living on the living room couch where I could best maneuver and support my awkward, motionless legs. For weeks, I could count on someone showing up to help. I was gifted with delicious home-cooked meals, housecleaning, treats, lattes, puzzle books, magazines, healing music, ice cream, cannabis, and so many flowers. My daughter Rachael who lives in Tuscon sent me inspirational texts, poems, and music every morning by nine, which helped me set an intention for the day. Friends and acquaintances that used to see me at the Saturday

Farmers Market delivered my favorite bagels and organic goodies. In some cases, people that I hadn't seen for a few or several years showed up, and I found our friendships endured lapses in time without awkwardness or diminished quality.

Thirty-three years ago, I was a kindergarten teacher at a local private school. One of the parents from that time showed up with an exotic, uncooked but prepared meal. He had never been in my home before, but comfortably moved about it as if he were a frequent visitor. When he arrived, he put dinner in the oven so that my friends and I would have a fresh meal prepared and ready to devour. My friends even washed and styled my hair. When called to the table, I hobbled with my walker into the kitchen, albeit awkward in a chair, looking darn pretty for a truly special night in.

I have grown deep roots here in Prescott. And what I came to know literally in my bones was how strong my roots are and how blessed I am to have such relationships in this community. Young children, now grown adults that were in my kindergarten classrooms, families of those children, faculty, students and staff I have worked with in my thirty years as a college professor, and comrades I have hiked with on the local trails, expanded my heart in ways I could not have predicted.

Something as simple as having help to prop pillows under my legs a certain way or a bar of dark chocolate being delivered was significant. These gestures were the medicines that helped me to shift from what could have been a very dark time to a time of deep reflection. The timing of this accident was ironic since I had just begun to explore my newly earned unstructured time post-retirement, four months prior. Under normal circumstances, I am independent to a fault. This was not a normal time, and letting go of I-can-do-it-all behaviors was challenging, but it was also empowering.

***“I have
grown
deep roots
here in
Prescott.”***

I was in the process of seeking balance with this newness because my first impulse was to dive too quickly into too many projects that I was self-imposing unrealistically high standards upon. As if autocorrect slammed into my intentions, my new ambitious endeavors were limited to crafting an efficient route from the couch to the bathroom using my walker. Ini-

tially, that was it for accomplishments. I was so vulnerable yet surprisingly able to melt into this new level of humility. For the first three weeks, nights were long and miserable due to the intense pain that erupted in my legs despite trying to manage it with medicine, ice packs, heat packs, healing music, and Netflix. I would shift my body this way and that way to find the most tolerable position, which would go on and on until morning. And I had spontaneous bouts of crying that would catch me off guard every few days without a particular theme attached.

Each new morning provided the possibility that the upcoming nights would start becoming easier, which they did by the very end of week three. My husband and the doctor suggested Ibuprofen religiously. Every 4–6 hours seemed to do more than anything else. Three weeks had passed, and my body was loosening up a bit, sinking more naturally into the puffy couch underneath me, and no longer resisting my wounds but ready to work with them. I began using the walker for much more than the essential trips to the bathroom and

I had plenty of time to think about the subjective nature of time. From moment to moment, my experience of time felt like a series of pauses with different subtle qualities. The significant events that occurred used to be the things that happened in between the stacked busyness of how I lived before the accident. Now, I could spend hours feeling the wind blowing through the hairs on my body, watching the constant activity on the bird feeders, listening to the neighbor kids playing on their trampoline, eating a guilt-free, expensive piece of chocolate, writing circuitous journal entries in scattered notebooks, and spending time with the dogs.

All these sensory-rich activities used to be what I would fit around the other seemingly necessary clutter of my life. Now they were my life, in my liminal space of healing, where a quiet but persistent current ran through me, holding me tight as the calendar ticked off days and turned pages toward summer.

By the eighth week, I had discovered ways to use the walker to support navigating stairs of varying widths, heights, and depths as well as the topography around our house and garden. Friends

“...from the stillness of undesignated time,

regularly made my way to the kitchen for meals. I got myself outside to sit by the front door for a more immersive dose of sunshine. Into the next month, the trajectory just continued to leap forward for more engagement in life beyond the couch.

had done some planting, and Rikk had been faithfully watering twice a day, but I was getting antsy to be in the dirt myself. My increasing self-reliance and energy inspired me to challenge myself further, and I supported my husband in taking time for himself.

I may have been physically broken and arduously healing, but I was also concerned about Rikk's overall sense of well-being. He was in this with me with his own invisible deep wounds. Rikk deserved time to decompress from the daily grind, the sight of his wife and her walker, and the counter full of prescriptions and supplements.

I was able to safely manage with Rikk away, but the shape of those days was complex. Bouncing around on my right foot, dragging my left foot behind me, with both hands firmly on the walker, leaning on anything that could support me, and reaching for things I hadn't yet grasped. To feed three dogs required more patience on the part of the dogs than me, having to wait the length of time it took to fill each bowl and place them into three separate rooms to avoid food fights. I had the dogs wait outside while I filled each bowl and placed it on the floor. Having to care for dogs, especially a new puppy, meant I was up and down the front steps of our home multiple times a day.

From the outside looking in, it seemed ironic that with my limitations, I was

As June came and went, I was back in the garden, and the plans I had for summer were manifesting. The vegetables, flowers, and bumble bees played well together, while I was back at strategizing to eliminate pesky rodents and birds that undermined garden efforts. Time still passed on its own terms, but I began to wonder what I would do when I could walk and drive again.

There was so much about life that I didn't miss; I didn't miss working, but then again, I was newly retired. I didn't miss the various volunteer commitments I had participated in. I didn't miss the back and forth of running to the store for something and then running to the store the next day for what I forgot. I began to understand the dire importance of rebuilding a life on a new structure of priorities that included the stillness that had become such a source of contentment. Time with the people I love, with the dogs I love, in my art studio, and time without any assigned activities at all.

Before the accident, I consulted a mystic Tarot card reader regarding my retirement, and she emphasized that more than anything, I needed to be still. From that place of stillness, I would find endeavors

I will discover new paths into my future."

doing so much, but it was an integral aspect of my healing. Any familiar task executed, no matter how long it took, was an accomplishment that energized my psyche. Plus, the increase in activity improved a circulation problem I had in my legs and helped me build back some strength.

that I embark upon, deepening my life's creative work, and perhaps be my most fulfilling work yet. Her words spiraled back to me numerous times. And as much as having been run over by a large truck challenged my faith and long-held assumptions about safety and security, I also realized the value of being versus doing.

My surgeon said that I would be able to walk and drive on July 12th, three months after my surgery. As that date came into view, I had more questions than answers. Would it hurt? Would I be stiff? Would I fall? Would I make it across the house or yard? What time on July 12th should I try?

Since that was the weekend that Rikk was away, my loyal dogs would be the first witnesses. The dogs knew me better than anyone throughout my recovery, so it was fitting that they would be the cheerleading committee when it came to walking for the first time.

I went to sleep early on the 11th, which was nothing new. I'd been sleeping a lot through this process, but this time it was like a child going to bed early to rush the arrival of a birthday or a trip to Disneyland. Getting settled with my blankets and pile of pillows, I was giddy with playful energy in my bones, awaiting morning. I woke early and did not hesitate. I pushed the walker out of the way. I used my left hand to push myself up until I was standing, then slowly slid my left foot out onto the floor. My foot was almost totally numb, and my whole left leg had patches of numbness. I was not in pain, but my balance was very off, and I had to be very careful not to fall. As awkward and heavy as my legs felt to move, I challenged myself to practice walking as much as I could stand it.

It only took a couple of days to feel competent enough to drive and run errands. For the most part, once walking, I could move toward a schedule of something close to the normalcy of a life, one that included the mundane tasks of going

to the grocery store, post office, and maintaining our home.

As I write this, it's been six months since I was injured, and I have six more months to go until I am fully healed. Although from the outside I look put back together, recovering is an underscore to everything else that goes on. My pain levels are minimal to non-existent, but there are movement restrictions. I am tired by 8 and sleep no less than 10 hours, no matter how inactive I am. And I take exercise classes to build strength and to mitigate the sporadic depression.

My experience as someone who shifted from an active lifestyle to someone with very limited activity was arduous. Exercise has always been an effective mood stabilizer for me, and it was a challenge to go without. The classes I attend now are humbling, focusing on form, balance, and building back up sensibly to continue my healing toward full recovery.

I still attend occasional EMDR sessions for trauma. It has not been a linear process; sometimes I need to desensitize myself from the sight of large trucks, sometimes I still need help with the guilt from harming Ziggy. Rikk sold the truck. Both him and I have become extremely careful about ensuring the dogs are in the house when there are moving vehicles in the driveway, and I do not look at the mail if there are moving vehicles anywhere nearby.

I am also very careful about what I flipantly say out loud. I don't joke about how I could get hit by a bus or run over by a truck tomorrow. I don't know if there is a Kinahora, and I am not about

to test that premise. I have learned that my communities extend beyond the day-to-day run-ins at the grocery store or local events. And I'll keep my ears primed for those in need of a hand to continue the large circle of kindness that wrapped itself around me in my time of need.

As far as the Tarot reader and retirement go, from the stillness of undesignated time, I will discover new paths into my future. For now, that still centers healing, but overall, I am really okay. In some ways, I feel more tethered now to all of the beings and places I love, hav-

ing almost lost my precious life. I live with gratitude and heartily celebrate everything from grandchildren losing teeth, to Rikk's continued success in his business, and to the taste of pumpkin pie from the pumpkins that grew in the garden. I have returned to spending quality time in my studio without setting rigid goals and am keeping the journal entries flowing. As I continue down this newly trodden path, I sense my most meaningful work in whatever forms they take, is ahead of me. I may step into that clumsily with a subtle limp, but for that—I don't need to count down.



White Knuckled

Jalen Warner

I rip grass from the earth
 as if something within me will finally loosen with it
 The blades snap wet against my calloused palms
 cold, fragile things breaking because *I need something to break*

The meadow is dying beneath me
 color drained, soil thinning
 like it has been waiting for someone like me
 to finish what the world has already started

The world does not hold the same consideration for me
 it presses instead
 a weight I can feel in my ribs
 in the breath that catches before it ever reaches my lungs

The wind moves through me
 as though I am not even here.
 Its chill settles into my bones
 and refuses to leave.

My hands tremble,

Fingernails biting in the flesh of my palms
 white-knuckled, raw,

like they are clinging to the last strand
 of something I can't name

Anunciación

Diego Perez



FAIRWEATHER
SOCIAL CLUB

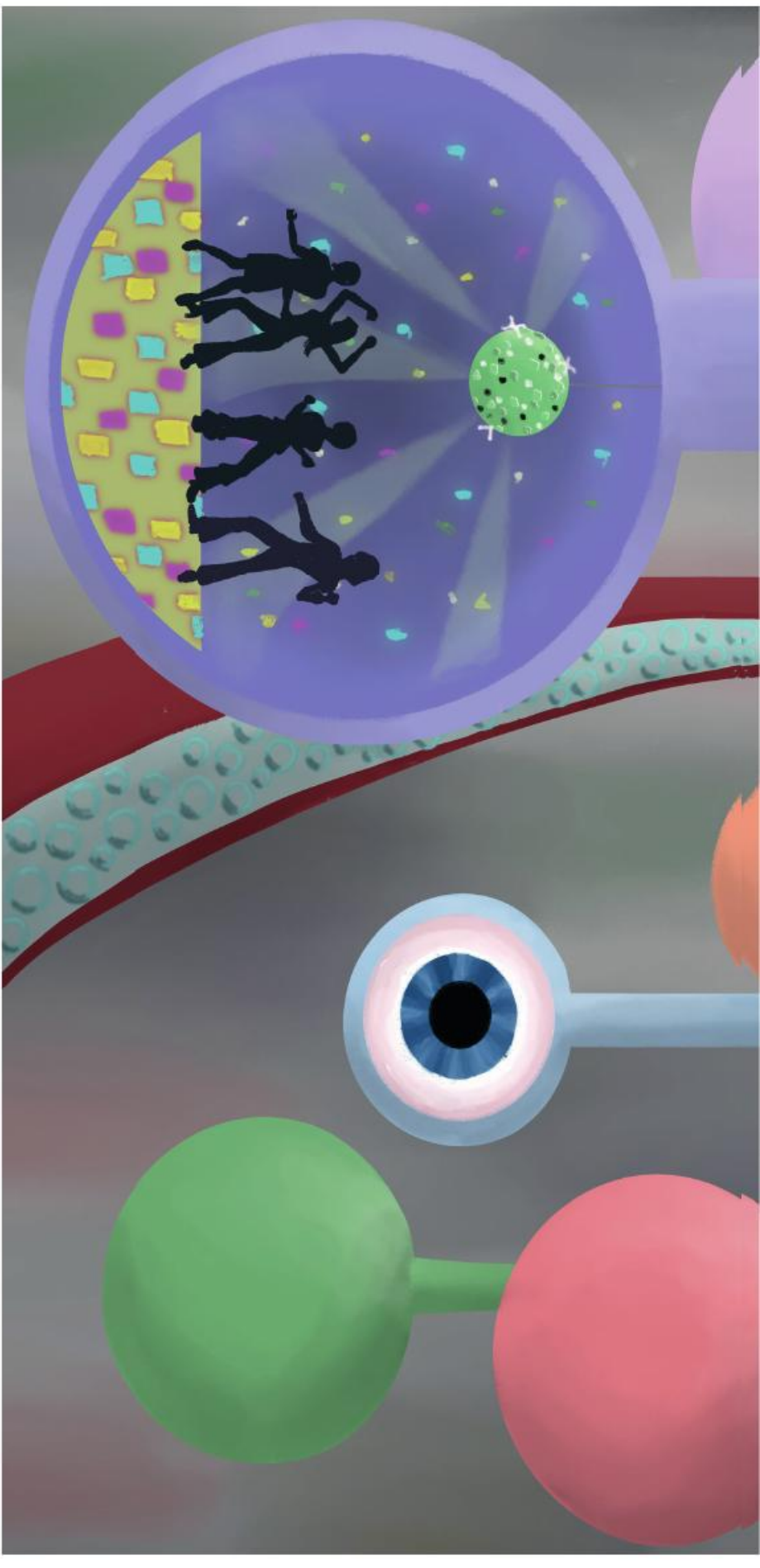
Where
GREAT DRINKS
and
GOOD VIBES
Meet



Hispana

Fanny Zapata

- 1** A Hispanic woman is built from stories.
- 2** Built from stories that everyone talked about at the dinner table.
- 3** Learns what love and family are early.
- 4** Comfort means something is cooking in ma's kitchen.
- 5** Busy, busy... Always jumping from task to task.
- 6** Still has room to take care of everyone else.
- 7** Doesn't brag about her knowledge. Because she never had time to show it off.
- 8** A Hispanic woman holds her roots close.
- 9** Because they remind her where she came from.
- 10** A Hispanic woman isn't perfect, but she's real.



Chelsea Castaño



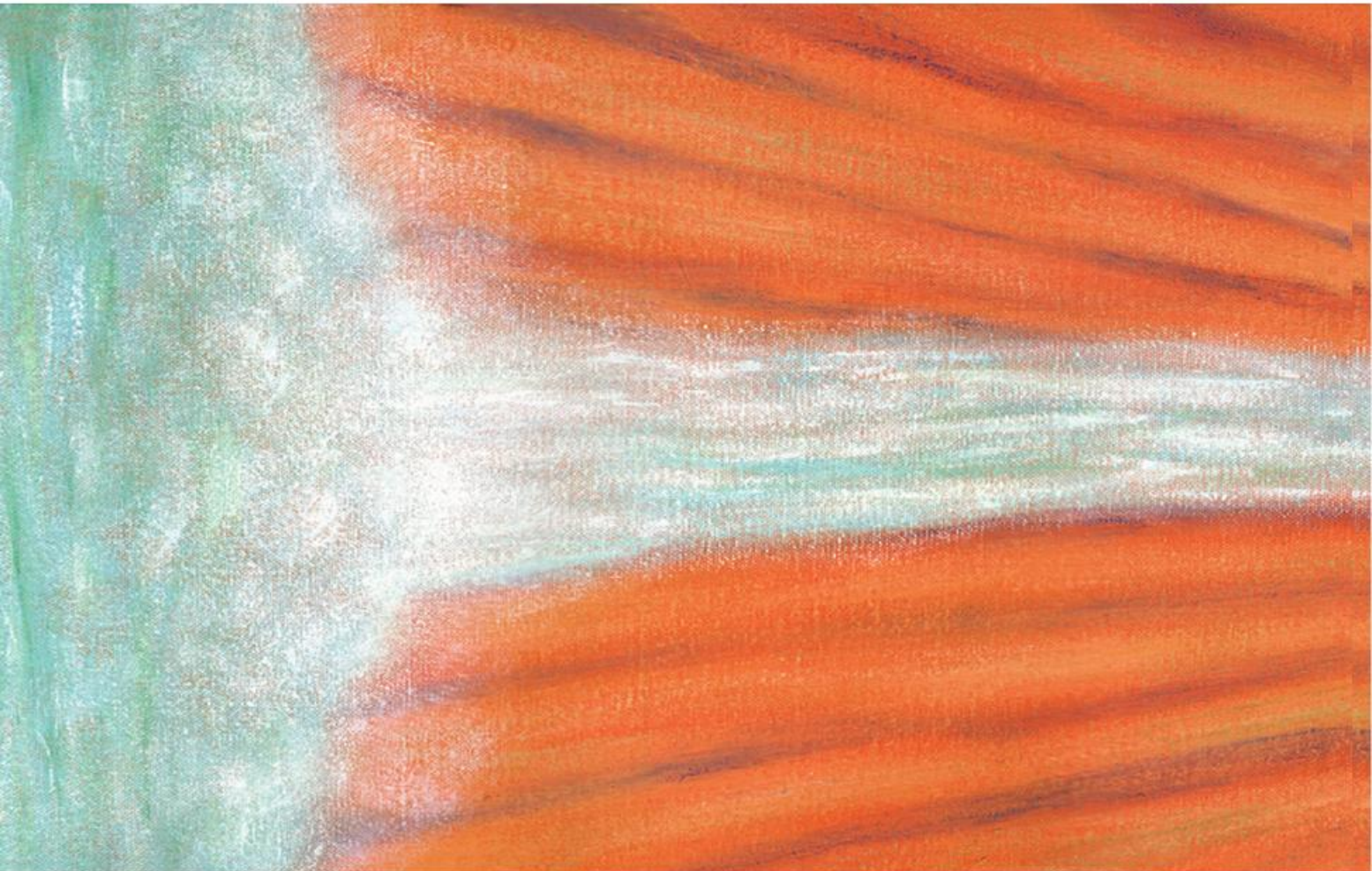
Out of nowhere
ground rumbled
shook wildly

Rocks split
cracked open
chasms spewed
gushing water

Land broke away
from itself
catapulted skyward

So many of
our ancestors
lost
in this upheaval

Upheaval



Today we stand
high amongst the clouds
towering over all
children of their children

Alert
watching
waiting
for the next
earthly blow

Our ancestors
call to us
through thundering torrents
of cascading falls

Remember the upheaval

Lest we become
complacent

Falling Waters

Shelley Lowell



SLEEP NO MORE

Sleep No More is performed three times a night, through dance, without words.

I'm afraid we have been here
before, to Manderley, in a past life,

before I could pronounce your name.
I ask you to marry me in Brooklyn

after two months and two absinthes.
Elderflower numbs this morning when

I told you to run, that I have fatal habits,
that these things which are broken

could one day be yours.
We are separated when we arrive

at the McKittrick Hotel: King of Clubs,
Queen of Hearts. Without you, I find

The bathtub where Lady Macbeth
washes blood off her beloved, running

her fingers through crimson hair.
When she suddenly runs three steps

along a wall, I follow down four flights
to the basement where her witches are waiting.

In unison the actors trade their clothes
for goat heads and ram horns. Folding

their bodies together, they dance
violent like animals seeking warmth,

penises and breasts careening
under strobe lights. As I watch,

I wonder if I wish you were with me.
On the subway from Hudson Yards

you tell me how you alone were shoved
out of the elevator onto the sixth floor.

A woman in a nurse costume
wheeled you down a pitch-black hall,

struck a match in the dark,
whispered prophecies in your ear.

How, while looking up at the Brooklyn
skyline through holes in the ceiling,

she brushed her lips on your forehead,
and said *Don't come back here.*

LARA HAMIDI-ISMERT





CELLULAR MEMORY | SHELLEY LOWELL | OIL/WAX ON CANVAS

the Raven cafe



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STRETCHING SOUTH

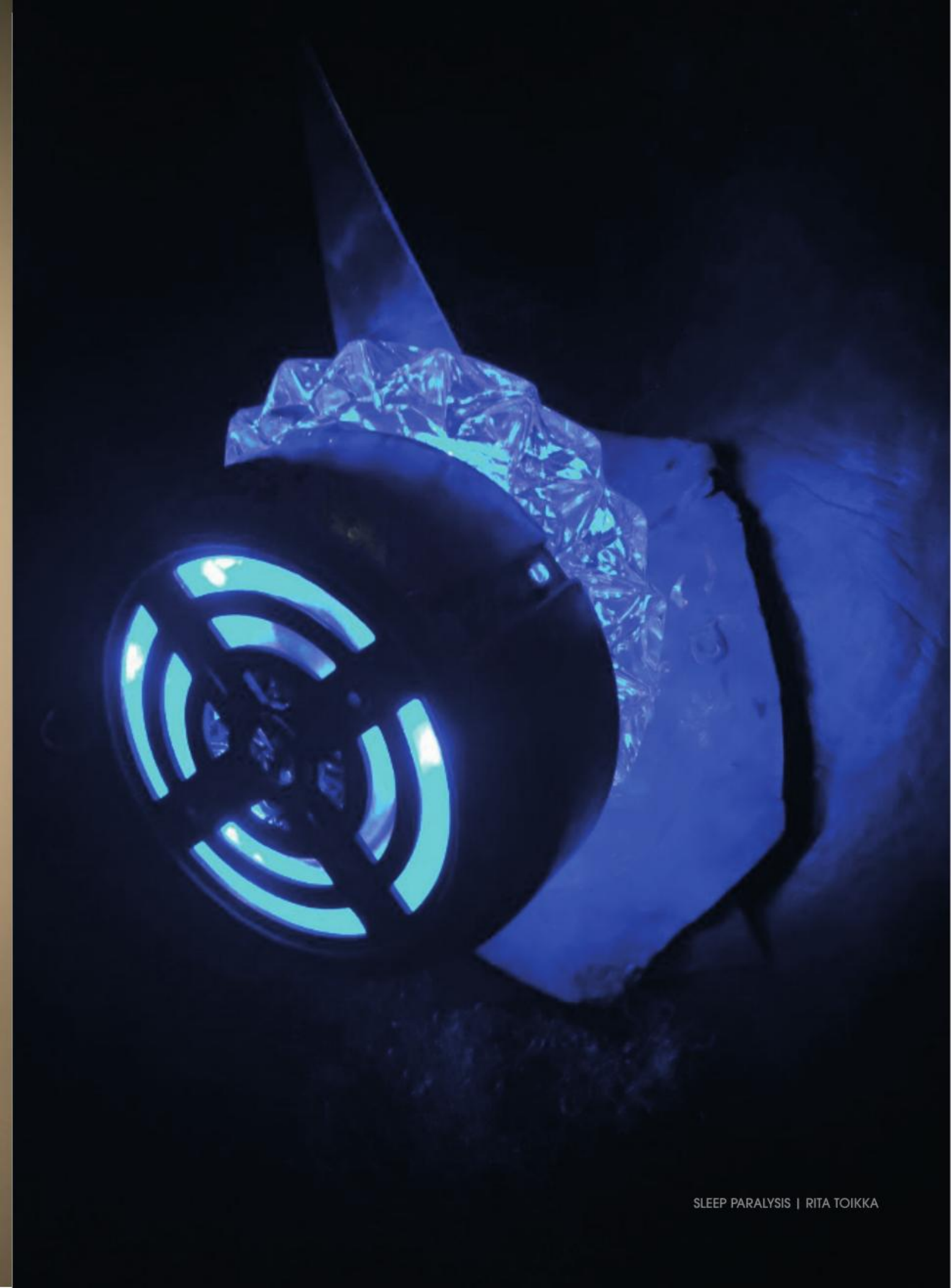
We lost track.
Losing count
We were sixteen.
After dark anywhere
Such light
Mud patch Star nights. I don't
Remember. Fridays often. Mostly Saturdays
Orange Julius when you got off.
Just to see your mouth!
Was making love where I picked you up. 747s
bumbling into SFO below Canada College, the roundabout

We'd make out. And watch. Deer, cricket
Racoon Seesaw Scintillation. Sparkling San Francisco Bay
Lights stretching Streaking south! All news all the time KCBS 740
Why would you ever wear a watch?
Then, there was the ledge outside Ms. Pink's
counseling office, high school corridors
Glad they had their wax paper shutters All pulled up
Somehow, we both had a free seventh.
Could we kiss another hundred times
Before the bell went off?

MICHAEL MCLAUGHLIN



DREAMZ | RITA TOIKKA | WOOD, STEEL, COPPER







MEXICAN SPOTTED OWL | THATCHER BOHRMAN

Christmas Day-El Toro, C a

Dee Cohen

California

El Toro, California
It's pretty quiet today,
one skateboarder clomping over
the cement of the basketball court,
a few guys sitting on a bench.
Louie drives by in the golf cart,
little ponytail pulled back,
red tinsel taped to the windshield.
This morning a Vega
broke down in front of the clubhouse,
and now it's pushed in a parking space
at an odd angle.
Our little trailer park,
looking like a '60s postcard
of the good life:
Palm trees flattened on a blue sky,
taken from enough of a distance
that you can't see the rust stains
running down drainpipes,
mailboxes battered and bent,
or the cars, sun-striped and heavy,
rolled to the back of carports.
No, there's only a pleasant nothingness,
a weighted stillness,
and a glimpse of oranges
strung like ornaments
on the last of our remaining trees.



RAVEN BOER | VANITAS STILL LIFE WITH DUTCH BANTAM AND COYOTE SKULL

ICARUS

Icarus is a blue supergiant that was discovered in 2018 and is the most distant individual star ever detected.

LARA HAMIDI-ISMERT

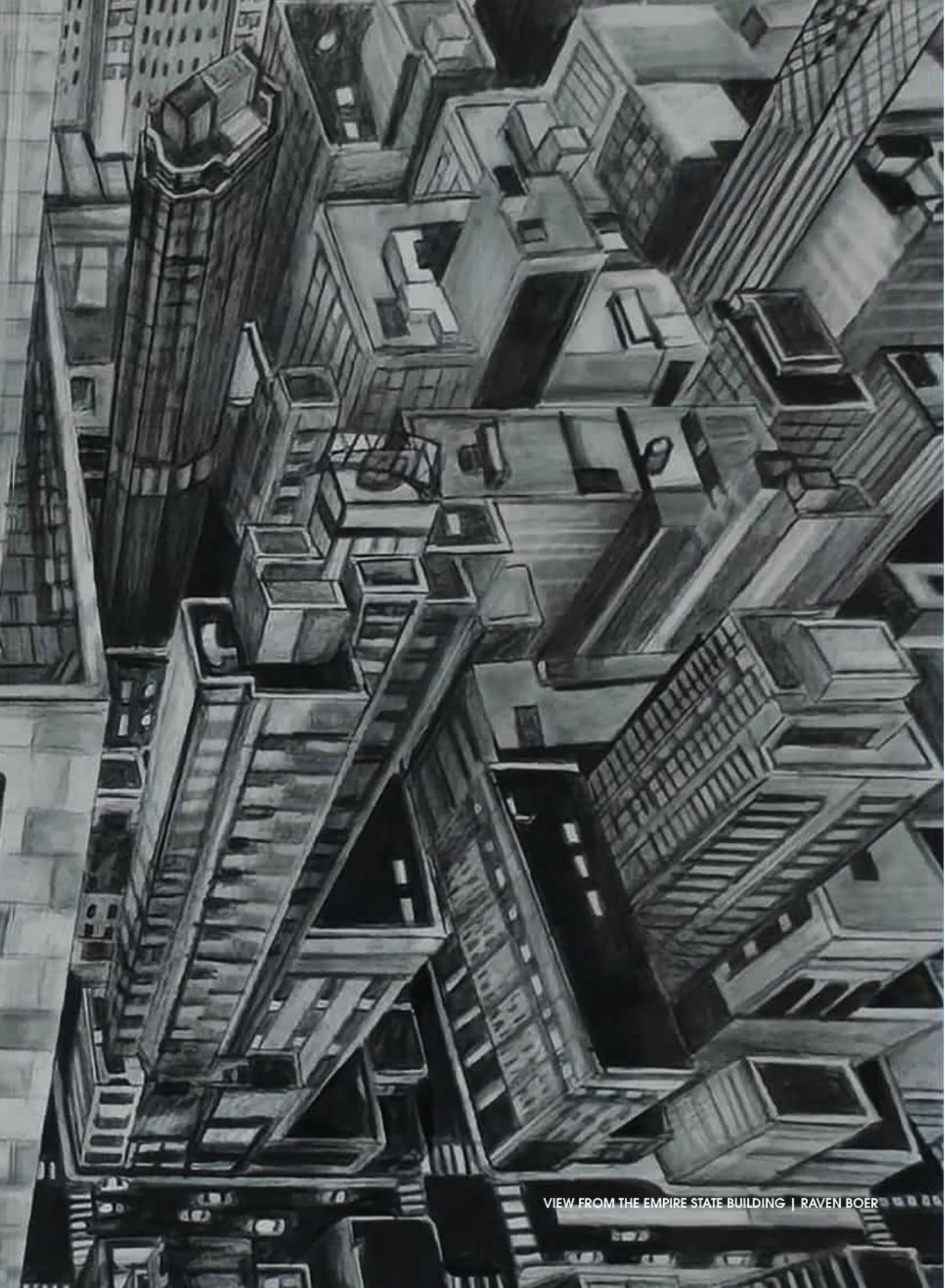
I wake my husband, my cats, shrieking because
in the faint light that falls from the hallway, moon
leaking through the cracked blinds, I see human-sized
shadows cast in our room. I see the ceiling coming down
to crush us. I cry out what is it what is it at the faceless
thing that too often visits my bedside.

These night terrors come as star-deaths.

When the light from Icarus appears to suddenly go out,

astronomers will mourn for light that was lost
nine billion years ago. It's the delayed death that comes
in flinches at my lover's touch, decades after a babysitter,
a brother, shoved his fingers between my girlish thighs.
It's the immediate instinct to duck after a glass slips
from my own hand and smashes on the ground.
Every time, my husband wraps me tightly while I tell him
my heart's stopping, to take me somewhere or else
soon I'll be gone. And each time, he reminds me
we must shut all the doors, close all the blinds.





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