

CURIOS

MAGAZINE 2023



Volume 15

CURIOS

Just as beauty exists in the eye of the beholder, danger, too, can be viewed from multiple perspectives. It may appear contradictory to put the terms together, but when tragedy and hardship attack a community, local residents rally together to help each other out. Danger delivers the beautiful gift of community, and it's the danger we encounter in life that allows us to freely see the beauty in each other. This year's edition reflects the dichotomy of beauty and danger and the ways in which the two themes bleed together. As we consider the hardships faced since the onset of Covid-19, we are reminded that beauty exists in everything. In keeping with this theme, you'll see that some art and literature in this year's edition revolves around bees. These works are denoted by a bee icon and reflect CCC's affiliation with the Bee Campus USA program, which promotes the protection of pollinators. The pandemic has allowed us time to consider the kind of community we want to be, and the art and literary works found within the pages of this year's edition illustrate this reflection.

–Araceli Montiel-Jaime–Curios Student Intern

In the summer of 2022, Flagstaff was beset by mountain wildfires and flooded by monsoon rains. It was "one for the books," as the old-timers say. It was also a time of reflection, celebration of new growth, and youth. At Coconino Community College, a new program for young Indigenous students provided the campus community with an exciting new venture. The Summer Bridge program worked within the Strengthening Indigenous Student Success initiative. Students gathered every day in ENG 101A and experienced (for most) their first "taste" of the college classroom, as well as extended interactions with tutors, mentors, and counselors. The class itself (and its instructor) was founded on the traditions of storytelling, family history, and an appreciation of the natural world. Our students' rich personal histories, generosity of sharing, and, of course, an abundance of nature provided the ideal scaffolding for what became our class theme of "Beauty and Danger." Student Jacob Chischille referred to this in his memorable narrative about a huge summer storm he'd witnessed with his brothers. CURIOS magazine selected our class, and our theme, to be featured in this summer's issue! Look for the sun icon located next to work published by Summer Bridge students. It's so wonderful to have such an artful memento of the summer's truly unique experience!

–Rebecca Byrkit–Summer Bridge Instructor

PUBLICATION STAFF

COORDINATOR

Sandra Dihlmann

ADMINISTRATION

Eric Heiser, Ph.D.

Coconino Community College President

Kelly Trainor, Ph.D.

Interim Provost / Vice President of Teaching and Learning

Jennifer Jameson

Interim Dean of Arts & Sciences

Mark Maciha, Ph.D.

Dean of Career & Technical Education

Larry Hendricks

Director of PR and Marketing

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Colleen Carscallen

Sandra Dihlmann

Jennifer Jameson

Trevor Welker

DESIGN

Araceli Montiel-Jaime (Student Intern)

Janel States

Trevor Welker



Araceli Montiel-Jaime



Janel States



Sandra Dihlmann



Trevor Welker

On the cover

Untitled

Anmoi Mathur



CONTENTS

26 **Darkness**
Taven Begay



28 **Koi Fish**
Isabella Campos



POETRY

- 5 **Monsoon Season**, Kyleese King
- 12 **A Poem Inspired by "Cafe Terrace at Night" by Vincent Van Gogh**,
Alexandra Grant
- 15 **Bees**, Jeremy Gadd
- 21 **Drunk**, Imelia Saunders
- 22 **You're My King, and I'm Your
Lionheart**, Alexandra Grant
- 27 **Twists and Bends in the Galaxia
Starways Express**, Liam Craddock
- 27 **Disheartened Reaping**, Janet Westra
- 29 **Bloom (Not For You)**, Stacey Forbes
- 30 **The Learner Becomes the Teacher**,
Deezhi Peralta
- 33 **Harken**, Jill Divine
- 34 **Weaving**, Barb Sherman
- 36 **It Doesn't Matter Why We Said
Goodbye**, Stacey Forbes

POETRY, CONTINUED

- 38 **The Age of Narcissus**, Imelia Saunders
- 40 **Seashore Yearning**, Janet S. Westra
- 40 **Resilience**, Maya Morales
- 43 **God's Arms**, Maxie Inigo

FICTION

- 37 **Back to the Black**, Larry Hendricks
- 44 **Signs**, Stacey Forbes

NONFICTION

- 6 **Beauty Within Danger**, Jacob Chischille
- 10 **Later Stages**, Larry Hendricks
- 16 **Beneath the Sleeping Giants**, Jack Flanigan
- 42 **Polaroids with Grandfather**, Akayla Williams

34 Empowered Woman
Sarah Louise Rossi



37 Seaside Inverted
John Denton



VISUAL ART

- 4 **Deer Skull**, Pigeon Baca
- 5 **Sonoran Storm Over Safford Peak**, Michele Miller
- 6 **Blue Hour In Monterey**, Brienne Harvey
- 7 **Woman With A Parasol**, Kevin Brown
- 8 **Magician's Burial**, Samuel Bockleman
- 11 **Untitled**, Anne Young
- 13 **She's Art**, Sakshi Kukreja
- 15 **Serendipity 2**, Kaleah Tsosie
- 16 **Seaside**, John Denton
- 17 **Lighthouse**, Anne Young
- 19 **In Dreams**, Victoria Valuk
- 20 **Vermilion**, Delmy Payne
- 21 **Chilly Down**, Eleanor Learn
- 23 **Tiger**, Anne Young
- 24 **Desert Study**, Samuel Bockleman
- 26 **Darkness**, Taven Begay

VISUAL ART, CONTINUED

- 28 **Koi Fish**, Isabella Campos
- 29 **Serendipity 1**, Kaleah Tsosie
- 30 **On My Way Home**, Sarah Louise Rossi
- 31 **Steve Irwin**, Anne Young
- 32 **Empowered Woman**, Sarah Louise Rossi
- 36 **Grapefruit**, Ira Vaughn-Uiltsee
- 37 **Lady in Red**, Ava Trent
- 38 **Protect Our Pollinators**, Jackelyne Aguirre
- 39 **An Ode to Fearless Women**, Sakshi Kukreja
- 41 **Seaside Inverted**, John Denton
- 42 **Fall Study**, Samuel Bockleman
- 43 **Tetons in Fall from the Snake River**, Kevin Brown
- 44 **AWW Bella**, Sage Netter



Denotes work associated with
Bee Campus USA Program



Denotes work associated with
Summer Bridge Program





Deer Skull
Pigeon Baca



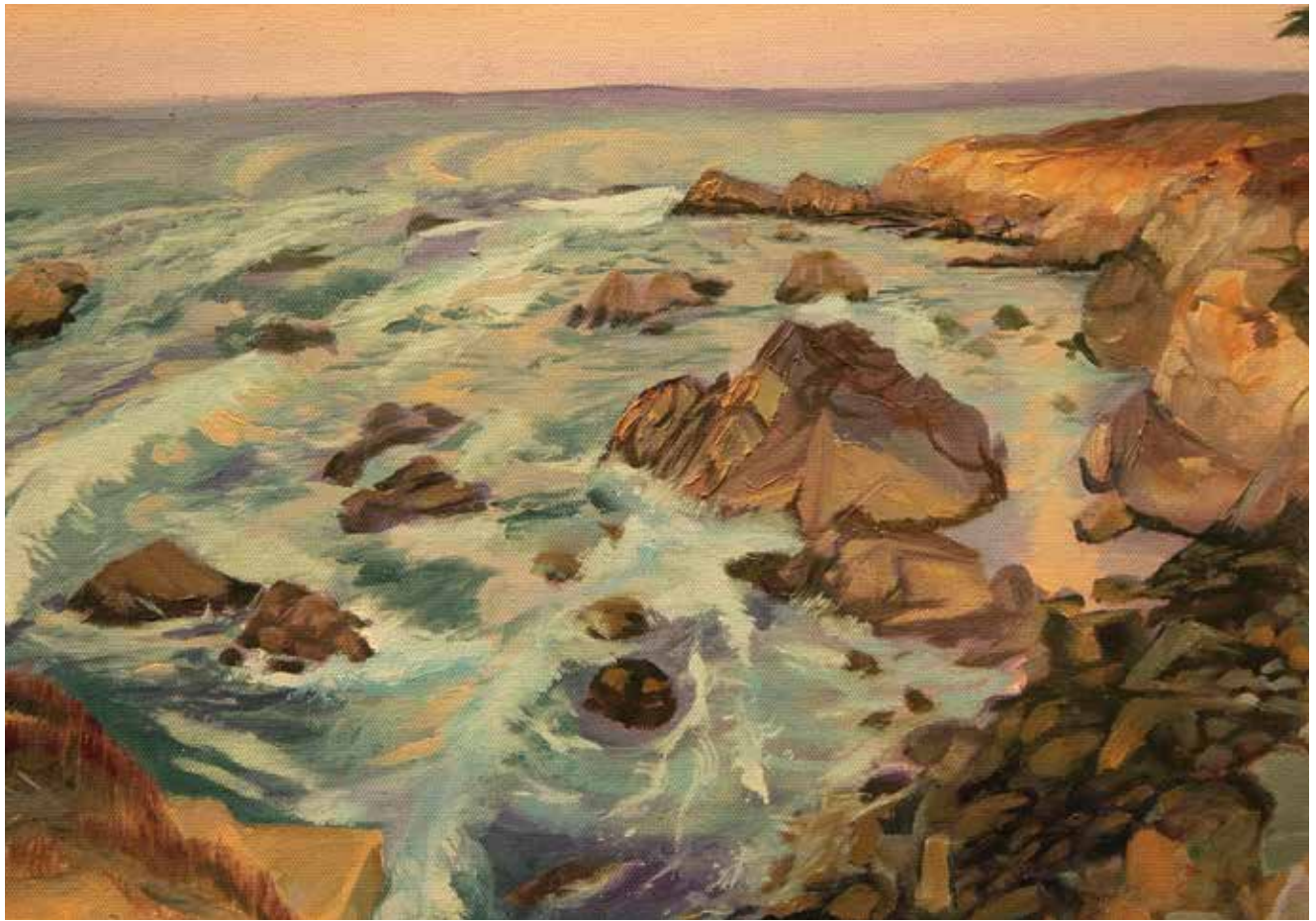
Sonoran Storm Over Safford Peak
Michele Miller

MONSOON SEASON

Kyleese King

The gray clouds
Pound its drumhead;
Percussion of pure power
Instant drums shake the lungs
Keys pressed,
Vibrating through bone
The quivering vibrato of a flute,
Skin rubbing cool sheets
Strumming warm fur
Low hum within the belly
Tingle against fingertips
Singular notes drip,
Quarters, halves, whole
Breath slows and fades—
Harmonious with
Earth's Symphony.

~



Blue Hour in Monterey
Brienne Harvey

BEAUTY WITHIN DANGER

Jacob Chischille

In the summer of 2018, my two brothers and I stayed home in Dilkon, Arizona. My parents left Dilkon to buy materials for the extension to our house. Overpowering winds started to shift the clouds from west to east. Alerts and the roaring winds filled the air with chaotic noises. It was quite terrifying. I didn't really see anything special in nature at the time until the strongest storm I have ever witnessed changed my perspective on the nature of beauty within danger.

Dilkon is a flat town in the Navajo Reservation. It is about 40 miles north of Winslow. In 2018, Dilkon didn't have a hospital or the two new neighborhoods currently being built. I live in a three-bedroom house that is peach and brown which is surrounded by a neighborhood that is also surrounded by various mountains and hills. By a short glance, you could tell they are hot and dry. A quarter of the sky was filled with clouds that afternoon and the wind brushed the trees and bushes. The mountains west of Dilkon were slowly being eaten by the storm.

Clouds multiplied in size and quantity. Although I refused to go outside to avoid the harsh wind, my curiosity couldn't bear not seeing and feeling the strong winds, along with the grey, massive clouds. Jade and J.R. were in the living room discussing the power of the

Woman With A Parasol
Kevin Brown





Magician's Burial
Samuel Bockleman

storm as I walked in. Concerns for our parents' trip to Flagstaff grew in a tremendous way. The three of us decided to go outside, and it was chaotic, yet alluring! Not a single drop of rain fell from the sky, but the smell of wet dirt filled the air. It was an earthy fragrance that you could feel within your nostrils. A spike of fear went down my spine as the National Weather Service alerted our phones. It indicated that there was a possible flood. We looked up from our phones in complete awe as we witnessed a cloud formation that resembled a cyclone, and it felt like we were exactly in the eye of the storm.

We stood frozen until I felt a single drop of rain hit my cheek. My brothers decided to go back inside to avoid getting wet, but I stayed. Although I did not appreciate nature as much back then, I really wanted to experience the storm. Observing the flat area surrounded by mountains and hills getting drenched by water, I

thought, "This is the most fascinating thing I had ever witnessed." A flash of lightning struck nearby and a shock of fear traveled through my entire body as brief light vibrations came from the ground. I stood still and extended my arms out to feel the cold rain droplets on my skin. I noticed that the raindrops multiplied and grew in size. Raindrops were sensational, up until they started to pour.

The wind grew cold and my shirt became soaked, so I decided to make my way back to the house. As I walked back, I suddenly felt sharp pains on my head and shoulders. Wild hail started to fall from the sky, and Dilkon looked like a hellish winter wonderland. It was ominous—and still, very beautiful.

"Get your ass inside, you are going to get sick!" J.R. opened the door and motioned to come inside.

I ran inside soaking wet, leaving a trail of water behind me in the extension of the house. After I removed my muddy boots and walked inside, a towel was thrown my way.

"Go dry yourself off before you walk inside!" yelled J.R.

"I'm sorry, I have to cool off somehow," I snickered into my jacket elbow.

"What were you doing out there anyway?"

"I figured with the small amount of rain we get, I might as well enjoy what we have."

J.R. smirked and walked into his room.

"The three of us decided to go outside and it was chaotic, yet alluring! Not a single drop of rain fell from the sky, but the smell of wet dirt filled the air. It was an earthy fragrance that you could feel ..."

When I finished drying myself off, we gathered in the living room and told stories of our childhoods and storms. Jade and J.R. told me about how they would jump across the ditch with their friends. A ditch is where the rainwater drains, which could go about seven or eight feet wide at the time.

Suddenly a crack of lightning struck nearby, and we were sitting in complete darkness. Silence filled the room, and all you could hear was the rain crashing above us.

J.R. laughed and said, "It was only a matter of time."

"What do you mean?" I uttered in confusion.

"The power outage, what do you expect?" Jade remarked as he leaned back in his seat.

"Oh." I wasn't used to this.

We couldn't do anything without power or phone service, so J.R. and I passed the time by talking and playing Uno while Jade went to the back room to sleep.

The rain died down enough for us to go outside so I could see how much rain filled the area.

As I took four steps from the door I exclaimed, "Holy crap!" Brown, dirty water filled the entire road, and it ran like a river.

"J.R., come check this out!"

J.R. walked over.

"Wow, that's crazy!" he exclaimed.

"Right? I knew it rained hard, but not this hard!"

I wanted to show Jade, but he doesn't like to be bothered while he is asleep. After both of us walked inside, I immediately slipped on my rubber boots and coat and left to feed my horse, about a quarter mile away.

As I walked, the rain stopped, and all that was left was a mere sprinkle. By the time I got to my horse corral, the clouds cleared, and the sunlight illuminated the mountains. I stood behind the corral and observed the scenery; it felt as if I was in a painting.

"Wow!" I said under my breath.

The fact that a dangerous storm only beautified the land that is already breathtaking amazed me. That moment of realization opened my eyes and made me see that nature in all of its dangerous beauty must be protected.

~

LATER STAGES

Larry Hendricks

It's a strange thing to bathe your father.

I think I'm still processing it. I thought I was prepared, but I wasn't. I noticed myself doing the things as they should be done to be supportive and caring and helpful. I was able to do it all, and I did it with a sense of being in the moment. It was an assigned task, and I took care of it as best I could, based on my best information and the instructions my father gave me in order not to cause him any pain.

It was a gentle process. I was kind. He was soft-spoken.

He seemed resigned to the fact that I had to do it. I tried not to think of his vulnerability, how small he seemed, how frail. My heart burst for him as he spoke about how he ran a multi-million-dollar company and held the fate of hundreds of employees in his hands, and now, he was reduced to . . . this.

There is an incredible quote attributed to Alexander the Great. I'm not sure if he said it, or if it is a story passed down through generations to make a point about the human experience. In any event, here it is: "When my casket is being carried to the grave, leave my hands hanging outside. For empty-handed I came into this world, and empty-handed I shall go. My whole life has been a hollow waste, a futile exercise, for no one at death can take anything with them."

Past, present and future. The three states of a human. Child. Adult. Senior. Taken care of as a child. Taken care of as a senior. Linear time in three-dimensional space. That is our lot. There was a time before birth. There is a time after death. And in between, there is this experience called "life." I have constantly searched for what it may mean, and the best answer I have come up with after decades of searching is: "Life is a chance for the Universe to experience, to know itself." I am a part of the universe. I contain the universe in me as I live. I will return to the Universe when I die . . . and so will my father.

I have spent so much time in anger, in rage, in a state of pure hatred of him, and now, at this later stage of our lives, I am filled with sorrow, with compassion, with a bursting kindness and . . . love for him.

And I discovered this while bathing him, as he stood naked and frail to me. There is a bravery there that I hope I have if I am as lucky as him to reach that stage of life. I'm still not convinced I will, even though I have reached 57 years of life on this planet as a human getting to experience the immensity of the Universe.

I think it will be some time yet for me to entirely process what is happening to him, and to me, through this process of taking care of him during this week.

This week was a busy one back at work, with lots of stuff I should be doing that I had to put off to come down here and be with my father. My new boss told me that this is much more important, and without a doubt, he is right.

I have made the right decision, and I will be a better human for this process. I continue to hope that I am a good son for my father, for all his faults as a man and as a father. In the end, we are all shiny little examples of the Universe manifested into flesh and bone and consciousness, shrouded by ego and personality, and I think I got a little glimpse of that shiny perfection in my father while helping him get clean in the shower.

I am honored.

A dad holds his baby boy close to his chest to keep away the bitter cold.

A son holds his aging father steady in the shower to keep him standing bold.

In between resides a lifetime of memory for both – the good and the bad.

With "love" the only meaningful word left for a son and a dad.



Untitled
Anne Young

A POEM INSPIRED BY "CAFE TERRACE AT NIGHT" BY VINCENT VAN GOGH

Alexandra Grant

We are together here
Drenched in moonlight

The soft glow of the candlelight
Reflects off your face and

I quickly realize just how much
You mean to me

The mess of dark hair on your head
Casting shadows over your face

And your clear blue eyes
Reflecting the multitude of stars

Shining like you belong
Up there in the sky

With all of those other
Swirling, shining, sparkling masses

We gaze at each other
Dancing that celestial dance

Which began in the beginning
As old as old itself

Sitting here I realize all at once
You are the sun to brighten the darkness within me

~





She's Art
Sakshi Kukreja



Serendipity 2
Kaleah Tsosie





BEES



Jeremy Gadd

Grass sensuously
undulates in the lazy
wind and all is Utopian.
It is a lovely garden.
A place where flowers
lethargically bob and bow
towards the sun, like spring
loaded children's toys;
where, flying between
or lightly landing on
blossom burdened fruit trees
- so thick it looks like snow -
an abundance of busy
bees buzz to and fro,
collecting nectar for
their hives but pollinating
stamens too; of strawberries,
onions, apples; enabling
new growth; food,
for me and for you.

Stinging and non-stinging bees,
short and long-tongued bees,
bees with bulbous thoraces
vigorously vibrating the
anthers of plants to encourage
them to relinquish their pollen.

But bees are canaries
in the ecological coal-mine
and the number of once
prolific bees is decreasing,
affected by pesticides and,
stressed, prey to disease,
parasites and pathogens.

~



Seaside
John Denton

BENEATH THE SLEEPING GIANTS

Jack Flanigan

Eerie. This is the word I use to describe this place. The Pacific Northwest of the United States, specifically the coastal parts, makes me want to stay in bed with a warm cup of tea. This is mostly due to the perpetual gloominess. The city of Seattle, Washington, the largest city in the Pacific Northwest only sees seventy-one days on average of sunlight every year. Comparing that with Flagstaff's average of two hundred and sixty-six sunlit days every year puts Seattle's lack of sun into perspective. Although this amount of gloom may seem depressing, it highlights different sides of society and the natural world. The side that loves the darkness and endless moisture.

You will notice it right when you land at the SEA-TAC airport: Everything is covered in moss. From cracks in the sidewalk to highway overhangs to skyscrapers that reflect a golden glow on the Puget when the sun goes down. Traveling out of town only makes it more apparent. The forests of mostly cedar and spruce are completely blanketed in a thick carpet of sphagnum moss with generous amounts of mushrooms of all colors popping through.

It is a mystical forest, the kind where your inner child expects to see a goblin or sprite. The elk populate this forest like rabbits. Why? Because they are an animal shrouded in darkness. All you have to do is hear their ominous bugling to get a sense of that. The



Lighthouse
Anne Young

bugling begins deep and resonant but ends in a hollow, high pitch screech. They are nocturnal creatures who spend their days sleeping in the shade.

The forests in which they live are dark. Darker than night. That is why moss carpets, not only the north side of trees but the entire forest floor. It only lives in the dark. The spring sun rarely gets a chance to break through the canopy, but when it does, it hits the cold, damp moss with its radiant beams and creates steam. It only does this in the few spots where the sun can penetrate, so the steam pockets are few and far between. On a sunny day, it is a dance of constantly moving spotlights. Once

"This part of the Washington coast is called 'The Graveyard of the Pacific' after the two thousand-plus ships that have sunk or forever gotten lost in the fog."

the day is over, it goes back to dark, damp, and cold for eternity. Devoid of all energy.

The Pacific Northwest ocean shares a similar vibe, for it is always foggy. The sounds consist of the gentle rolling of the ocean, seagulls, and the occasional distant fog horn. On the interior of the Olympic Peninsula lies Puget Sound with its many limbs extending into the extensively forested land. It is famous for its tidal flats that contain a seemingly endless supply of oysters and razor clams, which are harvested and sold in the famous Pike's Place Market. On the exterior of the peninsula lies the great Pacific Ocean.

This part of the Washington coast is called 'The Graveyard of the Pacific' after the two thousand-plus ships that have sunk or forever gotten lost in the fog. Like the forest, this place is quiet and eerie. Also like the forest, nothing comes of it. It is just eerie for the sake of being eerie. Or so it seems.



Same goes for the human civilizations here: dark, damp, silent, and eerie. Especially in the oppressive drizzle of winter. The people are dead silent and tend to keep their heads down. I remember my first time in Seattle. I said "Hi" to someone on the crosswalk and caused them to jump back in fear. It is a city of seemingly only introverts. "The Seattle Freeze" is what it's called. The complete inability to meet any friends there. It is a gathering of four million lonely people sharing the same streets. Just like the forest and beach, I get the feelings of solitude, majesty, and eeriness.



In Dreams
Victoria Valuk

There are very few clearings in the labyrinth of forest and city that allow you to see the horizon. Logging scars and residential areas are about as good as it gets. Once you are able to see the horizon, the cause of the eeriness presents itself in the form of striking white bulbs that rise out of the deep dark forest. A stark contrast. These white bulbs are The Giants. They were here long before humanity and will be long after. They are the reason for the mist, the moss, and the endless forest. They control the weather around here, which controls all life.

Seemingly stationary, these behemoths are very much awake. No matter where you are in the Pacific Northwest, they loom over you with an imposing presence. It is their imminent threat of eruption. This area has been quiet for a long time, but it only takes a mere second for thousand-degree ash, poisonous gas, and boiling mudflows to precipitate.

~





Vermilion
Delmy Payne



Chilly Down
Eleanor Learn

DRUNK

Imelia Saunders

The bearing of the soul— who is that stranger?

There you are in the flesh, in the nude.
The figure watching, reflected and
Encompassed by gold,
You are unfamiliar
To the form you take
In a state of clarity, or otherwise,
Confusion.
Unacceptable. Your expectations are shattered
Like the glass of the bottle you drowned in.
There, you stand:
Hollowed. The shards in lustful hands have
Scraped the walls
Of the vessel you hide within, seeking heaven in hell.
And, now, I finally catch a glimpse of

You.

~

YOU'RE MY KING, AND I'M YOUR LIONHEART

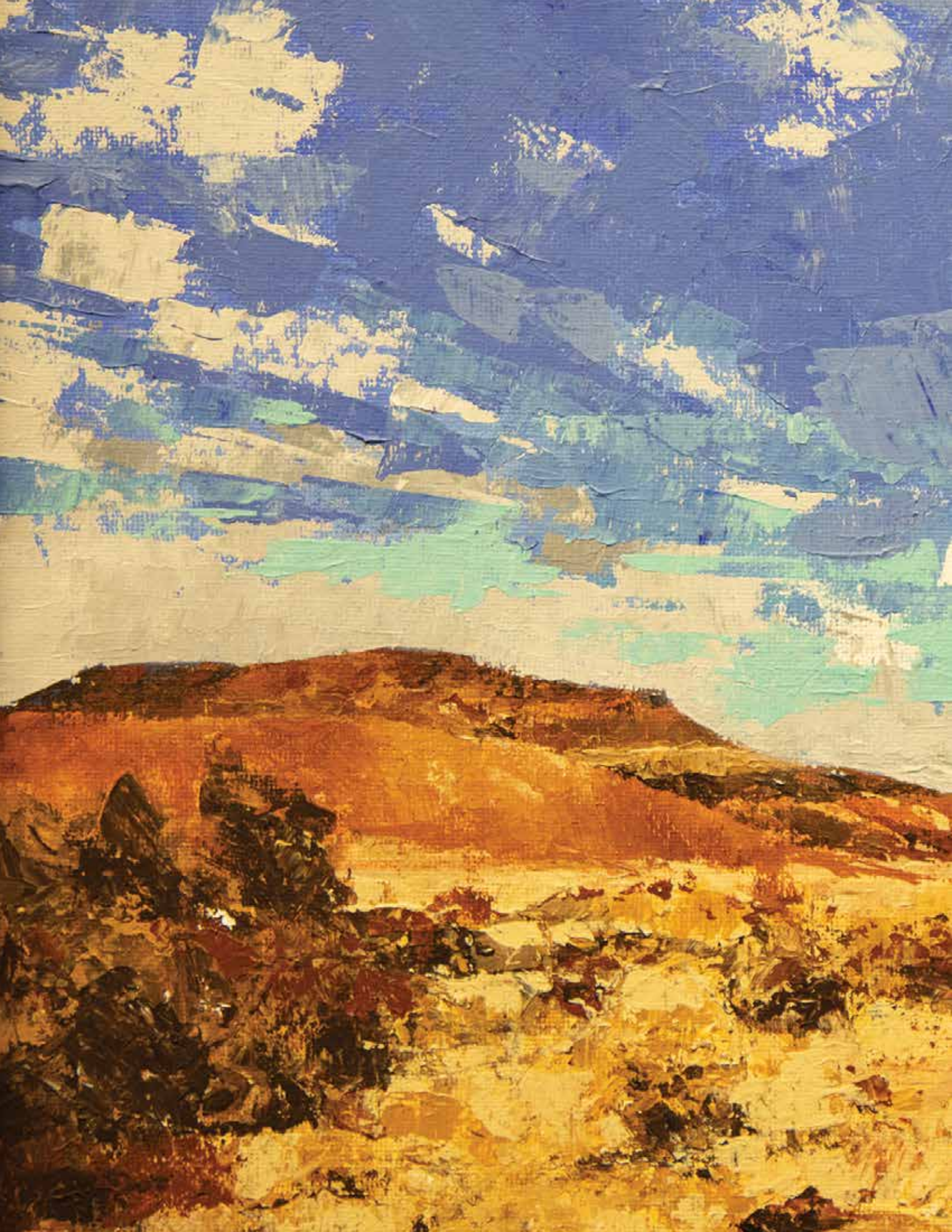
Alexandra Grant

They used to call me lionheart. I was one to be feared. Respected, yes, but ultimately feared. They told tales of my courageous feats for years after I had left my homeland. Now, sitting here, I realize how foolish I'd been. I was pigheaded, too proud for my own good. It seems silly now that the thing that will be my ultimate end is a scrape from a magic sword. I can feel the poison surging through my veins and wonder at the fact that something so small can cause such pain. I'd never admit it to anyone, but I'm scared. I'm utterly terrified. I feel as if I've transformed from an adult into a child. I can't stop the tears anymore. I just keep letting them out. It seems futile to feel shame for crying now. I can feel the life fading from me. My companion returns, holding out a water skin for me to drink from. I can't move, so he holds it up to my lips. The coolness of the water feels good on my aching throat. He pulls the skin away and asks if I want more. I tell him I don't. We sit in silence for a long while. Finally, I start to feel tired; I know I won't wake up again after I go to sleep, so I call my friend over. He asks if I need anything, food, more water perhaps? I say no, all I need is for him to sit with me. He does, and grips my hand tightly. I tell him I feel tired. He says I can't go to sleep now, we're almost home, almost there. I tell him this was always inevitable, that I don't want to waste my last breaths with goodbyes. He has tears in his eyes as he nods, understanding. I stare intently at his face, memorizing it. It is the last thing I'll ever see. With my last breath, I whisper, "thank you."

~









Desert Study
Sam Bockleman



Darkness
Taven Begay

TWISTS AND BENDS IN THE GALAXIA STARWAYS EXPRESS

Liam Craddock

Summer redshift leaves the Altair vendors
Feeling so blue
As they peddle their pieces of paper aeroplanes.
The businessmen huddled 'round the cat's eye
Puff their nebular whisps into the medium
And rear their equine heads.
Monoceros boys put rings around prying fingers
In gamma-ray bursts of passion
To be warped but not forgotten.
A collision on the tracks today, they say,
As Andromeda and Milky Way could not agree who should yield
To the tune of six hundred million.
The man from Vega, two heads and six arms to his name,
Violently bangs on rusted Stage I engines
As though they were snares and hi-hats.
Hyperborean winds caterwaul across an Arcturan glacier,
As a woman in a bear pelt
Guards her children from the blizzard.

Two snakes enjoy a rare Ascellan delicacy
As they serve each other tea
Made from their own tails.
A laser beam fired wildly from the second moon of Kaus
Pierces the heart
Of the last Antares scorpion.
A fusion-powered locomotive
Chugs across a bridge of carbon nanotubes,
Politely stepping over the Ran river.
Little green men sing a swan song
For the USS Deneb

As a northbound black hole crosses its path
And it sinks into oblivion.
Able-bodied heroes swarm the vacuum,
To keep the demon's flames surrounded,
But the tigers of Algol keep up their roaring.

The seven sisters reunite at last
To unveil to all the golden gate
That will take their children to the stars.
A slight parallax moves in from galactic east
That keeps me from seeing the truth you were
A thousand minutes ago.
I step onto the platform,
And I feel the gravity beneath me
Try to wrest the tickets from my fingers.

~

DISHEARTENED REAPING

Janet Westra

Dreary gloom sets in
On a dark day of sin,
Rain and tears must fall
Memories of mourning
Thoughts are scornfully awake
Hearts not saddened
Ahead only darkness awaits
A fate is set in stone
Be still oh ripened one
Cypress the disheartened soul
For there is no passionate song
The cognitive mind weary and sick
No voice for song to sing
Darkness is coming
For the wings of blackened coal sweep down
Through the gloom and rain
A heart that beats, no longer works
One must accept thy fate
Do not decline, for reaper is here
For you will not rise again...

~



Koi Fish
Isabella Campos



BLOOM (NOT FOR YOU)

Stacey Forbes



Serendipity 1
Kaleah Tsosie

"Yanked from the ground": cactus theft is ravaging the American desert. In Saguaro National Park . . . Towering saguaros fill the view on either side of the road, rising 40, even 60 ft high, their human-like arms outstretched." - The Guardian

She stands before you
in spring, the season of love.
The sun has touched her
skin but her body is young
and her fruit is a rumor
of sweetness on the tongue.
You want her wildness,
buy her unknowable beauty
from black market men
even before she blossoms
even with arms frozen open
even though the ache in her
ribs rakes the moon.
You don't know the darkest
part of her is hollow, holding
enough of the late summer rain
to fill your flask or drown
you where you stand.

She swells, then falls.
She has no father to give
her away but you take her,
drag her up the drive to your
honeymoon house. Hungry for
home, she grows thin as the springs
in your bed. She will not bloom
for you; it is you who will change.
Even now, you lie in your sheets
and she's moving beneath you,
but you who were never a groom
you who did not rise from dirt
you who did not dream a desert
you whose body is home to no
living thing, you feel nothing.
And you could have sworn
she was yours.

~



THE LEARNER BECOMES THE TEACHER

Deezhi Peralta



On My Way Home
Sarah Louise Rossi

I am in a classroom.
It is on the first floor of a two-story building.
The room itself has a peach-orange wall and a gray carpet with accents of pink, green, and blue.
There are at least twenty-five of us.
It always feels warm and cozy in here.
Following the edges of the room along the line of windows, facing west, and behind the teacher's desk, there is always something.

It could be a desk, a filing cabinet, or a table with papers and whiteboards set on top of it: there is always something.
A projector hangs from the ceiling, angled at a slant beside the door, opposite the windows, entering from the east.

To the right of the door as you walk in, there is a wall of whiteboards and in the right corner, and there sits aforementioned Ms. Osborne's desk. The windows, opposite the door, look out into the parking lot behind the school, and onto the football field.

A few oak trees stand around, and a few in front of the windows. There is always something.

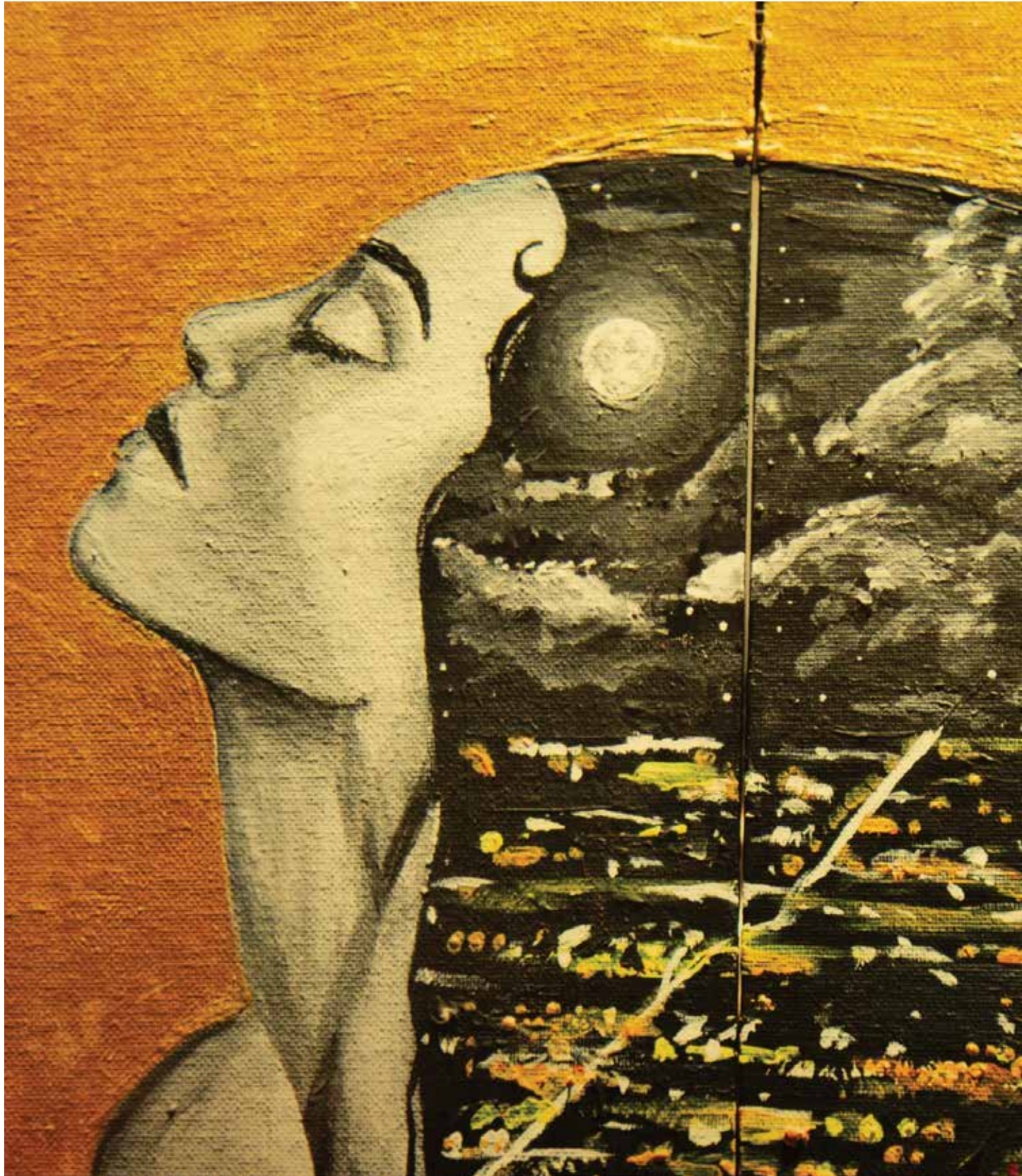
I look out the window for the squirrel that appears every once in a while, running up and down the pine trees or perched on an oak branch.

"Look, a squirrel!" I yell, pointing to the window!

~



Steve Irwin
Anne Young



Empowered Woman
Sarah Louise Rossi



HARKEN

Jill Divine

Remember that year when all the girls grew their hair long and the men let beards fill in the hollows, and sometimes grew their own hair so that even though you'd known him for years you never guessed there would be curls to run your fingers through. Remember that year when all those people died and at first you didn't know anyone and it didn't mean as much as when you started to recognize names and then finally you cried on the day you were writing Christmas cards and realized wait, she's gone now.

Remember that year when we stayed home and taught our kids to play dominoes and we fixed dinners again instead of stopping by Panera on the way home from work to get some food that looked homemade. We played Uno and Monopoly and watched show after show even if we stayed up all night. Drinking, remember the drinking that year, when a bottle of wine disappeared almost every night, and we finally got to be the whiskey girl because finally we drank enough whiskey to acquire a taste for it. That year, when democracy failed, and we looked at the screen, thank god we still had screens, for places to move. We thought maybe Canada or Ireland but no one would take us. Remember that year before the one I'm asking you to remember. That year when we didn't know what was coming. That secret year of grace, before all of our strange and beautiful normals were just our lives playing out, tragic or stunning or average. That last year when we still carried that tiny seed, that luminous pinprick of light.

~

WEAVING

Barb Sherman

sunsets are legendary here

clouds blush crimson and gold

twilight becomes dusk, stars brighten

bats

swoop silently

around our home

for now, the world is at ease in Oro Valley

there are seasons here

in spring

desert tortoise strolls the old ways

only she knows

Gambel's quail lay

speckled eggs

under brittlebush

everywhere mesquite trees'

lime-green fingers

welcome the rest of the bird kingdom to nest

summer heat conjures wasps

yellow bodies floating on pool waters

their thin black wings as sails

they lift into tiny gold dots

vanish

high in the blue sky

clouds form

rains come

pounding on flagstone paths

release heady scent of creosote and cactus

garlic lingers on my fingertips from dinner

in fall, flame-skimmers with translucent wings

zip forward and back

orb-weaving spiders

string elaborate webs

over spike and stem

sleepy diamondbacks curl up to heat-holding rocks

before slipping into the nearest hole

winter snows blanket mountaintops

delicate plants covered

warm slippers kept by the patio door

life in the desert slows down

time here is as precious as the days

of the Sonoran toad who blinks her way

into the sun to play

and digs back into the earth for a long slumber

this is my place for dreams and wonder

giant saguaro cacti with many arms

like Hindu deities

come out to dance at night

return to their rightful stations at dawn

they don't seem to mind when I join them

under overarching skies



Grapefruit

Ira Vaughn-Uiltsee

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHY WE SAID GOODBYE

Stacey Forbes

It doesn't matter why we said goodbye

Two rattlesnakes curl, careless as question
marks under the sofa. Only the cat, bathing
on her yellow carpet of moonlight, saw it coming.

Another living thing we loved was lost
to coyotes the next night, when the crescent
moon was sharp as your mother's tongue.

The deer that slips now down your drive with
unspeakable grace knows nothing of gravity,
does not feel the weight of her own absence.

Only the fragrance of moth-burn still stirs
in the kitchen at this hour. Tumbleweed strung

with white lights sleeps alone in the fireplace.

Just before dawn, a bobcat slices a green
creosote like a lime and the rabbit falls still.
Spotted kittens feed with blue eyes closed.

Sunrise is a pale pink wound on the slope
of a bare shoulder. The mountain shrugs. I said
the desert was beautiful. I didn't say it cared.

~

BACK TO THE BLACK

Larry Hendricks

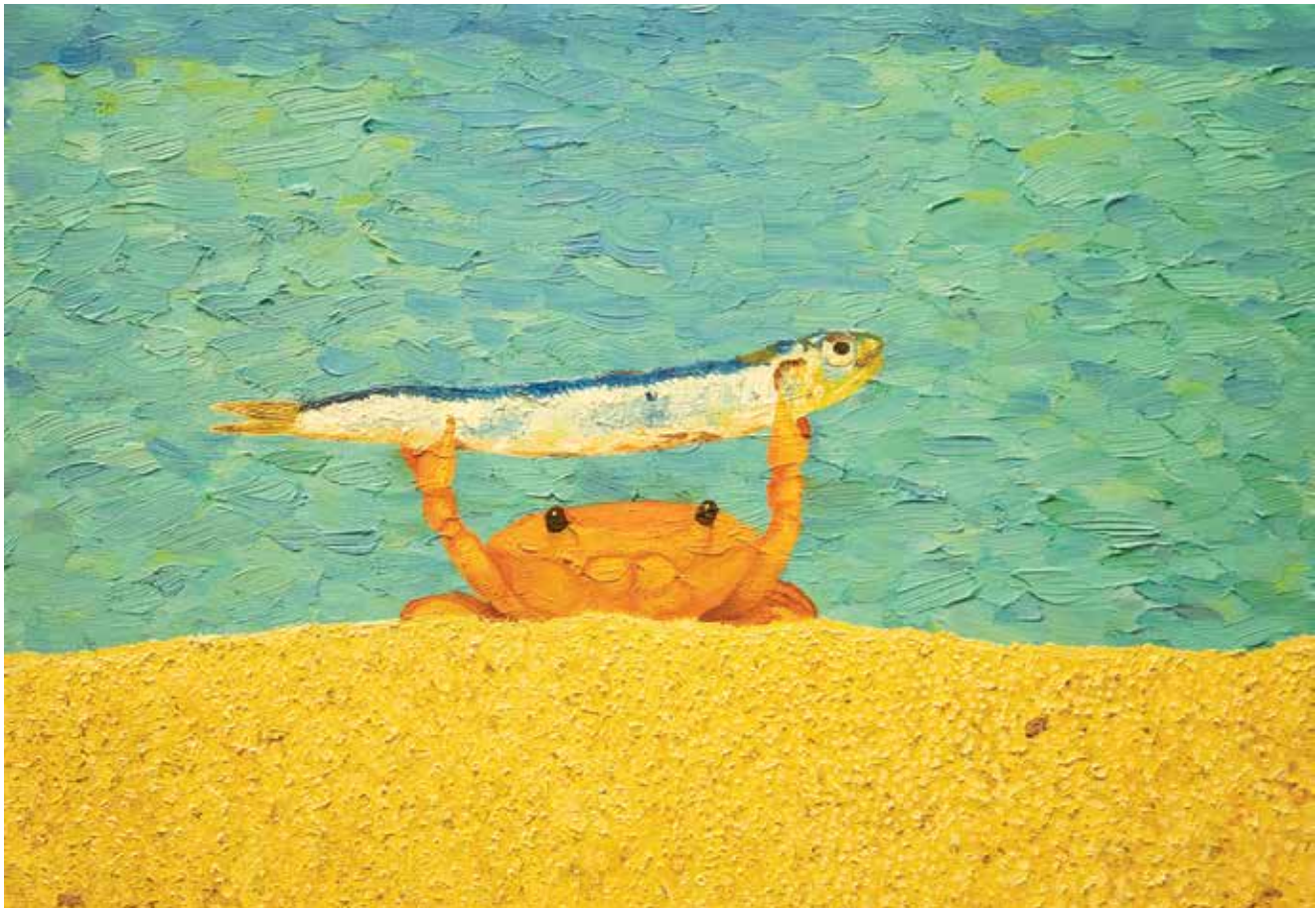
He's alive, but the ship, beaten by light years of the unknown, the unforeseen, won't survive. Lights flash and blip along the corridors, inside his enviro-suit, in his dreams.

The ship, christened Explorer Six, will be dead soon. Boone, too. His spot among the crew, Boatswain, not the most favored of the likely few to be left standing, but here he is, marooned.

He steps into the airlock. He depressurizes the chamber and watches for the green light of vacuum. Wet air escapes the chamber and quiets. All sound that is left to mock him is his breath bouncing off the inside of his helmet. Slowly, he sets the button to release the hatch, and he nurses it open without a noise. Beyond stretches the universe; he chooses it with his remaining poise.

Why die inside that bucket of titanium plating, now devoid of life, likely never to be encountered by another living soul? He will not be waiting. He steps through, pushes off the hull and rolls into the void. His breathing quickens when he activates the suit's thruster pack. His bearing is moot, so he doesn't look back. The thrusters propel their full sum. As they sputter their last, Boone finally maneuvers 180 degrees to see from where he had come.

Explorer Six is there, an insignificant dot of light in endless night. To his left looms the binary star system they hoped would host a planet of sandy beaches and fertile land. Their home planet floats ruined by a humanity not prepared to imagine beyond the expedient, the short term – much like the captain of the Explorer Six, a man who failed to correctly calculate the inevitable victory of fate over best-laid plans.

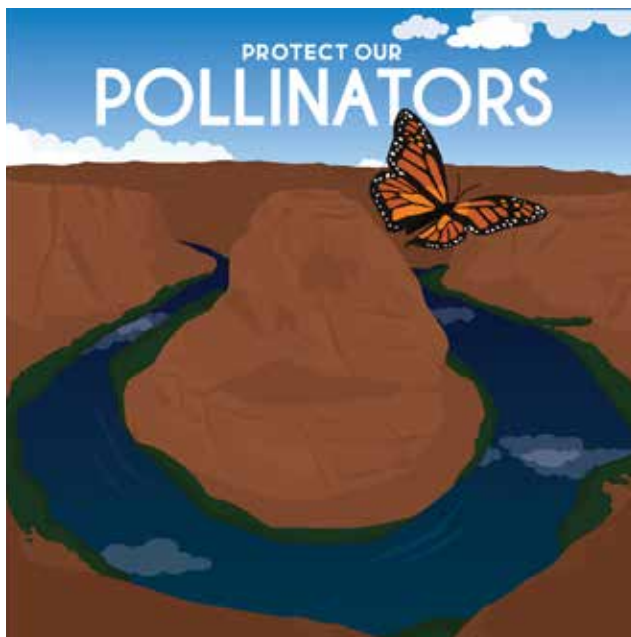


Triumphant Crab
Pigeon Baca

He listens to his breathing, calm now, as the yellow dwarf slowly forfeits life to the red giant parent it orbits. Boone thinks of his father, of how if he'd stayed on Earth, he might have suffered the same as the smaller sun. It is hard to live sane in the shadow of a titan, so the prodigal son must strike out on his own or face annihilation before his own life has begun.

He laughs. It feels good to do, and he swivels his view to chart a path in the vastness of the jeweled beauty resting on inked felt of eternity. Back home in Arizona, when he was a child, he would spend hours studying ants in a field, blessed by their collective will to be and to thrive, that struggle to stay alive, to survive the onslaught of infinity. He would catch himself misty-eyed, sad for their insignificance to the order of the universe, and then he would pose himself sadder still at the curse that his significance was no less, no more.

And then, one day, he reminded himself about how much of a miracle he was to exist at all, to be self-aware and brimming with curiosity. What were the odds that circumstances would arrive, out of all the statistical probabilities that Marcus Boone, a small, sentient being, would exist to ponder the Cosmos in its immensity. He can't help but smile and know, without the benefit of data to support such a claim, that, despite lacking



Horseshoe Bend Butterfly
Jackelyn Aguirre

the immortality of fame, his life will have mattered, just as any thread belonging to an ancient tapestry, lovingly crafted in brilliant artistry.

~

THE AGE OF NARCISSUS

Imelia Saunders

Grasping you by your reluctant wrists,
I lead you through the tunnel,
Of which, the end is nowhere in sight.
All is black, all is shadow,
All except for a blaring, blue light.
The sky I hold is a façade, where can I find the sun?
How many pixels would you sell your sanity for?

We sit on our knees within this cave
Peering into a murky puddle,
And we see ourselves, reflected,
Just barely.

"Look at me!"

An echo:
Look at me!

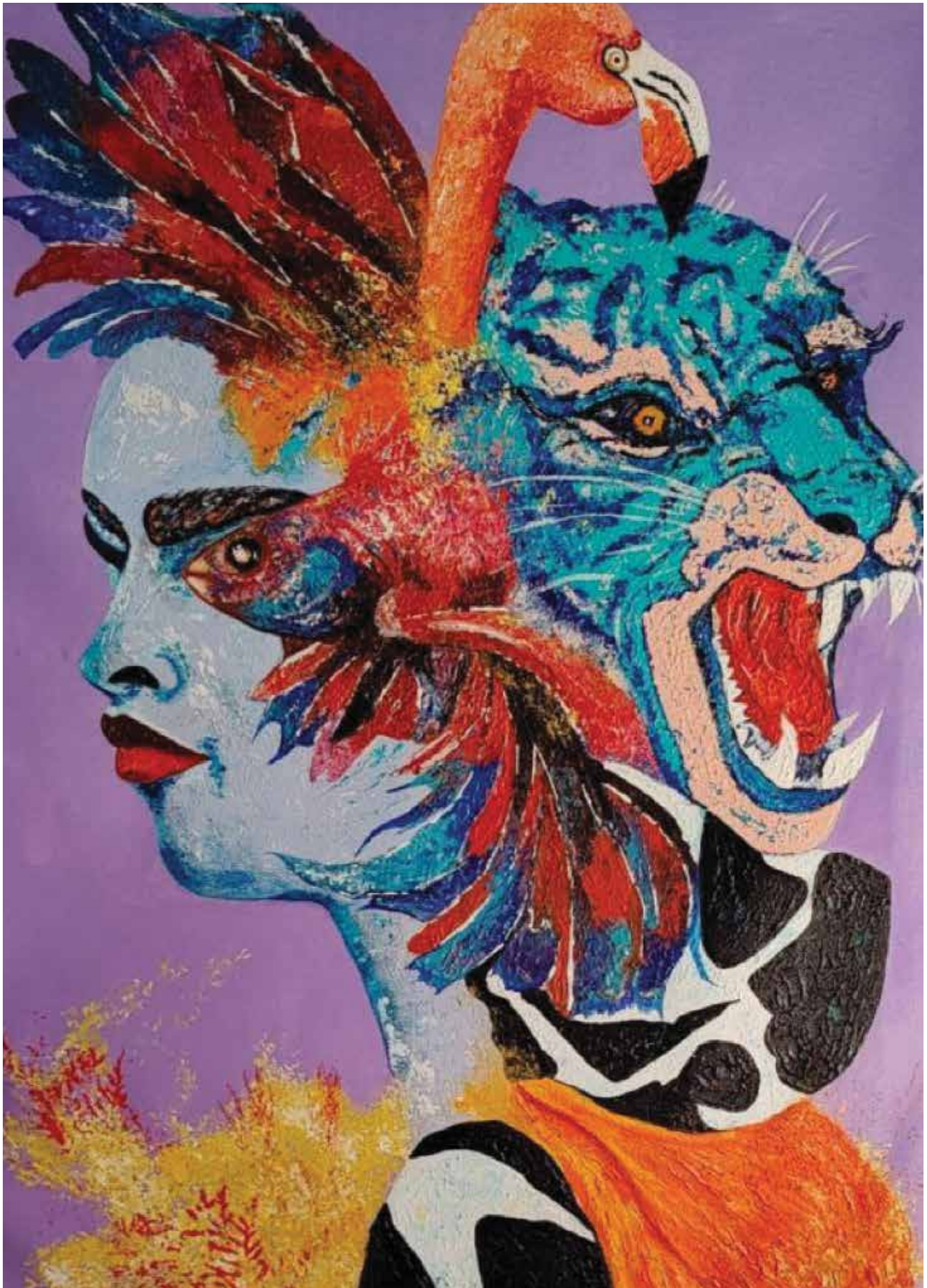
"See me!"

See me!

"Am I alone?"

Am I alone?

~



An Ode to Fearless Women
Sakshi Kukreja

SEASHORE YEARNING

Janet S. Westra

I feel the last of summer's beachy sands
—distant swells of ocean winds and wave
crispened hues of heated sand
The warmth of summer days
Fiery hot golden hues heated under my feet
When I cannot bear the sands,
Waves come swimming in
Bubbling foam beneath my waist
Mute and calm I am alone
Bestowed up on me
A cool delight
No longer hot
My worries gone
Aqua blue cool serenity
Worries wash out to sea
A treasure from the tides
For I the traveler will return to you.

~

RESILIENCE

Maya Morales

Warm embrace empty chase what am I looking for?
when everything I need is near
bring it here
you fight just let go
your fiery soul encased in beauty dripped in fear
Opportunity oozes through all of your bruises waiting for change
Little did you know you hold the keys to your own cage

~



Seaside (Inverted)
John Denton





Fall Study
Samuel Bockelman



POLAROIDS WITH GRANDFATHER

Akayla Williams

... The photo was a Polaroid because it was printed on a small square with a large white section on the bottom. In the picture you can see Mount Fuji. A beautiful sunset in the photo with blue, pink, and a mix of purple.

There was also fog that you could see clearly in the distance. My grandpa asked, "Do you know the coordinates?"

I said, "No Cheii, I don't. What is it?"

"26.33429 N, 127.800560 E," he said.

More photos of my grandpa.

A Polaroid of my grandpa, Johnnie, when he was in his 30's. A retro-looking McDonalds in the background with a clear window in the front of the street! The sign above reads, "McDonald's Hamburger" in English, and on the bottom it's printed in Japanese. On the outside there are two metal trash cans with the logo, and tall standing plants right next to them. In front and standing in the picture is my young grandpa with a white cup in hand with one of his friends.

"My cheii looks so young, and McDonald's looks so different!" I mused. At that moment it made me realize how my grandpa got the opportunity to see a different part of the world.

After showing me the picture and giving me a bit more information about where he was stationed, he asked me, "When are you starting school?"

"In about two weeks," I replied.

"When you get a good job, then you can travel to wherever you want. It's a big world, and there is a lot to see out there. Work hard, keep going to school. School is going to help you get a good job, and help you see the world."

He sounded serious. I know my grandpa wants me to experience what's out there because, when he is serious, it's coming from the heart.

~

GOD'S ARMS

Maxie Inigo

The birth, the dawn, the spring, the song,
Babe in arms where they belong.
The sun, the day, the clouds, the rain,
Illusions all inside the brain.
The earth, the rocks, the sand, the stone,
Consciousness provides the home.
Our hands, our lips, our eyes, our feet,
Corporeal seemingly so concrete.

The view, the water, this life, the sea,
Time parades the mirage in me.
The flow, the whoosh, the surge, the spin,
Dancing nerves beneath our skin.
Our love, our thoughts, beliefs, our smile,
Manifest a life worthwhile.
The work, the joy, the luck, the win,
All badges for our lives within.
Twilight, the stars, the setting sun,
Head home to where we once were one.
The night, the black, the death, the end,
The arms of God, we're home again.

~



Tetons in Fall from the Snake River
Kevin Brown



AWW Bella
Sage Netter

SIGNS

Stacey Forbes

Do you believe in signs? I do. But Sometimes I get it all wrong. Like tonight. My husband played bass on a stage at a Baja bar in Arizona, nowhere near the ocean. A sign scribbled on a surfboard and hung on the wall behind him said: *Bummer of the week*. Sweet Jesus, where to begin? The dress that was too tight. The lips that were too loose. The promise I forgot. The slap I remembered. Three flat tires – all my fault – and a breakdown. A baby rabbit rescued from brushfire only to shudder once, then die in my mother’s small hand. The pain and puzzle of identifying as human.

The sign said *burger*, of course. We give the cow with full-moon eyes a round of antibiotics. She sighs, and another moment in the ozone expires. Now, another sign lights: *last call* for wonder crushed in half-drunk glasses of red or white. For whiskey sours and love, sweet love. For whole forests of kisses planted on faces. For the striped cat and the spotted owl. For standing ovation. For stars. For song. For bad dancing, *good Lord*, and *goodbye*. If you can still lift your arms in this gravity, flag your waitress. Hurry now. We haven’t got all night.

~

CURIOS

Are you a writer, artist, or musician in northern Arizona?

Curios accepts submissions to its print and online publications yearly. For submission guidelines, interviews, and additional audio and video links, please visit us at

curiosmagazine.org

Help support the literary, visual, and music arts in northern Arizona.

Curios Living Magazine showcases the art and artists in northern Arizona. If you would like to support our mission, please donate through the Coconino Community College Foundation at

learn.coconino.edu/curios

The opinions, values, or beliefs, expressed herein are not intended to reflect those held publicly, privately, or officially by any or all staff, faculty, or students of the Coconino Community College District, its stakeholders or its constituents, nor are the aforementioned liable for such expressions.

This material may be made available in an alternative format upon request by contacting Disability Resource Services at 928-226-4243, or toll free at 1-800-350-7122

Coconino Community College is an
Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution and
is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association.
30 N LaSalle St., Suite 2400
Chicago, Illinois 60602-2504
312-263-0456 or 800-621-7440

CCC Lone Tree Campus
2800 S. Lone Tree Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86005
928-527-1222 | www.coconino.edu



CURIOS MAGAZINE.ORG