

PROGENITOR

Art & Literary Journal 2018



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www.arapahoe.edu/progenitor
progenitor@arapahoe.edu
5900 South Santa Fe Drive
Littleton, Co 80120
303-797-4222

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A Letter from the Editors:

We would proudly like to introduce you to the latest edition of *Progenitor Art & Literary Journal!*

Our staff, made up of ACC students, worked hard to create this latest edition. By working with a myriad of contributors, each one proud to bring forth their life's experiences, we strived to create a magazine of pure excellence while also embracing the theme of regrowth out of the ruins of modern-day life. More importantly, these works suggest that there will always be hope that humanity will be seen through the cracks of a cold and brutal world. Our compiled works suggest that the beauty of humanity can be found in the darkest of places. These contributors have shared their perspectives of such a theme through art and literary devices. It is our wish that you will enjoy the pieces as much as we have.

Furthermore, we would like to extend our thanks to the contributors whose work has helped to create the new edition of *Progenitor Art & Literary Journal*. We would also like to express our gratitude to the staff who worked diligently to make this latest edition possible. Finally, we would formally like to thank you, dear reader; if it was not for your overwhelming support, the journal would not have the ability to make an impact. Without all of you, it would not be possible.

Sincerely,

Cara Allen and Rachael Lozano
Co-editors of *Progenitor Art & Literary Journal*.

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* Winner: Writers Studio 2018 Literary Contest, our annual state-wide contest

** Winner: 2017 Student Art Juried Exhibition, a college-wide fine art contest

PROGENITOR:

*A person who first thinks of something
and causes it to happen.*

The Beer Gene

By: KG Newman

Imagine the liquor store
your grandfather used to frequent:
Was he known by name and if so
did he feel guilty about how often
he clanged the front bell—
back for just beer, not hard stuff,
his way of justifying the buy?

Now imagine the brewery
your father made his favorite—
he might have met your stepmom
there—and where won't your son
be able to visit a dispense?
The opportunities for intoxication
are endless even if staggered
by generation, bedridden old men
hanging on just long enough
for their son to light their joint.



Home

By Susan Smith



Eden - Winner: Writers Studio Literary Contest

By Darryl Halbrooks

A few other folks live up this way but I don't know any of them. Sometimes they wave and I might do something to show I've seen them—not too much—I can't have them thinking just because they waved I'm going all out on my end. I'll raise my eyebrows or jerk my chin but that's about it.

The first time this one guy waved I looked around to see if there was somebody behind me. If any of them made a *real* first move, like if they asked me what I've been up to, something like that, I might tell them about the holes—or maybe show them what's left of Daddy's old car—but they'd have to show me something of theirs first, like the machine gunner's machine gun or that other neighbor's fake waterfall, but no way I'm making the first move.

I bet you didn't know that deer bark. It's almost more of a cough than a bark.

I suspect it's some kind of warning—about me most likely. Of course, I could be wrong. Maybe they're all sick.

You've probably seen my paintings in the little store/gallery down in Walpole. They're Gardens of Eden mostly. Miss Michelle sells them for me.

Sometimes I get tired of doing Gardens of Eden but you gotta put food on the table, and according to Miss Michelle, people want Gardens of Eden—and if I don't make them—Vernon Hickman's ready to jump right in. Vernon lives up in Scooter. He's the one's been supplying her with those little animals welded up from garden tools and such. Vernon's been itching to get into the G.O.E. line but he says he doesn't want to step on any toes.

Sometimes I'll slip a tiny space ship into one of my G.O.E.'s. No one's caught on yet but I could show you just where to look. I put in

all the animals they would have had back then. No dinosaurs or mastodons or anything Bible people wouldn't have known about, but lots of snakes and spiders. Not just that one snake. Everybody uses *that* snake.

There's a big white dog under my house.

It's dark under there and I couldn't tell what it was 'til my eyes adjusted. I have a flashlight but the batteries went dead in 1987 (which I recognized as a sign.) I haven't said anything to the dog yet. You can make a dog like you by giving it food but *I* couldn't do that. If I made the first move it would mean that I had requested the dog's affection. But if it comes over and licks my hand I might speak to it, maybe even feed it.

In the afternoons it's quiet up here—except for the rooster and the machine gunner. I've been here twenty years and I've never seen him up close, the machine-gunner I mean. I know

"A code is what you live by."

where he lives though. From time to time I walk back behind his property to see what he's up to but the woods are pretty thick. He does a lot of hammering and sawing when he's not machine-gunning. He's put up a sign at the head of his driveway that says *Redneck*. I could have guessed that but I suppose he feels the need to make it clear.

Daddy inherited this property from an uncle but he never got around to doing anything with it. He used to talk about building a little getaway. He was fixin' to put it where some

squatters had parked this old church bus. He was a year away from retirement when his heart attacked him and that was that.

I moved into the bus.

Last week I built a windmill.

We don't get much wind here but every now and then a breeze turns the rotor and sends a few volts my way. An old car battery I got out of a junked car stores just enough juice to light a small bulb. On windy days I can work on my notebooks even after dark.

I'M KEEPING A RECORD OF EVERYTHING!

Self-sufficiency, that's what I believe in. Self-sufficiency and a code. A code is what you live by.

Ellie used to be with me on that but I guess she's been corrupted.

Sometimes even I miss the electricity. Real electricity was nice. Some folks say Ellie took off like she did because of what happened to little Greta, but I think it was the electricity.

The first time the power went out it was because somebody stole my fuses. Took the whole fuse holder right out of the box.

The second time I discovered the whole meter gone.

I hitched a ride into town to tell the electric company that somebody stole our meter and they told me that *they* took it. The electric company!

I could see it sitting on a shelf behind the electric man. I know it was mine because I could make out the little space ship on the glass.

These are different times, the electric man said. You can't just string wire through the woods anymore. You have to bury it in conduit and have an approved box on the outside and an approved service entrance and an inspection and

about a thousand other things that I can't afford and I said well bleep that.

Whenever I feel like saying fuck I just say bleep instead, which is a lot better than saying fuck.

Anyway, I told Ellie that this was actually a sign we'd become too dependent upon the whims of the electric company. And this sign they've given us is our opportunity to get off-grid.

No electric didn't sit too well with Ellie but that rattlesnake was the last straw. She wanted me to kill it, but that snake never did anything to me. Scared me a little, is all. At least the rattlesnake gives you a warning, unlike the electric company.

Most people are afraid of snakes.

The only contact they ever have with them is from movies or TV or maybe a zoo if it's a really good zoo, not like the one down in Walpole. *They* just have some goats and a llama but I saw somewhere that the St Louis Zoo has snakes—AND SPIDERS—and hard-shelled insects. It's not that I'm crazy about snakes, but when Ellie heard it rattle under our porch she freaked out. She pulled Greta up close and started crying and carryin' on—shrieking and pounding my chest—saying I was crazy for making us live like this. But if you ask me it didn't look like I was the crazy one.

I have three books.

Ellie packed the rest of them up when she took off with Joshua. Joshua—he's our oldest.

One is a book on color theory. Another is a book on design and the other one is about birds. Do you know the song of the wood thrush? It's an echo-y three-part melody that goes up on the first notes, levels off in the middle and goes back down at the end, finishing up on a little trill. I try to whistle his song back to him and he seems to answer—although that could

be what he would do anyway because when I don't do anything he still sings. I might not do it anymore. I'll have to study on it.

I still have Joshua's drawing of a whippoorwill.

He found one sitting on the picnic table. It might have been sick or something because it didn't move for two days. They're not beautiful. Fat with spots all over. I thought about putting one in the G.O.E. but it was too ugly so I used a swan. Joshua couldn't draw very well but his looked lots better than the real one. Too bad about his picnic table though. Really bad perspective.

Joshua wrote me a letter.

He said his mom told him to or he wouldn't have. He said for me not to write back, and that he wouldn't open it if I did. I didn't write back because (A) he told me not to and (B) his letter didn't qualify as a first move since his mother made him write it. Joshua says he's changing his name to Roto42 and that I should pronounce it Roto-four-two.

He used to get upset because I wouldn't teach him how to draw but it's against my rules to teach somebody to draw. I liked his drawings because they were honest. Honestly bad. I could have shown him my little tricks to make things look like what they look like—but they would have been more my drawings than his—and you can't have that.

When he was little he drew this great bird with fire coming out of its tail like a rocket. He'd always cry because his pictures didn't look real and he'd crumple them up and throw them away and I'd go uncrumple them and put them in a special folder. I might show them to him someday but he'd have to say something like—I'm glad you wouldn't teach me to draw—it used to upset me but now I now see that you were helping me stay honest. Or something like that.

That old school bus had started to leak pretty bad so I decided it was time to build a house. The squatters had left a few books in the bus. One of them was a book on log cabin construction. You can learn anything from a

“... if not you, who? If not now, when? Know what I mean?”

book. I still remember the name of the fella who wrote it—Walt Wheelock. Sometimes I'll say his name over and over to myself, you know, how you do when you can't sleep? Walt Wheelock—Walt Wheelock—Walt Wheelock. Or I'll use his name when I can't get started peeing—like when I'm at one of those urinals in town.

Say a man comes and stands next to me—I start saying Walt Wheelock—and he usually goes away. Then I can pee.

Anyway, Walt Wheelock's book showed you how to put together a log cabin. Old Walt, he dug a ditch and laid concrete blocks and used a cement mixer and a level and all kinds of power tools. All I had was twenty-eight acres of trees and Daddy's old chainsaw, which worked for about a week. Didn't have no fancy level either. I figure—if it looks level—it's level. Walt Wheelock's book had photographs instead of drawings. I guess Mr. Wheelock couldn't draw any better than Roto42. I just dug some holes and stuck posts in the ground. They've pretty much rotted away now and these days she's starting to list to starboard just a bit—but you get used to that. 'Course, when I'm in town I notice that I lean to the left more than most folks.

We used to have an outhouse.

It was set on skids so when things got too bad you just shoved it over a new hole and backfilled the old one. But that lady from social services, she said outhouses were a violation of the new county codes so she brought us this chemical toilet.

Greta said—I have to pee, Daddy. Sat down and used it right there in the kitchen.

I don't think she really had to go that bad. It was just because it was a new thing.

I put the chemical toilet out in the old outhouse. Everybody liked it because it had

*"Tomorrow I might whistle. That
wouldn't be like calling out
with your voice."*

a lid. They were always expecting a snake to come up out of the old outhouse hole but I don't think a snake would like it down there any better than you would.

I have to carry the chemical toilet down the hill to empty it in the creek. I ran out of the chemical you're supposed to put in it a long time ago. (A sign.) It's pretty heavy and you have to hold the thing way out to keep it from sloshing you, but that hardly ever works. The trip back is a lot easier but I have to hold my nose the whole way.

Water's still the biggest problem.

A well was out of the question 'cause you have to scrape out a road so they can get the drill rig in and it costs two arms and two legs

to drill—so what *I* do is—I haul water from Miss Michelle's store/gallery in town. She lets me fill up this five-gallon jug, which lasts a week if you're careful, even though carrying it is a killer. That's for drinking and cooking. Between the toilet and the five-gallon jug, I think my arms are about three inches longer than God intended.

I get rainwater from the roof too.

It pours into a trashcan I set up on a wooden tower. The tower fell down a few years back but the water still goes into the can. Anyway, that water is for dishes and showers. It always looks sort of black. Sometimes it starts to stink if it hasn't rained in a while. Ellie and the kids used to hate showering with it. Ellie was always after me to build something automatic so you could stand under it and pull a rope or something.

People from town though, they say that the water is what made little Greta sick—but I doubt that. It's never made me sick.

I've already dug a hole for the white dog, just in case. There's a hole for Ellie and a hole for Roto42 and one for me as well ... all empty so far ... but the wire mesh framework holds their shape and keeps them useable should the unfortunate occasion arise. I used chicken wire for the first hole and when it came time to put the chicken in —natural causes—I found that it had collapsed some, despite the straw filler ... so for my new holes I use rat-wire with a filler of those Styrofoam peanuts. That's what I used for the white dog's hole too. I dug it next to the chicken's hole, but even if the white dog doesn't return or fails to get the message I'm putting out there ... like telepathically...something will eventually come along.

From time to time I check out my own hole.

It's a comfort to know that when your time comes your hole can be quickly put to its intended use without a lot of fuss. It's a little weird doing upkeep on your own hole but if not you, who? If not now, when? Know what I mean?

I try to keep little Greta's hole maintained. They wouldn't let us put her in it but someday I'm going to dig her up from that cemetery in town and bring her home where she belongs.

I'm going to bed now.

Tomorrow I might whistle. That wouldn't be like calling out with your voice. Sometimes dogs come if you whistle, so I might do that. It wouldn't be like I had broken a rule. It would just be whistling and you never know what might happen.

If I whistled and a dog came that would be some kind of sign.



Origami Forest Fire

By: Jadon Gold



Bodily Authority

By: Meredith Lindgren

“For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does.”
1 Corinthians 7:4 (ESV)

I went to the doctor and found out that I’d lost the baby. It had been dead since right around the last appointment. I had carried it around that way for four weeks, the longest I could have without anyone noticing. The doctor, who had delivered my daughter twenty months before, asked if I wanted to do the removal procedure, dilation and curettage, that afternoon or if I wanted to wait the weekend, to see if anything happened, it was Friday.

I didn’t wait.

I had tasted anesthesia before. I never met a surgery that I liked.

I woke up screaming “Put it back in! It’s still alive!” The faces in the room were the surgical technician and my husband of two years. They fell. This quieted me. The room echoed even with the silence though.

There was nothing to do but leave, pick up dinner and go home.

I got put on two weeks pelvic rest. My follow up exam would be at the end of it. The mood aside, to fuck could be to fuck off my fertility.

When I imagine what happened next, order and honesty aren’t important.

Silence is the only truth.

He was coming to bed. The sun was rising. I guess it had been good coke, all night coke. The drugs were just another promise broken. If people wouldn’t say anything to get what they wanted, he would. My job was to not care.

As far as the next part, I tell myself he forgot that the doctor said we couldn’t do it. I tell myself he just forgot about the potential loss of fertility. Of course he cared, I was his wife.

I tell myself he didn’t hear me say “no.” I was too quiet.

That’s what I’ve told myself when I’ve tried not to think about it. I still tell myself that.

I turned my head into the pillow to hide my tears. I tell myself he didn’t see them. He didn’t hear me say no, because I said it too quietly. He didn’t see me crying. I have a really flexible neck. I could barely breathe my face was so far in the pillow.

He was touching, not holding my wrists. I wasn’t being held down. I could have gotten out and it wouldn’t have hurt like getting hit. That was behind us. It would never happen again. Shelters are always full.

This was nothing like that. And he didn’t hear me say no. And he didn’t see me cry. Just because there were hands on my wrists didn’t mean they were held down.

Then it was over. That’s what I tell myself. After that it was over because it stopped.

I lay in the fetal position, nothing was lost on me. I tried not to shake our bed with my crying. I didn’t want to think what would happen if I did, he hated when I cried.

There was no better place to calm down. When he fell asleep he snored, he was on his way to a deviated septum. I still had to be careful, about the shaking, but not as much.

The sun was up. Our baby was up. She was going to have a little brother or sister. It didn’t matter, she wasn’t now.

When I sat up I was still pretty bent. When I stood up I was still pretty bent.

He just didn’t hear. He just didn’t see. My wrists didn’t even really hurt. It was all over now because it stopped.

Scream Through Silence

By: Nikki Wheeler



Mourning Cloak

By: Mary Innerst

I was nine when they first visited. It was the first day of Fall. The air was clear as cut glass, shimmering with sunlight. The breeze cut across my face, mockingly energetic and I resented it, for in my small soul it was raining.

All I could do was run. I ran as my mother had run that morning, and although I would return to the safety of our home, she never would. Dad had told me that morning, the bags under his eyes heavier and darker than usual as he glanced at me over his newspaper.

“Where’s Mom?” I had asked.

“Did you sleep well?” He turned back to the paper, avoiding the question.

“Sure.” I lied. I had been up all night listening to the yelling. “Where’s Mom?”

“I thought we could take a walk by the pond today. It’s Fall now, you know.”

“Where’s Mom?” I said it louder.

He set his paper down deliberately, folded his hands, and looked me straight in the face. His lip twitched.

“Mom isn’t here right now.”

“Where is she? When will she be back?”

The empty plates clattered as he stood up from the table. He never answered, but I could guess well enough.

I knew he would cry. He did love her, even though she hurt him sometimes. He never let her hurt me, though. I thought of him as I hurtled down the dirt road towards the tall grasses by the pond. I hid there sometimes, when Mom was especially upset.

I must have caught my foot on an upturned root, for one moment I was running and the next I was falling. I landed with a thud on my stomach in the grass, and before I could cry out, a cloud erupted from below me.

A frenzy of colors crowded around me, delicate wings reflecting the light, fuzzy bodies brushing against my arms and legs, still sprawled on the dirt. I sat up with a shock, momentarily distracted from my pain. I stared as one after the other, they darted between my face, the sky, and the ground before finding their bearings and shooting off into the open blue. Finally, only one remained, perched atop my knee, its wings fluttering slightly with the breeze.

It was mostly dark, but a rim of cream made its way around the edges of the wings. It reminded me of when Dad would talk about storm clouds with silver linings. I waited for it to dash away, like the others had, but it didn’t. It remained there for as long as I did, patiently and slowly dancing there on my scraped knee.

I stared for a while, hypnotized by the motion, a strange sense of calm lingering as the butterfly lingered on me. The future was uncertain, but this moment wasn’t. I sat motionless, content and terrified. Content watching the bob of the wings. Terrified of breaking the glassy stillness of this moment.



Enchanted Fog

By: Ashley Smart



Forward Paddle

By: Julie Labuszewski

At 23, I believed in fairy tales.

I met the prince at the pool. We talked on the deck just before school let out.

“River guiding will come easy to you,” the prince said. “You’re in great shape. You’ll be a natural at it.” Swimming for the University of California at Santa Barbara had me fit as ever. My strong broad back, powerful arms and legs, and hard-earned endurance would be an asset on any river trip. The prince told me that once I got through the training, the rafting company would likely hire me on. We could work together.

Even though we were only friends, I hoped one day the prince would dance with me. I had an invitation to the royal ball. All I needed to do was show up.

I saved up enough money making subs at a deli to pay for the whitewater school and the flight. In the middle of the summer, I packed my duffle bag and jumped on a plane from my hometown of San Diego to Sacramento. A college friend from the area picked me up at the airport, and 50 minutes later dropped me off at Camp Lotus, the campground on the South Fork of the American River where the rafting company operated. I could hear the ballroom music playing when I stepped out of the car and set foot on the dirt.

The following day, I got wind of the news. The prince had met a girl he was planning to marry: a true princess – blonde, blue-eyed and nice.

The music stopped. What was I thinking? The prince hadn’t even noticed me. And why would he? With shoulders too broad for a formal gown, feet too wide for glass slippers, untamable big brown curls, no make-up, and often more direct in my approach than nice,

nothing about me was princess-like. Clearly, I had walked into the wrong fairy tale.

Dressed in my one-piece Speedo, with nylon shorts pulled up over my swimsuit, worn-out running shoes without socks, chapstick smeared on my lips, and my red visor – faded from summers spent lifeguarding at the Y– I headed over to the main office on the campground to check in.

I met the instructor for the American River Touring Association’s intensive 12-day whitewater school. I can still hear his voice today.

On the river, life jackets must be worn at all times. Grab one now. Find your size, buckle it up and cinch down the straps. You want a good, snug fit.

*“This job required stamina,
strength and resilience.
Princesses need not apply.”*

The first hour of whitewater school, he had us navigating our inflatable rubber raft through the rapids on the South Fork using these five basic commands: Forward paddle. Back paddle. Right turn. Left turn. Stop.

Your crew needs to hear you in a rapid. Speak loud. Louder!

Guiding the boat required being attentive and fully present. Safety took precedence over everything else. The river, the instructor, and the four other students in the boat became my only focus during those 12 days.

Early on, I learned to respect the water. Growing up on the coast, I spent hours playing in the ocean. One day when I was eight, I went out too far, lost my footing and got pulled into the center of a powerful wave. It spun me around like a dish towel in a washing machine. The lesson stayed: Be cautious, vigilant and alert. Never let your guard down.

Learn how to read the water. Study it. The subtle things you notice on the surface will tell you what's going on below the surface. Use this information to guide your boat.

After a week of practicing on the family-friendly South Fork, we moved on to a more technical river. The Tuolumne required quick,

"Soon, I didn't need a flashlight. I knew the path."

strategic maneuvering. We put in early in the morning, before the sun came out. I felt a chill in the air. And I listened. This river sounded different than the South Fork. Louder. Rowdier. More robust. It put me on edge.

My turn to navigate came up quickly. I had my paddle in the water, using it as a rudder to steer, when suddenly I got knocked out of the boat. Immediately, I put my body in the safest position to swim through a rapid: head out of the water looking downriver; feet up, out and in front; and arms wrapped around the lifejacket. As I descended the rapid, I got banged around on the rocks. My peers pulled me back into

the boat. I started to sulk. Seconds later, the instructor had me guiding the boat through the next rapid, shouting commands at the crew. Self-pity and self-doubt had no place in this raft. This job required stamina, strength and resilience. Princesses need not apply.

Five weeks later, the black and blue bruises on my legs went away.

Teach your crew how to stay in the boat. When you go through the rapid, find something to hold on to and HOLD ON.

After completing the whitewater school, I stayed around to help the experienced guides. We unrolled rafts, pumped them with air, loaded them on the trailer, jumped on the bus, unloaded the boats at put-in, pumped them with more air, carried them to the water, grabbed all the gear, tied it down, then waited for the guests.

The guides became my mentors. They knew every rock, every bend and every beach on the river. And they let me steer their boats. One rapid. Then two. A half day. Then a full day.

You approached too early. Turned too late. Should have been left. You went right. Paddle harder. That's a rock. You missed the eddy. Keep the next one in sight.

My runs were clumsy, until one day, they weren't. That day, I ran the river with precision and finesse.

ARTA hired me on. The following summer, I returned to as a commercial guide.

Plan out in advance how you will run the rapid. Then set up your boat before you're in the rapid.

There were 14 of us coming and going all season long. We shared a common building: the guide house. It had a bathroom, a kitchen, a fridge filled with leftover river-trip food, and a living room stuffed with couches. We talked

about the river the way parents talk about their kids. Nonstop.

Many evenings, I couldn't pull myself away from the spirited conversations to retrieve my flashlight before the sun went down. Those nights, I walked the winding trail from the guide house to my tent in the dark. Soon, I didn't need a flashlight. I knew the path. Zipped up in my sleeping bag with my head resting on my pillow, I'd listen to the river nearby. I slept fine in my castle.

Keep control in your boat at all times. If your guests start a water fight, make sure they don't swing their paddles around and hit anyone.

The discussions in my boat were lively. After learning the names of the guests and where they were from, we had a whole day together. They told me about their lives and I taught them about the river. On the easy rapids, I let them navigate the boat while I explained how to read the water.

As the lead guide, you'll have more responsibilities. You'll greet the guests, give the safety talk, make the decisions. Your boat will go first. The others will follow.

The group from San Francisco had arrived. It was a corporate trip, mostly women. They worked for Esprit. They were on the bus, ready to go. With over a dozen guides to choose from, I wasn't sure why ARTA selected me to be the lead guide. In fact, I had never led a trip this big: twenty-four guests, four boats, three guides, two days, one night and me.

When I stepped up onto the bus to greet them, my mouth went dry. "Hi, I'm Julie. Welcome to the South Fork. I'll be your head guide. And before I go over our plans for today, let me introduce you to the other guides." Three tanned and toned young men sitting in the

front of the bus wearing swim trunks and river sandals, stood up, smiled and waved.

Our trip went smoothly. We covered thirteen miles the first day and seven miles the second day. The guides communicated well and kept the boats in line. The crews paddled in sync and kept water fights to the calm areas. And the sun shone both days.

If you have any doubts about how to run a rapid, don't. Row your boat to shore, climb out and scout the rapid.

At the end of the summer, I packed my duffle bag, rolled up my sleeping bag, broke down my tent and got a ride to the airport. In a few weeks, I'd be flying to New York City to study the arts.

Instead of walking into someone else's fairy tale, I'd write my own.



Wind Song

By: Jane Adair

Meyer Hall, juvenile detention center, Des Moines, IA

“I can’t seem to forget you, your Wind Song stays on my mind.”
— Jingle, TV commercial

Under fluorescence, near a kitchen that smelled
of ammonia, floor wax and simmering
meat, we showered single-file under the watch

of a blunt-faced guard charged with dispensing
towels and a spritz to each of our willing wrists.

Pink and warm we’d wait, supplicants with outstretched arms,

for the guard to pull the cap from the crown-shaped bottle
and deliver
a measured mist of flowers and musk,

the brand in the air that year, sung
by a wistful man in a turtleneck,
longing for a woman on a seashore. Or a balcony. I forget.

But it was windy. And she was alone.
And the shower guard? Neither kind nor unkind.

She’d be the one to hose the new girls down
if she thought they had lice. She’d bust you

if you’d been out on pass and got the bright idea
of coming back with 20 hits of white cross
saran-wrapped and tucked up your ass.

But me and her,
our time was ephemeral, unmemorable.

I’d slip behind the flimsy curtain,
crank the valve until water rained down like a cage,
until steam clouded the tiles,

until that stall and that soap
became all the showers I’d ever known.
I’d scrub as if scrubbing could make me new,

as if I was not the stink that refused
to be masked. As if I wasn’t the meat gone bad,
more trouble than worth.

It’s what mother had known since my birth —
that one day she’d peel me off like a ruined dress.

As if I hadn’t known it would come to this —

standing naked, last week’s jeans surrendered
for clean ones, with wrists upturned,

my veins thin blue twigs
beneath the scrim of skin, waiting for

the cologne to uncap and the towel to unfurl.



Ghostly Presence

By: Kitty Huguley



The Best of It

By: Maria Picone

Once, in a broken home, I stumbled over the cut glass and ruined furniture, claiming to my family that I got robbed. The bruises never showed through my favorite peach cardigan, a shield of radiance I deployed to dazzle the world. I blamed the business trip you never took instead of the divorce I should have taken.

A long caesura fell, and you came back *changed*, you swore.

I know how to deflate a gambler's fallacy, but not, I fear, to alter the fixed nature of my Taurian heart. You took me to your favorite restaurant and confessed over the crème brulee that you wanted to start a family. I licked the round end of the spoon and watched us both flinch. When I confessed to Alyssa that you 'had a slight temper,' I hugged the sweater's rippling folds to my chest. Our secret bled inside my uterus, dripping its lies across our reupholstered couch.

The last time, I bought four new sweaters, and I denounced the Florida air conditioning as 'an epidemic.' Peach, despite its neutral heart, didn't always match my shoes. The routine violence of suburban fucking rounded my stomach and turned my wardrobe red and white. Alyssa smiled and bought an engraved silver spoon for the occasion: your initials entwined with mine. To remember.

In the shards and tears and stems of Valentine's Day carnations, I found my most honest self. My heart thudded in a way prenatal spin class never perpetrated. As I stood to shovel the corpses of our tranquility into the hall, I reveled in the silent absence of what I had always made.



Tears

By: Annie St. Germain



My Grandmother's Hands

By: Angie Thompson

Significance. It fuels our pursuits, overshadows our minds, and inspires our dreams. We want to know that we can make a difference in the world. Perhaps we have inherited some amazing genetic trait that will be the ticket. “She has her mother’s creativity,” or “he’s ambitious, just like his dad.” It’s funny how something so completely beyond our control can have such a profound impact on how we view ourselves. I have observed traits in myself, some of which bring shameless pride, others of which bring stolid acceptance and resignation, still others embarrassment and shame. The most complicated relationship I would come to have with a hereditary predisposition has been a bipolar connection with my hands, the hands that I inherited from my grandmother.

I had only just exited my teens the year my grandma died. Our yearly visits had become less frequent when I entered high school, and I was left to rely on my childhood memories of this branch of my family tree. To understand my conflicted emotion about my hands, one must first understand the source from whence they came.

Evelyn Raynor was a strong and resilient woman. She had to be. She was the mother of eight children and the wife of a stern, alcoholic husband. The few memories I have of her husband, my grandfather, include him eating cold buttermilk biscuits between toothless gums, and snapping at me through lips permanently etched into a frown. He sat upon a pauper’s throne in his den, a cruel dictator who allowed none to approach. I was secretly grateful that he died early in my childhood, preceding my grandmother in death and leaving her alone.

The Raynor family lived in a very rural part of eastern North Carolina, dotted with sprawling trees and irregular farm plots. Like

everyone in that area, my grandparents lived off the land. That’s a nice way of saying they were poor farmers. Their livelihood consisted of growing tobacco and raising hogs, certainly not the most auspicious of careers, nor ones that would logically lead to a healthy lifestyle. A seemingly lucrative tobacco industry rewarded my grandparents with nothing other than addiction and disease.

Grandmother Raynor raised her family in a matchbox house. There were four tiny bedrooms, one bathroom, and an undersized den to sustain ten people. With no central air, a furnace became the nucleus during the harsh winters. A hand crank water pump in the front yard, once the only source of life-giving water, provided hours of enjoyment for us kids in the later years. The rudimentary well near the expansive magnolia tree in the backyard was boarded up with a weathered 2x4 covering, stitched with rusty nails which were reincarnated from previous lives on sagging barn walls, or on crooked fence posts. We were given strict warnings to never go near that well, which held stagnant water and certain tragedy.

When she was not outside picking vegetables from her garden, my grandmother was in the kitchen. Without question, she reigned supreme here, but only out of necessity, certainly not out of choice. Her thriftiness was balanced between money and time. Biscuits were always made from scratch, but cakes emerged from a Betty Crocker box. One teaspoon of imitation lemon extract and a bit of real butter could somehow disguise the fact that we were eating cake from a box.

My grandmother was uncomplicated and, honestly, a very simple woman. She had only a 9th grade education and no driver’s license: she

was too afraid. She drove a tractor to the store when my granddad was no longer around to pilfer grocery money for alcohol. Her teeth were stained from years of tobacco use by her addiction of choice: dipping snuff. I suppose this practice made sense for the wife of a tobacco farmer.

Her hair was always pinned into a neat, taut bun, which led me to believe that she didn't have very much hair. I was wrong. On one occasion when we stayed overnight, I watched her unpin the gray-streaked hair. Her wiry hair reached to the middle part of her back. But it wasn't long and luxurious. It was simply long and stringy.

Her clothes were functional and plain. She taught her children a simple faith, and took them to the local Primitive Baptist Church, a compact, unadorned wooden structure, with long wooden pews lining the interior. I believe

"Evelyn Raynor was a strong and resilient woman. She had to be."

that she loved her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. It wasn't a pretty love, but I accepted that it was there.

Much of her life embodied things that I wanted to run from, and I did run as far away as I could. Poverty. Backbreaking work. Way too many children. A lack of courage. In essence, she was a prisoner in a small, unempowered, and insignificant life.

Her hands seemed to reflect those truths. These hands were not the soft and supple hands

that are proliferated in magazine ads. I'm quite sure she never had a manicure, as her nails were always cut close to her fingers to minimize the amount of gray sandy soil underneath. My grandmother worked the ground, digging potatoes and picking beans. The vegetables from the garden were either frozen or canned in preparation for the long winter months.

More like a man's than a woman's, her hands were rough, weathered, wrinkled, and calloused. They were nicked by the knives that she wielded to peel and cut vegetables. I would also periodically notice dark staining on her fingers. Her fingerprint lines were often outlined in gray, what I thought were the remnants of dirt that just could not be washed off.

As I grew up and started my own family, I began to notice my own hands. Instead of long slender fingers, mine were short and stubby. They were not the pretty hands of a model that I wished for, wrinkle-free and smooth. The 10 years of diaper changing and the 7 weekly loads of laundry began to take a toll on my hands. The stacks of sippy cups, Disney plates, and baby bottles screamed at me from the kitchen sink. My college education collected dust on a shelf as one child soon became five children. And the lines grew deeper in my sagging skin. One day, I noticed the gray outlines of my own fingerprints on my index finger and thumb, and diligently worked to get my hands clean. I recognized the familiar look on my hands that I had observed in my grandmother.

I wrestled with myself, vowing that I would not lead the same life that she did, scrubbing my hands along the way. I experienced the roller coaster of life in my twenties as responsibilities mounted and sleep declined. I set out to go as far away from my grandmother's life as I could,

even moving all the way to California. But somehow I couldn't escape the shadow of my grandmother. And her hands. Eventually, my wild heart began to settle. I began to remember the rest of the story.

My Grandma Raynor's hands contained something magical. We kids believed that her hands had some mystical quality that made any food she prepared taste marvelous to our young palates. My grandma always served butter beans, a miniature green version of the lima bean. They were best plucked from the vine well before their fat, round shapes bulged in the pod. They were at their peak for us when they were small, like early peas. Her hands knew how to find those sweet, tender beans on the vine, and gently demonstrated the difficult process of removing these little pearls from their pod. None could quite replicate the taste of grandma's food, not even my own mom. It must be grandma's hands, we reasoned. Just her touch caused everything to taste better, most extraordinarily, green vegetables. Imagine. Kids in love with a green vegetable.

I began to remember hands that expressed love. When she hugged me, she enveloped me completely. When her hands pressed around me in a full body embrace, for that moment I was fully aware of deep and abiding love. She had kept her family together because of this love. I realized that the physical appearance of my grandma's hands might reveal much about the values she held.

The successful adult lives of the children my grandma raised speak to her diligence and faithfulness. My dad went to college and later joined the Air Force. As a teenage boy, he took on the role of father to many of his siblings when his own father abdicated that role. All of

the Raynor boys served their country in a branch of the military, and one went on to become a minister. Among the four sisters, they had careers in nursing, education, and banking. My grandmother's sacrifice proved not to be in vain.

The attempts to avoid my grandmother's hard life were successful to some extent. My love of farm fresh vegetables was never great enough to justify having my own garden. I saw firsthand the effort that farming required, and I could just as easily buy fresh produce from the local farmer's market. My life did take a parallel route to hers, however. I still chose to dig in the dirt, planting nearly 1000 flowering bulbs, resulting in a cornucopia of color as spring emerged every year. Hydrangeas, azaleas, and gardenias became the objects of my inherited green thumb. The bouquet of 20 varietal roses infused my life.

"Biscuits were always made from scratch, but cakes emerged from a Betty Crocker box."

My kitchen gave birth to a love for the art of cooking. Instead of beans and biscuits, I chose a more gourmet approach with dishes like beef bourguignon and crepes. A few random seeds from my grandmother's kitchen did manage to sprout in my own kitchen in the form of cast iron skillet cornbread and buttery mashed potatoes. Perhaps by the time my own grandchildren appear, I will have perfected the

magic hands that my grandmother inspired, expressed in my own unique style.

Too often, the negative can obscure the positive. A physical attribute such as height or weight, facial features or hair can feel less like a blessing and more like a curse. Now when I look at my own hands, I can accept the less than taut skin, and the approaching wrinkles. I even am reconciled to the dark fingerprint lines that appear from time to time.

Proverbs 31 mentions the hands of a virtuous woman four times, with images of charity, labor, generosity, and service. Not once does it speak of the smooth skin or manicured nails. In almost all cases, the hands of this woman speak of the regular, monotonous work that comes with daily life. In essence, this woman's hands depict faithfulness.

The gray lines on my hands recede and reoccur. When I see them, I think about my own life. I hold hands with a loving husband, and five beautiful children were conceived through that love. My children have experienced the highest levels of success in academics, athletics, and art with three receiving honors of magna and summa cum laude graduation and scholarships totaling over \$200,000. One is a published artist. They have selected careers in chemistry, finance, and engineering. One played collegiate athletics. My home is warm and spacious, and often filled with laughter. When I see those gray lines, each time is a random reminder that I might be seeing a reflection of my heart, and I am ok with that. In a way, the lines are not stains of hardship, but symbols of honor. When I look at my hands, I can see, hidden in the midst of their lines, significance.

Dunes

By: Claire Giannaula



Sapello Seasons - Winner: Writers Studio Literary Contest

By: Alejandro Lucero

I remember seasons. Wet winter snowstorms, pounds of heavy powder dropped off in our yard. It's hardly a yard, more like a flat football field with alfalfa, now brittle yellow from permafrost and drought, like turf between the highway and my childhood home: that single-wide trailer with big windows and chipped white paint that I grew up in. When the mobile home was first brought to its grave, to this field that would see plenty of other people and things die around it, my parents had the idea to face what was supposed to be the backdoor to the highway. I never questioned that choice, or cared, but I now realize the screen door, two larger windows in the living room, and the window in my room all face a

"When I think about Sapello seasons, they're never that simple."

small mountain range. Maybe that was why, so I could grow up seeing the beauty in my home instead of the road away from it. After all, most of the kids who grow up in Sapello, New Mexico usually take that road -- some farther than others. Some will go 15 miles to live in the small town where we all went to school, Las Vegas. Some will choose "New Mexican city life" and move to Albuquerque, but the meth and street gangs may force them to turn back to the "ranch." Funny we call it a ranch since much more than half of the people in Sapello never

plan to use their land for raising livestock and food but, instead, for sweet isolated paradise. Some do not see comfort in isolation. Some will move to bigger cities; Deanna in Houston, Mikey in Los Angeles, Tita in Toronto. I didn't go far. I've always been just a state away.

"I don't think I'm coming back."

My shoes are on. Everything we're taking with us, like the photo-albums and hand-made birthday cards, are packed.

"Someday," my sister Hannah says.

I tell her "No, really, I don't see a reason."

"Grandma? Aunt Dorothy?" She throws the hood of her maroon zip-up over the dark hair she leaves untamed.

"We'll see." Even I can hear my rudeness.

Hannah makes a noise that sounds like cold air being sucked through teeth, turns away, and grabs two garbage bags off the floor. We came from Denver to put our father, and our childhood home, to rest. Our mom has already passed away. The home will be empty. One of Hannah's bags is full of condiments: Heinz tartar sauce, Great Value yellow mustard, some Smucker's fudge, and pickle jars- so many fucking pickle jars I still think, all half full, all my dad's. They clank together as Hannah shimmies through the hallway, out the front door.

I pick up my half of the garbage. The plastic bag is cold from the frozen food at the top. All the dry goods, from the cupboards, keep it warm at the bottom. We don't want to leave any temptation for the rodents without the cats here. I'd hate to come back, if that ever happens, and see rat shit in every corner of the kitchen, bite marks through the walls of the cabinets, a sticky film on the linoleum from urine.

I remember Sapello seasons. I played on my crooked basketball hoop, all evening, into the night, till I couldn't see the ball against the sky. The fall air tasted of burning pine wood. Chimney smoke from my aunt's trailer, which sat a few hundred feet to the left of ours, lent the sky and me that taste. As the sap crackled in her warm living room, the tops of my ears would burn red. I remember playing until I couldn't see the ball against the sky.

The basket now tilts on its side, resting in a bed of overgrown weeds, blown down from the in-your-face winds. The metal pole, the orange break-away rim, and the plastic backboard have lasted longer than the two men who put it all together for me -- a ten-year-old punk-ass who didn't bother to help because I couldn't understand the 'pero this, pero that' of my grandfather's Spanglish and it made me uncomfortable. Life is funny: I married a Mexican.

Walking out the front door for the last time, I try to appreciate the alfalfa fields and pine tree mountains. Besides my aunt's and grandmother's, there are only a few other trailer homes scattered around. The buzz of a car engine, hard at work, moves past me in a reddish blur. I know it must be someone around my age. Around here anyone older drives five miles under the speed limit. The hot-shot is headed to Las Vegas (which of course we call Vegas), probably to party. Fast driving can be tempting as the stretch of highway in front of me, like some kind of Bandimere Speedway, is long enough to land planes on and begs drivers to floor their gas pedals. But the race car is gone now, putting the miles between us faster than necessary, and I can hear the silence. Living

around Denver for the last five years, I'm not used to hearing silence. It's a noise in itself.

I remember seasons. Come summer, mom made sun tea, the glass pitcher with printed Hawaiian flowers, and the tea sweetening, turning into its maple whiskey color on our lattice panel porch. It must have been warm enough to brew tea; however, I don't remember it being very hot during summer breaks. Nowadays, my face melts like McDonald's cheese when I walk for more than five sweltering hot summer minutes. I rode my bike a lot then. I guess I'm still a kid in some older eyes, but I haven't felt like one in years. I had two bikes, the result of my mom moving out to Vegas for a few years with the heroin-addicted cop she met working at the police station. He died long before she did. I remember his prayer card next to the Sonic drive-thru straw my mother cut down to about three inches, the blue powdery residue she snorted dusted inside like an old blackboard. It was in one of my mom's many jewelry boxes when my sister and I sorted through her belongings.

We load the trash bags in the trunk and our luggage in the back-seat next to the cardboard box with all the photos and artwork taken off the refrigerator, which now stands bare in the kitchen. "Do you remember laying on the porch together, at night, in the summer?" Hannah asks. "We would take our sleeping bags and pillows outside with a bag of chips and watch the shooting stars."

"Yeah, there were so many. Too bad our wishes never came true." I close the door of my sister's tan Mazda Protege, respectfully, even though I want to slam it off its rusty hinges.

“Remember when we saw 13 in a row and thought the world was ending?”

I remember Sapello seasons. I remember our spring. Hannah’s birthday, red velvet with vanilla frosting every year, mom making all our cakes from scratch, her blonde hair tied up, lip-stick and embellished beauty mark applied, hoop earrings dangling over her mixing bowl. She handed me a beater to lick clean as she did the other. My big sister, my only sister, gets

*“The buzz of a car engine,
hard at work, moves past me
in a reddish blur.”*

older every second she’s alive and we celebrate the day after Memorial Day, the day she first escaped our mom’s dark womb. Born breech and a miracle child, she was my mom’s first cesarean section. I was the next, my dad saying he had never seen so much blood in a hospital bed, though he was just credits away from a nursing degree. My mom said she never saw a scar so big afterwards. I apologized every time I heard the story from mom as she smoked Pall Mall menthols in the living room and told the tale in front of friends, our wall and lace curtains still stained to this day from the smoke swirling from the cheap cigarettes she would bogart. My mom helped me write my first short story; my mom helped me type it on an actual typewriter, helping me slide it into my first plastic report

cover, her stories, and love of stories, seeping into me like the ground beneath a gutter drain.

We pull out of the bumpy dirt road and accelerate onto the highway. I don’t turn my head back, but instead, I look out of the window, into the passenger side mirror, and watch the fields of dead alfalfa, the mountains of green pine, and my childhood home get smaller and smaller.

When I think about Sapello seasons, they’re never that simple. They’re never that quick. Because when I think about the fall air, or the summer dust coating my teeth as I played in that small space between the trailer and those mountains, or the slopes of snow my sister and I cascaded down on butts layered with worn-out sweatpants, I think about what’s missing from that home. I think of the loud violent fights between my parents I heard behind walls anyone could punch through, the trips to basketball practice in my dad’s faded blue Oldsmobile, and I think too of the wonderful smells of my mother’s spices I cannot name and can never ask about, which came wafting out from my mother’s kitchen each time my father and I would return.



On The Ropes: A Box Ring

Winner: Student Art Juried Exhibition - Jewelry & Metal Arts

By: Marie Zahler Mullan



The Janitor Speaks America

By: Danny Barbare

I'm the janitor shining these hallways
of promise
of America.
Oh how the linoleum rolling
light
goes from sea to sea
The glory of these students'
dreams
I sweep and dust mop sweet
Liberty
Oh how independence sings
so
giftedly like the teachers, students and
me.



Brighton Swells

By: Brandon Kile



Part-Time No-Job

By: Rosa Izquierdo

The alarm of my iPhone 6 sounds at 5.30 a.m.; wake up, drink coffee espresso made in the DeLonghi coffee machine, smoke a handmade cigarette. Make regular coffee for my husband and my son (11 minutes). Take out bread from the freezer for breakfast (1 minute). Read the news, check email. Cut the bread in two, put one part in the toaster. Make orange juice, put some olive oil on the toast. Two pills of Advil. Write Gender Communication homework. We are discussing the role of education as a social institution in the perspective of gender. At schools, young girls learn that professions such as nursing, education or care for the elderly and children are made for them and are the worst paid jobs; science, engineering, and mathematics are things of men. Wake up my son (3 minutes). Take a shower. Put the dirty clothes in the washer, along with colored clothes from the laundry bag (14 minutes). Put the cup in the dishwasher, plus all the other dishes; turn on the short wash (8 minutes). Go to the bus stop, wait for the bus. My neighbor, a wrinkled skinny woman with a pink cap and a blue coat, who seems to me around 90-years-old, tells me that she is now unemployed and she needs to find a job; she smells wilted; she is too old to get a job. Go down to 15th street and Arapahoe. Walk to the Science building of the Community College of Denver for Biology class. Walk to the Cherry Creek building, write Women in World History homework. Analyze four primary sources about women's lives in the Ancient times; they were considered sub-species, secluded at home, raising kids. Since the establishment of the Agriculture, the work of women was relegated to the household and declared less important than the work of men. Eat a banana and some whole-wheat Ritz crackers. Go up to the 2nd

floor for Creative Writing class; we talk about word choices, from generic and abstract words to specific and concrete ones -- job/task. Walk to 17th and Stout; take the bus, say hello to the bus driver, he doesn't answer me, maybe he is tired. A man yells about sexual and basic needs: food, water, shelter, and sex. A blonde 8 to 10-year-old kid is reading Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*; there is still hope. Go back home at 4.30. Open the mailbox; King Soopers, Safeway, and Trader Joe's show their beers and pork meat; throw it in the trash (6 minutes). Open the washer, put some clothes in the dryer. Hang up the rest, too delicate for the dryer, a stupid fixation that remains of Spain (24 minutes). Empty the dishwasher, put everything into place (9 minutes). Start Creative Writing homework. Write a non-fiction piece about a list. 5 p.m., begin to cook dinner. Peel and cut three carrots, one green pepper, two leeks, only the white part, three onions, three garlic cloves, and two tomatoes. Put them with water and salt and cook for 1 hour. Leave the lentils in water for this hour (32 minutes). Keep doing homework, word choices: employed/unemployed. Gael, my oldest son, calls, listen, give good advice, cheer him up (48 minutes). Put two garlic cloves and a half of the onion in the red and white porcelain pan with salt and black pepper. Boiling vegetables smell sweet, add salt. One spoon of sweet paprika, one spoon of spicy paprika with the onion and the garlic. Put everything in the black iron pot with the lentils. The Smiths sound:

*Take me out tonight
Where there's music and there's people
And they're young and alive
Driving in your car*

*I never never want to go home
Because I haven't got one
Anymore*

Add cumin, turmeric, ginger and one dry bay leaf, and this is a secret, a little wine. Boil 2 hours (56 minutes). World Mythology homework, female Goddesses: fertility, nature, Mother Earth. Male Gods: strength, power, justice, aggressiveness. My husband arrives; he goes to stay working upstairs. He is very tired and barely talks to me. My son comes from the soccer practice. He is very tired and barely talks to me. Tell him not leave the backpack in front of the door (1 minute). Start to prepare the table (5 minutes). World Mythology homework: female archetypes: beauty, seductiveness, sexuality; male archetypes: heroes, fathers, saviors. My husband prepares the salad. Add oil, vinegar, and salt (2 minutes). 8 p.m., start dinner. Ask my husband and son how was their day. My husband is quiet; keep the conversation alive (20 minutes). Retake my two pills of Advil. Bring the stuff to the kitchen. Divide the leftovers, three lunch boxes, two in the freeze, one in the fridge. Throw out the leftovers of pasta I cooked four days ago; clean the fridge with a wet rag and an anti-bacterial cleaner. Clean the kitchen, put everything in the dishwasher wash the pan and the pot (41 minutes). Cigarette with my husband. He goes to bed. He is very tired. My son shows me a song that he composed yesterday. Cheer him. He goes to study, he is very tired. Start the paper for History. Women sexuality was considered an aberration in ancient times, women only could have sex to have kids, everything about women and sexuality, especially the menstruation, was considered impure and unclear. Tomorrow morning they collect the trash. The recycling

and organic bags go to the garage. With every bag in the cart, push the carts into the alley. Close the garage, go inside (10 minutes). Fold the dried clothes leave them in their place (36 minutes). Fold and place the sofa blankets, close the doors turn off all the lights (7 minutes). Draft for History; some women decided to be nuns to be free from the work of women. 12:30 a.m., put the alarm on my iPhone 6 at 5:30 a.m.

$11+1+3+14+8+6+24+9+32+48+56+1+5+2+20+41+10+36+7= 334$ minutes= 5.57 hours of household tasks.



Saharan Portrait

By: Nathan Shepard



I Am the Sky

By: Joan Hobbs

My father used to collect needles and I used to steal them, used them to pin my bed sheets around my neck and waist while I danced in our dusty attic. I knew want, but not this kind. I knew desire, but this was a deeper breed, a messy second cousin to the kind that reached for the gold in rich pockets.

Not knowing what to call it, I never put it to words. I kept my moments in the attic to myself. I stole and wrestled and spit with the best of my family. I made my father so proud. I was his little warrior, his little smog thief daughter. It was enough.

Until I met you.

You were proud. You walked with a stiff back in shining black boots. You wore velvet, brass and satin. You told stories about dancing in marble rooms and women in dresses that flared out from the waist and fell in tumbles of fabric. My bed sheet dances paled in comparison. You could be cold and unfeeling. You thought too much of yourself and it showed.

My father called you an “easy man” and laughed. I don’t think he knew. I don’t think he would have understood.

You had the most beautiful green eyes and I wanted to steal them. I wanted to take your grin and keep it in my chest, take your laugh and wear it around my neck. I wanted you and it wasn’t enough to just pass you on the street. It wasn’t even enough to be your friend.

I knew love. But I didn’t know this wild child of it, this caught breath, broken daughter of it.

I was in love with you. And I thought maybe you could feel the same.

I was the sky and you were the moon and I thought I had been built for you.

But when you saw the sea for the first time, you smiled more than you ever smiled at me. She had long wild hair and foam teeth and she tasted, you said, like salt and bitter when you kissed her.

Oh. *How I broke.*

I knew pain. But not this kind. Not this twisted half sister to a sting that drew blood, this relative to a wound that moved in to my body and ached all the time.

How I hated you for that. How I hated myself for that. I stopped talking to you. Or you stopped talking to me. I told no one how you’d broken me.

I stole my father’s needles; stuck them through the layers of my own skin in the dark of our dusty attic. I burned the sheets when mother asked about the dots of blood. I put away want and desire with their smoke. I put away your peridot eyes and your smile and your laugh when I disposed of the ashes.

I tried to dispose of my heart. I failed.

I started a distillery. I became so famous for it; I had my own shop in the City Royal in Market Square. I made enough money to wear dresses that flared out at the waist and fell in tumbles of fabric. My father was so proud. His smog thief daughter was so clever. I knew people talked of me. I knew I was considered beautiful. They called me Lovely Lady Liquor. It brought business.

It brought you.
Laughing the laugh I had put away.
With the sea on your arm.

What a cruel thing. I wanted to die. But I
had not died from the loss of you when it was
new. I would not die from it now.

You browsed the shelves. You said
something. She leaned into you, dark hair falling
over your shoulder, smiled up at you with her
white teeth. You turned and kissed her cheek.
I imagined what it would have been like to be
her, what the velvet of your coat would feel like
beneath my hand, what my cheek would feel
like beneath your mouth. Then I told myself it
would all feel like needles.

The first time you looked up, you didn't
know me. I was relieved and it stung. It made it
easy to smile and speak as if you didn't look full
of silver. The bottle you'd picked was something
expensive and golden with a red seal on the
cork. You handed it to me and looked back at
her. She was admiring her rings.

I realized in that moment you were not the
moon to her. I could taste blood in my mouth,
the prick of all the things I'd buried climbing up
my throat.

The second time you looked up, when
you were paying for the bottle, it dawned
across your face. I wondered what it was you
remembered of me.

The sea asked if we knew each other.
Beneath my skin, I broke again. I broke and was

full of white sheets and needles and dust and the
want that had no name. I was drowning in my
own blood. You would never know how much I
loved you.

I tell the sea I'd never met you.

The sea believes me. You look mildly
confused, but you leave with the sea on your arm.

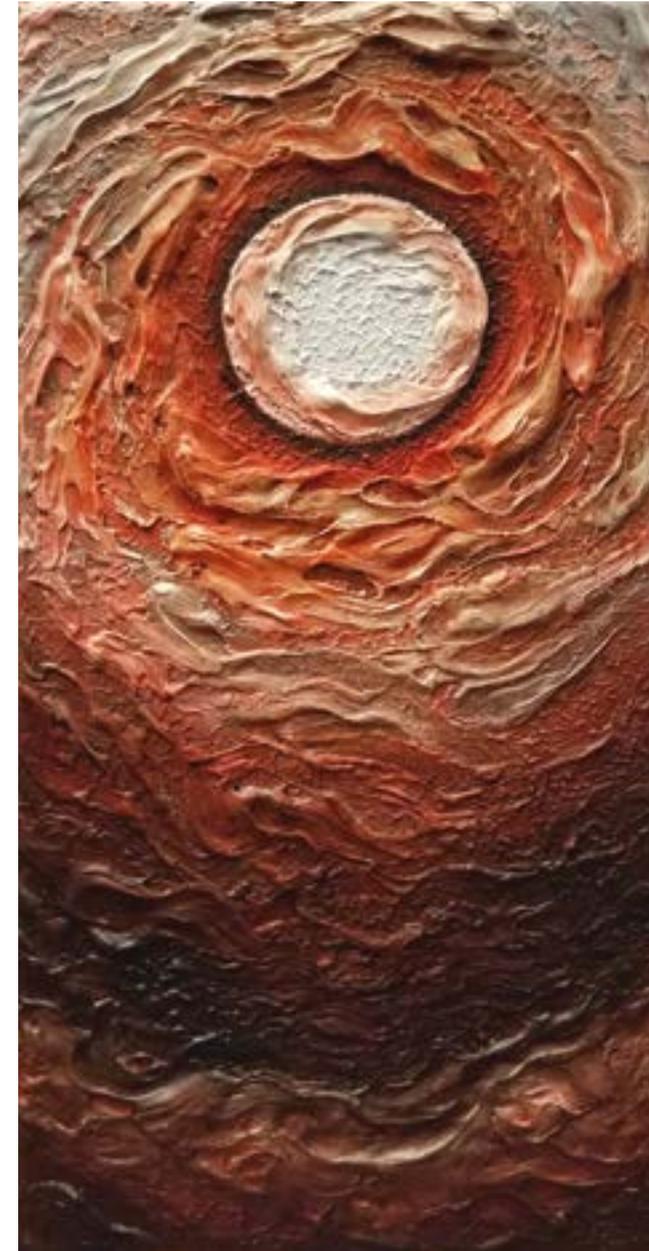
I am the sky. I will not drown.
But you have.
You are the moon and you are silver and the sea
has swallowed you whole and left nothing of
your shine for me.

But I do not need you. I only wanted you
more than I thought possible.



Beyond Words

By: Phillip Bernal



But It Does Not Smell Like Death

By: Robyn J. Williams

i smell death all around me
the scent much sweeter than
expected the scent
not really a scent at all
i feel death all around me but
it doesn't feel like death it feels like
life left unlived life left unfulfilled life
left behind
i smell death all around me but
it doesn't smell like death it smells like
cigars it smells like whisky it smells like
sex
had without passion like the halfassed
attempt at love we've all made
it smells like regret it doesn't feel
like an end it feels like
a collection of regrets you must acknowledge
which is infinitely worse
it feels like not being able to feel at all

i smell death all around me
but it does not smell like death



Paradoxical Verdure

Winner: Student Art Juried Exhibition - Ceramics

By: Kari Erickson



¡Oye! ¡Gringo! - Winner: Writers Studio Literary Contest

By: Brian Dickson

In this year of *there can never be enough
beer cans with American flags to drink:*

I call on my uncle who asked why I talked like a Mexican.
the mirror in his bathroom at his house,
golf bag toothbrush holder,
my shirt off, my gringoness slipping on tiles,
into sand bunkers.

I call on Lee Trevino* and his smile wider
than a thousand golf balls,
you and him swapping tequila
at a clubhouse in El Paso.

I call on ¡Oye!

My Tommy Hilfiger polo shirts tucked
into khaki shorts, trying to talk to chicas.

The homies wearing the same thing,
spitting game with chicas.

Hey, gringo! Don't you want any *fresa*?
Go get you some.

Don't you want any *panocha*?
Go get you some.

I call on the Little East Side Mob,
the running of their Nike Cortez shoes
on the concrete basketball court.
Angel, Angel, Angel how
I never took a charge from you.

The stalls at junior high with no doors,
and when I took a shit for the first,
and last time there, a gordito vato in Cortez shoes strolled
by while smoking a cigarette,
“Hey flaco, when you gotta go, you gotta go.”

I call on basketball--may you rescue me every time.

Oh, Coach Rodriguez, all the breakfast burritos
you brought to practice became my bones.

I call on ¡Oye! ¡Gringo!

My penny loafers rafting on the Rio Grande
and the Colorado to sleep
in the dens of coyotes in New Mexico.

El pueblito, Springer, and the rumors of all white school
strung on Main St.
The stars spelling the town's name,
the “R” lapping well water and chili beans.

The Jehovah's Witnesses at Kingdom Hall, the rows and rows
of white faces while I drew pillars of salt.

The Santa Fe trail, *fe* as in faith,
a luminous thing out of reach,
scarred on iron wheels.

The Catholics who knew we could all go to hell
in a confession or two.

I call on you, Merry Mex,
coaching uncle on the 18th tee box,
how to not give a damn when
the Mezcal worm weaves up
your throat, to swallow it
again as if the rough in the fairway
is a place to bury yourself.

I call on ¡*Oye!* ¡*Gringo!* *Ven aquí, wey!*
the La Raza boys with alternating Raiders and red “R” hats.
the *We only hire Mexicans cuz they the work the hardest.*
los espanoles and their green eyes
and why do you hang out with white people?

I call on the bean festival. The frijoles forever
rolling from the mesas in Wagon Mound.
Rancheros, their forever guitars,
rocky mountain oysters by firelight.

I call on generations of townies *claiming*
we brought the wrong generation to a fight.

I call on the generations of townies
claiming peace with frito pie.

I call on a dream at the bottom of frito pie.

¡*Oye!* Tío, I bet you speak like a Mexican.

I call you, Lee Buck Trevino, as the magical Mexican
to aid us all
in your parking lot
in a pimped out golf cart with my uncle.

Tell me about your bootstraps lathered in Petron.
Tell me about the dollar per a hole with him--por mas, por mas.
Tell me about a last hole in one
to scratch all my two stroke penalties.

Both of you tell me: what it's like to believe
in the dimples of those white balls
in flight,
miles of green ahead.

*Lee Trevino is a famous Mexican-American professional golfer who, as the story has it, quit school at a young age to work on a driving range outside of Dallas and began practicing every day before turning pro at age 21. His nickname is the Merry Mex.



Staff

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Trish Sangelo Director,
Colorado Gallery
of the Arts

Contributor Bios

Jane Adair:

Jane Adair is a recipient of a Colorado Council on the Arts Fellowship, a *Poets & Writers Magazine*, Writer's Exchange Award, and two Pushcart Prize nominations. Her writing has been supported by residencies awarded through Jentel, the Virginia Center for Creative Arts, Fundación Valparaíso, Ragdale, and Writing by Writers.

Danny P. Barbare:

Danny P. Barbare resides in Greenville, SC. His poetry has appeared most recently in *Interdisciplinary Humanities Beyond the Binary* Summer Issue 2016.

Phillip Bernal:

Art has been the vehicle to guide him through the twists and turns of life's experiences. As an art educator, Phillip has been granted the opportunity to help others explore undiscovered and unrecognized creative abilities.

Brian Dickson:

When not teaching at the Community College of Denver, Brian avoids driving as much as possible in order to be out in the world around the Front Range by foot, bike, bus or train as much as possible.

Kari Erickson:

The inspiration for Kari's work comes from the cacti of the Southwest and her love of flowers, which is heavily influenced by her grandmothers.

Claire Giannaula:

Claire has been taking photographs since high school but after moving to Durango, CO she has found a new beauty in the Four Corners region. "Dunes" was taken at the Great Sand Dunes National Monument near Alamosa, CO.

Jadon Gold:

Jadon Gold is a Colorado native currently attending Arapahoe Community College in Littleton, CO. He has aspirations in fine art and travel photography.

Darryl Halbrooks:

Darryl Halbrooks' fiction has appeared in *The New Delta Review*, *Verdad*, *Slow Trains*, *Kudzu*, *The Chaffin Journal*, *The Hamilton Stone Review*, *The Gihon River Review*, *Broken Bridge*, *Amoskeag*, *Cellar Roots*, *Dispatch*, *The Heartland Review*, and elsewhere. His visual art has been exhibited widely in the US and abroad and is represented in many private, public and corporate collections.

Joan Hobbes:

Joni writes poetry and fiction. Her poem, "Ode to the Fountain Pen," was published online after winning first place in The Docket Literary Competition.

Kitty Huguley:

Kitty Huguley received her Associate of General Studies degree from Arapahoe Community College. Her primary medium is jewelry metals, however, she has worked a lot with watercolor and was a member of Watercolor Art Society Houston in Houston, Texas.

Mary Innerst:

Mary Innerst is a creative writing student at Arapahoe Community College. She lives with her family in Denver, where she has been writing since an early age.

Roza Izquierdo:

Roza is a woman, a mother, a wife, a student, and a writer. Born and raised in Spain, she has lived in Denver since 2015.

Brandon Kile:

Brandon Kile is an Arapahoe Community College student who recently changed his major to Commercial Photography. This is among the first steps towards Brandon's long-term goal of becoming a high-altitude aerial photographer.

Julie Labuszewski:

Julie Labuszewski is a copywriter. In her free time, she is working toward a creative writing certificate from Arapahoe Community College.

Meredith Lindgren:

Meredith Lindgren graduated summa cum laude from Metropolitan State University of Denver in Colorado with a bachelor's degree in creative writing. Her work has appeared in *Toasted Cheese Literary Journal* and *Subprimal Poetry Art*.

Alejandro Lucero:

Alejandro Lucero is the recipient of the Writers Studio Student Scholarship at Arapahoe Community College for the year 2015. Previous work can be seen in *Progenitor* 2016.

Marie Zahler Mullan:

Marie Zahler Mullan has always been torn between art and science.

KG Newman:

KG Newman is a sports writer for *The Denver Post*. His first two poetry collections, "While Dreaming of Diamonds in Wintertime" and "Selfish Never Get Their Own", are available on Amazon.

Angie Thompson:

After a career in graphic design, Angie's passion for writing is re-emerging in the current phase of her life. She embraces purposeful, powerful living and enjoys tennis and hiking.

Nathan Shepard:

When he explores, his camera is always with him. Nathan's goal is that his photography can reflect the beauty around him and be a blessing to others.

Ashley Smart:

Ashley is an artist and a neuroscientist. She finds that both science and art let her explore and share the wonder of the world.

Susan Smith:

Susan Smith is a Colorado native. She has been taking jewelry metals classes for 3 years at Arapahoe Community College.

Submission Guidelines

Annie St. Germain:

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, Annie St. Germain makes her home in central Colorado. She has long had a passion for art and an appreciation for the way images can communicate emotion, tell stories and make social statements. Annie began developing her own unique style of multimedia illustrations and pursuing her dream as a professional artist in 2016.

Nikki Wheeler:

Nikki is a local photographer and mainly uses digital photography as her medium. She enjoys editorial portraiture and studio lighting.

Robyn J. Williams:

Robyn J. Williams is a Canadian poet and essayist who has been published in numerous anthologies and magazines. Her first poetry collection was released in 2011, and her second is due in late 2018.

Marie S. Picone:

Marie S. Picone has an MFA from Goddard College. She writes complex, lyrical, and unexpected stories about dangerous things.

Progenitor Art & Literary Journal accepts submissions from students and from the writing and art community at large. Published pieces are chosen by *Progenitor* staff through a blind review process. Submissions are accepted between October 1 and February 15 through Submittable, our online submissions manager.

Progenitor will consider original, unpublished work in poetry, nonfiction, and fiction, including graphic novel and screenplay excerpts. We also consider original, unpublished art, photography, and high-quality images of three-dimensional work.

For complete guidelines and current information, please visit www.arapahoe.edu/progenitor.



Colophon

Progenitor 2018 was designed using Adobe InDesign® CC and Adobe Illustrator® CC. The typeface used for text was Adobe Garamond Pro. The typeface used for titles, headlines, pull quotes, folio, and other special uses was Helvetica Neue in its various weights and styles. The typeface used for the cover was Rockwell. Educational funds from the school of Communication, Humanities, Art and Design were used to produce 500 copies printed by Mido Printing on Mohawk Everyday Digital 80# Silk Text, and Mohawk Everyday Digital 100# Silk Cover. The cover was printed with four process colors and a spot gloss and spot dull varnish. *Progenitor* was printed on a sheet-fed offset press using four process colors for the art pages and black ink only for the rest of the text.

