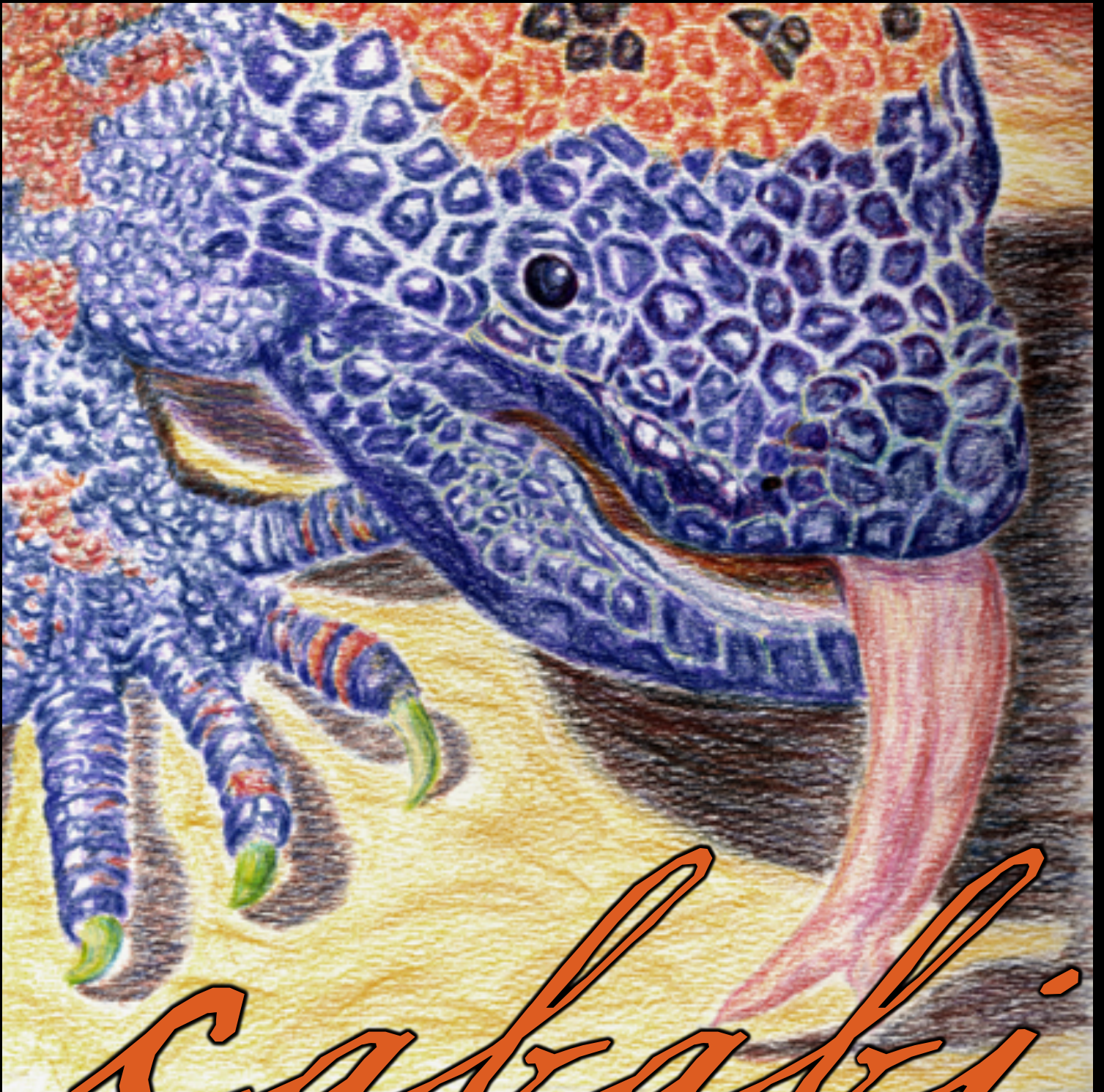


FALL 2014

ISSUE NO. 1



# *Cabalabi*

ART & LITERARY

*magazine*

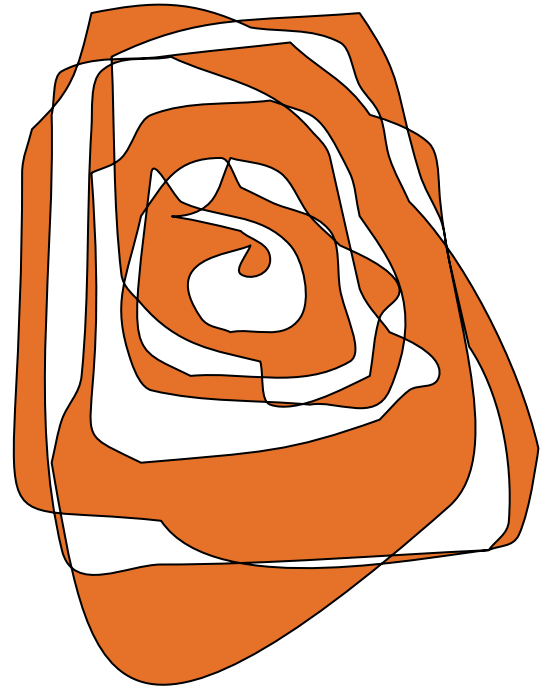
poetry • prose • visual arts

Celebrating the many talents of the faculty and staff of Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona

# FALL 2014

*editorial*

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**INAUGURAL**

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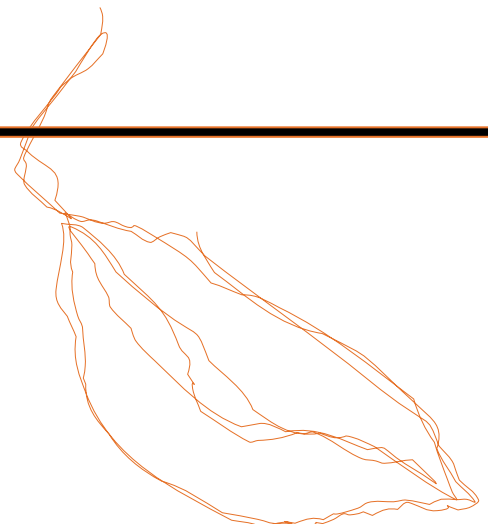
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## The meaning of CABABI

“Cababi” is a Tohono O’odham word that means *hidden springs*.





*Neon Look* by Mike Rom

## *A look into this issue...*

This past year has been a year of unexpected joys and surprises.

Along with the birth of my son, came the rebirth of a beloved Pima publication, Cababi. It has been eight long years since Cababi was published at the Downtown Campus – too long of an absence in light of the many talented writers, artists and critical minds that teach and work within our walls. After some long talks with Dean Pat Houston, and some mulling-over the possibilities with my close friends and colleagues, we decided to re-launch this once indelible magazine. We hope that our efforts to resurrect this publication serve as a tribute to the creativity of our teachers,

mentors and dedicated service staff that work hard to provide the best possible post-secondary experience to our students. We want to rededicate Cababi to fellow colleagues who help make Pima possible – even through the recent struggles and triumphs. We have always been a strong team, but we are now stronger than ever. Let's make this inaugural e-dition just one of many future digital AND printed issues. On that note, we are proud to announce that Cababi will be a district-wide publication for the 2014-2015 school year. I can't wait to see what the future holds for us!

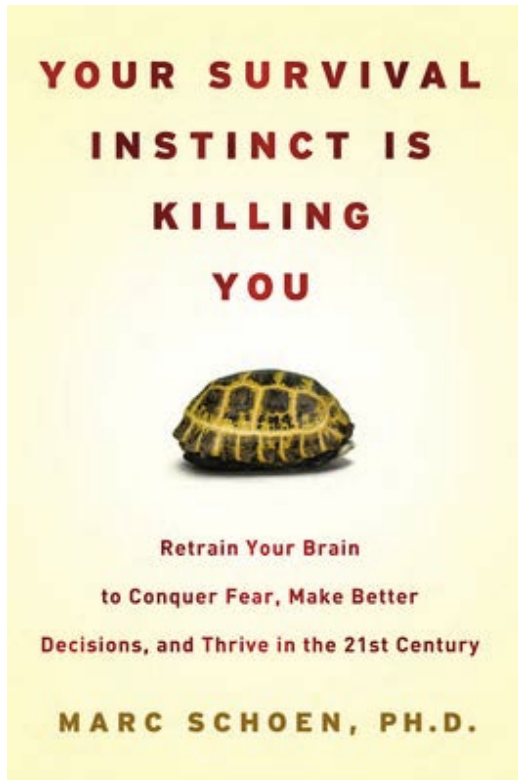
~ April Burge  
*Editor-in-Chief*



*Meditation Challenges of Stillness* by Mano Sotelo

# Book Review by Shelly Dorsey

*Your Survival Instinct is Killing You: Retrain your Brain to Conquer Fear, Make Better Decisions, and Thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*  
by Marc Schoen, Ph.D.



Why in an age of material comforts (at least in the US) do people seem more anxious, more distracted, and, in fact, more uncomfortable? This is the thought-provoking question raised by Dr. Marc Schoen in his new book, *Your Survival Instinct is Killing You* (Penguin 2013). Schoen is a psychologist specializing in mind-body approaches to health and teaches at the Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA as well as working with clients in private

practice. Schoen traces the ways that pursuing comfort has paradoxically resulted in greater discomfort in our lives. He suggests methods to begin to get comfortable with our pain, discomfort, and the uncertainties of life which can help diffuse the state of constant alarm, ‘fight or flight,’ perceptions of threat, and the sense of agitation that he argues underlie many modern physical and psychological illnesses.

## The Cozy Paradox

Schoen first brings up what he calls “the Cozy Paradox,” as he notes that despite the rise for many people of a materialistically more comfortable life, “we have become increasingly oversensitive to discomfort—so much so that even subtle adversity and general uneasiness have become capable of inculcating fear and unsettling our physical and emotional health” (21). Depression ranks as one of the US’s top causes of disability and premature death, and Schoen notes that the US ranks twenty-fourth in terms of life expectancy and fourteenth in terms of preventable deaths although we outspend all other countries in per person health care costs (23).

## Our Inner Survivalist

Schoen's explanation for the comfort-discomfort paradox rests upon his analysis of our brain evolution, including our so-called 'reptilian' and 'limbic' systems. He notes that our

frontal cortex part of the brain, a much later development in brain evolution, specializes in analysis and critical thinking while the limbic system specializes in fast gut reactions. The limbic system's number one priority is to keep us safe and for the limbic

system, pain and discomfort spell threat. Schoen comments: I could see how I was wired to avoid pain as a human. Long ago we evolved to take action when we felt pain, which no doubt has its adaptive properties, allowing us to survive. We've been wired to dodge the kind of pain and

discomfort that could really kill us. But today, we're rarely faced with life-threatening situations. I wondered about the potential downside of our body's natural reactions, especially to

"inner survivalist" lives in the "farthest reaches of the brain, in the limbic system" (28), which hosts strong emotions such as fear, anger, sexual attraction, and strong sensations of pain, pleasure, hunger, and thirst. Schoen notes that the cerebral pre-



*Waking Up from the World of Thought* by Mano Sotelo

petty nuisances that aren't so lethal.

(37)

Schoen argues that today we've become especially vulnerable to gut reactions of fear, anxiety, and 'fight or flight' as we are overwhelmed through the sheer speed and complexity of modern life.

## Agitation

Throughout the book, Schoen uses a word he coined, 'agitation,' which he defines as a constant or chronic state of being 'worked up,' feeling out of balance, or misaligned (44).

Schoen notes that unlike stress in which there is often a clear and fixed cause – sick baby, work deadline, leaky roof –

agitation is caused by a "buildup of imbalances . . . accumulating and gathering steam over time" (50). While agitation is a part of life, problems ensue when there are no steps taken to get back in alignment, to re-balance, and to find "resonance" (49). Schoen gives numerous accounts of clients he's worked with whose agitation reached a critical point, producing a variety of serious reactions and illnesses that undermined their overall health.

## The "Birth of a Bad Habit"

Schoen notes that people form "maladaptive habits and routines . . . when the limbic response becomes mismanaged" (73). In the face of rising levels of internal discomfort, we focus



*Drummer Boy* by Debra Disharoon

on "avoidance or distraction" strategies such as addictions of all types, compulsive behavior, and phobias that center on avoidance of upsetting stimuli. He also argues that some types of illness or insomnia can be unconscious ways of avoiding dealing with the main issues causing stress or agitation. He notes that what all these responses have in common is a "form of resistance against confronting the fear" that arises when we feel discomfort. We feel discomfort, we feel afraid of this



discomfort, and turn to a short-term solution to distract us from both the original feeling of discomfort and the fear that comes along with it.

### The “Hardy Survivalist”

In Part 2 of the book, Schoen offers strategies for lowering agitation and accepting discomfort to help our limbic system and survival instinct calm down. He offers 15 strategies for lowering agitation including spending some time each day without using technology like computers or cellphones, exercising, slowing down, creating a relaxing bedtime routine, trying a one-thing-at-a-time approach, experimenting with mindful breathing, and allowing more space for imperfection and even inefficiency. His most powerful strategies, however, revolve around “building a brain community” to more effectively deal with discomfort. The cerebral and limbic parts of the brain can operate effectively together to cope with discomfort but Schoen argues that training the brain is necessary for this to happen. In particular, he notes we need to be aware of the “duality” in life that enables us to experience both discomfort and a sense of safety at the same time, thus quieting the trigger responses and reactions from our survival instinct. Schoen emphasizes that this involves perceiving the world and our reactions in a “non-absolute way” (168) with the awareness that many different sensations of both pain

and pleasure, comfort and discomfort can be occurring at the same time. He states, “Practically speaking, this would imply that it’s possible to feel fear or discomfort while another part of us feels relaxed . . . at the same time” (168). Many of the significant exercises in the book involve experiencing a state of discomfort while consciously holding in mind something that is comforting, gratifying, or that induces a sense of positive challenge. Repeated practice in this skill of duality will result in less reactive responses, less fearfulness of discomfort, and greater awareness of the opportunities that experiences of discomfort present.

### Discomfort—Essential for Evolution of Consciousness

Schoen concludes that “discomfort or vulnerability in our present day actually has more survival value than being comfortable once had in prehistoric times” (230). How we deal with discomfort presents our greatest chance to evolve and grow in our own lives and, perhaps, in the growth and ultimate survival of our species. Indeed, he argues “becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable and vulnerable really is the most important tool in the twenty-first century” (231). Schoen’s book offers a valuable resource from a psychological perspective on finding more inner peace through successfully approaching and integrating our most challenging and uncomfortable experiences.

# Subtle Anatomy

by Sarah Chenoweth

My body's River runs smoothly;  
a slow, gray winding  
up and down my spine.  
Its currents churn  
against banks fashioned by bone,  
its languid waters lap my synapses.  
Those who have gone before me  
inhabit its many shores,  
helping navigate a life  
of uncertain joy.

Like a steady stream of consciousness  
the River meanders on;  
bending when there are organs in its path  
forging ahead when the way has been made clear.  
Life stays, teeming, just below the surface;  
rising and falling with the tide,  
carried away by the sound of waves.



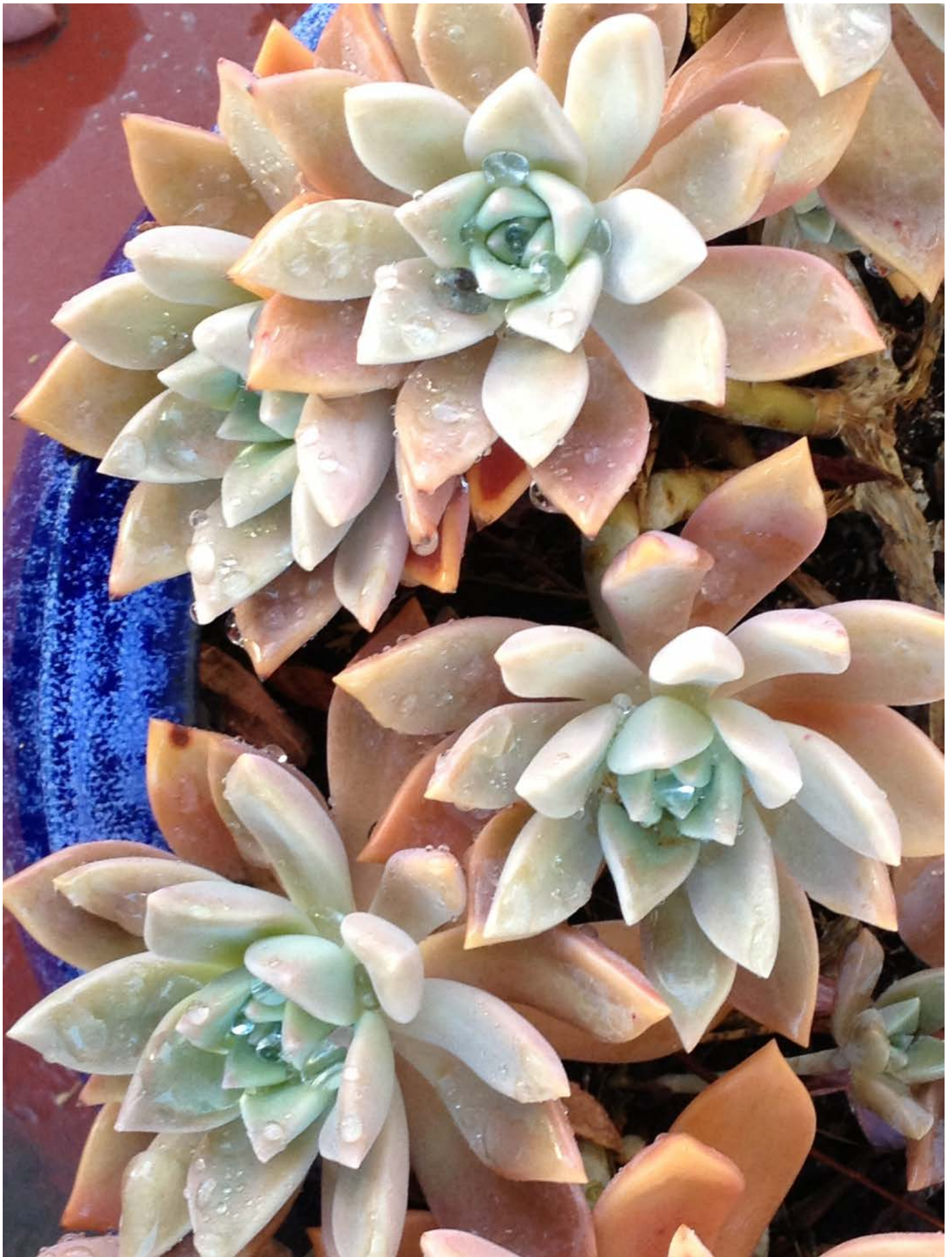
*Grief* by Debra Disharoon

# Identity, Roles

by Ralph Castellanos

the twisting and bending  
of human clay  
on one hand,  
we're beaten to a pulp  
yet busy  
on the other:  
softened to flimsy putty  
in unemployment  
in identity crisis  
searching and growing soft  
the omniscient clock  
looks down at us  
from overhead  
the days will see  
another unsuccessful interview  
another fruitless voyage  
about town  
in another town  
from another town  
now on to  
the next town  
lungs full of  
the dust that never settles  
there's no choice  
but to fight on  
in the contortionist war  
hell bent  
bent on three sides  
on a hexagon gig  
try again, get bent again  
and you don't make the cut  
for the rectangle role  
the chameleon identity  
is flattened, limp

we become obtuse  
we start over  
the frustrations of adulthood  
the transition from  
playdoh  
to a work of art  
we wonder where  
the masterpieces come from  
when all we see  
is our dank, semi-lit  
workshop  
and the creaking, rusted  
spindle of our pug mill  
roars on  
we're somewhere between  
failure and recognition  
as the scream of our  
artist soul  
speaks for our mute dry throats  
and our masterpiece vision  
exists, ready and willing  
beyond tired blood shot eyes  
naysayers may proclaim  
that you're a bit  
bent out of proportion  
all you can do is  
smile thoughtfully  
for this is the  
metamorphosis of man  
and if nothing else  
at least you have  
the scars to prove it



# Bedside Manner

by James McPherson

“Report at 8 AM, sharp, somebody there would be expecting you,” read the memo from the Director of Paramedic Training. The Los Angeles County Coroner’s office was in the basement. My spirits sank with the elevator—the sliding door tripped a bell, “Ding! Welcome to Nordstrom’s going down, next stop Lower Level One—Sweaters, Coats, Gloves and Scarves. Lower Level Two—Clearance items, and Bodies, lots of Dead Bodies. “Snap out of it,” I thought. Why was I so nervous? “You’ve been around death before,” thinking again. After all, I had been a firefighter for more than three years, and worked hundreds of emergency scenes—

bandaging the injured, treating the wounded, the sick, the dying, even as a steward to the dead. A few in the last moment of life, holding their hands, looking in their eyes at that final instant of mortality, trying to help them, trying to help me understand what they saw.

Selfishly I thought, “Why do I need to watch human dissection? I’m in the life-saving business, not the dead-body business. Don’t I see enough of that gore on the job? What can I

possibly learn?” No matter, as I approached the end of my training, about to become the seven-hundred and seventy-third L. A. County Paramedic—spending half a day in the coroner’s office, observing autopsies was a requirement for certification and I was dreading it. So far, I had thoroughly enjoyed paramedic training, but I was not looking forward to the next four hours.

The elevator opened to a cold, long hallway lit by fluorescent shop

**There were bodies on the gurneys and every so often, a foot or arm protruded from under stenciled sheets—LACCO.**

lights bolted to the center of the ceiling shining through heavy wire grids. The pale gray-green walls reflected the semi-gloss light—easy to wash. Stainless steel gurneys lined both sides of the hallway, metal tables standing still on soap-box derby wheels with hard rubber tires. There were bodies on the gurneys and every so often, a foot or arm protruded from under

stenciled sheets—LACCO. “Get a hold of yourself,” still thinking. My legs were lead and I strained to move, staring straight ahead, stilted steps, walking between the bodies.

I followed the voices at the end of the hall, my brain surrounded by a mixed odor of formaldehyde and organic rot. The smell was numbing. I began to drift into serenity, calmness—so what if it was a defense mechanism, I welcomed it.

Lou was wearing a white lab coat under a full-length black rubber apron. “You the trainee?” he asked, a Marlboro (my brand) hanging from the corner of his mouth. I think I said, “Yes”, or nodded, or did something to acknowledge that I understood him. I was still insulated in my protective defensive cocoon, but beginning to re-

**He also had the odd habit of speaking to the bodies as if they were still alive, beginning each procedure with, “and this won’t hurt a bit.” My first reaction was that Lou had been at this job too long and lost touch with reality.**

enter the world. “I’m Lou, assistant coroner. I’ll be showing you around. Do you have your attendance form?” “Yes sir. Here, I’m Jim.” He led me around a corner and down another hallway. More thoughts, “My God, there are bodies everywhere!” Lou stopped at a tall thick door equipped with the kind of hardware I’d seen before on restaurant walk-in refrigerators. He pulled the door open,

stepped inside, and flipped on the light, “This is where we keep the remains.” The room was thirty feet deep, with shelving two stories high, stacked with more corpses. There were hundreds. I managed to stay standing and croaked, “Is it okay if I smoke?” “Sure, follow me.”

He lead the way to a large room with half a dozen steel tables bolted to the floor, lined up down the center of

the room like silver parking spaces. There was a male body supine on the fourth table down. Next to the tables along the left wall, were several Formica and steel desks topped with letter trays, rubber stamps, and a stapler. Lou sat down at one, signed and rubber stamped my form, and handed it back with a wry smile. The opposite wall was lined with more sinks, a counter covered in stainless-lidded glass jars, upper and lower cabinets hiding more equipment. Jeez, that smell pervaded everything—the cigarette wasn’t helping.

True to his word, Lou spent the next three and half hours showing me around. He was a considerate mentor. He kept me focused on the anatomical side of the learning, while showing respect for the deceased, treating each with dignity. As he went about his forensic analyses he explained to me the reason for each test, each dissection, and each weight measurement. He also had the odd habit of speaking to the bodies as if they were still alive, beginning each procedure with, “and this won’t hurt a bit.” My first reaction was that Lou had been at this job too long and lost touch with reality. Perhaps a few weeks’ vacation would help. However, as I spent more time with him I came to see that it wasn’t a symptom of psychosis, but a reasonable strategy to deal with the responsibility he felt to take care of both the body, and the soul. He said, “I know because I speak to the dead, you think I’m a few

bricks short of a full pallet,” he shrugged. “I don’t pretend to know what happens when a person dies. We deal with so many people here; people of every faith, no faith, all ages, so many people. I use a ‘bedside manner,’ just as I would if they were still alive. That bedside manner serves to remind me that I have a responsibility to take good care of my charges.”

At noon, my time was up. Shaking Lou’s hand, the elevator doors

closed between us. As I walked through the parking garage, free from that overwhelming smell, I coughed-up what was left of my breakfast against a concrete wall, looking around embarrassed. Relieved, I leaned against my car and thought, “As a paramedic, I am accountable to the living and the dead. I need a bedside manner that transcends life.”



*Trees* by Brooke Anderson

# Voyager

by Sarah Chenoweth

When there are cobwebs on the cleaning implements;  
when there is rust on the hinges of the pantry doors;  
when the hems of my Sunday skirts go unmended,  
lying out on the bedroom floor—  
that's when you know I've gone out  
to knock the dust off my summer shoes;  
and I will not be home until well after dark.

# U-Haul Dance Call

by April Burge

Y2K. Southern. August. Day.  
Fleeing from home broke, back to broken home.  
Car carrier secured. 26-foot truck sways.  
Under the weight, miles alone.

Check engine light blinks in arrest.  
The waylaid orange and white, a blur  
afloat wreckage, like a leaky life vest  
past semi trucks that bellow with allure

Radiator hisses, a traveler's alarm  
Burnt coolant cut grass collision of East Texas  
Marlboro Lights and Diet Coke keeping the calm  
Slick rims slow. Middle aged. Nice shoes. Shiny Lexus.

Moments pass in the storm on black tarmac  
Exchange of information between seismic shifts  
She grabs her purse and doesn't look back  
Not surprised at how easy it is.



# Tears of Divinity

by Charlie Te

I am small, like the Who on the dust speck floating lightly on the clover held by Horton in the curl of his trunk. You cannot see me. I am a tiny being on an infinitesimal planet in the microscopic galaxy hanging off the collar of Orion, the cat. My life is a fleeting moment in a sea of much bigger moments that threaten to eat me and then I will be gone.

It is a sunny day, as it so often is in Tempe, Arizona. I walk to a class and I sit in a seat. I take out a notebook and a pen. The professor is talking. I take some notes. I imagine the synapses in my brain firing across the folds of my cerebral cortex, like so many brightly colored fireworks and just as fleeting. The professor asks a question. I have an elusive memory of the topic, faint and flickering sparks. The professor looks at us. We look at him. He sighs and tells us to figure it out before the next exam. I hear the sound of 30 pens scratching. The class time is up. I leave the classroom, get into my car, and pay the attendant. Soon, I am on the I-10, heading toward Tucson.

Driving slowly through the Phoenix area traffic, I turn on the radio. An angry-sounding man is explaining that his deity disapproves of Adam and Steve and intends to condemn their afterlife essence to an eternity of

unimaginable suffering. This hateful monologue reminds me of a dream that I had many years ago. In the dream, the song, "Beautiful Life," by Ace of Base was pounding out its cheerful beat while a mob of laughing and dancing people were kicking to death a small, effeminate man who was futilely trying to protect himself by curling into a fetal position on the ground of a dirty parking lot. A light blue car full of pointing and laughing Christians drove by, crosses swinging in the wind. I saw the sticker on the back bumper of their car as they drove off, not helping the dying man. "God Loves You!" Oh! Yeah!

I change the radio station. Katy Perry is asking if I ever feel like a plastic bag. I am not entirely sure what she means, but think I have. Anyway, I like the beat, so I let the station play on.

It is a sunny day, as it so often is in Tucson, Arizona. I walk to class. My students are seated when I arrive; their notepads and pens are out. I ask them a question about rational inequalities. We discussed several methods of solving these during the last class session. No one answers my question. I look at my students. My students look at me. I sigh and tell them to review

I change the radio station. Katy Perry is asking if I ever feel like a plastic bag. I am not entirely sure what she means, but think I have.

their notes on this topic before the next exam. I hear the sound of 30 pens scratching. Soon, the class time is up.

I go to my office and do some backed-up paperwork and answer several emails. I grade some quizzes and record the scores. Soon, it is time to go home. Driving home, east on Speedway Boulevard, the Rincon Mountains grow larger in my windshield while the Tucson Mountains shrink in the rearview mirror of my slightly dinged up Corolla. With some trepidation, I turn the radio on. A reporter is explaining that several of the Republican Arizona legislators believe in the freedom to deny services based on bigotry as long as that bigotry is a fervently held religious belief. I am of

the impression that they do not hold the freedom for all adults to marry a spouse of their own choosing quite so dear; though I certainly hold the fervent belief that God loves my wife and I at least as much as He loves any bigot. I wonder why I keep listening to the news, but I know I will tune back in tomorrow.

When I arrive home, my wife is cooking lubia, a middle-eastern dish featuring green beans, crushed tomatoes and beef. It smells delicious. I give her a hug. Over dinner, she asks if anything interesting happened at work today. I tell her about a student who, when asked why she had been absent recently, replied that perhaps she had been psychologically trapped at



*Bridal Falls by April Burge*

home; perhaps she had been curled up and crying because math made her that sad. She had a mischevious smile on her face when she said this, so I had assumed that she was joking about the curled up and crying part.

At least I hoped that she had been joking. My wife hoped so, too.

That night, I had another strange dream. Four terrible men were terrorizing a small town, doing all manner of horrible things. Tom Welling, the star of a television series called Smallville, was flying around in full Superman

regalia. He swooped down and seized all four men by their coats – two in each hand. He flew over to the police station and dropped them off into the custody of the local sheriff. The ringleader of the criminals asked Tom why he did not pillage and plunder as they did, as he could certainly get away with it using his super powers. In a voice that was no longer Tom Welling’s, Tom Welling boomed, “Without humility, there is no grace!”

I sat up in bed, my heart pounding. I looked over to my still

sleeping wife, whom the state of Arizona refused to acknowledge. I listened to the soothing sound of her soft snoring, not much louder than a purr. I thought about the many people

speaking for God, hating for God, condemning for God. I wondered if these people could ever see themselves as I see them – without a shred of humility, full of bigotry, and so clearly without a hint of grace?

I fell back into a fitfull sleep. The small spirit of the effeminate man was accompanied by Jesus. They walked together along a

shimmering beach. Their footsteps left no prints as the made their way toward a magnificent setting sun.

“Why do they hate me so?” the man asked Jesus.

The sun glinted off a tear running down Jesus’s cheek. He looked tenderly at the man and said sadly and simply, “I do not know.”

**I sat up in bed,  
my heart  
pounding. I  
looked over to  
my still sleeping  
wife, whom the  
state of Arizona  
refused to  
acknowledge.**



*Remembrance* by Lisa Larrabee



# Removed

by Debra Disharoon

She could have been beautiful, with that special glow  
She could start sprouting seeds and growing life, but  
never finish

Pain, Heavy and Dark

Black Flood, Living Hurt

Deserted. Silence and Abandonment

Fear like a charging herd of Elephants intense

Desperate. shiver within, blue ice

Gathering clouds, a veil drops.

Hollowed and cocooned into isolation.

Void and scarred Forever.

*Glow by Brooke Anderson*

# Taj Mahal

by Anne Franklin

If you visit the Red Fort in Agra it is easy to find a balcony where you can look out over the Yamuna River, a tributary of the great Ganges River, and see the Taj in the distance. The Red Fort is the palace, really more of a walled city, where the rulers of the Moghul Empire- the Muslim invaders from Persia who ruled this part of India for a few hundred years- lived and ruled.

Shah Jahan was, I think, the fourth ruler and was the son of Akbar the Great. He's the one who built the Taj Mahal in memory of his wife Mumtaz who died giving birth to their 14th child. When you are in Agra you hear a lot about their great love story which occupies the minds of the romantically inclined – pretty much everyone. There are stories about how they met, how she traveled with him to his various battles, what he said to her on her death bed, etc. When she died he was grief stricken and began building her mausoleum, the Taj Mahal. He was building a second Taj, which was going to be right across the river from hers and was going to be of black marble. It was going to be for him. You can see it today if you view the Taj from behind – across the river.

He evidently was pouring money into it, and his son felt that he was spending their fortune. The old man ignored him, so he locked his father up in the rooms off the balcony. From there, he was left with the a distant view of the Taj. So, here is this gorgeous building floating above it all. Shah Jahan was locked up there the last eight years of his life, and could only gaze at her tomb all day. You can stand on that balcony and feel his sorrow. Nowadays, the view is partly obscured by the clouds of smoke from the Hindu bodies being burned on the funeral ghats along the river. It is the superposition of cultures so typical of India.



# Invention

by Brooke Anderson

*"How dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow." Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*

To create in the mind.

Rather than in the body?

Cures: not invented but found.

Babies: not invented but created.

Continents: not invented but discovered.

Now, dirt turned to glass,

Liquid carbonated,

Light captured in dark,

Air bent for flight: Invented.

Man-made,

as in artificial,

as in not natural,  
as in playing god.

A drug is invented

A monster is invented

They do not grow  
of their own accord but  
require manipulation,  
imagination,  
ambition.

Biting the apple

Loses the garden,

Splits body and mind,

But is mind not body,

Body not natural?



*I Am the Way by Mano Sotelo*

# Flock

by Sarah Chenoweth

We decided to stop drinking and spend Sundays at the zoo. It was spring and, early in the morning, birds you'd never hear in the city were alive. We were alive with them. Peacocks, parrots, macaws, cranes, flamingos, eagles—all alive. We were alone while half the city slept in beds and the other half slept at First Southern Baptist, St. James United Methodist, and Sacred Heart Catholic Church. We watched life awaken from all seven continents—Hallelujah. The zoo is a faded tan dictionary. We began at A—acouchi, ant-eater, antelope—and ended at Z—zebra—and it didn't matter that we had to walk across the entire grounds twenty times to do it.

Sirona likes the ugly animals: hippos, baboons, snakes. I like the pretty ones: red pandas, jaguars, butterflies. Since she lost her right leg, she sees everything a little uglier. Still, it wouldn't have been her decision to go sober. Some things I can never understand.

The birds, however, I do understand. "If I woke up every morning in a cage with the sun in my eyes, I'd squawk too," Sirona would say.

\* \* \*

We had been drinking white Russians, my favorite, when Sirona had wanted to go exploring the city, her favorite.

We had been drinking white Russians, my favorite, when Sirona had wanted to go exploring the city, her favorite. Coats, scarves, boots, and we were out the door. Snow was falling gently in the empty street, like confetti after a parade.

"Let's go to the shzoo—let's try and see the elephantsh!" she'd said, slurring through her pink-lipped grin.

"I don't think they'd be out tonight...it doesn't shnow like this on the shavannah," I said, slurring mockingly back.

"But they *have* to be!" she sputtered with a cry-baby face as she almost slipped off the covered bus station bench near our apartment.

[Elephant: figuratively, something burdensome, embarrassing, hard to dispose of; as an elephant on one's hands, or a deliberate denial of the truth; an elephant in the room.]

That night she was swan—dressed in white with soft pink boots. Later that nigh she is opossum—still, cold, her white dress stained red and brown as she is lifted off the wet street. She lying, I standing on the cold, wet street.

They said she had been hit by the Number 2 bus east bound on



Broadway, four stops to the City Zoo, half a block from four feet of sidewalk leading up to five stairs entering one ten story building and down the hall to a one minute elevator ride arriving at apartment 309. I was there, but I couldn't recall—my memory, my actions becoming slow, deliberate, sloth-like.

\* \* \*

I understand the birds; always picking, pruning themselves in preparation for more picking and pruning. In the zoo, the crane calls to the peacock, the peacock calls to ibis, the ibis calls to the flamingo, and the flamingo calls to me. You'd never see such a flock of different color anywhere else.

[Did she still feel it, somewhere in at the bottom of her right hip? After that night, she no longer tells me what she feels. We were mother and daughter, aunt and niece, sisters, friends, lovers. What are we now?]

When I see the flamingos—and I always see the flamingos—I imagine a world wrapped in soft pink down. I wrap myself in its smoothness, roll in its solace, revel in its sovereign. She is here, and she is not here. Sirona slips in and out of my mind in pink. I do not say that she is a burden. She is not a burden on me—she is me. We took care of each other before and so will I

take care of her now, every Sunday at the City Zoo; and we will see the bears and laugh. We will see the bears and laugh at their playfulness, we will see the monkeys and cringe at their smell, and I will see the faintest trace of a smile on her face when we see the otters kick their legs in the glass pool.

We will be like we use to be: fun, courageous, beautiful—only sober. Eventually we will be this way. It will take time for her to learn to live without half of half of her body—the long, smooth, formerly strong lower half of her body.

We leave as the final weekend crowd comes, around eleven. Sundays are ours now—not wild and crazy Saturdays—soothing, easy Sundays. Sitting for hours watching one animal. Licking melting shaved ice off our fingers. Closing our eyes to the sounds of the Amazon in the city. Holding hands. Smelling the air from all seven continents. All this has become our life. This will be our life. We are alive together.

We decided to stop drinking and spend Sundays at the zoo. I watch the flamingos sleeping, feeding, pruning, dancing on one leg. I understand they are happy that way.

We will be like we use to be: fun, courageous, beautiful—only sober. Eventually we will be this way.

# Cochise

by April Burge

The Halloween hayride route from my childhood - through the San Pedro River Valley - is a treacherous divide.

The late summer aroma of sweet alfalfa fields and the cheerful tick-tick of irrigation sprinklers are vacant - fenced with barbs that clutch shoes and baby formula canisters.

There's the county fair where I clutched fresh green corn tamales and hot, buttery flour tortillas in a high perch on a Ferris wheel that now overlooks the dusty trails of human traffickers.

My ripe pumpkins, roasted green chiles, and blushed pomegranates are plucked from fields and orchards littered with looming towers.

This is Cochise.



*Fleeting* by Lisa Larrabbe

# A Day at the Races—The Human Races

by James McPherson

I thought that meeting the man my mom was married to before she married my dad was part of the fun. I still think that, but now that I'm all grown up, draped with knowledge, mores, and the wisdom of culture, I understand why people tend to cock their heads, wrinkle their noses, and say something like, "Really, your mom would go to see her ex-husband and bring her son from her current marriage along, really? What did your dad have to say about that?" When we'd get home, he'd ask how our day was and we would tell him. I do not think he especially liked the idea, but he understood that Mom was not going to the racetrack to see her ex-husband. She was going to the racetrack to see her ex-life. A life she enjoyed. It was fun, full of all sorts of interesting, good humored, loving people, and even though she decided to follow another path, she liked visiting from time to time, easing the conversion to a suburban way of life. She also wanted to share her only child with her friends and her friends to share themselves with her only child. Her ex just happened to be one of those friends.

Smitty was different from any adult I had met in my short seven years. Some gray at the temples, he wasn't much taller than me and I think a bit skinnier. We had bumped into him in the parking lot on our way into Santa

Anita Race Track. We stopped long enough for Mom to introduce me. He grinned and holding my right shoulder firmly with his left hand, he shook my right hand vigorously, almost rocking me off my feet. "So this is the little man?" I couldn't help thinking, trying to catch me balance between handshakes, "No, I'm the little boy, you're the little man."

Smitty turned and walked toward the "Employees Only" gate and we walked through the turnstiles labeled "General Admission." Pushing the thick chrome-plated bar and feeling the clickety-click of the machine, as it counted us, gave me a surge of excitement. Once inside, Mom took my hand and walked around the side of the entry stopping in front of a life-size statue of a horse on a granite pedestal. I had never seen a bronze statue, up close before and all I could do was stare—transfixed—the flared nostrils and piqued ears, six feet above me. Speaking in a quiet, reverent tone she said, "Jimmy that is the greatest racehorse that ever lived. His name was Seabiscuit." The expression on her face was the same as when she sang in the church choir—smiling, happy, but very serious. Reaching down and taking my hand again, her words came out like a schoolgirl's squeal, "Come on, let's go see the horses."

We passed under the back of the grand stand and came out into a large



*Seabiscuit Photo by James McPherson*

open area that reminded me of the baseball stadium I used to go to with Dad, except here the seats didn't go all the way down to the railing. They stopped at the edge of the grandstand roof, leaving an open area between the seats and the race track for people to stand, reading newspapers (racing forms), and chatting. They talked about everything—twenty-three cents a gallon for gas was outrageous, “Marty” was a good movie, but best picture should have gone to “Bad Day at Black Rock,” wasn't it sad about James Dean, and of course, “Who do you like in the first race?” Holding tight, we strolled toward the railing. So this was the human race, what a menagerie; dapper and well dressed, women wearing hats, men wearing spats. It was 1955, the country was no longer at war, and society was flexing muscles with a renewed sense of fashion. The mood was festive—a holiday—even though it was Wednesday.

“Jerry! Hey Jerry! Is that you?” We had made it to the rail and Mom was pointing out to the infield scoreboard surrounded by flowerbeds. The voice came from behind, we turned and it was one of the dapper men. “It is you. How are you? How long has it been? Where

have you been? I heard you remarried. Who is this handsome young man?” his words shot out, rapid-fire.

“Hello Brooks, whoa, hang-on; one question at a time. I'd like you to meet my son, Jimmy. He and I are spending a day at the races. He has just turned seven and this is his first time at the racetrack.”

“That's wonderful. It is so good to see you. You look great. Glad to meet you young man.” He stooped to shake my hand (polite, firm, not nearly the physical ordeal of Smitty's assault), turning back to Mom, “Jerry, what are you doing down here? Come with me. For the rest of the day you are my guests.” With that, Brooks led the way back up under the grandstands and to a stairway.

I couldn't see exactly where we were going, until Brooks sat me down in a padded folding chair, and then he sat down in front of me. There were six

more chairs inside a white picket fence. I looked around and noticed that our seats were in an area where *all* of the seats were padded and fenced in. Our were right next to a rail along a large path that ran off to the main track.

Mom grew up in Hot Springs, Arkansas during the 1920's and 30's. Hot Springs was then to Chicago what Miami was to New York, and what Las Vegas has become to the world—the place people with money go to have the kind of fun, they couldn't have at home. Hot Springs had gambling parlors, bars that served “white lightning”, horseracing, and hot mineral baths for purging the body of last night's frivolities. One day at the races in Hot Springs, Geraldine Davis (Mom) met Mr. G.L. Smith (Smitty), fell in love, married, and joined a traveling troupe of trainers, owners, and jockeys, moving from racetrack to racetrack, entertaining the public. As with any cloistered professional group, they became close; sharing each other's faults and tragedies, and enjoying each other's victories. Perhaps it was this camaraderie, developed between people who share everything; keeping few secrets, which made it okay for Mom to bring a child from her new life, and share him with those she was close to in a former life. It was certainly all right with me. I met so many wonderful people, happy people.

The rest of the day was a parade of visitors to our seats, all coming to

chat with Mom. It was a milestone for me. I saw my mother in a different light—a person with a life outside of being my mother. I listened to stories about the good old days, shook hands until my arm ached, had so many Shirley Temples my stomach hurt more than my arm, and felt very grown up.

Horses mounted with jockeys, walked from the paddock to the track, along the path by our seats. Smitty said, “Hey Jimmy”, waving his crop as he passed, perched on top of a big bay mare. I barely recognized him in his white and orange silks, crouched down—goggles and cap. The horse was huge compared to the diminutive Smitty—like Kipling's Mowgli perched on the Elephant's back. Someone had given Mom a racing form and feeling like I knew something about racing, I asked if she used it to pick the best horses. “Absolutely not,” came her answer. I use it as a fan to cool my face. I pick my horses by watching how they walk and by their color. I always bet on the bay,” giggling the last sentence. I was too young to get the “Camp Town Races” reference, but years later chuckled. Mom won most of her two-dollar bets that day, but unfortunately, Smitty's bay wasn't one of them.

Of all the recollections I have of how people act in public, this day at the races—the human races is my fondest—etched in my memory, honest feelings, respect and trust, civil conversations. Thanks, Mom.



*To Hell You Ride* by April Burge

# Eating Desire

by Brooke Anderson

My round belly craves a burger.

Not the meat,  
but the tang of unnaturally red ketchup,  
the spice of burning, yellow mustard,  
The smoothness of just a hint of mayo.

I want to crunch into wheels of red onion.  
To feel salt penetrate the roof of my mouth.  
I want the burst of iceberg lettuce.  
To wash my throat and gut clean of judgment.

I want tomato.  
Red tomato, garden grown tomato.  
Scarlet like an A pinned to a chest,  
Like the toothpick: piercing, holding, flagging  
This calorie rich meal: fatty, dripping  
Fluids staining my plate  
Like the mark of womanhood.

Hold the bacon.  
I don't crave the taste of flesh.  
I want the cheddar cheese shrouding the patty.  
The bun soft and round that gives in to pleasure.





*Frosty Animas by April Burge*



# Hospital

by Anne Franklin

The mosquitos were biting, attracted by the sweat coming from every one of my pores as I sat on the steps and phoned the Medco Insurance Company that Habitat had provided us in case of emergency. Wildly swatting, I tried to answer the questions that were meant for someone else, someone who was about to make a claim. When the cab arrived the three of us piled into the back in a sticky heap. The cab driver knew what he was doing as he sped around the hairpin turns with hundreds of feet of sheer drop-off just a few feet from the car. While in country I had looked over the edge many times and seen smashed cars and busses that had missed a turn or had come to close to the edge. I took a deep breath and resolved to put those thoughts out of my head. The important thing was to get Kevin to the hospital in this remote area of Asia.

Kevin was a smiley, joking 19 year old who was on the first big adventure of his life, which until now had consisted of obeying his Korean parents and making them proud of his achievements. This adventure had quickly gone wrong. Upon arrival he had gone to bed where he had been for most of the past three days. He had ventured out long enough to devour some street food of questionable origin, which was why he was in his current state. Without Mom, he had ignored the medicine and electrolytes he had been given, and his condition had reached a critical juncture.

In the dark, unpaved parking lot a group of drunken men were shouting and threatening each other as we walked past towards the open door. Sujit and I had our arms around Kevin providing emotional as well as physical support. We were directed to a room to wait. Sick people lined the walls; they were all lying on tables - barefoot and wearing traditional garb. Everyone looked the way we felt – scared and miserable. There were stains and smears on the walls from unidentified bodily fluids, and the sheet covering the table we were directed to was in the same condition. I was holding Kevin's hand, trying to hide my shock and fear, something mothers learn to do, when a young man walked up and told me he was a doctor. He gave Kevin an injection to stop the vomiting and diarrhea then told us that he needed to “open a vein” to test the blood to make sure Kevin did not have a parasite.

He inserted an I.V. in Kevin's arm, but this I.V. was attached to a small tube that was open on the other end. The doctor held a test tube near it while stroking the arm to keep the blood flowing. It took a few minutes until he got enough blood to drip out. Kevin also got an I.V. to replace the fluids he had been losing.

By the time the test came back, we were experiencing a lot of stiffness from sitting and laying on the examination table, which was nothing more than a piece of plywood with a none-too-clean sheet over it. I decided to take a little walk and to use the restroom. I changed my mind when I walked in the door and saw it was an Asian-

style toilet that had been well used by people who had come from the countryside and who normally would have relieved themselves behind a bush. In a situation like this I always wish I had on platform shoes.

Kevin's treatment included a blood draw and blood analysis, an injection to stop the vomiting and a prescription for Kevin to use for his ongoing vomiting and diarrhea. We were in and out of there in just a couple of hours. This was a small hospital in a rural area, but despite its shabbiness, it was efficient and orderly for servicing a population of thousands of people. Back out the door, past the men who were now exchanging slaps and insults, and into the cab we mused over the \$5.00 invoice for all of Kevin's treatment and services.

*Eye to Eye* by Mike Rom





# Conservation Panes

by April Burge

There are small-paned  
windows set in antiquated  
frames that I am going to steal.

You know the ones.

They usually adorn the small  
territorial homes here in the  
Southwest - the older homes  
that haven't undergone the  
travertine-tile, high-end faucet  
makeover.

These windows that I'm going  
to steal lay stacked,  
one on top of the other,  
forgotten in a pack rat-infested  
bunkhouse on land that was  
also stolen.

I see these windows as the lost  
birthright to my bloodline.

I grew up running under the  
citrus trees and wild grape  
arbors that floated between two  
ranch houses situated in the  
picturesque, cool embrace of  
Aravaipa Canyon.

The windows,  
then in their rightful place,  
peered down upon my  
childhood play like the  
ancestors before me.

# In their *own* words...

## Contributor Bios

### **Brooke Anderson**

Brooke Anderson is a writer, teacher, dancer, and all around adventurer. If she isn't in the classroom or off road tripping, you are likely to find her around Tucson enjoying local festivals, artist events, and creative cousins.

### **April Burge**

April enjoys working with creative, adventurous risk-takers who work hard and play rigorously. She hopes this publication will continue to showcase Pima's very talented faculty and staff every year. April is a public relations and marketing consultant for a number of Tucson businesses, writing teacher, free-lance writer, a wife and devoted mom to two beautiful children. She loves the country life, food, outdoor projects, and entertaining. She's launching a blog and PR/event business in the 2014-2015 school year.

### **Ralph Castellanos**

My name is A.R., I'm 27 years old and I'm a student, workingman, proud husband and father, and perpetual wonderer. I wonder about what seems to be the paradox of my own existence; a creative type in a society where our potential drummers and dancers are at youth discouraged, prescribed A.D.D medications, and redirected to "more practical" occupations that will surely lead to mediocrity and their own internal demise. Even now, I write under the name Ralph Castellanos so as to not be targeted and looked down upon in the future. I wouldn't want anyone to think that I'm "weird" for expressing myself in a deep, sometimes profound, sometimes off-putting, manner.

I began writing in my teen years as an outlet along with the liberating, creative freedoms of skateboarding and the bass guitar. These were the ways I expressed myself for always feeling different. I didn't follow THEIR sports, listen to THEIR music, and the few conversations I engaged in were almost always awkward. The only logical explanation for this is that I must in fact be swamp thing, a foreigner in any place, and an outcast in any time.

What is this thing that I do? Is it prose? Is it poetry? I'm not sure myself. What I do know is that it feels good; better than any job I've landed and endured, or paycheck mind-numbingly earned. The moments when I'm creating feel like windows of time where my mute voice can finally speak. Thanks for reading.

### **Debra Disharoon**

I am a Georgia native who has lived in Tucson for a number of years with many travels in between. I'm really a big kid who craves constant movement and activity, and many things goofy and absurd. My activities include running, cycling, writing, fine arts, music, vegetable gardening and creating....period. I also have an analytical bent to computer science, in which I am currently pursuing a degree as I work with students in the Pima Downtown Campus Writing Center. It delights my soul to marry creativity and precision, as is exemplified in some of my fine art and works that I created in my days as a machinist, welder and programmer. I love clever comedy and writing, especially works of Mark Twain and those by my brother.

## **Shelly Dorsey**

Shelly Dorsey teaches Writing and currently is the Lead Faculty for the Writing Center at the Downtown Campus. She is interested, among other things, in the literature of Buddhism, psychology, and meditation and in incorporating such ideas and practices into everyday life.

## **Anne Franklin**

Anne teaches Math at the Downtown Campus and travels extensively.

## **James McPherson**

Born and raised in the Los Angeles area, I grew up in the 60's surfing and working at Disneyland. My father flew bombers in WW II, going on to a career as a technical writer after the Air Force. Words and how to use them effectively were frequent topics in the McPherson Household. At the dinner table, Dad would often spring a word on the family, "What is the definition of exacerbate?" After giving us the definition, he challenged us to use the word the next day in a sentence—expecting us to share our story tomorrow at dinner. My mother was an aspiring actress, co-starring in several small budget productions during the late 40's. I suspect my sense of drama is her doing. She left acting to work part-time and raise our family.

I lean toward non-fiction and my early career as a Firefighter-Paramedic provides me with a good deal of raw material. As reflected in one of the current writings, whether by choice or necessity, I was thrust into all sorts of situations that made indelible marks. Whether assigned to observe autopsies, working to reassure a motorist trapped in a car accident or air-lifting a trauma-patient across the Puget Sound, the opportunities are infinite.

My satisfaction comes from writing about the things I believe are important in these true stories. As one of my favorite authors, Farley Mowat writes, "I'll braid you one."

## **Mike Rom**

I was going to Montana State University to become an engineer when I realized that this wasn't what I wanted to do with my life. I was talking to my cousin, Bob, about leaving college when he asked what I really wanted to do. I'd been toying with the idea of taking Film and Television classes so he told me to switch my major and go for it, so I did. I couldn't decide which major I wanted so I got BS degrees in both Film and Television production.

I worked in the movie industry in Tucson for over eight years and did everything from art department to office PA to special effects explosives—we had an explosives expert show us how to set them up then we helped set them off.

I'm a doodler from way back, always getting in trouble for drawing on things. I have always loved art and when I started working at Pima College, I was able to indulge my creative side through their Digital Art classes. I took sculpture and drawing classes and learned how to paint with acrylics.

I started photographing flowers for my wife's paintings—she works in oils—and I eventually framed some of them and put them into art shows at Blue Raven Gallery and Gifts. I sold my first piece in my first show and have done pretty well since then. My wife and I are now members of SAAG and share a website, RomByDesign.com, to exhibit our art.

## **Mano Sotelo**

Mano (Manny) is passionate about learning, teaching and creating art. He has over 12 years of higher education teaching experience and is currently Art Faculty at Pima Community College East Campus.

Mano's paintings have been exhibited at the Coutts Museum of Art, Alexandria Museum of Art, Tampa Museum of Art, Coos Art Museum, Tucson Museum of Art, University of Arizona

Museum of Art, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson Desert Art Museum, local and national juried and invitational shows, and a variety of Tucson galleries.

Recent awards include: grand prize winner of the 7th Annual Paint the Parks “Mini” national park competition, first place winner in the Manhattan Arts International “Healing Power of Art” competition, finalist in Artist’s Magazine “30th Annual Art Competition” (portrait / figure category), and 2nd place winner in Jerry’s Artarama National Self Portrait Contest. Mano’s work will also be featured in the 2014 August / September issue of International Artist Magazine as a Finalist in their Annual Figure & Portrait Competition.

Appointed by the Tucson City Manager, Mano is a former member of the Tucson Public Art and Community Design Committee. To see more of Mano’s work, visit: [www.sotelostudio.com](http://www.sotelostudio.com). Mano is a graduate of Otis Art Institute Parsons School of Design, Los Angeles CA and Academy of Art University, San Francisco CA

## Charlie Te

Charlie Te is the pen name of a downtown mathematics faculty member who loves to read, write, go walking and swimming and biking. She also enjoys movies – especially those based on comic books – but any escape from reality fiction will usually do. Of course, she loves to teach mathematics. She does not like people being mean to others or bigotry in general. As she has seen too much of this already, she asks that the readers, even if they believe they know good and well who Charlie Te really is, to please respect her desire for anonymity. Charlie Te knows quite well that bigotry is not just directed at homosexuals but toward all manner of people for so many other misguided reasons as well – race, gender, nationality, poverty, age, and so many more. She has no children of her own, but she does have several nieces and nephews that she loves dearly. She fervently hopes that when these children are her age that the world will have grown into a truly more caring and tolerant place.



Gypsy Mermaid by Brooke Anderson