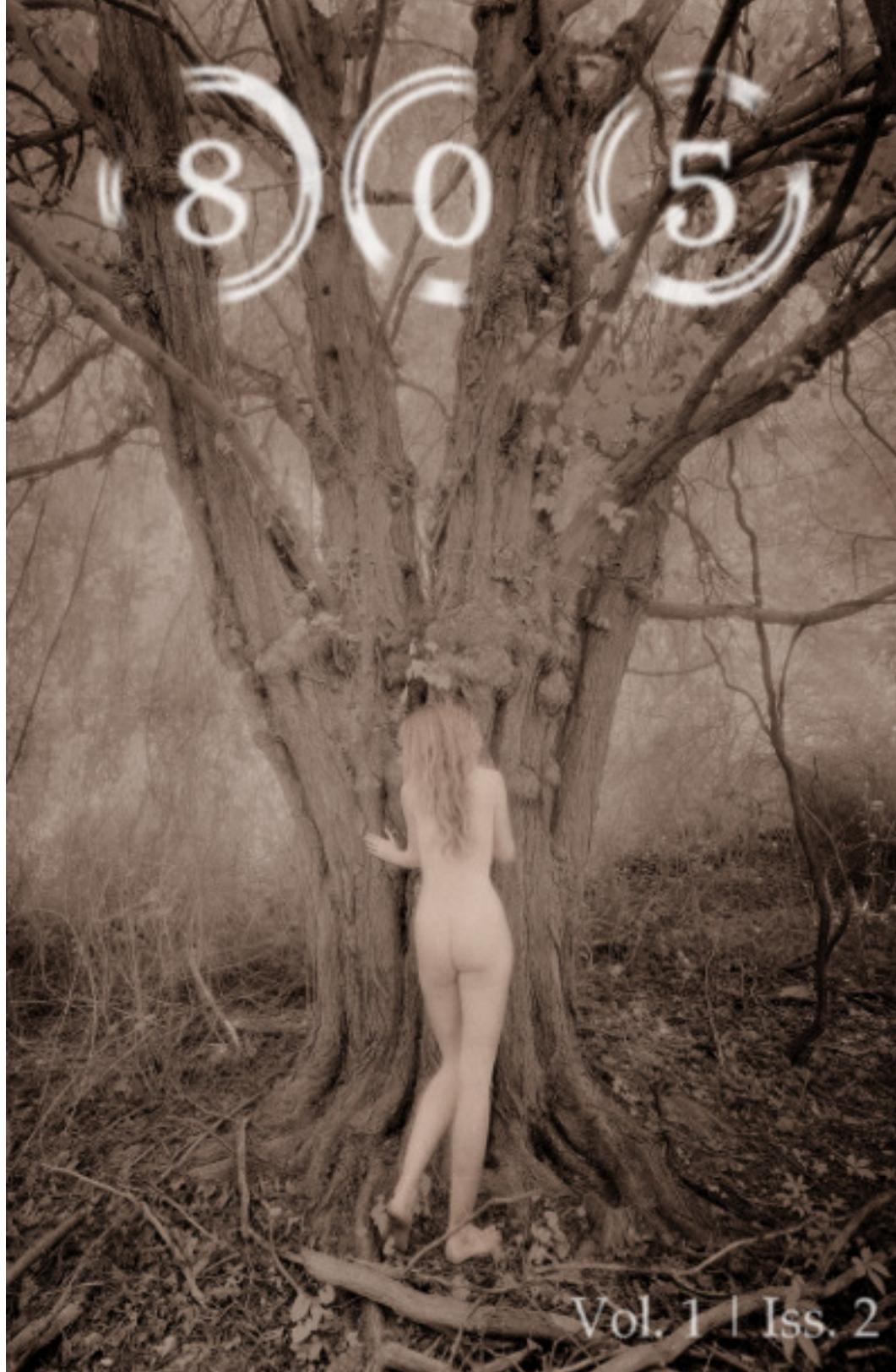


1805



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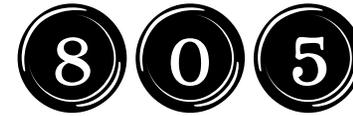
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800 Literature & rhetoric  
805 Serial publications

We're looking for prose, poetry, and art that is unexpected, striking, and moving. We accept submissions from residents of Manatee County and the rest of the universe. Submissions are accepted year-round, and there is no fee to submit. Please submit works not published elsewhere. Submissions can be made at [www.805lit.org/submissions.html](http://www.805lit.org/submissions.html).

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## Lit + Art Journal

Volume 1, Issue 2

2015

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## Lit + Art Journal

Volume 1, Issue 2

2015

### From the Editor

Our eagerly anticipated second issue of *805* is now available for you to enjoy. After our first issue was published, we were flooded with entries. Submitters from around the globe sent us their fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and art, and we relished reading and viewing every piece. We received submissions from established artists who have been published many times over as well as aspiring writers who dream of seeing their words in print. We carefully combed through the submissions and assembled an eclectic mix of works. We are thankful to all our submitters, contributors, and readers for spreading the word about *805*.

Stephanie Katz  
Editor-In-Chief

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Daphne  
Gary Bartoloni

# Run

**Kathryn Trattner**

In September a yellow bus collects her. White tennis shoes and jean shorts, pink nails bitten to the quick. This morning she forgot to brush her teeth, waking late and throwing on clothes; the hair on her legs soft and blonde. Her mother says she isn't old enough to shave, twelve is too young. But at school a certain set of girls giggle, sly words pricking.

In February she walks to the bus stop with the straps of the backpack on both shoulders, a book held in crossed arms, pressed to her chest. On her street, almost to the corner, she'll turn and plod to a spot where she'll wait. But before the corner, before the bus, before the girls with microscope eyes, there is a house with a long, narrow front porch. Not even a porch but an opening like a vein, glass storm door winking like a portal. The porch light is never on and at the edge, tilted forward, a tall man in a dark suit stands. Every day he watches, hands in pockets, as she hurries by with her head down.

In May he isn't there on the walk home. She sweats in a light jacket, the hundred degree heat crawling into the places where elastic touches skin.

In June her birthday arrives in a box with a two-piece bathing suit. It's plucked at as she comes out of the pool, fabric clinging, lifeguards watchful behind sunglasses. And still, her fuzzy legs and her mother insisting she's a child.

In a fresh August, with buses and notebooks in the future, she looks down the street to see police cars. Men in uniform and men in suits come and go. They carry things from the house,

mouths pressed tight like the perforated pages in notebooks. Their cars parked at odd angles, blocking the street. She watches a computer exit, sliding across the front porch, carried like a infant by a uniformed man.

Relief is like a brand new pink razor, like release from a pop quiz, like her best friend saying a name other than her secret crush. She runs past the house, around men who do not bother to stare, running to the park and a favorite blue swing.

She kicks, propelling herself to the highest point, stealing herself for the jump, for the leap.

She lets go.





**Colleen in the Sunflower Garden**  
John Lichtenstein

# Seashell

Jamie Lynn Heller

When the day surges,  
tugs at my ankles,  
laps at my thighs,

I escape to fields  
of cracked clay,  
sun bleached bones,

and hide from the shelter  
of a passing cloud.

Even in this place I carry  
the sound of the sea  
with each breath.

The roar of its waves  
caught in a seashell  
lodged in my throat.

# Savage Beast

Carolyn Stephens

I am on yet another road trip, alone in the car, fueled by loud, loud music. A smooth road unfurls before me. On the passenger seat, riding shotgun, is a stack of homemade burned compact discs, with precious Sharpied labels in Jeff's familiar handwriting. Among our marital worldly goods that he left behind like a shed skin: hundreds, thousands of slim jewel cases. Music powers my frequent solitary road trips and jumpstarts many, many memories.

The last year of his life, Jeff was mostly too weak to work. But he did have his projects, his myriad creative diversions. I suppose art, photography, music kept his mind off all he would soon be giving up, when he had to leave us, as he knew he must. He requested music from the library, which I dutifully delivered, and he spent a LOT of time loading many genres onto his iPod – an early model – this was 2008. (Afterwards, I gave the treasured iPod to his best friend, who cherishes it for the friendship AND the music contained therein – old blues, folk, rare jazz. Coltrane, Zappa, Hendrix, Dead. I love to think of Matt in his studio, working along to music selected by Jeff.)

Back in the day, Jeff's friends perfected a gleeful, teasing Flanagan imitation which consisted of shaking their heads sadly, throwing up open hands in mock despair, and declaring "WHY do you need Zeppelin when you've already got Hendrix?" He used to

make fun of me for indulging in my fondness for Led Zeppelin; tease me about their ringleted, long haired blonde skinny girl singer with the high, high voice. Uh, that would be Robert Plant. Yet among the handwritten labels is plenty of old Zeppelin. All for me. Thank you, baby.

I recently talked to a fellow widow in the grocery store. Her life is also good, as good as it can be. We talked about our work, our diversions, our children, our dead husbands. As one does. Wearing a music festival t-shirt, discussing going to hear music together some night, she fingered a guitar amulet around her neck, a symbol of her own husband lost to us. We talked about how music breaks us, then builds us back up.

Today I'm making a long and roundabout trek from Hampton Beach, New Hampshire to our family camp in Sullivan, Maine, by way of Rockland. My finger on the map traces a familiar route. On the actual road, my body remembers each curve, each bump. Part of the route is the back way that Jeff designed to avoid the toll and construction at the roundabout in Augusta. I haven't been on this road since I was a passenger, my husband at the wheel. Once again, my body decides all by itself to suddenly veer from happy sunglassed woman hands on wheel, to widow leaking fluids yet again, remembering. Something about the wide-open landscape of the highway undoes me. The number of times I've cried alone in the car is uncountable.

The same music that soothes me can in the next moment eviscerate. I suppose it will be ever thus. A few notes, like Proust's wafted scent of madeleine, can open up a flood of memory. My mind drifts back to the previous night. The evening could hardly be more idyllic. A perfect summer sunset. The venue: a riverside park flanked by luscious flower gardens. A favorite singer songwriter is nearly close enough to touch, working his magic. I am in a happy bouncing crowd by the stage, dancing, as my guitar hero Richard Thompson has suggested we might.

A familiar opening guitar riff. Along with the crowd, I cheer. But suddenly, surprisingly, I am crying. Or, my body is, without my knowledge or forethought. Damn tears! A few notes into the song, my body responds on its own: both hands clasp to my mouth, as if I am witnessing a current tragedy, not body-living

an old one. My body understands before I do what my ears hear, brain deciphers.

The song reveals itself: “Tear Stained Letter.” The phrase was Jeff’s wry shorthand to describe what we wrote to explain our circumstances to the college financial aid offices. He was diagnosed with terminal cancer near the end of our daughter’s junior year in high school, when the college search begins in earnest. The recession had just started, dropping the bottom out from so many. We weren’t alone in that. But for many years, Jeff and I ran a business together, which we could not sustain while he was “in treatment”. No income. Assets quickly diminished. No happy ending here. Hence: The Tear Stained Letter.

This night I am happy; I am dancing. I am here with my up-for-anything self-described “Peter Pan” beau, with whom I share many fun adventures. He’s seen this many times. He asks me what’s wrong. But I can’t. It’s too complicated to explain. I shake my head, wave away an explanation. This too shall pass.

My life is good. My child is happy. That’s all that matters. But the memory of what happened to our family, this wrenching loss, lives on inside me and always will. Apparently. My job now, the only way I can be happy, is to engage, revel in the world of the living, the world of sunsets and picnics and connections where I find them. Although all wrapped up in sadness, my love for Jeff, his love for me, must propel me forward. Not hold me back.

This will pass. It always does. Life is short and summer is sweet. It is our duty to make the most of it for those who cannot. Behind my sunglasses, I continue driving, heading up to camp, the sunny road, blue sky, impossibly white puffy summer clouds reminding me that life is for the living. Damn it all.



**The Countess**  
Aya Atrox

# Water

**William Doreski**

A pure orange topknot of fire  
caps a block of Second Avenue.  
Gas-fed disaster shaped to fit  
the urban imagination. Cries  
of spectators drift for miles,  
occluding skyscraper views,  
souring the hot-dog vendors,  
and stifling art in museums.

You should be here reflecting  
the flames with your elegance  
and absorbing heat for the future.  
The clash of chrome steel nozzles  
and rubber slicker keeps firefighters  
excited by their profession.  
The grunt of diesels pumping  
water into bottomless rage  
expresses a sense of distance  
we otherwise would relegate  
to organs too vague to plumb.

# Music

You enjoy these visceral moments,  
but the people hurt in the blast,  
their blood-mucked faces brimming,  
stare into their losses with sighs  
that would deflate you with regrets.  
The stink of fire will ghost through  
most of Manhattan by dusk.  
All the way to Washington Heights  
people will ask what's burning,  
what has burned. With a clash  
of brick and shattered beams a façade  
crumples into the avenue.

From your office you can see  
that spring has arrived with flowers  
in Washington Square; but here,  
a few blocks east, tangles of hose  
suggest a great uprooting,  
while the aerial streams compose,  
against smoke plume and sky,  
water music more graceful  
than Handel's, more purposeful  
than anything money can buy.



**Golden Arches**  
Allen Forrest



**Down and Out**  
Allen Forrest

# Snow Drifts

Vivian McNerny

I hit my high beams. The front porch lights up like a stage. The cop squints my way. Aunt Martha waves. She's wearing a puffy down vest over pajamas tucked into winter boots two sizes too big. I kill the engine and roll into her driveway. The snow makes a muffled crunch beneath the tires. More snow is falling. The path is disappearing into white. Earlier in the week, I shoveled a strip from the house to the driveway down to the mailbox so Aunt Martha wouldn't fall and break a bone. Now that seems the least of her dangers.

"Art's gone," she says simply.

I nod, introduce myself to the cop. "Her nephew?" he says like that's so hard to believe. I must look like a dick to him in my good coat and loafers. We shake. I try to give a firm grip. He's wearing gloves thick as catchers' mitts. "I came as soon as she called," I say. I keep my distance from the cop and hold my breath when I talk so he won't smell the Jameson's. Not that I'm faded, far from it. I only had two shots but I don't want to give the wrong impression. The cop goes over the sequence of events. I wrap my arm around Aunt Martha's shoulders. She feels so small. When I was a kid I thought of her as sturdy. She was big boned and broad faced. Dad used to describe his sister-in-law as "strong stock." I feel her shivering bones like sticks beneath her marshmallow coat.

"Why don't we go inside," I say. The cop waits in the front hall. Aunt Martha lets me steer her back to the den. I sit her down in the La-Z-Boy and turn on the television. She stares at the screen. It might as well be a stain on the wall. I don't even try to separate her from her down vest. It's almost one in the morning and the corners in the old house hold the chill. I turn up the thermostat and find the cop looking at framed photos on the hall table.

"That you?" he asks pointing to a picture that is obviously not me. As a detective, he sucks.

"Would you like a cup of coffee?"

Bryce the cop says yes. He pulls out a kitchen chair while I dig through Aunt Martha's cupboards looking for a coffee maker. I find one of those old aluminum percolators. I struggle to put the pieces together. The hole in the metal basket seems too big because when I put it on the stem thing it slides slowly down to the bottom of the pot. I think it's missing a little widget of some sort so paw through a junk drawer looking for something but I really have no idea what.

"Instant's fine," Bryce says.

I find a jar of Folger's crystals and put two mugs in the microwave.

"Does she have anyone else?"

"Just me," I say. "My cousin -- her oldest -- died in the first Iraq. She has a daughter my age; ran away when we were teens. She shows up every once in a while looking for drug money. It's sad. She's pretty messed up."

"Oh, yeah. I've seen that type of thing before," Bryce says slapping his big cop gloves on the kitchen table. "Seen a lot of things."

He's a little older than me, maybe mid 40s with a scraggly blond stash going gray. On the front of his jacket is an Anoka Police Department patch shaped like the state of Minnesota. If I saw him in the right bar in Minneapolis, I might hit on him. But the guy doesn't have a clue. I doubt he's seen things. I doubt he's seen much of anything at all.

"You take sugar?"

Bryce takes sugar. I find Aunt Martha's sugar bowl with the chipped lid. I open two more cabinets looking for the matching

creamer before I realize Bryce is watching me with a semi-smirk on his face, and I think I must look like a fussy budget tool. I grab an open carton of half-and-half from the fridge and put it down in the middle of the table. We're just two men having a casual cup of coffee, two guys shooting the breeze.

The microwave dings. I hand him the mug with four H's on the front. It's got to be from when my cousins and I were kids and raised prize-winning chickens. I take the mug with yellow smiley faces. The inside is stained. Aunt Martha doesn't own a dishwasher. No clothes dryer either since hers broke last summer. She refused to let me buy a replacement. She hung the wash on a clothesline in the backyard every week until temperatures dropped. One Saturday in early November, I came to find the sheets and towels board stiff. I had to crack and fold them in half just to get them in the house to thaw. I set them up like giant place cards near the oil furnace in the basement. A few hours later they'd warmed up to collapse in piles on the floor. After that I took home a load of Aunt Martha's dirty laundry each week, returning the next with it clean and folded. I never hid what I was doing but she always acted surprised and delighted to find clean linens her closet. The microwave is one of her rare concessions to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Uncle Art loved to brag about the price he got.

Bryce doctors his coffee in silence; a bit of cream, two spoons of sugar, stir, taste, more cream. He wraps his right hand around the entire coffee cup. I try the same in manly imitation. It's damn hot.

"She shouldn't be alone," the cop says.

"I drive up from Minneapolis every other weekend. I shop for her, do things around the house, mostly cleaning," I say. "She won't let me hire help."

One summer I went through everything in the attic with Aunt Martha and Uncle Art. We spread it out on the front yard for a sale. Ski boots from the '70s, bent aluminum pie pans, a grungy pink bath mat, a pair of orange and brown ceramic lamps that were hideous when new and age had done nothing to improve. "Fifty years of accumulated crap," said Uncle Art. They both laughed. They stood side by side on the lawn for a few minutes in silence, surveying the stuff of their lives. I think they were disappointed to

realize it amounted to so little.

"Old people can be stubborn," Bryce says

"Young people, too."

Bryce nods, raises his coffee cup in agreement.

"Still," he says, "she needs someone here and it sounds like you aren't around all that much, and even when you are . . ."

"I just dropped by Hal's tonight for a minute," I say. "I was only gone an hour. Hour and a half, max."

"Hal's Tavern?"

He makes the place sound smoky and possibly evil instead of a florescent-lit former grange hall where a bunch of guys in snowmobile suits drink Hamm's. After a day with Aunt Martha I needed a stiff drink, and she didn't believe in alcohol. It wasn't a religious thing. She just never saw the point. She and Art drank a bottle of cheap champagne on their wedding night. Art told the story at their anniversary party. "She falls asleep," he said. "And he blames the champagne," she said. Everyone laughed. I think theirs was a genuinely happy marriage.

"Yeah, Hell's Tavern," I say, and the cop seems to like that I know the locals' nickname for the place. "I ran into a friend and had to buy a round."

I think the cop knows I'm telling the truth but not the whole truth but I leave it there. Bryce drinks his coffee slowly, smoothing his moustache between each sip.

"They're saying a blizzard tomorrow, maybe Tuesday," he says.

"I heard that," I say.

Snow settles in the corners of the kitchen windows forming white frames around the black night. We both look out like there's something to see. Aunt Martha hung a bird feeder in the window above the kitchen sink. She likes to watch the chickadees while she's washing dishes. Uncle Art always said it was unnatural to feed wild animals. Once he complained to me in front of his wife, "She's messing with evolution and survival of the fittest." Aunt Martha said she didn't believe in Darwin. Uncle Art said he didn't believe in God. "Maybe that's because you aren't evolved," Aunt Martha said. They both laughed. That's how it was with them.

"I pulled the squad car to the edge of the field," Bryce says.

“I blasted my brights. I figured if he wandered off like she says, I’d of seen him, or least some trace of him. Alls I saw was a four-point buck spooked still as a statue looking straight my way.

“If I weren’t the law,” he says his moustache curling up in a smile, “we’d be eating venison burgers right about now.”

I laugh way too hard. He waits for me to stop.

“No footprints. Nothing. So I start deducing maybe your Uncle Art didn’t just wander off.”

I nod.

“I’m a regular Sherlock Holmes,” he says.

It takes me a second to realize he’s making a self-deprecating joke. I force a smile. He means to say that any idiot would figure out Uncle Art did not go gently into the night. I take a sip from my coffee. It tastes like dirty cardboard.

“She’s called before, you know,” he says. “Reported a prowler. An officer races over here, cherry flashing, and your aunt acts surprised, tells him there’s been some mistake, he’s got the wrong address. He calls dispatch. It’s the right place alright.”

“I didn’t know that.”

“It’s the truth.”

I nod. I sure as hell don’t want to give the impression I doubt his word. The snow on my shoes is melting through the leather; Cole Haan tassel loafers for chrissake. I must look like one of those urban assholes that consider winter an inconvenience to endure between the Beemer and the office. He must think I’m a tool. One time when I visited the farm, Uncle Art and Aunt Martha greeted me on the front porch. “He looks like one of those fancy boys,” Art said. Aunt Martha shushed him, told him, “That’s how they dress in the advertising world.” I never knew if they knew.

The cop takes a long drink from his coffee, downs nearly half a cup in one go. He’s got a bit of cream on his moustache. I wonder if I should tell him. Suddenly a commercial erupts from the next room and I remember Aunt Martha. I consider going in to turn down the volume but the commercial ends and all goes quiet, and it’s just Bryce the cop and me again, sitting around the kitchen table. I uncross my legs. I don’t think instant coffee packs enough punch to keep me up all night but I don’t want to risk lying in Aunt

Martha’s guest room staring jittery at the ceiling. I hold the mug to my mouth but barely wet my lips.

“Another time, she thought she was having a heart attack,” says Bryce. “The EMTs find her baking in the kitchen like nothing’s doing. She offers them fresh corn muffins. They figure she’s lonely but warn her not to call again unless it’s an honest to God emergency. The boy who called wolf, ya know.”

“I know.”

I wrap both hands around the coffee hoping the heat will finally warm me through. Bryce looks me straight in the eye. I hold his gaze. His eyes are the most amazing blue. I think we’re flirting.

“So where’s the uncle?”

“Dead,” I blurt out. It sounds so brutal. I add, “He died.”

“Dead people usually do that.”

I laugh. It comes out a nervous giggle. I swallow some coffee. The stuff is truly rank.

“You know I’ve got to call county,” Bryce says.

“I know,” I say, though I don’t know. I don’t even know what “call county” means but figure this is out of Bryce’s jurisdiction or something. The coffee is scrambling my brain. I really need to stop drinking the stuff. I take another sip.

“So how did he die?” Bryce asks. He’s looking right at me. He really wants to know.

“Aneurysm,” I say. “Four, almost five years ago.”

“And she has no idea?”

“Sometimes she knows,” I say. “It comes and goes. Some days she’s pretty lucid.”

“It’s only gonna get worse.”

I nod. I know. My mother ended up in the fetal position wearing diapers. She lived another two years that way. Physically, she was healthy as a horse but her brain was mush. Dad started dating before she died. In fairness, she wasn’t really alive either, curled up in a pink flannel nightgown on white sheets. Her hair was still thick and pretty. Aunt Martha has the same hair. It’s just a matter of time for her. The phrase rolls around in my head, *a matter of time* as though time is matter, something solid that gets in your blood and runs through your veins and bungs up your brain. I don’t realize I’m gripping the mug a little too tight until I splash some

coffee onto my hand and see Bryce just looking at me and I look at the spill. I get up to get a dishrag from the sink. It smells sour and leaves a trail of stink on the tabletop.

Bryce stands to go, mumbles something again about how county can help in these situations, how it's the best thing. He reaches into an inside pocket of his jacket and pulls out a business card. I think; since when did cops start carrying business cards but I take it.

"They got drugs now," he says. "They can't reverse memory loss but they can stop further damage or at least slow it down."

I tell him I think it's too late for Aunt Martha.

He looks at me with those blue eyes of his and says, "You should check it out."

I watch him walk down the porch steps. I watch him slide behind the wheel of the squad car. He revs the engine against the cold, hits the headlights. As he backs down the driveway the reach of the light grows broader and broader until I can see the whole night opening up and there's nothing but white and the snow just keeps coming.



**Boat on Dam Pond**  
Gary Bartoloni



**Sun and Moon**  
Simona Dancila



**Reminiscence**  
Simona Dancila

# We Never Got Around to Scrapbooking

Richard King Perkins II

We know these captured images of us can't be repaired or forgotten.

Every pose, each expression,  
creates a null-field around tomorrow.

We can unburden our sinking floorboards  
by junking the prints of these  
digital memories—

collected in  
hundreds of black plastic bags with drawstrings.

Somehow, you've burned yourself  
onto my retina like a splash of ghost pepper.

My hands can't possibly rub you  
out of my eyes

but my reflective memory  
takes a snapshot of a future without you—

one where you're no longer in the picture;  
the unavoidable thumb-shadow  
obscuring all that I would see.



**Beyond the Veil**  
Paule Woolsey

# The Buffalo

Ben Thomas

As I swung the paper sacks of groceries into the shopping cart, I felt something prodding at the back of my teeth.

“You know, the buffalo are coming back.”

“Sorry?”

“I saw it in the paper today - a buffalo was born in Illinois. First one in two hundred years, it said.”

“Hmm! Well that’s *something*,” said the clerk as she turned to the next person in line, a woman who was buying coffee and navel oranges.

I have heard that during the Cold War, professors and their students would have conversations like this over coffee:

“If you could know if and when the bomb would drop, would you want to?”

“I suppose so - get a chance to be prepared and all.”

“How would one prepare?”

“Well... Suppose I’d say goodbye to everyone. Guess I’d try to get something significant done beforehand, you know?”

“Significant? How so?”

As long as I’ve lived here, electricity has crackled through the power lines strung over Romeoville on their praying mantis towers. When we were boys, we’d follow the path cut by the manti for hours, until we came to maybe Crest Hill, or to somewhere that never really existed but for us to wander through in the violet dusk - like Crest Hill.

I took a picture of the article and sent it to a friend with whom I’d ridden a Greyhound to Montana a year ago, and who I

only see at funerals now. He still swears, at the funerals, that we saw two buffalo in Montana; I believe we saw only one, on a Native American reservation outside Missoula. The other was a brown cow, I think. Brown cows are to buffalo what Jacob was to Esau - timid swindlers of birthright.

“Heaven is not some spiritual place we go to when we die. Heaven is the state of being in the presence of God,” said Father Gorsic at Mass last Saturday.

We’d stab further along the manti’s path every evening, easing out of our curfews, until one day we learned to drive, and we drove. Then the next town over, and the next and the next ceased to be borderlands and became as claustrophobic as the thin-walled townhouses and apartments we crammed into with our families.

“I dunno. Like a bucket list kind of thing. See the Grand Canyon, stuff like that.”

“That’s fair. As for me, I wouldn’t want to know.”

“No?”

“No. What could you do with it? In the face of the end, could you find anything really worthwhile to be doing? On the last day, I think I would drink my coffee, mow my lawn, tidy up my papers, and laze away the final evening on the front porch with my wife and a tall glass of sweet tea - just as I spend many of my days now. Let it come as it should, like a thief in the night, undisturbed by me.”

The student would then stir his coffee and work his jaw and avoid making eye contact with the professor, and eventually he’d say something like “Well... huh.”

The dusk in Montana isn’t violet like ours; the dusk in Montana is gold. We saw the buffalo in the Montana dusk, and the buffalo was gold as well. Down the road a ways, on the edge of the reservation, there was a roadside stand selling bison burgers. There are certain people around Missoula who frequent that particular stand, and you can tell, because their faces shine like gold, too. Often you can find them kayaking down the river that runs through town.

In the grocer’s parking lot stood a graying man and a woman who had eyes that turned down in the corners, the kind which always seem ready to well up with strong emotion. The pair was illuminated by the pale yellow of a softly flickering streetlight.

Neither knew what to do with their hands, so they hung limply at their sides, jerking and flapping every once in a while like injured sparrows in the roadside gravel. They stood close to each other and spoke in low voices, and I couldn't tell whether they spoke of a shared love or a cancer diagnosis, but it must've been one or both of the two.

The woman at the register had a Polish accent that seemed to well up from the back of her throat. "Did you find everything okay today?" she said.

"Sure did."

"Good, good. You know, downtown Chicago today, there was horrible accident, did you hear?"

"No, that's terrible."

"Yeah, it was, it was - they say six people injured, two cops! It's terrible. Crazy people, you know?" She lowered her voice as she said this, as if the crazies would hear and ram their cars right through the storefront. She twirled her hand an inch or two from her temple. "Just crazy."

"With what can we compare the Kingdom of Heaven?" said Jesus," said Father Gorsic. I am thinking of becoming a Catholic.

In the Tribune this morning, I read that a buffalo has been born in Illinois - the first born East of the Mississippi in two hundred years. They had wedged the article as an afterthought between the mayoral election and the Wrigley Field renovations.

My face has sprouted something beyond stubble, but not quite a beard. Something like the grass in the outfield in the offseason. I haven't shaved since the last funeral.

I went to pick up the week's groceries in the evening, milk and bananas and extra pulp orange juice and potato chips.



# Author and Artist Bios

**Aya Atrox** pulls inspiration from post-Renaissance still life and portraiture art and combines those elements with her own twist of the strangeness. Her work has a narrative essence in which she tells the story of the world that lives within her head.

**Gary Bartoloni** began his photographic life around the age of 9 when his Dad allowed him to use his Kodak Tourister. Not satisfied with the previous gifts of Brownies and Instamatics, he was fascinated by the numbers (f-stops) written around the lens..the iris which opened and closed, and the big roll of (620) film. This type of fascination and desire would underwrite his story. Throughout his life, whether during his years studying Biology at various colleges, or photographic art at Pratt and L.I.U., he ceaselessly tried to push the limits of the then accepted and comfortable. While studying Botany, he was introduced to the technique of plant diagnostics through the use of infrared films and their unique ability to capture the light aura, indicative of the energies emitted by trees and all green plants through photosynthesis. He immediately saw the potential in this film's ability not just to create an diverse rendition of the visible, but to open to us the world of the otherwise invisible—animals see infrared, though we cannot. It creates a new tonal range and relation which can be further expanded as the nude reflectance of heat creating a sublime aura to mimic that of the forest. He has had many individual showings of this work, along with participating as a member in various photo and art groups in and between New York and Florida. His work has been chosen most recently for the internationally juried exhibit *Camera 2015* held at the Von Liebling Center, The Sarasota Center for the Arts, and The Southampton Art Center. He has participated in OK Harris and Soho Photo exhibits, and has presented a portfolio for a Guggenheim Grant

regarding the visual recognition of endangered world forests through infrared portrayals. His preferred methods were large format cameras and film. With the upsurge of digital capture, he is furthering his experimentation in this direction.

**Simona Dancila** is a member of the Plastic Artists Association in Bucharest. Born in Bucharest, Romania, she started to draw at the age of 4 years old and studied fine art in several countries in Europe and ultimately in Bogota (Columbia) where she lived because her father was an Ambassador. She was a finalist in the international drawing contest Juan Miro, Spain, and other drawing contest in Japan and Romania, and the first Romanian Artist selected and invited to participate at Florence Biennial. From 2013 Simona lives and works in the U.S. See more of her art at [simonadancila.wix.com/simona-dancila-art](http://simonadancila.wix.com/simona-dancila-art)

**William Doreski** lives in Peterborough, New Hampshire, and teaches at Keene State College. His most recent book of poetry is *The Suburbs of Atlantis* (2013). He has published three critical studies, including *Robert Lowell's Shifting Colors*. His essays, poetry, fiction, and reviews have appeared in many journals.

Born in Canada and bred in the U.S., **Allen Forrest** has worked in many mediums: computer graphics, theater, digital music, film, video, drawing and painting. Allen studied acting in the Columbia Pictures Talent Program in Los Angeles and digital media in art and design at Bellevue College (receiving degrees in Web Multimedia Authoring and Digital Video Production.) He currently works in the Vancouver, Canada, as a graphic artist and painter. He is the winner of the Leslie Jacoby Honor for Art at San Jose State University's Reed Magazine and his Bel Red painting series is part of the Bellevue College Foundation's permanent art collection. Forrest's expressive drawing and painting style is a mix of avant-garde expressionism and post-Impressionist elements reminiscent of van Gogh, creating emotion on canvas.

**Jamie Lynn Heller** has two young girls, the perfect spouse, a high school counseling career she loves, and she gets to write. She is a Pushcart Prize nominee and the author of *Domesticated, Poetry from Around the House*. [jamielynnheller.blogspot.com](http://jamielynnheller.blogspot.com).

**John Lichtenstein's** work is easily recognizable as his subject matter often includes movie monsters, models from his own reference photos, and currency presented in the foreground of a creatively filled negative space. He employs the use of bright colors, repetition, and image overlaying to strengthen his concepts. His choice is a functional canvas, like plywood also added to the character and recognition to his work. He began to develop his style after working closely with the local music scene and seeing the impact show fliers had on the community as collectible pieces of art.

**Vivian McInerny** is a career journalist and budding fiction writer based in Portland, Oregon. Her short stories are published in several literary anthologies including *Fishtrap Oregon East, Talus & Scree* (USA) *One Million Stories* (UK) *Skive* (Australia) *Sol* (Mexico). Her first novel is currently under consideration by agents.

**Richard King Perkins II** is a state-sponsored advocate for residents in long-term care facilities. He lives in Crystal Lake, IL, USA with his wife, Vickie and daughter, Sage. He is a three-time Pushcart nominee and a Best of the Net nominee whose work has appeared in more than a thousand publications.

**Carolyn Stephens** writes the blog *Through A Widow's Eyes*. She is a widow and a mom from Portland, Maine. She is a contributing poet and author in the anthology *The Widow's Handbook* and is currently compiling a book of essays for publication.

**Ben Thomas** is a student from the suburbs of Chicago, who has been to Florida exactly twice. Some days, he tries to write.

**Kathryn Trattner** writes from the middle of the United States but dreams of the ocean. Her fiction has appeared in various literary magazines including *Cheap Pop* and *Wyvern Lit*. Find her on twitter @k\_trattner.

**Paule Woolsey** is a former Northern Virginia High School librarian. She has recently retired to Bradenton where she will continue to explore and experiment with drawing, collage and mixed media art.