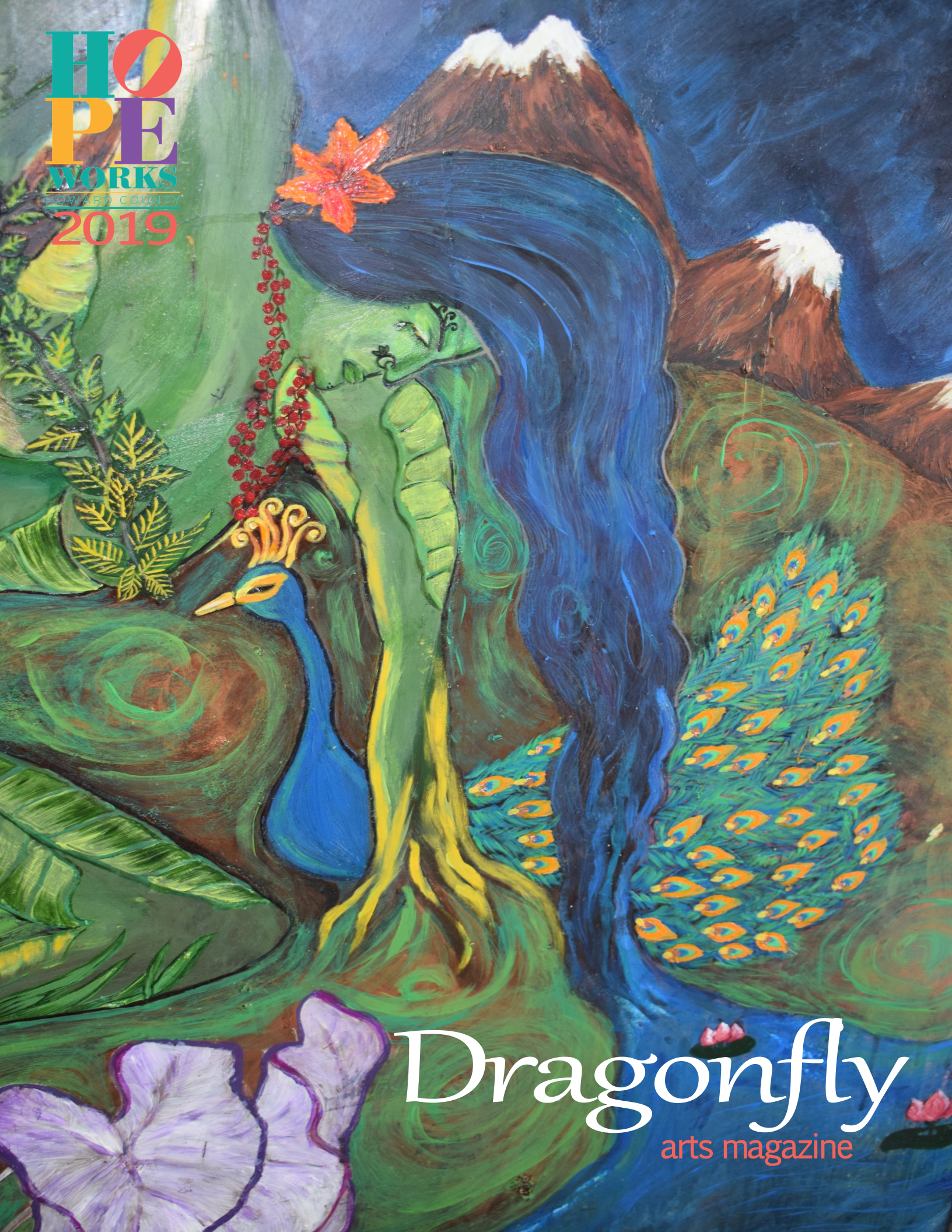


HOPE
WORKS
HOWARD COUNTY
2019



Dragonfly

arts magazine



Dragonfly

arts magazine
2019

HopeWorks' mission is to support and advocate for people in Howard County affected by sexual and intimate partner violence and to engage the community in creating the change required for violence prevention.

"Insight, I believe, refers to the depth of understanding that comes by setting experiences, yours and mine, familiar and exotic, new and old, side by side, learning by letting them speak to one another."

- Mary Catherine Bateson

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COVER ART: PRAKRITI BY SANGEETA KAUL

DISCLAIMER

The artistic expressions in this publication are those of the individual authors and artists and do not necessarily reflect the philosophies, position or policies of HopeWorks.

It is not by chance that our arts magazine is entitled *Dragonfly*.

The dragonfly has been a centuries old symbol for change – a special type of transformation, one wrought from crisis but ending in self-realization and a deeper



understanding of the meaning of life. This experience is often reflected in the lives of the people we serve at HopeWorks and you'll hear it in some of the voices on the pages to follow. This transformation is rarely an easy one and as humans, we sometimes feel so very limited in how to bare the intensity of our thoughts and feelings. This struggle to create something beautiful and inspirational from the dark places is somehow mystical and pedestrian at the same time – something that is hard to fathom, yet a common daily occurrence.

Congratulations to each of our contributing artists who were brave enough to articulate their own deep emotions and unique perspectives on life.

Self-expression through art gives wind to the wings of the dragonfly and we thank these artists who were generous enough to give us a window into their transformational journeys.

Jenn

*Jennifer Pollitt Hill, MSW | Executive Director
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*HopeWorks is Howard County's sexual and intimate partner violence center. We are here for our clients completely.
And we are agents of change. Hope builds momentum and momentum creates change...when we work together.*

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MY OLD BODIES

BY ALIE DAVIS

I sit in front of her, the first girl,
maybe eleven and smaller than me,
but the everything else is the same.

Somehow, she is above me, dancing.
Her laughter shaking loose
a forest of elm trees.

She is an old god with moss
around her antlers, eyes soft
as too-ripe blueberries.
She is spilling out
forgiveness I have yet to earn.

I bow to the second girl,
older and less familiar than the first.
The eyes pulled constantly to the ground.
This is when I began to lose myself,
thirteen and slipping out of my skin.

I owe her more than I can measure.
She is petrified wood,
hardened and hollow.

I kiss her eyes and offer her a garden
of purple hyacinth, one bowl of moonblood,
and the only words that matter.

I am sorry I didn't make it easier for you.

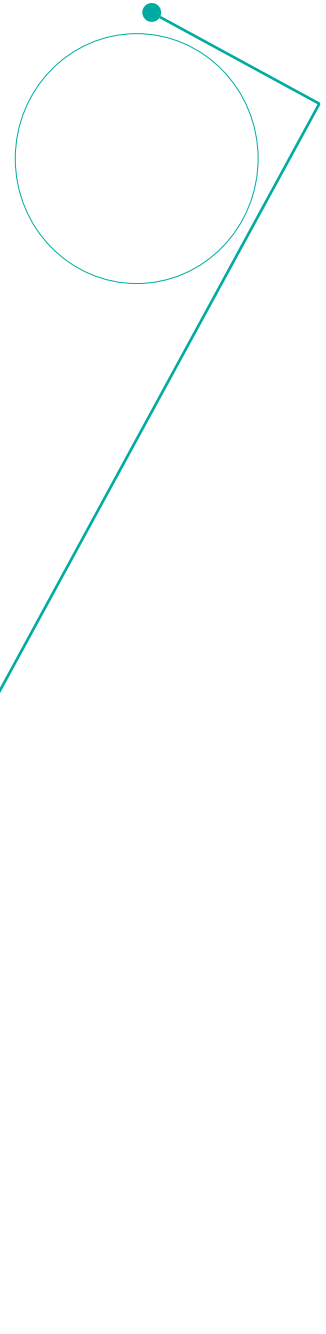
I gather the girls in my arms,
how deeply they possess me,
how lonely I allowed them to become.

I am sorry for wanting you to die.

I lean into the faces
of the girls whose love
never faltered.

Thank you, I will say.

Thank you for getting me to Now.



IF MOMENTS WERE LIKE LEAVES

BY RAY DIGIONDOMENICO

If moments were like leaves
we could catch them as they fall.
We could hold them in our hands;
follow each forking vein,
every shade of color.
We could keep the beautiful ones; preserve them like pieces of gold.
The sad or ugly ones we could throw away.
But moments are not things we can hold like leaves.
We cannot press them into books,
Or rise from a sleepless night for a second look.
Instead we must store them in our minds; those notorious, unstable vaults;
More prone to leakage and erosion than a cavern.
After many happy memories are forgotten,
the painful memories linger.
They hide in tall grass, behind doors, ready to intrude on our thoughts;
Reminding us how easy it is for human beings to be cruel.
Some we can learn from, but for most there is no use or remedy.
We cannot change them, or any other moment from the past.
We try to push them away, but there they sit, refusing to move.
Someday science may find a way to block them.
Until then, we must find a way to cope;
find a way to forgive,
or to ask for forgiveness.
Forgiveness is hard, but it happens slowly, in little pieces of time.
Like the twirling fall of snowflakes, forgiveness is silent.
Pain lasts so long,
but forgiveness is forever.

© 2019 Ray Digiondomenico

ODE TO A BRUISE #1

BY DARCY ROLLOW

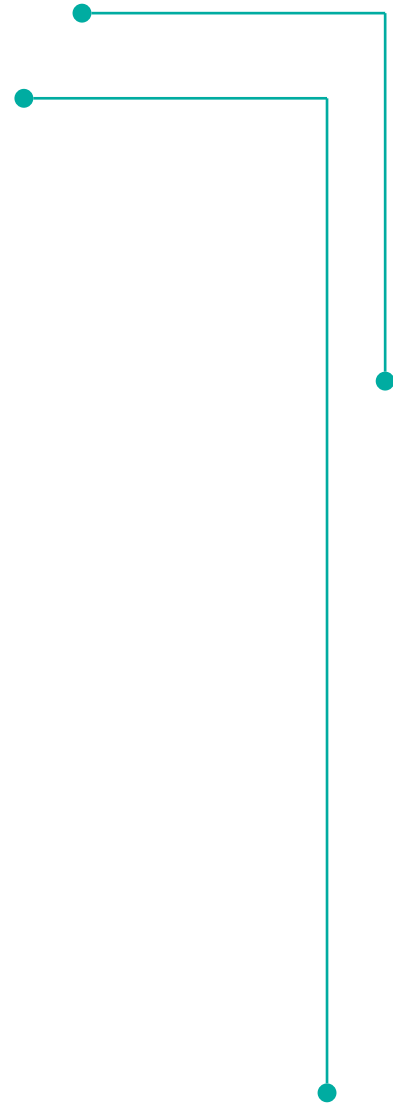
You stay
within the
passing days,
gorging on lilacs,
puffing purples
& monogamous maroons.
Please find a host
on someone else's body.
I don't want memory
of his hands on me.

The sight of
you disgusts me.
Bile rising up
as if gravity has neglected me
as well.
Your outer shell,
green and yellow
my old school colors, but there
is nothing spirited
about me wearing you.

Freckles inside, little miniature
bruises within one,
as if
there was a world built
inside his palms, waiting
to kidnap me, waiting
to enslave my skin
for his pleasure
only.

My friends tell me that
the mark has faded.
My brain says
the pain has receded.

But my eyes still see
the hand prints he left,
as if
they
were almost
more significant than my own.



ON THE JOURNEY TO ME

BY KRIS MCELROY

It's a new day,
My suitcase is packed,
Just five things;
But, that's all I need.
Together we're about to embark on a journey;
A journey to me.

My Past.
It takes up a lot of room in the suitcase.
Sometimes the rest of us wonder
why it is there.
Because there were good memories,
I don't want to forget.
To remain connected to my ancestors and
their stories.
To continue to heal and grow from it,
To let go of the shame we have from it.
And to remember,
I am strong and able to overcome
any obstacle that comes my way.
That's why my past has a place
in the suitcase.
That is why we shook hands,
Knowing we had to take the journey together.

My lifelines.
Art,
Music,
Movies,
Natures,
Water,
Creativity,
Photographs,
Quality Time;
There was no question about it.
I wouldn't be today without them.
This journey needs them.
They are my helping breath
and light along the way.

My belief that I, myself, am sacred and holy;
A space in the suitcase connected to wonder
and desire.
Yes, Sacred;
Yes, Holy;

So, that I may value and prioritize
Self Care.
Self Love.
Kindness.
Gentleness.
Self-esteem.

My body.
All aspects of my being are held as nothing
other than holy.
I wonder what it would be like to reach the
end of this journey,
I wonder what it would be like to actually
believe these things about me,
I wonder can I actually value and love myself.
Right now, it seems so far away
But, I believe it's possible because we are
already on our way.

Voice.
My voice.
Because I know what it's like to not have one.
To not be able to use it;
To not be heard when it is used;
I never want to go back there again.
A journey to me without my voice is not a
journey I want to take.
It is not a journey leading to me.
It is settled,
My voice is coming.
No negotiations.

Belief in a brand new day;
A belief that brings me
Hope
Joy
Possibility
Chances
Growth
Self-discovery
Connection
Freedom
and
A belief that led me on this journey to me.

© 2019 Kris McElroy

NAKED MOON

PAINTING

By LINDA SUAREZ

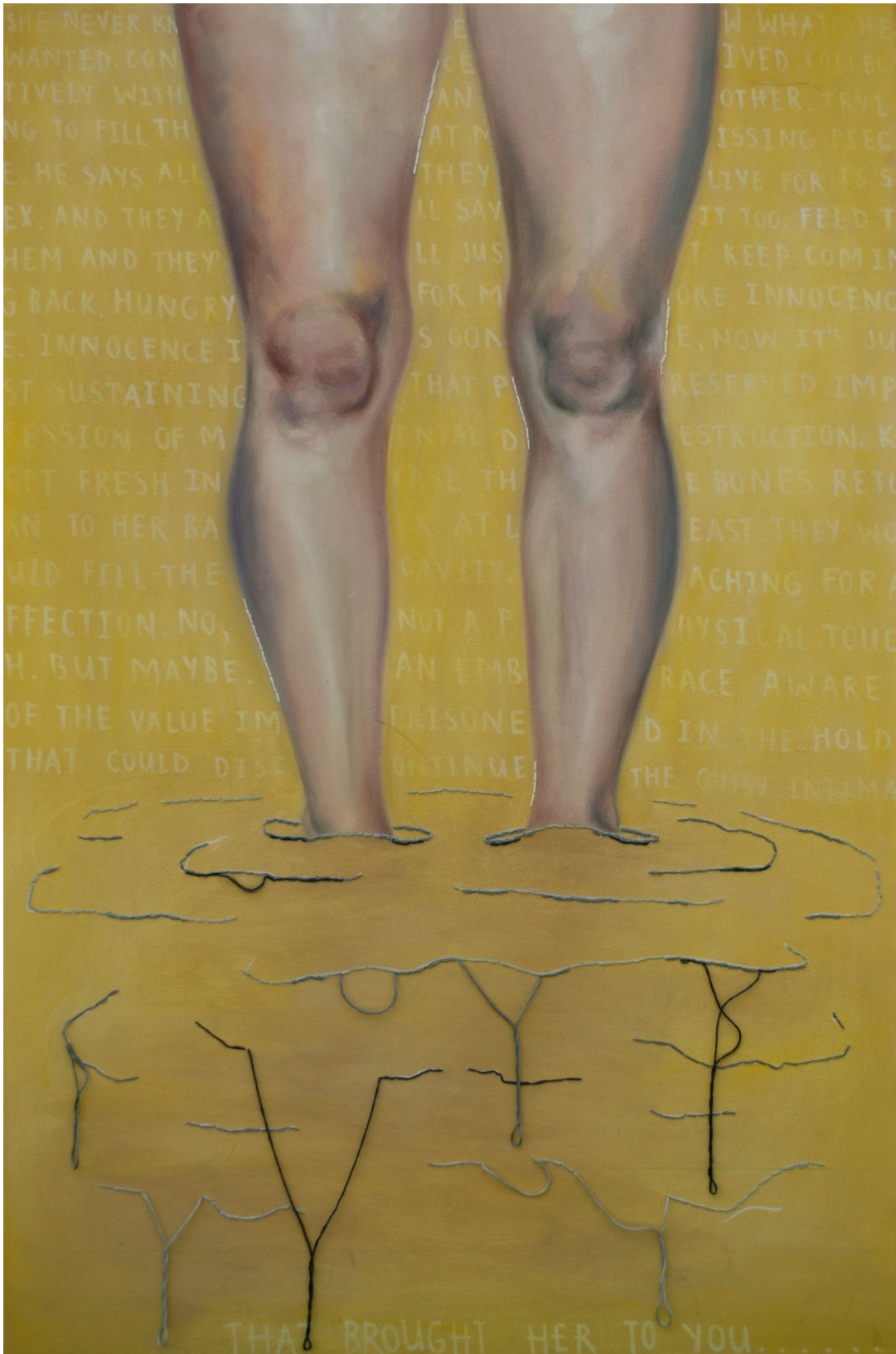


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SUBMERGENCE

PAINT AND THREAD ON CANVAS

By BRONWYN HAYMES



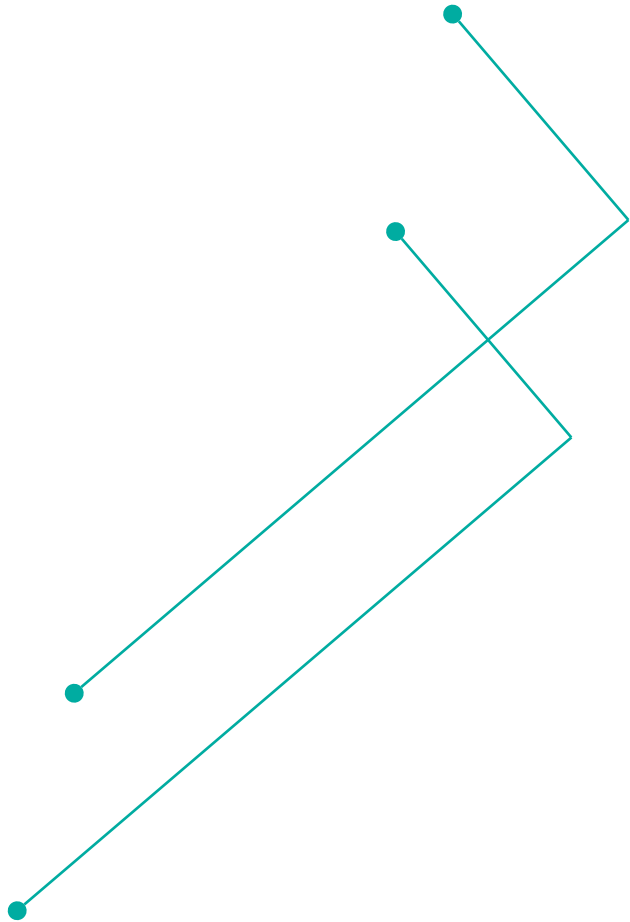
© 2019 Bronwyn Haymes

SURVIVOR

FOR NORA, NICOLE AND SHASPARAY

By DANIEL GARCIA

I used to be a survivor,
or, I became a statistic the night I realized
I had been sexually assaulted
more than once.
And most days, survivor feels more
like a noose than a life vest,
which is to say, how many times
do I have to write about my sexual assault
before I stop speaking the words in present tense?
We praise the survivor for opening their mouth,
for trading their trauma for your snaps and 10's,
but never for the work they did, or the demons
they fought to get in front of this mic.
And most days, I still feel like a victim,
but I sometimes feel like a survivor,
and what else do I call this in-between
but failure? Failure for not getting over it,
for not reporting it after the first time,
for not reporting it after the fifth time,
for feeling more like a statistic than a survivor,
for not closing my legs like I did my mouth,
for being good at keeping quiet,
and even worse at saying no.
A silence so loud you could lose yourself completely,
and it still wouldn't be lifeless enough
to be called death.
But even still, my friend Shasparay says,
I'm here for you.
And my friend Nora says,
I'm so proud of you,
and my friend Nicole says,
I'm always here to listen,
and what else do I call this but surviving?
When you could've stayed in bed,
but you got up for therapy the next day,
and you could've given up on this world,
but you went to a poetry slam,
and most days, I still feel like a victim,
and most days, I still want to be a survivor,
but both of those days, I am still Daniel.
Each of those days, I am still Daniel.
Every day, I am still Daniel.
And I survived, I survived,
I am still surviving.
And the next day Nora says,
look at that.
It's tomorrow,
and you're still alive.



TADASANA

By JOANNE JACKSON

Majestic and strong,
I arise in Mountain Pose
Standing up for me.

© 2019 Joanne Jackson

STAY

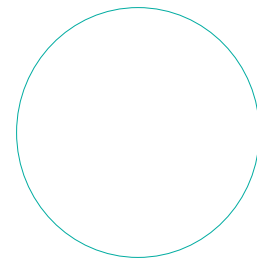
AFTER LAUREN PERRY'S ROCK'EM SOCK'EM

BY DANIEL GARCIA

There's something to be said about the girl
at the poetry slam that says battered women
"play the victim violin,"
that they should pack a bag, just go, no more staying,
or else they'll just be another statistic,
that my mom is just another statistic,
and the girl at the poetry slam is saying
that my mom should just leave,
as if he didn't crash her car, or,
steal all of her money, or,
drag her back inside by her hair, because
isn't it so much easier to blame a woman
for not fleeing from the bruises on her skin than to
blame the man who left them there in the first place?
And for the first time,
I don't wanna write about this.
I don't wanna write another poem about my body,
and how it becomes my mother's body,
or how my daddy loved me so much
he kicked my mother's belly when she was carrying me,
and is this not love?
What else do you call a failed abortion
if not a miracle or a curse?
You see, the last time I went back to my abuser,
he sexually assaulted me
again,
and this is the part of the story where I tell you
we weren't dating, but we were friends,
and he never hit me
much,
and this is the part of the story where I tell you:
Mom,
I did everything I could to stay with him,
because I didn't want to leave,
and he kept begging me to stay with him,
so I stayed with him, even after he left;
because I love him,
because I still love him.
Mom: He left, I stayed,
I didn't leave like you did,
and to that girl at the poetry slam that would tell me,
"Oh, you're so pretty when you cry
at how hard he loves you,"

I'm telling you right now:
Keep my mother's trauma out of your mouth,
(I love you mom)
because my mother is the reason I can speak
out against my abuser,
(I love you mom)
because every time I think about killing myself,
(I love you mom)
I hear her voice asking me to stay
just a little bit longer,
(I love you mom)
so before you tell me how weak
I am for staying,
I'm telling you right now:
Keep my trauma out of your mouth,
(I love you mom)
because my mom and I cry and sweat and
bleed and grow
and rise and survive
and rise
and rise
and rise
and rise
and rise
and rise
and rise
and rise
and neither of us are playing
a single violin.
I love you mom.

© 2019 Daniel Garcia



THE BEAUTY AND PAIN

PAINTING

BY SANDY GREENSPUN



© 2019 Sandy Greenspun

DIAMONDS IN THE GRASS

BY DMGREISL

I went back just to look at the broken glass on the pavement.

I went back, praying it would rip open the wound and I would feel something other than numb. I anticipated a moment of surreal confusion before a crushing agony would steal my breath. I was prepared to feel my very soul bleed. Something inside me had reached a fevered pitch, begging for something, anything other than this heartbroken misery that dulled everything else.

I parked across the lot and stared at the light post. The irony of this had not escaped me. I had, in my darkest moment, sought a literal light. I approached the light, part of me praying for the pain and part of me shying from the absolute terror at what I was doing. Surreal confusion took over, as I looked over the grass, shimmering as though strewn with diamonds. The pavement was clean of any shattered glass. The blood had washed out of my clothes and my car. The windows had been replaced. I felt no pain, only a furthered detachment from any reality as I stared at the shimmering green expanse. This should hurt; this was the place that every dream I had for us ended. This was where love lost its sanity and allegiances changed.

This place was where all the nightmares became reality.

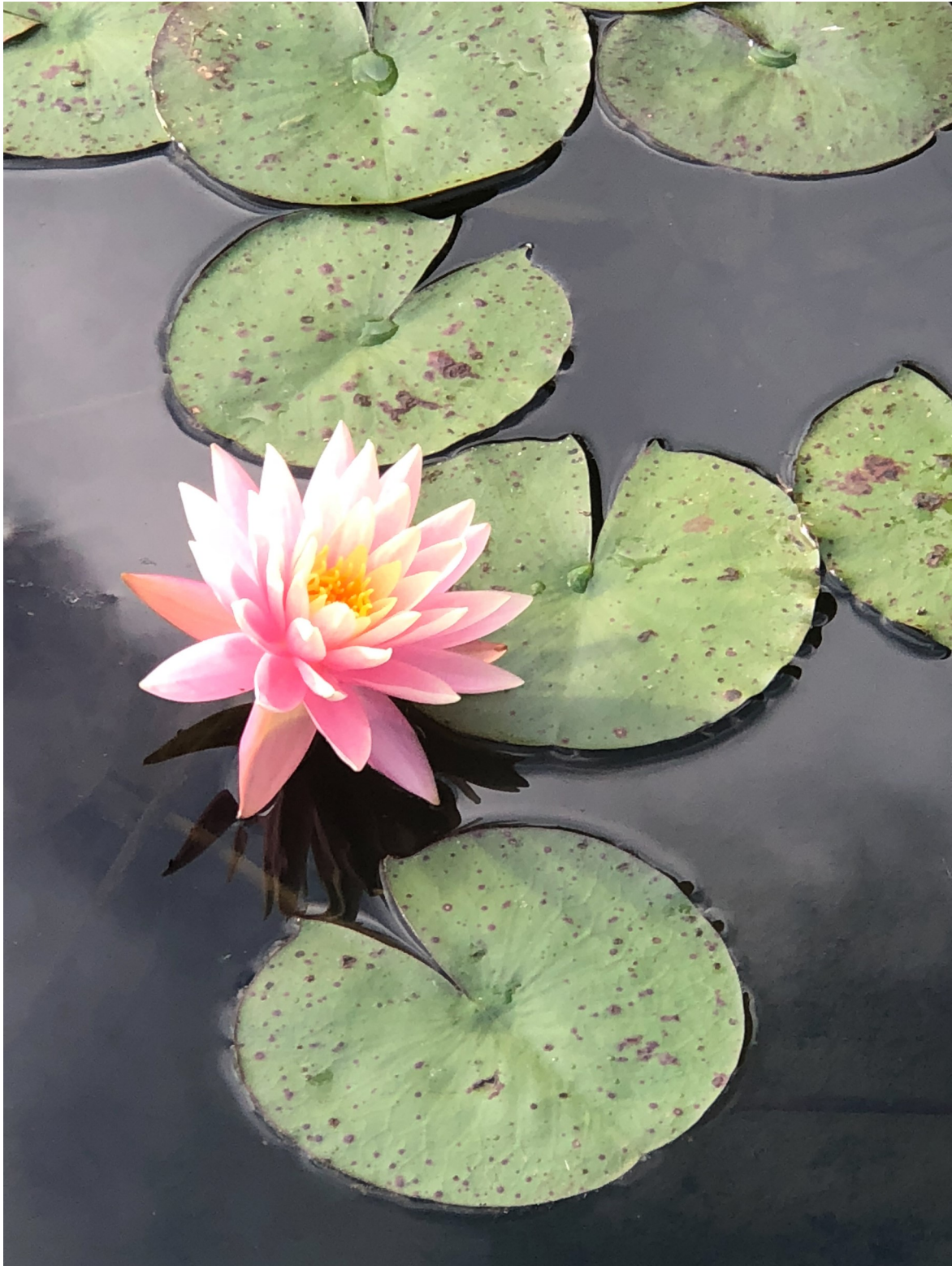
Time reversed in my head. I was pulling you back in my car, you were tearing the cartilage in my shoulder, telling me I didn't love you because I wouldn't let you jump. It was kidnapping you said, because I was taking you home. The sound of shattering glass filled my ears and blood splatter down my side. All I could do was beg you to let go. The sick crack as you put your head through the windshield. The moment when love overcame terror and I yanked you from the car. Stopped now, I ran from you. Your angry roars echoing in the empty lot. Running, running and begging anyone to please just call the police. You were behind me and then the sirens came screeching, the night filled with blue lights. I loved you with all that I was but in that moment, I realized my best friend had died. I realized that I couldn't do it anymore and I let you go. Something inside me broke away and I lost meaning of life.

It's been two years and I still replay it in my head. It's been two years of healing, with kindness and love from another. It knew that I should have answered yes every time you asked me, "Is this abusive?" It knows that the most important promise a man can ever make me from now to the day I die isn't that he will be faithful; it's that he will never hit me or scream at me. It's been two years since I escaped your abuse and since something inside me snapped.

I went back to look at the broken glass on the pavement.

I went back to bury the woman I was.

© 2019 DMGreisl



© 2019 Kelli Smith

SEEKING SHELTER

DRAWING

BY RUBY GOSSER SLAGLE



© 2019 Ruby Gosser Slagle

LADY JUSTICE STANDS

BY JENNIFER ELIZABETH HALL

Lady Justice stands
Though the world pulls against her—
Moral force of man

© 2019 Jennifer Elizabeth Hall

I'M FROM

BY DEBORAH KEVIN

I'm from barbed-wired words,
that shredded my soul
leaving no external marks.
Invisible to others.

I'm from broken promises and
shattered dreams which
left me hiding on the bathroom floor
behind locked doors.

I'm from being pinned to the wall,
your eyes blazing,
spittle flying,
igniting my fight or flight.

I'm from unexpected visits,
shouting and shame.
Unfounded accusations
make me question my own sanity.

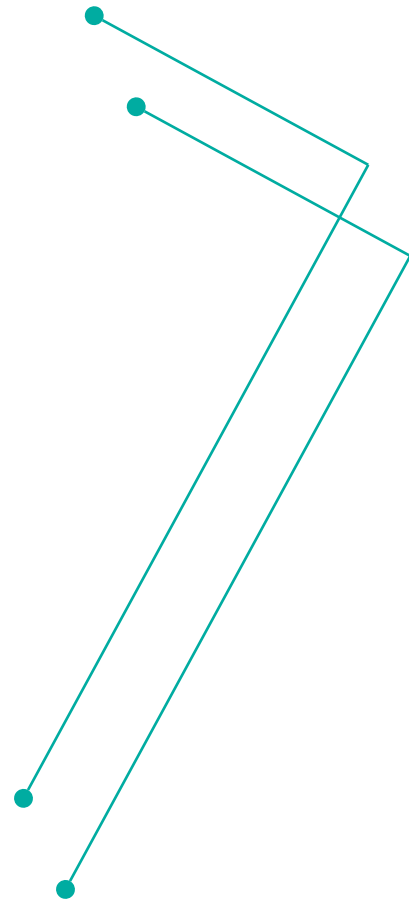
I'm from the stair landing, walls,
And ancient piano,
which stopped my forward momentum,
leaving me black and blue.

I'm from a car sitting hour after hour
outside my dark and shuttered home,
praying you'd just leave
without ever knocking.

I'm from the fear someone would notice
and the shame when they did,
not knowing what to say
to make them feel better.

I'm from questioning myself
and "How did this happen?"
Trying to understand
that which can't be.

I'm from confusing abuse
for love
because my childhood blueprint
was designed that way.



SELF PORTRAIT
CONCRETE SCULPTURE
BY MARIO LOPRETE



© 2019 Mario Loprete

SAY ANYTHING

BY MIRA STEIN

I have difficulty making small talk
Perhaps being raised with the idea
“If you have nothing nice to say, say nothing at all”
Had more of an impact than anticipated

All I know is
A coworker I genuinely like
Just tried to talk music with me
And I choked and what came out of my mouth
Was words

Meaningless words
About work
I see the friendly light dim
Her eyes telling me she feels the barrier

My fortress,
My Cask of Monte Crisco
Walking my tell tale heart in
Dark minds suitable metaphors

Lines from Poe, who was horrible
Tortured and miserable
Yet, I feel I would speak more frankly
With this dead specter
Than people who care

Because what can those
Full of optimism and life
aspirations and bliss

I am hollow.
I cry out, Ravens answer
Shiny?
No. Nothing bright reflects.
The flock departs.
And I am alone.

How to respond?
I spent last night curled on the bathroom floor
Crying
Talking myself out of panic
As it clawed my skin raw

No. Too personal, no need to depress
“I’m fine” makes for little conversation
And I wonder why they grow distant
Why can’t I trust?

Then again, every broken trust
Reminds me with a pang
Scars, old wounds, salt in my eyes

Opening my mouth to try
To explain?
To speak?
To apologize.

I know you are trying.
I’m sorry.
I have nothing nice to say.
Excuse me, as I say nothing at all.

© 2019 Mira Stein





© 2019 Gianna Schlossnagle

TURNING POINT

By EUDORA WATSON

The brick beside my face, impassive as my self
prickles your fist with blood, stands by me,
solid, strong - as unlike you as me.

Cornered by these bricks, yet sheltered,
I know my safety is a spell I cast -
You flail, I answer you with nothing,
an echo as formidable and empty
as earth's shine on the new moon's face.
Your rage has an ebb and flow whose gravity I deny -
you threaten,
but I am in command.

© 2019 Eudora Watson

DESTINY IS HERE

By JONAS GILHAM

I've pushed through the dense trees and thick wet fog
of the wilderness called the federal prison system
Fending off attacks on my sanity, my masculinity and person
Fifteen years has brought me full circle
Back to DC
My place of birth
My home
I've paid the price of redemption
Cultivated my mind with seeds of prosperity
And some have blossomed
Some have not yet bloomed
Still, destiny is here
And I'm only just getting started

© 2019 Jonas Gilham

DRAGONFLY

QUILT

By JOYCE HOELZER



© 2019 Joyce Hoelzer

I REMEMBER SOME THINGS

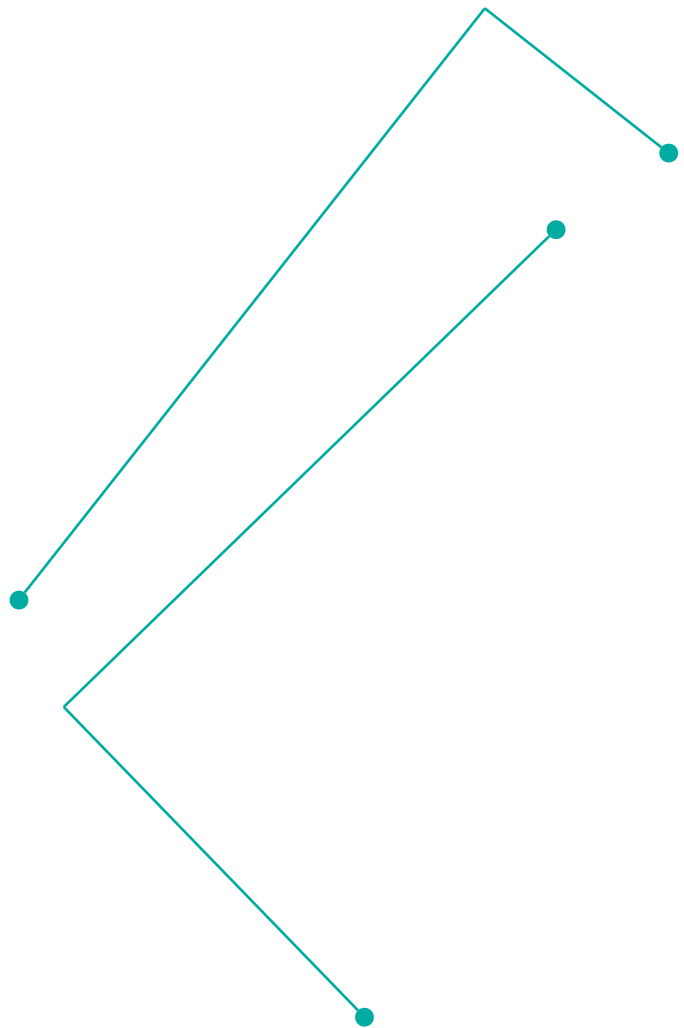
BY VICTORIA LEVITT

my mother told me: how she
took a bus from Denver to Raton, New Mexico
how she was tired
how she wanted to freshen up,
change into the white lace dress
she had packed in her suitcase
how my father was too eager
insisted they go immediately to
the Justice of the Peace
how she was married in
the tired suit she wore on the bus
how they went to her parents' farm
how her mother made a wedding cake
how it was baked in a round dish pan.
I have a snapshot of my mother
wearing the white lace dress
I see how she is slender,
how her dress catches a breeze
how it falls to just below her knees
how she is wearing white pumps
how she is standing in a plowed field
on the Kansas prairie.
On the back, in my father's hand:
"My June bride of 1940."

What my mother did not tell me:
that he took her to a nice restaurant
that there was a candle on the table,
that it reflected the pave diamonds
in her wedding band
that he had proposed to her in a letter
because he was far away
or he proposed before he left and
she said yes or she said I'm not sure,
or she might have wished she had been asked
by the man she told me was called "Chief"
because he was part Indian.
that she wished she had a bridesmaid instead
of a witness she had barely met.

She did not say if they had a few days' honeymoon
or she went back to Denver on the bus the next day
or she stayed with him in his room
near the gold mill where he worked
or they moved soon to the cabin
at the mine in Cripple Creek or Alma or Fairplay
where, she told me, he didn't wipe
his muddy shoes even
when she had just scrubbed
the floor on her hands and knees
on a cold and rainy afternoon.

© 2019 Victoria Levitt



UNEVEN PARALLEL BARS

BY JUDITH GOEDEKE

a look, that long slow exhale
her father's trembling hands
she learns the signs

her child's soft body
and everything in it
become dangerous
weapons that bear his stink
so she exiles herself
piece by piece
and they become one breath

over centuries
she becomes capable, well-dressed
yoked to a child, terrified and fierce
wise and beautiful
and in the vast distance

between

she bounces

soars

crashes

still

always

forever

grasping

at safety

GROOMING

BY ANN BRACKEN

He caresses my thigh,
inches his hand close to my breasts
as I lay next to him in bed.

I'm tired tonight,
my standard refusal.
I start to roll away.

But he continues.
My head hums, my stomach knots.
His words cascade into my ear,

“Just let me rub your breasts,
you know you like that.”
He pulls up my nightgown
whispers, “Let’s get naked and just hug.”

He never sees my trembling lips,
never hears the drumbeat of refusal
pounding in my chest.

So many other nights
began this way, as if in a prophecy
the arrow of no points to cold days of silence,
the arrow of yes signals betrayal of myself.

“Doesn’t that feel good?” he whispers
and presses himself against my thigh.
“We can stop whenever you want to.”

I always feel sick afterwards.

Now I understand that
what he did wasn’t
a typical seduction.

He told me,
the day before I left him,
“My best-friend’s father sexually abused me for years.”

© 2019 Ann Bracken

JAN WITH BIRDS, PUERTO RICO

MONO PRINT
BY DIANE DUNN



© 2019 Diane Dunn

NO VACANCY

BY MIRA STEIN

I am wide open
Spread
Vulnerable and clearly visible
The truth about trauma
Is you cannot squeeze shut
Keep it out
You must open wide
Attempt to allow it
To pass through you
In the least painful way
But it knows no way
Other than painful
So trust is broken
As is my body
Splayed and full
Sobbing when you
In sheer frustration
Ask why?
Why I cannot trust you
Open wider for you
Let you in
Know when I do, it will be different
There is no room
That part of me is too broken
It's not about you
This pathway was avalanched
Years ago

© 2019 Mira Stein

TOO LATE

BY ANN BRACKEN

Her heart
no longer
a porous
membrane
susceptible
to the gale
of your regrets
and rigged
apologies.

Don't wait
for the tide
to wash
a lonely bottle
a last message
to rest
at your feet.

If she holds
one good
memory
within the archive
of her heart
it is the passion
with which
she has always
lived. Even now
she embraces
a windfall
of stars.

© 2019 Ann Bracken



© 2019 Mario Loprete

ON AIR

CONCRETE SCULPTURE

BY MARIO LOPRETE



LOVE

PAINTING

BY SHEELA BECTON



© 2019 Sheela Becton



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CLIMBING DOWN

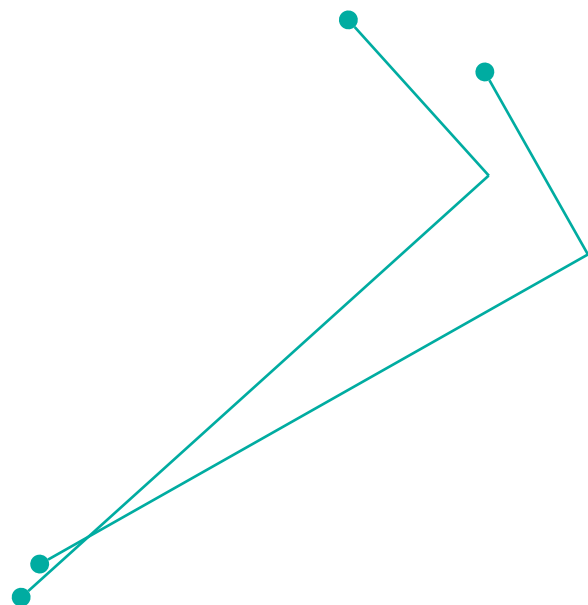
BY MIKE GRISWOLD

Standing near the precipice of possibility,
Edging forward, beckoned by the view;
Stepping back to consider the cost.

Hope glows... but the gap, and the leap,
and what must I leave behind?
There is no path down,
just resting ledges— taken with trust.
If I fixate on the visions, I will not
find the next foothold before fingers fail.

Perhaps “being bold” is to keep moving,
to and through the resting ledges.

© 2019 Mike Griswold



STRAUSS' WALTZ

BY NATASHA BOSKIC

I pace across my living room,
hitting the walls,
like an animal in its cage.
I cannot concentrate on the movie I have to translate,
or on the assignment I have to write.
She didn't say when,
but I can feel she is on her way now.
Always carrying a bag too heavy,
cutting into her arm.
We don't need anything, mother, I tell her.
We are fine.
But she doesn't listen.
She has apples to bring,
too much lunch that she cooked for herself and my father,
a cake that she just made with a new recipe,
my kids would love.
There is something she needs to tell me in person.
Always a reason for her to come.

I can see her holding onto the ropes,
and looking into the whirls of the Danube that is all colours but blue,
pushing her way through the crowd to get a spot
before the raft is too full and can hold no more bodies.
As if now, when the bridge is in pieces at the river bottom,
she has this urgent business to attend to.

I bite my nails, already too short.
I hear a blast far away.
Maybe muffled by the water. Where is she?
I imagine her body floating on the cold surface of the river,
I can see her expression surprised but determined,
lips shut tight, maybe swearing at the sky.
I try to push away the image of her blue jacket bloated
and the apples carried by the current.
Stay at home, I say. We are ok.
Do they have time to escape if they see the planes?
I don't ask and she doesn't mention.
She doesn't talk about it.
It is nothing important, a regular commute.

And every day, she comes.
My mother.

© 2019 Natasha Boskic

PRAKRITI

MIXED MEDIA ON RECYCLED GLASS

BY SANGEETA KAUL



© 2019 Sangeeta Kaul

TWO DRAGONFLIES ON WOOD

SCULPTURE

BY KEN BEERBOHM



© 2019 Ken Beerbohm

KINTSUGI

BY PHYLLIS A YIGDALL

I've spent my life hiding and denying.
Hiding myself. Denying my being.
As you have taught me.
Did you want me to be nothing?
Did you want me to not exist?
Am I merely a reflection of you?
A creation of your making
And nothing in my own right?

You will deny your own actions.
You will deny my hurt.
You will deny the damage.
You will deny the reality.
But I will not. I will expose it.
This is me. Here I am.
This truth and reality will no longer be hidden.
I am seen. I am here.

The wounds you have inflicted define me.
The damage is who I am.
Filled with light, these cracks shine and glow.
When I am me, this damage is exposed.
The pattern forms my reality.
My wounds are integral to my being.
They make me who I am.
I hope they will dance in the light.

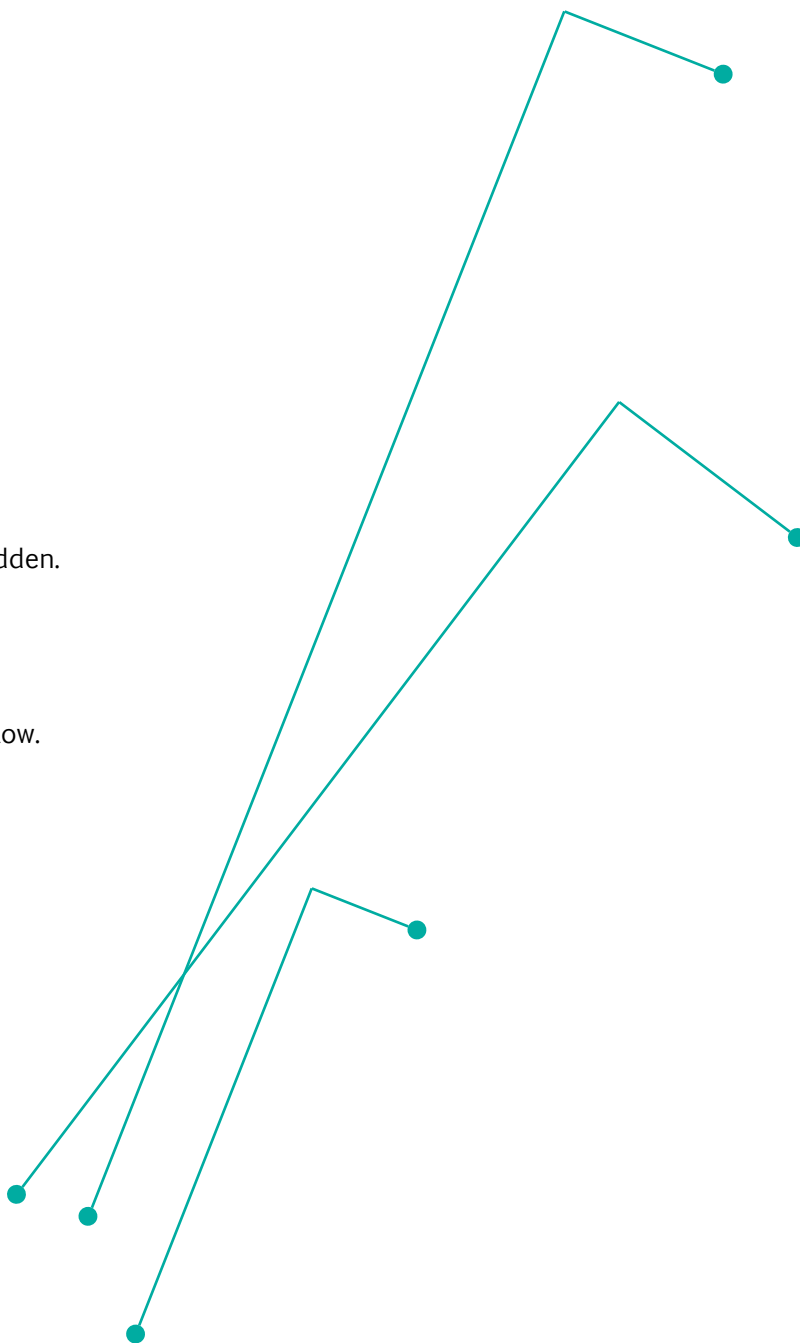
© 2019 Phyllis A Yigdall

THE SEARCH FOR PEACE

BY REGINA WINNER

Peace in the storm, how it comes and goes.
A smile, a prayer, a cloud, a crescent moon, all bring a moment of calm and joy.
The fear takes hold.
It arrives in a thought, a memory, a moment. It grips my heart, making it hard to breathe.
The unknown, the "what if" the threats that may come to fruition.
Even now he controls me and instills fear.
When will it end? When will freedom come and peace settle and stay?
I long for the day when his grasp can't reach me.
When my life is my own.

© 2019 Regina Winner



THE REMAINS

BY ALI MARIE

It's finally over
The fighting
The forced pain shoved down my throat
The constant wondering, will it ever get better
I gather my grief
My sadness
My lost hope for our future
And pack them into suitcases
They take up so much room
I wonder if there is space for the remains of what is left
Of my joy
Of my love
Of my hope for a more peaceful life

Suitcases and boxes filled
I find room to pack a little light to guide me out the door
But the darkness consumes me
I cannot see
My light is not yet lit

Yet my feet seem to know the way to a path they've never traveled before
Tugged by golden ribbons
My heart leads the rest of my body and the remains
At first I barely move
Too heavy to make it far
But distance is not the goal
Only slow and steady movement
Forward
And as I'm scrapped across the path
Out the door
And down the driveway
A small bit of sadness knocks free and gets left behind
Making space
First for breath
Then for strength
Next for my freedom
And maybe one day
Love

© 2019 Ali Marie

I AM WOMAN

PAINTING

By SANDY GREENSPUN



© 2019 Sandy Greenspun

THE REACH

PENCIL AND CHARCOAL ON PAPER

BY TOM BOURDEAUX, JR.



© 2019 Tom Bourdeaux, Jr.

WHAT YOU HOLD IN YOUR AFFECTIONS

BY MARY BRANDENBURG

We don't die from failure, we die from indifference,
when our eyes are too dim to behold the sliver
of the new moon and we sense the quickening of our soul.

Where do you go when the walls fall in,
what waters do you allow to nourish you
when failure leaves your lips dry?

Celebrate your mistakes
and savor your wounds,
knowing that these keep you alive.

We know that the sum of a person's life
is more than a string of accomplishments,
however remarkable these may be.

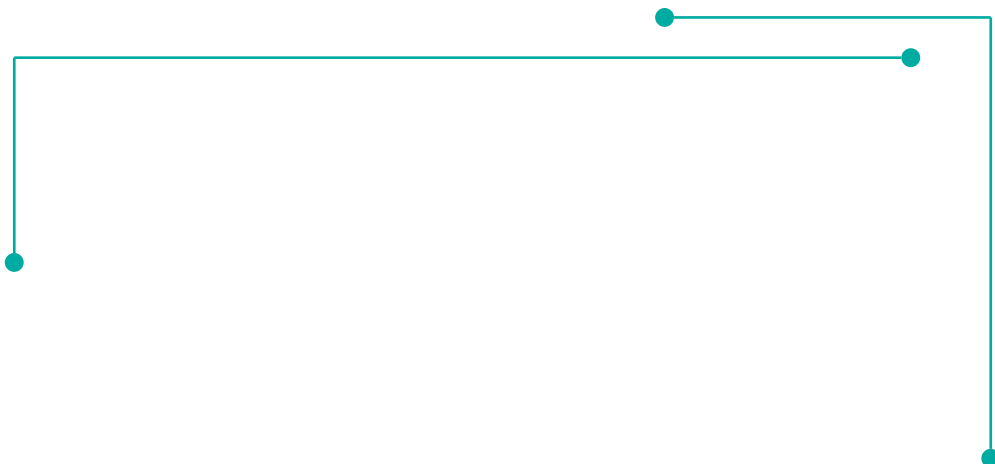
Look to what you hold in your affections,
in who you love and how you love,
in the sweet gestures and small kindnesses,
perhaps unnoticed by an indifferent world.

Can you hold your one and only life
like a treasure to be shared,
kept safe from cynicism
or the erosion of shame and disappointment?

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.
The journey of the heart is a messy affair.

How 'bout taking the long way home?

© 2019 Mary Brandenburg



OUR SONG

BY BRIGITTE HOFER-WOOD

Music

Has sound:

Traveling from afar: winds moving branches,
sunlight kissing birds, twittering their joy.
Trains of thoughts moving great machines
through darkness.
Starlight dancing quietly above the fog of misery.
This is our song.

Music

Has rhythm:

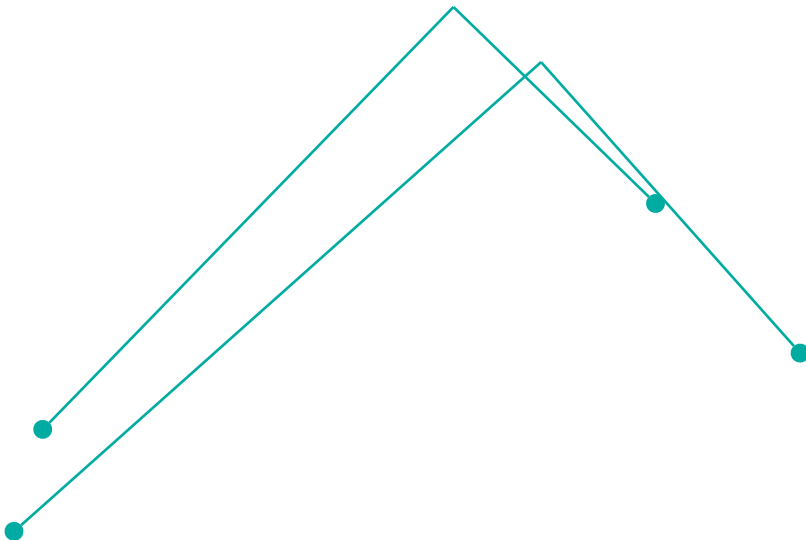
Wings of raindrops beating thirsty leaves,
Hooves of horses, bounding towards freedom,
Ocean waves, breathing eternally of endless times,
Steps of men, walking to drums of determination.
This is our song.

Music

Has harmony:

Hands, folded in prayer for continued life,
Children chasing butterflies of happiness,
Mothers, holding babies with arms of tender lullabies,
One thought creating greatness to affect the world.
All come together in harmony.
Great melody of life, this is our song,
Has been for so long.
Can you hear us now?
Can you hear...?

© 2019 Brigitte Hofer-Wood



BEAUTIFUL SARA

DEDICATED TO SARA HALL AND THE LOSS OF HER BEST FRIEND HEATHER MCGUIRE

BY FLYNN TAYLOR

A sweet smile and chatty talk
painting bright colors
on the sidewalk
of her far away dreams

She laughs
looks at her other
the blonde shines
under the sun

the things they did
the things they shared
the things they discovered
about each other
life tasted so good
on that day

But the gray came
it swallowed their love
in the evil men do

She weeps
in sleep
she seeks
a way back

When once again
she paints and writes her story
in white linen
over her sparkling eyes

Remembering
hoping
praying
to let go

© 2019 Flynn Taylor

AT THE WINDOW

PENCIL AND CHARCOAL ON PAPER

BY TOM BOURDEAUX, JR.



© 2019 Tom Bourdeaux, Jr.

b-boy

OIL ON CONCRETE

By MARIO LOPRETE



© 2019 Mario Loprete



THE OPPOSITE OF SLEEP

By BROOKE TYSON

I lay sideways in bed
The commitment of
Sheets
Blankets
A pillow
Too daunting

© 2019 Brooke Tyson

ENDEARMENT
SCULPTURE
BY KEN BEERBOHM



© 2019 Ken Beerbohm

LIONS
WATERCOLOR
BY MARIE WESTHAVER



© 2019 Marie Westhaver

ON BEING AN ARTIST—REDUX

BY LINDA JOY BURKE

ignore what you told yourself
about yourself when you were 17
or 27, or 57.

listen to things that you
don't want to hear about your work
leave your comfort zone
don't look back.

take everything you've bottled up
unlock the cage
set it free.

be
still
secrets will spill out
reframed
sans shame.

make friends with other artists
and clowns and rodeo riders
and scientists and beauticians
and people who live in odd places
and politicians and brethren
and revolutionaries and herbalists
and bowlers and engineers and healers
make friends with lots of healers.
make use of the things you don't
agree with – see eye to eye with
would never do -

make beauty hunting more of a priority
than killing time or sentient beings.

learn how to grieve and breath at the same time
learn how to pray and say what needs to be
said no matter the medium, say it.

weave the memories that making
a life created into something that will stand
the tests of time – life as we know it changing
take the children along with you
take your neighbors along with you
take your enemies along with you.

© 2019 Linda Joy Burke

AND THE SPEAKING WILL GET EASIER AND EASIER. And you will find you have fallen in love with your own vision, which you may never have realized you had. And you will lose some friends and lovers, and realize you don't miss them. And new ones will find you and cherish you. And you will still flirt and paint your nails, dress up and party, because, as I think Emma Goldman said, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution." And at last you'll know with surpassing certainty that only one thing is more frightening than speaking your truth. And that is not speaking.

...Audre Lorde
Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches, 1984

ARTISTS' BIOS

SHEELA BECTON: PAGE(S) 24, 25

Sheela is a Director in the IT department at Anne Arundel Community College. She lives in Montgomery County with her husband Eugene Becton. Sheela rekindled her passion for painting 10 years ago. Painting on the weekends is very fulfilling and also allows her to express herself. Most of her themes revolve around her memories from India. Her themes also focus on women, hope, love and empowerment. To Sheela her family is her greatest blessing.

KEN BEERBOHM: PAGE(S) 28, 38

Growing up with few possessions, Ken found his playground in nature on the mountain behind their house in Montana. Twenty years ago, he started carving from wood and sculpting with clay. After closing his business in 2007, was able to pursue art without constraints. He has accomplished his mission, Ken says, if his works bring an observer to laugh, ponder or to appreciate.

NATASHA BOSKIC: PAGE(S) 26

A long history of family storytelling, folk tales and legends and Natasha Boskic's personal life experiences have shaped and directed her writing. Interested in technology as a new landscape for literary expression, she experiments with new media. Her poetry and narratives have been published in literary journals, anthologies and special publications. Natasha lives in Vancouver.

TOM BOURDEAUX, JR.: PAGE(S) 32, 36

Art Director and Photographer, Tom Bourdeaux, Jr.'s professional experience spans almost three decades in the graphic arts and printing industry. A lifetime Maryland resident, he studied Visual Communications at the Maryland Institute College of Art after serving in the USMC. He now lives in Howard County with his wife, Sandra, their horses and two border collies. He credits her as his inspiration for revitalizing his creative endeavors in fine art.

ANN BRACKEN: PAGE(S) 21, 23

An activist with a pen, Ann has authored two poetry collections, *No Barking in the Hallways: Poems from the Classroom* and *The Altar of Innocence*, serves as a contributing editor for *Little Patuxent Review*, and co-facilitates the Wilde Readings Poetry Series. Her poetry, essays, and interviews have appeared in anthologies and journals, including *Bared: Contemporary Poetry & Art on Bras & Breasts*, *Fledgling Rag*, and *Gargoyle*. Ann's poetry has garnered two Pushcart Prize nominations.

MARY BRANDENBURG: PAGE(S) 33

Mary is a resident of Howard County, Maryland. For more than three decades she practiced traditional acupuncture which she considers to be the privilege of a lifetime. A year ago she set down her practice and turned her sights to facilitating transformative writing workshops, using the power of language to heal. Mary is a keen observer of nature, a dog lover and vegetable gardener. She has been married for 26 years.

LINDA JOY BURKE: PAGE(S) 39

Poet/writer Linda Joy Burke is a 2002 Distinguished Black Marylander Award recipient for Art and a 2004 Poetry for the People Baltimore Legacy Award recipient. She is currently a contributing editor to *Little Patuxent Review Literary and Art Anthology* and Co-host of the Wilde Reading Series in Columbia MD. Her poetry has appeared in numerous publications including: *The Little Patuxent Review*, *Obsidian II Black Literature in Review*, *Beltway: An On-Line Quarterly*, and *Fledgling Rag*.

ALIE DAVIS: PAGE(S) 3

Alie Davis obtained her BFA in Creative Writing at Chatham University in December 2018. She is the assistant editor of a Pittsburgh-based independent publishing house, Stranded Oak Press. Alie has been published in Allegheny College's *Overkill* magazine, *Beast Grrl*, *Three Rivers Review*, and *The Minor Bird*.

ARTISTS' BIOS CONTINUED

RAY DIGIONDOMENICO: PAGE(S) 4

Ray Digiondomenico is a retired real estate appraiser. For 38 years he worked for a government housing agency. Reading and creative writing are his hobbies and passions. He lives in Catonsville with his daughter Abby.

DIANE DUNN: PAGE(S) 22

Diane works in watercolor, acrylic, and oil to create paintings and mono prints. She often hand colors her black and white photographs with pastel to create depth and texture. Dunn is a member of Artists' Gallery in Ellicott City and is a signature member of the Baltimore Watercolor Society. She has exhibited at many area venues, including the Columbia Art Center, Himmelfarb Gallery in Laurel, Tatiana's in Glenelg, Diddywopps and Keefer Gallery in Monkton.

DANIEL GARCIA: PAGE(S) 9, 10

Daniel's work appears or is forthcoming in Hawaii Pacific Review, Crab Fat Magazine, Dragonfly 2017 and 2018, SLICE, The Offing, Denver Quarterly, and elsewhere. A Pushcart nominee and semifinalist for the Frank McCourt Memoir Prize, Daniel is a recipient of the Myong Cha Son Haiku Award, and a Rustbelt Poetry Slam Champion. Most recently, Daniel received the 1st Place Personal Essay Award at the Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference.

JONAS GILHAM: PAGE(S) 18

Jonas is an advocate for change, positivity and hope. He aspires to work with youth, encouraging them to be the best versions of themselves.

JUDITH GOEDEKE: PAGE(S) 20

The enormous healing power of words compels Judith Goedeke to write and facilitate Poem as Portal workshops. She strives to clarify, challenge, redirect and celebrate life; and do damage control. Her efforts are grounded in the fervent hope that she and all others may grow ever more firmly anchored in both truth and compassion, so we may bring comfort to our shared suffering.

SANDY GREENSPUN: PAGE(S) 11, 31

The first words she heard when she was born were, "it's not a boy." Looking back on her life, she's watched these words become a reality. Now 77 years later, she is no longer haunted by the inferiority of being born a female. Her art is an expression of struggle and accomplishment. Today she is proud of the woman she is.

DMGREISL: PAGE(S) 12

DMGreisl is a lover of books, gaming, and delicious food. Her free time is filled with pet cuddles, reading, writing, painting, and tabletop gaming. She believes that the best way to change the world is through the small and personal moments shared between people. Honesty about struggles and finding joy in the seemingly mundane is her preferred way of life.

MIKE GRISWOLD: PAGE(S) 25

Mike is a parent who has been on a 15-year journey of transformation, first propelled by a child who charted their own path, as a twelve-year old vegetarian, then activist, and then by coming out and bravely leaving situations and institutions that did not honor their identity. As Mike's theological and cultural certitudes dissolved in this new world, and he got help for his depression, the songs and poems he wrote and shared saved him.

JENNIFER ELIZABETH HALL: PAGE(S) 14

Jennifer is a poet and painter residing in Maryland. She developed a passion for books while working at Quill & Brush first edition bookstore. Her poems have appeared on thesongis.blogspot.com, as well as multiple times in *Dragonfly* arts magazine. Additionally, she won a haiku contest through The Southern Collective Experience.

BRONWYN HAYMES: PAGE(S) 8

Bronwyn Haymes is a Baltimore artist who depicts not only the external world, but the internal environment she's living in every second. Through detailed observations and abstract expressions of emotions, her memory has a chance to revisit the smallest of moments and gain new perspectives and closure.

JOYCE HOELZER: PAGE(S) 18

Joyce Hoelzer has been quilting for approximately 10 years and is always seeking new, more complex patterns to explore. It was a love of color and the logic of the patterns that drew this engineer to the art. Other fabric/needle-based arts that she enjoys are needlepoint, knitting, counted cross stitch, and recently the addition of basket weaving. Joyce is assisted in her crafts by her two cats, Calvin and Hobbes.

BRIGITTE HOFER-WOOD: PAGE(S) 34

Born in Germany, Brigitte survived the firebombing of Dresden in February 1945 – an event that shaped the rest of her life. She met her husband who was stationed in Germany and immigrated to the United States in 1976. She taught foreign languages in Howard County for 25+ years. Brigitte writes both poetry and prose in German and English. Music plays an important role in her life as it is international, healing and uplifting for all humanity.

JOANNE JACKSON: PAGE(S) 9

Joanne Jackson is a graduate of HopeWorks' Telling This Truth program, a member of the Survivors Speakers Bureau, a childcare volunteer, and a member of the Our Voice Advisory Council. Ms. Jackson is a passionate believer in the prevention of intimate partner violence and sexual assault through education. She has a special connection with and understanding for mothers of intimate partner violence and their children. She shares her own healing journey and insights on her website, helpforabusedmothers.com.

SANGEETA KAUL: PAGE(S) COVER, 27

Sangeeta Kaul is an intuitive creator who is learning to “unlearn” what was taught to her in her lifetime. She creates that which cannot be explained. Her art is simply a language through which she communicates and questions. As she sees it... anything is possible...with art, she sees no limits. The theme her mixed-media work, Prakriti, is an exploration of Divine Grace. What is this magical “Grace” and how do we locate it? She had no idea. Then one day, it hit her!

DEBORAH KEVIN: PAGE(S) 15

As a two-time international bestseller co-author, Deborah Kevin loves helping visionary entrepreneurs attract their ideal clients by tapping into and sharing their stories of healing and truth. Ms. Kevin is an associate editor with Inspired Living Publishing and a former online editor of Little Patuxent Review. Her passions include travel, cooking, hiking, and kayaking. She lives in Maryland with her family—that is when they're not off discovering the world. Learn more about her at website deborahkevin.com

VICTORIA LEVITT: PAGE(S) 19

She is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Communication at SUNY Potsdam, where she teaches in the creative writing program. She also volunteers in the SOAR (Stimulating Opportunities After Retirement) program where she teaches a writing workshop entitled Lifelines: Writing Your Way In. Her work has appeared in *The Journal of Poetry Therapy*, *Snapdragon*, *North Country Literary Magazine*, and elsewhere.

MARIO LOPRETE: PAGE(S) 15, 23, 37

Mario Loprete is an Italian artist based in Catanzaro, a small Calabrian city in the south of Italy. He says “My art is always dedicated to those who can recognize it. To those who can see a message. To those who see my message. Art is bought for passion, for pleasure, to invest. I like to think that those who buys my works, also buys a temporal door and who wants to enter it, will be conducted into my world, into my way of doing art.”

ARTISTS' BIOS CONTINUED

ALI MARIE: PAGE(S) 30

Ali is new to getting her thoughts out of the pen and onto the page. This is her first work that she has put together to publish and a critical step in helping her move out of the darkness and into the light.

KRIS MCELROY: PAGE(S) 6

Kris McElroy is a 34-year-old artist, poet, and survivor living in Central Maryland. His interest in art and writing began as a child. Over time, both art and writing became therapeutic helping to express, process, and cope with multiple disabilities, mental illness, sexuality & gender identity, self-identity, trauma, and rape. Each time he shares his artistic and literary works he hopes to help himself and others feel hope, empowered, and not alone.

DARCY ROLLOW: PAGE(S) 5

Darcy Rollow is a student at University of Baltimore (UB), obtaining her Bachelor's Degree in English with a specialization in Creative Writing. She has been published in *The Muse* at Howard Community College, as well as in *Skelter* at UB. She has also published her own book of poems, *Unwrapped Presents*, last year about trauma and healing.

GIANNA SCHLOSSNAGLE: PAGE(S) 17

Gianna loves reading (especially fiction), sleeping, drawing, eating (a lot), and writing. She has alopecia areata, which is an auto-immune disease causing her to be completely bald. She is basically allergic to her own hair. She is relatively new to digital art and prefers to draw on paper, but wants to get better at digital art.

RUBY GOSSER SLAGLE: PAGE(S) 14

Ruby Gosser Slagle lives in Glasgow KY. She is a Crisis Intervention Advocate at Barren River Area Safe Space (BRASS). She enjoys her work with clients but when she is off work, she is drawing, sewing and crafting. She has two grown girls that are out conquering the world and many step-grandchildren and step-great grandchildren. She says her drawing, *Seeking Shelter*, was done during a time in her life when her path was not peaceful and it was very unsure. She hopes you find meaning in it.

KELLI SMITH: PAGE(S) 13

Kelli Smith is a Howard County native. Her creative process is her first language and the voice she uses to express her healing. Her artwork exists in multiple mediums and she hopes that it will resonate with others and allow others to find their own creative process too.

MIRA STEIN: PAGE(S) 16, 23

Mira is thankful for the opportunity to write anything, let alone poems, since she has a learning disability which made basic reading and writing an epic feat. She has lived in Maryland her whole life and has no intention to go anywhere else. Mira loves art, especially outsider art, and is thrilled to be considered next to a vast talent of artisans. She has a background in social work and tries to be the person others needed to have growing up.

LINDA SUAREZ: PAGE(S) 7

Linda Suarez is a Venezuelan woman who stands against injustice. She enjoys painting landscapes, faces and animals. She uses different materials to create art abstract and impressionism. At age 13 she had her first painting class, where she discovered that painting was her passion. She dedicated 30 years of her life to her three children, with little time to paint. Today she is living in political exile in the United States and in her free time she paints.

ARTISTS' BIOS CONTINUED

FLYNN TAYLOR: PAGE(S) 35

Flynn lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, and has been writing prose for over 10 years. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Social Science in 2013. A survivor of domestic violence, she enjoys painting, drawing and writing in her journal about interesting things.

BROOKE TYSON: PAGE(S) 37

Brooke is a professor of English and Creative Writing at Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland. She enjoys reading and writing; spending time with her husband, family, and rescue pets, and in photography.

EUDORA WATSON: PAGE(S) 17

Eudora was born in a small city and has spent most her adult life in poor, rural areas. Her work has appeared in *Blue Line*, *North Country*, *The Aureorean*, and *Tule Review*. She has been a janitor, school bus driver, construction worker, grade school teacher, and college instructor. She currently serves as Writing Specialist at a School of Education in Northern New York.

MARIE WESTHAVER: PAGE(S) 38

Professor Marie Westhaver is the coordinator of film studies at Howard Community College, the director of HCC's film festivals, and a visual artist working in Chinese brush painting, watercolors, and fiber art.

REGINA WINNER: PAGE(S) 29

Regina is a mother, a nurse, a daughter, a friend and a survivor of narcissistic abuse. Her writing is a reflection of her lived experiences and helps heal her soul.

PHYLLIS A YIGDALL: PAGE(S) 29

Phyllis A Yigdall continues to work on "figuring things out" and is dedicated to supporting others in doing the same. She is a trauma-informed life coach and an active volunteer who supports the development of others, the beauty and survival of our natural world, and creative expression. She enjoys ever-expanding groups of friends and gratefully finds community in a variety of places.

ARTICLE

At HopeWorks, we use the arts in three important ways to accomplish our mission: to support survivors in their healing; as a vehicle to increase awareness; and to imagine creative solutions to bring about social change. Each year we are excited to introduce you to folks who also know the power of the arts.

“ART THAT BREATHES” A CONVERSATION WITH POET TAYLOR JOHNSON | BY MAYA CAREY

Taylor Johnson is a DC poet who was a featured guest at Dragonfly The Poetry Reading 2018. They offered their thoughts on poetry and transformation to HopeWorks' Maya Carey for this year's magazine.

Maya Carey (MC): The dragonfly is traditionally a symbol for change, and *Dragonfly* arts magazine celebrates change and transformation, born of struggle but ending in deep understanding and self-realization. How do you think change and transformation can occur in communities, and what do you see as your role as a poet in that transformation?

Taylor Johnson (TJ): With that question, I wonder what is meant by community, because I don't really like to take monoliths of people as being communities. I write poems because that is how I know how to be in the world. I'm making art out of that impulse, and it's not necessarily to transform a community or change anyone's mind about anything. I think it's just to share my interiority with the world, which is a powerful thing to do. But my intention is never to help change a community, because I don't really understand the idea of community yet. I don't really attach myself to that so much and I don't necessarily think my role as a poet is to transform any space. My goal is to create art that is new and beautiful.

MC: Could you elaborate on what it means to have a less traditional form of community and how that translates to your inspiration for your poetry?

TJ: I think I find community with people who read. Being in an intellectual community with people is more powerful than being with people who share similar identity or even family. I find community with people whose work I admire, people who ask good questions. That's completely separate from my identity for me, because everyone has such an individualized experience. I find community more with people who tend to think along the same lines.

MC: Going back to the idea of transformation, separating that from community, do you see your poetry as transformation or growth for yourself?

TJ: When I can show up and create art, it's always going to change me. But I think part of that is because I'm always pushing myself to think differently and to look at something in a new way. I find my work. When I write a poem I am transformed, because it is a visceral experience. The creation of art is visceral. So, in my body I feel something, and that can be called a transformation. I always hope that when I'm writing a poem, I am able to give myself completely over to the experience. Because of that, I do feel transformed. Every time I write a poem I hope that the poem teaches me. Every time I write a poem I am changed, because the poem shows me something that I didn't know about myself, or that I didn't know that language could stretch in this way. I really try to be humble to the process so that I can be transformed. I think any good art will humble you in that way.

MC: Thank you, that's beautiful. I want to move on to the next question. Here at HopeWorks we really love Audre Lorde and we ground ourselves in black feminism. Audre Lorde wrote, "Only one thing is more frightening than speaking your truth...And that is not speaking." I would love to know what that quote means to you.

CONTINUED

TJ: Writing poems is my way of being in the world. I don't know who I would be if I wasn't speaking in that way. As a person who is super quiet and really likes to be asked questions, poems are my way of showing up and actually talking about myself or sharing my interior self, which wouldn't come out in ordinary conversation. If I didn't share what is the truth for me, or what I know, or what I don't know, through writing, I think that I would be a sick person. I think that it would feel physically bad. I also understand the role that art has in moving past myself. There are so many times when I have found myself in other people's poems, when I can really hear myself more clearly because this person has written this. For example, Audre Lorde - I remember when I was in college, I took a day, a Saturday or Sunday at a coffee shop and I read *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, the whole book, in one day, in one sitting. And I heard myself. I was like, wow. She wrote something that I could see myself in. That's powerful. I don't know if all artists can do that well, but people who are in touch with being generous can do that. I think that the less egotistical we as artists can become, the more open that field is to other people to identify and to find themselves in art.



Taylor Johnson

MC: What I hear from that is the importance of seeing yourself, the importance of your own truth. That makes me think about other ways you can use art when you share it. How do you believe art intersects with community action and violence prevention? What is the role art has in healing?

TJ: I don't really know. For me ideas like violence prevention, community, and healing are so wide and vast. Everybody who lives here, on the earth, is important to me. I have to love them all, I have to be cognizant of them all. But I know that other people don't live in that way. We need each other to be here. I think that there is some art that can touch someone to maybe make a momentary change about themselves, or it can last beyond that moment. I don't think that it is ever my goal to change a specific thing, when I sit down to write something. It's more like, I need to get this out. I think that there are many different kinds of violence that I've experienced in my life, and most of them are interpersonal, but they are also from systems. It's because we don't value each other, we don't value the earth.

MC: I really liked hearing about how when you write, it's not for a reason, it's to get your emotions out, to get those thoughts out, and whether it changes the world or changes another person's mindset is almost up to the reader, but that's not your intention. I think that leads to a lot of organic creation.

TJ: Definitely. I like conversation. I want someone to talk to me about why they don't like my art, because that feels like a real thing. I want to have conversations where I seek to connect with people and connect with this idea of what comes after the art is written. I think that conversations can change people. I don't believe in the idea of being good or bad; I think we all have both of those things. So, listening to someone who might have a different opinion than mine can change me, too, even if [that opinion is] something that I perceive as being bad. I just want to be in the world, you know what I mean? That means as a participant; it doesn't mean aligning myself strictly with one way or the other way. I hope that my art isn't about moralizing. I don't think that you can put that on the art. That's too much for the art to hold. That's a human impulse. The art doesn't have any of that. I veer away from the idea of putting ego into the art, so that the art has the opportunity to breathe. The art can change people because it is just breathing.

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MC: That's beautiful, "the art is just breathing." That natural tendency is, I think, what makes the most beautiful art, and some of the most healing art, because it's genuine, it's authentic, and it breeds more connection. On that note, Dragonfly comes from HopeWorks' belief that art and literature have the power to heal us, shape us, and even fundamentally change who we are. Do you have a favorite poem, book, or piece of visual art that transformed you in some way or speaks to you?

TJ: So many. I'm always being changed by what I read. Most recently, I'm thinking every day about the poems of this guy named Christopher Gilbert. He wrote this book in 1984 called *Across the Mutual Landscape*. It is beautiful. I really connect with people who are introverted and he was someone who reached into his past, someone who spent a lot of his life in solitude and quiet, and he also was a psychologist. Poems were some of his ways of working out his interior, and he was nice enough to share that interior with us. There are so many other poets. The only thing I do is write and read, I don't have any other job, so this is it for me. When I'm thinking about work that transforms me, it's constant - work transforms me all the time. I think part of it is because I'm open to being transformed in that way. I'm open to revision within myself. If anything is coming from a genuine space, it's going to affect me. I'm always open to being moved.

Taylor Johnson is proud of being from Washington, DC. Their poems appear in *The Baffler*, *Indiana Review*, *Scalawag*, and the *Paris Review*, among other journals and literary magazines. Their first book, *Inheritance*, will be published in Fall 2020 with Alice James Books. Taylor lives in southern Louisiana where they listen.

For more information about Taylor and their poems, visit www.taylorjohnsonpoems.com.

The Our Voice Project

Wellness & Leadership Programs for Survivors



Program Descriptions

Leadership and Advocacy Opportunities

The **Our Voice Advisory Council** is HopeWorks' organizing mechanism for survivors to build community, share insights and provide feedback on a number of issues such as current events, and agency services or programs. Subcommittees include Legislative Advocacy and Outreach to Faith Communities. Meetings are quarterly, held in the months of July, October, January and April.

Workshops for Learning and Self-care

Survivors are invited to attend **Preservation Circle**. Through engaging and creative activities, we cultivate continued courage, self-compassion, connection, learning and self-directed advocacy. Events, topics and themes vary. Past events have included seminars about emotional abuse, workshops on learning to love again and arts-based stress relief.

Developing Self-care Practices

During one-on-one sessions called **Poetry N2 Wellness**, survivors who are out of crisis can learn and practice wellness and healing techniques. Sessions include development of self-care practices and mindfulness tools, as well as creative activities such as expressive journaling, visual journaling and mixed-media arts. No prior art or writing experience is needed. Call to schedule an appointment for an entrance interview.

Fostering Community & Creativity

In our **Poetry N2 Wellness Workshop** series, we use expressive arts activities to explore issues, share insights, and learn from guest speakers. A series usually meets once a week for eight weeks. Topics include stress relief, self-awareness, understanding boundaries, self-compassion, trauma and the body, and moving forward.

Maintaining Your Healing Journey

After participating in Poetry N2 Wellness one-on-one sessions or a workshop series, you are eligible to receive **Journaling Our Voice**, a monthly eNewsletter providing information to help you maintain self-care practices. Articles focus on expressive arts techniques, such as journaling prompts, inspirational quotes, arts journaling ideas, affirmations and more.

Annual Wellness & Self-care Day Retreat

During the **Unlearning Not to Speak Day Retreat**, members of the Advisory Committee facilitate interactive workshops where we share, play, reflect, and collectively celebrate surviving and thriving. This event is typically held in spring.



Questions? Please visit our website for a current schedule of events. For more information and a membership form, contact the Director of Community Engagement, Vanita Leatherwood, at (410) 997- 0304 or email her at vlatherwood@wearehopeworks.org.

finding our voices. speaking our truth. living our lives - well.

We Are HopeWorks.



Founded in 1978, HopeWorks of Howard County is a private nonprofit agency. HopeWorks' mission is to support and advocate for people in Howard County affected by sexual and intimate partner violence and to engage the community in creating the change required for violence prevention.

We are proud of our strong tradition of service provision and survivors will always need the specialized care our dedicated staff provides on a daily basis. Critical also to our mission is engaging the entire community in the work of changing the conditions that allow sexual and intimate partner violence to occur in the first place. This part takes all of us. Sexual and intimate partner violence are not inevitable realities in our world.

We all benefit when individuals are free to live self-determined lives without the threat of sexual and intimate partner violence – not just survivors. Parents, law enforcement, businesses, students, day care providers, doctors, nurses and teachers, men and boys benefit. Families and friends will all be better off without these threats.

Prevention takes an entire community working together – challenging and changing the beliefs, attitudes and culture that allow them to exist. And it takes hope. Hope builds momentum and momentum creates change...when we work together. Our community can be stronger and better and safer when we are all engaged in this work together.

WE ARE HOPEWORKS. EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US.

ADVOCACY SERVICES

- 24-Hour Helpline for callers seeking crisis counseling and referrals regarding sexual and intimate partner violence
- Providing comfort, support, and advocacy to survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence at Howard County General Hospital

SAFE SHELTER AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

- Crisis shelter for victims and their children
- Transitional housing
- Individual case management and educational programs and life-skill trainings

COUNSELING FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL & INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (WOMEN, MEN & CHILDREN)

- Crisis appointments
- Individual and group counseling

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- Brief advice, information and referrals for victims of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, stalking and child abuse
- Representation, consultation in peace & protective order matters, divorce, and family law proceedings
- Information and support through the Volunteer Legal Advocacy Project staffed at the District Court daily
- Criminal accompaniments to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault

ABUSER INTERVENTION PROGRAM

- Separate counseling programs for men and women to decrease behaviors of intimate partner violence
- Focused on increasing coping skills, active listening and effective communication in the context of intimate relationships

ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION & AWARENESS PROGRAMS

- Workshops and trainings at schools, faith communities, businesses and civic organizations
- HopeWorks' Youth Leadership Project: a service-learning program for teens ages 14 to 18
- The Our Voice Project: Survivor's Wellness & Leadership programs
- Arts-Based Programs for the general public to enhance wellness, build community and create change
- Self-care & Social Justice workshops for the general public to facilitating conversation, transformation and liberation
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Outreach and participation in community events such as school fairs, health fairs and awareness events

HOPEWORKS 24-HOUR HELPLINE 410.997.2272