“Allegro” a Poem by Tomas Tranströmer
Winner of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Literature

Questions for Naomi Shihab Nye
A Poem from Haven for Hope

The Land of Milk, Honey and Stone
Poetry & Arts Places in San Antonio

“A poem … begins as a lump in the throat, a sense of wrong, a homesickness, a lovesickness. … It finds the thought and the thought finds the words.” Robert Frost (1874–1963)

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Chairman’s Note

Mike Burke

As Voices de la Luna: A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine enters its fourth year of publication, I would like to thank all the volunteers, staff, and benefactors for their hard work and support. Also I would like to thank the many art and literary contributors who provide Voices de la Luna with the rich content published in the four formats, including hardcopy.

With all these efforts, Voices de la Luna continues to grow and improve upon the quality of its publication and the extent of its community service work.

As you will see in this issue, Voices de la Luna has become a platform for some outstanding local poets and writers such as Naomi Shihab Nye, Robert Bonazzi, Steven Kellman, and Wendy Barker. Their nationally and internationally recognized poetry and prose add to the quality and reputation of our humble San Antonio publication.

Jim Brandenburg and Mo Saidi have significantly expanded their workshops. Monthly venues at Barnes and Noble, local colleges and galleries, and Clark High School have encouraged and expanded the skills of new young writers who contribute regularly to Voices de la Luna. Their work has greatly expanded appreciation of the arts in our community which enrich our culture. Using poetry and art as a means of therapy has always been a key objective of Voices de la Luna.

In addition to the continued work of Jim Brandenburg, Maripat Munley is now utilizing art therapy at the Bexar County Detention Center and Haven for Hope on behalf of Voices de la Luna. Poetry and art therapy for at-risk individuals and groups continues to show results. Please note the section in this issue that features some of the contributions from individuals who are benefiting from these approaches.

Growth and expansion are always key objectives for Voices de la Luna, because we believe in the benefits we bring to the community and individuals. Our recent agreement with Gallery Nord gives us a cost-free venue to feature the work of our contributing artists and writers. Recent discussions with the English Department at San Antonio College will expand the number of poetry and writing workshops, while introducing a new group of young people to our work.

As we grow and the workload expands, we want to use the most updated technology to edit and publish our magazine. Thus we are employing Submishmash as of this edition. This service accepts submissions electronically via e-mail and at www.submishmash.com. This platform-agnostic tool enables our editors to read, view, or listen to submissions in many file types. We are also making it easier for our readers to manage the information they receive from us by using “PHP List” software to revise their e-mail addresses or unsubscribe from our announcement list.

Last year was a year of great strides forward for Voices de la Luna, but we can only continue to improve and grow with your support and help. As we plan our fundraising campaign and events for 2012 I hope we can count on your continued support. Thanks again!
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  To view videos of music & poetry and the spoken word, please visit www.voicesdelaluna.com.
Carolina G. Flores is a painter known for her highway and landscape pieces, as well as figurative work on family and significant people in her life. She holds a B.F.A in painting from the University of Texas at Austin, and an M.F.A in painting from the University of Texas at San Antonio. She maintains her studio in the Blue Star Contemporary Art Center. Flores has exhibited her work throughout the Southwestern U.S., and her work is in several permanent collections, including residences of the U.S. ambassadors to Belize and Nicaragua through the Art in Embassies Program. Her work in silk is documented in the Latino Design Archive of the Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum in New York as part of the Smithsonian Institution.

Flores has taught as a visiting artist for the San Antonio Independent School District since 1976, San Felipe del Rio Independent School District, and Southwest School of Arts and Crafts; she has also been an adjunct faculty member at Our Lady of the Lake University since 2002.

Flores describes her work as being about strong colors and expressive form, which she employs in her portraits, highways, landscapes, and still lifes. Her paintings on silk are abstract and presentational. She creates large-scale pieces of art as well as silk dresses, scarves, and ties. Her ceramic work includes tile murals as well as three-dimensional replicas of family members, shoes, “corazon sagrados” (sacred hearts), and “santos y angeles” (saints and angels).

Letters to the Editors

15 January 2012

The last two issues have been your best in terms of both content and design.

Robert Bonazzi; 15 October 2011

Congratulations on the publication of your latest issue. And, thank you for adding such a valuable contribution to the literature created in south Texas.

Allan Smith; 15 October 2011

Saw the new edition of UTSA’s Sagebrush and want to congratulate you on your poem “For Maria & James” -- very nice!

Louise Cantwell; 15 October 2011

Very groovy.

WZS; from lostnear@gmail.com; 15 October 2011

Thanks for those mags. There’s some really good stuff in there. Sorry I’ve been rather uncommunicative, but I’m very busy with teaching and writing. And I’m supposed to be retired!

Kevin Power, Ireland; 16 October 2011

Thank you for the new magazine.

Tristan, Montclair, NJ; 15 October 2011
**Featured Poem**

*Allegro*

*Tomas Tranströmer*

Winner of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Literature

from [http://tomastranstromer.net/poetry](http://tomastranstromer.net/poetry)

After a black day, I play Haydn, and feel a little warmth in my hands. The keys are ready. Kind hammers fall. The sound is spirited, green, and full of silence. The sound says that freedom exists and someone pays no tax to Caesar. I shove my hands in my haydn pockets and act like a man who is calm about it all. I raise my haydn flag. The signal is: “We do not surrender. But want peace.” The music is a house of glass standing on a slope; rocks are flying, rocks are rolling. The rocks roll straight through the house but every pane of glass is still whole.

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**Recognition of Lifetime Achievement**

*Tomas Tranströmer*

**Winner of the 2011 Nobel Prize for Literature**

*by Jodi Ierien*

Before winning the 2011 Nobel Prize for Literature, Tomas Tranströmer was known primarily in his native country of Sweden and throughout Europe, where his work has been translated into 50 languages. The Nobel Prize brought the 80-year-old poet greater name recognition in the United States, where he had occasionally toured for readings at major universities with his friend, the poet Robert Bly.

While building a career as a respected psychologist working at juvenile prisons and with the disabled and drug addicted, Tranströmer compiled 15 collections of poetry in his native language. Eleven of his books have been translated into English. Undeterred by a stroke he suffered in 1990, which left him partially paralyzed and unable to speak, Tranströmer continued to write, with his last major collection appearing in 2004.

In spite of having been criticized by other poets in the 1970s for being detached from his own age, Tranströmer has been nominated for the Nobel Prize every year since 1993. He is the first Swede to win the prize since 1974. The Prize Committee indicated he received the award due to the “condensed, translucent images” which “give us fresh access to reality.”

Much of his early work was traditional, centered on nature. Over the course of his writing career, Tranströmer expanded his focus to include death, memory, and history. Tranströmer’s work builds on modernism, surrealism, and expressionism. His lyric poetry, often in the form of quatrains, presents the reader with powerful images of fragmentation and isolation. While his poetry is influenced by the metaphysical, Tranströmer’s work remains easily accessible to a wide variety of readers. Even in translation, his poetry remains clear and concise with each word contributing to the overall structure and theme of the poem. In “Midwinter,” a poem about the long winters of his homeland, the reader stands beside Tranströmer as he closes his eyes and enters “a silent world.” This quiet solitude is followed by the image of “a crack/where the dead/are smuggled across the border.”

While “Midwinter” focuses on darker images, “Landscape with Suns” warms us on an Innsbruck street before we take our leave. We are reunited with “a glowing sun/in the grey, half-dead forest,” reminding us that there are constants in our lives and that even in our darkest places, there is a promise of light to come.

In Tranströmer’s poetry, the world is never really quite as it appears. If a reader is willing to look closely, he or she will discover hints of something vast and strange. Although Scandinavian readers are familiar with this perspective, Americans will discover the delights of Tranströmer’s works in the coming days. Within hours of the announcement of the Prize, print copies of Tranströmer’s work were back ordered on retailer’s websites, and electronic versions were difficult to find. *Selected Poems*, originally published in 2000, has recently been re-released. *The Great Enigma* and *Half-Finished Heaven* are also currently available. *The Deleted World*, originally published in 2006, should be available by year’s end.

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**Track**

*by Tomas Tranströmer*

*Translated by Robert Bly*

2 A.M. moonlight. The train has stopped out in a field. Far off sparks of light from a town, flickering coldly on the horizon. As when a man goes so deep into his dream he will never remember he was there when he returns again to his view. Or when a person goes so deep into a sickness that his days all become some flickering sparks, a swarm, feeble and cold on the horizon. The train is entirely motionless. 2 o’clock: strong moonlight, few stars.
Questions for Naomi Shihab Nye
Dialogue with Robert Bonazzi

Naomi Shihab Nye’s latest book of poems, Transfer (BOA Editions, 2011), is the focus of this brief dialogue. She was born in St. Louis, lived in Jerusalem, and shares a San Antonio home with husband Michael Nye, the documentary photographer, and son Madison, a grad student at Johns Hopkins. She graduated from Lee High School and Trinity University, has authored (or edited) 32 books in various genres for all ages, and works as a wandering poet in countless schools and communities in many countries. 19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems from the Middle East was a finalist for the National Book Award, and two of her books were recognized by the Jane Addams Peace Association’s Children’s Book Awards. In the fall of 2011 Nye was Visiting Professor at the Michener Center for Writers, UT/Austin. Her father Aziz Shihab’s memoir of Palestine, Does the Land Remember Me? (2007) was reissued in paperback by Syracuse University Press in 2011.

Robert Bonazzi: In Transfer you focus primarily on the loving relationship with your late father, Aziz Shihab, who has been the subject of poems in previous collections. The loss of a parent tends to be a primal event, and these poems track a deep grieving, which—despite the claims of clinicians as to the “stages of grief”—follow no prescribed pattern. What was your strategy for sequencing? Were the poems placed chronologically-as-written or were finished texts arranged later? Was your arrangement accomplished by a conscious method or by an intuitive aesthetic?

Naomi Shihab Nye: Definitely intuitive arrangement, on the floor, page by page, later. It would have been impossible to structure a sequencing beforehand, and chronological arrangement would be peculiar at best. The poems wanted to move, in the second part of the book, back into the world, which for me was entirely changed by my father’s new absence and deeper presence. We always look for a harmony among individual pieces—no?—a fluent current of thinking giving them new relationships, one to another.

The second section of Transfer (“Just Call Me Aziz”) contains eleven poems that take their titles from lines in your father’s notebooks. Unlike your other elegies about him, wherein the first-person narrator usually represents your voice, these seem to actually inhabit his voice, giving the convincing sense that Aziz had written them. We know you wrote the poems, but to what degree do they derive from recollections of his stories and the way he told them?

His voice inhabits my memory and ear so strongly that simply using his own floating lines as titles invited his voice to take over. This wasn’t planned beforehand, it just happened while writing. Aziz was skeptical of adjectives, as journalists often are, so the poems in his voice have fewer of those than my own might have. He loved short sentences and blunt diction. Writing this section made me laugh. I found things out. It was comforting to feel his own voice emerging so easily—I wouldn’t mind writing more poems of this kind. Guess it’s another way to keep that conversation going—as Alastair Reid mentioned [in an epigraph to Nye’s “Introduction”]. My father left a lot of scrappy notebooks, after all. Many more titles awaiting….

All cultures have story-telling traditions—from oral history to literature—and since your narrative poems and Aziz’s autobiographical texts about his exile from Palestine were often created from actual events—can we assume that you place great value upon story-telling, especially stories generated through the Palestinian culture?

Without a doubt, I do. No one can deny your story. Or the way you remember what you describe as your story. They may argue with your opinion, but not your story.

Since only recently are we hearing the long-silenced Palestinian narrative spoken in its own voice (by Abbas at the UN, through peaceful demonstrations throughout the Arab world, and in the overdue international awareness of the criminal injustices of Israeli occupation), do you sense new possibilities for human rights, self-determination, and peace in these developments?

Definitely I do. And it is long, long overdue. And everyone with a moderate, reasonable sensibility in any country hopes for it—Palestinians and Israeli Jews and everyone who cares about balance in the region and mutual respect. As a local friend said to me years ago about what happened to the Palestinians (the whole “spin” to disbelieve or minimize or justify all the horrific crimes committed against them), “How did anyone ever think this would work out?”

Your third section includes diverse poems—several that focus on anecdotes about Aziz, others that have no literal connection but become suddenly touched by strophes of grief—unbidden, definitely. It’s the gift of poetry that helps us see—allows threads to be stitched among disparate details, experiences, moments. I was staying at the San Jose Hotel in Austin—a favorite hotel, but was feeling deeply lonely for my dad. Kind friends showed up with a thermos of white tea. That same night, Jack’s quote floated in, and carried me for months. His own knowing helped life feel bearable again. Grief carries us into that new country of citizenship where no one is denied a passport. Checkpoints? Ha. Like, every day. We find ways to go on. Sentences can help a lot. Since childhood, I never thought we give enough credit to simple sentences.
Review & Books

Transfer
Poems by Naomi Shihab Nye
by Robert Bonazzi

Throughout this truthful and vulnerable book, Naomi Shihab Nye focuses on losing her beloved father (Aziz Shihab) and reflects on the mysteriously shifting sands of grief. “Missing him contains moments so intense,” says her Introduction, “I don’t know how I will continue.” Yet these elegies of dislocation—as emotionally complex and raw as grief itself—discover ways to continue.

In “1935”: “You’re 8 in the photograph, / standing behind a table of men / dipping bread in hummus. // You spoke inside / my head the moment before I saw it. / Now the picture hangs beside my desk, holding / layered lost worlds where / you are, not only the person I knew / but the person before the person I knew, / in your universe, your life’s possible story / still smiling.”

“Scared, Scarred, Sacred” begins: “Daddy! What’s that / ticket in your hand? ‘Our transfer.’” Later, “he felt safer traveling, wanting to be elsewhere, / restless, gone.” Yet he always “dreamed of doing something great / for peace, international healing, / but argued with people close by…” More questions: “When do we get there? / That place we are going? / What have we hauled along? / It was too much, wasn’t it?” No answers, except that “all your life you were flying back to your lost life.”

Transfer alludes to the life journey we all take and to her father’s “transfer” after the eviction from his mother’s house in Jerusalem by the Israeli government in 1948—a subject “we didn’t talk about often / because it was like a person who had died in another country / and we had never been able to wash the body.” In “The Only Democracy in the Middle East,” Nye writes: “Israeli soldiers order Palestinians to ‘leave your house immediately. / Do not call it a home. / This is our home not yours. / Security demands it. // Stand over there, against the rubble, where you belong.’”

Shihab left Palestine for Kansas, where he married Miriam (a painter), then traveled to her hometown in St. Louis. Eventually they came to San Antonio where he worked for the Express-News. When her parents moved on to Dallas, the poet made her home here, later marrying documentary photographer Michael Nye and starting their own family.

The writings of father and daughter emerge from a rich storytelling tradition that Nye combines in a dozen poems that take their titles from Shihab’s notebooks. One particularly charming text in “his” voice (“When One Is So Far From Home, Life Is a Mix of Fact and Fiction”) begins: “No one should hold that against you. / It’s a means of survival. / Sometimes I thought my best talent was / taking a skinny story, adding wings and a tale. / Dressing it in a woolen Bedouin cloak / with stitching around the edges.”

His stories become touching memories, retold without sentimentality. “Where Are You Now?” opens with “my head on the pillow / where you told your last folk tale, / mixing donkey, camel, mouse, / journey, kitchen, trees, / so the story grew jumbled....” She “listened from the other small bed / remembering two and four and six / when this voice calmed me every night, / thinking, how will I live without this voice?” But the poem recovers, as his tale returns “to the comforting donkey, bucket of olives, // smoke curling up from twig fire / over which anyone, / a lost girl, a wanderer, a dying man, / could warm his hands.”

An exiled diplomat for peace, Shihab returned to Palestine often and wrote two books, A Taste of Palestine: Menus & Memories (1993) and Does the Land Remember Me? A Memoir of Palestine, published four months before his death, in 2007. Sharing his nonviolent philosophy and also recognized as a peace advocate, Nye has published poems about Palestine in every book, including 19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East (2002), a National Book Award finalist. Their voices remain lucid, sane, and rebellious in questioning humanity’s blind prejudices and tragic wars while calling for peace.

Nye makes clear in a prose epilogue—“Wavelength”—that her father will always reappear in cherished memories. “He had been the one person in my world absolutely on my wavelength, since I was little. The one whose humor made us laugh the hardest, whose quirks and commentaries rang the most bells. He sang cheerily in the shower in two languages—something better was always about to happen.”

Since Aziz Shihab’s “transfer” and his spirit’s transference into our lives, Naomi Shihab Nye has inhabited all the “stages of grief” ever postulated, but never in any conscious, clinical sense. Rather, she bares this deepest wound without self-pity and traces its gradual healing in poetry. “There’s a way not to be broken”—reads the closure of “Cinco de Mayo”—“that takes brokenness to find it.”

The Land of Milk, Honey and Stone
Mo H Saidi

They have forgotten that their ancestors came here from Africa; that they were one tribe, siblings, and walked barefoot in the desert, raising sheep and collecting olives; and that they crossed the desolate Sinai and settled around cool oases; and they were wanderers who found refuge in the caves of Jerusalem. Some hunted goats and erected tents; some built abodes and dwelled in towns. They became nomads, shepherds, hunters, and city dwellers. They worshiped the sun, the moon, the stars, and many idols. They invented monotheism and the alphabet, coined words, wrote verses, and read them aloud. They conceived myths, produced prophets, built temples, and worshipped the gods.

Continued on page 10
Collaboration in Literature & Arts
The UTSA English Department
colfa.utsa.edu/English/

Creative Writing Reading Series

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

Jessica Lopez
January 27, 2012—7:30 p.m.
University Room (BB 2.06.04)

A three-time member of the City of Albuquerque Slam Team and the 2008 National Champion UNM Lobo Slam Team, Jessica Lopez has been the Poet-in-Residence in several New Mexico high schools and continues her work in the classroom as well as with not-for-profit poetry events in New Mexico. Her first collection of poetry is Always Messing with Them Boys (West End Press, 2011). Her work has also been published in UNM Press’s A Bigger Boat: The Unlikely Success of the Albuquerque Slam Scene, Chicago Open Mic America, Volume 1, Feminism Now, and Poetic Diversity.

John Phillip Santos
February 17, 2012—7:30 p.m.
University Room (BB 2.06.04)

Recipient of the Academy of American Poets Prize, the Oxford Prize for fiction, and the Berlin Prize Fellowship at the American Academy, John Phillip Santos’ Places Left Unfinished at the Time of Creation (Penguin, 1999) was a finalist for the National Book Award. Other books include The Farthest Home Is an Empire of Fire (Viking, 2010) and Songs Older Than Any Known Singer: Selected and New Poems (Wings Press, 2007). Santos has published dozens of articles in such venues as the Los Angeles Times, San Antonio Express-News, and the New York Times, and has also produced over forty documentaries. He is the University Distinguished Scholar in Mestizo Cultural Studies in UTSA’s Honors College.

Critical Insights: Albert Camus
by Steven G. Kellman*
www.salempress.com**

Throughout his career and in the decades following his premature death in 1960, Albert Camus gained a large and avid international readership. But he has also attracted the interest of scholars from many disciplines, specialists in literature, theater, philosophy, theology, political science, history, psychology, medicine, and law.

His novels, stories, essays, and plays have been examined within the context of their historical moment, the troubled period before, during, and after World War II. They have been studied for their distinctive, economic styles, their innovative use of narrative perspective, and their thematic preoccupation with alienation and injustice. His work has been read as a contribution to moral and political philosophy and to an understanding of personality disorders, legal theory, and personal identity.

An essay on his critical reception describes the variety of ways in which Camus has been read, themes that have inspired discussion, and points of continuing controversy. Camus’s own reaction to his hostile critics, particularly his erstwhile friend Jean-Paul Sartre, led to the bitterness pervading The Fall and Exile and the Kingdom. After more than seventy years, the accumulated commentary on Camus constitutes a rich and lively conversation to which this volume offers original contributions, while also reprinting a sampling of some of the more trenchant earlier essays about the man and his work.

Camus lived his work, and long before he conceived The First Man, the autobiographical novel whose unfinished manuscript was found at the scene of the crash that took his life, Camus’s life and work were unusually intertwined. As explained in the biographical overview, Camus was decisively shaped by his native Algeria, a North African outpost of France in which, as the French-speaking grandson of European settlers, he remained an outsider. The fact that Camus became famous with the publication of his first novel, The Stranger, in 1942, and remained one of Europe’s leading literary celebrities had profound effects on his life and work. So, too, did his embrace and subsequent repudiation by Sartre and his coterie of Existentialists.

Camus is probably best known as the author of a novel in which a European Algerian named Meursault gratuitously murders an Arab on the beach. Setting his fiction again and again in North Africa, he wrote about what he knew best, the colonial community. Reacting against dismissals of Camus as an apologist for French colonial rule, Margerrison offers an informed and nuanced analysis of his Algerian identity and his acquaintance with the North African communities outside the one into which he was born. For more information, please visit: www.salempress.com.

*English Department, UTSA, professor of comparative literature, modern and contemporary literature, European and American fiction, film, biography, and literary theory
**This summary of the book is adapted from the publisher’s website.
High Yellow

(Ellsworth Kelly, oil on canvas, 1960, Blanton Museum of Art)

Wendy Barker

This is it. All you need. Though nothing resembles anything you know. It’s neither star nor flower, this imperfect oval more like a fat yellow cigar floating in blue so dark and bright it couldn’t be any sky that’s ever filled your breath. And the bottom third of the canvas: pure green. You don’t have to do a thing. Can stop the churning of your desire to turn this high-flying ovoid into an ear of corn or a squashed halo. This is only about color: yellow, blue, green. But your mind is still recalling that the first two can make the third. Like sun and sky make grass. You keep trying to put names on these three shapes, though they have nothing to do with names. Yet you can’t leave, for in the high sky above this bright lawn, a widening sun is about to drop the egg of itself into your lap.

Light Pink Octagon

(Richard Tuttle, 1967, canvas dyed with TINTEX, Blanton Museum of Art)

Wendy Barker

Like nobody’s skin. Or skirt, blouse. Nobody’s flounce, neither ruffled nor scalloped, nobody’s ribboned basket. Or bonnet, or roses. No carnations, no half-sliced roast beside the wineglass, no ruddy cheek of a maid shouldering wheat, no dimpled buttocks of Venus or Bathsheba, no thundering Jehovah-splintered sunset, no velvet-tassled curtain, no fizzy drink. Not like skin, no veins traversing flesh, no one begging to be touched. I could move into this undorned, open, plain-woven canvas, a pastel simplicity, an unclouded fabric billowing rugged as a mainsail uncurled, heading out to the wide ocean with the wind, this aerial cotton swath, unsplashed by any paint, uncluttered by any pen or brush, this unframed shape—arresting as a full breath.

(The Georgia Review, 2008)

Festschrift for Wendy Barker

Call for Submissions

You are invited to respond to this call for submissions for a Festschrift volume celebrating the career of Wendy Barker. Wendy has taught for over thirty years, mostly in our community here in San Antonio. She is an award-winning poet, scholar, essayist, and she has been a mentor to numerous writers who now live, work, and teach all over the country. She introduced the creative writing curriculum at UTSA, and she continues to work to help our program grow and flourish. All submissions should include name, mailing and email addresses. Digital files should be submitted to: Wendybarkerfestschrift.submishmash.com

All submissions due: May 1, 2012

*Wendy Barker is poet-in-residence and a professor of English at UTSA. She is the author of Nothing Between Us: The Berkeley Years, a novel in prose poems (Del SolPress, 2009) and numerous collections of poetry, including Poems from Paradise (2005), Way of Whiteness (2000), Let the Ice Speak (1991), and Winter Chickens (1990), as well as three chapbooks, Eve Remembers (1996), Between Frames (2006), and Things of the Weather (2009).
Continued from page 7

What characterizes the Israelis and Palestinians most is their attachment to the land. This deep-rooted affinity has also become a contentious source of division and hostility over what both sides consider to be holy land. Ownership of the land has become the main source of their conflict, and the cause of wars, in the land that has become sacred for both parties.

On the surface one detects a remarkable confidence and a glowing hope for peace, prosperity, and survival among Israelis, as was evident listening to Eli, our guide, who fought the in 1973 war in Jerusalem. He dismissed Israel’s critics and said, “Look, we have survived the Holocaust.” Touring the land and riding in the tourist bus on Highway 6, he draws our attention to the wall that divides the Palestinian territories from Israel. “Since we have built this wall, we have had no suicide bombers in this area,” he says with touch of complacency. At the David Ben-Gurion Memorial, he reminds us, “When Ben-Gurion accepted the United Nations resolution authorizing both a Jewish and an Arab State, the Arabs should have taken advantage of the opportunity and done the same.”

According to United Nations statistics and the British archives, the total population of Palestine prior to 1942 was around 1.6 million, of which 30% were Jewish and 60% Arabs; the remaining 10% were Christian and Druze. Because of the significant exodus of Jews to Palestine from Europe and Russia during and shortly after the First and Second World Wars, coupled with the dramatic immigration of local Arabs to other Arab countries, the population distribution among various factions shifted radically. The population of Israel and Palestine in 1950, shortly after Israel’s declaration of independence, was 2.3 million, of which 1,203,000 were Jews (51%) and 1,172,100 (49%) were Arabs. In 2005, the numbers were much higher but with the same proportions: 5,275,700 (51%) Jews and 5,139,100 (49%) non-Jews, with a total population of 10,414,800.

Talking to a Palestinian-Israeli resident of East Jerusalem in his popular restaurant near the New Gate of the Old City, I encountered no resentment toward the Israeli people or even the Israeli government. “I’m doing very well financially,” he said. “I hope all Palestinian people will prosper and eventually live in their own country in peace with Israel.” He was critical of Hamas and jihadists, but supportive of the Palestinian Authority’s position during the negotiations. “Look, I have a son in the University of Cairo, and one in Tel Aviv,” he said. “My daughter is a senior at the best high school in town, and I have a house, a car, and this restaurant.”

A Palestinian taxi driver was even more pragmatic about the future. “I believe President Obama is fair,” he said. “You need to put some pressure against politicians to enter into a fair agreement; otherwise no peace treaty will be signed.” Then he added, “I’m sure we will sign the final peace treaty soon.”

In Jordan, Morad, our Palestinian-Jordanian guide, echoed the same sentiment: “Look, I was born here in Jordan and am a citizen of this country. I’m not interested to leave my home, job, family, and friends and go and live in Israel.” His parents came from a village near Nazareth. “They left in 1948, among a few hundred thousand Palestinians who fled their homes under duress, but they are now settled and happy here,” he explained. “But it’s only fair that they get compensated for the home and land they left behind.”

On our penultimate day in Jordan, tired of climbing the one thousand steps of Petra, a fellow traveler and I went to the Amman Intercontinental Hotel spa for a steam bath and sauna. When we were resting in the Jacuzzi, three burly middle-aged men entered the bubbling water and one, who introduced himself as Mohammad, began to splash the water against his friends and all over us, too. He was laughing loudly. Without apologizing for his mishap, he abruptly asked me where I was from.

“From Texas,” I said.

“We like American people but [expletive] Obama.” The other two nodded and Mohammad prattled on. “These blood sucker Americans. All of them are Israeli puppets. . . .”

We quickly left the Jacuzzi and went into the steam bath. Another member of the group was also taking the bath. We were three now and that made me more comfortable. I tried to forget the insults and divert my thoughts. I began to meditate in the steamy heat, but the three Palestinian-Jordanians pushed the glass door open and entered the chamber.

Mohammad was quick to resume his declamations. “I didn’t mean to insult you, but allow me to just say one thing. We really like the American people; they are our friends, but your government is a blood sucker.” My fellow travelers looked at me and signaled for us to leave. Mohammad got in another barb. “This Arab Spring uprising is all an Israeli plot. The Jews are a bunch of liars and the Holocaust is a pure myth.”

We got up and began to depart when he shouted, “The Jews are financing the uprisings in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and now they are going to destroy Syria.” As the glass door closed behind us we could still hear him shouting, “These blood sucker Jews, [expletive] Obama.”

At the farewell dinner in the hotel, our guide, Morad, thanked us for visiting Jordan and praised our group for showing such sincere interest in the Jordanian people. “I hope you will agree with me that the Jordanians are true friends of the United States, and they value peace with other countries, including Israel.”

After the dinner the manager of the hotel asked for a private meeting and took me to a quiet corner. “I want to express my sincere apologies for the behavior of those three men in the spa. The attendant reported the incident, and we have informed the main office and also the authorities.” He offered compensation for our expenses and said, “They are local businessmen that had bought an expensive membership in our spa. But we value your support and friendship at any cost. Tourism produces an important segment of our income.”

Morad joined the meeting and expressed similar sentiments. “I assure you that these people are not representative of all Palestinian-Jordanians.”

The manager added, “Doctor, I just want you to know that in Jordan, it’s against the law to deny the Holocaust. They could be prosecuted for what they said in the spa.”

Although the archeological and written ancient documents support continuous Jewish presence in Jerusalem and in the Middle East for the last millennia, they also indicate the movement and migration of other groups of people that eventually formed the local Arab population and Christian settlements. Unfortunately, the presence of the major religious monuments in Jerusalem only highlights the past and present deep-rooted divisions in the Middle East, a portent for continuous upheaval in the land of milk, honey, and stone.
The unemployment rate in the U.S. hovers around 9% and can’t seem to go any lower, in part because state and local governments are laying off workers at about the same rate that private companies are hiring them, yet both political parties have made reducing the federal debt a higher priority than creating jobs. The situation is much worse in Greece, where the unemployment rate is more than twice ours, but the most powerful countries in the European Union clamor for ever tighter restrictions on the Greek economy. Back in the U.S., one presidential candidate says, “Don’t blame the big banks. If you don’t have a job and you’re not rich, blame yourself.” Another suggests that the U.S. would be better off scrapping the social safety net erected during the New Deal and the Great Society and becoming more like China, which “doesn’t have the modern welfare state” [sic!]. Meanwhile, the Occupy Wall Street movement heaps the blame on the country’s economic ills on the big banks and other wealthy corporations.

During tough times it’s not surprising that interest in various economic models rises among those hoping desperately to find a way out of the economic morass. One of the most popular models, particularly in the U.S., is “free-market capitalism,” a scenario in which private enterprise is allowed to operate with a minimum of government regulation. The freer the markets, proponents claim, the stronger the economy. Ha-Joon Chang, a professor of economics at the University of Cambridge, begs to differ. Although he is a strong advocate of capitalism, he believes an examination of historical evidence conclusively demonstrates that some government regulation is not only helpful, but necessary to promote a strong economy, and in his book, 23 Things They Don’t Tell You about Capitalism, he makes his case.

We are all taught, he avers, that “if left alone, markets will produce the most efficient and just outcome” (xiii) and that “government intervention in the markets would only reduce their efficiency” (xiv). “These claims are false,” he says, “for the fact of the matter is, The free market doesn’t exist” (1). All markets have some constraints on them, usually imposed by a government. Restrictions on the sale of alcohol, drugs, and firearms; restrictions on child labor; health and safety regulations; immigration restrictions; truth in advertising laws; import and export regulations—all these constrain the “free market” just like minimum wage legislation, overtime laws, and taxes.

Chang next turns to the notion that corporations ought to be run in a way that maximizes stockholder profit. This idea, which is closely tied to the concept of limited liability for corporations (an idea strongly opposed by Adam Smith but supported in part by Karl Marx), tends to focus on maximizing short-term profit, ignoring some of the company’s most important stakeholders, its employees. Furthermore, “the worst thing about shareholder value maximization is that it does not even do the company itself much good” in the long run (19), for short-term thinking too often replaces strategic long-term planning.

Free market advocates like to claim that their brand of capitalism is necessary to improve the economic status of developing nations, but Chang asserts that such policies rarely make poor countries rich. Many, probably most, countries that are now rich or that are developing rapidly have used combinations of protectionism, promotion of state-owned businesses, and government subsidies of private companies in key economic sectors to achieve their wealth. Included in the list are Japan, Finland, Korea, France, Austria, Singapore, Taiwan, and China. Also included is a country whose trade policies were the most protectionist in the world for several decades, where political corruption was rampant, and which discriminated against foreign investment, especially in the banking industry, while defaulting on an alarming number of government loans. This country was the U.S. in the 1880s, a time during which the country grew to become one of the richest in the world.

Chang covers many other topics in his book, including the fallacy of trickle-down economics (how many times does that need to be disproved?), the lack of a strong correlation between a country’s education rate and its wealth, the advantage of less efficient markets, and the proven ability of governments to pick economic winners much of the time. For U.S. readers in particular, he includes these three topics: “The U.S. does not have the highest living standard in the world,” “U.S. managers are over-priced,” and “What is good for General Motors is not necessarily good for the U.S.”

23 Things They Don’t Tell You about Capitalism is an entertaining and well-written book, replete with both contemporary and historical examples to illustrate the author’s points. Far from being a screed against capitalism, Chang’s book is a call for the educated public to discover a flavor of capitalism that is robust, full of potential, and has a track record that far outpaces its poor cousin, free-market capitalism. He ends his book with a plea: “We need to end our love affair with unrestrained free-market capitalism, which has served humanity so poorly, and install a better-regulated variety.” There is no better time than the present, as we continue to be mired in the Great Recession and a jobless recovery, to listen to what Chang has to say.

Word Ghetto
Poems by Loretta Diane Walker
Reviewed by Mary Kay Rummel

In this accomplished book, Loretta Diane Walker, poet, musician, and teacher, draws us into her word music and convinces us to inhabit her deepest concerns—children, race in America, pain and forgiveness, the changing body, the open soul—to revel in language and life with her, to wonder and to grieve. Walker finds beauty so thoroughly entrenched in the quotidian, we are glad to enter her world, even though it is not unmarred. Her fierce poems temper hope with honesty, conviction with clarity of vision. Startlingly fresh without posturing or distraction, they pull us from whatever routine threatens to dull our senses. From the tenderness of the teacher to her young students, through memories of her childhood, and her involvement in the lived experiences of others, she holds a mirror to the revelations of a grounded life.
San Antonio Literary and Arts Events

S.A. Writer Accepts Gemini Ink Award
22 September 2011
Award goes to local novelist, essayist, songwriter, critic, and publisher.
by Steve Bennett
http://www.mysanantonio.com*

“The debt I owe to old man Tolkien is one I could never repay,” Bryce Milligan told a crowd of around 200 at the Pearl Stable on Thursday evening—apparently the birthday of the Baggins boys from The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings (we’ll take his word for it)—as the San Antonio writer accepted Gemini Ink’s Literary Excellence Award at the nonprofit organization’s annual INKstravaganza gala dinner and fundraiser.

Milligan is full of such literary arcana. A novelist, songwriter, essayist, critic, and publisher—he has built San Antonio’s Wings Press from a small local imprint to a national one—Milligan is an all-around man of literature. It is through poetry, however—reading it and writing it—that he is rejuvenated and inspired.

“I find that writing poetry and songs fuels everything else I do,” he said. “I wear a lot of hats, and through poetry I am closer to the source of power, and the better able to do what I do.”

In his introduction of Milligan, Roberto Bonazzi, a fellow critic and publisher and a friend for more than 30 years, described how indefatigable Milligan is, logging “thousands of hours” at everything from reading manuscripts to designing book covers to “unloading trucks at book fairs.”

“And something that Bryce is responsible for that mainstream-going-downstream publishers never do is to produce beautiful handmade books, folios, chapbooks, very fine editions,” Bonazzi said.

Before the dinner and speeches, San Antonio novelist and attorney Jay Brandon spoke for many attending when he said, “Aside from Bryce’s many personal accomplishments, you could have filled the room with writers he has either published, promoted or taught.”

Milligan read two poems during the celebration, including an older one called “Recasting,” influenced by T.S. Eliot, which he dedicated to his wife, Mary Milligan, an editor and librarian.

“My most heartfelt thanks goes to my wife, Mary, who has put up with and actually encouraged my endeavors for 36 years,” he said, in perhaps the evening’s most touching moment—well, aside from the Bilbo and Frodo shout-out.

*The article and the first photo are adapted from www.mysanantonio.com; the second photo shows the Voices de la Luna table.

Emerging Literacy
How Children Learn to Read and Write
http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/RoadtoRead/part2.html

Emerging literacy describes the gradual, ongoing process of learning to understand and use language that begins at birth and continues through the early childhood years (i.e., through age eight). During this period children first learn to use oral forms of language—listening and speaking—and then begin to explore and make sense of written forms—reading and writing.

Emerging literacy begins in infancy as a parent lift a baby, looks into her eyes, and speaks softly to her. It’s hard to believe that this casual, spontaneous activity is leading to the development of language skills, but this pleasant interaction helps the baby learn about the give and take of conversation and the pleasures of communicating with other people. Young children continue to develop listening and speaking skills as they communicate their needs and desires through sounds and gestures, babble to themselves and others, say their first words, and rapidly add new words to their spoken vocabularies.

Most children who have been surrounded by language from birth are fluent speakers by age three, regardless of intelligence, and without conscious effort. Each of the 6,000 languages in the world uses a different assortment of phonemes—the distinctive sounds used to form words. When adults hear another language, they may not notice the differences in phonemes not used in their own language. Babies are born with the ability to distinguish these differences. Their babbles include many more sounds than those used in their home language. At about six to ten months, babies begin to ignore the phonemes not used in their home language. They babble only the sounds made by the people who talk with them most often.

During their first year, babies hear speech as a series of distinct but meaningless words. By age one, most children begin linking words to meaning. They understand the names used to label familiar objects, body parts, animals, and people. Children at this stage simplify the process of learning these labels by making three basic assumptions: labels (words) refer to a whole object, not parts or qualities (“Flopsy” is a beloved toy, not its head or color). Labels refer to classes of things rather than individual items (“Doggie” is the word for all four-legged animals). Anything that has a name can only have one name (for now, “Daddy” is “Doggie,” and not a “man” or “Jake”).

As children develop their language skills, they give up these assumptions and learn new words and meanings. From this point on, children develop language skills rapidly. Here is a typical sequence: at about 18 months, children add new words to their vocabulary at the astounding rate of one every two hours. By age two, most children have one to 2,000 words and combine two words to form simple sentences: “Go out.” “All gone.” Between 24 to 30 months, children speak in longer sentences.

Please read the entire article at www.voicesdelaluna.com.

Please Support
San Antonio Non-profit Literary Organizations
www.geminiink.org
www.voicesdelaluna.com
www.laurelcrown.org

Please read the entire article at www.voicesdelaluna.com.
C.G. Jung & Arts

The Frog King
Al Drymala

In olden times when wishing still helped one, there lived a king whose daughters were all beautiful, but the youngest was so beautiful that the sun itself, which had seen so much, was astonished whenever it shone in her face. Close by the King’s castle lay a great dark forest, and under an old lime tree in the forest was a well, and when the day was very warm, the King’s child went out into the forest and sat down by the side of the cool fountain; when she was bored she took a golden ball, threw it up on high, and caught it. This ball was her favorite plaything.

So begins the much-beloved fairy tale of the Princess and the Frog, a tale of redemption on many levels. The opening lines tell us that this is a father-daughter story, and a story about a certain quality or expression of femininity, idealized by collective consciousness, i.e., “the sun.” And yet as beautiful and revered as this femininity is, it will undergo an essential transformation through contact with the frog.

It is important that close by the King’s castle is a great dark forest, and in this forest is a well under an old lime tree. The dark forest is a wonderful image for the unconscious in its mysterious and secretive nature, and the lime tree and well add special significance.

The lime tree in Europe is not our American citrus tree, but rather, it is a tree of great height and longevity, sacred in Slavic countries as the holy tilia, and in Germany it is known as the “tree of lovers.” Ovid tells us the story of Baucis and Philemon, who, because of their hospitality to Zeus and Hermes, and because of their wish to be forever together after death, were turned into a lime or linden tree and an oak, respectively, when they died, and so lived on intertwined in each others’ embrace.

How wonderful that there is a well right at the base of this tree. How wonderful that the very water that enlivened and sustained the roots of the “tree of lovers” is accessible through this well. One can easily imagine that it was the earnest quest for these special waters that led to the creation of the well.

The well is an access point, a portal, to the waters of the unconscious. In the tale, it is described also as a “cool fountain,” so one has the sense of how refreshing its waters must have been.

The King’s daughter went into the forest when the day was warm. Perhaps all that admiration from the sun was a bit too much. Here is the hint that indeed the reverence from collective consciousness was overdone. One can sense the need of the feminine for shade, for a bit of cooler darkness out of the bright sun, and of her attraction to this sacred tree and water.

She would sit by the side of the well and, when bored, toss her ball high into the air and then catch it when it came down. Bored. Oh, well, it seems that she does not yet fully appreciate the magical quality of the place where she is sitting!

The symbol of the golden ball is an important fairy tale motif, and an important dream motif as well, for that matter. The ball itself has quite magical qualities—it seems to have an energy all its own as it rolls right along, and a mind all its own, too, as it rolls this way and that way. And who can say just what is it about tossing a ball back and forth that is so satisfying? Symbolically, the ball or sphere is an image of wholeness, and represents what Jung calls the Self, especially in its dynamic capacity. This would be the active principle in the psyche that moves us toward wholeness—the urge toward individuation—in such a circuitous way. The fact that the ball in the tale is golden gives it even greater significance, as gold is the most precious of metals.

It is the King’s daughter—this young femininity—who carries and plays with the golden ball. She is the pivotal figure. She holds the key for transformation. But she tosses the ball upward, toward the heavens, and she enjoys this aerial game. So she is femininity, which engages the energy of wholeness in a spiritualized way, an ethereal way, and the law of opposites tells us that it is only a matter of time before it will have to come down. And we also just instinctively know that this is not her whole nature.

If we looked at these dynamics in the case of an individual woman, they could be exemplified in the woman who is a “father’s daughter.” Often a “father’s daughter” can look for her wholeness in a more spiritual realm, valuing a life of principles and transcendent ideals. In other words, she tosses the golden ball high up into air.

In the fairy tale, though, it is the “sun that shines so admirably on the daughter,” so we can also think about a collective attitude that values such a femininity—one characterized by being spiritual and idealized. In an individual man, this would represent an idealized view of things feminine, a tendency to put the woman of his life on a pedestal and then relate more to a projected ideal, a fantasy of his partner, than to who she really is as her own person.

In the West, we have had a very difficult struggle with joining the masculine and the feminine in a way that honors the nature of both. Witness our struggles in relationships and marriages and attitudes between the sexes in general. The Christian myth, as it has been lived out in Western culture, very often took a highly spiritualized perspective on life, typically valuing spirit over body/matter. More specifically, it could value an ideal of what it meant to be feminine, rather than true feminine wholeness.

And that struggle applies to both men and women, as both live out aspects of the feminine within their psyches.

This is ultimately why the fairy tale in general is so important. The fairy tale served to compensate the collective attitudes of the time—to balance them out or fill in their missing elements. As the dream guided the individual in a compensatory way, the fairy tale would guide the collective group such as a tribe or culture.

We will see in the next segments of the fairy tale how the compensation of such a one-sided idealization of the feminine might happen. And as you know how this tale unfolds, you already have a pretty good idea!

Poetry at San Antonio College
English Department

The Cheshyre Cheese Club was founded in 1926 at San Antonio College and emulates the supper club organized by Samuel Johnson in London at the Cheshire Cheese pub in the seventeenth century. Johnson and his friends met regularly to discuss culture, the arts, language, literature, politics, and biography, as does the Cheese Club.

Today’s CCC also enthusiastically supports literacy, sharing ideas, writing, debating, thinking, and dreaming. Community projects include supporting the Limpopo Writing Project in South Africa, providing information, assistance, and encouragement to other campus organizations (we helped Phi Theta Kappa—Beta Nu expand the children’s library at the Ronald McDonald House on Cypress, for example), and providing our open mic venue in partnership with the Office of Student Life. Our primary fundraising activity is selling low-cost used books to the SAC community. Open Mic night, usually three Friday evenings during the Fall and Spring semesters, is scheduled from 6:30–9:30 p.m. and is free and open to the public.
During a recent journey to Israel and Jordan, I witnessed the peaceful and democratic co-existence between Jews, Arabs, Christians, Bahais, and Druse in Israel, as well as the thriving economy that had benefited all including the Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. Observing this equilibrium in the towns and villages, I find it hard to believe the lack of progress and ultimate solution in the persistent Arab-Israeli conflict.

Although there was a deep-rooted desire for peace in both Israeli and Arab communities, especially among intellectuals, artists, poets, and writers—whether born in Israel or in the Palestinian towns and villages—one sadly notices a subtle pessimism toward achieving peace among all parties. They speak movingly of the need for peace and wish that the various political forces would reach a consensus, recognize each other’s existence and needs, and enhance friendship in the region.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly approved Resolution 181, which called for the partition of British-ruled Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The resolution was accepted by the Jews but rejected by the Arab countries. Ten days after the declaration of the State of Israel by David Ben-Gurion on 14 May 1948, the first modern Arab-Israeli war began.

Fighting over Jerusalem, the fertile Jordan valley, and the natural harbors along the Mediterranean Sea, however, has been a recurring event over the last three thousand years; among the invaders were Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Muslims, Crusaders, the Ottoman forces, and the British Empire. As the last three Arab-Israeli wars have shown, fighting has deepened the conflict and delayed the resolution of the disputes.

The despair and pessimism are reflected in the work of many local writers, for example, the Israeli writer and peace activist A.B. Yehoshua who is well known for his liberal views. He was born into a fifth-generation Jerusalem family of Sephardic origin. He served as a paratrooper in the Israeli army from 1954 to 1957. After studying literature and philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he began teaching and writing mainly fiction. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Chicago. Yehoshua is the author of nine novels, three books of short stories, four plays, and four collections of essays, most recently Ahizat Moledet (“Homeland Lesson”), a book of reflections on identity and literature. His works have been published in translation in 28 countries and adapted for film, television, theater, and opera. An ardent, untiring activist in the Israeli Peace Movement, Yehoshua attended the signing of the Geneva Accord and freely airs his political views in essays and interviews. He is a long-standing critic of both the Israeli occupation and the Palestinians. He and other intellectuals mobilized on behalf of the dovish New Movement shortly before the 2009 elections in Israel. Before the recent Israel-Gaza conflict, he published an appeal to Gaza residents urging them to end the violence: “We will always be neighbors, so the less blood is shed, the better the future will be.” He added that he “would be happy for the border crossings to be opened completely, and even for Palestinian workers to come to work in Israel as part of a cease-fire.”

Both Israeli and Palestinian poets desperately try to infuse energy and hope for peace and brotherhood in their people. Mahmoud Darwish is considered one of the most popular Palestinian poets and is widely perceived as a Palestinian symbol and a spokesman for Arab opposition to Israel. However, he rejects anti-Semitism. He says, “The accusation that I hate Jews is not true. I am not a lover of Israel, of course. But I don’t hate Jews.” Darwish gives the Palestinians a voice of hope for a positive future in these lines:

O man, may God cure your soul.
Why don’t you try the taste of love
Why don’t you make way for the sun!

Despite his criticism of both Israeli and Palestinian leadership, Darwish believes that peace is attainable. “I do not despair,” he told the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. “The Arabs are ready to accept a strong Israel with nuclear arms—all it has to do is open the gates of its fortress and make peace.”

Meanwhile Israeli poet Aryeh Sivan reflects on the horror of war inextricably entwined with the craving for peace in “To Live in the Land of Israel”:

To be cocked like a rifle, a hand on your gun, to walk
a tight, hard line, even when
your cheeks have filled with dust,
and your flesh is falling off, and your eyes
can no longer focus on the target.

Despite the desire of the majority of people, both Israeli and Palestinian, poets and artists, and the world, the peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict is as improbable today as ever, especially when you add the tenuous political situation in the aftermath of the Arab Spring movement, the bloody Syrian uprising, and the divided leadership in the Palestinian Territories. This fact justifies the gloom that overrides the literary work of many regional writers today.

Please read the entire article at www.voicesdelaluna.com.

San Antonio Visual Artists (SAVA)
San Antonio Visual Artists, SAVA, was founded in the 1980s as a listing site for local artists working in all media of the visual arts. More than 500 local artists have since joined SAVA. Their media include the full spectrum from painting, pottery, and sculpting to cloth arts and digital visual art forms.

Call for Submissions

SAVA is ready to accept submissions for the Annual SAVA Juried Art Show at the Bijou Theater in Crossroads Mall in October 2012. For more information please email: SAVA360@yahoo.com.
The Texas drought of 2011 will be remembered as the worst in state history. With only one third the normal rainfall, some rivers and lakes literally evaporated. Both Houston and Dallas had 24 consecutive days of temperatures in excess of 100 degrees. The brutally hot temperatures and dry conditions encouraged forest and grass fires all over the state that scorched 3.6 million acres of land (the size of Connecticut). More than 1,000 homes were destroyed and countless animals died.

By April, the drought had become so serious that Governor Rick Perry issued a proclamation encouraging all Texans to “pray for rain.” But conditions worsened, and by June FEMA declared Texas a natural disaster area. In October, rains finally came to most areas, but relief was brief and inadequate. The state still remains in a drought, which some predict will last for five years or more. Total drought-related costs so far exceed $5 billion.

*Daniel Parker is a composer, conductor, pianist, and resident of San Antonio, Texas. Having suffered the 2011 Texas drought and daily pleas, prayers, and forecasts for rain from friends, politicians, and meteorologists, he composed Rain Dance. Rain Dance is a freeform composition for full orchestra characterizing the devastation of the drought and the joy a little rain can bring, underscored by perhaps the oldest rain incantation, the American Indian Rain Dance.

The Photography of Ansel Adams
from http://www.archives.gov/research/ansel-adams/

American photographer Ansel Adams was born on 20 February 1902 in San Francisco. He was a talented child—a musician, not a photographer. Although he could be still and focused at a piano, he had a hard time in school. Education without either meaning or excitement is impossible. He says, “I longed for the outdoors, leaving only a small part of my conscious self to pay attention to schoolwork. One day, as I sat fidgeting in class, the whole situation suddenly appeared very ridiculous to me. I burst into raucous peals of uncontrolled laughter; I could not stop. The class was first amused, then scared. I stood up, pointed at the teacher, and shrieked my scorn, hardly taking breath in between my howling paroxysms. To my mother’s dismay, I was escorted home and remained under house arrest for a week, until my patient father concluded that my entry into yet another school would be useless. Instead, I was to study at home under his guidance.”

To read more, please visit www.voicesdelaluna.com

Two Photos by Ansel Adams

At The McNay Art Museum

McNay Collection
Southwest Art
www.mcnayart.org

With the McNay’s reopening, new installations appear on the second floor of the Main Collection Galleries. In the Hamon Galleries, visitors enjoy an expanded presentation of the museum’s Southwestern collections. Past Semmes intern Monica Boulton has extensively researched the McNay’s collection of Southwest art in preparation for the new exhibitions.

Monica Boulton’s investigation has led to learning more about the museum’s founder, Marion Koogler McNay. “I discovered that Mrs. McNay had an eclectic approach to collecting,” says Boulton. “She not only championed modern European and American art by amassing a superb collection of paintings and works on paper, but she also assembled a remarkable group of American Indian art and artifacts, as well as New Mexican Spanish colonial art. In the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, during Mrs. McNay’s extensive travels to the Southwest, she acquired Navajo jewelry and textiles, Pueblo pottery and baskets, New Mexican Spanish-style bultos and retablos, and Rio Grande textiles.” Boulton’s premise in installing the collection is based on cultural distinctions.

Current & Future Exhibitions

El Greco Rediscovered
Opening January 2012

The McNay Art Museum’s Head of Christ, part of Marion Koogler McNay’s founding collection, was for many years considered a studio version or later copy from a painting by El Greco (Doménikos Theotokópoulos, 1541–1614). Recent conservation treatment has revealed the small painting’s quality, and scholarly research has identified it as an original study for the head of Christ in the Disrobing of Christ altarpiece in the cathedral of Toledo, Spain. Documentation of the conservation process and comparisons with other versions attributed to El Greco are the focus of this exhibition.

Baroque to Bauhaus: Designs from the Tobin Collection
Wednesday, January 18 – Sunday, June 10, 2012

Baroque to Bauhaus connects theatre designs to the larger history of visual culture from the 1600s to the early 1900s. These two styles are the antithesis of one another, with the spare, clean lines of the Bauhaus challenging the painterly illusionism of the Baroque. The Baroque theme includes modern designs in an ornate mode by artists such as Alexandre Benois and Eugene Berman, along with designs from the 1600s–1700s by Giacomo Torelli and the Bibiena family. The Bauhaus theme focuses on artists affiliated with the German school that stressed unity of art, craft, and technology in the 1920s–1930s, including Laszló Moholy-Nagy and Grit Kallin-Fischer, as well as exponents of international Constructivism such as Alexandra Exter.
In early 2011, Reverend Ann Helmke, Director of Spiritual Services at Haven for Hope, gave Gretchen Bealer and me a tour of Haven for Hope, a multi-service shelter for men, women, and families in the heart of San Antonio, Texas. She told us that Haven for Hope residents, called members, and their families were already engaged in a variety of spiritual activities that enrich their lives but that few of these included the visual arts. Reverend Helmke believed this was an unmet need for Members at Haven.

Prior to our tour, we had no thought of volunteering at Haven, but with our combined backgrounds in meditation practice, social work, and art therapy, a Meditation and Art Workshop was a surprisingly natural, winged impulse. It simply flew into our imagination. We proposed a three-hour Saturday workshop of Eastern and Western meditation traditions combined with visual art-based personal reflection to appeal to members from diverse spiritual backgrounds. Four workshops for 25-30 participants were offered this year. At our first workshop, we literally had to go out into the courtyard and recruit members. By the second workshop, we were oversubscribed. It seemed we were indeed responding to an unmet need.

Goals and Objectives
Goals are designed to help members: 1. develop a broader, deeper understanding of prayer; 2. awaken an awareness of a spiritual Presence within; 3. access that Presence through meditation and art; and 4. understand the physical, emotional and spiritual impact of meditation accompanied with art making. Very quickly we noticed that some members possessed training and experience in meditative practices, both Eastern and Western, such as Native American, Centering Prayer, Buddhist, T’ai Chi Chih, and many others. While not everyone previously made art, some described themselves as artists.

Members’ measurable objectives are to: 1. learn and practice at least three methods of meditation; 2. explain some physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits of meditation; and 3. learn at least three ways to make meaning from their art.

Workshop Processes
Prior to the workshop, a flyer with the date, time, and place (Chapel) is posted on Haven’s bulletin boards. The flyer also informs members that no prior experience in art making is needed and that peace, quiet, and cookies (homemade by our volunteers) are part of the agenda. We begin the workshop with a brief explanation of what we will be doing, questions about members’ previous meditation or art-making experience—though none is necessary—and introductions. Volunteer facilitators at tables of five to seven invite members to introduce themselves by first name, identify a favorite color, and say something personal about their choice of color.

This art-based meditative practice calms, centers, increases attention span, and elicits the relaxation response by reducing blood pressure and muscle tension, as well as heart, metabolic, and respiration rates. Below are some examples of their work.

Meditation Approaches
Gretchen introduces three to four Eastern or Western meditations. Examples are meditations on self-forgiveness, breath awareness, lectio divina (divine reading – scriptural), and using silent mantras. Volunteer Terry Gay Puckett leads movement meditation, Tai Chi Chih. After a method is explained and questions answered, members practice for varying periods of time, depending upon the group readiness. The self-forgiveness meditation has been particularly appreciated.

Other Art Directives
To express their meditation experience visually, I introduce art-based directives to “journal” or document it. After brief instructions about how to create a scribble drawing, members use markers, Crayola crayons, and oil pastels on 18 x 12 white drawing paper to create their pictures. Soft music without words plays in background. Using this drawing in the same way that children view clouds in the sky, finding animals or other notions, the members find images or symbols in their drawing. They use the art materials to develop their ideas further.
Meaning Making
Most importantly members become adept at finding meaning in their art. To do this, they practice interpreting what they see visually as a whole in their picture(s) or more explicitly in their symbols or images. They learn to “make meaning” related to their meditation experience using personal projections, metaphor, an image anthology, and even how to use Google to explore the meaning of symbols or images found in their picture. Below are examples of responses to the scribble drawing art directive:

Some artists express a calming experience; some find and develop personally meaningful symbols; yet others may describe a “monkey mind,” often a phenomenon of meditation. No matter what members find in their work, what is most important is what their drawings communicate to them about their meditation experience. This kind of art making is enormously authentic since no model, still life, or picture is presented to duplicate. The image comes from their inner and physical experience of being present to meditation. Our enthusiastic, dependable volunteer facilitators lead table discussions and are key to helping members explore their images to discover meaning in their meditation experiences.

Practicing Skills
Interspersed with meditation, we introduce other art-based methods to express meditation experiences. We use the same materials as above and soft background music without words that would impact image development. One example is a larger and more colorful mandala. Experienced or new budding artists might have the confidence to create a free drawing of what their meditation practice feels like or says to them. Examples below:

Members write down what has meaning for them in their art and sometimes spontaneously write poetry. With the authors’ permission, poetry is submitted to Voices de la Luna for publication.

The Outcome
To be sure that members understand the meditation training, art-and meaning-making skills introduced, there are three methods of evaluation. This also provides feedback to adjust and improve the workshop: 1. Facilitators observe and report members’ overall ability to employ the meditation instruction, create expressive art and find meaning in it; 2. members answer questions about their progress toward reaching the workshop objectives in an anonymous, written self-report; they are also asked if they might utilize the new skills on their own; 3. an after-action report that reflects observations, lessons learned, and recommendations guides plans for future workshops.

The most rewarding outcome is that many members write about wanting more workshops like this. An unexpected happy surprise is that other Haven for Hope staff ask to attend facilitator trainings and observe the workshops, and they then go on to introduce the arts, including visual arts, to enhance Haven’s many departmental programs designed to help members transform their lives.
Select Poems—Part I
Youth Poems

Mime
*Henry Haswell*

The mime is turning, spinning, whirling,
Yet time is still...
The golden winds beat on the run
Majestic spirit and silence screaming in the air
While they whisper rhyme
And all is fine
Children speak
And parents eat

**Found:**
A Last Line/First Line Poem
*Henry Haswell*

I take it you are he?
Now it all made sense.
He had found him,
This man for whom he’d searched so far
Was right in front of him

“How will you please tell me
Who it is I see?”

“It is simple.
I am Blissful
That you ask my name.”

“What is it
That gave you fame?”

“It’s the name
Just like yours
It’s all really the same.”

“If that’s true,
I’ll try to follow you.”

So began this journey
Of Blissful and Lost.

Ode to Explosions
*Henry Haswell*

The match is lit.
The button is pressed.
The lever is pulled.
However it begins doesn’t matter.
The orange glow comes out.
The shockwave releases.
The sound of it spills out.
In a second, it is gone.

Griddle Cakes
*Kristen Davis*

Golden batter spills out of the bowl
Landing in a hot, buttery pan.
The yellow liquid bubbles with sweet aroma.
The edges slowly browned
creating a lake of gooey goodness.
I flipped the griddle cake over
and repeated the process
with my watering mouth.
Finally they’re done
and I squeal in delight
with my first bite of heaven.

Silence
*Kanikkie Yorba*

It fills the vast expanse,
Consumes every space, it takes.
All went silent after being silenced,
No noise or sound made.
For fear of breaking the tension;
The intense, tantalizing, consumable, the silence.
Deep breaths in and release on the air of silence.
Close your eyes and absorb the feelings,
Thoughts, surrounding, process.
All that sheds light, come to you,
In the abyss of silence.

Amorphous
*Devin Benitez*

Have you heard?
Here the Fairfax child was kidnapped
and later found destroyed
He was almost impossible to identify…
Hence, it was the work of the Amorphous One

She who exists without a definite shape
She can become whoever or whatever she wishes
She seduces her victims
and has them do her bidding
before she ends them
She holds all in her hands

Her defeat is impossible
Her skin is immortal
Her face is beautiful and entrancing
Her name is the Amorphous One
Select Poems—Part II
Youth Poems

Ode to Razors
Hunter Koch

After a few weeks, it’s time to shave.
I won’t. I refuse. I despise shaving.
But I do, and the blade slices open skin
as easily as a knife cutting through warm butter.

Blood bleeds bright red.
I curse and throw the razor in frustration.
My beard is sticky with blood and shaving cream.
I wipe it off and then leave the bathroom,
ignoring the cries of the discarded razor.

He claims he is sorry,
that he will do better next time,
but I ignore his desperate pleas.

Maybe I should write an ode to band-aids instead.

Ode to Water
Julieta Bautista

So crisp so clear
You make my mouth water.
I pick you up and twist you open
I pour your insides out
You make me feel fresh and clean
No one can ever survive without you
And as I run in the desert I long for you.
“Oh” the thought of your icy taste running down my throat.
I take a sip and pour you on my face
Rehydrating my insides
I’m ready for a new bottle

Ode to Cats
Kristen Davis

Soft fur weaves through my fingers.
Bumpy tongue scrapes my flesh.
The little tiger rolls in the blanket on top of its head,
resting in a jelly-like position.
Little vibrations emerge from its belly.
I reach to pet the sweet creature and receive a handful
Of claws.
Pain and anger arrive as I realize this trickery.
My furry friend meows in pleasure drawing me back in.
My hand is once again immersed in a sea
Of claws.
I squirm in pain until I’m finally released
from the bipolar grasp of the
Demonic cat.

Yes The World
Consuelo Esters

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

Ode to a Book
Monica Manjunath-Jain

You don’t share your treasure
with everybody,
Children who dream of you
draw alphabets with sticks on mud,
Literacy is not only a luxury;
it is a right and a responsibility,
Because enlightenment is a small part
of the things you impart!

You are my best friend, a wise advisor
and the most patient teacher,
No, ignorance is not bliss, for you are the light
at the end of a tunnel,
When hands curve around that round thin stick of wood
mightier than a sword,
It changes the world because today a reader,
tomorrow a leader!

Beginner’s Luck
Fernando Orsornio

Beginner’s luck helps you outrun
Everyone, one by one
Even if it has just begun
It is never done
You are defeated by none
Because you are number one

Ode to Ramen
Paula Canales

What would I do without Ramen?
Whether Saturday’s afternoon breakfast,
Or on weeknights working late,
You are always there to feed me
When Mom cannot.
No other food satisfies like you, no,
No other can compare.
You fill my heart with joy
And my arteries
With sodium.

Some accuse you of not being a meal,
Claiming that your calories are empty.
But to me, you are a feast
Fit for a king.
I could eat you every day.
You have a flavor for every day of the week.
Alas, as my love for you grows,
So do my hips, and soon I must leave you for another,
Greener food.
But soon when I am in college,
With neither money nor time,
I will once again return
To my salty, savory love.
**Select Poems–Part III**

**Blackberries**  
*Kevin Power*

Early this morning  
I saw them; black against green:  
A hedgerow packed with  
Unpicked blackberries;  
Sweet gifts from nature, all free—  
And so, left to rot.  
Time was when we boys,  
Carrying washed gallon cans,  
Set off at sunrise  
To plunder the bramble fruit.

Our mothers told us  
Blackberries were Nature’s gift,  
Packed rich with goodness  
From the summer sun;  
“Remember the secret, boys:  
The choicest berries  
Hide behind green leaves.  
But watch out for thorns!” they cried.  
Cans in hand, we ran  
To plunder the bramble fruit.

Late this afternoon  
I saw them: father and son  
Picking and eating  
Plump rich blackberries.  
The child learned from the father  
Where the best fruit lurked  
And we—all three—were  
Brothers of the purple mouth,  
Braving all the thorns  
To plunder the bramble fruit.

---

**Evita In Her Prime**  
*Catherine-Grace Patrick*

Sistering came easy to you:  
natural as April lilacs.  
Organic as ocean  
breezes that show up  
at the shore.

It’s as if you’d waited  
for your brother.

You, goddess of the dance,  
artfully nurturing your sibling?  
Of course. Of course!  
That defines you  
head to toe.

Occasional-substitute-mom.  
Teacher/remind of manners.  
The abundant everydayness  
of your über-tender heart.

Alexander is blessed; he’s fortunate.  
And exquisite little you?  
Your brother’s love,  
his gratitude, have sculpted  
who you are.

---

**A Moment**  
*Clark Watts*

To start the day I left my room  
to jog before the town awaked,  
except I heard the milkman  
on his rounds behind the fog  
that hugged the ground as if to say  
this day has yet to dawn.

I took a path less trod before  
descending to the river’s side,  
its way engulfed by drifting clouds  
its presence marked by restless sounds,  
the murmur of the flowing stream  
in concert with its teeming banks.

As I approached the river’s edge  
the fog, as though a curtain, split  
and there appeared in stark relief  
two long and splendid necks erect,  
of ivory down, with masks of black  
they slowly drifted off as one.

A treasured glimpse, then just as dense  
the curtain closed, and I moved on,  

enough revealed for me to sense  
how rich can be the day for those  
who seek the solitude of early morn  
before the tasks ahead are joined.

---

**What?**  
*Earl Salazar*

Ashes to ashes  
Dust to dust  
We’re all God’s children  
So we all must  
Endure the heartache  
Endure the pain  
With everything to lose  
With everything to gain  
There will be a fight  
The light against the night  
The night against the light  
Whichever I choose  
One side will lose  
The winner gets my soul.

---

*Mr. Salazar wrote this poem while at Haven for Hope. Haven for Hope is transforming and saving the lives of homeless men, women, and children through job training, education, and behavioral healthcare in San Antonio, TX. For more information, please visit: [http://www.havenforhope.org](http://www.havenforhope.org).*


**The Back Side of Stone Mountain (#1)**  
*James R. Adair*

Fractured granite, boulders, jagged rocks, gnarled pines here and there, dry grass. Man came, he saw, he coveted, he ravaged, cutting away tons of rock, leaving a barren gash. But things aren’t quite as barren as they look, for through the rocks seeps water, dissolving the stone, nourishing the plants, quenching the thirst of the ravished land. Before too long, as time on earth is measured, the signs of man’s presence will be destroyed, and the mountain will once again be clean.

---

**The City**  
*Mo H Saidi*

It’s as old as the alphabet  
it buries the marks of numerous wars  
the city within the massive stone walls.

It stood against brutal warriors. It bears  
the enormous temple. Its ancient cisterns  
fill the hollows of time, the birth of Gods.

In its dark crypts and vaults  
the shafts of light expose man’s quest  
for truth, the tales of massacres and exiles.

---

**Weather**  
*Lou Taylor*

Weather—body’s barometer  
Air pressure altering blood molecules

Wind blowing through  
Snow, sleet  
Heat and cold

Changing conditions  
Summer and winter

Tilt of the earth  
Distance from the sun  
Phases of the moon

The universe under our skin

---

**Breaking the Drought**  
*Carol Coffee Reposa*

We wait for rain  
The way a sailor  
On a long and dismal cruise  
Might yearn  
For the sight of land  
Or the touch of his lover.

The sun, a daily juggernaut,  
Grinds streets and skies to grit,  
Turns earth to stone.  
Grass dries to tawny skeletons  
And trees drop branches  
Like cast-off clothes.

Finally, when every leaf is charred  
And no green can be seen for miles,  
Rain comes. Bullfrogs morph  
Into downsized elephants, trumpeting  
In every puddle. Sage and bougainvillea  
Bloom like hallucinations in red and indigo.

I stand in my yard, a temporary statue,  
While the storm rolls down me, wave on wave  
In a long embrace  
And I feel wet grass beneath my feet,  
An old friend  
Come home at last.

---

**Undeclared**  
*Josie Mixon*

Do not  
Misinterpret my words  
There are no hidden images, messages or clues  
Do not identify the possibilities  
Of what it is or what it might be  
Words are left unsaid  
During public conversation  
Focus on reality  
Assume these words are yours  
So mean what you say  
When you hear my words  
Logistics will direct you  
Ignore dyslexic thought  
My thoughts are not yours  
Only my words  
Yes, you’re right  
That’s what I meant

*Now begins to rise in me the familiar rhythm; words that have lain dormant now lift, now toss their crests, and fall and rise, and fall and rise again. I am a poet, yes. Surely I am a great poet.— Virginia Woolf (The Waves)*

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Select Poems—Part IV

**Hyperborea**  
*Stewart Young*

I want to go North  
See the crisp, clear blue sky  
Through thin patches of cirrus clouds  
See my breath distill into frost  
Before dawn and after dusk  
My lungs laboring in the thin air  
Clearing them of all the Southern  
Fumes, dust, and soot  
I want the mind-numbing cold  
To awaken me  
My hammering heart  
Pumping blood  
To warm my shivering limbs  
Instead of rubbing-up  
Against my neighbor for warmth  
To stand on mountaintops  
To escape the sweltering valleys  
Where my limbs  
Are weighed down by the spirit of gravity  
My blood slowed  
Until my mind falls asleep

**Anniversary**  
*Mary Howell*

Lesson One: Gravity sucks.  
Never mind that tons  
of gleaming turbo-thrust steel  
plunge us into the sky.  
People can’t fly  
and gravity,  
always hungry,  
sucks us toward cement.  
Step out a window  
a hundred stories up  
and no matter how  
the arms flail,  
the body falls.

Lesson Two: Media sucks.  
What you see  
 happening on a  
sixty-inch screen  

isn’t reality.  
Ten years later  
talking heads still  
turn tragedy  
into sixty-second  
sound bites  
and burning bodies  
into beacons  
of hope.

**There Is**  
*Tatjana Debeljacci*

Someone is cracking the branch?!  
Hang on till morning.  
Here it is inside of me,  
Innocent, thirsty  
Still waiting for the bread and milk,  
Sipping the mint tea.  
Bring the peace without the aim  
And the flowers for the vase.  
Doesn’t know that her soul is freezing, so she takes her time.  
Every now and then she sees her but never anything happens.  
Starting to believe in miracles.  
Is there the heavenly love and  
Such a flame  
That it never turns into ashes?  
Always ripe like an apple!  
Eh, my quest for the fire...  
I’m intoxicated by the poem, not wine!  
Your words are the wind  
Blowing my love  
Away!!!

**For So Many**  
*Assef Al-Jundi*

My anger is strongest  
when I’m able to do  
little.  
I am most merciful  
when power rests  
in my hands.  
In the violent frenzy  
of war,  
polished metal warm  
under trigger finger,  
a tyrant cowers  
in the line of fire.  
How does one take an eye  
for so many?

**Short Poem**  
*Joyce Collins*

How delicious is water  
when the flavor you savor  
is clean
Voices de la Luna, 15 January 2012

Select Poems—Part V

International Poems

Casiquiare
Andrés Eloy Blanco (Venezuela 1897 – México 1955)

Ciudadano venezolano,
Casiquiare es la mano abierta del Orinoco
y el Orinoco es el alma de Venezuela,
que le da al que no pide el agua que le sobra
y al que venga a pedirle, el agua que le queda.
Casiquiare es el símbolo
de ese hombre de mi pueblo
que lo fue dando todo, y al quedarse
sin nada
desembocó en la Muerte, grande como el Océano.

Los Amigos
Julio Cortázar (Brussels 1914 – Paris 1984)

En el tabaco, en el café, en el vino,
al borde de la noche se levantan
como esas voces que a lo lejos cantan
sin que se sepa qué, por el camino.
Livianamente hermanos del destino,
dióscuros, sombras pálidas, me espantan
las moscas de los hábitos, me aguantan
que siga a flote entre tanto remolino.
Los muertos hablan más pero al oído
y los vivos son mano tibia y techo, suma
de lo ganado y lo perdido.
Así un día en la barca de la sombra,
de tanta ausencia abrigará mi pecho
esta antigua ternura que los nombra.

La Creación del Poema
Maria Gabriela Madrid

La poesía no llega
Está siempre allí
Incrustada en el alma del poeta
Como aguas apacibles y turbulentas
el poeta espera
ver
sentir
vivir
La angustia permanente
Por la pasión, el amor, el miedo y el deseo
para escribir y declamar
palabra por palabra
Los sentimientos más íntimos
De su alma inquieta

Himmelsglut
Hejo Müller

Wenn nur der Wind
den Brand
nicht erneut anfacht.

Zu viele Paradiese
liegen schon
in Asche.

Friends
Julio Cortázar (Brussels 1914 – Paris 1984)

In the tobacco, in the coffee, in the wine,
at the edge of the night they arise
like those voices that in the distance sing
without knowing what, along the way.
Superficially brothers of destiny,
Dioscuri, pale shadows, the flies
of the habits frighten me, bear me
that continues afloat within such a whirlwind.
The dead speak more but to the ear
and the living are all around, the sum
of what is gained and what is lost.
This way one day in the boat of the shadow,
of such an absence this ancient tenderness that names them
will shelter my breast.

The Craft of a Poem
Maria Gabriela Madrid

Poetry doesn’t arrive
It is always there
Ingrained in the soul of the poet
Like placid and turbulent waters
The poet waits
To see
To feel
To live
The permanent anguish
For passion, love, fear and desire
To write, and to recite
Word by word
The intimate feelings
Of his/her anguished soul

Skies Aglow
Translated by James Brandenburg

If only the wind
not fan the flames
afresh.

Too many paradises
already
in ashes.

Voices de la Luna, 15 January 2012
Select Poems–Part VI
Youth Poems

**Autumn**  
*Matthew Chandler*

As the crispy leaves float down  
on my face and arms,  
my lungs fill with the chill of fall.  
I spin around in circles with my arms out  
I look up and see the brittle tree spinkling leaves.  
In my gloved hand,  
I hold a baggie of candy corn.  
Biting the triangle candy,  
section by section.  
In my mind each section has a distinct taste.  
I take in the cool, breezy atmosphere  
as my own aura.  
Charlie Brown Thanksgiving  
echoes from the house.

**Fall**  
*Sydney Green*

Fall  
Leaves fall to the ground  
The air becomes chilled  
It’s finally here  
FALL

The air is crisp  
Children laugh and play  
It’s finally here  
FALL

The trees are golden  
The beginning of the holiday season  
It’s finally here  
FALL

**Ode to Television**  
*Troy Ogletree*

The perfect distraction from doing your homework,  
A joyful uplifter to get lost in time.  
Entertainment, inspiration, and comedy provider.  
To feel like you’re at the big game  
from the comfort of your living room.  
So many channels, so many options,  
The anti-reading device is my best friend.  
An object to learn from,  
an object that provides…  
Flat screen, 3-D, cable or satellite,  
My favorite pastime where I someday want to be  
I envision myself on the television.  
Unfixable.

**Soaring Free**  
*Gabriella Tavera*

I am the breeze underneath my wings,  
help me soar and glide through.  
I glide; I glide because I am free.

I am my yellow eyes,  
help me see this beautiful view, and all that are yet to come.  
I see, I see because I’m not blind.

I am not blind and I’m free  
What a perfect life…  
Wrong… it’s not perfect, despite the fact  
That I am free and I am not blind.

A world full of hatred is below me…  
They judge and hate me…  
Only the homeless don’t judge  
But only because they have no right to.  
They see the world of hatred too…  
Such a beautiful sight… with an ugly secret…  
The secret of hate…

**Boulevard**  
*Paula Canales*

Walking through your tree-lined splendor,  
I often wonder: if you could speak,  
What exactly would you have to say?  
I’m sure you’ve heard  
Many a secret.  
You’ve seen many young lovers pass over you,  
Only to see the same later  
In lost love.  
You’ve witnessed more than one hopeful business  
Open its doors for the first time,  
And close them for good  
Soon after.  
Trees have been cut down,  
And forests destroyed,  
To make way for your growing occupancy.  
And even more bitter storms have you seen,  
And still more harsh winters have you witnessed!  
In light of all of this,  
I really must say,  
Perhaps if you could tell your story,  
It would be better left  
Un told.
Your Turn  
*Nadia Barlow*

it is my attempt at reliving  
our past  
one of us must finally  
admit it was mutual.

the crash of that initial moment  
well that went as all crashes go  
I mean to say  
accidental  
but between the  
collision, claim and repair  
you stood beside and  
wound your fingers in mine  
and committed in ways  
beyond one  
so do not paint me red or  
pin my breast with the  
insignia of la loca, of  
the woman with her fingers  
gripping, curled in your collar  
you too had your fingers wound in my  
hair, murmuring that I was beautiful,  
confessing that you felt blindsided

yes I  
but  
you too

All that Burdens  
*Mark Holzheimer*

Steals life, steals it  
Without reason.  
Religion of exclusion.

I can be the Taliban  
On any night of sadness  
Or hatred, so I live alone  
In a sordid bedroom and smell  
My own scent. Like a gym  
Shower room.

The Sun, thank you  
For pulling me beyond  
My own shoestrings  
And placing me in a world  
Beyond the world  
Of damnable  
Expectation.

Gloria.

Dirt  
*Nabiha Zaman*

Brown and broad  
from dirt we were made  
with dirt there can be no fraud  
not at any time will it fade

Dirt brought life in this world  
Although some go astray  
Bare feet walk on it every day  
Leading us to the right way

Postmodern Ekphrasis #17  
*Roger Sedarat*

So this disaffected artist goes to the docks  
of the Jersey shore with a fistful of dollars  
to watch the boats return at twilight

from the shark-fishing competition,  
his eyes fixed on the scales for right the blend  
of blue/grey skin and bloody-toothed jaws.

He bids on third place. They unhook the chains,  
letting it fall with a thud. Said artist single-handedly drags  
his prize along the pier to a U-Haul truck where he’s pre-lined  
the floor with bags of ice bought from a nearby Wawa.  
Spectators watch him wrestle the eight-foot monster  
over his back and onto the bumper, its rubbery tail  
starting to slip between his arms. Once in said artist rolls  
down the back door and padlocks it shut, driving like mad  
without sleep for days to a recollected childhood setting.

Somewhere between Austin and San Antonio,  
he pulls along I-35 and hits the blinkers.  
Setting his camera on the tripod, he unlocks the latch,  
the curtain of metal revealing a greyer-blue body  
as blood-slushy ice spills onto the freshly tarred road.  
He pulls the shark out by its tail, dragging it into a field  
of knee-high bluebonnets, curling it into a U to face  
the camera that he clicks and re-clicks.  
As the sun sets in the hilly horizon,  
he slowly drives away from his principal subject,  
leaving it there for drivers to rubber-neck and ponder  
in all its random glory.
Poetry Therapy

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

Water

Gidge Trott*

It flows serenely through river and stream.
It sparkles in sunlight, its eddies a gleam.
The fields and the meadows its traverse refreshes,
The trees by the wayside their shadow emmenses.
The birds from their boughs will sweep down to drink—from the cool passing water, from the banks to its brink.
It flows through to help, in the heat of the day—
The grass and the flowers then goes on its way.
We hope for the showers of soft summer rain
That brings on the harvest and fills out the grain.

But the water we long for, for which we should pray,
for the water that eases the Spirit each day.
The water that quenches our thirst without end,
that comes from Our Lord and the teaching He sends.
He offers us treasure if we drink from His Word
Living water of Life when His message is heard.
The Baptismal water is blessed from above
That washes away our sins with His love.
How we welcome the babies, parents bring to be Christened,
and others, whose hearts, to God’s message have listened.
For this gift from Our Father and so much does He give.
Secure in the Hope, through Blessed Water we LIVE!

*90 years old

Hollywood, October, 1941

Robert Swanson

The war hadn’t quite started yet.
But rumors of war fluttered over my head
like fireflies I couldn’t catch.
Three years old, I was clumsy with my oatmeal.
Dad wasn’t clumsy though.
His hard fists conked my head.
I was too slow to duck.
One of my first words was ‘bruise.’

There was a place behind some exotic bushes
where I could hide.
I played in the dirt, building the mounds
of a town.
The dirt was paltry though, not Illinois loam.
One day in December, aunt Betty was all excited,
“Pearl Harbor! Pearl Harbor!”
The Big War had started.
But my little war was already over.

Your Favorite Son

Scott Brotherton

You are the best man in my life
I know because
My mom’s your wife
And one great thing that Mom has done
Is give to you
Your favorite Son

Sometimes I’m very, very bad
I think these genes,
I get from….(Mom?)
And all the good that I have done
I hope you’re proud
That I’m your Son

Before I leave this Planet Earth
I thank you Mom & Dad
For birth.
I love you, Dad, I’m forty-two
I hope one day
I’m just like you….

I LOVE YOU FOREVER,
Your Favorite Son
Happy Father’s Day, June 19th, 2005
Scott Brotherton

1920

Robert Swanson

All of a sudden, girls discovered they had legs. And they swung them side to side with long-suppressed ecstasy. And suddenly, the dusty roads were full of automobiles. You could get from Fort Wayne to Terre Haute quick. And in the back seat, a boy and a girl could get someplace quick. Different from before, boys and girls danced the Charleston, and the Blacks danced to Louis and the Whites danced to Bix. “Oh, I love that white boy.” And for a little bit, racial discord found harmony. The skyscraper was perfected

and even farmers in Iowa knew the New York skyline by heart. I was born in 1938, and missed 1920, but I have read The Great Gatsby, listened to King Oliver, looked at paintings by Picasso, and I have perched on a rooftop, watching the Bronx come alive.
Toys
Morgan Jones

I am broken banished to the bin
With wind-me-ups that no longer go
No one touches the bin
And we bitterly laugh at life’s nervous
Half-baked attempts to keep us in
Too tired to even try to reach my wind-up dial
Maybe she broke me with her vicious words
And rumor based judgments
And my snake friends who turn plastic
When every other option gets too hard
Or perhaps he broke me with the seductive love games
“Baby I love you.”
“Just once, it won’t change things.”
Caught in the fake glamour relationship lies
And the fascinating songs that mesmerize us in the
Crushing Flirting Kissing
Better yet, my blood broke me with blind rage punches
And margarita laced glassy-eyed kicks
But I bet they broke me
With mindless memorization assignments
Will a year of finding ‘x’ get me anywhere?
Or do those polyatomic ions admit me into Rice?
Teasing the scum failures
But haunted by the realization that it could be us
So we push the pencils till everything breaks
And you’re all cried out forgotten in the pathetic bin
Lonely and rueful
And we don’t even wanna wind ourselves up again.

“Toys” won 2nd place for 9th to 12th grade poetry in the Dana K. Barber Writing Contest.

With an Open Heart
Elissa Vura

Open your hands toward heaven
and let go.
Open your heart.

It splits me wide open
when I let it.
This ripe watermelon of a world
pink insides—mush and water
and seeds.
Stripey dark green rind
brash as summer.

It never forgets us.
It wants only good for us.

Ditty
William Z. Saunders

Before:
when I was all ways
always dishonest…
I was willing
to believe in everyone.
Once
I got a little truth down,
and I became a little honest,
I couldn’t believe anybody anymore
It was just too easy
to choose
to lie.
'Twas
just as easy
to
pick up the telephone and
start some shit.
Nevermind
how it would
finish.

static
William Z. Saunders

28 Dec

cleaning the toilet and floor behind the toilet made me feel like
Ghandi inside,
until i heard myself react to a knock at the bathroom door…
“YEAH!!?”
it hurt to hear the sound of my voice. I wish that wasn’t me in
my heart. gonna have to clean more. noted.
**Poetry & Dreams**

**Poetry, Dreams, and Interpretation**

*James Brandenburg*

“Lobo”

*Sept 28, 2011*

*San Antonio, Texas*

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**Dream:** The dream takes place outside in a remote area in the evening. It is hot, or I should say warm and dry. My thoughts race; a bush stands to my right. I imagine that the bush is the burning bush of Moses, except the bush is not burning. It needs a spark or a fire, and I have nothing with which to light the fire. I see the eyes of a wolf sitting behind the bush: a black wolf with white spots. The eyes light up like a fire—pupils that are green and slanted with red in the middle penetrate my very being. Perhaps this is the fire I need. The wolf looks up at the moon but is silent, does not howl at the moon. We stand there, staring at each other, end of dream.

**Interpretation:** The dream takes place in a remote place, probably in the unconscious. A bush protrudes from my right, but unlike the burning bush in Exodus, located on Mt. Sinai, where God appointed Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan, this bush is not burning. It needs a spark or a fire, and I have nothing to light the fire. Maybe the old order has played out in consciousness, and the unconscious contains the new order. I see the eyes of the wolf sitting behind the bush. The wolf’s coat glows black with white spots; the wolf encloses the diffuse light of dawn and dusk, representing the opposites and all shades of color in between. The eyes glow like fire and penetrate my essence. The pupils are green and slanted with some red in the middle. Is it possible the wolf comprises the fire I am missing? Although the wolf represents communion with nature (also symbolized by the color green) and the fear of unknown realities (the opposites again), my projections reveal a connection with the instincts of my own animal soul. The primordial she-wolf nurtured a civilization into being; this nurturing tells us something about wolfish energies as the basis for creative process, culture building, and our capacity to engage psyche’s energies of destruction, as well as rebirth in our repeated cycles of transformation. The wolf does not howl at the moon; therefore, the wolf does not subordinate herself to the moon. As I connect this dream to my childhood in Kentucky, when Little Jimmy (myself) and Little Billy (my best friend) were lying out under the stars and thinking about their futures, we already know the outcome: Little Billy became a millionaire, and Little Jimmy learned other languages (including the language of dreams) and traveled in foreign countries. In his new book, *Eyes in the Dark*, Little Jimmy (myself) reveals how these wolfish energies transformed his life. Conceivably, the unconscious was sending me the title for my new book, *Eyes in the Dark*, in the above dream. On the day before the dream, my son had adopted a dog, part wolf, and he named this dog “Lobo,” Spanish for wolf. Certainly, his adopting the dog was a trigger for my dream. In the dream, the wolf and I square off opposite each other; the wolf is something to be reckoned with. Especially as I move into the last part of my life, the wolf represents the wolfish energies in my own individuation process (the development of Self according to Swiss psychologist C.G. Jung). The wolf devours something in the old order (like the old King in fairy tales), so that new energies can be born. These energies continue to transform me in my golden years. The wolf embodies a part of me that I need to integrate into Self.


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**Eyes in the Dark**

*James Brandenburg*

Behind the burning bush
shadowy sparks
penetrate the night
Lobo sits
like a marble statue
a black wolf with white spots
eyes bright like fire
orbiting inside sea green
Lobo looks up
to a speechless moon
the night panting, hot,
dry leaves fractured
by too little rain
winds whispering

Dreamy presences
barefoot and bright-eyed
lie opposite Lobo
only the eyes*
move up and down
fixed on muted wails
then shift to the hushed silence
of an obscure moon
whose voices
remain to be heard.

*Eyes refer to the eyes of Little Jimmy & Little Billy

---

*Painting by Ulrike Rowe*
The Unraveling: Darkness consumes, even in the light of day. Slowly unraveling the thread of who she is and who she is meant to be. Feeding it to more of its kind so that they may grow off her misery.

The Guardian: With only the moonlight cutting through the dark mists and foggy night she stands at the harbor of dangerous waters with ancient machines of scale and muscle lurking underneath. Though just a child she is a brave and valiant warrior who will stand, showing no fear, against one or against many, or against all.

My Happy Place: A place where she can be free.
The following poems were written in poetry therapy groups at the Ingram Barnes and Noble poetry venue. Groups were run by Voices de la Luna editors.

**River View**  
*Maria Alonso*

I took the time to go to the River.  
To watch it, take it in and revel in its Water.  
Before the sun rose, I saw its stillness.

I saw the fallen leaves, colorful and dying  
mixed with small debris in a filmy glue  
where the ducks explored and swan through, around  
and out to the stillness of the fluid flow.

**Knock Knock**  
*Sophia DiGonis*

You knock on my door  
to bring me more news  
on how I bring down your world

Everywhere I seem to turn,  
you want to haunt me  
As my every thought,  
should be about your every whim

I don’t want to see your face  
I don’t want to hear your voice

Because the more I do, the more  
someone else I become.

—A me that does not exist—  
I’m not your marionette,  
I’m not your puppet,  
or trinket, or ornament

For your arm, your torso and  
for the whole world to see

I play my music to rush the blood inside me,  
I write my poetry to make that blood flow,  
which is the only way I know to relieve my pain.

As I open the door, with reluctance and fear  
only to find you on the other side,

I close it with assurance  
Knowing I can go on by myself

On my own terms  
With the wind by my side  
As One.

---

**Stepping Into**  
*Tina Karagulian*

*“*Tina Karagulian is the author of *It Is Time: A Spiritual Memoir Chronicles an Armenian Woman’s Journey in Expressing Her Voice through Truth, Compassion, and Reconciliation* and *New Skin: Poetry and Prayers from It Is Time.* [www.tinakaragulian.com](http://www.tinakaragulian.com)*
To the Self: A Question
Peter Holland

Do I let them see,
let them inside my world?
Show off the warts, the flaws,
open the cupboard wide,
give them the grand tour
or, do I just suffer in silence?

Kaleidoscope of Thoughts
Don Mathis

A “shiny shelf”
sits in the window
surrounded by a wall of bookcases.

I could call it a “shriney shelf”
for the remembrances
of each object contain volumes.

Tim’s ashes rest in an amber bottle
corked by a loquat twig.
A library lies inside.

Marbles from my childhood
play of “keepsies” with other Army brats
catch the light through a gallon jug.

Aunt Rose’s blue glass basket
and thick Murano craft
prismize the morning sun
Making a sparkling set of memories,
each reflection a feeling,
each ray a beam of peace.

Untitled
Vivian Kearney

Were we really voracious worms when
we strove so much to survive at our first stage
and when and how did our appetites
for bitter-tasting leaves leave us
and who told us we could be absorbed by
but not devour the garden
so we could decorate it with our
grace-granted new butterfly patterns
thankfully... delicately

Sober Reality
Milo Kearney

Six fauns lounging on the grass,
I said.
No, three, they corrected.
There were three fauns lounging on the grass.
Get things straight!
Please learn not to exaggerate.

Basic plain reality?
When there are three fauns on the grass
why isn’t it adequate to see
six fauns lounging on the grass
or one
or an infinity?

Life and calculations.
Experience honed by accuracy.
This world of numbers.
The precision of fog.
With such a commotion,
you’d get the notion
fauns existed.

Surrendering
Sharon Luna

Your lips sealed
as your arms embrace
Like the rays of sun
your eyes go dim
Your ears shut

Dead-bolted by nightmares
that keep sleep at bay
Unproven to self
but to me

Although I know my fragility
Strengthened within

Walls of crumbs
Tumbling yet rebuilt
And you say
Don’t feel that way

Surrendering wins the war
Steel
Blades of peace
putting earth together again

But today
the sun has hid
and the waters
are all that we remember
The Sagebrush Review is a literary journal produced by the students of the University of Texas at San Antonio. We are also classified by the U.S. Government as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

It is our mission here at the Review to collect submissions from the talented citizens of San Antonio, Texas, and publish the best in art, photography, and literature this city has to offer.

Every year The Sagebrush Review publishes one journal of our most highly rated submissions. These submissions are judged by members of The Sagebrush Review, the majority of whom are also active in the fine arts community here in San Antonio.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT! for UTSA Students

Sagebrush Review will now be taking all submissions through our submishmash account. This website allows us a place to host all of our submissions in a format that is easy to read, find, and view. The Sagebrush Review will only publish works from students in the State of Texas. To enforce this, we will require you to submit from a school e-mail address. We would like to thank you for your cooperation with us in undertaking this new submission system.

TO SUBMIT TO SAGEBRUSH REVIEW PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING LINK!

http://sagebrushreview.submishmash.com/submit

For Bess Houdini*

Emily Broadwater

Was it hard to breathe
with your beloved far away, or far below
bereft of air and dying for display?

Would you say a quiet prayer
as his head sank down
under a layer of ice?

Once his heartbeat lagged
behind the ticking watch in your palm
did yours quicken in despair?

When your death-defying magician
was finally outrun by his foe,
you continued to wait

for his great return to the world,
the conceding gasp of air
anticipating applause.

The flickering of a candle
rekindled frozen hope
pronouncing your fate.

*Published in Sagebrush Review: Volume 6; Summer 2011

Bismarck Studios Contemporary Fine Art Gallery

930 Proton Rd., Suite 202 ~ Near 1604 & 281
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 10 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Event
Reception: 7–10 pm

Literature by UTSA Students

An Accident of Geography

David Hale

It was nothing, just an accident of geography
Everything was just fading away
Things getting less and less
Till there was nothing left
But that’s not their fault
It had nothing to do with them
Everybody left there
It was no great romantic thing
It didn’t take any great amount of genius
There wasn’t any pride in it
I didn’t run away from it
I just turned my back on it
It couldn’t give me anything
Leaving wasn’t hard at all
I didn’t want to die there
As I think about it now though
It wouldn’t be such a bad place to go back and die in.

Fathom

Felicia Gregg

The tremors will frighten her
Will she salvage her sanity?
Will she cope with the blur?
She won’t shift the entity.
Her mind will sink further.
She will falter.
Her world will sink to black.
Her eyes will shutter.

She’s not coming back.
More Editors’ Poems

Fulfilled
Joan Seifert

To glean each field and then move on
To other harvesting, that was her plan.

She saw beside the road some tall corn, grown
Outside the squaring of a farm, on the perimeter.
And yes, this could be hers, she thought
For no one yet had claimed this accidental planting.

She made her way without the urgency of pride.
She had a certain hope, and did of course need corn
And even small, neglected peaches, now and then
From an abandoned orchard down the road.

And somehow, she had a little thriving,
Enough to find a gladness, time to time.
For there was freedom in a lack of purpose.

Was it Thoreau who said to simplify?
She said Don’t knock too hard
On fastened doors, but gently rap
Just loud enough to ask
Small shelter from the winds that sting.

To savor bits of life, that was her plan,
To glean, then bless a field for its free giving,

No one worried. She only seemed a mendicant.
She’d had a decent share of life this way. Fulfilled.

Guernica (Picasso’s Painting)
James Brandenburg

Neither weapons
nor bombings
nor soldiers
nor planes
just a bull charging a horse
inflicting a mortal wound;
the horse clings to life.

A mother
clutches her dead child
in her arms,
flees the attacker:
three women weep.

Oh, Son of Spain,
your voice springs from
your beloved traditions
onto your black, white, and grey canvas;
the bloody clash
between the mighty bull
and the powerless horse
resonates with violent realities
of Guernica’s bomb-ravaged ruins
and touches impotence
in our own inner strife.

It Was Only a Dream:
Nightmare at Noon
Valerie Martin Bailey

How many nights I drifted
into surreal dimensions—dark places
beyond reason—where I run or scream
or, conversely, am unable
to run or scream...and always I am
separated from those I love.

When I wakened, chilled by fear,
you held me, warned me by
the flame of your love and whispered,
“It was only a dream.”

My real nightmare came at noon,
on a bright New Year’s Day.
The rest of the world celebrated
a beginning, but my world ended.
You were taken from me—reality more
terrifying than the sinister fantasies
of my nightmares.

How many nights do I now drift
into a familiar haven, where I feel the
illusion of your touch, hear you whisper
my name, waken sensing your presence,
only to find cold sheets and emptiness
where a moment before I lay in your arms...
and I must tell myself,
“It was only a dream.”

Parenthetical Evening
Robert Bonazzi

I thought of a slice of onion I’d seen during dinner
And of the abyss that separates us from the other abysses.
—Nicanor Parr

Being lost in language
we gather ourselves
(in absences)

Kitten dives into self-composed instinct
(evening insight)

By slightly rearranging a studio I revise a working text
(then arrogant adjectives change everything)

Exhausted by writing the past
every future causes anxiety
this moment a night-blooming flower
(improvised freedom)

Abysmal onion
unfolding eternally
(parenthetically)
in delicate slices
of fading light
Learning to Swallow
Debra Peña

I have rocks in my head. And you can doubt me, even think me crazy, but these rocks—these stone secrets are real...stuck inside me because I swallowed them.

The morning of my pebble buffet started out normally. My four-year-old sister Angie and I were making our way across the street. Running in front of her and hollering, “Catch me if you can,” I stopped some ten feet before the curb. Crossing the street meant checking both ways and holding her hand as we traversed the asphalt border between our house and the McClain’s, the “community yard” where all the neighborhood kids gathered to play. Catching up to me, Angie held out her small hand. This was routine. Holding her tight, I checked both ways.

“All clear!” I sang out as we ran across the street to begin a day of play. Games of tag, hunts for garter snakes, and making mud pies kept us busy and happy, until Angie tugged at my sleeve and whined, “I need to pee!”

Not wanting to leave my friends I snipped, “Then go home! I’ll watch you from here.”

“No! Momma said YOU have to take me!” she cried.

Through clenched teeth I screamed, “Just go—she won’t ever know,” and then I turned around and continued to play. Seconds later, I heard skidding tires and an awful thud! Angie was flat and motionless on the asphalt of the street.

Within seconds, momma was there, her hands clenched around my arms, shaking me, shouting, “I TOLD YOU TO WATCH YOUR SISTER! IF SHE DIES IT IS YOUR FAULT!”

Seconds later she and Angie were whisked away in an ambulance. Left behind, scared, and alone, I listened to the siren screaming out its shrill accusations, “YOU... YOU... YOU,” and was certain I had killed my sister.

Falling to the ground, my hands landed upon thousands of pebbles, little rock witnesses. Picking up a handful, and without much thought, I swallowed a bunch of them. Crying and eating rocks, I sat on the edge of the street hoping the stones would do the trick. But as I stretched out in my bed that night, I felt the first slow slide of rocks down the back of my neck. Because the officer had assured me that they would leave my tummy, but didn’t tell me where they would go, I assumed they had already found their way out of my stomach, straight into my head, and were somehow rolling around inside of me. This thought didn’t scare me though. I simply figured it was the way things worked. You swallow something—it becomes a part of you. And, with this early knowing, I drifted off to sleep.

He was right. Several hours later, both momma and Angie returned. Bruised, but smiling, Angie hugged me as momma walked into the kitchen.

“We were lucky... very lucky,” was all momma said.

I didn’t tell momma or Angie about the rocks inside of me. They were a secret that belonged to the policeman and me. No one else needed to know. But as I stretched out in my bed that night, I felt the first slow slide of rocks down the back of my neck. Because the officer had assured me that they would leave my tummy, but didn’t tell me where they would go, I assumed they had already found their way out of my stomach, straight into my head, and were somehow rolling around inside of me. This thought didn’t scare me though. I simply figured it was the way things worked. You swallow something—it becomes a part of you. And, with this early knowing, I drifted off to sleep.

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Bernie Andrulis slowly pushed his way through the noontime throng outside the Adirondack Busline’s waiting room. Out of habit his eyes searched the passersby for details that might be memorable. It could be anything—a furrowed brow, the tense set of jaw or lips, a stumbling, uncertain gait that would speak of an inner life he’d not yet been able to imagine. But today the crowd seemed made up of those whose closed faces and determined steps suggested that the bus station was only a wearsome obstacle to be endured on the way to somewhere else. As he passed Slezak’s tenement, the crowd thinned a bit, and Bernie’s attention became more focused. He stopped, looking up at the front of the apartment building. The windows on all five floors were curtained against the bright sun. Next door the rank growth of weeds in the empty lot bordering St. Casimer’s Church provided a luxuriant green contrast to the burnt rust color of Slezak’s block. Bernie noted the profusion of yellow dandelions standing tall and brilliant above the darker greens of crab grass and young burdock. There was no doubt now that the earth had awakened to the touch of the June sun. The vegetation, fecund and grasping, had run riot over the grey rubble of winter.

Bernie quickened his step, passing the darkly tinted glass front of the Sargalis Funeral Chapel. Ahead, the rest of the street was deserted, quiet in the still air. At the corner of East Main and Schuyler sat the Atlas Hotel and Tavern, and Bernie turned and strode through the open door. The place looked as though it had just been deserted by its revelers. Stools and tables were scattered about the room, empty schooners littered the bar, and the red globe lights on either side of the mirrored wall behind the bar room were dimmed in the midday brightness. A lone patron at the far end of the bar sat hunched forward. At Bernie’s approach the slight figure turned slowly around, revealing the narrow, almost chinless face of Colley McIntyre. Bernie watched as the young man’s eyes went wide in recognition, his mouth narrow, almost chinless, as Colley’s gaze appeared to turn inward, making him look suddenly and unmistakably younger. Bernie’s heart beat a little harder at the sight. The youth was his home now too, and he’d goddamned make the best of it. Bernie sat silent in reply. His eyes sought the floor. Bernie watched as Colley’s gaze appeared to turn inward, making him look suddenly and unmistakably younger. Bernie’s heart beat a little harder at the sight. The youth was his home now too, and he’d goddamned make the best of it.

Bernie forced himself toward the faint halo of light outlining the door to his rooms. Over the years, the thin wood had warped away from the back of the glass. He fished the key from the pocket of his overalls and grasped the dented knob. There was a faint click and the door to his rooms. Over the years, the thin wood had warped away from the back of the glass. He fished the key from the pocket of his overalls and grasped the dented knob. There was a faint click and the door swung inward of its own accord.

“Hey, old man Rakstis ain’t so good today, so I came in to lend a hand.” His eyes moved away from Bernie, taking in the room. “I’m just lendin’ a hand to tidy up a bit, get ready for later. Yeh know, Saturday night’s always a big night.”

Bernie lowered his gaze from the patterns of fruits and leaves embossed across the ceiling and held Colley with his eyes.

“Yuh need booze, yuh need booze, that’s all.” Bernie tossed back.

Bernie knew again where he was and what that sound meant. Everyday when the old man fell asleep behind the counter, the Atlas was treated to the same swan song, the only gift Rakstis had gotten from forty years spent in the Bigelow-Sanford dye house. Another example of embracing something you couldn’t control, thought Bernie. He made his way up the creaking stairs to the second floor landing of the only place that he could now call home.

Bernie forced himself toward the faint halo of light outlining the door to his rooms. Over the years, the thin wood had warped away from the jamb. He fished the key from the pocket of his overalls and grasped the dented knob. There was a faint click and the door swung inward of its own accord.

The room was awash in a blaze of light streaming through the large curtainless window in the far wall. Bernie struggled out of his overalls and threw them on the crumpled mass of grey sheets piled at the foot of the narrow bed. He turned to avoid the merciless glare, his gaze passing quickly over the kitchen alcove where pots, dishes, and glassware lay scattered about the sink and stove top. Farther over, beyond the small wooden icebox, the door to his tiny windowless bathroom stood ajar. That private bath made his room the most expensive one the Atlas offered. He’d be damned if he’d share a craphouse with the rummies and worn-out whores, who regularly called the Atlas home. Well, it was his home now too, and he’d goddamned make the best of it, even though the light in the place was all wrong, too intense because it came from the south and west.
Bernie closed the door and faced the wall opposite the window. The tall-legged clerk’s desk, a small easel fastened to its top, was tucked into a corner. Next to the desk, a stand held open cigar boxes filled with pieces of charcoal and pastel spread over a layer of rice. Among the boxes were scattered tubes of artist’s paint and brushes. Bernie’s gaze rose to the wall. Tucked to the dark green plaster was a colored photo of Goya’s _The Naked Maja_, neatly scissors from a book. Around the photo were red chalk drawings of nudes, seated and standing, their faces and bodies modeled in such striking detail of highlight and shadow that the flesh of each figure suggested the personality of an individual man or woman. Beyond the nudes were tacked a few smaller landscapes of the Mohawk Valley; greens and golds so heavily rendered the colors seemed to pulse in the bright light. Bernie squinted and the wall appeared bejeweled. He looked again at each of the figure studies and waited. Slowly, the fear and anger left him. He grew calm in the certainty that in those drawings he could see others as they really were, in the cast of their eyes, the set of their mouths, the way they walked, or sat in repose. When he transferred faces and bodies to paper he knew he bore witness to the grand dreams and narrow terrors that haunted the lives of others. They were the only true things, hard and fast and true forever.

Bernie turned and gazed out of the small window above the kitchen sink. Across the lot next to St. Casimer’s, he could see where Forbes Street curved down towards East Main, and his eyes were drawn to a white house in the middle of the block. He could make out the delicately cut, wooden gingerbread and ornately fluted railings of the porches that wrapped around the front of the place. Even at this distance he could see the expanses of grey wood exposed by peeling paint. The windows on the second floor were uncurtained, black rectangles cut into the clapboard, and Bernie, as he raised his hands to wipe the grime of the morning’s labor from around his eyes, looked again into one of the bedrooms shadowed in the late winter dawn.

He heard the rush of sleet pattering against the window above his head, and breathed again the musky scent of the woman whose warm flesh had clung soft against him. Her dark eyes had opened slowly to watch his face while her arms circled his neck. Her legs slick and moist as the bodies of eels might be, had sought to twine slowly to watch his face while her arms circled his neck. Her dark eyes had opened to see his father standing just a pace behind him.

“He’ll be gettin’ up soon,” he’d offered by way of apology. “Jesus Christ, lover, we made enough noise most a’th’ night; he probably ain’t had any time ta’ sleep anyway. C’mon, baby, just one more for Valentine’s Day.” She’d laughed softly, her voice rich with anticipation and promise.

Bernie had rolled from under the heavy quilt and sat up, hunched at the edge of the bed. After a moment he’d felt the mattress shift as it gave up the burden of his partner’s weight. He’d turned to watch her as she’d switched on the ceiling bulb and stood at the dresser mirror, her back to him. Slowly, she’d begun combing out the matted kinks of her long black hair. She’d finished, turned to stare at him, cocking her head to one side, spreading her arms away from her body, shifting one leg slightly forward holding her pose a moment.

“How about some more of this?” she’d murmured smiling.

Bernie had assessed her nakedness. The pendulous pear-shaped breasts with their dark amber aureoles and nipples thrusting downward, a belly white and hips as full as Botticelli’s _Venus_, the triangle of hair so dark it shone blueblack in the yellow of the overhead light. Millie Lipari was a madonna of the flesh.

He’d recalled the night’s image of Millie in the dim light, eyes shut, offering herself without shame or reservation. At first he’d driven against her in maddening desire, and when she’d responded with the insistent clasp of her flesh, he’d grown fearful and then, angry. Her desperate embrace had told him she would surround and possess him. He would be hers. He would be nothing.

“You want me to go, Bernie?” he’d asked.

“If ya want, Millie.” He’d looked away. “Ya know how th’ old man’ll get if he catches on … ta what’s goin’ on … .” His voice had trailed off. He’d stared intently out the window at the growing brightness of dawn.

“Oh, baby, you’re th’ only one who don’t know what’s goin’ on!” she’d spat back.

He’d heard the soft, quick rustle of Millie dressing behind him. She’d sat abruptly down on the mattress so that the springs rattled noisily. Then the floor shook as she’d stomped her feet into the boots. Bernie had turned to see her struggling into her coat. She’d looked at him boldly, her chin thrust forward as if daring him to break the night’s promise. Then her dark eyes had begun to fill with tears. She’d reached a hand up to smooth her hair and shook her head as if to cast aside a troublesome memory. He’d led her along the dimly lit hallway past the thin bar of light glowing beneath the closed door of his father’s room. They’d slipped quietly down the stairs, and at the front door Millie had turned to look at him with angry, guarded eyes. He’d remained silent, turning the key in the lock, and Millie had walked off in the grey morning toward her flat in Slezak’s block. When Bernie had closed the door, he’d turned to see his father standing just a pace behind him.

The growing heat of the early afternoon flooding into his room made it impossible for him to sustain the memory. Bernie became conscious of the layer of grime clinging to his face and neck. A sour odor of sweat hung about him. He entered the bathroom, slowly shed his clothes, and climbed into the grey claw-footed tub. As he sat before the opened faucets waiting for the tepid water to rise around him, his gaze roamed over the narrow line of pale blue tiles running round the circumference of the room halfway between floor and ceiling. The color reminded him of his father’s eyes. Suddenly, he was back to that grey February morning, and Vitty Andrulis was staring up at him with eyes that seemed too large for the round face.

“Kekse. Don’t bring your whore into my house.” Vitty had said quietly, the baleful blue eyes fixed on his son.

“It’s my house too.” Bernie had shot back, wanting to crush the old man beneath the force of his words, but the sound of his voice had been high and tinny.

“Not no more. Not no more it ain’t. Get the hell out with your whore. Get the hell out… the hell… out!”

The voice reverberated down the halls of memory, its tone that of a feudal lord who’d always looked out on the world with an absolute faith in his own judgment. Bernie reflected on how different he and the old man had looked: Vitty, short, barrel-chested, bull-necked, and bald. Bernie could not remember his father ever having a wisp of hair on his head or the hint of beard across his cheek. And Bernie, tall, raw-boned, with a mane of unruly red-blonde hair, and a pig’s bristle goatee the color of amber had gotten his looks from his tall red-haired mother, gaunt with the burden of a bad heart, and dead at her only son’s birth. At least that’s what his much older sisters had always said. The Baloney Twins Vitty had called them—short, round like their father, and driven off long ago by the old man’s brutal certainty. No, he didn’t look like the old man, but Bernie knew he was Vitty’s son in the way he looked at the world. There are no grays, only black and white, and judgments are forever.

Time passed and the bath water cooled. Bernie stood, stepped
from the tub, and drew the grey towel about his waist. The thread- bare material felt cool and damp about his skin. He remembered the coldness of his father’s hands, folded one upon the other across the once-proud chest sunken to fit the narrow confines of the coffin.

“He went quick.” Bernie recalled Jack Rakstis’ throaty rasp over the phone line on that other Saturday morning a month after he’d been thrown out of the house. “Yeah, he went quick. Just fell on the sidewalk outside the waiting room. Don’t know if he was gonna take a bus or what the hell he was doin’ down there. They said he was dead when he hit th’ ground.”

There were few mourners at Sargalis’. His sisters, a couple of the old man’s cronies from the American Lithuanian Club, and Father Dichavicus from St. Casimer’s. Millie hadn’t come. He’d not seen her since that February morning, although once the weather had turned warm, he’d looked for her every time he’d passed Slezak’s block on his way back to the Atlas from work.

Bernie stood still letting the warm air dry his skin. There were no sounds from the street or from any of the other rooms in the Atlas. After a while, he stepped beyond the door of the bath into the larger room where the weight of the silence and the light bore down unremittingly upon him. His eyes sought the wall that held his drawings. In the painful glare they seemed just formless blobs of color. Bernie took a quick step forward and tried to look out of the small kitchen window, but the angle of the sun across the dirty glass made it impossible to see his father’s house. He stood still, his mind racing with thoughts of Millie and the old man—as the one had cast him away, so too, had he cast away the other.

The bright air began to suffocate him, and when he tried to draw a breath the taste of abandonment lay bitter in his mouth. He must leave the Atlas, make his way over to Slezak’s. Downstairs he would no doubt pass the sleeping Rakstis and Colley, who by now would surely be comatose on the bar. Bernie dressed quickly, and descended the stairs.

The reception desk was deserted. Bernie made his way to the barroom where the air was cool. The front door had been closed, and the air conditioner in the transom above gave off a low hum. Tables had been spaced in even rows, and with a quick step Jack Rakstis was pushing chairs across the newly mopped floor. Bernie noticed that his face had lost its yellow pallor. Jack’s cheeks were flushed a bright pink. Indifferent to Bernie’s presence, he did not look up as the gandy dancer passed. Over at the bar, Colley was busy with a soapy rag. He too was silent, and as Bernie stared at him, Colley looked up with steady eyes. Then he went back to scrubbing down the bar. Out in the street, Bernie raised a hand to shade his brow. The dazzling sunlight made it painful for him to look toward the west where Slezak’s block lay waiting, and with uncertain step, Bernie walked ahead into a world he could no longer imagine.

A Dawning
Clark Watts

As a young boy, certainly by the time I was in high school, a favorite subject of my leisure reading was transoceanic travel aboard the large and historic steamships. I cannot account for this as I had never seen one of these ships, much less sailed on one of them, but from this experience grew my ambition to take such a trip. I had to wait several years but the summer after I finished my education and training as a neurosurgeon, I was on the SS France heading home to the United States from the port of Southhampton, Great Britain.

At the time, the SS France was considered the most beautiful of the ocean liners then in service. She was, however, more than just a beautiful ship with an attention to art. She was Art itself—an observation consistent with that of Paul Klee: “Art does not reproduce the visible; rather it makes visible.” The ship had two services: first class and tourist class. Dining was an important part of the ambiance of life aboard the SS France. Because of the number of passengers, those in tourist took lunch and dinner at the same seat each meal. In first class there was more freedom of choice. But in both, seating at breakfast was open. Thus, the last breakfast before we were to dock, I found myself sharing a table with a family of Irish lineage.

The grandmother was from Belfast and was being escorted by her son, his wife, and their ten-year-old daughter, to the United States to live with them. This was during the time of the putative “civil war” in Ireland between Catholics and Protestants. This American family had been visiting her in Belfast when a huge explosion caused by one of the factions destroyed a great deal of property and killed several people. They simply bundled the elderly lady up and put her on the boat.

It was a delightful morning at breakfast, once the ugly part of the grandmother’s story was concluded. She had made 25 previous transatlantic crossings before this one, including one as a child aboard one of the last of the old sailing ships of the 19th century. The stories, at least to my ear, were priceless. One of the gems was her story of the first time she saw the Statue of Liberty in the New York harbor as her ship arrived. The passion she felt those many years ago was obvious in the acuteness of her memory.

As her story concluded, the daughter asked if we would be able to see the statue when we came in. The father replied that we would not see her because by the time we awakened the ship would be well up the Hudson River, in the throes of docking. It seems we would have to get up at 5:00 a.m., at the latest, to see the statue, and even then we might not be able to see her because of the expected fog. The child said she would get up at five to see her, but the father was adamant. They had a long way to travel after leaving the ship, so they were going to sleep as late as possible. The grandmother offered to help get her up, but because of the wheelchair she needed, she would be unable to accompany the child on deck. It seemed all options had been exhausted, but one. I volunteered to accompany her. After all, I had not seen the statue from this vantage point myself, and the grandmother’s stories could not be dismissed. So the plan was set. The girl would sleep in the grandmother’s cabin with her, and I would come for her at five.

When I knocked on the door at 5:00 a.m., the response from the other side was immediate. They were up and waiting. The little girl kissed her grandmother goodbye, grabbed my hand, and announced that we were off to see “Ms. Liberty.” We made our way up several flights of stairs to the appropriate deck on the port side, for the viewing. I had, the previous day, in preparation for this moment, consulted with several members of the crew, and had chosen a location on the deck suitable for the viewing.

We were confronted by a very dense fog; the child began to fret about not being able to see the statue. But, shortly after we arrived at our viewing spot on deck, the ship passed under the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, which we could see, if somewhat dimly, because of its lights. The child absorbed my explanations and assurances (rendered with the usual caveat of crossed fingers) and brightened immediately.
Clark Watts was born in 1938. He was raised in Buckner Orphans Home of Dallas, graduating from the orphanage high school, Buckner Academy, in 1955. Following an undergraduate education at UT in Austin he entered Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, graduating in 1962, and thereafter became a neurosurgeon. In 1990 he received a law degree and taught the Law of Health Care Law at the UT Law School. He has authored two books, Texas Neurosurgery: A Historical Anthology and All I Wanted Was a Home: Raised in an Orphanage. He and his wife head a family that includes eight children, fifteen grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. He lives in Austin.

From that point to the statue would be several long minutes, and I called upon every verbal device to keep her focused and positive. But as the minutes went by and there was nothing but fog between us and points west, I began to worry that we had missed her. There was no one on deck with us, no crew and no passengers. We were alone and quite chilled with the wet fog penetrating everything we had on. And I began to worry that the grandmother might be a little concerned about the length of our absence. Just as I started to suggest we go back to our cabins—I was standing with my back to the presumed site of the statue—she cried out, “There she is!”

Turning, I saw the fog had inexplicably parted, revealing the Statue of Liberty. Thinking, I guess, she would get a better view if she were elevated, the child asked me to lift her up, which I did. For several long moments we had our view. Although there was dense fog everywhere, the reflected lights from the ship and lower Manhattan aided our viewing. While the lighting was insufficient to reveal her features in detail, her crown and the torch at the end of her upraised arm were clearly discernible from her otherwise opaque and amorphous lower body silhouetted against the darkness. To this day, I am unsure if I saw the light of her torch, or was briefly mesmerized by a shimmering image created by the swirling fog twisting among the beams of what little light we were blessed with.

The child, seated upon my shoulder with her arms firmly around my head, remained absolutely still—transfixed. As the fog began to shroud the statue, reclaiming the stage, I returned the child to the deck. Even after the statue disappeared, my young companion stood motionless, hugging me tightly around my waist, clearly moved by the moment, and totally absorbed in her own thoughts. By this time, I was truly feeling the chill and knew she must be cold; it was now time to go back to our cabins and savor this experience. So it was with me. I cannot begin to surmise every positive emotion cried out to be heard, to be recorded with this experience, but I had read several stories, all similar. Virtually everyone who had been through this experience, but I had read several stories, all similar. Virtually every positive emotion cried out to be heard, to be recorded with this experience. So it was with me. I cannot begin to surmise the reaction of an emigrant to this sight, especially one who had waited years to make the trip. As for me, in my first thoughts, I did not see the statue in terms of gender, politics, or art; rather, I saw it in terms of that for which it stands. It truly said to me, in that dense fog as we groped our way to these shores: here is the way.

Two men walked over frozen ground covered by a thin layer of snow. One was an Indian. The other was a white man. When the two men arrived at the Indian’s camp, the white man held up his lantern and before him appeared a troubling scene. An Indian woman was sitting cross-legged in the snow. Her eyes were closed and she was holding a child, wrapped in a thin government-issue blanket, to her bosom.

The white man knelt down beside the woman and spoke softly, “Sister, I have come to offer aid.” The woman did not answer. The Indian knelt down and tenderly pulled back the blanket uncovering the face of a two year-old child whose half-open eyes betrayed the gravity of the situation.

The white man reached out his hand. With two fingers, he felt for a pulse at the child’s ice-cold throat. Bowing his head, fighting the choking sensation clawing at his throat, and swallowing hard to stifle the bile, he whispered, “I’m sorry, dear sister, but the little one has gone to a better place.”

The broken hearted woman clutched her only child tight and began to wail a feral and chilling cacophony of grief. Tears rolled down her cheeks and fell like raindrops onto the beautiful face of innocence.

The Indian collapsed to his knees and pounded the ground with his fists until the snow turned crimson. Then he sat back on his heels, lifted his tear-stained face and bloody hands to the heavens, and groaned a mournful lament.

The white man was overwhelmed with anguish as he walked back to his camp alone. When he arrived he stood by the fire in grief-sick meditation for several minutes. Then he slumped down beside the dwindling fire. Though he kept a diary, he had been so busy caring for his wife and others that he had not found time lately to write a single word. He did not want the events of the last two days to go unrecorded, so he removed a leather-bound journal from his travel bag and began to write.

Sabbath, November 25: I arose before daybreak and contemplated the unpleasantness of another day on the trail. After breakfast we assembled for worship in the cold open air and I preached on the wickedness of the men from the treaty party. After communion, Mr. Hair led the way for the whole detachment. This day we travelled about eight miles and camped in the Sequanche Valley. Darkness brought piercing cold and freezing rain. Tonight an aged man died of the bowel complaint. He had been sick for many days.

Monday, November 26: We proceeded with the detachment for about eight miles. Around noon my dear wife became ill with a fever and was scarcely able to walk. Late in the night, I was summoned to the camp of Golumstee where I found his wife holding their dead child, a daughter of two years. The past three long months have been a period of spiritual darkness for my friends and me. Many have died on this arduous journey. The cold air is perfumed with the breath of death. What have my Cherokee brothers and sisters done to deserve such misery?
As was his habit, Cyrus arrived at Reza’s right on schedule

As was his habit, Cyrus arrived at the modest two-room apartment in downtown Teheran right on time. Reza was sharing it with three other students, but he was alone that evening. They had turned the small landing into a dining area with a square wooden table and four metal folding chairs. The chess set was already in place on the table. But formalities had to be observed; Reza poured freshly brewed tea from an old blue teapot into two Estekans, and they sipped their tea Persian style, with pieces of nabaat, rock candy, in their mouths. After the obligatory questions about Reza’s family had been dealt with, Reza showed his guest around.

The apartment had a tiny kitchen, a bathroom with a shower, and a balcony. The larger of the two rooms held two sets of wooden bunk beds. The second room was assigned as the living and study room. On the wall of the study, above a built-in wooden shelf, were two unframed black and white photos: one of Dr. Mosadegh, the other one of Ayatollah Khomeini. The latter photo was a large version of the print Cyrus had picked up in Café Sorrento a few nights ago. The bookcase below the shelf contained a collection of literary, political, and theology books, some of which Cyrus recognized.

“All mine,” Reza explained proudly, “I’m the only one here who reads outside of class assignments.”

They stepped onto the balcony which was one level above the surrounding buildings. From there on a clear day one should be able to see downtown, but today a thick, gray layer of smog obscured the view. Cyrus coughed; the air irritated his throat and burned his eyes. “You will get used to the smog,” Reza said. “May I get you a glass of water?”

“Let’s go inside, please,” Cyrus said. When Cyrus recovered from the eye irritation, he sat on the chair and arranged the chess pieces. “I’m ready, Reza.”

They tossed a die, and Reza began the game. He played white and opened with the Queen’s Gambit. Reza took more time for each move but, at one point, when he was ahead a pawn and had castled, creating a strong position from which he was about to mount an attack against Cyrus’ right flank and threaten the king, Cyrus took a long time to figure out his move. Reza was annoyed by Cyrus’ slow pace but controlled his annoyance. But after the long pause, Cyrus initiated his counter-attack using the combination of the king’s rook, the queen, and a bishop. In a series of moves, Cyrus exchanged a knight for Reza’s bishop and pawn and brought out a rook against the queen. Reza was forced to sacrifice his queen to prevent a checkmate and settled for taking Cyrus’ rook. Reza lost a pawn two moves later and now clearly behind, realized the inevitable and resigned.

“I thought I had you early on,” Reza mused, “but you came up with a great play!”

“Thank you, but I needed a plan to get out of that conundrum,” Cyrus replied.

“And I didn’t notice the trap when you exchanged your second rook with my pawn and knight. And three moves later you took over the game; that was brilliant!” Reza was unabashedly enthused. “You haven’t lost your expertise.”

Cyrus laughed with a sense of satisfaction and enjoyed the young man’s praise. He turned his head, and the large photo of Ayatollah Khomeini in the study caught Cyrus’ eyes.

“Whose hero is he?” Cyrus asked, looking at the Ayatollah’s photo.

“He is the one who will rid Iran of the Shah,” proclaimed Reza with enthusiastic conviction.

“Perhaps,” Cyrus said, “but blowing up banks and post offices won’t get you there, Reza. Terror doesn’t win the war. The Shah has already survived too many similar attacks. The whole nation must rise and shut down the country before you can dismantle his government.”

“We have a good start and Ayatollah Khomeini is at the helm of our movement.”

Cyrus commented that Reza could save himself a lot of trouble if he focused his attention on his education instead of politics.

But Reza was adamant. “I cannot avoid politics. I want to live in free society as a free man. My friends and I are convinced the revolution will come before we finish medical school. And afterwards we’ll practice in the countryside. I want to be a village doctor and care for poor, hard working peasant families.”

“I have been there, Reza.” Cyrus said. “It isn’t all it’s cracked up to be.”

While serving in the Air Force, Cyrus had opened an evening office for primary medical care in a small town in the southwest of Iran. On weekends, he often traveled with a relative, a mullah, to nearby villages, taking along boxes with medications and his medical instruments, enough for basic procedures. One sunny Friday he, his medical assistant, and the mullah embarked on another medical expedition to the village of Shams Abad. The advance notice that the mullah was bringing his nephew, a medical officer in the nearby air-force base, to offer medical care had created a large response. Villagers and their families had lined up in the meadow outside the village, where they waited for the medical expedition. A blanket spread out under an oak tree served as the office. Cyrus listened to hearts and lungs, dispersed oral medications and gave injections, drained some small boils and abscesses, sutured cuts and dressed a few open wounds. In a small ice box he carried a precious parcel with ten doses of measles vaccine, which was newly imported from the United States and carried a premium price. Measles was the biggest killer of infants in those villages.

With only ten doses of vaccine and a long line of fathers — the chief of the village among them — carrying their sons in their arms, the competition was stiff. After many noisy quarrels between the parents and the chief, the chief chose ten recipients including himself to receive the vaccine; the others were sent home or to the second line for other procedures. The chief and his men kept everybody in the right queue. One after another, the assistant took the tiny bottles of vaccine out of the icebox; inserted the fine needle of a thin syringe into each bottle, and aspirated the light-blue fluid. After the last dose had been used, ten small, empty, sealed bottles were floating on the melted ice in the box.

A desperate villager cut in from the other line, threw himself on the blanket in front of the mullah, drew the mullah’s hand towards his face and kissed it fervently.

“I’ll pay anything to get a vaccine for my son,” he promised, kissing the mullah’s right hand. “I brought you my prize lamb.”
The mullah pulled his hand away and pushed him off. “Can’t you see, Karim? The doctor had only ten bottles in the box and they are all used up.”

“Look, Doc,” he turned to Cyrus. “I have already lost two sons; I cannot lose this one, too. Please!”

Cyrus saw the desperation in the man’s face. There had to be some way to help him.

“For the love of God, Doc!” the man pleaded. “Can’t you take the last drops at the bottom of each bottle and give them to my son?”

Cyrus turned to his assistant who fished an empty bottle of vaccine out of the icy water. There was a small, light-blue liquid marble rolling around the bottom. He fished out another bottle and another one, and each held a small, light-blue pearl. Assistant and physician looked at each other.

“There isn’t enough, Karim,” said Cyrus, “the volume will still be too little to give your son adequate protection.”

“I’ll chance it, doctor,” the villager pleaded. “Even a few drops may just give him the extra support he needs. Please!”

Cyrus shrugged his shoulders and waved to his assistant to proceed. The helper aspirated each bottle diligently, one after the other, and was able to collect almost half a regular dose.

“Doc, I will take it. Give the medicine to my son, please!” the villager begged. “My best lamb will be yours.” Tears were flowing down his dusty cheeks.

“Remember, it may not work, your son may not get enough to protect him.”

In the late afternoon, after draining the last abscess of a small boy, they packed their gear back into the car and set out to leave. On the back seat floorboard were a few chickens, three soft leather pouches with milk, and a coarsely woven sack of wheat. The desperate villager with his only surviving son brought a fluffy white lamb and pushed it onto the back seat. The mullah sat in front and the medical assistant next to the lamb, the noisy fettered chickens between his feet.

“Who took the lamb?” Reza asked Cyrus.

“The mullah took the lamb and the chickens; my assistant, the milk and the wheat, and I got a pouch of milk, some change, and a good night’s sleep.”

Cyrus had started out as idealistic as Reza, but over time he had mellowed, and now he was more moderate, more a social Democrat than a socialist, more a liberal than a Communist. But he remembered well how attractive and exciting revolutionary ideas could be for a young man.

“If Ayatollah Khomeini succeeds in toppling the Shah, the mullahs will take over this country,” Cyrus predicted. “And then the country will fall into a deeper hole: from autocracy into theocracy, and no one can argue with God.”

“Things cannot get worse. We do need a revolution,” Reza insisted. “Poor people in the city and farmers in the villages have no electricity, no clean water, and no medical care. The big cities have modern medical facilities, but we don’t even have ambulatory clinics in the small towns and the countryside. I can make a real difference if I set up my clinic in a village and provide medical care to farmers and their families.”

“Yes, things may get worse, as in Russia—from tsar to Stalin,” Cyrus said.

“These mullahs are not interested in running the country.”

“Look, I wanted to be a physician for a very different reason. My model was an uncle who was a professor and chief of otorhinolaryngology at Tehran Medical School; I wanted to be like him, an effective teacher at Tehran University, as well as an expert researcher.”

“So what happened to all your revolutionary predispositions?”

“Af ter I barely survived the revolt in June 1963, I quit all political activity and focused completely on my medical education. Before my first day of internship I had dreamt about discovering a cure for cancer. By the end of the first month of internship, I realized the best place for cancer research was the United States,” Cyrus said.

“So, how did you end up in Texas?”

“Af ter I passed the E.C.F.M.G. examination, I entered a postgraduate surgery residency program in the U.S., and eventually ended up at M. D. Anderson Cancer Institute, which is a mecca for cancer research and treatment. It was inspiring to see American fellows working non-stop, coming to work before dawn and working until late evening. Then they would toil on their own research project at night. That place was like paradise for me. And that’s why I ended up a surgeon and an oncologist.”

“But cancer is not a priority in Iran. Most deaths in children and young adults here are due to infectious diseases and lack of nutrition rather than cancer. My medical training can be more useful in a village, serving peasant families. I can save more lives that way.”

Cyrus said, “Reza, first you need to get into medical school. It’s really premature for you to talk about these issues until you’re there.”

“You are right about that! It isn’t easy to get into medical school here in Iran,” Reza said. “With thousands of young people finding no employment, and the only secure jobs being those for doctors or engineers, there are thousands of applicants for each slot at a university. By now the chance to get into medical school at a top university is minuscule. But I’ll do my best!”

“You won’t get there if you spend your time marching in the streets of Tehran,” Cyrus warned. Still, Reza’s words had impressed Cyrus. He liked Reza’s boundless confidence. Perhaps there was a way to lend him a hand.

“Have you ever considered going to medical school in the U.S.?” Cyrus asked, “I would be glad to help you.”

“Thank you, Uncle.” Reza smiled. “You are very kind, but my only option is to stay in Iran and get into Tehran Medical School.”

In the few days since Cyrus had arrived in Iran, he had already witnessed many clear indications of a clandestine campaign against the Shah but had yet to find out the organizations that carried out these daring attacks. Someone like Reza might know more about this subject than anybody he had met so far.

“What is going on in Tehran? There are armed policemen everywhere, in the airport, outside of banks, in cafés and restaurants.”

“They are there because the old peaceful ways of campaigning in Iran have failed and died, a painful death,” Reza said.

“Who is planting bombs in government buildings?” Cyrus asked.

“So, you have noticed that,” Reza responded with a dry smile. “Well, I don’t know which group is conducting what raid, but I do know that discontent is widespread. This economy benefits only senior government employees, high-ranking military, and...
Cyrus considered Reza rather naïve; he put all his faith in a revolution and yet appeared totally ignorant of the unpredictable directions a revolution can take.

Reza continued, “How come nobody cares about our heritage and tradition? The Shah is insulting our religious leaders and killing our best citizens. People are dying of easily preventable illnesses, and smog and pollution are engulfing poor neighborhoods.”

“Things are not quite as bad as you are describing,” Cyrus said, “What about all these construction cranes in Tehran! More buildings are going up here than anywhere else in the Middle East. Every one I meet has a nice home, a foreign car, and plenty of money to spend.”

“You haven’t met any working class people.” Reza pointed out. “They are the ones who are falling behind. Go to the poorer parts of Tehran; go downtown or to the south side, you will find only the glum face of hardship and poverty. Meanwhile our country is losing its identity. The Shah and his thousands of foreign advisors benefit from our economy while he is spending our oil revenues to buy arms and rule Iran by force.”

To Cyrus, Reza was looking more like a revolutionary than a focused applicant to a prestigious college. Suddenly Reza stood up, went into the study, and returned with a cassette tape wrapped in old newspapers. “Here is a gift for you,” he handed Cyrus the package.

“What is it?” asked Cyrus, somewhat surprised.

“It is an inspiring sermon by Ayatollah Khomeini about the martyrs of Tabriz, about the massacre of the street marchers. The Ayatollah Khomeini sends his sermons from Iraq to Iran via underground connections, and his speeches present a clear case that the Shah’s government must be overthrown in order to solve Iran’s problems.”

“Yes, the Shah’s actions are brutal,” Cyrus agreed. “But the Ayatollah is using these tragic events to advance his own agenda. Be careful.”

“We all agree with him when he demands that we throw out all foreigners and bring ordinary Iranian representatives into the government.”

“Reza, remember the Ayatollah has been ranting about overthrowing the Shah since 1963. That talk is old hat!”

“Not at all! It’s a whole new ball game in Iran. The problems in our country are reaching the point of no return. Don’t you want to at least listen to this?” insisted Reza. “The sermon takes only about half an hour.”

Cyrus checked his watch. “I’m sorry, Reza. I must go now.” He did not have enough time, but perhaps he could listen to it sometime later.

“Take it with you, Cyrus,” Reza urged, “But be careful, people have been arrested, tortured, and executed for having Ayatollah Khomeini’s tapes.”

“Okay, I’ll listen to it later,” conceded Cyrus, “in Bahram’s room.”

“Don’t,” Reza said quickly, “Bahram doesn’t care about Ayatollah Khomeini’s philosophy. He thinks politics and religion should be kept separate. But he is wrong. Ayatollah Khomeini is the only leader who can stand up to the tyranny of the Shah and end his terror. The Ayatollah has been imprisoned, humiliated and kicked out of his own country, just because he believes in democracy and independence for Iranians.”

“But he is a mullah first, an Iranian second.”

“The Ayatollah is not interested in politics,” Reza said. “All he wants is to return to Iran and resume his religious duties in Qum.”

“Well, that’s pure speculation.”

“You’ve got to hear him,” Reza insisted.

“Fine, I will listen to the tape in the privacy of my room.”

Cyrus recalled those troubling times in 1963 when Ayatollah Khomeini had first spoken out against the Shah’s government and instigated three days of bloody uprising in Tehran and other cities. He remembered the barricades and the soldiers. He remembered the sound of the gunfire and the rumbling of tanks in the streets when he was running for his life into a dead end alley. Cyrus remembered how his brother’s friend, a police officer released him from captivity and how that put an end to his political activities. He recalled how that uprising had turned into a tragic setback for democracy in Iran, had shaken the country, given the government an easy excuse to curtail human rights, and ultimately produced fifteen more years of the Shah’s totalitarian rule.

To be continued...

Three More Days
Elyse Goldman

While she lay in the hospital bed, I sat in the chair gently running my fingers along the side of her neck. Together, we waited for the tests results for her shoulder. It was impossible not to notice how her once lithe body had tightened, leaving her unable to move as gracefully as she once did. Her thick silver hair had thinned. Her face had lost its color, and her eyes had lost their light. Her body had curled, cutting off inches that had once brought her to a strong five foot six when she stretched. Strong bones were now frail and brittle. She was little more than a broken shell of the woman I’d spent a lifetime loving. It killed me to see her this way. When I leaned over to kiss the top of her head, I silently wished to take her place.

When the doctor returned, he beckoned me out into the hallway. It was clear that he did not want her to hear what he had to say. “I wanted to talk to you first,” the doctor said. “Unfortunately, I don’t have any good news for you this time. The disease has taken a stronger hold on her body than I had originally thought.”

“How?” I asked. “Did something else happen to her shoulder?”

The doctor hesitated. “Well, her shoulder didn’t break, it shattered.”

I felt my cheeks pale, and let my body sag against the wall as he talked. “Shattered? What does that even mean?”

He explained that there was nothing that he could do. The pieces of bone were simply too small for repair. “All I can do is bandage the shoulder and give her something for the pain.”

As bad as that particular bit of news was, the doctor still had more to give. He was more concerned about the increasing strength of the disease.

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Bedrock by Bonnie Lyons

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

Ours is a Flower by Marian Aitches

A native of San Antonio, Marian Aitches received her Ph.D. from the University of North Texas in 1990. She is an award-winning professor whose courses at the University of Texas at San Antonio focus on American Indian studies as well as race, ethnicity, gender, class and nationalism. Fishing for Light, her first collection of poetry, won the 2009 Wings Press Joanie Whiteblume Library of St. Mary’s University. The Press is set “in the timelessness of our lives,” will be available everywhere. The Color of Faith by Mo H Saidi

Mo H Saidi is a retired professor and OB/GYN physician with a master’s degree in English and American Literature and Language from Harvard University. His first book of poetry, Art in the City, won the 2007 Eakin Memorial Book Publication Award of the Poetry Society of Texas. His novel, Persian Marchers is under consideration. He is Co-Editor of Voices de la Luna: A Quarterly Poetry & Arts Magazine and has published numerous medical papers, essays, short fiction pieces and poems in local, state, and national journals and anthologies.

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Moments of Delicate Balance

by David Lee and William Kloefkorn

In a collection of poems “full of tenderness without sentimentality, laughter without derision, wisdom without sanctimony,” Lee and Kloefkorn strike a “delicate balance” on numerous fronts, both within their own work and in an unintentional dialogue that finds lyric introspection and narrative wit addressing the same topics. Truly western writers in love with the land, both poets bring their high literary acumen to bear upon both the mundane and the magnificent. These poets have been compared to William Carlos Williams, Cormac McCarthy, Flannery O’Connor and others whose ear for the American voice is unerring and unflinching.

Indios

by Linda Hogan

This work is available only from Wings Press until April 2012, when Indios will be available everywhere.

Indios is set “in the timelessness of our lives,” writes Linda Hogan. “Time is different in the cell structure of bodies created from and on this continent.” Indios speaks to us the truth of a history twisted to suit the needs of a conquering power. It is an old story and yet a tragically contemporary one. Indios, the character, speaks to us from a jail cell, a Native woman falsely accused of the death of her children. In her plight we hear echoes of Malinche, cursed and blessed as both a race traitor and as the mother of all mestizos. We hear echoes of Pocahontas, of La Llorona, and ultimately, of Medea—not, Hogan stresses, the Medea of Euripides, but the captured princess of the original story in which her children were murdered by the people of Corinth—and Medea herself was feared for her cultural differences and her knowledge. As Indios says of herself, she is an “affershock” of history. This powerful poem is her legacy.

Crazy Love

by Pamela Uschuk

As If The Empty Chair / Como si la silla vacía

by Margaret Randall

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Poetry & Art Events

San Antonio Recurring Venues

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2nd Tuesdays 7-9 PM – Awaken the Sleeping Poet at the Twig, 200 E. Grayson, Ste. 124, Pearl Brewery (210) 826-6411, Featured poets & open mic. Host: Floyd L. Lamrouex.

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


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

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

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


Last Thursday of Each Month 7–9 PM – Awaken the Sleeping Poet – Features and open mic – Northwoods Barnes & Noble,–18030 HWY 281 N, Suite #140 (281 & 1604)–(210) 490-0411. Host: Floyd L. Lamrouex

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

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

Book Readings/Signings

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The Museum Archives

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Photography Gentileschi Aegis Gallery Association
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