

The penultimate frontier with Roberto Cofresi, Susan Siebert Connors,
John Grey, Guy L. Jackson, Phil Juliano and The Dream Journal

The Blotter

November 2013

MAGAZINE

Dawn of the Space Age

**СПУТНИК
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FRONT COVER, "Sputnik Birth"
 by Susan Siebert Connors.

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"Legacy"

Fifty-six years ago, Mom had a bout with Appendicitis and Grandma swooped down and snatched me up and took me over to her house to stay until everything was better. I don't know where my sister went, maybe to her godparents' house. That would have made sense. Grandma picked me because I was her favorite, because I was there and I was a boy. A baby boy. She'd had three boys of her own – Dad and my uncles – and I was a chance to have another boy to take care of. It might have been my cousin Big Dave, but he lived in Ohio and that meant I was number one. The proximity rule in action. Ah, well, so it goes.

As a child, I often spent weekends at Grandma-and-Grandpa's, sometimes with my sisters, sometimes not. My dad and uncles had left vast and marvelous collections of wooden building blocks, trains, ships, planes, tin toy soldiers, and bookshelves full of Rover Boys and Bobbsey Twins. Everything was kid-tested. Almost nothing was breakable. Grandma fed me. Chicken Noodle soup. Buttered wheat bread, cut into fourths. I cannot adequately explain why that is sandwich perfection. It must be the confluence of child-hands, mouth size and butter-pat design. Sitting in my own seat in a sunny breakfast-nook just off the kitchen where Grandma washed dishes and wrapped beef-roasts in string. Occasionally she would check on me, reading and eating and looking out the window at the bird-feeder. Do you want anything else, Pet? I was her pet. Her guy. I had no needs, just wants. They were important. Grandma brought me a jelly-glass full of cold milk to wash everything down.

After lunch I played until supper, tin soldiers at war, or the great railroad expansion west. Or perhaps I went outside and watched Grandma in the back yard working in her rose garden, or sat on the front porch glider while she read aloud fairy tales or Beatrix Potter or pages in her field-guide to bird watching. We listened for their songs outside. Mockingbirds. Warblers. "Do you hear that one? Cardinal. And that other is an Oriole." The neighbors had a dog, we went over to pet it. Grandma let me suck on a molasses mint, or maybe two.

After dinner and more play, I would retire to the third bed in the spare room, the one nearest the wall. The sheets were crisp and smelled like Borax soap. The pillow cradled my head. From here I could hear the street traffic coming and going with the changing of the light. Clickety green. Clickety yellow-then-red. I nodded to the rhythm. I slept. Hot breakfast, a walk downtown, holding hands. Something to say? "How interesting!" Grandma remarked. Tired, I napped. Not tired? I played. Are you hungry, Pet? A scoop of vanilla ice cream in the afternoon. Then the sound of Dad's car coming up the driveway to fetch me home. Which I didn't want to do. I didn't want to go to school in the morning. I wanted to sleep to the rhythm of changing traffic lights. At this point, if you're still with me, you're probably thinking, so what? So my Grandma spoiled me. Well, here's my point. It's about memo-

ries. Everything. I remember back fifty odd years, and can still taste the bread beneath the butter. I can smell the rose blooms. And it's not all vagaries, confused images from different points and places, but specific moments. The flash of a red winged blackbird. The sweetness of hot shredded-wheat cereal.

One afternoon I'd been getting into my Grandpa's peppermints. He was there in the house, too, of course. Running errands, reading his papers, puttering in the garden, listening to the stock report on the radio. Grandpa had a coffee table with crystal jars that he kept stocked with candy he liked. Horehound drops. Canada Mints. At some point in my childhood, he offered me a Canada Mint. Oh, what lovely stuff! From that point on, at regular intervals I would ask if I could have one. Sometimes he said yes. Down the hatch! Sometimes he said no.

So I stole them.

They became my *raison d'être*. Whenever Grandpa wasn't looking, I would swipe a couple of mints and then go downstairs and play with soldiers and eat them. At first just a few, hoping no one counted the jars' contents, or noticed my fresh breath. Not good enough. I became more bold. Stuffed my pockets full. One afternoon I must have chewed and swallowed about a dozen of those big mints. Just standing in the hallway eating candy like it was going out of style. I was working on the last one when Grandpa came up behind me and asked me what I was doing. "Nuthin'." "OK, then." Grandpa went back into the living room. Well, that last one I didn't chew very well and the big bits got stuck in my throat when I tried to swallow. Gagging, I hustled into the bathroom and put my mouth up to the faucet to try and wash them down. Many swallows of water later, the mint was still stuck in my throat. Well, all that water and mint shut down my stomach something awful. I went to find Grandma. "I don't feel good," I told her. She was washing dishes and dried her hands off to feel my forehead. What's the matter, Pet? I was groaning at this point. Grandpa heard the shenanigans and came into the kitchen. "He's been eating all of my peppermints," he growled. Grandma spun and pointed a finger at Grandpa. *You leave the boy alone!* She was a mother bear with her cub. I was literally clinging to her skirts, trying to remain calm, but the drama was too much. I turned and up-chucked the contents of my stomach into Grandma's dishwater, providing ample evidence of my having munched down those Canada Mints. Grandpa could see it, Grandma could see it. It changed nothing: I was Grandma's pet. *Leave the boy alone!*

Nothing is quite as fine as my memory of Grandma-and-Grandpa's house. The bread not so fresh, the butter not so sweet. The sun doesn't shine in any window as brightly. That is their legacy to me.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

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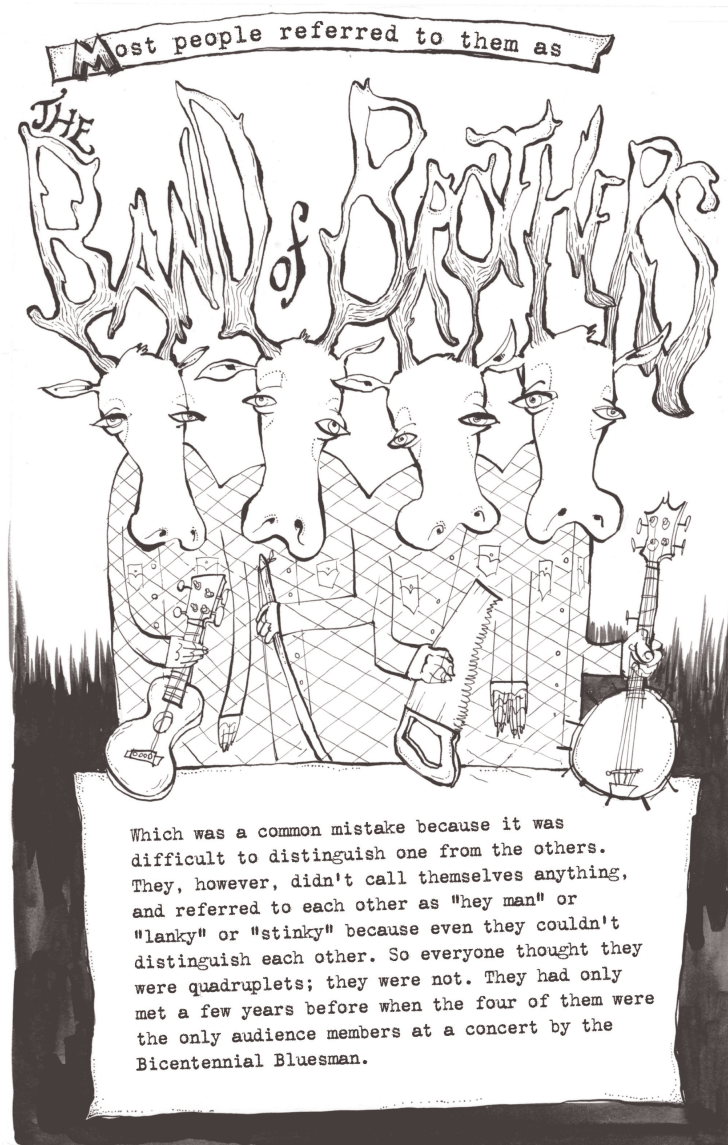


CAUTION

*It was just my
imagination,
running away...*

"Band of Brothers" - an excerpt from the book
Bel lows: Fables from the Musical Underground

By: Roberto Cofresi and illustrated by Nathan Golub



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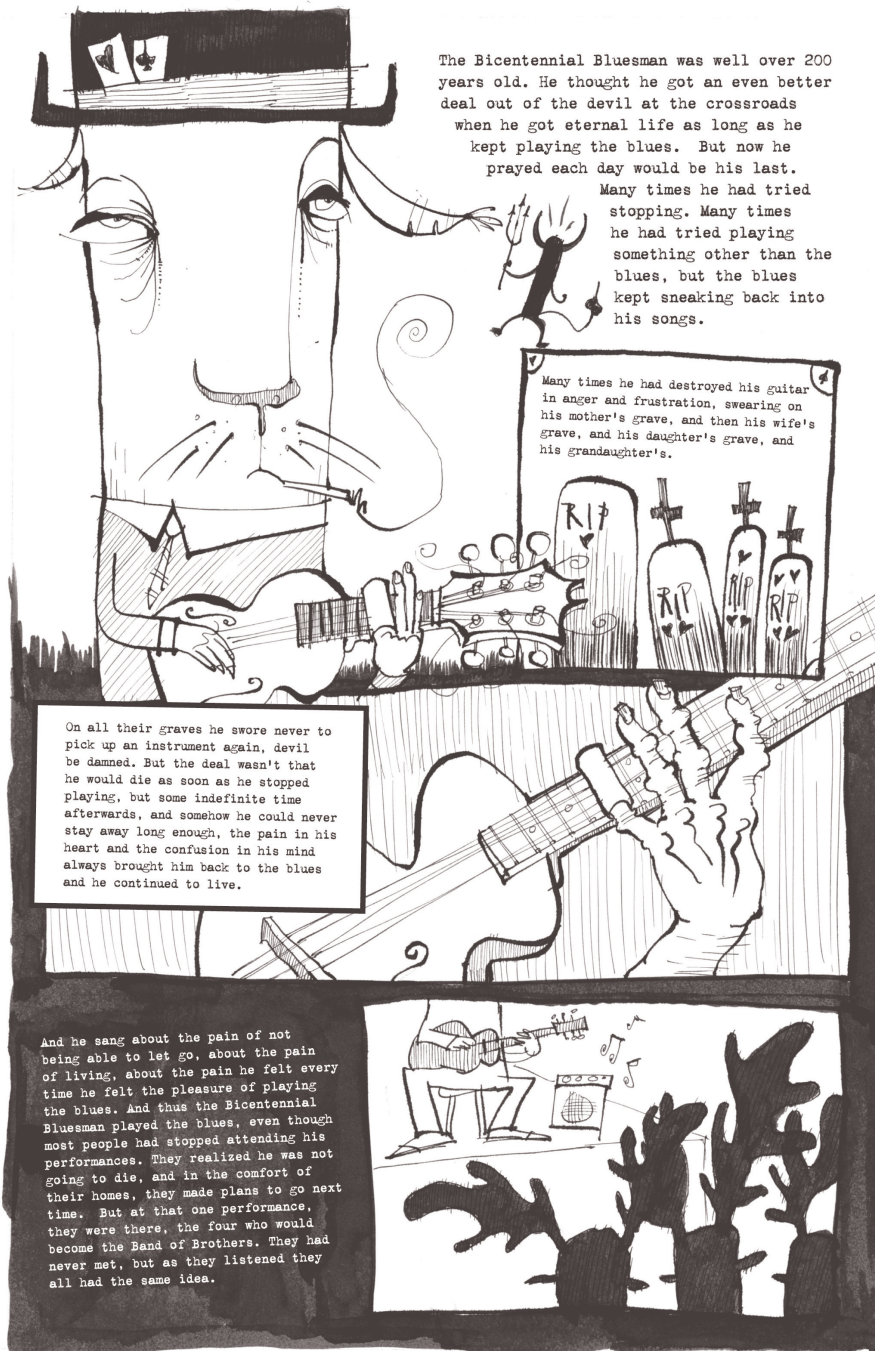


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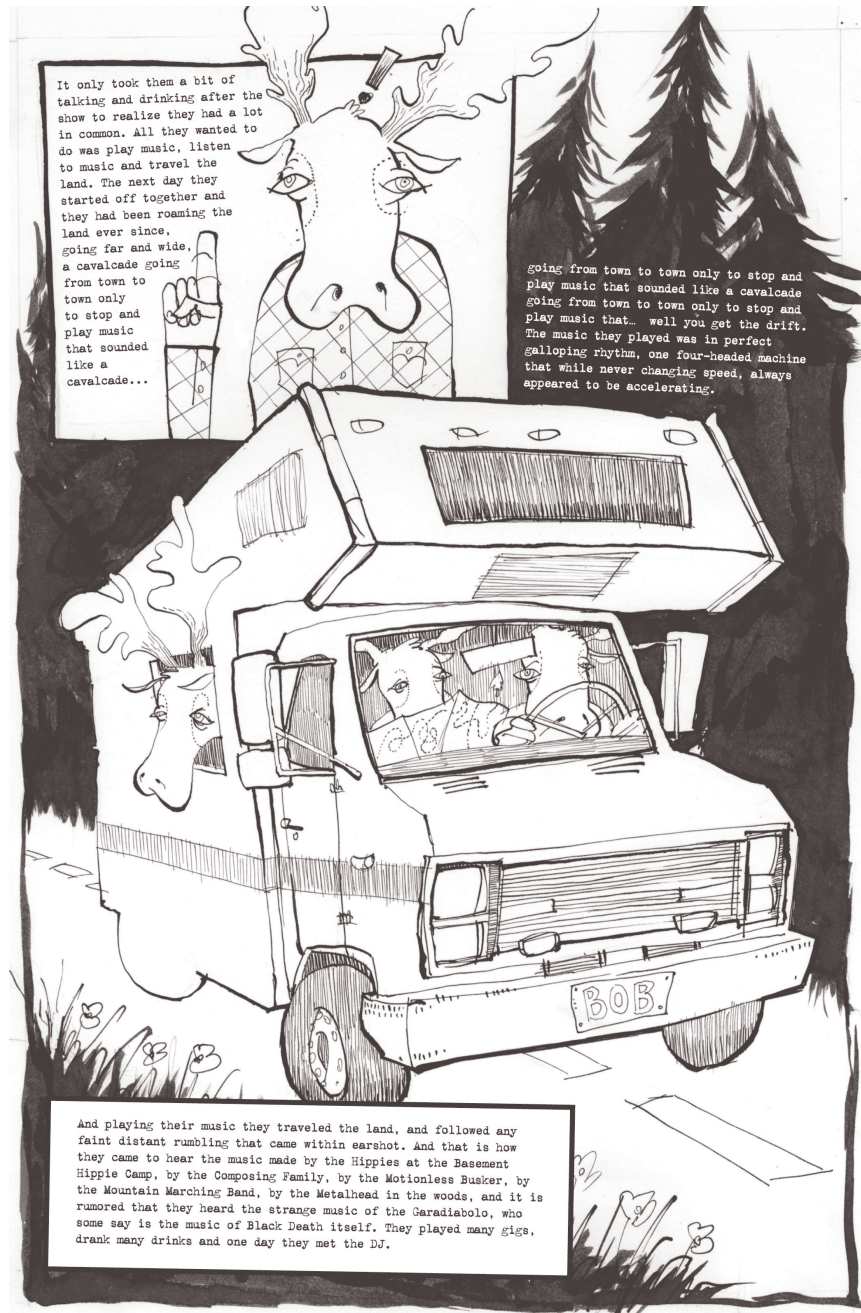
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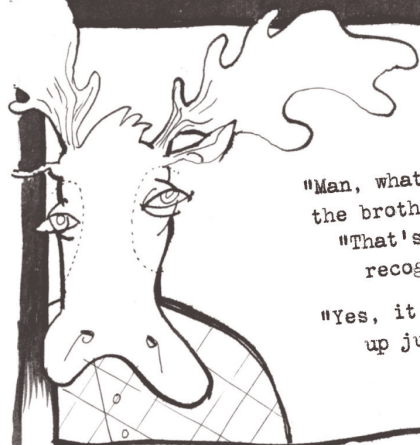
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"Man, what a rockin' tune!" said one of the brothers (I'm not sure which one), "That's got to be The Burdens. I'd recognize that bass anywhere."
"Yes, it's a new Burdens song I picked up just a couple of days back."



And they talked about this and that music and when the sun started to set, the Band of Brothers started to play. Some of the people from the vicinity heard it and came to listen, but not that many, and they played to their hearts' content.



The DJ took it all in and afterwards they all drank until one of them ran into a tree. The police came and they all spent the night in jail exchanging songs. The next morning they said goodbye to the hospitable police department and the DJ spread her wings and took off through the air. And the Band of Brothers gazed in hangover and wonder as they listened to one of their songs blasting over the small town's airwaves.



The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Please send excerpts from your own dream journals. If nothing else, we'd love to read them. We won't publish your whole name.

mermaid@blotterraag.com

I had no idea that you could dream sitting up in a car half-asleep (or was I?) It's just bits and pieces, like cutting room floor film, nothing like the two-reel features that take place at night, if you're lucky or, depending on how you dream, un. Faces shoot past, co-worker's heads, munching on subway foot-longs. A tick-tocking clock, like something from Disney's version of Alice. This morning's news - flooding in Colorado, oceans of waves streaming down the sides of the Rockies, stirring up mud and foam like a scene from a bad Godzilla movie. Houses like legos. I take a bite of bacon, why is it in my fingers, why does it taste like salty nothing at all. Oh, I've been leaning back in my seat and breathing through my mouth. A slight hiccup-py snore brings me back and makes me frown. I hate dream bacon.

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Best In Show

by Phil Juliano



"70 People Say"

by Guy J. Jackson

My brother had been six months here, and I think never once did he wash his clothes. He was plenty grumpy from never leaving the house and never being close enough to a bathroom. He always thought someday he'd feel different but here he is here, and not only here he is here but here he is here at 97. That's an age, can you believe it? An actual age of a human being. People say: how are you, I know you, very nice to see you. That is, they say that, the ones of us who can carry on a conversation without talking about our long dead friends or long dead brothers or sisters or long dead fathers or mothers. My brother wrote letters to all of them, those lodged in our past, while I begged out of writing letters. I didn't have anything to say to anyone. But even though my brother could write like thunder down the paper he'd absently fold the letters and stuff them in his

pockets. I was washing his clothes for him because I had to do something since I couldn't write letters, and so he was finding his letters washed into tattered crumbling wads that fell apart if you tried to unfold them to retrieve the words. "You're not mad at me are you?" I'd ask each time. "They're just words," My brother would say, after saying "WHAT?" a lot. Then he'd say: "And how am I supposed to send letters to dead people anyhow. You might as well wash them in the washing machine, it's as good a way as any to get the letters into the ether and on their way to the dead people." I wish he hadn't said that. My brother was six months here, but six months on and I'm still pausing to look into the washing machine for ten-minutes-or-so stretches before the clothes go in. Looking in it for what I don't know. But I used to peer in washing machines as a

toddler thinking they went somewhere. And I'm only one year younger than my brother so I'm almost back to being a toddler. So that's what's up. I'm looking for the dimension doors where the letters get posted to the dead people, the doors (or windows) my brother was implying. I'm looking every other day because I'm good about laundry. Yes, I'm looking. Something about those tiny holes.



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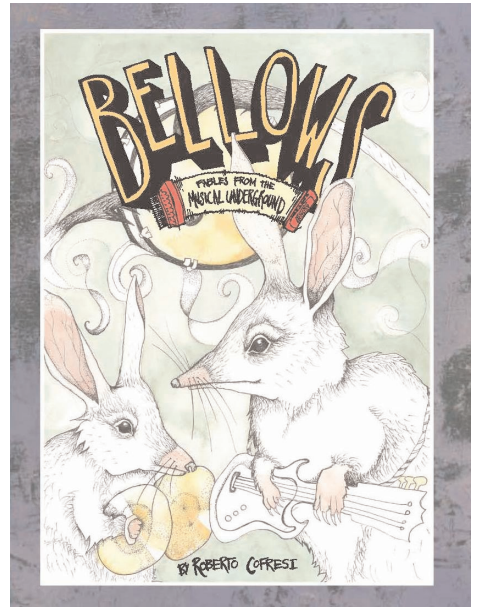
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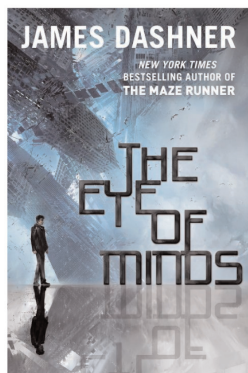
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GUIDE TO LOCAL EVENTS

OCTOBER 23 (Wed) Quail Ridge Books hosts **Lemony Snicket** for his new book, *When Did You See Her Last?* 7 pm.

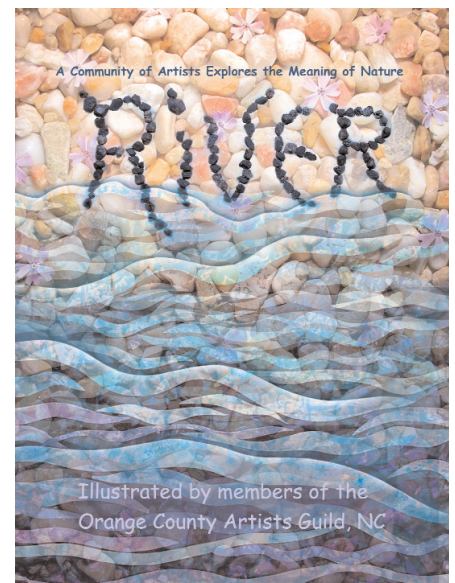
OCTOBER 25 (Fri) The Festival of Legends presents Unseelie Eve at Mystery Brewing Company in Hillsborough, NC. 7 pm - 12 am.

OCTOBER 25 (Fri-Sat) Duke University hosts the **Race in Space Conference**, exploring the issues of race, culture and nationality in the colonization of space stations, planets, and stars.

OCTOBER 26 (Sat) 2013 **Geek Gala** in Charlotte. 2 pm - 12 am.

NOVEMBER 6 (Wed) Quail Ridge Books hosts **James Dashner** for his new YA dystopian novel *The Eye of Minds*. 7 pm.

NOVEMBER 9-10 (Sat-Sun) **NC Comicon** returns to the Durham Convention Center. "Twice the space, four times the fun."



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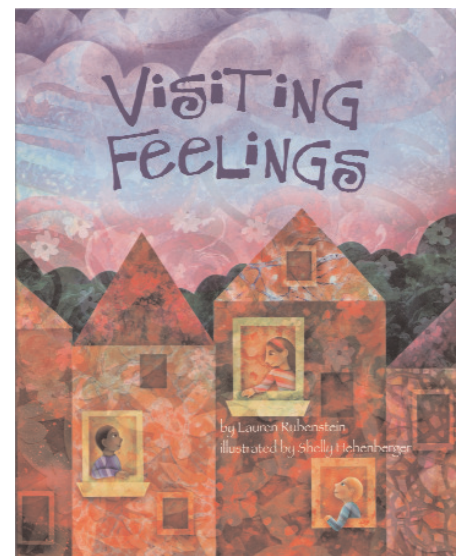
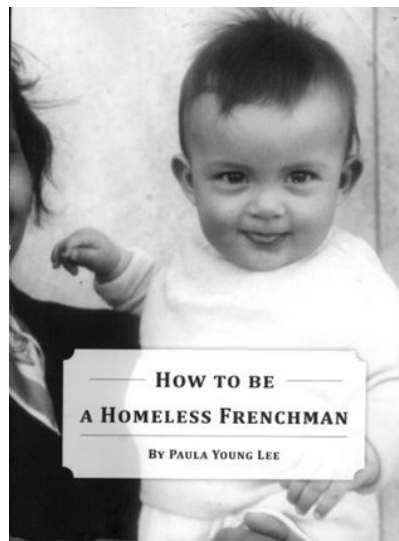
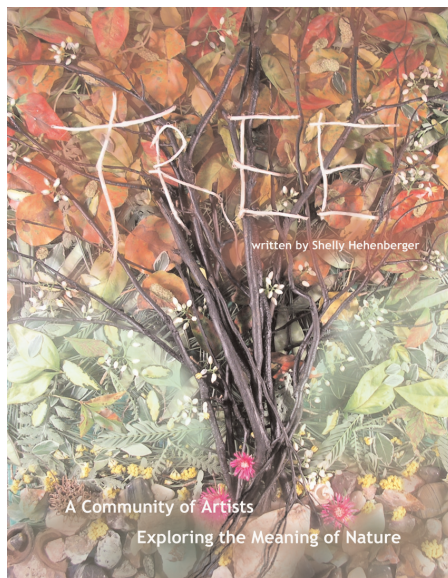
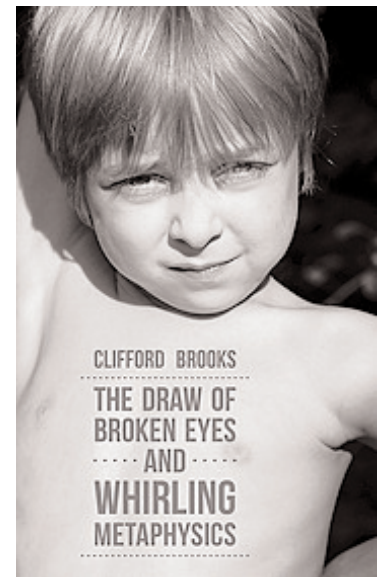
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on that moving target
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break a bone,
smash your head
in all the wrong places.

And it is a storm drain.
Eventually, a wave of water will rush down
this cement tube
and sweep you all away.
Some will drown.
Some will struggle back to safety,
clutching their boards.

Life and death...
the game deserves no less.

Two by John Grey

"My Communication Breakdown"

I'm in a coffee shop,
sipping Mocha blend,
reading a book.

Most everyone else has
a cell phone in their ear.

A few go through
their pads, tablets, laptops,
to some social media page
where everybody shares
what they're doing in the moment.

They need to communicate
at all times,
with their friends and family,
with complete strangers
if they have to.

They can no longer
risk being unconnected.
If it's just themselves,
then is there anybody?

Meanwhile, I'm reading Herman Hesse.
He doesn't know I'm here.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Susan Siebert Connors is a working artist specializing in producing quality art and artistic designs. Her early art experience was traditional painting on canvas (oil and acrylic), as well as colored pencil and charcoal on paper; her current medium of choice is Photoshop. She was born in Colorado and lived a happily eclectic childhood as the daughter of an engineer / scientist / inventor who studied for two years under the famous Albert Einstein at the University of Berlin. Connors currently resides in Florida with the three cats who own her, and her husband.

Roberto Cofresi is either the most famous pirate in Puerto Rico - "El Pirato Cofresi," or a guitarist and songwriter for the band New Town Drunks. Or both...

Nathan Golub is an illustrator/graphic designer based out of Durham NC. When he's not illustrating/graphic designing he's either playing music with his friends or hanging out with his wife and ever-growing household. Check him out at <http://nathangolub.com/>

Guy L. Jackson writes, "My short stories have appeared in the literary magazines *Hanson's*, *Cascade Reader*, *The Throwback* (a story which won a 'best of' issue prize), *Confrontation*, *Binnacle*, *The Fix*, *Nerve Cowboy*, *Pacific Review*, *Thorny Locust*, *The Helix*, *Art Times*, *The Delinquent*, online at *Wood Coin*, *Stanley The Whale*, *Platforms Magazine* and www.wirelesstheatrecompany.co.uk, and on the compilation album *Disco_r.dance Volume One*, with other publications pending in *Harvard Review*, *Lovechild*, and *Crash*. I also penned a humor column for *The Siskiyou* newspaper in Ashland, Oregon. My poems and short stories have also been published in the *Lazy Gramophone* collections *The Book of Apertures*, *Under the Influence*, *Surroundings*, *Make Love To Me*, *Guilt*, and *Past Present Future*, and my work will be in their upcoming collection, *The Time Project*. My handmade, illustrated storybooks have been made available in *Shoreditch's* bookartbookshop, and one storybook made it into an art exhibit in *Sunrunner Pub* in *Hitchin*, England. Recently my first horror screenplay was optioned by *Sean S. Cunningham* and his company, *Crystal Lake Entertainment*. In *Los Angeles*, in *2010* and *2011*, I've performed my one-man, all-original, not-for-kids storytelling show *Tintar Isle* at both *The Complex* and *The Whitefire Theatre*, and my storytelling show *In The Ages Of The Earth* enjoyed a successful four-month run at *Working Stage Theatre*. In *2010*, *Jville*, a weekly radio show hosted by myself and featuring spoken word and music, was launched on *KPOV 88.9 FM* and now streams Thursdays at midnight Pacific Time at www.kpov.org. Several 'lost' episodes are available for listening at www.guyjackson.podbean.com. In *2010* *Odd Frost*, a collaboration with pianist *David Finch* and my fifth all-original storytelling album, was released onto *iTunes*. In *2009* my storytelling tracks *The Man Who Was Kind of an Ark* and *Thousands Of Love Letters* were featured on *The Colin Murray Show* on *BBC Radio One*. Also in *2009* I performed (separately) my three all-original, one-man, storytelling shows *Tintar Isle*, *In The Ages of the Earth*, and *The Drunken Nurses* at *The Cascade Theatrical Company's Greenwood Playhouse*, in *Bend, Oregon*. *Tintar Isle*, the only one to receive a review, was called 'captivating', 'enchanting', 'riveting', 'mesmerizing', and 'incomparable in its originality'. www.tsweekly.com/culture/theater/spend-an-enchanting-night-on-guy-j-jacksons-tintar-isle.html. Two of my children's plays have been published: *Hello & Goodbye Hansel & Gretel*, from *Playscripts, Inc.*, and *Rumpelstiltskin Revisited*, from *Pioneer Drama Service*. In *2008* I wrote and performed a one-man, all-original storytelling show, *The Filthy Pilgrim*, as part of *The Camden Fringe Festival*. My Surprise Cousin *Catherine* (one of the *200+* short and feature-length movies I've made and posted at www.youtube.com/Guyjackson) was requested into competition in *2008* for *The South By Southwest Film Festival*. And the electronica artist *Isnaj Dui* and I created a duet spoken word/electronica album, *Ingily Spikin World*, through www.fboxrecords.co.uk. Eight of the plays I've written were produced in *Chicago, Illinois*, including *Products in the Last Refuge*, as part of *CollaborAction's WinterSketchbook 2000*, *Diggers at a Burial*, as part of the *1999 Bailiwick Director's Fest*, and *Marrieds*, as part of *Side Studio's The Balsa Heart (2003)*. *Lifeline Theatre*, named 'the best children's theatre in Chicago' by *New City* and *Chicago* magazines, presented my loose adaptations *Another Puss in Boots* and *Rumpelstiltskin Revisited* in *2001* and *2003*, respectively. My full-length plays *The Flight of the Butter Boy*, *The Cry Trilogii*, and *Pond 7* were all mounted by the itinerant *Fantod Theatre Company*. Also in *Chicago* I've done original storytelling performances at *The Green Mill*, and as part of the *Mary Arrchie Theatre's Abby Hoffman Festival* in both *2000* and *2001*. Elsewhere, in *New York, New York*, *Love Creek Productions* performed my one-act play *Waste* in their *Winter One Acts Festival 2002*, and in *2009* I spun original stories at *The Bowery Poetry Club*, *Cornelius Street Café*, *Kenny's Castaways*, and *Under St. Mark's Theatre*. I wrote and performed another storytelling show, *The Tunnel*, at *Moorhead College* in *Fargo, North Dakota*, in *2004*, and *Waste* was performed there in *2005*. *Waste* was also short-listed for the *2007 Heideman Award in the Actors' Theatre of Louisville's National Ten-Minute Play Contest*. The *Brush Creek Playhouse*, in *Silverton, Oregon*, performed my play *The Flight of the Butter Boy* in *May 2005*, and while triple-majoring in *English, History*, and *Theatre* at *Southern Oregon University* my plays *Yarning*, *Deer In The Headlights*, *Consider This...*, and *The Flight of the Butter Boy* were showcased as student productions. I directed the former two shows, and also directed other authors' *The Bay at Nice* and *Charlie the Chicken*. Two of my all-original storytelling CDs (*The Filthy Pilgrim* and *Live at Pete's*) have been published by *Lazy Gramophone* and are available on *iTunes*. Also available from *Bandcamp* is *Notes on Cow Life*, an EP in collaboration with *BBC* sound engineer *Robin The Fog*. During my time in *The United Kingdom* I guested in a multitude of variety shows and music and poetry nights, including *The Art of News Show* featuring *The London Sinfonietta*, *Freshly Scratched* at *Battersea Arts Center*, *Orange/Myspace Unlit*, *London Unlit*, *Derek Meins' Album Launch* at *The Enterprise*, *Slow Club's Residency* at *The Enterprise*, *Yarns & Storytellers*, *Shortfuse!*, *Lazy Gramophone Presents...* at *The Macbeth* and at *The Lumiere* as well as *The Lazy Gramophone Festival* at *The Miller*, *Scaledown*, *Express Excess*, *Gazing Into The Past Theatre Festival* at *The Miller*, *Camden Crawl* at *The Spread Eagle*, *The Delinquent Magazine Launch* at *Whitechapel Art Gallery*, *The Fix Christmas Show*, *The Fix Poetry Live* at *Rosemary Branch*, *Jam Sandwich* at *The Premises*, *The Soapbox Club*, *Jont & Friends* at *Soho Revue*, *The Human Zoo*, *Bugbear Promotions* at *Hope & Anchor*, *Brixton's Best Short Story Night*, *House Of Strange* at *HUB*, *Utter at Arcola Theatre*, *Utter at Salisbury Pub*, *The Cellar*, *Oxford Acid Jam*, *Wormworld*, *Littlest Birds*, *Bards In Their Eyes*, *Jorge*, *More Poetry*, *Little Legs Charity Event* at *The Troubadour*, *Room Of Abandon*, *The R U Sitting Comfortably StoryFest*, *An Evening With Luke Smith* at *Orange Street Music Club*, *Disco_r.dance*, *Donuts For Darwin*, *Zombies Are People Too*, *Poetry And Poppadums*, *Spoken Cabaret*, *Poetry Unplugged*, *West of Arkham*, *The Super-Best Friends Club* at *Vibe Bar*, *The Luncheon League*, *Half-Past Barking*, *The Lovecraft Society Night*, *Sourfeast Theatre* at *Dogstar Pub*, *The Takeaway Festival*, *Lazy Birds*, *The Stoke-Newington Festival*, *Why Not Take Five?*, *Pull Up A Chair* at *The Victoria*, *14 Hour*, *Touch Me I'm Sick*, *Farrago Festival Of The Spoken Word*, *Farrago UK Slam*, *Farrago Love Slam*, *Daytime TV* at *JAMM*, *A Spoonful Of Poison* at *Gramophone*, *A Spoonful Of Poison* at *The Rhythm Factory*, *King Gong*, *Muses Café*, *Pat And Trevor* at *Sassoon Gallery*, and I was the caller at a *Bingo/Karaoke/Poetry* night. Also in *The United Kingdom* I was on *Resonance Radio's The Late, Late Breakfast Show*, *The Sausage Show*, and *Space Soon*, on *Edinburgh Festival FM's The Afternoon Show*, and on a test pilot for the comic psychiatry show *What's Your Problem?* I captured the *Poetry Champion 2006* award in the *Farrago Summer Slam*, was a finalist in *Poetry Idol's Edinburgh Special*, was a finalist in *Poetry Idol's Brick Lane Festival Special*, and placed third in the *Masque Barbican Poetry Slam*. In *2006* and *2007* I joined the street performers in *The Edinburgh Fringe Festival*, *The Hay Literary Festival*, and *The Brighton Arts Festival*, was a selected busker in *2008's Big Chill Festival*, and was onstage at *The Poetry Arena* in *2007's Latitude Festival*, at *Pandora's Playground* for *2008's Latitude Festival*, and in *The Cabaret Tent* in *2007's Shambala Festival*. *Jacksonville*, my half-hour radio show of stories and idle chatter, ran for two series on *London's Resonance Radio*, in *2006* and *2007*. And from *2008* to *2009*, along with the UK's only poet/magician, *Nathan Penlington*, I co-hosted *Parlour Games*, an hour-long radio show featuring spoken word, magic tricks, and fake séances, again for two series on *Resonance Radio*. Living in *San Francisco* from *2004* to *2006* I incessantly performed my original short stories in venues such as *The Sweetwater*, *The Brainwash*, *No Name Bar*, *Bazaar Café*, *Daiva*, *Café International*, *The Green Tortoise*, *Peri's*, *Rockin' Java*, *16th & Mission*, *Canvas Café*, *Ireland's 32*, and on *The Diamond Dave Radio Show*, until winding up with a ten-month stint as the storytelling co-host of both *The Pete and Guy Show* and *The Purple Friday Show* at the legendary *Purple Onion*. I also co-wrote and acted in two independent films that saw production, *Ian* and *Gentle Lovers*. From *2009* to *2010* in *Bend, Oregon*, I was a three-time winner and a two-time second place finisher and a three-time third place finisher in *The Bend Poetry Slam*, and performed as a storyteller as part of two *Bend Art Walks*, in *Art Fusion*, and in variety nights and venues such as *M&J Tavern*, *The Kilns*, *Strictly Organic Coffee House*, *Silver Moon Tavern*, *Summit Tavern*, *Camalli Books*, *Between The Covers Bookstore*, and *The Poethouse*. I was also the founding host for *Bend Performing Arts Center's Speakeasy*. I've also performed my original stories in cabarets, variety nights, and venues around *Los Angeles*: *The Comedy Store*, *Velvet Gorilla Cabaret*, *The Silver Lake Lounge*, *Rick Shapiro's Spoken Word Night*, *The Pig N Whistle*, *Los Angeles Unlit*, *Café Audrey*, *Inkslam 2011*, *The Other Side*, *Hollywood Bar & Grill*, *El Cid*, *Da Poetry Lounge*, *The Actor's Lounge*, *Café Muse*, *The Vermont*, *Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf*, and *The Tribal Café*.

John Grey is an Australian born poet. Recently published in *International Poetry Review*, *Sanskrit* and the science fiction anthology, "Futuredaze" with work upcoming in *Clackamas Literary Review*, *New Orphic Review* and *Nerve Cowboy*. He resides in *Johnston, RI*.

Phil Juliano is bucking down for a long season with the Vikings.

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