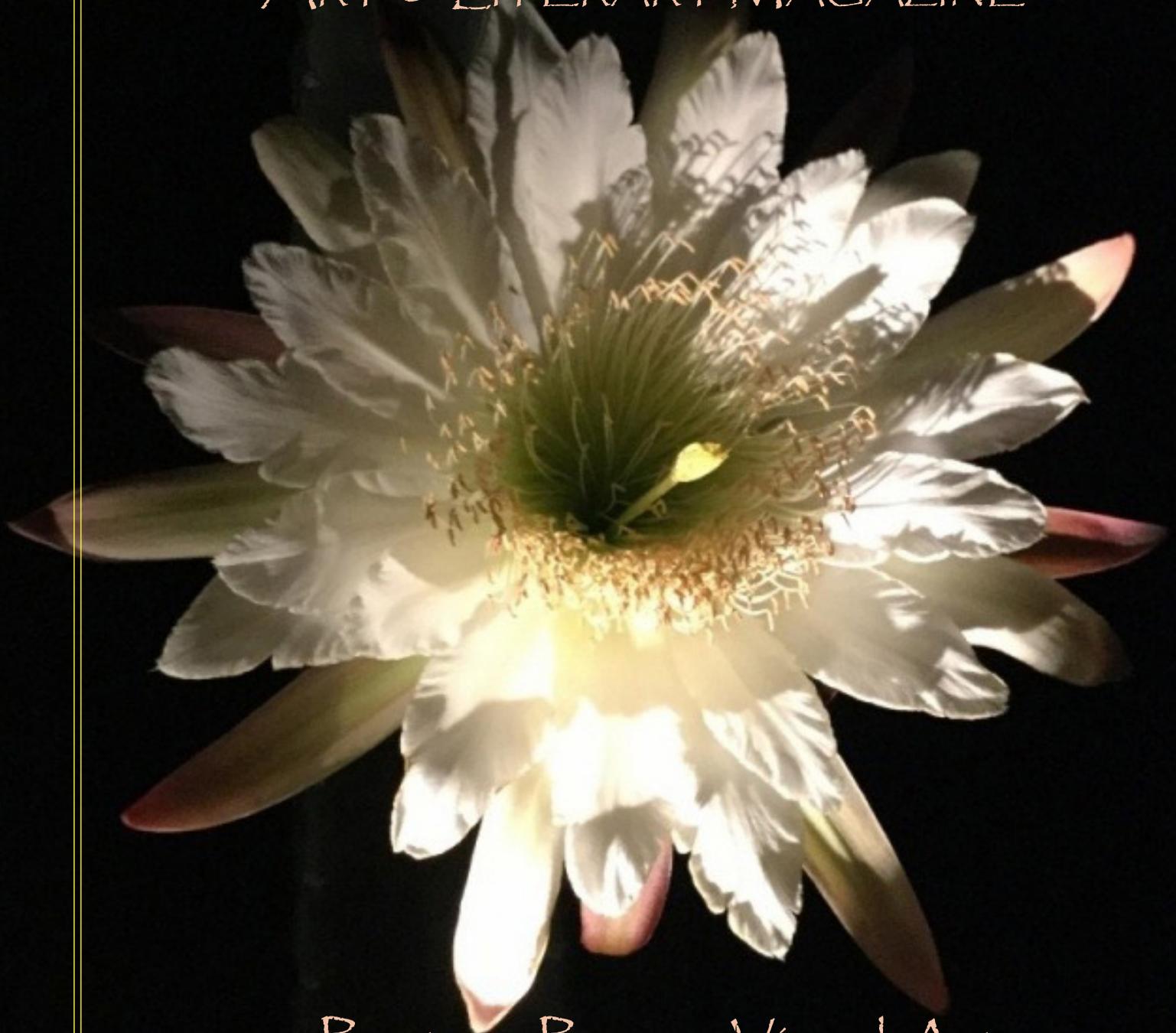


2018-2019 Issue N°5

# *Cababi*

ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE



Poetry - Prose - Visual Art

*Celebrating the many talents of the faculty and staff of Pima Community College*

Cover photograph by: Amanda McPherson



# *Cababi* 2018-2019

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# IN MEMORIAM & DEDICATION

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This year we lost some very dear friends and colleagues who were irreplaceable forces and wonderful people who helped Pima College maintain the level of creativity, spirit, and passion that makes Pima a special place to call home. Cababi Art & Literary Magazine would like to dedicate the 2018-2019 edition to two very special leaders and legends in our creative world: Aristeo Brito and Dennis Landry. Aristeo and Dennis were the warmest, most giving leaders within their disciplines at Pima and they are indescribably missed. We would also like to recognize and memorialize the sudden and unexpected passing of our friend Julianna Wilson. Julianna was a Cababi supporter who was instrumental in helping revive Cababi from a long hiatus. Her wry sense of humor and generous spirit is missed in the halls of the Downtown Campus.

## Be in the 2019-2020 Cababi Publication

Look for Spring 2019 submission updates, *Cababi* opportunities, and more art and writing.

Visit [www.pima.edu/cababi](http://www.pima.edu/cababi)  
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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**Last month** the March equinox marked the moment the sun crossed the celestial equator – the imaginary line in the sky above the earth’s equator. Leading up to this moment, I could feel the days getting longer and I could sense the fresh, bright rays streaming from behind the breathtaking Catalina Mountains in the morning. The promise of the spring season with its lush, verdant buds, blooms, and blades of grass always places me in a spirit of renewal, reassessment, and reflection.

With my annual spring cleaning comes some exciting new professional opportunities for me with the College. I’m very grateful and excited for the opportunity to serve as the new Mentoring Program Coordinator for the Faculty Learning Academy at Pima College. It’s been a goal of mine to help support and grow this vital element of our faculty training, and I couldn’t be happier to work with some of our outstanding mentors and new faculty who make this program possible. With that, it’s time to pass the Cababi torch to another talented member of our faculty, Molly McCloy. Molly is a creative force and award winning storyteller who is going to lead this amazing publication into the next phase of exciting

creative collaboration. I can’t wait to see what Molly and her team is going to do in the coming year.

I hope that you enjoy this very special 2018-2019 edition. I think the cover photo from Amanda McPherson is a vibrant tribute to spring in Tucson. This season we saw the majestic desert come alive with all the rich colors of wildflowers and flora. Amanda’s gorgeous floral photography reminds me of all the rich spots of color that can be seen around our wonderful community. I’m also very proud of the fantastic writing and visual feasts that are housed within this edition, all contributed by the talented and creative faculty, staff, and administrators at Pima Community College.

A piece of my heart will always be with Cababi, but I know I’m leaving it in strong, capable hands, and perhaps you will see some of my own work in future editions!

To new beginnings!

*April A. Burge*





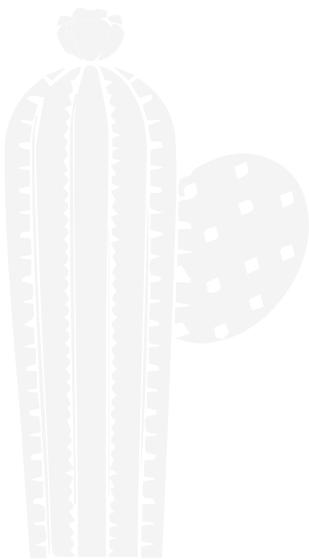
Annalisa Loevenguth, *Mother-Nature*,  
Mixed Media Collage Art



## In a Perfect World

*By Maureen Burns*

In a perfect world—Fear would not encumber us.  
In a perfect world—Hunger would be unknown.  
In a perfect world—Hope would be perpetual.  
In a perfect world—Pollution would be extinct.  
In a perfect world—Monday would not exist.  
In a perfect world—Criticism would be benevolent.  
In a perfect world—Charity would be universal.  
In a perfect world—Death would come gracefully.  
In a perfect world—Love would be magnanimous.  
In a perfect world—War would be an allusion.  
In a perfect world—Confidence would prevail.  
In a perfect world—Gay would not be a dirty word.  
In a perfect world—Respect would be prevalent.  
In a perfect world—Greed would disappear.  
In a perfect world—Children would be revered.  
In a perfect world—Extinction would be quenched.  
In a perfect world—God would never be an excuse for murder.  
In a perfect world—Traffic jams would vanish.  
In a perfect world—Censorship would be ostracized.  
In a perfect world—Pain would be diminished.  
In a perfect world—Prejudice would be history.  
In a perfect world—Humans would learn to love themselves.  
In a perfect world—Wishing for a perfect world would be unnecessary.



# The Distant Shore

*By Haziél Lopez*

My requiem has become a gushing river.

In the flowing ways of his water currents,  
And in the waves of his graceful crashes.  
I sought his light so I plunged into the darkness.  
Lost in the abyss in his stare.

Eyes a deep blue where I could drown myself forever.

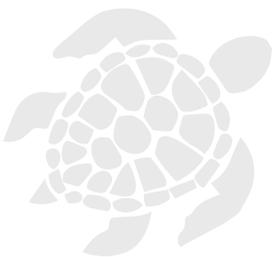
Washed out near the shore to gather,  
To face the repercussions of this tide,  
where I became a seaside gyre.

My requiem has become an endless ocean.  
For I am alone at sea. I find repose in whale songs  
that speak strange riddles in minor key.

A vindictive battle beneath the waters,  
I am engulfed in an aquatic storm,  
violently ripping apart my very being in an all too familiar form.

My requiem is a fearsome tempest,  
and I fall victim to his gale storm cyclone.  
I fall into the murky water, a reminder of this formal cycle.

What once was a hurricane is now but a calm breeze.  
What once was an ocean is now just the rain.  
Nothing more than dew on my skin. The familiarity is no more.  
My requiem now a distant memory; my requiem is the distant shore.



# Mermaid's Lullaby

By Kris Swank

Sail away, sail away, sail away child  
out on the crystal blue sea.  
Sail far away from a world that is wild  
to the shores where you'll live safe with me.

*Oh, but how can I sail on the crystal blue sea  
when I haven't a currach or boat?*

Just go out to the forest and fell an old tree  
to fashion a raft that will float.

*But, my hands are too tiny to fell an old tree.*  
Then go gather a large walnut shell,  
and with half you can hollow a coracle wee  
that surely will carry you well.

Sail away, sail away, sail away child;  
come sail into my waiting arms,  
for the wind it is fair and the waters are mild,  
and never shall you come to harm.

*Oh, but how can I sail in a half-walnut shell  
when I haven't a paddle or oar?  
I would bob on the ocean and never could tell  
where and how to come onto your shore.*

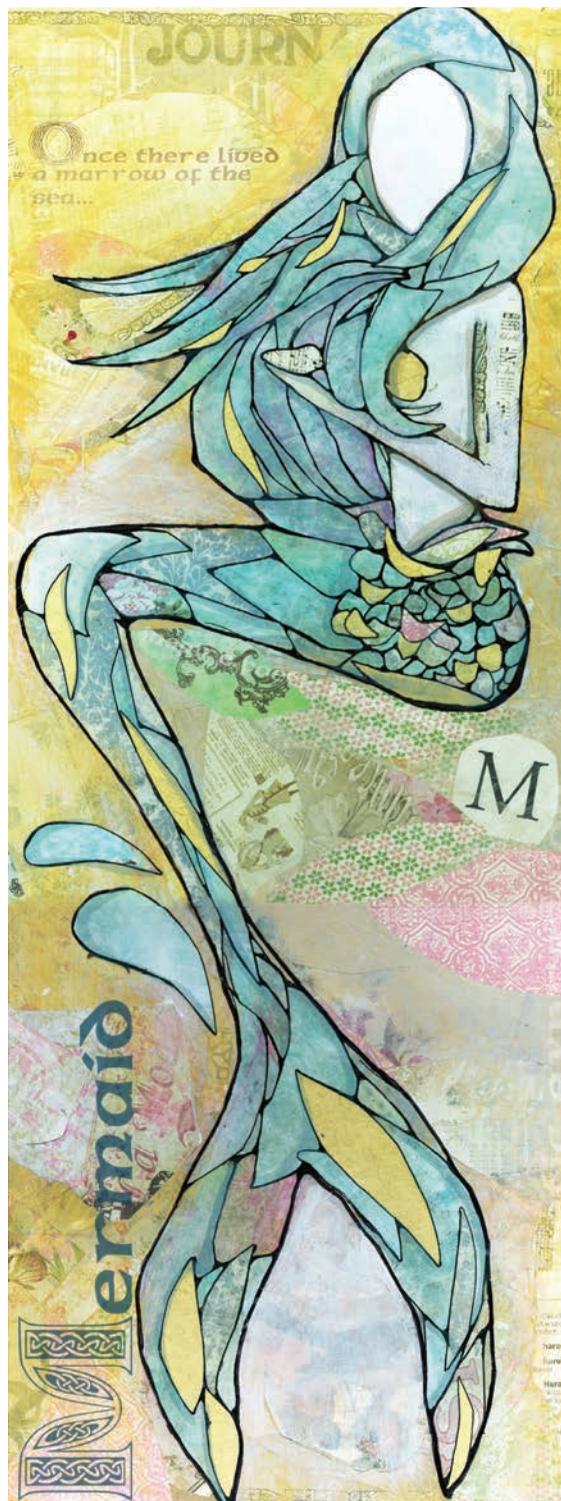
Just go down to the garden where lately you played  
and left all your toys there to lie;  
then gather together your bucket and spade  
to use each of them by-and-by.

Sail away, sail away onto my shore  
in your half-walnut coracle wee.  
With your bucket for bailing, your spade as an oar,  
come sailing, my child, to me.

*Oh, but how can I sail to your far distant shore  
when I haven't a compass or map?*  
Just follow the polestar that hangs in the north,  
then come rest your head in my lap,

and I'll sing you a tune that I heard long ago;  
it was known to both sailor and king.  
With their ships gently rocking, first to and then fro',  
these are the words they did sing—

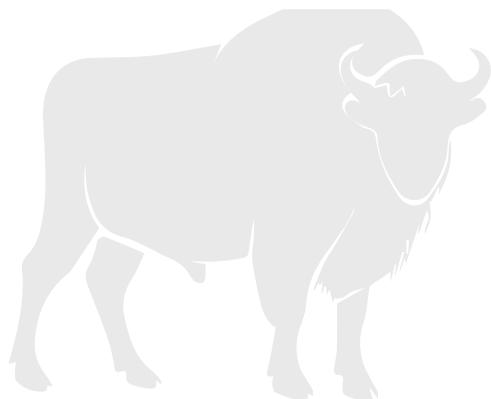
"Sail away, sail away, sail away child  
out on the crystal blue sea.  
Sail far away from a world that is wild  
to the shores where you'll live safe with me."



Annalisa Loevenguth, *Tale of Blue Marrow*, Mixed Media Collage Art



Ernesto Trujillo, *Silence Speaking 4*,  
Photograph Multi-Media



## As the Dream Dissolves, Disillusions Reemerge

By Maureen Burns

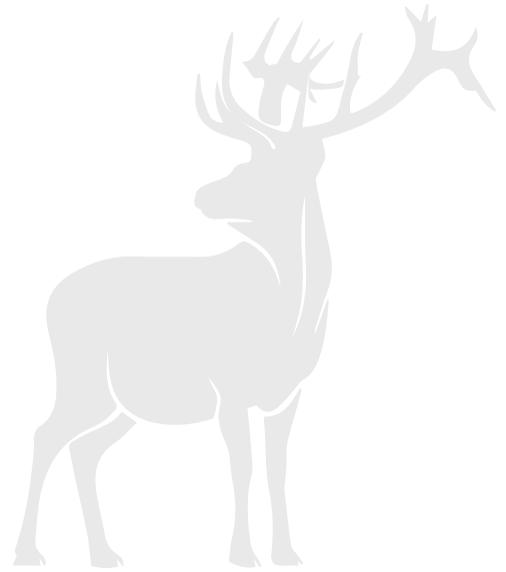
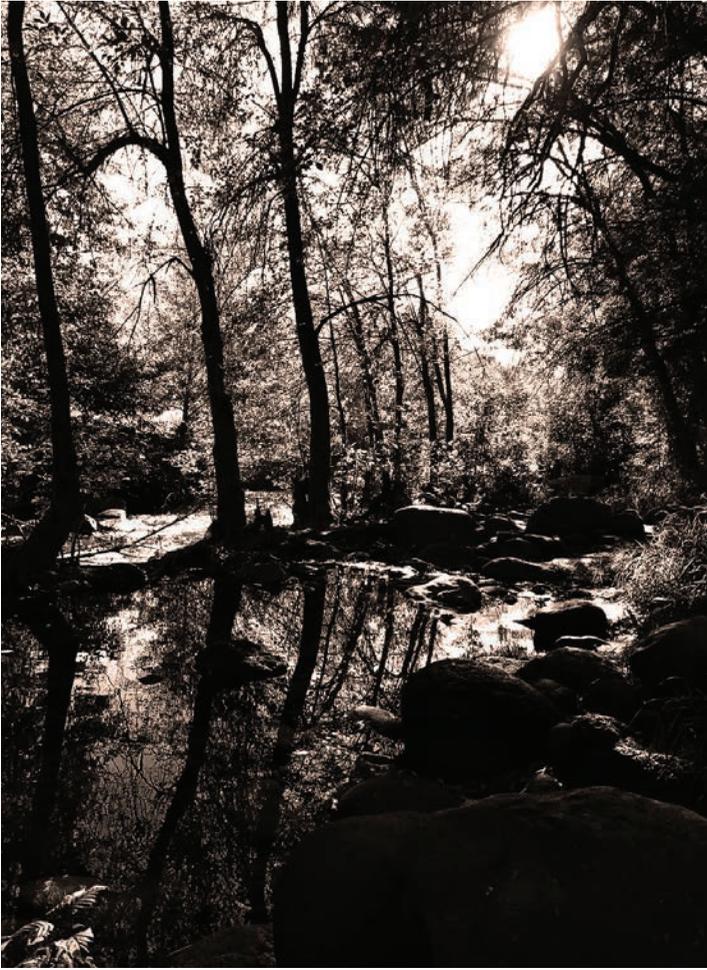
A scissortail waits on the wire,  
watches the bull snake coiled—  
complicit in the attack,  
reverent with attention.

Venus is replaced by  
Orion pointed toward Sirius  
or perhaps it is Cassiopeia  
too bright, too perfectly aligned—  
to malign my dream,  
dissolve the disillusion.

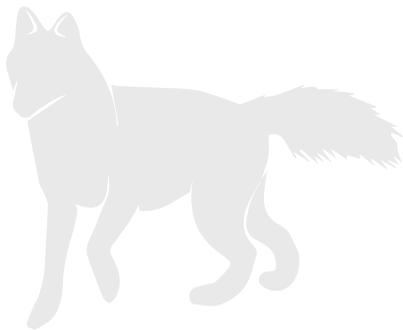
Or perhaps it is a Doppler  
effect the nearer  
I am—to the answer,  
the louder and more persistent  
is the insistence—that like the  
self-heal *Prunella vulgaris*  
I must be simple and true—  
to my own nature,  
at peace in my life's journey.

The moon's journey implies  
a greater consequence that belies  
its reassuring reappearance, and yet—  
mystifies with its ever-changing  
phases and colors and textures.

And yet suggests  
with each new moon—  
light is born of darkness  
life begins and ends, and  
life begins again;  
like the Albatross—  
will travel a great distance  
only to return to the end.



Ernesto Trujillo, *Silence Speaking 3*,  
Photograph Multi-Media



Ernesto Trujillo, *Silence Speaking 2*,  
Photograph Multi-Media



Annalisa Loevenguth, *Xiongñao Cove*,  
Mixed Media Collage Art

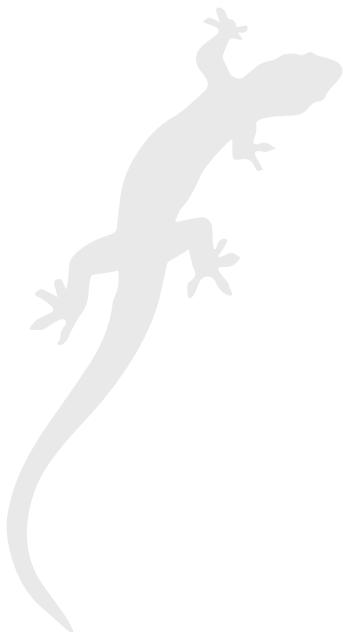
## Keep Smiling

*By Travis Ardle*

Random violence in pages and in yards  
Justifies how senseless you really are  
Death and destruction you hold in each hand  
The gift that you give to every woman and man

Sit in comfort with a pulled back smile  
Poisonous drinks made in a ring of fire  
Faith and trust strained with every passing hour  
As you give your life away to the everlasting coward

Create the fake words to hide your stolen soul  
Look back on every action and the effects on the world  
Completely safe from harm until you face me  
Then I hear the apologies on why you never believe



# Victory

By Travis Ardle

Conquered & pinned to every single wall  
Nameless & frail, unable to even crawl  
We continue until we finally fall  
United in the belief we are oh so tall

Sewn into the red, white & blue  
The names are read, even the few  
Who stood and took a stand  
Without ever striking their fellow man

Until the day of the fire  
Ignorance will say we need no trial  
We will stand and say we are ever so proud  
Even as the dead gathers a crowd



Annalisa Loevenguth, *Paper Crane*,  
Mixed Media Collage Art

# Packrat Wars

By Daniel Wright

“There’s another rat on the bridge,” my wife informs me. “There’s a couple pieces of cholla at the far end that were not there yesterday.” That’s my cue to rearm the traps, again. The hiatus since the last packrat was eliminated only lasted three weeks this time.

“I’ll set the traps later when it gets cool,” I answer. It must be a hundred in the shade today. It won’t get cool until the sun goes down and then I have to remember to set the traps before it gets too dark. I hate setting a snap trap holding a flashlight in my teeth. It seems to be a never-ending cycle. Cholla appears on the bridge, I set the traps, a couple days pass, and I have to bag and dispose of another filthy carcass before the ants get to it. My war on the packrats has lasted over ten years. Until recently, it seemed a hopeless exercise in futility.

You see there is a dry wash that runs through my backyard. Normally it is dry as a dusty bone, but during the monsoon season a sudden thunderstorm will cause the wash to fill with three to four feet of frothing water. The power of a monsoon rainstorm is amazing. Everything in the path of the rushing water is carried down wash in a torrent, pieces of cacti, sticks, coke cans, and other sundried stuff. Velvet mesquite and pale green palo verde trees along with prickly pear and cholla thrive along and in the wash from one end to the other of our wash. Their roots firmly hold these desert survivors against even the heaviest of downpours. Any creature or piece of flora not so firmly anchored get an E-ticket ride in the rapids from my yard into the next, cleaning out the wash to a pristine state. It is a desert paradise.

The previous owners built a rickety bridge, one that only Billy Goat Gruff might appreciate, spanning the wash at one of its narrowest points. I rebuilt it with three long 4x4’s and 20 feet of stout artificial planking, guaranteed to last twenty years, allowing me and my wife to cross over to the wild side of our back-forty. It is a tangled jungle of prickly pear and cholla that only the brave and armor-clad souls can wade through. We wear personally designated outdoor sandals whenever we trek to the back fence because upon our return from no man’s land there will be a smattering of cholla thorns and prickly pear glochids embedded in the rubber soles of that footwear, pointy things better left to the great outdoors. Several mesquite trees festooned with mistletoe thrive there as well as one very thorny

hackberry bush that the rabbits and round tailed squirrels hide under. I eliminated all the packrat middens that riddled the area when we first moved in as a deterrent to attracting rattlesnakes and other nasties that lived in the piles created by the rats.

We’ve fenced the near side of the wash with a combination of a rustic pole fence lined with chicken wire to keep our two clueless black and white Shelties on the tame side of the bridge. Anything with a thorn at dog-nose level has been removed from inside the fence line. The only cacti allowed where the dogs freely roam are two rather large nopals that grow up inside an old honey mesquite tree that survived the developer’s bulldozers. Protecting our kids, those two furry shepherds, has been a priority in our landscape planning.

The bridge is the ideal place to sit or stand and enjoy our natural desert landscape especially when it rains. From the bridge, we can watch and hear the roar of the desert monsoon pour under our feet. One large mesquite that grew up from under the bridge, doubtlessly planted there by an enterprising rodent, shades the bridge. There are hollow places under the two ends where the planks complete the span to the

desert paths we’ve created. These hollows have become the preferred residence of a revolving series of packrat families. Revolving because as soon as I detect a new resident

rodent, I am obliged to eliminate the offending animal. It’s not just that I do not like packrats, but their presence also attracts other unwanted guests to our home, rattlesnakes being the worst, with kissing bugs not far behind. Packrats, sometimes called the white-throated woodrat, or *Neotoma albiguia* by those with a Latin background, are large, for a rodent, solitary rats who have survived the Sonoran desert for over 5000 years, better than some cockroaches, apparently. Survivor is the key word for the purposes of this essay.

It’s easy to tell when a new interloper has taken up residence under my pride and joy by the tell-tale signs the creature leaves on top of my bridge. Depending on how long a rat has been present, an increasing amount of cholla segments, sticks, and maybe the desiccated scat of coyotes or javelina gets scattered across the walkway immediately above where the perpetrator of the trespass lives. My friend Tom always gets a kick out of the idea that packrats seem to think a few well-placed pieces of cactus detritus will protect them from the predators that coexist in my desert paradise. “They’re so cute,” he says. My wife sweeps the packrat leavings off the bridge when she spies it there like a sign post that screams, “We’re baacckkk!” After a short wait, sure enough, the cholla gets replaced, a sure sign

*“You can almost hear the cuties singing,  
‘And we won’t go away, no more, no more,  
no we won’t go away no more.”*

a new unwelcome neighbor has moved into the hollow. You can almost hear the cuties singing, “And we won’t go away, no more, no more, no we won’t go away no more.”

A few months back, I was pleasantly surprised to see a dusty bobcat lounging on my bridge with a self-satisfied smirk on its face just as serene as any house cat might be sitting on top of a fridge. He didn’t mind me raking up the brush under our citrus trees and stayed glued to his spot on the bridge for at least an hour. Even he expressed his approval for my bridge by leaving his mark on top of the bridge planks, scratches from one end to the other proclaiming the bridge as his alone, “Mine!” I was happy to leave him be, hoping he would take up residence, permanently, as my official bridge guardian, pledged to aid me in my war against packrats. But, I could tell from his dusty appearance even he had trouble squeezing under the bridge hollows to get to our entrenched common enemy.

I once watched three coyotes scale the six-foot high fence that encircles the backyard. One would think a six-foot high fence would keep almost anything out. All these coyotes had to do was reach up, put their fore paws on top of the fence, they were that tall, and pull themselves over the barrier. So much for keeping the migrants out with a wall, I thought. I was pretty sure the coyotes never made a dent in my resident packrat population. However, the rabbits were a little scarcer after one of their visits.

When I first started getting the rebuke from my wife, “There’s a rat on our bridge, take care of it,” I would set out a snap trap baited with peanut butter. Initially this proved effective, but as time went on more drastic measures had to be undertaken. When one trap no longer yielded a terminal resolution of the problem, I added additional traps to my minefield of increasing complexity and sensitivity until at one point, I had lined the entire end and edges of the bridge with a plethora of traps designed to limit any encroachment on my bridge. Any rat that dared to even step upon my bridge was sure to inadvertently trip one of my traps, whether they were attracted to the tasty treat that enticed

them or not. It was amazing to me how easily rats learned to jump over my minefield and avoid the dire consequences it promised. “Ha, ha.” I could hear them say. “Nice try, but we like the exercise.”

Poisoned bait is a recommendation offered by the local hardware stores, but I have refrained from escalating my battle to include chemical warfare. Doing so would just end up negatively affecting any carrion foragers in the area. Dealing with a sick raven one morning convinced me of the folly of using what many other home owners in my subdivision

resort to. I think the raven was straight out of Poe for he quoth, “Ne’er more,” before flying off in a drunken flutter. Somewhere in Tucson is a raven who will shun dead rodents like the plague.

I’ve always discounted the famed Havahart traps from the get-go. My policy has always been to take no prisoners once a war is fully engaged. To whose yard would I parole my prisoners, if I tried to be nice? Maybe that guy down the street would appreciate a furry friend. “Hey Joe, I noticed your backyard is bereft of wildlife. I have a friend here who is looking for a kind and loving home.”

There were times I felt like doing a Tucson version of Caddy Shack. I imagined myself emulating Chevy Chase, lighting and dropping M80’s down every hole I could find in and around my bridge. “BOOM!” That would wake everyone for about a mile around. “BOOM!” The flash bang and dirt flying up in the air might have been temporarily satisfying. I am sure that was true for

Chevy Chase. Fortunately for the neighbors, I’ve never been that fond of fireworks. “BOOM!” but it would have been fun until the cops showed up.

I won many of my initial skirmishes. A quick morning inspection after laying my brace of traps often yielded at least one rat, sometimes two. However, disposal of the bodies became a problem. The putrid smell of a dead rat could contaminate the garbage can for an entire week if a rat was caught the day after the garbage was picked up. Success could have its noisome down side. There is a small cemetery in



Kathleen Marks, *La Paz Waterfall*,  
Photograph

one corner of the back-forty commemorating the numerous victims of the slaughter from my packrat war. Judging by the disturbed soil in the area, the coyotes apparently didn't mind earth-baked carcasses as a quick and dirty meal.

At one point, in my frustration to capture a particularly intelligent foe, I decided to pull off all the planks covering the bridge hollows. I was armed with a pellet gun. I was sure I would be able to assassinate the offending rat before he scampered off into the cholla. No such luck, I think he thumbed his nose at me as he disappeared under the hackberry bush. I decided that as long as he had vacated the premises, I would fill the voids where he lived with cement. This entailed first removing all the mesquite and palo verde beans that I had under my bridge. Packrats, hence the name, love to store away all manner of MREs, along with a healthy dose of cholla, prickly pear, and other junk held in reserve to become topside deterrent materials. I filled a 55-gallon trashcan with what I raked out of the warren that had become established by succeeding generations of packrats. By eliminating the cozy nature of the hollows, I was sure I could make them uninhabitable. I left my handiwork feeling pretty smug with myself that I had been victorious and returned to the house for a delicious roast beef dinner and a good night's sleep.

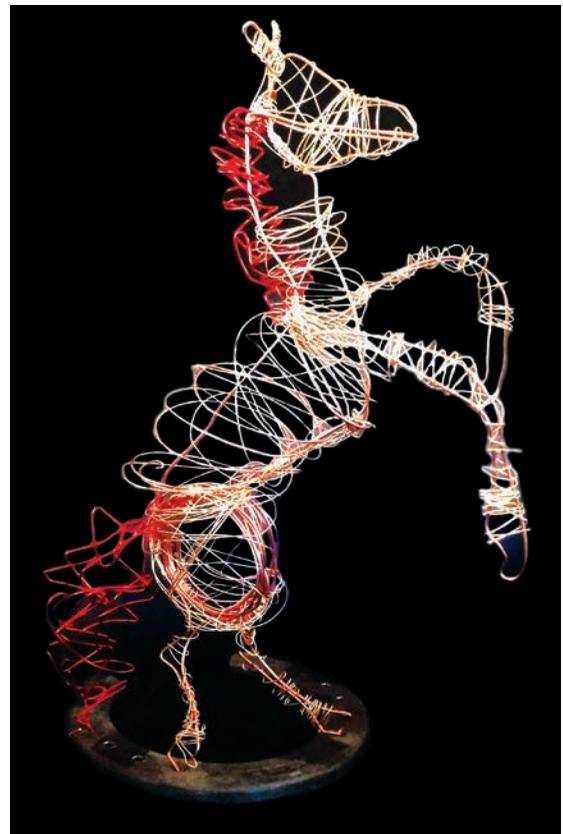
My wife was up before me the next day, and dashed my good mood yelling from the bridge, "You still have a rat to catch, there's cholla all over the far end." I ran out to see what she meant, sure that she was mistaken. Nope, she was right. If anything, there was more cholla on top of the bridge than the day before. All I succeeded in doing was to create just the hardened fortifications needed by the enemy to fully entrench themselves under my bridge and add to their defenses. I swear, they lined up (cholla barrels aimed out all the openings) of their new fortified bunkers like machine guns poking out of gun batteries on a beach.

I resorted to baiting my traps with other juicy edibles like berries and grapes when the peanut butter no longer held any interest to the rats. The ants became the packrat's coconspirators, defusing the traps in less than a day. Unfortunately, these alternative baits also resulted in more collateral damage. One morning, when I went to check the latest body count I discovered that a quail had inadvertently committed suicide on one of my traps. There are too many quail anyway, the "Cheetos" of the desert, as my friend Tom, the naturalist, likes to remark. But on another morning, it was a cactus wren I found whose stiffness suggested that he met his demise the evening before. The packrats were winning the moral war.

It finally occurred to me that a solution to my packrat problem stood parked out in my front yard, my Chevy S-10

pickup. I've never had a problem with packrats there. All I had to do was hang a utility light under the engine and open the hood periodically to discourage any transgressions on the wiring of my truck by packrats that preferred a more modern abode. All the neighbors do the same for the vehicles parked outside their garages. When I first moved to Tucson and before following suit with the other neighbors, I sometimes neglected to arm my sturdy steed with the protection it needed. I spent more than one afternoon cleaning the bits of cholla one of my foes had thoughtfully left on top of my carburetor as a result of my folly, just to remind me that the desert and all its stationary structures belonged to them. These events could explain my deep-seated animosity toward *Neotoma albiguia*.

Armed with a couple of bright solar light strings, purchased at discount from Harbor Freight, I pulled up the end planks of my bridge one more time, jack-hammered the concrete emplacements that had protected rather than discouraged the vermin underneath, and lined the hollows recreated with lights that would shine from dusk until dawn. Given our daily dose of sunshine, one day's charge lasts almost the entire night. But, just to be especially obnoxious, I set the lights to blink, on and off. Drives me crazy if I watch them too long. I figured packrats would be equally annoyed to have to deal with the staccato of these strobes. Hidden beneath the planks, the



Bobbi Nesbitt, *Horse*,  
Wire Sculpture

lights cannot be seen from my home. That didn't matter to me if the result was the solution to my troubles.

So far, six months after implementing the final solution, the rats have not returned. Every once in a while, a piece of cholla appears briefly on my bridge, but apparently the rats haven't figured out how to defuse my illuminating deterrence with some well-placed gnawing.

Sitting out on my back patio, looking out over the back forty, I have been much relieved not to have seen a repeat

performance of cholla stubs accumulating mysteriously on my bridge. But as I leaned back, the right rear leg of my white plastic patio chair shifted suddenly as it sunk, along with the brick it was resting on, down an inch. After prying up the brick, I discovered that a tunnel had been dug out that could be traced to the edge of my carefully laid brick patio. Mice have invaded while I've been distracted on the western front. A scurrilous sneak attack has occurred under my nose. War has been declared! Where are my traps? To arms, to arms, the enemy shall be mine.



Christine Connors, *Still*,  
Charcoal



Diane Deskin, *Birds and Blooms*,  
Photograph



Diane Deskin, *Black Neck Stilt*,  
Photograph

# The Beverage Cart Girl

By Mary Stoecklein

There was this really cool fox  
that liked to hang out at hole seventeen.  
I'd see him at the beginning  
of my shift as the beverage cart girl.

He'd run across the grass, so striking,  
an orange streak across a flat green,  
as I waited for average men  
to play average golf, three-putts a hole,  
and require domestic beers.  
It was really amazing  
though: the trees, the ponds,  
the breeze—it felt like Hilton Head

when I was seventeen and visited  
my grandfather's ex girlfriend.  
She was a badass bitch, made  
her own sherry. It was nasty,  
tasted like maraschino cherries  
in rubbing alcohol, but three years later,  
at twenty, as the beverage cart girl,  
watching par golf, serving

Bud heavy cans for two seventy-five,  
three twenty-five for a Heineken  
if they were feeling worldly,  
I knew I was wading into the deep waters  
of a Midwestern summer: no ocean,  
no seafood, plenty of sunburn, though.  
Once a golfer asked to kiss me—  
overweight, sweaty, sauced.

"I don't know if that's a good idea,"  
I said, "Can I get you anything else?"  
The geese, I remember, were mean,  
would hiss if you got too close.

They shit on everything on  
the front nine. I got to be pretty  
much on my own, brief interactions,  
fresh air, calm—like Hilton Head,  
except that night when my grandfather's ex  
told me over vodka martinis that  
my grandpa was cold after intimacy,  
and she cried while the servers cleaned

the tables and flipped the *Closed* sign.  
The golf course had its discomforts, too:  
the aura of that couple who killed  
their older brother's fiancé with the rudder,  
sightings of my old P.E. teacher, who  
was a starter, who I had tried to drop  
in elementary school because he gave me a  
B+ on layups when that year I made

the A Team on Select. And then  
there were the ducks. They'd march  
in a fuzzy line of eight in the spring,  
dwindle to one or two by June,

the fox running sprints between  
his handiwork, the men yelling "shit"  
between their shanks, my thoughts  
on South Carolina, wondering

why, other than sheer loneliness,  
I ever went there in the first place.

# A Little Boy, Mountain Lions and the Magic of Raven

By Dave Tedlock

Raven came into our lives around midnight on the first night of our family's visit to our Santa Fe home when our son Michael was about 2 years old. Michael routinely stayed up until 10 p.m., but that night in rural Santa Fe County as midnight approached or passed, Michael wrestled with his pillow and I realized something other than the excitement of travel and late-night hyperactivity was at work.

His Mom was already asleep and at least twice I'd fallen asleep while reading to him only to be woken up by a whack on the face and a voice sternly saying, "Keep reading, Daddy."

As I rubbed a sore cheek, I started asking questions.

"Are you worried about something? What are you thinking about?"

Eventually, I got an answer.

"Mountain lions. A mountain lion is going to come get me tonight."

Yes, the doors were locked. No matter.

"A mountain lion is going to come."

Our two golden retrievers, Nicky and Sammi, were on duty just outside his bedroom door. They wouldn't be enough.

"The mountain lion is going to eat me."

Grandpa Webb was to blame. We had dropped in to visit my wife's parents at their Elephant Butte home on our way to Santa Fe, and Grandpa had insisted on giving us a tour of the most impressive homes surrounding the lake.

One property in particular stood out, its entryway guarded by two utterly lifelike statues of mountain lions, each carved to actual size in such amazing detail that even I had imagined that if those two lions were to suddenly spring to life, they would leap off the pedestals where they crouched, dive through

the windshield and devour us.

Now, hours and hours later, Michael and I looked at each other in the yellow light of the single candle in his bedroom, and I said, "Well, you know that raven we always see around the house here?"

He did.

"Why do you think he's here?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I do. Raven — he just calls himself Raven--is here to protect you against mountain lions."

"Really?" Michael sat up a bit.

He'd seen the raven up in the ponderosa pine in the front yard, and not long ago we'd looked out a workshop window and seen the raven striding up to the cattle trough, just a few

feet away, to get a drink of water. Massive and arrogant, he seemed bigger than an eagle.

"Yes, really," I said firmly.

"How is Raven going to stop a mountain lion?"

"Uh, with magic," I managed. "Raven has magical powers."

"What does he do?" Michael was still for the first time in hours. And so the story of Raven began. I told it this way.

Every night, Raven hides high in the ponderosa, or sometimes stands on the chimney, where he stays on sentry duty all night. As soon as the sun sets, he starts watching out for mountain lions.

When the sun comes up, he flies off to have breakfast and take a nap. He can sleep once the sun is up because he knows that mountain lions do not come out during the day to get little boys.

"Raven knows you need protection," I told Michael. "That's why he's watching."

"What happens when the mountain lion comes?" Michael asked.

"This is the funny part," I said, and went back to telling the story.

When Raven sees a mountain lion approaching, he uses his magic to turn the mountain lion into a kitten. A house



Richea Olson, *Contemplation*, Photograph

kitten. Kittens don't weigh much, so Raven gently picks up the mountain lion he's turned into a kitten. Then Raven flies off with the kitten all the way to the Humane Society in Santa Fe, where the kitten will find a good home and grow up as a family's cat.

The story over, I added, "That's why Raven's always been around our house here. He's been watching over you ever since you first started coming here. I just forgot to tell you. I'm sorry."

Magically, Michael smiled and said to himself, "He turns them into kittens." Then he giggled a little at the idea of a gigantic mountain lion becoming a kitten.

"So you don't ever have to worry about mountain lions ever again," I told him. "Raven's watching over you."

In minutes, Michael was asleep.

I told that story every night we were on vacation. When we returned to Tucson, a complication arose. Michael was struggling, again, with getting to sleep.

When I brought up Raven, Michael immediately said, "Daddy, Raven lives in Santa Fe."

"That's right," I said. "But Raven has a big family.

Remember those ravens we saw in the parking lot at Target on the way home?" Michael nodded.

One of them is Raven's uncle. Uncle Billy. Raven's on his way over here right now, but he can't fly as fast as we can drive. So he used the raven network to get Uncle Billy to watch over you until Raven gets here. Uncle Billy's sitting on top of our chimney right now, watching out for you. After that, at bedtime, Michael asked for more Raven stories.

When we couldn't find Care Bear, a stuffed animal that made the rounds from child to child in Michael's preschool, Raven found the bear out in our driveway where Michael had dropped him. So Raven picked up Care Bear, dropped him on the Welcome mat and flew up just high enough to ring the doorbell with his beak.

When Michael's Daddy answered the door, looked out and saw no one there, he said, "What the heck?"

Michael always laughed at the part where the Daddy said, "What the heck?"

Then the Daddy saw Care Bear on the welcome mat and called out, "Michael, Care Bear is right out here on the front porch. But who rang the doorbell?"

Sometimes Raven made mistakes. One night, he saw a

large, dark form slinking up our driveway. Without further investigation, he turned the "mountain lion" into a kitten and flew down to investigate.

The kitten wailed, "What did you do to me? Now I'm a kitten!?"

Raven explained, "I turned you into a kitten because you were a mountain lion and you were coming to eat Michael."

"I am not a mountain lion," the kitten screeched indignantly. "I'm a Labrador retriever, and I'm lost!"

Then the kitten burst into tears, crying out, "How will I ever find my way home now?"

"What did Raven do?" Michael wanted to know.

Raven told Tasha – that was the dog's name – that Tasha would have to wait to be turned back into a dog.

Then Raven flew up into the night, holding her gently with his feet, and Tasha bravely looked down into each front yard and backyard they flew over, to see which one was hers.

On and on, house after house, yard after yard, Raven flew until he thought he could fly no more, but finally Tasha cried out excitedly, "There it is! That's my home right there! Put me down

there!"

Tasha got so excited Raven almost dropped her, but he managed to glide down into a backyard with two orange trees and a lovely stretch of lawn.

As soon as Raven set Tasha down, he turned her back into a Lab and in a flash she licked him in the face so hard that her tongue knocked him down. Then she raced for the back door, barking all the way. As Raven flew up out of sight, he heard a man say, "Oh, my God, I can't believe it! Tasha's back, honey! In our backyard! Tasha!"

A short while after Michael's third birthday party, I told him how the man who had set up the jumping castle was new to the job and confused his blower with the bottles of helium for party balloons. The man filled up the jumping castle with helium, and it started to float away – with Michael inside trying it out before the party started!

Raven was too small to hold down the jumping castle, so he called out to Michael's golden retrievers, Nicky and Sammi, to help, and they latched on with their teeth, but even so the Jumping Castle, dogs and all, began to float up into the sky.

So Raven brought Tasha from her yard and she grabbed ahold, and then Raven got Michael's cats, Cassidy and Mocha,

*"So you don't ever have to worry about mountain lions ever again," I told him. 'Raven's watching over you.'"*

to help, so that when Michael's Daddy finally came back outside, he saw a jumping castle floating only a couple of feet off the ground with three dogs, two cats and Raven desperately holding on!

The Daddy pulled the Jumping Castle back to earth and let the helium out slowly. Then Tasha went home, Nicky and Sammi went back inside where the birthday food was, and both cats rolled their eyes at what humans do.

Then, long after Michael quit asking for Raven stories, the stories kept coming. One was about a talkative, compulsive woodpecker Raven made friends with. In another story Raven looked at Mocha, the cat, and just knew she still had that mountain lion look in her eyes, even though he had worked his magic on her, a long time ago.

Then, many, many years later, magic. Michael and the love of his life, Ashley, had a baby, Emmett, and I wanted to know if Emmett had passed his final, in-hospital exams, and if his

proud parents would be taking him home that day—that first trip home for parents with a newborn, especially with their first baby, changing everything, including what the word “home” means, a healthy baby.

So I called Michael right then, to see if they were home yet. He is a man of few words, sometimes simply monosyllabic, so when he answered the phone, I was startled to hear him talking so fast, saying so much. First, the sound of wind blowing over his mobile phone. Then, “Dad, Dad, before I say anything else, I just have to tell you. This amazing thing just happened. We just got Emmett home and pulled into the driveway and then just as Ashley was lifting Emmett out of the back seat, at that exact moment, this Raven swoops down low over the car, right over Ashley's head!”

Raven was back. I managed to say, “Amazing.”

“Yeah,” Michael said, “So Raven's going to watch over Emmett, now.”



Jennie Conway, *A Window to the World*,  
Photograph



Jennie Conway, *Beach Dune*,  
Photograph



Michele E. Rorabaugh, *Road Runner*,  
Photograph

# On the Bus

By Tom Speer

When I got on the bus I looked at the heads bobbing above seat backs, like a herd of seals I thought. I was going from the San Joaquin Valley to the coast, and so my mind was full of beach images. At the very back, near the little bathroom (this was a Trailways bus and it was 1973), the one empty seat beckoned me. I brushed along the aisle and stood looking down on a middle-aged woman with bright yellow hair, ruby red lips, slightly smeared, and an unfiltered Camel cigarette dangling from her mouth, still unlit. She was wearing a tight black shirt with a gold swish of a capital Z across it and a red skirt. She was about to light up as I examined the empty window seat next to her. "That seat's taken," she said to me. In it sat a large, yellow-tan leather bag.

"The driver told me to come here. It's the only free seat on the bus."

She put her cigarette back in her pack, straightened some things around, grabbed the bag and gestured to the bin above.

"Put it in there for me," she directed. I lifted it and shoved it in and put my suitcase next to hers. We sat while the bus took off. After that, we sat another ten minutes without saying a word. She shifted in her seat a few times. We vied for arm room. Was she mad at me for taking the empty seat?

The usual fast foods, billboards, copy centers, shops, banks and cheap motels clipped by outside.

"Where are you going?" she finally asked me when we were on open road, along with tract houses and grape vines. I guess she wasn't going to hold a grudge forever.

"To Pacific Grove."

"Me too," she said. She smiled at me. She had once been a very attractive, maybe even beautiful, girl, but time had roughened her and thickened her. She still had a lovely smile and she smelled like lemons, but a little sweeter.

"You can call me Ruth." She stuck out her hand for me to shake.

"I'm Troy. Going to see my sister," I said. "She just got married, and I'm going to get her to leave the clown."

"Well, you're a nice one. How old are you?" She offered

me one of her cigarettes from the pack. I took it, and she lit a match for me. I breathed in the smoke, breathed it out. I would have blown circles as well, but I was just learning how.

"I'm seventeen." This would be true in two months.

"Well, I'm thirty seven," she said and smiled. Like, sure, and I'm a hundred and three.

"You live in Pacific Grove?" I asked.

"No, I'm from Bend, Oregon. I'm on an adventure."

"Do you have family in PG?"

"No, I'm just stopping. I rented a cottage near the ocean. I'll go look at the aquarium in Monterey. I'll go to the parks and zoo and library and such." She smiled at me.

"Mostly I'll just hang out at bars near the pier, though. I'm looking for husband number four." She smiled again, and I noticed lipstick on one of her teeth. "And maybe a little adventure."

"In a bar?"

"Well, bars seem to do the trick. I've had three husbands,

and I met each of them in a bar. What's the matter? Don't you like a drink?" She pulled a flask out of her large purse, along with a nest of Kleenex smudged by

lipstick, and offered me a sip. It was a very strong whiskey, and I winced as I pulled it down from my mouth.

"A bit strong for you?" She smiled at me.

"I think I can handle it." I wasn't used to whiskey, but I could get used to it quick.

"What's the matter with your sister's new husband?"

"Why, are you interested?"

"I'm asking, aren't I? All matters of matrimony interest me. I've been down the path a few times. I'm looking forward to the next."

"You have some advice for me?"

"Maybe, we'll see. Anyhow, it's free."

"She got pregnant by this guy. He's OK, but not her type really. My sister's really smart and likes to read long novels. Dostoyevsky. Serious stuff. He likes to play the guitar and crack jokes. Anyhow, my folks forced them to marry, even though they barely knew each other. My folks think they're liberal but they're not. They had the wedding in our living room. A total of seven people showed. A week later my sister

*"I brushed along the aisle and stood looking down on a middle-aged woman with bright yellow hair, ruby red lips, slightly smeared, and an unfiltered Camel cigarette dangling from her mouth, still unlit."*

felt blood in her underwear and called me. I told her I thought she was maybe losing the baby. She should go to emergency.”

“Well, divorce isn’t always easy, if you’re young.”

“I know. She says till death do us part and all that. I told her it might just happen like that. You’ll kill him or he’ll kill you. She laughed, told me, ‘Oh, we love each other all right,’ which I know isn’t true. Hell, they’ve known each other only two months maybe and they are fighting a lot. After she lost the baby, they moved over here to PG and she started calling me, miserable and all, crying on the phone, what a drag he was, how they’d dropped out of community college, how he was working all the time and she was working all the time, saving for something that never would happen. She says she doesn’t want to be a divorcee. I said what about annulment? So I figure I better go there and help her figure it out.

“Does she know you’re coming?”

“Oh yeah, she knows. She wants me to come. She and I are only a year apart, we’re real close.”

“This reminds me of my first marriage...” It was almost like a bell rang in her ear. She relaxed back in her seat and started spinning her story.

I could tell she’d told the story a lot of times, with all the edges smoothed out. A soldier boy got her pregnant, she lived on base with him, had her little boy, moved to Okinawa, the soldier started cheating on her. She seemed to enjoy the telling, going off into side-tales here and there, all of it mostly sad. It ended with her saying they threw her in the brig. That was the only surprise in the story.

“They have a woman’s brig in the army?” I asked her.

“Oh yeah, I met a few very nice girls there. Some locals, some Americans like me. I learned a lot from them. We still

write sometimes.”

“Like what did you learn?”

“Like how to shoplift. How to steal from your boss. How to write a bad check. All sorts of stuff.”

“Why’d they throw you in the brig?”

“Maybe it was the way I raked Carl’s face with my nails. Maybe it was the shish kabob skewer I stuck in his stomach... I was a real cat then.



Anja-Leigh Russell, *Wait for the Trolley*, Photograph

Carl thought he could hit me. I’m not the one who started the fight,” she said.

“I just finished it.”

“Was he OK?”

“You mean, other than the hole in his stomach?”

“Yeah, did he live?”

“Oh, he lived. He was in the hospital for six days. He got out and served me divorce papers in the brig. He laughed in my face, but then he had this pained look, like laughing hurt. So I laughed back.”

“Where’s your little boy?”

“My little boy is all grown and lives in Ohio. He’s got my first grandbaby.” We both rested in the seat. I took out a *Time* magazine and started to read. The bus driver announced a rest stop coming up in five minutes. Ruth started gathering things together in her bag.

“When we get inside, if there’s just the one clerk, ask him to show you where something is,” she said. “Something on the other side of the store.” She smiled at me sort of mysteriously. Like this was our mystery.

“What are you going to do?”

“You’ll find out. A little trick I learned.”

When we went inside, the place was pretty empty with just one girl who looked bored behind the counter. I asked her where shoe polish was, thinking maybe it was something

hidden off in some corner somewhere, and sure enough she came right out from the counter and took me way down the aisle to the far end of the store and pointed to the brown and black polish on a bottom rack. I'd never have found it by myself. I thanked her, then asked her where Fritos were. She looked a little put out with me, but motioned me to the other side of the store and pointed at the chip rack. I thanked her again, threw a bag into my basket, started walking around like I was still considering something, then went to the counter to pay. By that time the clerk was back behind the counter.

"You don't want the polish?" I'd forgotten about it, actually, but said, "wrong color," which seemed to satisfy her. I paid for the Fritos.

Back in the bus Ruth showed me her haul. A fifth of Bombay gin and two packs of Camel cigarettes. They were in her capacious leather purse.

She'd bought some tonic water, a pint of whiskey and a lemon on her way out. Also some plastic cups, and a medium coffee. They were in a paper bag.

When the bus started up again, she said, "I got this for you" She handed me a copy of *Playboy* from her purse. Ruth was unlike any grandma I'd ever seen, that was for damn sure.

"So why did you steal that stuff?" I asked her. She didn't look broke or even down and out. She had a place to stay in PG. She had money to sit in bars.

"For fun I guess. This bottle was gonna cost me 20 bucks, and cigarettes would be another five almost. I'd be embarrassed buying the magazine. And it saves on paying for it."

"Do you do this often?"

"Not really. It usually takes two to pull it off."

"Have you gotten caught?"

"Well yes, I have, a few times. But I can usually talk my way out of it. It's no big deal. Let's drink and be merry." She

handed me a plastic glass with gin and tonic and a slice of lemon stuck on the paring knife she had in her apparently endless purse. I shared my Fritos with her.

She got up and brought down her bag from the bin. She pulled out two ham sandwiches and something she'd tucked inside a black nylon stocking. She handed it to me. I could tell from its heft it was a gun. I pulled it out of the stocking.

"Careful. It's loaded."

"It's a derringer. I recognize it." I'd watched *Paladin* on TV.

It was nickel plated with a rosewood handle, a beautiful piece, and lethal looking.

"Belonged to my father. Still fires. Makes quite a bang. I carry it with me wherever I go." She took the pistol back, put it in the stocking, and stuffed it in the pocket of the seat in front of us. She handed me one of the sandwiches.

"Eat up," she said.

We'd been on the road for over

an hour and had five more to go till we arrived in PG. I was a little nervous with the gun touching my knees.

I'm not used to weapons of any kind. My dad wouldn't have a gun in our house. "Like having poison around babies," he said. I ate the sandwich, munched the Fritos and drank two gin and tonics in a row.

I listened. Finally she started telling me about her second husband who nearly bored her to death. "Yes, he loved golf. Golf golf golf. I mean, he pulled me out to follow him for 18 holes under the hot sun. I couldn't stand it. By then we had three kids and he got us a blonde babysitter named Trudy. It was kids and golf and sometimes Trudy, who was living with us for a while. He sold insurance. What a life."

The drinks kept coming. We were really attacking the bottle. Ruth was getting loud. Some of the passengers in front were looking back at us. She kept setting her hand on my knee, the



Diane Deskin, *Montecito Illusiones*, Photograph

same knee that bumped against the gun. I reached down and placed her hand back in her lap.

“What’s the matter, Troy?”

“So, what happened to the golfer?” I dodged her question.

“Oh, him, well he ran off with Trudy. Left me with three kids. But I got child support, and met number three only a few months later. He was the best by far, old and rich, with a weak ticker. He was fun, too. I mean, I was attracted to his money, but really fell for him over the years. He was just fun, loved to travel and spoil me, then he died. The kids are mostly grown up now. Hence my adventure.”

She relaxed and settled back in her seat to look at me sideways. “You know, Troy, you’re pretty cute.”

She wasn’t looking cute to me though. By then I was pretty drunk. She was drinking even more than I was, so she was really wasted. Her hair was a mess and her mascara had smeared.

She had me trapped in the window seat with a gun at my knee, and her knee, and her hands traveling all over my chest. “Excuse me, I have to use the bathroom,” I said, rising from my seat.

The bathroom was tiny, like the ones on airplanes. I looked in the mirror. My skin was a shade of green, probably from the non-stop cigarettes I’d been smoking as well as the gin. I was feeling sick, like I wanted to throw up but couldn’t. What could I do with this crazy woman? My history with girls included close hugging at school dances, making out and getting barely past first base a few times in the back of my dad’s station wagon, fantasizing often, but generally avoiding them other than in the library, where we sometimes talked and compared notes.

When I returned, Ruth seemed to have freshened up in my absence.

She’d brushed her hair and cleaned the smudges off her face. She’d gotten the bread crumbs off her shirt, and she even seemed more sober.

She was drinking the coffee she’d bought at the store.

“Do you play track in school?” she asked me as I squeezed past her and down into my seat. “You’re so tall and thin, you look like a runner.”

“No, I was a swimmer, and on the wrestling team.”

“I can see you as a swimmer. Those long arms and legs.”

“Actually, I could use more weight. I’m only fair.”

“How was the wrestling?”

“I lost more matches than I won.” My efforts at athletics had been pretty half-hearted. I liked other things. Reading. Acting in plays. Singing in choir. And I was a loner, hanging out most of the time in the school library, away from everyone.

“Well, I like your name. Troy. It’s strong and sensitive. Maybe that’s the way you are too.” She seemed to be looking at me very closely. Uncomfortably so. I picked up my magazine and tried to read, ignoring her remark.

“You know you have almost a perfect face,” she said, still looking at me.

“Almost perfect? I don’t think so.” I could feel myself blushing.

“Yes, they say if both sides of your face match perfectly, that’s how people are judged handsome or beautiful. Perfect symmetry. And yours match perfectly. Except for your nose.”

“My nose?”

“Nothing’s the matter with it. But did you break it sometime? It curves just a bit to the left when I look at you. It’s nice, you know, not too big or small. No one should be perfect.” She took out a mirror from her bag and handed it to me. “Look. You’ll see what I mean.” I took the mirror and looked. I had never looked at my nose quite so closely, had never noticed it, but she was right, it curved just a bit to the right in the mirror. Hardly noticeable, but she noticed. Now, forever, I would notice.

“I never broke it. It’s just the way it is.”

“Well, you are a beautiful young fellow anyway.”

“Beautiful?”

“Yes, beautiful, like a Greek god.”

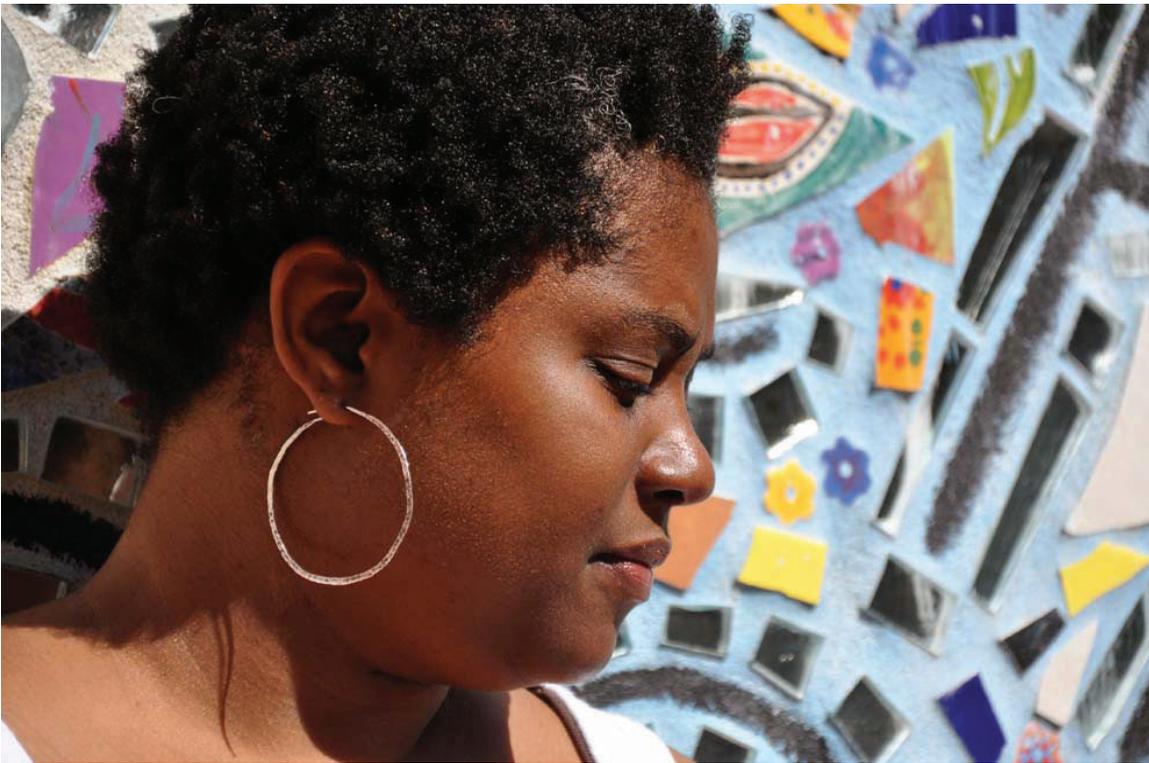
“With a broken nose?”

“Especially with the broken nose. And those eyes!” The conversation on my facial features was getting out of hand. She had the little table down and was making us two more gin and tonics. We were approaching the end of the bottle.

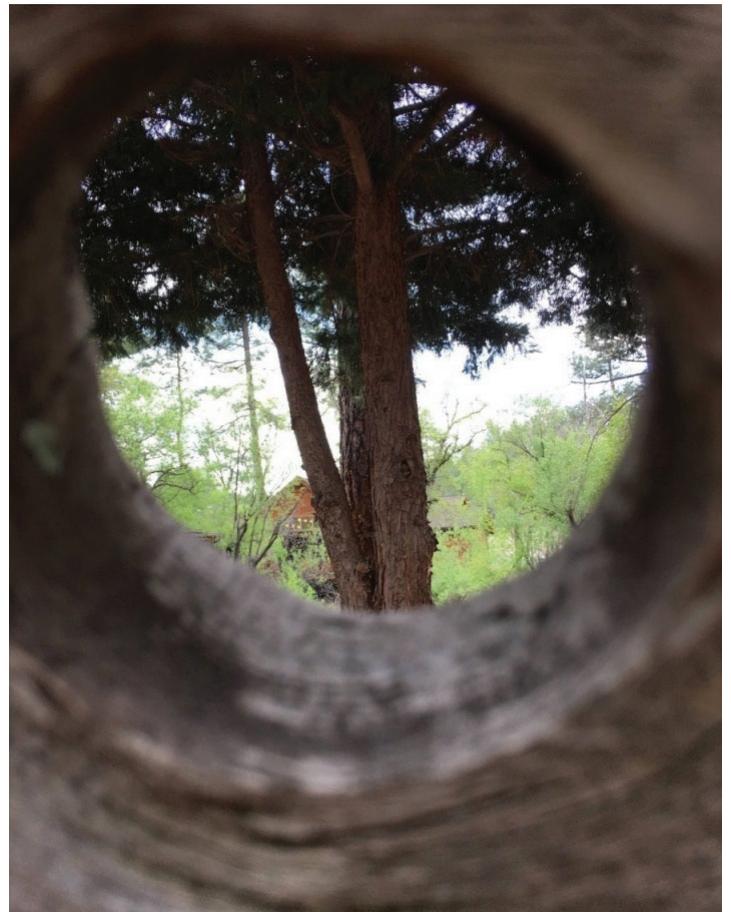
“I bet you have some attractive kids,” I said. People always like to talk about their kids.

“They’re all right. Nothing to write home about.” She dismissed the topic with a shrug and a smile, a little disappointment maybe. I picked up my magazine and the gin and tonic she handed me.

*“I recalled what my sister told me the last time we talked on the phone — ‘Welcome to the real world, Troy.’”*



Jennie Conway, *Mosaic*,  
Photograph



Amanda McPherson, *Lizard Eye*,  
Photograph

“You know when we get to PG I could show you the place I’ve rented. You might want an escape from your sister’s. And it’s right by the beach. We could hang out together.” The woman was older than my mother and she wanted us to hang out?

“I’ll be staying with my sister, I guess. But thanks for the offer.” I’ve always been a believer in diplomacy. But by then I was pretty drunk and felt sick. The gun hitting against my knee made me nervous.

Ruth had a wild side. A skewer-the-husband side. A thievery side. Hmmm I thought. Things were blurred. I was dizzy with alcohol. “Well it’s up to you. Maybe you’re scared?” Her voice raised on the last word, enough so that a young woman two seats up turned around and looked at us. I put my finger to my lips to shush Ruth a little.

She leaned over me and pulled out the gun with its black nylon sheath.

“What are you doing?”

“Yes, that’s it, you’re scared. You’re a virgin. I’ve always wanted to fuck a virgin, never had the luck.” She told me this in a soft voice a little above a whisper and shook her head sadly. “You know you gotta start sometime. You could learn a lot from me.” She pulled the gun out of the stocking. I sat frozen, stuck to the seat, mesmerized by the gun.

“Just kidding,” she said. “But I think you’re scared.”

“I don’t feel comfortable with you playing with the gun,” I said.

“You know, I’ve undressed you five times in my mind. I have you in my mouth.” She brushed the gun barrel against her lips.

“I’m getting wet with you. I can make you a man.”

“Ruth, I don’t think—I don’t think this is appropriate.” This was one of my mother’s favorite lines, and I grasped onto it like I was drowning. Ruth’s eyes were rolling around, like she was trying to get me in focus.

“Fuck appropriate. You’re a girl.”

“A girl?”

“Or maybe a fairy. Maybe that’s what you are.”

“Ruth, can you put the gun away?”

“Well, most guys don’t say no.” She pouted, and looked out the window.

“I think we’ve had too much to drink.” By that time I was thinking of ways to escape. Go to the bathroom again? Go talk to the driver? What could I say? Most of the people on the bus were sleeping.

She leaned over and trailed the gun along my thigh. “Could

we just make out a bit? Nobody’s looking.” Her breath was a mix of cigarette smoke, coffee, gin, whiskey, and ham sandwich. I scrunched myself away from her, against the side of the bus, and she pulled herself up. “You know you have beautiful eyes. They change color. Sometimes green. Then gray. Then blue...”

With that, she slid, low and comfortable on the seat, and went to sleep. It was instantaneous. I didn’t know what to do. Her head rested on my thigh.

I reached to take the gun softly from her hand and put it back in the nylon stocking, then in the pocket in front of the seat. I was afraid to move and wake her. It felt like I might vomit on her any minute. I recalled what my sister told me the last time we talked on the phone — “Welcome to the real world, Troy.”

She slept all the way to Pacific Grove. A few times I started to drift asleep.

When we pulled into the station, she woke and looked at me like I was a stranger, like who are you? I helped her get her bag down and put her stuff away.

She was a bit unsteady on her feet. When she moved down the aisle I stayed sitting. Others moved ahead of me. I saw her as she went down from the bus.

She looked back at me.

Outside, she walked back and forth like she was looking for someone. She peered back up at my window. I ducked out of sight. She was shouting my name. I opened the window a few inches but stayed out of her line of vision.

“I know you’re there Troy,” she yelled up toward the window. “It wasn’t loaded. I was just playing with you.” She looked up at the window. “You hear me? It wasn’t loaded.”

From the side I looked at her through the gap. Her eyes were smudged with mascara, her hair was wild. “Damn you Troy. God Damn you beautiful boy,” she shouted up at me, and turned and rushed away, toward the stairs that would take her into town.

I stayed on the bus, watched and waited till she was gone.





Sarah O'Hara, *Sun and Clouds*,  
Photograph

# Holding Watch

*By Ken Vorndran*

We arrive with food  
because there is nothing else to do,  
nothing remarkable, or healing,  
or even helpful to say,  
and helplessness suits us like coarse wool.  
We can only listen to inches  
of pain before we chafe.

Besides, they are beyond reach,  
beyond the sinuous boundaries of words,  
and gestures, no matter how frail or clumsy,  
are what are left us.

So we bring and bring and bring,  
dishes which have graced common tables  
and every days, not fancy foods,  
but those heavy with purpose, as if through them,  
we can offer all the strengths of earth.

And they, who are searching for voices  
amid dislodged gears and fraying wire,  
who want to tell stories until depleted  
and insensible,  
accept these gifts —  
wishing, wishing, wishing.



Victor Navarro, *Red*,  
Oil Painting

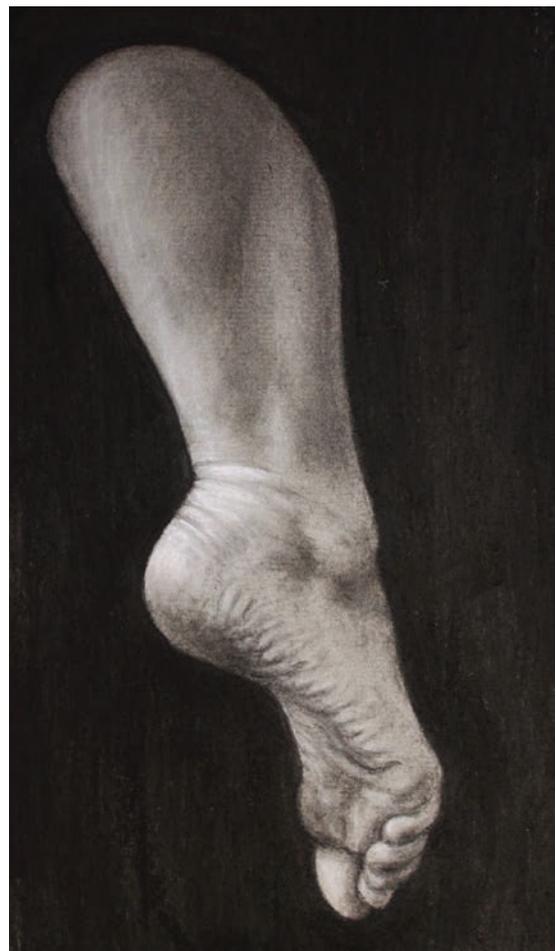
# Drive Thru

*By Ken Vorndran*

I hate the fast food  
side of myself  
that rushes and spills,  
that stuffs napkins  
into glove compartments  
against inevitable need,  
that leaves half-finished sodas  
unattended in sweltering cars  
until they are beyond use.

But I am lulled  
by the slick and slippery  
promise of time,  
by the promise of convenience.

At traffic lights,  
I unwrap, shuffle, hunt and organize,  
barely aware of mountains  
flush with breaking fever,  
  
hoping I won't have to wait too long.

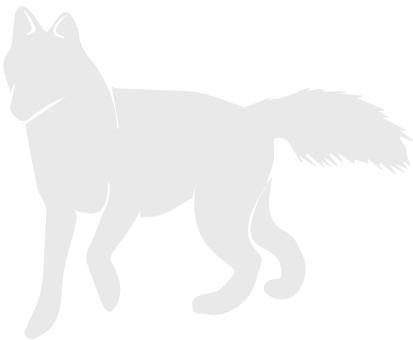
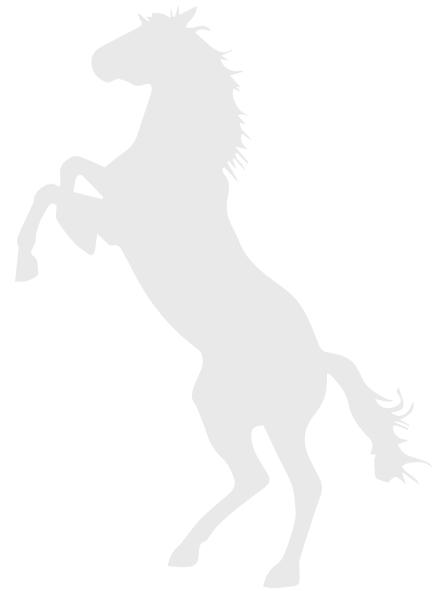


Christine Conners, *Foot Study B*,  
Charcoal





Amanda McPherson, *Protector of the Woods*,  
Photograph



Amanda McPherson, *Tree Saga*, Photograph

# Granny

By Maureen Burns

I found a card she sent in a book  
unopened for twenty years.  
Suddenly she was there leaning  
over the table with a plate  
of biscuits in her hands.  
Like a moth drawn to the porch light  
she hovered over us  
then we were rocking in the old  
gray swing snapping beans.  
Memories of her honeymoon riding  
in the horse-drawn wagon to Glasgow.  
Her mother dead when she was seven  
Nellie taught her how to mix the flour  
with a spoon of soda, not much water  
roll it out with a jelly glass, turn it around  
cut out circles and bake in the iron skillet.

Every day for sixty six years  
Granny baked biscuits.

In the garden shed under her porch  
was a blue eyed cat  
and a litter of kittens,  
a stove made of two bricks  
and a sawed-off plank,  
two sapphire blue bowls, enamel salt  
and pepper shakers, a skillet that  
one sister could not lift alone,  
a small red table and two yellow chairs,  
a plastic pitcher decorated  
with sunflowers and matching mugs,  
twisted forks and dented spoons,  
a red plate, and if we were lucky  
one green tomato.

Dressed in her hand stitched aprons  
that swept the floor when  
we walked, we mixed and mashed  
and pounded a bowl of black  
earth, mixing in a few leaves for texture  
and pieces of the tomato, if we were lucky,  
pulled it and shaped it and rolled  
out Granny's biscuits,  
arranged them in the skillet  
and carried to the stove.

Before she called us in for supper  
we walked up and down  
the rows of zinnias, marigolds,  
gladiolas, tomatoes, and ripe fruit.  
We fed our biscuits to the dolls  
sitting in the yellow chairs  
and spread the crumbs around her tomatoes.



Richea Olson, *Paws of a Greyhound at rest*, Photograph

# On the Channel

By Ken Vorndran

That winter  
the bay froze  
solid as wrought iron,  
yanking pilings up  
until high water marks  
soared overhead  
unreachable;

Robby's hair spilled  
like sunlight  
over his jeans jacket,  
its lamb's wool collar  
a teeming ring of clouds;

the shark's tooth cold  
caught waves in mid-leap  
and crushed the hulls  
of abandoned boats.

And we were lured outward  
beyond the dock  
where in summer  
we dropped our crab traps  
and dangled hopeless  
fishing lines,  
where we watched  
returning fisherman  
gut and scale and rinse  
  
while seagulls barked  
shrill  
echoing  
  
above the breeze.



Richea Olson, *Rubbernose*

Photograph

That winter  
the buoy hung  
lifeless  
in the channel  
and  
suddenly  
we  
had  
to  
touch  
it.



From Coyote Moon Trailer Haven

(30 residents total)

## # 11 Lindsay Flamingo 31

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Exotic Dancer

*By Robert Matte Jr*



It's just a damn job. You work a shift, it's physically demanding the pay isn't always so great and you have to deal with a lot of slobbering fools. At the same time it can get in your blood and be hard to walk away from. I used to be in real estate, but when the market collapsed I had a lot of bills and almost no income. My body was in decent shape and stripping seemed the lesser of three or four evils. Sitting in an office or slinging

hash was not an option. I've been doing this for three years. It's all an act—the name the come on—the stories you tell the customers. They don't want to know that my real name is Florence and I come from Omaha. Better to be Lindsay Flamingo from L.A. I'm competing with twenty year olds who have boob jobs and a sense of entitlement. You don't last in this business with an attitude. The girls that get along support each

other through all the sh\*t you have to put up with. I have two cats, Dink and Link I like that they ignore me most of the time it's a nice change since pole and lap dancing puts you at the very center of some guy's universe. Will I keep doing this? I don't know. At a certain point Lindsay Flamingo will be buried forever under a pile of stiletto heels and spangled g strings.





Sarah O'Hara, *Untitled*,  
Photograph



Christine Connors, *Runs like the Wind*,  
Oil Painting

From Coyote Moon Trailer Haven  
(30 residents total)

## #43 Matt Givens 33

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Swimming Pool Service

*By Robert Matte Jr*



It's pretty amazin' what you  
find in swimmin' pools. There  
is every type of dead critter  
from frogs and pack rats to  
bats and coyotes. Thas right  
I've found dead coyotes more  
than oncet. Then there is all  
the human junk from beer cans  
and wine bottles to bathin suits  
and condoms. I clean most  
pools oncet every two weeks.  
Bein exposed to that damn  
chlorine every day is a real  
problem. When I'm fifty my  
insides and skin will probably  
be rotten from this stuff even  
if I quit doin it today. I'm still  
waitin for some beautiful woman  
to proposition me while I'm  
cleanin her pool. Guess that  
only happens in movies. I tried  
hittin on that stripper in space 11  
Leslie Flaminco or sumthin like  
that but she weren't havin none  
of it. Said she only dated cats.  
Pretty damn weird if you ask  
me.

My friend Purvis got a tag to  
kill bighorn sheep and invited  
me along. I was wearin one  
of them bright orange vests  
but still got almost killed by  
some knucklehead who was  
huntin with a bow and arrow.  
Must of thought he was Chief  
Muckity Muck. That arrow  
whizzed right past my ear.  
Purvis didn't get no sheep and  
I decided huntin human tail  
was all I wanted to do in the  
future. The female species is  
only thing that interest me. I  
got one of them bobble headed  
dolls of a hula dancer on my  
truck dash. Poetry in motion.  
Just got a call about some pool  
where the pump been out for  
two weeks. Nasty. I'm spendin  
my life clean up other peoples  
messes. This here aren't no white  
collar world, not by a long shot.



Diane Deskin, *Flame Skimmer Dragonfly*, Photograph



Jennie Conway, *A Magnificent Bird is the Pelican*, Photograph



Bobby Nesbitt, *Rooster*,  
Water Color & Ink

From *Coyote Moon Trailer Haven*  
(30 residents total)

## #36 Tamara McBride 28

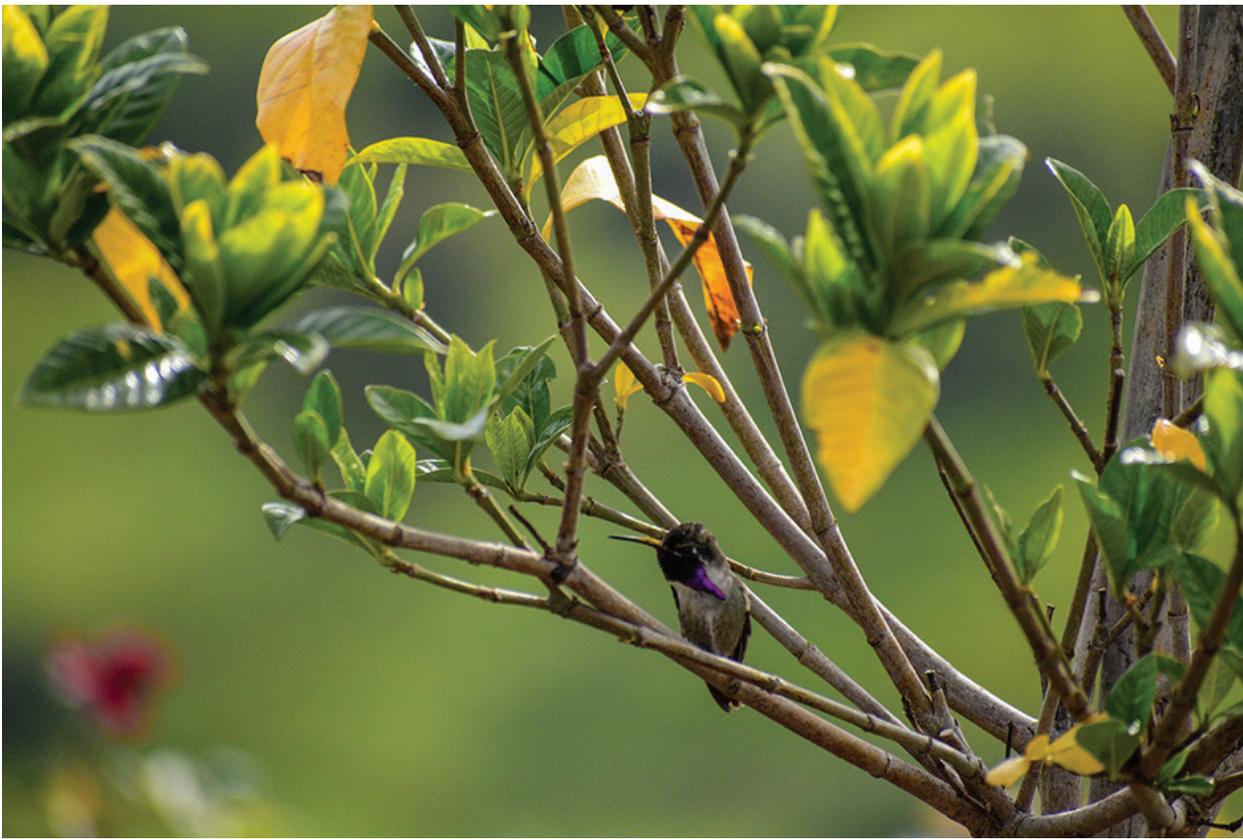
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Mother of Four

*By Robert Matte Jr*

It shore ain't easy livin  
with four chilins in a  
trailer. But we make do  
til we have nough money  
for somethin else. My husban

Tyrone, he a Navy vet, was  
on them ships in that Iraq war.  
Never seen no ocean til he  
joined up. He workin security  
at night, goin school on G.I.  
bill durin day. We just ships  
passin in the night. He love  
our kids but I got most of  
the raisin part right now.  
Gettin big uns to school  
keepin little ones from trouble.  
Out of high school I work  
at a textile factory. The closus  
was cheap to employees. Now  
with four chilins I can hardly  
remember that time.  
We got pride. One of my  
granfathers way back, he the  
first black senator in Washington.  
Name of Hiram Rhodes Revels  
from Mississippi. That were  
rite after Civil War fore them  
Jim Crow laws was put in.  
He next was college president  
at Alcorn A&M. Shows what  
you can be if you tries. My  
oldest LaVal, he got talent  
on the piano, wants to do Jazz.  
Long as he stay away from that  
drug life. I ain't raisin no one  
to be hopped up on somethin.  
His sister, Charlene, she gots  
the sweetest voice ever. Sings  
like an angel. I sung in choir in  
Hattiesburg at the African Methodist  
Episcopal Church. It was some good  
memories, "Every Time I Feel the  
Spirit." Surely was good memories.



Diane Deskin, *Male Costas Hummingbird on the lookout*  
Photograph



Kathleen Marks, *Dancing Girls*,  
Photograph



Christine Connors, *Tatanka-lyotanka*,  
Oil Painting



Christine Connors, *Standing Horse*,  
Oil Painting

# Of Libraries and Such

By Robert Matte Jr.

The first library was a caveman putting a berry stained handprint on a rock and then lending it to his friend Ugh, so Ugh could study and try to imitate the concept. Libraries have come a long way since then, but the concept of putting gathered knowledge in one place is a primal desire.

Around 3,000 BC, the first formal library was a collection of clay tablets with symbols that the Sumerians used to show how many camels Adiz traded for some guy's daughter.

Over the next couple of thousand years, more libraries consisted of documents made from papyrus or parchment. The Egyptians made papyrus sheets by gathering reeds from the Nile while trying to avoid becoming crocodile or hippo food. In Europe, Hans killed a goat or calf and used some of the skin as parchment to chronicle his living space. My hut is your hut. The great library at Alexandria was established in the third century BC. It held the pinnacle of knowledge from the ancient world, and the harbor's massive lighthouse was a beacon to folks far away. A beacon which allowed Julius Caesar, in 30 BC, to burn up the Egyptian fleet with a few errant sparks setting the library on fire. Centuries of learning went up in flames. Whoopsie! In China, Cai Lun, the court eunuch, had a lot of free time since romance was now out of the question. Instead, he invented paper in 105 AD. Paper was great in fostering burgeoning bureaucracies and the mind numbing statistical libraries that went with them.

When Rome fell and the barbarians used the books they found for toilet paper, meat wrappers and fire starters, accumulated knowledge took another nose dive. Thankfully, during the Dark Ages (candles were deemed an environmental hazard), a bunch of monks decided to kill time by copying biblical scripture and other ancient texts. They spent hours in cold, damp and dim stone garrets, and all they got for it was a lousy hair shirt. However knowledge was preserved and Christianity advanced. In the Muslim world, the House of Wisdom, the great library in Bagdad, lasted a few hundred years until the Mongol hordes showed up and destroyed all the books in a couple of days. So much for a cross cultural

exchange.

As the 1400s rolled around, libraries had reappeared, but books literally cost an arm and a leg because each one had to be hand copied. A guy named Gutenberg (no one knows his first name) saw vintners using wine presses and figured if you could crush a grape you could print a book.

Eureka! Movable type then created the mass paperback market and gave Tarantino the title for his movie *Pulp Fiction*. Gutenberg printed the first Bible, putting all those scribbling monks out of work. Some of their illuminated books would now end up in the remainder bin. Unfortunately Mr. G. had to print the first version of the Good Book in Latin, so most locals still couldn't read squat about Jesus. Then, in the 1500s, Martin Luther started the Protestant Reformation by having printed copies of his 99 theses slapped on doors all over Germany. Some leisure reading. Next, the Bible started being printed in English, German, French, etc. Things slow on a Saturday night in Wartburg? Read in German about all those demons being sent into a herd of pigs by Jesus. If Mr. G. had only gotten a patent for his press, his progeny would have been in the big marks for generations.

*"So as we move boldly forward into this more tech savvy and enlightened era, we don't need to fear the ignorance or volatility of the past. Right?"*

For the next few centuries, universities became home to the largest libraries of new books careening off the presses. However, there were still many individuals collecting books. Tommy Jefferson had a huge private library which he gave to the new American government. However, during the War of 1812 the British burned Jefferson's donated library to the ground.

Sense a pattern here? Over the millennia, great public libraries sprang up around the world. Many had incredible architecture which was worth taking in even if you were illiterate or homeless. A lot of these libraries, that weren't bombed into oblivion in various wars, survive today (there's that fire thing again).

They say that for most of us, history begins when we are born. My library experience tracks with that. While growing up, many of my formative years were spent overseas. But I did go to small American schools, and the libraries we had provided enough books to keep the eyes moving. In elementary school, I favored Hardy Boy mysteries and Frank Baum's series on the land of Oz (I self-identified with the scarecrow). Later on, my high school was in London, so I

spent less time in the library and more at the British Museum and the National Gallery. Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves. Then came college.

In the 1960s the University of Florida was somewhat a Southern backwater, but the main library rocked. It was a large brick edifice with a long reading room that had a huge vaulted ceiling framed by oak timbers. Rows of tables were adorned with art deco reading lamps; the walls sported arched windows and depression era murals. If you so much as whispered, the librarians, former nuns, would bang your knuckles with wooden rulers.

I spent *a lot* of time in the library. Trying to study in the dorm was akin to reading philosophy while participating in a roller derby. The two didn't mix.

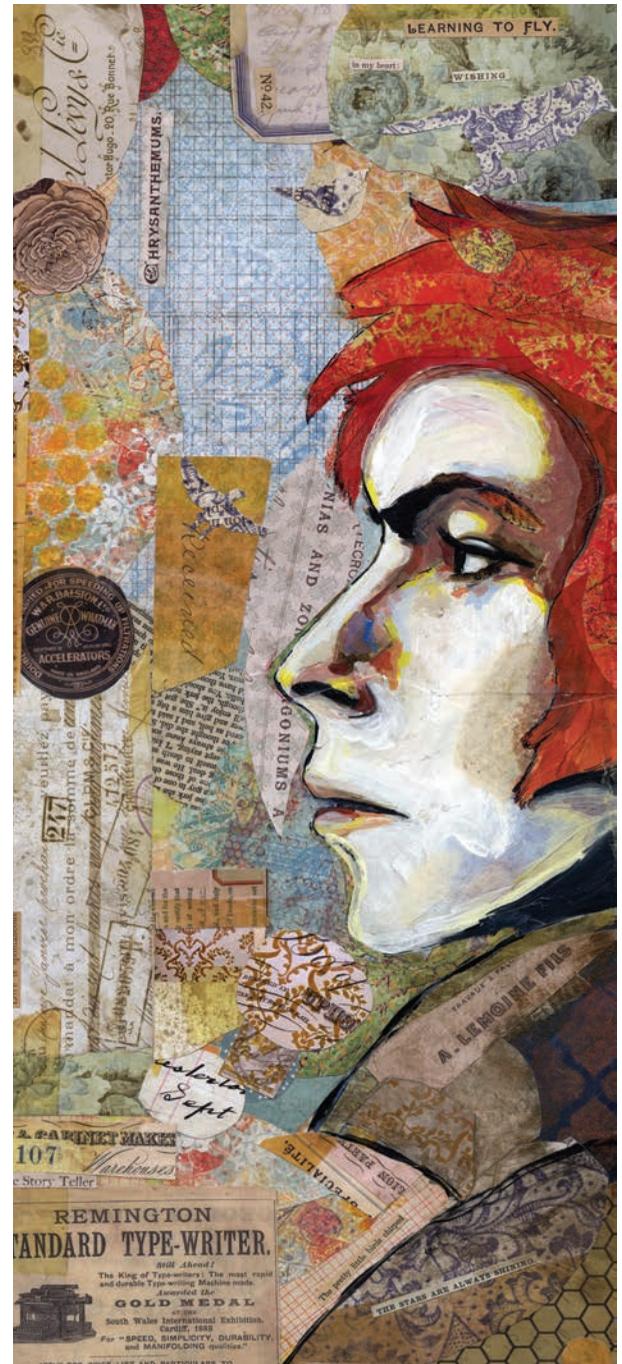
At the library, I'd study for awhile, sleep with my eyes open, and then study some more.

Back then there were *real* card catalogs, and all available knowledge was confined to physical books and magazines. You had to brave the perverts in the stacks to track down the latest statistics on the gross national product of Peru. However, it wasn't all drudgery. All work and no play make Jack (or Jill) a dull boy (or person of gender). One night in the library, while on hallucinogens, (what did YOU do in college?) I spent a couple of hours with a book of Canaletto's paintings, watching boats *move* up and down the canals of Venice. Better than the original *Star Trek* on TV. By the time I graduated they had microfilm readers and copy machines. I thought heaven had come down to Earth.

Fast forward to the 21st century. Having spent countless "challenging" years in the classroom as a college writing teacher, I still tutor said students in a library learning center. And what a learning center it is. Computers with access to myriads of data bases, most of them full text. Electronic connections to vast libraries all over the world. A dwindling collection of hard copy books. Amazing word processing capabilities that have now made typewriters retro chic for the same folks that buy 33 1/3 records and own turntables. Card catalogs are something that only the knuckle draggers knew about. As for being quiet, the old lady librarians with their hair in buns and who could shush with the best of them are long gone. Now the rules are that you can happily chat away with your buds but don't use a cell phone in the library unless it is an emergency, or your significant other wants you to bring home fish tacos for dinner.

So as we move boldly forward into this more tech savvy

and enlightened era, we don't need to fear the ignorance or volatility of the past. Right? Well, ISIS is burning Christian Bibles in the Middle East; the Chinese continue to destroy sacred Buddhist texts in Tibet and a protector of virtue in a small American town is about to consign *Huckleberry Finn*, *Lolita* and *The Great Gatsby* to some raging fire barrel. But, hey, you can still go down to your local neighborhood library and check out *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hinduism* by Linda Johnsen. What a world!



Annalisa Loevenguth, *Blue Bird*,  
Mixed Media Collage Art



Monique Rodriguez, *Sunshine in the Gadsden Hotel, Douglas, AZ*  
Photograph



Monique Rodriguez, *Morning Sun*  
Photograph



Mike Rom, *Sunrise Moment*, Photograph

# The Rabbit, the Fox, and the Owl

By Daniel Wright

It was one of those deep winter evenings with snow drifting out of the sky. Silent expectations thundered, waiting for echoes to return. Loneliness and heartbreak echoed with each footfall as James came plodding home through a foot of fresh Kansas snow. Home is just a few blocks away from the university, but this heavy snowfall came up unexpectedly while classes were still in session. He wonders if everything he has accomplished in life means anything. Waiting for him at home is his wife and two kids hoping and expecting to hear good news about his tenure meeting with the senior professors. Life is throwing him another curve ball, just like all the other missed opportunities of his dreary seemingly meaningless existence. The tenure committee does not seem to be inclined to grant him a promotion to Associate Professor. Budget cuts from the state mean only two promotions will be allowed this year. A younger more energetic colleague seems to have the inside track. For James, a denial would be a nail in his academic coffin.

The wind whips open his old wool pea coat exposing his tired body to the vagaries of the Midwestern winter. The chill strikes coldly at his heart, knifing directly to the core of his being. At first, it's just a small spasm of pain. But it quickly becomes a paralyzing tremor that shoots down his left arm immobilizing him midstride. He twists around looking for help, seeing only a snowplow coming toward him from the direction of home. A smirking hastily built snowman stands guard by the side of the road witnessing his imminent demise. A snow drift catches his fall as he tumbles into blackness.

Complete darkness stretching to infinity slowly gives way to misty greyness until dimly, James can make out a light in the distance illuminating a tree guarded by a small shadowed rabbit. The rabbit looks up, staring directly at James with compassionate eyes that welcome him to move forward toward the light.

"Where am I?" James wonders, "this isn't Kansas anymore."

"You've arrived where you may be," says the rabbit cryptically, while nibbling at the biggest carrot that James has

ever seen.

"Huh, what is that supposed to mean?"

"You're here, not there, not anywhere, yet," the rabbit riddles.

"What do you mean?" asks James. "Not here, not there, that means nowhere."

"Exactly, where do you want to be?" asks the rabbit.

"Home!"

"Home is where the heart is. You don't know me, do you?" continues the rabbit, "I guard the entrance. Some call me Saint Peter, the rabbit."

"The entrance to what?"

"Everlasting life, of course," quips the rabbit. "But before you can cross, you must be found worthy."

"Worthy, worthy of what?" At the moment, James couldn't think of a single worthy accomplishment. His mind had drawn a blank.

*"Underneath the tree was an inscription,  
'Life is what we make of it, and is never  
ending when we strive to succeed and help  
others find their success.'"*

"Having accomplished something, affected someone's life, perhaps your own. Do you remember that baseball game back when you were twelve?" The rabbit offers, innocently.

James did remember. It was the last out of the game. The bases were loaded. Two outs and his team was down by three points. It was his chance to become a hero. He walked up to the plate, kicked the mud out of his cleats, took a couple practice swings, and glared at the pitcher on the mound. Players on the other team began to chant, "Hey batter, batter, swing and miss. Hey batter, batter, swing and miss."

Players from his team yelled back, "Knock it out of the park, Jimmy. You can do it." All eyes seemed to be on James. The pitcher took a step back, extended his arms over his head, and brought his fist forward carrying the ball, releasing the throw towards the plate. Everything seemed to slow to a crawl as that ball flew home. James kept his eye on the ball until he smacked it with his bat halfway along its length. The ball sailed into left field, headed for the fence. Everyone held their breath, but just as the ball was about to fly out of the park, a little kid with an oversized glove reached up and snatched the victory out of James' destiny.

Zap! The pain in his chest just got a new jolt of energy. The defibrillator began to whine, again. Zap! Another jolt jerks him awake. "We got you, come back to us, big guy. We have a pulse. Bring the stretcher, he's still alive."

James opened an eyelid, and after the EMT briefly moved

out of his field of vision, he thought he saw a rabbit, a dark rabbit scoot across the road. The light faded past twilight plunging him into darkness again.

Slowly, a new awareness enveloped James. The tree from before was there again, but the rabbit was nowhere to be seen. Instead, a small red fox was curled up at the base of the tree.

“What’s going on? What did you do to the rabbit?” James yelled, genuinely afraid he had missed his chance. The fox looked well fed and much too satisfied with himself.

“Nothing, it’s just not his turn anymore,” said the fox, slyly.

“What do you mean?” asked James. This is getting nowhere fast he thought.

“I don’t mean anything,” said the fox. “What do you mean?”

“I mean to cross over to that tree.”

“Can’t.”

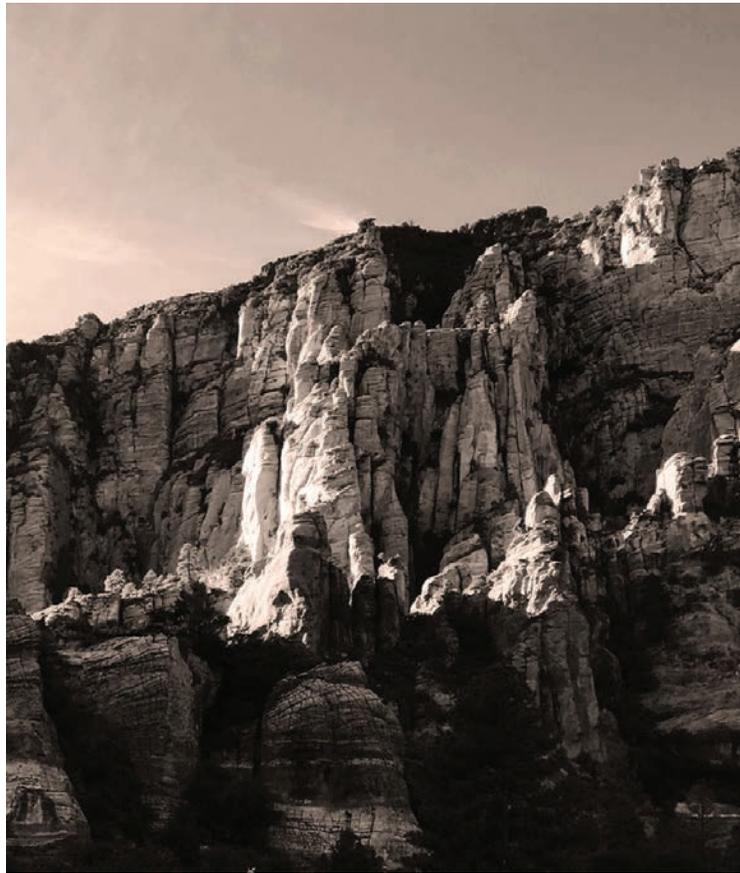
“Why not?”

“Don’t you remember your lecture?”

“What lecture, wait, you mean the heart lecture?”

James did remember. It was one of the first times he gave a lecture as an assistant professor. There were over 200 students in the lecture hall. He had spent hours preparing his notes for the class. The students were restless and they remained so throughout his lecture. Papers were rustling, and a low murmur permeated the classroom. It was frustrating. His lecture was important. These were future medical students. They needed to pay attention. Lives depended on it. He had studied for years acquiring the knowledge that was his alone to give to this ungrateful class of ingrates. “If you don’t pay attention to what I have to say, someday you will be faced with having to save a life, and you will fail, just as you will fail this course, if you do not learn!” His admonition seemed to go over everyone’s heads.

Scanning out over the crowd, James noticed one kid out of



Ernesto Trujillo, *Silence Speaking 5*,  
Photograph Multi-Media

all of them who sat in rapt attention to the details he was describing. He was kind of tall and skinny, a geek if ever there was one, with blue eyes that were intensely focused on the PowerPoint beamed on the whiteboard. The slide depicted the human heart, with all four chambers working in unison with its associated arteries and veins crisscrossing in a net across its surface. The human heart is a work of art, James thought, beating incessantly for years without any recognition for the job and life it gives to its owner.

“That’s the one,” grinned the fox.

Zap! Man that hurts, thought James. “He’s back. Pulse weak, pressure 90 over 50, eyes responsive.” The EMT looks a lot like a fox, thought James. Pointy nose and chin,

ears half hidden behind his reddish hair. The EMT’s eyes were shifty just like the fox. His name tag proclaims his name as Sly. The ambulance takes a bounce, and its lights out again for James.

Not again, James thought. Yep, there’s the tree, standing tall and majestic. It must be an oak, because it’s huge. The leaves are lobed and bright green. Where’s the fox that ate the rabbit, James’ opines. Gone.

“Who,” whispers from the branches of the tree.

“Who to you too,” responds James.

“Who,” the disembodied voice calls again from above.

“James Verve, I’ve been here before.”

An owl swoops down to confront James, echoing “Who,” once more.

“I’m here to climb that tree,” James declares assuming that is the whole point of this repetitious exercise. “I’ve had a heart attack and I’m lying on some stretcher in an ambulance. It’s time for me to move on.” James remembers his lessons from lecture. An artery has clogged, restricting blood flow feeding his heart. His heart is dying and so will he. All that’s left is to move on, climb the tree of life, and pass from this world to the

next.

“No!” The owl sounds sure of himself. “It’s not your time yet. You haven’t realized what you have achieved in your past or may in the future, and have no reason to climb this tree, yet.”

“What have I achieved? That’s the problem with my whole life,” James laments. Why am I still being tortured, he thinks, by animals, no less.

“Nooo, not yet, you must go back,” the owl declares. “Nooo one is allowed in this tree until they remember what deeds they have accomplished and more.”

Doomed, James thinks. He still doesn’t think he has accomplished anything.

“Not quite yet, you must go back,” the owl judges with solemn finality.

Zap! Everything hurts this time. James’ chest feels like it’s on fire. The room seems foggy and far away. A face appears briefly sporting round eyeglasses fringed by grey hair peering down into his eyes, the image of an owl. “Not quite, yet, but he’s coming around. Can you hear me, professor?” The visage resolves into a familiar face.

“Whoo’re yu?” James mumbles.

“I’m Dr. Stevens. Do you know where you are?”

“Hosppitl.”

“That’s right. We had to do a by-pass.”

“Waer’s the tre?”

“Sorry, there’s no tree here. You’re safe. Sleep. We’ll talk again later.”

James dreamt. A rabbit disappeared like magic, a fox appeared, and the owl said he couldn’t go on. It was very confusing. Sometimes the fox appeared in the tree, voicing “Whoo.” Sometimes it was the owl chewing on a carrot. But through it all, James remembered that ball game from so long ago. He remembered that while he didn’t become a hero that day, his best friend, a kid with an oversized glove, saved the day for his team. Over the years, they had reminisced about that



Ernesto Trujillo, *Silence Speaking 1*,  
Photograph Multi-Media

day, joking about what might have been. James had been glad his friend won the day. It meant more to him than it would have to James, because he went on in the sport to become a National League all-star.

James also remembered that young man who paid attention in his class. What was his name, he thought, Stevens, that’s it. He helped him get into med school, writing him a glowing letter of recommendation. Top of his class that kid. Yes, James remembered he had made a difference in the lives of other people. These were just the tip of the iceberg. But was it enough? Enough for what, he wondered.

Slowly waking from his reverie, James scanned the white room he was in. A picture of an oak tree hung on the wall in front of him with a rabbit being chased by a fox around its bole and an owl peering from a branch. “Mom, he’s awake,” a familiar high-pitched voice says.

“Jim, it’s me, Sally. You’re going to be okay. Get the doctor, Billy.” The shuffle of small feet and yells down a hall echo in James’ ears. “We’re so glad you’re back.” Sally’s lovely face hovers in front of his eyes and Judy’s little hands grab his tightly on the side. His family has sat vigil over him for the past two days watching the comings and goings of nurses and aides. A monitor’s beeps registering a cadence that assures that life is present.

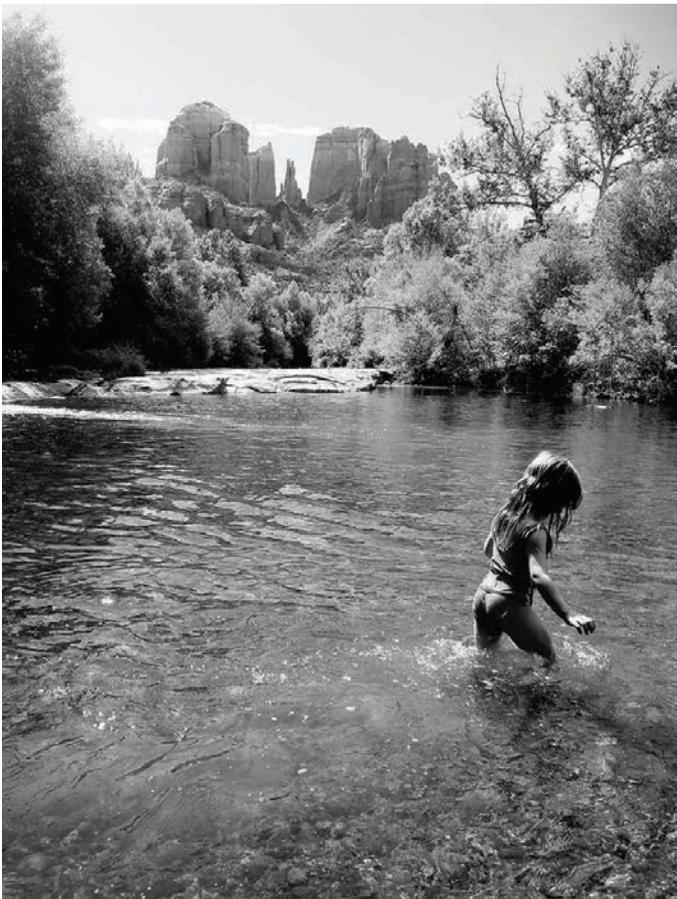
“Hello James, it’s Dr. Stevens again.” The doctor is all smiles. “It was touch and go there for a while, but you are going to make it, lucky guy.”

“You’re not a rabbit, fox, or owl,” James replies.

“No, no. None of those, but once upon a time, I was your student. Remember me?”

James did remember. Stevens was the kid in that dream lecture.

“Your family is here, and I am happy to report you are on your way out of the woods. The bypass surgery was very successful. A couple days here and you’ll be able to go home.”



Jennifer Wiley, *Tranquil Morning*,  
Digital Photograph

Home, James thought, but to what, another failure?

“I’ll leave you for now in the care of your family. They have some good news they received while you were out.”

“What news?” James asked, looking toward Sally. She was radiant, with tears brimming her eyes.

Giving him a careful, but very warm hug, Sally said, “You got a letter yesterday from the tenure committee, Associate Professor. They cited your contributions to the university and the recommendations they heard from your graduates from all over the world. You are a very successful and much-loved man.”

James couldn’t believe it. He thought he had blown the tenure review meeting. His life had been restored in more ways than one. His future held the promise of success yet to be. The picture on the wall drew his attention. Underneath the tree was an inscription, “Life is what we make of it, and is never ending when we strive to succeed and help others find their success.” The owl miraculously appeared to wink, while the rabbit and fox spun once around the tree.

## Rainbows

By Travis Ardle

Patience is greeted with your gentle kiss  
Now each one is dearly missed  
History of your love is forever erased  
Permanent regret in this fractured face

Believed to be the absolute best  
Allowed this heart to finally rest  
The need now is to quickly drown  
Fallen down, stripped of the crown

These wounded notes fall on the sword  
Only hearing your endless words  
Put on display at the center of the show  
Stretched and strained with nowhere to go



Jennifer Wiley, *Sunbathing*,  
Digital Photograph

# Cababi

## ARTISTS' BIOS

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### ERNESTO TRUJILLO

Ernesto is a graduate of the University of Arizona, Tucson. Ernesto is an instructor at Pima Community College Desert Vista Campus at the Center for Training and Development Business and Technology Programs. In addition to the business computer courses, he leads in the Medical Certificate programs which includes medical billing and coding. He has explored various mediums of art and continues to implement hybrid techniques and materials with traditional methodologies in creating art. His work has been influenced by many resources including painters, printmakers, sculptors, and makers of art throughout the course of history. His work attempts to embody other disciplines of science, nature, and human behavior to create works of art that exemplify honest expressions of self. He is constantly attempting to uncover new methods of approaching art, both from an analytical conceptual view and continued studio practice. Eventually he hopes that his work will influence others in creative and innovative ways.

### KRIS SWANK

Kris is the Library Director at the Northwest Campus, and has been an instructor in PCC's International Business

Studies and Honors programs, as well as a part-time instructor of business at Northern Arizona University and Thunderbird School of Global Management. She was named 2014 Outstanding Honors Faculty at PCC. Kris holds a BA in Humanities and English, *summa cum laude*, from Dana College, an MLS in Library Science from the University of Arizona, and an MBA in International Management from Thunderbird, where the faculty honored her as the Barton Kyle Yount Award outstanding graduate. Kris has recently turned her life-long love of fantasy literature into a professional pursuit. She completed an MA in Literature with a concentration in J.R.R. Tolkien Studies at the Mythgard Institute, and began writing fantasy poetry and literature criticism. In addition to *Cababi*, her fantasy poetry has appeared in the journal *Silver Leaves*. Her literature criticism has been published in the peer-reviewed journals *Tolkien Studies* and *Mythlore*, and the edited collections *Fantasy and Science-Fiction Medievalisms: From Isaac Asimov to A Game of Thrones* (Cambria, 2015), and *Harry Potter for Nerds II* (Unlocking Press, forthcoming 2015). She has also written for *Library Journal*, *American Libraries*, and other professional library publications.

### MIKE ROM

Mike has a BS in Film and Television production (not that kind of BS). He worked in the movie industry in Tucson for over 8 years and did everything from art department to office PA to special effects explosives assistant. When he started working at Pima College in the AV Department, he expanded their offerings to video and computer graphics. He was also able to indulge his creative side through their Digital Art classes. He took sculpture and drawing classes and learned how to paint with acrylics. Mike started photographing flowers for his wife's paintings—she works in oils—and eventually framed his own work and put them into art shows at the Blue Raven Gallery and Gifts. He sold his first piece in his first show and has done pretty well since. Lately, he has expanded into doing wire sculptures and hopes to get a larger inventory going. He shares a website with his wife at [RomByDesign.com](http://RomByDesign.com), to exhibit his art.

### MONIQUE RODRIGUEZ

Monique is an Educational Support Faculty Librarian at Pima Community College's Northwest Campus. As a librarian, some of her main responsibilities are information literacy instruction, library curriculum design, reference/referral services, along with research and development. One of her other focuses as an academic librarian is developing library instruction through interactive technology such as

online library-guides and video tutorials. In addition to her professional work, Monique has conducted and participated in numerous library-programming events where she collaborated with Tucson libraries, local community centers, and schools. These events focused on Latino and Native American populations in order to promote literacy as a stable and important part of society.

### JENNIFER WILEY

Jennifer is a writing instructor at the West Campus of Pima Community College. She recently earned her PhD from the University of Arizona and hopes to now have more time for two of her favorite hobbies, travel and photography.

### JENNIE CONWAY

Jennie has been at Pima for over 25 years. She returned to PCC, then transferred to the UA where, like many students had multiple change of majors; she finally earned her bachelor's degree in Anthropology. She then went on for her M.Ed. from NAU. While at Pima she spent a year as a student aid, was a temporary employee in the Testing Center, then became a regular employee first as an advisor, then a counselor, and is currently the Director of Curriculum and Articulation Services at the District Office. Jennie loves to be outdoors, whether it's hiking, birding, gardening, or just spending time appreciating the beauty of the mountains, desert, and beaches. She also enjoys photography, trying to document both what she sees and feels when experiencing the natural world.

### MARY STOECKLEIN

Mary is an adjunct instructor of writing at Pima Community College, Northwest Campus. She worked as a beverage cart girl at a golf course in Dayton, Ohio for two summers.

### ANJA-LEIGH RUSSELL

Anja-Leigh is a part-time substitute instructor at the Desert Vista campus now at the Business & Training Dept., but taught writing classes in the Los Angeles area and several PCC campuses for many years. She's been photographing, writing and publishing poetry since "forever" and her eyes and ears are always alert to creative opportunities.

### MAUREEN BURNS

Maureen was born in Kentucky. She lived and attended colleges in Germany and in Switzerland and eventually moved

to Colorado, where she completed a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in English Literature/Creative Writing at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She led a weekly Creative Writing Workshop in Boulder for nine years, while also teaching Creative Writing at CU and English Composition and English Literature courses for Colorado Community Colleges. She now lives in Marana, Arizona and teaches Writing at Pima Community College, Desert Vista Campus. Maureen also volunteers at Tohono Chul Park, a 50-acre natural park where visitors can enjoy the beauty of nature combined with art and educational activities. Maureen spends much of her free time experiencing nature and studying the ways it demonstrates the interconnectedness of all life. Maureen's life has been a journey of self-discovery, leading to a better understanding of the world she lives in and the human perspectives and ideals that drive it. As Linda Hogan states in her essay titled, "Hearing Voices," published in *The Writer on Her Work, Vol II, New Essays in New Territory*, "Writing begins for [her] with survival, with life and with freeing life, saving life, speaking life. It is work that speaks what can't be easily said."

### KATHLEEN MARKS

Kathleen is program manager of academic services at Desert Vista Campus. With an undergraduate degree in Humanities (art history) and an MBA, she spent many years in the public and private sectors on the east coast working in career education, business education, art education, and continuing professional development. Each area of academic study informed and enhanced the other, bringing unique perspectives to professional work that focused on the academic and career success of diverse learners. She enjoys photography and collage, believing both can provide important insights about the natural world, the human condition, and the built environment.

### KEN VORNDRAN

Ken is Coordinator of Pima Honors. He teaches Honors Research and Honors Writing courses.

### AMANDA MCPHERSON

Amanda has a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education and is a certified PreK-8 grade teacher. She works full time at Picture Rocks Elementary in the Marana Unified School District and is an adjunct faculty instructor for Pima Community College. She has two children and lives in Marana, Arizona. Traveling and writing are her passions. Amanda enjoys writing poetry in her spare time.

## DIANE DESKIN

Diane serves as the Advanced Program Manager for Student Conduct and Title IX, College Wide. Diane enjoys traveling and taking photos of everyday life.

## TOM SPEER

Tom has taught at Pima College West Campus since 1990. He was the faculty advisor to SandScript magazine for 14 years. Tom Speer received his doctorate from the University of Arizona in 2000, and taught literature and creative writing at PCC-West for twenty years, and now works as an adjunct instructor there. He is enjoying his semi-retirement.

## HAZIEL LOPEZ

Haziel is a Pima College student and Pima College employee currently working as an Office Aide for El Pueblo Liberty Adult Basic Education. He volunteers at the Tucson Police Department to help train officers in the academy and is a Student Senator for adult education as he regularly meets with State Legislators. Haziel is looking to study in the field of law to pursue a career as a lawyer as his current mission is to help others and fight for tranquility.

## DANIEL WRIGHT

Dan currently is an adjunct instructor teaching online for Pima's Community Campus. He was a program dean for several years assigned initially to the Downtown Campus, he then transferred to the Northwest Campus, before resigning his position as Dean for Online Development at Community Campus. His doctorate is in Botany and he is now semi-retired with interests in college accreditation and plant science.

## TRAVIS ARDLE

Travis is currently a writing tutor at Pima Downtown Campus. He has over 160 poems written and has also written two screenplays as well. He currently has six college degrees and is working on a degree in Sociology. He has been to over 30 concerts and has seen Metallica, Pearl Jam, Audioslave, Bruce Springsteen, Linkin Park, Guns N Roses, Foo Fighters, U2, The White Stripes and numerous other bands live. He also likes reading, hiking and going to the movies.

## RICHEA OLSON

Richea is a nursing instructor for the Practical Nurse program at Desert Vista Campus. A Tucson native who is a

proud graduate of Santa Rita High School and the University of Arizona where she received her Bachelor's of Science in Nursing in 1994. Currently she is a student at Grand Canyon University where she is pursuing her Master's of Science in Nursing Education in their online program. Photography is a fairly new hobby that helps feed her creative side. Her dogs supply endless opportunities to hone her photography skills as they seem to be natural models who work cheap! Offer them a treat per photo and they are happy campers! The Arizona desert also supplies chances to capture nature at her finest in photographs, whether it is through the plant or animal life.

## DAVE TEDLOCK

Dave teaches writing at Pima Community College, including courses at the Desert Vista, East and West campuses. He has published 8 short stories, more than 150 nonfiction articles for local or regional consumer or business magazines as well as a freshman writing textbook. For nearly 15 years, Dave worked as a copywriter and creative director in Tucson advertising agencies.

## ROBERT MATTE JR.

Robert is a Writing Tutor at East Campus. He has been a wordsmith for many years. He has lived in various parts of the U.S. as well as in France, Turkey and England. Among other pursuits he has been a hippie poet, an Army officer and a college teacher. Mr. Matte has an abiding love for the land and the peoples of the American Southwest and is often struck with awe and wonder.

## BOBBI NESBITT

Instructor, Adult Basic Education for College and Career (ABECC). Community Campus. Bobbi is a native Tucsonan who has been teaching academics to the young and the young-at-heart in the community since 1998. She has always enjoyed all types of art and has treasured her life on the ranch.

## VICTOR NAVARRO

Capturing his overpowering artist expressions has been Victor Navarro's passion since the age of 15. Moving to the United States from Guadalajara, Mexico in 1998, nurtured his inspiration. Soon this inspiration became an obsession. Graduated from The University of Arizona with his Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A) , and having received his Masters degree (M.Ed) from Northern Arizona University, Navarro seized art teaching opportunities at various institutions, such as Pima Community College, Parks & Rec, and Splendido. Creating

and promoting his art work has been Navarro's objective; nonetheless he contributes to the promotion of the Fine Arts by partaking in artistic events, fundraisers and other community engagement opportunities for the benefit of his peers. Navarro's artistic affiliation with Drouot Cotation, Merite et Devouement Francais, and other relevant artistic and cultural venues allowed him to co-direct the International Art Exchange along side Madame Denise Woirin, a highly recognized French Artist and promoter. Their affiliation with the Drouot Cotation Dictionnaire offered Navarro a venue of exposure at an international level in France. Victor Navarro has received various awards, including the Silver medal awarded from Paris' International Academy of Lutece. Navarro has received recognitions from the Societe Nationale des Beaux Arts and the European Center for the Promotion of Arts and Literature. At 19, Navarro was one of the youngest artist to be invited to exhibit his artwork at the famed Louvre in Paris, under the salon "Carrousel du Louvre." Additional recognition along with prizes have continued to follow from Art Communities in the United States as well as France.

### CHRISTINE CONNERS

Laura Christine Connors was born in Paris, grew up in Hawaii, and currently lives in Tucson, AZ. She has a B.A in psychology from the University of Hawaii and a master's degree in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling from Chapman University in CA. She is working on an MFA in painting and drawing online at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco (AAU). She currently teaches psychology part-time at Desert Vista and the West campuses. She has had many titles over the years including: therapist, teacher, mother, artist, and outdoor cookbook author. Christine, and her husband Tim, write outdoor cookbooks for Falcon Guides, the leading publisher of outdoor books in America. To date they have written over a dozen published outdoor cookbooks and have sold over 200,000 books. These books can be found at REI and the Boy Scouts of America. In the area of art, Christine specializes in oils and charcoal. She is currently certified by Pima to teach both psychology and art and hopes to also someday teach art at Pima Community College.

### SARAH O'HARA

Sarah has been the East Campus Battle Princess, teaching writing courses since 1999. She leads students through epic tests and trials in Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey where they experience the belly of the whale, dragon battles, and often a nadir, but persevering, cross the threshold as Master of Two Worlds. Sarah herself crossed the mighty Mississippi to look for the ring, the cup, and found it in the desert. Once

trading in magnolia blossoms for creosote, she now returns to the South in the summer to cool her fiery personality in the Atlantic Ocean and get washed in the blood. Sarah O'Hara picked her own last name because she was "Gone with the Wind." You can take the girl out of the South, but . . .

### ANNALISA LOEVENGUTH

Ever since Annalisa can remember, her head has always been stuck in the world of storytelling. It has always been her intent to show people what she sees, breathes, and feels. Creating this mixed-media style allows her to look inside herself and tell the stories she wants to tell. Deep inside us all is a story waiting to be heard and shared with others. She dares you to tell your tale. Over the years, she has experimented with many different media, which has allowed her to develop her own style. There are no rules to this art form, it can be whatever she wants it to be. The art has a way of inventing itself. This all began when she entered the world of print and graphic design. Whenever she sees print and textures used in design projects, she wants to somehow incorporate them into her own works. She began her search for the right paper and accessories to make her pieces one-of-a-kind. Now she is an independent artist creating works for clients around the world to enjoy! Visit [liveincoloronline.com](http://liveincoloronline.com)

### MICHELE E. RORABAUGH

Master Scheduler, NWC Michele moved to Tucson 11 years ago to work at PCC - Community Campus. She has now worked at four campuses and the District Office. She is originally from Bradford, Pennsylvania, where the weather and nature are very different. She loves the different wildlife and plants here in the desert. She started taking pictures more to share with her family and friends all over the country.

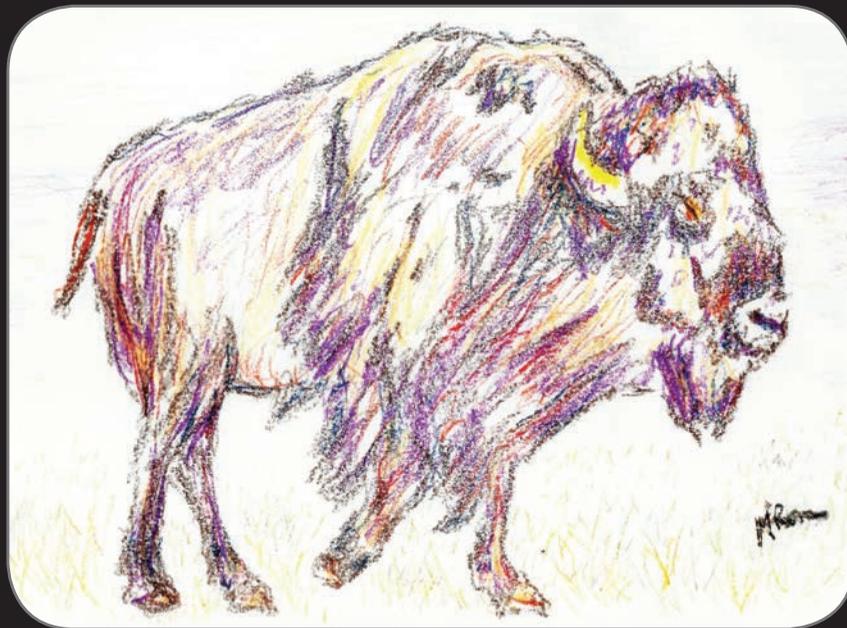


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*Cababi* is a Tohono O'odham term that means

## HIDDEN SPRINGS



Mike Rom, *Bison*. Watercolor pencil.

*Cababi* 2018-2019

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