



Curios Magazine 2019

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Curios

Magazine 2019

Curios fosters the breadth of creative expressions across our northern Arizona community by providing publication opportunities to local writers and artists. The magazine is produced annually by Coconino Community College students enrolled in COM 181 with the guidance of CCC faculty and staff.

This year, *Curios* has adopted the theme of "belonging" from Sebastian Junger's book, *Tribe*, and showcases work from Flagstaff High School photography students, Northern Arizona University students and professors, Coconino Community College staff, and a multitude of incredibly talented local writers and artists in Coconino County who sacrifice daily to create and share their art. We hope by exploring what it means to belong we will come closer to understanding what it means to be human and better understand how to build a stronger, supportive community in today's divided world.

Cover Images: Secret Moon Dream by Rhonda Urdang
Back Cover Image: If You Love Yellow, This Is For You by Jury S. Judge

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COM 181 STUDENT STAFF

Catherine Hill
Drake Madden
Literature Editors & Graphic Design Assistance

PUBLICATIONS COORDINATOR

Sandra Dihlmann

ADMINISTRATION

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PROOFREADER

Larry Hendricks

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Delmy Payne
Trevor A. Welker



Catherine Hill



Drake Madden



**Larry, Delmy, Sandra
& Trevor**

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30 N LaSalle St., Suite 2400
Chicago, Illinois 60602-2504
312-263-0456 or 800-621-7440

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

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A MESSAGE TO MY FUTURE SELF

Meg Adams

Someday you will look back on today.

You won't remember that you had ginger ale and half a lemon bar for breakfast,
but you will remember this time in your life.

You will recall this room, and you will see yourself
wearing pajamas
all
day.

And you will be tempted to remember this as *easy*.

Don't you dare.

Today, you don't need to get dressed because no one will care — or notice — if you show up
to class or not.

There are days when this is a difficult choice to make.

There are days when you wonder if it's worth it to get out of bed at all.

Someday you will have an ungrateful kid
or a stressful job
or a bill you can't pay
and you will wish you could go back in time.

Stop.

Don't kid yourself.

Remember what now is really like.

To not have a clue or a direction

when everyone tells you how lucky you are to be so free

and how blessed you are to be at this point in your life

without the responsibilities of an adult in the real world.

Now you feel the words, but you can't say them.

Enough. No thanks. Stop. I disagree. No.

They stick in your throat, and all you can say is

Ok. Yes. Whatever you think. Whatever you want.

Today you're worried about your roommate. You promised not to tell her parents what's going on with her; she swears
she will snap out of it. Are you a better friend if you respect her wishes or if you try to get her help?

One day this will be an easy question to answer, but today is not that day.

One day in the future you will have your voice.

You will feel comfortable taking up space.

You won't be scared to fail.

When that day comes, don't look back and think today was perfect.

Enjoy being the person you will become.

Be proud of the life you'll have.

And know that you earned it.

GRAND FALLS

Janel States James





ECLIPSE

Jason Oberman

STRAY

Janel States James

The first time Cherith saw Ruthie, the girl was chasing the dog Dingo, trying to collar him with a short scrap of rope. Cherith came on them all of a sudden over the slight crest of the hill behind the house. She pulled her gun free from the canvas sling on her back, but her shoulders filled with stiffness and pain and she couldn't lift the gun up level. She rested the butt on her hip in plain sight, but she would have to run the girl off with unforgiving words, the kind she threw out like grenades at trespassers' feet, making them to scuttle over the barbed wire fence and off her property.

At first, it was the dog that stopped her from calling out. She knew him, had seen him loping over her land often enough that she secretly named him Dingo, though he walked wide circles around her, his eyes sliding away. Cherith had never seen the girl but knew her too for a stray. She walked slumped over, like she was losing stuffing from an open seam, though she couldn't have been more than eleven. Even from where Cherith stood, she could see her matted hair and the unevenness of her skin, covered with scars.

Cherith watched the dog and girl play a repetitive game. The girl would blow a long low whistle in the hollow of her cupped hands, the rope over her shoulder. The dog would stop, head cocked, legs quivering. She would edge forward, speaking low, then spring and knock the dog down, pulling the rope tight around his neck. But he was a shape-shifter. Time and again Cherith watched amused as he flattened his ears, slipping his head out of the rope the way she'd seen

mice escape the narrow cracks in her bedroom wall. He would bound away down the gully, the girl sliding and diving in the loose dirt to catch him.

Cherith stalked them silently until she could make out the fence at the edge of her property. She gauged how quickly the girl and dog would reach it, then, impulsively, she braced her rifle on her knee and fired a single shot straight up. The dog froze wide-eyed, seeing Cherith for the first time, and the girl pounced, this time winding the rope tightly around the dog's chest, as if working a calf. She came to her feet stroking the dog's head and met Cherith's hard eye unflinchingly, as though she knew her, as though they'd been in it together. In that moment, Cherith understood what it was to want something. It was before she understood what it was to get it.

She took the girl in and named her Ruthie. She wanted the dog and girl to sleep in the house, in the kitchen, but Ruthie balked, wild-eyed, spreading her fingers over her scars, and Cherith quickly understood that the girl could not tolerate enclosed places where fire breeds. Instead, she helped Ruthie dig a small pit in the side of the hill where she had first seen her, edging it with rocks for warmth, leaving it open at the top. The girl should be happy enough, she thought.

For her part, Cherith liked how Ruthie did not complain about the heat of the plateau in midday or the lightning of the monsoon. She liked

Cherith turns the gun on the dog and cocks it. She looks at Ruthie. She meets her hard eye.

to bring her milk and bread in the morning and to comb out her roughly tangled hair with her fingers. She liked edging up on the girl the way she might sneak up on a bird's nest, peering between the rocks carefully, trying not to scare her. Because most of all, she liked the way Ruthie stayed.

But then the dry hush of winter settled over the plateau and Cherith woke one morning to find that cold was making the girl dangerous. Ruthie's lips and nails were turning a subtle purple that did not disappear, even in the sun.

So now Cherith sits on her porch, waiting for Ruthie, who comes every night on the promise of coffee. When Ruthie and Dingo appear in the distance, dropping out of sight now and again as they cross the uneven terrain, Cherith lays the gun across her knees. She does not move again until they reach the edge of the porch. The dog circles Ruthie's feet, lying down in the last patch of sun when Cherith brings her gun up level, ignoring the pain in her shoulder.

"You come on in now," she says, gesturing with the barrel toward the door, but Ruthie, head cocked, legs quivering, does not move.

"Bring Dingo, and come on in," Cherith says again, raising the gun higher.

When Ruthie still does not come, Cherith turns the gun on the dog and cocks it. She looks at Ruthie. She meets her hard eye.

Then she braces the butt of the rifle on her knee and fires a single shot straight up, and watches Ruthie run, somewhere beyond her fence, somewhere with the dog Dingo.

FADED FLOWERS

Theresa Palacios



CALM

Wyatt Armbruster

The house was quiet and the world was calm.
No birds were chirping;
The air, no qualm.
The boy with his thoughts, with wings and with chain,
Sat there in the silence,
His happiness slain.

He wandered the suburb and looked at the clothes,
That scattered the ground,
In heaps and in cloves.
The yards were brown and filled with weeds.
The boy never realized,
What everyone needs.

There then came a sound to the little boy's glee.
But he only saw a stop sign.
That had just broken free.
He collapsed and he cried with tears in his eyes.
He realized long ago,
That his wants were all lies.

The boy thought about what he had done.
How his parents were angry,
And he wanted to run.
The result of his wish he could have never known.
Everyone has thought it,
He wanted to be alone.



“My first mistake?
Majoring in English.”

MY FIRST MISTAKE

Matthew Henry Hall

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NIGHTS LIKE THESE

Margarita Cruz

She's got her lips round a cigarette
like a safety whistle
I wonder where she first learned to hold one
 between her fingers
to light it in the wind
 to hold it in just long enough to
feel that high

who gave her that first drag
the flavor of something that could kill her?
When did it become something associated with
cold nights, whiskey, ripped jackets
 unclimbed fences
and I wanna know who told her that orange peels
 and tobacco
are what ghosts taste like after they've just died.

How'd she manage to find the one Lucky
in the packet of the upturned filters
 on her first try
that first night her breath became more
like a small house fire
how did she manage to burn the city that night
high heels clutched in her hand and
 tights ripped
 across the seams.

ODE TO MY MOTHER DYING

Jill Divine

First the memory unit. Lockdown. You
were memory sick. I needed a passcode
to open the door. Three years flew
past us, and suddenly you spent
all your days in bed. I spent my time
next to you saying, you can go now,
it's okay, go. I'm okay, and I'll take care
of the boy. I thought it would be
like magic. I would say it and you
would go. But you didn't. You stayed
and stayed, and all my good mojo
disappeared. I started begging, please go,
I need you to go now. Then hospice came,
those good people who help others
die. At least someone thought
you might go. They took away the Seroquel
and Soma, the Naproxen and the Simvastatin.
They came to help you die, when I
couldn't. Wait, I have to start this over.
Let me start here. I was a teenager.
Sullen. Sarcastic. You and my father
called me into the kitchen. What, I said.
And you said, Pull the plug on us.
If we're incapacitated, pull the plug.
We don't want to be, what was it?
vegetables. That's what you said. I said
I would because I was a teenager who wanted
to get out of the kitchen. I didn't know
what you were asking. I didn't understand
the depth of dying. In the memory unit,
I had lost you, but then, for eight weeks,
after hospice came, I had you
back. You were beautiful.

I could see you again. Without the drugs
swimming in your veins, I found you.
I found you by looking into your eyes.
I found you in the way back, behind the iris
and pupil, back into the you who always
knew me. So I waited for you to die,
and while I waited, we had root beer floats
every night. I fed you and gave you baths.
I talked and looked into you, finding you
over and over again. Finding the reason
I couldn't have pulled the plug,
had there been one. Later, I walked
your body down the hallway
for the last time and watched
the man gently tuck you into the back
of the big black car and drive away.
I was empty, but as I moved across
the parking lot, and the sun smattered
itself across the sky, and some bird sang
somewhere, I celebrated your leaving.



"It's easier than writing poems."

HERDING CATS

Matthew Henry Hall

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INTO THE WILD

Jim Schroeder

Jim Schroeder

ON RETURNING

Margarita Cruz

Ghosts creep in the corners of an empty house.

Ghosts creep in the corners of your empty house.

Traces of God, I find

in the pictures they've placed on the walls. A

(first) communion, (family) in front of the church,

a cross decorated by a child, a rosary (minus a few beads).

This is where you've knelt and sung. Felt the holy spirit

(a ghost)

laid lips on the hands of strangers who have sat with you

and prayed.

This is where you've lost

all the sleep your father would have given you had he still been alive.

the smell of roses is pervasive, the saint candles make me feel like a little girl again.

I can feel their glow on my skin, a warmth much like a hug.

I can name them but not when I'm drunk, like this.

I can recite the prayers I've learned on my knees, and do,

with my mouth wrapped a bottle that can't tell the difference between

hymn and a hmm.

I have broken into this home now house to look at the relics

of us.

a museum or a mausoleum I can't tell;

I am the dead but there is no shrine for me like

the shrine for my abuelos, mí tíos, mí familia.

My baby pictures have disappeared

I don't recognize this home house anymore.

AMERICAN HONEY

Margarita Cruz

We used to sit on rooftops in the summer sun,
Dancing under it - out
skin glistening with sweat
A stickiness we could never get rid of.
Sometimes I dream of it

Shadow puppets,
our legs
Stretched with the sunset - sunrise
Broken porches, the shingles sliding into
Yards - patches of yellow grass and
Ice tea, otter pops,
Candy cigarettes
Somewhere in the roses a beer can.

The kids in the street carry guns -
Super soakers and nerfs,
They can't touch us up here.
Like bees, only sting until they're dead



LAST WORDS

Nina Dihlmann

GARDEN OF JOY

Hayley McLaughlin

I wished it would stop raining.

Carefully, I nudged the utility cart closer to the edge of my balcony, watching raindrops splatter against hundreds of little leaves. Half a dozen flowers bounced happily, exposed to the weather once more. Turning my attention elsewhere, I pulled a few pots out of the rain, towards the middle of the balcony. I wanted them to be happy. My little flowers were innocent and unblemished, they didn't deserve to know how it felt to drown.

Humming softly, I padded around in circles, moving some flowers into the rain and pulling some out of it. It had been raining for four days now; I'd spent an absurd amount of time ensuring the prosperity of my garden. I loved my flowers. I took better care of them than I did myself. I plucked a few of the dying flowers off, apologizing silently as I tossed them in the trash. The little balcony oasis was the only part of my kingdom that contained color. Rain had tainted the rest, turning everything a placid shade of gray. I dreaded the moment my oasis turned gray too. It would, eventually.

The sliding glass door screeched as it opened, and I turned my attention from my flowers to my roommate, a slight girl with hair like sunshine. Maybe she wasn't the same shade of gray as everything else. I still cared about her. She yawned, mumbling something about the coffee being ready. I stood off of the cold concrete, following her inside and shutting the door to my garden.

"How are you feeling?" Megan asked softly.

I shrugged. "Fine." Brushing off her concern and the twinge of pain in my stomach, I pulled mugs down from the cabinet and filled them to the brim with the steaming coffee. There was a long silence where Megan watched me chew on my lower lip, staring intently at the dark swirls in my drink. Finally, I looked up at her. "I called him last night."

Her shoulders slumped, and she lowered her mug from her mouth. "You didn't."

I nodded rapidly, taking a sip. "He didn't answer, just like always." Megan had deleted his number from my phone a week ago, but her efforts to keep me from him were futile. He was burned into my soul like a painful scar or a dreadful tattoo.

This was ridiculous. I buried my face in my hands, groaning. I didn't want to miss him like this. He was an awful person, and an even worse boyfriend. He paid no attention to how I was feeling or what I wanted. The only things that mattered to him were his career and how his hair looked that day. In the three years I stayed with him, he never brought me flowers just because he thought of me. His Christmas gifts were mediocre at best. For the life of me, I couldn't figure out why I loved him.

No, I knew.

I loved him because of the way his blue eyes matched the sea. I loved him because his laugh could change the world. When he kissed me, the rest of the world melted away and the only thing that mattered was the chills that ran down my spine. He would talk in his sleep, about innocent things like hot chocolate and marshmallows. He made the best scrambled eggs in the universe, and brewed a killer cup of coffee. I loved him, at first, because he was supportive; he told me I could do anything and be anything I wanted. He used to tell me I was beautiful, and that I was his world. I fell for it.

I should have known that the strange smell on his clothes was Chanel. I should have known that he wasn't texting his friends. When he stopped coming home every night, I should have known.

I was a good person. I had spent my entire life striving to see the best in people. I looked on the bright

side of life and genuinely believed that love could and would change the world someday. I tried to foster a cat once, one I found at a gas station, and ended up keeping it because I became too attached and couldn't bear to give it away. That same cat currently snored lightly on the back of our couch. One time, in third grade, I cried in class because I accidentally stepped on my friend's pencil and snapped it in two; the next day I brought her four more pencils to replace the one I broke. I was good.

I didn't know what I'd done to deserve this emotional execution. Every single day, I woke up drowning in cold water. Every day for seventeen days, I'd gone to bed and woke up again with tears staining my cheeks. I'd done nothing but love him. I asked him how his day was. I bought him his favorite things when he was feeling blue. I told him I loved him. I tried so hard.

What did I get in return?

In return, I was told that I wasn't allowed to wear heels because it was impertinent of me to be taller than him. I wasn't allowed to wear red lipstick because it made my smile too big. My childhood friends stopped talking to me after I started pouring all of my energy into preserving my fictitious love. I cleaned the house, I did the dishes, I paid the bills. For three years, I killed myself over and over again to become the star in his eyes. I was a daisy, but all he wanted was a rose. I was never enough for him.

Raising my eyes, I looked over at Megan, who was watching me sadly. "I'm a mess, aren't I?"

She shrugged. "Boys can do that to you."

I wandered away from her, back outside where the color was. It was still raining, but all my flowers looked so joyous that I couldn't help but smile at them. Why couldn't my life be as exultant as my flowers' lives were? Why couldn't I just be happy and dance in the

rain? I couldn't wait for the day the chains around my heart released and I could act normally again. My eyes roamed over my garden oasis, taking in the daisies and the daffodils and the calla lilies. All of my little buds of innocence smiled up at me, telling me that I was going to be okay. My kingdom could have color again. I didn't need a king to grow my flowers, because I could be the queen.

Most of the rest of the morning consisted of me staring at the dozens of flowers occupying my oasis, wondering what I had to do to be as merry as they were. I grinned at my roses and my peonies. I took such good care of every single flower in my garden. Every last one of them was happy and healthy. I deserved to be that way too.

I paused, my fingers brushing the petals of one of my red tulips. Undoubtedly, red was the brightest color in my entire garden. It contrasted so confidently against the thousands of green leaves. Leaning down, I took in a deep breath, inhaling the sweet smell of my tulip with a huge smile. Then, I ran inside.

Already mostly ready for the day, it only took me a few moments to do what I needed. Digging into the back of my closet, I snatched a pair of shoes I hadn't worn in years. Somewhere in the bottom of my disastrous makeup bag, I pulled out a small tube. Sitting on the edge of my bed, I stepped into the heels, standing straight and breathing in deeply. The clicking sound they made against the tile was unfamiliar, and it brought a radiant smile to my lips. My lips which, a few moments later, were painted red. I slicked the lipstick across my mouth triumphantly, and leaned against the counter excitedly as I smiled naturally for the first time in days. Red lipstick, my small and mighty attempt at rediscovering myself. When I returned outside, my red smile only grew.

It had stopped raining.



MORNING COFFEE, DRAGON & CHOCOLATE

Elaine Dillingham

LOVE AND WAR

Larry Hendricks

EXT. PARK - DAY

Two men sit at a picnic table, a chess board between them. The sound of a TIMER mixes with the singing of the birds.

JEB, 30s, sports a button-up shirt and tie. He raises a skinny arm to move his queen.

JEB

Check.

MERLE, 30s, lifts a powerfully muscular arm covered in tattoos to counter the move. His leather biker vest SQUEAKS.

He slams his hand down on a timer.

MERLE

Nice move.

Children SQUEAL, and both men glance over to a playground with children running around, including a LITTLE GIRL, 5, in a yellow dress and black sneakers.

To the left of the playground, three WOMEN chat. Both men gaze upon and smile at the woman with the golden hair and white sundress.

From the position of the sun, they can get a hint of what lies underneath the dress.

JEB

I'll make you a wager, Merle.

The little girl runs up to the woman, and hugs the woman's legs. The woman rubs the girl's head.

Jeb moves his queen again. Hits the timer.

The little girl lets go of her mother and runs, giggling, back to the playground.

MERLE

(studying the board)

What's that?

JEB

Winner gets to take her home.

Merle moves his king, hits the timer and glances up. Jeb flicks his head toward the women and the playground.

MERLE

(squinting at Jeb)

No way, Jeb.

The timer TICKS. Jeb moves a pawn. He hits the timer.

JEB

Afraid you'll lose?

MERLE

You wanna get your ass beat?

Merle moves a rook. Hits the timer.

JEB

Fine.

Jeb takes a bishop off the board. He sets it down, looks everything over, then takes off his hand. He hits the timer.

JEB (CONT'D)

Check.

Merle moves the king. Hits timer.

MERLE

(frustrated)

OK. How about this? We arm wrestle for it. Winner takes her home.

Jeb moves his queen close.

JEB

I don't know, Merle.

MERLE

Chicken?

JEB

(serious)

You're on.

Merle stops the timer. They move next to the game. Merle puts up his right arm.

MERLE

Get ready to have your arm broke.

JEB

I'm left-handed.

Merle smiles, lifts an equally beefy left arm covered in tattoos.

MERLE

Seems only fair.

They grasp left hands and tense at the ready.

JEB

Say when.

They glare into each other's eyes.

MERLE

When.

The match is over in a second, Jeb the victor. Merle, eyes wide, has his mouth open.

Jeb starts the timer.

JEB

State champ, three times. How about that original wager?

Merle takes a deep breath and lets it out slow.

MERLE

If it'll give me another shot at taking her home.

JEB

It's a bet.

Before Jeb can study the board again, Merle moves his rook down the board, pinning Jeb's king.

MERLE

Check mate.

He slams the timer, smiling like he won the lottery. Jeb frantically searches the board, then resigns himself.

JEB

Good game.

They shake hands.

The two men get up and head toward the playground and the gathered women.

Jeb saunters up to the woman in the sundress and they kiss.

Merle lumbers up to the little girl in the yellow dress, and, smiling, she runs into his arms. He twirls her around, the happiness of the world on his face.



GOD OF WAR

Jason Oberman

DEFINITION OF A HERO

Scott Talboom

Fence posts were about the only thing breaking the monotony as he sped through miles of open range. Mountains were in sight but far into the distance. Cows and an occasional antelope herd were the only signs of life in this barren land. It still had an appeal though, its own kind of beautiful, and the sunrise was nature's perfect fireworks display. He liked the fact this country was still open. No homes. No people.

He was in Prescott the night before and had to rise at 4 a.m. to make it to his meeting in Springerville on time. These stretches on the road were brutal and lonely. He had a long day ahead, one meeting after another. He thought about how he had to make everyone count, because the town was a long way from everywhere and never on the way to anywhere else.

Rolling into town, he could see the trailer homes with junk cars all around them, smoke billowing from wood stoves on the horizon. It was a quaint town in some ways and a sad town too. The lumber industry was dying, and it was taking its toll. The day was long, and some progress was made. He was only 22, and he had the gift of gab, a winning smile and little else in his toolkit. The people were guarded but nice. It was his second trip, and he already had made some friends. The old ladies, likely the great granddaughters of the Mormon pioneers, met him with freshly baked cookies in anticipation of his arrival.

Their husbands told fishing stories.

When the day came to an end, he was too exhausted to make the three-and-a-half-hour drive to Flagstaff. He checked in to an old hotel with a bar and restaurant attached. Everything on the menu included gravy, and he liked that. The walls were decorated with Coca-Cola signs and dusty, stuffed deer heads, with cob webs connecting their antlers. There was a juke box at every booth with Merle Haggard, George Jones, and Johnny Cash songs available--three for a quarter. The bar was in the back, probably so men could sneak in and out without the town gossips mentioning that they were there the night before.

After supper he headed to the bar hopefully to strike up a conversation. There wasn't anyone he wouldn't talk to. At first it was he and the bartender, a rough looking gal with a cigarette dangling from her lips. She wasn't much on small talk, so he ordered a Budweiser and stared at the TV screen. It was playing an *I Love Lucy* episode in black and white. An old man shuffled in wearing a dusty cowboy hat decorated with military metals including a purple heart. He ordered a shot and a beer and spit tobacco into a cup between sips.

He didn't have much to say either, so the young man turned to him and said, "You must be some kind of hero with all those metals pinned on your hat."

The old man turned to him and faced him eye to eye. His face had deep crags like the rock cliffs at the granite dells in Prescott. One eye drooped noticeably and his steel blue eyes pierced through him like daggers.

It seemed like an hour before he said, "The heroes are dead, Son. The heroes are the ones that died out there in Vietnam. I ain't no hero. I was there with those boys, but I ain't no goddamn hero. The heroes are dead."

There was more silence, and the younger man didn't dare to speak. Eventually the old man asked what he was doing in town and the conversation resumed. He said that he worked at the power plant in Saint Johns after the war until he fell off a scaffold and ruined his back. He lamented about how much he missed working. They spoke about other subjects that were not as heavy.

The old man finally got up, shook his hand, and shuffled out to his truck. It was late and time to go to bed. Five a.m. came early, and he had a meeting in Flagstaff at nine. The next morning, he checked out grabbing a Styrofoam cup of terrible coffee from the lobby. He shivered as he fired up the company car hoping that the McDonald's in Holbrook might be open by the time he arrived. It was 50 miles before he passed another car on that dark two-lane highway. He was too far from anywhere to pick up a radio station, and all he could hear were the haunting words now burned into his brain. *The heroes are dead, Son.* The heroes...are dead.

He didn't have much to say either, so the young man turned to him and said, "You must be some kind of hero with all those metals pinned on your hat."



TIMELAPSE

Chadin Dinehdeal



HANNAH

Delayna Scott

ODE TO THE GRAFFITIED TILES AT TWO GUNS

Jill Divine

You are sprinkled over the floor
of the old KOA like diamonds. 4x4 glossy
square diamonds, purple and teal,
orange and hideous pink. If I put you
back together you would be a mural
saying The Only Answer is Love, or
Your Friends Brought You Here to Kill You.
You are mostly the past,
and slightly the present, but your future
is crushed and ground into the dry dirt.
You are not alive, but I want to know
what you've seen. You are just fired clay
blasted with spray paint, lying beneath
the voices of ghosts, and the wind.
You remind me of the lost girl
in high school, so young and smooth
in the beginning, sheltered from the rain,
then covered with paint around the eyes,
and lipstick for no one to kiss. I stoop
to collect you, two, then six, then twelve tiles,
to take home. Relics of the past, beautiful bits
of words and crude pictures, puzzles
I'll construct on the back fence
or the garden box, and I'll listen hard
in the dark of night to hear your stories.

UNITY – SISTERS

Willette Edwards

Sisters, three of one
From sun-up to sun-down
Our mischief we own
Sisters, three of one
Through the ages we grow
Apart we grow
Sisters, three of one
One of three, Apart from the rest
Not for the best
One of three, alone
Sisters, not three of one
The clock has turned
A sister returned
Sisters, three of one



ARCHES
Jake Fischer



OTTER

Valerie Connel

DIRT(Y)

Margarita Cruz

the veins in my arms
converge at a heart
perennial streams
leading to bodies
like hers
which
w i d e n &
narrow
naturally
unraveling sediment
sentiments a flow of feelings,
a traumatic torrent
of debris
her words wash up
on a riparian & recycle
into me
gravel & silt & sand & cigarettes
loaded into my body
polluted with pathogens
she promised
wouldn't irrigate
into me
our hands confluences conflicted
fluvial fingers caress
fingers twisting
fingers failing
fingers slipping
into me

banks break
ing alongside my inside
flooding streams
once impermeable
a washout
barren
contaminants buried
in her pockets-
tributaries she carries
away

filtering out
of me.



BLACK AND BLUE

Nina Dihlmann



Coconino
Community
College

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