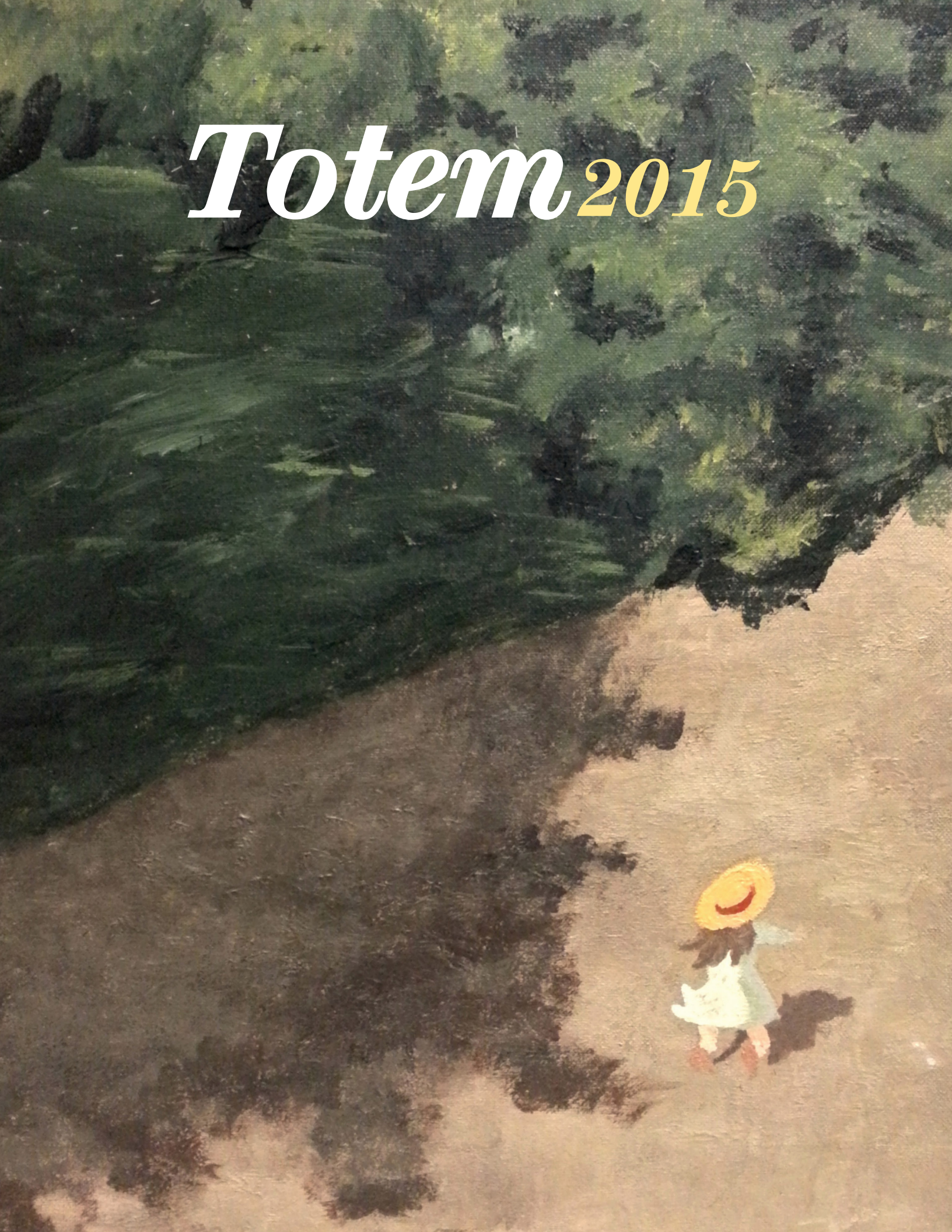


# *Totem* 2015





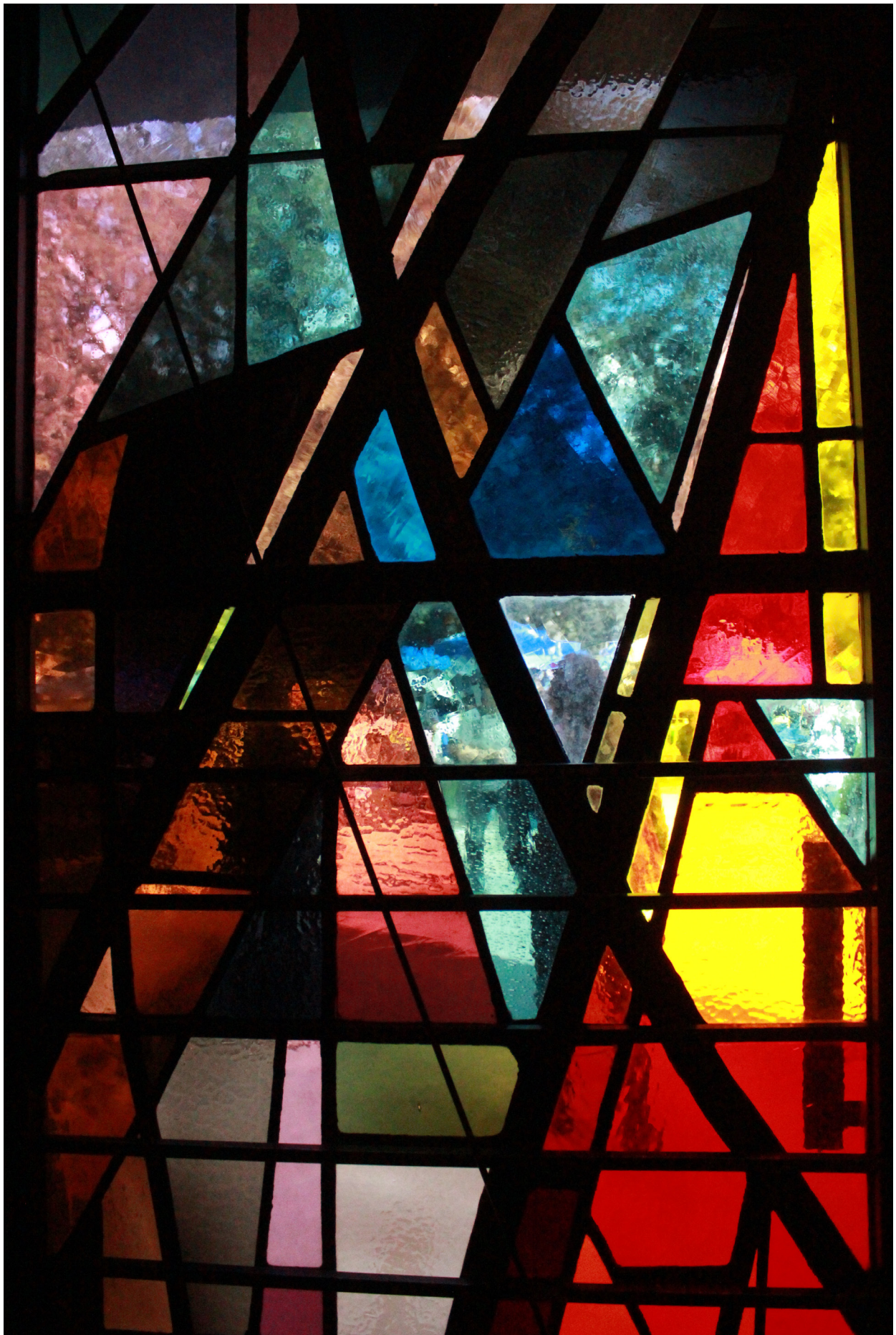
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fiat lumo | Jenny He | Digital Photography



# Room

Arin Davoodian

Four cornered walls  
With sundown lights  
Through squared windows glass  
Darkened cloth covered peering

Here I lay with mind gleaming and gearing  
Extending the confined ledge  
Pioneering  
Mind of mister  
Mind of mistress  
Engineering

No motion, nor movement  
Just in space,  
Steering

Waves of ocean, or particles of sand,  
nay, perhaps of phase  
Much like persona  
With emotion, mood, and hand.

Glimpse of glance  
In stochastic full, sight to see  
Determined by faith, by heart ever-last  
Whichever by stance

To forgo perfection to equation  
to solve what is solved.

Mothers of daughters and  
Fathers of sons see it,  
Creation,  
Their light,  
From the light.

Go on and search.  
Your answers are there.  
Before you.  
Solved or bare,  
Whichever by stance

Mind of mister  
Mind of mistress  
Sight to see  
By heart ever-last



# Forever

Oriel Humes

Walk by my side on the shoreline, my love,  
Take my hand and gaze with me into the ocean.  
Together we will walk in the golden sunshine  
Our toes sinking wet in the waters of low tide  
That sparkle like the life within your eyes.  
Hold me close and contemplate eternity.

Will you be at my side at the limit of eternity?  
I whisper in your ear that it is you I love.  
You assure me with the kindness of your eyes  
That for me you would cross the endless ocean  
Against the highest waves and strongest tide  
I will be waiting patiently in the sunshine.

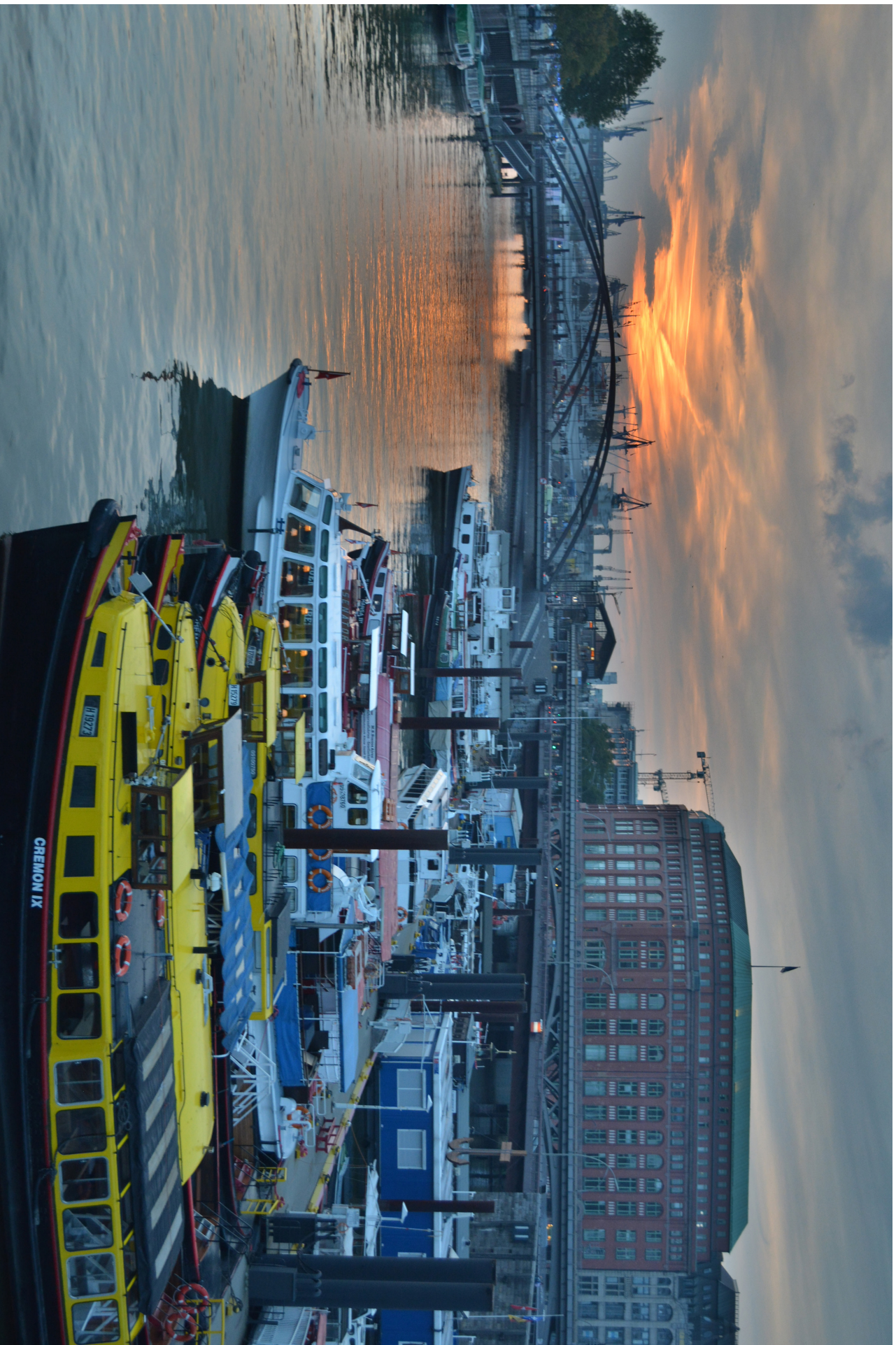
Will our love last, or fade like pigments in sunshine?  
Can any human endeavor stand for eternity?  
Or must it to erode like shorelines yielding to the tide?  
Does infinity so diminish love?  
Or simply render it a tiny bubble in the ocean?  
For what is a human life in the universe's eyes?

I feel the unbounded when I gaze into your eyes.  
The warmth of love when we sit in sunshine.  
If not infinite, seemingly, as is the ocean.  
Perhaps not forever, but enough for my eternity.  
Much more than needed to fill my life with love.  
And irresistible and ever present as the pull of tides.

Your love is an anchor against time's tide  
And more than plenty enough in human eyes  
How lucky I am, to call you my love  
And spend my days walking in your sunshine  
Every moment enough to dwarf eternity  
Every tiny bubble an enormous ocean.

We may be tiny against this endless ocean  
We may be powerless to resist the tide  
We may not stand against eternity  
But there is eternity enough within your eyes  
And infinity as you embrace me in the sunshine  
I feel immortal when I feel your love.

Stand with me by the ocean, my love.  
Embrace me in the sunshine before the tide.  
In my eyes we are eternity.



Sunset by the Canals | Kiara Simpao | Digital Photography



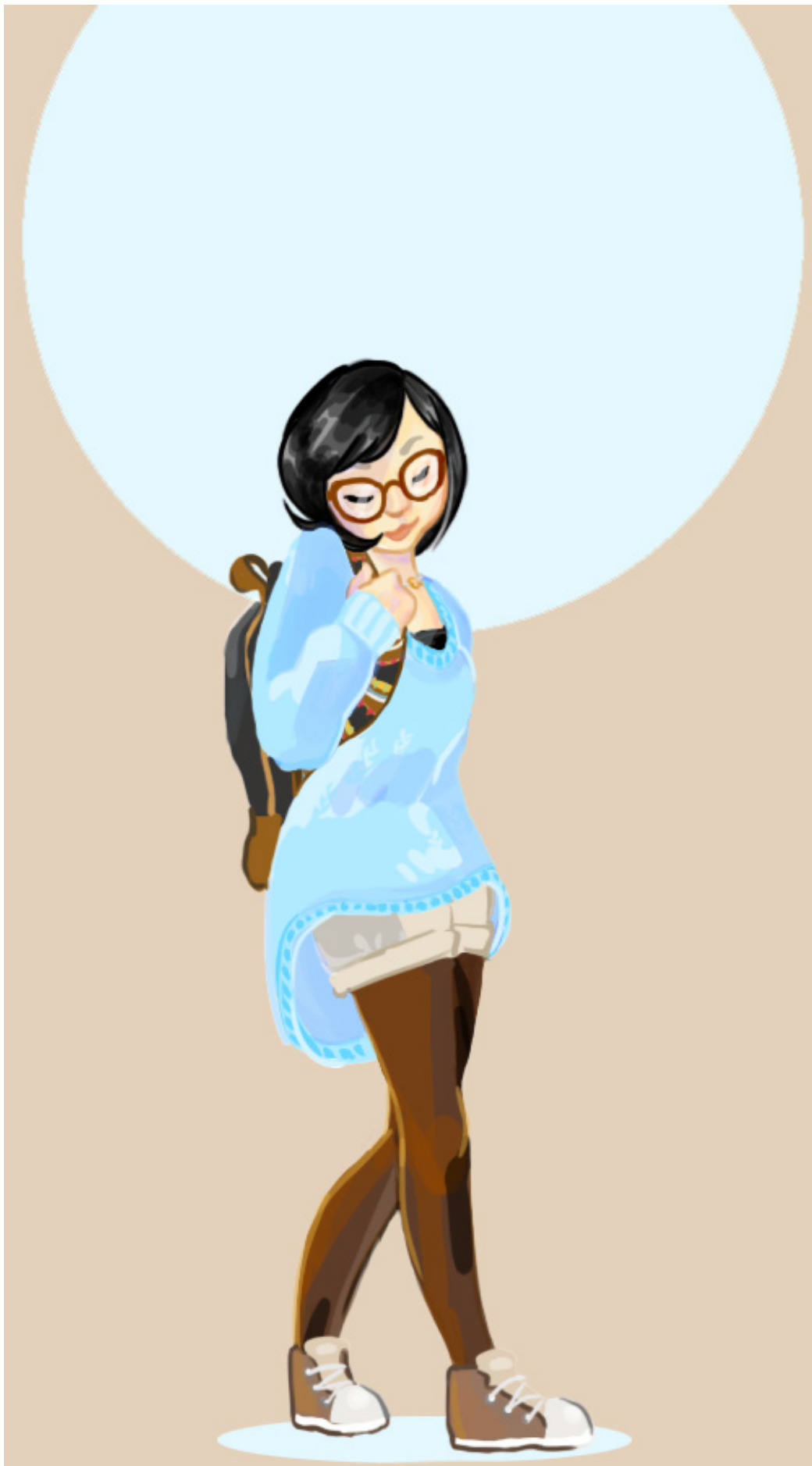


Baby Penguins | Sripriya Ravindra Kumar | Pencil

What did the baby penguin say to its elder sibling?

You are a special gift to me.  
You involve me in everything you explore and smile at my ignorance.  
When Mom and Dad said NO, you taught me your version was kNOw.  
I've often got you in trouble and that didn't shrink you even the slightest,  
For you knew I am part of you.  
You like when I follow your steps blindfolded,  
And you love when I question you, and you take pride to feed me with your experience.  
You are my best friend and you know that very well;  
What you don't know is how much I admire you every day for the loving person you are!





clothes, i.e., the little things that make me happy | Sandra Ning | Digital Art

# Know the Wind

Peter Buhler

The wind spoke to the old man  
Who is like you? To have seen the world  
To grow tired and satisfied with life

But the old man did not answer  
Because he could no longer hear

The wind spoke to the child  
Who is like you? To be new to the world  
To be young and craving the milk of life

But the child did not answer  
Because he could not understand yet

So the wind spoke to me, a young man  
Who is like you? To be in the world  
To be swimming in the currents of life

I answered and said  
Wind, I am like the old man  
I am satisfied with humility and peace

Wind, I am like the child  
I still crave the milk of life

Wind, I am like myself  
I find joy in the waves and currents of life

But I am not like you, wind  
Always search and never find  
Old as thunder, young as rain  
Know no pleasure, know no pain  
Tossed by currents, Earth, and Sun  
Never ceasing once begun

Never old and never new  
Wind, I am not like you

And the wind said to me

Though so many chase me  
And so many reap me  
You know me  
Because you are still and contemplate your heart



Superkilen | Kiara Simpao | Digital Photography





# California the Beautiful

Ding Ding

The coastline of California has always filled me with thrill and imagination.

Inspired by the works of Galen Rowell, I have always wanted to drive by Highway One at a leisurely pace to take some good photos of this world heritage.

While I have driven up and down the coast several times, it was a different experience each time.

This time, however, was very unique.

The sun was gently setting in the early spring while coastal flowers bloomed.

The color of the evening sun gently smeared its glow on rocks, plants, flowers and the water.

It was not like the harsh warmth of the cloudless California scene or the soft whitewashed coastline of the British Isles, but a gentle display of vivid exuberance.

Witnessing this scenery was such a joy and I can imagine why masters like Galen Rowell spent endless effort and energy to visit their beloved locations again and again to document the beauty that lies beyond.





# Dot

Yvette Doss

There it was. The green dot just under her own gray dot, his name spelled out beneath her name in the little Gmail chat window on her computer screen. A little light. A sign of life. His presence—there—in real time. Just sitting there. After so long. Francisco.

If she put her cursor on his name she could read the rest of the status message that was there next to his name. As it was, she could only make out the first three words. "One good thing..." What could he be getting at? She could find out. If she put her cursor on his name she would see a picture. A box would pop up and his photo and the full status message would be there for her to see. Just like before.

But she couldn't. She didn't dare. She pulled the mouse away, dragging the cursor as far from that little glowing dot as she could.

What was she doing? She wasn't going to do this. She had decided, hadn't she? She had blocked him from her email chat list so that she couldn't see his name. But this morning, she was compelled to unblock him. He had made an appearance in her dreams. He was smiling at her, telling her it was all right. That he understood. She awoke with a burning desire to see him, if only through the email chat window. The thought just took hold of her and she couldn't fight it.

On her part, there was no photo, no status message, and no green dot for anyone to see. Never had been. From the very beginning, when she first set up her email account, she had chosen to designate herself as invisible in the chat window so that no one could monitor her presence online. The thought of others watching her gave her a chill. The idea that she could be visible to the world through a little green light that represented her, that beamed the fact of her existence, had always disturbed her. So much monitoring going on these days. Video cameras in parking lots, cameras snapping shots of cars that careened through red lights, tracking cookies that snuck onto one's own personal computer. Orwell had it right. Big Brother was watching.

Despite her apprehension, she had thought back then, after they had spoken, about uploading and placing her own photo there in that little box, adding a quote from a book of poetry she loved as her status message—something inspirational. So that he could see her name the way she could see his. So that he could reach out to her when his green dot was on and her green dot was on. (His name had just appeared there one day after that one and only email exchange. It was such a happy day for her.) But she never dared. Instead, she had watched him for a couple of months, watched his green dot, until it got out of hand. She logged on at all hours of the day or night just to see his green light. It became too much. Hadn't it gotten out of hand? She decided to stop altogether. That was when she blocked him from her chat list so that she wouldn't have to see his name there every time she logged on to her email. After she blocked him, his name disappeared. It was for the best.

\*

There it was again, the green dot. He was online! She watched the dot, and it went from green to orange. That meant idle. He was on another window, doing something else. It was amazing that she could follow his actions from 3,000 miles away in Pasadena and know that he had been using his email and now was doing something else on his computer in New York. She was a part



of his life when she did this. So close. She could take a peek at his photo. See his face. She knew it was right there. All she had to do was use her cursor to scroll over his name and that box would pop up. He would be right there. His face. No. This was a bad idea. She couldn't do this again. She logged off.

\*

No green dot today. It was gray, like her own dot. Busy doing something else, not online at all. Gray like the rain. Gray like more and more of her hair these days. Gray like a mouse in a laboratory, its tiny claws hitting the lever again and again in pursuit of more of whatever drug the researchers used to hook it.

\*

She stared at her own name in the chat window, at her own grayed out dot. She typed his name in the search field and chose "Show in chat list." There it was again. His green dot. And his photograph. She stared at the photograph of Francisco now, so familiar to her. In it, he seemed about to leap in the air, even though all she could see was his shoulders and the top half of his torso. He was wearing a sweatshirt bearing the letters NYU. She loved those letters. There was so much packed into those three little letters. Images flashed through her mind. Imagined scenes of Francisco walking across campus, a backpack slung over his shoulder. It was as if she had been there. She could have been. It was her choice not to be. He had reminded her of that. The little he had said to her made it clear that he begrudged her that choice. It was unforgivable. She logged off and slammed her laptop lid shut.

\*

No green. Just gray.

\*

Nothing. Did he have a way of knowing she was watching? Had he caught on? No, it was impossible. He had probably forgotten that she had ever been on his chat list, or perhaps he had never seen her name there. Her name was probably down at the very bottom, not even visible to him since her light never glowed green. When your light glows green, your name rises to the top of the list. When it's gray, your name by your dot appears in alphabetical order by first name. Her name, Zara, would be at the very bottom. He wouldn't even see it, if his list was long. It would be off-screen. Unless she went visible. Unless she had her own green light.

\*

No green. Just gray. She could go green. If she went green, he could see her, and he would know that she was there, watching. She could broadcast a message to him. What would she say? She could put her photograph in that little box and remind him of her existence. What was the harm in that? She had already done that once before. She had already reminded him of her existence that day she approached him outside his apartment building, but it hadn't gone well, had it? He had been so startled, so confused when she approached.

"Francisco. Francisco, wait," she had called out.

"Yeah?" he had asked. "Do I know you?" He was getting out of his car, a backpack over his shoulder, she remembered.

"No. I've been trying to find you. I ... My name is Zara Carrasquillo ... I'm your mother, Francisco. I've been looking for you."

His face changed then.

"I just want to talk. Get to know you," she said.

"No. No, I have a mother," he said simply. "I have a mother—"

"Your real mother."

"I have a mother," he said again, moving away from her, toward his building.

Desperate, she had called out, "Can we talk? Can I call you?"

He stared at her blankly, and then his expression changed for a quick moment. He walked back toward his car then, put his backpack on his car roof and pulled out a notebook. He scribbled something on a piece of paper and handed it to her. "Here's my email address," he said. "If you have something to say, send me an email. But please don't come here again."

After she sent the email, which included a long apology, the whys and wheres of his conception, her decision to give him up and the anguish she had felt over it, her struggle to finish law school and pass the bar exam, her career as an assistant DA, her endless search for him later, her wish to be part of his life now that she had found him, he had responded with a short email. "I'm sorry, I don't want to spend time with you. I have a mother and father. I don't know you. You chose to give me up. Please let me live my life in peace."

\*

Green light. His green light. Glowing. Brilliant. She could. She could. Should she? More than a year had gone by. Surely by now he would have a different perspective on things. Surely by now he would be willing to get to know her. She was tired of being invisible to him. He needed to grow up and accept her. Maybe he already had.

She decided, in an instant, to go green. She would do it. She placed her cursor over her name and saw the list of options. She chose "Available." Her dot went green.

She held her breath and stared. There, on her screen, two green dots. Her green dot next to her name glowing above his green dot, next to his name. So close. His face, his smile in the photograph. Her Francisco, next to her. Next to her! It was like nothing she had ever felt before, this closeness. She felt full. Lush. Rich. Drunk, almost. Here, at last, was her son, by her side. By her side! Was this what it felt like to be loved by a child? Was this how it could have been? She felt, at that moment, that all the love in the world was inside her. She was a vessel for all that was warm and bright and beautiful and good. She imagined his hand reaching out through the screen, reaching out to her. She would take it. She would hold it. And she wouldn't let go this time.

As she watched, his dot went from green to gray.

\*

No green. Just gray.

\*

No green. Just gray.

\*

No green. Just gray.





Askance | Kiara Simpao | Digital Photography





Untitled | Dingyi Sun | Digital Photography



# Ocho y la eternidad

Vansh Kumar

¿Es posible caminar en  
el cénit del propio mundo?  
Meramente perderse en  
lo que uno más desea

¿Es posible agarrar a  
la raíz de los ideas?  
Entenderla y, con tiempo,  
admitir su perpetuidad

¿Es posible determinar  
el destino final del luz?  
El límite de la vista,  
la venda es nuestro foco

¿Es posible aniquilar  
la jaula mental del alma?  
Liberar los pensamientos  
y conectar con algo más

¿Es posible desempeñar  
un hito tan inspirador  
Que calma toda inquietud  
aunque se deja vacío?

¿Es posible fraguar una  
oración perfecta para  
Describir este segundo  
y, al mismo tiempo, todo?

Parar el tiempo con su voz,  
y enfocarse sólo en  
Lo que ya está, en vez de  
obcecarse con ambición

Someterse al paso del  
tiempo desinteresado  
Convencerse que, de veras,  
siempre ha sido eterno

# Eight and eternity

Is it possible to walk on  
the zenith of the world itself?  
Merely lose yourself in  
what you want most

Is it possible to capture  
the essence of our ideas?  
Understand it and, with time,  
admit its infiniteness

Is it possible to determine  
the final destination of light?  
The limit of our vision,  
the blindfold is our focus

Is it possible to annihilate  
the mental cage of the soul?  
Free our thoughts  
and connect with something greater

Is it possible to perform a  
feat so awe-inspiring  
That it calms your restlessness  
even though it leaves us empty?

Is it possible to concoct a  
perfect sentence to  
describe this second  
and, at the same time, everything?

Stop time with your voice,  
and focus only on  
what is already there, instead of  
blinding yourself with ambition

Submit yourself to the passing of  
disinterested time  
Convince yourself that, really,  
it has always been eternal.





leucistic raven | Sandra Ning | Acrylic on Canvas



# Anorexia

Anonymous

I live in a glass box that no one else can see.  
I can live and work and sleep in my box but I can never leave it.  
Usually I do not want to, but sometimes I do and then I am sad that I cannot.  
My friends call to me and say, "Come have fun with us!"  
If they do not know about my box, I must make up excuses.  
My closest friends know about my box.  
They come near it so I am not always alone.  
Even they do not understand why I cannot leave.  
"Come out just a short way," they say. "It is not so scary."  
They do not understand that there is no door in my box; it must be shattered.  
This I am not strong enough to do, even when I wish to.  
At times I hope someone outside will shatter the box and set me free, but I fear I would be crushed beneath the breaking glass.  
And so I stay here, in my little glass box that no one else can see.

# An Ocean of Memories

Jenny Hsin

I'm drowning in my thoughts.  
I'm drowning in an ocean.  
Glowing fish float by slowly.  
My hands grasp at them desperately,  
Wanting them to slow down.

The fish carry fragments of long-ago glories,  
From lost golden hours of yesterday.  
And so I search for hidden treasures,  
Along with shattered, but precious, pieces of forgotten pleasures,  
But the fish slip through my fingers.

A whirlpool clouds my vision,  
The fish disappear.  
A shark rushes at me, snapping.  
The ever present problems of today are haunting,  
Staring at me through the soulless black eyes of the shark.

Chase the fish, run from the shark.  
Childhood was easier, adulthood is trouble.  
A voice calls me a coward, but who cares?  
Face the present? I don't dare.  
But an anchor holds me back from diving back down.

Once beautiful mermaids now leer at me,  
And a kraken awaits me in the dark depths of the ocean.  
I tug at the anchor, but stop running.  
The glorious images of the past are distorting,  
And I swim to the surface to find my friends and family.

Leave the ghosts;  
They play in the murky abyss of the great blue.  
Leave the useless trophies,  
Their shine dulled by sand and salt water.  
Leave a part of myself;  
she goes to play with the ghosts and shine the trophies.



# Conductor of Swans, Gardener of Pines

Peter Buhler

She watches over stage and lake  
Chords take feather and strings awake  
Rising for this little girl  
From the balcony her body leads  
And the bevy of her swans proceeds  
Her flapping arms one-two-three-four  
One-two-three-four  
One-two-swing-soar  
Her limbs grow weary  
But she knows  
Swans must fly on  
So she cannot stop to rest too long  
Or else the music of the birds is gone  
So one-two-three-four she goes on  
To propel her wedge of swans  
Until they touch the final beat  
And she relaxes in her seat  
Proud of her conducting feat  
But she cannot linger long or spare  
Again her tiny hands will stir the air  
To practice a melody she does not yet know  
To prepare to grow the Pines of Rome



one windy afternoon | Sandra Ning | Acrylic on Canvas





Woman with a Hat | Archan Luhar | Acrylic



# Losing Faith

Oriel Humes

When I sent you my silent wish  
Did you get it or did it miss?  
And when you got my silent plea  
Did you not know it was from me?  
And once you got my silent prayer  
Did you not hear it or did you not care?  
And if you sent me a reply  
Did I receive or miss the sign?  
But are you even there at all?  
Perhaps I should repeat my call?  
Or maybe you are just my dream  
Not here for me, although you seemed.  
I fear a new line has been crossed  
You're now a friend that I have lost.  
You make them often, you don't care  
About a lost friend here or there.  
But me? I only have a few.  
I've lost my faith, in losing you.



decapitation | Jenny He | Digital Photography





Nude | Ann Elliott Cutting | Film Photography

# The Forest of Forgetting

Peter Buhler

Come on faithful bloodhound  
We have ourselves a lot of ground  
And we'll be walking on old time  
Get along sweet dusty compass  
Give me your heading and no fuss  
Show your bearing true and true  
Through your thick and oily grime  
Dipped in the honey of a harvest moon  
The three of us are heading soon  
To a country without sleep  
To the great forest of all memories  
Where each thought rustles on the trees  
And forgotten leaves have fallen deep  
Purposeful boots and a loyal dog  
Out we stride to the muted fog  
At the wooded archive we arrive  
And as I entered that great sylvan land  
The first time that I have seen firsthand  
I sighed because the wind was restless here  
To mix foreign thoughts with mine, I fear  
A blending of the maple, oak, and birch  
Under the trunks of every soul who ever lived  
Of every recollection I have sieved  
And countless more to search  
Crunch and crackle go the thoughts  
As I tread anamnesis, forget-me-nots  
Lost bits of every mind tumbled up and intertwined  
In the sweet shine of a compass rose  
With the chuffing of a bloodhound nose  
Wending on as wending goes  
To find the memory that once was mine





Monitoring the Evening Commute | Kiara Simpao | Digital Photography





Untitled | Dingyi Sun | Digital Photography



# Acknowledgements

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