

# RIDGELINE REVIEW

No. 1 Spring 2021

ENMU-Ruidoso's Literary & Fine Arts Magazine



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# Ridgeline Review

Number 1, Spring 2021

Editor: Jeff Frawley  
Managing Editor & Student Intern: Ciara Nickell

Eastern New Mexico University-Ruidoso's  
Literary and Fine Arts Journal

*Helping ENMU-Ruidoso Students & the Ruidoso  
community reach new creative peaks!*

Special thanks to Steve Lestarjette, Kathy Kiefer, and the  
sponsors of this issue.

*Cover photo provided by Sara Hall:  
"New Mexico Christmas"*

## About Ridgeline Review

*Ridgeline Review* is ENMU-Ruidoso's literary and fine arts publication, featuring work from students, faculty, staff, and community members. We define "community" to mean anyone who lives in or near the Ruidoso area, or who has been impacted by this area at some point in their lives.

Here at *Ridgeline Review*, we recognize the power of the creative arts, and we value their ability to connect our campus with the surrounding community and the larger world. *Ridgeline Review* is powered by student interns with guidance from college staff. As you experience the writing and artwork in these pages, we hope you feel as proud and inspired as we do!

*Ridgeline Review* serves as a creative space for this community, and the views and opinions expressed within don't necessarily reflect those of ENMU-Ruidoso.

## Submissions

Feel free to submit your writing and artwork year-round!

### *Guidelines*

- Fiction & Nonfiction (up to 10 pp.)
- Poetry (up to 5 poems)
- Art & Photography (300 dpi, saved as JPEG)
- Please submit written work as Word document
- Please include 25-50 word biography when submitting

Send all submissions or questions to: [jeff.frawley@enmu.edu](mailto:jeff.frawley@enmu.edu)

## Website

<https://ruidoso.enmu.edu/ridgeline-review>

## From the Editor

Welcome to the inaugural issue of ENMU-Ruidoso's literary and fine arts magazine, *Ridgeline Review*! As many know, our town and larger region are home to an abundance of talented writers and artists. And as an English professor at the college, I know our campus is bustling with creative students (and faculty and staff!). We wanted to create a venue for sharing all these unique voices and perspectives.

This first issue features poetry, short stories, photography, paintings, essays, and much more from a wide variety of people. We were overwhelmed and delighted with the number of submissions we received, and look forward to future issues jam-packed with wonderful writing and art.

The past year of the COVID-19 pandemic has been one of challenges, tragedies, and isolation. So we hope our magazine provides an opportunity for folks to feel connected with one another via creative work, and maybe even uplifted by it.

Equally exciting is that this will be a student-run and -designed publication. Our first student intern and managing editor, the *amazing* Ciara Nickell, has designed most of what you see in these pages. She has put in countless hours amidst her busy schedule, and has truly brought this publication to life.

Please visit our website at <https://ruidoso.enmu.edu/ridgeline-review> for videos from featured artists and writers.

Thanks, and keep climbing those peaks!

Jeff Frawley

Editor, Chair of the Department of Language and Fine Arts  
ENMU-Ruidoso

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## The Hatchet

Dannalyn Blake

We are driving on a spring morning through colorful Colorado, the grass is green, the flowers are blooming: my sister, my brother, my mother, myself. I am sitting in the back seat with my sister in our black extended cab pick-up truck. My brother is twelve years old, keeping my mother company, telling her stories about a fishing trip he had with a friend. My brother tells my mother, “Do the fish’s eyes blink? Because when we caught one it was wide open.” You can tell by my mother’s laugh she was put on the spot, as she replied, “I am sure it does just like ours.” The radio is playing country music as we are enjoying the scenery of our journey to Chemawa, Oregon. Our family of four is going on this road trip to return a hatchet to our grandfather. The hatchet is a special tool that is sacred and used for traditional ceremonies. My brother kept the hatchet from us in a leather bag, talking to it as if it were an imaginary friend named bè’ tsee’l.

My sister and I look out the windows with awe. There were beautiful houses and mountains of thick forest full of green trees. I tell my sister, “Do you think we could climb on one of the trees? It looks like it would be fun.” In reply she says, “We might need a ladder to reach the first branch.” We had driven through New Mexico, mostly desert, the land flat and dry with weeds and cactus plants. I was sixteen and my sister was fourteen; people thought we were twins and would mix our names up. We both had brown long hair and brown eyes and were taller than our mother. My father had died two weeks earlier from a heart attack and I remember how tall he was; I would always think we were lucky to have his height. It was difficult for my family because it was an unexpected death. My father was working with the horses when my mother found him by their corral. We have two horses: one girl named Trixie and a boy horse named Tonto. Our trip was planned because we had to take the hatchet to my grandfather for traditional blessings upon my father’s passing.

My mother was the only person that could drive on our long journey; she told us we would stay the night at Mesa Verde campground. The camp area was in the mountains and there were clay carvings of buildings made in the mountain walls. There was a walking trail to the top of a mountain, three miles long. We were excited as we were always outdoors. Because my mother was a single parent, she brought canned food to save money, plus ham, turkey, and bologna for sandwiches. For dinner we had tuna salad. That night we wanted to build a fire so we could enjoy the spring breeze by the water. Then my brother said he would ask his friend bè’ tsee’l the hatchet to help us. We

were happy when my mother said, “Get the grocery bag in the storage container — it has the s’mores stuff.” My sister and I jumped as we raced to the truck. We talked about who would roast the marshmallows and put together the chocolate and graham crackers. My brother took the hatchet out of the bag and it led him to the woods to look for sticks. When he came back, they were chopped and peeled for the s’mores and there were some sticks not peeled that would be used for the fire.

As it got darker in the night, we could see bright red and yellow lights flying over the lake. We all looked at each other frightened, as we began to gather our chairs and blankets together. My brother’s friend bè’ tsee’l leaped into the bag, then peeked out looking at the lights. My mother, in a scared voice, said, “Do not be afraid, it will not harm us.” We all gathered close to one another as the lights faded away to a distant camp. We heard some teenagers laughing across the lake as the red light drew closer to them. At this point, we didn’t know what they were looking at. As the object lowered to the ground the lights got dimmer. We went to the bathroom to wash up and get ready for bed, and overheard the teenagers say it was a drone. This was the first time we had heard or seen a drone; we talked about wanting to learn more. My brother took bè’tsee’l out of the bag and told him about the drone and said it would not harm us; he seemed relieved as he lay on my brother’s lap.

When it got dark and quiet, I noticed that my mother looked sad. While my siblings and I lay in the tent, she sat next to the fire. I could hear her weeping and as I looked out of the tent, she was wiping her tears. I asked, “Mom, are you ok.” She replied, “Yes it’s just that when it gets dark, I get lonely for your father.” I crawled out of the tent and held on to her. We sat there a while reminiscing about my father and the memories we had on our camping trips.

The next morning we began our early drive into Utah as we talked about how exciting it was to see the drone. We went through Moab, which was full of red clay mountains. The mountains were red with no trees or rocks, smooth as though made from clay. When we got outside of town, we saw a lot of cars parked off the road, then looking up the hills there were motorcycles and trucks driving up the hills. My brother was excited, asking our mother, “Can we pull over and watch them drive?” Bè’tsee’l leaped to the window with excitement, jumping up and down. It was about time for lunch, so my mother pulled over and we got out and stood by the rail watching. My mother yelled, “Do not go too far!” It was a little scary watching the motorcycles and trucks going up and down; we screamed, thinking they would wreck or tip over.

My mother received a telephone call from our aunt, who lived in Lay-

ton, Utah. She called to see when she could expect us for dinner and a night's stay. My mother told her to expect us at 3:30 that afternoon.

Driving through Utah proved another adventure, the scenery different from what we'd seen thus far. When we arrived at my aunt's, we were tired from the long drive. She asked if we wanted to visit the Sea Quest Aquarium before it closed for the day. My brother brought along bè'tsee'ł, talking to him about how excited he was to go to an aquarium. My mother warned him, "He may be afraid at the aquarium, especially the noise the sea creatures make and the dark rooms inside." But to our surprise bè' tsee'ł was fascinated by the swimming and floating of the sea creatures. This was a place we had not been to and to see all the sea creatures and pet the birds was something to remember.

The next day, driving through Boise, Idaho, my mother turned off the main road. My brother asked, "Where are we going?" I'd been asleep against the door, and woke up to the truck turning off the highway. I yawned and rubbed my eyes, trying to wake up. My mother replied, "I decided to take you all to the zoo to have lunch and walk around, since we still have a distance to drive." My sister was also asleep, so I woke her and told her where we were going. When we arrived at the zoo the weather was nice, overcast and cool. I have always enjoyed this type of weather. It proved good for sighting animals, which were out of their caves and mingling. Us three and bè'tsee'ł crawled through the tunnel to the gopher lookout to see if any of the gophers would come close. We crawled to the lookout so we could see the reaction of bè'tsee'ł when he saw the gophers. After a few seconds of us being in the globe, the gophers all came running towards us and we screamed and ducked back into the cave. As we pushed to get out of the tunnel, my mother was laughing. We didn't know why or what caused the gophers to approach us at the same time, like they wanted to attack us. After calming down, we finished our visit to the zoo and, feeling traumatized, did not seek any more closeup views of the animals.

Our visit through all the exhibits took us over an hour and it was enough exercise to get us back on the road. We would be staying at the Pendleton KOA in Oregon for the night, another campground. The owners were friends of my grandfather and had made accommodations for us to stay even though it was more crowded and expensive. You had to walk away from the camp area to be in the wilderness. The area was full of tents and campers; it was like everyone was cramped together. When we arrived, we had to set up our camping gear and after dinner played at the playground. My brother had made friends that he could play with and left bè'tsee'ł by himself in the leather bag by our tent. When my brother came back to play with bè'tsee'ł he

was sad. Most people didn't know about bè'tsee'í because he was a sacred tool and there were times he was left alone. He watched how much fun my brother was having with his new friends, which made bè'tsee'í feel left out. My brother told him, "I wish you could have other friends too." And although they didn't know bè'tsee'í was a hatchet, he told his new friends about how much fun he has with bè'tsee'í and that made him feel better.

On our final day of travel to our grandfather's, I could tell we were all tired despite the good journey thus far. We were barely moving around, packing up our camping gear. We had a good breakfast over the campfire —cooking over campfire was always good. Once we got to the Columbia River, we were full of excitement: the water was flowing fast and it was raining, then the sun began shining through the clouds. The most beautiful moment was when a rainbow followed along the river as we drew closer to Portland. I could see our eyes open wide and our mouths drop at the many waterfalls along the road flowing into the river.

We made it to my grandfather's about ten a.m. My mother had told us that it was important that we arrived before noon. My grandfather explained that our traditional blessings should be done early in the morning or before noon. I found out the blessing would honor my brother, since after my father's passing he would be the one to take the hatchet as our sacred medicine. Once this was done the hatchet could no longer interact with him as a friend but would give him guidance and keep us safe. When my brother received the blessing he told our family, "I will make my father and all of you proud as I move forward to keep you all protected, and to take care of my mother and sisters."

**Ravenous**

Katie Miller

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| Two ropes     | are knotted  |
| to the        | bridge       |
| above.        | Over         |
| the bones     | of the       |
| Rio Grande,   | connected    |
| by a          | shared       |
| board.        | Invisible    |
| hands         | push it      |
| forward.      | Gravity      |
| pulls it      | back.        |
| There are     | giggles.     |
| Or is that    | the wind//   |
| It calls you. | Or is that   |
| a coyote//    | It is still. |
| The air       | is silent.   |
| A chill       | grabs your   |
| shoulder,     | leading      |
| you to        | the river.   |
| You think     | it was       |
| just the      | wind.        |

However, the air is hushed. There  
is still giggling, but you realize  
that you are in a desert...Alone//



## **The Tenth Street Water Tower**

Eugene Downer

## **Silent Space**

Katherine Nelson

Beauty abounds in a place that I have found,  
where mystery & wonder grow.  
Among the giant trees in a forest known to me,  
a crystal-clear creek flows swiftly nearby, while mountains rise up  
to touch the piercing blue sky, even eagles swoop by.

When resting here on the forest floor, I don't mind pine needles anymore,  
poking me where I won't say, this forest beckons me to stay.  
Here I imagine all sorts of things unseen, wild things, watching me.  
Yet, not a sound, just nature and my pup as she sniffs & pokes the ground.

At times, I think I never want to leave this hallowed place that lures me.  
While my four legged friend roams free, though never too far,  
this forest doesn't lure her away. Alas, my thoughts start to wonder,  
And reality sinks in....

*I cannot stay all day. Life, again, calls me away.*

## **The Day I Became a Mother**

Ciara Nickell

I was only twenty-one when I found out I was pregnant and twenty-two when I gave birth. I was young, and I put partying over my future. School and a career were just a topic of conversation but never a plan. Had I not been in that phase, I would not have had my beautiful little girl.

On the morning of December 27, 2017, my labor was scheduled to be induced. I remember waking up before the sun. I rolled over in my bed with freshly washed sheets and the green comforter I loved so much. I was living with a friend at the time because it was close to the hospital, and my pregnancy was considered high risk. I remember having to wait for my windshield to defrost before I could go pick up my mom. It was so cold outside! She lived about thirty minutes out of town. She was going to meet me there, but her truck broke down. I remember how dark it was on the way to her house and how long that stretch of highway felt when realizing that in less than 24 hours, I would be holding this beautiful baby who had been kicking my bladder and pulling on my ribs for the last nine months.

When I pulled into my mother's neighborhood, everyone still had their Christmas lights up; I could not wait to show my baby girl all these pretty colored lights. I pulled into my mom's driveway just before the gate and stopped. There was a cute black cutout of a cowboy whose bandanna around his neck changes every season and a few cactus. I paused in my car for a few moments and just let the fact that I would have a beautiful little girl in the back seat the next time I pulled up to this blue gate sink in. That is when the nerves started creeping up on me. My palms were sweaty, and there were butterflies in my belly.

My mom was ready, excited and nervous. I don't remember much of the conversation on our way to the hospital. However, when we parked in the labor parking spots, my mom told me how proud she was. She handed me a coffee cup that said, "OMG My mother was right about everything." She also gave me a family heirloom: a deep amber-colored gem that someone found in the Red Sea when my grandmother gave birth to my mother in Germany. Later my grandmother had the gem cut and put into a setting. She then handed it down to my mom when she had me. I hope someday to hand it down to my daughter. After our conversation, we walked up to the hospital doors. I paused for a moment to realize that I'd be responsible for a tiny human next time I walked out of these doors. We checked in, and then we were escorted to my labor room.

I changed into the hospital gown and got comfortable in the bed

before they gave me my IV to start the Pitocin, which would then induce my labor. I played some video games on my laptop until the contractions got so painful that I needed to lie down. My mom put the movie *Moana* on in hopes that it would help distract me. It didn't. I was asked several times if I wanted the epidural. I told them no because I am afraid of needles, and I don't like taking medicine unless I genuinely need it. Later, the pain got so bad I was pulling on the arm of the bed in some attempt to relieve the pressure. A screw ended up falling out of the side of the bed. That was when my mom had enough of watching me in pain.

"Ciara, please get the epidural," she said.

I said, "Maybe later."

She said, "Please! I can't see you in this much pain anymore."

So, I caved and asked for the anesthesiologist. He was in an emergency C-section, so I would have to wait until he was done.

An hour and a half later, he finally came in. He then asked me to lean over the side of the bed while hugging a pillow. That is when I freaked out and told him I couldn't do it. He left and came back a short while later, and I freaked out again. But this time, he left trying to use reverse psychology and returned with a syringe full of anti-anxiety medication. I was still scared but was more ok with it. The nurse that was 'spotting me' so I wouldn't fall off the bed was wearing a nurse's jacket. I asked her if I could hold onto it because I was scared my shaking would mess him up.

When the epidural was in, I could feel a poking sensation in my right hip. I argued with him telling him he was putting it in the wrong place. He assured me that meant he got the right nerves. After about 15 minutes, I was numb from the waist down. I remember being afraid that I wasn't having contractions, and they had to show me the monitor. And boy, was I cold! They brought me warm blankets.

I wound up having a C-section. When they rolled me into the operating room, I remember thinking about how bright the room was and wondering why there were so many people. The operating table was in the center of the room. Down by where my feet would eventually lie, there were tables with the instruments they would use to open me up and bring my little girl into this world. Everything was stainless steel. The large surgical light was above the operating table, its light dancing across the room and reflecting off the stainless steel cabinets. It was scary. This was it. I was going to have my baby!

My mom was on my right side, and my anesthesiologist on my left. I could see almost everything they were doing reflected in the big surgical light above me. I was shaking. I asked my anesthesiologist to hold my left hand because I didn't want to mess them up. Then they pulled my baby girl out. I

felt like a banana peel when a monkey grabs the bottom of the banana and squeezes, so the fruit pops out. It took Ady what felt like ages to cry when it was only a matter of seconds. The umbilical cord was wrapped around her neck close to the placenta, so they had to cut it very strategically. They laid her on my chest for about a minute, maybe a little longer. I was in awe. The only thing I could muster was, "Hi." Then she grabbed my finger, and I began to cry.

We were in the hospital longer than most because Ady wasn't born with the coughing reflex, which made her choke and stop breathing. She was born with a club foot, but she is perfect. She is my mini-me, sassitude and all. Nothing in this world could be better than having this beautiful little girl call me Mommy. Having a daughter has made me a better person; I get to see the world in a whole new light. Things that were once dull now come to life when my daughter sees them for the first time. Becoming a mom is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me.



## **The Creation of Ann**

Cheyenne Dowdell

## Wholeness

Quin Arellano

He took another drink from the bottle, the lukewarm beer sliding down his throat like molasses. He tipped his head back—further, further, further until there was nothing left for his wandering tongue to find.

Jason hadn't even realized that he was holding his breath until he found himself heaving when he dropped the bottle to the tiled floor, a loud *clink!* echoing off the walls of the apartment. He sat for a moment, letting the warmth of the alcohol pool at the bottom of his belly. He bit the inside of his cheek, his hands cradling the sides of his head and pulling at the short strands of his hair.

It was still there.

One of his hands moved to grip at his chest. The suffocating ache of something missing was still there, weighing and threatening to eat him whole.

The doctor had told him that it wasn't his fault. There was nothing you could have done.

He climbed to his feet, stumbling a few times in the process and almost slipping when he wobbled forward with insecure steps. Resentment bitter on his tongue as he whispered: "There was plenty I could have done."

Hatred boiled at the bottom of his gut—for who, he wasn't sure—but the more he thought, the more it felt like it was burning a hole through him. He should have taken her to the hospital sooner. There was no way to catch it in time. He should have spent more money for a cure. Even if you spent all the money in the world, there would have never been a cure made in time. He should have—he should have—

He stood in front of the flimsy cardboard carrier, the word Lite on the side of the box glaring at him with its gaudy boldness. It was empty and mocking. I'm sorry. There's nothing more that can be done.

This was the third time this week he'd have to go get more.

Jason turned, swaying a bit as he stumbled towards the couch, crushing papers with sketches of cars under his feet. He felt the world tip as he twisted his body to fall on his back against the soft cushions of the couch—a *thud!* And then an *oof* as he collided with the floor. He tried to blink away the bursts of white specks that clouded his vision, a dull headache blooming against the back of his skull. She was only seven. The reminder was bitter as he lay on the floor, his body starting to feel numb.

The vague realization that he had never felt this...raw before, like his insides had been scraped out and he was left with the ache of the aftermath whispering somewhere in the back of his swirling mind. The only time he had

ever felt anywhere close to this hollowness was when he walked in on Zeta making out with some man—Rick, he thinks was his name—on their new leather couch on their anniversary night. And maybe when he was signing the divorce papers and she was sobbing, loud and ugly with her mascara falling down her cheeks in thick blobs as she begged for him to not sign it.

He did anyway.

His vision started to become watery, the white of the ceiling beginning to swim. No, he turned on his side, focusing on the space under the couch as hot tears slipped over the bridge of his nose. This hurts so much worse.

She didn't deserve to die. She was bright and happy, full of life and wonder. Why couldn't they have just taken him instead? He felt like he was suffocating. Maybe if he closed his eyes and wished really hard, she'd be back in his arms in the morning (night? afternoon? he wasn't sure anymore).

He giggled at the thought, half hysterical and half choked, as his eyes slipped shut.

God, he wished he had one more drink.

The sound of glass rolling made his eyes flutter open.

Jason was still facing the gap between the floor and the bottom of the couch, though there seemed to be something under it now. He reached out, feeling past the dust bunnies and grit to wrap his fingers around the smooth neck of a bottle—it was wet with condensation and cold. His eyebrows knitted together, his senses finally sobering to a more rational mind set. He pulled out the blue labeled bottle: Bud Light on the side. He hadn't gotten this—or at least he didn't remember buying this. That was one of the few things he would have remembered in the blur of the last month. He hated Bud Lights.

A fond memory cropped up despite his dislike and confusion: they were his grandpa's favorite. He always tried to get him to drink one when he went to visit. He always declined. That warm image was soon replaced with a thought: where had it come from?

He looked around, his eyesight bleary and a soft pain still throbbing against the side of his skull. His apartment looked the same since that day: a mess of paper and bottles and takeout boxes with rotting food. A lingering disgust dwelled in the back of his mind—he would have never let it get this bad before.

Soft crinkling of paper made his spine crawl. He glanced at the windows. Closed. He hadn't opened them since he got back from the funeral. He turned in a circle, mild frustration nipping at the back of his mind as he stumbled. He looked down when he heard another crinkle by his feet; there was a piece of paper laying at his feet, a pink daisy inside—his grandma's

favorite, he remembered. His hands trembled as he kneeled to pick it up. The paper felt thin and fragile between his fingers. He unfolded it, slowly, taking the flower out, his eyebrows knitting as he unfurled it to see the crude drawing of a child: it was of two characters with striking similarity to Jason and Sonya, holding hands and standing in a field of flowers with the word 'happy' underneath them. The 'h' was backwards. Just like Sonya's.

It felt like a hand was wrapped around his throat as he started looking around. "Sonya?" he called, his voice hoarse and his throat scratchy. Another crinkle of paper behind him. He turned, spotting the paper and shuffling on his knees towards it. He tried folding the other back into its neat creases but his fingers were shaking too bad, so instead he chose to put it on the coffee table, along with the flower.

He picked up the next one, this time with a picture of the little girl with an elderly man and woman (or what he could presume was an elderly man—the only real indicator was the white hair), who were driving down a dirt road in an old, beat-up red truck. At the bottom it read in black crayon: 'Grandpa's teaching me how to drive!' He felt his entire body start to shake, his eyes burning and his head throbbing. He missed her so much.

Another crinkle came from the couch and he almost fell flat on his face as he scrambled his way to the couch in a sort of half-walk, half-crawl. When he unfolded the paper, the drawing inside was just of the little girl and the elderly woman: 'Grandma is showing me how to make your favorite cookies, Daddy!'

Another crinkle came from the stove and he did slip this time getting to it, but the dull pain in his palms and knees has little meaning when he finally gets to the piece of paper. The little girl and the old man were under the truck, both of them blotched in black crayon. 'We're fixing Charlie!'

More started to sound, some taking a pause in the middle of appearing and others coming one right after the other. Some of the little pictures made him laugh (he hadn't laughed in so long; he felt like another person was laughing instead of him) and others made him smile. His cheeks wet with tears and his heart warmed as he waited for the next crinkle of paper making a pile of folded paper on the kitchen counter.

There was a quiet that rested over the room and Jason felt his heart fall to his stomach. "Sonya?" he whispered, turning in a slow circle as he strained his ears to listen for more rustling. He bumped into a bottle causing it to roll; he cursed jumping at the sound.

It was quickly forgotten as another crinkle rang out into the air. It was by the couch again. He felt half crazed by the time he got to it—that short moment of not having them appear made that suffocating feeling come back,

the hollowness of loneliness and loss that he didn't want to face. But this piece of paper didn't have a picture, just the words: 'I miss you, Daddy.'

"I miss you too," he said. Nothing had mattered after she died: he pushed everyone away, milking his vacation time at work (he was cutting it close, he knew). He only ever went out to get a case of beer—but even then he wouldn't talk to anyone, wouldn't remember their faces, everything a blur. His skin started to crawl as silence weighed in the apartment. "Sonya?" he called, hoping for another crinkle to sound.

Nothing.

Suddenly, he didn't feel right in his own skin, his fingers slick with sweat as the silence seemed to grow heavier and heavier. He didn't want to be alone again. What if this was all just a figment of his imagination? He needed her back. What if he hit his head harder than he thought? Was he still dreaming? He missed her. It hurt.

Sonya was dead. He clutched at his chest, his heart breaking. There's nothing you can do to change that. His breathing was coming out in broken wheezes and his head was throbbing again. Stupid. Stupid. This is what you get for dreaming—

A gust of air blew against him, soothing and cool. His mind found some sort of ground with which to calm itself down. When he finally opened his eyes there was a piece of paper, unfolded and with an image of the little girl hugging the man, the message 'I'll always love you, Daddy.' sprawled at the bottom of the page.

He knelt down, picking it up in his shaking hands and curling in on himself as he cried. He cried and cried for what felt like hours by the time he stopped. He sniffed, his face feeling gross and wet with tears and snot but he felt a peace settle in his bones as he wiped his face.

Jason took in the room, nose wrinkling at the messy state of it. God, he needed to clean.

## Neutrinos

Rene Mullen

Tiny particles rarely interact with meager  
other particles seen as different because they do  
heavy gravitational lifting. They pass through matter,  
never talking to or touching particles of the masses.

Why do they matter?  
Why do we give them might?

They don't interact with the Higgs Field  
of responsibility or accountability.

Left-handed and right-handed neutrinos  
seesaw back and forth—first one plays  
king, then the other, giving illusion of power  
to the masses.

To ensure progress, physicists need a new standard  
model. One that better reflects our changing  
understanding of the universe.

## Showcase from ARTH 1110: Art Appreciation

From Judy Pekelsma, instructor:

At ENMU-Ruidoso, Art History 1110: Art Appreciation is a fun class that awards 3 transferable credit hours towards most Associate degrees as a Fine Arts requirement.

This course introduces and explores visual arts, providing an awareness of the significance of the arts at personal, societal, and historical levels including both fine and applied arts. This awareness occurs via a series of assignments directed toward achieving a sense of how an artist creates using simple materials and one's imagination.



**Descent**

Judy Pekelsma

## Showcase from ARTH 1110: Art Appreciation



### My Nilla Wafers

Marley Aguillar

The image I have created is about my great, great grandmother. She could be a little bit of a mean Spanish woman, but I was her favorite. She would spank you if you spilled anything on her tablecloths, but every time she heard I was coming over she would have Nilla wafer cookies and milk sitting on the table for me. Before I got to eat the cookies, I had to greet my great grandmother in the kitchen, then had to go into the back room and greet my great grandfather. He only had one leg, so he stayed in the back room. Then I would help him up and we would go eat at the kitchen table together. If my sister or even my great grandfather tried to take my Nilla wafers, Grandma Rose would yell at them. This is my favorite memory of her.



### Asymmetry/Symmetry

Katelyn Burnett

## **Prairie Nights** Melvin Martin

prairie nights kissed by firefly lights  
a pathway eternally blue and beautiful

so close to the mighty temple of love  
mute, hungry giants stood guard over the precious  
treasures within that massive bronze pyramid, the skies deafened by  
her dinner-bell-siren-clarion-call—all clear now with the passing of  
the warstar, coolly-tempered now by vast flocks of albino crows pressed against a full moon

raised with wolves in old belarus, he became able to sense the songs  
and sacred paths of hidden gray planets in basic-broad-bright-daylight

he could touch the dry earth to shed tears for the cold aqua-green masters of  
ancient seas—their huge razored teeth given as god's signs of those  
things yet to come

he could place tongue to hot pavement, warning the villagers of  
the approaching storm, erecting shelters of blood and bone  
to give birth to barriers weaved but from love—electric-strong to keep  
the tortured creature-at-the-edge-of-the-city at bay

he could stand as the great wall, thick with the smiles of angels  
to absorb the stoned-cruel energies of generations of crushed red nations  
that horrible legacy born of black robes and trapped desire

his heroes were brave men in brown leather wearing proud crowns  
of red suns upon white silk—a sacred brotherhood giving solely of their own lives, thus  
leaving behind them legions of lovely, raven-haired vixens that any man would gladly  
die for—they and theirs who would feel the devil's own heat of nuclear fire

his own road has taken him from the top of the turtle to the bottom of the black bull  
two decades of banishment into the savage wilderness—that place of gods and witches,  
trolls and bitches, knives and guns, klansmen and huns, fathers and sons...

please allow him to come before you and share of high adventure!

## The Bedtime Problem

Bailey Moore

Lorelai has always liked being outside. From the moment we brought her home, her favorite part of the day was outside time. We even got her a kinetic sand table for her third birthday so she wouldn't throw temper tantrums about having to stay inside during winter. When allowed, she would stay outside all day, only coming in to use the bathroom and sleep. That all changed after the camping trip we took for her sixth birthday.

I have never been one for camping. I don't like bugs or how many bad things have happened to people who sleep in the forest. However, the love I have for my daughter wins out over my fears. She asked for a camping trip, so a camping trip she got. We got a tent, sleeping bags, s'more ingredients, the whole nine yards. She loved it. When we got back, she asked if the tent could go up in the backyard. Mark and I didn't see the harm in it, so we did it. That was our first mistake.

At first, she would just use it as a playhouse. Then she started sleeping in the tent for naptime. Then she asked if we could have a campout at home. Again, trying to be good parents, we went for it. We did s'mores, Mark played camp songs on his guitar, and for the second time in a month I slept on hard ground instead of a bed. After that, she insisted on sleeping in the tent every single night. She moved all her toys outside, and even her clothes. She threw temper tantrums when we tried to keep her inside, to the point that one of our neighbors called the police about a noise complaint. Thanks Mrs. Williams.

We didn't know what to do. We didn't want Lorelai to hate us, but once it started getting cold it would be dangerous for her to be outside at night.

"You know, you should really take that tent down. It's an eyesore," Mrs. Williams called over the fence.

"Thanks for the advice, Sandra, but we're going to keep it up for now," I replied, wishing she would just go away. This was a conversation we had near daily now. Why she didn't just move to a gated community where kids and pets wouldn't be a problem I didn't understand. She surely had the money for it. She only gave up her tirade to go rant to her gardener about the cat that kept eating her roses.

That night, Lorelai began sleeping outside of the tent. Concerned about her safety, I slept outside with her. The next morning, I called a behavioral specialist. Doctor Lynn Jones and her team tried their best to understand why Lorelai slept outside, and what would make her come inside to no avail.

Lorelai insisted that she just liked being outside, and it quickly became a nightly argument in our home.

"Please Lorelai. It isn't safe for you to sleep outside every night." It was just after dinner, and Mark was doing the dishes while I took my turn arguing with our daughter.

"But I have you and Papa to keep me safe," she said, putting her hands on her hips.

"True, but sleeping outside all the time isn't good for our backs. Even yours. We need to sleep on beds. Which are inside."

She contemplated for a moment before saying, "Then the beds should go outside too. Then we can all be outside and then your backs won't hurt, and I don't have to come inside."

Well, she wasn't wrong. Why did I have to be raising such a smart kid?

"Uh, that would be a great idea Lore, but you see, our beds are glued to the floor. They can't go outside." Obviously they weren't, but I wasn't going to tell her that.

"Well then you should just buy new ones that can go outside."

Distantly, I heard the dishwasher start up, which meant backup would be coming soon.

"Yeah, we could, but they cost a lot of money. Plus, we like our inside bed. Do you like your inside bed?"

"I do like my inside bed, but I like the outside more. It's better out there."

Just then, Mark comes in. "Hey kiddo. So, are we inside tonight?" he asks, kneeling down next to me.

"No," Lorelai says, "I don't wanna sleep inside. We're sleeping outside. Let's go." With that, she turns and marches out the back door.

"Wonderful." I drop my head to my hands. Once she's outside it's impossible to get her back in without a tantrum, even if it's just to brush her teeth.

"We could always bring her back in once she's asleep," Mark says.

I sigh. "You know what happens when we try that. She wakes up just before we get her in bed, starts screaming, cries for hours."

"Well, we're running out of options, Alex. Soon we're going to turn into mole people. So, it's either that or we keep her inside at night until she gets used to it."

"Right, because that won't make her hate us forever."

"She'll understand we were keeping her safe when she's older."

"And what do we do until then? Just let her scream until she tires

herself out every night?”

“It doesn’t sound fun but, yeah,” Mark says, taking a hold of my hands and pulling them into his lap. “Like I said, we’re running out of options. It’s almost September too, it’s gonna get too cold.”

“Alright. You’re right.”

We get Lorelai ready for bed in fake good spirits. We managed to convince her to brush her teeth in the kitchen sink with minimal protest. About an hour after she is asleep, I carefully pick her up and carry her inside. The spot where she’d been sleeping outside had started to dip, making a Lorelai sized impression in the ground. Miraculously, I got her tucked into her actual bed without her waking up. With a sigh of relief, I exit her room and enter mine. For the first time in two months, Mark and I get to sleep in our bed together.

When I wake up in the morning, Lorelai isn’t in her room. In fact, she’s back outside, in her hole. A jolt of panic runs through me. She didn’t even consider waking us up or getting angry. She just...walked right back outside. I wonder why our alarm system didn’t go off, and then remember that I was so relieved getting her inside and in bed that I didn’t turn it on. I turn to Mark, who’s just coming out of our bedroom, and point to our daughter through the glass of the back door. He looks, sighs, and shakes his head.

“So, I guess we move on to the final option,” he says.

“Unfortunately, I think you’re right,” I reply. This isn’t going to be fun.

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Three weeks later, and our daughter refuses to talk to us unless she absolutely needs something from us. We can hear her crying in her bedroom every night, but she won’t let us comfort her. She doesn’t put up a fight when we drag her inside anymore, just goes as limp as a ragdoll. We’re all miserable.

I fall into the seat opposite my friend at lunch on Saturday.

“You look well,” Clara remarks. “I’m assuming the kid is still being a little monster.”

“Sort of. Who knew a six-year-old would be able to hold a grudge like this,” I say.

“Well, she’s yours, and you’re one of the pettiest people I’ve ever met. And you haven’t found any solutions yet?”

“Nope. The skylight isn’t enough, neither was the forest mural. Leaving the windows open means she’ll just climb right out and into the backyard. We don’t know what to do.”

Clara looks at me for a couple of minutes in silence. A waitress comes by and we order before Clara says, “Have you tried bringing the outside in? Not just with paint and windows but, like, give her some house plants. Maybe

section off a section of her room and put dirt there. Compromise.”

“Clara, you are a genius,” I say, and after lunch is over, I head to the local plant nursery and get a crash-course on beginner house plants. When I leave, my car is full of flora and I have multiple bags of soil. Next, I go to the hardware store for planks and the biggest plastic tarp they have. My car can barely hold it all, but if it works out it’ll be worth it.

Mark is still with Lorelai at a playdate at the end of the cul-de-sac, so I get to work. I move all the furniture out of the way so I can put the tarp down, covering the entire floor. Then I put the furniture back in its place and surround Lorelai’s bed with the wooden planks. That’s where the soil goes once I’m done, and then the plants go in as many places as I can fit them. I consider putting some in her closet as well, but they would die too quickly without light. In the end, I still have too many plants, so they go wherever I can put them around the house.

My husband and daughter return to our home looking a lot greener than it used to. Lorelai is delighted, running into her room when told. She can be heard squealing in delight.

“What did you do, raid a jungle?” Mark asks, looking at the plant hanging from a hook newly installed in the corner of our living room.

“Kind of,” I say. “It was Clara’s idea, and if it gets Lorelai to stay inside, well. I’ll become a botanist.”

“Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that, but this is pretty impressive. Good job, Alex,” he laughs, heading to Lorelai’s room. Inside, Lorelai is happily playing in the dirt around her bed. That night, there’s no protest when we ask her to sleep inside.



**The Plant**  
Jennifer L. Stephens

## Showcase from The Alamogordo Enchanted Quilters Guild

*Editor's Note: Ridgeline Review is excited to partner with The Alamogordo Enchanted Quilters Guild to feature quilters' work in each issue.*

From Vice President of the Guild, **Deborah Goldberg**, whose work is featured here:

“Memories,” which is a quilt made from scraps, was 20 years in the making. Each of the 100 blocks represents a quilt project made over the years. This QAYG method is just one of the techniques taught by the Guild.

“Brother Warrior” is a tribute to the singer Kate Wolfe.

“Laural Burch 21 Block Swap” is another program the Guild holds every few years. Guild members make blocks and the owner of the fabric has to make an original design quilt using them.

Find the Guild on Facebook at Alamogordo Enchanted Quilters Guild!



**Memories**

Spring 2021

## Showcase from The Alamogordo Enchanted Quilters Guild



**Laurel Burch 21 Block Swap**



**Brother Warrior**

## The Dollhouse

Tim Berns

I never thought as a child that life would be the way it is today. I remember before it all happened...when my mother was, well, normal. I know that may seem like a strange statement. Believe me, we were about as average as they come. My father was a salesman. He sold ladies dresses and clothes to big stores. He was fairly successful and was the one who “brought home the bacon,” as my parents were fond of saying. Mother was the one tasked with taking care of the children and the household, which consisted of myself and my three brothers. My brothers were all older than me and had jobs around the house to help our mother. She, however, raised us and took care of us. She fed us, clothed us and taught us to be all the wonderful things our father dreamed we would be.

She had many hobbies. She would garden during the days and work on her sewing in the evenings after dinner. She was an amazing cook. She could work her way halfway through the pantry by noon, presenting our family with all sorts of amazing delights at dinner. She could sing better than angels and I had a sneaking suspicion that she might have been an angel, until that fateful day, so many years ago.

I had come home from school, dropping my schoolbooks on the porch with my saddle shoes. I typically would go upstairs and change from my school clothes into something more befitting a girl who enjoys toads and snails and detested things like dolls and dresses. Sometimes I would catch my father smiling at me when I would play Cowboys and Indians with my brothers and showed no interest in tea parties and teddy bears. Mother was not having it.

“Geraldine! You know I cannot stand it when you do these things! Young ladies should not be prancing about in creeks and muddying about in forests playing with boys and mussing their hair and clothes! We women need to be proper. What do you think your father would say?”

I knew exactly what my father would have said. We had talked about it once on the way back from town and the market. There had been an incident at the hardware store. My father and brothers had needed to buy some nails and wood to fix the chicken coop. I had wandered off to look at the pellet rifles. While I was imagining myself as a masked rider on horseback, shooting outlaws with perfect accuracy and saving the town from peril, I felt my head jerked back. The ceiling appeared suddenly and my rump found the floor. I had cried out in pain and looked up to find the source. I saw a boy only a little older than myself. He was wearing a pair of muddy jeans with

worn out boots and a brown t-shirt—well it looked brown, but had probably been white at one point, stained with old washwater and time.

“Girls ain’t supposed to play with guns,” he said. “You think you’re a boy, girlie? You wanna play with the big boys, huh? Girls are weak. Y’all can’t fight. You should be with the other girls drinking tea and playing with your dumb dolls!” The boy sneered through yellow teeth and his green eyes narrowed. I felt my anger boiling up inside. I grabbed his boot and yanked as hard as I could. Normally the boot would have probably just slid off, but because they were likely hand-me-downs, they did not. He flew backwards and hit his head on a shelf as he fell to the ground. He started to cry. Not wanting to lose an opportunity, I leaped on him and proceeded to pound his face with my tiny fists. He cried harder and started to wail in a high pitched squeak I almost mistook for a pig.

“I can do whatever I want, you big bully! Don’t you tell me what I can and can’t do!” These were the most coherent words I could muster. There were also quite a few words I didn’t know that I knew and that would make a nun blush. My father and brothers had heard the commotion and came running. It took all four of them to pull me from the whimpering and sobbing boy. His nose was bleeding and his eyes were already starting to swell and darken. I looked down and noticed a shiny white pearl...except it wasn’t a pearl. I looked closer. I had knocked his teeth out! I laughed as I picked it up and threw it at him.

“Here, Jack!...You may need this!” I exclaimed.

“Geraldine that is quite enough.” Father was looking at me quite sternly down the bridge of his nose. “Come along now. We must get home. Apologize to the boy.”

“But Father he...”

“Now, Geraldine,” he interrupted. I looked at the boy and then at my Father and then back at the boy. Blood was dripping onto his dingy shirt and his eyes were swollen, red and wet.

“I’m sorry,” I lied. We got into the buggy and headed off. My brothers were in back, holding onto the wood so it wouldn’t fall out. That left my father and I riding up front. He broke the silence by clearing his throat and then looked at me. I tried to read his expression, but this one I had not seen before.

“Gigi.” He used his nickname for me. He only did this when I was scared and sad. Strange. I had just been in a fistfight.

“This world is a rough place, you know?” He looked out ahead at the road and horizon, the cornfields and farmlands. It seemed to stretch on forever. He looked back at me after a moment. “It’s going to be rougher on you too.” I looked up at him quizzically.

“What do you mean?”

“Well...you aren’t exactly ladylike, girl. You know this. I know this. Your momma knows it too. We all do.” He looked down at me warmly.

“I’m sorry,” I said sheepishly.

“Don’t be sorry,” he said. “ Be proud.”

My expression must have been my answer. He laughed.

“Look...a lot of fathers might be ashamed. The little boys don’t understand. I see it. I have for a while now. You’re not like the other girls at school. You hate dresses. You play with frogs and snails. You dig in the mud. You prefer to be the cowboy rather than the damsel in distress. You like adventure books. You like ‘boy’ things...and you know what? That’s ok. I am proud of you for this. You’re strong and tough and resilient. You don’t take guff from anyone and you can fight for your rights. That makes you dangerous to the status quo. The world won’t see you coming. That makes you special to me. You’re my little cowgirl.”

I really didn’t know what to say and didn’t say anything, actually, for the rest of the ride home. When we got there, while my brothers unloaded the wagon, my father and I just sat there. Him looking at me and I at him. No words were spoken, but an understanding was shared. He had given me his blessing to be a tomboy, or whatever I was. I didn’t know how to express the gratitude I felt.

“Thanks Dad.” And I winked, jumping off the wagon and careening inside to go deal with my mother, who insisted I be proper.

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My mother was not raised wealthy, nor was she raised poor. My grandparents had some money from when they had lived “Back East,” where my grandfather was apparently a pretty successful oilman...and a degenerate gambler. He probably would have been much wealthier had it not been for this. Either way, they didn’t give us a dime, ever. Consequently, my mother had resented this and her upbringing, but simultaneously was trying to fix with me what had gone so terribly wrong in her own life. I don’t think she was unhappy with Father. She loved him dearly and they were always exceedingly kind to one another. I think she just had wished for more and never got it. It made me sad. I love my Mother. Even though we never saw eye to eye and disagreed over a woman’s place in a world dominated by men. She had always envisioned me as a stately woman having fancy parties and wearing petticoats, insisting that we follow “high tea” and always fussing over my hair and face, brushing my tangled locks out, despite my complaints that it hurt and I would have rather had short hair. “Mother! Stop it! You’re hurting me!” I would exclaim in frustration. Her pulling and tugging became more insistent.

“Well, if you would allow me to do this regularly, it wouldn’t be so

bad! I swear, child. One day I won't be around and then what will you do? Grow a mop on your head? Now hold still and stop squirming like a snail!"

Sometimes her frustrations would get the better of her and I would get the switch. Sometimes mine would get the better of me and I would grab the brush from her and run from the house all the way to the creek and throw it into the small pond that bordered our land. I have often wondered since then exactly how many brushes lay at the bottom, gathering algae and becoming homes for my beloved tadpoles and snails. Considering this would always make me smile.

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As I said before, I had come home from school and changed clothes. I put on jean shorts I had stolen from one of my brothers and had "altered" myself, using the lessons in sewing Mother had so expertly taught me. I tied my hair back with some twine and went outside to play. I passed the sewing table where our mother was typically stationed in the afternoons when we got home. Her rocking chair was bare. I went to go dig in the muddy creek banks with my brothers. The sun had started to dip behind the clouds on the big horizon, igniting the sky ablaze in a wash of oranges and yellows and reds. I had always admired the big open skies of the plains of Iowa. You could get lost in the stars at night, imagining all of the different world that might exist.

We had started back to the house when our father, who had just come home from working in the city, came running out of the house, the screen door clapping against the door jamb like hollow thunder. Ominous. Foreboding. He asked where our mother went. We shrugged, explaining she was not here when we got home from school. He asked if we knew where she had gone, and we replied that we did not. We searched the house. My brothers checked the chicken coop and goat pen. My father checked the attic and basement. Nothing. Not a sign of her anywhere other than everything she had left behind. A half-finished shawl crumpled on her sewing table. An apple pie she had made a few days ago that was starting to stale in the cupboard. Her favorite sundress draped over a chair. Signs she had been there but was not there any longer.

A few days went by. Then a week. Then longer. She had yet to return. Father was a mess. He stopped shaving and going to work. Distraught does not begin to cover it. My brothers went looking and had yet to find her anywhere in five counties. I had taken to sitting in my room staring at the walls. I missed her. I missed her fussing over my looks and the repeated sighs when I would capture frogs or come back with leaves and sticks in my curly red hair, looking like some wild child recently released from the forest. I missed her patience and sweet voice as she would brush my hair and clean the mud spackle from my freckled cheeks and sing to me.

I looked at the dollhouse she had saved for a year to buy me. I had never used it. It had sat in my room, collecting dust, silently hoping this girl would do what was expected of her and use it. I frowned. I knew, even at nine, that I would never be the woman my mother dreamed me to be. I was cut from different cloth. I had no interest in “girly” things like ponies and pink. I wanted to ride horses Western-Style, like the cowboys I had seen in the talkies that were now all the rage. I did not want to be a mother.... not like mine. At least, I had not. Now, all I could think of was how much I wished her to be home again and fuss at my hair and sigh in exasperation at my wild nature and throw her hands into the air. I wanted my mother to be my mother again, and I wanted to be her little girl.

I started sobbing uncontrollably. The rough linen that covered my pillow absorbed the salty tears until my eyes could no longer produce them. That was when I heard something strange coming from the dollhouse. I sat up, rubbed my face, and looked at it. There was a light on inside. This was not right. I had never touched the thing, and now there were lights on inside? Great. I knew I had lost it. I peered into one of the windows but could not see the source. I heard a very faint, yet familiar sound. It was my mother’s voice, and she was singing, but this was simply not possible. Certainly improbable. She had left us. She had vanished! Into thin air! Taken, for sure, by some mysterious force...or perhaps evil men. I leaned in and listened more intently. No, it was her voice, for sure, but sounded exceedingly small and faint. Almost imperceptible.

I saw movement inside. I fell backwards into my dresser and the force knocked some things over. A vase landed on my head and while it did not hurt, it startled me. I began to cry again. That was when it happened. I saw her: when she walked out the tiny front door and smiled at me, my eyes got as big as the moon does when it is late fall in Iowa and the leaves have all changed but it hasn’t snowed yet. She spoke to me and I passed out.

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When I came to, my brain was swimming through pudding. I looked around. Everything was the same. Same table, same chair, same dresser, same rocks and snails, same dollhouse...

Wait. The Dollhouse. I sprang up and shoved my face into one of the windows so fast I jammed my nose into a small planter box and crushed it, sending balsa wood and tiny silk flowers raining down. I sat back and rubbed my freckled face. As I opened an eye, I saw my mother walking out the front door of the house. Again. She smiled at me again. And I almost fainted again, but was able to somehow recover and prevent this. I had so many questions. How could this happen? When did it happen? Where? All of the obvious

ones. Also, how had she eaten and showered and used the bathroom? I will spare some detail on these, but she had been creative with cotton balls and iodine and water, all of which had sat on the table next to the house. As for food, I had left cookies and cakes in my room for late night snacks while reading my adventure books, which she snuck out and discovered while I slept, nibbling a bit until this food supply was dwindling.

The real question was how it had occurred. She was not sure herself exactly. She endeavored to explain that she had gone outside to tend to the chickens and when she was going back inside, she saw a bright flash of light and was suddenly exceedingly small.

I struggled to understand. How does light make you small? She did not have an answer.

I went and gathered a few things from around the house to make her more comfortable and collected some food for so she could live in the house on a more permanent basis. I could not tell my father or my brothers. Not yet. Not until I could figure out what to do about it and if we could fix it.

I tried everything. Fireworks. Mirrors and dozens of candles. I even sold my shiny rock collection to buy a camera flash. Nothing worked. I could not “flash” my mother back to normal. I tried asking the pastor from two counties over what to do. He did not know. I finally told my father and brothers. At first, they did not believe me. My brothers laughed and said I was full of scuttlebutt. My father just gave me this look, which at first caused abject terror, until I realized he believed me.

I had helped Mother into a box and carried her to the kitchen. Everyone looked inside. They all almost fainted. Except me. I just smiled.

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In the days, weeks, months, and now years that have followed, we adapted. It has certainly taken some getting used to and a considerable amount of changes and reorganizing due to my mother mysteriously shrinking to nine inches tall. We now travel as a Vaudevillian act. Mother is the star, of course. Father provides all the advertisements and sales of tickets and merchandise. My brothers provide security and are the “road crew,” doing all the heavy lifting and setup and breakdown of our tent. We sold the farm but took the dollhouse. That is the centerpiece of our show.

You are probably wondering how I fit in. Well, dear reader, I am the lady dressed in the pretty pink petticoat that introduces my “Magic Dollhouse” and “Living Doll” whom I have high tea with and we talk about our pretty ponies and lacey teddy bears. Afterwards I go have drinks with my brothers and the rest of the road crew and I usually outdrink and outwrestle most of them. In my petticoat. Life is good.



**Nature's Art**

Bobi Taylor



**Loui**  
Katherine Kiefer



## **The Amazing Flight of the Hummingbird**

Elise Haley

### **Resilience – NOW**

Mary S. Lemmond, Ed.D.

Life as we knew it came crashing to a halt about a year ago, March 2020. Since COVID-19 hit our resilience has been tested—a LOT. Some days might have been “good,” when you were full of energy and optimism. Then there were those “other days,” perhaps more than you wanted to count. That’s where resilience comes in and can help turn days more “good” than “not good.”

You might have had your resilience tested at other times: a relationship gone bad, a job lost, a death in the family. For me it was a car crash in February 2015 when my body sustained injuries that I am just now rehabilitating. Whatever the event, and there will be more as you age, you will need to draw on inner strength to move forward.

What is that inner strength—that “resilience”—and how do I get it? The concept has been around for ages, told and re-told in stories of heroes who have overcome great odds. Resilience is the ability to “bounce back” from trying times. Lately the word has popped up in popular magazines and news stories. To function during this past year, you have probably developed resilience without even knowing it.

Resilience is a pattern of thinking and behavior built over time. It is characterized by good adaptation to events, despite risk, stressors, or adversity. Does this sound like something you want to learn and practice?

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**What do resilient people do?** They cope with stressors and don’t get wrecked by stressful events but remain optimistic, even during very tough events.

**How do I become resilient?** Here are several strategies to help build and increase resilience:

**1. Seek help when needed:** Know you can't solve every problem on your own; seek guidance from experts, as mastering a transition or challenge takes assistance.

**2. Take care of yourself:** Physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally.

**3. Develop GRIT:** Think of the book *The Martian* or the movie with Matt Damon. Can you imagine being left on another planet? Matt Damon said, "You face one challenge at a time, solve it and then go onto the next." Sometimes we become overwhelmed with life. Take a step back, see what needs to be done first, then what needs to be done next—persevere.

**4. Be Flexible:** Resilient people tend to engage in behaviors that allow them to reset or pivot whenever necessary (I LOVE the word "pivot"), unleashing their creativity, which is highly valued on the path to resiliency. Creativity enhances the human experience and has its own storehouse of power. Set aside time to learn from others who create, then explore and nurture your own creativity.

**5. Engage in Positive Self-Talk:** Resilience doesn't mean every day is happy and problem-free, but resilient people are very careful with their inner dialogue, even when the going gets tough. Know that if you start to criticize your own performance, you are less likely to make a strong recovery. Know that mistakes will happen, so experience disappointment, but do not get stuck in it.

**6. Understand Mistakes:** When they happen, resilient people ask themselves: "What can I learn from this?" Recognize what makes YOU uniquely YOU, and build on those things.

**7. Look at situations through a lens of "Gratitude."** Know that GRATITUDE is the foundation of well-being. Each day write down three things you are grateful for. Even when a situation is dire, foster a sense of gratitude. Gratitude shifts your focus, if only for a moment.

**8. Be Mindful:** Mindfulness means "paying attention" to what you are doing in the here and now. Savor it—enjoy it—use your senses to perceive it.

**9. Enjoy nature, music, and spirituality:** These are some things which "soothe the soul", or "mind, body, spirit". Meditation and Yoga are two more resilience-building activities that can foster the "bouncing back" from hard times.

Know that the story we tell ourselves about how we will emerge from this pandemic and other challenges can shape not only how we connect with others, but also our own inner well-being.

What can you do to build your resilience?

**Creative Aging: Issues and Ideas**

**Community Development Department ENMU-Ruidoso**



# "Y" You Should Mask Up

Robert Trowbridge

## Contributor Biographies

### MARLEY AGUILLAR

Marley Aguilar is currently a dual credit student at ENMU-Ruidoso.

### FELISHA “QUIN” ARELLANO

Felisha Arellano actively goes by the name Quin. She has a passion for the arts and actively draws and writes. A college student going to New Mexico State University, she has illustrated a book and has collected several awards from entering writing contests in high school. She's hoping to get her English degree soon and travel to meet new people and come back with even more stories.

### TIMOTHY BERNIS

Tim Bernis is an ENMU-Ruidoso student studying Natural Sciences. He wrote “The Dollhouse” for ENGL 2310: Introduction to Creative Writing.

### DANNALYN BLAKE

Dannlyn Blake is an ENMU-Ruidoso student studying Business Administration. She wrote “The Hatchet” for ENGL 2310: Introduction to Creative Writing.

### KATELYN BURNETT

Katelyn Burnett is currently a dual credit student at ENMU-Ruidoso.

### CHEYENNE DOWDELL

Cheyenne Dowdell is one of our Navigators at ENMU-Ruidoso. If you've ever needed something on campus, you've likely met her. Cheyenne is an ENMU-Ruidoso alumna, and is currently attending ENMU in Portales online. Her hobbies include: playing video games, trying to create 'art', and chasing that dopamine through social media.

### EUGENE DOWNER

Eugene Downer is a photographer and is a current resident of Alamogordo. He published a magazine called *Teton* for many years in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where he also operated a float trip on the Snake River and owned a bookstore in downtown Jackson. He is 81 years old and hikes every day in Lincoln National Forest to maintain good health. His undergraduate degree was from Penn State in Journalism and he did graduate work at Harvard University in public health.

### DEBORAH GOLDBERG

Deborah Goldberg moved to Alamogordo in 1998. In order to meet new friends and learn to quilt, she joined The Alamogordo Enchanted Quilters Guild. She is currently the Vice President of the Guild.

## Contributor Biographies

### ELISE HALEY

When Elise was in New Jersey, she worked with inner-city children and spent time working for an engineering firm. She moved back to New Mexico in 1974. She grew up in Carlsbad, NM. She taught math to seventh graders for 25 years and then taught another seven and a half years at New Mexico State University Alamogordo. After retiring, she volunteered as a photographer for the schools. She attended Eastern New Mexico University from 1964-1969.

### SARA HALL

Sara Hall was born and raised in Roswell, NM and is married with 3 children and 6 grandchildren. She graduated from ENMU Portales and is serving on the ENMU Alumni Association board. She has traveled all over the world and lived in Saudi Arabia for 8 years. She just retired from the City of Roswell Recreation (22 yrs) to take care of her mom. She has many hobbies including photography, gourd artist, quilter, stained glass artist, hiker, swimmer and triathlete. She dances Tap, Hula and Mexican Folklorico with groups in Roswell and Country and Western dances with her husband Steve.

### KATHERINE KIEFER

Kathy Kiefer grew up in southern Michigan, about 90 miles east of Chicago. She dabbled in different types of art, and her high school art teacher encouraged her to pursue an artistic career. Kathy received a BFA with an emphasis in graphic design from NMSU in 1989. She has worked for newspapers, magazines, print shops, and has done freelance design for many organizations. Currently, Kathy is the Media Production Coordinator at ENMU-Ruidoso.

### MARY S. LEMMOND

Dr. Mary Lemmond, Adjunct Instructor at ENMU-Ruidoso, has developed and taught Creative Aging: Issues and Ideas classes with a student base ranging far beyond Lincoln County thanks to Zoom system. Designed for students of all ages, the curriculum touches on topics such as resilience, aging in place, memory, grit, and cognitive fitness. A new resident of Ruidoso, Mary moved from Tulsa, OK where she has been an educator for 40+ years, the last 19 teaching adult practitioners about Early Childhood Education, especially children with special needs. She says moving to Ruidoso has been amazing as is working at ENMU-Ruidoso.

### MELVIN "JOE" MARTIN

"Joe" is a disabled US Army veteran of the Vietnam-era who retired to New Mexico in 2011. An enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe of South Dakota, Melvin has written extensively on Native American issues primarily for Native American news sites over the years. This particular poem is based upon a collection of previous po-

## Contributor Biographies

ems from a diversity of subject areas.

### **KATIE MILLER**

Katie was born in Texas but has spent most of her life in the mountains of Ruidoso. A lover of books and writing, she will graduate with a Bachelor's in Literature and a minor in Creative Writing from NMSU in May 2022. Along with English, Katie also has a love for hiking, camping, painting, and spending time with her animals.

### **BAILEY MOORE**

Bailey Moore attended ENMU-Ruidoso during the Fall 2020 semester, during which she wrote "The Bedtime Problem" for ENGL 2310: Introduction to Creative Writing.

### **RENE MULLEN**

Rene is the managing editor for a PR firm in Albuquerque, a performance and traditional poet, and author of the full-length poetry collection *This Still Breathing Canvas*. His poetry has been featured in *Poetry Quarterly*, *50 Haikus*, and *The Santa Fe Literary Review*.

### **KATHERINE NELSON**

Katherine Nelson is an English Composition and Film Instructor at Eastern New Mexico University's Community College in Ruidoso, New Mexico. Katherine began writing short stories and poetry in grade school while growing up in Oahu, Hawaii and San Antonio, Texas. She learned early that home is where her heart is, and now that is in New Mexico, Texas, and Southwestern Colorado. Today, she happily resides with her Aussie Shepard on a mountainside where she gets much of her inspiration for her documentary filmmaking and writing. Her creative writing work includes screenplays, opinion pieces, essays, magazine articles, poems, and a memoir that is currently in development.

### **CIARA NICKELL**

Ciara is a mom to a beautiful little three-year-old girl. She likes to play videogames, read, and write in her free time. She likes to say, "I was born in New Mexico and raised everywhere else." She has lived in 5 different states and lived in Texas most of that time. She also enjoys traveling, being social, and cuddling at home with her little family including her dog and her cat!

### **JUDY PEKELSMA**

Judy Pekelsma teaches Art Appreciation at ENMU-Ruidoso. She achieved an MFA in non-representational painting, which pushed her from her comfort zone of functional pottery into the imagined world of my mind. She teaches students about the importance of art in their lives, helping them see art from the inside, from their

imaginations. Her work in this issue resulted from her intense study of Georgia O'Keeffe while recovering from a concussion. Understanding the life of this artist and her intense perseverance despite illness and self-imposed solitude made her want to explore her own paintings with an eye toward exploring O'Keeffe's abstract examination of New Mexico's flora and landscape.

### **JENNIFER LEE STEPHENS**

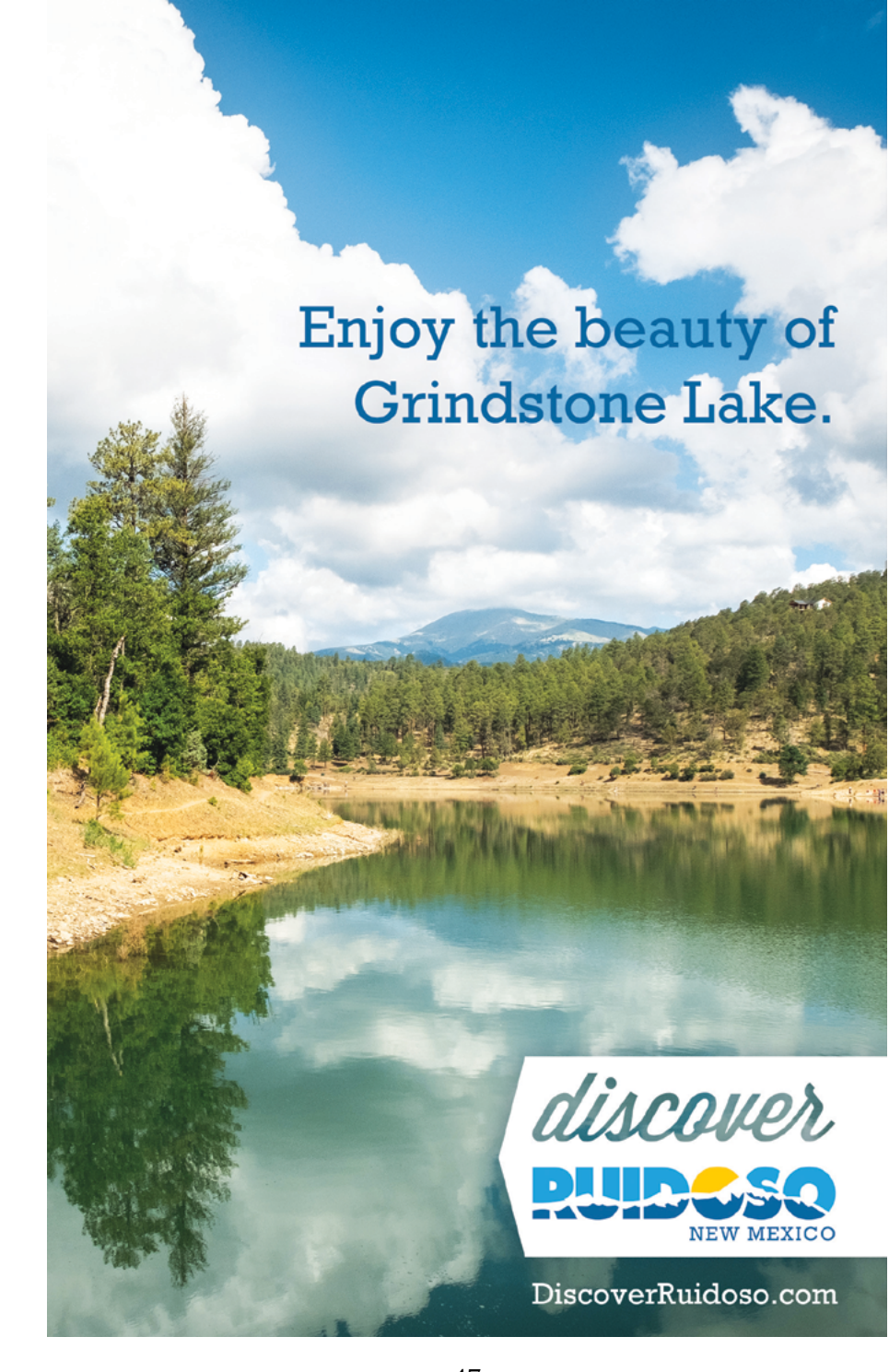
Jennifer is a retired administrative assistant who moved with her wife to Capitan, New Mexico in late 2010. They relocated to Alamogordo in 2019 to be closer to medical services and other amenities. She enjoys listening to music, going to concerts, playing guitar and bass, birdwatching, and taking lots of photographs, many of which she converts to digital art. She shares her home with her wife, Hollie, three dogs, one Meyer's parrot, and a parakeet.

### **BOBI TAYLOR**

Bobi Taylor is a long-time community member of Lincoln County. Born in Las Vegas, Nevada she currently resides in Capitan where her included photo was snapped. When Bobi isn't hard at work providing the best service one can get from a server this side of the county, she is busy being the World's Greatest 'Mami' to her 3 grand-kids who she adores beyond words.

### **ROBERT TROWBRIDGE**

Robert is an individual with many creative interests. Raised on 40 acres in western Washington State, he learned at an early age to draw and to wood-carve. He began cartooning in the mid-1960s. He served his country in the Coast Guard, the Colorado National Guard, and the U.S. Army, retiring from the military at White Sands Missile Range after 22 years of service. Following retirement, he became an actor and playwright. He also enjoys doing scrimshaw.



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