

OnCourse

Magazine

Literature and Art by Coconino Community College Students

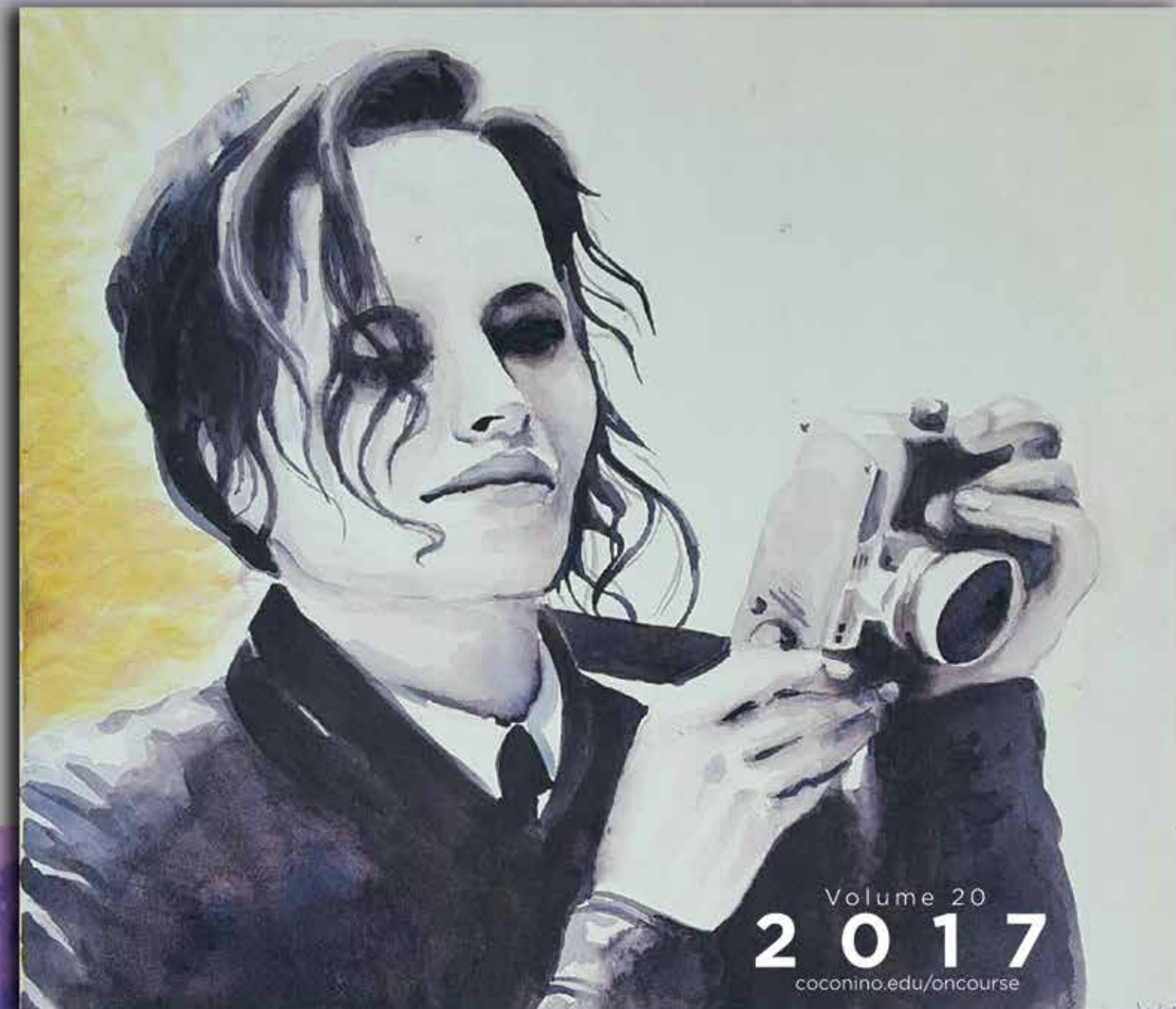


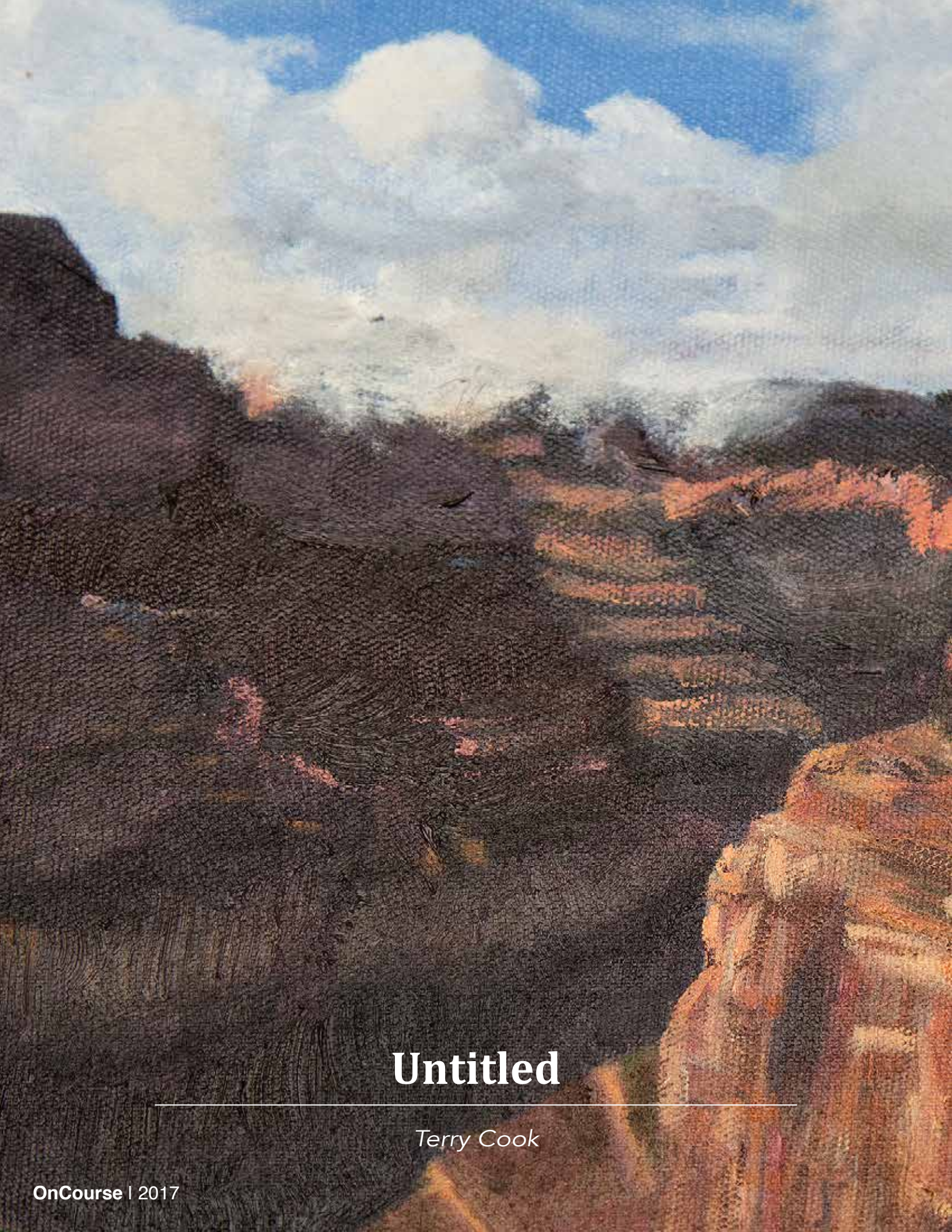
Table of Contents

Art

Untitled, Terry Cook	2
Prickly In Pink, Ashleigh Cuprak	4
Susie's Heaven, Brandon VanRees	7
The Phoenix, Kevin Scholler	9
Naked Citrus, Lani Weis	11
Pensive Peacock, Miriam Offner	12
Holi Pigment, Lydia Peterson	15
Brush Strokes, Teresa Dietrich	17
Scuttling Crab, Jessica Nelson	19
Soft and Crisp, Lydia Peterson	20
Pair of Three, Wyatt Worker	24
Cat, Hannah Valdovino	27
Lookout Gift Shop, Fran Robbins	29
Looking Away, Lenford Barton	31
Silo, Leslie Gilmore	32

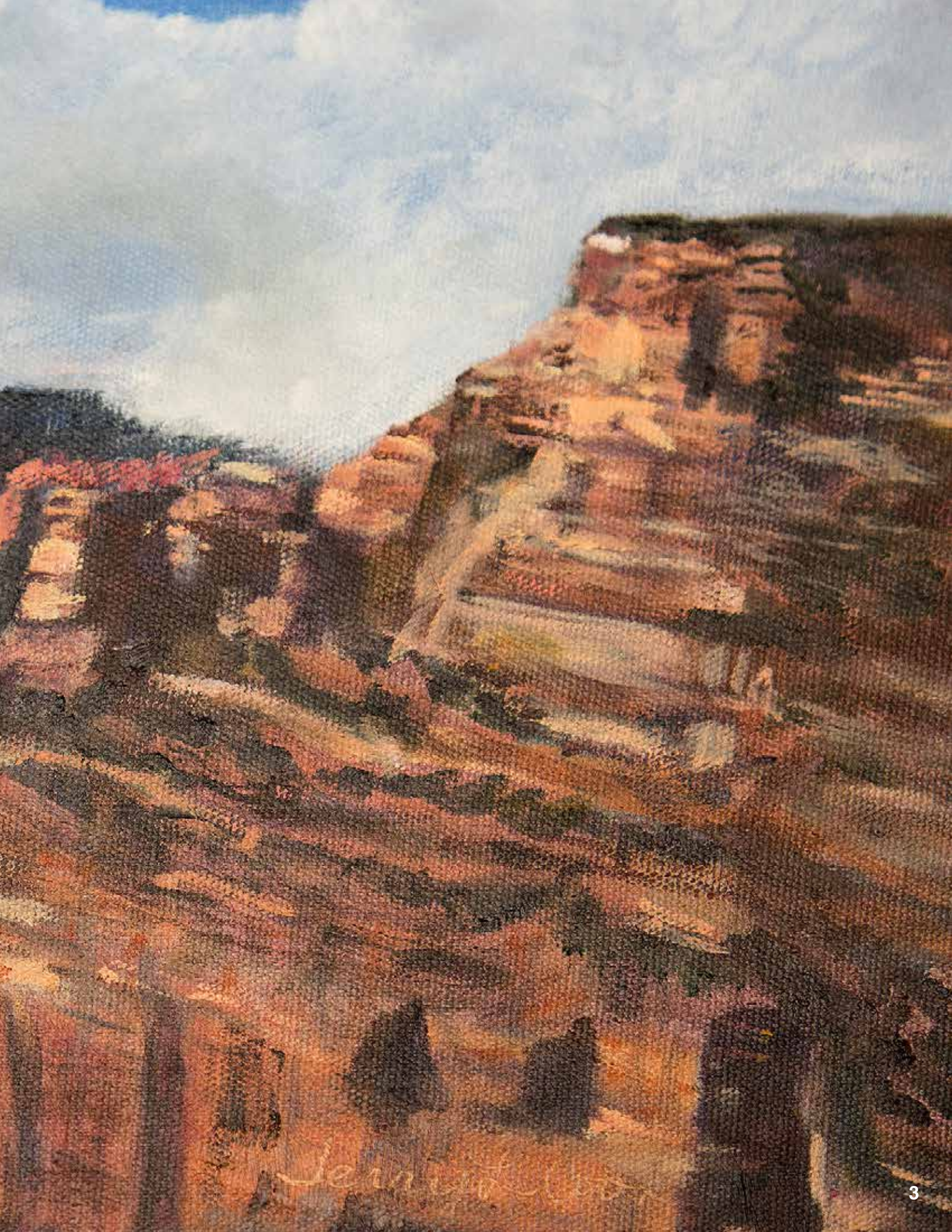
Literature

Unity As My Kin Has Shown, Kelynea Yazzie	5
Unity, Molly McNamara Carter	6
For a New York Minute, We Stood United, Kevin Scholler	8
Dine' Woman, Jamie Homer	10
What is Unity to Me, Carlyn Belone	13
United as Seven and a Half Billion, Maximilian Ziwey	14
My Portrait, Lou Blazquez	16
Battle of the Iron, Teresa Konkel	21
The Irony of It All, Kennedy Hall	25
Flick Your Bick, Suzanne Dison	26
Inner Beauty, Tai Spears	30



Untitled

Terry Cook



Prickly In Pink

Ashleigh Cuprak



Unity As My Kin Has Shown

Kelynea Yazzie

At the thought of the word “unity,” my family, home, community, and friends easily rush to mind. I come from a micro-sized rural community, a hidden gem, tucked away in a sandstone canyon, known as Shonto on the Navajo Reservation. If you blink driving by the turn-off, you will never even know it’s there. In Shonto, everyone knows everyone, and we are all related in one way or another. We take great pride in our culture, heritage, and teachings and that emphasizes our unification as Native American people.

My people are all-too-familiar with the term “unity,” and I can proudly say we take great pride in practicing all that comes with the understanding of unity. Travelling off the reservation, I have come across Natives from all corners and crevices of the country. Regardless of the specific tribes one may be from, there is always something in common between two seemingly foreign tribes, and I find conversing with every single one to be very easy. Once common ground is established, whether it be eerie similar backstories living on reservations or the feelings and relation to our ancestors’ history, family relations, through the traditional clan system, and kinship is determined and claimed. I now have a brother or a sister, or a grandparent who I had not known about in a foreign area and that is all the most comfort.

Take the Dakota Access Pipeline protest for instance. Thousands of individuals from hundreds of tribes have come globally to stand in solidarity with ONE single tribe in

their fight to defend their sacred land. Why? Why would people take time away from their lives and their families, travel hundreds and thousands of miles to a foreign land, to provide comfort and aid to complete strangers? What do they gain from such a decision? They are being pepper-sprayed, maced, beaten, and arrested on the land their ancestors died trying to protect. Yet they all continued to gather with disregard to the treatment from law enforcement, the living conditions, and stand with the Standing Rock people in unpredictable weather. My best friend ventured north in hopes of making a change, even just a fragment because “change has to start somewhere,” he said; he wanted to be a part of history. His words brought comfort back south when he returned with stories and knowledge unbeknownst to us. Once he explained where they were coming from, it all made sense. It was familiar. We have all experienced oppression at its finest at the hands of the United States of America, and that has paved the gateway to the easy relatability we have with fellow tribes.

The beauty in all this is that even though it has taken hundreds of years of unjust treatment and oppression of my people, we have a unique and undeniable understanding for the word unity. The relationships born and maintained through the hardships of my people is what my grandparents say make their past experiences all the more worthwhile. That is what the word “unity” means to me.

Unity

Molly McNamara Carter

We bleed	mine could be yours
all red, all drip	and yours could be mine.
all the same.	The air that goes around us
we breathe	moves through our hair
oxygen, the air	around our body
the same goes in me	through the trees
the same goes in you.	carries the leaves by the wind
We are the human race	through the sky
the race of humans	it's the same
a contest of humans	the same air that goes in
a race	my breath
to run	out your breath
to chase	it's the same
to compete	Cells to dust that blow
humans.	in the wind like the leaves
The same cells	through the trees.
that break apart	All are tied together
we are all the same	through the air, through the dust.
we are the human race	The same.
the drip of the red blood	
the same	
you and me	
the person down the street	
it's all the same	



Susie's Heaven

Brandon VanRees

For a New York Minute, We Stood United

Kevin Scholler

In a world today that is filled with unwillingness to compromise, a lack of humanity, and a moral demise, I think of a time where that wasn't so. I think of a time where volunteers were being turned down because there were masses of people willing to lend a helping hand; I think of a time when people lined the streets in silence, holding nothing but candles while wearing their hearts on their sleeves; I think of the time where the Fenway Faithful cheered as the New York Yankees took the field; I think of Tuesday, September 11th, 2001.

There is a man kneeling on a slab of concrete, looking at the helmet of a fallen firefighter; he's covered in debris, and his reflective flash-gear is barely visible. Sirens ring out in the street, as this man kneels in a helpless silence. Below his feet lay his 343 brothers, who he can only hope to deliver to a proper burial ground. He cares not about himself, but about the families he will present flags to and the countless memories that could have been made. He keeps digging through the rubble, despite the circumstances in hopes of finding just one more brother to return home. This man is not a metaphor, and he is not fiction. This is simply a man performing his job during an impossible situation.

Papers rained down from the sky, and a thick layer of smoke blanketed the streets of New York, turning a bright and sunny Tuesday morning into a Hellish nightmare. Millions of Americans tuned in to the unfolding chaos in schools and at work. We collectively gasped when the second plane hit the South Tower, and we cried as we watched both towers collapse to the ground, taking 2,977 innocent lives with them, along with the Pentagon and Flight 93. There was no answer for this appalling shock and no logical reason why these mothers, fathers, sons and daughters were taken in a span of 102 minutes — only raw emotion, disbelief, and paralyzing sorrow.

The most daunting memory from that day to me is the aftermath. Looking at footage of the New York City streets lined with pictures of missing loved ones and candle-lit vigils held by grief-stricken families who desperately tried to avoid the inevitable. As the pictures fell to the ground and the fleeting seconds dwindled down, so did any hopes of survival.

In the darkest of times is where the smallest bit of light gives us hope. On 9/11, the glimmer of light was unity. The American National Anthem rang from streets across America, London, and Paris; flags were draped

from apartment buildings, plastered on windows, and displayed proudly on front lawns. The phrase “United We Stand” became a national slogan as the entire world wept for New York City. It is in tragedy that we find unity, and this nation’s greatest tragedy brought every American closer together. It is tragically fitting that this nation’s darkest day is also a symbol of the American Spirit and unity.

Today, there rests a beautiful memorial where the Twin Towers once stood tall. There also stands a new building that reaches for the sky and rightfully owns the New York City skyline. Like the American spirit, this building symbolizes a rebuilding of hope and a fight within to come back bigger and to stand tall in the face of adversity. This new building is called “One World Trade Center,” as in we are all one, united in memory of what happened that day. Lady liberty will forever shine her light in the direction where the Twin Towers once stood and where One World Trade Center now stands; her light stands for the American fighting spirit and unity to

lend a helping hand like we did that day and the weeks which followed.

To me, the definition of unity is 9/11; from the brave firefighters and police officers selflessly running into almost sure death, to the thousands of volunteers who raced to the aid of possible survivors. On 9/11, we united to help remove the debris; we united to volunteer at hospitals; we united to give our heroes proper burials; we united by giving our blood sweat and rivers of tears; and we united to stand as one, as the people of the UNITED States of America to tell the world that we will forever stand together in unity.



The Phoenix

Kevin Scholler

Diné Woman

Jamie Homer

I am a Dine' woman

Who speaks my Dine' language

I am the Dine' woman who passes her language to her kids

Like my ancestors who passed on to us

I am the Dine' woman who has a strong spirit

I am strong like my ancestors before me

I am a Dine' woman

I am the Dine' woman who holds my family together

like the Dine' woman in my family

I am the protector of my children

Like the Dine' warriors who protect their tribes

I am the Dine' woman

Shi' Dine' pride

Naked Citrus

Lani Weis



Pensive Peacock

Miriam Offner



What is Unity to Me

Carlyn Belone

Once I became a mother, it was tough to think about the world my child would grow up in, the language others will use, or the judging of people's skin, or religion.

My daughter Jocelyn is only 9 years old. She knows not to judge others on their appearance, color of their skin, or how they are as person. I believe when I was her age, I was not so observant or knowledgeable of other nationalities, but with her demeanor, she tries to help in any way she can. My daughter and I are part of the Navajo Tribe, and in our upbringing, we are encouraged to greet or introduce ourselves first. Either with clans or with a warm handshake, this is called *K'e* – the relationship that binds us together. With clanship, one person can be from the other side of the reservation and can be a brother or sister of no blood relationship, and still be a family.

Just about everywhere we go we greet people and introduce ourselves to unite with one another regardless of their nationalities.

I continue to demonstrate to my young child the beauty of diverse people, diverse languages, and diverse religions, because this

is a big world we live in, and one day soon, she will be in it—as an adult. As a loving and overprotective parent, I would love for her to stay in my sheltered small town, Winslow, with familiar faces, but I would like for her to know how it is to sail the ocean, fly to Paris, or even visit the Statue of Liberty. I would like for her to know more than the Navajo Nation, the state of Arizona, or the United States. I would like for her to know how this world is diverse and that we all need each other to unite and be one race.

Unity holds a lot in our world, and our own culture as *K'e* in the Navajo language just means about the same. Unity can change the world, even if it's simply uniting with family, spouses, tribes, groups, counsels or children.

So with this, I am Carlyn Belone. I am *Todich' ii'nii* (Bitter Water Clan), born for the *Hashk'aa hadzohi* (Yucca-fruit-strung-out-in-a line Clan). My daughter is Jocelyn Farland. She is *Todich' ii'nii* (Bitter Water Clan), born for the *Lok'aa' dine'e* (the Reed People clan) and we are from Seba Dalkai, Arizona, where I was born and raised.

United as Seven and a Half Billion

Maximilian Ziwey

What place does loneliness have in the world? Is loneliness something that comes and goes? Is it something that sometimes crawls up from beneath the floor boards and sucks someone down into a place where they no longer feel safe? Or is it a warmth that draws you away from the clouds of people scattering and flocking and hustling and bustling every which way? I think to be lonely can mean a whole lot of things, depending on how your day is going. Humans like to think that they have a special sort of unity among them. “Hey you know what, I’m here and you’re there, and I’m doing this, and you’re doing that, but you know, we’re still human.” Meanwhile, we walk the streets looking down at our shoes hoping we can make it to our next destination in silence.

I think to have real unity, people need to have empathy first. Not the “yeah I guess if I was asked to I could put myself in your shoes” kind of empathy. I’m talking real life, real connection empathy. The kind that makes your gut turn and your muscles ache when you see someone in pain, or the kind where you get butterflies in your stomach seeing happy people holding hands and laughing.

Real empathy. Empathy and unity walk along the same path. It’s hard to believe we are united while we sit down with our family and watch CNN and think, “Boy, I really feel bad for those refugees; they are having a rough time,” and then continue on the same routine to conclude our day. Unity on a global scale, in my opinion, is not achievable. It’s difficult to believe that, but it is even more difficult to pretend that everything is perfect and beautiful and that the world works great.

Unity though—let’s get back to that. I think unity is real, just on a smaller scale than we wish it could be. I think friends and family can have unity in its most perfect and real way. I think soldiers with bullets whizzing past their heads lying next to each other may share a great deal of unity, too. See, I don’t think unity has anything to do with time. Humans have been around for millions of years as a species, but to look around and tell me the world isn’t filled with gaps and breaks would be childish. I think unity has more to do with experiences shared and emotions given. Real love, real hate, real understanding, real anything may be able to give us some sort of pure and unsheltered unity.

Holi Pigment

Lydia Peterson



My Portrait

Lou Blazquez

“Make sure you get all three of me,” I told the artist, who already had begun brushing across the canvas leaning on an easel. I mused as he worked.

One of us is a 10 year old who gives me wonder, curiosity, mischievousness, and naiveté. He is simple in a complicated world, doesn’t understand it, or America, or his house in which things disappear and are found again later. He asks, “Why can Gene Roddenberry figure out warp drive but not NASA?”

Another is a 16 year old with uncertainty, self-consciousness, and self-doubt who fears failure more than anything. He has impatient youthful energy, and he is shy. He wants to say, “Bite me!” to anyone who angers him and then thrust a résumé of knuckles into their throats for future reference, but he has black belt discipline and is thus harmless. He has a lust that began with the urge of mitosis three billion years ago and believes that the process was fun even then. That was why life began. When he makes intimate advances to women, he hates it when they ask him to control himself. “Why can’t women show this fabulous self-control and increase their sex drive?”

I’m the elder, with the experience and wisdom of 59 years who has to support the other two with food, shelter, movies, and dates. I’m the busy guy. I take mood disorder meds because my emotions can be overly capricious or confusing. I began a dedicated

career of instructing children in 1972, but it’s my daughter Jamie who is all-important. Teaching is what I do, a father is who I am.

Jamie displayed my 10 year old self when she was 4, walking her new puppy. A man was standing on his second story balcony when she called up to him, “Hey mister, do you want to pet my dog?” It made perfect sense, everyone was another her—is another me—and wanted to rush up to little Cinder and cuddle him.

The stranger called back, “No!”

“Okay,” she replied brightly and happily moved on. I was puzzled with her cheerfulness at rejection. She knew something I didn’t.

It took me a while to believe this, but I do now. In my life, I am allowed but one true relationship, and I had mine. My marriage changed me from an adult into a human being. Its ending is the biggest failure of my life, because I grew up wanting one person, one family, and one trip to the altar. My ex-wife’s friendship is still my North Star.

After my divorce, I accumulated 10 parrots and a girlfriend named Robin. I stayed at her house in Mesa on weekends. When I had my only modeling gig, I got up extra early to allow for getting lost. I needed to shave closely, and I panicked when I realized I forgot my travel kit. Robin handed me a brand-new Bic plastic shaver. I lathered up and began. Nothing happened. I stroked harder, but my stubble stood firm. I couldn’t press too hard, because I feared tracks of

moist scabs on my face. Exasperated, I told Robin that the Bic didn't work. She was puzzled. My electric razor was the dismal solution.

I left her house, got lost, and arrived in time. I went to the woman who does make up for the agency. "Do you realize you have two different colored socks? I'll tug your pants lower to cover them."

I got through the job for Reality Executives to their satisfaction. That night I was in bed with Robin. She jumped up and exclaimed, "Wait a minute!" and ran to the bathroom. There was uncontrolled laughter. She came back holding the Bic razor as if it were a scepter. While she was

still hysterically shaking and choking, she took off its plastic top.

I asked, "What's that?"

"It's a protector."

"From what?"

"From cutting yourself."

"I want to be cut. That's how I get the whiskers off." She doubled over.

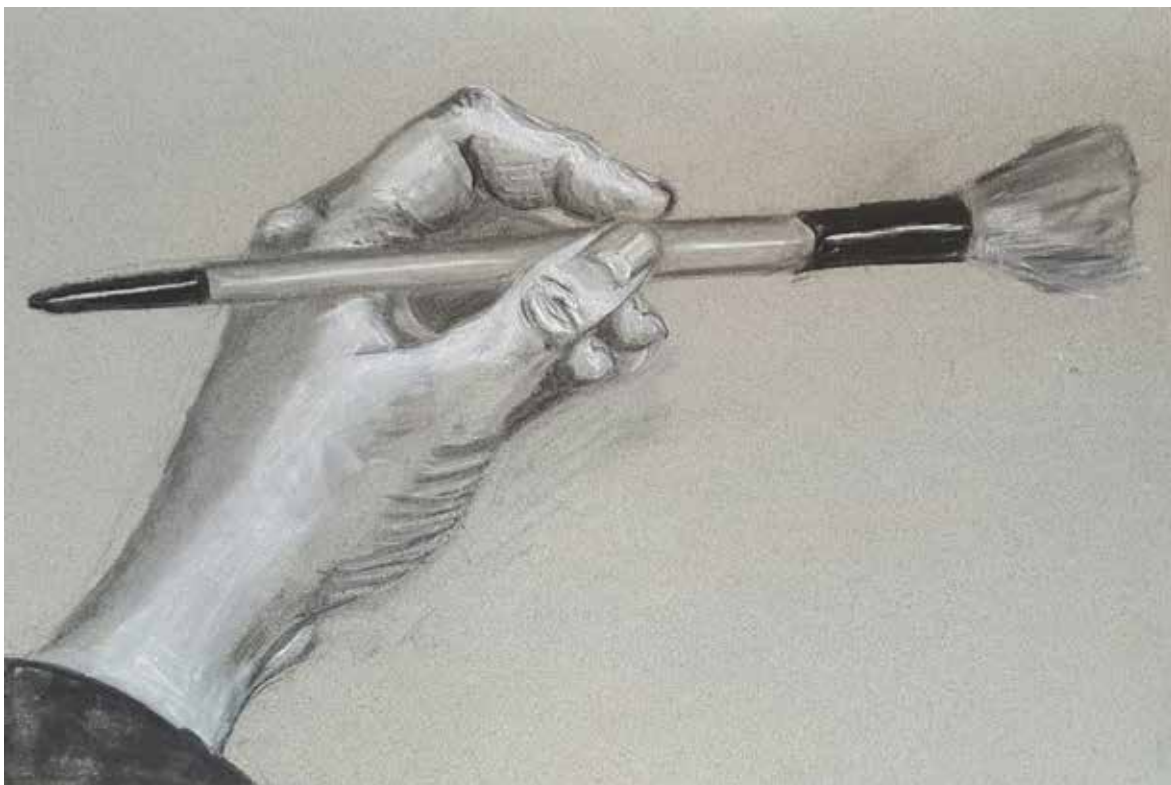
"What's so funny?" She knew something I didn't.

When she could finally speak, she told me I looked like a little boy, just lying there bewildered.

I wondered, how do I turn the comical into the romantic? I read or maybe someone mentioned that girls get turned on if you talk filthy to them in bed.

Brush Strokes

Teresa Dietrich



Youngsters—even when they’re 59—will believe anything that adults tell them. In the dark, I whispered dirty words to Robin. She went into gyrations of hilarity. I like amusing people, even when it’s unintentional, but I also like being in on the joke. “Now what?”

“That was like my little old grandmother cursing.”

So much for advice and so much for obscenities. I should have known better because it wasn’t natural. I try to be respectful, kind, and caring to the woman I’m with. It was always that way with Robin. After five minutes of unrestrained guffawing, she noticed me watching her without guile. With quiet intent, she suddenly embraced me. She never refused my fierce passion, loved my innocence, and appreciated my good sense. In moments, four hearts beat as one and three of them were mine.

There is the mire of my faults. I don’t know how dark or how bad they can be; I’ve never been tested in my fortunate life. I have a distressing amount of cowardice, deceit, selfishness, laziness, crankiness, and vengefulness—wait! I changed my mind about that last one. Vengeful is good. I’m tired of the innocent getting kicked around. Hurt the bad guys. I have some cynicism, but not too much. Mankind is basically good. I am too, but my worst side is the bad decisions I have made for my daughter and will never forgive myself. In my quiet moments, the wound still trickles. My flaws are there in despicable amounts. I am ashamed as the artist works uninterrupted. But if a man must have faults, what’s wrong with mine? Mrs. Shannon said in *Night of the Iguana*, “Nothing human disgusts me unless it is unkind or violent.” I

hold her standards.

I wonder if other guys are like me. I don’t know because I can only be one male at a time. It’s hard to believe females can be like me. I’ve been close to those who have been bashed, treated like meat, have had long term hurts, or had ex-husbands who steal their possessions. These women occasionally wanted fatherly moments recreated, being warmly held unconditionally, and just be touched with a subliminal healing without payoff, and receive an occasional kiss on the forehead. I like being sensitive in those quiet moments. My partner briefly becomes a 10 year old, as she deserves to be for the rest of her life. I can feel my adult nurturing and caring for her as we are silent in a different way.

Among the three of us, the consensus is that we are in the wrong reality. Our heaven and our good day are the same. Each morning I would be with a blonde, each afternoon I would be with my daughter, and at night, me and Roger Rabbit would shoot up Toon Town.

“Did you get us all?” I asked as the artist finished the last stroke. He turns the easel. I inhale.

**“In moments,
four hearts
beat as one
and three of
them were
mine”**

Scuttling Crab

Jessica Nelson



Soft and Crisp

Lydia Peterson



Battle of the Iron

Teresa Konkel

The greatest joy I have encountered throughout my life is in rearing our children. The Word of God declares in Psalms, “Children are a gift from the Lord.” Another verse in the Bible affirms this concept, “Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.”

This meaningful time for Naomi and me, is reminiscent of how I grow nearer to God. Regrettably, only after I have made the biggest heap of a mess in my circumstances, totally incapable of fixing it myself, am I able to draw close, and humbly ask Him for help. God’s loving kindness is extravagant. He doesn’t scold me like I deserve, but ever so tenderly, again. He guides me in the best direction and lights my path.

Being an active mother of four children, I tried to work outside the home during school hours when our children were young. This was to minimize their time spent at the sitters. This significantly helped our family out economically by not having the extra expense of childcare added to our already tight budget.

A particular job I took one year, when our eldest daughter was in the fourth grade, ended at 4 pm. This was somewhat later than my previous employment arrangement; therefore, a sitter was needed for a short period of time. After my day time shift, I would head over to the child care provider’s location and pick up the children. By 4:30 pm the kids and I were once again nestled home. This schedule worked out very well as they were released from school at 3:15 pm, rode the school bus to the sitter’s destination, and arrived about 20 minutes later. Our family lives in a quaint little town, and everything is in close proximity. Their time spent in this additional childcare was brief, so it wasn’t very productive.

Nonetheless, I had piece of mind that they were safe and sound.

Upon our arrival home, I would begin preparing our evening meal. Soon the air was filled with the pleasant aroma of home cooking. The children would get settled in with doing their homework, and I would occasionally check in with them to make sure it was accomplished well. I very much enjoyed being home in the evenings. Other jobs I had in the past didn’t allow me this luxury. I cherished the few hours I spent at the end of the day tending for our family. My favorite part was carrying out our bed time rituals: The bubble baths, flannel jammies, reading much loved stories over and over again, and especially prayer time, the sweet conversations of little one’s supplications are priceless.

Our eldest daughter was 10 years old and having three younger siblings. She was quite mature for her age. She frequently stepped in to help with their care. Her nature was to take charge and to tell them all what to do; although, her siblings called her Miss Bossy. She was also moving up in status among the middle school aged children. The higher-ranking fifth graders would be dismissed later, at 3:45pm, and then proceed to ride the famous “late bus.” This was deemed much more important, because it didn’t have any, what they all termed “little kids” riding on it. This created a new timetable for her. The way my husband and I saw it, we had two options. The first one being, she could ride the late bus to the same provider’s home as her younger siblings, arriving at 4 pm. She would only be there for a few minutes, and then again be transported, this time by me, to our home. Otherwise, our second choice was for her to ride the bus directly to our residence arriving shortly

before the whole gang. This posed somewhat of a dilemma. She would be home alone for a brief period, every school day, approximately 30 minutes. At that point in time, “latch key” was the catch phrase used. This described youngsters who were home alone after school before their working parents returned in the evenings.

I couldn’t fathom her getting into any type of trouble. I recalled the time, about her age, that I was left home alone. The worst thing I ever did was to watch an episode of “Gillian’s Island” and eat a forbidden bowl of frosted flakes. I washed, dried, and put away the bowl and spoon. Then, made sure the television was turned back to the previous channel (before I changed it). I never got caught; I also didn’t think it was that big of a deal to be home alone. It was not as if we lived in a big city with a lot of crime.

Because she had exhibited growing maturity, we decided she could be trusted to stay home unaccompanied for this short amount of time. The benefit would be she could get started on her homework, which she had plenty of, without her siblings constant noise and interruptions. Again, precious time would not be wasted in traveling to and from both locations.

After carefully weighing the pros and cons, we decided upon the latter option. The weekend before this new schedule was to take place, we sat down and had a family discussion. My greatest fear was that an emergency could develop. My husband and I were in complete agreement for what we expected her to accomplish: mainly arriving safe, fixing a lite snack for herself, and getting started to work on her homework assignments. We imposed strict guidelines. To keep her on task, safety rules were put into place and were discussed at great length. We

made sure she understood the importance of this new responsibility. One of the requirements involved was that she wasn’t allowed to watch any television. She could be too easily distracted with another preferred episode of *Saved by the Bell*. She wasn’t permitted to use the telephone, with the only exception being in a case of an emergency. This was to keep her from getting carried away in talking with her friends and not actively concentrating on her schoolwork. Upon entering the home, she was to immediately relock the door, securing it, and absolutely not open it for anyone. Should someone unexpectedly approach the home, she wasn’t permitted to answer the door. We had made an extra house key to be hers solo, and we instilled into her how much confidence we had

that she could be successful. We conveyed to her how much trust came along with this added charge. All weekend, her father and I would drill her on different scenarios of how she might handle some unforeseen emergency. We went over stranger danger, a refresher course on fire drills, what to do if at any time should she become frightened, and how to handle

all of these unpredicted events. Whatever would come to our minds, we would come up with two or three similar solutions; the wheels were spinning. We tried to make sure she had the knowledge and understanding to make good decisions in all types of situations, should they arise.

Monday’s dawn was soon upon us, much too quickly for me. I still had many chores that were unaccomplished from the weekend. I was again faced with the regular routine of getting the brood ready for school and me off to work on time. I remember it being a fairly mundane, uneventful morning. I reassured my daughter, before heading off to school that morning, that she held all the needed ingredients in her grasp to make this transition a smooth one. I

“All day at
work, my
imagination
would wander
off”

didn't sense any hesitation in her demeanor. I had full confidence in her abilities.

All day at work, my imagination would wander off. I found myself daydreaming a few times. I considered, how would she carry out this milestone, I can recollect envisioning her sitting on the bus a little taller with this important duty, and walking home from the bus stop, swiftly, with new purpose. Then, she would on her homework with even more aspiration and make us proud as she displayed elevated independence. All day long, I was beaming with a sense of pride.

After an exhausting eight hours of standing on my feet, my work day finally came to a close. As per our usual schedule, my younger children and I arrived home promptly. I totally anticipated my eldest daughter diligently sitting at the kitchen table very consumed with doing her Weekly Reader assignment. Her behavior unflawed, and the house quiet, calm, and relaxed, surely proof that all had gone well. I proceeded to unlock the front door because she wasn't permitted to answer for anyone--not even me! I had just started to put the key into the door and turn the knob. When I was abruptly greeted at the door. There she stood, sobbing uncontrollably, uttering in the most pitifully feeble voice, "Mom--mm--y I--I--I got the curling iron stuck in my" (a short pause followed) and then she blurted out "H-A-I-R!" Immediately, I knew what she had done. This particular curling iron had the bristles on the end of it and for anyone who has gotten a comb or brush stuck in their hair by rolling the apparatus over and over knows exactly how it feels. There it was, an enormous rat's nest the size of a football, on the side of her head where her otherwise very long (down past her waist) beautiful curly locks of auburn hair should have been draped. This thicket of contorted mess was like a hatchet wedged into a tree trunk. The long cord was dangling beneath her knotted clump of hair, and it was scraping the ground as she walked. It was a constant reminder of the unpleasant beast this

girl was leashed to. The visions of rage I had quickly subsided when I realized that she had been wrestling with this "iron giant" for what must have felt to her like many hours, but to no avail. She was in agony knowing that at any minute she would be caught red handed in the act for her negative antic. The anxiety she must have felt in knowing that she had let us down surely was demoralizing. The distress she felt with this self-inflicted pain, and the frustration she had undergone trying to free herself from this cruel weapon just melted my heart into sincere sympathy. I reassured her with a big hug and a soft voice that she had endured enough torture. This wasn't anything that was going to severely damage her hair like the time she got the wad of gum stuck in her hair and proceeded to cut it out with scissors that left a short patch that just stood straight up. I strived to calm her down. Then, with a screwdriver in hand, I dismantled the curling iron and carefully set free the gnarled stands of her bound up hair.

We both learned a very valuable lesson that day. She gained insight and maturity and I realized that it is necessary to allow our children to make their own mistakes and to learn from them. While at the same time, it is as equally important to show compassion and forgiveness in a failing situation.



Pair of Three

Wyatt Worker



The Irony of It All

Kennedy Hall

My pastor has a kind face. He has whispers of laugh lines and eyes of gratitude. He always keeps a watchful eye on me.

My congregation is in a great, holy room. The cherry wood pews seat fair children, expectant mothers, and intolerant fathers. The cross of Christ adorns the center wall, and the worn, leather book of God resides in our hands.

When my pastor asks us to rise, we rise. He begins with a prayer, and obediently we end with Amen. When he speaks, I swear I can hear the immutable crunch from the tree of knowledge and the cries of the two expelled sinners.

I feel a firm grip tug at my sleeve, and I look up into the always disapproving face of my father. A pool of sweat has formed on his unshaven upper lip, and his small, beady eyes scan over my face. He's searching, but he won't find it. He speaks to me with words that are meant for an obedient dog and not his misconceived daughter.

There was a time when a friend asked if I thought believing in God was the easy way out. My friend was a boy with bleached hair that often contemplated government conspiracy theories and Kurt Cobain's suicide. To him God was uncool and dehumanizing. Unless you were a striving Buddhist or a charismatic Hindu, would you ever earn favor in his eyes. I told him believing in God was the hardest thing I'd ever done.

The breaking of the bread and drinking of the wine has been done. Blood-red stains the lips of my congregation, and people murmur amongst themselves with pleasure. I hear the fair children play, the expectant mothers' gossip, and the intolerant fathers' demanding voices. The smell of rancid fruit and sweat hits my nostrils. I look up and see a pair of laughing eyes. They tell me they are always keeping a watchful eye on me. They tell me God loves me. They tell me to always listen. When I ask them why, they laugh; they tell me it's the irony of it all.

Flick Your Bic

Suzanne Dison

Bored stiff, I sit with my BicMate Pink, who doesn't talk much, and I'm getting claustrophobic in this cellophane package. Maybe she's too good to talk to me, being Pink and all. I'm Blue, and I wonder whose bright idea it was to pair us up, Pink and Blue; go figure. Oh, here comes a human eyeballing us. Ouch, she's flipping through all of us but keeps fondling me. I bet because she's a girl human, we'll get picked up because of Pink. Yep, here it goes – woah, flying through the air - but her grip is strong. Damn, now I'm flying even faster, free falling. Clunk, we land on a hard surface, but I can see grates and soft clothing and a pair of shoes; bet *they're* gonna have some stories to tell. The whispers at the factory told us of adventures we'd have in the right hands and in the BAD hands. Of course we can be used for good or BAD. Because my buyer is a girl human, I think I'll be okay.

Alright, now I'm on some kind of belt and it's moving; moving, but slow. Ahhh, grabbed up and shot across something flat and cold. A beep sounds, and we're slid across another flat surface, warmer. I can't believe it – Pink's still not talking to me! Can she talk at all? Flying again and now a new human girl grabs us and throws us into some

sort of flimsy contraption I can't see out of.

"Pink, are you there?" Maybe she's dead.

Rolling now on wheels, we're slammed against the shoes. "Where are we Shoes?" "No answer. Maybe Shoes can't talk either.

Flying again, still in this contraption but snuggled against other contraptions. Uh oh, slam; all goes dark and quiet.

"Pink I could really use a friend right now." Nothing.

We're moving, gently, but turning this way and that. Bump, bump. Now where are we? All quiet again. Woah, bright sunlight and more moving. I feel warm and comforted, and I don't need Pink. Finally, out of the flimsy contraption again and being held, not gripped this time. Uh oh, the human girl is going to eat us! Ahhhh. Oh, she was just using her teeth to set us free. So long Pink – nice knowing you. Yeah, right.

I finally get christened and light the human girl's cigarette. It feels awesome! I'm all warm inside, oooh. Each time she uses me, I feel more needed. I go everywhere with her now.

Cat

Hannah Valdovino



I feel different, stronger hands hold me today. Who is it? It's a human man, and he's going to use me to light a hand-rolled cigarette. Uh, wait, this doesn't smell the same, and it's making me feel funny. Hee, hee. That was fun! Is he going to do that again? Hey! He's going to put me in his pocket! Now wait! No! I like the girl, and I belong to her. I wiggle every which way and that and crash to the ground, ouch, but she sees me. Ahhh, back in her soft hands again and in her purse where I'm safe and warm in my home away from home. Whew, that was close.

I wonder where we're going today. I heard another human call my girl Suzie after that buzz sound, so I guess that's her color. Suzie went to the store and got these long, skinny meat things and beds to put them in. That loud buzzer goes off again; I hear her say the word campfire. We learned about that at the factory, I know we're a huge part of it. It's like a party. Here we go!

Suzie finally brings me out so I can see, and what a sight! Lots of humans, drinking, laughing and some are wiggling. This is going to be fun, I can tell. Suzie takes me to the pit piled high with wood. She uses me to light the campfire, and I'm sooo happy; I make her happy. The flames catch fire and go way up high in the sky.

They put those funny long, skinny things in the fire and actually eat them – wrapped in their beds! I hear a man human ask her if he can Flick her Bic. Uh, no! But she hands me off to one of the other humans, and they hand me off to another and another. I'm warm and happy, but I don't see Suzie. Now I'm lighting this rocket thing, but I 'm so tickled. It shoots straight up in the sky and bursts apart. It's so pretty. That was real nice; they do it over and over again. Oh wow, I see Red.

"Hey Red, how's it going?"

"Hey, Blue. Went to the Rocky Horror Picture Show last night. Had a blast. You having fun?"

"Oh yeah, but have you seen Pink? She wouldn't talk to me; I think there's something wrong with her."

"Nah, she got picked up by a street human after you found yours."

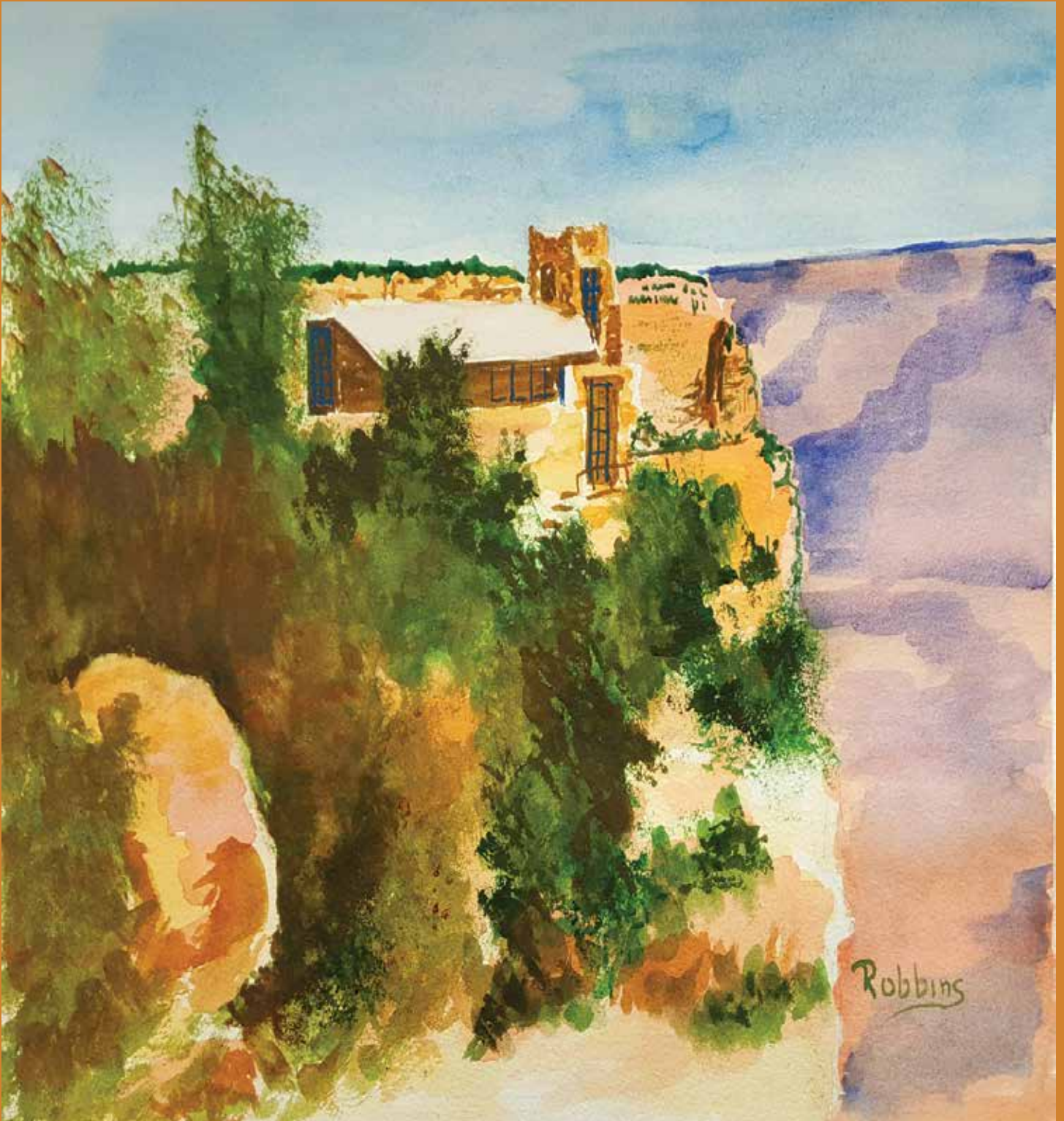
"But, how did she get away? She was in my human's package at Suzie's house."

"I guess Suzie loaned her out, and she went to the **dark side**, the BAD hands."

"Oh no."

Lookout Gift Shop

Fran Robbins



Inner Beauty

Tai Spears

One of the many sayings I grew up hearing constantly around the house was, “True beauty is when you’re just as pretty on the inside as you are on the outside.” As the only girl in the house, so the sassiest by default, I can vividly remember my grandmother repeating this quote to me countless times when she felt that my attitude was in her words, “above my age.” Growing up, this quote never meant much to me until I hit my teenage years. Like many young girls in high school, I suffered tremendously from insecurities and a lack of self-confidence. During this time, I could still count on my grandma repeating this to me, and little does she know, it taught me many valuable lessons and brought me out of a very dark time for myself.

Too often, we are so caught up in our physical appearance that we tend to forget to keep our heart pure. At a certain point in my life, I was one of those people. It took many ruined relationships and missed opportunities for me to realize that I needed to change. It was so bad that people automatically formed an impression about me before speaking to me because of my attitude. While I knew that I had a huge heart and was only making myself seem cold as a defense mechanism others didn’t know this, instead they thought that I had a bad attitude and had no interest in trying to get to know me. In fact, some of my closest friends today are individuals who I didn’t exactly “hit it

off” with at first because of my unapproachable demeanor. Growing increasingly tired and frustrated with this repetition, I decided to completely change my attitude and demeanor; I began to realize that having a pretty face but an ugly heart, in many ways, made me ugly as a person.

Suddenly, I felt more confident in myself when people fell in love with my heart and warm spirit rather than how I looked on the outside. I got a very satisfying feeling from being told that I could light up a room and make others feel good about themselves. It actually became one of the best compliments anyone could give.

While making this change was one of the best changes I’ve ever made for personal growth, it was not an easy change to make. I had to learn pretty quickly that being beautiful is not defined by being the prettiest, or about being perfect, because no one is. Instead, being beautiful, to me, is about how you carry yourself and how bright your self-confidence shines to others.

Another valuable lesson I had to learn was to accept me for me. While it may seem like a pretty easy task, it was something I struggled with for years. Instead of dwelling on everything I am not, I had to teach myself to shift my focus to the many wonderful things about myself, because, in the end, I am enough.

I realized that when I was unhappy with myself, I took on many traits unconsciously like envy, jealousy, and even hatred. Whether I thought so or not, these traits took over me and controlled my demeanor making me cold to others, which is why I had to reinvent my look; I had to teach myself to do small things like smile. It may seem weird, but a genuine smile can instantly change your physical appearance to others. Most importantly, it is the best way to let your inner beauty shine. While making this change has definitely changed me for the better, I still keep all of these valuable lessons in mind every day as I continue to improve myself.

Looking Away

Lenford Barton



Silo

Leslie Gilmore



OnCourse

Magazine

Promotes student achievement by showcasing student coursework and demonstrates the variety of intellectual and artistic opportunities at Coconino Community College.

Cover image by Lani Weis

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