



Winter Path 2013

Stone Path Review

AN ARTISTIC JOURNAL OF PATHS THROUGH IMAGES AND WORDS



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Stone Path Review

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A Message from the Founders of Stone Path Review

Our mission is to create a path across the planet joining and linking artists from any background, working in any medium to form an open, safe, and non-exclusive forum. By providing an online and print community to share expression and promote cross-cultural arts, while offering personalized positive feedback to submissions, we are a journal created by artists for artists.

Goals

Publish the journal quarterly; online and in print.

Publish a cross-section of new, up and coming, and established artists, working in any medium. Each issue will have a featured artist, that will highlight their work and include an interview. Publish book reviews, artistic pieces, and other content out of cycle to the website. Provide an artistic community and forum to exchange ideas, questions, and information about the arts, comment on other artists and their work, comment on the published issues.



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Artist Patricia Youker

Location Lake Superior Lutsen, MN 2012

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Stone Path Review

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How It Goes

by Mike Finley

Those who are going present themselves,
frantically asking for your help,
and you ease them onto the still-warm bed.
Their eyes are crazy, looking every which-way,
and you lay them on their side
and they pant like a broken bellows,
tearing itself apart, teeth bared,
tongue swollen like a foot in the mouth.
You stroke them so they know you are with
them
in case the brain can no longer see,
and you do not leave them,
not even to fetch water from the tap.
They look at you with gratitude
because you are doing something
and that is all they wanted,
though they never said the words,
to be with you, to feel the reassurance
of your hand, the hand they loved,
till darkness comes and
the heartbeat stops.

Mike Finley

On the morning of August 18, 2009, Mike was awakened by a Buddhist monk at the door. The monk was a chaplain of the Minneapolis Police Department. He was there to inform the household that Daniele Finley, Mike's daughter, had committed suicide.

Daniele was a brilliant girl who had twice before attempted suicide. She had suffered all her life from over a dozen psych problems, including depression, OCD, daily panic attacks and a severe anxiety syndrome. Her death plunged Mike and Rachel and their surviving child Jon into a deep spiral. Mike lost his job, many of his friends, who were frightened by the death, and his faith in a more or less habitable universe. Up until this point Mike had been a prolific published poet and author of over 40 collections, a 1985 Pushcart winner, a featured author in numerous journals. With his daughter's death Mike took the only approach he felt was open to him writing through the tumult of his grief. The result has been an outpouring of new work that went deeper to and more dangerous places of the heart than he had ever touched before.

Since Daniele's death Mike has self-published over 40 new titles, and nearly a hundred videos, exploring not just his daughter's life and death but the life beyond that, for himself, his wife Rachel and son Jon. The culmination of his writing is the book *A Thousand Days*.

In recognition of this work, Mike was awarded the 2010 KPVI Kerouac Award, a lifetime achievement award.

Website: <http://mfinley.com>



There is a Kingdom

by Mike Finley

of people who don't like who they are,
though the birds sing there
with every kind of flower.

No one knows how they got this way.
Some say they live under a witch's curse.
Some say they drank from a poisoned well.
Some say the people are sinners from another
life,
and this life is their punishment.

Some even say these people are the scape-
goats
from every other kingdom
where the people don't care
who suffers for them,
and the music and dancing
in those lands go on.



Marathon Through Open Fields by William Ricci

(1)

I awoke running through snowy fields
my naked body covered with snow.
With no certainty
I am near the Cathedral Mountains.

Each peak casts a shadow
into the valley of frozen creeks
and frozen pine as the horizon widens
on the first day of autumn.

Fists pumping in synch with
extended legs, silent imprints.

Distant white birch
blends with scattered clouds
heavy with rain, and the pale blue
emerging as the sun appears

its shadow grazing
each prairie grass stalk.

My breath suspended on exhale,
calves burning from the speed and distance
through this field, a field in a dream
or the light of day.

Haunted by pain of muscle and lung burning.
Does the existence of pain
exclude the existence of dream
when running through open fields?

I feel big bluestem whip against my skin,
and the rose bushes thorn bite. I feel
sweat beading on my forehead and can
hear the ice crystals grow.

(2)

Lying motionless at sunset,
just minutes before the senses disappear

and the night takes over.

I remember...

A fire in the open field
and we ran, towards the river.

Not all of us made it, some
stumbled upon the hidden tussocks,
others' breath gave out. Some
stopped and begged for mercy.

I kept running.

We run from that which we do
not understand, the pure moments
we face, the fear, the unknown
that we strive to find a hint of knowing.

As children the temptation of fire teases
a desire to hold the flames,
a growing shadow runs on the wall.

(3)

The grasses sway in the eastward autumn
wind.

(4)

Awakening to shades of gray
the tree line capped in burnt orange and violet
reflecting through a prism of ice crystals
suspended in the winter air.

Looking back at the next turn I see nor hear
anything.

Am I leading the marathon or am I the
only runner sprinting across the open field

towards an undisclosed finish line, miles away?

A marathon through the open fields outside
Hac
takes you into the industrial park, littered
with long abandoned Soviet-era tanks rust in
ruin,
fused to the concrete where a missile disabled
them.

Steel belted tracks scattered amongst
burnt grass and rock, wires tied to mines lay
across the corridor between two three story
concrete buildings, the partially exposed walls
speak of secrets once held under death.

This is where our sins crashed,
this is where they burn, far from
the confluence of the two rivers
and the white petals.

The open fields, the infinite visibility
where the sun stretches across the
prairie grass, only serves to know
the path to follow, and nothing more.

(5)

I awoke running through snowy fields,
the bison lumbering with frozen noses and
hanging breath

the autumn wheat dusted with snow,
weighed down from ice pellets
they do not budge when I run past.

The marathon continues
down a path I do not know
I have never been here before.

My legs burn. I stop for a moment
near the river's edge with ice along
the bank, reeds are frozen in time.

Even a breeze upon my chilled face,
does not move them. Near the horizon
over the willow trees reach, ravens
are suspended in mid-flight.

Not a whisper.

(6)

I awoke on what I thought was the
6th day of autumn, perhaps the end of spring,
the sun just minutes after rising, wisps
of white clouds expand north.

My head lies upon evergreens, near
the riverbank, a grove of trees to my left.
The remnants of a fire within a stone ring,
the smoldering oak white and ashen.

I run, a shadow is close
the cold tingle on my skin,
the open field offers no shelter
no protection.

The shadows disappear when the sun
reappears.

This path takes me into the ancient forest,
thousands year old oak and overgrown
alders reaching across the
recently trampled undergrowth and
star ferns. Green vegetation
mashed with brown mud, my bare
feet squish the muck.

Each bank, each curve, I look behind
and it follows, motion for motion, I
try to escape, out maneuver.

The shadow follows me still.

(7)

After what I thought was the 7th day of running,
I stopped. My chest, my lungs should be
burning,
I should feel pain, an intense tightness of my
lungs.
But I felt nothing,

Not even sweat upon chilled skin.
Is the marathon over? May I stop running
from the shadow, seemingly an extension of
extremities, sometimes mine, a conscious
connection
to the nerves, sometimes a separated flow
I feel, I am looking down upon?

Some distant sound, increasing intensity,
I lose focus and feeling in my legs,
maybe it's only in my mind,
my limbs cave like rubber bands.

I lose sight of the river, drop
to my knees amongst lady slippers.
Jack pines tower above me.

Opening my eyes, I do not know this path.
Time a distant memory, no more days.

A light shimmers

off of wrinkles in the river.

Something happened to the sun.
Where the prairie grass once swayed
in the wind, oak have taken over
and the vine creeps upwards.

Around the trunk, each branch,
the spiral reaches the top,
constricting and the oak wilts.

At the confluence of two rivers
white petals continuously fall
from somewhere, into the waiting water.

Like snowflakes, each one unique,
each pristine, a birth, a life,
moments in time, each one older
as another equinox passes.

And the river stops, glacial rock exposed.
Stillness, light comes closer
a double vision, the mirror splits to either side
as I stand at the confluence.

The shadow dissipates.

William Ricci has been writing experimental poems and essays about nature and awareness for 25 years. He is also the poetry editor for The Edge magazine and Stone Path Review. His poems and essays have appeared in: A View from the Loft, The Edge, Whistling Shade, Paper Darts, Whispering Angel, Seven Circle Press, PrimalZine, Lief Magazine, Misty Mountain Review, and Teesta Rangeet. When searching for his muse, he travels, hikes, and seeks sources of water and experiments with prairie restoration.

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In Search of Silence

by Chris Roe

Beyond the storm,
Where blue sky
Still cradles
The morning sun.

In the clearing,
Where shafts of light
Hold back the shadows
Of the ancient wood.

Beyond conflict and pain
And the inhumanity of man.
Beyond duty
And this journey
That has seemed so long.

Beyond the history
That has brought me
To this sacred place,
This spiritual sanctuary.

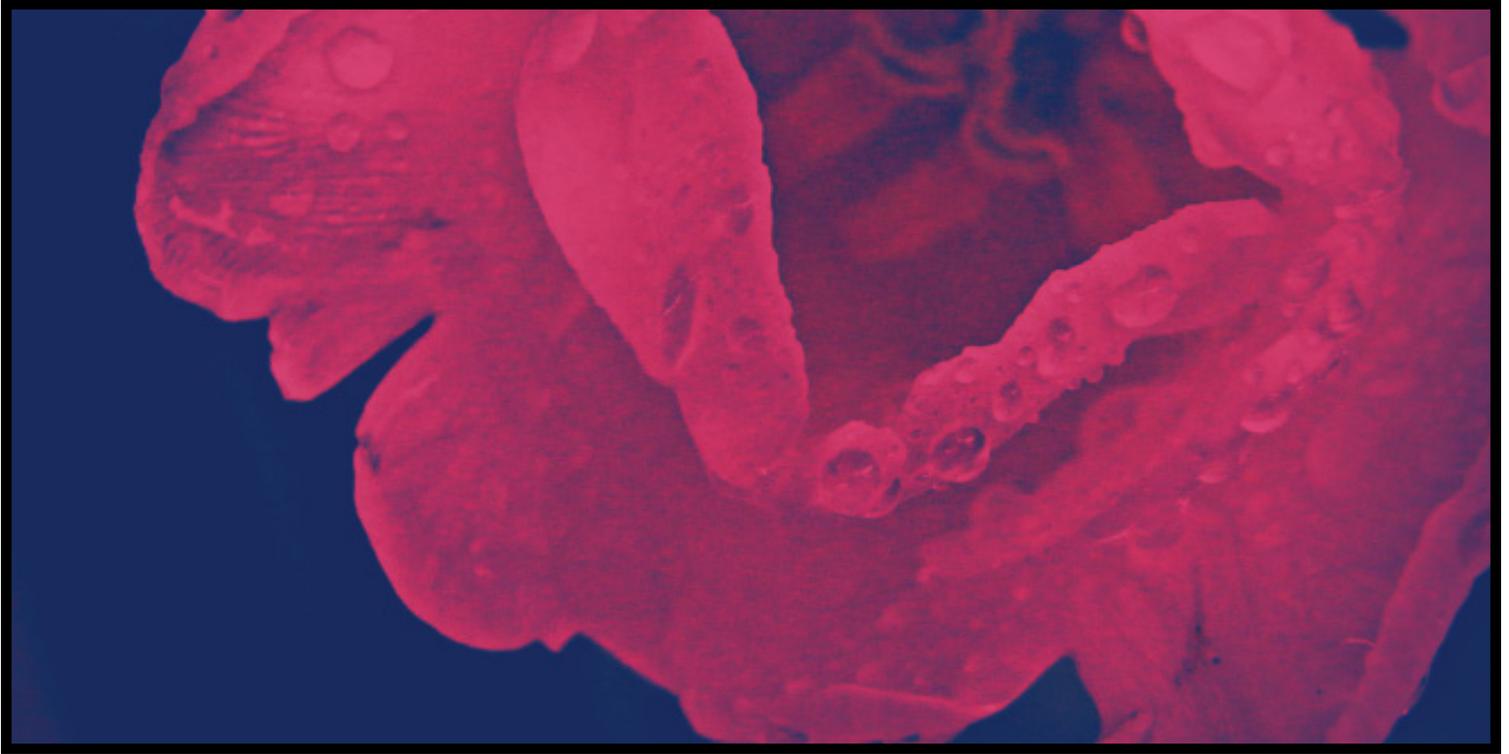
This peace,
This silence,
This love.

Chris Roe was born in the rural county of Norfolk, England, in 1948, where he has lived and worked for much of his life. Most of Chris's working career has been spent within the agricultural industry.

His love of nature and the peace and tranquillity of rural England is very much reflected in many of his poems.

Although individual poems have been published in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the UK, "In Search of Silence" is the first complete collection of work Chris has published to date. This collection of work is available from Chris's website at

www.silentflightpublications.co.uk

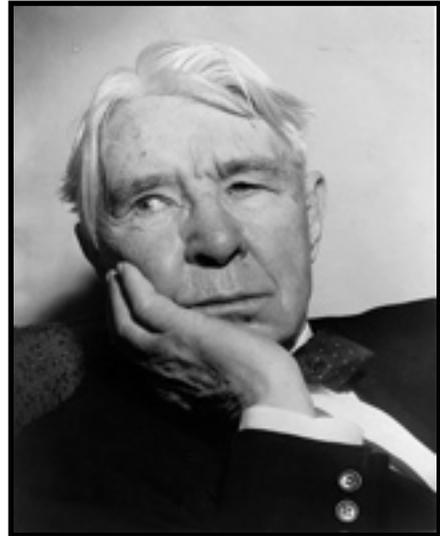


Under the Harvest Moon

by Carl Sandburg

Under the harvest moon,
When the soft silver
Drips shimmering
Over the garden nights,
Death, the gray mocker,
Comes and whispers to you
As a beautiful friend
Who remembers.

Under the summer roses
When the flagrant crimson
Lurks in the dusk
Of the wild red leaves,
Love, with little hands,
Comes and touches you
With a thousand memories,
And asks you
Beautiful, unanswerable questions.



Carl Sandburg (January 6, 1878 – July 22, 1967) was an American writer and editor, best known for his poetry. He was the recipient of three Pulitzer Prizes: two for his poetry and another for his biography of Abraham Lincoln.



Theme in Yellow

by Carl Sandburg

I spot the hills
With yellow balls in autumn.
I light the prairie cornfields
Orange and tawny gold clusters
And I am called pumpkins.
On the last of October
When dusk is fallen
Children join hands
And circle round me
Singing ghost songs
And love to the harvest moon;
I am a jack-o'-lantern
With terrible teeth
And the children know
I am fooling.



Soreng

by Dweep Subba

The place abundantly filled with nettle
 It is where our ancestor happened to settle
 Turning its face towards Darjeeling
 The rustic sensation from "Moh-Bhir" flies with
 its wing
 Gumpa Dara nestled in its head
 People to Barsey enroute do tread.
 The heart of the town
 A five minute long bazaar wears a gown
 Colorful myriad gown
 Majestically, the heart of the town

(1)

Stretching its one hand towards Timberbung,
 The tune of "Haakparey" do the Limboo's sung.
 The melody of "Dohori, Haakparey" flows

By the rice, paddy field that glitteringly glows
 To "Tharpu" just below its navel
 The bucolic tunes just like Aesop's fable
 Suddenly arouses the man from their babble.

(2)

The city of light
 To the further does it bright
 "I don't want to remain in here",
 In damp; Malbasey utters in fear
 Playing its reed while herding the cow
 Making the enthused spirit of Budang low
 What has happened and gone wrong?
 Oh Shamans elucidate the gist of the song

(3)

The natives then play the tune of Malshree
 Evoking the content reminiscence of by gone

days
The Limboo carrying its kettle drum plays,
The myriad beat of animism.
Malbasey hereof smiles in the shade of
pantheism.
The sound from the Kettle drum
And as the then tunes of Malashree hum
Mingling with the swirling flowing Rangvang
rivulet

(4)

The gorging and swirling "Rangvang" rivulet
To its foot positioned like bed
While Tharpu and Budang at times
Malbasey during weekends
And Timberbung, once in a blue moon
Rests their head in the bed like rivulet
While Soreng looks upon
At the bed shaped rivulet
Soreng About to utter but calm
Obelisk and quietly stands tall.

(5)

REFERENCE

1. Soreng – It lies to the West of Sikkim. It was previously known as "Sore-yong". A name which was kept by the Lepcha's as the meaning in Lepcha - the place full of nettle.
2. Lepcha – The aborigines or the natives of Sikkim.
3. Barsey – The Rhododendron sanctuary in West Sikkim.
4. Darjeeling – The famous Hill station faces Soreng face to face. Darjeeling also known as

"Gundri – Bazaar" during the past yester years.
5. Moh – Bhiri – "Mohbhiri" and also known as "Bhiri Dara" is the ultimate face of Soreng. It may be one of the highest precipice in Sikkim and is very unique as it attracts a lot of tourists.

6. Timberbung – A small mainly Limboo inherited village in Soreng.

7. Tharpu - A small mainly Limboo inherited village in the outskirts of Soreng.

8. Budang - A small village in the outskirts of Soreng.

9. Malshree -A beautiful tune played mostly during the celebration of Dashain. This tune gives a melancholic reminiscences of Dashain and Tihar which is observed by the Nepali people once in a year all over the world.

10. "Haakparey"- A limboo way of singing song which is full of rhetoric and prosody

11. Dohori – The Nepali name for folk song which is sung between two arch rivals as they continue to thrash each other by words used in their song.

12. Malbasey – The birthplace of former Chief Minister of Sikkim. Shree Nar Bahadur Bhandari.

13. Rangvang Rivulet – A small rivulet that flows by the foot of Soreng.

Dweep Mustang is a "Gurkha" Sikkimese Poet/writer and the author of the Book "The Sanctum of Art" – Madness & Creativity. He is currently working as a Journalist cum Columnist for Sikkim Express, "A Sikkimese daily". He is in the Editorial team of "The Applicant" and the founding Editor of "Teesta Rangeet" A Poetry Journal.

His poems have been published in various journals. His latest poem entitled "Junker" was published by "Teesta Rangeet" A Poetry Journal, from Sikkim along with internationally acclaimed poets and writers.

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Life Is

by Craig Steele

Life is
not about us.
Life is about crossing
traversable veils and our path
through them.

Craig W. Steele's poetry has been appearing in children's magazines and anthologies since 2009 and in literary magazines and anthologies since 2010. To date, he has had over 200 poems published in print and online journals, the majority in the United States, but nearly half in Australia, Canada, Ireland, Sweden, Taiwan, Japan and the United Kingdom. This is his first poetry collection.

Craig was born in Port Arthur, Texas, in 1954. He and his mother and brother moved back to the family's "home state" of Pennsylvania following the death of his father in 1967. Since the turn of the century (that's the 21st century!) he has lived with his wife, Catherine, and their two children, Emily and Ryan, in the urban countryside of northwestern Pennsylvania, not far from the great Lake Erie. He divides his creative time between his day job as a professor of biology at Edinboro University, and as a poet and writer of fiction and non-fiction for adults and children. Thanks to his family, he lives surrounded by inspiration and epiphanies.



Absence of Nothing

by Hanakia Zedek

(1)

In the absence of Nothing, everything exists. That is not to say that if you remove Nothing you have everything, on the contrary, everything exists in the essence of The Nothing. It is in absence that you have all potentiality; for there then is space left for the Manifest.

(2)

We have the notion that something can't come from Nothing, when in fact it does. That is truly the only way that anything can come into existence.

(3)

For the human existence to improve, much has to be removed. Release and letting go are sore spots for human beings because we hold onto

so much stuff enough is enough!

(4)

There is freedom in the contemplation of not having; in order to move you must remove. You need space to do the things that you really want to do.

(5)

This Universe is not built on things for it logically to exist it must be built on Nothing and it is this that is the fabric of things.

(6)

You can even say that extrapolating Nothing is nonsense for it (6) takes far more than sense to understand the inexplicable nature of absence. For it in essence is simply without. So from normal human standings we simply don't have the where-with-all to understand this because there simply is Nothing to understand.

(7)

This society is based on gain and accumulation and we deeply fear anything to do with loss, when in fact, we have seen that so much is gained in the losing of things, such as, archaic ideas and beliefs.

(8)

If a river stayed the same it would have nothing to gain. As a river flows it washes away all resistance eking away at the unnecessary aspects of existence.

(9)

Freedom is the absence of religion, belief, judgment, faith, hope, need, want, desire, and even self. Then when there is Nothing else, then you can simply be.

(10)

If you were to hold my hand I could not stand on my own I am truly free when I am left alone.

(11)

In the deepest parts of me I find Nothing, in between all of the spaces I find Nothing, In all of the scary places, I find Nothing. If there is anything at all to realize at any time it would be, Nothing.

(12)

If I were to be asked what does it feel like I would say that it is like not having to do anything at anytime. It is the breath that I breathe in that space when I am not anyplace in particular.

(13)

Now I have given my mind this treat; this absence, with Nothing to seek Nowhere to hide, with Nothing inside.

(14)

The simplicity of this absence has no twists or turns, Nothing to be taught, Nothing to learn.

(15)

When I have released myself from any ideas; I become so crystal clear, everything is right here/there.

(16)

Thought is the human tragedy, emptiness is the only strategy. If thought has nothing to hold onto, it releases you.

(17)

So if I go to that place of absolute emptiness and find Nothing in Absence I have found the keys to existence.

(18)

If I find the Absence of Nothing I have truly found something.

(19)

This society is hinged on endless preconceived notions of what they think life is, without doing what it takes to simply live it.

(20)

As I dig deeper into who I truly am, I find Nothing of a man, I by-pass who I think I am. I then find the Absence of being and I start

seeing my truth, with Nothing to prove and all removed.

(21)

When I say Hello, I have no idea of where it will go, all I know is that at that moment of it being said, it is not in my head. As it rises and it is spoken the wall between us is broken into a million unremembered pieces of false interpretation and misrepresentation.

(22)

As I rise my hands the air is everywhere and nowhere, I don't have to hold it, I don't have to own it, and it has shown me the way to absolute freedom. By being nowhere I am everywhere. By being everywhere I am nowhere to be found; I am therefore never bound!

(23)

You may ask me what is peace?; I would simply say "It is release".
Not having to hold onto any of this.

(24)

You have spent your life fighting for something that you never had to fight to have. Struggle is just sad, it make a pure person turn bad.

(25)

I have said it before; your worst case scenario is in most cases is your best case scenario. When you leave all else behind it is always your truth that you find.

(26)

I want to show you the brilliance of this Nothingness is the pure essence of all that is. It is there that you find it. Go to the deepest part of whatever it is, and that's all that there is. Now build from this absence and learn how to perpetuate existence.

(27)

If you empty out consciousness you get Nothingness. When Intent moves through this Absence you have the Manifest of Existence. This is the drawing board that is always ignored!

(28)

Extract Emptiness and see what you get. Manage Absence and you will always find success.

(29)

As I move into this Empty Field all is revealed. As I am removed into Absence I have misplaced my foolishness. And there is Nothing left.

(30)

Now here is the test, in yourself, find the Absence of Nothing, until there is Nothing else. Then you will realize what truly is The Self.

Hanakia Zedek is a Spiritual Leader in Twin Cities specializing in The Philosophy of Nothing. Known for his cutting edge application of the Psycho~Spiritual Arts; he shows how all that is and is not emerges from within.

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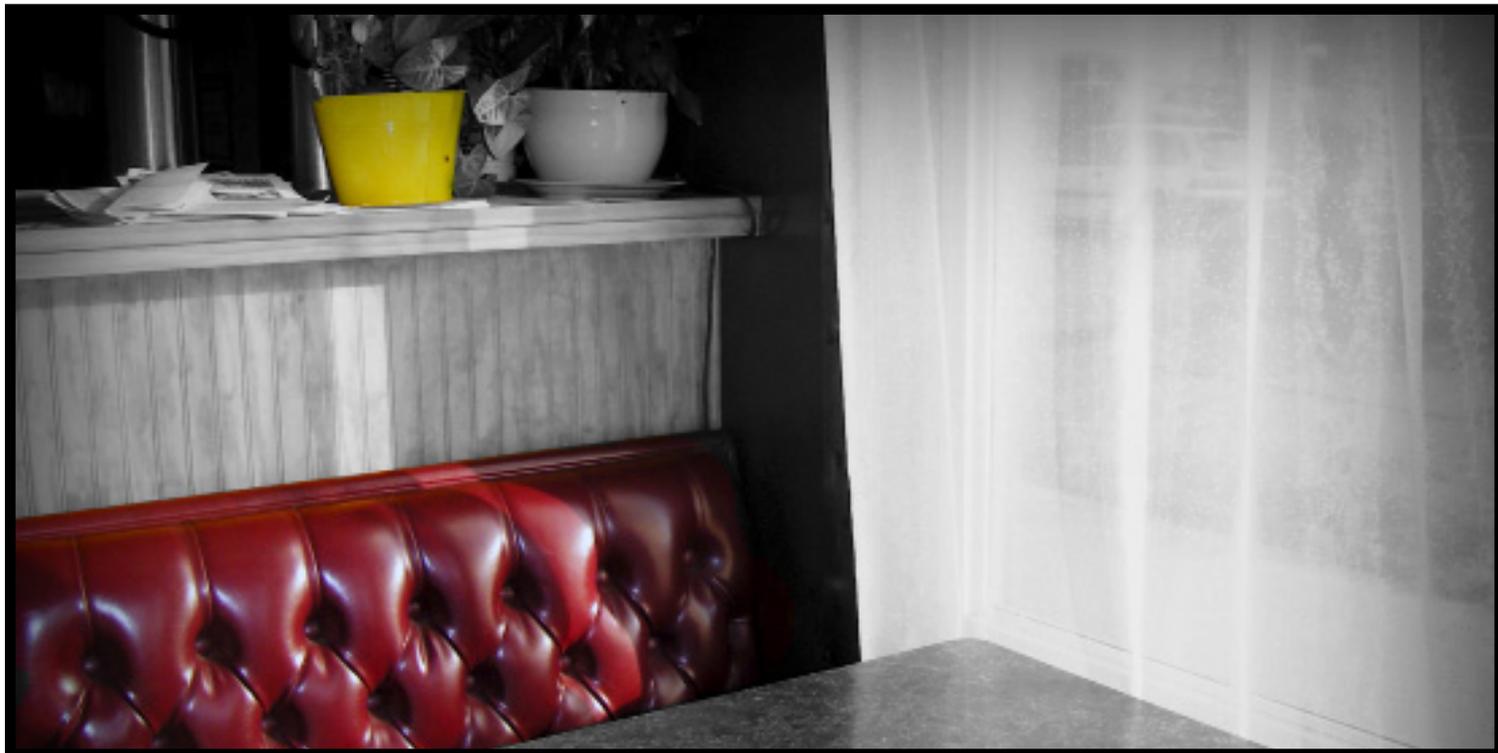
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David in the Different Colored Shirt

by Greg Morton

Guy tended his bruised cheek. His muscles flexed. He looked at himself in the glass and saw the bruise, but the bruise seemed distant. He dabbed it with the wet cloth before walking away. He still remembered. Maybe his cheek was sore, but that wasn't what pained him.

He walked to the phone, picking up the receiver but not putting it to his ear. It had been ringing, and now he heard a voice but he didn't want to talk. He didn't want to listen. Guy was still thinking about his cheek. About David. He put the phone to his ear.

"Yes."

"I have been trying to find you."

"I've been out."

"Out?"

"Yes."

"Can I see you?"

She wanted to see him. He didn't want to talk. He didn't want to see her. He was in pain, and his cheek was sore. His day had started so well, too. Now it was full of pain. And she wanted to see him. He set the receiver on the counter and walked away. Guy walked out of his front door and to the walkway. He still held the wet cloth in his hand.

Guy met David just that morning. They didn't know each other before, but maybe had seen each other. Guy didn't know if he had seen David before. He tried to remember. All he could think about was his coffee. His paper.

His life before David.

His life had been habit. Routine. Guy didn't have many friends. He worked alone at the house. Occasionally he needed to go out. He didn't own a car. He didn't own a television. His life was habit and routine. Guy didn't spend much time talking to others and he didn't spend much time listening to others. He remembered when he was little, when he would talk to other kids and what they would say to him and how much he tried to be different. It turned out Guy was different.

Guy walked. He received three deliveries at the house every day, and Fred always delivered them at the same time. Guy knew when he could leave the house to walk or when he needed to be home. The deliveries were heavy. Reams of paper in heavy cardboard boxes. Guy didn't mind. He liked lifting the boxes. He liked seeing Fred and getting his deliveries, and then leaving home for a walk. His morning walk always took him to the coffee stand.

It was his routine.

Guy ordered regular coffee and sweetened it with low fat milk. No sugar. The regular coffee didn't cost much and he had his own cup. It was large. Each morning he walked to the coffee stand and had his cup filled and sweetened and then he sat in the corner chair by himself and read the free paper. Amanda Petersen said it was Guy's social time. Guy didn't have social time.

Guy would read his paper and drain his cup and return home. It was his routine. Every day he spent his morning walk going to the coffee stand before returning home to work and to receive other deliveries. His afternoon walk took him down the street to the bakery for a sandwich and cup of soup. In the late afternoon Guy walked to the park.

Guy stood on the walkway in front of his house and looked down the street. It was empty. No car had driven by since he walked out of his house. He turned and looked the other direction. The street was empty. Guy felt empty. He checked his watch. It read five minutes after twelve noon. His second delivery was late.

Just like the first delivery was late.

The new driver had told Guy that Fred was at the hospital with his wife. She was pregnant. Fred was going to be a father. His first child. The new driver was excited for Fred, he told Guy. He was a father, too, and he knew Fred was going to be really good to his new child. Guy was happy too. In a way.

He had arrived at the coffee stand later than normal. He ordered his regular coffee sweetened with low fat milk. Guy paid for his drink and found a free copy of the paper lying on a table. Someone was sitting in his regular seat. Guy had checked his watch.

He had sat in another seat toward the

middle of the coffee stand. Closer to the counter. The stand had been busy. More people had been standing in line ordering coffee. More people had been sitting in the seats. Someone had been sitting in Guy's seat. He tried to read but he was distracted. He heard all of the conversations.

And he had seen David walk in. David was young and thin and small, and had been wearing that different colored shirt. Guy was sure he had never seen David before. He would have remembered. David had walked in and sat down in a seat. He had sat near Guy.

And Guy heard the conversations. He heard the words. He had heard them before. Guy hadn't heard those words in a very long time. He had glanced around carefully to see who had said them. He was sure they were talking about him. He had heard those words before and they had been talking about him. Guy had looked around and found his regular seat was occupied. He hadn't known the man sitting there, but he had heard the words before.

Guy had quickly returned to reading. He had pretended to read. He tried to sip his coffee and read but he was distracted. The man in his seat had been talking. When Guy had looked up again from his paper, he had noticed the man wasn't looking at him. The man had been looking at David. David in the different colored shirt.

"Loser."

Guy had trembled. He had heard the words when they were said about him. He had remembered how it made him feel. It had been a long time ago, but not so long. He had trembled when he heard them. But the man hadn't been saying them about Guy. He had been saying them about David. They still hurt when Guy heard them, but they weren't being said to him.

"Faggot."

Guy's face had flushed. He had held his paper up between him and the man sitting in his seat. The man he had never seen before. He had held the paper up and could no longer see the man. But he had still heard him. Guy had quickly looked to David.

David had been sitting in his seat with his back toward the man who had been talking about him. It hadn't appeared to Guy that David had even heard the words. David had seemed like he hadn't heard anything. He had never turned his head.

The woman who owned the coffee stand was young. She was a pretty woman. She had walked around the counter with a small cup of hot chocolate and a magazine and had given them both to David. She had kissed him on the forehead and tousled his hair. She had kissed him.

Guy hadn't heard the words when the woman was near.

David had taken his cup of hot chocolate and his magazine and set them on the table in front of him. He had lifted the magazine so nobody could see his face. He had been hiding. David had heard the words. Guy had seen that David looked just like him. Guy's face had flushed.

"Sissy."

Guy had wanted to break into tears. Like he used to. He had finished his coffee and hadn't been able to read his paper and had been flushed with hearing those words again. Guy had checked his watch. He was late. His routine had been interrupted. Destroyed. He had gotten up to leave. He had gotten up to flee.

"Nice shirt, retard."

Guy had left the free paper and his own table. He had grabbed his large cup, empty. He had avoided eye contact with everyone at the coffee stand. He had avoided looking at the man in his seat. He had walked toward the door but then he had stopped. Guy had walked to the counter.

"Is that a fresh pot?"

"It sure is."

"Is it hot?"

"Very hot."

"Can I get a refill?"

"You sure can. Be very careful."

Guy had paid his money. He hadn't asked for low fat milk. Guy had walked across the coffee stand and stood directly in front of the man who was sitting in his seat. He had stood there and waited for the man to look up again. The man had finally looked up to say something to David. The man had noticed Guy.

Guy had poured the very hot coffee directly over the man's head. The man had screamed and flailed his legs and squirmed. Guy had to take a step back. It allowed the man to stand. It had allowed the man face Guy. The man's face had been red, very red. It had been burned with coffee. The man had troubles seeing. But that hadn't stopped him from punching Guy in the cheek.

Guy had never been hit before. Not in the face. When he was ten Guy had been called a name by a boy at the playground. He had answered the insult with one of his own. The boy had chased him, and Guy remembered being scared. The boy had caught up with him near the monkey bars and punched him in the back. The blow had knocked all the air out of Guy's lungs. He remembered not being able to breathe. He remembered thinking he was going to die. He had never insulted anyone after that day.

The man at the coffee stand had punched in him the cheek, but it had seemed distant. And fast. Guy hadn't thought about being punched in the face before and certainly had never thought about what he would do. Guy had reached out with his coffee mug in his hand and smacked the man on the nose. The man who had been sitting in his seat and saying those words to David fell back onto the floor. His nose had grown red and swollen. He had begun bleeding. The man's eyes had grown big, and he had gotten up from the floor holding his bleeding nose.

Guy didn't know it but the man who had been sitting in his seat and saying those words to David had never been punched in the face before either. He had stood there and lightly touched his cheek and had felt the bruise begin to surface. He had been lost in his own world for a moment, but that moment hadn't lasted. He had soon realized the coffee stand was quiet. And he had realized everyone there had been looking at him. A couple of the people there had been smiling at him. David too. Guy had started walking for the door.

"I think your shirt is very cool," Guy had whispered.

Guy stood on the walkway in front of his house and looked down the street. His afternoon delivery was late. He checked his watch. He still held the wet cloth in his hand. His bruised cheek was sore, but that wasn't what pained him. He looked up when he heard the sound of a car turn the corner and stop in front

of his house. It was the young woman on the phone. The woman who owned the coffee stand. She stepped out of the car.

"My son told me."

"What?"

"You like his shirt."

"I had the same shirt."

"Nobody has ever told him."

"Is he okay?"

Nobody had ever told David they liked his shirt. Nobody had ever asked if he was okay. She smiled. The young woman reached her hand out to touch Guy's hand. She told him she appreciated him. She asked if he was okay. Nobody had told Guy they appreciated him. Nobody had ever asked if he was okay. He smiled and held her hand.

Greg Morton is an entertainment jack of all trades. He is an adventure novelist, motivational writer, outdoor adventure filmmaker and radio talk show host. He is a former child actor, having appeared opposite such Hollywood icons as Kate Jackson, Beverly Garland, Shirley Jones and Bruce Boxleitner. Greg's literary work includes action/adventure fiction, motivational non-fiction, poetry and family fantasy/adventure. He can currently be seen on the reoccurring webisodes of The Micro-Adventures and can be heard as the host of the weekly radio program The Greg Morton Show.

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Tunnels of My Childhood - pt 4 by Felice Scrittore

Once finished we closed the outer door leading into the storage area and ran out of the house. Chasing each other through the backyard and out into the open field that lay behind my grandmother's immaculate rows of fresh vegetables. We raced to bury our new found treasure. We stopped under the spreading limbs of a massive oak tree that stood three stories tall, with large twisting branches and a solid trunk that had deep crevices of broken bark - easily traced with a child's fingertip. This was perfectly suited for a tree house or a swing with the Soo Line train tracks just beyond the other side of the tree and tall summer grasses.

A shallow hole was dug and the box was put in. We covered it up with loose dry dirt and placed a few rocks over the disturbed earth.

To give the appearance that the area had not been touched in sometime, we kicked a little sand over the rocks. As we worked at this the afternoon train signaling the 4 o'clock hour came through - on time and lumbering past us. We waved at the engineer and he sounded his horn in response - he was used to the sight of us waiting and waving. It was one of the highlights of the day, to see the trains and hear the loud whistle blow. When the operators were not looking older boys would try to jump the slow moving train, waving as they moved down the tracks and jumping off at the next block. I did this once and never again - it was frightening, my footing slipped and I almost went under the wheels. There was one boy who did lose his foot a few years later, Leonard, not too many boys jumped the train after that, at least not the smart ones.

After burying the box we made a solemn oath, swearing never to tell anyone about our

adventure or our treasure, it was our secret only. Plans were made to explore more the next day, if grandma was at the neighbors. It was time to return to the backyard and run through the sprinkler that was watering the garden and grass, careful not to run into the garden and disturb the plants. This was grandma's pride and joy - the neighbors would come by to admire the beauty of her plants and the neatness of the weed-free rows. She grew the most delicious tomatoes, peppers and beans from her gardens. She seeded her own plants every year and canned the harvest for the long winters of Minnesota so as to have a taste of summer when the biting winds blew deep drifts of snow into our yards and neighborhood.

During all this play in the water we knew that once grandma came home we would be forced to strip down to our underwear so as not to make her floor wet. We never cared though as we grew up so close to each other it was more like we were siblings not cousins. As I was the smallest I had to endure the first stripping and sent into the house while Mark and Tony took their cloths off after me. Tony always laughed at my panties making me self-conscious even to this day. Interesting how memories of the past continue to pervade our day-to-day life as adults.

Day two began, and as always we were up early in the morning so as not to miss a chance at playing hard outside. Grandma made me my usual bowl of oatmeal with a glass of

milk to wash the breakfast down. The milkman had just come that morning so it was a fresh jar of milk, the time when milk was delivered at your front doorstep in glass jars. There was no such thing as skim milk, 1% or 2% for that matter. We all had whole milk and the best was when the jar was fresh and unopened because of the sweet thick cream that covered the mouth of the bottle. Grandma knew this was my favorite part and would forgo her cream in her coffee just so I could have this treat.

Afterwards I sailed out the back door with a wave and kiss for grandma to start my new day. I would greet all the other neighbors as I skipped down the block to see my cousins and hurry them along with their breakfast. My auntie, unlike my mother, didn't work. My mother was working to save up enough money for us to have a place of our own, even if it was an apartment just down the block. My mother never married my biological father; I was a love child in the truest sense. It was just mom and me; she had such a loving, caring way about her. She always made sure I had enough to eat and was clean and comfortable. She shared her kisses and hugs without reserve and I never once wondered why I was different from the other girls on the block. Not as long as I had my mom, she was my safe haven from the cruelty that the world can show to a child who was fatherless.

Tony and Mark were just finishing up and ready to hit the sidewalk. Again it was fast becoming a hot summer day, with clouds building on the western horizon. First we made

our rounds in the neighborhood, checking in on all our buddies, making sure there wasn't something we wanted to do before our other adventure called us. We had to wait a bit until grandma went next door to have her coffee and chat with her friends. She always did laundry and hung clothes outside on the line before opening the back gate of the fence to visit. Sometimes I would lie in the cool grass under the big oak tree in the backyard watching the sheets dance in the breeze, imagining that they had a life of their own.

Listening to the sounds of the air rushing around and past the cloth that sounded like a whisper, with an occasional snap of the cotton fabric as if someone were snapping their fingers. Lying there, I would ponder what I would be when I grew up, who I would marry, and where I would live. I thought I would be a jockey and race horses or maybe an artist, making beautiful paintings that people would want to own and hang on the walls of their front room. My life would be filled with love, this I knew. I wanted to live in a house with a beautiful garden and lots of flowers so I could pick them and bring them into my home - a garden where I could paint and a backyard to hang my own laundry out to dry.

Once we checked in and made sure that we could get into grandma's house without being noticed we made a fast track to the door in the basement - another day awaited us and we wanted to make the most of our time.

We pulled the bench away from the doorway

and yanked on the now extremely swollen door. We took all of our necessities as the day before and tied our string and walked into the cool dampness of the tunnel. We adjusted our eyes to meet the darkness now only lit by a low beam from a flashlight. Continuing forward we went right again at the fork in the tunnel, we never did find out what lay beyond to the left. Wandering for quite a while, I was beginning to worry if we had enough string. The tunnel broke again, this time with three passages. Using the scientific method of "enie, menie, minie and moe", we took the center tunnel.

My worries became true as we did run out of string, but being we were going straight and hadn't come across other splits we continued, it was fast becoming cold, so we hurried to keep warm. The tunnel ended abruptly, we saw no other door or passage, but it looked as if it was a huge ballroom used for parties. There were tables, chairs, and a sofa, all battered and soiled from a lack of use. Bits and pieces of shattered china and glass lay haphazard in the crevices where the walls and floor met. There were torch holders in the wall, six in a semi circle as the cave had become quite large and open at this point. It was here I imagined fancy parties with dancing and singing, people dressed up and laughing, drinking their illegal liquor till all hours of the morning.

Since we had run out of string and come to a dead-end we decided to follow back. Again this took awhile, how long I am not sure as no one owned a watch. By the time we came back to my grandmother's house we heard the first

calling to lunch. Today I was excited; grandma had made spaghetti and her delicious meatballs.

After lunch we headed out back past the backyard and garden to the big oak tree. We wanted to check the contents of the tin box we found the day before. Maybe there was a map or buried treasure we could find. After we dug up the box, we ran to the tall grass in the field. By now the weather was changing, it was more humid and the wind was very calm. Tall mushroom shaped clouds were hanging just on the western horizon threatening to spill out large amounts of rain and lightening. In the tall grass only the very tops of our heads could be seen so we knew we were safe to peek inside our treasure.

Looking inside with wide-eyed wonder, we removed the ledger we discovered the day before. Being I was only 6, I couldn't read all that well so it was up to Mark to read to the youngest of us two. We were very excited to see a paper with writing on it and a diagram of sorts, also in the bottom of this box laid an old key - a skeleton key like the one my grandmother had for the door to the attic. Mark read the paper again with the diagram and believed it to be some kind of map, and the key had to do with this paper. Wonder filled us at what we might find once we found the door this key would open.

By this time the sky was more than threatening as it was starting to make us wet with large raindrops and the wind had

noticeably picked up. The box was closed but we kept out the key and paper with the diagram. We would find the door that this key fit and maybe find a story to tell. It was time to go inside to play awhile. The rain was now beating down harder as we ran as fast as we could across the field. Once inside grandma's house we found a quiet spot in the front porch to look over our paper. The honor of holding the key was mine for now. What Mark and Tony figured out is that the passage actually started from my grandmother's basement. It looked as if it went a considerable distance, longer than we would have between meals. The only plan we could devise was to sneak into the tunnel at night to explore this to the end. We started making our plans as to how we would do this; it had to be a sleepover. Now how to convince grandma and auntie to have this sleepover - we had it! We wanted to camp in the backyard but we would have to wait for the rain to stop so we could build our makeshift tents of sheets and blankets.

The rain finally stopped, leaving sweet smelling pools to splash in. You could see the smoky mists rising from the street as the water evaporated into the afternoon heat. There was only a small reprieve from the heat and we knew that it would become even warmer with the humidity rising along with the temperature. In Minnesota we need long sweltering hot days as this is a memory that seeps into our bones to carry us through the even longer cold winters that keep us so hardy and preserved.

We had our lunch and asked sweetly for

blankets and sheets to make our tents with. Grandma gave us some old sheets and an old blanket to cover the ground with. This we used along with clothespins and a clothesline to make a tent. There were times we would pretend to be explorers who had just discovered the Mississippi or Indians who had lived there well before the explorers found their way to the large river that starts in Minnesota and winds its way down to the Gulf of Mexico.

Today though all of that was forgotten as the only reason for this tent was to have a sleep over so we could continue with our adventure into the tunnel.

Felice Scrittore lives everywhere, she is active in written and visual arts. She believes that all things have a story to tell and she enjoys telling those stories with her own voice. Felice is a happy writer!



Angels and Cemeteries

by Aaron Bowen

Taken 2012 *

Wichita, Kansas

About the photographs - These photos were taken at several different times in 2012. Aaron visits this cemetery when he is in Wichita, Kansas. He try's to capture something different each time, look at the angel in a different way.

*Photos were taken with a Nikon D80, Nikon D800, and an iPhone 4S.





Angels and Cemeteries
by Aaron Bowen

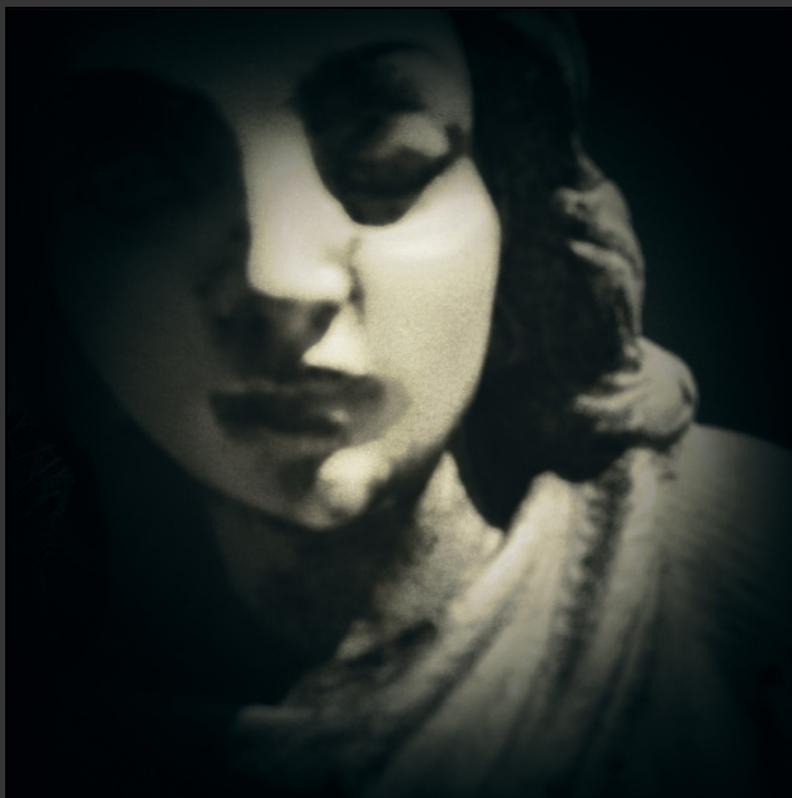




Angels and Cemeteries
by Aaron Bowen

Aaron Bowen is a photographer
living and creating in Dallas, Texas.

Aaron is available for portraiture,
special events and advertising
promotion.





Paintings

collected works
by Ashley Dull

*interview on page 36





Ashley Dull as interviewed by William Ricci

SPR – What age did you know you wanted to be an artist?

AD - I cannot think of a specific age, I've always just "known". My earliest memory, however, is from first grade when classmates started asking me to do their art projects for them – I already knew at that time that I loved to draw.

SPR – Have you had any formal training? Why or why not?

AD - Yes, I did study and graduate with a double major in fine arts and health from Luther College in Decorah, IA. I was never pushed to go to college by my parents. I guess I wanted the experience and when I was 18 I had no idea of what to do next. I am very grateful for the opportunity, but I was not concerned with continuing education after my four-year degree. I was ready to create in my own ways.

SPR – What led you to nature based themes in your art, specifically trees and forests?

AD - I suppose it all started while growing up on a small farm. I was constantly surrounded with endless beauty. There was a dirt road right behind our house. I remember taking walks and feeling so inspired all of the time. There were many more trees than buildings. I don't remember a specific time feeling called to paint trees, I guess I always remember feeling such awe from them. In just recent years, light

has become a fascination, and even more so, combining light with trees. Now, each painting represents so much more than what meets the eye.

SPR – Please respond to how you handle explaining your paintings vs. letting them speak for themselves.

AD - Although I feel very called to share my vision, I struggle with how much to verbally share and say about the painting versus letting the beauty within the painting speak for itself and touch each viewer on an individual level.

This reminds me of a quote from Henri Matisse, "The only valid thing in art is the one thing that cannot be explained, to explain away the mystery of a great painting would do irreplaceable harm, for whenever you explain or define something you substitute the explanation or the definition for the image."

SPR – Please tell us about some mentors you have worked with, and others who have influenced you in some way. It would seem that in retrospect, we realize even more so the people we have met and the impression they have left upon us.

AD - I suppose my ultimate influence has been nature, but there are also many people who have helped me along the way.

My elementary/high school art teacher, Rose Schutte, encouraged me from the beginning and my college art professor, Doug Eckheart,

critiqued my first painting and said, “you have something here”.

When I moved to the Twin Cities in 2007, I met a man named Jack McCauley. He helped me to land my very first gallery show in the Fall of 2007, just two years after graduating from college. Jack also introduced me to an artist, Pamela Sukhum, who has been my biggest influence as a professional artist. Working for her as an intern for over one year, I learned many valuable tools and encouragement for working in the fine art world.

A few years ago I met a dear friend, Jan Wikman. She introduced me to author Wayne Dyer. This was the start for a shift in my life path. Perhaps this was the same time in my life when I was going from ‘childhood thinking’ to viewing the broader world as a whole, an awakening, and the world was starting to make sense to me.

I became, and still am, very fascinated with what Dyer is saying, along with many other authors, teachers, and spiritual masters such as: Jesus, Saint Francis, Mother Theresa, Buddha, Napoleon Hill, and Deepok Chopra.

Finally, my parents have always told me that – “you can do it” (subconsciously, this has probably been a larger influence to me than I’m even aware of – thank you mom and dad!)

SPR – Looking beyond a person who influences and helps with direction and critique, do you have a higher calling that

influences your art, and in turn, your life?

AD - Yes, the spiritual world and its mysteries are a huge influence on me. I have become aware of and supremely fascinated with the idea of living at or at least striving to live at our highest potentials. I paint nature, and more specifically the light source, to represent this light that is within us all – our magnificent being. I passionately desire happiness for everyone, and I believe that if someone is aware of their own ability to be all they are capable of being, inner peace would happen –which would obviously lead to peace and love towards one another.

SPR – How did this idea transpire?

AD - First and foremost definitely through my influences that I’ve already mentioned, but I grew up being taught and raised in the Christian religion. However, only in recent years have I been intrigued to learn about all religions, or better yet, becoming curious about people finding their own path, not necessarily through an organization or by way of a label, but by way of being.

I was always fascinated with the Bible and praying. So much so that I remember reading out of the Bible every night before bed during my childhood years, and feeling very connected to God. I continued feeling this way all through college and starting with my senior art show, I began hiding scripture references in my paintings. For example, Proverbs 23:7 would be hidden in the trees. I continued this tradition

through the beginning years as a professional artist, up until only a few years ago, when I decided to do this only when I felt it was fitting, rather than as a ritual.

As I continued painting trees and light, the light was becoming more and more prominent. I don't remember specifically when I realized what the light was symbolizing, but it truly makes sense to me now, and this is what I feel called to share. When I started my first painting with the light source (Fall 2007), it was at the time one of my dear friends was very sick in the hospital. I remember feeling very connected to the idea of healing.

Upon finishing it, I titled it "The Light". I included my tradition of hiding a scripture, and chose John 8:12, which reads: "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." I now understand this verse to represent the light that is within us all, or at least that we all have access to, if we choose.

SPR - Do you ever worry about being stereotyped or cast as a certain type of painter, or become associated with specific themes?

AD - Actually, while doing this tradition [hiding scripture references], I became aware that my art was being categorized as 'religious art'. I didn't particularly like this stereotype, as in my mind my art isn't about organized religion, but I try not to let others' opinions affect my own thoughts. I don't take every word in the bible

too literally, but rather, I am connected and curious about the hidden symbolic meaning behind scripture - to me, here is where I believe there to be deep wisdom and truths.

SPR - What other mediums outside of oil painting do you express your art with?

AD - At this point, I'm not using anything else - there are way too many other paintings in my head to create before I'd be tempted to try another medium. I have, however, dabbled with watercolor, acrylic, and I loved pottery and weaving in high school and college.

SPR - What inspires you?

AD - Everything good. Life. Love, happiness, joy, beauty, trees, light, our souls, the idea of our infinite selves. The idea of world peace. The idea of inner peace. But, I suppose the bad may also inspire me to create good.

SPR - Please expand upon "But, I suppose the bad may also inspire me to create good."

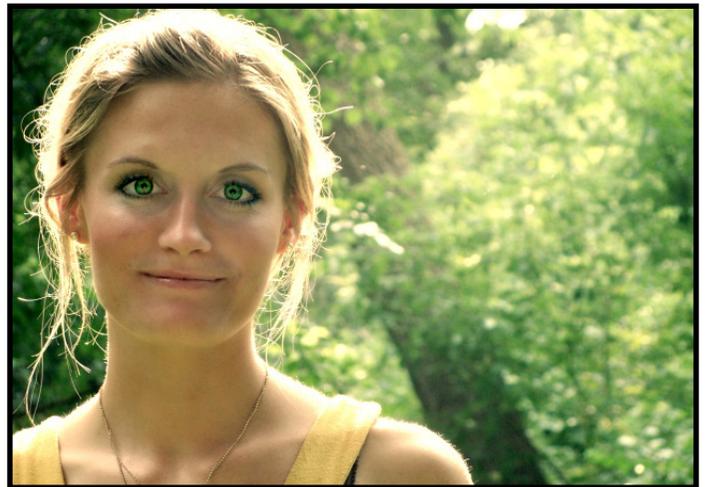
AD - Going back to the light and all the goodness that it represents - I passionately wish for everyone to experience this. When I see someone who may be sad, lacking peace, living in the dark, unhappy, or depressed, I get excited to paint more, to create more light and goodness, to help all those in need.

I just recently had a few paintings installed in my first hospital setting. It was a new mental health facility. Could nature paintings truly bring

healing? Along with some wonderful teachers, therapists, counselors, and psychiatrists, I'd like to think yes!

SPR – What words of advice do you have for budding artists in any medium?

AD - Anything is possible for those who just believe. I wholeheartedly believe this and wish this for everyone. But, you have to be willing to work hard and be persistent. Also, As Thoreau once said, "Live the life you've imagined". Don't be afraid to step out into the unknown – let your imagination soar, and live the artful life you're here for. I'm doing just that – and as long as I can keep imagining where I want my art career to go, I know I'll keep living it!



Photograph
by Caleb McKusick

Artist and painter Ashley Dull was interviewed as part of being the featured artist for this issue of Stone Path Path Review. We first met Ashley at Tarnish and Gold Gallery in Northeast Minneapolis where she was exhibiting along with Wendy Brown-Baez.

Her painting, *The Light*, drew us into the realistic landscapes that Ashley masterfully creates on canvas using Knife Painting technique.

Stone Path Review

AN ARTISTIC JOURNAL OF PATHS THROUGH IMAGES AND WORDS

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