

ARTIFACT NOUVEAU



FALL2022/SPRING2023 VOLUME 7 I SSUE 1
A WRITERS' GUILD PUBLICATION

LETTER FROM THE ARTIFACT EDITOR-in-chief

This issue, I was presented with the pleasant opportunity to act as the editor-in-chief for *Artifact Nouveau*. This issue, I was also presented with a wonderful team, an encouraging advisor, and all of the endearing works submitted to *Artifact Nouveau*. The collective effort of the San Joaquin Delta College Writers' Guild fuels our magazine's production. Gabrielle Myers, Writers Guild and *Artifact Nouveau* club advisor, has helped to build students' writing skills and confidence to submit their pieces. As always, Professor Myers played a large part in our magazines production. This year, our editors filled their roles well. Because of this, we were able to stay organized, and our social media presence has increased. I would like to give a great thanks to Jan Marlese, Gallery Coordinator at Delta College. She kindly encouraged her students' submissions, and shared their completed works through the student art exhibition. Myself and the *Artifact Nouveau* staff would like to extend the thanks to the students of San Joaquin Delta College, and to those who submitted their poetry, stories, and art to our publication. Our magazine is student based, it is made by students, for students, with more than half of its contents being from students. Our magazine could not be made without the help from our community. Each year we make it our responsibility to share the works that students have been courageous enough to submit to us. As you read through their pieces, let them inspire you to tap into your own artistic potential. Understand, as you will read, that poetry and art comes from everywhere, and can be done by an infinite amount of mediums. With that in mind, as you enjoy your peer's work, let it guide you to better understand yourself, and to better understand your peers' at San Joaquin Delta College.

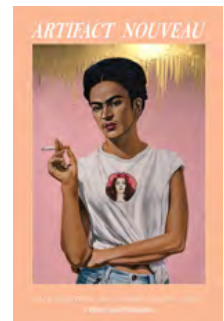
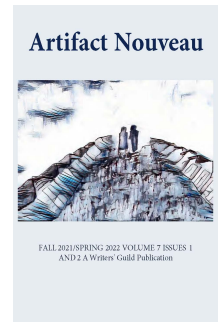
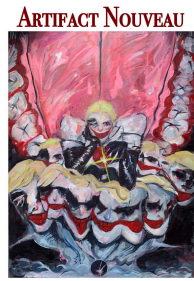


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Real California

By E. Martin Pederson

If you come to California
You'll see brown hills
Shining in the sun
Come on down to
California
Butterflies welcome you
When the whales run.

If you go into the
mountains
The people are friendly
there
As a WOW morning sky
Climb into our high Sierra
Make a granite bed
With a creek lullaby.

Avoid the cities in
California
Where they make
sourdough bread
Walk out into any field
To see no-makeup
California
No wine or electronics
No scepter to wield.

Then, what is real
The blue essence?
I'm calling for you
You and me
And the Joshua tree
In California.

I'm calling for you,
California.



Life Should Be Like Disneyland

by Celine Rose Mariotti

Life should be like Disneyland, Everyday a little bit of Never
Never Land, Dreams fill your heart,
They give us a new start, A delightful way to fill the day,
Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse, Spread happiness your
way,
And my way,
They lift you out of the doldrums,
Of everyday life,
All the pain and strife, But then we get swept away Into
something dreamy, Cinderella, finds her Prince, Her slipper
is the imprint,
She and the Prince,
Will live happily ever after,
The Prince and Cinderella truly matter, Life for Pinocchio
was a bit trying, He often did a lot of crying, But Jimminy
Cricket Showed him the way, And Pinocchio found
happiness In every day,
So, life in Disneyland
It is so grand, Life should be a Never, Never Land.



Toxic Beauty

By Milton. P. Ehlich

Everybody loves Crocus flowers
that remind us winters do end.
A never-edible feast for the eyes.
Starved for love, a man gets sick and dies
enjoying the beauty while eating the Crocus. He
shivers all over, a gong that's just been struck
from the inside out. His dog whimpers while
searching
for leftover scraps.

FUCKOVID



Doomsday clock

By Celine Rose Mariotti

Tick Tock
The Doomsday Clock
No law and order
Everything in disorder
Tick Tock
The Doomsday Clock
America not America
anymore

Constitution thrown
out the door,
Tick Tock
The Doomsday Clock
Too much insanity
and hate
What will be our fate?
Tick Tock
The Doomsday Clock

A Trance

by *Kaylyn Khaleck*

I smile and use my softest voice
only to be met with a response that lacks humanity, I remind
myself
that kindness is not weakness,
their lack of love is not my responsibility,
but sometimes
I can't help but look to that stranger & wish I could embrace
them
to break them from their trance,
hurt being the hypnotist,
trapping them like a blanket of safety
yet they remain cold to the touch,
a life filled with beauty
and inspiration,
a foreign thing it has become,
too busy standing in the shade to notice the warmth of the sun.

24-Hour Burnout

by *Steph Rheinor*

metal doors that are code protected buttons tap
dance along tired bones aware of the sunlight
singeing my back hunched, aching, carrying far too
much I welcome the familiar cold
creeping across my chest
icing over my veins

triage to the lobby

white and sterile
freshly mopped but stuffy
bleach stings nose hairs as I walk past isolation
"That parvo puppy isn't going to make it"
"We just had a DOA arrive"
"Code! I need a doctor!"
the day is just beginning
triage to the lobby

kidney failure cats drowning in bowls of
water post-op dogs anxious and crying to a godless
heaven
autoimmune anemia sucking up transfused

blood cells squished face bulldogs dyspeptic on
60% oxygen hit by car trauma paralyzes the
family's tenderhearted golden
dozens of toxicities; rat bait and meth to name a
few

"It must be nice working with puppies
and kittens all day!"

triage to the lobby

glossed over eyes meet pools of sorrow "Max
was my best friend"
mouth spewing words rehearsed condolences
slide of the tongue
like sand falling through fingers
m e a n i n g l e s s
"I'm so sorry for your loss"

triage to the lobby

IV pumps screech, haunting your dreams add
another name to the list of hourly treatments
each one pushing you to take another step
there is no time to let yourself break
keep going and hurry up, move on veterinary
nurses that survive this there are far too few

Parker



By Sydney Mariscal
Ceramic plate
10" x 10"

Are You Dangerous Stockton

By DuShonda Bullard

Stockton, the closer we grow over time.

Though we are closer, I am bewildered by the way
you are described.

When I speak well about you, people always
counter with the crime.

They tell me of all the dangers, and I admit I'm not
subscribed.

I wonder how it is, of these dangers, I am unaware.

And how they live so far away but know so much.

They always say I should beware,

But of what, I do not know such.

Are you dangerous Stockton? Surely you would
know.

Are the stories of crime they tell untrue?

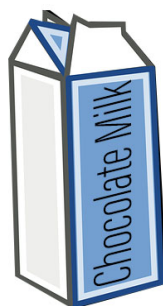
If the stories are real, should I go?

Though we are closer, can I trust you?

The time I have shared with you gives me more
reasons to stay.

Unless I see the danger for myself, I will not move
away.

Ode to Milk



By E. Martin Pederson

Chocolate milk
kid's stuff

when I want to let my kid out I go into the corner
grocery on Taraval
pull out my birthday leather wallet and buy a
carton of cool Berkeley Farms chocolate milk and
sit
on the ball on the curb and feel it slide down the
pipe
mustachioed watching the cars go by, feeling the
air, the birds chirp
my beatup jeans and tennies look good against the
gray asphalt
on an overcast Saturday morning, gray trimming
my baseball cap
though I'll be feeling those shin splints tonight, I'm
going to McCoppin Park to shoot me some hoops

gotta keep in shape, boy, you'll need all the
gristle you can get

when it starts to break down

Dry California Desert

By Francine Canal

Humidity sticks to the skin
and seeps through t-shirts
as wet tongues swim around me, speaking
words I should understand.

I try not to miss
dry, Californian desert.
Never not in a drought.
I find it hard to reminisce
with this –

humid homecoming.

How does the greenery irk me?
As if I can't stand anything except
Rolling, golden hills
Of long, stiff grass.
This is home,

I remember.

I find myself missing
dry, Californian desert.
Never not in a drought,
never wanting rain.

It always rains here, I notice.

My tito paints a beautiful picture for me:
Infant, clinging onto a bamboo mat,
floating on a clear, green river.

Moses eventually returned to
himself, long after he floated through the
reeds.

So when he asks “Do you remember?”
I bite back the acidic truth
and

Nod, nod, nod

No, no, no

I miss
dry, Californian desert,
never not in a drought, “I
remember” –

I lived in a lush place once.



By Susan Stewart

Just Some Guy

By Joe Romero

Smiley Mancuso- an interesting fellow with not much to offer, a thirty-five-year-old man who is in the search of a full-time job to give himself the last bit of meaning to his pathetic life.

The waiting room had a great view of a tall Willow tree standing outside of the office at the elementary school of where I was waiting to be called for my job interview. I was the only man in the facility. All around me were just women at their desk, areas a few feet away in front of me scattered inch by inch. Their faces were all glued upon their phones and computer screens doing work-related things, or talking to one another about things that shouldn't be spoken of during working hours.

I was never into people's business. Why would I want to be a part of it? Dealing with people was something I learned not to cope with from my parents. All the problems in the world resided in those two's hearts- a child's nightmare, to be exact!

The door swung open and three frantic kids ran in the office I was waiting in.

“Mrs. Duggar, Mrs. Duggar, Frankie cut his arm! He fell down from the Oak tree, really high. He was so far up, you know,” said one delinquent child in a concerned tone.

“You reckless kiddos, why you climb so high on that tree, Frankie? Were you trying to touch a cloud?” asked Mrs. Duggar.

“As if Mrs. Duggar, I saw a red cardinal up there, and I wanted a better look at it,” said Frankie. “Well, have you ever heard of the internet?” said the lady called Duggar. “Yeah, I have, but everything is better in person,” said Frankie.

“It doesn’t matter, just don’t ever see birds as a burning passion for your life again around the school grounds or like ever!”

“Sure thing, Mrs. Duggar,” said Frankie.” So, could Frankie get that band aid now?” said one of the two kids that came along with the injured child.

“Oh, right,” said Mrs. Duggar as she dashed her way to the nursing room. “There you go. All patched up. Now go before I report this to someone who actually cares about their job.”

Bye Mrs. Duggar you’re the best!”

Those kids were quite entertaining to distract me for the time being..... until I jump back straight to reality..... to live and to let die of myself.

I begin to look at the ground and think about what other Joe Rogan podcast video I should watch on my crappy android tablet when I go back to my home of a jail cell.

“Smiley Mancuso your long-awaited interview awaits!” said one of the office ladies in the back. Now it’s time to see if it was worth coming here or not, I’m thinking as I walk towards the principal’s office.

The office of the infamous principal, Rene, was very classy and well maintained. The room was full of all of the school’s history, awards and championships that they received and won from students that actually use their talents.

“This lady is the definition of school pride,” I said to myself.

“So, Mancuso, what it do baby?”

I look at her like she is an alien in front of me. Excuse me?

“ ‘What it do baby’ it’s slang for ‘what’s up’, I learned it from the kids here at this school. They say a famous basketball player said it one time. You familiar with who I’m talking about?”

“No, I’m not into sports at all really.”

“Oh no need to be harsh! I was just trying to get to know you better, but forget that. Let’s get down to it. Why are you here Smiley?”

I look at the ground to help me concentrate, to help me come up with an answer. At least the ground doesn’t have a face that is unpredictable like everyone else I see in public.

I raise back my head to stare out the window where it also has a view of the Willow tree, I saw earlier in the waiting room. I give her my answer.

“I don’t know, I thought I came here asking if there’s any work for hire here, but the more I think about it, the more I resent even coming here in the first place.”

“What makes you say that, said Principal Rene with a face featuring a large question mark.

“Well, every teacher, yard duty and those office ladies outside your office all look like happy campers to me.”

I stand up from the chair to receive even greater attention from Rene. “I bet a good portion of these kids looks up to at least a few of your employees as role models, and I don’t think I can be a part of this great establishment that you have here at your school, Mrs. Rene. I’m sorry I wasted your time” as I said rushing for the door.

She dashes herself to the door I was about to open. “Smiley you are overthinking this job thing here at this school way to far. Look, you seem like an easy guy who likes to get to the point, but is always open for a conversation. Am I right?”

I pout my face and stare at the ground. “So, I am right, ha! Those physiognomy books paid off after all!”

I look back up and stare at her in the face. “What’s your point Rene?” I said with annoyance.

Delta Landscape



By Al Francis Mejia

*Acrylic on canvas
30" x 24"*

"Work here. Just try it out and you can come back to my office any time you want to tell me that you are staying or leaving. "

I hesitate to answer her for a few seconds. Okay".

January 16th, the start of the new school year. My first day can be the turn for the worst. That broad, Rene gave me the bus driver job since they are shorthanded on drivers. I think about the time she called me about giving me the bus driver job.

"Smiley this is the only job opening available, take it or leave it!"

At the time I was desperate for any kind of motive in life to happen. It beats being a couch potato, and spending the amount of money that is left from my financial aid earnings from the college I used to go to. So, why shouldn't I take the job offer. I arrive at the front of the school at five in the morning as instructed by Rene. The Willow tree had less leaves than the last time I saw it.

A large, long, yellow bus appears before me. A fat, sweaty man exits the vehicle with a comforting face that meets my confused, get-me-the-hell-out-of-here kind of face.

"You Smiley?"

I look at him in the eyes. "Yes, I am."

"Well, then, let me give you a quick run down on how all of this works. Then I can finally kiss my retirement in peace."

(Sigh) “Shit,” as I said under my breath.”

“Also, the name is G.” He introduced himself with his thumb pointing at the smile on his face. I’ve never experienced a faster more direct tutorial ever than the one G gave me. He taught me every nook and cranny of the bus and works. And he taught me how to follow the schedule of each address listed for each student to get picked up.

“The look on your face is the answer to me that you understand how all this works,” said G.

My face is in utter confusion, you fat boar,” as I said in my head. I thank him for the lesson when we shake hands.

“Well, you can forget asking me all the other questions you had in store for me because my old ass is out of here. Peace.”

I stand there with a confused, disgusted, animated face, but I smile still. I then make my way to the driver seat to start my first day.

“Is this how it’s going to end then Smiley?” said a familiar voice.

“Huh?”

I was awoken back into my own reality with the voice of one of my two other inmates in our holding cell in a distant county jail.

“You call that a story, Smiley? My brain has been fried from all the weed and cocaine that I smoked and sniffed, and I can think of a far better story than that snore fest that you just told us!”

"Eat a dick, Bernie," I said with an annoyed tone.

"Hey it wasn't that bad of a story Bernie it was passing the time in this crappy joint we'll all in." "Shut up Nolan I don't like hearing slice-of-life kind of tales. They seem so forceful when it is trying to be relatable to normal people in society. If you ask me, the story is see-through glass. I could already guess that the good-for-nothing, sad bus driver, which is you. would not like his job at first. But each time you attend your job you will form an unlikely friendship with all the school kids you pick up for school which will suddenly heal the hole inside your heart. Then you will be awarded for 'Employee of the Year' for first time in your make-believe school history."

"Cheating is what you did, though. I predict gifting....for all those gifts you bought with your own salary from the school so that the children will look at you as a walking gift-giver, and so you can be a good role model. Right? In the end you will find peace to yourself within the children's love for you as their bus driver."

"Am I wrong for how your story was about to play out, Smiley?"

"No, you're not wrong at all, you completely read my mind upon my story telling."

Nolan gets up from the bed he was sitting on the whole time. “If you’re such a critic of stories, Bernie, why don’t you entertain us with an interesting tale of your own!”

Bernie looks at us both with great determination. “Alright bet.”

My Dog

By Angel Vasquez

My dog is not a good dog she doesn't sit, fetch, or
stay,
My dog is not a good dog, she always gets her way.

My dog is not a good dog, she tracks mud all
through the house ,
My dog is not a good dog, she's the type to be
scared of a mouse.

My dog is not a good dog, she barks all through
the night,
My dog is not a good dog, getting her to do
S` kZ[` Yis always a fight.

My dog is definitely quirky, truly one of a kind,
My dog is not a good dog, but I'm still happy to
call her mine.

A Post-Factual World

By Sam Hatch

1

In a post-factual world,
Respect for truth is supreme naivete,
Perhaps even a betrayal.
Ignorance is not a void,
Not some dark and sterile moonscape
Not the cold emptiness of interstellar space.

2

Ignorance is self-replicating cultural goo—Pundits
bloviating,
Spinning a web of truthiness
Into righteous indignation, resentment, and fear.
Bloggers whipping factoids
Into humbug and humbug
Into sinister inside dope,
And sinister inside dope into Apocalypse foretold
In all its stunning mystery and horror.

3

In the post-factual world a portal looms
Into the ectoplasmic underworld of Deep State.
There innocent children are trafficked
By demonic elites.

There elections are stolen from the People
By traitors who have made treachery a science.

4

So many sinister vistas loom,
In the end truth is what we fear.
Truth is kryptonite
Destroying our cyber world,
A world built factoid by gooey factoid By the Real
Saving Remnant,
Those waking few holding out
Against the alien pods
And their deluded minions—
The counterfeit Saving Remnants, Who claim the
mantle of prophecy Was woven by angels on a
heavenly loom Of the finest polyester
For them alone.

By Lorena Martinez-Meija

Blue Mother (2021)
Stoneware, blue underglaze, kittens clear glaze.
26"h x 9"w x 9"d



Photo by Susan Stewart



Serenade of Sirens

By Scott Thomas Outlar

*An ambulance screams
and twenty cars pull over*

*The emergency vehicle
maneuvers through a congested
intersection*

speeds onward

*Traffic resumes its natural motion
as each car is guided
by a human being
going somewhere
to do human things
in an inhumane world*

*but everyone bears the brunt of it well
as one crew races to save the day*

*and all the rest of us
do our best to stay in rhythm*

*so please just show some mercy
with your next siren serenade*

Midnight Hike in a Dark Room

By Alexis Paneda

A back is...

a wall!

No, maybe it is something even more reliable,
inviting...

perhaps more accurately, a back is...
a mountain!

A collection of mountains, in fact.

Built atop
muscle, fat, gristle.

Parts of this collection slips around under
body-heated silk blankets

The ribbonings gathering around a back as
sigh-worthy as this...

are an impartial, natural censorship.

It's the kind of beauty that people would be
lucky to capture.

Wonderful clusters and sparsities of freckles
populate

the surface. Its rigidity is complemented
beautifully

By the sensuous indents of a spine, curved in rest.

A surprising softness that interrupts the firmness, the tangible grit of the terrain, this physicality.

A geographical contrast that is wonderful in a way that only those who see it can really understand.

It heaves and settles like the volcanoes deciding if magma will become lava, given the day.

The owner, dormant and peaceful.
The lucky one-person explorer, the sole witness of it
could commit this topography to memory.
The map of this wondrous expanse!
It could be crafted with his love.
He could detail the rest of the sweet specifics in the legend!

Be My Fiance

By Andrew Un

Oh darling, grace my side.
I'm in woe, missing you.
With us, nothing to hide
for our sky brightens hue.

Oh, my love, my dashing dove.
Picked my parts, mixed my tin heart,
magic and myth, lack thereof.
No illusions set us apart.

Oh, queen of bees, goddess of nature's free.
The diligent duty you have refined
plush of pollen, sweet as sugar soothes me, caught
in a bind with beauty so divine.

Oh darling, let us sing and swing the twilight night
away.
It's our day, if I may, could I say, be my fiancée?
The Knight's Duty

Heed ready the sword at hand.
Trained knight is of might and fight,

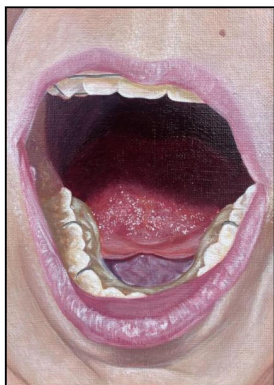
steady the heart of the land,
and by god's grace to due right.

For days and nights, the knight shall fight for the
grand call of kings and countries in God-given
grace to make right
for peace and prosperity in plenty!

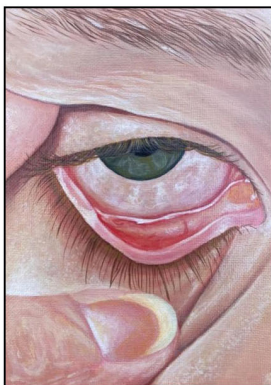
In the era of high kings and countries shall
construct a kingdom of an age
in lore and legends of high luxury
with our names written by sage!

We shall etch an empire of an age
in the heart of the promised land written in
timeless tales by sage,
by knights who ruled right by swords at hand.

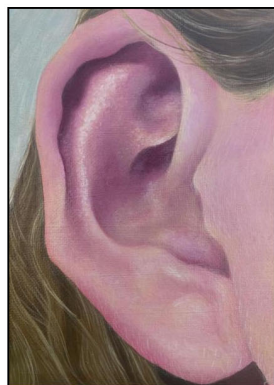
Speak



See



Hear



By Samantha Marie Holcomb

Savings

By E. Martin Pedersen

Bazooka Joe was good pink bubble gum and cost a penny
I'd pick up the wrappers off the ground outside the liquor store
because it said on the wrapper
if you sent in a hundred, 100
they'd send you a jack-knife

Some of my cub scout den brothers had knives
they used to carve their pinewood derby cars
I wanted a knife in case of emergencies
even though I knew I couldn't take it to school.
It wasn't that hard to save 100 wrappers, I counted them a lot
it took about two years though, so it wasn't that easy either
Mom gave me the envelope and off they went
I had my doubts about Bazooka Joe coming through
because he was a cartoon character with an eyepatch

Window into the Present



By Gabrielle Myers

A couple months later, I hadn't forgotten
the box came and inside a green jack-knife
a two-blader that is just exactly right
bent to fit in my hand, just my hand
I haven't used it much so it won't get old, but I use
it when I have to
and I've been careful not to break the tips off the
blades
I have that knife right now in my desk drawer --
because, you know, Bazooka Joe.



Chopin

By Lucy Becerra

Capture,

tell me how to capture the sound
of you playing these chords for me
because I never want to forget the sound.

Hands,

watching your hands
start and stop and start and stop and start
again,
until they play perfection.

One

over the other, wrists
criss crossed
above the black and white.

Pace,

your deft fingers pick up the pace,
and I can no longer keep track of where they
land

Instead

of waiting for me you tell me
that the same piece will always sound different,
as the emotions in the hands on the keys
will always come through.

Now,

you no longer play for me
and I understand,
as the strings no longer sound the same
when they are no longer played by you.

Dancing in the

Purple Rain

By Andrea Johnson

Rewind. Repeat. Echo.

*I'll always long to see you; anticipating tomorrow I
never meant to tell you, this is our goodbye Your
absence will be my biggest sorrow*

I stand protected under God's watchful eye

Raindrops beat against a window pane

Chaos in my life; Insane

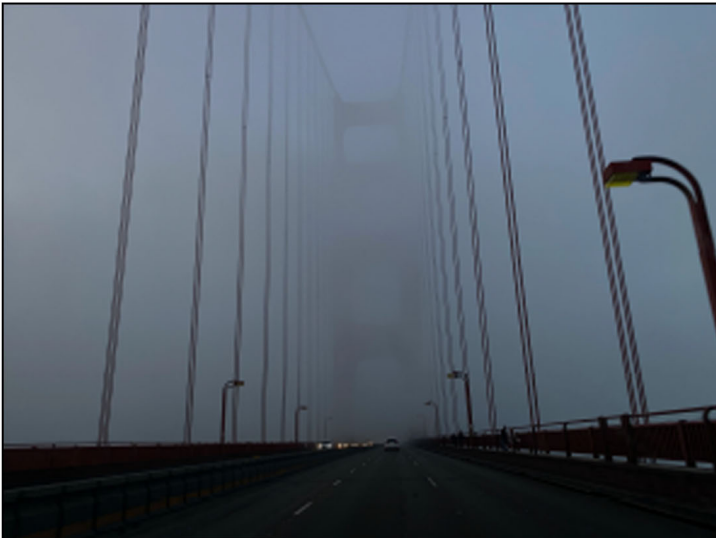
*Although, you know I was truly loved by another I
often wonder why our friendship had to end?*

Red and Blue together produce Purple

Me and you together; energy eternal

Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, and Brothers

*Judgement Day shall all attend
Unequivocally I choose to dance under the Purple
Rain
Always praying to love and protect you my eternal
friend
Soaking.
The fact is, I know I will see you again
And this time I pray that you, too, are laughing I
also ask that you please take your time
Come, let's dance, dance freely in the rain
I am reaching out to you;
I am calling your name
I am following the leader, I've made up my mind I
only want to see you dancing and laughing in the
Purple Rain.
Echo. Repeat. Rewind.*



After the Rain by I. Mar

Turning 60 Poem

by *E. Martin Pedersen*

When and if enough is enough
as in I've had enough tortilla chips to last me
if I never have another one, that's all right
I will always remember their fine salty crack
the false taste memory of 5,000-year-old maize they
were not necessary, only nice.

If I get my extra twenty, my bonus
I'd still like more ... sex, coffee, books, and tropical
fruit,
music to play, a walk in the woods,
baseball, my cat, old men, old women,
a cross country drive,
a swim in the Pacific Ocean,
picnic under an oak tree,
the smell of the High Sierra,
and you.
you and me.
of the
you and me.

Untitled

By Jose Eduardo Fernandez Pedroza

I walk through the
Barnes & Nobles music
and Movie aisles.
A shadow follows.
My shadow.
A heavy shadow.

Pick up My Family.
Glance. It's nothing.
Pick up One Blood.
Glance. It's nothing.
Fluorescent lights tan
my skin.
It's nothing.

I decide to buy a book
instead.
My shadow follows.
A vigilant shadow.
Pick up Broken Spears.
Glance. It's nothing.
Pick up The Injustice
Never Leaves You.
Glance. It's nothing.

Fluorescent lights
tan my skin.
Brown skin.
Brown blood.
Boiling blood, under
burning skin,
Under flickering
fluorescent lights.

I decide to buy
nothing.
"Have a good day."
"You too," my
shadow responds.
My shadow doesn't
follow.
An unmoved
shadow.
It's nothing.

How Unkind

by *Alexa Paneda*

Long skirts are my favorite pieces
to wear, to look at.

I love the natural sway, the timeless
swing of a skirt that almost kisses the floor.
It's romantic. I love it.

Cooking is my favorite hobby,
the fire at my command.

We work together
and the result is a wonderful thing.
The opportunity to feed another.
I can say I've nourished them,
they're fuller and I'm happier for it.
To take care of someone like that is
tender. It's rich, it's plump, a lush warmth.
Giving is so nameless. Quite easy on the palate.

Pink is my favorite color, it will be
forever, I think.

I'm so sure of that. I feel pink
in my vision, in my heart.
It bleeds out from my ears.

If I could make it so, my thoughts
would be pink. Pink, pink, pink.
It's silly, I know it. It's soft in my hands.
And yet it all feels like
a crime. It all feels like
I'm putting a sign on myself
that says
"A weak, easy catch –
take me, please.
Hurt me, please,
it's your right."

To be seen by others as a "girl"
is already so, so difficult.
To be raised as a "girl" that is to become a
"woman" is so hard.

Proposition 31

By Kylie Richards

Glazed ceramic
10.5"h x 14.25"w



My mother warns me nearly daily
because she loves me, my father's pessimistic
lectures,
he tells me "knows how boys are"
because he was one, too. Both of them
know how awful "men"
can be. So of course I know, too.

So I am scared of a prospect
that might not happen.
I'm worried about utility and function
of a long skirt
when I'm alone, so obviously
alone. Will it catch and snag?
"How fast can you really
run?"
I'm scared of a prospect, of
concepts and theories
of people that
I might not ever meet.
I wonder, could I ever cook
for someone I don't already love
without the cold thought of –
"What else do they think
they can take
from me?"
clattering in the dingy pot
of my heart?

How can a person
have faith in people
they are taught to
fear the shadows of?

Rarity

μ Æÿ Çøÿñ Â ùñ

*High on honeysuckle perfume
scent of ouroboros
solar mass corona
taste aurora's sweet drip
yellow light enters form
whet the tongue of thorns*

*signs of the source
please
sing me back safely*

*carrying lost thimbles
home
to quell the ancient thirst*

*I haven't felt this way
since I was eight years old
but I think I've finally
found the flavor
of spring transcendence
or at least
caught the white flash
of momentary remembrance
during the buzz*

Victoria



By Veronica Rodrigues

Monotype print
9"h x 12"w

Never Give Up

By Celine Rose Mariotti

**“Never give up”
My Dad always told me
He always believed in me,
My dreams are coming true,
Just like Big Blue
My team the New York Giants
Are in the playoffs
I’m expanding my horizons
My writing published in
Magazines in the USA
And beyond,
The Giants like me
Have miles to go,
We’ve both had our highs and lows,
Churchill said:
“Never give up!
Never give up!
Never give up!”
I never gave up
The NY Giants never gave up,
They beat Brady twice in
The Super Bowl,**

**They have a chance this year to do
It again,
To win that Super Bowl,
I'm in a Super Bowl of my own,
Creating new stories, books and poems,
That's my endzone,
Barry Manilow
Always says,
"You can give in,
You can give out,
But you never give up!"
That sums it all up,
One of these days
People all over will
Recognize my name
And know I'm an author
The NY Giants will be the champions
There will be no doubters,
And so I think of my Dad,
He loved me and he loved
The NY Giants,
If he were here,
For me and for the Giants,
He would cheer!**

Untitled

By Angel Vasquez

Hunched at the foot of the bed
Her body dips lightly into the sheets
Her eyes bore into the floor below, pain and
confusion show in her gaze.
She peaks up, eyes wide and sullen. A white
blanket framing her face
Her lips pout. She cries out for her mother

Her appetite left long ago,
Thin skin sags off of her frame her frame
Purple and red bruises new and old
Stain her nearly transparent skin

Her legs are no better
The skin of her shins looks cut to the bone
Her right foot is overtaken by Gangrene Her
pain feels contagious
And she knows it. She is ashamed

She is taken care of by a familiar woman
She protests
Her role should be the caretaker,
Not the patient

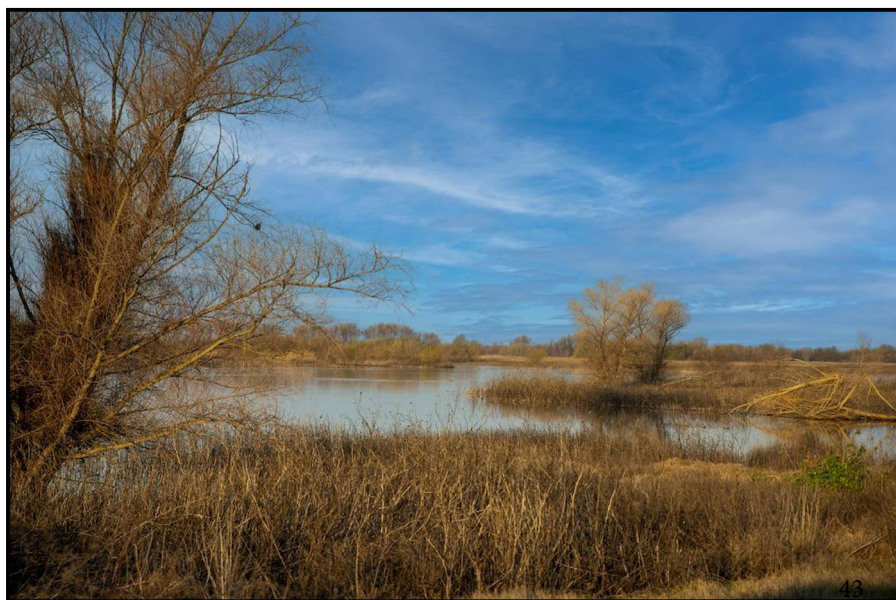
She gets fed, her room gets cleaned, her clothes
changed
Her favorite is when the woman brushes her
hair
And that is the woman's favorite too

Both relax. And both cry.
Then grief

The patient's cries for her mother cease
And the caretaker's cries take her place

Delta Marsh Land

By Michael Moreno



14" x 18"

Thank You Fairbanks

by *Andrea Johnson*

2,950 miles separated me and you, Tank tops and flip flops,
now bones chilled through

I am now from a place called the lower 48
Anticipating home, eagerly awaiting the date

Highly adaptable our bodies come to be
The seasons will change, yep, and so do we

Imagine it's 3 am; the sun you still see
Peeking over the horizon, nighttime takes heed
Almost 22 hours of daylight warming summer days
But less than 4 hours of the same produce opposite ways

Negative double digits freeze natural elements
While Aurora Borealis vibrantly dances with elegance

Yellow-green and red

Waving above my head

All due to gases like Oxygen

Our atmosphere also has Nitrogen Compounded to create

red-purple and blue

immediate solution

We need a resolution

Plants, animals, and humans; an eco-systematic fusion

Plants, animals, and humans; an eco-systematic fusion

Our Creator, amazing. This is very true

Unfortunately

Lamentably

Disturbingly factual

It's gradual

Obscurity follows air pollution

Uncertainty averts an immediate solution

We need a resolution

Plants, animals, and humans; an eco-systematic fusion



The Grey Washington Beaches by I. Mar

Everything is Fine



By Paighton Ortega

**Acrylic and fabric paint on canvas paper
20"h x 16"w**

A Weekend, and Yet...

By Alexis Paneda

All it is is three days, no,
even less than that.
A night and two days, and he'll
be back by Sunday afternoon.
He'll be back by your side.
Can you hold out long enough?

Clean the kitchen, wash your hair,
eat something, please, anything.
He'll be back by your side, so,
don't be so miserable.
Your small faith fits in the palm of your hand
with the tactility of ice you cannot let go of.
The bite of it wears down the skin of your palm.
It itches.
It's so hard, but you've felt the harsh licks of it for
so long that
you think,
you hope, really, maybe that is just what faith is
supposed to be.
You wonder if he's eaten. Has he smoked?
Is he keeping himself warm, out there,
somewhere, that place that isn't right next to you?
Oh, God, is he thinking about you?

You hope he doesn't, in fact, it'd be better
 if he forgot you, please, please, just for
 a night and two days.
 He'd hate to see you like this,
 he thinks it's so unlike you,
 and he's told you as much more than once.
 He'll be back by Sunday afternoon.

Dry your hair, pack laundry into the washer,
 check the mail, bite your fingernails,
 pull your hair. Maybe you choose to be
 so miserable.
 Instead of being alone
 the worst versions of him
 that you create keep you company.

A night and two days.
 Until Sunday afternoon.
 Can you hold out long enough?

Esqueleto Combinado



By Annel Mercado

Stoneware, Voulkus and Midnight blue glaze
 5"h x 5"w x 3"d

Girl Hugging Death



By Giovanna Martinez Fernandez

Sculpture, multiple colors of underglaze, clear glaze
 4 1/2 h x 4 1/2 w x 4 1/2 d

Skin

skin is just a suit
with a noose for
a tie
and I always
forget to loosen
mine
the solace is in
the tight squeeze,
an endless hug of
my own hands
ataraxia calls
with saccharine
metaphors,
that revoke the
rights of my
lungs
and I wonder,
if I belong in a
suit.

Fool

There's nothing to
fear
In the black mirror
Its warning turned
blueprint
By clocks and birds
and meta lizards
We share a smile and
a space
Our last laugh in
haste
Our necks are
hooked
Baited by the red,
white, and Bugatti
tool
There was another
shot
But did you see this
new dance?

Follower

Crimson umbrella
Preserves ivory petals
Devotion blemished

By Shane Klump

I LOVED HER FEROCIOUSLY

By Milton P. Ehlich

With a love she had
never known before.
She was overwhelmed,
and I was ecstatic beyond
any words I could possibly say.
In the madness of young love,
I could have swallowed her whole
like a hungry Barracuda.
There was no way she could
have matched my intense ardor
having recently emerged from
a marriage that was a mistake
and left her painfully scarred.
I had to wait 5 years before she
was ready to want to marry me.
The most agonizing years of my life,
followed by 62 more years of marital bliss.
Before she died last year, she promised
to wait for me in the next world so our
stardust can merge and we will be together
for all eternity.

Blackout

By Zach Murphy

My roommate took off right before I lost my job at the pizza place. The only thing he left behind was a note that read, "Moved back home." If only the unpaid rent were attached to it.

I sit at the wobbly kitchen table, gazing at the floating dust particles that you can only see when the sunlight shines in at the perfect angle. Sometimes, you have to convince yourself that they aren't old skin.

The air conditioner moans, as if it's irritated that it has to work so hard. I haven't left the apartment in four days, for fear that the hellish temperature might melt away my spirit even more. Is a heat wave a heat wave if it doesn't end? I gulp down the remainder of my orange juice. The pulp sticks to the side of the glass. It always bothers me when that happens.

As I stand up to go put my head into the freezer, the air conditioner suddenly goes on a strike of silence and the refrigerator releases a final gasp. I walk across the room and flip the light switch. Nothing.

There's a knock at the door. I peer through the peephole. It's the lady with the beehive hair from across the hall. I crack the door open.

"Is your power out?" she asks.

"Yes," I answer.

"It must be the whole building," she says.

"Maybe the whole city," I say.

"The food in your fridge will go bad after four hours," she says.

I'd take that information to heart if I had any food in the refrigerator.

"Thanks," I say as I close the door.

When the power goes out, it's amazing how all of your habits remind you that you're nothing without it. The TV isn't going to turn on and your phone isn't going to charge.

Spring Self-Portrait



By Alexis Paneda

*Acrylic on canvas
14"h x 11"w*

There's another knock at the door. It's the guy from downstairs who exclusively wears jorts. "Do you want a new roommate?" he asks.

"What?"

He nods his head to the left. I glance down the hallway and see a scraggly, black cat with a patch of white fur on its chest.

"It was out lying in the sun," the guy says. "Looked a bit overheated, so I let it inside."

Before I can say anything, the cat walks through the doorway and rubs against my leg.

"Catch you later," the guy says.

I fill up a bowl with some cold water and set it on the floor. The cat dashes over and drinks furiously.

At least water is free, I think to myself. Kind of.

I head into my dingy bedroom and grab the coin jar off of my dresser.

“This should be enough to get you some food,” I say.

I step out the apartment door and look back at the cat.

“I think I’ll call you Blackout.”

State of the Union

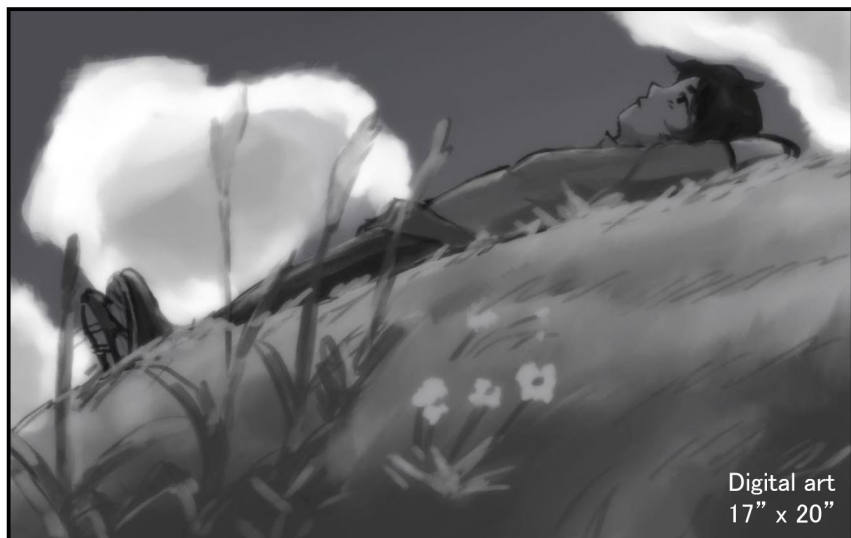
By E. Martin Pedersen

On the metal chairs outside
Peet's
on Market Street obviously
two shopping cart buddies,
rumpled and sore,
brains already pickled ready to
be stored
looking over a companion face
down on concrete
laid out for dead, stoned cold on
prescription drugs
written by a medical doctor;
made by a profitable industry
when will the cops come to call
an ambulance
do sidewalk cleanup duty

if the unconscious guy survives
--
does he care? -- do they? --
do we? -- really?
social services will
unsuccessfully intervene
meanwhile tourists from Europe
and Asia
perplexed by the scene
comment back home
on the state of America
the beautiful
of their childhood, of their
dreams.

Ghibli Inspired

By Mia Mendoza



Digital art
17" x 20"

Intentional **Motions**

By Scott Thomas Outlar

A photographer
eying loti in utero
through a divinely
focused lens

a thousand cliches
can be laced in the coding
of mundane lines
and same old stories

An artist
appreciating her perfect
nature at work

but magic is gorged
to the gills with primordial
guts

Clicking on all cylinders
ebbing in the tide

designed for weaving
a world of infinite
imagination

A connoisseur
witnessing Magdalena
in another era

A soldier
badgered by peace
beleaguered by the wages
of war

Glass sheen waterfalls
reflecting crystalline
consciousness
honed to the finest
degree

Medically Speaking

By Andrea Johnson

Experiments conducted, medical
innovations recognized
Patients left broken, sickly, no paradise
Consent ignored, enticed or disregarded
Minds left damaged, mangled, and
sometimes retarded
Cancer cells infinitely harvested; mailed to
everyone
Mother of 5, she died at the very young age
of thirty-one
Rashes covered the bodies of those dark-
skinned airmen
Never understanding what they gave to
their babies and women
Loss of vision and hearing, their brains
turned to mush
No sanction, no compensation, not even that
much

Chemical castrations to treat the
homosexual

And thyroid cancer for one third of those
islanders was so unusual

Retin-A can cure acne thanks to toxic
herbicides

Introduced to the innocent;
birth defects and congenital malformations
served on the side

AH, THAT TAHOE WINTER SUN

Photo by Gabriella Myers



LOVE AT THE AGE OF 91

By Milton P. Ehrlich

It came crashing
around my head many years ago,
kept me riding over the waves
in my Boston Whaler, The agony
and the Ecstasy, and repeatedly threatened
to drown me if not
for the spectacular reminder of
the beauty of the Aurora Borealis. Compared
to loving and being loved, everything else
seems trivial now.
It forged my life into perspective for 91 years.

A Letter You Can't Read

by I. Mar

If I got the opportunity to love you one more time, I would love you everyday. I would love you even when you did that one thing that annoyed me and when you made jokes during bad times. I would love the way you laughed way too loud even in public places where it echoed as if we were in a cave. To love you again would be the best thing that could ever happen. To never have lost you, would be one of the things I wish for the most. You are no longer a phone call away. You are in every corner of our house. You are in the chair you got up from that morning. You are in the coffee mug you left the last morning I kissed you goodbye, that I refuse to wash. You are in every moment I think of. Sometimes I wish I wouldn't have met you so I didn't have to experience this ache in my entire body, but then I think about everything amazing you made me feel. And if I had the opportunity to make a choice I would choose to love you all over again and never let you leave.

Her Love



By Samantha Marie Holcomb

Acrylic on canvas, piercing needles

24" h x 18" w

Crab-Feed

By Ellis Griffin-Jewett

Sometimes I recall how your fingers felt
between mine,
and how we'd say
it was just jokes,
at lunchtime,

in front of our friends.

But they weren't,
not to me.

Sometimes I recall how,
when I'd sit out and enjoy the rain,
you'd be the first to join me.

And how I would listen to you play

the latest piece
you had picked up
from your piano tutor.

I think of you sometimes,

while I'm playing.

And I wish my fingers had the dexterity then,
that my words so desperately lacked,
to express what my lips could never.

So you would take two in each hand,
and play they were crabs' legs, that
I trusted you never to crack.

Never could I tell you this though,
not then,
and not ever,
because someone rattled your skull
and knocked loose all the love
you had for me.
Sometimes I wonder,
where the boy that broke through
had gone off to that day?

Ad:

Celine Rose Mariotti

Two ghost stories-George Bowman appears
As a ghost playing the banjo in Book I
George Bowman resurrects and returns to life
In Book II

"I Hear the Banjo Playing"

"The Return of George Bowman"

Contact: celinem@aol.com



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"Pearls in Your Teeth" by Alexis
Paneda

BACK COVER ART

"Summer Self-Portrait" by Alexis
Paneda



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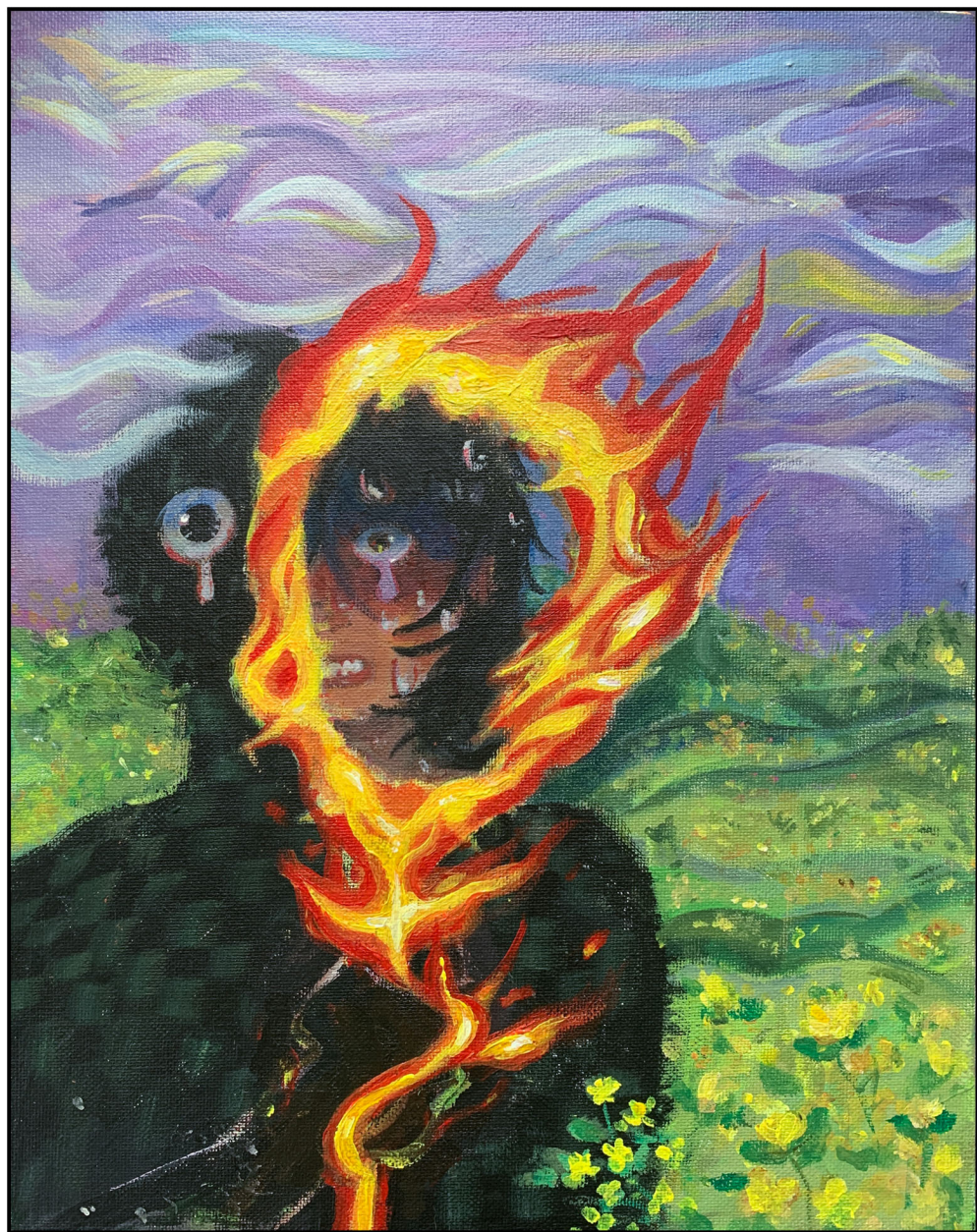
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