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MAGAZINE

SPRING 2024

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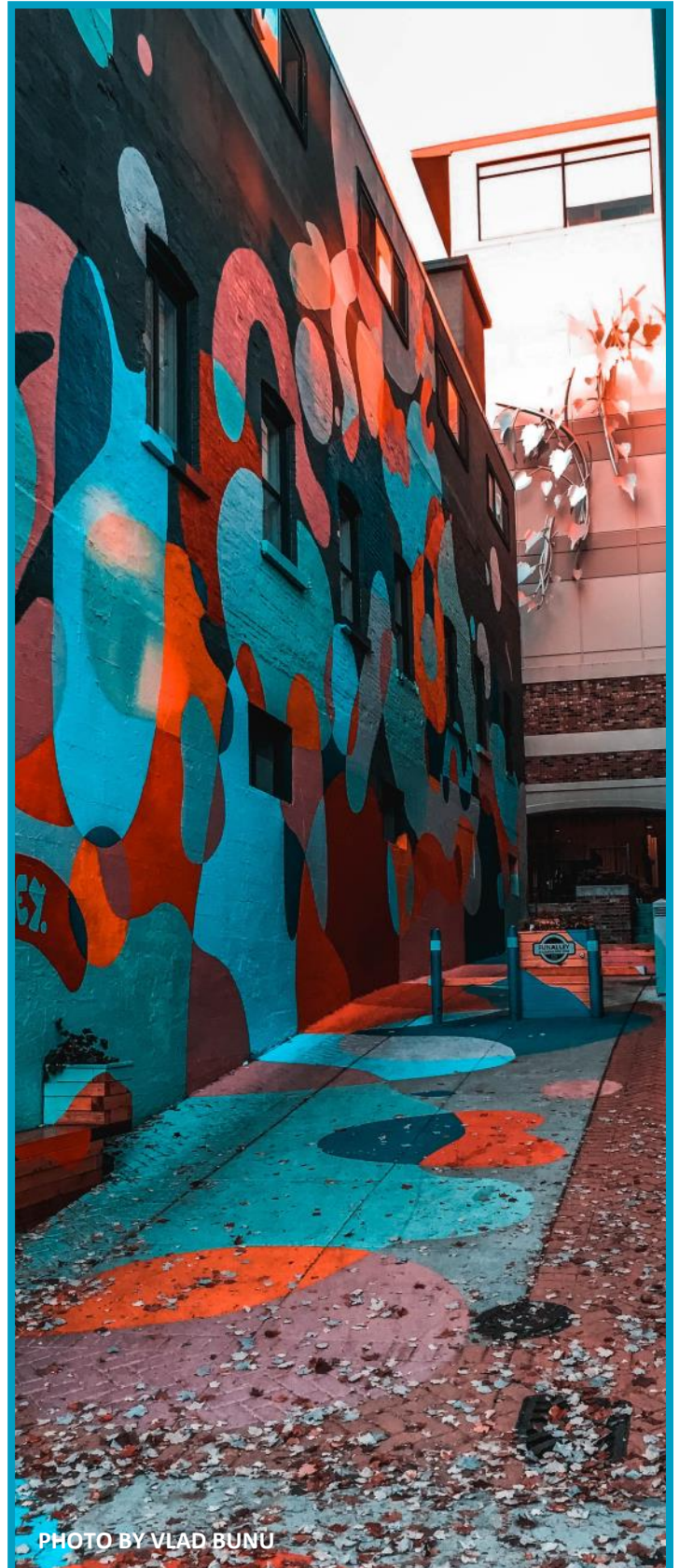
#YesItsArt

We've all had a moment where art struck a chord. I loved watching shows with my kids just to see them gasp the very first time they saw a well-known trope happen. For them, it was a revelation that the prince and pauper could exchange places, or the princess knew the way home all along. Art strikes us differently, based on our lived experiences and we're allowed to have favorites both high and low. My love of Marvel films and black-and-white noir don't come into conflict.

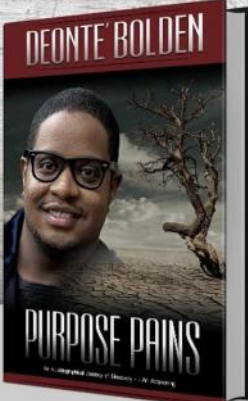

We don't always recognize art. I have a friend who stacks beautiful produce in the grocery department, and it is pleasing to look at. Her small act, among the mundanity of shopping, is a hidden gem. Our world is a better place when people impose themselves upon the storm of chaos that is life in order to make sense of it in a way we didn't. Our comprehension grows from their interpretation.

I love art, in both simplicity and complexity. In nature and in artifice. Creativity comes from a natural place, and is also a ton of work. So, where in your life are you finding out that #YesItsArt?

Heather Roulo / Editorial Director



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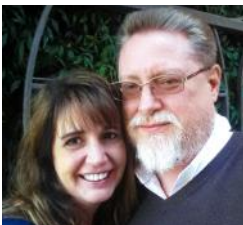
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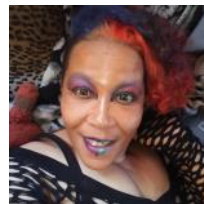
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KRISTIN BATTESTELLA



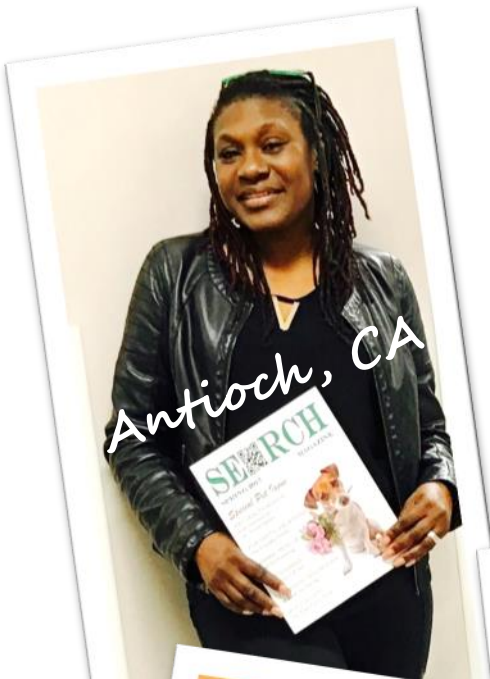
writes classic television reviews for *I Think, Therefore I Review* in addition to the *Women In-Session* Film podcast at *InSession Film*.

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Poetry Contest Winner

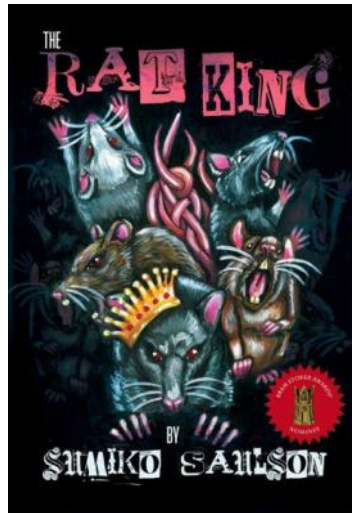
“The Dance of the Owls”

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#YesItsArt | Diversity in Speculative Poetry... BY SUMIKO SAULSON
...is on the Rise

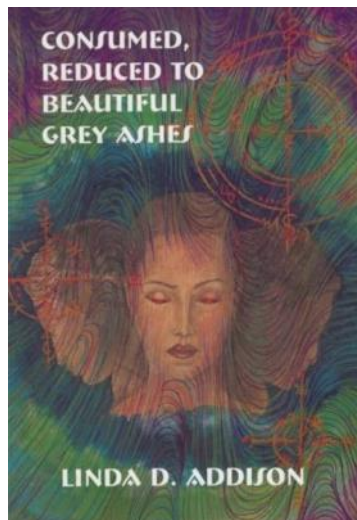
Most of us have had some experience with speculative fiction poetry. Considered the father of the horror poetry genre, Edgar Allan Poe uses metaphor to compare a human body to a crumbling castle in “The Haunted Palace.” “The Raven,” “Annabel Lee,” and “Ligeia,” are all thought to have been inspired by the death of his wife Virginia Eliza Clemm Poe, who died from tuberculosis.

Like Poe, I draw inspiration from personal life tragedies and current events. My release, *The Rat King: A Book of Dark Poetry* was nominated for the Bram Stoker Award, the most prestigious award in horror, as well as the Elgin Award for speculative poetry.



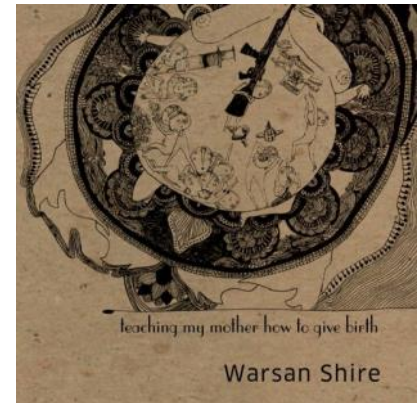
One challenge I have faced as a poet is my love of rhyming structure. In many sectors it has fallen out of vogue, considered by some to be juvenile or old-fashioned. My love of assonance—described by Dictionary.com as, “Repetition of the sound of a vowel or diphthong in non-rhyming stressed syllables near enough to each other for the echo to be discernible”—and consonance—defined as, “The recurrence of similar sounds, especially consonants, in close proximity”—means that rhymes and near rhymes are found throughout my poems, not just at the end of structured stanzas.

My friend Linda Addison—the first African American to have ever



won a Bram Stoker Award for her poetry collection *Consumed, Reduced to Beautiful Grey Ashes*—suggested that, rather than stressing on how to remove rhyme structures from my work, I could just decide they’re retro now and give them a comeback. Linda is a modern poet whose works convey deeper meaning without adhering to old-fashioned structures.

My favorite poet, Warsan Shire, also tends not to rhyme. You may know her from her chapbook *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*, many of the poems from which were read by Beyonce between music videos in her film *Lemonade*. Her poem “Denial,” which is read over images of Beyonce underwater, tells in gut-wrenching detail the ordeal of a woman consumed with the thought of her partner cheating on her. I was deeply honored when her poem “Trichotillomania” (from *Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in Her Head*) tied with my poem “Surviving” (from *The Rat King*) and “As Slow as Starlight” by Kim Whysall-Hammond (from *Frozen Wavelets 7*).



At the 2023 Stoker Awards, Cynthia Pelayo won with her poetry book *Crime Scene* (Raw Dog Screaming Press), becoming the first Puerto Rican to win the award. She was joined later in the night by a second Puerto Rican, Gabino Iglesias, whose *The Devil Takes You Home* (Mulholland Press) took the novel category. The Elgin Award went to Brandon O’Brien, a Black author from Trinidad and Tobago, for *Can You Sign My Tentacle?* (Interstellar Flight Press). Overall, recognition of diverse voices in speculative poetry rose incredibly in the last year and I hope this trend continues. ■



PLAGUE MASTER SANCTUARY DOME

When Samantha's brother goes missing, the trail leads to Julius Cerberon, the rich philanthropist who built a dome for the sufferers of mankind's newest disease. Can she really accuse the universe's greatest humanitarian of murder? Meanwhile, on a downtrodden planet, Trevor has the unenviable job of zombie bait. He saves his dream girl, but she is infected. He escapes to the domed utopia where the infected are quarantined until they change. Then the dome breaks and a planet's worth of zombies invade. And his girl could change any minute now.

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the green veining to come through, and some speckled mishaps became that natural, leaves-turning look. After touch ups and drying over the weekend, I arranged the short and long vine stems by twisting them around the chandelier's top loop. Instead of strategic hot glue spots, bending the vines around the chandelier kept them in place. To bolster the dollar store battery candles, I drizzled hot glue around good old T.P. rolls a la wax, inserted a cardboard shelf for the LED tea light, and gave the faux pillars an acrylic patina. With an easy J-hook installation, instead of noticing the eye-sore pipes on my basement ceiling, I can enjoy classy, customized ambiance for less than half that original retail value price. Kismet!

Certainly one must mull the buy now uniqueness versus potential project cost. However, thanks to the thrift price and surplus vines, this chandelier can change with the seasons. This is the kind of trash-to-treasure job that anyone can do. Decorating your whole house won't happen overnight, but by shopping second-hand and using elbow grease to upcycle florals, you can achieve bargain sense, creative elan, and affordable impact one room at a time.

Follow Kristin Battestella on Instagram @kbatzkrafts for more DIY photos and projects! ■

Unlike grandma's dusty, plastic, tacky florals; I've been populating my home with sophisticated looks for less with thrifted foliage, vases, and upcycled holiday topiaries. Don't spend on expensive swags or centerpieces when a little hunting and ingenuity can yield affordable florals reborn as luxury accents.

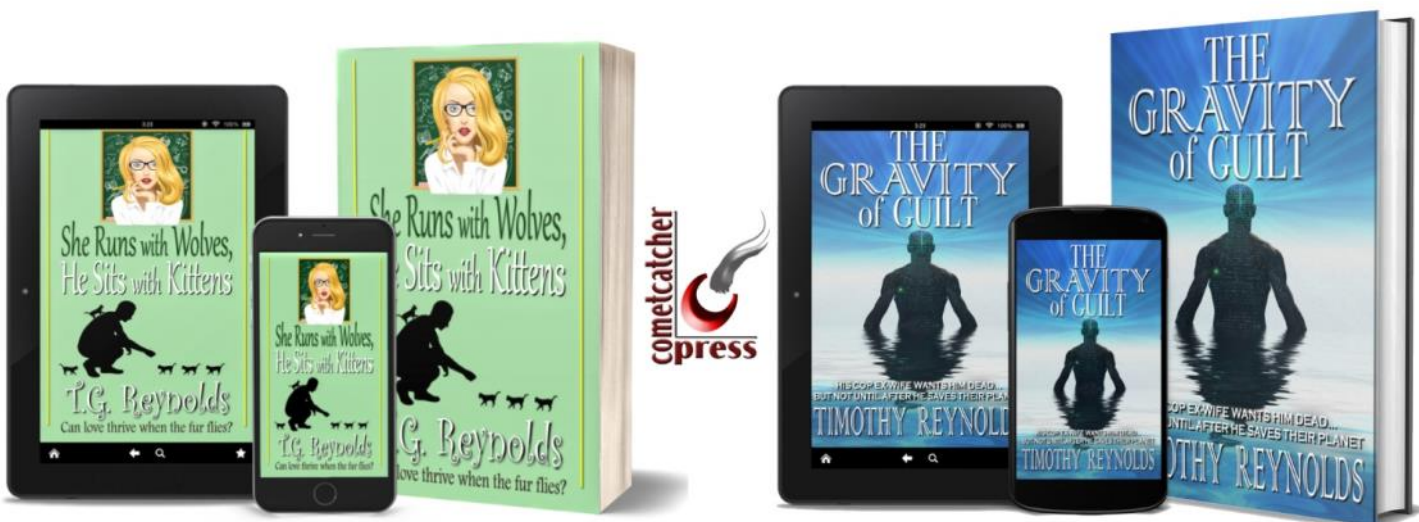
Real plants demand care and can be messy with kids and pets, but revitalizing a second hand item feels good, becoming a conversation piece when a house guest asks where I got my doctored wreath or candelcape. Recently, I've begun disguising the unsightly utilities in my basement studio with faux greenery, lucking out at my local Goodwill in finding vines, lighted floral strands, and more for five to ten dollars. Of course, stretching our decorating dollar is often overwhelming and put on the back burner as doubt interferes with creativity. What if my redo is cheap and terrible? Rather than their desired style, people often have what they can afford. By experimenting with thrift florals, you can find your style guilt free, seeing something not for what it is, but what it could be while unlocking your design potential.

A six-dollar candle chandelier and a basket of greenery for ten—with the \$50 big name retail tag still on it—were a matchmaking boon on my last thrift trip. Separating the basket's four vine stems was easy with wire cutters, and I tested how the strands should drape over the chandelier before spray painting the chandelier in gloss black. Although tempted to leave the golden and green summer vibe, I painted the vines by mixing burgundy and yellow acrylics for varying orange, autumn hues. Coverage to coat still allowed

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When laid-back Max isn't running a little map shop, he's fostering the five kittens his ex abandoned when she left.

While high-energy corporate trainer Tori is trying to stay fit and quit smoking, her condo floods and she has to find a short-term place to live.

Max has a basement suite available, but can two opposites get along under the same roof, especially when Max's ex threatens to return and reclaim the roof... and the rest of the house?



On a distant Earth colony, Zeke Hayz is a good father, a brilliant industrial designer, the most powerful psionic mind in the star system, and the thief known only as The Psilent One.

His ex, Marisol, is a by-the-book cop and single mom who wants Zeke kept away from their teenage daughter and for him to pay for his crimes, including deaths his actions have caused.

But Marisol can't save the planet from a pending, all-life-ending environmental disaster without Zeke, so she has to do her best to keep him alive, for at least a few more days.

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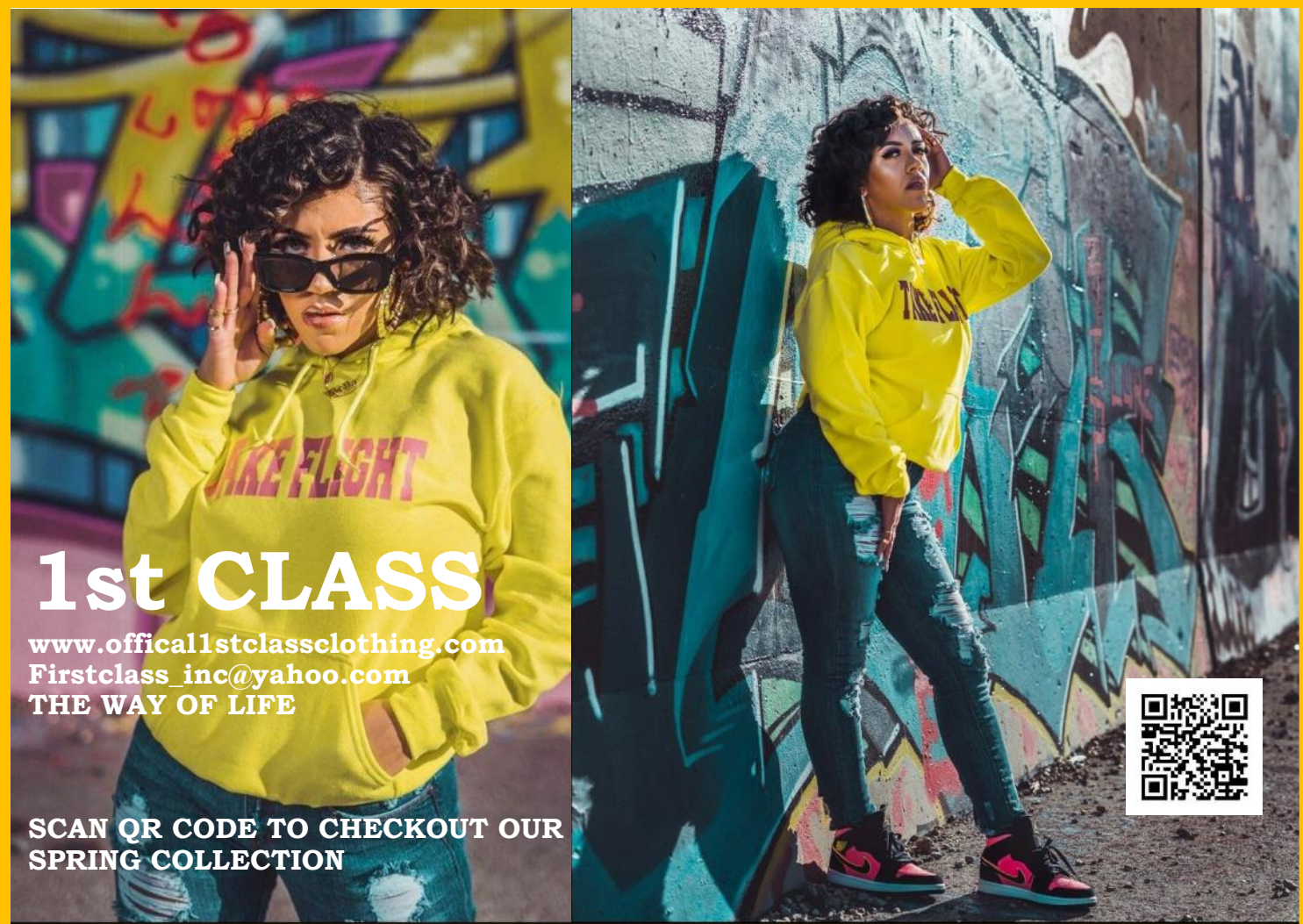


Evil for Good

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The Art of Dance... Was it still art when I was eleven and dancing in a square in a barn in rural Nova Scotia and fell in love with the cute twelve-year-old girl who dragged me onto the dance floor? Was it still art if I forgot to ask her name while I was swooning?

Was dance still art when I did it for nine hours for a United Way dance-a-thon the day after I ate thirty raw eggs to raise money?

Was it still art if the dancing was The Robot done to David Bowie or The Beatles instead of The Village People? Was it still art when a talent scout spotted my partner Dee and me and had us do The Robot on a television variety show because we were the only act of our kind in the entire city of Toronto?

Was dance still art when I spent three summers hanging out at Silver City Night Club in Banff and looked like I was having a seizure on the dance floor

every time the DJ spun Loverboy's "The Kid is Hot Tonight?"

Was dance still art when I was the only dude in Jazz Dance class? Was it ever art when I had to wear a dance belt (rubbery thong thingy lifting and separating my butt cheeks), tights, and leg warmers? Was it still art when I gave up grace and just wore baggy grey sweat pants with the college's crest on them while I stretched at the barre?

Was it still art when I got a scholarship to spend a week with the La Groupe de la Place Royale dance company? Probably, but was it still art when I drank eleven shots of schnapps to celebrate getting cast in *West Side Story* then went to the pub where I gyrated in orange coveralls and a red felt top hat and met my first college girlfriend?

Was dance still art when our cast of *West Side Story* danced in the streets on our breaks from rehearsals but I was too scrawny to lift my dance partner so I got relegated to the chorus as the Shark named Nibbles?

Was dance still art when I answered a classified ad for a ballroom dance class partner but my partner didn't show up for half the classes so I ended up dancing with the lady instructor?

Was it still art when I got offered a job teaching ballroom dance with Fred Astaire Studios but was required to quit my day job in order to train without pay so I turned down the opportunity to dance on cruise ships in the Caribbean?

Was dance still art when it was done in a line to a Brooks & Dunn song but I couldn't remember if it was right foot out twice or left foot out three times before I do a quarter turn and shout, "Yeehaw?"

Is it still art if all I do now is dance to Gloria Estefan's "Mi Tierra" with one of my cats or my dog?

Do you know when it was still art, though? When I walked into my step-daughter's house for Christmas dinner and my six-year-old granddaughter hopped up on the big coffee table, opened her arms, and said "Dance with me Grampa!" The art of the heart. ■

UNDECIDED
BY EMMY Z. MADRIGAL

Will Cynthia make the right decision?

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Name: Tim Reynolds
Location: Calgary, Alberta

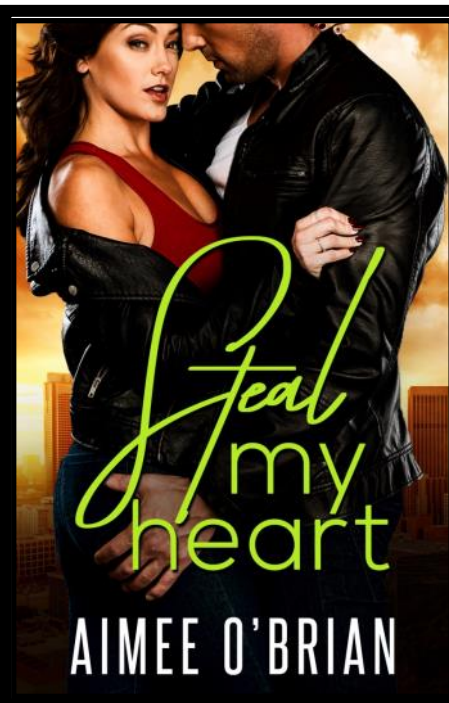
Tell us a little about yourself:
A bus driver by day and a novelist by night (really, really late into the night), my world revolves around

my elderly dog and two cats. Once a month or so, when the weather is good, the dog and I hop in the car and do a road trip out to dinosaur country, up to the mountains, or even down to Montana, just to get out of the house for the day and blast a little fresh air into our lungs.

What do you like to write about?
The articles I write for *SEARCH* tend to be based on my life experiences, including my times as a magician, a paparazzo, and a room service waiter in a haunted hotel. Quite often with my novels, too, I blend in true events and people. My latest, *She Runs with Wolves, He Sits with Kittens* is an urban Rom-Com inspired by many of the romantic follies I've experienced in over forty-five years of dating.

What's coming next?
My current fiction project is a series of sassy, cozy, small-town mysteries (with my dog as a character). My novels can be found at CometcatcherPress.com & tgmreynolds.com, and by the time you read this, I will have a new one out—either a serial killer thriller or a mystery starring a retired bus driver and his chonky cat in the Pacific Northwest.

What's your kryptonite?
Other than sweets, my greatest weakness is online shopping. I live near an Amazon Fulfillment Center and order more than I should, like my first lightsaber and Funko Pop figures. ■



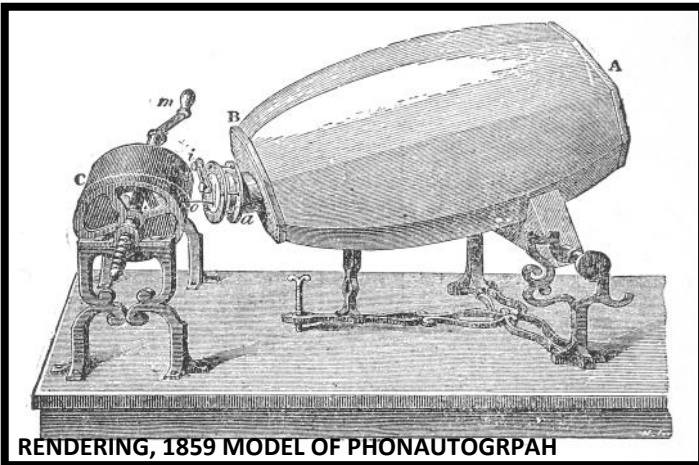
When a fantasy turns into a cold reality...

Lexanne Harris had a plan down to the last sexy detail. Never did she think her attempt to spice up her love life with her boyfriend would involve her in a burglary with a sexier-than-sin thief whose emerald eyes and serious between-the-sheets skills are impossible to forget. As a police detective, she is expected to stand on the side of the law and fight for justice. But what happens when the lines of justice blur and what's wrong becomes way too tempting?

The situation might be challenging, but Lexanne is determined to get assigned to the case, recover the jewels, and catch the culprit.

What will she do with her sexy cat burglar when she catches him?





The phonautograph, invented in France in 1857 by Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville, is the earliest known device for recording sound. He committed to smoke-blackened paper (called a phonautogram) the French folk song, “Au clair de la lune” but only in order to study acoustics.

There was at that time no physical way to listen to the recording itself. It didn’t occur to anyone in the 1800s that there would be enough information in the phonautogram to be able to reproduce the sound.

Wax or soft metal cylinders followed, with a stylus scratching an analogue of the sound waves into the wax/metal. This technique heralded the disc—thanks to the German-American inventor Emile Berliner—and music quickly became commercially available as early as the 1880s. Vinyl replaced the highly fragile shellac 78s. Early 10” discs were known due to the standardized rpm speed and the new discs became “long-playing” 12” records that could contain a whole set of recordings at 33rpm on both sides, while 7” singles usually contained one song per side (hence the moniker “single”) and played at 45rpm.

The single was in many ways the next major music revolution and more often than not, teenagers clamored to hear the latest song from their favorite pop idol. Teens would—certainly in the 1940s and 1950s—go to a local coffee shop or café and play the huge coin-operated jukeboxes that could hold anything up to 70 singles, giving the kids a mind-boggling choice of 140 different tunes. Record companies used jukeboxes as incredibly effective marketing tools. My dad often recalled his time as a teenager when he was

a Teddy Boy and how he and his friends would sit in a coffee shop all day, much to the shop owner’s frustration. They’d put more money in the jukebox than they’d ever spend buying coffee.

As tape cassettes were introduced in 1963 by the Philips company, leaping from the clunky reel-to-reels, music quickly became a much more personal thing. Cassette players were more compact and far more transportable. Not only that, you could even hook up a cassette recorder and tape music from the radio or even from your friend’s record player. How many of us (from a certain age) would sit huddled next to the radio, pressing record and pause in order to cut off the DJ and station breaks so we could grab the top 20 hits for ourselves? We’d even create mix tapes—our own little albums on a 60-minute cassette that we could share with a crush.

Sony invented the Walkman. Now *that* was quite possibly the most wonderful thing ever when I was a teenager. I could listen to whatever I was into, without disturbing anyone else—unless of course I played it too loud and everyone could hear the tinny refrains of Madonna belting out “Holiday!”



Bootleg recordings sprouted though and any number of record fairs across the world would attract sellers of these shoddy, hissy, third or fourth generation copies. Sometimes the tapes would be of badly recorded live concerts but they would still be a magical, alluring way to hear a band in a way that you’d never heard before. My family owned a record store, so bootlegs were something we didn’t always appreciate. Certainly there was a campaign in the 1980s from the British Phonograph Industry which used the slogan “Home Taping Is Killing Music.” It was feared that the rise of pirating music would lead to the music industry collapsing. It didn’t, of course.

When compact discs commercially arrived in 1983, the decline in vinyl (and tape cassettes) began. CDs were declared as the format to beat all others. How little did anyone foresee that soon we'd have the mini-disc. Well, *they* didn't last long, did they? I don't think I know anyone who ever even owned one. As the computer revolution took hold, it wouldn't be long before music was involved. When mp3 players and iPods arrived on the scene, suddenly we had access to hundreds at once. Those 140 songs on that huge ol' jukebox? How about ten times that in your pocket now, grandpa?

The iPod and mp3 player is all but obsolete now. Our cellphones can do all that. We can subscribe to any number of streaming sites, giving us access to



millions of songs. We can download whatever we want. The way we can buy music isn't endless, but what we can buy potentially is. Streaming and downloads are the favored route, but what warms the heart of a long-term music collector like myself is the choice. I still adore buying CDs, for instance. It's that tactile aspect

of owning an album. Even the return of vinyl is exciting. You really can't beat those 12" covers, the tangible link to the artist as you place that LP on the turntable.

Music is not just an audible product, it's not just a phonograph of our favorite artists. It's more than that. It's alive. It breathes. And it breathes life into those who embrace it in all its forms and formats. ■

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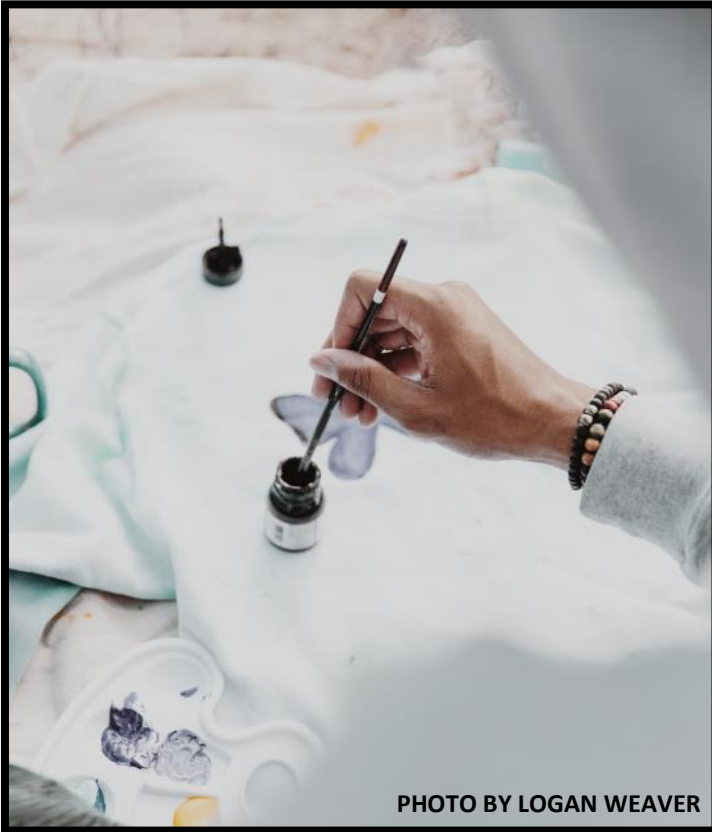


PHOTO BY LOGAN WEAVER

I believe humans are intrinsically artistic and creative by nature. Why, then do so many of us believe we have no artistic talent? It's a matter of our perceptions of ourselves.

Take Will, who is an electrical engineer. He attended a weekend writers retreat with his wife. He commented several times about how he wasn't a writer. Yet, by the end of the weekend, he composed five haikus. He just needed to be in a safe space to express himself. By safe, I mean being surrounded by people who might appreciate his efforts—and they did.

Then there's Irene, who decided to attend a wine and painting event to spend time with her girlfriends. Once she got into the flow and allowed herself to experiment with the shapes and colors, to try out the instructor's techniques, her mind opened up to the artistic talent within her. She deviated from the planned painting image and created something unique to herself. She proudly shared photos of it on her social media and it hangs on her office wall.

We often associate artistic endeavors as something fueled by madness, thus something to be avoided. We think creating belongs in therapy sessions. Additionally, our society is in quick-and-cheap mode. Everything

must be manufactured so that it's readily available and costs as little as possible. That leaves us in a cookie-cutter, bland world with little color and less beauty. Perfection in our world is often seen as a higher priority than the unique beauty of art.

Artistic value means nothing to most of our society, hence the low pay most artistic and creative people scrape together. Yet, studies show that these are an essential part of scientific exploration and innovation.

I have a 200-year-old antique bed that's been in my family its entire existence. It's cherry wood and has the most beautiful roses carved into the headboard. Because of its age, I know those were hand-carved which isn't a fast process. The carpenter took the *time* to add beauty as he built it. His artistic ability was not seen as separate from making a bed. It was a natural part of the process. The same was true of architecture in decades past.

Nowadays, we must actively seek out art and beauty instead of surrounding ourselves in it. That's the reason for the popularity of murals painted on building exterior walls and on overpass structures. People are striving to express their talent. I say we are all better for it.

We think we have no talent simply because we haven't tried it. We don't believe we can because we aren't in the *habit* of allowing our creative selves to step forward. The fear of making something less than perfect keeps us from giving ourselves the artistic exploration experience.

Get out there and do it anyway. Write a haiku or paint a picture. Let your artistic nature shine. ■



“*Northanger* is a delightful story based on Jane Austen’s classic, *Northanger Abbey*, that will appeal to both Austen fans and lovers of the gothic novel.”

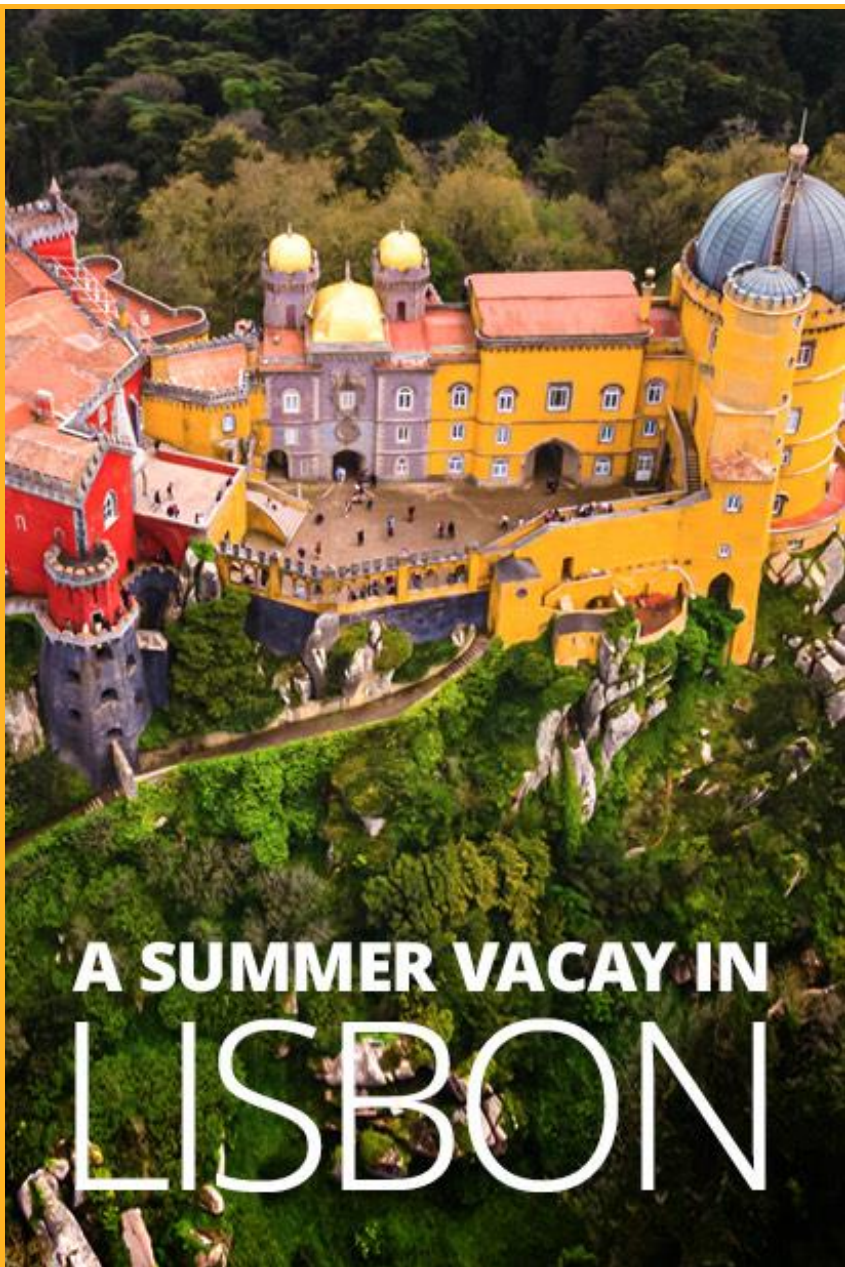
~ Kara Louise,
author of
Pirates and Prejudice



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Midnight Syndicate
Spooky Cover Artist
Lynne Hansen
Ornament Maker
Nikolette James

A Winter's Tale
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Bloody Tea

Dark Musicians
Valentine Wolfe

Mistress of Witchy Tea
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HALLOWEEN

Haunting Songbird
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A YEAR-AROUND HORROR MAGAZINE FOR HORROR ENTHUSIASTS



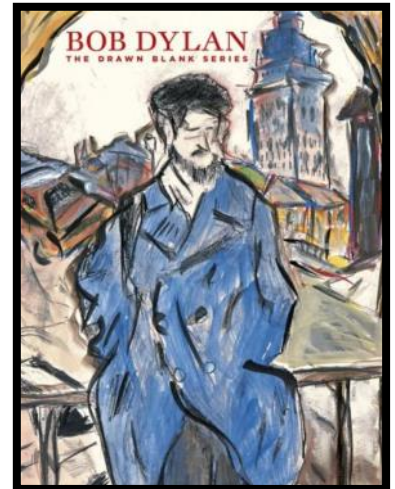
The great thing about social media is that we get to know famous people on a much more intimate level. Sadly, we as fans and public in general think that once we know an artist, we know them for their ONE talent when in fact, many of our favorite musicians and actors create in more than one medium. It's interesting to see some of our favorite artists through a different lens.

While we all know **Zoe Kravitz** for her film work and the show, *Big Little Lies*. What you might not know is that Zoe is also a successful R&B singer. She is the lead singer in the musical trio, Lolawolf. The group has been together since 2014 and produced such songs as, "Not Diana," "House Key," and "What Love Is." Much of their music is featured across streaming platforms.

Keanu Reeves might still be John Wick in our collective consciousness, but in real life, he's also a bass guitarist in the band Dogstar. The alternative rock band played a lot between 1999 and 2002. Then, there was a creative break. In 2023, Keanu returned to the musical stage with Dogstar, as the band toured in North America. We will see what's in store for 2024. Watch videos and check out the latest news at their website dogstarofficial.com.

An article about being multitasking has to include **David Bowie**. Bowie, a British rock icon is also known for his acting roles in movies like *Labyrinth* but did you know that he was an accomplished painter? He contributed regularly to *Modern Painter Magazine* and also did many self-portraits. Most of Bowie's paintings were sold at auctions around the world with profits benefitting charities close to the musician's heart.

My friend David and I meet once every few months for dinner and to catch up. Since we were seventeen, he has been a devoted fan of **Bob Dylan**. Last year, at one of these catch-up dinners, Dave spoke about his recent purchase of Bob Dylan's new line of bourbon, Heaven's Door. I laughed and said, "You don't even drink! Like never." He countered with, "It was a choice between Dylan's whiskey or a painting of his. The bourbon was more in my budget." I'd like to point out that upon investigation, I found that many of the singer and poet's paintings are published in a book called *Drawn Blank* where often, the subject matter is what Dylan saw on the road while on music tour.



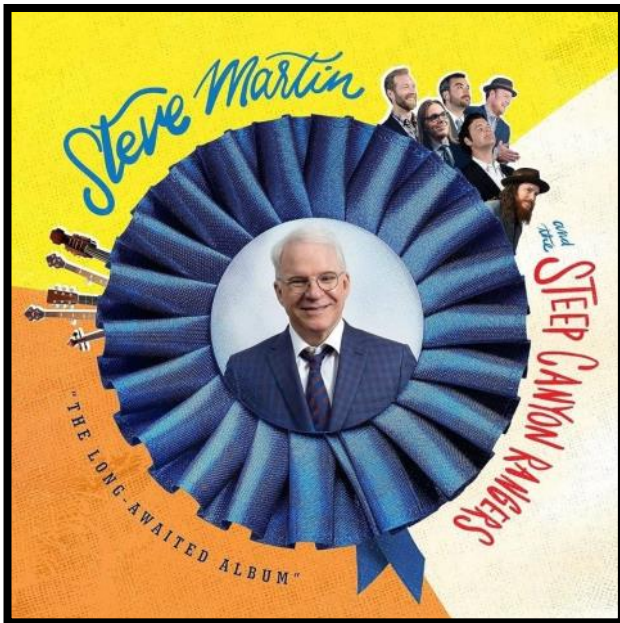
You might know **Miles Davis** as the jazz trumpeter who broke racial barriers. What you might not know is that Miles was a lifelong painter. In a show hosted posthumously in London in the early 2000's, the exhibition hailed Miles as an artist committed to his work. His family noted that Miles was painting just two days before he died. His works are largely abstract and geometric, portraying musicians as a main focal point.

Three of the four Beatles members turned out to also be visual artists. **John Lennon** studied Drawing at the Liverpool College of Arts for three years and continued drawing for his whole life. You can still purchase some of his work as litho prints online. While John's medium was pencil drawing, **Paul McCartney** mixed drawing with painting. Paul kept his work private until later in his life. He finally had an exhibition of his paintings in 1999. The exhibition pieces were later photographed and made into a book. And it wouldn't be a proper Beatles tribute without mentioning drummer, **Ringo Starr**. While Paul and John dabbled in more traditional forms of art, Ringo took to digital art. He is a designer for Timberland Boots and has his own line of footwear with their brand.

Joni Mitchell is a legend in music. Her music has crossed genres and won awards over several decades. Her lyrics have called for justice and fueled social change. But did you know that she's also a renowned painter? Much like Picasso, Mitchell's paintings have also had a blue phase and had gallery shows. She has also applied her painting talent to album covers. Her album visual art is best known in the releases of The Grateful Dead.

You may know **Emily Blunt** from *The Devil Wears Prada* or *Mary Poppins*. Before Emily became one of the highest paid actresses in Hollywood, she was moonlighting as the lead singer and songwriter in a British rock band. Meanwhile, Emily was rehearsing her role as Gwen in the play, *The Royal Family*. When her co-star Dame Judi Dench told her that she had to choose music or acting, Emily took it to heart. She obviously chose acting but she does indeed sing all of her own parts in *Mary Poppins*.

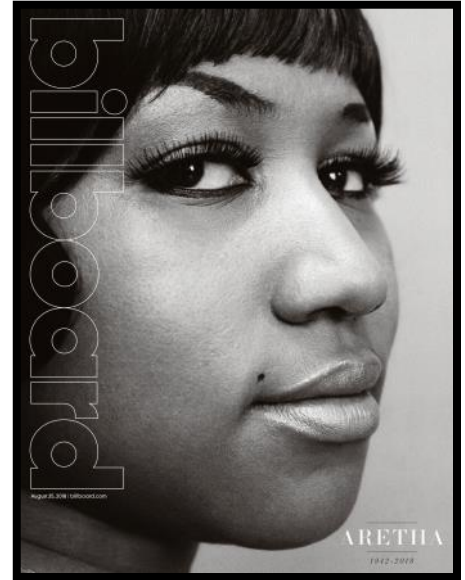
Those of us who are old enough can remember this young rapper in the late 1980's who sang about his rags-to-riches life named, The Fresh Prince. That same rapper became the star and producer of the sitcom by the same name, *The Fresh Prince of Belair*. His music career was just the beginning. Since then, **Will Smith** has reprised the role of a secret agent (several times), father (several times), super hero, a cowboy, a slave, an ace pilot fighting aliens, and a vampire slayer, just to name a few. He's won four Grammy awards for his music and five golden globes for his acting.



Steve Martin might be breaking the ageism barrier (like Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, and Diane Keaton) by becoming a household name (again) in the winter years of his life. Steve had humble beginnings as a standup comedian who played the banjo. While so many know him as an actor of several genres what you might now know is that Steve is also (quietly) a legend in banjo circles. His latest album is entitled,

The Long Awaited Album. He recorded it with his new band, Steep Canyon Rangers. Steve also played banjo from 1987-1990 in the musical band Agnostic Front.

While **Aretha Franklin** might be Queen of Soul and the heart of her hometown, Detroit, let's give her some credit for her screen appearances. When Aretha and acting come to mind, her performance as a singing diner owner (and wife of a blues musician) in the movie *The Blues Brothers* is first on my list. Let's not forget, she was also in the movies *Amazing Grace* in 2018, *Muscle Shoals* in 2013 and *Tom Dowd and the Language of Music* in 2003.



Actress **Lucy Liu** began painting as a child to help her through her feelings. Since then, she has also become a masterful sculptor, painter, and textile artist. Many of her fans have become accustomed to seeing her in *Chicago*, *Kill Bill*, and *Scooby Doo*. Her art, on the other hand is up for exhibit in the National Museum of Singapore and The Nappa Valley Museum in California.

And now I've saved the best for last. While we all know him as the swashbuckler in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, **Johnny Depp** is not limited to merely navigating the high seas and showing off his moves with a sword. Depp is also a musician in the band Hollywood Vampires. His bandmates include Alice Cooper, Joe Perry,



and Tommy Henriksen. Tour dates and swag can be found at hollywoodvampires.com. But that's not all. Depp continues to celebrate his creativity at home as well. He has taken up painting over the last ten years. An avid collector of the works of Jean-Michel Basquiat for years, Depp decided to try his hand at acrylic painting. He has also painted and designed some of the album covers for fellow musicians. His painted subjects include Marlon Brando, Jack Kerouac, and his former wife. You can see his style of painting first hand on the Vanessa Paradis 2007 album, *Divinidylle*.

I might also mention that **James Franco**, **Sir Anthony Hopkins**, and **Sylvester Stallone** all paint as well. Stallone said it helped painting his characters to help him visualize the roles. Franco likes to paint murals and Hopkins enjoys painting in his retirement. Nearly all of the works are put up for auction where the money is donated to charities.

My research for this article lead me to wonder: Which came first, the music or the art? Did these artists create something visually and then write a song about it? Or did the song demand further exploration in the form of paint and ink? Did acting on a stage just slowly give some of these artists the courage to

sing or was it the other way around? I imagine there are about a thousand different answers to that question. As long as there are those of us who are inspired by their example (I now paint my menus for memorable dinners and save them like Chef Jaques Pépin), the world is a better place. I am grateful. ■



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Alchemy by Oksanna Normandeau

A story of realization, heartache, understanding, acceptance, and resilience. A collective of commentary poems on the corruption of various worldly issues. The illustrations highlight the impacts made on the human psyche captured through a psychedelic lens in hopes of deciphering the truth within a broken foundation.

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Meaningful Moments

Poetry Contest

WINNER!



Melissa is an enlightened soul who resides in a small lake town in beautiful Washington State. When not busy with her construction company, she is thoughtfully leaning in and exploring her artistic talents. During the warmer weather she can be found wandering through her wildflower garden with her two dogs and ever-supportive husband.

Art and expression is important to *SEARCH Magazine*. Each issue, we include a poetry column, but once a year we open our doors to submissions from anyone willing to rise to the challenge. *SEARCH Magazine* is pleased to share the results of our third-annual poetry contest.

This year's contest is built around the theme of "Meaningful Moments." There's a long list of rules, but in these poems we asked to be moved by the moments that punctuate our lives. We received singular events and montages of memories. In the end, our winner shared "The Dance of the Owls." We hope you find it as peaceful and magical as we did.

The Dance of the Owls

by Melissa Spear

In the stillness of morning, before the light has awakened,
I hear the dance of the great horned owls calling out to one another.

I sit quietly and count the calls and depths of the echoes carried on
the fog-laced air to see how many are near.

Occasionally, I will catch a fleeting glimpse of silent wings slicing
through the black sky, spreading over to the next mysterious spot.

What a beautiful dance to hear.

After our judging, we reached out to Melissa and asked her to share some thoughts on the creation of her poem.

“A little over a year ago, I started waking up at four a.m. in predawn mornings. I was pulled by some unfamiliar urge to go outside and just sit. It was late summer when it started and I would grab my cup of coffee at the time, my blankets, and my dog, Scooby. He would join me on the back deck each morning and still does to this current day.

“I am lucky enough to live tucked up in the hills with an expansive view of the mountains nestled between apple orchards. It was here in these moments of pure, open-eyed presence, with no distractions, that I started hearing the hooting of the owls. Occasionally, I would get a glimpse of one of them on top of a large pine tree on the property and then, amazingly enough, could see the shadowy outline of it bend like a chicken when it hooted! I sent a recording off to a wildlife photographer that I follow on social media and he quickly informed me that I was surrounded by great horned owls. Sometimes there are only two that hoot, but at other times I have counted and heard up to seven. To catch a fleeting glimpse of them flying right by you, with no wing sound is utterly magical. Every morning I listen for them and they still show up. It’s one of the most beautiful chapters of my life so far. I feel incredibly blessed.” ■



PHOTO BY ZDENEK MACHACEK

Pan-Roasted Vegetables with Sausage



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE DAKES

Spring brings with it an abundance of young vegetables. As the days lengthen and temperatures warm, we have the opportunity to maintain healthy diets with fresh produce. This makes roasted vegetables a perfect choice. Pan roasting vegetables has become increasingly popular in recent years, but vegetables have been roasted—in one form or another—so far back it's hard to identify when the practice began.

It's rumored that the modern fascination with pan-roasting vegetables got its start in the 1980's in a restaurant in Providence, Rhode Island. The story goes that when the business opened, the only appliance available for cooking was an oven. Faced with this limitation, the owners experimented by roasting different vegetables and found they'd discovered something truly special. While they didn't invent roasting vegetables, they did devise a wonderful solution out of necessity. The reason we love this particular "origin story" is that we fondly remember the many times necessity led us to excellent solutions in the kitchen.

Using an oven for high-temperature cooking has been associated with meat and poultry back through the ages. Likely this is why large pieces of meat and poultry are often referred to as roasts. Roasting is

Ingredients

- *3 links Bratwurst Sausage
- *Cooking spray
- *2 Tbsp. American, yellow mustard
- *1 large, yellow onion
- *1 red bell pepper
- *1 green bell pepper
- *2 stalks celery
- *1 tsp. olive oil
- *1/2 tsp. oregano
- *1/2 tsp. smoked paprika
- *1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- *1/4 tsp. salt
- *2 Tbsp. butter

technically baking, done at temperatures above 400° F. This allows foods to brown and crisp, whereas baking retains more moisture in the food. It should be noted the pan roasting method allows for the use of less oil. Therefore, when pan-roasting vegetables, it's important to give them space by spreading the oiled vegetables out over the sheet pan. To accomplish this, you may need more than one sheet pan. Short-cutting this process, by piling up your vegetables in limited space, will produce limp, steamed vegetables, whose flavor does not benefit from the slight browning and crisping of roasting. Because aluminum transfers heat better than steel, we recommend using aluminum sheet pans with a rolled edge to prevent warping. If you are having trouble finding

sheet pans that do not warp, try searching Amazon.com with the phrase “non-warping sheet pans.”

Pan-sheet-roasting has become so popular that we now find bags of sliced meat and vegetable combinations in the frozen section of the grocery store, ready to be roasted in your oven. While this is definitely convenient, we prefer to revel in the flavors of spring with fresh produce.



PREPARATION

- *Cut and peel casing from sausage links.
- *Spray a 10-inch, non-stick fry pan with cooking spray. Place pan on the stove top at medium-high heat.
- *Place sausage in pan and brown on all sides. Remove browned sausage to cutting board and allow sausage to cool until it can be handled safely.
- *Cut sausages into 1/2-inch diagonal ovals.
- *Place sausage slices in small mixing bowl. Add mustard and stir to distribute evenly.
- *Preheat oven to 425°.
- *Cut ends from onion and remove dry outer skin. Discard ends and skin.
- *Cut onion from pole-to-pole in 1/2-inch wedges.
- *Cut top and bottom from bell peppers. Remove stems, seeds, and membrane.



*Slice bell peppers top to bottom into 1/2-inch strips.

*Trim, wash, and clean stalks of celery. Cut in to 3/8-inch diagonal strips

*Place the onion, bell pepper, and celery in large mixing bowl. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil and stir to distribute evenly.

*Add oregano, fresh ground black pepper, and smoked paprika to large mixing bowl. Stir to distribute spices evenly.

*Spread vegetables out in a single layer—using two sheet pans if necessary—so that the vegetables do not steam but roast.



COOK

- *Place the sheet pans on separate oven racks in a preheated oven. Cook for 12 minutes, swap pans on racks, and cook for 12 more minutes.
- *Remove the sheet pans from oven. Allow to cool until safe to handle.
- *Return vegetables to large mixing bowl with cooked sausage and butter. Stir until butter melts and is distributed through mixture.
- *Spread vegetable and sausage mixture across only one sheet pan and place back in oven for 5 minutes.

SERVE

- *Remove from oven and transfer food to serving dish.
- *Pair with hard cider and potato salad. ■



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*Everybody, get on the floor,
let's dance.*
– KC and the Sunshine Band

From KC and the Sunshine Band's "Shake Your Booty" to Daft Punk's "Lose Yourself to Dance," there's no shortage of musicians and songs exhorting us to shake our groove thing. And dancing the night away isn't just a fun way to spend an evening with friends, it's also a great way to get a cardio workout.

In addition to benefitting cardiovascular health, dancing can help improve muscle tone, increase strength and endurance, release endorphins, lead to greater coordination and flexibility, and is an artistic form of self-expression. Dancing has also been shown to help improve memory, reduce stress, and promote self-confidence.

There are plenty of dance styles to choose from, including flamenco, belly dancing, hip-hop, jazz, ballet, and pole dancing, among others. Or if you have a partner and want to improve your dancing skills together, there's always ballroom dancing, which offers a variety of styles such as foxtrot, tango, samba, swing, salsa, and more.

Unless you decide to take up tap dancing, pole dancing, or ballet, you won't typically need any special equipment or footwear. All you have to do is find a style that you think you might enjoy and check to see if there are any local dance schools or gyms that offer the type of classes that you're looking for. And if you can't find anything local that suits your needs and/or you prefer to perform your dancing at home, there are plenty of online dance classes and YouTube videos to get you started—from a 5-minute Lady Gaga "Bad Romance" dance workout to a 20-minute 80s Hits dance workout to a 30-minute beginner Bollywood dance workout.

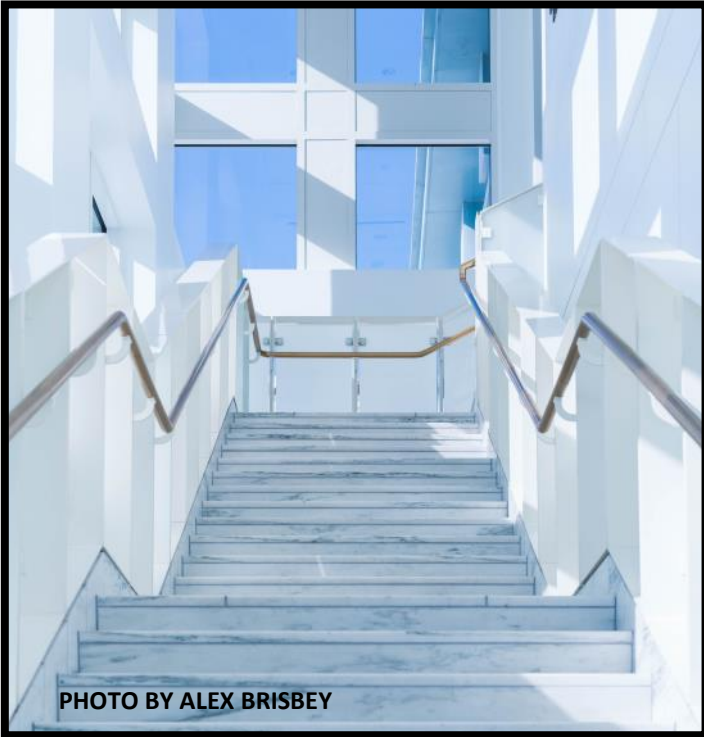
Or you can just put on your favorite music, turn up the volume, and shake your groove thing. ■



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Detroit has been called “The Motor City” for decades, but just under the surface of the automotive industry is a thriving art community. The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) was recently voted Best Museum of 2023 by *USA Today*.

The reason both locals and tourists alike are singing its praises are as plentiful as the museum’s vast collection of works.

The DIA hosts one hundred individual galleries. It houses the biggest collection of African American art. To expand it’s reach across social and socio-economic groups across South East Michigan, admission is free to citizens who can prove residency in either Macomb, Oakland, or Wayne Counties. It has displayed the works of Van Gogh with record numbers of patrons flocking to see the once in a lifetime collection. And yet, the DIA continues it’s outreach to the local community by renting its terrarium for weddings and donating free space within it’s walls to educational groups for chess clubs.

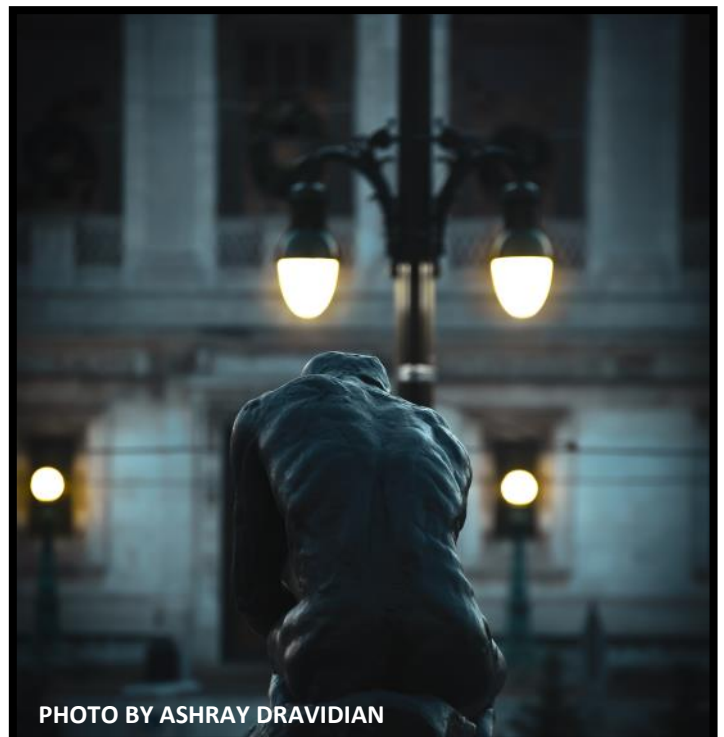
The DIA has struggled in the past. It was saved from bankruptcy in 2014 by a huge community effort taking pledges and donations from both public and corporate entities. Since then, its Board of Directors has

secured funding and has worked to invest in future projects that will ensure the Institute’s longevity.

If visiting the Detroit Institute of Arts, be sure to take in some of it’s more famous exhibits. The *Detroit Industrial Murals* by Mexican artist Diego M. Rivera were painted in 1932-1933. They stand floor to ceiling on both the east and west walls of the Edsel Ford Gallery. Themes include aviation, shipping, and the automotive assembly line but hidden themes like a skull and star become evident on further inspection. The DIA also has a vast Egyptian art collection including a bas-relief, a preserved mummy, photography, and urns for the afterlife.

For 2023 through 2024, the DIA has new exhibits in the works. *After Cubism: Celebrating the Works of France after WWI* will feature pieces, photos, and prints by Ozenfant and Corbusier who published their manifesto just days after the Armistice. *Regeneration* will be a multimedia exhibition that features the films of African Americans from the years 1898-1971. This exhibit and film festival will be of particular interest to enthusiasts because some of the independent films were thought to be lost during the Civil Rights movement but have recently been recovered and will be shown to a new generation of patrons for the first time.

From it’s humble beginnings on Jefferson Avenue, to it’s modern off-site and online events, to its “accessibility for all” policy, the DIA may have come from humble roots but it has grown into a world class museum. For more information, visit dia.org. ■

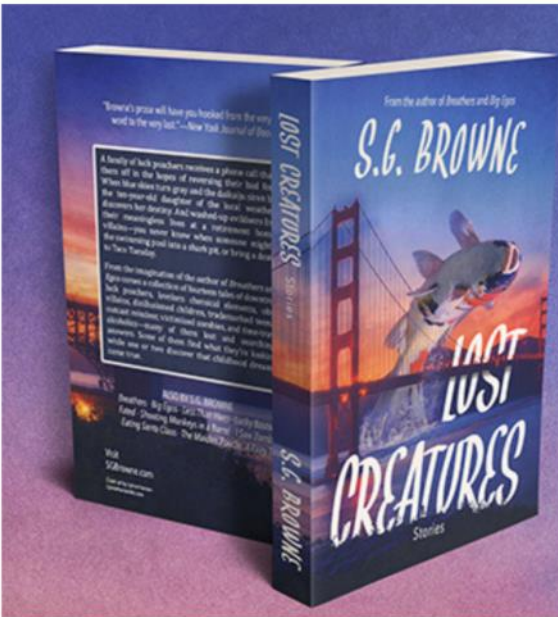




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A blend of fantasy, science fiction, horror, dark comedy, and social satire, *Lost Creatures* contains fourteen tales of downtrodden luck poachers, lovelorn chemical elements, disillusioned children, trademarked teenagers, outcast reindeer, domesticated centaurs, obsolete villains, and victimized zombies.

"A perfect addition for fans or a great start for new readers wanting to try Browne for the first time."

—Portland Book Review

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PHOTO BY VONVIX

“That which you mistake for madness is but an over-acuteness of the senses.”—Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe knew what he was talking about. There’s a body of academic and medical research that places Poe squarely on the autistic spectrum. “While Poe’s stories depict the macabre, they also demonstrate how a neurodiverse mind can find inclusion in a neurotypical society,” says Geoff Hoppe, in his article on hekint.org. “Two instances in a seminal Poe story, ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue,’ demonstrate characters thinking in a neurodiverse fashion. Poe’s imaginary literature provides a very real model of neurodiverse inclusion.”

Poe’s unique imagination made him a major figure in world literature. If he was indeed on the autistic spectrum, there’s a strong possibility Poe had to cope with Sensory Processing Disorder. According to brain-balancecenters.com, “Also called Sensory Integration Dysfunction, Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a disorder in which the brain cannot properly synthesize multisensory information. This causes hypersensitivity (over-responsiveness to stimuli) or hyposensitivity (under-responsiveness to stimuli).” Ninety percent of people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) also experience Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD). This means they experience the world differently, often more intensely, which can help them create remarkable works of art.

Whether or not they’re actively creative, ASD people who struggle with the disadvantages of SPD do have therapeutic options available. “Many therapists use a sensory integration (OT-SI) approach that begins in a controlled, stimulating environment, and focuses

on making SPD easier to manage in day-to-day life. OT-SI uses fun, stimulating activities to challenge patients’ senses without overwhelming them or linking stimulation to feelings of failure,” says Janice Rodden in her article “How to Treat Sensory Processing Disorder.” The benefits of the sensory integration approach are considerable and according to Lisa Jo Rudy of verywellhealth.com, “The outcome of these activities may be better focus, improved behavior, and even lowered anxiety.”

In addition to the five basic senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, there are three “hidden” senses that may also play a part in both the creative process and the SPD experienced by ASD people.

•**Vestibular:** “The vestibular receptors, located in the inner ear, tell the brain where the body is in space by providing the information related to movement and head position. These are key elements of balance and coordination, among other things.” (Beth Arky, “Sensory Processing Issues Explained.”) My son John is autistic. When he was in grade school, his occupational therapist recommended gymnastics as a good way to help improve his bilateral coordination.

•**Proprioceptive:** “Proprioceptive receptors are located in the joints and ligaments, allowing for motor control and posture. The proprioceptive system tells the brain where the body is in relation to other objects and how to move.” (Beth Arky, “Sensory Processing Issues Explained.”) Gymnastics helps here as well. Martial arts training has also proven effective for helping ASD people with both physical and cognitive growth.

•**Interoception:** “Interoception is a lesser-known sense that helps you understand and feel what’s going on inside your body. Kids who strug-

gle with the interoceptive sense may have trouble knowing when they feel hungry, full, hot, cold, or thirsty. Having trouble with this sense can also make self-regulation a challenge.” (Amanda Morin, “Interoception and Processing Issues: What You Need to Know”). Mindfulness is a key tool in helping ASD people develop greater internal awareness. “Mindfulness focuses on enhancing attention and understanding current experiences, like the senses, thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. Additionally, mindfulness practices are taught to cultivate acceptance and compassion toward the self and others.” (“Mindfulness And Autism,” ABA Centers of America.)

Creative people on the autistic spectrum who have to cope with the daily challenges of SPD may have some advantages thanks to that creativity. “People with ASD can vastly benefit from art therapy. It helps in regulating emotions, improving social interaction with loved ones, and building self-confidence. It calms and soothes the senses as well as reduces maladaptive behaviors,” says Neerja Anand, at caliberautism.com. SI therapy and art therapy can help ASD people live more comfortably in their world while enjoying the benefits of creative expression.

A great example of this is Michelle Thevenot, a multimedia artist from Saskatchewan, Canada. Diagnosed with ASD and ADHD, she explains how creating art helps her function in a world fraught with sensory input. “The creative process filters out all the busy-ness going on inside me and transfers that energy into another material. Art is an outlet for an abundance of senses. When reality gets a little too “real,” it can be painful. But that pain redirects me on this unique path as an artist. Truly understanding myself, accommodating my differences, and making space for my authentic self to thrive allows life to become tolerable, enjoyable, and breathtakingly beautiful.” ■



TIMOTHY REYNOLDS

"Canada's modern-day Aesop"
~CBC Radio

author of
The Sisterhood of the Black Dragonfly



“The Sisterhood of the Black Dragonfly enthralls with its vivid characters and high-stakes quest. Friendship, loss and the Sisters' struggle for independence will draw you into the rich layers of the realm of Faerie.”

- Suzy Vadori, Award-Winning Author of The Fountain Series



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And being the richest
Is not with a twenty,
But realizing our only bounds
Are within Father Time's
bounty.

As a knowing cognoscenti
And again he said,
"Our own minds
And the lines we set,
Even though we are infinite."

Light be
Darkness be
And everything in between.

Queen of Wands
Type energy.
The muse,
The main character,
The inspirer,
Our flame spits farther
Than our desire.

Be(ing) within
Then without,
Stokes this fire.

By the hands of many
With hearts that lead.

Souls filled with plenty
Trading up two cents.
For two dimes and one penny,
A life of abundance.
Never feeling empty,
The truth can be experienced
By anybody.

Where the answer is shouted
From the void,
Wanting to be outed
To ascend us higher.

Wherever this comes from,
Yes, It is Art. ■

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