

Artemis 2020

Artemis design and layout is based on Sacred Geometry proportions of Phi, 1.618. This number is considered to be the fundamental building block of nature, recurring throughout art, architecture, botany, astronomy, biology and music. Named by the Greeks as the Golden Mean, this number was also referred to as the Divine Proportion. The primary font used in *Artemis* is from the Berkeley family, modernized version of a classic Goudy old-style font, originally designed for the University of California Press at Berkeley in the late 1930s. Rotis san Serif is also used as an accent font.

Featured Cover Artist: **Dorothy Gillespie**

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Sunset, 1988*

Back Cover: *New River: Celebration, 1997*

Featured Writer: **Natasha Trethewey**

Featured Poem: *Reach*

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Blue Star Implosion

Gwen Cates

Artemis Journal 2020, Volume XXVII

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Foreword “Season Of Women”

Artemis Journal, now 43 years old, celebrates the voices and visions of artists and writers from the Appalachian region of the Blue Ridge Mountains and beyond. Our journal is titled after the Greek moon goddess, Artemis, who presided over the hunt, protected the natural world and illuminated the darkness. Our mission is to provide an honored space for artists and writers to publish their contributions for cultural enrichment.



Mother and Daughter
Teri Hoover

100 years ago, women gained the right to vote in the United States by the passage of the 19th amendment. This year’s journal showcases poems and art that celebrate this moment in our history, expanding this fundamental freedom to women. Consequently, we call our theme “Season of Women.” Banding together with those who fought for fairer representation and greater opportunity, *Artemis Journal* demonstrates our commitment to these ideals by providing a publishing platform for women to be heard and recognized.

We should remember to thank the women throughout our history who have fought tirelessly to give us a voice. Thanks to Susan B. Anthony for pushing the right to vote, Maud Wood Park for prenatal care and identity outside of your husband’s, Elizabeth Stanton for the right to work, Margaret Sanger for the right to legal birth control, Eleanor Roosevelt and Molly Dewson for the right to work in politics and make policy, Carol Downer for reproductive health care, Malala Yousafzai for pushing the rights of young women internationally, Rosa Parks for not backing down on the bus, Ruth Bader Ginsburg for advocating for the rights of women on the Supreme Court, Gloria Steinem for her lifetime commitment to equal rights and our mothers and grandmothers who stood before us with few of the rights, we now have as women.

Since the 19th amendment and our cover artist, Dorothy Gillespie’s birthday coincide, we celebrate both simultaneously. Dorothy Gillespie, 1920-2012, supported our fledgling idea of starting a feminist literary and art journal by donating her beautiful pastel for our very first cover in 1977. Her work of art was later painted to become Roanoke’s first downtown mural. As a native of Roanoke, Ms. Gillespie’s international career spanned seven decades and her works of art have graced many institutions, museums, colleges, universities and public places. We are honored again to have her grace our current cover.

This year we are pleased to present United States Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey, as our featured writer. In addition to encouraging novice unpublished artists and writers, *Artemis* has published many notable writers including Nikki Giovanni, Virginia Poet Laureates, Carlton Drewry, George Garrett, Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda and Ron Smith. Many exceptional artists are also featured in our journal alongside the writers, including Betty Branch, Ray Kass, Robert Sulkien, Sam Krisch, Starroot, Angie Zed and many more too numerous to mention. Just open the pages of our journal to explore these wonderful treasures.

As a small press, *Artemis Journal* relies on the generosity of our readers to help support this unique contribution to art and literature. As a charitable organization, *Artemis* is grateful for the continued support of our writers and artists, the Roanoke Arts Commission and the Taubman Museum of Art.

Jeri Rogers, Editor
Maurice Ferguson, Literary Editor
Page & Zephren Turner, Art-Design Editors

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Vote
Trish Korte

VOTE

It's not a hug
Nor mistletoe at Christmas

It's not a colored egg
At Easter
Nor a bunny hopping
Across the meadow

It's A Vote

Saying you are
A citizen

Though it sometimes
Is chocolate
Or sometimes vanilla
It can be a female
Or a male
It is right
Or left
I can agree
Or disagree but
And this is an important but
I am a citizen

I should be able
To vote from prison
I should be able
To vote when I get a driver's license
I should be able
To vote when I can purchase a gun
I must be able
To vote
If I'm in the hospital
If I'm in the old folks home
If I'm needing a ride
To the Polling Place

I am a citizen

Nikki Giovanni



snap-away general
Aggie Zed

Reach*

AFTER MY FATHER

Right off I hear him singing, the strings
of his old guitar hemming the darkness
as before—late nights on the front porch—
the mountains across the valley blurred
to outline. We are at it again, father
and daughter, deep in our cups, rehearsing
the long years between us. In the distance
I hear the foghorn call of bullfrogs,
envoys from the river of lamentation
my father is determined to cross. Already
I know where this is headed: how many times
has the night turned toward regret? My father
saying, *If only I'd been a better husband*
she'd be alive today, saying, *Gwen and I*
would get back together if she were alive.
It's the same old song. He is Orpheus
trying to bring her back with the music
of his words, lines of a poem drifting now
into my dream. Picking the first chords,
my father leans into the neck of the guitar,
rolls his shoulders until he's lost in it—
the song carrying him across the porch
and down into the damp grass. Even asleep,
I know where he is going. I cannot call
him back. Through the valley the blacktop
winds like a river, and he is stepping into it,
walking now toward the other side where
she waits, my mother, just out of reach.

Natasha Trethewey

To the Goddess After a Very Long Pause

In this uncluttered sunny little studio
I feel your presence through a
fat fierce muscular woman
born to belly-laugh, born to teach.

Twenty years, Goddess,
since I've made word art
from your voluptuous movements.

But what usually inspires me
now that my hair has whitened
rarely seems to catch your ear or eye –
the creaky, the flattened, the stripped,
the missing, the inaudible, the
invisible. Yet here you are
enjoying my tango lesson.
Perhaps I've been wrong...?

Thank you
for this open window,
clean wooden floor and my chance to dance beyond myself
into the blue between us.



Birds of a Feather
Sandi Badash

Marjorie Power

To My Loyal and Beautiful Body

When joints beg, Please
Quit moving me

And spots pop up in random places
One here, one there,
An extra pound

When inches vanish top from toe
And skin drops dry away from bones

When muscles stick like mules in mud
And lumps come unwelcome
That's not good.

While in the sink and everywhere
Lie scraggly white and brittle hair

When eyes behind the mirror shine
You love yourself for the first time.

The laughter and the bitter sorrows
Enlivened you through all the hours.

You see the bridge for what it is.
You've joined the earth and All That Is.

And now it's time to finally say
Thanks old friend, I'm on my way.

But wait, Dear Body
Not so quick
There's more to do and I'm not sick.

Frances Curtis Barnhart



Reclaiming my Body
Maggie Perrin-Key



Guardian
Anne Gregerson

The Goddesses of Doubt

"Does Any Pantheon Even Have a Goddess of Doubt?"

--Elizabeth Didon, Vogue Magazine

Those Goddesses have been everywhere, split-tongued by the god of poetry, who wrecked them as he knew best: prophecy but broken mouth, broken syntax; warnings to speak, and no one other to believe them.

Grief-struck they disseminated to the edge of a city or an idea and wander the unheard sentences of their lives, ink blossoming in their psyches.
You can find them along so many roadsides:

a car left running, driver's door open, the silhouette of one leaning down to finger the crack in the bridge, to consider the weight of us, to wonder if we'd make it across.

Or the ones below, wading the river edge, test tube in hand, gathering the water to count its pollutants. If you listen carefully, you can hear their murmurings of tenderness to the lone turtles, the last species, the sky.

These goddesses of doubt, drive miles back home mid-day to unplug a toaster. They know a smallness can beget disaster. We have lived so long among them we forget how many, domesticated, moved through the houses of our century,

late into the night, as my mother did, listening to steady our breaths, rechecking to insure the doors are locked, the windows, locked against that which is surely coming, that which means to find a way in.

Melanie Almeder

Last Call

Two girls took rope-swing turns till the tire broke off
and rolled away into the gnat-infested, waist-high weeds
at the edge of the yard up the hill from the fishing pond.
Full up with creating, glad to be forgotten by parents,
we found elation in each other's eyes, tripping silly words
in our duets that trickled on beams of light
that were surely laid out as first love.

In time, we grew handsome hips, high hair styles,
tried our darn-dest to walk wise into different worlds,
spun tall tales in family style at the drop of a hat,
turned lyrical vowels under assorted stage lights
while babies slid down our legs, in and out of doors,
going up and down stairs from one state to another
where we won or lost buddies, bets and social games.

When some feast or funeral called us back home
to the piedmont, we embraced familiar slang
and satire that flashed raw and seemed more than real,
where all the stuffed pillows in life forgot
their marked impressions, as we replayed the joy
of just being girls again, unnoticed for a spell
by the hand-crafted world of incessant schedules.

Last December, you called your daughter about pain,
and then dialed the rescue squad at her suggestion.
After, it appeared as if you suddenly spun around,
knocking over an unlit candle as you passed away.
I heard the tale of it, imagined that flighty pirouette,
and saw two girls slip bare feet into an amber pond.
Where they have gone is anyone's guess.

For Jeanne Light

Judy Light Ayyildiz



Maenads
Mary Boxley Bullington



Her Dad's Favorite
Jennifer Carpenter

Dear Brother

As daffodils bloom and rivers run high,
I still hear your laughter echoing strong.
Across yellow meadows where bluebirds fly,
we'd play in the sunshine while you'd sing a song.

I still hear your laughter echoing strong
when your silly lyrics ended up in a rhyme.
We'd play in the sunshine while you'd sing a song
and dance in bare feet until suppertime.

When your silly lyrics ended up in a rhyme,
you'd twirl me around and pick up the pace
and dance in bare feet until suppertime.
We'd run for the house. You'd make it a race.

You'd twirl me around and pick up the pace
when daylight fades into its purple haze.
We'd run for the house. You'd make it a race.
Dear Brother, I sure remember those days.

When daylight fades into its purple haze
across yellow meadows where bluebirds fly,
dear Brother, I sure remember those days
as daffodils bloom and rivers run high.

Dee Bowlin

The Grieving Mother Sees a Pregnant Woman at the Gravesite

She stands at a bowed mound, dropping white petals onto the dark brown hemisphere of mud.

I cannot determine the look in her eyes from here, my knees fixed in the cold soil I have come to visit, no longer rounded. The growing bones inside her skin point to bones growing no longer in the barren womb of earth.

The lonely moon endures above us. On nights like this, I question the universe and its kindness.

And how like a moon her curved belly is! The other half the grave beneath her.

How like the cosmos this cemetery becomes — crisscrossed dirt bulbs, all pregnant with bodies as cold as dead faraway planets, souvenirs of memories no one remembers.

Yet, every so often, the hope of a visitor bearing fresh buds returns to mend all the major losses one-by-one. I watch this stranger repair our dead not with her wilted flower petals, but with the little remedy inside her. She is her own master in matter-making.

The bones beneath me too, I know, were once crafted with kindness.

Madeleine Gallo



I Said No
Eva M. Schlesinger

When a Grown-Ass Woman Speaks

So, my political posts are distasteful?
They are impolite, you say?
It makes you “uncomfortable,” really?
I don’t give a fuck!

Children are dying!

So, you believe it is your Second Amendment Right to own the kind of weapon that kills mass numbers of people?

The mentally ill are to blame, not you.
Do I have that right?

You know other countries have mentally ill people too. They provide health care for their people. We don’t have enough beds. We don’t have insurance policies which cover counseling services or needed medications. We don’t see it as a real health concern and stigmatize those who seek help.

They also have very strict rules and regulations when it comes to guns. We do not not even the most common sense of laws. They invest in education. We do not. They build shelters for their homeless. We cut programs that feed our children and give them needed medical care.

Do you know what an AR-15 can do to a small child’s body?

The same people who splatter the internet with pictures of aborted fetuses loudly proclaim, “Don’t take away my guns!” The same people who hold signs reading, “Choose life!” outside Planned Parenthood argue guns don’t kill people, people kill people.

I want those self-righteous idiots to recover the bodies of splintered children out of a school building. I want them to see the parents coming to try to identify the broken remains of their six-year-old and explain to them that their right to bear arms is more valuable than the child they lost. More valuable than the future this child had in front of them to live.

Don’t give me that shit that says guns don’t kill people, people kill people.

I’m a grown-ass woman, and I can say it— I call BULLSHIT!

Angela V. Clevinger

The Acorn and the Leaf

Grey rough growth
left
and right
dredged by years
most likely.

Like tiny hats on my old hands, from Sol, from
salt, from Cornish blood that battled centuries,
from veins of the far north claiming day-lengths for naps
bones fragile through thousand-mile walks in blistering heat over far dunes and plains
running from hatred running toward the unknown small bodies leather feet hunger there.
Did the birds run, too, or were they flying by then? Did the gazelle even look up as we passed?
Rich chestnut limbs dart, reach a fair land, shadowed figures with wide foreheads, fighting for
water, for a child of mine. *O, to have that skin of deep nut woods now.* Rivers hold olive leaves.
Through long grasses, towers build, we die, we think to run again, against the hills.
The old woman, weary from walking, weary from men, mother to brown and tan.
Mother keens as daughters fall in clutches, keens as sons scream to war.
Two sons run east with spears, and seek other daughters, and water.
The man with braids sits in the river below. He eschewed the fire.
He refused the spear. Daughters drew to him, but boys, too.
His stories wove spirits. The women warmed wheat for him.
The man sewed olive leaves through his braids,
And the women and boys followed.
Look at the scales on my old hands.
Leaves, turning, balm the ancient wounds.

Marjie Gowdy



Lady Day
The Patrick Harris

Night

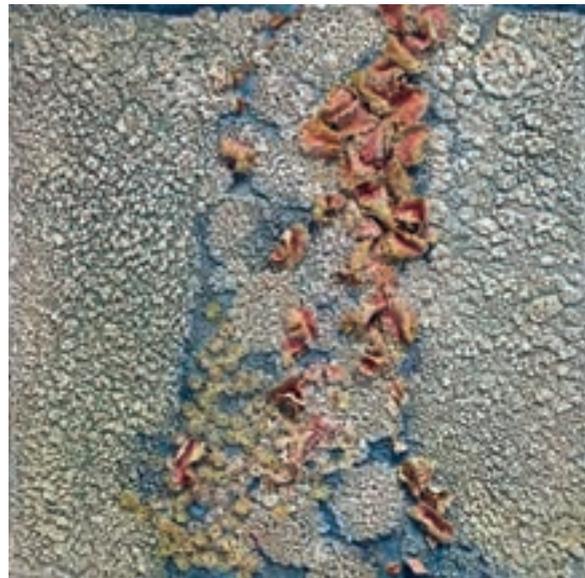
Night is the darker sister of Day.
She sits before the mirror
draping golden chains
around her neck and shoulders,
pearl pendant between
her small breasts.
While her sister sings
in the warm sunlight,
Night stays inside and
dreams, book and pen
in hand. Sometimes she sits
by the upstairs window,
watching the pale moon
climb a ladder of clouds,
waiting for shadows to creep
out of the corners.
As the sky brightens,
Night slips underground,
trailing her black veil. She touches
each root with her long fingers,
stokes the strawberry's unseen
flame. The trees reach for her,
calling with their thin voices,
their top branches crowned
with the dark nests of crows.

Robbi Nester

Overlooking the City, I Reminisce

about women in homeless shelters who have nothing to do but imagine their fate: overdose, a gun, a husband who demands his wife heed his dicey commands.

In a split second, a woman begging on a street corner falls to the pavement. Epileptic seizures shake her limbs with the force of a tempestuous wind. In flashing streetlights her dark skin glistens. Her front teeth tumble onto the sidewalk. I call out to drivers to dial 9-1-1, their slapdash haste, egregious.



I tell myself, *Don't dwell on the madness, the insane chatter of hurried drivers, the headstrong haste of pedestrians.* I pillow the fallen woman's head in my lap, place a sweater beneath her neck, thank a passerby for calling an ambulance, a siren's shrill wail in the distance.

I dwell on this craziness, on humanity's self-absorption, wonder why it took over an hour for someone to seek help, wonder if the woman will live, if she'll end up in the shelter where I read poetry to pregnant Hope while she clapped, danced, beat the blues on tin cans, where Gwendolyn stood tall and chanted, where a woman like the one I sought to save crouched in a corner, extended her hand, begged for a quarter.

Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda

seaffluer
Maja Bosen

Villanelle for a Strained Work Environment

Machine noise muffles the conversation of my colleagues standing near the entryway. I am distressed by my situation.

I prefer the solitude of a desert population over civil discourse with *dramatis personae*. Machine noise muffles the conversation.

Richard namedrops—yet again—Fast Food Nation, as if enlightenment makes for a better lay. I am distressed by my situation,

trading quality time elsewhere for the sensation of chilled air devouring the whole of my workday. Machine noise muffles the conversation.

My worldview edges toward disintegration but I'd be mad to give up steady pay. I am distressed by my situation.

A phone call distracts me from their machinations. When they leave, I'll work on my résumé. Machine noise muffles the conversation. I am distressed by my situation.

Josette Torres



Hand Wrench
Zephren H Turner

Sew, Knit, Stitch Together

American born, middle child of nine, she learned the ways of old-country parents: to cook and sew from a mother who died birthing the last son; the secrets of soil from her farmer father, who clung to a map of his former homeland, lost to war.

She grew, responsible and serious, while older raised younger in a motherless home focused on hard effort and long hours. They worked the fields of their tenant farm; all gave to the extent of their abilities, received little enough according to their needs.

She finished school and set out to work in a land of cooks and maids; embraced by an apron and a starched white cap she learned the skills to manage a household, escaping dull routine one day each week in her farm boy beau's Model A roadster.

They drove to a courthouse in a next-door state where teens could marry without waiting, but the nationwide Depression blessed their vows and forced their newly joined paths apart. He left to work construction, she stayed behind to cook and sew and mind someone else's children.

The birth of their son restored their union, a newly formed family barely settled, yet soon divided by our nation under attack. Greetings in the mail and tearful farewells, hasty training, troop trains, and a world at war split husbands from wives, fathers from children.

She nurtured and raised a son, at first in her father's home, the old way, with brothers and sisters pitching in; then on her own, a rented house in town, working jobs fitted to school schedules, war's version of single parenting.

Ration coupons, noodles and Spam, church every Sunday, a household of two. She gathered string, tinfoil and rubber bands, sowed the lawn with a Victory Garden and tended the soil with remembered skills. As her son grew and learned, so did she.

Letters to her husband went out one by one, telling the story of making do, getting by. She worked retail, fingers red from sewing at night for neighbors. She joined guilds and clubs and auxiliaries, baked for church suppers, curated churchly linens.

Her husband's return, nearly a stranger, meant war was over but peace eluded them as his strain from foreign battles surged on. Homemaking, jobs, and education: a family's postwar celebration of achievement stopped at the edge of her husband's early grave.

Widowhood led to unsought relocation while her son reached out toward his own goals. Paths diverged and she knit a new life as another man's wife, briefly embraced, until a stroke froze her aspirations and cast them into bedridden anxieties.



Life Quilt
Jane Winders Frank

Alone again, she has finally found rest, ashes returned to a land she had loved. Her life forms a square in the American quilt, handmade by all, brothers and sisters alike who rise through immigrant households, stitching the fabric of our national experience.

James Broschart

Everything

You are a crystal quartz necklace,
Dangling from a sterling silver chain,
Radiating energy
Absorbed by the full moon.

You are a white-spotted hawk
Soaring high above others,
Teaching me how to be a predator,
Not prey.

You are a steamy cup of chamomile tea
In a hand-crafted Floyd mug,
Warming my sore throat
And tired heart.

You are a soft Kleenex tissue
Ready to dry my teary eyes
After heartbreak
And life's many let-downs.

You are a bowl of crushed rose petals and beeswax,
For making jars of sweet-smelling lotions
And all-natural soaps.

You are a cozy purple quilt of patchwork
Stitched by the hands of my great-great grandma,
Unfolding to warm me
After the world has become too bitter.

You are a Fleetwood Mac song,
Dancing around the house,
Telling me to rule my life like a bird in flight
And that thunder only happens when it's raining.

You are a crisp page of a leather-bound book
At the end of a long grueling day,
Reclining with your feet up
After you finish taking care of everyone else.

Samantha Prillaman



Lying on Arid Land
Paola Bidinelli

Refugee

I'm almost sorry I asked you to tell me your story.
I say *almost* because I would not have known
how the Janjaweed rode into Dabar on camels
to rape women, burn them alive in their huts,
and slaughter males with their silver swords
all because your skin was as black as their hearts.

Your mother put your baby brother and you
on a donkey and led you to a forest,
hid you in a hole, covered it with a blanket,
then climbed a nearby tree as lookout.

Adrift in Chad's vast, unfamiliar wilderness,
you slept on bare ground and foraged for food.
Months later Red Cross workers led you to Fergana Camp
where you shared pills with a friend when you both got sick,
gave blood to keep a woman from dying in childbirth,
and studied in a packed room without computers.

After eleven years you married a young woman,
unaware that five months later you'd be invited to the US
with your mother and brother, but not your wife.
At the train station, you cried and clung to one another.
Often you show me pictures of her solemn-faced
beside your three-year-old son, born soon after you left.

Now you work nightshift at a plant for minimum wage,
study English by day and learn the American ways.
The hope of family reunion foiled by politics
makes you worry and relive bad dreams.
But then your survivor spirit returns,
and you tell me how much better off you are
than so many others left behind.

Katherine De Lorraine

On Turning Fifty-five at the Theater

Bawd and gin on stage
red stiletto persecutions
that must be suffered,
the drama of flirtations.
Oh yeah, my arches
now gone, also, the onset
of alcohol'd reflux, not to mention
the dried cave
of my sex.

The couple in front of me:
white hairs combed careful
or maybe curled over
what's gone, now the moss
of hairs inside ear shells
pink-flushed maybe
with lusty reminders.

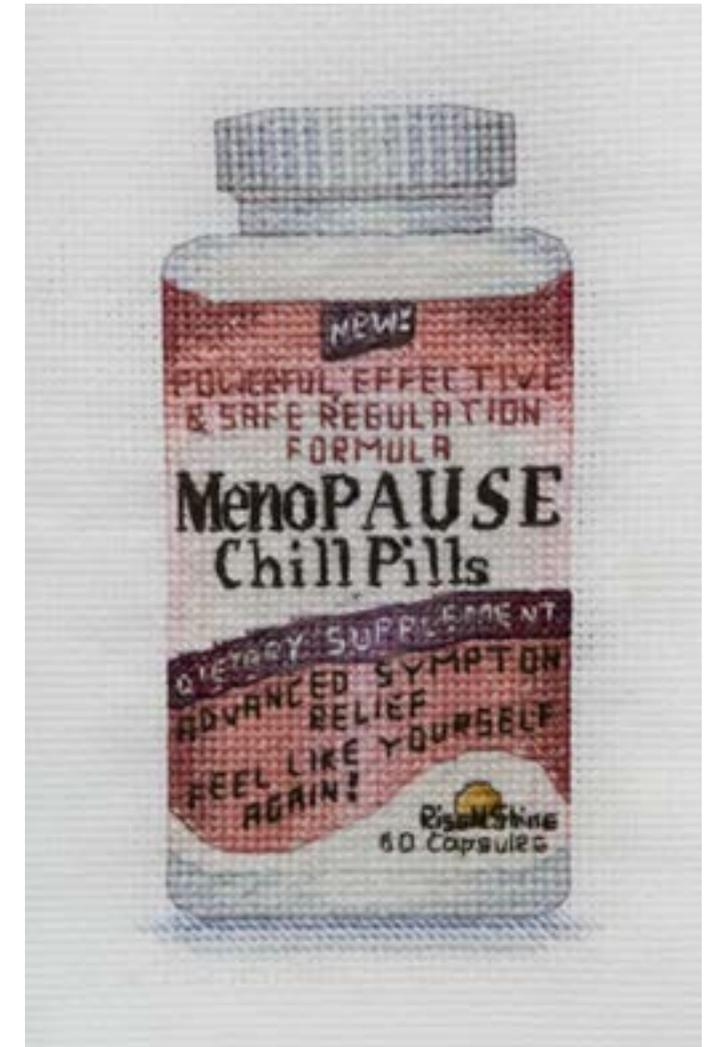
His shoulder a scaffold for hers
against the denouement
of gravity, to monitor the tremors
underneath her fine cotton
and cashmere. I do wonder
their plot: champagne parties till dawn,
the baby spit years and gristly barbecues,
nagging dialogue, once a wandering off stage,
and the comfort years:
bending down tenderly
to touch up again and again
the grease paint, fading
with tolerance.

Who will shore up my decay?
Munch popcorn in sync, while we dab
at each other's buttery drool? I ask you,

who will witness the slip of my skin
guised in grayed veins, who knows
the secrets of my soft
and the map of my moles?

To applaud when my soul's whiteness
rises from this body's cloth?
To waltz in chiffon
with the now lesbian
virgin martyrs? Together, then,
we wave like crazed queens
and throw eternal kisses,
tap dancing on and on
the higher stage.

Kate Rose Bast



Menopause Chill Pills
Katrina Majkut

Continuation

Life does go on and on indeed;
Pain starts to fade, grief to recede.

Some things begin to have appeal
Though nothing ever is ideal.

Words fail more often than before;
Thoughts may take flight but seldom soar.

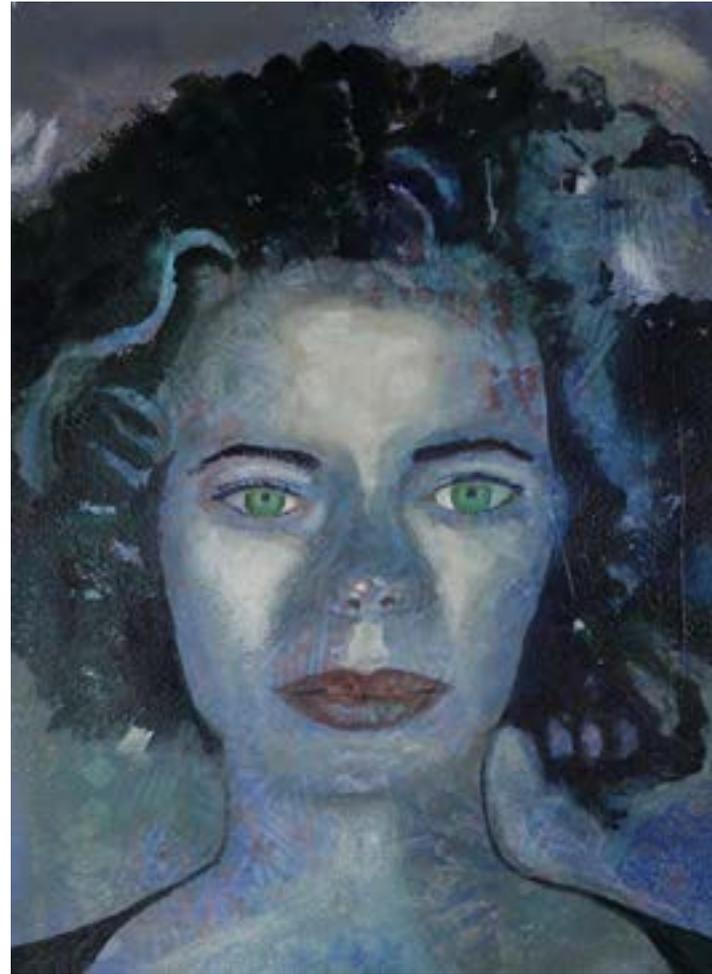
Plans lead to little, maybe less;
Few efforts prove their usefulness.

Sleep comes too early or too late;
It leaves too soon at any rate.

Dreams tend to muddle now with then
As if to show what might have been.

The sun does rise, the moon as well;
The future is for time to tell.

Jane Blanchard



Why be blue when I see green?

Gerri Young

And how would it be to fly

And how would it be to fly
As the birds of the sea
Wings unfurled into whatever wind might be

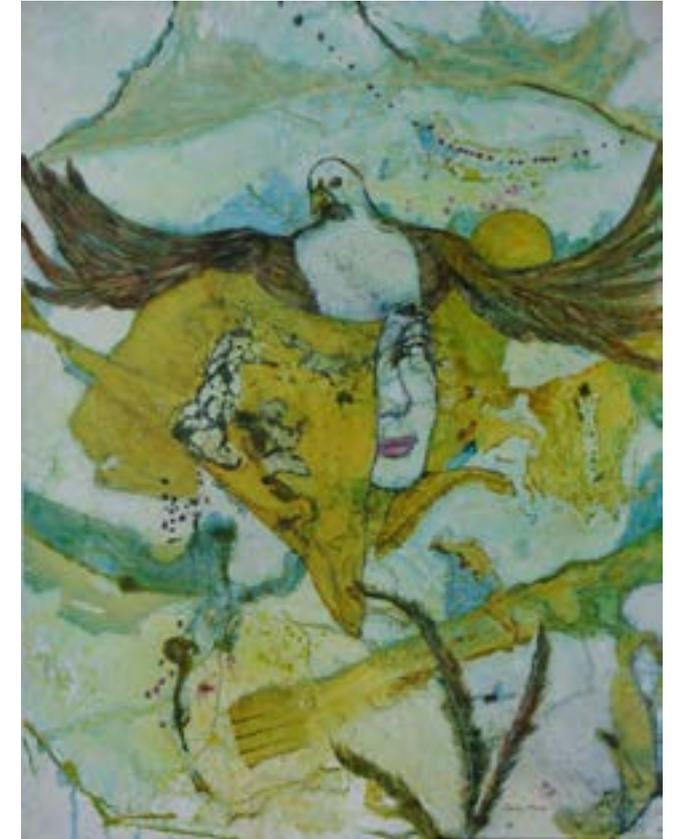
Immeasurably calculated, free
Not a part of them wondering
What should I do now, or Can it be?

As simply poised as a drop of water
Raised to fall
Back into its source
Just so
These birds know
How to sail without hoisting
Their wings
Never listing nor luffing
Even keeled they soar
Just above the wave
Every wave
Now below the horizon, now above
Floating in the air, like love

And how would it be to fly
As the birds of the sea
Wings unfurled into whatever wind might be

As they fly above
Grounded,
Astounded,
me.

Diane Scribner Clevenger



Flight of Fancy

Sally Mook

Icarus Advises His Daughter

Celebrate yourself, rise above the chorus of grey
that keeps you cave hidden and small.

Do not hold back the wild thing
that lives deep inside.

Insist on wings dipped in sunrise,
a festival of feathers in turquoise and violet.

Sing not like that mechanical bird
fashioned to chirp each morning,

but large and loud and out of tune
from time to time.

Fly beyond the sun.
You will not be stunned dumb

or become undone by wax melt.
Free yourself from the design.

Delight in wind currents and see
from that height

the monotony of things. Cast off
the fixed ideas of who you should be.

When you are ready, fling earthward
a winged doll made in your own image.

Resist the myth that a brazen child will drown.
Leave a storm of feathers floating on water.

Babo Kamel



Principia
Megan Knobloch Geilman

Played by Ear

Barbed wire – ears nose lips tongue
pierced parts protect her
from intrusion.
Parade of hair colors
draws outsiders away
from her real drama.

She winds prismatic threads
about her straight lines
coiled into circular illusions
to keep her safe.

Hidden scars on both wrists,
the only surface evidence
of real-life staging
when failed escape from her father
was self-inflicted.

Angst undressed
by sung expression, sense
of the world through her guitar.

Purple pain,
punched in the gut, vomited
her restorative life force
back on two rooted feet.

Another year of theatrics
trolls turbulent water,

social services now her parents,
but she'll bounce back
on her beat as she's done
since age four,

her resilience like a tuner
that can always find middle C.

Patsy Asuncion



Hollow
Stacie Ann Smith

Pilate's Wife

*Pilate's wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that
innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him."
Matthew 27:19*

She wakes at dawn, pulse heavy with heat,
mouth sticky from last night's wine.

Gods, I hate these forsaken festivals.

She remembers a dream.
In it hordes packed the street,
reaching for her, hands at her throat.
The Jew was there,
wild, rail thin, covered in rags,
black eyes boring into her fear.
She ran and fell, drowning in bodies,
felt his fingers touch her face.
Breath returned.

She woke with the feel of his hand on her mouth.

*They'll kill him. Today.
Stupid fool of a peasant.*

Fumbling, she gathers her robes,
rushes down corridors
to her husband's judgment seat,

peers through the crowd,
soldiers, priests,
gawkers, loungers.
Oh, gods, he's young. The blood...

Pilate turns to her.
Words fall like stones from her cracked lips.
She stumbles backward under a porch,
eyes closed against the stinging sun.

Jane Mary Curran

Darci Lynne in the Making

At just 12-years old, by the most votes for a final performance in the history of the show, singer/ventriloquist, Darci Lynne Farmer wins NBC's America's Got Talent.

She gets her hair done at the planetarium, cures old lyrics of any sign of weariness, poses her slice of teeth like a Velcro strip of beauty pageant. She knows how to maneuver a Las Vegas stage manager & a stage mom who shepherds a million dollar payload.

Once upon a time, her diva bunny sister swallowed golden confetti, now the cotton is high in Oklahoma City & her cotton candy disposition spins merch into rainbows. She was like, Mom & Dad, Can I Please Have a Puppet & they were like, Here Is Your Princess Crown, Honey, & then

quarterfinals with four-eyed Oscar & his mousey palms pawing a mic for Mel B—
semifinals with Edna Lady in her Eighties
licking salt from Simon's cheek—
seesaw finale with Petunia & Oscar, dueling
at her shoulders: a little help from her friends.

Behind her dressing room mirrors
Shari Lewis smirks
while Lamb Chop & Hush Puppy
hum their dusty hymns.
Fame now rattles Darci's lungs,
this plank-chested, lanky-legged
confection of legacy's daughter
who spends her months harvesting
straight aces & fever applause.

Rikki Santer

THE GODDESS DESCENDS

She is not, as we'd hoped, beautiful.
The passage left her haggard,
knotty, thick with remorse.
Her plain face inspires no poets,
causes no wars, keeps her off prime time.
The ratty jeans and sweatshirt
dismay our ladies of influence
who have arranged a tea.
Their dashing muscular sons
turn away indifferently
to shot-put, medicine balls
and girls in cashmere sweaters
that change history.

We are polite, deferential.
Fire in the sky should mean something.
We take our phones
off the hook, draw shades,
hope the world shrieks, rages--
anything to ease our desuetude.
We want money and love,
a cure for cancer, the end of time.
But not a single rock has risen
since her arrival.

Like the deep, stern sadness
in the faces of granite lions
guarding our empty pavilion,
we assume she too has some purpose.
We make no waves, remain civil,
continue to sacrifice one another
with proper remorse.

We cannot tell you
how often this has happened.

Louis Gallo



Die Mutter - The Mother
Janis Wunderlich