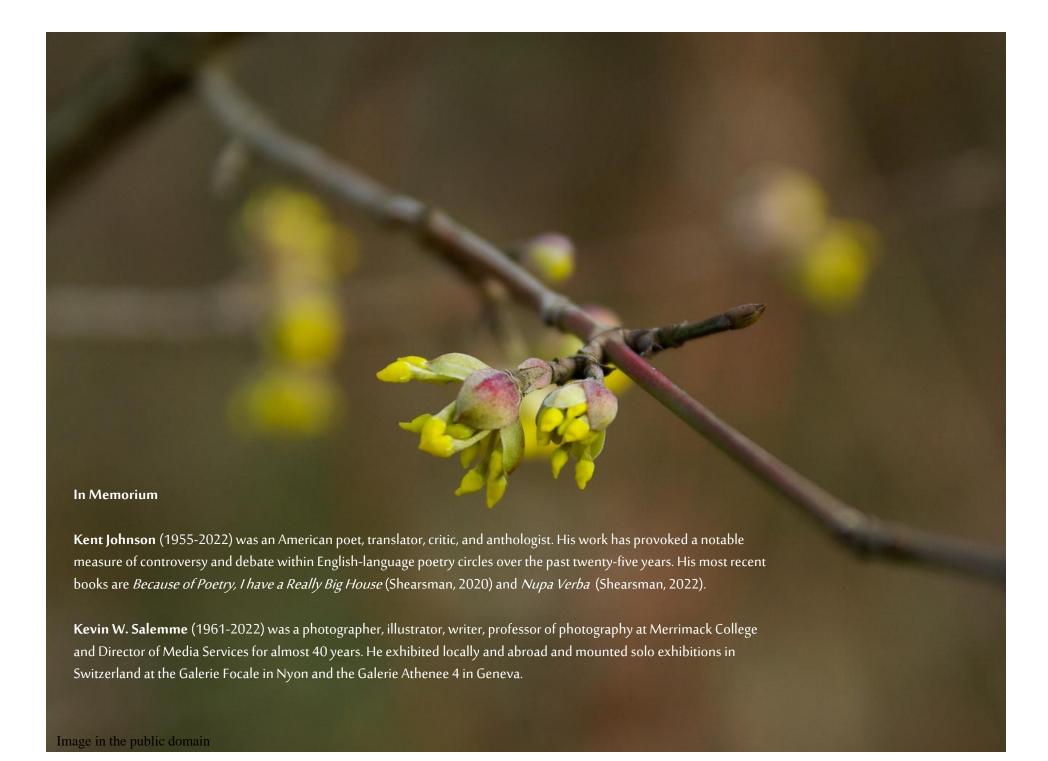


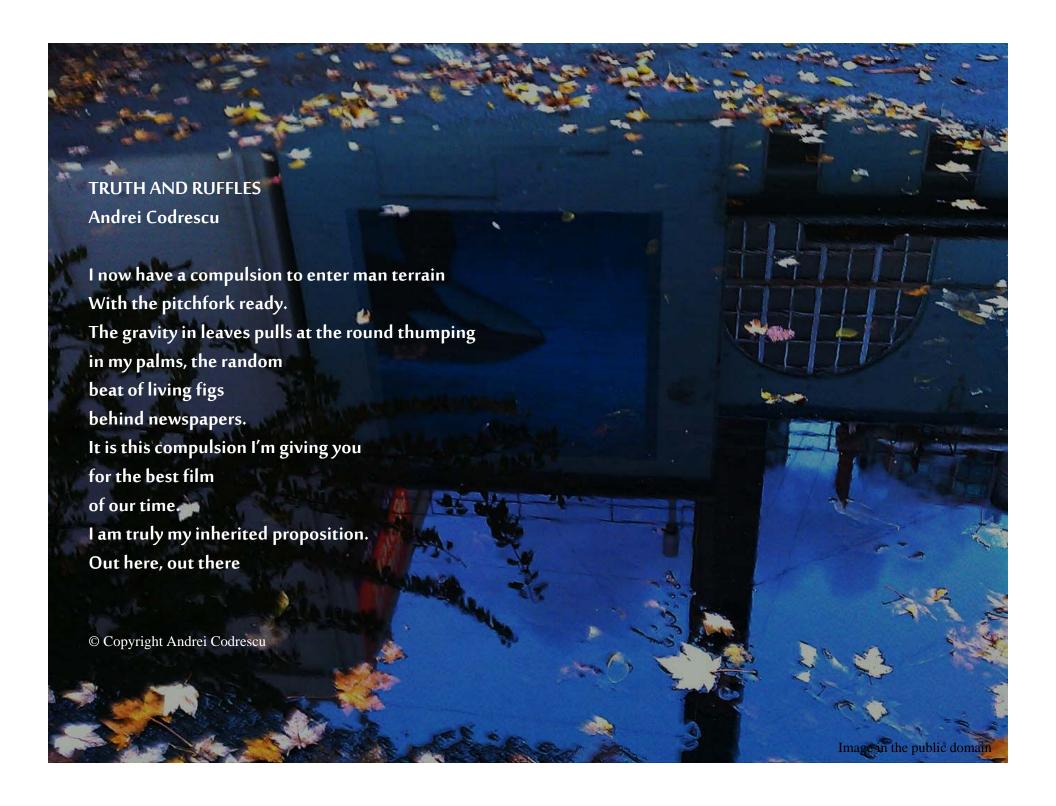


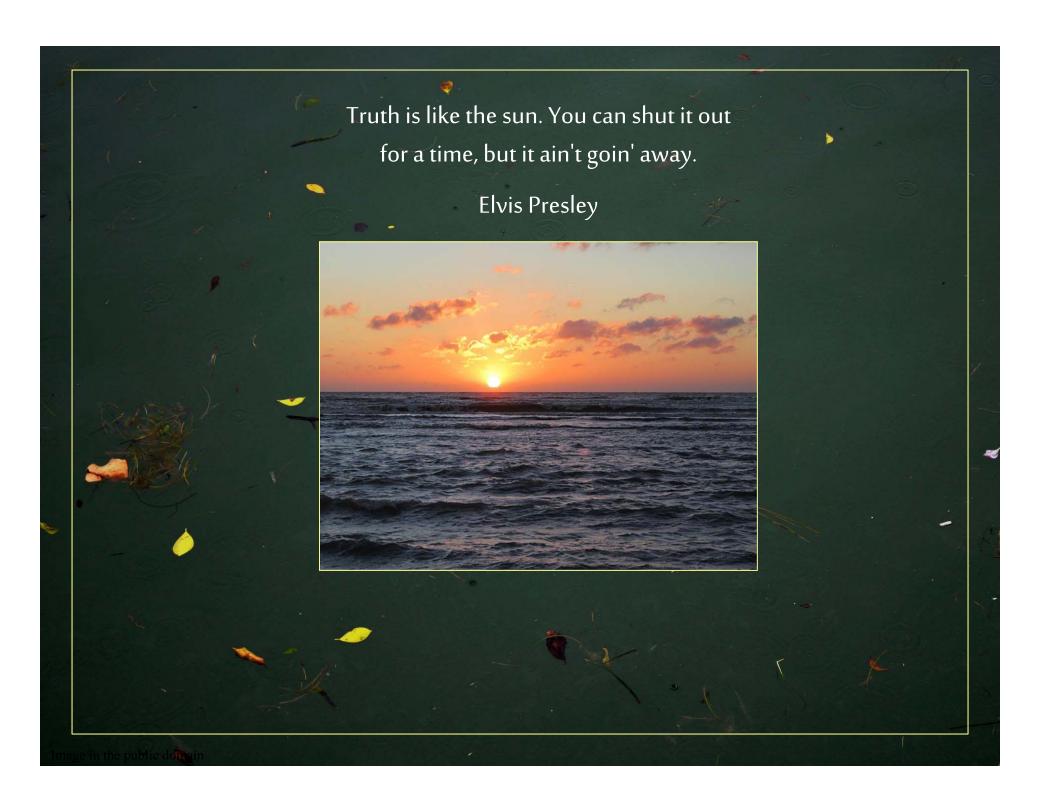
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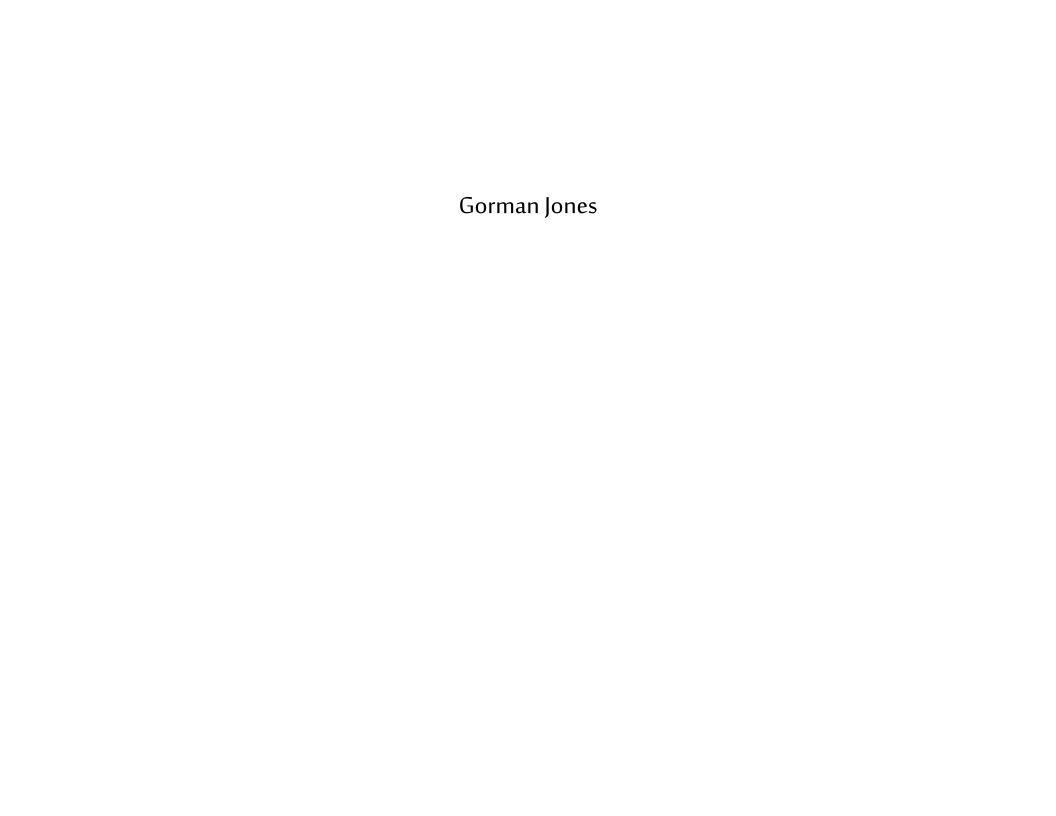








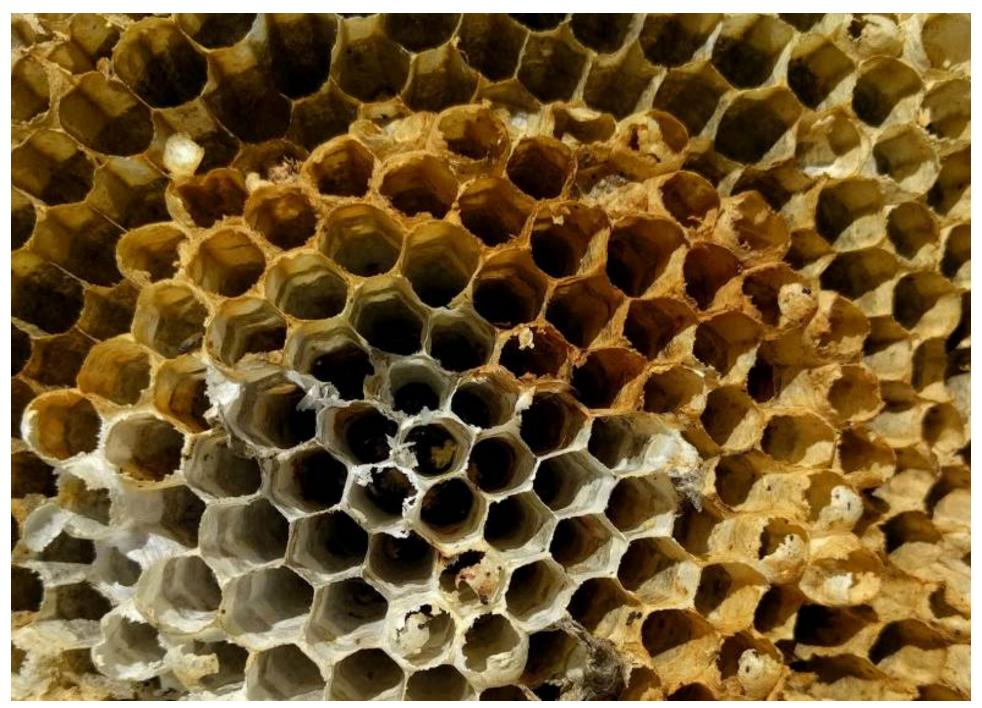






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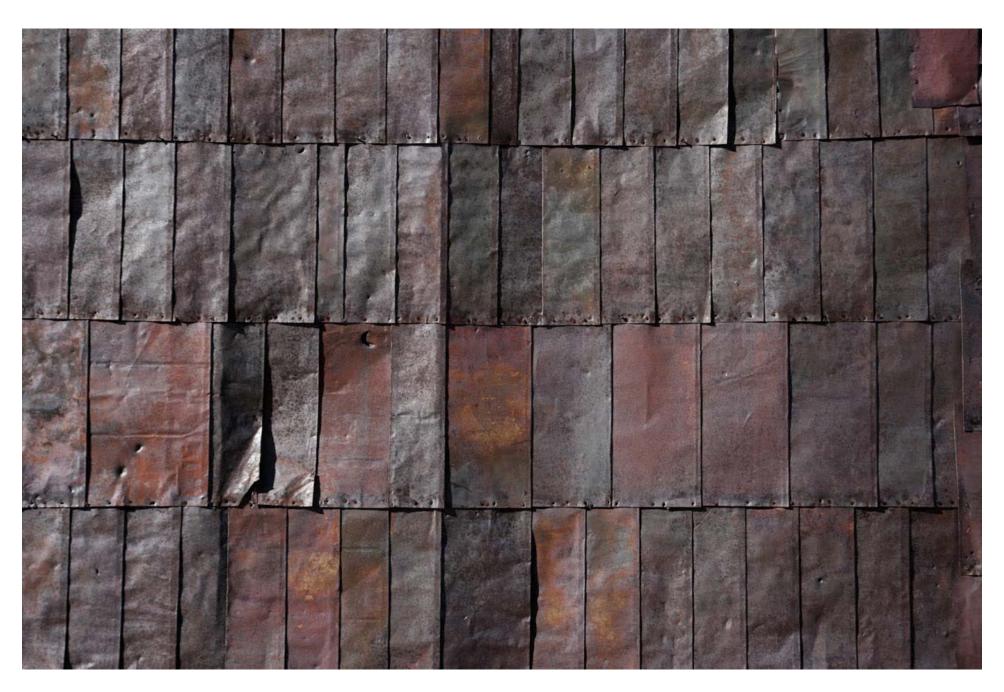




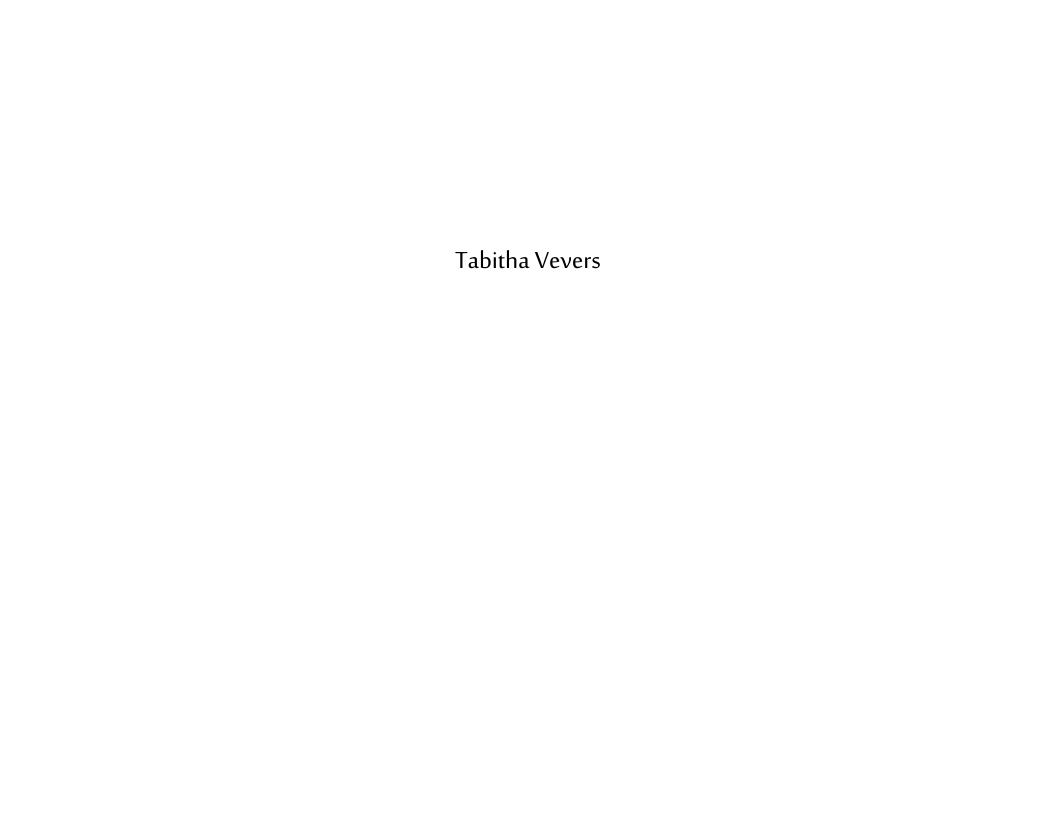
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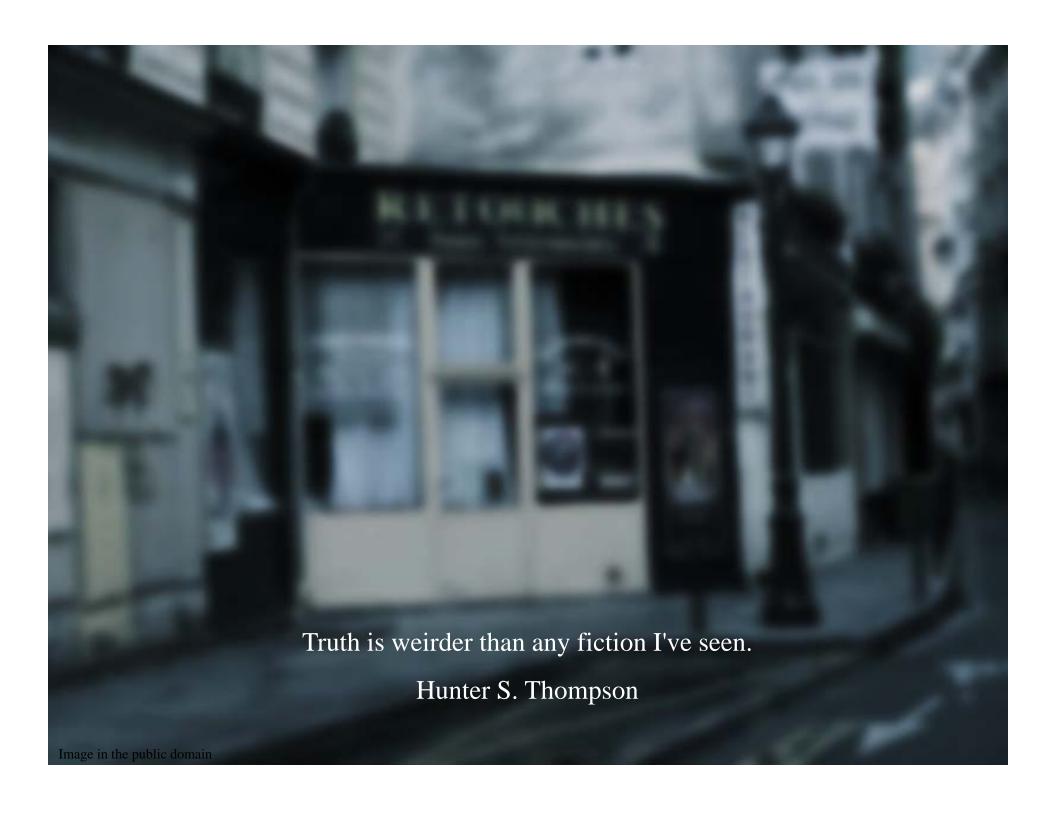


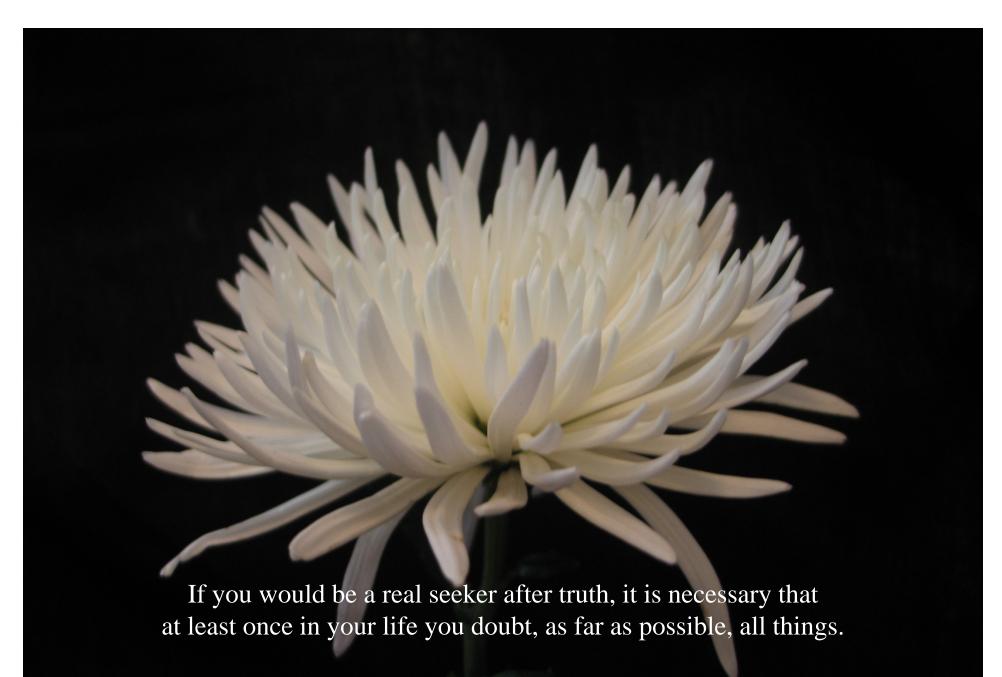
Fear

12" x 12"; oil + mixed media on panel.

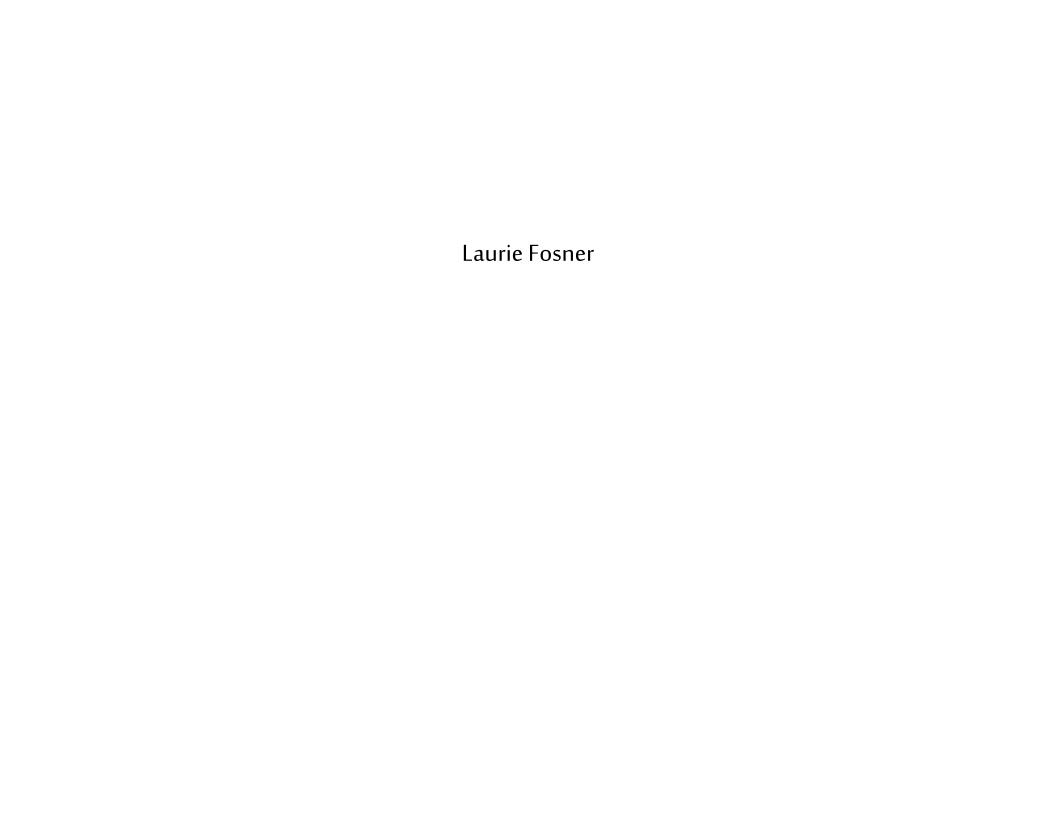
Done in the midst of the Trump presidency, after a fatal shark attack in Wellfleet on Cape Cod and before the January 6th attack on the Capital in DC.

(c) Tabitha Vevers 2020; Courtesy of Albert Merola Gallery.





Rene Descartes



My Sister says Comparisons are Odious: Truer words were never spoken.

By Laurie Fosner

I had a crush on a guy in my high school band. We hung out for a few months but then he fell hard for Danette. She was adorable and very flexible. She used to stretch at lunch.

I remember once she sat down on the lawn and leaned forward with her legs wide apart and touched her head to the ground between her legs, and I thought, does she have a missing bone or something? Are people even supposed to be able to do that?

Danette also played the flute, so in addition to the hour of orchestra they shared every day, she and my crush spent a lot of time together in after school band practice. Anyway, he liked her, and who could blame him?

Still, I kept asking myself if it would have been different if I'd been in the band. Would additional hours of forced



togetherness every week have given me the edge? Should I ask him to be my physics partner again next semester and try to win him back?

No. He liked her more. That was all there was to it. Okay, fine. Let's move on.

But wait — What was it was about her that made him like her more? What did she have that I didn't have?

The problem with constantly comparing ourselves to others — whether it's how they look, what they have or who they date — is that one of two things always follows:

1) You feel a false sense of superiority, or

2) You feel a false sense of inferiority.

Neither of the above is helpful. There will always be people who are better looking than you, smarter than you, more charming, more talented. Likewise, there will always be people not as attractive, intelligent, charming, talented.

Growing up, my sister Heidi was blonde. I was not. She also had blue eyes (mine are hazel), was quiet (compared to me that would probably be true of anyone).

Everyone loved Heidi. I was challenging.

Every Christmas when I asked for something, my parents bought it for Heidi. True story. Even Heidi will admit it now.

I also got blamed for all the crap she pulled. (Using a hole punch to create decorative patterns in the bathroom curtain comes to mind. There was more, but my mom will probably read this, so we'll stop there.)

When she finally came clean (we were both in our 40s by then) instead of apologizing to me for blaming me all those years, my parents gave Heidi a pat on the back



for finally telling the truth. We both got a chuckle out of that. By then I'd grown up, and I no longer felt compelled to assess *my* worth based on how my parents treated my sister.

I no longer resented her for getting those white go-go boots with the tassels that I had repeatedly asked for, while I got flat suede boots with fringe on the top and thigh high fishnets that made me look like a second-grade ho. (I was expected to wear my new boots to school so the humiliation was compounded by the fact that I didn't have any way to keep the stockings up. I was constantly lifting my skirt to yank on them — exposing more than was comfortable or appropriate.)

Likewise, I am no longer angry about the fact that they

gave her the Scarlett O'Hara storybook doll for Christmas even though I was the one who read the entire book **Gone with the Wind** twice, back-to-back.

(I was in love with Rhett Butler and wanted to be Scarlett O'Hara — I had not studied the Civil War in school yet, so I had no idea how I'd feel about it just two years later when I learned about Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and the Underground Railroad).

My Christmas gift that year was the Thailand storybook doll. My doll did not resemble Vivian Leigh, with her miniscule waist and beautiful hoop skirt, my doll was dressed like **I Dream of Jeannie**, wore baggy pants, a skimpy top and pointy shoes — and where the bleep was Thailand, anyway?

What I've come to realize is that my parents' behavior wasn't about me, it was about them. That's when I had this epiphany: I couldn't change what they did, but I could change how I thought about it.

I would never be like Heidi. But that was okay. I wasn't supposed to be like her. My parents didn't mean to upset me. They just wanted to make Heidi happy. They weren't tracking who asked for what — They just bought the best gift for their oldest child. It was really that simple.



Ironically, it was my sister who first said to me "Comparisons are odious." The first known utterance of those three words was in the year 1440. You'd think by now more people would understand this. I have thought about it a lot in my decades of adult life. Looking back I realize at some point during my childhood I stopped wishing I was different and began trying to find my own way as me, not as someone trying to be someone else. It was the turning point in my life. And I have my sister to thank for it.

When you get older, you begin to realize that anybody who is comfortable in their own skin is beautiful. This should be the goal, not trying to "best" someone else.

You don't have to fit a certain mold. There is no right way to be or look. But there is something undeniably attractive about people who know who they are and

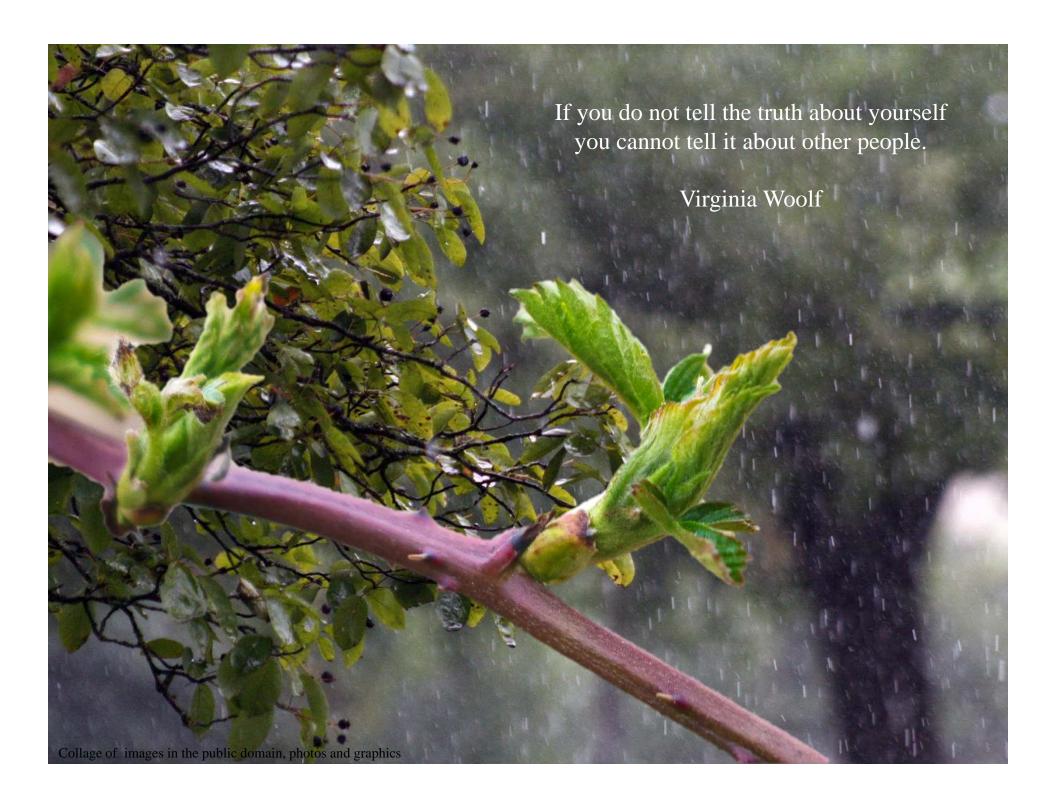


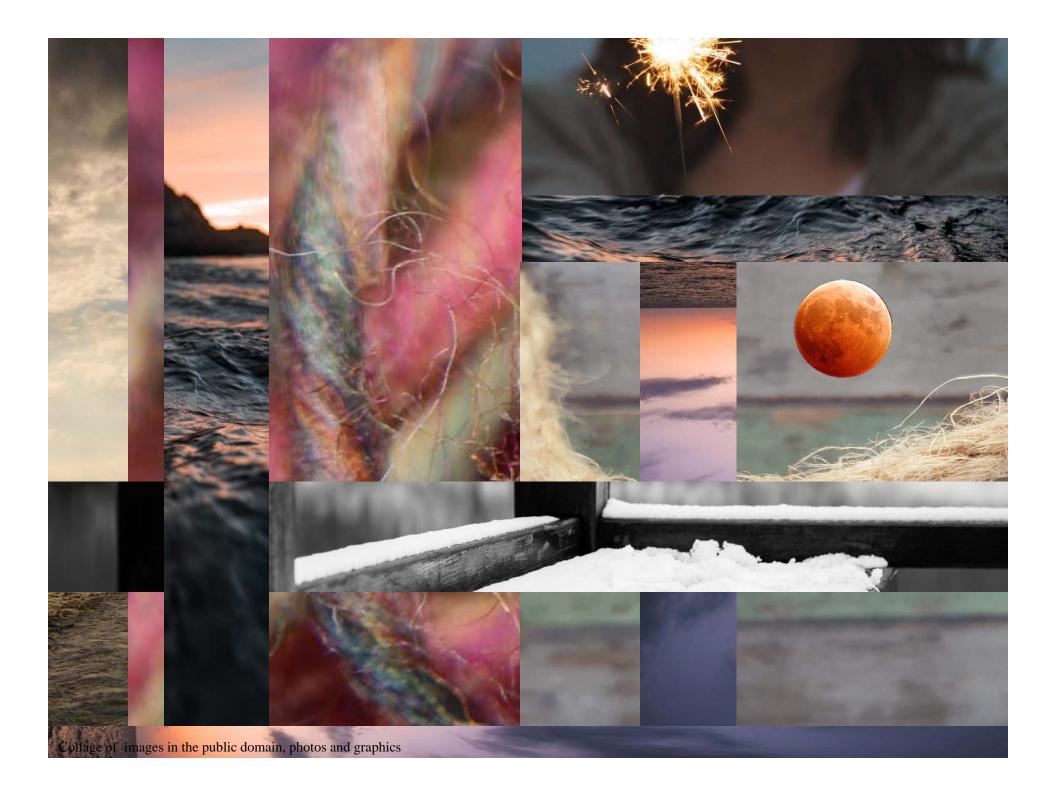
don't pretend to be anything else. These are not people who waste time wishing they looked like someone else or have more money or talent than they do. They focus on being the best version of *themselves*.

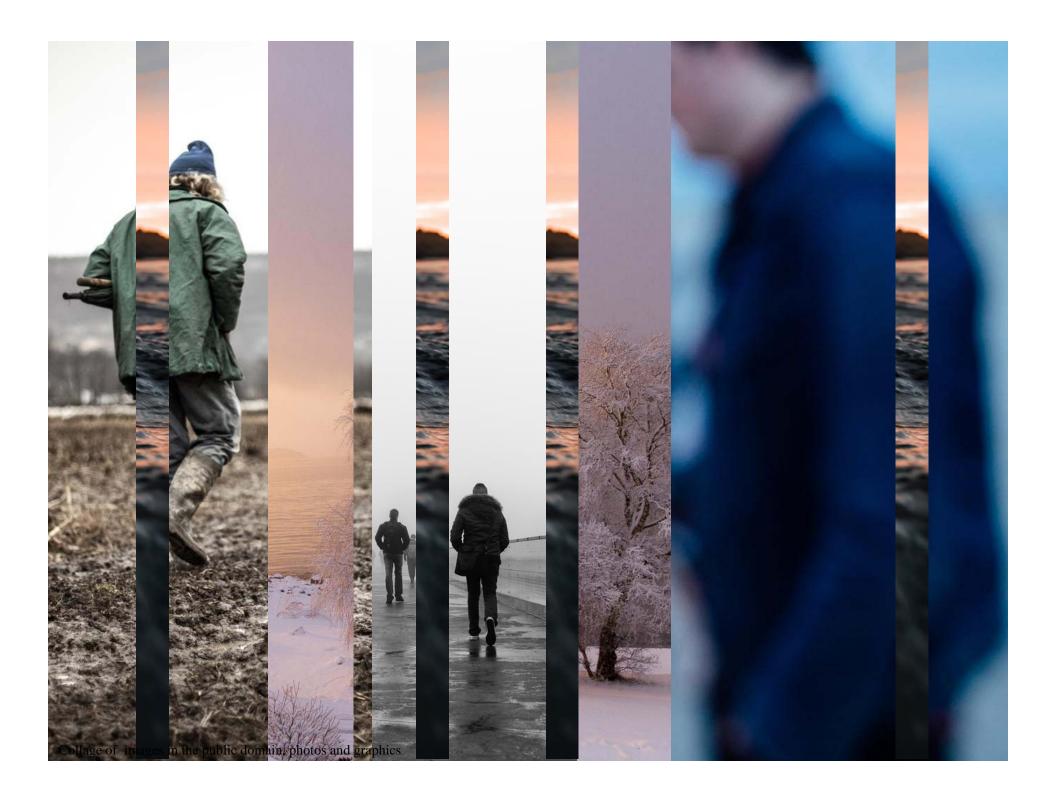
How you do that is up to you, but accepting yourself and being grateful for what you have is a good place to start. Antoine de Saint-Exupery said something like "The only sin is not being yourself." I think he's right.

No one can show you how to be yourself, that's a private journey you must take on your own. If you want to get there, look in the mirror by all means, self-awareness is a beautiful thing.

But please stop comparing yourself to others. It will only slow you down.

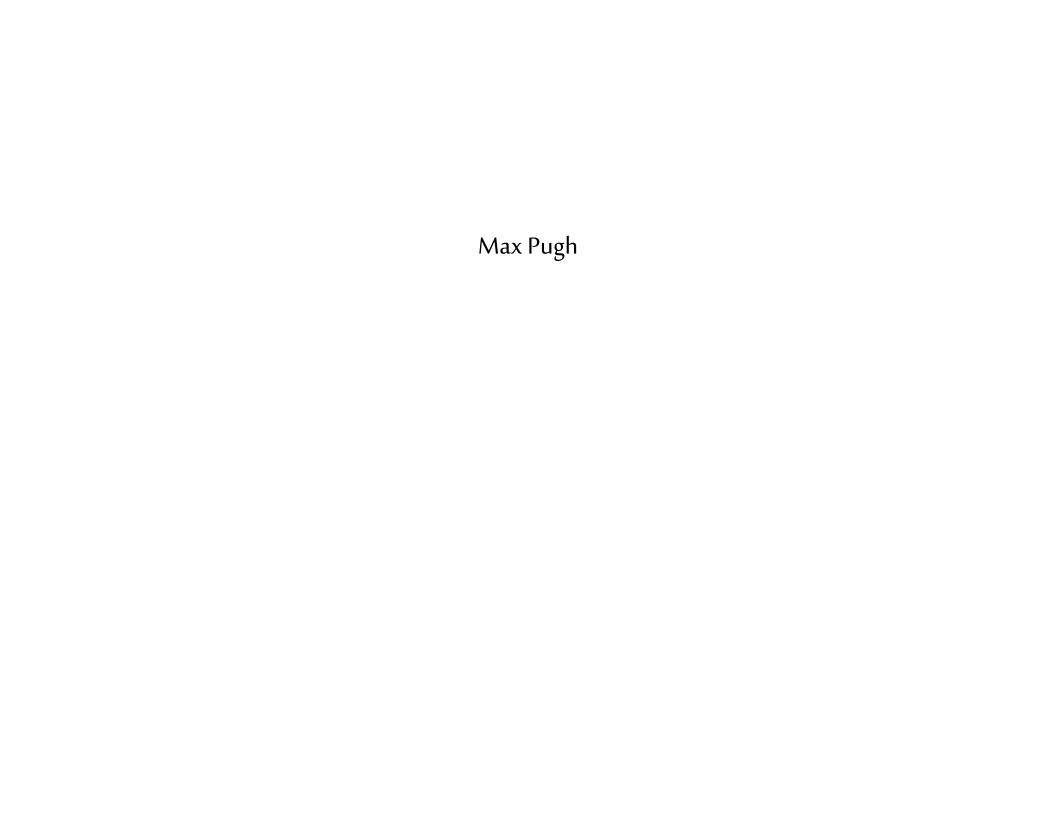


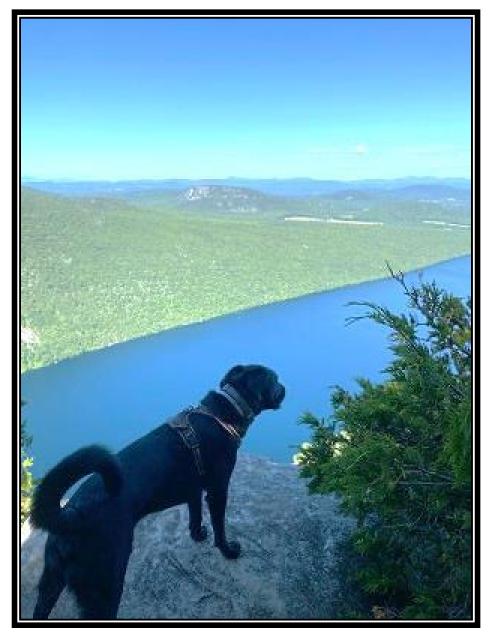






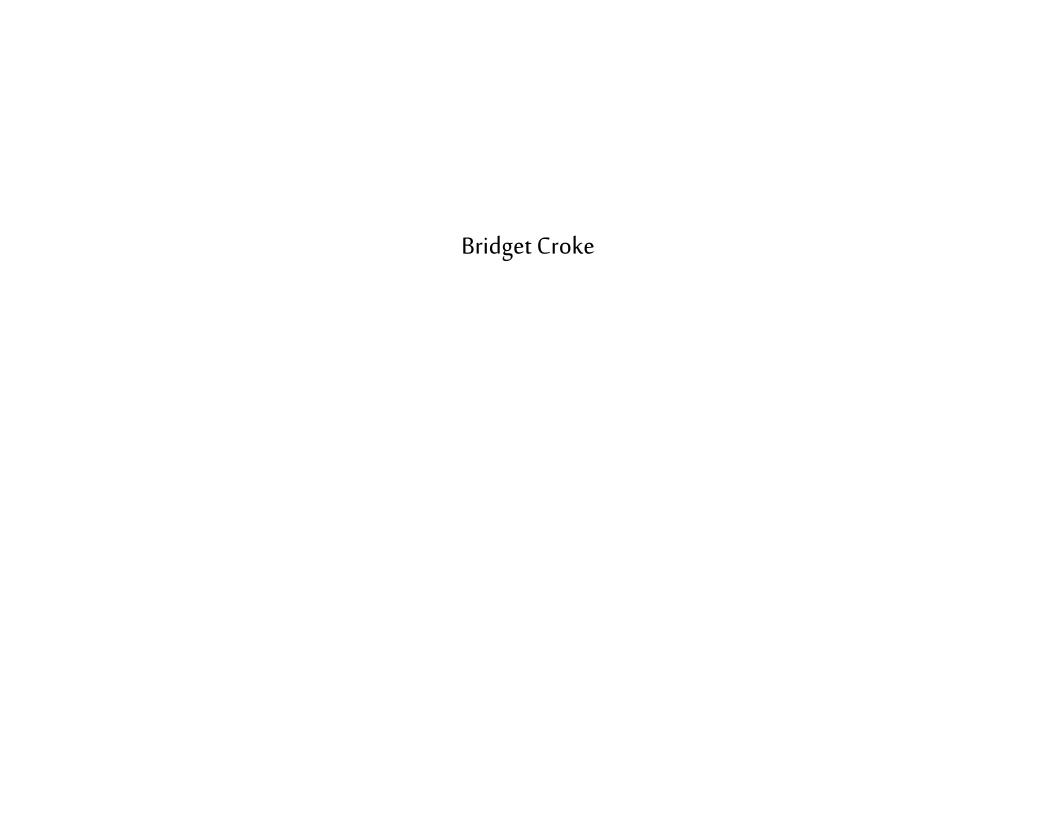


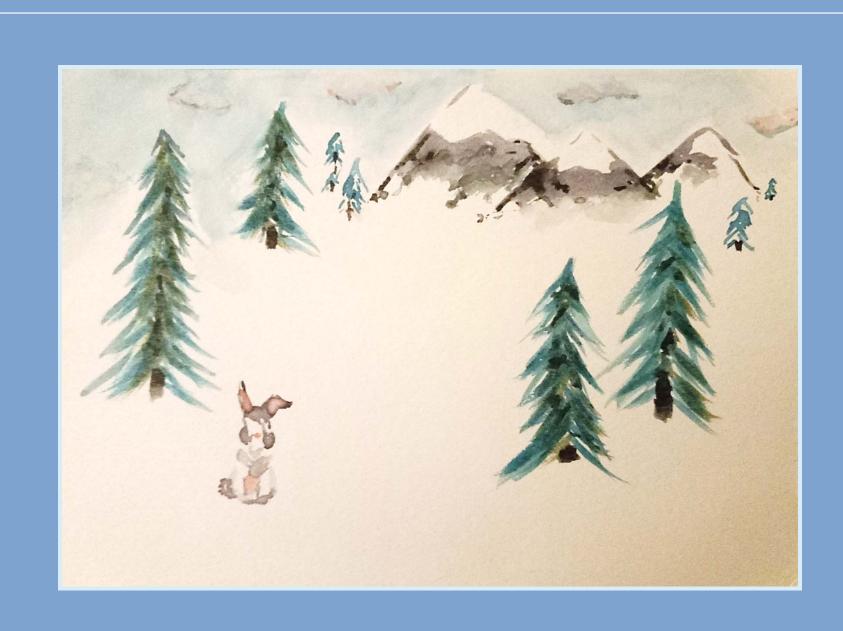


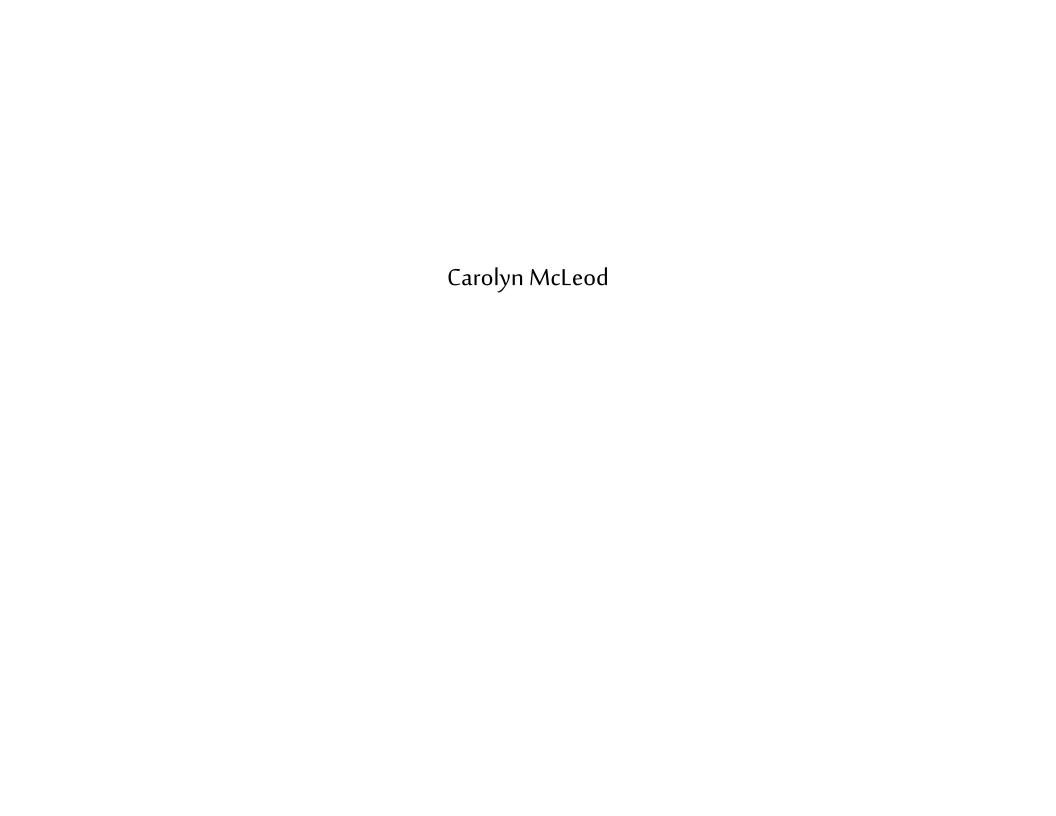


Ranger

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TRUST

By Carolyn McLeod

Trust is important, but it is also dangerous. It is important because it allows us to depend on others—for love, for advice, for help with our plumbing, or what have you—especially when we know that no outside force compels them to give us these things. But trust also involves the risk that people we trust will not pull through for us, for if there were some guarantee they would pull through, then we would have no need to trust them. Trust is therefore dangerous. What we risk while trusting is the loss of valuable things that we entrust to others, including our self-respect perhaps, which can be shattered by the betrayal of our trust.

(Continue reading by clicking this link to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy site: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trust/)

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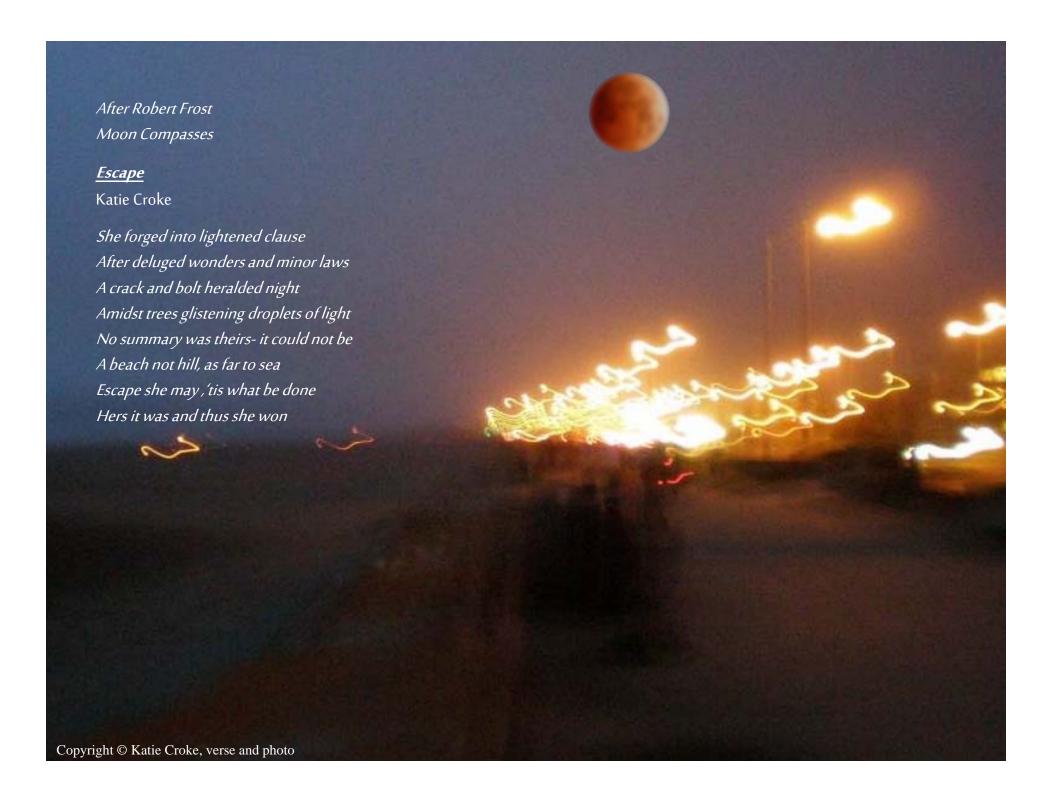




I could go on about this I put the truth in the top drawer of the tallest file cabinet in my office, but now it's gone! I'm sure I put it there, because I'd left the short wooden stepladder nearby (to make searching the top drawer easy), and I used it when I filed the truth in there. Today I can see, even from my desk, that the stepladder's still there: I'd folded it and leaned it against the wall next to the file cabinet when I was done. I put the truth in my knapsack, in one of the side pockets where I stash my canteen, but now it's gone! At first I thought I might have squished it under my umbrella when I got on the bus and folded it up and stuck it in the plastic bag I take with me for doing that (it's been raining constantly), but the truth is not there. The knapsack did not tip over when I was packing up vegetables at the farmers' market, and I had it on my back while I was walking home. I put the truth in my pocket when I was at the laundromat, and while I was moving stuff from the washer to the dryer, I had a sudden need for it – so I reached for it, and found it gone! There's no way it could have fallen out; that's a zipper pocket, and it was zipped tight. No evidence: The pocket wasn't wet, and there was no trace of detergent on my jeans (or any cookie crumbs – I got a chocolate chip cookie from the bakery on my way there). Well, I could go on about this, but it's too upsetting; I mean, it keeps happening, this thing about suddenly finding the truth is gone! I even heard a guy on the news saying that many people are asking – where is the truth? How could they know what's been happening to me? Until writing this, I hadn't told anybody it was missing! I figured it would show up, that I'd find it. I thought I'd just remembered wrong about where I put it. Judith Arcana, Autumn of 2022 Copyright © Judith Arcana 2022







The universe is transformation: life is opinion. Marcus Aurelius GSFC NASA Hubble galaxy image



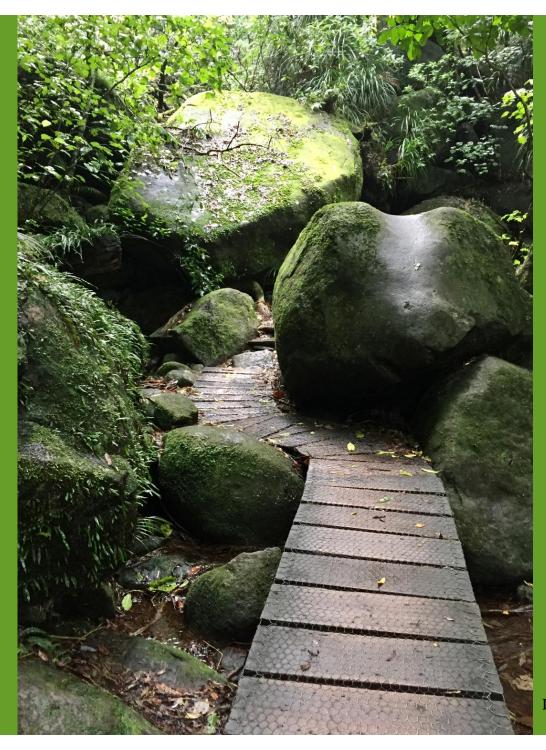
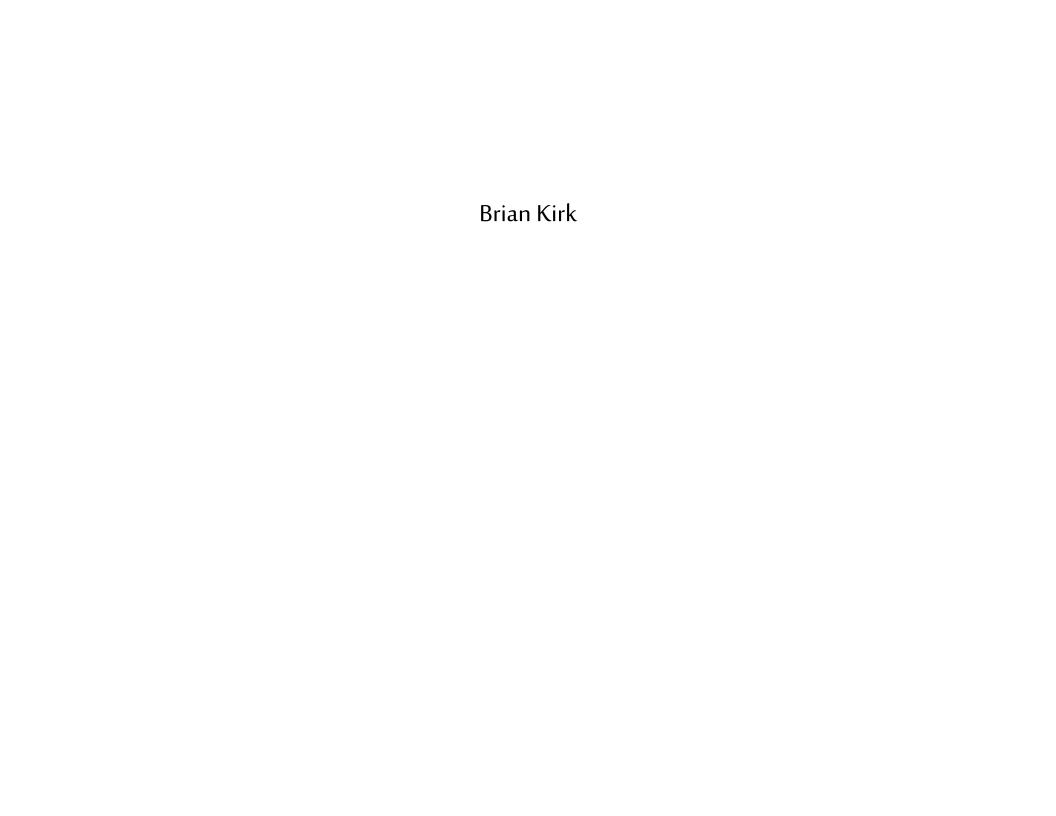


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Excursion into Philosophy

Edward Hopper, 1959

We are only ever alone.

Sharing a sunlit room, our backs almost touching could be miles apart.

The discarded book remains open, read or unread; the moment unfolds,

trapped between two rectangles of light.

Outside the sky is sky blue, the ground in shadow. Inside it's awful.

Something is over, something new has yet to be born. Knowledge comes with the heft of a blow.

Light opens out as space closes in.

Are beginnings and endings the same?

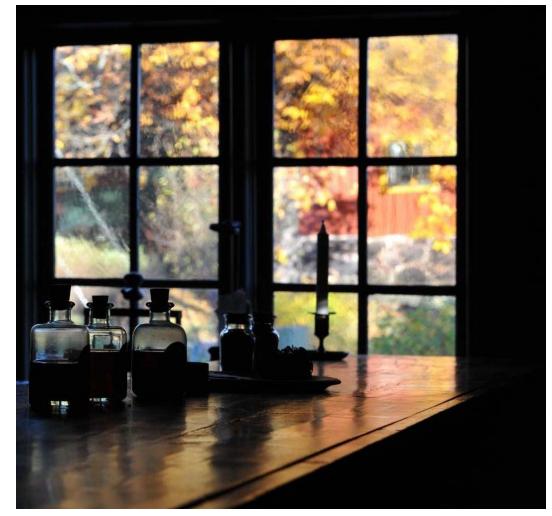


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Excursion Into Philosophy was originally published in 14 Magazine in 2021 Copyright © Brian Kirk

Knockout

Have a drink to hamper memory, take a pill to quell the tremor; stay at home and hide from others whose fathers, mothers might remember what you said or did that time you lost it years ago. The silence is an empty bucket you must fill with stuff inside your head – spill it out onto the road and keep on spilling. Don't ask questions you already know the answers to. If you must go out, then wear a belted coat and hat, a private eye abroad in daylight taking notes you later will destroy – there's no good keeping things, public things or private things. Alone in crowds, in crowds alone, you fear, despise in equal measure: and that is fair. Fair too your gaunt reflection in shop windows, a ghost self-haunting in the day and night. If pressed stick always to the facts, names and dates that can be proven; the where, the when and how are questions you no longer may allow. Smile if you can, wince if you must. The blow will come, so call it by its name, evince indifference, accept the fated final ferocity before you hug the floor.



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Knockout was originally published in Abridged 'Delete' and Abridged 'Kassandra' in 2020/21. Copyright © Brian Kirk

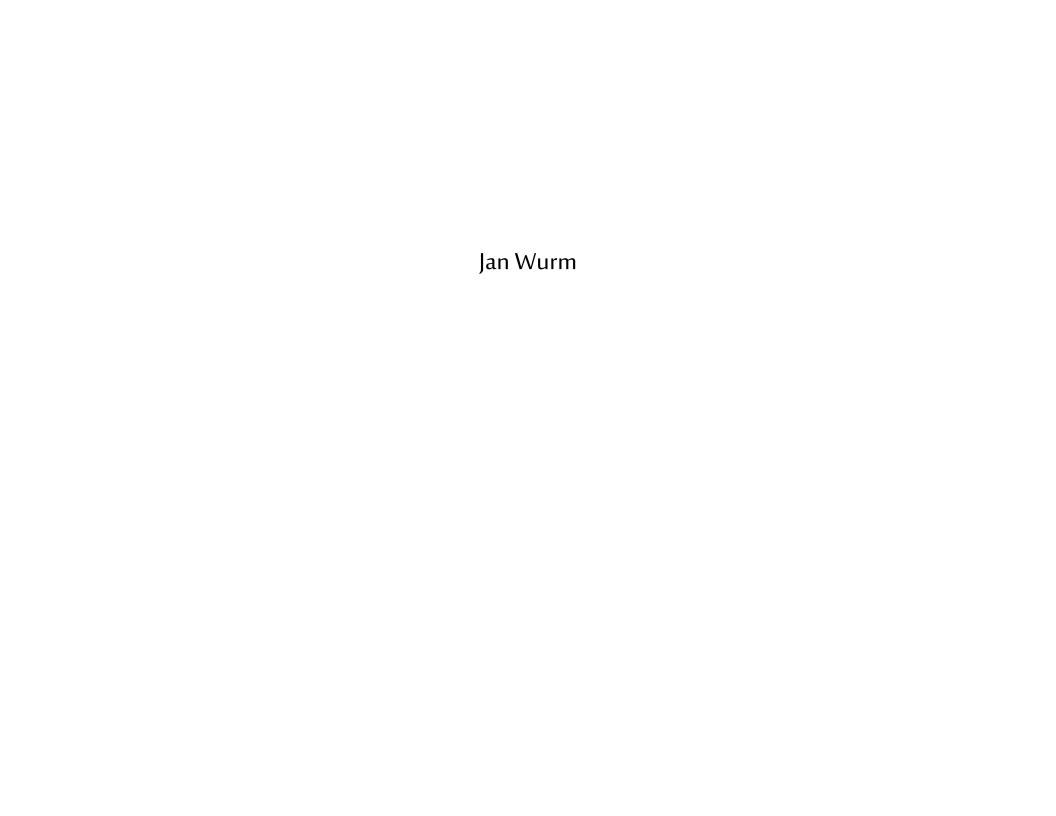
Deepfake

I'm happy to mind my own business, to turn a blind eye, so long as I'm left alone. When people complain, I can't help but think: boo hoo, you have only yourself to blame. In art I look for beauty and truth, admire the pathos of suffering, a violence of style, the tragedy of a prophesied Dystopia. But I won't relent because there is a line between life and poetry that must never ever be crossed – until it is. Then it's too late, and I am the story; lies spew from smiling mouths that no one could believe, so I turn to my friends seeking solidarity, denouncing fake news and myth. Meantime, behind headlines runs a dumb show of death, forests burning, cities in flood, and there's my face, superimposed on the rapist's.



Image in the public domain







We look over our shoulder we look closer peer in through the fog through the dark in half light the obscured view we distrust our eyes

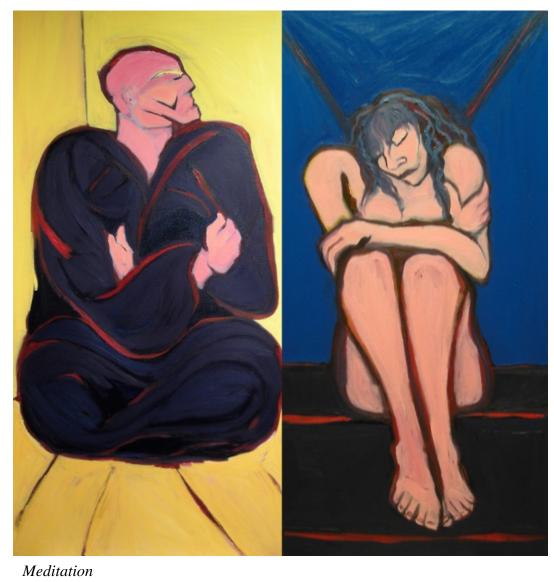
We gasp
we hold our breath
listen closely
through the hum
through the wind
the mumbled moan
half dropped groan
we doubt our ears

We change the channel we close the book shut the computer through closed eyes through memory searching the heart where truth may lie



Lear and His Fool







Speak No Evil

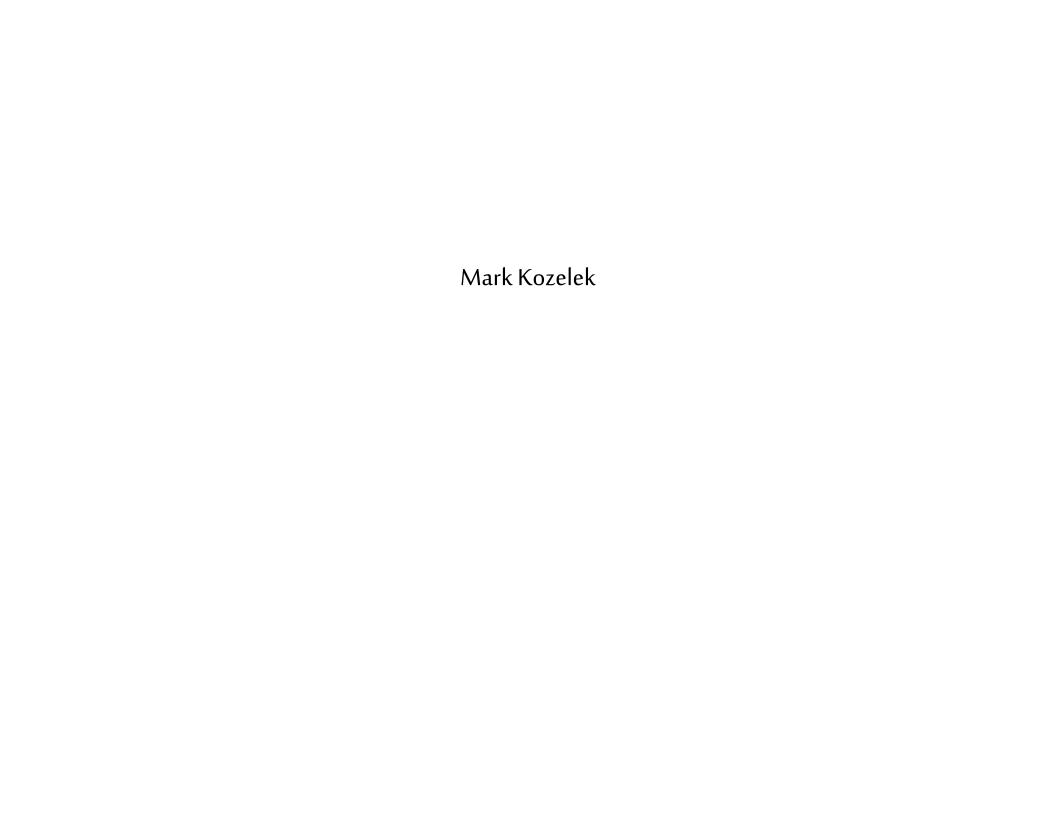


Hoops



Art (From Art, Music, and Literature)







Norwegian Trees - Route E-16 - October 29, 2010, Bergen to Oslo



Norwegian Trees - Route E-16 - October 29, 2010

This photo was taken on Route E-16 road, Oslo to Bergen, Norway, October 29. 2010. I was on tour, with my friend Josh Stoddard, who I'd hired to drive and film the tour.

Before we left Oslo, we received many warnings about the dangers of E-16, but with merch in the car, my guitar, and our luggage, we decided to take the risk.

There were very few signs of life along that snowy drive. Looking out at the Fjords, I never saw a boat or even a single bird. The mountains off in the distance had a metallic black sheen; it was the most surreal scenery I've seen in my life.

We slid off the road a few times, just like we were warned would happen, but Josh managed to keep the car under control.

We took a few brief stops along the way, but somehow, during the entire drive, we only met two people, who appeared to be husband and wife.

We walked into their store, to see if there was anything to drink or eat. They glanced up at us, and quickly dropped their eyes back to whatever they were reading. We asked them if their store was open, but they didn't respond. After we left, our laughter was uncontrollable. Josh kept saying, "Dude. I think we just walked into someone's *house*." The sign in their front yard led us to believe it was a store, but maybe the sign was in regard to something else

I had a show in Bergen that night, but missed soundcheck, due to how long the drive took. We left Oslo at around 9 a.m. and arrived after 9 p.m.

My main memoirs of the drive, are of the scenery, and long conversations with Josh, who I met in 2003. At that time, he was twenty-three years' old and worked as a guitar tech. He'd been through a lot since then; a break-up, and his mother had passed away. But he was still the very competent Josh, who could do anything he put his mind to.

Josh came along for a few other tours, in early 2011. Then, after a few months in San Francisco editing room, we completed *Mark Kozelek: On Tour. A Documentary*.

Josh passed away December of 2021, at 42-years old. The last time we spoke, was during the summer of 2021. Like always, he was good-spirited, and he made me laugh.

Kathleen asked me to write a piece about the truth, and everything I just wrote, is true.

Mark Kozelek - October 8, 2022

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Manchac Inverness

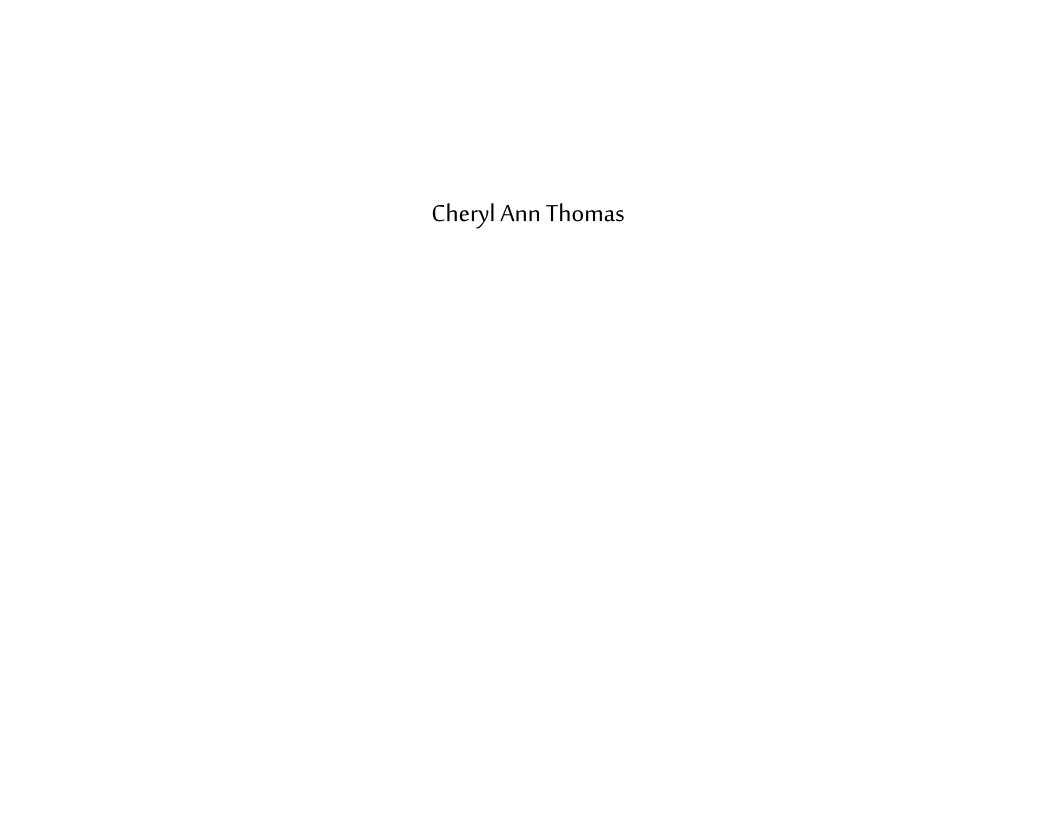


Friend's Dog Ireland

Airplane Winter



Field Golden Gate



My current investigation in porcelain clay began with a question, "How thin and how tall can I make a column using the coiling method and what will the results be?" I found that the columns were too thin and too tall to hold their form and would collapse during the firing. I chose to limit my colors to black, white and gray.

Five years later, another question arose, "What will happen if I combine two or more fired columns and refire them?" I found that the forms would continue to reshape and enfold one another.

In another five years the next question arose. "What will happen if I add white to my black clay." I assumed I would get another variety of gray. Instead, I got blue. Then I wondered what other colors I could develop.

I assumed that my investigation of process would not be personal but merely academic. In hindsight, I realize the purely objective pursuit is impossible. Looking at my work as it surrounds me in the studio, I learn that I an drawn to fragility, accident or chance and reconciliation. The intuitive grows stronger as I continue my exploration.





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CONTRIBUTORS

Andrei Codrescu is a Romanian-born American poet, novelist, essayist, screenwriter, and commentator for National Public Radio. He was Mac Curdy Distinguished Professor of English at Louisiana State University from 1984 until his retirement in 2009. Codrescu published his first poems in Romanian under the pen name Andrei Steiu. He moved to the United States in 1966. In 1970, his poetry book, *License to Carry a Gun*, won the "Big Table Poetry Award". He moved to San Francisco in 1970, and lived on the West Coast for seven years. He also lived in Baltimore (where he taught at Johns Hopkins University), New Orleans and Baton Rouge, publishing a book every year. During this time he wrote poetry, stories, essays and reviews for many publications, including *The New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times, Harper's*, and the *Paris Review*. He had regular columns in *The Baltimore Sun*, the *City Paper, Architecture, Funny Times, Gambit Weekly*, and *Neon*. Codrescu was a regular commentator on National Public Radio from 1983 until 2016. He won the 1995 Peabody Award for the film *Road Scholar*, an American road movie that he wrote and starred in, and is a two-time winner of the Pushcart Prize. His book *So Recently a World: Selected Poems, 1968-2016* was a National Book Award nominee. In 1989, Codrescu covered the Romanian Revolution of 1989 for National Public Radio and ABC News's *Nightline*. He created new work written in Romanian, including *Miracle and Catastrophe*, a book-length interview conducted by the theologian Robert Lazu, and *The Forgiven Submarine*, an epic poem written in collaboration with poet Ruxandra Cesereanu, which won the 2008 Radio România Cultural award. In 2002 Codrescu returned to Romania with a PBS *Frontline World* video and and produced the story, "My Old Haunts". In 2005 he was awarded the Ovidius (Ovid) Prize. He is the editor and founder of the online journal *Exquisite Corpse*.

Gorman Jones is a photographer living in the San Francisco, Bay Area, California.

Tabitha Vevers has exhibited nationally and internationally and has work in numerous public and private collections. Her work will be included in the upcoming exhibition On the Basis of Art: 150 Years of Women as Yale, at the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT. It was the subject of a comprehensive exhibition, *Tabitha Vevers: Lover's Eyes*, at The Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, SC in 2019-20 and was featured in a major exhibition entitled GOLD, at the Belvedere Museum, Vienna, Austria in 2012. She was honored with a mid-career retrospective entitled NARRATIVE BODIES at the DeCordova Sculpture Park + Museum in 2009. She is represented by the Albert Merola Gallery, Provincetown, MA, Gallery Kayafas, Boston, Bookstein Projects, New York, NY. She currently lives and works in Cambridge and Wellfleet, MA and is married to the artist Daniel Ranalli. Website: www.tabithavevers.com.

Laurie Fosner is a writer and retired Sr. Operations Analyst. All her poetry was coerced by her junior college English teacher, who learned that unless she gave her students a topic, there would be no poetry. The series of poems that resulted is titled The Reluctant Poet and a few more of her poems may be found on Medium.com where she posts as L.A. Fosner, Writer/Activist/Humorist/Catalyst for Change. Dispelling the myth of white/male supremacy, and removing religion from government. ProLIFE, not ProBIRTH.

Max Pugh is Customer Marketing Specialist at Cynosure. He lives in northeastern Massachusetts and hikes frequently with his dog Ranger.

Bridget Croke lives and works in Portland, Oregon, enjoys the seasons and spending good time with friends. She makes art for the peace it brings and makes it for others as a way to say I love you.

Carolyn McLeod, Professor and Chair, Department of Philosophy, Western University, Canada is a philosophy professor with expertise in applied ethics, feminist philosophy, and moral philosophy. Some of her research concerns how to understand moral concepts like trust, autonomy, and conscience, and other research focuses on pressing issues in public policy. She has a particular interest in policy matters that deal with the creation or dissolution of families with children. For example, she has published work on the provision and use of medically assisted reproduction, on parental licensing or vetting, on conscientious objections by health care professionals to provide reproductive services (e.g., abortions), and on reproductive justice for marginalized social groups. She has been directly involved in policy-making and public debate in Canada on topics that concern her research, including the right of health care professionals to make conscientious objections, public funding for in vitro fertilization, and improvements to our adoption systems. Some of her work on adoption occurred in her capacity as Chair (2016-19) of the Board of Directors for Ontario's Adoptive Parents Association. Her training in feminist philosophy informs all of her research, teaching, and policy efforts. She is deeply committed to bringing a feminist lens to the subjects she studies and to mentoring the next generation of feminist philosophers and bioethicists. She was named a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2021.

Judith Arcana learned to read at home when she was in kindergarten; by the time she was ten years old, the libraries and public schools of Ohio, Florida, Indiana and Wisconsin had introduced her to *literature*. She has been writing for publication since 1961, when the literary magazine at the University of Illinois published her parody of "Chicken Little," done as if Dostoevsky had written it. Since then, her work's been in magazines and anthologies, and her books have been published by a variety of presses, from Alta's radical *feminist Shameless Hussy* to conventional Doubleday and some seriously wonderful small presses in Oregon. Her two most recent collections are *Announcements from the Planetarium*, poems about memory, wisdom, and aging into new consciousness; and *Hello. This is Jane.*, stories seeded by Judith's pre-Roe underground abortion work in Chicago — and by tattooing. Visit juditharcana.com.

Kevin Croke is Associate Area Counsel, US Internal Revenue Service, northern California. He plans to retire in January 2023.

Brian Kirk is an award winning poet and short story writer from Clondalkin in Dublin. He was selected for the Poetry Ireland Introductions Series in 2013 and was shortlisted for the Patrick Kavanagh Award in 2014 and 2015. He won the Jonathan Swift Creative Writing Award for Poetry in 2014, the Bailieborough Poetry Prize in 2015 and the Galway RCC Poetry Award in 2016. His poetry film Red Line Haiku was featured at the Red Line Book Festival in October 2015 and was subsequently shortlisted for the Ó Bhéal Poetry Film Competition in 2016. His poetry has been widely published and has been nominated for the Forward Prize and Pushcart Prize. His novel for 9-12 year olds *The Rising Son* was published in December 2015. He is a member of the Hibernian Poetry Workshop and he blogs at www.briankirkwriter.com.

Jan Wurm is an artist, educator, and curator engaged in expanding the community forum for contemporary art dialogue. Wurm taught for UC Berkeley Extension, the ASUC Art Studio, and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. She served 8 years on the Committee for Undergraduate Scholarships and Honors and mentored UC Regents Scholars. She served on the Steering Committee of the Cal Art Alumni Group organizing and moderating six annual symposia. She has lectured extensively as a guest artist and taught in the Sommerakademie in Neumarkt, Austria. Wurm organized and facilitated a Guest Artist Lecture Series for the Berkeley Art Center for 5 years. Her writings on art and society have been published by Routledge in WS, Women's Studies Journal of Claremont Graduate University. She has juried and judged exhibitions as well as an artist residency for the National Park Service. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is in collections including the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, the New York Public Library Print Collection, the Archives of American Art in Washington, D.C., the Archive Verein der Berliner Künstlerinnen in Berlin, and the Universität für angewandte Kunst in Vienna. Wurm was engaged as Director of Exhibitions and Curator of Art at the Richmond Art Center where her projects included Closely Considered: *Diebenkorn in Berkeley, Mildred Howard: Spirit & Matter, David Park: Personal Perspectives, The Human Spirit: Contemporary Figuration as an Expression of Humanism,* and *Mapping the Uncharted*. (https://janwurm.com)

Mark Edward Kozelek is an American singer, songwriter, guitarist, record producer, and occasional actor. He is known as the vocalist and primary recording artist of the indie folk act Sun Kil Moon and founding member of the indie rock band Red House Painters, with whom he recorded six studio albums from 1989 until 2001. Upon meeting drummer Anthony Koutsos in Atlanta, Georgia, the pair moved to San Francisco, California and formed Red House Painters alongside guitarist Gorden Mack and bass guitarist Jerry Vessel. Signing with record label 4AD, the band released four studio albums to acclaim. In 1996, Kozelek recorded the band's fifth studio album, *Songs for a Blue Guitar*, mostly alone. The release of the band's final studio album, *Old Ramon* (2001), was delayed for three years. In the interim, Kozelek recorded both

an album and an EP of AC/DC cover songs. Reconvening with Koutsos and Vessel, the trio continued performing under the new name of Sun Kil Moon, releasing their debut album, *Ghosts of the Great Highway*, in 2003. Inspired by classical guitar music, Kozelek recorded Sun Kil Moon's fourth studio album, *Admiral Fell Promises* (2010), as a solo act and continued to record mostly alone on its follow-up, *Among the Leaves* (2012), and later *Perils from the Sea* and *Mark Kozelek & Desertshore*, both released in 2013. In 2014, Sun Kil Moon's sixth studio album, *Benji*, was released to widespread critical acclaim and increased exposure with its follow-up, *Universal Themes*, featuring lengthy compositions and stream-of-consciousness lyrics. In 2016, Kozelek released a collaborative studio album with Jesu, titled *Jesu/Sun Kil Moon*. Kozelek has released thirty-one studio albums, with his most recent being *All the Best, Isaac Hayes* (2020).

Cheryl Ann Thomas graduated from the Art Center College of Design with a BFA. Before practicing art full time in the late 1990s as a ceramic sculptor, Thomas worked as a grade school teacher. She lives and works in Ventura, California. Thomas creates her works using the age-old coiling technique. Unlike other sculptors who integrate the coils to create a smooth surface, Thomas retains the integrity of each thin, serpentine coil and the imprint of her hand, giving the works their textured surfaces. She creates tall cylinders of thin, coiled porcelain that when fired, collapse and fold in on themselves. Chance and unpredictability dictate the process. Thomas has exhibited her work in solo and group shows in New York, Los Angeles, and Santa Fe. Numerous collecting institutions hold her work in their permanent collections such as the American Museum of Ceramic Art, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and Fuller Craft Museum, among others. Her work was recently featured in *Melting Point: Movements in Contemporary Clay* at the Craft and Folk Museum which highlighted ceramicists for their experimental manipulations of clay to expand the technical, aesthetic, and metaphoric potential of the medium.

