

Volume IV ~ October 2012

TORRID LITERATURE JOURNAL

Divine

The
D.N.A.

Of A
Poet

Natural

Attributes

1ST ANNUAL
ROMANCING THE CRAFT OF
POETRY & FICTION
CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

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PSYCHO KANEV
A.J. HUFFMAN
AND MANY MORE!

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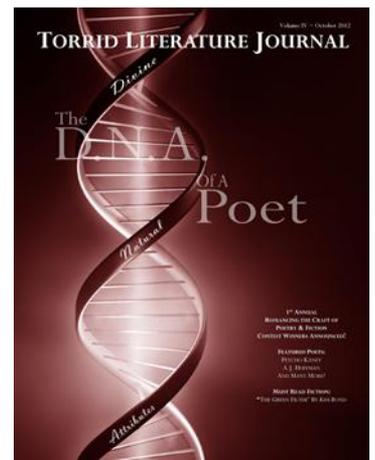
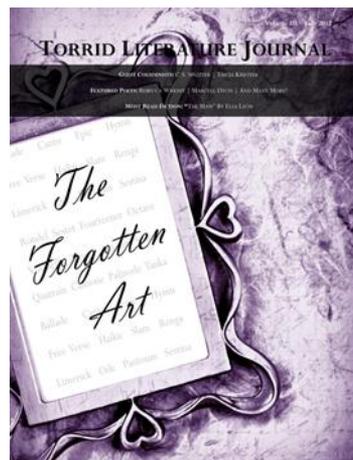
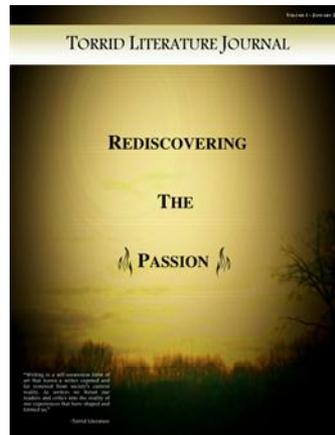
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FROM THE EDITORS

Throughout our 2012 season, we have published over 100 works of literature, from poetry and fiction to informative editorial content. Writers of diverse demographics and literary backgrounds have blessed our pages and readers with creative material that captures the essence of literature, the reason literature even exists. We now humbly close out our 2012 debut year with Volume IV - The D.N.A. of a Poet. Inside this issue, we wanted to capture and explore the genetic make up of an artist, the divine natural attributes that sets them apart and makes them unique. We have (and hopefully our readers will to) come to the conclusion that the answer lays not the biography or history of the writer but in the writer's work itself. The answer is found in the way they go about executing an idea, thought, dream, or statement. The ways in which they reign in their muse and/or let it run wild.

In the beginning we stated that to create art means to leave pieces of oneself behind for the benefit of someone else. Today, we still stand by that belief. Artists themselves may be flesh and bones but their art carries a universal voice and language that can span through the generations. So as artists, the more we create the more reflective we become of our art that points out what we stand for. Experience is our motivation. Art is the tongue that speaks and decodes. The spoken version of the words many people cannot or do not know how to express. It is inside art that we find our boldness to praise, rebuke, support, and condemn. Inside art we find not our voice but the voices of others. This is the reason the Torrid Literature Journal is not a theme based publication. The poems and stories that grace our pages are as different as the people who grace this earth.

This is attributed to the fact that writers are like GPS navigators with a preselected destination in mind. They are working hard to move you from one point of understanding or thought to another point of realization or feeling. This is why each writer carries a unique signature; the reason you as the reader may, at times, have to work for an understanding. In order to truly appreciate the concept or meaning within a poem or story, you first must go through the same notion deciphering and understanding the literary work that the writer went through experiencing and penning it.

Speaking of phenomenal art that makes moves, inside this issue we announce the winners of our 1st Annual Romancing the Craft of Poetry & Fiction Contest. The winners of our contest not only reflect amazing literary skill but they also give a profound voice to issues current in today's society. This is what art is about; it's about creating work so powerful that it gives sight to the blind sight and hearing to the deaf (metaphorically speaking). We want to humbly thank everyone who submitted entries into our contest. The astounding number of submissions received surpassed our projections. We look forward to our 2013 second annual contest being even more successful and impactful.

As we look at the remainder of the year we realize one question is still outstanding, what should be done to recognize the exceptional contributors who have been published in our journals? As you will discover in this issue, we answer that question by revealing our "Torridian Hall of Fame" which is already accepting votes for nominees via our website. Our hall of fame, which accepts inductees based solely on votes, will recognize several writers from our publications. Who will be the first inductees into our 2012 Torridian Hall of Fame? Visit our website to cast your vote now. Then stay tuned as we announce our official inductees in Volume VI of the Torrid Literature Journal.

This publication is what it is because of you. We want to take a moment to recognize and give a special thanks to everyone who submitted work towards the Torrid Literature Journal. Thanks to everyone, we have received over 400 submissions throughout our debut and launch season. Although we are unable to accept everything that comes across our desk, we thoroughly enjoy the reading pleasure derived from each individual piece we receive. We look forward to embarking on the next phase of our literary journey.

We also would like to thank our open mic audience and supporters who come out and participant in our live open mic events that take place in our Tampa, Florida hometown. This past year, our successful events have showcased not only poets, but singers and musicians as well. It is our sincerest hope that these events continue to evolve, leaving a positive impact on the performers and community.

With beautiful memories and a promising future, we have come to the realization that everything is tied to a cycle, a cause and affect relationship. You continue to support, encourage, and strengthen us, thus allowing us to do the same in turn. Thank you for revealing to us the divine natural attributes that make up an artist. Thank you for being a Torridian.

Sincerely,

Alice Saunders

Follow me on Twitter:
@lyricaltempest

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NANOWRIMO FEVER

BY ALICE SAUNDERS

November means many things, but for the literary world it means one thing in particular: NaNoWriMo. Yes, November is National Novel Writing Month.

A Bit of History:

NaNoWriMo was created back in 1999 by a group of more than 15 people. What started out with only 21 participants now includes well over 200,000 participants and growing. This is an annual writing competition open to all writers, regardless of age, skill, or profession. So whether you are a five time Pushcart Award nominee, a Pulitzer prize winner, a nurse, an engineer, an English Professor, or a college student, this free and exciting opportunity welcomes everyone. It gives participants the opportunity to write without a conscious per say. In 2006, the team formed the 501(c)3 nonprofit organization the Office of Letters and Light. Today, the Office of Letters and Light is one of the largest literary groups. Some of their other literary programs include the Young Writers Program, Camp NaNoWriMo, and Script Frenzy.

The 50k Challenge:

During this period writers are challenged with writing a 50,000 word novel in 30 days. Keep in mind craft is not an applicable tool but rather, "enthusiasm and perseverance"¹ is. Sounds crazy right? I bet it does, but let me ask you this, how many of you have put off finishing or even starting a novel for fear or concern over the quality of your material? How many you of you have become your own road block on the way to completing a novel? Exactly. With NaNoWriMo it's quantity over quality not the other way around. There will be plenty of time later to go back and edit your novel thoroughly, which should be a common practice any

writer's regimen. Each novel should go through several phases of editing, including developmental editing, line editing, and proof reading before the publishing step abounds.

"The secret to writing a novel in a month is just to do it — and it's a good idea to accept from the start that, barring miracles, it will be very, very bad."² To make it through this competition, participants must accept the huge possibility that their novel may be bad. There will be errors, huge errors. This is not to discourage you. This is to get you to ignore the 'elephant in the room', for a short period, 30 days to be exact. So as NaNoWriMo makes its way around the corner, I encourage you all to polish up your story outline and coffee mugs. Get prepared to make sleep optional as you get lost in the siege of a tight deadline, only to push through at the end 50,000 words and 30 days later, a NaNoWriMo conqueror and a novelist. Though this event "emphasizes creativity and adventure over creating a literary masterpiece"³ the team at NaNoWriMo reports that over 90 novels written during NaNoWriMo have been published, including *Water of Elephants* by Sara Gruen and *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern, both of which have been on the New York Times Best Sellers list.

Resources:

NaNoWriMo is supported by the more than 650 regional volunteers located around the world who hold various write-ins. Write-ins provide NanoWriMo participants with a great environment that offers support, encouragement, constructive peer pressure. This in turn, makes the entire process a great community experience.

To learn more about NaNoWriMo or to locate speak to a regional volunteer in your area, please visit their website at <http://www.nanowrimo.org>.



CALL FOR COLUMNISTS

Speak and be heard! TL Publishing Group is seeking freelance writers and literary professionals who are interested in appearing as guest columnists in future editions of the *Torrid Literature Journal*. Articles should focus on topics concerning the literary industry.

For more information, please visit our website or contact Alice Saunders, Editor, at asaunders@torridliterature.com.

ODE TO LITERATURE

“...in a moment I remember
you and everything is
warmer...”
Pollen

“...her lover's blood-stained
garden soil will cool your
shovel's blade...”
Blacksmith

“...each day at low tide the
massive sandbar breaches the
surface...”
Leviathan

“...all in your upbringing is
constructive that you may
prosper in freedom from
strife...”
Asattah

“...what beauty beholds the thirsty
eyes, at this causal offering of nature's
finest moment...”
In the Mist of Time

A PERFECT POEM:

By Stephen Grigsby

Though I will not be he who writes it, I will know it
For it must be as I imagine it:

It will rise from the wept and weeping earth
Dressed in silk,
Cradled in its majesty
We will be carried above our shame
Raised from our abject solitude
It will speak us toward what is higher
It will spare us the humiliation of our flesh
Nourish us, transfigure our appetite:
The insatiable hunger for death
Will yield to the satiety of pure light.
It will be born in words - a gathered radiance
Of an ancient star
Broken from its heavy yoke,
Its loosed light falling
From the darkness of then
Into the clarity of now.

Stephen Grigsby is Stephen Grigsby graduated in 1990 from St. Olaf College in philosophy. Grigsby then went to law school at Georgetown and after about 13 years of practice moved to a cabin in the woods in Arctic Alaska. He returned to Minnesota in April of 2012 and continue to write poetry, essays and mixed genre pieces. Grigsby is currently working on a play about Tomas Torequemada and torture.

“...I wanted to devote my
Life to you; to spend my
Days making you The queen
of my life...”
Fidelity

“...sundered in a tongue-tied
awareness: Parts of me are
now light years distant...”
Light Years Distant

“...kill me or enliven me,
but please - make me
hum...”
This Dreamlike Time

“...and he rips my flesh until I am
only bones and I am beautiful
again...”
Sacred Wind

“...realization to embrace the agony of
illusive inspiration...”
Artistic Awakening

“...I work for a living—A real job that pays real
money, which is always enough to be starving,
but not an artist...”
Naked



THE DIVINE NATURAL ATTRIBUTES OF A POET

Steven Westbrook is a 16 year old writer currently attending Douglas Anderson School of Performing Arts in Jacksonville, Florida in the Creative Writing Department. Westbrook been writing since eighth grade and intends to pursue as a career, especially the art of poetry.

POLLEN

By Steven Westbrook

I saw
for the first time
in what seemed like
only a few seconds

A light
the dim light of the sun
in the early morning
shining through the open window

I could see the pollen
that the wind itself carried
painting itself in my presence
with several shades of pink

The sheets are still so cool
the sun shines
and the hummingbirds sing
and there's a sound of a rusty swing

In a moment I remember you
and everything is warmer

Anthony Burnett is a member of the Writer's League of Texas and an award winning songwriter. He writes a science and nature column for a regional Texas newspaper. His short fiction and poetry has appeared in national literary journals including, most recently, *Tidal Basin Review*, *Fringe*, *Fiction 365*, and many others.

BLACKSMITH

By Anthony Burnett

Your tortured forge burns crimson,
sun's lava seen through dusty wind,
daughter's blood-stained cotton sheets.
Bellows blast rage against the fuel.

Your hammer falls and falls again.
Your flame rises and burns within,
sweat, like wax; beading, rolling,
impassioned waves, creation's sledge.

Your hammer falls and falls again.
Heat dissipates, quells the rage.
Her lover's blood-stained garden soil
will cool your shovel's blade.

John Grey is an Australian born poet, works as financial systems analyst. Grey has work recently published in *Poem*, *Caveat Lector*, *Prism International* and the horror anthology, "What Fears Become" with work upcoming in *Potomac Review*, *Hurricane Review* and *Pinyon*.

DIPPERS

By John Grey

February, a brisk fifteen degrees,
Blinding snow drifts, all small birds roosted high
Up in the thickest pines, sheltered, dry,
Fluffed up against the bitter blasting wheeze
Of wind, but for the dipper's industries
Of skimming the ice-covered brook to ply
Its trade of frozen bugs, fish startled by
Intruders oblivious to winter freeze.

No time of year, hot or cold, is not theirs,
The summer feast, even the pickings lean
Of bitter months, the water's meager wares
May not be choice but what's that really mean
To whosoever takes to air, who dares
To be what moves in this immobile scene.

Jane Blanchard divides her time between Augusta and St. Simon's Island, Georgia. Her poetry has recently appeared in *Caveat Lector*, *James Dickey Review*, *Pearl*, *Pembroke Magazine*, *REAL*, *RiverSedge*, *Stone Voices*, and *The Vehicle*.

LEVIATHAN

By Jane Blanchard

Each day at low tide
the massive sandbar
breaches the surface
of the broad ocean
and stretches itself
to soak up the sun.

Its apt appearance
entices swimmers
to venture to reach
the vast, tan expanse,
then return to beach
their own briny brawn.

Susan Martin is a retired English and creative writing teacher. She has published poetry and short fiction in anthologies, literary magazines, e-zines, and other on-line sites. She was a prize winner in *The Age Begins 2009 Women's Inspirational Contest* and the *New Jersey Poetry Society's 2012 National Poetry Month Contest*.

ASATTAH

By Susan Martin

*All I have are my voice, my spirit,
and my will to tell the truth.*

Assata Shakur

Asattah, named for one whose life was war,
who struggled to be on the angels' side,
Reluctant to live as a metaphor
of empowerment where rights are denied.
She fought with love for solidarity
making freedom's dream a reality.

From blatant racism she couldn't run,
intimidated she would never be,
She fought with foresight and courage so none
be denied the right of human dignity.
Respect, equality, the cause of her fight,
This legacy she gave you, your birthright.

Your home is one, creative, productive,
where reason and pride are a way of life.
All in your upbringing is constructive
that you may prosper in freedom from strife
from which she before you had sought release,
Asattah, her namesake, warrior for peace.

Dean Miller is a freelance writer and member of Northern Colorado Writers. His work has appeared online and in *Trout Magazine*. Employed by the FAA as an Air Traffic Controller for over twenty-four years, he was the 2010 Northwest Mountain Region recipient of the NATCA Archie League Safety Award. . He is working on his first novel.

NAKED

By Dean Miler

And they with balding heads,
their half-dollar spectacles,
and beards that almost touch
the floor (when they lie down).

With smiling metaphors
and metaphysical similes,
and insights of all that's nuclear,
I find it more—unclear.

Maybe it's because I work
for a living—A real job
that pays real money,
which is always enough
to be starving,
but not an artist.

A love found by the oceanside,
or with the girl next door,
seemed foreign to me.
Maybe it just didn't happen.
Or I blinked
at the wrong time.

And sure I thrill at
the sight
of an exotic dancer,
and see the statement she is making;
Except that she is naked.

Erren Geraud Kelly is a poet based in New York City who received a B.A. in English-Creative Writing from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Kelly has been writing for 21 years with work appearing in over three dozen publications in print and online including *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Mudfish*, *Poetry Magazine*(online) and many others. Kelly's most recent publication was in "In Our Own Words," a Generation X poetry anthology; Kelly was also published in other anthologies such as " Fertile Ground," Beyond The Frontier " and other anthologies.

3-14-08

By Erren Kelly

i can find love
even in tears
our calloused hands
shared redemption
my father held on to me
as we both reached back
for lost years
never letting go

Bobbi Dawn Rightmyer was born and raised in historic Harrodsburg, Kentucky where she lives with her husband, three grown daughters, two granddaughters and one grandson. She has been published in *Kentucky Monthly*, *New Southerner*, *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*, and many others. She has five published chapbooks: *Out of My Comfort Zone*, *Care and Feeding of Nightmares*, *Bobbi's Mercer Memories Vol. 1 and Vol. 2* and *Bobbi's Christmas Memories*. Her first book, *Images of America – Harrodsburg*, was published by Arcadia Publishing in August 2011 and her first poetry book, *Some Scars Don't Heal*, was published in June 2012.

THE MIST OF TIME

By Bobbi Dawn Rightmyer

Hugging the bark like a fine silk glove,
the mist encircled the trees;
coating each branch with the careless moisture
left over at the break of dawn.

What beauty beholds the thirsty eyes,
at this causal offering of nature's finest moment;
blurred and fuzzy like an old photograph
whispering the essence of times gone by.

Why can't life be as simple as this?
A beautiful second in a never-ending world,
awash with memories and bathed in remembrances
like the trees standing in the mist

A.J. Huffman is a poet and freelance writer in Daytona Beach, Florida. She has previously published four collections of poetry: "The Difference Between Shadows and Stars", "Carrying Yesterday", "Cognitive Distortion", and "And Other Such Nonsense". She has also published her work in national and international literary journals such as *Avon Literary Intelligencer*, *Writer's Gazette*, and *The Penwood Review*.

BREAK FROM SAND-FILLED DREAMS

By A.J. Huffman

Time moves slower at night. Every second stalling
in the strobe of a stars' echoes. My consciousness
tries to connect [with] these ephemeral dots.
But light's space refuses all shape of containment.
I envy that visionary denial – the idea
that simply being could (and should) beget
elucivity
is comforting in these tocless hours
before dawn. I bury myself in that belief;
pulling it over my eyes like a blanket. I can breathe
in its scent of freedom as I wait for my own
mental wings to learn their shine.

Stephen Grigsby is Stephen Grigsby graduated in 1990 from St. Olaf College in philosophy. Grigsby then went to law school at Georgetown and after about 13 years of practice moved to a cabin in the woods in Arctic Alaska. He returned to Minnesota in April of 2012 and continue to write poetry, essays and mixed genre pieces. Grigsby is currently working on a play about Tomas Torequemada and torture.

NEARNESS II

By Stephen Grigsby

When I am near
I am leaving that place
I approach
Where I was
No longer there
Always
Leaving that place
No longer there
When I am near.

Heather Hartung is a poet and mother of four who currently resides in Tampa, Florida.

RELEASED

By Heather Hartung

You got the amorphous shell, full of shattered pieces.
Pieces I barely held together with the mask of self-confidence.
Little did I know when it would all come crashing down.
Trying to be perfect for you lost who I was supposed to be.
And we both suffer.

Now that girl rages inside her cage,
Threatening to burst out with the unrequited anger of repression.
She is the scarred, jaded reminder of bad experience,
Refusing to compromise with the martyr I forced myself to be.
And we all suffer.

So the battle begins.
Armed with the strength that stares down diversity,
I tell that angry girl, "I will bear your scars and heed your wisdom.
Fly from your cage and empower me to speak the words that could incite a nation."
And less shall suffer.

BLOODLINE

By Heather Hartung

I hold the power of mountain mothers.
The accent of my blood
May be harsh and unrefined.
The uncanny balance of strength and grace,
May throw you off.
But, a mountain child I am.
Take me from my home,
Still, the ghost remains.
The pathways of my mind
Are dirt roads, winding through peaks and vale.
Inner peace is found
Under the ancient trees in the wood.
My mind sharp as the owl,
I carry the lion's heart,
With the lioness poise.
Wisdom, traveling through the ages,
Emanates from these bones,
Creating the mystique,
That will always keep you wondering.

Jackie Sommers grew up in a small town in Minnesota but now lives in the Twin Cities. Sommers has a bachelor's degree in English, is a member of a critique group, and author of a blog on faith, creativity, and OCD at lightsallaround.wordpress.com.

HEALING THIS WAY

By Jackie Sommers

seems so vague and transient and distracted,
as if you could catch it chewing its nails
or sitting exhausted on the winner's podium,
weary legs dangling before the number one.
Where is the magical trip across a definitive line,
the diploma, signed and dated and official,
the raw victory cry from the top of a mountain?
I had always dreamed that rescue would be shiny,
but a dull dime is still worth ten cents.

AFTER ALL THIS TIME

By Jackie Sommers

I can finally exhale, step over the carnage.
There is life outside this jail cell,
cold water in the town beyond the battlefield,
fresh air after you leave the room.
Freedom is scary, but it has softer hands.



Neelam Chandra is an engineer by profession. Writing poetry and fiction is her passion. More than two hundred of her stories/poems have been published in various leading Indian publications as well as international magazines such as *Enchanting Verses*, *Frog croon*, *Saraba*, *Ewoman*, and etc. Three of her children's story books have also been published by Room to Read, Naman and Sahni Publications. Three more books are under publication including one novella. Her poems/stories have been published in various international anthologies such as "On the Brink" (By Spectacle Publishing) and "Healing Waves" (By Skywarrior Publications).. She has won second prize in a competition organized by Pratham Books (Chuskit competition). One of her stories won an award in a contest organized by Children Book Trust, India in 2009. She has also been awarded second prize by Gulzarji in a Poetry Contest organized by American Society on the topic 'Poetry for Social Change'. Her story was also awarded in a contest organized by IWG Writers Guild.

COS, I LOVE YOU

By Neelam Chandra

I shall keep burning for you
like a candle
which destroys itself
but keeps illuminating the world

I shall keep twinkling for you
like a star
which smoulders itself
but keeps radiating bright

I shall keep flowing for you
like a river
which has no abode of its own
and keeps searching for a destination happily

However,
I shall never profess my love again...
If you love me
look for the luminescence
search for the radiance
watch the happiness
and
you will realize
that it is me and my love
calling you
summoning you
hollering for you....

If the sparkle and shimmer
of my love
is strong enough
you will come back one day
and holding me in your arms
say, "I love you!"

I will then

BURDEN OF MY HEART

By Neelam Chandra

My latent thoughts
coiled and curled up
deep in the seams and layers
of my mute and taciturn heart
boiled up, ranted and raved
one day.

I saw them wrathfully and furiously
mounting and intensifying
expanding and escalating
revolting and rebelling
against me.

Finally they irately shrieked,
"How can you be
so casual, cavalier and uncaring
for your own self?
Can't you see and feel
how much you have hurt us
by wounding and hurting yourself?"

We are part of you
and although you may be
satiated and satisfied
by suppressing and burying us
deep in the seams and layers
of your heart;
we express our deep resentment
and we shall
neither disappear nor dissolve
unless you promise us
that you will release us
from your bondage."

I released them that very moment
and I no longer carry
the burden of my heart.

THE MASK

By Michael Miller and Vinelle Paullisa Cudjoe

Tired of smiling and dying on the inside
Tired of trying to make it when I feel like I'm falling behind
I'm just tired of wearing this mask, that everyone believes is real

I'm tired of waiting for a real friend to come along

Tired of pretending to be alive

Tired of the pain, the realness of the cruel life

Tired of the people that irritate my soul

Tired of restraining myself from "acting out"

Tired of smiling when I really want to cry

Tired of laughing when I feel like being a destroyer

I'm just tired of wearing this mask, that everyone believes is real

I'm tired of pretending to be great

Tired of pretending to be a fool as others try to deceive me with lies

I'm tired of wearing this mask, that everyone believes is real...

Agony awakes me

My mind is compelled to the dangers of tomorrow

Sleepless nights on the run chasing dollars

Burying my head under pillows of sorrow

I'm awake but the giant has been beat humiliated,

Humbled, and non-hostile

But quick to move on the daily grind and hustle

The blind are leading the blind; noticing the decline of love in

Mankind and they say keep hope alive

Tell me how is that so when everyone is afraid to live and complicate

The one thing that is; figure out that four letter word

I'm sure you heard its always transferred till ignored and allowed to

Fly away as quick as a bird

I want to be who I am but most people won't understand

Showing love that's how I live in a world so complicated and negative

Full of temptation, times are changing no more persuading

This is a real conversation, my heart is exposed

So the mask is fading

Michael Miller is a poet born in Hamlet, North Carolina currently residing in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Miller writes poetry songs and short stories by occasion. Miller has also attended spoken word and poetry workshops.

Vinelle Paullisa Cudjoe was born in Trinidad Tobago currently residing in Biche in Trinidad. Cudjoe is a nursing student at the College of Applied Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT).

Peycho Kanev is the Editor-In-Chief of *Kanev Books*. His poems have appeared in more than 600 literary magazines, such as: *Poetry Quarterly*, *Evergreen Review*, *Hawaii Review*, and many others. Kanev has won several European awards for his poetry and he is nominated for the Pushcart Award and Best of the Net. His poetry collection *Bone Silence* was released in September 2010 by Desperanto Publishing Group. A new collection of his poetry, titled *Requiem for One Night*, will be published by Desperanto Publishing Group in 2012.

MEAT

By Peycho Kanev

I still remember the eagles
perched on the rocks
and, after that, leaping from the infinity
into the abyss to look for meat.

So majestically!
The smooth feathers and the shining talons,
pulsing against the Sun.

I still remember those eagles
from my dream.
So real!
Was I 5 or 8?
But I still haven't forgotten those creatures.

They were perching on my hands
and pecking at the pieces of meat
and, after that, they flew towards the empyrean,
but their feathered souls
stayed with me,

even now...

One of them sits on my left shoulder,
like some obscure critic,
frowning at these lines
and pecking at
th w rds th t I m writ ng.

SACRED WIND

By Peycho Kanev

The dark and stinking wind
blows through
my shattered window.

I sit naked on the chair
with a beer bottle in my hand
and let the wind on me.

My radio is broken,
my life is torn,
and my girl is somewhere in
the deep black night.

As the lovers love,
as the flowers grow,
as the junkies blow

I feel the wind
and he rips my flesh
until I am only bones
and I am beautiful
again.

HM Gruendler-Schierloh is a bilingual writer and translator. To support her deep interest in verbal and written communication with academic credentials, the author acquired a BA in journalism as well as advanced credits in linguistics. Some of HM Gruendler-Schierloh's work has been published in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and online.

IF IT IS LOVE - A SONNET

By HM Gruendler-Schierloh

The sadness I detect within your smile
betrays the secret you have never told.
I muse and wonder, hoping all the while
to never learn the truths your eyes unfold.
My thoughts are drifting in a pool of pain,
yearning to stay – yet begging to be free.
Love's treasure chest once opened up in vain,
releasing images of pleasures not to be.
For me to dwell once more within your charms,
again to cherish all I now bemoan,
we need the love you've spent in other arms.
Still clutching tightly, we are already alone.
Let's not give in to feelings easily swayed.
If it is love --- its beauty has decayed.

ARTISTIC AWAKENING

By HM Gruendler-Schierloh

Longing,
for anything – anyone,
gradually turning into
an exercise of something
and someone
to care for.

Serendipity,
deceitfully camouflaged
as desired wellbeing,
dissolving into nothing
and no one
to dream about.

Realization
to embrace the agony
of illusive inspiration
as incentive for someone
and something
to be created.

Janet Butler relocated to the Bay Area in 2005 after many years in central Italy. She teaches Test Prep to foreign students in San Francisco, and lives in Alameda with Fulmi, a lovely Spaniel mix she rescued in Italy and brought back with her. Butler has work appearing and forthcoming in *Mason's Road*, *Assisi*, *Caduceus*, and *The Quotable*. Her poems have placed for the third consecutive year in the Bay Area Poetry Coalition's annual contest. Her most recent chapbook is "Searching for Eden" from Finishing Line Press.

MORNING

By Janet Butler

Morning stumbles over hills
round hills, soft like a breast
waiting a hand, a caress.

Morning raises a frazzled head
ribbons of dawn helter-skelter
disheveled like the bed she left.

She dresses for day in proper blues
slips into wanton red at dusk
waits in shadows for her lover, Night.

Sarah Marie Mooney lives near Glasgow in Scotland. Mooney graduated last year with a first class joint honors degree in English and Creative Writing. Sarah won her first national competition, the Henrietta Branford Writing Competition, when she was 15. Sarah currently writes poetry now and she is also the poetry editor for *Octavius*, a new creative writing magazine for student writers.

BACKSPACE POET

By Sarah Marie Mooney

I click **delete** and see the words
Disappear forever –
Now you'll never know how I feel

And maybe soon I won't remember

Clinton Van Inman was born in Walton-on-Thames, England and graduated from San Diego State University in 1977 with a degree in philosophy. Inman works as a high school teacher in Tampa. He is one of the few last standing Beat poets. He is trying to get a collection of poems together for future publication called, "Far From Out" or "One Last Beat." Many of his poems have been published over the years. Recent publications include the *Tower Journal*, *Essence*, *The Warwick*, and many others. Also some of his poems have been recently read on YouTube by Janet K. of Down in the *Dirt magazine*, which publishes many of his poems.

SONG OF ULYSSES

By Clinton Van Inman

For greatness and glory's sake,
For all things rich and noble,
In proud ships tall let us make
Again where only men are able.

Tired we've grown of glitter and gold,
The Cimmerian curse of a market place,
Let us dream of Delphic days of old
That even Poseidon's rage could not erase.

Come, arise, my men, arise
For tomorrow we shall sail
Again under blue Aegean skies
There to find newer walls to assail.

The Sirens' song had made us weak
For we have slept too long and late.
Now for greater joys let us seek
Knowing we are masters of our fate.

SONG OF SIRENS

By Clinton Van Inman

Come closer and you shall hear
Voices only the seas remember
As your proud ship rolls near
And soon upon the rocks surrender.

For those who hear our chorus
There is no turning back,
Or for you, steadfast Ulysses
From the cold, billowing black.

For you are proud, defiant, and true,
Among the Achaeans the bravest and best.
Listen for a voice is calling you,
A voice, a voice unlike all the rest.

Listen as Penelope waits for you.
For we know everything which is Troy!
Listen as her voice is calling you.
For we know everything which is Troy!

Saul Hughes is a Welsh writer living in Toulouse, France.

WINE-DARK SEAS

By Saul Hughes

i
Night's moon-filmed waters churn,
Unfolding waves blackly,
Panic, scaled and finned,
Swims out towards me,
Circling the broken mast,
Brine-corroded rigging
Of my wind-spurned trawler,
Static on wine-dark seas.

ii
A light frost of birdsong,
That brittle crust of calls,
Fallen on the morning;
Tidal fears then recede
Exposing salt-smoothed shells
That glimmer soothingly
On the sealess sandscape,
White, immeasurable.

LIGHT YEARS DISTANT

By Saul Hughes

We are opened up and then pulled apart,
There's neither violence nor resistance;
It's a tightly-turned wheel being cranked,
Forcing further those bits that were once us;
Dry-mouthed, stomach-squeezing diasporas.
A heart honeycombed, remorse laundered,
Sundered in a tongue-tied awareness:
Parts of me are now light years distant.

THIS DREAMLIKE TIME

By Nan Rush

When the clocks stand still,
when the curtains drift
and cover me,
when the moon on the
windowsill
sparkles the ashtray,
when the scented candles burn,
when the ghosts of the past,
free of their wrappings,
dance and sway
to the scent of old photographs,
when monsters rear their heads,
vast jaws that swallow me,
phallic,
cold.

When phantoms touch me,
shaped like the muzzles of guns,
shooting bullets like lead
but fashioned of come,
when memories designed by me
let loose a torrent of years
and dreams left behind,
scattered like tears
from a roving mad mind,
when song lyrics,
obscure
and powerful
roar past my ears,
when the pressure of money
crushes my feet
before I can begin to look for a job,
when the weight of
unasked-for
terminations
and unattainable vacations
and relocations crush me,
when no alarm clock
jars me into the day,
when my characters say:
kill me
or enliven me,
but please –
make me hum.

Sounding out songs,
struggling to match my notes
on the keys
to the songs that echo in my jaded ears
from past years,
years of innocence,
love unaccounted for,
boredom unknown,
limits alien to my
world of stars,
of stars,
of stars.

Nan Rush is a poet and musician who has been published in *Rolling Stone*, *Poets On*, *Yet Another Small Magazine*, *Thirteen*, and *Rambunctious Review*. She has completed a short non-fiction book on her family, and a first draft of a fantasy novel. Rush has been the featured poet at Godfrey Daniels' Coffeehouse in Bethlehem, PA.

Jose Paolo Calcetas is working as a writer for George "E.R." Ejercito Estregan, Governor of the Province of Laguna and multi-awarded actor/champion public servant in the Philippines. He began writing and won his first competition at the age of 8. He has been a scholastic journalist for 17 years and is the founding president of Pass the Passion, a journalism-based organization that conducts free trainings and seminars for young and old writing enthusiasts. He won several international recognitions such as: Special Citation, 3rd Dokdo International Essay Competition (Seoul, South Korea); Champion, 4th Scott Hammond Essay Competition (California, USA), and the only finalist from the Philippines with two entries at the 2012 Littworld International Blogging Competition (Nairobi, Kenya).

FIDELITY

By Jose Paolo Calcetas

With all my life, I love
You; I have never

wanted anyone else; I
have always wanted to
be with you...

I plan to build a
Home where you
Will be the queen

I want you to be
the mother of my kids

To hold your hand
When things get rough
And destiny yearns

Whenever I work or
When I play, nothing
Else runs in my
Mind....

I want to wake up
And sleep beside you

I wanted to devote my
Life to you; to spend my
Days making you
The queen of my life...

And my nights warming
Up in your embrace...
Your body next to mine

...As we kiss, roses fall
From the sky

...as we touch, heaven
Comes down to us

I have always wanted
To give you the world
And walk down the aisle
But I can't...

Because my wife will kill me.

A BUTTERFLY MY HANDS CAN NEVER HOLD

By Jose Paolo Calcetas

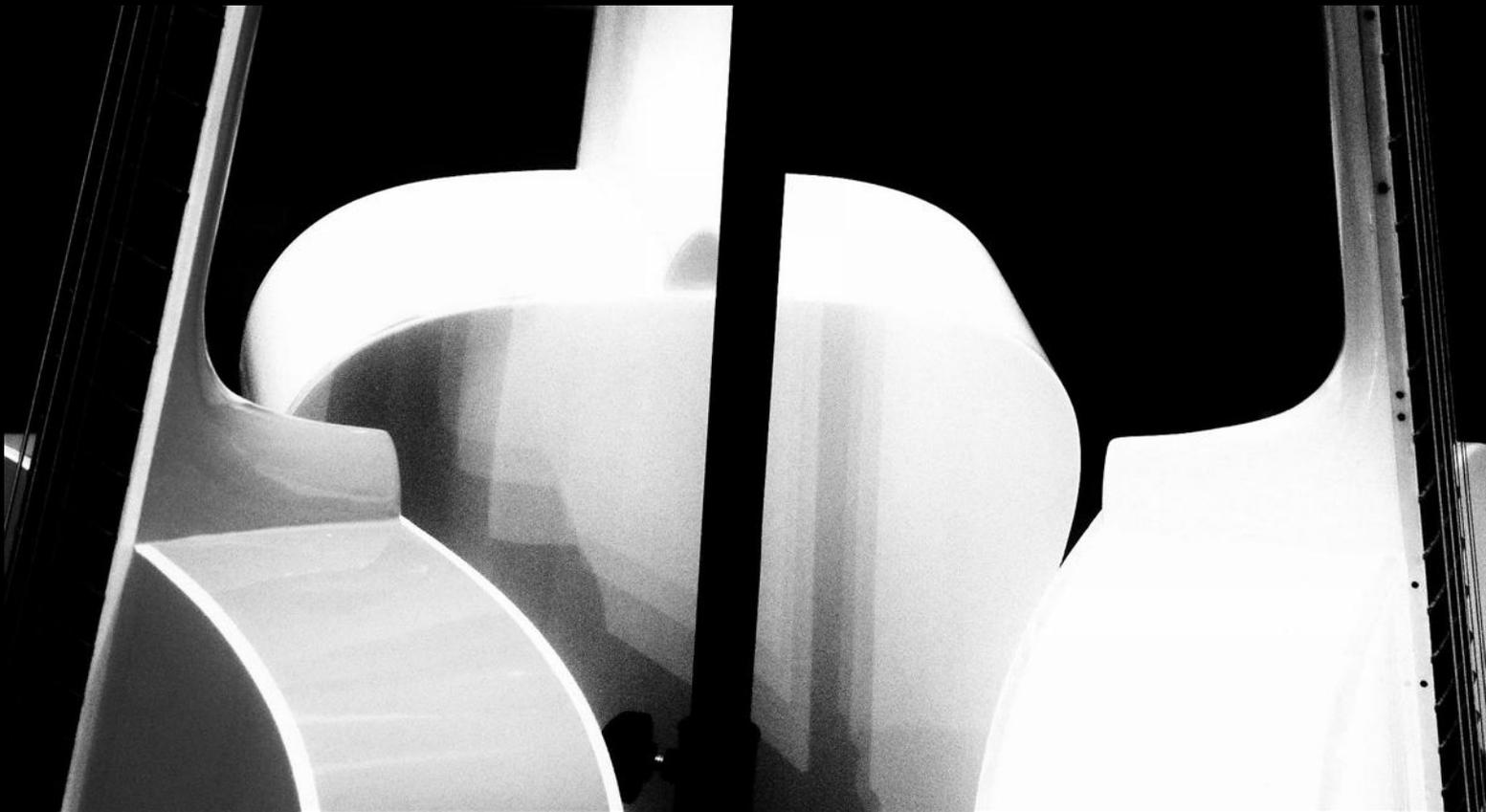
A pink butterfly flew by my window
It walks in its feet, each up to its toe
But its wings, I have seen love flow
A charm that lifts me when I feel low

Sheer enchantment fills my head
The great desire to bring her to bed
It flopped its wings and stayed instead
With her teary eyes, a tale has been said

After a long plight, it runs out of breathe
Will she be able to survive or yield to death?
What will I do with this pink butterfly?
Should I wait in vain as time goes by?

I want to touch it, I want to try
But if I do so, away it might fly
I'd rather not have my desire be told
So I won't lose the butterfly...
My hands can never hold

INTRODUCING PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELEANOR LEONNE BENNETT



Eleanor Leonne Bennett is a 16 year old internationally award winning photographer and artist who won first place with National Geographic, The World Photography Organisation, Nature's Best Photography, Papworth Trust, Mencap, The Woodland trust and Postal Heritage. Her photography has been published in the Telegraph, The Guardian, BBC News Website and on the cover of books and magazines in the United states and Canada. Her art is globally exhibited , having shown work in London, Paris, Indonesia, Los Angeles, Florida, Washington, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Canada, Spain, Germany, Japan, Australia and The Environmental Photographer of the year Exhibition (2011) amongst many other locations. She was also the only person from the UK to have her work displayed in the National Geographic and Airbus run See The Bigger Picture global exhibition tour with the United Nations International Year Of Biodiversity 2010.

FICTION

THE GREEN FILTER

By Kim Bond

Kim Bond holds a BBA and draws on business writing experience to entertain readers. Her stories appear in *Johnny America*, *Best of Foliate Oak*, and *Joyful!*

From petite models to architectural details, every image I captured in my camera lens earned rave reviews from critics. Customers flocked to buy my work after it appeared in the photography exhibit. My name, Gavin Beck, grew larger than life.

I abandoned noodle package dinners alone in a one-bedroom flat and took up sushi in a new apartment alongside my favorite model. At first glance, I saw nothing special about Vanessa. She was beautiful like the other models. But when she began to pose, she unleashed her inner self. I watched Vanessa through the lens as she bit into a plump orange and juice sprayed from her perfect lips. I knew she had to be mine.

I begged her to go to dinner with me. For the next few months, we were inseparable. She loved what I loved, ate what I ate, and watched my favorite TV shows. We both wanted the same things out of life—marriage, children, and a white picket fence. So one afternoon as she sat at her kitchen table flipping through a magazine with a deep conditioning treatment on her hair and an oatmeal facial on her face, I proposed.

She jumped up from the colonial chair she had undoubtedly bought at a consignment shop. She slid the ring on her finger and screamed, “Yes!” She kissed me, leaving oatmeal gobs around my mouth which she carefully wiped away before kissing me again and again until I looked as though I was wearing an oatmeal mask.

Everything was not perfect though. She described herself as “green”—unlike me. This minor detail grew more detrimental after I proposed. Even when wearing her lemon-colored stilettos, my fiancé refused to ride in my newly leased Mercedes to any destination within five miles. She cringed every time I threw away cottage cheese containers and junk mail. Soon I found these items reused as decorations for my apartment!

Modern society told me she was correct and I was the ignorant buffoon for making it a point of contention, so I bit my tongue until I thought it might bleed. Truly I loved her, but I soon found myself making excuses not to see her and considered breaking off the engagement.

I decided to clear my head and escape the city awhile. Under the guise of work, I booked a mountain cabin for the whole month of March. Vanessa drove me to the airport and blinked away tears as she kissed me goodbye.

Once the plane landed, a sense of freedom washed over me. The rented sports utility vehicle contributed to my new sense of identity, one more hardy and less debonair. I took up smoking again. This time, I smoked expensive organic cigarettes rather than the generics I smoked in art school. Most mornings, I relaxed on an Adirondack chair waiting for the sun to position itself for a shot of the glorious snow-capped peaks.

The towering mountains and boundless sky chased away decision-making woes and the static in my head. When March ended, I was no closer to calling off the engagement or committing to marriage than the day I arrived. I dreaded the thought of life with or without Vanessa.

She would have picked me up from the airport had I called, but instead I hailed a taxi. As the driver accelerated, I stared out the window. The city projected a dark hue in contrast to the pure landscape where I had spent the last month. Graffiti-stained buildings and broken windows I had seen hundreds of times appeared filthy to me rather than as simply as a part of the landscape. Industrial smoke filled my lungs. I offered the remainder of my cigarette pack to the taxi driver, which he eagerly snapped from my fingers.

Once in my apartment, I absentmindedly flipped the light switch when my hand grazed the uneven surface of the light switch cover. I turned to familiarize myself with it again after my month away. Vanessa had decouped the light switch with unsolicited catalog scraps some time back. I remembered begrudgingly rolling my eyes without even really looking at it.

In this moment, I could not remove my eyes from the color collage created with sheared images from the ads. My careful study of the images revealed the pores of an orange, a colonial furniture leg, and half the face of a child. My body rushed with excitement at the jewel I unearthed in my very own apartment. The light switch decoupage seemed pregnant with symbolism about my and Vanessa’s past, present, and future—all of which promised to be irrefutably beautiful.

SARAH'S WORLD

By Audrey Williams

Audrey Williams earned her MFA from Chicago State University. Her work has appeared in *The Alchemist Review* (flash fiction), an Honorable Mention from *ByLine Magazine* (novel excerpt), and *Bewildering Press* (short story). A short story published by Sleepytown Press and a short story in *African American Review* are forthcoming. She lives in Chicago with Danielle, Chris, Jeremy and Malik.

Someone once said, that what we fear grows exponentially, or something of that nature, and it's true in life and it became true for Sara. The truth is what we fear is usually that part of life that we least understand and so we put blockers around it.

Before the age of seven, Sara, smaller in stature than the normal aged seven-year-old, and timid was basically a carefree child.

Fear of the unknown stalked and claimed her at the age of seven and a half, when her cat Boots died. He'd gotten tangled in the iron cord hanging in the utility closet. She found him with the cord around his neck and his four paws dangling midair. No breathing, nor playfulness or life resonated from her cat. She stood there for a long time, not moving, breathing lightly, and waiting, for Boots to meow. Finally she snapped out of it and let out a long piercing scream before running down the hall, clutching her stomach, in search of her mother. Her toast and Tropical Punch juice she'd just had splat on the floor missing her mother by an inch.

They buried her cat in the back yard under the flowering Golden Rain tree. Her mother had said, "It's a perfect spot for Boots." Sara nodded, and wondered if the weird feeling on her insides would stay with her forever.

In school Sara felt intimidated by her larger sized peers and her fear grew. She never felt like she truly fit in. Her teachers, though, would praise her saying they wished they'd had more students just like her. That's because she didn't talk, raise her hand, or do anything to cause any attention to her. Her teachers let her be since she wasn't any trouble.

"I think home schooling might be best for her," her dad had said unexpectedly one day following a parent-teacher meeting. This was quickly followed through on and she was withdrawn from her classes. She skipped experiencing the awkward first date, and dance, the first kiss, learning to handle social activities and many other struggles and triumphs that young people experience.

Moving into adulthood her fears intensified. At her much loved mother's death, as much as she wished, she couldn't bring herself to touch the lifeless body that lay on the bed. And the weird and familiar feeling she'd nurtured throughout her life was with her causing her stomach to knot and twist. In her mind, it was a non-entity, strange being, not her mother who had once been alive and vibrant. Sara stood close, inches away, willing herself to just brush her fingers against it, to no avail. By now she knew now not to question her terror of the unknown.

Her father had died three years before that, and she had loved him even more. Yet she had stood approximately three feet away from the corpse, wishing that she could come closer, but standing frozen, unable to move. Her father had died in a hospital and was already gone by the time she'd made it for her daily visit. He'd been there for seven days, in a coma, and never regained consciousness. She had enjoyed being with him. The quiet hum of the respirator was somehow comforting. She always talked to him and touched him and squeezed his hand reassuringly.

"I'll be back tomorrow," she'd say, and then kiss his cheek.

She remembered another saying, that the reason we don't want to get too close, is because we fear too deeply and she thought that also was true.

Now she sat in her darkened bedroom rocking back and forth and avoiding the window. Looking around she felt comforted by the darkness. Technology along with a small trust fund had allowed her to transact bill payments, communications, food deliveries, magazine subscriptions and every day-to-day living-ness to be done remotely.

Her neighbors wouldn't know her. She never was a visitor at any of their homes, nor had she invited any of them to hers. In fact, the people on her block didn't know that Sara lived in the unassuming, darkened house with the black shades that sat back off the street.

She heard stirrings outside her front door and felt the fear within. She also heard *it* creeping up to her front door. Outside parked at the curb she had seen the white van and had read the word, *ward*, and she didn't want to think about its meaning. Instead, she thought about how she felt secure in her home where she'd grown up. The thought seemed to help settle the uneasiness creeping outside her door.

"Ms. Washington, open the door," the voice sounded insistent.

Sara heard the man. She didn't move.

Instead she remained in her reading chair surrounded by the comforts of having everything close. She didn't need people, because she had things. Meanwhile some ants busily worked in a corner. A bug crawled across her foot but she didn't notice any of that. Closing her eyes, she saw herself lovingly stroking her dead cat, heard her whisper good night to her mother and then watching as she bent and plant a kiss on her dad's cheek. This was living, to her.

I know my rights; as long as I'm not mean or spiteful, she thought. Sighing wearily she was hoping that she would find solace and peace and hopefully drown out the noise just outside her door.

"We know you're there. We have orders. This house is unsafe." And then, "I'm not going anywhere...open up!"

Just then a tiny flicker of a smile touched her lips. She hesitated there experiencing the moment. The smile finding reception lingered and slowly moved across her full lips and then spread ever so slightly towards her face and a tiny bit to her eyes. They crinkled and the sensation warmed her a bit. Surprised by the sensations she then felt a tiny glimmer of recognition. She realized that this wasn't the first time that fear had come to her door but somehow this time she was ready for it. It felt old and familiar and comfortable, and this was pleasing to her.

Then she heard a loud crash that made her jump. Someone was in the house.

"Holy shit! Look at all this crap!"

"What is that smell?"

There were two distinct and different voices Sara flinched at the thought of outsiders being in her house. She looked lovingly around her room. The mounds of papers, food, clothing, furniture, dust, dirt, ashes, cobwebs, centipedes, tiny crawling creatures, spiders, bugs, and filth that had accumulated over the years was stacked from floor to ceiling. She steeled herself. No one's taking me anywhere she thought, while clutching the butcher knife to her thin chest. Why couldn't they just leave her alone?

Ms. Washington, where are you?"

Sara didn't move and neither did she answer. She sat perfectly still and at the same time let her mind drift unaware on a current that slowly dissipated but not before it rested on an incredible sensation of familiarity. Feelings of being embraced and of being caressed enveloped her. She didn't hear the men enter her room. Neither did she see them dressed in protective clothing like the kind worn during chemical warfare.

"Wow! She looks like she's been dead for awhile," one of the men said.

"This place is horrendous," the other said, and then, "It's sad she was all alone."

"It is...perhaps she didn't feel alone...you can barely move in here."

"Let's remove her corpse, first."

BROTHER

By: Roberta Lynn Rosencutter

Roberta Lynn Rosencutter received her B.A. in English from Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas where she tutored students in writing. Her work has appeared in the *Humid Literary Journal*. She is an avid geocacher and clarinet player.

I don't know your birthday, or how old you are. I don't know your middle name, or if we have ever shared the same last name. I don't know if you have freckles. I don't know if you have blue eyes, or if we share the same nose. I don't know if you are left-handed like me, or if you hate peanut butter the same way I do. I don't know if you played little league baseball. I don't know if you took piano lessons. I don't know the name of your first puppy. I don't know which flavor of Popsicle is your favorite. I don't know if you got picked on in middle school, or if you had a date to your senior prom. I don't know if you wore braces. I don't know when you graduated from high school. I don't know if you're a Republican, or a Democrat, or something else. I don't know if you've ever been married or if you have any kids. I don't know if you believe in God. I don't know why they have never said your name. I don't know why I never knew about you until I found that smudged, old photograph in the drawer. I don't know if Dad ever looked for you. I don't know why he got divorced and married my mom instead. I don't know if you know who I am. I don't even know if you are alive. I know how to speak short phrases in Spanish. I know how to parallel park. I know where the noble gases are on the Periodic Table. I know how to perform CPR. I know the Pythagorean Theorem. I don't know you.

RETIREMENT

By D.T. Robbins

D.T. Robbins has works published in *Chiron Review* and *Full of Crow*. He lives in Southern California with his wife and daughter.

Marvin Hyer stood in the corner of his seventh floor office, staring out across the metropolis he had witnessed evolve over the past twenty years. The city buzzed in choral unison, moving obediently in a steady flow. Marvin drank burnt coffee from the day before--his preference for taste diminished significantly, along with any sleep--and scratched his matted, graying beard. His boss had suggested he shave, as it didn't seem to keep up with the clean-cut image of most of the other Marketing Representatives. Marvin declined, not seeing the point of upkeep these days. Yet, his wedding ring remained polished. The sun pierced through the heavily fogged skyline, casting light across the floor. Marvin squinted, rubbed the bags under his eyes, and stepped into the shadows.

Today was Marvin's last day.

An hour after work had begun, several co-workers gathered around his desk, singing obligatory celebratory songs and wishing him good luck in the future. One of the younger, prettier women handed Marvin his retirement gift. Leaving it next to the trashcan, Marvin half-heartedly thanked everyone, shaking hands and reluctantly receiving pats on the back as the others exited his office and returned to their respective cubicles.

Marvin removed his coat and tossed it on the grey carpet. Opening the top drawer of his desk, he pulled out the heavily marked upon *Travel USA* book of Washington and again poured over the areas he and Emma had planned on spending their remaining years. Emma: Marvin's wife. She had passed away in an accident ten months prior to today. Tracing his fingers over the notes Emma had made in the margins, Marvin grew angry. His chest rose and fell vigorously. Marvin would now travel alone.

The phone rings. Marvin closes his eyes and regains some composure before answering, expecting either security reminding him of the procedure for turning in his cards and clearance pin numbers or someone from the fifth floor with another problem only he could solve.

"This is Marvin." he answers gruffly.

"Hi, Marvin." a woman's voice says.

"Yea, hi. Who's this?"

"My name is Olive."

Marvin pauses, anticipating more of an explanation. Nothing. "Ok, Olive. What can I help you with?" he asks, flipping the pages of his travel book with his free hand.

"Nothing, really. I just called to talk." she says lightly.

Confused, "Excuse me?"

"I'm just calling to chat with you before you leave."

"Well, I'm not in much of a mood for keeping up a conversation today. Is there something you need?"

"Yes, I need to talk to you. I just told you that." she quips.

Marvin snickers. "Is this a joke? Did someone put you up to this?"

The woman laughs.

"Seriously, who decided to waste my time?"

The woman's voice hints that Marvin ought to take her more seriously. "You did, Marvin. You made me call you. I've been waiting long enough. I'm a bit disappointed in you, you know?"

"Really? How's that, *Olive*?" Marvin asks, not hiding his rising irritation.

"I just always assumed you were much stronger than the man I know now."

"*The man you know*?" he mocks, laughing at the ridiculousness of this stranger's implications. "Well, I'm sorry I let you down, lady. And please tell whoever the hell you're working with that I'd rather not be bothered today," and hangs up.

Cursing under his breath, Marvin grabs his empty coffee cup and marches to the break room for a refill. Halfway down the hall, he hears his phone ringing again. He decides to let it ring until the caller gives up. After several minutes of pacing back and forth, he grows agitated, springs toward the phone, and answers.

"Yea!?" he barks.

"When you were sixteen years old, Joseph Ellis would wait for you on 2nd and Euclid as you walked home..." Olive begins.

Marvin's neck runs cold. "Who the hell is this?"

"...and every day he would beat you black and blue."

He slowly descends into his black, leather chair. "How do you know that?" he whispers.

"I'm not finished, Marvin." Olive pauses, waiting for his silence. "Day after day, for two years you allowed him to beat you senseless. But *finally*, the week before your graduation, you retaliated. You broke his nose and knocked out his front teeth, didn't you, Marvin?" she asks, allowing him to join the conversation now.

"Yes." The word barely escapes his cracked lips.

"Yes." she echoes. "Emma was watching that day, wasn't she?"

Marvin slams the phone down repeatedly with all his strength, breaking a few pieces of plastic from the earpiece. He shoots like a cannon out of his office into the break room where his co-workers quietly eat their lunches.

"Marvin? You ok?" a guy from the IT department asks.

Marvin's voice slowly rises. "I don't know which one of you find this amusing, but I can promise you, it's sure as shit *not!*" The air in the room grows thin as everyone holds their breath. "After today, I will never have to walk into this place again, so don't think for a second that I won't kick any of your asses for pulling a stunt like this!" He meets each pair of eyes in the room before storming out.

The phone is ringing again as Marvin barges into his office. He slams the door behind him and yanks the cord out of its socket. Forty-five minutes of pacing back and forth, incessantly wiping his sopping forehead pass. He grabs his cold coffee and returns to the window, again meditating upon the living city below him. Two more hours pass. His cup is only half-empty, and Marvin still refuses to sit down. The sun has moved to the other side of his building, leaving only shadows lying across the concrete in its memory. There's a knock at the door. The blonde receptionist lets Marvin know that his boss is trying to call him to no avail. He returns a snide remark, reconnects the phone, and sits. For a few moments, he waits in quiet fear for the phone to ring. It obliges.

"Yes?" Marvin answers, apprehensively. The boss goes on to explain what an asset to the company Marvin's been over the past twenty years and what a great guy they're losing. All of this is untrue, as of late, of course. More genuinely, however, he expresses his condolences for the loss of Emma and assures Marvin that, in time, he will find peace.

"The universe does what it wants with us, for better or worse. And it's not up to us to make sense of it." he says.

Marvin quickly thanks him, and hangs up the phone. Immediately, it rings again. Marvin stares at the phone, examining his options. He chooses to answer, but says nothing. Silence lingers for a moment over the line.

"Emma had been watching you get jumped every day from across the street for two years, hadn't she?"

Marvin's hands ball into fists.

"What did she say to you after you knocked out that boy, Marvin?" Olive asks.

The tears form in Marvin's eyes. "For Christ's sake, please leave me alone." he pleads.

"You can either speak with me now, Marvin, or I will be your shadow at every moment until your death." Her voice is cold, harsh, void of all sympathy. Marvin continues to cry without a noise. "What did she say, Marvin? The day you stood up to Joseph Ellis?"

Marvin closed his eyes and traveled back in time. The young woman that would one day be his wife ran across the street while Marvin stood stiff, trembling. Her long, strawberry-blonde hair barely brushed her shoulders. She removed the bandana around her wrist and wiped the tears and blood from Marvin's face, as he remained motionless. Joseph Ellis was now crawling toward his home in the background. Marvin felt the embarrassment of crying during a fight swarm across his body.

"Are you okay?" Emma asked, continuing to pat Marvin's face down.

"Fine." he lied.

She paused, and looked briefly into his black and blue eyes. "I was wondering how long it would take for you to fight back." she beamed.

Marvin's eyes snapped open, back to the present. He recited her every word back to Olive, weeping openly.

"When *will* you fight back, Marvin?"

The tears fell heavier. He didn't respond.

"It wasn't the seizure that killed her that night, was it, Marvin?"

His heart plummeted into his chest, pounding with anger and resentment at this woman who now stabbed at his most secretive, unhealed wounds. "Stop!" he grunted between clenched teeth.

"Answer my question, Marvin."

"No! Stop this, please! I'm hanging up. I can't do this. I'm hanging up! That's too far!"

"Fine. Hang up. But these questions will continue to linger, to haunt you forever." She waits for a retort. Nothing. "It wasn't the seizure, was it?"

"No." he whispers.

"No?"

"NO!" he shouts. "It wasn't the damn seizure! She..." he stammers. Tears and snot collide as they slide down his face rapidly and onto his shirt. "...SHE DROWNED!!" Hunched over his desk, Marvin sobs into his sleeve.

"Marvin, pay attention." Olive commands. "Or this day will never end."

It takes him a moment to come to. "I'm here." he says as he wipes his face.

"Where were you when the accident happened, Marvin?"

His eyes shrink in rage. "That's not fair!" he exclaims.

"WHERE WERE YOU, MARVIN?!" Olive no longer hides her fierceness. "WHERE WERE YOU AS SHE WAS DYING?! AS SHE STRUGGLED FOR AIR?!"

"Damn it, *enough!*"

Olive continued to press him, allotting him no escape.

After cursing Olive, himself, the heavens, life, death, and virtually everything under God's creation, "I WAS ASLEEP!! I FELL ASLEEP ON THE COUCH DOWNSTAIRS!! I COULD HAVE SAVED HER AND I DIDN'T DO A DAMN THING!! IT'S MY FAULT!! IT'S MY FAULT!!" He screamed and groaned in such deep pain that his voice seemed to shake the building. Marvin slumped from his chair and fell to his knees, pounding his fists into the floor. In a matter of seconds, Marvin relived that night over and over again for what felt like centuries. He watched his wife lay dead in the tub of warm water. The shampoo and soaps scattered on the floor where her vibrating, contorted body had knocked them as she began to helplessly sink into the bath. Her hair sloshed back and forth in the soapsuds. Her perfectly smooth, freckled skin

beginning to pale as the blood ceased from flowing through her veins and into her heart. Her wide eyes displayed such fear---the last emotion she was to experience in this life. She would have still been alive if he had just chosen to stay with her, talk with her while she bathed as she had asked him when he came home that evening. But he was too tired from working all day, he said. Exhausted. Stressed.

He was careless, selfish. He traded a fifteen-minute nap for Emma's life.

Several co-workers gathered at his door, watching in horror, unable to do anything. Two men crouched a foot from him, seeking the right opportunity to offer him any help. After an eternity, his throat grew dry and his voice sank back down into his stomach. His growls slowly became whimpers as he knelt on the office floor, begging for his pain to end. The phone receiver cracked as his grip tightened, and again as his hands began to tire. The voice on the other line eventually called his name.

"Are you still there, Marvin?" Olive continued until Marvin slowly brought the phone to his ear.

"Leave me alone." His voice was hoarse, tired, and lifeless.

"How long will it take you to fight back, Marvin?"

He stared at the floor. She made no sense to him.

"How long will it take you to fight back?"

Click. Olive was gone.

Marvin set the phone upon his desk and slowly rose to his feet. Two of his co-workers rushed into the office to lift him back into the chair. Someone brought a cup of cold water. He sipped it slowly. After reassuring everyone that he was not in need of any medical attention, they left in twos and threes until the doorway was empty.

Twenty minutes of staring outside the window passed by. Marvin packed his briefcase, refusing to look upon his office any longer, and left the building forever.

The purple evening sky fell upon Marvin as he trudged along the busy sidewalks. Marvin walked forever, allowing his thoughts to fuse with Emma and Olive's exhortation. Slowly, he began to melt into the canvas of the reality around him. Despite all that had happened to him today, Marvin knew he played just a small part in some grand storyline. And Emma, though meaning everything to him, was even more meaningless now that she was gone. She no longer possessed a role, a function. Any contribution she had once had was no longer necessary---it was, in fact, void. She was now only a memory. A beloved memory. A stepping stone onto some greater, unknown plane.

A coffee shop a block down caught Marvin's attention. His appetite had returned after ten months. He ordered a blueberry muffin and a small coffee with vanilla cream. Tipping the barista five bucks at the counter, he turned and left. The sky was growing darker and as he stepped outside, he bumped into a short, petite, young lady. Marvin spilled his coffee all over her. She stumbled back and dropped her purse, spilling all of the contents onto the filthy concrete.

"I'm so sorry!" he said, sincerely. "Let me help." He bent down to help her, and as he continued to apologize, her eyes widened in enormous fear. She started trembling. The young woman clinched her fists and started swinging violently. A right cross to his left jaw. A scratch to his right cheek. A kick to the groin. Marvin slumped to his knees, crossing his arms to shield his face.

"YOU STAY AWAY FROM ME, YOU SON OF A BITCH!" she screamed.

The manner of her reaction to him confused him entirely. Still, Marvin recognized her voice instantly. "Olive?!" he asked between his forearms.

A crowd was now forming. Olive continued to wail on Marvin, though not causing any real pain. Several men jumped between them and, with more strength than they assumed they'd have to use, attempted to pry Olive off the man.

After being pulled a few feet from one another, Olive's voice became more sane, less fearful, less deranged. "Stay away from me! I can't take this anymore! Please!" she pleaded.

"What?" Marvin was baffled. He stepped forward, reaching at her arm. A large black man blocked his path, threatening him. Without any care towards the growing crowd that eyed Marvin maliciously, "Olive, listen, you were right! You were right. I see that now. I'm grateful. I'm very grateful." he screamed over the large man's shoulders before being shoved into the brick wall of the coffee shop. Tears welled in his eyes as he expressed his appreciation, praying she understood.

Olive stared at him, utterly dumbfounded.

"You know this guy?" the black man asked Olive.

Marvin answered first, "She's been calling me at my office all day! Telling me things about my wife! She helped me!"

"LIAR!!" Olive shouted.

She explained to the crowd how Marvin had been calling *her* all day and disclosing information about her past that only she would know. He had forced her to recall the night her son was hit by a drunk driver while riding his bicycle near a grocery store. He made her relive her nightmares. She threw lipstick at Marvin, and sobbed madly.

Both stood there, staring at one another, apparent in their tearful sorrow. Both knowing neither of them was crazy, neither of them was lying. The horror of their situations implied complete and total truthfulness.

"Olive, it's not your fault." He paused. "It's not *our* fault." Marvin fought back.

Olive listens with her eyes on the ground.

A woman in a red overcoat asks Olive if she's all right. Olive gives a slight nod, picks up a few things from her spilled belongings, and turns to leave. The crowd slowly dispersed.

Marvin watched Olive escape his sight. The black man suggested he leave, too. Marvin walked the rest of the way home. He lit a fire, drew his bath, and soaked in the bathtub, allowing his head to sink into the peacefulness of the water.

Outside his window, the city quieted to a low hum.

PHOTOGRAPHY



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Romancing The Craft



OF POETRY AND FICTION

2012 WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

THE KILLING FIELDS (A PANTOUM)

By Marchell Jefferson

Hot on the block another summer in the city,
Snipers riding in dark cars: six deep.
Into a crowd, bullets spray where children play.
On Monday, rows of black cars will clog up traffic.

Snipers riding in dark cars: six deep.
Hype up on drugs and rap music,
On Monday, rows of black cars will clog up traffic,
Mourners will come with tears for the latest young and dead.

Hype up on drugs and rap music
Speeding by, fingers on the trigger: twelve years old.
Mourners will come with tears for the latest young and dead.
Teddy bears and balloons will mark where the child has fallen.

Speeding by, fingers on the trigger: twelve years old,
Is it his fault, his mother sold him to the gangs?
Teddy bears and balloons will mark where the child has fallen.
Like ducks in a row, every year they fall prey.

Is it his fault, his mother sold him to the gangs?
At seven years old to pay for her habit,
Like ducks in a row, every year they fall prey.
Cops don't arrive until the gun fire clears

At seven years old, to pay for her habit he was sold,
At seven years old, he never had a chance.
Cops don't arrive until the gun fire clears,
With nothing to do but bag bodies and quiet the crowd.

At seven years old, he never had a chance.
How many lost to the street, can you count the stars?
Cops won't do a thing but bag bodies and quiet the crowd.
As blood sweeps down the sewers, cops question, but nobody saw a thing.

How many lost to the street, can you count the stars?
While politicians praise themselves and bid for the Olympics.
As blood sweeps down the sewers, cops question, but nobody saw a thing.
A code of silence, while mothers scream for their babies,

While politician praise themselves and bid for the Olympics,
While black backpacks pile up like rotten bodies.
A code of silence, while mothers scream for their babies,
Their screams fall on deaf ears not knowing next time it might be you.

Black backpacks pile up like rotten bodies.
Hot on the block, another summer to maggot the city,
Mothers' screams falls on deaf ears, not knowing next time it will be you.
Into another crowd bullets spray where children play; everybody scatters.

NO MORE GAMES

By Mary Hendrix

“Let’s play!” she says to me, tugging at my hand. I shake my head, planting my feet firmly and yanking my arm free from her slim fingers. Alice frowns at me, before shrugging and running towards the large playground. Alice always asks me to play with her, but I never go; instead, I go sit next to the large brick wall with my book.

I don’t read though, just pretend to. Instead, I watch the other kids start up a game of pirates; the plastic play-set turning into an imaginary boat. My chest aches, feelings of loneliness and sadness flaring before I shove them violently away. I know better than to play with anyone.

Mommy liked to play with me. Her favorite game was “What Does Vinny Want?” I never won that game. I could never win the “Make Mommy Happy” game, either. Soon, I became so bad at playing games that they took me away from Mommy. Now I live with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and other kids who can’t live with their real mommies and daddies.

“Vinny?” It’s Mrs. Johnson, her voice quiet as she sits next to me in the garden. Her blonde hair is in a ponytail, and she’s wearing her favorite shirt. It’s pink with white flowers all over it. I look at the flowers instead of her eyes. That’s a bad game to play too, Mommy taught me that.

“You can go play with them, you know. You don’t have to sit here all alone,” she tells me. She tells me this every day, but doesn’t she know I’m not alone? Mrs. Johnson is sitting here with me, and I have my book. I’m not alone because I know in ten minutes Alice will sit down next to me right after Mrs. Johnson leaves, and she will read my book to me.

Mrs. Johnson makes us all come outside after lunch, because she thinks that kids need to play. I don’t know if she’s right; she’s an adult though, so she knows more than I do. I just don’t like playing very much. It hurts a lot. When Mr. Johnson comes home from work we will get to go back inside. When it’s raining or snowing we don’t have to play outside, but are told to play inside instead. I just hold my book and watch. I always watch.

“Remember Vinny, you don’t have to hide anymore,” Mrs. Johnson says, standing up and brushing the dirt from her dark-blue jeans. As soon as she steps back into the house, I see Alice jump off of the monkey bars, waving at the other kids before running towards me. I draw my legs up, letting my head rest on them as she drops to the ground right where Mrs. Johnson was sitting at.

“Hey! Do you want me to read to you?” she asks, just like she asks each time she reads to me. I nod, handing her my book. Alice is in 10th grade, and can read the words that don’t mean anything to me. I listen to her start telling me about how Chris, the clumsy knight, was trying to rescue Princess Emily from the evil dragon.

I close my eyes, letting her words make pictures in my head. But even though Princess Emily is supposed to be tall and thin, with long blonde hair, I see the short and chubby Alice with her really short brown hair instead. She makes a much better princess, because she’s much nicer than the mean and rude Emily. I wish I could be the clumsy knight, but I can’t put myself there like Alice seems to be the princess.

Because I can’t save anyone.

“Hey Vinny,” Alice says, touching my shoulder. I open my eyes tiredly, staring quietly into Alice’s eyes. The only light is from the large moon outside, and it’s making her brown eyes look black instead. I sit up, letting the bed sheets fall backwards. Alice isn’t supposed to be in the boy’s room, since she’s a girl. I tilt my head, and Alice keeps talking.

“I had a nightmare, please come sit in the living room with me?”

I hesitate, knowing that the question is part of a game, the one Mommy always played with me. But Alice looks scared, her hands are shaking; she doesn’t look up to playing games right now. So I take her hand and slide out of bed. We walk down the hallway with the nightlights in each outlet, and it goes to the living room. Alice climbs on the couch, tugging one of the puffy pillows against her chest and hugging it. I sit next to her, hugging my legs instead of a pillow.

“Uncle Joe was there,” Alice whispers, and I just listen. Alice said once that talking about it makes it less real for her. Nightmares are scary, so I want it to be less scary for her. “He wouldn’t leave me alone... It was so dark and I couldn’t breathe. I could hear him laughing, the dirt hitting the top of the box...”

I could hear her voice hitch, the sob coming right after.

“It was so real, I was back there, and the cops never came. Uncle Joe kept laughing and laughing... and I died.”

I reach out and touch her hand, my much smaller hands wrapping around her wrist. I can feel the throb of her heart in the wide limb, and her skin is too cold. I press on the heartbeat in her wrist, as if reminding her she’s alive right now.

"I know, it was a dream. But if they hadn't found me, I would be dead right now. I wouldn't have met you, and you would be all alone. It scared me."

I nod, and she moves over, wrapping her arms around me and crying. I look up to see Mr. Johnson standing in the hallway. He smiles at me and mouths a couple words before leaving back towards his room. I know he will tell Mrs. Johnson that Alice is okay, because he told me 'Thank you.'

"So do you ever think you'll talk out loud?" Alice asks me, swinging her legs back and forth on her stool. I shrug, picking up a different color and filling in the square. I think I'll make all the squares blue, and do the triangles green. The hearts will be brown though. Brown is my favorite color.

"I wonder what you sound like. You're only seven, so maybe your voice is like Jesse's voice. But you're also very gentle, so maybe it's like a younger version of Dad's?"

Alice calls Mr. and Mrs. Johnson "Mom" and "Dad," though I don't know why. They aren't her mom and dad, so she should call them Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. Maybe she's just playing pretend?

"Have you ever talked before? Before coming here to live with us?" she asks me, and I nod. I talked, but that was a long time ago. Talking made me lose the "Make Mommy Happy" game, so I stopped doing it. I'm not sure if I can do it again though. I don't remember how to anymore.

"What did you sound like?"

Stupid. Mommy didn't like it, so it couldn't have sounded like Alice is thinking. Alice sounds nice when she talks. I like listening to Alice talk. It makes me happy.

"Come on, I'm bored. Let's go make a fort in your room!"

I follow her, and do what she says to make a fort. She says only good people can come in. She also says I'm allowed to be in there because I'm good. I don't believe her, but I don't dare disagree.

Alice is gone. The doctors took her away in the ambulance, and Mr. Johnson is with them. I heard them say that they have to make plans to bury her. Alice is afraid to be buried, don't they know that? Her Uncle Joe did that to her and the police rescued her. Why are they doing it again?

"Come on, let's get you cleaned up," Mrs. Johnson says, and I shake my head, pointing to where the big red ambulance is at with Alice. I shake my head, mouthing the word 'bury.'

"She's not coming back, honey. When people—when they die, they go in the ground."

'Scared,' I mouth the word, pointing again.

"She's not scared anymore, honey. She's going to be in a better place from now on."

I frown, but Mrs. Johnson starts leading me away. I don't want to take the clothes off. They have Alice's blood all over them, from when I was trying to wake her up. I don't want them to go away. I won't have Alice anymore, so I want to keep the clothes on. I don't want to forget.

'Vinny,

I lost the game. I can't keep playing anymore. The game of life is over for me, but you need to play for me, okay? Take my turns, and win. I know you can, this is a game you need to play. I tried to teach you, and I hope you learned. Mom and Dad love you, and they will help you win the game. I wish I was strong enough to play with you, but I always knew we were never going to play together.

Love,

Alice.'

Sarah Marie Mooney lives near Glasgow in Scotland. Mooney graduated last year with a first class joint honors degree in English and Creative Writing. Sarah won her first national competition, the Henrietta Branford Writing Competition, when she was 15. Sarah currently writes poetry now and she is also the poetry editor for *Octavius*, a new creative writing magazine for student writers.

REFLECTION

By Sarah Marie Mooney

I see you look at me
For a second to check your hair –
Not knowing what I feel
On this side.

My eyes are yours,
My mouth speaks what you say,
My face is painted as you have chosen,
My hair changes with yours –
Blonde, black, short, long.
I have no control.

Not like you as you stand
In the world that looks like mine
But is not confined
To the frame.

Then, when you decide to leave,
I must exit too
And wait until I'm needed
In some other frame
With you gazing in –
Not knowing I exist

Only as you.

VOLUME III OPEN MIC RECAP

One Night
Five Hours
Pure Torridian Artistry





CREATING ROOTS

To be fruitful is to plant seeds and leave roots. That is the driving force behind our efforts to support the arts by continually helping writers and poets connect with their readers. The Torrid Literature Journal is a seed and the artists who appear therein are the roots. We want people to grab one of our roots and start running with it. We want readers to close the last page and walk away with roots of inspiration, entertainment, education, and information. However, this would not be possible without our supporters. Thanks to people like Holly Wright, Sujata Narayan, Amy Snider, and many others, who have humbled us through their contributions of time, money, resources, and wisdom, we are better able to provide professional products and services that serve the community.

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TL PUBLISHING, INC. PRESENTS

ENTER THE GATEWAY

A POETRY ANTHOLOGY



"I AM THE DOOR; ANYONE WHO ENTERS IN
THROUGH ME WILL BE SAVED (WILL LIVE).
HE WILL COME IN AND HE WILL GO OUT [FREE],
AND WILL FIND PASTURE."
JOHN 10:9 AMP

ENTER THE GATEWAY

TL Publishing is now accepting Christian themed poetry submissions for the upcoming anthology, "Enter the Gateway".

All submissions should be previously unpublished. Please send a maximum of five poems, of any length.

To submit, upload your submission at:

<http://torridliterature.submishmash.com/submit>

Details on where to purchase the book will be provided closer to the release date.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Alice Saunders or visit the website for more information.

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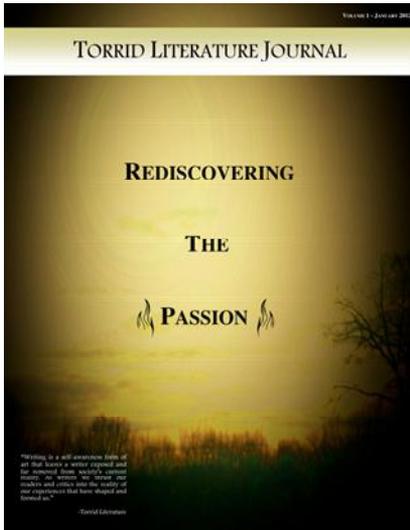
TORRIDIAN HALL OF FAME

Voting is now open! Who will be inducted into our 2012 Torridian Hall of Fame? As we close out our 2012 season, over 80 poets and writers have graced our pages. So much in fact, that we want to hear from you, our readers. We want to know which poem and story defines literature. Tell us which poet / fiction writer had the greatest impact. Cast your vote today! We want to give special recognition to the writers whose work left the biggest impression on you, our readers.

Voting is open to everyone. Writers who have been published in one of our literary journals are official nominees. Voting starts October 1, 2012 and runs through February 28, 2013. One poet and one fiction writer from each volume will be selected and inducted into the Torridian Hall of Fame. The chosen inductees will be based solely on the writers with the highest votes.

Inductees will be awarded with: 1) official acknowledgement of induction in the Torrid Literature Journal; and 2) One year free electronic subscription to the Torrid Literature Journal.

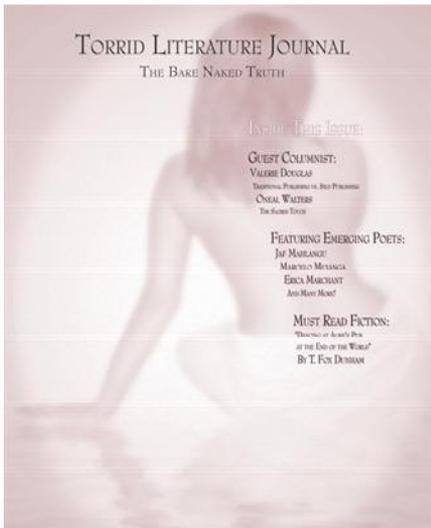
Questions or comments? Contact Alice Saunders at asaunders@torridliterature.com.



Nominees:

Poets: 17

Fiction Writers: 4



Nominees:

Poets: 18

Fiction Writers: 5

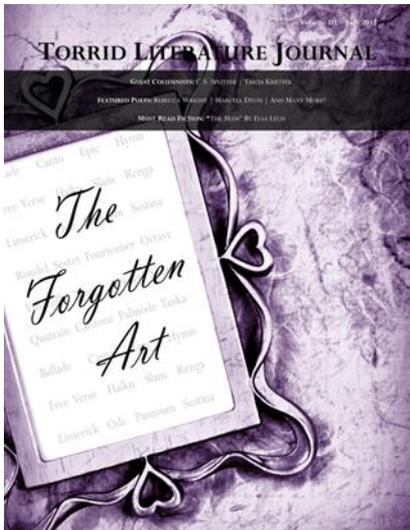
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Over 90 Nominees!

Only 8 Inductees will be chosen!

You decide!

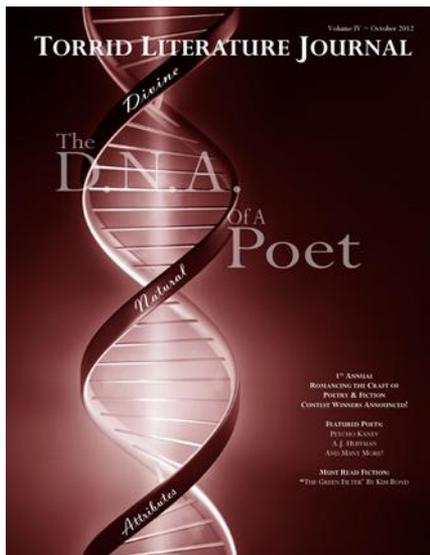
Visit our website to cast your vote today!



Nominees:

Poets: 21

Fiction Writers: 5



Nominees:

Poets: 23

Fiction Writers: 4

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We also enjoy feedback, so make sure you sign our guestbook located on our website or leave a comment on one of our fan pages.

In addition, these sites are a great way to stay connected and current concerning the latest events and news that affect the Torrid Literature Journal, writers, and readers everywhere.

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CALL FOR LITERARY SUBMISSIONS

TL Publishing Group is now accepting submissions for the Torrid Literature Journal. We look for work with strong literary content. Send us your best. We're all about diversity and communication through the arts.

We don't look for a particular theme. We look at the poem, its message, and its structure. We consider poems in multiple genres as well as different forms and techniques which means we will also consider experimental work.

Writers may submit up to 3 poems or one fiction story with 3,000 words or less. All submissions may be uploaded by visiting:

<http://torridliterature.submittable.com>

We encourage everyone to become familiar with the Torrid Literature Journal first by reading previous editions. This will give writers a general idea of the type of literary content we look for. Our submission period for the Torrid Literature Journal is year round. Our response time varies depending on the volume of submissions received.

Please keep in mind we are now accepting poetry submissions for our Christian Anthology as well. Visit our website for detailed submission guidelines.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Alice Saunders at asaunders@torridliterature.com. We look forward to the reading experience.

CALL FOR ART

Get your art and photography supplies ready. The editors are expanding the submission guidelines for the Torrid Literature Journal to include artwork, such as drawings, paintings, sketches, photos, and etc. Artwork submissions will be considered year around.

Please visit the website for more details.

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Supports the arts! Become involved with TL Publishing by joining their 2013 Street Team where members will be commissioned to market and promote TL Publishing, Inc., its products, services, and events.

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Training and nonmonetary compensation will be provided. To apply or learn more about this position, please contact Tiffani Barner, Marketing & Networking Specialist, at tbarner@torridliterature.com.

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Dear Reader,

Finishing the first book in a series is like having a delicious appetizer that brings with it the satisfying promise that the follow up course will be even better. You feel compelled to see the next book through because the appetizer gave you just enough of a taste to leave you wanting more. This is what a good book or journal does. It provides a two-part promise that one you will read this product right now and immediately take away something useful or meaningful and two this literary product will consistently build up your expectation and increase interest, thereby preparing you for the next book or journal to follow.

There are two main components required in order to make a dish successful so each part of the promise can be fulfilled: the chef and the ingredients. A great chef (i.e. an editor, publisher, etc) is nothing without the right ingredients. This requires that we remain selective when it comes to hand picking the right ingredient, flavor, and style of the dishes (journals) we serve because we have a responsibility to the reader. We must keep their tastes in mind while also being daring and bold enough to introduce them to new and attractive flavors they have yet to experience. We do not seek to merely meet expectations but to greatly exceed them.

This is how we view Volume IV – The D.N.A. of a Poet and the Torrid Literature Journal in general. While this may be our last issue of 2012, this only the appetizer, a taste of what is to come. We hope this teaser left you looking forward to our 2013 course where we embark on new literary adventures. With the launch of our Hall of Fame and our upcoming Christian Anthology book, next year is already showing great prospects for being an impactful and exciting season.

Thank you for being a part of our family. Please visit our website and stay in touch with us on Facebook and Twitter. Submit, support, share, exchange, and grow with us. We look forward to our next encounter together where we continue to bring you Torridian material crafted by gifted artists all over the world.

- Editorial Staff



OPEN MIC EVENT



Make plans to attend our last
open mic event of 2012!

What: Open Mic Event

When: Saturday, October 20, 2012;
7 PM - 11 PM

Where: The Bunker (f.k.a. Tre Amici)