

CURIOS

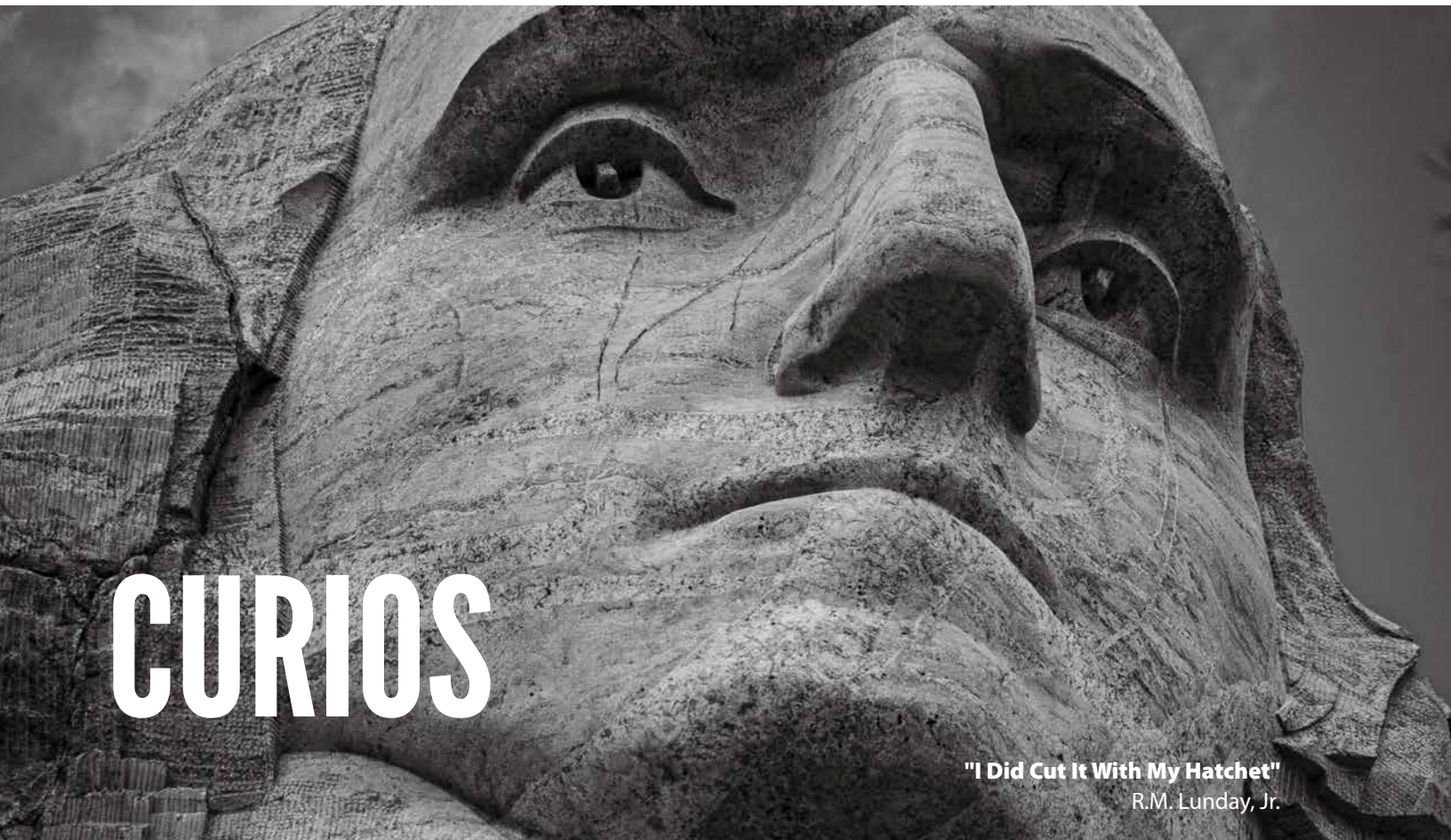
MAGAZINE 2024



Volume 16

ON THIS SITE
★ IN 1897 NOTHING ★
HAPPENED.

"Nothing Happened So They Say"
R.M. Lunday, Jr.



CURIOS

"I Did Cut It With My Hatchet"
R.M. Lunday, Jr.

Dear Readers,

This year's edition of *Curios* addresses a timeless and relevant topic in today's society: the concept of truth and lies. In a world where misinformation spreads like wildfire and deceit can have far-reaching consequences, it is more important than ever to uphold the values of honesty and integrity.

The truth holds immense power. It can build trust, foster meaningful relationships, and drive positive change. Conversely, lies can erode trust, sow discord, and cause irreparable harm. As members of the human race, we must seek out the truth, present facts accurately, and hold each other accountable for our words and actions.

In a time when truth is often muddled with falsehoods, we must stand as bastions of honesty and transparency. We must provide accurate information, challenge falsehoods, and promote critical thinking and discernment.

The truth may sometimes be uncomfortable, but it is always worth pursuing. It is the foundation upon which trust is built and the cornerstone of a just and informed society.

As you navigate the pages of this edition, we hope you consider these complexities of valuing truth over lies, integrity over deception, and honesty over deceit.

Happy Reading!

Curios Staff



Some pieces contain themes related to self harm, which may be distressing to some readers. If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts please seek support from a mental health professional or contact a crisis hotline. **Reader discretion is advised.**



"Love on the Rock"
Bonnie Vagen

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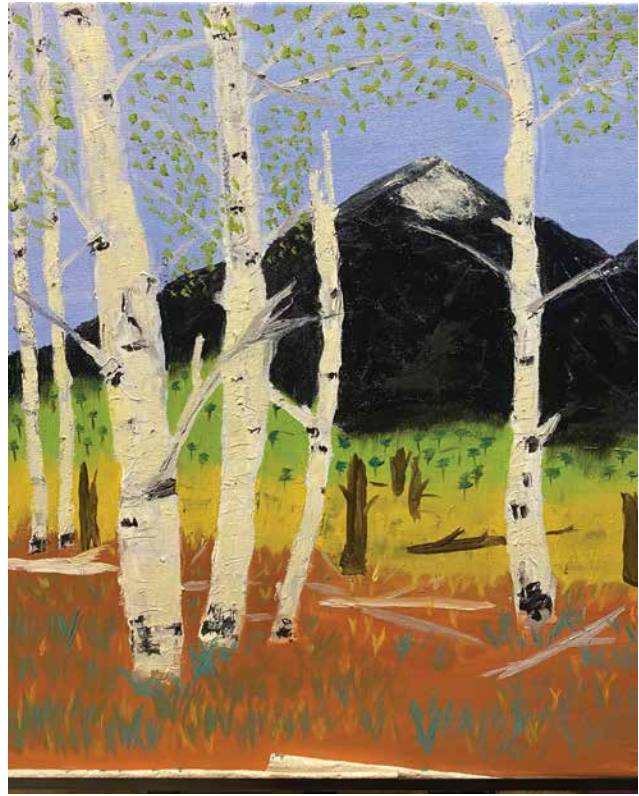
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"Aspens and San Francisco Peaks"
Duane Jameson

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BECAUSE THE TRUTH IS: MORE

Rebecca Byrkit

Γιατί κλαις; ρώτησε, λυγίζοντας τη ζώνη του.
"Why are you crying?" he asked, buckling his belt.

The truth is: because
the monsoon is a thicket of energy, a smatter
of tonnage and thunderous repose, desire
in its sodden electroparalysis scoffs
at a furious few. Women around the world start awake, mascaraed
to some sudden shoulder, draw
abruptly from the smell then sprint like mimes toward freezing Camaros.

Tulips rumple beneath a squall as the suicide showers his path

with glass, Arcadia
doors he's strolled through with his body. Big Gulp cups
kicked-in by fattened tires endeavor to rot
as they once perspired. Torrents of hours beyond the prom,
a reluctant page editor emerges from her
fourth bath, daubs the purpliest welts with a terse disinterest. The truth is: that thanks
to wine that smelt of naugahyde, bruised clouds

shrug like a boy, a white one. Somnambulists stretch, sure-
footed in hurricanes, so dreams that don't distinguish themselves
from the wan world at dawn take over. Skies

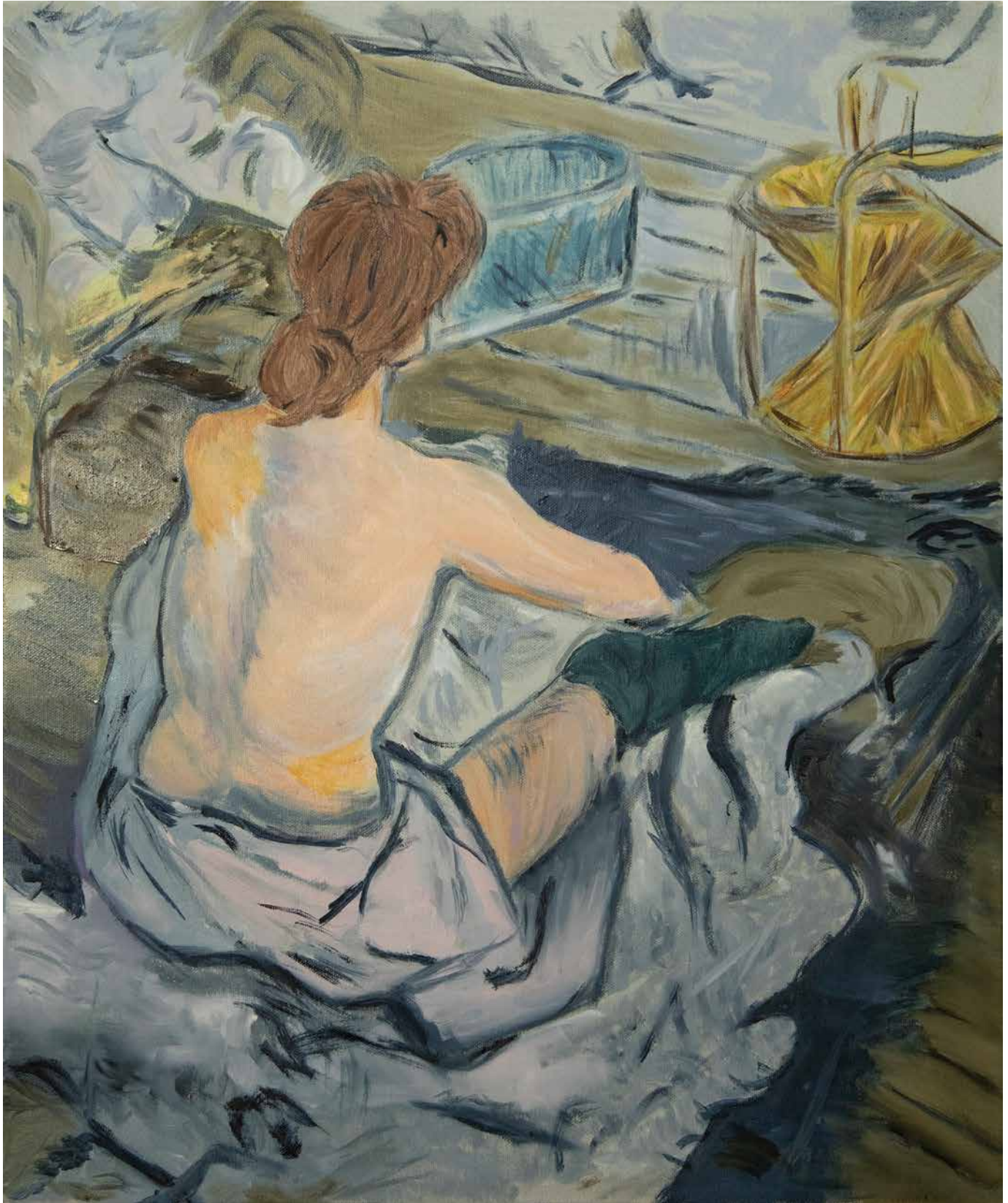
implode, astonishing the man who has slept
without hands in his shower. Legs in their jagged open muster
the wobbly saunter. Lilacs once considered far afield of flood now bow
to the fuming pelt. Bombs of rain and Siamese lightning, for mere precipitation

is never enough experience. The real question is: does a mother
not murmur, *make tracks to the water awaiting, darling?*
Isn't our coupling our running, our waking the hemorrhaging weather?

Η ζωή είναι όμορφη, αυτή απάντησε.
"Life is beautiful," she answered.

~

(Lines from the Greek poet, Yannis Ritsos: "Brief Dialogue")



"Copy of *La Toilette* by Henri Toulouse-Lautrec"

Victoria Oehlbaem

DEEP SORROW IN QUOTATION MARKS

Rebecca Byrkit

Well, it fuckin' well better be.

~ Joe Bolton, 1961-1990

1.

In line by the tabloids
And spearmint antacids, some kid
Started juggling tangelos. His mom

Was a true dream bitch
About it: she said
Why donya quit throwin
Them fruits, Emilio?

The cashier and the bag boy'd
Been flirting: this paused.
Both of these people were dudes.
I was thinking,
God *damn*. My ass is *immense!* What should I *do?*

My handcart held only some Kleenex
And Reisling, but,
I couldn't not
Ogle the child, how he tossed his
Auspicious, bright round meats.
How his chuffing momma couldn't
Stop him making a party now.
No
She could not.

And I could smell them oranges and
How they'd be cut
For dinner.

A wild waft of white liquor
Struck my memory like a cicada to the face.
Stemless stemware. Ha!
Wasn't that hilarious? Ware's the stem? Ha!
It's not there! Haha!
Blood all over the kitchen counter! Ha!

A bag of ice then
I thought, decisively.
That's what I need.
Ice, please. Ice.

2.

God,
It's a swell night to be an asshole,
He said, and flexed
His long hand above
The fabulous oranges.

Our glasses had flamingoes.
Nights were novels, soaked.
The neighborhood
Learned about Clapton at
Three in the morning whether
The neighborhood
Wanted to learn about Clapton, or not.

Fuck the neighborhood! he
Cried, dropping lit
Cigarettes onto
Himself.

If
"Somehow" it "rained"
He'd close the door for the day
In pure fury.

Two nights, of course:
Asleep as a
Pigeon on the bathroom floor.

Many nights:
Politesse: unforgivable pornography.

One night:
Bludgeoned furniture. Sharp
Parts of glass things.
Screams.

Parts of a gun on
A newspaper, spread
Out like a
Special Collection.
When I said why? he said
Well what do I
Know.
They're clean.

And that was that.



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3.

When, later,
I put on some clothes
And went out
On a date with a painter.

I said oh, man, amigo, I'm
So sorry.
My boyfriend
Shot all the best
Of his brains out

Of his head onto
The front of my pants and shorts drawer
Next to my bed.
He chipped his tooth
On the barrel if
You can believe it!

I've spent the whole day
At the Presidio Grill
With an autopsy graph
And a waitress. The soup had so much butter.

He said well,
All right. Just tell me
If the whole deal has *changed* you,
Or what. And
Make it swift, now, honey.

The high balls. or stripes
Clacked in their chassis.
The bartender
Beamed at his chip rack.

Emilio, let your momma take
Her long loud naps outdoor sometimes.

Lift the grass-green flamingoes
Above your bare, hot heads
And consider your footfalls
In the counting, umbilical summer.

~



"Scaring Mountain Lions"
R.M. Lunday, Jr.

GAHAL—GONE AUGUST

Rebecca Byrkit

... and the trees, and the trees, and the trees, and the trees ...! Whoo!

~ Friends of Distinction

Gone August: blueberries and mayonnaise in the grasses --
Your thermos of Guinness. My chardonnays in the grasses

Gone crackers and sweet cheeses. Gone melon. Molasses
Gone mango souari nut-breathed Thursdays in the grasses.

Gone grazin'. You Boch-drunk. Clink of spoons on sunglasses --
Me, girl gone glisterlight. Whitehot malaise in the grasses.

Gone soft aspen slantlight that blisters, then passes.
Gone your kisses, O my Clearing! Wildwood "ways" in the grasses!

Gone lemon, pistachio. White napkin. Gone lashes.
Gone the longgone gone long game that stays for days in the grasses.

Winter lawn, one leaf whips into sky: then crashes --
I remember the tune of your tongue, praise the Grasses.

The chinchillette broods on small losses, great lapses.
Thimbleberry, going, count to tres in the grasses.

Gone a caught August's almonds. Winters that pass us --
Greet the stupefied lie of the body on earth. Long praise that Craze in the grasses.

~



"A Hummy Kind of Day"
Anna Young

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SOMETIME PEOPLE MAGAZINE SUBSCRIBER

Rebecca Byrkit

*... I have spent my life writing poems about living in the woods.
I have never lived in the woods.
~ David Ignatow*

I recommend the fricative
Of felt pink inch right here on me.

I've known about this place as long
As I've fuckin' been *alive*.

It is arrhythmic, crystal, and a museum room for caught things.
It is a classical altitude, deep within a stitch.

I lie on the back of my body
Like an unsuccessful sea.

I compliment the handlebars
At the lawn sale of the suicide.

He'd laughed at me for realizing early oak smoke in the city.
I'd caulk my palms with pitch: blaze crisp saplings of my sex.

Why does every lover have to stage the explanation?
Will I always be a liar, to every loving skin?

Splendid natal thrill of the mute, permissive evergreen.
Fingers, so gone in the earth, they belong.

~

1990

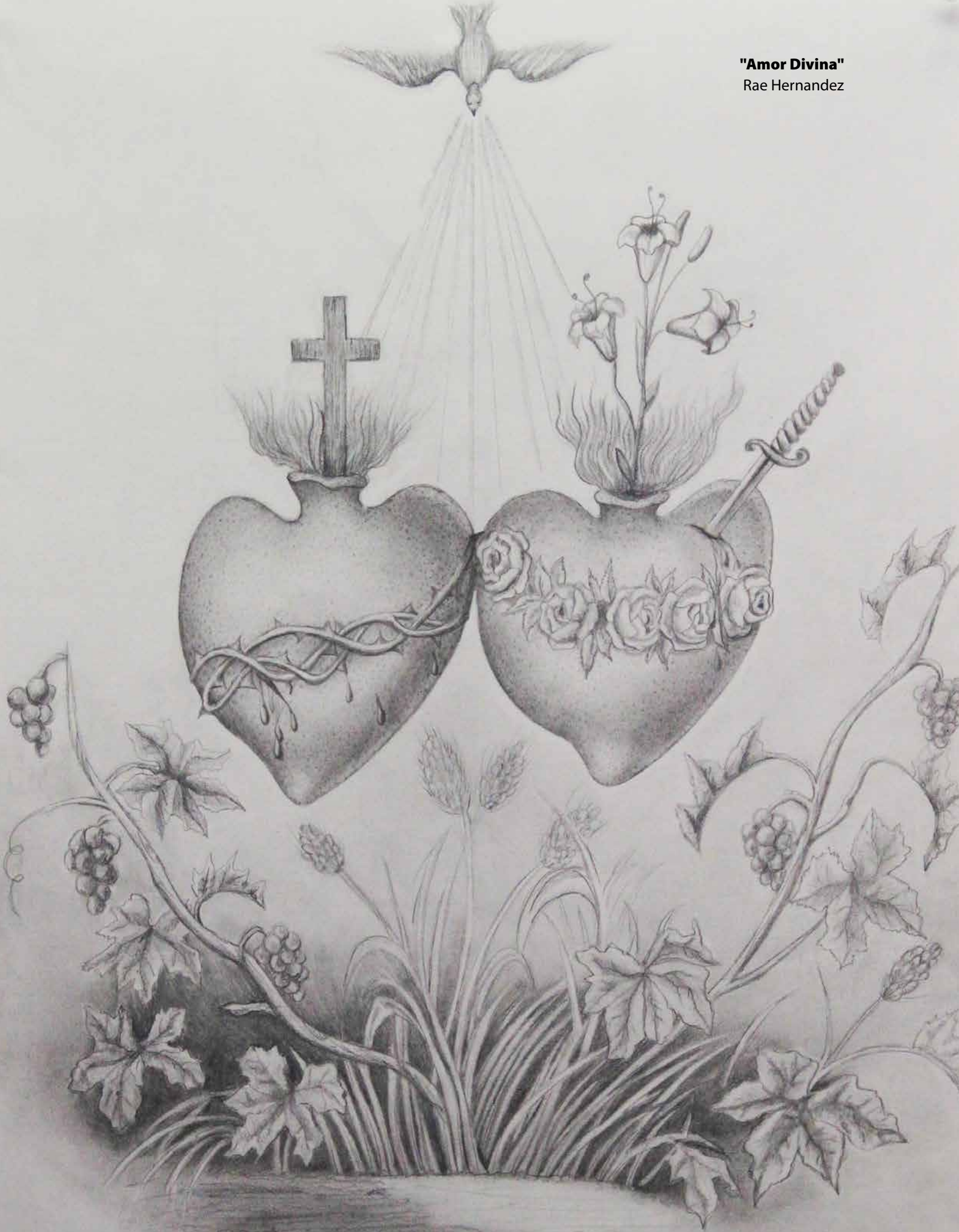


"Safe Harbor"
Sandra Dihlmann

**"PEOPLE LIKE TO SAY THAT
THE CONFLICT IS BETWEEN
GOOD AND EVIL. THE REAL
CONFLICT IS BETWEEN
TRUTH AND LIES."**

Miguel Angel Ruiz

"Amor Divina"
Rae Hernandez



THE RAMBLINGS OF A COWARD

Kaytera Steah

Hold her hand.
You coward, do it
You love her, don't you?

I want to
I want to, and I love her
But I feel a dozen eyes sticking to my skin
and the insults flooding my ears
I can see my grandma crying, asking "Where did I go wrong?"

Wrong.
That's what I am. that's what they want to say when they call me
a fag, a dyke, and why don't they just show me what it's like to live in their light?

Come on darling, you know you want it.
This is what you were made for.

My hand is so cold,
You would warm it right up.
My heart tingles at the thought, yet breaks
When I see your gentle smile, those soft eyes
Waiting, expecting.
I want to hold you,
You're all I want
If I could just reach...

But the world, it closes in
I am better than this. We can be better than this.
It's the finish line I need to cross, and it's just a few steps away
Your hand would make it all stop
And make this awful feeling disappear..

Still,
I stick it in my pocket and say, "Sorry, not right now."
Because I have never been as brave as you
And the eyes, those millions of eyes, release me from their sights
But the pocket never warms me in the same way you do.

I am so selfish, to toy with you like this.

~



"Echoes from the Ancients"
Kevin Brown

FALL

Kaytera Steah

When the leaves turn red
The trees lose their form
They fall. Fall apart. Fall upon the ground.
Fall is beautiful. We love when nature comes
Undone, when it ages, when it bares its naked flesh for all to see.
We love when it Falls.
When nature falls, it's a gift
Fall is beautiful
When you are not human.
When I fall, I'm falling, I've fallen
I am ugly, I am hideous, I am broken
Strip me, then
Of my emotion, my humanity, my clothes
Strip me down to the bone
So I, too, can be beautiful, come my fall.

~



"Walker Lake"
Vicki Oehibaum

I SAW A RIVER

Kaytera Steah

I saw a river
flowing into the sea
stretching beyond the horizon
And starting with me.

I saw the sun set
with eye blink of my eye
getting darker and darker
Till I saw stars in the sky.

I felt a chill
settling beneath my skin
I wished I had a blanket
As it gnawed from within.

I felt a sting in my limbs
As the life drizzled through
I closed my eyes
And thought of you.

~



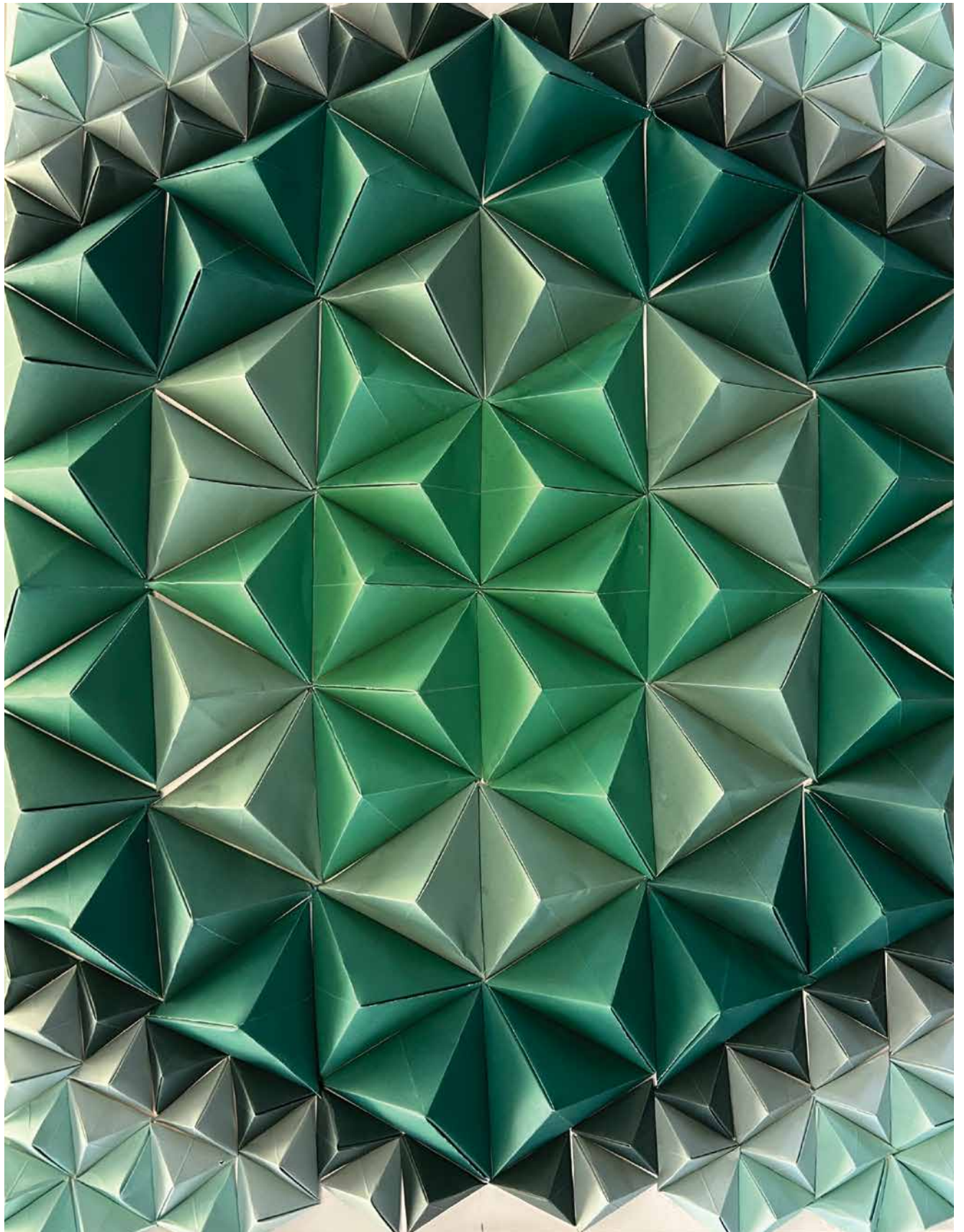
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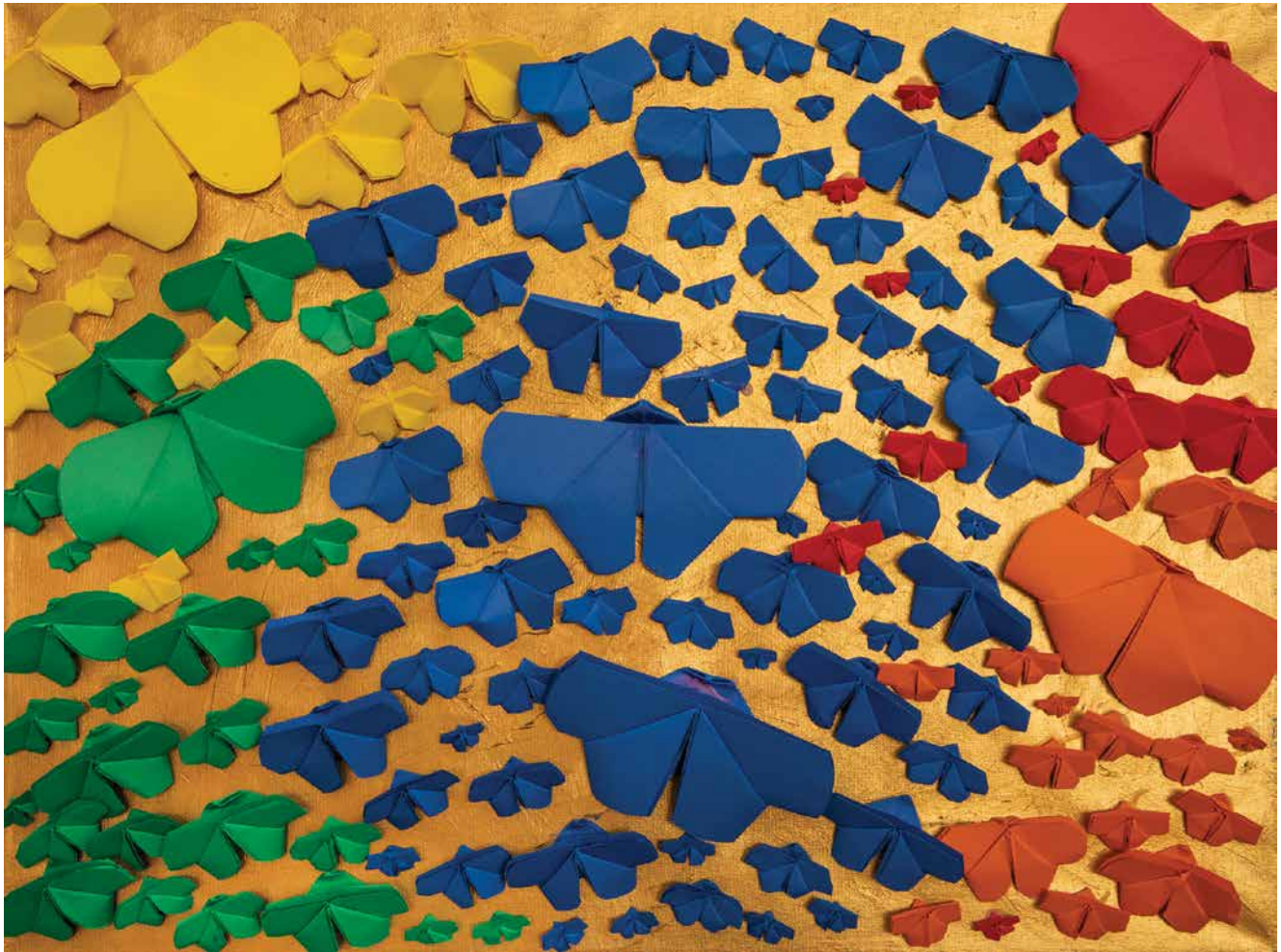
Nevaeh Lewis





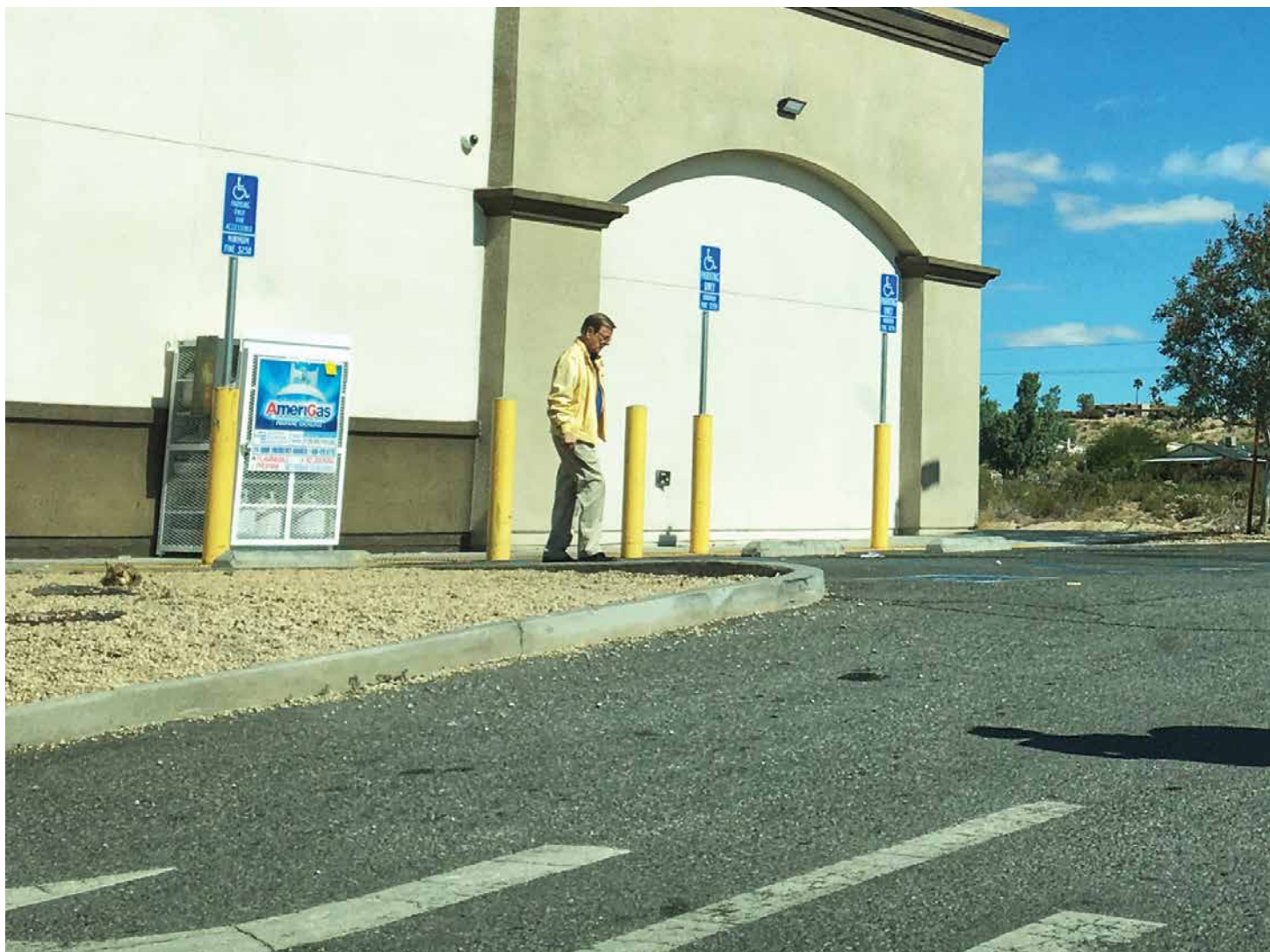


"Untitled"
Brissa Serrano



"Butterflies"
Eleanor Learn

"THE *TRUTH* WILL SET IT WILL MAKE YOU



YOU FREE, BUT FIRST, *MISERABLE.*"

James A. Garfield



"Returns Accepted. No Questions Asked"

R.M. Lunday Jr.

MY SPECIAL POWERS

Cymbre Lauing

I'm 35

My special powers:

No kids, no spouse, no debt,

no financing, no credit cards.

No loans to be paid off

with other loans, death, or taxes.

No degree, no budget, no dad—
no "OnlyFans."

We die like men

crashing through glass ceilings

with sharks and hustlers

circling the deep end.

I've moved 5 times in 2 years.

I've spent more on fast food
than my current monthly rent.

My special powers:

Existing too loud in shared living situations
for old white women
to control or comprehend.

My livelihood is not my hobby.

My heritage is not a fashion choice.

I'm too old to be dug up, straightened—
put on display.

I work part-time in the same museum
where tokens and crystals
pay for guided services.

The White Way.

I cook, bake, sew, paint, dance, draw, and cry.

My special powers:

"No way, John Wayne."

Maybe I'll be an excellent wife, mother, friend (someday),
a cheerleader, supporter, actor, leader,
and counselor. . .

I'm a very good listener.

I can't sing, enunciate, laugh, argue,

trill my r's,

or remember to brush my teeth.

I'm colorblind to all flags

when I'm lonely,

but I'm a very good listener.

10 years recovered

from a "cavernous mass"

of 3 years, 2 father figures,

1 spiritual scrape/brush with death,

1 month of total peace,

and a childhood's worth

of memories.

My special powers:

I'd be the best toxic lover.

No mirrors, no scales, no armor,

no plan, no consequence. . .

When the smoke pours in

there's just me left to save.

No deep breath, no meditation, no song--

Just time to wake up

and wish for more time

to take care of me.



"When Cars Fly"
R.M. Lunday, Jr.

REDEFINING GROOMING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Cassidy Cammarata

Growing up, you read and see stories about people who find love, and all you can think about is how you can't wait for it to happen to you. You never think about how old your partner or best friend will be someday, nor do you care as long as you continue to feel loved by them. As a child, you often believe what you are told; you lean into honesty and tell the truth. You're not ready for deceit. You're not prepared to feel your trust compromised by a person who builds an emotional connection with you so they can manipulate, exploit, and abuse you. You understand grooming to mean what happens to your family pet, not something a human does to another human.

Groomers can be of any age, gender, ethnicity, or race, and they can be strangers, relatives, or authority figures who might be targeting a child (e.g., a faith group leader or sports coach). A groomer "might use blackmail to make a child feel guilt and shame or introduce the idea of 'secrets' to control, frighten, and intimidate" ("What is Grooming?"). This is particularly true of most vulnerable children—those who are unpopular, have family problems, lack confidence and self-esteem, have physical or intellectual disabilities, or those who their caretakers may neglect. The list of consequences is long and varied, with sleep problems, chronic anxiety, and depression rising to the top of the list. One constant is that the lasting effects on a child's well-being may take years to unravel and will likely persist into adulthood, rendering them uncommunicative, angry, and withdrawn from those around them. The best way to protect children from grooming is to talk to them about staying safe.

While predators use a variety of tactics to control their victims, grooming typically unfolds by targeting a child who appears vulnerable, building trust, testing boundaries, and isolating the child ("Protecting Children: Understanding the Impact of Grooming"). Over time, a predator might introduce inappropriate touching, pornography, or physical contact like hugging or tickling to desensitize or attempt to normalize sexual abuse. According to one Middlesex University study, "Offenders often introduce sexual topics with children after just three minutes of chatting online and can form a bond with a child after just eight minutes" (Marchenko). Easy access to email, instant messaging, social media sites, online gaming sites, and photo-sharing sites make grooming accessible; predators can easily disguise their true identities through fake profiles. In-person, the groomer may get close to the victim's family to gain more access to the child and reveal a trustworthy persona. Whether meeting online or in-person, the end goal is to lower a child's inhibitions for sexual exploitation.

Many studies have revealed the effects of grooming on a person's mental health. Following a grooming experience, "[a] child may suffer numerous negative effects such as embarrassment, irritability, anxiety, stress, depression, and substance abuse" (Marchenko). When trust is violated, a child may have difficulty relating to others later in life or engage in unhealthy sexual behavior or activity, and the best way to combat these consequences (outside of stricter laws) is to talk openly about grooming with children. In this world where there is so much access to information and people, with few concerns for facts or consequences, it truly does take a village to raise a child—a heavily populated village.

~

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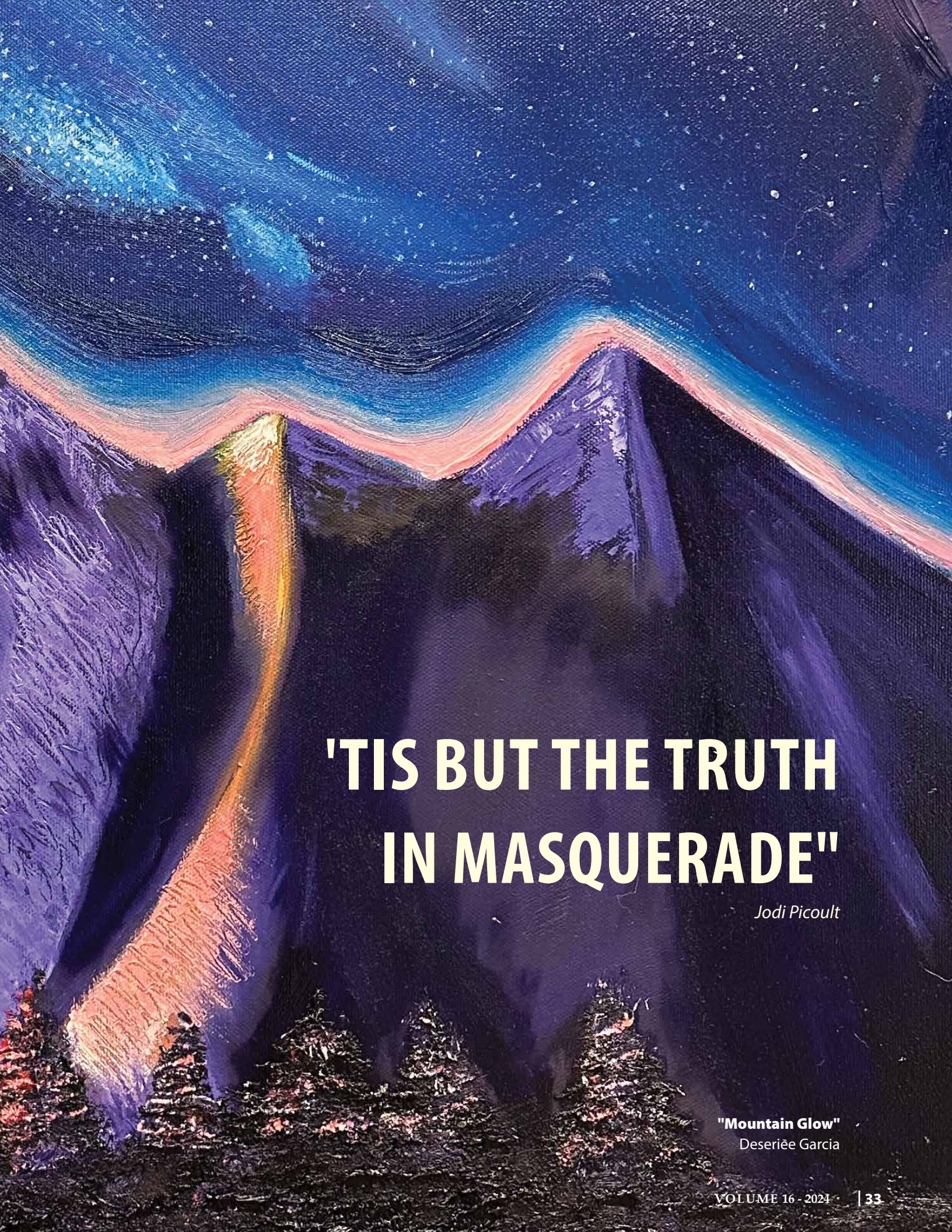
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"Progress"
Anna Young



**"AND, AFTER ALL,
WHAT IS A LIE?"**



'TIS BUT THE TRUTH IN MASQUERADE"

Jodi Picoult

"Mountain Glow"
Deserée Garcia



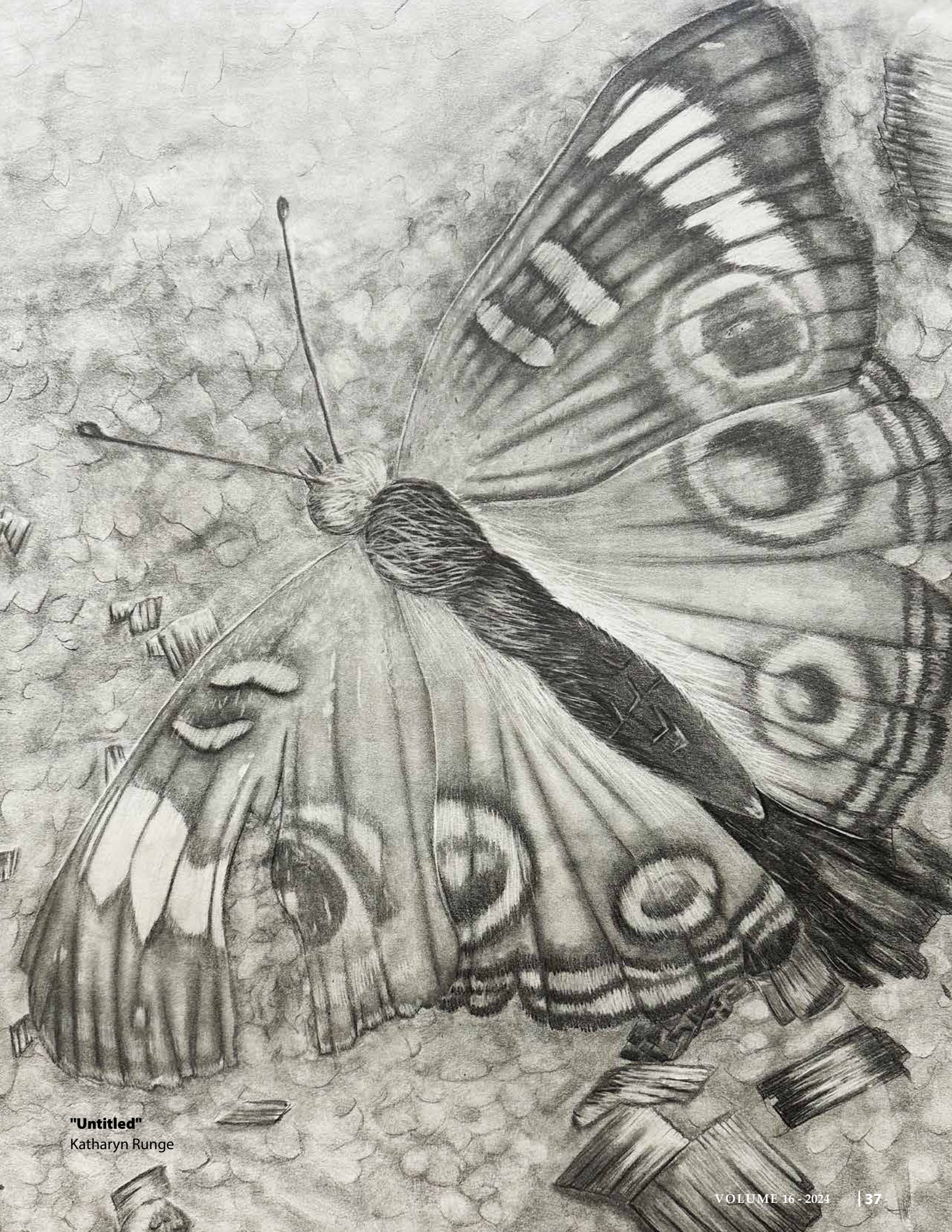
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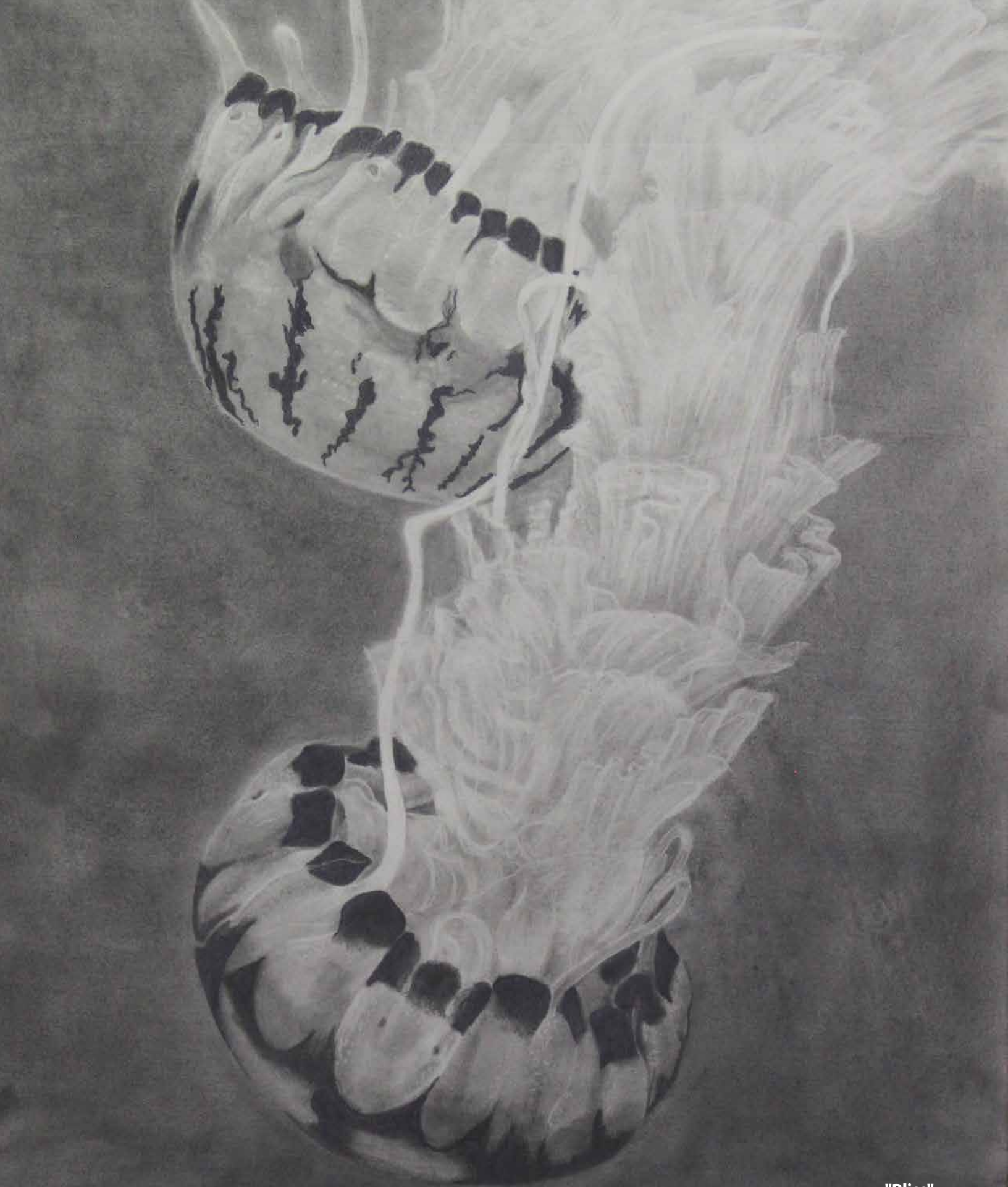
"Lounging Lilly"
Rae Hernandez



"Elephant"
Helene Piet



"Untitled"
Katharyn Runge



"Bliss"

Clairence Twomey

FILM POET

Jason Chavez

In frames of silver, tales unfold,
A reel of dreams, both new and old.
From silent whispers to roaring sound,
Each era's secrets, lost and found.

Through flickering light, a timeless story,
Cinematic magic, in all its glory.
In shadows cast and images spun,
Film journey, never done.

~



"SunMoon Gingerscape"
Bonnie Vagen



"SunMoon Greenscape"
Bonnie Vagen



"Prototype"
Brienne Harvey

**"YOU SHALL KNOW
THE TRUTH,**

**AND THE TRUTH
SHALL MAKE YOU MAD."**

Aldous Huxley





"America"
Duane Jameson



**THE HISTORY OF OUR RACE, AND EACH
INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERIENCE,**

**ARE SOWN THICK WITH EVIDENCE THAT
A TRUTH IS NOT HARD TO KILL AND
THAT A LIE TOLD WELL IS IMMORTAL.**

Mark Twain

"White Sands Sunset"

Duane Jameson

CURIOS

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"It's Super!"
R.M. Lunday, Jr.





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