



Vol 03, Issue 10

Spring Path 2014

Stone Path Review

AN ARTISTIC JOURNAL OF PATHS THROUGH IMAGES AND WORDS



Cover Image
by Jimmy Ostgard "Big Top Circus"



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Stone Path Review

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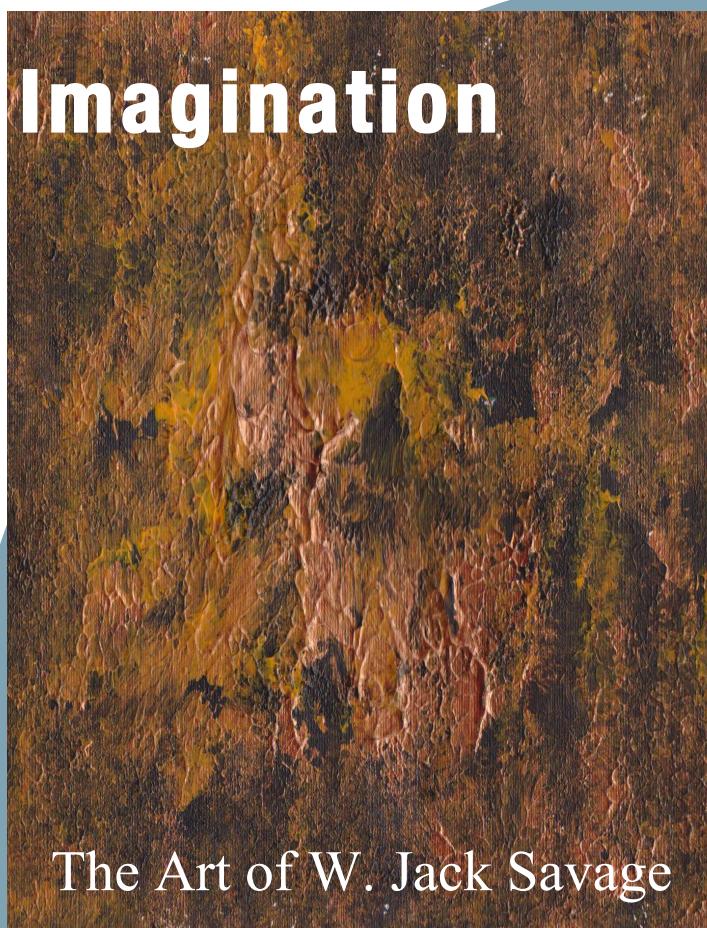
Cover Image

by Jimmy Ostgard "Big Top Circus"

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Imagination



The Art of W. Jack Savage

Imagination: The Art of W. Jack Savage book

Imagination: The Art of W. Jack Savage is a collection of more than 60 pieces from St. Paul, MN native (now living in California) W. Jack Savage. This can be purchased at Amazon.com.

More information at
www.wjacksavage.com

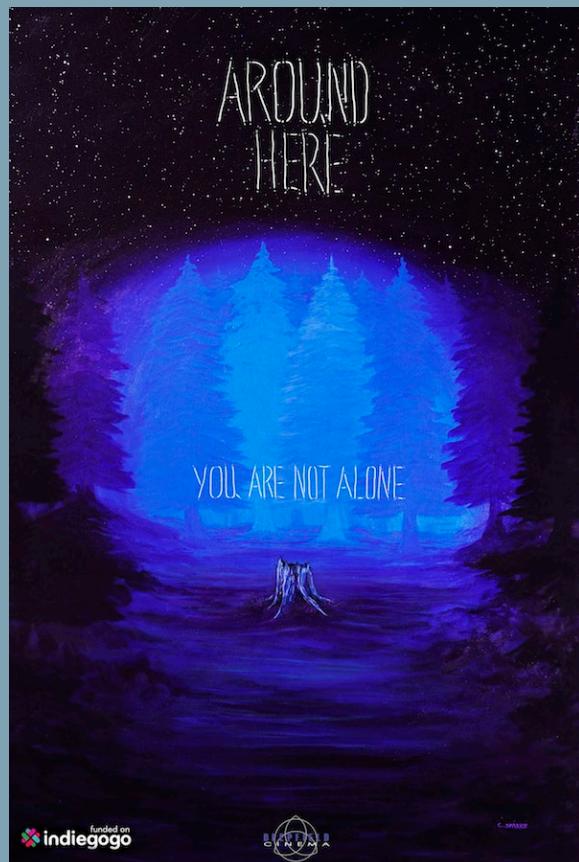
Around Here

Around Here - A feature length science fiction film about an Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran with PTSD who finds healing through an extraordinary encounter.

Enso Press, LLC now has a film division – Stone Path Films! Around Here is our first foray into film and as such we are asking many questions, learning, and pretty much just jumping in and seeing what happens.

We are extremely excited to see this film go from pre-production, to final script, filming, post-production, and then to the big screen. We are fortunate to be a part of each step and have the opportunity to learn the industry from the inside with real experience as we look forward to more film projects.

Deep Field Cinema in partnership
with Stone Path Films
www.StonePathFilms.com



Spring 2014 Introduction

by William Ricci

Welcome to the Spring 2014 issue of Stone Path Review. Our primary mission is to present art that delves into life and path in life, the route and direction we take, and the struggle and triumph we all endure. The path is often dark before the full light emerges.

Where we are going and what tomorrow will look like is rarely known today. Sometimes tomorrow arrives, and we wonder how did I get here. There are many variables and external influences pushing and pulling against you. These directly affect what constitutes that path, and what tomorrow will contain.

That path, that thread, is often dark. Comprised of a myriad of emotions it saturates the mind, filling the soul, and pushes us to breaking points that we are unaware of. When we get through the experience, what happens next is essential in determining where this leads, as the path we are on is never static. It is constantly changing in response to our state of being, the environment we are within, and how we respond to that environment.

Across the distance, from where I sit in a rocking chair, the space is full with trees, hills, small valleys, and marshland. I tell myself I can touch the sun. I convince myself there is no distance and there is no time. Such is the path I attempt to define while mired in the daily chaos I struggle to avoid.

The path we travel is toward something. It can be anything we seek to attain or obtain from this limited time we have chosen. Here I call this the

source, or a bright light. Some schools of thought call this enlightenment or salvation. The end goal seeks to be the culmination of our experiences and a reason for what we have endured. It is a light in the distance, where no straight path or direct route exists, but it shines regardless.

Each day filled with doubt, loneliness, or a sense of loss or purpose. The path is stormy and there never seems to be enough time to reach the source before the sun disappears and the day is over. And this begins again the next day as we continue to navigate that path - sometimes not realizing the answers we are looking for have quietly entered our mind and our being.

Even when we see the light and feel good about the direction there are storms building. Perhaps we do not believe the goodness, even in small doses, a lotus growing in middle of a burned field. There seems to be something hiding and lurking in the background. While it is simple to look the other way and ignore what is still an opportunity, these challenges further the growing experience building the person you are now and will become shortly, as each second passes.

What is most important is how we respond and react to each moment and what we want from this limited time – this determines the shape and direction of our path.

There is goodness and light beyond the dark. There is something more beyond what we see now and we can make it through knowing this. The more we experience gives more options as we choose pieces to keep in building the person within and the path to follow. The more positive the path becomes, the more positive the impact on people and nature around us. ~WR



Universal Commute

by Timothy B. Dodd

Explosion collapses the core, bursting
frowns and scowls into purple
fog-cloud matter
of burning gas, spinning
exhaust through the black tar void
to be “on-time.” Now horns bleed
as the heat of collision,
speeding steel, scars and sizzles.

A crust forms as the surface cools,
and from its cracks blossom rivers

originating from the grave
of stars. From twisted wreckage
on the highway we do not see
new planets form, brilliance
in death, teaching patience.

Timothy B. Dodd is from Mink Shoals, WV. His writing has appeared in *Yemassee*, *Main Street Rag*, *The William & Mary Review*, and elsewhere. He is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Texas El Paso.



Drive Home

by Daniel Flanagan

& what if our lives are nothing but a figment
Of someone else's imagination
Our individual lives are all another individual's
dream

Everyone thinks they are unique though
Esoteric though

I wrote this at a red traffic light
& it turned green & the sports car honked at me
With fury!
He has yet to realize he is not real.

I drove past picketers with political picket signs
& they were passionate about a dream
& so I honked at them
Gave a thumbs up to support another's dream

We are all dreaming
But not all of us are dreamers.

Daniel N. Flanagan is a Worcester, MA native. He is the author of the short story "Daddy's Girl", located in The Commonline Journal, and twelve poems, featured in Aberration Labyrinth, Three Line Poetry, The Camel Saloon, and others.

Website: www.DanFlanagan.webs.com



Wolf

by John Grey

I can follow the spoor
but only as far as the history of the wolves -
diminishing tracks
through the feathery arms of grass,
I'm lifetimes too late,
but like a vulture
I look for my signs of life
in the dead:
a rabbit skin, vole bones -
the land steepens,
a blur in the cliff-face
excites me for a moment,
a paw-print cements in mud,
like an old aunt,
refuses to surrender its age -
best to shadow the stillness,
the area some yellowing nature book says
was once their stomping, feeding, mating ground -

in deep forest,
night shoulders aside the sunless,
the half-moon won't give up a howl,
the trees refuse to whisper,
"they've been here" -
evidence is nowhere,
not even mist
can make the unearthly clear.

John Grey is an Australian born poet. Recently published in *The Lyric*, *Vallum* and the science fiction anthology, "The Kennedy Curse" with work upcoming in *Bryant Literary Magazine*, *Natural Bridge*, *Southern California Review* and the *Pedestal*.



Can You? Will You?

by Richard Hartwell

Can You? Will You?

In the crash of ocean waves
can you hear the soft rain's patters?

In the tumult of a hurricane
can you feel the pines' whispers?

In the stench of fresh laid fertilizer
can you smell the summer roses?

In the copper bite of blood
can you taste the tongue of passion?

In the death of all the wars
can you see the peace of reason?

In the fullness of this life
will you learn what lies beyond?

Rick Hartwell is a retired middle school English teacher living in Southern California. He believes in the succinct, that the small becomes large; and, like the Transcendentalists and William Blake, that the instant contains eternity. He has been published in: Newtowner Magazine, Birmingham Arts Magazine, Poppy Road Review, and others. Published chapbooks include : The Sea Turtle, This Way to the Egress and, Vietnam Flashbacks: A Personal Memoir.



Love is a Choice

by Cambria Jones

What made me think that with you,
I could still unfold a paper sky each night
to map the earth's turning from the stars

and grab handfuls of the tide
to hold back the moon?

I have paid for our love in paper currency,
Counting out novel romances into your palm.

I wore the white of centuries-dead starlight
finally reaching earth; my heart finger glinted
to the edge of the universe; I clutched the begin-
nings
of a thousand poems like a bouquet.

Why me,

whose nausea comes from the earth spin-
ning

and whose skin burns on starry nights,

with you,

who to the moon's face speaks loudly of the
sun

and reads a poem of the sea on steady legs?

Cambria Jones was born in Minneapolis, MN, and currently resides just outside the Twin Cities. She dabbles in theatre, writing, and dance, and always enjoys a good cup of coffee and people watching.



Stray

by Mark J. Mitchell

All day I listen
to the Roshi.

Outside,
a cat sleeps
on the greenhouse roof.

I studied writing and medieval literature at the University of California at Santa Cruz. My poems have also appeared in many magazines, including: The Comstock Review, J Journal, kayak, Buddhist Poetry Review, and others. A chapbook, Artifacts and Relics, is being published by Folded Word Press and a novel, Knight Prisoner was recently published by Vagabondage Press.



Muni Sutra

by Mark J. Mitchell

The Munidharma rolls
In fits and starts.
It keeps you off balance
But it is alive with electricity.

The Munidharma sounds
With a chorus of bells
Caused by tugged cords
Pulled by people as empty as you.

The Munidharma exhorts
You to count the loud
Exhalations of air brake
And to notice the horn.

The Munidharma does its job.
It takes you from one place
To another. Once you're there
It leaves you behind.



Butter Pecan

by Rachel Nix

For as long as I can remember,
the chair across from the television
was where I would sink into for safety.
She was there, my grandmother, sitting
on the couch: half Indian-style, her
left foot curled under her right knee
and her other leg stretched out, hanging
off the edge of the cushions.

On commercials, she'd lean lazily
on her left elbow and look over at me
while I spoke about the things that were
breaking me. I knew better than to talk
out of turn; Survivor and Wheel of Fortune
were the things that were to be concentrated
on. Life could be handled in due time.

I laid my load down on her coffee table,
knowing I'd have to pick it back up before
I left. It felt lighter, still, for a little while.
When things were at their worst and I could not
catch my breath, she'd hop up while I was still
talking and tell me to speak louder till she got
back.

When she returned, she'd be struggling
to carry four butter pecan ice cream cones,
handing two off to me; a quick fix
should come in two servings, I learned.
Part of the mess usually leaked down the sides
of her hands; she'd lick it away like a child,
and would say she forgot napkins,
but we'd make it alright.



Drought

by Rachel Nix

I witch for water.
Walking blindly,
I concentrate on my effort.
I am desperate,
you say.

You watch for rain.
Staring blindly,
you believe it will come.
You have faith,
you say.

It is in your nature
to trust in what you need.

Nature does not need you.

I witch for water;
you watch for rain.

Rachel Nix grew up in Northwest Alabama, still residing a stone's throw away from her childhood stomping grounds. She is a lover of dogs and an avid reader of poetry; she believes most everything else is trivial or over her head. Her most recently published/forthcoming work can be found at cahoodaloodaling, Lummox, Petrichor Machine, and Spillway.



A Sense of Closure and Privacy

by Rob Schultz

A blade of grass rendered
by Wyeth, or single strand
of hair,
still-life of a bowl of apples,
one to split, offer,
a Durer flower
or Audubon wren,
bride stripped bare with legs spread
in a Schiele.

Hyper-real?
If art is scrutiny
what are we looking at?
Unearth a seed to see
if growing, if fibers of grass
and glowing strands
of hair and green apples
revolving across a shallow space
suffice, lovely

volumetric of appleness
echoing curves of the bride;
and something caught
out of the corner of an eye
like the wing of a wren,
loneliness
of a subject who has the art
of being alone; the painter's
calm reflection

of passion in the green base
of her skin, before adding white
to give an ivory look
to natural skin otherworldly green,
natural green refashioning skin otherworldly,
as though elements
of a flower with cool green blood
ran under the long length
of her body.

Rob Schultz has had poems published in The Avalon Literary Review, Coe Review, Euphony, Main Street Rag, and New Plains Review.



Own Music

by Charles Wilkinson

somewhere in
the grounds there
is the thrill
of tonight's

fine music
and so he
must stay with
the water

the steam and
no sound a-
bove a soap
bubble's sigh

but one tap
whose drip sub-
stantiates
the stillness

just before
notes almost
being played
so faintly

as if a
piano
is next door
composing

with shadows
what might have
been his own
music - had

he no fear

Charles Wilkinson lives in Powys, Wales. A collection of Charles Wilkinson's poems appeared from Iron Press many years ago; recent work has come out from Poetry Wales, Poetry Salzburg (Austria), The SHOp (Eire), Prick of the Spindle (USA), and other journals. A pamphlet, Ag & Au, has just been published by Flarestack.



Love at California in Me or Me at California in Love

by Robin Wyatt Dunn

1.

It's funny that you knew that I was cold, because you were warming up. I never knew that I could be a man, or be a man who knew that he was cold, and liked it, his mind cooling down to California cold. I stand on the beach and see that the tide is him, because he is a force of nature, ready to sweep everything you knew away (with vengeance)

5.

Cut me. Tell me, is it okay to weep when I hold your hand? Will that kill the man I have inside? Cut me so you'll see the beast within, the one I keep on such long tether, who's aware that every day

that passes without teeth, means that I'm taming him too deep for words, and when I need him he will be asleep—

6.

Cut me, because I need the ape to see that this is real. This is it. We worked it to a lather and we're foaming for the tether to be re-attached. I break everything at last, I hold your hand. When I splash the sea with my cracked laugh—

I break everything at last and curse the worst was first, because I know it will return, and it will bring me deeper in, to the working of this stairwell spirals magnets and lurching epics—

Robin Wyatt Dunn lives in southern California and is the author of three novels. He was born in the Carter Administration.

Website: www.robindunn.com.



The Steppes

by Robert Schmidt

The Steppes

Sahim wore a long linen robe, the excess bunched and thrown over his shoulder, and a turban wrapped carefully around his head. His gray eyes were small and deep set, and a long thick beard grew down to his chest. He was working through the poppy fields - back bent and with hast - as he was nearing the end of the harvest.

The poppy had a long stalk that terminated into a bulb, where atop, a small delicate purple flower projected. Before the flower would bloom, the top of the bulb was marked with delicate lines that would radiate out from the center like the spokes of a wheel. It was on the bulb that he was cutting thin slices. In time, milky ooze would run down the sides and dry to a black resin. But you had to do it just right. Too deep and the flowers

would die, too shallow, and no resin would form.

He had been working all day, and his hands were coated in the sticky and pungent resin. He paused to take a breath, looking outward. His crop grew next to a winding stream, the water like a desperate trickle through the long snaking bed of muted stone. The far bank sloped upward and leveled into a flat plain of grass, splotched and thinning, as herding goat moved about in the distance. Looking further, he could see the red earth scattered with jagged rock and cavernous hollows. Tall skinny sheers of rock like stalagmites, dwarfed by the rising immensity of the steppes stretching across the horizon. It was a breathtaking dichotomy. The flats, sunny and hot, while the steppes were cold and cloaked with hazy clouds and mist that diffused the sunlight into a myriad subtlety of purple, red, and orange as if haloed in a mystical aura like some distant pantheon suspended in the sky.

He dropped his hand and hunched over and continued on amidst the long ordered rows of

bulbs - no wind, a brief scattering of purple, that sense of calm and total isolation - till the light of day was all but gone.

When Sahim finished he was exhausted. His hands were rubbed raw and a pit was growing in his stomach. He gathered his tools and placed them in a sling and slung it across his back, and then climbed down the steep embankment towards the stream to wash up. The sound of the water, meandering and gurgling through the rock, was pleasant as of rhythmic paddle strokes. From his knees he bent and washed his hands and splashed water on his face and took a long drink and then he looked up, water dripping through his beard. The rocky river banks seemed immense around him; the dark swath of purplish black sky carved out above like seen though a slit. He felt very moved as if coming to the end of a long journey. He closed his eyes and spoke a prayer of thankfulness, and then climbed back up the embankment and began his trek back towards his home.

The path wound away from the river and cut across the flat desolate land before branching off, one part towards his home, the other towards the village. The land felt lonesome and unending, but he could now see firelight far away like bright points of light ebbing. It was comforting to see that light ahead of him and to think of his children, wife and the smell of his hearth.

In time, he was near. The dark rounded silhouette of his home rising up as if out of the land. The house was constructed from packed straw and mud; the exterior a light brown and smooth. Windows were cut into the walls, and a flicker of candlelight could be seen, as a thin stream of smoke curled from the roof. He walked around to the rear. A crude fence corralled a goat and a few slumbering chickens, and a large wooden basin was filled with water, while a tarnished dipper hung from an old split nail. Sahim crouched down in front of a shed that abutted the back wall. Fully

dark, he was guided by vague outlines, opening the rusted lock and swinging open the door. He took his tools and placed them in the back, and re-clasped the lock and brushed off the front of his gown.

When he came in through the front, his wife raised her head from a meal she was preparing in the center of the large common room. Sahim said, "Good evening."
"Welcome husband."
"How is the mother of my son?"

She bowed her head in a sign of respect, her face solemn and refrained.
"I am well."

His son was crouched on the dirt floor next to her. His daughter, sitting in the corner next to a clay oven set into the wall, her head bent downward, while poking at the fire. The room was warm and smoky. There was little furniture to speak of. The center point of the room was the fire pit, where his wife had laid out a collection of clay bowls and rough weaved wool, frayed at the edges. Sahim crossed the room and patted his son on the head.

"My son. My little Amir."

He remained quiet, a shy boy, but he smiled. Sahim looked again at his wife and said, "I will clean up and then dinner will be served."
"Yes my husband."

And as he walked towards the back, his wife said to their daughter, "Flip them and be done with it."

"Their not ready to be flipped."

"Why must you argue."

"I'm sorry, let me..."

She flipped the naan and her mother smiled.
"You see they were almost burnt."

Sahim stepped back in the room. They grew silent.

"What is that you women speak of?"

"Nothing. How are you tonight?"

"Tired and very hungry."

His wife smiled.

"I have cooked extra."

Sahim sat down on a cushion next to his son and his wife brought him a cup of tea. His daughter was just finishing placing pieces of naan in a large bowl, and she carried it to them and placed it next to a group of smaller bowls that contained meat stock and dried buttermilk. She sat, completing the circle they had formed around the fire pit. Sahim said, "We should celebrate tonight for the reaping has been completed. We have been blessed."

They bent their heads and were quiet, observing a ritual. Sitting there, cross-legged, with his long grayish beard and sun cracked face, Sahim looked like some Sufi prophet. And when sufficient time had passed, he raised his cup and pronounced, "In the name of the all merciful and compassionate Allah we may start to eat."

They washed their hands with water from a copper pot and then they began. They ate from the same bowls, the meal meager, so they tried to eat slowly, savoring every bite. The smell of bread, spice, and musk intermingled into a homey aroma, and the fire cast the tan dirt walls with a warm orange light, while the far recesses still lay in pockets of shadow. Silence as they ate: a look, a passed bowl, the gentle splash of water as they washed their hands in the copper pot.

Sahim stopped eating and set the bowl of meat stock down, resting his hands on his knees. His daughter was now bareheaded, her long dark glossy hair spilling over her shoulders. She was pretty. Her skin was caramel and smooth with eyes dark. He watched as she ate as if trying to divine an answer to a question, as yet, unasked. She noticed his stare and began to eat with a familiar self-consciousness, her head down and with small slow bites.

"Have you heard from your husband?"

"No sir, not since last week."

Sahim rubbed the point of his beard in

thought.

"This is not like him to be gone so long without word. It worries me."

His wife said, "Perhaps they have extended his work."

"If they had done so, then he would have still sent word, or at least the money back from which he had earned the week before. I do not like this. It is very disrespectful to us and to you."

"Something must have happened you know that he is not like this."

"Then I am worried. Listen. I must go to the village tomorrow. I could be gone for a few days, but I will send word if it is for any longer."

"We are almost out of provisions."

"I know this woman. I will try to return as quickly as possible, do nothing to the animals, if anything visit Deqhar."

"Papa?"

"Yes."

"Can I come with you?"

Sahim's stern face, suddenly, broke into a smile like a stone mask that cracks.

"My little Amir, soon. Soon you will come to the village with me, and soon you will come to the fields with me, and you will grow to be big and strong and brave like a great lion. Wife?"

"Yes?"

"Fetch us some of the yogurt. It is time to celebrate."

Sahim patted Amir on his head and sat back and sipped the remainder of his tea, forgetting about his daughter's husband. He thought of his crop and about his son growing older and the many [possibilities. The idea made him very satisfied and he was happy.

They were asleep. The two children curled up beside their parents, chests rhythmically rising and falling, Sahim's head laid to the side, his beard tickling the top of his sons head. A large trunk sat against the wall, the corners covered in bronze, linen neatly folded atop. The

shade for the window was made of woven straw and angled just open; a thin yawn of night could be seen. Tranquil and quiet.

A thunderous explosion awoke Sahim. It was so close. A momentary lull... and then the concussion blasted their home, the walls of the house cracking, straw separating from mud, the goat outside bleating like some wild alarm; and it was as if time had slowed to the minutest of points, every motion catalogued and delayed in some terrifying aspect as he scrambled to his feet, the screams from his children, his wife shouting, his own heart pounding panic. And then came another explosion. The ground rippled with such a violent force, a brilliant red and orange flash, his ears ringing. The roof and walls blew a cinder and caved in like a hole collapsing in upon itself, the desperate look on his wife's face, hands outstretched, a roof beam falling, crushing...

In that perfect unity of time and place, a tomb was created from their home. A home where once love had been made, children born, and meals prepared. Now burning, a thick billowing black smoke pouring upwards into the starry night.

The sunrise began with a subtle lightening on the horizon. Soon, the sun will emerge out of the desultory and craggy land. From where Sahim sat he could see the rubble of his home, but he dared not look, sitting with his head between his legs. In his arm he held a long staff, his other carried in a sling. He sat next to three graves. There were no headstones, only a piling of rock like small rounded hills. He had sat this way for the last two days, as those from the surrounding villages came and paid their respects. He had not eaten nor washed. He had not thought about the deaths of his loved ones. He had not thought of what he would do next, as if in total shock.

As the sun was rising, a small figure appeared on a distant hill. Sahim watched as it wound its way down. It paused at the rubble of

his home and then continued towards him, slowly growing larger, the figures white robe bright, as the sun reflected off it. The figure came to a standstill in front of Sahim and was quiet, no introduction, no greeting, as if he knew this was trivial in comparison to the tragedy that Sahim had suffered.

Sahim, for the first time looked lucid, and he stood and clasped his hand over his heart and said, "It is good to see you Deqhar." "You as well my friend. I offer you a thousand blessings."

Deqhar embraced him. They held close for many seconds.

"I am so sorry my dear friend, so sorry."

They withdrew and Sahim watched as Deqhar walked to the side of the graves and bent down on his knees and placed his hands on ground and bent his head onto them. He began to recite a prayer in a low voice, his head rising and falling, and when he was finished he stood, and the two walked from the graves, hands clasped behind the smalls of their backs.

For a while they were quiet, and then Deqhar asked, "What do you plan on doing now?"

"I have had no time to consider that in the last few days."

"You must consider. You cannot lay in grief forever. You must pay the necessary respect and then you must be strong and begin anew."

Sahim held his head downward, those small eyes of his growing ever smaller, as inward they looked, his essence laid bare and exposed like a wound. A wind swept up and their robes gently fluttered.

"Come of you man, what have you to say?"

Sahim turned his head up and looked at him with a penetrating gaze.

"I know that I must consider and be strong. I know this to be the truth. I trust that there is purpose behind this, that I will find them waiting for me in the afterlife, but my friend how much pain I feel

and how angry I am that this is to happen to me. Why has this befallen me and not the man that strays? Why must my wife be crushed, my daughter burned..."

His eyes had begun to grow watery and his bottom lip trembled, he turned his face away.

"My little Amir, my boy, my son!"

"You must not cry. I beseech you to remain strong and remember the pillars in this moment. You must not fall from the path. Listen my brother, after tomorrow I will go with you to Sharana and we will visit the army office and submit a claim for your wronging, and then you will come with me and I will take you into my home, until you can rebuild. It is no shame. You still have your crop do you not?"

"Yes."

"Well, all is not lost."

Sahim had stopped crying and was wiping his eyes. Deqhar stood next to him, stolid, his face old with splotches of white in his beard. When he spoke he did so with an assertive cadence, almost magisterial, eyes stern like the stone on which they walked.

"Have you heard from your brother?"

"I have not."

"I would have thought he would come to pay his respects."

"I don't even know if he is still alive."

"You see what his jihad has gotten him? Away from you and your family in this time of need, while he is off in the mountains living in caves, and for what? What has he changed? This is a war that we cannot fight with weapons, but with our sheer resistance by maintaining our way of life. In time the foreign invaders will leave."

"Yes, but what until then? Were they not the ones that bombed my home?"

"It was an accident."

"But if they had not been here in the first place."

They faced in the direction of the steppes. The sun was rising quickly, one side of the river

valley cast in shade, the summery green plains adjoined by vast stretches of hard rocky earth. "I know that you feel that you have been wronged. But there is a purpose for you. You have been chosen and you must remain devout. When my youngest took sick I prayed and did all that I could for her to get better, but alas, it did not change anything. I was saddened, but I told myself that this was the ways things were and that I must accept."

He looked up towards the sky.

"She is in a better place now."

"God bless."

"You will come with me tomorrow?"

"Yes."

"I will leave you then to continue your mourning."

On the third day Sahim was still sitting by the gravesides. The shock was replaced by maddening and convoluted thought. He thought of so many things, running his whole life through his mind as if trying to discern some meaning, some pattern, and he would break down and cry, and then build himself back up only to do it again.

At first he did not see the group of men crossing the plains towards him. They came quickly and moved with a practiced ease, covered head to toe with dark cloth and wearing packs. Slung on their shoulders were the long stocks of AK-47 automatic rifles, the magazine clips long and curved. Sahim sat up when he saw them, and as they approached, he recognized his brother at the front.

Forgetting any introduction, they came together and embraced each other. Sahim held him at arms length.

"My brother I thought you were dead. How good it is to see you!"

"I am sorry to have come in this way, but when word reached of what happened, I knew that you would need my help. What has happened is a tragedy. I am very sorry for you. But thou knows that the most merciful God has taken into his

arms the pureness and righteousness of your loved ones in all of his infinite wisdom. They are in a better place now brother."

Sahim began to cry.

"My brother, my only family, why, what has befallen me?"

"Please do not cry. Do not let them see you cry brother."

Sahim, eyes welling, face tragic and imploring, looked at his brother.

"You know that you shouldn't have come. You put each of us in danger, but it is so good to see you. I have known nothing since the day."

The other men had collected behind his brother, guns still slung, and eyes casting about warily. They were a rugged group, their faces long and drawn in. Beards thick and untrimmed.

"I came for you brother, for are you not ready to join our jihad? God has sent you a message, thou had strayed and now he asks of you to take the true path towards righteousness. Dost thou not see? All else is subordinate to his will."

Sahim looked hesitant, his eyes searching his brothers, them still holding each other at arms length, and then he turned and looked back over his shoulder at the rubble of what once his home, and his face became grim, as anger flashed within his eyes.

"I am."

"We will have our vengeance against these blasphemers. Like a stone we will not move..."

"Look!"

His brother turned and saw one of the men pointing towards the sky, where a bright metallic point flashed like quartz in granite.

"We must go now!"

"Move, move."

"I must wait till night fall!"

"We cannot or there will be no nightfall to speak of. Let us go brother, say goodbye."

Hurriedly, they slipped away, becoming part of the land. Sahim looking back once at the three

graves, the rubble of rock, his home. They headed towards the steppes, crossing the green plains and rocky flats, slowly climbing ever upward, until they could no longer be seen.

I was born in North Carolina and now reside in New York City. I received my undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina in Philosophy. I received my law degree at the City University of New York. My writing is focused on portraying the philosophical significance of everyday events. I am always searching for human nature in every word and action and try to write on many different levels.



Big Top Circus

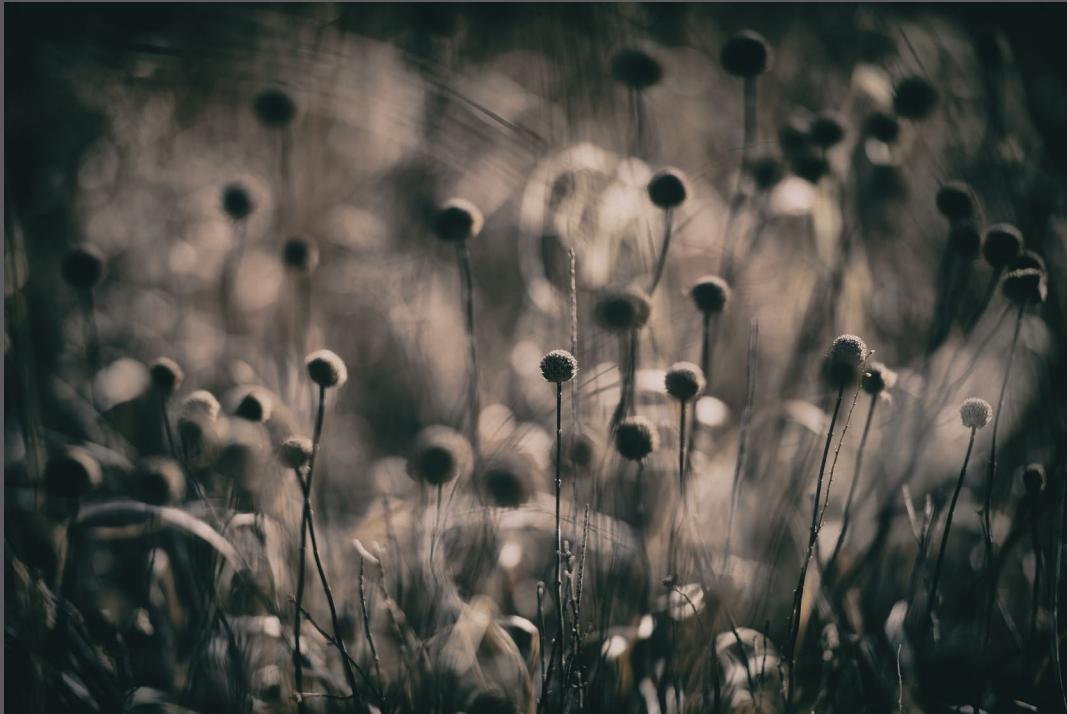
photography
by Jimmy Ostgard

Jimmy R. Ostgard has been a photographer since 2004 and has been published in The Ruminator Literary Magazine, The Saint Paul Almanac, MPLSzine, and FishFood and LavaJuice. Jimmy has had gallery showings in both Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota.



Tallgrass Prairie #1 photography by Aaron Bowen

These photos (Tallgrass Prairie #1, #2, #3) were taken in 2014 at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, which is part of the National Park System. This is some of the last remaining tall grass prairie in the United States. More information about tallgrass prairies can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tallgrass_prairie



**Tallgrass
Prairie #2**
photography
by Aaron Bowen



Tallgrass Prairie #3 photography by Aaron Bowen

Aaron Bowen resides and enjoys life in Wichita, Kansas. His interest in photography took root in the 10th grade. Aaron also shoots portraits, one series which had been on exhibit at a local coffee shop in Wichita, KS.
www.aaronbowenphotography.com



Pagoda Wishes 1

photography

by Julian J. Jackson

My name is Julian J Jackson and I've been a professional photographer for over ten years. I worked for the Times/News of Hendersonville, N.C. from 2006 to 2010. Recently my work has appeared in Whitefish Review, Wholesome Living Magazine (online), Apeiron Review, and Grey Sparrow Journal. In 2012, I relocated to Xinzheng, Henan Province, P.R. China, and now live on the campus of an international university. I continue to pursue photography here in China and other countries in South East Asia.



Pagoda Wishes 2

photography

by Julian J. Jackson



Pagoda Wishes 3

photography

by Julian J. Jackson



Pagoda Wishes 4

photography

by Julian J. Jackson



Pagoda Wishes 5

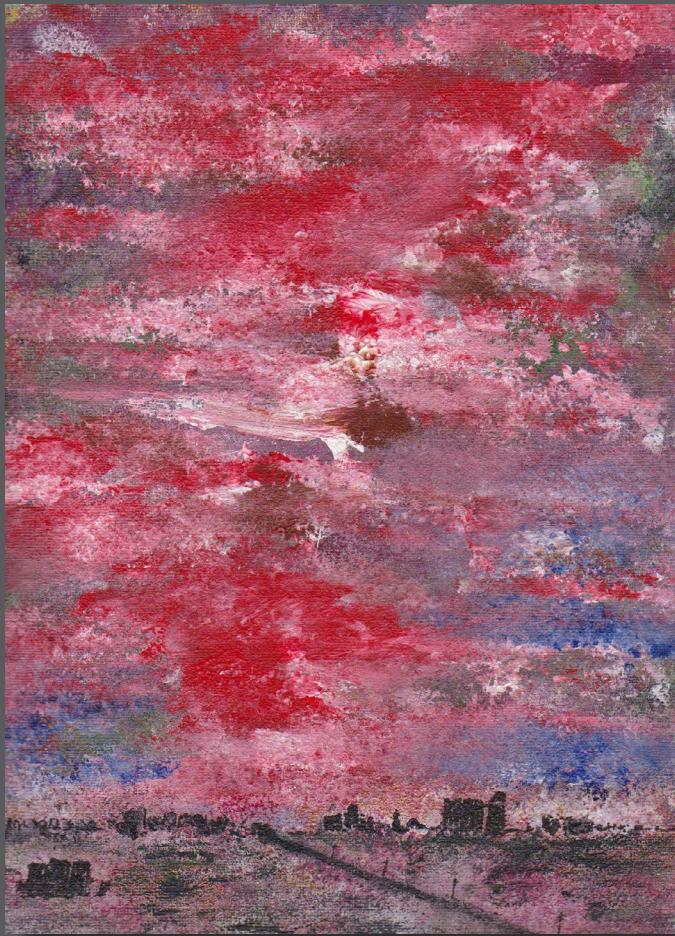
photography

by Julian J. Jackson

Wenfeng Pagoda lies on the grounds of Tianning Temple and is believed to have been constructed in the early 900's. Outside the Pagoda are red prayer cards for wishes to be fulfilled. The Wenfeng Pagoda is located in Anyang, Peoples Republic of China. Website: jjackson.zenfolio.com



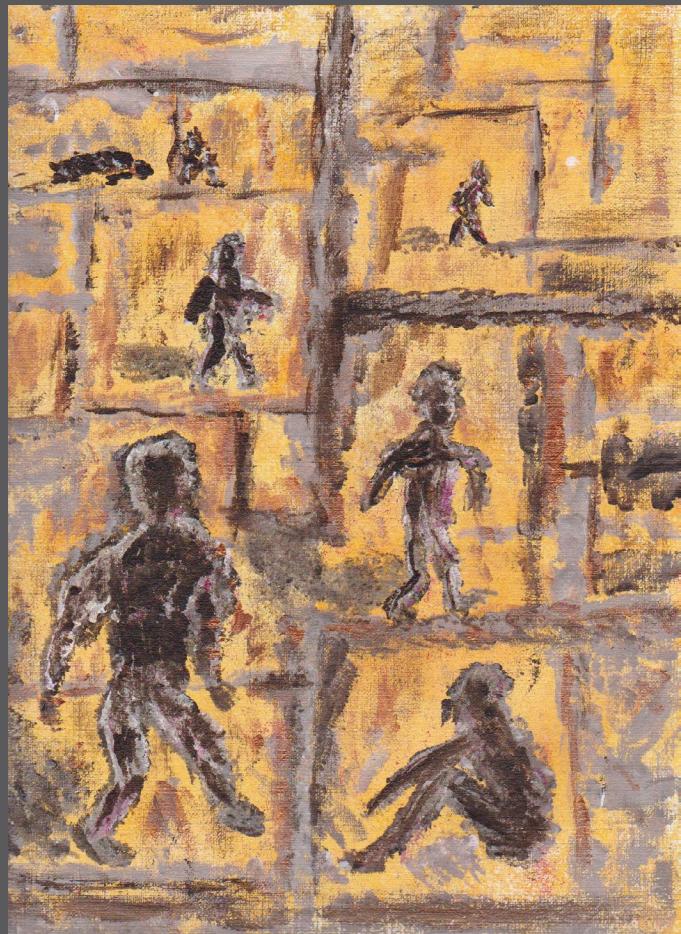
St. Paul, Minnesota
drawings
by W. Jack Savage



Long Prairie, Minnesota

drawings
by W. Jack Savage

W. Jack Savage is a graduate of Brown Institute and Mankato State University in Minnesota. He is a retired broadcaster and newsman in Los Angeles. Jack has written five books: three novels and two short story collections, and is also a veteran stage actor and Associate Professor in Telecommunications and Film at California State University, Los Angeles. He and his wife Kathy live in Monrovia, California.
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The Life We Know

drawings
by W. Jack Savage

Stone Path Review

AN ARTISTIC JOURNAL OF PATHS THROUGH IMAGES AND WORDS

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