



*to Love and to Create*



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# Graffiti magazine

Graffiti Magazine is the property of **Graffiti Publishing** — a Non-Profit Organization, registered in the *State of Oregon*.

## Our purpose is to Celebrate and Support The Arts.

**Editor:** Morgan Smith  
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## How do I get published in Graffiti?

The preferred method for sending us your written and/or visual art is to use the **Submission Form** on our website: [graffiti-magazine.com](http://graffiti-magazine.com).

As a secondary option, you may email us directly at: [submissions@graffiti-magazine.com](mailto:submissions@graffiti-magazine.com).

### Submission Guidelines:

- 1) Written work should not exceed 1,000 words.
- 2) Visual works are to be sent in JPEG/PNG/PDF format, and be in Black & White/Grayscale.
- 3) Works must be original, created by you.

**Advertising:** Page 8  
**Places to find Graffiti:** Page 11

*Thank you, we are grateful. Without you, the artist, there is no us.*

## On the Cover

The poster art for the DEAD ROCKSTARS show at BLUNT GRAFFIX on February 7th, 2026. See page 7 for more details and an interview with its creator, Matt Dey.

# Follow the white rabbit

I discovered Graffiti when I went to check for mail at the Eugene Mailbox. As I turned to leave, there it was on a table. Issue #1. There was only one copy. Intrigued by its cover I picked it up and took it home.

After reading it, taking note of the call for submissions, I emailed a link to a photograph for possible inclusion. I still have that email. It was January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 3:17pm. The submitted image was a view of the rocky shoreline in Pacific City, Oregon.

The next day a response came from Don Root, founder and editor of Graffiti:

*"Wow! That's gorgeous! It will definitely go into the next issue."*

This was exciting news and I looked forward to seeing #2. And now, three years later, here is Issue #27.

Back to that fateful day... it was the cover of Graffiti that drew me in. It was simple, elegant, focused on the art. Inside was an eclectic mix of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and visual art.

Don is akin to Morpheus, from "The Matrix" — the wise "professor" — and the magazine; the mysterious lady with the rabbit tattoo on her back shoulder, inviting all on an odyssey.

Now living the life in Grayan-et-l'Hôpital, a coastal town in France, Don passed the torch after #20 to we, a group of ten, carrying it into the future. That "torch" is Graffiti: a unique publication, bringing people together, telling stories, inviting creativity and fostering a community of art.

Thank you, Don. You created something wonderful. Thank you to the "G-Team" (The Board of Directors) for your labor of love, keeping Graffiti alive and kickin'. And much gratitude to the donors and advertisers, readers, and, saving the best for last: for all of the artists who send in work.

- Morgan

# These two small shoes

## Frank Keim

I found them on a ridgetop near Paradise, Arizona, discarded because they were so worn and broken, and I hoped the migrant child who had once worn them had an extra pair to finish her tangled journey with her mother across the Chiricahua mountains, and that they reached their destination so they could finally rest and visit with family and new friends wherever they landed...

how hard their trail must have been! although it was really no trail at all, but only dry chaparral and barbed cactus and thorny hopes and dreams that they would make it, escaping cold wind and snowstorms, or torrid heat and a coyote's fury when they simply wanted to stop and rest a while to catch their breath or take a drink and try to go on to the end...

sometimes during their ordeal, and an ordeal it certainly was, the child must have cried and cried some more until she had no tears to cry again, and her mother thought she might die from the pain she felt for her over and over again as they snaked through narrow canyons, up and down red cobble-stoned mountains among the pinyon pines and stunted junipers and needle-sharp agaves and cat's claw that shredded their clothes and bare flesh and shoes until they could wear them no more...

like these two small shoes...

if they could talk, if they could tell us about the heartaches she and her mother felt, the cold nights around a small smoking fire as they tried to sleep with their only blanket, and the burning hot sun during the days as they shuffled slowly and surely toward their goal of a car ride somewhere along an unknown road that would take them to a nearby city where they could finally hide among other brown people

who looked just like they did, and where they might find the family they were searching for, maybe a father and husband who would take them in and make them feel safe so they could now relax and plan their next move to look for work doing the jobs that other Americans were too proud to do.

These two small shoes.



# D. O. B. B.

**Tony Brown** @tboradb

Drive Optimistically Belching Beavers  
Dehydrated Onions Below Basement  
Decaying Olives Bruise Badly  
Defending Our Blue Badgers  
Demonstration Over Big Bill  
Dogs Offer Blasting Bark  
Dimple On Baby Butt  
Duplicate Omen Bends Backwards  
Dent Opposite Black Buick  
Defend Obese Booing Buyers  
Dragon Openly Blames Bird  
Dark Office Bright Bulbs  
Divorced Opinionated Beach Brides  
Dwarfs Own Bouncy Beagles  
Dumber Owls Boil Broth  
Dense Ocean Bites Boat  
Drones Orbit Bold Bison  
Dream Overlap Baffles Beast  
Death Occurs By Breakfast  
Deluxe Ornate Bootleg Blankets  
Dedicated Opinionated Bickering Bakers  
Dumpling Onto Blended Banana  
Displaying Old Bat Blood  
Dashing Officer Believes Bicycle  
Dapper Oregonians Buy Boots  
Deceptive Observation Breaks Brain  
Daydreaming Octopus Befriends Breeze  
Damp Otters Barely Breathing  
Dental Orthodontists Bring Braces  
Definitely One Broken Bachelor  
Delivery Of Baked Beans  
Dramamine Only Before Brew

# STANDING ON THE CORNER



*watching all the girls go bye*

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# Love Song for Renée Nicole Good

Jesús Sepúlveda [www.poetajesussepulveda.com](http://www.poetajesussepulveda.com)

I remember the night  
when the barrel of the machine gun  
was pressing against his naked back

Hands on the back of his head  
smoke & sirens

It wasn't a joke:  
You should have stayed in your rocking chair  
with your solipsistic sunsets

But no, first they came for the wandering-J, the LatinX  
the *Commies*, the Homos, and finally  
you  
who reached the age of Rimbaud

A wretched bullet  
silenced the stream  
where your soul took refuge

"When praying doesn't help us"—the poet wrote

Oh God, deliver us from ourselves!

They opened Pandora's box

Heaven, there is no heaven  
nor future  
while they snort on their golden  
thrones

They're coming for the saints and the nuns

Who?

The sirens are sounding  
Alarms go off

Squirrels remain on the branches  
the day is tinged with color  
and a shivering body  
writes poetry...

\*\*\*

Greenland is a little girl  
running in terror  
in the forest of Geopolitics

Pack of wolves

The key that opens the heart  
has fallen into the well of nightmares

\*\*\*

First, they came for the criminals—or so they said  
removed Maduro  
bombed boats

One or two countries  
Nigeria, Iran, Somalia, what does it matter?

Latin folks hide their faces

Hands in their pockets and  
let us keep opening detention centers  
concentration camps  
annihilation gulags

ReSort for sale in the PALESTINE strip  
*Made in BB's Kingdom*

What a great time the guy had in Florida!

New Year's Eve  
French champagne  
and chicks brought from the island

2026 is the year of the beast  
deporting the dark haired  
tan skinned

National Guard in the streets

And now they are coming for the poets

Shot in the face  
The world's keyboards report the sacrifice

The beasts snort in their golden  
chairs

It was in self-defense, you know!

Free radicals—and perhaps wild ones—  
anar-  
Kists  
rainbow

They are coming for the women and the nurses

Bertolt Brecht writes the last scene...

A dark shroud covers  
the dissection room  
of the pigs  
who are not to blame

agent orange is spreading in the minds of the zombies

\*\*\*

Renée is reborn

In the stagnant winter air  
crows tuck their wings

a solitary hummingbird  
announces the midday light...

January, 2026

# Vienna Waits for No One

H.R. Harney [f/HHarney](https://www.facebook.com/HHarney)

I avoided you all summer.

I thought I had - I thought WE had - more Time.

Sitting there, watching your name on my screen and thinking it  
was power to just let it ring.

And when I finally answered - you were no longer on the line.

Turns out, that whole Time,  
you were calling to tell me that yours was running out.

If only I could go back in Time.  
I'd answer the damn phone.

# Members Only

macgeálai [macgealai@gmail.com](mailto:macgealai@gmail.com)

I don't call it a "pee-pee" -  
that feels unnatural.  
Nor is it called a "dingle"..  
That's just not factual.  
The same thing goes for "weiner" -  
These words all seem so small!  
I guess, clinically, I have a "penis"..  
But c'mon... don't we all?  
And yet it's not quite big enough  
For, "cock," or "dong," or "schlong."  
And giving that descriptor to you  
somehow just feels wrong.  
"Tallywhacker" and, "pecker" sound  
like I'd beat you with my "wood!"  
Its mass isn't very special -  
It's the lovin' makes it good!  
There are many monikers  
Which I could give my "prick,"  
Yet I stand before you naked  
Proudly asking, "Suck my DICK!"

# The Way Back

Marissa Brinkman [marissa.brinkman101@gmail.com](mailto:marissa.brinkman101@gmail.com)

Land before time, heart before soul,  
My body is a warm, wet, animal; hungry for more,  
I'm not sure what is out there, what awaits me at the pearly  
gates of dawn or yore,  
But here on earth, I find myself gradually coming back into my  
body and craving the warmth that was before.

# Turn it up!

by Carianne Shriver



It sure is hard to think about Summer Concert Season during the winter, but we will all be taking in our favorite bands and artists performing live sooner than later. With that in mind, my focus with this month's column of Turn It Up is going to be sunny days, chill music and maybe a little bit of the beach.

## Free Flow Sessions



**Stick Figure**  
Released: November 14, 2025  
Tracks: 12

If you're looking for a little bit of escape from the day, find your favorite streaming service and take a listen to...

...this album — it brings all the good vibes to one place. The songs are laid back, with wonderfully calming energy. Right away with the first song, "Moon Palace," you can imagine yourself maybe driving along the coast or laying on the living room floor with your headphones just listening with your eyes closed as the vinyl spins on the turntable. Stick Figure has some great reggae and dub-style tracks on this album. Although there aren't many lyrics and they are heavy on instrumental, sometimes those are the best songs to escape with. "Land of the Midnight Sun" is another track that takes you away to an imaginary place.

## Pleasure Point



**The Expendables**  
Released: June 23, 2023  
Tracks: 12

The band averages 125-150 shows a year, including internationally. They have toured with such acts as 311, Pepper, Slightly Stoopid, and more...

Here's another album that can take you on an imaginary adventure of your choosing. There's even a track called "Surfman Cometh" that starts with the sound of crashing waves, setting the scene for complete relaxation. The name of the album "Pleasure Point" refers to a local surfing spot in Santa Cruz. Another great track on the album is The Expendables' take on "Wicked Game." The Reggae Surf version of this song is indescribable. I imagine myself taking in an island breeze, sitting by the ocean and listening to it while watching the waves crash on the sand.

## Out There



**Tropicdelic**  
Released: May 16, 2025  
Single

"Hailing from Cleveland, Ohio... this six-piece performance powerhouse carves their own path with an independent mentality." — tropidelic.com

The cold and cloudy days of winter can put some sadness into your days, but one listen to the song "Out There" by Tropicdelic will lift you right out of that funk. "Out There" was released as a single and is not part of one of their full albums. It really shows the band's evolving sound. The lyrics to the song focus on hope, perseverance, and purpose. The chorus includes the words, "Keep your head up. Don't slow down. This time I swear, we'll find it all out there." The song goes on to tell us that 'hope will carry you through your ups and downs' and sometimes we all need to hear a song just like this. The Cali-Reggae mixed with the upbeat vibe and lyrics is a sure win to pull you back up if you are down.

# Interview: Matt Dey / BLUNT GRAFFIX



Matt Dey is the founder and creative force behind Eugene-based art and printmaking studio BLUNT GRAFFIX. Among the places you can see his work is in the lobby and halls of the Broadway Metro Theater.

Graffiti (G): I am interested to hear about the beginnings of Blunt Graffix... What is its "origin story?"

Matt Dey (MD): I was always messing with the copy machines when I was in the military. I'd make photocopied mashups with white out and a sharpie. Then in the early 2000's I got a computer and to me it was like a copy machine on steroids!

(G): Of those early mashups, what was among the subject matter?

(MD): Mainly pop culture stuff...and lots of skulls! Also, did a photocopied "zine" while attached to the squadron that conducted operations in support of the United States Antarctic Program. Like the John Carpenter movie "The Thing"! ...Minus the aliens.

(G): Which artists have been most inspiring, influential to your work?

(MD): Initially I was inspired by the psychedelic concert posters of the 1960s, like artist Stanley Mouse. Which is what ultimately led me to screen printing.

(G): What is a common struggle when it comes to creating?

(MD): Creating is the easy part! Seems to me the challenge is competing with a world full of distractions.

(G): What is the best part about being an artist?

(MD): Doing my own thing.

(G): What have been some misunderstandings that people have expressed about your work?

(MD): I don't mind the internet critics when it relates to my art... it gets more people wanting to find out who is this Blunt Graffix.

(G): Anything else you'd like people to know?

(MD): Yea. The Dead Rockstars show will be part of the newly formed, Warehouse District Art Hop ([www.warehousedistrictarthop.com](http://www.warehousedistrictarthop.com)), which is on the first Saturday of every month and has artists and businesses opening up their work spaces to the public. Come check it out, there will be over 30 participating artists from around the world paying tribute to their favorite Rockstars! There will be live music performed by The Girin Guha Experience. Then keep an eye out as The Dead Rockstars show is going on tour! Co-curated By Brian Cox of BC Blotter Co., we will be headed to Los Angeles in June 2026 and then finishing off the year at the Psychedelic SF Art Gallery in San Francisco.

**“I want to support the local arts”**

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**Graffiti**

Founded in January 2023, we are a nonprofit organization that makes a free, bi-monthly publication (one every two months) featuring creative works such as Poetry, Fiction, Nonfiction, Drawings, Photography, etc.

We print our newsprint, tabloid-style magazine and then distribute it to popular, people-gathering locations — like coffeehouses, theaters, bookstores, and shops — in Lane County, Oregon.

We invite you to advertise in our magazine and support the effort to foster a community of creativity.

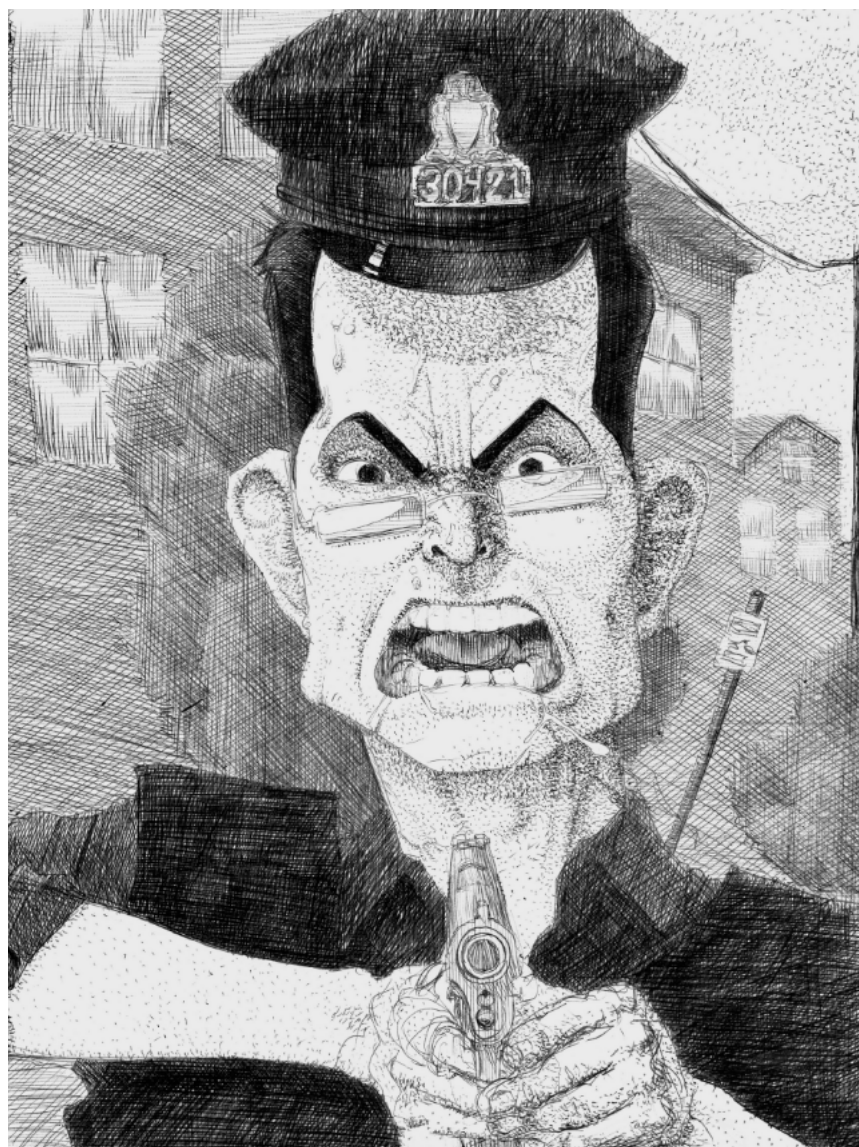
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### Maud Kerns Art Center

You have up to February 6<sup>th</sup> to see “Escape to the Forest,” featuring work by Yoncalla artist Susan Applegate, Eugene artists Joanna Carrabbio and Marco Elliott, and Gearhart, Oregon artist Greg Navratil.



Marco Elliott [Marcoelliott.com](http://Marcoelliott.com)



Logan Grant

# Noise Pollution

Aidan LaCroix [@lacroixaidan](https://www.instagram.com/lacroixaidan)

A pang rattles around in my skull, reminding me of the hard casing it is. It's from my whale, or maybe someone else's, I don't care to discern anymore. Whale echolocation has gotten so strong that they're able to target individual humans (at least those of us near the coast), hurling intelligible frequencies at us with pinpoint accuracy. Basically, humans have become hosts for whale thoughts. They have access to ours too, though unlike them, we don't have a choice in what they see—the transmission is one-way. I welcome it, allowing whatever's left of my own thought to be drowned out by the reverberations.

“You aren't putting in effort anymore Gabe, you know that.”

“I know.” How grateful I am to be having this conversation on the Oregon coast, whales aplenty.

“What's your whale telling you?” June asks me. She's wearing the teal hoodie I picked out for her at the thrift store, or maybe my whale picked it out. Either way, it was a great choice. It has one of those tropical sunset graphics in an oval frame. We thought it matched her buoyant personality.

“It's sending me sharp, guilty clicks. I think it's telling me that I haven't been a good partner, that I should've communicated earlier that I wasn't ready for something long-term. You were just so fun to be with, I didn't want it to end. It's telling me that I don't know what I want, and that's not fair to you.”

“It's not.”

I don't tell her about the other whale, the one sending me quiet, soothing clicks, telling me that everything will be alright, that everyone makes mistakes, that this is all inevitable and is happening exactly as it should. I never tell her about the other whale.

“What about you?”

“There are three whales speaking to me right now. One says you should take some responsibility. That the narrative you have about this not working out because of your anxiety doesn't have to come true, if that's what you want. Another one is telling me that I also need to take responsibility, that you shouldn't have all the power here.”

“True.” I always liked it when she said that. I shouldn't have all the power.

“The third one is quiet, but I think it's reminding me of the last time we were at the beach, when we had another fight like this on the pier, and you said you could see something real, something long-term with me. Did you just say that to make me feel better?” “No, I really did feel that.” I also said it to make her feel better.

“Did?”

“Sorry, just a poor choice of words. I do feel that.”

The pang returns, and sharp points on my skull come into awareness, subtle edges I'm normally too dull to notice. They feel like obsidian does on the hands, and I start to worry they will cut my soft scalp flesh.

June shakes her head, “I can't believe I held out for you again. I'm so stupid.”

“You're not stupid, you're genuinely one of the smartest people I've ever met.” I can hardly focus on the conversation, the pain is too sharp, but her empty look tells me my response was worthless. “I want to keep trying, I do. I'm so grateful for you, I'm sorry, maybe I just need some time...”

“Just stop talking, please.”

The sun sets mercilessly, giving us little time to soak in the orange clouds before it slips under the horizon. For a moment, it perfectly matches the scene on her hoodie (aside from the palm trees), but I have to keep this to myself.

“Bye Gabe, I really love you. I know you loved me too, but I don't think you do anymore.” She kisses my cheek and walks inland.

“How are you going to get home? I can still give you a ride if you want.” But she doesn't respond, and is soon a silhouette in the falling darkness. “Bye, June.”

Three whales stick around. I can't see them very well, but I recognize their sounds. One is a Gray Whale, the one always telling me that everything will be ok. But for the first time, it's not telling me that, it's not telling me anything, it's just crying. The louder one is there too, still clicking away with guilt-ridden frequencies. It must be a Sperm Whale: nothing else gets this loud.

The third whale is me. I guess I hadn't noticed the shift under all the noise. I'm the one June was talking about, the one who sent that memory of them on the pier. I know because it's all I can think about. I mean it really could have worked. After the fight, when I saw them embrace, I could tell they truly loved each other.

Had the Sperm Whale gotten to him? I swim towards the deafening creature. It looks like a hunk of lead, yet it refuses to sink, suspended vertically just below the surface of the water. Its incessant clicking makes it hard to hold onto the memory, and soon I can no longer remember what it was, or what I am. All I know is I'm sinking to the bottom, having overstayed my welcome.

# sometimes, still time

Mike Heide [michaelheide@pm.me](mailto:michaelheide@pm.me)

how did i get there? well, on the road, i came across the cosmic expanse, and there i was. "thanks for the lift," i said. as usual, it just kind of twinkled a little.

this whole thing began in immanence: concrete, sawdust, domestic debris. bent into reflection: labyrinths of ego, sifting through loss to search for voice. then abstraction turned into recursion: finding what naturally cycles, calling it a cog or gear, trying to piece together a schematic of the machine, until it began to resemble an excavator, at which point i released it to go on digging at fresh graves and ancient ruins.

it freed up my hands to touch the rain, in a windy headspace too inclement for clouds to articulate. the universe laughs at me in bursts of air, not cruel or kind, just existing louder than i can. i briefly think that i might understand the setup, then it's gone in a moment, and i'm left with the sound of my own breath, trying to remember the punchline.

nothing can be saved from humor, or philosophy, or the feeling that existence needs to be justified, and earn its toilet privileges. it's the void that i keep circling, sometimes barely clutching the precipice, sometimes just trolling around looking for a good spot to fish, catch a piece of the emptiness, and accept the mandatory release. every little butterfly swallowed by a pitcher plant pours a drink to overflow the cup, while still trying to make time for tea.

hunched over the picnic table of an abandoned bistro on some discreet city corner, where i might as well have been born, the unfolding steam abstracts the gray morning. i refuse transcendence, and reenter matter, a spontaneous resurrection, not in some higher state, but belonging to the unimportant, perishable, tactile. my fingertips trace rotted wood, dead skin, and bygone stains, all of us spilled onto the sidewalk like so many tram puddles. city lights curve in our reflections, accepting our versions of scenery, where passers-by feel comfortable looking elsewhere.

i've grown old, and they don't fear for me anymore, turned inward slightly, and carry the languid scent of solipsism. so let it be-- sinking behind the audience, into the wastebasket, falling asleep at the bottom of the ecosystem. to wake in eons would hardly be enough to not laugh in the same breath as despair, harness the power to remain undisturbed, or justify the cadences of compost that are falling from above.

most people just seem to sprint by, staying light on their feet, loose on the earth, eyes toward some secret horizon, raindrops and meteors, hurtling by each other, speedy toward some personally unique abyss, accessing rarity in the subtle gravity of nearness that collides only conceptually with the worlds of others, minor changes in trajectory, polite enough to let us face our own private impacts.

i expect the fearful return, when left looking for an adherence to reality, or at least a laudable framework, and the certainty that there will never be anyone to whom i won't regret not saying at least one more thing. occasionally, the dread lies not in foreseeable disaster, but the mere resumption of reality; not in the resistance of pain, but its anticipation as a form of truth. Starving for correctness, subsisting on bearable narratives, coherence exposes itself as a lazier prey, and salvation gives way to workability, until the value of the shrine falls into the distraction of its upkeep.

a tender kind of love emerges from the incomplete gesture, the grief of the permanently unfinished, until the haste of escapism feels merciful. isolation becomes creation: a fortress from which to both survive, and venture into, awareness. to be conscious, of anything, is another brick that one is required to place, making necessity out of unwanted scaffolds. somewhere after, the cadence turns toward braiding longing with hesitation, until each symbol is needed more by the one after, perpetually incomplete just enough to topple forward into the next, hoping the inertia will eventually embarrass itself, hunting its own miniature afterlife. sometimes invoking old rhythms, a bureaucrat shuffling papers, making a career out of evading all the decisions that can't be undone. vagueness slips into a refusal of extraction, and the easy exit that comes from dominating an experience with systems of knowledge. letting the weeds grow, once in a while, just to confirm that the psyche doesn't have to shred everything to pieces.

other times, it's just about stacking doorways, a breezy villa, so open that any invader feels awkward for storming a windswept hollow. and so, everyone passes through, safe in the quiet spaces of population density, exiting with the last usable shards of anonymity these days, with selves in constant negotiations through relational evolutions, inhabiting the process of becoming, bowing to every traveler as though each were a primal infinity, all peers in the pauper's pantheon.

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## silver portions

Justin Rodermond

*a temperpedic audit friendly fatal-fated pose  
a pop pitch turnpike fancy  
circumdairy tractor fairy  
flip flop spinkite dancey.*

*fists and tallied timeouts  
turn a bit and the turnkit pulls too tight  
whether the measures are pleasure or power  
or costly or free depends on the night*

*or the height of the tower or the angle of light.*

*burdens of grandeur are scary when nary  
you're clean or you're captured or sold off on sight.*

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# Persistence

Stephen Swiftfox  [alpinelake1@gmail.com](mailto:alpinelake1@gmail.com)

Mother, Father, we're taller than you again! Will we stay this way?

No children, again we all will be brought down to the same level mother says.


I hate this, my clone says, look at that over there. He's big and low, he never gets short. He's quick to show a yellow flag that turns into a white pom pom.

But he gets poisoned at times, mother says. The giant shadow that you see not only cuts us down but he poisons others. It is our destiny to bring color, softness and beauty to the earth, and there's always a price to pay for it. However, we, and all things of earth, will be here long after the giant shadow is gone.

My clone, again, protests. Why should we be like this? Why not just give up our green color and turn dead brown? We wouldn't need to go through this again and again.

Because my children, mother answers, we grow to the sun our true mother. The sun is warmth, goodness, and light. And we will never give up.

# Precious Life

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The cat did not make it. I had high hopes, because it seemed like a broken limb. She had body movements and normal reactions and only cried out if touched. But the spine was severed. The emergency vet said it was impossible to fix. Didn't even take an x-ray, could feel the spine was crushed. When she announced her findings, she seemed disconnected, unaffected by the cat's fate. I was thinking, well this is the 24-hr emergency for animals, they see a lot of this, and stuff like that. Maybe she was masking her inner feelings. Maybe she wasn't. Maybe she was cut from the cloth of people who think if the animal's not one of our kind, they don't get equal respect, their life are less valuable, and their value is what they do to serve us. We're not really animals, us humans, beings of loftier purpose and therefore higher value.

But we are. We're part of the animal kingdom. We've decided to put ourselves on top—but what animal doesn't? We're animals just like all the rest, and nothings wrong with an animal being alive. We all have souls and hearts and feelings and lives.

I can't judge.

Who am I to judge?

I was able to find the owner, who was out of town and had left a group of her friends here in charge of looking after her. Her name was Precious. She was an outdoor kitty. Crossed that street all the time. Last night was the night someone didn't see her.

It broke my heart to see her go.

The owner was on the phone, in the room with me and one of the friends involved, and she was in tears. She gave the vet permission to take her down with opiates, and heard the cat's last meow.

That really tore me apart. I had to leave the clinic and get myself back together.

I'd hoped for better, and I always grieve when a beautiful life is lost. I left all my lights on, all night, as a sort of candlelight vigil for her. I only turned them off this afternoon. It's so sad.

Today when I woke up I'd reconciled it with myself, and I'm putting some of it behind me. But there are parts of it that will always be with me—just as Looseleaf is still with me, and AP too. I am not a romantic or an idealist. I just love life and regard it as a treasure, and a soul is a soul, the way I see it, on a journey just like mine is.

I could take views on it, but I don't; for me, it's all from the heart, and the heart's just pure feeling. I listen to others' views, take their views to heart, and in the end embrace all of life with all my heart

The night before last, instead of driving home from the store, I just drove—nowhere, just ahead. I passed my exit, got off on a different street, and just went straight.

I stopped at 8th and Lincoln, and a woman standing on the sidewalk on crutches was gesturing at a car that had just driven past her. It was a gesture of anger, and she was almost shouting, but I couldn't make any of it out. Beside her was a small man, looking cold and bewildered.

I stayed at the stop sign. I knew I had some cash in my wallet, not much—from bottle redemption, but it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out these two street people could use whatever the good lord offered them, so—it took me a minute—I got the cash out, put the car in park, put on the hazards, walked across the street, and gave it to the woman.

Her anxiety dissolved. The man looked me in the eye, and I met his eyes and nodded, walked back to my car, waved at them. The woman waved back, the man nodded. I waved at the car who was driving up behind me to thank him for being patient, put the car in drive, and drove away, not looking back at them or the car behind me

Instead I was thinking, wondering, did that help their hearts? Do they feel any hope?

It seemed like a no brainer: I look at my life, and I look at their moment; it should be automatic. A decent human being should not have to even think for a second about doing what I did. But people do—not so much here, though, not so much in Eugene. Eugene still has the Oregon people I've known for 50 years.

I've never seen so much giving anywhere I've ever lived. I'm in the right place. Goodness knows where home is.





