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Questions for Robert Bonazzi
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Poetry & Arts Places in San Antonio

“A poem … begins as a lump in the throat, a sense of wrong, a homesickness, a lovesickness. … It finds the thought and the thought finds the words.”

Robert Frost (1874–1963)

BOTANICAL GARDEN—33 acres of formal gardens, pools, fountains, and natural areas; Native Texas Trail, Lucille Halsell Conservatory. www.sabot.org

CARVER COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTER—Traces its historic roots back some 85 years. Facility is both a gallery for contemporary art exhibits and a theater for performing artists. www.theclarver.org

GUADALUPE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER—Dedicated to the development, preservation, and promotion of Mexican-American arts. www.guadalupeculturalarts.org

INSTITUTE OF TEXAN CULTURES—The Institute is concerned with the people who produced Texas events—people who created the robust kaleidoscope that is Texas today. www.texan cultures.com

JAZZ AT THE LANDING—NPR’s acclaimed radio show, Riverwalk Jazz, is produced in San Antonio at The Landing, one of the country’s oldest jazz clubs. www.riverwalkjazz.org

LA VILLITA—This restored Mexican village captures charm of the past amid narrow streets and authentic adobe houses with arts and crafts shops. www.lavillita.com

MAJESTIC THEATER—Opened in 1929; restored in 1989 as a performing arts center, the Majestic is said to be one of the finest “atmospheric” theaters ever built. www.themajestic.com/theatre.htm

McNAY ART MUSEUM—The mission of the McNay Art Museum is to maintain an art museum on the premises of the estate of Mrs. McNay for the advancement and enjoyment of modern and early art, for the educational advantage of the public. www.McNayArt.org

MEXICAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE—Exhibits of contemporary Mexican artists. portal.sre.gob.mx/culturamexsaing/


SAN ANTONIO OPERA—The opera currently performs at the Lila Cockrell Theater. Future performances Don Giovanni and The Barber of Seville. www.saopera.com

SAN PEDRO PLAYHOUSE—Call the Box Office for tickets and more information: (210) 733-7258, www.sanpedroplayhouse.com

SAN ANTONIO SYMPHONY—The mission of the San Antonio Symphony is to inspire, educate, and entertain the people of, and visitors to, San Antonio and South Texas through the performance of live music. www.sasympphony.org

SOUTHWEST SCHOOL OF ART—Housed in city’s only remaining example of French Provincial architecture. Craft Center established alternative art school at site in 1971. www.swschool.org


Poetry Venues
Please see the Poetry Events section on page 44 and at: www.voicesdelaluna.com

Letter from the Editors
Mo H Saidi and James Brandenburg

With this issue, Voices de la Luna: A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine is entering its fourth year as a forum for poetry and arts. Our magazine was set up when a precursor, The Poet, folded after publishing four issues in two years. With a new non-profit corporation and a new name—Brandenburg suggested the title, Saidi the subtitle—we achieved our goal of publishing the magazine in four formats: high quality hardcopy, eMagazine, PDF, and website. Like major literary journals—e.g., The New Yorker—past issues are available in the archive section of our website.

Voices de la Luna is actively promoting poetry and arts in San Antonio by supporting other literary and arts organizations such as Gemini Ink, the Macondo Foundation, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, and Blue Star Contemporary Arts Center, and by helping spread the word about local art galleries and poetry readings.

Voices de la Luna and the UTSA English Department have embarked upon a serious collaboration. Our editors have participated in teaching English literature at UTSA, San Antonio College, and Saint Mary’s University, as well as in local high schools. We are conducting free monthly or bi-weekly poetry workshops at local bookstores.

Our 3-year track record is paying off: Voices de la Luna is attracting interest among university-based literates both locally and nationally. We are receiving submissions from Chautauqua Institution writers and national best-selling authors such as David Bliss, Naomi Shihab Nye, Sandra Cisneros, Jim Daniels, and Clara Silverstein.

Although Voices de la Luna has not yet secured a major grant or corporate sponsor, the magazine continues to thrive, thanks to generous donations from literary supporters, members of the boards of directors and advisors, and funding of limited projects by the City of San Antonio’s Office of Cultural Affairs. The success of the magazine and its continued improvement of quality have been attained by the hard work of staff, most of them unpaid volunteers, and the generous support of loyal authors who submit their work without financial expectations. We are grateful to be alive in these challenging times.

We are a 501(c)(3) tax exempt corporation and really need your financial support. We believe your investment in this unique element of our city’s literature and arts is a worthwhile tax-deductible expenditure, which will significantly improve the business climate and quality of life for all inhabitants of San Antonio and South Texas. Remember: annual subscriptions to Voices hardcopy issues are also tax exempt. Please send your check to:

Voices de la Luna
A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine
14 Morning Green
San Antonio, Texas 78257

We encourage our readers to attend poetry venues at local bookstores and to visit art exhibitions at San Antonio museums and galleries, because we believe poetry heals minds, and arts advance the quality of life.
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Our Sponsors

To view videos of music & poetry and the spoken word, please visit www.voicesdelaluna.com
Featured Poem

Gruene, Texas
at the River*

Marian Haddad

I came here because
I know this place—because
I have been here before,
and I know where the river
ends—I sit by the part
where it foams
white above rocks—three
stumps reach far down into this
river—and there, across
from me, one seems to be
growing right out of cliff,
right out of rock. It leans—
graceful sway of trunk—it has
somehow found its leaning
comfortable, a sideways growing—
if something stays bent
long enough—it assumes its place
gracefully—learns to live

*from Wildflower. Stone. Pecan Grove Press, 2011

*Marrian Haddad, MFA, is a Pushcart-nominated poet, writer, manuscript and publishing consultant, private writing mentor, visiting writer, and creative writing workshop instructor.

Her chapbook Saturn Falling Down was published at the request of Texas Public Radio in connection with their Hands-On Poetry workshops (2003). Her full-length collection Somewhere between Mexico and a River Called Home (Pecan Grove Press, 2004) is approaching its fifth printing. Her new collection, exploring connection to place and the geography of home, was published by Pecan Grove Press in 2011 and is entitled Wildflower. Stone. The poem “Gruene, Texas: at the River” is taken from this collection.

Her poems, essays, reviews, and articles have been published in various literary journals and anthologies in the United States, Belgium, and in several Middle Eastern countries.

*A National Endowment for the Humanities recipient, she engaged in graduate work in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame and studied The Prose Poem at Emerson College. She holds a BA in creative writing from the University of Texas at El Paso and an MFA from San Diego State University, where she was associate editor of Poetry International, vol. 3.

She has taught at Our Lady of the Lake University, Northwest Vista College, and St. Mary’s University. Her works in progress include a collection of essays about growing up Arab American in a Mexican American border town. She writes a blog for the San Antonio Express-News.

A Poet Deals with Breast Cancer

Redefining Beauty

Karla K. Morton*

Texas Poet Laureate, Karla K. Morton was diagnosed with an aggressive breast tumor in May 2008 during a routine mammogram. She describes cancer as if it were a drunken gunfighter on her front porch, “loose matches spilling out of its ugly fists.” The Fort Worth, Texas, native daughter has always been in love with words, but when she looked for books to help her deal with her diagnosis, nothing suited her. She created her own therapy by writing her way through treatment. Redefining Beauty is the result—a collection of poetry and photos that take readers through the emotional stages of her year of fighting breast cancer.

She loses breast tissue and her waist-length blonde hair. Yet she writes, “I will not hide,” dismisses her custom wig and big sheltering hat—instead wearing her cancer out loud. Morton takes chemo, “skulls and crossbones dripped and seeped into my veins,” and feels toasted by months of radiation. “Unseen fire burns everything in its path” describes how radiation affected her, inside and out. Yet she is comforted by her cat and reminded by her saved-from-the-pound dog that “miracles happen.” Married to Stan Morton (a healthcare CEO), with whom she has a daughter and a son, she often addresses him as her Beloved or talks about her relationships with friends and family. There is one poem about her great-grandmother, whose life and mettle inspire

*Karla K. Morton, the 2010 Texas Poet Laureate, is a celebrated poet, author, and storyteller. She is the author of Wee Cowrin’ Timorous Beastie (a North Texas Book Festival Awards Finalist), Redefining Beauty, Stirring Goldfish, Becoming Superman, and several upcoming books, including Names We’ve Never Known (Texas Review Press), and a collection of her works as part of the Poet Laureate series by Texas Christian University Press. Morton’s poetry, which spans many subjects and forms, has also been published in a variety of literary journals, including descant, (Betsy Colquitt Award Winner), Amarillo Bay, Concho River Review, Southwestern American Literature, Oak Bend Review, Wichita Falls Literary and Art Review, Right Hand Pointing, Langdon Review of the Arts in Texas, Texas Poetry Calendar; Illya’s Honey, Austin International Poetry Anthology, New Texas, Denton Writer’s League Anthology, and ARDENT. An avid photographer, Morton has had several showings of her black and white artwork across the state, and loves to mix poetry and the arts. She also serves as a board member of the Greater Denton Arts Council. She has been featured on “Good Morning Texas,” NPR, and the “Art of Living Gallery” (national show on Veria TV). Morton holds a journalism degree from Texas A&M University and currently resides in Denton, Texas, with her husband and two children. For more information, visit www.kkmorton.com or www.facebook.com/karlakmorton, and www.voicesdelaluna.com.
Robert Bonazzi was born in New York City in 1942 but grew up in Houston. He graduated in 1965 with a BA in English from the University of Houston, where he taught English while completing course work for an MA degree. He did not write a thesis because he had decided against an academic career. He moved to Brooklyn to teach high school English and write. His first book of poems, *Living the Borrowed Life*, was published by New Rivers Press in 1972. During this same period, he was editor of Latitudes Press (1966-2000), publishing anthologies of fiction that included Russell Banks, Stephen Dixon, Alvin Greenberg, Marvin Cohen, and Charles Baxter, who later published with mainstream publishers. After a year in Mexico City, he rejoined the Texas literary scene. His fifth book of poems, *Maestro of Solitude* (Wings Press), was a nominee for the poetry award from the Texas Institute of Letters in 2008. His acclaimed biography, *Man in the Mirror* (Orbis, 1997), sold 80,000 copies and is now an e-book from Wings. As executor for the estate of John Howard Griffin, he has edited a dozen books by the late author—for Wings, Orbis, and publishers in Germany, France, Japan, South Korea, and the UK. He has lived in San Antonio since 2003, and he writes a column, “Poetic Diversity,” for the *San Antonio Express-News*.

Mo H Saidi: You were born in New York City, but most of your literary activities have occurred after you moved to Texas. Is there something in Texas heat that inspires you to write?

Robert Bonazzi: I moved away from Texas several times but always returned. It had nothing to do with the state’s politics or weather, but only with the friendship of writers who live here.

My research revealed that most of the information about you is connected with the classic nonfiction book, *Black Like Me*, by John Howard Griffin. You even wrote a book about it. Why were you so impressed by this tale, and what moved you so deeply?

I interviewed John Howard Griffin in 1966, and we became friends. While impressed with *Black Like Me*, I was equally taken with his novels, personal essays, photography, and musicology. He became a mentor who opened a deeper reality. Before he died in 1980, he asked that I put his papers in order. In 1983 I began that two-year project and married his widow, Elizabeth, with whom I worked on Griffin’s unpublished books—until her death in 2000, when I shut down Latitudes Press after 35 years.

When *Black Like Me* was published, it raised controversy. Do you think changing the color of his skin was an appropriate method of discovering racism in America?

What is most significant about *Black Like Me* is not that Griffin changed skin color but that he had the courage to be truthful about his unexpected racism. In 1959, when he made this journey, the white majority would not heed the warnings of black leaders and thinkers. After the book appeared in 1961, he lectured on racism across Europe and the U.S. and, at the request of friends (Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, and activist Dick Gregory), he spoke predominantly to white audiences. Since I believe that racism is a disease, any means of trying to cure it is “appropriate.”

Who are your favorite Texas poets?

Of the Texas poets I have published and reviewed, the late Vassar Miller and 88-year-old Robert Burlingame have produced the finest poetry. Among current poets I would count Paul Christensen, Jim LaVilla-Havelin, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Bryce Milligan.

What caused you to take a 20-year sabbatical from active writing?

I never ceased writing from 1977 to 1997 but stopped “submitting” for publication. *Maestro of Solitude* (*Wings* 2007) and *The Scribbling Cure* (due this fall from Pecan Grove) constitute a selected volume of poems, prose poems, and poetics from 1970 to 2010. I still do not send work to magazines or publishers unless invited.

There’s a dizzying revolution in publishing. What’s your forecast about actual books and magazines versus electronic media? Do you use the current devices or write a blog or have a page on Facebook?

I work on a computer, but will not use other electronic devices or seek attention on the global spider web. The escalation of media is reminiscent of the underground papers and independent publishers of the 60s and 70s—except it is now global and not merely a Western phenomenon. Nonetheless, both “revolutions” represent a definitive mediocrity in publishing. While great titles are now e-books, I would read them only in book form. I suspect real books will be produced for several decades and that book collectors will be considered literary snobs. I accept this rude change because I relish sparing trees even as I lament the disappearing aesthetics of bookmaking.

Do you think poetry has a future in America? The last American Nobel laureate in literature was Toni Morrison in 1993; why has no American won since then?

Poetry will survive as long as our planet survives, but I make no prediction about its quality. Toni Morrison is a marvelous writer because I relish sparing trees even as I lament the disappearing aesthetics of bookmaking.

Are Texas writers read more than authors from Boston or New York City?

Texas authors are likely less read than authors from either coast, but the influence of establishment publishers is in the process of being neutralized by the world-wide proliferation of independent imprints and availability of e-books.

Thank You.
In the late spring of 1966, I first met Griffin at his studio located in the countryside west of Mansfield, Texas, the town where he had been lynchéd in effigy six years earlier. I requested an interview for *Latitudes*, an independent literary journal I had started while doing graduate study at the University of Houston. Griffin had responded by return mail, inviting co-editor Dan Robertson and me to visit.

Since we were involved in civil rights initiatives at our respective universities, we had read *Black Like Me*; but neither had read Griffin’s novels, nor were we aware of his talents as photographer and musician. When we entered the cottage, we noticed a kitchen, a darkroom, and a grand piano. But what astonished us were the magnificent black and white portraits that lined the bare white stucco walls—dozens of lively faces, most of them strangers to our eyes—peered back at us. We recognized the images of Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk whose autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, we had read as Catholic teenagers. Griffin had recently been appointed by Abbot Dom James of the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky (Thomas Merton’s home) to make a series of official portraits of the monk.

Then almost 46, Griffin looked younger, resembling a farmer rather than a writer, standing over six feet and weighing a robust 200 pounds. But he did not speak like a farmer or a native Texan, measuring his elegant language in a quiet tenor voice with a slight hint of a French accent. He wore dark sunglasses to protect his eyes from the glaring light of afternoon—eyes that had remained sensitive since recovering his sight, in January of 1957, after a decade of blindness. By evening, he would remove the glasses, revealing warm hazel eyes. Initially, somewhat remote behind dark lenses, he moved about the room identifying “the faces of intelligence,” as he called them.

“Merton is one of the most vital human beings I have ever known,” he began in a rush, “and one of the most gifted, since he works splendidly in almost any medium: writing, painting, photography. During my last visit with him, it was like being in a room where lightning constantly struck. I realized as never before that this monk who long ago gave himself to monastic vows, giving up all worldly ambition and what we call freedom, is the most completely free and unfettered person I have ever encountered.” Without intending it, Griffin had described himself, for that this monk who long ago gave himself to monastic vows, giving up all worldly ambition and what we call freedom, is the most completely free and unfettered person I have ever encountered.

He turned next to the portraits of Jacques Maritain, the French philosopher, whom he called his mentor. “Maritain is probably the greatest mind of our times. He wrote this magnificent *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*;” he said, displaying the deluxe French edition like a holy grail, “which you must read, a tremendous book.” We did not know Maritain’s work and asked if it was in English translation. “Yes, I’ll give you a paperback,” he promised, but that was forgotten until a later visit.

As he continued along the walls, pointing out the few portraits we recognized—pianists Artur Rubinstein and Lili Kraus, blues legend Josh White, and retired boxing champion Archie Moore—I saw that Griffin wore thick white socks covered by brown knitted house slippers, giving the impression of bulging feet on which he moved ever more cautiously.

Finally, after the tour had reduced him to hobbling, he disappeared into the restroom and returned rolling in a wheelchair. We learned that he had surgery on his feet. He lighted the first of many cigarettes, leaned back, indicating that he was ready to be interviewed. We began by asking about the influence of France, since he had first traveled there as a teenager in search of a classical education.

“Let me play you one of my greatest influences,” he declared, switching on a tape recorder on the glass top table. A Mozart piano concerto leaped out and penetrated the sudden silencing of our voices. We listened and wondered aloud: “You mean Mozart?”

“Of course, Mozart, the supreme genius; but I mean the pianist.”

It was the French virtuoso Robert Casadesus, he informed us, playing with the Cleveland Orchestra under the baton of George Szell. “Robert Casadesus, his wife Gaby, their entire musical family, really, were my greatest influence from France. It was Robert and the legendary teacher Nadia Boulanger who convinced me that my future as an aspiring composer—this when I was 26 and losing the last of my sight—should not be pursued. They felt that my true gifts would be revealed only after I had lost all sight and returned to America.”

“They discouraged you from music?” I ventured.

He laughed heartily. “No, no, merely from composing, for I had learned all the rules but could breathe no life into the compositions.” Had they not done so, he explained, he might have not traveled on to the Abbey of Solesmes, where he studied Gregorian Chant with the Benedictine monk-musicologists who encouraged his fascination for medieval music. It was there he had lost the last of his eyesight and where his ears were opened to the eternal nature of the chants. Due to that experience, he was able to set his first novel, *The Devil Rides Outside*, in a French monastery and the surrounding village modeled after Solesmes.

“But they couldn’t have known any of this,” I countered.

“No one could have, least of all myself. But the point is that these masters, Robert and Nadia, cared enough to be truthful, knowing that their example of dedication and integrity would lead me along my own path.”

That first electrifying visit lasted eight hours. But our visit fatigued even the youthful interviewers, and by ten that night we had enough sense to take our leave.

There would be many other visits after the Griffins had moved twenty miles north to Fort Worth later that year. The Griffins were incredibly generous hosts, feeding all visitors and sending them home with gifts—inscribed books, matted prints, music tapes. He treated everyone as an equal and his humility was authentic. He had his heroes but never posed as one. In fact, he was very uncomfortable with fame.

Our conversations and the 178 letters he wrote during our 15 year friendship touched on personal news but the primary focus remained on the creative process. Toward my early writing efforts, he gave unstinting encouragement, offering criticism that was invariably accurate and useful.

Even though he was my elder by 22 years and was at the height of his creative powers and public recognition, never did he pull rank or become paternalistic. He always said that nothing is lost on the writer, or should not be, and he was right.

Griffin taught us not to obsess on the misery of the moment but to focus on the spiritual horizon beyond mere ego. It was the sort of mentoring he accomplished without fanfare or pride. He chose friendship and that sense of artistic brotherhood he embodied—never the mentor-acolyte relationship.

Nonetheless he was a mentor to many of us, because we choose our mentors whether or not they choose us.
A painter from the age of 10, Carole Minton has had a passion that does not stop. At the age of 10, she won a three-year scholarship to the renowned John Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis, Indiana. She has continued to take lessons to improve her work. Carole started working with oil paint on canvas when she attended the Art Institute, primarily working with still lifes and landscapes. She then moved into watercolors. Today she works with acrylic paint on canvas and is studying the abstract world of painting. Abstract art is not cosmic or ethereal. It is a learning process in balance, form, shape, and color. This is true of all areas that allow her to move back and forth between realism, impressionism, and the abstract world. She moves between watercolors and acrylics even though they differ in many respects.

Carole lives in San Antonio, Texas, with Ralph, her husband of 40 years. They have 3 children and 6 grandchildren.

To Mother
Mother’s Day 2010
Darby Riley*

All six of your children we woke to your working kitchen pans banging cream of wheat steaming the local radio blaring a Chevrolet ad.

Now, still, you launder altar linens for St. Luke’s file papers at the law office knit a bright blanket for another great grandchild.

You organize pictures boil eggs for the homeless bake a buttermilk coffeecake make dinner for a party.

Work is one way you play—cheerfully getting it done with care and skill—as everything you do honors the blessing of being alive.

*for Betty Riley, 1922-2011
The UTSA Creative Writing Reading Series was inaugurated in 1983 when Carolyn Forché read on a Friday afternoon to a room of 100 people. Over the years, the series has hosted such writers as Mary Oliver, Ernest Gaines, Tobias Wolff, Denise Levertov, Alberto Ríos, Pat Mora, Diane Wakoski, Edward Hirsch, and many other poets and fiction writers who not only give public readings but also visit classes and meet with students about their writing. We’ve had as many as twelve readings by visiting writers in a year, but have settled on three or four annually as an ideal number.

October 21, 2011—7:30 p.m.
University Room (BB 2.06.04)

Ruth Lilly Professor of Poetry at Indiana University, Catherine Bowman is the author of 1-800-Hot-Ribs (Gibbs-Smith, 1993; reissued Carnegie Mellon, 2010), Rock Farm (Gibbs-Smith, 1996), Notarikon (Four Way Books, 2006), and The Plath Cabinet (Four Way Books, 2009). Her writing has been awarded the Peregrine Smith Poetry Prize, the Kate Tufts Discovery Award, a Dobie Paisano Fellowship, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, and four Yaddo fellowships. Her poems have appeared in Best American Poetry, as well as numerous anthologies and journals. She is editor of Word of Mouth: Poems Featured on NPR’s All Things Considered. Catherine Bowman reads at UTSA’s Main Campus, Business Building, University Room (BB 2.06.04).

Lucy, Ardi, and the Rest of Our Family Tree
James R. Adair
Department of Undergraduate Studies, UTSA

Fossil human ancestors first came to the public’s attention in 1857, when an announcement was made that bones found the previous year in Germany’s Neander Valley belonged to an ancient human significantly different from modern people. Thirty years later, a Dutch medical student, Eugène Dubois, traveled to the Dutch East Indies specifically to search for evidence of early humans, and in 1891 he found remains that he called Pithecanthropus erectus, now reclassified as Homo erectus. Despite the fact that many early finds in the field of paleoanthropology were discovered in Europe and Asia, many scientists believed that humans originated in Africa, as Darwin had suggested in his book The Descent of Man. Darwin’s prediction was verified in 1924 when Raymond Dart unearthed a skull of the most primitive hominin yet discovered, Australopithecus africanus, in South Africa. Subsequent major discoveries in Africa included Australopithecus afarensis (Lucy) and, more recently, Ardipithecus ramidus (Ardi).

The human family tree now contains more than twenty distinct species in addition to Homo sapiens, ranging from the 7-million year old Sahelanthropus tchadensis to Homo floresiensis, which flourished as recently as 13,000 years ago, long after modern humans had come to Australia and about the time other modern humans made their way to the Americas. The last several years have seen an explosion of books on the subject of paleoanthropology, and more will undoubtedly appear in the future, as new discoveries are made and old fossils are reexamined using DNA analysis and other scientific tools.

The briefest of overviews is found in Bernard Wood’s Human Evolution: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford University Press, 2005). Although it is already somewhat dated, its focus on the practice of paleoanthropology is rare and thus valuable. Wood treats scientific dating methods, discusses the scholarly debate between gradualism and punctuated equilibrium in evolutionary theory, and introduces the practice of cladistic analysis, in addition to discussing the discovery and significance of numerous hominin species.

The First Human by Ann Gibbons (Doubleday, 2006) and The Last Human by G. J. Sawyer and Victor Deak, et al. (Yale University Press, 2007), contrary to the implication of their titles, both deal with essentially the same topic: the discovery of the predecessors of modern humans. Gibbons’ account is a lively description of the race to find the earliest human ancestor following the split from the common ancestor of humans and chimps. Her focus on the personalities as well as the discoveries of the scientists involved in this quest reads like an adventure novel and is both exciting and poignant. Sawyer and Deak’s book gets its title from the fact that modern humans, Homo sapiens, are the only remaining species of a family that generally had three or four species—sometimes more—alive at any given time. It looks at twenty-two different extinct species, combining the imaginative work of a paleoartist (Deak) with that of a physical anthropologist (Sawyer) to create images of extinct human ancestors that stare back from the book’s pages with breathtaking vividness, accompanied by descriptions of the species’ physical characteristics, range, and behavior.

A fourth book that is well worth reading is From Lucy to Language by Donald Johanson (discoverer of Lucy) and Blake Edgar (rev. ed., Simon & Schuster, 2006). The most technical of the four books, it combines intricate scientific descriptions of individual specimens of twenty-one species with beautiful photographs of cranial, and occasionally postcranial, fossils. In addition, Johanson and Edgar offer a general introduction to paleoanthropology, discussing issues such as migration patterns, interspecific diversity, and the culture of humans and their ancestors.

No book can contain the final word on the subject of the hominin family tree, because new discoveries are being made every year, such as the 2010 announcement of a new species, Australopithecus sediba, found in South Africa by nine-year-old Matthew Berger, son of paleoanthropologist Lee Berger, or the even more recent publication of evidence about a distinct paleohuman population in Siberia that might have contributed genetic material to the genomes of modern Melanesians. Nevertheless, the four books reviewed here offer the reader valuable introductions to the quest for humanity’s ancestors, a quest that is well worth undertaking.
So from the first line of the poem I’m quibbling, 
and I don’t even teach this poem now
I’m pushing threescore and ten. All that counting
Housman has us busy doing, figuring
the speaker’s age, and I know in class we’d end up
focusing on the stanzas with the math. Yet
students never had trouble getting hold
of the poem’s carpe diem message: inhale
the scent of roses while you can. I’ve never seen
a flowering cherry, have never known
spring in Washington D.C. or England or
been invited to a hanami, a party to view
the blooms in Tokyo. But I knew the dogwoods
lacing my first hesitant steps, have known
white pines’ needles gleaming with
light reflected from a northern lake, and
I’ve known the palo verdes in the dusty Sonoran
desert where Rudy, my first boyfriend,
kissed me. And the olives I planted
with my former husband, shoveling down
into Phoenix hardpan. The eucalyptus
lifting their astringent scent in the Berkeley
hills where I lay in a carpet of fog-softened leaves, ecstatic
with a lover. The lemon tree by the front door
of the house where my son was born. I could say
“with rue my heart is laden” for these and all
the trees I may never see again: banyans and teak,
neem trees, cinnamon and coconut palms,
the bodhi tree—under which the Buddha sat
so still. And since I haven’t many springs
left in me—a dozen? two?—maybe,
like the woman diagnosed with terminal
cancer who traveled seven continents
compiling a life list of eight thousand birds,
I could search out all the trees I’ve never seen,
including the blossoming cherry. In California
there’s a bristlecone that’s lived for almost
five thousand years, and in Sweden, a spruce
that’s lived for close to ten. That woman’s travels
kept her cancer in remission, her doctors
were amazed. But how can I leave our own
Mexican persimmon near the drive, its peeling
layers of coppery silver bark, its branching
trunk I can’t begin to wrap my arms around?

*Wendy Barker is poet-in-residence and a professor of English at UTSA. She is the author of Nothing Between Us: The Berkeley Years, a novel in prose poems (Del SolPress, 2009) and numerous collections of poetry, including Poems from Paradise (2005), Way of Whiteness (2000), Let the Ice Speak (1991), and Winter Chickens (1990), as well as three chapbooks, Eve Remembers (1996), Between Frames (2006), and Things of the Weather (2009).*
We Really Shouldn’t Be Killing People
H. Palmer Hall

We are killing so many people on death row here in Texas that I thought I might tell you about the day I killed a man. I did not pull the trigger, but had I not been there a young man named Bao would not have died.

I had been in the Central Highlands of Vietnam for only a couple of months. During the previous few weeks, the VC and NVA had been carrying out massive attacks on the U.S. base at Dak To (only a couple of miles from the tri-border area of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam). For a week or so after the battle, American convoys making supply runs from Dak To to Pleiku were ambushed almost every day. We knew it was going to happen because we were intercepting messages from someone spying on the base camp at Dak To. The reports always indicated the time the convoy left Dak To and the number of vehicles (three jeeps, five big trucks, three personnel carriers, and so on) in the convoy. Somewhere on Vietnam Highway 14 that convoy would be attacked.

I was sent to Dak To, feet dangling out of a HUEY as I looked down on, first, rice paddies, bomb craters like pimples on a teenager, and then densely canopied hills and mountains with strange names like Ngok Rinh Rua. The first night I was there, the VC dropped mortars and rockets on the camp, and I pretty much spent the night in a reinforced bunker.

The next day, I got to work. I was able to triangulate Bao’s position using the Army’s Direction Finding gear. He was on a hill overlooking the camp and about a klick away. We had already known he could see the camp, but high hills surrounded it, and we had no idea which one he was hiding on until I was able to fix his position.

The next morning, the camp commander sent out a pre-arranged convoy, and I listened to the radio on Bao’s frequency. When he began to broadcast, I gave the signal and then walked outside. Within a very few minutes, American jets dropped napalm all over the spot I had indicated and then circled back to strafe the whole area. If you have not seen napalm except in movies like “Apocalypse Now,” you have no idea of the sheer beauty this death bringer can display. It opens up like flowers blooming as if the blossom developed in only a few seconds in those old Disney nature films. With napalm blossoms no ultra slow motion is needed.

I stayed the next day when the camp commander sent out another convoy. He wanted to be sure the millions of dollars in munitions he had expended had killed one young man. The convoy went out and there was not even a carrier sound on Bao’s frequency. Oh, yes, I am not certain “Bao” was his real name. “Bao chi” is Vietnamese for “reporter,” but he ended all his messages with “Het Roi! Bao.” “That’s all, Bao.”

For years, I have thought back about that incident: about the young man at the other end of my radio, about napalm blossoms, about responsibility. I pointed the finger at Bao, the commander ordered the attack on him, three pilots dropped the napalm and strafed the area, Congress sanctioned the whole thing, the President bore some responsibility, taxpayers bore the rest. But, ultimately, I think I’m the one who pulled the trigger. I pointed the gun when I pointed my finger, the pilots were only the physical triggers, part of my weapon.

I suspect that I am also responsible for what is going to happen once again someday soon when a man, perhaps with only one witness against him, perhaps who had an attorney who slept through most of the proceedings, perhaps who could be cleared with DNA tests since no other physical evidence convicts him, will have an IV inserted in a vein and will fall asleep without waking up. In Texas we prefer not to think we have killed an innocent man, but we sometimes do.

I often thought, while marching in demonstrations against the war, almost as soon as I returned from Vietnam, that I was really marching for Bao as much as for the American soldiers who would still die in the war. People, today, march frequently in Austin and in Huntsville, Texas, against another kind of government-sanctioned killing. I am not marching, though I know I should. Perhaps it’s age and cynicism, perhaps it’s that there have been too many such demonstrations and too few results. I came home from Vietnam in 1968, after the Tet Offensive had pretty much demonstrated that we were not going to win that little war, and, only a short time later, a man running for president indicated that he had a “secret plan” to end the war. Almost as many Americans and Vietnamese died after he became president than had died before that date.

And now, another man running for president refuses to consider DNA evidence and fires a panel he appointed to investigate the possibility that we killed an innocent man, Claude Jones (Had I mentioned his name? We need to remember his name!), convicted erroneously and murdered by the State ten years ago. Yes, we are all guilty of something, but he was not guilty of that murder.*

This is going nowhere. But it’s what I’m thinking about, rambling though the thoughts may be on this day. The injections that take the lives of Texas death row inmates are not as spectacular as watching a whole hillside light up with deep red napalm blossoms to kill a single man, but the results, though cheaper to achieve, are identical.

*Some cases in Texas with strong evidence of innocence include:
Ruben Cantu, Texas—Convicted: 1985, Executed: 1993
Books and Reviews
from Chautauqua Institution Writers & Poets

Fathom: Poems
Philip Brady*

“In poems of spiritual hunger and erotic receptivity, Philip Brady achieves utterance through formal gestures, ‘revealing in every form and syllable / a double essence.’ The pleasures of FATHOM are literary and sensuous, even when the poems address the events of 9/11. Through rhythmic cadences, ‘a murmur rippling in lines,’ Brady brings the world into focus, ‘purr[s] “accord” / into the ear of the continuum.’ These are poems to savor as they lodge themselves within us”—Michael Waters. A professor at Youngstown State University and the NEOMFA program, Philip Brady directs the YSU Poetry Center and Etruscan Press. For kicks, he plays in the New-Celtic band, Brady’s Leap.

*Philip Brady is a professor of English at Youngstown State University, where he directs the Poetry Center and Etruscan Press. He is the author of three books of poetry, Weal (winner of Ashland Poetry Press’ Snyder Prize); Forged Correspondences (chosen for Ploughshares’ Editors’ Shelf by Maxine Kumin); and Fathom; and a memoir, To Prove My Blood: A Memoir of Emigrations & the Afterlife. He is the co-editor, with James F. Carens, of Critical Essays on James Joyce’s A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. He plays in Brady’s Leap, a New-Celtic band, which has produced two CDs of original music. He’s also executive editor of Etruscan Press. To read the complete review, please visit www.voicesdelaluna.com.

Who Are the Etruscans?
The Etruscans, who lived in Etruria, were known as Tyrrenians by the Greeks. They were at their height in Italy from the 8th to the 5th century B.C.E. However, there in the back alleys of the American Literary maze, there is a group of poets and writers who have formed a non-profit cooperation to produce and promote books that nurture the dialogue among genres, achieve a distinctive voice, and reshape the literary and cultural history of which we are a part. They publish books of poems, novels, short stories, creative nonfiction, criticism, and anthologies. They are proud to stand tall against giant publishing houses, because they have lasted more than ten years and published remarkable work by distinguished authors, including John Updike and Erika Long. One of the 80,000 small presses in the U.S.—including Pecan Grove Press and Wings Press in San Antonio—Etruscan Press is thriving by publishing well-regarded works of literature. To read more about the press and its published books, please visit www.etruscanpress.org.

Common Life: Poems
Robert Cording

Common Life looks at the various meanings of common, especially its senses of familiar and widely known; belonging or relating to the community at large; and its twinned notions of simple and rudimentary and vulgar and profane. The book’s perspective is religious and is grounded in the epigraph from the Psalms: “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.” The “waiting” that is required has to do with three things: first, our desire, as Charles Wright puts it, “to believe in belief” rather than believe; secondly, the need for a setting aside of the self, an abandonment of “every attempt to make something of oneself, even … a righteous person” in the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer; and thirdly, the “waiting” must be as Eliot wrote in the Four Quartets, a waiting “without hope for hope would be hope of the wrong thing.” If we learn to wait in these ways, the final section of the book suggests that we have the chance of opening ourselves to all that is graceful within life’s common bounds.

The Memoir Project
Marion Roach Smith
Adapted from NPR

Marion Rouch Smith believes writers must publish their work when they believe their work carries a literary value. She often mentions proudly how she began her own successful writing career by self-publishing.

Everyone has a story to tell, but writer and memoir writing instructor Marion Roach Smith says making those stories interesting and readable is harder than it looks.

In her memoir writing guide, The Memoir Project, Roach Smith argues that too many aspiring memoirists focus on cramming every memory onto the page, instead of focusing on relating their story to broader themes.

She tells NPR’s Neal Conan that a useful memoir writing exercise is to consider what’s worth including and what’s best left out for the story you’d like to tell. She says that’s what she did when she decided to write about her mother being diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease when Roach Smith was 22-years-old. In the resulting memoir, Another Name For Madness, Roach Smith discussed her mother’s alcoholism, but left out the details of her infidelity.
**Book Reviews**

and Notes from Chautauqua Institution

**The Warmth of Other Suns**
by Isabel Wilkerson
Reviewed by Clara Silverstein*

In *The Help*, Kathryn Stockett recreates the restricted lives of black women in Jackson, Mississippi in the 1960s. This fictional account gives some insight into why the real people that Isabel Wilkerson writes about in *The Warmth of Other Suns* wanted to leave the South.

The maids in *The Help*, and the real protagonists in *The Warmth of Other Suns*, faced many kinds of discrimination—some subtle, some overt, all egregious. Wilkerson gives many examples from the lives of people she has interviewed, including her Georgia-born mother. Most African-Americans in the South had to take low-wage jobs, such as domestic work or farming, because nothing else was available to them.

White owners generally cheated sharecroppers to keep them from ever being able to buy out their share and move to land of their own. There were Jim Crow laws, which required separate seating for blacks and whites on buses, and also in movies and restaurants. Travelers often went without access to bathrooms, restaurants, and hotels. Discrimination extended to small indignities. Black customers were not allowed to try on or return clothes at stores and were always served last, after the white customers. Given the prevailing disrespect, blacks could not appear too smart or knowledgeable or express an honest opinion to a white person. The ultimate threat for challenging the system? Death by lynching....

*Clara Silverstein directs the Chautauqua Writers’ Center and is the author of four books, including the memoir White Girl: A Story of School Desegregation. She just completed an M.A. in History from the University of Massachusetts-Boston. To read the complete review, please browse www.voicesdelaluna.com.

**Trigger Man:**
More Tales of the Motor City
Jim Ray Daniels

*Trigger Man* is a superb collection of stories capturing the gritty spirit of Detroit and the sometimes grim circumstances of the characters shaped by its industry and economics. Grounded on the bleak streets of the Motor City, these stories also explore the mythical “Up North,” the idealized country of many Detroit workers’ fantasy—an escape from the concrete and metal reality of their daily lives. Daniels’ characters are resilient and defiant, inhabiting a world that has often placed them on the margins of society, scouring a declining region for spiritual providence. Building on Daniels’ earlier collections of stories, *Trigger Man* brings vivid life to individuals struggling both to remain in and to flee the city that once sustained them....

*Please read the complete review at www.voicesdelaluna.com.*

**Things I’ve Been Silent About**
A New Memoir by Azar Nafisi,* Author of Reading Lolita in Tehran
Adapted from http://azarnafisi.com/books

*Things I’ve Been Silent About* is a stunning personal story of growing up in Iran; memories of Azar Nafisi’s life lived in thrall to a powerful and complex mother, against the background of a country’s political revolution. A girl’s pain over family secrets; a young woman’s discovery of the power of sensuality in literature; the price a family pays for freedom in a country beset by political upheaval—these and other threads are woven together in this beautiful memoir, as a gifted storyteller once again transforms the way we see the world and “reminds us of why we read in the first place.”

Nafisi’s intelligent and complicated mother, disappointed in her dreams of leading an important and romantic life, created mesmerizing fictions about herself, her family, and her past. But her daughter soon learned that these narratives of triumph hid as much as they revealed.

Nafisi’s father escaped into narratives of another kind, enchanting his children with the classic tales like the Shahnamah, *the Persian Book of Kings*. When her father started seeing other women, young Azar began to keep his secrets from her mother. Nafisi’s complicity in these childhood dramas ultimately led her to resist remaining silent about other personal, as well as political, cultural, and social injustices.

*Azar Nafisi is author of the beloved international bestseller Reading Lolita in Tehran.*

Azar Nafisi presented a keynote lecture to a standing only crowd of 5,000 and conducted a writing Master Class at Chautauqua Institution during week six of the Summer Program. Please see a video of her presentation at www.voicesdelaluna.com.

**Ghazal Games**
Roger Sedarat

Roger Sedarat’s poems reflect his mixed identities as an Iranian American. Using the formal characteristics of the ghazal, he masterfully recreates the qualities of classical Persian verse in the English language. He could be considered a successor to poets such as Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001), a Kashmiri American who authored several collections of ghazals in English. Sedarat brings the musicality of the ghazal into the lighthearted atmosphere of his English verse. He has an enviable command of language and creates narratives that are imaginative and sincere.

*For more information, please visit www.voicesdelaluna.com.*
C.G. Jung & Arts

The Golden Bird—Continued

Al Drymala*

When the older sons do not return, the youngest son sets out, and he too encounters the fox. This youngest son takes the advice of the fox who carries the son to the castle of the golden bird. There he instructs the son to quietly go past the sleeping soldiers and retrieve the golden bird, which is held in a plain wooden cage. The fox says that the son must leave the bird in its plain cage and not put it into a golden cage nearby, or else there will be trouble.

Yet, the youngest son cannot resist putting the bird into its golden cage, and the bird calls out to the soldiers and the son is captured. He is sentenced to death, but he is told he will be freed if he agrees to now retrieve a golden horse in another kingdom for this king. A similar scene unfolds regarding the golden horse, and the son is again captured, but is promised release if he can retrieve the beautiful princess who lives in the golden castle in the next kingdom.

In the previous installment of this series on the fairy tale of the Golden Bird, we examined the figure of the helpful fox. We saw that the fox represents a kind of wisdom of nature, an instinct within us for knowing the natural ways of the unconscious. It allows for a certain clairvoyance, a knowledge about what will happen, because it knows the pathways which crisscross the archetypal world. It knows the realm of the archetypes. And if one knows the pathways, then one can intuit where those pathways may lead. This can have an illuminating effect. For example, if one knows the archetypal stages of grieving and loss, one can have some inkling about what is ahead on the road for a person in a grieving process. The same with the experience of falling in love, or crossing a threshold, or going through a dark night of the soul. Our inner fox knows these pathways.

But knowing the pathway does not necessarily mean that one knows for sure how things will turn out. In our fairy tale, the fox tells the hero how to retrieve the bird, the horse, and the princess—the feminine element, eros and relatedness, and (the golden horse), that now needs the further element of the body and instinctual life (the golden bird), that requires a union with the body and instinctual life. We think of horsepower and reining in the wild horses, representative of a kind of animal drive and stamina within us. Because of the closeness between a horse and rider, we think of the body in its entirety in the service of will and conscious direction. In that sense it represents the totality of the instinctual life. And this is a golden horse, which means that it is a divine horse. It emanates divine energy. This takes us into a reflection about the divine aspect of the instincts, how there is something Godlike in the instincts and nature. And this is precisely what is needed to further complement the mystical experience of the golden bird in its golden cage, which otherwise might remain too ethereal. The golden horse adds the fullness of the instincts in their divine nature. It is the underlying and profound meaning of the popular bumper sticker, “Nature is my Church.”

As before, the hero is not content to lead the golden horse away with a simple bridle as per the fox’s instruction, but instead chooses to use the golden one, which leads to him getting caught once again, and then being ordered to go off and bring back a princess from a distant kingdom to secure his freedom.

Thus far we have the mystical experience (the golden bird), that requires a union with the body and instinctual life (the golden horse), that now needs the further element of the princess—the feminine element, eros and relatedness, and ultimately, the element that leads to the coniunctio, or the experience of wholeness through the union of the opposites. This series of acquisitions—taken together—describes a profound transformation of the image of God and how one experiences the Divine. Jung understood the God image to be in a long process of evolution, as one can see within a particular religious tradition such as Christianity, as well is in the innumerable religious traditions of the world.

In the original kingdom, the Tree of Life grew behind the castle, and its golden apples were numbered and counted each day. Through the development described in the tale, the divine image now includes the mystical experience, the celebration of the body and instinctual life, and ultimately the divine character of eros and relationship. Truly an empowering God image!

*Quotations of Marie Louise von Franz from her lectures in Individuation in Fairy Tales.
Poems for 9/11
from http://www.poetryfoundation.org
and www.pbs.com

Photograph from September 11
Wisława Szymborska
Translated By Clare Cavanagh and Stanislaw Baranczak

They jumped from the burning floors—
one, two, a few more,
higher, lower.

The photograph halted them in life,
and now keeps them
above the earth toward the earth.

Each is still complete,
with a particular face
and blood well hidden.

There’s enough time
for hair to come loose,
for keys and coins
to fall from pockets.

They’re still within the air’s reach,
within the compass of places
that have just now opened.

I can do only two things for them—
describe this flight
and not add a last line.

*from Nobel Prize-winning Polish poet Wisława Szymborska

Grief
Jacks Blue

How sad I thought, this world of ours
When tragedy strikes home.
We often think it’s not for us
Then reminded life’s on loan.

The sadness, sorrow, bitterness,
Will happen to us all,
Not one of us evades this fact
Get braced for you will fall.

But when you do you must recall,
Brief moments on this earth,
And treat each second with tenderness
Giving each its own true worth.

The sadness now will go away
With time less pain is felt,
And happiness creeps slowly in,
As you play what you’ve been dealt.

The Names
Billy Collins, Poet Laureate of the United States
for the victims of 9/11
http://video.pbs.org/video/2125993873/

Yesterday, I lay awake in the palm of the night.
A soft rain stole in, unhelped by any breeze,
And when I saw the silver glaze on the windows,
I started with A, with Ackerman, as it happened,
Then Baxter and Calabro,
Davis and Eberling, names falling into place
As droplets fell through the dark.
Names printed on the ceiling of the night.
Names slipping around a watery bend.
Twenty-six willows on the banks of a stream.
In the morning, I walked out barefoot
Among thousands of flowers
Heavy with dew like the eyes of tears,
And each had a name—
Fiori inscribed on a yellow petal
Then Gonzalez and Han, Ishikawa and Jenkins.
Names written in the air
And stitched into the cloth of the day.
A name under a photograph taped to a mailbox.
Monogram on a torn shirt,
I see you spelled out on storefront windows
And on the bright unfurled awnings of this city.
I say the syllables as I turn a corner—
Kelly and Lee,
Medina, Nardella, and O’Connor.
When I peer into the woods,
I see a thick tangle where letters are hidden
As in a puzzle concocted for children.
Parker and Quigley in the twigs of an ash,
Rizzo, Schubert, Torres, and Upton,
Secrets in the boughs of an ancient maple.
Names written in the pale sky.
Names rising in the updraft amid buildings.
Names silent in stone
Or cried out behind a door.
Names blown over the earth and out to sea.
In the evening —weakening light, the last swallows.
A boy on a lake lifts his oars.
A woman by a window puts a match to a candle,
And the names are outlined on the rose clouds—
Vanacore and Wallace,
(let X stand, if it can, for the ones unfound)
Then Young and Ziminsky, the final jolt of Z.
Names etched on the head of a pin.
One name spanning a bridge, another undergoing a tunnel.
A blue name needled into the skin.
Names of citizens, workers, mothers and fathers,
The bright-eyed daughter, the quick son.
Alphabet of names in a green field.
Names in the small tracks of birds.
Names lifted from a hat
Or balanced on the tip of the tongue.
Names wheeled into the dim warehouse of memory.
So many names, there is barely room on the walls of the heart.
Graphic Arts & Photography

Photography of Ramin Samandari

Earthly Bodies

“Of or belonging to or characteristic of this earth as distinguished from heaven.” The artist says “the human form in relation to other forms, space, and the intangible forces of time, place, and history are the primary concerns that fuel my work. As an artist working the image-based media, I approach the making of photographs as a means to document my philosophical, artistic and personal examination of life. The images presented in this series are the result of my ongoing fascination and spiritual connection to some of the landscapes around San Antonio. Enchanted Rock, Pedernales River, Guadalupe River are the backdrops for these Earthly Bodies, whether in the form of a human figure or an isolated tree or rock.”

Ramin Samandari, born in 1960 in Tehran, emigrated from Iran to the United States in 1978 and makes his home in San Antonio, Texas. A versatile artist working with photographic and digital imaging processes, Samandari investigates the human form in relation to other forms, space, and the intangible forces of time, place, and history.

At The McNay Museum

www.mcnyart.org

Current & Future Exhibitions

George Nelson Modern Furniture

Next time you settle down in your family room, remember to thank George Nelson (1908–1986). When Nelson coauthored the book Tomorrow’s House in 1945, he described the now familiar family gathering spot, as well as a “storage wall,” solving specific design challenges for modern residences. George Nelson: Architect, Writer, Designer, Teacher celebrates this iconic American designer whose ideas yielded numerous classics in American furniture and interior design.

Shakespeare to Sondheim

Designs from the Tobin Collection

September 7–December 18

From the Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts, four thematic groupings of drawings, maquettes, and costumes: (1) Opera and the Mythic Imagination; (2) Shakespeare’s Richard II and III; (3) Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake; and (4) Steven Sondheim’s Broadway. Rare theater books and costume bibles, as well as Gontcharova’s oil panels of Russian folk tales that inspired operas and ballets.

“The Nightmare Before Christmas”

September 14, 2011–January 1, 2012

Just in time for the fall & winter holidays, from the Tobin Collection of Theatre Arts at the museum, artifacts and sets used in making Tim Burton’s stop-action film The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993) include Jack Skellington’s tower; Lock, Shock, Barrel’s clubhouse; Oogie Boogie; and the One-Armed Bandits.

The Orient Expressed

Japan’s Influence on Western Art, 1854–1918


The Mississippi Museum of Art presents Japonisme, a worldwide cultural phenomenon that greatly influenced late 19th-century visual arts. Eastern motifs and aesthetics permeated Western visual and decorative arts, as well as music, theater, literature, and fashion.

Cassatt and the Orient

Japan’s Influence on Printmaking


Organized to complement The Orient Expressed and drawn from the McNay’s and Barbara Oppenheimer Cohn’s collections, prints and drawings by French and American artists inspired by Japanese woodblock printmaking.

Art + Present

Gifts from the Peter Norton Family


Collector and software entrepreneur Peter Norton commissions an art edition by an artist in the Nortons’ collection to celebrate the holiday season.
Poetry & Art Therapy

Art-Making:
Journaling on the Margin
Maripat Munley

For more than seven years, small groups of up to 25 incarcerated women in the Bexar County Adult Detention Center (BCADC) have engaged in a process of learning to express themselves and aspects of their spiritual journey through Visual Spiritual Journaling—Art as Prayer.

Participants utilize various art-making approaches. Via manila-colored paper, pencils, craypas, colored markers, crayons, and sometimes stencils, the women are encouraged to visually engage their own personal and/or spiritual questions or work with their inspirations. Examples of art making include scribble drawings and finding images or symbols within the scribble, creating mandala drawings, or developing a timeline to describe events in their lives related to their spirituality. Often they use free-drawings from their own imagination to respond to the evocative questions. Various forms of music are the background to their work. Making art of this type is much like dreaming onto paper and may be explored and interpreted similarly to dream analysis.

The women add writing to their visual journals to help them remember what they learned. Some spontaneously write poetry. Twice their poetry has been published in *Voices de la Luna*. Most participants have had no art-making experience since grade school.

The women’s goals in this art-based program are to: (1) Use art-making to self-soothe and center, (2) Express aspects of their spiritual journey visually and in writing, (3) Develop a habit of Visual Journaling to reduce stress and improve their immune systems, (4) Make meaning from the art process and product that guides personal reflection, and (5) Build a small community (family, soul friends in jail and when they are free) with whom to make art, journal, and support the journaling process in their respective worlds.

While these goals were not the ones first intended when the classes were initiated, over the years the women themselves have developed them—creatively shaping the direction of the classes. Their self-exploration, the results of written surveys about their art-making and journaling experience, and the identification of their unmet creative and spiritual needs propels the program.

Their ability to reach their goals is measured each 6-week cycle during each class by pre- and post-written self-reports. Additional progress evaluations incorporate facilitator observation of the women’s ability to follow the art directives and spiritual questions, their process of making art, and the writing they do in response to their experience, providing valuable feedback adjustment to future cycles of Visual Spiritual Journaling—Art as Prayer.

The women describe poignant meaning-making and reflective depth that occurs as a result of the art-making process, the art created, and their responses to it.
Following this opening art-based centering, each week a question related to their spirituality is then suggested to them as a focus for their art-making, such as: What is my image of God? Where is my personal place for prayer and quiet? What are my spiritual gifts? They may also substitute their own question. By the end of 6 weeks, all of the women are able to formulate their own personal questions or originate inspirations to stimulate their art-making and explore their spiritual life. Over time, the women become accurate witnesses to their personal process of creating images, as well as to the images themselves. They become adept at interpreting their experience of making the art, as well as the resulting product, and they thereby find meaning, answering their pre-stated questions. They benefit from training in the use of symbol/image encyclopedias, metaphor related to their process of making art and product, color theory and symbolism, the ability to project meaning onto images that surface, and telling their image-stimulated personal stories. Meaning-making is often the most prized part of the women’s experiences. Simultaneously, they discover how wholesome community building advances their new skills and supports their continued practice of Visual Spiritual Journaling.

Skill Transference

While the Visual Spiritual Journaling–Art as Prayer program was pioneered to introduce innovative art-based forms of prayer and to develop the habit of Visual Journaling, the women have been transferring the skills learned into other parts of their lives. Participants learn to resist making themselves vulnerable to others by disclosing more than they intended, and they report introducing these processes to their children when they come to visit. They also encourage others to register for the classes because they find them valuable. They report the use of mandala-making as a calming device in a variety of situations: awaiting their court case to be called, before legal judgments are rendered, when anticipating doctors’ appointments, or when other potentially stressful situations are expected. They discuss their past lack of impulse-control behaviors, which sometimes landed them in jail. They want to use the new art-based methods to give them thinking time before they decide to act. The women realize that mandala-making increased their attention span in the art-based classes and report employing this method in other classes they attend. They have done this so much that facilitators are being invited to offer introductory art-based skills, for example, creating mandalas or time lines and engaging in reflective meaning making, at other BCADC programs such as the Mothers and Their Children (MATCH) program.

In fact, by both written and spoken report, this endeavor has been a life-altering experience for the women in detention and for the facilitators. The experience has shown us over and over that: (1) Art is a way of knowing; (2) Images have power; (3) Imagery has layers of meaning that can inform us; and (4) The act of creating touches the divine within.

Facilitators

Reverend Kelly Schneider Conkling, an Episcopal woman priest, now ministering in West Texas, led classes at Viva! Book Store and wrote the book *Prayer of the HeART*, which initially inspired this program in 2004. Along with Sister Ellen McRedmond, DC, Chaplain, through Bexar County Detention Ministries (BCDM), volunteers Jan Davis, Chris McCartney, and Maripat Munley spearhead this six-week, once a week, two-hour class cyclically to introduce the women to Visual Spiritual Journaling and Art as Prayer. Over the years, several other volunteers have assisted them, including nurses, teachers, art therapists, spiritual directors, and business women. Both facilitators and volunteers engage in art-making and journaling alongside the inmates. They report that their work with the inmates promotes their own learning and enriches their own spirituality. Some say they often drive home after class without remembering how they got there because they are still experiencing wonder and appreciation for what the women accomplished, the images produced, and their connections to them. Making art together resonates the truth in what art therapist Pat Allen tells us: “Art is a way of bringing soul into your life. Soul is a place where the messiness of life is tolerated, where feelings animate the narration of life, where story exists. Soul is a place where we can be replenished and can experience gardens and graveyards” (*Art Is a Way of Knowing*, p. x).

Readers who wish to learn more about Visual Journaling, eliciting the Relaxation Response, or working with mandalas may enjoy the additional material posted on our website at www.voicesdelaluna.com.
Select Poems—Part I
Youth Poems

My Fall
Kenya Barrientos

Sweeping my hair to the side
Enticing me with a promise of apple pie far away
Pushing me forward
Tales of her past whispered into my ears
Ember colored leaves dancing at my feet
Moving the trees in a ballet of wonder
Bringing me closer to home
Entering a new world
Reminding me of falls past
Sweetly embracing strangers on the streets

Cinnamon fills the air
October around the corner
Obscure afternoons creeping slowly by
Looking like a slice of heaven

When September comes back
I’ll be waiting for her
Never shall I cry because
Don’t you know? September’s cool wind is here.

Poth High School, grade 11

When You Walk Towards Me
Kari Shea Browning

When you walk towards me
You turn into transparent nothingness
Cold hearted and cruel thoughts race through your mind
You don’t care who you hurt or what you do
You’re so vindictive and disgusting
Your words are scalding my skin like hot water
Piercing my ears like nails to a chalkboard
When I look at you, I see a liar
Not a person
How do you live with yourself through the lies and fakeness?
But the fact of the matter is,
The only way you’ll ever hear from me again
is when you read this to your pathetic self
I never could’ve guessed how low someone could go
But you have reached an all time new low
I wanted to say thanks
Thanks for making me a stronger person
Forgive and forget
I’ll forgive you and I want to forget you forever
You messed up
Your loss, my gain

Bandera High School, grade 12

Ocean
Christian B. Gonzalez

Ocean you are so beautiful
My eyes adore watching you
Your movements and your waves are so relaxing
They soothe my ears
When we sail your waves clash against my ship so loudly
I go into deep thought
When morning comes you really stand out
The sunset and you seem infinite
Your salty scent is so unique
It’s unforgettable
Everything around you is so alive when you are calm
You complete life to everything you’re around
Your Creator’s creation is so extraordinary
It’s like nothing ever seen before
Although you may be harmful
We forgive you and will always love you
When I fly over you
You look unbelievable
You shine like a star
And you move like you’re just crawling
You can be enjoyed by anyone and everyone
You bring beautiful inspiration to people
Without even trying
And this is what makes you beautiful and natural

Homeschool, grade 9 (Harper, Texas)

Sleep
Hannah Jarzombek

Sleep avoids me
Images from my day
Arrive much too easily
They build a wall of light
Shielding the pure black I long for
I’m running
Reaching wanting
That dark perfect world
Then I trip and fall
No closer to the blinding wall
I’m trying to destroy
And suddenly I’m awake
Someone’s snores fill my head
A light breathing is slowly
Falling into the same rhythm
Then the light wall is back
Is it just my eyes
Or is it grey now?
Is it going black?
Then my alarm sounds
Signaling six a.m.
Goodbye sleep
Until we fight again.

LaVernia Middle School, grade 8
Select Poems–Part II
Youth Poems

Labor of Love
Katherine Mansfield

Sunday mornings, we woke to the sound
Of the orange juicer whirring
Dad bent over it
Pressing down firmly on half an orange sphere.
The rest of them sat
Submerged in water,
Waiting.

An hour yielded only a third of a glass,
Not chilled.

Still, he whistled away
Watching as juice dribbled down the sides
And pulp slipped into the cup,
Never once crossing his mind that
A perfectly whole store-bought carton
Sat gleaming in the fridge.

Keystone Middle School, grade 8

Wonderful Winter
Kara Piłaczynski

The days are getting colder
The chilly wind is here
Sometimes you might feel older
When aches and pains appear

The noise of children’s laughter
The smell of peppermint candy fills the air
Twinkling lights hang from the rafters
To embrace the beauty with a stare

And let’s not forget the joy
That comes from this time of year
That happiness we enjoy
Of warm and jolly Christmas cheer

Devine High School, grade 12

Yes The World
Consuelo Esters

I listen to the unfamiliar sounds
music that has never been written
words that have never been spoken
yet they are so familiar
my body knows these unfamiliar sounds
my mind understands these words that have never been spoken

Bandera High School, grade 10

Other Worlds
Asya Mazmanyan

Other worlds, are they possible?
Able to support life?
Do they have water?
Do they have land?
Or even any life?
Will it be my new home?
Will I be able to visit it?
How far away is it from earth?
Is it in another galaxy,
Or maybe in another universe?
Does this new world have war,
Or famine,
Or death?
Does this place have peace,
Or love, anywhere?
Will I know anyone?
By the way,
What do they look like?
Do they have children,
Or pets?
What do they eat?
And what about their language?
Do they even speak?
What is this new, other world?

Hobby Middle School, grade 6

A Picture of Us...
Cacilia Saez

A picture of you
that runs through my mind.
A picture of you
that lasted a long time.
A picture of you
that I don’t want to change.
A picture of you
and all the feelings I have for you.
A picture of me
that sits in the back of your mind.
A picture of me
that lasted a second.
A picture of me
that you wish you could change.
A picture of me
and all the feelings you have for me.

Bandera High School, grade 11
The Speaking Book  
*Tatjana Debeljacki*

I wish I could write a book which could speak.  
Speak with my words, using my voice.  
Music could be heard from that book,  
Sounds of supper, invitation of small breasts for staying over-night.  
Somebody’s smile, charming for sure, mocking maybe.  
In this wrong century.  
Time is eroding my book covers.  
A book is the heart without armor,  
Prone to twitching, fragile and unpredictable.  
Who knows how many children would resemble me  
If I only could, if I only dare  
My step into stepping out to take.  
I am a flower on inaccessible slope.  
On the other side of all cravings.  
We cannot kill animals within us.  
The eyes are born with lenity of the God’s grace.  
The most beautiful things are done silently.  
If we wanted, we could take sacred paths.  
However, there are no empty pages.  
That’s my book.

**Select Poems–Part III**

**Downsizing**
*Mary Anne Morefield*

After I’ve measured each empty room  
with a twenty foot tape measure, written  
dimensions for the living room, dining room,  
bedrooms and study, in my mind  
I place each bed, chair, table, desk and sofa.

On the floor, leaning against the wall  
with a yellow legal pad and a thermos  
of strong coffee, I make lists of things  
that fit and things I must give away—  
a first rehearsal of that final losing.

The things to take are easy: marriage bed,  
tall case clock which strikes the hours of our days,  
desks, computers, shelves of books and TV,  
his rocker, wedding china, chairs and table,  
the leather couch so comfortable for reading.

Another list. Things to give away that are easy:  
chain saw, jigsaw, digging iron and snow shoes,  
antique ironware for open hearth cooking,  
worn patchwork quilts made by great Aunt Edith,  
piles of unread books in French and Spanish.

But now it gets more difficult—  
What to do with Mother’s Wedgwood,  
Grandmother’s hope chest, stuffed  
with monogrammed linens, the side board,  
passed down for generations?

My children do not have space for them.  
Having measured each wall to fit our art work,  
I end up with extra paintings. Even this,  
a little still life—a goblet  
and a bowl of fruit on a polished table.

I must let it go along with  
the slant of sun on yellow pine,  
blue mountains seen through  
six by nine windows, lilacs in April,  
and beneath the hill, the Conodoquinet.

**Chronometry**  
*Ian James*

Canvases dripping  
Centuries of a dying world  
Mornings come at evolution’s pace  
They meet their end prematurely  
Blood soaked memories  
Blood soaked injuries  
Sparklers and twinkling lights  
Atom bombs are igniting cold dark cities  
Do they know their alarm clocks have stopped  
Do they know the taste of their blood  
Do they know they lost track  
Let’s let the sand fall to end  
Let the candles die out again  
Celebrate the millennium’s end

**The Monarch**  
*Felicia Lujan*

For just this moment in time you are now frozen.  
Your ravishing colors have at once been chosen.  
Wind… She has decided to pin your wings.  
Monarch fight in flight and my mind sings.  
You were once wrapped in silk tight as can be.  
Escaping the chrysalis so you could rightly see.  
Caterpillar your metamorphosis was slow and sweet.  
Your emblem, two small black spots beloved male monarch.  
Seek sugary nectar by day, and conceal your wings after dark.  
Your attractively broken cocoon still lay at my feet.  
Poisonous but lovely, one must ask why?  
For a fleeting journey surely leads to the sky.  
Fight as you may, wind has decided to keep you.  
For just this moment she will soothe and woo.

**Untitled**  
*Alex Millard*

Golden locks though rare  
Her eyes glow with wintry ice  
Seduction her vice
Heat
James R. Adair

The sun beat like fire on the south Texas briar
And the prickly pear cluttered their way.
But Sheriff Adair and those in his care
Were hot on the trail of their prey.

Seems a drifter named Scott, in a cold-blooded plot,
Had murdered and stolen a horse.
So a posse was formed and rode out like a storm;
Adair’s icy resolve stayed the course.

But the tracks were too old, and the trail it grew cold,
As Old Sol neared the end of his race.
So Adair hollered, “Men, let’s meet back here again
At sunup and restart our chase.”

As he rode home the breeze, blowing cool in the trees,
Carried sounds of the locusts in song.
“This ain’t bad,” Adair said, wiping sweat from his head,
“I’ll be home with my wife before long.”

From the bushes Scott came, for his horse had gone lame,
He was now on the run for his life.
When Adair turned around, Scott jumped up from the ground,
And coolly slashed him with his knife.

While the thief rode his bay, Adair staggered away;
The gore on his hands was so warm!
But he held in his guts, spilling out from the cuts,
And he walked half a mile to a farm.

He stepped through the door dripping blood on the floor,
And bore witness to all those inside:
“Scott killed me tonight, and y’all must make it right.”
Then he felt a sharp chill, and he died.

Well they captured Scott soon, one July afternoon,
And they hanged him the day he was found.
The sun blazed with its heat while he dangled his feet.
Now he sleeps in the cold, cold ground.

*My great-grandfather was a deputy sheriff in northeast Texas in the late 19th century and was killed in the line of duty, more or less as described in this poem. I’ve transferred the action to South Texas, and the poem explores the various meanings, nuances, synonyms, and antonyms of the word “heat.” To get the real feel of this poem, it ought to be read with a strong Texas drawl.

Sea of Air
Mo H Saidi

From the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Western shores the mass of caesious air like a giant sea fills endless skies for myriads of miles covers the rolling meadows, winding roads.

In the twilight of one epoch and the rise of a new one, the miasma shelters the continent from the Eastern shores to the Western firs the ethereal sea protects the hamlets and towns.

From the Everglades to the Olympic Peninsula it tends native lands, new colonies, majestic canyons, and red Cathedral Rock; and it guards the Shenandoah Valley and green mounds.

The smoky torches illuminate the wooden faces of the totem poles the wisps of smoke rise and dissipate in the gossamer air, fade in the deep night.

At the bottom of the valley, the trees spread like green coral, sway like floating seaweeds in the calm breeze, the lights blink like fireflies the passing clouds float like the wings of time.

A pair of bikers pedals on Skyline Drive to the peak, they pause at an overlook—the sea of air fills the world—in trance, they embark on a free ride and land on a green plain.

Watching the moon and the stars, they swim in a cool spring and camp for the night.
At sunrise, they ride anew across the land from the high seas to the golden shores.

Reflection on an Arrowhead
Lou Taylor

Sliver of smooth stone
Rippling shades of gray

Pointed end
Curved shaft
Engineered for flight

Carved by ancient artist
His imprint reveals wonder and care
Of the first rocket scientist
And hides the plow in the vale of the crystal spring
The secret of the mirror.
And hides the plow in the vale of the crystal spring
The buffoon risking the temporary nature.

Since the history of the simian that laughs
It is the one that sustains the beginning of identity
And it is the sovereign beginning that edits and proclaims
The continuous dream of metaphysical power.

Since the history of the silkworm
It is that convolution of the brain
Providing him with an ecstatic look at the sky
And it is the sovereign beginning that flatters the ulcer in the
gullet of the poet.

Since the history of the thinker dilettante
It is the one that branches out into thin sensitive and nervous
completions
And it is the sovereign beginning of the psychotic concoction
That provokes war and relaxes in sex
Calculating everything coldly.

La memoria de viñedos y sitios santos quema como el sol
sobre la meseta castellana.
Toledo. Sevilla. Lucena.
And the Lord said unto the adversary: “From where do you come?”
They came from the palace and the monastery,
the castle and the hut, a Catholic Queen and her confessor
to hasten a cruel servitude and pronounce their dire decree.
And so we left the open gates and the doors without locks,
cast out of Tarshish, away from the fragrant orange blossoms and
from the Guadalquivir, in whose waters a Leviathan
once swam to announce the birth pangs of a Messiah that did not
come, had not come,
and would not come.
All Your Beauty
Hejo Müller
Translated by James Brandenburg

All your beauty, my love,
grows
out of
Heaven’s spendor.

Heaven’s brightness
yields
all this light.

An abundance
of joy and delight.

How can one
escape
all this beauty?

How is one not to drown
in all this beauty?

The Spider Web of the Poet
Maria Gabriela Madrid

Every sunrise
Every moonlight
The spider web of the poet
Is intertwined with passion, love, fear and desire
And a permanent anguish
That guides their most intimate feelings
To crave the lost moment
To long for the passion of love
To grieve the tear of the soul
To wish to keep alive
Every sunrise
Every moonlight
And walk the invisible furrows
Of the spider web of the poet

Absence
Pablo Neruda
from http://www.links2love.com/poetry_40.htm

I have scarcely left you
when you go in me, crystalline,
or trembling,
or uneasy, wounded by me
or overwhelmed with love, as when your eyes
close upon the gift of life
that without cease I give you.

My love,
we have found each other
thirsty and we have
drunk up all the water and the blood,
we found each other
hungry
and we bit each other
as fire bites,
leaving wounds in us.

But wait for me,
keep for me your sweetness.
I will give you too
a rose.

All Deine Schönheit
Hejo Müller

All deine Schönheit, Liebste,
wächst
aus dem Glanz
dem Himmel

All das...
all dies Licht

Alle Fülle
des Entzückens

Wie kann einer
dieser Freude
entrinnen?

Wie nicht
darin
entrinken?

La Tejedora del Poeta
Maria Gabriela Madrid

En cada amanecer
En cada luna llena
La telaraña del poeta
Está entrelazada por pasión, amor, miedo, y deseo
Y por la angustia permanente
Que guía sus más íntimos pensamientos
Para ansiar el momento perdido
Para añorar la pasión del amor
Para sufrir el desgarro del alma
Para desear seguir vivo
En cada amanecer
En cada luna llena
Y caminar los surcos invisibles
De la tejereda del poeta

Ausencia
Pablo Neruda
http://youtu.be/8b0R5nwUcQc

Apenas te he dejado,
vas en mi, cristalina
o temblorosa,
o inquieta, herida por mi mismo
o colmada de amor, como cuando tus ojos
se cierran sobre el don de la vida
que sin cesar te entrego.

Amor mío,
nos hemos encontrado
sedientos y nos hemos
bebido toda el agua y la sangre,
nos encontramos
con hambre
y nos mordimos
como el fuego muerde,
dejándonos heridos.

Pero esperame
guardame tu dulzura.
Yo te dare también
una rosa.
Doubt versus Faith
William Levay

Is man naught but sorrow’s child,
Born to wander, lost, in the wild?
Or are we more, from heaven sent
In mortal form, divinity lent?

Each eve as shadows draw to a close
These wonders swirling as I doze.
The certainty that more resides
Within mankind, my thoughts divide.

Unending questions crowd my mind
With doubt is faith so oft maligned.
In the dark these qualms may taunt
But in the sun no terrors haunt.

The fears that come with the night
Disappear with dawn’s sweet light.
The worries that grip me with their power
Have no hold in sun-kissed hours.

The surety that there is a plan,
Although I may not understand,
Holds my heart and grants me ease
And in the end, assures me peace.

Grade 9

My Dearest Wish
Lilah Kalista Qubrosi

A spell upon the Oceans, a spell upon the Seas,
A spell upon the Galaxies…
My Grandpas and Grandma to come back alive.
To be in perfect health, no asthma, or allergies.
A clean Earth, a wish for everyone to end Hunger, War,
Homelessness, Sadness, Enough of everything we need.

Kriterion Montessori Middle School, grade 6

Friends
Peyton Cole Eichman

I have a friend.
He is there for me,
And I am there for him.
We like to play and jump on a trampoline,
To see it is such a funny scene!
Happy is what we are,
Each of us a shining star.
Friends forever we will be,
My friend and me!

Pleasanton Primary School, grade 1

Unfixable
Bailee Hauck

My life, so incomplete
Until I met you.
A dark sky
Where you were my shooting star
That lit up my life.
So much in common,
So many hours spent on the phone,
To find out were all wasted.
Now becoming more than friends,
You lifted my life,
Making me think I was all that mattered.
The way you laugh,
The way you tell me stories,
The way you’re so understanding,
The way you helped me through everything,
Even when I needed you the most.
Life is so uncomplicated in your eyes,
And then,
All is lost in one text.
My heart in pieces like a crumbled cookie,
But no matter what the case may be,
Crumbs of a cookie
Will never be as good as a whole—
Broken and unfixable is how I was left.
How could you leave me be?

Bandera High School, grade 11

Bandera High School, grade 12

Select Poems–Part V
More Youth Poems

Thanks for Everything
Jesus Arreola

I love how You send us new people
So randomly, just simply out of the blue
To help us, change us
It’s funny how You know it
But we don’t
It’s funny how You take people away
People we thought cared, loved, but didn’t
You help us without us knowing it
And sometimes we’re mad, sad,
Mad at the world, Sad at the world,
Confused about life, Mad at You, Sad at You,
Confused within,
But You knew what You were doing way before
We come to realize
What You’ve done, how You’ve helped, what You’ve changed
Thank You God
Thanks for everything
Then, Now and Tomorrow.

Bandera High School, grade 12

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Select Poems–Part VI

In the Land of Vanities
Philip C. Kolin

He wore a Mao suit
And spoke in monosyllables. Time
Covers the poor like lice. Inside
Their mouths are scribes
Writing a new history.

A carnival came to town
All of its politics were written on tents
Put up in the pitch of desire
On borrowed space
When they folded back again
The performances stopped
And trucks carried the laughter away.

In the current crisis loyalty
Calls every name.

Tell us another version
Of the truth; this one will not keep
Fruit on the sallow trees or
Missionaries delivering bread.

The Woman With The Amber Eyes
Charlie Whipple

A soft sea breeze
Flutter the leaves
Of her jacaranda trees
Their blue blossoms
Like confetti
Torn from the sky
Drift down
To the bench
Where she rests
The woman
With the amber eyes.
Her garden is filled
With roses
With gardenias
With ginger
With rosemary
Red bougainvillea
Cloaks a wall
The scent of jasmine
And lemon trees
Fills the air.
She whispers
To her green and yellow
Parrot on its perch
I struggle to hear
But the sea breeze
Rustles my window shade
And I awake wondering
Have I had this dream before?

Poem to Movie: Whale Rider
Margot Van Sluytman

On your back
I enter the blue-green depth.
This time, I am not entered.
All is moist. Still.
Wetness surrounds us,
I begin to breathe in a new way.
My arms about your girth.
No need to speak here,
Down deep.
No need for words.
My instinct knows the language
Of your song, now.
Wear me as your mantle,
Great behemoth.
Take me to where my soul
Will be saturated by the
Chorus of our ancestors
Applauding.
Resonating as poets who
Dream without words,
Who penetrate heart,
Splice through bone,
Who truly communicate,
Truly speak,
In this other tongue.

Copyright Margot Van Sluytman, from her book
Of Dark Night: poems of journey—poems of arrival

Shakespeare Recycled
Clyta Coder

Let me not to the recycling of paper and plastic
admit impediments.
Trash is not trash which alteration transforms
to a more worthy state,
or conservation’s friend bends to remove
that which mars and does not beautify.
Oh no, it is an ever worthy goal to save the trees,
conserve the soil, catch the rain to rain again.
Though weary, do not forsake the fight.
Do not tire of shouting out the plea
but bear it out even to the edge of doom.
If but one bloom be saved to bloom again,
the victory won in that one flower
a faithful servant’s finest hour.

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Live to Write to Live
William Z. Saunders

I learned to write when I was a child. Writing was fun and it was easy. In it there was no judgment, until things moved and it all changed. I went from childhood to boyhood, and then I turned into a kid. I did what I did. The world swirled, and in it I built boxes in my mind. I had bad dreams, and I hid myself in them. I got lost. I had to find my way back. I did it by writing.

It's hard to pin down exactly when things went downhill. All I know is that they did. I was driven by fear, which kept me locked in a holding pattern of stunted growth for nearly fifteen years. I used to sit or lie around for hours viewing the perpetual playback of misery in my own mind’s viewfinder. I could see it, feel it, and stare at it, but I didn’t know what to do about it, so instead of dwelling in that bad area I did whatever I could to avoid feeling it.

After I quit getting high, the stuff was still there. Someone told me once that tears were like soul puke, so I did it as often as I could. I didn’t need much stimulus, and for a while I could do it on cue. Though I had some post traumatic stress, and was in the throes of post acute withdrawal syndrome (and still am five years later), my crying wasn’t a symptom of the disorder, it was part of a healing process.

I was molting. The icy walls inside of me were melting. It was my body’s way of reacting to the sum of all the wounds that I had been refusing to feel. There is no cure, no shot you can take or pill that you can pop that will permanently eradicate the illness that comes from within, but there are tools we can use to maintain it. I was shown a spiritual exercise that could identify for me the part(s) I have played in destroying the past. This has allowed me to see in all directions. I wasn’t writing in the past. I was creatively dead. Writing is a healing tool that I have used to dig myself out of an emotional graveyard, and turn it into a burial mound.

My return to sanity was a steep slope, and I stumbled and crawled, but I’ve kept moving. As an addict/alcoholic I did things for their effects, not because I enjoyed the process. Writing is no different. At times it is all impulse, whether writing, walking down the street, or driving and POP! Inspiration following these momentary impulses and getting results has led me to make it a point to always carry a pen and pad. Even though I know that it is in the action of writing that I find relief, it is often the last thing I want to do. I don’t/won’t/can’t write until I absolutely have to. When I do it’s like vomit. I hate to do it, but it makes me feel better.

Writing is healing. The more I do it, the stronger it gets. The legs of its effect grow longer and stronger. It gets easier if I practice. I am able to revisit negative events and discern from them what I must, and I don’t have to stay there. It should be harder for me to climb out, but being conditioned to keep moving, looking no further than exactly where I am now, in this moment, I keep pressing down, getting a little further along with every letter that I draw, and every word that I write.

Poetry Therapy
Poets use poetry to deal with such issues as heroin/alcohol addiction, death, abandonment, and sexual and emotional abuse. The following poets illustrate the use of writing to deal with the above issues.

From the Pavilion of Green & White Porcelain
“Everything appears upside down, in the pavilion of green and white porcelain.”
Hans Bethge, “The Chinese Flute”

Must I scold you for saying I’ve left you?
I am with you, still…
on every azure wave that breaks the shore—
in the ivory seagull’s bleating,
greeting dawn’s first light,
I am the North Star’s glimmer that guides you home.

I am in the rain that washes clean the orchid’s petal.
I am on the wind that bends to kiss your sun-warmed cheek.
I am in the creek that murmurs, whispering your name.
I am still the same,
for there are promises to keep.

Then, do not weep remembering
the vow I made to stay;
just say that I remain true to my word—
in every note of music heard,
in poetry, in rhyme;
through the corridors of time and tide
I am by your side—

Just look for me in nature’s nomenclature,
all around—
for it’s in this dance of loving you,
that I’ll be ever found.
And though my form is changed—
you’ll find it’s been arranged
that I’m still nearer Dearest, than before;
that Love and I enfold you, hold you close—
forevermore.

Catherine-Grace Patrick
La Jolla, California
One of the worst things I inherited from my dear old Dad is chronic cystic acne. I had it all over my face, neck, and back bad as a boy. Hair products didn’t help things much, or sweating while wearing hats and helmets. Mama used to take me to see the dermatologists about once a month. There, they’d ask me how I was doing with whatever acidic confection they had me burning up my epidermis with, and then hit me with some horror stories and how I had it so good with what I was getting. I’d study the informative posters they had hanging all over the place and hope to get better medicine soon. Something, anything, would be better than the constant application of various prescription primers, strippers, and moisturizers. They finally put me on Accutane—the one that causes birth defects and makes your skin temporarily worse than it ever was. It may have caused me to develop Crohn’s disease. Anyway, I started taking the stuff just as I was about to begin again in a new town, another state, a nether world away from the old one. I spent the bulk of my fifteenth summer in Omaha, Nebraska, scooping ice cream in the now-defunct horse track Ak-sar-ben. You could see Boy’s Town (the home for wayward kids, not the famed border town, dime-a-dance hall/house of ill repute with the same name) from our apartment, and my mother would tease that if I screwed up again, they’d leave me there.

We moved to Texas in August and went tubing on the Guadalupe River. I wore a t-shirt and shorts, and though I put on plenty of sunscreen everywhere my pale skin could be seen by the sun, Accutane pulled rank on the SPF and the back half of me baked. My legs, arms, neck, and especially my ears were badly burned. I had bleached out the hair on my head a few weeks before my family forced me to dye it brown, and the sun had turned the bad dye job bright orange. I looked like the son of the Toxic Avenger and felt much worse. The next week I started eleventh grade. Since I was new and none of the other upper-classmen knew me, they didn’t hesitate to harass me along with all the other gangly geeks they were hazing. My best bro Joe told me once that he and the rest of our friends used to call me the ugliest kid we ever met.

My skin cleared up for goodness sake, but every now and then I still get spotty, burst into a breakout with a gnarly knot on my noggin like the big bump on Jean Claude Van Damme’s forehead or that supersized perpetual papule on Ric Flair’s back.

**helmet face:**

a skin condition common to motorcyclists in the winter time characterized by rosy chapped cheeks, lips, ears, and noses caused by limited/constant exposure of the cheeks and nose to weird weather, wind, and worry, not to be confused with motorcycle face, which is descriptive of a trance-like mindstate developed from externally adapting internal mechanisms, hearing humming, horns bleeping, thumb pressing, rolling helmet hair, having people honking, light passing, throttle twisting, keeping moving as time is passing, remaining calm inside throughout the whole whatever just happened happened, and I am living to tell about it.

**Someone somewhere way back when (little old me)**

A little red blooded American boy,
born in 78
had a red hot date with a wild eyed girl,
a real tuff chick.
That boy went to pick her up
in a blood red American automobile ... it was a 1978 Camaro
(there is something so sacred about being the driver of a vehicle that is just as old as you are, like a sort of biomechanical metaphysical communion that is. It can be, if looked at through the right eyes.)
They rode down the devil’s backbone toward suicide night at the county fair.
The boy kissed the girl
on the tilt-a-whirl
she had vomit in her hair.
Poetry & Dreams

Poetry, Dreams and Interpretation

James Brandenburg

“Eye of the Storm”

Aug. 18, 2011

San Antonio, Texas

Dream: The dream takes place in Switzerland in an Inn. There is a conference going on. I am sitting at a table with two unknown elderly gentlemen. In fact, each table seats three people. We are all dressed in sports jackets, but the meeting is informal. We have a nice meal with soup, Brötchen, vegetables, and fish. There is Swiss wine and pastries after the meal, and we finish the meal with an Espresso coffee. At the table in front of me is C.G. Jung. Although in his 80s, he is intently engaged in conversation with the two men seated at his table. There has been some sort of writing contest, and the three of us, at my table, are introduced. I have made a creative design out of my Brötchen. It looks like a boat. I am going to give the Brötchen to a child. There is a male Master of Ceremonies, and he calls us up one at a time to read our works. I give the Brötchen to the MC and read my poem, “Eye of the Storm.” Jung seems interested. I notice that he has a round crystal tube around 8 inches long (two inches in diameter) and is sucking honey out of it, a little bit at a time. He becomes very involved in tasting and swallowing the honey. I finish my poem and go back to my table. People rap their knuckles in approval. Although, the title of the poem, “Eye of the Storm,” appeared to me in another dream, its appearance in this dream emphasizes the significant affiliation of the symbolism in poetry and dreams.

Day Life: We have been swamped at SAC this week. Had an excellent poetry therapy session at Barnes and Noble last night. I wrote the poem there last night, but the title of the poem came to me in the dream.

Dream Interpretation: The setting for the dream is Switzerland. Why did the unconscious send me this dream at this time? I have been working for several months on my application for the Research and Training Centre in Depth Psychology at a village outside of Zürich, Switzerland. The process is almost complete. The Center was founded by C.G. Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz for the purpose of participants spending a few weeks in Switzerland at the Training Centre, and includes spending the rest of the year applying the principles to their work with clients, as well as themselves.

Although I have never been to the Training Centre, a participant in the program tells me that my dream reflects aspects of the Centre, especially the food and the wine.

I notice that Jung has a round crystal tube around 8 inches long (two inches in diameter) and is sucking honey out of it. Christ was referred to as “honey in the rock,” for soul is to body as honey is to the comb, divine essence housed in an earthly vessel (Psalm 81:16). The intricacy of the honey-making process was identified with divine wisdom, and the product itself—golden sweet on the tongue—could inspire poetry, truth-saying and prophecy, and even propitiate gods and monsters. Honey also connotes earthly sexual pleasure. Early poets describe eros as “bitter honey,” because Cupid, the honey thief, stings with arrows that intoxicate with both the sweetness and the agony of sexual desire, which brings forth new life. The honeybee’s gold is the “sweetness of the earth” and resides in naturally growing things. Jung and I make eye contact while tasting the “sweetness of the earth.” I drink my honey out of a mug, which connects me to the Germanic mythology of drinking mead, a fermented drink of honey and water—the drink of gods and heroes. The intoxicating effect is often interpreted as a sign of the transmittal of divine powers to humans.

Another symbol of divine powers is the circle. The circle leads back to itself and is therefore a symbol of unity, the absolute and perfection. In Zen Buddhism, the circle symbolizes the highest level of enlightenment; for Jung, the circle is a symbol of Self. The circle is a mandala for the individuation process, a process in which our individual journeys lead us more toward the godlike within us, I think the dream offers me compensation in that my application to the Center in Switzerland is a step forward in my own individuation process.
**Eye of the Storm**  
*James Brandenburg*

Silence inside me  
Everything calm  
The once pounding waves  
Lapping up over the shoreline  
easing down to a crawl  
and now lying perfectly still  

Yet in the depths  
Something stirred  
Hardly enough for a ripple effect  
The infinitesimal whirlwind  
Chasing its tail  
Round and round  
Until it rose to the top  
Of the water  
Escalating in size and intensity  
The circle extending its tentacles out for miles  
Hurricane-like winds erupting  
And producing a maelstrom  
Of inexplicable beauty  
Finally coming ashore  
With the eye of the storm  
At its center.

**Painting by David Drymala**

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**Stained Glass**  
*James Brandenburg*

It was  
emptiness  
nothingness  
inside  
this broken frame  
bruised  
battered  
All these years  
climbing up  
a ladder  
not looking back  
yet not afraid to fall  

I look up  
it stirs  
I don’t know  
what it is  
Is it inside?  
Is it in the stars?  

Suddenly  
I am drunk  
too drunk  
to step down  
too drunk  
to climb up  
and my heart  
shatters into shards  
onto the earth  
Finally I pick  
up the pieces  
to a poem.

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Voices de la Luna, 15 Oct 2011  
29
Healing Through Art and Poetry

I am from colored pencils
Tasha Marlin (Brandeis High School)

I am from colored pencils, broken-in paint brushes and half smeared, half splattered paint, from prism, liquitex, and copic.
I am from the home that’s a house to “those crazy neighbors,” you know, the house with the dying grass, but the thriving rose-bushes. The residence that has the puppies that wait patiently for their masters.
I am from the colorful, vivid, cross-bred flowers that never seem to die, the grass that never seems to live.
I am from waking up at 6 am so we can wait for Santa, with eyes that are green on the inside and blue on the outside, from Russell, Reese, and mum (not mom).
I am from Attention Hyper family disorder and dry sarcasm.
From no one is perfect, and you can’t change the world.
I am from believe whatever you believe is right and don’t let anyone tell you different, because I can tell you what I think, but I can’t tell you how to think.
I am from my mother who was adopted and a father who is elusive. Derived from Kit Kat bars and Frito pie, from the hardships of living on food stamps, but still being able to laugh and smile. From the hair dyes, piercings, and tattoos that express us as a whole and the handed down wisdom from sibling to sibling.
I am from the mum with two kids who would lie down and reminisce staring at a wall of mementoes, to the current time of a mum with three kids whose timelines and snapshots now hang in a hall right by the front door.
I am descended through happy times, sad times, hard times, and restless times. I am from every picture that documents each.

Art by Tasha Marlin

The following poems were written in poetry therapy groups at the Ingram Barnes and Noble Poetry Venue. Groups were run by Voices de la Luna editors.

Diamond Self
Maria Alonso

Am I that dark?
How can you distinguish me from the rest of the underground stones?
Is it my size, my shape? What?

How?
Do you glimpse a sparkle, a light?
I know it is a process to get to my brilliance within, and courage and trust to let it shine.

Mouse
Jodi Ierien

Is the nickname
You chose to bestow
On me.  Think of it:

A small, furry rodent
Known to transmit myriad
Diseases among mankind,
Frequently set upon by cats,
Stuck to glue boards,
Offered De-Con and
Strychnine practically
By the shovelful and,
All too often, found
Broken-necked in traps
Packing enough force
To snap a man’s
Thumb in two.

Yet in spite of these
Man-made hazards
We mice survive,
Flitting in and out
Of the edge of your vision,
Nibbling away at your

Peace of mind. Yes, perhaps
“Mouse” isn’t such a bad nickname
For me after all.
Little Brown Bowl
Peter Holland

Handmade of clay and water
from deep in the earth
made quick by fire.
Delicate vessel crafted
to elevate thoughts
on scented smoke.
Rustic and earthy,
sublimely imperfect
from its very creation.
Now, a fault I see.
Age is not kind to you,
but why should it?
It’s not kind to any of us.

Santo Pablo
Don Mathis

Takes me places,
Places in nature,
Places in the mind,
In winter, by a river
But always with fire.
Speechless mouth, sightless eyes,
But always with fire.
Open heavens, pulsing planets,
Infinity, mystery,
But always with fire.

Untitled
Vivian Kearney

The road not taken
appeared again in a dream
taunting and asking
would you still not choose me?
I said
God led
The road taken was the only possibility.

Untitled
Milo Kearney

Standing in the evening snow,
looking up at your balcony,
the light still on in your room,
waiting to see your face at the window.
But that was years ago,
and now you are lost from view,
somewhere in the great unknown.

Unforgiving Time
Janie Alonzo

I tried to speak to my Father
But my eyes
Could not
Hold his stern gaze
I became a child again
And my words like peanut butter
Stuck to the roof of my mouth
And there they remained
Unspoken
Unasked
Questions for another day

Life rolled on
Year by year
Erasing his memory
Softly at first
Leaving faint chalky traces
Of names, dates, faces
Then one swift stroke
Left dusty remnants
Floating in the air

The questions unvoiced
Unanswered
Too late
Memories vanish
Vanquished
By unforgiving time
I don’t remember visiting my oldest sister Renee in the hospital at all. But then, I wasn’t even a year old yet, so why would I? Maybe my parents didn’t take me and Angie with them when they went to see her. I don’t know for sure where or who we stayed with, but it must have been with maw-maw. She lived right down the road. I can’t say for sure since I’ve never asked. That whole incident is something that was not to be asked about. Angie and I understood that from the beginning.

It wasn’t like it was just a week or two that she was in there. It was a while she was in traction after a drunk family member ran over her by accident. Growing up I always wanted to ask her about that day. I was curious about morbid things, like did she scream when she saw the car backing over her legs? I finally did ask her one day when we were in her late thirties. She said she remembers seeing the underbelly of the car. It just kept coming and coming and she was thinking it would stop any moment. She said she still hears her screams in her sleep and watches the car run over her again and again. At thirty-nine, she still has nightmares about it.

My parents had no insurance and the hospital began pressing them for money. Her bill was getting bigger with each passing day. And she lay there week after week with legs that had been crushed from her hip to her ankle. She lay there with crushed, casted legs raised in traction for three months. When they left her that way too long, her feet started rotting and the gaping holes were what she was left with for a few years. The hospital stopped asking for money. Then, a few years later, a skin graft from her stomach to cover the holes only made a transparent cover so she was left with tragic scars on top of her feet and partial heels. The Shriners did the best they could. I remember begging her to let them do more, but she wouldn’t. The doctors told them that way too long, her feet started rotting and the gaping holes were what she was left with for a few years. The hospital stopped asking for money. Then, a few years later, a skin graft from her stomach to cover the holes only made a transparent cover so she was left with tragic scars on top of her feet and partial heels. The Shriners did the best they could. I remember begging her to let them do more, but she wouldn’t. The doctors told them that way too long, her feet started rotting and the gaping holes were what she was left with for a few years. The hospital stopped asking for money. Then, a few years later, a skin graft from her stomach to cover the holes only made a transparent cover so she was left with tragic scars on top of her feet and partial heels. The Shriners did the best they could. I remember begging her to let them do more, but she wouldn’t.

Visuals de la Luna, 15 October 2011
More Editors’ Poems

If I Choose …

Joan Seifert

This road is too familiar to me;
I’m searching for more essence,
and need to go another way.

The road forks into an unknown bend;
I thought I heard:
  Unless you want to change, to really change,
  don’t go that way;
  there’s no returning, really.
  And you’ll see no bright, familiar playthings,
  and nothing of the path of haughtiness you knew.

There’s low foliage there;
an herb-like scent, pungent, not unpleasant,
urges the venture in.
Myrrh, aloes, maybe?

Then from farther down the path
a great straight Tree, unwavering in its strength,
reaches toward the sky,
its vigor summoning.

My present road is too familiar to me,
and without challenge.

So, if I choose …

Product of My Experiences

Josie Mixon

No one cares about my past humiliations
Visually I am who I have always been
No one knows I wrecked my car and died that day
Nor do they know of my long walk on a short pier
My efforts at self-destruction were almost successful
Pain hindered my writing while collapsing my thinking lung
I am here now, like I was then
I walked backwards taking back my past
Crawled and spewed out energies reminiscent of hopelessness
I walked the walk and talked the walk
As if nothing was wrong
Words flowed from tightened lips
While humiliation gravitated
From one mirror to another
I am a product of my experience
It was my humiliation
That brought me here today

Autumn: Mother Nature’s Finest Hour

Valerie Martin Bailey

Seasoned by time and experience,
she’s losing leaves here and there, but
she’s outgrown the capriciousness
of springtime—when she was
a silly young thing,
given to fits of sunny giggles,
than stormy weeping for no reason.

She’s sowed her wild oats,
played the fields,
given birth, nursed her young,
danced in the bright lights.
She’s lost the heat of summer, but ripened
to perfection, she satisfies her lovers with
gentle warmth and apple-sweet kisses
beneath blue skies and harvest moons.

She’s learned the wisdom
of generosity—bestows her
bounty from a heart of gold
that understands life won’t last forever—
Winter is coming, she gives it all now.

Dance of the Light Fantastic

James Brandenburg

Funny the way
the wind blew the leaves in
through the door this morning.
And they lay there on the floor all day.

All day, I turned over hundreds of papers,
listened to the phone, even answered it
when it refused to stop ringing,
made eye contact with people
who could not look me in the eye;
my insides cramping, I sat down to finish my work
drank too much coffee
the day extending way beyond my intentions,
my papers stacked neatly in piles,
ordered in a way that gave the illusion
I was in control.

When I opened the door to go home,
the swirling leaves outside
joined the dance of the swirling leaves inside
and I stopped for a moment
noticing how randomly
they were placed here and there,
and how quickly they responded
when someone opened the door.
Amazing how light from the setting sun
fell at just the right angle,
intensifying their brown and red colors
so that I felt happy when I left the building,
and the leaves followed me out.
Short Prose

The Short Tail of the Dollar

Valerie Katz

When S&P downgraded our credit, they downgraded my life. Did they really mean to do that? What did I do but pay taxes and invest all my life? And wasn’t I promised a return to beat inflation? My mattress would have been a better place to put my cash. As it turns out, my gold jewelry was not a bad investment after all. We live on the first floor so I can’t jump out of a window after today’s stock market took a dive. Besides, I would probably only break an arm which would prohibit me from doing my own hair or putting on my makeup. Then, I’d have to go to the beauty shop more often—if I could afford it. Breaking a hip would be unthinkable. This was the time in my life I thought I’d enjoy the kids and be able to help them in ways my parents couldn’t help me, sip fancy drinks on a cruise ship and travel the world. We are so glad we did all the travel we did; I feel badly my kids might not be able to enjoy all we did, but KIDS, YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN. I am going to need every penny for my medical care, food, and shelter. Thank heaven we bought those time-shares.

I dreamed of traveling since I was a kid, but now our travel destinations are getting severely limited. Scratch Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba, Columbia, Egypt, and Morocco, in fact anywhere in North Africa, and probably a good part of Africa now that I think of it. If it isn’t starvation or human rights, it is piracy and lack of any government. Afghanistan and Iraq were never on my list to tell you the truth. Iran was. Let’s see, Jewish, not welcome in Saudi Arabia for sure or in Dubai or any Muslim country really. Dubai has eliminated Israel from all its maps and area codes for phones. Syria is in turmoil and Lebanon is a tinderbox. Israel, of course that is the ONE place I know we are welcome.

OK, let’s think of the continent, Europe. England . . . uh bombs away there. Oh, Europe is safe you say? Yes, but the Euro is killing our dollar. I was in Spain this year and it made Whole Foods look like Wholesale Foods. Germany is about the safest bet, but hard to visit on a cruise. Iceland is in the toilet, Ireland— they are still fighting there. Wales (about 10 days of summer a year). Myanmar? Talk about human rights, which brings me to Tibet. China? A possibility, but today’s comment on how we are getting what we deserve doesn’t exactly make me want to rush over there AGAIN. Japan, a bit too radioactive for me. Alaska, what if I run into Sarah Palin? Serbia and that area? Like watching grass grow. We have been to Scandinavia about 5 times and it keeps getting more expensive and not much new there to visit.

OK, let’s focus on the USA. Driving will be really fun with gas over $4 a gallon. We are having a drought and heat wave all over the South. There have been more tornadoes this year than ever before. We are not storm hunters. How about going to New Orleans and viewing the damage from Katrina 6 years ago that hasn’t been repaired? I am scared to go to San Francisco even though they have rescinded the ballot referendum on prohibiting circumcision; I am fine but I think Joel would not be comfortable and we’d have to run back to the hotel to use the bathroom.

California is a wonderful state, but we don’t have enough time to see much because of the traffic and avoiding pot holes in the highways and the profusion of CHIP pointing radar beams at you. I am afraid of getting a radiation burn. Speed traps are not a new thing, but California changes stop signs, mileage signs, and puts up road blocks while you are sleeping, and then they nail you with the newly created trap.

So, I am sitting home and reading travel magazines. I am not reordering them after the subscriptions expire, I can tell you that. It is too painful to see places we can’t go for all those reasons I have indicated.

The food channel is my only travel outlet.

I am not a big feminist, in fact quite the opposite, but it seems obvious we need to let go of a lot of the good ol’ boys in government and start a sorority. Let the women run the world for the next 200 years. What could it hurt other than a few more days of PMS, but hell, they aren’t there all that much anyway.

Science

Bob Ross

I

Frost whitened the crumbling edges of the blacktop highway. Five of us teenaged sleepyheads rode into the dawn in Mr. Pohl’s two-tone Pontiac. A ray of sunlight lit the top of Turtle Lodge Butte, but behind us, far to the west, our town’s black teapot water tower stood in shadow. Mr. Pohl complained that his engine cut out above 80, but none of us paid attention to the speedometer. Fast driving was a regular part of a high-school science teacher’s job.

We were traveling, with our projects in the trunk, to the Science Fair in Vermillion, South Dakota. As president of the Science Club, I rode up front in the window seat across from Mr. Pohl. Lydia Bunting, the Science Club treasurer, rode beside me. Stuffed in back were Andy Smith and little Gary Zwiebel, a sophomore and a freshman along for the experience. Ed Keogh took up the corner of the back seat opposite me. The son of Jack Keogh, President of the First Interstate Bank of Turtle Lodge, Ed had a wide lump of a nose and a face well spotted with pimples. He led the Turtle Lodge Pumas in rebounds and studied the classical piano, but his science aptitude was eight points lower than mine.

Lydia Bunting had braved rattlesnakes to gather fossil mouse teeth from the clay of the butte. (Her display was attractive, but I could have helped her with the interpretation.) Ed had spent his spare time that semester under my and Mr. Pohl’s supervision, feeding radioactive rat-food pellets to a cage of rats. My own specialty was radioactive phosphorus. I had taken a second place ribbon the previous year with my contact negatives of bean pods. His display was a sheaf of research, better knowledge of chemistry, and a display that had cost a fortune. I figured to clean up.

The sun rose above the horizon and warmed my face, and I settled back to bask in the coming glory. I could not help but be distracted, however, by the soft warm friction between my hip and Lydia’s. Lydia was a sophomore classmate of the despised Andy Smith. Lively and natural, with warm, dark eyes full of sparkle, she seemed to have joined the Science Club to become friends with me. I responded with scientific advice and watched her when I was supposed to be observing my goldfish....

Please read the entire piece at www.voicesdelaluna.com
Atticus Finch Was a Lousy Lawyer

Jay Brandon*

The State Bar of Texas (and I’m sure other bar associations around the country) sometimes asks a lawyer to describe his or her “Atticus Finch moment”; that is, when he did something that made him proud to be a lawyer. For me an Atticus Finch moment would be when I knew I’d screwed up and lost a case as a result.

We only know of one case Atticus Finch tried, and he lost it. Not a close loss, either: 12-zip. It was a tough case, sure, but as far as we know Atticus’ trial batting average was zero. Make no mistake about it, either: he lost it. It wasn’t even taken from him. The prosecutor in the trial was incompetent, relying on nothing but prejudice. When he finished his questioning of the complaining witness, it wasn’t even clear that a crime had been committed, let alone that Tom Robinson had done it. The answers he elicited from the supposed victim were so vague they didn’t even prove a crime: “He took advantage of me.” Did he swindle you in a con scheme?

The first time I saw the movie, when the prosecutor finished his questioning I was thinking, “Insufficient evidence.” This is a reason for a case being reversed on appeal, or for a judge to grant a directed verdict of not guilty: when the state hasn’t even proven its case. As an appellate lawyer myself, I was thinking Tom Robinson had a good chance of having his conviction reversed on appeal.

Until his lawyer began his cross-examination. Where the prosecutor had failed to prove the crime, obliging Atticus filled in the blanks: “Are you saying that my client raped you? That he sexually assaulted you?” Yes, she says. Yes. While I thought, Thank you for clearing that up for the jury, defense lawyer.

After his client is dead (and if Atticus Finch were my lawyer, I’d contemplate suicide too), Atticus says, “We had a very good chance of winning our appeal.” Well, you did until you started questioning the witnesses. Then your client was doomed.

His final argument was less than stirring too. “Tom Robinson is not guilty,” he says. I imagine jurors thinking, Wow, that turned me completely around on that question. Now I’m voting not guilty. He said it with as little flair as I’ve ever heard such words spoken, too. In his Oscar-winning performance, Gregory Peck plays Atticus as the big white stiff of the courtroom, the legal equivalent of a basketball center in 1952, with a vertical leap of half an inch.

I grant you, Atticus Finch does the morally correct thing, taking a case he knows will make him unpopular in some quarters. I don’t know of many lawyers who will turn down a judge who personally asks them for a favor, but still, he does the right thing. I just wish he’d done it better.

I don’t think much of him as a father, for that matter. After making himself the most hated man in town, he lets his children walk home alone at night through the woods, when he’s sitting at home available to pick them up. He didn’t attend the play, either, and I can’t remember ever missing one of my children’s school events. But that’s for another essay. To conclude this one, let me give you another example of his legal ineptitude.

After the climax, when justice finally triumphs after a fashion (with no help from Atticus), and Jem is lying in bed with his broken arm, Atticus is trying to remember how old his son is, to figure out whether he should be arrested as an adult or a juvenile. In a situation where any parent, let alone a halfway decent lawyer, would be trying to deflect official scrutiny from his son, Atticus is trying to turn him in. Even the not so bright sheriff finds this baffling: “Your boy never killed Bob Ewell.” Luckily for Jem, his father wasn’t representing him.

I haven’t had any Atticus Finch moments, being a pretty fair lawyer myself. He’s revered in some circles, including (to my amazement) legal ones, but do me a favor. If I’m ever unconscious, unable to think for myself, and arrested for something in Maycomb, Alabama, in the 1930s, and Atticus Finch is the only available lawyer, here’s the favor: Maycomb seems like a good-sized town, certainly big enough to have a village idiot. Hire him to represent me instead.

*Jay Brandon is the author of fifteen novels, from 1985’s Deadbolt (Editor’s Choice award, Booklist) to 2009’s Milagro Lane, as well as one book of non-fiction, a history of practicing law in San Antonio. Five of his novels feature District Attorney Chris Sinclair and child psychiatrist Anne Greenwald, the most recent being Running with the Dead (“a brilliant entry in a series that just keeps getting better”—Kirkus). His novel Fade the Heat was nominated for an Edgar award and has been published in more than a dozen foreign countries. Jay holds a master’s degree in writing from Johns Hopkins and is a practicing lawyer in San Antonio.

Freeze Frames

Fred Zirm

“Quicksand!” Danny exclaimed as the ground softened beneath our feet and sucked at our sneakers: black muck beneath the light brown pine needles in the Georgia woods where we played soldiers. We had just reached the reputed ruins of a Confederate fort—nothing more than a slight hummock and a faint line of stones in the morning light—and were too excited to watch where we were going.

“What’ll we do?” I asked. Danny was older than me, already six, and his handsome father owned a popular Italian restaurant, which gave the whole family an aura of authority in my mind, although I’m not sure what chicken cacciatore had to do with quicksand—except that they both sounded exotic. My bespectacled dad was a chemist for Dupont, but as far as I knew, he spent his time in some secret laboratory making the bubble solution he sometimes brought home for my sister and me.

“Lie down and stay still,” Danny suggested and lowered himself to the ground like we had seen big game hunters do on Ramar of the Jungle, starring Jon Hall. I followed Danny’s example. The ground smelled freshly rotten, like fertilizer, under my nose, and my blue jeans and plaid shirt were soon soaked with stagnant ooze. I tried to stay calm like a TV hero and hope that a trusty sidekick or a smart chimp would throw us one of those vines that always grow by quicksand pits in the movies. I waited, but no one came.

“Should we yell for help?” I asked Danny.

“Who’d hear us?” he replied. And he was right. The remoteness that made the fort an appealing playground and a perfect hideout also made it a perfect grave. Or so I thought. And then I thought that I should have told mom where we were going, but she would have said no because we weren’t supposed to go more...
than shouting distance from the house since the older kids supposedly hung out there and smoked and drank, and that’s why we had never come out here before, and I never would again if someone would save us before we sank or else we’d have our skeletons discovered by some scientists in the science fiction future next to some saber tooth tiger bones like in that pit in Los Angeles.

My shoulders shook, and I think I was crying when I spotted the rusty beer can about three feet in front of me. It had obviously been there a long time—and it hadn’t sunk. That’s when I realized—neither had I.

Slowly, I got to my feet.

“It’s just mud, Danny,” I said, both relieved and disappointed.

“Just mud.”

I trudged my way home; my mom would yell for a while and then wash my clothes. I had learned my lesson, whatever it was.

“Vultures!” Robert exclaimed and dropped his baseball bat as he pointed to the large birds that circled over the field behind Monroe Park Apartments, the one bit of former farmland left in the neighborhood.

“What’ll we do?” I asked. Robert was the first third grader to get a Butch-waxed flat top or show any signs of muscles. His friendship was my passport to acceptance after my family’s move to Delaware.

“Lie down and stay still,” Robert whispered, as if the birds might overhear our plan and adjust accordingly. I lowered myself to the ground, first checking to make sure that there were no bumble bees buzzing among the clover and dandelions beneath me. As I lay on my back looking at the summer sky, I watched the birds tighten their circle and thought of Westerns I had seen. Cow skulls. Cactus. Tumbleweed. A coyote howling at the moon. Freezing in your tracks if you came upon a rattlesnake. These I could remember, but I couldn’t picture Hopalong Cassidy or the Cisco Kid lying around motionless until some vultures declared them dead.

That’s when I remembered what vultures ate. I took a closer look at the birds, shielding my eyes against the afternoon sun.

“Chicken hawks,” I said as I got to my feet.

“I don’t love you,” my wife tells me. The kids are upstairs in bed, and I’ve just stretched out on the living room couch that I always see as brown, but she says is green. She’s sitting tensely on the edge of the wooden rocking chair, the first piece of furniture we ever bought and then moved from Ohio to Michigan to Iowa to this house in Maryland. I sink back further into the couch and stare at the ceiling. Except for the small stain where the bathtub once stood, and I think I was crying when I spotted the rusty beer can about three feet in front of me. It had obviously been there a long time—and it hadn’t sunk. That’s when I realized—neither had I.

It’s Not Easy Being Green
Carol C. Reposa

I was late coming to environmental activism. True, in the eighties and early nineties, I was mildly interested in the moratorium on commercial whaling and the heroic efforts of Greenpeace, but my real awakening was to come much later.

In 1999, I received a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship for study of ecology and sustainable development in Peru and Ecuador. I gleefully full up, packed up, and prepared to join fourteen others in a great adventure. And an adventure it was. One of the high points was a four-day campout in the Peruvian rainforest, during which we learned to our detriment why people call it the RAIN forest, but we also began to grasp the vital role of environmental protection. We saw trees that had been growing and thriving before the birth of Christ. I photographed a ficus with a girth of eight feet and ...
Daniel Cochran, A Tale of Youth
Dave Northrup

The seven o’clock Mass was sparsely attended, yet in the cool stillness the church was luminous. In the dark recesses of the vaulted ceiling the narrow cylinders of the chandeliers glowed a bright yellow-orange. Shafts of light from the newly-risen sun slanted through the glass panels of the side door, making the red and black veins of the marble floor seem sharply etched across the surface of the stone. Even the grain of the carved oak figures at the end of each pew stood out as though burnished with gold.

Daniel Cochran felt this was a special time, a time when he could see with absolute clarity.

The first bars of “Christ The Lord Is Risen Today” sounded from the back of the church, and Daniel turned to catch a glimpse of old Mrs. Coppard, the organist, squatting before the keyboard. The bulge of her humpback jutted up so high it hid from view all but a sliver of her grey-blue hair. Daniel stood and squared his shoulders, feeling their bulk press snugly against the material of his coat.

He looked good this Easter Sunday. Even his father had as much as said so when Daniel had taken the dark brown fedora out of the big hatbox that had Dobbs Fifth Avenue lettered so neatly in yellow cursive round the black circumference of the lid.

Clearing his throat while he cast a hurried glance at Daniel, the old man had stutteringly offered, “Th-tha-that’ll look nice with the tan topcoat.”

Daniel took a deep breath and felt his chest expand. Glancing to the side, he noted that at fifteen he could already look right over his father’s receding hairline. The play of light and the throbbing cadences old Coppard coaxed from the organ lulled Daniel into the grandeur of vaguely imagined promises. His reverie turned of old Mrs. Coppard, the organist, squatting before the keyboard. The play of light and the throbbing cadences old Coppard coaxed from the organ lulled Daniel into the grandeur of vaguely imagined promises. His reverie turned...
A Perfectly Splendid Time: 
Female Culpability in the Civil War* 
Pat Carr**

In the fall of 1860, the nation was full of wealth, leisure, and charm for those who either had plenty of slaves or who could hire plenty of servants to make things run smoothly, and well-to-do women had “a perfectly splendid time” at balls, whist parties, and ice cream soirees. Wealthy women furnished their parlors with rich brocade sofas and draperies, served elaborate dinners with courses of ham, veal, venison, duck, goose and boned turkey, which they washed down with imported French wines. They sent to New Orleans for barrels of oysters packed in ice, to Philadelphia for silk stockings or the latest in satin gowns and matching satin slippers, and they had their carriages, kerosene lamps, and sewing machines delivered from Cincinnati. Shops sold the finest leather gloves, gold toothpicks, and linen handkerchiefs, booksellers supplied the novels of Victor Hugo as well as Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*, which was the talk of dinner parties, and drugstores featured a new drink called soda water.

Fashionable women, in both South & North, stylishly suffered under dozens of petticoats, lace pantaloons, and huge hoop skirts made from yards of silk. They tucked their curls into silky snoods and velvet bonnets, called attention to their dainty earlobes with diamond or pearl studs, and adorned their bodices with jewels and gold chains bought by their successful land-owning or merchant husbands. Both Northern and Southern women were expected to rule the house and were expected to leave the cotton or tobacco crops, the field hands, and all aspects of business to their capable husbands.

When Abraham Lincoln was elected president, and Southern men talked of secession—and later war—women in both the North & South were required to turn those topics over to males as well. As Ellen Glasgow describes in her novel, *Battle-Ground*, when one wife expressed the thought that perhaps a war might last months, her husband snapped, “Can’t you leave such things as war to my judgment? …Two weeks will be ample time [to finish off the Yankees], ma’am.” Despite their lack of input over secession and war, most women were as enthusiastic as their sons, lovers, and husbands about the up-coming battles, and Louisa May Alcott wrote to a friend, “If I was only a boy I’d march off tomorrow.”

Some astute women did realize what a momentous occasion the war actually was, but in general, women on both sides merely basked in the excitement and happily stitched up fanciful army uniforms in blue and green wools trimmed with lavish gold braid. One early uniform design featured a gray jacket with crossed red bands over the chest which—as one observant soldier said—may as well have been a bulls eye to show the enemy where to aim. The women appliqued company banners, and when a troop of local boys was ready to march off, a popular matron or belle presented the lovingly sewn flag with such patriotic words as these spoken for the Arkansas Fourteenth: “It is not necessary for me to urge you on to valorous deeds. Nor do I need bid you bring back this flag as a treasured relic of our town, stained with blood and crowned with Glory! For you go from us today buoyed by determination & an innate power of endurance that knows no conquering.”

War fever swept the nation, and ladies sent off their husbands and sweethearts with hugs and packets of cigarette papers and taffy. They waved handkerchiefs and blew kisses to soldiers passing through their towns on the way to battlefields, and they gave dances and parties for soldiers bivouacked nearby. Going to war was such a heady game that ladies took picnic baskets and champagne to the hillocks outside Washington to watch the first Battle of Bull Run. It was that particular battle, in which the Union army retreated in a complete rout & overtook the ladies in their carriages, that taught them not to picnic at a battle site. But despite the defeats and shortages and a declining male population, women on the home fronts stayed relatively untouched and uneducated by the carnage on the battlefields until quite late in the war. Matthew Brady might take photographs of the bodies, and *Harper’s Weekly* might show engravings of the dead, and Louisa May Alcott might write about sick room horrors in her *Hospital Sketches*, but viewing photos or etchings or reading about maggots & suppurring wounds wasn’t like seeing the mutilation in real life, and even as the war was winding down, women kept urging, “Fight to the end, boys … and when the end comes, keep on fighting” (*Battle-Ground*, 468).

Unfortunately most women also remained unaware of just how influential they were when they refused to become engaged to or even dance with men not in uniform, or just how powerful they were in promoting the ideals of honor and bravery.

A few men became aware of how vital women could be in spying or in prompting men to act, and General Ben Butler during the occupation of New Orleans had women’s influence in mind when he issued his infamous decree declaring that any Confederate woman who spat on a Union soldier would be treated as a prostitute. But it was only after Appomattox and the assassination of Lincoln that a wider circle of men seemed to recognize just how important women could be in a war—or in a conspiracy—when they tried & executed Mary Surratt.

Despite the slow acceptance of female power by the general 19th century public, however, Civil War literature had been feminized from the beginning with a surprising number of female authors. Scores of women wrote pamphlets promoting the war and preserved the war years in letters, journals, and diaries. The most famous of these was the diary of Mary Chesnut, which documented life in the South for the entire four years. With Reconstruction, women became even more involved in reshaping Southern history, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Southern women writers were instrumental in explaining the Lost Cause and in convincing the public that the South had been noble and just. By 1900, Southern white female novelists were idealizing the role of Southern men—and women—during the war, were justifying the Ku Klux Klan, and were insisting that the war was over states’ rights and not over slavery. ...
Cyrus and Tooraj in front, the long column of marchers streamed down Pahlavi Street

Cyrus and Tooraj in front, the long column of marchers streamed down Pahlavi Street towards the center of the city. In row upon row, these cautious but determined youths, most of them students at Tehran University, serious about asserting their rights, strode on, waving homemade posters that demanded a new and free election. Ahead of them drove a line of trucks filled to capacity with armed police, while on either side of the marchers additional police kept up the pace. Police and marchers gingerly observed each other, avoiding direct confrontation. But the tension rose as the front reached the downtown business center. Suddenly, a few blocks from the bazaar, gunfire filled the air. A company of soldiers with machine guns blocked the road. Their commander yelled at the marchers through his megaphone and ordered them to disperse immediately. Initially, the students ignored the repeated call and stood fast. Another loud command ordered the soldiers to fire, and the soldiers immediately aimed several volleys into the air. Nobody moved. With another order from the commander, the soldiers lowered their guns till they were aiming right at the marchers. Shots resounded, smoke billowed, and bodies collapsed on the pavement, posters fell to the ground, pools of spilled blood painted the roads red. People ran in every direction, away from the guns and the carnage. Young protesters turned and escaped pell-mell into the park, into back alleys, around corners, and even into commercial buildings.

Cyrus was deeply shaken by the soldiers’ bloody attack; for the first time in his life he had faced bullets and eluded death by mere chance. He saw soldiers drag injured demonstrators away towards assembled trucks and military vehicles immediately advance into the disheveled street; he saw soldiers beat the injured and fallen students; he saw several of his classmates arrested and taken away by security men; and he saw three policemen running toward him.

Cyrus skipped over the sidewalk and raced into a narrow lane away from the deserted intersection where all shops were closed, their doors shuttered tight. Gasping, stumbling, he dashed along the alley’s twists and turns but after some distance ended up in a cul-de-sac with no way out. He looked around. He was alone but he could still hear the rat-tat-tat of the machine guns. Smoke was siftling into the alley and the sound of shots came closer. Desperate, he tried a few doors. Yes, one opened to his desperate touch! He followed the narrow corridor to a small courtyard with an old-fashioned restroom. Quickly he scurried into it and pulled the door shut behind him. Not long after, two of the policemen who had chased him into the alley and around the bend arrived in the cul-de-sac and espied the doors; they quickly discovered the slightly ajar door, pushed through into courtyard and started searching every nook and cranny. Cyrus could hear their heavy stomping. One pushed the door to the restroom, found Cyrus, and dragged him out, and both policemen gave Cyrus a thorough beating. Soon his face was bleeding from cuts and bruises. When they figured they had taught him a solid lesson, the policemen pushed him back through the alley toward the main street where they shoved him into a military truck, already loaded up with other captured students.

Before the sun went down, most demonstrations in the city were crushed; only isolated battles continued. Tehran was transformed into a war zone under strict military control; the university was overrun by security forces and became the staging post for special police operations. Hour after hour military trucks rumbled through the streets, transporting their captives from all over town to the soccer field of Tehran University that now served as processing center for arrested marchers. Upon arrival, the arrested protestors were herded into a column and commanded to move across the field where they were systematically beaten.

By late night the last truck had arrived and the officers received the news that the Shah’s military forces had overtaken the bazaar and razed all the barricades. Now it was time to process the prisoners. First the police meted out another severe thrashing to all offenders; the beatings lasted all night. Meanwhile the officers called five captives at a time into a corner of the soccer field where a small field tent served as makeshift office. By midnight most of the captives were registered and given numbers. When Cyrus was brought in for registration and interrogation, he was still in high spirits despite the aches and pains he was starting to feel all over his body. He steadfastly asserted that he was a student who demonstrated only for the protection of the established constitutional monarchy, for freedom of the press, and for democracy. His interrogator disdainfully dismissed these claims; all he wanted to know was whether Cyrus was a Communist or a follower of Ayatollah Khomeini. The young man insisted that he belonged to the Iranian National Front and supported the present constitution. When the interrogator searched Cyrus’s pockets, he found flyers from the Iranian National Front and its affiliated student organizations.

“These people are fools,” the interrogator sneered, “They are a bunch of puppets dancing to Khomeini’s music.”

“We care less about the mullahs,” Cyrus said. “We are for the constitution.”

“That’s bullshit,” the interrogator shouted. “I have a spot for you in Evin Prison.”

Cyrus began to realize his precarious situation. Suddenly he remembered his classmate Bijan, who had lost a year of medical school because he had been held in Evin Prison and who often groaned about the many times he had been tortured there to within an inch of his life. As if the interrogator were reading his mind, he screeched at Cyrus, “Say goodbye to your medical education!”

After a pause the interrogator announced, “Here is one chance to get back to your life,” and pushed a form toward Cyrus. “Just sign this, and you will be given another chance. We’ll release you right away.”

Cyrus merely pushed the form back. No way was he going to sign this. At that point, the interrogator signaled another policeman to intervene. That man pushed Cyrus to the floor and began throwing punches at Cyrus’s chest and face, yelling, “This is your reward for demonstrating against the government!” He completed the treatment by kicking Cyrus repeatedly in the crotch until Cyrus curled up and became mute. After a final kick the policeman hollered, “Just shut your mouth and leave the politics to us.”
He opened the tent and signaled two other policemen to drag Cyrus out to the field and shove him among the nearest row of prisoners sitting in the soccer field, nursing swollen lips and bruised faces and bodies. Most of them were young, many of them students, a few from the medical school. It was now after midnight and the prisoners had received neither food nor water since their arrests early in the day. The starless night and the heat and humidity added to the captives’ glum suffering.

As the police began to divide the prisoners and assign them to different prisons, a new officer who had joined the task noticed Cyrus’ name; it sounded faintly familiar. He ordered a sergeant to bring in Cyrus for a second round of interrogation. He looked at Cyrus’ swollen face but the memory remained foggy. He perused the questionnaire from the previous session with Cyrus’ information and his answers. He turned to Cyrus, “You are really lucky; this time the National Front leaflets have saved your life, because they prove you are not a Communist. But they are not enough to prevent your expulsion from medical school. There is only one way!” The officer pushed a document towards Cyrus, “Save your ass. Write a few lines and beg for leniency.”

Cyrus read the printed statement. It stated that the undersigned had confessed to breaking the law by participating in illegal anti-government activities. Below that the accused expressed his regrets, asked for clemency, and promised to avoid all criminal activity in the future. Cyrus took one final glance at the sheet and looked up at the officer and said, “I have not broken any law. The Iranian constitution permits the peaceful expression of political opinion. All we are saying is that the latest parliamentary elections were a farce and we demand new and free elections.”

The officer exploded with anger; he landed a punch in Cyrus’ face and shouted, “You’re revolting against our country, our Shah!” Another punch landed. “You are out of your bloody mind!” The officer screamed and delivered a third punch.

Cyrus felt dizzy, but managed to raise his head, “I love this country more than you do.”

“You’re nothing but a stupid traitor.”

When another attempt to convince Cyrus to sign the pledge failed, the officer ordered Cyrus to be taken into a corner for another round of beating, and added Cyrus’ name to the list of medical students that must be expelled from the university. The policemen stopped the beating only when Cyrus collapsed in front of their feet. Bloody cuts and bruises covered his face, legs, chest, and ribs. Breathing turned into excruciating agony for Cyrus. They dragged him out of the tent and dropped him back on the soccer field among other prisoners who would be sent to Evin Prison. The officer looked at Cyrus’ information, this time perusing it slowly.

It was dark and the grass was cool. Cyrus crawled towards the rest of the well-beaten and condemned marchers and crumpled into fetal position beside them. At that moment he was not thinking clearly, but still he was certain the fight was not over and the people would continue to resist the Shah’s regime. “Things will change,” he mumbled. “People will overcome this unjust situation.” He did not believe the officer that his medical education was about to come to an abrupt end; he took that as a bluff. Revolutionary fervor pulsed strong in his heart. He vowed, “To achieve our goal to establish a democratic society in Iran, I must do my part.”

It was well into the night when a policeman came looking for Cyrus. Calling his name several times before locating him, the policeman pulled Cyrus out of the crowd and back into the makeshift office. Inside the office, Cyrus faced the same officer who earlier interrogated him. Now the official was sitting in a metal chair perusing the list of captives to be transferred to Evin Prison. Cyrus couldn’t sit still. Intense pangs of pain needles in his legs, hips, swollen face, and chest. Holding the list the officer looked at Cyrus and said, “What’s your name?”

“Cyrus Sohrabi.”

“This is your last chance, Cyrus!” The officer yelled at him. Then, in a stern but low voice, he said, “If you don’t sign now, you will go to jail and it will be years before you will see the light of day.” The officer repeated calmly, “Don’t be an idiot. Sign it.” He pushed the paper toward Cyrus and when Cyrus didn’t respond, the officer dismissed him with a grimace, “Fucking asshole, you will never see a medical school diploma. Never.”

Cyrus didn’t hear the last words because of the severe aches stabbing his chest. But he mumbled, “I have done nothing wrong.” While the officer was pondering what to do with Cyrus, measuring him up carefully, something flashed in his mind. Suddenly a past memory surfaced and now Cyrus’ voice and face were again familiar to him. Cyrus was surprised at the officer’s confused expression but forced his words through swollen lips, “Believe me, I deeply respect our constitutional monarchy and I’m not against the Shah.” But the officer was not listening now. There was a long silence while the officer looked at Cyrus’ papers, murmuring to himself, Cyrus Sohrabi, Cyrus Sohrabi? Where have I heard the name before? He got up, turned, and left quickly, slamming the tent flap against the metal frame. Cyrus was both surprised and frightened by this sudden departure, but there was something curious about this officer. The man’s voice triggered a chain reaction in his brain; he thought something was familiar about the tone, the man’s indecisiveness, and his mannerisms.

Outside, near the gate of the soccer field, the rest of the officers were assigning the remaining captives to various city prisons. Only one officer kept himself apart, walking in a circle and thinking about Cyrus, “Haven’t I seen that guy somewhere?” He murmured. All of a sudden, two faces flashed in his mind: Cyrus and Cyrus’ brother, Parviz, playing chess late at night while he was watching them, frustrated Parviz, calm but victorious Cyrus.

Swiftly, the officer turned and asked his lieutenant to follow him into the makeshift office where he pulled out the list of captives, crossed over Cyrus’ name, rolled up the three pages with the information about Cyrus and shoved them into his breast pocket and ordered, “Officer! Move on with other assigned captives to Evin. I’ll handle this one myself.” He pointed to Cyrus who was still sitting on a chair awaiting his fate. The officer moved close to Cyrus for another good look. Yes! This is the one! “Hey, you. I used to play chess with your brother—we were classmates in senior high, now I remember you.” Cyrus was surprised at this change in manner. “Don’t you have a brother named Parviz?”

“I do,” answered Cyrus with an air of suspicion. Cyrus slowly and painfully looked up into the officer’s face and he too made the connection. He remembered him! Years ago this man used to visit Parviz and play chess. The officer had played many games with Parviz but only two with Cyrus, but both times he had been checkmated quickly. Cyrus remembered the name, too.

Continued on page 41
Yes, this was Kazem, now sporting a thick mustache and appearing much slimmer and important in his tightly buttoned, dark-blue uniform. Cyrus wasn’t sure this discovery would make any difference. He thought the man used to be more polite then, but always a poor chess player who could never stage an effective offensive strategy.

“Do you still play chess?” Kazem asked, in an almost conversational manner.

“Not lately.”

“No, it’s hard to find time for chess when you’re a medical student!”

“Bullshit! You have been wasting your time cavorting with criminals.” The officer stood up and curtly ordered Cyrus, “Shut up and follow me.”

Cyrus was confused about the situation. He sensed a change in Kazem’s attitude towards him and was wondering what that meant; at any rate he had no option but to follow the officer, across the field into a dark passage and then out of the gate into the quiet street. A police sentry saluted Kazem who replied with a smart gesture. The strange couple continued into the dark, passing under some maple trees on the sidewalk, crossing the deserted street that had been blocked off by military vehicles, and passing under a broken street light. They continued. Cyrus obediently, but somewhat confused, followed till Kazem finally stopped at the tall brick wall of the university.

The officer pushed Cyrus against the wall and hissed: “Take these papers and get out of here. Run and make yourself scarce! Get out of this area as fast as you can. And remember! From now on, stick to your books and play chess instead of hanging around criminals.”

Cyrus was frozen on his feet and could neither react nor move. He stared at the Kazem’s face with bewilderment, in total amazement. Kazem repeated in an urgent whisper. “You better run now, quickly, before anybody discovers what is happening. Hurry up! Go!”

He pushed Cyrus into the dark alley and added, “Say hello to Parviz.” Then he abruptly turned around and walked back towards the gate of the university and the soccer field.

Chapter Ten

At dawn the next day, security forces ambushed the house of Ayatollah Khomeini

At dawn the next day, security forces ambushed the house of Ayatollah Khomeini in the city of Qum and arrested him and hundreds of his followers in Qum, Tabriz, and Tehran, hoping to end his crusade and return calm and peace to the cities. The arrest of the Shiite leader was unprecedented in the history of Iran. The holy and unwritten accord that had dictated mutual tolerance and respect between state and mosque was broken. The arrest of Ayatollah Khomeini transformed him permanently into the Shah’s most formidable enemy and raised his popularity among the Iranian people by leaps and bounds. Suddenly he became a national hero for everyone, even those in secular and nationalist groups.

The government tried Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran for instigating an uprising and attempting to overthrow the government. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison. His arrest and conviction were greeted with protests by both Moslem and Western countries. When heads of state in the Middle East, Europe, and North America pleaded for clemency for the Ayatollah, the Shah commuted the sentence into exile abroad in return for his promise to preach on religious matters only and abandon politics for a while. The Ayatollah settled first in Turkey and later in the Shiite holy city of Najaf in Iraq. He gradually built up that religious center into a breeding ground for his personal vision of an Islamic system of government in Iran.

He became a time-bomb that would explode some sixteen years later and ignite fire and quakes in the streets of Tehran. For the next sixteen years the mosques in Iran became the bulwark of political resistance, the only effective centers of opposition against the Shah. From that time on the Shah and his government began their slow, downward slide into an abyss of demise and defeat.

Over the next decade and a half a steady chain of events continued like a curse and finally delivered the fatal blow to the Shah’s family, his dynasty, and to the entire secular culture that had flourished under his regime. The storm started brewing in the spring of 1963 and grew into a social unrest, a devastating tsunami, Khomeini at its front edge, its stalwart.

“..." The Shah is a weak man,” Ayatollah Khomeini had once said to his theology students. “He is a coward, a very superstitious king. He reminds me of Nader Shah, who once killed most of his top aides after accusing them of disloyalty, but wouldn’t harm the court’s Ayatollah who eventually plotted and dethroned him. The Shah is also digging his own grave.”

Knowing the Shah’s achilles heel, Khomeini’s supporters used mosques to their advantage against both the Shah and other opposition groups. Their vision gathered steam and gained support around the country. The mullahs became the only active group who could utilize the religious holidays and memorial services to propagate Khomeini’s rhetoric, his call to resist against the government, distribute printed and audio material dedicated to his vision of an Islamic government for Iran.

Love Is This

Rumi

from http://www.rumi.org.uk/love_poems.html#This is love

The intellectual is always showing off, the lover is always getting lost.

The intellectual runs away, afraid of drowning; the whole business of love is to drown in the sea.

Intellectuals plan their repose; lovers are ashamed to rest.

The lover is always alone, even surrounded by people; like water and oil, he remains apart.

The man who goes to the trouble of giving advice to a lover gets nothing. He’s mocked by passion.

Love is like musk. It attracts attention.

Love is a tree, and the lovers are its shade.
San Antonio Small Presses

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Bedrock by Bonnie Lyons
Bonnie Lyons’s first full-length book of poems, In Other Words, was published by Pecan Grove Press in 2004. Her chapbooks, Himen (2003) and Meanwhile (2005), were both published by Finishing Line Press. She is also the author of Henry Roth: The Man and His Work and co-author of Passion and Craft, interviews with fiction writers. A Professor of English at the University of Texas at San Antonio, she has received teaching, creative writing, and research awards from the university. She has taught as a Fulbright Professor at the Aristotelian University in Thessaloniki and at the Central and Autonoma Universities in Barcelona, and has also been a Fulbright lecturer in Athens, Rome, Florence, Haifa, and Tel Aviv.

Feeding Time by Emily Scudder
Emily Scudder is the author of two chapbooks, Natural Instincts and A Change of Pace (Finishing Line Press) and the editor of the blog Fiddler Crab Review: the Home of the Poetry Chapbook Review. Her poems have been published in Harvard Review, Agni Online, Salamander, New Letters, Harpur Palate, and other journals. She lives with her three favorite land creatures, her husband and two children, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Inherent Vice by Pat Valdata
Patricia Valdata has an MFA in writing from Goddard College. Her publications include two novels, The Other Sister (Plain View Press, 2008) and Crosswind (Wind Canyon Publishing, 1997), plus an earlier chapbook from Pecan Grove Press, Looking for Bivalve (2002). Her poetry has won first place in the Eastern Shore Regional Poetry Competition and the Icarus Poetry Competition. She has twice received Maryland Individual Artists Grants for poetry.

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—E. A. “Tony” Mares, author of With the Eyes of a Raptor and Astonishing Light: Conversations I Never Had With Patrociño Barela

As If The Empty Chair / Como si la silla vacía
by Margaret Randall

These twelve exquisite poems depict, with razor-precise clarity, the realities of the “disappeared” in Latin America and the emotional devastation of the families left behind. As human beings, we can find the strength to bury our dead, grieve for them always, and yet somehow move on. Not so with our disappeared loved ones: every moment is filled with the horror of what they must be suffering in some secret torture cell. We never escape from their screams, and we never stop trying to find them. As Margaret Randall so vividly writes, “We cannot move on, for where would they find us when they stumble home?”

Crazy Love
by Pamela Uschuk

Life lived at the fever pitch of awareness and care—intensely present eye and voice, to ripped-out rooms, distant battles, vivid landscapes, succulent soil cupped in the fist and loves un-ending—Pamela Uschuk moves at eloquent, passionate depth through the glories and pleasures of our haunted days. In language both rich and sturdy, she reminds us it is “never too late for repair” in any realm of being.
—Naomi Shihab Nye, award-winning poet, novelist, and children’s author
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Poetry & Art Events

San Antonio Recurring Venues

DISCLAIMER: All venue information listed has been provided by third parties. These venues have not been verified. It is the sole responsibility of parties interested in attending these venues to verify the validity of the post.


Tuesdays 6–9 PM – Jazz Poet Society – Guadalupe Street Coffee, 1320 Guadalupe St.– (210) 573-5115. Bring poetry and songs and work with other poets and songwriters to present works on stage. A drum circle accompanies poets.


Tuesdays 10:30 PM – Puro Slam – The Heights–9315 N. Broadway (just north of 410). Weekly open mic certiﬁed by the National Poetry Slam allows poets to deliver their work and get heckled. DJ Donnie Dee spins before and after the show. Sign up begins at 9:30 PM. Slam begins @ 10:30 PM. For more information visit www.puroslam.com.

1st & 3rd Wednesdays 7–9 PM – Barnes & Noble, Ingram Festival, 6065 NW Loop 410 (same side as Ingram Mall). Features and open mic. 210-522-1340. Host: Josie Mixon.

Every Fourth Wednesday – Barnes & Noble, The Shops at La Cantera, 15900 La Cantera Parkway, Bldg 27, San Antonio, TX 78256. Host: Voices de la Luna: 6 PM Poetry Workshop / 7 PM Featured Guest / 8 PM Open Mic.


2nd Saturday 7–9 pm – Gallista – Features and open mic, Gallista Gallery and Art Studio, 1913 S. Flores – (210) 212-8606. Host: Thom E.

3rd Saturday 1–3 PM – San Antonio Poets Association – Monthly at Bethany Congregational Church – 500 Pilgrim Dr.

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In Memoriam

Peter McKinnon
1958-2011

A poet, father, past technical director of Voices de la Luna, and city of San Antonio employee, Peter C. McKinnon, 53, died in a tragic motorcycle accident near his home on Friday, June 17, 2011.

Born in Waterbury, Connecticut, on Feb. 11, 1958, he was the son of Charles T. McKinnon and the late Germaine (Ouellette) McKinnon of Boca Raton, Fla. Peter was the proud father of four children: Sgt. Julian (Tina) McKinnon, U.S. Army, and A1C Joshua McKinnon, U.S. Air Force, both currently deployed in Iraq, and two daughters, Mariyah and Michelle McKinnon. He also precedes three siblings, Joanne (Andre) Bourassa of Bristol; Bruce (Mercy) McKinnon of Mexico, Mo.; and RoseMarie (Mauro) Santos of Boca Raton, Fla., as well as his former wife, Rosa Surita McKinnon, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and other relatives.

Following graduation from Sacred Heart High School in Waterbury, he entered the Air Force, retiring in 1997. He received a BA in criminal justice from the University of Central Florida and master’s degrees in public administration and management from Webster University in San Antonio, Texas. At the time of his death, Peter was the administrator of the Bob Ross Senior Services Center in San Antonio. His avocation was writing poetry, and in 2004 his first collection of poetry was published, If Only Yet the Fog. He volunteered his time working on community literary projects and events and hosted San Antonio’s first Poets in the Park event in 2006. He served as technical director of Voices de la Luna from 2008 to 2010.

To read his published poems in the past issues of Voices de la Luna, please go to the “Archives” section of the webpage at www.voicesdelaluna.com, click on the PDF icons of the 2009 and 2010 issues, and browse the editors’ poems.

Instructions for the eMagazine

Go to www.voicesdelaluna.com

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The Archives include 15 March, 15 June, 15 Sept and 15 Dec 2009; and 15 March, 15 June, and 15 Sept 2010.

To Submit Poetry: joans@voicesdelaluna.com
To Submit prose: Deb Peña: debra.pena@utsa.edu
Send Questions to: chopper001@satx.rr.com