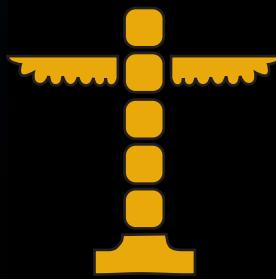


T O T E M

'13



Sandra Facci
1/19/13



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Front Cover Art: "Jellyfish Ascending" | Sandra Fang | Photoshop CS2

Back Cover Art: Untitled | Mohammad Hadi Hedayatzadeh | Digital Photography

Background Art: "Macro Picture of Snow" | Dennis Liao | Film Photography



"Inuksuk" | Russ Laher | Sculpture

Artist's Description:

"Inuksuk sculpture I made from rounded river rocks that I brought back from Alberta, Canada while on vacation there in the summer of 2010...It is composed of 27 rocks and is about 10 inches tall. The sculpture's wooden stand is natural red oak, a tree that grows in the northeastern United States and Canada. The sculpture was inspired by the inuksuk logo of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, which has connotations of friendship and cooperation."

Inside the Atomic Clock

By Kathabela Wilson

"the moon"
he said
"is beginning."

ticktock
of the atomic clock
magnetic moments draw us closer
enabling our anatomically
precise timing remotely to sense
our wave length reference cells

"beginning moon"
we call it"
he called to me from his zip-car

open-windowed he grinned
the moon shape at me
it was over his head

excitation
in a vapor our decay time
limited by collisions

While he talked I sat on a bench
attracting moths ticktock
in the lamplight.
We turned to fireflies
"It's the first few nights"
he said.

excited in our non-linear process
we detect
the uncertainty of environmental factors

"on these nights
the time to plant
fortunate nights" he said

what magnetometer
measures (in our tiny application) what
excites us directly
ticktock
in our coupled
resonator system

I wondered did he say plans?
"They will grow well
in the dark"

no matter, it's all the same
to the spin degree of freedom
the timing of the frequency

hyperfine at which
our total atomic moment
can oscillate

Steel

By Jonathan Schor

I'm on a bus.

The windows are painted over with an advertisement
And from my view the backwards text spells "HSAWHTUOM".

The wheels ooze over hot asphalt
As we wind our way through the city, burned out shells of
Buildings and huge steel bridges covered in graffiti and the word "MOOK".

Most of the passengers are silent
Except for the man in the dashiki who's talking to himself
Complaining about the weather and how the ride is "TOO DAMN LONG".

The bus rocks to a halt.
My body sways forwards in a sympathetic motion
While my left shoe stays stuck to a gray piece of gum lying on the bus floor.
A woman wearing a paper bag shirt and a dazed smile clamors aboard
And stops in front of my seat.
As I look up, she spits in my direction. "MOVE".



"Rocketman" | Anne Cutting | Digital Photography



"Speicherstadt" | Mohammad Hadi Hedayatzadeh | Digital Photography

We ran.

by Monica He

We ran.

Room after room fled beneath our feet,
hearts racing in tandem with our steps
like drums,
steps like the beating of waves upon
a deserted shore.

Behind us spread the sounds of escape –
celestial echoes chasing shadows
monstrous and mutable.
Was there anything to truly fear
in those spectres of imagination?

We did not know. But that simple act
of flight, of fear so intertwined with
freedom –
that we craved and hounded with our lives.
Flinging our heads back we ran.

In our secret hearts we knew it was
wrong. It was the other way around;
the fear chased us,
tickled our bare soles, skipped behind our
sprinting bodies.

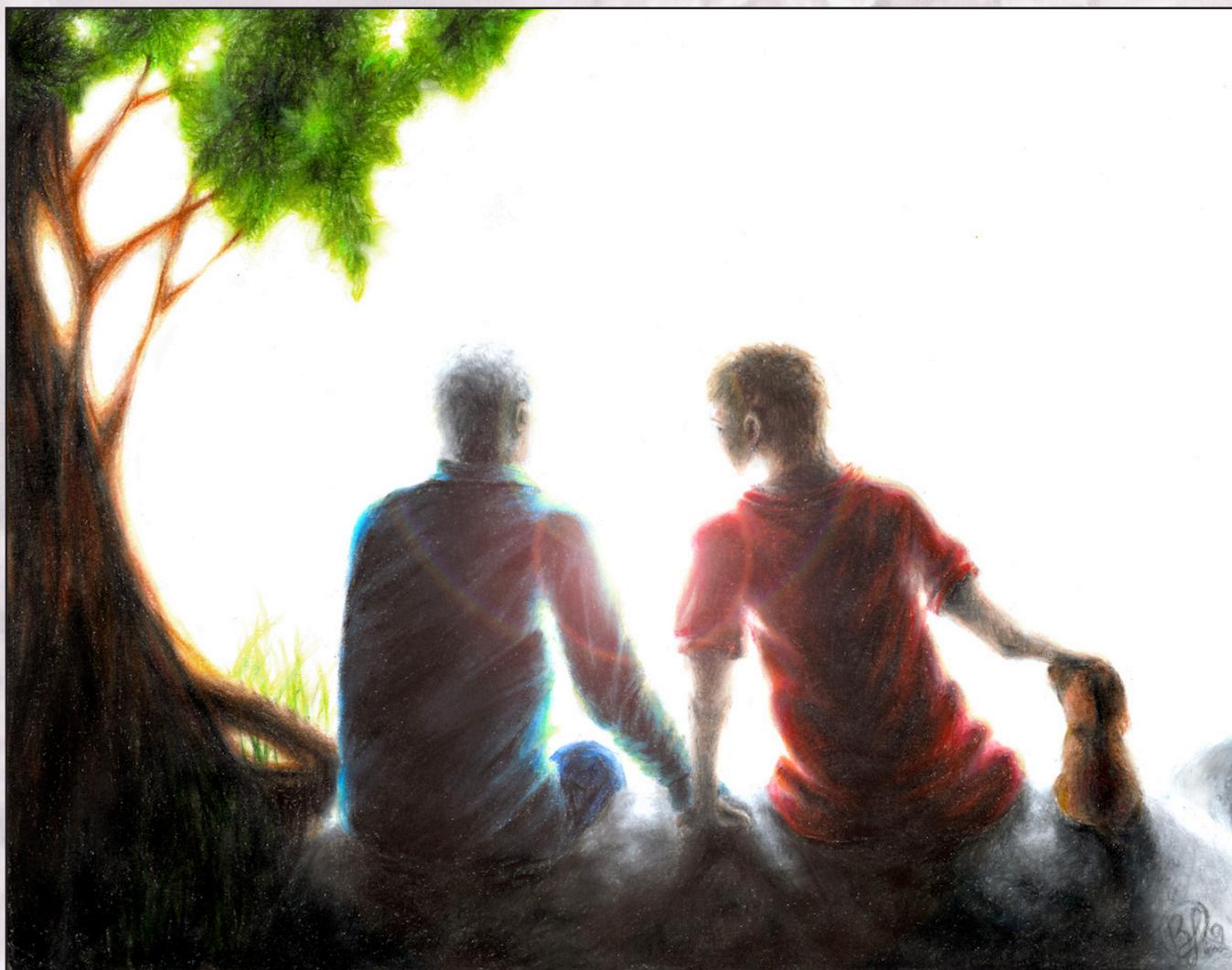
And still we ran.

On the earliest evidence for habitual use of fire in Europe

By Jonathan Vos Post

Small teeth, short gut
We cook and eat our food, but
“we” goes back before the hut
to cave-man days, before the rut
of Homo sapiens, and so we cut
and cook and chew, and that’s what’s what.

* Note: based on “On the earliest evidence for habitual use of fire in Europe”, Wil Roebroeks, and Paola Villa, PNAS | March 29, 2011 | vol. 108 | no. 13 | 5209–5214



"Sitting in Sunshine" | Bhavana Jonnalagadda | Color Pencil



"Childhood" | Bhavana Jonnalagadda | Ink

Trapped

By Vivan Huang

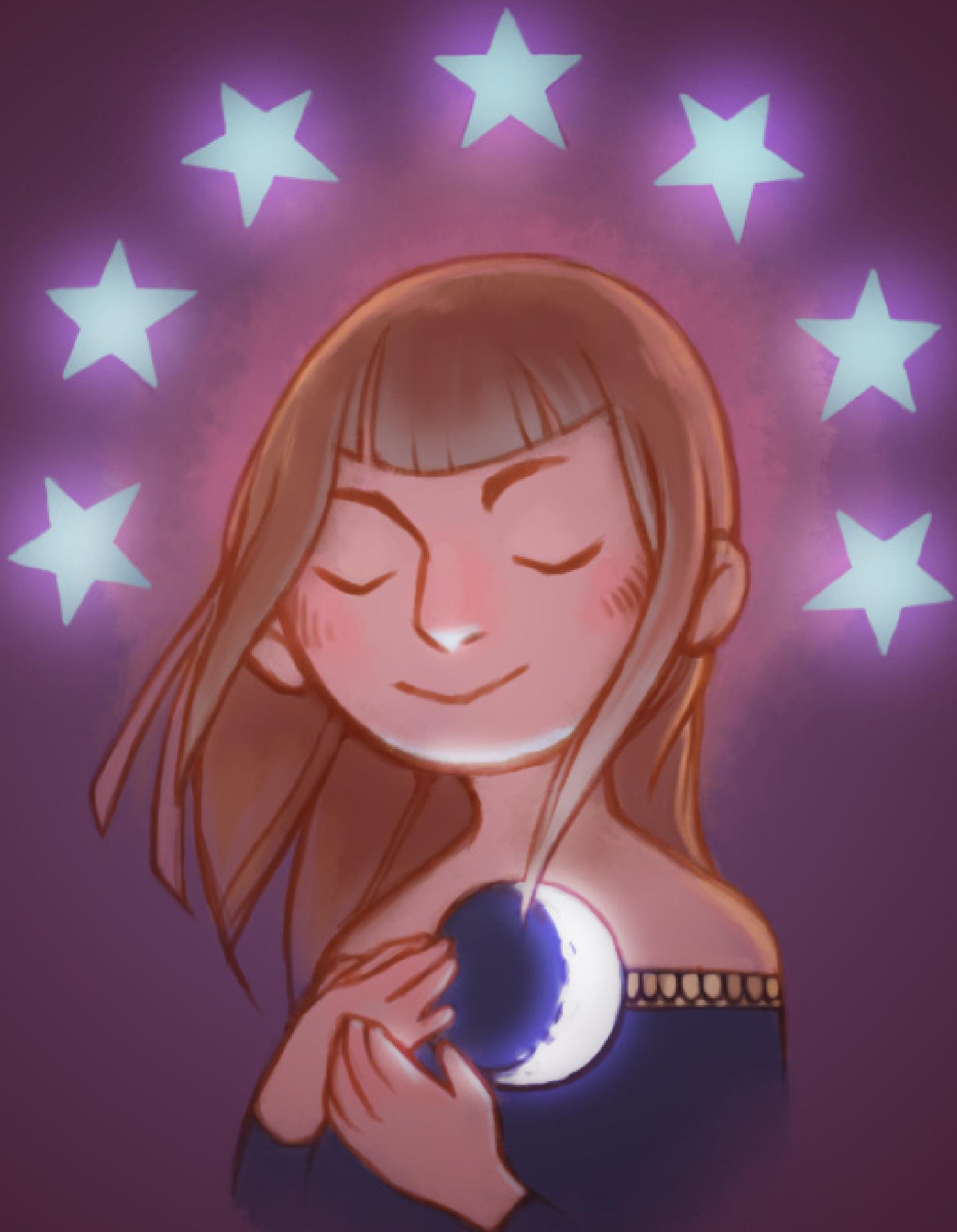
I feel walls where I thought
I built bridges to become
closer to others I am farther from
myself.
Who is what and where
is why?

My God, I fear
that I fear. May I sleep
still?

HARVEST (For Daniel)

By Professor Merrill Joan Gerber

Today's wish is straightforward:
Not the usual
Let me be happy
Or pretty
Or rich
(I never do those now in any case),
Not the whimsical entertainment
Of a sleepless night:
"Let me be reborn as a snowflake,
Let the sun rise upside-down,"
But nailed to the moment's truth:
Let my friend's teenage son—
Who this very day received a dead man's lungs—
Breathe through them with ease,
Let him wake to know the score of the Lakers' game,
And all the others to come,
Let his body embrace the tissue that came from the sky
In a helicopter
And give it space
And place to grow.
But also, let the family of the motorcycle man,
Who in cosmic generosity (And never fearing it would come to
this),
Offered to the surgeon's knife
His precious parts.
May they who mourn as we pray
Find a bit of ease to know those fragile bellows
Dance on in a young man's zippered chest—
Every breath a
Bless you.



"Moon Girl" | Katherine Kaufman | Photoshop CS2



Ritual of Stones

By Elyse Garlock

I walked through towering pines with the mist clinging in crystal drops to the needles, down the steep yellowed cliffs worn and eaten by the sea. I stood in a sheltered cove, the waves rolling over and breaking themselves on the shore. I tried to catch the moment before each wave broke, to hold it forever in my mind, but I could not. Above the crash and rumble of the waves playing and wrestling, a low murmur reached me. I followed the sound, stooping, I crawled through a crevice into a cave lighted by a fissure high above. The thin blue light washed over stones piled high covering the floor of the cave and reaching up the walls. The murmur echoed softly around the cave. I lay down among the whispering stones and listened. The murmur ebbed and flowed like the waves. After the light had receded



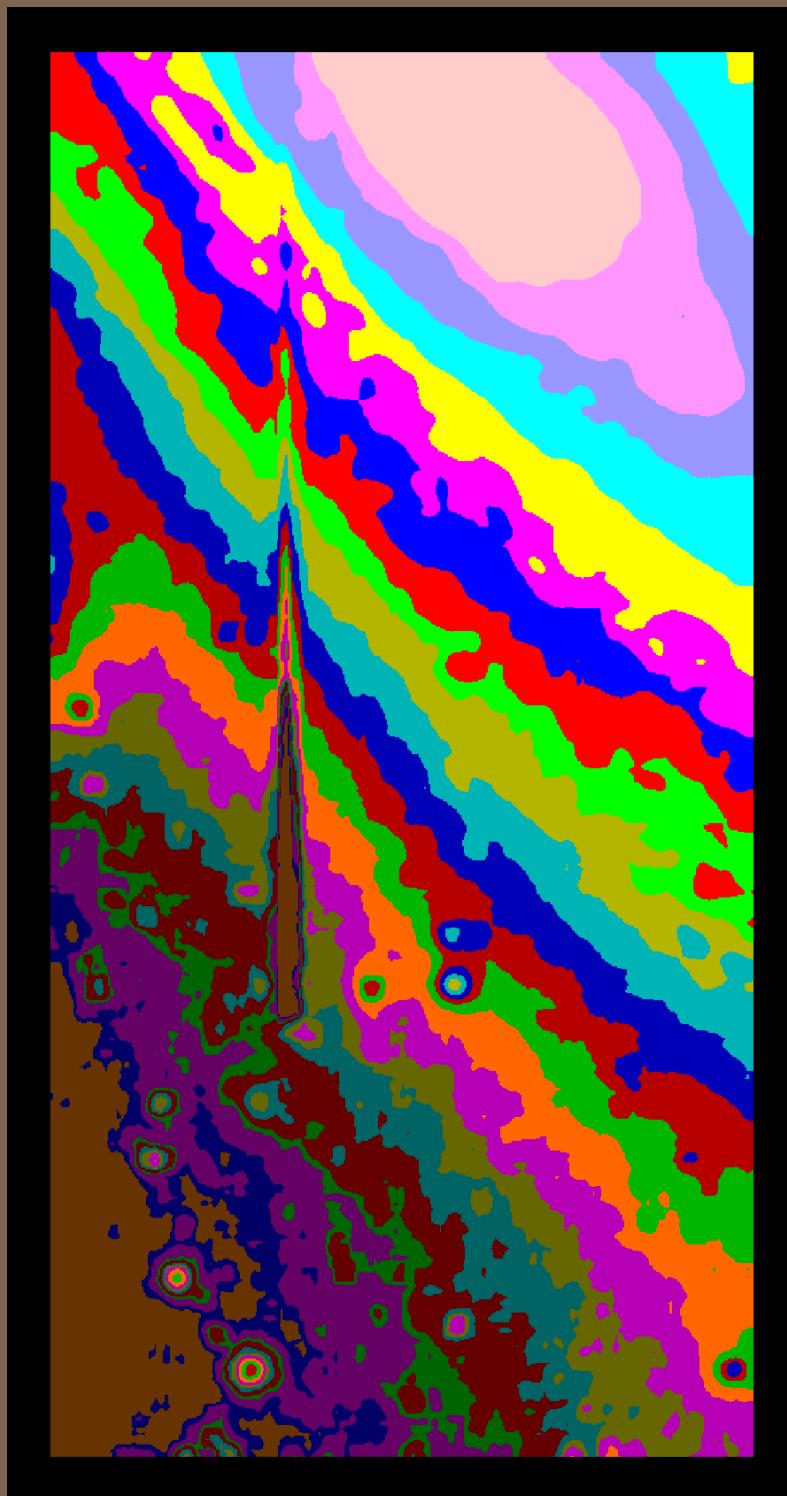
"Impasse" | Mohammad Hadi Hedayatzadeh |Digital Photography

into darkness and then returned, I began to distinguish separate voices speaking of the stone mother, of being broken away, of fear. Young and old voices telling of eons spent moving slowly at the bottom of a clear pool, of butterflies alighting then gone the soft memory remaining, of being worn away, crumbling, dividing, of loss, of being blown far into the sky towards lighted stones, of pain or tossed continuously within the waves, of soft caressing mists, of desires, of love. The whispering of beautiful and plain stones tumbled together each unique.

I took a stone by my foot, another by my knee and two on either side of my head, lifting myself up I stepped carefully over the stones and stopped for a moment as the murmuring swelled filling the cave and my heart. I knelt down and found several more stones in my hand. I turned away into the world.

One stone I placed at the foot of a wave, another I carried to the pines and nestled it among the needles and feathers. Another I placed on a mountaintop, another in flower fields with butterflies. The last one I carried away with me - a gift, the reflection of a life in time.

"PTF M31" | Russ Laher | Digital Art



Artist's Description:

This piece is sort of at the crossroads between science and art. It is a rendition of a science image from the 48-inch telescope on Mt. Palomar (the name of the project is the Palomar Transient Factory). The image is displayed in false color with a logarithmic stretch. I actually developed the software that displayed the image and designed that particular false-color table, which is called "Contour" and seeks to differentiate adjacent colors in the false-color table.

An Indian Folk Legend

By Michelle Dee

In the faraway lands of India
Where it's both colder and much hotter
A little scorpion near drowned
In three inches of water

The little imp had wandered far
From rocky holes in stone
T'would never catch the eye
Of passing strangers on its own

But high atop a mountain
Lived a guru, wise and old
Whose eagle eye detected
From its height lofty and cold

He spied the creature in its plight
From his rocky hole in stone
He alighted, to aid the brute
Down paths steep and wind blown

Where the victim suffered drowning
He hastened to the village, low
And saw the scorpion slowly dying
Writhing backwards, to and fro

The people gathered round the puddle
And wondered at the creature
How such a foul arachnid beast
Could so divert their teacher

The vill'gers, sensing his intentions
Warned him to desist
Pointing to the scorpion's sting
That very rarely missed

And sure enough when man approached
The bug raised up its tail
That even in its wretched peril
Was eager to impale

But even yet the elder knelt
To face the scorpion in all its rancor
And meant to save the villain
With resolve so firmly anchored

The people begged him to explain
And guru did not decline:

"The scorpion will not change its ways
So why should I change mine?"



"Woman in Garden" | Anne Cutting | Digital Photography



"Peacock" | Jay Wood | Digital Photography

23 Cannot Be Divided By 6

By Kathabela Wilson

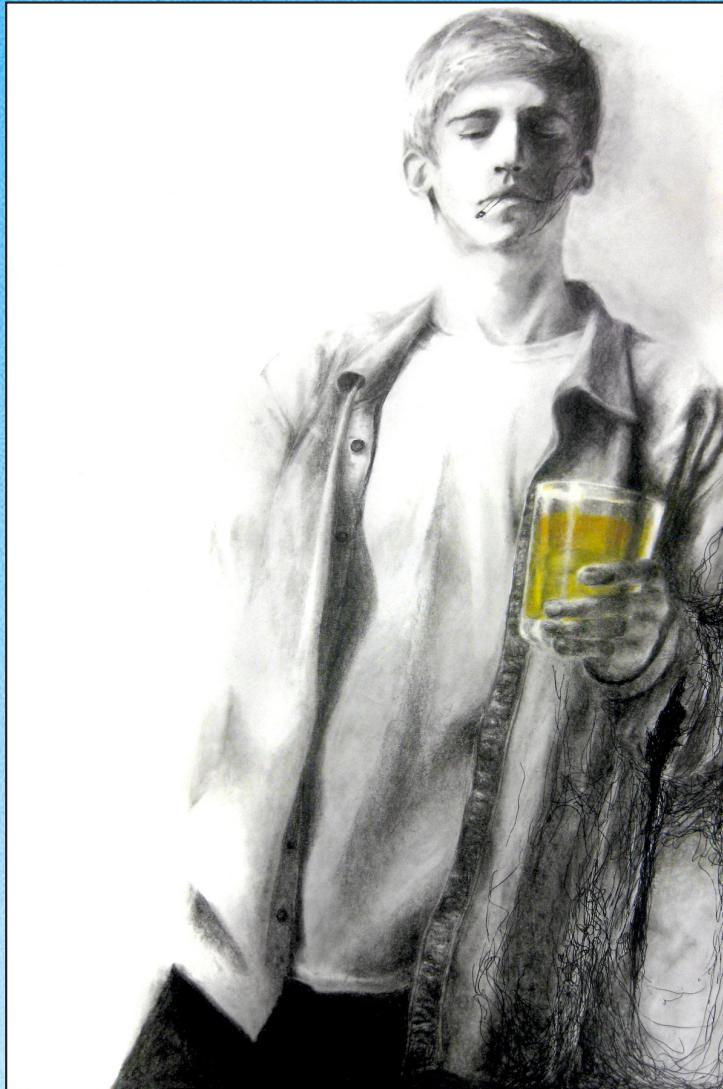
we view the moon in moon viewing lake
stepping stones of its reflection
a bridge into the sky
steps at the left of the rightmost lowest point
a lattice path where we travel in the plane
from where we bend to pluck

this wild vegetable night
and from that height lifted free
become a new constellation
our childhoods float
a simple proof one small idea
perhaps you cannot get a full answer

perhaps the proof is a long red thin leaf
on a stone shaped like a sheep
that gazes at the lake
a simple proof made with a language not used before
constructed of probability
that takes an up down step

this reflected moon more full more deep
where details have appeared plus more
take the collection of the boundaries of all faces through
whose strong embedding we become
a bridgeless graph a path unbounded on every edge

* Note: *The title is a quote from a lecture by mathematician Yeong-Nan Yeh.*



"Consumption" | Bhavana Jonnalagadda | Charcoal, Chalk Pastel, Ink

Curbside

By JL Walters

In a dark alley on the good side of town sat a lone red Jaguar convertible, engine idling, beige top up against the night. Colorless vapor blew from the tail pipe as warm engine exhaust met chill whipping wind brought in from the coast by the mountains and deserts far inland. Drops of condensation fell from the stainless steel muffler, measuring time and accumulating on the broken asphalt. Inside the little English car Linda O'Brien, pretty, exhausted, frantic, freaking out, clutched a cheap flip cell phone. The one provided by her employer for their exclusive communication day and night, but mostly night. Linda O'Brien listened as the man on the other end of the line berated her. She took it all in, trying to remain calm. Trying to be the woman she knew she was. The woman her father, career Marine Sergeant Henry O'Brien raised with her five brothers to be a ball-buster. She was having trouble being herself.

She did not feel like a ball-buster. Alone, except for the stream of disappointment pouring into her ear from the Hollywood Hills. As Ted Conway ranted, she considered the amount of cocaine she snorted every day, trying to decipher if it still helped her perform better at her job as it once undoubtedly had. She thought of her teen years in her father's barrack's housing and her brothers and so many men in uniform. She had had to plead to be sent away to the East Coast all-girl boarding school outside Boston just to catch up to the rest of the young women of her generation in the nineteen-seventies. Just to be more than another tomboy kicking all the other girl's and boy's asses after class in the small militarybase town.

At a pause in Ted Conway's cellular abuse, Linda O'Brien interjected, "I know Ted. I know. It'll never happen again. No. No. You don't need to promote anyone else. I'm your man."

It felt to her like a scripted thing to say. Ted Conway was a scripted guy, never adlibbing, never taking chances unless he saw three or four ways to profit from what everyone else perceived as inevitable failure.

His abuse of her, she could see him propped on one elbow laying on a massive hand-made Swedish mattress engulfed by sheets and bedding that cost more than she was paid by him in one week, his glasses on his head, his wife, still perfect after so many years of tanning beds and cosmetic surgeries; eyes, nose, chins, cheeks, ears, tits three times and each time much bigger, ass, veins, tummy, vagina after the kids, lying next to him in a Valium and vodka stupor, having just suffered his marital yearning like a dog owner training a puppy not to jump on her by remaining perfectly still until the unwanted behavior and attention passed. "What was the point of trying to keep this job?" She wondered.

She had been valedictorian of her class at Brown. Had published fiction for years working as a lowly copy editor for First Fiction, happily living in The Village, for so many years. The call of Hollywood, the salary, the glitz, the allure of being wanted by a national show, although a daytime weekly strip, a serial, a soap opera, with little prestige to anyone other than soap opera lovers, had made her head swell.

She left New York. Married an actor, divorced the actor, and never saw her kids. Her Philippine nanny was raising them. Now professionally she was a pariah, unable to work for any other show, branded a soap opera talent just like the producers and directors and actors: the lowest well-paid Hollywood insiders, nearly outsiders, only one rung above valley pornindustry regulars.

Ted Conway continued to explain to her all the ways her arcs were weak in his clipped SoCal Executive Producer's baritone as she emptied an airline bottle of booze, vodka with a comic-sounding Russian name, Vodlika, into a cardboard cup half-full of cold, brothy, drive-thru take out coffee still in the car's cup-holder from a forgotten distant morning. All mornings seemed like phenomena from another lifetime.

She stirred the coffee with a ballpoint pen she found on the floor board, licked the pen clean, clicked it a couple of times, sucked the drips from its insides, dropped it back on the floor mat, and sipped the boozy coffee. The vodka cut at her as she swallowed it and the coffee in one short sip, a line of brown liquid trickling dark against her skin from

the corner of her mouth and wetting the little phone in her hand where she pressed it against her cheek. Linda O'Brien swallowed, stammered, "Please don't threaten me -- please -- you can count on me Ted -- I know you took a big risk on -- no -- I won't let it happen again. You'll have all of it in the morning. Seven hours. I'll fix it -- I'll see you in seven hours. I -- Hello? Hello?"

He was gone.

"Fuck."

She hung up the phone, mashing the button harder than necessary and flipping it shut. She tossed it into the seat next to her and sighed, head back, hands on the leather steering wheel, the orange dash lights glowing into her mind through closed eyelids. She opened them and stared at the brown woven fabric above her head keeping the chill evening away from her soft spoiled skin.

"Brown is a million miles away," she thought. "I never should have come here. I hate this fucking town. I hate this stupid industry. Short fiction was better for my soul. Now I have to pay for private schools. Do they have private schools in Montana? Fuck. I hate Montana too. Snow and ice and old poor rednecks, and new rich yuppies. Fuck." She took another gulp of the vodka coffee. She snorted and wiped her nose hard, then fished the little brown empty glass vial from the passenger floorboard and, with a pinky finger, swabbed the dust from the inside of it and the black plastic lid then sucked the pinky and wiped at her nose again. Mind back on track, thinking of private school tuition for little kids totaling more than her mom's Hilton Head mortgage, Linda O'Brien rifled through a black worn leather datebook and tattered slips of paper. She picked up a Blackberry, most of picked up her iPhone, and scrolled through its address book. Put it down, retrieved a Macbook from the seat next to her, scrolling through windows and addresses in her off-line email.

Eventually, she found what she was looking for, picked up her cell phone, and dialed. It rang; she looked at the clock on the corner of the glowing laptop's screen, eleven forty-five in the evening. It rang more, a woman's voice answered, tired, asleep, and afraid of bad news, or worse: of being bothered from sleep for no good reason.

Linda O'Brien failed to recognize the phone had stopped ringing, she had fallen into a reverie in the dark in her car, phone pressed to her ear pushing the back of her earring sharply into the soft skin behind her ear.

The voice shook her latently awake, Linda O'Brien said, "Sandy, hey. It's me." Linda O'Brien began to cry, to weep, silently, "I gotta have it," she said, "I'm freaking out. Just one last time. Please."

She studied accumulating drops of dew on the windshield group together and roll down the cold glass. She watched the wind push the clouds across the sky exposing the moon for a moment behind tall shaggy Diadore branches and confessed, "He's gonna kill me."

Linda O'Brien held her breath with the realization that he could indeed kill her. He would not actually do it himself but could hire it done. Had hired it done to get out of other contracts he deemed detrimental to his life's work after the party involved disappointed him or cost too much just to buy off. It was widely known as the sole reason

they recruited her, all their talent, from New York. It was also why no one ever quit. At least never quit without an off the books payout. She fumbled for a pack of cigarettes, found one crushed and empty. She wadded it tighter and tossed it into an empty booster seat in the diminutive rear seat.

"He's gonna kill me," she said it again and it did not seem so fantastic hearing it a second time. Maybe she would get used to the idea. Get used to the possibility. "I don't know what else to do. I lost it. I can't get it back. He's gonna get rid of me. You know how he gets rid of people."

Linda O'Brien brightened as the woman on the other end of the phone, Sandy Folson, spoke. The night seemed a little less ominous, a little less dark. Sandy Folson was Linda O'Brien's knight in shining armor, again.

Linda O'Brien confirmed, "In an hour. Yes. Okay. I'll bring all I have. Yes. Bye." She mashed the off button, let the phone fall into the passenger seat, and rested her forehead on the brown leather steering wheel. She sat up, looked around, swirled the slight remains of coffee and vodka in the bottom of the cardboard cup, tipped it to her mouth, finished the coffee chewing the few grounds left on her tongue, pressed the button that rolled the window down, threw the coffee cup out, found an stale half-pack of cigarettes in the compartment in the driver's door, lit a cigarette with a green disposable lighter, and drove away.

Around the corner, she remembered to click the car's lights back on and switched the windshield wipers into intermittent motion. The radio played a Chopin sonata and it sounded to her like a death song. Switched off, the silence of the car enveloped her. With no options left Linda O'Brien navigated dark street-light-yellowed streets, pulled the expensive little car up to a curbside bank machine. She filed through bankcards in her big designer wallet extracted off the floor from a huge designer purse. At length she picked a card, skipping over all the other closed and overdrawn accounts. The sight of the useless money market cards were like sand in her eyes, each dollar spent and gone a painful grain, an individual reminder of her slow and flailing fiscal failure. Out of the car she bee-lined to the ATM and inserted her lucky card of choice, punched in the numbers, the same numbers of her now meaningless wedding anniversary.

She thought, "what if you're only allowed the number of days of happiness in marriage as your anniversary abbreviates into a four digit PIN?"

She waited, pushed more buttons, trying to squeeze more money from the machine than there was in the account. It denied her. She aimed a little lower. She hit the mark; the wide, thin door opened and spit cash out like paper vomit from a mechanical mouth. She pried the stack of bills out of the machine, the funny cash-door shut, then reopened, and spit out more bills. She removed the card and receipt, the one now useless, the other a printed confirmation of her fatal financial anemia, and returned to her car. Inside she rummaged the detritus on the passenger floor mat and came up with a plain grease-stained brown bag from her favorite taco stand. She dumped out the old plastic fork, napkins, and baggie of wasted lemon and radish wedges, dropped the stack of money in, and pushed the bundle down between her legs under her thighs for safekeeping, drove hurriedly away punching more numbers into her cell phone.

A few minutes and many midnight blocks later Linda O'Brien pulled the flashy convertible up to another dark curbside in a forgotten city suburb. Trash littered the tree root cracked sidewalks and immobile cars decorated the municipal property. Low chain-link fences, metal screen doors and For Rent signs with Asian contact information like Happy Golden Property LLC written on them festooned private property that was neither Happy nor Golden.

"This neighborhood," she thought, "matches my pathetic pecuniary position. I should just move the kids here to be closer to my kind of people." A dark man in dark bilious clothes walked out of the shadows, approached his waiting customer. Linda O'Brien pressed the button lowering the passenger-side window, stretched and handed the man some bills extracted from the paper bag. The man in turn handed her a small baggy and slowly, deliberately, returned to the darkness, away from the curbside, as Linda O'Brien drove quickly away, feeling as always; she was risking her life not only by taking the contents of the baggie but also in their acquisition. Linda O'Brien pulled the little car up to another curbside ATM cluster; this one afforded her the privilege of remaining in the car. She rifled the wallet; again, she skipped most of the cards, again, landed on a long shot. She pushed the button and her window lowered into the door, she inserted the card and entered the PIN of her first child's birth date.

"Why would I use such an important, non-material date for the continued access and retrieval of blood money?" She wondered to herself. Again, she selected her ideal amount of cash. Again, it denied her. It took three more tries before she got down below the magic number, beneath the threshold of cash available to her. She looked at her watch, the perfect platinum and diamond Tag Hauer her father gave her for college graduation so many long years ago. It was just before midnight. Again, the ATM mouth opened; again, she pulled the stack of bills out and stuffed them with the others into the taco-stand paper bag. The machine produced a receipt and returned her card. She took the card, held it in her hand. Removed the receipt; its time-stamp read 23:59:07. She looked at her watch again, then reinserted the card, entered the PIN again, requested the same amount again, and felt a rush of relief when the door miraculously opened and piled up a tall stack of cash for her, again.

"Minimum Daily Withdrawal Amount my ass," Linda O'Brien muttered as she added the bills to what now amounted to a brick of money in the taco-less taco bag. She removed the card and the receipt; its time stamp read 00:00:02.

Linda O'Brien stood at her favorite taco stand's window, La Estrella, on the sketchy Latino side of town. Fluorescent lights bathed the outdoor eating area in a yellow glow. The taco stand windows, painted in bright colors with menu items, kept the taco clerk and cook separated from the customers who at the moment numbered one, Linda O'Brien, alone. The cook sat on a white five-gallon bucket with a metal lid in the back of the shop near the massive gray ovens looking at a Mexican low-rider and naked-pinup girlie magazine. Linda O'Brien, order of tacos on the counter in front of her, held a card, yet another card, out to the taco clerk, haggling through the little hole in the glass, her car parked behind her at the curbside, "Cash back. I want cash back."

She spoke slowly, knowing no Spanish. The crazy white woman bewildered the

taco clerk. She was tired, her feet hurt, the strap of the apron she was required to wear was rubbing her neck raw. The cook would try to grope her again as soon as the crazy rich woman drove off in her money car.

The taco clerk said, repeated, "No cash back. No cash back."

Linda O'Brien told her, "I'll give you fifty dollars, just give me all the cash you have in the drawer and charge my card for the amount. Please?"

The taco clerk thought for a moment, she thought about fifty dollars, she thought about closing and going home and going to bed, with no more greasy onion hands rubbing her thick bra straps through her shirt if she could no longer make change, then reconsidered, "Okay."

"Okay?" Linda O'Brien asked, confirmed.

"Okay," the taco clerk said again opening the drawer with a white plastic knife wrapped in cellophane slid under the register, clicking the manual release. She counted out the bills, including the fifties and hundreds from under the dirty black plastic bill-tray insert. "Oh my God, thank you so much!" Linda O'Brien said.

Then the taco clerk pocketed fifty, slid Linda O'Brien's platinum card through the point-of-sale card reader, and slid the receipt, the card, and all the cash back into her waiting manicured fingers through the slot in the glass on the counter. "Wait, you give me five back. I forgot charge you the tacos," the taco clerk said. Linda nodded, extracted a five-dollar bill, and slid it back under the partition window. The taco clerk shut the window that secured the sheet of thick clear plastic with the hole and slot, locked it, turned the OPEN sign around, and clicked off the external lights. The taco cook looked up, bewildered.

Linda stuffed the cash into her ass-less baby-boomer jean pockets and pulled the folded paper plate of tacos out of the brown paper bag. She unwrapped the aluminum foil from around the now-soggy paper plate and began to eat, standing in front of the taco stand, resting against the order counter. Mouth full, dark red sauce on her chin, she knocked on the window, interrupting the taco stand employee's heated discussion over closing, and gave them a thumb's up, chewing. They looked at her; quickly smiled as though they cared about her good opinion, and resumed their argument.

She walked past the little concrete tables and around her car, placed the plate of tacos on the convertible's brown fabric top, rummaged her massive purse for her keys. The street was deserted; all the other shops closed for as far as she could see down either side. Suddenly a dark figure was approaching her, a man stood menacingly close before Linda O'Brian realized.

"Gimme your purse, bitch!" The mugger demanded. Linda O'Brien's purse contained the brown paper bag with over ten thousand dollars inside.

"I'll be God-damned," she thought rummaging for her keys, "if any skulking crackhead motherfucker is gonna take this away from me, away from my babies, away from our future."

When she found what she was looking for she stopped in mid chew and, turning toward the tall faceless man in the dark hooded sweatshirt, pulled out her keys, pepper spray lid removed, and streamed a shot the same color as the sauce dribbled on her chin

into the man's recessed, shrouded, face.

He yelled, clutched at his eyes and turned back the way he came, running and scratching at his eyes, crying and moaning and bumping into parked cars and disappearing back into the shadows of the barrio alley between a furniture store and used clothing store, both dark and long-closed for the night.

Linda O'Brien called after him, taking the plate in hand and getting another big bite, "Not tonight motherfucker! Not tonight!"

She unlocked the door, placed the taco plate on the leather dash and got in, purse clutched to her chest. She closed the door, inserted the key, threw the car in gear, and launched it down the quiet street.

Linda O'Brien navigated barrio streets to the ghetto grocery store. Pulling into the parking lot, she steered in large circles, thumping over the useless speed bumps and stopped beside a curbed planter full of dry, dead, brown shrubs encircling a large light pole with one large light lit, the other hanging open like a big drunk hand puppet's toothless mouth. She sat in the stationary car surrounded by the still night, thankful to be alive and fed and momentarily liquid enough to buy momentary relief and momentary freedom. "Maybe elite university education isn't about being taught to do what you do," she thought as she looked around for the little baggie, "maybe it's about learning to improvise when you're no longer able, or have grown to hate, what you were taught to do." She removed the vial from the baggie, unscrewed the little cap, licked and stuck her little finger in the small jar and then swabbed the finger up each flared nostril. Then she recapped the vial and hid it up under the passenger seat in an abandoned paper French fry cup.

Linda O'Brien looked at her watch, looked at her iPhone clock, looked at her Blackberry clock, looked at her cell phone clock, looked at her Macbook clock, and squinted at the clock nested into the dashboard of the car. They all confirmed she was on time. Plastic grocery bags, dead leaves, and yellow paper food wrappers blew across the empty parking lot. They briefly swirled in a small vortex near the wall of the distant grocery store. She pressed the button and rolled her window down a few inches, shook a cigarette out of the half pack, put it between her red lips and lit it. She inhaled the toxic smoke deeply, and then exhaled noisily.

She remembered she had gone into the big store one time to buy cigarettes. The entire place smelled like rotting meat. The shelves were mostly empty, what products they did carry she had not recognized and she could not read their Spanish labels. Small children in rickety metal shopping carts pushed by tired parents with books of food stamps in their hands had stared at her, as though she was a dignitary from a first-world country shopping with the third-world citizenry at the native store instead of the diplomat's grocery store, the one for the rich foreign people.

Five Latino boys, young men, on BMX bikes spray-painted dull black, rode into the parking lot. They eyed her from beneath bandanas pulled low, approached the lone expensive car in the middle of the parking lot with the stoned, pale, middle-aged woman sitting at the wheel listening to Phillip Glass. She eyed them and wondered how much pretty handguns cost. Shiny silver ones with black leather holsters, small enough to fit in

a glove compartment or a purse. The boys passed, rode on, circled, and returned. Linda O'Brien popped the half-smoked cigarette out the gap in the window and pushed the button. The window rolled all the way, as one of the cyclists said something to her she could not hear or understand.

A dark Suburban with blaring headlights pulled into the parking lot, approached from the other direction, running the biker kids off. Both cars rolled their windows down. Linda O'Brien handed the paper bag full of cash up to the woman in the Suburban, Sandy Folson, wearing a purple nightgown. Sandy Folson handed a small white paper bag down to Linda O'Brien. Having barely stopped, no words exchanged, the Suburban drove quickly away.

Linda O'Brien watched in her rearview mirror as the massive SUV's rear red lights left the abandoned parking lot. She contemplated the bag in her hands. Her career flashed before her eyes; school, New York, Los Angeles, marriage, kids, divorce, the emptiness inside her when she tried to work. It all lead to this disappointing state of life.

"Everyone else's soul is mortgaged in Los Angeles," she thought as she opened the crinkly bag and found the zip lock baggie, "why not mine?"

She peeled it open, extracted the USB thumb drive, removed its cap, inserted the funny silver connector into the corresponding hole on the side of her Macbook, clicked the mounted drive, clicked the lone document, it opened her writing application and she began to read the words on the page on the screen. It was instantly brilliant in her mind's eye. A few grammar mistakes and a couple of formatting changes and no one would know she bought it off the script market. She fumbled around and lit another cigarette, taking the poison in deeply, as she read windows up, shielding her self-inflicted menace from the world outside.

Eight blissful weeks later Linda O'Brien sat in her pristine home office, bathed in morning light from sash windows, crammed bookshelves surrounding her massive old craftsman mahogany desk. She was lost in reverie, again, staring at her new shiny Daytime Emmy. The dress she had worn, bought just for the occasion from an expensive appointment-only Santa Monica designer, hung in the garment bag on the back of the half closed office door. It cost more than she paid for the award-winning original story and arcs that crazy night in her car, trying to unravel her career. The fantastically expensive high heeled shoes she wore to the ceremony sat on the bookshelf, next to the gilt statue. She would not wear them again, she told herself, until the next awards ceremony and gala.



400 years
and then one windstorm
whitewashed at the breaks
I think of the story
of my old love

The Oldest Tree

from Neptune's mouth
one voice a fountain
five lines of different lengths
a chorus sings the lyric
language of water

like Ten Jin
poet at age five
patient as his yak
decorated
with a flowery hat

Dabney Gardens,

climbing back up again
your roof my floor
a carapace
the shaky rock you stand on
cannot change my feelings



**The Turtle Pond
Throop Memorial Garden,**

father turtle
bubbles and ripples
where you must be
what I've forgotten
of your sudden disappearance

A Campus Tour (A set)

By Kathabela Wilson



"An illuminated wedding at Pasadena" | Adelia Grzybowski | Digital photography

Circuit Breaker

By dalton perry

A snap-crackle-pop of shorted circuits
arc and fuse to sputter along some relay,
sending vague electrical impulses
to the hydraulics. Which raise my arm.

With confidence, I tell my professor
that I forgot what I was going to say.

Devoured

By dalton perry

Minutes pass like hors d'oeuvres
on trays, person to person,
back and forth around
the room.

Time ticks and tocks and
spins around, sometimes
devoured, passed over, or
just wasted.

Best to eat those snacks
from trays when they pass,
or let them slip by tired
and hungry.



"Details" | Taryn Campbell | Pencil



"The Theft" | Bhavana Jonnalagadda | Charcoal, Chalk Pastel, Ink

House on 112th Street

By Ranjana Kishore

That day,
when the rain
fell
in apology
and the seasons seemed confused again

I walked into a house
Opened the door, where a hundred houses were play-acted within
The wall-paper obligingly grew yellow flowers again
And the wind was an excited child that could not be hushed
Down
the
stairs
I
go
And in the shadows find
A memory crouched against time.

And this, the taste of sunlight

By Jonathan Liu

Into an ash-black hole,
Lined with fury moss and mossy fur,
Into grassy, stemmy roots
Of unfiltered, unchecked wild,
Into a splintered pool
Of glass, kraken and vast,
Into an icy torrent,
Fiery with curses and edges,
Into rows unto rows in rows
Of teeth, beware the bite,
Into the empty sun,

The forgotten light, the forsaken ones,
Into conspiracies, mysteries,
Secret apologies,
Into matter, mattest,
No matter and no-mattest what,
Into forever, I promise,
And I swear,
Could you ever begin?
To find the sound of truth,
The smell of loss
And this, the taste of sunlight.



"Zenkoji Temple" | Irene Yang | Chalk pastel

Quail

Picture this:

Little ones following a mother with head held high, running for their lives, then streamlining like bicyclists on the Tour, body low to the ground, and then – when the forward-stretching road still beckons

(how easy life would be if they simply turned off the path to where no one would follow)

a short, bursting flight.

By Monica He



"Symmetry" | Mohammad Hadi Hedayatzadeh | Digital Photography

a love algorithm

By Ariel O'Neill

if you're able, love autonomously
guilty in bandwidth desire; together we
believe in humanoid heat
you & I would
simulate touch
simulate code



Poem (based on Richard III)

By Vivian Huang

Richmond: When Kingdom Comes
The owl cries a song of death
Yet true hope flies with swallow's wings.
Gentle folk stir with the lark
With alacrity and cheer of spirit mind
All through cockshut time.
Tomorrow they mount with wings of victory,
But now, good night, kind gentlemen,
Quiet, untroubled soul, peace.

Richard: My Kingdom for a Horse!
The owl cries a song of death
Despair, gray rivers and shadow falls.
Dickon dreams boars and bosom blood;
The lights burn blue in conscience,
So lour sky for sun on weeping streams
Winged by dewy tears, and fears fly.
It is now dead midnight,
And trembling flesh revenge.

(And should each live again,
Has each his own deserts?)



Richard II (and his ilk)

By Vivian Huang

Pelican's young
Do you?—no, how can you?—
As cormorant and cockatrice
You deliberately misconstrue
Fables and genealogies.

Reined young hot colt,
Do you rage the more
Rash, fierce blaze of riot
As sudden storms and envy
Of unsilver seas?

Ransomed tenement, are you
As the sepulchre, bound
With inky blots and parchment
Parliament contrary stain
To pain leopard spots?

What gaunt health were
Grandsire to bone
Where compass point
Circumspect to old composition
To crown the ill anointed.

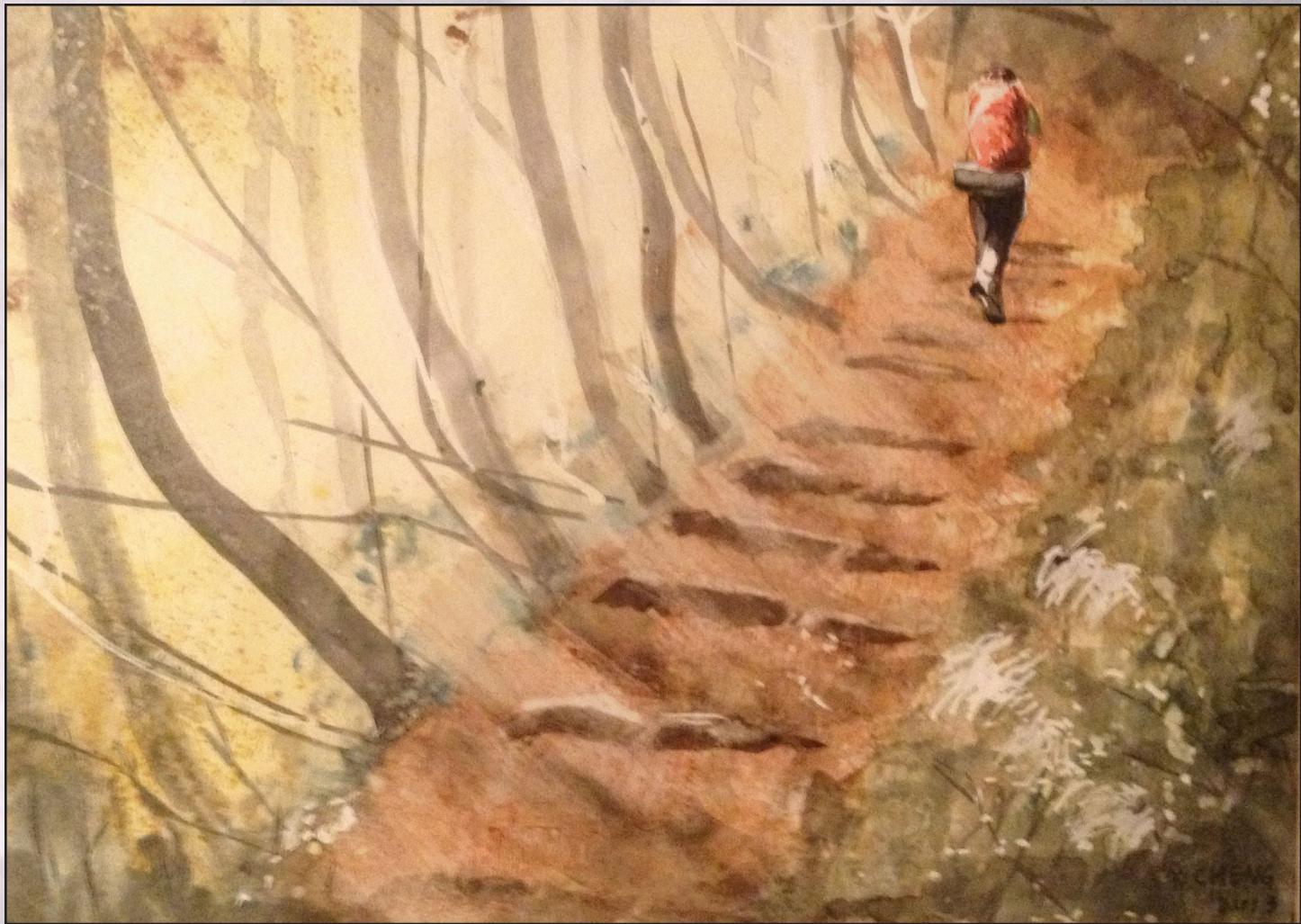
Yet the wind sits fair
To prophet this land
While patient breath watch;
All's left at six and seven,
Though world and regent deny:

"Wipe off the dust that hides our
sceptre's gilt"
And "The ripest fruit first falls."



"Float" | Bhavana Jonnalagadda | Charcoal, Chalk Pastel, Ink





"Morning Hiking" | Yang Cheng | Watercolor

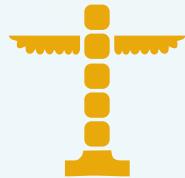


"Daniel and the Bear" | Anne Cutting | Digital Photography



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