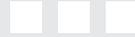


# ARGENTUM

The Art &  
Literary  
Magazine of  
Great Basin  
College  
2020:

**Vision**





## Winter Brooding

*Medium: Photography*

Brian Boyd

On the Front Cover

## Soul Captured

*Medium: Photography*

Cassandra Sasse

## Thoughts on the 2020 Issue

While *Vision* was perhaps an obvious choice for this year's *Argentum*, it was the thought and effort of the contributors that made it a reality. As with any publication of this type, it takes many people to make it happen. Special thanks are extended to Angie de Braga, Dr. Josh Webster, Jennifer Bean, Frank Sawyer, and Gail Rappa for their efforts in encouraging submissions and helping in every way possible from recording the promotional video to reviewing material. We hope you enjoy this issue, and consider submitting to the 2021 issue of the publication. Our website is [www.gbcnv.edu/argentum](http://www.gbcnv.edu/argentum) and staff can be emailed at [argentum@gbcnv.edu](mailto:argentum@gbcnv.edu).

*Dori Andrepont, 2019–2020 Argentum Editor*

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## Argentum Selection Committee



**Linda Cole** *Graphic Designer, Costumer*

Linda went to her local college to learn Photoshop and came away with a degree in graphic design. Who knew just one more photography class or a children's book illustration would lead to that? She is also an award-winning costumer. She has put many nose prints on museum glass trying to see how they did that. She loves the arts, dabbles in many and excels in some.

**Kaitlin Dempsey** *Artist and Educator*

Kaitlin holds a Bachelor of Arts in both History and Archaeology from Western Washington University. Currently Kaitlin teaches science programming at the Museum of Flight, in Seattle, Washington. She feeds her lifelong appetite for art by developing science/art programs for the museum, and with a variety of creative extracurriculars. Recently, Kaitlin served as art editor for the illustrated poetry anthology *WHEEL: A Heart's Hike Through*. In her free time, she is working to hone her oil painting skills and has dabbled in the exciting world of printmaking.



ANDEAN COCK-OF-THE-ROCK, LINOLEUM BLOCK PRINT



**Felicia DeWald** *Writer*

Felicia DeWald holds a Master of Fine Arts in Fiction Writing from Saint Mary's College of California, a Master of Arts in Teaching from Santa Clara University, and a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Notre Dame. She was the chair of the Notre Dame Literary Festival, and former fiction editor for *Mary: A Journal of New Writing*. Felicia is writing a novel, and working for the Office of the Provost at the University of Nevada, Reno as the NevadaFIT Director, running academic bootcamps for college freshmen.

**Janet Winterer** *Artist*

Janet is an artist, sculptor, potter, wood worker, leather worker, jewelry artist, and glass lamp worker. She has done metal casting, various types of weaving, spinning, sewing, fiber arts, lapidary and mosaics. She has produced thousands of works of art both large and small, been represented by an esteemed art gallery and won numerous art competitions. She served as assistant sculpture teacher at Antelope Valley College in California and is currently an active artisan member of the Society for Creative Anachronism. She plans to never have a day in her life without art.



*We thank our 2020 Selection Committee as they took time from their busy schedules to review and choose this year's submissions to be included in this publication. Their willingness and effort is deeply appreciated.*



FIRST PLACE IN STUDENT ART

**Peek-A-Boo**

*Medium: Digital Macro Photography*

Katelynn Sasse





# Black Queen; A Concept

by Tierra Cox

## THIRD PLACE IN STUDENT WRITING

On a head of dark kinky coils, a crown is placed.  
Her face is devoid of emotion. Except one.  
A small smirk in the corner of her mouth.  
Half of me wonders if she were to show any, would they demonize her?  
Would they say she is loud? A stereotype of her skin color.  
Or because she shows none, do they paint her as callous and cold?

We can never do anything right, at least not to them but in this moment  
In this freeze-frame of time, they cannot speak, they can only wonder.  
They can see the magnanimous empress that she is  
Beautiful, powerful and deserving of respect.  
Perhaps, that's why she's grinning. She knows our worth.

Here it is on a throne she sits.  
Gold, of course, nothing else suits black skin better.  
Her poise, tall and regal, she is the epitome of royalty.  
This dress hugging the curves that they hate and desire.  
Sitting on a dais, above the thrall, above these plebs that would usually scorn her.

We are at the bottom of the barrel some say.  
Unlovable, unwanted, doomed to be alone.  
She makes me realize I am more than they will ever say.  
There is a crown on my kinky coils.  
Invisible to your eye, but always seen in my mirror.

There is a crown on my curls that you cannot take off.  
My neck straight and my head high, I walk on.  
Imitate my walk, my lips, my grace if you try  
You can hate me all you want, but that little smirk reminds you  
You'll never be me.

I LIE WITH YOU on the rug in the firelight. Your pupils and irises are the same color. Your face – innocent, inquisitive. You move your mouth like you’re trying to say the word, ooh. I run my finger along your smooth arms and smell your head. Your wonderful God-given baby scented head. I wonder what your voice will sound like when you talk.

It’s amazing that they thought to include fireplaces down here. Natural gas fed from hidden repositories deeper and wider than the San Francisco Bay.

I miss the smell of the ocean, your mother says. She props her elbow on the edge of the rug and rests her cheek on her hand. Warm hues bathe the curves of her face. A delicate nose. Full lips. Her hair, the color of sand. I tell her that I miss wet sand under my feet. She wrinkles her nose and says something about sliminess between toes and things lurking in the cold water. I thought you missed it I say and she says, the smell. And crab. I say, that’s one thing I can go another lifetime without. That and cats. She shakes her head and says don’t you listen to that, Eira. And don’t you believe it, either. Your daddy loves kitties even though he won’t admit it.

I turn you a hundred and eighty degrees, concerned that you’ll overheat on one side of your body from the fire. Your eyes are closed and I stare at your chest to make sure you’re still breathing. Your stomach moves every two seconds in shallow respirations. You breathe a lot. Why is that? So much work for simply sleeping. Sleeping and growing. Every moment you are growing and learning. Your body is working. Cycling through the program set by your DNA.

Your mother has fallen asleep, closer to the fire and opposite from us. It is cool for me in the flickering shadows her hips and legs create and now I’m worried that you’ll be too cold. I wrap you in your blanket like your mother showed me to. Long diagonal folds that trap your arms and shoulders and a large fold back up to your chest that I tuck around you. She likes the security of it, your mother told me. It’s like the womb.

Your cheeks are round and even smoother than your arms. Your right forearm has a peppering of tiny bumps. But those are new. I look at you sleeping, at your mother in repose. The fire hasn’t changed nor will it. I think about how new your life is. I think about death and about life after it.

I’ve always had a hard time picturing it – heaven. Somehow a city with golden streets and a mansion with many rooms still feels too small. Heaven. Eternity. Even space seems more vast. But empty. Perhaps heaven isn’t an enormous house, or an emerald city. Perhaps it is millions of little moments just like this.

You wake in the night. An early morning hour. You’re crying and your mother, eyes half open, cradles you in her arms and lifts you to her breast. You quiet and suckle contented. She smiles, weary, happy and her eyes meet mine.

I love you, I mouth to her. She looks back to you. You finish and we change you by the firelight. Let’s go to bed, I say.

Yes. Can you take her?

I can.

I scoop you into my arms. You’re so light. I’m afraid of not holding you right. I feel your mother’s lips meet mine.

She strokes the hair by my ear.

I love you, too.

YOU BOTH ARE ASLEEP. You in your bassinet, your mother in our bed. I know your mother is tired when I can get up and she doesn’t stir. The fire is off now. Only the blue pilot glow. It is matched by the cerulean night light at the outlet on the kitchen island. Eight hundred square feet. Two bedrooms and the coziest living room and kitchen I’ve ever known. Here of all places.

But I don’t like it when the fire is off. You both sink so easily into the respite of sleep. Fatigued by birth and healing and for you, growing. I put on my gray sweatshirt. It’s hooded. I used to wear it on the beach and share salty kisses with your mother. I pull a pair of cargo pants over my pajama bottoms and slide my stocking feet into a pair of shoes. I leave through the front door. It slides shut and auto locks behind.

The hallways are long with recessed track light lining the walls and casting shadows. There is a hum about the corridor. This time of night I don’t see anyone. But there is the din of systems –heating and ventilation, servers and routers, lighting. When I walk out here I like it. I feel like we’re on a ship, in space, and we are traveling a long distance. And at some point we will reach a destination and disembark to a world much much different than we have ever known.

I FOLLOW THE HUM. It crescendos and guides me along a labyrinth course. It's not such a maze to me now. But the first time I followed the sound it was. Your mother was upset with me then. For leaving in the night. She didn't understand. You were warm in her womb and I was absent. When I'm there she sleeps.

I feel like I shoulder a weight for us. Like I hold at bay an enormous dark flat stone that sits above us. It comes in the evening, or what we call evening for all we know. But in the time when the fire is out. When only the night-lights illuminate. That's when I lie there and I hold this weight.

At first I was scared to leave her alone. But I realized that the weight remained with me if I could lie there long enough for her to fall asleep.

And the weight lessens when I walk the corridors. When I imagine our ship and its long trip and the movement of us all to a place new and full of rebirth. A place like you.

WEEKS AGO I saw McClellan dial in the code for the ventilation room. His skills lent him toward building engineering and so he adopted some oversight in this wing of the tasks and responsibilities our existence requires.

He doesn't know that I have the code. Maybe it will change. Maybe it will be upgraded with a hand chip reader like the lower wings and I won't have access anymore. But tonight I do. I leave the vacant hallway and enter the room.

Four giant steel fans operate within a networked system of ducts. The blowing sound of the fan blades is constant. The room is warmer than the hallway, but not hot. Muted lighting illumines the borders of the ceiling. A graphite-colored office desk with cabinetry lines one corner. A couple flat panel monitors sit darkened with glowing little lights showing their sleep states. The giant fans are for fresh air, not heat. The floor itself is warmed hydronically. One corner in particular must possess more coils because it is noticeably nicer to the touch. There are three stairs near it that lead to a raised platform that runs beside the fans. It is bordered by tubular steel railings.

I pull the hood over my head and sit on the warm section of floor. I lean my neck back and let my head rest on one of the steps. The fans are good. They're in motion. And the dark weight cannot come inside here.

I WAKE, for a precious moment not knowing where I am. Somewhere warm and good. I don't wear a watch, but I know that too much time has passed. There is a lingering sense of morning approaching. I set out into the corridor and pace single-minded back to our unit.

I reach for our front door keypad and see your mother standing there. I suck in a quick and shuddered breath. She knits her eyebrows and shuffles back into the living room. I hear the sound of your music box turning on our nightstand. She just fed you and changed you and put you down. Now you will sleep. Your mother will not. At least

not deeply. And I will not either. I'll fall into a twilight where I wander dark halls made of wood and try many door knobs but none are unlocked.

THE TRUST tells us to imagine our children. And our grandchildren. Walking and playing in our favorite places. Natural places. Before the White Death.

Cathartic vision casting.

They have classes on it. I stopped going after the first week. I'm still waiting for the delinquency visit. The thought of you feeling the ocean around your feet for the first time at eighty years old is not therapeutic or reassuring to me.

I feel like a man who has been told my house will be robbed, years from now, and that there is nothing that will stop it and no way to secure my possessions.

You're resting on my chest now. We're on the couch and the fireplace is on. Your mother is asleep, a sleep more closely resembling unconsciousness than slumber. My job is to ensure her three hours of uninterrupted rest. You'll help out with that, won't you?

I think about the ocean a lot lately. Not that I am trying to. But it's like it lives inside me. As if we had a house on a small cliff above a sandy beach, the sea would naturally be ever-present for us whether consciously or otherwise.

It's the otherwise that I find myself retreating to. The soul stirred savannah of floppy clocks and floating castles. Dali and Magritte. It is here that I hold something. A conviction rooted and fundamental. But I'm not quite able to bring it into words. At least not yet. I just know that deep inside me is a truth that is at odds with what underlies everything down here in Patmos.

Your ruby lips part and you breathe deep.

You are truth, Eira.

Help me to know it.

YOUR MOTHER loves the arboretum. The arboretum and schedules. I roll you along in your stroller beneath high and arched ceilings. The smoothed domed concrete is painted like the sky and varied lighting produces an illusory sun and seasons. An underground earth spinning in its mock sojourn.

There are birds. The caws and whistles beckon your eyelids upward. Your sight is growing brighter in ability to discern colors and shapes. Every second a new creation. Butterflies flutter and elicit smiles from your mother. One lands on your nose and forces a cross-eyed stare and the stillest I've seen you while awake.

The air is humid and there is the sound of falling water. Fish undulate in ponds and I see people walking on the level beneath its glassy bottom.

It's like Eden, she says.

YOUR CRIES DO NOT allow for us to linger in the aquarium below. We exit with a soft-voiced recording extolling the

sustainable environments of the science bay, championing our evolved ability to adapt and overcome the most dramatic global catastrophes. An ability wrought in the bubbling soup of billions of years past.

SEMANTICS. At some point we became a people who no longer worried about the weight of words. But words change our thinking. Like oak lifted sidewalks. Subtly. Over time.

YOU ARE ASLEEP on your mother's lap and we are sitting on the couch. She entwines her fingers in your wispy fine hair.

You used to read, she says to me.

I say, what do you mean, and she glances sideways at me and smiles. She waits for me to respond, knowing what she said is true and giving me time to get past my defensiveness.

I open my mouth and shut it. I stare at the fire. I do miss it.

She looks into me now. Then why don't you?

I swallow, knit my eyebrows and look down.

And don't say because there aren't any good books.

Maybe that's it.

You have the entire digital library.

But not books, I say. Not tangible, physical books. You ever think that's odd?

Space here is limited.

Is it?

Is it that much? That we can't fit a few bound books?

It's outmoded.

I find her eyes. Do you really think that?

She traces your earlobe with her fingertip. No. It's the party line, though, isn't it?

Say the truth, then.

She looks inward and then up at me. A word on the printed page can't be changed once it's there.

You sigh.

Yes, I say. There is power in words.

In the written word.

I nod. In *printed* words.

THIS IS WRONG, your mother says in stride, our running steps in syncopated rhythm. The whirl of the treadmills fills the cardio room with a whining din. She is frowning at the forest scene on the digital wall, eyebrows creased.

What is? I thought you liked the Tahoe program.

Your mother grew up near Lake Tahoe. The scenery is familiar. But she isn't happy.

She slows her jog to a walk, then steps on the sides of the treadmill, track still running, trail movie still rolling along. She lets out a breath, sweat glistening above her lip and looks at me. It never changes, she says.

I slow to a walk. Well, yeah. It's a program. But it's long. I think we can do the entire Rim Trail.

She shakes her head. No. That's not it. It's — can you tell me what month it is right now?

I rub the back of my neck. February, right?

Exactly.

So I lose track of time down here. Maybe that's not such a bad thing.

Well, I don't. I know that it is exactly February, and the first week in it. The second day. Do you think we could run the Rim Trail like this in the first week of February?

I glance at the shaded forest trail. Dry dirt with evergreens and granite and rubbery manzanita, its brick-red branches twisting in the filtered sunlight. I stop my treadmill now and look at your mother. It should have snow, I say.

She tents her eyebrows and tilts her head. Her lips twist to one side for a moment and she says, yeah. It should have a lot of it.

And it should be cold.

Frigid. And we should be skiing, not running. And then coming home and leaving our boots in the mudroom and sipping something hot on a rug by a fire that you just built.

That sounds nice.

It does.

I look at the wall and back to her. I'm sorry about the program. I thought you'd like it.

I do. I do, Peter.

Only...

It just reminds me —

Of where you grew up?

Of what we don't have.

Snow?

Snow. And change.

IN THE ARBORETUM your mother stops with the stroller beneath a pear tree and says, what would you name him?

I exhale and smile. Don't get any ideas. We've got our hands full as is. I wink at you. You grin and flap your arms.

Your mother studies the dangling bell shaped fruit, supple, green with sunny speckles, hanging in twos, and looks back at me with a coy smile and a raise of her eyebrows.

I inhale the crisp fresh humidity of the arboretum and shake my head.

So? She says.

I press my lips together and look away.

What? A laugh underlying her tone.

I wouldn't name him anything.

I feel her step closer. Not an option.

Why not? I face her.

The playfulness slowly exits from her eyes. Because you can't have a child without a name.

Exactly, I say.

She searches my face. I don't understand what you mean.

I swallow and look around the tree canopy covering the room. A mix of deciduous and coniferous trees. A steady flowing brook winds through the center of it all – out one wall and down through a hidden centrifugal pump and then back out of another wall. I lower my voice. Exactly, because if you have no child then you don't have to name it.

*Him*, your mother counters.

How could you know beforehand if it would be a him or her?

Either way *they* wouldn't be an *it*.

Well, there's certainly not going to be a *them*.

You don't know that. Why are you being like this, Peter?

Like what?

She extends a flat palm. Like this.

What?

Her eyes, now reddened, well with tears. I want her to have a sibling, she says. We're allowed two. If you're not ready to try again, that's one thing but –

That's just it. We're *allowed* two? What right does The Trust have to dictate anything in the matter?

Lower your – Her eyes sweep the room. There are only so many supplies down here, Peter. Rationing is part of our –

Is that right? Is it? Or is that just what we've been taught? Indoctrinated. This pear tree here looks pretty self-sustaining to me.

Tears pull over her cheeks. Why are you saying this? What are you saying?

I'm saying I'm not willing to raise another child just so he can spend the rest of his waking life holed up beneath the ground, never knowing a sunset or a sky or a real mountain stream where the same water passes him only one time. One. Time.

Your mother is quiet.

I stare at the floor and exhale. How can we do that?

YOU AND YOUR MOTHER SLEEP. Deep chest heaving sighs. I lie in bed, my mind knotted with constructs and the way we always know things to be and how readily apparent it is that they are no longer. Yet, down here every effort is made to continue on with the societal blueprints. Before the Svalbard descent we were wrapped up in you and the changing trimesters and believed the homogeneous news reports of everything remaining as it always had been. Just as we'd been conditioned to do. Scant faint voices spoke to the contrary. Now, all but silenced.

I stare at the ceiling in the blackness, knowing that a hundred million tons of lightless rock lie above us.

*Daddy,*

*My hands are shaking. Not because I'm cold but because I'm writing this in the changing light of a sunrise over the ocean.*

*The ocean, Daddy.*

*A sunrise.*

*I'm seeing it and I'm not dying. I'm not sick.*

*And it isn't just a few colors like the arboretum. It's thousands. Tens of thousands across the sky. And the sea is a companion mirror reflecting its glory.*

*I'm transfixed.*

*This sun moves differently, hovering in the southeast, edging behind morphing clouds. Some close. Some far. Misty waifs. Never fully waking up, she lingers, strolling along a distant shore, as though she were conserving her energy to light the day twice as long, sparing herself the arduous climb over the arc of the sky. I've seen her retire for a quick nap and then rise to bathe again in a tub drawn with myriad hues of deep rose and tangerine.*

*This happened every year we were down there?*

*This is what I am learning – This sun doesn't rise because it's morning time. Because a schedule or a program dictated that it was the hour to get up.*

*She is the morning.*

*I've always known the shadow and now behold the form.*

*All of it, Daddy – the light, the waves, the wind, the swirls of snow powder over this immaculate landscape – it's all in motion.*

*An ever-changing canvas.*

*I want you to know that your letters are life breath to me. I'm writing in the bare spaces of them because it's the only paper I could find. And I want this to reach you and for you to know without any doubt that this is from me. So you know that I am alive, more so now than ever. That I made it.*

*I am with the others. I love you and Momma and I want desperately to see you again but you know that I can't until I find out.*

*Were we sent to Patmos to protect us from the White Death –*

*Or because we are immune to it? ■*



**Sunset Oregon Coast**

*Medium: Photography*

Roger Hockemier

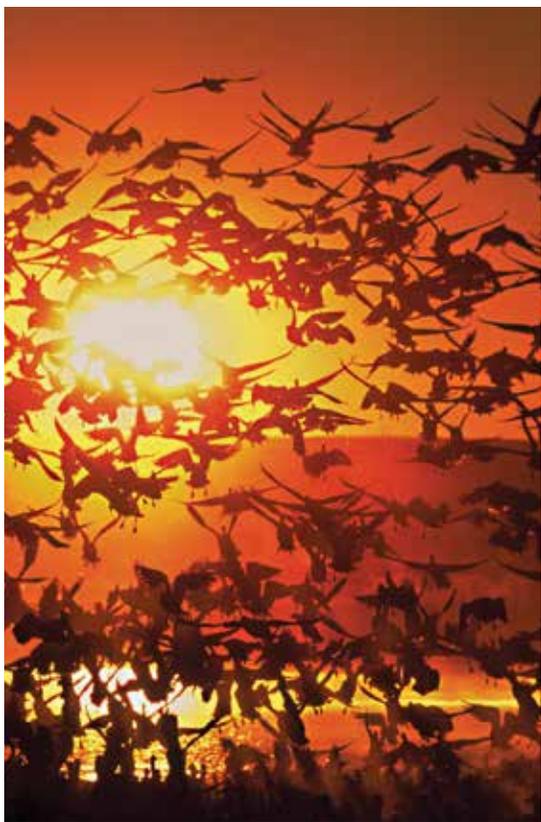


## Visions of Spring

An old seeder for field planting.

*Medium: Photography*

Katina Morris



## Snow Geese

*Medium: Photography*

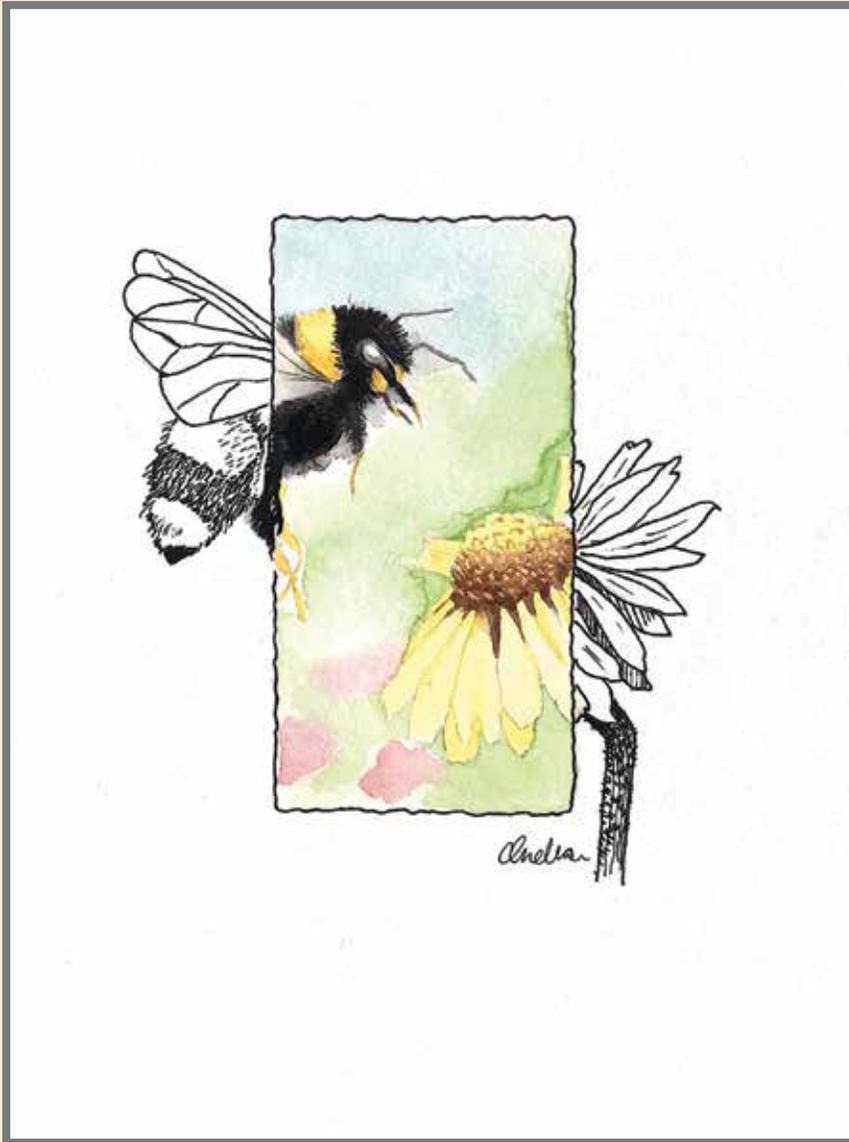
Cynthia Delaney



**Ancestral Vision**

*Medium: Pencil Drawing*

Andrew Hall



## Bumblebee

*Medium: Watercolor on Paper*

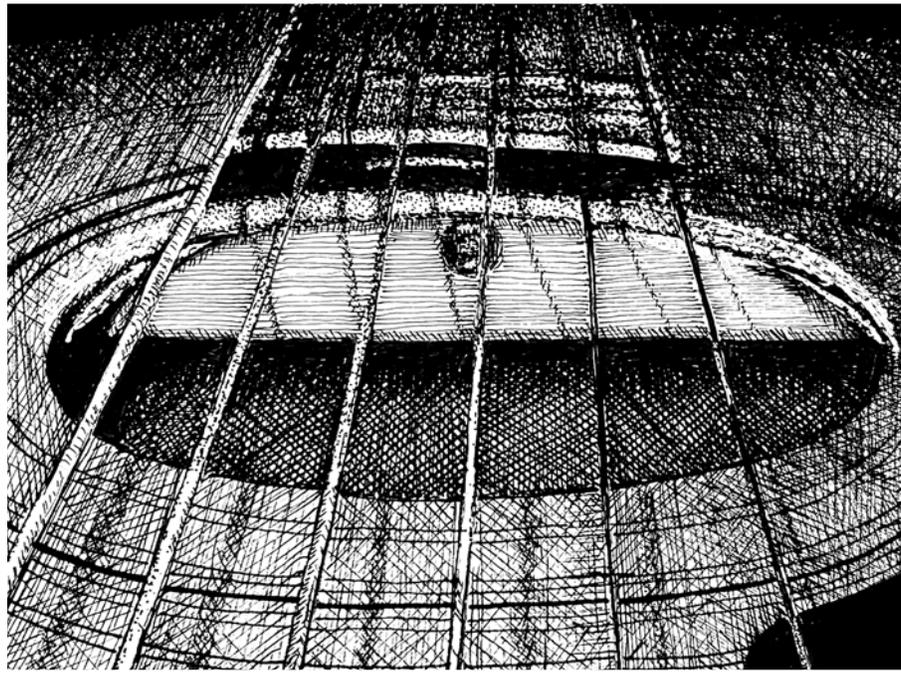
Indica Morgenstein



**View from Under the Aspen**

*Medium: Digital Photography*

Angela de Braga



## Hello Darkness

*Medium: Ink*

Torrey Weiss



## Highway to Nevada

*Medium: Metal, License Plates,  
and Post Cards*

Carissa Turner



## Gas Up at Belmont

*Medium: Jewelry Making*

Sidnie Miller





**Perspective**

*Medium: Photography*

Mike McFarlane



**Sapphire Rose**

*Medium: Metalwork*

Zoie Leaman



**Four Roses**

*Medium: Ceramics – Slab Building*

Cynthia Cordray



# Your 1830 Traffic Report

by Lora Minter

Gooooood Morning from the TRAFFIC 1830 observation station. It's 5:40 a.m. and a cool 53 degrees. Plenty of heat headed our way with an expected high of 84. A thin band of clouds to the north may bring afternoon thundershowers.

**Up in the sky today**, we are seeing:

- Unusual rush hour traffic at KESTREL BOX and TOWER caused by all four fluffy bodies navigating a tight entrance onto SUNSHINE LANE simultaneously. Collisions possible, with potential for unexpected first-flight tumbles off crowded platform. Be warned that frequent food deliveries by attentive and experienced fliers will result in pandemonium.
- The stream of traffic along POWER WIRE WAY varies this morning from clear to controlled. A circling flock of sharp-billed grackles is maintaining a steady flow with only slight congestion as clusters of four break into well-spaced pairs of two along the traffic lane. WIRE WAY has now been cleared, with only moderate confusion to nearby kestrel chicks bobbing their heads to gawk at the unexpected traffic.

**Down on the ground:**

- Dangerous conditions currently reported on CONCRETE WALL. Reports of a fast-moving, young cottontail behaving erratically have been verified. The bunny races 10 concrete blocks forward, then executes a 180-degree turn and charges in the opposite direction, only to repeat. Nearby traffic is advised to avoid the roadway as the hopper makes unexpected lane changes and may veer unexpectedly into brush.
- The bull snake traveling WEST SIDE GARDEN HOSE toward SHADY PINES is advised to avoid BARE PATCH, and make a quick exit through TALL GRASS to avoid air strike.
- Mourning dove cacophony once again is disrupting the intersection at PEACE and QUIET. Desperate dove calls of "Da Dee, Da Dee, Da Dee," may indicate lost parent. TRAFFIC 1830 reassures listeners that the missing bird is frequently found on CHIMNEY FLUE, pulled over for a morning nap.
- Sentinel Quail, an unreliable lookout, can be heard calling at SAGEBRUSH POINT. Travelers note that any sudden quiet may indicate either that (1) danger was detected and circumvented, or, (2) as usual, the incompetent guard may have missed what is standing only two-feet next to him, and mass destruction has taken out the flock. No sight of kestrel parents carrying quail cargo reported.
- Finally, our listeners are advised, and implored, to avoid SLIDING DOOR Exit 2 onto BACK PORCH due to extreme excitability of nesting King Birds prone to dive bomb any moving object within 4 feet of nest.

That wraps up our TRAFFIC 1830 report for Saturday, July 6, 2019.

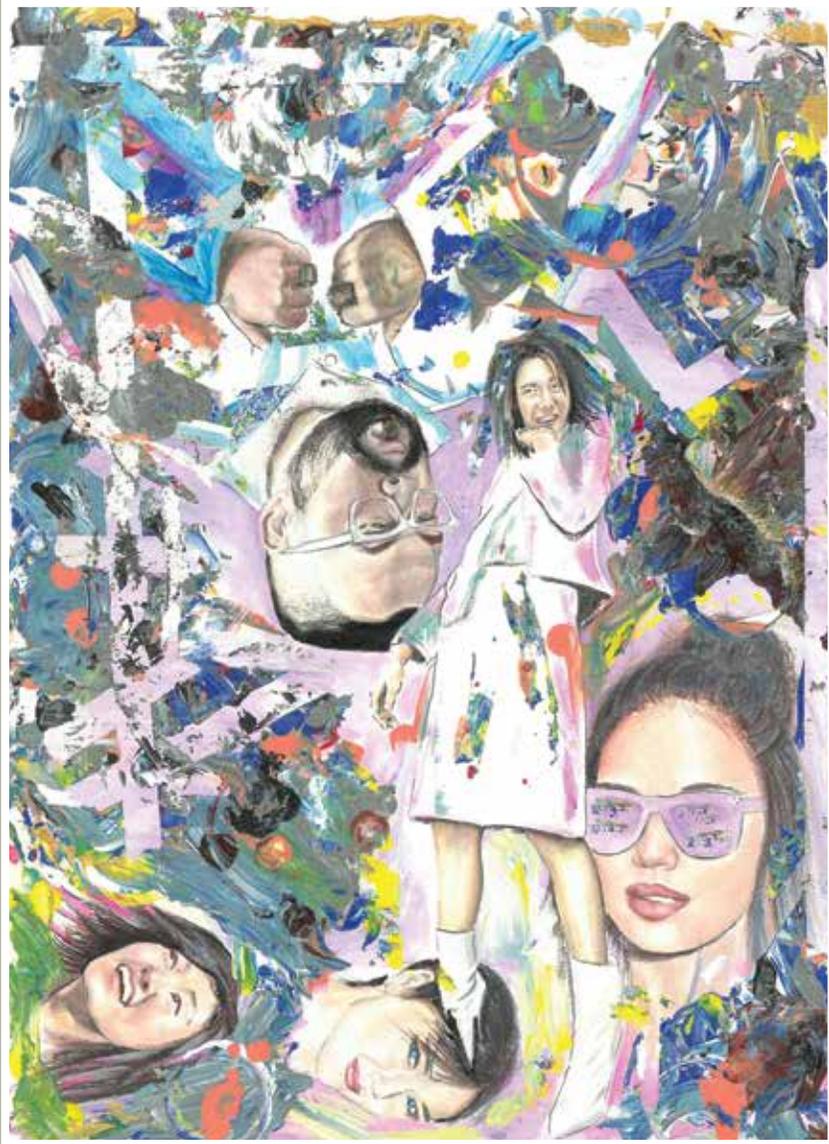
**Keep your eyes on the sky, and have a nice day!**



**Winters in Yellowstone**

*Medium: Digital Photography*

Cassandra Sasse



**Kissing Monkey, Hidden Antman**

*Medium: Pencil and Acrylic Collage*

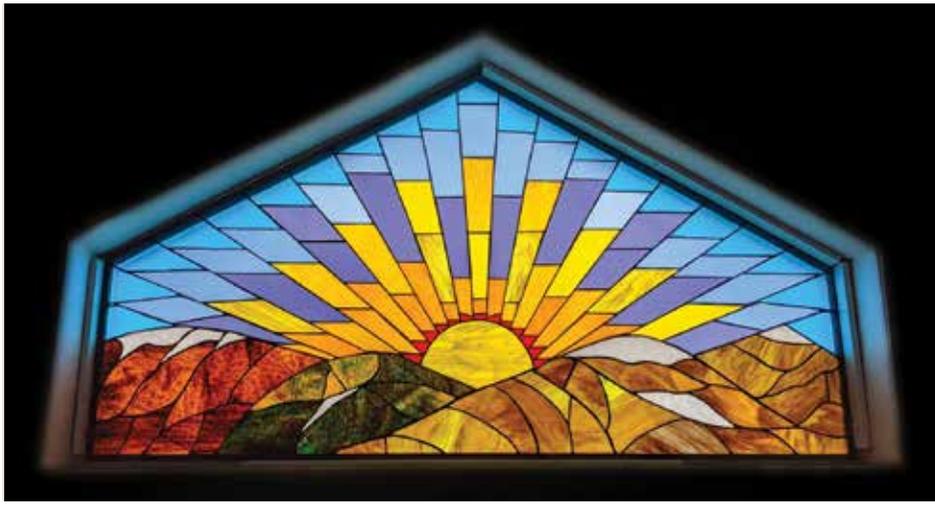
Brandy Gaylor



**Sun Dog**

*Medium: Photography*

Cynthia Delaney



**Sunrise in the Rubies**

*Medium: Stained Glass*

Martha Watson



**Sunset Feather**

*Medium: Oil on Canvas*

Heidi Roberson

HER MOUTH IS DRY AND STICKY, causing a salty white ring to form around her lips. They've been walking for days. Today is the first day no one has said anything. No one has complained or told the younger ones to hustle up or even talked about water. Her brother has slowed down, he's behind the crying lady. She's the slowest. A man said she is pregnant, and no one should wait for her. He usually talks the most. Mostly about getting caught or where they should sleep to avoid getting caught or where he has heard other groups have gotten caught. She is happy he is quiet today. She is thinking about her mother right now. The way she smelled when she got home from school and would wrap just one arm around her chest while standing at the stove. She tries to stop because the memory always ends with the voice her mother used the last time they spoke. The voice she had never heard before, deep and watery, telling her to take her brother and leave.

She looks down at her arm and sees the finger marks her mother left reminding her to wait for him. *Wait*. She has to keep saying the word to remember what she's doing. Her head hurts more than it did yesterday; it's hotter today. *Wait, wait, wait*. She is facing forward when she sees the crying lady pass her, a red river running down her leg. The borders of the river are dry and cracked, some places are thick and syrupy where dust has risen to block its flow. The crying lady's right shoe is filled with it. She has stood for too long staring. She can feel her heels begin to throb and the sweat from her armpits trickling down her hips. She turns around to yell at her brother to hurry up but doesn't see anyone else, only spindly saguaros and yellow bloomed rabbit brush. It's too hot. "Stop!" she says, quieter than she meant to. Her throat is dry, and she can only just whisper. "Stop, stop!" she says again, this time a mere hiss. No one stops, as if in a daze they all keep stumbling through the brush above her. The crying lady has just disappeared over a hill, and she realizes she must find him alone.

She hates the crying lady. Her useless howling, her matted hair and red stained shorts, how she smells of monkey bars heated in the sun. Monkey bars. How she could climb and spin on them with just one knee lopped over the top. She can feel the rush of blood to her head just thinking about hanging upside down on them, hands reaching for the ground and the breeze on her belly. She

could hang the longest. Mia came close to beating her just once when the sweat from behind her knees almost lost her the title. Mia must have had the same problem because she broke the rule of no hands to wipe her leg. Her hands are picking at the dirt and she realizes she has been sitting too near an ant hill. They are climbing angrily over her knees, pinching their tiny bodies over her skin. The burning forces her to stand and flick them off one by one. Some of them lose their bodies to her flicking, their heads still firmly gripping at her skin. That's why they are here in the middle of the desert.

Her uncle owned a store in the middle of town. He had it painted bright yellow and her mother laughed, squinting her eyes she told him his customers would buy anything he stocked because they would be blind by the time they reached the door. She can still smell him – peppermint and tobacco. He slipped her peppermints from his shirt pocket when her mother wasn't looking, cool and hard she would bite them into little pieces then run to the back where the television hummed. When the shadowy men arrived in town no one left the house anymore, not for school or peppermints.

When her uncle would visit, he would bring her candy with him then speak in whispers about the men and the guns. Her mother's friends started talking about how the shadows wanted to tax her uncle's store for protection from bad men. Her uncle was a proud man and too brave her mother said. When her uncle wouldn't pay, the shadows removed his head and put it outside the store so everyone could see. Their neighbor, Ms. Patricia, told her Mother everything through shaky hands and gasps for air. That night she heard the popping of gunfire and muffled screams. Her mother grabbed her arm so tightly she could feel her skin beating and told her to meet a man behind their storage shack. She said she needed to get Ms. Patricia, "I'll be right behind you." She hugged her tightly, head against her hot belly and handed her her sleeping brother. They waited as long as they could, then the man took Gabriel in his arms then beckoned her into the darkness.

The sun is lower now and her belly is making noises. She has to find him. Her legs are weak and wobbly, she shakes them before she starts walking again. Her lips are sticking together and bleed when she tries to open her

mouth to call for him. Gabriel let go of her hand shortly after they woke up this morning. He had cried every day and night, calling for their mother, until today. She was too tired from him fighting her for days that she let him fall behind. Mother gave him something to make him sleep the night they left to keep him quiet. He has never been away from Mother, always clinging to her leg or begging to be carried even though he has outgrown her hip. She wonders then if he walked ahead of her and she hadn't noticed, maybe he is at the front with the man they call "Coyote," although he looks nothing like one. His hair is long, and he braids it back and wears a bandana over his mouth and nose. He carried Gabriel until he woke up that first night crying and screaming. He told her she had to keep him quiet or they'd have to leave them behind. Their mother must have thought this would happen because she had packed an entire pouch of candy. All of that is gone now, the water, candy, apples and sandwiches.

Her eyes and nose are stinging now, little drips of water leak down her cheeks. "Gabriel!" She shouts beneath sobs and chokes. The sky is darker now, smears of pink and white paint the horizon. The group will be picking up speed now because it will be dark soon. The best time to move the Coyote man will say. She hears a rattling sound, like smooth pebbles being shaken in a bowl. She looks up and there is a coil of rocks shaking. She stands staring for a long time then sees the coil move upright; a rattlesnake. Her dog had been bitten by one last year and swelled and bloated until he couldn't breathe. He didn't make it through the night. She wants to scream and smash its head in with her hands, but she can't, she has no strength for that and knows she wouldn't win the fight. She backs up slowly until it stops shaking and slithers off out of sight. She turns around to keep looking and sees a small Mickey Mouse backpack underneath a bush. Gabriel's backpack. Gabriel loves backpacks. He has about a dozen at home he has collected from birthdays and hand-me-downs from their cousins – the Mickey Mouse one is his favorite. He used to pack it full of stuffed animals and rocks then carry it around the house and sometimes to their uncle's store.

Gabriel is lying on his side with one arm up under his head like a pillow, his long dark lashes are closed. There is dry puke near his mouth where his dimpled knuckles are resting. "Gabriel," she says gently shaking his arm. "Wake up, we have to go. Everyone is ahead of us." He is always hard to wake up. Their mother must time his naps, so he doesn't oversleep then refuse to go to bed. "Gabe, we have to go." She is shaking him harder now and his head has flopped over his arm into the puke. Now that she has stopped moving, she realizes how tired she is. Her legs ache, and she can feel a blister on the heel of her foot has popped and wetted her sock. It's shady here, she can see why Gabriel laid down in this spot. There is a large boulder right behind the sagebrush he is under that is casting a wide shadow far out in front of them. It feels cool here, and she decides she will lay behind him just for a while to rest. She is surprised by how cool his skin is, but his hair smells of lavender shampoo and sweat. He loves baths. Mother bathed him the day they left, a morning bath because they stayed up late with their uncle the night before. Sometimes she watches him while he's in the bath so her mother can fold laundry or cook. He was making a soap beard and dunking his face in the water to wash it clean.

She nuzzles her face deep into his hair and closes her eyes. It's hard to sleep without her mother's soft humming. She starts rubbing her brother's back and begins to hum a lullaby as best she can with a dry and sore throat. Then she hears something, a hum of sorts that sounds like women crying in the distance. The coyotes are singing a lullaby. The desert has turned dark, but the sky is lit with a nightlight of stars. She holds her brother tighter to warm him up then feels her body giving in to sleep. Her heart is pinched with sadness for her warm bed and her mother's hand on her back. The aching dulls as she folds into her brother and listens to the desert's hum and feels the warm wind on her back. Her mother is there behind her now, whispering warmth into her ear and gently rubbing her back. She can feel her body sinking into Gabriel's as she falls asleep in her warm bed. ■



SECOND PLACE IN STUDENT ART

**Scrambled Eyes**

*Medium: Intaglio*

Julianne Stahl



**Vision 20-20 –  
Where It's At in  
the Year of the Rat**

*Medium: Copper Repoussé*

Sidnie Miller



## Petrified

by Chelsey Pennell

The boat of heaven aches for something more;  
Lilting and swelling the laden boards bend  
While water blooms between the splinters.  
How many men can this lumbered boat hold?

Men spitting, men crowing, men scuffing their shoes,  
Men heaving, men carving, men sanding dry hulls.

She will hold it. She will hold it all. She will choke on their sticky spit,  
Listen to their panting, inhale every print, go with them where they take her,  
Grimace every whim. She will do it, rock them home to shore, hold their bodies  
And their grit deep inside her belly until the salt, sand and years of smothered silence  
Turn wood to polished stone.



THIRD PLACE IN STUDENT ART

**Post Apocalyptic**

*Medium: Photography*

Cassandra Sasse



## Disappearing

*Medium: Digital Macro Photography*

Katelynn Sasse



## Sakura

by Jennifer Stieger

Blushing blossoms wake  
then milk-pink petals expire —  
celebration dawns

# Life Through My Eyes

by Matthew Hutchinson

I stood there, smoking a cigarette as they wheeled the gurney into the unit. A few minutes prior, the echoing thunder of loud gunshots had yanked me from another poor night of sleep. In the close confines of the unit, the shots sounded like God was banging on the doors of my ears. I had tried to sleep in this morning, because I was so tired, but that wasn't going to happen anymore. Adrenaline was currently wracking my body as the cold shakiness of its effects seeped into my joints. The instant response to gunshots is that fight or flight feeling that is simultaneously exhilarating and terrifying. I inhaled another lungful of smoke as I looked out through my two-inch wide window at the carnage in front of me, and couldn't shake off the shudder as I thought of how normal this had become.

I watched a correctional officer stomp on the unconscious head of an inmate, the blood falling in droplets from his boot, the image of a bloody boot print wouldn't leave my mind after I saw it there on the floor. The inmate was clearly dead, his face no longer recognizable after being shot off by a shotgun. Bits of skin and other unrecognizable anatomy were scattered across the floor like strips of bacon, and I thought at that moment of how I wished I could be at my Mom's house having bacon and eggs. I was a long way away from that memory now, serving life without parole at eighteen years old in a maximum security prison.

He must have slipped off his handcuffs on his way to the shower and attacked the officer. I saw the very end of the incident as it was happening. I saw as the officer ran towards the shower while the inmate tried to beat him. The inmate was too old to do it effectively, but that didn't prevent him from getting shot again and again and again. He fell after the third time I saw him get shot,

and the officer kept shooting his corpse as he lay there unconscious. Each shot jarring his frail old body like he was being kicked by some invisible giant. I knew the old man, and he had always talked about being too much of a man to take his own life. I guess he decided that today was his last day.

The aftermath of the scene seemed almost comical, because the inmate that was clearly dead was being handcuffed, because he must be for security measures before he could leave the unit to go to the hospital. Live ammunition in a closely confined space is especially deadly, as the scene in front of me perfectly displayed, and as my ringing ears bore witness. I watched as they took his body and threw it haphazardly on the gurney to wheel him out of the unit. After picking him up, one of the correctional officers joked that he wished the inmate canteen would stop selling honey buns. His buddy responded that he wished that he had worked out a little more. Laughter echoed across the concrete tier as they stood over his corpse. I breathed in another lungful of smoke.

I overheard another inmate talking to his neighbor, saying that he wished it was him that was getting out. I knew he was thirty-seven years into his first of three life sentences. I didn't know how to take that comment, but the shiver in my body was enough to jar into my mind the reality that I would feel the same way some day. The warm cigarette smoke could not fight back the coldness of my reality. Life through my eyes was going to be an endless cycle of what I had just seen, differing versions of the same day as I stared out of my two-inch window. This is all that I would ever see of the world. If only I could shut my eyes and forget. But hope became a friend that I had just lost sight of. ■



## Alaska 2019

by Lora Minter

### Inside Passage

Dolphins disco dance.  
Bounding, break from ferry wake  
Daily joyful chase.

Albatross sighted  
Persistent birder pay-off  
Frozen lips crack smiles.

Lofty clouds shoreward  
Sunset pink puffs. Slants? Edges?  
Mountain height surprise.

### Whittier, AK. 4 a.m.

Two horns air-kiss beeps  
Disrupt mid-night raindrop plop  
Friendly pre-dawn "Hi."

### Futility Defined

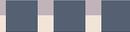
Frantic thrusts upstream  
Useless lunges onto rocks.  
Cadavers sun-dried crusts.

### Denali Park, AK

Far-off bus dust coils  
Specks in Alaska vastness  
So small, our passage.

### Pleas for Help

Rangers beg: Respect  
water, trails, bears, birds, moose, plants  
Mother needs our help.



## Vision

by Bailey Schulz

Vision they say, there's only so much  
we can truly see,

But between you and me  
Vision is much more than just  
an open door.

It lies beyond thralls of history  
and wars.

No, vision is with its people  
Are we not the people who dream?  
The people who gathered together to  
form what we now see?

The vision seen by the people who  
fought for a free land.

The vision that started with taking  
a stand.

I see a million chances, possibilities  
brought forth by the brave.

I know the value of those who gave;  
Vision is seeing the light of  
bright dawn.

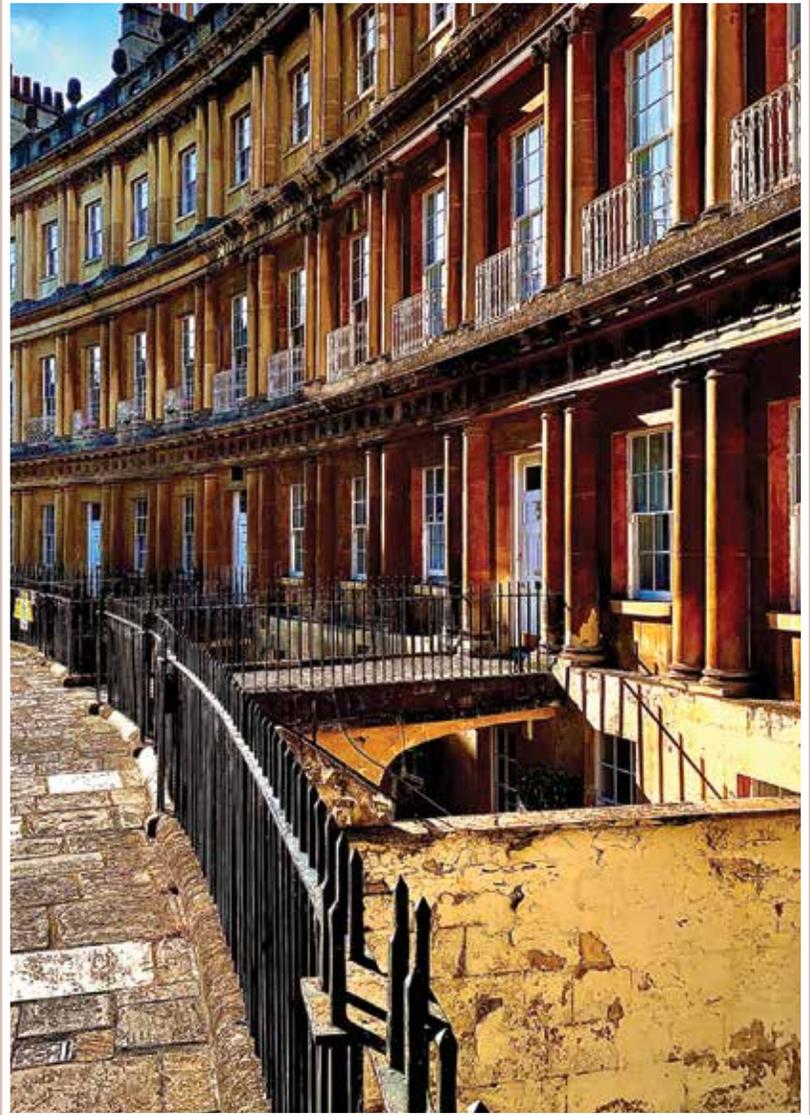
Now, I look ahead as others before  
me have done.

The battles that have been won.  
For here we start again to pave  
the way;

What's more that I could never say  
Is the vision of the future

Although the light of this vision can  
hardly be captured

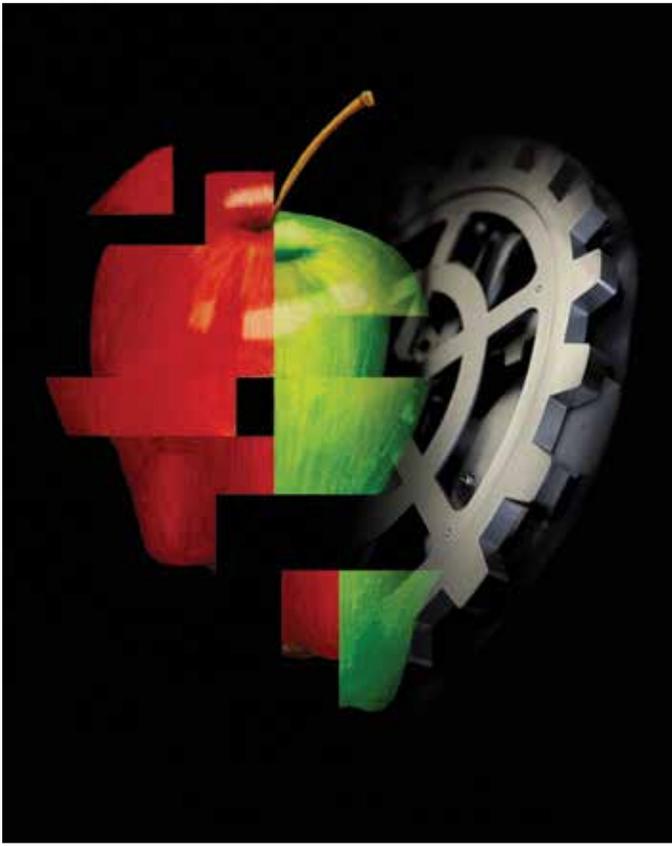
For it's dreamt by you and me  
So, what do you see?



## The Circus

*Medium: Photography*

Jennifer Stieger



**Love**

*Medium: Colored Pencil Digitally Rendered*

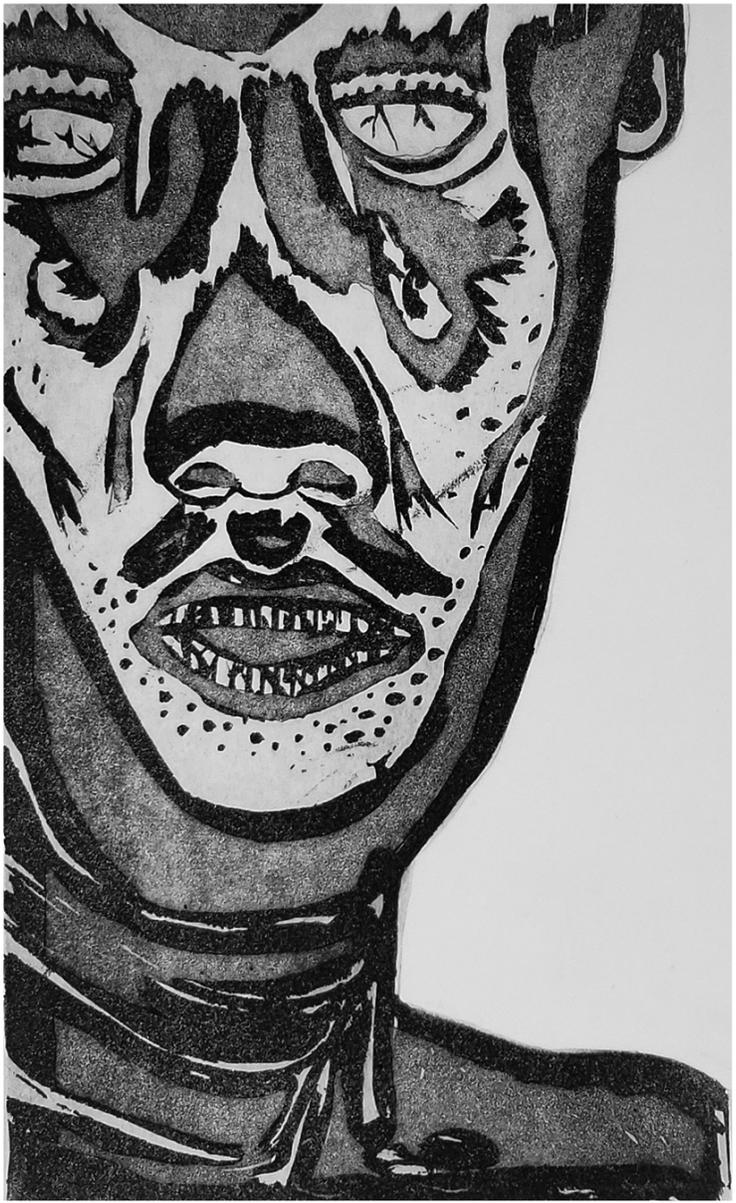
Leonard Stossel



**Vision in Voodoo**

*Medium: Intaglio*

Julianne Stahl





Work from ART 206 Jewelry II Spring 2020 students.

## Vials of Vision

LEFT TO RIGHT

Clear Vision – *I can see clearly now...* | Gretchen Greiner

1996 – *Light a candle for the sinners, set the world on fire.* | Mica Johnson

Lightness | Gretchen Greiner

Untitled | Doe Coshway

Crying Eye | Elaine Parks

Vision | Julianne Stahl

Tempus Fugit – *It escapes irretrievably time.* | Mica Johnson

[www.gbcnv.edu/argentum](http://www.gbcnv.edu/argentum)

[argentum@gbcnv.edu](mailto:argentum@gbcnv.edu)

## A Timeline from the Editor

April 10, 2020

The subject of my English degree capstone project was *Argentum*, and one of the points I made was that the publication captures a moment in time. The purpose of this addendum to the digital version is to document the pandemic timeline in relation to this year's issue.

Work on the publication started the summer of 2019. It was a time when we would have mocked anyone who suggested that there could be a toilet paper shortage, let alone a pandemic. By the time *Argentum* submissions were due on February 18, it had been 29 days since the first case in the United States was confirmed. Globally, there were just over 75,000 cases with 2,000 deaths.

The submissions were processed and emailed to the four judges on February 23. On February 24, pictures of empty grocery store shelves in Italy were published. Personally, I was raised rurally with relatives who lived through the Great Depression where having an empty pantry was considered outrageous, perhaps even heinous, and furthermore, just plain wrong. I saw those pictures and went shopping, taking a grumbling 11-year-old with me. As the kid asked, repeatedly, why we had to do this right now, I told her to look at what other people were buying. They weren't buying clothing and St. Patrick's Day decorations. They were buying paper products, disinfectants, and long-term foodstuffs. She rolled her eyes. (I have to add here that it was only a few weeks before she admitted I was right. Rarely does validation come so quickly. I would have happily been wrong.)

The *Argentum* judging was finished on March 7. On that day, the virus in Italy was a headline news story and it would be only hours before the country put 10 million citizens on lockdown. In the United States, according to Reuters, "there are at least 160 people in more than a dozen states with the coronavirus". The initial magazine layout was finished the next week, a few days after the outbreak was declared a pandemic on March 11. As non-essential businesses were quickly shuttered, the question became whether or not the print company could produce the publication. After debate with the Utah government, their business was deemed necessary as a large part of their work is for the medical industry. I very much realize that this is small potatoes in the grand scheme of things but as many have noted, it is the arts in the form of books and movies that most are turning to during this time of stay-at-home orders and quarantines.

As of 10am PST today, there are 483,418 confirmed cases in the US with 26,448 recovered and 17,859 deaths. "More Americans died from COVID-19 over the past 48 hours than were killed on D-Day," wrote Rep. Don Beyer. Nevada has 2,456 cases, and 82 deaths. Elko County has 11 positive cases, one death, and 56 presumed positive (testing is limited, and if someone displays mild symptoms, they are not tested). The coronavirus is now the leading cause of death in the United States. According to *Business Insider*, "US weekly jobless claims for the week ending March 28 totaled 6.64 million". Governor Sisolak wrote on April 9 that there will be, "more than 300,000 [unemployment] claims by the end of this week, a 3,427% increase in claims since January 2020" in Nevada.

The tag line "Home Means Nevada" has been temporarily changed to "Stay Home for Nevada". Beginning today, if you are entering Utah by plane or car, you need to fill out a travel declaration including a health questionnaire. The recommendation to avoid wearing masks has now been reversed, and the latest social media posts are full of how to make them. How to make them with pockets for filters. How to make them with elastic. How to make no-sew versions. There are also 2,740,000 toilet paper shortage memes. (Really. I checked.) Children are advised, only partly in jest, not to get injured because no one is going to the emergency room. *Argentum* is at the printer without us ever seeing a final, hard-copy proof (not that this fact causes me uneasiness or sleeplessness). The online version will be posted on the website early as we don't know when the physical copies can be distributed even after they are printed.

How quickly our world changed. What will it be in the coming weeks and months? For all the forecasts, we simply do not know.

Still, as author Arundhati Roy wrote, "historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next." This is where *Argentum* moves gracefully into its place in the bigger picture: it is an offering of imagination from the Great Basin College students and community members, one that, given our deadlines, represents the moments before this pandemic struck home.

Dori Andrepont