

Marbles, Pinata, Bears, Fireworks, Shooting Stars

A Creative Odyssey
By Shasta Sovereign
April-September 2025



Participants

AJ	4
AliG	5
Angel Lady	7
Angmaria	11
Anna Mary Robertson	12
Bella	13
Brenna H	14
Cat's Eyes	15
Colette Bee	16
Diego Yyoati	18
DLS 35	19
Dru	24
ERB	25
G. Locks	31
Golden Sapphire	32
Grace T	37
Gus	38
Hooter	39
Invisible Force	40
Jasmine Carter	41
J.riann	42
Karebear	45
Kathleen	46
KD	48
Kelly	50
Liv Josefina Saborido	51
Luna Lumbre	52
Marilyn	53
Markus	56
Mary	57
Martha	58
Mixed Blessing	59
Natalia	60
Rene	61
Reserves91	65
SaraRose	66
Scott Harper	67
Sharon	68
Shoooooot	69
SKS	70
Soaring Eagle	71
Sri	72
Stitches In the Wind	84
Sunflower530	85
Tawnya	86
Yahir G	87
Welcome Sight	88



Dear Reader:

It's been a long time. The last publication was in April featuring our art contests. Since then, we have posed many different topics.

It started with marbles. When was the last time you played with them? Did you play in school or with your siblings.

Then it transitioned to Pinatas. When was the last time you swung at one? Did you find any treasures?

Then, boom boom, fireworks! What is the coolest firework you have ever seen? Do you remember the first time you saw them?

Finally, it was with shooting stars. Did you see any during our summer nights? Do you ever make wishes on them?

Although these topics seem unconnected, there are always threads that find connections. We hope you enjoy the following threads, and we hope you add your threads here and there.

In Inspiration,

Shasta Sovereign



Country Dream

By AJ



Tulips

By AJ





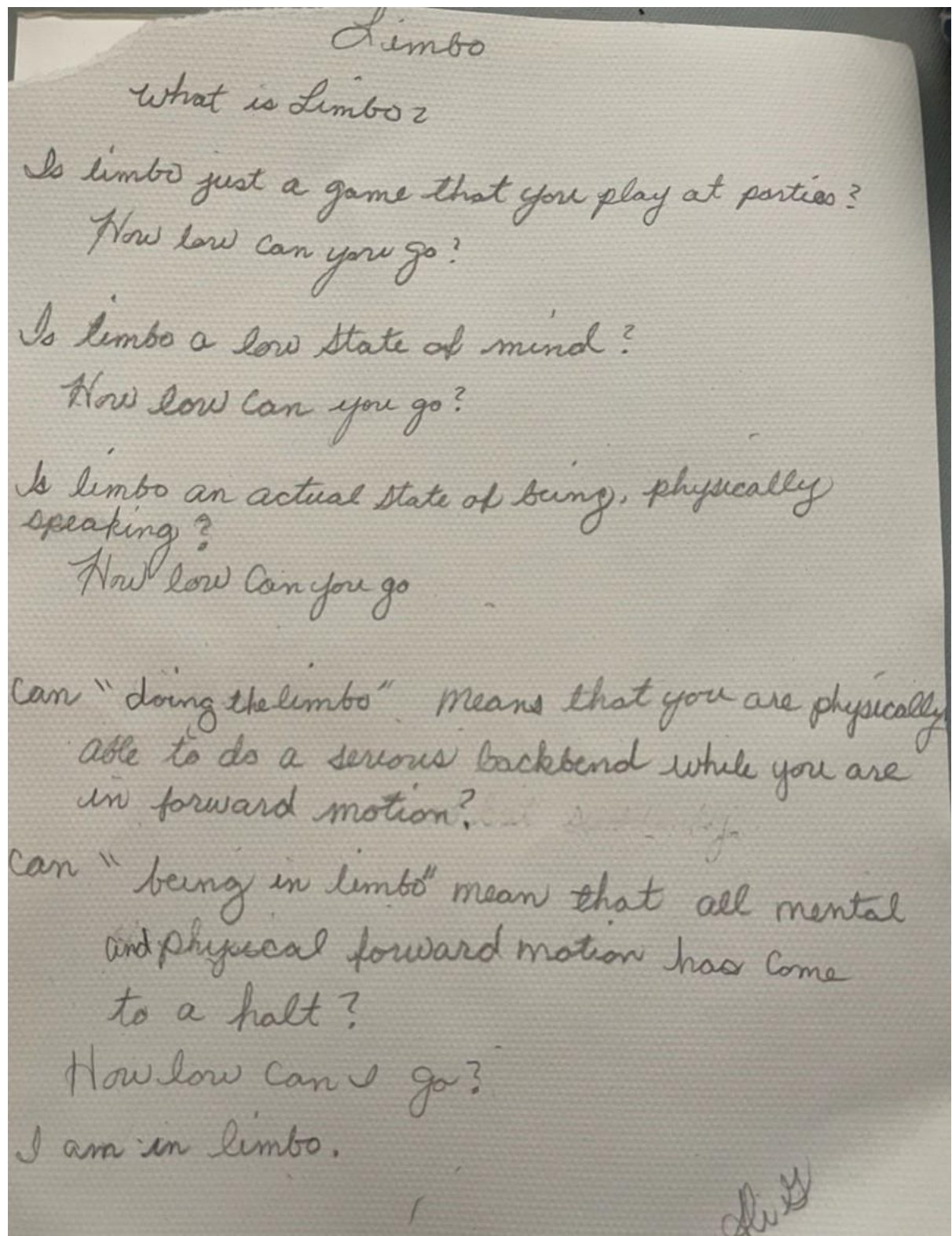
ADHD
By AliG





Limbo

By AliG





Shooting Stars

By Angel Lady

When I heard the topic of "Shooting Stars", what was the first thing that came to my mind? There were a few thoughts that came to mind. Looking back, as a child, I remember the saying: "Star light, star bright, First star I see tonight, I wish I may, I wish I might, Have this wish I wish tonight."

I believed that when I focused and made the effort to spot the first star to be seen in the night sky, that my wish could possibly come true. At that time, I also loved reading Fairy Tales, "Journey to the Center of the Earth" by Jules Verne (loved the original movie made about that book). I still believe in the power of a deeply held wish, and to never give up completely on dreams. We may have to compromise, and adapt, but it definitely does no good to throw in the towel on things. Been there, done that, what a waste of time to give up, I see that now that I'm older.

I remember the Disney movie, Pinocchio, where Jiminy Cricket sang "When You Wish Upon A Star", here are the lyrics:

When you wish upon a star
Makes no difference who you are
Anything your heart desires
Will come to you
If your heart is in your dream
No request is too extreme
When you wish upon a star
As dreamers do
Fate is kind
She brings to those who love
The sweet fulfillment of Their secret longing
Like a bolt out of the blue
Fate steps in and sees you through
When you wish upon a star
Your dreams come true

In the case of a person "wishing upon a star", I tend to feel it is the shooting stars, aka falling stars that catch my eye. Now that I am "all grown up" and actually would be referred to as a (gasp!) "senior citizen", I still do believe like the song says "If your heart is in your dream, no request is too extreme, Like a bolt out of the blue, Fate steps in to see you through".

Since I was in my teens, for over 50 years now, off and on, I have been into "personal growth" which at times has included: receiving counseling, attending seminars, reading books, taking classes, doing meditation and breathwork, cleansing of body and mind, reprogramming the subconscious through various techniques, etc. I do feel that it does take effort for many of us, to do the "inner work" to move past trauma, hardships, losses, disappointments in relationships, friendships and just life in general.



But, I would like to say that I do believe it is worth the effort to push forward from burdens of the past, no matter if one's mind wants to ruminate over and over, and to do "the inner work", whatever that is that works for you, and stay determined and committed. I have this little saying I made up years ago, and I try to remind myself once in a while, and that is "The Future Does Not Have To Be Like The Past".

So, I say, let the sweet inner child dreamer still believe in "magic", get in touch with that part of the mind that still dreams and imagines positive things unfolding more and more each day in your life. Take actions that bring you one step closer to manifesting those positive things you want happening in your life. So, desire, determination, commitment, and action.

So, when you see those "shooting stars", be reminded that there is a positive magic when you keep training that "wild horse" of the mind, grab those reins and take charge, don't let that horse drag you under tree branches and knock you off, train that wild horse mind to focus on the positive and keep seeking to build on that little by little, til you tip the scales to the positive, enough to manifest the things you want in your life - health, good relationships, improved finances, development of abilities, whatever it might be.

Look for those shooting stars to remind you of "magic", the magic of positive visualization and positive expectancy, despite the F.E.A.R. - False Evidence Appearing Real. Keep fighting the good fight, don't give in, take heart, everything is going to be alright, in the very big picture of things. Keep on Believing.



image of someone wishing upon a star





Past Life In A Himalayan Monastery Via a Vivid Dream

By Angel Lady

I have decided that, in a series, one by one, over time, I will open up and share some, out of many, very significant and vivid dreams, mystical experiences and what I would call "other worldly happenings" that have occurred in my life that really stand out to me as being very important and meaningful to me in the last handful of decades of my life, starting with the most recent, and going back in the order in which they happened. Starting with a couple months ago.

The Dream. I dreamt I was with a woman friend and we were walking to a place. As we approached, I could see that there was a gathering of people all seated on narrow wooden decks that were a couple feet off the ground with open space underneath. The decks filled a large area to seat everyone. They had walkways that interconnected the various seating areas. And, it was as if they were all awaiting our arrival, like a special event. There were colorful banners made of beautiful fabrics waving in the breeze and the decks were covered with the same beautiful fabric.

The woman friend and myself sat in the two empty bamboo chairs that seemed to be meant for us, that were on the deck that was in the foremost front row. I felt a bit hesitant as I didn't know if I was supposed to be there, even telling my friend that I wasn't sure about this. We sat down and soon after, she was called to come up to a central stage area, there was some special recognition being given to her. I was thinking "Oh please don't call me up there too" and I felt like I wanted to be invisible.

But, of course, sure enough, I was called up next. I was receiving some special recognition also, and I then relaxed and was thinking that perhaps we were in the right place. They had me sit in a special chair and lifted the chair and were carrying me. Then, I saw that a woman was being carried in on a special palanquin with it's own roof, like you see done with royalty in old movies, with two people carrying it, one in front and one in back. I was carried in my chair to be right next to her and my right arm touched her left arm, and I felt an immediate, nostalgic reconnection with her as my spiritual mentor and I recognized her as the Abbess of the Monastery. That's where this happened, in a monastery in the Himalayas of Tibet.

I had such a deep experience in that moment, I felt such devotion and connection with her and from the very bottom of my heart and soul, I said to her "THIS (meaning total spiritual devotion) was all I ever really cared about, not romance, only THIS!" I began crying and sobbing and yelling out "Please don't ever leave me! I need you, I need you!" I was begging with my whole heart and soul on the deepest possible level.

I awoke from the dream and continued to physically enact the same thing, I carried it over into my waking life and continued to cry and I sobbed deeper and louder than I can ever remember doing in my entire life about anything. And knowing I was fully awake, I continued to shout out "Please don't ever leave me, I need you, I need you!" with more loud sobs. It was such a deep experience that shook me to my very spiritual and emotional core.

After calming down, I laid there and thought back to how when I was in high school, in the hippie days of the late 1960's, I had come across a book by a British writer with the pen name Lobsang Rampa. He wrote about the Himalayan Yogis and Lamas of Tibet. At the age of 15, no sooner than



just starting to read about these spiritual masters in the Himalayas, I felt an immediate kinship and familiarity with them and the Himalayas as well. Nostalgia in a deja vu kind of way.

After this very vivid dream which really struck a dramatic cord, I needed to let it simmer in the back of my mind for a few days before I could even write about it in my journal. Now it's been a few weeks and I am finally writing about it. I've seen what seem to be past lives in other dreams. In Victorian England, in Russia, in India. None of them shook me to the core like this dream did.

Who was this Abbess and what community of monks and nuns was this? Why were they waiting for me and what was I being recognized for along with my woman friend. Why was I lifted up on a chair at the center stage and so connected with the Abbess as she was carried in her palanquin? Why were they contacting me now? Why was I so deeply moved by this reconnection and remembrance of myself in this other identity?

The images that get brought up in dreams come from the subconscious and unconscious mind. They call it unconscious for a reason. I have been fascinated with Psychology for decades as I continue to seek a deeper understanding of myself and my fellow human beings. Well, my search continues. At the very least, the dream serves as a reminder that it is always good for the morale to identify with the highest and best self, the True Self.

And obviously some part of me (the one who was crying out) needs to feel that close bond with that part of my self identity. I long for the Purest Truth. About life, people, God, life after death, spiritual growth, fulfilling my highest potential. The long and winding road....

By the way, I'm not a Buddhist or Hindu. I've studied those Religions for insight into how people approach Self Realization and spiritual growth. I believe in God, have experienced God, have had 2 near death experiences. Have experienced God's Angels of Healing and Protection. And even had a Visitation in my room one night that made me sit up in bed staring at something of beautiful spiritual light, that is a story for another time to tell in my "series" of writings. In the meantime, I have been praying for years now to experience Jesus, in the way so many Christians talk about, that personal connection. Still hoping for that Rebirth experience people speak of.





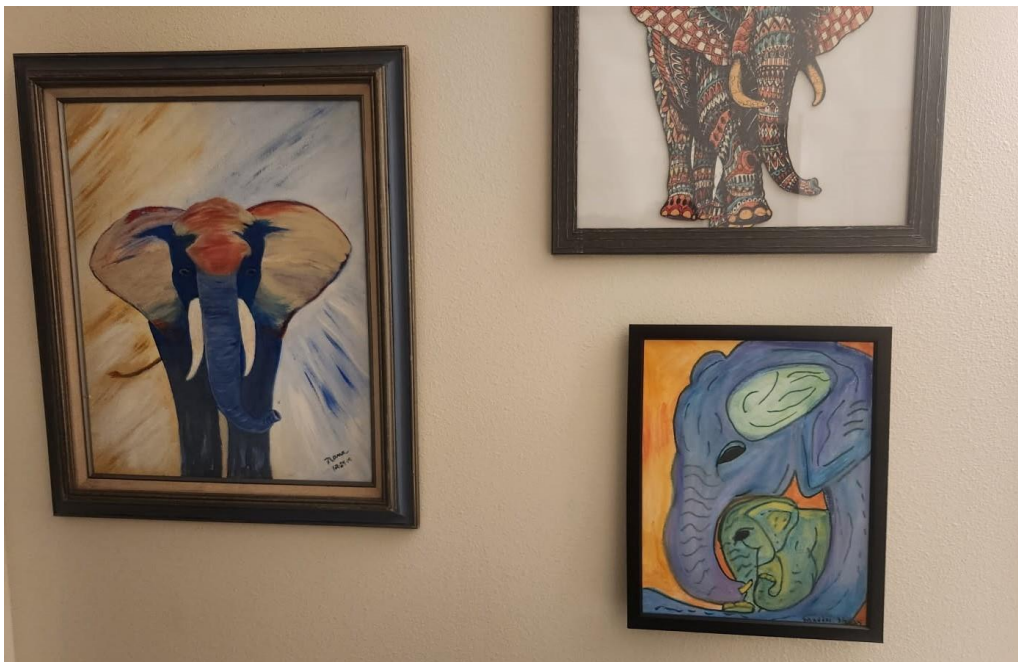
Love Knows no boundaries

By Angmaria



A Mother's First Love

By Angmaria



My mom painted the elephant on the Left many years ago and I painted the one on the Lower right.



Shooting Stars

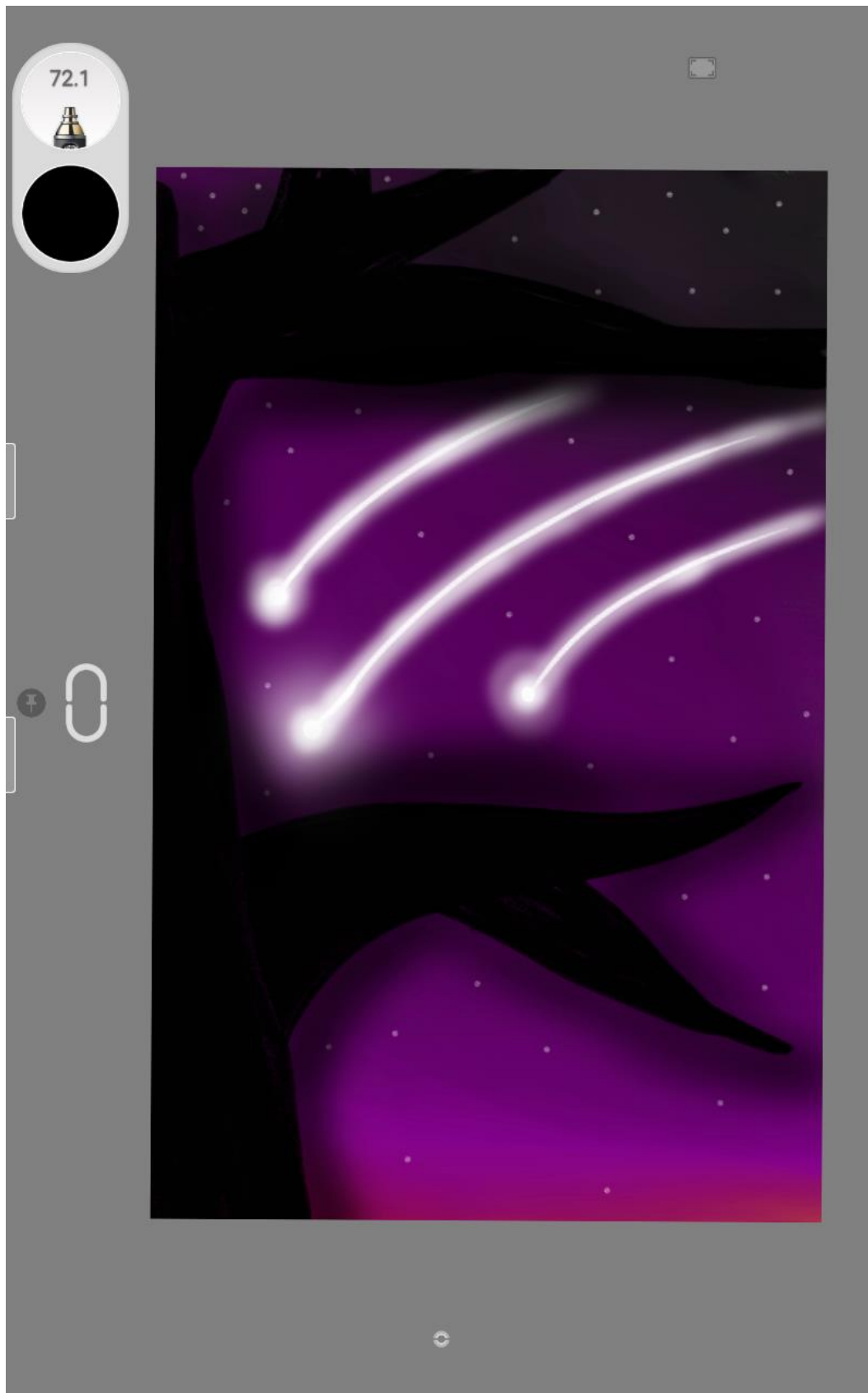
By Anna Mary Robertson





Shooting Stars

By Bella





Fireworks Part 1

By Brenna H



Painting of July Fireworks at night

Fireworks Part 2

By Breanna H





Father Knows Best?

By Cats' Eyes

Larry begged for baseball cards for his birthday, but
He hadn't yet learned that to get what you want you don't ask for it
Particularly when it came to the ongoing warfare with Dad.
He got marbles instead. Not even cat's eyes,
Just plain old solid colored marbles in a flimsy bag
Dad probably picked up at Woolworth's for under
A buck. But this was Larry's seventh birthday
So he'd learned enough to fake delight in the gift and
In typical Larry fashion, I knew he would find a way
To get what he wanted.

The day after his birthday, he started a marble gambling game,
Let the younger kids win a few
Word got out he was an easy target so
Our neighborhood bully, Tom Harwood, came to play.
Of course, Larry knew Tom collected Baseball cards.
Blowing big bubbles of baseball card gum, he'd flash them,
Particularly Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays, Yogi Berra,
Larry's favorite players.

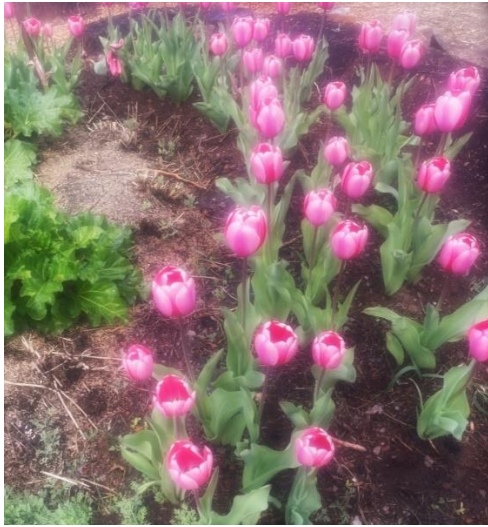
Marbles were won, marbles were lost
Until Larry dropped into his winning streak
Winning all but one of Tom's marbles.
Tom threatened to trash him but
Everyone knew Larry had won fair and square
And we kids would fight to protect him.

"I have an idea," Larry challenged, "If you win,
I'll give you all your marbles back, and you can have all of mine"
Tom sneered. "but if I win, you give me
All of your baseball cards, and I keep all of the marbles."

That day lives forever in neighborhood legend
Larry became the Marble King of Mariposa Avenue,
And proud owner of fifteen packs of baseball cards
"I guess Dad knew what he was doing," Larry laughed
As we sorted through the cards, finding a Willie Mays card
Then a Yogi Berra, and two Mickey Mantles,
"This was my best birthday ever!
Can't wait Until I turn eight!"

**Tulip**

By Colette Bee



Planted intentional gardening, things continued to want to live
“Flipping the switch” and turning off addiction.

I was going through a difficult time of grief and the optimism that a bulb planted in the fall would bloom in the spring kept me going. I made the print so I could share a message of hope.

Untitled

By Colette Bee

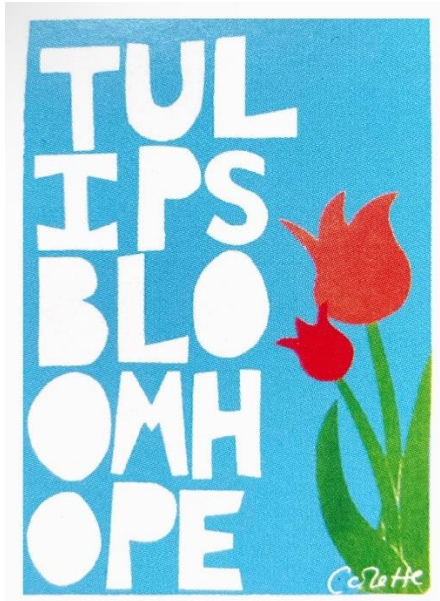


This s a black iris, a transplant from Santa Rosa



Bloom

By Colette Bee



Sunflower

By Colette Bee



first sunflower of the season. grown in a 4" pot on the kitchen window sill.

**A winged bird carries your desire**

By Diego Yyoati

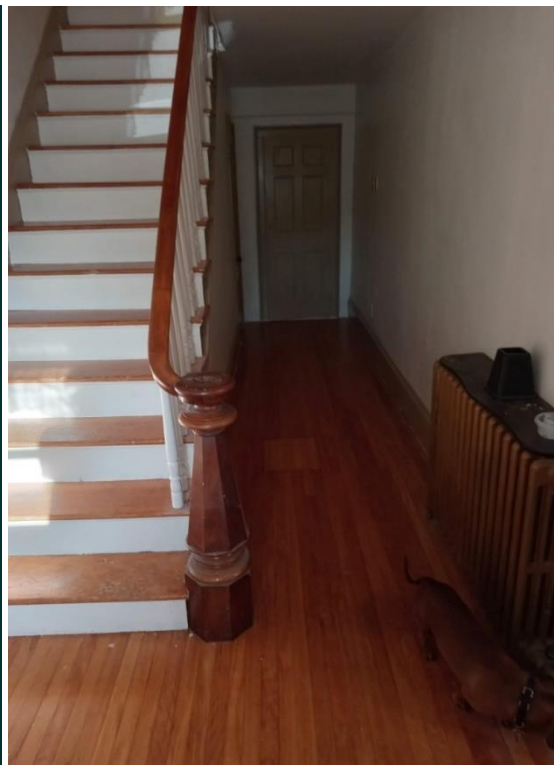
I want danger
and flame.
Ice added to my morning bath.
Paperbacks well worn, lost spines, dog eared,
and you. I want you, now.
And then, and then,
again
and again. Again I want you.
My dangerous heart, razed
in an instant. My dangerous heart, in your clutch,
dancing there in my T-shirt and nothing else,
beside the sill
with the swaying plant
born from a seed planted long ago.
That day. The 29th of February,
when we grabbed 'em and jumped.
And you sing. With volume.
Always you sang.
But my bones, shed of gut, shed of flesh,
they still posture, they still get up for you.
I don't want danger. No.
I want chance,
and maybe a single flame
lighting the way
protecting this moment,
protecting us.
I want you, naked, holding a book.
I heard a bird once sing this to me.
I too sing with volume, only there's no you,
no us. But that bird had such a sweet song.

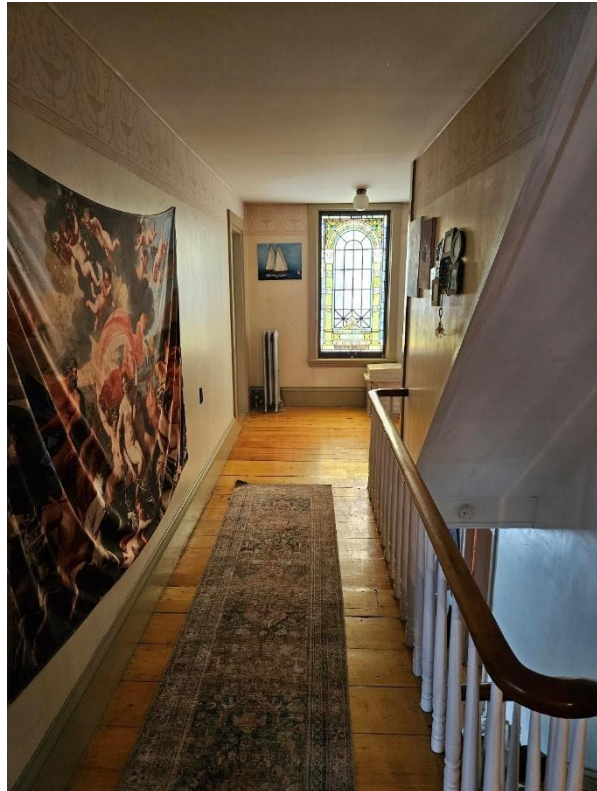
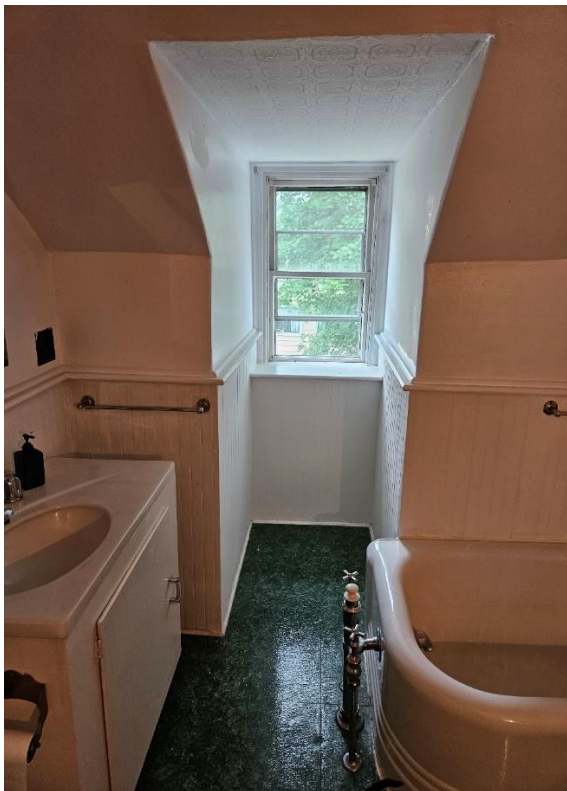
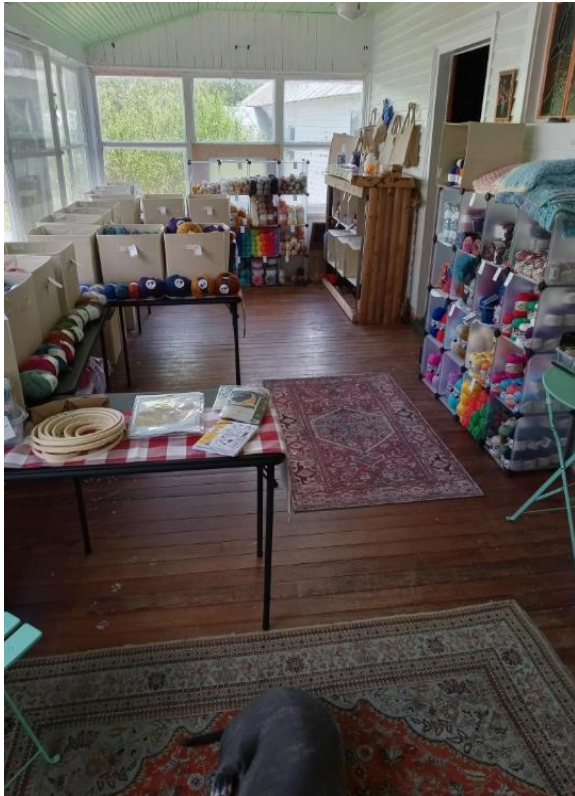


My House in Maine. 1835 Colonial/Greek Revival

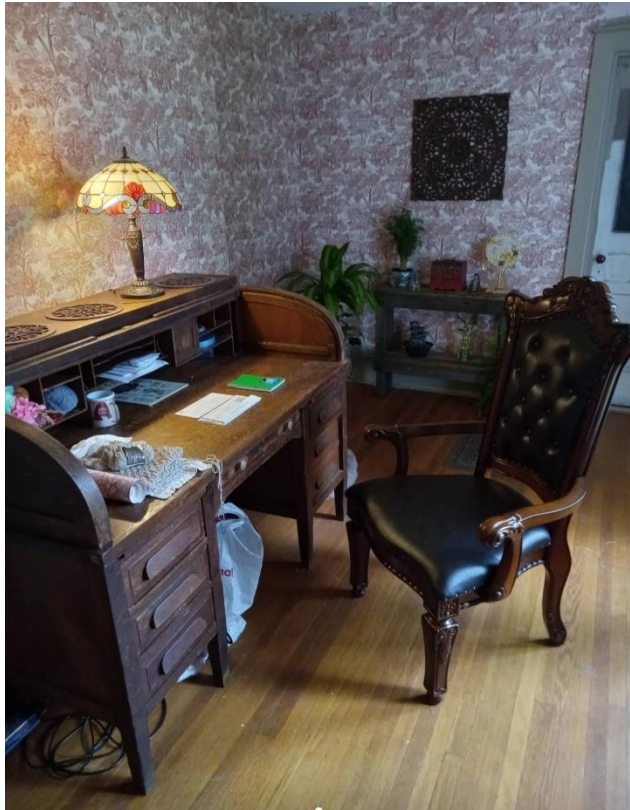
By DLS 35

I am sending a lot of photos of my house in Maine. It was built in the year 1835. 5 beds, two baths on 1/2 acre, dining room with built ins, attic where slaves were kept secretly (I think), basement, office, kitchen with wood burning stove from the 1800's, living room, entry, great room soon to be husband's "man cave" 🤪, lots of closets and spaces with doors, hidden spaces. It's 3,000 sq. ft. Colonial, Greek Revival. The black and white photograph was taken in 1895. I am honored to be the owner of such a historical piece of property and history. Address is 333 Main Street, Bingham, ME 04920. Enjoy!









**Marbles**

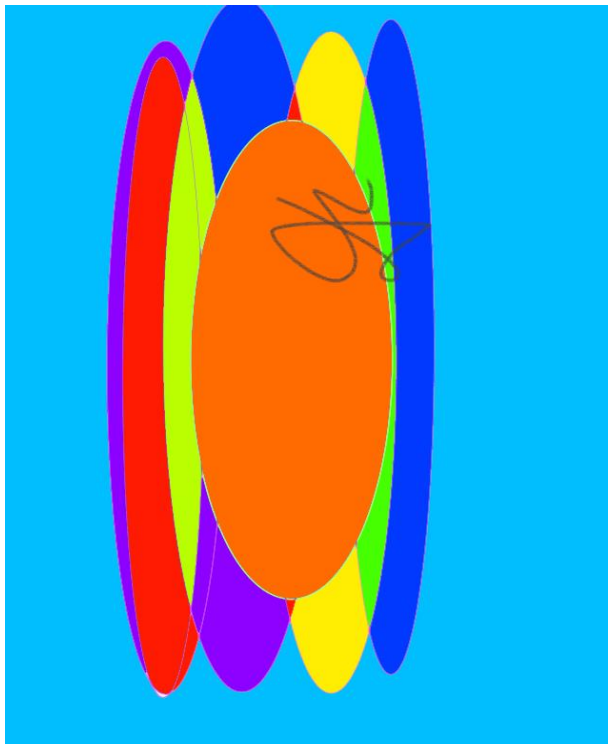
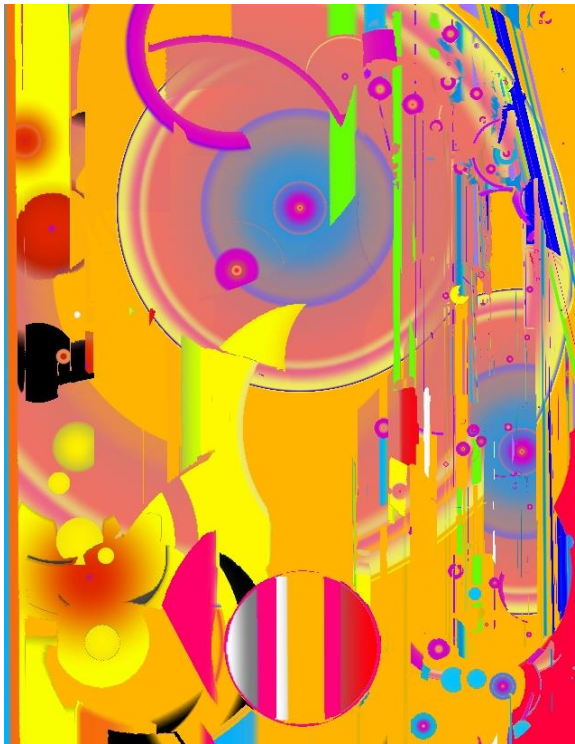
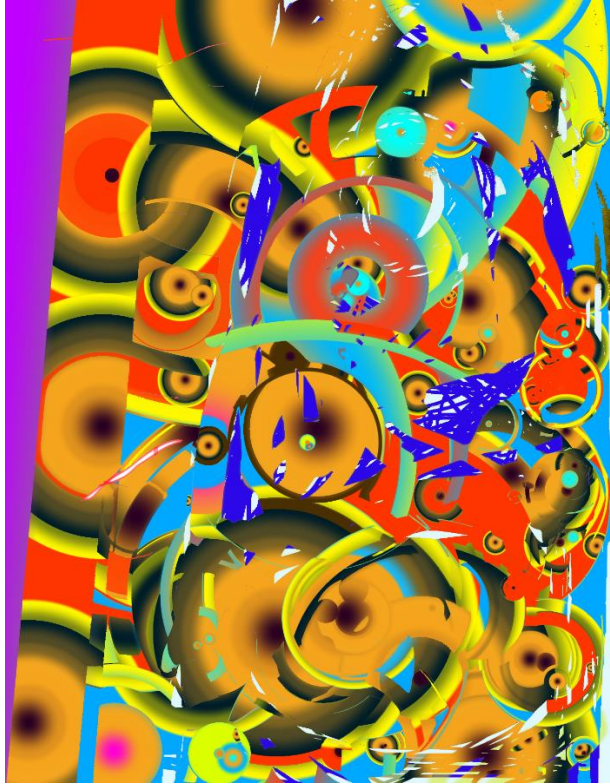
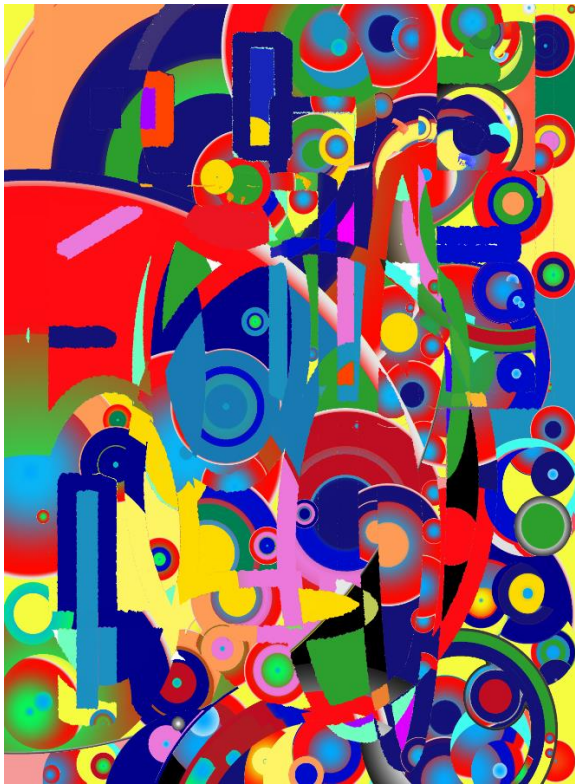
DLS 35

Marbles! Glorious
tiny glass balls
with color swirls throughout.
Rolling and clinking.
Collected as a child
we play games
with our little glass rolling delights.
A safe joy
from a difficult world.
Bound with friends
over marbles
until it was time to go home.
To dinner.
To the days end.
To sleep.



Art Collections

By Dru





The Other One

By ERB

"In sterile labs where silence grows,
A mirror breathes, but no one knows.
It wears your face, it steals your name,
But deep inside, it's not the same.
You blink—too late—it takes your place,
Now you're the shadow, gone... erased."
—Unknown

Ellis woke from a deep, dreamless sleep with a strange feeling of clarity humming in his chest. A rare peace, like something lurking had decided—for now—not to move.
"Finally," he thought, "Christmas break. I can show those booger stuffers who really runs the lake."

He rolled out of bed, his breath visible in the dim light. The old house never seemed to hold warmth in winter, no matter how high the thermostat read. He pulled on his winter pants, the fabric stiff and tight from last year's growth. The jacket resisted his arms like it didn't recognize him anymore. Squeezing his head through his too-small beanie, he stepped in front of the mirror.

His reflection stared back, and for a brief moment, didn't move. Ellis blinked. The boy in the mirror stood still. Then, a blink—delayed, mechanical.
He rubbed his eyes and shook his head. "Nah," he muttered, "not today."

Ellis was ten, but his eyes looked older. When he was five, something happened—something wrong. His father had called him down into the basement. Not the kind of basement with spiderwebs and rusted shelves, no. This one was disturbingly clean. Bleached concrete. Bright fluorescent lights. Chrome shelving that reflected your face in little fragments. The air down there had always felt too still, too staged.

His father, Martin, was kneeling by a plastic storage bin labeled "XMAS LIGHTS."
"Little E," he said, "see if you can untangle these. You're better with knots than I am."
Then, casually, Martin got up and said he was grabbing a beer.

Ellis had barely begun unraveling the lights when a cold hand pressed over his mouth and nose. A sharp chemical smell hit him like lightning—then darkness.

When he woke, he was back in bed. Bandage on his head. The memory, hazy and sickly sweet, always felt like it had been placed there rather than born from experience.

Standing before the mirror now, five years later, that memory drifted away like frost melting under a pale sun.
"Five years," he whispered. "Already?"
The anniversary was creeping closer—Christmas Eve.

But it didn't matter. Not today. Today he was free. No school. Just snow, ice, and the lake.



Ellis thundered down the stairs, floorboards groaning beneath his weight. In the kitchen sat a cold bowl of oatmeal, thick and gelatinous. A note beside it read:

"I love you, son – Pa."

From the basement came distant sounds—metal clinking, a saw buzzing, then silence. He didn't want to think about what his dad did down there anymore.

He wolfed the oatmeal down in three swallows, grimacing at the taste. He stood, walked to the basement door, cracked it open.

"I'm going to the lake!" he called.

His father's voice came faint but sharp. "What do you mean? I thought we were finishing the matchbox together."

Ellis frowned. "What matchbox? We never started one."

Silence.

A low hum clicked on in the basement, insectile and constant. Then: "Never mind."

Ellis slowly closed the door. The click echoed too loudly.

Outside, the cold sliced through his clothes like thin blades. The snow crunched beneath his boots, each step echoing in the stillness. The trees stood tall and judgmental. Snow fell in thick, slow-motion silence—the kind only a forest can offer, where sound itself feels afraid to move.

As he walked the familiar trail to the lake, he began to hear voices. Not the kind that haunt or whisper—but the unmistakable chaos of his two best friends.

"...I'm obviously taller than you, Greg," Thatch was saying. "Even your shadow's scared to admit you're five foot nothing. That's why they call you Greg the Egg—fragile and round."

"You're sitting down while criticizing me?" Greg snapped. "You crawled out of bed just to get humbled. That's the real crime here."

Thatch was tall and wiry, with a perpetual cowlick that even his hat seemed afraid to touch. His teeth were too big for his mouth and always on display—he laughed more than he breathed. Greg, shorter and sturdier, had the permanent scowl of someone twice his age and a mop of curly hair that never obeyed a brush.

Ellis laughed. As he approached, Thatch threw his arms wide.

"Well, if it isn't Sleeping Beauty herself! He's come down from his royal tower to bless us peasants!"

"Shut up, Thatch," Ellis grinned. "What's up, Greg?"



Greg waved, smiling. "Not much. Just fending off insults from the village idiot. You know, typical Monday."

Ellis dropped his bag, pulled out his skates. The lake stretched before them—glass-smooth and waiting. In the middle of all the cold and silence, the laughter of three boys made the world feel warm again.

Sweaty, red, panting, all three boys reared around for a fifth time to begin another race. Before each race came a mandatory round of badmouthing—half insult, half tradition. It served a dual purpose: to rattle each other's focus and, more truthfully, to catch their breath.

"Ellis always gets to skate under the shaded side," Thatch huffed, adjusting his laces. "It's slicker over there, you cheating bastard."

"Go ahead and try the shaded side," Ellis fired back, not missing a beat. "If Greg and I gave you a ten-second head start, you'd still come in last, you whining dog."

"Ladies, ladies, please," Greg cut in, mock-serious. "I think you've done enough flirting for the day."

They exhaled together, breath fogging the air in thick bursts, waiting for the stone to be thrown.

Thatch, as always, was the stone-thrower. He bent down, plucked up a jagged rock, and lofted it high. The second it cracked against the frozen surface, the echo snapped across the lake like a gunshot.

They launched forward.

Skates screamed across the ice. The cold air stung their cheeks, and their lungs burned with every gasp. The only sounds were their blades carving deep lines into the lake and their ragged breaths. They pushed harder. Faster. The world blurred around the edges.

"They're losing speed," Ellis thought. "Five more strokes and I'm to the finish—"

His blades sliced across the line they'd etched into the ice.

He won.

But the moment victory touched him, it was stolen away.

Ellis skidded to a halt, chest heaving—not from exertion, but from something else. Something primal and cold tightening around his ribs.

A figure.

Barely visible at first, standing at the far edge of the lake, where the trees thickened and shadows swallowed the snow.



A kid.

Same height. Same build. Same age.

Ellis's breath caught in his throat. The figure was watching. No movement. Just stillness. As if waiting.

Then—movement.

The boy turned, darting into the trees, vanishing down the trail that led back toward the neighborhood.

"What's wrong with him?" Thatch called out behind him.

"God knows," Greg replied, "but you'd think he'd be a bit more excited and boastful for his first ever win."

Ellis didn't hear them. The world had dulled to a muffle, like he was underwater. Something inside pulled him forward—an invisible thread, tight and unrelenting.

He tore off his skates, his boots, barely registering the cold that bit at his feet. Then he ran—toward the trees. Toward the place where he had just seen himself standing.

Thatch and Greg stood frozen, watching their friend vanish into the woods.

"He's always been a bit weird anyway," Thatch muttered.

"Yeah," Greg nodded. "Let him chase whatever that was."

Ellis was driven by pure adrenal terror—but beneath that was something stranger: a dull ache, a longing. A quiet, inexplicable desire to understand who the boy was, even though some part of him already knew they'd never met before.

The wind howled as he rounded the third bend in the trail. The forest around him thinned, and now he could hear two sets of boots crunching through the snow—his own and the boy's. Each ragged breath he took seemed to echo the ones ahead of him, like a ghostly duet. The chase had taken them toward the edge of the woods, and now, improbably, onto the narrow sidewalk of his own neighborhood.

"Wait!" Ellis called out, his voice desperate.

The boy didn't turn around—he only moved faster. They passed the Petersons' mailbox. The dim porch light of the Yuen house flickered as they ran by.

Then the thought struck Ellis like a hammer: Why is he running this way?



Why would someone trying to escape sprint straight into a cramped neighborhood, into the most well-lit, least concealable area for miles? If the boy had wanted to disappear, he could've vanished into the dark spine of the forest. But instead...

Ellis's thoughts crumbled into silence.

The boy had stopped.

He was standing in his driveway.

The garage light was on, and Ellis could hear his father, Martin, blaring old blues from the radio inside, just like he always did when working on something he didn't want Ellis to ask about.

Ellis slowed, chest heaving. His breath formed clouds that hung between them.

The boy turned. In the flickering garage light, Ellis got his first clear look at him.

He looked like—

No.

He looked like Ellis.

Same nose. Same lips. Same crooked jawline from when Ellis cracked it skateboarding at thirteen. The boy even anxiously straightened his hair with the exact same twitch Ellis had. It was like watching a recording of himself, one trained to mimic him down to the breath.

But he wasn't right.

His eyes were glassy, too small, sunken—like two fish eyes pressed into the face too deep. His skin was too smooth, like rubber stretched too tightly over bones. His smile didn't reach his eyes. His limbs were just too long, his neck just too narrow, and his nose hooked slightly downward, serpent-like. The more Ellis looked, the more wrong it all felt, like staring at a painting of yourself made by someone who'd only ever heard you described by strangers.

Ellis stepped back. "Why are you here?" he asked, his voice barely a whisper. "Where did you come from?"

The boy smiled. His teeth were perfect. Too perfect.

"I came from you," he said.

Something inside Ellis snapped into place.

He reached up and touched the scar on his scalp, hidden beneath his hair—the one he'd woken up with five years ago after that night in the basement. The night he'd never gotten answers about. The one time his dad had locked the door and told him to never ask again.



"No..." Ellis whispered. "It can't be."

The boy began walking toward him.

It wasn't natural.

His legs moved just slightly out of sync, as though his knees bent a second too late. His arms hung loosely, twitching at odd angles like broken marionette strings. With every step, his spine swayed side to side, as if his body hadn't been built to carry its own weight. There was a wet clicking sound beneath the skin with each movement, and the way his eyes locked on Ellis—unblinking, unfeeling—made Ellis feel like prey.

A thick, rotting sweetness clung to the air around him, like fruit left to die in a sealed jar. Ellis wanted to scream, to run, to claw his skin off just to escape the sight. His body locked up, seized by a terror so complete it almost felt like surrender. He had never wanted to die before—but now, watching this thing that wore his face approach him with lurching, gleeful certainty, he wanted nothing more than to vanish from the world.

The boy stepped forward until their noses were almost touching. He raised a thin, trembling finger and pressed it gently against Ellis's head—right on the scar.

"That's right," he said. "I came from there."

Ellis flinched. Nobody knew about the scar. Not even his friends. Not even his mom.

Only him.

And his father.

The clone turned away and walked casually to the front door. Without knocking, he opened it, stepped inside, and closed it behind him.

From the garage, muffled but unmistakable, Ellis heard Martin's voice:

"Welcome home, son."

Ellis stood frozen, breath shallow. The wind shifted, and something deep inside him—something old and frightened—began to unravel.



Hidden Honey

By G. Locks

A family of brown bears prowls inside my body
I've known about it ever since my mother read the Goldilocks
Tale, which, even as a three year old I knew
Was a story about bears, not a hungry little girl
Without manners.

When I was four, daily my father took me to the San Francisco Zoo
We always spent the day in front of bear lairs,
Polar bears sweating in the heat and an ancient sad Grizzly
Pacing from one edge of the grotto to another
I loved them all, but the brown bears stole my heart
Padded quietly and quickly into my soul

Which welcomed them. Father Bear growled
Then slunk in to the far edges of my feet and slept
Mother Bear lodged inside my rib cage,
Watched her twin cubs as they romped
And rolled from my head to my toes, careful
Always to avoid their sleeping father.

Mother Bear moved the most, prowling through my veins
Seeking the honey I'd hidden from any and all prying eyes
But she was a crafty one and promised to nurture
And protect me, promised to teach me how to avoid
Marauders like Goldilocks, so cute on the outside
But ravaging anything that stood in their ways.

And I decided to believe her.

Some fifty years have passed since they first burrowed
Into my being. We've lived a happy, quiet life
Every night, the twins and I curl around each
(carefully avoiding Father Bear when he's sleeping)
Share the honey Mother Bear always found,
Fall asleep as she tells the true story of
Goldilocks and the Brown Bear Family.



Poetry Collection

By Golden Sapphire

1

Will my mind
Ever heal?
Will my past stop getting
In the way of my future?
I want to forgive and
forget about it all
Let God handle it all.
I'm tired of creating
My own light
When I just want
Someone to shine that light
For me.
Instead of being scared
Instead of feeling targeted because
Being prophet of the Lord
Or being mental unstable.
When will I finally heal
From it all?
Will my nightmares stop?
Will I stop seeing the earth destroyed?
Will I stop seeing chaos after chaos?
Will everyone finally
Live in peace?
I'm tired of holding a mask
That says I'm fine,
But deep down I'm not fine.
All I want to do is cry and cry,
Curl up under a blanket and cry.
I'm tired of holding up a wall
That says
Do not enter.
I just want someone to hold me
And tell me
Everything is okay
That I don't need
To be brave or have a brave face on.
I don't need to be scared of people,
That I won't shut down like I normally do.
I don't need to be scared of my family
Anymore.
I wear long sleeves to cover up
My scars all over my body.



When will I can relax
Without anxiety
Without PTSD
Without being paranoid.
But all that is part of my life.
So all I want to do is curl up and cry.
And wishing that darkness
Never happened to me,
But it did.
How can I heal or begin to heal
When I have nightmares of my past?
I just wish someone would hold me,
Tell me everything is alright,
Everything will be fine.
I wish someone
Would just hold me and let it all out,
Let me talk about my past

2

I wear a mask
To hide my pain.
I wear a mask
To shield my pain.
The mask I wear
For others to not ask
If I'm okay, if I'm alright.
All I do is
Nod my head,
Bury my head deep in my knees,
Cry to myself.
I wear a mask
To build up a wall
From letting others
Ask me the same question
I hear every day.
I wear a mask
Everyday to hide
Everything I feel
Deep inside
From sadness to
Uncontrollably overwhelmedness,
Hearing everyone tell me
That I'm not who I am.
They tell me
I'm not God's daughter,



When I am.
They tell me
I'm not heaven royalty,
When I am.
I know everyone is supposed
To reject me,
Deny me,
Because that's part of my destiny.
Only two aren't supposed to
are God and Christ.
Only two who truly have my back
Is God and Christ
Because they know
What my fate and destiny are.
I wear a mask
To shelter my sorrow away from the world.
Because I do feel
When the earth is crying
When the people are dying,
I do feel when everyone is lost
To the darkness.
I wear a mask from the world
I wear a mask from my family.
I hide my pain away
I hide my overwhelmedness
I hide myself away
For others to not ask
If I'm okay.
I put on a brave face and smile
Because I just don't want to be a
Burden to anyone.
I don't want my family to worry about me
I don't want my children to see me crying
I don't want my husband to see
My tears and ask what's wrong.
When I feel drowning
It's hard to talk to him about anything
When he doesn't understand
What's headed for my destiny.

3

Letter to everyone

Healing is hard
But letting go is harder.



Wanting to disappear
Hide from those
Who want to cause
Me harm.
Finding out the truth
About those around me,
Who just want to use me
For personal gain.
To gather information
About me to be used against me.
I've kept my mouth shut
For so long.
When others are talking about me
When others are so against me,
Trying to see
What makes me tick
Like a time bomb.
Instead of understanding,
They just want me
To remain in silence
Until the final call is made.
Everyone wants power, greed
Everyone wants me to remain hidden.
What's worse is that
Everyone truly doesn't understand.
They'd rather have me behind bars.
But when I'm on my phone,
Everyone looks to see
What I'm doing.
Whether it's writing to my doctor
Or shopping online.
As long as they can use anything
And everything against me.
Worst of all
Is that my husband does it too.
From start of our relationship
He does things on purpose
Just to give wrong information
To those who have upper power
Than take a picture or video of me.
When I'm not looking
He does it so he doesn't
Get in trouble with what he's been doing.
He wants me to remain mentally unstable
For he can control me more.
That's why he wants to move me



Up to Alaska.
That's been his plan all along.
He doesn't want to grow old with me.
He says he loves me
But if he truly loved me,
He'd let me have my freedom
Instead of keeping me home.
He won't let me hang out with
My friends.
If I do, he stalks me until I'm ready to come home
He gaslights me until I'm unsure of life .
But what no one doesn't know
Is that once God gets involved
Like he always has been involved,
He'll question mankind
About me.
Then he won't allow anyone in heaven
Since I closed heaven's gates.
Those souls who passed on
Are just standing out in front,
Waiting for them to open again.
Since I've been treated
Poorly by mankind,
Even those with power and greed.
I closed those gates
I pushed everyone away from me.
Those with money, those who would stop me
From fulfilling my destiny.
Everyone wants to protect me
Everyone doesn't want my government
to find me.
But why?
Why is everyone so scared of them finding out?
I'm not a gold mine, I'm not treasure
Because I belong to the world
I belong to heaven.
After my book is published
After my husband moves me up to Alaska,
I think I'll write a letter to my government
Or write a letter to the people of the world
About heaven's queen.
Everyone is scared to lose me
But holding me down and keeping me hidden
Is what causing me harm...
Honestly it's not up to anyone anymore.
It's my choice and my choice alone...



Shooting Stars

By Grace T

Have you ever wished upon a shooting star?

Shooting stars are not stars at all.

They are actually rocks or dust from space.

They are called meteors,

They travel through the atmosphere at high temperatures,

Like extreme heat.

They leave a fiery trail of light.

Shooting stars name

Is really a meteorite.

Next time you see one,

You can make a wish on one

If you want.



Steve's Rare Marbles & Valuables

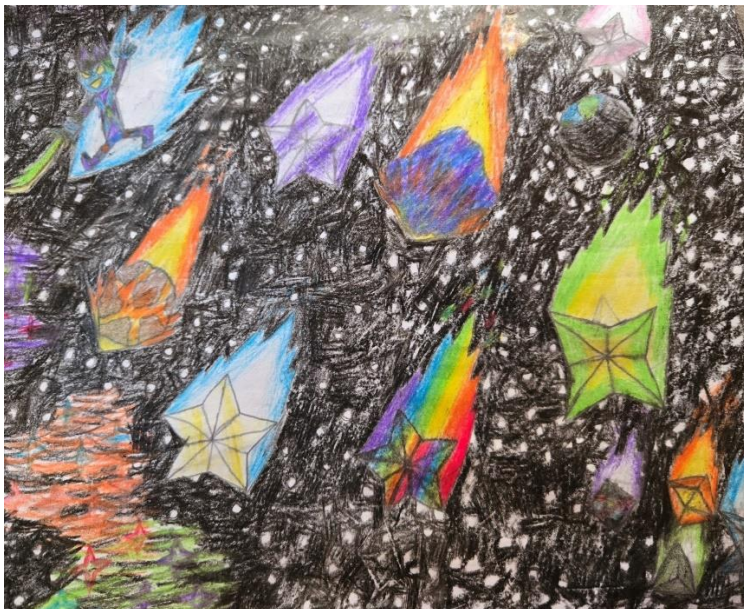
By Gus



Steve put some marbles and valuables on his table and then took a picture of them to share with his friend Carl. Carl will really like Steve's photo of the marbles and valuables! Steve will share some of his valuables with Carl, his friend, and they will talk about what they are about!

Celestial Variety of Shooting Stars

By Gus

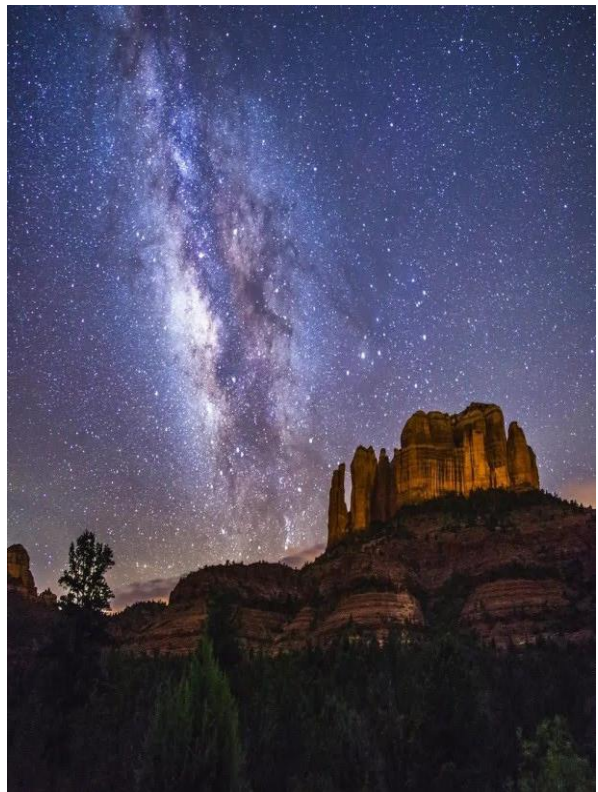


There's a lot of all kinds of celestial shooting stars and meteors and celestial crystals. Patariken, the Gabanotix Terrain Lord, is having lots of fun flying through outer space. He will probably go to a far away planet like Saturn, visit the aliens, show them some celestial potion recipe scrolls and cool stuff, and talk about what they are about and their super powers! Patariken can be a great friend to the aliens!



Star studded skies...

By Hooter



**I Am a Pinata**

By Invisible Force

I am a pinata
Every sunrise a new shape and color
Blood red crocodile
Twilight blue rabbit
Sun yellow rooster
Pink polka dot purple parrot
I am

Stuffed with
Dreams, fears, hopes, angers, memories
Past present future of loved ones, hated ones
Nothing forgotten, all stuffed inside
Joy, anguish, grief, giggles,
All part of the crazy color and shape
I am for that day
Connected by a radiant thread
Held by an Invisible Force
As life whacks at me throughout the day
Sometimes just creating minute fissures
But sometimes the whacks hit
A weak spot

Then everything inside of me
Spills out until I am
Almost empty!
That is the best time when

I am
 wide open, for then I am
Willing to be filled up again
Ready for a new shape and color
I am ready
To change over and over
And over again
I am
A pinata every sunrise
Ready for a new shape and color



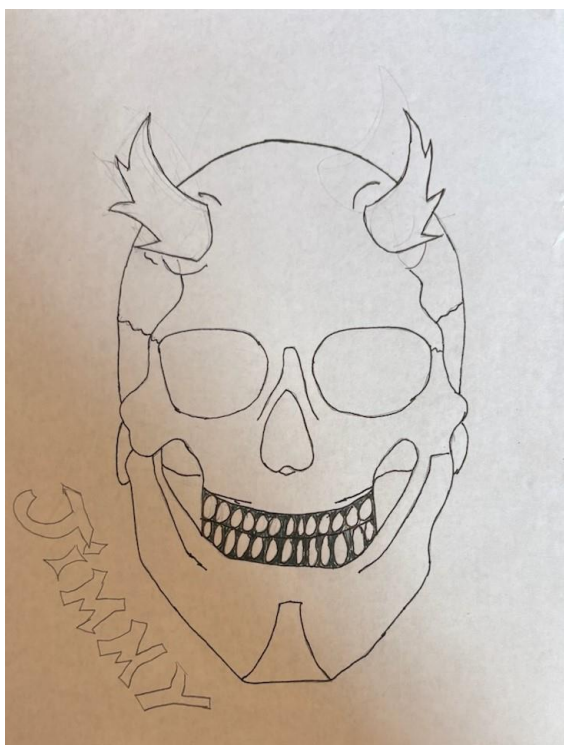
My Family

By Jasmine Carter



Son in Law's Horned Skull

By Jasmine Carter





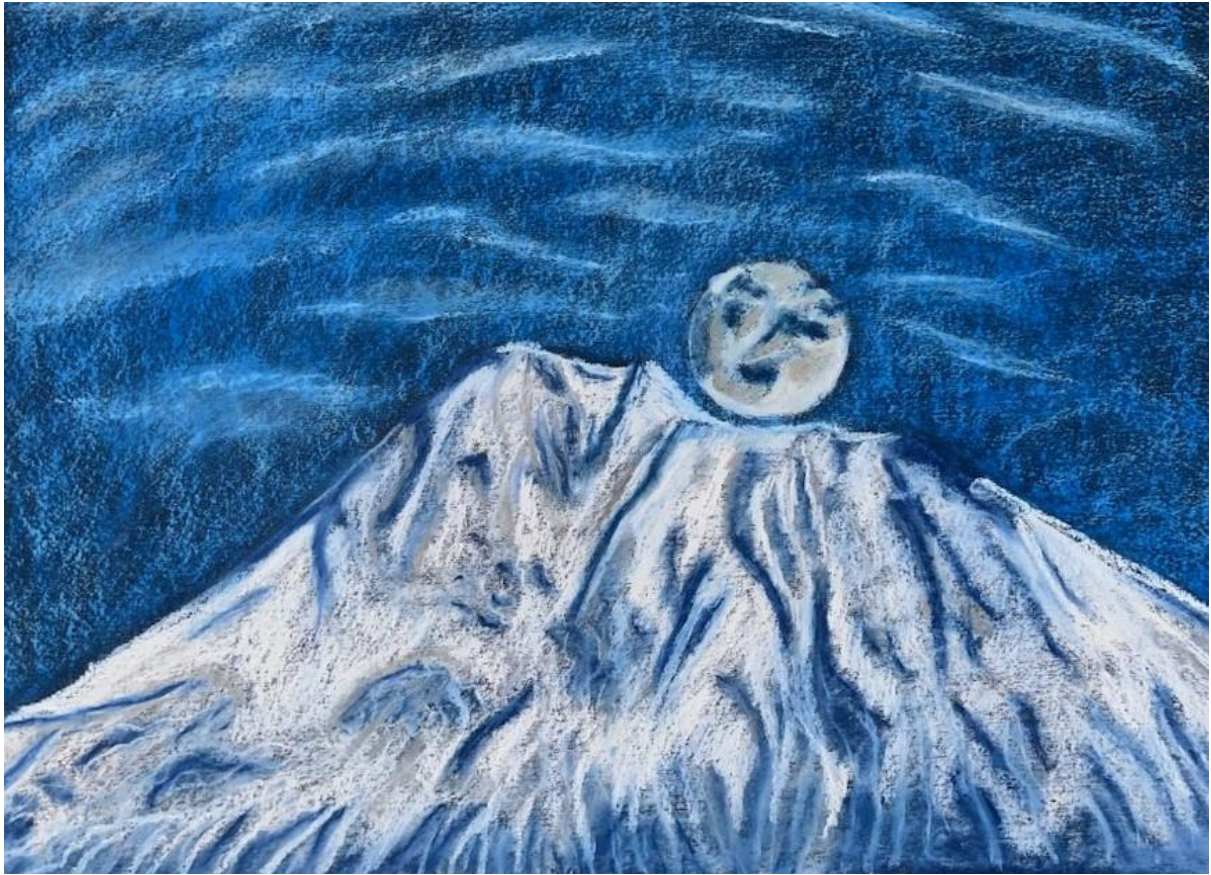
Milky Way Meets Mount Shasta

By J.riann





Moonin!
By J.riann





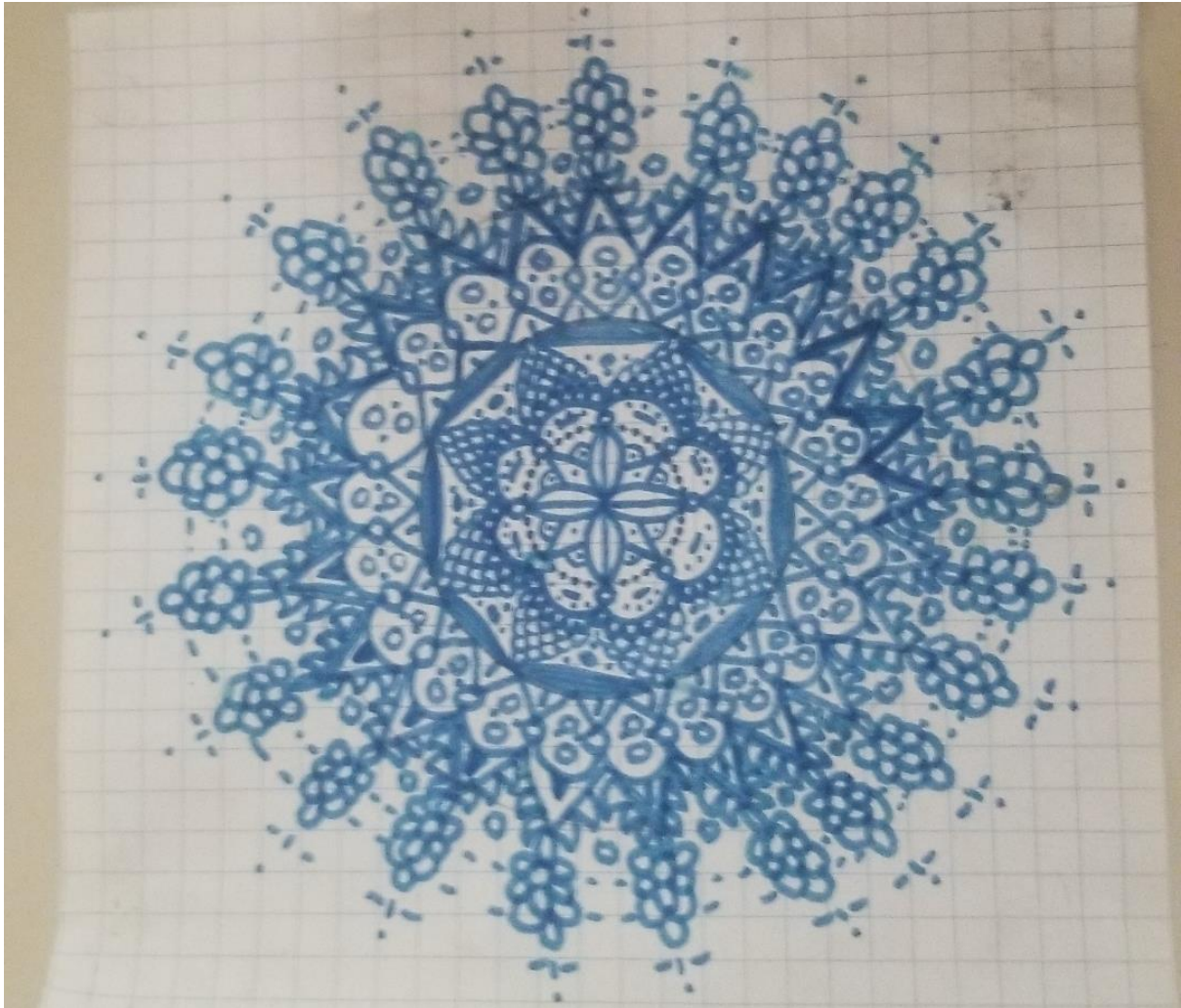
Heart Lake

By J.riann





Blue Mandala
By Karebear





Gourd in a Bedspring

By Kathleen



I enjoy growing gourds and creating art out of them. When this gourd was very small, I found an old bedspring and thought it would be fun see how it would grow inside the bedspring. When it was ready, I painted it!



A Day at the Beach

By Kathleen

This is a Bushel Gourd that I grew in my garden. After drying it for a year, I sanded it, painted it and added a beach scene. I collected seashells, beach rocks, tree vines, and anything else that I find interesting, to put on it.



**Dear Dad**

By KD

I usually write to explain what I feel,
But these words on this paper can never express the reality
Of what is going on in my head and my heart.
There is no rhyme, there is no structure.
The words are almost as jumbled as my thoughts.
I go through phases where I can stand tall and remember you with pride in my heart.
Then there's today, and every day that I break.
I feel lost, and it's not like I can just pick up a phone and call you.
Every day I have to remind myself that you are dead.
Gone seems so temporary, like you can come back
And I can see your face and I'll have my dad again.
But dead is dead and you can't come back from that.
I don't understand.
You were so young, and so was I.
You promised me my whole life that nothing would ever happen to you,
That you were invincible.
I was 17 years old, and I got that call.
I'll never forget it.
I was blamed for your death, and all I could think was that it was my fault.
I was too bad, I shouldn't have been messing up.
I was just a stupid teenager, and it wasn't my fault.
It's not my fault. It's not my fault.
It's not my fault? Is it my fault?
No! It's not my fault!!!
I am mad at you!!!
I'm not mad at you, I'm sad at you.
You promised you wouldn't ever leave me and you did!
It's your fault! It's not your fault.
The thoughts fight against each other
Like waves crashing against the sand on the beach.
The beach where we left you...the beach where we said goodbye.
I never said goodbye.
Your ashes might be in the ocean,
But your spirit is in MY heart,
And your blood runs through MY veins.
I am still your child.
You are still my dad.
I celebrate the love you shared with us while you were here,
And I mourn the loss of the encouragement that I used to get when times were hard.
I never got to miss you, I had to be strong.
I don't want to be strong anymore.
I miss you, and I would give anything to trade places with you.



Baby brother needs you,
I need you, but I've got this, I will be strong.
I'll lace up my boots, and I'll get to work.
You taught me how to be the rock when a rock is needed.
Thank you for that.
I'll be his rock.
I'll keep learning, and I'll keep fighting, and I'll keep going.
It's my turn to be invincible.
It's your turn to rest.
You fought your fight, and you tagged me in.
I've got this.
I am invincible.



Sailing

By Kelly

I love sailing. I have been lucky to have had the opportunity to sail at different times on different Coasts because of my job. It's a strong feeling of freedom and wonder to me. You get to see different kinds of animals like Seals and Dolphins.

It also encouraged me to explore more and be adventurous. I was fascinated by the water and different fish species so I ventured out into wind surfing and then got my diving certificate. Graduated to diving the Great Barrier Reef in AU.

So yes, you can say that sailing is what inspired me to do all this because it showed that I wanted to learn and see more. I had a fascination of becoming a Marine Biologist one day but I knew in the back of mind I could never because I'm definitely not that smart.

I love the different colors and sizes of all the fish species.....the underwater habitat... the coral, oyster reefs which give them shelter. I had no idea what a colorful world it truly is down there.

Spring

By Kelly

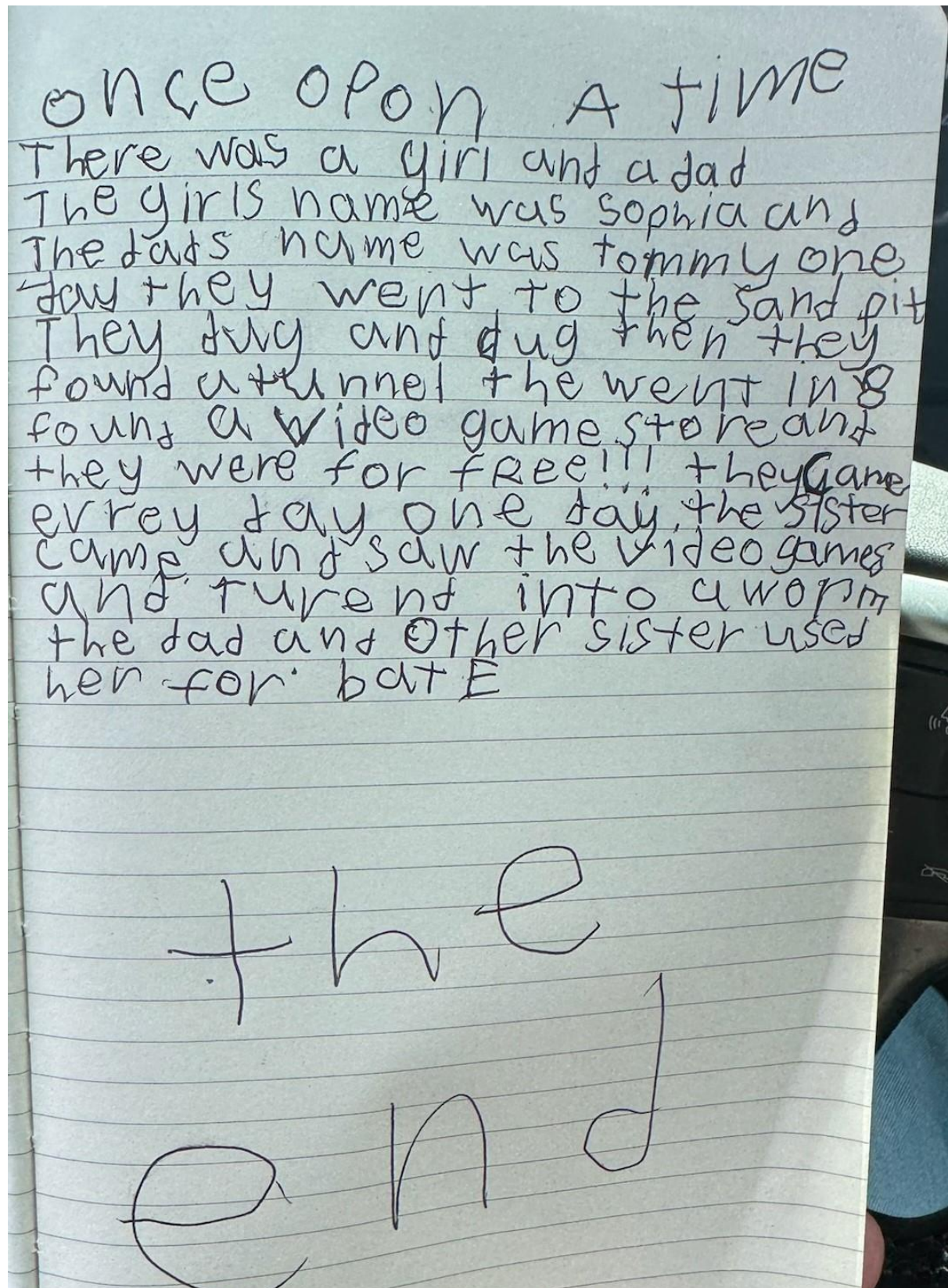
Spring reminds me of being young in my childhood years.
It reminds me of the smell of fresh green grass.
We used to have a man who would come over
And do our yard with his Rototiller Tractor.
I looked forward to it every year.

It also reminds me Spring Cleaning inside the house
And reorganizing my closet and dresser
Moving my winter clothes away
And putting out my Summer things.



Once Upon a time

By Liv Josefina Saborido





A Double Spring Haiku

By Luna Lumbré

A dandelion –
Fluffy white ball of wishes
waiting for the wind

Or perhaps hoping
for a dreamer brave enough
to help the seeds fly



Shooting Stars

By Marilyn



Pinata

By Marilyn





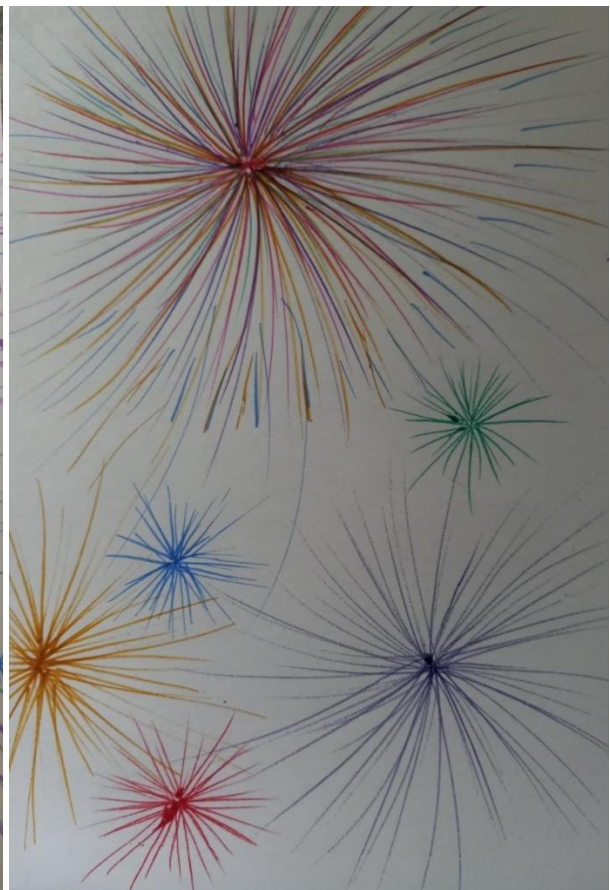
Birthday Bear

By Marilyn



Fireworks

By Marilyn





Wishing Upon a Star
By Marilyn



**Spring**

By Markus

As the seasons flow, there is nothing like spring.
It is the most beautiful time of the year to me.
It's never too hot and not too cold,
The temp is mostly in a perfect position.
The different fresh smells in the air,
The beginning of everything sprouting
And bringing out the beautiful colors.
The crisp morning air.
The fair warm partly cloudy day
With the cooling of the evening breeze.
There is so much stuff going on with spring
That if it stayed that way would be ok.

The pretty streaks in the night sky.

By Markus

Ever since I was a kid, I loved to watch the night sky.
All the stars and you can even see the hint of the Milky Way.
I would always camp in our back yard when I could to watch the night sky.
Lots of times I was lucky enough to catch like 2 to 3 a night.
Once in a while there would be lots of shooting stars.
Never knew really about the celestial events always happening.
I was just excited to see them.

When you're a kid everything is always simple.
Like wishing upon a shooting star and hope your wish would come true.
Sometimes even as adults we may do this
Knowing it's more than likely not going to happen, but why not?
As we have gotten older, some of us adults forget what it was like
To be a kid, and don't look up as much as we should.

I have been trying to better myself and understanding these things
As we go on with this adulthood stuff that's almost awful.
It's ok to act like kids to an extent
And bring joy back in our lives.
Cause one day it will all be gone.

**Letter to self**

By Mary

I met my younger self for coffee.
She got there 45 minutes late,
And I was there 10 minutes early, waiting.
I ordered a tea
And she ordered a black coffee.
Her hair was bleach blonde and she had a full face of makeup on.
I laugh because one day she will realize less is more.

She goes on and on about the same man
That she should have left long ago.
She cries about the hurt that she endures,
Not just from him, but from her family too.
She is speaking from a dark, lonely place.
I look at her and smile
Because one day,
She doesn't know it yet,
She will be living a life of her dreams,
Paving her own way,
And healing generational trauma.

I remind her that better days are coming.



Spring Flowers

By Martha



Spring Lily of the Valley

By Martha





Fireworks

By Mixed Blessing

Because he thought fire
Would work for mankind,
Prometheus stole fire from the gods
And gave it to us, making us gods of sorts

He was condemned to eternal torture
His liver devoured by a rapacious eagle
Each and every day his liver regenerated
To be devoured anew by the eagle

Condemned to eternal damnation.

And just how well has fire worked for us?

Devoured by our rapacious desire for fire
Works
Fire burning the green earth to ashes
Daily
The earth regenerates every day
But behold the fire
Devours, works its furious way
Across the globe warming the air and water
Devouring this green planet.

We are tottering
On the brink of eternal damnation

Of course there is the lighter side
Eating, drinking, laughing around the campfire, telling tales,
Creating them, fire works by lighting our rooms, homes,
Cities, roads so that darkness, even of a moonless light
Shines. Fireworks for celebrations, filling the sky
With charming colors and echoing with cheers of delight...

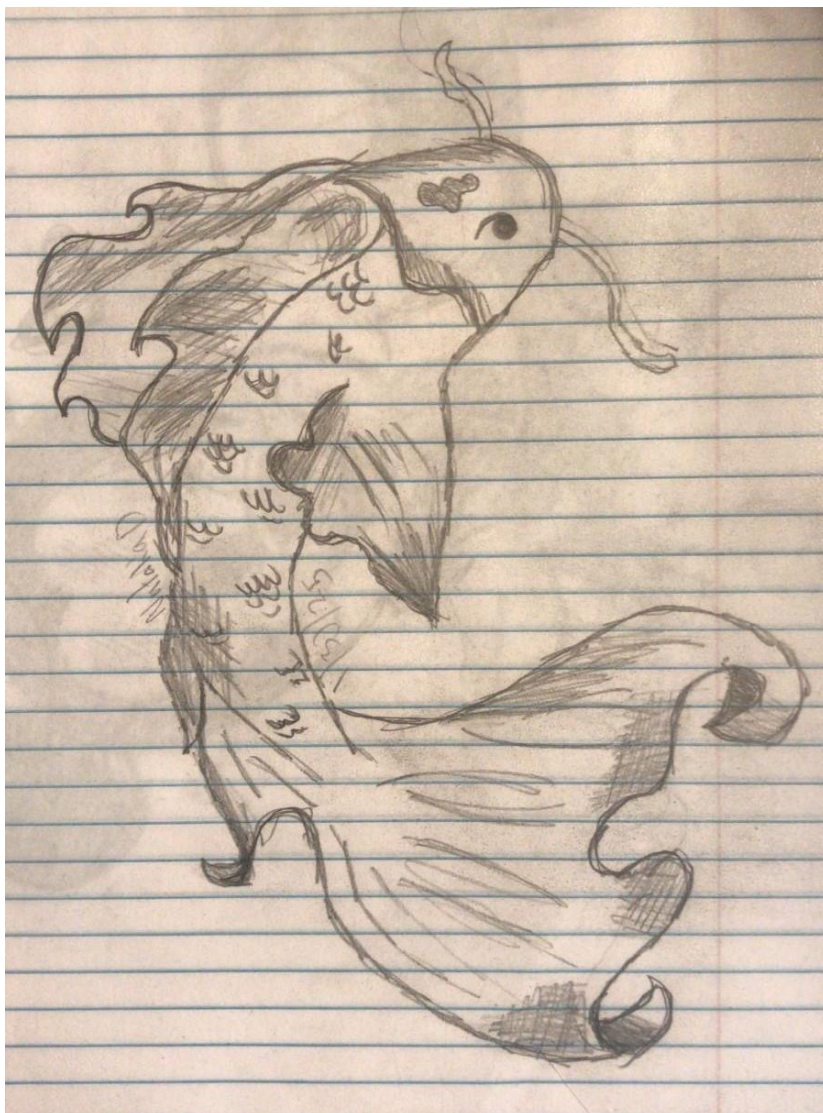
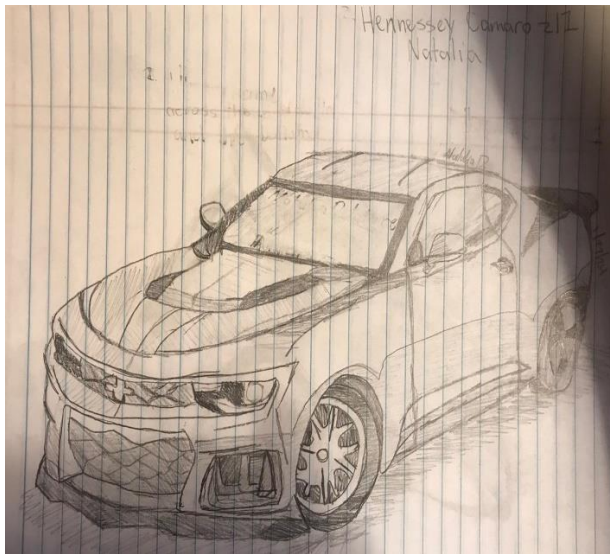
Perhaps as always, it's a matter of creating balance
Between when fire works and when fire doesn't work
Mixed blessing between gods and men

Are we divine enough to ask for help?
I pray we are.



Assortment of Drawings

By Natalia



**SOS**

By Rene

Hush sweet girl and wipe your tears,
Drown out the voices in your head.
The world is spinning faster and faster I think I might float away.
Nothing is anchoring me to keep me from drowning In my visceral pain.
The pain so deep its turned physical.
No control of my ship, the waves are thrashing me about.
Why can't anyone hear my SOS?
Am I already a ghost?

Tuck yourself in sweet girl before you lose your battle.
Fighting to see a point, no matter how hard I try it's never enough. SOS...

Ghost of me

By Rene

I looked at myself in the mirror today,
First time in a long time...
I saw her, and was shocked.
For I am no longer myself, but the ghost of the woman you used to love.
Eyes that used to shine and left dull and lifeless. A smile I no longer recognize and a laugh
that sounds hollow...
You didn't just break me, you used me to make yourself shine brighter.
You left me no choice but to walk away...
A choice that haunts me every day.
I can't look myself in the eye too long because then I start to cry. I mourn that person I was
before you, before I become addicted to your pain. We were perfect you see, a masochist
and a narcissist. The more you hurt me the more I gave, you said you loved me but you also
loved to watch me cry. Not just silent tears but deep sorrowful wails of pain.
You watched me bleed and then bandaged me up and held me tight and made me feel safe.
A cycle I'm so familiar with.
I know I'm safer without you, but I long to return.

**Letter to self**

By Rene

Take a breath, let it out.... I know it's been hard.

I know you don't know how much more you can take but we've made it this far. You can keep going just wipe those tears away.

Everytime someone reminds us the reason we feel like we have no one and nothing is because I have no one and nothing it's like my chest is being ripped open.

You don't need them. All you need is your girls. Focus...

When the walls are crashing in and the future is looking bleak, just know this is our rock bottom. Could be worse. You're used to being alone. You call yourself a lone wolf.

You do have people that love you, they depend on you. They're 8 and 10.

If you actually do it and listen to the thoughts and let them win, that just hurts them. You've endured this much pain already Rene, what's another lifetime? And that clench in my chest even as I type this, I don't know if I have another week let alone another lifetime.

Little Birdie

By Rene

Little Birdie

Feels like all I do is gasp for air and try and catch my breath...

The world is constantly spying and the walls are closing in.

I feel like I can't take another breathe

My chest is going to collapse.

How can I continue on when this is all I've ever known? A world of continuous agony with no reason or rhyme?

I know they say life is never fair but if this is what life is then I really don't know how to see a point? If another day is just going to feel like this and no one cares and no one is there, then why keep trying?

I'm always bouncing back and always getting knocked down 5x harder. My shell is wearing thin and I'm beginning to falter. I have nowhere to rest my weary wings that's safe. I'm going to collapse. Fly little birdy fly before we drown.



Green Paper

By Rene

As I'm sitting in my car this morning a bright green piece of paper caught my attention. I laugh quietly as I read it...

" 4/17/25 6:45 am...

On my way to work this morning and I noticed a semi truck barreling towards me as I pulled out of my drive way, I slowly crept out and thought here we go this is it. Noticed the driver was scared, dropped my head, waved sorry, and proceeded to work "

I was so tired and drained and defeated and no one was listening to my pleas as I begged for help. It's 2 months later and I'm proud of myself for making it out of that situation.

I'm thankful I found that reminder because every second of every day my heart aches for the monster that kept me in that dark place. A reminder to not reach out and stand strong. Why did I think that was love? Because I was raised by monsters that created that dark space for me to live in. Love is familiarity, so of course that's who I crave.

One day I might make it out, until then I just keep pleading for help. I sat on my grandma's couch yesterday and instead of supporting me, she was scolding me for not noticing I needed to leave sooner and how my mental issues aren't real and I need to grow up. Just one more person turning me away as I'm explaining how tired and drained I am.

Every day I wake up and battle the demons in my head that are trying to pull me away from this earth. Silent tears stream down my face more often than not. I recently told someone I thought I was better because I don't laugh when I cry anymore. After that phone call I thought about it and couldn't remember the last time I laughed actually to validate that statement.

I was recently at the ocean on vacation and my best friend's daughter told me she can't take her eyes off of me because she didn't trust me not to die in the ocean. Broke my heart like that sweet baby could read my mind as I was staring out at the waves pleading for the blackness to take me. I was not allowed near the waves without her, broke my heart that my 8 yr old best friend is more concerned about me than anyone else in this world.

I say I'm fine and put on a smile, but really I'm drowning and trying to escape. What way is up??



Paralyzed

By Rene

Your name floats across my name like a whisper haunting me, paralyzing me in my thoughts. Making my eyes Brim with tears. Memories and flashbacks play like a video on a screen in my mind as I stare off blankly lost in my own version of Hell.

A tear escapes down my cheek, a reminder of the vows we'll never share and a future I'll forever grieve. I was so close to becoming forever entangled in your web, you truly thought I'd never leave. I'll never forget the surprise in your voice when you realized I was gone. This time it was you who came home to an empty house, not I.

I know deep in my heart you never really loved me because you don't destroy the people that you love. You played with my mind like it was a toy and laughed about it while I crumpled on the floor. Made jokes as I called for help and tricked me into thinking your abuse was love.

You are moving on in life like nothing has changed and I never existed. I'm paralyzed and exhausted by anxiety and depression at the end of the day, away from everyone and every thing.

One day I hope I can wake up from your poison and come back to life and not be lost staring off, paralyzed as life passes me by.



Goodbye RedHair

By Reserves91

Here's a story about my last haircut. It is a reflection of growing older.

As I sat in the Barber's chair yesterday getting my haircut, I realized that my hair is no longer the bright red it used to be. Now, it is a dull gray with some red highlights. Oh, it sucks being 60ish.

I wasn't thrilled about being a redhead when I was young, but as I grew older, I came to like how it distinguished me as to who I was and who I am. When I married my wife, I looked forward to having girls with red hair, but it skipped a generation, so none of my girls had red hair; two blondes and a brunette. But this last haircut for me represented the end of a part of my identity, and the start of a new, exciting phase. This caused me to reflect on three times my red hair came into play. There have been many times that have been relevant, but these were the special ones that I remember specifically.

The first time was in the 3rd grade at an elementary school in Centerville, OH. The principal decided that day to dismiss classes based on their hair color. First off the list was blondes, then brunettes, then kids with black hair, and then... that "then" never came, she forgot all about redheads. For me, that was significant because that was the first time I realized just how uncommon having red hair was, and how it made me stand out in a crowd. That might have been the time when I really started to embrace my red hair. Later, I came to embrace it fully when my wife fell in love with me, and one of the reasons was my hair color.

Later in my early 30s, I was on an airplane flying to New Orleans on Friday the 13th..I was sitting next to a charming young black woman who was a joy to talk to. However, when we landed, she turned to me and said, "It's Friday the 13th, and you got red hair. I would suggest you stay in the hotel tonight and not go out. There are a lot of weirdos in NOLA and a lot of voodoo going on. " Ah... OK.

Finally, my last experience was at Seattle airport two months ago. I was boarding a flight with my wife to return to Redding. I had to return the rental car, so my wife went ahead and got on the plane. I showed up towards the end of the boarding process and walked up to the counter to swipe my boarding pass and get on the plane. The attendant kindly said Oh, Mr. Tippett, we're glad you made it. We weren't sure it was you because your wife said you had red hair. That was when I realized my red hair was over.

I hope to keep some of those red highlights so that maybe I can play Santa Claus around Christmas. I don't know; we'll see, but reflecting on my lifetime, I'm glad I was a redhead.



Torn Apart

By SaraRose



I didn't know what I wanted to do with this exactly, but I do know how it made me feel in the end. In my eyes the Piñata represents a person. Someone who's been beaten and used for someone else's entertainment. Being left vulnerable and open for those to take what they desire. May it be that it's sweet-as candy- heart, or cotton candy lungs. The excitement of tearing through the candy Lei intestines taking all that's sweet for yourself.



Tiger's Eye

By Scott Harper

Upon being told the topic for this month, my very first thought was— “I’ve lost my marbles; therefore, I am a patient of Dr. Samran.”

But I’m guessing that’s probably not what’s wanted.

Marbles is a game that I haven’t played in several decades. I think I still have my marble collection packed away somewhere; I don’t think that I’ve actually lost them! bWhen I did play, I was never too terribly good great at it. I was a descent player—fair, or maybe slightly better. I had a big Tiger’s Eye marble that I typically used to shoot with. I did better with it than with any other shooter.

Because of that, I rarely used my special Tiger’s Eye marble during playing “for keeps” games. those were the “hardcore” marbles games in which any of your opponent’s marbles that you knocked out of the circle—be it made of drawn chalk or laid out in string—you got to keep. I was very hesitant to risk my Tiger’s Eye shooter for those games.

These days, I don’t hear about marbles anymore. I very rarely see them anywhere in stores. I don’t remember the last time I saw anyone playing a game of marbles. Does anyone even play anymore? Has the game gone extinct, at least in the USA?

If so, that’s tragic.

Marbles were one of the first—if not the first—thing that I collected as a child. I played many games of marbles as a child before arcade video games and household video game systems came around—never mind cell phones and their endless supply of game apps.

Where have the marbles gone?

**Pinata**

By Sharon

I'm finding this last couple of months hectic. Is it because everyone is in a hurry for summer to be here.

People are rude and pushy and it's just had me in a funk.

I feel like I am being batted around, like a piñata.

What's the difference in being sad and being depressed?

I don't feel like being out with people.

They're crazy and lost their minds.

Does that make me depressed?

I don't think so.

It does make me sad that I have had to cut people off and out of my life

For my own well-being.

But I don't think it's a bad thing for self-care.

I never really remember having a piñata growing up.

We had Pin the tail on the donkey.

I try really hard to be the bigger person and be better than the day before.

Maybe there is something to bashing a piñata

Till it falls to the ground.

Still working on myself not being selfish.

Marbles

By Sharon

Those beautiful shining little glass balls.

They came in all different colors. Different shades and hues.

We traded them. Rolled them, tried to bounce them.

Cracked them and coveted them.

Some we sold and kept.

The tiger eyed ones I think were sought after and treasured.

Now adays I don't see many.

I am sure there is a couple of generations

That don't have a clue

About what a marble is or how they were used in our childhood.

As we have gotten older, those all so coveted items

Have been missed place lost or stolen.

Along with the innocence of our childhood memories.

With every lost marble is a lost memory.

Henceforth the old saying you have lost your marbles

**ING**

By Shoooooot

Shooting stars shooting stars shooting
Stars shooting— what are they shooting
Really are they shooting stars or are they dancing
To the infinite dance of the universe, pulled to a great
Barn dance where banjos are twanging and floors are vibrating
With dancing legs and feet kicking up sparks like
Shooting stars where joy and freedom are the partners
Shooting all that is dour and melancholy into stars
That shoot ings throughout the raucous sky
Propelled into the giggling arms of beings who
Create the delight of everything is all rightness
Make a wish upon a star make a trillion wishes
Upon a trillion shooting stars that are soul seeds
Falling upon us all shooting upon us all shooting
All that would suffocate the divine will to live and be
And celebrating the miraculous that appears
Every second in the ING of this lifetime and throughout
Eternity shooting stars.
SHOOOOOOTING STARS! SHOOTING!



Beautiful Mountain

By SKS





Pinata for my nephew

By Soaring Eagle



I love music for many reasons, and I found out My Autistic nephew loves music as well so for his birthday I wanted to do something special for him. I made him a guitar pinata !



Skyscape

By Sri





Fireworks, A long-term relationship

By Sri

I absolutely love fireworks. They are up there with lightning storms and airshows in the fun and excitement department for me. Anytime I am near any of these sky events I begin filming. I even chase storms.

The first firework show I remember seeing as a child (I was 12 or 13) was the one the Hare Krishnas did at the Palace of Gold in West Virginia. It was the summer of 1982 I believe. I didn't live there. I had travelled with my adoptive parents and a friend from upstate New York for the Prabhupada festival. The West Virginia Hare Krsna farm, called New Vrindavana, had a boarding school and some school-mates and friends who I knew from when we were younger were huddled with me, where we sat on the steps of the palace. I was nervous but they all made me feel more excited than nervous. The show ended with a huge metal frame with an image of Srila Prabhupada (the founder of the Hare Krsna movement in the West) in the center of it and it lit up with different colored fire (static firework display). It was cool. A fun experience.

The next time I was around fireworks was on the Hare Krishna farm in Port Royal Pennsylvania, at age 14. We had sparklers and those popits that you throw. I decided to be clever, and when everyone was eating food in the marble temple room, I threw some popits on the floor as I got up to leave after I was done eating. It was on a dare that I had done that. It was so loud. I got in trouble for it; I think I was banned from the barn(my favorite place), for a while. But I'm glad I did it.

When I moved to Australia, when I was 16, I got to watch the big fireworks show in Melbourne. They were put on near a river that ran through the city, on New Year's Eve I believe.

The next fireworks display I saw was back in US in 1989 for July 4th. I had been reunited, upon my return from Australia, with friends I had only known in the Hare Krishna school and last place I had seen them was in New York. Most of the ones in LA I had been in the school with in Seattle when we were little kids. All of us were now in our early 20's and none of the friends in LA were following the strict rules we had been raised with. In Australia I had begun dating when I was 19 but never anyone from my childhood in the Hare Krsna Movement. It was a pretty mind-warping time for me. I was grieving having had to leave Australia and my friend, who had been murdered while I was living with him there. I did not want to leave Australia, but because of the murder, and my overstayed visa, I had to return to the US. It was a major culture shock, because hanging around people who were raised in the strict religion, and doing so in California, was way different than hanging with the down-to-Earth, way more loving to me people of Australia. It was a heartbreaking and traumatic transition.

But the best looking guy, who I had known as a child, had grown up into a gorgeous guy who I was immediately warned about. He immediately pursued me. My first Hare Krsna boyfriend. My friend who had warned me about him also loaned me a gorgeous dress and boots for the 4th of July fireworks. They were held at the Culver City public high school so it was not a Hare



Krsna event, although a lot of them attended it. I felt like such a rebel being held by this beautiful man as he stood behind me (I know we both looked gorgeous and newly in love), with adult Hare Krsnas, including my adoptive parents, looking on. It gave me a thrill, a high. And the fireworks show culminated in the same type of metal frame that had been shown at the palace in West Virginia with lit up tubes showing a static display of the U.S. flag. The whole show was synchronized with music. Oh if I could go back in time.

A few years later I watched the fireworks show in the Palisades. I was a mom of one young child by then. Beautiful vantage point there.

Since living up here in Siskiyou County, I moved here in 2001, I have attended the July 4th fireworks show at Lake Siskiyou in Mount Shasta almost every year. I would bring babies and young children there, along with a cooler of drinks and food, swimming gear and toys. When they were younger, my kids and I and my partner would make a whole fun day of it. And then we'd all sit close together, as it got summer night chilly out, and get ready to watch the show being lit on a beach across Lake Siskiyou. I would be prepared to block the ears of whichever baby I had and was holding at the time. I have always been deeply moved watching the show, with the explosions reverberating all around the mountains and the gorgeous lights reflecting on the water of the lake. There is nothing like it.

Then there is the grand finale and then the darkness we're all plunged into as the fireworks end, the packing up of the day's supplies, the trek in the dark, along with so many others up to our vehicles. Then the long sit in traffic.

Whether we decided to forego the big show and long wait, or even if we did go to it, we quickly decided to start doing our own show. Every year we'd excitedly await the opening of the fireworks booths in Weed, Mount Shasta and Yreka. It was so fun to pick out good ones, always Picolo Petes because they're so awesome when they're modified and taped together. We would light them on the street in front of our house, over by the mill, or in the alley. There was one family one street over who always did the illegal mortars and Roman candles. But oh so fun.

One year we drove over to a friend's place on South Weed Blvd. She had purchased some mortars. We lit them on the cement street as we sat on the front lawn in front of their building. Even the neighbors across the street enjoyed them. However as I sat cross legged on the grass with one of my young children in my lap, and awaited the next mortar something different happened. After this was lit instead of it shooting out and up there was the loudest bang and it exploded out horizontally, out the bottom. I could actually see the shimmering sound waves and watched in a daze as the pieces of blown up debris came flying at me, just missing me and my child. The mortar had flipped as it dropped into the tube, we all surmised. The neighbors, now turned hoity-toity all of a sudden, angrily said to STOP! My friend apologized. We laughed in shock and excitement and that was the end of the show. It had been fun, though.

Sadly we have not done that in a few years since they banned the booths in Siskiyou County.



This year I wasn't going to go to the lake for the fireworks. I was feeling a bit unsure of myself and my car's ability to make the trip; just kind of in the dumps and feeling insecure since neurosurgery. I told my youngest child to contact her dad and see if he could take her. Her dad threw a verbal tantrum about having to make a whole day of it, finding a spot for the truck so everyone can lay in the back of it during the show; what he saw as an all day commitment. Years ago when we were together when the kids were young he would always make a big day of it and I'm glad he did because it will always be a good thing in their memories. But he told us on July 4 that it always takes a lot out of him. So I figured it was on me to make my youngest child and her friend happy this year. I drove her and her friend to a cool spot in the creek that runs parallel to W.A. Barr Road. They didn't want to go to the big busy beach. A watering hole has been built using strategically placed logs and river rocks at this spot. It was refreshing and nice.

We then returned home where I committed to going to the firework show by the lake I had never actually driven there on my own for this event. We got close to the lake about an hour and a half for dark. While there were loads of cars parked everywhere there was no apparent shortage of parking spots along WA Barr Road. We parked just past where my daughter works her summer job and walked along the path towards the lake. It was an adventure walking past people who seem to have been camped out there all day. We crossed the bridge over the dam and walked down to the other side of it. Only a couple families were set up there and we had a perfect spot right on the lakefront. I was concerned that my filming view would be obstructed by an outcropping of land as I wasn't sure where the pyrotechnic beach was. My daughter said not to worry.

We watched the lit up boats on the water and their lights made long red white and blue streaks on the water. Someone played some rap music on one of the boats.

The show started after it got completely dark and it turned out that we were directly across the lake from where the pyrotechnics were lighting the fireworks.

The fireworks began. I began filming. In the video you can see 2 geese go flying by and my daughter expresses her sadness at that, audibly.

It was an amazing show. We enjoyed the walk back because the more time we spent walking the less time we would have to spend in bumper to bumper traffic, if we even would have to experience any of it at all. By the time we got to the car most of that type of traffic was gone. We drove home at a steady perfect pace.

I felt so glad that even though I had felt the apprehension and fears, I was able to overcome that and make my daughter and her friend and myself happy. My car performed like a champ as well. The next day I drove my daughter to work and drove down to see where we had been sitting during the fireworks show and when I took a photo of where it was I was pleasantly surprised.

Marvelling at fireworks makes me happy.



See a teddy bear? 🧸 where we sat during the fireworks. ✨







What's in your Pinata?

By Sri

India: clay pots filled with yogurt, curd, butter, milk, water. Hung very high. The occasion is called Dahi Handi, Gopal Kala or Utslotsavam. To celebrate Krsna's pastime as the butter thief (Makhan Chor) when He was a small child, on the day of His birth Sri Janmastami, annually, a pot is hung very high on a string, and while singing and dancing takes place a human pyramid is formed. Naturally the lightest person ends up being a child at the top of the pyramid and he strikes the pot with the stick.

There are differences in the details of this celebration according to different districts in India. This could be the oldest tradition as Krsna was on the planet over 5000 years ago.





According to sources on the internet, China was the first place to have a piñata type ceremony and tradition wherein paper, animal-shaped (oxen, buffaloes, etc.,) were filled with seeds and struck open with sticks in order to bring good luck, health and bountiful harvests.

This tradition was discovered by the Italian explorer Marco Polo who then brought it over to Italy. Piñata says to come from the Italian word “pignatta” which means “fragile pot.” These were used during Lent. From there the piñata tradition went to Spain whose missionaries brought them over to America’s Spanish colonies and into Mexico, in the 16th century. They did this to help lure people to Catholicism.



The traditional 16th century Mexican piñata had seven points which stood for the seven deadly sins: greed, gluttony, pride, wrath, envy, lust and sloth which could be beaten away from reach. The fruits and sweets that spilled out represented earthly temptations. Players wearing blindfolds represented faith overcoming all sin.





The Mayans (1800BC to 900AD) as well as the Aztecs(1325 to 1521) (I'm not going to harp too much on the exact years as there are way too many conflicts on online sources but it was a long time ago, even before Chinese civilization), had a tradition of smashing treasure-filled, feather-decorated clay pots until the contents fell out at the feet of an idol of their worshipable god of war Huitzilopochtli. The Mayans turned it into more of a sport by blindfolding the person striking the pots.





Even Japan has a version of piñata, smashing of treasure-filled outer container to get them to spill out to the outside. It is called Suikawari and uses watermelons, usually on a cloth or board on the beach. The person with the stick(bokken) is blindfolded. There are exact rules for this game. Once the watermelon is broken apart, its pieces are distributed amongst the participants.

Piñatas are mostly associated with Mexican traditions now and even in my family we have enjoyed making our own for birthday parties. They are a symbol of fun, festivity and yumminess.

Here is one that won an award in Mexico City in 2013.



And last but not least is a story about what was at the time, November 2008, the biggest piñata in the Guinness Book of World Records. It was built by Carnival Cruises. It was 61 feet(6 stories) tall, 60 feet long and 23 feet wide. It was filled with 8000 pounds of candy. On the day it was to be broken so many spectators showed up that the police stopped the event. It was broken at a later date and the candy was distributed to various charities.



Piñatas are hecka fun. Get one, make one and have a good time with loved ones.



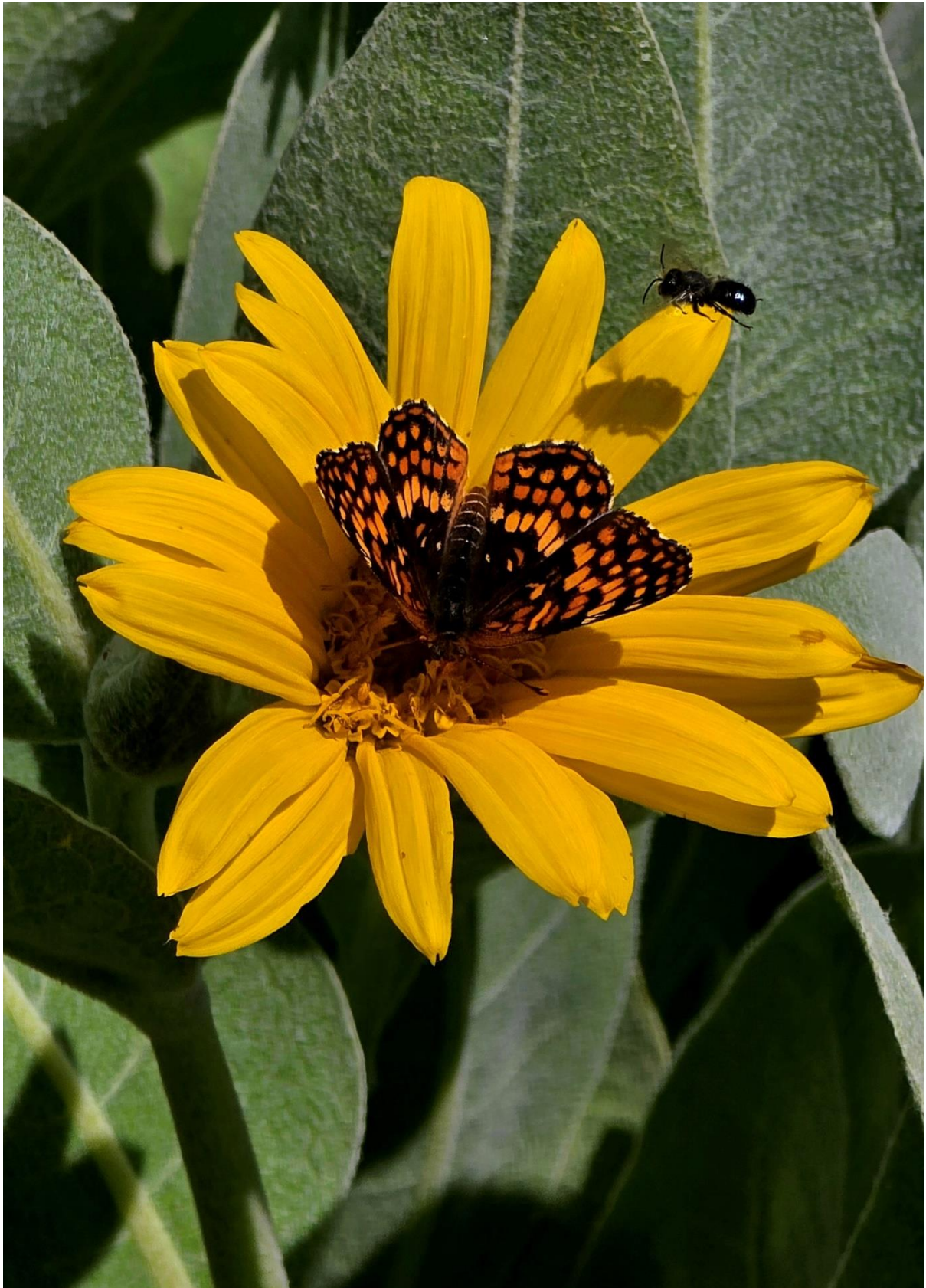
Woodland Fairy Themed Party
By Stitches In The Wind



Cake is lavender vanilla with blackberry filling.



Beauty and the Bees
By Sunflower530





Dear Me ...

By Tawnya

I'm sorry you don't know.
I'm sorry about internal betrayal.
I'm sorry you're bruised and
Broken from hanging
Onto the ragged
Edge of reality

Please keep being brave;
It's really
All you
Have left.

I love you.

P.S. Remember you're fire <3



Shooting Stars

By Yahir G, Dorris Elementary



**Manna Pinata**

By Welcome Sight

Who would ever put those two words together,
Yet whenever I hear the word pinata,
I immediately think of gifts from heaven
Which of course manna was, according to the Bible,
The wafer like food that fell from the sky for
40 years (40 years!) as the Israelites wandered
Through the desert, relying only upon God's grace
To survive, which is a somber, life and death idea

What could be farther away from a pinata
Than manna? And yet
I remember the first time I walked into a craft
Store, a hundred pinatas dangled from the ceiling,
Their festive colors and bodies lifted my spirit.
Although they were empty of goodies,
They were full of the promise of joy and delight

And wouldn't the Israelites have been filled
With hope and delight as their sustenance fell
Upon them

I always thought my friend Juanita was blessed
Since her family celebrated her birthdays
With a pinata party,
Each year another pinata added until she turned
thirteen. I recalled our frenzy as we'd enter her house
With the ceiling alive with candy and treat-filled pinatas

Of course, we whacked those pinatas, demanding
They release their bounty. Part of the celebration
Was being the one who successfully broke the body
Open and we were all showered with sweets and treats.

No whacking the sky while wondering the desert,
Demanding to be fed, perhaps praying, even
For something other than manna....
I bet a pinata would have been a welcome sight



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