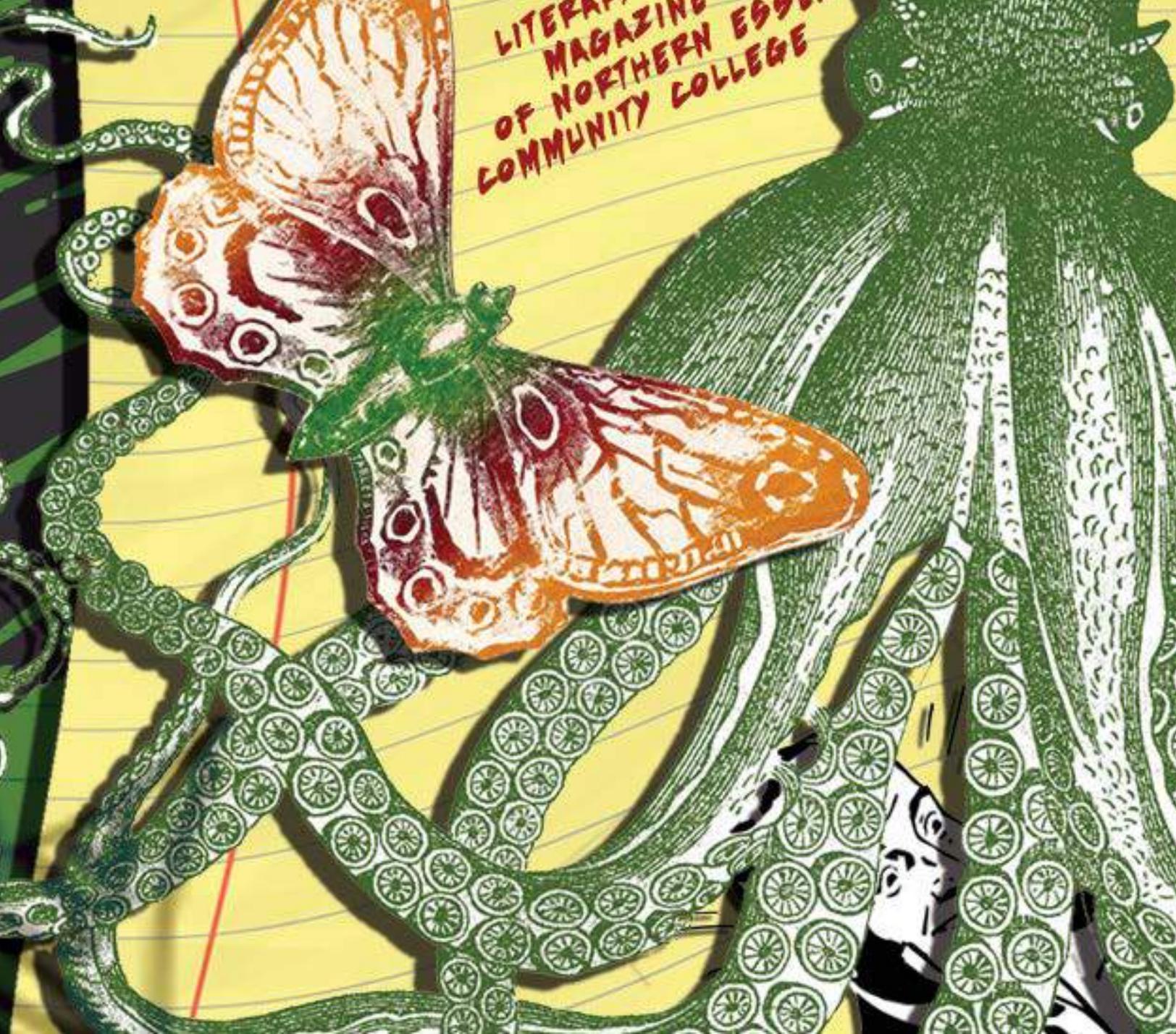
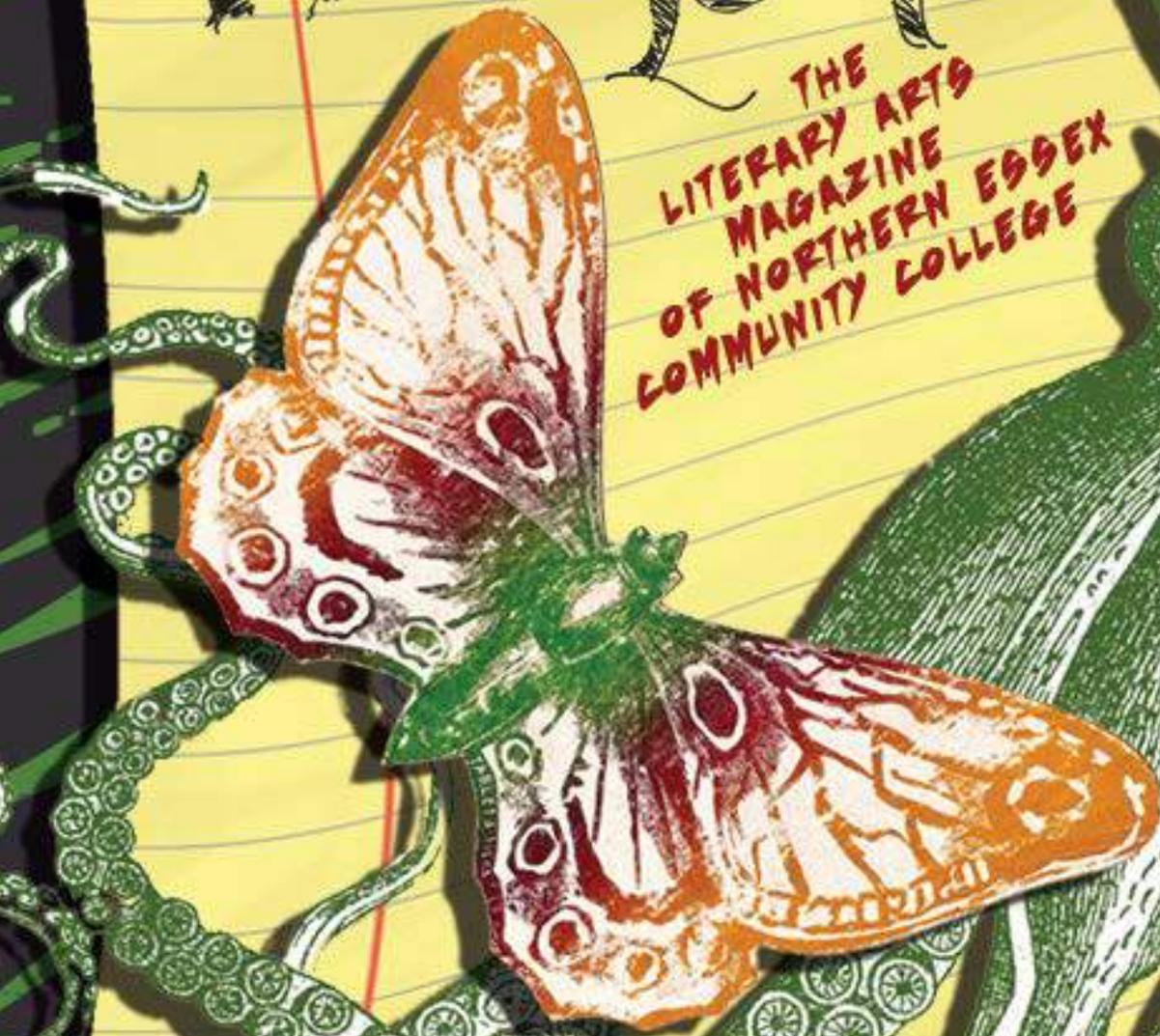


# PARASOLS

2017

THE  
LITERARY ARTS  
MAGAZINE  
OF NORTHERN ESSEX  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE





# parnassus awards

NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
100 ELLIOTT STREET, HAVERHILL, MA

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*Second place, Eastern Division: 2016, 2008*

## ASSOCIATED COLLEGIATE PRESS PACEMAKER AWARDS

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*Finalist: 2013, 2009*

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## AMERICAN SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION

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*Best Gallery: 2008*  
*Best Page Design: 2010*

## NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PARAGON AWARDS

*Gold: 2011*  
*Silver: 2009*

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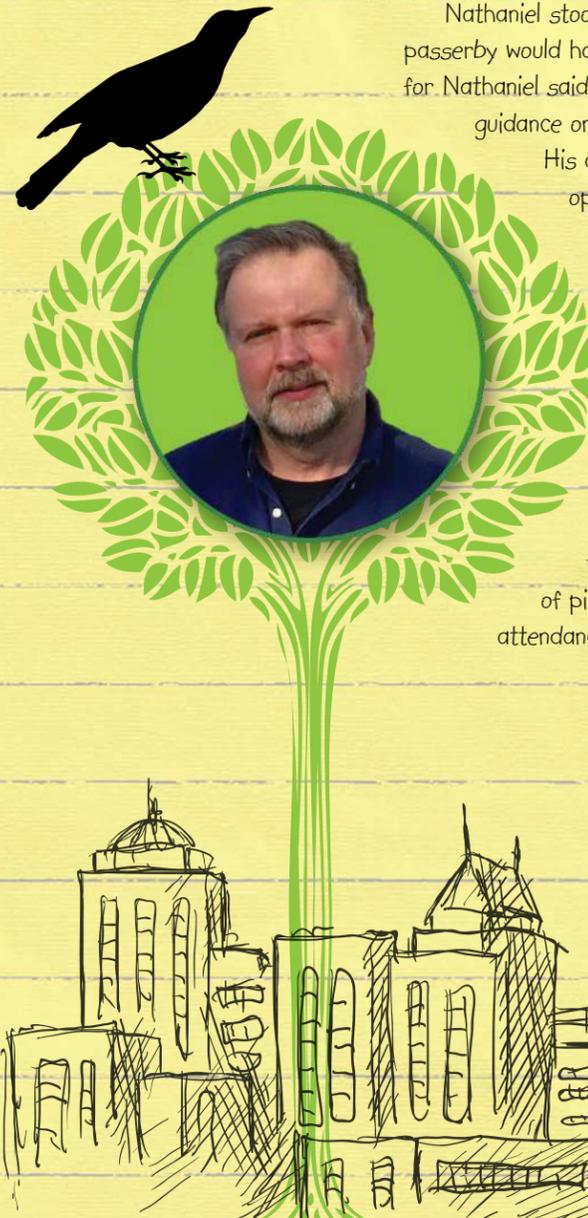


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GUEST  
AUTHOR:  
Michael  
Cormier

THE  
WORSHIPPING  
TREE

Michael Cormier was raised in Southern California and Haverhill, Massachusetts. A graduate of Northeastern University and Rutgers Law School, his writing focuses on coastal New England and the Merrimack Valley. His work includes the well-received novel *Sumner Island*, as well as two other books, *Convention* and *Why Brother Why?* A resident of Atkinson, New Hampshire, he is currently at work on a play about the Salem Witch Trials told from the point of view of Haverhill's own Nathaniel Saltonstall.



The tree was ancient. A great oak with a trunk roughly the girth of a hoghead, it stood far taller than any tree in the area. Its branches spread so wide and thick that in the springtime when the leaves came in you could stand under its canopy in a rainstorm and never feel a drop.

The tree belonged to Nathaniel Saltonstall, who stood beneath it now. That is to say it grew on his land, for as Nathaniel had come to understand, the Worshipping Tree belonged to no man. Something that age and size could not be owned any more than a great buck or an aged catfish. It belonged only to the earth, which, as the local Natives said, belonged only to the Creator.

In fact the tree had once served another Creator. Fifty years ago the earliest white settlers—a dozen Puritan faithful—had worshipped their own God beneath it. Each Sabbath the flock had gathered to hear Rev. John Ward, father of Nathaniel's wife Elizabeth, deliver his thundering sermons. The tree served them well for many years, until a meetinghouse could be built. These days it only took on this role when a Ward or a Saltonstall needed to feel closer to God. Like now.

Nathaniel stood with his hands clasped in front of him, face down, eyes closed. A passerby would have mistaken this for deep prayer, but he would have been wrong for. Nathaniel said nothing and thought nothing. A while ago he had asked God for guidance on a matter of the greatest importance, and he was still waiting for His answer. But no answer came, and eventually he lifted his head and opened his eyes. Fifty yards from the tree, the Merrimack River wound through the valley on its way to the Atlantic. It seemed slow this morning, in no particular hurry to get there. The whole valley, in fact, moved at a lazy pace in the early summer light, a vision of serenity and contentment.

Yet this vision was deceiving, for just beyond the river's southern bank a war raged. It had begun this past winter. While the people of Salem were distracted by the cold and deep snows, the devil had come to town and set up camp right under their noses. How the dark one had managed it so quickly, the people could only guess. Most believed it began with a lapse of piety among members of the Salem Village parish. Poor meeting attendance, lazy prayer habits, failure to Keep God's commandments. The



flock had grown complacent, taken its collective eye off Satan's ever-present threat, and he had seized the opportunity to sail into harbor under cover of night.

Like most, Nathaniel had accepted this explanation as fact. But not now. Not after what he'd witnessed with his own eyes these past few days. Oh, Essex County was at war—there was no mistaking that—but it wasn't what the ministers and the governor and their cohort said. It was something more, something far worse than everyone thought. And that was why Nathaniel stood here taking whatever comfort he could in the shade of this mighty tree. Meditating on the problem that confronted him, a problem he was beginning to fear he might have to confront alone.

Behind him came the sound of a latching door, followed by slow, shuffling footsteps. Nathaniel didn't have to look to know it was his father-in-law, out for his morning walk. The footfalls accompanied by the soft poke of a hickory cane came slowly down the hill. Then the Reverend's voice, commanding and somehow accusatory even in old age, broke the quiet, calling out, "Ah! Such a fine day!" as though the sinners of this earth did not deserve God's bounty.

Nathaniel turned and watched his approach. His body looked thin and frail picking his way along the uneven ground the way he did every morning. Behind him, a tendrill of white smoke rose from the chimney of their modest house: Elizabeth had lit the fire for

the morning meal. Such ordinary things, Nathaniel thought. The everyday events of a family at peace. If only they had seen Salem. If only they knew what he knew...

"Aye," Nathaniel answered, turning back to the river.

The old man sidled up to him. "You are out early."

"The fresh air suits me."

The old man followed Nathaniel's gaze. "Out here, where the southern horizon is more easily seen."

Nathaniel said nothing.

"All morning hath I watched you from the window," said the Reverend. "Your eyes point in one direction... One might think you missed Salem."

"Is this what you believe?"

"No."

"Then why say it?"

"Since your return you are often quiet. 'Tis natural to think, mayhap, you are recalling your time there."

"There is nothing about Salem I wish to recall. In fact—" He stopped. He was going to say he wished he'd never gone to Salem, but that went too far. In a perverse way there was some truth to what his father-in-law suspected. He missed being in Salem, yet only because up here he was helpless to do anything. From Haverhill he couldn't raise an army of voices to counter the devil's attack. He could only stand by as reports came in almost daily about the devil turning the people of Essex against one another like the mythical snake that consumed itself. "I am needed here. I am glad to have returned."

"As are we all. Yet I wonder just how much of you did return—"

"All of me returned! Must we belabor this?" Nathaniel squeezed his eyes shut and rubbed his forehead, trying to control his frayed nerves. He had slept little since returning to Haverhill earlier this month, and his temper often flared. It took only a moment or two to gain control again, and in a more subdued tone he said, "Five more are to hang."

"Mm." The Reverend gave a grim nod.

"All convicted of witchcraft. To be executed on questionable evidence, just as Goody Bishop were."

"Mayhap."

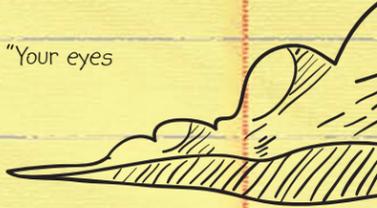
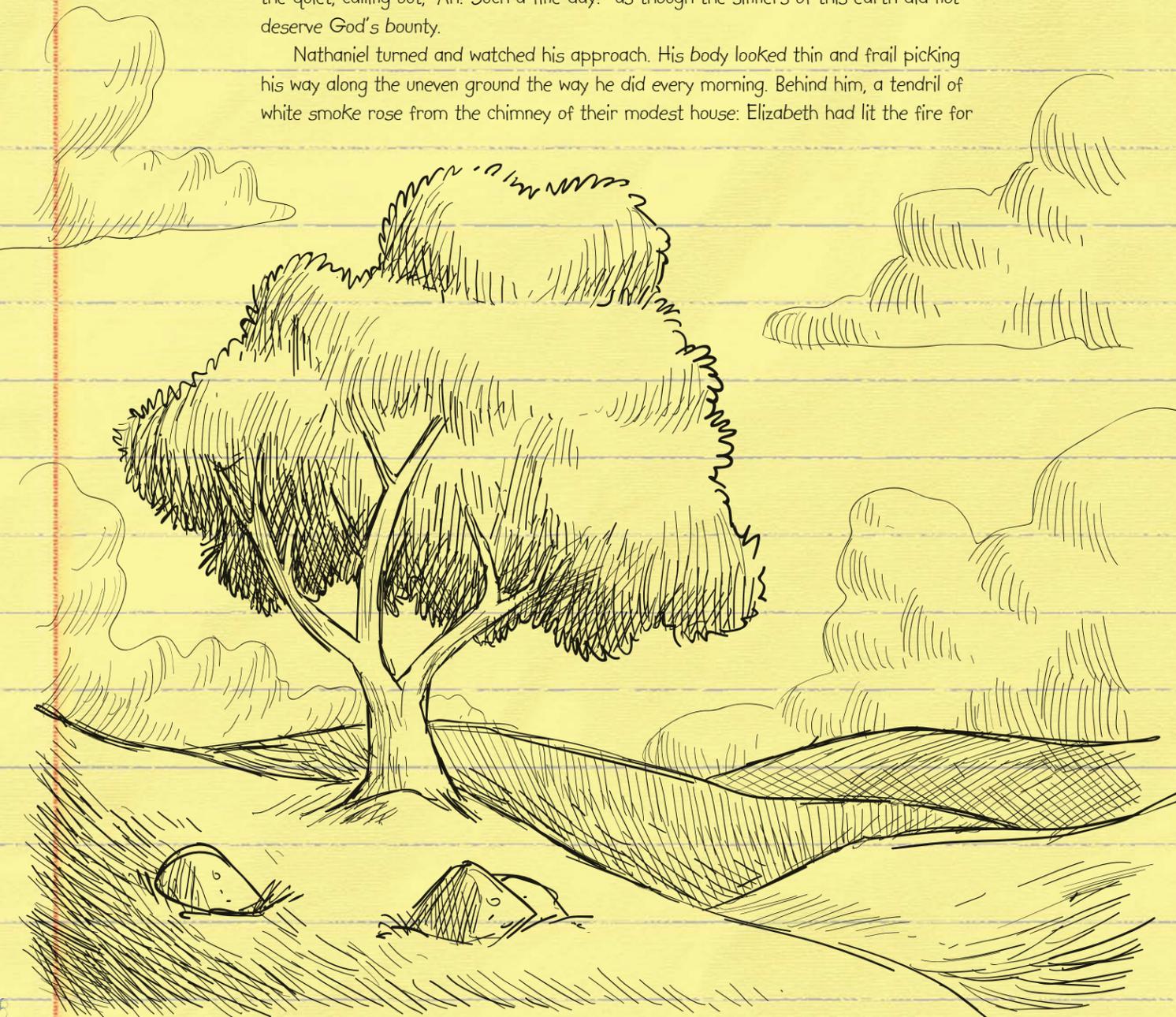
"Mayhap? Mayhap what?"

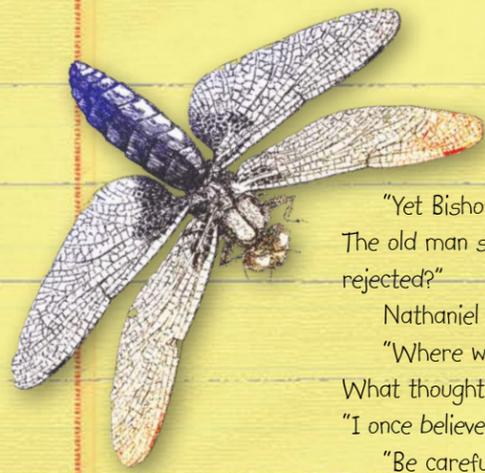
"Oh, for certain they will hang. Reverend Mather and Mr. Stoughton will see to that. 'Tis your doubts about the evidence that I question."

"How can you? 'Twere the same with these five as the Bishop woman: spectral evidence; nothing of this earth in support! Tell me, should invisible evidence make a case for hanging?"

"Then why did you quit the court, son? Why leave when you were the only voice against it?"

"I could not be part of a court that condemns without a fair trial."





"Yet Bishop's trial were no different than every other witchcraft trial in memory." The old man studied Nathaniel's face. "What say you—that the old ways should be rejected?"

Nathaniel looked away. His temper was rising again.

"Where were your voice when Goody Glover hanged in Boston four years agone? What thought you then? I recall none of these protests."

"I once believed God created our courts for enforcement of His laws. I now have doubt."

"Be careful what you say!"

Nathaniel dug into the old man's eyes with his own. "I believed we mortals could fight evil equipped only with the laws God handed down. I believed we were tasked with this. Yet of late I see a problem in this, father."

"You realize what you say is blasphemy, Na—"

"Hear me first, father. You well know I am no blasphemer. All mine days I hath followed God's Word as closely as I could. Yet I am reminded from my experience in Salem that we men are all sinners from birth—'tis a truth undisputed! Which leads me to ask: how do men fight the devil in a court of law when 'tis man's greatest flaw—his propensity to sin—that the devil uses against him?"

"By punishing that propensity when it comes to fruition, son. I hath spake on this many a time."

"Aye. Yet a man can only know a man's heart and not the devil's. A man can know the devil's goals, yet not his devious plots. How can we know these when the devil works under a cloak of invisibility? How can mere men profess to know Satan's tactics—yea, his means—in a trial conducted by men?"

"In what venue would we fight the devil if not a court? You, a judge—you should know the answer if there is any."

Nathaniel sighed. "You are right. And yet this I know not. Only not in a court. Most of what these five were charged with amounts to petty crimes for which I regularly order a day in the stocks or a fine. In any other court they would remain free men. Yet in this one we condemn them to death, and for what? Because someone declares 'Witchcraft!'" He paused. What he was about to say had troubled him all morning, and he knew it would trouble the old pastor even more. But it was a conclusion he couldn't escape, nor could he keep it to himself any longer.

"Father, listen to me. We know not where Satan's influence truly lies... which people hath truly come under his spell."

"Again I bid you caution. If mine ears hear what they seem to..."

"I hath taken all the caution I can, father. If only I could say the same of your brethren. My brethren. Yet how could they if the devil hath found his way into their own hearts?"

The old man chewed on his lip the way he did these days when he could not reconcile something with God's Word. Thirty years ago Nathaniel would have faced a tongue-lashing for what he'd just said. But in his old age the beloved pastor had mellowed. In fact, Nathaniel would have sworn the old man's views leaned closer to where Nathaniel was going with this. Yet he was still the Reverend John Ward, of whom it was once said that the very trees shook and the waters rippled from the ferocity of his voice. He would not concede so easily, only retreat to his study to think it through in prayer.

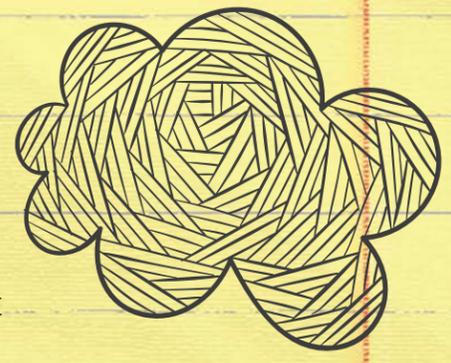
The sound of the door latch broke the silence again. Elizabeth came out and stood in the doorway, beckoning to them.

"Breakfast appears ready." The Reverend sounded relieved. "Let us save this for another time."

"Tell her I'll be right along."

As the old man three-stepped his way up to the house, Nathaniel noticed a man on horseback coming up the river road. From here he was just a shadow, but Nathaniel knew who it was by the star-shaped blaze on his horse's forehead. Soon the man was tying up to the hitching post beside the road and tipping his hat. "Good morning, magistrate."





"Good morning, Sam. What brings you so early?"  
Samuel Ayer, the town constable, came up the steep rise. From a satchel on his shoulder he dug out a letter. "It came in the post last night, too late to deliver. I thought I should bring it first thing."

"I thank thee."

"It comes from the governor."

"I see that." Nathaniel impatiently broke the seal and read the letter. When he was finished he shook his head in disgust. It was not from Governor Phips at all, but from an assistant. A bunch of niceties and vague assurances that His Honor was giving due consideration to Nathaniel's concerns. The governor had probably never even read Nathaniel's letter. His pleas had been ignored once again, just as they'd been ignored by Chief Justice Stoughton. "My words reach only deaf ears, I'm afraid."

The constable nodded, but said nothing. He was not privy to the content of any of these letters.

"Even the governor will not spare a reasoned thought on the matter," Nathaniel went on, more to himself than the constable. He looked across the river again. "Yet a paper is more easily set aside than a man..."

"I am sorry, sir," Ayer said politely.

"...Though a man will find himself in shackles more readily than a letter."

"Sir?" This last had the constable mildly alarmed.

Nathaniel ignored the man. He was gazing up at the great branches of the Worshipping Tree. Its leaves hung motionless in the still morning air. This day was going to be a hot one without any breezes—a sampling of what awaited those who did the devil's bidding. And here was this tree, towering above the rest, looking out over the river toward that warring land. From its topmost branches one probably had a clear view all the way to Salem Town itself, where the heat of damnation had been stoked in the courthouse and on Gallow's Hill. No doubt that heat could be felt from up there. Yet those same branches brought relief to anyone standing in their shadow. In Salem there was no such relief these days. In Salem all stood naked amid the scorching evil Satan had brought upon it.

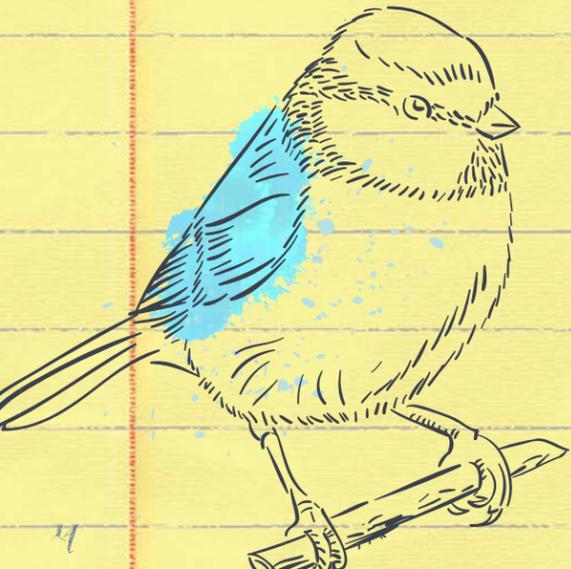
God had made this tree. He'd made it to benefit his children. To offer shelter when needed, especially when the storms were those of the heart and mind. No man in need of its protection had ever been disappointed. Through so many years the tree had stood; it would stand through this day and tomorrow, too. Even in this terrible time it would not burn or topple.

Nathaniel shook the constable's hand, bade him a good day and started up to the house. He dreaded what he had to say to his wife, but say it he must. He was going back.





*Patricia Keabchi*



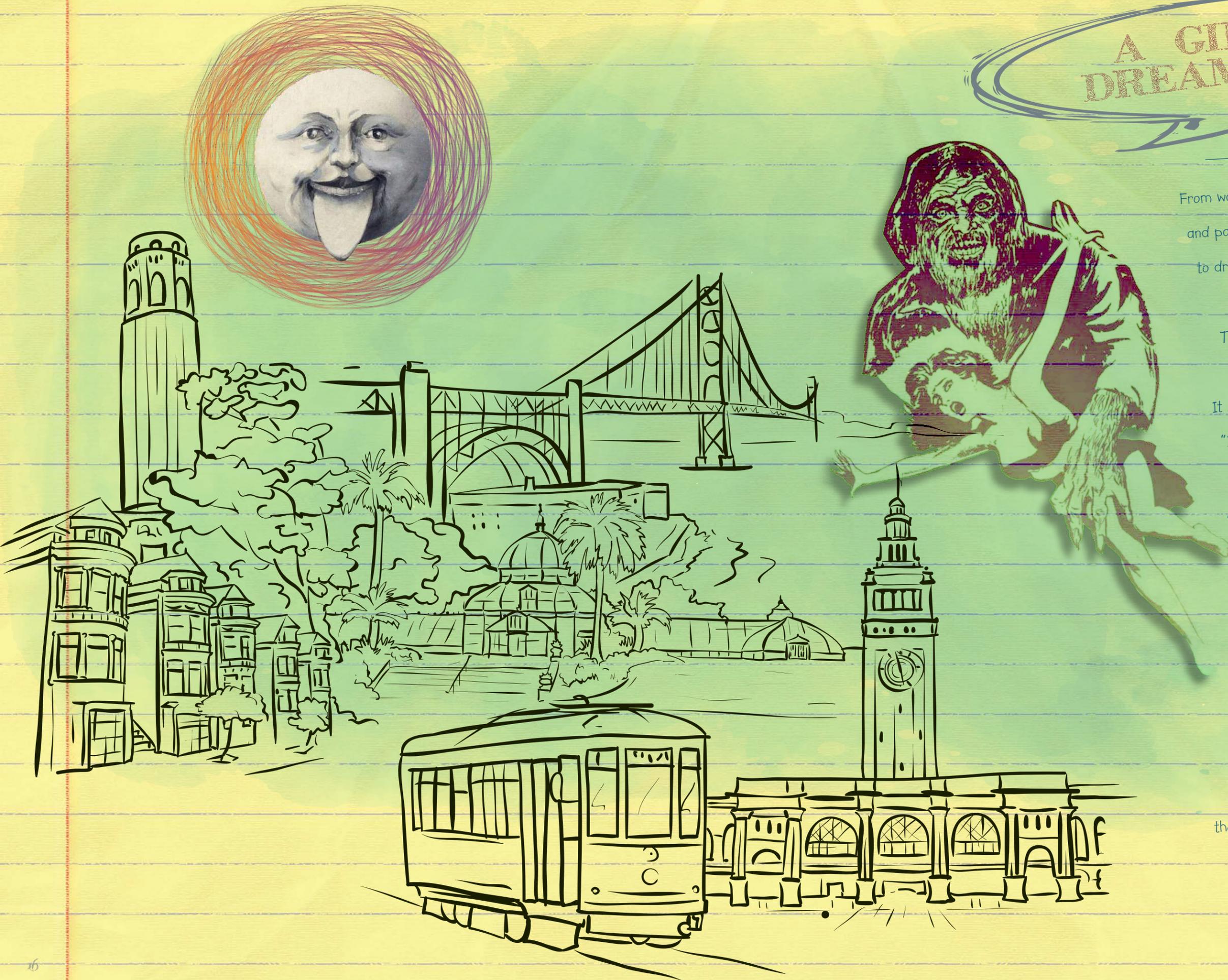
*~ Ginger Hurajt*



# A GINGER DREAMSCAPE

—Karen Brockelbank

From warmth to early morning air I step,  
and pause with hand on moisture-laden door,  
to drink in all the sights and sounds and scents  
that overwhelm my soul with ecstasy.  
The world today is filled with drowsy trees,  
all bursting forth in one last wakeful fit.  
It seems to me they're screaming with delight,  
"It's autumn time!" I hear their frenzied call  
and scan the rustling branches leaf by leaf.  
A heady, harvest smell comes barreling through,  
cajoling mounds of flaming leaves to dance.  
They leap and play, inspired by the wind,  
like graceful ballerinas' pirouette.  
The ground is soft and gives beneath my feet,  
one year's worth of silky scattered needles  
cloaks and shelters hulking mossy banks,  
to sleep again, for one more frigid spell.  
A ginger dreamscape, magical and sweet,  
the memory to last through winter's sleep.



# DALLAS

~Karen Brockelbank

It was a warm winter evening in Dallas. On this particular evening it was around 60°, and Clyde's fingers stayed warm as he sang and strummed his guitar for passing strangers. Every once in a while some people would linger, drawn to his enthusiastic performance. It was easy to see that this was a young man who thoroughly enjoyed making music.

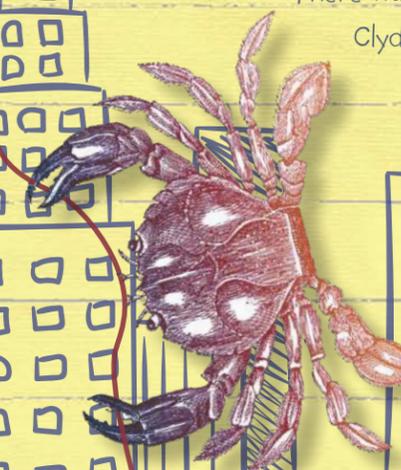
He was seated nearby a train station in downtown. At night that area was occupied by wealthy men and their ladies, dressed in stylish clothing as they went out for a night on the town. These were the beautiful people who went to plays, musicals, and classy nightclubs, walking arm in arm as they made their way through the smooth glow of the streetlights. Clyde could usually count on the men to toss a few coins into his guitar case, to impress the ladies. Tonight, especially with the warm weather to bring people outside, he knew that he would go home with pockets that jingled.

"Thank you kindly, sir!" he called out as several coins tumbled into his guitar case, and resumed the song with barely a beat missed. As darkness swallowed up the streets, Clyde knew it was time to pack up and go. He whistled as he hurried home, clutching the loose change stuffed deep into his pockets.

"Hey, Ma!" he cried, upon entering the house. "Where's Marv?"

"Oh, he's down near the Riverwalk with Maggie and her friends," she replied. "He said he wants you to meet him there."

"And I know why," he grumbled under his breath. "He wants me to meet that stupid Billie Jean." He changed his clothes quickly, grabbed a sandwich,



and dashed out the door. Determined to avoid his brother, Clyde ran down to the Riverwalk from the opposite direction. He bought a glass of beer, and hung out in the background so he could check out all the pretty girls and listen to the music. He sang along with the band, and watched them play. It was there that Marv found him.

"Baby Brother!" Marv shouted from across the dock. Clyde didn't hear him at first above the band. "Over here!"

Clyde turned to face him, "Now don't think for a second I came down here so you could blind-date me with some country girl, Marv!"

"Now just give it a chance! She's just over that way in the little grey house. Come on, Clyde!"

"Goddammit," mumbled Clyde, as he downed his beer and tossed away the glass. He marched forcefully toward the grey house. As the dock music drifted away, he heard dance music coming from a radio inside. He peeked inside one of the windows and saw several people. "Okay, so it's not a fix-up – it's just a party." He inhaled deeply and knocked on the door.

A plain-faced girl in a flowered dress answered. "Hi!" she said. "Come on in! Are you Marv's brother?"

There was no way out of it. "Um, yes, I am," answered Clyde.





"Well make yourself to home, have a glass of punch and meet everybody."

Clyde drifted inside the house. He tapped his feet a little to the dance music and hummed along. Maybe this wouldn't be so bad. Suddenly he saw a figure coming from the other side of the room. It was a shapely female form, and caught Clyde's eye.

As she came out of the kitchen holding a cup of hot chocolate, she looked straight into Clyde's stunned face. She was beyond beautiful. Her hair was full of cotton colored curls that framed her dimpled face. Her eyes were blue like the sky on a summer day, and her red mouth launched into a radiant smile. She wore a fitting, pink dress with a neckline that was slightly low and a skirt that was slightly short. "Want some hot chocolate?"

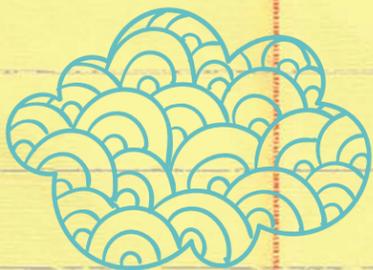
Clyde was speechless. He stuttered several times. She was a diaphanous vision of charm and allure and he instantly fell in love with her. She seemed to sense this and moved toward him, lashes flickering. It was then that the young girl who answered the door dashed across the room.

"Hey there! Bonnie, this is Clyde Barrow. Clyde, this here's my sister, Bonnie Parker."

"Pleased to meet you, Clyde," said Bonnie.



- Lesa Tran





~ Althea John

## CACOPHONY

—Karen Brockelbank

In dreams,  
silently drinking in,  
anxieties of yesterday.

Amidst mountains  
of pillows,  
a soft, whiskered,  
purring companion...  
the cat and I,  
lie intertwined.

First grey light  
reaches through the trees,  
dissolving the night,  
touching lightly the  
dreaming, resting,  
nesting birds.

Fly to stretch  
wings and words.

Singing forest,  
joyous birds.

Uproarious,  
notorious,  
divine feathered  
symphony,

Inundated by  
orchestral  
cacophony.

Awake,  
but confused,  
and shaking off sleep.  
First angry,  
then oh so very  
amused.

Amazed,  
entranced and entertained,  
as birdland celebrates  
the first gray light,  
and joyfully heralds  
the passing  
of night.



~ Anne Hopkins



~ Anne Hopkins

# THE PARK

KAREN  
BROCKELBANK

It's cold  
but I decide to walk  
against the wind,  
down to the park.

Five tiny, brown birds  
squabble together,  
around a piece of old, dried bread.  
Determinedly  
pecking,  
stubbornly  
squawking,

they remind me of

five old women  
on the last day of  
a 50% off sale.

A lone squirrel scampers lightly  
'cross my path.  
Feathered tail waving,  
nose a-quivering,  
sharp-nailed paws on sleeping ground,  
barely touching frozen grass.

What nourishment can he now find  
in such a barren land?



The path, it winds round trees and shrub,  
built solidly, of close-set brick.  
It's geometric symmetry,  
precise, exact, no flaws are seen.  
I imagine, as I walk,  
a long-ago mason.  
Carefully  
measuring,  
lovingly  
setting,  
each piece of rectangular rock  
into its proper, perfect place.

To mercy then, he doesn't know  
the sight I see, in front of me.  
A tree.

Old and gnarled,  
grand and tall,  
looming o'er the lonely path,

massive roots have  
long destroyed  
the rigid lines of masonry,

botanical toes  
wrest, effortless,  
up through the man-made obstacle,

rippling helpless,  
inanimate brick,  
rapidly reclaiming ground.

Seeming to smile through its leaves, at me,  
I hear a whispering voice:

"Only a sapling, long ago,  
but now, you see, victorious.  
No small brick road can stunt my growth.  
I am a living, moving tree..."

The cold wind bites my nose  
but I  
pay it no heed.  
I feel as free  
as the birds, and the squirrel,  
and the wise old tree

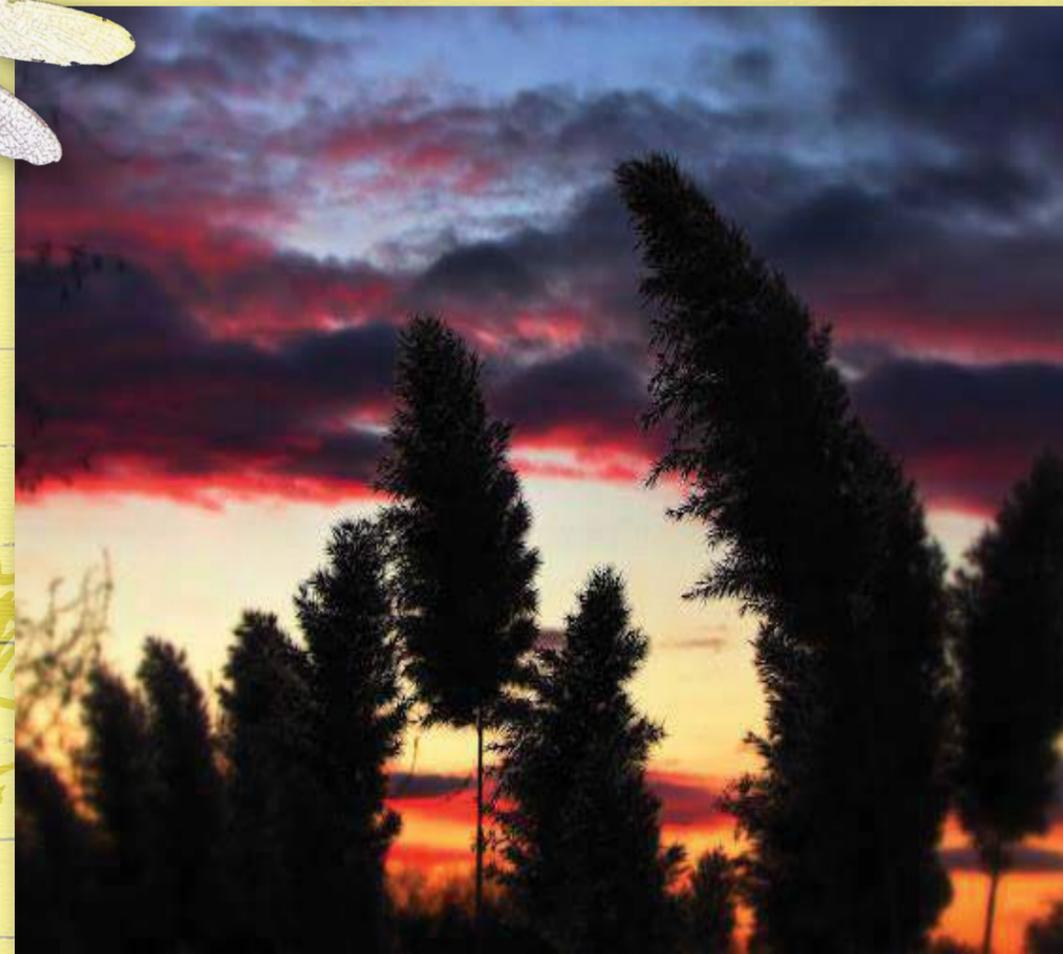


Jose Saul Joubert



Raul Lozada

~Grant Tyler Bellino



~Jose Saul Joubert

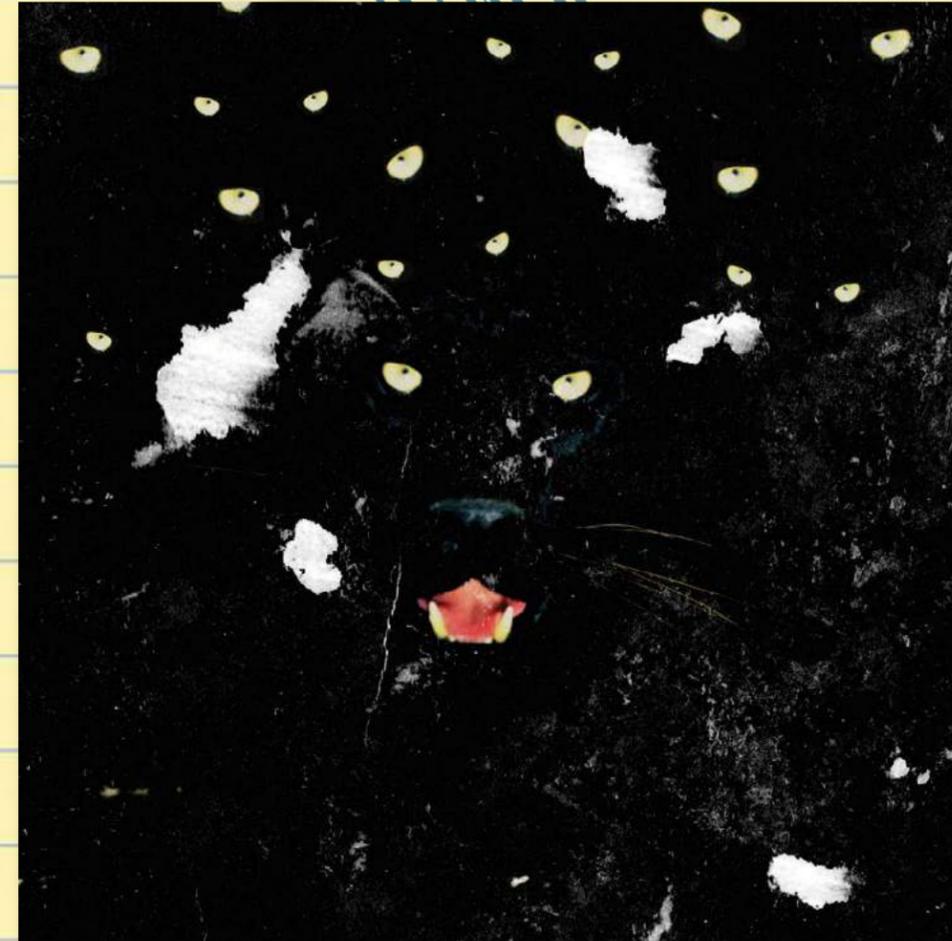
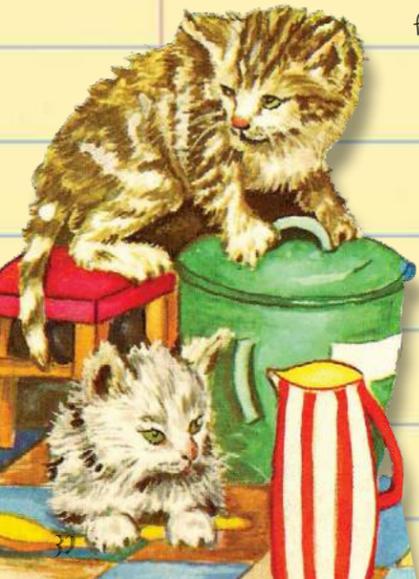
# LOBA PACÍFICA



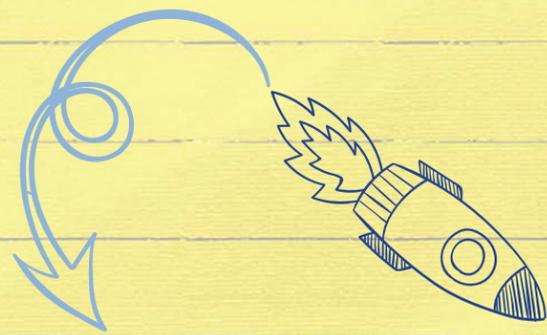
- Yumilda Garcia

So I wake up. She whispers, "Good morning"  
Now let's open up our eyes and feel the earth breathe.  
Gently place your feet on the souls who rest beneath you. Today nothing shall escape you.  
As you take a look at the muse in the mirror, say, "hello me" and point to thee.  
You clearly see there is no one like me - like you - like me - like you.  
Time to dress me up, like me - like you.  
Not for his eyes.  
Not like my homegirls at school.  
Not like the co-workers at work who always on point with their shoes.  
Not like the chicks I see on the media, who post for some likes and some comments.  
Dress me up like me, like you, like me in the mirror.  
I am her, she is I, and I am she, and when the three become one, we are able to save lives on a daily.  
When her smile rose up and said thank you to a server who handed her, her coffee - she saved thee.  
When she held the door for someone other than she, they said thank you- they saved she.  
As I held my composure from flicking them the finger during rush hour - that saved we.

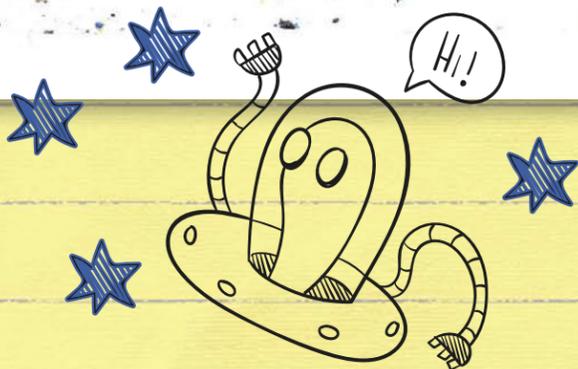
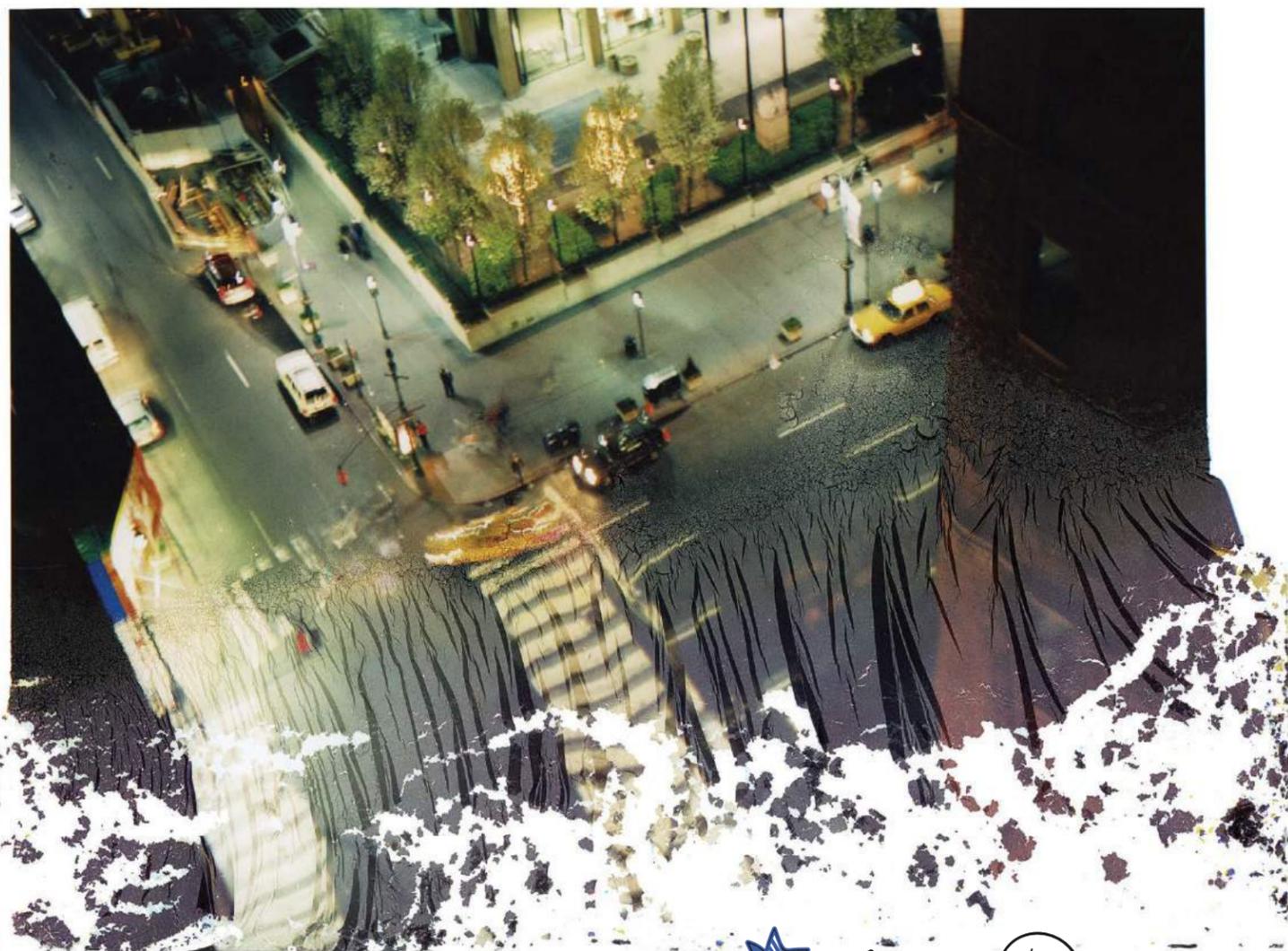
She was taught a valuable equation. An equation so simplified. It goes, if you subtract  
from life - the I and the you, you would get- it's not about me and its not about you-  
then summed it all up and you'd see, it is equally for me and for you.  
As the sun becomes restless, as did I. Time to rest my beautiful eyes. Rest just  
enough so she can charge up her powers.  
Because tomorrow when she tells me, "Good morning", I'll have the energy to save  
all lives that matter.



- Sam Larsen

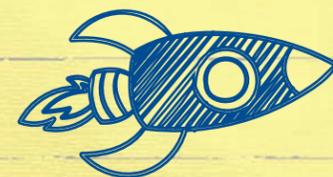


— Anne Hopkins



## Last Day

— Crish Pettinati



I died today.  
All told, it was a great day. I spent it with family and friends, eating all of my favorite foods, remembering the good times and letting the bad ones go. There were tears, but they paled in comparison to the laughter.  
"Auntie?" Lisa looked at me with her big brown eyes. "Do you really have to go?"

I paused, scanning the crowd for my sister. This was not a conversation that I wanted to have. Lisa had just turned six, so my sister had told her I was going on a long trip and wouldn't be back for a while. She thought it would be easier to explain everything later, when Lisa was older.

Of course, Sarah's nowhere to be found. Just my luck. I put a big smile on my face and held Lisa's hands. "Yeah, sweetie. I have to. I..."

"There you are!" Brian, my brother-in-law, swept in, giving me a nervous smile. "I thought you'd run off with your cousins."

"No, Daddy. I wanted to ask Auntie why she was going away and why Mommy looked so sad."

I flinched, but Brian, a social worker, kept a smile on his face. "Oh, honey... Auntie's taking a long trip. You know how she got sick?" Lisa nodded, but still looked unsure. "Well, her trip is part of that."

"Oh!" She turned to me with a smile. "When you feel better, you're coming home. Right, Auntie?"

Brian froze. Outright lying to his child was beyond him, so it fell to me. "Of course, Lisa! I couldn't stay away from my favorite niece forever, now could I?" I forced a smile onto my face and into my voice.

Grinning from ear to ear, Lisa threw her arms around me with a squeal. "Yay! I hope you have a good trip, Auntie!"

I hugged her back, eyeing Brian, who looked away. "Thanks, sweetie. Why don't you go play with your cousins?"

"Okay!" Lisa scampered off, leaving me with Brian. He was quiet for several moments.

"You know you don't have to do this. There are other things..."

"Brian." My voice turned to steel. "You know why I chose this." I looked to where Lisa had run off to, sighing. "If I stuck around, let myself wither away, would it be any less hard on them?"

Would it be worse than a little white lie?"

He looked at me again, a wry quirk to his lips. "Not exactly a little white lie, but..." He exhaled, running his hand through his hair. "I know why you're doing it, and... it's the right decision." He chuckled. "I guess I'm just more of a coward than you are."

"Nah," I replied, softening my voice. "You've got the harder job. But I know you'll raise them right, and, one day, they'll be old enough to be told the truth."

Nodding, Brian took a step away, craning his head towards where the kids were playing. "Maybe. I wouldn't have the strength to make the decision you made." He looked at me again, and I caught a glimpse of tears in his eyes. "I know Sarah won't say it, but she's proud of you. We all are."

I started to reply, but there was a shriek from the children and Brian, who'd always been the peacekeeper, started moving away. "We'll talk later." I nodded and sat back in my seat, watching him run after the kids.

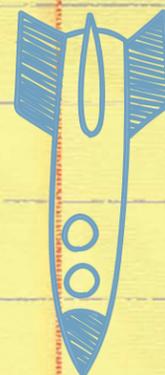
It had been a common refrain of the day: Everyone said my parents — long gone ahead of me — would be proud of my decision, though my brother and sister had to add the caveat that it was hard to explain to my nieces and nephews that their aunt was going away. Brian had asked once why I'd never had a serious relationship. I gave him some lame excuse, but the truth was I'd always been afraid of losing myself — that someone or something else would define me.

Now, with this, I'm glad I don't have a husband or children. Or pets, for that matter. It would be too hard to say goodbye, and I'd lose my courage.

My courage is one of the few things the cancer has left me. Or will, really, since the tumor hasn't grown enough to take away my sight or my reflexes yet. When the terminal diagnosis came in, even though it would be years before it killed me, my only thought was to end it all well, to not go out of this life weak and a burden.

People already had too many things to worry about. I didn't want to be one of them.

When the party was over and everyone but my family was gone, I sat down with them and the lawyers to sign my name to the paperwork giving them legal ownership of all my worldly possessions, save for a few photos I was taking with me and my old, worn teddy bear.



"Why the hell are you taking that with you?" Scott, my brother, interjected. I could see he was starting to crumble, now that things were being finalized.

I'd had him since I was six, and he'd been through all my life's ups and downs. Why wouldn't he be with me through this next journey?

I stood up and wrapped my arms around Scott. "Everywhere I've been, he's been with me. He's home. He's family. And it means you'll always be with me, too." My brother sniffled hard and I could feel his shoulders shake. I held him for a bit, and, eventually, Grace came over to comfort her husband, giving me a look of apology.

I started to say something, but held back. What was the point? Grace lost a brother when she was young to leukemia. She knew what it was like for those who got left behind and she knew that this wasn't my fault, just the hand that had been dealt to me. Her apology wasn't because Scott was upset, but because she was one of the few who had any idea what I was feeling.

After it was all finalized, I wished them well, one last time, and climbed into the car, waiting outside. Somehow, I managed to keep composed, even as they cried and mourned. We pulled away and that's when my tears started. I couldn't stop them, and I didn't want to. Everything I knew was behind me, growing smaller in the distance as the tires whirred, taking me away on my last earthly trip.

Thankfully, someone had the foresight to make sure a counselor - Ms. Young - was with me, there to reassure me, when the tears began to abate, that I was making the right choice. I'd been warned that many people in my situation had lost their nerve, forcing the car to go back and leading to ridiculous amounts of paperwork and difficult feelings and explanations for those who had already said farewell.

It was bad enough already. How could I possibly put that on everyone? I leaned against Ms. Young, and she held me letting me cry into her shoulder until I exhausted myself and fell asleep.

When we arrived, she gently woke me - "We're here." - and I slowly got out of the car. I took in my surroundings and squared my shoulders, trying to meet my destiny with a brave face. A man, dressed in a smart uniform, approached me, hand outstretched.

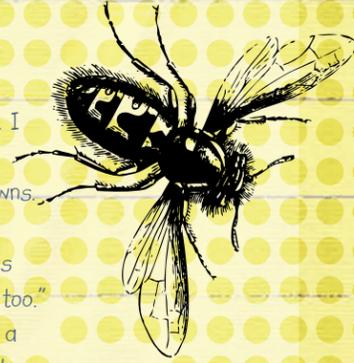
I shook it and he introduced himself as Staff Sergeant Thompson. I recognized the name from some of the paperwork I'd signed earlier in the week. He brought me to a quiet bungalow - where I'd spend my last evening as a civilian - leaving me to my thoughts.

Five years ago, when the invasion occurred, the weapons used by the alien force had wiped out five percent of humanity and left many survivors with cancer from the radiation. As one of the unlucky who was still healthy enough to fight, it was my honor and privilege to volunteer for the Marines, joining their assault troops fighting the alien aggressors at the edge of the solar system.

It was a one-way trip. Either you died, defending the Earth, or you didn't have enough years left to make it home. Who better to send than the terminally - but still functional - ill?

I stared out the window at the darkening sky above. The stars had never been so close. After tomorrow, they'd be even closer. I closed my eyes and dreamed of home.

It wouldn't be the last time, but it sure felt like it.



Ray Florent



the anatomy of ghosts

- COURTNEY MORIN



A FLEETING KISS OF BREATH  
ON THE BACK OF SNOW-  
TOUCHED NECKS; LIPS  
LIKE FIRE,  
SPINE MORE STAIRS  
THAN COLUMN.  
THE VELVET NIGHT  
AN APPARITION OF WHITE  
DRESS, MORE GOSSAMER  
THAN OPAQUE.

MORE PEACH ROSE AND  
SHADOW THAN SOLID.  
SHE IS WITCHCRAFT  
ON YOUR PALMS  
AND ANCIENT LORE  
ON YOUR TONGUE.  
YOU WILL TRY TO LEARN  
HER WAVES; THE CRESTS  
OF SAND DUNES—THE SHATTERING

OF GLASS IN HER EYES,  
THE WAY HER PETALS FALL OPEN  
NOT WITH RAINDROP SEAS  
BUT A VIOLET TOUCH,  
MORE HURRICANE THAN  
SUNSHINE. DO NOT GENTLE  
YOUR FINGERS, EXCAVATE  
HER BONES, FIND  
THE STARS BENEATH

HER SKIN. BATHE IN THE DARK-  
NESS OF HER MIND.  
THIS IS THE ANATOMY  
OF GHOSTS. EYES HEAVY  
WITH MELANCHOLY,  
RIBCAGE A LABYRINTHINE  
AFFAIR—MAKE LOVE  
TO HER MIND  
AND HER FLESH WILL FOLLOW.



Ray Florent



Ray Florent

# Thank You, Crow

Ginger Hurajt

treetop spy  
you case the street  
black sails open and you fall  
with a wet laundry flap

strutting silhouette  
boss of the world  
raucous caw

an opportunist  
you carry away the dead  
bit by bit

swallow that darkness  
take it with you  
wing away the silence





**THE  
MIDWIFE  
OF TRAGEDY**  
COURTNEY MORIN



WHAT IS THIS SELF  
MYSELF, ME, I: A GIRL, MORE SALT  
THAN SUGAR, SOME HONEY  
LIPS, A MIND MORE PRISON:  
EVERYTHING IS ALL LOCKED UP  
THESE RUSTING BONES  
THESE 3 A.M. THOUGHTS  
THIS BODY THAT IS ALL OCEAN  
AND BLOOD, AND NOTHING  
BUT WISHBONE.

CATHARSIS ON MY FINGERS  
NOSTALGIA THE CROOK OF MY SPINE.

THERE IS NO ESCAPING THE BODY,  
THE SUN SHADOWED WAVES OF DESPAIR,  
OTHER THAN TO DEPART  
THE CRESTS AND CRASHES  
WITH A SHIP.



I GO TO MEET THE FERRYMAN,  
HE WILL CARRY ME TO THE AFTERLIFE:  
AFTER THIS LIFE, OUT OF THIS BODY  
OF STARDUST AND SCARS  
OF HALF EATEN BONE,  
OF LOST TONGUES.



I WILL SPEAK NO MORE,  
NOT OF THIS PLACE,  
OR THIS SADNESS,  
OR THIS DISAPPOINTMENT  
THAT RESTS ON MY FEET LIKE OBSIDIAN  
SLABS. I HAVE TIRED THIS BODY,  
TIRED OF AIMLESS WANDERINGS  
OF THE MIND  
AND THE FLESH  
AND THE FEAR OF OTHER'S FLESH.

OH WHAT AM I IF I AM NOT FEAR?  
THE FERRYMAN KNOWS OF THIS,  
KNOWS OF THESE SINS  
IN MY ATOMS, THE LACK OF LIFE  
NOT LIVED. FEAR IS THE MIDWIFE  
OF TRAGEDY; THE KINDLE OF VIOLENCE,  
THE RAIN TO THE FLAME OF COURAGE.  
IT SPITS ON THE STARDUST IN OUR VEINS.

FEAR IS ALL THAT I AM,  
IT IS THE COUSIN OF MELANCHOLY,  
TOGETHER THEY MAKE ME DEATH,  
BUT I DO NOT PERISH. THE FERRYMAN  
REACHES OUT AN OPEN PALM  
AND HYSTERIA ECHOES BENEATH MY SKIN.



WHAT IS THIS SELF  
BUT AN ABSURD EXISTENCE?  
I LET DEATH PASS BY  
AND KEEP THIS BODY  
BECAUSE NO MATTER  
THE FEAR OF LIVING  
I FEAR DYING  
EVEN MORE.



i fear i have  
become the universe

- COURTNEY MORIN

OUR LIPS DANCE AND MY HEART  
REMAINS STAGNANT.  
YOU PAINT LUST ON MY NECK  
IN BLACKBERRY KISSES - YOUR BREATH  
A SUMMER AFTERNOON  
- YOUR HANDS THE SUN  
AFTER A SNOWSTORM,  
BUT NOT EVEN YOUR SUPERNOVA  
SOUL CAN THAW MY HEART.

I AM SEVEN YEARS OF WINTER.  
I HAVE FORGOTTEN WHAT DESIRE  
TASTES LIKE, HOW BLOOD  
BECOMES A LIVE WIRE READY  
TO CATCH FIRE. OR PERHAPS I  
HAVE NEVER KNOWN FLESH  
AS FRAGILE AS BUTTERFLY WINGS  
AND PASSION AS VOLATILE  
AS AN EARLY AUTUMN HURRICANE.

I FEAR I HAVE BECOME THE UNIVERSE  
FILLED WITH AN UNBEARABLE VASTNESS  
FOR THE THINGS I HAVE DONE  
FOR EVERYTHING I WISH I HAD.

I AM ASLEEP BENEATH  
THE ICEBERGS OF THE ARCTIC.  
BLUE SKIN - BLUE BLOOD  
EVERYTHING IS THE COLOR OF SADNESS.

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT I AM  
IF I AM NOT SADNESS.  
SADNESS WRAPPED AROUND YOU LIKE  
IVY. I BREAK WINDOWS WITH WORDS  
AND DEVOUR LIGHT LIKE A BLACK HOLE.

MY MIND IS AN ABANDONED  
HOUSE WITH A NOTICE  
ON THE FRONT DOOR.  
HOLLOW WALLS AND MOLDED  
FLOORS. IT IS ALWAYS DECEMBER  
INSIDE OF ME.

SO I LEAVE  
BEFORE SPRING -  
BEFORE YOU REALIZE  
THAT I AM NOT A SEASON,  
I AM AN ETERNITY.

— Janelly Echevarria



— Janelly Echevarria





“Woe”

—WALTER TORRES

YOU WERE LIKE WAFFLES AFTER A NIGHT OF DRINKING  
THAT FEELING THAT ONE CAN NEVER DESCRIBE  
BUT ALWAYS LOVED FEELING.

THAT GASP OF AIR

WHEN ONE TRAVELS TO DEEP IN THE WATER AND THE SURFACE SEEMS FOREVER FAR.

THE EXCITEMENT OF MY EVERYDAY PARTY

I LOVED YOU SO MUCH THAT I FORGOT TO LOVE MYSELF

BUT THAT'S OK.

BECAUSE I REALLY HOPE THAT I WAKE UP TO THAT SWEET SMELL OF WAFFLES IN THE MORNING...

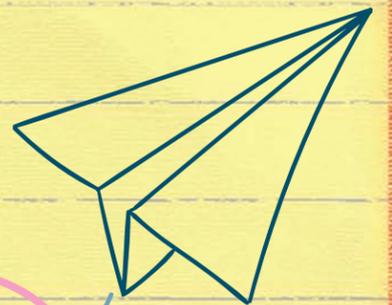


Dear Child

—Jennifer  
Jean Fay

O DEAR CHILD, MY BEAUTIFUL GIRL:  
O DEAR CHILD, FOR SHE IS MY WORLD.  
THE NAME YOU BEAR IS TRUE,  
YOU ARE A MOST PRECIOUS ONE:  
AWAKENING MY LIFE IS WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.  
YOU ARE MY EVERYTHING, AND MY SUN  
A CHILD BORN OUT OF PASSION  
OUT OF ENMITY, SUCH A BEAUTIFUL CREATION  
AN ANGEL OF LIGHT: NOTHING LESS THAN A DELIGHT  
YOU ARE SO SWEET AND BRIGHT  
FROM THE MOMENT YOU WERE PUT INTO MY ARMS,  
I WANTED TO KEEP YOU SAFE FROM HARM

AND FROM THE VERY START:  
IN ITS ENTIRETY, SHE STOLE MY WHOLE HEART  
GAZING UPON YOUR HAZEL EYES,  
I SEE ONLY TRUTH AND NO LIES.  
LIKE AN AMBER WAVE THAT MEETS A DEEP FOREST:  
THERE IS NO DOUBTING THE DEEP CONNECTION BETWEEN US.  
WITH DARK GOLDEN LOCKS FLOWING LIKE A RIVER, AND CHARMING EYES TO MATCH,  
UNTO MY CHEST, YOU WOULD THEN LATCH.  
A MARK OF BEAUTY NEAR YOUR BROW,  
LOOKING INTO YOUR SOUL, YOUR INNOCENCE SHOWS.  
THE MEANING OF YOUR NAME  
IS THE TITLE JUST THE SAME.





# HOLY LAND

~ Courtney Morin

I COLLECT SCARS  
THE WAY A PILLOW COLLECTS DREAMS.  
WE COMPARE THE TRAGEDIES OF MY HOST BODY.  
I AM MERELY A VISITOR IN THIS SKIN,  
A WASTELAND OF SILVER CYPHERS, SOME RAISED,  
MOST CONCAVE: I THINK THIS IS HOW IT BEGINS.  
THE MADNESS OF CREATION.  
I GAVE BIRTH TO THIS BODY — ITS ACTIONS.  
I AM THE MOTHER  
TO ITS GRAVEYARD, TO ITS HOLLOW BONES.  
I HAVE FILLED IT WITH MELANCHOLY,  
WITH POE AND PLATH AND WOOLF.  
THIS IS THE WAY OF WICKED.  
THIS FLESH KNOWS MY SINS: IT CARRIES OCEANS  
OF STARDUST RAIN. I AM THE SCULPTOR,  
I FILL VEINS WITH CONCRETE AND STEEL,  
I WRAP MY MIND TIGHT IN CATTLE WIRE.  
THIS BODY WILL BE A MONUMENT,  
GET ON YOUR KNEES  
PRAY TO MY COSMOS.  
I AM THE GODDESS AND THE TEMPLE,  
I OWN THIS HOLY LAND  
AND ONLY I CAN DESECRATE IT.

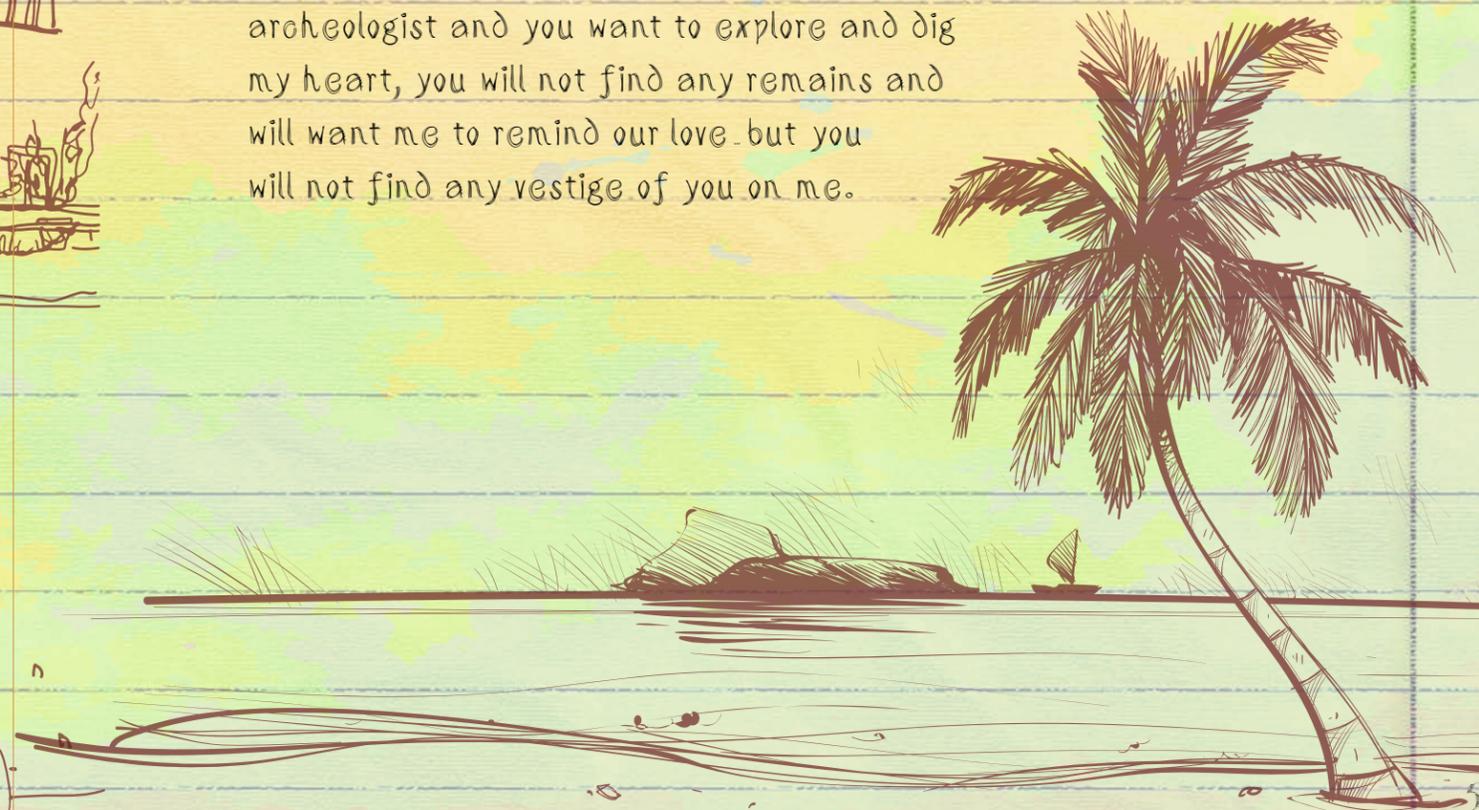
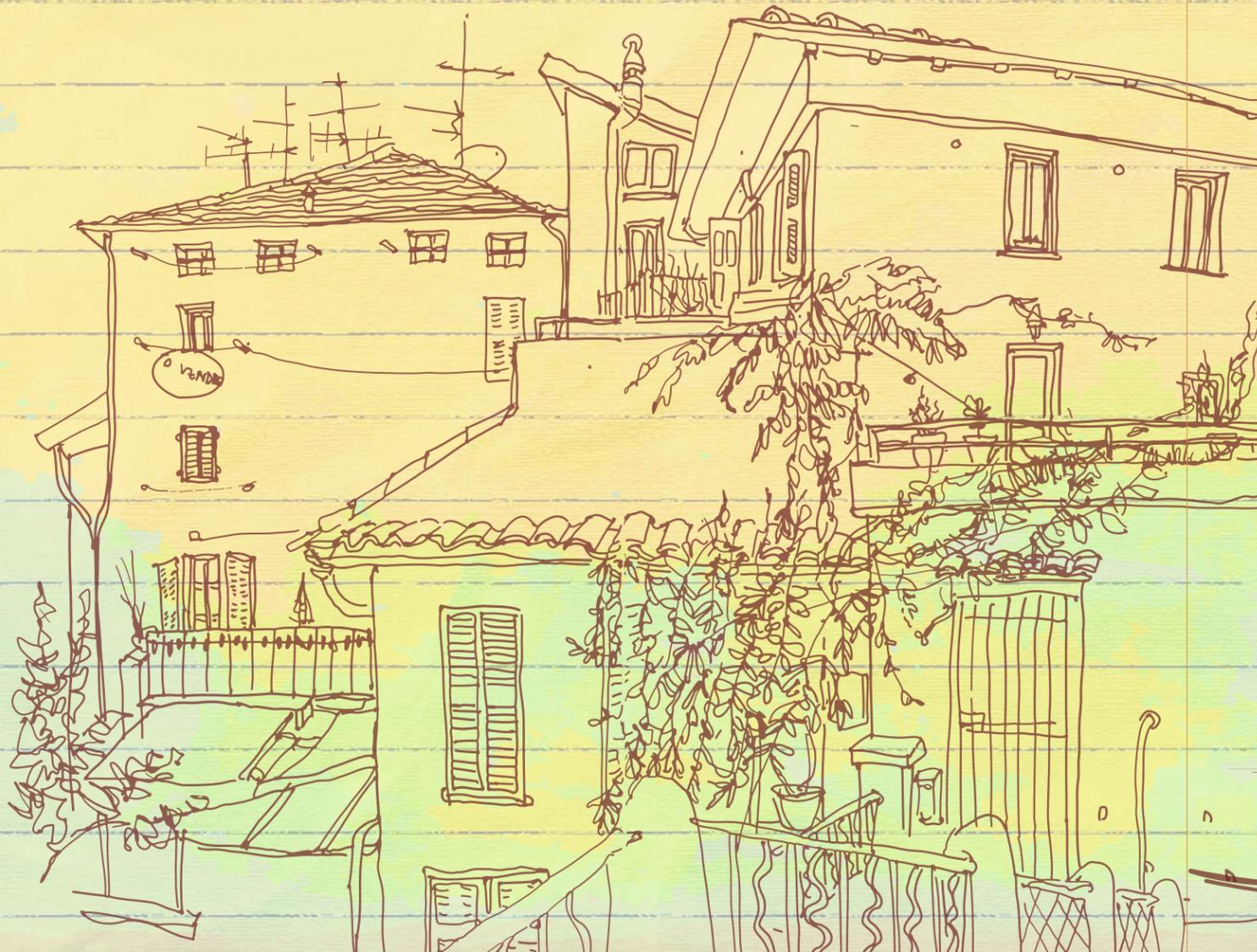


REMINDS  
AND  
REMAINS  
- FERGIE NELL BATISTA

I can't keep the reminds and remains of you in me. They get erased like letters written with love in the sand, by deep and blue oceanic waters coming to the shore of my mind. They drown in the deep blue ocean, and nobody can rescue them. Even if it was a beautiful land filled with pleasant scented flowers and caressing winds that touched my skin, or it was a blank sheet that got your face drawn in it with blood spilled from my furiously beating heart. You dig in the woods, took the fragments and buried them deep to prevent them from being lost and destroyed by the catastrophism of my mind savage wilderness but still, they are getting deleted, rotten, oxidized and now I find them crumbling, trembling and falling.

How deep did you entomb your love inside the core and roots of my heart? It wasn't though, as deep as you saw. Because whichever piece of you that was still inside me is being destroyed. It's disappearing and fading from my mind like cigarette's smoke.

If one day, you come as curious as an archeologist and you want to explore and dig my heart, you will not find any remains and will want me to remind our love but you will not find any vestige of you on me.



I BLEED  
RED  
- WALTER TORRES

I am Latino  
I am Hispanic  
I am American  
And I bleed red

I speak Spanish  
But I can learn your language  
And any other one I choose  
My tongue rolls its r's  
And my voice is naturally loud  
And still I bleed red

I'm all over the map  
And I'm able to adapt  
I've climbed trees for plantains  
And some of my family have come here on trains  
And yet I bleed red

I listen to reggaeton  
And move my hips "con mucho sazón"  
I've drunk at an early age  
I've burst out in Rage  
And yet I still bleed red

I have loved  
And I have lost  
As we all  
"Señora" Rodriguez  
and "Señora" Arias  
My heart was once theirs  
But I didn't play fair  
And still I bleed red

We all seek happiness  
And at times end up with sadness  
Your mother loves you  
As much, as mine loves me  
My mother worries, as much as yours does too  
And still we bleed red

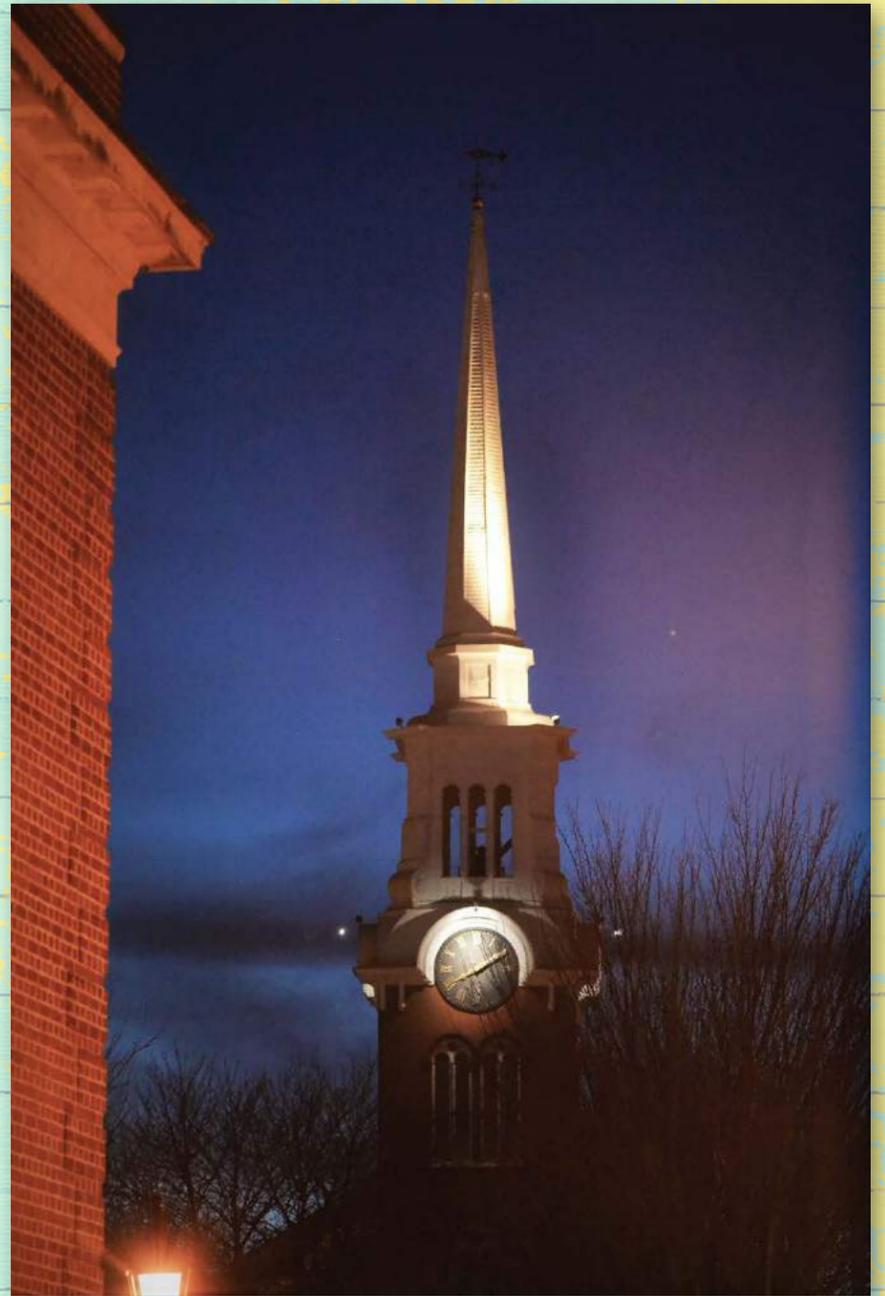
You cut me  
You spit on me; you ask me to leave  
And I still bleed red  
I cut you, I spit on you  
And yet you. Bleed Red.



~ Jacob Risacher



~ Ginger Hurajt



~ Patricia Ketabchi





*- Noah Greenstein*



*- Cynthia Arias*

# CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

**Cinthia Arias** is a young digital artist majoring in Business Transfer. She spends her time making fantasy illustrations. When boredom strikes, it's hard to stop her from doodling all over her class notes. Keeping a sketchbook is a must at all times.

**Fergie Nell Batista** is a Computer Science student who writes poetry and takes photographs as her hobby. When she was 11 years old, she realized that during moments of inspiration, her mind became cloudy, and the only way of getting rid of her thoughts was writing them. She wanted to write a book of poetry, so she started her own blog. Then she deleted it to make something better and stood away from poetry for a while until a Guatemalan friend of hers asked her to be an administrator of the Facebook page where she published poetry. She is still writing, and now she combines her writing with photographs and publishes them in her social media.

**Grant Tyler Bellino** enjoys adventuring through lukewarm rain showers, writing through the medium of free association. With his loyal journal and riveting pen, he writes poetry, short stories, and screenplays; he is currently preparing for his eventual emergence into the realm of the novel. He is a philosophy major at NECC. Philosophy has influenced his works pertaining to love, power, self-identity, relationships, history, and the 'subjective v. objective experience'. He plans to teach History as a college professor, continuing to write along the way.

**Karen Brockelbank** is a native of Georgetown, MA. A self-proclaimed "workforce-dropout" (having been laid off approximately eight times this century), she has returned to college to nurture her life-long interest in writing, in addition to pursuing other artistic talents. An avid lover of history and classic-film, Karen enjoys exploring Boston and taking the occasional trip to New York City.

**Janely Echevarria** has a broad range of influences. It comes from people, places, emotions, history, and so much more. Although she works with abstract art, she also dabbles with realism and figure art. She enjoys being an observer because it often creates ideas in her head for her potential pieces. Art in her opinion is considered a passionate teamwork of heart and mind. She believes that art will always live forever because inspiration never dies; she believes this is one of the key elements when creating a piece. Like all things, practice makes perfect, and for years that's what she's been doing with art. As time went along, she expanded her range of media as well as her way of thinking. The best part is, she believes there is always still so much more to expand on. Art is the landmark to a soul.

**Jennifer Joan Fay** has been writing poetry since she was seven and has always kept a journal. Over two decades of her life writing has been her passion, whether it be song lyrics, poetry, short stories, articles, or her dreams. She initially came to NECC as a journalism major and had several of her articles published in the college newspaper. Additionally, she has had articles published in the past in both *TV Guide* and the *Lowell Sun*. She is currently a psychology major, very motivated, and a single mom of two. She has overcome many obstacles in her life, and her strength always shines through and is a true inspiration. Her poem is written about her beloved daughter.

**Ray Florent** has served on the Student Senate and has been very involved with all sorts of groups on campus along with fundraising for local charities. Ray is a well-known person on campus who is also a former commencement speaker at NECC. He is still attending the college and works at the school in the Wellness and Fitness Center in the D building on the Haverhill campus.

**Yunilda Garcia** experiences opposing qualities in her nature: the desire for system, concentration, step-by-step progress, and the urge for change and new philosophies. Yunilda experiences a strong sense of obligation and empathy for those in less fortunate circumstances, but does not allow her sensitive feelings for the suffering of others to override analysis and good judgment, or she finds herself personally involved in their troubled situations. Yunilda has compassion for humanity, which must be objective and universal, and would offset any selfish, self-pitying, intolerant, or excessively sympathetic tendencies.

Winner of multiple photography awards, **Noah Greenstein** is a 21 year-old student at NECC. Noah uses his digital photography skills to capture the beauty and personality of the region and its people. His photos often provide thoughtful views of common sites and activities. One of Noah's photos was recently chosen for the new mural at the NECC Lawrence campus. He was also a contributor to the *Tri-Town Transcript* newspaper for several years with images that reflected local people and popular events. Noah is also an actor, theatre technician, and stage manager for several regional theatre programs. During the school year, he works in a Haverhill afterschool program where he is able to share his creative ideas and skills with kids in grades K through 7.

**Anne Hopkins** was born in upstate New York and moved to Massachusetts while a young child. She attended UMass Lowell and studied under Arno Minkkinnen and Mark Eshbaugh where she fell in love with the magic and science of photography. Upon graduation, she worked for many years in a color lab as well as a custom black and white lab. With digital photography becoming more and more prevalent, she focused her attentions on more traditional materials, and in 2009, she discovered a process in which it was possible to lift and transfer the dyes of a chromogenic print (commonly known as a C-Print) to veil and manipulate them. She has continued to explore the possibilities with this process as a means to illustrate the way that our perception and memories are transformed by our own experiences and interpretations. She is an eternal optimist and sees the glass as having plenty.

**Ginger Hurajt** teaches in the English Department, writes poetry, and is taking a Digital Photography class. She enjoys looking at the world through different lenses.

**Althea John** is a Native American photographer of the Diné Tribe, exploring all styles of photography, from natural lighting portraits and studio lighting portraits to news photography. She is focused on highlighting issues facing Indigenous Tribes of the world and she wants to show the world that Indigenous Tribes still exist and are holding on to their ways of life and what they stand for. "We are still here."

**Jose Saul Joubert** is a fine arts major who does photography, drawings, sculptures, and studies ancient history for fun. Jose is currently part of the Art club and *Parnassus* staff. He now boxes out of Haverhill Downtown boxing and had his first fight in March in Kansas City in a 3rd round loss. He is heavily inspired by art and uses it to express himself. He enjoys museums, especially the Museum of Fine Arts.

**Patricia Ketabchi** was born in North Reading, MA in 1956. She is one of eight children born to Bill and Estelle Weir. After graduating from high school, she headed for NECC and graduated in 1977 with a degree in Liberal Arts. She returned to NECC in 2013 and completed a degree in Business Management at the age of 58. Patricia is a member of Alpha Beta Gamma and graduated with honors. A great champion of the college, Patricia was thrilled to find employment in Enrollment Services where she enjoys the day to day contact with students. Patricia has enjoyed careers in hotel management and the airline industry. A lover of travel and culture, she has travelled to many parts of the world. Currently, Patricia is enjoying a digital photography class at NECC, a lifelong hobby.

**Sam Larsen** designs album artwork for artists such as Rick Ross, Young Thug, Lil Uzi Vert, Lil Durk, and many more. He also designed Lil Durk's clothing line and is still currently designing clothing for their team.

There are many great artists who develop technique and skill throughout their lives, but when it comes to interpretation of the events within one's life one in particular is **Raul Lozada**, born November 20, 1996. Growing up in the town of Lawrence to an impoverished but hardworking family, hardships were many but being bombarded with daily amounts of cartoon violence and historical documentaries helped influence the young Raul to pursue the arts. As with all young men and women, the spirit of rebellion and speaking out was key, and musicians within the punk and metal sub genres have greatly impacted the visual style including such artists as Shawn Kerri, Robert Crumb, and Vaughn Bode, whose impact is greatly embedded. Besides the artistic inspiration, Raul also has the support of his friends Janely, Allen, Anthony, Alex, and Nick for pushing the young man towards a future in the Arts.

**Courtney Morin** is a lover of words, a chronic optimistic pessimist, an introverted anxiety ridden extrovert, and clearly an ocean of contradictions. Most days she is more wishful thinking than reality and can never quiet her mind; thus she is compelled to confess all to pen and paper. She is currently majoring in Liberal Arts at NECC and plans to transfer to a four-year college as a Philosophy major where she hopes to strengthen her resume for law schools. At the end of the day her only hope is that she did her best to bring light and kindness into the world, because this earth of sharp edges could use a little more softness.

Trish Pettinati is a Sophomore at NECC, according to her transcript. In reality, she's been plugging away at this college thing for nearly two and a half years now, still trying to figure out how to finish her degree in Journalism/Communications while working over 40 hours a week in Boston. Essentially, she's kind of hoping to hit the lottery in order to take the necessary classes, but in the meantime, Trish is making do as a part-time student and reconnecting with her skills as a writer. A lifelong fan of science fiction and fantasy – which she happily blames upon her parents – she also spends some of her free time hanging out with friends and playing pen-and-paper role-playing games, along with adding to her collection of *Lilo & Stitch* movie memorabilia.

As long as Jake Riscacher can remember, he has always enjoyed crafting things with his hands. It has always left him with a rewarding feeling of accomplishment. It fills him with joy to know that what was once in his imagination is now right in front of him. What was once a thought is now a tangible object to be admired by others. Over the years that he has worked with various materials, he has taken a great focus in metals, ceramics, and fiberglass, such as with the mask in this issue. He hopes to make a career out of making pieces like this in the near future.

Walter Torres is as cool as a snake wearing glasses. Walter is also as delicate and fragile as a glass rose. Beautiful until he is touched and broken, then he is sharp and deadly. He's the one who is the loudest yet the quietest. The quietest when around others and the loudest once the pencil touches the paper. Poetry is his escape and also his reality. He lives in a world in which he questions everything, but not poetry.

Lesa Tran is a graphic design student hoping to get into web development. She has experience programming in C++, Python, and other languages.

## PARNASSUS 2016-17 STAFF

Grant Bellino  
Noah Greenstein  
Saul Joubert  
Raul Lozada  
Kayla-Dayne Maguire  
Courtney Morin  
Izzy Okaya

FACULTY ADVISOR  
Patrick Lochelt

GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
Susan Stehfest

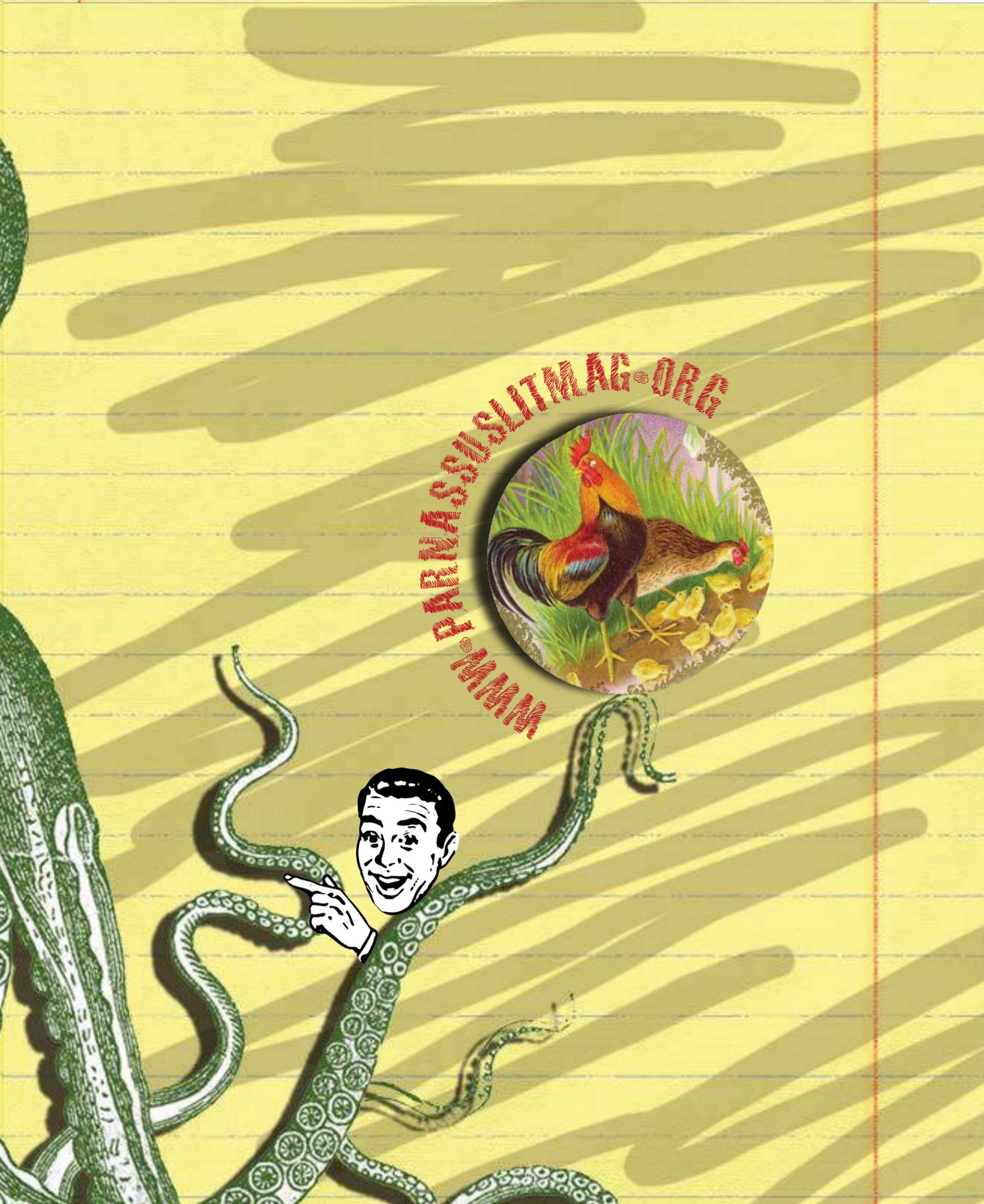
## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

Submissions to *Parnassus* are limited to NECC students, staff, and faculty, with two deadlines per year. We accept submissions in the areas of art, photography, fiction, poetry, and creative non fiction. We yearn for the most amazing work - give it up. Entries are reviewed and chosen democratically each semester by the staff and faculty advisor. Deadlines are announced online and around campus, and *Parnassus* is published at the end of each spring, sometimes during the summer. Creative people are like that sometimes.

Calls for new staff members go out at the start of each semester. You too can be part of the solution. (Or perhaps you can be part of the problem?) Come join us!

Full information on how to submit your possibly publishable work can be found within our awe inspiring website:

[www.parnassuslitmag.com](http://www.parnassuslitmag.com)



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