



SPARK

A REVIEW OF NSCC STUDENT LITERARY & ARTISTIC EXPRESSION



SPARK 2013 **volume 5**

sparked by inspiration

Through poetry and stories, photographs and drawings, *Spark* showcases the talent and spirit of students at North Shore Community College. This fifth issue of *Spark* is dedicated to the persistence of vision, forward movement, and the knowledge that creativity is its own reward.

Enjoy.

beautiful

deep

touching

fulfilling

talented

uplifting

bright

brilliant



eclectic

original



colors



enlightening



creative

impressive

energizes



unique

clever

stimulating



spark on the inside

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on the cover:

Lights | *Andrey Samuylov*

Innocence That Never Was

By Beatrice Varga

White fence, black berries, laughter ...
Childhood dreams. What are they?
Where do they come from?
So wise in pain, yet so brilliantly white ...
innocence that never was.
An ancient face stares back at me from the mirror
the happy mask discarded briefly.
Not trapped in replaying
nor speeding ahead
left only with the image
of innocence that never was.
The children I couldn't hold
The life I couldn't keep
Why didn't someone hold me? Teach me? Tell me
the pain of innocence that never was.
It's funny, I still think life is good, yet bittersweet.
Like a seedling breaking new ground,
I eagerly seek light.
Yet, come the memories of a girl lost,
broken,
alone.
Her innocence that never was ■

My Loved Ones

by Ilya Prints

Sometimes I close my eyes
and see my father's slight smile,
and hear his muffled voice,
or feel the concerned mother's glance,
inquiring if I'm fine.

I'd like to approach them,
to hug, to comfort, ...but
it's impossible now, alas.

Two steps - it was so easy,
so little they needed in all,
but it meant so much for the old -
a smile, an embrace, or a call.

In the swift stream of my life
the years invisibly fly...
I pray, grant me more time
to tell you of my love,
My Loved Ones... ■



A Hiker's View
Sam Gottlich



On Duty
Island Ector

For Hate.

by Nicholas Lovasco

the imperfect
bones, muscles, and smile
attached to your neck
die off like an alcoholic
grand ideas of -it.
and the feelings are stiff
uncomfortable to me,
whipped and lashed
in a car wreck
designed as a death
wish in anger and
honesty.
(beautiful women
turning their backs before me.)
but when i saw
the engine block

a third of the way in
and sipped on
thoughts
at the impound lot
before signing
the title
for scrap'd tin.
those angry thoughts
weren't so violent anymore.
and a not so perfect mate
fucks me better than
a judge
if he were able to charge me
with a hit
and run
for hate. ■



At the Farmer's Market

clockwise (from bottom left)

Tomatoes | *Danielle Marie Dugan*

Fennel | *Danielle Marie Dugan*

Squash Blossoms | *Danielle Marie Dugan*

Strawberries | *Danielle Marie Dugan*

Scallions | *Danielle Marie Dugan*

My Maple

by Ilya Prints

My maple, beloved my maple,
you stand on a hillock, alone,
deep-frozen and knee-deep in snow.
What mysteries do you keep long nights,
when darkness abounds with frights?

Just recently fall here feasted,
in brilliant green-yellow colors.
With glowing gold-purple cover,
your powerful branches spread out.

In dreams, you have found your lovely
white-pearly slim birch, and fondly
you touched her thin twigs, and whispered
the secret well-cherished words.

Alone, seized by a blizzard,
I am like you, my maple,
I wander in white seas of snow
and sing songs to winter of April.

I feel the arrival of springtime,
and see light of good in my doom,
I'll find strength to withstand bad weather,
my garden again will bloom.

Oh, maple! Beloved my maple,
you stand on a hillock, alone,
deep-frozen and knee-deep in snow.
What memories bother your soul?
What hopes or dreams do console you? ■

“THE ANACHRON PROJECT” PREVIEW

A novel by Jonathan Cwiok

Why does a gun feel so much heavier when it's loaded?

This is all that Arthur Dickinson could focus on, sitting in room 413 of a boarding house in Fell's Point with a pistol laid flat in his hands. The dank air and rowdy hails of sailors and prostitutes floors beneath him couldn't shake his concentration on the instrument that lay before him. Like the dagger to Macbeth, its transformation was so unreal that it felt like a trick, or some mistake made by the universe itself. He held it already countless times, but only after sliding a bullet into one of its six chambers did it take on a new weight between his fingers. It was a simple revolver, ashen in color save for the maroon hardwood handle and surrounded with the tingling scent of cold metal. By tomorrow it would be a murder weapon.

Maybe that's where the heaviness came from. The gravity of the task this pistol would carry. Kinetic energy in lead.

Like kicking an addiction, Arthur dropped the gun on the musty bed and did all he could to keep his mind off it. His eyes darted around the cramped wooden box of a room, complete with the bare amenities of 19th

Century life in the form of a bed, chair, window and a dresser with a mirror. A fitting environment for someone without a past. Out of his window, the faint glow of the nocturnal docks gave light to a city still in its infancy. Horse carriages sat empty aside buildings of wood and the roads were still mostly dirt. Even the seediest corner of Baltimore was peaceful, compared to what he was used to.

Three steps from the bed got him to the mirror, where he stared into the face of a man still foreign to him. His eyes were his own, but the bushy, crooked mustache and five o'clock shadow beneath them felt like lipstick on a pig. Worse still was the greasy, waved-back hairstyle that gladly displayed the mountainous hairline he had always tried to hide. It made him look deranged and desperate, but that was the point. He was just another ugly mug in a boarding house, giving no hint of his true origins. He had to let out a chuckle. Matthew Enber thought of everything, the clever bastard.

The very name Enber forced his thoughts to what lay in the topmost drawer of the dresser. Opening it cautiously, he found the pocketwatch still resting there. Ironic, he thought, that this meager timepiece is the icon to what may be the most important undertaking in human history. He gently lifted it by the chain, making sure the watch was

“Why does a gun feel so much heavier when it's loaded?”

physically still in his grasp. It half-surprised him that he hadn't crossed the time limit yet, but the furious ticking behind its brilliant gold-plated face reminded him the moment was near. Any minute now, that limit will be reached, and Arthur will have entered the point of no return, when he will have forfeited his life to the mission he helped arrange.

The thought hit like a torpedo to the gut. He was really going to sacrifice himself for the Project. Even if he somehow survived beyond the mission, he'd be cut off from his friends and family forever. Granted he had little of either, but even a few friendly faces become priceless when faced with an eternity without them.

Everything was accelerating with or without his approval. In time, the watch would leave this room, as would Arthur and a loaded revolver, making way for Washington D.C. In a matter of hours, President Andrew Jackson would be arriving at the United States Capitol to sign the Indian Removal Act into law. In a matter

of seconds, it would be vetoed with a bullet.

And so stood Arthur Dickinson in room 413, ruminating on the first ever assassination of a president of the United States. He sighed heavily, shut his eyes and let the watch fall back into the drawer. He had to succeed. Enber had to succeed. The Project had to succeed. Or all human endeavor could be a failure. He pulled his own watch

out of his pocket. Quarter past three in the morning. It was almost time to leave. He turned to retrieve the pistol from the bed.

Four frantic knocks at the door shook the air around Arthur. His fingers froze on the grip of the gun. It was impossible for anybody around here to know who Arthur Dickinson was, but the force at the door persisted. He hastily buried the revolver under the bed sheets. Another volley

of knocks. Arthur stood tall and ready, reached for the doorknob, and answered his summons.

What met Arthur Dickinson beyond the door was the long square barrel of a Colt 1911. The handgun was polished stainless steel, with “JPM” carved in elegant script along the side.

That gun would not exist for another eighty-one years. ■



A Winter's Plunge
David Dougwillo



Boston Harbor
Andrey Samuylov

The Porch

by Robin Myers

One may tend to think
that if a person is minding her own business,
doing her homework,
art work
and the like...
Not socializing or
going out much,
that nothing outside can come in
uninvited.
So,
so very wrong.

A few weeks ago,
early in the morning
cold,
I opened the door
to seize the day,
as is my habit.
The weather is always a surprise,
one must know how to dress.

I opened the door,
pushed my sleepy face out
for a quick look see,
closed the door.
My morning brain tripped all over itself.
I opened the door again.

My porch was splashed with blood and feces
red, brown, reddish brown.
Sweet, sticky,
stinky.
Catches in the back of my throat,
covers the floor,
the brick,
smeared every which way,
blood drops dangling.
In the middle of all this red
is a large
something.
white.

The impression I had at first
was that of a carpenter
sitting on the ground,
lost,
flinging color.
The second impression
was some kind of large whiten infant,
shock of snowy hair,
diapered,
with no fingers or toes,
Limb ends pointy.

I screamed for Mya
to call 911
and went to see
what I could not comprehend.
A man with white hair,
smooth brown skin,
white tee shirt,
no pants,
just white socks (were once white socks)
was sitting in the middle of the porch.

Bodily fluids
covered
his paleness.
His hands were swaying back and forth,
stone blind.
The back of his head was caved in.

I wrapped him in a purple sheet
holding him between my
elbows and knees,
keeping him from getting up.
Was he shot?
Had he been beaten?
No,
no.
There was a large bloody pool on my stone
doorstep.
It took me several mental rewinds
to figure out
what happened.

I had never seen him before.
Had he come out of his apartment,
staggering drunk
and gone out the wrong door?
Did he think he was headed to his bathroom
and tripped through the outside door instead?
He could not get into my apartment,
fell,
smashing the back of his skull
on my stone stoop.



It took a while for the ambulance to get here,
the EMTs
unconcerned,
said he lives in the building,
and that this happens to him
all the time.
His little drunken adventure
spilled out onto my porch
tripping
smashing,
bleeding.

I have not been able
to get the smell
of bodily juices
out of my hair,
off my skin,
out of my nose.
The sight of him,
the smell of the almost dead
does not leave
my mind.

Now,
I see him walking
to and from the store,
always with a bottle of booze
under his arm.
He is never without.
I wonder if he recognizes me?
Doubtful. ■



Personal Logo | Madison Onanian

Sky Lantern

by Nicholas Lovasco

your smile rises like a chinese lantern
soaring in the july cape ann dusk,
which begins to
turn the yawns of
saturday skippers
lurking on the indian lake
into a confrontation with
capabilities and
in- realities

i lay in a ten foot skiff
anchored in some dim,
moon lit cove
watching your apparatus
in one continuous leap
as it comes closer to knowing
oddly open space
with no good
fishing holes.

not seeing
all the on looker's eyes
attached to your luminous ascent
and how you cause
ridiculous thoughts
including my own
that, someday,



Look Around You | Nicole McLellan

we would meet exhausted
in the whittier motel
for shameful sex
and irish steel oatmeal
that i make for us
on an electric burner
while you hang naked,
with a sore cunt
and as an occasional smoker,
-over my shoulder,
waiting to drop
ashes
on summer cottages
sleeping along the cape
as you grave and gently
catcha flame
at an altitude designed
for proper, modern
planes. ■

Opposite page:
Gossamer Wings | David Dougwillo
Brown Trees | Gary Lucas

The Breaking of Dawn

by Beatrice Varga

Daylight breaks out of the constraints of night
unraveling the bonds with golden splendor.
Away the rats! The bats! The owls!
Away the fearsome
blackened corners.
Happily birds greet each other “g’morrow”.
Bees awaken sleeping glory, bathing
in the sunny pools of sweet.
Rubbing eyes, warm and fresh,
AWAKE!
Where has the night gone?
Where are the stripes? The cold steel of the fearsome prison?
Gone?!!
Gone also, the yellowed patchment and black ink well
I have known so intimately.
This is strange, but good.
No fear, but wonder
Child-like questions
What? Where? Why? When? How?
Where is the concrete of my youth?
Where is the grey wall drawn upon before?
Or the forked tongue of recent years?
This is good, but WAIT!
Where is the night? Where is the fire?
When did the burning coals die?
How...
did I awaken to daylight?
What is this new?
This new is scary. Lonely.
Security lost.
Why has the cloak of comfort departed?
Return O, night and ash divide!
Return warm fire to ease my trembling!
Ah, but no....
This is the dawn of new life.
Good. Wholesome. Healing. Changing.
Scary, unfamiliar dawn. ■





clockwise (from bottom left):
White Admiral | Jonathan Cwiok
Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Plum Island, MA | David Salucco
RED | Andrey Samuylov
Clouds | Andrey Samuylov
Plotting Mantis | David Dougwillo

Ordinary People

by Stephanie Buonaugurio

Ordinary people

Volunteer their stories
with a very low level of prompting.

At first you feel trapped

Held hostage by their need to feel heard.

And—because you are just as anonymous as they are to you,
they could care less if you're uncomfortable.

The stakes are low.

Once you accept,
that you're "in" the conversation
'til they're ready to stop
then you can go:

"Hmm, perhaps there's something for me to
hear, here."

And sometimes it's just

pieces of someone's life, that they find precious.

Another grandmother's grandson
Another dying man's prognosis
Another soccer mom's sewing project

(perhaps you showed some slight curiosity, that turned
into her stage for a thirty minute monologue...)

Another widow's dog pictures.

Not a waste of time

necessarily.

A fine opportunity

to practice good listening skills.

Can you be authentic?

— is the question here. ■



clockwise (from top left):
Train Time | Colleen Bertolino
Festive Email Newsletter | Felicia Santos
Timely River | Nicole Mclellan



ESSENCIA salon | spa | boutique

home spa salon boutique events gifts

Season's Gifts

for yourself of course...

Pumpkin Chocolate

Enzyme Facial

Our most delicious facial ever! With over 300 anti-oxidants and age defying ingredients this facial detoxifies and hydrates the skin for the winter months ahead. \$75 (45 min)

Festive

Express Peel

An anti-aging treatment that will make your skin tighter and brighter. You'll have a youthful glow for all your festive occasions this holiday season. \$60 (30 min)

A James Bond Synopsis

by Robert Williams

SYNOPSIS:

Bond is on a NATO training exercise with the French Foreign Legion, at their Commando Training Centre in Djibouti. A healthy rivalry develops with his French colleagues as Bond is put through his paces on the notorious obstacle course. One French commando nearly dies in the “Tunnel of Death” – a 50 yard underwater swim in full kit, with rifle. Bond is pulled from the course and briefed on a mission he will be undertaking with a crack team of Legionnaires. Abu-Al-Sharif, a leading Al Qaeda figure, has been sighted in Yemen, in the city of Aden. Bond is to accompany the snatch squad as an observer.

While staking out Al Sharif’s safe house Bond recognizes a dissident IRA bomb maker, Farrell, entering the target house. A fire fight ensues and Al-Sharif is successfully captured. Several of the French commandoes are killed in the operation, and Bond is blamed for not killing Farrell when he had the chance – Bond wanted Farrell alive, who escapes the scene. There are recriminations and French Intelligence accuses the British Secret Service of pursuing its own agenda.

Bond is recalled to London and debriefed by M. It is revealed that M killed Farrell’s father in 1988 in an incident based on the notorious “Death on the Rock” shooting in Gibraltar. M was leading the SAS team that killed 3 IRA bombers, one of whom was Farrell’s father. Farrell is identified as virulently anti-British, but also as a soldier of fortune, hired by various terrorist and criminal organizations for his bomb making expertise. M produces a surveillance photograph of Farrell talking with Mr. White, of the Quantum Organization, which intensifies Bond’s interest in Farrell.

Spanish Intelligence has notified MI6 that Farrell is currently in Spain, having met with hardliners from ETA – the Basque Separatist Organization – who want to restart a bombing campaign on the Iberian mainland. Bond is dispatched to Pamplona (it is the time of San Fermin – the Running of the Bulls) where he is to

rendezvous with a beautiful Spanish Secret Service agent, Isabella Aguerro. Bond and Aguerro chase Farrell through the streets of Pamplona, running against the oncoming tide of humanity and bulls. Farrell escapes again as Bond is injured in the chase.

M orders Bond to Juarez, Mexico, where an ETA hard liner is known to be based. It is the only lead on Farrell; his connection with the ETA dissidents. Meanwhile, the interrogation of Al-Sharif, at Guantanamo, has revealed an Al Qaeda plot to bomb New York. Before leaving for Mexico, Q briefs Bond on the properties of “Americium,” a large quantity of which has gone missing from an Iranian reactor. According to an Iranian defecting scientist, the radioactive material has fallen into the hands of Al Qaeda via Quantum, for the sum of \$500,000,000. The potential for Americium’s use in a dirty bomb is awesome. Americium has a half-life of 7,000 years and an affected area would be effectively contaminated forever. The FBI and CIA are

aware of a possible dirty bomb threat and were on a state of full alert. Bond and Aguerro team up in Juarez and begin their surveillance of the ETA terrorist, who is staying with Cartel members, apparently as a guest. A passionate relationship soon develops between Bond and Isabella.

A US Special Forces hit team, operating over the border with the approval of the Mexican government, launches a raid on the Cartel’s hacienda. Photographic evidence of Farrell and the New York bombing plot are found at the scene. The ETA terrorist is killed but, before he dies, informs Bond that the Americium has already been smuggled into the US. Aguerro is abducted by Cartel members during the raid. Her severed head is later found attached to a pole in a Juarez street.

Bond meets CIA agent, Felix Leiter, in New York. Leiter informs Bond that Farrell has been posted on “America’s Most Wanted List”, on the pretext that he is

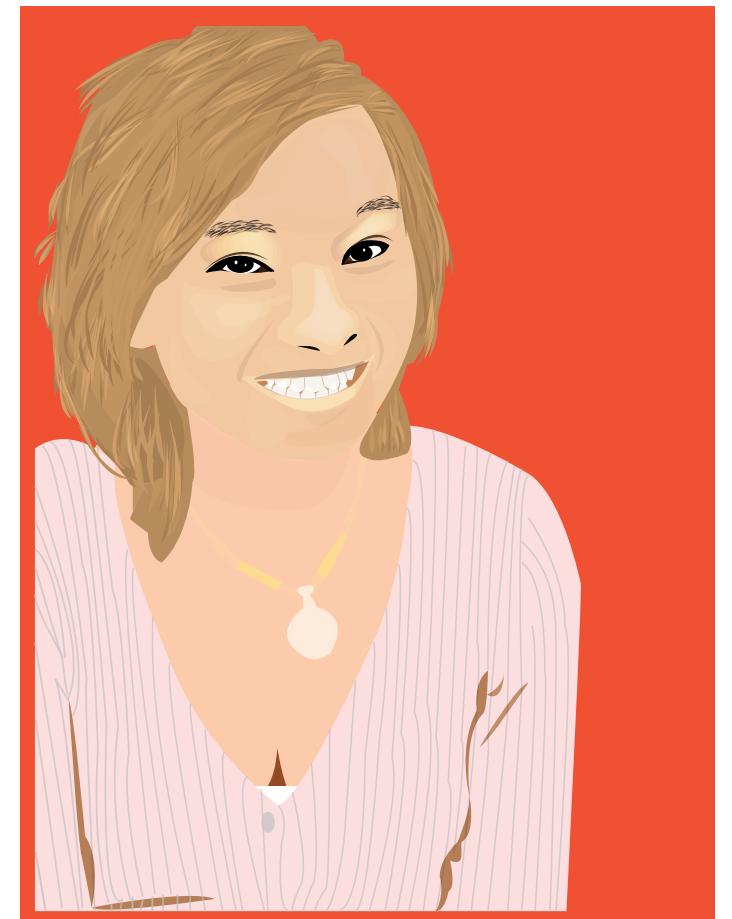
wanted for murder and terrorist activities. No mention has been made of the New York bomb plot. American counter-intelligence sources confirm the New York dirty bomb plot, and the impact it would have on the world financial system and the multi-billion dollar value of real estate in Manhattan, if New York is hit.

Going on gut instinct, Bond believes the recently opened Freedom Tower, with its iconic status, will be the target for the explosion. Despite tight security, a disguised Farrell has infiltrated the Tower with the Americium bomb, contained in a suitcase. Bond and Farrell fight at the top of the Tower as Farrell attempts to detonate the device. Farrell falls to his death and Bond disarms the bomb. M debriefs Bond in London and admits to Bond, in a rare moment of intimacy, that his shooting of Farrell’s father had been questionable. Bond replies, “In times of war, questionable actions abound”. M replies, “Quite, Bond. We are at War.” ■

Moth Dust | *Kasha Kawczynski*



Self-Portrait Lexicon | *Linda Tran*



Personal Essay

by Linda Tran

During my middle and high school years, I had my future planned out. I planned out when I wanted to travel the world, where I was going to live, what I wanted to be. I was always thinking about my future and never actually lived in the moment. The saying was to live today like it was your last. However, I never did that. I always lived my life thinking about the future and how I wanted it to turn out, but suddenly, it changed. One of my close friends committed suicide in September 2010. I was devastated from the incident, but it made me realize something. I should not focus on my future too much, but instead start living in the present. Her incident taught me to take the opportunities given to me, appreciate the people I have in my life, and to always be genuine with those around me since everybody is struggling with their own problems.

Before her incident, I was a reserved girl who did not really take any opportunities. I let everything slide by thinking something else would come along. After her incident though, I tried to get out of my comfort zone. I used to leave school right after it ended but instead, I started joining clubs. I joined the book club and the newspaper. Joining these clubs opened doors

for me. I wrote an article for the newspaper about my friend's incident. A couple months later, my article became the "talk of the school" since it was mentioned right after the front cover story. Every day, someone came up to me and congratulated me on my article. For book club, I was so passionate about organizing the meetings that the president let me organize events for the club. I became the events-coordinator for the club and little did I know, I was getting recognition from the librarian and she reported to the principal that I was doing a fantastic job. The principal asked me for help to plan out an event that involved one-fourth of the school. I would not have received that opportunity if it was not for my friend's death teaching me to get out of my comfort zone.

I always had a horrible way of showing people I cared about them. My way of showing someone I cared was giving them an attitude. I never told my friend I loved her before she passed away and I felt guilty for weeks. After her incident, I started becoming more affectionate. I used her incident as an example to appreciate everyone I have in my life. Every night before I went to sleep, I told my mom I loved her. I usually never did but because of my friend's incident, I started to

Every morning after I woke up, I would text my best friends and sisters, wishing them a wonderful day. Almost every day, I went on my social networking sites and thanked the people I have in my life for everything they have done for me. As of today, I still do these things. I still try to reassure my friends and family how thankful I am to have them in my life.

Growing up, I was always stubborn. I argued and made sure I had the last word. I had a short temper. In fact, sometimes, I still do but I am controlling it. Now that my friend is no longer here, I use her as an inspiration to be genuine to everyone who comes my way. She was always a happy girl and had a genuine heart, so she was my motivation to be the same. I got into an argument with one of my classmates about religion. We were screaming back and forth and then, I realized that arguing was not going to change anything, so I bit my lip and apologized to her. I agreed to her points about religion and stopped arguing. Little did I know, I found out a couple days ago that she snapped at me, not because she's religious but because she was still suffering from her parents' divorce. She took her anger out on me and eventually apologized, but I did not mind. The death of my

friend taught me to be genuine with every one because I do not know if they are struggling with their own problems. If I continued to argue with that girl, I would not know what would have happened. She would have broken down and cried and that would have made me feel awful. This death taught me to put myself in someone else's shoes and try to understand why they act the way they do or why they are the person they are today.

I would not say I am a completely different person

from the one I was back in 2010. However, my mentality definitely has changed quite a bit. I went from planning when and where I wanted my wedding to be, to taking each opportunity that was given to me. I used to always turn down opportunities thinking something else will come along for me. I was always afraid to take risks thinking I wouldn't succeed. Now, I do still turn down opportunities and am afraid of taking risks, but I am slowly trying. Trying never hurts and if I fail, at least I can say

that I tried. If anything, I can keep trying until I succeed. My friend's incident taught me to cherish everything and everyone around me. Because of her incident, I am now more appreciative of all my friends and family. I remind my family almost every day that I love them. I still keep my friend in my life and I use her as a motivation to try harder. She's my inspiration to taking risks and to always persevere. She may not be physically here, but she will always be in my heart. ■

Cannon Mountain Summit | *David Salucco*



Through This Storm We Do Not Walk Alone

by Beatrice Varga

I know I sound a little dark.
 I know I sound a little desperate
 but these are just discarded thoughts,
 feelings,
 hurts.
 We all hurt.
 we all, at times, feel
 discarded
 used
 broken.
 But, we are not alone.
 Though storms come
 though teardrops fall,
 Through this storm we do not walk alone.
 The lie is that we do.
 The lie is that we are singular in our pain.
 Yet, through this storm, we do not walk alone.
 We are unique
 and yet so very alike inside.
 We all have the same need to be loved,
 accepted
 cherished
 for the little bit that makes us unique,
 scared
 different
 Yet, through this storm,
 we do not walk alone.
 We all bleed the same.
 We all cry for the same needs.
 We all need to be loved just for who we are ...
 And ...
 that is why I am convinced that
 Through this storm we do not walk alone. ■





WENHAM MUSEUM

Faery Festival

Storyteller * Faery Portraits



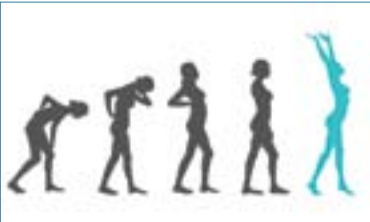
Faery Tea * Faery Crafts

UNDERWOOD PHOTOGRAPHY FAERY PORTRAITS
 TO BENEFIT THE WENHAM MUSEUM

*** SATURDAY** SEPTEMBER 8, 10AM-3PM
RAIN DATE: SUNDAY, SEPT. 9

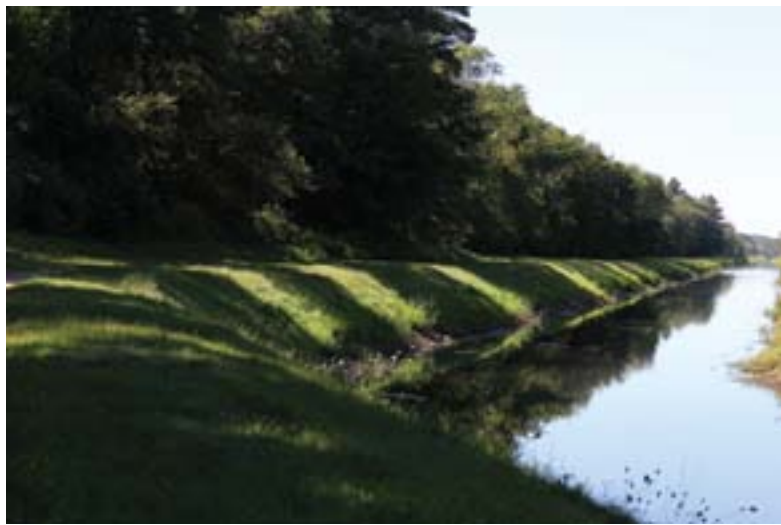
FAMILY ADMISSION: \$6 PER CHILD FAMILY MAX: (4): \$20
 132 MAIN STREET, WENHAM, MA 01984 * 978.468.2377

WENHAM MUSEUM.ORG

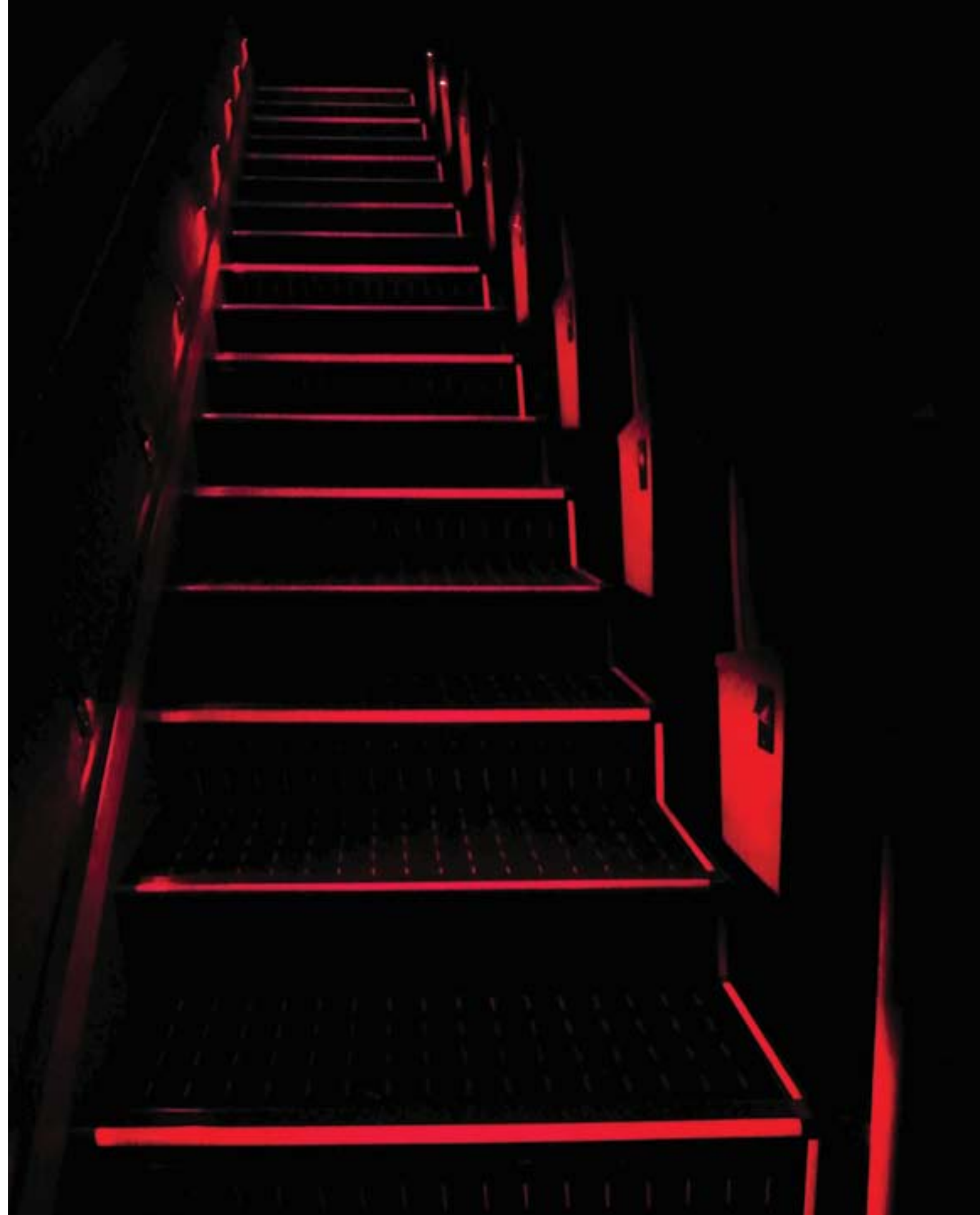
Abbey Curtin
 Licensed Massage Therapist
 acurtin13@yahoo.com
 508.692.8284

clockwise (from bottom left):
 Peek-a-boo | *Island Ector*
 Self Portrait | *Amina Aziz*
 Faery Festival | *Colleen Bertolino*
 Massage Menu | *Felicia Santos*
 T.O.P. | *Kasha Kawczynski*
 Silhouette Business Card | *Felicia Santos*



from top to bottom
Nubble Light, York, ME | *David Salucco*
Grand Wenham Canal | *David Salucco*
3d Wharf | *Gary Lucas*

opposite page
Night Photography | *Amina Aziz*





clockwise (from bottom left)
Tidal Waves | Nicole McLellan
Illusion | Jaime Stone
Lion 2 | Jaime Stone
Walden Pond | Madison Onanian

His Old Man

by Ilya Prints

It was an overcast winter day, and only a light snowfall refreshed the image of the small rural city. It was an ordinary winter day for all, except him, the big tough guy, as he considered himself. Just today, for the first time, he saw his newborn son, his tiny beaming face and his doll-like fingers, and he felt that, beginning now, all his son's sorrow, and tears, and misfortunes would become his own pain. As the boy was growing up, the feeling of that small sun had switched on in his home, and lightened, and warmed all around, did not leave him. Years have passed and the boy, now a tall handsome young man, moved to another city, and his visits and calls became seldom and occasional. But every time,

they were as the holidays for the man, who was now at a mature age and looked as if he would soon be an old man. His son was too preoccupied with his own problems, businesses, marriage and divorce, and remarriage. The years flew. The old man lived alone, and loneliness had become his primary disease. And one time, somebody knocked at his door, and came in, and said quietly "Hello, Dad". He did not recognize the stranger, but after the first few words, he felt that it was him, his son. Age changes both our faces and our appearances, but the voice changes just a little. The old man got lost. He did not know where to put his hands or his clothes, scattered on the chairs, what to say, where to propose to sit down

to his guest. His guest, his son. He remembered well his childhood, but did not know his life at present. And his son, in contrast, did not remember much from his past and was preoccupied by his current problems. Their meeting was not long and, as it turned out, was the last. A few years passed. Through the fuss and the anxiety in his own life, the son had found the time to visit the small rural city, the silent cemetery. He stayed close to the small burial mound, bending his head. In his life, many people either respected, or loved, or even hated him, but nobody except the old man loved him just for the fact that he existed. His old man. ■



clockwise (from bottom left)
Sandy | *Nicole Mclellan*
Flower Fields | *Kasha Kawczynski*
Tsunami | *Jaime Stone*



The World Beyond Our Imaginations

by Reichley Tambi Mokom

Facing the immigration officer, listening to the thorn of his voice striking my eardrum, it sounded like Niagara Falls, my heart pounding like an old African dancer playing his “tambou.” My brain finally translated his words as he said “Welcome to America.” Apparently it was like a dream, as I reflected on the thresholds of my path.

In past years Mexico was the mecca of happiness; every groom and bride would dream to go for their honeymoon, imagining themselves, lying on the white sandy beaches of Cancun, Veracruz, Playa del Carmen through Tampico and Los Cabos. The newlyweds would have an endless view of the blue ocean, the unique sound of the ocean breeze and the whispering sound of ocean birds flying in the sky as the dolphins do their spectacular diving. With a glass of “Piña Colada” or the famous “Margarita,” they would tan their bodies and live in their Paradise on Earth.

The influx of American tourists made apparent the class distinctions in Mexico, where people had to do anything to earn a living. As you walked through its streets you could see young men in their flashy cars with music playing, and young

girls moving around the markets’ squares with short skirts hanging on a pair of beautiful long straight legs while children move about with handmade articles for tourists. It was an apparent community of the haves and have-nots.

This was a warm, windy day July 7th, when I set foot on the Mexican International Airport, Benito Juarez. As every other first time visitor to Mexico, I couldn’t find my luggage; it wasn’t much of a problem due to the warm smiles on the faces of the gorgeous looking Latino girls. As they say “Bienvenidos a México.”

After enjoying the warm welcome of the southern Mexican cities, I boarded a bus moving north through Mexico; we drove for long hours. Looking through the window, all I could see was the sun setting miles away at the back of dry, stony mountains. I realized we were in the middle of nowhere, with sand and dry hot air burning on our faces. This isn’t Mexico, I said to myself. I arrived in the city of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. It wasn’t beautiful Mexico; the streets were paraded in the day by armies in their big war jeeps carrying machine guns of all calibers with their faces covered like those of Ninjas. People were alert and the news went from mouth to ear. At night it was a different world; the streets filled with drug cartels in their separate groups and American tourists talking to free girls hovering

around for prey.

The mini-clubs called “Cantinas” were the meeting places for “predators and prey.” My eyes fell on a boldly written notice, “Bienvenido a La BOA.” As I pushed open the door, I was hit by the smoke of cigarettes and the stinking smell of alcohol and narcotics. It was stuffy, and the first sensation I had was, I am in the chimney of a beer factory. Standing in front of me was a pair of straight, long and smooth beautiful legs; scanning upwards, her skirt was long enough just to cover her pelvic cavity. She wore a tiny transparent blouse that could be noticed only by a touch of it. Even in the smoky stuffy room I could see the dragon tattoo on her belly. It was difficult to try not to notice her. As my eyes darted, an innocent young face with a look filled with grief, anger and vengeance came into view. An angelic voice said, “Eres Americano?” I didn’t understand Spanish at the time but I could tell she wanted to know if I was American. I replied, “no, African.” That voice came again “one beer for me.” It would be abnormal for a man to say no to

“...she mentioned that her family was owned by a cartel...”



Clairliens | Kasha Kawczynski

that request from such a lady-fine like refined gold with long tender hair as of a mermaid.

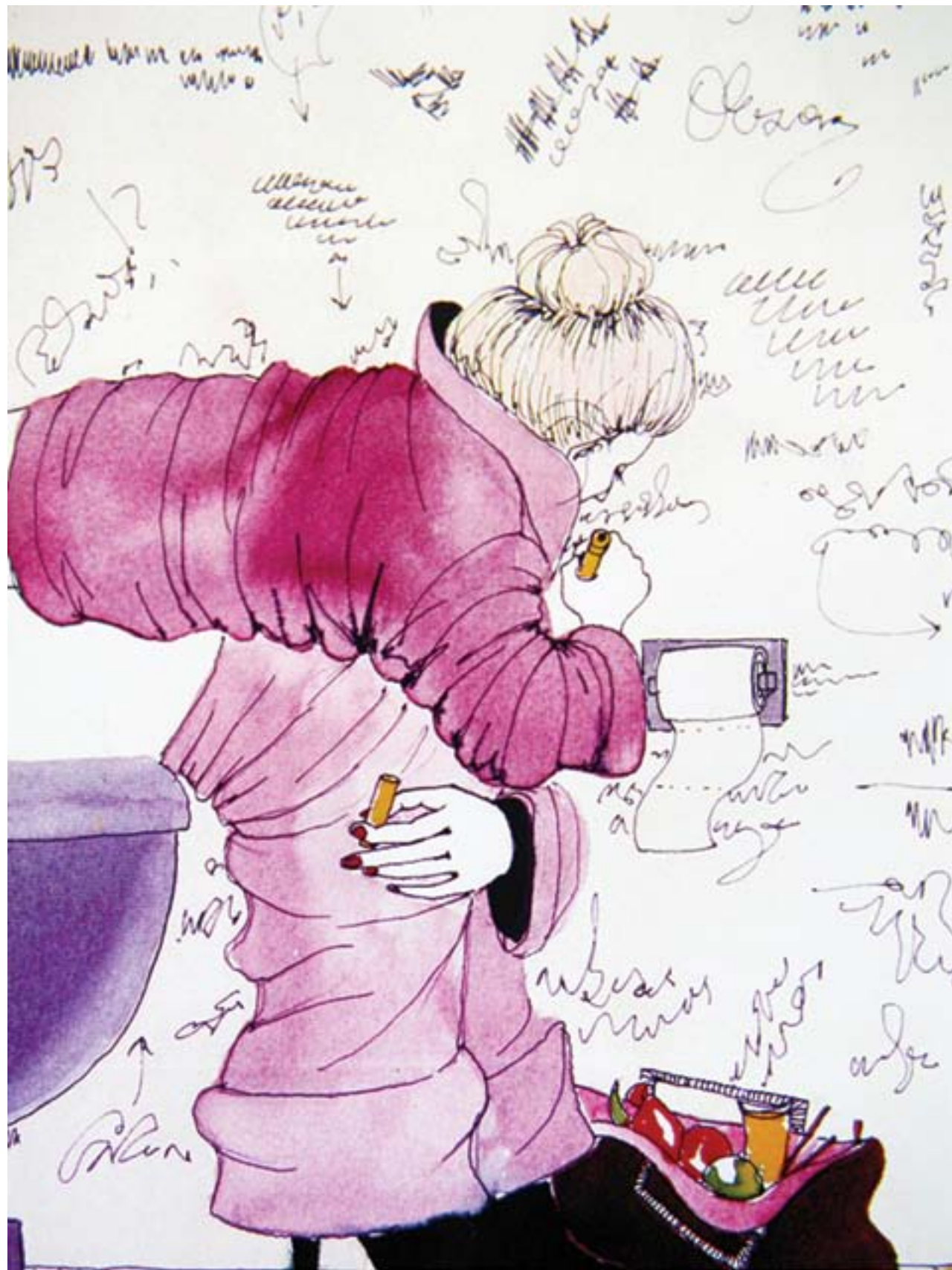
After a couple of drinks and a series of questions, I learned she was 18 and a single mother; she couldn’t continue school because her family couldn’t afford it. She had to start earning money for their home at age eleven. What slammed me in the face, sinking deep into my heart, making my body shiver was when she mentioned that her family was owned by a cartel; what she earned went to the cartel. I felt empathy for her; coming from a society where neocolonialism is going on, where we are enslaved by the greedy wicked nature of our colonial masters, tears dripped from my eyes. Again comes the voice “do not cry for me, look at these girls here, will you cry for them?” Looking

across the hall there were about a hundred of them ages 16 to 26, beautiful as a summer evening with a full moon. She said she had to go or she would be in trouble because we had been talking for so long. She warned me that I should not look for her but promised she would watch after me, “You are a good man; this place is not for you.”

I got a job as a teacher working hard and harder every blessed day, saying to myself how blessed I was every day; I was blessed to be where was. I went to “La BOA” often; as I talked to those girls I had the feeling I was back home; I saw the children back home in my community where children can’t afford a basic education, where they are forced to work.

Cherishing what we have doesn’t mean we have what

we want; it is just about being appreciative of having what others cannot. My fellow college mates, when I see you drop classes because you don’t like the teacher, drop out of school because you want to work to get a new car or refuse to attend school because your parents made you, I feel sad. I would pledge you to take a journey to your nearest neighboring country, Mexico, where children don’t even have the parents to make them angry, or the schools where they could meet a teacher they won’t like, or even a bus to take them along before wanting a car, or enough food to eat before choosing what not to eat. Count yourself lucky. Nelson Mandela once said “We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.” ■



opposite page
Graffiti | Robin Myers

above
Freaky, Fab and Fly | Kasha Kawczynski

HOME

by Kristen Kosta

It's the calm after the
storm that keeps me
holding
on

hope floods over
like the tide floods over
the washed out seashells
and brings them back
home

it's home
they say, when your heart
is there

but sometimes the storm
carries hearts to the shore
lost
no perception of
belonging
until

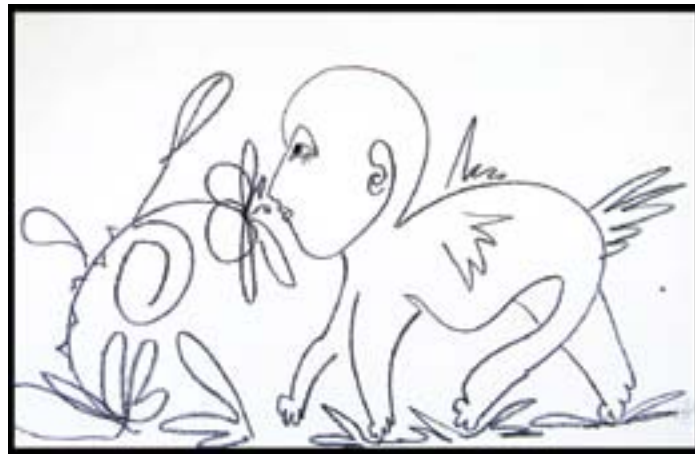
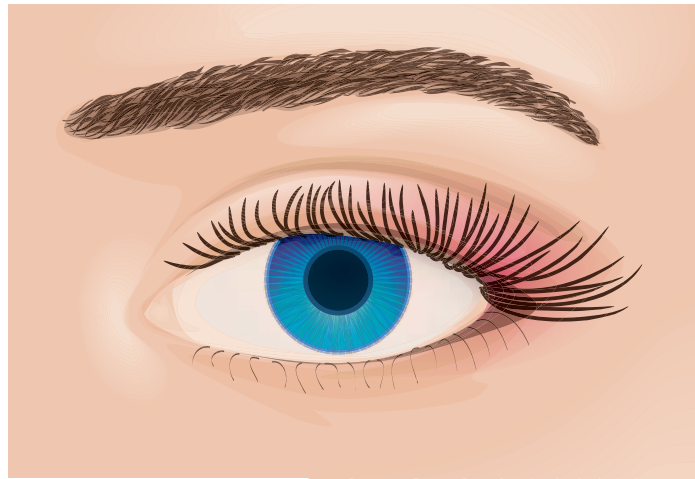
the calm

and the tide brings me
home
again ■



clockwise (from bottom left)
Winter | Gary Lucas
Rocky Shores | Samantha Gottlich
Red Manufactory | Geraldine Scola





top to bottom
Eye | Tina Donahue
Sniffing the Sweetness | Robin Myers

I AM LUCKY

by Ilya Prints

November, gloomy, rainy, changeable weather, but for today, it is light and relatively windless. Red-brown leaves rustling underfoot. I walk the narrow path of the park and inhale this moist decaying scent of declining nature. All around are so marvelous and mysterious. Sunbeams suddenly break through the veil of clouds as a parting, but still bright smile of summer. It is a little bit sad for the memories, but at the same time, I feel a sudden lightness and hope for the beginning of something new.

How quickly the world changes!

I am happy that I have lived up to this time. We have settled in different countries, but we see each other on the computer screen. We can easily search and find any information, articles, music on the Internet. We orient ourselves in space with a GPS. And what a miracle this little fairy magic mirror is, iPhone, inside your pocket - connecting us with the whole world!

How lucky I have been to have lived up to this time.

And at the same time, with slight sadness, I think of those days when we talked with friends looking at each other's eyes, not by way of the computer, and discussed the world's problems, not on Skype, and received the letters written by hand and, seemingly, still warm from her hands ... Sometimes, I hear a quiet melody of old unhurried tango, Argentine Tango ... And other melodies, melodies of unforgettable songs emerge from the soul, now and again. Sunset - Sunrise, Sunrise - Sunset ... It is interesting how it happens that these events, which took place in the past, I now find in front of me. Things and images, I've always enjoyed, as well as the people with whom I associated, communicated, argued, reconciled and argued again, now sort of hang in the air and become history. It seems to me that everything was easier then, warmer and more natural, or maybe it is only an illusion?

I was lucky to have lived at that time. ■

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