

805

Volume 1 | Issue 1



805, Volume 1, Issue 1, 2015. 805 (ISSN 2379-4593) is published online bi-monthly by the Manatee County Public Library System at www.805lit.org.

805, a literary and arts journal, was founded in 2015 from the Manatee County Public Library System's commitment to promote the vast creativity of our community and beyond. The Library's mission is to nurture imagination, promote lifelong learning, and enrich the community.

"805" is the Dewey Decimal number for literary journals. The subject breakdown is:

800 Literature & rhetoric
805 Serial publications

We're looking for prose, poetry, and art that is unexpected, striking, and moving. We accept submissions from residents of Manatee County and the rest of the universe. Submissions are accepted year-round, and there is no fee to submit. Please submit works not published elsewhere. Submissions can be made at www.805lit.org/submissions.html.

Subscriptions are free and can be made at www.805lit.org/issues.html.

Published by
Manatee County Public Library System

www.805lit.org



Lit + Art Journal

Volume 1, Issue 1

2015

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Stephanie Katz

EDITOR
Julieanna Blackwell

FACULTY ADVISOR
Matthew Masucci

EDITOR
Courtney DeSear

POETRY EDITOR
Kristin Dashiell

EDITOR
Jyna Johnson

EDITOR
Kevin Beach

EDITOR
Sarah P. Gibson

PUBLISHING CONSULTANT
Simone Peterson

Published by
Manatee County Public Library System

www.805lit.org



Lit + Art Journal

Volume 1, Issue 1

2015

From the Editor

The editorial team at 805 is proud to present our first issue to the world. We were thrilled to read all the submissions we received and to choose the very best for this publication. Many of the pieces are from authors and artists who have never been published before, and we are honored to showcase them.

This journal is a dream come true for many people. For the library, it's a way to enrich the culture of our community. For our editors, who are also writers, it's an adventure to be on the other side of the submissions page and create a publication. For our contributors, it's an opportunity to see their name published after all their hard work and to share their work with the world. And for you, the reader, it's a chance to savor the beautiful words and images inside.

Enjoy.

Stephanie Katz
Editor-In-Chief

Contents

Fiction

<i>Toots</i> , T. R. Healy	24
<i>Build-A-Baby</i> , Catherine Le Nguyen	10
<i>It Works When You Work It</i> , Matt Peters	2

Nonfiction

<i>Author Bio</i> , Jennifer Ammon	18
------------------------------------	----

Poetry

<i>Winter Offering</i> , Alexandria Boire	23
<i>To See the World...</i> , Teresa Falsani	1
<i>Waitresses</i> , Gordon Kuhn	9

Art

Cover: *The Lamp Was Here*, Jay Canterbury

<i>Hemingway's Typewriter</i> , Zachary Hartman	18
<i>Rustic Traditions</i> , Zachary Hartman	24
<i>Traveler's Palm</i> , Susan Michael	9
<i>Horton Hears a What?</i> , Koral Novak	1
<i>African's Fighters</i> , Tom Ruthz	7
<i>Metal Layers</i> , Fabio Sassi	21
<i>Catch Me If You Can</i> , Brandon Scott	23
<i>Silence</i> , Nancy Tobin	8
<i>Along US 19</i> , Joseph Weinzettle	17

Contributor Bios	28
------------------	----

To See the World . . .

Teresa Falsani

That's a lot to ask from a grain of sand,
flicked out of the damp by a ghost crab,
sliding down the hillside
of a beach walker's footprint.
I have run my fingers through this desert,
plowed roads around a beach towel
watched hungry ants carry crumbs
dropped from my sandwich.

One grain of sand, like no other,
I roll between my finger and thumb,
a shard of time grating there
like a mote in the eye,
resisting me, the grind of time,
the rub of water.
So, you and I flood words on a page
sun-flashed rivulets
carved by waves
rising and receding with the tide—
enduring as a speck of sand
or dust the living leave behind—
holding place in what matters.



© Koral Dawn Photography

Horton Hears a What? Koral Novak

It Works When You Work It

Matt Peters

Monte puts the cob of corn down without taking a bite and sips his water. He swallows and says, "Let's go to a movie tonight."

"It's Thursday," Juanita says without looking up from her plate. Her voice is rough and grating, not from years of smoking, although it hasn't helped any, but from a blunt trauma to her vocal cords caused by a rushed endotracheal tube.

They sit across from each other at the table, both drinking ice water from wine glasses. The dining room is decorated in an old-world style with an ornate cherry wood table and high back chairs. A cherry wood hutch holds pewter cake plates, punch bowls and serving platters. A large print of The Last Supper and a framed bullfighting poster bill hang on the wall. Above the archway into the sitting room is a framed embroidery of the Narcotics Anonymous Serenity Prayer.

Monte looks at the bullfighting poster and frowns. "Remember Barcelona?" he asks with a nod toward the poster. "Getting lost trying to find the gypsy market?" Juanita smiles and nods once. He smooths his shirt with his palms and says, "I want us to be like that again."

Her smile goes flat, and in her raspy voice she asks, "What's that mean?"

"We used to do things."

"We have responsibilities," she says. "Sponsees."

"We used to have a great time. Just us."

"People look to us for guidance."

"Dessert and a movie," he says. He picks a pill of lint off his golf shirt and places it on the table next to his wine glass. The shirt is white and embroidered with the University of Florida Orlampa's logo. The shirt is so white it seems to vibrate in contrast with his dark skin. "Like a date," he adds.

"Maybe Sunday, after the social," Juanita says. She cuts and eats her steak in a regular rhythm, not hurried, but with purpose. She is thin without looking fragile; her taut muscles are strung like wires on long slender limbs.

"Let's skip the Sunday Social and make a night of it." He sits up and leans toward her.

"Dinner at Bravissimo and then that new Mel Gibson movie."

"We can't skip the social," she says. "They need us there."

"They don't need us there," Monte says with a shake of his head.

Juanita looks up for the first time. "My sponsees do." She jabs a cube of meat with her fork.

He sighs and sits back. He pokes the cob of corn with his knife. "So tonight. Let's go tonight."

"It's Thursday," she says and brings another bite to her mouth.

He looks down and takes a breath. He picks lint off his slacks, puts it on the table next to the first piece and says, "I don't feel like sitting through a meeting tonight." He lifts his face and looks at her. "Let's do something else. It doesn't have to be a movie."

She puts her knife down and leans toward Monte as if she's hard of hearing. "What do you mean you don't feel like sitting through a meeting tonight?" The light from the chandelier reflects off her domed forehead and arched cheekbones.

He breaks eye contact and pinches the two pieces of lint together as if trying to get them to meld into one. "We could go to the bookstore and get café mochas."

"There are only two times we go to meetings," she says, clearing her throat in a vain attempt to smooth her voice. He nods impatiently and mouths with her as she finishes, "When we want to and when we don't want to."

Monte shrugs, picks up his water. "I just thought we could do something together, like normal people. You know, enjoy each other's company for a change." He watches her for a reaction. She waits for more. "Work on the thirteenth step a little," he adds.

"Oh." She nods, smiling slightly and blushing. Then she shakes her head. "No, not tonight." She shrugs her shoulders, smiles at him and shakes her head like a parent. "We can't miss our home group."

"Every night is a damn home group," he says low. He leans back and tosses his napkin on to the table. "I'm done

with the meetings," he says, then watches her.

Juanita sits up straight as if suddenly awake. She wears her long black hair banded in a severe ponytail at the back of her head, each hair smooth and straight and secure. She looks at the embroidery of the Serenity Prayer and pulls the band free, releasing her hair. She runs her fingers through it and shakes it loose. Then she, slides her palms along her head smoothing the hair out again, gathers it up between her thumb and index finger, and reties the ponytail. "You're never done with meetings," she says calmly.

"I've got eleven years," he says and laces his fingers behind his head.

"No. We've got today. A twenty-four hour reprieve. And without a supportive community, we'll be closer to using tomorrow."

He smacks the table. "Bullshit. I'm sick of that crap. Are you telling me we can't go for cheesecake and a movie without spiking a vein?"

"What about Bill?" she asks. "He had almost fifteen years when he relapsed and no one's seen him since."

He looks away and sits back. "I'm not Bill," he says with a shake of his head.

She nods, but with a smile. "What makes you better than him?"

"Why would I relapse now?" he asks. "Bill was in the middle of a divorce and got laid off. But everything's great with me. I've got a good career and a great house and friends at work who've never even seen meth. And you. I have you. What would make me relapse?"

"Anything. Nothing. This is the most dangerous time. When was the last time you worked the steps?"

"You're not my sponsor anymore."

"I'll always be your sponsor," she says, her voice a sad whisper. "And you'll be mine."

He sits forward and opens his hands. "So why do we need the meetings?"

"Oh please..." She waves him off and looks away, back to the Serenity Prayer above the archway.

Monte sighs and looks down at the table. He picks lint out of the tablecloth.

She pulls her hair free, shakes it out, and smooths it down. "You've forgotten you're powerless," she says as she ties it up. "You need to call your sponsor."

He shakes his head as he squashes the lint into the other two with his thumb. "Don't talk to me like that."

"Like what?" she asks.

"Like I'm one of your kids at the shelter," he says. "I'm not taking that. I've got eleven years clean and sober, and I'm telling you, I don't want any meth." He taps the table with his finger. "

I don't need it. I don't crave it. I don't even know where I'd find it. The only time I think about it now is at the damn meetings."

She clears her throat and leans forward. "I've got twenty three years, and I think about using every day."

"Because you're surrounded by misery," he says, raising his hands and glancing up. "Between La Rue House and NA, you're wallowing in it. You're still surrounded by junkies, dependent on them," he says slowly. "You have to remove yourself from the situation." He looks her in the eye. "Why didn't you apply for that career services position I emailed you?"

"I'm not quitting my job." She runs her hand over her hair.

"It's killing you," he says. "It's killing me, and I don't even work there. God damn it. You need to move on."

"And who'd run the shelter if I leave?"

"They'll find somebody. There's hundreds of social workers out there." He points to the UFO logo on his shirt and says, "We crank out fifty a year. You're not the only one who can help."

"I won't leave my kids," she says.

"They're not your kids. You didn't screw them up; you're not responsible for them." He leans forward and opens his hands. "You have to look out for yourself. Clean up your own side of the street."

She smooths her hair and glances from the prayer to the wall to the floor and then into the kitchen. "Now, I need a meeting," she says.

He shakes his head and stands up; he was muscular in his youth, but now he's soft. "Go to a damn meeting then," he says. He straightens his shirt and walks away from the table.

"Come with me," she calls, her hoarse voice cracking.

He stops in the archway between the dining room and the sitting room and turns back to her. "I'm going to a movie," he says. "Join me."

She looks down at the table. "I'll pray for you."

"Fine. Pray that the movie doesn't suck." He turns to leave the room.

"We've built up too much time for you to relapse now," she calls after him.

He stops and looks back over his shoulder. "I'm not going to use. I don't need it."

"Yet." She gets up and walks toward him. "Using is just the final step of the relapse process. You're self-sabotaging."

He turns to her. "I'm not."

She reaches to hug him, but drops her hands when he doesn't move his. "Without the meetings, you'll relapse. Only meeting-makers make it."

"No. Without meetings, we might actually have a life."

"I'm just..." She hugs him and turns her face against his chest.

"I know," he tells her, stroking her back. "I love you too."

She looks up from his chest. "It's okay to relapse. Everyone relapses at some point. Relapse if you have to but don't stop working the program."

"Damn it," he says and pushes her away. "I'm not stopping to relapse."

"Denial," she says. "You need clarity. Let's go to the seven o'clock at St. Joseph's."

"Fuck St. Joseph's." He walks toward the door.

"All right," she yells, stopping him. "You want to relapse?" She snatches her purse off the couch and pushes past Monte into the foyer. "We'll fucking relapse." She sets her pumps upright with her toe and jams her feet into them. "Pick your poison, let's do it." She pulls open the front door.

"That's not what I want," he says, catching hold of her. "I want you. I want us. I want a life." She pulls away and turns a few times in the sitting room before sitting on the edge of the couch and tugging her ponytail free.

"I don't need the meetings anymore," he says from the foyer as he pulls on his jacket. "I'm recovered."

"Don't say that," she says, shaking her head. Her hair falls loose and veils her face. "You're an addict."

"Can't we not be addicts, just for tonight?" he asks.

"Never," she tells him. She looks up at him and pulls her hair away from her face.

"Self-deception is the first step to relapse."

"It's ancient history," he says. "I was an addict. Now I'm an admissions recruiter and a husband and a home owner and an upstanding member of society — who'd like to use his vacation time for something other than a national addicts conference."

She stares at the floor and shakes her head, shrouding herself once again.

He looks at a portrait on the wall of the sitting room. It's of him and Juanita with their estranged kids: her daughter who was raised by Juanita's parents and is an adult now but doesn't call, and his two boys who live with their mothers in Miami and only get to visit on holidays.

"Come with me," he says, holding the front door open.

She looks up through her hair and asks, "Why are you doing this?"

He sighs and softens. "Because it's time. If we're going to go on, something has to change."

"I'm not going to watch you destroy yourself."

"And I'm not going to watch you." He holds his hand out to her. "Come on."

She looks back down and slowly shakes her head. "We can't do this," she says.

"It's just a movie," he says. "See how you feel afterward. We could always catch a midnight meeting."

"Don't screw with my program." She turns her body from

him. "I can't."

Monte sighs and shrugs his shoulders. "I'll be in the car."
He steps outside and pulls the door shut.

In the car, he calls the theater on his cell phone and listens to the show times and smokes a whole cigarette, but Juanita doesn't come out of the house. He turns on the ignition and puts the car in gear. With his foot on the brake, Monte lights another cigarette.



African's Fighters, Tom Ruthz



Silence, Nancy Tobin

Waitresses

Gordon Kuhn

Trays firmly held in hands that move in ballet
Carried high loaded with meals ordered by those
Whose voices rumble over one another
As if one has more importance than the other
In the booth next door, the table over there
The counter where Miss Ellie sits and wonders
If Ray had lived here for some years or was new to it all
Where cups are filled and refilled
By waitresses smiling benignly
And spoons take up the chatter and clatter to swirl brown liquid
With the white of cream amid the rise of voices straining
Straining to be first in place of some feigned importance
And the voices rise and nothing is said and nothing is heard
As the waitresses with trays held high move in a restaurant's ballet
Smiles painted on by memory as voices rise and nothing is heard



Traveler's Palm, Susan Michael

BUILD-A-BABY

By Catherine Le Nguyen

After little Charlie passed away, everyone kept telling Andie to build a baby. Everyone was doing it, they said—designer babies were all the rage. As if a baby was the same thing as some stupid shopping mall teddy bear— *pick an expression, slap on a bow, and boom, done!*

Just the thought of it made Andie sick.

At forty-five, Andie wasn't old, but according to her doctor her body was too old for having babies. She and Simon had wanted to wait to start a family until they felt ready—financially, emotionally, socially and so on. But they took too long, and now that Andie finally felt prepared her traitorous body was letting them down. It was so unfair.

Go to the Saxell Institute, everyone advised— friends and family, neighbors and co-workers. You choose what kind of baby you want, then they create it for you... no nine months of fretting and waiting, you don't even go through labor!

Don't you want to remove the uncertainty? others asked. Don't you want a sure thing?

Even Andie's sister Harriet agreed. "It's like freaky sci-fi shit," she said, "But it's real, and FDA approved."

"I'm just not ready," Andie would answer, secretly horrified. Then the matter would drop... at least until the next person brought it up.

*

A year and a half later, the wells of sympathy began to dry up. The people around Andie, uncomfortable and inconvenienced by her ongoing grief, no longer seemed willing to burden themselves with the emotional black hole she had become. They turned downright passive-aggressive; barely-there consolations were a thin veil against a fierce mean desire to return to the status quo.

Then Simon— sweet, solid, understanding Simon— announced one night that he'd been having an affair with a coworker half his age, some young fool named Tiff.

"Oh, good," said Andie, relieved that she no longer had to be responsible for her husband's happiness, needs and desires. The pressure was off, she was free, at least from that part of her marriage.

Simon was angry. "Jesus, don't you care? Can't you even pretend to care?" He then said he was leaving her—and then came the kicker—Tiff was pregnant.

Afterward, when everyone heard that Simon was in the hospital with a serious concussion and that Andie was the one who'd put him there, they agreed on one thing: Andie was *finally* dealing with her feelings in a healthy, understandable way.

*

It was Harriet who made the appointment.

Andie drove to Harriet's apartment the moment she found out. "What the hell!" Andie demanded. "Why would you do something like that!?"

Harriet had answered the door wrapped up in a loud-print satin kimono and smoking a cigarette, the previous night's makeup still smeared beneath her eyes. She stepped aside to let Andie in. "I'm gonna need coffee if you're going to yell at me this early in the morning."

"It's almost noon."

"So?" Harriet poured two mugs then handed one to Andie as she sat down. "Alright, what did I do now?"

"You signed me up for that clone baby institute."

Harriet snickered. "Oh right. That."

"I don't want some mass manufactured baby. You know that. Everyone knows that!"

"Andie, shut up," said Harriet. "You're my only sister, so I can't really look away when I see you falling apart at the seams. You've been depressed now for years. And now that Simon has gone and knocked up some bimbo, what are you going to do, mope around alone forever? You say all you want is to be a mom, but you can't achieve that on your own. Maybe this place can help."

"I wanted to do it the natural way," Andie said. "I wanted Charlie."

"I know," said Harriet. "But that didn't work out. So maybe here's a solution. I already paid the consultation fee and it's non-refundable, so at least go check it out." She got up for more coffee then turned back, grinning. "I used your credit card, by the way... hope you don't mind."

*

The Saxell Institute for Family Advancement was the foremost facility for designing babies, and their motto was, "*When nature fails, science prevails!*"

Inside, the building was all sleek lines and minimalist furnishings, soft-hushed voices and serene-faced employees in matching all-white linen tunics and pants. It was less like a laboratory than Andie expected and more like a futuristic hippie commune or the base of some advanced techie cult.

The waiting room was full of hip young couples, as well

as some desperate-looking older people. Andie was depressed to realize she fell into the latter category. When her name was called, Andie stood up to meet the Saxell Community Representative coming out to greet her— a young woman named Tiara.

“Like the crown,” Tiara trilled.

In a private room, Tiara served Andie a glass of chilled cucumber water from a tray. Andie sat in a modernist chair made from a single piece of curved wood. It resembled a large, lolling tongue that made her slide around uncomfortably— no matter how Andie shifted she could not sit straight.

“I’m so excited to assist you today and explain about what we do here at the Saxell Institute,” gushed Tiara. “Mrs. Epstein—”

“It’s Ms. Beaulieu now,” she interrupted. “Just call me Andie. And yes, please explain about... all of this.”

“Ever since the science behind the cloning process was unlocked, we’ve come leaps and bounds in applying it. Cloning people is no longer just an outlandish idea, it’s a reality. Many places offer cloned offspring. Here at the Saxell Institute for Family Advancement, our patented process intermingles parental DNA with clone DNA so that your cloned offspring has the same genetics that a naturally-conceived child of yours would have. It makes for a much more personal experience.”

“That’s... wow,” said Andie.

“It’s a very revolutionary process,” said Tiara. “Not to mention life-changing to so many who want to have children but are perhaps unable or unwilling. Same-sex couples, singles, older individuals— now everyone can have the child they always desired. We even have an extensive list of customization options to choose from, so you can really personalize your new child the way you want.”

She handed over a list, and Andie scanned some of the choices. “*Carnivorous incisors? Feline optics?*” She looked up, skeptical. “Does anyone actually pick these?”

“You’d be surprised! We have some very creative clients who want their children to stand out— they choose some of our more unique aesthetic features. It’s a lot of fun.”

“But it sounds like a laundry list for some kind of comic book villain. Enhanced intellect, increased physical strength... charisma boost?”

Tiara chuckled. “We curb custom attributes at a certain threshold, so that no one’s abilities get too far in front of the pack. But it’s fun to imagine... who knows what will happen one day!”

“Is there some kind of return policy?” asked Andie. “Like if this baby turns out different from what I wanted.”

“This is a real, live baby, not some kind of consumer commodity,” Tiara *tsked*. “Once your new baby is released to you,

the Institute's involvement is over. We enable you to design your baby, but it's up to you to raise and parent your child appropriately."

Andie felt embarrassed. "Yes, of course."

Tiara suddenly turned very somber. "Ms. Beaulieu, I studied your medical history, I understand why you're here. At Saxell, you will never have to go through the distress of a late-term miscarriage. Our technology eliminates all physical obstacles completely. We get many people like you—"

"People who are unsure?"

"Outdated people," said Tiara. "Who don't quite understand the technology behind what we do, which can lead to mistrust. That's okay! I assure you, we do our best to make the process as smooth and user-friendly as possible." She smiled brightly. "Are there any other questions I can answer for you at this time?"

"Yes," said Andie. "Are you a robot?"

*

Andie's new Saxell baby was ready for pick-up in just five business days.

She sat in the austere waiting room, clutching a cucumber water and wiping clammy palms on her jeans as she waited. Finally, a Saxell technician walked over to her bearing a bundle swathed in white. Andie nervously peered into the mouth of the cotton cocoon and what peered back at her looked just like a normal baby—tiny, pink and chubby-cheeked, with a tuft of fine hair and startlingly blue eyes. He took one look at her then promptly fell back asleep.

Babies were naturally born with the instinct to recognize and seek out their mothers' faces, but what about cloned babies. What about *this* baby, Andie wondered—did he know she was his mother, at least genetically?

On the creation certificate, Andie named him Charles Beaulieu, after her father. Yet in her head, she thought of him as "Clone Charlie," whereas "Real Charlie" was the baby she lost in the womb.

Once they were home, Andie didn't know what to do. She wandered around the house with Clone Charlie in a daze, afraid to hold him, afraid to put him down. Finally she took him to the baby room, which used to be the saddest thing in the world to her—a baby room with all the toys and trimmings but no baby to fill it... until now.

Andie gently placed Clone Charlie into the crib, tucking the soft blankets around his soft body. She pulled up a chair and sat there, watching Clone Charlie sleep, too terrified to take her eyes off of him, even for a minute.

*

Harriet opened the door and found Andie on the step with goop in her hair and all over her clothes, Clone Charlie red-faced and screaming in her arms.

"Ah," said Harriet. "The joys of motherhood in the flesh."

"I can't do this," said Andie, pushing her way in. She thrust Clone Charlie at Harriet, dropped a baby bag bursting from over-capacity onto the ground, and then collapsed onto the couch, head in her hands. "Charlie won't stop crying and screaming and I don't know what he wants and I haven't slept in five days and *oh my god*, what did I get myself into!"

Harriet held Clone Charlie gingerly, arms outstretched. He stopped bawling as the two of them side-eyed each other. "Well, you wanted to be a mom, Andie. Gotta pay the toll if you want the roll."

"There's something wrong with him," insisted Andie. "Clone Charlie is extremely fussy and loud and demanding... *real* babies are different. If he'd been born naturally, it wouldn't be like this, it would be better."

"Aren't all babies loud and fussy and annoying? Real or clone or otherwise, the laws of nature and science probably align for this one." Harriet regarded her sister. "Maybe it isn't the baby, Andie. Maybe it's you. Have you ever thought of that? Maybe you would've been a crappy mother no matter what."

Andie gaped as Harriet laughed her cigarette-burnt laugh. "Don't beat yourself up about it. It happens. Just think about our shitty parents and the shitty way they raised us... why do you think I chose not to have kids?"

"I thought you were just selfish and didn't want to be tied down."

"Oh yeah, that too."

Andie rubbed her face, willing herself not to cry. "I just never imagined it would be like this. Me, a single parent, raising a clone baby by myself? Harriet, I don't know if I can do this."

"Sure you can." Harriet tickled Clone Charlie—he let out a loud, gurgling baby laugh and she smiled. "Plus, you're not alone. You got me, and now you've got Charlie, forever... for better or for worse."

*

As Clone Charlie grew up, he developed from a problematic baby into a problematic adolescent then a teenager. He was a lazy, messy, dependent boy of sub-par intellect with no friends. Mean-spirited and petty, Clone Charlie held onto grudges and his half-baked plans for revenge constantly backfired on him. His troublesome nature drove the other kids away.

No one could believe Clone Charlie had been a designer baby. He's a *Saxell* baby? they'd ask, confounded and disgusted.

It was inconceivable that anyone would build a child that was not only ungifted, but supremely unlikable and possibly defective.

"I get why you wouldn't choose vampire teeth," said Harriet. "But you could have made Charlie a math genius. A handsome, kind and clean math genius. Why'd you choose all the bad things?"

"I wanted him to be flawed," said Andie. "I wanted him to be human."

"Well, you got it," said Harriet. "I love the little poop, but come on— Charlie's just another shitty human male in a long history of shitty human males. Great job, Andie. You should be real proud."

Clone Charlie's one good quality and saving grace was his unconditional love for Andie, which was always clear to see. This made Andie feel even worse, because a deep-seeded part of her still mistrusted the very concept of him— always had, always would. Andie hoped Clone Charlie was too dumb to realize this, too obtuse to sense her lacking love.

*

The years stretched on. Clone Charlie was thirty-one, unmotivated, careless, and unremarkable slob of a man-child. Due to his attention span and temper being as short as they were, he had trouble holding a steady job, so Andie continued to support them both, even in her old age. It was habit at this point. They were barely hanging on, and Andie was worried.

"Charlie, you must do better, you must learn to take care of yourself. I'm nearly eighty... Harriet will look after you once I'm gone, but one day she'll be gone too, and then what will you do?" The thought troubled her immensely. "Charlie, what will happen to you after that?"

"If you and Aunt Harriet were both gone, I wouldn't want to exist anymore," said Clone Charlie, unconcerned. "I love you too much to live without you, Mama."

"Is it love?" she asked. "Or just a matter of survival?" Clone Charlie cocked his head, confused.

*

That night, Andie lay in the dark, wondering— wasn't this what she had wanted all along? Someone to love her without question and to carry her into the future? This biological desire had bred Clone Charlie— an unnatural creature of science that would never, ever leave her, if only because it was solely dependent upon her to live; a creation so deeply flawed due to her own fear and selfishness.

They say you can't pick your children, but Andie had— and this was what she'd chosen.

In the morning, she dragged herself out of bed and plodded downstairs, where something was burning. In the

kitchen, Clone Charlie was trying to make breakfast. Something was blackening on the stove and there was flour all over the counter and spilled milk on the floor, but when he turned, Clone Charlie had a cup of coffee in his hand— half dark, half milk, and a dash of sugar—just the way Andie liked it.

“Good morning, Mama!” said Clone Charlie when he saw her. He smiled broadly, happy, unworried, and presented the coffee as he came forward.

“Good morning, my son,” said Andie, reaching out and seeing the entirety of life in his wide bead-blue eyes.





Along US 19, Joseph Weinzettle



Hemingway's Typewriter, Zachary Hartman

Author Bio

Jennifer Ammon

Jennifer Ammon received her MFA in creative writing in 2010. Ms. Ammon lives in Bradenton, Florida, but would rather say she lives in New York City. She is not Jewish, African American, Hispanic, a Southerner, lesbian (except for a time or two), transgender, or a dead white male. Ms. Ammon believes she is diverse in that she is old. Ms. Ammon is 60, but she doesn't look a day over 59.

Since getting her MFA, Ms. Ammon has been actively engaged in high-level sloth rather than writing. She is the author of several unpublished books and short stories, probably unpublished because her stories of post-menopausal women do not electrify most people in publishing and not because she's embracing sloth and rarely submits. Most people in the

publishing world are men or younger women, Ms. Ammon surmises, and they do not want to read about vaginal atrophy.

Ms. Ammon realizes that perhaps plot is the problem. She knows her characters have to want something, and struggle to get it. An orgasm would be nice, if only they didn't have to work so hard for it. Sleep is the new sex for Ms. Ammon's characters. Oh, to sleep without always having to get up to go to the bathroom, Ms. Ammon's protagonists moan. Oh, if I could just sleep eight hours straight, they groan. The struggle for sleep is not one men relate to, however. Men go to bed, put their head on the pillow and within five seconds are out like a light. (Ms. Ammon acknowledges this is a stereotype. Surely there are some men who do not fall asleep quickly, though Ms. Ammon has never slept with one.) (Note: Ms. Ammon understands "out like a light" is a cliché and doesn't need this pointed out by some nincompoop nitpicker.)

Ms. Ammon works as a legal secretary to support her writing hobby. She took her first job working as a legal secretary as a stepping-stone job, like a waitressing job; something to do for money until she was discovered. Ms. Ammon has been serving up the bacon and eggs for twenty-five years. Every year around Thanksgiving, Ms. Ammon is sure she'll get a job doing something else, something way cool. Every New Year she finds herself doing the same thing.

According to the agents who have ~~battered~~ replied to her stories six months after they were submitted, Ms. Ammon's protagonists, whom she's become deeply involved with, appear to be assholes. Some of Ms. Ammon's male contemporaries in her writing classes became enraged at her characters because they were, well, you know. The word "whiny" was often thrown about. Heated discussions about "sympathetic" and "likable" protagonists ensued. Ms. Ammon's characters were neither. This is somewhat disconcerting since Ms. Ammon's main characters are loosely based on herself. If it is true that Ms. Ammon excels at writing assholes, she does not understand why she does not have a job writing for TV, where so many of its protagonists are assholes or crazy bitches.

Ms. Ammon's literary influences are something she will have to look into, to impress in her Author Bio. She feels she should mention women writers since she's a fan of Gloria Steinem and is a feminist herself (not the kind that has no sense of humor), but cannot recall reading many women writers in her many literature classes. Ms. Ammon does not remember reading Flannery O'Connor, for example, probably because Ms. Ammon's literature professors had her reading *Moby Dick*, *The Naked and the Dead*, and *The Macho Guys' Guide to Hunting and Fishing* by Ernest Hemingway. Ms. Ammon believes that since she enjoyed reading *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, that is almost like reading a book written by a woman.

In her spare time, Ms. Ammon reads book reviews to get an idea of what book she should buy. While reading these book reviews, she wonders why someone would want to read a book about candy bars or the story of the button and not her book. After reading a particularly good book review, Ms. Ammon will buy the book that tweaks her interest, and said book will sadly end up in a pile of unread books, waiting. Ms. Ammon likes watching TV and cannot turn off a real-life murder mystery. She loves to Google around whatever silly questions race through her head. Recently she asked Google, "Is man still evolving?" to which Google's response was, "Go to Walmart and see for yourself." Ms. Ammon is very thankful to Bill Gates for the minimize screen feature so she can have some pleasure in her incredibly lackluster day at work. When she hears her boss heading over, she can instantly minimize her search of *Gilligan's Island* and go quickly back to typing the Answer and Affirmative Defenses she's supposed to be working on.

Despite not having much substance otherwise and an inordinate lack of ambition, Ms. Ammon possesses an above-average imagination. Sometimes she imagines what would happen if she were murdered by one of her furious readers and the cops did an investigation of her computer searches.

There are two cops on the case. Ms. Ammon's body is sprawled out and bloody on the living room floor (her eye makeup is *perfect*). The policeman with the big mustache steps around her and goes to her computer. He finds out Ms. Ammon searched the evolution question.

"Sure we're evolving," he says. "Evolving into a buncha morons."

There was one more search.

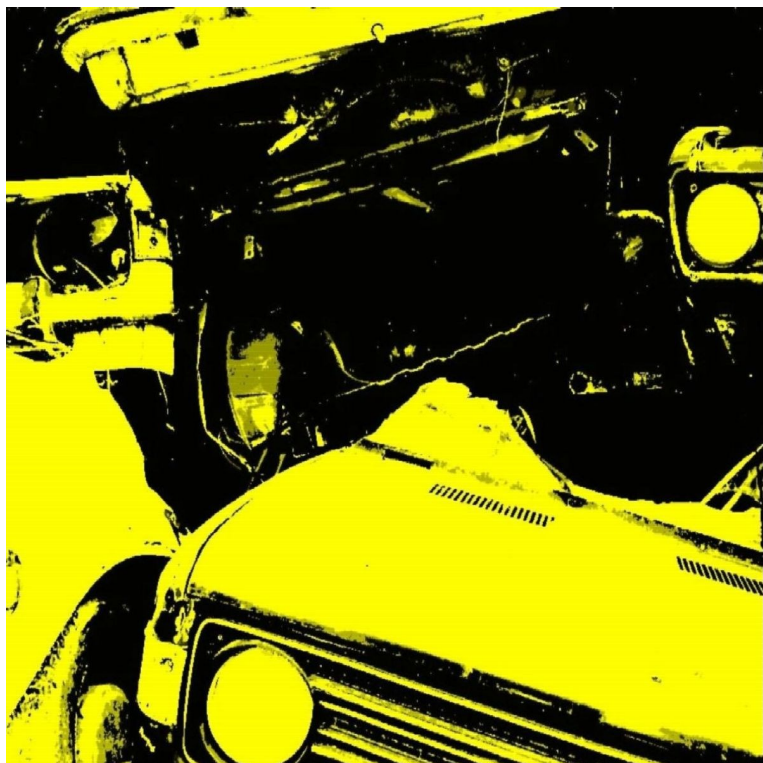
He tells the other policeman, "Last thing she did was watch Patrick Swayze on YouTube singing 'She's Like the Wind.'"

The other policeman, who has quite a large belly and who might quickly run out of breath trying to catch an alleged criminal, makes a face. He has no recollection of the song.

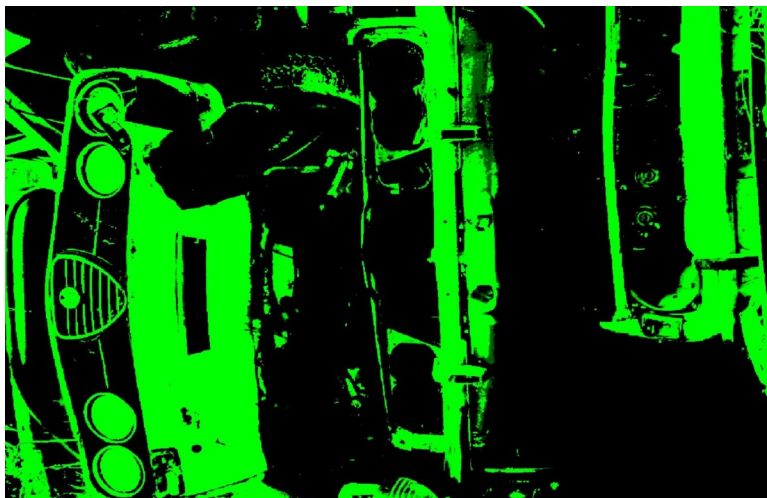
The mustached officer sings a few bars, arms spread out.

The large bellied policeman nods and starts to sing loudly, "*She's out of my league!*" Then he wheezes, "Patrick Swayze sang that? You're shittin' me!"





8 0 5



Metal Layers, Fabio Sassi



Catch Me If You Can, Brandon Scott

Winter Offering

Alexandria Boire

Winter's branches bear a truth
life is a maze, they whisper.
Now we know
and with no fear
unfetter
our
tether
tightly held all our years.



Rustic Traditions, Zachary Hartman

Toots

T. R. Healy

Scooting up a little in his chair, Wallen adjusted the gooseneck lamp so it shone directly on the center of his desk, then laid one Popsicle stick on top of another one and placed the sticks across two narrow strips of craft paper. Then he folded over each strip and secured them with Scotch tape. Pausing a moment, he took another draw on his cigarette then set it back in the ashtray and carefully slipped out the bottom stick. Next, he stretched a rubber band around the length of the top stick, placed the bottom stick under it, and fastened them together with two smaller rubber bands.

Smiling, he lifted the homemade harmonica to his mouth and gently blew, performing a very ragged rendition of "Row,

Row, Row Your Boat.”

*

Wallen leaned to his left as the bus lumbered around a corner, pressing his shoulder against the window which was spattered with raindrops. The newspaper on his lap fell to the floor but he didn't bother to pick it up because he wasn't really interested in reading it. Instead, he preferred to watch the different people who came aboard which was why he was seated at the back of the articulated bus. It allowed him a clear view of both doors.

After a couple of stops, a young girl boarded the bus with her mother and sat in the row directly across from him, her toes barely touching the floor. He stared at her out of the corner of his eye, amazed at the size of her eyes which seemed as large as walnuts. Bright blue walnuts, he thought to himself, grinning.

After the next stop, he took out one of the Popsicle harmonicas he made last night and began to play the row boat ditty and, at once, the girl looked over at him as he knew she would. He played a few more bars then handed the harmonica to her. Shyly, she shook her head but he insisted she take it, and she did and placed it in her mouth and blew, but nothing happened.

“Press down with your lips, dear,” he told her.

Squinting, she did as he suggested, and still not a sound.

“Don't forget to blow while you're pressing.”

She tried again and after a moment produced a faint little toot that brightened her entire face.

“Good job,” he congratulated her.

Grinning excitedly, she handed the harmonica back to him but he refused to take it.

“It's yours, dear.”

“Oh, sir, you don't have to do that,” her mother said, patting the girl's left knee.

“It's my pleasure.”

“What do you say to the nice man, Ellen?”

“Thank you.”

He nodded. “I hope you enjoy playing it.”

Shortly after the girl and her mother got off the bus, he offered a harmonica to a young boy who seemed even more pleased than the girl. He made five Popsicle harmonicas last night and intended to ride the bus until he gave out all of them. Once a week, for the past six weeks, he boarded one of the crosstown buses and handed out the noisemakers. He was so shy talking to people he didn't know that he only thought he would do it once, but he was so gratified by the reception he

received that he decided to pass more out.

*

Not surprisingly, he only had to play a couple of notes when a ginger-haired girl seated in front of him turned around and looked at the crude harmonica and smiled. He smiled back and handed it to her.

"Here, give it a toot."

Before she could try, though, her mother told her to give it back to him.

"That's all right," he told the stern-looking woman. "She can have it."

Turning just her head, she glared at him for a moment. "I know who you are, mister."

"You do?"

She nodded tersely. "And I'd appreciate it if you'd not bother us or else I'll have to report you to the driver."

*

Wallen didn't offer the harmonica to anyone else and got off at the next stop and started home even though it was a good two mile hike. Since he got out of prison nearly four months ago, he had been recognized before but never when he was passing out a harmonica. The children he gave them to were too young to follow the news so he wasn't worried about them recognizing him. They were often with adults, though, so he should have expected that one day someone would recall reading about him in the newspaper. The fatal accident he was involved in was mentioned in news reports for several days, and when he was arrested his mug shot was printed on the front page of the daily paper.

Even now, after all this time, he found it hard to believe what occurred. Early one evening, on his way home from work, he noticed a thick pile of leaves in the street and, for whatever reason, drove over it. Almost at once he struck something that felt like a plank of wood and nearly lost control of the steering wheel. Not having any idea what was buried under the leaves, he continued on, worried he might have damaged his axle. The next morning, on the radio he learned that a five-year-old girl, hiding from her older brother in the pile of leaves, was crushed to death by a hit and run driver. He was incredulous, mortified. And though he knew he should turn himself in to the police, he didn't want to go to jail so he kept quiet, hoping what he heard on the radio was all a terrible dream. But someone in the neighborhood identified his car, and by the end of the week two detectives

appeared at his door with an arrest warrant.

*

Caleb McCoy, a burglar Wallen met soon after he entered the state penitentiary, was the person who showed him how to make a harmonica out of Popsicles sticks. It was a trick his father had taught him when he was a youngster. The sounds he was able to produce out of the crude little instrument were remarkable, as polished and precise as those of a professional musician he believed.

"It's amazing what you can get out of one of these damn noisemakers if you're willing to put in the practice," Caleb told him one day out in the yard. "Not only can you put smiles on folks' faces, but sometimes even in their hearts."

Wallen did indeed practice day after day in his cell and in time managed to develop a fairly extensive list of songs he could play on a harmonica. He never became as proficient as Caleb but he didn't mind because what really mattered to him was to produce those smiles that the inmate talked about so that others would realize he wasn't that terrible person who drove over that little girl buried in the leaves.

Rounding a corner, as he headed home, he noticed a youngster stretched out on the lawn of a house in the middle of the block. He smiled. He had one harmonica left in his pocket and, at once, took it out and started to play it as he walked toward the child.



Author and Artist Bios

Jennifer Ammon has an MFA in creative writing from Florida International University.

Alexandria Boire is a retired Canadian architectural designer/artist has taken on a new life six months a year in Manatee County, Florida. She now writes, draws, and paints everyday in the sunshine. This is her first time to be published, and at 68-years-old.

Jay Canterbury received two first place awards at the first two juried shows he entered. Since then, he has earned many other significant awards and had his art displayed in venues such as State College of Florida and Whole Foods. This is his first time being published. Jay's work is often dark and thought-provoking. His photographic abstracts reflect an evolving insightful, true vision as well as a compassionate interpretation of the human condition and that of all life forms. See more of his art at www.jaycanterbury.com.

Teresa Falsani, born and raised in Portland, Maine, has lived in Duluth, Minnesota since 1973. A mother of two, she enjoyed second and third careers as a public relations writer/creative director and teacher of English literature. Falsani has twice won both the Peace River Center for Writers Contest (Florida) and the Lake Superior Writers Contest (Minnesota) for her poetry and drama. Her writing has also appeared in several anthologies and journals. You can read more of her work on her poetry blog at tbfalsani.wordpress.com.

Zachary Hartman has been an amateur photographer for the past four years with goals of pursuing a career in photography. He is currently studying at Lakewood Ranch High School where he participates in different arts courses held there and takes courses in photography.

T. R. Healy was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, and his stories have appeared in such publications as the Boston Literary Review, Gravel, the Steel Toe Review, and Welter.

Gordon Kuhn has been writing since high school. He is a published short story writer, a novelist, a narrative nonfiction writer (true crime), and a poet. He has published one novel and two poetry books. He is currently working on a true crime story about a local murder.

Catherine Le Nguyen is from Southern California and obtained a B.A. in English and Creative Writing from the University of California, Irvine. She writes fiction in the form of novels, short stories and screenplays.

Susan Ashley Michael is author of *Crossing the Bridge of Sighs*, a novel set in Venice, Italy. She enjoys writing, photography, and co-piloting a seaplane.

Koral Novak is one with the earth. She was born in a small town of NJ. She has been photographing ever since she could operate a camera, and received her first one at the age of 5. There have been many over the years, but she currently uses a Canon Rebel T5i. After attending college with a concentration in Photography and Art, her work has never been published prior. For more of her work please visit facebook.com/koraldawnphoto.

Matt Peters has an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of New Orleans and a BA in English from the University of Central Florida. Between universities, he worked as a case manager at Covenant House, a homeless shelter for youth. His fiction has been published by *580 Split* (Spring, 2009), *There Will Be Words* (January, 2012), *Keeping Track* edited by Yelizaveta P. Renfro (Main Street Rag, 2012), *Burrow Press Review* (January, 2013), *the Burlesque Press Variety Show* (May, 2013), *Crossing Lines* (forthcoming from Main Street Rag, 2015), and *Gutters and Alleyways* edited by Sarah Thursday and Nancy Woo (Lucid Moose Lit, 2014). He currently teaches in the Creative Writing department at Full Sail University and runs Beating Windward Press.

Tom Ruthz is a Brazilian artist originally from Rio de Janeiro who now resides in Sarasota, Florida. Ruthz began his career as a painter focusing primarily on fine arts. He is also well-known for portrait work, and his paintings of horses have been well-received in the art community. Currently, he has been dedicated to the contemporary art, using acrylic, oil and different textures on canvas. Although he has never received formal training, Ruthz has painted professionally since 1995. During his career, he has received many awards.

Fabio Sassi makes photos and acrylics using tiny objects and what is considered to have no worth by the mainstream. Fabio lives and works in Bologna, Italy. His work can be viewed at <http://fabiosassi.foliohd.com>.

Brandon Scott is an internationally recognized artist from New York who relocated to Bradenton, Florida for its emerging art scene. He coined the term "Uninhibited Expression" as a trademark for his emotional portrait art defined as neo-contemporary art; signaling a new era with a new interpretation of today's human condition. www.brandonscottart.com. Scott is also an art scene Blogger/writer for the million plus online arts promotion: www.facebook.com/artsartistsartwork. In addition, he supports the Art for Good Foundation and co-hosts a popular Jtap Arts Radio Show syndicated throughout Florida. Gaining in reputation Scott displayed in the recent 2014 Leonardo Da Vinci exhibit and the Divine Michelangelo & DaVinci: Side-by-Side exhibit on loan from Florence Italy.

Nancy Tobin is a photographer, antique photo collector and children's book author living in Punta Gorda, FL.

Joseph Weinzettle is an artist, picture framer and art instructor. A Pittsburgh, PA native, Joe has lived on the Florida Gulf Coast since 1992, from Tarpon Springs to Ft. Myers. In 2010, Joe served as Artist-in-Residence in the Florida Everglades, drawing and painting in pine woodlands and cypress savannah. In 2014, Joe received a Gottlieb Foundation Individual Artist Support Grant. His influences include Romare Bearden, Rackstraw Downes and Hasegawa Tohaku.



Lit + Art Journal

Volume 1, Issue 1

2015

Subscriptions are free at
www.805lit.org/issues.html.

Published by
Manatee County Public Library System

www.805lit.org