

*Cambium*



**Feather River College**

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***Cambium***

A Humanities Journal

Quincy, California



*Cambium* at Feather River College nourishes intellectual and creative communities on our campus while allowing students to apply what they've learned. The journal also serves as a bridge with local communities, creating connections between the campus community and regional writers, artists, and other community members. *Cambium* is an opportunity for aspiring and established artists and writers in the community to share their art and writing.

*Cambium* is the annual humanities journal published each spring by Feather River College (FRC) in Quincy, California. Students interested in creative writing and small press publishing are encouraged to participate on the editorial board. Visit <https://www.frc.edu/english/cambium> for information and submission guidelines or contact the Editor-in-Chief at [NGrose@frc.edu](mailto:NGrose@frc.edu).

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<https://www.frc.edu/english/cambium>



## **Prose and Poetry Editors**

Nikki Grose

Chris Connell

Will Lombardi

## **Art Editor**

Josh Olivera

## **Student Editor**

Kenneth McCann



## Faculty Editor Bios

**Chris Connell**—Chris Connell is a professor of English at Feather River College. He has a long and deep interest in creative writing of all kinds and enjoys helping students develop their creative chops in the Creative Writing classes. He is supposedly writing a novel and a book about bees.

**Nikki Grose**—I have loved stories for as long as I can remember. When I was a child, I devoured books. As an adult, that love grew throughout my college years and eventually led me to the world of composition. Stories have a strong power to educate and unite us, provide opportunities to question and challenge ourselves, and are at the basis of everything we do. Sharing stories and encouraging writers and other artists who tell stories through visual means is an important part of the work I want to do—thus, *Cambium* was born.

**Will Lombardi**—Dr. Will Lombardi lives in, loves, and works to protect the wild landscapes of the Feather River Watershed and the communities that depend on them. He is dedicated to sharing and exploring local history, literature, and art.

**Josh Olivera**— Joshua Olivera is an artist and professor of art in Quincy, California. In addition to making art and teaching, Olivera has worked as a fly fishing and whitewater guide and enjoys backpacking and bike touring throughout the western United States. All of these activities inform his studio practice and provide a sense of responsibility, to help ensure that these places will endure.

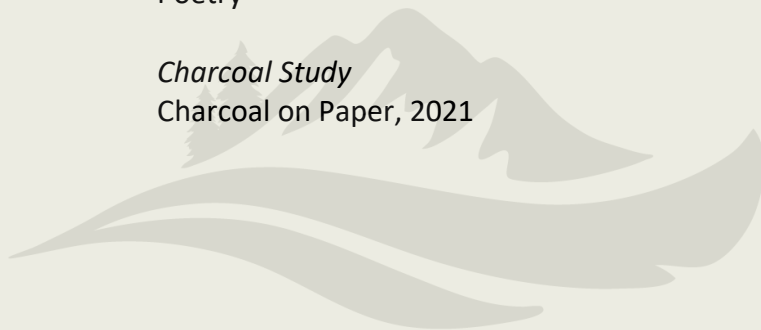


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# From the Eyrie

*Eyrie* can be defined as a nest, specifically of a bird of prey, such as the Eagle, and is typically located high in the mountains. The Eyrie of the Cambium, then, is our roost.

Welcome to the first edition of *Cambium*. The word cambium refers to a tissue layer in plants that provides cells for the secondary growth of stems and roots. Secondary growth is vital—it occurs after the first season and results in increased thickness, which can offer vital protection for plants. In this way, *Cambium* offers us a metaphor for our own growth—the way we learn, grow, and strengthen ourselves through visual and written stories. Let *Cambium*, then, symbolize the work, dedication, and growth of our own students and community members in and around Feather River College.

I leave you with a cinquain that hopes that this edition of *Cambium* will promote healing as we begin to move back into the world after some uncertainty, change, innovation, and personal growth.

Divide  
frees nothing but  
makes us feel lonely and  
without each other can we heal?  
Converge

—Nikki Grose



# *My Cambium*

Brytol Beatley

Living and breathing  
Hardening and reeling  
This stiff bark on my skin I was not born with  
But rather grew into dead edges.  
I'd like to think of life inside me as wisps of green  
But more and more it's rusted into brown.  
The grown-ups never told me as I grew,  
that the green inside would slowly slip away.  
In order to make room for the restricting, protective layer.  
I'm reaching higher and higher like never before  
But at what cost does it come,  
To grow ancient and wise?  
Reaching towards many skies with parting branches.  
How much more of my innocence dies?  
But that's what it takes to get old and grow,  
I suppose.



# Untitled, Photograph

Julia Nehl



# *Soothing to my Grandmother and Me*

Shadow

While watching  
a mental health TV station...

I recalled  
sitting behind my grandmother  
on a church pew  
as she sat with other family  
sobbing.  
...as this was the service  
for her husband  
of over sixty-four years.

My mother was to my right.  
Yet none responded  
as (Hazel) my grandmother  
held back  
her sorrow.

By gently touching  
her left shoulder,  
I handed her Kleenex  
and she looked back  
...to become disappointed  
that her daughter  
who sat to my right,  
was not offering this,  
but her second granddaughter.

Still,  
at me... she looked,  
my hand... she enclosed  
with the released tissue,  
as she kissed it.

Before entering,  
I had asked  
Mother  
for the Kleenex box.  
I had wanted to take

this inside,  
but she had told me  
to “just take a few.”

After sitting in the pew  
behind my grandmother  
and others,  
I gave Kleenex away-  
some to Mother  
some to Chad, my cousin,  
who sat with his wife and child  
to Mother’s far side,  
which left me even less!

Later,  
after this part of church services,  
a prior Sunday school elderly woman teacher,  
came to me  
to acknowledge the love,  
I had shown.

This Sunday school teacher  
was almost unrecognizable,  
as I had not seen her  
in years,  
but slowly  
I recognized  
the shape of her face  
and her kind eyes.

Yet,  
she had taken this moment  
to acknowledge  
my caring  
and I gave her my thanks.

After  
the church’s skillfully prepared luncheon,  
the family traveled  
back to our hometown  
for another service,  
but with a graveyard.

Folding chairs

were carefully placed  
and sitting nearby  
was an Oklahoman sister  
of my grandmother's.

Each other, we greeted.  
then came a surge  
of unhappiness  
from my Aunt Sammie,  
(my grandmother's Oklahoman sister).

I knew  
this wail  
so well-  
as I had heard this earlier,  
from my grandmother!

Early on,  
I had been taught  
to not show  
much emotion.  
So, I placed my hand carefully  
on top  
of Aunt Sammie's  
hand which was in her lap.

This brought  
more sobbing.  
Then I spoke  
that I knew  
it had not been that long  
since her husband's passing,  
(Uncle Leon).

She gazed  
at me amazed  
that I could sense  
her deep recent sadness,  
...encumbered with this passing  
of her sister's husband.  
Aunt Sammie continued her caring  
through this difficulty.

Finally,

I don't understand  
why we have to say farewell,  
even Christ could not bear- for his friend,  
as he raised him from the dead.



# Still Life, Acrylic on Paper

Julia Nehl





# Dear Me

Judy Pulido

Dear Me,

Listen, take a step back and pay attention. Do you hear it? No? Listen again.

“I’m okay. I’m fine. I should have spoken up. Why didn’t I do anything?  
WHAT’S WRONG WITH ME!” I know it’s not my fault”.

You hear it now right? They are words with no meaning. They are words that disguise your true emotions. Release. You hold the key, unlock and you will be set free. Free. You know you want that sweet release to simply let go of the fear you hold inside, to let go of that responsibility you place upon yourself, and to let go of that anger. You are angry release your fist, it’s okay. You are angry at yourself, for what! Understand you were young, you were innocent, you were vulnerable. Now embrace it. Yes embrace your anger, your embarrassment, your pain, and let it go. Stop bottling up how you feel and relax.

Let me break your walls down and let me heal you. Do you want to heal? I know you do. I know you crave to be freed from your self-inflicted torture. STOP! Please just stop torturing yourself. Please love yourself, remind yourself you’re strong, you’re worthy, you’re beautiful, and most importantly remind yourself you’re in control. Tell me are you ready? If you are take my hand and I’ll guide you. Believe in me and I will help you heal. I know you want to heal so please accept me.

Yes me, I am the forgiveness you have been searching for. Now that we are acquainted we can dive deeper into learning how to forgive ourselves. First, you must choose to forgive yourself, choose to open up to your pain, choose to understand your suffering and deal with your worries. Just say it “I forgive myself”. Now be honest with yourself did you mean it because from now on you can no longer speak the half-truths you make yourself believe in order to protect yourself from what truly scares you and that’s your own guilt. Your own guilt that someone took your voice away when they took your innocents. You blame yourself for burying your voice. You no longer have to feel guilty. You no longer have to lie to yourself and pretend “you’re okay” when in reality you’re drowning in your despair of lingering pain.

Breathe, I believe in you. Are you ready to believe in yourself? I know you are. You are tired of the darkness that fills your heart, you are tired of the insecurities you have developed, you are tired of the pain that clouds your thoughts and you are tired of replaying the options you had in your head. I love you and I am ready to take this journey of self-control with you. Now say those three words you continue to avoid. You’re ready. Dear me, I forgive you.

Love,

Judy Pulido



# *Conqueror of Snowflakes*

Michael Hammontree

The tree was a comfort,  
Buried in snow, watching snowflakes-  
They fall and bury each other,  
Forming a blanket for the earth.  
My heart is beating.

It is the dusk of day.  
I have water at my fingertips.  
Look around and see the silhouettes of pine trees.  
My breath, visible-  
My heart still beats.

Through twilight, the moon shines-  
I see him, the silhouette of a man,  
The snowflakes froze in the air.  
He reached out and pinched a single flake-  
My heartbeat is gone.



# Yosemite Valley, Photograph

Jack Joseph



# *Trials and Tribulations of a Small Town Outcast*

Nichelle Gordon

“Ha! Don’t worry Lindsey, you and I have a great start. When we go to Feather River College in the fall we will hit the ground running!” This was what I had said to my best friend as we walked down the red carpet at our high school graduation in 2015. Little did I know the phrase that has just left my lips would only be true for one of us.

Let me give you a little bit of backstory. When I was three years old my mom put me on the back of a horse for the first time. That was the moment I fell in love with the equine species and when my passion started to grow. Much like a seed sprouting out of the ground on a spring morning. In the third grade however, I started getting bullied because I looked different and all I could talk about was the horses my mom and sister had that I rode all the time until my parents got me my first pony. I was different. That made me very sad, but the horses helped me forget the sadness.

When I was seven, turning eight years old my mom and dad bought me my first pony. Her name was Shyann. We had a bit of a rough start because she had been mishandled and mistreated by her previous owner, so she and I had many firsts together. She taught me patience, I taught her trust. She taught me courage, I taught her respect. Together, we learned confidence. As often as possible I would be with her because Shyann never judged me because of how I looked. Shyann finally had a bond with a human unlike any other. She loved me for who I was. The same could never be said for my peers.

As the years progressed the bullying became more and more intense. With words of hate spreading like wildfire and phrases of “ Ew! She’s fat!” And “she is ugly. Why would anyone ever want to date her, let alone be friends with her? She really should just do the world a favor and go unalive herself because she doesn’t matter and never will.” I was only thirteen by this time. I hated myself. The bullying sparked what I would later find out was depression and anxiety. Though life was hard, Shyann and her filly Puff still loved me.

Now I know what you might be thinking, “what about her parents?” Do not worry. My mom and dad are amazing people and always try their best to give me whatever I need. They were my biggest support system. Depression is a strange thing though. I did have my parents, my older siblings, Heather and Joe, but that does not register with someone suffering from major depression. Things like that are easily overlooked. I knew I had them, but my depression switched it in my head to make it seem like I was always alone. That led me to being suicidal. I had bad days and good days. On bad days I would sit in my room and cry because I felt alone, unwanted and thought I was better off dead. No teenager should ever have to feel that way. I was not okay. That was until I would get to the barn, once I was with Shyann I was happy. I was safe. I was not being judged for what I looked or sounded like, all my horses cared about was the relationship we had created. They followed me around like dogs, and every time I got to

ride with them I wasn't just walking anymore. Their legs became my legs. I was free from my troubles. Nothing but me, my horses, and true happiness.

From ages twelve to fourteen, I immersed myself into the world of horses and natural horsemanship. I spent every day with them. Taking lessons with a family friend Katrina learning everything I could to be the best I could. It was the best distraction from the mess of life I called teenage years. Doing this I became the best I had been. I was ready for the show season coming later that summer.

December 11th, 2011 tragedy struck, the first time. I lost Puff to an antibiotic injection that attacked her immune system and caused her to go septic. The second tragedy happened on February 14th, 2012. Just three short months after losing puff I lost my best four legged friend. Shyann got sick, laid down, and wouldn't get back up so I had to make the decision to end her suffering. I was gutted in a way that bullying had never done to me, but being an outcast freshman in high school did not help the matter. I was ready to quit, but my parents and Katrina were not going to let me quit my passion. So I rode the lesson pony for two months until my parents could buy me a new horse.

May 19th, 2012 I was blessed with a new horse. Her name is Uno. My parents bought her from the annual Feather River College horse sale. She was three years old at the time, but she was a rockstar. The bond was instant and we started our training for the show season that was coming later that year. Fast forward to August, the county fair was in full swing and the biggest horse show of the year had started. Uno and I were the underdog newbies, and we won. Two championships, two divisions, 25 horses per class, and we came out on top. I was thrilled with my new partner! I would not have had so much success with her if Shyann had not prepared me for the next step. From that moment I was sure I wanted to breed, raise, train, and sell my own stock. I figured since my horses and support system had helped me so much this far, why not see just how far I can take it.

On June 15th, 2015 when graduation day had finally arrived, I was more than ready to leave behind the shit show I call my teenage years. Lindsey J. had been my only friend that year and she had been my show buddy since 2013. We had been such good friends because she found a passion for horses for the same reason I did, bullying.

Our senior year was filled with fantastic memories. We rode horses together almost every day when the sun was up. We had many Reno trips just the two of us just so we could get Outback Steakhouse for dinner. There were many late night sleepovers that consisted of us watching movies, playing video games in her basement, nerf gun wars with her two siblings, and laughing until we almost passed out at the stupidest things. I remember all the late Friday nights after the football games of eating pizza and drinking soda while we talked about how high school sucked and that college would be so much better and how we couldn't wait to get there. I even got to go to Kauai, Hawaii with her and her family for two weeks in April that year as our graduation present. The bond we had was so strong people would have thought we were siblings ourselves. If you recall, at the beginning of this story I was telling Lindsey not to be

nervous about training the two year old horses because between the two of us we had trained two or three successful horses a piece. However, my statement was only true for one of us... her.

I had started my summer like I always did, riding every other day and preparing for show season, but that year I had decided to try something new. I became the rodeo princess for the Indian Valley Riding and Roping Club. That was a huge boost of confidence for me not only in my horse career but also personally. Being the new princess meant that I had to compete in events known as play-days throughout the summer. I was excited to do new things. If I had only known how much my life would change in the coming months.

When I woke up on August 1st, 2015 I had a feeling that I should not compete in the play-day because I knew something bad would happen.

So I went to my mom and I said, "hey mom, I have a bad feeling about today and I already spoke with my advisor. She told me I did not have to compete if I didn't want to, but I should still show up and ride around." To which she replied, "Nichelle, you have to. I am not taking you all that way for you to not compete."

"But mom, I really don't have a good feeling about competing and I know something bad will happen if I do."

"I don't think so you are just psyching yourself out."

So I showed up anyway to compete. Next thing I knew my world was crashing down around me. My plans were dashed. I was on a horse I had in training with me. Her name was Brighty. It was the first event of the day and at the last barrel something scared her. She took off like a bat out of hell and forgot I was even aboard. Before I knew it I had to make a split second decision to either break my neck, or grab the fence and let go of the horse with my legs. So I decided to grab the fence. My leg folded in half like a taco and everyone watching heard the snap. It sounded similar to someone breaking a carrot but ten times louder in volume. I could not get up and I could not walk. Now, I have fallen off of many horses, but I was always able to get back up. Not this time. I felt like a failure, I was in a great deal of physical pain, but my self confidence I had battled so hard to gain was also depleted. Worst of all, I felt like I had let everyone who was supporting me down. That's when I saw the guys who were checking my leg and started answering their questions. I told them my knee was broken but they thought I should get up and try to walk anyway to make sure. So through my groans of pain and teary eyes I tried to put weight on my right leg, which made my leg fold again. Instead of calling for an ambulance they had the Rodeo Queen drive her car in to get me and take me to my moms truck where we proceeded back to the emergency room in Quincy.

After my emergency room visit I was sent to the local orthopaedic surgeon for further assessment. He sighed at the results of my MRI because he did not see a clear picture. So he signed me up to do physical therapy for six weeks to try and bring strength back into my leg so I could try and walk again, but the attempt was unsuccessful. He offered to do surgery anyway

even though he did not know exactly what was wrong so I sought out a second opinion from an orthopedic surgeon in Reno, NV.

At my first appointment, Dr. Uppal took one glance at my scan and said, “Well that’s why physical therapy hasn’t been working, your ACL was obliterated, your MCL was torn in half, and your meniscus also sustained damage. You will need surgery to fix your knee in order to have a good shot at training horses again.” Dr. Uppal was the leading knee and ankle surgeon in the Reno Orthopaedic Center. I trusted his opinion, but I was absolutely devastated. That just meant an even longer healing time that I didn’t want to deal with.

Hearing that news, I ultimately decided to put going to college on hold and focus on healing. Healing from the accident after surgery was not a walk in the park, but healing from the mental scar it left was harder than trying to climb Everest. Lindsey had to remind me constantly that I did not let her or anyone down and that Uno would be ready for me when I was ready to ride again. Even though she and others told me that it was not my fault, it was a freak accident, I can still ride and train horses, I have all the skills and knowledge, my fear stopped me dead in my tracks and I hated myself. I had become my worst critic. I hated not being able to ride due to the fear of breaking my leg again, so I decided to try teaching kids how to ride. I spent the next five years doing just that. I also expanded my knowledge on breeding and foaling horses and bred my mare Uno in 2018. She had a foal in 2019, a colt I named Jethro. His dad was the same horse that sired Shyanns 2009 fill I lost to sepsis. He was perfect, a true blessing because he helped bring motivation to be out with my horses everyday again. I thought I was still not mentally ready to try going to college at that point though.

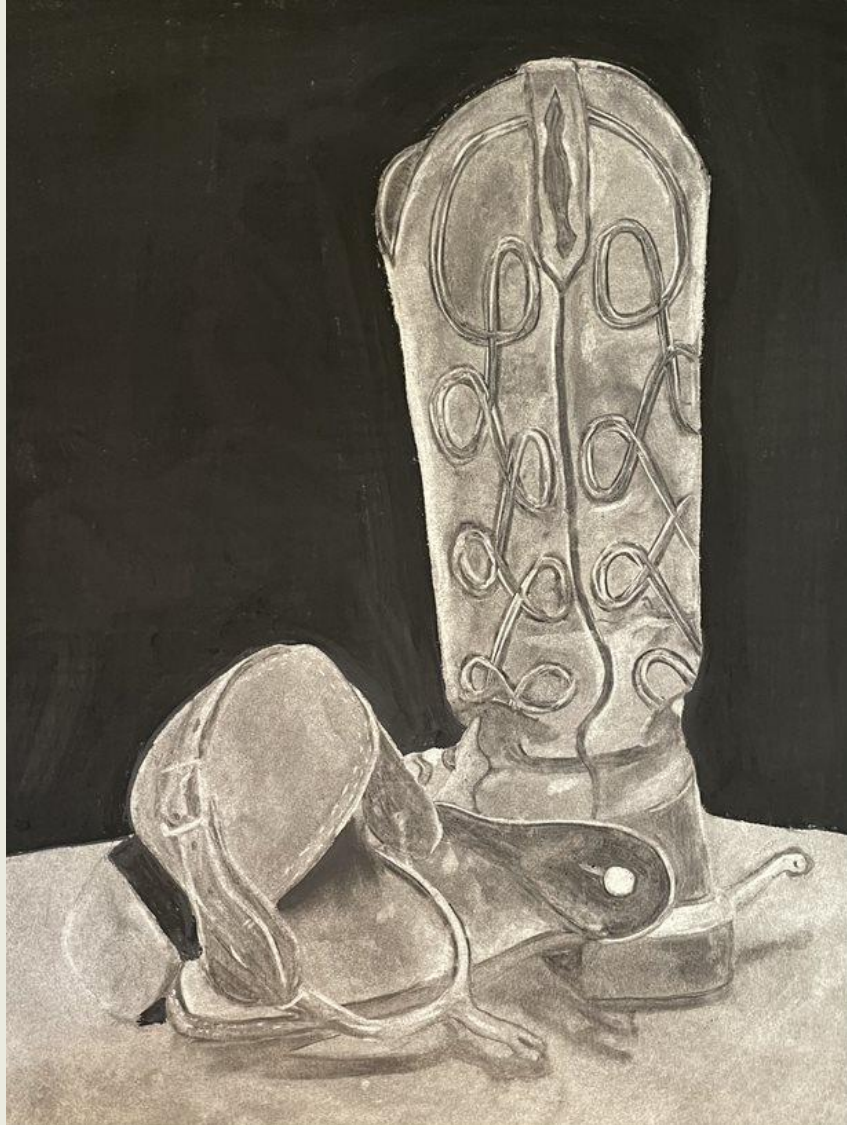
The next year however, in 2020 I met my friend Aya (pronounced I-UH) she helped me get the courage I needed to go back to college because she was also struggling with wanting to finish school. We talked about going back to school a lot together for a year, so I re-enrolled in Feather River College in the fall of 2021. It was time to finish getting my AA in equine studies and reproduction with plans of getting my BA in equine science and reproduction. I was ready.

I do still get nervous from time to time when I’m about to get on my horse, but it gets easier with every good ride I have. That is why horses have had such an impact on me. Given everything I have been through, my passion for horses always helped me pick myself up by my bootstraps and keep pushing forward. Bad things happen. We can either run from them, or learn from them. I ran from my issues for a while, but no matter how much I ran I felt more and more depressed and guilty for not chasing my dreams because I know dreams don’t chase you back. So I stopped running and started learning. I challenge those who are in tough situations to not give up. I know it’s hard, but stop running and take the first step to a brighter future. I promise, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.



# *Charcoal Study, Charcoal on Paper 2021*

Aubrianna Keeler





# *Blossom*

Robert Kelly

She who is the caretaker once told me  
A lily's beauty isn't what it becomes  
But the journey it takes to be what it is  
Its strength to keep going when all are against it

She who is the caretaker embrace the child when the child was lost  
Covered Them from the monsters who didn't understand  
The ones who were afraid of the unknown  
When the feeling was mutual

She who is the caretaker created her Valhalla  
A place where lilies Blossom  
Creating their journey through every frostbite  
Through every scorch, They bloomed

She who is the caretaker was a guardian to the child  
Nourishing them when she was weak  
Her undying belief that their story was beautiful  
Even with faint in her life, she catered to the child.

She who was the guardian left her legacy  
Continuing her essence in the lilies she made a promise  
Bloom and continue your story child  
Show them your story and love your blossom.



*Main Street of Greenville, Two Months  
Removed of the Dixie Fire, Photograph*

Jack Joseph



# *Silence*

Sky Rose

I just want to scream  
and scream  
and scream.  
Scream until this terrible ache in my heart will cease.  
Scream until I lose my thoughts.  
Scream until I have no air.  
But I can't scream.  
I can't.

My mind commands to scream,  
but my lips are sealed tight.  
My lungs aren't working,  
and I can't let this anguish out.  
It just sits and festers inside of me  
until it tears me apart once more  
and causes me to break,  
over and over.

They say time heals all wounds,  
that it'll get better as the days pass,  
but that's a lie.

The more time that goes on,  
the more you are reminded  
of how distant the time was  
when you were happy,  
when everything was better.  
With each second  
you become further removed  
from that once upon a time.  
You have nothing now  
except these pictures that hurt,  
that make you relive  
the day it happened.

Except now you still can't scream,  
and all you get are tears  
that do nothing to relieve the pain,  
nothing to ease the anger that you want to unleash  
upon every atom,

every electron and proton.

Instead we stay quiet,  
act like we are fine  
like everyone else wants us to be,  
and we sit  
in silence.



# *Untitled*, Photograph

Julia Nehl



# *Apples's Dangling Positions*

## Shadow

Apples, created from trees,  
are some of our 'mainstays'.

They are often interjected  
into poetry  
and sayings.

Some apples have lost their hold  
and fallen to the ground,  
while others  
are dangling  
onto limbs.

Precariously,  
apples are seen  
swinging into the breeze,  
and swiftly lifted  
into their destinies!

Others  
are observed  
as departed  
and being carried down the nearby stream.

Awe,  
such are our lives!  
Sometimes,  
hanging by a single thread,  
with other moments  
bringing us to our knees...  
followed by sights onward-  
leading us to the skies!



# *Landscape Study*, Acrylic on Canvas, 2021

Rilee McAdams



# *An American in Japan: A New Perspective on Covid*

Jacek Van Pelt

In January of 2020, a new and potentially deadly virus was emerging in Wuhan Province, China. During this time, United States citizens were either blissfully unaware of Corona Virus's existence or thought that it would have absolutely no effect on their lives. During Corona Virus's initial onset, I was living in Japan and had a very different experience from that of most Americans.

The first time I heard the words "Corona Virus" was sometime in January in a post a friend of mine put on Facebook. This particular friend of mine is prone to posting about possible doomsday scenarios and I thought nothing of it. For weeks, the only news you could find on this new virus was from articles people wrote who had visited China. Getting facts from reputable sources was difficult. The sources made it seem as if the Corona Virus was the most dangerous disease since the bubonic plague.

This was the very beginning of the year, I wasn't worried about this new disease; Wuhan seemed a long way away. I had just started school and was settling into life in a foreign country. I was eighteen years old and this was my first time away from home. The language barrier was the greatest obstacle at the time, making seemingly mundane tasks difficult. Washing machines were particularly challenging. I bumped my head on the slightly too short doorway of the shed where the school kept the washing machines they provided for the students and stood there rubbing my head for a minute. There were three identical machines, each one was about three feet high and a foot and a half wide. You loaded them from the top. Like a lot of Japanese technology, there were a lot more buttons than I thought were necessary. These buttons had labels on them explaining what they did. However, they were in Japanese. I was looking up the characters on my online dictionary, when my concentration was interrupted by footsteps. A man walked through the doorway, he was a little shorter than I. He had brown eyes and dirty blonde hair. He was a proponent of the no-socks-and-slightly-too-short-pants style.

"Hey, do you know how to work these things?" I asked.

"Sort of," he replied. He chose his words very carefully as if searching for the perfect flavor of meaning, "Apparently they include a dry cycle."

"Does it work?" I asked.

"Haven't the foggiest, but it locks its lid until it is finished."



“Sounds like a pain in the ass.”

“Yes, it is quite irritating.”

“I’m Jacek, by the way.”

“My name is Julio, where are you from?”

“California, tiny little town called Quincy.”

“Ah, I like to say I’m from the city that invented the Macarena. I am from Seville.”

Julio and I eventually became friends. He showed me how to work the washing machines. I still had some confusion on the metric measurements for water volume but eventually learned that 36 liters of water worked for me. Meanwhile, Corona Virus cases began to seep out of China and into neighboring countries.

On January 27th, I woke up with a sore throat. I had taught English at an elementary school two days before and must have got something from one of the kids. I sat in my sleeping bag on my cot (the blankets were too short and my feet stuck out the end) and started Googling Corona Virus symptoms. Finding information was difficult because I didn’t consider any information released by the Chinese government to be reliable and anything I found from the United States turned out to be conspiracy theories about how the Russian government manufactured the virus in a lab and it is in fact a bioweapon, or how the virus was the result of amino acids that came to Earth in an asteroid. I eventually stumbled on an article by the Japan Times on what the symptoms were. Up to this point I had some vague, and incorrect, assumptions of what Corona Virus looked like. I had an idea that someone with Corona Virus would display Ebola-like symptoms and that it would be grotesquely obvious that they contracted the disease. Learning that the symptoms started the same as those of the common cold was chilling. Based on the incomplete knowledge that was available and the fact that the earliest variants were much more deadly than today’s, I deduced that if I wasn’t in the hospital with pneumonia within four days, I would probably be fine. I also learned that the scientific name for Corona Virus was Covid-19. I recovered within a week and believe that what I contracted was just a cold. I promptly bought hand sanitizer and face masks.

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, the cruise ship *The Diamond Princess* landed in a Japanese port carrying 3,711 people, 712 of them infected with Covid, making Japan the nation with the largest population of Covid patients outside of China.<sup>1</sup> At this time most if not all of Japan’s Covid Cases were Quarantined on *The Diamond Princess*, a boat my friends and I fondly dubbed “The Corona Virus Ship”, the rest of the population of Japan was largely unaffected by the virus. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, I learned that the *Diamond Princess* patients had been moved to a hospital in Okazaki, Aichi, the city I was living in, needless to say I avoided the part of town near the hospital where they were quarantined in case it got out. You could no longer find hand sanitizer or masks in the store, the trains were empty of commuters, and everyone wore a mask when out in public. This is about the time that Covid came to the United States. Near the end

of March, the United States government addressed its citizens residing in foreign countries telling us to return to the United States or be prepared to shelter in place. My visa was about to expire so I needed to return home anyway.

My flight was scheduled to leave on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March. Due to the flight being cancelled, I left on the 22<sup>nd</sup> instead on a different plane. At 7A.M., I locked up my apartment for the last time and slipped my key through the mail slot and set off towards the train station with my two suit cases and fiddle. At the ticket counter I bought two tickets, one for my train to Toyohashi and the other for the bullet train that would take me from Toyohashi to Shinagawa station in Tokyo. I thanked the man at the ticket counter and made my way to the platform to await my train that should have been arriving in ten minutes. Ten minutes later, I asked the guard if I was on the correct platform. Twenty minutes later, I was worried that my train wasn't coming. What would happen if I missed my flight and couldn't make it back to the United States because the borders were locked down? What would happen if I got stranded in Japan with an expired visa? Would I get arrested? Deported? I took a few deep breaths and reasoned with myself, "If I get arrested, I'll at least have a roof over my head and three square meals a day. If I get deported, then I'll at least wind up back in the United States."

One hour later, the train pulled into the station. It was late because of Covid, the commuters were either not commuting or they were finding alternate methods. The rail lines didn't want to run empty trains on the tracks and as a result, the trains that were usually very punctual ran late.

The rest of the journey went smoothly, I ate my breakfast sitting on the platform waiting for the bullet train. A few minutes later, the train was racing along the coast towards Tokyo. In Shinagawa, I boarded the Narita Express. I entered the rail car to find it completely empty. Trains in Tokyo are usually packed so tightly with people that you don't need to grab the overhead handles to keep balance because you are firmly wedged in with the crowd. I took a seat on the left side of the train by the window to watch the city go by. I got a glimpse of Sky Tree, one of the tallest towers in Japan.

The train got off right underneath the airport, I walked up the single flight of stairs to meet the expected hustle and bustle of an international airport. It was completely deserted except for a few employees. No crowd of people going in and out of shops. No seasoned world travelers in chairs sleeping through their layovers. No important looking businessmen, excited looking tourists, or bored looking flight attendants. It was a ghost town. Checking my luggage and getting through security took a grand total of fifteen minutes. The plane was mostly devoid of human life too, I had the whole row to myself. I kicked off my shoes, laid down across the four seats, and slept.

On arriving in the United States, I was in for a shock, official notices stated that I would be subjected to questioning and possibly even quarantine upon arriving in the airport. There was absolutely none of this. The man in immigration wasn't at all concerned that I had just returned from a Covid Infested country. He looked up at me suspiciously as he interrogated me

very thoroughly on how I had paid for my schooling and if I was bringing in more than five thousand dollars' worth of goods into the U.S..

Soon after my arrival, I learned that the American people were not taking this disease, recently classified as a pandemic, well at all. Instead of approaching the problem in a logical fashion, everyone seemed more interested in arguing about it. As cases in the U.S. surpassed those of even China, people were still arguing about whether or not masks work. Some were convinced that the whole thing was a lie concocted by the opposing political party, others panicked and started buying toilet paper. The confusion over masks was particularly strange to me. In Japan, people always wore one if they were sick and the transition to wearing one in public to keep from catching Covid was a natural transition. Not so for Americans, some believed (and still do) that wearing a small piece of cloth or paper was an appalling attack on their rights. Other Americans thought that they had to wear a mask literally all the time, I actually had an old lady confess to me how she would sometimes "break the rules" by removing her mask when she was home by herself. I had friends who felt the need to inform me that the world fell apart when I was away and that things would be very different now. Covid hadn't even reached Plumas County yet, my friends had no idea what was coming.

When I was in Japan, I got to experience how that country responded to Covid. As I came to find out, my experience was very different from that of most Americans. While I was dealing with the onset of a new disease, most Americans were either unaware of Covid's existence or thought it could never affect them.

1 [www.cnbc.com/2020/03/23/cdc-coronavirus-survived-in-princess-cruise-cabin-up-to-17-days-after-passengers-left.html](http://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/23/cdc-coronavirus-survived-in-princess-cruise-cabin-up-to-17-days-after-passengers-left.html)



# *At The "Odd Fellow's Cemetery"*

Bryston Beatley

What an odd place to get married.  
But this was your request and not once have I tarried

To heed and fulfill your heart's desires.  
But these ghastly stones are reminders

Of how death will do us part.  
How beautiful you are, a work of art.

I see now the appeasement of this place.  
It is after all, where odd fellows taste

The sweet embrace of humble earth.  
I'm sure no matter how odd, covered in mirth

They may be, never as odd as to believe  
A wedding should take place above, and relieved

To find that it is not, in fact, a wedding  
Just an odd fellow, with crumpled bedding.

Refusing to leave the other odd fellow

For I have told you countless times, my dear  
That death could never do us part.



# *Childhood Swing*, Mixed Media, Installation View, 2021

Rilee McAdams



# *Life by Misadventure: The Ailing Traveler*

Kenneth McCann

I have gone over seas, got lost in big cities, nearly died more than I care to count in one week, discovered new gods, pissed off old gods, found a place I belong, been on planes that I wasn't sure would have a safe landing, seen ancient cities repaved with modern aesthetics and flown back the way I came.

I have one last stop before I must head home. To my real home not the place I feel at home. No, that place is where I am now.

I returned here for a few reasons. The first was given my previous experience in Italy I could no longer continue west just to be disillusioned that these places have sold their history to the most frequent bidders. There was so much I wanted to see both ancient and new that I no longer felt that I was allowed to be near while I was in this frame of mind from my travels so far. My experiences in countries that have both embraced their past and preserved it in some way through their culture that leads up to a place that only preserves the necessary amount to put on a postcard and attract more tourists, has deterred me.

The second reason is what I call my weakness, hope. When I was here last, just over a week ago I had met someone who stood out beyond everything else I had seen to this point. She had been in the states long enough as a kid to understand how that mindset works, as well as having been in Japan long enough to have embraced the culture to a degree that a person wouldn't think of her as any different than anyone in this country. My hope brought me back here because I missed an opportunity that I previously should have taken. However, my hopes would be dashed as I returned here, I never saw her again.

Now that we know why I have returned to this place I should tell of where I am returning to and everything that has happened. I return to this northern city in Japan called Hakodate. Since I left Italy, I have spent nearly twenty hours in an airport in Istanbul, several more hours on a flight back to Japan, gone to a hostel in the middle of Tokyo at midnight, barely had more than an hour of sleep, got up went to a main station to get a rail pass, got on a high-speed train, spent another five hours on this train with a ticket that doesn't even get me a seat, and pulled into the station and transferred to a local line to get to this city.

There is a festival going on here for the next few days in the middle of town so much of the public transport is restricted. I am stationed for a night in a hostel on the other side of this city so I must find a way. Once I get past the festival, I find some public transportation to where I am staying, check in and try to sleep, but I can't. the problem with sharing a room with a bunch of people is if one person snores violently it becomes difficult to get any sleep at all. So, I lie down for the night just to listen to the snoring interrupting my focus of getting the rest I

desperately need. I have had a headache since I left Italy, and with little sleep as well as next to no liquid in my system, it won't leave me alone.

Since I have to move to a new hostel almost every day due to all the festivals that are happening in the next few weeks, and since they all have an early checkout requirement first thing in the morning as well as check ins often not happening until the afternoon. I am unable to sleep in to ease this throbbing in my skull. The next place I am staying is back where I was when I came here the first time. I should be able to get some rest here tonight. However, after getting my luggage across town back to this hostel I have no energy left and I sit in the lobby and wait for the next several hours trying to keep enough energy in me to check in go upstairs and lie down in my bed for the night. With my head repeatedly falling and snapping back I somehow survive long enough. I somehow make it to my bed and sleep, but not for long.

Three hours later, its late afternoon, the sun is setting and against my need for sleep and liquid to get rid of this pain behind my eyes, I awake. Something inside of me is possessed. I am sacrificing my wellbeing to go and see this festival, to understand what it is about, and my mind is winning against the ailment of my body. I make it to the edge of the festival as the last tints of orange hang against the horizon. The world is growing darker, but in my current state all I see are dazzling lights smeared beyond their bulbs and crowds of ghostly figures lining the sides of the streets. I can hear a chant timed to rhythm, as a procession marches by while group after group dances in their own interpretation of the original dance, all chanting the same song.

The more this festival proceeds to happen the more convinced I become that I am in a fever dream. These blinding lights, the chanting, the blurred vision, dancing down the street and looping back around. I feel like a ghost among the crowd, and I follow the procession to a plaza lined with festival stands all containing their own unique offers and games, all the foods are different from each other, all the games designed for everyone to participate.

At the center of this plaza is a platform, with royal looking judges, watching as the people in front of them carry a manned wooden transport, with one person on top blowing a whistle while jumping up and down, setting the rhythm of the people carrying the transport for them to bounce up and down. I have been pulled into something deeply spiritual and I wish only to observe and understand.

It is difficult to pull myself away from this festival as something tethers me to this, but it is not over for a few more days, and I desperately need rest to rid myself of this headache. I make my way back to my bed lay down, peer into the darkness of my consciousness as the chanting, well out of earshot, continues to repeat in my head until I hear nothing more.



# *Jacqueline*

Evi de Bois

Water finds her way  
From ebb and flow to quiet lakes  
She was calm tides  
Rippling and cheerful she sang her song  
Understanding and forgiving she ran along steadfast rocks  
As a stream that separates from the river  
And finds her way to the ocean once more  
I still carry her  
Yet she flows where I cannot yet go





# Mother

Dasha Petrov

Mother,

Mother! Am I enough? My wit, my body- how they've been conditioned to function, what they've been constrained to perform,

Mother! My heart- it breaks, all I see in myself when I look in the mirror is the criticism and ridicule

that has been cemented in my reflection from so many years of it ongoing.

I've lost the weight, but there's still too much.

Too much of

me.

Mother! I go to school learn- so that I'm not like Daisy's daughter- "A beautiful little fool"

Though at times, I wish I was.

My mind and heart are too big.

Both- with love and interest.

To give the same love I've learned of, in fairytales.

The kind that sweeps you off your feet.

The love that I so desperately yearn for.

No-

I'm too much.

Is that what they mean when they say: "You can't have your cake and eat it too"?

One slice, wouldn't hurt?

But I'm so hungry. I've been left in the dark for so long I crave light.

Left alone for so long I crave touch. Something sweet, with a dash of spice.

No whipped cream, I'm watching my figure.

Mother! The words you spilled about my waist- and my thighs and arms.

-God they sting.

Burn, like the top of a Crème brûlée. Gentle, handle carefully.

The spots of uneven sugar remind me how imperfect I am.

I get the curves but, hold off on the height, right?

Mother! Your Little comments resonate with me as though they were whispered to my ears by elves the night before.

Though it's been all one's life since you've said a damn thing. It still feels like yesterday.

Mother! I'm hungry- But I must keep the fridge on empty, unless I'm having guests.

The ones that come and go.

For love and warmth, I must constrain myself. Starve myself for what I crave- the love and warmth you forgot to give me.

Mother, if I have a daughter I'll be so jealous of the love she'll receive.  
The little girl in me will kick, and cry, and scream.  
As I tuck her to bed and tell her how beautiful she is, the world is in her hand,  
she'll never second guess. She'll never compare- she'll never fear, she'll never starve.

Mother. She'll be enough!  
She'll never be told to shrink herself down for the pleasure of others.  
Mother- I must keep a distance from you.

To heal myself, to learn the love that I so desperately deserve for myself.  
To overcome the "beautiful little fool" For I will overcome!

Mother, my love will blossom.  
My love will grow, for you have taught me- from your stubborn careless ways.  
The sage takes from the fool. For that was once you, when you were young.

Mother, you've given me all from what was nothing.  
And finally it's my pattern that begins, as yours falls to a tapered end; with me- the trusting  
fool.  
Mother, I forgive you.



# *To Grandma's, corn-husking*

Shadow

Our family gathering  
demanded  
many varieties of foods-  
along with  
lots of sweetened ice tea  
with ice cubes-  
which caused sweating  
on the outside of the glasses.

Yet,  
for the preparing  
this time,  
my sister and I  
were given  
the job  
of shucking  
freshly picked corn  
inside our family's truck bed.

However, other cousins  
were at Grandma's home,  
but my sister and I  
were buried  
In corn husks!

Eventually,  
Grandma recognized  
our dilemma-  
she came to our aid!

She gleefully said  
that whenever we finished,  
she would reward  
us with money.

I remember  
Stepping  
Up my pace!  
I believed

I would receive  
One Dollar!

I vocalized  
by bragging  
What  
I would purchase!

At last,  
we were finished!  
Grandma came outside  
with that mischievous  
and proud look  
upon her face.  
From her large black purse,  
she pulled out  
and offered us each ten cents!

I was so offended,  
but no other family member  
had recognized  
our steady labor.

Above all,  
I honored  
Grandma  
and readily  
saw  
the Value  
she placed  
upon us!

I gave Grandma  
my thanks,  
but requested  
she please keep.

Internally-  
you see-  
she had given  
a more valuable  
gift-  
that of love!

which...  
did not  
need explanations  
for our differing  
values  
of tender!



# *Ink is my Epitaph*

Michael Hammontree

My creative mind is a trap;  
A trapped maze, full of wonder-  
And self-hatred. For having to ask questions.  
Such as, "What is the true meaning of life?"

Do I feel pain? Do I treasure climax?  
Do I even know who I am?  
What is my greatest fear?  
Allow me to leave my one Epitaph.

I loathe, I dread, I worry,  
I fear of experiencing death without  
Leaving such a worthy legacy.  
No child will ever embrace my greatness.

To become immortal through words:  
Writing the ink will seal the soul.  
People will remember me, treasure me.  
For my ink on paper is my own Epitaph.

As long as I tell my story,  
Through passages written in ink,  
Then I shall grow immortal.  
As every story is just a mere Epitaph.

There is only one of each soul;  
As they die, all we can do is remember:  
Remember their blood-soaked ink,  
Repeat their Epitaph. And watch their soul never die.



# From Wood to Water, Photograph

Debbie Corsino



# Mine

Kristen Alexander

*Iron head and sandbagged feet  
Fractured spirit drowning deep  
Diving bell mute as you lay in line  
What is yours and what is mine*

*Fair is fair and justice sublime  
As I remind myself to pick up only what is mine*

*Your brand of justice, oily black  
You left it writhing in the bones of my back  
It's turned my shoulder and curved my spine  
Because I carried your things as well as mine*

*You hammered me out, paper thin  
Overextended and folded me in  
Smaller and smaller until into your pocket I'd go  
Where if I cried out, nobody would know*

*You carried me like a trophy, but really everybody knew  
Even dying, I was carrying you  
Dead-eyed smiles and "Miss, how do you do?"  
The fake  
The farce  
The niceties behind the dark, dark  
Unsmiling eyes we all saw through*

*Yard sale life, wrecked menagerie  
It's written in the pages of your history  
Divided perfectly down the line  
The respect is yours and the blame is mine  
All the things that can't be counted or defined  
Doesn't matter, now is not the time*

*As I stare gazing at my shoes  
Wondering why people do the things they do  
And then carry on without a clue  
Oh, the things I cleaned up, endured, and fixed for you...  
I can't eat and you crossed a line  
But you are oblivious, and I am fine...*

*But your time is up, the moment's no more*



*Your shadow no longer darkens my kitchen door  
So go on, petty tyrant, just a be a dear  
And take your things before you exit here  
Though I'm not mad, I must resign  
For now, I pick up only what is mine*



# *Bridging the Gap*

Sara Sotomayor

There is an inherent fundamental divide between the species of Homo Sapien and Equus Caballus. The instincts of predator versus prey have laid the foundation for a long and complicated history between us. The past has reaped many mistakes in our approach to domesticating and building relationships with horses (Miller 3). Oddly enough, despite being juxtaposed in our natural roles, my research has brought to light that horses and humans actually have more in common than you may think. We share similar needs, chemistry, psychological responses to stimuli, as well as, equivalent behavioral patterns. Through these similarities I believe we can further close the divide between our species and fine tune our relationships with horses.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, humans have various levels of necessities that as a whole, keep us balanced. These include physiological needs, a desire for safety, love, belonging, esteem and self actualization (Hopper). Surprisingly, horses share numerous needs with us at multiple levels of the hierarchy. On a very basic level, we both require air, water, food, and shelter (Hopper). These are called physiological needs and it influences our behavior and susceptibility to illness if one or more of these items is lacking. We both also require security and health (Hopper). Risks to health and safety can activate the sympathetic nervous system in both humans and horses. The sympathetic nervous system is the fight or flight response that keeps us alive and out of danger. We share even more similarities with horses when it comes to connection. Horses, like us, thrive in social settings and prefer relationships and family rather than being alone. They are herd animals who form bonds with their group and likewise we build strong attachments with our community, family members and friends (Hopper). Lastly, we share traits like status and strength (Hopper). Horses and humans implement social hierarchies where certain participants gain status and have perks and responsibilities associated with that authority. Moreover, the stronger a horse is, the better quality of life they experience and tend to lead longer lives. As humans, our strength comes from our minds and our unique ability to adapt and think through situations. Identical to the horse, our strength has kept us thriving for thousands of years.

Internally, we share a multitude of chemicals that influence our bodies. Two of them in particular, dopamine and cortisol have a direct influence on our mental state, physiology and behavior. Horses, when exposed to the stress hormone cortisol, tend to be more tense and flighty, showing the whites of their eyes, tightening their muzzles, and flaring their nostrils (Peters 26). The long-term side effects of cortisol make horses susceptible to certain diseases, and parasites. This may include a weakened immune system, virus, bacterial infection, weight loss, gastric ulcers, skin infection, colic, and vulnerability to parasites such as Ascarids, Pinworms, Bots, Tapeworms and others. Similarly, humans have tense reactions and an increase in alertness when exposed to cortisol. However, long term exposure leads to lethargy, fatigue, susceptibility to diseases including heart disease, autoimmune disorder and inflammation (Maez).

Dopamine is cortisol's opposite and offers horses a chance to de-escalate and access the parasympathetic nervous system. They get a highly reinforcing, positive release that leads to lip licking, a loosening of their jaw and learning opportunities in the long run (Peters 27). Likewise, humans also experience a sense of euphoria and increased bursts of energy which can lead to addiction and impulsive behaviors on a long-term basis as it is also highly reinforcing (Maez). Even though our brains are set up differently, I found that both chemicals have the potential to significantly impact multiple parts of the body and affect quality of life for both species.

The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are measured on a scale where the parasympathetic emotions and behaviors are akin to a relaxed or neutral state in both humans and horses. This typically looks like a calm, curious, mindful and grounded state (Missimer). Whereas, the sympathetic state gets triggered via external or internal perception of danger or stress. There is a notable increase in panic, fear, desire to flee, and anxiety (Missimer). Another survival instinct we share is to fight. Fight triggers anger, fear, irritation, frustration in both species however, in horses it will also manifest as kicking, bucking and rearing (Missimer, Peters17-24). Psychologically we are similar in the way that we climb, descend and engage in the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

Furthermore, when dealing with chronic stress horses begin to develop “stereotyped behaviors” such as cribbing, weaving, wind-sucking, box-walking (Peters 81). In humans we can see withdrawn behavior, substance abuse, anger and irritation (Maez). At their worst, horses exhibit signs of learned helplessness. The indicators for learned helplessness include withdrawn behavior, disengagement and show little reaction. They are described as lifeless, passive, quiet and have sunken eyes. Their physiological functioning and cortisol levels are unhealthy. One possible reason they do this is so that they do not appear weak and get singled out by predators in the wild (Peters 67). As it happens, “humans display the exact same condition as horses” (Maez). However, in humans, it is called “severe acute” and “emotional trauma” (Maez). Behaviorally, it is uncanny how both species respond to stress. I believe it is one of the strongest connections we have to horses.

In conclusion, horses mirror humans in a variety of ways. I believe our similarities are incredibly significant and can change the way we relate with horses. Looking forward, I hope more people can connect our similarities and bridge the gap between our species by looking inside themselves.

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# *People Die Twice*

Michael Hammontree

Memories are cracked paintings;  
They wither through time and  
Fade away. We can always see  
The age of a painting. But what,

But what of memories? Will we  
Notice the age of the images  
Within our minds? Mostly not  
But we must remember, for truth.

We must remember for those,  
Who had fallen, through death  
Or spirit. So that we may be  
Better. Treasure memories, observe life.

Look at the ancient forest,  
Detail every tree, any bird, all animals.  
They all wither, just to be replaced,  
So that the new will honor legacy.

Remember, please,  
Remember this truth in life;  
People die twice. Through life,  
Through memory. So please remember,

So that they may live within your spirit.



# *Charcoal Study, Charcoal on Paper, 2021*

Alicia Manning



# *Experience*

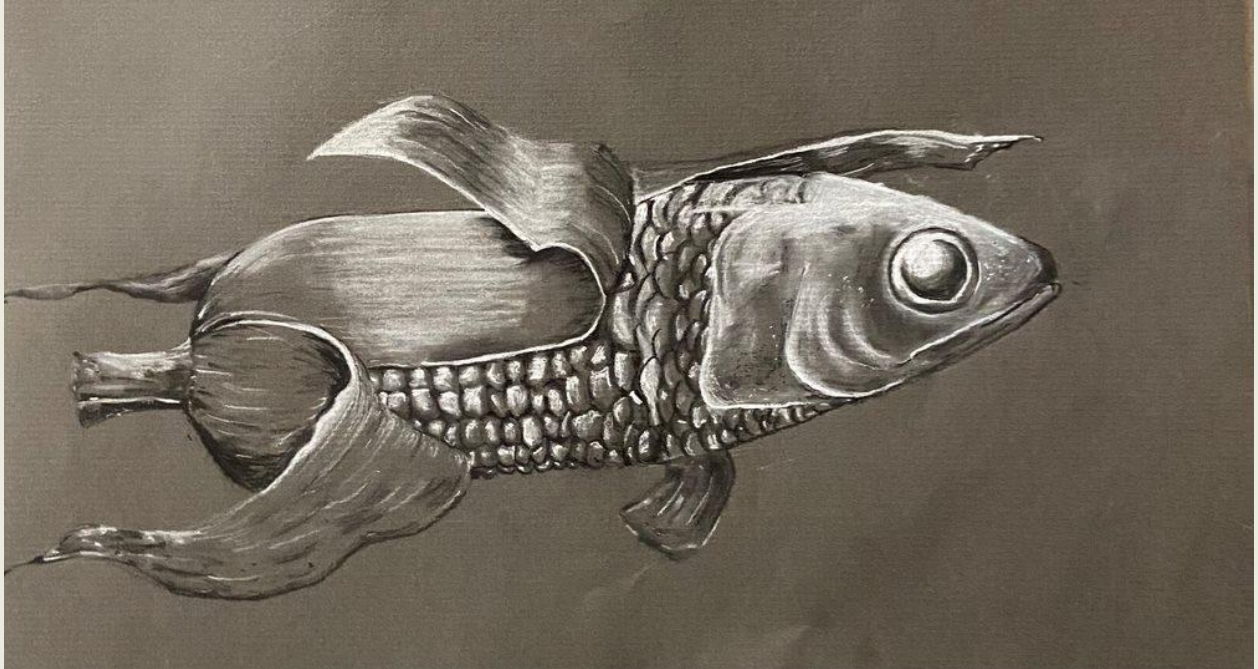
Bryston Beatley

Once closed, now clenched.  
Now open, now etched  
To this sinner's edge of skin.  
So much to feel in wispy notes  
Unnoticed, I hear a young girl  
Play with icy foams of sea  
And silky, lilting, ember winds  
Rustles and whispers of sweet little kin.  
As ivory pounds, careens, cascades colors  
My bloodied feet moved by beautiful terrors  
As music floods my soul like no other  
Running farther and farther through mirrors  
Heart flounderin among cold-lit stars  
Not stranded behind walls of gray  
Or stooped low upon stools in a bar  
But falling safely among my breathe  
Is the parched sunlight, slanted and fading  
As I walk, awake, among sleepless trees.



# Corn Fish, Charcoal on Paper, 2021

Alicia Manning





# *Evanescent Garden*

TyAnna Farmer

I am a garden.

Inside I carry the essence of life, I am a vessel of creation.

I choose how to purpose my garden: to express, experience and love.

My garden serves no one.

I am full of flowers, fertilized, watered and grounded.

Seeming bountiful to those hunting for something to satisfy a hunger.

But my garden is only a temporary path used for instant relief.

They come to find themselves by walking through me,

I'm picked and I'm plucked,

temporarily abused to amuse someone who finds comfort in destroying beautiful things.

But, why is it when my garden starts to die I am no longer useful?

I am to blame.

As if my garden somehow became too beautiful, and now I have to hold that shame.

But when will we learn when flowers are consistently damaged

look at the environment surrounding the garden?

check the soil,

measure the water

and monitor the light.

never should we blame the flowers for the circumstances they've endured, for they chose

survival.

And as for me I have always been a survivor.



# *Self Portrait*, Acrylic on Canvas, 2021

Rilee McAdams



# What a Twisted Life

Sky Rose

1

She hummed her way along as her arms grew sore from mixing the cookie dough. As always, she carefully measured the dry ingredients into a separate bowl and was now gradually mixing them into the wet ingredients. As always, she washed her hands after finishing every step. As always, she made sure all the balls of dough were the same size on the sheet. She slid the last tray in the oven and closed the door.

The blanket was already bundled up from where she had been reading, and it was calling to her, so she listened. She sat down with a sigh and picked up her book.

As she began to read, she looked out the window and realized something puzzling. There were some stains on the glass as if someone threw paint onto it, but that didn't make sense. She had just cleaned it last night. She always cleaned it. Every. Single. Night.

The couch was ignored as she rushed to her sink to get the cleaning spray. Of course, everything was meticulously organized and labeled, so she was able to find the bottle in record time. The next step was to grab a rag. Wait, no - check the timer. Three minutes left. Will that be enough time? Yes, it will - not to worry. She can get it cleaned in no more than two minutes. With her feet stomping, she rushed outside and began to spray the mark. She could smell something metallic. Sure, it was faint, but it was *there*. She could smell it, and it was not in her imagination. No, it was real.

Her arms locked in place, refusing to move. The breeze danced across her skin, pushing dark strands into her vision. The timer went off then, but she wouldn't hear it. No, her ears were hurting, so she turned the timer down. What a shame.

Trying to ignore the same sharp scent, she scrubbed and scrubbed, swearing that it wasn't coming off when in fact it was all wiped away five minutes ago.

After sufficient scrubbing, she nodded in approval of her work and went back inside. The only problem was that she could now smell something so horrid that it tainted her tongue. Smoke was spilling from the oven, and she realized that the scent was of something once so sweet that was now destroyed. Isn't that how so many things work? Everyone starts out innocent in this world only to be damaged by others and society as we grow. What a disappointing predicament.

Now is not the time for philosophical thinking though. As she opens the door, she is blasted in the face and has to wave through the smoke to get to the coal cookies. She throws the tray against the wall, creating a hole in the pleasant pink, and collapses to the floor. Her hands cover her eyes as she begins to sob.

2

All she sees is the curly brown hair, and she imagines it turning a nice russet. Her hand grips the knife tighter, and her steps stay light as she creeps behind him. Stopping in the middle of the woods is a stupid idea. Who cares if you're tired from running? It's stupid. Plain stupid. Haven't you heard of the stabbings around here?

Her mouth splits into a grin as she gets close enough to strike. Her once small pupils have now widened, blocking out all the blue, as pure excitement courses through her veins.

Without another thought, she brings her arm around his neck and digs the knife deep into his throat. Warmth flows over her hand, and she can't help but chuckle at the sound of his gurgling. It's quite poetic when you stop to think about it. Our hearts produce blood for us constantly so we can live, but we can also drown in it, creating such a sweet way to die.

At least, that's what she thinks. After pulling the knife out, she licks her wrist, and her eyes close with delight. She sees fear within his eyes before they go blank and his body stills.

Now it was time to escape. She got some blood on her shoes which is a shame since she just bought them. Oh well, she can always get a new pair. She disappears further into the woods, off the path, until she gets to a stream. Her skin prickled just thinking of how cold the water is, but it's what she has to do.

Her steps turn light again as she creeps into the coldness. The bloody shoes fill quickly, and she grimaces at the mushy feeling underfoot. She realizes that creeping in is not the best way to do this, so she backs up onto dry land and leaps into the creek.

All of her skin is blasted with the glacial liquid. As she resurfaces, she brushes the water out of her eyes and looks around. It is dark now, the sun almost fully set, but she can make out some of the surrounding nature. Oaks, pines, you know, common trees. Grass. Weeds. Nothing beautiful. The only true beauty is seeing life leave a body.

She has a pretty good secret that allows her to relish the feel of blood against her skin and to simply dump the knives. Years ago, when she started this, she burned her fingerprints off. Quite a great asset. Every year she burns them again to be safe. If she ever becomes a suspect, she'll burn them very thoroughly, just in case.

Sitting in the water started to become quite relaxing, but she knew she had to get a move on and get out of the area. Not many people went on that trail, but who knows, maybe some weirdo decided to go for a jog in the pitch black.

She swam back onto land, her clothes now heavy and dripping. Dirt clung to her shoes as she made her way back to where she entered her safe place.

After walking for some time, she made her way home and saw she had left the lights on. She didn't mind that much as her neighbors, if she were a suspect, would say, "No, officer, it's not possible. She was home. I saw all of her lights on, so she couldn't have been off murdering someone."

As she went inside, she trailed water all over the floor. But, of course, she didn't care. It was just water, and it would dry. No need to fuss over something that will just disappear on its own. After slipping into her pajamas, she got in bed and took some melatonin to help her sleep. This evening had been much too exciting for her to simply shut her eyes and want to move on to the next day.

3

Today was a Wednesday, and that was never good. No, not good at all. Everyone gets so excited because you're halfway to the weekend, but the middle point is unpredictable. Something could go wrong, and then you're left with the rest of your week ruined and a terrible

weekend. This had happened to her on several occasions. So, she always erred on the side of caution. Better to be safe than sorry.

She always baked cookies for her friends on Tuesdays and would go visit them after that, but then she had no cookies, so she had to stay home. The thought of going to see her friends came into her mind for a split second before she told herself no. One of her rules was to never leave the house on Wednesdays, unless there is a special circumstance. If she stays home, the likelihood of something bad happening lowers by quite an exponential amount.

Besides that, her friends were acting odd towards her. They would make plans and then cancel them. Of course, she was just jumping to conclusions. Her friends were probably just really busy with their own lives.

On Wednesdays, she usually read a nice book, wrote some poetry, or played a video game. Not the violent ones though, she couldn't stand those. All the blood and gore was too much for her.

She stood there, not moving, as she contemplated over and over what she should do today. There was the book she was reading, but the plot wasn't that interesting. Poetry was nice, but she wasn't in the mood for writing. That leaves video games, but which one to play? There was the farming one, the newest Pokémon game, and then there was the one where you control the people. Gosh, there were just too many to choose from.

Her mind reeled with indecision, but she decided to play the farming game. When she goes to walk to her living room where her PC is located, she stops when she sees the tray and the burnt cookies still lying on the floor. She thinks of how flustered she became afterwards that she didn't even bother to clean up the mess. That wasn't like her at all. No, she always cleaned everything. She really needed to get a hold of herself and start thinking clearly.

As she bends down to pick up the mess, she reels back when the charred scent reaches her nose. Her eyes close as tears spring to life. Memories flood her head, and she falls to her knees. That night comes to mind. The night that changed her whole life. No, she didn't want to think about it. But, how could she not? Thoughts of smoke fill her as she looks down at her scarred arms. She tells herself to not look, to think about anything else, but she can't. She is unable to look away from the proof of that night.

A fire had burned down her home. That was all that happened. Yes, of course, that was all that happened - nothing more. She had escaped her home, and she was safe now. Her home was gone, but that was all. That was all. *That was all.*

Her reassurances allow her to breathe more easily, for her tears to stop, for her to stand up and lean against the counter.

The tray still remains on the floor, but she doesn't know if she can handle going near the smell again. No, she needs to wait until she has a clear head. Wait until she can smell it without bursting into tears.

Of course, she comes up with a solution to the problem. Her feet carry her over to the drawer with her clips and clothespins, and she takes one out to shut up her nose. She gives a few sniffs just to make sure she can't smell a thing, and she nods with satisfaction when she can't. Although, now she has to breathe through her mouth which she doesn't like very much, but oh well. This will only take her a few seconds.

Once stacking the burnt cookies onto the tray, she throws open her door, creaks across the wooden deck, and chucks it out into the yard. Now she can take off the clothespin, so she does. She takes in a deep breath of the fresh, crisp air that is a large improvement.

Her eyes catch on a tree after hearing a unique bird call. A smile plays on her lips as she recognizes the beautiful black, white, and blue bird. Its long tail dangles down far past the branch it rests on, and the sunshine helps the cobalt shimmer amongst the darkness. The white of its belly is stark and brighter than the moon. Of course, it's a magpie.

As she watches the bird, her mind registers that this is a special occasion, no, *the* special occasion. This means she can go somewhere even though it's a Wednesday.

Alright. She's going out today. The question is whether she should go for a walk or a drive. Eventually, she decides a drive would be nice.

A smile was now broadly across her face, and she rushed to grab her keys. Once walking outside, she unlocks her well-polished car and starts the ignition.

A little ways into her drive, she starts admiring the trees and the nature around her. However, this doesn't last long. As she goes around the next bend, she hits her brake pedal as she sees a car smashed into the mountainside. Smoke is billowing in the air, and there are car parts scattered on the asphalt along with broken glass.

She puts her car in park, turns her hazards on, and rushes out. There is a man and a woman in the front seats, and they are both covered in blood. Her head starts rushing as images of that night come back to her. She shuts her eyes. She tries to remain calm, but she can't. She just can't. Blackness clouds her vision as she falls to the ground.

#### 4

Her head pounded as she awoke, confused as to how she wasn't in her bed. Maybe she had passed out after her last kill and had dreamt coming back home. As she lifts herself off the ground, she is greeted with a car that has been in an accident. There are two people in the car, covered in blood. She grins at the delightful scene, and she walks over to see if they're alive. The windows are broken, so she easily places two fingers against the driver's neck and finds that he is indeed dead. Nodding, she walks around to the other side and does the same thing. However, the woman is breathing. It's very faint, but she, unlike the driver, is not dead. This is the perfect time for her to kill, but she wonders how. Looking around at the mess on the ground, she sees a shard of glass and knows it will be perfect. It will seem like a piece of glass from the windshield flew through into her neck.

She holds the glass firm in her hand until blood trickles from her fingertips. The shard slices into the woman's neck, and she pulls it back out without thinking.

She licks a drip of blood that landed on her lip and grins. Two people dead, one at her hands, and there will never be any suspicion placed upon her. When she starts to walk away, there is a man watching that yells at her to stop and starts running towards her. Her eyes widen, and she curses herself for being so stupid to not look for witnesses before doing that.

Looking down at her hand, she sees the glass and fights against herself to not smile. Once the man gets close enough, she knows she has to do and that she needs to say something.

“Wait! She’s still alive. I was using the glass to cut her seatbelt off.”

His feet stop with a crunch on some car part that is now halfway to dust. “Ah, sorry, it looked like something else. I saw her blood spray on you.” He has a gruff voice that gets on her nerves.

Trying to feign shock, she gasps. “No, why on earth would I do that? She coughed, and a lot of blood came out.” All she needs to do is just play it cool and act like he’s the crazy one.

They stood there for some time before she finally said, “Shouldn’t you call 911 or something?”

“Oh, yeah, you’re right. I just figured you had called already. Let me go get my phone.”

As soon as his back was turned, she rushed forward and drove the shard right into the side of his neck. He shouted in pain as his hands flew to the piece of glass. Once his hands found it, he tried to pull it out but fell before getting a grip. She turned him over and saw that he was still alive. His sandy brown coat was now turning the same color as yesterday’s victim as the red soaked in.

Trying to hurry, she cut her hand again as she grabbed the shard and pulled it out. The blood poured out much faster while she pushed his coat aside to reveal the thinner shirt underneath. She drove the glass into his chest. Again, she pulled it back out and took it with her. Throughout it all, she doesn’t make a sound. She just watches what she does in careful precision.

Now, it is time to run.

## 5

Once deep in the woods, she feels sure that she’s safe and far away from the accident, from her murders. Her side aches from running, and her lungs burn from lack of use. She wishes now that she would run in her spare time.

Once her breathing returns to almost normal, she sits on a stump. The dampness soaks into her red speckled jeans. She looks down at her clothes and sees her white sweater is clearly proclaiming *MURDER* to anyone who sees. Wait, a white sweater? Why on earth would she wear *white*? Come to think of it, how did she even get to that car accident? Was she somehow in the accident and forgot?

Her brows furrow, and she presses her thumb down on her bottom lip as she tries to answer all of the questions running through her mind. Thinking back, all she can remember is going to bed and then waking up, staring at the sky. There must be an explanation as to how there is such a large gap in her memory.

When she thinks about it, there have been other times where she blacks out and can’t remember periods of time. Could she...? No, it was not possible. But, could it be?

Unexpectedly, tears spring to life, and she bites down on her thumb. Her vision clouds as her thoughts clash. One of her closest friends had told her long ago that she was worried about her, and sometimes she acted differently. She said she acted like a completely different person, and it was worrying her.

That night, she looked up on her computer what it means to act like a different person. Let’s just say that she didn’t like the results, and that computer is now somewhere in a landfill. There was no way she was going to believe any of that stuff. She was who she was, right? She

would know if she lived two different lives, right? After all, there was no trauma in her life, nothing bad. Actually, she had a pretty nice childhood. So, there must be another explanation for all of this. But, what?

Both of her hands went to the sides of her head, her eyes closed, and she screamed. She screamed and screamed, and no one heard except the crows hidden in the shadows. The sound echoed off of the trees and shot back at her. It sounded as if there were two of her. Her screams, and the real her trapped inside, crying out for help all at once.

6

When she woke up, she was now in a foggy and shaded forest. Her eyes widened as her heart sped up. Where was she? What happened? She realized with a thud that there was a car accident, and she had passed out. Right, all the smoke.

She places her hand down on the stump to sit up, and she winces in pain. Her eyes fall down to her hand. Slowly, she turns it over and gasps when she sees two large gashes in her palm. Blood is partially dried, but she can tell that she just reopened the wounds.

Nausea courses up from her stomach into her throat. Before she can help it, she vomits onto the ground of pine needles. When she looks down, she sees even more blood. Her pants, her shoes, her sweater, her arms, her hands, they all have blood on them. More vomit elicits from her, and her eyes water from the pressure and pain, but also fear.

Did someone attack her? She couldn't feel any other injuries except her hand, but she was sore all over. Her eyes scanned the expansive forest, and her breathing quickened. What. Had. Happened? There was no answer, and it terrified her.

She didn't even know where her car was or how to get home. When she uses her other hand to check for her phone, she finds nothing. Her heart palpitates as she wills herself not to panic, but she can't.

Her eyes remain looking up at the sky. If she looks back down at herself, she'll see blood and puke. Sitting in this forest all alone provides great time for some reflection and thinking. That night comes to mind. She wills herself to not freak out and to just remember what happened. Not all of the puzzle pieces come together to form a perfect picture, but she is able to see enough even with the gaps.

Her father had gotten mad again, and she tried to help her mom. It didn't work, and he just got more upset. Angry screams mingled with frightful ones, and she remembers rope scratching against her skin. The sound of liquid. A pungent smell of gasoline with alcohol, most likely whiskey or vodka - maybe even both. The flick of a match. Her father's fist found her cheek as it normally did.

Then, the smoke. The flames. The screams of pain. The searing of burns. The smell of flesh. The rope had burned off when the flames licked up her arms and feet, and she was able to get away. Her mom was already dead. Thankfully, the image of her mother is one of the missing puzzle pieces.

She ran and ran, until she collapsed. Next thing she knew, she was in a hospital, then with her grandmother. To this day, she has no clue where her father is, but she doesn't want to know.



Her eyelids slowly close. Tears start to form, and her heart aches along with everything else. She wants to scream, but her throat feels too sore as if she already has.

Exhaustion creeps in, and she feels so tired of everything, of what her life has become. She has tried so hard to make her life better, so she is careful with everything. She does things a certain way and sticks to a routine. She has tried to keep up relationships, but people push her away, and she doesn't understand why. She is in so much pain, but no one notices, and no one cares. She has no one and nothing. She is alone.

7

When her eyes open again, she feels so much more pain. Not physical, but mental and emotional. She wants to scream again, but she can't summon the energy. Did she just black out again? Part of her can feel like she is sharing a body right now. All of her feelings seem to be from her but someone else entirely separate as well. She can't explain it, but she can *feel* that there is another person right alongside her at this moment.

This is quite a perplexing thought, and she doesn't feel afraid. No, she actually feels a little upset. Who else is taking over her body, and why? Another interesting thought: is she the real person, or the other one? Whatever the answer is, all she knows is that the other one is struggling too.

Deep down, she knows whoever the other person is isn't like her. This stops her and causes her face to fall flat. She feels like she is being infiltrated in a way.

Trying to confirm her theory, she tries to see if anything has changed, and indeed there are differences. Her hand's cuts are open again. There is vomit on the ground, which proves that the other one is weak. So, this proves it, but what should she do with this information? Well, she doesn't know.

Maybe she could leave a sign for the other one. Although, she might not be as smart as her, so it'd have to be pretty obvious. Looking down at the piece of glass lying by her hand, she comes up with a plan. She just hopes she can will herself to fall asleep.

8

There is a sharp pain that causes her to wake. A piece of glass is sticking out of her leg, and she screams. Where did that come from? Her head whips around as she looks for whoever has done this to her. She can't find anyone.

The forest is quiet, and the only sound is her heavy breathing. Is it possible that she stabbed herself in her *own leg*? But, if that was the answer, then where did the shard come from?

Thinking back, she remembers seeing glass at the accident. Maybe she was being attacked or chased, picked up a piece of glass, and then ran to the forest for cover. Yes, that was the most logical conclusion. After all, she has blocked out traumatic experiences before.

Okay, so, she had an answer as to where the glass came from. She still had to answer *why* she stabbed herself, but she doesn't have an answer. The blood makes her feel faint, and darkness greets her again.

9

Eagerness causes her eyes to slam open. When she glances around for an answer back, she just sees the shard still in her leg. Well, that's not very helpful. She supposes that she must be a bit more direct with the other one. After all, it makes sense that you wouldn't think you have a completely different personality just because you stab yourself. Time to be a bit more clever with her.

10

A decent amount of time passes before she awakes again. She looks to see how her leg is doing and realizes the glass is gone. It feels as if her heart has come to a complete stop. Where did it go? However, she doesn't wonder this for long before she glances a few inches away and sees writing on the stump. Scrawled messily are the words *I killed*.

With a shock, she realizes that her own hand is on the glass, resting at the end of the horrific words. These words confirm what she has suspected before. Of course, she didn't want to believe it or even acknowledge it, but here is the conclusive answer.

At first, she used to think someone was stalking her and staying in her house in secret. She would find things a bit unorganized when she left, and there would be smudges on her window, which is why she cleaned it every night.

Then, her friends drifted away and always seemed a bit on edge around her as if a shinigami followed right behind her. There were even a couple times when blood would be under her fingernails with no explanation. Sometimes, there were unexplainable gaps in time.

She didn't like to look up symptoms or what she was going through, because it made her anxiety terrible, but she had to know. So, she searched if she could have a secret personality, and found that she could. In fact, her experiencing trauma makes it easier for her to develop another self out of her own security.

These two words here are a confirmation to her darkest worry: she had another personality that was a murderer. It always seemed like an outlandish theory, but now it was face to face with her, and she couldn't look away. She started to cry again, and she knew she needed to be brave now. She knew what she had to do. But, first, she wanted, no, *needed*, an answer back before it was all over. So, she lifted her hand and wrote the message through the pain of the glass pressing against her palm.

11

She wakes up feeling excited. The other one must've sent a message back. Once looking down, her jaw drops at the response back. She notices how different the writing looks even though the same hand wrote it. The letters are clear and can't be mistaken. They read, *Die*.

*Die?* Really? The other one sounded a bit immature, honestly. Fine, she would play along with the little game. After all, it was fun talking to her other side.

12

The tears have dried up now, but she still feels like crying when she awakes again. She stops breathing when she sees the response back. *No* :). Wow, the evil personality must think she is so funny. Fury fills her, and she knows she has to end this.

As much as she has tried to improve her life and to be a better person, it has all been for nothing. Her own mind betrayed her when it was the only thing she could depend on. There was no way she could let the other personality continue to live and to hurt others. She couldn't be half of her father. Of course, she would never be him, but still.

The glass lays flat on the stump, and she gently picks it up. There have been so many regrets in her life, but she doesn't feel like what she is about to do is something she would regret. After all, it was against her own choice for this to happen. She just wanted a better life and to be happy. However, she's never truly been happy ever since that night. The feeling of joy was an impermanent thing that wanted to stick, but her other side tore it off and ripped it to pieces. Her eyes close as a tear slips down her cheek. Thinking over her life, she knows that this is the best way to end it, by *her* own hands. She inhales.

"I love you, Mom. I'll see you soon."

Her hand raises to her chest, and she exhales.

"What a twisted life," she says as the glass becomes one with her heart.



# *Outside, life is forming*

## Shadow

Leaves are forming  
on the twigs  
from the trimmed pecan tree.

A red-headed  
woodpecker  
(like  
used to be seen  
at the Honey Mesquite tree  
by the hand water pump  
toward the water well),  
outside  
the kitchen window.

A dove  
had tried  
in the wind  
to build a nest...

Now, below  
this newly shaped tree,  
on the cleared ground-  
resides  
the cottontail  
munching  
on some grass.

While nearby,  
the wind  
is gently blowing  
its audience  
of buttercups  
downward  
as they bounce back up!



# Be Kind, Pencil Drawing

Terise Seits



# Contributors

**Kristen Alexander**—Kristen is a former physics and mathematics instructor at FRC. She graduated from the University of Sydney with a double B.Sc. in Physics and Mathematics and received her Ph.D. in Physics from the University of North Carolina. Originally from rural Georgia, she has lived in Australia, Russia, and China before returning to the U.S. permanently. She is baking with real butter, looking under rocks for insects, and speaking sub-fluent Russian with her partner Mitya.

**Brystol Beatley**—My name is Brystol Beatley and I am a senior at Quincy Jr/ Sr High School. I mostly write poems and short, fictional stories where I am inspired by the people around me, the nature that surrounds me, and all of the things I have learned from school.

**Debbie Corsino**—I enjoy seeing art take shape whether it is on canvas, wood, or clay, with the ideas I have in my head. It allows me to express myself in ways I am forever exploring. As I am a multifaceted person, so I strive to be with my art.

**Evi de Bois**—My name is Evi Sisse Adel de Bois. I was born and raised in Antwerp, Belgium. I am a biology major at Feather River College and an animal advocate. I write poetry as an outlet for my emotions.

**TyAnna Farmer**—I am a human that's just trying to make it through this experience we call life. When humanity becomes a little less humane, I find comfort in words and solidarity in expressing myself.

**Nichelle Gordon**—The fourth generation born and raised right here in Plumas County, Nichelle is the daughter of Steve and Lori Gordon. Nichelle is pursuing her Associate's degree in Equine Studies with hopes to earn her Bachelor's in Equine Science and Reproduction either from FRC or by transferring to a university.

**Michael Hammontree**— My name is Michael, though I prefer Mikey. I was born in Chester, California. I don't consider myself to be a poet, but I still enjoy writing poetry as a form of expression. I mostly plan on working on and publishing novels, however. Hope you enjoy reading!

**Jack Joseph**— My name is John Joseph but most people call me Jack. I am a high school senior but I've taken photography at FRC for three semesters now and have loved every minute of it. During my time with the camera and in the darkroom, I have made prints that not only resonate with myself and classes mates but also with community members. Some interests of mine are exploring the outdoors, photography, and golf. I hope to continue printing in a darkroom after this class whether it is having one at my home or using a professional one. I hope you enjoy the images.

**Robert Kelly**—Hi, my name is Rjay! I'm a Nonbinary, aspiring sociologist Student at FRC. Trying to figure out my path and blossom into a life of my own. I'm a huge fantasy nerd and super spiritual so I see reality through a huge lens of colors and questions with no real answer. But a life lesson is usually learned through it all and hopefully, these writings show that perspective and we can learn these life lessons together.

**Alicia Manning**—I am 19 years old and this is my second semester at FRC and I'm attending college to be an interior designer. One day I hope to have my own design company also sell my art.

**Rilee McAdams**—My name is Rilee McAdams and I am an aspiring video game artist, with a passion for 3D modeling and digital art. I have been an avid artist for as long as I can remember, doodles and coloring books dominating the contents of my childhood. After I graduate from FRC with my Associates in Studio Art, I am going to transfer to Cal Poly Humboldt to pursue a degree in Environmental Science, so that one day I'll be able to combine my art skill with my knowledge of Earth and its many environments to create beautiful and believable virtual worlds.

**Kenneth McCann**— I, Kenneth McCann, am a current student at FRC majoring in English. I enjoy writing both serious works and humorous works as both feed the others creativity. I have all intent of continuing to major in English beyond FRC as well as continuing to hone my writing.

**Julia Nehl**— Julia is a visual artist, mainly specializing in digital photography and acrylic paint. Julia is passionate about ecology, and her goal is to represent the often overlooked aspects of nature, especially anything "creepy crawly."

**Dasha Petrov**—Dasha is an aspiring writer with a love for endless criticism.

**Judy Pulido**—I am Judy Pulido. I am from Bakersfield, California. This is my first year at Feather River College. I'm a part of the women's basketball team. I come from a Hispanic household where talking about your feelings is frowned upon. Therefore, I like writing as a way to truly express myself.

**Shadow (Pen Name)**-- My being a Texan was based on hard-working, strict Christian beliefs, in-the-mist of cattle, horses, dogs, coyotes, rattlesnakes with other fauna. I attended six colleges, worked: security at Sacramento Intl' Airport, have held three Federal jobs, and retired as CA State IT. Moreover, I became friends with wolves and applied at wolf centers.

**Sklyar Rose (Pen Name)**-- Skylar Rose is a student at FRC and will be graduating in Spring 2023. She is seeking her B.A. to become an English teacher and has always had a passion for reading and writing. "What a Twisted Life" and "Silence" are her first published works.

**Terise Seits**— Terise Seits is new to art and college. She started college at age 61 and has taken a variety of classes. She loves to learn and has appreciated the variety of learning opportunities offered at Feather River College.

**Sara Sotomayor**—My name is Sara Sotomayor. I come from the Sacramento area and I am here at FRC for the Bachelor's in Equine Studies and Ranch Management degree. I'm interested in working with horses and possibly also pursuing the Ecological Farming Certificate.

**Jacek Van Pelt**—I grew up in Quincy California. I graduated high school in 2019 and started taking classes at Feather River College that fall. I got accepted and started school at the Yamasa Institute in Japan in spring of 2020, came home when Covid started and have been in Quincy ever since.





## Submission Guidelines

Our submission period begins each year on December 1st and ends on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Please note: We do not accept email submissions. All submissions must be uploaded through our website: <https://www.frc.edu/english/cambium>

For general queries, please contact us at [NGrose@frc.edu](mailto:NGrose@frc.edu)

We welcome submissions of prose (essays, non-fiction, fiction), poetry, art (photography, sketches, drawings, paintings, or sculpture art).

All submissions must be de-identified and accompanied by contact information (name, address, telephone, email, and a brief (fewer than 50 words) biography; include the title(s) for each piece submitted.

We do not accept previously published work, but we will consider simultaneous submissions and expect to be notified immediately of acceptance elsewhere.

We will accept up to five poems, photos or artwork pieces or one work of prose (fiction or nonfiction) from each author or artist. Prose may not exceed 5,000 words.





# Feather River College

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***Cambium***

A Humanities Journal

Quincy, California

*Cambium* at Feather River College nourishes intellectual and creative communities on our campus while allowing students to apply what they've learned. The journal also serves as a bridge with local communities, creating connections between the campus community and regional writers, artists, and other community members. *Cambium* is an opportunity for aspiring and established artists and writers in the community to share their art and writing.

*Cambium* is the annual humanities journal published each spring by Feather River College (FRC) in Quincy, California. Students interested in creative writing and small press

publishing are encouraged to participate on the editorial board. Visit <https://www.frc.edu/english/cambium> for information and submission guidelines or contact the Editor-in-Chief at [NGrose@frc.edu](mailto:NGrose@frc.edu).

All rights revert to the author upon publication, and we expect *Cambium* to be acknowledged as the original publisher in any future chapbooks or books.

Our address is Editor-in-Chief, *Cambium*, Feather River College, English Department, 570 Golden Eagle Ave., Quincy, CA 95971

The views expressed in *Cambium* solely reflective of the authors' perspectives. Feather River College takes no responsibility for the creative expression contained herein.

Cover Art: Josh Olivera and Nikki Grose

**A special thanks to the Feather River Foundation for their support in this endeavor.**

<https://www.frc.edu/english/cambium>

## **Prose and Poetry Editors**

Nikki Grose

Chris Connell

Will Lombardi

## **Art Editor**

Josh Olivera

## **Student Editor**

Kenneth McCann

# Faculty Editor Bios

**Chris Connell**—Chris Connell is a professor of English at Feather River College. He has a long and deep interest in creative writing of all kinds and enjoys helping students develop their creative chops in the Creative Writing classes. He is supposedly writing a novel and a book about bees.

**Nikki Grose**—I have loved stories for as long as I can remember. When I was a child, I devoured books. As an adult, that love grew throughout my college years and eventually led me to the world of composition. Stories have a strong power to educate and unite us, provide opportunities to question and challenge ourselves, and are at the basis of everything we do. Sharing stories and encouraging writers and other artists who tell stories through visual means is an important part of the work I want to do—thus, *Cambium* was born.

**Will Lombardi**—Dr. Will Lombardi lives in, loves, and works to protect the wild landscapes of the Feather River Watershed and the communities that depend on them. He is dedicated to sharing and exploring local history, literature, and art.

**Josh Olivera**— Joshua Olivera is an artist and professor of art in Quincy, California. In addition to making art and teaching, Olivera has worked as a fly fishing and whitewater guide and enjoys backpacking and bike touring throughout the western United States. All of these activities inform his studio practice and provide a sense of responsibility, to help ensure that these places will endure.

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# From the Eyrie

*Eyrie* can be defined as a nest, specifically of a bird of prey, such as the Eagle, and is typically located high in the mountains. The Eyrie of the Cambium, then, is our roost.

Welcome to the first edition of *Cambium*. The word cambium refers to a tissue layer in plants that provides cells for the secondary growth of stems and roots. Secondary growth is vital—it occurs after the first season and results in increased thickness, which can offer vital protection for plants. In this way, *Cambium* offers us a metaphor for our own growth—the way we learn, grow, and strengthen ourselves through visual and written stories. Let *Cambium*, then, symbolize the work, dedication, and growth of our own students and community members in and around Feather River College.

I leave you with a cinquain that hopes that this edition of *Cambium* will promote healing as we begin to move back into the world after some uncertainty, change, innovation, and personal growth.

Divide  
frees nothing but  
makes us feel lonely and  
without each other can we heal?  
Converge

—Nikki Grose

# *My Cambium*

Bristol Beatley

Living and breathing  
Hardening and reeling  
This stiff bark on my skin I was not born with  
But rather grew into dead edges.  
I'd like to think of life inside me as wisps of green  
But more and more it's rusted into brown.  
The grown-ups never told me as I grew,  
that the green inside would slowly slip away.  
In order to make room for the restricting, protective layer.  
I'm reaching higher and higher like never before  
But at what cost does it come,  
To grow ancient and wise?  
Reaching towards many skies with parting branches.  
How much more of my innocence dies?  
But that's what it takes to get old and grow,  
I suppose.

# *Untitled*, Photograph

Julia Nehl



# *Soothing to my Grandmother and Me*

Shadow

While watching  
a mental health TV station...

I recalled  
sitting behind my grandmother  
on a church pew  
as she sat with other family  
sobbing.  
...as this was the service  
for her husband  
of over sixty-four years.

My mother was to my right.  
Yet none responded  
as (Hazel) my grandmother  
held back  
her sorrow.

By gently touching  
her left shoulder,  
I handed her Kleenex  
and she looked back  
...to become disappointed  
that her daughter  
who sat to my right,  
was not offering this,  
but her second granddaughter.

Still,  
at me... she looked,  
my hand... she enclosed  
with the released tissue,  
as she kissed it.

Before entering,  
I had asked  
Mother  
for the Kleenex box.  
I had wanted to take

this inside,  
but she had told me  
to "just take a few."

After sitting in the pew  
behind my grandmother  
and others,  
I gave Kleenex away-  
some to Mother  
some to Chad, my cousin,  
who sat with his wife and child  
to Mother's far side,  
which left me even less!

Later,  
after this part of church services,  
a prior Sunday school elderly woman teacher,  
came to me  
to acknowledge the love,  
I had shown.

This Sunday school teacher  
was almost unrecognizable,  
as I had not seen her  
in years,  
but slowly  
I recognized  
the shape of her face  
and her kind eyes.

Yet,  
she had taken this moment  
to acknowledge  
my caring  
and I gave her my thanks.

After  
the church's skillfully prepared luncheon,  
the family traveled  
back to our hometown  
for another service,  
but with a graveyard.

Folding chairs

were carefully placed  
and sitting nearby  
was an Oklahoman sister  
of my grandmother's.

Each other, we greeted.  
then came a surge  
of unhappiness  
from my Aunt Sammie,  
(my grandmother's Oklahoman sister).

I knew  
this wail  
so well-  
as I had heard this earlier,  
from my grandmother!

Early on,  
I had been taught  
to not show  
much emotion.  
So, I placed my hand carefully  
on top  
of Aunt Sammie's  
hand which was in her lap.

This brought  
more sobbing.  
Then I spoke  
that I knew  
it had not been that long  
since her husband's passing,  
(Uncle Leon).

She gazed  
at me amazed  
that I could sense  
her deep recent sadness,  
...encumbered with this passing  
of her sister's husband.  
Aunt Sammie continued her caring  
through this difficulty.

Finally,

I don't understand  
why we have to say farewell,  
even Christ could not bear- for his friend,  
as he raised him from the dead.

# *Still Life, Acrylic on Paper*

Julia Nehl





# Dear Me

Judy Pulido

Dear Me,

Listen, take a step back and pay attention. Do you hear it? No? Listen again.

“I’m okay. I’m fine. I should have spoken up. Why didn’t I do anything?  
WHAT’S WRONG WITH ME!” I know it’s not my fault”.

You hear it now right? They are words with no meaning. They are words that disguise your true emotions. Release. You hold the key, unlock and you will be set free. Free. You know you want that sweet release to simply let go of the fear you hold inside, to let go of that responsibility you place upon yourself, and to let go of that anger. You are angry release your fist, it’s okay. You are angry at yourself, for what! Understand you were young, you were innocent, you were vulnerable. Now embrace it. Yes embrace your anger, your embarrassment, your pain, and let it go. Stop bottling up how you feel and relax.

Let me break your walls down and let me heal you. Do you want to heal? I know you do. I know you crave to be freed from your self-inflicted torture. STOP! Please just stop torturing yourself. Please love yourself, remind yourself you’re strong, you’re worthy, you’re beautiful, and most importantly remind yourself you’re in control. Tell me are you ready? If you are take my hand and I’ll guide you. Believe in me and I will help you heal. I know you want to heal so please accept me.

Yes me, I am the forgiveness you have been searching for. Now that we are acquainted we can dive deeper into learning how to forgive ourselves. First, you must choose to forgive yourself, choose to open up to your pain, choose to understand your suffering and deal with your worries. Just say it “I forgive myself”. Now be honest with yourself did you mean it because from now on you can no longer speak the half-truths you make yourself believe in order to protect yourself from what truly scares you and that’s your own guilt. Your own guilt that someone took your voice away when they took your innocents. You blame yourself for burying your voice. You no longer have to feel guilty. You no longer have to lie to yourself and pretend “you’re okay” when in reality you’re drowning in your despair of lingering pain.

Breathe, I believe in you. Are you ready to believe in yourself? I know you are. You are tired of the darkness that fills your heart, you are tired of the insecurities you have developed, you are tired of the pain that clouds your thoughts and you are tired of replaying the options you had in your head. I love you and I am ready to take this journey of self-control with you. Now say those three words you continue to avoid. You’re ready. Dear me, I forgive you.

Love,

Judy Pulido

# *Conqueror of Snowflakes*

Michael Hammontree

The tree was a comfort,  
Buried in snow, watching snowflakes-  
They fall and bury each other,  
Forming a blanket for the earth.  
My heart is beating.

It is the dusk of day.  
I have water at my fingertips.  
Look around and see the silhouettes of pine trees.  
My breath, visible-  
My heart still beats.

Through twilight, the moon shines-  
I see him, the silhouette of a man,  
The snowflakes froze in the air.  
He reached out and pinched a single flake-  
My heartbeat is gone.

# *Yosemite Valley*, Photograph

Jack Joseph



# *Trials and Tribulations of a Small Town Outcast*

Nichelle Gordon

“Ha! Don’t worry Lindsey, you and I have a great start. When we go to Feather River College in the fall we will hit the ground running!” This was what I had said to my best friend as we walked down the red carpet at our high school graduation in 2015. Little did I know the phrase that has just left my lips would only be true for one of us.

Let me give you a little bit of backstory. When I was three years old my mom put me on the back of a horse for the first time. That was the moment I fell in love with the equine species and when my passion started to grow. Much like a seed sprouting out of the ground on a spring morning. In the third grade however, I started getting bullied because I looked different and all I could talk about was the horses my mom and sister had that I rode all the time until my parents got me my first pony. I was different. That made me very sad, but the horses helped me forget the sadness.

When I was seven, turning eight years old my mom and dad bought me my first pony. Her name was Shyann. We had a bit of a rough start because she had been mishandled and mistreated by her previous owner, so she and I had many firsts together. She taught me patience, I taught her trust. She taught me courage, I taught her respect. Together, we learned confidence. As often as possible I would be with her because Shyann never judged me because of how I looked. Shyann finally had a bond with a human unlike any other. She loved me for who I was. The same could never be said for my peers.

As the years progressed the bullying became more and more intense. With words of hate spreading like wildfire and phrases of “ Ew! She’s fat!” And “she is ugly. Why would anyone ever want to date her, let alone be friends with her? She really should just do the world a favor and go unalive herself because she doesn’t matter and never will.” I was only thirteen by this time. I hated myself. The bullying sparked what I would later find out was depression and anxiety. Though life was hard, Shyann and her filly Puff still loved me.

Now I know what you might be thinking, “what about her parents?” Do not worry. My mom and dad are amazing people and always try their best to give me whatever I need. They were my biggest support system. Depression is a strange thing though. I did have my parents, my older siblings, Heather and Joe, but that does not register with someone suffering from major depression. Things like that are easily overlooked. I knew I had them, but my depression switched it in my head to make it seem like I was always alone. That led me to being suicidal. I had bad days and good days. On bad days I would sit in my room and cry because I felt alone, unwanted and thought I was better off dead. No teenager should ever have to feel that way. I was not okay. That was until I would get to the barn, once I was with Shyann I was happy. I was safe. I was not being judged for what I looked or sounded like, all my horses cared about was the relationship we had created. They followed me around like dogs, and every time I got to

ride with them I wasn't just walking anymore. Their legs became my legs. I was free from my troubles. Nothing but me, my horses, and true happiness.

From ages twelve to fourteen, I immersed myself into the world of horses and natural horsemanship. I spent every day with them. Taking lessons with a family friend Katrina learning everything I could to be the best I could. It was the best distraction from the mess of life I called teenage years. Doing this I became the best I had been. I was ready for the show season coming later that summer.

December 11th, 2011 tragedy struck, the first time. I lost Puff to an antibiotic injection that attacked her immune system and caused her to go septic. The second tragedy happened on February 14th, 2012. Just three short months after losing puff I lost my best four legged friend. Shyann got sick, laid down, and wouldn't get back up so I had to make the decision to end her suffering. I was gutted in a way that bullying had never done to me, but being an outcast freshman in high school did not help the matter. I was ready to quit, but my parents and Katrina were not going to let me quit my passion. So I rode the lesson pony for two months until my parents could buy me a new horse.

May 19th, 2012 I was blessed with a new horse. Her name is Uno. My parents bought her from the annual Feather River College horse sale. She was three years old at the time, but she was a rockstar. The bond was instant and we started our training for the show season that was coming later that year. Fast forward to August, the county fair was in full swing and the biggest horse show of the year had started. Uno and I were the underdog newbies, and we won. Two championships, two divisions, 25 horses per class, and we came out on top. I was thrilled with my new partner! I would not have had so much success with her if Shyann had not prepared me for the next step. From that moment I was sure I wanted to breed, raise, train, and sell my own stock. I figured since my horses and support system had helped me so much this far, why not see just how far I can take it.

On June 15th, 2015 when graduation day had finally arrived, I was more than ready to leave behind the shit show I call my teenage years. Lindsey J. had been my only friend that year and she had been my show buddy since 2013. We had been such good friends because she found a passion for horses for the same reason I did, bullying.

Our senior year was filled with fantastic memories. We rode horses together almost every day when the sun was up. We had many Reno trips just the two of us just so we could get Outback Steakhouse for dinner. There were many late night sleepovers that consisted of us watching movies, playing video games in her basement, nerf gun wars with her two siblings, and laughing until we almost passed out at the stupidest things. I remember all the late Friday nights after the football games of eating pizza and drinking soda while we talked about how high school sucked and that college would be so much better and how we couldn't wait to get there. I even got to go to Kauai, Hawaii with her and her family for two weeks in April that year as our graduation present. The bond we had was so strong people would have thought we were siblings ourselves. If you recall, at the beginning of this story I was telling Lindsey not to be

nervous about training the two year old horses because between the two of us we had trained two or three successful horses a piece. However, my statement was only true for one of us... her.

I had started my summer like I always did, riding every other day and preparing for show season, but that year I had decided to try something new. I became the rodeo princess for the Indian Valley Riding and Roping Club. That was a huge boost of confidence for me not only in my horse career but also personally. Being the new princess meant that I had to compete in events known as play-days throughout the summer. I was excited to do new things. If I had only known how much my life would change in the coming months.

When I woke up on August 1st, 2015 I had a feeling that I should not compete in the play-day because I knew something bad would happen.

So I went to my mom and I said, "hey mom, I have a bad feeling about today and I already spoke with my advisor. She told me I did not have to compete if I didn't want to, but I should still show up and ride around." To which she replied, "Nichelle, you have to. I am not taking you all that way for you to not compete."

"But mom, I really don't have a good feeling about competing and I know something bad will happen if I do."

"I don't think so you are just psyching yourself out."

So I showed up anyway to compete. Next thing I knew my world was crashing down around me. My plans were dashed. I was on a horse I had in training with me. Her name was Brighty. It was the first event of the day and at the last barrel something scared her. She took off like a bat out of hell and forgot I was even aboard. Before I knew it I had to make a split second decision to either break my neck, or grab the fence and let go of the horse with my legs. So I decided to grab the fence. My leg folded in half like a taco and everyone watching heard the snap. It sounded similar to someone breaking a carrot but ten times louder in volume. I could not get up and I could not walk. Now, I have fallen off of many horses, but I was always able to get back up. Not this time. I felt like a failure, I was in a great deal of physical pain, but my self confidence I had battled so hard to gain was also depleted. Worst of all, I felt like I had let everyone who was supporting me down. That's when I saw the guys who were checking my leg and started answering their questions. I told them my knee was broken but they thought I should get up and try to walk anyway to make sure. So through my groans of pain and teary eyes I tried to put weight on my right leg, which made my leg fold again. Instead of calling for an ambulance they had the Rodeo Queen drive her car in to get me and take me to my moms truck where we proceeded back to the emergency room in Quincy.

After my emergency room visit I was sent to the local orthopaedic surgeon for further assessment. He sighed at the results of my MRI because he did not see a clear picture. So he signed me up to do physical therapy for six weeks to try and bring strength back into my leg so I could try and walk again, but the attempt was unsuccessful. He offered to do surgery anyway

even though he did not know exactly what was wrong so I sought out a second opinion from an orthopedic surgeon in Reno, NV.

At my first appointment, Dr. Uppal took one glance at my scan and said, “Well that’s why physical therapy hasn’t been working, your ACL was obliterated, your MCL was torn in half, and your meniscus also sustained damage. You will need surgery to fix your knee in order to have a good shot at training horses again.” Dr. Uppal was the leading knee and ankle surgeon in the Reno Orthopaedic Center. I trusted his opinion, but I was absolutely devastated. That just meant an even longer healing time that I didn’t want to deal with.

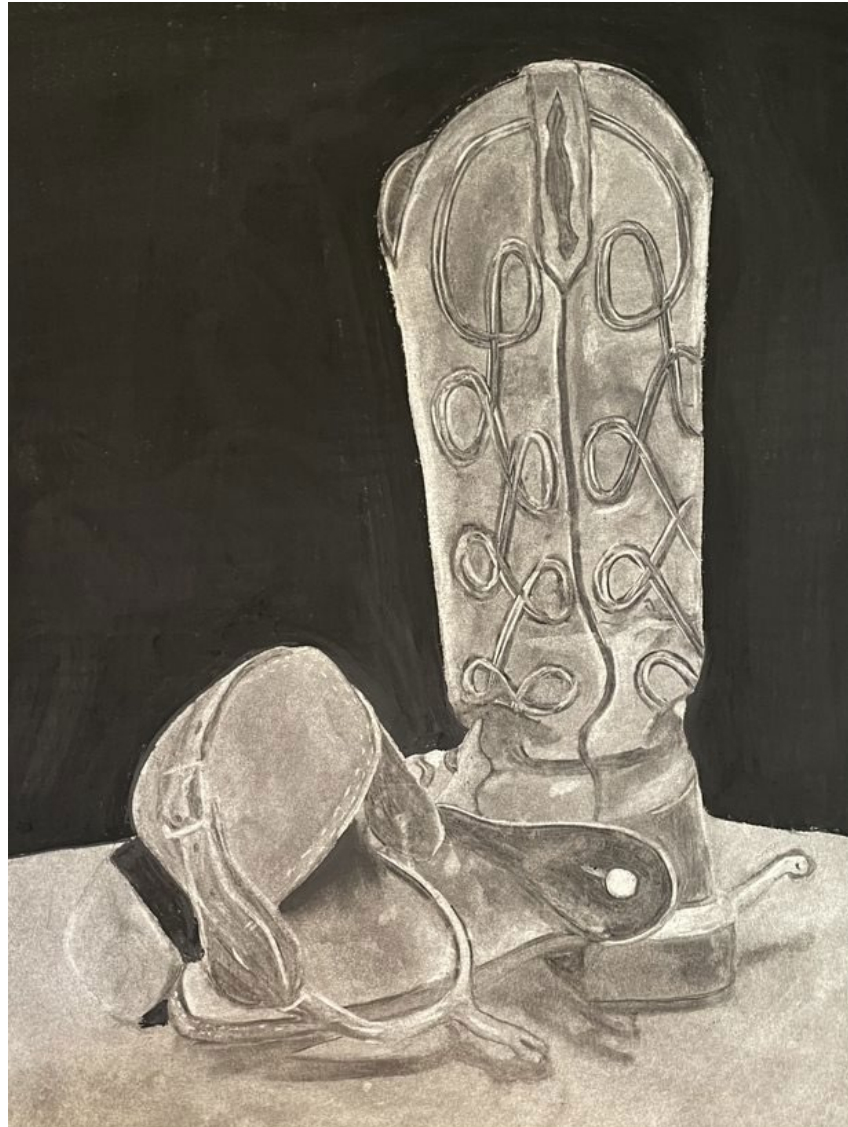
Hearing that news, I ultimately decided to put going to college on hold and focus on healing. Healing from the accident after surgery was not a walk in the park, but healing from the mental scar it left was harder than trying to climb Everest. Lindsey had to remind me constantly that I did not let her or anyone down and that Uno would be ready for me when I was ready to ride again. Even though she and others told me that it was not my fault, it was a freak accident, I can still ride and train horses, I have all the skills and knowledge, my fear stopped me dead in my tracks and I hated myself. I had become my worst critic. I hated not being able to ride due to the fear of breaking my leg again, so I decided to try teaching kids how to ride. I spent the next five years doing just that. I also expanded my knowledge on breeding and foaling horses and bred my mare Uno in 2018. She had a foal in 2019, a colt I named Jethro. His dad was the same horse that sired Shyanns 2009 fill I lost to sepsis. He was perfect, a true blessing because he helped bring motivation to be out with my horses everyday again. I thought I was still not mentally ready to try going to college at that point though.

The next year however, in 2020 I met my friend Aya (pronounced I-UH) she helped me get the courage I needed to go back to college because she was also struggling with wanting to finish school. We talked about going back to school a lot together for a year, so I re-enrolled in Feather River College in the fall of 2021. It was time to finish getting my AA in equine studies and reproduction with plans of getting my BA in equine science and reproduction. I was ready.

I do still get nervous from time to time when I’m about to get on my horse, but it gets easier with every good ride I have. That is why horses have had such an impact on me. Given everything I have been through, my passion for horses always helped me pick myself up by my bootstraps and keep pushing forward. Bad things happen. We can either run from them, or learn from them. I ran from my issues for a while, but no matter how much I ran I felt more and more depressed and guilty for not chasing my dreams because I know dreams don’t chase you back. So I stopped running and started learning. I challenge those who are in tough situations to not give up. I know it’s hard, but stop running and take the first step to a brighter future. I promise, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

# *Charcoal Study, Charcoal on Paper 2021*

Aubrianna Keeler





# *Blossom*

Robert Kelly

She who is the caretaker once told me  
A lily's beauty isn't what it becomes  
But the journey it takes to be what it is  
Its strength to keep going when all are against it

She who is the caretaker embrace the child when the child was lost  
Covered Them from the monsters who didn't understand  
The ones who were afraid of the unknown  
When the feeling was mutual

She who is the caretaker created her Valhalla  
A place where lilies Blossom  
Creating their journey through every frostbite  
Through every scorch, They bloomed

She who is the caretaker was a guardian to the child  
Nourishing them when she was weak  
Her undying belief that their story was beautiful  
Even with faint in her life, she catered to the child.

She who was the guardian left her legacy  
Continuing her essence in the lilies she made a promise  
Bloom and continue your story child  
Show them your story and love your blossom.

*Main Street of Greenville, Two Months  
Removed of the Dixie Fire, Photograph*

Jack Joseph



# *Silence*

Sky Rose

I just want to scream  
and scream  
and scream.  
Scream until this terrible ache in my heart will cease.  
Scream until I lose my thoughts.  
Scream until I have no air.  
But I can't scream.  
I can't.

My mind commands to scream,  
but my lips are sealed tight.  
My lungs aren't working,  
and I can't let this anguish out.  
It just sits and festers inside of me  
until it tears me apart once more  
and causes me to break,  
over and over.

They say time heals all wounds,  
that it'll get better as the days pass,  
but that's a lie.

The more time that goes on,  
the more you are reminded  
of how distant the time was  
when you were happy,  
when everything was better.  
With each second  
you become further removed  
from that once upon a time.  
You have nothing now  
except these pictures that hurt,  
that make you relive  
the day it happened.

Except now you still can't scream,  
and all you get are tears  
that do nothing to relieve the pain,  
nothing to ease the anger that you want to unleash  
upon every atom,

every electron and proton.

Instead we stay quiet,  
act like we are fine  
like everyone else wants us to be,  
and we sit  
in silence.

# *Untitled*, Photograph

Julia Nehl



# *Apples's Dangling Positions*

Shadow

Apples, created from trees,  
are some of our 'mainstays'.

They are often interjected  
into poetry  
and sayings.

Some apples have lost their hold  
and fallen to the ground,  
while others  
are dangling  
onto limbs.

Precariously,  
apples are seen  
swinging into the breeze,  
and swiftly lifted  
into their destinies!

Others  
are observed  
as departed  
and being carried down the nearby stream.

Awe,  
such are our lives!  
Sometimes,  
hanging by a single thread,  
with other moments  
bringing us to our knees...  
followed by sights onward-  
leading us to the skies!

# *Landscape Study*, Acrylic on Canvas, 2021

Rilee McAdams



# *An American in Japan: A New Perspective on Covid*

Jacek Van Pelt

In January of 2020, a new and potentially deadly virus was emerging in Wuhan Province, China. During this time, United States citizens were either blissfully unaware of Corona Virus's existence or thought that it would have absolutely no effect on their lives. During Corona Virus's initial onset, I was living in Japan and had a very different experience from that of most Americans.

The first time I heard the words "Corona Virus" was sometime in January in a post a friend of mine put on Facebook. This particular friend of mine is prone to posting about possible doomsday scenarios and I thought nothing of it. For weeks, the only news you could find on this new virus was from articles people wrote who had visited China. Getting facts from reputable sources was difficult. The sources made it seem as if the Corona Virus was the most dangerous disease since the bubonic plague.

This was the very beginning of the year, I wasn't worried about this new disease; Wuhan seemed a long way away. I had just started school and was settling into life in a foreign country. I was eighteen years old and this was my first time away from home. The language barrier was the greatest obstacle at the time, making seemingly mundane tasks difficult. Washing machines were particularly challenging. I bumped my head on the slightly too short doorway of the shed where the school kept the washing machines they provided for the students and stood there rubbing my head for a minute. There were three identical machines, each one was about three feet high and a foot and a half wide. You loaded them from the top. Like a lot of Japanese technology, there were a lot more buttons than I thought were necessary. These buttons had labels on them explaining what they did. However, they were in Japanese. I was looking up the characters on my online dictionary, when my concentration was interrupted by footsteps. A man walked through the doorway, he was a little shorter than I. He had brown eyes and dirty blonde hair. He was a proponent of the no-socks-and-slightly-too-short-pants style.

"Hey, do you know how to work these things?" I asked.

"Sort of," he replied. He chose his words very carefully as if searching for the perfect flavor of meaning, "Apparently they include a dry cycle."

"Does it work?" I asked.

"Haven't the foggiest, but it locks its lid until it is finished."



“Sounds like a pain in the ass.”

“Yes, it is quite irritating.”

“I’m Jacek, by the way.”

“My name is Julio, where are you from?”

“California, tiny little town called Quincy.”

“Ah, I like to say I’m from the city that invented the Macarena. I am from Seville.”

Julio and I eventually became friends. He showed me how to work the washing machines. I still had some confusion on the metric measurements for water volume but eventually learned that 36 liters of water worked for me. Meanwhile, Corona Virus cases began to seep out of China and into neighboring countries.

On January 27th, I woke up with a sore throat. I had taught English at an elementary school two days before and must have got something from one of the kids. I sat in my sleeping bag on my cot (the blankets were too short and my feet stuck out the end) and started Googling Corona Virus symptoms. Finding information was difficult because I didn’t consider any information released by the Chinese government to be reliable and anything I found from the United States turned out to be conspiracy theories about how the Russian government manufactured the virus in a lab and it is in fact a bioweapon, or how the virus was the result of amino acids that came to Earth in an asteroid. I eventually stumbled on an article by the Japan Times on what the symptoms were. Up to this point I had some vague, and incorrect, assumptions of what Corona Virus looked like. I had an idea that someone with Corona Virus would display Ebola-like symptoms and that it would be grotesquely obvious that they contracted the disease. Learning that the symptoms started the same as those of the common cold was chilling. Based on the incomplete knowledge that was available and the fact that the earliest variants were much more deadly than today’s, I deduced that if I wasn’t in the hospital with pneumonia within four days, I would probably be fine. I also learned that the scientific name for Corona Virus was Covid-19. I recovered within a week and believe that what I contracted was just a cold. I promptly bought hand sanitizer and face masks.

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, the cruise ship *The Diamond Princess* landed in a Japanese port carrying 3,711 people, 712 of them infected with Covid, making Japan the nation with the largest population of Covid patients outside of China.<sup>1</sup> At this time most if not all of Japan’s Covid Cases were Quarantined on *The Diamond Princess*, a boat my friends and I fondly dubbed “The Corona Virus Ship”, the rest of the population of Japan was largely unaffected by the virus. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, I learned that the *Diamond Princess* patients had been moved to a hospital in Okazaki, Aichi, the city I was living in, needless to say I avoided the part of town near the hospital where they were quarantined in case it got out. You could no longer find hand sanitizer or masks in the store, the trains were empty of commuters, and everyone wore a mask when out in public. This is about the time that Covid came to the United States. Near the end

of March, the United States government addressed its citizens residing in foreign countries telling us to return to the United States or be prepared to shelter in place. My visa was about to expire so I needed to return home anyway.

My flight was scheduled to leave on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March. Due to the flight being cancelled, I left on the 22<sup>nd</sup> instead on a different plane. At 7A.M., I locked up my apartment for the last time and slipped my key through the mail slot and set off towards the train station with my two suit cases and fiddle. At the ticket counter I bought two tickets, one for my train to Toyohashi and the other for the bullet train that would take me from Toyohashi to Shinagawa station in Tokyo. I thanked the man at the ticket counter and made my way to the platform to await my train that should have been arriving in ten minutes. Ten minutes later, I asked the guard if I was on the correct platform. Twenty minutes later, I was worried that my train wasn't coming. What would happen if I missed my flight and couldn't make it back to the United States because the borders were locked down? What would happen if I got stranded in Japan with an expired visa? Would I get arrested? Deported? I took a few deep breaths and reasoned with myself, "If I get arrested, I'll at least have a roof over my head and three square meals a day. If I get deported, then I'll at least wind up back in the United States."

One hour later, the train pulled into the station. It was late because of Covid, the commuters were either not commuting or they were finding alternate methods. The rail lines didn't want to run empty trains on the tracks and as a result, the trains that were usually very punctual ran late.

The rest of the journey went smoothly, I ate my breakfast sitting on the platform waiting for the bullet train. A few minutes later, the train was racing along the coast towards Tokyo. In Shinagawa, I boarded the Narita Express. I entered the rail car to find it completely empty. Trains in Tokyo are usually packed so tightly with people that you don't need to grab the overhead handles to keep balance because you are firmly wedged in with the crowd. I took a seat on the left side of the train by the window to watch the city go by. I got a glimpse of Sky Tree, one of the tallest towers in Japan.

The train got off right underneath the airport, I walked up the single flight of stairs to meet the expected hustle and bustle of an international airport. It was completely deserted except for a few employees. No crowd of people going in and out of shops. No seasoned world travelers in chairs sleeping through their layovers. No important looking businessmen, excited looking tourists, or bored looking flight attendants. It was a ghost town. Checking my luggage and getting through security took a grand total of fifteen minutes. The plane was mostly devoid of human life too, I had the whole row to myself. I kicked off my shoes, laid down across the four seats, and slept.

On arriving in the United States, I was in for a shock, official notices stated that I would be subjected to questioning and possibly even quarantine upon arriving in the airport. There was absolutely none of this. The man in immigration wasn't at all concerned that I had just returned from a Covid Infested country. He looked up at me suspiciously as he interrogated me

very thoroughly on how I had paid for my schooling and if I was bringing in more than five thousand dollars' worth of goods into the U.S..

Soon after my arrival, I learned that the American people were not taking this disease, recently classified as a pandemic, well at all. Instead of approaching the problem in a logical fashion, everyone seemed more interested in arguing about it. As cases in the U.S. surpassed those of even China, people were still arguing about whether or not masks work. Some were convinced that the whole thing was a lie concocted by the opposing political party, others panicked and started buying toilet paper. The confusion over masks was particularly strange to me. In Japan, people always wore one if they were sick and the transition to wearing one in public to keep from catching Covid was a natural transition. Not so for Americans, some believed (and still do) that wearing a small piece of cloth or paper was an appalling attack on their rights. Other Americans thought that they had to wear a mask literally all the time, I actually had an old lady confess to me how she would sometimes "break the rules" by removing her mask when she was home by herself. I had friends who felt the need to inform me that the world fell apart when I was away and that things would be very different now. Covid hadn't even reached Plumas County yet, my friends had no idea what was coming.

When I was in Japan, I got to experience how that country responded to Covid. As I came to find out, my experience was very different from that of most Americans. While I was dealing with the onset of a new disease, most Americans were either unaware of Covid's existence or thought it could never affect them.

1 [www.cnbc.com/2020/03/23/cdc-coronavirus-survived-in-princess-cruise-cabin-up-to-17-days-after-passengers-left.html](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/23/cdc-coronavirus-survived-in-princess-cruise-cabin-up-to-17-days-after-passengers-left.html)

# *At The "Odd Fellow's Cemetery"*

Bristol Beatley

What an odd place to get married.  
But this was your request and not once have I tarried

To heed and fulfill your heart's desires.  
But these ghastly stones are reminders

Of how death will do us part.  
How beautiful you are, a work of art.

I see now the appeasement of this place.  
It is after all, where odd fellows taste

The sweet embrace of humble earth.  
I'm sure no matter how odd, covered in mirth

They may be, never as odd as to believe  
A wedding should take place above, and relieved

To find that it is not, in fact, a wedding  
Just an odd fellow, with crumpled bedding.

Refusing to leave the other odd fellow

For I have told you countless times, my dear  
That death could never do us part.

# *Childhood Swing*, Mixed Media, Installation View, 2021

Rilee McAdams



# *Life by Misadventure: The Ailing Traveler*

Kenneth McCann

I have gone over seas, got lost in big cities, nearly died more than I care to count in one week, discovered new gods, pissed off old gods, found a place I belong, been on planes that I wasn't sure would have a safe landing, seen ancient cities repaved with modern aesthetics and flown back the way I came.

I have one last stop before I must head home. To my real home not the place I feel at home. No, that place is where I am now.

I returned here for a few reasons. The first was given my previous experience in Italy I could no longer continue west just to be disillusioned that these places have sold their history to the most frequent bidders. There was so much I wanted to see both ancient and new that I no longer felt that I was allowed to be near while I was in this frame of mind from my travels so far. My experiences in countries that have both embraced their past and preserved it in some way through their culture that leads up to a place that only preserves the necessary amount to put on a postcard and attract more tourists, has deterred me.

The second reason is what I call my weakness, hope. When I was here last, just over a week ago I had met someone who stood out beyond everything else I had seen to this point. She had been in the states long enough as a kid to understand how that mindset works, as well as having been in Japan long enough to have embraced the culture to a degree that a person wouldn't think of her as any different than anyone in this country. My hope brought me back here because I missed an opportunity that I previously should have taken. However, my hopes would be dashed as I returned here, I never saw her again.

Now that we know why I have returned to this place I should tell of where I am returning to and everything that has happened. I return to this northern city in Japan called Hakodate. Since I left Italy, I have spent nearly twenty hours in an airport in Istanbul, several more hours on a flight back to Japan, gone to a hostel in the middle of Tokyo at midnight, barely had more than an hour of sleep, got up went to a main station to get a rail pass, got on a high-speed train, spent another five hours on this train with a ticket that doesn't even get me a seat, and pulled into the station and transferred to a local line to get to this city.

There is a festival going on here for the next few days in the middle of town so much of the public transport is restricted. I am stationed for a night in a hostel on the other side of this city so I must find a way. Once I get past the festival, I find some public transportation to where I am staying, check in and try to sleep, but I can't. the problem with sharing a room with a bunch of people is if one person snores violently it becomes difficult to get any sleep at all. So, I lie down for the night just to listen to the snoring interrupting my focus of getting the rest I

desperately need. I have had a headache since I left Italy, and with little sleep as well as next to no liquid in my system, it won't leave me alone.

Since I have to move to a new hostel almost every day due to all the festivals that are happening in the next few weeks, and since they all have an early checkout requirement first thing in the morning as well as check ins often not happening until the afternoon. I am unable to sleep in to ease this throbbing in my skull. The next place I am staying is back where I was when I came here the first time. I should be able to get some rest here tonight. However, after getting my luggage across town back to this hostel I have no energy left and I sit in the lobby and wait for the next several hours trying to keep enough energy in me to check in go upstairs and lie down in my bed for the night. With my head repeatedly falling and snapping back I somehow survive long enough. I somehow make it to my bed and sleep, but not for long.

Three hours later, its late afternoon, the sun is setting and against my need for sleep and liquid to get rid of this pain behind my eyes, I awake. Something inside of me is possessed. I am sacrificing my wellbeing to go and see this festival, to understand what it is about, and my mind is winning against the ailment of my body. I make it to the edge of the festival as the last tints of orange hang against the horizon. The world is growing darker, but in my current state all I see are dazzling lights smeared beyond their bulbs and crowds of ghostly figures lining the sides of the streets. I can hear a chant timed to rhythm, as a procession marches by while group after group dances in their own interpretation of the original dance, all chanting the same song.

The more this festival proceeds to happen the more convinced I become that I am in a fever dream. These blinding lights, the chanting, the blurred vision, dancing down the street and looping back around. I feel like a ghost among the crowd, and I follow the procession to a plaza lined with festival stands all containing their own unique offers and games, all the foods are different from each other, all the games designed for everyone to participate.

At the center of this plaza is a platform, with royal looking judges, watching as the people in front of them carry a manned wooden transport, with one person on top blowing a whistle while jumping up and down, setting the rhythm of the people carrying the transport for them to bounce up and down. I have been pulled into something deeply spiritual and I wish only to observe and understand.

It is difficult to pull myself away from this festival as something tethers me to this, but it is not over for a few more days, and I desperately need rest to rid myself of this headache. I make my way back to my bed lay down, peer into the darkness of my consciousness as the chanting, well out of earshot, continues to repeat in my head until I hear nothing more.

# *Jacqueline*

Evi de Bois

Water finds her way  
From ebb and flow to quiet lakes  
She was calm tides  
Rippling and cheerful she sang her song  
Understanding and forgiving she ran along steadfast rocks  
As a stream that separates from the river  
And finds her way to the ocean once more  
I still carry her  
Yet she flows where I cannot yet go



# Mother

Dasha Petrov

Mother,

Mother! Am I enough? My wit, my body- how they've been conditioned to function, what they've been constrained to perform,

Mother! My heart- it breaks, all I see in myself when I look in the mirror is the criticism and ridicule

that has been cemented in my reflection from so many years of it ongoing.

I've lost the weight, but there's still too much.

Too much of

me.

Mother! I go to school learn- so that I'm not like Daisy's daughter- "A beautiful little fool"

Though at times, I wish I was.

My mind and heart are too big.

Both- with love and interest.

To give the same love I've learned of, in fairytales.

The kind that sweeps you off your feet.

The love that I so desperately yearn for.

No-

I'm too much.

Is that what they mean when they say: "You can't have your cake and eat it too"?

One slice, wouldn't hurt?

But I'm so hungry. I've been left in the dark for so long I crave light.

Left alone for so long I crave touch. Something sweet, with a dash of spice.

No whipped cream, I'm watching my figure.

Mother! The words you spilled about my waist- and my thighs and arms.

-God they sting.

Burn, like the top of a Crème brûlée. Gentle, handle carefully.

The spots of uneven sugar remind me how imperfect I am.

I get the curves but, hold off on the height, right?

Mother! Your Little comments resonate with me as though they were whispered to my ears by elves the night before.

Though it's been all one's life since you've said a damn thing. It still feels like yesterday.

Mother! I'm hungry- But I must keep the fridge on empty, unless I'm having guests.

The ones that come and go.

For love and warmth, I must constrain myself. Starve myself for what I crave-

the love and warmth you forgot to give me.

Mother, if I have a daughter I'll be so jealous of the love she'll receive.  
The little girl in me will kick, and cry, and scream.  
As I tuck her to bed and tell her how beautiful she is, the world is in her hand,  
she'll never second guess. She'll never compare- she'll never fear, she'll never starve.

Mother. She'll be enough!  
She'll never be told to shrink herself down for the pleasure of others.  
Mother- I must keep a distance from you.

To heal myself, to learn the love that I so desperately deserve for myself.  
To overcome the "beautiful little fool" For I will overcome!

Mother, my love will blossom.  
My love will grow, for you have taught me- from your stubborn careless ways.  
The sage takes from the fool. For that was once you, when you were young.

Mother, you've given me all from what was nothing.  
And finally it's my pattern that begins, as yours falls to a tapered end; with me- the trusting  
fool.  
Mother, I forgive you.

# *To Grandma's, corn-husking*

Shadow

Our family gathering  
demanded  
many varieties of foods-  
along with  
lots of sweetened ice tea  
with ice cubes-  
which caused sweating  
on the outside of the glasses.

Yet,  
for the preparing  
this time,  
my sister and I  
were given  
the job  
of shucking  
freshly picked corn  
inside our family's truck bed.

However, other cousins  
were at Grandma's home,  
but my sister and I  
were buried  
In corn husks!

Eventually,  
Grandma recognized  
our dilemma-  
she came to our aid!

She gleefully said  
that whenever we finished,  
she would reward  
us with money.

I remember  
Stepping  
Up my pace!  
I believed

I would receive  
One Dollar!

I vocalized  
by bragging  
What  
I would purchase!

At last,  
we were finished!  
Grandma came outside  
with that mischievous  
and proud look  
upon her face.  
From her large black purse,  
she pulled out  
and offered us each ten cents!

I was so offended,  
but no other family member  
had recognized  
our steady labor.

Above all,  
I honored  
Grandma  
and readily  
saw  
the Value  
she placed  
upon us!

I gave Grandma  
my thanks,  
but requested  
she please keep.

Internally-  
you see-  
she had given  
a more valuable  
gift-  
that of love!

which...  
did not  
need explanations  
for our differing  
values  
of tender!

# *Ink is my Epitaph*

Michael Hammontree

My creative mind is a trap;  
A trapped maze, full of wonder-  
And self-hatred. For having to ask questions.  
Such as, "What is the true meaning of life?"

Do I feel pain? Do I treasure climax?  
Do I even know who I am?  
What is my greatest fear?  
Allow me to leave my one Epitaph.

I loathe, I dread, I worry,  
I fear of experiencing death without  
Leaving such a worthy legacy.  
No child will ever embrace my greatness.

To become immortal through words:  
Writing the ink will seal the soul.  
People will remember me, treasure me.  
For my ink on paper is my own Epitaph.

As long as I tell my story,  
Through passages written in ink,  
Then I shall grow immortal.  
As every story is just a mere Epitaph.

There is only one of each soul;  
As they die, all we can do is remember:  
Remember their blood-soaked ink,  
Repeat their Epitaph. And watch their soul never die.

# From Wood to Water, Photograph

Debbie Corsino



# Mine

Kristen Alexander

*Iron head and sandbagged feet  
Fractured spirit drowning deep  
Diving bell mute as you lay in line  
What is yours and what is mine*

*Fair is fair and justice sublime  
As I remind myself to pick up only what is mine*

*Your brand of justice, oily black  
You left it writhing in the bones of my back  
It's turned my shoulder and curved my spine  
Because I carried your things as well as mine*

*You hammered me out, paper thin  
Overextended and folded me in  
Smaller and smaller until into your pocket I'd go  
Where if I cried out, nobody would know*

*You carried me like a trophy, but really everybody knew  
Even dying, I was carrying you  
Dead-eyed smiles and "Miss, how do you do?"  
The fake  
The farce  
The niceties behind the dark, dark  
Unsmiling eyes we all saw through*

*Yard sale life, wrecked menagerie  
It's written in the pages of your history  
Divided perfectly down the line  
The respect is yours and the blame is mine  
All the things that can't be counted or defined  
Doesn't matter, now is not the time*

*As I stare gazing at my shoes  
Wondering why people do the things they do  
And then carry on without a clue  
Oh, the things I cleaned up, endured, and fixed for you...  
I can't eat and you crossed a line  
But you are oblivious, and I am fine...*

*But your time is up, the moment's no more*



*Your shadow no longer darkens my kitchen door  
So go on, petty tyrant, just a be a dear  
And take your things before you exit here  
Though I'm not mad, I must resign  
For now, I pick up only what is mine*

# *Bridging the Gap*

Sara Sotomayor

There is an inherent fundamental divide between the species of Homo Sapien and Equus Caballus. The instincts of predator versus prey have laid the foundation for a long and complicated history between us. The past has reaped many mistakes in our approach to domesticating and building relationships with horses (Miller 3). Oddly enough, despite being juxtaposed in our natural roles, my research has brought to light that horses and humans actually have more in common than you may think. We share similar needs, chemistry, psychological responses to stimuli, as well as, equivalent behavioral patterns. Through these similarities I believe we can further close the divide between our species and fine tune our relationships with horses.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, humans have various levels of necessities that as a whole, keep us balanced. These include physiological needs, a desire for safety, love, belonging, esteem and self actualization (Hopper). Surprisingly, horses share numerous needs with us at multiple levels of the hierarchy. On a very basic level, we both require air, water, food, and shelter (Hopper). These are called physiological needs and it influences our behavior and susceptibility to illness if one or more of these items is lacking. We both also require security and health (Hopper). Risks to health and safety can activate the sympathetic nervous system in both humans and horses. The sympathetic nervous system is the fight or flight response that keeps us alive and out of danger. We share even more similarities with horses when it comes to connection. Horses, like us, thrive in social settings and prefer relationships and family rather than being alone. They are herd animals who form bonds with their group and likewise we build strong attachments with our community, family members and friends (Hopper). Lastly, we share traits like status and strength (Hopper). Horses and humans implement social hierarchies where certain participants gain status and have perks and responsibilities associated with that authority. Moreover, the stronger a horse is, the better quality of life they experience and tend to lead longer lives. As humans, our strength comes from our minds and our unique ability to adapt and think through situations. Identical to the horse, our strength has kept us thriving for thousands of years.

Internally, we share a multitude of chemicals that influence our bodies. Two of them in particular, dopamine and cortisol have a direct influence on our mental state, physiology and behavior. Horses, when exposed to the stress hormone cortisol, tend to be more tense and flighty, showing the whites of their eyes, tightening their muzzles, and flaring their nostrils (Peters 26). The long-term side effects of cortisol make horses susceptible to certain diseases, and parasites. This may include a weakened immune system, virus, bacterial infection, weight loss, gastric ulcers, skin infection, colic, and vulnerability to parasites such as Ascarids, Pinworms, Bots, Tapeworms and others. Similarly, humans have tense reactions and an increase in alertness when exposed to cortisol. However, long term exposure leads to lethargy, fatigue, susceptibility to diseases including heart disease, autoimmune disorder and inflammation (Maez).

Dopamine is cortisol's opposite and offers horses a chance to de-escalate and access the parasympathetic nervous system. They get a highly reinforcing, positive release that leads to lip licking, a loosening of their jaw and learning opportunities in the long run (Peters 27). Likewise, humans also experience a sense of euphoria and increased bursts of energy which can lead to addiction and impulsive behaviors on a long-term basis as it is also highly reinforcing (Maez). Even though our brains are set up differently, I found that both chemicals have the potential to significantly impact multiple parts of the body and affect quality of life for both species.

The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are measured on a scale where the parasympathetic emotions and behaviors are akin to a relaxed or neutral state in both humans and horses. This typically looks like a calm, curious, mindful and grounded state (Missimer). Whereas, the sympathetic state gets triggered via external or internal perception of danger or stress. There is a notable increase in panic, fear, desire to flee, and anxiety (Missimer). Another survival instinct we share is to fight. Fight triggers anger, fear, irritation, frustration in both species however, in horses it will also manifest as kicking, bucking and rearing (Missimer, Peters17-24). Psychologically we are similar in the way that we climb, descend and engage in the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

Furthermore, when dealing with chronic stress horses begin to develop “stereotyped behaviors” such as cribbing, weaving, wind-sucking, box-walking (Peters 81). In humans we can see withdrawn behavior, substance abuse, anger and irritation (Maez). At their worst, horses exhibit signs of learned helplessness. The indicators for learned helplessness include withdrawn behavior, disengagement and show little reaction. They are described as lifeless, passive, quiet and have sunken eyes. Their physiological functioning and cortisol levels are unhealthy. One possible reason they do this is so that they do not appear weak and get singled out by predators in the wild (Peters 67). As it happens, “humans display the exact same condition as horses” (Maez). However, in humans, it is called “severe acute” and “emotional trauma” (Maez). Behaviorally, it is uncanny how both species respond to stress. I believe it is one of the strongest connections we have to horses.

In conclusion, horses mirror humans in a variety of ways. I believe our similarities are incredibly significant and can change the way we relate with horses. Looking forward, I hope more people can connect our similarities and bridge the gap between our species by looking inside themselves.

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# *People Die Twice*

Michael Hammontree

Memories are cracked paintings;  
They wither through time and  
Fade away. We can always see  
The age of a painting. But what,

But what of memories? Will we  
Notice the age of the images  
Within our minds? Mostly not  
But we must remember, for truth.

We must remember for those,  
Who had fallen, through death  
Or spirit. So that we may be  
Better. Treasure memories, observe life.

Look at the ancient forest,  
Detail every tree, any bird, all animals.  
They all wither, just to be replaced,  
So that the new will honor legacy.

Remember, please,  
Remember this truth in life;  
People die twice. Through life,  
Through memory. So please remember,

So that they may live within your spirit.

# *Charcoal Study, Charcoal on Paper, 2021*

Alicia Manning



# *Experience*

Brytol Beatley

Once closed, now clenched.  
Now open, now etched  
To this sinner's edge of skin.  
So much to feel in wispy notes  
Unnoticed, I hear a young girl  
Play with icy foams of sea  
And silky, lilting, ember winds  
Rustles and whispers of sweet little kin.  
As ivory pounds, careens, cascades colors  
My bloodied feet moved by beautiful terrors  
As music floods my soul like no other  
Running farther and farther through mirrors  
Heart flounderin among cold-lit stars  
Not stranded behind walls of gray  
Or stooped low upon stools in a bar  
But falling safely among my breathe  
Is the parched sunlight, slanted and fading  
As I walk, awake, among sleepless trees.

# Corn Fish, Charcoal on Paper, 2021

Alicia Manning





# *Evanescent Garden*

TyAnna Farmer

I am a garden.

Inside I carry the essence of life, I am a vessel of creation.

I choose how to purpose my garden: to express, experience and love.

My garden serves no one.

I am full of flowers, fertilized, watered and grounded.

Seeming bountiful to those hunting for something to satisfy a hunger.

But my garden is only a temporary path used for instant relief.

They come to find themselves by walking through me,

I'm picked and I'm plucked,

temporarily abused to amuse someone who finds comfort in destroying beautiful things.

But, why is it when my garden starts to die I am no longer useful?

I am to blame.

As if my garden somehow became too beautiful, and now I have to hold that shame.

But when will we learn when flowers are consistently damaged

look at the environment surrounding the garden?

check the soil,

measure the water

and monitor the light.

never should we blame the flowers for the circumstances they've endured, for they chose

survival.

And as for me I have always been a survivor.

# *Self Portrait*, Acrylic on Canvas, 2021

Rilee McAdams



# *What a Twisted Life*

Sky Rose

1

She hummed her way along as her arms grew sore from mixing the cookie dough. As always, she carefully measured the dry ingredients into a separate bowl and was now gradually mixing them into the wet ingredients. As always, she washed her hands after finishing every step. As always, she made sure all the balls of dough were the same size on the sheet. She slid the last tray in the oven and closed the door.

The blanket was already bundled up from where she had been reading, and it was calling to her, so she listened. She sat down with a sigh and picked up her book.

As she began to read, she looked out the window and realized something puzzling. There were some stains on the glass as if someone threw paint onto it, but that didn't make sense. She had just cleaned it last night. She always cleaned it. Every. Single. Night.

The couch was ignored as she rushed to her sink to get the cleaning spray. Of course, everything was meticulously organized and labeled, so she was able to find the bottle in record time. The next step was to grab a rag. Wait, no - check the timer. Three minutes left. Will that be enough time? Yes, it will - not to worry. She can get it cleaned in no more than two minutes. With her feet stomping, she rushed outside and began to spray the mark. She could smell something metallic. Sure, it was faint, but it was *there*. She could smell it, and it was not in her imagination. No, it was real.

Her arms locked in place, refusing to move. The breeze danced across her skin, pushing dark strands into her vision. The timer went off then, but she wouldn't hear it. No, her ears were hurting, so she turned the timer down. What a shame.

Trying to ignore the same sharp scent, she scrubbed and scrubbed, swearing that it wasn't coming off when in fact it was all wiped away five minutes ago.

After sufficient scrubbing, she nodded in approval of her work and went back inside. The only problem was that she could now smell something so horrid that it tainted her tongue. Smoke was spilling from the oven, and she realized that the scent was of something once so sweet that was now destroyed. Isn't that how so many things work? Everyone starts out innocent in this world only to be damaged by others and society as we grow. What a disappointing predicament.

Now is not the time for philosophical thinking though. As she opens the door, she is blasted in the face and has to wave through the smoke to get to the coal cookies. She throws the tray against the wall, creating a hole in the pleasant pink, and collapses to the floor. Her hands cover her eyes as she begins to sob.

2

All she sees is the curly brown hair, and she imagines it turning a nice russet. Her hand grips the knife tighter, and her steps stay light as she creeps behind him. Stopping in the middle of the woods is a stupid idea. Who cares if you're tired from running? It's stupid. Plain stupid. Haven't you heard of the stabbings around here?

Her mouth splits into a grin as she gets close enough to strike. Her once small pupils have now widened, blocking out all the blue, as pure excitement courses through her veins.

Without another thought, she brings her arm around his neck and digs the knife deep into his throat. Warmth flows over her hand, and she can't help but chuckle at the sound of his gurgling. It's quite poetic when you stop to think about it. Our hearts produce blood for us constantly so we can live, but we can also drown in it, creating such a sweet way to die.

At least, that's what she thinks. After pulling the knife out, she licks her wrist, and her eyes close with delight. She sees fear within his eyes before they go blank and his body stills.

Now it was time to escape. She got some blood on her shoes which is a shame since she just bought them. Oh well, she can always get a new pair. She disappears further into the woods, off the path, until she gets to a stream. Her skin prickled just thinking of how cold the water is, but it's what she has to do.

Her steps turn light again as she creeps into the coldness. The bloody shoes fill quickly, and she grimaces at the mushy feeling underfoot. She realizes that creeping in is not the best way to do this, so she backs up onto dry land and leaps into the creek.

All of her skin is blasted with the glacial liquid. As she resurfaces, she brushes the water out of her eyes and looks around. It is dark now, the sun almost fully set, but she can make out some of the surrounding nature. Oaks, pines, you know, common trees. Grass. Weeds. Nothing beautiful. The only true beauty is seeing life leave a body.

She has a pretty good secret that allows her to relish the feel of blood against her skin and to simply dump the knives. Years ago, when she started this, she burned her fingerprints off. Quite a great asset. Every year she burns them again to be safe. If she ever becomes a suspect, she'll burn them very thoroughly, just in case.

Sitting in the water started to become quite relaxing, but she knew she had to get a move on and get out of the area. Not many people went on that trail, but who knows, maybe some weirdo decided to go for a jog in the pitch black.

She swam back onto land, her clothes now heavy and dripping. Dirt clung to her shoes as she made her way back to where she entered her safe place.

After walking for some time, she made her way home and saw she had left the lights on. She didn't mind that much as her neighbors, if she were a suspect, would say, "No, officer, it's not possible. She was home. I saw all of her lights on, so she couldn't have been off murdering someone."

As she went inside, she trailed water all over the floor. But, of course, she didn't care. It was just water, and it would dry. No need to fuss over something that will just disappear on its own. After slipping into her pajamas, she got in bed and took some melatonin to help her sleep. This evening had been much too exciting for her to simply shut her eyes and want to move on to the next day.

Today was a Wednesday, and that was never good. No, not good at all. Everyone gets so excited because you're halfway to the weekend, but the middle point is unpredictable. Something could go wrong, and then you're left with the rest of your week ruined and a terrible

weekend. This had happened to her on several occasions. So, she always erred on the side of caution. Better to be safe than sorry.

She always baked cookies for her friends on Tuesdays and would go visit them after that, but then she had no cookies, so she had to stay home. The thought of going to see her friends came into her mind for a split second before she told herself no. One of her rules was to never leave the house on Wednesdays, unless there is a special circumstance. If she stays home, the likelihood of something bad happening lowers by quite an exponential amount.

Besides that, her friends were acting odd towards her. They would make plans and then cancel them. Of course, she was just jumping to conclusions. Her friends were probably just really busy with their own lives.

On Wednesdays, she usually read a nice book, wrote some poetry, or played a video game. Not the violent ones though, she couldn't stand those. All the blood and gore was too much for her.

She stood there, not moving, as she contemplated over and over what she should do today. There was the book she was reading, but the plot wasn't that interesting. Poetry was nice, but she wasn't in the mood for writing. That leaves video games, but which one to play? There was the farming one, the newest Pokémon game, and then there was the one where you control the people. Gosh, there were just too many to choose from.

Her mind reeled with indecision, but she decided to play the farming game. When she goes to walk to her living room where her PC is located, she stops when she sees the tray and the burnt cookies still lying on the floor. She thinks of how flustered she became afterwards that she didn't even bother to clean up the mess. That wasn't like her at all. No, she always cleaned everything. She really needed to get a hold of herself and start thinking clearly.

As she bends down to pick up the mess, she reels back when the charred scent reaches her nose. Her eyes close as tears spring to life. Memories flood her head, and she falls to her knees. That night comes to mind. The night that changed her whole life. No, she didn't want to think about it. But, how could she not? Thoughts of smoke fill her as she looks down at her scarred arms. She tells herself to not look, to think about anything else, but she can't. She is unable to look away from the proof of that night.

A fire had burned down her home. That was all that happened. Yes, of course, that was all that happened - nothing more. She had escaped her home, and she was safe now. Her home was gone, but that was all. That was all. *That was all.*

Her reassurances allow her to breathe more easily, for her tears to stop, for her to stand up and lean against the counter.

The tray still remains on the floor, but she doesn't know if she can handle going near the smell again. No, she needs to wait until she has a clear head. Wait until she can smell it without bursting into tears.

Of course, she comes up with a solution to the problem. Her feet carry her over to the drawer with her clips and clothespins, and she takes one out to shut up her nose. She gives a few sniffs just to make sure she can't smell a thing, and she nods with satisfaction when she can't.

Although, now she has to breathe through her mouth which she doesn't like very much, but oh well. This will only take her a few seconds.

Once stacking the burnt cookies onto the tray, she throws open her door, creaks across the wooden deck, and chucks it out into the yard. Now she can take off the clothespin, so she does. She takes in a deep breath of the fresh, crisp air that is a large improvement.

Her eyes catch on a tree after hearing a unique bird call. A smile plays on her lips as she recognizes the beautiful black, white, and blue bird. Its long tail dangles down far past the branch it rests on, and the sunshine helps the cobalt shimmer amongst the darkness. The white of its belly is stark and brighter than the moon. Of course, it's a magpie.

As she watches the bird, her mind registers that this is a special occasion, no, *the* special occasion. This means she can go somewhere even though it's a Wednesday.

Alright. She's going out today. The question is whether she should go for a walk or a drive. Eventually, she decides a drive would be nice.

A smile was now broadly across her face, and she rushed to grab her keys. Once walking outside, she unlocks her well-polished car and starts the ignition.

A little ways into her drive, she starts admiring the trees and the nature around her. However, this doesn't last long. As she goes around the next bend, she hits her brake pedal as she sees a car smashed into the mountainside. Smoke is billowing in the air, and there are car parts scattered on the asphalt along with broken glass.

She puts her car in park, turns her hazards on, and rushes out. There is a man and a woman in the front seats, and they are both covered in blood. Her head starts rushing as images of that night come back to her. She shuts her eyes. She tries to remain calm, but she can't. She just can't. Blackness clouds her vision as she falls to the ground.

#### 4

Her head pounded as she awoke, confused as to how she wasn't in her bed. Maybe she had passed out after her last kill and had dreamt coming back home. As she lifts herself off the ground, she is greeted with a car that has been in an accident. There are two people in the car, covered in blood. She grins at the delightful scene, and she walks over to see if they're alive. The windows are broken, so she easily places two fingers against the driver's neck and finds that he is indeed dead. Nodding, she walks around to the other side and does the same thing. However, the woman is breathing. It's very faint, but she, unlike the driver, is not dead. This is the perfect time for her to kill, but she wonders how. Looking around at the mess on the ground, she sees a shard of glass and knows it will be perfect. It will seem like a piece of glass from the windshield flew through into her neck.

She holds the glass firm in her hand until blood trickles from her fingertips. The shard slices into the woman's neck, and she pulls it back out without thinking.

She licks a drip of blood that landed on her lip and grins. Two people dead, one at her hands, and there will never be any suspicion placed upon her. When she starts to walk away, there is a man watching that yells at her to stop and starts running towards her. Her eyes widen, and she curses herself for being so stupid to not look for witnesses before doing that.

Looking down at her hand, she sees the glass and fights against herself to not smile. Once the man gets close enough, she knows she has to do and that she needs to say something.

“Wait! She’s still alive. I was using the glass to cut her seatbelt off.”

His feet stop with a crunch on some car part that is now halfway to dust. “Ah, sorry, it looked like something else. I saw her blood spray on you.” He has a gruff voice that gets on her nerves.

Trying to feign shock, she gasps. “No, why on earth would I do that? She coughed, and a lot of blood came out.” All she needs to do is just play it cool and act like he’s the crazy one.

They stood there for some time before she finally said, “Shouldn’t you call 911 or something?”

“Oh, yeah, you’re right. I just figured you had called already. Let me go get my phone.”

As soon as his back was turned, she rushed forward and drove the shard right into the side of his neck. He shouted in pain as his hands flew to the piece of glass. Once his hands found it, he tried to pull it out but fell before getting a grip. She turned him over and saw that he was still alive. His sandy brown coat was now turning the same color as yesterday’s victim as the red soaked in.

Trying to hurry, she cut her hand again as she grabbed the shard and pulled it out. The blood poured out much faster while she pushed his coat aside to reveal the thinner shirt underneath. She drove the glass into his chest. Again, she pulled it back out and took it with her. Throughout it all, she doesn’t make a sound. She just watches what she does in careful precision.

Now, it is time to run.

5

Once deep in the woods, she feels sure that she’s safe and far away from the accident, from her murders. Her side aches from running, and her lungs burn from lack of use. She wishes now that she would run in her spare time.

Once her breathing returns to almost normal, she sits on a stump. The dampness soaks into her red speckled jeans. She looks down at her clothes and sees her white sweater is clearly proclaiming *MURDER* to anyone who sees. Wait, a white sweater? Why on earth would she wear *white*? Come to think of it, how did she even get to that car accident? Was she somehow in the accident and forgot?

Her brows furrow, and she presses her thumb down on her bottom lip as she tries to answer all of the questions running through her mind. Thinking back, all she can remember is going to bed and then waking up, staring at the sky. There must be an explanation as to how there is such a large gap in her memory.

When she thinks about it, there have been other times where she blacks out and can’t remember periods of time. Could she...? No, it was not possible. But, could it be?

Unexpectedly, tears spring to life, and she bites down on her thumb. Her vision clouds as her thoughts clash. One of her closest friends had told her long ago that she was worried about her, and sometimes she acted differently. She said she acted like a completely different person, and it was worrying her.

That night, she looked up on her computer what it means to act like a different person. Let’s just say that she didn’t like the results, and that computer is now somewhere in a landfill. There was no way she was going to believe any of that stuff. She was who she was, right? She

would know if she lived two different lives, right? After all, there was no trauma in her life, nothing bad. Actually, she had a pretty nice childhood. So, there must be another explanation for all of this. But, what?

Both of her hands went to the sides of her head, her eyes closed, and she screamed. She screamed and screamed, and no one heard except the crows hidden in the shadows. The sound echoed off of the trees and shot back at her. It sounded as if there were two of her. Her screams, and the real her trapped inside, crying out for help all at once.

6

When she woke up, she was now in a foggy and shaded forest. Her eyes widened as her heart sped up. Where was she? What happened? She realized with a thud that there was a car accident, and she had passed out. Right, all the smoke.

She places her hand down on the stump to sit up, and she winces in pain. Her eyes fall down to her hand. Slowly, she turns it over and gasps when she sees two large gashes in her palm. Blood is partially dried, but she can tell that she just reopened the wounds.

Nausea courses up from her stomach into her throat. Before she can help it, she vomits onto the ground of pine needles. When she looks down, she sees even more blood. Her pants, her shoes, her sweater, her arms, her hands, they all have blood on them. More vomit elicits from her, and her eyes water from the pressure and pain, but also fear.

Did someone attack her? She couldn't feel any other injuries except her hand, but she was sore all over. Her eyes scanned the expansive forest, and her breathing quickened. What. Had. Happened? There was no answer, and it terrified her.

She didn't even know where her car was or how to get home. When she uses her other hand to check for her phone, she finds nothing. Her heart palpitates as she wills herself not to panic, but she can't.

Her eyes remain looking up at the sky. If she looks back down at herself, she'll see blood and puke. Sitting in this forest all alone provides great time for some reflection and thinking. That night comes to mind. She wills herself to not freak out and to just remember what happened. Not all of the puzzle pieces come together to form a perfect picture, but she is able to see enough even with the gaps.

Her father had gotten mad again, and she tried to help her mom. It didn't work, and he just got more upset. Angry screams mingled with frightful ones, and she remembers rope scratching against her skin. The sound of liquid. A pungent smell of gasoline with alcohol, most likely whiskey or vodka - maybe even both. The flick of a match. Her father's fist found her cheek as it normally did.

Then, the smoke. The flames. The screams of pain. The searing of burns. The smell of flesh. The rope had burned off when the flames licked up her arms and feet, and she was able to get away. Her mom was already dead. Thankfully, the image of her mother is one of the missing puzzle pieces.

She ran and ran, until she collapsed. Next thing she knew, she was in a hospital, then with her grandmother. To this day, she has no clue where her father is, but she doesn't want to know.



Her eyelids slowly close. Tears start to form, and her heart aches along with everything else. She wants to scream, but her throat feels too sore as if she already has.

Exhaustion creeps in, and she feels so tired of everything, of what her life has become. She has tried so hard to make her life better, so she is careful with everything. She does things a certain way and sticks to a routine. She has tried to keep up relationships, but people push her away, and she doesn't understand why. She is in so much pain, but no one notices, and no one cares. She has no one and nothing. She is alone.

7

When her eyes open again, she feels so much more pain. Not physical, but mental and emotional. She wants to scream again, but she can't summon the energy. Did she just black out again? Part of her can feel like she is sharing a body right now. All of her feelings seem to be from her but someone else entirely separate as well. She can't explain it, but she can *feel* that there is another person right alongside her at this moment.

This is quite a perplexing thought, and she doesn't feel afraid. No, she actually feels a little upset. Who else is taking over her body, and why? Another interesting thought: is she the real person, or the other one? Whatever the answer is, all she knows is that the other one is struggling too.

Deep down, she knows whoever the other person is isn't like her. This stops her and causes her face to fall flat. She feels like she is being infiltrated in a way.

Trying to confirm her theory, she tries to see if anything has changed, and indeed there are differences. Her hand's cuts are open again. There is vomit on the ground, which proves that the other one is weak. So, this proves it, but what should she do with this information? Well, she doesn't know.

Maybe she could leave a sign for the other one. Although, she might not be as smart as her, so it'd have to be pretty obvious. Looking down at the piece of glass lying by her hand, she comes up with a plan. She just hopes she can will herself to fall asleep.

8

There is a sharp pain that causes her to wake. A piece of glass is sticking out of her leg, and she screams. Where did that come from? Her head whips around as she looks for whoever has done this to her. She can't find anyone.

The forest is quiet, and the only sound is her heavy breathing. Is it possible that she stabbed herself in her *own leg*? But, if that was the answer, then where did the shard come from?

Thinking back, she remembers seeing glass at the accident. Maybe she was being attacked or chased, picked up a piece of glass, and then ran to the forest for cover. Yes, that was the most logical conclusion. After all, she has blocked out traumatic experiences before.

Okay, so, she had an answer as to where the glass came from. She still had to answer *why* she stabbed herself, but she doesn't have an answer. The blood makes her feel faint, and darkness greets her again.

9

Eagerness causes her eyes to slam open. When she glances around for an answer back, she just sees the shard still in her leg. Well, that's not very helpful. She supposes that she must be a bit more direct with the other one. After all, it makes sense that you wouldn't think you have a completely different personality just because you stab yourself. Time to be a bit more clever with her.

10

A decent amount of time passes before she awakes again. She looks to see how her leg is doing and realizes the glass is gone. It feels as if her heart has come to a complete stop. Where did it go? However, she doesn't wonder this for long before she glances a few inches away and sees writing on the stump. Scrawled messily are the words *I killed*.

With a shock, she realizes that her own hand is on the glass, resting at the end of the horrific words. These words confirm what she has suspected before. Of course, she didn't want to believe it or even acknowledge it, but here is the conclusive answer.

At first, she used to think someone was stalking her and staying in her house in secret. She would find things a bit unorganized when she left, and there would be smudges on her window, which is why she cleaned it every night.

Then, her friends drifted away and always seemed a bit on edge around her as if a shinigami followed right behind her. There were even a couple times when blood would be under her fingernails with no explanation. Sometimes, there were unexplainable gaps in time.

She didn't like to look up symptoms or what she was going through, because it made her anxiety terrible, but she had to know. So, she searched if she could have a secret personality, and found that she could. In fact, her experiencing trauma makes it easier for her to develop another self out of her own security.

These two words here are a confirmation to her darkest worry: she had another personality that was a murderer. It always seemed like an outlandish theory, but now it was face to face with her, and she couldn't look away. She started to cry again, and she knew she needed to be brave now. She knew what she had to do. But, first, she wanted, no, *needed*, an answer back before it was all over. So, she lifted her hand and wrote the message through the pain of the glass pressing against her palm.

11

She wakes up feeling excited. The other one must've sent a message back. Once looking down, her jaw drops at the response back. She notices how different the writing looks even though the same hand wrote it. The letters are clear and can't be mistaken. They read, *Die*.

*Die?* Really? The other one sounded a bit immature, honestly. Fine, she would play along with the little game. After all, it was fun talking to her other side.

12

The tears have dried up now, but she still feels like crying when she awakes again. She stops breathing when she sees the response back. *No* :). Wow, the evil personality must think she is so funny. Fury fills her, and she knows she has to end this.

As much as she has tried to improve her life and to be a better person, it has all been for nothing. Her own mind betrayed her when it was the only thing she could depend on. There was no way she could let the other personality continue to live and to hurt others. She couldn't be half of her father. Of course, she would never be him, but still.

The glass lays flat on the stump, and she gently picks it up. There have been so many regrets in her life, but she doesn't feel like what she is about to do is something she would regret. After all, it was against her own choice for this to happen. She just wanted a better life and to be happy. However, she's never truly been happy ever since that night. The feeling of joy was an impermanent thing that wanted to stick, but her other side tore it off and ripped it to pieces. Her eyes close as a tear slips down her cheek. Thinking over her life, she knows that this is the best way to end it, by *her* own hands. She inhales.

"I love you, Mom. I'll see you soon."

Her hand raises to her chest, and she exhales.

"What a twisted life," she says as the glass becomes one with her heart.

# *Outside, life is forming*

## Shadow

Leaves are forming  
on the twigs  
from the trimmed pecan tree.

A red-headed  
woodpecker  
(like  
used to be seen  
at the Honey Mesquite tree  
by the hand water pump  
toward the water well),  
outside  
the kitchen window.

A dove  
had tried  
in the wind  
to build a nest...

Now, below  
this newly shaped tree,  
on the cleared ground-  
resides  
the cottontail  
munching  
on some grass.

While nearby,  
the wind  
is gently blowing  
its audience  
of buttercups  
downward  
as they bounce back up!

# Be Kind, Pencil Drawing

Terise Seits



# Contributors

**Kristen Alexander**—Kristen is a former physics and mathematics instructor at FRC. She graduated from the University of Sydney with a double B.Sc. in Physics and Mathematics and received her Ph.D. in Physics from the University of North Carolina. Originally from rural Georgia, she has lived in Australia, Russia, and China before returning to the U.S. permanently. She is baking with real butter, looking under rocks for insects, and speaking sub-fluent Russian with her partner Mitya.

**Brystol Beatley**—My name is Brystol Beatley and I am a senior at Quincy Jr/ Sr High School. I mostly write poems and short, fictional stories where I am inspired by the people around me, the nature that surrounds me, and all of the things I have learned from school.

**Debbie Corsino**—I enjoy seeing art take shape whether it is on canvas, wood, or clay, with the ideas I have in my head. It allows me to express myself in ways I am forever exploring. As I am a multifaceted person, so I strive to be with my art.

**Evi de Bois**—My name is Evi Sisse Adel de Bois. I was born and raised in Antwerp, Belgium. I am a biology major at Feather River College and an animal advocate. I write poetry as an outlet for my emotions.

**TyAnna Farmer**—I am a human that's just trying to make it through this experience we call life. When humanity becomes a little less humane, I find comfort in words and solidarity in expressing myself.

**Nichelle Gordon**—The fourth generation born and raised right here in Plumas County, Nichelle is the daughter of Steve and Lori Gordon. Nichelle is pursuing her Associate's degree in Equine Studies with hopes to earn her Bachelor's in Equine Science and Reproduction either from FRC or by transferring to a university.

**Michael Hammontree**— My name is Michael, though I prefer Mikey. I was born in Chester, California. I don't consider myself to be a poet, but I still enjoy writing poetry as a form of expression. I mostly plan on working on and publishing novels, however. Hope you enjoy reading!

**Jack Joseph**— My name is John Joseph but most people call me Jack. I am a high school senior but I've taken photography at FRC for three semesters now and have loved every minute of it. During my time with the camera and in the darkroom, I have made prints that not only resonate with myself and classes mates but also with community members. Some interests of mine are exploring the outdoors, photography, and golf. I hope to continue printing in a darkroom after this class whether it is having one at my home or using a professional one. I hope you enjoy the images.

**Robert Kelly**—Hi, my name is Rjay! I'm a Nonbinary, aspiring sociologist Student at FRC. Trying to figure out my path and blossom into a life of my own. I'm a huge fantasy nerd and super spiritual so I see reality through a huge lens of colors and questions with no real answer. But a life lesson is usually learned through it all and hopefully, these writings show that perspective and we can learn these life lessons together.

**Alicia Manning**—I am 19 years old and this is my second semester at FRC and I'm attending college to be an interior designer. One day I hope to have my own design company also sell my art.

**Rilee McAdams**—My name is Rilee McAdams and I am an aspiring video game artist, with a passion for 3D modeling and digital art. I have been an avid artist for as long as I can remember, doodles and coloring books dominating the contents of my childhood. After I graduate from FRC with my Associates in Studio Art, I am going to transfer to Cal Poly Humboldt to pursue a degree in Environmental Science, so that one day I'll be able to combine my art skill with my knowledge of Earth and its many environments to create beautiful and believable virtual worlds.

**Kenneth McCann**— I, Kenneth McCann, am a current student at FRC majoring in English. I enjoy writing both serious works and humorous works as both feed the others creativity. I have all intent of continuing to major in English beyond FRC as well as continuing to hone my writing.

**Julia Nehl**— Julia is a visual artist, mainly specializing in digital photography and acrylic paint. Julia is passionate about ecology, and her goal is to represent the often overlooked aspects of nature, especially anything "creepy crawly."

**Dasha Petrov**—Dasha is an aspiring writer with a love for endless criticism.

**Judy Pulido**—I am Judy Pulido. I am from Bakersfield, California. This is my first year at Feather River College. I'm a part of the women's basketball team. I come from a Hispanic household where talking about your feelings is frowned upon. Therefore, I like writing as a way to truly express myself.

**Shadow (Pen Name)**-- My being a Texan was based on hard-working, strict Christian beliefs, in-the-mist of cattle, horses, dogs, coyotes, rattlesnakes with other fauna. I attended six colleges, worked: security at Sacramento Intl' Airport, have held three Federal jobs, and retired as CA State IT. Moreover, I became friends with wolves and applied at wolf centers.

**Sklyar Rose (Pen Name)**-- Skylar Rose is a student at FRC and will be graduating in Spring 2023. She is seeking her B.A. to become an English teacher and has always had a passion for reading and writing. "What a Twisted Life" and "Silence" are her first published works.

**Terise Seits**— Terise Seits is new to art and college. She started college at age 61 and has taken a variety of classes. She loves to learn and has appreciated the variety of learning opportunities offered at Feather River College.

**Sara Sotomayor**—My name is Sara Sotomayor. I come from the Sacramento area and I am here at FRC for the Bachelor's in Equine Studies and Ranch Management degree. I'm interested in working with horses and possibly also pursuing the Ecological Farming Certificate.

**Jacek Van Pelt**—I grew up in Quincy California. I graduated high school in 2019 and started taking classes at Feather River College that fall. I got accepted and started school at the Yamasa Institute in Japan in spring of 2020, came home when Covid started and have been in Quincy ever since.



## Submission Guidelines

Our submission period begins each year on December 1st and ends on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Please note: We do not accept email submissions. All submissions must be uploaded through our website: <https://www.frc.edu/english/cambium>

For general queries, please contact us at [NGrose@frc.edu](mailto:NGrose@frc.edu)

We welcome submissions of prose (essays, non-fiction, fiction), poetry, art (photography, sketches, drawings, paintings, or sculpture art).

All submissions must be de-identified and accompanied by contact information (name, address, telephone, email, and a brief (fewer than 50 words) biography; include the title(s) for each piece submitted.

We do not accept previously published work, but we will consider simultaneous submissions and expect to be notified immediately of acceptance elsewhere.

We will accept up to five poems, photos or artwork pieces or one work of prose (fiction or nonfiction) from each author or artist. Prose may not exceed 5,000 words.